



Brent

SUMMONS TO ATTEND COUNCIL MEETING

Thursday 23 February 2023 at 6.00 pm

Conference Hall - Brent Civic Centre, Engineers Way,
Wembley, HA9 0FJ

Please note that this meeting will be held as a physical meeting with all members of the Council required to attend in person.

To the Mayor and Councillors of the London Borough of Brent and to each and every one of them.

I hereby summon you to attend the MEETING OF THE COUNCIL of this Borough.

CAROLYN DOWNS
Chief Executive

Dated: 15 February 2023 (agenda republished on 23 February 2023)

For further information contact: James Kinsella, Governance Manager
Tel: 020 8937 2063; Email: james.kinsella@brent.gov.uk

For electronic copies of minutes, reports and agendas, and to be alerted when the minutes of this meeting have been published visit:
democracy.brent.gov.uk

Limited space will be available at the meeting for the press and public to attend or alternatively it will be possible to follow the meeting via the live webcast. The link to follow proceedings via the live webcast is available [here](#)

Notes for Members - Declarations of Interest:

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

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

If the Personal Interest is also a Prejudicial Interest (i.e. it affects a financial position or relates to determining of any approval, consent, licence, permission, or registration) then (unless an exception at 14(2) of the Members Code applies), 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 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, to a greater extent than the majority of other council tax payers, ratepayers or inhabitants of the electoral ward affected by the decision, 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 employs or has appointed any of these or in whom they have a beneficial interest in a class of securities exceeding the nominal value of £25,000, or any firm in which they are a partner, or any company of which they are a director
- any body of a type described in (a) above

Agenda

1 Apologies for Absence

2 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

To confirm as a correct record, the minutes of the following meetings of the Council:

- | | | |
|-----|---|---------|
| 2.1 | Council meeting held on Monday 21 November 2022. | 1 - 38 |
| 2.2 | Extraordinary Council meeting held on Monday 23 January 2023. | 39 - 42 |

3 Declarations of Interest

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

4 Mayor's Announcements

To receive any announcements from the Mayor.

5 Appointments to Committees and Outside Bodies and Appointment of Chairs/Vice Chairs (if any) 43 - 44

To agree any appointments to Committees, Joint Committees, Forums, Panels and Outside Bodies in accordance with Standing Order 30(g).

(Agenda republished to include the list of appointment(s) on 23 February 2023)

6 Budget and Council Tax 2023/2024

6.1 Budget & Council Tax 2023-24 45 - 330

This report sets out the Council's budget proposals for 2023/24. It also details the results of the consultation, scrutiny and equalities considerations in relation to the budget proposals. The report also sets out the overall financial position facing the Council for the medium term and highlights the significant risks, issues and uncertainties.

Members are asked to note that the recommendations in the report were approved by Cabinet on 6 February 2023 for reference on to Council.

6.2 Conservative Group amendments to the Budget & Council Tax proposals 2023-24 331 - 334

To consider the proposed amendments submitted by the Conservative Group in relation to the Council's budget proposals for 2023-24.

6.3 Liberal Democrats Group amendments to the Budget & Council Tax proposals 2023-24 335 - 348

To consider the proposed amendments submitted by the Liberal Democrats Group in relation to the Council's budget proposals for 2023-24.

Ward Affected: All Wards
Contact Officer: Ravinder Jassar, Deputy Director of Finance
Tel: 020 8937 1487
Ravinder.Jassar@brent.gov.uk

7 Auditor's Annual Report on the London Borough of Brent 349 - 382

This report presents the Council's External Auditor's Annual Report on value for money as part of the 2021/22 audit of the year end accounts. It also sets out the key recommendations made within the Annual Report.

Members are asked to note that a representative of the Council's External Auditor's (Grant Thornton) will be present at the meeting to respond to any issues raised.

Ward Affected: All Wards
Contact Officer: Minesh Patel, Corporate Director of Finance & Resources
Tel: 020 8937 6528
Minesh.Patel@brent.gov.uk

8 Borough Plan 2023-2027 383 - 454

This report presents the Borough Plan 2023-2027 to Council for formal adoption, setting out the Council's vision, strategic priorities and actions for review.

Members are asked to note that the Borough Plan was approved by Cabinet on 6 February 2023 for referral to Council.

Ward Affected: All Wards
Contact Officer: Lorna Hughes, Director of Communities
Tel: 020 8937 5068
lorna.hughes@brent.gov.uk

9 Treasury Management Mid-Year Report 2022-2023 455 - 468

This report provides an update on treasury management activities for the first half of the financial year 2022-23.

Members are asked to note that the report was noted by Cabinet on 16 January 2023 and has been referred on to Council for consideration in compliance with CIPFAs Code of Practice on Treasury Management.

Ward Affected: All Wards
Contact Officer: Amanda Healy, Head of Finance
Tel: 020 8937 5912
Amanda.Healy@brent.gov.uk

10 Members' Allowance Scheme Annual Review 469 - 476

This report outlines the annual review of the Members Allowance Scheme undertaken for 2023/2024.

Ward Affected: All Wards
Contact Officer: Natalie Zara, Head of Executive & Member Services
Tel: 020 8937
natalie.zara@brent.gov.uk

11 Amendments to the Constitution 477 - 484

This report sets out a number of proposed changes to the Constitution, for Council's consideration and approval.

Ward Affected: All Wards
Contact Officer: Debra Norman, Corporate Director of Governance
Tel: 020 8937 1578
debra.norman@brent.gov.uk

12 Urgent Business

At the discretion of the Mayor to consider any urgent business, in accordance with Standing Order 30(s).



Please remember to switch 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. Alternatively, it will be possible to follow proceedings via the live webcast [here](#)

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LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

Minutes of the ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

Held in the Conference Hall, Brent Civic Centre on Monday 21 November 2022 at 6.00 pm

PRESENT:

The Worshipful the Mayor

Councillor Abdi Aden

The Deputy Mayor

Councillor Orleen Hylton

COUNCILLORS:

Afzal	Agha
Ahmadi Moghaddam	Ahmed
Akram	Bajwa
Benea	M Butt
S Butt	Chan
Chappell	Chohan
Choudry	Collymore
Conneely	Crabb
Dar	Dixon
Donnelly-Jackson	Ethapemi
Farah	Fraser
Gbajumo	Georgiou
Grahl	Hack
Johnson	Kabir
Kansagra	Kelcher
Kennelly	Knight
Long	Lorber
Mahmood	Matin
Maurice	Miller
Mistry	Mitchell
Moeen	Molloy
Nerva	M Patel
Rajan-Seelan	Rubin
Shah	Ketan Sheth
Krupa Sheth	Smith
Southwood	Tatler

1. **Mayors Introductory Statement**

The Mayor welcomed all those present to the meeting and thanked everyone for their attendance.

2. **Apologies for Absence**

The Mayor reported that apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Begum, Hirani and Jayanti Patel.

3. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the previous meeting held on Wednesday 21 September 2022 be approved as a correct record.

4. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

5. **Mayor's Announcements**

Prior to commencing his announcements the Mayor took the opportunity to thank Councillor Hylton, as Deputy Mayor, for her support in covering the mayoral engagements whilst he had been away. He then moved on to make the following announcements:

(i) Remembrance Sunday

The Mayor advised he had been honoured to attend the recent ceremony held to commemorate Remembrance Sunday and all those who had lost their lives in various conflicts throughout the world.

The ceremony had been held at the Barham Park Memorial with the Mayor thanking everyone who had attended in order to pay tribute.

(ii) Black History Month

The Mayor took the opportunity to thank the Cultural Diversity Network for the work undertaken to prepare and deliver such an engaging and successful programme of activities during Black History month.

Particular highlights had included the 21-day virtual equality challenge and the Black History month Civic Centre takeover undertaken in partnership with the local community, Public Health and the Gender Network, included as new events in the programme both of which had been well received by staff and residents.

(iii) Islamophobia Awareness Month

The Mayor advised he was also pleased to be supporting Islamophobia Awareness month which, as part of the programme of activities, had included him joining the Brent Multi-Faith Forum peace walk and tree planting. This event had been undertaken to symbolise peace, unity and solidarity between all communities and to raise awareness in an attempt to bring people together to stand against discrimination and hate crime.

Other events included Stand against Islamophobia, which members were reminded was being held at the Civic Centre on Wednesday 23 November 2023.

(iv) Petitions

Finally, the Mayor referred members to the list of current petitions tabled at the meeting, in accordance with Standing Orders which also detailed the action being taken to deal with them.

6. Appointments to Committees and Outside Bodies

The Mayor advised that there were no appointments to Council Committees, Sub Committees and other bodies which had been received for consideration so moved straight on to the next item.

7. Deputations (if any)

The Mayor advised that no deputations had been requested for presentation at the meeting.

8. Questions from Members of the Public & Brent Youth Parliament

8.1 Questions from the Public

The Mayor advised that the following three questions had been received from members of the public:

Question 1 from Nichola Rogers to Councillor Krupa Sheth, Cabinet Member for Environment, Infrastructure and Climate Action regarding the introduction of a plant-based food policy where catering was provided at Council and Civic events and also within schools.

Question 2 from Jeanette Audrey to Councillor Knight, Cabinet Member for Housing, Homelessness and Renters Security, regarding the impact of current housing infill development proposals on local residents at Windmill Court

Question 3 from Siobhan Culhane to Councillor Tatler, Cabinet Member for Regeneration & Planning, regarding the transport assessment undertaken as part of the infill development proposals at Windmill Court.

Members noted the written responses provided on each of the questions, which had been circulated with the agenda. The Mayor advised that each member of the public

had been invited to attend the meeting and all three were present in order to ask a supplementary question following the written responses provided.

Having been welcomed to the meeting, the following supplementary questions were asked of the relevant Cabinet Member(s).

Question 1: Supplementary question from Nichola Rogers to Councillor Krupa Sheth, Cabinet Member for Environment, Infrastructure and Climate Action

Having noted and thanked Councillor Krupa Sheth for the written response provided, Nichola Rogers advised she was pleased for the acknowledgement regarding the impact that consuming less meat and reducing food waste would have as part of Council's Climate Emergency Strategy and in reducing the effects of the climate crisis. Whilst welcoming the efforts being made, however, she felt that the Council could take an even more proactive approach and as a supplementary question therefore asked if the Council would consider introducing a plant based food policy at all future Council and Civic catered events, as had been the case in other local authorities.

In thanking Nichola Rogers for her question, Councillor Krupa Sheth advised that whilst willing to work with the Mayor in terms of future Civic events, the Council already ensured plant-based options were available at the limited range of events where catering was now provided, in support of the theme relating to consumption, resources and waste within the Climate Emergency Strategy.

Question 2: Supplementary Question from Jeanette Audrey to Councillor Knight, Cabinet Member for Housing, Homelessness and Renters Security.

Having noted the written response provided, Jeanette Audrey highlighted concern at what she felt had been the lack of consultation and engagement with local residents regarding development of the infill proposals. In expressing specific concerns at what was felt to be an unacceptable loss of daylight and sunlight amenity to surrounding properties and overall negative impact of the development, she again asked the Cabinet Member to justify the basis on which such an excessive development had been able to proceed given what local residents felt to be its adverse and overbearing effect on the amenity of the surrounding area and overall financial viability in terms of the provision of genuinely affordable housing.

In thanking Jeanette Audrey for her question, Councillor Knight began by assuring residents that development of the scheme had been subject to careful consideration and detailed assessment, which included the impact in relation to daylight and sunlight amenity on surrounding properties. This assessment had identified that the proposed development was in line with local, regional and national planning policy and had been the basis on which the planning application had been progressed. Whilst understanding and appreciating the concerns expressed and acknowledging that the development would have some impact on local residents, the associated improvements being delivered in relation to security and the communal green space were also outlined. Councillor Knight also felt it important to highlight the wider context in which the proposals had been brought forward as part of a programme to address the shortage of genuinely affordable housing in Brent with 24,000

households on the housing waiting list, over 1,700 families currently living in temporary accommodation and a further 240 families in priority need of transfer due to issues such as overcrowding. Whilst the building of new homes was a priority she advised of the efforts also being made to ensure these developments worked for people living in the area. Although recognising the concerns raised, Councillor Knight ended by highlighting the level of engagement undertaken with residents to seek their views and create proposals which had been designed to balance the provision of new affordable housing with improvements that would also benefit and seek to mitigate any potential impact on them arising from the development.

Question 3 from Siobhan Culhane to Councillor Tatler, Cabinet Member for Regeneration & Planning

In noting and thanking the Cabinet Member for her written response, Siobhan Culhane as a supplementary question sought further details on the assessment undertaken by the Transport Consultant in relation to vehicle access to Windmill Court as part of the Infill development planning application process, especially in relation to access by large high reach fire appliances. As a result of a recent Freedom of Information request it appeared an assessment had been completed which had identified that large sized appliances would not be able to negotiate the site layout but details had not been provided on the assessment in relation to access by smaller sized first line ariel appliances, which had previously needed to be deployed in Windmill Court. Post Grenfell, Councillor Tatler was therefore asked if, as Cabinet Member, she was satisfied the Council had demonstrated its commitment to incorporating the highest standards of fire safety in development of the scheme proposals.

In thanking Siobhan Culhane for her question Councillor Tatler took the opportunity to assure local residents of the seriousness in which fire safety was treated in relation to all planning applications and development proposals. In highlighting that the main regulatory framework for fire safety measures was focussed around Building Regulations she advised it was the Council's Building Control team who were responsible for considering detailed fire safety provision within scheme proposals to ensure the necessary conditions were placed on any development, working in conjunction with the Fire Brigade. Referring to her written response, Councillor Tatler felt it important to recognise that the assessment of vehicular access for fire safety as part of the Windmill Court development had therefore been based on the likely vehicles that the Fire Service would deploy to attend a fire at the site.

Having noted the responses provided, the Mayor thanked the members of the public in attendance for their supplementary questions and Cabinet Members for their response and then moved on to deal with the question submitted by Brent Youth Parliament.

8.2 Questions from Brent Youth Parliament

The Mayor advised that the following question had been received from Brent Youth Parliament:

Question 1 from Brent Youth Parliament to Councillor Grahl, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools regarding support for the Youth Parliament's "Education for Life" campaign aimed at improving how life skills were taught in schools and to involve young people in decision making relating to local education matters.

The Mayor thanked Brent Youth Parliament for their question, with members noting the written response provided. As representatives from the Youth Parliament had unfortunately been unable to attend the meeting members were advised there would be no supplementary question.

With no further questions to be considered, the Mayor advised that this now concluded the public question session and moved on to the next item.

9. **Petitions (if any)**

The Mayor advised that no requests for debates on any petitions had been received for consideration at the meeting.

10. **Reports from the Leader and Cabinet**

The Mayor then invited Councillor Muhammed Butt, as Leader of the Council, to introduce the report updating members on the work being undertaken across each Cabinet portfolio in order to provide ongoing support and services to residents within the borough.

In presenting the report, the Leader began by highlighting the challenging nature of the current economic position faced by the Council. This was not only in terms of the impact of the Government's recent fiscal interventions and programme of austerity in terms of funding available for services across the public sector but also level of savings which the Council and other key public sector stakeholders had needed to identify and deliver as a result, ongoing uncertainty in relation to future funding settlements and impact of the cost of living crisis and ongoing economic uncertainty on inflation and interest rates. Despite these challenges, the Leader highlighted how the report detailed the work being undertaken to manage the Council's finances as efficiently as possible whilst also seeking to deliver on the emerging priorities within the Borough Plan and protect the most vulnerable including the continued support for the Residents Support Fund, Council Tax Support Scheme and Brent Hubs. In closing his update, the Leader advised that given the nature and extent of the financial challenges needing to be addressed he was keen to encourage as many people as possible to engage with the upcoming consultation on the budget proposals for 2023-24. Finally, members were asked to note the details on Executive decision(s) that had been taken under the Council's urgency procedures, since the previous update provided for the Council meeting in July, as tabled at the meeting.

The Mayor thanked the Leader for his report and it was **RESOLVED** (having allowed a brief point of order to be raised by Councillor Kansagra) to formally note the update provided.

11. Questions from the Opposition and other Non-Cabinet Members

Before moving on to consider the questions submitted by non-Cabinet members, the Mayor reminded Members that a total of 30 minutes had been set aside for this item, which would begin with consideration of the written questions submitted in advance of the meeting along with any supplementary questions. Once these had been dealt with, the remaining time available would then be opened up for any other non-Cabinet members to question Cabinet Members (without the need for advance notice) on matters relating to their portfolio.

The Mayor advised that five written questions had been submitted in advance of the meeting for response by the relevant Cabinet Member and the written responses circulated within the agenda were noted. The Mayor then invited supplementary questions on the responses which had been provided:

11.1 Councillor Fraser thanked Councillor Nerva, as Cabinet Member for Public Health and Adult Social Care, for the written response in relation to her question regarding the recognition, impact and support available for residents and staff experiencing the impact of long covid. As a supplementary question, she asked whether Councillor Nerva agreed that central government should recognise long-covid in legislation and require that employers make reasonable adjustments for those experiencing symptoms.

In response, Councillor Nerva expressed concern at the current waiting time of 6-8 weeks in being able to access support in relation to long-covid and agreed with the need for a national approach to be developed in addressing the issues identified supported through legislation, where necessary. Whilst recognising the new service established by the NHS to address post-covid syndrome he also felt it important to recognise the disproportionate impact of covid within Brent meaning that the number of people requiring support was also likely to be higher. In order to reflect this position and recognise the associated strain being placed on health services, Councillor Nerva was also keen to encourage the NHS across North-West London to continue seeking long-term funding from central government to support the ongoing provision of support. Recognising not only the health but also social, emotional and financial legacy of long covid, Councillor Nerva also praised the support being provided through initiatives such as the Brent Health Matters programme, in order to assist residents seeking access to NHS and community support, and the Resident Support Fund. Given the importance of the issue, Councillor Nerva ended by advising members that he would also be seeking to continue monitoring the impact of long-covid on residents and the health service in Brent through the Health and Wellbeing Board.

11.2 Councillor Gbajumo thanked Councillor Grahl, as Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools, for the written response in relation to her question on support available for Looked After Children (LAC) and the impact of the cost-of-living crisis as part of the Council's Corporate Parent role. In welcoming the support outlined within the response, Councillor Gbajumo, as a supplementary question, sought clarification on the extent to which it was felt

the cost-of-living crisis had been connected to the increase in number of Looked After Children within Brent.

In response, Councillor Grahl thanked Councillor Gbajumo for the question and felt it important to recognise and highlight the impact that the cost-of-living crisis was having on the borough's most vulnerable children as more families began to struggle with poverty. As an example, she highlighted the link between the increase in poverty and concerns relating to child abuse and neglect, with increased deprivation also making it harder for women to flee domestic violence. Whilst the demand in relation to children's social care had increased pressure on already stretched resources, Councillor Grahl assured members of the measures being taken by the Council to ensure support was available for those families most in need making specific reference (as examples) to the Resident Support Fund, Family Wellbeing Centre's and adoption of the Council's Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy. In outlining the additional pressures created as a result of the Government's funding restrictions on local government she ended by assuring members of the current work being undertaken by the Council in an effort to ensure that no child would be left behind.

- 11.3 Councillor Akram thanked Councillor Mili Patel, as Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources and Reform, for the written response to his question regarding the impact of the current economic uncertainty on the Council's budget and ongoing provision of services, and the need for reform of the current system for funding local government. In commending the work being undertaken to manage the Council's finances in such challenging circumstances, Councillor Akram (as a supplementary question) asked whether the Deputy Leader would also be able to confirm what work was being undertaken with other finance leads across London to lobby central government on the reform of local government finance and Council Tax.

In response, Councillor Mili Patel thanked Councillor Akram for recognising the hard work being undertaken to manage the Council's budget whilst also seeking to continue the delivery of vital services and for highlighting the major problems with the current system of local government funding and Council Tax. Rather than addressing the need to ensure local authorities were properly funded with clarity on future funding settlements, Councillor Mili Patel highlighted the Government's current solution involved lifting the cap on Council Tax increases, which it was felt would not provide the long-term solution required. This view was also supported by cross party LGA commissioned research, which had revealed that the proposed increase in the cap on Council Tax would not be sufficient to meet current pressures or address the significant gaps already identified in relation to local government funding. Councillor Mili Patel also took the opportunity to highlight what she advised had been widely recognised as the regressive and unfair nature of Council Tax, particularly as it related to areas with higher levels of deprivation and low incomes. Highlighting the funding issues and challenges being experienced by many local authorities and difficulties being experienced as a result, she advised that she would be continuing to work with other finance leads to actively lobby the Government on the need for local government finance and Council Tax reform.

11.4 Councillor Mistry thanked Councillor Krupa Sheth, as Cabinet Member for Environment, Infrastructure & Climate Action, for the written response to her question on the need for parking enforcement in cycle lanes along Kingsbury Road. As a supplementary question she sought details on what further measures could be taken to ensure more vigorous and visible enforcement of the current restrictions and use of the cycle lane by the Council's parking enforcement contractor.

In response, Councillor Krupa Sheth thanked Councillor Mistry for highlighting the issues being experienced in terms of the vehicles blocking the cycle lane and pavement along Kingsbury Road and reiterated that the Council would continue to work with Serco to ensure a fair and more visible enforcement presence in order to address the issues identified.

11.5 Having noted the response to his question by Councillor Krupa Sheth, as Cabinet member for Environment, Infrastructure & Climate Action regarding the consultation and proposed changes to the recycling and street cleaning arrangements across the borough Councillor Lorber, in highlighting his concern at the impact of the proposals, sought further details as a supplementary question as to when the results of the public consultation used to support the procurement process and trial arrangements would be published.

In response, Councillor Krupa Sheth assured Councillor Lorber that the results of the public consultation were due to be published, however it would not be possible to provide further detail at this stage on the detailed contractual arrangements as the procurement process was still to be concluded. Councillor Krupa Sheth also felt it important to highlight the challenging financial position which had needed to be addressed as part of the procurement process and proposed reconfiguration of services but ended by outlining how the Council was focussed on ensuring that Brent remained a clean and green borough that everyone was proud to live and work in.

The Mayor thanked members for their written questions and Cabinet Members for the responses provided to the supplementary questions. He then advised that the remainder of the time available would be used for an open question time session to the Cabinet. Questions relating to the following issues were raised and responses were provided, as set out below:

- (i) Councillor Kansagra seeking reassurance on the measures the Council was taking to tackle and reduce knife crime in the borough.

In responding Councillor Farah, as Cabinet Member for Safer Communities and Public Protection, felt it important to highlight the overall reduction in crime rates across the borough. Knife crime had, however, been recognised as a continuing area of concern and whilst not complacent, he assured Councillor Kansagra of the Council's ongoing efforts working in partnership with relevant stakeholders to address the issue with a particularly focus on prevention and early intervention.

- (ii) Councillor Afzal expressing concern at what he felt to be the discriminatory tone and approach being taken by the Government in their response to issues such as Windrush, Grenfell, refuge and asylum seekers. In comparing this to the positive approach being taken by the Council in terms of the ongoing delivery of recommendations made by the Poverty Commission and within the Black Community Action Plan (BCAP) and through the Multi-Faith Forum in relation to community cohesion, he was keen to seek views on how this difference in approach reflected on the borough.

In response Councillor Donnelly-Jackson, as Cabinet Member for Community Engagement, Equalities and Culture, supported the positive recognition of the approach adopted within Brent towards championing the borough's diversity working in partnership with the Multi Faith Forum. As an example she referred to the recent programme of activities delivered as part of Inter Faith week designed to bring communities together as well as the Council's ongoing support working with the local community to deliver the recommendations within the Black Community Action Plan and other cultural activities including (as a further example) the recent public artwork installed in Gladstone Park designed to uncover and acknowledge the hidden truths regarding the transatlantic slave trade.

- (iii) Councillor Lorber raising concerns at what he felt to be the detrimental environmental impacts arising from the Local Plan in terms of the approach being taken towards achieving delivery of the new homes target across the borough and how this compared to the priorities within the emerging Borough Plan relating to a cleaner and greener borough.

In response Councillor Butt, as Leader of the Council, felt it important to recognise the key objectives within the emerging Borough Plan and Local Plan which had been focussed on delivering the necessary infrastructure (including housing and employment) needed to ensure all residents had the opportunity to succeed. Whilst the Local Plan had been ambitious in its approach, he was keen to stress this was in an attempt to ensure no one was left behind with the Council seeking to encourage a positive rather than negative approach towards the potential for new development, where this was considered appropriate.

- (iv) Councillor Kelcher seeking clarification regarding the plans to ensure residents were aware of the changes due to be implemented in relation to voter identification (ID), in order to avoid anyone being disenfranchised.

In response Councillor Donnelly-Jackson, as Cabinet Member for Community Engagement, Equalities and Culture, recognised and supported concerns regarding the potential risk of individuals being disenfranchised as a result of the recent introduction of the voter ID requirements by the Government. In order to raise awareness of the change, a comprehensive communications campaign was being designed to ensure voters were fully aware of the new requirements, with those unable to access the permitted forms of photographic identification also able to apply for a free local voter ID card via the Government's dedicated online portal.

- (v) Councillor Georgiou seeking clarification on the Council's position regarding Shared Ownership and whether this should be classed as a genuinely Affordable Housing option in the development of housing schemes within Brent.

In response Councillor Tatler, as Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Planning, advised that whilst its use was not a priority option within Brent Shared Ownership could be classified as an intermediary affordable housing product available for use, where appropriate to support the delivery of new homes.

In response to an additional comment made by Councillor Georgiou in relation to ward members representing their constituents at Planning Committee meetings Councillor Butt, as Leader of the Council, highlighted the comprehensive nature of the assessments made by members of the Committee in considering applications before them. Whilst aware of the pressures in relation to housing demand, he felt it important to recognise that these assessments would be based on an objective consideration of relevant planning considerations rather than any more negative, ideological based approach.

- (vi) Councillor Kennelly, who in highlighting his personal experience, sought confirmation of the Council's ongoing support for the LGBTQ+ community across the borough, particularly given its location as the home of the Football Association (FA) and national football team and stance taken by Qatar as the host nation of the FIFA World Cup.

In response Councillor Muhammed Butt, as Leader of the Council, reassured Councillor Kennelly of the Council's unwavering commitment to support and represent all residents within the borough regardless of their beliefs or sexual orientation in order to tackle all forms of discrimination and ensure no one felt vulnerable or without support.

- (vii) Councillor Long sought reassurance on the measures in place to prevent the use of rental e-bikes on pavements across the borough.

In response, Councillor Krupa Sheth, as Cabinet Member for Environment, Infrastructure and Climate Action, advised of the work being undertaken with the suppliers and users of e-bikes within the borough to address the issues highlighted on which progress continued to be monitored.

At this stage in the proceedings, the Mayor advised that the time available for the open question session had expired. He therefore thanked all members for their contributions and advised that he would now move on to the next item.

12. **Report from Chairs of Scrutiny Committees**

Before being presented with the updates from each Scrutiny Committee, the Mayor reminded members the time set aside for this item was 12 minutes, with each Chair having up to three minutes in which to highlight any significant issues arising from the work of their Committees. Once these updates had been provided, the

remaining time available would then be opened up for any other non-Cabinet members to question (without the need for advance notice) the Scrutiny Committee Chairs on matters relating to the work of their Committee.

Councillor Ketan Sheth was then invited to introduce the update report on the work being undertaken by the Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee, with the following issues highlighted:

- Key issues considered at the previous Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee had included a review of the Council's Early Help Strategy and Family Wellbeing Centres, with Brent recognised as being ahead of the national debate on Early Help with the introduction of its hub model of service delivery. In addition, the Committee had reviewed the impact arising from implementation of potential changes to the services for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) including the High Needs Funding Block, as set out within a recently published Green Paper. The Committee had been keen to focus these reviews on the outreach support being provided for the most vulnerable families as well as the engagement with key partners and associated funding impacts.
- In terms of the North West London Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee (JHOSC) the committee remained focussed on the emerging priorities of the newly established North West London Integrated Care System (ICS), with the previous meeting having included a review and made a number of recommendations in relation to the primary care strategy and performance across North West London. In addition, the Committee had reviewed and made recommendations in relation to Accident and Emergency Pathways and London Ambulance Service Performance across North West London before receiving an update on the Community based specialised Palliative Care Improvement Programme and work streams being progressed by the North West London ICS with the ongoing importance in scrutiny continuing to work in partnership with the NHS to ensure the best outcomes were being delivered for local residents again highlighted.
- As a further update, members were also advised of the first meeting of the four acute provider Trusts in North West London which Brent had been pleased to host, given Councillor Ketan Sheth's role as Chair of the North West London JHOSC. It was felt this provided further evidence of the increasing collaboration between acute Trusts across North West London as well as highlighting Brent's ambition to contribute towards and support the vital role of the NHS across North West London.
- As a final update, Councillor Ketan Sheth also highlighted the progress being made by the Task Group establishment by the Committee to explore and review the use of social prescribing in Brent along with their participation in the Scrutiny Budget Task Group.

The Mayor thanked Councillor Ketan Sheth for his update and then invited Councillor Conneely as chair of the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee to introduce the update report on the work being undertaken by that Committee. The following issues were highlight as part of the update:

- The broad ranging nature of the Scrutiny Committee's ongoing work programme for 2022-23. Key issues considered at the Committee's previous

meeting had included the Council's community grants programmes, development of the emerging Borough Plan 2023-27, Safer Brent Annual Report 2021-22 along with an update on police engagement within Brent.

- As part of the work undertaken at the previous meeting the Committee had been pleased to welcome a number of voluntary and community sector representatives and local residents in order to review their experience on delivery of the community grants and "You Decide" participatory budgeting programmes, with members keen to ensure the funding being awarded as a result were focussed and targeted to support residents and areas most in need in a way that was also representative of the borough's demographics. The review on development of the Borough Plan had focussed around the strategic priorities, with the Committee keen to ensure these were designed to not only reflect the current financial pressures on the Council but were more specific and measurable in terms of outcomes being sought, including a more prominent focus on climate action, and measures in place as part of the ongoing consultation and engagement process to secure as wide and representative a range of views as possible.
- The Committee had also welcomed the engagement of the police in reviewing the effectiveness of ward Panels, with members keen to ensure that local ward councillors were better utilised as a means of increasing participation and engagement in the work of the Panels.
- As a final update, members were advised of the progress being made in relation to the Budget Scrutiny Task Group. It was noted that members as part of the review had already recognised the impact of the challenging financial environment in which the Council was operating given the long-term reduction in Government funding, level of savings already achieved, current economic challenges and increasing complexity of demand for Council services on development of the budget proposals supporting the need for a fairer funding settlement by central government.

The Mayor thanked Councillors Ketan Sheth and Conneely for presenting their updates and it was **RESOLVED** that the contents of both reports be noted.

Following the updates provided, the Mayor advised that the remainder of time available would be open for questions from non-cabinet members to the Scrutiny Chair in attendance. As no questions were raised the Mayor advised he would move straight on to the next item.

13. **Report from the Vice-Chair of the Audit Advisory Committee**

The Mayor invited Councillor Chan, as the Vice-Chair of the Audit & Standards Advisory Committee, to introduce the report updating members on the work of the Committee.

In terms of issues highlighted, Councillor Chan drew members' attention to the important role and work undertaken by the Committee in relation to monitoring and advising on various governance matters relating to audit activity, the Council's finance, accounting and regulatory framework and members standards of conduct. As one of their key responsibilities, members were advised that the Committee had agreed to authorise sign off of the Council's Annual Statement of Accounts 2021-22

having considered the External Auditors report, subject to the resolution of a national financial regulatory issue by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities relating to the accounting for infrastructure assets. The Committee were also continuing to monitor the performance management and accounts of the Council's two subsidiary companies i4B and First Wave Housing Ltd along with the approach towards emergency planning and monitoring of the Councillor Code of Conduct. The Committee had also taken an active interest in the measures introduced by the Council to mitigate against the impact of the current economic uncertainty and cost-of-living crisis being experienced both in relation to the delivery of Council services and support for residents. As part of their focus on this issue, members had been keen to continue monitoring development of the Financial Inclusion Dashboard being used as a business tool to assist in targeting support for local residents.

Councillor Chan advised the Committee were looking forward to continuing their work with members and other key stakeholders to ensure the necessary focus was maintained in relation to compliance and control of the Council's key governance arrangements.

The Mayor thanked Councillor Chan for the update provided and it was **RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

14. **Non Cabinet Members' Debate**

In accordance with Standing Order 34, the Mayor advised that the next item on the agenda was the non-cabinet member debate, with the subject chosen for consideration being the Council's approach to the delivery of social council housing.

Members were advised that the motion submitted as the basis for the debate had been circulated with the agenda and that the time available for the debate was 25 minutes.

The Mayor then invited Councillor Georgiou to introduce the motion. As context for the debate, Councillor Georgiou highlighted what he regarded to be the fundamental right to housing, with concern expressed at the increasing pressure on Council Housing stock as a result of the current cost-of-living crisis and economic uncertainty. Given the pressures being experienced, the motion highlighted the priority to ensure action continued to support delivery of Council homes for social tenants in an effort to reduce the growing housing waiting list and the number of residents in temporary accommodation which, he pointed out, also reflected the approach recommended by the Council's Poverty Commission. Whilst reflecting on the progress made to date, concerns were expressed at the change of approach recently agreed by Cabinet in relation to delivery of the New Council Homes Programme (NCHP) impacting on the percentage of new stock to be delivered at Council and London Affordable Housing rent and potential to include elements of shared ownership, which it was felt would adversely effect the delivery of genuinely affordable housing supply for those most in need. With private developments also not felt to be supporting the type of housing provision needed across the borough, Councillor Georgiou advised that the motion was calling on the Council to focus its approach around the delivery of genuinely affordable social housing, excluding

shared ownership provision, and to hold developers to account to ensure the homes being delivered across the Borough were of the type and size needed to support local housing demand. He also took the opportunity in closing his comments to highlight his opposition to the amendment to the motion for debate, which had been circulated in advance of the meeting from the Labour Group.

The Mayor thanked Councillor Georgiou for introducing the motion and then drew member's attention to an amendment submitted by Councillor Tatler on behalf of the Labour Group, which had been circulated in advance of the meeting.

In moving the amendment Councillor Tatler began by supporting the need to recognise the importance of housing as a fundamental right in the delivery of life opportunities and social aspiration and concerns highlighted in relation to increased pressure on the supply and delivery of social housing as a result of the cost-of-living crisis and governments mismanagement of the economy. Whilst highlighting Brent's success as one of the leading boroughs in delivering social housing in London, she felt it important to also recognise the challenges and risks in relation to the programme as a result of the lack of government investment or leadership and current challenging economic conditions affecting the viability and delivery of many schemes and pressure to manage the Council's limited resources. As a result, members were advised that the amendment was seeking to reflect the reality of the current position and challenges identified with the rationale for the change in approach to delivery of the NCHP having been to ensure the Council was able to continue delivering the much needed supply of social housing, working alongside developers, within such a challenging social and economic climate. In concluding, Councillor Tatler once again highlighted Brent's strong record in delivery against its housing targets, especially when compared with other local authorities. She ended by urging all members to support the amendment and call to lobby the government in order to provide the necessary funding, stable leadership and to address how more affordable housing could be secured through land value capture and reforming viability assessments highlighting that pausing or doing nothing was not an option, with the amendment moved by the Labour Group as follows:

To add the wording underlined and delete the wording indicated:

"This Council notes:

The pressures on Council Housing stock are immense and in the absence of Government investment, will not ease in the coming months and years, rather they will grow even more. For example, in Brent there are currently 25,853 households on our housing waiting list, containing 53,644 individuals. Even at a record-breaking pace of building, without a renaissance in Government investment in the social housing sector, many of these families will regrettably wait many years for a home.

The Cost of Living Crisis, ~~coupled~~ compounded by a Government that has created a with the disastrous macroeconomic situation in the UK, means it is increasingly likely that has seen more local residents ~~will~~ turn to the council Council ~~to assume responsibility for their~~ for support with their housing needs, with a 33% increase in approaches in the last year. As an authority, we ~~need to be prepared for this~~ are

working around the clock to provide support to households effected by the Cost of Living Crisis, with a Resident Support Fund that has distributed £8.46 million to 4,045 households, aiding hundreds of families with Rent Arrears and Mortgage payments; and those in need of food and fuel support.

Whilst ~~We~~ are grateful ~~proud~~ that Brent has made progress in seeking to supply Council Homes, with a record of consistently being one of the leading boroughs in providing social homes in London. There is still more to do and we need to see greater, more urgent resolve from all political parties to deliver more Council Homes for ~~Social~~ our tenants. There have been 20 ministers for housing in the past 25 years and four housing secretaries in just over a year. We desperately need action from our new Minister, on waiting lists for council housing, supporting private tenants that are made homeless, aiding cladding victims that remain trapped in unsellable flats and homeowners living in fear of their next mortgage bill. Finally, without the abolition of Right to Buy London will continue to see more council homes sold and private-let with 54,000 and counting across the capital.

The latest report to Cabinet, entitled, 'Update on the supply of New Affordable Homes', sets out where Brent is when it comes to the delivery of the *New Council Homes Programme* (NCHP), our programme to develop 1,000 new council homes by 2025. To date, the Council has developed and let 684 new homes to Brent households and there are 616 homes on site and on track to be completed before 2025. This programme has been made possible through a grant in excess of £100m from the Mayor of London, Labour's Sadiq Khan, and an investment of more than £200m of the council's own money.

Spiralling inflation, exacerbated by a botched mini-budget has not only impacted Brent residents, but has also put our council house building programme at risk. As such, ~~o~~On the 14th November, the Cabinet was asked to formalise a change of approach that would allow Brent Council to deliver much needed housing, within the challenging social and economic climate, ~~only~~ providing 50% of new stock at Council Rent and London Affordable Rent level in its own developments. While ~~This~~ This approach will deliver some Social Housing on Council owned land, ~~this will be at the expense of current Estate residents, reduction of amenity space, and will not achieve our overriding ambition to reduce the ever-growing housing waiting list in a meaningful way. Where appropriate, ~~C~~ council owned ~~L~~land will be ~~de-facto~~ used to build the next generation of council housing homes out of reach for most Brent residents and play our part in addressing the housing crisis.~~

There are also a growing number of local people in ~~our area~~ Brent and in our city, who have been life-long residents of Brent and who are now being priced out of the borough, because of a shortfall in the supply of housing, while demand continues to drive prices higher. ~~is too expensive.~~

There are no quick fixes to resolve the housing crisis and ~~d~~Developers, who that are granted consent for their private schemes by Brent's Planning Committee, are not only part of the larger answer, if we are to provide ~~ing~~ our area with the type of housing our community desperately needs.

This Council believes:

1. ~~There needs to be greater~~The Government needs to provide greater clarity on terminology around housing, particularly what constitutes being 'genuinely affordable housing'. The Government must explore how more affordable housing can be secured through Land Value Capture and reforming viability assessments.
2. Targets and policy around house building, must be focused on seeking to reduce the housing waiting list and reduce the number of local people currently in temporary accommodation and deliver family sized housing units, most keenly needed.
3. Shared Ownership schemes are not a ~~'genuinely affordable'~~ housing model and ~~are not something that should be promoted by~~ top priority for Brent Council, but do form a valuable part of an overall housing mix, as they allow some people to get onto the housing ladder when they otherwise would not be able to afford a full deposit.
4. ~~We should never make the perfect enemy of the good in housing policy whilst need to be~~ holding developers accountable and ensuring that a greater proportion of new stock built in our borough is genuinely affordable for local people.

This Council resolves to:

1. ~~Guarantee that the banner term 'affordable housing' is not used in communications, and instead council communications only refer to~~ "genuinely Lobby the government to simplify its terminology on affordable housing in order to give greater clarity across council communications.
2. ~~Amend the~~ Call on the Government to address Land Value Capture and viability assessments to enable Brent to secure at least our Local Plan to ensure Affordable Housing is defined as being purely ~~targets for Council Social Rents, London Affordable Rent, London Living Rent, which would exclude Shared Ownership and Affordable Rent (below or equal to 80% of market value rent).~~
3. Continue to work with the GLA and DLUHC to secure the funding needed to ~~e~~ Ensure all new developments taking place on existing estates within our borough must be seeking to provide as much more s ~~Shared Ownership or Market Sale units.~~ Social h ~~as is financially viable.~~ Housing and not
4. ~~Increase the~~ Continue to push Brent's Local Plan target of affordable units within private developments to match neighbouring Camden at 50% affordable housing, with a split of 70 ~~40% social low cost rent and 30% intermediate housing others, in order to ensure we are building the homes our community really needs.~~
5. Play our part in addressing the housing crisis across London, by driving up the supply of housing in every ward in Brent."

The Mayor thanked Councillor Tatler for moving the amendment on behalf of the Labour Group and then opened the debate for contributions from other members.

Councillor Maurice, in supporting the original motion, detailed how the Planning Committee was often required to consider applications from developers that failed to fully meet requirements in relation to the provision of affordable housing and amenity space, which despite objections raised often ended up being approved on an overall assessment of planning policy and the requirements within the Local Plan. Concerns were also raised at the lack of family sized dwellings being provided by developers and abundance of one-bedroom properties many of which, he felt, ended up being purchased by overseas investors and would not therefore contribute towards addressing the pressure on supply of social housing or help families in the borough in housing need. As opposed to criticising the government, Councillor Maurice highlighted the lack of Brent-owned land identified for social housing development and supported the concerns highlighted in relation to the approach recently agreed by the Cabinet on the percentage of affordable housing to be delivered under the NCHP moving forward.

Councillor Johnson, in supporting the amended motion and welcoming the debate on the issue felt it was important to recognise (as had been detailed in a previous Affordable Housing Scrutiny Task Group report and outlined within the amendment) the impact of the Conservative Government's policies in relation to the current pressures on social housing, including the introduction of Right to Buy, lack of leadership, funding and failure to deliver on previous targets and promises. As a result, it had fallen on the Council themselves along with the current Mayor of London to provide the funding required to support the ongoing programme of delivery, with Councillor Johnson supporting the calls on the Government within the proposed amendment to properly fund and support the delivery of the required levels of affordable social housing recognising the reality of the current situation to be addressed.

Councillor Kelcher, also speaking in support of the proposed amendment, felt it was important to recognise and support the ambitious nature of targets set for the supply of affordable social housing by the Council and progress made in terms of Brent delivering one of the highest rates of new housing in London alongside the requirement to include and prioritise the provision of affordable housing within all developments. Whilst recognising that Shared Ownership schemes were not a priority option for the Council, they were felt to have a role in terms of the overall mix of housing tenure as a means of providing the first step towards home ownership for those unable to afford a full deposit or initial mortgage. Given the supply issues identified when compared to levels of demand and affordability Councillor Kelcher felt that the proposed amendment was based on a more realistic assessment of the current challenges reflecting there were no quick or easy fixes to resolve the housing crisis.

Councillor Lorber, speaking in support of the original motion, highlighted concerns regarding the Council's ability to deliver on major housing development schemes with specific reference to the delays and change in approach and tenure mix as part of the Wembley Housing Zone development at Cecil Road and Moreland Gardens. In seeking to ensure that the most appropriate type of housing was being provided in

order to meet recognised housing need he also queried the necessity for the level of student accommodation and smaller one or two bedroom properties being approved (especially as a means of ensuring the viability of private development schemes) within the borough, highlighting the more pressing demand identified for larger family sized dwellings and on this basis supported the original motion in challenging the Council's overall approach.

As there were no further contributions, the Mayor then drew discussions to a close and invited Councillor Knight, as the Cabinet Member for Housing, Homelessness and Renters Security, to summarise and close the debate.

Councillor Knight began by thanking Councillor Georgiou for raising such an important subject for debate. Whilst proud of Brent's record and progress in relation to affordable social housing provision the need to continue delivering was recognised in order to address the current demand in relation to the Council's housing waiting list. In supporting the amendment moved to the original motion, Councillor Knight felt that no plausible solutions had been offered by members from either of the Opposition Groups during the debate, emphasising that the Council had a moral imperative to act on behalf of its residents. In recognising the impact of the current social, economic and political challenges in addressing the housing crisis the recent change to delivery of the NCHP agreed by Cabinet and amendments proposed to the motion were felt to reflect the current reality affecting scheme viability and funding as well as the governments limited actions, funding and ambitions. In contrast, Councillor Knight ended by highlighting the ongoing commitment of the Council to continue delivering in relation to its targets for new affordable social housing notwithstanding the challenges and difficult choices that would be required.

The Mayor thanked all members for their contributions and then moved on to put the amendment moved by the Labour Group to the vote prior to seeking approval of the final substantive motion as an outcome of the non-cabinet member debate.

On being put to the vote the amendment moved by the Labour Group (as set out above) was declared **CARRIED**:

As a result, the following substantive motion (as amended) was put to the vote and **AGREED** as the outcome of the non-cabinet member debate:

"Building the Homes our Community Needs

This Council notes:

The pressures on Council Housing stock are immense and in the absence of Government investment, will not ease in the coming months and years, rather they will grow even more. For example, in Brent there are currently 25,853 households on our housing waiting list, containing 53,644 individuals. Even at a record-breaking pace of building, without a renaissance in Government investment in the social housing sector, many of these families will regrettably wait many years for a home.

The Cost-of-Living Crisis, compounded by a Government that has created a disastrous macroeconomic situation in the UK, has seen more local residents turn to

the council for support with their housing needs, with a 33% increase in approaches in the last year. As an authority, we are working around the clock to provide support to households effected by the Cost-of-Living Crisis, with a Resident Support Fund that has distributed £8.46 million to 4,045 households, aiding hundreds of families with Rent Arrears and Mortgage payments; and those in need of food and fuel support.

We are proud that Brent has made progress in seeking to supply Council Homes, with a record of consistently being one of the leading boroughs in providing social homes in London. There is still more to do and we need to see greater, more urgent resolve from all political parties to deliver more Council Homes for our tenants. There have been 20 ministers for housing in the past 25 years and four housing secretaries in just over a year. We desperately need action from our new Minister, on waiting lists for council housing, supporting private tenants that are made homeless, aiding cladding victims that remain trapped in unsellable flats and homeowners living in fear of their next mortgage bill. Finally, without the abolition of Right to Buy London will continue to see more council homes sold and private-let with 54,000 and counting across the capital.

The latest report to Cabinet, entitled, *'Update on the supply of New Affordable Homes'*, sets out where Brent is when it comes to the delivery of the *New Council Homes Programme* (NCHP), our programme to develop 1,000 new council homes by 2025. To date, the Council has developed and let 684 new homes to Brent households and there are 616 homes on site and on track to be completed before 2025. This programme has been made possible through a grant in excess of £100m from the Mayor of London, Labour's Sadiq Khan, and an investment of more than £200m of the council's own money.

Spiralling inflation, exacerbated by a botched mini-budget has not only impacted Brent residents, but has also put our council house building programme at risk. As such, on the 14th November, the Cabinet was asked to formalise a change of approach that would allow Brent Council to deliver much needed housing, within the challenging social and economic climate, providing 50% of new stock at Council Rent and London Affordable Rent level in its own developments. This approach will deliver Social Housing on Council owned land and will achieve our overriding ambition to reduce the ever-growing housing waiting list in a meaningful way. Where appropriate, council owned land will be used to build the next generation of council homes and play our part in addressing the housing crisis.

There are also a growing number of local people in Brent and in our city, who have been life-long residents of Brent and who are now being priced out of the borough, because of a shortfall in the supply of housing, while demand continues to drive prices higher.

There are no quick fixes to resolve the housing crisis and developers, that are granted consent for their private schemes, are only part of the larger answer, if we are to provide our area with the type of housing our community desperately needs.

This Council believes:

1. The Government needs to provide greater clarity on terminology around housing, particularly what constitutes being 'genuinely affordable housing'. The Government must explore how more affordable housing can be secured through Land Value Capture and reforming viability assessments.
2. Targets and policy around house building, must be focused on seeking to reduce the housing waiting list and reduce the number of local people currently in temporary accommodation and deliver family sized housing units, most keenly needed.
3. Shared Ownership schemes are not a top priority for Brent Council, but do form a valuable part of an overall housing mix, as they allow some people to get onto the housing ladder when they otherwise would not be able to afford a full deposit.
4. We should never make the perfect enemy of the good in housing policy whilst holding developers accountable and ensuring that a greater proportion of new stock built in our borough is genuinely affordable for local people.

This Council resolves to:

1. Lobby the government to simplify its terminology on affordable housing in order to give greater clarity across council communications.
2. Call on the Government to address Land Value Capture and viability assessments to enable Brent to secure at least our Local Plan targets for Social Rents, London Affordable Rent, London Living Rent, and Affordable Rent.
3. Continue to work with the GLA and DLUHC to secure the funding needed to ensure all new developments must seek to provide as much social housing as is financially viable.
4. Continue to push Brent's Local Plan target of 50% affordable housing, with a split of 70% low cost rent and 30% intermediate housing, in order to ensure we are building the homes our community really needs.
5. Play our part in addressing the housing crisis across London, by driving up the supply of housing in every ward in Brent."

15. Brent Licensing Cumulative Impact Assessment Review

The Mayor then invited Councillor Farah, as Cabinet Member for Community Safety & Public Protection, to introduce a report from the Corporate Director of Resident Services detailing the outcome of a review of the Council's existing Cumulative Impact Policy and Cumulative Impact Assessment Zones.

In introducing the report Councillor Farah advised that the review had been undertaken in accordance with the Licensing Act 2003 and Police and Crime Act 2017, with the Cumulative Impact Policy forming part of the Council's overall Licensing Policy and Statement of Principles. Members noted that the review had

also been subject to a public consultation process, the outcome of which had been detailed in Appendix B of the report.

As no other members indicated they wished to speak on the report and Councillor Farah had confirmed he did not need to exercise any right of reply the Mayor then put the recommendations in the report to the vote and they were unanimously declared **CARRIED**.

Council therefore **RESOLVED**:

- (1) To approve the retention of the Cumulative Impact Assessment in the current 10 areas.
- (2) To approve the creation two new CIZs in Wembley Park and Cricklewood Broadway.
- (3) To approve the updates to Policy 9 and Appendix 6 of the Licensing Policy to reflect the agreed changes proposed in Appendix C of the report.
- (4) To note that the Policy including the Cumulative Impact Assessments will have to be reviewed within 2 years.

16. **Changes to the Constitution**

The Mayor invited Councillor Muhammed Butt, Leader of the Council, to introduce a report from the Corporate Director of Governance outlining proposed changes to the Constitution. In introducing the report, it was noted that the changes had primarily been designed to reflect changes made to the Council's Planning Code of Practice arising from an Independent review of compliance undertaken by the Planning Advisory Service in June 2022. Members noted the outcome of the review, as detailed within Appendix A of the report, which had identified the Code as representing best practice.

The Mayor thanked the Leader for introducing the report and then opened the debate for contributions from other members.

Councillor Maurice, in highlighting comments raised regarding members role on the Planning Committee, felt it important to assure residents of the open and transparent way in which the Committee operated and the code of practice was applied.

Councillor Lorber also spoke to request minor additional changes he was keen to see included to assist in clarifying the Code of Practice, which included within section 2 (Principles of Planning & Decision Making) clarity around application of the Code to members and also reference to other councillors being included as part of the list Committee members should not allow themselves to be influenced by.

In response to the additional changes identified, the Chief Executive requested that these were submitted in writing in order to enable further consideration prior to them coming forward for approval as potential additional amendments to the Code.

As no other members indicated they wished to speak and Councillor Muhammed Butt confirmed he did not need to exercise his right of reply the Mayor then put the recommendations in the report to the vote and they were unanimously declared **CARRIED**.

Council therefore **RESOLVED**:

- (1) To approve the amendments to the Constitution as set out in Appendix A of the report relating to the Planning Code of Practice.
- (2) To authorise the Corporate Director, Governance to amend the Constitution accordingly, including making any necessary incidental or consequential changes.

17. **Motions**

Before moving on to consider the motions listed on the summons, the Mayor advised members that a total of 40 minutes had been set aside for the consideration of the four motions submitted for debate, based on an initial allocation of 10 minutes per motion. Should the time taken to consider the first motion be less than 10 minutes he advised that the remaining time available would be rolled forward for consideration of the remaining motions.

16.1 1st Motion (Conservative Group) – Measures to tackle flooding in Brent

The Mayor invited Councillor Kansagra to move the first motion which had been submitted on behalf of the Conservative Group. Councillor Kansagra began by providing context on what he felt to be the severity of flooding issues in Brent and increase in frequency. Whilst acknowledging climate change and global warming as factors it was, however, felt that the increasing level of development on green and brownfield sites was also having a detrimental impact on the drainage of rainwater. In addition, the Council's policy of tarmacking footpaths was also felt to be making the position worse by increasing surface water run off as opposed allowing water to permeate into the ground naturally. Although it was recognised that the Council could not prevent global warming and climate change on their own, Councillor Kansagra felt that the suggested actions detailed within the motion would assist in mitigating the consequences of local flood events and protect resident's lives and properties, which he hoped all members would support.

The Mayor thanked Councillor Kansagra for moving the motion, then invited other members to speak with the following contributions received.

Councillor Lorber, speaking in support of the motion, felt that further consideration was required in relation to the use of asphalt for the repair and replacement of footways, given its effectiveness and impact in terms of surface water pooling and run off. Reflecting on specific issues in his own ward, he highlighted the issues caused by uneven footway surfaces and pooling of surface water, which he felt not only increased flood risks but also caused potential hazards for elderly and disabled residents. In concluding his comments, Councillor Lorber also took the opportunity to highlight concerns regarding the potential environmental impacts of what he felt

was overdevelopment being permitted in front and back gardens and other green spaces across Brent.

Councillor Krupa Sheth, in responding to the motion as Cabinet Member for Environment, Infrastructure and Climate Action, started by welcoming the reference and acknowledgement within the motion to the impact of climate change. Highlighting the Council's commitment towards tackling the climate emergency she highlighted how environmental issues remained a key consideration within policy and new development proposals, with bio-diversity, flooding and drainage assessments routinely included as part of the planning considerations for new developments. In highlighting what she felt was the governments poor record on environmental issues she also felt it important to recognise that many new developments within the borough were actually designed to enhance bio-diversity and provide ecological drainage solutions with the use of asphalt on footways also designed to provide a permeable solution. In addition, Councillor Krupa Sheth advised members of the regular meetings held with representatives of the main water companies operating in the borough and programme of regular gully cleaning that was in place to ensure water could flow freely through the drainage system to reduce the risk of flooding. For these reasons she advised the Labour Group would not be supporting the motion, also taking the opportunity to highlight that the concerns relating to back garden developments fell under Permitted Development regulations, with members from all groups encouraged to continue lobbying government for the funding required to ensure a greener future for Brent.

As there were no further contributions, the Mayor then invited Councillor Kansagra (as mover of the original motion) to exercise his right of reply.

In summing up, Councillor Kansagra advised that the Conservative Group in submitting the motion did not agree with the view expressed by the Cabinet Member for Environment, Infrastructure and Climate Action that adequate measures were in place to mitigate against the increased flooding risk arising from climate change and the scale of developments across the borough. As such, he felt the most responsible course of action moving forward would be for members to vote in support of the motion and additional mitigations being sought to address the flood risks identified and protect residents across the borough.

The Mayor thanked members for their contributions and then moved on to put the motion, as set out below, to a vote which was declared **LOST** and not therefore approved.

“Measures to tackle Flooding in Brent”

In the past few years, flooding in Brent and other areas is getting more frequent and severe. Whilst this is partly due to climate change and global warming, it also reflects the massive level of regeneration, development and building on green and brown fields sites which is detrimental to the drainage of rainwater and it is felt future planning policy must reflect.

We are losing more green and open spaces which used to soak up the rain water. The Council's policy of tarmacking footpaths also does not allow water to permeate

in the ground. Just a little rain and we observe streams of water flowing on the roads and pavements.

We notice that flood water collects in low lying areas and does not recede for a few days after it rains which means that in the current situation more frequent and severe flooding will take place.

We appreciate that Brent alone cannot stop global warming and climate change and recognise that the borough has a Flood Risk management Strategy in place, however we can take further steps to mitigate the consequences and protect our residents' lives and property.

As a result this Council calls on Cabinet to:

- 1) Reverse the policy of tarmacking the footways and replace with paving slabs and bricks which allows more water to soak in the ground, especially in known flood risk areas;
- 2) Reverse the policy of large scale developments which are reducing the green open spaces and making Brent a concrete jungle;
- 3) Implement a regular gully cleaning and leaf collection program, especially in the flood prone areas;
- 4) Implement a regular program of inspecting all drains and gullies in areas identified as flood risk and repair as necessary and the Council's responsibility, including Brent's brooks and rivers;
- 5) Introduce a policy that makes it's illegal to concrete over the whole of a rear garden as this also impedes the draining of rainwater. We suggest a maximum of 20% of the rear garden can be paved or concreted over.

If Brent is serious about global warming and climate change and wants to protect its citizens now and for future, it's the least it can do."

16.2 2nd Motion (Liberal Democrats Group) – Holding Housing Associations to Account

The Mayor invited Councillor Georgiou to move the second motion which had been submitted on behalf of the Liberal Democrats Group. Councillor Georgiou, in moving the motion, began by highlighting the high number of residents within Brent who lived in properties managed by Housing Associations as either tenants, leaseholders or shared owners, given the increasing levels of stock they managed. It was noted that Housing Associations had originally been set up as charitable non-profit making organisations that aimed to provide low cost housing options, however, in more recent times as they had become more profitable and increased their stock it was felt their ethos had shifted with many now appearing to be primarily driven by financial gain. Concern was expressed that this change did not appear to have been accompanied by any associated benefits for tenants with members having to deal with an increasing level of casework involving issues with properties managed by

Housing Associations. These reflected increased service charges, poor customer service and lengthy wait times for building repairs leading to financial hardship and comprising the health and safety of residents or difficulties for those with disabilities or other access or mobility issues. As a result, Councillor Georgiou advised the motion was seeking support to address the lack of communication and accountability demonstrated by Housing Associations in dealing with their tenants and to demand better and ensure the necessary support was available for residents experiencing issues with their Associations.

The Mayor then invited members to speak on the motion with the following contributions received.

Councillor Knight, as Cabinet Member for Housing, Homelessness & Renters Security, expressed her full support for the actions being sought in response to the motion recognising the necessity in the Council supporting tenants in seeking to uphold their rights and receive the level of service they deserved in order to ensure that Housing Associations were held to account and accepted their responsibility in remedying issues effectively. Referring to the recent case in Rochdale involving the tragic death of Awabb Ishak which had been linked to the failure of a housing landlord to address concerns raised in relation to the level of damp and mould in the families accommodation, Councillor Knight reassured members of the measures being taken by Brent as a responsible landlord to contact tenants who had raised concerns involving damp or mould in their properties in order to ensure the necessary action and support was being provided and to act on any lessons that could be learned as a result of the tragedy. In terms of Housing Associations it was noted that the Council unfortunately had no specific powers to force them to act with the Housing Ombudsman serving as the main source of redress. In her capacity as Cabinet Member, however Councillor Knight advised that she did meet regularly with the five biggest Housing Associations operating in the borough and, in urging all members on a cross party basis to support the motion, advised she would be willing to take forward any issues raised by other councillors on behalf of their constituents in relation to concerns or difficulties with their Housing Associations in an effort to ensure residents in the borough were able to access a decent quality of safe and secure housing.

Councillor Kansagra also spoke in support of the motion, highlighting that it was particularly important to understand and support residents in seeking to hold their Housing Associations to account and to ensure they were provided with a good standard of service, given the level of increasing level of properties they owned and managed across Brent. In reflecting on the difficulties experienced by many of his own constituents when dealing with Housing Association he felt it was important to ensure the Council was doing all within the powers available to support residents in ensuring the Housing Associations were meeting their responsibilities and needs of their tenants. On this basis he advised the Conservative Group would also be supporting the motion.

Councillor Matin, also spoke in support of the motion, again reflecting on issues highlighted by her constituents in relation to the stress and anxiety being created as a result of the lack of communication by Housing Associations and safety concerns created by long periods of time passing before issues were identified and resolved.

Given the increasing level of property owned and managed by Housing Associations within the borough she was also keen to ensure support was provided for those residents in seeking to hold their Housing Associations to account particularly given the unresponsive nature of many providers, as evidenced by the level of associated casework within her ward.

Councillor Miller also speaking in support of the motion, took the opportunity to highlight what he felt were the advantages in democratically run publicly managed social housing given the level of accountability available in seeking to address issues. Referring members to a previous scrutiny review on the same subject he pointed out that a number of similar concerns had also been identified in relation to the service being provided by Housing Associations, which supported the actions identified within the motion.

As no further members had indicated they wished to speak the Mayor then invited Councillor Georgiou to exercise his right to reply.

In exercising his right of reply Councillor Georgiou expressed his gratitude for the cross party support expressed towards the motion with a unified response, he felt, providing a strong message to Housing Associations about the need for accountability and the legal and moral duty on them to ensure that their tenants' needs were being met and addressed in a timely manner.

Having thanked councillors for their contributions, the Mayor then put the motion to a vote which was unanimously declared **CARRIED**.

It was therefore **RESOLVED** to approve the following motion:

“Holding Housing Associations to Account

The Council notes:

Many Brent residents live in properties managed by Housing Associations. They may be Housing Association tenants, leaseholders or shared owners.

The number of residents who will live in properties managed by Housing Associations will continue to grow in the coming years, as more large tower blocks and Housing Association managed units are approved and built in our borough.

Housing Associations were originally set up as charitable, non-profit making organisations, with the aim to provide low cost housing for people.

In recent times, as Housing Associations have grown in number and as their stock has vastly increased, their original focus seems to have been lost as they now seem to be driven by profit and the desire to continuously increase their stock.

As Elected Members we are often made aware of issues within buildings managed by Housing Associations, whether in individual properties or in communal areas.

The communication between tenants and Housing Associations is poor, resulting in long periods of time passing before issues are identified and resolved.

There is a distinct lack of accountability when it comes to Housing Associations, and leaseholders, tenants, shared owners, often feel their concerns are ignored.

Ever increasing Service Charges continue to cause financial misery to many in our borough.

Frequently, Service Charge bills are not explained in detail to residents, as should be the case and scrutinising huge increases in bills is often complicated, meaning many experience financial hardship without fully understanding where their money is going.

Building repairs identified in individual homes and communal areas often take unacceptably long to rectify, despite residents paying vast Service Charges and most Housing Associations having considerable amounts in reserves, to deal with building defects and similar issues.

Essential building repairs are not prioritised, comprising the health and safety of residents, or causing real obstacles for people with disabilities or impairments.

Housing Associations rarely review the work of their contractors, resulting in issues reoccurring for no reason. In the long run this costs tenants more.

This Council believes:

1. Housing Associations must be held accountable and deliver for their tenants, some of whom are vulnerable and have specific housing and care needs.
2. That Housing Associations have both a legal and moral duty to ensure that their tenants' needs are met and all issues are addressed in a timely manner.
3. There is often a distinct lack of communication between Housing Associations and their tenants, which fuels the frustration many feel.
4. It is difficult for tenants to make complaints when issues persist and are left unresolved as it is hard to know who within these bureaucratic organisations is responsible for different issues that arise.

This Council resolves to:

1. Exert our influence to demand better for residents who are currently experiencing issues with their Housing Association
2. Collate a directory of useful contact information of all Housing Associations who have stock in our borough, in order for Elected Members and Officers to be able to better support residents who have ongoing problems with their Housing Association.

3. Help signpost residents to their specific Housing Association officer who would be best placed to help resolve ongoing issues in their homes or communal spaces in their building.
4. Organise a roundtable with all Housing Associations who have stock in Brent in order for a frank and open conversation to take place between Elected Members and representatives from Housing Associations about ongoing issues within their stock.
5. Review our relationship with Housing Associations who have significant issues, particularly those who do not address building defects within their existing stock.
6. Support local people in holding their Housing Association to account by seeking to democratise the relationship between tenant and Housing Association through setting up Resident Associations where in public meetings issues can be raised and actions determined.”

16.3 3rd Motion (Labour Group) – Our Home Our Vote

The Mayor then invited Councillor Benea to move the first motion submitted by the Labour Group. In moving the motion, Councillor Benea advised members that the issues raised and actions being sought had been identified in response to the recent Elections Bill. Concerns were expressed that the Bill, once enabled, would introduce a number of measures impacting on electors and local authorities including mandatory photographic voter ID, overseas voting, and voting and candidacy rights of EU citizens. Highlighting that the concerns identified were shared by election administrators, Councillor Benea outlined the disproportionate impact it was felt the new requirements would have as a result of the inconsistency around acceptable forms of ID. In addition, concerns were expressed regarding the change in approach relating to the eligibility of EU citizens who entered the UK from 2021 (not covered by the Withdrawal Agreement, or by any ‘bilateral treaty’ covering voting rights) no longer having voting and candidacy rights in local elections from 2022. It was felt this would create an unequal situation, particularly within Brent and across London, where some EU citizens would have the right to vote and others would not. Referring to the position in Scotland and Wales where residence-based voting rights had been introduced for all residents with lawful immigration status, Councillor Benea ended by highlighting the support being sought within the motion as part of the “Our Home Our Vote” campaign for residence-based voting rights across England and Northern Ireland and in lobbying for a change in approach regarding the introduction of Voter ID given the impact it was felt this would have on many minority groups in terms of voting eligibility and democratic participation.

The Mayor thanked Councillor Benea for moving the motion before inviting other members to speak on the motion, with the following contributions received.

Councillor Lorber, speaking in support of the motion, also outlined his concerns at the changes included within the Bill which he felt were discriminatory in nature. In highlighting his support for the measures outlined within the motion he felt strongly that if you lived, worked and contributed to society within the UK you should have the right to participate in the democratic process and vote at local elections.

Councillor Afzal, also speaking in support of the motion, felt that the proposals being introduced through the Bill demonstrated a lack of genuine appetite for democracy by the Government given the disproportionate impact on already marginalised groups, including young people, older people and non UK born residents and what he regarded as an approach seeking to exclude them from being able to vote in order to retain power. As an alternative, it was felt that government resources could be better used to tackle large scale tax evasion rather than the limited instances identified of voter fraud. In expressing his full support for the motion, Councillor Afzal was keen to endorse the case for residence-based voting rights feeling that those living within the UK should be entitled to have a say in how the country was run.

Councillor Kansagra, speaking in support of the measures within the Elections Bill highlighting his support for the introduction of Voter ID as a means of protecting the integrity and legitimacy of the electoral process. Given that research had identified a significant percentage of the population having a valid form of ID that could be used under the new requirements and the provision being made for those who did not to obtain a voter ID card, Councillor Kansagra advised that the Conservative Group, whilst not objecting to the efforts being made to further encourage voter registration and ensure all were aware of the changes, would be abstaining from voting on the overall motion.

Councillor Crabb, speaking in support of the motion, also highlighted concerns at the way he felt it had been designed to discriminate against certain minority groups and exclude them from being able to vote. Questioning the intention behind the Bill he urged all members to stand together in support of the motion.

As no further members had indicated they wished to speak, the Mayor then invited Councillor Benea to exercise her right of reply.

In responding, Councillor Benea reiterated that the issues the motion raised were not just with regard to Voter ID but also in support of residence-based voting rights enabling all residents with lawful status to have the right to vote in local elections in England and Northern Ireland and ended by thanking Councillor Saqib Butt for his support in presenting the motion, which she hoped all members would be willing to support.

Having once again thanked all members for their contributions, the Mayor then put the motion, to a vote which was declared **CARRIED**.

It was therefore **RESOLVED** to approve the following motion:

“Our Home Our Vote

The Council notes:

- The Elections Bill has passed Royal Assent. The Bill when enabled will introduce a number of measures which will impact electors and local authorities including mandatory photographic voter ID, overseas voting, and voting and candidacy rights of EU citizens.

- Election officials say they have not had enough time to prepare for voter ID and are worried that thousands of people will be turned away from polling stations. Labour Party MPs have raised concerns regarding voter suppression, since six of the Government-accepted IDs are specifically targeted at older people, while almost none are aimed at younger people.
- In Brent, 169,000 residents were born abroad, and across London over 12% of residents are from the European Union.
- They live, work, study, make use of public services, and call London their home. Many of our foreign-born residents from EU and Commonwealth countries can vote in our local elections. However, approximately 377,000 Londoners that were born in non-EU and non-Commonwealth countries cannot vote in our elections.
- Scotland and Wales implemented residence-based voting rights where all residents with lawful immigration status have the right to vote in local and devolved national elections.
- A poll conducted by Number Cruncher showed that 63% of people agree that all residents with lawful status in the UK should have the right to vote in local elections in England and Northern Ireland.

The Council welcomes:

- That 37% of Londoners are born outside of the UK and that the voting and candidacy rights of EU citizens with pre-settled and settled status who entered the UK before 2021 will be maintained.
- That the London Assembly passed a motion in support of residence-based voting rights on the 11th of November 2021 and that various organisations in the democracy and immigration sector have signed a joint statement in support of the “Our Home Our Vote” campaign for residence-based voting rights.

The Council expresses concern that:

- EU citizens who enter the UK from 2021 and are not covered by the Withdrawal Agreement, or by ‘bilateral treaties’ covering voting rights, will not have voting and candidacy rights in local elections from 2022. This will create an unequal situation where some EU citizens will have the right to vote where others will not.
- Brent Council also expresses concerns that the democratic rights to vote in local or national elections will impact many minority groups once voter ID is implemented through the Election Act;
- We fear this complexity in voting eligibility will cause confusion and will reduce voter turnout in London elections, undermining the effectiveness of projects such as London Voter Registration Week working to improve voter registration.

The Council will commit to:

- Increasing its efforts to encourage eligible voters to register to vote in advance of future elections. For instance, but not limited to, including information about voter registration and eligibility in council tax letters, council social media communications and the Brent Magazine.
- Brent Council will work closely with organisations and charities operating across our borough to ensure that the information about local election voting rights reaches as many EU citizens as possible that call Brent home.
- Ask that the Leader of the Council write to Andrew Stephenson, Minister of State for Local Government, Faith and Communities requesting that the right to vote be extended to all residents in local elections in England and Northern Ireland.”

16.4 4th Motion (Labour Group) – Backlog Britain: Waiting for Care

The Mayor then invited Councillor Choudhry to move the second and final motion submitted by the Labour Group who began by highlighting the challenges and pressures on health and social care as a result of what he felt had been the mismanagement of public services and programme of austerity implemented during the previous 12 years of a Conservative Government. The extent of these pressures across many public services were now fully evident with particular concerns highlighted in relation to health and social care services as they approached a highly challenging winter season with potential strike action, long waiting lists and staff shortages. In recognising the efforts being made by staff within the NHS to manage the significant pressures and local outcomes being achieved through the Brent Health Matters programme to ensure that access to vital health care services in Brent were maintained, Councillor Choudhry urged all members to support the motion. In doing so he highlighted the importance of the actions being sought to reinforce the Brent Health Matters programme as a means of addressing the significant health inequalities across the borough and in supporting residents with the cost of living crisis and in being able to continue accessing vital health, wellbeing and social care provision.

Following the motion being formally moved the Mayor opened the motion up to debate, with the following contributions received.

Councillor Ketan Sheth, speaking in support of the motion as Chair of the Community & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee, felt it was important to recognise the full impact of the additional pressures on health and social care provision as a result of the cost of living crisis, especially over the upcoming winter period. Whilst welcoming the additional funding provided within the Chancellors Autumn Statement for Health and Social care, members were advised this would not be sufficient to remedy the pressures and backlogs identified as a result of previous underfunding and Government’s inaction to address the issues identified, especially in relation to social care. As a result, Councillor Ketan Sheth supported the calls for radical reform of the care system given the associated impact on wider health services, which included chronic staff shortages. In concluding, Councillor Ketan Sheth thanked all stakeholders for their support of the Brent Health Matters programme and highlighted the key role of the recently established Integrated Care Partnership

for North West London in seeking to ensure that the limited Government funding being provided was used to maximum impact locally, which he assured members the Scrutiny Committee and Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee would continue to keep under review.

Councillor Mistry then spoke to outline her appreciation of the NHS in both a personal capacity and in recognition of the important and valued levels of health care being provided across the country, with particular reference as an example to the roll-out of the Covid 19 vaccination programme. Whilst recognising the extent of current pressures on the NHS and social care, Councillor Mistry felt it important to recognise the active measures being taken by the Conservative Government to improve matters. These included the recruitment of additional nurses and doctors as well as provision of significant additional funding for the coming winter to address the pressures identified including the issue of delayed hospital discharges and to improve community diagnostic measures and reduce waiting lists, working in partnership with the independent and private sector. As it was felt these had not been reflected she advised that the Conservative Group would be abstaining from voting on the motion.

Councillor Lorber, in expressing his support for the motion, felt there was also a need to recognise the significant impact of Brexit in terms of limiting the workforce available to support the health and care system, which had added to the pressures and challenges identified, particularly in the aftermath of the covid pandemic.

Councillor Hack, also speaking in support of the motion, felt it important to re-emphasise the fundamental right to free health care established within the UK which, despite the approach by the Government and pressures identified, he advised the Labour Administration in Brent remained committed to preserve.

Councillor Nerva responding in support of the motion, as Cabinet Member for Public Health & Adult Social Care, commended the measures outlined within the motion and highlighted what he felt was the repeated failure by central government to adequately fund and support the NHS and Social Care in overcoming the challenges and pressures identified within the system despite continued assurances to the contrary. Whilst welcoming the additional funding provided to address the winter pressures identified and backlog in care, he felt it was important to note that that this had not taken account of inflation and in urging all members to support the motion also supported the previous concerns expressed regarding the impact of Brexit, particularly in relation to the ability to recruit and retain appropriate levels of staffing across the health and social care sector.

As a final contribution, given the time available, Councillor Moeen also spoke in support of the motion re-iterating concerns previously expressed about the Conservative Governments under resourcing of the health service despite being aware of the challenges faced particularly in the aftermath of Covid. It was felt this had been a significant reason for the increase in waiting lists for routine operations, access to GP and primary care along with delays in referrals and diagnostic targets repeatedly being missed. As a result, Councillor Moeen felt that significant investment was needed to support the recovery of the NHS and on this basis also urged all members to support the motion.

Given the limited time remaining, the Mayor then moved on to invite Councillor Choudhry to exercise his right of reply.

In responding and closing the debate, Councillor Choudhry thanked members for their support of the motion which he felt reinforced the ongoing commitment within Brent to support the NHS and provision of social care along with those key workers who delivered care across the system.

Having thanked all members for their contributions, the Mayor then put the motion, to a vote which was declared **CARRIED**.

It was therefore **RESOLVED** to approve the following motion:

“Backlog Britain: Waiting for Care

This Council notes:

All across the United Kingdom the country is facing backlogs across public services. In the past few weeks, we have seen that these delays can have tragic consequences – with a bottleneck in processing asylum applications, leading to deplorable conditions at Manston in Kent.

However, right now across the health sector, with staff leaving the industry in their droves and nurses balloting for a strike for the first time ever; we are seeing even greater delays to accessing healthcare:

- There are some 6.7 million people waiting for routine hospital treatment the highest level since records began 15 years ago. Hospitals, meanwhile, are full of patients who cannot be discharged owing to a lack of care-home beds or community services to support them. This in turn means that nationally almost 700,000 people have waited more than 12 hours in A&E in the first seven months of 2022, with ambulances queuing outside hospital doors for hours.
- The NHS is the Labour Party’s proudest achievement – a gift from Nye Bevan to the country which has lasted 74 years. The NHS is a source of national pride, but this year it is facing another balancing act, with spiralling demands for care; while thousands of positions are vacant. As a result, there are now 1 in 9 people in England on hospital waiting lists, with people dying while waiting for care.
- The Health and Social Care Levy was put forward as a means to “fix” social care by providing sustainable funding to the sector. There have been no new announcements from government on what will replace the £13 billion it would have offered.
- Figures from the NHS reveal that last month 7,953 people had to wait more than four hours for emergency care at A&Es in London North West University Healthcare NHS Trust. In North West London, there are now 247,296 residents on the waiting list for care, up from 175,291 just a year ago and the highest number in London. There are 6,225 residents waiting over a year for routine operations.

- At the same time many NHS trusts are supporting their staff through the cost-of-living crisis by food banks on site, providing salary advances and free school uniforms to the children of NHS staff.
- The NHS Confederation has made an unprecedented intervention, highlighting in an open letter the link between fuel poverty and demand on NHS services, stating that Britain “is facing a humanitarian crisis. Many people could face the awful choice between skipping meals to heat their homes and having to live in cold, damp and very unpleasant conditions.”
- Further on 9th November 2022 NHS Confederation stated that “If social care reforms are delayed by another year, this will only serve to exacerbate the bottlenecks across local services and harm patients “
- Around 1 in every 10 dentists in England quit last year, leaving 4 million people unable to access an NHS dentist with some parts of the country now described as ‘dentistry deserts’, because remaining NHS dentists aren’t taking on new patients. The British Dentistry Association, emergency teeth extractions are now the most common reason for children to go to hospital.
- Data from the NHS reveals that in the past year, 23,434 GP appointments in the North West London Integrated Care System were held over a month late, as patients struggle to see a GP when they need one.
- That there is a six to eight week wait to access the local Long Covid service based at Central Middlesex Hospital.
- Public satisfaction with GP services has fallen from 77 per cent in 2010, to just 38 per cent now, the lowest level since the survey began in 1983. A BBC Panorama investigation in June found that unqualified staff at Operose Health practices, the UK’s largest GP chain, are seeing patients without the required clinical supervision and support.

This Council believes:

- That Brent owes a huge debt of gratitude to health and social care staff that continue to tirelessly work for a health service that keeps us healthy and has saved lives across the pandemic. However, it also clear that successive governments over the last decade have presided over the deterioration of services, creating some of the backlogs we see today.
- Public services are a public right, but residents in Brent are facing huge delays for the most basic care. The NHS and universal public services need a new deal, if the social contract that bonds citizens and governments, can continue.
- We need a real plan to get waiting lists in hospitals, primary care and dentistry under control. At present there is a golden thread of delay, decay and dither leading back to the Conservatives. Previous governments have reduced waiting times in hospitals from 18 months to 18 weeks.

- That if Brent residents cannot afford to heat their homes and cannot afford nutritious food, we will face a new public health emergency; increasing the strain on our local hospital admissions further.
- Local government has shown that with the right funding, it has a part to play in promoting and protecting the health and well-being of the public, and supporting the NHS in alleviating the demand for services.
- In Brent we are proud to have our own Brent Health Matters programme which has:
 - Established a public health prevention team, recruited from our community with lived experiences of what makes Brent, Brent.
 - Worked hand in glove with our multi-faith groups to reach a wide range of stakeholders across Brent, to address entrenched health inequalities.
 - Been at the heart of a public health outreach campaign: coordinating diabetes screenings, organising pop-up Covid-19 vaccination sites; and working now with our community groups to increase vaccination uptake.

This Council resolves:

- As part of the campaign to ensure that healthcare for Brent residents is properly funded, working alongside patient voice groups, to press the case for equitable NHS funding across the new North West London Integrated Care System (ICS).
- To reinforce the Brent Health Matters programme, taking forward transformational projects to reverse the health inequalities the pandemic exposed. We will facilitate more outreach sessions across Brent's communities, such as our diabetes prevention events and our mobile dentistry sessions.
- To bolster our communications campaign across all channels, with a new multi-language information booklet setting out what support is available to residents struggling with the cost of living, energy and food poverty.
- To provide 'Warm Places' a network of spaces where Brent residents can come together to stay warm and receive additional support and advice to alleviate poverty – helping to ease pressures on the NHS.
- To support a national campaign as outlined by the NHS Confederation in support of the action that is so desperately required to address the dearth of adequate social care provision, including introducing a minimum wage for social care staff. Social care is about so much more than alleviating pressure on the NHS, but without action to address the lack of capacity in social care, the NHS will continue to experience huge delays in discharging medically fit patients from hospitals.
- Request that the Leader of the Council write to our local MPs requesting that the backlog in healthcare services and health inequalities in Brent is raised in

Parliament; and for those MPs to meet with interested councillors in facilitating discussions.”

18. Urgent Business

There were no urgent items of business raised at the meeting so the Mayor, in closing the meeting, thanked all members for their co-operation and support and advised that he looked forward to seeing everyone again in person at the next Full Council which would be the Budget Setting meeting on Thursday 23 February 2023.

The meeting closed at 8.17 pm

COUNCILLOR ABDI ADEN
Mayor

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LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

Minutes of the EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL
Held in the Conference Hall, Brent Civic Centre on Monday 23 January 2023 at
6.00 pm

PRESENT:

The Worshipful the Mayor
Councillor Abdi Aden

The Deputy Mayor
Councillor Orleen Hylton

COUNCILLORS:

Afzal	Ahmadi Moghaddam
Ahmed	Akram
Bajwa	Begum
Benea	M Butt
S Butt	Chan
Chappell	Chohan
Choudry	Collymore
Conneely	Crabb
Dar	Dixon
Donnelly-Jackson	Ethapemi
Farah	Fraser
Gbajumo	Georgiou
Grahl	Hack
Hirani	Johnson
Kabir	Kansagra
Kelcher	Kennelly
Knight	Long
Lorber	Mahmood
Matin	Maurice
Miller	Mistry
Mitchell	Moeen
Nerva	Patel
M Patel	Rubin
Shah	Ketan Sheth
Krupa Sheth	Southwood
Tatler	

1. **Mayors Introductory Statement**

The Mayor welcomed all those present and thanked everyone for their attendance, explaining that he had called the Extraordinary Council meeting under Standing Order 29 in order to formally approve, with effect from 1st May 2023, the recommended appointment of the Council's new Chief Executive.

2. **Apologies for Absence**

The Mayor reported that apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Molloy and Rajan-Seelan.

3. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

4. **Appointment of the Chief Executive and Designation of Head of Paid Service.**

The Mayor invited Councillor Muhammed Butt, as Leader of the Council, to introduce a report from the Corporate Director of Governance recommending the appointment of Chief Executive for the London Borough of Brent and their designation as the Council's Head of Paid Service to take effect from 1st May 2023, following completion of a recruitment process undertaken by the Senior Staff Appointment Sub Committee.

In introducing the report Councillor Muhammed Butt outlined the comprehensive nature of the recruitment process, with those officers involved thanked for their support, and highlighted the positive outcome in terms of the recommended appointment that had been unanimously approved for referral to Council by the Senior Staff Appointment Sub Committee. Subject to formal approval of her appointment, the Leader welcomed Kim Wright to Brent in order to continue the work and significant achievements to date in serving the residents of the borough.

The Mayor thanked Councillor Muhammed Butt for his introduction and advised that following consultation with the three political groups leaders, he had agreed to allow, as further contributions, one representative from each of the Opposition Groups to also speak on the item at the meeting.

On this basis, the Mayor then invited Councillor Kansagra to speak on behalf of the Conservative Group, who endorsed the comments made by the Leader in terms of the thorough nature of the recruitment process. In outlining his support for the recommended appointment, he also took the opportunity to highlight how his Group were looking forward to being able to work with the new Chief Executive, once in post.

As a final contribution, Councillor Georgiou was then invited to speak on behalf of the Liberal Democrats Group. In supporting the sentiments already expressed he also took the opportunity to personally thank Carolyn Downs for her support as Chief Executive (in advance of more formal tributes being paid) and to advise how he was looking forward to working with the new Chief Executive, particularly in seeking to continue supporting the opposition and scrutiny as a means of holding the Executive to account and to ensure the best outcome for all residents in the borough.

The Mayor thanked both Opposition Group Leaders for their contributions and then invited Councillor Muhammed Butt to exercise his right of reply. The Leader, in summing up, welcomed the comments made and took the opportunity to once again thank all those involved in the recruitment process for their support and participation.

With no further comments made, the Mayor put the recommendations in the report to the vote and they were unanimously declared **CARRIED**.

Council therefore **RESOLVED** to approve the appointment of Kim Wright as Chief Executive and designate her as the Head of Paid Service, with effect from 1st May 2023.

As there was no further business to be considered the Mayor, prior to closing the meeting, also took the opportunity to formally welcome Kim Wright to Brent and reminded members that the next scheduled Council was due to take place on Thursday 23 February 2023 as the Budget & Council Tax setting meeting.

The meeting closed at 6.10 pm

COUNCILLOR ABDI ADEN
Mayor

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FULL COUNCIL – 23 FEBRUARY 2023

AGENDA ITEM 5 – APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES


Standing Order 30(g) states that, if necessary, Full Council is required to agree appointments to committees and outside bodies.

Such appointments are set out below:

1. Councillor Kennelly to replace Councillor Dar as a full member of the Brent Pension Fund Sub Committee.

Members are asked to note that this appointment will be subject to confirmation by the General Purposes Sub Committee on 13 March 2023.

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	<p align="center">Full Council 23 February 2023</p>
	<p align="center">Report from the Corporate Director of Finance and Resources</p>
<p>Budget and Council Tax 2023/24</p>	

Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	Council
Open or Part/Fully Exempt: <small>(If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)</small>	Open
No. of Appendices:	21 – See list attached
Background Papers:	None
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1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to set out the Council's budget proposals for 2023/24. It also sets out the results of the consultation, scrutiny and equalities processes. Following consideration by Cabinet on 6 February 2023 these proposals now form the basis of the budget to be agreed by Full Council. The report also sets out the overall financial position facing the Council for the medium term and highlights the significant risks, issues and uncertainties.
- 1.2 Reports on the budget position have been brought to Cabinet throughout the year, most recently in July and November 2022. There is a high level of uncertainty due to high levels of inflation, economic turmoil resulting from war in Ukraine, the Government's short-term funding settlements, delays in funding

reforms, the effects of the cost of living crisis on residents and businesses in the borough and the impact of Brexit. Due to these issues, it was estimated in November 2022 that £28m of savings would be required in 2023/24 and 2024/25, profiled £18m in 2023/24 and £10m in 2024/25.

- 1.3 Brent has delivered total cumulative savings of £196m since 2010, and it is clear that over the remainder of the Spending Review period into 2023/24 and 2024/25 further savings will be required. The lack of clarity about the future of local government financing makes it hard to be precise about future financial targets, but the estimated savings requirement was calculated to ensure that the Council can set a balanced budget in 2023/24 and 2024/25.
- 1.4 However, the local government finance settlement unexpectedly increased core spending power for Brent by 11.2%, including an increase to the 'referendum limit' for Council Tax to 4.99% (where 2% is ring fenced for Adult Social Care). Like last year, the Government's financing assumption is that all Councils would act on this. The decision on Council Tax will be taken by Full Council, but the budget has been constructed on the basis of a 4.99% rise in the Brent element of Council Tax, which is consistent with the previous position of increasing Council Tax by the maximum amount allowable under the legislation. In addition, this is based on taking into account the rising inflationary pressures that the Council is subject to, the financial position in the round and the results of consultation through Brent Connects and other meetings held by the date of despatch of this report. Further details regarding decisions on Council Tax, including support for residents that are financially vulnerable, are set out in section five of this report.
- 1.5 The Mayor of London has announced plans for an increase in his precept of 9.7% (slightly different rules on the limits for the Greater London Authority (GLA) apply due to its role as the police authority) making the overall increase in Council Tax 6.0%. This equates to £1,924.45 at Band D, or the equivalent of £37.01 per week, and the overall increase equates to £2.10 per week.
- 1.6 The additional resources provided in the local government finance settlement have resulted in a reduction in the savings requirement for 2023/24 and 2024/25 to £21.0m, profiled £13.5m in 2023/24 and £7.5m in 2024/25. This enables the deferral of £4.5m of the savings previously identified for 2023/24 to be deferred to 2024/25. Based on current estimates, this leaves a budget gap of £3m in 2024/25. However, this settlement also deferred many of the spending cuts that the Chancellor of the Exchequer had set out as necessary in his Autumn Statement to return the nation's finances to a sustainable position over the medium term. Therefore, it remains likely that further savings will be required from 2025/26 onwards and this will be kept under review and reported to Cabinet throughout 2023/24. Further details on the changes to the budget development process since the draft budget are set out in sections four and five of this report.
- 1.7 Given the significant financial uncertainties that have been highlighted throughout this process, this is a balanced and proportionate approach to the demanding choices that have to be confronted in budget setting. It should be

recognised, however, that forecasting over the medium term has been, and continues to be, extremely difficult. There is a high level of uncertainty over the medium term due to the delays in funding reforms, the continuing impacts of COVID-19 and Brexit on residents and businesses in the borough, the war in Ukraine and global inflationary pressures. The significance of the financial challenge cannot be underestimated, however the measures outlined in this report aim to ensure that the Council continues to operate in a financially sustainable and resilient way.

1.8 Agreeing the proposals in this report will enable the Council to set a balanced budget in 2023/24 in accordance with its statutory obligations and consistent with the Borough Plan. The plan focuses on how the Council will take forward delivery in the five priority areas being of fundamental importance to Brent and its people:

- Prosperity, Pride and Belonging
- A Cleaner, Greener Future
- Respect and Renewal in Brent
- The Best Start In Life
- A Healthier Brent

1.9 The Council received over 900 responses to the Consultation on the draft Borough Plan. Broadly, people found that the key issues for the borough were reflected within the draft priorities. As a result, the MTFs will need to ensure it provides a framework to enable and support the delivery of these programmes.

1.10 Aside from the updating of and adjustments to various technical assumptions the key features of this budget are:

- A Council Tax rise of 4.99% for the Brent element, making a Band D Council Tax of £1,490.31. Additionally, the Council will levy a Council Tax precept currently expected to be £434.14 at Band D on behalf of the GLA. Therefore, the total Council Tax at Band D is expected to be £1,924.45, which is an overall increase of 6.0%.
- New budget savings proposals with an aggregate value of £18m, with £13.5m to be delivered in 2023/24 and £4.5m in 2024/25, as set out in Appendix C (i).

1.11 This report is structured as follows:

- Officer recommendations for Cabinet and Full Council to approve;
- Strategic overview of the financial and macro-economic climate;
- Summary of the processes taken to develop the budget;
- Update on the 2022/23 revenue budget and review of the key budget assumptions;
- The results of consultation, scrutiny and equalities are set out;
- Updates from the Council's ring fenced budgets, specifically the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG);

- The capital programme is set out, along with the associated capital strategy, investment strategy and treasury management strategy.

2.0 Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 Agree an overall 4.99% increase in the Council's element of Council Tax for 2023/24, with 2% as a precept for Adult Social Care and a 2.99% general increase.
- 2.2 Agree the General Fund revenue budget for 2023/24, as summarised in Appendices A and B.
- 2.3 Agree the savings proposals for 2023/24 and deferral of savings to 2024/25, as set out in Appendix C (i).
- 2.4 Note the Equalities Impact Assessments on the budget proposals, as set out in Appendices C (ii) and C (iii).
- 2.5 Note the report from the Budget Scrutiny Task Group in Appendix D.
- 2.6 Agree the HRA budget and business plan for 2023/24, as set out in section seven and appendix Q of this report.
- 2.7 Agree the Dedicated Schools Grant, as set out in section eight of this report.
- 2.8 Agree the changes to the existing Capital Programme in relation to additions of new schemes and reprofiling, as set out in section 10 of this report and Appendix E, and note the Capital Pipeline Schemes in Appendix F.
- 2.9 Agree the Capital Strategy, the Investment Strategy, the Treasury Management Strategy and the Minimum Revenue Provision Statement as set out in Appendices G, H, I and J.
- 2.10 Agree the Reserves Strategy and schedule of reserves, as set out in Appendix K.
- 2.11 Note the action plan to implement CIPFA's Financial Management Code and conduct a Financial Resilience Assessment, as set out in Appendix L.
- 2.12 Agree the schedule of fees and charges, as set out in Appendix M.
- 2.13 Note the results of the budget consultation, as set out in section six and detailed in Appendix N.
- 2.14 Note the legal advice from the Corporate Director of Governance, as set out in Appendix O.
- 2.15 Agree the Pay Policy Statement for 2023/24, as set out in Appendix P.

Council Tax recommendations

The GLA will agree its final budget and Council Tax precept at a meeting on the same day as the Full Council meeting of 23 February 2023. The statutory calculation of the total amount of Council Tax under Section 30(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 cannot be carried out until the final GLA precept has been received.

2.16 In relation to the Council Tax for 2023/24 we resolve:

That the following amounts be now calculated as the Council's element by the Council for the year 2023/24 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as amended:

- (a) £1,061,792,345 being the aggregate of the amount that the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) of the Act.
- (b) £910,992,347 being the aggregate of the amounts that the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) of the Act.
- (c) £150,799,998 being the amount by which the aggregate at (a) above exceeds the aggregate at (b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act, as its Council Tax requirement for the year.
- (d) £1,490.31 being the amount at (c) above, divided by the amount for the tax base of 101,187, agreed by the General Purposes Committee on the 12 December 2022, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year.

(e) Valuation Bands

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
993.54	1,159.13	1,324.72	1,490.31	1,821.49	2,152.67	2,483.85	2,980.62

being the amounts given by multiplying the amount at (d) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation band D, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands.

2.17 That it be noted that for the year 2023/24 the proposed GLA precept issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, in respect of the GLA, for each of the categories of dwellings are as shown below:

Valuation Bands

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
289.43	337.66	385.90	434.14	530.62	627.09	723.57	868.28

2.18 That, if notification of the GLA precept has been received at the time of the Full Council meeting of 23 February 2023, having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at paragraph 2.31(e) and 2.32, the Council, in accordance with Section 30(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the following amounts as the amounts of council tax for the year 2023/24 for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:

Valuation Bands

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
1,282.97	1,496.79	1,710.62	1,924.45	2,352.11	2,779.76	3,207.42	3,848.90

2.19 That, if notification of the GLA precept has not been received at the time of the Full Council meeting of 23 February 2023, the Council will refer to the Council Tax setting committee, the setting of the Council Tax for the year 2023/24, in accordance with section 67(3) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

2.20 That, if required, the special Council Tax setting committee meet on 24 February 2023 to allow Council Tax notices to be issued in line with the normal statutory timetable.

2.21 That it be noted that the Corporate Director of Finance and Resources has determined that the Council element of the basic amount of Council Tax for 2023/24 is not excessive in accordance with the principles approved under Section 52ZB of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

- (a) That the Corporate Director of Finance and Resources be and is hereby authorised to give due notice of the said Council Tax in the manner provided by Section 38(2) of the 1992 Act.
- (b) That the Corporate Director of Finance and Resources be and is hereby authorised when necessary to apply for a summons against any Council Tax payer or non-domestic ratepayer on whom an account for the said tax or rate and any arrears has been duly served and who has failed to pay the amounts due to take all subsequent necessary action to recover them promptly.

- (c) That the Corporate Director of Finance and Resources be and is hereby authorised to collect revenues and distribute monies from the Collection Fund and is authorised to borrow or to lend money in accordance with the regulations to the maximum benefit of each fund.

3.0 Strategic Overview

- 3.1 In July 2022 Cabinet received a report on the Medium Term Financial Outlook. That report highlighted considerable uncertainty in the economy caused by exceptional factors such as the enduring impact of COVID-19, high levels of inflation, particularly for fuel and energy, labour shortages and rising interest rates and the global impact of war in Ukraine. These macro-economic factors together with local changes to demographics and demand-led pressures combine to create substantial need for growth in the Council's budget. At that time, levels of government funding were uncertain with speculation that nationally funding for local government was unlikely to keep pace with inflationary pressures and locally the effect of the government's "Levelling Up" agenda may be to move funding from London to the rest of the country.
- 3.2 In November 2022, the draft 2023/24 budget was presented, which highlighted that the budget gap between 2023/24 and 2024/25 was estimated at £28m and that due to high level of uncertainty over the economic environment and local government funding the budget setting process was to be restricted to a single year, rather than the two year programme that was previously customary practice. £18m of new savings proposals were presented, which if approved would enable the Council to set a balanced budget for 2023/24.
- 3.3 These savings are in addition to the £196m removed from the Council's budget since 2010 as a result of significant reductions in government funding and the challenges posed by new legislation, at a time when demand for key services is rising and COVID-19 continues to have an impact on the Council's finances and services.
- 3.4 Brent continues to experience levels of unemployment and poverty higher than the rest of London – a trend which has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. According to Official Labour Market Statistics, the unemployment rate in Brent was 4% in September 2019, lower than the London average of 4.6%. However, by June 2022 this had risen to 8.2% - significantly higher than the London average of 5.3%. 36% of people in Brent live in poverty – the second highest level in London – and 30% of residents are estimated to be earning below the Living Wage. Brent therefore has a large number of vulnerable people who are already financially challenged and who face further deprivations as a result of the cost of living crisis.
- 3.5 The cost of living crisis will have a significant impact on the residents of Brent. The Council is committed to doing what it can to assist those in greatest need, in particular providing support via the Resident Support Fund and the local Council Tax Support scheme. Further details are provided at the end of this section of the report.

- 3.6 Service demand continues to rise due to demographic changes which affect all age groups, with particular pressures on adults' and children's social care and the homelessness budget.
- 3.7 In part as a result of the war in Ukraine causing a spike in energy prices, inflation is running at high levels not seen since the 1980s. Besides rising energy costs, other goods are also experiencing increases in prices, due to factors such as labour shortages, pay rises, logistics issues and a general trend to restore profit margins where previously slumps in demand had suppressed price levels. In September 2022 CPI stood at 10.1% against a Bank of England target of 2%. RPI, which is often used as the basis for indexation in contracts, was at 12.6%.
- 3.8 In December 2022, CPI stood at 10.5%, down from a peak of 11.1% in October 2022. The Bank of England expects inflation to fall sharply from the middle of 2023 as the price of energy will not continue to rise as quickly and due to a fall in demand for goods and services. However, it currently remains significantly above the Bank of England's inflation target of 2% and is likely to remain high throughout much of 2023.
- 3.8 Having remained at 1% or less since February 2009, interest rates began rising in June 2022. Initially this was in response to rising inflation with the Bank of England using rises in borrowing costs as a means to stifle demand in the economy. More recently, the run on the pound and the potential collapse of some private sector pension schemes have prompted significant increases in the costs of government borrowing with gilt yields reaching their highest level since 2008. For the Council, this translates into higher costs of borrowing which in turn is having an adverse impact on the capital programme.
- 3.9 Over the course of 2022 the country has had three Prime Ministers and four Chancellors of the Exchequer. The political uncertainty and indecision caused by these changes has been exacerbated by policy decisions such as the September mini-budget which found so little favour with the financial markets that it led to a run on the pound, substantial hikes in gilt prices and the intervention of the bank of England to prevent the collapse of the pensions market. As 2022 drew to a close, some much needed calm was restored to the political situation. For local government the Autumn Statement provided much needed additional cash for social care, though not as much as the LGA amongst others had identified as needed. It also deferred the implementation of the cap on care costs, meaning that the timing of the implementation of the proposed care reforms is now unclear.

Local Government Finance Settlement

- 3.10 On 19 December 2022, Michael Gove issued the provisional 2023/24 Local Government Finance settlement and the final settlement was announced on 6 February 2023. There were no material changes in the final settlement for Brent.
- 3.11 Whilst the 2022 Autumn Statement covered three years, the Local Government Finance Settlement is for one year only, the fifth one-year settlement in a row.

Clearly, this is not helpful for medium term financial planning. The Autumn Statement is backloaded, with substantial cuts in public sector funding which are required to balance the books scheduled for 2025/26 (i.e., after the next general election). It is therefore important to realise that whilst the funding for 2023/24 and the indicative figures for 2024/25 are better than anticipated, in the medium term it would appear that very substantial cuts in government funding could be on the horizon. It is therefore prudent to plan for this now and take action that will put the Council in as strong a position as possible to deal with future funding reductions.

- 3.12 In summary, the settlement confirms the additional care funding announced in the Autumn Statement. This was announced too late for inclusion in the Draft Budget presented to Cabinet on 14 November 2022. Whilst the settlement provided additional funding that was not forecast in the MTFs, additional pressures have emerged since the MTFs was last reported to members. It is also worth noting that some of the additional funding is one-off (New Homes Bonus) and other elements are ringfenced to particular service areas (social care). Taking these factors into account, the overall picture presented by the MTFs remains largely unchanged, although the additional funding will enable £4.5m of the savings identified for 2023/24 to be deferred into the following year.
- 3.13 Further details of the technical elements of the settlement and the impact on the 2023/24 budget are set out in section five of this report.
- 3.14 Overall, the headline announcement is that core spending power for Brent will increase by 11.2% in 2023/24. However, this assumes that the Council will increase Council Tax by the maximum amount allowable of 4.99% without triggering a referendum – a two percent increase in the previous limit (1% Council Tax and 1% Adult Social Care Precept). Some of the funding allocation formulae use measures of deprivation and Brent has the second highest level of deprivation in London. Therefore, Brent received a proportionately higher increase in core spending power. As RPI in September 2022 was 12.6%, it is arguable that an 11.2% increase in core spending power actually represents a real terms cut in funding.
- 3.15 Nevertheless, while the additional funding announced for Local Government is welcome, the funding available overall is unlikely to be sufficient to withstand the increased demand for services, in particular as demand for children's social care services is still increasing. Uncertainty over the timing of the adult social care reforms adds a further financial risk. Therefore, Brent, like all Local Authorities, will need to make significant savings over the next few years to deliver balanced budgets. The settlement and Autumn Statement provide figures on additional social care grants for the next two years, but it is unclear what happens after that.
- 3.16 The government has decided to continue with the Services Grant, first introduced last year. The MTFs assumed that the 2022/23 Services Grant would be redirected away from London as part of the government's Levelling Up agenda and that Brent would therefore receive reduced funding. In fact, this

has not happened, but the NIC clawback and the redirection of funding to supporting families grant have taken its place. The Settlement abolishes the Lower Tier Services grant and uses its resources to provide a minimum funding increase guarantee – no London Borough receives any funding from this grant. The reallocation of the Lower Tier Services Grant was not anticipated.

- 3.17 The Autumn Statement announced the deferment of the implementation of the cap on care charges part of adult social care funding reforms for two years. The Settlement reallocates the funding made available for the preparatory work to provide funding for additional care placements. There is speculation whether this will ever be implemented – the revised date is after the next general election. If implementation does recommence in 2025/26, there is a potential financial risk if these funds have been used to fund additional ongoing placements, when the funds revert to funding the introduction of the care cap. The settlement also includes a new Adult Social Care grant which is ringfenced to funding hospital discharges.
- 3.18 Whilst the increase in core spending power is greater than expected, some of the increase depends on Brent residents paying 4.99% more Council Tax in the midst of the cost of living crisis and a substantial part of it is targeted at additional social care expenditure. The additional funding available to support existing services is less than inflation and therefore amounts to a real terms cut.

Cost of living crisis

- 3.19 Since late 2021, the UK has experienced a rise in the cost of living for individuals and businesses. For many Brent residents, this means having to make difficult decisions on how they spend their income, which can have a negative impact on their standard of living.
- 3.20 The December 2022 attitudes survey by YouGov for the GLA found 50% of Londoners surveyed were going without basic needs, struggling to make ends meet or just about managing with their financial situation, with 32% buying less food and essentials to manage their living costs. Of those surveyed, the groups that were most likely to face these challenges included Black and Asian Londoners, social renters (from housing association or Council), and those whose daily activities were considerably limited by health problems or disabilities. These findings align with the Council's Resident's Attitudes Survey, conducted in 2021 to inform the Borough Plan, which at that time found almost a quarter of residents said their financial situation had got worse.
- 3.21 The Council has a number of initiatives aimed at supporting residents who may be struggling and enabling Brent and partner organisations to best respond to local needs. These include:

Financial support

- The **Brent Resident Support Fund (RSF)** has been in place since August 2020. In the period August 2020 to January 2023, RSF has supported 6,940 households with a total of £12.2 million. The support provided is for

help with the cost of living. This can include, but is not limited to, household bills, arrears in rent, mortgage, Council Tax, food, fuel, digital equipment and emergency funds. Urgent assistance is provided when residents are at risk of losing their home and when an application to the RSF is unsuccessful, the applicant is referred to a credit union for help with an interest-free loan.

- Further support is provided through signposting to other internal (e.g. Brent Hubs) and external (e.g. Citizens Advice) services. The Council and key partners are also trialling a subsidiary of the RSF, a Crisis Response Fund, to provide rapid financial aid for residents facing emergencies. The trial began in December 2022.
- During 2022/23 Brent has also supported 94,000 households with a £150 rebate, funded from government grants, to help with the cost of energy bills.
- **Council Tax Support (CTS):** 27,495 households are supported through CTS of which 18,923 are working age and 8,572 are pension age. Pension age residents are entitled to full Council Tax support depending on their income, savings and household composition. The total support given to households is around £32m per annum.
- A new training programme to upskill front-line staff began in January 2023. The programme aims to enable more effective and earlier interventions by Brent and partner staff and to increase capacity for money and debt support in the borough. A CoL Practitioners Network has also been developed and recently expanded to include external partners to share learning and improve access to existing support.
- In addition, a pilot programme to increase capacity for specialist debt advice is being developed, this will include more capacity to issue debt relief orders where appropriate. The pilot will look at the benefits of providing this advice to RSF applicants who are seeking support to deal with debt to help them to avoid going back into debt in future.

Food and energy support

- **Brent Hubs** work with residents who find it difficult to access the support they need through mainstream services. This includes issuing vouchers to residents in need of urgent food and fuel support, as well as making referrals to food aid agencies and support schemes for utility costs. Since January 2021, over 8,115 residents have accessed Hub services. Over the same period, the Hubs provided food and fuel vouchers.
- The most common needs which residents present with at the Hubs are food and fuel support (25%), housing costs (18%), homelessness (11%), form filling – such as RSF applications - (16%), debt and money (7%), welfare benefits (7%), and other, for example, employment, general support, immigration etc.(16%).

- The Government's **Household Support Fund (HSF)** has been used to provide support to Brent households with the cost of food and fuel in the form of food and fuel vouchers, grants, and financial support to food aid organisations. The HSF is a follow-on fund from the previous COVID-19 Winter Support Fund and COVID-19 Local Support Funds, which had been in place since December 2020.
- The Council is testing the delivery of a new food aid and support model in partnership with Sufra NW London. The Community Shop and Kitchen will be trialled over a 6-month period at Bridge Park Leisure Centre, commencing in January 2023. The model will give members a host of benefits including weekly food shopping, hot meals, access to themed support workshops and other social and wellbeing activities.

4.0 Budget Development Process 2023/24

4.1 The budget development process for the Council to set its budget and council tax for 2023/24 was as follows:

- Meetings involving Cabinet and Corporate Management Team members to consider the key service and budget issues likely to affect the council in future years;
- Development of budget proposals by officers and relevant Lead Members for individual services within the context of the Borough Plan and the overall resources available;
- Development of the budget approach, based on the updated medium term financial outlook, which was considered by the Cabinet on 14 November 2022;
- The publication of a detailed list of savings proposals at Cabinet in November 2022 for the purposes of consultation, scrutiny and equality analyses;
- Debates through the Budget Scrutiny Task Group of the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee;
- Presentations and question and answer sessions at virtual Brent Connects meetings;
- Review of the schools budgets by the Schools Forum;
- Considering feedback from residents, businesses and other key stakeholders, whether received from the online consultation portal or other direct representations; and
- Conducting individual equality impact assessments (Appendix C (ii)) on the budget proposals and a cumulative equality impact assessment

(Appendix C (iii)) on the overall budget in order to ensure that the consequences of the budget proposals were properly understood.

- 4.2 This report updates the position on the core estimates that drive the Medium Term Financial Strategy assumptions, including the outcome of the final settlement and the consultation, scrutiny and equalities analyses processes.

5.0 Update and Review of Key Budget Assumptions

- 5.1 The 2023/24 Local Government Finance Settlement provided details of the core funding allocations for local authorities in 2023/24. This is another one-year settlement, which does not help medium term planning, but there is sufficient information to produce a high-level forecast of government funding in 2024/25. The settlement confirmed the funding announced in the Autumn Statement and the Local Government finance policy statement 2023-24 to 2024-25. The key headlines that are relevant for Brent from a budget setting point of view are set out below.

Revenue support grant (RSG) and other relevant grants

- 5.2 RSG for 2023/24 is £28.97m an increase of 12.2% from the 2022/23 level. Some of this increase results from the government rolling into RSG a number of grants that were previously allocated separately. If these are stripped out, the increase is 10.1%, in line with the September CPI inflation figure.
- 5.3 On social care funding, as announced in the Autumn Statement 2022, the settlement sets out the proposed amounts and allocation methodologies. For Brent, this includes £13.3m Improved Better Care Fund – fixed at its 2022/23 level and £22.34m Social Care Grant – an increase of £8.6m. The ASC precept has increased from 1% to 2% - this is intended to provide £2.8m of recurring funding for social care.
- 5.4 The Market Sustainability and Fair Cost of Care Fund (£0.91m in 2022/23) has been replaced by a new Adult Social Care Market Sustainability and Improvement Fund. Brent's allocation is £3.14m – a £2.23m increase. This is intended to support Local Authorities prepare their markets for reform and move towards paying providers a fair cost of care. This grant therefore covers new burdens arising from reform of the care system and is therefore fully committed to fund anticipated additional expenditure.
- 5.5 The settlement introduces a new Adult Social Care Discharge Grant – Brent's allocation is £1.87m. This is intended to support the discharge of patients from hospital into social care. It is understood that this grant is ringfenced for use on interventions that best enable the discharge of patients from hospital to the most appropriate location for their ongoing care.
- 5.6 The government has decided to continue to allocate Services Grant, but has deducted from this the additional funding for the increase in employer's National Insurance Contribution for the social care levy, which is not going ahead. An amount has also been removed to provide additional resources for supporting

families grant. Brent may receive some additional grant in this area, but it is unclear whether this will be more or less than the amount top sliced from the Services Grant. Brent's allocation is £3.43m - a reduction of £2.7m from the 2022/23 amount.

- 5.7 New Homes Bonus for 2023/24 is £7.91m – an increase of £4.8m. This is the highest amount in England. The large allocation results from a number of property completions, delayed due to the pandemic, taking place in 2022/23. This is one-off funding. The government has not indicated whether there will be a future allocation; instead, stating that this will be decided in the settlement for 2024/25. This does not have an impact on the revenue budget currently being consulted upon as the grant forms part of the funding for the Council's capital programme.
- 5.8 At the date of despatch of this report, allocations for the Public Health Grant had not been announced. While no allocations have been published, it is inferred from the Spending Review statement that the grants will rise by inflation. Last year's allocation was £22.9m.
- 5.9 The Council had been expecting a reduction in Homelessness Prevention Grant as the government undertook a consultation during 2022 on new allocation methodologies. Either of the two options proposed would have reduced Brent's allocation. In fact, the allocation for 2023/24 is £7.3m – an increase of £0.2m on the 2022/23 level. For 2024/25 the government has allocated Brent £7.6m – a further £0.3m increase.

Council Tax

- 5.10 The settlement confirmed that Local Authorities will be able to increase Council Tax by up to 2.99% without a local referendum. In addition, local authorities will be able to levy a 2% adult social care precept.
- 5.11 Like last year, the Government's financing assumption is that all councils will act on this and increase Council Tax by the maximum amount possible. It should be noted that the additional income generated through the Adult Social Care precept alone does not cover the total growth requirement for Adult Social Care pressures. However, the increase would permanently increase the council tax base income and it would also help to reduce the significant funding pressures in 2023/24 and beyond. Taking into account the unprecedented pressures within social care and the financial position in the round, the recommendation of this report is that the budget should be constructed on the basis of a Council Tax increase of 4.99% in 2023/24.
- 5.12 While it is acknowledged that increasing Council Tax will be difficult for some households, it should also be recognised that the Council continues to invest in the Council Tax Support scheme, which provides over £32m of support for around 28,000 households who are financially vulnerable. This support will be supplemented in 2023/24 from the Government's £100m Council Tax Support Fund, which will enable Brent to reduce bills for Council Tax Support claimants by up to a further £25. In addition, the Council's Resident Support Fund has

made available additional funds for residents who are having difficulty due to unforeseen financial circumstances as a result of COVID-19 and the cost of living crisis.

- 5.13 Since the draft budget was presented to Cabinet in November 2022, a review of collection rates was undertaken as part of the calculation of the Council Tax Base for 2023/24, agreed at General Purposes Committee on 12 December 2022. This review determined that the long term collection rate was still below the Medium Term Financial Strategy target rate of 97.5%, from which the target had been reduced in 2022/23, and that the cost of living crisis is likely to continue to have an impact on collection of Council Tax. The decision was therefore taken to keep the collection rate target at 97.0% for 2023/24. However, this reduction in assumed collection is offset by a higher than expected rate of growth in the tax base driven by ambitious targets for housebuilding in the borough, as set out in the Brent Local Plan. All other budget assumptions for Council Tax remain unchanged to those presented as part of the draft budget.
- 5.14 Each financial year, the Mayor and London Assembly must prepare and approve a budget for each of the constituent bodies and a consolidated budget for the authority as a whole. At the date of despatch of this report, the Mayor has proposed to increase the GLA precept by 9.7% to £434.14 per Band D property in the 32 London Boroughs. The increase includes a bespoke additional £20 requested by the Mayor of London, and approved by Central Government, to fund TfL services. This would mean that the overall Council Tax would increase by 6.0%.
- 5.15 These figures are subject to change following the consultation process and confirmation of London Boroughs' tax bases. The final GLA budget will be considered by the London Assembly on 23 February 2023. As the GLA's budget will be considered on the same day as the Council considers its budget and Council Tax, a Council Tax setting committee has been established to finalise the overall Council Tax setting process if the GLA precept is not received in time for the Full Council meeting.

Business Rates

- 5.16 In the Local Government Finance Settlement, the Baseline Funding Level was increased by 3.7% to £91.6m.
- 5.17 Each year the business rates multiplier should increase by CPI, which was 10.1% in September 2022. As in previous years, Central Government decided to freeze the multiplier to protect businesses from the impact of this inflation. In 2023/24 the Government will once again provide an additional grant to compensate for the income lost due to the under-indexation of the multiplier both in 2023/24 and for previous years. This takes the total funding received by Brent under the business rates retention system to £107.2m, a 10.1% increase on 2022/23.

- 5.18 The Government has allowed Local Authorities with a geographic link to form a business rate pool. The settlement confirmed the Eight Authority Business Rates Pool (involving the City of London Corporation as well as Tower Hamlets, Hackney, Haringey, Waltham Forest, Brent, Barnet and Enfield) is able to proceed in 2023/24 and a Memorandum of Understanding has been signed by all boroughs. In forming a pool, the group of authorities are seen as a single entity from a business rate perspective and in doing this, should retain more of the business rate income generated locally. However, it should be noted that the benefits of the pooling arrangement will not be recognised in 2023/24 as the final calculation can only be made once the statutory NNDR3 returns for all eight authorities have been audited. Final settlement of the pooling benefits will therefore be received in 2024/25 at the earliest.
- 5.19 From 1 April 2023, liabilities for business rates will be based on the rateable value of the property at 1 April 2021. This revaluation is the first to take place since 2017 and will result in either an increase or decrease to the business rates bills for individual businesses relative to the change in the open market annual rental value of the property between 2015 and 2021. The sector with the largest increase in rateable value overall in Brent is the industrial sector, with smaller increases overall for retail, offices and others. However, within each sector, some rateable values will increase, while others will decrease.
- 5.20 Bills will also take into account any reliefs that a property is eligible for, e.g. small business rates relief, ensuring that individual businesses are not disproportionately affected by changes to their rateable value.
- 5.21 Under the business rates retention system, the revaluation will have a nil impact on the funding received by the Council. The Council receives a top up to bring its business rates income in line with the Baseline Funding Level (BFL). If the amount of retained business rates rises as a result of the revaluation, the top up amount will fall to keep the Council at the BLF figure. Other authorities pay a levy, as their retained business rates would otherwise be over their BFL. In their case, the levy will change to maintain funding at the BLF value. Therefore, the revaluation will have an impact on the balance of top-ups and levies within the Eight Authority Business Rates Pool. For technical reasons, this could result in an increase or decrease to the benefit that is generated from the pooling arrangement.
- 5.22 Financial modelling on the impact of the revaluation on the pool has been undertaken, which has determined that there is a financial incentive for all boroughs to continue in the pool. In accordance with the authority delegated to the Corporate Director of Finance and Resources, the decision has been taken for Brent to continue in the Eight Authority Business Rates Pool. The financial benefits of the pooling arrangement, once confirmed, will be brought forward in a subsequent budget setting round.
- 5.23 The City of London will act as lead authority and during 2023/24 a working group will be set up to closely monitor each borough's financial forecasts with respect to collectible amounts, collection rates, growth, revaluations, etc. All other budget assumptions for Business Rates remain unchanged to those

presented as part of the draft budget

Brent Pension Fund employer contributions

- 5.24 The Brent Pension Fund is currently in the process of finalising the triannual valuation and analysis of the Council's employer contribution rate has been completed. The results of this exercise were presented to the Pension Fund Sub-Committee in October 2022 and it was agreed that the Council's employer contribution rate can be reduced by 1.5% per year over the next three years from 2023/24. This reduction also applies to the Council's schools and most academy schools in the borough. The reason for this is due to a significant improvement in the funding level of the pension fund, arising from better than expected investment returns.
- 5.25 However, the exact size of the saving is uncertain and will depend on the level of pensionable pay for employees in the pension scheme and the pay award. The pay award for 2022/23 agreed in November 2022 is for a fixed increase which averages 6.5%; the pay award for 2023/24 has yet to be agreed. If the pay award for 2023/24 is around the same level as 2022/23, the additional cost would negate the savings from lower contribution rates. A further reduction in the contribution rate of 1.5% would occur in 2024/25 and again in 2025/26. As the pay award for future years is unknown, it is not possible to estimate if further savings can be achieved from reduced contribution rates. This will be assessed every year as part of the budget setting process and if savings can be realised they will be incorporated into the MTFS to support the overall budget.

Departmental pressures

- 5.26 The Draft Budget report presented to Cabinet in November 2022 highlighted that managing ongoing demand-led pressures remains a key aspect of the MTFS. The draft budget report set out in detail the existing annual growth assumptions, or estimated increases in unavoidable expenditure, that are built in to the MTFS, for example contract inflation, pay inflation and meeting the cost of providing existing services for a growing population. As the two areas most affected by the changes in demography and increasing contractual costs, the Adult Social Care and Children's and Young People's departments undertook scenario and sensitivity analysis of the effects of different levels of inflation and demographic change. This determined a central case (that is a position between possible best and worst cases), which has been used as the basis of the contract inflation and demographic changes in these areas. A summary of these growth and cost pressures presented in November are shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Growth / Cost Pressures (Draft Budget, November 2022)

GROWTH SUMMARY	2023/24
Demographics	
- ASC	3.73
- CYP	1.47

- Other Departments	1.30
Sub-total	6.50
Inflation	
- ASC	7.76
- CYP	3.06
- Contracts	3.83
Sub-total	14.65
Pay	6.50
Other (E.g. Public Health Grant inflation)	0.70
	28.35

5.27 Since the Draft Budget Report presented to Cabinet in November, further work has been done to identify inflationary and service pressures on the 2023/24 budget.

- The rising demand in CYP for placements was reported in the Q2 Financial Report and the position had further deteriorated by Q3. This issue is unlikely to be resolved in the short term by management action and therefore further growth is required.
- London Councils has provided forecasts for concessionary fares (Freedom Pass), which shows a substantial uptick over the next two years. If that is the case, growth in this budget is unavoidable.
- Part of the additional government social care funding is ringfenced to support hospital discharges. The Council therefore needs to incorporate this expenditure into its budget.
- The Residents Support Fund has proven to be a highly effective means to support vulnerable people experiencing financial difficulty. Providing a further £3m tranche of funding in 2023/24 is considered reasonable given the ongoing cost of living crisis.
- In addition, the Council is aware that many families experiencing poverty as a result of the cost of living crisis are unable to access Free School Meals for their child/children. As a result, a further £1m of funding will be made available under the Council's new 'Family Food Fund' to support families with food poverty.
- Increased costs of borrowing caused by rising interest rates and the rise in gilt rates as a result of the mini-budget mean that additional funding is required to service the capital programme financing requirement.
- Inflationary pressures are expected to be higher than anticipated in the November Budget Report, particularly in children's and adults' social care.
- The 2022/23 pay award was higher than budgeted in part due to the use of a fixed amount pay increase which proved high cost to Brent once London weighting was added to the base amount. The ongoing pay budget needs to be increased to reflect this. Also, it would be advisable to increase the pay award provision in case a further fixed amount pay award is agreed for 2023/24 as this is more costly to Brent than a percentage increase. Additional provision is also needed for the 2024/25 pay award.

- Economic uncertainty is very high and in consequence it is prudent to build up a contingency budget to deal with unexpected cost pressures. The previous contingency was exhausted by the 2022/23 pay award.
- Provision has been built in to allow for the deferral of savings across years of up to £4.5m of the existing £18m package of 2023/24 savings.

5.28 A summary of the overall growth and cost pressures are shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Growth / Cost Pressures (Final Budget, February 2023)

GROWTH SUMMARY	2023/24
Demographics	
- ASC	3.73
- CYP	3.97
- Other Departments	1.30
Sub-total	9.00
Inflation	
- ASC	9.71
- CYP	3.86
- Contracts	4.08
Sub-total	17.65
Pay	8.50
Service Changes	13.80
	48.95

5.29 The following sections provide commentary on the service pressures and other challenges faced by each department.

Summary of Service Area pressures:

Adult Social Care and Health

5.30 Within Adult Social Care a key area of uncertainty for 2023/24 was the fair cost of care and social care reforms. The reforms were due to be implemented from October 2023. However, at the Autumn Statement, delivered in November 2022, it was announced that they would be delayed for two years to October 2025. Whilst the reforms have been delayed, the sector must still work to ensure sustainable rates for care are paid with fair cost of care funding from the Government continuing for the next two years.

5.31 Ongoing financial government support and market sustainability are an uncertainty, particularly with the ongoing cost of living crisis and inflationary pressures being faced by the department. These are highly likely to have an impact on spot placement requests from providers who are looking to recover some of the additional costs they are incurring.

- 5.32 There were previous concerns around Hospital Discharge (D2A) funding ending in 2022/23. However, as was stated in 3.17 the Autumn Statement confirmed that hospital discharge funding will continue. Going forward It will be distributed as a ringfenced part of the Better Care Fund. The government will set out further details on the conditions of this funding in due course, with the funding intended to support improvements to adult social care and in particular to address discharge delays.
- 5.33 The growth set out in Table 2 is primarily based on taking the central case following a series of scenario analyses and sensitivity analyses on various budget assumptions. Specifically, they arise from demographic pressures which have been calculated by extrapolating trends over recent years and inflation where upward pressures on contract values and spot purchase prices have been used to calculate the future indexation requirement. At this stage of the budget setting process this growth is deemed as reasonable to contain the financial pressures expected in 2023/24.

Children and Young People (CYP) General Fund

- 5.34 There continues to be increased spend in the General Fund of the CYP department due to the impact of rising demand for placements and high inflationary cost increases, risk of loss of health contributions and the reliance on agency Social Work staff due to recruitment and retention challenges.
- 5.35 Across the CYP department, there has been an increase in the number of children and young people receiving support. This increased demand for services follows from a 13.1% rise in the cumulative rate of referrals for social care services in October 2022 through the Brent Family Front Door (BFFD) compared to October 2021. As a result, since the end of the last financial year, there has been a 3.2% rise in the number of cases. The number of cases increased from 2,878 in October 2021 to 2,969 in October 2022. Caseloads are exceeding the budgeted level of c2,500 by 18.8%. Alongside the increase in overall caseloads, which is also in line with national trends, there has been an increase in complex cases, evidenced by an increase in children subject of a Child Protection Plan with the number in August 2022 of 413 being the highest in the last 10 years in Brent.
- 5.36 After a period of relative stability in the Looked After Children (LAC) population at between 280 and 300 children before the COVID-19 pandemic, in 2022/23, the LAC numbers have averaged 337. The Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) currently represents 16.9% of the LAC population. Although grant funding is received from the Home Office to mitigate the costs, pressures arise, as the funding is not sufficient to cover costs such as specialist age assessment social workers, legal costs, additional personal advisors to manage cases, and increased subsistence costs. In addition, a larger cohort of UASC are older and when they turn 18 years, the funding reduces significantly from £143 per day to £38.57 per day.
- 5.37 The average weekly cost of a residential placement is £4,935, which is £535 higher than the 2021/22 average. The impact of inflation is likely to see the

weekly costs increase further in 2023/24. In 2022/23, six residential placements with complex needs weekly costs, ranged from £7,300 to £13,000 and the local authority has recently placed a child in a placement at £20,000 per week. These costs reflect the challenging placements market, which is a national issue and is causing significant budgetary pressures. Due to the current economic climate, inflationary pressures are expected to be passed onto the service by providers.

- 5.38 Health contributions from the Integrated Care Partnership mitigates some of the placement cost pressures and pressures on support for children with disabilities. With the implementation of the North West London Integrated Care System (ICS), a review of health contributions is taking place which for some is resulting in decisions that they no longer meet thresholds. Brent is not isolated in this issue and Directors of Children Services (DCSs) from LAs across the ICS footprint have collectively escalated their concerns to the ICS about the impact on local authorities. Through the Joint Funding Panel, the CYP department will continue to challenge decisions and consideration will be given to appropriate legal redress if a satisfactory outcome cannot be achieved.
- 5.39 Within the Localities, Looked After Children, and Permanency (LAC&P) services, there are challenges regarding the recruitment and retention of skilled and experienced social work staff with the services relying on agency staff whose costs are more expensive than permanent staff. Across the Localities team, agency staff occupy 44% of the establishment. If demand in cases continues to grow, this could create an added pressure in these areas. The department continues to face pressures from the national challenge for the recruitment and retention of social workers, leading to a reliance on agency staff. A shortage of social workers and other case holding staff, which has further been exacerbated by the impact of the pandemic and rising demand, is an acknowledged national issue, which requires a coordinated regional approach over the medium term. CYP management will continue to take steps to improve the recruitment and retention of social workers.

Communities and Regeneration

Communities

- 5.40 Brent is mandated to accept Homelessness applications from newly arrived Ukrainian refugees. The Communities service receives a grant from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities to fund the support provided to the guests and their sponsors. It was announced in December 2022 that the second-year funding, commencing on 1st January 2023, will reduce from £10.5k per new guest to £5.9k. This will result in pressures on the Communities budget as there will be less funding for the service to provide the same level of support and reduce the level of resources distributed to other departments.
- 5.41 Following COVID-19, residents are now more aware of the support available for them which has led to an increase in demand for critical services delivered by our Voluntary and Community Sector partners, for example Independent

Advice and Guidance services. In addition to this, the cost of living crisis is expected to cause further increase to demand.

- 5.42 Similarly, the impact of COVID-19 has led to additional learning and understanding of how community organisations can be supported to deliver vital services, which has led to an increase in funding applications that are administered by the teams. The service is working on plans for how this demand can be managed within existing resources.

Regeneration

- 5.43 Within Regeneration there is some uncertainty on the Planning income that can be expected to be collected in future years. Income is currently lower than in past years, which is likely to relate to ongoing inflationary pressures and challenging legislative changes around fire safety, materials and staffing shortages. The market is demonstrating some nervousness in property and land investment decisions and there is less appetite for developments of all sizes. There is the potential that this could impact the income received for years to come.

Resident Services

Demographics

- 5.44 Environmental Services generate a large proportion of the Council's income through fees and charges. A decrease in the level of income received due to a slow recovery following the pandemic or decreased demand for services due to the cost of living crisis, could put a pressure on the service's budgets.
- 5.45 For instance, within the Parking service, whilst there is a slight increase in the number of resident permits sold as people work from home, there is a decline in the number of business permits purchased, as well as a reduction in revenue from car parks and on street parking. A reduction in penalty charge notices, and a loss of income as a result, is also likely due to people less likely to take a risk of non-compliance.
- 5.46 The Heathy Streets and Parking budget is reliant on TfL LIP (Local Implementation Plan) funding, which has been significantly reduced due to severe financial pressures on TfL. TfL have negotiated a funding settlement for 18 months and Brent's allocation has reduced by £1m for 2022/23. The budget pressure for 2023/24 and future years will depend on funding available for the programme. The service is restructuring to align with future resource requirements in early 2023.
- 5.47 The current volatility in the energy markets mean significant uncertainties in this area. Brent is on a forward purchase contract, whereby a lot of energy for the current year was bought months ago when prices were lower. However, a £2m budgetary pressure is still anticipated in 2022/23, rising to £4.6m in 2023/24. The average delivered energy price change last supply year versus current supply year shows approximately 76% increase for electricity and circa 204%

increase for gas. It is hoped that prices will come down in 2023/24, however this is hard to predict. It is also known that public sector organisations are not eligible for support through the Government’s proposed Business Energy Bill Relief Scheme. The Council is currently completing significant energy efficiency works, using a Government grant, across Brent’s estate, which is expected to alleviate some of the pressures.

Environment contracts

5.48 Growth has been built into the MTFs to help alleviate some of the pressures associated with contract indexation within the Environmental Services department, however this continues to present a significant budget risk. Growth for Housing and Leisure services Private Finance Initiative contracts is also included in the MTFs for 2023/24. Contracts are often linked to indices such as CPI or RPI and services are contractually obliged to reflect any fluctuations in annual contract payments.

Temporary accommodation

5.49 As the cost of living crisis deepens, with energy costs and day to day expenditure increasing, there has been a rise in homelessness applications, resulting in an increased use of temporary accommodation. In addition, the current economic climate could also have an impact on the rent collection rates and result in an increase in rent arrears.

5.50 In addition, the affordable Private Rented Sector has contracted, which means there is a lack of supply to move households on from temporary accommodation, which will put further pressures on the budget. Although, the opening of Anansi and Knowles house has alleviated this pressure to some extent, both schemes are now full and silted up due to the lack of move on accommodation available.

Overall summary of the budget position

5.51 The main general fund revenue budget for 2023/24 is set out in detail in Appendices A and B. The budget includes £48.9m of growth items and £13.5m of savings. Provided that the key assumptions set out in this report hold true then expenditure in 2023/24 should be contained within budget. The overall revenue budget is set out in the table below.

Table 3: Net Revenue Budget

REVENUE BUDGET	2023/24
	£m
Service Area Budgets	
Adult Social Care and Health	137.3

Children and Young People	70.1
Communities and Regeneration	5.3
Finance and Resources	11.8
Resident Services	73.8
Governance	13.7
Total Service Area Budgets	312.1
Central Budgets	46.3
Total Budget Requirement	358.4
Funding	
Business Rates	(107.2)
Government Grants	(100.4)
Council Tax	(150.8)
Total Funding	(358.4)

Adequacy of reserves

- 5.52 As part of the implementation of CIPFA's Financial Management Code, the Council reviewed its approach to reserves. It produced a Reserves Strategy, set out in Appendix K (i), which defines a formal policy to determining the purposes for which reserves will be held and how the amount of those reserves will be calculated. This is closely aligned to the MTFS.
- 5.53 Whilst reserves are held for a variety of purposes, they can be grouped under two main headings: reserves held for planned and specific purposes and those held to hedge against the unexpected.
- 5.54 Planned reserves are an intrinsic part of the Council's medium and long term financial planning processes, as they enable funds to be carried across years to fund planned expenditure and to smooth demand that may be uneven over time. Within this heading also fall reserves required by statute or the accounting code of practice. The Council's financial plans will determine the nature and level of these reserves.
- 5.55 Contingency reserves provide funds to cover uncertain events that may transpire. This includes holding a working balance to cover bumps in the Council's cash flow. Unlike planned reserves, the level of contingency reserves is subjective and requires professional judgment. Indeed Section 25 of Local Government Act 2003 places a duty on the Director of Finance to report to Council his/her view of the adequacy of the reserves so that the Council can make an informed decision. To do this, consideration needs to be given to the risks facing the Council, such failure to deliver savings, overspending due to demand pressures, uncertainty over future funding and potential natural disasters. These need to be considered from the perspective of likelihood and impact. Past experience and comparison with similar local authorities, such as other London boroughs, are a means to assess the level at which reserves need to be held. Also, it would not be prudent to set a level of reserves that would guard against all possible eventualities. Some events, like major natural disasters or a second pandemic, are of such calamitous impact that no local

authority could be expected to weather them without assistance from central government. Indeed, this is why the government has the Bellwin scheme to support such events and also why substantial support has been provided to alleviate the financial effects of COVID-19 pandemic.

- 5.56 The Council has taken these factors into account and has decided that as a principle 5% of net expenditure should be held as generally usable reserves. The details of this assessment are explained further in the Reserves Strategy, in Appendix K (i). It is the opinion of the Corporate Director of Finance and Resources, as required by Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003, that this level of general usable reserves constitutes the amount that is sufficiently robust to maintain the Council's financial sustainability.
- 5.57 Appendix K (ii) sets out the Council's schedule of earmarked reserves, their purpose and a forecast for the use of the reserve. The Council determines, via this report, the use of these reserves for these purposes in the context of the Council's financial regulations and scheme of transfers and virements. In addition, should an overspend arise, it can be set against the general fund balance or the service pressures reserve, which are defined as the Council's generally usable reserves for these purposes. Again, approval of these arrangements are to determine compliance with the Council's financial regulations and scheme of transfers and virements.
- 5.58 Some local authorities may propose to balance their 2023/24 budget using reserves, thus reducing the savings requirement. However, in order to ensure that the Council's budget is sustainable in the long term, it is not considered appropriate at this time to use the reserves in this way, as they are required for the reasons set out above and in Appendix K. Therefore, the Council is not proposing to use reserves to help balance the 2023/24 budget.

Robustness of estimates

- 5.59 Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 requires the Section 151 officer to report to Council on the robustness of the estimates made for the purposes of the calculations included in the budget. The Council has used a variety of techniques to ensure that the estimates made in setting the budget are robust. These include revised forecasts of the resources available to the Council, which sets the financial envelope in which the Council has to operate, and identification of areas subject to significant demand and cost pressures. Sensitivity analysis has been used to ascertain the impact of changes to demographics and the level of inflation. A middle case scenario has been used which is the anticipated most likely outcome to determine any growth requirements in these areas. Departmental bids for growth and corporate provisions for cost pressures such as the pay award have been subject to challenge. The culmination of this work is the identification of the budget gap which will be bridged by savings, which themselves have been subject to challenge by CMT and members. Finally, the impact of the Local Government Finance Settlement has been reviewed to ensure that the estimates made in the budget remain robust and appropriate.

Financial Management Code – Financial Resilience Assessment

- 5.60 CIPFA recommends that local authorities undertake a Financial Resilience Assessment (FRA) each year. The FRA builds on the one-year assessments required under section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 of the robustness of the estimates used in the budget calculations and the robustness of the proposed levels of financial reserves.
- 5.61 The Financial Management Code states that “Effective governance and financial management is focused on ensuring that the authority is able to operate sustainably in the long term. This means that the authority needs to look beyond the limited time horizons of its funding arrangements and to consider the longer-term financing of its operations and activities.”
- 5.62 The Financial Resilience Assessment considers long-term financial stability. It does so by considering warning signs such as the symptoms of financial stress and reviewing how effectively the authority manages its finances. This includes explicit consideration of capital resources, reserves, savings plans and the use of performance information.
- 5.63 The Council intends to use the information in this budget report as the starting point of its Financial Resilience Assessment. This will be a desktop exercise to tease out and address any issue with financial sustainability. The initial assessment is that the Council needs to focus on longer term planning given current uncertainties and anticipated problems on the horizon. Further details of the methodology are set out in Appendix L.

Value For Money

- 5.64 The Council’s external auditors, Grant Thornton, are required to report in more detail on whether the Council has put in place proper arrangements to secure Value for Money (VFM) in respect of economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. This includes taking properly informed decisions and managing key operational and financial risks so that the Council can deliver its objectives and safeguard public money. This is assessed under the following areas: Financial Sustainability; Governance; and Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness.
- 5.65 The report was presented to the Audit & Standards Advisory Committee on 7 February 2023 and is on the agenda for this Full Council meeting. The report concluded that there have been no significant weaknesses identified in the Council’s VFM arrangements and only improvement recommendations were made. Overall, the commentary from the auditors in respect of financial sustainability is positive from a budget setting point of view. The report notes that the Council has a track record of strong financial management, in particular balancing its budget, delivering savings and managing risks to ensure financial resilience and financial sustainability.

6.0 Statutory process of consultation, scrutiny and equalities analyses

Equalities

- 6.1 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. Each of the budget proposals set out in Appendix C have been subject to an initial equality impact assessment (EIA) to assess their potential or likely impact on service users and employees with protected characteristics. Where the EIA process identified a disproportionately negative impact with no reasonable mitigation, the proposals were subject to a full EIA. In addition to individual EIAs, a cumulative (or overall) EIA has been produced to assess and understand the potential cumulative and compounding impact on groups with a protected characteristic that arise from either changes across a range of services or a group of savings proposals. This EIA report is set out in Appendix C alongside the actual proposal. In summary, it has been concluded that all of the proposals are considered reasonable and have shown due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Scrutiny

- 6.2 A Budget Scrutiny Task Group was convened after the Cabinet published the draft budget proposals in November 2022. The task group, made up of members of the two scrutiny committees (Resources & Public Realm and Community Wellbeing) reviewed the proposals, as well as the budget development process, with relevant Lead members and officers. The task group's report and recommendations, attached in full at Appendix D, were agreed by the Resources & Public Realm scrutiny committee on 24 January 2023 as part of the Cabinet's decision making process.

Consultation

- 6.3 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. The Council has consulted on the budget options in a variety of ways. Legally, the results of consultation are something that Members must have due regard to in making budget decisions. However, consultation need not legally be the single or even most significant determining factor in choosing between difficult options, although at Brent considerable emphasis is usually placed on the results of consultation.
- 6.4 The Council conducted an extensive consultation process between November 2022 and January 2023 where the budget proposals for 2023/24 were presented. This included attendance at all five Brent Connects events and an online consultation on the specific budget proposals.
- 6.5 The detailed budget proposals were published on the Council's website, inviting comments and feedback through the online consultation portal. A number of people accessed the online consultation and provided responses. Appendix N contains further information about the results of consultation and sets out a summary of emerging themes and other key findings.

- 6.6 There are various business forums and associations that the Council regularly engages with that include a wide range of both small and large local businesses. These include West London Business (a non-profit business membership organisation), the Federation of Small Businesses, the Chamber of Commerce, and town centre business associations. The consultation on the budget was published in a newsletter that is sent to a large number of Brent businesses, explaining why the views of local businesses were important and how they could have their say.
- 6.7 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. Engagement with the local voluntary sector has therefore been an important part of the consultation process. Invitations to participate in the consultation were sent to all Brent voluntary and community sector organisations. In addition, the consultation was publicised in the CVS Brent newsletter, inviting responses through the online portal.
- 6.8 Overall, the most commented theme was the proposed increase in Council Tax. It is acknowledged that increasing Council Tax will be difficult for some households to manage in the current circumstances and sections 5.10 - 5.15 of this report sets out the rationale the Council considered as part of its decision making. In summary, the additional income will provide much needed funding to limit the impact of the significant inflationary pressures expected in 2023/24, in particular for the provision of social care, as well as preventing the wholesale cuts to the key services the Council provides that many other Councils are having to consider. In addition, it should be recognised that the Council continues to invest in the Council Tax Support scheme, which provides over £32m of support for around 28,000 households who are financially vulnerable.
- 6.9 One of the main aims of the consultation and communications strategy was to raise awareness of the Council's financial position, inform residents on how the Council spends its budget and ensure residents, businesses and other key stakeholders were fully aware of the opportunities to have their say, by knowing how to respond and when the consultation events were taking place. This was delivered through a variety of communication channels, including publicity on the Council's website, media briefings and use of the Council's Facebook and Twitter accounts to disseminate reminders and encourage residents to participate.

7.0 Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget

- 7.1 The proposed HRA annual budget for 2023/24 sets out proposed expenditure for housing management services, stock investment, maintenance work and new council housing development programmes, as well as rent and service charge setting proposals for 2023/24.
- 7.2 The HRA budget is set each year in the context of the 30-year business plan (included in Appendix Q). The business plan is reviewed annually allowing for horizon scanning and the identification and mitigation of risks in the short,

medium and long term. Early identification of risks enables planning and implementation of mitigations to ensure the HRA can continue to remain financially secure and deliver on its commitments to:

- Expand and accelerate the development of new council homes
- Continue to maintain and improve existing council homes; and
- Transformation and continuous improvement of front line services to tenants and leaseholders

7.3 After four consecutive years of rent reductions, between 2016/17 to 2019/20, the Government set out its rent policy, which allows rent levels to be increased by CPI plus 1% for the next five years starting from April 2020. In light of exceptional inflation levels, government has amended its rent setting policy to allow for up to 7% rent inflation in 2023/24, compared to 11.1% if CPI plus 1% was applied. There will be a reversion to the previous rent setting arrangements from 2024/25.

7.4 The table below shows a snapshot of current average rent levels from occupied properties and the proposed increase of 7% for 2023/24. All new re-lets are charged at Formula rent and new builds are charged at Formula or London Affordable rent (LAR). Updated rent levels are reflected in the current average rent for 2022/23, the average rent can change depending on time of reporting. The average proposed rent rate for 2023/24 is £8.72 per week (7%) higher than the current financial year.

Tenant Rents for 2023/24

Table 4: Rents

Bed Size	Current Average Rent pw 2022/23	Proposed Average Rent pw 2023/24 (7%)	Proposed v Current Rent
	£	£	£
Bedsits	92.05	98.49	6.44
1	109.43	117.09	7.66
2	126.85	135.72	8.87
3	138.38	148.06	9.68
4	149.83	160.31	10.48
5	161.90	173.23	11.33
6+	170.08	181.98	11.90
Average rent	124.70	133.42	8.72

7.5 A rent increase of 7% is estimated to result in additional £3.5m of income when compared to 2022/23. This is estimated to be £2m less income compared to previous policy of CPI plus 1% (11.1%). In real terms, this will be the third biggest annual reduction in social housing rents since the introduction of rent restructuring two decades ago. Like most other housing providers, difficult

decisions will need to be made to reduce costs in order to close the gap between rental income and increasing cost of service delivery. Brent Housing Management services have identified a target of £3m cost reduction detailed further in this report.

- 7.6 For tenants in receipt of housing support to help pay their rent, the cost of a rent increase will be met by their housing benefit or the housing element of universal credit, unless the level of support is reduced by factors that may apply to individual circumstances such as benefit cap. Brent Housing Management provide support to tenants who are struggling to pay their rent. The primary objective is to ensure that tenants have all the support that they can get, rather than pursuing an eviction. Support options include assessing whether the tenant is claiming all the welfare benefits that they are entitled to and arranging a suitable payment plan. After the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, Brent Housing Management endeavoured to identify vulnerable tenants and have since kept in contact with tenants in order to ensure that they continue to get the required support to sustain their tenancy.
- 7.7 The net rent amounts exclude service charges. The service charges are recharges to tenants and leaseholders, which are based on the actual costs incurred for providing specific services, such as estate cleaning.

Tenants Service Charges 2023/24

- 7.8 Individual service charge elements are adjusted to bring them in line with the estimated contract costs of providing these services to tenants in 2023/24. The tables below show a snapshot of the current average service charges from occupied properties, compared to proposed rates, this is analysed below for services provided to tenants. The current average can change depending on time of reporting, to reflect re-lets and stock movements such as new additions.

Service charge frozen for 2023/24

- 7.9 Grounds maintenance service is included within the Council's wider corporate contract. The annual contribution from the HRA is estimated to offset against the HRA's proportion of the contract cost through existing charges.
- 7.10 The cost of maintenance and servicing for the laundry room and TV aerials is forecasted in line with service charges. Therefore, no increases are proposed for this charge for 2023/24.

Table 5: Service Charges (i)

Service	No. of Properties	Current Average Charge 2022-23	Estimated Average Charge 2023-24	Estimated Increase / (Decrease)

		(£/Week)	(£/Week)	%
Grounds Maintenance	4,813	1.31	1.31	0.00%
Laundry	25	2.59	2.59	0.00%
TV Aerial	3,206	0.73	0.73	0.00%

Service charge increases for 2023/24

- 7.11 The estate cleaning service was transferred in-house in 2019/20, with a commitment to pay staff at the London Living Wage before being integrated into LGPS pay scales. The cost of bringing the service in-house and the associated costs for vehicles, machinery and material is projected to be under recovered by £0.1m in 2023/24. The proposed increase of £0.52 per week in 2023/24 will not fully offset this, and therefore a phased approach to cost recovery has been modelled to allow service charges to increase over a four-year period, whilst balancing in-year budget shortfalls at the same time.
- 7.12 The concierge service charge is currently £10.55 per week on average. An increase of £1.17 is estimated to contribute towards inflationary cost pressures.
- 7.13 The helpline monitoring service charge is currently £1.74 per week on average. An increase of £0.19 per week is estimated to result in a break-even position for 2023/24.
- 7.14 Unmetered communal lighting, heating and hot water charges are adjusted annually in line with the forecasted energy supplier inflations for 2023/24, reflecting increased price of energy. The past year has experienced unprecedented price movement and volatility within wholesale gas and electricity prices. The projected overall cost to the HRA for energy is estimated to increase budget requirements by £1.8m in 2023/24. Cost on communal lighting is forecasted at 73% inflation on current levels, this is reflected in the proposed service charge uplift, resulting in an increase of £1.39. Although gas prices are currently projected to increase by 226%, the Council is proposing a cap for communal heating and hot water at 100%, with a view to catch up with overall energy costs over the next 4 years, in order to spread the cost for tenants. This will result in an increase of £11.85 for heating and £3.38 for hot water.

Table 6: Service Charges (ii)

Service	No. of Properties	Current Average Charge 2022-23	Estimated Average Charge 2023-24	Increase / (Decrease)
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		(£/Week)	(£/Week)	%
Estate Caretaking	4,502	7.40	7.92	7%
Concierge	406	10.55	11.72	11%
Helpline Monitoring	52	1.74	1.93	11%
Communal Lighting	5,291	1.91	3.30	73%
Communal Heating	363	11.85	23.70	100%
Communal Hot Water	19	3.38	6.76	100%

District Heat Network

7.15 Unity Place in South Kilburn hosts the energy centre for the local district heat network for metered billing. It currently supplies heat and hot water to 235 properties and tenants are billed based on actual usage. The fuel contract has been renewed from 1 October 2022 to a two-year variable rate until 30 September 2024. Based on the projected fuel contract rates in the current energy market, heat tariff for 2023/24 is estimated to be a variable element of £0.12 p/kWh and a standing charge of £0.55 per day, in order to recover costs.

Table 7: Heating

Service	No. of Properties	Estimated Charge per kWh 2022-23	Estimated Charge per kWh 2023-24	Recommended Increase / (Decrease)
		(£p/kWh)	(£p/kWh)	%
Heating Tariff	235	0.04	0.12	196%
Standing Charge	235	0.44	0.55	26%

Brent Supported Living

7.16 In November 2020, tenants moved in to 11 new independent living homes at Peel Road. These homes are all one-bedroom, self-contained residential flats developed as part of previous New Accommodation for Independent Living (NAIL) programme and are held within the HRA. The properties are fully adapted and the homes benefit from communal facilities, including a garden area. There is access to 24-hour care, allowing residents to contact care staff from anywhere in the building.

7.17 The table below compares the current gross rent levels (including service charges) for these homes against the proposed increase of 7% for 2023/24. This equates to an increase of £21.73 per week when compared to the current financial year.

Table 8: Gross Rent

Current Gross Rent 2022/23	Proposed Gross Rent 2023/24 (7%)	Proposed v Current Rent
(£/Week)	(£/Week)	(£/Week)
310.48	332.21	21.73

Garage Rent for 2023/24

- 7.18 HRA currently has 243 occupied garages with an estimated annual income of £0.2m for 2022/23, consistent with previous year. Cabinet approved a standard rate of pricing during budget setting in 2021/22, along with a three-year phased increase for existing occupancies that are below the standard rates (2023/24 will be year 3).
- 7.19 The table below shows the current standard rate and the proposed uplift of CPI +1 (11.1%) for garage rents.

Table 9: Garage Rents

Garage Charge (Net)	Current Standard Rate 2022/23	Proposed Standard Rate 2023/24 (11.1%)
	(£/Week)	(£/Week)
LBB Tenants & Leaseholder	15.62	17.35
LBB Resident	20.82	23.13
Non – Resident	26.03	28.92

HRA Budget 2023/24

- 7.20 The proposed budget for 2023/24 is set out in the table below and shows a net balanced budget. The budget movements are as a result of the items summarised below.

Table 10: HRA budget 2023/24

Technical Adjustments	£m
Rent Increase of 7% on current stock	(3.5)

Service charge uplifts to reflect cost incurred	(1.0)
Reduction in service charges for major works in line with profiled works completed	0.4
Growth	
Pay and operational cost inflation budget gap 22-23	0.4
Pay and operational cost inflation 23-24	0.7
Repairs contract inflation	1.6
Disrepair and associated temporary accommodation	0.3
Increased void repair cost	1.5
Estate caretaking services cost inflation	0.2
Communal utility supplier inflation	1.8
Leaseholder insurance contract inflation	0.1
Bad debt provision	0.5
Savings Target	
Review void standards and active interventions to reduce costs	(1.2)
Reduction in staffing	(0.9)
Reduction in support services after adjusting for commercial income	(0.3)
Reduction in costs associated with contracts and external provider spend	(0.7)
Total Net Movement	0.0

- 7.21 As mentioned above, due to a rent rise limitation, 2023/24 budget includes a £3m savings target, in addition to annual saving targets that are already incorporated into medium-term financial plans.
- 7.22 In order to reduce costs associated with expenditure on void properties, closer monitoring of void specifications is now in place. This is anticipated to reduce the number of major voids which have both higher specifications and longer turnaround times. Quicker turnaround times are expected to reduce the void rent loss and Council Tax liability periods. This is expected to generate a £1.2m saving.
- 7.23 An estimated saving of £0.8m is anticipated to be achieved by a reduction in staff. The vast majority can be achieved through the loss of posts that have been difficult to recruit to in Property Services and are currently vacant. The remainder would be achieved through rationalising posts where there are multiple full time employees.
- 7.24 A £0.3m saving is anticipated as a result of general efficiencies and a reduced expenditure associated with support services.
- 7.25 The HRA is carrying out an exercise to assess exclusions within the responsive repairs contract which are not included in the price per property schedule and are therefore higher cost to the HRA. This helps to ensure value for money and

reduce duplication for works. The Tenant Management Organisations are now being reviewed to bring their management fees in line with the current HRA position which will result in a small saving plus recouping costs incurred by the Council such as repairs which fall under the TMO's responsibility to cover. This is expected to generate a £0.7m saving.

- 7.26 The proposed 2023/24 HRA budget summarised in a table below ensures a break-even balance at year end. The opening reserve balance has reduced by £0.9m compared to last year, due to partially funding a provision in 2021/22 for identified capital works to the Granville New Homes blocks that have transferred to the HRA from First Wave Housing on 1st April 2022. HRA reserves were used to cover the timing difference and the provision will be released when works commence, returning the HRA reserves to previous value.

Table 11: HRA Budget 2022/23 v Draft Budgets for 2023/24

HRA Budget 2022/23 v Draft Budgets 2023/24	(1) Budgets 2022/23	(2) Draft Budgets 2023/24	(2-1) Variance	Variance Explanation (2-1)
Description	£'000	£'000	£'000	
Rents and Service Charge	(52.8)	(57.0)	(4.2)	Tenant rents and service charges offset by rent loss through voids and RTB sales
Non-Dwelling Rents	(0.5)	(0.2)	0.3	commercial income offset against savings in support services
Leaseholders' Charge for Services and Facilities	(2.7)	(2.9)	(0.2)	Uplift to reflect increased cost of rechargeable services
Major Works and Other Contribution Towards Expenditure	(1.5)	(1.1)	0.4	Service charge reduction based on profiled major works completion
Total Income	(57.5)	(61.2)	(3.7)	
Repairs and Maintenance	13.6	15.0	1.4	repairs contract uplifts, provision for disrepairs and voids offset by efficiency savings
Supervision and Management	12.2	11.9	(0.3)	operational cost inflations offset by savings in management and support services
Special Services	4.9	6.9	2.0	caretaking and communal utility supplier inflation
Rent and Rates and Other Charges	1.4	1.5	0.1	council tax and insurance contract inflation
Depreciation of Fixed Assets	15.5	15.5	0.0	
Bad or Doubtful Debts	0.7	1.2	0.5	Provisions for non-payments
Capital Financing and Debt Management	9.2	9.2	(0.0)	

Total Expenditure	57.5	61.2	3.7	
(Surplus)/or Deficit for the Year on HRA	0.0	0.0	0.0	
Housing Revenue Account brought forward	(0.4)	(0.4)	0.0	
(Surplus)/or Deficit on HRA	0.0	0.0	0.0	
Closing balance	(0.4)	(0.4)	0.0	

HRA Stock Improvement and Major Works Budgets 2023/24 and 2024/25

- 7.27 Planned works include refurbishments such as new roofs, windows, lifts, kitchens, bathrooms, heating systems and planned fire safety works. Major works relate to extensive refurbishment programmes, such as the planned major refurbishment of four high rise blocks.
- 7.28 The Council Housing Asset Management Strategy (AMS) 2022-2026 sets out a vision for responsive repairs, investment, reform and improvement of the stock and its performance. The AMS consists of a 5-year budget requirement totalling £80.8m and has outlined requirements to increase investment in tower blocks over the next two years. The overall major works programme budget has been set at £19.1m for 2023/24 and £29.8m for 2024/25. Increased budget requirements are projected to require borrowing to cover funding shortfalls in the capital programme, this is estimated to result in the need to reduce cost by an average £0.5m to fund cost of borrowing.

New Council Homes Programme 2023/24

- 7.29 The development and management of new council homes and affordable housing remains a key priority in the Council's Housing Strategy and the HRA Asset Management Strategy. The Council has an ongoing commitment to deliver 5000 new affordable home in the borough by 31 March 2024, this includes the provision 1,000 to be delivered directly by the Council. As of November 2022, 684 new homes have been delivered. Due to the ongoing need for affordable housing in Brent, the Council has committed to directly deliver an additional target of 700 new affordable homes by 31 March 2028 and was awarded £111m of grant funding from Greater London Authority (GLA). The forecast capital investment on acquisitions and building new council homes in 2022/23 is £55m, with a capital budget in 2023/24 set at £140.2m.

Housing General Fund

Hillside Rent Setting

- 7.30 In addition to the dwellings contained within the HRA, the Council also continues to hold dwellings in the General Fund (GF). These dwellings were formerly held by the Stonebridge Housing Action Trust (HAT) and were

transferred to Brent Council in August 2007 when the HAT was dissolved. The Council currently owns 324 properties under this scheme and Hillside Housing Trust (part of Hyde Housing Group) manages these properties on the Council's behalf.

- 7.31 The table below sets out the rent levels for 2022/23, with an average increase of £9.21 per week for 2023/24.

Table 12: Average Rent Increase

	Weekly Rent 2022/23 (£)	Weekly Rent 2023/24 (£)	Increase (£)	Increase (%)
1 Bed Flat	£107.81	£115.35	£7.54	7%
2 Bed Flat	£127.63	£136.56	£8.93	7%
1 S/croft Elders	£107.81	£115.35	£7.54	7%
2 S/croft Elders	£127.63	£136.56	£8.93	7%
2 Bed House	£138.62	£148.32	£9.70	7%
3 Bed House	£151.92	£162.55	£10.63	7%
4+ Bed House	£159.93	£171.12	£11.19	7%

- 7.32 Hillside are also responsible for setting service charges across the stock, including those retained by the Council. The average service charge per week for 2023/24 is set at £7.58 per week, an increase of £0.49 from the 2022/23 average, based on an uplift of 7%.

Housing Private Finance Initiative (PFI)

- 7.33 The Housing PFI refers to 364 units of rented accommodation managed by Hyde under a PFI contract. The stock is made up of a mixture of Temporary Accommodation, Discounted Market Rent and Affordable Rent properties, which are up to 80% of market rates and are capped at the London Affordable Rent (LAR) set by the GLA. As per the cabinet decision on the 17 January 2017 in regards to PFI Housing Tenancy Conversions, Temporary Accommodation units are being phased out with the units being converted into Affordable Rent and Discounted Market Rent properties.
- 7.34 Throughout the conversion programme it has been identified that households cannot afford to maintain tenancies that exceed LHA and whilst a small number of tenancies remain lower than this threshold, the proposal is to hold the rents at the current levels, with no increase for the coming year. This is to ensure that there is a consistent approach to rent changes across the portfolio and also takes into consideration lack of affordability for households living in PFI properties.

Travellers' Site Pitch Rent

- 7.35 The current weekly pitch rent is £156.42. It is proposed to increase this by 7% to £167.37 for 2023/24. Travellers' site pitch rent is estimated to generate an annual income of £0.25m.

8.0 Schools Revenue Budget

- 8.1. The final DSG allocations were announced on 16 December 2022 and the proposed budget was presented to the Schools' Forum for endorsement on 19 January 2023. Following the announcement made by the government in the Autumn Statement to invest an additional £2.3 billion in schools for 2023/24 and 2024/25, the Schools Block which supports mainstream schools, has a confirmed allocation of £270 million (of which £9 million will be allocated as a separate grant), representing an increase from the 1.2% (announced in July 2022) to 5.3%. This equates to an overall increase of £14 million compared to 2022/23. This increase is lower than the national percentage increase of 6.3% but slightly higher than the average of 5.2% for local authorities in London. The London position is driven by a decline in pupil numbers according to the dataset underpinning the notional National Funding Formula (NFF). As in previous years, the Council will continue to set a local funding formula for mainstream schools in 2023/24, although the total funding available will be determined by the NFF.
- 8.2. In March 2022, the government confirmed its commitment to introduce the direct NFF. Local authorities will be required, from 2023/24, to move their local funding formula factors by 10% towards the NFF factors and must use all and only the NFF funding formula factors to calculate schools' budget allocations. The implications to Brent schools were presented to Schools Forum in June 2022.
- 8.3. The government recently completed a consultation on the detail of the implementation of the direct NFF. The consultation included proposals for how funding for schools experiencing significant growth in pupil numbers or falling rolls could operate under the direct NFF and more importantly, the determination of SEN notional budgets for mainstream schools' and disability support within the direct NFF allocations. Results of the consultation will be published by the end of the financial year.
- 8.4. The number of Brent schools experiencing difficulties in 2022/23 has increased with 67% projecting an in-year deficit. 23% of these schools' plan to use over 50% of reserves to balance their budgets in 2022/23. Schools are feeling the impact of rising inflationary costs, including increases in energy prices alongside teachers' pay increasing by 5% in 2022/23 and starting salaries rising by 8.9% to £30k. A number of Brent schools are also experiencing falling rolls and as a result have had significant reductions in funding. This is requiring schools to make strategic decisions to mitigate the impact of this, including the consideration of staffing restructures. Alongside measures to support schools, such as capping admission numbers, the Local Authority has established a

School Place Planning Working Group to review the sustainability of provision in primary planning areas.

- 8.5. The High Needs block (HNB) of the DSG allocation will be £82 million, a 10% (£7 million) increase in 2023/24 compared to 2022/23. Following the autumn statement, funding increased from the previously announced position for 2023/24 of 5% to 10%. This is the same as the London average but slightly lower than the national average increase of 11%, due to reductions in pupil numbers.
- 8.6. Pressures against the HNB remain, due to increased demand for Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) which remains a regional and national issue. Despite the additional funds, the demand pressures continue to grow and to set a balanced DSG budget in 2023/24 the local authority will request, via the Schools' Forum, a 0.5% transfer from the Schools Block. The pressure in the HNB has led to there being a £15.1 million deficit in the DSG carried forward from 2021/22 and further pressures in 2022/23 will increase the deficit position. The statutory override which was put in place to enable local authorities to hold deficit balances was due to end in 2022/23, however, this has now been extended for a further three years.
- 8.7. The DfE requires local authorities with an overall DSG deficit to have a Management Plan to recover the deficit over a number of financial years. The Schools Forum have been presented with actions being taken to manage demand, improve sufficiency of places and financial management to recover the deficit in the medium to long term. These include establishing more SEND provision in the borough including building a new special school and developing new Additionally Resourced Provisions (ARPs) as part of the School Place Planning Strategy 2019-23 Refresh paper agreed at Cabinet in November 2021. In addition, ensuring there is full cost recovery from other local authorities that place pupils in Brent special schools including administration and other specific costs; efficiencies through commissioning arrangements and continued central government lobbying.
- 8.8. Brent is part of the newly introduced DfE programme called Delivering Better Value (DBV) in SEND to provide dedicated support and funding to help local authorities reform their high needs systems. The DBV programme has made a provision of £85m over 3 years from 2022/23 to support a wider group of LAs with smaller DSG deficits. Brent is in the first tranche of 20 local authorities the DfE is working with. The expected outcomes include a comprehensive diagnostic to identify root cause cost drivers and mitigating solutions or reforms and support in developing a quality assured Management Plan and the opportunity to bid for a £1 million grant to deliver the actions in the Management Plan. The aim of the DBV programme is not to address the historic deficit but to support Brent to return to an in-year balance whilst delivering high-quality services. Any efficiencies that are identified from the programme may allow funds to be released to address historic deficits.
- 8.9. The government's response to their consultation on the 2022 SEND Green paper is also likely to bring about reforms to the funding system, a major part

being the introduction of a new national framework of banding and price tariffs for high needs funding. Bandings would cluster specific types of education provision aligned to need. Brent like most local authorities uses a banding system to allocate funding ranging from Band 1 for lower levels of need to Band 6 for the most complex needs. The introduction of tariffs would help to control high costs attributed to expensive provision. National funding bands have the potential to establish a more consistent basis for the funding of provision and all specialist providers will need to ensure the provision they offer is in line with the national SEND standards. The DfE proposes to work with local authorities and provide clarity on the process.

- 8.10. The Early Years Block funds early education entitlements for children aged 2, 3 and 4. A consultation on the Early Years National Funding Formulae (EYNFF) and Maintained Nursery School (MNS) supplementary funding, that focused on updating underlying data within the EYNFF, mainstreaming the current separate teachers' pay and pensions grants into the EYNFF and into the MNS supplementary funding and reforming the distribution of the MNS supplementary funding concluded in September 2022. The consultation results have been published and majority of the proposals had favourable responses and the EYNFF has been updated to reflect the proposed changes, including mainstreaming the teachers' pay and pension grant by baselining the grant within the EYNFF.
- 8.11. The key principle of allocating the funding for the Early Years Block remains the same i.e., 95% of funding received is allocated directly to providers with the remaining 5% retained for central services. Nationally the government announced a £180 million increase for 2023/24 and £170 million for 2024/25 in the 2021 Spending Review however, a further £20m was announced for 2023/24 to support providers with the additional National Living Wage costs associated with delivering the free childcare entitlements. For Brent, the allocation for 2023/24 will be £24.5 million an increase of £1.3 million compared to 2022/23.

9.0 Pay Policy Statement 2023/24

- 9.1 Section 38 of the Localism Act 2011 requires local authorities to publish an annual 'Pay Policy Statement', setting out their policies in respect of chief officer remuneration and other specified matters. Regard must be had to guidance to be published by the Secretary of State in preparing the statement, which must be approved by Full Council. The Council is then constrained by its pay policy statement when making determinations on chief officer pay, although the statement may be amended at any time by a further resolution of the Full Council. No new guidance has been published since the statement was adopted for 2022/23 and so there are no proposed changes to the statement related to the guidance. The Draft Pay Policy Statement, attached as Appendix P, contains minor updating and cosmetic changes from the Statement adopted by full Council for the last financial year.

10.0 Capital Programme Budget 2023/24 – 2027/28

- 10.1 The Council's Capital Programme forms part of the medium-term financial strategy and is key to the overall budget setting process. The programme is focused on supporting the delivery of the Council's statutory responsibility in relation to ensuring there are sufficient school places available for children and young people whilst, investing in new affordable housing and in our existing housing stock, town centres, public realm, and community facilities across Brent.
- 10.2 A key element of the Council's successful financial strategy has been to grow the capital investment programme and enable it to deliver substantial revenue savings over the medium term financial planning period and beyond.
- 10.3 The Capital and Investment Strategies (Appendix G & H) provide further details on the overall capital strategy, which sets out how capital investment supports the delivery of the Council's objectives.
- 10.4 The Council's Capital Programme utilises a variety of funding sources including capital receipts, grants, S106 and CIL, reserves, contributions from revenue and borrowing as a last resort. Affordability remains an important influence on the Council's borrowing strategy following the Council's shift to a net borrower following the cost effective approach of utilising internal resources to delay the need to borrow externally. The programme has a mixture of invest to save, grant funded and self-financing projects to help reduce the treasury risk. Hence our strategy looks to undertake external borrowing to fund projects as a last resort.
- 10.5 The current economic environment is having a significant impact on both affordability and delivery of the capital programme. Rising costs especially in the construction industry are making it extremely difficult to estimate the potential cost of developments. Interest rates have also been volatile with current PWLB rates at 5% from circa 2% this time last year. Together these create a challenging environment to forecast future borrowing rates and the impact on affordability of delivering the capital programme. The budget contains a significant number of schemes that are financed by borrowing. These schemes are all under regular review to ensure their viability. The focus of this capital programme is to ensure best value for money including facilitating delivery of essential services with a focus on mitigation of key areas of risk and investing in opportunities to provide efficiency savings. The Council is likely to have to pause schemes with viability challenges with a review at a later date, reduce their scope or remove them entirely from the programme to ensure funding can be prioritised appropriately. A decision of this nature will be reported to Cabinet via a project update and the quarterly monitoring reports.
- 10.6 S106/Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) will be utilised to undertake major infrastructure projects meeting the conditions or terms for funding. The capital programme includes CIL funded schemes totalling £46m. The total CIL allocation includes contributions towards the fit out cost of 3 medical centres, a new facility in Wembley for the College of North West London, the new Morland

Gardens educational facility, a new pedestrian and cycle bridge in Alperton and contributions towards community facilities in Stonebridge, Preston Community Library, Learie Constantine Centre and Brent Indian Community Centre.

- 10.7 The Council has embarked on an extensive Capital Programme to invest c£899m over 5 years, 2023/24 to 2027/28. The investment includes significant spend across the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) to support the strategic vision of the Council across the borough. Since the capital budget was agreed by Council in February 2022 the pipeline projects approved and promoted during the year have been included in the 2022/23 to 2027/28 Capital Programme. The balance of provisional schemes held in the pipeline is currently £531.6m for 25 projects. The pipeline provision has not been included in the Capital Programme set out in Table 13 and Appendix E but are shown as a separate summary in Appendix F.
- 10.8 A summary of Capital Programme arranged according to portfolio for the 5 year period 2023/24 to 2027/28 is set out in Table 13. The detailed Capital Programme and financing is set out in Appendix E.
- 10.9 The 2022/23 current revised budget is £232m. The revised budget is subject to change as new schemes are approved prior to Council in February 2023. Any budget changes post the Quarter 3 monitoring report will be updated in subsequent budget report to Cabinet.

Table 13: Summary Capital Programme

Portfolio	BOARD (PROGRAMME)	2022/23 (Revised Budget)	2023/24 Budget	2024/25 Budget	2025/26 Budget	2026/27 Budget	2027/28 Budget	TOTAL 2023/24 to 2027/28
		£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Resources: Cllr Mili Patel	Corporate Landlord	17.317	10.333	27.063	16.302	8.908	27.740	90.345
Regeneration, Property & Planning: Cllr Shama Tatler	South Kilburn	11.510	27.036	13.625	2.170	11.426	7.085	242.946
	Regeneration	9.394	74.061	63.740	28.801	15.000	-	
St Raphael's: Cllr Shama Tatler	St Raphael's	1.907	31.700	-	-	-	-	31.700
Regeneration, Property & Planning: Cllr Shama Tatler	Public Realm	19.548	12.867	8.873	7.833	-	-	54.687
Public Health, Culture & Leisure: Cllr Neil Nerva	Public Realm	0.378	-	-	-	-	-	
Environment: Cllr Krupa Sheth	Public Realm	1.204	12.580	2.948	1.401	1.034	7.150	
Children, Young People and Schools: Cllr Gwen Grahl	Schools	12.446	35.097	20.415	2.230	-	-	57.742
Housing, Homelessness and Renter Security: Cllr Promise Knight	Housing (GF)	71.745	80.019	76.315	26.259	4.661	-	539.444
	Housing (HRA)	59.443	156.945	113.315	37.045	22.650	-	
	Housing (i4B Phase 1&2)	19.900	18.447	-	-	-	-	
Adult Social Care: Cllr Neil Nerva	Housing (Supported Living)	7.649	2.268	0.820	-	-	-	
	Total	232.440	461.353	327.114	122.743	63.679	41.974	1,016.864

10.10 The Capital Programme is comprised of projects approved annually by Cabinet as well as new approvals in year. New capital schemes and projects will usually be added to the Capital Programme as part of the annual budget setting process, however, the governance arrangements allow for new schemes and projects including those promoted from the pipeline provision to be added in year, subject to appropriate approval.

10.11 The Capital Programme detailed in Table 13 above currently excludes slippage from the 2022/23 Capital Programme. Estimated slippage and re-profiled projects are detailed in the Quarter 3 Capital Monitoring Report to Cabinet in January 2023. The potential slippage from 2022/23 will be reviewed at the end of the financial year and reported to Cabinet in July 2022.

10.12 There are a number of key projects supported in the 2023/24 – 2027/28 Capital Programme, including:

Corporate Landlord

Facilities Management (*New*)

10.13 The planned programme of works to the value of £1.5m per annum will allow the continued investment in Council owned assets. This includes building improvement projects identified at the Civic Centre, Willesden Green Cultural Centre and the wider operational estate buildings.

Customer Experience Improvements at the Civic Centre (*New*)

10.14 The redesign of the face-to-face public spaces in the Civic Centre will allow an improved service delivery to residents and customers. The project works totalling £1.96m include improvements to accessibility, expanding the Hubs, self-service, Libraries and Arts and Heritage offer whilst also unlocking efficiencies in how customer facing services operate.

Regeneration

South Kilburn Estate Regeneration

10.15 Our multi-award winning 15-year programme that will deliver 2,400 new high quality homes of which around 1,400 will be made available to existing South Kilburn secure tenants including new larger high quality urban park, improved public realm, new primary school and health facilities, and improved environmental standards and a site-wide energy solution.

10.16 Over 1,100 homes have been delivered to date with approximately 60% of those being affordable rent for existing secure tenants of South Kilburn. With over 512 homes currently on site and a further c626 homes going to planning this year.

10.17 The planned expenditure from 2023/24 over 5 years is £61.3m for the delivery of homes including infrastructure improvements. The programme is self-

financing and is expected to be fully funded by a combination of capital receipts and grants.

CIL contribution towards Three Medical Centres

- 10.18 In April 2020, Cabinet approved a capital contribution from Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy (SCIL) of up to c£3.5m for use towards the fit out costs of three new medical centres, in Wembley Park, South Kilburn and Alperton. The expansion of the healthcare facilities will help meet the needs of the borough's growing population.

Pedestrian/cycle footbridge over the Grand Union Canal (New)

- 10.19 In December 2022 Cabinet approval for Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy funding to deliver a proposed new pedestrian/cycle footbridge over the Grand Union Canal in Alperton to support regeneration and growth in the area.

UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UK SPF) (New)

- 10.20 The Council was successful in securing £1.1m of capital funding via the UK SPF to deliver a number of communities and place projects across the borough including a horticultural centre for Post-16 SEND provision and the redevelopment of the Welsh Harp Environmental Education Centre.

Wembley Housing Zones

- 10.21 In August 2021, Cabinet approved the investment of approximately £130m, funded by a mixture of grant from Greater London Authority, capital receipts and prudential borrowing. This scheme allows for council-led mixed-use regeneration of the eastern end of Wembley High Road within the Wembley Housing Zone.

Public Realm

- 10.22 There will be continued investment in public realm to ensure the infrastructure is fit-for-purpose and achieves our vision of making use of the opportunities presented by developments within the borough.
- 10.23 The Highways Capital Scheme Programme £3.5m annual highways capital maintenance budget is used to maintain carriageways and structures. The council has agreed to invest a further £15m over the next four years into planned maintenance. It is intended to deliver £2m of that in this year 2022/23, and the remaining £13m over the following three years. Because of the relatively poor condition of the Principal Road network, it is intended that £4m of the £15m be spent on Principal Road maintenance, with the remainder being spent on footway reconstruction.

Integrated Street Cleansing & Waste Contract Fleet

- 10.24 There is £21m in the budget to purchase fleet required to deliver the Integrated Street Cleansing & Waste Contract, the borrowing costs to fund the asset purchases will be offset by equivalent savings in the revenue area.
- 10.25 The Council receives a fixed block of capital funding annually from TfL. In 2023/24, the Council has initially been allocated £1,044m, which comprises £1.008m under the Safer Corridors and Neighbourhoods programme and £36,000 under the Cycle Parking programme. Funding for other 2023/24 programmes, such as Bus Priority and Cycle Training, is still to be confirmed. In the absence of confirmed funding allocations for 2024/25, TfL has asked boroughs to submit a spending programme for that year to the value of their 2023/24 LIP funding allocation.

Parks Improvement Programme

- 10.26 The Parks Service is investing £1.43m to improve various areas of aging infrastructure across the borough's parks; including pathways and playgrounds. They are also seeking to install a number of new welcome notice boards with improved maps of each location, wildflower meadow information boards and to make infrastructure improvements to allotments with new fencing, pathways and new sustainable toilets.

Schools

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Schools

- 10.27 In January 2022, Cabinet approved a £44.2m investment to provide 427 additional school places and accessibility improvements for the growing number of children in the borough with SEND. The Council has statutory responsibilities in relation to children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), that require the Council to ensure that there is suitable provision to meet their needs.
- 10.28 The Programme will meet this demand via a number of work-streams, including construction of a new build SEND School, Additionally Resourced Provision (ARP), expansion of existing SEND schools and capital improvement projects. In 2023/24, the construction works for the projects within the work-streams will be delivered.

Schools Capital Improvement (*New*)

- 10.29 The Council is responsible for 38 community and foundation schools and nurseries across 41 sites in Brent. The Council has a statutory duty to undertake major projects at these schools to ensure the buildings are weather tight and provide a safe environment for education.
- 10.30 Funding is provided to carry out these works by the Department for Education (DfE) via the School Condition Allocation (SCA). This funding is provided each

year based on an assessment by the DfE of high level building condition need and is provided to meet Brent's local condition priorities across its schools. The Council places SCA monies in a specific capital budget, the School Asset Management Programme (AMP) budget, to meet its statutory requirement.

- 10.31 The 2023 – 2026 AMP Programme includes 47 school condition improvement projects across the 41 school sites with a total programme budget of £7.5m across the three years. For 2023/24, the Council expects to deliver 16 projects within a budget of £2.5m.

Relocation of Islamia Primary School (*New*)

- 10.32 In September 2022, Cabinet approved the relocation of Islamia Primary School from its existing site in Salusbury Road to the vacant Strathcona Site. The proposed capital investment is up to £10m depending on the option chosen with the preferred option expected to cost £9.1m. A consultation process has commenced on the relocation of the school to which the Governing Body is responsible for making this proposal. It is expected that this proposal will come back to Cabinet for a decision to relocate the school in early 2024/25.

- 10.33 It is expected the majority of the capital expenditure will be made in financial years 2023/24 and 2024/25 subject to the outcome of the consultation process and the resultant decision.

Housing Programme

- 10.34 The development and management of new and existing Council housing continues to be a key priority as reflected by ongoing investment in housing repairs, maintenance and improvements.

General Fund Housing

- 10.35 The General Fund is set to spend £170m over the next four years from 2023/24 in mixed-use developments. This investment will deliver 586 homes. Where GLA grant is utilised the properties will transfer to the HRA upon completion of the scheme.

Contingency Programme (*New*)

- 10.36 To counter cost uncertainty across the programme schemes; particularly for those schemes yet in contract, a contingency of £9.1m has been included for 2023/24.

Empty Property Grant (*New*)

- 10.37 Investment of £2.1m towards securing nomination rights for empty homes across the Borough will continue to alleviate homelessness through obtaining suitable forms of accommodation whilst reducing the spend on more expensive temporary accommodation. This work has been ongoing for a number of years

and has contributed to the availability of units that would be otherwise lost to the private sector.

i4B Holdings

- 10.38 i4B is acquiring units across the borough and purchasing street properties as affordable rented homes to alleviate the housing pressures, reduce the financial pressure and number of families in temporary accommodation with the Council acting as lender for the balance of the funds. The Council provides a mix of equity investment and loan to supplement the existing i4B street purchases programme.
- 10.39 Current plans include the provision of 60 street properties annually to increase the Council's temporary accommodation provision and identification of new build opportunities. The 2023/24 Capital Programme includes £18m planned expenditure in 2023/24.

New Council Homes Programme (HRA)

- 10.40 In 2022/23, planned expenditure on new Council homes and acquisitions is £55m. Over the next 4 years from 2023/24; planned investment in the New Council Homes Programme is £265.6m.

RTB Affordable Housing

- 10.41 The Council retains capital receipts from Right-to-Buy (RTB) sales after deducting debt repayment and other costs. The Council has 3 years to spend the receipts on affordable programmes, capped at 40% of the construction cost. RTB receipts cannot be combined with other funds provided by the GLA.
- 10.42 The Council is required to spend £9.6m within 3 years to meet its RTB targets, this amount is currently allocated across new build and acquisition projects in the capital programme. The picture is dynamic, as the Council needs available schemes to complete on schedule; therefore, officers are also exploring the possibility of gifting RTB receipts to other Registered Providers in return for an interest in affordable housing units.

Major Repairs & Maintenance of council stock

- 10.43 A key aim for the Council has been the government target of bringing 100% of social homes up to the decent home standard. The Council has invested in its HRA properties to ensure that it meets, and continue to achieve the decent homes standard.
- 10.44 The Council continues to invest in repairs, maintenance and improvement works in order to maximise the life of the assets. The HRA Capital Programme sets out planned expenditure of £19.1m for 2023/24.

Fire Safety Works

- 10.45 The safety of our residents is our main priority and we continue to take a robust approach to our statutory duties under health and safety. The pipeline provision includes a provisional sum of £2.1m for fire safety works on our housing stock.

Contingency Programme (*New*)

- 10.46 The New Council Homes Programme is reaching a critical phase. A number of schemes are expecting tender returns and some tenders have returned materially in excess of the approved budget allocation. This uncertainty in the construction industry is a consequence of current prevailing market conditions. In order to offset risk and cost uncertainty, a contingency of £8.1m has been included for 2023/24.

Fulton Road (*New*)

- 10.47 The acquisition of the development at Fulton road will provide an additional 294 homes at a mixture of London Affordable Rent and London Living Rent within the Wembley Park ward. The site will prioritise the delivery of 3-bed homes to meet the current housing demand for larger family sized accommodation. The homes are expected to be delivered. The scheme is expected to cost circa £85.6m and completion of the construction is anticipated in July 2026.

St Raphael's

- 10.48 The Council has committed to delivering significant placemaking improvements across the estate with a £30m investment in improvements to the care and maintenance of the estate and target green spaces, waste management, parking and a new community centre.

Statutory Capital & Treasury Reports

- 10.49 In recognition of the importance of capital investment in asset and treasury management to Council activities, CIPFA and central government have compiled codes of practice and regulations for Councils to follow. These ensure that Councils have effective processes and practices in place to control, manage and govern capital investment decisions, that include borrowing and treasury management practices.
- 10.50 The requirement on local authorities in relation to this statutory guidance is that they should “have regard” to such guidance and each year must produce a number of documents/strategies for approval by council or a nominated body.
- 10.51 The various statutory reports are as follows:
- Capital Strategy (high-level report covering the basics of capital programme, treasury management and investments for service commercial reasons) – Appendix G.

- Investment Strategy (disclose the contribution that investments make “towards the service delivery objectives and / or place making role of the local authority – Appendix H.
- Treasury Management Strategy (the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy’s Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice 2021 Edition (the CIPFA Code) requires the Council to approve a treasury management strategy before the start of each financial year. The strategy outlines a framework within which the Council manages its cash flows, borrowing and investments, and the associated risks – Appendix I.
- Minimum Revenue Provision (the process for calculating the annual charge to the revenue account of provision to repay debt incurred in respect of capital expenditure financed by borrowing or other long term credit arrangements (such as PFI) – Appendix J.

11.0 Financial Implications

- 11.1 The Council’s financial position has been set out in this report and Members are under a legal obligation to set a balanced budget. In doing so they are obliged, under normal administrative principles, to take into account the various relevant factors, particularly in respect of consultation and equalities. In doing so Members are, of course, entitled to exercise their political judgement, paying regard to the relevant factors rather than being absolutely determined by them.
- 11.2 The budget report sets out a comprehensive picture of the council's finances over the short, medium and long term to assist in the decision making process in setting the 2023/24 budget.
- 11.3 In considering the budget report, a key consideration should be the delivery of the savings programme as it presents substantial management challenges. Again, considerable management attention has been, and is being, devoted to ensure that these can be delivered, but it is important to stress again the inherent risks in delivering such a complex programme.
- 11.4 In addition to the risk of delivery of the savings programme, there remains considerable uncertainty on the future of Local Government funding from 2024/25. In consequence, and following a comprehensive review of budget assumptions, the general reserve is expected to increase from £15m to £18m to ensure that the Council continues to follow the principle set out in section five regarding the appropriate level of generally usable reserves. This level is still relatively low for London, but is not unreasonable.
- 11.5 That said, the budget now proposed is realistic and affordable, albeit challenging. The increases in Council Tax set out, if agreed, will generate significant additional revenue over time, minimising the number of difficult new decisions about funding for specific services to be proposed. If agreed, this budget would provide for affordable services in 2023/24.

11.6 Formally, this section of the report is the report of the Section 151 officer to which the Council is required by Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 to have regard confirming that if the budget as proposed were to be agreed the estimates made for the purposes of the calculations are robust and the proposed financial reserves are adequate. The Section 151 officer concludes that the proposed level of reserves are adequate and the estimates underpinning the proposed budget are robust.

12.0 Legal Implications

12.1 These are set out in Appendix O.

13.0 Equality Implications

13.1 Section six of this report provides more details of the approach to complying with the Equalities Act 2010 and the outcome of equalities impact assessments.

14.0 Consultation with Ward Members and Stakeholders

14.1 Section six of this report provides more details of the statutory consultation process with regards to setting the 2023/24 budget.

15.0 Human Resources

15.1 Of the proposals identified in Appendix C, there are some where there is a potential impact on staffing and could be subject to redundancy. However, the number of redundancies is not expected to be significant as a result of the voluntary redundancy scheme that took place in 2022.

15.2 The Council will apply its Managing Change Policy and Procedure in the application of all restructuring arrangements which have an impact on staff, consulting with staff and trade union representatives accordingly.

Related Document:

Draft Budget 2023/24 report - Cabinet 14 November 2022

Report sign off:

Minesh Patel

Corporate Director of Finance and
Resources

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix A	Overall Revenue Budget 2023/24
Appendix B	Medium Term Financial Strategy Model
Appendix C (i)	New Savings 2023/24 – 2024/25
Appendix C (ii)	Full Equalities Impact Assessments
Appendix C (iii)	Cumulative Equalities Impact Assessment
Appendix D	Budget Scrutiny Task Group Findings Report
Appendix E	Capital Programme 2023/24 – 2027/28
Appendix F	Capital Programme Pipeline
Appendix G	Capital Strategy 2023/24
Appendix H	Investment Strategy 2023/24
Appendix I	Treasury Management Strategy 2023/24
Appendix J	Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statement 2023/24
Appendix K (i)	Reserves Strategy 2023/24
Appendix K (ii)	Schedule of reserves
Appendix L	CIPFA Financial Management Code – Financial Resilience Assessment
Appendix M (i)	Fees & Charges Policy
Appendix M (ii)	Fees & Charges Schedule
Appendix N	Summary of Budget Consultation
Appendix O	Legal Advice
Appendix P	Pay Policy Statement 2023/24
Appendix Q	HRA Business Plan

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Appendix A: Overall Revenue Budget 2023/24

The table below sets out the revenue budget for each directorate in 2023/24 and how this has changed from the 2022/23 budget.

	2022/23 Current Budget £m	Growth £m	Savings £m	Technical Adjustments £m	2023/24 Approved Budget £m
Service Area Budgets					
Adult Social Care and Health	126.2	15.3	(4.3)		137.3
Children and Young People	62.9	8.0	(0.8)		70.1
Communities and Regeneration	5.6	0.0	(0.3)		5.3
Finance and Resources	13.2	0.0	(1.5)		11.8
Resident Services - General Fund	73.1	4.7	(4.0)		73.8
Governance	13.9	0.1	(0.4)		13.7
Total Service Area Budgets	295.1	28.3	(11.3)	0.0	312.1
Central Budgets	28.0	20.7	(2.2)	(0.1)	46.3
Total Budget Requirement	323.1	49.0	(13.5)	(0.1)	358.4
Funding					
Business Rates	(95.7)			(11.5)	(107.2)
Revenue Support Grant	(25.8)			(3.2)	(29.0)
Specific Grants	(61.5)			(9.9)	(71.4)
Council Tax	(140.1)			(10.7)	(150.8)
Total Funding	(323.1)	0.0	0.0	(35.3)	(358.4)

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Appendix B: MTFS Model

CHANGES TO THE BUDGET YEAR-ON-YEAR	BUDGET	ADJUSTMENTS			BUDGET	Relative Changes
	2022/23 £m	Growth £m	Savings £m	Technical £m	2023/24 £m	
Base Budget	323.1				323.1	
Growth						
Demographics						
- ASCH		3.7			3.7	
- CYP		4.0			4.0	
- Other Departments		1.3			1.3	
Sub-total		9.0			9.0	
Inflation						
- ASCH		9.7			9.7	
- CYP		3.9			3.9	
- Contracts		4.1			4.1	
Sub-total		17.7			17.7	
Pay Award		8.5			8.5	
Service Changes		13.8		0.4	14.2	
		49.0				
Savings						
Service Transformation			(7.5)		(7.5)	
Restructure			(3.8)		(3.8)	
Reduction in provision			(0.6)		(0.6)	
Procurement			(0.1)		(0.1)	
Income generation			(0.5)		(0.5)	
Digital			(0.9)		(0.9)	
Corporate items				(0.6)	(0.6)	
			(13.5)			
	323.1				358.4	
Funding						
RSG	(25.8)			(3.2)	(29.0)	
Business Rates	(95.7)			(11.5)	(107.2)	
Council Tax	(140.1)			(10.7)	(150.8)	
Specific grants	(61.5)			(9.9)	(71.4)	
	(323.1)				(358.4)	

MTFS ASSUMPTIONS	
Growth	The growth proposals in the budget are largely responsive in nature rather than introducing new service provision. This is a direct result of the volatile and unpredictable economic climate faced by the Council where high inflation and rising demand and demographic pressures increase the cost of providing existing services to current service standards.
Demographic Growth	This largely relates to changes in the make up of the population due to ageing (ASCH) and demand pressures on the placements, transitions, homecare and children with disabilities budgets (CYP).
Inflation	General inflation is high with CPI in September 2022 at 10.1%. Specific inflationary pressures are being experienced in social care where rising demand and a shortage of supply puts upwards pressure on prices. Also the war in Ukraine has pushed up energy and food costs. These inflationary pressures have direct effects on goods bought by the council and indirect effects via increased prices for services and supply contracts.
Pay Award	As a response to inflation and the cost of living crisis, pay awards are anticipated to be higher than the norm in recent years. If future pay awards are based on flat rate increases, this tend to increase the cost of the pay award at Brent due to extra London weighing and the associated increase in national insurance and pensions on costs.
Service Changes	These are unavoidable changes resulting from new burdens, increases in ringfenced grants and externally driven changes to service levels.
	£m
	Council Energy Bills and Street Lighting 5.0
	Residents Support Fund 3.0
	ASC Grant - Hospital Discharge 1.9
	Contingency 1.5
	Capital Programme Financing 1.2
	Public Health 0.7
	Concessionary Fares (Freedom Passes) 0.5
	13.8

Savings - Full Details in Appendix C	New savings proposals totalling £18m were put forward. A level of funding in the Local Government Finance Settlement has enabled £4.5m of 2023/24 savings to be deferred into future years.			
Service Transformation	These savings involve changing methods of service delivery to match current demand levels whilst delivering the service in the most efficient, effective and economic manner. COVID-19 has transformed service demand in certain areas and the services provided by the Council need to match the new pattern of demand.			
Restructure	Savings which require changes to the staffing establishment			
Reduction in provision	A number of savings where the level of provision will be reduced. Whilst as a matter of policy the Council aims to avoid cuts to frontline services, in order to balance the budget a number of small cuts to service provision have been proposed where the impact on service users will be minimal.			
Procurement	Efficiency savings arising from securing better value for money and lower prices for contracts let by the Council without an adverse impact on service quality or the level of service provision.			
Income generation	This saving largely relates to increased rents and parking charges at the Civic Centre to secure additional external income.			
Digital	Better use of software and digital transformation will result in efficiency savings, whilst improving the customer experience.			
Corporate items	This heading holds the £4.5m budget available to allow some savings in the headings above to be deferred into a future year.			
Funding				
RSG	The 2023/24 RSG allocation of £29m has been calculated by uprating the 2022/23 amount by an indexation factor based on the September CPI inflation increase of 10.1%. It is anticipated that future years will be calculated in the same way. CPI inflation for September 2023 is currently estimated at 5.5% by the Office for Budget Responsibility.			
Business Rates	The Government has frozen the business rates multiplier nationally, but has compensated local authorities for the loss of additional income via s31 grant based on the yield if the multiplier had increased by the September CPI rate of 10.1%. In previous years the RPI rate was used which was 12.6% in September 2022. The rating list has been revalued at April 2023. To keep the effect of the revaluation revenue neutral, the increase in the retained business rates share has been reduced to zero by reducing the amount of the top up thus keeping the Baseline Funding Level unchanged.			
Council Tax	The increase in Council Tax income arises from a 3% increase in Council Tax and a 2% adult social care precept. This is the result of a 2% increase in the referendum threshold announced in the Autumn Statement. This is coupled with other changes, for example an increase in the tax base and reduction in the assumed collection rate.			
Specific grants	The government has introduced some additional ringfenced funding for social care via new grants and increases to existing grants. The Services grant has been reduced to remove the NIC increase for the social care levy, which is no longer required and to redirect funding to supporting families. The lower tier services grant is now used as a funding guarantee, which no London Borough receives. Other grants are expected to increase by inflation.			
	SPECIFIC GRANTS	2022/23	2023/24	Difference
	Specific Grants	£m	£m	£m
	Improved Better Care Fund	13.3	13.3	0.0
	Social Care Grant	13.7	22.3	8.6
	ASC Market Sustainability and Improvement Fund	0.9	3.1	2.2
	ASC Discharge Fund	-	1.9	1.9
	Total Social Care Grants	28.0	40.7	12.7
	Services Grant	6.1	3.4	- 2.7
	Lower Tier Services Grant	0.9	-	- 0.9
	Other Grants	26.6	27.3	0.7
	Total Specific Grants	61.5	71.4	9.9

APPENDIX C (i)

**SUMMARY OF
BUDGET SAVINGS
PROPOSALS 2023-24**

Department	Reference	Project/Proposal	Category	Headline Description of Savings Proposal	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000
Adult Social Care & Health	2023-24 AH01	Homecare Reductions	Service Transformation	Post Covid increases in homecare, driven by increased need and hospital discharge, introduce new reablement service and reduce double handed care packages to manage demand and increase independence	1,200	
Adult Social Care & Health	2023-24 AH02	Not in-sourcing Reablement	Service Transformation	Commission a reablement service through the market, which will deliver the same benefit for residents and for demand, but will cost substantially less to deliver than bringing the service in house	1,300	
Adult Social Care & Health	2023-24 AH03	Reduction in cost of Learning Disability Placements	Service Transformation	Proposal to support more people with a Learning Disability to live as independently as possible and to continue to reduce Residential Placements	600	
Adult Social Care & Health	2023-24 AH04	Extra Care Void Saving	Service Transformation	Reduce the number of care home placements, reversing the increase driven by health during Covid, re-focusing on extra care placements filling voids and new extra care schemes as alternatives that promote more independence	250	
Adult Social Care & Health	2023-24 AH05	Mental Health Placements	Service Transformation	Working closely with housing and secondary MH services to improve the recovery pathway post Covid, in particular reducing supported living placements and increased access to General Needs accommodation	470	
Adult Social Care & Health	2023-24 AH06	Reductions in Staffing	Restructure	Deliver the plan to increase the number of permanent staff in a very challenging recruitment market and reduce the Adult Social Care agency staffing	270	
Adult Social Care & Health	2023-24 AH07	Digital / Transformation Savings	Service Transformation	ASC - online forms, single view dashboards, integration of applications with Mosaic, assistive technology. Electronic document management. Direct payments automation and reduction in overpayments; and potential for increased alignment with CYP DP team. Automation of manual case review processes.	175	
Sub total					4,265	-

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Department	Reference	Project/Proposal	Category	Headline Description of Savings Proposal	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000
Children & Young People	2023-24 CYP01	Early Help	Restructure	Savings proposals will be a combination of establishment savings achieved by deleting posts and reducing some commissioned services.	240	
Children & Young People	2023-24 CYP02	Inclusion and Virtual School	Reduction in provision	Reducing the Supporting Young People Contract, ('Connexions').	80	
Children & Young People	2023-24 CYP03	Localities - Care Packages reduction	Reduction in provision	Care package reductions for families receiving support from the 0-25 children and young people with disabilities teams	365	
Children & Young People	2023-24 CYP05	Looked after Children and Permanency	Restructure	Review of agency worker usage and implementation of a vacancy factor		510
Children & Young People	2023-24 CYP06	Forward Planning Performance & Partnerships	Procurement	Proposed savings will be made through the commissioning of placements for Looked After Children and Care Leavers		860
Children & Young People	2023-24 CYP07	Safeguarding and Quality Assurance	Restructure	Savings will be made through the management of vacant posts and a reduction of the CYP training budget.	121	
Children & Young People	2023-24 CYP08	Setting and School Effectiveness	Restructure	Proposed savings will be made by a reduction in staffing costs within the core school effectiveness team.	34	
Children & Young People	2023-24 CYP09	Digital / Transformation Savings	Service Transformation	Admin - case management, RPA, Mosaic enhancement (alerts), electronic document management, removing manual processes and excel. Schools admissions chatbots/virtual agents. Direct payments automation and reduction in overpayments; potential for increased alignment with ASC DP team. CAMS dashboard.		200
Sub total					840	1,570

Department	Reference	Project/Proposal	Category	Headline Description of Savings Proposal	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000
Communities & Regeneration	2023-24 CR01	Planning Service Staff	Restructure	Reduce planning staff by 5% (3.5 FTE) achieved by natural turnover/deletion of vacant posts. Would impact ability to provide planning service and policy framework.		205
Communities & Regeneration	2023-24 CR02	Brent Works / Brent Start	Restructure	Proposal to combine advisors across both Brent Start and Brent Works via turnover / vacancy management	35	
Communities & Regeneration	2023-24 CR03	Brent Start Programme Leader	Restructure	Proposal to merge a position with another programme to delete this provision in Brent Start via vacancy management	24	
Communities & Regeneration	2023-24 CR04	Regeneration Capitalisation	Restructure	Opportunity for further capitalisation for 4 years, whilst Wembley housing zone schemes are built		75
Communities & Regeneration	2023-24 CR05	Town Centre managers	Restructure	Reduction of one Town Centre manager.	68	
Communities & Regeneration	2023-24 CR06	Strategy & Engagement restructure	Restructure	Reduction in IAG Contract. Non appointment of new posts identified in the new structure	55	
Communities & Regeneration	2023-24 CR07	Communications restructure	Restructure	Reduce the cost of Communications by moving to a business partnering model	100	
Communities & Regeneration	2023-24 CR08	Digital / Transformation Savings	Service Transformation	Automation, chatbot, virtual agents. Dashboards for contract monitoring and demand management. Any changes to structures, alignment and commissioned services from Employment and Skills OBR. IoT e.g. potholes, better tech for field officers (Powerapps) to increase efficiency.	50	
Sub-total					332	280

Department	Reference	Project/Proposal	Category	Headline Description of Savings Proposal	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000
Resident Services	2023-24 RS01	Removal of first class envelopes from the Civic Centre	Service Transformation	Removal of first class envelopes from Civic Centre to reduce postage spends. First class postage will remain available in the Post Room but only for those requiring first class postage	64	
Resident Services	2023-24 RS02	Staffing changes	Restructure	Staffing changes across the Improvement & Performance Team and the Digital Post Room teams. Duties to be covered by existing staff once re-evaluation of JD's and staff consultation has been carried out	86	
Resident Services	2023-24 RS03	IEG and Resilience contract reduction & Staffing reductions due to systems automation	Digital	Reduction in the usage of the Resilience contract and creation of in house applications to replace IEG	262	
Resident Services	2023-24 RS04	Online diary and reporting system and booking citizenship ceremonies	Digital	Online diary and reporting system equivalent to current product bought in house use of corporate. Online booking Citizenship ceremonies incorporating facility for payment for private ceremonies	11	
Resident Services	2023-24 RS05	Staff reorganisation	Restructure	Staff reorganisation in the Revenue & Debt team	210	
Resident Services	2023-24 RS06	Reduction in licensing, corporate printing, supplies and services, delivery of ICT roadmap, staffing	Digital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in licensing spend through applications rationalisation • Reduction in corporate printing spend through continued move to digital options • Reduction in ICT and Transformation supplies and services spend • Reduction in Brent's contribution to the shared ICT service through realisation of savings through delivery of roadmap projects • Reduction in staffing in Transformation service 	418	
Resident Services	2023-24 RS07	Digital / Transformation Savings	Service Transformation	Online forms, chatbot/virtual agent, RPA, further reduction in print, aligning systems	300	
Resident Services	2023-24 RS08	Libraries stock	Reduction in provision	Reduction in Libraries stock budget	62	
Resident Services	2023-24 RS09	Increase Council Owned Temporary Accommodation Portfolio	Service Transformation	Build a new Temporary Accommodation scheme of up to 100 units (similar to Anansi House), providing better quality and more affordable accommodation for people who would otherwise be in private sector nightly paid accommodation	350	
Resident Services	2023-24 RS11	Temporary Accommodation (TA)	Service Transformation	Increase portfolio of Council Managed Temporary Accommodation	86	
Resident Services	2023-24 RS12	Street Light Dimming	Reduction in provision	Proposal for Street Light Dimming. Identify areas where lighting levels can be reduced to secure energy cost savings	60	

Department	Reference	Project/Proposal	Category	Headline Description of Savings Proposal	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000
Resident Services	2023-24 RS13	Waste disposal – Education and outreach insourcing	Service Transformation	Reduction in residual waste stream in order to secure increased recycling rates and reduced waste disposal payments to WLWA	250	
Resident Services	2023-24 RS14	Review Payments to WLWA	Service Transformation	This proposal seeks to recover any over-payment of waste disposal charges made by Brent that may be retained by WLWA and held as reserves by that organisation.	100	
Resident Services	2023-24 RS15	Increased use of Proceeds Of Crime Act	Restructure	Subsidise Regulatory Services area with use of POCA income	300	
Resident Services	2023-24 RS16	RLS related - Environmental Services Review	Restructure	Environmental Services review staff structures as part of RLS Phase 2 review	150	
Resident Services	2023-24 RS17	RLS related -Review of BTS	Service Transformation	Detailed service review, route optimisation and alternative means of transport	1,200	
Resident Services	2023-24 RS18	RLS Related - Negotiate RLS cost reduction	Procurement	Potential to reduce cost as part of RLS competitive dialogue tendering approach		200
Resident Services	2023-24 RS19	RLS related - Rationalisation of Environmental service budgets	Restructure	A rationalisation of the budgets within Environmental Services has taken place in anticipation of the savings required for the RLS project.	130	
Sub-total					4,039	200

Department	Reference	Project/Proposal	Category	Headline Description of Savings Proposal	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000
Finance & Resources	2023-24 FR01	Reduction in staffing	Restructure	Savings will be made from the creation of a centralised Oracle support function in IT; a proportion of Head of Finance management oversight of master data and systems control is no longer required	252	
Finance & Resources	2023-24 FR02	Digital / Transformation Savings	Digital	Digital Transformation will enable automation of transactional activity across the whole of the Finance function and improvements in management self serve as a result of Oracle Cloud enhancements which will deliver savings	250	
Finance & Resources	2023-24 FR03	External support for Internal Audit activity	Procurement	Reduce use of external support to internal audit service	23	
Finance & Resources	2023-24 FR04	Civic Centre Office Let	Income Generation	Lease further floors of the Civic Centre to external organisations / tenants to generate revenue	-	680
Finance & Resources	2023-24 FR05	Increase car park/EVCP charge	Income Generation	Considered feasible to increase civic centre parking charge and also charging rate for EVCP provision without impacting demand.	100	
Finance & Resources	2023-24 FR06	Security Service Transformation	Service Transformation	Service transformation to be implemented following the detailed review of security provision across all Brent's operational buildings after staff TUPE'D across from the previous out-sourced provider in summer 2021	300	
Finance & Resources	2023-24 FR07	Rationalise soft FM service	Service Transformation	Rationalising soft FM services (cleaning) to meet reduced portfolio demand	150	
Finance & Resources	2023-24 FR08	Commercial Staffing Review	Restructure	Review capitalisation of staffing costs and replace interims with permanent staff	50	
Sub-total					1,125	680

Appendix A: Summary of Budget Proposals 2023-24

Department	Reference	Project/Proposal	Category	Headline Description of Savings Proposal	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000
Governance	2023-24 GOV01	Reduction in staffing via restructure	Restructure	Proposed savings to be made from reduction in posts and more efficient allocation of tasks	89	
Governance	2023-24 GOV02	Restructures in HR	Restructure	This saving would introduce a new model for advisory support in HR and reduce the number of advisory posts in HR by one in 2023/24 and by one in 2024/25.	85	
Governance	2023-24 GOV03	Reduce Corporate Learning and Development Budget	Reduction in provision	Reduction in budget held by HR for Corporate training	40	
Governance	2023-24 GOV04	Administrative and Miscellaneous Efficiencies	Service Transformation	Increased advert via LinkedIn for recruitment advertising - reduction in publications	12	
Governance	2023-24 GOV05	Increase income target for recoverable legal work costs	Income generation	S106 and other third party income increase	30	
Governance	2023-24 GOV06	Reduce Legal Fees Budget	Service Transformation	Reduce the provision in the legal budget for payment of court fees and the costs of advice and representation by barristers in cases brought by or against the council	50	
Governance	2023-24 GOV07	Cessation of DX Postal service	Service Transformation	This savings would involve discontinuing use of the legal document exchange service through which documents for the court, barristers chambers and solicitors firms are currently sometimes despatched	3	
Governance	2023-24 GOV08	Miscellaneous expenses reduction	Service Transformation	Miscellaneous expenses reduction. This saving would remove a budget utilised for unplanned overhead expenses	19	
Governance	2023-24 GOV09	Administrative and Miscellaneous Efficiencies	Restructure	This proposal concerns aligning salary budgets with the establishment	22	
Governance	2023-24 GOV10	Procurement restructure	Restructure	Review structure of the Procurement team with overall impact leading to a reduction in the establishment by 1 FTE		50
Governance	2023-24 GOV11	Digital / Transformation Savings	Service Transformation	Electronic document management, further implementation of DocuSign, sharing documents with external parties via M365, chatbots for routine HR and Legal queries		75
Sub-total					350	125

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Department	Reference	Project/Proposal	Category	Headline Description of Savings Proposal	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000
Corporate	2023-24 CORP1	Digital / Transformation Savings	Service Transformation	Commissioning, Performance and Communications review	600	
Corporate	2023-24 CORP4	Procurement savings	Procurement	To be managed by the Commissioning and Procurement Board. All contracts on pipeline will come to the board to review contract specifications in order to deliver savings	449	51
Corporate	2023-24 CORP5	CMT Savings	Restructure	Savings from June 2022 CMT Restructure	200	
Corporate	2023-24 CORP6	RLS related - Environment department saving	Restructure	A rationalisation of the budgets within Environment has taken place in anticipation of the savings required for the RLS project.	1,300	
Corporate	2023-24 AH08	Technical Adjustment - recurring grant funding	Service Transformation	Recognition of grants not previously budgeted for in the MTFS.		1,500
Sub-total					2,549	1,551

Department	Reference	Project/Proposal	Category	Headline Description of Savings Proposal	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000
SUMMARY OF SAVINGS PROPOSALS BY DIRECTORATE						
Adult Social Care & Health					4,265	-
Children & Young People					840	1,570
Communities & Regeneration					332	280
Resident Services					4,039	200
Finance & Resources					1,125	680
Governance					350	125
Corporate					2,549	1,551
Grand Total					13,500	4,406

EQUALITY ANALYSIS (EA)

POLICY/PROPOSAL:	Reviewing community-based Support Packages, residential and Nursing home placements to ensure they are commensurate with needs and always maximising independence. (AH01, AH03 and AH04)
DEPARTMENT:	Adult social care
TEAM:	Reablement, Review, Long term support & Occupational Therapist teams
LEAD OFFICER:	Claudia Brown
DATE:	29 December 2022

NB: Please ensure you have read the accompanying EA guidance and instructions in full.

SECTION A – INITIAL SCREENING

1. Please provide a description of the policy, proposal, change or initiative, and a summary its objectives and the intended results.

There is some evidence that Brent provides more homecare hours in community care packages than other London boroughs – potentially around 1 hour per week extra per client over the age of 75 than expected.

Under the Care Act 2014, all service users are to receive a proportionate review of their support funded by social care, annually. As a result, support packages/ placements can be adjusted accordingly. By undertaking some focus reviews, it will provide us with an opportunity to ensure support packages are commensurate to the needs of the individual.

This project proposes to be focussed on the areas where the data shows that we are outliers in providing care.

2. Who may be affected by this policy or proposal?

All Adult from the Age of 18

3. Is there relevance to equality and the council's public sector equality duty? Please explain why. If your answer is no, you must still provide an explanation.

ASC work with vulnerable client who require support as a result of their Physical, psychological and Mental frailty / disabilities. All clients receiving funded support from ASC are required to have an annual review. So, although this project will be undertaken as business as usual, there will be a closer focus on the area that we are outlier in our spending compared to other boroughs.

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4. Please indicate with an “X” the potential impact of the policy or proposal on groups with each protected characteristic. Carefully consider if the proposal will impact on people in different ways as a result of their characteristics.

Characteristic	IMPACT		
	Positive	Neutral/None	Negative
Age		X	
Sex		X	
Race		X	
Disability		X	
Sexual orientation		X	
Gender reassignment		X	
Religion or belief		X	
Pregnancy or maternity		X	
Marriage		X	

5. Please complete **each row** of the checklist with an “X”.

SCREENING CHECKLIST		
	YES	NO
Have you established that the policy or proposal <i>is</i> relevant to the council’s public sector equality duty?	X	
Does the policy or proposal relate to an area with known inequalities?		X
Would the policy or proposal change or remove services used by vulnerable groups of people?		X
Has the potential for negative or positive equality impacts been identified with this policy or proposal?		X
If you have answered YES to ANY of the above, then proceed to section B. If you have answered NO to ALL of the above, then proceed straight to section D.		

SECTION B – IMPACTS ANALYSIS

1. Outline what information and evidence have you gathered and considered for this analysis. If there is little, then explain your judgements in detail and your plans to validate them with evidence. If you have monitoring information available, include it here.

To achieve the saving as set out in the budget all current service users will be subjected to a review.

2. For each “protected characteristic” provide details of all the potential or known impacts identified, both positive and negative, and explain how you have reached these conclusions based on the information and evidence listed above. Where appropriate state “not applicable”.

AGE	
Details of impacts identified	Not applicable.
DISABILITY	
Details of impacts identified	Not applicable. The review will relate to all service users who meet the Care Act criteria and are in receipt of a social care funded support package or a placement
RACE	
Details of impacts identified	Not applicable.
SEX	
Details of impacts identified	Not applicable.
SEXUAL ORIENTATION	

Details of impacts identified	Not applicable
PREGANCY AND MATERNITY	
Details of impacts identified	Not applicable.
RELIGION OR BELIEF	
Details of impacts identified	Not applicable.
GENDER REASSIGNMENT	
Details of impacts identified	Not applicable.
MARRIAGE & CIVIL PARTNERSHIP	
Details of impacts identified	Not applicable

3. Could any of the impacts you have identified be unlawful under the Equality Act 2010?

No

4. Were the participants in any engagement initiatives representative of the people who will be affected by your proposal and is further engagement required?

At each review the working group will engage with the individual and all parties involved in the support arrangements of the individual will be reviewed

5. Please detail any areas identified as requiring further data or detailed analysis.

None

6. If, following your action plan, negative impacts will or may remain, please explain how these can be justified?

- Service change can be perceived by individuals to be a negative change. Service users and their families may choose not to engage with this process. However, our social workers are experienced from previous work and will make all efforts to engage families and service users in the process before any changes are made. If the person does not have capacity and their family continues to dispute the assessed change, we have the option of approaching the court of protection to make a decision. However, this will be used as a last option as we are usually able to negotiate an agreed position.
- Staff will engage with providers as appropriate however, there is a risk of existing providers try to disrupt the move on process – this will be managed by the Commissioning Team, to work with providers to recognise the best interests of service users

7. Outline how you will monitor the actual, ongoing impact of the policy or proposal?

All reviews are monitored by team manager and the project will feed into the Project and Transformation Board via a highlight report

SECTION C - CONCLUSIONS

Based on the analysis above, please detail your overall conclusions. State if any mitigating actions are required to alleviate negative impacts, what these are and what the desired outcomes will be. If positive equality impacts have been identified, consider what actions you can take to enhance them. If you have decided to justify and continue with the policy despite negative equality impacts, provide your justification. If you are to stop the policy, explain why.

The project will be undertaken as business as usual and any impact for the focused areas will be monitored and reported to the Project and transformation board.

Therefore, no adverse equality impact has been identified at this stage

SECTION D – RESULT

Please select one of the following options. Mark with an “X”.

A	CONTINUE WITH THE POLICY/PROPOSAL UNCHANGED	X
B	JUSTIFY AND CONTINUE THE POLICY/PROPOSAL	
C	CHANGE / ADJUST THE POLICY/PROPOSAL	
D	STOP OR ABANDON THE POLICY/PROPOSAL	

SECTION E - ACTION PLAN

This will help you monitor the steps you have identified to reduce the negative impacts (or increase the positive); monitor actual or ongoing impacts; plan reviews and any further engagement or analysis required.

Action	Expected outcome	Officer	Completion Date
Continue with reviewing all Service users receiving funded support from ASC annually as required by the care ACT	Support packages are adjusted as a result of the review/ reassessment if needed	Social workers, Occupational Therapist and Reviewing offices	April 2024

SECTION F – SIGN OFF

Please ensure this section is signed and dated.

OFFICER:	Claudia Brown, Director ASC
REVIEWING OFFICER:	Andrew Davies, Head of Commissioning, Contracting and Market Management Tiffany Adonis-French Head of Complex Care Direct Services and Duty Sarah Richards Head of Intermediate care and Principal Occupational Therapist
HEAD OF SERVICE:	Claudia Brown, Director ASC

EQUALITY ANALYSIS (EA)

POLICY/PROPOSAL:	Savings will be made by a reduction in the contract value of the Supporting Young People Contract ('Connexions')
DEPARTMENT:	Children and Young People
TEAM:	Inclusion
LEAD OFFICER:	Sharon Buckby/Shirley Parks
DATE:	19 December 2022

NB: Please ensure you have read the accompanying EA guidance and instructions in full.

SECTION A – INITIAL SCREENING

1. Please provide a description of the policy, proposal, change or initiative, and a summary its objectives and the intended results.

Savings will be made by a reduction in the contract value of the Supporting Young People Contract ('Connexions') by the value of £80K. The full impact will be mitigated by £40K of education funding (e.g., pupil premium funding) being allocated to the service to enable a dedicated advisor from the provider Prospects to be maintained within Brent Virtual School.

2. Who may be affected by this policy or proposal?

Young people who are at risk of being Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) may not get the same level of support as currently.

3. Is there relevance to equality and the council's public sector equality duty?
Please explain why. If your answer is no, you must still provide an explanation.

Yes, as the contract supports outcomes for vulnerable children and young people.

4. Please indicate with an “X” the potential impact of the policy or proposal on groups with each protected characteristic. Carefully consider if the proposal will impact on people in different ways as a result of their characteristics.

Characteristic	IMPACT		
	Positive	Neutral/None	Negative
Age			x
Sex		x	
Race			x
Disability			x
Sexual orientation		x	
Gender reassignment		x	
Religion or belief		x	
Pregnancy or maternity		x	
Marriage		x	

5. Please complete **each row** of the checklist with an “X”.

SCREENING CHECKLIST		
	YES	NO
Have you established that the policy or proposal <i>is</i> relevant to the council’s public sector equality duty?	x	
Does the policy or proposal relate to an area with known inequalities?	x	
Would the policy or proposal change or remove services used by vulnerable groups of people?	x	
Has the potential for negative or positive equality impacts been identified with this policy or proposal?	x	
If you have answered YES to ANY of the above, then proceed to section B. If you have answered NO to ALL of the above, then proceed straight to section D.		

SECTION B – IMPACTS ANALYSIS

1. Outline what information and evidence have you gathered and considered for this analysis. If there is little, then explain your judgements in detail and your plans to validate them with evidence. If you have monitoring information available, include it here.

The Supporting Young People Contract is aimed at ensuring all young people are in education, employment and training. The number of young people in Brent who are NEET is low. However, those who are NEET are vulnerable young people, some have SEND and there is some disproportionality in the cohort.

2. For each “protected characteristic” provide details of all the potential or known impacts identified, both positive and negative, and explain how you have reached these conclusions based on the information and evidence listed above. Where appropriate state “not applicable”.

AGE	
Details of impacts identified	The service is for young people who are aged 16+, and a lower level of service could impact on outcomes into education, employment and training post-16.
DISABILITY	
Details of impacts identified	There could be an impact on the timeliness of the progress into education, employment and training of young people with Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) if the level of support is reduced.
RACE	
Details of impacts identified	There could be an impact on the timeliness of the progress into education, employment and training of young people who are of different ethnic backgrounds, in particular of Black Caribbean or Black or Black mixed heritage, if the level of support is reduced.
SEX	
Details of impacts identified	None

SEXUAL ORIENTATION	
Details of impacts identified	None
PREGANCY AND MATERNITY	
Details of impacts identified	N/A
RELIGION OR BELIEF	
Details of impacts identified	N/A
GENDER REASSIGNMENT	
Details of impacts identified	N/A
MARRIAGE & CIVIL PARTNERSHIP	
Details of impacts identified	N/A

3. Could any of the impacts you have identified be unlawful under the Equality Act 2010?

No

4. Were the participants in any engagement initiatives representative of the people who will be affected by your proposal and is further engagement required?

No

5. Please detail any areas identified as requiring further data or detailed analysis.

N/A

6. If, following your action plan, negative impacts will or may remain, please explain how these can be justified?

Mitigation measures will address any potential negative impacts.

7. Outline how you will monitor the actual, ongoing impact of the policy or proposal?

The NEET data is monitored regularly and there is ongoing contract management which will be used to monitor impacts. There will be targeted approaches for the young people considered to be most at risk of being negatively impacted by reduced levels of support.

SECTION C - CONCLUSIONS

Based on the analysis above, please detail your overall conclusions. State if any mitigating actions are required to alleviate negative impacts, what these are and what the desired outcomes will be. If positive equality impacts have been identified, consider what actions you can take to enhance them. If you have decided to justify and continue with the policy despite negative equality impacts, provide your justification. If you are to stop the policy, explain why.

Overall, the contract will continue to provide essential support to children and young people to ensure that they have positive journeys into adulthood.

A reduced service, however, could impact on the number of Brent young people who are in education, employment or training post-16 in relation to the most vulnerable groups. A number of mitigation measures will address these:

- The impact of the saving will be reduced by £40K being provided towards the contract through Brent Virtual School funds
- The contract will focus on vulnerable young people most at risk of being NEET to mitigate any negative impacts.
- Young people with SEND will be supported through improved 14 + transition planning at annual reviews of Education, Health and Care Plans led by schools to mitigate any impact.

As a Council priority there is separate, targeted work underway through the Black Community Action Plan to support and motivate young people into education, employment

and training and to provide access/exposure to employment opportunities that will mitigate the impact.

SECTION D – RESULT

Please select one of the following options. Mark with an “X”.

A	CONTINUE WITH THE POLICY/PROPOSAL UNCHANGED	x
B	JUSTIFY AND CONTINUE THE POLICY/PROPOSAL	
C	CHANGE / ADJUST THE POLICY/PROPOSAL	
D	STOP OR ABANDON THE POLICY/PROPOSAL	

SECTION E - ACTION PLAN

This will help you monitor the steps you have identified to reduce the negative impacts (or increase the positive); monitor actual or ongoing impacts; plan reviews and any further engagement or analysis required.

Action	Expected outcome	Officer	Completion Date
Continue to monitor the percentage of young people who are EET/NEET in vulnerable groups through regular contract monitoring.	There is no reduction in the number who are EET	Sharon Buckby	Ongoing

SECTION F – SIGN OFF

Please ensure this section is signed and dated.

OFFICER:	Shirley Parks, OD Safeguarding Performance and Strategy
REVIEWING OFFICER:	Sharon Buckby, Head of Inclusion and Brent Virtual School
HEAD OF SERVICE:	Nigel Chapman, Corporate Director Children and Young People

EQUALITY ANALYSIS (EA)

POLICY/PROPOSAL:	Reduction of one Practice Educator Role
DEPARTMENT:	CYP – Safeguarding, Partnerships and Strategy
TEAM:	Quality Assurance and L&D
LEAD OFFICER:	Sonya Kalyniak
DATE:	19 December 2022

NB: Please ensure you have read the accompanying EA guidance and instructions in full.

SECTION A – INITIAL SCREENING

1. Please provide a description of the policy, proposal, change or initiative, and a summary its objectives and the intended results.

Reduction of one Practice Educator post

2. Who may be affected by this policy or proposal?

There are 3 people in this role and 1 post would be reduced.

3. Is there relevance to equality and the council's public sector equality duty?
Please explain why. If your answer is no, you must still provide an explanation.

Yes, there is relevance to equality and the council's public sector duty due to all three post-holders being female from ethnically diverse backgrounds from a variety of religions or beliefs.

4. Please indicate with an "X" the potential impact of the policy or proposal on groups with each protected characteristic. Carefully consider if the proposal will impact on people in different ways as a result of their characteristics.

Characteristic	IMPACT		
	Positive	Neutral/None	Negative
Age		x	

Sex			x
Race			x
Disability		x	
Sexual orientation		x	
Gender reassignment		x	
Religion or belief			x
Pregnancy or maternity		x	
Marriage		x	

5. Please complete **each row** of the checklist with an “X”.

SCREENING CHECKLIST		
	YES	NO
Have you established that the policy or proposal <i>is</i> relevant to the council's public sector equality duty?	x	
Does the policy or proposal relate to an area with known inequalities?		x
Would the policy or proposal change or remove services used by vulnerable groups of people?		x
Has the potential for negative or positive equality impacts been identified with this policy or proposal?	x	
If you have answered YES to ANY of the above, then proceed to section B. If you have answered NO to ALL of the above, then proceed straight to section D.		

SECTION B – IMPACTS ANALYSIS

1. Outline what information and evidence have you gathered and considered for this analysis. If there is little, then explain your judgements in detail and your plans to validate them with evidence. If you have monitoring information available, include it here.

Reviewed the sex, religious and ethnic background of the three candidates.
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2. For each “protected characteristic” provide details of all the potential or known impacts identified, both positive and negative, and explain how you have reached these conclusions based on the information and evidence listed above. Where appropriate state “not applicable”.

AGE	
Details of impacts identified	Not applicable
DISABILITY	
Details of impacts identified	Not applicable
RACE	
Details of impacts identified	All three employees in these posts are from ethnically diverse backgrounds.
SEX	
Details of impacts identified	All three employees in these posts are female.
SEXUAL ORIENTATION	

Details of impacts identified	Not applicable
PREGANCY AND MATERNITY	
Details of impacts identified	Not applicable
RELIGION OR BELIEF	
Details of impacts identified	All three employees in these posts have different religious backgrounds.
GENDER REASSIGNMENT	
Details of impacts identified	Not applicable.
MARRIAGE & CIVIL PARTNERSHIP	
Details of impacts identified	Not applicable

3. Could any of the impacts you have identified be unlawful under the Equality Act 2010?

No

4. Were the participants in any engagement initiatives representative of the people who will be affected by your proposal and is further engagement required?

Yes

5. Please detail any areas identified as requiring further data or detailed analysis.

Careful consideration will be given to selecting the employees who remain in the post and the employee who will be moved to another area of CYP, in collaboration with post holders. There will be no redundancies from this proposal and every effort will be given to support one of these employees into a different social work qualified role with the same pay and conditions.

6. If, following your action plan, negative impacts will or may remain, please explain how these can be justified?

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7. Outline how you will monitor the actual, ongoing impact of the policy or proposal?

This will be measured through supervision (job satisfaction) and retention of all three employees.

SECTION C - CONCLUSIONS

Based on the analysis above, please detail your overall conclusions. State if any mitigating actions are required to alleviate negative impacts, what these are and what the desired outcomes will be. If positive equality impacts have been identified, consider what actions you can take to enhance them. If you have decided to justify and continue with the policy despite negative equality impacts, provide your justification. If you are to stop the policy, explain why.

Although one employee with protected characteristics will move from the Practice Educator post to another social work qualified position with similar pay and conditions, this will be done with sensitivity and support. There will be no redundancies

SECTION D – RESULT

Please select one of the following options. Mark with an "X".

A	CONTINUE WITH THE POLICY/PROPOSAL UNCHANGED	X
B	JUSTIFY AND CONTINUE THE POLICY/PROPOSAL	
C	CHANGE / ADJUST THE POLICY/PROPOSAL	

D	STOP OR ABANDON THE POLICY/PROPOSAL	
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SECTION E - ACTION PLAN

This will help you monitor the steps you have identified to reduce the negative impacts (or increase the positive); monitor actual or ongoing impacts; plan reviews and any further engagement or analysis required.

Action	Expected outcome	Officer	Completion Date
Determine a fair and transparent selection process for one employee to move to a different role	One employee is selected and supported to move to a different role.	Nicole Levy	31/03/2023

SECTION F – SIGN OFF

Please ensure this section is signed and dated.

OFFICER:	Shirley Parks, OD Safeguarding Performance and Strategy 19/12/2022
REVIEWING OFFICER:	Sonya Kalyniak, Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance
HEAD OF SERVICE:	Nigel Chapman, Corporate Director Children and Young People

EQUALITY ANALYSIS (EA)

POLICY/PROPOSAL:	Savings will be made by a reduction in staffing costs within the core school effectiveness team.
DEPARTMENT:	Children and Young People
TEAM:	Setting and School Effectiveness Service
LEAD OFFICER:	Shirley Parks/Jen Haskew
DATE:	12.12.22

NB: Please ensure you have read the accompanying EA guidance and instructions in full.

SECTION A – INITIAL SCREENING

1. Please provide a description of the policy, proposal, change or initiative, and a summary its objectives and the intended results.

Savings will be made by a reduction in staffing costs within the core school effectiveness team.

2. Who may be affected by this policy or proposal?

There is a risk that pupil outcomes and school Ofsted inspection judgements could decline due to less capacity to fulfil core school improvement work. However, this risk will be avoided by reducing staffing costs without reducing capacity within the core school improvement team.

3. Is there relevance to equality and the council's public sector equality duty?
Please explain why. If your answer is no, you must still provide an explanation.

No. The potential impact on young people will be protected by cutting staffing costs without reducing capacity within the core team.

4. Please indicate with an "X" the potential impact of the policy or proposal on groups with each protected characteristic. Carefully consider if the proposal will impact on people in different ways as a result of their characteristics.

Characteristic	IMPACT		
	Positive	Neutral/None	Negative
Age		X	

Sex		X	
Race		X	
Disability		X	
Sexual orientation		X	
Gender reassignment		X	
Religion or belief		X	
Pregnancy or maternity		X	
Marriage		X	

5. Please complete **each row** of the checklist with an “X”.

SCREENING CHECKLIST		
	YES	NO
Have you established that the policy or proposal <i>is</i> relevant to the council's public sector equality duty?		X
Does the policy or proposal relate to an area with known inequalities?		X
Would the policy or proposal change or remove services used by vulnerable groups of people?		X
Has the potential for negative or positive equality impacts been identified with this policy or proposal?		X
If you have answered YES to ANY of the above, then proceed to section B. If you have answered NO to ALL of the above, then proceed straight to section D.		

SECTION B – IMPACTS ANALYSIS

1. Outline what information and evidence have you gathered and considered for this analysis. If there is little, then explain your judgements in detail and your plans to validate them with evidence. If you have monitoring information available, include it here.

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2. For each “protected characteristic” provide details of all the potential or known impacts identified, both positive and negative, and explain how you have reached these conclusions based on the information and evidence listed above. Where appropriate state “not applicable”.

AGE	
Details of impacts identified	N/A
DISABILITY	
Details of impacts identified	N/A
RACE	
Details of impacts identified	N/A
SEX	
Details of impacts identified	N/A
SEXUAL ORIENTATION	

Details of impacts identified	N/A
PREGANCY AND MATERNITY	
Details of impacts identified	N/A
RELIGION OR BELIEF	
Details of impacts identified	N/A
GENDER REASSIGNMENT	
Details of impacts identified	N/A
MARRIAGE & CIVIL PARTNERSHIP	
Details of impacts identified	N/A

3. Could any of the impacts you have identified be unlawful under the Equality Act 2010?

No

4. Were the participants in any engagement initiatives representative of the people who will be affected by your proposal and is further engagement required?

N/A

5. Please detail any areas identified as requiring further data or detailed analysis.

N/A

6. If, following your action plan, negative impacts will or may remain, please explain how these can be justified?

N/A

7. Outline how you will monitor the actual, ongoing impact of the policy or proposal?

N/A

SECTION C - CONCLUSIONS

Based on the analysis above, please detail your overall conclusions. State if any mitigating actions are required to alleviate negative impacts, what these are and what the desired outcomes will be. If positive equality impacts have been identified, consider what actions you can take to enhance them. If you have decided to justify and continue with the policy despite negative equality impacts, provide your justification. If you are to stop the policy, explain why.

SECTION D – RESULT

<i>Please select one of the following options. Mark with an "X".</i>		
A	CONTINUE WITH THE POLICY/PROPOSAL UNCHANGED	X
B	JUSTIFY AND CONTINUE THE POLICY/PROPOSAL	
C	CHANGE / ADJUST THE POLICY/PROPOSAL	
D	STOP OR ABANDON THE POLICY/PROPOSAL	

SECTION E - ACTION PLAN

This will help you monitor the steps you have identified to reduce the negative impacts (or increase the positive); monitor actual or ongoing impacts; plan reviews and any further engagement or analysis required.

Action	Expected outcome	Officer	Completion Date
Continue to monitor Ofsted outcomes	Quality of provision maintained	Jen Haskew	Ongoing

SECTION F – SIGN OFF

Please ensure this section is signed and dated.

OFFICER:	Jen Haskew, Head of Setting and School Effectiveness (12.12.22)
REVIEWING OFFICER:	Shirley Parks, OD Safeguarding Performance and Strategy
HEAD OF SERVICE:	Nigel Chapman, Corporate Director Children and Young People

EQUALITY ANALYSIS (EA)

POLICY/PROPOSAL:	Service Transformation - RLS related - Detailed service review including route optimisation and alternative means of transport
DEPARTMENT:	Residents Services
TEAM:	Neighbourhood Management
LEAD OFFICER:	Chris Whyte
DATE:	1/12/2022

NB: Please ensure you have read the accompanying EA guidance and instructions in full.

SECTION A – INITIAL SCREENING

1. Please provide a description of the policy, proposal, change or initiative, and a summary its objectives and the intended results.

The SEN passenger transport service is currently shared with LB Harrow who lead the service on behalf of both Authorities. Despite this, Brent BC is the larger 'client' for the service and it is estimated that costs per user for Brent are 30% higher than the cost for Harrow.

We know that there is opportunity for savings from benchmarking with other local authorities.

Edge Public Solutions has been appointed to carry out a review in order to inform savings options. Their first objective will be to effectively establish how well travel and transport services performs and identify cost reduction potential along with service quality and compliance improvement opportunities. They will then identify a program of change that will deliver successful implementation.

The expected efficiencies from the review are at least 10-15% of current expenditure (£1.2m - £1.8m) and are in line with efficiencies that Brent Public Solutions have identified for other local authorities.

We expect that the following key areas will provide the improvement opportunities

Strategy and policy

- Strategic and service planning for passenger transport; the fit with corporate priorities, legal requirements, and comparison to best practice.

- Culture and interaction with customers both internal and external, interaction with the Brent client team, SEN and ASC teams, parents, carers, and schools/daycentres.
- Policy improvement opportunities, eligibility and assessment practice and control
- Delivery strategy, possible alternative delivery models and options.
- Demand forecasts and management of this data for future years (including school rolls, impacts of demand management, and demographic projections).
- Opportunities to move from providing door to door transport to other travel solutions
- Opportunities to improve internal fleet and suppliers in terms of carbon emissions

Passenger transport management

- Operation structures, client management arrangements, processes, and financial control across all transport functions and processes including compliance with the Inter Authority Agreement between Brent BTS client team, Brent SEN & ASC, Brent NHS team and schools etc. including any gaps identified.
- Management capabilities and effectiveness
- Systems used and reporting functionality and effectiveness
- Accountability. Financial overview, management, control and reporting, financial trends, demand management. Including a review of the suitability of KPI's for financial and operational performance.
- Management skills and capability, including skills gaps across management, officers and front-line driver and PA's for both managed service internal routes and private hire providers.
- Performance management regime.
- Compliance regime in relation to vehicle and driver/escort provision and statutory compliance (e.g., S19, PATS, MIDAS etc.)
- Depot arrangements with Harrow, costs, flexibility, future strategy.
- Provision of internal fleet cost model and comparison with external supply
- Contract analysis and review
- Day to day management of safe-guarding, safety, training of providers, CCTV, and specialist equipment management.

Passenger transport co-ordination and demand control

- Routing and co-ordination methodology/ protocols/ opportunities
- Examination of approach to complex and exceptional travel requirement cases in terms of how they are managed, and decision made
- Suitability of service provision (routing logic, journey times, appropriateness of vehicles, relevant access requirements, route rationalisation potential etc.) and any alternatives.
- Balance of internal and external passenger transport provision
- Passenger transport procurement and options for improvement including contracts with private suppliers.
- Market supply analysis (market capacity, market engagement, strategic sourcing options, innovative ways to increase competition and drive best value)
- Focus on effective use of escorts, reduction in single person journeys and vehicle utilization improvement opportunities
- Opportunities for alternative travel arrangements including personal budgets
- Travel training and travel 'buddy' schemes to enable walking.

Group pick up opportunities

2. Who may be affected by this policy or proposal?

Users of the Brent Passenger Transport Service: children with physical and/or learning disabilities and adults who use day centres.

The families and careers of users of the service.

Brent Passenger Transport staff and associated contractors

School staff and day centre staff.

3. Is there relevance to equality and the council's public sector equality duty?

Please explain why. If your answer is no, you must still provide an explanation.

Yes

The current passenger transport service is used to transport 1234 children and young people with special educational needs to school or college. These children have learning and/or physical disabilities. The service also transports 75 adult clients who are either elderly and / or have learning difficulties or physical disabilities. It transports them from home to day centres or other placements or activities, as defined within their personal care plans. The service is therefore currently mainly focused on younger and older age groups and therefore any change will disproportionately affect those groups. The nature of the impact will depend on the individuals and their disability. People with learning disabilities may find any change in transport drivers and escorts very unsettling.

4. Please indicate with an "X" the potential impact of the policy or proposal on groups with each protected characteristic. Carefully consider if the proposal will impact on people in different ways as a result of their characteristics.

Characteristic	IMPACT		
	Positive	Neutral/None	Negative
Age			X
Sex		X	
Race		X	
Disability			X
Sexual orientation		X	
Gender reassignment		X	
Religion or belief		X	
Pregnancy or maternity		X	
Marriage		X	

5. Please complete **each row** of the checklist with an "X".

SCREENING CHECKLIST		
	YES	NO
Have you established that the policy or proposal <i>is</i> relevant to the council's public sector equality duty?	X	
Does the policy or proposal relate to an area with known inequalities?	X	
Would the policy or proposal change or remove services used by vulnerable groups of people?	X	
Has the potential for negative or positive equality impacts been identified with this policy or proposal?	X	
If you have answered YES to ANY of the above, then proceed to section B. If you have answered NO to ALL of the above, then proceed straight to section D.		

SECTION B – IMPACTS ANALYSIS

1. Outline what information and evidence have you gathered and considered for this analysis. If there is little, then explain your judgements in detail and your plans to validate them with evidence. If you have monitoring information available, include it here.

Information from Brent Transport Services, Adult Social Care and Children and Young People on the age, gender and disability of service users. Many of the users have high level physical and learning disabilities.

Information provided through an in-depth analysis of the current service offer in terms of how it compares to other authorities and how it complies with government guidance and legislation.

Further consultation and engagement work will take place with stakeholders to inform the service review that is underway.

2. For each “protected characteristic” provide details of all the potential or known impacts identified, both positive and negative, and explain how you have reached these conclusions based on the information and evidence listed above. Where appropriate state “not applicable”.

AGE	
Details of impacts identified	The passenger transport service will still be provided to its existing users, most of which are either children or older people. Any change that is identified as necessary by the review has the potential to very unsettling and disconcerting for a period of time for many users, especially those who may be anxious about changes to routine but should ultimately provide a better service.

	<p>Consultation and engagement will take place with these stakeholders, including service users and families, to understand what they want from the service and on what the most important considerations are in terms of facilitating a more seamless and less-unsettling transition.</p>
DISABILITY	
Details of impacts identified	<p>The passenger transport service will still be provided to its existing users, most of whom have a disability. Consultation and engagement will take place with stakeholders, including service users and families, to understand what they want from any revised service and/or operating policies. This consultation will include an engagement programme that will identify the best means of ensuring the most seamless transition and of creating appropriate mitigations to remove stress and anxiety. It is considered most beneficial to undertake any change in full consultation with stakeholders, so their concerns are heard and accounted for.</p>
RACE	
Details of impacts identified	N/A
SEX	
Details of impacts identified	N/A
SEXUAL ORIENTATION	
Details of impacts identified	N/A
PREGNANCY AND MATERNITY	
Details of impacts identified	N/A
RELIGION OR BELIEF	

Details of impacts identified	N/A
GENDER REASSIGNMENT	
Details of impacts identified	N/A
MARRIAGE & CIVIL PARTNERSHIP	
Details of impacts identified	N/A

3. Could any of the impacts you have identified be unlawful under the Equality Act 2010?

No

4. Were the participants in any engagement initiatives representative of the people who will be affected by your proposal and is further engagement required?

The review of the service that is underway will include a full engagement and consultation exercise with service users. This review will help determine the extent of any operational changes and the revision of any policies that may be necessary and/or appropriate. It will be fully open to receiving concerns and representation from service users so these can be properly accounted for as part of any service redesign.

5. Please detail any areas identified as requiring further data or detailed analysis.

This will be established through the course of the review but are most likely to include issues that relate to re-routing, a change of pick up and drop of routines, or any change in the service personnel with whom the service users are used to coming into contact with. There will be a need to limit the level of change in relation to these issues to the fullest extent possible, or at least to fully communicate any change to users in the clearest and most helpful way possible.

6. If, following your action plan, negative impacts will or may remain, please explain how these can be justified?

The review is intended to identify policy and operating changes that will benefit passengers over the longer term. This will mean a settled and more effective service over a longer period in the future.

7. Outline how you will monitor the actual, ongoing impact of the policy or proposal?

The revised services and the changed policies will be monitored by a newly created cross-council Transport Board. That governance will run parallel to the day-to-day operational monitoring of the service and will include very regular dialogue with service users and their parents/guardians.

SECTION C - CONCLUSIONS

Based on the analysis above, please detail your overall conclusions. State if any mitigating actions are required to alleviate negative impacts, what these are and what the desired outcomes will be. If positive equality impacts have been identified, consider what actions you can take to enhance them. If you have decided to justify and continue with the policy despite negative equality impacts, provide your justification. If you are to stop the policy, explain why.

This is intended to be a process of service review that will generate cost efficiencies alongside improvements and benefits for passengers.

In order to optimise the benefits, the following actions will apply –

- Through the Review, engage and consult fully with service users so that their views can inform the future service.
- Have an agreed transition phase to ensure a smooth move to any new service.
- Ensure that consistency with drivers and passenger attendants forms part of the outcome.
- Ensure compliance with government guidance, legislation and good practice by similar organisations elsewhere
- Promote, encourage and support the skills for independent travel.
- Engage with staff about the proposals, support them through the change process

SECTION D – RESULT

Please select one of the following options. Mark with an “X”.

A	CONTINUE WITH THE POLICY/PROPOSAL UNCHANGED	
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B	JUSTIFY AND CONTINUE THE POLICY/PROPOSAL	X
C	CHANGE / ADJUST THE POLICY/PROPOSAL	
D	STOP OR ABANDON THE POLICY/PROPOSAL	

SECTION E - ACTION PLAN

This will help you monitor the steps you have identified to reduce the negative impacts (or increase the positive); monitor actual or ongoing impacts; plan reviews and any further engagement or analysis required.

Action	Expected outcome	Officer	Completion Date
Service Review	Change operating procedures, policies, new governance, savings and efficiencies.	C Whyte	March 2024
Consultation/ engagement with stakeholders	All stakeholders aware of any proposed service change / policy changes.	C Whyte	March 2024
Transport Board established	New governance in place.	C Whyte	Dec 2023

SECTION F – SIGN OFF

Please ensure this section is signed and dated.

OFFICER:	Simon Finney, Head of Neighbourhood Management
REVIEWING OFFICER:	Chris Whyte Director of Environment and Leisure
HEAD OF SERVICE:	Chris Whyte Director of Environment and Leisure

EQUALITY ANALYSIS (EA)

POLICY/PROPOSAL:	To increase Council Tax by 4.99% in 2023/24
DEPARTMENT:	Council wide
TEAM:	N/A
LEAD OFFICER:	N/A
DATE:	7 December 2022

NB: Please ensure you have read the accompanying EA guidance and instructions in full.

SECTION A – INITIAL SCREENING

1. Please provide a description of the policy, proposal, change or initiative, and a summary its objectives and the intended results.

The council is required to make significant savings in order to deliver a legally required balanced budget. In order to help overcome this it is proposed to increase Council Tax by 4.99%, where 2% is ring fenced for Adult Social Care and 2.99% is a general increase. This is the maximum increase allowed by government. The proposal will generate an additional £7.0m of recurring income for the Council and therefore avoid having to make further savings to key council services such as adult social care, children's services, etc.

This will impact on all residents within Brent who are eligible to pay Council Tax. Under the changes that are being made to local government funding, there is more emphasis on generating more funding locally (i.e. becoming more self-determinant). This proposal is linked to one aspect of local government funding where the council has some discretion to raise additional funds by increases to Council Tax.

2. Who may be affected by this policy or proposal?

All households in Brent, apart from those eligible for 100% Council Tax discount.

The increase by band and the number of properties affected are shown below.

Band	Amount payable in 2022/23 (Brent share)	Amount payable in 2023/24 (Brent share)	Increase per annum	Increase per month	Increase per week	Total number of dwellings affected

A	£946.32	£993.54	£47.22	£3.94	£0.91	6,051
B	£1,104.04	£1,159.13	£55.09	£4.59	£1.06	13,850
C	£1,261.76	£1,324.72	£62.96	£5.25	£1.21	40,162
D	£1,419.48	£1,490.31	£70.83	£5.90	£1.36	38,709
E	£1,734.92	£1,821.49	£86.57	£7.21	£1.66	22,943
F	£2,050.36	£2,152.67	£102.31	£8.53	£1.97	6,477
G	£2,365.80	£2,483.85	£118.05	£9.84	£2.27	3,433
H	£2,838.96	£2,980.62	£141.66	£11.81	£2.72	250

If this proposal is approved it will affect all households in Brent's 131,875 residential dwellings, that will see their Council Tax bills increase, unless they are eligible for 100% Council Tax support. Currently, approximately 20% (26,300 households out of the 131,875) of households in Brent receive full or partial Council Tax support, which means that they will receive full or partial protection from the increase. In addition, those households where there is one eligible adult resident or less (38,612 households), a reduction of up to 50% on their bill will be due.

The Council Tax increase will mean that the budget of Adult Social Care services will grow by a further £2.8m which will enable the service to meet increasing demand of current and future service users, who are among the most vulnerable members of Brent's community. This is a positive impact.

3. Is there relevance to equality and the council's public sector equality duty?
Please explain why. If your answer is no, you must still provide an explanation.

Yes. This proposal will have both positive and negative impacts on residents and will potentially hit groups with protected characteristics harder. However, since the council tax is applicable to all properties it is not considered that the increase targets any one particular group rather it is an increase that is applied across the board. At the same time because the increase is applied to all properties it is not possible to exempt any particular groups. However, on the latter point there is a council tax support scheme that offers support to vulnerable people and people on low incomes. In addition, the Brent Resident Support Fund (RSF) provides further assistance to vulnerable residents, including but not limited to help with the cost of their Council tax bill.

4. Please indicate with an "X" the potential impact of the policy or proposal on groups with each protected characteristic. Carefully consider if the proposal will impact on people in different ways as a result of their characteristics.

Characteristic	IMPACT		
	Positive	Neutral/None	Negative
Age		X	
Sex		X	
Race		X	
Disability		X	
Sexual orientation		X	

Gender reassignment		X	
Religion or belief		X	
Pregnancy or maternity		X	
Marriage		X	

5. Please complete **each row** of the checklist with an “X”.

SCREENING CHECKLIST		
	YES	NO
Have you established that the policy or proposal <i>is</i> relevant to the council’s public sector equality duty?	X	
Does the policy or proposal relate to an area with known inequalities?		X
Would the policy or proposal change or remove services used by vulnerable groups of people?		X
Has the potential for negative or positive equality impacts been identified with this policy or proposal?	X	
If you have answered YES to ANY of the above, then proceed to section B. If you have answered NO to ALL of the above, then proceed straight to section D.		

SECTION B – IMPACTS ANALYSIS

1. Outline what information and evidence have you gathered and considered for this analysis. If there is little, then explain your judgements in detail and your plans to validate them with evidence. If you have monitoring information available, include it here.

The council has analysed the statutory council tax base return which shows the total number of households that are required to pay council tax and the households who are eligible for council tax support.

Other than this is not possible to conduct further impact analyses as the proposed Council Tax increase will affect households in Brent in different ways based on their financial circumstances. However, low income households are likely to be protected as they will see increases in their Council Tax support which will either offset in full or partially this increase. The council tax support scheme is also proposed to be reviewed and further analysis on the cumulative impact will be assessed.

2. For each “protected characteristic” provide details of all the potential or known impacts identified, both positive and negative, and explain how you have reached

these conclusions based on the information and evidence listed above. Where appropriate state “not applicable”.

AGE	
Details of impacts identified	N/A
DISABILITY	
Details of impacts identified	N/A
RACE	
Details of impacts identified	N/A
SEX	
Details of impacts identified	N/A
SEXUAL ORIENTATION	
Details of impacts identified	N/A
PREGANCY AND MATERNITY	
Details of impacts identified	N/A
RELIGION OR BELIEF	

Details of impacts identified	N/A
GENDER REASSIGNMENT	
Details of impacts identified	N/A
MARRIAGE & CIVIL PARTNERSHIP	
Details of impacts identified	N/A

3. Could any of the impacts you have identified be unlawful under the Equality Act 2010?

No

4. Were the participants in any engagement initiatives representative of the people who will be affected by your proposal and is further engagement required?

Yes to both. Significant engagement / consultation is planned between December 2022 and February 2023 ahead of the decision being made by full council on 23 February 2023.

5. Please detail any areas identified as requiring further data or detailed analysis.

None required

6. If, following your action plan, negative impacts will or may remain, please explain how these can be justified?

If the proposal is rejected, the Adult Social Care budget will not grow by £2.8m, which could pose challenges to the service to meet growing demand of current and future service users. Failure to meet the increasing demand and diverse needs of current

and future service users would have a negative impact on those most at need. It will also likely lead to increased crisis costs and further impact upon budget pressures.

The 2.99% increase in Council Tax for general use should have a positive impact on some equality groups as it prevents an additional reduction of £4.2m in the Council's budget. Without a specific alternative proposal, the exact benefit to specific groups of residents, staff and external stakeholders is uncertain, but a reduction in budget at short notice will limit the scope of the Council to reduce the impact on services used by vulnerable groups of people.

While the Council Tax proposal will increase the financial pressure on some households, the Council Tax support scheme will partially or fully mitigate this impact for those households who are living on low incomes and are eligible for Council Tax support. Further, single households will have the impact mitigated by the 25% discount offered to single households.

7. Outline how you will monitor the actual, ongoing impact of the policy or proposal?

If the Council Tax proposal is approved, the Council will continue to monitor the impact on equality groups to ensure that any unexpected consequences and/or adverse impact are promptly identified and mitigated. This will take place when the new council tax support scheme is implemented.

The existing powers under Section 13A of the Local Government Act 1992 allow the Council to reduce Council Tax by up to 100%. The process for applying is detailed on the Council's website.

SECTION C - CONCLUSIONS

Based on the analysis above, please detail your overall conclusions. State if any mitigating actions are required to alleviate negative impacts, what these are and what the desired outcomes will be. If positive equality impacts have been identified, consider what actions you can take to enhance them. If you have decided to justify and continue with the policy despite negative equality impacts, provide your justification. If you are to stop the policy, explain why.

It is proposed to continue with the proposal. The reason for this is that the Council Tax increase will help to protect front line services, reduce the amount of savings required and provide much needed additional growth for the Adult Social Care budget. The Council Tax increase proposed is equivalent to approximately £7.0m of additional funding. If this funding was not available, services such as Adult Social Care and Children's Social Care would have to be significantly reduced.

Brent has processes in place for applying a Council Tax support/reduction/exemption to those eligible, therefore whilst this increase will impact across the board, it is anticipated that the impact will be proportionate dependent on an individual's circumstances and whether they receive a Council Tax support/reduction/exemption

SECTION D – RESULT

<i>Please select one of the following options. Mark with an "X".</i>		
A	CONTINUE WITH THE POLICY/PROPOSAL UNCHANGED	X
B	JUSTIFY AND CONTINUE THE POLICY/PROPOSAL	
C	CHANGE / ADJUST THE POLICY/PROPOSAL	
D	STOP OR ABANDON THE POLICY/PROPOSAL	

SECTION E - ACTION PLAN

This will help you monitor the steps you have identified to reduce the negative impacts (or increase the positive); monitor actual or ongoing impacts; plan reviews and any further engagement or analysis required.

Action	Expected outcome	Officer	Completion Date
Review impact of council tax increase	Better understanding of negative impacts	Peter Cosgrove	April – June 2023

SECTION F – SIGN OFF

Please ensure this section is signed and dated.

OFFICER:	Peter Cosgrove, Head of Revenues and Debt
REVIEWING OFFICER:	Ravinder Jassar, Deputy Director of Finance
HEAD OF SERVICE:	Thomas Cattermole, Director of Customer Access

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Cumulative Equalities Assessment: Budget Proposals 2023/24

1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this equality assessment is to provide an analysis of the likely impact of the council's budget savings proposals on residents and community groups with 'protected characteristics' as defined by the Equality Act 2010. The nine protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership¹, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity. Section 149, Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) of the Equality Act 2010 requires the council in the exercise of its functions to have regard to the need to:

1. Eliminate discrimination, harassment, and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the act;
2. Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not;
3. Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.

Whilst not a statutory requirement, it is our policy that where relevant an equality analysis should also cover socio-economic equality implications.

The council is committed to equality, diversity and inclusion. It seeks to ensure that all residents, employees and stakeholders are treated fairly and receive appropriate, accessible services and fair and equal opportunities. This commitment requires that equality considerations play a key role in our decision making processes; and in understanding the effect of our policies and practices.

Approach to considering equalities

The budget savings proposals have all been subject to an Equality Analysis (EA) screening, which helps to establish their relevance to the council's equalities duties and determine whether or not a full EA is required. The screening assesses the potential or likely impact on service users and employees with protected characteristics. Guidance issued to all officers on how to undertake an EA, provides that a full EA will not be required if it is clearly demonstrated that there will be no negative equality impacts. However, EAs are living documents

¹ Bullet point 2 and 3 does not apply to marriage and civil partnerships.

and if - as projects/proposals develop and further evidence of impacts becomes available – any unforeseen impacts emerge, they should be reviewed.

This document highlights the equality impacts for the 2023-24 budget proposals. Individual EA screenings for each proposal and full Equality Analyses are attached.

Nine proposals have been identified as requiring a full EA. The equality impacts concerned with these proposals are summarised in this report. The council must carefully consider and have regard to the impact of its savings proposals on the PSED; and take a reasonable and proportionate view regarding the overall impact and seek to mitigate impacts where possible.

Overall Assessment

No direct discrimination has been identified as a result of the budget proposals. A small proportion of the savings proposals may have a negative impact on equality of opportunity and may have a negative impact on opportunities to promote good relations, however measures have been identified to offset this.

These impacts will be kept under review. The proposed budget saving proposals are considered reasonable and have shown due regard to the PSED.

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2 DEMOGRAPHY OVERVIEW

Key facts about Brent's demographic profile are taken from the data sources [Population change in Brent](#) and the [Equality profile of Brent](#). They show the make-up of the borough, help us to identify potential impacts; and identify the increasing pressures and demand for council services. Please note that some of this information will be updated when final data sets are available from the Census 2021.

- Brent is home to around 335,300 residents and is the seventh largest borough in London.
- The borough has a population density of 7,652 people per square kilometre – the 14th highest density in England, and the highest in Outer London.
- Brent has high levels of population churn: in 2017-18, 32,600 people moved into the borough and 34,000 moved out – a turnover rate of 201 per 1000 population – 24th highest out of 317 areas in England, and second highest across Outer London.

- Brent's population increased by 27% between 1998-2018. In recent years, the borough's population change has been driven, primarily, by natural change (more births than deaths) as opposed to net migration. The birth rate has fallen over the year but remains well above the national average.
- Projections indicate that this pace of growth is set to continue: the population is expected to rise by a further 25% by 2041, faster than the London average (22%) and more than double the England average (10%). If realised, this would equate to an additional 84,800 residents by 2041.
- In line with national trends, the population is ageing: by 2041, the number of Brent residents aged 65 and over is projected to increase by 85% – an additional 34,900 older residents by 2041. The child population is also expected to grow, albeit more slowly, by 12% by 2041 (+8,600 children).
- Population growth will be concentrated in the areas where significant housing development is planned. The wards of Tokyngton and Alperton are expected to see the fastest growth: considered together, they are projected to accommodate an additional 47,600 residents by 2041.

A summary of the key protected characteristics in Brent are as follows:

Age

- Brent has a relatively young population. In 2018, the median age of the population was 35 in Brent, the same as in London, but five years lower than the national average (40 years, England). In Brent, 29% of the population is aged over 50 compared with 37% across England. Conversely, 39% of the borough's population is aged 25-49 compared with 33% in England. Brent has a higher proportion of children aged under ten compared with England (14% vs. 12%). The population has been ageing in recent years and this is expected to continue.

Disability

- Around one in seven Brent residents have a long-term health problem or disability that limits their day-to-day-activities in some way. The prevalence of disability rises sharply with age: more than half of all residents aged 65 and over had a long-term health problem or

disability.

Gender reassignment

- The Government Equalities Office tentatively estimates that around 0.3-0.8% of the UK population are transgender. In Brent, this would equate to between 1,000 to 2,500 people. Since the Gender Recognition Act came into force, only a small minority have obtained a Gender Recognition Certificate: 0.007% of the UK population (4,910 people across the UK since 2005).

Marriage and civil partnership

- In 2015, 960 marriages or civil partnerships took place in Brent – of these, 29 (3%) were same sex marriages or civil partnerships, the same as the percentage nationally but lower than the percentage in London (5%).

Pregnancy and maternity

- Brent has relatively high birth rates. In 2018, there were 4,705 births in Brent – which equates to 68.1 births per 1,000 women aged 15 to 44 – well above the national rate (59.2). Three quarters of all births in Brent were to women born outside the UK (75%) – this is the highest rate in England and Wales, reflecting the diversity of the borough's population.

Race

- Two thirds (67%) of the Brent population are from Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups. Brent's largest single ethnic group is the Indian population – who comprise 17% of residents – the fourth largest in London. Brent is the second most ethnically diverse borough in London, after Newham (according to the Simpson's Diversity Index).

Religion or belief

- The borough's three largest religious groups are Christian (41%), Muslim (19%) and Hindu (18%). Overall, 82% of residents had a religion – the fourth highest rate in England and Wales. The borough has the second largest Hindu population in England and Wales, and the 10th largest Muslim population (as a percentage of the population).

Sex

- The gender split in the population is 51% male and 49% female. The proportion of men is highest in the 20-34 age group where they comprise 54% of the population. In contrast, women make up a higher proportion of the Borough's elderly population: 62% of those aged 85 and over are female.

Sexual orientation

- Statistics about the size of the LGB population vary considerably and there is no single widely accepted measure. The 2017 GP Patient Survey found that 4.6% of Brent residents surveyed identified as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or 'Other' – below the London average (5.4%) but above the national rate (3.3%). Figures from the 2017 Annual Population Survey provide lower estimates for both London and England (3.2% and 2.6%).

3 IMPACT OF SAVING PROPOSALS

Summary 23/24 budget proposals

Although initial equality screenings have been undertaken to ascertain impact in terms of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), some of the proposals are in their formative stages and still to be developed or are subject to consultations. Consequently, as the proposals are developed further equality analysis will be undertaken to assess the PSED. It is important to note that several of the proposals have identified no impact on the PSED. Where a full equality impact assessment has been carried out, this is noted next to the proposal.

The proposals are:

AH01: Homecare Reductions: Post Covid increases in homecare, driven by increased need and hospital discharge, introduce new reablement service and reduce double handed care packages to manage demand and increase independence.

AH02: Not in-sourcing Reablement: Commission a reablement service through the market, which will deliver the same benefit for residents and for demand but will cost substantially less to deliver than bringing the service in house

AH03: Reduction in cost of Learning Disability Placements: Proposal to support more people with a Learning Disability to live as independently as possible and to continue to reduce Residential Placements

AH04: Extra Care Void Saving: Reduce the number of care home placements, reversing the increase driven by health during Covid, re-focusing on extra care placements filling voids and new extra care schemes as alternatives that promote more independence

A full Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken reviewing all levels of support highlighted in AH01 - AHO4

AH05: Mental Health Placements : Working closely with housing and secondary MH services to improve the recovery pathway post Covid, in particular reducing supported living placements and increased access to General Needs accommodation

AH06: Reductions in Staffing: Deliver the plan to increase the number of permanent staff in a very challenging recruitment market and reduce the Adult Social Care agency staffing

AH07: Digital / Transformation Savings - online forms, single view dashboards, integration of applications with Mosaic, assistive technology, electronic document management, Direct payments automation and reduction in overpayments; and potential for increased alignment with CYP DP team. Automation of manual case review processes

CYP01: Early Help: Savings proposals will be a combination of establishment savings achieved by deleting posts and reducing some commissioned services

CYP02: Inclusion and Virtual School: Reducing the Supporting Young People Contract, ('Connexions'). **A full Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken**

CYP03: Localities - Care Packages reduction: Care package reductions for families receiving support from the 0-25 children and young people with disabilities teams. **A full Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken**

CYP05: Looked after Children and Permanency: Review of agency worker usage and implementation of a vacancy factor. **A full Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken**

CYP06: Forward Planning Performance & Partnerships: Proposed savings will be made through the commissioning of placements for Looked After Children and Care Leavers

CYP07: Safeguarding and Quality Assurance: Savings will be made through the management of vacant posts and a reduction of the CYP training budget. **A full Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken**

CYP08: Setting and School Effectiveness: Proposed savings will be made by a reduction in staffing costs within the core school effectiveness team

CYP09: Digital / Transformation Savings: Admin - case management, RPA, Mosaic enhancement (alerts), electronic document management, removing manual processes and excel. Schools' admissions chatbots/virtual agents. Direct payments automation and reduction in overpayments; potential for increased alignment with ASC DP team. CAMS dashboard

CR01: Planning Service Staff: Reduce planning staff by 5% (3.5 FTE) achieved by natural turnover/deletion of vacant posts. Would impact ability to provide planning service and policy framework

CR02: Brent Works / Brent Start: Proposal to combine advisors across both Brent Start and Brent Works via turnover / vacancy management

CR03: Brent Start Programme Leader: Proposal to merge a position with another programme to delete this provision in Brent Start via vacancy management

CR04: Regeneration Capitalisation: Opportunity for further capitalisation for 4 years, whilst Wembley housing zone schemes are built

CR05: Town Centre managers: Reduction of one Town Centre manager

CR06: Strategy & Engagement restructure: Reduction in IAG Contract. Non appointment of new posts identified in the new structure

CR07: Communications restructure: Reduce the cost of Communications by moving to a business partnering model

CR08: Digital / Transformation Savings: Automation, chatbot, virtual agents. Dashboards for contract monitoring and demand management. Any changes to structures, alignment and commissioned services from Employment and Skills OBR. IoT e.g., potholes, better tech for field officers (Powerapps) to increase efficiency.

RS01: Removal of first class envelopes from the Civic Centre: Removal of first class envelopes from Civic Centre to reduce postage spends. First class postage will remain available in the Post Room but only for those requiring first class postage

RS02: Staffing changes: Staffing changes across the Improvement & Performance Team and the Digital Post Room teams. Duties to be covered by existing staff once re-evaluation of JD's and staff consultation has been carried out

RS03: IEG and Resilience contract reduction & Staffing reductions due to systems automation: Reduction in the usage of the Resilience contract and creation of in house applications to replace IEG

RS04: Online diary and reporting system and booking citizenship ceremonies: Online diary and reporting system equivalent to current product bought in house use of corporate. Online booking Citizenship ceremonies incorporating facility for payment for private ceremonies

RS05: Staff reorganisation: Staff reorganisation in the Revenue & Debt team

RS06: Reduction in licensing, corporate printing, supplies and services, delivery of ICT roadmap, staffing. Reduction in licensing spend through applications rationalisation; Reduction in corporate printing spend through continued move to digital options; Reduction in ICT and Transformation supplies and services spend; Reduction in Brent's contribution to the shared ICT service through realisation of savings through delivery of roadmap projects; Reduction in staffing in Transformation service

RS07: Digital / Transformation Savings: Online forms, chatbot/virtual agent, RPA, further reduction in print, aligning systems

RS08: Libraries stock: Reduction in Libraries stock budget

RS09: Increase Council Owned Temporary Accommodation Portfolio: Build a new Temporary Accommodation scheme of up to 100 units (similar to Anansi House), providing better quality and more affordable accommodation for people who would otherwise be in private sector nightly paid accommodation

RS11: Increase portfolio of Council Managed Temporary Accommodation (TA)

RS12: Street Light Dimming: Identify areas where lighting levels can be reduced to secure energy cost savings

RS13: Waste disposal – Education and outreach insourcing: Reduction in residual waste stream in order to secure increased recycling rates and reduced waste disposal payments to WLWA

RS14: Review Payments to WLWA: This proposal seeks to recover any over-payment of waste disposal charges made by Brent that may be retained by WLWA and held as reserves by that organisation.

RS15: Increased use of Proceeds Of Crime Act: Subsidise Regulatory Services area with use of POCA income

RS16: RLS related - Environmental Services Review: Environmental Services review staff structures as part of RLS Phase 2 review

RS17: RLS related Review of BTS: Detailed service review, route optimisation and alternative means of transport. **A full Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken**

RS18: RLS Related - Negotiate RLS cost reduction: Potential to reduce cost as part of RLS competitive dialogue tendering approach

RS19: RLS related - Rationalisation of Environmental service budgets: A rationalisation of the budgets within Environmental Services has taken place in anticipation of the savings required for the RLS project.

FR01: Reduction in staffing: Savings will be made from the creation of a centralised Oracle support function in IT, a proportion of Head of Finance management oversight of master data and systems control is no longer required

FR02: Digital / Transformation Savings: Transformation will enable automation of transactional activity across the whole of the Finance function and improvements in management self-serve as a result of Oracle Cloud enhancements which will deliver savings

FR03: External support for Internal Audit activity: Reduce use of external support to internal audit service

FR04: Civic Centre Office Let: Lease further floors of the Civic Centre to external organisations / tenants to generate revenue

FR05: Increase car park/EVCP charge: Considered feasible to increase civic centre parking charge and also charging rate for EVCP provision without impacting demand.

FR06: Security Service Transformation: Service transformation to be implemented following the detailed review of security provision across all Brent's operational buildings after staff TUPE'D across from the previous out-sourced provider in summer 2021

FR07: Rationalise soft FM service: Rationalising soft FM services (cleaning) to meet reduced portfolio demand

FR08: Commercial Staffing Review: Review capitalisation of staffing costs and replace interims with permanent staff

GOV01: Reduction in staffing via restructure: Proposed savings to be made from reduction in posts and more efficient allocation of tasks

GOV02: Restructures in HR: This saving would introduce a new model for advisory support in HR and reduce the number of advisory posts in HR by one in 2023/24 and by one in 2023/24.

GOV03: Reduce Corporate Learning and Development Budget: Reduction in budget held by HR for Corporate training

GOV04: Administrative and Miscellaneous Efficiencies: Increased advert via LinkedIn for recruitment advertising - reduction in publications

GOV05: Increase income target for recoverable legal work costs: S106 and other third-party income increase

GOV06: Reduce Legal Fees Budget: Reduce the provision in the legal budget for payment of court fees and the costs of advice and representation by barristers in cases brought by or against the council

GOV07: Cessation of DX Postal service: This savings would involve discontinuing use of the legal document exchange service through which documents for the court, barrister's chambers and solicitor's firms are currently sometimes despatched

GOV08: Miscellaneous expenses reduction: Miscellaneous expenses reduction. This saving would remove a budget utilised for unplanned overhead expenses

GOV09: Administrative and Miscellaneous Efficiencies: This proposal concerns aligning salary budgets with the establishment

GOV10: Procurement restructure: Review structure of the Procurement team with overall impact leading to a reduction in the establishment by 1 FTE

GOV11: Digital / Transformation Savings: Electronic document management, further implementation of DocuSign, sharing documents with external parties via M365, chatbots for routine HR and Legal queries

CORP1: Digital / Transformation Savings: Commissioning, Performance and Communications review

CORP4: Procurement savings: To be managed by the Commissioning and Procurement Board. All contracts on pipeline will come to the board to review contract specifications in order to deliver savings

CORP5: CMT Savings: Savings from June 2022 CMT Restructure

CORP6: RLS related - Environment department saving; A rationalisation of the budgets within Environment has taken place in anticipation of the savings required for the RLS project.

Proposals requiring a full equality assessment

The proposed savings look to generate income for the council or have other positive impacts on service users. Few proposals were identified during the screening process as having an anticipated negative impact. Attached to this report are the supporting EA screenings for each savings proposal as well as the full Equality Analysis (the latter of which are summarised below).

AH01: Homecare Reductions; AH03: Reduction in Cost of Learning Disability Placements; AH04: Reduction in Care Home Placements

The proposal outlines a reduction in residential placements, where service users would be moved to supported living or extra care services, increasing independence and tailoring their care and support around their needs. This is in line with Brent's aim to use services that promote independence and choice within care and has formed a fundamental objective of the Brent Supported Living programme.

Initially, service users may experience some negative impact, due to the significant change in the type of care that they are provided as well as the level of care they are given, such as being introduced to different carers, being in a different location and a different way in.

Every change to a package of care is assessed for individually by a qualified professional, trained to understand legislation including the Care Act 2014 and the Equalities Act 2010. Protected characteristics are considered as part of an holistic assessment and if the practitioner is of the opinion that the client requires additional support to manage changes then they will ensure appropriate interventions are put in place to minimise the impact.

However, no negative impact is expected over the long term, as all reablement packages are subject to a personalised assessment of need before they are prescribed and any change to existing services will be subject to an assessment/review of the individual's needs. The service will also be monitored and evaluated regularly to ensure the efficiency of the service.

All moves are done working closely with the person and their family or advocate to live as independently as possible and to continue to reduce Residential Placements.

CYP02: Inclusion and Virtual School: Reducing the Supporting Young People Contract:

It is proposed that savings will be made by a reduction in the contract value of the Supporting Young People Contract ('Connexions') by the value of £80K. The full impact will be mitigated by £40K of education funding (e.g., pupil premium funding) being allocated to the service to enable a dedicated advisor from the provider Prospects to be maintained within Brent Virtual School.

Overall, the contract will continue to provide essential support to children and young people to ensure that they have positive journeys into adulthood.

However, a reduced service could impact on the number of young people who are in education, employment or training post-16 in relation to the most vulnerable groups. A number of mitigation measures will address these:

- The impact of the saving will be reduced by £40K being provided towards the contract through Brent Virtual School funds
- The contract will focus on vulnerable young people most at risk of being NEET to mitigate any negative impacts.
- Young people with SEND will be supported through improved 14+ transition planning at annual reviews of Education, Health and Care Plans led by schools to mitigate any impact.
- As a Council priority there is separate, targeted work underway through the Black Community Action Plan to support and motivate young people into education, employment and training and to provide access/exposure to employment opportunities that will mitigate the impact.

CYP03: Localities - Care Packages reduction: Care package reductions for families receiving support from the 0-25 children and young people with disabilities teams.

The proposal is to implement a Resource Allocation System (RAS) in the 0-25 service. This should provide a fairer and more consistent allocation of care packages for families and some current high cost packages are likely to be reduced. This will require a reassessment of the level of support being received by some families, both in terms of direct payments and care at home support. However, using this allocation scheme is likely to create a more consistent decision making in relation to the calculation of the size of care packages.

Potential negative impacts have been identified in relation to age and disability. It is likely that the proposal will impact on the level of support and payments being received with some families experiencing a reduction in the size of their care packages. This will be

because using the new assessment tool their assessment did not support the current level of care package. Work to explore how these impacts can be mitigated will be determined following the pilot.

A level of engagement has been undertaken with key stakeholders through the Brent Care Forum and before the RAS is implemented, a pilot scheme will run between December 2022 and February 2023 prior to full implementation in April 2023. This will help to identify any issues and concerns that arise. Furthermore, the number and type of challenges or complaints regarding care packages will be monitored and feedback from the Brent Parent Carer Forum will be sought to ensure that support is provided during the process and any feedback and suggestions are reviewed throughout implementation.

Equality analysis will continue to be conducted and reviewed, and any impacts monitored and mitigated against where applicable.

CYP05: Looked after Children and Permanency: Review of agency worker usage and implementation of a vacancy factor

The proposal sets out achieving savings through the management of vacant posts. This includes not recruiting to vacant posts in social work teams and realigning workload. An increase in vacant posts would require a redistribution of work to manage caseloads and redistribution of support for practice development.

Potential negative impact on age (under 25's provision) due to lack of resource over a period of time. The posts are being held vacant and work has been redistributed. This is possible in the short term, however, could have a much more significant impact if the roles were deleted permanently. This would affect the quality and consistency of social work practice for looked after children as the remaining service and team managers would be expected to undertake these tasks in addition to their existing job requirements over a longer period of time.

Staffing pressures could have the following impact:

- Less time and attention from allocated social workers due to higher caseloads
- Less capacity within teams for reflective practice which could impact on ability to understand, identify and respond to children and young people's needs, increasing pressures on existing resources which will impact the timeliness and quality of service to children, young people and families.

As highlighted above these concerns are only likely to arise if the roles were permanently deleted, mitigations will be put in place including monitoring and evaluation of the impact of the policy on caseloads and team functioning, mid-year review of the policy/proposals by HOS to ensure service is meeting statutory functions for all children and young people.

The Equality Assessment will be reviewed and updated as necessary to ensure any changes or impacts are monitored and evaluated on a regular basis.

CYP07: Safeguarding and Quality Assurance

Savings will be made through the management of vacant posts and a reduction of the CYP training budget. It is proposed that 4 social work posts will no longer be funded in the Locality Service. These savings will be achieved through the removal of funding for 2 social work posts in the AST team (Early Help service) and not recruiting to 2 vacant posts in the long term Locality social work teams. It is proposed that the 2 AST posts will be funded from other sources. The reduction of 2 posts in the Localities teams will lead to fewer case holding social workers and this will be managed by reallocating cases to other workers within the service.

This service provides support to children and their families up to the age of 18. It is young people in this age range who will be affected.

Staffing pressures could have the following impact:

- Less time and attention from allocated social workers due to higher caseloads
- Less capacity within teams for reflective practice which could impact on ability to understand, identify and respond to children and young people's needs.

The impacts of the reduction of posts will need to be carefully monitored and reviewed over time. The size of caseloads will need to be carefully tracked as will the quality and timeliness of the casework being completed. Detailed caseload analysis would need to take place before April 2023 in order to identify which teams could best cope with the loss of a social worker post.

RS17: Review of Brent Transport Service

It is proposed that a review of Transport Services is conducted in order to inform savings options. This will assist in establishing how well travel and transport services currently perform and identify cost reduction potential along with service quality and compliance

improvement opportunities. Areas that will be under review include users of the Brent Passenger Transport Service, children with physical and/or learning disabilities and adults who use day centres, families and carers of users of the service, Brent Passenger Transport staff and associated contractors and school staff and day centre staff.

Currently the service is mainly focused on younger and older age groups and therefore any change will disproportionately affect those groups. The nature of the impact will depend on the individuals and their disability. People with learning disabilities may find any change in transport drivers and escorts very unsettling.

The proposal is likely to have negative impacts in terms of the 'disability' and 'age' protected groups, as SEN children are likely to be affected by changes to individual routines, which can cause anxiety. Also, users may experience longer or additional travelling in order to access the service. Carers, whilst not protected themselves under the Equality Act 2010, are protected from indirect discrimination if they are caring for someone with a disability. Parent carers of SEN children may also be affected by outcomes of this proposal as their children would be affected.

Currently there are no impacts as the proposal is only to review the services. Equality analysis would continue to be conducted and reviewed, and any impacts monitored and mitigated against where applicable.

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Increase in Council Tax by 4.99% in 2023/24

In order to deliver a legally required balanced budget, it is proposed to increase Council Tax by 4.99%, where 2% is ring fenced for Adult Social Care and 2.99% is a general increase. The proposal will generate an additional £7m of recurring income for the Council and therefore avoid having to make further savings to key council services such as adult social care and children's services.

This will impact on all residents within Brent who are eligible to pay Council Tax. The proposal will impact on all residents in the borough who are liable to pay Council Tax. As the increase has universal application, no one particular group with protected characteristics is targeted.

An increase in Council tax will impact on residents and potentially affect those from protected groups harder. However, for the most vulnerable residents, the Council Tax Support scheme will partially or fully mitigate this impact for those households who are living on low incomes and are eligible for Council Tax Support. Furthermore, single households will have the impact mitigated by the 25% discount offered to single households.

In addition, further staff training will be provided to equip officers with the awareness to identify where a discretionary payment may be appropriate, and how such requests should be assessed, and opportunities to improve equality monitoring data. Further mitigating actions are also available for residents and are highlighted in under the socio-economic implications section.

4 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Of the EAs that have indicated a negative impact, they have been related to the protected groups of disability and age. However, at this stage the impacts are considered to be short-term and part of a process that will eventually bring about improvements to the same.

5 SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS

Certain groups within the population are more likely than others to live in a low income household. Low income is defined as living on household incomes below £20,000 per year, after tax and deductions (Brent Resident Attitude Survey 2018). In Brent, survey analysis shows that those living on lower incomes are more likely to be from Black ethnic groups; residents with a disability or long-term illness; older residents; those with no qualifications; those who are not in work; and those who live in social housing.

The proposal regarding increasing council tax has the potential to negatively impact on families and residents from lower socio-economic groups. This will be mitigated by early and accessible communication with residents affected, continuing to offer support for vulnerable residents, and more effective working with partners to ensure resources are used effectively.

The Council is aware of the cumulative impact of the cost of living crisis and the support that our residents and service users may require at this time. The following support has been made available:

Financial Support: households across Brent can access financial assistance through the following funds

- Resident Support Fund: this is available to Brent residents who are having difficulty due to unforeseen financial circumstances. Brent residents can apply for financial support, for up to £1000, to help with energy bills and other household expenditure
- Household Support Fund (HSF): The Government's HSF has been used to provide support to Brent households with the cost of food and fuel in the form of food vouchers, grants, and financial support to food aid organisations
- Discretionary Housing Payment: A one off payment can be provided to assist with rent shortfall, rent deposits and rent in advance if a Brent resident needs to move home

Certain eligibility criteria need to be met to access financial support.

Support and Advice: Brent hubs can provide support and advice to Brent residents who are struggling to pay their utility bills this winter. This can include assistance with completing funding applications for support from local and national schemes, including the Brent Resident Support Fund, referral routes to other advisory agencies who specialise in energy support such as Green Doctors and SHINE, referral routes to food banks and emergency supermarket vouchers and urgent support with topping up pre-payment gas and electricity meters

Food Aid and Vouchers: Supporting the families / carers of approximately 12,000 eligible children and young people with supermarket vouchers during each of the school holidays since December 2020.

Some of the proposals outlined in the report will be mitigated by early and accessible communication with residents affected, continuing to offer support for vulnerable residents, for example through the Brent Hubs and digital assistance, and more effective working with partners to ensure resources are used effectively.

6 STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

Of the budget proposals that were subject to an equality screening, several have staffing implications arising from staff restructures or service redesign. Where there are staffing implications for a third party, the council will work with the third party organisation to ensure that the equality implications are understood, and appropriate steps taken to minimise any adverse impacts.

To mitigate against compulsory staff redundancies, a number of the proposals will achieve a reduction through giving up vacant posts or through natural turnover. In these cases, it is considered that there will be no impact on characteristic groups.

Whenever the council is required to undertake compulsory redundancies, full EAs will be undertaken as part of the consultation process. For proposals that include a reduction in the number of posts and redundancy implications, a meaningful assessment on the equality impact is not possible at this stage as no individuals (and therefore protected characteristics) have been identified for assessment. Equality Analyses in these cases will be carried out closer to the time of the start of the restructure.

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Budget Scrutiny Task Group Findings Report

Scrutiny of the Draft Budget
Proposals for 2023/24

24 January 2023



Foreward

Austerity policies since 2010 have created financial insecurity for Brent residents. The Budget Scrutiny Task Group's role has been to assess the impact of the Council's draft budget proposals for 2023/24. This is in response to another year of significant cuts to local government funding. Despite this, the Council has put forward a Budget which recognises the reality of the lives of our residents. For instance, the Council choosing not to cut Home Care visits to 15 minutes, unlike many other boroughs; Investing in Council-owned temporary accommodation to improve housing standards for those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness; and keeping Brent's libraries open. There is no doubt though that the impact of 12 years of cumulative public sector and local authority cuts will continue to be felt by all residents in Brent. Residents deserve a budget driven by their needs, not austerity budgets driven by funding cuts.

I would like to thank our local stakeholders and community organisations who contributed to this report, and to the other members of the Task Group for their commitment and thoughtful challenges to the budget within a compressed timetable. The thanks of the Task Group also goes to the scrutiny officers for their support throughout the budget scrutiny process.

Councillor Rita Conneely

Chair – Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee



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Members of the Budget Scrutiny Task Group

The Budget Scrutiny Task Group was a joint effort between the Council's two scrutiny committees, with equal representation from the Resources and Public Realm Committee and the Community and Wellbeing Committee. The Task Group comprised of the following representatives:

Councillor Rita Conneely – Chair

Councillor Ketan Sheth – Vice-Chair

Councillor Tom Miller

Councillor Hannah Matin

Councillor Jayanti Patel

Councillor Diane Collymore

Terms of Reference

The following terms of reference were agreed at the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee on 6 September 2022:

- To consider the Cabinet's budget proposals for 2023-24.
- To receive evidence from Cabinet Members, senior departmental officers, and any other relevant stakeholders to help inform and shape any comments and recommendations.
- To agree a draft report that comments on the budget proposals for submission to the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee for subsequent ratification and submission to Cabinet.

1. Introduction

Context

- 1.1. In July 2022, Brent Council agreed its revised Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), outlining the financial framework for the financial years 2023/24 to 2024/2025. The programme developed through a combination of effective financial management, cost control, scenario modelling and more innovative approaches to investment and demand management, forecasted a two-year savings target of £28m of which £18m has been identified for the financial year 2023/24, and £12m for 2024/25. At the time the MTFS was agreed, it was noted that the Council was already operating in a significantly challenging financial environment having made £196m worth of cumulative cuts to its budget since 2010. The financial pressures have been exacerbated by unexpected factors such as the global implications from war in Ukraine, high levels of inflation and rising interest rates, presenting the Authority with an uncertain economic environment to navigate.
- 1.2. The Council published its Draft Budget for 2023/24 in November 2022, setting out a series of budget proposals totalling £18m. It is important to note that since the proposals have been published, the provisional Local Government Finance Settlement for 2023/24 was released on 21 December 2022. Overall, it is understood that the provisional settlement provides additional resources above the level forecast in the November Budget report. Whilst the settlement provided additional funding that was not forecast in the MTFS, additional pressures have emerged since the MTFS was last presented to members.
- 1.3. The final budget position of the Council will not be known until the final proposals are published for the Cabinet Meeting in February 2023. The Task Group have been assured that any additional monies from the Settlement will be used to fund new budget pressures that have been identified, such as pressures in Children's Social Care and rising energy costs. Additionally, this will enable the Council to spread a portion of the savings identified for financial year 2023/24 over the next two financial years to lessen the impacts of the proposals on our residents.
- 1.4. The Task Group's findings are therefore based on the assumptions set out as part of the Draft Budget 2023/24.
- 1.5. Additionally, the Draft Budget proposed to increase Council Tax by 2.99% (consisting of a 1.99% general increase plus 1% for the Adult Social Care Precept). Again it is important to note that since the proposals were published, the Chancellor's Autumn Statement has increased the maximum amount local authorities can raise Council Tax, from 2.99% to 4.99% (consisting of a 2.99% general increase plus 2% for the Adult Social Care Precept) without needing a referendum. The Council is currently considering this and are likely to adopt the new maximum increase, following the consultation that is currently underway.

Role of Task Group

- 1.6. Brent's decision-making framework gives a clear and important role to Overview and Scrutiny in its budget-setting. The process for developing proposals for the budget and capital programme is outlined in the Brent Council Constitution, Part 2, Standing Order 19. This requires that the Cabinet's budget proposals be considered by the Council's Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee. After it has scrutinised the proposals, the Committee will then submit a note of its deliberations and comments on the proposals to the Cabinet.

- 1.7. The Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee agreed to scrutinise the draft budget proposals for 2023/24 through a Budget Scrutiny Task Group. This was established at the committee meeting on 6 September 2022.¹
- 1.8. The panel held a series of meetings between October and December 2022 to prepare this report. This included closed meetings that discussed the Task Group's own findings, ideas, and recommendations, and evidence sessions with the Cabinet, Corporate Management Team, and our valued partners. We also presented questions and scrutinised the proposals in detail. The full list of participants is provided at the end of this report.
- 1.9. For the purposes outlined in the Constitution this report will be considered and agreed by the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee on Tuesday 24 January 2023. A report from the Committee will then be presented to Cabinet for consideration in February 2023, alongside the report from the Corporate Director of Finance and Resources on the final budget proposals for 2023/24.
- 1.10. The Task Group seeks to act as a 'critical friend'. Therefore, it is hoped this report will spark constructive debate on the proposals, and more widely on how Brent sets its budget in alignment with the democratically agreed strategic priorities of the Council.
- 1.11. Residents, businesses, partners and communities need us more than ever as we all navigate the Cost of Living crisis. We can strive to provide support and continue to improve the way we deliver services by adopting a robust and creative budget built on income generation and investing in our voluntary and community sector that prioritises protecting our most vulnerable residents.
- 1.12. This report summarises our investigations and conclusions. We would welcome the Cabinet's decision to take our recommendations on the proposed budget for 2023/24 forward.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 The Budget Scrutiny Task Group makes the following recommendations to Cabinet.

Recommendation 1- Borough Plan 2023-27 Alignment

It is important that the proposed budget properly aligns with the strategic priorities identified in the upcoming Borough Plan 2023-27. The Task Group are concerned that the draft budget omits solid proposals to deliver on our strategic priorities around our climate commitments, including our goal to become Carbon Net Zero by 2030. There is a real opportunity for the Council to clearly communicate the relationship between its strategic priorities and budget proposals to residents, local councillors, and partners. The Council should strive to publish both the Budget and Borough Plan at the same time but the Task Group has noted that this has been challenging on this occasion due to time restraints and budget uncertainties. **The Task Group recommend that the Council more clearly demonstrates how public money is being spent in line with the democratically agreed strategic priorities for the borough.**

Recommendation 2 – Proposal Categorisations

The Task Group are concerned with how the draft budget proposals were being presented to residents. It was noted that using language such as 'savings' in past budget setting processes may have been acceptable; however, on this occasion this is not applicable due to the great amount that needs to be cut from the budget moving forward. Given that the Council has to continue to deliver savings over the next two years to balance the budget, there is a greater need for resident's expectations to be managed correctly and honestly to ensure that they are prepared for the difficult changes to important services. **The Task Group recommend that each budget proposal is categorised as one of: Cut; Income generation;**

¹ <https://democracy.brent.gov.uk/documents/s124625/06.%20Establishment%20of%20Budget%20Task%20Group.pdf>

Service transformation; Efficiency; or Investment for transparency purposes. This language should also be used in Council communications in order for residents to distinguish between the proposals which are cuts/service reductions, those which are investments, and those which are efficiencies/service transformation.

Recommendation 3 – Income Generation

The Task Group welcome and are encouraged by the Council's efforts to identify options for income generation. We would encourage officers to continue being innovative in identifying further opportunities for income generation to offset the impact that many of the proposals will have on vital council services. Specifically, around increasing parking fees/charges and generating income from our assets, such as parks. With regards to the former, we note the Chief Executive's comments around ensuring that if we are able to increase parking fees/charges, that the messaging to residents would have to be very clear in specifying that any charges recouped from parking fees would be reinvested in highways infrastructure as is legally required. However, any fee/charge increases must adopt a balanced approach that accounts for the impact of the Cost of Living crisis on different communities. We would also like to stress that utilising our parks to generate income could assist us in our legacy work as 'Borough of Culture 2020'. **The Task Group recommend that the Council:**

- **Increase parking fees/charges to a more comparable rate charged by surrounding boroughs to secure safe movement of traffic and adequate parking and;**
- **Utilise our parks to generate additional income – as part of this process, the Council should draw comparisons with other local authorities to learn from good practice.**

Recommendation 4 – Additional Financial Support for Residents

The Task Group note the Chancellor's Autumn Statement, which gives provision for local authorities to raise Council Tax by a maximum of 4.99% without a referendum. We appreciate the Council is likely to have no other viable options but to raise Council Tax by this amount to navigate the current financial challenges. However, Council Tax is a regressive tax; should this increase happen, the Task Group is concerned that this may cause greater hardship to those residents who currently do not qualify for relief under the Council Tax Support Scheme or Resident Support Fund. Additionally, the Task Group are concerned that in response to tax increases, along with rising energy costs and unaffordable rents, it is frequently only food which is left for residents and families to sacrifice. **The Task Group therefore recommend that the Council:**

- **Increases funding and reviews the eligibility criteria for both the Council Tax Support scheme and the Resident Support Fund, should the financial modelling process allow and;**
- **Explores options to provide additional support to children to tackle food poverty, such as extending universal free school meals provision.**

Recommendation 5 – Additional Advice & Support for our Voluntary Sector partners

It is clear that our voluntary sector partners are also experiencing significant financial difficulty and, like the Council, have been subject to consistent budget reductions over the last 10 years. The voluntary sector provide vital support for many residents and act as a safety net for the Council by going above and beyond to offer services that are beyond their traditional remit (e.g. food aid). The Task Group are satisfied that the Council is doing the best it can to protect the voluntary sector and frontline services in its proposed budget. However, it is likely that in the future funding to the voluntary sector could be scaled back. It is important we provide the voluntary sector with its own safety net. **To assist in building voluntary sector resilience, the Task Group recommend that the Council develops:**

- **An approach to increase the value of the commissioned contracts offered to the VCS to help them navigate the current volatile economic environment. The Council could also use this as an opportunity to tighten and improve its contract monitoring process to ensure further robustness and transparency in achieving outcomes.**
- **A collaborative strategy with the VCS to enable these organisations to identify and secure new income streams. This should also include scope for increased opportunities to make joint bids for grant funding.**

- **A transparent policy for distributing Council community assets to our voluntary partners in need of space. Specifically, offering capped peppercorn rents to the sector to expand their operations.**

Recommendation 6 – Equal Access for All Residents

The Task Group understands the importance of the Council taking advantage of the opportunities/benefits associated with digital transformation, especially when taking into consideration the possible savings and efficiencies they can provide. However, we are still mindful that not all automated services are fit for purpose nor accessible to all residents (e.g. those who are digitally excluded, those with disabilities etc.) **The Task Group recommend that:**

- **The proposed automated services (e.g. chat bots) are tested by residents ahead of implementation, especially by those who have accessibility needs to ensure that all residents have equal access to services and;**
- **Additional advice and support is provided to disabled residents and those cohorts of residents with other access needs (e.g. literacy needs/English not a first language etc.) to navigate digital-form filling so they can maximise the benefits/grants they are eligible for and entitled to.**

Recommendation 7 – Improving Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs)

The Task Group noted that the Council has undertaken individual equality impact assessments (EIA) on each proposal, but improvements could be made to the current process to ensure greater transparency so EIAs are not seen as a ‘tick box’ exercise. **The Task Group recommend that the Council:**

- **Include an evidence base/rationale section in the EIA for each proposal where it has been deemed that there are no potential or likely impact on service users and employees with protected characteristics (e.g. how the Council arrived at such decisions) and;**
- **Undertake a cumulative equality impact assessment of the budget decisions since 2018 to understand fully the medium and long-term impacts of its financial decisions. It is recommended a cumulative EqIA is completed during financial year 2023/24 and is included in the final budget report 2024/25.**

Recommendation 8- Increased Collaboration

The Task Group is not clear on how health partners will be involved in the decision-making around in agreeing step down plans into general needs accommodation (proposal AH05). This partnership is vital to ensure our most vulnerable residents have the appropriate support in place at the right time, especially considering the difficulties in recruiting and retaining high quality staff. More generally this proposal raises interest from the Task Group regarding how we can work better with the NHS and other stakeholders around hospital discharges e.g. how we collectively mitigate the risks around discharge, and how we leverage contributions from partners/agencies in providing high quality social care and support. At present we have concerns that the rising costs in Adult Social Care cannot be met by the Council alone, where there is a need for clarity on the NHS funding responsibilities. **To ensure a holistic approach to residents’ care, specifically ‘those with complex needs’, the Task Group recommend that:**

- **A collaborative mechanism is established between the Council, NHS, and other relevant stakeholders to agree discharges/step down plans. If possible, this should be considered as part of the review process currently taking place with Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust (CNWL) in the Integrated Care Partnership and;**
- **The Council leverage sufficient financial contributions from the NHS (and other relevant anchor institutions) to improve the Health & Social Care function in Brent.**

Recommendation 9 – Lobbying

We note that many of the challenges in the draft budget proposals are reliant on the powers and funding from central government to be resolved. **The Task Group therefore recommend that the Council works closely with neighbouring local authorities, London Councils, and the Local Government Association (LGA) to seek:**

- **Additional funding in the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG), notably the High Needs Block of the DSG which is currently in deficit. Although the Task Group is pleased with the activity**

undertaken to manage the deficit and despite the fact that the Council will see increased funding from central government, there is still a need for additional financial support to meet rising demand.

- Powers to levy proportionate charges on parked motorcycles/mopeds. If successful, this would enable the Council to expand the parking permit system in the borough to include other forms of vehicles.
- Local Government funding reform, including reform of regressive taxes such as Council Tax.
- Changes to gambling legislation and regulations that enable local authorities to generate additional income from gambling licensing fees. This money could then be used to reinvest in vital Council services.
- The introduction of 'Short Term Letting' legislation that will allow local authorities to establish licensing schemes for 'Air B&B' accommodation in their respective boroughs. This would enable the Council to generate additional income from 'Air B&B' businesses in Brent that could then be reinvested back into services for the benefit of residents.

Recommendation 10- Phased Reduction to Care Packages Provision

In relation to proposal CYP03, the Task Group note that the Children and Young People department has identified discrepancies between care packages and the need for clarity and consistency in regards to the eligibility criteria and presenting needs when determining the level of support to be provided. The Task Group supports the review of care packages and better aligning resources to the evidenced needs of children; however we still have concerns about the impact this proposal could have on disabled children in the borough as a whole if the cut to overall provision is made over one financial year. **The Task Group recommend that a proportion of the additional funding from the Local Government Finance Settlement is used to enable the Council to defer a proportion of the savings in this proposal to financial year 24/25. This is to ensure changes in provision are implemented in a phased way.**

Recommendation 11- Review Areas of Focus for Town Centre Management Function

The Task Group believe the current town centre management infrastructure has made great strides in revitalising our town centres and supporting our businesses. This has been essential post-covid and in the current economic climate. We felt assured that proposal CR05 would not impact service delivery, however we believe this proposal presents an opportunity for the Council to rethink its town centre management structure to ensure more effective focus on economically deprived areas. **The Task Group recommend reviewing the areas of focus for the town centre management function, whereby resource can be balanced against need; and work duplication prevented.**

Recommendation 12 – Mitigating the impact of reducing the library stock budget

Although proposal RS08 is likely to have a small impact in the context of the collective budget proposals, the Task Group has concerns with the potential impact that this specific proposal could have on Brent's most vulnerable residents, and in particular children. **The Task Group recommend that the Council explores external options to leverage additional resources for our most vulnerable residents, such as the promotion of schemes (e.g. Letterbox Club run by BookTrust) offering free books to vulnerable and disadvantaged children. This could help offset the impact of the proposal on disadvantaged residents and children; and could assist with ensuring children in Brent have equal access to a broad range of reading material.**

Recommendation 13 – Mitigating the impact of reducing the Corporate Learning and Training budget

The Task Group recommend that the Council be guided by staff satisfaction surveys when deciding what training courses to discontinue as part of the reduction to the Corporate Learning and Training budget (GOV03).

3. Evidence Sessions

- 3.1. The Budget Scrutiny Task Group held a series of evidence sessions with Cabinet Members, the Corporate Management Team, and partners to review the suitability of the 2023/24 budget proposals and to inform its recommendations.
- 3.2. As part of this process, council officers provided the following reports for consideration:
- [Q2 Financial Report 2022/23](#)
 - [Medium Term Financial Strategy \(MTFS\)](#)
 - [Draft Budget 2023/24](#) (inclusive of the revised MTFS, budget assumptions, scenario modelling, and draft budget proposals)

Work Planning Sessions

- 3.3. The work planning meetings were held on 25 October and 31 October 2022.
- 3.4. Key witnesses included the Deputy Leader, the Corporate Director of Finance & Resources, and the Deputy Director of Finance.
- 3.5. At the initial session the Task Group heard from the Deputy Leader and senior finance officers on the Council's latest overall financial position, the Medium Term Financial Outlook, the Council's financial pressures/mitigations, emerging budget assumptions and its budget setting strategy for 2023/24 (Q2 Financial Report and Medium Term Financial Outlook).
- 3.6. During work planning, Task Group members discussed and agreed the approach to be taken to scrutinise the Draft Budget 2023/24. This consisted of:
- A focus group with key voluntary and community sector partners to analyse the budget proposals and temperature check the impact and assumptions that sit behind them.
 - An evidence session to review the updated Medium Term Financial Outlook, proposed consultation/engagement plan and the budget proposals put forward for the following directorates: Children and Young People, Communities & Regeneration, Governance, and Finance & Resources.
 - An evidence session on the remaining proposals for Adult Social Care & Health and Residents Services
 - A final evidence session to hear any additional evidence and to agree the draft recommendations and conclusions
- 3.7. There were a number of specific areas that the Task Group agreed to review in depth, specifically:
- **Brent Council's overall financial position**
 - Brent Council's **MTFS**, and the proposed budget setting strategy for 2023/24 (including budget assumptions).
 - Draft Budget 2023/24 consultation
 - **The impact of the COVID19** on Brent Council's budget pressures and performance
 - **The impact of the Cost of Living Crisis** on Brent Council's budget pressures and performance.
 - **The impact of inflation** on Brent Council's budget pressures and performance
 - The Council's key departmental **overspends and underspends**
 - The main areas for expenditure pressure by department and spending assumptions in the Budget for 2023/24.
 - The profile of Budget risks for 2022/2023 and 2023/24
 - **The impact of budget proposals 2023/24** on service delivery
 - The main **income** streams for 2022/2023; including income generation strategy and targets.
 - The **Capital Budget** of the Council

- The Council's **Housing Revenue Account**
- The level of **reserves** for 2022-23 and projected for 2023-24

3.8. The Cabinet, Corporate Management Team and Statutory Scrutiny Officer were sighted on the scope and content of the budget scrutiny project plan.

Evidence Session 1

3.9. Evidence session 1 was held on 17 November 2022.

3.10. Key attendees included the Deputy Leader, the Cabinet Members for Community Engagement, Equalities, and Culture; Children, Young People, and Schools; Regeneration and Planning, Jobs, Economy & Citizen Experience; the Chief Executive, and the Corporate Director for Finance & Resources.

3.11. The session focused on several topics including:

- The Council's renewed MTFs
- Updated income and expenditure budget assumptions
- Risk, issues and uncertainties faced by the Council e.g. Cost of Living Crisis and rising inflation etc.
- Reserves strategy

3.12. The Task Group undertook a deep dive exercise into the draft budget proposals for the directorates below:

- Children & Young People
- Communities & Regeneration
- Governance
- Finance & Resources

3.13. The exercise entailed interrogating the impact of these proposals on residents, analysing the accuracy of the relevant equality impact assessments and discussing whether the proposals were realistic.

Budget-setting process:

3.14. The Task Group noted the challenging financial situation and uncertainty that the Council face in its budget setting process. The biggest impact on the Council's budget for next year will be inflation, which officers predicted will be at its highest this and next year. The Corporate Director of Finance and Resources stressed the challenge of identifying savings of £18m in the next year and achieving the savings target of £28m for the next 2 years, due to factors such as demographic changes in Brent, likely cost of inflation and changes in income streams e.g. grants or funding from central government, Council Tax, Business Rates etc.

3.15. The Deputy Leader and officers stressed that the assumptions made in the Draft Budget 2023/24 reports are based on the information currently available to the Council, which would be reviewed following details on the final Local Government Finance Settlement.

3.16. The budget gap between 2023/24 and 2024/25, estimated at £28m, was a central case based on current budget assumptions and scenario modelling. The accuracy of this is at best +/- 20%, and wider variations are entirely plausible. Due to volatility in the economic environment the Task Group agree with the Council going with a central case – officers stressed the importance of guarding against being overly pessimistic or overly optimistic to ensure we do not implement decisions (e.g. service/staff cuts) that are later determined unnecessary.

- 3.17. Due to the uncertainty in the economic environment, it was noted that the Council had diverted from customary practice and planned to set a one-year budget on this occasion to allow for agility in the budget setting process. The Task Group were assured that the budget would be kept under review with assumptions being updated as and when needed.
- 3.18. Officers stressed that the budget proposals for 2023/24 are mainly focused on transformation and staff restructures to protect frontline services. However, being creative and focusing savings in this manner is becoming increasingly difficult, particularly when considering the cuts the Council have experienced over the last 10 years.
- 3.19. Officers described two main areas for growth in the budget, which are in Adult Social Care & Health (ASC), and Children & Young People. The growth mainly relates to the rising costs of placements and the increasing demand for services, which is one of the main contributors for the £28m budget gap.

Alignment with Borough Plan:

- 3.20. The Task Group shared the concerns it had around how the budget aligns with our strategic priorities and whether the budget is resourced enough to achieve our strategic ambitions. The Task Group called for clearer alignment and synergy; for example, more commitment in the budget to climate action considering it is a strategic objective for the Council to achieve Net Zero by 2030.

Core Assumptions:

- 3.21. The Task Group presented questions on the assumptions made throughout the budget and asked how confident the Council are in achieving these proposals. Officers stressed that these are based on 'educated' estimates, based on the latest information available, scenario modelling and sensitivity analysis. For example, determining population growth based on assumptions using the planning information around housing constructions in Brent over the next few years. Nonetheless, officers' assumptions are established based on worst case, best case, and central case - we normally go with the latter. Inflation predictions are developed using information from Bank of England and the Office for National Statistics.

Proposed Council Tax Increase:

- 3.22. The Task Group raised concerns with the potential impact that increasing Council Tax by 2.99% could have on residents and what we are doing to mitigate the impact of this on residents experiencing financial hardship. It is important to note the Autumn Statement was published on the day of Evidence Session 1. This statement confirmed that local authorities are now able to raise its Council Tax by 4.99% without a referendum, however this increase would exacerbate the Task Group's concerns.
- 3.23. The Task Group acknowledged that if the Council does not increase Council Tax by the maximum 4.99% it would forgo additional income of £2.8m. If the Council adopts this increase, schemes such as the Council Tax Reduction Scheme and Residents Support Fund should be increased and the eligibility should be reviewed. The Task Group also stressed the importance of the Council communicating to residents where any additional income from any Council Tax rises would be invested.

Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP):

- 3.24. The Task Group asked questions around our position in relation to borrowing, and our approach to Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP). The Task Group were assured that the provision remains prudent and compliant with the statutory guidance for MRP. The Corporate Director for Finance and Resources stressed the importance of the Council setting sufficient MRP and not borrowing without a robust strategy for paying monies owed back.

Reserves Strategy:

- 3.25. Officers discussed the reserves strategy we have in place, the various reserves that exist and what they can be used for e.g. if they ringfenced or earmarked for certain activity. Reserves should never

be used to balance a budget; this is due to their one-off nature, therefore they should only be used in line with the key principles outlined in our reserves strategy:

- The balance on the general reserve will be reviewed as part of the budget setting process
- Earmarked Reserves will only be established to meet a defined purpose
- Reserves should only be used to fund one off items as they can only be used once

3.26. The Task Group were satisfied that the Council had a robust process in place for managing reserves.

Consultation/Engagement Activity:

3.27. Officers outlined consultation/engagement activities which had taken place/were planned, including plans to engage with younger residents, businesses and the voluntary sector.

3.28. The Task Group sought assurances around how trade unions will be engaged, in addition to engaging businesses. The Cabinet Member Community Engagement, Equalities, and Culture acknowledged this and invited any further input on how to improve/widen consultation efforts.

Children & Young People

3.29. A total of £2.4m savings are proposed in the Children and Young People Directorate for 2023/24 – the proposals are designed to protect the delivery of our statutory duties and should also be viewed in the context of 10 years of financial pressures. The Task Group explored the practicality of the budget proposals, including the impact they would have on residents/service users and how the risks would be mitigated.

3.30. The Task Group discussed the £1.7m overspend projected in the Q2 Financial Report 2023/24 and how the risks were being managed. This was driven by 3 factors:

- (1) Placement costs
- (2) Agency spend for Social Workers
- (3) Number and cost of care packages for disabled children and young people

3.31. The risks of these financial pressures will, in part, be mitigated by the growth allocated to the budget in 2023/24. Additionally, an active bid was made to the Department for Education (DfE) to build our own children's home. Should this be successful, this will assist the Council in managing future pressures.

High Needs Block of the Dedicated Service Grant (DSG):

3.32. The High Needs Block of the DSG will be increased by 5% (£3.5m) in 2023/24 following the July announcement, however financial pressures for the Council still remain with a deficit of approximately £17m. This is due to increased demand for Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), which is a national issue. This also presents ongoing financial pressures for our schools. The Task Group heard that the Council is a part of the DfE programme to try and find ways of reducing the pressure on the High Needs Block and have a Deficit Recovery Management Plan in place.

3.33. Separately, it was announced that an additional £2.3b funding from central government was announced for schools to support the running of schools which in real terms is an increase for schools. In light of the Autumn Statement funding announcement, the High Needs Block allocation will increase by an additional 5% equating to an overall 10% (£7m) increase in 2023/24. This increase will still not be sufficient to mitigate the demand pressures and recover the deficit as the additional funding is also expected to contribute towards inflationary increases for special schools and pupil referral units (PRUs).

3.34. The Deficit Recovery Management Plan consists of three themes:

- Reducing costs through **managing demand** for EHCPs.
- **Improving sufficiency of local places** thereby reducing the number of children being placed out of borough or in independent special schools that cost more than local places. The Council has made a capital investment of £44m to deliver additional SEND places in the borough.

- **Financial management** to identify areas of efficiencies.

Early Help:

- 3.35. Difficult decisions will need be made in non-statutory areas such as Early Help which, in the most acute cases, could result in more children going into care. The Task Group were satisfied that there were no plans to reduce key workers and workers in Early Help. The types of posts that are likely to be affected by proposed staff reductions will be deleted as they become vacant and are those that provide additional services such as parenting support within Children's Family Wellbeing Centres.
- 3.36. It was also acknowledged that unlike other local authorities, Brent has developed Family Wellbeing Centres to provide early intervention support across a wider age range for children. The Secretary of State has visited Brent, and has now started to recommend all Councils open Family Wellbeing Centres (referred to as 'Family Hubs') because it is a good way to streamline services, and that those services are required and so on.
- 3.37. It was also noted that the funding settlement for the Supporting Families Programme has been agreed for the next two financial years. Grant income from this programme can be used to off-set some of the Early Help reductions the Council plan to make. The Corporate Director for Children and Young People also mentioned we had been successful in bidding for the Best Start for Life Programme through the DfE, which is a programme that bring us about £4m worth of income over three years.
- 3.38. The Task Group asked whether the Council will be looking to increase the eligibility thresholds for people accessing Early Help support, however revised national guides for partners do not propose any change.

Reduction in the use of Agency Staff:

- 3.39. The Task Group questioned the intention to reduce agency staff in a climate where there are challenges in recruiting permanent staff. This issue was echoed by officers where it was highlighted there are specific challenges in areas such as children protection and social work provision.
- 3.40. The Cabinet Member highlighted that reviewing the use of our agency staff could save the Council more money to reinvest in services. Concurrently, the Council are trying to offer more substantial incentives to permanent social workers that reduces costs and provides greater stability for service users. The Task Group appreciated and supports the Council's ambitions to recruit more permanent staff but were not as confident in the proposals to reduce agency staff due to the recruitment challenges that exist nationally. The group retain concerns about the achievability of this proposal.

Deletion of Vacant Posts:

- 3.41. The removal of vacant posts across the directorate will leave social workers with manageable caseloads and will not impact service delivery.
- 3.42. The rationale behind not recruiting to a vacant post in the Youth Offending Team was linked to national reductions in first time entrants to the criminal justice system and stabilised rates for repeat offending. Providing this remains the case, this specific proposal is realistic and manageable.

Reducing the Supporting Young People Contract, ('Connexions'):

- 3.43. The Task Group were assured that the reduction of £80k would be offset by grants the department receive elsewhere

Digital Transformation Savings

- 3.44. The Task Group raised accessibility/equal access concerns about the proposal relating to additional digital savings via the Digital Transformation Programme. To mitigate this the Council will maintain key worker contact for those families who are unable to use automated systems or chatbots. It was noted that there was evidence to support this; for example, school admissions where some families are struggling with the online process.

Communities & Regeneration

3.45. A total of £612k savings are proposed in the Communities and Regeneration Directorate for 2023/24.

Planning Service Staff Reduction:

3.46. It was stressed that the reductions to the planning service equates to not recruiting to vacant posts, meaning that no impact to service delivery is anticipated. However, the biggest risk in the proposals is the length of time to review planning applications and officer caseloads. Additionally, notable pressures for the Planning department are inflation, increased construction costs, and rising interest rates, deterring developers coming forward to build in the borough. Some of these factors have also impacted our own housing programme.

3.47. Despite this, the need to continue to build council housing was highlighted, although we will have to start thinking about tenure as it is no longer financially viable to build solely social housing. This is a concern of the Task Group in terms of impacting our ability to increase Council housing stock and offering truly 'affordable housing'. The Chief Executive appreciated this but acknowledged its either we think about mixed tenure to deliver some affordable housing or build none at all. The Task Group stressed that we need all tenures to be affordable, even if this is private housing. Whatever model the Council decides to use it must ensure it is in a strong negotiation position with possible contractors.

Reduction in Town Centre Managers:

3.48. The Task Group raised concerns with the proposal to reduce town centre managers, and whether this would have an impact on service output. The importance of these posts post-Covid in supporting deprived areas of Brent with economic recovery was emphasised. However, the post proposed for deletion is already vacant and there will be no compulsory redundancies – the work across town centres has been redistributed to the three current Town Centre managers. It was questioned whether this proposal warrants a new approach to town centre management e.g. a centralised function to distribute resource according to need.

Reduction in number of Communications Account Managers:

3.49. Additionally, there were concerns raised about reducing the Communications Team from five to three given it has been identified that there is room for improvement in Brent communications and consultations. It was clarified that this £100k saving will consider all communication posts in the Council rather than just from the Communication Team that sits in Communities & Regeneration. The aim of this proposal will be to streamline the service rather than impacting delivery.

Governance

3.50. A total of £475k savings are proposed in the Governance Directorate for 2023/24.

'Miscellaneous Expenses Reduction':

3.51. The Task Group questioned what the 'Miscellaneous Expenses Reduction' meant in practice. The Corporate Director for Governance explained that this proposal is already in place and has little impact on service delivery as the Council has been spending less on the DX (documents exchange - private postal service). Since the pandemic the courts have made technological changes, allowing for electronic bundling of court documents, and there is also now the ability to sign contract and similar documentation electronically via DocuSign.

Reductions in Corporate Learning and Development Budget:

3.52. Questions were raised on reducing the Corporate Learning and Development training package, and assurances were given that this would not impact department specific training packages. The task group suggested that staff satisfaction surveys inform this reduction.

Reduction in Legal Fee Budget:

3.53. The Task Group questioned the practicality of the proposal to reduce the Legal Fee Budget. The Corporate Director advised that this proposal partly reflects the fact that we have been conducting more in-house advocacy and have been recruiting to advocacy posts which is cheaper than paying for external barristers. The Legal Fees Budget is around Counsel's advice and representation and

court fees; the more we can do complex advocacy ourselves, and the more knowledgeable and skilled staff we have, the less we need to spend to instruct Counsel and this reduction reflects what in practise has been happening.

Finance & Resources

3.54. A total of £1.8m savings are proposed in the Finance & Resources Directorate for 2023/24.

Capital Programme:

3.55. It was noted by the Corporate Director for Finance and Resources that undertaking Capital Programmes is still problematic for the Council; we still have an issue where we have to go out to tender for any Capital Programme, for example housing, and the cost of this has gone up by 20-30%. Interest rates have also gone up so when we are borrowing money for Capital Programmes these costs also go up, which we will have to finance through the General Funds. So again, budget reductions will be required to off-set those additional costs.

Civic Centre Office Let:

3.56. The Task Group questioned the proposal to let more space in the Civic Centre given that most workplaces are catering more for home working and that many organisations are moving further to the outskirts of London. The Corporate Director for Finance & Resources advised that we are trying to rent more space to public sector organisations rather than private organisations as they require more consistent office presence from staff. Additionally, an asset review is taking place to determine other income streams, with findings being reported to the Resources and Public Realm Committee at a later date.

Income Generation:

3.57. The Task Group were concerned if the Council has explored enough ways to generate new income streams, specifically in relation to increasing fees and charges e.g. increased car parking charges. Officers welcomed any Task Group suggestions.

3.58. The Corporate Director for Finance and Resources cautioned around the challenges of price elasticity of demand i.e. the striking balance of increasing charges and the impact on service use. The Task Group proposed introducing parking charges for motorcycles and explored whether we should charge more for the various licenses we issue e.g. alcohol licenses, gambling licenses, Air B&B licenses etc.

Stakeholder Q&A session

3.59. This session was held on 29 November 2022 and attended by colleagues from the voluntary, community, and business sectors (a full list of external witnesses who contributed to this report is outlined in section 5 of this report). The Deputy Leader and the Corporate Director for Finance and Resources were also present.

3.60. The Task Group sought to understand stakeholder views on the proposals; their experiences, pressures and priorities, and where they believe Council investment should be targeted moving forward.

3.61. Areas of particular focus included:

- **Budget Suitability** – reviewing the accuracy of the equality impact assessments for each budget proposal and the assumptions that sat behind them.
- **Front-facing roles** – ensuring that we do not cut any front facing roles, especially in areas such as Housing which has seen in recent years rough sleeping in Brent dramatically increase.
- **Budget Narrative** – being more clear in the narrative of the budget how the proposals will impact residents; and what our vision/priorities are for the borough so residents can provide meaningful consultation feedback in line with our strategic priorities.
- **Working relationship with the VCS** – improving our communications around the proposed changes with our VCS sector so they are equipped to explain changes to service users and can adapt their own service offer as appropriate

- **Accessible communications and engagement plans** – improving our standard of accessibility of communications for our disabled residents in communicating the proposals
- **Targeted engagement with residents/service users** – e.g. the need to carry out more targeted engagement than planned, especially on the ASC & Health and Children and Young People proposals which will disproportionately affect young people and those with disabilities/learning needs
- **‘You Said, We Did’** - ensuring that feedback is provided to residents on what action the Council is taking as a result of their budget consultation/engagement responses
- **Digital Transformation** – e.g. ensuring that those with accessibility needs are catered to deal with new digital requirements in form-filling; and the process not being obstructive to residents in accessing extra funds/entitlements during a time of financial struggle.

3.62. Our stakeholders’ priorities for Council investment included:

- More affordable and suitable permanent housing (although the group welcomed the proposed investment in Temporary Accommodation)
- Additional financial support for residents who historically wouldn’t qualify for support but who are now in poverty as a result of the current economic climate e.g. children who are in poverty but cannot access free school meals
- Additional support for the VCS sector to deal with the increased demand in services. This could be additional financial support or providing more community assets/capped peppercorn rents to the sector to expand their operations. Another option would be to increase the value of the commissioned contracts offered to the VCS to help them navigate the current volatile economic environment.
- Targeted jobs and employment support in the most economically deprived areas in the borough (e.g. St Raphael’s Estate)
- Targeted jobs, employment, and apprenticeship support for our most vulnerable residents e.g. those with disabilities
- Additional advice and support for disabled residents and those with other access needs (e.g. poor literacy/English not as a first language etc.) to navigate digital-form filling so they can maximise the income they are eligible for and entitled to

Evidence Session 2

3.63. Evidence Session 2 was held on 1 December 2022; the Task Group reviewed the remaining budget proposals for ASC & Health; and Residents Services; and the possible impacts on service delivery.

3.64. Key attendees included the Cabinet Member for Public Health and Adult Social Care; the Cabinet Member for Environment; the Cabinet Member for Housing, Homelessness & Renters’ Security; the Corporate Director of ASC and Health; and Corporate Director for Resident Services.

Adult Social Care & Health

3.65. A total of £4.2m savings are proposed in the Adult Social Care & Health Directorate for 2023/24.

3.66. It was stressed that although all services remain Care Act compliant, provision over the last 10-12 years has been significantly stripped back to the minimum service which is solely focused on supporting and ensuring the safety of the most vulnerable.

3.67. Given the continued need to reduced provision the Task Group questioned at what point and how far services are from being unable to deliver on statutory responsibilities. The Corporate Director advised that this was uncertain, and that the Council will be able to provide more detail when central government announce Brent’s Local Finance Settlement.

- 3.68. The Task Group went onto question the assumptions made in the proposals, and how officers arrived at their decisions. The Corporate Director advised that it involved a collaborative process with colleagues looking at need across services, benchmarking our services with other local authorities, and identifying significant pressures in the directorate and how we mitigate these pressures. For example, reducing the use of agency staff and recruiting more permanent staff.
- 3.69. The group questioned how realistic it is for the department to deliver £4.2m of savings with minimal impact to residents' experience. The Corporate Director shared these concerns and stressed that all proposals have been RAG rated from high risk to secure. The higher the risk, the more mitigation that has been put in place if the proposal cannot be achieved.

Reduction in the use of Agency Staff:

- 3.70. The Task Group questioned the proposal to reduce agency staff and increase permanent staffing in a climate where there are recruitment and retention challenges. The Corporate Director for ASC and Health admitted that it is very challenging but noted that mitigations/plans have been put in place to achieve this saving. These mitigations include plans for international recruitment, and making permanent roles more attractive to prospective applicants. It was emphasised by the Corporate Director that higher levels of permanent staff are correlated with a higher quality service, where the department will remain focused on delivering this saving.

Promoting Independence in Adult Social Care:

- 3.71. The Task Group delved into the proposals that aimed to maximise independence for service users (particularly proposals AH01 and AH02). The Task group were concerned that these proposals were being led by a 'cuts agenda' rather than an 'independence agenda' and were concerned that this could lead to insufficient support being in place for service users. In response to these points, the Corporate Director offered the following responses:
1. With regards to learning disabilities placements, colleagues are very skilled and work closely with families to ensure steps to independence are put in place at the very right time.
 2. With regards to reducing resident placements, this is also a positive as we have less people going into residential care so the demand is not as high as it was before. The risks associated with this proposal will also be offset by the opening of Honey Pot Lane.
 3. With regards to the home care reduction, this proposal will focus on reducing double ups which is in line with service users wishes. They prefer one person coming into their home rather than two. It is also important to note that Care Act assessments are carried out by trained social workers to ensure the assessments are robust and accurate.
- 3.72. The Task group questioned how quality assurance of care will be achieved in the proposals aimed at 'maximising independence'. The Corporate Director stressed that individual assessments are carried out by qualified social workers/occupational therapists, and they are all checked and signed off by their line manager – a more senior and experienced practitioner. Also, this is supported by how we train and develop our staff through the Adult Social Care Skills Academy. Additionally, the department run audits on a quarterly basis to see what can be improved to those Care Plans. They also get feedback in from complaints and other partner organisations. The Council have a rigorous process, people are trained, their decisions are always checked and then we have sample checking and quality assurance checks.

Mental Health Placements:

- 3.73. The Task Group heard evidence that mental health referrals had increased and questioned the effectiveness of the proposals to refresh the review process for all MH service users with a view to putting in place step down plans into general needs accommodation. Concerns were raised that step down plans could be put in place at the wrong time. Officers assured the Task Group that the process of doing so was a collaborative process with CNWL who provided secondary mental health services, and talked us through the recovery pathway. In this approach, it is recognised that mental health relapses do happen where it is vital to ensure the right support is in place at the right time. The group felt the commitment to recovery is admirable, but this is best achieved with sufficient support in place, including tenancy management support.

- 3.74. The Corporate Director for ASC and Health went onto explain that the department focused on all issues relating to Mental Health. It is a priority for all of our Partners in Brent, and we have the backing from CNWL, our providers and the voluntary and community sector and now we have got Clinical Leads across a number of services so it is all completely integrated with Integrated Care.
- 3.75. The Task Group went onto consider whether we had sufficient support arrangements in place for those in general needs accommodation. The group were assured that we do have enough floating support but the question is if we could change that floating support to better train and professionalise this might lead to better outcomes.
- 3.76. It was considered whether the NHS are inputting enough into social care initiatives. The Task Group noted the need for the NHS to step in and release some of the burden from our social workers. The Corporate Director said that through the Brent ICP we are working together to identify gaps in provision and if those gaps relate to health services then the NHS would be encouraged to fill those gaps, and jointly in Brent we are making the case for more funding to come to Brent to recognise historically lower levels of funding and greater need.

Resident Services

- 3.77. A total of £4.2m savings are proposed in the Resident Services Directorate for 2023/24.
- 3.78. The Task Group raised concerns with the language being used to describe cuts relating to the environmental services, and whether we are properly managing residents' expectations. The Cabinet Member for Environment committed to working with officers on the language in the proposals to better manage residents' expectations and prepare them for what is to come. For instance, differentiating between the proposals that equate to cuts/service reductions and the proposals that equate to efficiencies/service transformation.
- 3.79. The Task Group went onto consider the cumulative impact of cuts to residents' services over the last 10-12 years, and how we are managing these major gaps. Additionally, the feasibility of the budget proposals along with the impact they would have on residents/service users and how the risks would be mitigated were also reviewed.
- 3.80. The Corporate Director of Resident Services explained that we have been good at mitigating cuts by investing in technology and investing in different ways of working so that over time this helps to deliver the outcomes we want with a reduced cost.

Income Generation:

- 3.81. The Task Group also raised concerns on whether we are ambitious enough to generate new income streams to offset some of the cuts listed in the proposals. Specifically in relation to increasing fees and charges e.g. increased car parking charges. Officers were of the view that have pushed our proposals as much as possible in terms of generating income for parking fees/charges, which must be set for the purposes permitted under the legislation. Although options are currently being considered to introduce parking charges to motorcyclists. The Task Group highlighted that many motorcyclists in the borough (e.g. delivery drivers) have some of the lowest annual incomes and unstable employment (e.g. 'zero-hour/casual contracts'). Therefore, would have concerns if new parking charges for motorcyclists were introduced that significantly impacted this cohort of residents' livelihoods.
- 3.82. The Task Group also questioned whether we have been ambitious enough in pursuing payments that we should be getting from other companies e.g. contractors for breach of contract. Questions were presented on how the Council could better monitor our contracts and make sure that we get money back from our contracts when they are not fulfilled. The Cabinet Member explained that officers have regular meetings with all of our contractors on a regular basis where they have breached KPIs etc. They are required to make payments due under the contract in such circumstances. They do pay that amount. The Cabinet member went on to explain that these monies are reinvested into resident services.

Housing Revenue Account:

3.83. Since 2020/21, and originally for the following four years, the Council had the power to increase rents annually up to a maximum of CPI plus 1%. However due to the rapid rise of inflation within the context of the Cost of Living crisis, the government consulted on introducing a rent increase cap. The consultation included proposals for capping rent increases at 3%, 5% and 7%, all of which are below CPI + 1%. A central case scenario of a 5% rents cap was used for budget planning purposes in the draft budget, but it has since been confirmed that the maximum will be 7%. Officers acknowledged this as good news for the Housing Revenue Account and equates to a £1m increase to the HRA when compared to the draft budget estimate. Anything below 7% would have meant significant cuts to be made to our HRA, purely on the management and maintenance of our stock.

Increased Temporary Accommodation:

3.84. The Task Group praised the decision to protect frontline housing services and plans to invest in building temporary accommodation due to increased homelessness in the borough.

3.85. The group also welcomed the proposals to increase the amounts of temporary accommodation through acquisition of other social housing providers stock, although it had hesitations on the assumptions that were made in this proposal. For instance, whether there would be an appetite for Notting Hill Genesis to sell their stock. The Cabinet Member for Housing, Homelessness & Renters Security acknowledged that these concerns were legitimate. The Corporate Director for Finance and Resources stressed that risk mitigation had been built into this proposal, as well as the rest of the proposals.

Deletion of Vacant Posts:

3.86. The Task Group went on to consider the impact of the deletion of vacant posts throughout the proposals, and whether these have led to staff being overstretched in their existing roles. The Task Group noted officers' views that this risk was being managed through digital transformation, with staff work focus being on value-added work.

Use of Chatbots in Service Transformation:

3.87. The Task Group raised concerns with the increased use of chatbots, especially for those people with accessibility support needs. The Corporate Director assured that with the digital transformation proposals, there will still be options for vulnerable residents to interact and receive support from staff e.g. via Brent Hubs. It was stressed that we have 120 digital champions in place to support residents with accessibility support needs, where this figure will rise to 500 by 2026.

3.88. The group noted the proposed risk mitigations but stressed the need for chatbots to be trialled and tested by residents, especially those with accessibility needs.

Reducing Library Stock:

3.89. The Panel heard evidence that in reducing library stock, the aim is to reduce the books that are not currently being used. It is expected that this saving of £62k will not impact the resident experience. The Task Group accepted this but acknowledged that further mitigations should be explored to manage the risks associated with this proposal.

Street Light Dimming:

3.90. The Task Group were satisfied that the proposal to enact street dimming in certain areas to reduce energy costs was balanced with the need to ensure the safety of residents. The Cabinet Member for Environment stressed that when cuts are made to lighting, we carry out an audit of all the roads in Brent, and see where it is safe to carry out dimming activities. It was stressed that the Council would not go below the recommended Road Safety level for lighting. Also, any areas where there are concerns around crime would not be affected by these proposals.

3.91. The group noted the points made by the Cabinet Member, and highlighted the need to involve residents with visual impairments/mobility needs in the audit process.

Redefining Local Services:

- 3.92. The Task Group noted that two of the draft budget proposals (RS13 and RS18) within Residents Services relate to the 'Redefining Local Services' programme, where many of the contracts therein at the time of this meeting were still undergoing live procurement. The group confirmed that these proposals, specifically those relating to the Integrated Street Cleansing, Waste Collections and Winter Maintenance Services Contract Procurement Programme would be scrutinised in greater detail by the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee at an additional meeting on 15 December 2022. Numerous recommendations have since been put forward to the department inviting responses in time for the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee meeting on 22 February 2022².
- 3.93. The Task Group questioned the specific proposal relating to the review of the Brent Transport Service. It was stressed this was not a cut, but rather a service transformation. The idea is to ensure we are not doubling up on some routes. Currently the service is not running at the best capacity and not helping the SEND children, in terms of the route that they are taking. We are looking to transform the service to ensure we get the best outcome for SEND children, and for the Council in terms of how much we pay. The Task Group were satisfied that this would not impact our children with SEND.

Final Evidence Session

- 3.94. The final evidence session was held on 6 December 2022.
- 3.95. Key attendees included the Deputy Leader, the Chief Executive, and the Corporate Director of Finance & Resources.
- 3.96. At this session, the Task Group commended the budget as being well-informed but stressed to cabinet members and senior officers that improvements could be made to our consultation efforts so it is clear to residents what our vision/priorities are for the borough. This could increase our data set of consultation responses and invite more meaningful feedback.
- 3.97. The group raised concerns with the cuts-based proposals outlined in the budget for 2023/24 and revisited how the Council can increase its income streams to offset the impact of these cuts on Council services. It was suggested that the Council could perform a benchmarking exercise with other local authorities to identify viable options for income generation. The group also suggested for the Cabinet to utilise our community assets (such as parks) for income generation should the evidence allow us to do so.
- 3.98. The Panel raised concerns with the deletion of vacant posts in this budget, which sparked a wider conversation on the cumulative impact of staffing cuts over the last 10-12 years of austerity and how we are effectively responding to this. Albeit not a recommendation, we suggest that it would be worthwhile for the Council to undertake a comparison from 2010 to 2022 pertaining to workforce figures and the impact that this has had on our operations.
- 3.99. Nonetheless, the Task Group discussed and agreed the recommendations that would be made to Cabinet and Full Council, based on all of the evidence heard to date. For transparency purposes, the Chair flagged that possible amendments and changes could be made to the recommendations discussed and agreed in this meeting ahead of reviewing and digesting additional evidence outside of this meeting. Any additions would be reflected in this final report.
- 3.100. Final recommendations can be found in section 2 of this report.

² <https://democracy.brent.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=551&MIId=7251&Ver=4>

4. Conclusions

- 4.1. Given the extremely challenging circumstances that local authorities are facing with regards to budget pressures and financial planning, the Task Group believes that this report underlines the importance of Scrutiny's role as critical friend and a check and balance in reviewing the Council's budget proposals and budget performance throughout the annual cycle.
- 4.2. We are satisfied that the budget proposals for 2023/24 are designed to limit, as far as possible, service reductions and the impact to front line services. We are of the view that the Council has correctly balanced its responsibilities and risks; and maintained a strong financial position during an extremely tough time where there is a high level of financial uncertainty and significant funding pressures due to factors such as high levels of inflation, economic turmoil resulting from war in Ukraine, the Government's short-term funding settlements, delays in funding reforms, the effects of the cost of living crisis on residents and businesses in the borough and the ongoing impact of Brexit. Taking these issues into consideration, we agree with the Council's approach to restrict its budget proposals to a single year, rather than a customary two-year programme, to allow for flexibility in the budget setting process.
- 4.3. We have noted the significant savings required over the next 2 years is in addition to the £196m removed from the Council's budget since 2010. We have also noted that the precise figure of savings required for the next 2 financial years is likely to change due to the unexpected additional funding provided to the Council via the Local Finance Settlement from central government.
- 4.4. Although the Council has managed to set a balanced budget for 2023/2024 without severely impacting frontline services, it is only a matter of time before this becomes a reality with the challenging financial environment and uncertainty ahead. Moving forward it will be critical for the Council to double its lobbying efforts for additional funding to continue to provide an adequate level of support to our residents, especially as we navigate through the Cost of Living Crisis. We appreciate initiatives such as the Resident Support Fund and the Council Tax Support Scheme provide residents in financial difficulties with additional financial support. However, we hope these services are bolstered in some capacity as it is likely we will see more residents who historically do not access such support now requiring support to pay towards their increased living costs as a result of the forthcoming Council Tax increase, high inflation, rising energy costs, and rent increases.
- 4.5. We encourage the Council to continue to put residents at the heart of the budget priority setting, informing what the Council does and who it does it for. We believe there are further opportunities for the Council to closer align the budget proposals for 2023/24 with the democratically agreed strategic priorities identified in the new Borough Plan 2023-27.
- 4.6. We note that each of the budget proposals considered have been subject to equality impact assessments (EIAs) to assess their potential or likely impact on service users and employees with protected characteristics and where the EIA identifies a disproportionate negative impact with no reasonable mitigation, the proposal would be subject to a full EIA and could be changed or even rejected altogether. We do however suggest that officers relook at all EIAs conducted to ensure absolute accuracy and that they reflect the voices of those impacted.
- 4.7. Overall, the Task Group are satisfied that the proposals outlined aim to deliver efficiency measures, service transformations, cost reductions and income generation to protect front line services as much as possible. However, due to the scale of savings that need to be made on this occasion it is inevitable for the effects of the proposals to impact residents – directly or indirectly. It is important for Cabinet to ensure the risks of the proposals are risk mitigated as best as possible to ensure the Council continue to offer high quality services to residents.

- 4.8. The Task Group acknowledges that it is unlikely we will see an end to cuts to funding in the next 2 years. We encourage the Council to think more creatively on how we close our budget gaps without making significant cuts to services. For instance, developing innovative ideas to generate income from our assets and build on our legacy as a 'London Borough of Culture'; as well as leveraging funding from our anchor institutions (and relevant agencies) to deliver on joint initiatives for the common purpose of enriching our residents' lives.
- 4.9. The Task Group would also welcome more investment in the voluntary and community sector. The pandemic demonstrated the reliance on the sector to help residents access support and advice, and their role of providing a safety net to the Council in delivering vital services.
- 4.10. The Task Group supports the Draft Budget, subject to the outcomes of final consultation, and submits the recommendations outlined in section two of this report to the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee, Cabinet and Full Council for consideration. 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 at future meetings.

5. Participants

We commend the Council for the prudent, tough financial decisions it has taken in recent years to ensure we have achieved a balanced budget, despite facing significant cuts to local government funding.

We would like to thank the following members for giving up their time to take part in this process, and also to the many council officers who worked extremely hard to support and provide us with information and advice on policy when needed:

- Councillor Muhammed Butt - Leader of the Council
- Councillor Mili Patel - Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources & Reform
- Councillor Fleur Donnelly-Jackson - Cabinet Member for Community Engagement, Equalities & Culture
- Councillor Harbi Farah - Cabinet Member for Safer Communities & Public Protection
- Councillor Gwen Grahl - Cabinet Member for Children, Young People & Schools
- Councillor Promise Knight - Cabinet Member for Housing, Homelessness & Renters Security
- Councillor Neil Nerva - Cabinet Member for Public Health & Adult Social Care
- Councillor Krupa Sheth - Cabinet Member for Environment, Infrastructure & Climate Action
- Councillor Eleanor Southwood - Cabinet Member for Jobs, Economy & Citizen Experience
- Councillor Shama Tatler - Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Planning
- Carolyn Downs – Chief Executive
- Minesh Patel – Corporate Director, Finance & Resources
- Peter Gadsdon – Corporate Director, Resident Services
- Phil Porter – Corporate Director, ASC & Health
- Nigel Chapman – Corporate Director, Children & Young People
- Debra Norman – Corporate Director, Governance
- Ravinder Jassar – Deputy Director of Finance
- Tom Pickup – Policy Partnerships and Scrutiny Manager
- Jason Sigba – Strategy Lead, Scrutiny
- George Kockelbergh – Strategy Lead, Scrutiny

The Task Group would also like to thank the following valued partners and stakeholders, who contributed to our discussion to ensure robust consideration of the 2023/24 budget proposals:

- SUFRA North West London
- Crisis Skylight Brent
- Brent Mencap
- Brent Multi-Faith Forum
- West London Business
- Brent Youth Parliament

Committee Contacts:

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Detailed Capital Programme 2022/23 – 2027/28

Portfolio Holder	Portfolio	Capital Board	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	TOTAL 2023/24 to 2027/28
			£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Resources: Cllr Mili Patel	Civic Centre - Capital	Corporate Landlord	0.5	3.6	20.4	1.5	-	-	25.483
	Digital Strategy - Capital	Corporate Landlord	5.0	4.9	3.0	1.1	0.5	-	9.429
	Energy - Capital	Corporate Landlord	3.7	-	-	-	-	-	-
	ICT - Capital	Corporate Landlord	4.6	1.9	3.6	-	-	-	5.500
	Libraries - Capital	Corporate Landlord	0.8	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Oracle Cloud Programme - Capital	Corporate Landlord	1.7	-	-	-	-	-	-
	CNWL - Capital	Corporate Landlord	-	-	-	13.7	8.5	27.7	49.933
	Equipment for Flexible Working - Capital	Corporate Landlord	0.3	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Family Wellbeing Centre - ICT Infrastructure - Capital	Corporate Landlord	0.4	-	-	-	-	-	-

	Property Management - Capital	Corporate Landlord	0.3	-	-	-	-	-	-
Regeneration & Planning: Cllr Shama Tatler	South Kilburn Phase 3a - Capital	South Kilburn	1.3	6.2	-	-	-	-	6.200
	South Kilburn Phase 3b - Capital	South Kilburn	1.0	0.6	-	-	0.5	-	1.079
	South Kilburn Phase 4 - Capital	South Kilburn	2.4	15.4	10.5	1.6	0.8	0.9	29.133
	South Kilburn Phase 5 - Capital	South Kilburn	1.2	3.9	0.3	0.1	0.2	-	4.551
	South Kilburn Phase 6 - Capital	South Kilburn	2.7	0.4	0.3	0.1	5.7	-	6.410
	South Kilburn Phase 7 & 8 - Capital	South Kilburn	1.4	0.4	0.5	-	4.2	6.1	11.238
	South Kilburn Legacy - Capital	South Kilburn	-	0.2	0.4	0.4	0.1	0.1	1.100
	South Kilburn Energy - Capital	South Kilburn	1.5	-	1.6	-	-	-	1.632
	S106 Affordable Housing - Capital	Regeneration	-	0.4	-	-	-	-	0.444
	New Homes Bonus - Capital	Regeneration	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Housing Zones - Capital	Regeneration	1.1	35.0	53.0	28.8	15.0	-	131.801	

	Grand Union Canal Pedestrian / Cycle Bridge	Regeneration	-	6.9	-	-	-	-	6.850
	Harlesden Regeneration - Capital	Regeneration	2.5	2.8	-	-	-	-	2.842
	Morland Gardens - Capital	Regeneration	5.7	25.5	10.7	-	-	-	36.194
	SCIL - Capital	Regeneration	-	3.5	-	-	-	-	3.472
St Raphael's : Cllr Shama Tatler	St. Raphael's Estate Regeneration - Capital	St Raphael's	1.9	31.7	-	-	-	-	31.700
Regeneration & Planning: Cllr Shama Tatler	Landscaping - Capital	Public Realm	0.7	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Highways Management	Public Realm	13.8	11.4	7.8	7.8	-	-	27.042
	Highways Management - Lighting	Public Realm	0.1	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Healthy Streets & Parking	Public Realm	1.4	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Healthy Streets & Parking - S106	Public Realm	1.5	0.5	-	-	-	-	0.451
	Healthy Streets & Parking - Parking	Public Realm	0.2	-	-	-	-	-	-

	Healthy Streets & Parking - TfL	Public Realm	1.8	1.0	1.0	-	-	-	2.080
Public Health: Cllr Neil Nerva	Sports & Culture - Capital	Public Realm	0.4	-	-	-	-	-	-
Environment: Cllr Krupa Sheth	Parks - Capital	Public Realm	1.2	2.0	0.4	0.1	0.0	-	2.462
	Environmental Health - Capital	Public Realm	-	10.6	2.5	1.4	1.0	7.1	22.651
Children, Young People and Schools: Cllr Gwen Grahl	Children & Youth Facilities - Capital	Schools	-	2.2	-	-	-	-	2.150
	Expansion of School Places - Capital	Schools	0.0	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Phase 3 Permanent Primary - Capital	Schools	0.8	0.4	-	-	-	-	0.400
	SEND Expansion - Capital	Schools	6.1	24.1	14.0	-	-	-	38.100
	School Capital Improvement - Capital	Schools	5.5	8.4	6.4	2.2	-	-	17.092
Housing & Welfare Reform: Cllr Promise Knight	Aids & Adaptations - Capital	Housing GF	7.2	3.6	-	-	-	-	3.628
	Empty Property - Capital	Housing GF	1.5	0.7	0.7	0.7	-	-	2.100
	Mixed Development - Capital	Housing GF	2.4	22.7	8.3	1.7	1.7	-	34.430

	New Council Homes Programme (NCHP) - Phase 3 (GF) - Capital	Housing GF	50.0	34.4	16.6	23.5	3.0	-	77.415
	Feasibility 1 - Capital	Housing GF	0.6	0.2	0.2	0.2	-	-	0.600
	Housing Infrastructure Fund - Capital	Housing GF	7.3	2.1	-	-	-	-	2.054
	PRS I4B - Capital	Housing GF	19.9	18.4	-	-	-	-	18.447
	Supported Living - Capital	Housing GF	1.8	15.4	-	-	-	-	15.379
	Bridge Park Regeneration - Capital	Housing GF	0.0	0.2	49.6	-	-	-	49.828
	GF Central Fund - Capital	Housing GF	1.0	0.8	0.8	0.8	-	-	2.520
	Feasibility - Capital	Housing HRA	0.8	11.5	16.7	6.6	6.6	-	41.415
	RTB Affordable Housing - Capital	Housing HRA	20.2	11.0	9.9	9.9	5.9	-	36.585
	Enfranchisement - Capital	Housing HRA	1.2	-	-	-	-	-	-
	New Council Homes Programme (NCHP) - Phase 1 - Capital	Housing HRA	0.1	0.6	0.4	0.4	0.4	-	1.711

New Council Homes Programme (NCHP) - Phase 2 - Capital	Housing HRA	0.4	1.5	4.2	-	-	-	5.714
New Council Homes Programme (NCHP) - Phase 3 - Capital	Housing HRA	8.3	12.7	4.5	0.0	-	-	17.272
New Council Homes Programme (NCHP) - Phase 4 - Capital	Housing HRA	1.9	9.0	3.9	1.7	1.7	-	16.217
New Council Homes Programme (NCHP) - Phase 5 - Capital	Housing HRA	0.3	69.0	20.2	4.3	1.8	-	95.255
Major Repairs & Maintenance - Capital	Housing HRA	12.1	19.1	29.8	12.1	6.5	-	67.413
Major Repairs & Maintenance - Adaptations - Capital	Housing HRA	0.8	-	-	-	-	-	-
New Council Homes Programme - Capital	Housing HRA	12.3	22.5	23.7	2.2	-	-	48.374

	In Borough Acquisition Strategy - Capital	Housing HRA	0.8	-	-	-	-	-	-
	NAIL - Capital	Housing GF	7.6	2.3	0.8	-	-	-	3.088
			232.440	461.353	327.114	122.743	63.679	41.974	1016.864

Funding Sources	Grants & Other Contributions		40.723	99.978	33.033	13.909	0.002	-	146.922
	S106 & CIL		15.481	24.137	6.138	6.500	-	-	36.775
	Capital Receipts		9.702	10.735	37.414	22.197	11.426	7.085	88.856
	Reserves		7.719	34.408	4.388	4.333	-	-	43.129
	Revenue Contribution		10.571	11.500	12.000	0.032	-	-	23.532
	Major Repairs Allowance		6.356	4.000	4.000	4.000	-	-	12.000
	Prudential Borrowing		141.887	276.595	230.141	71.772	52.251	34.890	665.648
				232.440	461.353	327.114	122.743	63.679	41.974

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Pipeline Project ID	Project Name	Portfolio	Programme and purpose of scheme	Proposed Budget (M)	Funding Proposals (M)	Business Case to CPB	Borough Plan Objectives	Strategic Alignment	Statutory Obligations	Risk	Financial Return	Demand Management	Rating
Corporate Landlord													
PL07	Energy Schemes	Corporate Landlord	Energy Efficiency: The Energy team are working with RE: FIT to develop future energy efficiency and renewable energy schemes, focused on demand reduction, LED installation and solar. Currently an estimate of energy schemes moving forward is in the region of £20m. The energy team have procured heat decarbonisation plans for the council's own estate and community schools. The initial estimates to decarbonise our own estate is £5m over and above the current grant funding. For schools, it would be a further £20m. The Climate Teams have applied for a grant under BEIS's Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme for 16 of our community schools (which fit the eligibility criteria). The project costs are ~£5m, £3.7m of which would be covered from the grant.	25.0	£23.5 PSDS £1.5m Capital	May-23	A Cleaner More Considerate Brent - This investment will help make our buildings cleaner and greener, helping to address the climate emergency Strong Foundations - Investing in the infrastructure will improve productivity across the Council with custom built spaces to suit the service area needs.	Borough Plan Brent-climate - ecological-emergency-strategy-2021-2030	None	1. Grant has been obtained from Government, it has very tight delivery timelines 2. Competition - lots of other organisations will be competing in the market place for the contractors and resource to deliver these works	Increasing energy costs has meant that looking to mitigate demand will be in the Council's interests whilst also addressing the public demand for cleaner greener services.	None	2
PL021	Land & Property strategic acquisitions (general)	Corporate Landlord	Strategic Acquisitions: Papers will be taken forward to the Capital Programme Board when strategic land opportunities arise and are developed within regeneration areas. The key focus areas are Alperton and Staples Corner.	44.5	Ongoing	Ongoing	A Future Built for Everyone, An Economy Fit for All - Investment in the growth areas of the Council will enable the vision in the local plan to be delivered	Borough Plan Local Plan	None	1. Opportunities are market led and this difficult to predict 2. Generally investment opportunities in the targeted areas are popular as property assets are high performing or present good asset-management potential (re-development etc.)	Some opportunities will have income as part of the asset opportunity - this will be assessed on a case by case basis	Local Plan identifies these areas as in need of growth and regeneration to deliver benefits and help to accommodate significant numbers of new homes to meet housing targets	2
PL051	Commercial Property Asset Management Programme NEW	Corporate Landlord	Asset Management Programme: The commercial property portfolio are key resources for the Council to provide economic return and public value. The commercial portfolio generates circa £3m rental income per annum from around 190 business and third sector lettings, which includes a number of multi-let buildings. In order to be kept in good use they require an inflow of financial capital for their maintenance, repairs, refurbishments and upgrades where needed for the purposes of maintaining or upgrading the stock of physical capital over time.	0.8	Borrowing	TBC	Strong Foundations - Investing in the infrastructure will improve productivity across the Council with custom built spaces to suit the service area needs.	This proposal aligns with the Council's Borough Plan – the provision and supply of good quality accommodation for organisations impacts on all priorities.	The project would help fulfil the statutory obligations of health and safety in respect of the Council's landlord responsibilities, as well as supporting the accurate reporting of property values for statutory accounting purposes which relies on accurate stock condition information.	None identified. There are risks in not carrying out the project as mentioned in the main body of the report.	None	Economic and social changes are having an impact on supply and demand for properties i.e. increasing demand from all sections of the community.	1
PL053	Re-Development of Ealing Road Library NEW	HCIB	New Council Homes Programme: To create 23 new homes for residents and improve our library building assets, modernising their design, extending their offer to residents and visitors, and protecting their status as anchor sites in their communities and high streets. The proposal is to demolish the existing library and rebuild a new Library on the ground floor and a 5 Storey block of residential flats consisting of 6x3bed flats, 14x 2bed flats and 3x1 bed flats. The library to be provided will be 590m2 and the café 65m2. The development will refrain from building on the wildlife corridor at the back of the site as recommended by the planners.	8.2	CIL, S106, Libraries Improvement Fund	Jun-23	Strong Foundations - Building services around residents and their needs. A Future Built For Everyone, An Economy Fit For All - Increase in housing supply; reduction in number of households in temporary accommodation.	Borough Plan 2021-2022 Housing Asset Management Strategy 2020-2025	A library service is a statutory provision and these buildings form part of Brent current operational footprint of providing that service.	Increasing costs associated with construction, shortage of material and labour.	Long term savings to the Temporary Accommodation service through additional housing supply for residents.	Growing population in Alperton and increasing residential demand for community facilities.	4
Corporate Landlord Total				78.5									
Housing Care Investment Board													
PL012	St Raphael's estate	HCIB	Mixed Development: Brent's 2014-2019 Housing Strategy explains that St Raphael's is also expected to deliver new supply alongside improvement or replacement of existing stock and the public realm. There is the opportunity to fundamentally change the area, with proposed improvements to housing and local infrastructure which, depending on whether infill or redevelopment are progressed, could help to improve the economic, social and environmental conditions in the Borough. The significant viability gap for redevelopment necessitated the delivery of infill. No ballot was required. This infill programme has been paused due to the viability challenges with a look to review viability in 2023/24.	100.0	AHP Grant	TBC	A Future Built for Everyone, An Economy Fit for All - increase and improvement in housing supply and reduction in number of households in temporary accommodation. Strong Foundations - there was an increase in resident involvement ahead of the decision between redevelopment or infill.	Borough Plan 2021-2022 Brent Climate & Ecological Emergency Strategy 2021-2030 Poverty Commission Housing Asset Management Strategy 2020-2025	St Raps development will provide the following statutory provision: - Housing for families in Brent	1. Subject to planning permission 2. Cost of development - prices have increased following pandemic 3. Possibility of residents objecting proposals	Schemes - partially funded by GLA. This assumes a reasonable cost to build, however if development prices increase, viability will be challenged.	The provision of affordable housing is linked to the future need highlighted by housing waiting list.	4
PL044	New Council Homes Programme	HCIB	New Council Homes Programme: The Council submitted a bid for GLA grant funding to support delivery of a further 701 new social rented homes in April 2021 as part of the GLA's Affordable Homes Programme 2021-2026. The Councils bid was based upon each project breaking even by the expiry of 60 years from practical completion. The total grant allocated was £111 million. The total scheme costs to deliver 701 new homes has now been estimated at £281m (net £170m up from £125m) based on benchmarking data from November 2022.	281.0	AHP Grant	Ongoing	A Future Built for Everyone, An Economy Fit for All - increase and improvement in housing supply; reduction in number of households in temporary accommodation or homeless in the borough. Strong Foundations - there is an increase in resident involvement ahead of all new developments	Borough Plan 2021-2022 Brent Climate & Ecological Emergency Strategy 2021-2030 Housing Asset Management Strategy 2020-2025 Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025	NCHP will provide the following statutory provision: - Housing for families in need in Brent	1. Subject to planning permission 2. Cost of development - prices have increased following pandemic 3. Possibility of residents objecting proposals 4. Availability of sites	Schemes - partially funded by GLA. This assumes a reasonable cost to build, however if development prices increase, viability will be challenged.	The provision of affordable housing is linked to the future need highlighted by housing waiting list.	4

PL052	Kingsbury Library Redevelopment NEW	HCIB	New Council Homes Programme: This proposal seeks to create 60 homes for residents and improve our library building assets, modernising their design, extending their offer to residents and visitors, and protecting their status as anchor sites in their communities and high streets. This proposal focusses on Westcroft Court, which presents opportunities to develop and enhance facilities in the current location and align with growth areas.	22.2	CIL, S106, Libraries Improvement Fund	Jun-23	Strong Foundations - Building services around residents and their needs. A Future Built For Everyone, An Economy Fit For All - Increase in housing supply; reduction in number of households in temporary accommodation.	Borough Plan 2021-2022 Housing Asset Management Strategy 2020-2025	A library service is a statutory provision and these buildings form part of Brent current operational footprint of providing that service.	Need to acquire 17 leaseholder buybacks to secure site possession. Increasing costs associated with construction, shortage of material and labour.	Long term savings to the Temporary Accommodation service through additional housing supply for residents.	Growing population in Kingsbury and increasing residential demand for community facilities.	4
PL054	Kilburn Library Development NEW	Corporate Landlord	Libraries Development Plan: The Kilburn Library project seeks to transform the relationship between the Library and the South Kilburn community, increasing participation and take up of the library offer by local residents and creating a sense of belonging and ownership amongst the community to support the longer-term development of services.	0.7	SCIL, Libraries Improvement Fund	May-23	Strong Foundations - Investing in the infrastructure will improve productivity across the Council with custom built spaces to suit the service area needs.	Borough Plan 2021-2022	A library service is a statutory provision and these buildings form part of Brent current operational footprint of providing that service.	Arts Council bid is un-successful	We anticipate there will be indirect savings generated through the outcomes of these aims in improved health, employment and community cohesion.	Growing population in the borough requires additional better quality facilities.	2
Housing Care Investment Board Total				403.9									
Public Realm													
PL016	Kensal Rise priority bus Scheme	Public Realm	Corridors: Bus Priority funded improvements to the Chamberlayne Corridor to include Traffic and Parking management, wider pavements, greening, new bus shelters, cycling and walking improvements near Kensal Rise Station and on Kilburn Lane and Chamberlayne Road. Circa £1.2M has been secured to deliver improvements around Kensal Overground Station. Status 27/10/21 Work is progressing around Kensal Overground Station. TfL have experienced severe financial difficulties and the £0.3M contribution from the LIP programme has not been secured for 2021/22. TfL have committed to allocating funding but this is dependent on negotiations with the Department for Transport for funding beyond 11 December 2021. The project is to be delivered in phases in future years using TfL LIP and Bus Priority funding.	n/a	TBC	TBC	A Borough where we can all feel safe, secure, happy and healthy - provision of public realm improvements including, new pavements, trees and greening, new pedestrian crossing points including 2 signal crossings, cycling amenities, will encourage active and sustainable travel. Active travel helps to improve the health of Brent Residents and reduce health inequalities. A future built for everyone, an economy fit for all - new signal junctions within the scheme will be designed to keep traffic moving on our roads and pavements will be improved. A cleaner more considerate Brent - improved walking and cycling facilities, accessibility to bus services and reduced bus journey times contribute to reduced car use reducing carbon emissions from transport and improving air quality.	Borough Plan 2021-2022, Brent Long Term Transport Strategy 2015-2035, Brent's Third Local Implementation Plan 2019-2041, Brent Climate & Ecological Emergency Strategy 2021-2030	The Greater London Authority Act 1999 ("the GLA Act") requires that in exercising any function, London local authorities must have regard to the Mayor's Transport Strategy which sets out the transport policy framework for London.	1. Traffic Signal installation by TfL's signals team 2. Implementation of future phases of the scheme is dependant on TfL funding through the LIP and Bus Priority programmes.	The scheme will be funded through future TfL LIP and Bus priority programmes. There is no specific financial return but road traffic injury accidents and poor public health result in significant costs to the UK economy. Creating a high quality public realm will attract visitors and support the local economy.	Improvements on the Kensal Corridor were developed in partnership with local residents groups and business association from 2016. The scheme will remove a double looping bus movement to improve bus journey times and bus accessibility. The public realm improvements will also improve road safety, encourage sustainable travel and visitor to the area, which will support the local economy.	2
PL046	Barham Park	Public Realm	Improvements to Barham Park: There is a need to improve the buildings and landscaped grounds at Barham Park. Funding required for a strategic review and the refurbishment of the Barham Park Estate, estimated at £3m Status 17/11/22: We are awaiting the completion of a survey-led review of the building which will inform intended works. The spread of expenditure for the years of the programme will be clearer after the review.	3.0	SCIL, S106, Council capital - TBC	Mar-24	Strong foundations - improved building and grounds at this community hub will encourage visitors and participation, support community cohesion and increased resident satisfaction A Borough where we can all feel safe, secure, happy and healthy - provision of community space and attractive grounds encourage visitors, walking and supports the health of Brent Residents and reduce health inequalities.	Borough Plan 2021-2022, Brent Climate & Ecological Emergency Strategy 2021-2030	Local authorities in England have a statutory duty to provide a range of services to their communities.	1. Dependant on a strategic review of existing facilities and identifying improvements to the building and grounds.	The capital investment is necessary to maintain the building and grounds for continued use as important community space, retaining income to the Barham Park Trust for which the Council is the sole trustee.	Barham Park is an important community hub providing a range of services and recreational activities. There is a growing need for the renovation of the building and grounds to address deterioration, reduce energy costs, and the risk of a loss of tenants including the ACAVA charity, Barham Community Library, the Veterans Club, Tmu Samaj and the Children's Centre.	2
PL02	Wembley Hill Road/ Park Lane / Wembley Park Drive - Signal Junction Improvements	Public Realm	Traffic Management Improvement: Provision of pedestrian phases and enhanced pedestrian crossing facilities at a 5-arm signal junction with a poor safety record in the close vicinity of the Wembley Regeneration area. There is need to improve safety and accessibility due to increased traffic volumes and pedestrians visiting the area. Options for improving pedestrian safety at this junction and traffic modelling have been completed. The proposals have been subject to consultation and implementation is planned for early 2022. Status 16/11/22: TfL funding agreed, awaiting estimates. Work programmed for April 2023.	TBC	SCIL, S106, TfL - TBC	Jan-23	A Borough where we can all feel safe, secure, happy and healthy - provision of safe pedestrian crossing points at this signal junction will encourage walking / sustainable travel. Active travel helps to improve the health of Brent Residents and reduce health inequalities. A future built for everyone, an economy fit for all - the new signal junction will be designed to keep traffic moving on our roads and pavements at the junction will be improved. A cleaner more considerate Brent - improved walking facilities contribute to reduced car use reducing carbon emissions from transport and improving air quality.	Borough Plan 2021-2022, Brent Long Term Transport Strategy 2015-2035, Brent's Third Local Implementation Plan 2019-2041, Brent Climate & Ecological Emergency Strategy 2021-2030	The Greater London Authority Act 1999 ("the GLA Act") requires that in exercising any function, London local authorities must have regard to the Mayor's Transport Strategy which sets out the transport policy framework for London.	1. Traffic modelling subject to approval by Transport for London (TfL) 2. Traffic Signal installation by TfL's signals team	The scheme is partly funded by TfL but we are awaiting confirmation to programme implementation. There is no specific financial return but road traffic injury accidents result in significant costs to the UK economy.	The junction is on a main route to the Wembley Regeneration area, Brent Civic Centre, the London Designer Outlet, Wembley Stadium, Wembley Arena, and local train stations and bus routes.	1
PL045	Redefining Local Services (RLS) Depot Refurbishment Programme NEW	Public Realm	Depot Improvement Works: The Public Realm Contract let to Veolia in April 2014 is due to expire in March 2023. A tendering exercise is in progress to identify new providers under two separate, specialist contracts - the Integrated Street Cleansing, Waste Collections and Winter Maintenance contract (The Integrated Contract) and the Grounds Maintenance Services contract (GM). In March 2022, we received an estimated cost from Watts Consulting for the refurbishment required to the 11 depot sites in advance of new providers taking occupation in April 2023. The works categories comprise a varying mix of external, internal, mechanical, electrical, and land and boundaries at each site, ranging from a total of £3.5k at Roe Green to £229k at Unit 2 Marsh Rd.	0.7	Council Capital	TBC	A cleaner more considerate Brent.	The aim of Redefining Local Services programme is to design and implement a better, more integrated and flexible local services delivery model that improves the look and feel of Brent's public realm.	Statutory compliance checks.	1) A 10% contingency has been added to the works budget. 2) Incumbent contractor to contribute towards work costs through the reclaiming of dilapidation.	Future savings through the reduction in reactive maintenance and structural repairs.	Not applicable.	1

PL020	Sports Programme	Public Realm	<p>Green spaces: Improvement works to a range of grounds (including football, cricket and rugby) and their facilities, feasibility studies and longer-term improvement works. An evaluation of existing pitches has confirmed that the service will be seeking to provide a business case for the remainder of the funding in the next financial year.</p> <p>Status 17/11/22 : Sports pitches: Gladstone Park: We are currently working on investigations, seeking consents and then the design for the drainage. The main part of the works for Gladstone Park are now more likely in 2023/24 and onwards. John Billam / Tenterden Sports Pitches: We are awaiting decisions by external partners and whether a drainage consent is achievable.</p>	1.1	Borrowing	May-23	<p>A Borough where we can all feel safe, secure, happy and healthy - provision of high quality sports facilities encourages physical activities and helps to improve the health of Brent's residents and reduce health inequalities.</p> <p>Strong foundations - improved sports facilities will increase resident participation in activities, support community cohesion and increased resident satisfaction.</p>	Borough Plan 2021-2022, The Planning for Sport and Active Recreation Facilities Strategy 2008-2021	Local authorities in England have a statutory duty to provide a range of services to their communities.	1. Dependant on a feasibility study and business case identifying priorities and costs	The provision of improved sports facilities will result in an increase in activities and revenue generated from charges, which will be detailed in the business case.	Brent has a growing population and demands will increase in future years.	1
PL055	Mortuary Expansion NEW	Public Realm	An expansion of the mortuary building to provide additional fridge and freezer capacity in order to meeting increased demand and to satisfy obligations with respect to the Human Tissue Authority.	1.8	Borrowing	Apr-23	<p>A future built for everyone - Investing in the bereavement and mortuary infrastructure will cater for increased demand arising from a growing population to provide sustained additional capacity to manage periods of peak demand</p>	Borough Plan Brent-climate - ecological-emergency-strategy-2021-2030	The Human Tissue Act 2004 regulates the removal, storage and use of human tissue. The Act is regulated by the Human Tissue Authority (HTA) who license Brent's mortuary for the following activities – Making of a Post Mortem Examination Removal of Relevant Material Storage of a Body or Relevant Material	Without investment in an expanded mortuary the council may be unable to meet increased demand for body storage and be in default with respect to its licensed activities.	The capital costs would be shared by the IAA partners, or could be solely met by Brent and recharged to the partners over the term of the IAA	Since the pandemic and during winter periods there is an increase in storage demand, and this is et to increase further in line with local population increase.	4
PL056	Wembley High Road – Carriageway reconstruction NEW	Public Realm	<p>Wembley High Road Carriageway Reconstruction –</p> <p>Structural investigations, due to be completed in mid-February 2023, have been commissioned to identify structural issues with the carriageway build-up that is causing accelerated deterioration of the road surface. The study will identify the underlying issue and propose options for remedial measures.</p> <p>Early indications indicate moisture in the carriageway structure and below, which is most likely from natural sources (water table).</p> <p>The estimate for remedial measures will be confirmed once we have confirmation of the issue and options to resolve.</p>	TBC	TBC	Apr-23	<p>A Future built for everyone, and economy fit for all - Going Places Keep our roads in good repair</p> <p>A Future built for everyone, and economy fit for all - A Great Place to do Good Work Invest in Brent's Town Centres to reverse decline and support diversification, employment and enterprise.</p> <p>A Future built for everyone, and economy fit for all - Getting Regeneration Right Ensure the right social, environmental and physical infrastructure is in place to support new development and growth</p>	Borough Plan	Section 41 of the Highways Act 1980 places a duty on the council as highways authority to maintain the public highway. Breach of this duty can render the council liable to pay compensation if anyone is injured as a result of failure to maintain the highway. There is also a general power under section 62 of the Highways Act 1980 to improve highways.	The carriageway is deteriorating rapidly with sections cracking, sinking and multiple potholes developing. "Make safe" repairs are only lasting a limited period and sections of the road is at risk of having to be closed if the surface deteriorates to a state where it is considered unfit for traffic. This will create widespread disruption throughout the area, which will increase further on Wembley Event days.	1.Avoidance of risk of claims 2.Economic damage due to road closures causing disruption and congestion. 3.Impact on Highways maintenance revenue budget through continuous make safe repairs.	None	2
PL057	Green Corridor Infrastructure Improvements in the two Green Neighbourhoods NEW	Public Realm	Green Corridor Infrastructure Improvements in the two Green Neighbourhoods: The council is taking a progressive and pioneering approach to tackling the climate and ecological emergency through the delivery of several Green Neighbourhood pilots (the first phase being Church End & Roundwood; and Kingsbury). Distinct overall 'visions' have emerged for the approach in these two pilot areas. In Church End and Roundwood in particular, there is significant potential for developing an area-wide focus on 'Green Corridors' to promote the healthy streets agenda, enhancing and linking green and active infrastructure. This CPB bid would therefore be implemented via an integrated approach from Parks and Healthy Streets. The council is in the process of putting together a comprehensive brief for consultants to assess and cost the physical infrastructure required in these localities, but we are likely to need capital investment in order to make turn this feasibility study into a reality on the ground.	1.5	Borrowing	Apr-23	<p>A Cleaner, More Considerate Brent This investment will boost the council's current flagship climate programme (the Green Neighbourhoods) and will contribute to the desired borough plan outcomes of both: 'considerable and measurable progress made in the borough's journey to reaching net zero carbon emissions' and 'promote a cleaner more attractive borough, improving biodiversity in our streets and parks, through greening and sustainability projects including tree planting and the development of new and different habitats'</p>	Brent Borough Plan 2023-2027 Brent Climate & Ecological Emergency Strategy 2021-2030 Brent Long Term Transport Strategy 2015-2035 Brent's Third Local Implementation Plan 2019-2041	The Climate Change Act 2008 (the Act) is the statutory basis for the UK's approach to tackling and responding to climate change. The Act places a legal duty on central government to set legally binding targets to reduce UK greenhouse gas emissions to net-zero by 2050 The Greater London Authority Act 1999 ("the GLA Act") requires that in exercising any function, London local authorities must have regard to the Mayor's Transport Strategy which sets out the transport policy framework for London.	There is a risk to the council achieving its aspirations to become a carbon neutral borough if its flagship pilot programme does not have sufficient financial support to be implemented. Schemes should be developed and implemented alongside the community wherever possible, to minimise risk of public opposition. Identified climate risk specific to Brent is set out in more detail in our Climate Adaptation and Resilience Plan, this includes a risk assessment public health, infrastructure and the natural environment in Brent.	There is no specific financial return the risk posed by climate change and poor public health result in significant costs to the UK economy. The programme will support the wider Council objectives to encourage sustainable travel, improve air quality, the local economy and community health and general well-being.	The Green Corridors element of the Green Neighbourhoods programme seeks to build on our existing Transport for London LIP funded corridors and neighbourhoods improvements programme, with the aim of improving people's health and wellbeing and facilitating social inclusion. The focus will be on delivering comprehensive, 'high impact' schemes, implemented over wider areas to address multiple issues and bring about a greater range of benefits to more people.	2

PL058	Parks Infrastructure Improvements NEW	Public Realm	A large number of pathways in parks are failing; with edging falling away and tree root incursion. These are a health and safety issue requiring investment At least two of our pavilions are suffering from high deterioration internally, meaning that we cannot rent or use them and gain any income. The aviary at Roundwood has subsidence and requires structural repair and the toilets at Roundwood require a complete redesign and rebuild.	2.0	Borrowing	Mar-23	A Cleaner More Considerate Brent - This investment will help make our parks more sustainable for the increase in use A future built for everyone - Investing in the infrastructure will allow for sustained visitor numbers to our open spaces	Borough Plan Brent-climate - ecological-emergency-strategy-2021-2030	None	1)Without investment our pathways become heath and safety risks for visitors leading to increased insurance claims for trips and falls and closure of pathways that cannot be used. There is no other source of funding for this kind of infrastructure. 2)The toilet block in Roundwood is one of the few remaining in our parks and if there is no investment, we will have to close these leading to high levels of complaints and public dissatisfaction. 3) The internal stairs and upstairs floor at the pavilion in Vale Farm are disintegrating, creating a health and safety risk and putting the structure of the building at risk.	There is a possibility to consider an invest to save option with the pavilion repairs, as an improved, safe building provides for opportunities for it to be hired and bring in revenue.	Since the pandemic and with high levels of flattened developments, there is an increase in visitor numbers to our parks, leading to increased wear and tear.	2
Public Realm Total				10.1									
Regeneration													
PL03	Alperton Housing Zone Infrastructure Requirements	Regeneration	Housing Zone: Infrastructure improvements to improve east-west connectivity, and to improve the quality of parks and open spaces to support housing zone growth. 1. Improvement to Woodside End highway linking Suneigh Rd to Abbey Industrial estate/redevelopment (E-W connectivity), and Atlip Rd public realm 2. Parks and open spaces.	0.8	SCIL	Mar-23	A Future Built for Everyone, An Economy Fit for All - connectivity improvements across the Alperton growth area will enable residents to better access transport, shops and services, and job opportunities particularly in Park Royal.	Draft Local Plan Draft long term transport strategy Borough Plan	The local authority is required to have a spatial plan for the area. Once adopted, the Local Plan is part of the statutory development plan and these works are required to implement the strategy for Alperton	Subject to planning permission and potentially some CPOs.	Works should be SCIL eligible as infrastructure in a growth area; the developments in the area have contributed many millions of CIL to the Council.	Over the period of growth the population of Alperton is likely to increase by around 6,000 new homes	3
PL031	Neasden Connectivity and Place Making Improvements	Regeneration	Strategic Transport: The proposal is to improve the character and connections around the A406, between east and west Neasden, by improving the entrances to the subway to create a pleasant and more inviting environment for pedestrians and cyclists. The work will open out and extending the approaches to the subway; environmental treatment to the extended approaches; upgrade to the subway for lighting, surface, walls and ceiling.	3.1	SCIL, S106, TIL - TBC	Nov-23	A Future Built for Everyone, An Economy Fit for All - to improve connectivity within Neasden currently cut in half by the NCR. Harsh environment. Encourage pedestrian and cycling use. A Borough where we can feel safe, secure, happy and healthy	Borough Plan Draft Long Term Transport Strategy Draft Local Plan	None	Price inflation/materials	None directly; would be SCIL eligible	Once Neasden Growth Area gets into delivery, population of Neasden will increase	2
PL025	Improvements to Underpass from Monk Park to Wembley Park	Regeneration	Accessibility Improvements: To enhance pedestrian and cycling access across the Chiltern Line to improve accessibility between Monks Park and Wembley Park.	1.0	SCIL	Apr-23	A Future Built for Everyone, An Economy Fit for All	Borough Plan	None	Implementable measures may not make a significant improvement	None directly	None	1
Regeneration Total				4.9									
Schools													
PL049	Gordon Brown OEC Independent Life Skills Project NEW	Schools	Independent Life Skills Project: To create a new purpose built building at the Gordon Brown Outdoor Education Centre to provide independent life skills sessions to young people in Brent. The centre will provide young people with independent life skills to support them to move into their own tenancies quicker which reduces the financial pressure on CYP. It is anticipated that the savings this project will produce will be adequate to cover the capital borrowing costs.	3.6	Council Capital	Apr-23	Every Opportunity to Succeed - Increased opportunities for children and young people to succeed. A borough where we can all feel safe, secure, happy and healthy: Support our most vulnerable adults, enabling them to choose and control the services they receive, to remain independent and lead active lives	This project also aligns with the Care Leavers Charter and Young Peoples Promise.	Under the Children Act 1989, social care services have a duty to prepare young people for leaving care. This includes supporting young people into adulthood and supporting those who have left care up to their 25th birthday	Lack of capacity on workshops for all eligible young people - Work with TMS to ensure they are clear on the programme, its requirements and expected outcomes.	None directly	No. of young people over the age of 18 in semi-independent accommodation is increasing each year and therefore the associated costs to house them in this accommodation is to increase. In 2018 there were 50 young people in semi-independent accommodation and in 2022 there is 150	4
PL050	Children's Care Home Project NEW	Schools	Children's Care Home Project: The project will develop a four bed residential step-down home within Brent for looked after adolescents with social, emotional and behavioural needs. The home will be set within a continuum of care pathways, providing step-down provision that prepares young people, who are in residential settings away from the borough or in a crisis setting, for a move into a local fostering placement, supported accommodation (if 16+) or return home.	2.2	DfE Children's Homes Capital Fund Lot 2, Council Capital	Apr-23	Every Opportunity to Succeed - Increased opportunities for children and young people to succeed.	A residential home within Brent would reduce the amount of time social work staff and other professionals need to travel to see children and young people. It will also contribute to the council-wide focus on transitional safeguarding as a range of services within Brent will be able to support them locally.	Having a children's residential home run by Brent Council even directly or via a commissioned provider supports the LA in delivering a range of statutory duties as laid down the Children Act 1989, the Children Act 2004, the Children Leaving Care Act 2000 and the Children and Social Work Act 2017.	Costs of project over assigned budget - Ensure designs/specs and methodologies are financially analysed before issuing to market.	The proposed residential home model would generate an estimated annual cost avoidance saving of at least £150K and up to £500K a year against the children's placement budget	Currently it is very difficult to find step-down provision for the cohort in residential provision who are aged 16 and above and when they transition to living in semi-independent provision they often require additional support.	4

PL048	Post-16 Skills Resource Centre & SEND School Expansion NEW	Schools	Post-16 Skills Resource Centre- To develop a post-16 resource centre at Airco Close and horticultural centre at Welsh Harp to support young people aged 16 – 25 with SEND.	16	SCIL, Basic Need	Apr-23	Every Opportunity to Succeed - supporting the continued development of young people by providing new skill opportunities for them to succeed.	The Brent SEND Strategy 2021-2025 The Brent Youth Strategy 2021-2023	The Children and Families Act 2014 introduced a new legislative framework for children and young people aged 0-25 with SEND.. The reforms aimed to increase protection for young people with SEND and to promote a greater focus on outcomes and preparing for adulthood.	Increasing inflation costs and its impact on the construction industry (resources, materials, deliveries)	None directly	The School Place Planning Strategy Refresh, agreed by Cabinet in November 2021, evidences the growing demand for places that meet the needs of children and young people with SEND. The rationale for a Post 16 Skills Resource Centre is supported by the changing demography, with increasing numbers of young people with SEND.	4
Schools Total				21.8									
South Kilburn Regeneration													
PL026	South Kilburn Schools	South Kilburn Regeneration	South Kilburn Regeneration: Provision of sufficient school places for both primary and nursery children; new school building in Austen/Blake redevelopment, part of the masterplan. Notes: Linked to Open Space project above; schools now in agreement. Design works in progress for Austen/Blake and new school building.	5.6	SCIL	Jun-23	A Future Built for Everyone, an economy fit for all Every opportunity to succeed - part of the masterplan for the area to improve the existing school provision	Borough Plan South Kilburn masterplan SPD South Kilburn Landlord Offer Draft Local plan	Statutory requirement to provide a spatial strategy for the area. Once adopted the Local Plan will become part of the statutory development plan	Procurement of a contractor. Agreeing design with schools	None directly. School element would be SCIL eligible.	Increasing population in the area; landlord offer was on basis of the masterplan	4
PL013	Open Spaces and public realm improvements (e.g. NWCC, Carlton Vale Boulevard)	South Kilburn Regeneration	South Kilburn Regeneration: Delivering high quality open spaces across the area, including on site of existing schools. In addition, improved connectivity through the masterplan area, and improved local infrastructure including Carlton Vale Boulevard. NWCC public realm contribution from SIL (£4.9m) agreed by Cabinet April 2021.	6.8	SCIL	Apr-23	A Future Built for Everyone, an economy fit for all - part of the estate regeneration masterplan	Borough Plan South Kilburn masterplan SPD South Kilburn Landlord Offer Draft Local plan	Statutory requirement to provide a spatial strategy for the area. Once adopted the Local Plan will become part of the statutory development plan	Procurement of a contractor	None directly SCIL eligible.	Increasing population in the area; landlord offer was on basis of the masterplan.	2
South Kilburn Regeneration Total				12.4									
Grand Total				531.6									

Priority Ranking: 5 = high priority and 1 = low priority

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Capital Strategy Report 2023/24

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Capital Strategy Report gives a high-level overview of how capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activity contribute to the provision of local public services along with an overview of how associated risk is managed and the implications for future financial sustainability. It has been written in an accessible style to enhance members' understanding of these sometimes technical areas.
- 1.2 Decisions made this year on capital and treasury management will have financial consequences for the Council for many years into the future. They are therefore subject to both a national regulatory framework and to local policy framework, summarised in this report.

2.0 Capital Expenditure and Financing

- 2.1 Capital expenditure is where the Council spends money on assets, such as property, vehicles or other assets that will be used for more than one year. In local government this includes spending on assets owned by other bodies, and loans and grants to other bodies enabling them to buy assets. The Council has some limited discretion on what counts as capital expenditure, for example assets costing below £5,000 are generally not capitalised and are charged to revenue in year. Details of the Council's policy on capitalisation is set out in the annual Statement of Accounts.
- 2.2 In 2023/24, the Council is planning capital expenditure of £461.4m as summarised below:

Table 1: Prudential Indicator: Estimates of Capital Expenditure in £ millions

£M	2022/23 forecast	2023/24 budget	2024/25 budget	2025/26 budget	2026/27 budget	2027/28 budget
General Fund services	173.0	304.4	213.8	85.7	41.0	42.0
Council housing (HRA)	59.4	156.9	113.3	37.0	22.6	-
Capital investments	-	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	232.4	461.4	327.1	122.7	63.7	42.0

- 2.3 The Capital Programme comprises of projects approved by Cabinet from previous year budget setting, new projects approved in year and being brought forward including those promoted from the pipeline provision.

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- 2.4 The main General Fund capital projects include the new Council Homes Programme £143.2m, i4B Street Properties Purchase £58.2m, NAIL (Supported Living) £18.1m and Morland Gardens Regeneration £43.5m. The Council also plans to incur capital expenditure on investments, which are discussed in more detail within the Investment Strategy for 2023/24.
- 2.5 The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) is a ring-fenced account which ensures that council housing does not subsidise, or is itself subsidised, by other local services. HRA capital expenditure is therefore recorded separately, and includes the building of new homes as well as expenditure on improving and maintaining council homes over the planning period.
- 2.6 Capital investments include loans and shares made for service purposes and property to be held primarily for financial return in line with the definition in the CIPFA Treasury Management Code.
- 2.7 **Governance:** Full details of the Council's capital programme, including the project appraisals undertaken can be found within the capital programme and capital pipeline proposals 2023/24 presented to Cabinet in February 2023.
- 2.8 All capital expenditure must be financed, either from external sources (government grants and other contributions), the Council's own resources (revenue, reserves and capital receipts) or debt (borrowing, leasing and Private Finance Initiative). The planned financing of the above expenditure is as follows:

Table 2: Capital financing in £ millions

£M	2022/23 forecast	2023/24 budget	2024/25 budget	2025/26 budget	2026/27 budget	2027/28 budget
External resources	56.2	124.1	39.2	20.4	0.0	0.0
Revenue resources	34.3	60.6	57.8	30.6	11.4	7.1
Debt	141.9	276.6	230.1	71.8	52.3	34.9
TOTAL	232.4	364.8	327.1	122.7	63.7	42.0

- 2.9 Excluding external grants and other resources most assets are funded from debt. As with any debt, it must be repaid over time, and for a local authority there is a statutory requirement to set aside "minimum revenue provision" (MRP) in each year's budget for debt repayment. Planned MRP to 2026/27 is as set out in the table below.

Table 3: Replacement of debt finance in £ millions

£M	2022/23 forecast	2023/24 budget	2024/25 budget	2025/26 budget	2026/27 budget	2027/28 budget
MRP	13.6	13.3	15.8	18.1	20.5	21.6
TOTAL	13.6	13.3	15.8	18.1	20.5	21.6

- 2.10 The Council's full minimum revenue policy statement is presented as an Appendix to the annual Council Tax and Budget Setting Report.
- 2.11 The Council's cumulative outstanding amount of debt finance is measured by the capital financing requirement (CFR). This increases with new debt-financed capital expenditure and reduces with MRP and capital receipts used to replace debt. The CFR is expected to increase to £1.3bn during 2023/24 and to over £1.6bn by 2026/27. Based on the above figures for expenditure and financing, the Council's estimated CFR is as follows:

Table 4: Prudential Indicator: Estimates of Capital Financing Requirement in £ millions

£M	2022/23 forecast	2023/24 budget	2024/25 budget	2025/26 budget	2026/27 budget	2027/28 budget
Opening CFR	997.3	1,125.6	1,389.0	1,603.3	1,657.0	1,688.7
Capital Expenditure	232.4	461.4	327.1	122.7	63.7	42.0
External resources	(56.2)	(124.1)	(39.2)	(20.4)	0.0	0.0
Own Resources	(34.3)	(60.6)	(57.8)	(30.6)	(11.4)	(7.1)
MRP	(13.6)	(13.3)	(15.8)	(18.1)	(20.5)	(21.6)
Closing CFR	1,125.6	1,389.0	1,603.3	1,657.0	1,688.7	1,702.1

3.0 Capital Programme Governance and Prioritisation

- 3.1 The capital programme is updated annually for new schemes, revised profiling, slippage and changes in expenditure projections. The capital programme and capital pipeline proposals 2023/24 – report (included elsewhere on this agenda) sets out the indicative capital programme that will be presented to Council in February 2023 as part of the annual budget setting cycle.

Pipeline Schemes

- 3.2 During the year the individual capital sub-boards (led by Operational Directors) developed a comprehensive list of opportunities and proposals for future aspirational capital investment to meet the council's strategic objectives. These outline bids are then collated by the PMO (Programme Management Office). For 2023/24 this process has culminated in the assimilation of c24 individual outline capital proposals with a total value of c480m and a spend profile spanning 2 to 5 years. At this stage these strategic pipeline schemes are only indicative and do not yet form part of the main programme as there is a requirement that individually they will still go through the normal approval routes (i.e. CMT/Cabinet/Council). Furthermore, officers will be required to produce detailed business cases, undertake feasibility and consult appropriately before getting to this stage.

Capital Programme Board

- 3.3 This Board is the main forum for reviewing the financial viability of the new capital bids and monitoring of existing programme. The Board reviews all capital investment and new opportunities, oversees and maintains the list of pipeline schemes and ensures outcomes are aligned with Council's aspirations and reflective of the circumstances within Brent. The board also ensures that all projects have a viable business case and that value for money (VfM) will be delivered for the Council.

Prioritisation criteria

- 3.4 The general criteria for scoring proposals are summarised below, higher scores were applied based on the following criterion:
- **Strategic Alignment** - How the scheme meets the outcomes of a key service objective as stated in a strategy document, business plan or action plan.
 - **Statutory Obligations** - How the delivery of a scheme is essential to ensuring the Council meets the statutory need and without the project, the Council would otherwise be at risk of failing to meet.
 - **Risk** - Whether the success of the project is dependent on mitigating high associated risks
 - **Financial Return** - Whether the scheme generates ongoing revenue savings, a capital receipt or attract external funding (partial or fully).
 - **Demand and Demographic Changes** - whether the scheme is required following a change in demographic, economic or social change that impact the borough and will reduce the demand for services in the borough.

4.0 Asset management

- 4.1 To ensure that capital assets continue to be of long-term use, the Council has a Housing Asset Management strategy in place and a Property Asset Management Strategy under review. The strategies provide a planning tool which ensures the assets are well managed and maintained in order to maximise the benefits for local residents.

5.0 Asset disposals

- 5.1 When a capital asset is no longer needed, it may be sold so that the proceeds, known as capital receipts, can be spent on new assets or to repay debt. The Council is currently also permitted to spend capital receipts on service transformation projects until 2023/24. Repayments of capital grants, loans and investments also generate capital receipts.
- 5.2 The Council plans to receive £7.1m of capital receipts in the current financial year. A significant proportion of these arise from asset disposals on the South Kilburn site as well as housing sold under the right to buy (RTB) scheme. The capital receipts expected in future financial years are as follows:

Table 5: Capital receipts in £ millions

£M	2022/23 forecast	2023/24 budget	2024/25 budget	2025/26 budget	2026/27 budget	2027/28 budget
Asset Sales	3.0	16.2	6.0	0.0	13.8	0.0
Loans Repaid	7.4	6.9	20.7	34.5	77.0	51.9
TOTAL	10.4	23.1	26.7	34.5	90.8	51.9

6.0 Treasury Management

- 6.1 Treasury management is concerned with keeping sufficient but not excessive cash available to meet the Council's spending needs, while managing the risks involved. Surplus cash is invested until required, while a shortage of cash will be met by borrowing, to avoid excessive credit balances or overdrafts in the bank current account.
- 6.2 The Council is typically cash rich in the short-term as revenue income is received before it is spent, but cash poor in the long-term as capital expenditure is incurred before being financed. The revenue cash surpluses are offset against capital cash shortfalls to reduce overall borrowing.
- 6.2 On 31st December 2022, the Authority held £761.9m of borrowing (£686.9m long term and £75.0m short term) at an average rate of 3.3% and £142.0m of investments at an average rate of 2.7%.

7.0 Borrowing strategy

- 7.1 The Council's main objectives when borrowing are to achieve a low but certain cost of finance while retaining flexibility should plans change in future. These objectives are often conflicting, and the Council therefore seeks to strike a balance between cheap short-term loans (currently available at around 3.5-4%) and long-term fixed rate loans where the future cost is known but higher (currently around 4.2-4.8%).

7.2 Projected levels of the Council’s total outstanding debt (which comprises borrowing, PFI liabilities and leases are shown below, compared with the capital financing requirement (see above).

Table 6: Prudential Indicator: Gross Debt and the Capital Financing Requirement in £ millions

£M	2022/23 forecast	2023/24 budget	2024/25 budget	2025/26 budget	2026/27 budget	2027/28 budget
Debt (incl. PFI & leases)	700.5	689.0	726.6	716.9	707.5	697.7
Capital Financing Requirement	1,125.6	1,389.0	1,603.3	1,657.0	1,688.7	1,702.1

7.3 Statutory guidance prescribes that debt should remain below the capital financing requirement, except in the short-term. As can be seen from Table 6, the Council expects to comply with this regulation.

8.0 Affordable borrowing limit

8.1 The Council is legally obliged to set an affordable borrowing limit (also termed the authorised limit for external debt) each year. In line with statutory guidance, a lower “operational boundary” is also set as a warning level should debt approach the limit.

Table 7: Prudential Indicators: Authorised limit and operational boundary for external debt in £ millions

£M	2022/23 budget	2023/24 budget	2024/25 budget	2025/26 budget	2026/27 budget	2027/28 budget
Authorised Limit	1,400.0	1,700.0	1,800.0	1,800.0	1,900.0	2,000.0
Operational Boundary	1,200.0	1,500.0	1,600.0	1,600.0	1,700.0	1,800.0

8.3 Further details on borrowing are contained within the Council’s treasury management strategy.

9.0 Investment strategy

9.1 Treasury investments balances arise from receiving cash before it is required to be paid out again. Investments made for service reasons or for pure financial gain are not generally considered to be part of treasury management.

9.2 The Council’s policy on treasury investments is to prioritise security and liquidity over yield and to focus on minimising risk rather than maximising returns. Cash that is likely to be spent in the near term is invested securely, for example with the government, other local authorities or selected high-quality banks, to minimise the risk of loss. Money that will be held for longer terms is invested more widely, including in bonds, shares and property, to balance the risk of loss against the risk of receiving returns below inflation. Both near-term and longer-term investments may be held in pooled funds, where an external fund manager makes decisions on which particular investments to buy and the Council may request its money back at short notice.

Table 8: Treasury management investments in £millions

£M	2022/23 forecast	2023/24 budget	2024/25 budget	2025/26 budget	2026/27 budget	2027/28 budget
Short term investments	30.0	30.0	30.0	30.0	30.0	30.0
Long term investments	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

9.3 Further details on treasury investments are contained within the Council’s treasury management strategy.

9.4 Risk management: The effective management and control of risk are prime objectives of the Council’s treasury management activities. The treasury management strategy therefore sets out various indicators and limits to constrain the risk of unexpected losses.

9.5 Decisions on treasury management investment and borrowing are made daily and are therefore delegated to the Director of Finance, who must act in line with the treasury management strategy approved by Council. Reports on treasury management activity are presented to Cabinet and Full Council, whilst the Audit & Standards Advisory Committee is responsible for scrutinising treasury management decisions.

10.0 Investments for Service Purposes

10.1 The Council makes investments to assist local public services, including making loans to council subsidiaries to promote economic growth. In light of the public service objective, the Council is willing to take more risk than with treasury investments, however it still plans for such investments to break-even after all costs.

10.2 Decisions on service investments are either made by Cabinet or under delegated authority, or set down in the approved investment strategy. Most loans and shares are capital expenditure and purchases will therefore also be approved as part of the capital programme. Further details on service investments are contained within the investment strategy.

10.3 The proposed budget includes sums for investment in the Council’s subsidiary i4B for the acquisition of street properties as part of the Council’s temporary accommodation reform plan. These schemes aim to alleviate affordable housing pressures. A development finance loan to United College’s Group to assist with cashflow pressures around their campus redevelopment has also been included.

11.0 Commercial Activities

11.1 The Council has previously invested in property locally to support regeneration whilst also securing a financial return. Total commercial investments are currently valued at £20.7m consisting of 40 individual property assets generating £3.1m PA, or a yield of 15%. Over time the use of these assets may change as new priorities are confirmed and assets are repurposed to contribute to the delivery of new strategic priorities.

Table 9: Property asset types and income generated in £millions

ASSET TYPES	No. of Assets	Value £M	Income PA £M
Operational	47	186.4	0.0
Commercial	40	20.7	3.1
Community Groups	63	28.3	0.0
Education	70	486.8	0.0
Regeneration	101	6.5	0.0
Non HRA Housing	533	280.5	0.0
TOTAL	853	1,009.2	3.1

11.2 With a higher financial return, the Council accepts higher risk on commercial investment than with treasury investments. The principal risk exposures include voids, diminution of capital values, etc. These risks are managed by the existing risk management framework. In order that commercial investments remain proportionate to the size of the authority they are under constant review and contingency plans are in place should expected yields not materialise. The Corporate Director for Finance and Resources is responsible for governance and due diligence on these investments.

12.0 Liabilities

- 12.1 In addition to debt of £700.5m detailed above, the Council is committed to making future payments to cover its pension fund deficit (valued at £163m – Report March 2022).
- 12.2 The Council will be making appropriate adjustments to its bad debt provision due to the impact of global pandemic on local businesses, residents and suppliers with more details to be provided in the 2022/23 statement of accounts.

13.0 Revenue Budget Implications

- 13.1 Although capital expenditure is not charged directly to the revenue budget, interest payable on loans and MRP payments are charged to revenue, offset by any investment income receivable. The net annual charge is known as financing costs; this is compared to the net revenue stream i.e. the amount funded from Council Tax, business rates and general government grants.

Table 10: Prudential Indicator: Proportion of net revenue stream to financing costs

£M	2022/23 forecast	2023/24 budget	2024/25 budget	2025/26 budget	2026/27 budget	2027/28 budget
Financing costs	36.5	57.3	78.5	101.8	109.7	112.1
Proportion of net revenue stream %	12.6%	18.7%	24.3%	31.0%	33.4%	34.1%

- 13.2 Due to the very long-term nature of capital expenditure and financing, the revenue budget implications of expenditure incurred in the next few years will extend for up to 50 years into the future. The detailed information contained within the treasury management strategy and the Budget & Council Tax Report 2023/24, as well as the prudential indicators included above demonstrates how this is prudent, affordable and sustainable.

14.0 Knowledge and Skills

- 14.1 The Council employs professionally qualified and experienced staff in senior positions with responsibility for making capital expenditure, borrowing and investment decisions. The Council also pays for junior staff to study towards relevant professional qualifications including CIPFA and AAT for example.
- 14.2 Where Council staff do not have the knowledge and skills required, use is made of external advisers and consultants that are specialists in their field. The Council currently employs Arlingclose Limited as treasury management advisers. This approach can be

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more cost effective than employing such staff directly, and ensures that the Council has access to knowledge and skills commensurate with its risk appetite.

Investment Strategy Report 2023/24

Introduction

1. The Council invests its money for three broad purposes:
 - because it has surplus cash as a result of its day-to-day activities, for example when income is received in advance of expenditure (known as **treasury management investments**);
 - to support local public services by lending to or buying shares in other organisations (**service investments**); and
 - to earn investment income (known as **commercial investments** where this is the main purpose).
2. This investment strategy meets the requirements of statutory guidance issued by the government in January 2018.

Treasury Management Investments

3. The Council typically receives its income in cash (e.g. from taxes and grants) before it pays for its expenditure in cash (e.g. through payroll and invoices). It also holds reserves for future expenditure and collects local taxes on behalf of other local authorities and central government. These activities, plus the timing of borrowing decisions, lead to a cash surplus which is invested in accordance with guidance from the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy. The balance of treasury management investments is expected to fluctuate between £20m and £150m during the 2023/24 financial year.
4. The contribution that these investments make to the objectives of the Council is to support effective treasury management activities.
5. Full details of the Council's policies and its plan for treasury management investments are covered in a separate document, the Treasury Management Strategy 2023/24.

Service Investments: Loans

6. The Council lends money to its subsidiaries, statutory bodies, suppliers, local businesses, local charities and academies, housing associations, residents and its employees to support local public services and stimulate local economic growth.
7. An invest to save loan was given to the West London Waste Authority which is the statutory body responsible for waste disposal in a number of West London

boroughs. The funding assisted the development of a new waste treatment facility.

8. The Council's loan to First Wave Housing Limited has been used to support the provision of affordable accommodation and improve the provision of permanent housing as a registered provider. The loan to the Council's other subsidiary, i4B Holdings Ltd, has been used to purchase 521 properties as part of the Council's temporary accommodation reform plan.
9. The School Loan Scheme has helped support significant improvements to school facilities ensuring the buildings are suitable for modern teaching and learning and accessible for pupils with disabilities.
10. The Council is planning to provide a cashflow loan to United Colleges Group, to help facilitate the development of their new campus in Wembley.
11. The main risk when making service loans is that the borrower will be unable to repay the principal lent and/or the interest due. In order to limit this risk, and ensure that total exposure to service loans remains proportionate to the size of the Council, upper limits on the outstanding loans to each category of borrower have been set as follows:

Table 1: Loans for service purposes in £ millions

Category of borrower	2022/23	2023/24
	Forecast Balance owing	Approved Limit
Subsidiaries	135.4	400.0
Local businesses	0.2	10.0
Schools, Academies and Colleges	0.7	55.0
Waste Authority	15.5	20.0
Local Charities	0.0	10.0
Housing Associations	0.0	50.0
Local Residents	0.0	5.0
TOTAL	151.8	550.0

12. Accounting standards require the Council to set aside loss allowance for loans, reflecting the likelihood of non-payment. The figures for loans in the Council's statement of accounts have been shown net of this loss allowance since 2019/20. However, the Council makes every reasonable effort to collect the full

sum lent and has appropriate credit control arrangements in place to recover overdue repayments. The loss allowance to date has been immaterial.

13. The Council assesses the risk of loss before entering into and whilst holding service loans by undertaking various financial checks and utilising specialists (where required) to advise on technical aspects of the investment. Projects funded by service loans are monitored within the Council's existing capital programme and governance reporting regime.

Commercial Investments: Property

14. The Council has previously invested in property locally to support regeneration as well as secure a financial return.
15. A fair value assessment of the Authority's investment property portfolio has been made within the past twelve months, and the underlying assets provide security for capital investment. Should the 2022/23 year end accounts preparation and audit process value these properties below their purchase cost, then an updated investment strategy will be presented to full council detailing the impact of the loss on the security of investments and any revenue consequences arising therefrom.
16. The Council assesses the risk of loss before entering into and whilst holding property investments by regularly reviewing investment performance.
17. Compared with other investment types, property is relatively difficult to sell and convert to cash at short notice and can take a considerable period to sell in certain market conditions. To ensure that the invested funds can be accessed when they are needed, for example to repay capital borrowed, the Council uses cashflow forecasting to assess when funding will be required and hold sufficient short term deposits which provide a liquidity buffer reducing the likelihood of any short notice investment property sales.

Table 2: Property held for investment purposes in £ millions

	Expected 2023/24			
Asset Types	No. of Assets	Gain or (losses)	Value in accounts in £m	Income PA in £m
Commercial	40	1.0	20.7	3.1

Other categories of investment

Loan Commitments and Financial Guarantees

18. Although not strictly counted as investments, since no money has exchanged hands yet, loan commitments and financial guarantees carry similar risks to the Council and are included here for completeness.
19. I4B currently has loans of £100.2m outstanding with the Council at varying rates of interest and maturity dates depending on the date of the initial loan draw down. A further £40m of loan finance was available as at the 31st of December 2022 with a further £17.7m of this forecast to be utilised in the 2022/23 financial year. £18.4m is forecast to be utilised in 2023/24.

Capacity, skills and Culture

20. The Council employs professionally qualified and experienced staff in senior positions with responsibility for making recommendations and decisions on commercial activities. The Council pays for junior staff to study towards relevant professional qualifications including CIPFA and AAT.
21. Where Council staff do not have the knowledge and skills required, use is made of external advisers and consultants that are specialists in their field. The Council currently employs Arlingclose Limited as treasury management advisers. This approach can be more cost effective than employing such staff directly, and ensures that the Council has access to knowledge and skills commensurate with its risk appetite.
22. Our retained advisors provide a comprehensive training and awareness programme for elected Members, including training in relation to scrutiny of the Treasury Management function and the annual Statement of Accounts. The training programme covers, Local Government Finance, Corporate Governance, The Role of the Governance / Audit Committee and capital Programme Prioritisation.
23. The Council's treasury activity (including investments and borrowing) is reported to the Audit & Standards Advisory Committee and full Council twice a year via a mid-year report as well as the full year outturn report.

Investment Indicators

24. The Council has set the following quantitative indicators to allow elected members and the public to assess the Council's total risk exposure as a result of its investment decisions.

Total risk exposure

25. The first indicator shows the Council's total exposure to potential investment losses. This includes amounts the Council is contractually committed to lend but have yet to be drawn down and guarantees the Council has issued over third party loans.

Table 3: Total investment exposure in £millions

Total investment exposure	21/22 Actual	22/23 Forecast	23/24 Forecast
Treasury management investments	98.6	30.0	30.0
Service investments: Loans	151.8	154.5	172.1
Commercial investments: Property	20.7	20.7	20.7
TOTAL INVESTMENTS	271.1	205.2	222.8
Commitments to lend	72.2	52.1	32.9
TOTAL EXPOSURE	343.3	257.3	255.7

How investments are funded

26. Government guidance states that these indicators should include details of how investments are funded. Since the Council does not normally associate particular assets with particular liabilities, this guidance is difficult to comply with. However, the following investments could be described as being funded by borrowing. The remainder of the Council's investments are funded by usable reserves, grants and other income.

Table 4: Investments funded by borrowing in £millions

Investments funded by borrowing	21/22 Actual	22/23 Forecast	23/24 Forecast
Service investments: Loans	151.8	154.5	172.1
TOTAL FUNDED BY BORROWING	151.8	154.5	172.1

Rate of return

27. This indicator shows the investment income received less the associated costs, including the cost of borrowing where appropriate, as a proportion of the sum

initially invested. Note that due to the complex local government accounting framework, not all recorded gains and losses affect the revenue account in the year they are incurred.

Table 5: Investment rate of return (net of all costs)

Investments net rate of return	21/22 Actual	22/23 Forecast	23/24 Forecast
Treasury management investments	0.06%	3.1%	3.1%
Service investments: Loans	3.9%	3.9%	3.9%
Commercial investments: Property	6.4%	15.0%	15.0%

Table 6: Other investment indicators

Indicator	2021/22 Actual	2022/23 Forecast	2023/24 Forecast
Debt to net service expenditure ratio	2.27	2.22	2.09
Commercial income as a % of net service expenditure ratio	0.62%	1.01%	0.96%

Appendix I - Draft Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2023/24

Introduction

- 1.0 Treasury management is the management of the Council's cash flows, borrowing and investments, and the associated risks. The Council has borrowed and invested substantial sums of money and is therefore exposed to financial risks including the loss of invested funds and the revenue effect of changing interest rates. The successful identification, monitoring and control of financial risk are therefore central to the Council's prudent financial management.
- 2.0 Treasury risk management at the Authority is conducted within the framework of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice 2021 Edition (the CIPFA Code) which requires the Authority to approve a treasury management strategy before the start of each financial year. This report fulfils the Authority's legal obligation under the Local Government Act 2003 to have regard to the CIPFA Code.

External Context

- 3.0 The ongoing impact on the UK from the war in Ukraine, together with higher inflation, higher interest rates, uncertain government policy, and a deteriorating economic outlook, will be major influences on the Authority's treasury management strategy for 2023/24.
- 4.0 The Bank of England (BoE) increased Bank Rate by 0.5% to 3.5% in December 2022. This followed a 0.75% rise in November which was the largest single rate hike since 1989 and the ninth successive rise since December 2021. The December decision was voted for by a 6 3 majority of the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC), with two dissenters voting for a no-change at 3% and one for a larger rise of 0.75%.
- 5.0 The November quarterly Monetary Policy Report (MPR) forecast a prolonged but shallow recession in the UK with CPI inflation remaining elevated at over 10% in the near-term. While the projected peak of inflation is lower than in the August report, due in part to the government's support package for household energy costs, inflation is expected remain higher for longer over the forecast horizon and the economic outlook remains weak, with unemployment projected to start rising.
- 6.0 The UK economy contracted by 0.3% between July and September 2022 according to the Office for National Statistics, and the BoE forecasts Gross Domestic Product (GDP) will decline 0.75% in the second half of the calendar year due to the squeeze on household income from higher energy costs and goods prices. Growth is then expected to continue to fall throughout 2023 and the first half of 2024.
- 7.0 CPI inflation is expected to peak at around 11% in the last calendar quarter of 2022 and then fall sharply to 1.4%, below the 2% target, in two years' time and to 0% in three years' time if Bank Rate follows the path implied by financial markets with a peak of 5.25%. However, the BoE has stated it considers this path to be too high, suggesting that the peak in interest rates will be lower, reducing the risk of

inflation falling too far below target. Market rates have fallen since the time of the November MPR.

- 8.0 The labour market remains tight for now, with the most recent statistics showing the unemployment rate was 3.7%. Earnings were up strongly in nominal terms by 6.1% for both total pay and for regular pay but factoring in inflation means real pay for both measures was -2.7%. Looking forward, the November MPR shows the labour market weakening in response to the deteriorating outlook for growth, leading to the unemployment rate rising to around 6.5% in 2025.
- 9.0 Interest rates have also been rising sharply in the US, with the Federal Reserve increasing the range on its key interest rate by 0.5% in December 2022 to 4.25%-4.5%. This rise follows four successive 0.75% rises in a pace of tightening that has seen rates increase from 0.25%-0.50% in March 2022. Annual inflation has been slowing in the US but remains above 7%. GDP grew at an annualised rate of 3.2% (revised up from 2.9%) between July and September 2022, but with official interest rates expected to rise even further in the coming months, a recession in the region is widely expected at some point during 2023.
- 10.0 Inflation rose consistently in the Euro Zone since the start of the year, hitting a peak annual rate of 10.6% in October 2022, before declining to 10.1% in November. Economic growth has been weakening with an upwardly revised expansion of 0.3% (from 0.2%) in the three months to September 2022. As with the UK and US, the European Central Bank has been on an interest rate tightening cycle, pushing up its three key interest rates by 0.50% in December, following two consecutive 0.75% rises, taking its main refinancing rate to 2.5% and deposit facility rate to 2.0%.

Credit outlook

- 11.0 Credit default swap (CDS) prices have followed an upward trend throughout the year, indicating higher credit risk. They have been boosted by the war in Ukraine, increasing economic and political uncertainty and a weaker global and UK outlook, but remain well below the levels seen at the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 12.0 CDS price volatility has been higher in 2022 compared to 2021 and this year has seen a divergence in prices between ringfenced (retail) and non-ringfenced (investment) banking entities once again.
- 13.0 The weakening economic picture during 2022 led the credit rating agencies to reflect this in their assessment of the outlook for the UK sovereign as well as several local authorities and financial institutions, revising them from to negative from stable.
- 14.0 There are competing tensions in the banking sector which could impact bank balance sheet strength going forward. The weakening economic outlook and likely recessions in many regions increase the possibility of a deterioration in the quality of banks' assets, while higher interest rates provide a boost to net income and profitability.

Interest rate forecast

- 15.0 The Council's treasury management adviser Arlingclose is forecasting that the Bank Rate will continue to rise in 2022 and 2023 as the Bank of England attempts to subdue inflation which is significantly above its 2% target.
- 16.0 While interest rate expectations reduced during October and November 2022, multiple interest rate rises are still expected over the forecast horizon despite looming recession. Arlingclose expects Bank Rate to rise to 4.25% by June 2023 under its central case, with the risks in the near- and medium-term to the upside should inflation not evolve as the Bank forecasts and remains persistently higher.
- 17.0 Yields are expected to remain broadly at current levels over the medium-term, with 5-, 10- and 20-year gilt yields expected to average around 3.5%, 3.5%, and 3.85% respectively over the 3-year period to December 2025. The risks for short, medium and longer-term yields are judged to be broadly balanced over the forecast horizon. As ever, there will undoubtedly be short-term volatility due to economic and political uncertainty and events.
- 18.0 A more detailed economic and interest rate forecast provided by Arlingclose is in Appendix 1.
- 19.0 For the purpose of setting the budget, it has been assumed that new treasury investments will be made at an average rate of 3%, and that new long-term loans will be borrowed at an average rate of 4%.

Local Context

- 20.0 The Council's borrowing as at 31st December 2022 will be summarised in 21.0 below and detailed in Appendix 2 once available later this year.
- 21.0 At 31st December 2022, the Council held £761.9m of borrowing (£686.9m long term and £75.0m short term) and £142.0m of investments. This is set out in further detail at **Appendix 2**. Forecast changes in these sums are shown in the balance sheet analysis in table 1 below.

22.0 *Table 1: Balance sheet summary and forecast*

	31.3.22	31.3.23	31.3.24	31.3.25	31.3.26	31.3.27
	Actual	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Capital financing requirement	998.5	1,125.6	1,389.0	1,603.3	1,657.0	1,688.7
Other debt liabilities *	25.6	24.0	22.3	20.2	18.3	16.3
Loans CFR	1,024.1	1,149.6	1,411.2	1,623.5	1,675.3	1,705.0
External borrowing **	(684.6)	(681.7)	(618.3)	(609.9)	(601.6)	(593.3)
Internal (over) borrowing	339.6	467.9	792.9	1,013.6	1,073.6	1,111.7
Less: Balance Sheet resources	(438.2)	(438.2)	(438.2)	(438.2)	(438.2)	(438.2)

Treasury Investments (or New borrowing)	98.6	(29.7)	(354.7)	(575.4)	(635.4)	(673.5)
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* leases and PFI liabilities that form part of the Authority's total debt

** shows only loans to which the Authority is committed and excludes optional refinancing

- 23.0 The underlying need to borrow for capital purposes is measured by the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR), while usable reserves and working capital are the underlying resources available for investment. The Council's strategy has been to maintain borrowing and investments below their underlying levels, sometimes known as internal borrowing. This means the Council has minimised its interest costs by utilising internal resources over the short term instead of undertaking more expensive external borrowing. As our internal resources are being depleted, there is an increasing need for the Council to undertake new external borrowing to fund the capital programme. The Council will need to borrow up to £617.8m over the forecast period.
- 24.0 CIPFA's *Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities* recommends that the Council's total debt should be lower than its highest forecast CFR over the next three years. Table 1 shows that the Council expects to comply with this recommendation during 2023/24.

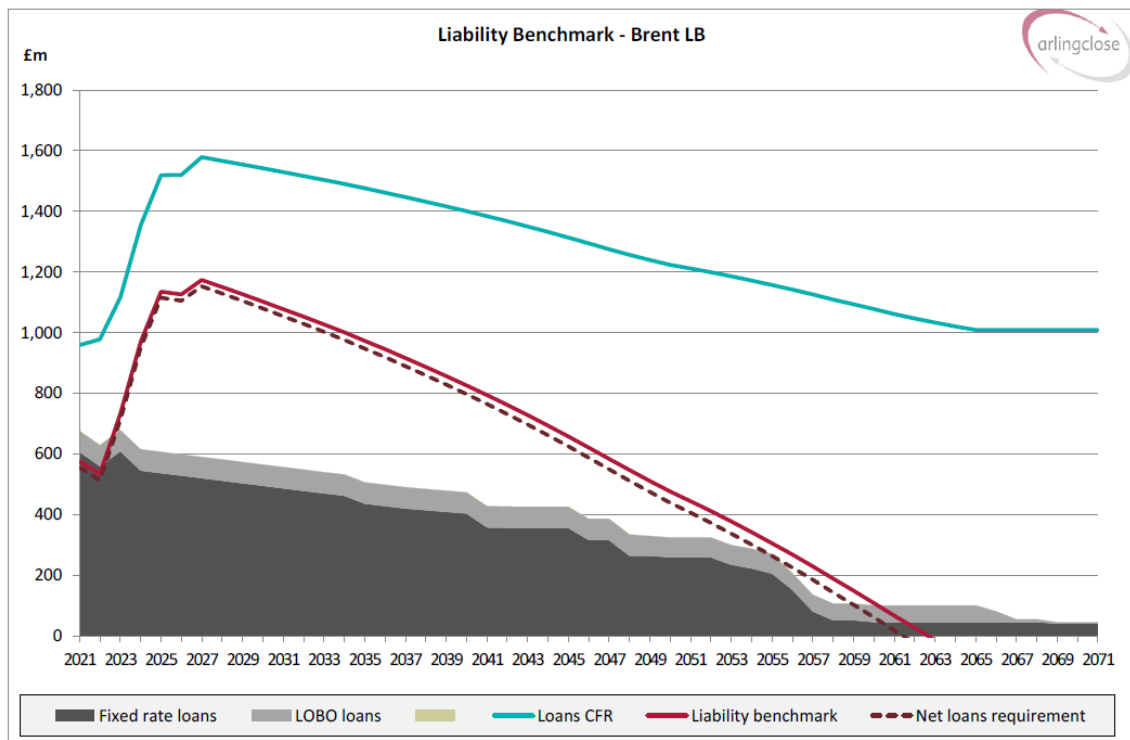
Liability Benchmark

- 25.0 To compare the Council's actual borrowing against an alternative strategy, a liability benchmark has been calculated showing the lowest risk level of borrowing. This assumes that cash and investment balances are kept to a minimum level to maintain sufficient liquidity but minimise credit risk.
- 26.0 The liability benchmark is an important tool to help establish whether the Council is likely to be a long-term borrower or long-term investor in the future, and so shape its strategic focus and decision making. The liability benchmark itself represents an estimate of the cumulative amount of external borrowing the Council must hold to fund its current capital and revenue plans while keeping treasury investments at the minimum level required to manage day-to-day cash flow.

27.0 Table 2: Prudential Indicator: Liability benchmark

	31.3.22	31.3.23	31.3.24	31.3.25	31.3.26	31.3.27
	Actual	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Loans CFR	1,024.1	1,149.6	1,411.2	1,623.5	1,675.2	1,705.0
Less: Balance sheet resources	(438.2)	(438.2)	(438.2)	(438.2)	(438.2)	(438.2)
Net loans requirement	586.0	711.4	973.0	1,185.3	1,237.0	1,266.8
Plus: Liquidity allowance	20.0	20.0	20.0	20.0	20.0	20.0
Liability benchmark	606.0	731.4	993.0	1,205.3	1,257.0	1,286.8

28.0 Following on from the medium-term forecasts in table 2 above, the long-term liability benchmark assumes minimum revenue provision on new capital expenditure based on a 5 - 60 year asset life and income, expenditure and reserves all increasing by inflation of 2.5% a year. This is shown in the chart below:



29.0 The Loan CFR (Blue lines) represents the need to fund capital expenditure through borrowing. The Liability benchmark (Red Lines) represents the level of borrowing requirement once reserves and working capital has been taken into account.

Where the liability benchmark exceeds the Council's current borrowing levels (Grey area), this indicates the real need to borrow.

Borrowing Strategy

- 30.0 The Council currently holds £684.6m million of loans, an increase of £25.5m (Last year £659.1m) on the previous year, due to the decrease in internal cash reserves and planned capital expenditure. The balance sheet forecast in Table 1 shows that the Council expects to borrow up to £1,219m by 2025/26 however, this is largely dependent on how the capital programme progresses. The Council may also borrow additional sums to pre-fund future years' requirements, providing this does not exceed the authorised limit for borrowing of £1.5 billion.
- 31.0 **Objectives:** The Council's main objective when borrowing money is to strike an appropriately low risk balance between securing low interest costs and achieving certainty of those costs over the period for which funds are required. The flexibility to renegotiate loans should the Council's long-term plans change is a secondary objective.
- 32.0 **Strategy:** Given the significant cuts to public expenditure and in particular to local government funding, the Council's borrowing strategy continues to address the key issue of affordability without compromising the longer-term stability of the debt portfolio. Interest rates have increased across the yield curve over the past year. The Council will continue to work closely with our Treasury advisors Arlingclose in order to borrow at optimal points avoiding the worst of the market volatility. Where appropriate, the Council may increase the proportion of it's debt held for short-term maturities.
- 33.0 In order to ensure long term stability of the debt portfolio, a proportion of the portfolio will be funded by long term borrowing. Where is affordable, this can help provide certainty to ensure the ongoing viability for capital programme schemes in these volatile markets.
- 34.0 **Sources of borrowing:** The approved sources of long-term and short-term borrowing are:
- HM Treasury's PWLB lending facility (formerly the Public Works Loan Board)
 - any institution approved for investments (see below)
 - any other bank or building society authorised to operate in the UK
 - any other UK public sector body
 - UK public and private sector pension funds (except the local Brent Pension Fund)
 - capital market bond investors
 - UK Municipal Bonds Agency plc and other special purpose companies created to enable local authority bond issues

- 35.0 **Other sources of debt finance:** In addition, capital finance may be raised by the following methods that are not borrowing, but may be classed as other debt liabilities:
- Leasing
 - Hire purchase
 - Private Finance Initiative
 - Sale and leaseback
- 36.0 The Council has previously raised the majority of its long term borrowing from the PWLB and will continue to do so in 2023/24. The Council will also consider the arrangement of forward starting loans, where the interest rate is fixed in advance, but the cash is received in later years. This would enable certainty of cost to be achieved without suffering a cost of carry in the intervening period.
- 37.0 PWLB loans are no longer available to local authorities planning to buy investment assets primarily for yield. The Council has not undertaken such borrowing and has no plans to in future, which ensures continuing access to PWLB borrowing facilities.
- 38.0 In addition to above, the Council may borrow short-term loans to cover temporary cash flow pressures from other Local Authorities.
- 39.0 **Municipal Bonds Agency:** UK Municipal Bonds Agency plc was established in 2014 by the Local Government Association as an alternative to the PWLB. It issues bonds on the capital markets and lends the proceeds to local authorities. This is a more complicated source of finance than the PWLB for two reasons: borrowing authorities will be required to provide bond investors with a guarantee to refund their investment in the event that the agency is unable to for any reason; and there will be a lead time of several months between committing to borrow and knowing the interest rate payable. Any decision to borrow from the Agency will therefore be the subject of a separate report to members.
- 40.0 **LOBOs:** The Council holds £70.5m of LOBO (Lender's Option Borrower's Option) loans where the lender has the option to propose an increase in the interest rate at set dates, following which the Council has the option to either accept the new rate or to repay the loan at no additional cost. £26m of these LOBOs have options during 2023/24. Due to higher market rates, there is now a significant risk that some existing LOBO's may now require refinancing at higher rates or will require repaying.
- 41.0 **Short-term and variable rate loans:** These loans leave the Council exposed to the risk of short-term interest rate rises and are therefore subject to the interest rate exposure limits in the treasury management indicators below. Financial derivatives may be used to manage this interest rate risk (see section 69 below).

42.0 **Debt rescheduling:** The PWLB allows authorities to repay loans before maturity and either pay a premium or receive a discount according to a set formula based on current interest rates. Other lenders may also be prepared to negotiate premature redemption terms. The Council may take advantage of this and replace some loans with new loans, or repay loans without replacement, where this is expected to lead to an overall cost saving or a reduction in risk.

Treasury Investment Strategy

43.0 The Council holds invested funds, representing income received in advance of expenditure plus balances and reserves held. In the past 12 months, the Council's treasury investment balance has ranged between £37.7m and £124.5m due to capital expenditure utilising the Council's internal cash reserves. These balances are expected to remain low for the remainder of the year with cash available to invest for relatively short periods.

44.0 **Objectives:** The CIPFA Code requires the Council to invest its treasury funds prudently, and to have regard to the security and liquidity of its investments before seeking the highest rate of return, or yield. The Council's objective when investing money is to strike an appropriate balance between risk and return, minimising the risk of incurring losses from defaults and the risk of receiving unsuitably low investment income. Where balances are expected to be invested for more than one year, the Council will aim to achieve a total return that is equal or higher than the prevailing rate of inflation, in order to maintain the spending power of the sum invested. The Authority aims to be a responsible investor and will consider environmental, social and governance (ESG) issues when investing.

45.0 **Strategy:** Given the increasing risk and very low returns from short-term unsecured bank investments, the Council continue to monitor higher yielding asset classes during 2023/24. This represents a continuation of the strategy adopted in 2018/19. However, it is worth noting that this approach will be limited to the extent that the capital investment plans are delivered in line with current expectations. Should this prove to be the case, surplus funds will not be available to invest over longer durations as set out below.

46.0 **ESG Policy** - Environmental, social and governance (ESG) considerations are increasingly a factor in global investors' decision making, but the framework for evaluating investment opportunities is still developing and therefore the Authority's ESG policy does not currently include ESG scoring or other real-time ESG criteria at an individual investment level. When investing in banks and funds, the Council will prioritise banks that are signatories to the UN Principles for Responsible Banking and funds operated by managers that are signatories to the

UN Principles for Responsible Investment, the Net Zero Asset Managers Alliance and/or the UK Stewardship Code.

- 47.0 Currently, the majority of the Council's surplus cash remains invested in short-term money market funds. The average rate of interest received on short-term investments during the year to December 22 was 3.15% with an average duration of 1 day. Due to the authorities borrowing requirement, there is unlikely to be scope to improve the short term investment returns achieved as liquidity of the surplus funds will play a key role.
- 48.0 The Council will maintain a minimum investment balance of £10m to ensure the Council complies with the requirements to be a professional client under MIFID II regulations.
- 49.0 **Business models:** Under the new IFRS 9 standard, the accounting for certain investments depends on the Council's "business model" for managing them. The Council aims to achieve value from its treasury investments by a business model of collecting the contractual cash flows and therefore, where other criteria are also met, these investments will continue to be accounted for at amortised cost.
- 50.0 **Credit Rating:** Treasury investments in the sectors marked with an asterisk will only be made with entities whose long-term credit rating is no lower than A-. The Council uses the lowest rating quoted by the main rating agencies, as recommended by CIPFA. Where available, the credit rating relevant to the specific investment or class of investment is used, otherwise the counterparty credit rating is used. However, investment decisions are never made solely based on credit ratings, and all other relevant factors including external advice will be taken into account. Within these criteria the Director of Finance will have discretion to accept or reject individual institutions as counterparties on the basis of any information which may become available.
- 51.0 Credit ratings are obtained and monitored by the Council's treasury advisers, who will notify changes in ratings as they occur. Any institution will be suspended or removed should any factors give rise to concern, and caution will be paramount in reaching any investment decision regardless of the counterparty or the circumstances. Should an entity's credit rating be downgraded so that it does not meet the Council's approved criteria then:
- No new investments will be made;
 - Full consideration will be made to the recall or sale of existing investments with the affected counterparty.
- 52.0 Where a credit rating agency announces that a credit rating is on review for possible downgrade (also known as "negative watch") so that it may fall below

the approved rating criteria, then only investments that can be withdrawn on the next working day will be made with that organisation until the outcome of the review is announced. This policy will not apply to negative outlooks, which indicate a long-term direction of travel rather than an imminent change of rating.

- 53.0 Having an appropriate lending list of counterparties, remains critically important to protecting Brent's investments. A list of extremely secure counterparties would be very small, and the limits with each would be correspondingly high. This would expose the Council to a risk of an unlikely but potentially large loss. This arises because the arrangements for dealing with banks in difficulty now require a loss to be imposed on various categories of liabilities of the banks to allow the bank to recapitalise itself and continue in business (sometimes referred to as bail in).
- 54.0 When deteriorating financial market conditions affect the creditworthiness of all organisations, as happened in 2008 and 2020, this is not generally reflected in credit ratings, but can be seen in other market measures. In these circumstances, the Council will restrict its investments to those organisations of higher credit quality and reduce the maximum duration of its investments to maintain the required level of security. The extent of these restrictions will be in line with prevailing financial market conditions. This will cause a reduction in the level of investment income earned, but will protect the principal sum invested.
- 55.0 **Government:** Loans to, and bonds and bills issued or guaranteed by, national governments, regional and local authorities and multilateral development banks. These investments are not subject to bail-in, and there is generally a lower risk of insolvency, although they are not zero risk. Investments with the UK Government are deemed to be zero credit risk due to its ability to create additional currency and therefore may be made in unlimited amounts for up to 50 years.
- 56.0 **Banks and building societies (unsecured):** Accounts, deposits, certificates of deposit and senior unsecured bonds with banks and building societies, other than multilateral development banks. These investments are subject to the risk of credit loss via a bail-in should the regulator determine that the bank is failing or likely to fail. There is no upper limit to the maximum credit loss that the Council could suffer in the event of a bail-in scenario. See section 54 below for arrangements relating to operational bank accounts. Investments in unsecured deposits will be limited to £20m.
- 57.0 **Registered providers (unsecured):** Loans to, and bonds issued or guaranteed by, registered providers of social housing or registered social landlords, formerly known as housing associations. These bodies are regulated by the Regulator of Social Housing (in England), the Scottish Housing Regulator, the Welsh Government and the Department for Communities (in Northern Ireland). As providers of public services, they retain the likelihood of receiving government

support if needed. Investments with registered providers will be limited to £20m in 2023/24.

- 58.0 **Secured investments:** Investments secured on the borrower's assets, which limits the potential losses in the event of insolvency. The amount and quality of the security will be a key factor in the investment decision. Covered bonds and reverse repurchase agreements with banks and building societies are exempt from bail-in. Where there is no investment specific credit rating, but the collateral upon which the investment is secured has a credit rating, the higher of the collateral credit rating and the counterparty credit rating will be used. The combined secured and unsecured investments with any one counterparty will not exceed the cash limit for secured investments. The Council and its advisors remain alert for signs of credit or market distress that might adversely affect the Council. Investments in secured deposits will be limited to £20m.
- 59.0 **Money market funds (MMFs):** Pooled funds that offer same-day or short notice liquidity and very low or no price volatility by investing in short-term money markets. They have the advantage over bank accounts of providing wide diversification of investment risks, coupled with the services of a professional fund manager. Although no sector limit applies to money market funds, the Council will take care to diversify its liquid investments over a variety of providers to ensure access to cash at all times. Deposits will not exceed 0.5% of the net asset value of the MMF. In addition, each Fund will be limited to a maximum deposit of £20m.
- 60.0 The investment strategy will provide flexibility to invest cash for longer periods in order to access higher investment returns. The upper limit for lending beyond a year is £50m. In practice, lending for more than one year will be only to institutions of the highest credit quality and at rates which justify the liquidity risk involved. Marketable instruments may have longer maturities, though the maturity will be considered in conjunction with the likely liquidity of the market and credit quality of the institution. Other than UK Central Government the Council may invest its surplus funds subject to a maximum duration of 25 years.

Alternative investment options will include:

- 61.0 **Strategic pooled funds:** Bond, equity and property funds that offer enhanced returns over the longer term but are more volatile in the short term. These allow the Council to diversify into asset classes other than cash without the need to own and manage the underlying investments. Because these funds have no defined maturity date, but are available for withdrawal after a notice period, their performance and continued suitability in meeting the Council's investment objectives will be monitored regularly. Although considered as pooled funds, MMF's are discussed separately in paragraph 34. The Council currently has no investments in Pooled Funds (other than MMFs) at present, but may make

prudent use of them in the future. Investments in pooled funds will be limited to £20m in 2023/24.

- 62.0 Real estate investment trusts (REITs):** Shares in companies that invest mainly in real estate and pay the majority of their rental income to investors in a similar manner to pooled property funds. As with property funds, REITs offer enhanced returns over the longer term, but are more volatile especially as the share price reflects changing demand for the shares as well as changes in the value of the underlying properties. The risk with any investments in REITs is that shares cannot be withdrawn but can be sold on the stock market to another investor which leaves the Council open to market risk. Investments in REITs will be limited to £20m in 2023/24.
- 63.0 Other investments:** This category covers treasury investments not listed above, for example unsecured corporate bonds and company loans. Non-bank companies cannot be bailed-in but can become insolvent placing the Council’s investment at risk.
- 64.0 Operational bank accounts:** The Council may incur operational exposures, for example though current accounts, collection accounts and merchant acquiring services, to any UK bank with credit ratings no lower than BBB- and with assets greater than £25 billion. These are not classed as investments but are still subject to the risk of a bank bail-in. The Bank of England has stated that in the event of failure, banks with assets greater than £25 billion are more likely to be bailed-in than made insolvent, increasing the chance of the Council maintaining operational continuity. The Council banks with National Westminster Bank (NatWest) who meet the Council’s minimum credit criteria. Should Natwest’s creditworthiness deteriorate below the Council’s minimum credit criteria, then as far as is consistent with operational efficiency, no money will be placed with NatWest and credit balances in the various Council accounts will be kept to a minimum level.

Investment limits: The Council’s revenue reserves available to cover investment losses are forecast to be £384 million on 31st March 2023. In order that no more than 10% of available reserves will be put at risk in the case of a single default, the maximum that will be lent to any one organisation (other than the UK Government and Council subsidiaries) will be £20 million. A group of banks under the same ownership will be treated as a single organisation for limit purposes.

65.0 *Table 3: Investment Limits*

	Credit Quality	Cash limit	Time Limit
Any single organisation, except a Government entity	A- Or equivalent	£20m	n/a
UK Government	Any	Unlimited	50 years

Local Authorities & other government entities	Any	Unlimited	25 years
Banks (unsecured)*	A- Or equivalent	£20m	13 months
Building Societies (unsecured)*	A- Or equivalent	£20m	13 months
Registered providers and registered social landlords*	A- Or equivalent	£20m	5 years
Secured investments*	A- Or equivalent	£20m	5 years
Money market funds*	A- Or equivalent	Lower of 5% of total net assets of the fund or £20m	n/a
Strategic pooled funds*	A- Or equivalent	£20m	n/a
Real estate investment trusts*	A- Or equivalent	£20m	n/a
Other Investments*	A- Or equivalent	£50m	5 years

*** Minimum credit rating:** Treasury investments in the sectors marked with an asterisk will only be made with entities whose lowest published long-term credit rating is no lower than A-. Where available, the credit rating relevant to the specific investment or class of investment is used, otherwise the counterparty credit rating is used. However, investment decisions are never made solely based on credit ratings, and all other relevant factors including external advice will be taken into account.

For entities without published credit ratings, investments may be made either (a) where external advice indicates the entity to be of similar credit quality; or (b) to a maximum of £200,000 per counterparty as part of a diversified pool e.g. via a peer-to-peer platform.

66.0 Liquidity management: The Council uses internal purpose-built cash flow modelling tools to determine the maximum period for which funds may prudently be committed. The forecast is compiled on a prudent basis to minimise the risk of the Council being forced to borrow on unfavourable terms to meet its financial commitments. Limits on long-term investments are set by reference to the Council's medium-term financial plan and cash flow forecast. The Council aims to spread its liquid cash over at least two providers (e.g. bank accounts and money market funds) to ensure that access to cash is maintained in the event of operational difficulties at any one provider.

TREASURY MANAGEMENT PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS

67.0 The Council measures and manages its exposures to treasury management risks using the following indicators.

68.0 Security: The Council has adopted a voluntary measure of its exposure to credit risk by monitoring the value-weighted average credit rating of its investment

portfolio. This is calculated by applying a score to each investment (AAA=1, AA+=2, etc.) and taking the arithmetic average, weighted by the size of each investment. Unrated investments are assigned a score based on their perceived risk.

Table 4: Credit risk indicator

Credit risk indicator	Target
Portfolio average credit rating	A

69.0 **Liquidity:** The Council has adopted a voluntary measure of its exposure to liquidity risk by monitoring the amount of cash available to meet unexpected payments within a rolling three month period, without additional borrowing.

Table 5: Liquidity risk indicator

Liquidity risk indicator	Target
Total cash available within 3 months	£20m

70.0 **Interest rate exposures:** This indicator is set to control the Council's exposure to interest rate risk. The upper limits on the one-year revenue impact of a 1% rise or fall in interest rates will be:

Table 6: Interest rate risk indicator

Interest rate risk indicator	Limit
Upper limit on one-year revenue impact of a 1% rise in interest rates	£5m
Upper limit on one-year revenue impact of a 1% fall in interest rates	£5m

The impact of a change in interest rates is calculated on the assumption that maturing loans and investments will be replaced at current rates.

71.0 **Maturity structure of borrowing:** This indicator is set to control the Council's exposure to refinancing risk. The upper and lower limits on the maturity structure of borrowing will be:

Table 7: Refinancing rate risk indicator

Refinancing rate risk indicator	Upper limit	Lower limit
Under 12 months	40%	0%
12 months and within 24 months	40%	0%
24 months and within 5 years	40%	0%
5 years and within 10 years	60%	0%
10 years and within 20 years	75%	0%
20 years and within 30 years	75%	0%
30 years and within 40 years	75%	0%

Over 40 years	75%	0%
---------------	-----	----

Time periods start on the first day of each financial year. LOBOs are classified as maturing on the next call date i.e. the earliest date that the lender can require repayment.

- 72.0 **Principal sums invested for periods longer than a year:** The purpose of this indicator is to control the Council’s exposure to the risk of incurring losses by seeking early repayment of its investments. The limits on the long-term principal sum invested to final maturities beyond the period end will be:

Table 8: Price risk indicator

Price risk indicator	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Limit on principal invested beyond year end	£50m	£50m	£50m

Related Matters

- 73.0 The CIPFA Code requires the Council to include the following in its treasury management strategy.
- 74.0 **Financial Derivatives:** A Derivative is a contract between two or more parties to hedge against the risk associated with the performance of an underlying asset. Local authorities have previously made use of financial derivatives embedded into its loans and investments both to reduce interest rate risk and to reduce costs or increase income at the expense of greater risk.
- 75.0 The general power of competence in Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 removes much of the uncertainty over local authorities’ use of standalone financial derivatives (i.e. those that are not embedded into a loan or investment).
- 76.0 The Council will only use standalone financial derivatives (such as swaps, forwards, futures and options) where they can be clearly demonstrated to reduce the overall level of the financial risks that the Council is exposed to.
- 77.0 Financial derivative transactions may be arranged with any organisation that meets the approved investment criteria. The current value of any amount due from a derivative counterparty will count against the counterparty credit limit and the relevant foreign country limit.
- 78.0 In line with the CIPFA Code, the Council will seek external advice and consult with Members before entering into financial derivatives to ensure that it fully understands the implications. This will include analysis of the impact on interest

rate, refinancing, counterparty, market, regulatory and legal risks, together with an assessment on the effectiveness of the derivative.

- 79.0 **Housing Revenue Account:** On 1st April 2012, the Council notionally split each of its existing long-term loans into General Fund and HRA pools. In the future, new long-term loans borrowed will be assigned in their entirety to one pool or the other. Interest payable and other costs/income arising from long-term loans (e.g. premiums and discounts on early redemption) will be charged/ credited to the respective revenue account. Differences between the value of the HRA loans pool and the HRA's underlying need to borrow (adjusted for HRA balance sheet resources available for investment) will result in a notional cash balance which may be positive or negative. This balance will be measured each month and interest transferred between the General Fund and HRA at the Council's average interest rate on investments, adjusted for credit risk.
- 80.0 **Markets in Financial Instruments Directive:** The MiFID II regulations took effect from January 2018 which saw the council reclassified as a retail client with the opportunity to opt up to professional client status. Retail clients have access increased protection however this would be balanced against potentially higher fees and access to a more limited range of products. The Council has opted up to professional client status with its providers of financial services, including advisors, banks, brokers and fund managers. Given the size and range of the Council's treasury management activities, the Director of Finance believes this to be the appropriate status for the Council's treasury management activities.
- 81.0 **Financial Implications:** The draft capital financing budget of £23.6m for 2023/24 has been calculated based on the reduction in balances available for investment and the increased external borrowing required.
- 82.0 **Other Options Considered:** The CIPFA Code does not prescribe any particular treasury management strategy for local authorities to adopt. The Council believes that the above strategy represents an appropriate balance between risk management and cost effectiveness. Some alternative strategies, with their financial and risk management implications, are listed below.

Table 9: Alternative Strategies

Alternative	Impact on income and expenditure	Impact on risk management
Invest in a narrower range of counterparties and/or for shorter times	Interest income will be lower	Lower chance of losses from credit related defaults, but any such losses may be greater
Invest in a wider range of counterparties and/or for longer times	Interest income will be higher	Increased risk of losses from credit related defaults, but any such losses may be smaller
Borrow additional sums at long-term fixed interest rates	Debt interest costs will rise; this is unlikely to be offset by higher investment income	Higher investment balance leading to a higher impact in the event of a default; however long-term interest costs may be more certain
Borrow short-term or variable loans instead of long-term fixed rates	Debt interest costs will initially be lower	Increases in debt interest costs will be broadly offset by rising investment income in the medium term, but long-term costs may be less certain
Reduce level of borrowing	Saving on debt interest is likely to exceed lost investment income	Reduced investment balance leading to a lower impact in the event of a default; however long-term interest costs may be less certain

Appendix 1 - Arlingclose Economic & Interest Rate Forecast - November 2022

Underlying assumptions:

- UK interest rate expectations have eased following the mini-budget, with a growing expectation that UK fiscal policy will now be tightened to restore investor confidence, adding to the pressure on household finances. The peak for UK interest rates will therefore be lower, although the path for interest rates and gilt yields remain highly uncertain.
- Globally, economic growth is slowing as inflation and tighter monetary policy depress activity. Inflation, however, continues to run hot, raising expectations that policymakers, particularly in the US, will err on the side of caution, continue to increase rates and tighten economies into recession.
- The new Chancellor dismantled the mini-budget, calming bond markets and broadly removing the premium evident since the first Tory leadership election. Support for retail energy bills will be less generous, causing a lower but more prolonged peak in inflation. This will have ramifications for both growth and inflation expectations.
- The UK economy is already experiencing recessionary conditions, with business activity and household spending falling. Tighter monetary and fiscal policy, alongside high inflation will bear down on household disposable income. The short- to medium-term outlook for the UK economy is bleak, with the BoE projecting a protracted recession.
- Demand for labour remains strong, although there are some signs of easing. The decline in the active workforce has fed through into higher wage growth, which could prolong higher inflation. The development of the UK labour market will be a key influence on MPC decisions. It is difficult to see labour market strength remaining given the current economic outlook.
- Global bond yields have steadied somewhat as attention turns towards a possible turning point in US monetary policy. Stubborn US inflation and strong labour markets mean that the Federal Reserve remains hawkish, creating inflationary risks for other central banks breaking ranks.
- However, in a departure from Fed and ECB policy, in November the BoE attempted to explicitly talk down interest rate expectations, underlining the damage current market expectations will do to the UK economy, and the probable resulting inflation undershoot in the medium term. This did not stop the Governor affirming that there will be further rises in Bank Rate.

Forecast:

- The MPC remains concerned about inflation but sees the path for Bank Rate to be below that priced into markets.
- Following the exceptional 75bp rise in November, Arlingclose believes the MPC will slow the rate of increase at the next few meetings. Arlingclose now expects Bank Rate to peak at 4.25%, with a further 50bp rise in December and smaller rises in 2023.
- The UK economy likely entered into recession in Q3, which will continue for some time. Once inflation has fallen from the peak, the MPC will cut Bank Rate.
- Arlingclose expects gilt yields to remain broadly steady despite the MPC's attempt to push down on interest rate expectations. Without a weakening in the inflation outlook, investors will price in higher inflation expectations given signs of a softer monetary policy stance.
- Gilt yields face pressures to both sides from hawkish US/EZ central bank policy on one hand to the weak global economic outlook on the other. BoE bond sales will maintain yields at a higher level than would otherwise be the case.

	Current	Dec-22	Mar-23	Jun-23	Sep-23	Dec-23	Mar-24	Jun-24	Sep-24	Dec-24	Mar-25	Jun-25	Sep-25
Official Bank Rate													
Upside risk	0.00	0.25	0.50	0.75	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.25	1.50	1.75	1.50	1.25	1.25
Arlingclose Central Case	3.00	3.50	4.00	4.25	4.25	4.25	4.25	4.00	3.75	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50
Downside risk	0.00	0.25	0.50	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
3-month money market rate													
Upside risk	0.00	0.25	0.50	0.75	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.25	1.50	1.75	1.50	1.25	1.25
Arlingclose Central Case	3.00	3.90	4.40	4.40	4.40	4.35	4.30	4.25	4.00	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.75
Downside risk	0.00	0.25	0.50	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
5yr gilt yield													
Upside risk	0.00	0.60	0.70	0.80	0.90	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Arlingclose Central Case	3.36	3.65	3.90	3.90	3.90	3.90	3.80	3.70	3.60	3.50	3.40	3.30	3.20
Downside risk	0.00	0.70	0.90	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
10yr gilt yield													
Upside risk	0.00	0.60	0.70	0.80	0.90	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Arlingclose Central Case	3.46	3.70	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.70	3.70	3.70	3.70	3.70	3.70	3.70	3.70
Downside risk	0.00	0.70	0.90	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
20yr gilt yield													
Upside risk	0.00	0.60	0.70	0.80	0.90	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Arlingclose Central Case	3.88	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	3.90	3.90	3.90	3.90	3.90	3.90	3.90
Downside risk	0.00	0.70	0.90	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
50yr gilt yield													
Upside risk	0.00	0.60	0.70	0.80	0.90	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Arlingclose Central Case	3.24	3.40	3.40	3.40	3.40	3.40	3.30	3.30	3.30	3.30	3.30	3.30	3.30
Downside risk	0.00	0.70	0.90	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00

PWLB Standard Rate (Maturity Loans) = Gilt yield + 1.00%

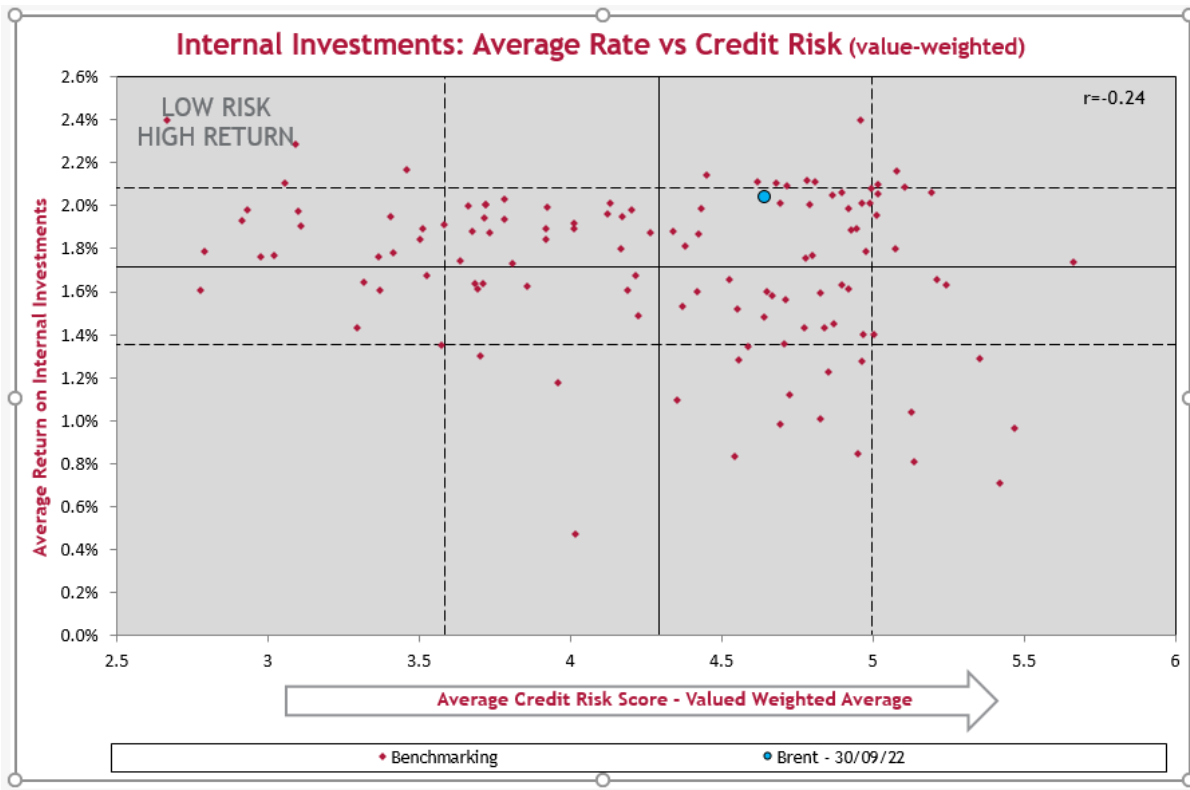
PWLB Certainty Rate (Maturity Loans) = Gilt yield + 0.80%

UKIB Rate (Maturity Loans) = Gilt yield + 0.60%

Appendix 2 - Existing Investment & Debt Portfolio Position

	31/12/22 Actual Portfolio £m	31/12/22 Average Rate %
External borrowing:		
Public Works Loan Board	521.4	3.91
Local authorities	-	-
LOBO loans from banks	75.5	4.48
Other loans	90.0	2.61
Short Term Loans	75.0	2.91
Total external borrowing	761.9	3.47
Other long-term liabilities:		
Private Finance Initiative	20.5	-
Finance Leases	7.7	-
Other long-term liabilities	1.6	-
Total other long-term liabilities	29.8	
Total gross external debt	791.7	
Treasury investments:		
Banks & building societies (unsecured)	0.0	0.0
Government (incl. local authorities)	35.0	3.1
Money Market Funds	107.0	3.2
Total treasury investments	142.0	3.15
Net debt	619.9	

Appendix 3 - Internal Investments: Average Rate vs Credit Risk



A credit rating of 4 is equivalent to credit score of AA-. The Council has a target rating of A which is a rating of 6. The current portfolio has a credit rating of A+ (Credit score 5) which exceeds our target rating.

Minimum Revenue Provision – 2023/24

- 1.1. Where the Council finances capital expenditure by debt, it must put aside resources to repay that debt in later years. The amount charged to the revenue budget for the repayment of debt is known as Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP), although there has been no statutory minimum since 2008. The Local Government Act 2003 requires the Council to have regard to the former Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's Guidance on Minimum Revenue Provision (the MHCLG Guidance) most recently issued in 2018.
- 1.2. The broad aim of the MHCLG Guidance is to ensure that capital expenditure is financed over a period that is either reasonable commensurate with that over which the capital expenditure provides benefits, or, in the case of borrowing supported by Government Revenue Support Grant, reasonably commensurate with the period implicit in the determination of that grant.
- 1.3. The Guidance requires Full Council (or a delegated body) to approve an MRP policy statement in advance of each financial year and recommends a number of options for calculating a prudent amount of MRP.
- 1.4. In accordance with the current guidance for the calculation of MRP the following policy for non-HRA assets has been applied:
 - 1.4.1. For supported borrowing, the Council will use the asset life method (Option 3) and an 'annuity' approach for calculating repayments. Based on the useful economic lives of the council's assets, a single annuity has been calculated, which results in the outstanding principal being repaid over the course of one hundred years.
 - 1.4.2. For prudential borrowing, the Council will adopt Option 3, 'the asset life method', and an 'annuity' approach for calculating repayments. This option allows provision for repayment of principal to be made over the estimated life of the asset. The use of the 'annuity' method is akin to a mortgage where the combined sum of principal and interest are equalised over the life of the asset.
 - 1.4.3. In line with the statutory guidance, MRP will be charged for finance leases at a rate equal to the amount that goes to write down the balance sheet liability.

- 1.4.4. MRP will include a charge equal to any capital lifecycle additions within the lease.
- 1.4.5. Where borrowing is undertaken for the construction of new assets, MRP will only become chargeable once such assets are completed and operational. Whilst this is not one of the options in the MHCLG Guidance, it is thought to be a prudent approach since it ensure that the capital expenditure incurred on the loan is fully funded over the life of those assets.
- 1.4.6. The Council reserve the right to charge a £nil MRP where the conditions set out in paragraph 26 of the statutory guidance have been met.
- 1.5. The asset lives which will be applied to different classes of assets are as shown in table 1, however the Council reserves the right to determine useful life periods and prudent MRP in exceptional circumstances where the recommendations of the guidance would not be appropriate.

Table 1

Asset Type	Years
Vehicles and equipment	5 to 15 years
Capital repairs to roads and buildings	15 to 25 years
Purchase of buildings	30 to 40 years
New construction	40 to 60 years
Purchase of land	50 to 100 years

- 1.6. Based on the Council’s latest estimate of its capital financing requirement (CFR) on 31st March 2023, the MRP budget for 2023/24 has been set at £12.0m.

BRENT RESERVES STRATEGY

What are reserves?

CIPFA states in the *Financial Management Code* that “the aim of the authority’s financial reserves is to provide funding for investment in future activities and to act as a safety net in case of short-term financial challenges.”

What is a reserves strategy?

The *Reserves Strategy* defines the level and purposes for which the Council holds reserves. It consists of three key elements:

1. **Strategy:** what the Council is seeking to achieve through holding reserves;
2. **Financial Planning:** linking the level of reserves with plans for their use over the period of *Medium Term Financial Strategy* (MTFS); and
3. **Operational Framework:** how the Council determines the level of reserves, manages those reserves and plans for their use in line with best practice and statutory requirements.

Together these elements set out the Council’s ambition for reserves, the nature of that ambition and how we will provide assurance.

STRATEGY

Why do we need a reserves strategy?

The Council plans its finances over the short term, medium and long term so that it has adequate resources to deliver services for the residents of the borough. As a large, complex organisation, there will always be variations between our actual spending/income and our plans due to variations in demand, demographic change, changes in costs and the funding decisions of third parties as well as the need to deliver projects and investments spanning more than one financial year.

To ensure we can manage these financial risks, whilst being able to maintain services, requires that the Authority holds funds in reserve to meet these costs as and when they arise and to deal with any unexpected emergency that may occur. A reserves strategy enables us to do this in a planned way.

Do we have to have a reserves strategy?

The requirement for financial reserves is acknowledged in statute. Sections 32 and 43 of the *Local Government Act 1992* require precepting authorities and billing authorities in England and Wales to have regard to the level of reserves needed for meeting estimated future expenditure when calculating the budget requirement.

There are other safeguards in place that help to prevent the Council from over-committing itself financially. These include:

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- a) The balanced budget requirement (*Local Government Act 1992 s32 and s43*);
- b) Chief Finance Officer's duty to report on the robustness of estimates and adequacy of reserves (*Local Government Act 2003 s25*) when the Council is considering the budget requirement;
- c) Legislative requirement to make arrangements for the proper administration of the Council's financial affairs and that the Chief Finance Officer has responsibility for the administration of those affairs (*Local Government Act 1972 s151*);
- d) The requirements of the *Prudential Code*;
- e) Auditors' consideration of whether the audited body has established adequate arrangements to ensure that its financial position is sustainable. Financial sustainability is covered as part of the *Value for Money Audit*, and
- f) CIPFA's *Financial Management Code* requirement that the effective management of reserves is reviewed as part of a formal Financial Resilience Assessment (FRA).

These requirements are reinforced by section 114 of the *Local Government Finance Act 1988*, which requires the Chief Finance Officer to report if there is likely to be unlawful expenditure or an unbalanced budget. This would include situations where reserves have become seriously depleted and it is forecast that the Council will not have the resources to meet its expenditure in a particular financial year.

Whilst it is primarily the responsibility of the Chief Finance Officer to maintain a sound financial position, the external auditors will, as part of their wider responsibilities, consider whether the audited body has established adequate arrangements to ensure that its financial position is soundly based. However, it is not the responsibility of the external auditors to prescribe the optimum or minimum level of reserves for the Council.

FINANCIAL PLANNING

How does it fit with our other strategies?

The *Reserves Strategy* is part of a suite of supporting strategies that supplement the *Borough Plan* and the *Medium Term Financial Strategy*. These detailed strategies provide an additional level of granularity that helps to create a bridge between the over-arching strategies and operational delivery plans

CIPFA's *Prudential Code* requires the Chief Finance Officer to have regard to affordability when making recommendations about the future capital programme. Such consideration includes the level of long-term revenue commitments. Indeed, in considering the affordability of its capital plans, the Council is required to consider all of the resources available to it and estimated for the future, together with the totality of its capital plans and revenue forecasts for the forthcoming year and the following two years.

There is a requirement for three-year revenue forecasts across the public sector and this is achieved through the *Medium Term Financial Strategy* and the annual budget.

The 2021 Autumn Budget and Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR21) provided details of proposed government support for a three-year timeframe, but with only a one-year detailed financial settlement. This creates uncertainty over future funding and provides limited information for planning over the medium term the use of balances and reserves.

How are the level of reserves set?

CIPFA's Local Authority Accounting Panel does not accept that there is a case for introducing a generally acceptable minimum level of reserves. Instead, it is for the Council, on the advice of its Chief Finance Officer, to make its own judgement on such matters, taking into account all relevant local circumstances. What are relevant circumstances will vary between areas. A well-managed organisation with a prudent approach to budgeting should be able to operate with a minimal level of general reserves which are appropriate to the risks (both internal and external) to which it is exposed. In assessing the appropriate level of reserves, a well-managed organisation will ensure that the reserves are not only adequate, but also are necessary.

It is worth noting that not all reserves are usable. Some reserves arise out of the interaction of legislation and proper accounting practice. These are termed 'unusable reserves' as they cannot be used for any other purpose. They are not considered further as there is no need to set their level and no discretion over their creation, purpose or usage.

Types of Reserve

When reviewing the medium term financial plans and preparing the annual budgets, the establishment and maintenance of reserves should be considered. These can be held for five main purposes:

- a) **Working Balance** - to help cushion the impact of uneven cash flows and avoid unnecessary temporary borrowing – this forms part of general reserves.
- b) **Contingency Reserve** - to cushion the impact of unexpected events or emergencies – this forms part of general reserves.
- c) **Sinking Fund and Smoothing Reserves** – these allow a response to uncertainty in the economic climate and provide assurance on the safety of the Council's financial assets. These are closely linked with the *Treasury Management Strategy* and *Capital Strategy* - these form part of general reserves.
- d) **Statutory and Ring-fenced Reserves** – these are held for specific purposes, often set by statute. Examples include grant funding where the expenditure has yet to be incurred (Capital Grants Unapplied), the HRA Balance and the Schools Balances. Although these are legally part of the general reserves, the restrictions and limitations on their use mean that they should be accounted for separately and not viewed as generally usable.
- e) **Earmarked Reserves** – these represent a means of building up funds to meet known or predicted requirements, such as planned

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investment, capital projects and change programmes; earmarked reserves are accounted for separately and viewed as largely not generally usable. They remain legally part of the general reserves.

In addition the Council holds the following two usable reserves:

- a) **Major Repairs Reserve** – this reserve records the unspent amount of HRA balances for capital financing purposes in accordance with statutory requirements for the reserve. This is an HRA specific reserve.
- b) **Capital Receipts Reserve** – this reserve holds the proceeds from the sale of assets, and can only be used for those purposes specified in the capital finance and accounting regulations.

OPERATIONAL FRAMEWORK

When establishing reserves, there needs to be compliance with the *Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting* and in particular, the need to distinguish between reserves and provisions.

The split of reserves into five categories is helpful as each category has its own nature, purpose and planned usage that can be used to determine the required level of reserves.

Working Balance

The cash flow forecast is key to understanding the level of reserve required to cushion the impact of uneven cash flows. The overall size of the net expenditure budget should be used as the reference point for determining the percentage required to be retained as the working balance.

Contingency Reserve

Determining a suitable level of reserve to cover the unexpected is an inexact science. At best this will be an estimate created using risk management techniques to determine the likelihood and impact of potentially disastrous events. Past experience demonstrates the ability of the Council to deliver savings, while dealing with resource reductions and demographic and other demand changes. How these issues have been tackled without overspending the budget will be an important consideration in deciding how much needs to be set aside in reserves as contingency. A reasonableness check also needs to be considered - retaining adequate funds to cover a calamitous event such as a second pandemic may be overly cautious and therefore not prudent as it ties up scarce resources unnecessarily. The contingency requirement should be referenced to a percentage of net expenditure.

The first two types of reserve, although different in nature, involve dealing with the unplanned and unexpected. The Council also hold reserves for planned purposes. It defines these usable reserves under the following headings:

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- Ring-fenced and Statutory
 - HRA
 - Schools
 - COVID
- Capital
- Investment
- Sinking and Smoothing
- Service reserves
- Transformation
- General Fund Balance

When considering reserves held for specific purposes that could be freely utilised to fund unexpected expenditure, only the final three headings (service reserves, transformation and the general fund balance) can be used without limitation. The other reserves are either restricted to a specific use or already committed. Theoretically, the General Fund balance could be viewed as the working balance, whilst the other two types of reserve constitute amounts available for contingency purposes.

As stated already, the reference point for determining the target level for the working balance and contingency reserves should be a percentage of net expenditure. The end result will be a single target percentage of net expenditure that should be held. Although CIPFA oppose an arbitrary figure, 5% is widely used in local authorities as such a target. This is viewed as a starting point and tested for adequacy by considering past data and future forecasts. When considering past experience, use has been made of both benchmarking data for other London boroughs, provided by London Councils and CIPFA's Financial Resilience Index, and historic data for the Council. The comparative data shows that the level of reserves at Brent is good and provides strong foundations for long-term financial sustainability.

An analysis has been undertaken of the percentage of over- or under-spend that the year-end outturn represents of the Council's net budget. This shows that at no point in the last 20 years did any year-end overspend equate to as much as 2% of the net expenditure budget. Looking to the future, funding uncertainty, cost drivers, demand pressures and demographic changes have been considered. Further factors such as the effects of COVID-19 and the current high levels of inflation have also been taken into account. The conclusion of this work is that 5% is a reasonable minimum level of general reserves based on past experience and future expectations.

Uncertainty and Smoothing Reserves

At Brent, reserves for insurance, redundancy and welfare reform are examples of this type of reserve. Each is set on the basis of an individual calculation that takes in to account relevant factors and local circumstances. The *Reserves Strategy* recommends that this policy continues with a requirement to demonstrate need and

adequacy are a part of the working paper for the calculation of any reserve under this heading.

Statutory and Ring-fenced Reserves

As these arise from circumstances largely prescribed by statute, there is no need to provide further policy on their level or use. The Council divides these reserves between s106/CIL, Ring-fenced and capital reserves. They are presented in the accounts as part of the earmarked reserves.

Earmarked Reserves

Under this heading fall service specific reserves including carry forwards and more general amounts set aside for transformation, service pressures and future funding risks. The need for and level of these reserves should be justified by a calculation demonstrating the requirement for the reserve, its intended purpose, how its level has been determined and plans for its profiled release. This should be aligned with corporate plans and strategies such as the *Borough Plan*, the *MTFS* and the *Capital Strategy* as appropriate. All earmarked reserves should be reviewed annually as part of the closure of the accounts.

MONITORING

The level of all reserves is kept under continuous review by the Director of Finance. This is achieved through revisions to the *Medium Term Financial Strategy* and the budget monitoring reports. Periodic updates will be provided to the Cabinet and the Audit and Standards Advisory Committee. The planned level of reserves will be reported to the Council annually via the *Budget Report*.

USE OF RESERVES

The maintenance and use of reserves play a key role in long-term financial sustainability. Just as the creation and maintenance of reserves arises in a structured way through the Council's financial planning process, so the release of reserves needs to be subject to a similarly planned and controlled process. Such a process is provided by the *Scheme of Transfers and Virements*, which sets out specific requirements for the use of reserves. The main points are:

1. Reserves cannot be used to fund overspends without a plan

Section 3 of the Scheme of Transfers and Virements requires that "Reserves must not be used to fund ongoing overspends unless there is an agreed, realistic plan to eliminate the overspend before the reserve is exhausted (this applies to all reserves, both earmarked and non-earmarked). The Director of Finance must review planned uses of reserves to ensure that these are not being used to hide or obscure systemic overspends. The Director of Finance must report to Full Council report any areas with inadequate plans to address overspends."

2. Budget report must identify the reserves against which overspends can be charged

Section 3 of the Scheme of Transfers and Virements states that “In certain circumstances where such overspends on Funds arise, there is a choice as to which reserve the charge should be made. The annual Budget Report will identify which reserves overspends will and will not be charged against, for approval by Full Council. In the event of inadequate reserves to fund overspends, the Director of Finance may have to use additional reserves to fund overspends, any such action is to be reported to Full Council. “

3. Budget report must specify how reserves are to be used

Section 6 of the Scheme of Transfers and Virements directs that “Reserves have been established to aid the smooth running of the Council’s finances, and it will be normal to charge costs to those reserves subject to financial regulations and local procedures and policies. Further, the council has capital monies, such as capital grants and capital receipts held in the council’s useable reserves. The Schedule of Earmarked Reserves in the Budget Report must specify how the council’s useable reserves are to be used, including if they can be used to fund overspends, and this needs to be approved by Full Council as part of the Budget Report. Officers may make transfers from these reserves up to the amounts in the Budget Report for the specified purposes.”

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APPENDIX K - RESERVES FORECAST

BRENT RESERVES		PURPOSE AND PLANNED USAGE	Actual 31/03/2022 £m	Movement £m	Forecast 31/03/2023 £m	Movement £m	Forecast 31/03/2024 £m																		
BALANCES																									
General Fund Balance		This both provides the Council's working balance and represents an amount held against unexpected overspends or failure to identify sufficient savings to balance the budget in year. On a net budget of £358m, even a 2% variance would rapidly erode this and would leave the Council dangerously exposed. For this reason the Council aims to retain at least 5% of its net expenditure as a contingency reserve.	(15.1)	0.0	(15.1)	(2.9)	(18.0)																		
Schools Balances		Balance carried forward of Dedicated Schools Grant delegated to individual schools. Forecast to decline in response to school funding pressures and not directly in the control of the Council.	(17.0)	3.9	(13.1)	2.6	(10.5)																		
HRA Balance		This is the accumulated surplus of income over expenditure for the HRA. This can only be used for the HRA. The balance is used as a contingency against overspending and unexpected events that affect the HRA.	(0.4)	0.0	(0.4)	0.0	(0.4)																		
TOTAL BALANCES			(32.5)	3.9	(28.6)	(0.3)	(28.9)																		
CAPITAL RESERVES																									
Capital Receipts Reserve		The proceeds from the disposal of land or other assets. Capital receipts can only be used to finance new capital expenditure, to provide loans or grants or to repay debt. They cannot be used to fund revenue expenditure.	(7.1)	0.0	(7.1)	0.0	(7.1)																		
Major Repairs Reserve		The unspent amount of the Major Repairs Allowance provided for capital renewal of HRA properties.	(0.9)	0.0	(0.9)	0.0	(0.9)																		
Capital Grants Unapplied		Capital grants received from central government agencies unapplied as not yet used to fund capital projects. Major elements include Basic Needs Grant for additional school places, School Condition Grants, DFG – Disabled Facilities Grant and others.	(69.6)	0.0	(69.6)	0.0	(69.6)																		
TOTAL CAPITAL			(77.6)	0.0	(77.6)	0.0	(77.6)																		
EARMARKED RESERVES																									
Capital and other statutorily ring-fenced reserves																									
<p>This reserve is made up of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and S106 planning contributions made under legally binding agreements. The accumulated S106/CIL receipts that have not yet been spent are committed to finance planned capital expenditure, as set out in the <i>Capital Strategy</i>.</p> <p>Community Infrastructure Levy is made up of an amount paid over to the Mayor of London on a quarterly basis (MCIL), and an amount retained by the Borough (BCIL). BCIL is divided into Strategic CIL (SCIL) for use borough-wide, and a local amount termed Neighbourhood CIL (NCIL). A Cabinet decision is required to allocate Strategic CIL to finance new capital expenditure before it can be added to the Brent capital programme. There is also an allowance for administration costs which can be deducted from CIL.</p> <p>The balance on each category at 31 March 2022 was:</p>																									
S106/Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)			(150.5)	(3.5)	(154.0)	(4.9)	(158.9)																		
		<table style="margin-left: 40px;"> <tr><td>£m</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>SCIL</td><td>(114.6)</td></tr> <tr><td>NCIL</td><td>(13.9)</td></tr> <tr><td>BCIL</td><td>(128.5)</td></tr> <tr><td>MCIL</td><td>(3.9)</td></tr> <tr><td>Admin</td><td>0.5</td></tr> <tr><td>Total CIL</td><td>(131.9)</td></tr> <tr><td>S106</td><td>(18.6)</td></tr> <tr><td>Total S106 & CIL</td><td>(150.5)</td></tr> </table>	£m		SCIL	(114.6)	NCIL	(13.9)	BCIL	(128.5)	MCIL	(3.9)	Admin	0.5	Total CIL	(131.9)	S106	(18.6)	Total S106 & CIL	(150.5)					
£m																									
SCIL	(114.6)																								
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Admin	0.5																								
Total CIL	(131.9)																								
S106	(18.6)																								
Total S106 & CIL	(150.5)																								

APPENDIX K - RESERVES FORECAST

BRENT RESERVES		PURPOSE AND PLANNED USAGE	Actual 31/03/2022 £m	Movement £m	Forecast 31/03/2023 £m	Movement £m	Forecast 31/03/2024 £m
S106/Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)	The S106 reserve balance at 31 March 2022 was £18.5m. The majority of this is committed to financing capital expenditure, with some revenue projects also benefitting. The reserve must be used to offset the impact of new development (there are some very specific exceptions which apply to some older S106 agreements, but these will invariably be very restrictive in any event). There are limits to the discretion as to what S106 contributions can subsequently be used to finance which are written into the individual S106 legal agreements.						
<i>Ring-fenced</i>							
HMO Licensing	Income is received on a five yearly cycle and released annually to meet expenditure. The service does not have a mainstream budget for this activity, and the reserve is ring-fenced by law and operationally required to match the different cycles of income and expenditure.		(2.6)	0.0	(2.6)	0.0	(2.6)
HRA Earmarked	This reserve has been set aside to cover contingent liabilities for insurance claims.		(1.7)	0.0	(1.7)	0.0	(1.7)
Public Health	Reflects carry forward of ring fenced funds for Public Health		(8.1)	(2.0)	(10.1)	0.0	(10.1)
Edward Harvist Trust	Brent distributes grant monies from the Edward Harvist Trust		(0.1)	0.0	(0.1)	0.0	(0.1)
Total			(12.5)	(2.0)	(14.5)	0.0	(14.5)
<i>Capital Finance Related</i>							
South Kilburn	This reserve smooths annual payments on the programme, which is any given year may be more or less than the budget. It is allocated to South Kilburn and, assuming that the remaining 7 years of the programme run to budget, will be spent in full.		(5.5)	0.0	(5.5)	0.0	(5.5)
General Fund Capital funding	This reserve is used to finance existing or future expenditure on projects within the Capital Programme.		(70.5)	9.2	(61.3)	3.6	(57.7)
Total			(76.0)	9.2	(66.8)	3.6	(63.2)
TOTAL			(88.5)	7.2	(81.3)	3.6	(77.7)
Committed Reserves							
<i>Sinking fund and other smoothing reserves</i>							
PFI	In the financial models for the council's PFIs, income and expenditure do not match in any given year. This is normal under such arrangements, as the PFI contractor is bearing the up-front cost of the capital investment. This reserve is ring-fenced to provide funds to cover this mismatch.		(5.4)	0.0	(5.4)	0.0	(5.4)
UC staffing	This reserve is fully committed to paying for staff working on Housing Benefit claims. As more cases transfer to Universal Credit, managed by the DWP, less staff will be required to work on Housing Benefit claims.		(1.1)	0.5	(0.6)	0.6	0.0
Redundancy	The reserve is used to fund redundancy costs. Without it, many planned savings would take a year longer to start delivering their benefits (assuming that the average redundancy cost is about one year's salary).		(3.2)	1.7	(1.5)	0.0	(1.5)
Insurance	The insurance reserve sets aside funds to cover self-insured items and any excesses on externally insured cover. This differs from the Insurance provision which covers amounts set aside upon review by the Council's insurance actuary to make sure that we have enough to deal with the pipeline of known cases that are not yet settled.		(5.3)	0.0	(5.3)	0.0	(5.3)

APPENDIX K - RESERVES FORECAST

BRENT RESERVES		PURPOSE AND PLANNED USAGE	Actual 31/03/2022 £m	Movement £m	Forecast 31/03/2023 £m	Movement £m	Forecast 31/03/2024 £m
Business Equalisation Reserve and other Central Reserves	This reserve is used to manage volatility in the amounts retained within the council tax and business rates retention regimes, in particular the impact of backdated revaluation appeals, appeals relating to Material Change of Circumstances and collection rates. In addition c£35m was previously held to repay the collection fund deficit, over three years, generated from compensation grants from government received to offset the additional COVID-19 reliefs that were granted to businesses.		(24.6)	15.0	(9.6)	6.1	(3.5)
Temporary Accommodation	Temporary Accommodation Service Pressures - Smoothing reserve to manage fluctuations in homelessness costs.		(8.3)	0.0	(8.3)	0.0	(8.3)
Total			(47.9)	17.2	(30.7)	6.7	(24.0)
TOTAL			(47.9)	17.2	(30.7)	6.7	(24.0)
Other earmarked reserves							
<i>Service reserves</i>							
Adult Social Care & Health	<p>This reserve is comprised of:</p> <p>Brent NHS S256 Agreement - Joint Investment Funding. Agreement with the Council for joint programmes across health and social care. (6.7)</p> <p>Other reserves including MHCLG Community Champions (0.6)</p> <p>This includes balance of grants for CNWL Mental Health Supplement and Reablement and LD DHSC Community Discharge Grant (0.2)</p> <hr/> <p>(7.5)</p>		(7.5)	1.7	(5.8)	1.2	(4.6)
Children and Young People	<p>£1.5m of the reserves relates to projects including Education Recovery, Mental Health Support teams in schools and Accelerated Support scale up team and most of the funding will be utilised in 2022/23.</p> <p>£1.2m of this reserve is linked to a combination of previous and current government grants, including the Youth Justice fund grant, troubled families program and MOPAC grants.</p>		(2.6)	2.0	(0.6)	0.2	(0.5)

BRENT RESERVES		PURPOSE AND PLANNED USAGE	Actual 31/03/2022 £m	Movement £m	Forecast 31/03/2023 £m	Movement £m	Forecast 31/03/2024 £m
Resident Services	This reserve is comprised of: Customer Services and Libraries: - Community Hubs (play key role in responding to Poverty Commission's recommendations) (0.7) - Council Tax Improvement project (covers system replacement) (0.3) Transformation: monies set aside to fund a contribution to investments in improving the condition of the roads and pavements and transformational project work to improve the department's ability to generate future income. (3.2)						
	Proceeds of Crime Act: historic income from Proceeds of Crime Act which is subject to a ringfence and is planned to be used to fund financial investigators and enforcement officers (1.2)						
	Cemeteries Maintenance: to fund the long term maintenance of cemeteries. Some fees & charges income in the years that burial plots are sold are set aside to fund a proportion of the maintenance in the future – (i) any large maintenance expenditure that cannot be funded by in-year income and (ii) ongoing maintenance costs once cemeteries are full and no longer receiving income (1.5)		(9.1)	1.7	(7.4)	0.1	(7.3)
	Environmental Services: this contains some external funding to which there will be ring-fences on policy purposes (e.g. for Community Protection Team, shared reserve with Harrow for Trading Standards Service), and more or less formal earmarking by the services in question. Otherwise, the reserves allow the services in question to operate with a degree of flexibility in responding to issues. (2.1)						
	This includes MHCLG Rogue Landlord Enforcement Grant (0.1) <u>(9.1)</u>						
Communities and Regeneration	This is comprised of reserves for Regeneration (£2.2m) and Communities (£0.8m). These are earmarked for various specific projects and initiatives.		(3.0)	0.4	(2.6)	0.0	(2.6)
Governance	This reserve is earmarked for specific projects and the local elections.		(1.5)	(0.5)	(2.0)	0.0	(2.0)
Finance and Resources	This reserve is held for investigations.		(0.2)	0.0	(0.2)	0.0	(0.2)
Total			(23.9)	5.3	(18.6)	1.5	(17.1)

APPENDIX K - RESERVES FORECAST

BRENT RESERVES	PURPOSE AND PLANNED USAGE	Actual 31/03/2022 £m	Movement £m	Forecast 31/03/2023 £m	Movement £m	Forecast 31/03/2024 £m
<i>Budget stabilisation</i>						
Inflation Risk	This is a general reserve to smooth out the effects of high and volatile inflation on the Council's budgets. The reserve will be used to offset additional pressures on service budgets which arise as a result of inflation exceeding what was forecast at budget setting, thereby reducing the requirement for savings in order to balance budgets in the short term.	0.0	(10.0)	(10.0)	0.0	(10.0)
Future funding risks	This is a general reserve to cover any future service pressures, such as demand pressures and demographic changes, which are in excess of any provision already made in the annual budget and future funding risks relating to the one-year front-loaded local government finance settlement, changes to the business rates revaluation methodology and the Government's 'levelling up' agenda, which is widely expected to move resources away from London.	(19.2)	13.1	(6.1)	0.0	(6.1)
Total		(19.2)	3.1	(16.1)	0.0	(16.1)
COVID-19 reserves	This reserve covers the potential financial impact of COVID-19 and is funded through Government Grants with restrictions on the use of the funding	(15.8)	12.6	(3.2)	1.1	(2.1)
TOTAL		(58.9)	21.0	(37.9)	2.6	(35.3)
TOTAL EARMARKED		(345.8)	41.9	(303.9)	7.9	(295.9)
GRAND TOTAL		(455.9)	45.8	(410.1)	7.6	(402.4)

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Financial Management Code: Financial Resilience Assessment

Purpose

CIPFA's Financial Management (FM) Code recommends that local authorities undertake a financial resilience assessment (FRA) each year. The FRA builds on the one-year assessments required under section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 of the robustness of the estimates used in the budget calculations and the adequacy of the proposed levels of financial reserves.

Context

CIPFA states that “effective governance and financial management is focused on ensuring that the authority is able to operate sustainably in the long term. This means that the authority needs to look beyond the limited time horizons of its funding arrangements and to consider the longer-term financing of its operations and activities.”

The financial resilience assessment considers long-term financial stability. It does so by considering warning signs such as the symptoms of financial stress and reviewing how effectively the authority manages its finances. This includes explicit consideration of capital resources, reserves, savings plans and the use of performance information. The FM Code requires that the authority demonstrates how the risks identified through a financial resilience assessment have informed the development of its longer-term financial strategy.

Approach

Pre-requisites for the financial resilience assessment are the council's strategic plan (Borough Plan) and financial strategy (MTFS). The FM code recommends the technique of scenario planning to inform their development. For capital CIPFA's Prudential Code provides a framework for the self-regulation of the authority's capital financing arrangements. The financial resilience assessment reviews how effectively the council delivers the aims of the Prudential Code. It also considers how the Council develops a suitable Capital Strategy and how it sets and reviews the various indicators required under the Prudential Code.

Medium Term Planning

The Medium Term Financial Strategy translates the authority's financial strategy into a plan for the near future. Before a financial resilience assessment can be undertaken, the Council needs develop a robust medium-term financial plan that coordinates and integrates financial and service planning, capital financial management, risk management and asset management plans. This needs to be linked to the long-term financial planning process that the FM Code advocates together with adoption of a robust cycle of the financial year that will become a feedback loop to inform the financial planning process.

Long Term Planning

A full and thorough financial resilience assessment can only be undertaken once the Council's service and financial planning framework has moved to a more long-term and better joined up position with a clearly linked and articulated Medium Term Finance Strategy, a Long Term Financial Strategy, Borough Plan, Service Plans and Capital Strategy. These plans need to be seen as dynamic documents which are subjected to sensitivity analysis using techniques such as scenario planning and risk management to ensure that the Council's finances will be sustainable in the long-term.

Reviewing of Current Position

The FRA will consider CIPFA's symptoms of financial stress. These are:

Symptoms of financial stress

Running down reserves	Using the authority's financial reserves to finance a deficit or to avoid difficult decisions around spending cuts. This provides temporary relief, but is not sustainable in the long term.
Failure to address financial pressures	Refusing to make difficult decisions about how to reconcile funding and service pressures, or not recognising that such decisions need to be made. This is equally not a solution to those challenges, but instead simply increases the financial gap and the extent of change that will be required in future years.
Shortened planning horizons	Long-term planning is more difficult in times of uncertainty, but it is still important, perhaps even more so than in more stable circumstances. A failure to plan is indicative of a lack of strategic thinking and an unwillingness to make difficult decisions.
Lack of investment in infrastructure resources	When resources are scarce, it is tempting to defer the maintenance and enhancement of assets (such as buildings) to future periods, which can result in the failure of key physical resources and repairs backlogs that are ultimately more costly than timely maintenance and planned investment in enhancements.
Gaps in savings plans	Knowing that savings are required is helpful, but knowing how these savings are going to be achieved is critical. Simply indicating that 'unidentified savings' will be made is not an acceptable strategy for financial resilience.
Unplanned overspends	No budget is going to be absolutely spot-on. However, overspending against the budget is simply rolling over this year's problems into next year. It is a clear sign that the authority is failing to turn its financial policy decisions into action on the ground.

Ensuring processes deliver financial resilience

This work will cover many of the core financial management process: the MTFs, budget setting process, Capital Strategy, Asset Management Plan, performance management, benchmarking and peer reviews of performance, agreement and management of savings and the effective management of reserves. The main headings are:

Factors for assessing financial resilience

Routine	Getting routine financial management right
Capital	Planning and managing capital resources well
Performance	Using performance information effectively
Savings	Having clear plans for delivering savings
Reserves	Managing reserves well.

Scope of Formal Assessment

The scope for the formal Financial Resilience Assessment is as follows:

Scope

Current	The authority's current financial position
Future	The authority's own assessment of its future financial prospects
Adopted FRF	The extent to which the authority has embraced the financial resilience factors discussed above
Risks	The key financial risks facing the authority, for example by drawing on potential future scenarios including 'best' and 'worst' case scenarios – for the environment in authority operates and for the services that it provides
Independent measures of risk	The use of independent, objective measures to assess the risks to the authority's financial resilience and sustainability.
Associated risks	The authority's understanding of the risks associated with all resources used for service delivery, including its workforce, its physical assets, its strategic business partners (including 'group' entities such as leisure trusts), its information technology infrastructure, etc
Robustness	The robustness of the plans that the authority has put in place to address these risks
Capacity	The capacity and capability of the authority, its leadership team and its officers to manage the authority's finances in a sustainable manner.

Reporting

A financial resilience assessment will result in a clear report to the CMT and Cabinet, setting out an assessment of the Council's financial resilience, together with areas for improvement and how these could be addressed.

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Brent Council Fees and Charges Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1. By using its powers to charge for goods and services and imposing fines, fixed penalties and other such financial sanctions, Brent Council is able to generate additional income to support investment in services and/or reduce the overall level of expenditure to be met by local taxpayers.
- 1.2. The aim of this Fees and Charges Policy is to ensure that the Council makes use of all the powers available to it in order to recover the full cost of providing services. In using these powers however, the Council will wish to take care to ensure that the consequences of charging on individuals, the wider aims of the Council itself and / or organisations do not adversely impact on those who are vulnerable or in difficulties.

2. Background

- 2.1. The overriding aim of the charging policy is to maximise income generation and collection to enhance the social and economic wellbeing of the community the council serves, whilst ensuring a fair price for all services reflecting the ability of the community to pay and the relative demand for the service. Maximisation of income, following a decision to charge, is also dependent on a charge being raised and that amount being collected, both in a timely way.

Legal Position

- 2.2. The majority of the Council's statutory services, Building Control being a key exception, are funded directly from the Council's other main sources of revenue, i.e. government grants and local taxation.
- 2.3. Income received by Brent from fees and charges is generated by both statutory and discretionary services. Where fees and charges apply to statutory services these are often set nationally, for example, some planning and licensing fees.
- 2.4. The remaining income generating services where the Council levies fees and charges are of a discretionary nature. Discretionary services are those that an authority has the power to provide but is not obliged to. They include services provided directly to the public in general such as leisure services as well as charges for the costs incurred by the council (such as legal costs) when entering into planning or highways agreements with specific persons.
- 2.5. The legal powers that the Council has to raise fees and charges are set out in the final section of this policy.

3. Managers' Guidance

Overview

- 3.1. The Managers' Guidance has been written to provide information to managers in Brent Council responsible for applying fees and charges to goods and services delivered. The aim is to encourage a consistent and cost effective approach to the setting of charges for services provided by:
 - a. Specifying the process and frequency for reviewing existing charges for all areas of the council's work for which charges could in principle be set
 - b. Providing guidance on the factors that need to be taken into consideration

Appendix M (i)

- when charges are being reviewed
- c. Requiring more active use of market intelligence when setting charges
- d. Establishing parameters for calculating different levels of charges
- e. Recommending the criteria for applying concessions or discounted charges consistently across the council

Cost of Living Crisis

- 3.2. In response to the cost of living crisis facing Brent's residents and the current high levels of inflation and economic uncertainty, supplementary guidance was issued to managers on how to step fees and charges for 2023/24. This recognised that whilst the Council was facing substantial increases in costs, Brent's residents were also facing a similarly challenging economic environment. Whilst a freeze in fees and charges increases would not be affordable, the guidance advised managers to take a holistic approach which reviewed any proposed price increases in the round considering the effect on both the Council and its customers.
- 3.3. The supplementary guidance recommended a step-by-step approach to considering the extent to which the cost of providing the service was increasing for the council and the cost pressures faced by the Council's customers. These factors and any other pertinent issues would then to be considered together to determine an appropriate increase in prices. This approach permits managers to avoid following the normal full cost recovery approach if they can manage a lower level of increase within their budget. The intention was that for most fees and charges, where the Council has freedom to set the increase, the proposed increase will be below current levels of inflation.
- 3.4. The supplementary guidance applies only to setting fees and charges for 2023/24 and does not permanently vary the Council's policy on setting fees and charges, which is set out in this appendix. The cost of living crisis will be considered when setting fees and charges next year, but at this stage it is unclear whether there will need to be any departure from the normal process to set price increases.

Calculation of Fees and Charges

- 3.5. Fees and charges raised must be based on the full cost of the service. Charges cannot be set at a level to recover more than cost if that is all the Council has the legal power to do, but the definition of cost includes direct costs of service provision together with overhead and central costs. The cost recovery limit applies to the overwhelming majority of services which the Council can set a charge for. If, however, the Council has the legal power to do so careful consideration should be given to charging more than the full cost of the service. For example, charging could be used as a tool to manage excess demand for limited spaces on leisure centre classes. In overview there are 3 ways in which fees and charges may be set:
- a. Fees and charges prescribed by legislation, usually in a regulatory context, and varied from time to time which the person liable has an obligation to pay;
 - b. Fees and charges reviewed and set by members (e.g. Individual Cabinet Members, Cabinet or Full Council) from time to time (usually annually); and
 - c. Fees and charges reviewed and set by officers from time to time acting under delegated powers.
- 3.6. As part of the annual budget cycle each department will carry out a recalculation of existing fees and charges together with opportunities to raise additional income from new areas of charging, and present proposals for revised charges.

Approvals

- 3.7. In broad terms setting fees for regulatory services (i.e. licensing, planning, etc) are non-executive functions. These therefore need to be submitted to Full Council for approval. Full Council can, however, delegate this function to a committee, officer etc.
- 3.8. Fees and charges for discretionary services are usually executive functions and therefore need to be approved by Cabinet or Cabinet Members. Cabinet and Cabinet Members can, however delegate this function.

Concessionary Charging

- 3.9. The purpose of offering concessions must be to support council priorities. Generally the reasons for operating concessionary charges will fall into one of two categories: to influence the level of demand for a service or to reflect the circumstances of service users. Concessions must also be reviewed at least on an annual basis, to confirm both the level of subsidy and also their ongoing relevance.
- 3.10. The Finance Department will maintain a list of concessions in operation and keep under review requests for concessions to be offered. For customer / clients who cannot pay, action must be taken to ensure that there are sufficient safeguards in place to allow access to service, and that appropriate steps are taken to recognise the realistic payment capacity of vulnerable individuals.
- 3.11. Concessionary charges should not normally apply at times when it would result in a loss of income from customers paying the full charge, unless prior approval has been given by a senior Council officer.
- 3.12. No concessions will be provided to non-Brent residents.

Education related services

- 3.13. With regards to education related services, services and packages will be based around the academic year and not on the municipal financial year.

VAT

- 3.14. Managers must ensure that the correct treatment of VAT is applied to the fees and charges they are responsible for. The correct treatment should be agreed with Finance in advance of application.

Other statutory requirements

- 3.15. Managers must also ensure that when setting fees and charges or reporting to members they are aware of any special statutory requirements that need to be complied with. For example, before changes to some fees and charges can be implemented, there may be a statutory requirement to consult and/or publish a notice in a local newspaper.

4. Payment Methods

- 4.1. All collection methods and payment terms must be effective, efficient and appropriate for the service. The preferred methods of payment are those direct to the bank such as direct debits and standing orders.
- 4.2. Wherever practical to do so payment for services provided should be sought in advance to minimise debt recovery issues.

- 4.3. The full cost recovery analysis will need to factor in the cost of processing payments and that some payment methods are preferred.

5. Equality impact Assessments

- 5.1. 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 and other conduct prohibited under the Act and advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a "protected characteristic" and those who do not. This is the public sector equality duty. The protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. The purpose of the duty is to enquire into whether a proposed decision disproportionately affects people with a protected characteristic. In other words, the indirect discriminatory effects of a proposed decision. Due regard is the regard that is appropriate in all the circumstances.
- 5.2. Before the Council exercises its fees and charging powers, the impact on individuals or groups of individuals who share a protected characteristic must be carefully considered and properly factored into the decision making process using the Council's EA screening template.

6. Review of Policy

- 6.1. This Policy is to be reviewed a minimum of every two years to ensure consistency with wider council and departmental objectives and priorities.

7. Fees and Charges - Legal Powers

- 7.1. Under the Localism Act 2011 there is a general power of competence which explicitly gives councils the power to do anything that an individual can do which is not prohibited by other legislation. This activity can include **charging** (i.e. to recover the costs of providing a discretionary service which the person has agreed to) or can be undertaken for a commercial purpose (i.e. to generate efficiencies, surpluses and profits) through a special purpose trading company. This is what is more commonly known as **trading**. Charging and trading activities can be aimed at benefiting the Council, the borough or its local communities.
- 7.2. These powers are in addition to similar powers set out in the Local Government Act 2003. The 2003 Act empowers councils to charge for any discretionary services (i.e. services councils have the *power* to provide but do not have a *duty* to provide by law) on a cost recovery basis. For example, the Council could decide to provide a new discretionary service, that is an addition to or enhancement of a statutory service, and then charge for it.
- 7.3. The 2011 Act power and the 2003 Act power cannot be used where charging is prohibited or where another specific charging regime applies. Statutory guidance published in 2003 outlines how costs and charges should be established and that guidance remains in force (see: '*General Power for Best Value Authorities to Charge for Discretionary Services*', ODPM, 2003). The Council must have regard to the guidance when charging for discretionary services under the 2003 Act.
- 7.4. In particular, the guidance contains useful advice on setting charges. It explains that for each discretionary service for which a charge is made, councils need to secure that, taking one year with another, the income from charges for that service does not exceed the costs

of provision. The requirement to take one year with another recognises the practical difficulties council will face in estimating the charges. It establishes the idea of balancing the books over a period of time (not less than 1 year and no more than 3 years). Any over or under recovery that results in a surplus or deficit of income in relation to costs in one period should be addressed by the council when setting its charges for future periods so that over time income equates to costs.

7.5. The 2003 Act also enables councils to trade in activities related to their functions on a commercial basis with a view to profit through a company.

7.6. Under the Local Authorities (Goods and Services) Act 1970 councils also have powers to enter into agreements with each other and a long list of designated bodies. These activities are not limited to cost recovery and a profit can be generated from these activities.

7.7. In terms of leisure and recreational facilities, section 19 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 permits councils to charge for these beyond cost recovery limitations.

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06m(ii). Appendix M (ii) Fees and Charges for 2023 24

DIRECTORATE	SERVICE CATEGORY	SERVICE PROVIDED	23/24 PROPOSED CHARGE £ (Excl. VAT)
Children and Young People	Early Help	Childcare Nursery places (Willows Nursery) 0 to 2 Years 8am to 6pm	£325.00
Children and Young People	Early Help	Childcare Nursery places (Willows Nursery) 2 to 3 Years 8am to 4pm	£240.00
Children and Young People	Early Help	Childcare Nursery places (Willows Nursery) 2 to 3 Years 9am to 3pm	£180.00
Children and Young People	Early Help	Childcare Nursery places (Willows Nursery) 2 to 3 Years 8am to 6pm	£300.00
Children and Young People	Early Help	Childcare Nursery places (Willows Nursery) 3 to 4 Years 8am to 4pm	£220.00
Children and Young People	Early Help	Childcare Nursery places (Willows Nursery) 3 to 4 Years 9am to 3pm	£165.00
Children and Young People	Early Help	Childcare Nursery places (Willows Nursery) 3 to 4 Years 8am to 6pm	£275.00
CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE	GORDON BROWN OEC		
Children and Young People	Gordon Brown OEC	Residential stays for Brent Schools	£210.55
Children and Young People	Gordon Brown OEC	Residential stays for non Brent Schools	£221.89
Children and Young People	Gordon Brown OEC	Non-residential day visit for non Brent Schools	£11.71
Children and Young People	Gordon Brown OEC	Non-residential day visit for Brent Schools	£11.71
Children and Young People	Gordon Brown OEC	Holiday Activities (per child, per day)	£29.95
Children and Young People	Gordon Brown OEC	Childrens Laser Party (per child)	£29.95
CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE	SETTING AND SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS SERVICE		
Children and Young People	Setting and School Effectiveness Service	Compliance and Governor Training Annual package	£2,235.00
Children and Young People	Setting and School Effectiveness Service	Compliance and Governor Training Pay as you go rate (blended course rate)	£139.00
Children and Young People	Setting and School Effectiveness Service	FFT annual subscription (Primary)	Discontinued
Children and Young People	Setting and School Effectiveness Service	FFT annual subscription (Secondary)	Discontinued
Children and Young People	Setting and School Effectiveness Service	Moderation of Teacher Assessment	£665.00
Children and Young People	Setting and School Effectiveness Service	Newly Qualified Teachers - Acting as Appropriate Body for NQT Induction Standard (3 term) rate	£354.00
CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE	Brent Music Service		
Children and Young People	Setting and School Effectiveness Service	Brent Music Service Instrumental/vocal tuition	£729.75
Children and Young People	Setting and School Effectiveness Service	Brent Music Service Large group tuition	£808.50
Children and Young People	Setting and School Effectiveness Service	Brent Music Service Music'sCool' where class teacher remains with BMS teacher	£1,709.40
Children and Young People	Setting and School Effectiveness Service	Brent Music Service Music'sCool' where BMS teacher provides PPA cover	£2,178.75
Children and Young People	Setting and School Effectiveness Service	Brent Music Service Wider Opportunities	£1,170.75
CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE	SHORT BREAK CENTRE		
Children and Young People	Short Break Centre	Respite Care - Other LA (Weekday) 3pm - 9am	£688.00
Children and Young People	Short Break Centre	Respite Care - Other LA (Weekend - Friday, Saturday, School Holidays 24 hours, Sunday 3pm - 8am)	£826.00
Children and Young People	Short Break Centre	Respite Care - Other LA (Weekday, 2:1 Care)	£986.00
COMMUNITIES AND REGENERATION	BUILDING CONTROL		
Communities and Regeneration	Building Control	Building Regulations Table A - Charges for the erection of one or more new dwelling units (<250m2) Full Plan charge ranging from 1 - 15 units	£2,100.00

06m(ii). Appendix M (ii) Fees and Charges for 2023 24

DIRECTORATE	SERVICE CATEGORY	SERVICE PROVIDED	23/24 PROPOSED CHARGE £ (Excl. VAT)
Communities and Regeneration	Building Control	Building Regulations Table A - Charges for the erection of > 15 units or units > 250m2) Full Plan & Inspection charge	Individually assessed
Communities and Regeneration	Building Control	Building Regulations Table B (Domestic Single Storey Extension)	Remove
Communities and Regeneration	Building Control	Building Regulations Table C (Domestic Alterations)	£250.00
Communities and Regeneration	Building Control	Building Regulations Table D (Other Works)	£460.00
Communities and Regeneration	Building Control	Demolition Notices	£500.00
Communities and Regeneration	Building Control	Dangerous Structures	£300.00
Communities and Regeneration	Building Control	Copy of Decision Notice (Post 2002)	
Communities and Regeneration	Building Control	Copy of Section 25 PHA certificate/notice	£100.00
Communities and Regeneration	Building Control	Existing Premises Name Change -Single house or premises per property	£250.00
Communities and Regeneration	Building Control	Existing Premises Name Change –Multiple property involving more than one premises / address.	£250.00
Communities and Regeneration	Building Control	Existing Premises - Street Name Change	£1,000.00
Communities and Regeneration	Building Control	Existing Premises - Regularisation of previously unauthorised use of address / Retrospective application.	£1,500.00
Communities and Regeneration	Building Control	Building Regulations Table B (Domestic Multi Storey Extension)	£1,100.00
Communities and Regeneration	Building Control	Building Regulations Table B (Domestic Loft Conversions)	£820.00
Communities and Regeneration	Building Control	Building Regulations Table B (Domestic Basement Extension)	£1,100.00
Communities and Regeneration	Building Control	Building Regulations Table B (Domestic Single Storey Extension)	£860.00
Communities and Regeneration	Building Control	Building Regulations Table B (Domestic Multi Storey Extension)	£1,100.00
Communities and Regeneration	Building Control	Building Regulations Table B (Domestic Loft Conversions)	£820.00
Communities and Regeneration	Building Control	Building Regulations Table B (Domestic Basement Extension)	£1,100.00
Communities and Regeneration	Building Control	Conversion of Existing Building Into Self-Contained Flats/Dwelling Units - Single Unit	£840.00
Communities and Regeneration	Building Control	Retrieval of Microfiche Record	£33.32
Communities and Regeneration	Building Control	Correspondence requiring technical research / review of casefile	£133.28
Communities and Regeneration	Building Control	Complex queries requiring extensive research – individually assessed. Per Hour	£166.60
Communities and Regeneration	Building Control	Completion Certificates Pre 2002 -£80.00 PLUS £20.00 Retrieval	£200.00
Communities and Regeneration	Building Control	Completion Certificates Post 2002	£100.00
Communities and Regeneration	Building Control	Copy of Decision Notice (Pre 2002)	£120.00
Communities and Regeneration	Building Control	Copy of Decision Notice (Post 2002)	£100.00
Communities and Regeneration	Building Control	Providing Copy of SNN Decision Notice + Agreed Plans (where available)	£166.60
Communities and Regeneration	Building Control	Copy of AI Final Certificate per plot (where available)	£100.00
Communities and Regeneration	Building Control	Confirmation regarding LA acceptance of CPS record	£83.30
Communities and Regeneration	Building Control	Cancellation / Withdrawal Charge BEFORE validation	£166.60
Communities and Regeneration	Building Control	Cancellation / Withdrawal Charge AFTER validation	£249.90
Communities and Regeneration	Building Control	Cancellation / Withdrawal Charge AFTER Plans / Details or Calculations checked	Min £250 or 50% of building notice charge
Communities and Regeneration	Building Control	Calculation of refund following request where charge exceeds expenditure – refer to Fee Regulations.	£166.60
Communities and Regeneration	Building Control	Additional charge in respect of cancellation / non-payment / bounced cheque (refer to drawer)	£100.00
Communities and Regeneration	Building Control	Cross Boundary working (including site inspections and Post Borough Administration Charge)	£100.00

06m(ii). Appendix M (ii) Fees and Charges for 2023 24

DIRECTORATE	SERVICE CATEGORY	SERVICE PROVIDED	23/24 PROPOSED CHARGE £ (Excl. VAT)
Communities and Regeneration	Building Control	Supplementary Charge per hour	£199.92
Communities and Regeneration	Building Control	Resurrection Charge (or 50% whichever is greater)	£499.80
Communities and Regeneration	Building Control	Dangerous structures - Surveying Costs (09:00 to 17:00) Mon-Fri	£199.92
Communities and Regeneration	Building Control	Dangerous structures - Surveying Costs (17:00 to 09:00) Mon to Fri, Weekends and Bank Holidays (min 2 hours)	£249.90
Communities and Regeneration	Building Control	Dangerous structures - Mileage	£1.17
Communities and Regeneration	Building Control	Dangerous structures - Charge where excessive number of visits required to gain compliance	£333.20
Communities and Regeneration	Building Control	Certify and Service of formal DS Notice	£500.00
Communities and Regeneration	Building Control	Court Action (minimum fee)	£833.00
Communities and Regeneration	Building Control	Removing Danger, shoring or hoarding in accordance with London Building Acts	15% of contractors net costs
Communities and Regeneration	Building Control	Brent Administration costs in respect of contract, supervision of works, payments, etc.	15% of contractors net costs
Communities and Regeneration	Building Control	SOL numbers confirmation of address for Land registry	£100.00
Communities and Regeneration	Building Control	Existing Premises - Providing Copy of SNN Decision Notice + Agreed Plans (where available) charge per application.	£200.00
Communities and Regeneration	Building Control	Street Naming & Numbering (house/property name change)	Remove
Communities and Regeneration	Building Control	Street Naming & Numbering (Rename of street)	Remove
Communities and Regeneration	Building Control	Street Naming & Numbering (New property 1-2 plots)	£330.00
Communities and Regeneration	Building Control	Street Naming & Numbering (New property 3-5 plots)	£500.00
Communities and Regeneration	Building Control	Street Naming & Numbering (New property 6-10 plots)	£670.00
Communities and Regeneration	Building Control	Street Naming & Numbering (New property 11-20 plots)	£1,000.00
Communities and Regeneration	Building Control	Street Naming & Numbering (New property 21-50 plots)	£1,500.00
Communities and Regeneration	Building Control	Street Naming & Numbering (New property 51-100 plots)	£2,330.00
Communities and Regeneration	Building Control	Street Naming & Numbering (New property 100+ plots plots)	£2,330.00
Communities and Regeneration	Building Control	Street Naming & Numbering (New property additional charge where this includes naming a street)	£670.00
COMMUNITIES AND REGENERATION	AND PLANNING		
Communities and Regeneration	Planning	Pre-app 1 - Householder (extensions and alterations to a dwelling) (written response)	£103.50
Communities and Regeneration	Planning	Pre-app 2 - Small Minor development (1 home / up to 99 sqm) (written response)	£310.50
Communities and Regeneration	Planning	Pre-app 3 - Medium Minor development (2 to 4 homes/ 100 – 499 sqm) - written and meeting	£1,200.00
Communities and Regeneration	Planning	Pre-app 4 - Large Minor development (5 to 9 homes / 500 – 999 sq.m.) - written and meeting	£2,120.00
Communities and Regeneration	Planning	Pre-app 5 - Major development (10 to 24 homes / 1,000 - 1,999 sqm) - written and meeting	£5,180.00
Communities and Regeneration	Planning	Pre-app 6 - Large major development (25 to 49 homes / 2,000 - 3,999 sqm) - written and meeting	£6,170.00
Communities and Regeneration	Planning	Pre-app 7 - Medium major development (50 to 149 homes / 3,000 - 4999 sqm) - written and meeting	£8,460.00
Communities and Regeneration	Planning	Pre-app 8 - Strategic development (150 units + / 5,000 sqm) - written and meeting	£10,500.00

06m(ii). Appendix M (ii) Fees and Charges for 2023 24

DIRECTORATE	SERVICE CATEGORY	SERVICE PROVIDED	23/24 PROPOSED CHARGE £ (Excl. VAT)
Communities and Regeneration	Planning	Pre-app 9 - Reserved matters (pursuant to an outline consent) - written and meeting	Half full price
Communities and Regeneration	Planning	Meeting (Pre-app 1 to 2)	£103.50
Communities and Regeneration	Planning	Revised submission from same applicant within 6 months of written feedback (Pre-app 2 to 8)	Half full price
Communities and Regeneration	Planning	Multiple options for pre-application request (pre-app 2 to 8)	Half full price
Communities and Regeneration	Planning	Issue related meeting - Major development (10+ homes, 1,000+ sqm)	£2,070.00
Communities and Regeneration	Planning	Presentation to Planning Committee	£2,070.00
Communities and Regeneration	Planning	Planning/development briefs/ frameworks/ masterplans	£9,000.00
Communities and Regeneration	Planning	Copies of planning decision notices	£25.88
Communities and Regeneration	Planning	Copies of archived documents	£25.88
Communities and Regeneration	Planning	Confirmation of compliance with clauses in a S106	£500.00
Communities and Regeneration	Planning	S106 Legal Fee (per hour)	
Communities and Regeneration	Planning	S106 Planning Negotiation Fee - Simple (1-3 obligations)	£905.00
Communities and Regeneration	Planning	S106 Planning Negotiation Fee - Moderate (4-7 obligations)	£1,540.00
Communities and Regeneration	Planning	S106 Planning Negotiation Fee - Complex (8+ obligations / review mechanisms)	£2,115.00
Communities and Regeneration	Planning	S106 Planning Negotiation Fee - Simple Deed of Variation	£450.00
Communities and Regeneration	Planning	S106 Monitoring Fee - General - Non-financial contribution (Per each HoT) that's not specific under 10 units or under 1,000 sqm	£500.00
Communities and Regeneration	Planning	S106 Monitoring Fee - General - Non-financial contribution (Per each HoT) that's not specific between 10-100 units or between 1,000- 10,000 sqm	£750.00
Communities and Regeneration	Planning	S106 Monitoring Fee - General - Non-financial contribution (Per each HoT) that's not specific between in excess of 100 units or in excess of 10,000 sqm	£1,000.00
Communities and Regeneration	Planning	S106 Monitoring Fee - General - Standard Simple Obligation	5% of the total financial contribution amount up to £100,000
Communities and Regeneration	Planning	S106 Monitoring Fee - General - Standard Moderate Obligation	3% of the total financial contribution amount on the remainder of the contributions between £100,000 and £1 million
Communities and Regeneration	Planning	S106 Monitoring Fee - General - Standard Complex Obligation	1% of the total financial contribution amount on the remainder of the contributions over £1 million. Total fees capped at £100,000 per development
Communities and Regeneration	Planning	S106 Monitoring Fee - Specific - Affordable Housing	Remove
Communities and Regeneration	Planning	S106 Monitoring Fee - Specific - Viability Review	£1,320.00

06m(ii). Appendix M (ii) Fees and Charges for 2023 24

DIRECTORATE	SERVICE CATEGORY	SERVICE PROVIDED	23/24 PROPOSED CHARGE £ (Excl. VAT)
Communities and Regeneration	Planning	S106 Monitoring Fee - Specific - Sustainability	£882.00
Communities and Regeneration	Planning	S106 Monitoring Fee - Specific - Energy	£882.00
Communities and Regeneration	Planning	S106 Monitoring Fee - Specific - Sustainability and Energy	£1,764.00
Communities and Regeneration	Planning	S106 Monitoring Fee - Specific - Travel Plan	£1,884.00
Communities and Regeneration	Planning	S106 Monitoring Fee - Specific - Car Club (Off Site)	£882.00
Communities and Regeneration	Planning	S106 Monitoring Fee - Specific - Training and Employment	£882.00
COMMUNITIES AND REGENERATION	BRENT START		
Communities and Regeneration	Brent Start	Learning and skills - Accredited courses	£3.75
Communities and Regeneration	Brent Start	Learning and Skills - Personal and community development learning	£5.20
Communities and Regeneration	Brent Start	Learning and Skills - Personal and community development learning - concessions (A)	£2.60
Communities and Regeneration	Brent Start	Learning and Skills - Personal and community development learning - concessions (B)	£1.30
Communities and Regeneration	Brent Start	Learning and Skills - targeted community development courses	£3.75
Communities and Regeneration	Brent Start	Learning and Skills - targeted community development courses - concessions (A)	£1.90
Communities and Regeneration	Brent Start	Room hire	From £40 p/h for standard rental, £32ph for repeat/local business, £20ph for charities
COMMUNITIES AND REGENERATION	LAND CHARGES		
Communities and Regeneration	Land charges	Full Official Search (LLC1 and CON29 2016)	£289.80
Communities and Regeneration	Land charges	Full Official Search and each additional Parcel	£56.93
Communities and Regeneration	Land charges	LLC1	£82.80
Communities and Regeneration	Land charges	LLC1 Additional Parcel	£25.88
Communities and Regeneration	Land charges	CON 29 - 2016	£207.00
Communities and Regeneration	Land charges	Con 29 - 2016 each additional Parcel	£31.05
Communities and Regeneration	Land charges	CON 29O requested each question submitted with LLC1 and CON 29 - 2016 forms	£31.05
Communities and Regeneration	Land charges	CON 29 O each question requested separately	£41.40
Communities and Regeneration	Land charges	Copy Search of replies	£41.40
Communities and Regeneration	Land charges	CON29 O requested separately for each additional parcel	£31.05
Communities and Regeneration	Land charges - EIR	CON29 2016 Individual first question	£25.88
Communities and Regeneration	Land charges - EIR	CON29 2016 Individual each additional question	£3.11
Communities and Regeneration	Land charges - EIR	CON29 2016 Individual All questions listed on our website under Environmental Informational Regulations details 'Local Land Charges	£103.50
Communities and Regeneration	Land charges - EIR	CON29 2016 Individual each additional parcel	£6.21
Communities and Regeneration	Land charges - EIR	Copy of replies CON29 2016 individual replies	£15.53
COMMUNITIES AND REGENERATION	COMMUNICATIONS		
Communities and Regeneration	Communications	Film Licence	£100.00
Communities and Regeneration	Communications	Location Fees (high) per day	£5,000.00
Communities and Regeneration	Communications	Location Fees per day (Medium)	£3,000.00
Communities and Regeneration	Communications	Location Fees per day (low)	£2,000.00
Communities and Regeneration	Communications	Parking Fees (per parking bay suspension)	£60.00
Communities and Regeneration	Communications	Full Page Advertising in Your Brent Magazine	£1,770.00
Communities and Regeneration	Communications	Half Page Advertising in Your Brent Magazine	£973.00
Communities and Regeneration	Communications	Quarter Page Advertising in Your Brent Magazine	£643.00
Communities and Regeneration	Communications	Eighth Page Advertising in Your Brent Magazine	£275.00
Communities and Regeneration	Communications	Late Notice Admin Fee	£150.00
Communities and Regeneration	Communications	Additional/Film Officer time fee/site visits	£75 per hour

06m(ii). Appendix M (ii) Fees and Charges for 2023 24

DIRECTORATE	SERVICE CATEGORY	SERVICE PROVIDED	23/24 PROPOSED CHARGE £ (Excl. VAT)
Communities and Regeneration	Communications	Film Officer out of hours fee weekdays (between 9pm-7am) and all weekend	£150 per hour
Communities and Regeneration	Communications	No Notice of Objection (subject to online payment system going ahead)	£50.00
Communities and Regeneration	Communications	Parks A Filming (large crew): Roundwood Gladstone Barham Park Fryent Country Welsh Harp	£3,500.00
Communities and Regeneration	Communications	Parks A Filming (medium crew): Roundwood Gladstone Barham Park Fryent Country Welsh Harp	£3,000.00
Communities and Regeneration	Communications	Parks A Filming (small crew): Roundwood Gladstone Barham Park Fryent Country Welsh Harp	£2,000.00
Communities and Regeneration	Communications	Parks B Filming (large crew) All other park and recreation grounds	£1,500.00
Communities and Regeneration	Communications	Parks B Filming (medium crew) All other park and recreation grounds	£1,000.00
Communities and Regeneration	Communications	Parks B Filming (small crew) All other park and recreation grounds	£500.00
Communities and Regeneration	Communications	Parks Unit base	£800.00
Communities and Regeneration	Communications	Brent Civic Centre	£5,000.00
Communities and Regeneration	Communications	Cemeteries / Libraries / Sports Centres (large crew)	£2,500.00
Communities and Regeneration	Communications	Cemeteries / Libraries / Sports Centres (medium crew)	£2,000.00
Communities and Regeneration	Communications	Cemeteries / Libraries / Sports Centres (small crew)	£1,500.00
Communities and Regeneration	Communications	Willesden Sports Centre (large crew)	£3,500.00
Communities and Regeneration	Communications	Willesden Sports Centre (medium crew)	£3,000.00
Communities and Regeneration	Communications	Willesden Sports Centre (small crew)	£2,500.00
Communities and Regeneration	Communications	Roundwood Youth Centre (large crew)	£2,500.00
Communities and Regeneration	Communications	Roundwood Youth Centre (medium crew)	£2,000.00
Communities and Regeneration	Communications	Roundwood Youth Centre (small crew)	£1,500.00
Communities and Regeneration	Communications	Housing Estates (large crew)	£2,500.00
Communities and Regeneration	Communications	Housing Estates (medium crew)	£2,000.00
Communities and Regeneration	Communications	Housing Estates (small crew)	£1,500.00
Communities and Regeneration	Communications	Temporary structures	£250.00
Communities and Regeneration	Communications	Cherry pickers / Cranes / Mobile platforms	300 + 100 per sqm deposit
Communities and Regeneration	Communications	Scaffolding	From 211 + 100 per sqm deposit for two weeks
Communities and Regeneration	Communications	Stop / Go Traffic management	£250 per location
Communities and Regeneration	Communications	Full road closure	£2,500.00
Communities and Regeneration	Communications	Highways officer site visit	£250 per hour
Communities and Regeneration	Communications	Drone admin fee	150 per application
COMMUNITIES AND REGENERATION	AND	CONFERENCE AND EVENTS	
Communities and Regeneration	Conference and Events	The Grand Hall 10 hours hire package (Monday to Sunday)	£6,490.00
Communities and Regeneration	Conference and Events	The Grand Hall 12 hours hire package (Saturday and Sunday)	£8,910.00

06m(ii). Appendix M (ii) Fees and Charges for 2023 24

DIRECTORATE	SERVICE CATEGORY	SERVICE PROVIDED	23/24 PROPOSED CHARGE £ (Excl. VAT)
Communities and Regeneration	Conference and Events	The Grand Hall 18 hours hire package (Saturday and Sunday only)	£10,780.00
Communities and Regeneration	Conference and Events	The Grand Hall additional set up or de-rig hire (per hour)	£330.00
Communities and Regeneration	Conference and Events	The Grand Hall bank holiday surcharge fee	£1,133.00
Communities and Regeneration	Conference and Events	The Grand Hall (per hour, min 6 hours required)	£660.00
Communities and Regeneration	Conference and Events	Conference Hall (per hour, min 5 hours required)	£286.00
Communities and Regeneration	Conference and Events	The Bridge (available only with the Grand Hall)	£550.00
Communities and Regeneration	Conference and Events	One Board Room (per hour)	£45.00
Communities and Regeneration	Conference and Events	Two Board Rooms together (per hour)	£90.00
Communities and Regeneration	Conference and Events	Three Board Rooms together (per hour)	£135.00
Communities and Regeneration	Conference and Events	Four Board Rooms together (per hour)	£180.00
Communities and Regeneration	Conference and Events	Foyer stall hire (8 hours)	£170.00
Communities and Regeneration	Conference and Events	Day Delegate Rate (with sandwich lunch and 3 servings of tea and coffee) per person, min numbers apply	65 *from price
Communities and Regeneration	Conference and Events	Day Delegate Rate (with finger buffet lunch and 3 servings of tea and coffee) per person, min numbers apply	65 *from price
Communities and Regeneration	Conference and Events	Charitable discount. A discount of 20% - 50% on Conference Hall and Board Rooms hire are available for charitable purpose events that are closely aligned to the Council's Borough Plan and will benefit the borough and its local residents.	25% - 50%
Communities and Regeneration	Conference and Events	Discretionary discount to attract bookings at quiet times	10% - 20%
GOVERNANCE	LEGAL SERVICES		
Governance	Legal Services	Third Party Charges for Legal Work - Housing Management - Residential Conveyancing. Loft cellers garden	£1,539.67
Governance	Legal Services	Third Party Charges for Legal Work - Housing Management - Residential Conveyancing. Deed of rectification	£650.48
Governance	Legal Services	Third Party Charges for Legal Work - Housing Management - Residential Conveyancing. Single Lease extension for enfranchisement of a single house	£1,424 if assessment by Tribunal then additional £75 per hour if Senior Legal Assistant or £105 per hour if Lawyer
Governance	Legal Services	Third Party Charges for Legal Work - Housing Management - Residential Conveyancing. Collective Enfranchisement	£1,424 if assessment by Tribunal then additional £75 per hour if Senior Legal Assistant or £105 per hour if Lawyer
Governance	Legal Services	Third Party Charges for Legal Work - Housing Management - Residential Conveyancing. License for Alteration	£889.19
Governance	Legal Services	Third Party Charges for Legal Work - S106 Agreements.	£262 per hour based on minimum of £1,776
Governance	Legal Services	Third Party Charges for Legal Work - Section 38 and Section 278 Agreements.	£2,887 plus a charge rate of £261 per hour

06m(ii). Appendix M (ii) Fees and Charges for 2023 24

DIRECTORATE	SERVICE CATEGORY	SERVICE PROVIDED	23/24 PROPOSED CHARGE £ (Excl. VAT)
Governance	Legal Services	Third Party Charges for Legal Work - Commercial Property Transactions, Lease	£710 for leases between £0-£5000 per year / £948 for leases with rent between £5001.00 and £10,000 per year / £1,066 for leases with rent between £10,000 upwards
Governance	Legal Services	Third Party Charges for Legal Work - Commercial Property Transactions. Licence to Assign	£770.40
Governance	Legal Services	Third Party Charges for Legal Work - Commercial Property Transactions. Licence for alteration	£770.40
Governance	Legal Services	Third Party Charges for Legal Work - Commercial Property Transactions. Licence to underlet	£770.40
Governance	Legal Services	Third Party Charges for Legal Work - Commercial Property Transactions. Collaboration Agreement	£1,778.37
Governance	Legal Services	Third Party Charges for Legal Work - Commercial Property Transactions. Development Agreement subject to Lease	£3,556.74
Governance	Legal Services	Third Party Charges for Legal Work - Commercial Property Transactions. S123 LGA Notice	£355.23
RESIDENT SERVICES	PRIVATE HOUSING SERVICES		
Resident Services	Private Housing Services	Houses in Multiple Occupation Mandatory licences	£840.00
Resident Services	Private Housing Services	Houses in Multiple Occupation Additional licences	£840.00
Resident Services	Private Housing Services	Other Houses Selective licences	£540.00
Resident Services	Private Housing Services	Admin charge for Work in Default	30% of cost of works or minimum of £150
Resident Services	Private Housing Services	Notices	£330.00
Resident Services	Private Housing Services	Specifications for Empty Property Grant	£550.00
Resident Services	Private Housing Services	DFG and SWG Agency Service	No change proposed
RESIDENT SERVICES	LIBRARIES		
Resident Services	Libraries	Reservations - If an item is not on the catalogue and has to be ordered	£0.00
Resident Services	Libraries	Audio Visual loans	£1.00
Resident Services	Libraries	Overdue charges on items returned late	£0.00
Resident Services	Libraries	Printing and photocopying charges	£0.20
Resident Services	Libraries	Reserved book from the British Library	£0.00
Resident Services	The Library at Willesden Green	Education Room - per hour commercial hire charges	£20.00
Resident Services	The Library at Willesden Green	Performance Space- per hour commercial hire charges	£40.00
Resident Services	The Library at Willesden Green	Reading Room- per hour commercial hire charges	£20.00
Resident Services	The Library at Willesden Green	Education Room - per hour concessionary hire charges	£12.00
Resident Services	The Library at Willesden Green	Performance Space- per hour concessionary hire charges	£20.00
Resident Services	The Library at Willesden Green	Reading Room- per hour concessionary hire charges	£12.00
RESIDENT SERVICES	SPORTS		
Resident Services	Sports	B.Active card (Resident standard card)	£42.00
Resident Services	Sports	Page 280 (Non resident standard card)	£72.00

06m(ii). Appendix M (ii) Fees and Charges for 2023 24

DIRECTORATE	SERVICE CATEGORY	SERVICE PROVIDED	23/24 PROPOSED CHARGE £ (Excl. VAT)
Resident Services	Sports	B.Active card (60+ or disabled resident Concession)	£6.75
Resident Services	Sports	B.Active card (Resident Concession - 6 months)	£3.50
Resident Services	Culture, Sports and Recreation	Sports Hall Hire - Peak	£60.00
Resident Services	Bridge Park Sports Centre	Sports Hall Hire - Juniors Peak	£45.00
Resident Services	Bridge Park Sports Centre	Sports Hall Hire - Off Peak	£36.00
Resident Services	Bridge Park Sports Centre	Sports Hall Hire - Juniors Off Peak	£27.00
Resident Services	Culture, Sports and Recreation	Dance Studio Peak	£40.00
Resident Services	Bridge Park Sports Centre	Dance Studio - Off Peak	£24.00
Resident Services	Culture, Sports and Recreation	Badminton Court Peak	£11.00
Resident Services	Bridge Park Sports Centre	Badminton Court - Off Peak	£7.00
Resident Services	Culture, Sports and Recreation	Table Tennis Peak	£6.30
Resident Services	Bridge Park Sports Centre	Table Tennis - Off Peak	£4.00
Resident Services	Culture, Sports and Recreation	Gym Membership	£25.00
Resident Services	Culture, Sports and Recreation	Gym Membership - Joint	£45.00
Resident Services	Culture, Sports and Recreation	Gym Membership - Annual	£250.00
Resident Services	Bridge Park Sports Centre	Gym Membership - concessions	£21.00
Resident Services	Bridge Park Sports Centre	Gym Membership - off peak use	£18.00
Resident Services	Bridge Park Sports Centre	Gym Membership - corporate	£24.00
Resident Services	Bridge Park Sports Centre	Gym Membership - Junior	£16.00
Resident Services	Bridge Park Sports Centre	Gym Induction - Adults	£12.50
Resident Services	Bridge Park Sports Centre	Gym Induction - Youth 14-16	£6.00
Resident Services	Culture, Sports and Recreation	Gym casual use - Adults Peak	£6.00
Resident Services	Bridge Park Sports Centre	Gym casual use - Adults Off Peak	£4.00
Resident Services	Bridge Park Sports Centre	Gym casual use - Youth 14-16	£3.00
Resident Services	Culture, Sports and Recreation	Sauna and Steam - Peak	£7.00
Resident Services	Culture, Sports and Recreation	Sauna and Steam - Off Peak	£5.30
Resident Services	Culture, Sports and Recreation	Parties	from £110
Resident Services	Bridge Park Sports Centre	Junior Crs/session	£3.50
Resident Services	Culture, Sports and Recreation	Boardroom - Full Day	£65.00
Resident Services	Culture, Sports and Recreation	Community Suite - Full Day	£135.00
Resident Services	Culture, Sports and Recreation	Tropics Suite - Full Day	£195.00
Resident Services	Culture, Sports and Recreation	Spring Suite - Full Day	£150.00

06m(ii). Appendix M (ii) Fees and Charges for 2023 24

DIRECTORATE	SERVICE CATEGORY	SERVICE PROVIDED	23/24 PROPOSED CHARGE £ (Excl. VAT)
Resident Services	Culture, Sports and Recreation	Conference Room - Full Day	£225.00
Resident Services	Culture, Sports and Recreation	Function Hall - Full Day	Telephone for prices
Resident Services	Culture, Sports and Recreation	Boardroom - Per Hour	£12.00
Resident Services	Culture, Sports and Recreation	Community Suite - Per Hour	£24.00
Resident Services	Culture, Sports and Recreation	Tropics Suite - Per Hour	£35.00
Resident Services	Culture, Sports and Recreation	Syndicate Room - Per Hour	£35.00
Resident Services	Culture, Sports and Recreation	Conference Room - Per Hour	£60.00
Resident Services	Culture, Sports and Recreation	Function Hall - Per Hour	£45.00
Resident Services	Bridge Park Room Hire	Kitchen	£350.00
Resident Services	Bridge Park Room Hire	Servery	£250.00
Resident Services	Environmental Services - Commercial team	Dog Fouling Fixed Penalty	£100.00
RESIDENT SERVICES	ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH		
Resident Services	Environmental Health	Contaminated Land Basic Enquiry	£66.00
Resident Services	Environmental Health	Contaminated Land Residential Property Search	£132.00
Resident Services	Environmental Health	Contaminated Land Commercial Property Search	£262.00
Resident Services	Environmental Health	Works in Default Interest Rate Bank of England Base Rate plus 8%	Bank of England rate plus 8%
Resident Services	Environmental Health	Works in Default Officer Rate (per hour subject to grade)	50.00 p/h
Resident Services	Environmental Health	Works in Default Admin Charge (Single property or shared dwellings)	£155.00
Resident Services	Environmental Health	Part B Permits for Mobile Plant and Solvent Emission Activities. Various fees as per DEFRA's charging Scheme	Various fees as per DEFRA's charging Scheme
RESIDENT SERVICES	PEST CONTROL		
Resident Services	Pest Control	Pest - Bedbugs (2 visits)	£241.67
Resident Services	Pest Control	Pest - Bedbugs 5-8 bedrooms (2 visits)	£275.00
Resident Services	Pest Control	Pest - Cockroaches (1 visit)	£166.67
Resident Services	Pest Control	Pest - Fleas (2 visits)	£224.00
Resident Services	Pest Control	Pest - Mice (3 visits)	£150.00
Resident Services	Pest Control	Pest - Rats (3 visits)	£150.00
Resident Services	Pest Control	Pest - Wasps (1 visit)	£68.33
Resident Services	Pest Control	Pest treatment, Pharaoh Ants	£224.00
Resident Services	Pest Control	Pest treatment, Squirrels	£150.00
Resident Services	Pest Control	Pest treatment - appointment missed/treatment not carried out	£48.00
Resident Services	Pest Control	Admin fee for offline bookings	£25.00
Resident Services	Pest Control	Pest - Clothes Moths up to 3 bedrooms (2 visits booked online)	£241.67
Resident Services	Pest Control	Pest - Clothes Moths 4 - 6 bedrooms (2 visits booked online)	£275.00
Resident Services	Pest Control	Pest - Combined rodents and cockroaches (3 visits booked online)	£240.00
Resident Services	Pest Control	Pest - Garden Ants (1 visit booked online)	£88.00
Resident Services	Pest Control	Pest - Bird Control	100.00-150.00 p/h
Resident Services	Pest Control	Technician Charges per hour	60.00-80.00 p/h
Resident Services	Pest Control	Treatment outside of London Borough of Brent	Discretionary Charge to Cover Additional Costs
RESIDENT SERVICES	PUBLIC SAFETY		
Resident Services	Animal Welfare	Collection and Return of stray dog	£ 35- £190
Resident Services	Animal Welfare	Animal Welfare Fees	£45 per dog

06m(ii). Appendix M (ii) Fees and Charges for 2023 24

DIRECTORATE	SERVICE CATEGORY	SERVICE PROVIDED	23/24 PROPOSED CHARGE £ (Excl. VAT)
Resident Services	Animal Welfare	Vets Fees for Stray Dogs	Recharge at cost
RESIDENT SERVICES	PUBLIC SAFETY		
Resident Services	Public Safety	Stadium Safety Certification (General/New Style)	£110.00 p/h
Resident Services	Public Safety	Stadium Safety Certification (Special)	£110.00 p/h
Resident Services	Public Safety	Revision of Safety Certificate	£110.00 p/h
RESIDENT SERVICES	HIGHWAYS AND INFRASTRUCTURE		
Resident Services	Highways and Infrastructure	Failed Core Samples, Cost Neutral sample inspection	£150.00
Resident Services	Highways and Infrastructure	Section 50 Licence Application, varies on depth	£495.00
Resident Services	Highways and Infrastructure	NRSWA CAT 1+2 Roads - DfT Maximum £105	£105.00
Resident Services	Highways and Infrastructure	NRSWA CAT 1+2 Roads - DfT Maximum £240	£223.00
Resident Services	Highways and Infrastructure	NRSWA CAT 1+2 Roads - DfT Maximum £130	£130.00
Resident Services	Highways and Infrastructure	NRSWA CAT 1+2 Roads - DfT Maximum £65	£65.00
Resident Services	Highways and Infrastructure	NRSWA CAT 1+2 Roads - DfT Maximum £60	£60.00
Resident Services	Highways and Infrastructure	NRSWA CAT 3+4 Roads - DfT Maximum £75	£75.00
Resident Services	Highways and Infrastructure	NRSWA CAT 3+4 Roads - DfT Maximum £150	£150.00
Resident Services	Highways and Infrastructure	NRSWA CAT 3+4 Roads - DfT Maximum £45	£45.00
Resident Services	Highways and Infrastructure	NRSWA CAT 3+4 Roads - DfT Maximum £40	£40.00
Resident Services	Highways and Infrastructure	NRSWA Section 72 Inspection of defective reinstatement	£48.00
Resident Services	Highways and Infrastructure	NRSWA Section 72 Defective reinstatement reported	£68.00
Resident Services	Highways and Infrastructure	NRSWA Section 74 charges	varies £100 - £2,500 per day
Resident Services	Highways and Infrastructure	NRSWA Major offence (discount for early pay)	£500.00
Resident Services	Highways and Infrastructure	NRSWA Minor offence (discounted for early pay)	£120.00
Resident Services	Highways and Infrastructure	Nonrefundable admin charge Domestic Vehicle Crossing	£105.00
Resident Services	Highways and Infrastructure	Nonrefundable admin charge Industrial Vehicle Crossover	£105.00
Resident Services	Highways and Infrastructure	Crossings - White Line Access Bar <6m fixed £	£75.00
Resident Services	Highways and Infrastructure	Crossings -White Line Access Bar 6-10m	£125.00
Resident Services	Highways and Infrastructure	Crossings - White Line Access Bar >10m	POA
Resident Services	Highways and Infrastructure	Crossings - Mark Up on Constructing a crossing	40% Mark up
Resident Services	Highways and Infrastructure	TM, cost of officer resource at events	4,057.33 (per event).
Resident Services	Highways and Infrastructure	Temporary Traffic Management Order	£2,419.00
Resident Services	Highways and Infrastructure	Emergency Traffic Manag. Order s14(2)	£1,238.00
Resident Services	Highways and Infrastructure	Permanent Orders	£4,083.00
Resident Services	Highways and Infrastructure	Stopping Up Orders	£5,573.55
RESIDENT SERVICES	Highways Management		

06m(ii). Appendix M (ii) Fees and Charges for 2023 24

DIRECTORATE	SERVICE CATEGORY	SERVICE PROVIDED	23/24 PROPOSED CHARGE £ (Excl. VAT)
Resident Services	Highways Management	Provision of advice on drainage to developers prior to planning application Category A (large scale developments) - initial meeting	£4,503.42
Resident Services	Highways Management	Provision of advice on drainage to developers prior to planning application Category A (large scale developments) - follow-up meeting	£1,286.67
Resident Services	Highways Management	Provision of advice on drainage to developers prior to planning application Category B (other developments) - initial meeting	£2,860.58
Resident Services	Highways Management	Provision of advice on drainage to developers prior to planning application Category B (other developments) - follow-up meeting	£922.08
RESIDENT SERVICES	PUBLIC REALM (RECREATION)		
Resident Services	Public Realm (Recreation)	Hire of pavilion per hour	£57.00
Resident Services	Public Realm (Recreation)	Hire of pavilion per hour after 8pm in Winter, after 10pm in summer per hour	£74.00
Resident Services	Public Realm (Recreation)	Partial cost recovery of events in parks - Category 2	£1,155.00
Resident Services	Public Realm (Recreation)	Partial cost recovery of events in parks - Category 3	£2,310.00
Resident Services	Public Realm (Recreation)	Reinstatement (Refundable deposit)- category 3	max.5000
Resident Services	Public Realm (Recreation)	Partial cost recovery of events in parks (ticketed events) up to 300 hundred attendees	£240.00
Resident Services	Public Realm (Recreation)	Partial cost recovery of events in parks (ticketed events) up to 600 hundred attendees	£465.00
Resident Services	Public Realm (Recreation)	Reinstatement (Refundable deposit)- category 1 (+£200)	maximum £250
Resident Services	Public Realm (Recreation)	Ad-hoc street parties and special events on non-traffic sensitive streets	Not parks
Resident Services	Public Realm (Recreation)	Regular special events	not parks
Resident Services	Public Realm (Recreation)	Special events hosted by commercial groups	Not parks
Resident Services	Public Realm (Recreation)	Circus or funfair similar in size or scope to a BSAG Category 2 event (daily fee)	funfair on lease
Resident Services	Public Realm (Recreation)	Refundable damage deposit for a circus or funfair event similar in size or scope to a BSAG Category 2 event (whole event)	adhoc
Resident Services	Public Realm (Recreation)	Circus or funfair similar in size or scope to a BSAG Category 3 event or a circus and funfair combined (daily fee)	adhoc
Resident Services	Public Realm (Recreation)	Refundable damage deposit for a circus or funfair similar in size or scope to a BSAG Category 3 event or a circus and funfair combined (whole event)	adhoc
Resident Services	Public Realm (Recreation)	£500 -Reinstatement (Refundable deposit)- category 2 (+500)	max 2,000
Resident Services	Public Realm (Recreation)	Small Events	£73.00
Resident Services	Public Realm (Recreation)	Partial cost recovery of events in parks (ticketed events) up to 1000 hundred attendees	£1,050.00
Resident Services	Public Realm (Recreation)	Soccer Adult Single	£90.00
Resident Services	Public Realm (Recreation)	Soccer Adult Short Season [13 week pre booked]	£1,080.00
Resident Services	Public Realm (Recreation)	Soccer Adult Long Season [17 weeks pre-booked]	£1,377.00
Resident Services	Public Realm (Recreation)	Soccer Junior 11-a-side Single	£55.00
Resident Services	Public Realm (Recreation)	Soccer Junior 9-a-side Single	£48.00

06m(ii). Appendix M (ii) Fees and Charges for 2023 24

DIRECTORATE	SERVICE CATEGORY	SERVICE PROVIDED	23/24 PROPOSED CHARGE £ (Excl. VAT)
Resident Services	Public Realm (Recreation)	Soccer Junior 7-a-side Single	£33.00
Resident Services	Public Realm (Recreation)	Soccer Junior 5-a-side Single	£22.00
Resident Services	Public Realm (Recreation)	Soccer Junior 11-a-side Short Season [13 week pre booked]	£643.50
Resident Services	Public Realm (Recreation)	Soccer Junior 11-a-side Long Season [17 weeks pre-booked]	£841.50
Resident Services	Public Realm (Recreation)	Soccer Junior 9-a-side Short Season [13 week pre booked]	£561.60
Resident Services	Public Realm (Recreation)	Soccer Junior 9-a-side Long Season [17 weeks pre-booked]	£734.40
Resident Services	Public Realm (Recreation)	Soccer Junior 7-a-side Short Season [13 week pre booked]	£386.10
Resident Services	Public Realm (Recreation)	Soccer Junior 7-a-side Long Season [17 weeks pre-booked]	£504.90
Resident Services	Public Realm (Recreation)	Soccer Junior 5-a-side Short Season [13 week pre booked]	£257.40
Resident Services	Public Realm (Recreation)	Soccer Junior 5-a-side Long Season [17 weeks pre-booked]	£336.60
Resident Services	Public Realm (Recreation)	Rugby Adult Single	£98.00
Resident Services	Public Realm (Recreation)	Rugby junior Single	£57.00
Resident Services	Public Realm (Recreation)	Gaelic Adult single (with changing)	£115.00
Resident Services	Public Realm (Recreation)	Gaelic Adult single (without changing)	£83.00
Resident Services	Public Realm (Recreation)	Gaelic junior single (with changing)	£68.00
Resident Services	Public Realm (Recreation)	Gaelic junior single (without changing)	£50.00
Resident Services	Public Realm (Recreation)	Hurling Adult single	£115.00
Resident Services	Public Realm (Recreation)	Hurling Junior single	£68.00
Resident Services	Public Realm (Recreation)	Cricket single	£130.00
Resident Services	Public Realm (Recreation)	Cricket Adult [11 week season]	£1,287.00
Resident Services	Public Realm (Recreation)	Cricket Junior (11 week season)	£680.00
Resident Services	Public Realm (Recreation)	Cricket junior single	£68.00
Resident Services	Public Realm (Recreation)	Artificial cricket wicket (Adults) per match	£90.00
Resident Services	Public Realm (Recreation)	Artificial cricket wicket (juniors) per match	£55.00
Resident Services	Public Realm (Recreation)	Bowls - per green	£2,392.00
Resident Services	Public Realm (Recreation)	Bowls - per rink per season	£500.00
Resident Services	Public Realm (Recreation)	Tennis Court - adult, per hour	£6.00
Resident Services	Public Realm (Recreation)	Tennis Court - junior, per hour	£3.00
Resident Services	Public Realm (Recreation)	Tennis Court - where no more than 50% of players are Adults	£4.00
Resident Services	Public Realm (Recreation)	Adult training soccer/rugby/Gaelic/Hurling not on a pitch (per 2 hours including changing rooms, excluding floodlights)	£75.00
Resident Services	Public Realm (Recreation)	Junior training soccer/rugby/Gaelic/hurling not on a pitch (per 2 hours including changing rooms, excluding floodlights)	£43.00

06m(ii). Appendix M (ii) Fees and Charges for 2023 24

DIRECTORATE	SERVICE CATEGORY	SERVICE PROVIDED	23/24 PROPOSED CHARGE £ (Excl. VAT)
Resident Services	Public Realm (Recreation)	Floodlights per hour	£41.00
Resident Services	Public Realm (Recreation)	Unmarked ground school/sports use (Morning or afternoon - 3 hours including changing rooms)	£71.00
Resident Services	Public Realm (Recreation)	Hire of changing rooms only (during normal staffing hours)	£0.00
Resident Services	Public Realm (Recreation)	Late cancellation fees	£0.30
Resident Services	Public Realm (Recreation)	Boot camp/ personal fitness sessions (per hour)	£0.00
Resident Services	Public Realm (Recreation)	Model Aircraft Licence Fee	£45.00
Resident Services	Public Realm (Recreation)	Volleyball	£32.00
Resident Services	Public Realm (Recreation)	Memorial bench in a park	£1,267.00
Resident Services	Public Realm (Recreation)	Indemnity - per container per week	£220.00
Resident Services	Public Realm (Recreation)	Deposit for indemnity per container	£520.00
Resident Services	Public Realm (Recreation)	Access through park land - hand tools only upto 3 hours	£75.00
Resident Services	Public Realm (Recreation)	Deposit - Access through park land - hand tools only	£150.00
Resident Services	Public Realm (Recreation)	Indemnity through land - vehicle access only (car /van) per week	£120.00
Resident Services	Public Realm (Recreation)	Deposit - Indemnity through land - vehicle access only (car /van)	£200.00
Resident Services	Public Realm (Recreation)	Indemnitys - Utility company works	£150.00
Resident Services	Public Realm (Recreation)	Deposit Indemnitys - Utility company works	£5,000.00
Resident Services	Public Realm (Recreation)	Indemnity Scaffold Licence Fee (0-10m)	£260.00
Resident Services	Public Realm (Recreation)	Indemnity Scaffold Licence Fee (10-15m)	£320.00
Resident Services	Public Realm (Recreation)	Indemnity Scaffold Licence Fee (15m+)	£520.00
Resident Services	Public Realm (Recreation)	Indemnity Hoarding Licence Fee(0-10m)	£220.00
Resident Services	Public Realm (Recreation)	Indemnity Hoarding Licence Fee (10-15m)	£320.00
Resident Services	Public Realm (Recreation)	Indemnity Hoarding Licence Fee (15m+)	£520.00
Resident Services	Public Realm (Recreation)	Indemnity Skip Licence Fee (per skip per week)	£120.00
Resident Services	Public Realm (Recreation)	Skips (fines) Per skip per week	£260.00
Resident Services	Public Realm (Recreation)	Deposit for skip (per skip)	£220.00
Resident Services	Public Realm (Recreation)	Deposits for scaffolding	£320.00
Resident Services	Public Realm (Recreation)	Deposit for hoarding	£320.00
RESIDENT SERVICES	PUBLIC REALM (WASTE)		
Resident Services	Public Realm (Waste)	Garden Waste Collection	£60.00
Resident Services	Public Realm (Waste)	Bulky Waste Collection	£35.00
RESIDENT SERVICES	APPLICABLE TO ONLY BRENT RESIDENTS		
Resident Services	Applicable to only Brent residents		
Resident Services	Cemeteries - Brent Residents	Burial rights Carpenders Park Lawn Cemetery	£3,050.00

06m(ii). Appendix M (ii) Fees and Charges for 2023 24

DIRECTORATE	SERVICE CATEGORY	SERVICE PROVIDED	23/24 PROPOSED CHARGE £ (Excl. VAT)
Resident Services	Cemeteries - Brent Residents	Burial rights Willesden New, Alperton, Paddington Old Cemetery - Reclaim	£3,650.00
Resident Services	Cemeteries - Brent Residents	Burial rights Willesden New, Alperton, Paddington Old Cemetery - New Plot	£5,575.00
Resident Services	Cemeteries - Brent Residents	Interment	£955.00
Resident Services	Cemeteries - Brent Residents	Burial rights - Path side graves Carpenders Park Lawn Cemetery	£4,665.00
Resident Services	Cemeteries - Brent Residents	Burial rights - Path side graves Willesden New, Alperton, Paddington Old Cemetery	£6,420.00
Resident Services	Cemeteries - Brent Residents	Interment - Path side graves	£955.00
Resident Services	Cemeteries - Brent Residents	Burial rights - Woodland grave for 1 interment (includes 1 tree)	£3,900.00
Resident Services	Cemeteries - Brent Residents	Woodland grave for (1 interment) Interment	£940.00
Resident Services	Cemeteries - Brent Residents	Burial rights - Woodland grave for ashes	£3,110.00
Resident Services	Cemeteries - Brent Residents	Woodland grave for ashes Interment	£350.00
Resident Services	Cemeteries - Brent Residents	Grave Reopen	£2,580.00
Resident Services	Cemeteries - Brent Residents	Vault (reopen)	£970.00
Resident Services	Cemeteries - Brent Residents	Common Grave	£2,530.00
Resident Services	Cemeteries - Brent Residents	Cremated Remains In New Half Grave Space Burial Rights & Internment	£2,470.00
Resident Services	Cemeteries - Brent Residents	Cremated Remains In existing Grave Space Interment	£360.00
Resident Services	Cemeteries - Brent Residents	Cremated remains in existing vault	£500.00
Resident Services	Cemeteries - Brent Residents	Niche in Columbaria for First Five Years	£1,000.00
Resident Services	Cemeteries - Brent Residents	Each Additional Five Years for Niche in Columbaria	£500.00
Resident Services	Applicable to Non Brent residents		
Resident Services	Cemeteries - Non-Residents	Burial rights Carpenders Park Lawn Cemetery	£6,400.00
Resident Services	Cemeteries - Non-Residents	Burial rights Willesden New, Alperton, Paddington Old Cemetery - Reclaim	£6,610.00
Resident Services	Cemeteries - Non-Residents	Burial rights Willesden New, Alperton, Paddington Old Cemetery - - New Plot	£7,355.00
Resident Services	Cemeteries - Non-Residents	Interment	£1,650.00
Resident Services	Cemeteries - Non-Residents	Burial rights - Path side graves Path side graves Carpenders Park Lawn Cemetery	£6,540.00
Resident Services	Cemeteries - Non-Residents	Burial rights - Path side graves Path side graves Willesden New, Alperton, Paddington Old Cemetery	£7,460.00
Resident Services	Cemeteries - Non-Residents	Interment - Path side graves (earth)	£1,510.00
Resident Services	Cemeteries - Non-Residents	Burial rights - Woodland grave for 1 interment (includes 1 tree)	£5,460.00
Resident Services	Cemeteries - Non-Residents	Burial rights - Woodland grave for ashes	£3,360.00
Resident Services	Cemeteries - Non-Residents	Interment - Woodland grave for ashes	£440.00
Resident Services	Cemeteries - Non-Residents	Grave Reopen	£2,680.00
Resident Services	Cemeteries - Non-Residents	Interment	£2,500.00
Resident Services	Cemeteries - Non-Residents	Burial rights - Cremated Remains In new half grave space	£3,250.00

06m(ii). Appendix M (ii) Fees and Charges for 2023 24

DIRECTORATE	SERVICE CATEGORY	SERVICE PROVIDED	23/24 PROPOSED CHARGE £ (Excl. VAT)
Resident Services	Cemeteries - Non Residents	Interment - Cremated Remains In new half & existing grave space	£725.00
Resident Services	Cemeteries - Non Residents	Cremated remains in existing vault	£320.00
Resident Services	Cemeteries - Non Residents	Niche in Columbaria for First Five Years	£1,500.00
Resident Services	Cemeteries - Non Residents	Each Additional Five Years for Niche in Columbaria	£750.00
Resident Services	Applicable for both Brent residents & non residents		
Resident Services	Cemeteries - Additional Charges	Earth Grave for 3 where applicable	£920.00
Resident Services	Cemeteries - Additional Charges	Shroud timbers & slats	£300.00
Resident Services	Cemeteries - Additional Charges	Grave surround	£260.00
Resident Services	Cemeteries - Additional Charges	Transfer burial rights	£159.00
Resident Services	Cemeteries - Additional Charges	Burial Register search fee	£60.00
Resident Services	Cemeteries - Additional Charges	Chapel hire up to 2 hours	£198.00
Resident Services	Cemeteries - Additional Charges	Saturday burials at Alperton, Paddington and Willesden	£990.00
Resident Services	Cemeteries - Additional Charges	Cancellation of an interment or late arrival of funeral cortege of more than 20 mins	£450.00
Resident Services	Cemeteries - Additional Charges	Memorial [full with Landing]	£520.00
Resident Services	Cemeteries - Additional Charges	Non Residents - Vaults Package Paddington Old Cemetery	£19,000.00
Resident Services	Cemeteries - Additional Charges	Vaults Package Paddington Old Cemetery	£16,500.00
Resident Services	Cemeteries - Additional Charges	Additional Internment of Ashes	£150.00
Resident Services	Cemeteries - Memorial Permits	Headstone / plaque	£495.00
Resident Services	Cemeteries - Memorial Permits	Inscriptions / works	£335.00
Resident Services	Cemeteries - Memorial Permits	Memorial removal for interment	£450.00
Resident Services	Cemeteries - Memorial Permits	Memorial replacement after interment	£450.00
Resident Services	Cemeteries - Memorial Permits	Memorial raise and level (full memorials)	£150.00
Resident Services	Cemeteries - Memorial Permits	Memorial raise and level (plaques)	£96.00
Resident Services	Cemeteries - Memorial Permits	Tree Plaque at Carpenders Park (Inc. VAT) (Single)	£495.00
Resident Services	Cemeteries - Memorial Permits	Tree Plaque at Carpenders Park (Inc. VAT) (Double)	£535.00
Resident Services	Cemeteries - Memorial Permits	Bench with plaque on to existing landing (Inc. VAT)	£2,500.00
Resident Services	Cemeteries - Memorial Permits	Bench Plaques only at Carpenders Park (Inc. VAT - 5 years)	£420.00
Resident Services	Cemeteries - Memorial Permits	Grave tendering 1 x per year, all cemeteries except Carpenders Park	£130.00
Resident Services	Cemeteries - Memorial Permits	Grave tendering 2 x per year, all cemeteries except Carpenders Park	£190.00
Resident Services	Cemeteries - Memorial Permits	Grave tendering 1 x per year, Carpenders Park	£90.00
Resident Services	Cemeteries - Memorial Permits	Grave tendering 2 x per year, Carpenders Park	£150.00
Resident Services	Cemeteries - Memorial Permits	Concrete based bench with plaque (inc. VAT not at Carpenders Park)	£3,990.00

06m(ii). Appendix M (ii) Fees and Charges for 2023 24

DIRECTORATE	SERVICE CATEGORY	SERVICE PROVIDED	23/24 PROPOSED CHARGE £ (Excl. VAT)
RESIDENT SERVICES	ALLOTMENTS		
Resident Services	Allotments	Allotment type site 126m2 (5 pole)	£100.00
Resident Services	Allotments	Allotment cost per pole	£20.00
RESIDENT SERVICES	FOOD AND HEALTH & SAFETY		
Resident Services	Food and Health & Safety	Cadaver certificate (3 working days' notice)	£73.50
Resident Services	Food and Health & Safety	Cadaver certificate (urgent next day service)	£143.00
Resident Services	Food and Health & Safety	Food Export Health Certificates (3 working days)	£75.00
Resident Services	Food and Health & Safety	Food Export Health Certificates (urgent next day service)	£142.00
Resident Services	Food and Health & Safety	Food destruction certificate	£275.00
Resident Services	Food and Health & Safety	Freezer breakdown certificate	£275.00
Resident Services	Food and Health & Safety	Pool water analysis single pool	£246.00
Resident Services	Food and Health & Safety	Pool water analysis double pool	£419.00
Resident Services	Food and Health & Safety	Schools Legionella Water Sampling	£1,610.00
Resident Services	Food and Health & Safety	Schools Drinking Water Sampling	£538.00
Resident Services	Food and Health & Safety	Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS) rating re-assessment	£318.00
Resident Services	Food and Health & Safety	Food Business Start-up Scheme	£318.00
Resident Services	Food and Health & Safety	Food Hygiene Coaching Service	£510.00
Resident Services	Food and Health & Safety	Special treatments exhibition including any treatment from categories B, C or D	1,395 plus 97.00 per applicant administering
Resident Services	Food and Health & Safety	Special treatments - lasers (Cat A)	£890.00
Resident Services	Food and Health & Safety	Special treatments - massage, acupuncture, tattooing etc (cat B)	£725.00
Resident Services	Food and Health & Safety	Special treatments - beauty treatments, etc (Cat C)	£432.00
Resident Services	Food and Health & Safety	Special treatments - manicure, nose and ear piercing, etc (Cat D)	£238.00
Resident Services	Food and Health & Safety	Special treatments - licence variation including addition or change of therapist	£125.00
Resident Services	Food Safety	Primary Authority - bulk purchase (per hour)	£71.00
Resident Services	Food Safety	Primary Authority - pay as you go (per hour)	£88.00
Resident Services	Food Safety	Enforcement Officer hourly rate	£66.00
RESIDENT SERVICES	LICENSING		
Resident Services	Licensing	Animal Boarding Licence including inspection (up to 20 animals)	£355.00
Resident Services	Licensing	Animal Boarding Licence including inspection (over 20 animals)	£395.00
Resident Services	Licensing	Breeding of Dogs Licence including inspection (with one bitch)	£355.00
Resident Services	Licensing	Breeding of Dogs Licence including inspection (with more than one bitch)	£395.00
Resident Services	Licensing	Performing Animals Registration	£395.00
Resident Services	Licensing	Pet Animals (Pet Shop Licence)	£395.00
Resident Services	Licensing	Dangerous Wild Animals	£422.00
Resident Services	Licensing	Leaflet distribution (application)	£215+ 85 per person p/d

06m(ii). Appendix M (ii) Fees and Charges for 2023 24

DIRECTORATE	SERVICE CATEGORY	SERVICE PROVIDED	23/24 PROPOSED CHARGE £ (Excl. VAT)
Resident Services	Licensing	Occasional sales (application) (Discretionary reduction of educational, charitable organisations)	£200 + 10.00 p/d per stall
Resident Services	Licensing	Sex establishments	£450.00
Resident Services	Licensing	Street trading (new application)	£84.00
Resident Services	Licensing	Street trading (variation)	£55.00
Resident Services	Licensing	Temporary Street Trading (per day per stall) up to six-months shop fronts	£100 p/m
Resident Services	Licensing	Scrap Metal Site Licence	£650.00
Resident Services	Licensing	Scrap Metal Collectors Licence	£380.00
Resident Services	Licensing	Explosives Registration	Various Fees from £54 - £500
Resident Services	Licensing	Explosives Licence	Various Fees from £54 - £500
Resident Services	Licensing	Film Classification (per 15 minutes)	£60 minimum charge, £15 per 15 minutes thereafter
Resident Services	Licensing	Premises Licence - Licensing Act 2003 (see separate list of fees for specific charges)	Various Fees from £10.50 to £64,000
Resident Services	Licensing	Premises Licence - Gambling Act 2005 (see separate list of fees for specific charges)	Various Fees from £15 - £15,000
Resident Services	Licensing	Marriage Licence (see separate list of fees for specific charges)	Various Fees from £600 to £1,500
Resident Services	Licensing	Licensing Surgeries (to help businesses with applications)	£60 p/h
Resident Services	Licensing	Enforcement Officer hourly rate	£66.00
Resident Services	Licensing	Other Animal Inspections Fees	£100 - £135 p/h
Resident Services	Licensing	Pavement Tables and Chairs Licences	£100 (to be reviewed subject to new legislation)
Resident Services	Licensing	Casual Street Trading for Wembley Event	£200 p/d
Resident Services	Licensing	Casual Street Trading	£177 p/d
Resident Services	Licensing	Casual Street Trading (Discretionary charge for educational, not for profit or charitable organisations)	£177 p/d
Resident Services	Licensing	Temporary Shop Front (1-6 Months plus admin fee. New applications receive one months free trading if they pay for five months)	£100 p/m
Resident Services	Licensing	Temporary Independent Pitch (1-6 Months plus admin fee. New applications receive one months free trading if they pay for five months)	£3.50 p/s/m per day
Resident Services	Licensing	Permanent Shop Front (12 months plus admin fee)	£1,185 p/a
Resident Services	Licensing	Permanent Independent Pitch (12 months plus admin fee)	3.25 p/s/m per day
Resident Services	Licensing	Leaflet distribution on Sundays and Bank holidays and Wembly event day	215 + 177 per person p/d
Resident Services	Licensing	Street Trading Renewal Fee	£40.00
RESIDENT SERVICES	PUBLIC REALM (HIGHWAYS)		
Resident Services	Public Realm (Highways)	Temporary Crossing – Commercial:	£607.00
Resident Services	Public Realm (Highways)	Crane Oversail	£607.00
Resident Services	Public Realm (Highways)	Crane (mobile platform):	£366.00
Resident Services	Public Realm (Highways)	Scaffold Licence Fee (0-10m)	£256.00
Resident Services	Public Realm (Highways)	Scaffold Licence Fee (10-15m)	£328.00
Resident Services	Public Realm (Highways)	Scaffold Licence Fee (15m+)	£646.00
Resident Services	Public Realm (Highways)	Hoarding Licence Fee(0-10m)	£256.00
Resident Services	Public Realm (Highways)	Hoarding Licence Fee (10-15m)	£328.00

06m(ii). Appendix M (ii) Fees and Charges for 2023 24

DIRECTORATE	SERVICE CATEGORY	SERVICE PROVIDED	23/24 PROPOSED CHARGE £ (Excl. VAT)
Resident Services	Public Realm (Highways)	Hoarding Licence Fee (15m+)	£646.00
Resident Services	Public Realm (Highways)	Skip Licence Fee	£61.00
Resident Services	Public Realm (Highways)	Skips (fines)	-
Resident Services	Public Realm (Highways)	Building Material licences (Residential)	£180.00
Resident Services	Public Realm (Highways)	Builders Material Licences (Commercial)	£360.00
Resident Services	Public Realm (Highways)	Skip Company - Annual Registration fee:	£327.00
Resident Services	Public Realm (Highways)	Container/Portacabin licences:	£366.00
Resident Services	Public Realm (Highways)	Admin fee for refunds processing	£66.00
Resident Services	Public Realm (Highways)	Temporary Crossing – Domestic	£180.00
Resident Services	Public Realm (Highways)	Crane /mobile platform (per week)	£547.00
Resident Services	Public Realm (Highways)	Building Material licences (Residential/week)	£49.00
Resident Services	Public Realm (Highways)	Builders Material Licences (Commercial/week)	£92.00
Resident Services	Public Realm (Highways)	Container/Portacabin licence (per week)	£164.00
RESIDENT SERVICES	TRADING STANDARDS		
Resident Services	Trading Standards	Registration of Premises for Auction	£360.00
Resident Services	Trading Standards	Primary Authority - bulk purchase (per hour)	£71.00
Resident Services	Trading Standards	Primary Authority - pay as you go (per hour)	£88.00
Resident Services	Trading Standards	Verification of Weights & Measures Equipment (per hour)	£71.00
Resident Services	Trading Standards	Calibration of Weights for Business 9per Hour	£71.00
Resident Services	Trading Standards	Testing of Working Standards and Testing Equipment for other Las (per hour)	£71.00
Resident Services	Trading Standards	Extra Staff Member assisting with above W&M fees (per hour)	£45.00
Resident Services	Trading Standards	Use of Safety Lab (per hour)	£78.00
Resident Services	Trading Standards	Licence to store explosives	Various Fees from £54.00 - £500.00
Resident Services	Trading Standards	Financial Investigator (per hour, plus contract fee)	£45.00
Resident Services	Trading Standards	Redress Schemes for Lettings Agency Work and Property Management Work (Requirement to Belong to a Scheme etc) (England) Order 2014, Full Charge Penalty Notice	Up to £5,000
Resident Services	Trading Standards	Penalty Charge Notice under Part 3, Chapter 3 Consumer Rights Act 2015 (Maximum Penalty)	Up to £5,000
Resident Services	Trading Standards	Full financial penalty issued under the Tenant's Fees Act 2019 (Maximum Penalty)	Up to £30,000
Resident Services	Trading Standards	Full financial penalty issued under the Client Money Protection Schemes for Property Agents (Requirement to Belong to a Scheme etc.) Regulations 2019	Up to £30,000
Resident Services	Trading Standards	Enforcement Officer hourly rate	£66.00
Resident Services	Trading Standards	Senior/Supervisory Staff hourly rate	£85.00
RESIDENT SERVICES	Registration and Nationality		
Resident Services	Registration and Nationality	Approved Premises Weddings Internal Saturday Before 4pm	£435.00
Resident Services	Registration and Nationality	Approved Premises Weddings Internal Saturday After 4pm	£635.00

06m(ii). Appendix M (ii) Fees and Charges for 2023 24

DIRECTORATE	SERVICE CATEGORY	SERVICE PROVIDED	23/24 PROPOSED CHARGE £ (Excl. VAT)
Resident Services	Registration and Nationality	Approved Premises Weddings Internal Sunday Before 1pm	£534.00
Resident Services	Registration and Nationality	Approved Premises Weddings Internal Sunday After 1pm	£701.00
Resident Services	Registration and Nationality	Approved Premises Weddings external Monday - Friday Before 4pm	£485.00
Resident Services	Registration and Nationality	Approved Premises Weddings external Monday - Friday After 4pm	£551.00
Resident Services	Registration and Nationality	Approved Premises Weddings external Saturday Before 4pm	£551.00
Resident Services	Registration and Nationality	Approved Premises Weddings external Saturday After 4pm	£667.00
Resident Services	Registration and Nationality	Approved Premises Weddings external Sunday Before 1pm	£606.00
Resident Services	Registration and Nationality	Approved Premises Weddings external Sunday After 1pm	£788.00
Resident Services	Registration and Nationality	Bank Holidays Before 4:30pm	£1,000.00
Resident Services	Registration and Nationality	Bank Holidays After 4:30pm	£1,000.00
Resident Services	Registration and Nationality	Private Ceremonies (M- F)	£150.00
Resident Services	Registration and Nationality	Citizenship Private Ceremony-weekend	£190.00
Resident Services	Registration and Nationality	Issue of Letter	£30.00
Resident Services	Registration and Nationality	Secure Deposit	£168.00
Resident Services	Registration and Nationality	Change of date	£55.00
Resident Services	Registration and Nationality	Notice priority fee per notice	£20.00
Resident Services	Registration and Nationality	Approved Premises external Garden Monday - Friday Before 4pm	£364.00
Resident Services	Registration and Nationality	Approved Premises external Garden Monday - Friday After 4pm	£617.00
Resident Services	Registration and Nationality	Approved Premises external Garden Saturday Before 4pm	£485.00
Resident Services	Registration and Nationality	Approved Premises external Garden Saturday After 4pm	£685.00
Resident Services	Registration and Nationality	Approved Premises external Garden Sunday Before 1pm	£584.00
Resident Services	Registration and Nationality	Approved Premises external Garden Sunday After 1pm	£751.00
Resident Services	Registration and Nationality	Approved Premises Ceremonies Internal Monday - Friday Before 4pm	£314.00
Resident Services	Registration and Nationality	Approved Premises Ceremonies Internal Monday - Friday After 4pm	£567.00
CUSTOMER AND DIGITAL SERVICES	Registration and Nationality	Ceremonies Receptions (new service pending refurb)	£500.00
CUSTOMER AND DIGITAL SERVICES	Registration and Nationality	License of approved premises for civil marriage or partnership* up to 50	£700.00
CUSTOMER AND DIGITAL SERVICES	Registration and Nationality	License of approved premises for civil marriage or partnership* 51 to 100	£800.00
CUSTOMER AND DIGITAL SERVICES	Registration and Nationality	License of approved premises for civil marriage or partnership* 101 to 200	£800.00
CUSTOMER AND DIGITAL SERVICES	Registration and Nationality	License of approved premises for civil marriage or partnership* 201 to 300	£1,000.00
CUSTOMER AND DIGITAL SERVICES	Registration and Nationality	License of approved premises for civil marriage or partnership* 301 to 400	£1,100.00
CUSTOMER AND DIGITAL SERVICES	Registration and Nationality	License of approved premises for civil marriage or partnership* 401 to 500	£1,200.00

06m(ii). Appendix M (ii) Fees and Charges for 2023 24

DIRECTORATE	SERVICE CATEGORY	SERVICE PROVIDED	23/24 PROPOSED CHARGE £ (Excl. VAT)
CUSTOMER AND DIGITAL SERVICES	Registration and Nationality	License of approved premises for civil marriage or partnership* Over 500	£1,600.00
Resident Services	Community Protection		
Resident Services	Community Protection	Processing of CCTV footage for insurance companies.	£100.00
Resident Services	Community Protection	Public Spaces Protection Order Enforcement Nuisance Vehicles .	£100.00
Resident Services	Community Protection	Enforcement of ASB Tools and Powers . Fixed penalty notices of breach of CPN.	£100.00
Resident Service	Funeral Service		
Resident Services	Funeral Service	Direct Cremation (Unattended Cremation)	£995.00
Resident Services	Funeral Service	Basic Burial Package (Resident)	£1,500 onward
Resident Services	Funeral Service	Basic Cremation Package (Resident)	£1,500 onward

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Budget Consultation Analysis Summary of Key Findings

The online 2023/24 budget consultation opened on 14 November 2022 and ended on 31 January 2023.

The online consultation asked Brent residents to read the Draft Budget Plan for 2023/24, including appendices, and answer the following questions:

- Do you have any comments about our draft budget strategy?
- Having read the draft budget proposals, how much do you now feel you understand the Council's overall financial position and the need to both increase council tax and deliver savings in 2023/24 in order to deliver a balanced budget?
- To what extent do you agree or disagree with the budget proposals?
- Please provide any other comments you may have on the proposals for the 2023/24 Budget
- If you have any other ideas for ways we could save money, please specify below

In addition to the questions above standard equalities monitoring questions were asked, to better understand the demographic of the residents who responded. Please note, answering these questions was not mandatory.

The new proposals for 2023/24 are designed to limit, as far as possible, service reductions and the impact on front line services. The Budget Plan consultation aims to inform residents of the pressures faced, explain the need to reduce spending and expand on how savings will be made. The consultation aims to receive feedback on the aforementioned and capture responses to the borough's financial position.

To date, the budget plan survey has received 101 responses from the community, including residents, businesses, the voluntary sector and other key stakeholders.

Question 1

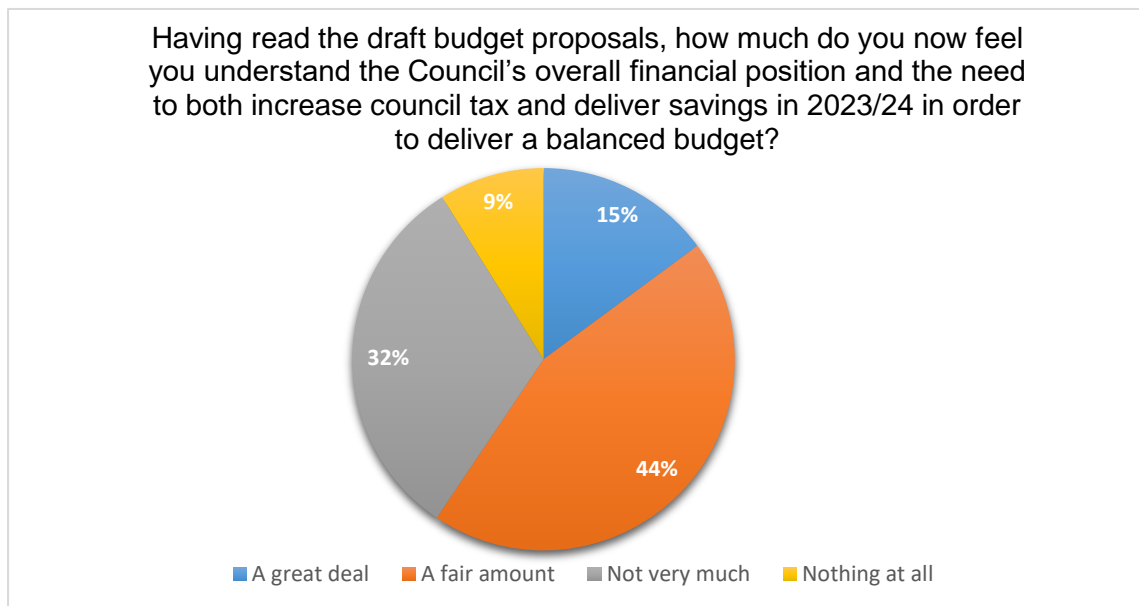
The first question in the survey asked respondents whether they had any comments about the draft budget strategy. Some key themes captured in the comments from this question are as follows:

- Concerns regarding budget cuts affecting the provision of services and the impact to residents.
- Concerns regarding the increase of council tax.

- Concerns centred on Brent Council expenditures within the organisation.

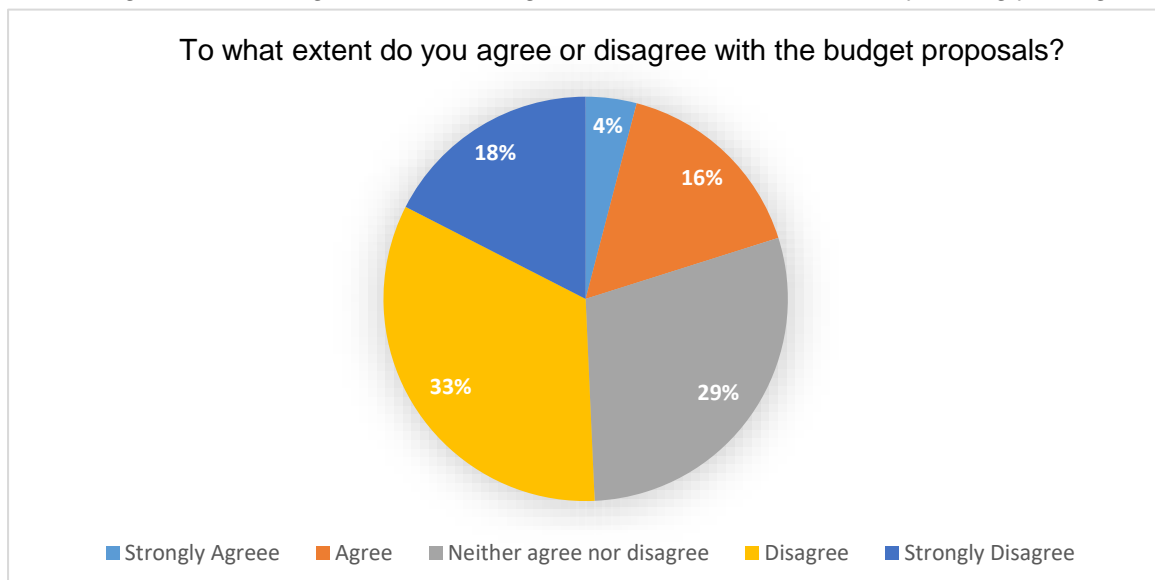
Question 2

Question 2 asked respondents to share how much they felt they understood the Council's overall financial position and the need to both increase council tax and deliver savings in 2023/24 in order to deliver a balanced budget. The data shows that **15%** of respondents feel as though they understand the Council's overall financial position 'a great deal'. **44%** of all respondents felt that that understood the Council's position 'a fair amount' whilst **32%** amount answered that they felt they didn't understand the Council's overall financial position very much. **9%** felt that they understood 'nothing at all' about the Council's overall financial position.



Question 3

The third question asks respondents to tell us to what extent they agree or disagree with the budget proposals. **4%** said they strongly agreed with the proposals, **16%** agreed, **29%** neither agreed nor disagreed, **33%** disagreed and **18%** answered they strongly disagreed.



Question 4

Here we asked respondents to provide any additional comments they may have for the budget proposals for 2023/24. The most popular theme for this question can be found below:

- Concerns over Council Tax increases
- Too little spending on green spaces and environmental services
- More support for adult, youth and community services

Question 5

This question asked respondents to share any other ideas for ways the Council could save money. A summary of the comments made are as follows:

- Focus on work from home agenda
- A reduction in overhead costs
- Cut back on physical marketing materials

Summary

Overall, the most common theme identified throughout the consultation survey was the concern regarding an increase in Council Tax. It is acknowledged that increasing Council Tax will be difficult for some households to manage in the current circumstances and section five the budget report set out the rationale the Council considers as part of its decision making. In summary, the increase will provide much needed funding to limit the impact inflationary pressures expected in 2022/23, in particular for the Adult Social Care department, as well as preventing the wholesale cuts key services that many other Councils are having to consider. In addition, the Council continues to invest in the Council Tax Support scheme, which provides over £32m of support for around 28,000 households who are financially vulnerable. In addition, the Council's Resident Support Fund has made available additional funds for residents who are having difficulty due to unforeseen financial circumstances as a result of the cost of living crisis.

Feedback and comments captured by the survey were varied and it is clear to see that Brent residents are concerned with what a reduction in spending means for them and their community.

Monitoring Questions

In addition to the questions above standard equalities monitoring questions were asked, to better understand the demographic of the residents who responded. Please note, answering these questions was not mandatory. A summary of responses can be found below.

A majority (**90%**) of respondents who took part in the survey answered as a Brent Resident. Organisations who answered the survey included **Brent NEU, Young Brent Foundation** and **Friends of Woodcock Park**. The most common areas the survey received responses from were; **Willesden, Cricklewood, Kingsbury and the post code area of HA9**. Respondents heard about the survey from a range of sources, however the most common source was an **email from a Brent Council Officer/Team member**. **44.6%** of those who took part in the survey were female, **50.8%** were male. **95.2%** also

answered that the gender they identify with is the same as their sex registered at birth. The survey was answered most by those between the ages of **51-60**. **18.2%** of people who answered were between the ages of **61-65** and **41-50**. **19.7%** were between the ages of **31-40**.

40.6% stated that they did not have a religion, **29.7%** of respondents were Christian and **15.6%** answered that they preferred not to state. **68.9%** of respondents answered they considered themselves **'heterosexual'**, **9.8%** answered they were **'gay or lesbian'** and **3.3%** stated they were **'bisexual'**. **41.3%** of those who answered belong to the **English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British** ethnic group. The second most common ethnic group for respondents was **White other (19%)**, and **14.3%** belonged to the **Indian** ethnic group. **7.9%** belonged to the **Black Caribbean** ethnic group. The most common 'other' ethnic group was **Spanish**. **80.6%** answered that English was their **first language**. **14.5%** answered that **English wasn't theirs first language**.

71% do not look after or give support to anyone with long-term physical or mental illnesses, or those with problems related to old age. **17.7%** do provide support for these groups. **71%** answered that they do not have any physical or mental health conditions lasting or expected to last 12 months or longer. **22.6%** said they did. **30%** of those who answered this question preferred not to state the nature of their impairment, **25%** stated they had a **mobility impairment**, **15%** stated they had a **mental health illness** and **10%** answered that they're impairment was **physical**. **78.8%** said their condition **didn't** reduce their ability to carry our day-to-day activities whilst **14.3%** answered that it **did**.

Budget Plan – Promotion

Engagement activity	Audience	Dates
Promoted across Citizens Lab	2945	18 November, 6 December and 30 December
Promoted across the Community Newsletter	7607	15 November and 23 December.
Brent Connects	135 Brent residents	31 October, 4 November, 10 November, 15 November, 17 November

Total reach: **Over 10,500 residents**

ADVICE FROM THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR OF GOVERNANCE

1. INTRODUCTION

This appendix sets out in some detail Members' individual responsibilities to set a legal budget and how Members should approach the task. It also reminds Members about the rules concerning pecuniary and other interests.

2. WHEN THE BUDGET MUST BE SET

Under Section 31A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, budget calculations have to be made before 11th March, but they are not invalid merely because they are made on or after 11th March. However, delay in setting the Council Tax will have very serious financial consequences. It will render the Council vulnerable to legal proceedings requiring it to set the tax. In any event, it is important that the tax is set well in advance of 1st April as no sum is payable for Council Tax until 14 days after the date of posting bills. Serious financial losses will accrue very soon from a late setting of Council Tax as income is delayed and interest is foregone.

An important feature of Council Tax is that the statutory budget calculation must be followed exactly. If not the Council Tax resolution will be invalid and void.

3. SETTING OF THE COUNCIL TAX

Section 30 of the Local Government Finance Act (the Act) provides that no amount of council tax may be set before the earlier of the following—

- (a) 1st March in the financial year preceding that for which the amount is set;
- (b) the date of the issue to the authority of the last precept capable of being issued to it (otherwise than by way of substitute) by a major precepting authority for the financial year for which the amount is set.

This year the GLA meeting at which the precept will be set will take place in the afternoon of the 23 February 2023, which is the same day as the council's budget setting meeting at which the council tax would normally be set. In the event that the precept is not issued by the GLA by the time Council comes to make its decision on 23 February, the Council will only be able to calculate the Brent element of the council tax at that meeting.

Section 67 of the Act permits the setting of the council tax to be delegated to a special council tax setting committee established under that section. It is proposed that a meeting of the committee established under this section be called shortly after the 23 February so that the council tax can be set at that meeting in the event that it cannot be set by Council on 23 February.

4. NOTICE

There is a requirement to publish notice of the amount set for Council Tax in at least one local paper within 21 days of the Council's decision under section 38(2) of the Local Government and Finance Act 1992. There is also a duty to consult with representatives of Non-Domestic Ratepayers about the proposed revenue and capital expenditure before the budget requirement is calculated under section 65 of the Local Government and Finance Act 1992.

5. MEMBERS' FIDUCIARY DUTIES

The obligation to make a lawful budget each year is shared equally by each individual Member. In discharging that obligation, Members owe a fiduciary duty to the Council Taxpayer.

The budget must not include expenditure on items which would fall outside the Council's powers. Expenditure on lawful items must be prudent, and any forecasts or assumptions such as rates of interest or inflation must themselves be rational. Powers to spend money must be exercised bona fide for the purpose for which they were conferred and any ulterior motives risk a finding of illegality. In determining the Council's overall budget requirement, Members are bound to have regard to the level of Council Tax necessary to sustain it. Essentially the interests of the Council Taxpayer must be balanced against those of the various service recipients.

Within this overall framework, there is of course considerable scope for discretion within the 2023/24 financial year, especially on the part of the Cabinet. Setting a budget is not the same as deciding what expenditure will in fact be incurred. To budget for expenditure is to estimate likely expenditure and/or make financial provision for such expenditure. However, Members will bear in mind that in making the budget commitments are being entered which will have an impact on future years. Some such commitments are susceptible to change in future years, such as staff numbers which are capable of upward or downward adjustment at any time. Other commitments however impose upon the Council future obligations which are binding and cannot be adjusted, such as loan charges to pay for capital schemes. For some specific proposals within the overall Budgetary framework, Cabinet decisions have already been made. For some other proposals, subject to relevant consultation where necessary, decisions by the Cabinet will need to be made, especially where the making of such a decision would result or would be likely to result in the permanent closure of a facility used by the public or a permanent and significant reduction in the level of services or facilities provided to the public other than where such closure or reduction in service is considered necessary by the relevant strategic director for reasons of health and safety.

In making those subsequent decisions the Cabinet will be required to consider all relevant matters including the results of any consultation and the Council's equality duties. Should the Cabinet (or other decision maker) consider it

appropriate, for example when being asked to make service changes to achieve a budget reduction and having taken into account all relevant facts (including but not limited to the results of any consultation and after due consideration of the Council's equalities duties) they have the option of not making the budget reductions detailed within the overall budget. They will still be required to balance the budget overall using the appropriate constitutional procedures, for example, finding the savings from elsewhere or using reserves and otherwise complying with the Council's rules on budget setting and management.

Only relevant and lawful factors may be taken into account and irrelevant factors must be ignored. A Member who votes in accordance with the decision of his or her political group but who does so after taking into account the relevant factors and professional advice will be acting within the law. Party loyalty and party policy are capable of being relevant considerations for the individual Member provided the member does not dogmatically toe the party line without considering the relevant factors and professional advice and without properly exercising any real discretion.

Under the Brent Member Code of Conduct members are required when reaching decisions to have regard to relevant advice from the Corporate Director of Finance and Resources and the Monitoring Officer (the corporate Director of Governance). If the Council should fail to set a budget at all or fail to set a lawful budget, contrary to the advice of these two officers there may be a breach of the Code by individual members if it can be demonstrated that they have not had proper regard to the advice given.

6. ARREARS OF COUNCIL TAX AND VOTING

In accordance with section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 ("the 1992 Act"), where a payment of Council Tax that a member is liable to make has been outstanding for two months or more at the time of a meeting, the Member must disclose the fact of their arrears (though they are not required to declare the amount) and cannot vote on any of the following matters if they are the subject of consideration at a meeting:

- (a) Any decision relating to the administration or enforcement of Council Tax.
- (b) Any budget calculation required by the Local Government Finance Act 1992 underlying the setting of the Council Tax.
- (c) Any recommendation, resolution or other decision which might affect the making of the Annual Budget calculation.

Members should note the following points:

- (i) These rules are extremely wide in scope. Virtually any Council decision which has financial implications is one which might affect the making of the budget underlying the Council Tax for next year and thus is caught. The former DoE (now MHCLG) shared this interpretation as it made clear in its letter to the AMA dated 28th May 1992.

- (ii) The rules do not apply just to full Council meetings but extend to committees and sub-committees of the Council and to the Cabinet.
- (iii) Members who make a declaration are not entitled to vote on the matter in question but are not prevented by the section from taking part in the discussion.
- (iv) Members will have a defence under section 106 of the 1992 Act if they did not know that the section applied to them (i.e., that they were in arrears to the relevant extent) at the time of the meeting. Thus unwitting Members who for example can prove that they did not know and had no reason to suppose at the time of the meeting that their bank has failed to honour a standing order will be protected should any prosecution arise.
- (v) It is not enough to state that a benefit application has been submitted which has not yet been determined, as Members remain liable to pay pending determination.
- (vi) Breach of the rules is a criminal offence under section 106 of the 1992 Act which attracts a maximum fine at level 3 on the standard scale, currently £1,000.

Members' attention is also be drawn to the effect of the Local Authorities (Standing Orders)(England)(Amendment) Regulations 2014 which came into effect on 25 February 2014 which is that where any vote is taken at a Council meeting on setting the budget for the authority, the Minutes of the meeting will record the names of all Councillors present at the vote and how each Councillor voted (for or against) or the fact that they abstained from voting.

7. DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

Members are reminded to consider whether they have a disclosable pecuniary interest or a personal interest in the setting of the council's budget. If a member has a relevant interest they must disclose the interest at the meeting, subject to the provisions in the Code in respect of sensitive interests. If the interest is:

- a disclosable pecuniary interest; or
- a personal interest which a member of the public knowing the facts would reasonably regard it as so significant that it is likely to prejudice their judgement of the public interest (and it affects their financial position or the financial position of a connected person (as defined in the Code) or relates to a regulatory matter affecting or likely to affect them or a connected person.

The member may not participate in the discussions or vote on the matter, although if the interest is prejudicial but not a disclosable pecuniary interest, the member may remain for the purposes of making representations or asking questions.

Members should seek early advice to avoid any confusion on the night of the meeting if they consider they have a relevant interest.

Dispensations

The Council's Monitoring Officer may, on written request from a Member, grant a dispensation to relieve the applicant from the restrictions on participation and voting. Dispensation may be granted if:-

- Without the dispensation the number of persons prohibited from participating would be so great a proportion to impede the effectiveness of the meeting;
- The representation of different political groups would be affected and likely to alter the likely outcome of any voting at the meeting;
- Granting the dispensation is in the interests of persons living in the Borough;
- Every Member of the Council's Cabinet would be precluded from participating in the meeting;
- It is appropriate to grant a dispensation.

Dispensation may be granted for up to 4 years. A dispensation will mean that the Member to whom it is granted can speak and vote on a matter in which they have a relevant interest. Where the Monitoring Officer is undecided on the best response, and time is not of the essence, the decision could be passed to Audit & Standards Committee for decision. There is no Audit & Standards Committee meeting currently fixed before the budget setting meeting.

8. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND AUDITORS' POWERS

Director of Finance and Resources and Monitoring Officer

Section 114 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 places the Director of Finance and Resources under an obligation to prepare a report (to full Council) if it appears to him that the expenditure the Authority proposes to incur in a financial year is likely to exceed its resources available to meet that expenditure. A failure to take note and act on such a report could lead to a complaint to the Standards Board. Similarly, the Council's Monitoring Officer is required to report to Full Council if it appears to her that a decision has been or is about to be taken which is or would be unlawful or would be likely to lead to maladministration.

Under section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 the Director of Finance and resources is required to report to the authority on the robustness of the estimates made for the purposes of the calculations required to be made by the Council and the adequacy of the proposed financial reserves. These are the estimates which the Cabinet is required to determine and submit to Full Council and are contained within this report. However, if the Council were minded to agree a budget based on different estimates e.g. if Council did not agree with the estimates provided by the Cabinet then those estimates which the Council would adopt would effectively become 'the estimates' for the purpose of Section 25 and as such should be subject to a report by the Director of Finance and Resources.

External Auditors' Powers

Section 91 of the Local Government Act 2000 and section 19A of the Audit Commission Act 1998 provide that an External Auditor may issue an "Advisory Notice" if he has reason to believe that an Authority is about to take a course of action which, if pursued to its conclusion, would be unlawful and likely to cause a loss or deficiency. This power is to be used where the matter is significant either in amount or in principle or both.

While the advisory notice has effect it is not lawful for the authority to implement or take the course of action in question unless it has considered the issues raised in the notice and given the auditor notice that it intends to proceed with that course of action in a specified period and that period has expired.

In addition, it is also open to the Auditor to apply for judicial review on any decision of an Authority or failure to act which it is reasonable to believe would have an effect on the accounts of an Authority.

9. SPECIFIC BUDGET ADVICE

Balances and Other Budget Calculations

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 section 31A(2)(b) and (c) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 to calculate as part of their overall budget what amounts are appropriate for contingencies and reserves. The Council faces various contingent liabilities set out in the main budget report. Furthermore, the Council must ensure sufficient flexibility to avoid going into deficit at any point during the financial year. Members will need to pay careful attention to the advice of officers here. As set out previously, under section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 the Director of Finance and Resources is required to report to the authority on the adequacy of the proposed financial reserves.

In addition to advising on the robustness of the estimates as set out above, the Director of Finance and Resources is also required to report on the robustness of the proposed financial reserves. The same advice applies to these as to the other calculations required to be made by the Council.

Having considered the officer's report the Council is then required to "*have regard to the report*" but it is not required to adopt the recommendations in it. However, Members must demonstrate they have acted reasonably if they do not adopt the recommendations.

Localism Act 2011

Sections 72 to 79 and Schedules 5 to 7 of the Localism Act 2011 amended the legislation regarding the calculation of council tax. Schedule 5 of the Localism Act provides for a council tax referendum to be held if an authority increases its

relevant basic amount of council tax in excess of principles determined by the Secretary of State. Authorities will not be able to exceed the Secretary of State's principles without having held such a referendum. The principles applicable for 2023/24 are discussed at paragraphs 5.10 to 5.11 of the main report.

Alternative Proposals

If alternative proposals to those contained in this report are moved at the budget setting meeting, the Director of Finance and Resources will need to consider if the estimates or proposed financial reserves contained in this report are affected and whether a further report (which may be oral) is required under section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003. If the Director of Finance and Resources is unable to report on the estimates or the reserves because of the lateness of the alternative proposals then he will not be able to comply with this statutory requirement. The Act does not say what happens if this duty is not fulfilled and nor does it say whether the Council can set the budget without that advice. It follows from this then that there is no express statutory prohibition. However, the authority is at risk of a Judicial Review by an interested person, e.g. a resident, if the Council has failed to have regard to a report of the Director of Finance on the estimates and reserves used for its budget calculations.

Capital Programme

The requirements of the "*Prudential Code*" established in the Local Government Act 2003 are set out in the report.

Expenditure Charged to the Housing Revenue Account

Members will be aware that the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) is by law to be maintained separately from the General Fund and there are strict rules which determine to which account any expenditure must be charged. There are only very limited areas of discretion here. Members should bear in mind that if they wished to review any current determination which affects the apportionment of charges between the General Fund and HRA, they would need to do so on the basis of an officers' report and specific legal advice. The Housing Revenue Account must be maintained in balance throughout the year and the Council is under a duty to prevent a debit balance in the Housing Revenue Account pursuant to Section 76 Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

Equalities Legislation

Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 sets out the public sector equality duty which requires the Council, when exercising its functions to have 'due regard' to the need to eliminate discrimination (both direct and indirect discrimination), harassment and victimization and other conduct prohibited under the Equality Act, and to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between

those who share a 'protected characteristic' and those who do not share that protected characteristic.

A 'protected characteristic' is defined in the Equality Act as:

- age;
- disability;
- gender reassignment;
- pregnancy and maternity;
- race; (including ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality)
- religion or belief;
- sex;
- sexual orientation.

Marriage and civil partnership are also a protected characteristic for the purposes of the duty to eliminate discrimination.

Having due regard to the need to 'advance equality of opportunity' between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, includes having due regard to the need to remove or minimize disadvantages suffered by them. Due regard must also be had to the need to take steps to meet the needs of such persons where those needs are different from persons who do not have that characteristic, and encourage those who have a protected characteristic to participate in public life.

Complying with the duty may involve treating some people better than others, as far as that is allowed by the discrimination law.

Due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality, and foster good relations must form an integral part of the decision making process. The Council must consider the effect that implementing a particular policy will have in relation to equality before making a decision.

There is no prescribed manner in which the equality duty must be exercised. However, the council must have an adequate evidence base for its decision making. This can be achieved by gathering details and statistics on who use the facilities. A careful consideration of this assessment is one of the key ways in which the Council can show "due regard" to the relevant matters. Where it is apparent from the analysis of the information that the proposals would have an adverse effect on equality then adjustments should be made to avoid that effect (mitigation).

The duty is not to achieve the objectives or take the steps set out in s.149. Rather, the duty on public authorities is to bring these important objectives relating to discrimination into consideration when carrying out its functions. "Due regard" means the regard that is appropriate in all the particular circumstances in which the authority is carrying out its functions.

There must be a proper regard for the goals set out in s.149. At the same time, the council must also pay regard to any countervailing factors, which it is proper and reasonable for them to consider. Budgetary pressures, economics and

practical factors will often be important. The weight of these countervailing factors in the decision making process is a matter for the Council.

The equality and diversity implications of budget proposals are considered at all stages of the budget process, from the development of the initial budget strategy, through consideration of individual growth and savings proposals, to the production of service development plans. The processes in place are therefore aimed at ensuring that the budget proposals in this report do not discriminate against communities or individuals because of age, ethnicity, gender, disability, religion, or sexual orientation, and support the council in meeting its other duties to promote equal opportunities and good race relations.

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Brent

**Appendix P
BRENT COUNCIL PAY POLICY
STATEMENT**

Financial Year 2023/24

April 2023

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BRENT COUNCIL PAY POLICY STATEMENT

Financial Year 2023/24

Purpose

The council's pay policy outlines Brent's policy on pay and benefits for all employees (excluding schools) and has been developed to meet the relevant statutory provisions of the Localism Act 2011.

The pay policy will be reviewed on an annual basis and will be approved by Full Council in advance of each new financial year.

The pay policy statement can be amended during the course of any financial year, but only by a resolution of the Full Council. The revised version of the statement will be published as soon as reasonably practicable.

Strategic Context

The current and future pay and benefit arrangements are embodied in the council's Workforce Strategy which reflects the Borough Plan priorities. The council's Borough Plan provides the strategic framework for the council's workforce and people priorities.

The overarching objective for the Workforce Strategy is to have a high performing workforce that provides the best services it can and which can truly understand and meet the needs of all our diverse communities to enable the organisation to achieve its goals for the borough.

Key priorities of the Workforce Strategy are:

- Workforce planning;
- Workforce insight and experience;
- Workforce growth and development;
- Workforce ways of working.

These priorities have been determined with the aim of achievement of the overall outcome of having and maintaining a skilled and engaged workforce.

The council is committed to being a good employer and maintaining its excellent track record in employing a diverse workforce which reflects the local community. In order to recruit and retain a high quality workforce, the council will pay its staff at appropriate salary levels to attract and retain staff, throughout the council, particularly those in hard to recruit roles.

Employee Benefits

The council's pay arrangements and terms and conditions play a key role in enabling the council to fully realise its objectives and ensuring the workforce is 'fit for purpose'. The council is committed to fair and equitable pay and benefits arrangements to maintain a flexible, talented and performance focused workforce. The council published its Gender Pay Gap Report on 21 March 2022. This revealed that the overall mean gender pay gap based on data taken from the HR databases on 31 March 2021 was 5.1% and the median gender pay gap was 5%.

All the council's pay arrangements are contained within a single policy document.

Pay Rates and Scales

Pay scales are reviewed annually in line with the relevant national agreements and any changes are usually effective from 1 April or 1 September each year depending on the pay scales applicable to different groups of staff.

The following pay scales have been adopted by the council:

- Greater London Provincial Council (GLPC) London Pay Scales (main pay scales)
- Senior Manager Pay Scales (senior managers including Chief Officers)
- Soulbury Pay Scales (Education Psychologists, Advisors and Inspectors)
- Soulbury Pay Scales (Youth and Community Service, Young People and Community Service Managers)
- Teaching Pay Scales (for centrally employed local authority teachers)

Remuneration of Senior Management (Chief Officers)

The council defines its senior management as the top 3 tiers in the management structure. This includes all statutory and non-statutory Chief Officers and Deputy Chief Officer roles. It comprises the Chief Executive, Corporate Directors and Directors.

Currently the pay, expenses and key benefits for the Council Management Team are published on the council's website. The Council Management Team comprises the Chief Executive and the Corporate Directors.

The rates of pay of the Chief Executive and Corporate Directors and other Senior Managers are in accordance with the council's senior manager pay scales. The council may, from time to time, engage senior managers under contracts for services. The council generally will aim to pay such individuals at a rate consistent with the pay of directly employed staff performing a comparable role, although there may be exceptional circumstances which support a higher pay rate for a short-term period to ensure continuity of service and meet any statutory obligations.

Remuneration of Lowest Paid Employees

The council defines its lowest paid employees as those staff paid on the lowest established grade and scale point which in Brent is Scale 1 spinal column point 1 of the Greater London Provincial Council (GLPC) Pay Scales which is currently £23,457 per annum or the pay of its lowest paid employee where they are on a higher salary which is currently £25,629.

London Living Wage

The council has implemented the London Living Wage. All staff (including Apprentices) are paid at or above the London Living Wage. The Council is an accredited London Living Wage Employer and asks its contractors supplying services to the Council to pay their staff the London Living Wage. As contractors are employers in their own right, the council cannot force contractors to pay the London Living Wage but has built into its procurement procedures a requirement to do so in relation to council contracts where possible. The Council also encourages schools to pay the London Living Wage.

Pay Multiple

The 'pay multiple' is the ratio between the highest paid salary and the lowest/median average salary of the council's workforce. The council's highest paid employee is the Chief Executive. The current median salary is £37,725.

The lowest pay multiple is 1:8.7; the median pay multiple is 1:5.9.

This is within what is regarded as good practice for the median salary multiple as described by Will Hutton in his 2011 Fair Pay Review in the Public Sector which identified multiples at or around 8.00. The council has not set a target for a maximum multiple. The lowest pay multiple has decreased from 1:10:6 in 2016/2017.

Job Grading

Single Status was introduced in 2009 for staff on the main pay scales. Single Status introduced common job evaluation schemes and pay scales for the council's former manual workers, administrative, professional, technical and clerical employees with the exception of education psychologists, nursery nurses, youth and community workers, chief officers and the chief executive.

There are some staff who transferred to the council from other organisations who have yet to move over to Single Status.

Senior managers including chief officers have locally determined rates of pay which are linked to national negotiations for the determination of pay awards. A revised pay and grading structure for senior managers was introduced on 1 April 2013. The aim of the review was to reduce costs whilst ensuring the council's pay arrangements remained competitive.

Also in 2013, the council rationalised the terms and conditions for senior managers. Those senior management posts which fall within the Joint National Committee (JNC) Chief Officer definition are employed on JNC terms and conditions and all other senior managers are employed on National Joint Committee (NJC) for Local Government Services terms and conditions with some local variations. The senior management posts which fall within the JNC definition are predominately the Corporate Directors and other directors with statutory responsibilities e.g. Section 151 officer. This means that the majority of senior managers have terms and conditions which are largely consistent with those for other staff. A number of changes were also made to the JNC for Chief Officer terms and conditions to align them more with the terms and conditions for all other staff.

Local Conventions for the GLPC Job Evaluation Scheme

Virtually all local authorities and organisations that use the GLPC Scheme have local conventions in place. A convention is the term given to the local interpretation of the wording of a job evaluation scheme, which are usually written down. Without local conventions, evaluators may interpret the scheme's factor level definitions differently.

This exposes the authority to the potential risk of inconsistency and can lead to inaccurate gradings.

The council in March 2013 introduced local conventions to ensure that the scheme is applied consistently and fairly to all employees. These have been reviewed and amended in accordance with refreshed guidance notes on the job evaluation scheme issued by the GLPC in 2016.

Pay on Appointment

All employees are normally appointed on the lowest pay spinal column point for their job evaluated grade. Employees may be appointed at a higher point, where they are currently earning more than the lowest pay spine for the role and/or where it is considered that they already possess the skills and experience needed to justify a higher salary within the grade. Appointment at a higher point on the salary scale has to be authorised by the service Director and the Head of HR or Corporate director responsible for HR.

The council delegates authority to the Senior Staff Appointments Sub-Committee to make appointments to the council of all officers at Director level and above, except for the Chief Executive, in which case a recommendation to appoint is made to Full Council for its final decision to confirm the appointment or not. The starting salary for new appointments to these posts is agreed by the body making the appointment. The starting salary for any other post where the overall remuneration package on new appointment (excluding pension contributions in accordance with the Local Government Pension Scheme regulations) is to exceed £100,000 will normally be agreed by full council or a committee of the council unless the Chief Executive agrees otherwise.

Annual Pay Progression

Brent's pay policy is primarily based on evaluated pay grades, each having a salary range comprising a number of incremental points. Other pay grades are nationally prescribed and also have incremental progression arrangements. Most employees incrementally progress through the pay grade for their job. Progression will normally be one increment (pay spine column point) on the 1st of April each year until the top of the grade is reached for those on the main pay scales. Separate arrangements

apply during the first year of service where the start date is between 1 October and 31 March and on the anniversary of joining for those on senior manager pay scales.

Pay progression takes place on an annual basis and can be withheld if there is a disciplinary sanction or where performance is currently being addressed.

Performance Related Pay and Bonuses

Council employees including the Chief Executive and directors do not receive performance related payments or bonuses.

National / Regional Pay Agreements

The council operates the national (JNC/NJC) and regional (GLPC) collective bargaining arrangements for pay and conditions of service for all employees, including senior managers. Pay is increased in line with national and regional pay agreements.

Details of the national pay award for 2023/24 are not yet known. All proposals received from the trade unions will be considered in the context of the public sector pay freeze announced by the Chancellor in the in the 2020 Spending Review.

Market Supplements

The council re-introduced a market supplement policy in 2018 and the General Purposes Committee has agreed recruitment and retention allowances for some social work staff. Individual service areas do not have discretion to apply market supplements or other recruitment and retention payments and there is a governance structure in place to agree any new supplements based on a sound business case.

Fees for Election Duties

Election fees paid to employees (including chief officers) who assist in elections are in line with the rates agreed by the Government whenever general, regional or European elections occur. Where local elections occur fees will be determined using the cross- London agreed rates.

Pensions

All non-teaching employees are able to join the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS). Teachers are able to join the Teachers' Pension Scheme. Benefits for both schemes are paid in accordance with government regulations. National Health Service employees who transferred to the council under TUPE have access to the NHS Pension Scheme under special provisions agreed as part of the transfer into local

government. Employees joining Public Health after the transfer are employed on Council terms and conditions and do have access to the LGPS.

Payments on Termination of Employment

In the event that the council terminates the employment of an employee on the grounds of redundancy the terms of the council's redundancy and early retirement arrangements will apply. Termination payments are also subject to any caps or repayment requirements introduced by government legislation. Where practicable, and unless the Chief Executive agrees otherwise, termination payments which exceed £100k will normally be agreed by full council or a committee of the council. Where a termination payment includes a special severance payment, due regard will be given to Statutory Guidance on the Making and Disclosure of Special Severance Payments By Local Authorities in England.

Re-employment of Employees

Section 7 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 requires that every appointment to paid office or employment in a local authority shall be made on merit.

The re-engagement of employees including chief officers who are made redundant is subject to the council's re-engagement arrangements (contained within the council's Managing Change Policy). The policy sets out the minimum period a former employee must wait before being eligible to work for the council again, as well as outlining other restrictions.

Employees who are made redundant may not be re-engaged within twelve months of their termination of employment for reasons of redundancy. After twelve months the employee may be re-engaged via the normal recruitment procedures either to carry out similar work or a different job. Re-engagement is subject to the approval of the relevant Director and the Corporate Director, Governance.

Tax avoidance

All permanent Brent staff including senior managers are paid through payroll which means that all taxes are deducted at source. A review of temporary staff is regularly conducted and it is Brent's policy to cover vacancies through the use of approved agency workers or by appointing staff on fixed term contracts. Temporary workers providing services through their own companies will be carrying out projects and generally not covering permanent roles other than in exceptional circumstances e.g. where interim cover is essential whilst a permanent appointment is recruited. Where these situations do occur they will be limited in duration, usually to less than 6 months.

The council's approach to dealing with Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs' (HMRC) changes to regulations for provision of personal services from April 2017 and further changes to off-payroll working introduced in April 2021, is to use the HMRC online assessment tool to determine the employment status of individuals for income tax

purposes. Most agency workers, consultants and interims are required to pay tax on a PAYE basis, like council employees.

Publication and access to information

Brent's annual Pay Policy Statement will be published on the website where it can be easily accessed. Information about chief officers' remuneration is published on the council's website www.brent.gov.uk in the section Senior Managers' pay.

Appendix Q: Summary of the HRA Business Plan

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report includes a proposal for HRA rent setting for 2023/24 and provides an update to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan, along with highlighting the key assumptions required to reflect national policies and financial impacts to the HRA. The business plan projections reflect the income and expenditure required to manage the landlord function and, at the same time, work towards the Council's objectives to increase Council housing supply in Brent.
- 1.2 This report does not attempt to summarise all aspects of the HRA business plan but aims to highlight areas where particular issues should be noted and consider options for future budget strategy.

2. National and local policies that can impact the HRA Business Plan

- 2.1 The HRA self-financing system for Council Housing was implemented in April 2012. Under HRA self-financing, the Council's HRA continues to be a ring-fenced account (income and expenditure) for Council dwellings. HRA self-financing is intended to allow local authority landlords to manage and maintain their own stock from the rental income they generate.
- 2.2 In October 2018, the government announced that the HRA borrowing cap would be lifted, revoking the previous determinations that specified local authorities' limits on indebtedness. This has provided councils with new borrowing powers to increase their housing supply, with a focus on mixed-tenure development including homes for social rent, affordable rent and shared equity products.
- 2.3 The Welfare Reform Act 2012 introduced radical changes to the welfare system, which included a reduction of housing benefits for social tenants if their accommodation is considered larger than required. It also introduced a new universal credit system to be implemented over time, where benefit payments would be made directly to the tenant, rather than the landlord. This change increases the risk of non-collection, which could lead to a rise in rent arrears.
- 2.4 The Welfare Reform Act 2016 imposed a 1% rent reduction a year for 4 years from April 2016 to March 2020. The final financial year of reductions being 2019/20. The resulting loss of rental income for Brent over this period was £23 million when compared to the income that would have been due to the Council if this was not imposed.
- 2.5 It was therefore necessary to make revenue savings within the HRA to compensate for the loss of rental income. A combination of these savings and the use of HRA reserves has helped to achieve a balanced budget during the period of rent reduction, as required by legislation.

- 2.6 In October 2017, the government announced a return to the option of increasing rent by CPI plus 1% for 5 years for all local authorities, starting in April 2020. A return to the CPI plus 1% model had helped to provide some stability and certainty over planned investment in the current stock, service improvements and new developments, at least in the short to medium-term.
- 2.7 Due to exceptional inflation levels and cost of living crisis experienced during 2022/23 financial year, Government published a consultation paper that proposed a cap on social housing rent increases for 2023/24 and identified other options for the level of cap, period of cap and its application. The consultation closed on 12 October 2022. On 14 December 2022 the Government issued its response to the Consultation and set a ceiling of 7% for 2023/24, compared to 11.1% if CPI plus 1% was applied. There will be a reversion to the previous rent setting arrangements from 2024/25.
- 2.8 The approach to be taken by the government beyond 2025 remains uncertain for all local authorities. In the absence of this information, it is assumed in the business plan that rent will remain as CPI plus 1% after 2025.
- 2.9 In the context of the 30-year business plan, whilst a CPI plus 1% model helps to provide some stability and certainty, it does not entirely mitigate other risks which are present in the current economic climate. Factors such as the unprecedented increases in energy and material costs, repair and maintenance contracts and anticipated wage increases, mean that any decision to set rents at less than the maximum permitted, provides a significant risk to the sustainability of the HRA. Local authorities still need to cover the inflationary pressures within the HRA whilst delivering on their operational requirements and strategic priorities, some of which are additional legislative requirements, from repairs and maintenance, to building safety, fire safety and decarbonisation. A rent cap or lower than a CPI plus 1% increase combined with increasing costs results in even greater pressure on the HRA and a likely situation of spend exceeding income generated through rent and service charge collection.
- 2.10 The independent review of building regulations and fire safety, also known as the Hackitt Report, was published in 2018. The report set out over 50 recommendations for the delivery of a robust regulatory system. As a result, in June 2019, the government published the 'Building a Safer Future' consultation detailing proposals to achieve long-term reform of the building safety system. This document sets out the government's proposals for a reformed building safety system covering the performance of all buildings, as well as the management of fire and structural safety risks in new and existing buildings in scope.
- 2.11 A low-rise fire safety programme was developed by Brent Housing Management to address risks in 1,208 converted and purpose built blocks. With regard to high-rise blocks, it was decided to go over and above regulatory standards by carrying out Type 4 Fire Risk Assessments across all tower blocks over 12 storeys, the outcome of which found no fundamental issues or safety concerns.

- 2.12 The Council Housing Asset Management Strategy (AMS) 2022-2026 sets out a vision for responsive repairs, investment, reform and improvement of the stock and its performance. The AMS consists of a 5 year budget requirement totalling £80.8m and spend profiling for this has been incorporated into the business plan.
- 2.13 As part of the South Kilburn regeneration programme, the Gloucester House & Durham Court site has been redeveloped to provide 235 new affordable homes to assured social tenants. These have been occupied by Brent's residents in 2021/22. Brent Council owns the freehold and the Council's housing team, together with the Council's energy team, provide the billing for heat to the residents. The associated costs are funded by service charges and through the HRA asset management strategy, in line with other communal heating networks.
- 2.14 In May 2019, the UK government declared a climate change emergency, committing to target net zero carbon emissions by 2050. In July 2019, Brent declared a local climate and ecological emergency, and has committed to working towards carbon neutrality by the year 2030.
- 2.15 London Councils have included a target of an average EPC Band B rating for London's housing stock by 2030 as part of its joint statement with the London Environment Directors' Network on climate change. Currently, 35% of Brent's Council housing stock is performing better than the national average of Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) band D. However, 100% of housing stock falls short of EPC band B. A key feature of the borough-wide climate strategy will be to achieve an average level of EPC band B by retrofitting all housing properties by 2030.
- 2.16 Decarbonisation works to Council homes, including energy efficiency works that reduce demand for heat, is an important part of the AMS. The AMS plays an important role in the delivery of the Brent Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy. Homes account for 42% of direct carbon emissions in the Borough. The target is to achieve an average EPC band B rating by 2030 for Brent council stock, as it is important that the Council leads by example. Energy efficiency works will be important in helping tenants and leaseholders with the cost of living crisis by helping to reduce fuel costs. Supporting households with the cost of living crisis is a key priority in the Council's Draft Climate Strategy Delivery Plan for 2022-2024.
- 2.17 Whilst major refurbishment work on tower blocks are undertaken, there are opportunities to decarbonise properties to as high a standard as is practicable and achievable targeting at least an EPC B. The five-year Asset Management Plan therefore includes climate emergency works within the tower block programme now rather than having to return in later years with associated disruption and increased costs. The Council is submitting a bid for the Social Housing Decarbonisation Funding grant. If successful, this will provide grant funding for key energy efficiency measures such as external wall insulation, high

performance windows, and renewable energy equipment. If the grant is not obtained, this will create further pressures on the HRA capital budget of circa £1.4m.

- 2.18 The Council has piloted retrofit works on three properties. The retrofit works included external wall insulation, internal wall insulation, installation of PV panels, upgraded the ventilation and replaced the kitchen and bathroom. Whilst the costs of the pilots were significant, this has included non-energy efficiency measures also. The results of the pilots will be considered in conjunction with the housing energy modelling exercise to identify the optimum cost-benefit level, and the various specification options available.
- 2.19 Brent has committed to an ambitious strategic housing target to deliver 5,000 new affordable homes over the five year period between 2019 - 2024. The 5,000 new affordable homes includes the provision of 1,000 to be delivered directly by the Council by the 31st March 2024 and a further 700 by 31st March 2028. As of November 2022, 684 homes have already been delivered, with more in the pipeline. The current baseline business plan has incorporated the expected delivery of an additional 354 new homes, along with the associated income and expenditure.
- 2.20 Following the identification of urgent remedial works required to Granville New Homes, Cabinet reviewed the proposed options presented in October 2021. It was agreed to dispose of the blocks at Granville New Homes owned by First Wave Housing (FWH) to the Council's HRA, subject to a consultation with residents. The transfer was finalised on 1 April 2022, which involved the transfer of 84 social housing and 1 leasehold property, along with associated income and expenditures to maintain the stock. Remediation works estimated at £15.4m has been incorporated into the business plan.

3. Rent setting proposal for 2023/24

- 3.1 The table below shows a snapshot of current average rent levels containing Social and Affordable Rent from occupied properties and the proposed increase of 7% for 2023/24. All re-lets are charged at Formula rent and new builds are charged at Formula or London Affordable rent. Updated rent levels are reflected in the current average rent in 2022/23 and can change depending on time of reporting. The average proposed rent rate for 2023/24 is £8.72 per week (7%) higher than the current financial year.

Proposed Tenant Rents for 2023/24

Bed Size	Current average rent 2022/23	Proposed average rent 2023/24 (7%)	Rent uplift
	£	£	£

Bedsits	92.05	98.49	6.44
1	109.43	117.09	7.66
2	126.85	135.72	8.87
3	138.38	148.06	9.68
4	149.83	160.31	10.48
5	161.90	173.23	11.33
6+	170.08	181.98	11.90
Average rent	124.70	133.42	8.72

- 3.2 A rent increase of 7% is estimated to result in additional £3.5m of income when compared to 2022/23. This is estimated to be £2m less in income when compared to the previous policy of CPI plus 1 (11.1%). In real terms, this will be the third biggest annual reduction in social housing rents since the introduction of rent restructuring two decades ago. Like most other housing providers, difficult decisions will need to be made to reduce costs in order to close the gap between rental income and increasing cost of service delivery. Brent Housing Management services have identified a target of £3m cost reductions that are incorporated into the budget set for 2023/24 and the business plan.
- 3.3 For tenants that are in receipt of housing support to help pay their rent, the cost of a rent increase will be met by their housing benefit or the housing element of universal credit, unless the level of support is reduced by factors that may apply to individual circumstances, such as a benefit cap. Brent Housing Management provide support to tenants who are struggling to pay their rent. The primary objective is to ensure that tenants have all the support that they can get, rather than pursuing an eviction. Support options include assessing whether the tenant is claiming all the welfare benefits that they are entitled to, assisting them to claim from the Council's Resident Support Fund and arranging a suitable payment plan. After the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, Brent Housing Management endeavoured to identify vulnerable tenants and have since kept in contact with tenants in order to ensure that they continue to get the required support to sustain their tenancy.
- 3.4 The net rent amounts exclude service charges. Service charges are a recharge to tenants and leaseholders based on actual costs incurred in providing specific services, such as estate cleaning.
- 3.5 It is recognised that cost of living crisis and increased rental charges can have an adverse impact on the level of rent collections. Approximately 40% of rent charges are covered through housing benefit payments, which is estimated at £20m. The remaining 60% of income estimated at £30m are paid directly by tenants who are in employment or in receipt of universal credit and would be at risk of non-collection.
- 3.6 Collection rates 2022/23 on average, stood between 95% - 96%. If this level of rent collection remained consistent for the year, this would result in an additional

budget requirement of £2.4m in order to allow for potential non-payments. The Council's Resident Support Fund helps to alleviate some of financial hardship being faced by tenants. However, collection rates are still expected to continue to be impacted. For every 1% drop in collection, the loss of income is estimated at £0.5m. Bad debts have been assumed at 2% of rental income per annum over 30 years, this equates to an average £1.8m rent loss per annum over the course of the business plan.

- 3.7 Supervision and management costs include allowances for pay inflation uplifts in the business plan. An assumed 6% inflation, similar to current year, is estimated to amount to an additional £0.7m budget requirement in 2023/24 compared to previous year. Future pay inflations have been assumed at 4% in year 2 and 3% per annum after that in the business plan.
- 3.8 Repairs, maintenance and general costs include annual inflationary uplifts. The general cost inflations in the business plan are assumed at 2% in year 2, followed by a reduction to 1% in year 3, during possible negative inflationary period forecasted by Office of Budget Responsibility (OBR). The following years are assumed to increase gradually to 3.5% from year 7 onwards.
- 3.9 From financial year 2023/24, there is an increased focus on energy efficiency works and major works to tower blocks. The business plan has incorporated £40m over the next three years on tower block refurbishment programme. The blocks are Kilburn Square, Lodge Court, Manor Court and Windmill Court. These blocks were built in the late 1960's and whilst they have had repairs and refurbishment undertaken over the last 60 years, there are further investment required in order to increase the estimated life of the blocks by more than 40 years.
- 3.10 Efficiency savings targets are incorporated into the budget setting process and business plan, in line with the Council's overall budget setting process. A 0.5% efficiency target across management and repairs is assumed in the business plan in the first 5 years, followed by 1% over the course of the remaining 25 years, equating to an average saving of £0.3m per annum over 30 years. This saving target is following significant cost reduction of £3m incorporated into budget setting for 2023/24 and is equivalent to 10 years worth of efficiency saving projections in the business plan.
- 3.11 The HRA business plain aims to set aside appropriate funds and incorporate a voluntary debt repayment policy that mirrors the General Fund approach. The calculations involve profiling debt repayments for new builds over 60 years, and debt repayment for major works over 25 years, based on the rate of borrowing for the debt. The repayment modelling commences from debt incurred in 2019/20 onwards, reflecting the period when HRA borrowing exceeded a previously set debt cap of £199.3m. In practice, repayments will be possible in years where there is capacity within accumulated operating reserve.

3.12 HRA operating reserve as at 31st March 2022 was £0.4m, and it is not anticipated to be used while rent increases are set at CPI plus 1%. The opening reserve balance has reduced by £0.9m compared to last year, due to partially funding a provision in 2021/22 for identified capital works to the Granville New Homes blocks that have transferred to the HRA from First Wave Housing on 1st April 2022. HRA reserves were used to cover the timing difference and the provision will be released when works commence, returning the HRA reserve to the previous value of £1.3m.

3.13 Currently, the business plan model aims to achieve a minimum operating reserve balance that represents an estimated 3% of rental income, which is approximately £1.6m in 2023/24. The operating reserve balance of £1.3m is not projected to reduce, however due to increased cost pressures in the current economic climate, a rent cap of 7%, along with increased investment to improve high rise blocks in line with the AMS, target reserve levels are projected to be achieved from year 6 onwards, at an estimated balance of £1.9m. The operating reserve is necessary to manage unexpected deficits, or for smoothing in-year budget pressures due to timing differences between the cost of building new homes and receiving rental income, so that it can offset the increased borrowing costs. In addition to the need for the HRA to balance competing demands, such as investing in supply of new homes, the Covid-19 pandemic and inflation has further stressed the importance of maintaining adequate level of reserves.

4. Summary of key assumptions in the HRA Business Plan

4.1 The HRA business plan provides long-term financial forecasts resulting from the implications of the Council’s spending, investment and rent-setting decisions, based on the authority’s current income, expenditure and investment expectations. The data is combined with key assumptions on how costs and income might change in the future to illustrate what the authority can reasonably expect to happen, using the best available information.

4.2 Regular review of assumptions is important in order to help the Council to make early decisions that help keep the HRA in balance, whilst also delivering substantial levels of investment in Council housing.

4.3 A summary of the key assumptions that underpin the 30 Year Business Plan are presented below:

Description	How it impacts the Business Plan	Assumptions used in the Business Plan
HRA stock movements	Projected rental income is based on stock numbers	Baseline stock numbers in the current year are adjusted for projected RTB sales and new affordable housing supply

Description	How it impacts the Business Plan	Assumptions used in the Business Plan
Inflation on supplies and services	All income and expenditure is adjusted for inflation to reflect general cost increases. CPI forecast is based on rate in September of previous year.	Rental income uses CPI, all other expenditure is assumed at RPI. CPI 6% in year 2, reducing to 2% from year 7 onwards. RPI 2% in yr 2, reducing to 1% in yr 3, then gradually increasing to 3.5% from year 7 onwards.
Minimum Working Balance	Target level of minimum reserve for any overspends	Working balance requirements assumed at 3% of income giving circa £1.6m
Rental Income	Tenant rent projections are driven by stock numbers and average rent. Tenant rent is the largest source of income for the HRA	Average rent is currently set at £133 per week. Rent is adjusted as per government policy. Assumed CPI+1% for duration of business plan
Supervision and Management Costs	Rental income is allocated to management costs of providing a landlord service	Cost assumed to increase by RPI each year
Service Charges	Cost of specific services are charged back to tenants and leaseholders	Service charge uplift is in line with anticipated cost increases at RPI
Voids	Level of void properties have an impact on rental income that can be charged	Rent loss though voids is estimated at 1% of rent
Bad Debts	Rent arrears that are not collected results in loss of income	Assumed on average 2% of rent
Repairs and Maintenance Costs	Rental income is allocated to repairs budgets	Expenditure is adjusted in line with RPI and stock movements

Description	How it impacts the Business Plan	Assumptions used in the Business Plan
Right to Buy Sales	Stock reductions reduce rental income and set a target for the Council to achieve 1-4-1 replacements	Projected 15 sales per annum
Interest rate on borrowing	Rental income is allocated to financing debt	New debt is assumed at interest rates of 5.2% in year 1, gradually reducing to 3.5% from year 4 onwards
Capital Programme - Major Works	Investment to maintain housing stock	Profiling over first 4 years based on Asset Management Strategy. Assumed £15m per annum from year 5 onwards.
HRA Debt Balance	The HRA debt balance as at 31st of March 2022 was £268m.	Accumulated reserve balances will determine capacity for debt repayments
RTB Receipts	Rolling five year spend targets are set by MHCLG based on RTB sales	It is currently assumed in the business plan that spend targets will be met to achieve 1-4-1 replacement of homes.
Affordable Housing Supply	The Council has committed to providing 1,700 affordable homes by 31 March 2028	The current baseline business plan assumes 354 new affordable homes with an estimated cost remaining in the business plan of £51m over 6 years.
Efficiency Savings	Savings contribute towards offsetting budget pressures	0.5% first 5 years then 1% efficiency savings target across revenue costs for management and repairs

5. Sensitivity Analysis

5.1 Alongside the baseline assumptions, sensitivity analysis have been undertaken to explore the impact on reserve balances from a range of assumptions. Considering each of these in turn enables to read the baseline financial projections in the context of potential changes, and so gives an indication of key risks. The key sensitivities analysed are:

A) Baseline assumptions

- B) RPI cost inflation 0.5% higher in years 2 to 4
- C) Repairs and major works 1.5% higher than inflation in years 2 to 4
- D) Rent freeze imposed from 2025/26 for 4 years
- E) Voids and bad debts 0.5% higher from year 2 onwards
- F) CPI reduction by 0.5% from year 7 onwards

5.2 The sensitivity analysis demonstrates that:

- A) Baseline assumptions avoid deficits over 30 years with a projected reserve balance of £134.4m in year 30.
- B) Cost inflations to RPI for all expenditure items, between years 2 to 4 from current economic uncertainties absorb inflations in the short-term at 0.5% higher than baseline; this is projected to result in a reduced reserve balance in year 30 at £115.2m (£19.2m less than baseline).
- C) Repair cost inflations of 1.5% above baseline from year 2 to 4, are projected to be absorbed within the business plan model, if all other baseline assumptions remain consistent. The reserve balance in year 30 is projected to be £79.1m (£55.3m less than baseline).
- D) A 4 years rent freeze from 2025/26 can have a significant impact on the health of the business plan, particularly in the immediate short-term, resulting in projected budget deficit totalling £28m, making it unviable over 30 years without mitigating cost reduction being identified.
- E) Rental income inflations assumed in the baseline are projected to absorb 0.5% increases to voids (1% baseline) and bad debts (2% baseline) over the life of the business plan. The projected 30-year reserve balance is £109.1m (£25m less than baseline).
- F) If average annual CPI was to reduce by 0.5% to 1.5% from year 7 onwards, average rental income inflation per annum will be 2.5% per annum. The impact of this will lead to a budget deficit of £7m in the business plan, making it unviable over 30 years without mitigating cost reductions being identified.

6. Risks

- 6.1 The business plan is based on a set of assumptions, and there will always be an element of risk of significant changes in cashflow projections in the revenue and capital accounts, if any of the assumptions fail to materialise.
- 6.2 The main variables that could affect the long-term viability of the Business Plan are rent levels and long-term major works and repairs. There has already been a change to the Council's power to increase rents annually up to a maximum of CPI plus 1%, with an introduced rent rise limitation of 7%, and after April 2025, the implications of future Government regulated rent policy remain uncertain.

- 6.3 War in Ukraine, the long-term impact of COVID-19, Brexit, high levels of inflation, labour shortages and rising interest rates present the Council with a volatile and uncertain economic environment. The cost of living crisis will impact residents of Brent and the Council is committed to doing what it can to support those in greatest need. Cost pressures and risk of income collection losses are continuously monitored.
- 6.4 Inflation is running at such high levels that have not been seen since the 1980's. Besides rising energy costs, other goods are also experiencing increases in prices, due to factors such as labour shortages, pay rises, logistics issues and a general trend to increase prices and restore profit margins where previously slumps in demand had suppressed price levels.
- 6.5 In September 2022 CPI stood at 10.1% against a Bank of England target of 2%. The September inflation figures are important as they are used for the following years uplift on formula rent levels, 2023/24 being an exception with a 7% ceiling. The gap between inflation on rent levels and inflation on costs is a significant risk to the long-term business plan. Inflation rates assumed in the current business plan is informed by projections from the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR), which is forecasting a likely period of negative inflation in the short-term. For business planning purposes, negative inflation has not been modelled for expenditures in order to allow some room for uncertainty, while at the same time inflation on rent has been modelled in line with OBR projections.
- 6.6 The impacts of Universal Credit and cost of living crisis can affect the HRA Business Plan, as the number of rent arrears may increase considerably. A number of mitigations are in place to help support tenants with universal credit such as:
- Continuing raising awareness with residents about Universal Credit, including what it means for them
 - Developing future delivery partnership with DWP
 - Establishing delivery partnership agreement that supports the most vulnerable
 - Increasing provision for digital inclusion and improve capacity for residents to manage accounts independently
 - Continuing to review strategy for maximising rent collection that reflects Universal Credit implications for transition and full service
 - Investing in technology to optimise operating process and generate efficiencies
- 6.7 As the Council adds more stock to its portfolio and complexities of new additional requirements to building standards are increasing, such as fire safety works and climate change, the cost of major works is rising. At the moment, there is insufficient government subsidy available to address these changes. The Asset

Management Strategy and investment plans must be approached cautiously and allow for flexibility to scale back on schemes where required.

- 6.8 Impacts of national housing policies and any changes proposed in future Government papers can have an adverse impact on the HRA and could require additional resources to address any unexpected changes.
- 6.9 Whilst the Council is confident in its ability to continue delivering affordable homes for Brent residents, there are social and economic factors, which are increasingly placing pressure on both current schemes that are on site and those in the Council's pipeline. Brexit, rising inflation, a continued shortage of labour, materials and events such as the Covid-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine have had an adverse effect on costs and therefore the financial viability of each capital scheme. The Government reported an increase of 23% on materials such as steel, timber and concrete last year alone. The Council was previously using a build cost of circa £2,000 - £2,500 per sqm to test financial viability. From 2022/23, the Council is using a build cost of £3,000 - £3,500 per sqm to test viability of schemes in the New Council Homes Programme. The Council also applies a 10% contingency to each schemes estimated build costs in order to mitigate against inflationary rises when assessing viability.
- 6.10 The HRA debt cap has been removed and significant borrowing is required to invest in stock in order to increase housing supply in Brent. The HRA is exposed to interest rate fluctuations, which can have a significant impact on revenue budgets and the overall business plan. Brent Council operates a one-pool approach to its borrowing, where the HRA receives a proportion of the Council's overall borrowing but with a reduced rate. Having remained at 1% or less since February 2009, base rates began rising in June 2022. The forecast borrowing rate for the HRA is informed by the Bank of England Monetary Policy, with projections for base rates to peak in 2023/24. Interest rates for new borrowing in the HRA are currently assumed at 5.2% in 2023/24, with a gradual reduction annually to 3.5% from 2026/27 onwards.
- 6.11 Spend targets for 1-4-1 receipts set by Government mean that the Council may need to transfer receipts with compounded interest, if spend targets are not met within 5 years of receiving the receipt. There is currently sufficient schemes in pipeline to be able to utilise receipts towards adding affordable housing in Brent.
- 6.12 There are also demographic changes and a general recognition that there should be better integration of housing, social care and health services. As time goes on, a proportion of the population who are elderly or vulnerable increases and there is an increased need for appropriate housing. However, with limited clarity on the government's funding of supported housing, it is likely that the problem of how to house vulnerable elderly people will intensify.

Council Meeting 23 February 2023

Conservative Group Amendment to the Council's Budget Proposals 2023/24

The Council is asked to consider the following alternative budget for 2023/24:

Propose to increase Council tax by 2% only, with the full amount ring fenced for Adult Social Care.

This proposal will generate income of £146.6m, compared to £150.8m generated with the planned increase of 4.99%, leaving a shortfall of £4.2m

The proposal means a Brent Council Tax of £1,447.83 at Band D for 2023/24 compared to the Labour proposal for £1,490.31.

The Council notes the following:

- The Conservatives have always been and still are the party of lower rates of taxation through responsible policies and budgeting, meaning that people will have more money in their pockets to spend and save as they wish.
- The Conservative have always proposed to tax the residents less leaving more money in their pockets to spend and save as they wish.
- Council tax increased by 3.99% in 2016/17, 3.99% in 2017/18, 4.99% in 2018/19, 4.99% in 2019/20, 3.99% in 2020/21, 3.99% in 2021/22 and 2.99% in 2022/23. Prior to this council tax was frozen. Therefore, since 2016, council tax has increased by over 40% (£431.37) overall.

Propose to remove the landlord incentive and save £1.1m.

The Council's Landlords Incentive Scheme is designed to give money to Landlords as an incentive to rent their properties to people who have been evicted from their homes and who cannot ordinarily afford to live in the borough. There are many people who work hard, pay their bills and taxes but have to live outside Brent because they cannot afford to live in the borough. We feel that it is wrong to subsidise private landlords in this way. It also acts as an incentive to keep rents artificially high. It is therefore our proposal to scrap this scheme.

Propose to delete two Cabinet members, forego an annual increase in allowance of 4.04% and save £0.08m.

It is proposed to delete two Cabinet members and re-distribute portfolios to existing Cabinet members. In addition it is proposed to not take forward a planned increase in members allowance of 4.04%. This would save approximately £0.08m.

Propose to discontinue the Resident Support Fund and save £3m.

Councillor Suresh Kansagra
Leader of the Conservative Group

Advice from the Director of Finance

Senior finance support has been provided to assist the Conservative Group to formulate an alternative budget that reflects their policy priorities.

The Alternative Budget proposed by the Conservative Group would be a legal, balanced budget for 2023/24, although it is recognised that this carries financial risk. The potential implications for 2024/25 and beyond have not been considered as part of these proposals.

The table below sets out the proposed changes to the 2023/24 budget.

Conservative Group - Alternative budget proposals	Impact on 2023/24 budget
Propose to increase Council tax by 2%, ring fenced for Adult Social Care	4.2
Propose to remove landlord incentives	(1.1)
Reduce two Cabinet members	(0.08)
Discontinue the Resident Support Fund	(3.0)
Total	0.0

The proposals that are considered material relate to Council Tax, landlord incentives and the Resident Support Fund.

It is proposed to increase Council Tax by 2% only in 2023/24, reflecting the Adult Social Care precept where the funding would be ring fenced for Adult Social Care. Given the current Administration is proposing to increase Council Tax by the maximum amount allowed by the Government of 4.99%, this proposal would create a budget gap of £4.2m.

In order to close this gap, it is proposed to reduce expenditure planned in 2023/24 by removing the landlord incentives budget and discontinuing the Resident Support Fund.

The council currently spends approximately £1.1m per annum on landlord incentives. The budget is used to procure properties to end the homeless duty, and so move people out of temporary accommodation which is typically more expensive. It is also used to procure properties to prevent homelessness and therefore stop people going into temporary accommodation in the first instance. Consequently, reducing this budget may result in higher temporary accommodation costs if alternative housing cannot be secured outside of the borough. Therefore, this proposal carries some risk with regards to additional spend elsewhere in the Council's budget and may require a short term use of reserves to contain additional spend on temporary accommodation.

The draft 2023/24 budget allocated a further £3m to continue the current Resident Support Fund. It is proposed to remove this budget and discontinue the scheme to save £3m. While this scheme is discretionary, it may have unintended consequences for residents who experience financial hardship under the current economic environment and cost of living crisis.

Minesh Patel

Director of Finance

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Council Meeting 23 February 2023

Liberal Democrat Group Amendment to the Council's Budget Proposals 2023/24

INTRODUCTION

As a service-based organisation Brent Council should be putting residents' needs and concerns at the forefront of all that we do.

The Council's finances are volatile and impacted by events outside of its direct control. Local Government is frequently impacted by the actions of others – including Central Government and the Mayor of London – who have readily placed additional burdens on Brent without providing the necessary resources.

A brief history:

- Devaluation of the sterling during the Wilson Labour Government in the 1960s.
- The 'Winter of Discontent' during the Callaghan Labour Government in late 1970s.
- The Thatcher Government's policy to sell Council Housing in the 1980s.
- Collapse of sterling during the ERM crash under John Major's Conservative Government in 1992.
- Tony Blair's Labour Government health reforms which shifted the cost of Adult Social Care onto local authorities.
- Gordon Brown's Labour Government £850 billion bailout of the banking sector in 2008 and Alistair Darling's promise of "*cuts worse than Thatcher*".
- The current Conservative Government's Brexit fiasco and continuing to make Council taxpayers pay for Adult Social Care through enforced Council Tax hikes.
- The policy of successive Governments to shift resources away from London.
- The Financial Crisis at the GLA forcing the Labour Mayor of London to raise his share of the Council Tax by a cumulative 30% in just 3 years and to cut his contribution towards road and pavement repairs.

These events have all over the years created greater burdens and passed on additional cost pressures to Brent Council.

Despite all of this, successive Brent Council Administrations, of different political persuasions, have tried to manage the situation as best as they could.

It is the responsibility of the current Labour Administration to present a Budget and for the Full Council and Councillors of all political parties in this place to scrutinise their proposals and to provide amendments and suggestions for improvement.

Brent Council provides many statutory services but also has discretion on some services it provides and the level of funding.

Council finance is complex and neither well explained to the general public.

Brent residents do have justified concerns on many issues and would like to see improvements especially as their Council Tax is going up by 6% this year (*the highest amount for some years*).

As we know 95% of the Budget is unchanged from the previous financial year and any changes proposed by the Administration make marginal adjustments. The reasons for this – inflation, change in Government funding, additional burdens – are all set out in the Administration proposals.

The best approach in putting forward additional ideas for consideration by all Councillors, not just the Cabinet, is therefore through considered amendments.

The Liberal Democrat Group have discussed the financial situation with senior officers of the Council and reviewed the existing Budget as a whole. This is a complex process as most Council Reports only provide top level information. In our view the Budget Scrutiny Process should start much earlier than it does and concentrate next year on reviewing all areas of expenditure and income in much greater detail.

One area worth exploring for example is whether it is still appropriate for the Council to occupy the Civic Centre. While the Civic Centre approach may have been appropriate 15 years ago when the Council occupied a number of scattered and old buildings – many of them on short life leases – and where consolidation brought about both costs savings and greater efficiency, subsequent events, including the pandemic, has changed the situation and possibly the need for the Council to continue to occupy such a large building, large parts of which are currently empty and underused.

Expansion of home working and loss of some sitting tenants confirm that change may be needed.

The Council should therefore review its future accommodation needs and consider whether the Civic Centre site could be better used for a mixed development including additional housing. The need for such a review is clearly needed as the Cabinet have just decided to spend a staggering **£1.96 million** to reconfigure part of the Civic Centre. Compared to other pressing needs for Council funding this cannot possibly be a top priority.

In view of this, the recent decision by the Cabinet to spend the £1.96 million should be out on hold.

In relation to other proposals the Liberal Democrat group have listened to local residents and groups active across Brent. Our amendments to the Administration's Budget aim to enhance the offer and respond to local needs.

1. THE STATE OF ROADS AND PAVEMENTS

Prior to the 2022 local elections the Administration allocated £20 million for pavement works in one year. Much of the work was not well planned and many pavements were ripped up which were in perfect condition and when much cheaper remedial work would have been sufficient.

For example, the pavement work in Wembley High Road is not complete while the road surface itself is in an appalling state.

Due to financial problems at City Hall the Mayor of London has **CUT** his contribution to Brent for capital works.

The current 'Capital Budget' includes £13 million spread over 3 years.

This is clearly inadequate in dealing with the backlog of works and will disappoint residents across all wards in Brent.

Part of the problem with our roads is lack of effective preventative maintenance. A simple look will confirm that many potholes appear in the middle of the road where two halves (*most resurfacing is done on basis of half in one direction first and then then the 2nd half*) are joined. After a while the seal between the two halves wears off and a split appears through which water seeps through. In many cases regular maintenance to reseal the joints will prevent large scale potholes arising and prevent more extensive and costly works being necessary.

Many of our main roads (and pavements) are damaged by the ever-increasing construction traffic using Brent roads – these are usually the main 'A roads' but often residential roads are also used as short cuts from the North Circular – Beresford Avenue, Mount Pleasant, Stanley Avenue and Ealing Road in Alperton, for example.

PROPOSAL

We propose:

1. To increase the Capital Budget for road and pavement upgrading to £20 million and instruct officers to prepare a 3-year program of works, recommending as high spend in the 1st year as the construction industry can cope with. There are many roads and pavements in Brent that cannot wait another 3 years for the essential work to be carried out. £2 million of the £20 million Budget to be allocated to regular preventative maintenance works over the 3 years to extend the life of existing road surfaces.
2. To allocate £10 million of the £20m to be spent on repairing or resurfacing major roads in Brent damaged by construction traffic. Part of this is to be specifically used to repair crumbling and cratered bus lanes and bus stops across Brent,

this is essential as we need to have efficient and unobstructed public transport to meet the Council's challenge to persuade new residents moving into new development to abandon cars and use public transport instead. This will also assist in persuading people to cycle as the poor condition of bus lanes and bus stops is currently extremely dangerous for cyclists.

3. To allocate an additional £2 million to develop further safe cycle routes across Brent.

FUNDING

Cabinet approved an additional £15m investment in principal roads and footways from 2022/23-2025/26 of which £2m has been utilised in 2022/23. Therefore, there is £13m remaining. A further £7m will be required to reach the £20m target. Assuming a contribution of £2m can be justified from CIL, the total capital budget will be £22m. Overall, £7m of new borrowing will be required to fund these proposals. Total borrowing of £7m will incur an ongoing revenue cost of £0.7m. It is proposed to fund this revenue cost by reducing the growth that has been added to the budget since the draft budget was agreed by Cabinet. Growth has been added to the 2023/24 budget, mainly to cover the inflationary pressures expected in that year. However, given the Council is setting up an inflation risk reserve to manage additional one-off pressures, we feel that reducing growth for inflation by just £0.7m carries the least amount of risk, as the base budget already includes a reasonable level of allowance for inflation. It is a risk, but one that could be mitigated if, for example, the Bank of England's rising interest rates have the effect of reducing inflationary pressures faster than currently assumed.

2. POST COVID RECOVERY

Our community continues to suffer the impact of the pandemic, which as we know was felt disproportionately in our borough. The health inequalities that have been exposed and highlighted by Covid-19 will take many years to address.

One group of vulnerable people, for whom Covid infection was more dangerous were regular smokers and those regarded as clinically overweight.

As part of post Covid recovery the Council should provide a 3-year programme of support, advice and direct activities to assist people to follow healthier lifestyles through giving up smoking and taking part in healthy activities.

The Council Reserves include £8m from the Public Health grant, which is currently not committed and is intended to fund various Public Health initiatives, such as tackling health inequalities. We propose that £1m of this reserve is utilised to fund our priorities.

PROPOSAL

We propose:

1. To develop programs for:

- a. Assisting smokers to give up smoking.
 - b. Providing additional sporting related activities for adults with weight or other health issues.
2. Create a **new Grant Fund** of £250,000 per year for 3 years to encourage local community organisations to bid for health/ sport related activities for children and young people together with advice about smoking prevention, healthy eating and healthy lifestyles.

All of the above being intended to make people of all ages more active and thus resilient to infections such as Covid

A campaign to persuade local people to give up smoking has financial benefits too, at a time of massive squeeze on family incomes. Smoking is an expensive habit and the people who benefit most from this are Tobacco Company executives. **The overall pay package for the BAT (British & American Tobacco) Chief Executive. is around £4 million a year – over 20 times the amount paid to the Prime Minister.**

Smokers need to be reminded that their unhealthy habit is making others very rich!

3. **A NEW YOUTH OFFER**

We know that in recent years young people have had it tough. Where previously the Council has been able to provide certain targeted services through the Children and Young People Service, at present this is limited, and often relies on community organisations to obtain grant funding, often through NCIL, where there is no guarantee of success.

We are principally concerned about young people in our community from economically deprived backgrounds who often need the most support early in their lives.

The isolation caused by the pandemic and other factors has made matters even more difficult for young people. Direct Council services providing support and activities for young people, as well as targeted support, needs to be enhanced to assist in their positive development.

PROPOSAL

We propose:

1. Allocate and transfer £1.5 million from the unspecified £10 million inflation provision to a new ring-fenced provision for a new '*Youth Offer*' provision of £1.5 million to be spent over the next 3 years.
2. The £1.5 million to be supplemented by the Brent Grant Unit applying (or assisting community groups to apply) for specific grants supporting young people activities with the aim of enhancing the fund beyond its initial 3 years.

FUNDING

As part of the 2023/24 budget the Council has set up a £10m inflation risk reserve *'to smooth out the effects of high and volatile inflation on the Council's budgets. The reserve will be used to offset additional pressures on service budgets which arise as a result of inflation exceeding what was forecast at budget setting, thereby reducing the requirement for savings in order to balance budgets in the short term.'*

We believe that this reserve is excessive and could be reduced by £3m to fund the initiatives suggested above. This commitment is one off and after three years the services are expected to be self-financing or otherwise discontinued.

4. MAKING BRENT GREENER

The Council does not currently have a specific main program budget for new trees relying on Section 106 agreements or one-off ad-hoc funds.

The pandemic highlighted the importance of our open green spaces, the value of trees and access to nature.

PROPOSAL

1. Allocate and transfer £500,000 from the unspecified £10 million inflation provision to a new ring-fenced Tree Fund which will be used to plant new or replacement trees and improve planting in our open spaces. The aim is to spend the £500,000 over the next 4 years at a rate of £125,000 pa.

The £500,000 to be supplemented by the Council Grants Unit applying (or assisting local community groups to apply) for specific grants for new trees or improvements to Parks and Open spaces with the aim of enhancing the fund beyond its initial 4 years.

FUNDING

As per the new youth offer, this expenditure is considered one-off and could be funded from reserves. It is proposed to further reduce the inflation risk reserve to fund this service.

5. STREET CLEANING AND BINS

The Cabinet recently approved the new *Contract for Street Cleansing, Waste Collections and Winter Maintenance Services*. The contract includes both changes and reduction in certain services.

Brent faces a serious problem with litter and rubbish dumping.

These new changes come on top of past changes, including a reduction in refuse collections to once a fortnight instead of weekly, reducing street cleaning from three times per week to just once, the removal of litter bins from residential streets and changes to the recycling service.

The so called '*intelligence led street cleaning*' approach places an additional burden on residents and Councillors to report problems before cleaning takes place creating both delays and additional bureaucracy. The reduction in cleaning side streets close to Town Centres and busy shopping areas will likely create dirtier streets in these locations and more complaints for the Council to deal with.

The few remaining dual rubbish and recycling bins in the borough are hardly ever cleaned and a health hazard.

PROPOSAL

The Council has received a substantial windfall from a **New Homes Bonus**. The ever-growing population adds extra pressures on already stretched services.

In response to the concerns raised by the Public Realm and Resources Scrutiny Committee on the issue of bins versus sacks for paper and cardboard, the Cabinet agreed to place around £1.5 million from the Capital budget for new wheelie bins.

We propose that as part of the revised service the Council confirms that residents will be given a clear choice of either an additional bin for paper and *cardboard (suitably colour coded with a different colour lid and clear instructions)* or sack(s) and the service will be configured in such a way that the contractor can collect the material either from the bins or sacks.

In addition, we propose taking £1.5 million from the New Homes Bonus and allocate it to a new 3-year fund:

1. To re-establish weekly cleaning to 50 metres from a junction with shopping areas
2. Provision of more dual litter/ recycling bins in areas requested by Councillors and residents
3. Establish a monthly cleaning service for all street bins (*existing and new*) in our streets and parks to ensure that they are safe to use.

FUNDING

The Council received £3.1m of NHB last year and due to receive £7.9m next year, an increase of £4.8m. This is a non-ring-fenced grant that is currently recorded as a reserve and used to finance the capital programme. We are not proposing a change to this approach, rather allocating a proportion of the additional amount to fund this proposal. This is considered a one-off investment in order to establish the additional services and after 3 years a review will be conducted on its effectiveness. If no new funding is available to continue these services, they will be scaled back accordingly.

6. COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

Major challenges remain in seeking to keep our local area clean and free of illegal dumping and littering.

The Council is struggling to keep on top of this issue, and often is left having to pay out significant sums in clearing up once dumping has taken place.

There needs to be greater preventative measures put in place and a focus on taking effective action to both educate residents and warn persistent offenders.

PROPOSAL

We propose:

1. The Council employ 12 apprentices, two assigned to each of the six Neighbourhood Managers, to assist with the required work in our communities, be proactive on local streets, support Neighbourhood Managers and engage with members of the community, businesses and other stakeholders. This would require a total of £480,000 pa, on the basis that each apprentice would cost the Council £30,000, salary including on costs.

FUNDING

It is understood that this would incur ongoing revenue funding of c£0.5m per annum. Similar to the roads and pavement proposal, we propose to further reduce the growth built into the budget for inflation. We understand that this adds risk to the budget, however there is still sufficient amounts left in the inflation risk reserve to manage in year pressures as they arise.

7. NEW ADAPTED HOMES

The Council has a significant backlog/ waiting list for accommodation suitable for disabled people – mostly in need of accommodation on the ground floor and built or adapted to a standard suitable for wheelchairs and disabled people.

The Council has already agreed to purchase a number of properties from various developers in Brent.

PROPOSAL

1. The Council will confirm the current need and waiting list for suitably accessible and adapted accommodation for people with mobility disabilities and identify suitable properties in the current and future build programme.
2. We will allocate £2 million from this year's **New Homes Bonus** to meet the required cost of specific adaptation of newly built or existing properties and/ or the acquisition of new ones with a view to eliminating or reducing the current waiting list.

FUNDING

As per the street cleaning proposal, NHB is a non-ring-fenced grant that could be used to fund this proposal. We are mindful of the impact on the financing of the capital

programme, however, the total overall cost (£2m and £1.5m, total £3.5m) is still more than the additional amount received compared to last year and therefore the impact is expected to be minimal.

8. SUPPORTING DIVERSITY

Brent is one of the most diverse parts of the UK. We believe our diversity is our greatest strength.

In recent times, it has been difficult for many community groups in our borough to get together, to celebrate cultural events. The pandemic had a huge impact, as has increasing costs associated with renting venues and space for events to take place.

PROPOSAL

We propose:

1. To support and assist Brent based groups in being able to hold and celebrate community events. We resolve to allocate £150,000 pa over 4 years to a special Grant Fund aimed at supporting local groups with the cost of hall, room hire and facilities.
2. The maximum grant in each financial year will be £5,000 per organisation. The organisations will be encouraged to raise match funding and the Grants Unit will provide advice on this. There will be one round of funding in each year and the Council will give 2 months' notice for applications.
3. Assessment of the applications will include consideration of the organisation's ability and willingness to raise additional funding and the effort they plan to put into involving people from other communities in their event/ celebration.

FUNDING

It is understood that these proposals can be by NCIL, provided they demonstrate a link to development in the local area of each project. Appropriate due diligence will need to be undertaken to ensure conditions of NCIL can be met.

CONCLUSION

Brent Council must offer hope and improvements in services to local people – especially when proposing another significant Council Tax rise.

Any new spend should provide something for as many local people across the whole of Brent as possible.

We believe that the Liberal Democrat Group's proposals achieve that objective. They address:

1. **The State of Roads and Pavements**

2. **Post Covid Recovery**
3. **A New Youth Offer**
4. **Making Brent Greener**
5. **More Street Cleaning and Bins**
6. **Environmental Outreach and Education**
7. **New Adapted Homes**
8. **Supporting Diversity**

Our reasonable and costed proposals represent a positive contribution to delivering a Council Budget, which by no means perfect, is vastly improved by showing that this Council is both prepared to listen to local people and to take positive action on the suggestions made.

Advice from the Director of Finance

Senior finance support has been provided to assist the Liberal Democrat Group to formulate an alternative budget that reflects their policy priorities.

The Alternative Budget proposed by the Liberal Democrat Group would be a legal, balanced budget for 2023/24, although it is recognised that this carries financial risk. The potential implications for 2024/25 and beyond have not been considered as part of these proposals.

The table below sets out a summary of the proposals and the sources of funding.

SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS AND SOURCES OF FUNDING

Liberal Democrat Group - Alternative budget proposals	Impact on 2023/24 budget £m
Roads and Pavements – additional £9m for the capital programme - £7m funded from borrowing and £2m funded from CIL. Borrowing adds £0.7m of growth to the revenue budget	0.7
Above funded by a reduction in part of the growth allocated to the revenue budget to manage inflationary pressures	(0.7)
Post Covid recovery – Total one off commitment of £1m, of which £0.5m to be spent in 2023/24	0.5
Above funded by use of earmarked Public Health reserves	(0.5)
New Youth Offer – adds £3m of one off spend to the budget	3.0
Above funded by a reduction in inflation risk earmarked reserve	(3.0)
Making Brent Greener – adds £0.5m of one off spend to the budget, of which £0.1m will be spent in 2023/24	0.1
Above funded by a further reduction to the inflation risk earmarked reserve	(0.1)
Street Cleaning and Bins – adds £3m of one off spend to the budget, of which £0.5m will be spent in 2023/24	0.5
Above funded by use of the New Homes Bonus grant	(0.5)
Environmental outreach – adds £0.5m of recurring revenue expenditure to the 2023/24 budget	0.5
Above funded by a further reduction in part of the growth allocated to the revenue budget to manage inflationary pressures	(0.5)
New Adapted Homes – adds £2m of capital expenditure to the capital programme	2.0
Above funded by use of the New Homes Bonus grant	(2.0)
Supporting Diversity – adds £0.15m of one off expenditure to the revenue budget in 2023/24	0.15
Above funded by use of NCIL	(0.15)
Total	0.0

Overall these proposals introduce £19m of new spending commitments. The Roads and Pavements proposal is funded by borrowing £7m, which will add £0.7m of recurring expenditure to the revenue budget and £2m from CIL. Furthermore, the Keeping our Area Clean proposal also adds £0.5m of recurring expenditure to the

revenue budget, a total of £1.2m. To fund this, it is proposed to reduce part of the growth allocated to the budget to fund additional inflationary pressures expected in 2023/24.

As part of the Council's budget setting process financial modelling and scenario analyses are conducted on all areas of expenditure to understand the exposure to inflationary pressures. This has been used to inform the budget for 2023/24 by taking the central case of expected outcomes. Therefore, any reduction to this provision could put the budget at risk of overspend if inflationary pressures cannot be contained within the existing budget.

Related to this is the Youth Offer and proposals on trees, both of which are to be funded by reducing the Inflation Risk reserve from £10m to £6.9m. This reserve was specifically set up to smooth out the effects of high and volatile inflation on the Council's budgets. The reserve will be used to offset additional pressures on service budgets which arise as a result of inflation exceeding what was forecast at budget setting, thereby reducing the requirement for savings in order to balance budgets in the short term.

Taking a risk that inflation will fall faster than currently expected introduces risk to the overall budget. This can be evidenced with the latest forecast for 2022/23, where, since the budget was set, inflation has risen unexpectedly during the year resulting in the use of reserves and contingencies to manage large spikes in costs, such as energy costs, pay inflation and provision of social care. The 2023/24 forecast of the state of the national economy remains volatile.

Reducing the overall provision for inflation would therefore add further risk to the budget and its resilience to manage the impact of short term spikes in inflation. Positioning the budget in this way would move the budget from a prudent central case to a less prudent best case scenario, the outcome of which cannot be currently determined. That being the case, while these proposals add risk to the budget, they are not unlawful. If the best case scenario assumed here does not transpire which, in-year mitigations will need to be considered to bring the budget back into balance.

Finally, part of the capital spending commitments assume the use of CIL. The levy can be spent on 'the provision, improvement, replacement, operation or maintenance of infrastructure'. It can be used to increase the capacity of existing infrastructure or to repair failing infrastructure if that is necessary to support development. The application of CIL should relate to what infrastructure Brent need to deliver their relevant plan (the Development Plan and the London Plan in London) and growth.

CIL must be used on infrastructure required to support development and we would expect that there are only certain roads within the Borough that we are able to legitimately show is needed to support development (Take heavy traffic to and from developments). Therefore, any commitments on the use of CIL must be subject to the necessary due diligence to ensure compliance with relevant conditions. Where this could be demonstrated, CIL could be used to fund specific highways projects. However, if this is not qualified, the £2m proposal would not be undertaken in 2023/24.

The Post Covid Recovery proposal seeks to utilise £1m of Public Health earmarked reserves. The Public Health grant is ringfenced for use on public health initiatives as well as health challenges arising from Covid. Therefore, any commitments against this grant would be subject to appropriate due diligence in checking grant conditions by the Director of Public Health.

Likewise, the Supporting Diversity proposal assumes the use of NCIL. It is important to note that NCIL can only be used where it could be demonstrated that there is a link to development in the local area. Therefore, appropriate legal due diligence in compliance with relevant conditions would be necessary. If the relevant legal conditions cannot be met, both in relation to use of Public Health reserves and NCIL, the proposals would need to be withdrawn or alternative sources of funding found.

The Street Cleaning and New Adapted Homes proposals seek to utilise the New Homes Bonus Grant. The Council received £3.1m of NHB last year and is due to receive £7.9m next year, an increase of £4.8m. This is a non ring-fenced grant that is currently recorded as a reserve and used to finance the capital programme. Allocating a proportion of the grant into the Council's revenue budget is allowed under the current grant conditions, however this would have an impact on the financing of the capital programme such that projects would need to be either scaled back or reconsidered.


On a final note, reserves have been used to fund certain proposals with ongoing revenue implications into future years. The proposals make clear that when the reserve has been exhausted the commitments will end, however there is a risk that new services become embedded into Council services making it more difficult to cease. Recurring expenditure requires either sustainable funding sources or savings found elsewhere in the budget. This has not been offered as part of these proposals, which would impact the financial sustainability of these services.

Overall, while the proposals add an element of risk to the 2023/24 budget, particularly higher inflation uncertainty and use of one-off reserves for potentially recurring commitments, the budget can be considered balanced. This is also subject to appropriate due diligence on the use of CIL, NCIL and the Public Health grant.

Minesh Patel

Director of Finance

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	Full Council 23 February 2023
	Report from the Chief Executive
Auditor's Annual Report on the London Borough of Brent	

Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	Council
Open or Part/Fully Exempt: <small>(If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)</small>	Open
No. of Appendices:	One Appendix A: Auditor's Annual Report on the London Borough of Brent
Background Papers:	N/A
Contact Officer(s): <small>(Name, Title, Contact Details)</small>	Minesh Patel Corporate Director of Finance & Resources 020 8937 6528 Email: Minesh.Patel@brent.gov.uk Rav Jassar Deputy Director of Finance 020 8937 1487 Email: Ravinder.Jassar@brent.gov.uk

1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 This report presents the Council's external auditor's annual report on value for money as part of the 2021/22 audit of the year end accounts. It also sets out their key recommendations.

2.0 Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 To note the report and recommendations.

3.0 Background

- 3.1 The National Audit Office introduced a new Code of Audit Practice for 2020/21 which revised the approach to the audit of Value for Money (VFM).

There are three main changes:

- A new set of key criteria, covering financial sustainability, governance and improvements in economy, efficiency and effectiveness.
- More extensive reporting, providing commentary on arrangements across all key criteria.
- Auditors to arrive at a more sophisticated judgement on performance, as well recommendations.

3.2 As part of the auditors work, no significant weaknesses were identified in the Council's VFM arrangements and only improvement recommendations have been made. In summary, there are two Financial Sustainability recommendations, three Governance recommendations and three economy, efficiency and effectiveness recommendations.

3.3 All of the recommendations have been accepted and management responses have been provided. Overall, this is an improvement compared to last year where improvement recommendations have reduced from 14 to 8.

3.4 The full report is attached at Appendix A.

4.0 Financial Implications

4.1 There are no financial implications arising as result of this report.

5.0 Legal Implications

5.1 There are no legal implications arising as result of this report.

6.0 Equality Implications

6.1 Not applicable.

7.0 Consultation with Ward Members and Stakeholders

7.1 Not applicable.

8.0 Human Resources

8.1 Not applicable.

Report sign off:

Minesh Patel
Director of Finance

Auditor's Annual Report on London Borough of Brent

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2021/22

Final Report

February 2023



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We are required under Section 20(1)(c) of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 to satisfy ourselves that the Council has made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. The Code of Audit Practice issued by the National Audit Office (NAO) requires us to report to you our commentary relating to proper arrangements.

We report if significant matters have come to our attention. We are not required to consider, nor have we considered, whether all aspects of the Council's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources are operating effectively.



The contents of this report relate only to those matters which came to our attention during the conduct of our normal audit procedures which are designed for the purpose of completing our work under the NAO Code and related guidance. Our audit is not designed to test all arrangements in respect of value for money. However, where, as part of our testing, we identify significant weaknesses, we will report these to you. In consequence, our work cannot be relied upon to disclose all irregularities, or to include all possible improvements in arrangements that a more extensive special examination might identify. We do not accept any responsibility for any loss occasioned to any third party acting, or refraining from acting on the basis of the content of this report, as this report was not prepared for, nor intended for, any other purpose.

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Executive summary















Value for money arrangements and key recommendation(s)

Under the National Audit Office (NAO) Code of Audit Practice ('the Code'), we are required to consider whether the Council has put in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

Auditors are required to report their commentary on the Council's arrangements under specified criteria and 2021/22 is the second year that we have reported our findings in this way. As part of our work, we considered whether there were any risks of significant weakness in the Council's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. Our conclusions are summarised in the table below.

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Criteria	Risk assessment	2020/21 Auditor Judgment	2021/22 Auditor Judgment	Direction of travel
Financial sustainability	No risks of significant weakness identified	 No significant weaknesses in arrangements identified, but improvement recommendation made	 No significant weaknesses in arrangements identified, but improvement recommendation made.	
Governance	No risks of significant weakness identified	 No significant weaknesses in arrangements identified, but improvement recommendation made	 No significant weaknesses in arrangements identified, but improvement recommendation made.	
Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness	No risks of significant weakness identified	 No significant weaknesses in arrangements identified, but improvement recommendation made	 No significant weaknesses in arrangements identified, but improvement recommendation made.	

-  No significant weaknesses in arrangements identified or improvement recommendation made.
-  No significant weaknesses in arrangements identified, but improvement recommendations made.
-  Significant weaknesses in arrangements identified and key recommendations made.

Executive summary



Financial sustainability

The Council continues to operate with an increasing amount of turmoil in the economic environment. Brent, as with all local authorities, will need to continue to plan with little certainty over funding in the medium term. There will continue to be added pressures from significant increases in capital costs, inflation and continued increases in demand for services from some elements of the population that the Council would not previously have had much contact with, as well as the longer-term impacts of Covid-19, The Council has continued to maintain a good financial position including continuing to achieve planned savings.

Our work has not identified any significant weaknesses in arrangements but has identified improvement recommendations in relation to securing financial stability at the Council.

Further details can be seen on pages 7 -12 of this report.



Governance

Our work this year has focussed on further developing a detailed understanding of the governance arrangements in place at the Council and in particular those relating to the two wholly owned subsidiary housing companies and key partnerships.

Our work has not identified any significant weaknesses in arrangements but has identified improvement recommendations in relation to governance.

Further details can be seen on pages 13-17 of this report.



Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness

The Council has demonstrated a clear understanding of its role in securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

Our work has not identified any significant weaknesses in arrangements but improvement recommendations have been made in relation to delivering economy efficiency and effectiveness.

Further details can be seen on pages 18-23 of this report.



We have not yet completed our audit of the financial statements for 2021-22 and therefore we have not yet issued an audit opinion.



Opinion on the financial statements and use of auditor's powers

We bring the following matters to your attention:

Opinion on the financial statements

Auditors are required to express an opinion on the financial statements that states whether they : (i) present a true and fair view of the Council's financial position, and (ii) have been prepared in accordance with the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of practice on local authority accounting in the United Kingdom 2021/22

We have not yet completed our audit of the financial statements for 2021-22 and therefore we have not yet issued an audit opinion.

Statutory recommendations

Under Schedule 7 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, auditors can make written recommendations to the audited body which need to be considered by the body and responded to publicly

We have not issued any Statutory recommendations

Public Interest Report

Under Schedule 7 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, auditors have the power to make a report if they consider a matter is sufficiently important to be brought to the attention of the audited body or the public as a matter of urgency, including matters which may already be known to the public, but where it is in the public interest for the auditor to publish their independent view.

We have not issued a Public Interest report

Application to the Court

Under Section 28 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, if auditors think that an item of account is contrary to law, they may apply to the court for a declaration to that effect.

We have not made any application to the court

Advisory notice

Under Section 29 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, auditors may issue an advisory notice if the auditor thinks that the Council or an officer of the Council:

- is about to make or has made a decision which involves or would involve the Council incurring unlawful expenditure,
- is about to take or has begun to take a course of action which, if followed to its conclusion, would be unlawful and likely to cause a loss or deficiency, or
- is about to enter an item of account, the entry of which is unlawful.

We have not issued an advisory notice

Judicial review

Under Section 31 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, auditors may make an application for judicial review of a decision of a Council, or of a failure by an Council to act, which it is reasonable to believe would have an effect on the accounts of that body.

We have not applied for a Judicial Review

Securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the Council's use of resources

All Councils are responsible for putting in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness from their resources. This includes taking properly informed decisions and managing key operational and financial risks so that they can deliver their objectives and safeguard public money. The Council's responsibilities are set out in Appendix A.

Councils report on their arrangements, and the effectiveness of these arrangements as part of their annual governance statement.

Under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, we are required to be satisfied whether the Council has made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

The National Audit Office's Auditor Guidance Note (AGN) 03, requires us to assess arrangements under three areas:



Financial Sustainability

Arrangements for ensuring the Council can continue to deliver services. This includes planning resources to ensure adequate finances and maintain sustainable levels of spending over the medium term (3-5 years).



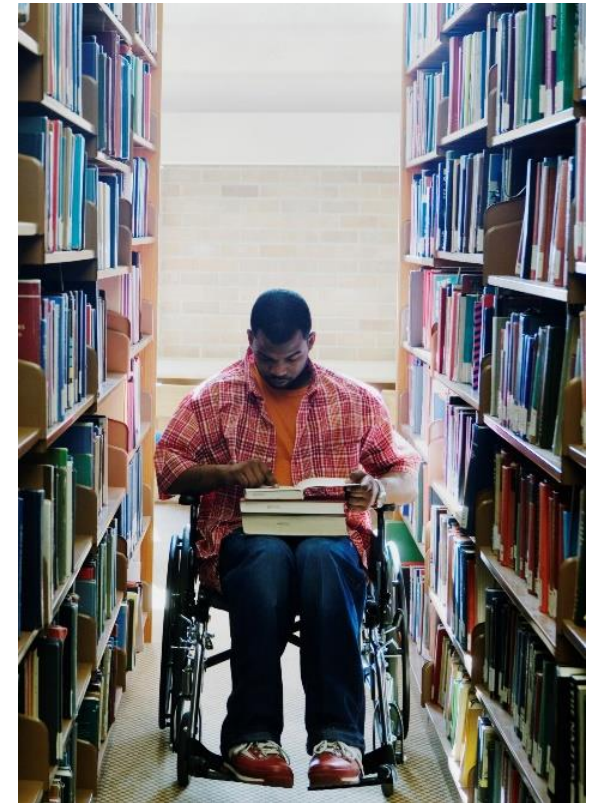
Governance

Arrangements for ensuring that the Council makes appropriate decisions in the right way. This includes arrangements for budget setting and management, risk management, and ensuring the Council makes decisions based on appropriate information.



Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness

Arrangements for improving the way the Council delivers its services. This includes arrangements for understanding costs and delivering efficiencies and improving outcomes for service users.



Our commentary on the Council's arrangements in each of these three areas, is set out on pages 7 to 23.

Financial sustainability



We considered how the Council:

- identifies all the significant financial pressures that are relevant to its short and medium-term plans and builds them into its plans
- plans to bridge its funding gaps and identify achievable savings
- plans its finances to support the sustainable delivery of services in accordance with strategic and statutory priorities
- ensures its financial plan is consistent with other plans such as workforce, capital, investment and other operational planning which may include working with other local public bodies as part of a wider system
- identifies and manages risk to financial resilience, such as unplanned changes in demand and assumptions underlying its plans.

Outturn 2021/22 and budget 2022/23

The 2021-22 General Fund outturn position for the Council prior to accounting for the impact of Covid-19 was break even compared to the original budget on the General Fund. There was a £4.6m overspend on the Dedicated Schools Budget (DSG) and a £0.6m overspend on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). The total gross Covid-19 impact across the Council was £20.7m.

The Council set a two-year budget in February 2021 with a total £11.2m savings required over the two years in order to achieve a balanced budget (£8.5m in 2021-22 and £2.7m in 2022-23). These savings targets were not revised in February 2022 when finalising the budget for 2022-23. All savings plans were fully assessed for equalities impact and consulted on with external stakeholders including local businesses, residents and key partners. The budget for 2022-23 was clearly aligned to priorities set out in the Borough Plan.

There was slippage of £0.8m on the £11.2m savings set in total for 2021-22 and 2022-23. The full value of those savings will still be achieved during the life of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).

Homelessness continues to be a significant issue for the Council. In March 2022 the Council approved the purchase of a site at Edgeware Road to meet temporary accommodation needs.

The Council has a commitment to paying the London Living Wage (LLW) where possible, including enabling contractors/providers to pay their workers LLW. This has a particularly large impact on the provision of homecare.

Income reduced as a result of the cessation of some Covid-19 compensation schemes (e.g. Council Tax, Business Rates, fees and charges). Continued restrictions on movement of people was expected to impact on footfall which in turn impact on business rates, fees and charges. The Council experienced a 9% contraction in economy with a 2.6% fall in jobs (compared to 1.9% for West London and 1.5% UK).

Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

The HRA is a ring-fenced budget meaning this money cannot be used for any other purpose. The Council introduced a rent increase of 4.1% generating an additional £2m income for 2022-23. The concierge service charge was also increased to balance the budget and re-procurement of this contract is planned for 2022-23.

Unmetered communal lighting and heating charges were increased by 30% to reflect increased energy prices with the bulk energy contract to be renewed in 2022-23. The heating tariff for metered usage by residents was increased by 55%.

A £7.1m refund to tenants was necessary as a result of a court ruling that Council's had overcharged residents on water and waste-water charges. This was funded through a reduction in the revenue contribution to the HRA capital programme. HRA set a balanced budget for 2022-23 with efficiency savings planned of £0.5m.

Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)

The DSG budget is also a ring-fenced budget. Within the DSG budget the High Needs Block funding was in deficit of £10.5m carried forward from 2020-21 increasing to £15.9m deficit at the end of 2021-22. A Deficit Recovery Action Plan has been in place since April 2021 to address the deficit.

Financial Sustainability (cont'd)

A members' Schools Forum monitors these actions. A revised Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) assessment, planning and review process was implemented from April 2021. The number of EHCPs grew by 6% in 2021-22 but this was a lower growth rate than 2020-21 (16%) indicating that the plan is having an effect. £44m Capital Investment was agreed by Cabinet in January 2022 to deliver 427 additional Special Educational Needs (SEND) places. Even with these additional measures the cumulative DSG deficit is envisaged to grow to a total deficit of £21m by 2025-26. This is slightly lower than the £23m deficit envisaged under the initial plan and £6m less than was estimated without the plan in place.

The Council cannot fund a deficit from the General Fund without the Secretary of State's approval as the DSG is a ring-fenced grant. An arrangement is in place until the end of the financial year 2022/23 which allows Council's to treat the deficit as a payment in advance that has first call on the following year's DSG. In December 2021 the Department for Education (DfE) announced new additional funding as part of the Delivering Better Value in SEND programme. This scheme is aimed at assisting councils which have substantial cumulative deficits. The Council will participate in the three-year programme which includes conducting comprehensive analysis to identify the underlying cost drivers of the high needs system and potential reforms to manage/mitigate these cost drivers more effectively.

The Council has recently modelled the implications on reserves should the deficit need to be met from General Funds. The Council has sufficient unallocated reserves to enable it to meet the deficit in the short-term but this would have a significant impact on longer term financial plans and reduce reserves to a level which would not be sustainable.

Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)

The MTFS is aligned to the Borough Plan and a further £12m savings will be needed in total for 2023/24 and 2024/25 in order to balance the budget. However with uncertainties in funding arrangements as well as increased demand led pressures the Council reported in the 2022-23 budget report that in a worst case scenario there could be a +20% margin for error and that savings requirements could be between £9.6m and £14.4m.

The Council reported in the February 2022 budget report that inflationary pressures (even at 4 or 5%) would mean that adult social care funding reforms could apply pressure to front line services and mean that new funding may not be sufficient to bridge the gap. The Council received £13.3m Improved Better Care Fund and £13.7m Social Care Grant and £6.1m Services Grant to cover new burdens such as National Insurance increases and other inflationary pressures and a £0.91m grant towards paying a fair cost of care. The Council has therefore assumed these increased grants to be revenue neutral.

The Public Health Grant was increased by £0.6m in 2022-23 but this is seen by the Council as a real term cut due to increased demand flowing from impacts of pandemic. Similarly the Homelessness Prevention Grant increased by £0.1m and again this is seen by the Council as a real term cut.

Annual growth assumptions built in to the MTFS include contract inflation, pay inflation, and the demands of a growing population. Future years' budgets are currently balanced, so there is no current plans to utilise unallocated reserves. Significant work has been undertaken to identify savings opportunities to balance the books, and the Council has a strong track record in delivering savings. The medium term financial planning undertaken demonstrates a prudent approach, with a recognition that future funding levels remain uncertain as demand for services is likely to grow and current economic environment will impact the Council's costs.

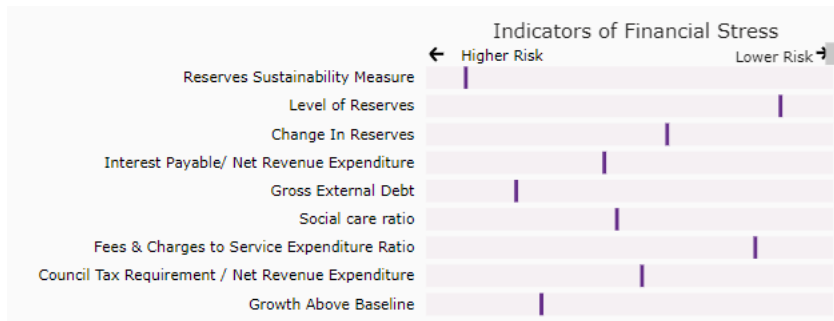


Financial Sustainability (cont'd)

Reserves

The Council has a reserves strategy which is aligned to the MTFs. This reserves strategy aims for 5% of net revenue expenditure for general usable reserves (General Fund balance and service pressure reserve). The General Fund Balance at 31/03/2022 was £15.1m against net revenue spend of £280m, which at 5.3% is in line with this strategy. In addition the Council has a transformation/services pressure reserve of £11.4m and specific Covid-19 pressure reserves of £14.1m. In July 2021 the Council agreed £17.5m funding from reserves for projects aimed at supporting the most impacted communities and businesses and addressing health inequalities. The Council also created a Resident Support Fund funded from reserves. This dispersed £3m in 2021-22.

The below chart shows the Council's risk status against various indicators of financial stress under the CIPFA Financial Resilience Index.



Of particular note is the level of reserves indicates a low risk for the Council as does fees/charges to service expenditure ratio. The Reserves Sustainability measure is however showing as very high risk.

The reserves sustainability measure is the ratio between the current level of reserves and the average change in reserves in each of the previous 3 years. Given that the Council's reserves have increased over the last 3 years, primarily due to grants received for COVID-19, this does not appear to be a high risk for the Council.

Capital Programme and Borrowing

The Council spent £165.4m on its capital programme in 2021-22 against a budget of £220m. This is an underspend of £56.9m.

The Council has a New Council Homes Programme to deliver 5,000 new affordable homes by end 2024 including 1,000 directly delivered by the Council. The Council had delivered 563 as of November 2021. This required capital investment of £47.9m in 2021-22 and £32.1m in 2022-23. This programme is essential in order to avoid reliance on emergency temporary accommodation, which would adversely impact the quality of life for residents and increase costs for the Council.

The Council had total debt of £709m in 2021-22 and £698m in 2022-23 against a Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) of £1.004bn and £1.123bn respectively. Debt is projected to fall to £660m by 2026/27 against a CFR of £1.332bn. The total debt figures are approximately half of the affordable borrowing limits. Financing costs charged to revenue are set to rise from £31.5m in 2021/22 to £57.1m in 2025/26 (11% and 17.5% of net revenue channel respectively). The level of external borrowing is within CIPFA prudential limits.

The Council's wholly owned subsidiary First Wave Housing (FWH) identified in September 2021 that 110 homes (Granville New Homes) required remediation work to address cladding and fire safety issues. The total cost of this work is estimated at £18.5m. This would have meant that the FWA business plan would have been unviable. The Council considered a number of options against the following criteria :

- Putting the properties back into a good state of repair as quickly as possible;
- Causing the least disruption to residents;
- Allocating risks to where they can best be managed; and
- Utilising the structures of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), General Fund, and its housing subsidiaries in a way that is most financially beneficial to the Council overall.

Financial Sustainability (cont'd)



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The Council decided that FWH would dispose of the properties to the Council HRA. The HRA would then carry out the remediation work. FWH will continue to manage its other housing provision. The transfer was at zero value based on the fact that the refurbishment costs exceeded the asset valuation of £12.5m.

The increase in the cost of borrowing together with the rising construction costs from high inflation are making the viability of capital projects extremely challenging. For schemes within the Council's existing programme, work is ongoing to identify mitigations to allow delivery to continue; however, this may result in a scope reduction or pausing delivery for a further evaluation at a later date. For schemes within the pipeline and yet to form part of the main programme, updated financial assessments are being undertaken to reflect the increased borrowing costs and scheme costs and the impact on project viability.

There was slight slippage across some parts of the programme including reported delays in commissioning, delays in procurement or contract negotiations as well as supply chain issues and inflationary pressures on budgets requiring additional management. Although there is no evidence that this is a trend for previous years, the fact that these slippages have occurred across different projects, the Council has agreed to explore these to determine if there are any broader lessons to learn. An improvement recommendation has been made in this respect.

Although the Council has not invested in new commercial property it does however derive some income from historically held properties. These properties with a value of £27m generate a yield of £3.1m (15%). This is a very favourable yield when compared to other investment opportunities however performance of such investments is inextricably linked to the wider economic outlook and therefore the Council should continue to be cautious in its assumptions about the level of future yields for the purposes of its financial planning. An improvement recommendation has been made in this respect.

Conclusion

Overall, we are satisfied the Council has appropriate arrangements in place to ensure it manages risks to its financial sustainability. We have not identified any risks of serious weakness but have identified two improvement recommendations which are set out on pages 11-12.

Improvement recommendations



Financial Sustainability

Recommendation 1

The Council should continue to review the reasons for procurement related delays to the Capital Programme to identify any lessons learned

Why/impact

Delays in the procurement process could increase costs and delay the Council achieving a return on investment.

Auditor judgement

The procurement delays have not been explored by the Council to determine if any improvements to arrangements need to be made.

Summary findings

There was slippage across many parts of the Capital programme including delays in commissioning , delays in procurement or contract negotiations as well as supply chain issues and inflationary pressures on budgets requiring additional management.

Management Comments

Any delays in the delivery of our Capital Programme are reported through the internal Capital Programme Board and included in the reporting to Cabinet on a quarterly basis. If there has been a significant impact on project delivery for example a failed procurement the reasons for this are also reported to Cabinet. The Council will review the key drivers of the procurement delays experienced and ensure the findings are incorporated into future procurement processes.



The range of recommendations that external auditors can make is explained in Appendix C.

Improvement recommendations



Financial Sustainability

Recommendation 2

The Council should continue to ensure that assumptions made about future yield from commercial property remain cautious.

Why/impact

A drop in yield could adversely impact the Council's financial plans.

Auditor judgement

Performance of such income is inextricably linked to the wider economic outlook and therefore the Council should be cautious in its assumptions about the level of yield going forwards.

Summary findings

The Council has a very favourable yield from commercial property, particularly when compared to other investment opportunities. The Council has £20.7m worth Commercial Property generating a yield of £3.1m (15%).

Management Comments

The Council is developing a property strategy for the commercial property estate which will provide an overarching framework for how these assets will be developed and managed. This will support our assumptions around the future yield anticipated from these assets whilst reviewing the impact of future economic uncertainty.



The range of recommendations that external auditors can make is explained in Appendix C.

Governance



We considered how the Council:

- monitors and assesses risk and gains assurance over the effective operation of internal controls, including arrangements to prevent and detect fraud
- approaches and carries out its annual budget setting process
- ensures effective processes and systems are in place to ensure budgetary control; communicate relevant, accurate and timely management information (including non-financial information); supports its statutory financial reporting; and ensures corrective action is taken where needed, including in relation to significant partnerships
- ensures it makes properly informed decisions, supported by appropriate evidence and allowing for challenge and transparency. This includes arrangements for effective challenge from those charged with governance/audit committee
- monitors and ensures appropriate standards, such as meeting legislative/regulatory requirements and standards in terms of staff and board member behaviour (such as gifts and hospitality or declaration/conflicts of interests) and where it procures and commissions services.

Monitoring and assessing risk

The Corporate Strategic Risk Register was updated in March 2022 and aligned to the Borough Plan. The Cabinet consider risks as part of their decision-making role on corporate policies, including the annual budget setting processes, major policy decisions and major projects. The Council Management Team reviews these corporate risks through quarterly monitoring reports. The Corporate Risk Register impact matrix does not explicitly include legal and regulatory impact assessments. An improvement recommendation has been made in this respect.

Risks are identified within individual Service Plans and considered on a regular basis within departmental management teams. Key operational risks are reported through to the Corporate Management Team.

An external quality assessment (EQA) of the Internal Audit Service was last carried out during 2018/19. This concluded that the Service conformed to the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards. The next EQA is scheduled for Q4 2022-23. The Annual Governance statement for 2021/22 issued by the Council states that in the opinion of the Head of Audit and Investigations there is reasonable assurance over the adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's overall framework of governance, risk management and control.

31 internal audits were undertaken during 2021-22 including 13 audits carried forward from 2020-21. The audit plan for 2021-22 included 37 planned audits 8 of which have been carried forward to 2022-23. 11 Audits have been deferred. In addition 8 School Reviews were completed against a planned 10 reviews with two reviews carried forward to 2022-23. The number of audits carried forward each year has decreased slightly however the Council is in a position where audits are deferred to accommodate additional in-year reviews which the Council has identified as being higher risk. No significant weaknesses from a VFM perspective have been identified by internal audit.

Counter fraud arrangements include notable practice such as the introduction of identity verification tools for housing teams and a Counter Fraud Specialist apprenticeship scheme for customer service team members. Specific fraud risk registers have also been prepared at departmental level.

There were no data breaches reported in 2021-22. The Council achieved Cyber Essentials accreditation in February 2022, demonstrating compliance with a minimum level of controls to mitigate the risk from common cyber threats. The Council has a 4-year Cyber Security Strategy agreed in March 2022.

The Council's understanding and management of risk does not demonstrate a risk of a serious weakness.

Budget Setting Process

The budget-setting process is thorough and receives a high level of scrutiny both internally and externally. An equalities impact assessment is undertaken on all proposals. A budget scrutiny task group is formed consisting of members of the two scrutiny committees (Resources & the Public Realm and Community Wellbeing). There is extensive external consultation with residents, community organisations and local businesses.

The Council completed a major project to implement the CIPFA Financial Management Code in 2021-22. An initial self-assessment was undertaken and a detailed action plan presented to the Audit and Standards Advisory Committee (ASC) in December 2021. This identified an 18-month programme of tasks to fully implement the code. Progress with that programme of work was to be managed and monitored using a formal project management governance approach. The project envisaged delivering quick wins by 31 March 2022, with remaining tasks to be delivered by 31 December 2022. Key tasks included: a review of the Council's Value for Money framework; completion of a financial resilience assessment and introducing the use of an appropriate documented option appraisal methodology to demonstrate the value for money of its decisions. The action plan was approved by Cabinet in February 2022 however no further updates have been provided to the ASAC. An improvement recommendation has been made in this respect.

Governance (cont'd)

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Budget Monitoring

As part of the budget monitoring cycle, any actuals or forecasts are scrutinised by managers with increasing levels of seniority. This is done with the support of the Finance business partner. Cost Centre managers input a forecast, which is then reviewed by the Head of Service, and then the Operational Director. Amendments to the forecast are made where necessary. This is then reviewed by the Head of Finance and taken to the departmental management team meetings for review.

Figures are added to the Quarterly Financial report which is reviewed by the Director of Finance. All Budget Managers review the financial data at different stages within the forecast review process. This provides effective assurance that what is presented to Council and its sub-committees is accurate.

Financial Systems and Processes

The Council has moved to Oracle Cloud across the Council's various Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems. A number of efficiencies have been achieved by automating many manual processes and reconciliations, as well as improving data accuracy and data security for payroll, procurement, cash management, Accounts Payable and Accounts Receivable. In addition support for the previous version of the Oracle system (R12) expired in December 2021. This meant that regulatory updates, such as tax changes in payroll, changes to pension regulations and bug fixes would not be issued by Oracle after that date.

Moving to Oracle Cloud also enabled the transfer of risk and costs of having on premise data centres to external specialist providers, so that they manage the software and hardware, including backups, disaster recovery and cyber security arrangements on behalf of the Council. This is in line with the Council's Digital Transformation Strategy.

Council Wholly Owned Subsidiary Housing Companies

The Council has two wholly owned subsidiary housing companies: i4B Holdings Ltd (i4B) and First Wave Housing Ltd (FWH). There are two shareholder meetings per year for each company attended by the Chief Executive and S151 officer. One meeting reviews the business plan and performance year to date and agrees priorities with the companies. The other reviews the outturn position including performance and the financial position. In addition the Audit and Standards Committee receives a report from the Auditor and the Chair of the Board on the accounting statements performance in the year and any key risks that need to be monitored. The Council receives financial benefits from i4B, mainly through reducing the use of temporary accommodation. The latest annual report states that i4B brings a gross annual benefit of £1.784 million to the Council. i4B made an operating profit after taxation of £1.898 million and FWH £3.362m in the 2021-22 financial year. The current adverse economic climate could pose a significant risk to i4B's acquisition strategy and FWH tenant rent affordability. This is being closely monitored through the Companies and the Council's own strategic risk register. A recent internal audit of the governance arrangements in place for the subsidiary companies identified a number of recommendations which have been implemented in 2022. The Council should ensure that these recommendations have been implemented and operating effectively. An improvement recommendation has been made in this respect.

Conclusion

Overall, we found no evidence of significant weaknesses in the Council's arrangements for ensuring that it makes informed decisions and properly manages its risks. We have made three improvement recommendations which are set out on pages 15-18.

Improvement recommendations



Governance

Recommendation 3

The Corporate Risk Register impact matrix should include legal and regulatory impact assessments

Why/impact

To ensure the full potential impacts of the risks is understood.

Auditor judgement

Legal and regulatory impact assessment is a key part of risk management.

Summary findings

The Corporate Risk Register impact matrix does not explicitly include legal and regulatory impact assessments.

Management Comments

Legal and regulatory impacts already form part of the 'Reputation' and 'Financial' assessments to any risks. Where appropriate, we will consider how best to more explicitly draw out any legal/regulatory impacts.



The range of recommendations that external auditors can make is explained in Appendix C.

Improvement recommendations



Governance

Recommendation 4

The Council's Audit and Standards Advisory Committee (ASAC) should ensure timely implementation of the CIPFA Financial Management code requirements.

Why/impact

The Council may not be compliant with the requirements of the code.

Auditor judgement

Progress reports have not been provided to the ASAC.

Summary findings

An initial self- assessment was undertaken and a detailed action plan presented to the ASAC in December 2021. This identified an 18-month programme of tasks to fully implement the code. The project envisaged delivering quick wins by 31 March 2022, with remaining tasks to be delivered by 31 December 2022. The action plan was approved by Cabinet in February 2022 however no further updates have been provided to the ASAC.

Management Comments

Outputs and decisions arising from the FM Code work are already reported regularly in the main finance update reports to Cabinet. A further update will be provided to ASAC when the project is substantially complete.



The range of recommendations that external auditors can make is explained in Appendix C.

Improvement recommendations



Governance

Recommendation 5

The Council should regularly review the governance arrangements relating to its subsidiary companies to ensure they are operating effectively

Why/impact

Risks including conflicts of interest may not be effectively managed.

Auditor judgement

The governance roles of certain officers has been clarified in 2022 but the operational effectiveness of these changes has not been assessed.

Summary findings

A recent internal audit of the governance arrangements in place for the subsidiary companies identified a number of recommendations which have been implemented in 2022. The Council should ensure that these recommendations have been implemented and operating effectively.

Management Comments

Reports to the Shareholder/Guarantor, as well as the annual business planning process, and reports to the Audit and Standards Advisory Committee provide information to enable the Council to gain assurance of the operation of the companies. We will continue to review and refine the Governance process and ensure the recommendations from the internal audit are implemented and operating effectively.



The range of recommendations that external auditors can make is explained in Appendix C.

Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness



We considered how the Council:

- uses financial and performance information to assess performance to identify areas for improvement
- evaluates the services it provides to assess performance and identify areas for improvement
- ensures it delivers its role within significant partnerships and engages with stakeholders it has identified, in order to assess whether it is meeting its objectives
- where it commissions or procures services assesses whether it is realising the expected benefits.

Performance review, monitoring and assessment

The Council's Performance Management Framework is overseen by the Corporate Performance Team (CPT), within the Chief Executive's Department. The CPT works with Departmental Management Teams to strategically align the Council's performance monitoring and reporting and coordinate the production of two main reports, the Quarterly Performance Report for Cabinet, and the Portfolio Performance Packs. Cabinet receives a report on performance each quarter. Cabinet portfolio holders also have regular meetings with Strategic Directors and review finance and performance indicators.

The performance information produced for scrutiny is highly detailed and an explanatory performance scorecard is included within these reports. This scorecard aligns to the Borough Plan, and sets out RAG ratings for all KPIs used to assess the Council's performance against the targets set out in the Borough Plan. Notable achievements reported include:

- Employment and Apprenticeships secured (273 against a target of 225).
- 4813 students enrolled on Brent Start courses against a target of 4,000.
- The number of households in temporary accommodation reduced to 1,683 against a target of 1,850
- 550 affordable homes have been delivered by external partners against a target of 211

At the end of Q4 2021-22 four KPIs were recorded as Amber and 9 Red.

KPI areas reported by the Council as underperforming include:

- Housing Voids (gaps between tenancies)
- The rate of referrals per 10,000 children was 610 against a target of 540.

The scorecard clearly sets out areas for improvement with commentary against each KPI rated Amber or Red, explaining issues which have arisen and actions taken. There is less visibility regarding how performance is linked to financial performance and vice versa. An improvement recommendation has been made in this respect.

A new 'direction of travel' indicator has been added to the reports to show how each theme in the plan is progressing. This 'direction of travel' has not been reported at individual KPI level and an improvement recommendation has been made in this respect.

The Council adopts a number of methods to receive feedback from user groups across the Council. An annual resident survey samples 1,000 residents profiled for borough demographics. This provides data on what residents want against what they are receiving. This is feedback to departments, some departments will also commission feedback. The Council also holds resident forums, quarterly meetings with local people and feedback to departments.

The Council uses various benchmarking reports including a London specific benchmarking report and CFOi. As part of this review we undertook our own analysis using CFOi and identified four areas of relative high cost for the Council. This included spend on Social care where costs have increased due to the Council's policy to pay the LLW.

Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness (cont'd)

Benchmarking data is mainly used by the Finance Team but it is not evident how benchmarking data is used to improve service performance levels. An improvement recommendation has been made in this respect.

We have identified notable practice in the way in which the Council uses data to obtain a single view of residents across the Council's services. The Financial Inclusion draws together data from across various datasets, including Council Tax support and benefits. This enables the Council to quickly identify vulnerable customers and identify which geographic and demographic areas are using the most services, or where the Council may need to alter its plans or strategy.

Data quality is assured by the Corporate Performance team. This process gives assurance that data is being collected, stored and reported using strong data practices. In addition data is submitted to the Performance Team as base data rather than just being sent a count or a calculated percentage. This ensures that there has been no human or rounding errors. The performance Team use a system which calculates monetary and performance figures based on annually agreed calculations which are set out in method statements.

A Capital Programme Board oversees major projects.

Partnership working

The Borough Plan sets out the objectives of partnerships, expected outcomes and deliverables. Scrutiny is provided through the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee as well as Cabinet oversight. The Council takes part in regular liaison meetings with the most senior officers through its lead role in Strategic Partnerships Board, for example Police, Health, GLA, major Developers and large employers. The Borough Plan has been amended to now include the description of 'anchor institution'. This enables clear demonstration of what is achieved through the Council's role as an enabler in the borough. The Council also takes the lead on discussions with key partners where issues arise. For example there were incidents where Brent residents were allegedly implicated in race riots in Leicestershire. The Council brought together relevant faith leaders to formulate a plan to tackle the issue.

The Council has a Shared Technology Service (STS) covering three Councils (Brent, Lewisham and Southwark). A Joint Executive Committee (JEC) has been established and an officer management board is also in place. A new Service Level Agreement was agreed in January 2021. A detailed risk register is maintained and reviewed by the JEC.

In 2020-21 there were 15 audits across the three partner Authorities covering the work of STS. The JEC had full visibility of all of these audits however the Council's Audit Committee only has visibility of those audits undertaken by its Internal Audit team. These arrangements have been reviewed by the Council and plans made to include all STS related audits in its 2022/23 reporting.

LGA Digital Services is a company limited by shares, which the Council jointly owns 50/50 with the Local Government Association (LGA). LGA digital was set up in July 2016 to allow the Council to manage ICT services for the LGA. Board and governance support is provided by the Council's Transformation team. The Board of the Company is chaired by an LGA Head of Service, with remaining members being made up of Council and LGA representatives. Board meetings are held on a quarterly basis. The company maintains its own risk register and the business plan is reviewed on an annual basis. The current business plan does not contain any financial information and simply sets out the key service deliverables. The longer-term vision for the company is unclear and it is not clear how the Council determines the value for money delivered by the company. An improvement recommendation has been made in this respect.



Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness (cont'd)

Procurement

The Council has a comprehensive procurement strategy, updated in 2021 to incorporate the Council's Social Value and Ethical Procurement Policy. Oversight is provided by a Procurement and Commissioning Board which is chaired by the Head of Legal. Contract Management has been devolved to Commissioning Managers with guidance and training provided by a central Procurement function. There is a lack of oversight of this process by the Procurement function which means that trends and issues will not get picked up at a corporate level. An improvement recommendation has been made in this respect.

A recent Internal Audit of contract management arrangements has also highlighted the lack of a complete central register of contracts as well as a lack of segmentation identifying key contracts. Work is underway to address this and a new 'Gateway 3' process introduced so that contracts over £2m in value will be reviewed by the Procurement team half-way through their term, so for example a contract that is set to run for 5 years with a possible 2-year extension will be reviewed after 2.5 years to determine if the contract should be extended for the extra 2 years. A further 'Gateway 4' is also planned to review contracts coming to an end and looking at whether to be renewed and whether terms should be reviewed to achieve better efficiency.

The Social Value element of the procurement strategy is key to the Council's aim to improve the local economy by utilising local suppliers. Suppliers also identify key social performance indicators which they pledge to meet. These KPIs and the reporting of them is currently being considered by the Procurement and Commissioning Board.

Conclusion

Overall, we are satisfied the Council has appropriate arrangements in place to ensure it manages risks to its oversight in ensuring economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. We have identified three improvement recommendations which are set out on pages 22-24



Improvement recommendations



Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness

Recommendation 6

Improvements to performance management should be made to include: The 'direction of travel' should be included on performance reports at individual KPI level; Benchmarking data should be utilised to benchmark service performance, and the report narrative should include relevant financial performance information

Why/impact

Effective Performance Management is critical to the Council delivering value for money

Auditor judgement

The current performance management arrangements can be improved

Summary findings

A new 'direction of travel' indicator has been added to the reports to show how each theme in the plan is progressing. This 'direction of travel' has not been reported at individual KPI level.

Benchmarking data is mainly used by the Finance Team but it is not evident how benchmarking data is used to improve service performance levels. An improvement recommendation has been made in this respect.

There is less visibility regarding how performance is linked to financial performance and vice versa.

Management Comments

The Corporate Performance Team accept this recommendation and will include direction of travel at the individual KPI level once new KPIs are in place following the adoption of the new Borough Plan 2023 -2027. In addition, stronger alignment of performance and financial performance, including use of benchmarking information, will be considered going forwards.



The range of recommendations that external auditors can make is explained in Appendix C.

Improvement recommendations



Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness

Recommendation 6

The LGA Digital Ltd business plan should be reviewed to identify the key financial deliverables to the Council as well as a longer term strategy to determine how value for money will be achieved.

Why/impact

The financial benefits and value for money achievements for the Council will not be understood.

Auditor judgement

Financial benefits to the Council including longer-term vision and value for money are unclear.

Summary findings

The current LGA Digital Ltd business plan does not contain any financial information and simply sets out the key service deliverables. The longer-term vision for the company is unclear and it is not clear how the Council determines the value for money delivered by the company.

Management Comments

The LGA Business Plan will be revised to specify key financial deliverables to the Council and longer term strategy on achieving value for money. The revised Business Plan will be presented at a LGA Digital Board meeting in February 2023



The range of recommendations that external auditors can make is explained in Appendix C.

Improvement recommendations



Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness

Recommendation 7

Arrangements for the Procurement Function to provide oversight of Contract Management compliance should be improved

Why/impact

Contract Management trends and issues will not get picked up at a corporate level.

Auditor judgement

There is a lack of oversight of Contract Management compliance

Summary findings

Contract Management has been devolved to Commissioning Managers with guidance and training provided by a central Procurement function. There is no second line oversight of compliance with contract management arrangements.

Management Comments

Arising out of an Audit of contract management it was recently agreed by CMT that in future CMT receive an annual contract management report prepared by Procurement covering 10-15 of the council's most high cost/risk contracts. The report will highlight the performance of the key contracts to include identified risks and mitigation plans. The production of the report will be a collaborative exercise, between the relevant contract managers and facilitated by Procurement. There have been discussions at the Commissioning and Procurement Board to identify which contracts should be included and the list is in the process of being finalised.



The range of recommendations that external auditors can make is explained in Appendix C.

Follow-up of previous recommendations

	Recommendation	Type of recommendation	Date raised	Progress to date	Addressed?	Further action?
1	A clear distinction could be made between statutory and discretionary spending in the budgetary information provided to members and published on the web.	Improvement	Sept 2021	The Council will continue to assess ways of providing key budget information to members as part of its budget setting process. That being said, the distinction between statutory and discretionary services is not as clear as it would have been prior to the beginning of austerity, where the number of discretionary services has reduced.	No	No
2	All Covid-19 grant payments to business should be reviewed, and members should check and confirm whether payments were made to any related parties and whether any additional declarations are required to be made by them.	Improvement	Sept 2021	The Council has reviewed the process for Council Members and Chief Officers to declare/disclose 'related party transactions' with the Council on an annual basis, and shared a summary of our findings with appropriate colleagues. As part of the 21-22 Related Party process, Members are reminded that the Council made a significant amount of payments to businesses since March 2020 and they should take this into consideration when completing their 21-22 Related Party return.	Yes	No
3	In developing the annual plan, internal audit should consider an exercise to review legislation passed over the last year (or due to be passed) which will have implications for the Council.	Improvement	Sept 2021	A comprehensive risk assessment process is followed in preparing the annual plan. As part of this process, risk assessments are performed per each department. One of the risk factors considered includes the implementation of any new legislation.	Yes	No
4	All but two of the eleven departmental risk registers follow the standardised format. This format is good, with a scorecard at the front of the register setting out the weighting and the scoring of risks. We recommend that all departments use this model, as the weighting and scoring system is good and focusses the assessment of risks on those which are high..	Improvement	Sept 2021	All Departmental risk registers follow a standardised format. Over the past 12 months the Council has made considerable progress in developing its strategic risk register. The began with an exercise at Senior Managers Group in December 2021 - led to two papers being presented to CMT - and resulted in the refreshed strategic risk register being taken to Audit and Standards Advisory Committee in June 2022. The Strategic Risk Register now forms a significant part of internal audit planning - and Internal Audit prepare an assurance risk map against all strategic risks.	Yes	No

Follow-up of previous recommendations

	Recommendation	Type of recommendation	Date raised	Progress to date	Addressed?	Further action?
5	Whilst interests declared by members are available on their individual biographies on the website, the Council should consider the creation of a central, online register of members' interests. This would enable a review of the interests of the Cabinet or of a specific Committee as a whole.	Improvement	Sept 2021	The Mod.Gov system used to maintain the register of interests does not support a central register. Other boroughs using this system have the same approach as Brent and do not maintain a manual central register.	No	The Council will raise with Mod.Gov whether this is something they are, or could, include in future development of their product.
Page 375	There is no requirement to register gifts or hospitality which have been declined. This could be helpful to report to other members as a matter of course, so they can be alert in case they are also approached and offered something which ought to be declined.	Improvement	Sept 2021	The Council has advised it will not be implementing this recommendation for the following reasons. The register of gifts and hospitality is linked to the Code of Conduct. Where a gift is received a personal interest that must be declared at meetings is created and may affect participation. Including declined gifts may lead to confusion and undermine the effectiveness of this mechanism. In the view of the Council it would not be proportionate for members to be in breach of the Code of Conduct with the consequences that entails for failing to register something they have refused.	Yes	No
7	The Council should consider including an analysis which benchmarks its performance against that of other authorities, both in its internal management information and in its corporate performance scorecard. implications for the Council.	Improvement	Sept 2021	Benchmarking reports/dashboards are made available to all performance and management teams as and when they are published. Benchmarking data has been previously included and consideration can be given to including benchmarking data in the future.	No	The benchmarking analysis should form part of the budget approval process so that members have a clear view when making decisions.
8	Routine reporting of services provided by external contractors should be included in the information provided to and reviewed by those charged with governance.	Improvement	Sept 2021	A recent Internal Audit of Contract Management has been undertaken.	No	Implement recommendations of IA report

Follow-up of previous recommendations

	Recommendation	Type of recommendation	Date raised	Progress to date	Addressed?	Further action?
9	All those charged with the management and monitoring of contracts within their service should meet at least annually for refresher training. This should include establishing and monitoring KPIs for service performance, as well as dispute resolution and escalation.	Improvement	Sept 2021	A recent Internal Audit of Contract Management has been undertaken.	No	Implement recommendations of IA report
10	The Borough Plan is very high level with lots of strategic aims and goals, but it isn't very specific. It doesn't say how the Borough plans to achieve those goals. Consideration should be given to referring to the action plans in place in achieve these aims and objectives..	Improvement	Sept 2021	A new Borough Plan is in draft. The new plan includes details of the success measures we aim to achieve. Action plans to monitor delivery are held in the departments and form the basis of quarterly performance reporting	Yes	No
11	Working with partners is a key theme throughout the Borough Plan. However, the plan is not explicit in setting out how it works with partners. Nor is it clear in the Corporate performance Scorecard which of the KPIs are being delivered by partners.	Improvement	Sept 2021	The Council's partnership arrangements allow multiple interactions across our priorities. Partners contribute to the delivery of many KPIs but arrangements vary from goodwill to formal commissioning arrangements.	No	The Council should include where possible.
12	Consideration should be given to defining social value in the procurement strategy, to setting out the Council's current position (against which to benchmark targets) and to adding numerical (rather than just aspirational) targets in the plan.	Improvement	Sept 2021	The Procurement strategy has been updated in this respect and a Social Value ambassador appointed.	Yes	No

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Follow-up of previous recommendations

Recommendation	Type of recommendation	Date raised	Progress to date	Addressed?	Further action?
13 Whilst we understand the social values in the Council's procurement Policy have been communicated to its suppliers, it is not clear that mechanisms exist to measure whether these values are being met. The Council should consider the development of a mechanism to measure whether and how suppliers are meeting these goals.	Improvement	Sept 2021	The Director of Communities heads up the Council's corporate performance team and is now the Social Value ambassador for the Council and is currently reviewing all relevant KPIs and reporting. This work is set to conclude in 2023.	Yes	No

Appendices

Appendix A – Responsibilities of the Council

Public bodies spending taxpayers' money are accountable for their stewardship of the resources entrusted to them. They should account properly for their use of resources and manage themselves well so that the public can be confident.

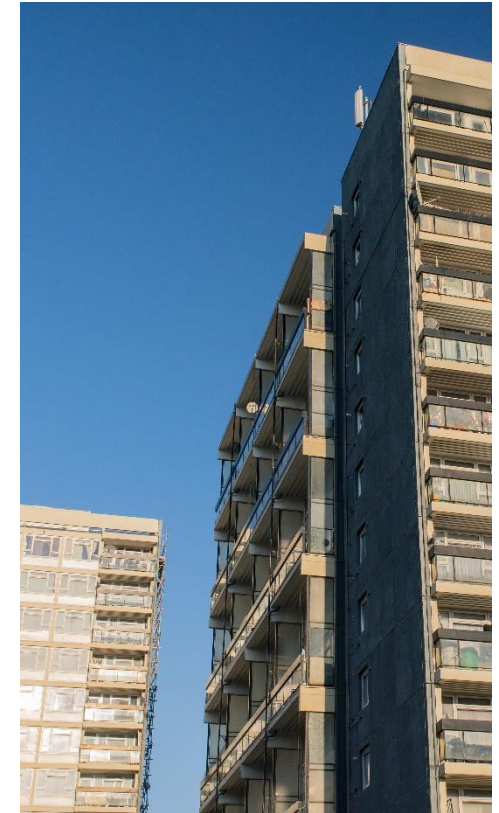
Financial statements are the main way in which local public bodies account for how they use their resources. Local public bodies are required to prepare and publish financial statements setting out their financial performance for the year. To do this, bodies need to maintain proper accounting records and ensure they have effective systems of internal control.

All local public bodies are responsible for putting in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness from their resources. This includes taking properly informed decisions and managing key operational and financial risks so that they can deliver their objectives and safeguard public money. Local public bodies report on their arrangements, and the effectiveness with which the arrangements are operating, as part of their annual governance statement

The Chief Financial Officer (or equivalent) is responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the Chief Financial Officer (or equivalent) determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

The Chief Financial Officer (or equivalent) or equivalent is required to prepare the financial statements in accordance with proper practices as set out in the CIPFA/LASAAC code of practice on local authority accounting in the United Kingdom. In preparing the financial statements, the Chief Financial Officer (or equivalent) is responsible for assessing the Council's ability to continue as a going concern and use the going concern basis of accounting unless there is an intention by government that the services provided by the Council will no longer be provided.

The Council is responsible for putting in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources, to ensure proper stewardship and governance, and to review regularly the adequacy and effectiveness of these arrangements.




Appendix B – An explanatory note on recommendations

A range of different recommendations can be raised by the Council’s auditors as follows:

Type of recommendation	Background	Raised within this report	Page reference
Statutory	Written recommendations to the Council under Section 24 (Schedule 7) of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014.	No	
Key	The NAO Code of Audit Practice requires that where auditors identify significant weaknesses as part of their arrangements to secure value for money they should make recommendations setting out the actions that should be taken by the Council. We have defined these recommendations as ‘key recommendations’.	No	
Improvement	These recommendations, if implemented should improve the arrangements in place at the Council, but are not a result of identifying significant weaknesses in the Council’s arrangements.	Yes	Pages 11-12 Pages 15-17 Pages 21-23



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	<p>Full Council 23 February 2023</p>
<p>Report of Corporate Director of Communities and Regeneration</p>	
<p>Brent Borough Plan 2023 - 2027</p>	

Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	Council
Open or Part/Fully Exempt: (If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)	Open
No. of Appendices:	Four Appendix A: Borough Plan Engagement and Consultation Findings 2023-27 Appendix 2: Brent Borough Plan 2023 – 27 Appendix 3: Borough Plan evidence base Appendix 4: Equality Impact Assessment
Background Papers:	None
Contact Officer(s): (Name, Title, Contact Details)	Zahur Khan Corporate Director Communities & Regeneration 020 8937 3092 Zahur.Khan@brent.gov.uk Lorna Hughes Director of Communities 020 8937 5068 Lorna.hughes@brent.gov.uk Tom Pickup Policy, Partnerships and Scrutiny Manager 07553724213 Tom.pickup@brent.gov.uk

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1. To share, following Cabinet approval on the 6 February 2023, the new Brent Borough Plan 2023-27. This includes the accompanying suite of supporting documents:

- Borough Plan Engagement and Consultation Findings 2023-27 (Appendix A)
 - Brent Borough Plan 2023 - 27 (Appendix B)
 - Borough Plan evidence base (Appendix C)
 - Equality Impact Assessment (Appendix D)
- 1.2. To share the findings from the draft Borough Plan consultation and engagement and, reflecting on the findings, the changes and updates made to the final Borough Plan.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. To endorse the new Brent Borough Plan 2023-27, including the accompanying suite of supporting documents:
- Borough Plan Engagement and Consultation Findings 2023-27 (attached as Appendix A)
 - Brent Borough Plan 2023 – 27 (attached as Appendix B)
 - Borough Plan evidence base (attached as Appendix C)
 - Equality Impact Assessment (attached as Appendix D)

3. Brent Borough Plan 2023 – 27

- 3.1 This report shares the final Brent Borough Plan 2023-27 and outlines the thorough process undertaken to frame, shape and consolidate our ambitions.
- 3.2 In spring 2022, Members and officers established a provisional set of ideas that were further shaped by initial engagement undertaken in May. Subsequent development of the Borough Plan was then lead and shaped by an internal working group and public consultation and engagement (as outlined in section 4 of the report). Both of these layers aimed to challenge and inform our draft priorities. Adopting such a process has been vital in creating the final product, which was agreed by Cabinet on 6 February 2023.
- 3.2 The final Brent Borough Plan 2023-27 captures our achievements over the last four years and provides the context, narrative and strategic priorities for our new ambitions. It is the overarching strategy that states our commitments and desired outcomes moving forward. The Borough Plan consists of the following core components:
- Our Strategic Priorities – these are the five key overarching themes that will drive all we do as an organisation.
 - The Desired Outcomes – these sit underneath each Strategic Priorities and outline the specific issues and areas we want to make an impact. Each desired outcome includes greater detail and commitments within the ‘we will’ sections which outline what we will seek to deliver.

- What Success Will Look Like – this consists of broad and indicative success measures. These will be expanded further into key performance indicators following the finalisation of the Borough Plan.

3.3 Our new Strategic Priorities for the next four years are:

- Prosperity and Stability in Brent
- A Cleaner, Green Future
- Thriving Communities
- The Best Start in Life
- A Healthier Brent

3.4 Although the Borough Plan shares our ambitions for the next four years, we also understand the importance of flexibility. The pandemic demonstrated that we must be able to adapt to needs and challenges as they arise. Currently, we are operating within the cost-of-living crisis and the difficult financial context it has created, as outlined within our Budget Strategy 2023/24, therefore we will ensure we are ready to respond to any changes in circumstance and tailor our priorities accordingly.

4. Consultation and engagement findings

Engagement undertaken

4.1 Between 31 October 2022 – 10 January 2023, the council consulted and engaged with residents, partners, stakeholders and specific communities. Our consultation approach focused on sharing and receiving feedback from people around our draft ambitions – essentially, our provisional areas of focus were used to capture peoples voice and understand what matters to them. The aim of this consultation was to:

- Share and amplify the new, proposed strategic ambitions
- Provide information on the council’s current pressures
- Understand and align our ambitions with stakeholder, partner and resident priorities

4.2 We aimed to engage and involve as many people as possible. To ensure this, we have undertaken a thorough series of engagement activities across the following key groups: specific communities, stakeholders and partners, general public and internal staff. As outlined in the table below, the engagement has consisted of the following:

- Drop-in sessions and community events
- A range of meetings and focus groups in each Brent Connect area
- Information sessions at libraries and hubs
- Online information sessions
- Online survey/ feedback form
- Multimedia campaign
- CitizenLab
- Focus groups with underrepresented groups
- Meetings with partnership and stakeholder groups

4.3 It is estimated that we have reached out to thousands of residents, communities and organisations and received over 900 direct responses through the online survey and the range of activities.

Event	Attendees/number	Additional Notes
Workshops and focus groups	73	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshops open to residents and specific communities: 30 November and 8 December • Pensioners focus group: 7 December • Partner and stakeholder event: 9 January
Library drop-in sessions	Estimated 105	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kilburn Library Drop-in Session - 8 November • Wembley Hub Drop-in Session - 23 November • Willesden Library Drop-in Session - 8 December
Partners events	Estimated over 350	<p>Includes but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brent Health and Wellbeing Board • Brent Multi-faith forum • Housing Department Licensing events • Healthwatch event • Pride of Brent Youth Awards • Gladstone Park Primary School • Local Democracy week event • Brent Connects x5 • VCSE Question Time • Disability Forum • Borough of Sanctuary group • Brent Youth Parliament • Forward Together and other internal staff sessions
Survey responses	417	402 online survey responses 15 physical survey responses

Consultation and engagement findings

4.4 The Borough Plan Engagement and Consultation Findings Report (Appendix A) details the breadth of feedback, ideas and concerns raised across the engagement. The key overarching themes were as follows:

- Environment – making Brent cleaner (i.e. tackling flying tipping) and greener (i.e. more and improved parks and open spaces).
- Crime and safety – concerns about safety for young people and women, anti-social behaviour and substance misuse.
- Young People – supporting their skills development and routes to full-time employment.

- Roads and transport – reducing congestion; improving access to, and facilitating more active travel.
- Housing – improving quality and affordability of housing, particularly during the cost-of-living crisis. Continuing to tackle homelessness, namely rough sleeping.
- Community cohesion and inclusion – harnessing our diversity and being more proactive to support greater community cohesion.
- Health – improving access to health care and mental health support; addressing health inequalities.
- Local democracy – amplifying the value of, and our work with the VCS; continuing to create more opportunities for community participation and for people to influence decisions.
- Businesses and skills – supporting local skills development to get people into higher paid jobs.

4.5 In order to categorise the feedback, both through the quantitative and qualitative exercises, the findings report is broken down into three sections:

- **Feeling and responses to the draft priorities.** This section outlines the feedback to the survey questions which aimed to understand respondents feeling and reaction to the draft strategic priorities and core elements within them.
 - Within the residents' responses to draft priorities, 'A Cleaner, Greener Future' was identified as the most important to residents, whilst 'Prosperity, Pride and Belonging in Brent' and 'Respect and Renewal' were viewed less favourably.
- **What did people have to say about Brent?** This section captures the broad range of feedback and views we received from qualitative engagement, such as workshops, focus groups, meetings and drop-in sessions.
 - The most frequently occurring themes when analysing the open-ended survey questions were as follows:
 - Environment
 - Young people
 - Health
 - Roads and transport
 - Local democracy
 - Housing
- **What should Brent look like in 2027?** The section describes the responses received to this question, both to the survey and during qualitative engagement.
 - Many responses wanted the borough to look safer and cleaner over the next four years, which is represented in the word cloud of resident responses.

5. Using the findings to update the Borough Plan 2023 – 27

- 5.1 In October, Cabinet received the draft Borough Plan which translated the themes from a series of initial engagement into provisional priorities. However, to ensure our ambitions are right and reflective of what matters to our residents, communities and partners, we wanted to utilise the findings from a more comprehensive consultation exercise to shape the strategy. As such, our final Borough Plan 2023-27 (Appendix B) is a product that is based on feedback.
- 5.2 The feedback that we received helped significantly to refine our ambitions. The following areas outline the key changes that have been made to the Borough Plan, following feedback from the consultation:

General comment:

- Include more reference to the importance of partnership working, including the value of our voluntary and community sector.

Prosperity, Pride and Belonging in Brent (now Prosperity and Stability in Brent)

- Updating Strategic Priority (SP) 1 to “Prosperity and Stability” – this is to reflect feedback that people didn’t align the desired outcomes within this priority with the feeling of ‘pride or belonging’.
- Move ‘Safe, Secure and Decent Housing’ from SP 3 to SP 1 and expanding this to include ambitions around housing quality across Brent. Moving this priority also reflects people’s uncertainty around the meaning of the previous SP 3 (Respect & Renewal).

A Cleaner, Greener Future

- Move the desired outcomes “Empowering our Communities” (now “Enabling our Communities”) and “A Safer Borough” to the new SP 3, which is more clearly aligned with these themes.
- Include desired outcomes “A Sustainable Borough and a Greener Economy” (now “Climate-friendly, Sustainable Borough”) and “Keeping Brent on the Move”, both previously in SP 3.
- Amplify our climate change activity and commitment – this reflects many comments around presenting this more clearly and comprehensively in the Borough Plan.

Respect and Renewal in Brent (now Thriving Communities)

- Updating SP 3 to “Thriving Communities”. This will reflect people’s uncertainty with the previous title ‘Respect and Renewal’ and desired outcomes within this. This also reflects comments to amplify our support and recognition for our diverse communities and voluntary and community sector.
- Add new desired outcomes: “Enabling our Communities” and “A Safer Borough”, as above.

- New commitment ('we will') included around community safety. This reflects peoples focus on safety during the consultation - specifically around feeling safe, anti-social behaviour and substance misuse.
- Include greater reference and possible commitments around community cohesion – this reflects the value people have placed on inclusion, community cohesion and integration.

The Best Start in Life

- Only minor updates and no substantial changes. The issues identified in the consultation are already being addressed within this and other strategic priorities.

A Healthier Brent

- More reference to Adult Social Care provision to reflect the level of need and council resource invested into supporting resident who require care support.
- Ambition included around addressing substance misuse through a public health approach – this reflects feedback and concerns around anti-social behaviour and drug and alcohol misuse.

6. Borough Plan Evidence Base

- 6.1 The supporting evidence base for the Borough Plan (Appendix C) captures the key information, data and trends (from publicly accessible sources) that clearly describes Brent its make-up, needs, uniqueness and challenges. The evidence base also consists of data and key quotes from the engagement and consultation to paint the Brent picture, aligned with the new priorities ('Quotes' and 'Context Setting'). This product also seeks to show the progress and activity ('What We've Done') by the council to address key challenges for the borough.
- 6.2 Whilst the evidence base has been used to drive the development of, and contextualise the Borough Plan, it can also be used as tool that can inform the development of other Council strategies, projects and initiatives, and can be used by partners and residents.

7. Next steps

- 7.1 Once agreed, the following next steps will be undertaken:
- Socialising the Borough Plan – we will initiate both internal and external engagement to begin sharing our new ambitions. This will include:
 - External:
 - Partnership event(s) to share the ambitions and to have a dialogue about working better together within a challenging financial context.

- Communications to our communities and across our partnership landscape to share the new ambitions.
- Internal:
 - All staff and departmental sessions.
 - Communications with across the organisation to share the new ambitions
- Officers will work with departments to agree measures and milestones to be included in the new corporate performance matrix. This will be developed for spring 2023.

8. Legal implications

- 8.1. The Borough Plan is one of the Policy Framework documents which is required by the Constitution to be considered by Cabinet and recommended by Cabinet for adoption by the full Council. Legal advice will be required in respect of the implementation of a number of the actions in the Borough Plan and the Equality Action plan.

9. Financial implications

- 9.1. The Borough Plan will go to the same Full Council meeting as the 2023/24 budget report. The budget report will set out the overall financial position facing the Council highlighting the significant risks, issues, and uncertainties. As in previous years the Medium Term Financial Strategy will ensure it provides a framework to enable and support the delivery of the Borough Plan, considering the significant financial pressures the Council is currently facing.

10. Equality implications

- 10.1. Under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the Council has a duty when exercising their functions to have 'due regard' to the need:
- To eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the Act;
 - Advance equality of opportunity; and
 - Foster good relations between those who share a "protected characteristic" and those who do not.
- 10.2. This is the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). The 'protected characteristics' are: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.
- 10.3. The purpose of the duty is to enquire into whether a proposed decision disproportionately affects people with a protected characteristic. In other words, the indirect discriminatory effects of a proposed decision. Due regard is the regard that is appropriate in all the circumstances.

- 10.4. The proposals in this report have been subject to a full Equality Impact Assessment and Officers believe that there are no adverse equality implications and assist in advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relationships.
- 10.5. Equality analyses has been conducted concerning the ambitions and it has been considered that there will be positive equality implications for many of the activities undertaken under the Borough Plan in the next four years.
- 10.6. Responses from the public consultation on the plan have shaped the ambitions, priorities and content of the Borough Plan.
- 10.7. Further analysis will be conducted or reviewed as necessary as Plan is implemented

Report sign off:

Zahur Khan

Corporate Director of Communities and
Regeneration

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Brent Borough Plan 2023-2027

2023 engagement findings



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Executive Summary

From 31 October to 10 January 2022, Brent Council carried out a comprehensive engagement exercise to understand the views and opinions of residents and partners for the Brent Borough Plan 2023-2027. We engaged with people through a survey, focus groups, workshops and drop-in sessions and captured the voice of at least 900 people who live and work in Brent. This included engagement and responses from a range of different communities within the borough.

To understand people's perspectives, we asked them to feedback on our five draft priorities. However, our engagement wasn't solely about obtaining feedback, we also sought to understand their own priorities for the borough, the concerns and challenges they face and the opportunities for Brent by 2027. This is also within a context where Brent, just like other areas across the country, finds itself in a challenging financial environment where the council and partners must do things differently to continue supporting our communities.

Broadly, people found that the key issues for the borough were reflected within the draft priorities. However, local people identified some themes that we need to amplify and extend in order to be more transparent and aspirational.

The environment was a key priority as people wanted to see cleaner streets and a greener borough, characterised by better air quality, less traffic, more green spaces and more accessible route for active travel (e.g. cycling).



Safety, particularly feeling safe, was really important to people. People often spoke about creating safer environments for young people and women, both in general but also in relation to public environments and transport. To help people feel safe we also need to address crime and prevent criminally, as many referenced concerns about anti-social behaviour and drug and alcohol abuse.

People value our younger generations and recognise we need to do more to support them and harness their talent. Residents mainly spoke about the need to better develop young people's skills to help them access more opportunities and get them into full-time work.

For Brent, our diversity is vital – it is what makes the borough unique, vibrant and thriving. Residents and partners want us to be more proactive in harnessing our diversity and supporting cohesion across the borough. Linked with this is the value placed on community empowerment, specifically being able to influence the issues and decisions that matter to them and supporting our voluntary, community and faith sector organisations.



Housing was a key issue that was raised in the context of the cost of living crisis. People wanted better quality and more affordable housing, including support to tackle rogue landlords. Additionally, there were concerns about rough sleeping and the need to help into temporary accommodation.

As everyone experiences the impact of the cost of living crisis some people spoke about the need for more and better paid jobs. This also means supporting local people to develop new and existing skills to help them access better opportunities.

People are concerned about being access to health care, particularly in relation to being able to see professionals without need a long wait. They also acknowledge the importance of improving access to, and awareness of mental health support. For many people, being healthy is essential to also being happy.



The themes raised from the engagement are nuanced but essential to help shape our ambitions for the next four years. It is encouraging that the issues and areas that matter to residents and partners align with the councils, however we need to match their levels of prioritisation and ambition. Once we finalise and begin delivering the Borough Plan we must also commit to the final emerging theme – partnership working. Organisations across the borough are experiencing similar challenges due to the cost of living crisis, therefore it is more important than ever to establish our collective ambitions for Brent and work together to achieve them.

Introduction

This report shares the key findings from the consultation and engagement exercise undertaken by the Council to help shape the Brent Borough Plan 2023-27. The draft Brent Borough Plan 2023-27 captures the Council's achievements over the last four years and provides the context, narrative and strategic priorities for our new ambitions. Essentially, the Borough Plan states our provisional commitments and desired outcomes for the next four years and outlines how we will work with others to achieve them.

The new Borough Plan has been drafted in the context of the post-pandemic period and the ongoing Cost of Living Crisis which has adversely impacted residents, communities, businesses and the Council. Understanding and reflecting this context is vital, as it is more important than ever to incorporate the views of everyone who lives and works in Brent as we overcome existing challenges but also identify and utilise new opportunities for the borough.

We delivered a communications and engagement plan, which from 31 October 2022 – 10 January 2023, that was centred around capturing voice, started to socialising the challenges and opportunities for the Council and initiated conversations with partners and stakeholders about the importance of working closer together. Specifically, the purpose of communications and engagement was to:

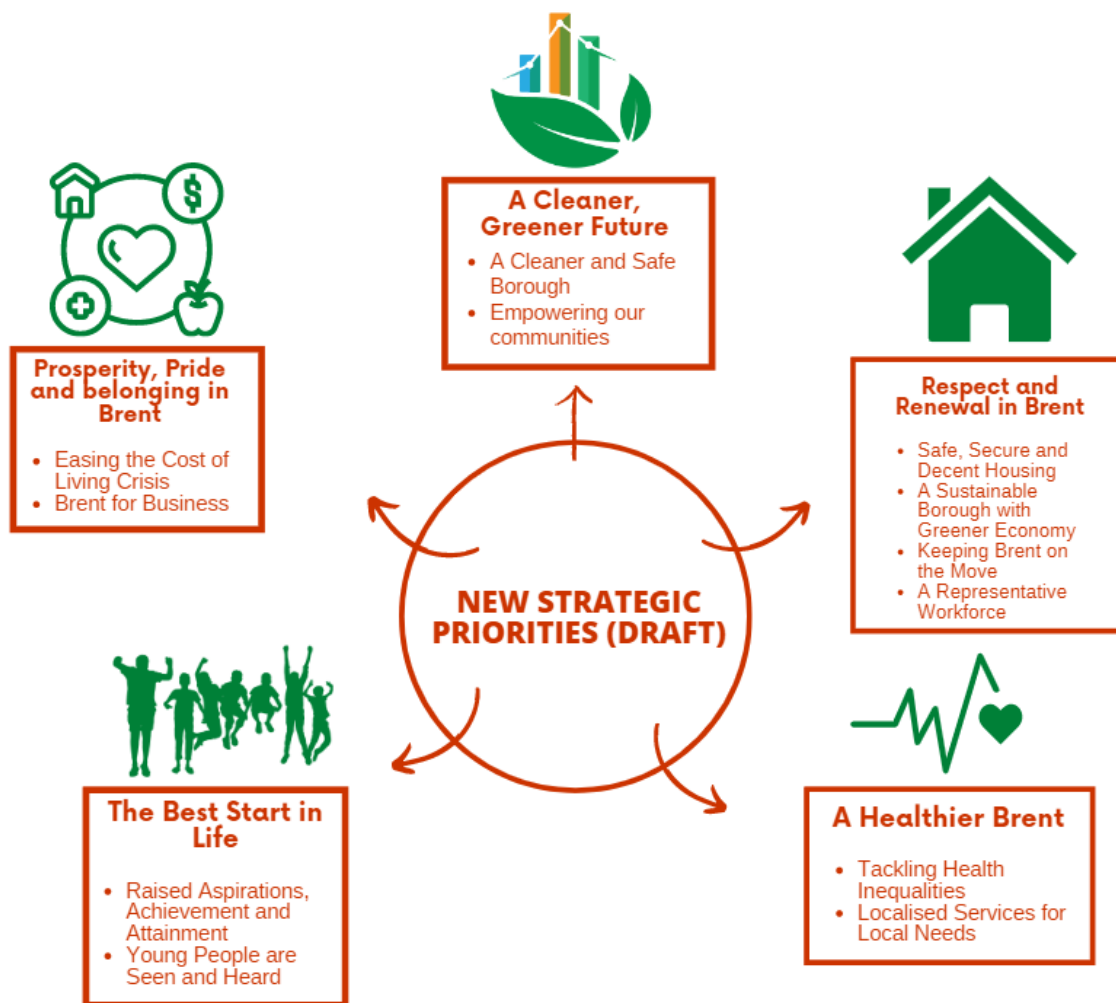
- Share and amplify the new, proposed strategic ambitions
- Provide information on the Council's budget situation and current pressures
- Receive feedback on our ambitions and the Council's budget pressures
- Understand and align our ambitions with stakeholder, partner and resident priorities

Throughout this process we engaged with a range of groups and estimated to have received around 900 responses. A breakdown of outreach and responses is available in Annex A. This broad spectrum of respondents ensured that as many voices as possible were captured, including from marginalised and minority groups, and this was achieved through a range of different methods and platforms. The responses have been used to identify the needs, concerns and ambitions of residents, and will be used to inform the Borough Plan and future Council activity and service delivery.

The key findings and feedback of residents and partners are captured through this document and will be used to change and update the draft Borough Plan. Where possible, a demographic breakdown for survey responses is provided, however it has been difficult to establish a comprehensive breakdown due to the small number of people that completed the equalities monitoring questions (e.g. around age, ethnicity, gender, postcode etc.). The report is categorised by the following sections:

1. **Feeling and responses to the draft priorities.** This section will outline the feedback to the survey questions, which aimed to understand respondents feeling and reaction to the draft strategic priorities and core elements within them.
2. **What did people have to say about Brent?** The section describes the responses received to this question, both to the survey and during qualitative engagement - such as workshops, focus groups, meetings and drop-in sessions.
3. **What should Brent look like in 2027?** The section will focus on outlining the responses received to this question within the survey but will also be supplemented by people's future focused views and reactions during the qualitative engagement.

Feeling and responses to the draft priorities



We asked residents to rank their preference for the five strategic priorities and the desired outcomes within each specific priority. Most of these questions also provided an open text box for additional thoughts and reflections.

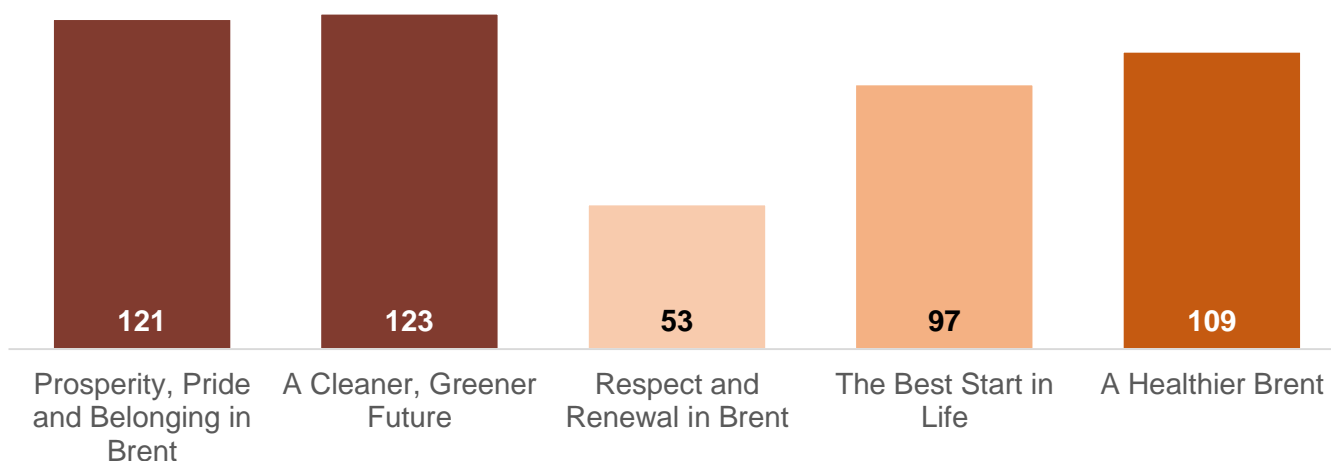
Overall, from the surveys, it was clear that Priority 2 (A Cleaner, Greener Future) resonated most with residents. Priority 1 (Prosperity, Pride and Belonging in Brent) and Priority 3 (Respect and Renewal in Brent) were less popular with residents. This was a similar theme to drop-in sessions and focus groups (see sections below), where participants said that they felt the wording around these priorities was too vague and did not accurately capture the content or desired outcomes within them.

Analysing the survey

When analysing the tables below, the larger graph details how survey respondents felt about each borough plan strategic priority. Residents were asked to rank priorities from 1 to 5, with 1 being the one they were most strongly in support of and 5 being the one they were least supportive of. The first graph illustrates how many residents ranked "1" each priority.

The horizontal bar graphs show how residents responded to the themes under each priority. The answers "Strongly agree" and "Tend to agree" were combined to "Agree". We merged "Tend to disagree" and "Strongly disagree" answers to be displayed as "Disagree".

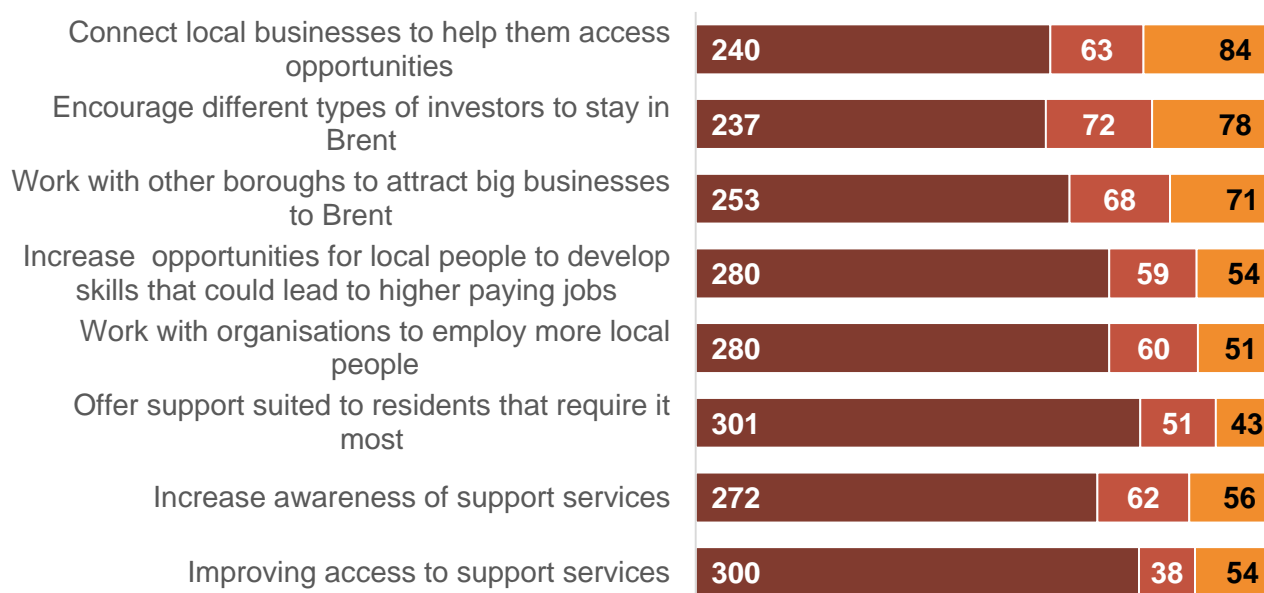
Number of responders who ranked each priority as the most important



Strategic Priority 1 - Prosperity, Pride and Belonging in Brent

Responses for **Priority 1**, Prosperity, Pride and Belonging in Brent, were varied. For desired outcome 1 (Easing the Cost of Living Crisis), there was a positive reaction to the promotion and availability of vocational training and developing skills for higher paid employment. Numerous respondents suggested that there should be more access to training to ensure residents have the opportunity and confidence to apply for jobs they would not normally be able to go for. Even though the cost of living crisis ranked quite high during the development of the plan, respondents did not offer much insight or feedback on what was included in the Borough Plan to combat this.

For desired outcome 2 (Brent for Business), there were several comments made regarding the lack consultation that takes place with local business when it comes to high street development, traffic calming measures and parking in shopping areas. There was a general feeling that engagement with local and high street businesses should be at the forefront of any changes impacting the retail sector in these areas.



Agree

Indifferent

Disagree

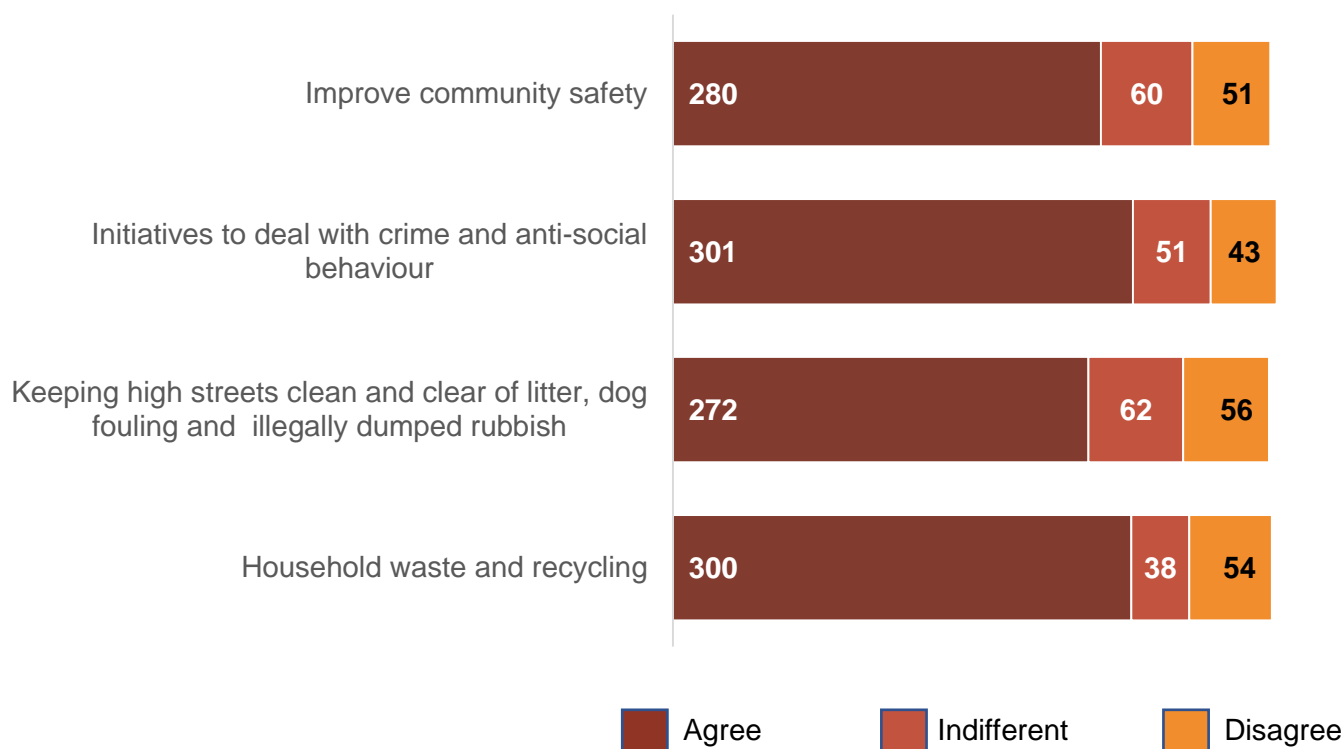
Strategic Priority 2 – A Cleaner, Greener Future

Priority 2, A Cleaner, Greener Future, was seen as the most important Strategic Priority by survey respondents. This priority covered issues including recycling and household waste, as well as residents attributing importance to initiatives to deal with crime and anti-social behaviour. However, in drop-in sessions and focus groups many residents expressed that it was unclear why issues around crime and anti-social behaviour were placed within this priority.

Responses for desired outcome 1 (A Cleaner and Safe Borough) were positive. Many respondents suggested that street cleansing; including paan spitting, dog fouling, illegal dumping of waste, and waste collections remained high on their list of priorities. Several requests were made for more effective monitoring of these issues in town centre locations. In addition to this, there was numerous mentions for additional tree planting and effective grounds maintenance of parks and open spaces.

Additionally, this outcome includes a commitment to improve community safety and reduce violence. Residents did raise concerns about not always feeling safe on the streets, walking home at night and Anti-Social behaviour such as drinking and drug use on streets and parks. Various comments were made suggesting that the Council needs to do more to tackle these issues with more enforcement, education and making community centres and other such locations available for younger residents to ensure they do not spend their spare time on the streets.

Desired outcome 2 for this priority is focused on community empowerment. Response to this outcome was limited. However, those who did comment expressed a desire for more involvement of businesses when consulting on regeneration and town centre developments. There were also suggestions made that Brent could do even more to work with charities and the voluntary sector to help develop and deliver services whilst ensuring locals felt involved. Another key finding was that many respondents felt that Council meetings are deliberately made inaccessible for all residents by insisting on them taking place at the Civic Centre in Wembley. Several respondents commented that they felt decision making meetings should not always take place in Wembley.



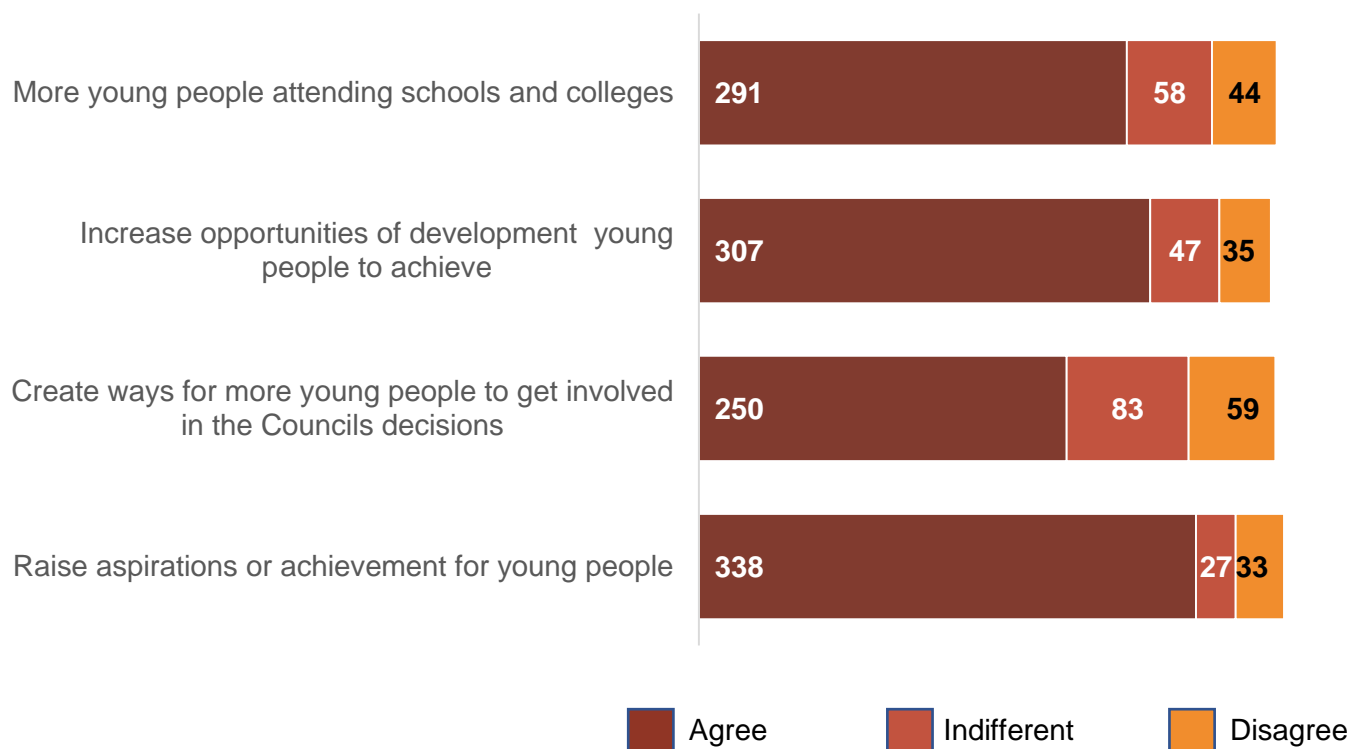
Strategic Priority 3 – Respect and Renewal in Brent

Priority 3 received a mixed reaction. Whilst some desired outcomes such as around housing and roads were positively received, other themes within this priority did not receive much feedback. This was also in line with feedback from drop-in sessions where there is a consensus that the priorities need to be worded differently.

Desired outcomes 1 and 3 (Safe, Secure and Decent Housing; Keeping Brent On the Move) were accepted without contest. The Council was encouraged to do more to ensure the quality of roads and pavements are improved with road defects such as potholes and broken paving at the top of respondents' lists. These two areas scored highly among survey respondents, despite the theme as a whole receiving lower scores overall.

Several comments were made in relation to how Brent currently tackles rough sleeping and homelessness with a mention that the Council should be doing more to look after these residents and offer temporary accommodation throughout the winter months as a minimum. There were also several comments made on Brent Council's inability to tackle rogue landlords and the Private Renting Sector in general.

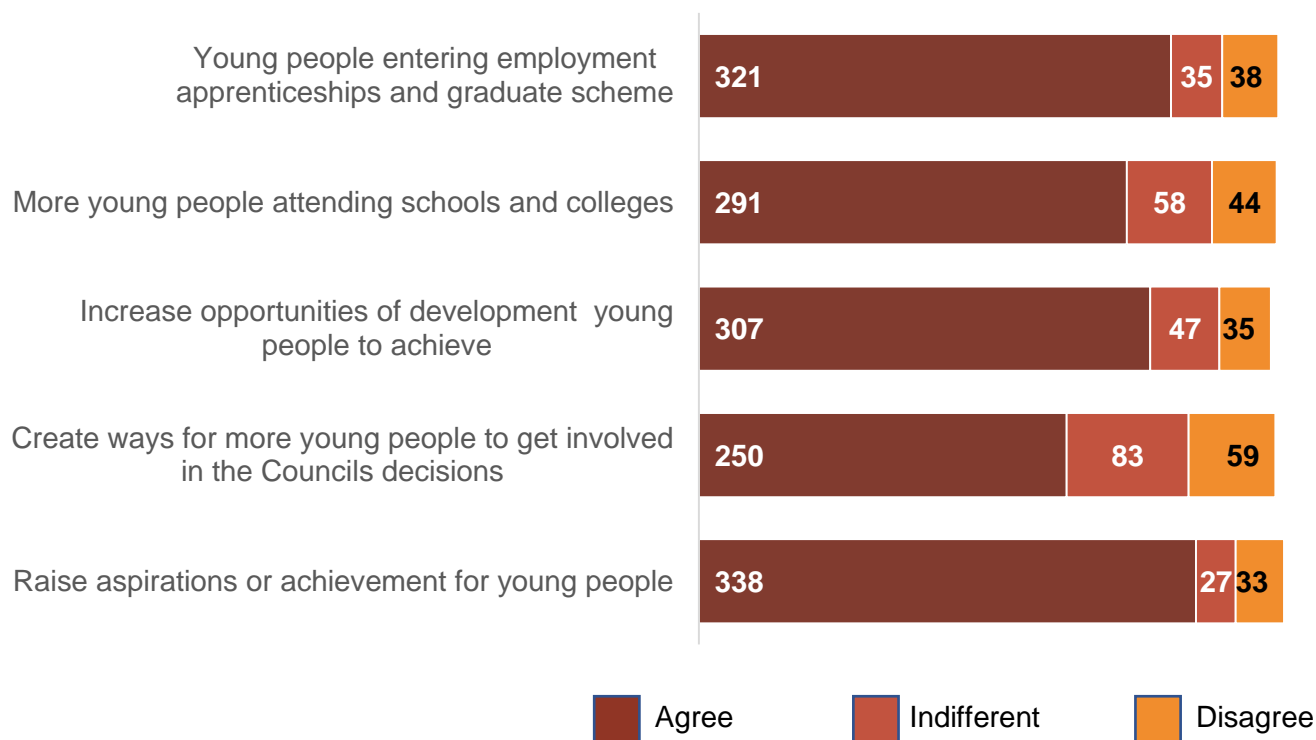
Response levels regarding a green economy were very low as was the response to more sustainable living. As mentioned in Strategic Priority 1, the need for developing vocational skills and green skills did receive positivity but no comments were made about the use of the Civic Centre or land ownership opportunities. Additionally, responses to a representative workforce (desired outcome 4) were also low.



Strategic Priority 4 – The Best Start in Life

Priority 4 was seen as important to residents. In particular, desired outcome 1 (Raised Aspirations, Achievement and Attainment) was popular as respondents agreed with raising aspirations for younger people in the borough, in tandem with providing more employment opportunities to help facilitate this. Ways to achieve this, including supporting young people through local apprenticeships and graduate schemes, scored highly. A large emphasis was also placed on vocational training and the importance of it instead of, or with support through more traditional academic channels. However, some respondents felt that their communities were excluded from these promises in the Borough Plan as specific mentions are only made

for the Black, African, Caribbean and Somali communities. Suggestions were made that we should also mention newer, emerging communities into this outcome.



Strategic Priority 5 – A Healthier Brent

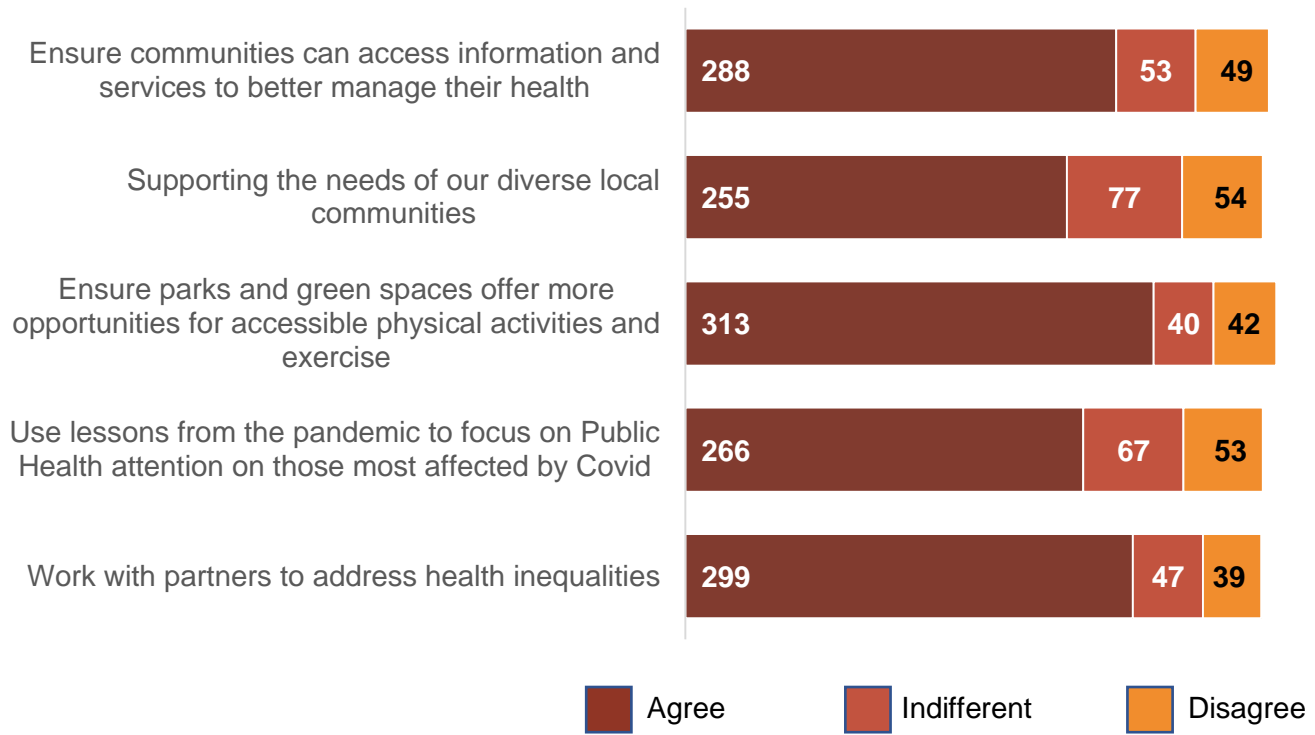
In response to **Priority 5** residents wanted to see further work with partners to address health inequalities, as well as ensuring all communities could access information and better manage their health. Responses were focused more on delivery and access of services rather than community engagement.

Respondents wanted to ensure the borough’s parks and green spaces offered opportunities for accessible physical activities and exercise. The delivery and promotion of outdoor gym and exercise areas were high on their list of priorities.

A major concern with many respondents was around access to NHS services, particularly access to face-to-face GP appointments. The general feeling is that GPs are not accessible and longer waiting times for appointments need to be addressed immediately.

Tacking mental health was also mentioned as a concern for our residents. Numerous comments were made regarding mental health issues in the community both in adults and young people. It is felt that the Council can do more to promote existing initiatives and treatments available as well as working closer with the NHS and other partners to ensure delivery of therapies and education on how to manage mental health issues such as depression, gambling, and opiate use.

Several respondents made comments regarding Covid-19 vaccines and misinformation that has and still circulates through independent community channels. There was a general feeling that the Council can still do more to educate residents on the effectiveness of the vaccines and subsequent boosters.



What did people have to say about Brent?

This section captures key findings from the qualitative engagement and exercises that were undertaken which includes activity such as workshops, focus groups, meetings and events with residents and partners. Through slightly different approaches and questions, based on the audience, each exercise explored and aimed to understand:

- Feedback on the draft priorities
- The audience's priorities and the issues that mattered to them
- How we can work together to realise and achieve our collective ambitions for Brent

Residents and partners were generally positive about the draft priorities, finding that the key issues and components were present. However, there were clear areas within the draft ambitions that should be reframed, updated or amplified. These key areas are detailed in the themes below.

Environment

This theme encompasses feedback centred around 'clean' and 'green'. The clear overarching reflection across all forms of qualitative engagement was the need to amplify and strengthen our commitments around climate change, including reference to the activity undertaken over the last few years to frame these ambitions, and to be more transparent around how we will make the borough cleaner. This theme includes concerns, suggestions and ideas around the following issues:

- Air quality – being clear around commitments to reduce emissions and being more ambitious in our action and targets to improve air quality.
- Active travel – in conjunction with feedback around air quality, many people wanted to see more actions around improving active travel. For example, extending cycle lanes, encouraging active travel measures and a suggestion that Brent further aligns itself with Transport for London's walking and cycling strategy to encourage more active travel in the borough.
- Fly-tipping and littering – This issue was raised both in relation to the visible cleanliness of the borough and ensuring we are clearer on how we can address this, in addition to the secondary impact of fly-tipping on the natural environment. To reduce littering, suggestions were made around employing a stricter framework to greater enforce penalties against things like littering, fly tipping, dog fouling and street drinking, to deter residents from engaging in these behaviours. Additionally, some points were raised about bins being emptied more regularly.

"If Brent employed more officers to patrol and issue fines, the people dropping rubbish would pay fines which could be reinvested in keeping streets cleaner".

- Green energy – The Council could better explore options around green energy, particularly as a result of increased energy prices due to the cost-of-living crisis.

"As the price for electricity & gas explodes we should be doing more to cut those costs".

Crime and Safety

This theme is centred around the importance of feeling safe and being clearer, within the Borough Plan, about our activity around community safety. This theme includes concerns, suggestions and ideas around the following issues:

- Feeling safe – this was an issue for all audiences. We heard an overwhelming response from young people that they would like to see more street lighting to improve safety at night, particularly for young

women, and had concerns about violence and safety on public transport. Others said that they would like to see more CCTV in areas of the borough where crime was highest.

- Anti-social behaviour – many spoke about anti-social behaviour across the borough and the need to create safe environments on high streets. People describe a range of different issues, namely substance misuse.

Housing

The theme captures a range of feedback linked to housing, including housing quality and stock and population density. This theme includes concerns, suggestions and ideas around the following issues:

- Housing stock – many people aligned this to environmental issues, namely the adapting the Council's housing stock to the issues posed by climate change, including insulation and improved energy efficiency in homes. There were also concerns around the rise of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) and would like to see these reduced.
- Housing quality – this issue is twofold:
 - Some people are concerned the boroughs population density is having a detrimental impact on the quality of housing available to residents and the possible effects on access to public services and, more broadly, community cohesion.
 - Other feedback focused on aesthetics and affordability, stating they would like to see greener front gardens in the borough, with the dual purpose of improving the aesthetic landscape of local areas, as well as helping to tackle the climate emergency. In conjunction with this, people also referred to the high cost of housing in the borough, with private renting being more expensive and leading to being unable to afford a better home with more outdoor space.

Children and Young People

This theme encompasses key points linked to young people - generally, there was a feeling that the Borough Plan lacked enough focus on this area. This theme includes concerns, suggestions and ideas around the following issues:

- Skills development and employment opportunities – many respondents wanted to see young people provided with further opportunities outside of school to help shape and realise their ambitions, in addition to help prevent them from falling into anti-social behaviour or gangs. Aligned with this, some also expressed that there should be more jobs made available in Brent for young people, as well as providing enterprise and entrepreneurial skills, building on opportunities already available in the borough.

“Kids need more funding so they aren't searching for it elsewhere”

“Building on programmes already delivered in the borough, children and young people should learn enterprise and entrepreneurship skills in order to be prepared for work and the future of work”

- Local and specialist activities and facilities - Some people wanted to see more youth clubs in Brent, as well as monthly days out for children and teenagers, a type of initiative that happens in other London boroughs. During an exercise with young people, we heard that they would like to see more youth clubs and sports facilities in the borough. Additionally, some people spoke specifically around Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) provision – this was in reference ensuring the needs of SEND children are reflected with in Council decisions and seeing more facilities in Brent for families who required SEND support, particularly in the 16 and over age group.

Healthy Communities

This theme includes several issues that capture the value of community cohesion and the importance of health and social care. This theme includes concerns, suggestions and ideas around the following issues:

- Community cohesion – people recognise and value the diverse range of communities across Brent. To support our communities and encourage greater integration across them, some respondents expressed that they would like to see further social hubs in the Borough for all ages and communities, in conjunction with improving our green spaces and community spaces as a means of fostering a greater feeling of togetherness in the borough. Additionally, some felt that there should be further spaces designed for young children, similar to the playground around Wembley, outside the London Designer Outlet.

“We have a lot of isolation, young people with no space, older people with nowhere to go, and yet a wealth of knowledge, community spirit, and demographics with so much to offer”

- Investing in Brent, beyond Wembley – associated with ideas around community cohesion, many also voiced their concerns and perceptions around the borough being Wembley-centric i.e. receiving greater attention and investment. People want reassurance that areas outside of Wembley Park, such as Kilburn and Harlesden, would be fairly represented going forward, and receive similar levels of investment. This sentiment was also noted at the Brent Partnership event, with some stakeholders feeling as though ‘Prosperity, Pride and Belonging in Brent’ was more relevant to Wembley than the rest of the borough.
- Health and social care – there were several perspectives associated with this area, some of which also align with other emerging themes:
 - Both the Brent Integrated Care Partnership and Health and Wellbeing Board referenced the importance of aligning the Borough Plan with the Health and Wellbeing Strategy to ensure partners continue to work together to achieve our collective ambitions for Brent - for example ensuring health services, with other ‘anchor institutions, employ more local people. Additionally, partners agreed to establish and maintain a dialogue with other organisations across Brent to ensure we strengthen relationships as we continue to deliver key services within a difficult financial context.
 - Accessibility to health services was raised by some people, this included increasing capacity in the community to support vulnerable and elderly people to help with transport to medical appointments, making phone calls and accessing online medical services. Additionally, others wanted to see more communication from health services in different languages – this was raised specifically by the Romanian community but may also be applicable to other areas.

Roads and Transport

Key issues raised with in this theme were around Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs) and accessibility for cyclists. This theme includes concerns, suggestions and ideas around the following issues:

- LTNs – this continues to be a polarised issue with some residents agreeing that there should be further LTNs in the borough, in line with traffic targets from the Mayor of London, as well as increasing the safety of cyclists. Conversely, other residents disagreed that LTNs were the correct approach for Brent, considering them inconvenient and an eyesore. Some respondents shared ideas around reducing traffic, for instance using more ‘car clubs’ in the borough, which would reduce the number of parked cars on streets, in addition to opening up the potential for the free space to be utilised for bike docking stations.

“If done well and consulted properly LTNs can enhance a neighbourhood (as has been seen in other areas of London).”

- Cycling accessibility and safety – the issue of safe cycling was raised by other stakeholders, with residents wanting to see further protected cycle lanes, particularly along the A5 and in the Chamberlyne Road area of the borough. There was also a suggestion around Brent introducing its own rental bike scheme, in conjunction with the South Kilburn regeneration scheme and in other areas which do not fall under the Transport for London docking stations area.

“A protected cycle lane on both sides would give more separation and protection for pedestrian and of course make it much safer and pleasant for Cyclists”

Local Democracy and Resident Engagement

This theme captures feedback and ideas around the voluntary sector and participation in decision making. This theme includes concerns, suggestions and ideas around the following issues:

- Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector – organisations from this sector expressed that their role in supporting residents and communities, independently and with the Council, should be reflected within the Borough Plan. Additionally, some residents also thought that the Council could do more work with Mutual Aid Groups, who had played a key role in the response to the pandemic.
- Council decision-making – some people said they would like to see greater transparency in the Council’s decision-making processes, including how money was spent and how resident complaints were dealt with. Furthermore, young people expressed that they would like more opportunities to get involved in work that the Council were doing, as well as having a greater say in Council decision making processes.

Aligned with the word cloud, the following themes have been identified from detailed responses to the survey question, they have been roughly ordered based on frequency and prevalence.

Clean, Green and Safe

“A cleaner, greener, cycle friendly, reduced or traffic free borough with tangible investments in deprived areas.”

Residents want to feel proud of the areas they live and for many, as reflected in the word cloud, this aligned with the collective theme: establishing a Cleaner, Greener and Safer Brent. When broken down into individual components respondents shared the following key points:

- A Cleaner Borough. Many residents wanted to see a visibly cleaner borough with less traffic and more active travel. This will help address poor air quality, an issue that is high on the agenda for many residents.
- A Greener Brent. Similar to establishing a greener borough, respondents also want a visibly greener borough with more trees and greenery. For many, to help unlock this, this includes having better maintained parks and open spaces.
- Feeling Safe. Most responses linked to safety centred around the importance of feeling safe, particularly for women and young people. Women’s safety was identified as an area which could improve in 2027, with survey respondents saying that they did not feel comfortable walking around areas of Brent at night, and that more access to information and support for women’s safety could be provided. Aligned with this, responses referred to the need to reduce and prevent crime, focusing particularly on anti-social behaviour, violent crime and drugs.

Vibrant Communities

Residents want Brent’s communities to thrive, central to this is the diversity across the borough and the vibrancy this brings. This theme encompasses two components – fostering greater community cohesion and inclusion and continuing to harness diversity.

- Diverse and Inclusive. People wanted to see Brent continue being a diverse and inclusive place and by 2027 envisaged an adaptable borough that could change with the times, aware of and responsive to the needs of residents and inclusive of the different communities that live and work in Brent. Associated with this, respondents also wanted to see digital inclusion - cultivating a creative, innovative and technologically advanced borough with more opportunities for online access for all residents.
- Community Cohesion and Inclusion. To complement calls to harness the levels of diversity, residents recognised the importance of belonging and how establishing cohesive communities can help ensure this. Many respondents championed the idea of greater integration within communities and more inclusivity, with some suggesting further links with the Council and faith groups in order to foster these relationships.

Affordable Housing

“Brent should put more focus on affordable housing”

Many residents wanted to see more housing in the borough, dealing with rogue landlords and providing a safe and decent standard of housing for all. Residents also wanted to see more affordable and ‘better’ housing that is supported by accessible infrastructure. Additionally, there were some conflicting views as some respondents wanted to see fewer tower blocks in the borough, whilst others appreciated the need to build more homes due to a shortage of housing.

Young People

“A multi-diverse, modern community with opportunities for all. More work experience and degree apprenticeship opportunity for the best start in careers.”

Respondents wanted to see Brent creating more opportunities and work experience to support young people into employment. This is both in an academic sense as well as providing incentives for young people to stay in Brent to work, such as providing more local graduate schemes and apprenticeships to keep talented young people in Brent. Additionally, people wanted to re-establishing youth clubs and local activities for young people.

When young people themselves were asked what the borough should look like in 2027, most young people expressed their hope to see Brent being safer and cleaner place where they will be provided with more opportunities.

Creating more jobs and developing skills:

“Brent should be a destination for business, commerce and residents to thrive, with money reinvested into the community”

People want to see more and better paid jobs in the borough and to accompany this, supporting local people to develop new and existing skills. Rejuvenated and prosperous high streets also have an important role to play for residents, as an opportunity to support local businesses.

Health and happiness

“A safe, caring borough that provides more services for those with mental health problems in the borough”

Respondents tended to align being healthy with being ‘happy’. Many respondents wanted to see a greater focus on mental health in the borough, with less waiting times for services and further awareness and signposting around men’s mental health services. This was also echoed by stakeholders including the Brent Integrated Care Partnership, who wanted to see a focus on mental health in the borough, particularly as a result of an increase in waiting times for mental health services after the Covid-19 Pandemic and lockdowns.

Annex A - Engagement Summary

Draft Borough Plan feedback – events and survey

Event	Attendees/number	Additional Notes
Workshops and focus groups	73	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workshops open to residents and specific communities: 30 November and 8 December Pensioners focus group: 7 December Partner and stakeholder event: 9 January
Library drop-in sessions	Estimated 105	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kilburn Library Drop-in Session - 8 November Wembley Hub Drop-in Session - 23 November Willesden Library Drop-in Session - 8 December
Partners events	Estimated over 350	<p>Includes but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing Department Licensing events Healthwatch event Pride of Brent Youth Awards Gladstone Park Primary School Brent Multi-faith forum Local Democracy week event Brent Connects x5 VCSE Question Time Disability Forum Borough of Sanctuary group Brent Youth Parliament Brent Health and Wellbeing Board Forward Together and other internal staff sessions
Survey responses	417	<p>402 online survey responses</p> <p>15 physical survey responses</p>

Draft Borough Plan Outreach

Borough Plan Outreach		
Communication	Number Contacted	Description
Borough Plan Email	Over 13,500	Email detailing the Borough Plan, the survey, Focus Group events and Partnership Events sent out to organisations, residents, and partners in Brent
Calls detailing the Borough Plan survey and events	400	400 organisations contacted via phone with follow up emails sent out after the phone call regarding the Borough Plan survey, focus group events and partnership event

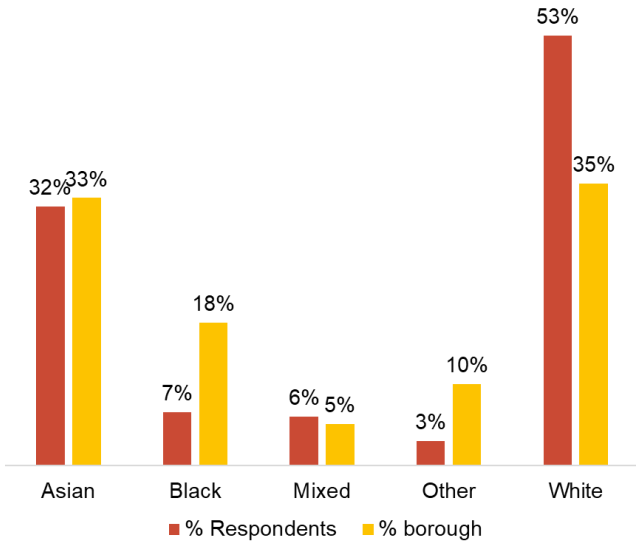
Paper Surveys in Brent Libraries	150 paper surveys placed in Brent hubs and libraries to promote inclusivity	
Media communications	Over 6000, sharing information regarding the Borough Plan survey and events	

Annex B – Demographic breakdown of survey responses

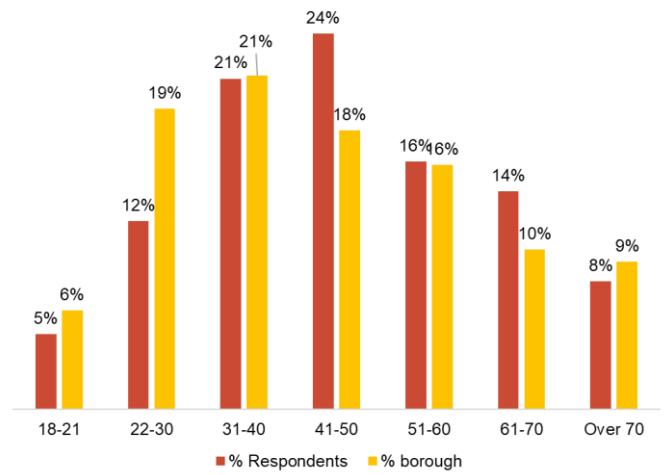
Of the 417 online surveys completed, many did not provide demographic information. The most completed questions were on age (228 responses, 55% of all surveys), gender (194 responses, 47%) and religion (193 responses, 46%). The least completed questions were whether the respondent has any caring responsibilities (158, 38%), postcode (156, 37%), and whether any illness affects their ability to carry out day to day activities (145, 35%).

- Ethnicity: Black (11 responses, 7% vs 18% of borough population) and Other (5 responses, 3% vs 10% of borough population) ethnic groups were underrepresented in survey responses. White groups were overrepresented, with 88 respondents making up 53% of the total responses compared to 35% of the borough population. White groups were predominantly White British, who alone accounted for 39% of total respondents.
- Age: Age is broadly in line with the borough population, with an underrepresentation of residents aged 22-30 (25 responses, 12% vs 19% of population). There were also six responses from residents under 18 which have not been included in the graph due to not having a specific age range to compare them to.
- Postcode: Most responses came from NW10 (48, 32%). HA0 was the only area with a significant underrepresentation, with 10 responses making up 7% of the total, compared to 13% of the borough overall.
- Respondent type: 226 respondents identified themselves as Brent residents (84%). There were 11 responses from Council employees, eight from councillors, seven on behalf of the voluntary sector and four on behalf of a school or college.
- Gender: 51% (92) of respondents were male and 49% (90) were female.
- LGBT+: 11% (17) of respondents who completed this question identified as LGBT+.
- Gender Identity: Four residents responded saying their gender identity did not match the sex they were assigned at birth, 2.3% of the 171 respondents for this question.
- Religion: Top responses for this question were no religion (59, 34% vs 14% of population), Christian (53, 31% vs 39% of population) or Hindu (28, 16% vs 16% of population). Although Muslims make up the second largest religious group in Brent with 21% of the overall population, they only accounted for 16 (9%) of survey responses.
- Disability: 18% of respondents said they had a disability, slightly above the 14.1% of the population (note: this is compared to 2011 census data as 2021 has yet to be published). Most people (19, 42%) declined to state the nature of their disability.
- Language: English was not the first language for 41 (25.5%) of the 161 respondents.
- Caring responsibilities: 23 out of 158 respondents (15%) said they had caring responsibilities for another person.

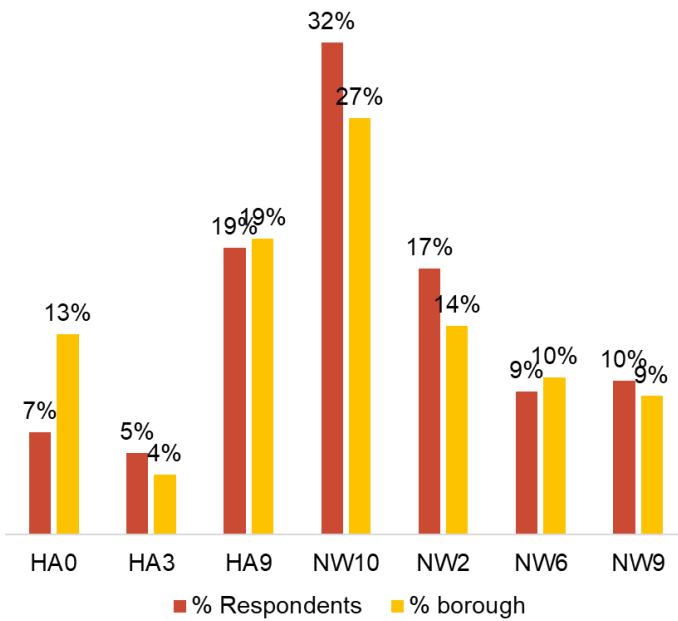
Respondents by Ethnicity



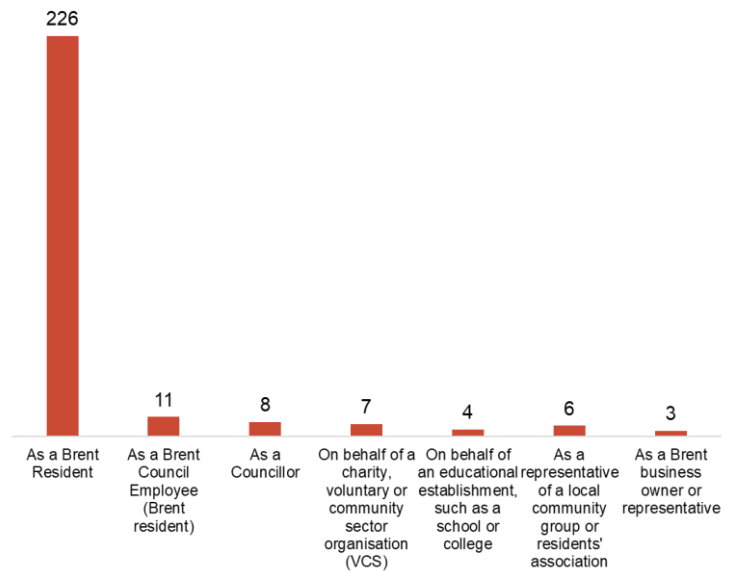
Respondents by Age



Respondents by Postcode



Respondent Type





Moving Brent Forward Together for **2023-2027**



Brent Borough Plan foreword

It gives me great pleasure to introduce Brent's Borough Plan for the next four years.

This document is informed by your priorities, expressed through your vote at the ballot box last year and through your participation in the Resident Attitudes Survey that over 1,000 people completed at the end of 2021. Throughout this plan, my eyes remain on the same principle as always – to leave no resident behind. This will be more important than ever, as we stare down the cost of living emergency together.

The plan on the following pages sets out the direction of travel Brent Council will take over the coming years. It is a snapshot of what we want to achieve and the path we will take to get there together.

What is still unclear is our destination. As you will recognise, four years is a long time in the world of today, where every day brings a new unknown and a different crisis to respond to. With every change comes opportunity and Brent is a borough of unlimited opportunities.

Over the last ten years, Brent Council has needed to strip out close to £200m from its budgets. We have needed to be agile, cut back our workforce and reduce spend. We have innovated, using new technology and modern ways of working. We have streamlined senior management and worked ever more closely with community groups and residents.

Our ambitions for Brent can regrettably diminish in line with inflation. The same rising cost of living that has affected us all individually has also cut our already shrinking pot of funding even further. Increased inflation does not only drive up the price of everyday essentials, it stretches the cost of goods, services, supplies and running buildings too.

This has obvious effects on what it is we can deliver for you.

With all that said, we will look to continue our record as the Council of the Year, the award we received back in 2020 – recognising that despite the challenges, Brent Council will always take tough decisions in seeking to ensure that no one is left behind. We will continue to prioritise the most vulnerable in our community and make sure that essential services like waste collection, libraries, education, public health and care are protected.

In Brent, like every London borough – we face a constant balancing act between the many challenges that await us. We face unprecedented demand in housing services; many more residents requiring round the clock care in later life; an increase in interventions by children's social services; and the ever present need to keep our borough safe, secure and clean.

We have so much to be hopeful for though. We are a place of renewal; filled with people who come from far and wide, people who wish for a brighter future. Our children attend more Ofsted 'Good' and 'Outstanding' schools than ever. We will seek to deliver more genuinely affordable homes than any other London Borough and we will re-affirm our commitment to do whatever we can to respond to the Climate and Ecological Emergency before us.

Brent Council exists to serve you, our residents. I hope that our new Borough Plan shows that we are committed to supporting everyone who lives and works in Brent. Together we will build a better Brent, with a brighter future.

Cllr Muhammed Butt
Leader of Brent Council



Building a Better Brent – our journey

In Brent we think it is important to always talk to you, our residents, about what our plans should be now and in the future. In 2019 we spoke and engaged with residents (you) across Brent to decide on the five priorities to build a Better Brent. Since this, we also updated the plan during Covid. We wanted to make sure we supported you, the people of Brent, in the best way we could, by responding to the pandemic's impact on our communities.

Here are the previous priorities and what we have achieved so far:

Every opportunity to succeed

We focused on equipping our young people for the future. We wanted to improve attainment and exam results for our young people who are in or have left care, our young men of Black Caribbean heritage and to help young people to have more employment opportunities. We invested £44 million to upgrade our schools, adding 427 places for our young people with special education needs and disabilities. We have helped 1,000 residents into employment, including over 200 apprenticeships and 90 kick-start places.

A future built for everyone, an economy fit for all

We focused on making Brent a great and affordable place to live and work. We are committed to investing in our towns and high streets and bringing jobs into Brent. We wanted to provide safe, affordable housing for our residents. Over the last four years, our council homes programme has built 871 homes. We have introduced licencing laws to protect our renters' safety and wellbeing. We repaired over 128km of roads and pavement.

A cleaner, more considerate Brent

We focused on how we could play our part in tackling climate change and improve air quality. We developed a Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy to drive our ambition to become carbon neutral by 2030 and reducing the carbon footprint on our estate. We have also started to utilise our Carbon Offset Fund by spending £500,000 to make residents' homes more energy efficient and run green education programmes. Further measures include installing over 21,000 energy efficient streetlights, fitting 515 electric vehicle charging points and delivering over 100 new bike hangars. We have also planted 4,533 trees, 22 wild-flower meadows, and bee corridors to boost biodiversity and provide the green and natural infrastructure that provides a host of co-benefits to our residents.

A Borough where we can all feel safe, secure, happy, and healthy

We focused on crime, safeguarding, physical activity, and culture. We aimed to reduce anti-social behaviour and violent crime, with reported incidents falling over the last four years. We were the fourth lowest borough for resident physical activity, so we aimed to improve this. We have installed 20 open space gyms and offered free instructor-led sessions. We want Brent to be a borough where culture is celebrated and vibrant. We were awarded the Borough of Culture in 2020, which our culture services delivered successfully.

Strong foundations

We focused on making Brent a digital place, where our services meet the needs of residents and are value for money. We created a new way of working with our voluntary and community sector. Through our digital strategy we set up a fund to provide residents with a free laptop, access to the

internet, and training. We have given over £16 million in funding to our communities. We created a social value and ethical procurement policy, which means our suppliers have agreed to invest in Brent.

Our plan for the next four years

The new Borough Plan builds on our work and progress over the last four years but recognises that we have more to do. The Borough Plan will be a guide for the things we will prioritise and focus attention on as a council, as we try to make Brent the best place it can be.

We will support our residents and businesses through the cost of living crisis and help everyone to recover following the pandemic. We recognise that we need a Borough Plan that builds on the lessons we have learned and prepares us for the challenges facing our residents, communities, partners and businesses. We must also be honest and acknowledge that the cost of living crisis will impact our resources and capacity to provide everything we have in the past. We have listened to, and will continue to listen to residents and partners to decide the best way for us to respond to any upcoming challenges together.

We will continue to work in partnership with Voluntary and Community Sector organisations, and we recognise that they are a vital part of Brent. We will make use of their skills and expertise and support VCS organisations to be a sustainable and thriving sector.

We would like to build on the strong community spirit in Brent, which saw the council and residents working together so effectively during the pandemic. We want the council and the community to continue to work together, building on these strong foundations and making sure your voices are heard and influence the services we deliver. To capture your voices, in recent months we have consulted:

- Our young people,
- Our residents who are carers,
- Our residents with disabilities,
- Our older people,
- Our homeless community,
- Our business community,
- Our key partners e.g. NHS,
- Our community and voluntary sector,
- Our residents who are in low social-economic situation,
- Our staff union representatives.

To help present a picture for Brent and demonstrate how our ambitions are informed by data, we have put together the information we have gathered in one document published alongside the Borough Plan. We have called this document an evidence base as it tells us the make-up of our borough, our needs, our diversity, our uniqueness, and also includes opportunities for Brent.

We will continue to review our evidence base and the use of data through the development of our upcoming Data Strategy which will support our vision of becoming an organisation that maximises the value of data within all that we do.

By building on what you told us and using the evidence, we commit to delivering a Borough Plan 2023-27 that prioritises:

1. Prosperity and Stability in Brent
2. A Cleaner, Greener Future
3. Thriving Communities
4. The Best Start in Life

5. A Healthier Brent

Strategic Priority 1: Prosperity and Stability in Brent

The cost of living crisis is affecting everyone in Brent, with residents and communities with the most complex needs being hit the hardest. In our resident attitudes survey, one in five people expect their finances will get worse over the next year. We expect greater demand for our support as energy costs and use of foodbanks continues to increase.

We want to tackle inequality and ease the pressure of the rising cost of living. This means continuing to work with partners and building on our existing joint plans to reduce poverty and ensure everyone has access to direct support when they need it – whether it be financial, digital, welfare-centred advice or for employment. This is also about making sure our residents and communities with more complex needs receive the best possible support. To enable this, we will continue our progress to be a Digital Place and Digital Council that make it easier for residents to access support and for us all to interact.

We will create more accessible and genuinely affordable housing. We want to be the leaders in London for inclusive housing development that works better for everyone. This means buying houses; building new social, accessible and affordable homes and improving our existing estates. We will also continue working with partners to increase the supply of private rented accommodation.

We want to be clear that Brent is open for business. This means building stronger partnerships to ensure our high streets and local organisations are able to thrive. To achieve this, we will support our business community in providing and developing appropriate training. This will help residents gain the high quality skills they need to access and secure local well-paid jobs.

DESIRED OUTCOME 1: Easing the Cost of Living Crisis

We will:

- Work together with partners across Brent to reduce poverty. This includes spreading awareness, improving access to services and support and providing tools and resource to help residents improve their lives.
- Continue to develop and deliver a range of initiatives to best support, empower and equip residents. This includes the resident support fund and digital inclusion offers and new exploring new ideas such as a Community Shop model and upskilling of front-line professionals to provide holistic support.
- Deliver welfare support services from Brent Hubs to ensure residents access advice and guidance, help them to understand their rights and entitlements, promote Credit Unions and provide support that encourage small businesses to thrive.
- Provide tailored resources to those residents with the most complex needs to ensure our services are as accessible as possible and remove any unnecessary barriers.
- Work with partners, to create more opportunities for residents to develop skills and secure higher-paid jobs in growth markets, for example tech and green skills.
- Work with partners across the borough in developing a 'Built for Zero' approach to addressing rough sleeping which ensures there are fewer people moving into rough sleeping than there are being supported out of it.

DESIRED OUTCOME 2: Safe, Secure and Decent Housing

We will:

- Continue with our pledge to deliver 1,000 new council homes and be leaders in London in building inclusive and genuinely more affordable homes. This includes our pledge to deliver 5,000 new affordable homes within the borough, of which 1,700 will be directly delivered by the Council, by 2028
- Improve the quality of housing in Brent across the private sector and our own housing stock.

DESIRED OUTCOME 3: Brent for Business

We will:

- Improve the way we work with businesses to better support our high streets by increasing footfall.
- Lead by example and work with partners to employ more local people and create more opportunities to develop skills and training that help people to secure well-paid jobs.
- Work with neighbouring boroughs to attract more large businesses to north-west London and support them with local recruitment, skills and training.
- Better understand our business community so that we can raise awareness of appropriate training and employment opportunities for local people.
- Supporting community wealth building by encouraging retention of investment in the Brent economy and connecting local businesses to help them access supply chain opportunities.
- Empower businesses to become greener and more environmentally sustainable in their operations, through the launch of a new climate charter for businesses, access to a carbon footprinting tool, and grants/audits to reduce energy usage.
- Use our planning powers and land ownership opportunities to deliver more joined up projects and services with localities and neighbourhoods. Learn from good examples such as the Church End Council led development that will bring an additional £3m Social Value into the area.
- Ensure our social value policy encourages all the organisations we buy services from to provide benefit to our local communities, through jobs, skills, apprenticeships and training places.



What Success Will Look Like

- Greater accessibility for our welfare support and advice programmes, including Brent Hubs, Family Wellbeing Centres, Resident Support Fund, Digital Inclusion, Fuel Vouchers, Brent Well and Warm service, Green Doctors.
- More council homes and more temporary accommodation provided by the council.
- More genuinely affordable and accessible homes available to families and residents.
- A digitally included borough with access to devices, internet connectivity, digital skills and a network of digital champions.
- Greater availability and uptake of skills development and training initiatives.
- More people securing work through training and development provided through Brent Works and Brent Start.
- The council continues its commitment to, and encourages more businesses and partners to pay the London Living Wage.
- More people are employed in well-paid jobs and an increase in average hourly wage.
- Achieving the 'functional built to zero' definition which means there are fewer people moving into rough sleeping than there are being supported out of it.
- Greater collaboration with business on green and climate change initiatives e.g. through the Climate Charter for Businesses
- More local investment and social value commitments from our suppliers in Brent.



Strategic Priority 2: A Cleaner, Greener Future

We want to make Brent cleaner. However, if we want to deliver quality public services such as street cleansing, bin collections and park maintenance, we need you to tell us what you want and need from these services. We need to ensure there are ways for you to do that, which give you the opportunity to influence decisions on council services and activity.

We want Brent to continue to grow, prosper and be a place where people want to live and work. To support this aspiration, we will do two things:

- **Ensure sustainability is central to the growth of our borough and local economy**
- **Invest to make our streets cleaner and healthier.**

We are excited to continue working with our residents, partners and communities to make sure Brent is a carbon neutral area by 2030 and for us to be one of the most biodiverse urban boroughs in London. If we achieve our objectives, we can future proof the borough to effects of climate change and bring about positive changes to our local community on many of the issues that matter to people such as cleaner air, greener spaces, warmer homes, healthier travel and a thriving local economy.

That's why we are taking a pioneering and exciting approach to tackling climate change through the delivery of Brent's first 'Green Neighbourhoods' projects, with a view to expanding these across the borough in the years to come.

Cleaner and greener environments are also the key to communities becoming healthier. We want to enhance and improve green infrastructure on the public realm, deploy new models of working to keep our streets cleaner and support residents' mental and physical health through enhanced active travel infrastructure and continuing to make our award-winning parks even better.

The importance of transitioning to a Low Carbon Circular Economy model is also central to tackling the climate and ecological emergency. We will therefore prioritise new actions and initiatives that will help to reduce carbon emissions from the commercial/industrial sector whilst simultaneously supporting businesses in ways which will help with the rising cost of business. For example, by cutting their operating costs, growing their operations, and creating more secure and sustainable 'green' job opportunities.

DESIRED OUTCOME 1: A Cleaner Borough

We will:

- Offer provision of high quality responsive universal services to all residents, ensuring we reduce negative impacts on the environment while delivering high standards and meeting our Customer Promise - for example, clean streets, waste collection, skills, parks and libraries.
- Invest in our roads and pavement improvement to help keep our streets clean.

DESIRED OUTCOME 2: A Climate-friendly, Sustainable Borough

We will:

- Roll-out the council's first Green Neighbourhoods, working with local communities and providing the foundation for greener, more sustainable local areas.
- Deliver the actions in our Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy to tackle climate change by reducing consumption, resources and waste; accelerating the transition to sustainable travel; reducing emissions from our homes and buildings; and enhanced green infrastructure.
- Lead by example by retrofitting and reducing energy usage across our estate and operations, developing a comprehensive plan to be a carbon neutral council by 2030.
- Work with partners, through the West London Alliance, to create more opportunities for residents to develop skills and secure higher-paid jobs in growth markets, for examples tech and green skills.

DESIRED OUTCOME 3: Keeping Brent on the Move

We will:

- Deliver the Long Term Transport Strategy and Healthy Streets programme to encourage more active travel, including walking and cycling in safe, inclusive, designed environments.

What Success Will Look Like

- Successful implementation of Green Neighbourhood projects
- Implementation of all of the actions within our Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy Delivery Plans
- A growing and active Brent Environmental Network, with localised networks supporting the delivery of climate action across the borough
- Maintain our recycling targets as a proportion of overall waste and improved outcomes from the mobilization of contracts as part of our Redefining Local Services Programme
- An increase in residents walking and cycling.
- Achieving our roadways and pavement maintenance targets.

Strategic Priority 3: Thriving Communities

We want you, as a community, to have opportunities to take part in the council's decision-making processes. Brent Connects is a central part of our approach to this, as it allows residents to come together, discuss what matters most to them, and work with us to develop and test new ideas. We will continue to work with faith leaders, Brent hubs, and other voluntary and community sector partners to engage with under-represented groups. We know that there are hundreds of Voluntary and Community Organisations providing support, advice, recreation activities and education in the borough. We want to strengthen our work with these organisations so that your involvement locally is actively used.

You have told us that safety should be the most important priority for the council. We commit to working hard to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour. Prevention is essential so we want to tackle the causes of crime. We will help people leave criminal lifestyles and we will pursue justice for victims. We will also work with our communities to build trust, prevent criminality and improve our response to crime.

DESIRED OUTCOME 1: Enabling our Communities

We will:

- Introduce and deliver our new Community Engagement Framework. The framework is our plan to engage with people at a neighbourhood level to better capture and understand residents' voices, encourage greater involvement in council activities, and use different methods to do this.
- Support the Voluntary and Community Sector with clear communication and forums to provide insight, data and case studies of the lived experiences of residents.
- Deliver grant funding schemes which enable local people to lead on community activities that make measurable differences to improve local communities.
- Utilise Brent's diverse cultures to celebrate and acknowledge key events and encourage residents to come together in celebration and commemoration.
- Use our Social Value measures to bring additional value to the work delivered by VCS organisations.

DESIRED OUTCOME 2: A Safer Borough

We will:

- Work with the Safer Brent Partnership to strengthen our early intervention approach to community safety, agreeing multi-agency interventions to reduce crime, exploitation and all forms of violence against women and girls.
- Keep our streets safe, by working with Partners to reduce harm to our community, preventing re-offending and bringing prolific offenders to justice
- Tackle anti-social behaviour, by working with drug and alcohol outreach services, businesses and residents. Ensuring that we identify emerging hotspots, intervene early and design out crime and anti-social behaviour.

DESIRED OUTCOME 3: A Representative Workforce

We will:

- Continue to strengthen our workforce and its ability to deliver fair and equitable services through development and leadership programmes, ensuring the workforce is representative of the borough at all levels where we can.

What Success Will Look Like

- More local residents in council jobs, including those in graduate or entry level roles.
- Improve the representativeness of senior management, compared to the Brent population, within the organisation.
- Reduced incidents of anti-social behaviour and fear of crime.
- Increase the number of residents taking an active part in Brent Connects meetings.
- Increase the number of engagement events that take place across the community – so that resident can share their views on things that matter in their local areas frequently.
- Develop the Community Directory as a shared resource with community organisations to provide accurate information that is regularly updated.



Strategic Priority 4: The Best Start in Life

We want our babies, children and young people to get the best start in life. We want them to receive the support they need when they need it. To do this, we will work through our Family Wellbeing Centres, with partners, communities, businesses and residents, and in particular our young residents. We also want to ensure our children and young people are safe and will aim to achieve this by improving our approach to safeguarding, including for those who are transitioning to adulthood.

We will raise attainment and aspirations. Working with schools and partners we will make sure access to education is fair and equal. We also want our young people to receive a quality education, which develops their skills and allows them to achieve their potential and realise their aspirations. This includes ensuring there is tailored support for our Black African, Caribbean and Somali communities to harness their talent and potential. We will also deliver our SEND strategy, which includes investing in additional SEND places and opportunities for post-16 skills development for young people with SEND.

We want all our young people from all backgrounds to be seen and heard in our services. We will create more opportunities and spaces to empower our young people to have their say - for example, the Youth Advisory Group used their lived experience to design the leadership programme, and influence other priorities in the Black Community Action Plan. We will constantly review how we engage with our young people to ensure the voices of different groups of young people from across the borough can shape our services, from newly arrive refugees to long established communities; from young people with disabilities to those who belong to the LGBTQ+ community.

DESIRED OUTCOME 1: Raised Aspirations, Achievement and Attainment

We will:

- Supporting every child and young person to access high quality education.
- Raise aspirations and address any underachievement from age 0-25 by promoting inclusion and inclusive settings, schools and post-16 provision.
- Focus on young people from Black African, Caribbean and Somali communities, through the Black Community Action Plan initiatives to continue to develop future community leaders.
- Improve our approach and support around safeguarding, both in relation to contextual and transitional safeguarding
- Establish an integrated offer of early intervention and prevention for all families from conception to adulthood, delivered through our Family Wellbeing Centres. This includes tailored support available for those who need it most.
- Ensure the Children's Trust and Integrated Care System provide value for money and build better partnerships to improve our Children's Services.

DESIRED OUTCOME 2: Young People are Seen and Heard

We will:

- Enhance our existing young peoples' forums, including Brent Youth Parliament, School Councils, Care in Action and Care Leavers in Action (Brent's Children in Care Council) and Youth Advisory Groups by encouraging greater involvement of diverse groups and newly arrived residents.
- Encourage young people to become active in their communities and ensure their voices are central in our key sustainability projects.
- Directly engage with our young people across all service areas using approaches and methods outlined in the Community Engagement Framework.

What Success Will Look Like

- More young people leave education better equipped for future life.
- More your people have the skills and attributes for work, enabling them to make a positive contribution to their communities.
- More your people to enter employment including apprenticeships and graduate schemes.
- Improved opportunities and achievements for young people from Black African, Caribbean and Somali communities.
- Increased use and take up of Family Wellbeing Centre support and offers.
- More opportunities for young people to participate in decisions, including more engagement with young people and people from a range of different communities.



Strategic Priority 5: A Healthier Brent

The pandemic highlighted the health inequalities that exist in our communities. In Brent, we saw that there were more Covid cases and deaths in some groups, specifically: older people; men; Black and Asian people; and those living in more deprived areas. We know that there are a range of underlying factors such as housing, employment, and income that contribute to these inequalities. To tackle this, we want to establish ways to improve health outcomes for those who need it most.

We will learn from the pandemic. We will make sure our health and social care services meet local need and reduce health inequalities. We will combine efficient universal provision with tailored and targeted interventions for those communities who find our services hard to access. Developing those targeted interventions means engaging with our communities and health partners to understand the challenges and differences that exist. We will use this information to develop community-centred approaches and solutions. We also want to improve communication with our communities so our residents know how to access support and improve their health.

We want Brent to be a healthier and stronger borough where everyone can live independent, safe and happy lives. We can do this by supporting the most vulnerable and removing barriers all residents face to becoming physically active. This includes making our green spaces, walking, and cycling routes more accessible, friendly, inclusive, and well-maintained.

DESIRED OUTCOME 1: Tackling Health Inequalities

We will:

- Work with our local NHS and community and voluntary sector partners through the Brent borough based partnership to address health inequalities and to deliver priorities in the Health and Wellbeing Strategy.
- Ensure children's physical health, mental health and wellbeing are prioritised.
- Ensure all adults with care and support needs are able to access support and services and they are integrated with health, culturally competent and responsive to individual need.
- We will work with residents, as partners in their own care and support, to live independent, safe, happy and fulfilling lives
- Explore inequalities in access, outcome and experience in health and care by ethnicity, deprivation or disability and work with our communities to develop targeted plans to address these.
- Maintain preparedness to cope with public health emergencies.
- Work with NHS and partners to deliver more cross-sector working within services that impact on health, such as housing, mental health and community safety.
- Continue our community based work through Brent Health Matters and work with NHS partners to increase more community led approaches.
- Make sure Parks and Green spaces offer everyone opportunities for accessible physical activities and exercise.

DESIRED OUTCOME 2: Localised Services for Local Needs

We will:

- Create integrated community neighbourhood teams that will enable more locality-based decision-making and delivery of services that meet the needs of Brent's diverse localities.
- Strengthen our commissioning approach to prevention and wellbeing and ensure residents are involved in deciding local solutions.
- Support our Primary Care services to increase the level of support available through new and innovative approaches, including an increased role for community pharmacies.
- Support people to look after their mental health and wellbeing, and ensure our support for people with mental illness is holistic and responds to their physical health needs as well as their wider aspirations, for example employment and housing
- Continuing to support people to be cared for closer to home, by developing health and social care community services to help people, including those with complex needs, to live at home independently while also addressing key health issues including heart disease and respiratory conditions.
- Engage with communities to ensure they can access information and services to support them in managing their health better. This includes investing and working with our Voluntary Community Sector, community and partner organisations.
- Build on the successful methods of communication and engagement used during the pandemic, such as webinars with key speakers and social commentators for ongoing discussion with residents.

- Work with the NHS, the voluntary sector and residents to design and develop a community campaign to address the harmful use of alcohol across Brent. This includes continuing to offer those residents directly impacted by problematic drug and alcohol use access to our New Beginnings Treatment Services backed by a 24/7 helpline.

What Success Will Look Like

- More accessible facilities in public spaces.
- Reduced health inequalities, particularly for groups disproportionately impacted by Covid and through co-designed approaches with communities.
- More people enabled to sign up to GP practices.
- Improved outreach to communities and residents and more services provided in local community spaces.
- More people engaged with the Brent Health Matters team.
- More people supported to live in their own home
- Improved physical health, housing and employment outcomes for people accessing mental health services.
- More people accessing local community services and reduced demand for acute and emergency services.
- Increased number of local residents engaging with drug and alcohol treatment and recovery services.



Black Community Action Plan

In July 2020, Brent talked to its Black community about the inequalities they face. Together we developed our [Black Community Action Plan](#) to address these inequalities.

Brent Connects

[Brent Connects](#) is a space for local communities to come together, discuss the things that matter most to you and work with the council and its partners to develop and test new ideas that will improve the lives of Brent residents. There are five Brent Connects areas.

Brent Health Matters (BHM)

[Brent Health Matters](#) is a programme to reduce health inequalities. BHM works with the local communities to find out what services they want and need. It then delivers those services in a way which is easy for local residents to access.

Brent Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022-27

[The Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy](#) is the Brent Health and Wellbeing Board's collective vision and approach to reduce health inequalities and wider determinants of health inequalities.

Brent Hubs

[Brent Hubs](#) provide advice and support for residents in different locations across the borough.

Brent Customer Promise

[The Brent Customer Promise](#) is our commitment and promise. It sets out the standards of service you can expect from us whichever service you use.

Community gardens

A community garden is owned and run by the local community. It is often used to grow food.

Contextual safeguarding

An approach to safeguarding that recognises that young people may be at risk of significant harm not only within their home environment, but also outside it.

Data Strategy

The Council will be developing its first Data Strategy which will outline our approach for using data ethically, responsibly, safely and well. It will support us in realising our vision of becoming an organisation that maximises the value of data to innovate, improve services and deliver better outcomes for Brent.

Digital Council

Digital Council is a term used in our [Digital Strategy](#). It means that we are improving the way we use technology and data. By collecting data in an ethical and secure way we are using it to make our services and information more accessible, personalised and responsive.

Digital Place

Digital Place is a term used in our Digital Strategy. It means we are building a borough-wide digital infrastructure providing fast connection to the internet. It also means we are providing training to improve residents' digital skills.

Integrated Care Partnership (ICP)

The Integrated Care Partnership is a partnership of local health and care providers in Brent. Its aim is to improve local health and remove health inequalities.

Local Plan

The [Local Plan](#) is a collection of planning documents which sets out our strategy for future development in Brent

Long Term Transport Strategy 2015-35

[The Long Term Transport Strategy 2015-35](#) shares Brent's strategic direction for investment in transport throughout the borough over the period of 2015 to 2035.

Resident Support Fund

Brent's [Resident Support Fund](#) is a support fund available to residents who are in financial difficulty.

SEND

SEND is an acronym which stands for Special Educational Needs and Disability. You can view the Brent SEND Strategy 2021-25 [here](#). Our SEND strategy sets how we will support our young people with these needs from 2021-25

Transitional safeguarding

A safeguarding approach and response that addresses specific developmental, social and contextual needs from a person going from adolescence to adulthood.

West London Alliance

The [West London Alliance](#) is a partnership between seven London boroughs: Brent, Barnet, Ealing, Hammersmith and Fulham, Harrow, Hillingdon, and Hounslow.





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Borough Plan 2023-27

Evidence Base



Introduction

This pack will be used as a supplementary appendix to the Brent Borough Plan 2023-27. This document should also be view alongside the Borough Plan Engagement Findings Report 2023 which captures key feedback, ideas and suggestions during the draft Borough Plan 2023-27 consultation.

The evidence base aims to contextualise the overarching ambitions and priorities for Brent over the next four years. It brings together information about challenges and opportunities for the borough, both about the local, national and global context in which we are working and information on what the council is doing under each priority.

It contains data from Brent Council, central government, partner organisations, and Census 2021. Any data included is already be available online through Brent websites (including data.brent.gov.uk), government departmental websites and partner organisation websites.

Who We Are

Brent has

339,800

residents, making us the **fifth largest** borough in London



19% of our population is **under 16**, and 11.6% is **65 or older**



Page 431

56% of residents were born outside of the UK

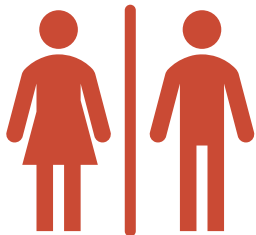


65.4%

of residents are from a Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic background



3.2% of Brent residents are LGBT+



51% of Brent's residents are female and **49%** are male



After English, our most spoken languages are **Guajarati, Romanian and Arabic**



What should Brent look like in 2027?



Prosperity and Stability in Brent

Quotes from the draft Borough Plan consultation

“More **education opportunities** for adults.”

“No person living in **poverty.**”

“More **work experience** and degree apprenticeship opportunities for the **best start in careers.**”

“Brent should put more focus on **affordable housing** and supporting residents.”

“**End homelessness** in Brent.”

Prosperity and Stability in Brent

Context Setting

33% of Brent residents **live in poverty** once their housing costs are taken into account ¹

31,974 parcels were given out by **local food banks** in 2020/21 ²

Page 434



36.2% percent of people live in the **private rented sector** – more than any other tenure type ³

28% of Brent residents earn less than the living wage of **£11.05** per hour ⁴



7.7% of residents aged 16-64 have **no formal qualifications at all** – the second highest level in London ⁵

There were **1,671 Brent households in temporary accommodation** at the end of June 2022 ⁶



Prosperity and Stability in Brent

What We've Done



Our **Resident Support Fund** received **6,609**

applications in 2021-22, **501** of which were for the

digital support package



Demand for **Community Hubs** is growing, with

11,823 residents seeking help in 2021-22



At the end of June 2022, Brent had so far delivered **660 homes** of its 1,000 new council homes target. There are additional **496 homes** on site and another **440** with planning permission and moving to site shortly.

Last year **273** residents were helped into **employment or apprenticeships** through Brent Works – **171** of these were in work paying on or above the **London Living Wage**



A Cleaner, Greener Future

Quotes from the draft Borough Plan consultation

“Vibrant, **green, and energy conscious.**”

“**More trees**, wildlife and greenery, well kept parks.”

Page 436 “A **greener borough** with increased tree cover.”

“More **accessible services.**”

“There should be much less traffic and **litter/fly tipping.**”

“**Cleaner, less pollution**, less traffic, less waste.”

A Cleaner, Greener Future

Context Setting & What We've Done



Brent Council looks after 114 **parks and open spaces** covering 458 hectares.

In 2020-21, only **33.4%** of Brent's Household waste was recycled



We cleared 27,363 **illegal rubbish dumps** in 2022

Page 437

In 2022 we collected over **85,000** tons of waste and recycling

We've planted **4,533** trees, 22 wildflower meadows, and bee corridors across the borough

We covered **2,400 miles** of the borough's roads with 230 tons of salt with the help of carbon-friendly electric salt-spreading gritters

Thriving Communities

Quotes from the draft Borough Plan consultation

“**Safe** for everyone.”

“Healthy, **engaged**, and educated.”

Page 438 “More **representative workforce** – diversity.”

“Less crime and **better street safety**.”

“Significantly **reduced crime** - safer Brent, cleaner Brent.”

“**Safer for women**.”

Thriving Communities

Context Setting & What We've Done



641 residents attended the 10 **participatory budgeting decision day** events, with **89** local projects being either fully or partially funded.



Page 439

58% of residents would like to be **more involved in decisions** made in the local area²

In 2022 there were **944** robbery, **1,970** burglary, and **6,423** theft offences in Brent³



Brent Council has the most ethnically diverse workforce of all London councils with **66%** of staff identifying as Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic, compared to 46% for London as a whole

The Best Start in Life

Quotes from the draft Borough Plan consultation

*“Trying to build more **youth focused community initiatives.**”*

*“**More engaged** young people.”*

Page 440
*“Where children can go **healthy and happy.**”*

*“A place where children whatever their background are given **a fantastic start in their early schooling.**”*

*“Young people should have access to **more work experiences.**”*

*“Happier, cleaner, greener and **youth focused.**”*

The Best Start in Life

Context Setting

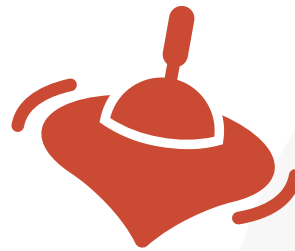
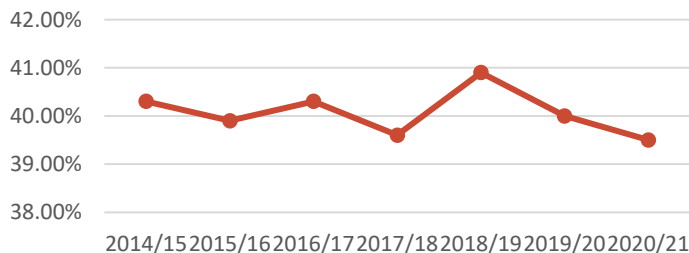


62% of Key Stage 2 pupils meet the expected standard in **reading, writing and maths** – this is the fifth lowest in London, below the 66% average ¹

14.3% of pupils have Special Educational Needs and Disabilities ²

Page 14
Child poverty in Brent is **39.5%**

a figure which has changed very little in the past eight years ³



Only **77%** of three and four year old children in Brent benefit from funded early education, compared to 92% nationally ⁴

7,765 pupils are eligible for free school meals ⁵

The Best Start in Life

What We've Done



In 2022 we supported **4,644 families** at eight Family Wellbeing Centres

In 2021/22 we completed

269

Early Help Assessments and reviews per 10,000 children, with new workers embedded in the Early Help Service to help us exceed target

Page 44

In 2021/22 **46** residents engaged with **Moving on Up**, our programme supporting young black men aged 16-24

97.6% of our schools are rated Good or Outstanding by Ofsted



81%

of Looked After Children in years 12 and 13 are in **education, employment or training**

A Healthier Brent

Quotes from the draft Borough Plan consultation

“More services for those with **mental health problems** in the community.”

Page 443

“Healthy – **less obesity.**”

“**Healthy**, happy and community minded.”

“Healthier, **more activity** within all age groups so that we reduce the chances of health issues in the future.”

“A happier borough, **mental health focus** and opportunities for developing community resilience.”

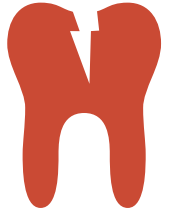
A Healthier Brent

Context Setting



Only **18.7%** of people in Brent aged 40-74 have received an **NHS health check** – well below the London average of 33.0%¹

40.1% of Brent five year olds have **visually obvious dental decay**²



Page 4/4

Brent is ranked ninth in London for the prevalence of obesity in year six pupils, with **25.2%** of pupils being obese²



29.6% of Brent children are active for an average of **less than 30 minutes a day**³



8.9% of Brent residents aged 17+ have **diabetes**⁴



59% of residents feel there are enough opportunities to **improve their health through exercise**, down from 69% in 2018⁵

A Healthier Brent

What We've Done

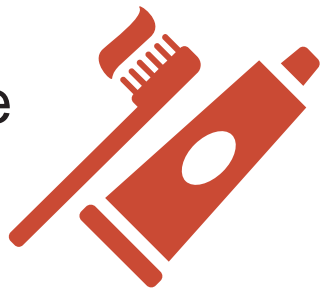
In 2022 we organised health events which were attended by over

3,000

people, and completed almost **2,500 free health checks**

Page 445

534 free dental checks



took place in 2022



In 2021/22, there were **1,148,815** wet, dry or virtual visits to Brent's sports centres

60.8% of new birth visits took place within 14 days in 2021/22



All residents live within one mile of one of our **20 outdoor gyms**

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EQUALITY ANALYSIS (EA)

POLICY/PROPOSAL:	Borough Plan 2023 - 27
DEPARTMENT:	Communities & Regeneration
TEAM:	Strategy & Partnerships
LEAD OFFICER:	Tom Pickup
DATE:	23.01.23

NB: Please ensure you have read the accompanying EA guidance and instructions in full.

SECTION A – INITIAL SCREENING

1. Please provide a description of the policy, proposal, change or initiative, and a summary its objectives and the intended results.

The Brent Borough Plan 2023-27 captures the council's achievements over the last four years and provides the context, narrative and strategic priorities for our new ambitions. It states our provisional commitments and desired outcomes for the next four years and outlines how we will work with others to achieve them.

Mindful of the impacts the cost of living crisis and the pandemic has had on our Borough, the Plan aims to overcome existing challenges, but also identify and utilise new opportunities for all who live and work in the borough.

2. Who may be affected by this policy or proposal?

The Borough Plan provides ambitions to make the Borough a better place for all, especially those who may require additional support and help. However, we also understand that we have framed and will seek to deliver our ambitions within a period of financial uncertain for our communities, our organisation and sector. Therefore, we will need to be adaptable and ready to manage our level of ambitions to reflect the context we are operating in.

3. Is there relevance to equality and the council's public sector equality duty? Please explain why. If your answer is no, you must still provide an explanation.

Yes. The Borough Plans ambitions are strongly linked with two components of the PSED: The need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. This involves having due regard to the need to:

- remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it; and
- encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low and

The need to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it. This includes having due regard to the need to tackle prejudice and to promote understanding.

As the Borough Plan aims to promote equality of opportunity and understanding as well as minimise disadvantage, it is believed that the Plan should generally have a positive impact. However, given the financial context that we are all operating in, we must also be prudent and understand that the ability to deliver our ambitions may be limited over the next four years. Hence, we will be stating an overall neutral impact.

4. Please indicate with an “X” the potential impact of the policy or proposal on groups with each protected characteristic. Carefully consider if the proposal will impact on people in different ways as a result of their characteristics.

Characteristic	Impact Positive	Impact Neutral/None	Impact Negative
Age		x	
Sex		x	
Race		x	
Disability *		x	
Sexual orientation		x	
Gender reassignment		x	
Religion or belief		x	
Pregnancy or maternity		x	
Marriage		x	

5. Please complete **each row** of the checklist with an “X”.

Screening Checklist

	YES	NO
Have you established that the policy or proposal <i>is</i> relevant to the council’s public sector equality duty?	x	
Does the policy or proposal relate to an area with known inequalities?	x	

Would the policy or proposal change or remove services used by vulnerable groups of people?		x
Has the potential for negative or positive equality impacts been identified with this policy or proposal?	x	

**If you have answered YES to ANY of the above, then proceed to section B.
If you have answered NO to ALL of the above, then proceed straight to section D.**

SECTION B – IMPACTS ANALYSIS

1. Outline what information and evidence have you gathered and considered for this analysis. If there is little, then explain your judgements in detail and your plans to validate them with evidence. If you have monitoring information available, include it here.

The Borough Plan has had extensive engagement. It is estimated that we have reached out to thousands of residents, communities and organisations and received around 900 responses to our online survey. The engagement involved as many people as possible, especially seldom heard voices. The engagement has consisted of the following:

- Drop-in sessions and community events
- A range of meetings and focus groups in each Brent Connect area
- Information sessions at libraries and hubs
- Online information sessions
- Online survey/ feedback form
- Multimedia campaign
- CitizenLab
- Focus groups with underrepresented groups
- Meetings with partnership and stakeholder groups

2. For each “protected characteristic” provide details of all the potential or known impacts identified, both positive and negative, and explain how you have reached these conclusions based on the information and evidence listed above. Where appropriate state “not applicable”.

AGE

Details of impacts identified	<p>The Borough Plan has priorities to improve the quality of life for all residents, service users and members of staff, especially those that are in most need of additional support and assistance. However, whilst we have set a high level of ambition we are also operating within a difficult financial context which may impact or limit what we are able to achieve and the support we can provide for residents.</p> <p>The development of Key Performance Indicators will highlight specific work related to this protected characteristic and will be monitored and evaluated over time.</p>
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DISABILITY

Details of impacts identified	<p>The Borough Plan has priorities to improve the quality of life for all residents, service users and members of staff, especially those that are in most need of additional support and assistance. However, whilst we have set a high level of ambition we are also operating within a difficult financial context which may impact or limit what we are able to achieve and the support we can provide for residents.</p> <p>The development of Key Performance Indicators will highlight specific work related to this protected characteristic and will be monitored and evaluated over time.</p>
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RACE

Details of impacts identified	<p>The Borough Plan has priorities to improve the quality of life for all residents, service users and members of staff, especially those that are in most need of additional support and assistance. However, whilst we have set a high level of ambition we are also operating within a difficult financial context which may impact or limit what we are able to achieve and the support we can provide for residents.</p> <p>The development of Key Performance Indicators will highlight specific work related to this protected characteristic and will be monitored and evaluated over time.</p>
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SEX

Details of impacts identified	<p>The Borough Plan has priorities to improve the quality of life for all residents, service users and members of staff, especially those that are in most need of additional support and assistance. However, whilst we have set a high level of ambition we are also operating within a difficult financial context which may impact or limit what we are able to achieve and the support we can provide for residents.</p> <p>The development of Key Performance Indicators will highlight specific work related to this protected characteristic and will be monitored and evaluated over time.</p>
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SEXUAL ORIENTATION

Details of impacts identified	<p>The Borough Plan has priorities to improve the quality of life for all residents, service users and members of staff, especially those that are in most need of additional support and assistance. However, whilst we have set a high level of ambition we are also operating within a difficult financial context which may impact or limit what we are able to achieve and the support we can provide for residents.</p> <p>The development of Key Performance Indicators will highlight specific work related to this protected characteristic and will be monitored and evaluated over time.</p>
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PREGANCY AND MATERNITY

Details of impacts identified	<p>The Borough Plan has priorities to improve the quality of life for all residents, service users and members of staff, especially those that are in most need of additional support and assistance. However, whilst we have set a high level of ambition we are also operating within a difficult financial context which may impact or limit what we are able to achieve and the support we can provide for residents.</p> <p>The development of Key Performance Indicators will highlight specific work related to this protected characteristic and will be monitored and evaluated over time.</p>
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RELIGION OR BELIEF

Details of impacts identified	<p>The Borough Plan has priorities to improve the quality of life for all residents, service users and members of staff, especially those that are in most need of additional support and assistance. However, whilst we have set a high level of ambition we are also operating within a difficult financial context which may impact or limit what we are able to achieve and the support we can provide for residents.</p> <p>The development of Key Performance Indicators will highlight specific work related to this protected characteristic and will be monitored and evaluated over time.</p>
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GENDER REASSIGNMENT

Details of impacts identified	<p>The Borough Plan has priorities to improve the quality of life for all residents, service users and members of staff, especially those that are in most need of additional support and assistance. However, whilst we have set a high level of ambition we are also operating within a difficult financial context which may impact or limit what we are able to achieve and the support we can provide for residents.</p> <p>The development of Key Performance Indicators will highlight specific work related to this protected characteristic and will be monitored and evaluated over time.</p>
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MARRIAGE & CIVIL PARTNERSHIP

Details of impacts identified	<p>The Borough Plan has priorities to improve the quality of life for all residents, service users and members of staff, especially those that are in most need of additional support and assistance. However, whilst we have set a high level of ambition we are also operating within a difficult financial context which may impact or limit what we are able to achieve and the support we can provide for residents.</p> <p>The development of Key Performance Indicators will highlight specific work related to this protected characteristic and will be monitored and evaluated over time.</p>
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3. Could any of the impacts you have identified be unlawful under the Equality Act 2010?

No

4. Were the participants in any engagement initiatives representative of the people who will be affected by your proposal and is further engagement required?

Yes. All engagement was with relevant stakeholders, including those that will be affected by the Plan. The broad spectrum of engagement ensured that as many voices as possible were captured, including from marginalised and minority groups, and this was achieved through a range of different methods and platforms. The responses have been used to identify the needs, concerns and ambitions of residents, and will be used to inform the Borough Plan and future council activity and service delivery.

5. Please detail any areas identified as requiring further data or detailed analysis.

N/A

6. If, following your action plan, negative impacts will or may remain, please explain how these can be justified?

N/A

7. Outline how you will monitor the actual, ongoing impact of the policy or proposal?

A performance dashboard highlighting key performance indicators is being created. This will be continually reviewed to ensure that the ambitions of the Plan are monitored, reviewed, evaluated and delivered. The equality impact analysis document will be updated with the additional information.

SECTION C - CONCLUSIONS

Based on the analysis above, please detail your overall conclusions. State if any mitigating actions are required to alleviate negative impacts, what these are and what the desired outcomes will be. If positive equality impacts have been identified, consider what actions you can take to enhance them. If you have decided to justify and continue with the policy despite negative equality impacts, provide your justification. If you are to stop the policy, explain why.

Overall, the Borough Plan should have a positive impact on our service users, residents and workforce. Our Performance Dashboard will enable efficient monitoring and evaluation of progress against key priorities going forward.

SECTION D – RESULT

Please select one of the following options. Mark with an “X”.

A	CONTINUE WITH THE POLICY/PROPOSAL UNCHANGED	X
B	JUSTIFY AND CONTINUE THE POLICY/PROPOSAL	
C	CHANGE / ADJUST THE POLICY/PROPOSAL	
D	STOP OR ABANDON THE POLICY/PROPOSAL	

SECTION E - ACTION PLAN

This will help you monitor the steps you have identified to reduce the negative impacts (or increase the positive); monitor actual or ongoing impacts; plan reviews and any further engagement or analysis required.


Action	Expected outcome	Officer	Completion Date
Update the EA document once KPIs have been defined	Efficient monitoring and evaluation of progress against key priorities		

SECTION F – SIGN OFF

Please ensure this section is signed and dated.

OFFICER:	Tom Pickup 23.01.23
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REVIEWING OFFICER:	Janet Latinwo 23.01.23
HEAD OF SERVICE / Operational Director:	Lorna Hughes 23.01.23

 Brent	Full Council 23 February 2023
	Report from the Corporate Director Finance and Resources
Treasury Management Mid-Year Report 2022-23	

Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	Council
Open or Part/Fully Exempt: (If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)	Open
No. of Appendices:	One Appendix 1 - Treasury Management Indicators
Background Papers:	None
Contact Officer(s): (Name, Title, Contact Details)	Amanda Healy Head of Finance Email: Amanda.Healy@brent.gov.uk Tel: 020 8937 5912 Sacha Bakhtiar Senior Finance Analyst Email: Sacha.Bakhtiar@brent.gov.uk Tel: 020 8937 4039

1.0 Purpose of the Report

1.1 This report updates Members on Treasury activity for the first half of the financial year 2022-23.

2.0 Recommendation(s)

2.1 Council is asked to note the 2022-23 Mid-Year Treasury report in compliance with compliance with the Council's Treasury Management indicators and CIPFA's Code of Practice on Treasury Management (the Code).

3.0 Detail

Background

- 3.1 The Council's Treasury Management Strategy is underpinned by the adoption of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's Code of Practice (the CIPFA Code) on Treasury Management 2011. This requires the Council to approve Treasury Management mid-year and annual reports. The update report is presented here in-line with CIPFA's recommendations.
- 3.2 CIPFA published its revised Treasury Management Code of Practice (the TM Code) in December 2021. The key changes in the two codes are around permitted reasons to borrow, knowledge and skills, and the management of non-treasury investments.
- 3.3 The principles within the Code took immediate effect although local authorities could defer introducing the revised reporting requirements within the revised Codes until the 2023/24 financial year if they wished. The Council has elected to fully adopt the revised reporting requirements from 2023/24.
- 3.4 Treasury Management is defined as: "The management of the local authority's investments and cash flows, its banking, money market and capital market transactions; the effective control of the risks associated with those activities; and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks."
- 3.5 The Council's Treasury Management Strategy for 2022/23 was approved by Full Council on 24th February 2022.
- 3.6 In addition to reporting on risk management, the Code requires the Council to report on any financial instruments entered into to manage treasury risks.

Economic Background

- 3.7 There are ongoing impacts to the UK from the war in Ukraine, together with higher inflation, higher interest rates, uncertain economic policy and a deteriorating economic outlook.
- 3.8 The Bank of England increased the official Bank Rate to 3.0% in November 2022, the largest single rate hike since 1989 and the eighth successive rise since December 2021. This was voted for by a 7-2 majority of the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC).
- 3.9 The November quarterly Monetary Policy Report (MPR) forecast a prolonged but shallow recession in the UK with CPI inflation remaining elevated at over 10% in the near-term. While the projected peak of inflation is lower than in the August report, due in part to the government's support package for household energy costs, inflation is expected remain higher for longer over the forecast horizon and the economic outlook remains weak, with unemployment projected to start rising.
- 3.10 CPI inflation is expected to peak at around 11% in the last calendar quarter of 2022 and then fall sharply to 1.4%, below the 2% target, in two years' time and to 0% in three years' time if the Bank Rate follows the path implied by financial

markets with a peak of 5.25%. However the BoE has stated it considers this path to be too high, suggesting that the peak in interest rates will be lower, reducing the risk of inflation falling too far below target.

- 3.11 The labour market remains tight for now, with the most recent statistics showing the unemployment rate fell to 3.5%, driven mostly by a shrinking labour force. Earnings were up strongly in nominal terms by 6% for total pay and 5.4% for regular pay but factoring in inflation means real total pay was -2.4% and regular pay -2.9%. Looking forward, the MPR shows the labour market weakening in response to the deteriorating outlook for growth, leading to the unemployment rate rising to around 6.5% in 2025.
- 3.12 Interest rates have also been rising sharply in the US, with the Federal Reserve increasing the range on its key interest rate by 0.75% in November 2022 to 3.75%-4.0%. This was the fourth successive 0.75% rise in a pace of tightening that has seen rates increase from 0.25%-0.50% in March 2022. Annual inflation has been slowing in the US but remains above 8%. GDP grew at an annualised rate of 2.6% between July and September 2022, a better-than-expected rise, but with official interest rates expected to rise even further in the coming months, a recession in the region is widely expected at some point during 2023.
- 3.13 Inflation has been rising consistently in the Euro Zone since the start of the year, hitting an annual rate of 10.7% in October 2022. Economic growth has been weakening with an expansion of just 0.2% in the three months to September 2022. As with the UK and US, the European Central Bank has been on an interest rate tightening cycle, pushing up its three key interest rates by 0.75% in October, the third major increase in a row, taking its main refinancing rate to 2% and deposit facility rate to 1.5%.

Financial Markets

- 3.14 Uncertainty remained in control of financial market sentiment and bond yields remained volatile, continuing their general upward trend as concern over higher inflation and higher interest rates continued to dominate. Towards the end of September, volatility in financial markets was significantly exacerbated by the UK government's fiscal plans, leading to an acceleration in the rate of the rise in gilt yields and decline in the value of sterling.
- 3.15 Due to pressure on pension funds, the Bank of England announced a direct intervention in the gilt market to increase liquidity and reduce yields.
- 3.16 Over the period the 5-year UK benchmark gilt yield rose from 1.41% to 4.40%, the 10-year gilt yield rose from 1.61% to 4.15%, the 20-year yield from 1.82% to 4.13% and the 50-year yield from 1.56% to 3.25%. The Sterling Overnight Rate (SONIA) averaged 1.22% over the period.
- 3.17 The movement in standard rates at which local authorities can borrow from the Public Works Loans Board (PWLB) on maturity loans is shown in the table below including the highest and lowest rates during the period.

PWLB Rates %

Period	Mar 22	Jun 22	Sep 22	YTD Low	YTD High
1-year	2.05	2.91	4.28	2.15	5.31
5-year	2.34	3.12	4.41	2.41	5.63
10-year	2.54	3.42	4.46	2.58	5.67
20-year	2.77	3.68	4.73	2.75	6.08
30-year	2.70	3.59	4.63	2.65	5.98

Debt Management

- 3.18 CIPFA's 2021 Prudential Code is clear that local authorities must not borrow to invest primarily for financial return. Councils that intend to borrow to invest primarily for yield will not be able to access the PWLB except to refinance existing loans or externalise internal borrowing. This restriction does not prevent regeneration activities where "debt-for-yield" is not the primary purpose of the investment. The Council is not planning to purchase any investment assets primarily for yield and so is able fully access the PWLB borrowing facilities.
- 3.19 Competitive market alternatives may be available for Councils with or without access to the PWLB. However, the financial strength of the individual Council and the borrowing purpose will be scrutinised by commercial lenders.
- 3.20 The UK Infrastructure Bank (UKIB) which is wholly owned and backed by HM Treasury has earmarked £4bn for lending to local authorities. The Bank is currently operating in interim form, without its full suite of staff and functions. The Treasury has provided £22bn in funding to the Bank over its first 5 years.
- 3.21 To date, the Bank has invested in eight deals worth £760m, including subsidy-free solar farms, gigabit broadband infrastructure and green buses. Loans are available for qualifying projects at gilt yields plus 0.6%, which is 0.2% lower than the PWLB certainty rate.
- 3.22 UKIB borrowing proposals must meet a strict set of criteria to be eligible. These include alignment with the government's net zero objectives and the project being an infrastructure asset or network. The UKIB does not support predominantly social infrastructure projects.
- 3.23 The UK Municipal Bonds Agency (UK MBA) is working to deliver loans to UK local authorities to fund capital expenditure. Funding is provided through three lending programmes; long term pooled loans, standalone loans of over £250m, and short term pooled loans. Any authority wishing to engage in long-term borrowing must accept the UK MBA Framework Agreement.
- 3.24 A summary of the Council's borrowing in the first half of 2022/23 is provided below:

	Balance on 01/04/2022	Debt repaid*	New Borrowing	Balance on 30/09/2022
	£m	£m	£m	£m
Short Term Borrowing	119.4	96.2	15.0	38.2
Long Term Borrowing	565.2	0	60.0	625.2
TOTAL BORROWING	684.6	96.2	75.0	663.4
Average Rate of Borrowing %	3.24%	1.03%	2.64%	3.55%

- 3.25 The Council's main objective when borrowing has been to strike an appropriately low risk balance between securing low interest costs and achieving cost certainty over the period for which funds are required, with flexibility to renegotiate loans should the Council's long-term plans change being a secondary objective.
- 3.26 In keeping with these objectives, new external borrowing was kept to a minimum of £90m to meet cash flow requirements. This has included borrowing to support the viability and affordability of the Capital Programme during this time of market volatility.
- 3.27 Borrowing costs on new borrowing have increased steadily through the year alongside increased market rates (see 3.7). In light of the increased market volatility, we have worked closely with our Treasury advisors in suggesting optimal points at when to enter the market and borrow. The highest borrowing rate that has been agreed YTD was at 4.1%, significantly below the market peaks shown in 3.16. Subsequent borrowing has been achieved at below 4%.
- 3.28 The Council has an increasing Capital Financing Requirement due to the elements of the capital programme funded by borrowing. An estimated borrowing requirement is determined by the liability benchmark, which takes into account the Council's usable reserves, planned capital expenditure and minimum revenue provision. This has shown that further borrowing in excess of £50m will be required during 2022/23.
- 3.29 Whilst PWLB funding margins have increased in 22/23, there has been no evidence that lower rates can be achieved through alternative sources of long-term funding.
- 3.30 The Council has considered and will continue to monitor the possibility of agreeing forward funded deals if these are at advantageous rates. The Council will continue to monitor alternative sources of funding and pursue the lower cost solutions and opportunities as they arise. The Council will evaluate and pursue these lower cost solutions and opportunities as they arise and will look to take advantage of the low borrowing rates for the HRA to provide certainty for its business plan.
- 3.31 Higher interest rates mean that it would be uneconomic to restructure existing PWLB debt, because interest rates are now higher than those secured on existing borrowing. However this will be kept under review should interest rates be reduced in future.

3.32 The Authority continues to hold £70.5m of LOBO (Lender's Option Borrower's Option) loans where the lender has the option to propose an increase in the interest rate as set dates, following which the Council has the option to either accept the new rate or to repay the loan at no additional cost. No lender exercised their option in the first half of the year. However, due to higher market rates, there is now a significant risk that some existing LOBO's may now require refinancing at higher rates or will require repaying. £15m of LOBO's have break points in the second half of the year and may require repayment and refinancing at higher rates.

Treasury Investment Activity

3.33 The Council holds invested funds, representing income received in advance of expenditure plus balances and reserves held. During the year, the Council's investment balances ranged between £33.3m and £129.0m due to timing differences between income and expenditure.

3.34 Both the CIPFA Code and government guidance require the Council to invest its funds prudently, and to have regard to the security and liquidity of its treasury investments before seeking the optimum rate of return, or yield. The Council's objective when investing money is to strike an appropriate balance between risk and return, minimising the risk of incurring losses from defaults and the risk of receiving unsuitably low investment income.

3.35 The Council's investment position is shown in the table below.

	Balance b/f 01/04/2022	Investments Repaid	Investments Made	Balance c/f 30/09/2022
	£m	£m	£m	£m
Debt Management Account Deposit Facility	0.0	43.6	53.1	9.5
Money Market Funds	98.6	386.8	368.5	80.3
TOTAL INVESTMENTS	98.6	430.4	421.6	89.8
Average Rate of Investments	0.52%	0.92%	1.16%	1.99%

3.36 The Council holds most of its cash in Money Market Funds. The return on Money Market Funds has increased reflecting the higher interest rate environment. As at 30th September our Funds were paying rates between 1.8% - 2.09%. The Council also uses the Debt Management Agency's Deposit Facility (DMADF) for short-term cash deposits, which pays comparable rates.

3.37 The inter-local authority market has also seen higher interest rates. The return on our deposits vary significantly, reflecting the higher rates achieved on our more recent fixed term deposits. As at 30th September these funds were paying rates between 0.1% and 3.1%.

3.38 There was a modest reduction of £8.8m in short term investments in the first half of the year. Investment balances are expected to remain low over the next 6 months as the Council's internal resources have been utilised however may increase as external borrowing is undertaken. The Council is reviewing its

borrowing options which may include short-term local authority borrowing, longer-term PWLB borrowing and forward borrowing (agreement to borrow at an agreed future date and rate in the future).

3.39 Security of capital has been maintained by following the Council’s counterparty policy as set out in its Treasury Management Strategy Statement for 2022/23. In accordance with the policy, new investments can be made with the following classes of institutions:

- A+ or above rated banks;
- AAA rated Money Market Funds;
- Other Local Authorities;
- Housing Associations;
- UK Debt Management Office;
- Corporate Bonds
- Collective Investment Schemes (Pooled Funds)
- Real Estate Investment Trusts

A short summary of the investment products available to the council along with an indication of relative risk is provided below:

3.40 The table below shows the different assets classes available to the council for its investment portfolio together with the major driver of the return and a summary of the key risks for each asset class.

Asset Classes (approx. return)	Cash (2.9%)	Bonds (3.9%)	Equities (3.4%)	Property (4.0%)
Income driven by	Short term interest rates	Medium term interest rates	Dividends / share prices	Rental income / vacancies
Key Risk(s)	Bank defaults	Company defaults	Company performance and perception of future performance	Property prices, least liquid asset class

3.41 Investments in Equities and Property classes tend to be considered over a longer time frame, which are not currently suitable for the Council given its significant capital spending plans.

Risks

3.42 Regardless of the approach taken, the Council will be required to manage significant risks in relation to its treasury investment portfolio. Some key risks are: -

- Credit risk - the risk that a bank or other institution will not be able to pay back the money invested with it. For longer term investments, the council is more exposed to credit risk. Should a counterparty’s credit worthiness

change, the council may not be able to get all their money back or may face heavy penalties if it can do so.

Mitigation – see Prudential Indicator 1 – Appendix 1

- Liquidity risk - that is the council having funds tied up in long-term investments when it needs to use that money. Increasing the duration of fixed cash deposits increases liquidity risk, however this can be mitigated through good cash flow management.

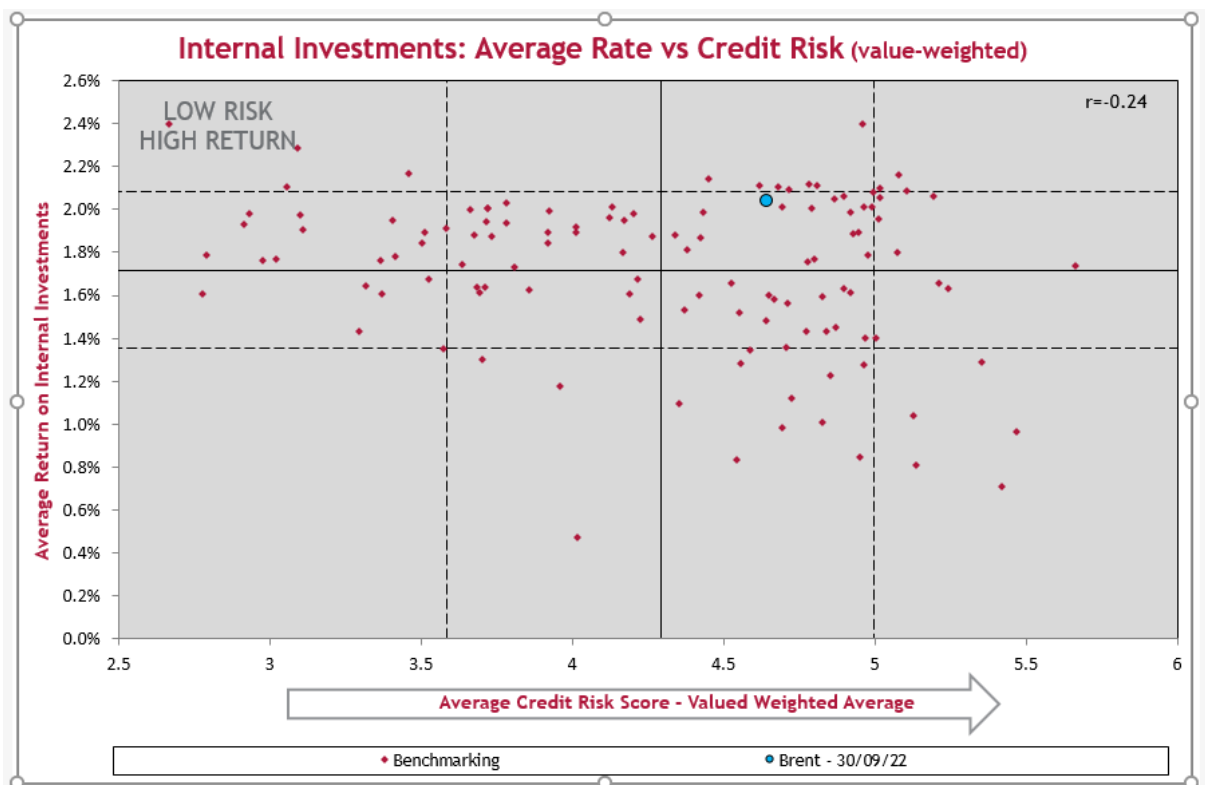
Mitigation – see Prudential Indicator 2 – Appendix 1

- Interest rate risk – the risk of the council's budget being affected by unforeseen changes in interest rates. Longer term cash deposits increase this risk and will negatively affect the council should interest rates rise. On the other hand, the council may benefit should interest rates fall.

Mitigation – see prudential Indicator 3 – Appendix 1

Benchmarking to other councils

3.43 The graph below shows a comparison in performance between Brent's investment portfolio and those of Arlingclose's (the Council's treasury advisor) other Local Authority clients. Brent's portfolio has a low risk profile compared with many of the others and our investments are also shorter dated, which also equates to a lower yield.



- 3.44 Our investment portfolio has a credit rating of A+ (equivalent to a Credit Risk Score of 4.7 in the table above). The credit rating achieved on our investments beats our target rating of A (which equates to a Credit Risk Score of 6 in the table above). The lower the Average Credit Risk score in the table above, the better the credit rating of the counterparties with which we hold investments.
- 3.45 A credit rating of 'A' per the Fitch agency indicates that an organisation has low default risk, but may be vulnerable to adverse economic conditions. A credit rating of 'AA' denotes that an organisation has very low default risk and is not significantly vulnerable to foreseeable events. The '+' and '-' are further delineations for each credit rating.

Budgeted Income And Outturn

- 3.46 The Council's external interest budget for the year is £18.2m, and for investment income is £4.7m. The average cash balances, representing the Council's reserves and working balances, were £87.8m during the period to 30 September 2022. The Council expects to receive significantly higher income from its cash and short-dated money market investments than it did in 2021/22 and earlier years due to the higher interest rate environment and the immediate cash requirements, which only allow for short-term investments.

Compliance

- 3.47 Officers confirm that they have complied with its Treasury Management Indicators for 2022/23, which were set in February 2022 as part of the Council's Treasury Management Strategy Statement (TMSS). Details can be found in Appendix 1.

Summary

- 3.48 In compliance with the requirements of the CIPFA Code of Practice, this report provides Members with a summary report of the treasury management activity during the first half of 2022/23. As indicated in this report, none of the Prudential Indicators have been breached and a prudent approach has been taken in relation to investment activity with priority being given to security and liquidity over yield.

4.0 Financial Implications

- 4.1 These are covered throughout the report.

5.0 Legal Implications

- 5.1 There are no direct legal implications.

6.0 Equality Implications

- 6.1 No direct implications.

7.0 Consultation with Ward Members and Stakeholders

7.1 None.

8.0 Human Resources/Property Implications

8.1 No direct implications.

Related Document:

Treasury Management Strategy – Report to Full Council as part of the Budget Report (Appendix I) – February 2022

Report sign off:

Minesh Patel

Corporate Director of
Finance and Resources

Appendix 1

Treasury Management Indicators

Security

The Council has adopted a voluntary measure of its exposure to credit risk by monitoring the value-weighted average credit rating of its investment portfolio. This is calculated by applying a score to each investment (AAA=1, AA+=2, etc) and taking the arithmetic average, weighted by the size of each investment. Unrated investments are assigned a score based on their perceived risk.

Credit Risk Indicator	30/09/2022 Target	30/09/2022 Actual
Portfolio average credit rating	A	A+

Liquidity

The Council has adopted a voluntary measure of its exposure to liquidity risk by monitoring the amount of cash available to meet unexpected payments within a rolling three-month period, without additional borrowing.

Liquidity Risk Indicator	30/09/2022 Target £m	30/09/2022 Actual £m
Total cash available within 3 months	20	76.2

Interest Rate exposure

This indicators is set to control the Council's exposure to interest rate risk. The impact of a change in interest rates is calculated on the assumption that maturing loans and investment will be replaced at current rates.

	2022/23 Approved Limits £m	30/09/2022 Actual £m
Upper limit on one-year revenue impact of a 1% rise in interest rates Compliance with limits:	5.0	0.1 Yes
Upper limit on one-year revenue impact of a 1% fall in interest rates Compliance with limits:	5.0	0.1 Yes

Maturity Structure of Fixed Rate Borrowing

This indicator is to limit large concentrations of fixed rate debt needing to be replace at times of uncertainty over interest rates. The Council uses the option date as the maturity date for it's LOBO loans.

Maturity Structure of Fixed Rate Borrowing	Upper Limit	Lower Limit	Actual Fixed Rate Borrowing at 30/09/2022	% of Fixed Rate Borrowing at 30/09/2022	Compliance with set limits?
	%	%	£m	%	Yes / No
Under 12 months	40%	0%	122.5	18.5%	Yes
12 months and within 24 months	40%	0%	23.7	3.6%	Yes
24 months and within 5 years	40%	0%	45.2	6.8%	Yes
5 years and within 10 years	60%	0%	39.5	6.0%	Yes
10 years and within 20 years	75%	0%	117.0	17.6%	Yes
20 years and within 30 years	75%	0%	96.9	14.6%	Yes
30 years and within 40 years	75%	0%	213.7	32.2%	Yes
40 years and within 50 years	75%	0%	5.0	0.8%	Yes
50 years and above	75%	0%	0.0	0%	Yes
			663.4	100%	

Prudential Indicator: Capital Financing Requirement

The table below sets out the forecast levels of borrowing expected. As our capital financing requirement grows over the coming years, this is expected to lead to additional external borrowing.

	31.3.22	31.3.23	31.3.24	31.3.25	31.3.26
	Actual	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Capital financing requirement	998.5	1,146.6	1,395.1	1,571.6	1,632.0
Other debt liabilities *	25.6	25.6	25.6	25.6	25.6
Loans CFR	1,024.1	1,172.3	1,420.7	1,597.3	1,657.6
External borrowing **	(684.6)	(681.7)	(618.3)	(609.9)	(601.6)
Internal (over) borrowing	339.6	490.6	802.4	987.4	1,056.0
Less: Balance Sheet resources	(438.2)	(438.2)	(438.2)	(438.2)	(438.2)
Treasury Investments (or New borrowing)	98.6	(52.4)	(364.2)	(549.2)	(617.8)

* leases and PFI liabilities that form part of the Authority's total debt

** shows only loans to which the Authority is committed and excludes optional refinancing


Prudential Indicator: Liability Benchmark

	31.3.22	31.3.23	31.3.24	31.3.25	31.3.26
	Actual	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Loans CFR	1,024.1	1,172.3	1,420.7	1,597.3	1,657.6
Less: Balance sheet resources	(438.2)	(438.2)	(438.2)	(438.2)	(438.2)
Net loans requirement	586.0	734.1	982.5	1,159.1	1,219.4
Plus: Liquidity allowance	20.0	20.0	20.0	20.0	20.0
Liability benchmark	606.0	754.1	1,002.5	1,179.1	1,239.4

Prudential Indicator: Authorised Limit and Operational Boundary for external debt

	2022/23 Forecast £m	2023/24 Budget £m	2024/25 Budget £m	2025/26 Budget £m
Authorised Limit	1,500.0	1,500.0	1,500.0	1,500.0
Operational Boundary	1,300.0	1,300.0	1,300.0	1,300.0

The Authorised Limit sets the maximum level of external borrowing that the Council can incur. The Operational Boundary for External Debt is not a limit and actual borrowing can vary around the boundary. The Operational Boundary acts as an early indicator to ensure that the Authorised Limit is not breached.

	Full Council 23 February 2023
	Report from the Corporate Director, Governance
Members Allowance Scheme Annual Review 2023-24	

Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	Council
Open or Part/Fully Exempt: (If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)	Open
No. of Appendices:	One Appendix 1 Members Allowance Cost Analysis
Background Papers:	None
Contact Officer(s): (Name, Title, Contact Details)	Natalie Zara, Head of Executive & Member Services 020 8937 1716 Natalie.Zara@brent.gov.uk

1. Summary

- 1.1 A Members' Allowance Scheme, which sets out the allowances Members are entitled to receive for carrying out their responsibilities has to be made for the 2023-24 Financial Year.

2. Recommendations

That Full Council:

- 2.1 Considers and approves the Members Allowance Scheme in the proposed terms set out within this report for the 2023-24 Financial Year.
- 2.2 Authorises the Corporate Director of Governance to comply with the statutory requirements to publicise the Council's Members' Allowance Scheme.

3. Detail

Background

- 3.1 Brent Council's Members' Allowance Scheme (which is included in the Council's Constitution at Part 6 and is published on the Council's website) was subject to full formal review at the Annual Council Meeting in 2018 and since then has been subject to ongoing annual review at each of the Council's budget setting meetings.
- 3.2 These reviews have been informed by the most recently available report from the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) for London Councils. The latest review and report undertaken by the IRP (entitled "The Remuneration of Councillors in London 2022 – Report of the Independent Panel") was published in December 2021. A further IRP review on councillors remuneration was recommended within this report, which is currently underway but as yet has not been completed. Therefore, this year's annual review has been based on the contents of the initial 2022 report, which will continue to inform the Council's decision-making in respect of its scheme for a maximum period of four years.
- 3.3 The 2022 IRP report recognises the importance of the role played by elected members not only in terms of their representational role but also given the increasing challenges and demands in managing the delivery of local services and on the allocation of financial resources. The report highlights the increasingly difficult and complex nature of choices and work faced by local councillors in terms of managing these challenges and increasing level of demand on services. In addition, reference is made to the growth in other public sector activities including community safety, increasing expectations for closer working with health services and the voluntary sector, as well the growing role of councillors acting as a point of information, advice and reassurance for local communities. The report also recognises the increasing expectations of the public in terms of access to their local councillors supported by the growth in digital connectivity, social media etc.
- 3.4 While conscious of the above, the review also takes account of the continuing financial challenges faced by local authorities. Having taken account of adjustments made in accordance with annual local government pay settlements over previous years, this led to the recommendation of a Basic Allowance set at £12,014. The current basic allowance payable under Brent's Members Allowance Scheme is already comparable at £12,484.
- 3.5 It is for Full Council to make a scheme for the payment of allowances to its Members specifying the amount of entitlement by way of basic allowance (which is mandatory) and other allowances (which are discretionary). Such a scheme has to be in accordance with the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 and the Council is required to have regard to the recommendations made by the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP).

Annual Uplift

- 3.6 Brent's Members Allowance Scheme states that Basic, Special and Civic allowances "shall be increased with effect from each April, by a percentage equal to the inflation pay award agreed as part of the Local Government Pay Settlement in the previous

financial year, unless otherwise determined by the Council". Since 2021, the decision has been taken not to apply any uplift in allowances.

- 3.7 In terms of the current financial year the National Joint Council Government Services pay agreement has now been confirmed for 2022/23. This year, the offer was a fixed sum rather than a percentage increase. However, a fixed uplift of 4.04% was included in the pay agreement across all allowances. The report from the Independent Panel for the Remuneration of Councillors in London reiterated its previous recommendation that members' allowances should be uplifted annually in line with the pay settlement for employees and are therefore recommending that boroughs also use the 4.04% uplift for their member allowances. It is, however, up to each borough to determine the allowances it pays to members. On this basis, members are therefore asked to consider (following consultation with the Constitution Working Group) applying an uplift of 4.04% across the Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances within the Members Allowance Scheme for 2023/24. If this were to be agreed, it would mean an increase in the Basic Allowance from £12,484 to £12,988 (a difference of £504 for each of the 57 councillors).

Special Responsibility Allowances

- 3.8 With regards to the Special Responsibility Allowances (SRA), Full Council noted at the February 2022 meeting that these would be subject to further review during 2022-23 following the local elections. However, this was subject to the outcome of the further review of councillors remuneration by the IRP during 2022-23. As explained in section 3.2 above this review, which was supposed to assess new patterns of demand and expectations, has not yet been completed with the results due to be presented to the Constitution Working Group in order to consider any changes (other than any annual uplift to be applied and proposal in 3.9 below) in relation to the current level of SRAs payable under the Scheme. Any changes recommended as a result of this further review will need to be subject to approval by Full Council.
- 3.9 It should be noted that the list of Special Responsibility Allowances has also been amended following consultation with the Constitution Working Group to include a proposed payment of £4k for the Leader of the second Opposition Group (in order to reflect the current political membership of the Council). This has been factored into the allowances cost analysis at Appendix 1.

4. Publicity

- 4.1 As soon as reasonably practicable after the making or amendment of a Scheme, copies of the Scheme have to be made available for inspection at the Civic Centre and a notice has to be published in a local newspaper. It is recommended that the Corporate Director of Governance be authorised to comply with these requirements.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 The actual overall cost of the payment of allowances depends on which Members are appointed to the roles where an SRA is received, as only one such allowance is

payable irrespective of the number of roles held. At the end of each financial year, the payments made to each Member are published in accordance with statutory rules.

- 5.2 Any uplift to the allowance scheme will result in additional expenditure. A table illustrating this can be found at Appendix 1. In summary, the additional expenditure should the uplift and additional SRA be applied would be £46,163
- 5.3 The current budget for members' allowances is £1,170,000. Therefore there is scope to include the changes proposed without overspending the budget, should this be agreed.

6. Legal Implications

- 6.1 The Council's Members' Allowance Scheme must comply with the relevant provisions of the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003; the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and the Local Government Act 2000. In adopting or amending the scheme the Council is required to have due regard to the report published by its Remuneration Panel, which is the IRP appointed by London Councils.
- 6.2 The introduction of a Special Responsibility Allowance for the Leader of the smaller opposition group is consistent with the recommendations of the Remuneration of Councillors in London 2022 Report of the Independent Panel, to which the council must have regard. Such an allowance can be paid within band one as identified in the report. The allowance for the principal opposition leader falls within band two. The recommended proportion of a band two allowance that should be paid at band one is approximately 1/3 to 1/2.

7. Consultation with Ward Members and Stakeholders

- 7.1 The outcome of the annual review has been subject to consultation with members of the Constitution Working Group.

8. Equality Implications

- 8.1 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. The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civic partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- 8.2 "Due regard" is the regard that is appropriate in all the circumstances. The weight to be attached to the effect is a matter for the council. As long as the council is properly aware of the effects and has taken them into account, the duty is discharged. Depending on the circumstances, regard should be had to the following:

- the need to enquire into whether and how a proposed decision disproportionately affects people with a protected characteristic. In other words, the indirect discriminatory effects of a proposed decision;
- the need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- the need to take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it. This includes taking account of disabled persons' disabilities. There can be a positive duty to take action to help a disabled person. What matters is how they are affected, whatever proportion of the relevant group of people they might be;
- the need to encourage persons who share a protected characteristic to participate in public life (or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low); and
- the need to tackle prejudice and promote understanding.

8.3 There are no equality implications arising directly from this report.

9. Human Resources/Property Implications (if appropriate)

None.

Report sign off:

Debra Norman
Corporate Director of Governance

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Position	Numbers	Current allowance	Current total	Percentage	Final individual allowance with increase	Final total allowance with increase	Total difference
Normal allowance for all Councillors	57	£12,484	£711,588	4.04%	£12,988	£740,336	£28,748
Leader of the Council	1	£39,748	£39,748	4.04%	£41,354	£41,354	£1,606
Deputy Leader of the Council	1	£28,968	£28,968	4.04%	£30,138	£30,138	£1,170
Other Cabinet Members	8	£19,087	£152,696	4.04%	£19,858	£158,865	£6,169
Chair of the Community & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee	1	£14,281	£14,281	4.04%	£14,858	£14,858	£577
Chair of the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee	1	£14,281	£14,281	4.04%	£14,858	£14,858	£577
Chair of the Planning Committee	1	£14,281	£14,281	4.04%	£14,858	£14,858	£577
Members of the Planning Committee	7	£2,177	£15,239	4.04%	£2,265	£15,855	£616
Chair of the Audit and Standards Committee	1	£5,000	£5,000	4.04%	£5,202	£5,202	£202
Chairs of the Brent Connects Area Consultative Forums	5	£1,250	£6,250	4.04%	£1,301	£6,503	£253
Chair of the Licensing Committee	1	£3,234	£3,234	4.04%	£3,365	£3,365	£131
Members of the Licensing Committee	9	£1,000	£9,000	4.04%	£1,040	£9,364	£364
Member of the Fostering Panel	1	£3,224	£3,224	4.04%	£3,354	£3,354	£130
Leader of the Principal Opposition Group	1	£8,000	£8,000	4.04%	£8,323	£8,323	£323
Leader of the Second Opposition Group	1	£4,000	£4,000		£4,000	£4,000	£4,000
Group Whip for the majority group with over 50%	1	£4,000	£4,000	4.04%	£4,161	£4,161	£161
Mayor	1	£7,141	£7,141	4.04%	£7,429	£7,429	£288
Deputy Mayor	1	£3,234	£3,234	4.04%	£3,365	£3,365	£131
Chair of the Audit and Standards Advisory Committee	1	£1,500	£1,500	4.04%	£1,561	£1,561	£61
Education Co-Opted Member(s) Community & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee	5	£226	£1,130	4.04%	£235	£1,176	£46
Independent Member(s) of the Audit and Standards Advisory Committee	2	£427	£854	4.04%	£444	£889	£35
TOTALS	107	£187,543	£1,047,649		£194,958	£1,089,812	£46,163

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	<p align="center">Council 23 February 2023</p>
	<p align="center">Report from the Corporate Director, Governance</p>
<p>Amendments to the Constitution</p>	
<p>Wards Affected:</p>	N/A
<p>Key or Non-Key Decision:</p>	Council
<p>Open or Part/Fully Exempt: <small>(If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)</small></p>	Open
<p>No. of Appendices:</p>	One Appendix 1: Proposed changes to the Constitution
<p>Background Papers:</p>	None
<p>Contact Officer(s): <small>(Name, Title, Contact Details)</small></p>	Debra Norman, Corporate Director, Governance 020 8937 1578 Debra.norman@brent.gov.uk

1.0 Summary

1.1 This report proposes a number of minor changes to the Constitution to remove disproportionate bureaucracy and provide clarification.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 To agree the amendments to the Constitution set out in this report and Appendix 1.

2.2 To note that, to the extent that the changes set out in this report relate to executive functions of the Council, they have been approved by the Leader.

2.3 To authorise the Corporate Director, Governance to amend the Constitution accordingly, including making any necessary incidental or consequential changes.

3.0 Background

3.1 A number of minor changes to the Constitution are proposed following a recent meeting of the Constitutional Working Group, as set out below.

Agreeing Grant Criteria

- 3.2 Currently the Constitution allows for officers to make grants from the council's own resources up to £25k (or in the case of NCIL, up to £100k) subject to a number of restrictions. One of these is:

“(iv) the grant criteria has been approved by the Cabinet other appropriate body or person with appropriate authority.”

This has made it difficult on a number of occasions to move quickly to agree small grant programmes.

- 3.3 It is therefore proposed that where the awards to be made under a grant programme will not exceed £25k, Corporate Directors be given delegated power to agree the criteria to be applied, in consultation with the relevant Cabinet Member.

Bidding for Grants

- 3.4 Currently individual Cabinet Members have delegated power to agree submission of bids for additional resources from government and other bodies in relation to their portfolio area, subject to financial regulations and any matching funding being identified at the time of bidding.

- 3.5 These bids are often speculative in nature and the making of the bid does not normally commit the council to accept or use the grant or provide any match funding. The requirement for a Cabinet Member decision can make it difficult for bids to be submitted in time where timescales are tight because of the process surrounding Cabinet Member decision, which is often disproportionate to the sums involved.

- 3.6 It is proposed that this delegation be removed so that officers are free to make bids for additional resources without going through a detailed governance process. Officers will instead be required to consult with the Cabinet Member before bidding. The use of any grant received will be subject to the usual governance processes relevant to the application of the grant.

Supplementary Planning Documents

- 3.7 Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) build upon and provide more detailed advice or guidance on policies in an adopted local plan. As they do not form part of the development plan, they cannot introduce new planning policies into the development plan.

- 3.8 Current practice is that draft SPDs are agreed prior to consultation by Cabinet and in some instances return to Cabinet to be adopted taking into account the outcome of consultation. This is a cumbersome process for documents which do not establish new policy and are often quite technical.

- 3.9 It is proposed that it be made explicit in the Cabinet Member delegations that the Cabinet Member can agree consultation on such documents and that the Cabinet Member also be empowered to adopt the SPD following consultation. The Cabinet Member will be able to refer the SPD to Cabinet for consideration if they consider this to be appropriate in the circumstances.

Fees and Charges

- 3.10 A minor addition is also proposed to the wording of the delegation of powers to Cabinet Members to agree fees and charges to clarify that these powers do not restrict the powers of officers to agree fees and charges as provided for in the Policy adopted by full Council.

Procurement decisions

- 3.11 In order to ensure consistency and avoid confusion, it is proposed that the thresholds for officer decision-making mentioned in Part 3 Paragraph 9.5 (3.3(a)) relating to contract and procurement matters be exclusive rather than inclusive of VAT. This was the case before changes to the Public Contract Regulations 2015 came into effect in January 2022 and is currently the case in respect of all other contract and procurement delegations in Part 3.

4.0 Legal implications

- 4.1 These are contained in the body of the report

5.0 Financial Implications

- 5.1 No specific financial implications arise from this report.

6.0 Diversity Implications

- 6.1 Under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the Council has a duty when exercising their functions to have 'due regard' to the need:

- a) to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the Act;
- b) advance equality of opportunity; and
- c) foster good relations between those who share a "protected characteristic" and those who do not.

This is the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). The 'protected characteristics' are: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation

Report sign off:

Debra Norman
Corporate Director of Governance

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Appendix 1 – Changes to Constitution

PART 3 - RESPONSIBILITY FOR FUNCTIONS

9.5 In addition to those powers specified in the Tables and elsewhere in this Constitution, the officers specified above have delegated to them by the Council or the Leader, or Cabinet (as the case may be) all and any of the powers of the Council and the executive as may be necessary or desirable to enable them to effectively manage and operate their Department or to carry out the roles and responsibilities required of them from time to time (not necessarily restricted to those roles and responsibilities specified above). These powers are subject to the exemptions, restrictions and limitations specified in paragraph 10 below or elsewhere in this Constitution. These powers include (but are not limited to) the powers set out in the following table which are also, subject to any exemption, restriction or limitation specified in respect of them in that table:-

Power	Exception, restriction or limitation
<p>9. to <u>bid for and</u> make grants or give other financial or other assistance to organisations.</p>	<p>(a) Provided that if the grant or other financial assistance involves the grant of funds from Council's own resources</p> <p>(i) the relevant Director is satisfied that no adverse capital finance or other negative implications would arise, unless written consent of the Corporate Director, Finance and Resources is obtained.</p> <p>(ii) no grant shall be made by officers if it amounts to more than £25k per annum except in the case of Neighbourhood Infrastructure Level grants which may be made by the Corporate Director of Communities and Regeneration up to the value of £100k.</p> <p>(iii) no grant shall be withdrawn or reduced by officers if the receiving body has received a grant from the Council for each of the last five years for the same purpose unless such withdrawal is due to the fact that the body no longer meets the relevant grant criteria or conditions of grant.</p> <p>(iv) the grant criteria has been approved by the Cabinet, other appropriate body, <u>the relevant Corporate Director</u> or <u>other</u> person with appropriate authority.</p>

	<p>(v) no grant shall be made by officers from the council's Voluntary Sector Initiative Fund except with the prior approval of the Cabinet.</p> <p>(b).....</p> <p><u>(c) Provided that submission of bids for additional resources from government and other bodies shall be subject to consultation with the relevant Cabinet Member.</u></p>
<p>3(a) to invite expressions of interest, agree shortlists, invite tenders, negotiate, award, enter into and terminate contracts, agreements, deeds or other transactions; to purchase supplies and services; to appoint external consultants; to make minor or consequential changes to any of the documents mentioned above which were previously agreed by the Cabinet or the Council or their committees or sub-committees.</p>	<p>Provided that:</p> <p>(a) In the case of a contract, agreement, deed or transaction where the Council would be in receipt of works, services or supplies (other than the supply of electricity of gas through a corporate contract) if the value inclusive of VAT of the contract, agreement, deed, transaction, supply, service, work or consultancy would or would be likely or is estimated at the commencement of any procurement process to exceed £2 million in respect of services, supplies or £5 million in respect of works, such value to be aggregated over the life of the contract (including any possible extension) then:-</p> <p>.....</p>

.....

13. Decisions by individual Members

The Leader has delegated the following functions to Cabinet members to be exercised within their portfolio area and in consultation with the Leader.

Categories of decisions for individual Cabinet Members, to be taken in consultation with the Leader.

CATEGORY	INDIVIDUAL MEMBER DELEGATED DECISIONS (in relation to their portfolio area)
Financial	Submission of bids for additional resources from government and other bodies in relation to their portfolio area, subject to financial regulations and any matching funding being identified at the time of bidding.
	Agreement of changes to existing fees and charges <u>where this is not within powers delegated to officer in accordance with the Fees and Charges policy adopted by Council.</u>
<u>Consultations</u>	<u>To agree Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) for consultation, together with the arrangements for consultation, and following consultation to adopt SPDs or refer them to Cabinet for adoption.</u>

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