



## Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee

**Tuesday 24 January 2023 at 6.00 pm**

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

Please note this will be held as an in person meeting which all Committee members will be required to attend in person.

The meeting will be open for the press and public to attend or alternatively can be followed via the live webcast. The link to follow proceedings via the live webcast is available [HERE](#)

### Membership:

#### Members

Councillors:

Conneely (Chair)  
Long (Vice-Chair)  
Ahmadi Moghaddam  
Akram  
Bajwa  
S Butt  
Georgiou  
Miller  
Mitchell  
J Patel  
Shah

#### Substitute Members

Councillors:

Afzal, Begum, Collymore, Ethapemi, Fraser, Moeen,  
Rajan-Seelan, Ketan Sheth and Smith

Councillors:

Maurice & Kansagra  
Lorber & Martin

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The business relates to or affects:

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

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

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

or

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

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

# Agenda

Introductions, if appropriate.

Item	Page
<b>1 Apologies for absence and clarification of alternate members</b>	
<b>2 Declarations of interests</b>	
Members are invited to declare at this stage of the meeting, the nature and existence of any relevant disclosable pecuniary or personal interests in the items on this agenda and to specify the item(s) to which they relate.	
<b>3 Deputations (if any)</b>	
To hear any deputations received from members of the public in accordance with Standing Order 67.	
<b>4 Minutes of the previous meeting</b>	
4.1 To approve the minutes of the previous meeting held on 15 December 2022 as a correct record.	1-10
4.2 To receive and confirm as approved the minutes of the meeting held on 8 November 2022, following their initial consideration at the previous meeting in December 2022.	11-26
<b>5 Matters arising (if any)</b>	
To consider any matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting.	
<b>6 Budget Scrutiny Task Group Findings</b>	27 - 308
This report presents the findings and recommendations of the Budget Scrutiny Task Group, following its review of the Council's Draft budget proposals for 2023/24.	
(Agenda republished to include the Task Group report on 20 January 23)	
<b>7 Scrutiny Work Plan 2022/23 Update</b>	309 - 316
To provide an update on the changes to the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee's work programme.	

This report updates the Committee on the Scrutiny Recommendations Tracker.

**9 Any Other Urgent Business**

Notice of items to be raised under this heading must be given in writing to the Head of Executive and Member Services or her representative before the meeting in accordance with Standing Order 60.

**Date of the next meeting: Wednesday 22 February 2023**



Please remember to set your mobile phone to silent during the meeting.

- The meeting room is accessible by lift and seats will be provided for members of the public. Alternatively, it will be possible to follow proceedings via the live webcast [HERE](#)



**MINUTES OF THE RESOURCES AND PUBLIC REALM SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
Held in the Conference Hall, Brent Civic Centre on Thursday 15 December  
2022 at 6.00 pm**

PRESENT: Councillor Conneely (Chair), Councillor Long (Vice-Chair) and Councillors, Ahmadi Moghaddam, Akram, S Butt, Bajwa, Georgiou, Miller, Mitchell and J Patel..

Councillor Shah was also present in remote online attendance.

Also Present: Councillor Krupa Sheth, Cabinet Member for Environment, Infrastructure & Climate Action and Councillor Lorber.

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

Apologies for lateness were received from Councillor S Butt. It was noted that whilst also present Councillor Shah would not be able to participate in any formal decisions taken during the meeting as she was in remote online attendance.

**2. Declarations of interests**

There were no declarations of interest shared.

**3. Deputations (if any)**

There were no deputations.

**4. Minutes of the previous meeting**

Having noted the request by Councillor Mitchell to include additional clarification in the minutes with regard to Item 6 – Brent Council's Grants Programme in relation to the discussion around Carbon Offset Funding the Committee AGREED to defer formal approval of the minutes from the previous meeting held on 8 November 2022 in order for these additional comments to be finalised and shared with the Committee

Members noted the minutes would therefore be presented to the next meeting for final approval and confirmation.

**5. Matters arising (if any)**

Other than the comments referred to in agenda item 4 – Minutes of the previous meeting, no other Matters Arising were raised at the meeting.

**6. Redefining Local Services: Update on the Integrated Street Cleansing, Waste Collections and Winter Maintenance Services Contract Procurement**

Councillor Krupa Sheth, Cabinet Member for Environment, Infrastructure & Climate Action introduced the report that had been circulated to members ahead of the

meeting which updated the Committee on the procurement programme and the proposed service changes to be included in the Integrated Street Cleansing, Waste Collections and Winter Maintenance Services Contract. The Committee was being asked to comment on the report and proposed service changes in advance of its final consideration by Cabinet in January 2023.

Context was provided that the Resources & Public Realm Scrutiny Committee last received a report on the wider Redefining Local Services (RLS) programme in July 2021 which had outlined the procurement strategy and timetable for the Integrated Contract. The Committee were advised that the current Street Cleaning, Waste Collections and Winter Maintenance Services that formed the contract would come to an end on 31 March 2023. Therefore in line with the RLS delivery model that was confirmed by Cabinet in February 2022 (specialist contracts delivery model with low level insourcing) the item had returned to the Committee with updates that included a more detailed plan of the preferred service moving forward.

The Committee was advised that as part of the recommissioning of the Integrated Contract, in Summer 2022 officers had sought feedback from the local community via public consultations with regard to the Preferred Service which included a shift from weekly, co-mingled (single stream) dry recycling collections to alternate weekly, twin stream dry recycling collections (whereby containers would be collected one week and mixed paper and card would be collected the next) for street level households. Changes were also proposed to street cleansing which would see a shift from frequency based cleaning to an intelligence led approach. In Autumn 2022 the Council's Preferred Service of alternate weekly twin stream recycling was trialled in pilot areas across the borough to examine how potential changes to the current system would work in practice. The outcome of these actions had informed the ongoing live procurement of contracted service providers.

The Committee recognised the challenges in continuing to deliver an effective service within the community balanced against budgetary challenges and Brent's commitment to achieve carbon net zero by 2030.

In welcoming the opportunity to review the report prior to its consideration by Cabinet, the Committee had a number of questions for officers on the approach outlined, with the following key points discussed. The Chair also advised that she had received a late request to speak prior to the meeting from Councillor Lorber, which she would allow if time permitted:

- The Committee required clarity as to how the Council's Preferred Service would support Brent's climate commitment to achieve carbon net zero by 2030 and what were the differences between the current contract and the suggested 'Preferred Service' that would support this aim. In response the Committee were advised that the new service hoped to see positive impacts on climate and environment by increased levels of recycling, decreased levels of waste going to disposal and the use of newly introduced electric vehicles being used as part of the Integrated Contract. The plans had been developed with the aim of creating an environmental betterment as well as generating additional funds for the Council to re-invest in public services.
- Issues around fly tipping were raised, with the Committee requiring clarification on how the new contract plan would deliver more robust

enforcement and targeted action against fly-tipping in line with residents wishes and if there was scope to increase charges or increase the number of fines being issued to reinvest into other resident services. In response, Chris Whyte (Director of Environment & Leisure) supported by Oliver Myers (Head of Environmental Strategy & Commissioning) advised that whilst enforcement did not fall within the contract, Neighbourhood Patrol Officers were actively communicating the Council's policy on fly tipping to residents to limit this behaviour as much as possible, with street cleansing officers working with the enforcement team to advise where there are fly tipping hotspots in the borough so that efforts could be focused in these areas to gather intelligence and hold fly tippers accountable.

- The Committee questioned how commercial bins that were placed on the footpath of residential streets would be monitored for misuse, as this had been an ongoing issue in some wards. Officers advised that the location of the bins would be a highways issue and between neighbourhood managers and enforcement officers a resolution should be sought. In addition to this mobile CCTV was available where requested to monitor hot spot areas.
- The Committee questioned the effectiveness of the public consultation, querying whether the public had been made aware of the possibilities and limitations of the service given the Council's challenging financial position. Particular concern was raised in relation to the outcome of the consultation with regard to recycling collections, whereby 57.9% of residents wanted the Council to maintain the current schedule of service and 62.2% of residents did not support the Council's suggested preferred service for recycling, given the recommendation was still to adopt the Preferred Service going forward. Committee members queried if by proceeding with the Preferred Service despite resident concerns, residents may feel that their voices had not been valued throughout the consultation process. In response to the points raised officers advised that consultations with the public were extensive with responses having been taken into account in terms of development of the Preferred Service, although these had also needed to be balanced against the budgetary constraints identified. Officers acknowledged the weight of the behavioural changes needed by the public to support the revised system, recognising that to deliver a financially viable service in line with Brent's climate ambition would be an ongoing and extended piece of work. It was viewed positively that officers advised that many residents who participated in the consultation appeared to share enthusiasm and a willingness to learn more about what they could do to support recycling and a greener Brent in general.
- In acknowledgement that waste collections and street cleansing were of high priority to residents, it was queried whether funds could be reallocated from elsewhere across the Council to support such an important service for residents. Officers, supported by the Cabinet Member for Environment, Infrastructure and Climate Action confirmed that this would not be possible given pressures also needing to be managed across other Council services, additionally it was of paramount importance that funding was not reduced from services supporting Brent's most vulnerable residents. Officers re-iterated the scale of the task in supporting mass behavioural changes in residents approach to the impending changes, however felt that the significant cost and environmental benefits were essential in moving forward to manage Council services effectively and meet Brent's climate ambitions.

- In response to a Committee query regarding whether benchmarking against other Local Authorities had taken place to explore alternative options outside of the Preferred Service which may be both viable and require less change for residents, officers advised that benchmarking of different delivery models had been undertaken throughout the procurement process, with the introduction of sacks for separately recycling paper and card appearing to be emerging best practice. Benchmarking had also taken place against council's that insourced, to explore if this was a good option for Brent, however following the benchmarking exercise it was concluded that the approach outlined would be the most effective way forward for Brent as laid out in the Cabinet report in February 2022.
- The Committee were advised that Brent already had a comprehensive system of refuse and recycling collection in place with weekly food waste collections and bi-weekly collections of refuse and dry recycling. It was felt the next step in developing Brent's environmental efforts was to remove the paper and card from the recycling bins and place in separate recycling sacks as this would benefit both the environment, by increasing the volume of recycling and, reduce levels of cross contamination and generate additional income for the council that could be used to invest in improving services further.
- It was noted that some Council's had moved to collections every 3-4 weeks, therefore officers felt that the Brent offer provided an effective service for residents.
- In response to a query regarding the possibility of a shared service approach with neighbouring boroughs to ease the contract costs, the Committee were advised that there were no neighbouring authorities working to the same procurement timescales as Brent. In addition to this it was acknowledged that shared contracts were often difficult to manage, particularly if there were political differences in neighbouring boroughs.
- The Committee highlighted that residents would like to see cheaper or free bulky waste collections. In addition to this, members felt that the current system of recycling bulky waste was unfair to residents who did not have access to a vehicle, as they were charged a fee for bulky waste collection, whereas residents who were able to take their bulky waste to the Abbey Road Recycling Centre were able to recycle theirs at no additional cost. It was felt that the current situation unfairly impacted on residents who did not have access to a vehicle and in having to incur extra charges to recycle bulky waste if car ownership was an indicator of their socio economic status. Furthermore it was felt that the system as it stood was in conflict with Brent's climate change objectives due to the promotion of car use to recycle as opposed to having one vehicle travel around the borough collecting waste.
- The Committee queried if it was viable to create pedestrian access point at Abbey Road and if it was possible to charge a small fee for those who accessed Abbey Road by vehicle to support reduced collection fees for residents who were unable to access Abbey Road by vehicle.
- Officers acknowledged the disparity in the current system, citing that due to waste legislation they were unable to charge a fee for residents to dispose of their household waste, adding that it would not be viable to significantly reduce or remove the bulky waste collection charge as further investment would need to be sourced from elsewhere to run the service. The Committee were also advised that the collection cost to residents compared favourably when benchmarked against other boroughs.

- Members were also advised of the plans being developed to procure the service in future through the West London Waste Authority which would provide a more cost effective option for this service and with any additional funding generated, then passed on to support recycling and refuse disposal, with the example of additional community skips being funded.
- The Committee were reassured that the West London Waste Authority were also in the process of exploring how pedestrian access could be supported at Abbey Road, although there was no timeline available at present. Members were assured that the necessity of pedestrian access continued to be strongly advocated for by the Council.
- The Committee queried whether a sliding scale of fees for the collection of bulky items could be explored as part of the re-procurement with residents, if they only had one large item to be collected, paying a lower price. It was felt that the current system may discourage residents from paying for the collection service and could subsequently lead to increased fly tipping. Officers confirmed that they would be exploring this through the procurement process.
- In acknowledgement of the wider issue of fly tipping across the borough the Committee were advised that the Communications and Engagement teams were working collaboratively to ensure that residents were aware of the recycling options in Brent and the consequences for individuals who were found to be fly tipping. Officers recognised the scale of the work that needed to be undertaken in strengthening internal communications between in house enforcement teams and collection operatives in highlighting hot spot areas and gathering evidence at ground level to support successful enforcement.

The Committee were keen to keep the progress being made in this area under review and requested that this specific topic was brought to a future Committee meeting to look at what gains had been made.

- Concerns were also identified following the pilot of the alternate weekly twin stream recycling service and feedback provided by residents, that the recycling sacks were too small and of insufficient quality to prevent tearing and proper sealing, with a demonstration provided by one of the Committee members. The Committee therefore queried if a different coloured bin could be used instead of a sack. Officers advised that there were a number of reasons that supported using sacks over an additional bin, including the time and cost to roll out a further bin service, many properties did not have room to store another bin and bins were more susceptible to being misused and contaminated with other materials. Officers welcomed the feedback that the current sack type was not durable enough and reassured the Committee that the sacks would be stronger and have a seal on to reduce moisture levels when the service was fully rolled out. Officers advised that reducing moisture levels was particularly important as there was a threshold level of 12% permitted in order for the materials to be recycled with the optimum financial return to the Council.
- In terms of contamination, officers confirmed that there was a much lower rate of contamination using the sacks with an estimated 1% contamination rate.
- The Committee queried what would happen if paper/card went in to the blue recycling bin instead of the sack, in response officers confirmed that as part of

- the reprocessing contract the comingled material would still be recycled, however the Council would receive less income than if it had been separated.
- Officers confirmed that some investigation had taken place into other opportunities to separate waste, however many were not feasible in Brent due to space limitations. The Environment Act that came out in 2021 had a deposit return scheme built in to, it was expected that once this and the other changes in the Act came in to effect over the next few years there would be less packaging to recycle as deposit return schemes were expanded.
  - In response to a Committee query regarding how recycling sacks would be distributed to HMO properties, it was confirmed that one sack per household would be provided, with the offer of an additional sack when needed in line with all other households. This raised further queries as to how large HMO's and flats would get their sacks returned. Officers advised that households within HMO's would have their number on their sack so that it could be returned. It was confirmed that blocks of flats and flats above shops would not be included in the initial roll out of the new contract, however work was ongoing to explore how residents in flats could become more actively involved in recycling.
  - Following a Committee query regarding how effective the trial had been in meeting the desired outcomes of the twin stream recycling collection programme in terms of reducing contamination and increasing recycling rates, officers reported that as the trial was only 8 weeks in duration and in pilot areas it only provided a snapshot of how figures could look. However by the end of the trial 71% of properties were presenting sacks, this had increased from 51% in Fortnight 1 of the trial and estimated sack contamination was 1% , this was well received in light of the average 27% contamination of recycling collected from bins. Officers therefore felt that the initial figures looked promising in achieving the long term desired outcome.
  - The Committee required further details regarding the use of bin sensors to measure the communal bin fill rates to gauge recycling rates in poorly performing areas. Officers advised that the Council would receive reports on the weight and levels of contamination in the communal bins, this information would act as baseline data and support next steps in identifying where further public engagement was needed to reduce the misuse of the bins and in supporting residents increased knowledge of recycling. It was felt that the data collected could also support the reduction of fly tipping as the sensor would alert the Council when the bin required emptying. A trial date was to be confirmed and feedback could be shared at a future meeting.
  - Further details were also sought with regard to what risks there may be to the efficiency of the service as a result of the proposed changes and what mitigations had been put in place to minimise the risk of residents feeling any impact from the change in service in relation to street cleansing. Officers advised that the revisions that formed part of the Preferred Service for street cleansing were intended to deliver a more targeted service by responding to incidents as and when necessary, alongside a regular street cleaning schedule, albeit with revised frequencies. Where hot spots and/or ad hoc incidents occurred the intelligence led approach would see new dedicated rapid response teams in each Brent Connects area who could respond quickly to reported concerns. The approach would also see cohesive working between local teams in each area to identify and monitor hot spots, issues could be reported from the public via the new app and data would be closely

- monitored and responded to accordingly. It was noted that Councillors would also be encouraged to make contact if their constituents had raised issues.
- The Committee advised that there had historically been issues when reporting concerns via the “Love Clean Streets” app, with issues not being acted upon. The Committee queried how reporting via the new app would work in practice and if it could be used to report issues on council estates. Officers advised that all residents would be able to report using the app, including reporting issues raised from council estates. The information residents shared via the app would go to the rapid response team and the neighbourhood manager’s office who would work with the contractors to ensure that issues were responded to. In addition to this the new app that would go live in April 2023 would be more accessible and user friendly. Officers were hopeful this would encourage more residents to actively use the app to report concerns. The app also supported one of the key objectives of the Redefining Local Services Programmes to move to a more integrated system as the new app when fully rolled out would allow residents to report highways issues, street cleansing issues and waste issues, with additional reporting tools to be added in the future which it was felt would vastly improve the resident experience being able to report a number of issues using one platform. Work would continue to explore how digitally excluded households could report issues in addition to the traditional route of calling the contact centre.
  - In response to Committee queries around the procurement process, officers advised they were not able to share further information while the procurement process remained live, however the information would be available for the Cabinet meeting scheduled for January 2023.
  - The Committee were reassured that Brent’s social values would be upheld in any contracts being awarded with confirmation that the London Living Wage had already been included as a requirement in the new contract.
  - The Committee required clarity with regard to how underperformance in any new contracts would be addressed. Officers reassured the Committee that a robust performance management framework would form part of all new contracts. Key performance indicators would have to be met under contract to ensure that residents were receiving efficient services and value for money. Officers advised that the use of fines for contractors was an option where they were not meeting their contractual obligations however it was felt that positive working relationships between key officers and contractors was the most effective way to ensure a consistently good service was delivered.
  - Councillors felt it would be helpful once the contracts had been awarded for officers to share a defined list of what actually constituted a failure to deliver services so that Councillors could support residents in having appropriate expectations of their service.

As no further issues were raised and the Committee had come to the end of the time available the Chair thanked those present for their contributions to the discussion along with Councillor Sheth (as Cabinet Member for Environment, Infrastructure & Climate Action), Peter Gadsdon (Corporate Director Resident Services), Chris Whyte (Director of Environment & Leisure) & Oliver Myers (Head of Environmental Strategy & Commissioning) for the information provided in response and closed the item by summarising the suggestions for improvement and information requests made by the Committee which are noted below:

As a result of their review, the Committee identified the following recommendations for improvement which it was AGREED should be included as comments from scrutiny in the final report to Cabinet on the proposed award of contract:

That officers be asked to:

- i) Produce a diagram/flowchart detailing all milestones from May 2019 when the Redefining Local Services (RLS) programme was first initiated.
- ii) Review household bulky waste collection charges, including consideration of a sliding scale of charges linked to the number of items to be collected, rather than the current fixed rate of £35 for up to five items.
- iii) Undertake a feasibility study on the potential for introducing a mixed approach to paper/card recycling collections, to explore whether any recycling collection rounds in the borough would be more suited to the use of bins rather than sacks.
- iv) Arrange a session with ward councillors and Neighbourhood Managers to inform the design and development of the new recycling engagement and communication plan that will accompany the roll out of the new recycling service.
- v) Liaise with the West London Waste Authority to ensure access is reinstated for pedestrians and cyclists at the Abbey Road Household Reuse and Recycling Centre.
- vi) Improve collaboration between in-house enforcement teams and collection operatives in identifying fly tipping hot spots and collating evidence, to remove the burden from residents

In addition to the above recommendations, the Committee also AGREED the following as further information requests:

To provide:

- i) The recycling communications/engagement plan that will be developed in February/March 2023.
- ii) Figures from the twin stream recycling trial on the impact the Preferred Service had (e.g. in reducing contamination rates in comparison with the current service).
- iii) Detail from the twin stream recycling trial on the nature of contamination in the recycling bins to assist the Council in communications and engagement around the new recycling proposals.
- iv) Information to local councillors on the new zone classifications outlined in the report once these have been finalised by March 2023.
- v) Further details on the 'bin sensor' trial (e.g. the trial period, the areas/wards that will be included in the trial, and when the findings report will be published etc.) when this is available in March 2023.
- vi) Detail on how many fines the Council have issued to the contractor for contract breaches as part of the current Public Realm Contract. To be inclusive of the value of fines, and the reasons for the Council issuing such fines.
- vii) Information on mechanisms within the new integrated contract that permit the council to deal with localised pockets of underperformance or specific areas of underperformance in the borough that emerge under the new integrated contract.

7. **Any Other Urgent Business**

None.

The meeting closed at 9:00pm.

Councillor Conneely

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**MINUTES OF THE RESOURCES AND PUBLIC REALM SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
Held in the Conference Hall, Brent Civic Centre on Tuesday 8 November 2022  
at 6.00 pm**

PRESENT: Councillor Conneely (Chair), Councillor Long (Vice-Chair) and Councillors, Akram, S Butt, Bajwa, Collymore, Fraser, Georgiou, Miller, Mitchell and Patel.

Also Present: Councillor Ketan Sheth (Chair of the Community & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee) for Items 6 & 7.

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

Apologies were received from Councillor Ahmadi Moghaddam and Councillor Shah, substituted by Councillor Fraser and Councillor Collymore.

2. **Declarations of interests**

Councillor Conneely made a declaration in relation to Item 8 - Safer Brent Partnership Annual Report 2021-22, due to her work with a local organisation that had received funding from the Violence Reduction Unit to provide mental health services to young people

3. **Deputations (if any)**

None.

4. **Minutes of the previous meeting**

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the previous meeting held on Tuesday 6 September 2022 be approved as an accurate record.

5. **Matters arising (if any)**

6. **Brent Council's Grants Programmes (joint item with the Community & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee)**

Councillor Donnelly – Jackson (Cabinet Member for Community Engagement, Equalities & Culture) introduced a report updating the Scrutiny Committee on the Council's grants programmes with particular emphasis on the participatory budgeting initiative "You Decide" whereby the local community were actively involved in voting for the local projects they believed would most benefit the community and should be awarded funding.

Lorna Hughes (LH) Operational Director, Engagement Strategy and Communications advised the Committee of the broader scope of grants that the Council made available to community in addition the You Decide Grants including the smaller Love Where You Live Grant that awarded up to £1000 and the Edward Harvist Grant that was a medium level grant offering up to £5000 for applicants.

There were also grants available for the Carbon Offset Fund, Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy (NCIL) and Brent Health Matters. The Committee heard that the You Decide funding of £2 million was split equally between the 5 Brent Connect areas, with each area allocated £400,000. The emphasis of the You Decide Participatory Grant was to maximise community engagement, it was felt this approach had been successful with an unprecedented 149 application received with 479 residents having taken part across the 5 separate events.

The Committee were advised that Brent had provided the largest participatory budgeting funds across London, however going forward with the current budgetary pressures there were likely to be uncertain times ahead in accruing revenue from NCIL to support this.

In summarising LH shared that the trialling of the You Decide Participatory Budgeting Scheme was felt to have been a successful initiative, allowing for increased community engagement and local organisations to benefit from funding that was invested back in to the community. It was acknowledged that there were further areas of development to build on to increase the reach and further enhance community engagement.

In order to provide the Committee with greater insight in to the experiences of the community groups who had actively applied for a grant, several community organisation representatives were in attendance to share their experiences.

The Chair proceeded to invite the first community speaker Jon Coming - Higgs from Elders Voice to address the Committee, with the following key points shared:

- Elders Voice was a local organisation that supported elderly residents to live safely and independently in their own homes through community support.
- The application experience had been overwhelmingly positive, Mr Coming – Higgs advised the Committee that if he had to apply for a grant in the traditional capacity he felt it was unlikely to have been successful as the nature of their project was focused on learning how to support the elderly community with outcomes being qualitative rather than quantitative, a lack of measurable data may have hindered their application success if the grant application was rolled out in the more traditional way.
- It was highlighted as a strength that Brent valued the voices of the local community and had explored a more dynamic approach to community engagement and grant allocation.
- It was suggested that to continue to build on the success of the You Decide Grant process that Local Authority grant commissioners should learn the language of local organisations rather than having an expectation of local residents and organisations learning the language of commissioners as this could lead to a gulf in communication whereby officers are missing what really matters to local residents.
- Mr Coming – Higgs expressed his gratitude to Lorna Hughes (Operational Director, Engagement Strategy and Communications) for her commitment in trying to break down barriers and provide the local community with a meaningful voice to support effective positive change.

The Chair thanked Mr Coming – Higgs for his contribution to the meeting and asked officers if they had any clarifying questions, as no issues were raised the next community speaker, Leslie Barson, Granville Community Kitchen was invited to address the Committee.

- Ms Barson began by expressing that she felt the You Decide scheme was a welcome opportunity for the local community to gain an insight in to the work of community organisations and also provided a unique way for community grant applicants to apply for funding. However she felt that there were some operational issues that could be improved to support the experience for budget applicants.
- It was felt that the application process was weighted heavily in favour of applicants who had a strength in public speaking, as part of the process was to present publicly to your local Brent Connects area to persuade your local community why they should vote for your application. There was concern that this could disadvantage some projects from being awarded funding and also discourage some applicants from making an application at all.
- It was suggested that to support public participation it may also be useful to have hybrid events where attendees could take part and vote /present via Zoom as well as in person.
- It was felt there was some disparity regarding the success of the Brent Connects sessions in terms of the number of attendees, Ms Barson advised that there were very low numbers at the event she presented at in comparison to other events.
- Ms Barson shared that she had feedback from some residents that they weren't clear on where their address fell in terms of which Brent Connects event they could attend.
- The final area of development raised was with regard to the lack of clarity received from Brent in terms of the paperwork needed to progress the process of receiving funding from the point of successful applicants being awarded the grant. Ms Barson reflected that in the case of the Granville Community Kitchen, they were awarded the grant on 18 June 2022 however to date the funds had not been received.
- Ms Barson advised that part of the delay in receiving the funds was due to additional paperwork required that Ms Barson felt had not been made clear at the beginning of the process, additionally it was felt there was a lack of timely communication with officers at some points in the process. Concern was shared that this could deter some groups from applying due to the amount of paperwork required for what was considered a relatively small grant in grant terms.
- Ms Barson closed her comments by re-iterating her thanks to Brent on behalf of the organisation and echoed her belief that once all the “teething issues”

had been resolved the You Decide system of awarding grants was an innovative way to involve the local community in participatory budgeting.

The Chair thanked Ms Barson for sharing her experience and advising on areas that she felt could be developed further, it was noted that the input shared would inform the Committee's questioning to support improving the process.

Councillor Ketan Sheth (Chair of the Community Health & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee) asked Ms Barson what she believed were the top priorities that needed to be addressed to improve the bidding process. In response Ms Barson advised that she believed that the key priorities were to increase opportunities for public participation, giving the example of hybrid options to join meetings, increased publicity of the applications that were being presented to vote on so that members of the public could read up in advance on the organisations and their projects and providing applicants at the outset of the application process with a break down of the process including all the documentation that would be needed.

As there were no further questions, the Chair invited the third community speaker Sacha Dsane from Financial Harmony to share her experience with the Committee with the following key points shared:

- Ms Dsane advised the Committee that her organisation's project that aimed to support adults and young people in financial literacy and personal finances had been unsuccessful in being awarded a grant.
- Ms Dsane felt that in general terms the application process went well although the public speaking element of the application process had not been best suited to the presentation of her organisations application.
- The event that Ms Dsane spoke at was well subscribed with approximately 200 residents in attendance, however among these attendees there was one particular group who had brought approximately 60-70 supporters with them to vote. It was felt this immediately disadvantaged all other applicants for this session
- In closing her comments Ms Dsane commended the idea of encouraging more community engagement in the grants awarding process for community schemes, however felt it was important to recognise the balance needed in ensuring voting was undertaken fairly.

The Chair thanked Ms Dsane for her contribution to the meeting and asked the Committee if they had any further questions. The Committee did not have any specific questions, however in thanking Ms Dsane for her representation, the Committee noted the issues raised and recognised that some group's abilities to mobilise a group of supporters to vote for their project did not necessarily reflect how useful the project could be to residents.

The final speaker Colin George was then invited to address the Committee to share his feedback in his capacity as a resident who participated in the voting process at one of the You Decide events, with the following key points shared –

- Mr George shared that he had been a Brent resident for 45 years and active as a community volunteer since 1978, therefore had a wealth of experience within the community and voluntary sector. In addition to this he was also a trustee of the Harlesden Neighbourhood Forum.
- Mr George advised the Committee that he felt it should be made clear to applicants and voters that grants being allocated in line with the NCIL criteria should include lasting benefits, Mr George felt this was not evident in the presentations shared at the event he attended.
- As a neutral observer, Mr George felt he was in a position to make fair assessments of all the presentations heard and in his assessment felt that there was no correlation between the strength of the presentation and their success rate, leading to further queries regarding how fair the voting system was.
- Mr George felt that the general organisation of the event was good, however it was suggested that more information on the applications would have been of benefit for members of the public attending.
- In line with the comments made by the other community speakers Mr George believed that efforts should be made to prevent large numbers of supporters registering to attend to vote at events as votes would then be awarded on the basis of friendships and affiliations rather than projects being assessed on their own merits

The Chair thanked Mr George for his comments and proceeded to allow the Committee to ask officers questions, which are noted below:

- In response to a Committee question regarding how the challenges as a result of increased budgetary pressures in local government would impact the support provided to local Community and Voluntary Sector (CVS) organisations, officers advised that work was ongoing to support and prepare the CVS in their preparedness for the challenging times ahead. This included support to encourage greater collaboration and networking to aid CVS organisations in submitting bids in partnership to increase their funding opportunities.
- The Committee raised concerns regarding the potential abuse of the participatory budgeting system with particular regard to the issues raised around block voting. In response the Committee were advised that where suspicious voting activity had been observed, votes had been removed. Moving forward further discussion would be undertaken to facilitate fair voting systems.
- In response to a Committee observation that 25-29 year olds were under represented at You Decide events in addition to generally low attendance at events in the South of the borough, the Committee were advised that it was a priority to engage more young adults to make sure their views were represented, particularly where there were projects that were specifically targeted towards young people. It was noted that Brent Youth Parliament

would be instrumental in supporting the success of this. It was also suggested that collecting additional demographic data at future events could support the identification and targeting of under represented groups . Processes could then be put in place to increase engagement ensuring as broad a demographic group were represented and could contribute at subsequent events.

- The Committee queried the lack of community engagement due to the very low number of attendees at the Brent Health Matters You Decide Event in Willesden. In addition to this the Committee noted that as health inequalities were widely acknowledged to profoundly impact people from ethnic minority backgrounds it was important that people voting for projects adequately reflected this group. As a result the Committee questioned how confident they could be that the results from this event reflected the voice of the community. In response to the Committee query, officers established that Pride celebrations had taken place in London on the same day therefore possibly impacted event numbers at the event. In acknowledgement of the points raised officer advised that to add value to the process of future events they would explore setting a minimum number of participants in addition to reaching out to under represented communities to encourage engagement either as a member of the public voting or as part of an organisation bidding for funding.
- In terms of the Carbon Offset Funding Grant the Committee noted the responsibility of the Local Authority to ensure that funding was used to maximise the impacts of carbon reduction, this led the Committee to query if delegating the decision making responsibility to residents as part of the participatory process was the most effective way to maximise funding, particularly as residents were not experts in this area. This raised further queries as to how residents had been supported to understand Carbon Offset Funding.
- Officers advised the Committee that the decision was taken to pilot using the part of the funding in this way after recognising the low carbon literacy among residents in Brent, therefore it was recognised as a priority to engage and communicate with residents from the outset to educate and support increased carbon literacy. This objective was achieved through focusing on reaching all sections of Brent's community, tapping into existing networks but also making sure to target hard to reach areas and those who were reluctant to engage. This involved producing communications and marketing materials in community languages and lots of face-to-face community engagement with expert speakers to provide technical advice.
- Officers felt delegating some responsibilities to residents through the participatory aspect of the scheme was appropriate as part of the pilot project to allow residents to feel involved in affecting positive change in the community to reduce emissions and tackle climate change.
- It was felt there was a high value attached to the work undertaken with

the residents planning group. The group had vastly increased their knowledge in understanding carbon emissions and how the carbon offset fund worked. It was hoped this information would then cascade out into the wider community, offering increased community knowledge and engagement.

- Officers noted Committee comments recognising the scope to utilise the research available as to how to maximise funding to achieve maximum impact in reducing emissions. It was confirmed that the Carbon Offset Funding would not be distributed in the same way moving forwards, following confirmation from the Cabinet meeting in June 2022, the remainder of the funding would be split 60% to council housing, 30% to schools and the remaining 10% to be kept as a buffer for other funding bids.

Due to time constraints additional questions regarding the Carbon Offset Funding would be addressed at the next Resources & Public Realm Scrutiny Committee in January 2023. Officers welcomed Committee members to email them any specific questions directly.

The Chair thanked those present for their contributions to the discussion, and closed the item by summarising the suggestions for improvement and information requests made by the Committee, which are noted below:

The Committee noted the following suggestions for improvement:

- i. Ensure monies distributed as part of the Carbon Offset Fund are targeted to communities/areas in most need.
- ii. Introduce a ballot system into the 'You Decide' initiative, whereby residents who wish to attend decision days apply for tickets in a ballot. Tickets could then be allocated randomly to avoid block voting and popularity contests
- iii. Capture and include information such as age and ethnicity in 'You Decide' data gathering to ensure attendees voting are representative of the borough's demographic
- iv. Add a requirement for those applying for monies as part of the 'You Decide' initiative to have someone with lived experience as part of their presentation.
- v. Utilise local councillors in engaging hard to reach residents to participate in future 'You Decide' decision days.
- vi. Improve communications around the 'You Decide' application process so forthcoming applicants are aware of the eligibility criteria, and time commitments associated with the application process before applying. This includes setting out clear expectations around the documentation successful applicants need to provide, and the time it will take to receive funding.
- vii. Strengthen criteria for allocating NHS funding through Love Where You Live grant funding to ensure monies are directed to the appropriate organisations for maximum impact in reducing health inequalities amongst Black African Heritage communities.

- viii. Support our voluntary and community sector organisations in building new income generation streams.

The Committee noted the following information requests:

- i. Provide voting data across all “You Decide” sessions that have taken place so far in 2022. To be inclusive of the voting data related to the Carbon Offset Fund, NCIL, and Brent Health Matters Health and Wellbeing grants.
- ii. Provide detailed information on the ‘You Decide’ project monitoring processes in place.
- iii. Provide information on the difference between the standard NCIL application rounds versus the ‘You Decide’ application rounds and the rationale why the monies are split this way.
- iv. What is the approach to preventing duplication in funding across Council directorates, especially in a time of oversubscription of grants with diminishing resource?
- v. Provide a feasibility report into different options for voting on ‘You Decide’ decision days to increase accessibility.

8. **Draft Borough Plan 2023-2027  
(Joint Item with the Community & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee)**

The Committee received a report detailing the draft Borough Plan 2023-27, which had been developed with departmental leads and set out the vision and strategic priorities developed with CMT and Cabinet earlier this year. The Committee were asked to note and comment on the report before endorsing ahead of its finalisation in early 2023.

Councillor Butt highlighted that the plan laid out the ambitions of the administration to achieve the best outcomes for Brent residents, including increasing skills and employment opportunities, providing a good standard of education in all Brent schools, delivering on the commitment to increase the affordable housing stock in Brent and ensure that Brent residents have every opportunity to thrive. Councillor Butt advised of the financial challenges going forward due to the lack of adequate funding and mismanagement of the budget from central government, however highlighted that despite the budgetary pressures he felt the Labour administration in Brent had demonstrated they were able to positively manage the funds they had to work with residents and provide high level public services, it was felt that the draft borough plan continued to illustrate the Labour administration in Brent’s commitment to support residents.

The Committee had a number of questions on the draft borough plan, with the following key points discussed –

- The Committee queried whether the objectives in the borough plan were achievable within budget when taking in to consideration the additional financial pressures the council was under. In response the Committee were advised that budgetary pressures were considered in the creation of the plan and the financial situation

would continue to be monitored parallel to the objectives on the plan. , making changes as and when necessary. It was noted that the lack of certainty and delivery of single year budgets from central government increased pressures in planning local services.

- It was confirmed that when the revised Borough Plan comes in to place there would be a degree of harmonisation with strategies and policies on the existing plan to ensure that the plan accurately captured the administrations' vision for Brent and the steps needed to achieve this.
- In response to a Committee concern that the extent of Brent's climate ambition was not reflected in the borough plan, it was noted that feedback from residents demonstrated that climate concerns had not featured on residents top priorities. Despite this the Council were clear in acknowledging its social and moral responsibility to act upon climate concerns. As discussed previously some of the greatest impacts in reducing carbon emissions was through work with schools and addressing adaptations to Brent's housing stock. Pending confirmation of funding and whether there would be a significant rent cap introduced, the council was not yet in a position to confirm if carbon offset in relation to investment in Brent's housing stock would be achievable.
- The Committee questioned officers regarding what they felt to be a lack of accountability on the plan coupled with ambiguous target setting, noting that specific targets would support clearer measurable outcomes. Officers reassured the Committee that the borough plan remained a live document and would not be finalised until the beginning of the next financial year. The Committee noted that specific target setting had been more challenging during the current stage of the plan's construction due to the ambiguity around government funding. It was hoped that assurances would be made from central government confirming funding, once actual funding figures were known it would be possible to include more specific detail and areas of accountability in the plan.
- In terms of the Borough Plan section "The Best Start in Life" whereby it was noted that Raising the attainment of Black African and Caribbean boys had been a feature of the last borough plan, the Committee were curious as to whether this had been achieved in the previous four years. In response it was confirmed that the funding agreed by the Schools Forum to support this initiative had been highly effective in narrowing the attainment gap from 12 to 8 points. Schools agreed that strong effective leadership, an allocated member of staff "champion" to lead on the initiative, tackling racism and stereotyping were all key to being able to minimise the attainment gap.
- The Committee heard that when the current data is shared from schools if it were found that the levels of improvement had not been maintained there would be a need to approach the Schools Forum to explore further funding streams to ensure the gap continued to reduce.
- The Committee acknowledged there were still gains to be made in

managing transitional safeguarding issues and a strong action plan was needed to continue to effectively manage this.

- In response to a Committee question requiring clarity on the council's position of delivering on 1000 new council homes and how many of these would be in addition to the current housing stock and how many were replacement homes, it was confirmed that in the last 4 year period 768 new homes had been built, with a target of an additional 1000 new homes in the next 4 year period.
- The Committee noted that Brent were the only London borough to exclusively build social housing properties, with all other council's building projects including shared ownership and market rent. It was acknowledged that if further support was not received from central government, Brent may have to also start building mixed tenure homes under these conditions in order for it to be viable to continue to also build homes for social rent.

The Chair thanked those present for their contributions including Councillor Sheth for attending in order to participate in the joint scrutiny items. The meeting was then moved on to consider suggestions for improvement and information requests which were agreed as follows:

The Committee noted the following suggestions for improvement:

- i. Ensure the outcomes/success criteria under each strategic priority is more specific, measurable, and accountable
- ii. Involve the worker community (i.e. trade unions) in the consultation/engagement process.
- iii. Make our climate action commitments more prominent throughout strategic priorities
- iv. Include 'togetherness' and 'community cohesion' throughout strategic priorities
- v. Ensure there is continuous engagement with the Brent Integrated Care Partnership on the Borough Plan.

The Committee noted the following information requests:

- i. What have we done (or what are we planning to do) to involve communities who haven't been involved historically in the consultation process for previous borough plans?
- ii. What targeted engagement is planned with marginalised/hard to reach groups in the borough?
- iii. Please provide a breakdown on the amount of people consulted/engaged with so far in order for the committee to establish how representative the data set is of the borough's demographic.

## 9. Safer Brent Partnership Annual Report 2021 -22

The Chair invited Carolyn Downs, Chief Executive and Chair of the Safer Brent Partnership to introduce the Safer Brent Partnership Annual Report 2021-22 for the Committee to note the Safer Brent Partnership, Annual Report Financial Year 2021 – 2022 and the activities undertaken to support agreed priorities. Additionally, for the Committee to provide recommendations to feed into the Safer Brent – Community Safety Strategy and related delivery for 2023 – 2025. Key highlights from the report were shared as follows:

- There were positive themes throughout the report, namely reductions in anti social behaviour, knife crime and gang related crimes. Despite the successes the Safer Brent Partnership were clear that there was no room for complacency and continued to sustain momentum moving forwards.
- Although there had been a general reduction in gang and knife crime, Dollis Hill and Neasden had seen an increase in these types of crime, this had illustrated a significant shift as historically Harlesden and Wembley had always recorded the highest figures in the borough in relation to these crimes. It was established that further exploration was needed to understand why Dollis Hill and Neasden were now presenting as hot spot areas, the Committee noted that the shift in crime prevalence across the borough may impact the way that police resources are distributed across the borough.
- There had been an uptick in sexual offences against women and girls, further exploration was needed to ascertain whether the increase in reported figures was due to an actual increase in activity or if more effective reporting was in place.
- Domestic Abuse Services and MARAC were working collaboratively to manage Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) with Youth Offending becoming progressively more engaged in the multi -agency approach to tackle VAWG.
- The Partnership recognised that a renewed focus to increase opportunities to support skills, employment and education for individuals within the justice system was necessary to improve outcomes in this area.

The Committee welcomed the areas of success in the report and in noting the continued areas of development asked some follow up questions to clarify the information shared, with the following points discussed:

- In noting that violent crime remained a strategic priority for the Safer Brent Partnership the Committee queried how partners had worked collaboratively to address violent crime, particularly in hot sport areas and what interventions would look like moving forward. In response the Committee were advised that following Harlesden and Wembley being recognised as previous hot spot areas there had been significant investment in to

supporting community engagement and police visibility in Wembley and Harlesden wards through the addition of Police Town Centre Teams. It was felt the increased visibility and positive relationship building within the community had a positive impact on wider community engagement as well as acting as a deterrent for certain crimes.

- Further community police engagement included the police meeting with local multi faith forums, GymSafe – a programme to support women feeling safe in gyms, a Summer Camp at Newman Catholic College and Police Cadets.
- Councillor Farah had also been active in the community to support police engagement with the community by leading community meetings on St Raphaels estate following a serious crime incident.
- The Committee heard that in response to the increased activity near Dollis Hill Tube Station and Neasden Town Centre, there was an opportunity to apply to the Violence Reduction Unit for funding to support specific work in these areas.
- In response to a Committee query regarding clarity on section 3.4 of the draft Community Strategy 2023-25 , the Committee required further information as to what the “public health” approach would look like in practice and if the Cost of Living Crisis was expected to impact upon crime rates. The Committee were advised that the process of embedding a public health approach in Brent’s practice had been underway, this included measures outlined in a report to the Health and Wellbeing Board suggesting ways that collaborative working could be effective in reducing crime, a VRU funded project delivered by the Young Brent Foundation – My Endz, that worked with a specific group of young people, funding had also been received to support the transition of young people moving from primary school to high school as this was recognised as particularly vulnerable time in terms of possible exploitation.
- Additionally the Westminster Drug Project had been commissioned to support young people with emotional health needs this included outreach work in schools.
- In response to the Committee query regarding the impact of the Cost of Living Crisis on crime, the Committee heard that there had been a slight uptick in crime, however it was too early to attribute this to the Cost of Living Crisis.
- Following a Committee query regarding how the new strategic priorities were developed and the evidence base used to support this, the Committee were advised that crime statistics from both the MPS and MOPAC were used to identify priorities and followed up with monitoring to assess the impact of interventions to form an evidence base to support future funding applications.
- In responding to a Committee concern that it appeared that priorities relating to the LGBTQ community in terms of addressing hate crimes were missing

from the reports, the police advised that they did not have figures to hand on this particular area of hate crime, however would source feedback on this to share at a future meeting. Officers went on to advise that the Safer Brent Partnership did explore data on hate crimes, however recent trends suggested there were more issues with right wing extremism rather than homophobia, biphobia or transphobia, however it was acknowledged that there was likely to be underreporting and as such it would be a priority to explore ways in which safe reporting avenues could be established and communicated to vulnerable communities.

- The Committee recognised the role as a ward councillor could be a powerful tool in increasing trust and confidence linking the community with local policing, particularly in light of the relationship between the community and law and order over the last few years. It was queried whether this could feature more prominently in the strategy. In response officers felt that the issue should be a major priority for the police to lead on to re-establish and build trust and confidence among the community. Tania Martin, Metropolitan Police added that as an organisation the Met understood their current position in the eyes of the public and the gravitas in ensuring a positive relationship with the community was established.
- In response to a Committee question with regard to how officers ensured that in agreeing the draft priorities engagement with stakeholders included disproportionately affected groups, officers assured the Committee that consultation was undertaken with a broad group of disproportionately affected individuals affected by crime including those affected by their vulnerability, substance misuse, discussion with the Young People's Forum and those involved in the Brent Youth Justice system.
- The Committee were further assured that the priorities were still in their draft stage, therefore officers were keen to reach out to as wide a group as possible to seek further contributions to the plan to ensure it was as effective as possible in addressing the needs and safety of the local community.
- The Committee reflected that it would be useful to re-establish links with health partners at Safer Brent Partnership meetings to support and advise with particular regard to mental health support and how a genuine effective mental health offer could be established for residents.

The Chair thanked those present for their contributions before moving the meeting on to consider suggestions for improvement which were agreed as follows:

The Committee noted the following suggestions for improvement:

- i. For the Partnership to develop new proposals on how we specifically engage with communities in the crime hotspot areas identified in the Annual Report.
- ii. For the Partnership to look further into the statistics of Homophobic, Biphobic, Transphobic, and Islamophobic Hate Crime in Brent, and should there be a strong evidence base, include these areas within the strategic priorities of the Strategy and related delivery for 2023 – 2025.

- iii. For the Partnership to reinstate a health representative on the Safer Brent Partnership Board
- iv. For the Partnership to explore how to improve prove communications in promoting safe ways of reporting domestic violence.

As the meeting was approaching the 3 hour time limit the Chair was required to ask members if they were willing to apply the guillotine procedure under Standing Order 62 in order to extend the meeting for a period of 15 minutes in order to complete the business on the agenda. This was confirmed by Committee members and the meeting resumed.

## 10. **Police Engagement in Brent**

Tania Martin, MPS updated the Committee that following previous feedback there had been a recent push on revising the structure of Ward Panel meetings. It was recognised that Ward Panels provided the community and the Police with a positive opportunity to engage and work together, therefore it was felt there should be a high value placed in ensuring Ward Panels were running effectively. As a result of the revised structure a new Ward Panel handbook , terms of reference and Code of Conduct were also being used to support the effective running of Ward Panels. The Committee heard that there should be a maximum number of 25 participants at Panels covering a broad range of demographics to truly reflect the Community of each Ward. It was understood that there was disparity among the different Ward Panels in terms of numbers and diversity represented. In order to support the continued development of Ward Panels feedback was requested from Committee members.

The Committee provided the following feedback and points of discussion:

- There was a lack of consistency from one ward panel to another, some ward's had very small numbers of attendees and others were well attended. There were also some Ward Panel's taking place where the local Ward Councillor had not been invited to attend.
- It was felt that much of the success of the Panel was dictated by the approach and commitment of the Sergeants who ran each Panel. The Committee noted that ideally Ward Panels would become more aligned, however it was recognised that there had to be flexibility to reflect the differing characters of each Ward and each Sergeant running the Panels. Tania Martin, MPS confirmed that feedback would be shared across Ward Panels to continue to improve the process.
- In response to a Committee query regarding the best path Councillors should take to seek accurate information from the Police following a significant crime happening in their ward, the Committee were advised that inconsistent communication had been recognised as an issue previously, in an attempt to improve channels of communication, this type of information would now be accessible from an Operations Manager covering the BCU.

- Some Committee members felt it would be helpful to consider a different structure to Ward Panels whereby one meeting could scrutinise the police priorities within the ward and an additional Panel could be convened for attendees to flag issues they were concerned about within the local community. It was felt this would be more effective in allowing local residents to share their concern and without impeding on the discussions that were needed to scrutinise the ward. Tania Martin, MPS agreed to take this information to explore further with colleagues.

#### 11. **Scrutiny Work Plan**

The Chair confirmed there had been some changes to the Scrutiny Work Plan agenda and minor amendments to the wording.

There would be an additional Resources & Public Realm meeting held on Tuesday 13 December 2022 to discuss redefining local services. The Resources & Public Realm meeting in January 2023 would look at the Budget Task Group.

#### 12. **Scrutiny Progress Update – Recommendations Tracker**

The Chair updated the Committee that suggestions previously made on the abuse of parking permits had been followed up by the relevant officers.


#### 13. **Any Other Urgent Business**

None.

The meeting closed at 9:15pm.

Councillor Conneely

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 <b>Brent</b>	<b>Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee</b> 24 January 2023
	<b>Report from Director of Communities</b>
<b>Scrutiny Task Group Findings Report</b>	

<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All
<b>Key or Non-Key Decision:</b>	Non-Key Decision
<b>Open or Part/Fully Exempt:</b> <small>(If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)</small>	Open
<b>No. of Appendices:</b>	Two  Appendix 1 – Budget Scrutiny Task Group Findings Report  Appendix 2 – Cabinet Draft Budget 2023/24 report (including Appendix A and B)
<b>Background Papers:</b>	None
<b>Contact Officer(s):</b> <small>(Name, Title, Contact Details)</small>	Jason Sigba, Strategy Lead – Scrutiny, Strategy and Partnerships <a href="mailto:Jason.Sigba@brent.gov.uk">Jason.Sigba@brent.gov.uk</a>  Tom Pickup, Policy Partnerships and Scrutiny Manager, Strategy and Partnerships <a href="mailto:Tom.Pickup@brent.gov.uk">Tom.Pickup@brent.gov.uk</a>

## 1.0 Purpose of the Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to present the Budget Scrutiny Task Group Findings Report for adoption by the Committee (please see Appendix A).

## 2.0 Recommendation

2.1 That the Budget Scrutiny Task Group report is agreed and submitted to Cabinet and Full Council as part of the budget setting process.

### **3.0 Detail**

3.1 The Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee established a Scrutiny Task Group on 6 September 2022 to consider the Council's draft budget proposals for 2023/24.

3.2 The Task Group has now concluded and agreed a report and recommendations for adoption by the Committee and referral to Cabinet for consideration in February 2023.

3.3 The report includes 13 recommendations which are summarised on page 2 of the findings report.

### **4.0 Financial Implications**

4.1 There are no financial implications for the purposes of this report.

### **5.0 Legal Implications**

5.1 There are no legal implications for the purposes of this report.

### **6.0 Equality Implications**

6.1 There are no equality implications for the purposes of this report.

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

7.1 None for the purposes of this report.

**Report sign off:**

**Lorna Hughes**  
Director of Communities

# 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



## Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Evidence Sessions</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Conclusions</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Participants</b>	<b>19</b>

## **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.<sup>1</sup>
- 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;**

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<sup>1</sup> <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 2022<sup>2</sup>.
- 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.

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<sup>2</sup> <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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## Appendix 2

	<p align="center"><b>Cabinet</b> 14 November 2022</p>
	<p align="center"><b>Report from the Corporate Director of Finance and Resources</b></p>
<p><b>Draft Budget 2023/24</b></p>	

<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All
<b>Key or Non-Key Decision:</b>	Key
<b>Open or Part/Fully Exempt:</b>	Open
<b>No. of Appendices:</b>	Two Appendix A Summary of new 2023/24 budget proposals Appendix B Detailed budget templates for new 2023/24 budget proposals
<b>Background Papers:</b>	None
<b>Contact Officer(s):</b> (Name, Title, Contact Details)	<p>Minesh Patel Corporate Director of Finance and Resources Email: <a href="mailto:minesh.patel@brent.gov.uk">minesh.patel@brent.gov.uk</a> Tel: 020 8937 4043</p> <p>Rav Jassar Deputy Director of Finance Email: <a href="mailto:ravinder.jassar@brent.gov.uk">ravinder.jassar@brent.gov.uk</a> Tel: 020 8937 1487</p>

### 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 provides a general update on the Council's overall financial position, including an overview of the current economic outlook.
- 1.2. This report renews the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), which is the Council's overarching financial planning document. The MTFS contains forecasts

for the financial position of the Council's General Fund revenue budget, as well as providing a framework within which financial planning is undertaken for the Housing Revenue Account, the Dedicated Schools Grant and the Capital Programme.

- 1.3. It should be recognised, however, that forecasting over the medium term is extremely difficult. 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.
- 1.4. The report outlines the approach being taken to address the budget gap expected to result from demographic and inflationary pressures. As the economic environment remains challenging, it is extremely difficult to make a full, definitive and comprehensive assessment of the potential financial impacts. The figures in this report are based upon best estimates and forecasts, which will be subject to change. 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.
- 1.5. As reported to Cabinet in July 2022, due to the issues identified above, the budget gap between 2023/24 and 2024/25 is estimated at £28m, which is the central case based on current budget assumptions and scenario modelling. The accuracy of this is probably at best +/- 20%, and wider variations are entirely plausible. The actual figure required will not be known until a longer term Spending Review for Local Government is announced. The budget gap is profiled £18m next year and £10m the year after.
- 1.6. Given the high-level of uncertainty over the economic environment and the funding of local government, the Council has decided to restrict its budget proposals to a single year, rather than the two-year programme that was customary practice.
- 1.7. The Council has therefore now brought forward a series of new proposals totalling £18m which, if approved following consultation and scrutiny, would be implemented in 2023/24. These new proposals, and the updates to budget assumptions set out in this report, will enable the Council to set a balanced budget for 2023/24. Any material changes to circumstances, such as a worse than expected local government finance settlement, would need to be addressed via the use of reserves; conversely, favourable changes could mean that some of the savings proposals would not need to be implemented. The new savings proposals for 2023/24 are summarised in Appendix A and full details of each of the proposals are set out in Appendix B.
- 1.8. There remains significant uncertainty over local government funding in the medium term in the absence of a longer term Spending Review and the outcome of other significant reforms to Local Government funding, for example the Fair Funding review and reforms to the business rates regime. In addition, at the time of despatch of this report, it is expected that the autumn statement that will be delivered on 17 November 2022 will include both tax increases and public

spending cuts. In other words, another period of austerity for the public sector. As a result, further savings could be required in future years.

- 1.9. The new proposals for 2023/24 are designed to limit, as far as possible, service reductions and the impact on front line services particularly during these challenging times. This does not mean that delivering these planned savings, if approved, will be managerially straightforward, or that front-line services will be entirely unaffected, or that they can be achieved without staffing reductions.
- 1.10. In summary, the key features of the 2023/24 budget are:
  - A Council Tax increase of 2.99% (consisting of a 1.99% general increase plus 1% for the Adult Social Care Precept), making a Band D Council Tax of £1,461.96 (for the Brent element). The GLA precept is unknown at this stage and is subject to their own decision making and consultation processes.
  - New budget savings proposals of £18m to be delivered in 2023/24, as set out in Appendices A and B.
- 1.11. The process following this Cabinet meeting is: -
  - Proposals, together with any changes made by Cabinet, to form the basis of consultation between November 2022 and February 2023 with local residents, businesses and other key stakeholders;
  - Resources & Public Realm Scrutiny Committee to review the budget proposals and report accordingly;
  - General Purposes Committee, in December 2022, will review the calculation of the Council Tax base; and
  - After consultation, a budget report will be presented for Cabinet to recommend a final budget and Council Tax to the February 2023 Full Council meeting.

## **2. Recommendation(s)**

- 2.1. That Cabinet notes the overall financial position.
- 2.2. That Cabinet agrees to consult on the new budget proposals, as set out in Appendices A and B.
- 2.3. That Cabinet agrees to consult on a Council Tax increase of 2.99% (consisting of a 1.99% general increase plus 1% for the Adult Social Care Precept) in 2023/24.
- 2.4. That Cabinet endorses the approach to the statutory process of consultation, scrutiny and equalities between November 2022 and February 2023, as set out in section eight of this report.
- 2.5. That Cabinet endorses the changes to the technical budget assumptions underpinning the budget, as set out in section four of this report.
- 2.6. That Cabinet notes the position with regard to the funding for Schools and the Dedicated Schools Grant, as set out in section nine of this report.

- 2.7. That Cabinet notes the rent increase for 2023/24 will be subject to the outcome of the government consultation on the proposed rent cap, as set out in section ten of this report.
- 2.8. That Cabinet notes the position with regard to the Capital programme, as set out in section eleven of this report.

### **3. Strategic Financial Overview**

#### **Financial Context**

- 3.1. In February 2022, Council agreed the budget for 2022/23 which included £2.7m of savings. The report also forecast that savings in 2023/24 and 2024/25 would total £12m. Dramatic changes in the economic environment since then has forced the two-year savings target to rise to £28m of which £18m have been allocated to the 2023/24 Budget. These savings will be in addition to the £196m removed from the Council's budget since 2010 as a result 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.

#### **Current financial position**

##### *Uncertain Economic Environment*

- 3.2. War in Ukraine, the enduring 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 the residents of Brent and the Council is committed to doing what it can to support those in greatest need. 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.

##### *Inflation*

- 3.3. In part as a result of the war in the 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 increase prices and restore profit margins where previously slumps in demand had suppressed price levels.
- 3.4. 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%. The September inflation figures are important as they are normally used for the uprating of much central government expenditure including pensions (under the triple lock) and other welfare payments. The local government finance settlement sets out the governments assumptions on the level of resources available to local government, which it terms Core Spending Power (CSP). The government usually uprate local government resources by the September CPI figure and this increase applies to government grants. Should the government restrict inflation increases to the 2021 spending review levels, this will be only 3% - potentially

7% below actual inflation rates measured by CPI. For the Council this would mean CSP is £21m less than it would have been - £11m is attributable to retained Business Rates, Revenue Support Grant and other grants and £10m of Council Tax rises (if they were to increase at a rate of 10%).

#### *Interest Rates*

- 3.5. 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 spectacular increases in the costs of government borrowing with gilt yields reaching their highest level since 2008.
- 3.6. For the Council, this translates into higher costs of borrowing which in turn will have an adverse impact on the capital programme. For Brent residents, rising interest rates will add additional costs to the holders of existing mortgages, while a higher stress test for affordability (for many mortgages as higher as 8% interest rates) and the withdrawal of higher loan to value mortgage products (meaning a higher deposit is required) will act as barriers to first time buyers.
- 3.7. The markets are pricing in base rate rising to between 5% and 6% over the next few months. Whilst this is uncertain, it is highly unlikely that in the near future interest rates will return to the historically low levels at which they have been for the last decade.

#### *Cost of Living Crisis*

- 3.8. Since late 2021, the UK has experienced a rise in the costs 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.
- 3.9. In a recent attitudes survey by YouGov for the GLA, 90% of Londoners surveyed said their cost of living had increased to some extent in the last 6 months, while 65% said their energy bills had increased a lot, and 47% said they were struggling with mortgage or rent payments. Of those surveyed, the groups that were most likely to say their costs had risen a lot 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.
- 3.10. This analysis resonates with the Council's own Resident's Attitudes Survey, conducted in 2021 to inform the Borough Plan, which found almost a quarter of residents said their financial situation had got worse.
- 3.11. 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 15 August 2022, RSF has supported

4,045 households with a total of £8.46 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.

- 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):** 27,597 households are supported through CTS of which 18,999 are working age and 8,598 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.

#### 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 6,500 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 (23%), housing costs (17%), homelessness (13%), form filling – such as RSF applications - (13%), debt and money (9%), welfare benefits (8%), and other, for example, employment, general support, immigration etc.(17%).
- 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.

#### *Financial Inclusion Dashboard*

- 3.12. Measuring impact will improve the Council's understanding of the effects of the Cost of Living crisis on the borough, and will shape how effective collective efforts are in helping to mitigate any negative impacts. The main mechanism for measuring impact is a financial inclusion dashboard developed by the council. The dashboard allows strategic level staff to monitor high-level statistics, such as Housing Benefit caseload, Council Tax outstanding and Resident Support Fund granted to support operational decisions, with a ward level breakdown of each statistic, which allows senior staff to identify discrepancies between wards and highlight areas for targeted action.

- 3.13. The dashboard uses underlying data gathered from our source systems to match and identify residents that are known to the Council in different systems. This provides a more holistic view of demand and helps identify those residents most in need.
- 3.14. Phase 2 development of the dashboard will consider multiple new indicators, which will enable us to target and monitor resources with respect to the Cost of Living crisis. Proxy indicators will be used to allow the Council to make targeted decisions in mitigating the crisis using internal council data to identify residents in need.

*Energy Price Cap (Consumers and Businesses)*

- 3.15. In light of the recent increase in the cost of wholesale gas, the price suppliers need to charge per unit of energy has gone up significantly.
- 3.16. To help protect consumers, the Government has announced the Energy Price Guarantee which came into effect on 1 October 2022. This new scheme will reduce the unit cost of electricity and gas so that a household with typical energy use in Great Britain pays, on average, around £2,500 a year on their energy bill, for the next 2 years. [Revised by the Chancellor on 17 October to April 2023 with a Treasury review of on-going support for targeted groups beyond this point.] On average usage, a household will save £1,000 a year (based on current prices from October). Energy suppliers will be fully compensated by the government for the savings delivered to households.
- 3.17. For an individual customer, the amount paid under the Energy Price Guarantee will vary depending on how much energy they use, where they live, how they pay for their energy and their metering arrangement. The £2,500 figure is based on a household with typical consumption on a dual electricity and gas bill paying by direct debit.
- 3.18. On 1 October, the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS) updated the guidance on the Energy Bill Relief Scheme for businesses and other non-domestic customers.
- 3.19. The scheme provides support for everyone on a non-domestic contract which is either a fixed price contract agreed on or after 1 April 2022; a new fixed contract being signed; a deemed or variable tariff; or a flexible purchase / similar contract. Local authorities fall within its scope as “public sector organisations such as schools, hospitals and care homes”.
- 3.20. The scheme does not cap unit costs, which include network charges and operating costs, but is applied to “the estimated wholesale portion of the unit price”, which will be capped at £211 per megawatt hour for electricity and £75 per megawatt hour for gas. The guidance notes that current forecasts for market prices this winter are £600 and £180 respectively.
- 3.21. The scheme applies for six months, from 1 October to 31 March and is due to be reviewed within 3 months. The guidance indicates that support will likely only continue for “the most vulnerable non-domestic customers” and highlights that “It is important that users who are less vulnerable to energy price increases

(particularly larger businesses that are not energy-intensive) use the 6 months support provided by the scheme to identify measures they can take to protect themselves against high energy prices”.

- 3.22. Rising energy costs is a significant challenge to the Council, even with the six-month price cap. Although on a new energy contract, the impact this year is estimated at around a £2m rise in costs.

### Government Fiscal Events

#### *September Mini-Budget*

- 3.23. The Mini-Budget confirmed many measures that had been previously announced (Corporation Tax increase from 19% to 25% will not be implemented and the Health and Social Care NIC rise will be reversed) and also included some new measures. This was the biggest tax cutting budget since 1972 – bigger than Nigel Lawson’s 1988 budget by 50%, according to the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS).
- 3.24. Measures to cap energy costs were confirmed, but at the same time the Chancellor introduced new welfare to work penalties on benefits for claimants who do not meet their obligations to seek employment.
- 3.25. Headline measures on tax were a cut in basic rate income tax to 19% from April 2023 (a year earlier than expected), abolition of the 45% additional rate tax band and the repeal of IR35 reforms made in 2017 and 2022.
- 3.26. The Mini-Budget was poorly received by the markets. This sparked a run on the pound and substantial increases in borrowing costs. It also forced the Bank of England to launch a £65bn scheme to buy back gilts to protect the pension funds. It has since made multiple interventions in markets to calm spooked investors. Outcry at the abolition of the additional rate tax band resulted in a U-turn reversing this measure at a saving £2bn.
- 3.27. The Mini-Budget was silent on public sector spending plans.
- 3.28. As a result of the turbulence caused by the Mini-Budget’s unfunded tax cuts, government ministers indicated that they intend to cut public expenditure to bridge the original £45bn budget gap, since reduced to £43bn. This failed to head off further troubles in the financial markets and political unrest amongst the parliamentary Conservative party. As a result, Kwasi Kwarteng was dismissed as Chancellor. His replacement, Jeremy Hunt, became the fifth Chancellor of this government.

#### *Chancellor statement on the Medium-Term Fiscal Plan (17 October 2022)*

- 3.29. The new Chancellor announced in a major U-turn that he was scrapping virtually all of the tax measures announced in the Mini-Budget. Only those already enacted (the reversal of the NIC increase, the reduction in stamp duty and the removal of the limits on bankers’ bonuses) remained in place. In a significant change of direction, the Chancellor announced that instead of bringing forward the reduction in base rate from 20% to 19% from April 2024 to April 2023 as announced in the Mini-Budget, he was putting this measure on hold "indefinitely until economic circumstances allow for it to be cut".

- 3.30. In a further U-turn, the energy price cap for consumers was restricted as a universal benefit to a period of six months (ending in April 2023) rather than the two years in the Mini-Budget. The Treasury will review options for future support, which may be targeted at poorer and more vulnerable households. The Chancellor's rationale for this change was that "it would not be responsible to continue exposing public finances to unlimited volatility in international gas prices".
- 3.31. The Chancellor brought forward no specific proposals relating to public spending, but did say that "All departments will need to redouble their efforts to find savings and some areas of spending will need to be cut." Mr Hunt added that there would be "more difficult decisions" on tax and spending. The Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) estimates that the size of the cuts needed to balance the books over the next five years are only "slightly smaller" than those imposed by George Osborne's austerity measures in 2010.
- 3.32. The Mini-Budget contained £45bn of unfunded tax measures; however, the IFS have calculated that substantial increases in gilt rates as a result of the market reaction to this potential funding requirement have added a further £17bn of increased government borrowing costs, taking the funding gap to £62bn. The new Chancellor has made £32bn of tax U-turns, which in turn has resulted in an improvement in gilt rates reducing the cost of borrowing by £7bn, leaving a gap of £23bn to be found from cuts to public expenditure.

*Fiscal Statement (17 November 2022).*

- 3.33. The autumn statement was scheduled for 23 November in line with customary practice, but the previous Chancellor had brought forward his plan to balance the government's finances by three weeks to 31 October in a bid to reassure the markets. This has changed again and is now scheduled to be a Fiscal Statement setting out the government's medium term financial plan on 17 November.
- 3.34. There has been much speculation about public sector spending. Two measures widely mooted were not to update the inflation assumptions in the 2021 spending review (SR21) and to uprate welfare benefits only by average wage rises rather than the September inflation figure. Neither of these has been officially announced and there is considerable pressure to uprate Universal Credit by inflation rather than wage rises. Pensions are expected to remain covered by the triple lock, which will see a rise in line with September's inflation rate.
- 3.35. It is unclear whether the government will have any further spending reviews until the next general election, due by January 2025. Currently SR21 assumes inflation of about 3%. If the government uses this as the rate for indexing central government expenditure, it represents a substantial reduction on the amount that would have been required if the September CPI inflation figure (10.1%) were used. This is in effect a real terms cut in funding. A reduction in the inflation provision of 7% represents a 'saving' of £76bn on central government expenditure. These are very broad assumptions – the government was only budgeting for 3% inflation so the 10% figure would have represented an unfunded increase that would have needed to be financed. On the other hand, the effect of higher levels of inflation is to raise government revenues, through increases in

VAT yield, extra personal taxation on higher levels of pay and additional corporate taxation on higher revenues and profits. An end result of a substantial saving may not therefore be unreasonable.

- 3.36. The appointment of Rishi Sunak as Prime Minister on 25 October 2025 has done much to calm the financial markets. The new Prime Minister decided to delay the medium term fiscal statement from 31 October to November 17 to allow the Chancellor to rework his plans. An analysis by the Resolution Foundation shows that the fortnight delay is expected to shrink the size of the black hole in the public finances by up to £15 billion. Without knowing the new taxation and spending policy, the Bank of England raised the base interest rate on 3 November by 0.75% to 3%. With the interest rate paid on government gilts falling rapidly - and the international gas price reducing - there is growing confidence in Downing Street that more minor changes to the public finances may be necessary.

*Local Government Finance Settlement (expected in December 2022)*

- 3.37. It is not yet known when the provisional Local Government Finance will be announced, but past experience suggests that this will happen in mid- to late-December.
- 3.38. The starting point of the Local Government Finance Settlement (LGFS) is Core Spending Power. This is a measure of the resources available to local authorities to fund service delivery. It includes Council Tax and locally retained Business Rates, a number of generally usable government grants and the Revenue Support Grant. Normally, Core Spending Power is increased in total by the September CPI rate. The government then calculates the income available to the local authority by assuming that it sets the Council Tax at the referendum limit, receives the local share of indexed Business Rates and inflated government grants (including any changes to the level of funding). The level of Revenue Support Grant is then set as the balancing figure to bring total funding in line with the Core Spending Power figure.
- 3.39. If the government retains the provisions of the 2021 spending review, these include a headline 3% inflationary increase in local government Core Spending Power for each year. In 2022/23 that included £3.6bn to fund social care reforms, such as the implementation of the cap on personal care costs (£86,000 lifetime cap) and the changes to the means test (free care for those with assets less than £20,000). Removing the funding for the social care reforms, the local government increase was actually 1.8% compared to 3.3% for the average government department. The Council will need to see if this pattern continues into 2023/24.
- 3.40. The 2022/23 headline announcement that Core Spending Power will increase by 3% each year assumed that all Councils will increase Council Tax by the maximum amount allowable of 2.99% without triggering a referendum. The Council will need to see whether the government changes the referendum limit and the extent to which any new money is tied to social care reforms, meaning other services will benefit less.
- 3.41. At present the MTFSS assumes that government funding will increase by 3% in 2023/24 and that the Council will increase Council Tax by the maximum of 2.99% allowed by an unchanged referendum limit. Given that 1% of this will be the social

care precept, the actual increase for most Council services will be 1.99% - a real terms cut of around 8% if inflation is running at 10%. If the increase in Core Spending Power were only 2%, this would lead to a loss of around £3m in resources.

- 3.42. In the event that the referendum limit for Council Tax is higher than 2.99%, the proposal will be considered in the round alongside other announcements on government grant funding. As mentioned earlier in the report, the autumn statement that will be announced on 17 November 2022 may include both tax increases and public spending cuts, potentially marking a return to austerity.

#### *Outlook for Future Government Funding*

- 3.43. The MTF model assumes that government funding and Council Tax will each increase by 3% in future years. If inflation remains at significantly above this level, this will cause a real terms cut in resources. Service pressures caused by increased demand resulting from the cost of living crisis and demographic pressures will put further pressure on the Council's budget leading to a need for substantial savings in future years.

### **Administration Priorities**

- 3.44. The budget process is designed to ensure that it is priority led so that resources are aligned with council priorities and statutory responsibilities. A four-year Borough Plan (2023-2027) is due to be developed during 2022/23. This gives the Council the opportunity to refresh its vision and ambitions and to show how it will work with local communities over the next four years to deliver them.
- 3.45. The draft Borough Plan has the following Strategic Priorities and Desired Outcomes:

#### **Prosperity, Pride and Belonging in Brent**

1. *Easing the Cost of Living Crisis*
2. *Brent for Business*

#### **A Cleaner, Greener Future**

1. *A Cleaner and Safe Borough*
2. *Empowering our Communities*

#### **Respect and Renewal in Brent**

1. *Safe, Secure and Decent Housing*
2. *A Sustainable Borough and a Greener Economy*
3. *Keeping Brent on the Move*
4. *A Representative Workforce*

#### **The Best Start in Life**

1. *Raised Aspirations, Achievement and Attainment*
2. *Young People are Seen and Heard*

#### **A Healthier Brent**

1. *Tackling Health Inequalities*
2. *Localised Services for Local Needs*

- 3.46. Officers have developed an engagement plan which will run in November and January, ahead of finalising the Borough Plan in February. The engagement will be delivered over a period of ten weeks where the Council will target a range of

specific groups, utilising partnerships, stakeholders and Members. The engagement will also align with plans to consult on the draft budget, this is to help contextualise the draft ambitions within the resources available and to ensure the final ambitions are reflective of the resources available. The Medium Term Financial Strategy will also need to ensure it provides a framework to enable and support the delivery of the Council's ambitions, priorities and any subsequent or existing programmes, considering the significant financial pressures the Council is currently facing.

#### **4. Review of Key Budget Assumptions**

##### **Overview of Current MTFS**

- 4.1. The General Fund revenue budget for 2022/23 was set at the Council meeting of February 2022, where savings of £2.7m were agreed. These savings are on track to be delivered. Expenditure in 2022/23 should also be within budget for the General Fund with the exception of a projected overspend of £1.7m in the Children's and Young people's department. Work is being undertaken on management action that will bring this expenditure back in line with the budget.
- 4.2. Looking beyond 2022/23, there are a number of factors that need to be taken into account in setting the budget 2023/24 and determining the financial outlook for future years.

##### **Departmental pressures**

- 4.3. Managing ongoing demand-led pressures remains a key aspect of the MTFS. The existing annual growth assumptions are in fact estimated increases in unavoidable expenditure. Those built into the MTFS cover areas such as contract inflation, pay inflation, and demographics (by which is meant meeting the cost of providing existing services for a growing and changing population). These expenditure assumptions represent the annual costs that have to be incurred just to stand still.
- 4.4. 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 are shown in the table below.

Table 1: Existing Growth / Cost Pressures

<b>GROWTH SUMMARY</b>	<b>2023/24</b>
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	14.66
Pay	6.50
Other (E.g. Public Health Grant inflation)	0.70
	<b>28.35</b>

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

### **Adult Social Care and Health**

- 4.6. Within Adult Social Care a key area of uncertainty is the fair cost of care and social care reforms. Work is ongoing to better understand the impact of the fair cost of care, the care cap and the number of self-funders coming forward which will create additional burdens. Whilst government funding is being made available to Brent in 2022/23 and future years, it is unknown at this moment in time whether this funding is enough to afford the market sustainability costs and implementation costs. Underfunded reforms run the risk of also exacerbating the workforce pressures being seen within Adult Social Care with staffing shortages and rising vacancy numbers across the sector. The reforms will create additional pressures on the Adult Social Care service due to the increased number of care assessments required.
- 4.7. By 2025/26, the budget gap between funding available and demand in ASC could be an additional £45m required to cover demographic (such as transitions and growth in elderly population) and inflationary pressures, as well as LLW commitment.
- 4.8. Ongoing financial government support & market sustainability is an uncertainty, particularly with the ongoing cost of living crisis and inflationary pressures. The cost of living crisis and the steep rise in inflation, heating and fuel costs are likely to have an impact on spot placement requests from providers who are looking to recover some of the additional costs they are incurring. For 2022/23, the Adult Social Care budget was increased in order to meet projected demographic

growth demand and inflationary increases, these increases are expected to continue and be a pressure in future years.

- 4.9. Hospital Discharge (D2A) funding is coming to an end in 2022/23. Funding was made available to continue to D2A funding for part of the current year, and there has been ongoing discussions between the LA's and Integrated Care Boards (ICB) around future funding. In September the new Health Secretary announced £500m of discharge funding but it is still unknown at this stage.
- 4.10. The growth set out in Table 1 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**

- 4.11. 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.
- 4.12. 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 15.2% rise in the rate of referrals for social care services in August 2022 through the Brent Family Front Door (BFFD) compared to August 2021. As a result, since the end of the last financial year, there has been an 8.4% rise in the number of cases. The number of cases increased from 2,737 in August 2021 to 2,967 in August 2022. Caseloads are exceeding the budgeted level of c2,500 by 18.7%. 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 current number of 413 the highest in the last 10 years in Brent.
- 4.13. After a period of relative stability in the Looked After Children (LAC) population at between 280 and 300 children before the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a 15.8% increase in the number of Looked After Children (LAC). Between August 2021 and August 2022, the number of LAC increased from 297 to 344. 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.
- 4.14. The average weekly cost of a residential placement is £4,631, which is £191 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, with 9-15% increases being requested in some cases.

- 4.15. 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. For example, the Continuing Health Care Team is reviewing individual children's eligibility for funding, 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 of the Continuing Health Care Team's new operating model. Consideration will be given to appropriate legal redress if a satisfactory outcome cannot be achieved through other means. Through the Joint Funding Panel, the CYP department is also challenging decisions and their timing on a case-by-case basis.
- 4.16. 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. Management will continue to monitor the caseload levels and the use of agency staff while continuing the drive to recruit permanent staff.
- 4.17. 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.
- 4.18. The growth set out in Table 1 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.

## **Communities and Regeneration**

### *Communities*

- 4.19. Over the past 18 months, Brent's population has seen notable changes in the numbers of refugees and migrants into the borough. The rising numbers are in part, due to changes in national guidance on Housing and Homelessness eligibility for new arrivals from Afghanistan and Ukraine. The ever changing guidance means that Brent is mandated to accept Homelessness applications from newly arrived refugees.
- 4.20. In these circumstances, additional strain is put on a number of services involved in assessing need, administering applications and the ongoing support those families are entitled to. We face additional burdens with an open Landlord scheme that will also add to our population, and is outside of our control. The changing population is likely to mean we will need to employ more temporary staff to cope with demand in a number of services including, Legal, Housing and the Migration Coordination Team. The emergent need is to increase our workforce with Community Support Officers to cope with demand.
- 4.21. The legacy of COVID-19 has meant that demand has risen for critical services delivered by our Voluntary and Community Sector partners, e.g. Independent Advice and Guidance services. This means that Brent and our partners are having to work harder to continue to provide much needed support to residents. For example, we are having to increase the value of the Voluntary Sector Infrastructure Fund, which supports VCS development, to ensure organisations can be sustainable across this difficult time.
- 4.22. The impact of COVID-19 has led to a well-documented increase in the need for food support and other community led initiatives at the grass roots level. Those organisations providing this support look to our core Community Engagement and Grants offers for enabling and support. Throughout COVID-19 additional learning and understanding of how community organisations can be supported to deliver vital services has meant an increase in funding applications that are administered by the teams.

### *Regeneration*

- 4.23. 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 may in part be due to the industry still recovering from the impact of COVID-19, and the imposed shutdowns on the construction industry. However, the current economic climate is also beginning to have an impact on construction, with there being little appetite for developments of all sizes. There is the potential that this could impact the income received for years to come. This is also likely to impact the income collected by the Building Control team if less developments are taking place.

### **Resident Services**

#### *COVID-19 scarring and demographics*

- 4.24. 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.

- 4.25. 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.
- 4.26. The Highways service is reliant on a reduced TfL LIP (Local Implementation Plan) funding, which is due to severe financial pressures on TfL. Typically, Brent would receive an annual allocation of c£2.2m to deliver this programme, with additional funding for Bus priority (c£0.8m). This funding was withdrawn in April 2020 following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent impact on TfL's finances. The Heathy Streets and Parking revenue budget is reliant on TfL LIP funding, which has been significantly reduced due to severe financial pressures. TfL has recently reached an agreement with the Government and confirmed the funding will be available for 2022/23 as c£1.3m, which represents a reduction of c£1m. The service has also commissioned S106 developer funding to deliver a programme of schemes, however, with reduced income and charges for staff costs, it is anticipated that this will result in a risk of under recovery of up to £0.2m. The service will seek to manage this through the reduction of agency staff, however, the risk cannot be fully mitigated as staff resources will still be needed to deliver the council funded programme and continue day to day operations. The current volatility in the energy markets mean significant uncertainties in this area. The exact details of the Government's proposed Business Energy Relief Scheme's implications to the Council at the time of the report writing are also uncertain. 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.
- 4.27. As energy costs are increasing for leisure centres, the risk of provider failure is increasing, forcing the Council to make difficult choices. An option is to support operators by subsidising their operating costs. Closing sites due to rising utility costs would also have a significant impact on both communities and income levels.
- 4.28. The provision of sufficient special needs home to school transport is the Council's statutory obligation and Brent Transport Service continues to experience annual net growth in net passenger numbers leading to an increase in cost of the service delivery. This obligation is recognised in the MTFS and growth is built in based on prior years' trends and demography forecasts.

*Veolia and Other Contract reletting – contract value and ongoing indexation*

- 4.29. The Redefining Local Services (RLS) programme was initiated in May 2019 to develop and implement a commissioning strategy for the outsourced environmental services. The existing contracts were synchronised so that the new service arrangements would come into place from 1st April 2023. The final delivery model was approved to operate as a "specialist contracts delivery model

with low to moderate levels of insourcing”. And the procurement process is now underway for these specialist contracts.

- 4.30. Risks around the procurement process are being monitored and reviewed, however until the procurement processes are completed there remains a financial risk around the affordability of the contracts. In particular the rising rates of inflation and fuel costs, which could lead to increased contract prices when they commence in April 2023. The projected contract prices remain in review against the budget available, and increased contract costs have already been considered when setting savings targets for 2023/24.
- 4.31. Growth has been built into the MTFS to help alleviate some of the pressures associated with contracts indexation within the Environmental Services, however this continue to present a significant budget risk. There is growth currently built into the MTFS for 2023/24 to recognise a requirement for Environmental Services contract inflations, including non-recurring growth relating to the RLS programme. A 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 contact payments.

#### *Temporary accommodation*

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

#### *Homelessness Prevention Grant consultation*

- 4.34. The government is reviewing the funding arrangements for the Homelessness Prevention Grant for 2023/24 onwards and launched a technical consultation seeking views on the approach to the funding arrangements and conditions for the grant. Under both of the considered options Brent would see a reduction in funding, £854k under Option 1 and £3.5m under Option 2. With a significant reduction in funding, there is an increased risk of a resulting budget gap requiring additional savings from the Council and changes to the service delivery.

### **Finance and Resources**

- 4.35. There are social and economic factors which are increasingly placing pressures on the viability of the New Council Homes Programme (NCHP). Rising inflation, a continued shortage of labour and materials and events such as the COVID-19

pandemic and the war in Ukraine have had an adverse effect on project costs and increased demands for suitable housing accommodation. The Government reported an increase of 23% on materials such as steel, timber and concrete and this will impact our ability to continue working at pace to deliver affordable homes for Brent residents and other projects related to the refurbishment/maintenance of our retained estate.

- 4.36. The Commercial Property team is experiencing pressures in collecting outstanding debts for rent arrears from tenants that have suffered as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. This is putting direct pressure on the department's income target and work is being undertaken in coordination with the Council's Legal and Debt Recovery teams to recover outstanding debts in a timely manner.

### **Employee Costs**

- 4.37. The current financial environment is putting considerable upward pressure on pay. The pay award for 2022/23 was agreed on 1 November 2022 with a flat amount for outer London of £2,229 at all pay levels. This broadly equates to an average 6.5% increase in pay, ranging from 10% at the lowest level of pay and 1.2% at the highest level of pay. This is estimated to cost £9m in 2022/23. The Council will seek to manage this pressure in 2022/23, either by implementing mitigating actions or by use of reserves. If the latter approach needs to be taken, it will add to the budget gap for 2023/24.
- 4.38. The pay award for 2023/24 has yet to be agreed and the type of pay award for 2023/24 is also unknown - it could be an overall percentage or a flat amount, like 2022/23; however, the growth assumed for pay inflation has been increased to £6m, which is sufficient for a pay award of up to 4.5%. At the present £6m is deemed prudent as inflation in 2023/24 is not expected to be as high as in 2022/23. This will need to be kept under review. While it is welcome that the pay award for council staff has been agreed at a time when inflation is high and there is a cost of living crisis, the permanent increase in the Council's cost base represents a significant ongoing cost pressure.
- 4.39. The Brent Pension Fund is currently in the process of completing the triannual valuation and analysis of the Council's contribution rate has been completed. The results of this exercise were presented to the Pension Sub-committee in October 2022 and it was agreed that the Council's contribution rate can be reduced by 1.5% per year over the next three years from 2023/24. 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.
- 4.40. 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 and reduce the budget gap.

### **Voluntary redundancy**

- 4.41. In order to minimise the need for compulsory redundancies, the Council is operating a voluntary redundancy (VR) scheme in the 2022/23 financial year. Applications under the VR scheme closed on 31 August 2022. Where an application for VR has been accepted, the individual's post will be deleted and the funding for that post will be removed from the service budgets permanently. The savings from these post reductions are expected to form part of the £18m of savings that have been put forward as part of the 2023/24 budget and as a result will reduce the need for compulsory redundancies

### **Fees and Charges**

- 4.42. Setting the level of increase in fees and charges is going to be difficult this year due to high inflation and a volatile economic environment. Brent's residents are also facing a cost of living crisis, unprecedented in recent times. Whilst the Council is committed to supporting the borough's residents through this economic uncertainty, freezing all fees and charges is not an affordable option. The Council is therefore taking a balanced approach that seeks to keep down the level of increase as far as is possible and appropriate.
- 4.43. The outcome of the review of fees and charges and the proposed increases for 2023/24 will be set out for Full Council in February 2023.

### **Council Tax**

- 4.44. Council Tax one of the most significant sources of income for the Council, making up £140.1m (or 47%) of total core funding in 2022/23.
- 4.45. The 2021 Spending Review allowed Local Authorities to increase Council Tax by up to 2% without a local referendum and in addition, local authorities were able to levy a 1% adult social care precept.
- 4.46. The current working assumption is that the referendum limit will remain the same for 2023/24. As mentioned earlier in the report, in the event that the referendum limit for Council Tax is higher than 2.99%, the proposal will be considered in the round alongside other potential cuts to government grant funding.
- 4.47. The Government is also likely to continue its financing assumption 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.
- 4.48. The cost of living crisis, increasing interest rates, COVID-19 scarring and social care reforms add additional burdens to existing pressures within the Adult Social Care and housing services. This significantly impacts people's ability to live

independently, therefore the Council is seeing increased demand, particularly for more complex needs cases, which require a more comprehensive support package. The situation is exacerbated by staffing shortages across the sector and unmet demand in both the working age adults and older people mental health services for highly trained professionals. There has also been growth in the number of people approaching the Council with multiple needs which has in turn increased the number of care assessments required. This is largely connected to difficult housing conditions where self-neglect and hoarding are common problems. There has also been additional growth in Safeguarding Adults. The effects of the cost crisis, including diminishing disposable incomes and increased energy poverty, as well as long-term COVID-19 issues are expected to increase in demand for services.

- 4.49. Taking into account the unprecedented pressures within social care, housing and the financial position in the round, the budget has been prepared on the basis of a 2.99% increase in the Brent element of Council Tax. This will add £4.2m of recurring income to the Council's budget. 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 (CTS) scheme which provides £32m of support to around 28,000 households who are financially vulnerable. Further announcements from the government on additional funding that it may make available to help households in financial difficulty are awaited.
- 4.50. The GLA precept, which makes up about 22% of the overall Council Tax bill, is unknown at this stage and is subject to their own decision making and consultation processes.
- 4.51. When budgeting for Council Tax, there are three main factors to consider:
- Council Tax Support (CTS) expenditure,
  - Short and long term collection rates, and
  - Growth in the tax base.
- 4.52. The total cost of providing CTS has increased from £28.4m at the start of the pandemic to £31.8m as at September 2022, an increase of £3.4m, or 12% which is broadly in line with the overall increase in Council Tax. This is significant as an increase in CTS expenditure reduces the amount of Council Tax that is able to be collected.
- 4.53. Another factor that could affect Council Tax income is a reduction in the collection rate. Typically, in-year collection for Brent is around 96% and over a longer period of time will reach around 98%, which is built into the MTFs model and prior to the pandemic was broadly comparable to other London boroughs. The in-year collection rate in 2021/22 was 92.3%, although total collection is expected to increase in future years as debt recovery will continue to be attempted. Based on current modelling, the in-year collection rate for 2022/23 is expected at 92.5% which would result in a £5m reduction of income compared to the previous in year target of 96%. Clearly this is significant, however it is expected that through ongoing debt recovery in future years, this will reach the long-term collection rate target of 98%.

- 4.54. As a result of the postponement of normal debt recovery action for nearly two years during the pandemic collection assumptions were reduced in 2021/22 and 2022/23. It is too early to be able to estimate the long term impact on collection. At present the long term collection rate in the MTFS has reverted to 97.5%. This will be kept under review as there may be an impact on collection from the cost of living crisis, lower than inflation pay rises, higher interest rates and potential squeeze on benefits. It should be noted that the Council maintains provisions for writing off debt that will not ultimately be collected.
- 4.55. The calculation of the tax base (and likewise the collection rate) is one of the technical stages in the process of setting the Council Tax, which will be considered by the General Purposes Committee on 12 December 2022. Brent, like all Local Authorities, has to set a balanced budget by working out how much next year's band D Council Tax should be on the basis that the total tax to be collected equals the budget required to pay for its services. The tax base represents the aggregate taxable value of all residential property in Brent. The Council Tax base was previously assumed to grow at 1% per year annum (or around 1,000 properties) and contributes nearly 30% to total budgeted Council Tax income in the MTFS.
- 4.56. Data compiled by the Council from a number of sources, including the planning department and directly from developers, shows the number of consented schemes that are likely to complete towards the end of 2022/23. The general trend is also supported by new Council Tax registrations that are currently awaiting banding by the Valuation Office Agency. On this basis, it is recommended to keep the tax base growth for budget setting purposes of 1% for 2023/24.

### **Business Rates**

- 4.57. The Council remained committed to supporting local businesses throughout the pandemic. Funded by government, the Council processed a range of reliefs for various businesses across the retail, hospitality, leisure and other sectors. This has significantly reduced the amount of rates paid to the Council with the reduction estimated at £114.1m in 2022/23. In addition, the Council has administered direct grants, funded by central government, to local businesses totalling £105.9m across over 13,500 local businesses. The Council continues to engage with the business community to ensure that eligible businesses have access to this support.
- 4.58. Irrespective of the range of support provided to businesses by local authorities, including the support provided directly by government (job retention scheme, loans, tax deferrals, etc.), it is inevitable that more businesses will be unable to pay their business rates: some may be unable to trade effectively and others may be impacted by a reduction in customer demand. This will lead to an increase in bad debt and a loss of income collected on behalf of the Council, the GLA and government.
- 4.59. The in-year collection rate in 2021/22 was 91.3% which is significantly lower than the amount collected pre-pandemic, at 98.2%.

- 4.60. The amount that was planned to be collected in 2022/23 was £115.6m and, as a result of mandatory reliefs funded by government, the amount that is able to be collected is now £114.1m. The in-year collection rate for 2022/23 is forecast to be around 84% of amounts due, increasing the levels of debt outstanding that will be pursued over time.
- 4.61. Business Rates and Council Tax income assumptions in the budgets for 2021/22 and 2022/23 were fairly cautious and reduced the overall income built into the MTFs. At this stage of the budget process, and due to the continued uncertainty in collection, it is deemed reasonable to continue with cautious budget assumptions.

### **Business rates - Eight authority pool**

- 4.62. The Government designated a pan-London business rates pool in 2018/19, which piloted 100% retention in that year, and was revised to pilot 75% retention in 2019/20. For 2020/21 the Government decided not to renew the London pilot, and for London to revert back to the pre-existing 2017/18 67% retention scheme (30% borough share, 37% GLA share, 33% Government share). A voluntary pool was set up by all London Boroughs in 2020/21 which offered lower financial benefits than the previous scheme, while retaining all the strategic benefits. However, the onset of the pandemic during 2020/21 had a significant impact on the collection of business rates and the pool was not continued in 2021/22.
- 4.63. In 2022/23 the Council entered into a new pool with seven other London authorities on the same basis as the previous London-wide pool. There are potential benefits of £30m, which will be shared between the authorities. Brent's share was estimated at the time to be in the region of £2m based on initial forecasts from the eight authorities. The final position will not be known until a reconciliation process during 2023/24, when settlement will be made. Recent monitoring suggests the pool is on track to make expected gains. Any pooling gain that is confirmed, once the audit is complete, will be allocated to one-off projects in a future budget.
- 4.64. For 2023/24 a proposal has been made for the eight authority pool to continue. If accepted, further potential benefits could be generated for Brent, but at this stage it is too early to build an estimate into the base budget due to the uncertainties around the continuation of the pool and lack of clarity on central government's plans for business rates in general.
- 4.65. As part of the February 2022 Budget Report, decisions on entering into and remaining a member of a Business Rates pool were delegated to the Corporate Director of Finance and Resources. A decision on this is not therefore required. If there is a risk to the pool making a loss, which is currently deemed unlikely, Brent will have the ability to withdraw from the pool at any point up to 28 days after the government's provisional Local Government Finance Settlement.

### **Government Funding**

- 4.66. As described earlier in the report, the precise details of any additional funding for Local Government will not be known until the Provisional Local Government

Finance Settlement, usually announced in mid-December. The Chancellor's comments on 17 October indicate that there may be real terms cuts. The expectation is that the government will use the inflation forecasts contained in the 2021 Spending Review as the indexation factor for public sector expenditure rather than the September CPI figure. For government departments as a whole, the inflation factor averaged 3.35; for local government the amount was 3%. The September CPI figure is 10.1%. It is worth noting that the 3% local government figure includes 1.2% for changes and reforms to social care, leaving just 1.8% as the general inflation uplift. It is unclear if this split will continue.

- 4.67. In line with the 2021 Spending Review, it is anticipated that the Revenue Support Grant, Public Health Grant, the Improved Better Care Fund and the Social Care Grant will continue to be uplifted by an inflationary indexation factor, albeit at a lower rate than the September CPI figure. 2021 Spending Review gave no commitment to maintain the level of the 2022/23 Services Grant for individual local authorities. It is believed that the government will use this to target funds to areas as part of the Levelling Up agenda with a reduction of funding to London boroughs. In anticipation of this, the MTFs assumes that this grant will fall to 80% of its current value - a reduction of £1m to £5m for 2023/24.
- 4.68. The overall approach assumed in the MTFs to the indexation of government funding has been cautious. The working assumption at the last update in July was for a 3% increase and this was not updated when inflation rose substantially above this level, as there was no indication whether the government would entertain increases as very high levels. Since it has become clear that the government intends to cap indexation at around 3%, this approach means that the Council will not be required to find extra savings to cover any potential loss in indexation, as this was already assumed.
- 4.69. Taking into account the indexation assumptions and the expected changes in grant levels, these grants represent over £60m of funding. The core funding forecast for the 2023/24 budget remains as previously assumed.

### **Reserves Strategy**

- 4.70. The Council takes a risk based approach to the management of useable reserves and as part of setting the annual budget, the s151 Officer undertakes a review of risks and known commitments to calculate a minimum level for the General Fund reserve. For 2022/23, it was determined that a level of £15.1m remained an appropriate figure – this represents 5% of net expenditure. With the exception of this reserve, which is set at the minimum prudent level expected by external auditors, all other reserves are earmarked for specific purposes and known future costs and therefore they are not readily available to fund any budget gap.
- 4.71. The Council does have some flexibility with some reserves to support the MTFs, as some reserves are not needed for a number of years. The Council could potentially draw down upon some reserves, subject to those reserves being replenished in time to fund future known costs to prevent budget pressures in future years.

- 4.72. All earmarked reserves are also being reviewed to assess the extent to which they could be repurposed; however, the vast majority of earmarked reserves are already set aside to help fund expenditure to which the Council is already committed. The use of some reserves is also ring-fenced by statute to specific purposes (Community Infrastructure Levy and Public Health are examples of this).
- 4.73. Best practice is to use reserves only to fund one-off items as the reserves themselves are by nature single sums that can only be used once. According to CIPFA's *Financial Management Code*, running down reserves by persistent use to support the revenue budget would be a symptom of financial stress, indicating a financial position that is not sustainable in the long run.
- 4.74. Any draw down from reserves in the proposed budget and future forecasts in the MTFs needs to be stress tested to determine its effect on the level of usable reserves. For instance, if a drawdown of £5m per annum (circa 5% of the net budget) were incorporated into the Council's budget plans, the General Fund balance of £15.1m would be exhausted after three years. Having no reserves is not prudent and would expose the Council to considerable financial risk and would be likely to lead to an adverse external audit opinion on financial sustainability and resilience.
- 4.75. Given the current volatility in the economy, the Council intends to create an Inflation Risks Reserve by the reallocation of funds from existing reserves as a buffer against major risks from rising prices and other cost pressures.
- 4.76. The current budget proposals are made without an assumption that reserves will be drawn down to support the budget. Should the financial position be worse than expected, for instance due to an adverse local government finance settlement, the Council will use reserves to bring the 2023/24 budget into balance. It is permissible to use reserves in the short-term to bridge gaps and cover timing differences, but only if there are clear, achievable savings in the medium term. This will be a one-off measure and the gap will need to be addressed in future years as persistent use of reserves will cause them to fall below the prudent level required to guard against risks and uncertainties, and could ultimately lead to the complete depletion of uncommitted reserves.

### **Overall summary of the budget position**

- 4.77. The MTFs captures the factors that give rise to pressures on the revenue budget. As far as can be assessed in these uncertain times, the MTFs is a robust model of the financial outlook for Brent and is resilient within a range of tolerances.

## **5. Savings Proposals**

- 5.1. When the 2022/23 budget was set in February 2022, this was the second year of a two year savings package. No savings were agreed for years beyond 2022/23. Since then the economic situation has deteriorated considerably and remains highly volatile. Whilst the financial impact of COVID-19 has reduced and is now much easier to quantify, new economic pressures have emerged, such as high levels of inflation, as set out early in this report. Given the high degree of

uncertainty over financial forecasts, it is hard to predict the potential budget gap beyond 2023/24. It is therefore prudent to only agree a one-year savings package at this point. The budget gap for 2023/24 is currently estimated at £18m to achieve a balanced budget. This is set out in the following table.

Table 2: Overall Financial Position

<b>Proposed Budget</b>	<b>2023/24 £m</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>	
Base Budget from 2022/23	323.1
Demographics	6.5
Inflation	14.7
Pay	6.5
Other	0.7
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>351.5</b>
<b>Income</b>	
Revenue Support Grant	(26.6)
Specific Grants	(61.3)
<b>Total funding from Central Government</b>	<b>(87.9)</b>
Council Tax	(147.8)
Business Rates	(97.8)
<b>Total funding from residents and businesses</b>	<b>(245.6)</b>
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>(333.5)</b>
<b>Budget Gap (Expenditure less Income)</b>	<b>18.0</b>
Savings Proposals (for agreement in February 2023)	(18.0)
<b>Budget Gap</b>	<b>0.0</b>

- 5.2. The budget gap arises for two reasons. The anticipated government cap on the increase in Core Spending Power means that government grants, retained business rates and Council Tax rise at less than the actual value of inflation. Unless measures were in place to similarly restrict the rise in costs due to inflation, it would not be prudent to put in place a similar restriction on expenditure indexation. The inflation amounts included in the budget are robust as they are based on OBR and Bank of England forecasts. The gap arising from the differing treatment of inflation is £10.8m. The cost of providing services at existing levels also increases due to changes in the population. These demographic changes add a future £7.2m pressure to the budget, resulting in the savings target of £18m.

5.3. As part of the budget setting process for 2023/24, a number of new budget proposals have been developed in order to close the £18m budget gap noted in the table above. Throughout the process, in producing the draft budget proposals, the emphasis continues to be on delivering efficiency measures, service transformations, cost reductions and income generation with a view to protecting front line services and Council priorities as much as possible.

5.4. The table below summarises the proposals put forward to close the budget gap.

Table 3: New budget proposals

<b>Proposal</b>	<b>Saving (£m)</b>	<b>Description</b>
Reduction in provision	0.6	These relate to marginal reductions in service levels in a number of areas.
Service Transformation	9.3	Transformation service offer and increased level of automation.
Digital	0.9	Use digital technologies to transform processes and service delivery
Procurement	1.6	Ongoing review procurement and contract management, covering new procurement activity, re-scoping of contracts and reviewing inflationary uplifts.
Restructure	4.8	Reorganisation of staff
Income generation	0.8	Income from leasing floors of the Civic Centre to external organisations and increase in third party income
<b>Total</b>	<b>18.0</b>	

5.5. The table below summarises the proposals by service area.

Table 4: New savings proposals

<b>Service Area</b>	<b>Sum of savings proposed (£m)</b>	<b>No of Proposals</b>
Adult Social Care & Health	4.3	7
Children and Young People	2.4	8
Communities and Regeneration	0.6	8
Resident Services	4.2	18

Finance and Resources	1.8	8
Governance	0.5	11
Corporate	4.1	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>18.0</b>	<b>65</b>

- 5.6. The Officers have reviewed the proposals to ensure the plans are realistic and deliverable. Detailed budget templates have been produced, attached as Appendix B, that set out further details of each proposal while providing the overall current budget context, the key risks and mitigations and the equalities impact where relevant.
- 5.7. It should be noted that this report reflects the position at this point in the budget preparation and these numbers will change as the budget develops over the next two months. We also await confirmation of the Local Government Finance Settlement, expected in mid-December 2022. If the LGFS is better than expected, then it may be possible to defer some of the savings proposals; conversely, if the LGFS is worse than expected, there will be no requirement to identify further savings for the 2023/24 budget. Instead, if the situation does deteriorate, it may be necessary to use reserves to bridge any budget gap in the short term with the longer term issues tackled in a future budget. Any revisions will be reflected in the budget to be considered by Cabinet in February 2023.
- 5.8. While the approach to budget setting for 2023/24 is deemed reasonable under the current circumstances, the situation remains that there is still a considerable budget gap for 2024/25 expected – this is currently estimated at £10m, but is likely to be higher. The Council will therefore have some difficult decisions to take over the coming year as part of the next budget planning round.

## 6. Risk Management

- 6.1. The Council has adopted a risk-based approach to its financial planning. The earlier the Council becomes aware of a potential risk to the achievement of its Financial Strategy, Medium Term Financial Strategy or its annual budget, the sooner – and the more effectively – it can take action to address that risk and to mitigate its impact.
- 6.2. Through the financial planning and budget setting process risks have been identified and actions to control or mitigate those risks have been identified. The MTFs contains a risk register covering risks inherent in the MTFs assumptions and other factors both within the Council and externally that could have an impact on the Council's financial position. In the section covering services pressures, risks were extensively explored and in the detailed savings proposals risks are also considered.

## 7. Financial Resilience Assessment

- 7.1. In the *Financial Management Code*, CIPFA recommends that local authorities undertake a Financial Resilience Assessment (FRA) to determine the long-term financial sustainability of the authority. The Financial Resilience Assessment

looks at symptoms of financial stress (such as running down reserves as mentioned earlier) and effective financial management (for instance, having clear plans for delivering savings).

- 7.2. This report sets out the factors that an FRA would consider, such as the use of reserves, stress testing budget proposals and sensitivity analysis. A full FRA will be undertaken when the February Budget report is approved, as the Chief Finance Officer's assessment of the adequacy of reserves and robustness of estimates under section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 should be taken into account.

## **8. Statutory process of consultation, scrutiny and equalities**

### *Consultation*

- 8.1. The Council recognises consultation as a key part of policy formulation, and makes considerable effort to ensure that the views of residents, businesses and other key stakeholders are taken into account. Legally, the results of consultation are something that Members must have due regard to, alongside other relevant considerations, when making decisions.
- 8.2. As in previous years, it is proposed to formally consult on the draft budget via the online consultation portal, where respondents will be invited to focus their attention on the new budget proposals for 2023/24. In addition, it is proposed that a presentation on the draft budget be delivered to each of the five Brent Connects meetings in November 2022 and January 2023
- 8.3. There are a number of business forums and associations that the Council regularly engages with that include a wide range of both small and large local businesses. These include West London Business (a non-profit business membership organisation), the Federation of Small Businesses, the Chamber of Commerce, and a number of town centre business associations. The consultation on the budget will be published in a newsletter that is sent to a large number of Brent businesses, explaining why the views of local businesses are important and how they could have their say
- 8.4. 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 will therefore play an important part of the consultation process and invitations to participate in the consultation will be sent to all Brent voluntary and community sector organisations. There will be additional opportunities for residents to respond to the consultation through drop in events in all Hubs in the borough. Focus group discussions will also be held with specific groups including older people, youth groups and newly arrived communities.
- 8.5. Overall, the main aim of this approach to consultation is to raise awareness of the Council's financial position, inform residents of how the Council spends its budget and ensure residents, businesses and other key stakeholders are aware of the opportunities to have their say, by knowing how to respond and when the consultation events are taking place. This will be delivered through a variety of

communication channels, for example through the local newspaper, publicity on the council's website, e-Newsletters, posters, media briefings and use of the Council's social media platforms, including Facebook and Twitter, to disseminate reminders and encourage residents to participate in the consultation process.

### *Scrutiny*

- 8.6. The scrutiny committees will review the draft budget through their budget task group in order to carry out the statutory scrutiny of the budget. This will include scrutiny of the budget development process, the budget assumptions in the MTFs as well as the new proposals set out in appendices A and B. Following this, the chair of the committee will present a report to Cabinet commenting on the outcome of the scrutiny process and providing recommendations for Cabinet to consider as part of their decision making.

### *Equalities Impact assessments*

- 8.7. The Council has a duty to pay due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination and advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who have a protected characteristic and those who don't when making decisions. This duty is set out in more detail in the Equality Implications section of this report. Each of the budget proposals attached in Appendix B have been subject to an equality impact assessments (EIA) screening to assess their potential or likely impact on service users and employees with protected characteristics. Where the EIA process identifies a disproportionate negative impact with no reasonable mitigation, the proposal will be subject to a full EIA and may need to be changed or even rejected. The consultation process outlined in this report will be an important source of information for these exercises. If a proposal involves a staffing restructure, an EIA will be conducted as part of that process, which forms part of the Managing Change policy.

## **9. Schools and Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)**

- 9.1. The provisional DSG allocations announced in July 2022 show that Brent will receive an increase in mainstream pupil funding of £2.9 million, which represents an overall increase of 1.2%. This is lower than the national percentage increase of 1.9% and lower than the average of 1.6% for local authorities in London, primarily driven by only London experiencing 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.
- 9.2. 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 and details can be accessed via the following link: [DSG Final Outturn 2021/22](#).

- 9.3. 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 later in the calendar year.
- 9.4. The number of Brent schools experiencing difficulties has increased with 67% projecting an in year deficit. 23% of these schools plan to use over 50% of reserves to balance their budgets. Schools are feeling the impact of rising inflationary costs and increases in energy prices alongside the prospect of teachers pay increasing by 5% in 2022/23 and starting salaries rising by 8.9% to £30k. The DfE expects schools to manage these pressures within the allocated funding increase in 2022/23 of 3.6% and 1.2% expected in 2023/24. 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, a School Place Planning Working Group will be established to review the sustainability of provision in primary planning areas.
- 9.5. The High Needs block (HNB) of the DSG will see a 5% (£3.5 million) increase in 2023/24. This is on par with other Outer London boroughs but lower than the national average increase of 6.3%, due to London experiencing the lowest increase across various funding factors as a result of reductions in pupil numbers.
- 9.6. Pressures against the HNB remain, due to increased demand for Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) and this is a 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 forecast pressures of £2.2 million in 2022/23 will increase the deficit position to £17.3 million. The statutory override that was put in place to enable local authorities to hold deficit balances is due to end this financial year. Further guidance is anticipated from the DfE regarding the management of historic deficits going forward as this poses a risk to the general fund reserves.
- 9.7. 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 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; a review of the DSG funded SEN support services and continued central government lobbying.

- 9.8. 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.
- 9.9. A consultation on the Early Years funding formula and maintained nursery school supplementary funding concluded in September 2022. The main aspects of the proposals related to the need to update the funding formula for early education entitlements for children aged 2, 3 and 4. Analysis shows that a number of the proposed changes to the Early Years funding from 2023/24, if approved, could have significant financial impacts on elements of the early years' settings and will jeopardize the sustainability of some local childcare providers. The results of the consultation are expected to be published this autumn.
- 9.10. 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. Funding allocations for the Early Years Block are expected to be announced in December 2022. In the Spending Review 2021, the DfE confirmed that nationally, the block will receive additional funding worth £180 million in 2023/24 and £170 million in 2024/25, to enable local authorities to increase hourly rates paid to providers for childcare entitlement offers and reflects the costs of inflation and national living wage increases. An Early Years funding report for 2023/24 will be presented at the Schools Forum in January 2023, detailing the revised funding rates.
- 9.11. The recent SEND Green paper is 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.

## **10. Housing Revenue Account**

- 10.1. The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) is a ring-fenced account, which contains the income and expenditure relating to the Council's landlord duties in respect of approximately 12,000 dwellings including those held by leaseholders.
- 10.2. The HRA budget is set each year in the context of the 30-year business plan. 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:

- 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

- 10.3. 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 is currently consulting on introducing a rent increase cap. The consultation includes 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 is being used for budget planning purposes.
- 10.4. In 2022/23, the average rent currently sits at £124.70 per week, after applying an uplift of CPI + 1% (a 4.1% increase overall) on the previous year. A 5% cap would result in an average rent per week of £130.94, raising an additional £2.5m per annum. This is a £3m (or a 55%) reduction in investment in the HRA when compared to continuing with the CPI + 1% policy. With a 3% rent rise cap, the level of income per annum would reduce further by £1m when compared to the 5% cap. A 7% rent cap, would be a £1m increase when compared to the 5% option.
- 10.5. In the context of the 30-year business plan, a CPI + 1% model helps to provide some stability and certainty over planned investment in the stock, service improvement and new development, at least in the medium term. It does however 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 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 + 1% increase combined with increasing costs would result in even greater pressure on the HRA and a likely situation of spend exceeding income generated through rent and service charge collection.
- 10.6. It is illegal to set a budget that would result in negative balances on the HRA. If faced with this likely situation, significant savings will be required from the management and maintenance budgets.
- 10.7. Rent increases in 2023/24 do not only affect the financial year in question, but also have an impact on future rent levels. There is no provision in the current rent regulations to allow anything more than the maximum (CPI+1%) increases in future years. Therefore a lower rent increase in 2023/24 means that the base for a rent increase in 2024/25 is also going to be lower and so on for future years. For example, if CPI is 10% and 6% for the next 2 years and rents are capped at

5%, the HRA will have a budget deficit of £4m, compared to an operating balance of £2.9m if CPI+1% was implemented.

- 10.8. Implications of future Government regulated rent policy remain uncertain beyond April 2025. Some costs such as repairs are likely to rise significantly and remain at those levels without falling when the current economic pressures subside. Therefore, it may be necessary to reduce planned major works, along with plans for decarbonisation and new builds in order to maintain long-term financial sustainability and resilience
- 10.9. The table below shows the best and worst case scenarios' impact on the HRA budget with a 5% rent rise limitation in place.

Table 5 - HRA Budget Scenarios

	<b>Best Case £m</b>	<b>Worst Case £m</b>
Rent (5% rise)	(2.5)	(2.5)
Bad Debt Provision	0.5	1.0
Repairs and Major works inflation	2.1	2.7
Pay Award	0.4	0.7
Increased void costs	1.5	2.0
Increased costs of disrepairs	0.3	0.5
<b>Budget Gap</b>	<b>2.3</b>	<b>4.4</b>
<b>Saving Proposals</b>		
Reviewing void standards and active interventions to reduce costs	(1.15)	(1.15)
A reduction in staffing costs	(0.85)	(0.85)
A reduction in support services	(0.3)	(0.3)
A reduction in costs associated with contracts and external provider spend (e.g. exclusions, TMO)	(0.7)	(0.7)
<b>Total Savings</b>	<b>(3.0)</b>	<b>(3.0)</b>
<b>Total Impact</b>	<b>(0.7)</b>	<b>1.4</b>

- 10.10. A 5% rent limitation would result in a budget gap of between £2.3m and £4.4m. With a 3% cap, this gap widens to between £3.3m and £5.4m and with a 7% cap, it reduces to between £1.3m and £3.4m.
- 10.11. Based on the scenarios modelled in the table, the central case (that is broadly in-between the best and worst case scenario) suggests that a 5% rent cap and identified savings could result in a balanced budget.

*Bad Debts*

10.12. It is recognised that cost of living crisis and increased rental charges can have an adverse impact on the level of rent collections. In 2021/22, 40% of rent charges were covered through housing benefit payments, which equates to £20m. The remaining 60% of income totalling £30m was paid directly by tenants who are in employment or in receipt of universal credit and would be at risk of increases levels of non-collection.

10.13. Collection rates in Quarter 1 2022/23, on average, stood at 95%. 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. It is estimated that in 2023/24 the budget will need to increase by anywhere between £0.5m and £1m in order to account for a potential increase in non-collection.

#### *Repairs and major works*

10.14. The figures from the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors, published in May 2022, suggest that high material prices are now impeding activity for 84% of construction firms. The construction industry expects further price rises, with an average estimate of 12%-13% inflation over the next 12 months, increasing the likelihood of risk that the contractor may not be able to complete or take on more work. It is estimated that inflationary uplifts on Brent's repairs contracts could potentially range between 8%-10% resulting in an additional budget requirement between £2.1m to £2.7m in 2023/24.

#### *Pay Award*

10.15. Staffing budget for 2022/23 is £10.9m, made up of 227.5 FTE's, an average of £50k per FTE. The pay award for 2022/23 has been agreed at a fixed amount of £2,229 in outer London, which is estimated to result in a budget uplift requirement of £0.5m, an average uplift of 5% on existing budgets. An inflationary uplift ranging between 4%-6% will result in a budgetary requirement between £0.4m to £0.7m in 2023/24.

#### *Existing Budget Pressures*

10.16. Over the last two years, the HRA experienced budgetary pressures associated with expenditure on void properties required to bring them to letting standards. These pressures were mitigated through underspends on staffing costs due to vacancies and reduced spend on major works. With the need to recruit to vacant positions and requirements within the major works programme to maintain a minimum baseline budget of £15m per annum, the budgetary pressures identified for void works require additional funding estimated at £1.5m - £2m per annum.

10.17. Compensation claims for disrepairs have also increased over the last few years. The rate of new claims from third party solicitors are not showing any sign of decline as an increasing number of legal claim firms are contacting tenants

directly to promote their services. Additional budget requirement is estimated to be between £0.3 and £0.5m per annum.

### *Saving Proposals*

- 10.18. Difficult decisions are required to be made in order to reappraise HRA budget priorities, achieve a significant level of savings across the HRA and maintain a balanced budget. Annual saving targets are already incorporated into medium-term financial plans, however new savings are required in order to contain the reduction in rental income.
- 10.19. In order to address a budget gap associated with expenditure on void properties closer monitoring of void specifications to ensure overspend is reduced is now in place. This will also reduce the number of major voids which have both higher specifications and longer turnaround times. Quicker turnaround times will reduce the void rent loss and Council Tax liability periods. This is expected to generate a £1.15m saving.
- 10.20. An estimated saving of £850k can 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.
- 10.21. A £0.3m saving is anticipated as a result of general efficiencies and a reduced expenditure associated with support services.
- 10.22. 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.

### *Tenants Service Charges*

- 10.23. Service charges are recharges to tenants, which are based on the actual costs incurred for providing specific services, such as estate cleaning. For the purpose of the budget setting, individual service charge elements are adjusted to bring them in line with the estimated costs of providing these services to tenants. Service charges are adjusted if there is a projected over or under recovery of costs. Currently there is under recovery of costs for estate cleaning services. Therefore a phased approach to cost recovery has been modelled to allow charges to increase over a four-year period, limiting the impact on tenants.
- 10.24. Unmetered communal lighting, heating and hot water charges are adjusted annually in line with the forecast energy supplier inflations. 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.

10.25. The rent cap consultation closed on 12 October and a final decision is expected to be announced later this year. Once the rent policy changes are confirmed, the HRA draft budget and the 2023/24 HRA Business Plan will be updated to reflect the impact. Budget assumptions will continue to be reviewed and updated. The HRA budget for 2023/24 will be presented to Cabinet in February 2023 for approval by Full Council.

## **11. Capital Programme**

11.1. The Capital Programme is spend on providing or improving assets, which include land, buildings and equipment, which will be of use or benefit in providing services for more than one financial year. The programme is funded through a combination of capital grants and contributions, capital receipts, reserves, contribution from revenue or prudential borrowing. Any borrowing must be both prudent and affordable therefore the Council must ensure the ability to repay both the interest and principal of any borrowing through the revenue capital financing budget.

11.2. Interest rates have been increasing steadily from historic lows. The Bank of England base rate was 0.25% at the start of 2022. Since then, there have been six rate increases taking the current Bank of England base rate to 2.25%. In recent months, there has been further volatility as markets question the sustainability of government borrowing in light of recent policy announcements around energy price caps and tax cuts.

11.3. The market is expecting significant interest rate increases to be required by the Bank of England in order to bring inflation under control, causing the cost of borrowing to increase significantly. For instance, if the Council were to take a new 30-year today, this would currently be at an interest rate of c6% as compared with below 3% in April.

11.4. This substantial increase in the cost of borrowing coupled 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.

11.5. The Capital Programme below comprises of projects approved by Cabinet at the February 2022 budget setting, new projects approved and a number of in year budget adjustments. The full details of the budget changes including options to pause schemes as well as new proposals will be reported in the budget setting report in February 2023.

Table 6 – Current Capital Programme Budget and Financing

<b>Programme Budget</b>	<b>2022/23 £m</b>	<b>2023/24 £m</b>	<b>2024/25 £m</b>	<b>2025/26 £m</b>	<b>2026/27 £m</b>
Corporate Landlord	17.1	57.2	25.6	1.1	0.5
South Kilburn	26.4	10.4	9.9	2.8	11.5
Regeneration	9.4	81.1	63.7	28.8	-
St Raphael's	1.9	1.7	-	-	-
Public Realm	17.9	14.2	5.5	6.1	0.0
Schools	12.4	31.5	17.7	-	-
Housing GF	100.1	83.4	62.1	6.3	1.7
Housing HRA	58.0	85.4	41.6	20.3	20.2
	<b>243.2</b>	<b>364.9</b>	<b>226.2</b>	<b>65.2</b>	<b>33.9</b>

<b>Programme Financing</b>	<b>2022/23 £m</b>	<b>2023/24 £m</b>	<b>2024/25 £m</b>	<b>2025/26 £m</b>	<b>2026/27 £m</b>
Grants & Other Contributions	53.6	77.2	27.6	2.1	0.0
S106 & CIL	11.0	14.8	-	-	-
Capital Receipts	6.3	9.2	9.9	2.8	11.5
Reserves	5.9	0.1	0.1	-	-
Major Repairs Allowance	11.0	11.5	12.0	0.0	-
Revenue Contribution	6.0	4.0	-	-	-
Prudential Borrowing	149.4	248.1	176.6	60.3	22.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>243.2</b>	<b>364.9</b>	<b>226.2</b>	<b>65.2</b>	<b>33.9</b>

- 11.6. Many of the demand pressures for the capital programme are further exacerbated by the cost of living crisis.

*Temporary Accommodation and Social Housing*

- 11.7. Temporary Accommodation (TA) is housing provided to homeless people within the borough whilst awaiting a permanent arrangement to house them. The demand for this type of accommodation is rising given the increased number of homelessness applications received given the current cost of living crisis. This demand drives the need for further social housing where the demand far exceeds the current supply. The housing schemes are experiencing significant viability challenges with the cost of construction rising and the increased borrowing costs. This has required an alternative approach to support the delivery of affordable housing:
- 11.8. A programme wide approach to support cross-subsidy between schemes in the New Council Homes Programme to ensure larger family homes can continue to be built.

- 11.9. Converting schemes to include alternative tenures including Shared Ownership (SO), Open Market Rent (OMR) and Open Market Sale (OMS) with a view to make schemes viable and prioritise larger homes.
- 11.10. Scenario analysis on build costs for schemes during their feasibility to develop plans required to maintain viability throughout the design and tender process in a high inflationary environment. If this is not achievable, an assessment will be made on whether the scheme should proceed.
- 11.11. Even with these considerations, it is highly likely for schemes to still not reach our viability levels so a decision will be taken on whether to reduce the scope of the scheme, pause until a future date and allow for a further assessment or cancel the project.

#### *Supported Living*

- 11.12. Supported Living is a specialised form of social housing that allows adults with care and support needs to maintain independence within the community as an alternative to living in residential care or a nursing home. Its demand is influenced by people's health, ageing, etc. The demand is rising given our ageing population.

#### *School Places*

- 11.13. It is important that the Council is cognisant of the latest demand for school places as it has a statutory duty to provide school places to residents of the borough. The Council had approved a secondary school expansion programme in 2020 but updated demographic figures in 2021 meant there was no longer the projected figures to justify the scheme.
- 11.14. The Programme was paused and funds were used for a new SEND expansion scheme, to meet the need for more places for Special Education Needs within borough. There are currently large revenue costs associated with funding places outside the borough.

#### *Highways*

- 11.15. The highways programme is reliant on Local Implementation Plan funding from TFL to support the improvement works programme however the reduction and uncertainty of this funding has applied additional pressure to the Council to fund any shortfalls in recent years. This makes it increasingly challenging to plan an affordable asset management programme of the footways and carriageways in the borough.

## **12. Financial Implications**

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

## **13. Legal Implications**

- 13.1. A local authority must budget so as to give a reasonable degree of certainty as to the maintenance of its services. In particular, local authorities are required by the Local Government Finance Act 1992 to calculate as part of their overall budget what amounts are appropriate for contingencies and reserves. The Council must ensure sufficient flexibility to avoid going into deficit at any point during the financial year. The Director of Finance is required to report on the robustness of the proposed financial reserves.
- 13.2. Standing Order 24 sets out the process that applies within the Council for developing budget and capital proposals for 2023/24. There is a duty to consult representatives of non-domestic ratepayers on the Council's expenditure plans before each annual budget under Section 65 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992. The Council also has a general duty to consult representatives of Council Taxpayers, service users and others under Section 3 (2) Local Government Act 1999.
- 13.3. The Council is also required to comply with other statutory and common law consultation obligations relevant to particular options being considered and with the Public Sector Equality Duty. The Council must consult at a formative stage in the decision making process and adequate time must be given for public consideration and response. The consultation information must be accurate, fair and balanced, give sufficient reasons for proposals to permit of intelligent consideration and response and the information produced by the consultation must conscientiously be taken into account in finalising the proposals.

#### **14. Equality Implications**

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

available to them. This may mean making up the shortfall from additional reductions elsewhere.

## **15. Consultation with Ward Members and Stakeholders**

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

## **16. Human Resources**

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

Related Document:

Medium Term Financial Outlook, Cabinet July 2022

**Report sign off:**

***Minesh Patel***

Corporate Director of  
Finance and Resources.



**APPENDIX A**

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

Department	Reference	Project/Proposal	Category	Headline Description of Savings Proposal	2023/24 £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
<b>Sub-total</b>					<b>4,265</b>

Page 95

Department	Reference	Project/Proposal	Category	Headline Description of Savings Proposal	2023/24 £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
<b>Sub-total</b>					<b>2,410</b>

Department	Reference	Project/Proposal	Category	Headline Description of Savings Proposal	2023/24 £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 number of Communications Account Managers in the corporate communications team from five to three	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
<b>Sub-total</b>					<b>612</b>

Department	Reference	Project/Proposal	Category	Headline Description of Savings Proposal	2023/24 £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"> <li>Reduction in licensing spend through applications rationalisation</li> <li>Reduction in corporate printing spend through continued move to digital options</li> <li>Reduction in ICT and Transformation supplies and services spend</li> <li>Reduction in Brent's contribution to the shared ICT service through realisation of savings through delivery of roadmap projects</li> <li>Reduction in staffing in Transformation service</li> </ul>	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	Increase portfolio of Council Managed Temporary Accommodation (TA)	Service Transformation	Transfer HALS TA portfolio from Notting Hill Genesis (NHG) to Brent Direct Leasing (BDL)	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
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
<b>Sub-total</b>					<b>4,239</b>

Department	Reference	Project/Proposal	Category	Headline Description of Savings Proposal	2023/24 £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
<b>Sub-total</b>					<b>1,805</b>

Department	Reference	Project/Proposal	Category	Headline Description of Savings Proposal	2023/24 £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 2023/24.	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
<b>Sub-total</b>					<b>475</b>

Page 8 of 12

Department	Reference	Project/Proposal	Category	Headline Description of Savings Proposal	2023/24 £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	500
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
<b>Sub-total</b>					<b>4,100</b>

Department	Reference	Project/Proposal	Category	Headline Description of Savings Proposal	2023/24 £000
<b>SUMMARY OF SAVINGS PROPOSALS BY DIRECTORATE</b>					
Adult Social Care & Health					4,265
Children & Young People					2,410
Communities & Regeneration					612
Resident Services					4,239
Finance & Resources					1,805
Governance					475
Corporate					4,100
<b>Grand Total</b>					<b>17,906</b>



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# **APPENDIX B**

# **BUDGET SAVINGS PROPOSALS 2023-24**

Appendix B - Budget Savings Proposals 2023 - 2024

Department	Reference No.	Project/ Proposal	Page No.
Adult Social Care & Health	<a href="#">2023-24 AH01</a>	Homecare Reductions	1-3
Adult Social Care & Health	<a href="#">2023-24 AH02</a>	Not in-sourcing Reablement	4-7
Adult Social Care & Health	<a href="#">2023-24 AH03</a>	Reduction in cost of Learning Disability Placements	8-10
Adult Social Care & Health	<a href="#">2023-24 AH04</a>	Extra Care Void Saving	11-13
Adult Social Care & Health	<a href="#">2023-24 AH05</a>	Mental Health Placements	14-16
Adult Social Care & Health	<a href="#">2023-24 AH06</a>	Reductions in Staffing	17-19
Adult Social Care & Health	<a href="#">2023-24 AH07</a>	Digital / Transformation Savings	20-22
Children & Young People	<a href="#">2023-24 CYP01</a>	Early Help	23-26
Children & Young People	<a href="#">2023-24 CYP02</a>	Inclusion and Virtual School	27-29
Children & Young People	<a href="#">2023-24 CYP03</a>	Localities - Care Packages reduction	30-33
Children & Young People	<a href="#">2023-24 CYP05</a>	Looked after Children and Permanency	34-37
Children & Young People	<a href="#">2023-24 CYP06</a>	Forward Planning Performance & Partnerships	38-41
Children & Young People	<a href="#">2023-24 CYP07</a>	Safeguarding and Quality Assurance	42-44
Children & Young People	<a href="#">2023-24 CYP08</a>	Setting and School Effectiveness	45-47
Children & Young People	<a href="#">2023-24 CYP09</a>	Digital / Transformation Savings	48-50
Communities & Regeneration	<a href="#">2023-24 CR01</a>	Planning Service Staff Reduction	51-53
Communities & Regeneration	<a href="#">2023-24 CR02</a>	Improve efficiency - Brent Works / Brent Start	54-56
Communities & Regeneration	<a href="#">2023-24 CR03</a>	Brent Start Programme Leader	57-59
Communities & Regeneration	<a href="#">2023-24 CR04</a>	Regeneration Capitalisation	60-62

Appendix B - Budget Savings Proposals 2023 - 2024

Department	Reference No.	Project/ Proposal	Page No.
Communities & Regeneration	<a href="#">2023-24 CR05</a>	Town Centre managers	63-65
Communities & Regeneration	<a href="#">2023-24 CR06</a>	Strategy & Partnerships restructure (1FTE)	66-68
Communities & Regeneration	<a href="#">2023-24 CR07</a>	Reduction in staffing via restructure	69-71
Communities & Regeneration	<a href="#">2023-24 CR08</a>	Digital / Transformation Savings	72-74
Resident Services	<a href="#">2023-24 RS01</a>	Removal of first class envelopes from the Civic Centre	75-77
Resident Services	<a href="#">2023-24 RS02</a>	Staffing changes	78-80
Resident Services	<a href="#">2023-24 RS03</a>	IEG and Resilience contract reduction & Staffing reductions due to systems automation	81-83
Resident Services	<a href="#">2023-24 RS04</a>	Online diary and reporting system and booking citizenship ceremonies	84-86
Resident Services	<a href="#">2023-24 RS05</a>	Staff reorganisation	87-89
Resident Services	<a href="#">2023-24 RS06</a>	Reduction in licensing, corporate printing, supplies and services, delivery of ICT roadmap, staffing	90-92
Resident Services	<a href="#">2023-24 RS07</a>	Digital / Transformation Savings	93-95
Resident Services	<a href="#">2023-24 RS08</a>	Libraries stock	96-98
Resident Services	<a href="#">2023-24 RS09</a>	Increase Council Owned Temporary Accommodation Portfolio	99-101
Resident Services	<a href="#">2023-24 RS11</a>	Increase portfolio of Council Managed Temporary Accommodation (TA)	102-104

Appendix B - Budget Savings Proposals 2023 - 2024

Department	Reference No.	Project/ Proposal	Page No.
Resident Services	<a href="#">2023-24 RS12</a>	Street Light Dimming	105-107
Resident Services	<a href="#">2023-24 RS13</a>	Waste disposal – Education and outreach insourcing	108-110
Resident Services	<a href="#">2023-24 RS14</a>	Review Payments to WLWA	111-113
Resident Services	<a href="#">2023-24 RS15</a>	Increased use of Proceeds Of Crime Act	114-116
Resident Services	<a href="#">2023-24 RS16</a>	RLS related - Environmental Services Review	117-119
Resident Services	<a href="#">2023-24 RS17</a>	RLS related -Review of BTS	120-125
Resident Services	<a href="#">2023-24 RS18</a>	RLS Related - Negotiate RLS cost reduction	126-128
Resident Services	<a href="#">2023-24 RS19</a>	RLS related - Rationalisation of Environmental service budgets	129-131
Finance & Resources	<a href="#">2023-24 FR01</a>	Reduction in staffing	132-134
Finance & Resources	<a href="#">2023-24 FR02</a>	Digital / Transformation Savings	135-137
Finance & Resources	<a href="#">2023-24 FR03</a>	External support for Internal Audit activity	138-140
Finance & Resources	<a href="#">2023-24 FR04</a>	Civic Centre Office Let	141-143
Finance & Resources	<a href="#">2023-24 FR05</a>	Increase car park/EVCP charge	144-146
Finance & Resources	<a href="#">2023-24 FR06</a>	Security Service Transformation	147-149
Finance & Resources	<a href="#">2023-24 FR07</a>	Rationalise soft FM service	150-152
Finance & Resources	<a href="#">2023-24 FR08</a>	Commercial Staffing Review	153-155

Appendix B - Budget Savings Proposals 2023 - 2024

Department	Reference No.	Project/ Proposal	Page No.
Governance	<a href="#">2023-24 GOV1</a>	Reduction in staffing via restructure	156-158
Governance	<a href="#">2023-24 GOV2</a>	Restructures in HR	159-162
Governance	<a href="#">2023-24 GOV3</a>	Reduce Corporate Learning and Development Budget	163-165
Governance	<a href="#">2023-24 GOV4</a>	Administrative and Miscellaneous Efficiencies	166-168
Governance	<a href="#">2023-24 GOV5</a>	Increase income target for recoverable legal work costs	169-171
Governance	<a href="#">2023-24 GOV6</a>	Reduce Legal Fees Budget	172-174
Governance	<a href="#">2023-24 GOV7</a>	Cessation of DX Postal service	175-177
Governance	<a href="#">2023-24 GOV8</a>	Miscellaneous expenses reduction	178-180
Governance	<a href="#">2023-24 GOV9</a>	Administrative and Miscellaneous Efficiencies	181-183
Governance	<a href="#">2023-24 GOV10</a>	Removal of first class envelopes from the Civic Centre	184-186
Governance	<a href="#">2023-24 GOV11</a>	Deletion of 2 FTE posts	187-189
Corporate	<a href="#">2023-24 CORP1</a>	Digital / Transformation Savings	190-191
Corporate	<a href="#">2023-24 CORP4</a>	Procurement Savings	192-193
Corporate	<a href="#">2023-24 CORP5</a>	CMT Savings	194-195
Corporate	<a href="#">2023-24 CORP6</a>	RLS related – Environment department saving	196-197
Corporate	2023-24 AH08	Technical Adjustment - recurring grant funding	N/A

## **Budget Options Information**

Reference:	2023-24 AH01
Service(s):	Homecare
Lead Member(s):	Cllr Neil Nerva, Cabinet Member for Public Health & Adult Social Care

Savings Proposals:	In light on the pandemic and increased homecare packages, reviewing community based Support Packages to ensure they are commensurate with need and always maximising independence.
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### **Financial and Staffing Information**

2022/23	
Total budget for the service(s) £'000:	20,002
Total post numbers in the services(s) (FTE):	-

	2023/24	2024/25
	£'000	£'000
Proposed saving:	1,200	0
	FTE	FTE
Proposed staffing reduction	-	-

### **Proposed savings**

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.

There are a number of interventions that need to be delivered both in response to the pandemic and because they are good practice, which should reduce the overall levels of homecare. These include:

*Double handed care reviews* – partly as a result of the pandemic, and the reduced access to care homes for discharge we have seen a significant increase in double handed care packages (where 2 carers are needed to carry out care). Reducing double handed care packages, means fewer people entering someone's home, better use of community equipment and, therefore, more independence and less intrusive care.

*Reablement* – the new and redesigned dedicated reablement service goes live in February 2023. The new service has been designed after a full review and brings a range of new features, which have been successful in other Local Authorities, therefore, we expect to see a significant increase in the number of people supported to maximise independence and so require lower or no care packages.

*High and Low costing care Packages* – the purpose of social care is to assist people to live as independent a life as is possible outside the formal care system. For these cohort of service users focused reviews will be undertaken with a stronger attention on Personalisation and promoting Personal Budgets/ Personal Assistants as a means of receiving their services. For very low costing support packages the aim will be to Promote Independence. Looking at housing adjustment / equipment's, telecare and digital solutions to support individual's so that they will no longer require funded support.

### **How would this affect users of this service?**

We carry out reviews at the end of the reablement process and on an annual basis. We will ensure that these reviews are strength bases reviews and with a focus on independence. This will also be true of double handed calls because although the person will not be full independent with activities of daily living, they may only require a single carer, which should be seen as a positive as it will reduce the number of carers and should improve the relationships.

### **Key milestones**

The nature of this proposal means it will be part of all reviews on an ongoing basis. Individual reviews will be done with the person who receives the care, their family or advocates and the care agency. The only specific milestone is the implementation of the new reablement service in February 2023.

### **Key consultations**

Service users and families will be consulted on a case by case basis – there will not be a wider consultation given the personalised aspect of this proposal.

### **Key risks and mitigations**

- Reducing packages becomes harder to achieve in practice than in principle, because of a reliance on the care provided – social workers use their experience and understanding of the Care Act to promote a strength based approach to care, to mitigate these issues.

- Undertaking work as part of the service improvement plans to agree and benchmark our “local offer” and to help manage community expectations.

### **Equality impact screening**

Is there potential for the proposed saving to have a disproportionate adverse impact on any of the following groups:	
Disabled people	Y
Particular ethnic groups	N
Men or Women (include impacts due to pregnancy/maternity)	N
People of particular sexual orientation/s	N
People who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone a process or part of a process of gender reassignment	N
People in particular age groups	Y
Groups with particular faiths/beliefs	N
Marriage / civil partnership	N

If the screening has identified a potentially disproportionate adverse impact, you will need to complete an Equality Impact Assessment.

EIA required?	Yes
EIA to be completed by:	Andrew Davies, Head of Commissioning, Contracting and Market Management
Deadline:	31 January 2023

Lead officer for this proposal:	Andrew Davies, Head of Commissioning, Contracting and Market Management Tiffany Adonis-French Head of Complex Care Direct Services and Duty
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## **Budget Options Information**

Reference:	2023-24 AH02
Service(s):	Delivery of reablement service through external providers
Lead Member(s):	Cllr Neil Nerva, Cabinet Member for Public Health & Adult Social Care

Savings Proposals:	The original plan was to create an in house reablement service from April 2022, however, it is possible to procure this service externally and deliver the same outcomes at a reduced cost.
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### **Financial and Staffing Information**

2022/23	
Total budget for the service(s) £'000:	1,300
Total post numbers in the services(s) (FTE):	-

	2023/24	2024/25
	£'000	£'000
Proposed saving:	1,300	
	FTE	FTE
Proposed staffing reduction	N/A	

### **Proposed savings**

Reablement is a homecare based service offered for a maximum of 6 weeks where the resident is supported to re-learn, or become confident in activities of daily living, this promotes their independence and reduces the long term cost of an ongoing package of care. Currently reablement is delivered through a number of homecare

providers, and people are allowed to stay with their reablement provider after the reablement period as a homecare client.

In November 2019 Cabinet approved the recommendation that Reablement services be brought in-house. At that time, Brent commissioned around 1,500 hours a week of reablement services (around 6% of the total hours commissioned). Following the Cabinet decision officers were instructed to develop plans to set up and implement the new service within a 12-18 month period. The aim was to set up and implement the new reablement in-house service from April 2022.

It is clear from the work on preparing to bring reablement services in house that to do this will cost the council significantly more than a commissioned service. Brent's reablement service delivers approximately 750 hours per week, which is 39,105 hours per year. The total cost of an in-house service is £2.5m (based on the current business case that has been verified by finance) compared to only £1.2m for an external homecare provider (based on £21.50 per hour – this is £2 higher than the standard homecare cost and allows for staff to be paid above LLW and have additional training). This is a difference of £1.3m.

Given that there is no external evidence, checked as part of this budget process, to suggest that an in-house service delivers better long term care outcomes than a specifically procured external service (in particular where the reablement provider does not provide ongoing care), this is proposed as a saving.

### **How would this affect users of this service?**

As stated above the aim of a reablement service remains the same whether it is in - house or external. Therefore, not bringing the service in – house would not have an impact on service users. The key characteristics of a successful reablement model (evidence pulled together for this process) are:

- Visits are 15 minutes longer than needed to meet the 'need' to allow time for clients to maximise their independence, and are delivered by workers who are not trapped in a 'time and task' mentality.
- Paying £1-2 per hour more to reablement provider(s) to compensate for short-term care packages and less efficient routing for care workers.
- Strength based review at the end of reablement phase, including Occupational Therapy, to ensure homecare only continues when it is genuinely needed.
- Specifying that the reablement provider does not retain clients for ongoing homecare after the reablement period. This helps ensure providers have no incentive to not 'reable' (It should be noted that whether we bring the service in house or procure a separate provider, the client will not have the option to stay with the same carer.)

### **Key milestones**

- Building on the work done to design the in-house service, designing the service specification over the next 2 months
- Procurement which is likely to take 6 months
- Implementing the new contract from February 2023
- Monitoring delivery – this will be done through the Community and Prevention Team as with homecare

### **Key consultations**

There will be no need for formal consultation. The currently external reablement service will remain pending the procurement of the new service, which we will aim to have in place by October 2022.

### **Key risks and mitigations**

- Delay in the procurement of the new service.
- Low levels of provider interest – this might be the case as providers would prefer the higher volumes in the core homecare contract (Lot 20 would go out at the same time), however, the homecare market is big, and this provides defined levels of work, so with the right market preparation this should be manageable.

### **Equality impact screening**

Is there potential for the proposed saving to have a disproportionate adverse impact on any of the following groups:	
Disabled people	N
Particular ethnic groups	N
Men or Women (include impacts due to pregnancy/maternity)	N
People of particular sexual orientation/s	N
People who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone a process or part of a process of gender reassignment	N
People in particular age groups	N
Groups with particular faiths/beliefs	N
Marriage / civil partnership	N

If the screening has identified a potentially disproportionate adverse impact, you will need to complete an Equality Impact Assessment.

EIA required?	No
EIA to be completed by:	N/A
Deadline:	N/A

Lead officer for this proposal:	Andrew Davies, Head of Commissioning, Contracting and Market Management
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### **Budget Options Information**

Reference:	2023-24 AH03
Service(s):	Learning Disability – Reducing Residential Placements
Lead Member(s):	Cllr Neil Nerva, Cabinet Member for Public Health & Adult Social Care

Savings Proposals:	Continue to reduce the spend on Learning Disability Residential Placements and support people to live as independently as possible.
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### **Financial and Staffing Information**

2022/23	
Total budget for the service(s) £'000:	9,300
Total post numbers in the services(s) (FTE):	-

	2023/24	2024/25
	£'000	£'000
Proposed saving:	600	0
	FTE	FTE
Proposed staffing reduction	-	-

### **Proposed savings**

Currently there are 127 learning disability care home placements. Even though this number is comparatively low across London, as a result of the New Accommodation for Independent Living programme, we have a very clear understanding of the individual needs of the people in care home placements and their ability to live more independently. Therefore, we are confident there are more people who could benefit from a Supported Living placement. We believe there are at least another 25 people who are currently in a care home, who could live more independently and we will work to support them to move to the right accommodation over the next two years. This will save the Council an average of £500 per week, per placement (as previously evidenced through the Brent Shared Lives / NAIL Programme to date).

### **How would this affect users of this service?**

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 our aim to use services that promote independence and choice within care, and has formed a fundamental objective of the Brent Supported Living programme. All moves are done working closely with the person and their family or advocate.

### **Key milestones**

This is an existing and ongoing process:

- Identification of individual service users to step down
- Engagement with service users and families / LPAs and providers to plan moves
- Identification of appropriate supported living services and confirmation of care package
- Transition of service users from residential to supported living placements

The Brent Supported Living Team will use the experience gained from previous moves to put in place bespoke move on plans for each service user stepping down to supported living services.

### **Key consultations**

Service users and families will be consulted on a case by case basis – there will not be a wider consultation given the personalised aspect of this proposal.

### **Key risks and mitigations**

- Service users and their families choose not to move, or won't engage with this process – Social workers to use experience from previous work to engage families and service users in this process; work will start with a larger number of clients than will actually move, because some will choose not to move or it will be decided that they won't move
- 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

## **Equality impact screening**

Is there potential for the proposed saving to have a disproportionate adverse impact on any of the following groups:	
Disabled people	Y
Particular ethnic groups	N
Men or Women (include impacts due to pregnancy/maternity)	N
People of particular sexual orientation/s	N
People who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone a process or part of a process of gender reassignment	N
People in particular age groups	Y
Groups with particular faiths/beliefs	N
Marriage / civil partnership	N

If the screening has identified a potentially disproportionate adverse impact, you will need to complete an Equality Impact Assessment.

EIA required?	Yes
EIA to be completed by:	Andrew Davies, Head of Commissioning, Contracting and Market Management
Deadline:	31 January 2023

Lead officer for this proposal:	Andrew Davies, Head of Commissioning, Contracting and Market Management
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### **Budget Options Information**

Reference:	2023-24 AH04
Service(s):	Older People – Reduction in Care Home placements
Lead Member(s):	Cllr Neil Nerva, Cabinet Member for Public Health & Adult Social Care

Savings Proposals:	Post Covid, post increased health and discharge driven residential and nursing placements, reduce the number of care home placements.
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### **Financial and Staffing Information**

2022/23	
Total budget for the service(s) £'000:	9,274
Total post numbers in the services(s) (FTE):	-

	2023/24	2024/25
	£'000	£'000
Proposed saving:	250	0
	FTE	FTE
Proposed staffing reduction	-	-

### **Proposed savings**

Older Adult residential care home placements have increased from 244 in October 2020 to 262 in October 2021 related to NHS discharge placements and going against previous trends where care home numbers have fallen. This savings proposal is based on reducing expenditure on care homes, by bringing numbers back to October 2020 levels by the end of 2022/23, and reducing numbers further to 230 by the end of 2023/24.

This would be done through ASC control of the discharge process, a clear focus on HomeFirst (supporting people to go back to their own homes) and the use of extra care services (filling all voids and fully utilising Honey Pot Lane), saving on average £150 per placement per week (this is an estimate for the purpose of this proposal).

ASC can achieve this saving and deliver on the Council's Supported Living objective (to ensure that there is greater mix of need in extra care) because we are building new accommodation for older people, for example, Honey Pot Lane, a new extra care facility coming at the end of 2022.

### **How would this affect users of this service?**

Service users would benefit from living good quality accommodation, that provides social care support with more choice and control over their care and support than they receive in residential care.

### **Key milestones**

Identification of service users to step down

- Engagement with service users and families / LPAs and providers to plan moves
- Identification of appropriate supported living services and confirmation of care package
- Transition of service users from residential to supported living placements

The Brent Supported Living Team will use the experience gained from previous moves to put in place bespoke move on plans for each service user stepping down to supported living services.

### **Key consultations**

Service users and families will be consulted on a case by case basis – there will not be a wider consultation given the personalised aspect of this proposal.

### **Key risks and mitigations**

- Process – Social workers to use experience from previous work to engage families and service users in this process; work will start with a larger number of clients than will actually move, because some will choose not to move or it will be decided that they won't move
- 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

### **Equality impact screening**

Is there potential for the proposed saving to have a disproportionate adverse impact on any of the following groups:	
Disabled people	Y
Particular ethnic groups	N
Men or Women (include impacts due to pregnancy/maternity)	N
People of particular sexual orientation/s	N
People who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone a process or part of a process of gender reassignment	N
People in particular age groups	Y
Groups with particular faiths/beliefs	N
Marriage / civil partnership	N

If the screening has identified a potentially disproportionate adverse impact, you will need to complete an Equality Impact Assessment.

EIA required?	Yes
EIA to be completed by:	Andrew Davies, Head of Commissioning, Contracting and Market Management
Deadline:	31 January 2023

Lead officer for this proposal:	Andrew Davies, Head of Commissioning, Contracting and Market Management
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### **Budget Options Information**

Reference:	2023-24 AH05
Service(s):	Mental Health
Lead Member(s):	Cllr Neil Nerva, Cabinet Member for Public Health & Adult Social Care

Savings Proposals:	In light of the significant increase in Mental Health referrals during the pandemic and increases in all forms of support through the pandemic, to refresh the review process for all MH service users with a view to putting in place step down plans into general needs accommodation in all but exceptional circumstances for people in residential placement and support living placements.
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### **Financial and Staffing Information**

2022/23	
Total budget for the service(s) £'000:	1,482
Total post numbers in the services(s) (FTE):	36

	2022/23	2023/24
	£'000	£'000
Proposed saving:	470	0
	FTE	FTE
Proposed staffing reduction	0	0

### **Proposed savings**

There are currently over 180 placement care packages / placements, the costs of which range from £190 to £1900 a week. We are working with CNWL as part of the Integrated Care Partnership (ICP) to put in place new review capacity and capability, which ensures that we have a joined up approach across all partners which is focused on recovery and supporting people to live independently in general needs accommodation where that is possible and sustainable. Ensuring the whole system is focused on recovery will maximise independence for service users and reduce costs for the Council.

### **How would this affect users of this service?**

It is a statutory requirement for service users to have a review of their needs and associated placement as per Care ACT 2014.

The reviews uses a strengths based approach and will focus on supporting people to develop their potential in settings that promote their autonomy and independence. With the right access to housing, the right health support whether that is in secondary care or through primary care, we should be able to provide positive opportunities as part of a wider recovery approach for service users.

### **Key milestones**

The dedicated placement Review Care Management Team in ASCMH is in place – this is newly formed as part of the enhanced social care oversight agreed in the Memorandum of Understanding. There is an agreed work programme, which includes priority allocation of cases, and is supported by a multi-agency team, and this will report on a monthly basis in ASC, and to the ICP as necessary, so we can hold all parts of the system to account and track and update the forecasts.

### **Key consultations**

None required. Service users and families will be consulted on a case by case basis – there will not be a wider consultation given the personalised aspect of this proposal.

### **Key risks and mitigations**

This requires excellent social workers to take on difficult, strength based, recovery focused conversations, and for them to have access to the right accommodation. Therefore the key risks are:

- The recruitment and retention of staff that can be dedicated to this area of work within ASCMH. Currently this has been mitigated through the use of agency staff that comes at an increased cost
- Strong support from health partners and Housing, both PRS and social housing to ensure quick access to the right accommodation.

### **Equality impact screening**

Is there potential for the proposed saving to have a disproportionate adverse impact on any of the following groups:	
Disabled people	N
Particular ethnic groups	N
Men or Women (include impacts due to pregnancy/maternity)	N
People of particular sexual orientation/s	N
People who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone a process or part of a process of gender reassignment	N
People in particular age groups	N
Groups with particular faiths/beliefs	N
Marriage / civil partnership	N

If the screening has identified a potentially disproportionate adverse impact, you will need to complete an Equality Impact Assessment.

EIA required?	No
EIA to be completed by:	N/A
Deadline:	N/A

Lead officer for this proposal:	Rebecca Byrne, Head of Learning Disability and Mental Health
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### **Budget Options Information**

Reference:	2023-24 AH06
Service(s):	Reduction in Agency staffing
Lead Member(s):	Cllr Neil Nerva, Cabinet Member for Public Health & Adult Social Care

Savings Proposals:	Reduction in agency staff across the Adult Social Care (ASC)
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### **Financial and Staffing Information**

2022/23	
Total budget for the service(s) £'000:	21,825
Total post numbers in the services(s) (FTE):	FTE 139

The below table show the variance in cost between agency staff and permanent staff per year:

FTE	Total budget Agency staff £'000	Permanent staff £'000	Variance £'000
1	69	60	9
30	2,070	1,170	270

	2023/24 £'000	2024/25 £'000
Proposed saving:	270	0
	FTE	FTE
Proposed staffing reduction	30 agency staff	

**Proposed savings**

The saving will come from reducing the number of agency staff in the department by 30.

**How would this affect users of this service?**

This should be positive for the service and service users, less churn in staff, more permanent staff trained and developed in Brent

**Key milestones**

There is an active recruitment project working at the moment – this is being reviewed on a six monthly basis by Adult Social Care DMT and has support from HR and CMT

**Key consultations**

As this is not about a change in the delivery, model and only effecting vacant posts a consultation will not be required.

**Key risks and mitigations**

- Not achieving recruitment target of 30 permanent staff – initial feedback from the current recruitment drive is not positive, however, the move away from mandatory vaccination should help
- We will need to look to other (CYP and other boroughs) and identify additional things we can do to improve recruitment rates (this may include financial incentives)

## **Equality impact screening**

Is there potential for the proposed saving to have a disproportionate adverse impact on any of the following groups:	
Disabled people	N
Particular ethnic groups	N
Men or Women (include impacts due to pregnancy/maternity)	N
People of particular sexual orientation/s	N
People who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone a process or part of a process of gender reassignment	N
People in particular age groups	N
Groups with particular faiths/beliefs	N
Marriage / civil partnership	N

If the screening has identified a potentially disproportionate adverse impact, you will need to complete an Equality Impact Assessment.

EIA required?	No
EIA to be completed by:	N/A
Deadline:	N/A

Lead officer for this proposal:	Claudia Brown, Director Adult Social Care
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### **Budget Options Information**

Reference:	2023-24 AH07
Service(s):	Adult Social Care & Health
Lead Member(s):	Cllr Neil Nerva, Cabinet Member for Public Health & Adult Social Care

Savings Proposals:	Additional digital savings to be delivered through the Digital Transformation Programme.
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### **Financial and Staffing Information**

2022/23	
Total budget for the service(s) £'000:	21,825
Total post numbers in the services(s) (FTE):	-

	2023/24	2024/25
	£'000	£'000
Proposed saving:	175	N/A
	FTE	FTE
Proposed staffing reduction	Approx. 2.3	N/A

### **Proposed savings**

There are a range of processes in Adult Social Care which will benefit from digital transformation, including direct payments (process automation); financial assessment (online process for people who can use this), debt process review (increased automation), hospital discharge review (streamlining multi-agency processes) and demand management (through a more responsive front door enabled by technology). Delivering these changes will improve the customer experience, and reduce headcount through efficiencies.

### **How would this affect users of this service?**

As stated above this is focused on back office systems and processes. It will involve further channel shift to more accessible and effective online systems (while maintaining telephone and face to face channels for those who need additional support).

### **Key milestones**

TBC

### **Key consultations**

All of these changes will be delivered through co-design working with services users and staff to ensure they improve the experience and reduce the cost.

### **Key risks and mitigations**

There is a risk that work to scope, develop and implement new systems cannot be made in time to enable savings to be delivered by the start of 2023/24. This will be mitigated by bringing in additional business analysis support and capacity to backfill posts in the service area to allow them to act as SMEs.

This process will be led by operational managers to ensure that changes are made in line with natural churn in the workforce to ensure that there is no need for compulsory redundancies.

### **Equality impact screening**

This section will be completed when detailed more proposals have been developed.

Is there potential for the proposed saving to have a disproportionate adverse impact on any of the following groups? Please indicate Y/N below:	
Disabled people	N
Particular ethnic groups	N
Men or women	N
Particular sexual orientations	N
People who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone a process or part of a process of gender reassignment	N
Particular age groups	N
Groups with particular faiths/beliefs	N
Pregnancy/maternity	N
Marriage/civil partnership	N

If the screening has identified a potentially disproportionate adverse impact, you will need to complete an Equality Impact Assessment. Template and guidance available from [staff intranet](#)

EIA required?	No
EIA to be completed by:	N/A
Deadline:	N/A

Lead officer for this proposal:	Phil Porter, Corporate Director, Adult Social Care & Health
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## **Budget Options Information**

Reference:	2023-25 CYP01
Service(s):	Early Help Service (CYP)
Lead Member(s):	Councillor Gwen Grahl

Savings Proposals:	Savings proposals will be a combination of establishment savings achieved by deleting posts and reducing some commissioned services.
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### **Financial and Staffing Information**

2022/23	
Total budget for the service(s) £'000:	5,600
Total post numbers in the services(s) (FTE):	138

	2023/24	2024/25
	£'000	£'000
Proposed saving:	240	
	FTE	FTE
Proposed staffing reduction:	5	

### **Proposed savings**

The savings proposals are based primarily on staffing as this constitutes the majority of the service budget. This follows previous budget reductions of £1.5m in Early Help in 2020/21 following the closure of 8 children's centres and the repurposing of the remaining sites into 8 Family Wellbeing Centres.

Some posts will be deleted as they become vacant in 2023/24 (all operate out of FWCs) with a total value of £188k:

The posts that will be selected will not carry a regular caseload but are likely to be those that offer added value and capacity for work with families across the service.

Cut commissioned services (CAB, SLT, psychotherapy, Mentoring) by 10%	-	40k
Holiday activities at Family Wellbeing Centres	-	12k
Total	-	240k

### **How would this affect users of this service?**

Service users may see a reduced and less flexible service as key worker caseloads are re-distributed amongst existing workers. Services will need to become increasingly targeted due to the reductions and the early intervention benefits of universal access which provides opportunities for early identification of emerging issues will be lost.

### **Key milestones**

2023/24

Notification to affected commissioned services about future reductions.

### **Key consultations**

In line with the Council's managing change process and with providers of commissioned services.

### **Key risks and mitigations**

Losing vacant posts could reduce the amount of overall family support available within the service. However the amount of funding from the Supporting Families programme (SFP) has been increased for 22/23 and it is anticipated that some services can continue to be funded from the additional income, assuming the SFP grant income remains at the same level beyond 22/23, with no impact to service delivery.

Some of the posts that provide added value, if deleted, would reduce capacity to deliver universal and some targeted programmes for families. The focus would be on training volunteers and partner agencies to deliver support programmes. There is now a Volunteer Coordinator who supports the work of the Family Wellbeing Centres and the number of volunteers has been increasing.

It is anticipated that the trend for reduced numbers of young people entering the criminal justice system may continue, allowing a post to be held vacant within the Youth Offending service, without significantly impacting adversely on caseloads for remaining staff. However it would reduce opportunities for greater preventative work with the existing cohort of young people.

A 10% reduction across Early Help commissioned services would result in fewer children and adults accessing support services such as CAB, speech and language therapy, mentoring and counselling. These services have already been cut by 30% and are coming near their threshold for viability to deliver effectively.

The holiday activities funding may be mitigated through continued DfE support for the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programmes.

**Equality impact screening**

Is there potential for the proposed saving to have a disproportionate adverse impact on any of the following groups? Please indicate Y/N below:	
Disabled people	Y
Particular ethnic groups	Y
Men or women	Y
Particular sexual orientations	N
People who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone a process or part of a process of gender reassignment	N
Particular age groups	Y
Groups with particular faiths/beliefs	N
Pregnancy/maternity	Y
Marriage/civil partnership	N

If the screening has identified a potentially disproportionate adverse impact, you will need to complete an Equality Impact Assessment. Template and guidance available from [staff intranet](#)

EIA required?	Yes
EIA to be completed by:	Zafer Yilkan
Deadline:	31 January 2023

Lead officer for this proposal:	Zafer Yilkan/Tenidola Awoyemi
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### **Legal Services' Comments**

There is unlikely to be a legal challenge in respect of this proposal. There is a general duty under s.17 of the Children Act 1989 to provide services for children in need and their families.

As stated above, this could potentially at a later date lead to other risks such as reduced preventative work thereby reversing the current trend for reduced numbers of young people entering the criminal justice system and the outcomes of Ofsted inspections could decline as a result.

## Budget Options Information

Reference:	2023-25 CYP02
Service(s):	Inclusion and Virtual School (CYP)
Lead Member(s):	Councillor Gwen Grahl

Savings Proposals:	Reducing the Supporting Young People Contract, (' <i>Connexions</i> ').
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### Financial and Staffing Information

2022/23	
Total budget for the service(s) £'000:	1,800
Total post numbers in the services(s) (FTE):	90

	2023/24	2024/25
	£'000	£'000
Proposed saving:	80	
	FTE	FTE
Proposed staffing reduction:	n/a	n/a

### Proposed savings

By reducing the Supporting Young People Contract by the value of £80k

There is an expected increase in the Pupil Premium Grant (PPG) for the Virtual School and potentially post-16 PPG funding. This increase would be used to offset 50% of this reduction, maintaining a dedicated advisor for the Virtual School. Details of the PPG increase for 22/23 and therefore for 23/24 have not yet been released.

### **How would this affect users of this service?**

- There should be a manageable impact on service users. Brent has a low rate of NEET currently.
- Core tracking work will be maintained through the current contract, ensuring the Council meets its core statutory duty.
- Alternative provision, PRUs and Brent schools already commission Prospects for targeted work to prevent young people becoming NEET, therefore those at risk of NEET are already being identified earlier. CYP Department will work with schools where participation post 16 is identified as an issue in order to develop their approach to addressing needs earlier.
- As noted above, an allocation of pupil premium grant for Looked After Children will be used to secure a dedicated advisor, thereby minimising the impact for looked after children.
- SEND young people will need to be supported through improved 14 + transition planning at annual reviews led by schools.
- As a Council priority there is separate, targeted work underway through the Black Community Action Plan to support and motivate young people and to provide access/exposure to employment opportunities.

### **Key milestones**

Current contract arrangements to be reviewed to ensure appropriate break clause is triggered.

### **Key consultations**

With the current service provider Prospects.

### **Key risks and mitigations**

Risks that NEET levels begin to rise with more young people unable to obtain meaningful employment in adult life.

Mitigated by effective contract management and targeted approaches on those young people most at risk.

### **Equality impact screening**

Is there potential for the proposed saving to have a disproportionate adverse impact on any of the following groups? Please indicate Y/N below:	
Disabled people	N
Particular ethnic groups	N
Men or women	N
Particular sexual orientations	N
People who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone a process or part of a process of gender reassignment	N
Particular age groups	Y
Groups with particular faiths/beliefs	N
Pregnancy/maternity	N
Marriage/civil partnership	N

If the screening has identified a potentially disproportionate adverse impact, you will need to complete an Equality Impact Assessment. Template and guidance available from [staff intranet](#)

EIA required?	Yes
EIA to be completed by:	Zafer Yilkan
Deadline:	31 January 2023

Lead officer for this proposal:	Zafer Yilkan /Sharon Buckby
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### **Legal Services' Comments**

There is unlikely to be a legal challenge in respect of this proposal.

However, this proposal could potentially at a later date lead to other risks such as an increase in NEET (i.e. young people not in employment, education or training) and the outcomes of Ofsted inspections could decline as a result. However, proactive steps are being taken to mitigate this.

## Budget Options Information

Reference:	2023-25 CYP03
Service(s):	Localities (CYP) (1)
Lead Member(s):	Councillor Gwen Grahl

Savings Proposals:	Care package reductions for families receiving support from the 0-25 children and young people with disabilities teams
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### Financial and Staffing Information

2022/23	
Total budget for the service(s) £'000:	18,600
Total post numbers in the services(s) (FTE):	195

	2023/24	2024/25
	£000	£000
Proposed saving:	365	
	FTE	FTE
Proposed staffing reduction	0	

### Proposed savings

By implementing a Resource Allocation System (RAS) in CWD a saving of c10% on Direct Payment budgets (£185,000) and 10% on Care at Home packages (£180,000) could be achieved.

### How would this affect users of this service?

- The RAS should provide a fairer and more consistent allocation of care packages for families but some current high cost packages are likely to be reduced which will impact on the level of support being received by some families, both in terms of

direct payments and care at home support.

### **Key milestones**

- RAS: Letters to families would need to be sent out 6 months before the start date to confirm details of the scheme.
- The RAS would need to be fully operational prior to April 2023 in order to make the proposed savings.

### **Key consultations**

- RAS: Consultation with service users and the Parent Carer Forum on the specific details of the scheme will take place.

### **Key risks and mitigations**

- RAS: Some families may have a reduced care package but these will be implemented gradually over time and families will receive significant periods of notice prior to any proposed reductions.

### **Equality impact screening**

Is there potential for the proposed saving to have a disproportionate adverse impact on any of the following groups? Please indicate Y/N below:	
Disabled people	Y
Particular ethnic groups	N
Men or women	N
Particular sexual orientations	N
People who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone a process or part of a process of gender reassignment	N
Particular age groups	Y
Groups with particular faiths/beliefs	N
Pregnancy/maternity	N
Marriage/civil partnership	N

If the screening has identified a potentially disproportionate adverse impact, you will need to complete an Equality Impact Assessment. Template and guidance available from [staff intranet](#)

EIA required?	Yes
EIA to be completed by:	Zafer Yilkan
Deadline:	31 January 2023

Lead officer for this proposal:	Zafer Yilkan / Stephen Gordon
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### **Legal Services' Comments**

There is potential for legal challenge in respect of this proposal by way of Judicial review in individual cases should a support package be significantly reduced without robust assessment of the child and family's needs. There is a general duty on local authorities under s.17 of the Children Act 1989 to provide services for children in need and their families.

In addition, consideration should be made for the following legislation:

[The Special Educational Needs \(Personal Budgets\) Regulations 2014](#) provides the regulatory provisions about personal budgets and direct payments. The provision for reducing personal budgets is contained in section 12 as follows:

Reducing the amount of direct payments

**12.—**(1) Where a local authority decides to reduce the amount of direct payments it must provide reasonable notice to the recipient, and must set out in the notice the reasons for its decision.

(2) The local authority must reconsider its decision, where requested to do so by the recipient.

(3) When conducting its reconsideration, the local authority must consider the representations made by the recipient (and where the recipient is a nominee, any representations made by the child's parent or the young person) and must then provide written reasons to the recipient (and to the child's parent or young person, where the recipient is a nominee) of its decision following the reconsideration.

(4) A local authority may not be required to undertake more than one reconsideration of a decision made under paragraph (1).

(5) The local authority may reduce direct payments following reasonable notice despite the fact that a request for reconsideration has been made under paragraph (2).

[SEN Code of Practice 2014](#) has regard for what the LA must do support children and young people aged 0 to 25 with special educational needs and disabilities.

[Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014](#) provides the regulatory provisions for the Local Authority's responsibilities to children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities.

[The Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014](#) provides for the duties related to Education Health and Care (EHC) assessments and plans

[The Care Act 2014](#) explains what Local Authorities must do to support adults over the age of 18. It also explains who can get support, how assessments must be made and when we can charge for support.

[The Equality Act 2010](#) explains what schools, early years providers, post-16 institutions, local authorities, councils and other providers must do to support disabled children and young people.

The Annual Ofsted review published 7 December 2021 emphasised the decline that services during the pandemic had for SEND families; reducing the outcomes of Ofsted and CQC SEND inspections. Areas that have not addressed all significant weaknesses are determined by the Department for Education and NHS England, and may include the Secretary of State using his powers of intervention, such as the issuing of an improvement notice or statutory direction by the Department for Education.

### **Budget Options Information**

Reference:	2023-25 CYP05
Service(s):	Looked After Children and Permanency Service and Localities Service (CYP)
Lead Member(s):	Councillor Gwen Grahl

Savings Proposals:	Management of vacant posts within the Looked After Children and Permanency Service and Localities Service
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### **Financial and Staffing Information**

2022/23	
Total budget for the service(s) £'000:	25,174
Total post numbers in the services(s) (FTE):	284

	2023/24	2024/25
	£000	£000
Proposed saving:	£510.8	
	FTE	FTE
Proposed staffing reduction	8	0

### **Proposed savings**

Savings will be achieved through the management of vacant posts. This includes not recruiting to vacant posts in social work teams and realigning workload. This includes both case holding social work posts (PO2 posts at annual costs of £55,200 per post) and deputy team manager and social work practice consultant (SWPC) posts who do not hold cases, but contribute significantly to overall practice development across Children's Services (PO5 posts at £69,400 per post amount). Over a year it is anticipated that this will account to £510,800. The majority of the service budgets in both the Looked After Children and Permanency Service and the Localities Service is for staffing. An increase in vacant posts would require a redistribution of work to manage caseloads and redistribution of support for practice development.

### **How would this affect users of this service?**

Social Workers in the Localities Service and Looked After Children and Permanency services will see an increase in caseloads for remaining staff by an average of 1 case per social worker. This will impact on the quality and consistency of social work practice with children and families at a time of higher demand for services.

SWPCs and deputy team managers provide essential support to social work teams working with Looked After Children and other vulnerable children and their families. The role provides flexibility in supporting services in responding to the dynamic needs of children and young people in care and leaving care and in services for children in need and children on child protection plans. If vacant roles were not recruited to the quality and consistency of social work practice for children and families would be impacted as the remaining service and team managers would be expected to undertake a range of tasks in addition to their existing job requirements. This includes for example, being the single point of contact with Adopt London West in relation to Permanency Planning/Family Finding, responsible for permanency planning meetings (PPMs) for children; supporting personal advisors in relation to complex care leaver cases including issues of transitional safeguarding and responsibility for return home interviews and quality of practice around vulnerable adolescents who go missing and who are in care (this area was noted as an area requiring improvement in the 2018 Ofsted inspection).

Depending on the number of vacant posts, there could be a need to re-structure services.

### **Key milestones**

The distribution of vacant posts across grades and services would need to be monitored. Caseload analysis would need to be monitored on a monthly basis.

### **Key consultations**

If a restructure was required, there would be consultation with affected staff.

### **Key risks and mitigations**

- The quality of service across Children's Services will likely be impacted leading to increase in complaints, legal challenges and costs, reputational damage and a potentially negative Ofsted inspection outcome in 2023.

- To mitigate increasing caseloads in the Localities Service, it may be possible for some child in need level cases to be worked on with other services e.g. Early Help.
- A reduction in SWPC capacity could mean more pressure/stress on social workers that could result in higher rates of turnover when workforce pressures are already at a significant level.
- A reduction in social work, deputy team manager and SWPC capacity will impact on the capacity of managers to develop their team and staff as the case work pressures would be higher.
- The SWPCs provide range of support and bridge the practice/management gap and are able to co-work cases, providing experienced social work expertise alongside less experienced colleagues.
- With the creation of Adopt London West the LACP service no longer has a separate in-house Adoption/Post-Permanency team. Retaining a SWPC with expertise and knowledge in this area supports permanency planning for children and ensures timescales for children are met. There is a risk that good adoption performance will be negatively impacted without a dedicated post.

### **Equality impact screening**

Is there potential for the proposed saving to have a disproportionate adverse impact on any of the following groups? Please indicate Y/N below:	
Disabled people	N
Particular ethnic groups	N
Men or women	N
Particular sexual orientations	N
People who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone a process or part of a process of gender reassignment	N
Particular age groups	Y
Groups with particular faiths/beliefs	N
Pregnancy/maternity	N
Marriage/civil partnership	N

If the screening has identified a potentially disproportionate adverse impact, you will need to complete an Equality Impact Assessment. Template and guidance available from [staff intranet](#)

EIA required?	Yes
EIA to be completed by:	Zafer Yilkan
Deadline:	31 January 2023

Lead officer for this proposal:	Zafer Yilkan / Onder Beter
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### **Legal Services' Comments**

There is unlikely to be a legal challenge in respect of this proposal in the form of a judicial review claim. However as stated above, this proposal could potentially lead to other risks such as reduced preventative work and quality of service thereby resulting in further legal challenge in individual cases and cost implications and the outcomes of Ofsted inspections could decline as a result.

The impact of reducing social work capacity within the Localities and Looked After Children (LAC) services may have adverse effect on court proceedings, increased delays, reputational loss, wasted costs and challenge, with further pressures also increasing risk of data breaches, self-reporting to the Information Commissioner's Office under Part 3 of the Data Protection Act 2018 and enforcement.

## **Budget Options Information**

Reference:	2023-25 CYP06
Service(s):	Forward Planning, Performance and Partnerships (CYP)
Lead Member(s):	Councillor Gwen Grahl

Savings Proposals:	Savings will be made through the commissioning of placements for Looked After Children and Care Leavers
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### **Financial and Staffing Information**

2022/23	
Total budget for the service(s) £'000:	20,000
Total post numbers in the services(s) (FTE):	66

	2023/24	2024/25
	£'000	£'000
Proposed saving:	£860	
	FTE	FTE
Proposed staffing reduction	0.6	

### **Proposed savings**

The placements budgets are demand-led. The Children and Young People Department is currently experiencing an increase in demand for services, with the number of Looked After Children and Care Leavers increasing by more than 10% over the past year. That said, opportunities to make cost avoidance savings in the placements budget have been identified in the following areas:

- Savings on placement costs for semi-independent provision;
- Savings through a reduction in placements with Independent Fostering Agencies

- (IFAs) and an increase in placement with in-house foster carers and;
- PAN London commissioning opportunities.
  - The Council currently commissions circa 235 placements in semi-independent provision, 60% of which are placements for care leavers. Cost avoidance savings from semi-independent placements will be pursued through the following actions:
    - a) Reducing the length of time that care leavers are accommodated in semi-independent provision through an enhanced and focused life skills development programme to help young people successfully move into adulthood and independent living. Looked After Children will be introduced to this programme earlier from the age of 17. The approach will include as part of a new intensive life skills programme, including the use of the Gordon Brown Centre to undertake training weekends. If the average period of time that a care leaver is accommodated reduced by 6 months, the saving per placement would be approximately £18,000.
    - b) Working with the Housing Department to ensure that care leavers can access their own tenancy, reducing the time they are accommodated. If the average period of time that a care leaver is accommodated reduced by 6 months, the saving per placement would be approximately £18,000. As part of this work, consideration will be given to commissioning a targeted service that supports young people to move into their own tenancies before they turn 19, proactively managing the risk of tenancy breakdown.
    - c) Redesigning the Council's commissioning approach to semi-independent provision with Housing colleagues. Options include developing a supported housing scheme and block contracts that secure provision with a cost and volume discount, building on the current block contract model with CenterPoint. The savings generated would be subject to the market response.
  - Working with the Looked After Children and Permanency Service, cost avoidance will be achieved by increasing the number of placements with in-house foster carers at the expense of IFA foster placements. There is currently an average cost difference of £500 between an in-house and IFA placement, equating to £24,000 a year. The Children and Young People's department is also exploring a collaborative project with Ealing and Harrow (the West London Fostering Collaboration Project), which as an 'invest to save' project is aimed at significantly increasing the number of in-house carers through an in-house service that would effectively compete with the IFA market. This would see fostering fees increase and establishment of an enhanced support service for in-house foster carers. The new approach would also create opportunities to recruit specialist foster carers for complex adolescents with the potential to avoid residential placements. Each residential placement avoided would generate a saving of approximately £192,000.
  - Schemes to achieve cost avoidance through joint commissioning approaches PAN London and/or with other West London authorities in relation to residential placements are currently being developed. These include the potential to block contract local residential placements at cost and volume discounts. There is no guarantee, however, that this will produce significant savings due to issues around matching a young person with others in a placement and placement location.

- A temporary business support officer post in the commissioning team that is supporting a review of SGO carer payments will not be retained from 2023/24 onwards. This will generate a saving of circa £20k.

**How would this affect users of this service?**

No practice changes could be implemented that were not in line with the local authority’s statutory duty. This includes the provision of accommodation as deemed necessary for vulnerable care leavers.

**Key milestones**

- Redesign of life skills programme – April 2022
- Agreement with Housing on a refreshed tenancy pathway for care leavers – September 2022
- New commissioning approach on semi-independent provision – September 2022
- Redesign of Brent in-house fostering service – January 2023
- West London and PAN London Joint Commissioning approaches – pilots through 2022/23.

**Key consultations**

- Consultation on the Life Skills pathway is being undertaken with young people in spring 2022.
- Initial consultation with Housing colleagues is due to take place in early February.
- Consultation with foster carers on future service design has already been undertaken as part of the West London Collaborative Fostering Project.

**Key risks and mitigations**

- That demand continues to increase and savings initiatives cannot keep pace with this. The ‘invest to save’ fostering project may mitigate this but savings may not be achieved by 2024/25.
- That market costs continue to increase due to inflation and cost of living increases, meaning savings cannot be realised via block contracts.
- That Brent Housing department does not have sufficient suitable properties for care leavers to take up their own tenancy, meaning they continue to be accommodated while waiting. Alternative housing options that would meet the Care Leaver offer to be considered by the Council.

**Equality impact screening**

Is there potential for the proposed saving to have a disproportionate adverse impact on any of the following groups? Please indicate Y/N below:	
Disabled people	N
Particular ethnic groups	N

Men or women	N
Particular sexual orientations	N
People who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone a process or part of a process of gender reassignment	N
Particular age groups	N
Groups with particular faiths/beliefs	N
Pregnancy/maternity	N
Marriage/civil partnership	N

If the screening has identified a potentially disproportionate adverse impact, you will need to complete an Equality Impact Assessment. Template and guidance available from [staff intranet](#)

EIA required?	No
EIA to be completed by:	N/A
Deadline:	N/A

Lead officer for this proposal:	Shirley Parks/Michelle Gwyther
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**Legal Services' Comments**

There is unlikely to be a legal challenge in respect of this proposal.

## **Budget Options Information**

Reference:	2023-25 CYP07
Service(s):	Safeguarding and Quality Assurance (CYP)
Lead Member(s):	Councillor Gwen Grahl

Savings Proposals:	Savings will be made through the management of vacant posts and a reduction of the CYP training budget.
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### **Financial and Staffing Information**

2022/23	
Total budget for the service(s) £'000:	1,891
Total post numbers in the services(s) (FTE):	21

	2023/24	2024/25
	£'000	£'000
Proposed saving:	£121	
	FTE	FTE
Proposed staffing reduction:	1.5	

### **Proposed savings**

Holding vacant posts	1.5 FTE - £83,000	
Reduction of training budget		£38,000

The service will hold posts vacant as they become available to achieve the savings target – this is estimated as the equivalent of 1.5 FTE. The type of work that may be affected is advice and support for parents of children with SEND, child protection case professional advice, participation support for looked after children and care leavers as well as support for student social workers, newly qualified social workers and

supporting social workers to progress their careers through social work progression panel. Other areas in this service that could be affected include those that develop training and workshops across CYP based on improvement areas identified in reviews of serious cases and learning from audit activity. The net CYP training budget is a total of £158k and £38k will be taken from this to make these savings.

### **How would this affect users of this service?**

Overall there will be less support and training available for learning and development – this will impact upon social workers and managers who value this support. A reduction of support and training opportunities could impact on recruitment and retention of social workers who could find a better offer in other LAs, the overall quality of services that families receive and resultant LA inspection outcomes.

### **Key milestones**

- Throughout 2022/23, review best value for money from the CYP training budget. Training programme from 2023/24 will be developed to include £38k savings.

### **Key consultations**

- SQA service
- CYP Heads of Service
- SENDIAS Steering Group

### **Key risks and mitigations**

Risk – reduced support offer to hard to recruit posts such as social workers and social work team managers. Mitigation – best use of resources for remaining posts and Learning and Development budget available.

The CYP training budget is vulnerable as of the remaining £158k, £53k is DSG funded which could be impacted by the introduction of the Dedicated Schools Grant National Funding Formula

Risk – reduced participation for children with SEND. Mitigation – build this support offer into a Participation Team Restructure being put in place in 2022/2023.

### **Equality impact screening**

Is there potential for the proposed saving to have a disproportionate adverse impact on any of the following groups? Please indicate Y/N below:	
Disabled people	N
Particular ethnic groups	N
Men or women	N
Particular sexual orientations	N
People who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone a process or part of a process of gender reassignment	N
Particular age groups	Y
Groups with particular faiths/beliefs	N
Pregnancy/maternity	N
Marriage/civil partnership	N

If the screening has identified a potentially disproportionate adverse impact, you will need to complete an Equality Impact Assessment. Template and guidance available from [staff intranet](#)

EIA required?	Yes
EIA to be completed by:	Nicole Levy
Deadline:	31 January 2023

Lead officer for this proposal:	Shirley Parks / Sonya Kalyniak
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### **Legal Services' Comments**

No comment / There is unlikely to be a legal challenge in respect of this proposal.

## **Budget Options Information**

Reference:	2023-25 CYP08
Service(s):	Setting and School Effectiveness (CYP)
Lead Member(s):	Councillor Gwen Grahl

Savings Proposals:	Savings will be made by a reduction in staffing costs within the core school effectiveness team.
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### **Financial and Staffing Information**

2022/23	
Total budget for the service(s) £'000:	200
Total post numbers in the services(s) (FTE):	4

	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000
Proposed saving:	£34	
	FTE	FTE
Proposed staffing reduction:	0.4	

### **Proposed savings**

Reduction in staffing resource by two days per week.

### **How would this affect users of this service?**

There would be less capacity to fulfil core school improvement work.

### **Key milestones**

This will be in place by 1 April 2023

### **Key consultations**

N/A

### **Key risks and mitigations**

- There is a risk that pupil outcomes and school Ofsted inspection judgements could decline.
- This risk would be mitigated by best use of remaining resources.

### **Equality impact screening**

Is there potential for the proposed saving to have a disproportionate adverse impact on any of the following groups? Please indicate Y/N below:	
Disabled people	N
Particular ethnic groups	N
Men or women	N
Particular sexual orientations	N
People who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone a process or part of a process of gender reassignment	N
Particular age groups	Y
Groups with particular faiths/beliefs	N
Pregnancy/maternity	N
Marriage/civil partnership	N

If the screening has identified a potentially disproportionate adverse impact, you will need to complete an Equality Impact Assessment. Template and guidance available from [staff intranet](#)

EIA required?	Yes
EIA to be completed by:	Shirley Parks
Deadline:	31 January 2023

Lead officer for this proposal:	Shirley Parks / Jen Haskew
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### **Legal Services' Comments**

There is unlikely to be a legal challenge in respect of this proposal. As stated above, this could potentially at a later date lead to other risks such as poorer pupil outcomes and the outcomes of Ofsted inspections could decline as a result.

## **Budget Options Information**

Reference:	2023-24 CYP09
Service(s):	CYP
Lead Member(s):	Councillor Gwen Grahl, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People & Schools

Savings Proposals:	Additional digital savings to be delivered through the Digital Transformation Programme. Detailed proposals currently being scoped but likely to be achieved through projects including implementation of digital administration and case management systems, RPA, Mosaic enhancements (alerts), electronic document management, direct payments automation and reduction in overpayments.
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### **Financial and Staffing Information**

2022/23	
Total budget for the service(s) £'000:	62,148
Total post numbers in the services(s) (FTE):	607

	2023/24	2024/25
	£'000	£'000
Proposed saving:	200	N/A
	FTE	FTE
Proposed staffing reduction	TBC	N/A

### **Proposed savings**

Reductions in headcount through efficiencies delivered through digital solutions.  
Reduction in direct payment spend.

**How would this affect users of this service?**

To be confirmed but likely primarily affect back office systems and processes. May also involve further channel shift to more accessible and effective online systems (while maintaining telephone and face to face channels for those who need additional support).

**Key milestones**

TBC

**Key consultations**

TBC

**Key risks and mitigations**

There is a risk that work to scope, develop and implement new systems cannot be made in time to enable savings to be delivered by the start of 2023/24. This will be mitigated by bringing in additional business analysis support and capacity to backfill posts in the service area to allow them to act as SMEs.

**Equality impact screening**

This section will be completed when detailed more proposals have been developed.

Is there potential for the proposed saving to have a disproportionate adverse impact on any of the following groups? Please indicate Y/N below:	
Disabled people	N
Particular ethnic groups	N
Men or women	N
Particular sexual orientations	N
People who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone a process or part of a process of gender reassignment	N
Particular age groups	N
Groups with particular faiths/beliefs	N
Pregnancy/maternity	N
Marriage/civil partnership	N

If the screening has identified a potentially disproportionate adverse impact, you will need to complete an Equality Impact Assessment. Template and guidance available from [staff intranet](#)

EIA required?	No
EIA to be completed by:	N/A
Deadline:	N/A

Lead officer for this proposal:	Nigel Chapman, Corporate Director, Children and Young People
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### **Budget Options Information**

Reference:	2023-24 CR01
Service(s):	Regeneration Growth and Employment (Planning and Development Services)
Lead Member(s):	Cllr Tatler, Cabinet Member for Regeneration & Planning

Savings Proposals:	Vacancy Management - Staffing reduction across planning service
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### **Financial and Staffing Information**

2022/23	
Total budget for the service(s) £'000:	427
Total post numbers in the services(s) (FTE):	56

	2023/24
	£'000
Proposed saving:	205
	FTE
Proposed staffing reduction	5% or 3

### **Proposed savings**

The proposal involves the reduction of staff across the planning function by 5% (3 staff) – based on December 2021 establishment). This can be delivered via vacancy management while ensuring that the impact of loss of numbers is mitigated in areas where capacity is required in order to effectively deliver services.

### **How would this affect users of this service?**

Poorer service, longer response times, increased pressure on remaining staff. Lack of policy guidance to help schemes be policy compliant and for masterplan development.

### **Key milestones**

Vacancy management – posts held vacant to March 2023.

Government consultation on increasing planning fees (autumn 2022) for implementation April 2023.

March 2023, based on increased forecast income if planning fees increase, review situation.

### **Key consultations**

Head of Planning and Development Services and staff in planning.

### **Key risks and mitigations**

Risks relate to decline in service provision and consequent reputational impact with longer term possibility that developers feel Brent isn't a good Borough to do business with. Reduced number of enforcement investigations. Slower rate of production of SPDs to support new Local Plan, making applications.

Increased pressure on remaining staff – morale and mental wellbeing and consequent pressures on recruitment and retention.

### **Equality impact screening**

Is there potential for the proposed saving to have a disproportionate adverse impact on any of the following groups? Please indicate Y/N below:	
Disabled people	N
Particular ethnic groups	N
Men or women	N
Particular sexual orientations	N
People who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone a process or part of a process of gender reassignment	N
Particular age groups	N
Groups with particular faiths/beliefs	N
Pregnancy/maternity	N
Marriage/civil partnership	N

If the screening has identified a potentially disproportionate adverse impact, you will need to complete an Equality Impact Assessment. Template and guidance available from [staff intranet](#)

EIA required?	No
EIA to be completed by:	N/A
Deadline:	N/A

Lead officer for this proposal:	Alice Lester, Director Regeneration, Growth and Employment
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### **Budget Options Information**

Reference:	2023-24 CR02
Service(s):	Regeneration Growth and Employment
Lead Member(s):	Cllr Southwood, Cabinet Member for Jobs, Economy & Citizen Experience

Savings Proposals:	Re-structure - Vacancy Management - Brent Works / Brent Start - Combine advisors and reduce team by 1 FTE
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### **Financial and Staffing Information**

2022/23	
Total budget for the service(s) £'000:	-794 (Brent works 8, Brent Start - 802)
Total post numbers in the services(s) (FTE):	26

	2023/24
	£'000
Proposed saving:	35
	FTE
Proposed staffing reduction	1

### **Proposed savings**

The proposal involves the combining of advisors across both Brent Start and Brent Works via turnover / vacancy management.

### **How would this affect users of this service?**

Feasible to do so without any major noticeable impact on service delivery

### **Key milestones**

January 2023 – commence compulsory redundancy process if not achieved through a natural vacancy.

### **Key consultations**

Head of Employment Skills and Enterprise, Brent Start and Brent Works leads. Staff. Unions.

### **Key risks and mitigations**

None

### **Equality impact screening**

Is there potential for the proposed saving to have a disproportionate adverse impact on any of the following groups? Please indicate Y/N below:	
	N
Disabled people	N
Particular ethnic groups	N
Men or women	N
Particular sexual orientations	N
People who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone a process or part of a process of gender reassignment	N
Particular age groups	N
Groups with particular faiths/beliefs	N
Pregnancy/maternity	N
Marriage/civil partnership	N

If the screening has identified a potentially disproportionate adverse impact, you will need to complete an Equality Impact Assessment. Template and guidance available from [staff intranet](#)

EIA required?	No
EIA to be completed by:	N/A
Deadline:	N/A

Lead officer for this proposal:	Alice Lester, Director Regeneration, Growth and Employment
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### **Budget Options Information**

Reference:	2023-24 CR03
Service(s):	Regeneration Growth and Employment
Lead Member(s):	Cllr Southwood, Cabinet Member for Jobs, Economy & Citizen Experience

Savings Proposals:	Re-structure - Vacancy Management - Brent Start – efficiency improvement – delete 0.5 programme leader
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### **Financial and Staffing Information**

2022/23	
Total budget for the service(s) £'000:	-802
Total post numbers in the services(s) (FTE):	18 (excluding teachers)

	2023/24
	£'000
Proposed saving:	24
	FTE
Proposed staffing reduction	0.5

### **Proposed savings**

It is intended to merge this position with another programme to delete this provision. This can be achieved without negative impacts upon the service. This is very likely to be achieved via Vacancy Management.

**How would this affect users of this service?**

Feasible to do so without any major noticeable impact on service delivery

**Key milestones**

January 2023 – commence compulsory redundancy process if not achieved through a natural vacancy.

**Key consultations**

Head of Employment Skills and Enterprise, Brent Start and Brent Works leads. Staff Unions.

**Key risks and mitigations**

None

**Equality impact screening**

Is there potential for the proposed saving to have a disproportionate adverse impact on any of the following groups? Please indicate Y/N below:	
Disabled people	N
Particular ethnic groups	N
Men or women	N
Particular sexual orientations	N
People who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone a process or part of a process of gender reassignment	N
Particular age groups	N
Groups with particular faiths/beliefs	N
Pregnancy/maternity	N
Marriage/civil partnership	N

If the screening has identified a potentially disproportionate adverse impact, you will need to complete an Equality Impact Assessment. Template and guidance available from [staff intranet](#)

EIA required?	No
EIA to be completed by:	N/A
Deadline:	N/A

Lead officer for this proposal:	Alice Lester, Director Regeneration, Growth and Employment
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## **Budget Options Information**

Reference:	2023-24 CR04
Service(s):	Regeneration Growth and Employment
Lead Member(s):	Cllr Tatler, Cabinet Member for Regeneration & Planning

Savings Proposals:	Re-structure - Capitalisation of part of Regeneration team whilst working on housing zone capital projects
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### **Financial and Staffing Information**

2022/23	
Total budget for the service(s) £'000:	4,455
Total post numbers in the services(s) (FTE):	n/a

	2023/24
	£'000
Proposed saving:	75
	FTE
Proposed staffing reduction	0

### **Proposed savings**

Part capitalisation of staff within the Regeneration team whilst working on the housing zone capital projects. It is projected that there will be sufficient capital project activity for 4 years (until 27-28) to capitalise £75k of staffing costs. The potential exists for further capital projects to take place within and beyond this period, enabling the Council to continue to capitalise staffing costs. However, if this is not the case it provides the time to identify alternative revenue savings proposals. This proposal is subject to review by Finance colleagues prior to confirmation.

### **How would this affect users of this service?**

No impact

### **Key milestones**

Implement April 2023

Review after 3 years

### **Key consultations**

Finance

### **Key risks and mitigations**

Short term – if decisions are made not to continue with the capital projects, capitalisation would not be appropriate.

When capital projects finish staff will need to revert to being paid from revenue.

### **Equality impact screening**

Is there potential for the proposed saving to have a disproportionate adverse impact on any of the following groups? Please indicate Y/N below:	
	N
Disabled people	N
Particular ethnic groups	N
Men or women	N
Particular sexual orientations	N
People who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone a process or part of a process of gender reassignment	N
Particular age groups	N
Groups with particular faiths/beliefs	N
Pregnancy/maternity	N
Marriage/civil partnership	N

If the screening has identified a potentially disproportionate adverse impact, you will need to complete an Equality Impact Assessment. Template and guidance available from [staff intranet](#)

EIA required?	No
EIA to be completed by:	N/A
Deadline:	N/A

Lead officer for this proposal:	Alice Lester, Director Regeneration, Growth and Employment
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## **Budget Options Information**

Reference:	2023-24 CR05
Service(s):	Regeneration, Growth and Employment Employment Skills & Enterprise (Economic Development)
Lead Member(s):	Cllr Southwood, Cabinet Member for Jobs, Economy & Citizen Experience

Savings Proposals:	Restructure - reduce the town centre manager team (from 4 to 3)
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### **Financial and Staffing Information**

2022/23	
Total budget for the service(s) £'000:	795
Total post numbers in the services(s) (FTE): Economic Development team	9

	2023/24
	£'000
Proposed saving:	66
Proposed staffing reduction	1

### **Proposed savings**

Deletion of 1 of the 4 town centre manager posts

### **How would this affect users of this service?**

The service offer of support to the priority town centres would be reduced by 25%. The remaining three managers would not be able to service the 9 priority town centres to the same degree. It is likely that the number of priority town centres would be reduced so those areas would not receive any focussed business support, and officers would be spread more thinly diluting the support offer. Alternatively the 3 remaining managers would work across all of the centres on a thematic basis, which would

diminish the in depth understanding of a place and remove the personal relationship between the TCM and the businesses. Activities such as 'Small Business Saturday' might not be able to be resourced.

The reduction would impact on the health and vitality of our town centres, risking the ongoing recovery and improvement and contribution to the economy.

Businesses could lose faith in the Council's commitment to be business friendly and supporting the local economy.

### **Key milestones**

July 2022 – keep a vacant post vacant

### **Key consultations**

Lead Member for Jobs, Economy & Citizen Experience

Head of Employment Skills and Enterprise, Economic Development manager, town centre managers.

### **Key risks and mitigations**

Risks relate to decline in service provision and consequent reputational impact. Less support for town centre businesses and initiatives, impacting on the town centre environment and economy.

Increased pressure on remaining staff – morale and mental wellbeing.

Brent not being seen as 'open for business' and supporting inward investment. Impact on local economy and local businesses.

### **Equality impact screening**

Is there potential for the proposed saving to have a disproportionate adverse impact on any of the following groups? Please indicate Y/N below:	
	N
Disabled people	N
Particular ethnic groups	N
Men or women	N
Particular sexual orientations	N
People who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone a process or part of a process of gender reassignment	N
Particular age groups	N
Groups with particular faiths/beliefs	N
Pregnancy/maternity	N
Marriage/civil partnership	N

If the screening has identified a potentially disproportionate adverse impact, you will need to complete an Equality Impact Assessment. Template and guidance available from [staff intranet](#)

EIA required?	No
EIA to be completed by:	N/A
Deadline:	N/A

Lead officer for this proposal:	Alice Lester, Director Regeneration, Growth and Employment
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### **Budget Options Information**

Reference:	2023–24 CR06
Service(s):	Strategy and Partnerships
Lead Member(s):	Cllr Donnelly-Jackson, Cabinet Member for Community Engagement, Equalities & Culture

Savings Proposals:	Non appointment of new posts identified in new S & P Restructure
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### **Financial and Staffing Information**

2022/23	
Total budget for the service(s) £'000:	3,143
Total post numbers in the services(s) (FTE):	30.3

	2023/24
	£'000
Proposed saving:	55
	FTE
Proposed staffing reduction	1

### **Proposed savings**

In 23/24 savings will be achieved by:

1. Not appointing to 1 new posts identified in the forthcoming S & P restructure - £55,000 savings.

### **How would this affect users of this service?**

The forthcoming S & P restructure identifies 6.6 new FTE posts in the VCS and Community Engagement Team. This is significant growth in headcount to deliver community engagement.

The current service operates with 2 FTE officers graded at PO3. The saving proposed will remove 1 FTE.

Reducing the appointments to 5.6 FTE will not have an impact on service users and the restructure proposal on the whole increases the number of officers available to support resident engagement.

As these posts are newly created there will be no impact as posts are not filled.

### **Key milestones**

- Proposed restructure was launched in early February 2022
- Implemented restructure in May 2022

### **Key consultations**

- Staff consultation on restructure has been completed

### **Key risks and mitigations**

- There are no risks.

### **Equality impact screening**

Is there potential for the proposed saving to have a disproportionate adverse impact on any of the following groups? Please indicate Y/N below:	
Disabled people	N
Particular ethnic groups	N
Men or women	N
Particular sexual orientations	
People who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone a process or part of a process of gender reassignment	N
Particular age groups	N
Groups with particular faiths/beliefs	N
Pregnancy/maternity	N
Marriage/civil partnership	N

If the screening has identified a potentially disproportionate adverse impact, you will need to complete an Equality Impact Assessment. Template and guidance available from [staff intranet](#)

EIA required?	No
EIA to be completed by:	N/A
Deadline:	N/A

Lead officer for this proposal:	Lorna Hughes, Director of Communities
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### **Budget Options Information**

Reference:	2023–24 CR07
Service(s):	Communications, Conference & Events
Lead Member(s):	Cllr Butt

Savings Proposals:	Saving will be delivered by moving Communications to a business partnering model
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### **Financial and Staffing Information**

2022/23	
Total budget for the service(s) £'000:	652
Total post numbers in the services(s) (FTE):	17

	2023/24 £000
Proposed saving:	100
	FTE
Proposed staffing reduction	2

### **Proposed savings**

It is proposed to further reduce the number of Communications Account Managers in the corporate communications team from five to three.

The corporate communications team has proven its worth in building the council's reputation, managing demand and encouraging positive behaviour change during a period when many residents and businesses in Brent have been hit hard by the devastating effects of COVID-19. However, one of the lessons from the communications response during the pandemic was to prove that a streamlined way of working is possible as lower level communications that deliver less value to the council's corporate priorities can be deprioritised by corporate communications if required.

Given the need for savings across the council, it is now proposed to exclusively focus the corporate communications team on a small number of core campaigns that will be agreed corporately as part of the annual Communications Strategy discussions and solely focus the team on a specific and agreed number of core strategic aims.

### **How would this affect users of this service?**

As the core delivery capacity of the corporate communications unit is cut by 40%, Lead Members and service directorates would need to accept significantly less support on communications that are not agreed as core campaign priorities.

Officers in service departments will need to self-serve on lower level 'business as usual' communications work so that the remaining corporate communications time can be spent on the limited number of proactive campaign priorities. Alongside the reduction in staff, there would need to be a review of the frequency and volume of communications output (e.g. e-newsletters, social media and digital content and the number of pages in the YourBrent Magazine) that will need to change as staff capacity is significantly reduced.

A review of ways of working will also take place with the work of the corporate communications team increasingly focused on quality, not quantity, and less time spent on preparing for reactive issues, including media enquiries.

Additional temporary communications capacity for any ad hoc or newly emerging strategic communications priorities that surface in year will need to be funded from the relevant service directorate's budget.

### **Key milestones**

Development of the Borough Plan – summer 2022.

Alongside the development of the Borough Plan, the corporate communications team will engage with key stakeholders to discuss and agree where corporate communications can add value and assist with the delivery of core council aims and objectives within the limited capacity available

Service directorates and Lead Members will need to pick and choose where corporate communications effort adds the most value and where it can safely be foregone

### **Key consultations**

Staff consultation on the proposals – spring 2022.

### **Key risks and mitigations**

By reducing the number of Communications Account Managers from five to three we will inevitably reduce the capacity available for major campaigns. However, by

spending less time preparing for reactive issues and events, that sometimes do not materialise, and reducing the amount of time the corporate communications team spends on business as usual communications the impact can be limited.

**Equality impact screening**

Is there potential for the proposed saving to have a disproportionate adverse impact on any of the following groups? Please indicate Y/N below:	
Disabled people	N
Particular ethnic groups	N
Men or women	N
Particular sexual orientations	N
People who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone a process or part of a process of gender reassignment	N
Particular age groups	N
Groups with particular faiths/beliefs	N
Pregnancy/maternity	N
Marriage/civil partnership	N

If the screening has identified a potentially disproportionate adverse impact, you will need to complete an Equality Impact Assessment. Template and guidance available from [staff intranet](#)

EIA required?	No
EIA to be completed by:	N/A
Deadline:	N/A

Lead officer for this proposal:	Rob Mansfield, Head of Communications, Conference and Events
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### **Budget Options Information**

Reference:	2023-24 CR08
Service(s):	Communities and Regeneration
Lead Member(s):	Cabinet Member for Community Engagement, Equalities & Culture Cabinet Member for Regeneration & Planning

Savings Proposals:	Additional digital savings to be delivered through the Digital Transformation Programme. Detailed proposals currently being scoped but likely to be achieved through projects including automation and the implementation of the new IDOX Cloud solution.
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### **Financial and Staffing Information**

2022/23	
Total budget for the service(s) £'000:	8,995
Total post numbers in the services(s) (FTE):	255.8

	2023/24	2024/25
	£'000	
Proposed saving:	50	N/A
	FTE	FTE
Proposed staffing reduction	Approx. 0.7	N/A

### **Proposed savings**

Reductions in headcount through efficiencies delivered through digital solutions.

### **How would this affect users of this service?**

To be confirmed but likely to primarily affect back office systems and processes. May also involve further channel shift to more accessible and effective online systems (while maintaining telephone and face to face channels for those who need additional support).

### **Key milestones**

TBC

### **Key consultations**

TBC

### **Key risks and mitigations**

There is a risk that work to scope, develop and implement new systems cannot be made in time to enable savings to be delivered by the start of 2023/24. This will be mitigated by bringing in additional business analysis support and capacity to backfill posts in the service area to allow them to act as SMEs.

### **Equality impact screening**

This section will be completed when detailed more proposals have been developed.

Is there potential for the proposed saving to have a disproportionate adverse impact on any of the following groups? Please indicate Y/N below:	
Disabled people	N
Particular ethnic groups	N
Men or women	N
Particular sexual orientations	N
People who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone a process or part of a process of gender reassignment	N
Particular age groups	N
Groups with particular faiths/beliefs	N
Pregnancy/maternity	N
Marriage/civil partnership	N

If the screening has identified a potentially disproportionate adverse impact, you will need to complete an Equality Impact Assessment. Template and guidance available from [staff intranet](#)

EIA required?	No
EIA to be completed by:	N/A
Deadline:	N/A

Lead officer for this proposal:	Alice Lester, Director Regeneration, Growth and Employment Lorna Hughes, Head of Strategy & Partnerships
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### **Budget Options Information**

Reference:	2023–24 RS01
Service(s):	Customer Access, Improvement and Performance Team
Lead Member(s):	Cllr Eleanor Southwood, Cabinet Member for Jobs, Economy & Citizen Experience

Savings Proposals:	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.
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### **Financial and Staffing Information**

2022/23	
Total budget for the service(s) £'000:	327
Total post numbers in the services(s) (FTE):	5.83 in the DPR

	2023/24
	£'000
Proposed saving:	64.4
	FTE
Proposed staffing reduction	0

### **Proposed savings**

Removal of first class postage from floors in the Civic Centre will result in a saving.

**How would this affect users of this service?**

No impact to service users, first class post will still be available for those that actually need it.

**Key milestones**

In place, saving carried over for 1/4/2023.

**Key consultations**

Already completed.

**Key risks and mitigations**

None

**Equality impact screening**

Is there potential for the proposed saving to have a disproportionate adverse impact on any of the following groups? Please indicate Y/N below:	
Disabled people	N
Particular ethnic groups	N
Men or women	N
Particular sexual orientations	N
People who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone a process or part of a process of gender reassignment	N
Particular age groups	N
Groups with particular faiths/beliefs	N
Pregnancy/maternity	N
Marriage/civil partnership	N

If the screening has identified a potentially disproportionate adverse impact, you will need to complete an Equality Impact Assessment. Template and guidance available from [staff intranet](#)

EIA required?	No
EIA to be completed by:	N/A
Deadline:	N/A

Lead officer for this proposal:	Regina McDonald, Improvement & Performance Manager
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### **Budget Options Information**

Reference:	2023-24 RS02
Service(s):	Customer Access, Improvement and Performance Team
Lead Member(s):	Cllr Eleanor Southwood, Cabinet Member for Jobs, Economy & Citizen Experience

Savings Proposals:	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.
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### **Financial and Staffing Information**

2022/23	
Total budget for the service(s) £'000:	552
Total post numbers in the services(s) (FTE):	14.83

	2023/24
	£'000
Proposed saving:	86
	FTE
Proposed staffing reduction	2

### **Proposed savings**

2 x FTE posts to be deleted across Improvement & Performance Team and the Digital Post Room.

### **How would this affect users of this service?**

No impact to service users.

### **Key milestones**

Changes to staffing within the Improvement & Performance team to be implemented in 2023/24 and changes to staffing within the Digital Post Room to be implemented in 2023/24.

### **Key consultations**

In line with the Council's managing change policy, all affected staff would be consulted.

### **Key risks and mitigations**

None

### **Equality impact screening**

Is there potential for the proposed saving to have a disproportionate adverse impact on any of the following groups? Please indicate Y/N below:	
Disabled people	N
Particular ethnic groups	N
Men or women	N
Particular sexual orientations	N
People who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone a process or part of a process of gender reassignment	N
Particular age groups	N
Groups with particular faiths/beliefs	N
Pregnancy/maternity	N
Marriage/civil partnership	N

If the screening has identified a potentially disproportionate adverse impact, you will need to complete an Equality Impact Assessment. Template and guidance available from [staff intranet](#)

EIA required?	No
EIA to be completed by:	N/A
Deadline:	N/A

Lead officer for this proposal:	Regina McDonald, Improvement & Performance Manager
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### **Budget Options Information**

Reference:	2023-24 RS03
Service(s):	Customer Access, Customer Services and Assessments
Lead Member(s):	Cllr Eleanor Southwood, Cabinet Member for Jobs, Economy & Citizen Experience

Savings Proposals:	Reduction in the usage of the Resilience contract and creation of in house applications to replace IEG
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### **Financial and Staffing Information**

2022/23	
Total budget for the service(s) £'000:	8,716
Total post numbers in the services(s) (FTE):	152

	2023/24 £000
	262
Proposed saving:	IEG and Resilience Contract / Staffing
	FTE
Proposed staffing reduction	4

### **Proposed savings**

2023/24 - A further reduction in the usage of the Resilience contract and creation of in house applications to replace IEG.

2023/24 - This is based on staffing reductions across all Customer Services and Assessments due to systems automation and reduction in benefits caseload

### **How would this affect users of this service?**

Residents will receive a better customer experience and will not impact them negatively.

### **Key milestones**

January 2023-IEG

September 2023 - Staff consultation

### **Key consultations**

In line with the Council's managing Change Policy and Procedure, all affected staff will be consulted.

### **Key risks and mitigations**

New Government legislation and increase in workload

Staff retention, resilience and cross training to help us cover unexpected pressures

### **Equality impact screening**

Is there potential for the proposed saving to have a disproportionate adverse impact on any of the following groups? Please indicate Y/N below:	
Disabled people	N
Particular ethnic groups	N
Men or women	N
Particular sexual orientations	N
People who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone a process or part of a process of gender reassignment	N
Particular age groups	N
Groups with particular faiths/beliefs	N
Pregnancy/maternity	N
Marriage/civil partnership	N

If the screening has identified a potentially disproportionate adverse impact, you will need to complete an Equality Impact Assessment. Template and guidance available from [staff intranet](#)

EIA required?	No
EIA to be completed by:	N/A
Deadline:	N/A
Lead officer for this proposal:	Thomas Cattermole, Director of Customer Access / Asha Vyas, Head of Customer Services & Assessments

### **Budget Options Information**

Reference:	2023-24 RS04
Service(s):	Customer Access, Registration and Nationality
Lead Member(s):	Cllr Eleanor Southwood, Cabinet Member for Jobs, Economy & Citizen Experience

Savings Proposals:	<p>Online diary and reporting system equivalent to current product bought in house use of corporate</p> <p>Online booking Citizenship ceremonies incorporating facility for payment for private ceremonies</p>
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### **Financial and Staffing Information**

2022/23	
Total budget for the service(s) £'000:	0 This service is self-financing
Total post numbers in the services(s) (FTE):	0

	2023/24
	£'000
Proposed saving:	10.5
	FTE
Proposed staffing reduction	0

### **Proposed savings**

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

### **How would this affect users of this service?**

Users of the service will have an improved online service whilst retaining a face-to-face service for those customers that are digitally challenged.

### **Key milestones**

N/A

### **Key consultations**

None

### **Key risks and mitigations**

None

### **Equality impact screening**

Is there potential for the proposed saving to have a disproportionate adverse impact on any of the following groups? Please indicate Y/N below:	
Disabled people	N
Particular ethnic groups	N
Men or women	N
Particular sexual orientations	N
People who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone a process or part of a process of gender reassignment	N
Particular age groups	N
Groups with particular faiths/beliefs	N
Pregnancy/maternity	N
Marriage/civil partnership	N

If the screening has identified a potentially disproportionate adverse impact, you will need to complete an Equality Impact Assessment. Template and guidance available from [staff intranet](#)

EIA required?	No
EIA to be completed by:	N/A
Deadline:	N/A

Lead officer for this proposal:	Mandy Brammer, Head of Registration and Nationality
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### **Budget Options Information**

Reference:	2023-24 RS05
Service(s):	Customer Access, Revenue and Debt
Lead Member(s):	Cllr Eleanor Southwood, Cabinet Member for Jobs, Economy & Citizen Experience

Savings Proposals:	Staff reorganisation
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### **Financial and Staffing Information**

2022/23	
Total budget for the service(s) £'000:	4,600
Total post numbers in the services(s) (FTE):	75

	2023/24
	£'000
Proposed saving:	210
	FTE
Proposed staffing reduction	5

### **Proposed savings**

Staff reorganisation to provide savings of £210,000.

### **How would this affect users of this service?**

Improved use of technology, increased volumes of self-service with reduced inbound calls will mean an improved service to customers with lower failure demand.

### **Key milestones**

To go through the required process regarding consultation.

### **Key consultations**

Staff side representatives, managers, members.

### **Key risks and mitigations**

That staff feel uncertain and anxious

Ensure effective communications are in place.

### **Equality impact screening**

Is there potential for the proposed saving to have a disproportionate adverse impact on any of the following groups? Please indicate Y/N below:	
Disabled people	N
Particular ethnic groups	N
Men or women	N
Particular sexual orientations	N
People who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone a process or part of a process of gender reassignment	N
Particular age groups	N
Groups with particular faiths/beliefs	N
Pregnancy/maternity	N
Marriage/civil partnership	N

If the screening has identified a potentially disproportionate adverse impact, you will need to complete an Equality Impact Assessment. Template and guidance available from [staff intranet](#)

EIA required?	No
EIA to be completed by:	N/A
Deadline:	N/A

Lead officer for this proposal:	Peter Cosgrove, Head of Revenue and Debt
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### **Budget Options Information**

Reference:	2023-24 RS06
Service(s):	Transformation
Lead Member(s):	Cllr Mili Patel, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources and Reform

Savings Proposals:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduction in licensing spend through applications rationalisation</li> <li>• Reduction in corporate printing spend through continued move to digital options</li> <li>• Reduction in ICT and Transformation supplies and services spend</li> <li>• Reduction in Brent's contribution to the shared ICT service through realisation of savings through delivery of roadmap projects</li> <li>• Reduction in staffing in Transformation service (2xFTE)</li> </ul>
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### **Financial and Staffing Information**

2022/23	
Total budget for the service(s) £'000:	11,190
Total post numbers in the services(s) (FTE):	121.7

	2023/24
	£'000
Proposed saving:	£418
	FTE
Proposed staffing reduction	2

## **Proposed savings**

- **Reduction in licensing spend through applications rationalisation (£45,000).** This saving is part of the ongoing programme to deliver Brent's digital strategy and will be realised by further consolidation of back office systems
- **Reduction in corporate printing spend through continued move to digital options (£60,000).** This will be delivered through a reduction in printers in the Civic Centre (maximising the shift away from hard copy documents which has resulted from more hybrid working) and by implementing improved tracking and controls on spending through the print room and working with departments to ensure a shift to digital where possible. This saving is also part of the Digital Programme.
- **Reduction in ICT and Transformation supplies and services spend (£113,000K).** This saving will be delivered through a reduction in miscellaneous spend on IT hardware etc. Again this saving links to the Digital Programme.
- Reduction in Brent's contribution to the shared ICT service through realisation of savings through delivery of roadmap projects (£60,000). Investment in improving infrastructure via the STS Tech Roadmap will result in revenue savings, reducing the cost of Brent's contribution to the shared service. These savings relate to data centre improvements which will increase security while reducing overall cost. Other savings are also being delivered to the other two Council's in STS.
- **Reduction in staffing in Transformation service (2xFTE) (£140,000).** Reduction in two posts in the Transformation service (1 x PO8, 1 x PO1). This will be delivered through deletion of vacant posts and is enabled by the new Transformation structure which will deliver more effective cross working between project and BAU staff.

## **How would this affect users of this service?**

Savings related to services are corporate and internal facing so savings would not impact directly on residents. Savings through rationalisation of ICT systems and through the STS digital roadmap will not have any adverse effect on system users and are part of programmes to improve ICT systems and infrastructure.

The reduction in print spend, which is a corporate budget, will have a minor impact on departments who will be supported to continue to move towards digital channels.

The reduction in FTE in will have a minor impact on the level of support for transformation projects across the council meaning that some further prioritisation of projects being supported will be required.

## **Key milestones**

Work is already underway which will deliver these proposals. Milestones are set out in the Digital Transformation and STS Technical Roadmaps.

## **Key consultations**

It is anticipated that staffing reductions will be delivered without making redundancies through deletion of vacant posts but a consultation may be required if this is not possible. Services will continue to be engaged to support changes to applications and move towards new digital solutions.

### **Key risks and mitigations**

There are minor risks in the delivery of ICT savings which are dependent on work to develop and implement new systems. There are also minor risks in the delivery of printing savings which will required changes in behaviour by other council departments as this is a corporate budget. These will be mitigated by ensuring projects are well planned and managed and that change management support is also in place.

### **Equality impact screening**

Is there potential for the proposed saving to have a disproportionate adverse impact on any of the following groups? Please indicate Y/N below:	
Disabled people	N
Particular ethnic groups	N
Men or women	N
Particular sexual orientations	N
People who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone a process or part of a process of gender reassignment	N
Particular age groups	N
Groups with particular faiths/beliefs	N
Pregnancy/maternity	N
Marriage/civil partnership	N

If the screening has identified a potentially disproportionate adverse impact, you will need to complete an Equality Impact Assessment. Template and guidance available from [staff intranet](#)

EIA required?	No
EIA to be completed by:	N/A
Deadline:	N/A

Lead officer for this proposal:	Sadie East, Director of Transformation
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### **Budget Options Information**

Reference:	2023-24 RS07
Service(s):	Resident Services
Lead Member(s):	<p>Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources and Reform</p> <p>Cabinet Member for Jobs, Economy and Citizen Experience</p> <p>Cabinet Member for Environment, Infrastructure and Climate Action</p> <p>Cabinet Member for Housing, Homelessness and Renters Security</p> <p>Cabinet Member for Safer Communities &amp; Public Protection</p> <p>Cabinet Member for Community Engagement, Equalities and Culture</p>

Savings Proposals:	Additional digital savings to be delivered through the Digital Transformation Programme. Detailed proposals currently being scoped but likely to be achieved through projects including additional implementation of online forms, chatbot/virtual agents and RPA as well as further reductions in print.
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### **Financial and Staffing Information**

2022/23	
Total budget for the service(s) £'000:	70,282
Total post numbers in the services(s) (FTE):	24.8

	2023/24	2024/25
	£'000	£'000
Proposed saving:	300	N/A
	FTE	FTE
Proposed staffing reduction	Approx. 4	N/A

### **Proposed savings**

Reductions in headcount through efficiencies delivered through digital solutions.  
Reductions in spend on print through move to online solutions.

### **How would this affect users of this service?**

To be confirmed but likely primarily affect back office systems and processes. May also involve further channel shift to more accessible and effective online systems (while maintaining telephone and face to face channels for those who need additional support).

### **Key milestones**

TBC

### **Key consultations**

TBC

### **Key risks and mitigations**

There is a risk that work to scope, develop and implement new systems cannot be made in time to enable savings to be delivered by the start of 2023/24. This will be mitigated by bringing in additional business analysis support and capacity to backfill posts in the service area to allow them to act as SMEs.

### **Equality impact screening**

This section will be completed when detailed more proposals have been developed.

Is there potential for the proposed saving to have a disproportionate adverse impact on any of the following groups? Please indicate Y/N below:	
Disabled people	N
Particular ethnic groups	N
Men or women	N
Particular sexual orientations	N
People who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone a process or part of a process of gender reassignment	N
Particular age groups	N
Groups with particular faiths/beliefs	N
Pregnancy/maternity	N
Marriage/civil partnership	N

If the screening has identified a potentially disproportionate adverse impact, you will need to complete an Equality Impact Assessment. Template and guidance available from [staff intranet](#)

EIA required?	No
EIA to be completed by:	N/A
Deadline:	N/A

Lead officer for this proposal:	Peter Gadsdon, Corporate Director Resident Services
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### **Budget Options Information**

Reference:	2023-24 RS08
Service(s):	Library Arts and Heritage, Customer Access, Residents Services,
Lead Member(s):	Cllr Donnelly-Jackson, Cabinet Member for Community Engagement, Equalities & Culture

Savings Proposals:	Reduction in the library stock budget
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### **Financial and Staffing Information**

2022/23	
Total budget for the service(s) £'000:	3,400
Total post numbers in the services(s) (FTE):	66.4

	2023/24 £'000	2024/25 £'000
Reduction of 13% in stock budget		
Proposed saving:	62	0
Proposed staffing reduction	Nil	Nil

## **Proposed savings**

### Stock Reduction Profile

Type of Stock	Saving	Impact
Online Resources	£3,600	Remove services that have yet to gain popularity (Digi Back Books). Less choice of online resources.
Adult Fiction	£13,000	HBK only at Wembley and Willesden Green, remove small language collections not issuing well Reduced issues and increased pressure requests system.
Adult-Non Fiction	£12,000	Reduce general non-fiction spend; with focus decreasing spend in less popular areas such as history and biography. Increased pressure on requests from other libraries and slower response times.
Children's Non-Fiction	£8,000	Reduction in material. Less ability to support homework clubs and increased pressure on requests system. Reduced spend on Outreach and deliveries to schools.
Children's Fiction	£14,500	Reduced spend on Board books, duplicate new fiction. Loss of issues and satisfaction for Under 5s and class visits.
Periodicals	£6,200	Stop physical magazines at all sites
DVDs	£1,500	Removal of service, loss of hire charges for adult films.
Reference Material	£1,000	Reduce to core collection at Willesden and specific titles at Wembley. Unable to support smaller libraries and partnerships such as library hubs.
Stationary	£2000	Estimated savings through less stock
TOTAL	£61,800	

No reduction is proposed in spoken word or large print collections as these would disproportionately impact upon home library users.

### **How would this affect users of this service?**

In comparison with our geographical neighbours (Ealing and Harrow), CIPFA benchmarking indicates that Brent's higher investment in library stock will mitigate any reduction that is agreed.

### **Key milestones**

The reductions in stock is relatively straightforward to implement in 2023-24.

### **Key consultations**

Reduction in the stock budget has not previously been consulted upon and no consultation is proposed.

### **Key risks and mitigations**

See above.

### **Equality impact screening**

This section will be completed when detailed more proposals have been developed.

Is there potential for the proposed saving to have a disproportionate adverse impact on any of the following groups? Please indicate Y/N below:	
Disabled people	N
Particular ethnic groups	N
Men or women	N
Particular sexual orientations	N
People who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone a process or part of a process of gender reassignment	N
Particular age groups	N
Groups with particular faiths/beliefs	N
Pregnancy/maternity	N
Marriage/civil partnership	

If the screening has identified a potentially disproportionate adverse impact, you will need to complete an Equality Impact Assessment. Template and guidance available from [staff intranet](#)

EIA required?	No
EIA to be completed by:	N/A
Deadline:	N/A

Lead officer for this proposal:	Peter Gadsdon, Corporate Director Resident Services
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## **Budget Options Information**

Reference:	2023-24 RS09
Service(s):	Increase Council Owned Temporary Accommodation Portfolio
Lead Member(s):	Cllr Knight, Cabinet Member for Housing, Homelessness & Renters Security

Savings Proposals:	To build a new Temporary Accommodation scheme of up to 100 units (similar to Anansi and Knowles House) to use in place of emergency B&B's and Annexes
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### **Financial and Staffing Information**

2022/23	
Total budget for the service(s) £'000:	0
Total post numbers in the services(s) (FTE):	0

	2023/24	2024/25
	£'000	£'000
Proposed saving:	0	350 (half year)
	FTE	FTE
Proposed staffing reduction	0	0

### **Proposed savings**

The savings are based on the following cautious assumptions:

- £10M to acquire the land
- £30M to build

Based on Anansi and Knowles House the site would yield net annual income of £700k.

A site with planning permission has now been purchased and work is now ongoing to appoint a developer.

Due to the current increased cost of labour and materials, there is a potential that the estimated build cost of £30M, may increase.

New accommodation is not expected to be available until 2024.

### **How would this affect users of this service?**

The Council has recently developed two TA schemes at Anansi House, for homeless families and Knowles House for single homeless people. These schemes are being used to provide emergency accommodation, to replace the use of B&B's. However, there are still over 100 homeless households living in emergency TA, such as B&B, provided by a private owner. This type of accommodation tends to be of a poorer quality and is expensive for the Council to use. Developing a 3<sup>rd</sup> scheme of 100 units, will help achieve the Council's strategy to reduce the use of TA, and only use Council owned or managed TA.

This will also have a positive impact on the service users, as they will be living in high quality, purpose built, emergency TA that is managed by the Council.

The need for this has recently heightened, as we are experiencing a significant increase in homelessness demand. Over the last few years, we have successfully reduced the number of households in temporary accommodation, bucking the London trend. However, we have started to experience an increase in TA use, due to exceptional increase in demand.

### **Key milestones**

- Land acquisition/identification – Q1 22/23
- Design and planning permission – Q2 22/23
- Procurement of building contractor – Q3 22/23
- Completion and handover – Q3 24/25

### **Key consultations**

- Implement new build engagement strategy

### **Key risks and mitigations**

- No suitable land available
- Public resistance
- General construction risks

## **Equality impact screening**

Is there potential for the proposed saving to have a disproportionate adverse impact on any of the following groups:	
Disabled people	N
Particular ethnic groups	N
Men or Women (include impacts due to pregnancy/maternity)	N
People of particular sexual orientation/s	N
People who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone a process or part of a process of gender reassignment	N
People in particular age groups	N
Groups with particular faiths/beliefs	N
Marriage / civil partnership	N

If the screening has identified a potentially disproportionate adverse impact, you will need to complete an Equality Impact Assessment.

EIA required?	No
EIA to be completed by:	N/A
Deadline:	N/A

Lead officer for this proposal:	Hakeem Osinaike, Director of Housing
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### **Budget Options Information**

Reference:	2023-24 RS11
Service(s):	Increase portfolio of Council Managed (BDL) Temporary Accommodation (TA)
Lead Member(s):	Cllr Knight, Cabinet Member for Housing, Homelessness & Renters Security

Savings Proposals:	Transfer HALS TA portfolio from Notting Hill Genesis (NHG) to Brent Direct Leasing (BDL)
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### **Financial and Staffing Information**

2022/23	
Total budget for the service(s) £'000:	0
Total post numbers in the services(s) (FTE):	0

	2023/24	2024/25
	£'000	£'000
Proposed saving:	86	0
	FTE	FTE
Proposed staffing reduction	0	0

### **Proposed savings**

TUPED Staff costs are included in the above. The net income generated by operating an in-house leasing scheme is £86K.

### **How would this affect users of this service?**

In July 2020, the Council transferred the TA portfolio, formerly operated by Network Homes Housing Association, to the in house TA leasing scheme, BDL. This portfolio is generating an annual net profit of £86K.

It is therefore proposed to approach Notting Hill Genesis Housing Association, to ask if they would consider transferring their TA portfolio (circa 550 properties) to the Council.

Increasing the in house TA portfolio will help achieve the Council's strategy to reduce the use of TA, and only use Council owned or managed TA.

This will also have a positive impact on the service users, as they will be dealing directly with the Council, on issues such as repairs, instead of going through a Housing Association.

### **Key milestones**

- In formal approach to NHG
- Consultation
- Assignment of current leases
- TUPE

### **Key consultations**

- NHG
- Lead Member
- Staff (Brent/NHG)
- Trade Unions

### **Key risks and mitigations**

- NHG refuse, but the numbers are reducing, so there will be a tipping point at which the service makes no sense for them, we think this is it.

## **Equality impact screening**

Is there potential for the proposed saving to have a disproportionate adverse impact on any of the following groups:	
	Y/N
Disabled people	N
Particular ethnic groups	N
Men or Women (include impacts due to pregnancy/maternity)	N
People of particular sexual orientation/s	N
People who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone a process or part of a process of gender reassignment	N
People in particular age groups	N
Groups with particular faiths/beliefs	N
Marriage / civil partnership	N

If the screening has identified a potentially disproportionate adverse impact, you will need to complete an Equality Impact Assessment.

EIA required?	No
EIA to be completed by:	N/A
Deadline:	N/A

Lead officer for this proposal:	Laurence Coaker Head of Housing Needs
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### **Budget Options Information**

Reference:	2023-24 RS12
Service(s):	Highways Management – Energy Team
Lead Member(s):	Cllr. Sheth, Cabinet Member for Environment, Infrastructure and Climate Action

Savings Proposals:	Reduction in Provision - Energy Cost Saving - Street Light Dimming
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### **Financial and Staffing Information**

2022/23	
Total budget for the service(s) £'000:	250
Total post numbers in the services(s) (FTE):	N/A

	2023/24
	£'000
Proposed savings:	£60
	FTE
Proposed staffing reduction	N/A

### **Proposed savings**

An additional £0.1m p.a. could be saved through a further rigorous review of lighting levels at a highly localised level across the borough.

### **How would this affect users of this service?**

Areas for selective dimming would be identified carefully in order to ensure that the implications are minimised. Officers are cognisant of and sensitive towards ensuring that safety – particularly of Women and Girls, is not impacted as a result. There are areas where natural surveillance and other background lighting does facilitate dimming. Some users may notice lower lighting levels than expected at certain locations, especially given previous reductions have been made. Any impact must not be sufficient to affect lighting levels required for road safety, or to meet expectations of community safety.

### **Key milestones**

- Complete review and implement detailed Lighting Plan – 2022
- Light level reduction – April 2023

### **Key consultations**

N/A. Resident and visitor feedback on lighting levels could be acted on quickly.

### **Key risks and mitigations**

Some users will likely notice lower lighting levels than expected at certain locations. Should the lighting level not be acceptable at a specific location the CMS does allow corrective adjustments to be made rapidly.

### **Equality impact screening**

Is there potential for the proposed saving to have a disproportionate adverse impact on any of the following groups:	
Disabled people	N
Particular ethnic groups	N
Men or Women (include impacts due to pregnancy/maternity)	N
People of particular sexual orientation/s	N
People who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone a process or part of a process of gender reassignment	N
People in particular age groups	N
Groups with particular faiths/beliefs	N
Marriage / civil partnership	N

If the screening has identified a potentially disproportionate adverse impact, you will need to complete an Equality Impact Assessment.

EIA required?	No
EIA to be completed by:	N/A
Deadline:	N/A

Lead officer for this proposal:	Chris Whyte, Director of Environment & Leisure
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### **Budget Options Information**

Reference:	2023-24 RS13
Service(s):	Neighbourhood Management
Lead Member(s):	Cllr Krupa Sheth, Cabinet Member for Environment, Infrastructure and Climate Action

Savings Proposals:	Service Transformation - Waste disposal – Education and outreach insourcing
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### **Financial and Staffing Information**

2021/2022	
Total budget for the service(s) £'000:	9,000
Total post numbers in the services(s) (FTE):	N/A

	2023/24
	£'000
Proposed saving:	250
	FTE
Proposed staffing reduction	N/A

### **Proposed savings**

Utilise an insourced waste education and education resource to secure a reduction in residual waste stream in order to secure increased recycling rates and reduced waste disposal payments to WLWA.

### **How would this affect users of this service?**

Residents would receive better information regarding the services we provide. That would encourage better and fuller use of these services and would see less problems associated with the contamination of bins. Targeted interventions at difficult locations would remove long-standing problems and increase waste diversion rates thus reducing waste disposal costs overall.

### **Key milestones**

- Agree TUPE transfer of staff – 2022 as part of RLS dialogue with Bidders
- Implementation – April 2023.

### **Key consultations**

Residents who receive the recycling services the Council provides.

### **Key risks and mitigations**

There is a risk that any interventions have little impact at problem locations. This is best mitigated by ensuring the intervention work is focused, data-led and that our communications are targeted very precisely to counter the problems that are relevant to each location.

### **Equality impact screening**

Is there potential for the proposed saving to have a disproportionate adverse impact on any of the following groups:	
Disabled people	N
Particular ethnic groups	N
Men or Women (include impacts due to pregnancy/maternity)	N
People of particular sexual orientation/s	N
People who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone a process or part of a process of gender reassignment	N
People in particular age groups	N
Groups with particular faiths/beliefs	N
Marriage / civil partnership	N

If the screening has identified a potentially disproportionate adverse impact, you will need to complete an Equality Impact Assessment.

EIA required?	No
EIA to be completed by:	N/A
Deadline:	N/A

Lead officer for this proposal:	Chris Whyte, Director Environment & Leisure
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## **Budget Options Information**

Reference:	2023-24 RS14
Service(s):	Neighbourhood Management
Lead Member(s):	Cllr Krupa Sheth, Cabinet Member for Environment, Infrastructure and Climate Action

Savings Proposals:	Service Transformation - Review Payments to WLWA
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### **Financial and Staffing Information**

2022/2023	
Total budget for the service(s) £'000:	9,000
Total post numbers in the services(s) (FTE):	N/A

	2023/24
	£'000
Proposed saving:	100
	FTE
Proposed staffing reduction	N/A

### **Proposed savings**

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. Usually, when this happens in any given year, the surplus from boroughs is retained to bolster the reserves of WLWA so that investment can be made in their services in ways that might be beneficial to all constituent boroughs. The proposal is to seek a repayment so that this can create a revenue saving for Brent. In recent years there has generally been an over-payment and £100,000 reduction is not considered unreasonable.

Negotiation would be required with WLWA as this would affect the relationship between WLW and all constituent boroughs.

**How would this affect users of this service?**

Residents would not be affected by this proposal.

**Key milestones**

- Negotiate the approach with WLWA – 2022
- Inform constituent boroughs of that intention – 2022
- Formal response to WLWA budget consultation - 2022
- Implementation – April 2023.

**Key consultations**

WLWA and its constituent boroughs.

**Key risks and mitigations**

There is a risk that there may be no available surplus in the year intended in which case this proposal may be invalid. There is also a high risk of objection by WLWA and the other boroughs, who may prefer investment in WLWA services in ways that might generate benefit for the common good. Brent will need to understand the financial position of WLWA at the appropriate time, establish the financial benefit and make a case for repayment via the formal, and annual, WLWA budget setting process.

**Equality impact screening**

Is there potential for the proposed saving to have a disproportionate adverse impact on any of the following groups:	
Disabled people	N
Particular ethnic groups	N
Men or Women (include impacts due to pregnancy/maternity)	N
People of particular sexual orientation/s	N
People who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone a process or part of a process of gender reassignment	N
People in particular age groups	N
Groups with particular faiths/beliefs	N
Marriage / civil partnership	N

If the screening has identified a potentially disproportionate adverse impact, you will need to complete an Equality Impact Assessment.

EIA required?	No
EIA to be completed by:	N/A
Deadline:	N/A

Lead officer for this proposal:	Chris Whyte, Director Environment & Leisure
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## **Budget Options Information**

Reference:	2023-24 RS15
Service(s):	Regulatory Services
Lead Member(s):	Cllr Farah, Cabinet Member for Safer Communities & Public Protection

Savings Proposals:	Re-structure - Regulatory Services – use Proceeds of Crime Act to part-fund enforcement.
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### **Financial and Staffing Information**

2022/23	
Total budget for the service(s) £'000:	1,400
Total post numbers in the services(s) (FTE):	25.8

	2023/24
	£'000
Proposed saving:	300
	FTE
Proposed staffing reduction	0

### **Proposed savings**

It is proposed to switch the funding for two financial investigators from general council budgets to incentives received via the Proceeds of Crime Act.

Income received from the Proceeds of Crime Act relating to Trading Standards has built up in a reserve (currently at £1.1m). This income is ring-fenced and can only be used for narrow purposes. It can be used to fund future investigations.

The Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 (POCA) is a piece of legislation used in relation to confiscating money that had been acquired as a result of crime.

In 2012 Brent and Harrow Trading Standards Service established a dedicated Financial Investigation Team to take advantage of the opportunities offered by POCA to ensure that criminals did not financially benefit from wrongdoing and that confiscated proceeds of crime could be used towards the cost of carrying out investigations.

The Government introduced an incentivisation scheme to encourage authorities to use POCA. The scheme, administered by the Home Office, allowed local authorities to retain a percentage of all successful confiscation orders obtained, when they were paid.

The investigations team consists of two fully trained Accredited Financial Investigators (AFI) who carry out all the financial investigations, source future work for the team and assist colleagues with guidance as to investigations with potential for POCA work.

These financial investigators are currently funded by general council budgets. This proposal is for those two investigators to be funded by the POCA incentives they generate or have generated in the past. There is a £1.1m reserve which can be used to fund them in any years where the team do not receive sufficient POCA incentive payments to cover their salaries. However, based on performance over the past five years, income from POCA should be sufficient to fund two officers on an ongoing basis.

#### **How would this affect users of this service?**

No impact on service

#### **Key milestones**

This is a funding change and can be implemented on the date required.

#### **Key consultations**

#### **Key risks and mitigations**

There is a risk that the team do not receive sufficient POCA incentive payments to cover their salaries in a given year. The Trading Standards POCA reserve (currently at £1.1m) can be used to smooth incentive payments. In years where more is received, the balance would add to the reserve (due to ring-fence). In years where the incentives received do not cover the investigators' salaries, Brent can draw on the Trading Standards POCA reserve.

### **Equality impact screening**

Is there potential for the proposed saving to have a disproportionate adverse impact on any of the following groups? Please indicate Y/N below:	
Disabled people	N
Particular ethnic groups	N
Men or women	N
Particular sexual orientations	N
People who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone a process or part of a process of gender reassignment	N
Particular age groups	N
Groups with particular faiths/beliefs	N
Pregnancy/maternity	N
Marriage/civil partnership	N

If the screening has identified a potentially disproportionate adverse impact, you will need to complete an Equality Impact Assessment. Template and guidance available from [staff intranet](#)

EIA required?	No
EIA to be completed by:	N/A
Deadline:	N/A

Lead officer for this proposal:	Chris Whyte, Director Environment & Leisure
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## **Budget Options Information**

Reference:	2023-24 RS16
Service(s):	Environmental Services
Lead Member(s):	Cllr Krupa Sheth, Cabinet Member for Environment, Infrastructure and Climate Action

Savings Proposals:	Re-structure - RLS Related - Review staff structures as part of RLS Phase 2 review
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### **Financial and Staffing Information**

2022/2023	
Total budget for the service(s) £'000:	4,000
Total post numbers in the services(s) (FTE):	N/A

	2023/24
	£'000
Proposed saving:	150
	FTE
Proposed staffing reduction	2

### **Proposed savings**

A £150k saving is envisaged through a comprehensive Phase 2 reorganisation that is necessary to account for the outcomes that will emerge from the Redefining Local Services programme in 2023.

A reorganisation will –

- Create services that deliver our strategies, improving synergy and collaborative working between service areas.
- Design services which support neighbourhood working, are aligned to meet current and future levels of demand, and improve efficiency.
- Prioritise the delivery of public realm improvements, from highways management to new projects and initiatives, focusing on innovation and continuous improvement.
- Support the neighbourhood approach, member and community engagement and improved customer satisfaction.
- Enable efficiencies, with new services being responsible for policy through to operational delivery.
- Strengthen the department's ability to deliver council priorities including the Climate Emergency strategy, Inclusive Growth Strategy and the Redefining Local Services Project which will establish the future delivery models for all our services so they are better integrated.

#### **How would this affect users of this service?**

Residents would not be affected by this proposal.

#### **Key milestones**

- Review of current arrangements – March 2022
- Review of outcomes of RLS programme – September 2022
- Service redesign – September 2022
- Managing Change consultation Jan – March 2023
- Implementation – April 2023

#### **Key consultations**

- All staff affected by the change.

#### **Key risks and mitigations**

Any negative impact on staff, and any compulsory redundancies, can be minimised through 'vacancy management' between now and the implementation date.

## **Equality impact screening**

Is there potential for the proposed saving to have a disproportionate adverse impact on any of the following groups:	
Disabled people	N
Particular ethnic groups	N
Men or Women (include impacts due to pregnancy/maternity)	N
People of particular sexual orientation/s	N
People who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone a process or part of a process of gender reassignment	N
People in particular age groups	N
Groups with particular faiths/beliefs	N
Marriage / civil partnership	N

If the screening has identified a potentially disproportionate adverse impact, you will need to complete an Equality Impact Assessment.

EIA required?	No
EIA to be completed by:	N/A
Deadline:	N/A

Lead officer for this proposal:	Chris Whyte, Director Environment & Leisure
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### **Budget Options Information**

Reference:	2023-24 RS17
Service(s):	Brent Transport Service
Lead Member(s):	Cllr Krupa Sheth, Cabinet Member for Environment, Infrastructure and Climate Action Cllr Grahl, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People & Schools

Savings Proposals:	Service Transformation - RLS related - Detailed service review including route optimisation and alternative means of transport
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### **Financial and Staffing Information**

2022/23	
Total budget for the service(s) £'000:	11,800
Total post numbers in the services(s) (FTE):	None employed directly by Brent Council

	2023/24
	£'000
Proposed saving:	1,200
	FTE
Proposed staffing reduction	0

## **Proposed savings**

The service is currently shared with LB Harrow who lead the service on behalf of both Authorities. Despite this, Brent LBC 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 an initial review. 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

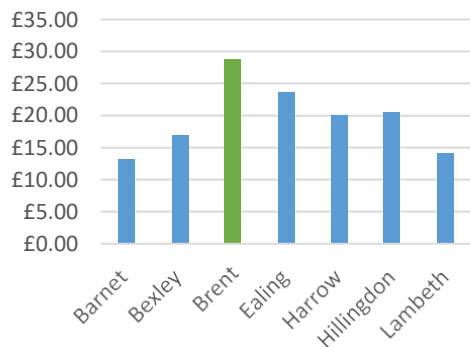
### **Benchmarking Harrow vs Brent Special Needs Transport**

(2019 figures)	Brent	Harrow	% difference
Number of clients	1300	800	60% more in Brent
Cost per annum	£10.5m	£5.2m	Brent's expenditure is double that of Harrow
Net cost per client	£8,400	£6,500	30% higher costs per client for Brent

Scenario (2019 figures)	Service cost	Potential annual saving up to
1. As is	£10.5m	-
2. Keep the current number of clients but reduce average net cost to Harrow's level	£8.2m	£2.3m
3. Reduce the number of clients to Harrow's level (per head of population) while costs per client remain high (at Brent's current level)	£8.8m	Up to £1.7m
4. Reduce Brent's number of clients (per head of population) and the cost per client to Harrow's levels	£6.9m	Up to £3.6m

Brent has the highest SEN travel spend per head of population of the benchmarked local authorities (figure 1)

Figure 1: SEN Travel forecast spend 2019/20 per head of population



This is a combination of a high number of SEN children with travel assistance (highest per head of population, figure 2) and a high cost per child transported (second highest, figure 5)

Figure 2: Number of SEN with Travel Assistance (all forms) per 1000 head of population

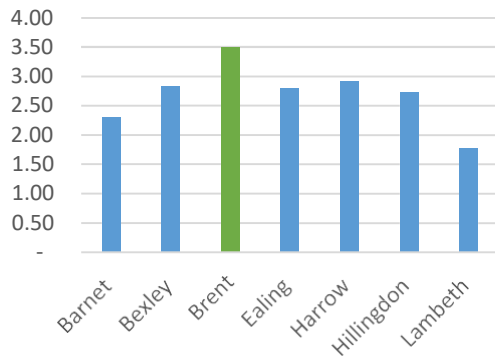
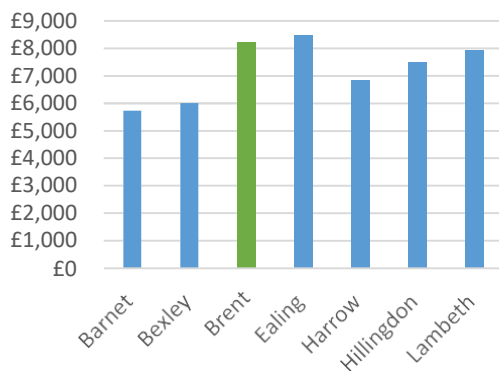


Figure 2: Average annual cost per passenger



### **How would this affect users of this service?**

The individual proposals are not known at this stage and will be reviewed following the independent review of the service.

### **Key milestones**

The independent review to identify savings and efficiencies has begun (funded by Recovery Initiatives). This will include a proposal for the specific transformations required.

The transformation period is 24 months, therefore there is a risk that these savings will not be fully achieved in 2023/24.

### **Key consultations**

LB Harrow, as the delivery partner  
 CWB and CYP as client departments  
 Parents and Passengers

### **Key risks and mitigations**

Potential impact on vulnerable service users, with mitigations to be established via a formal EIA.

## **Equality impact screening**

Is there potential for the proposed saving to have a disproportionate adverse impact on any of the following groups? Please indicate Y/N below:	
Disabled people	Y
Particular ethnic groups	Y
Men or women	N
Particular sexual orientations	N
People who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone a process or part of a process of gender reassignment	N
Particular age groups	Y
Groups with particular faiths/beliefs	N
Pregnancy/maternity	N
Marriage/civil partnership	N

If the screening has identified a potentially disproportionate adverse impact, you will need to complete an Equality Impact Assessment. Template and guidance available from [staff intranet](#)

EIA required?	Yes
EIA to be completed by:	Regina McDonald
Deadline:	31 January 2023

Lead officer for this proposal:	Chris Whyte, Director Environment & Leisure
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## **Budget Options Information**

Reference:	2023-24 RS18
Service(s):	Environmental Services
Lead Member(s):	Cllr Krupa Sheth, Cabinet Member for Environment, Infrastructure and Climate Action

Savings Proposals:	Procurement - RLS Related - Reduce costs as part of RLS competitive tendering approach.
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## **Financial and Staffing Information**

2022/2023	
Total budget for the service(s) £'000:	N/A
Total post numbers in the services(s) (FTE):	N/A

	2023/24
	£'000
Proposed saving:	200
	FTE
Proposed staffing reduction	N/A

### **Proposed savings**

There is the potential to attach a savings target of £200k to the RLS commissioning programme to reduce costs via the various competitive tendering process that will be undertaken through 2022. This is considered a reasonable target given the number and scale of processes that are in train as part of RLS. Any that involve a change / reduction in service specification would be agreed politically as part of the competitive dialogue process.

### **How would this affect users of this service?**

Residents would not necessarily be affected by this proposal unless the cost savings were created by a discernible reduction in service compared to the current offer.

### **Key milestones**

- Review costs and potential savings via the competitive tendering processes – 2022.
- Secure best value for new contracts through these processes – 2022
- Consultation on any significant service changes - 2022
- Implementation 2023

### **Key consultations**

- Consultation with elected Members and residents affected by any significant change/reduction in service.

### **Key risks and mitigations**

There is a risk that a reduction in the cost of key front line operational services may only be created by a reduction in service levels compared with the current, baseline offer.

The key mitigation is to ensure a considered and assertive dialogue with bidders in order to secure best value.

### **Equality impact screening**

Is there potential for the proposed saving to have a disproportionate adverse impact on any of the following groups:	
	Y/N
Disabled people	N
Particular ethnic groups	N
Men or Women (include impacts due to pregnancy/maternity)	N
People of particular sexual orientation/s	N
People who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone a process or part of a process of gender reassignment	N
People in particular age groups	N
Groups with particular faiths/beliefs	N
Marriage / civil partnership	N

If the screening has identified a potentially disproportionate adverse impact, you will need to complete an Equality Impact Assessment.

EIA required?	No
EIA to be completed by:	N/A
Deadline:	N/A

Lead officer for this proposal:	Chris Whyte, Director Environment & Leisure
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### **Budget Options Information**

Reference:	2023-24 RS19
Service(s):	Environmental Services
Lead Member(s):	Cllr Krupa Sheth, Cabinet Member for Environment, Infrastructure and Climate Action

Savings Proposals:	Rationalisation of Environmental Services Directorate budget
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### **Financial and Staffing Information**

2022/23	
Total budget for the service(s) £'000:	39,313 (full ES budget)
Total post numbers in the services(s) (FTE):	198

	2023/24
	£'000
Proposed saving:	130
	FTE
Proposed staffing reduction	N/A

### **Proposed savings**

A rationalisation of the budgets within Environmental Services has taken place in anticipation of the savings required for the RLS project.

Included in this was a review of insourcing opportunities, where a saving was identified to bring the Cemeteries Ground Maintenance service in-house. This saving has already been achieved.

**How would this affect users of this service?**

The removal of this would have no adverse operational impact.

The Cemeteries GM service has already been bought in-house, so there will be no further impact related to this.

**Key milestones**

The budget review has been undertaken and saving achieved.

**Key consultations**

Budget holders

**Key risks and mitigations**

None

**Equality impact screening**

Is there potential for the proposed saving to have a disproportionate adverse impact on any of the following groups? Please indicate Y/N below:	
Disabled people	N
Particular ethnic groups	N
Men or women	N
Particular sexual orientations	N
People who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone a process or part of a process of gender reassignment	N
Particular age groups	N
Groups with particular faiths/beliefs	N
Pregnancy/maternity	N
Marriage/civil partnership	N

If the screening has identified a potentially disproportionate adverse impact, you will need to complete an Equality Impact Assessment. Template and guidance available from [staff intranet](#)

EIA required?	No
EIA to be completed by:	N/A
Deadline:	N/A

Lead officer for this proposal:	Chris Whyte, Director Environment & Leisure
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### **Budget Options Information**

Reference:	2023-24 FR01
Service(s):	Finance and Resources
Lead Member(s):	Cllr Mili Patel Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources and Reform

Savings Proposals:	Deletion of 3 FTE.
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### **Financial and Staffing Information**

2022/23	
Total budget for the service(s) £'000:	8,800
Total post numbers in the services(s) (FTE):	91

	2023/24
	£'000
Proposed saving:	252
	FTE
Proposed staffing reduction	3

### **Proposed savings**

With the creation of a centralised Oracle support function in IT, a proportion of a Head of Finance management oversight of master data and systems control is no longer required. The remainder of the Head of Finance responsibility will be distributed across

other Heads of Finance - (no risk of redundancy as post held vacant through staff turnover).

A Senior Finance Analyst and a Finance Analyst post were created in 2016 to work specifically on Commercial ventures. Over the last few years the Council has moved away from these types of activities in general. Most recent ventures have been Housing or Treasury Management led. It is proposed to delete these posts and distribute these activities to core service specific officers within Finance. If any new substantial ventures are progressed, Finance resources will need to be funded by the programme. In essence this proposal moves from base budget resources to a project based funding - (no risk of redundancy as post held vacant through staff turnover).

**How would this affect users of this service?**

The proposal reduces 3 FTE Finance which dilutes the offer to the council.

**Key milestones**

**Key consultations**

Small-scale Finance department restructure maybe required.

**Key risks and mitigations**

No risk of redundancy as all 3 posts are held vacant through staff turnover.

**Equality impact screening**

Is there potential for the proposed saving to have a disproportionate adverse impact on any of the following groups? Please indicate Y/N below:	
Disabled people	N
Particular ethnic groups	N
Men or women	N
Particular sexual orientations	N
People who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone a process or part of a process of gender reassignment	N
Particular age groups	N
Groups with particular faiths/beliefs	N
Pregnancy/maternity	N
Marriage/civil partnership	N

If the screening has identified a potentially disproportionate adverse impact, you will need to complete an Equality Impact Assessment. Template and guidance available from [staff intranet](#)

EIA required?	No
EIA to be completed by:	N/A
Deadline:	N/A

Lead officer for this proposal:	Minesh Patel, Corporate Director Finance & Resources
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## **Budget Options Information**

Reference:	2023-24 FR02
Service(s):	Finance and Resources
Lead Member(s):	Cllr Mili Patel Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources and Reform

Savings Proposals:	Digital Transformation – automation of transactional and through projects including additional automation and improvements in management self-serve as a result of Oracle Cloud enhancements.
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### **Financial and Staffing Information**

2022/23	
Total budget for the service(s) £'000:	8,800
Total post numbers in the services(s) (FTE):	91

	2023/24
	£'000
Proposed saving:	250
	FTE
Proposed staffing reduction	4.3

### **Proposed savings**

Over the years the Council has delivered substantial savings in Finance with technology. The Council's investment in further Digital transformation affords the opportunity to explore the use of Automation and Artificial intelligence/Machine

learning to deliver further savings in the management of transactions across the whole of the Finance function.

**How would this affect users of this service?**

Should be low impact

**Key milestones**

To be confirmed following scoping meeting with Digital Partner in March 2022.

**Key consultations**

TBC

**Key risks and mitigations**

The automation of activities will lead to some reductions in staffing. There is a risk that work to scope, develop and implement new systems cannot be made in time to enable savings to be delivered by the start of 2023/24. This will be mitigated by bringing in additional business analysis support and capacity to backfill posts in the service area to allow them to act as SMEs.

**Equality impact screening**

Is there potential for the proposed saving to have a disproportionate adverse impact on any of the following groups? Please indicate Y/N below:	
Disabled people	N
Particular ethnic groups	N
Men or women	N
Particular sexual orientations	N
People who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone a process or part of a process of gender reassignment	N
Particular age groups	N
Groups with particular faiths/beliefs	N
Pregnancy/maternity	N
Marriage/civil partnership	N

If the screening has identified a potentially disproportionate adverse impact, you will need to complete an Equality Impact Assessment. Template and guidance available from [staff intranet](#)

EIA required?	No
EIA to be completed by:	N/a
Deadline:	N/A

Lead officer for this proposal:	Minesh Patel, Corporate Director Finance & Resources
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### **Budget Options Information**

Reference:	2023-24 FR03
Service(s):	Audit and Investigation
Lead Member(s):	Cllr Mili Patel, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources and Reform

Savings Proposals:	Reduce use of external support to internal audit service
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### **Financial and Staffing Information**

2022/23	
Total budget for the service(s) £'000:	1,100
Total post numbers in the services(s) (FTE):	14

	2023/24
	£'000
Proposed saving:	23
	FTE
Proposed staffing reduction	0

### **Proposed savings**

This saving would reduce the funding available to secure external support for Internal Audit work.

### **How would this affect users of this service?**

The availability of capacity to undertake specialist audits (in an area of strategic risk) at the request of services through the internal audit contract would be reduced.

### **Key milestones**

Audit and Investigations would specify a reduced expenditure target in its contractual commitment for 2023/24 at the end of 2022/23.

### **Key consultations**

None

### **Key risks and mitigations**

A reduction in the availability of capacity for specialist audits to be undertaken through the internal audit contract might lead to a request for additional funding should this capacity provide insufficient for audits deemed essential by the Chief Executive or Head of Internal Audit to be undertaken.

### **Equality impact screening**

Is there potential for the proposed saving to have a disproportionate adverse impact on any of the following groups? Please indicate Y/N below:	
Disabled people	N
Particular ethnic groups	N
Men or women	N
Particular sexual orientations	N
People who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone a process or part of a process of gender reassignment	N
Particular age groups	N
Groups with particular faiths/beliefs	N
Pregnancy/maternity	N
Marriage/civil partnership	N

If the screening has identified a potentially disproportionate adverse impact, you will need to complete an Equality Impact Assessment. Template and guidance available from [staff intranet](#)

EIA required?	No
EIA to be completed by:	N/A
Deadline:	N/A

Lead officer for this proposal:	Darren Armstrong, Head of Audit & Investigation
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## **Budget Options Information**

Reference:	2023-24 FR04
Service(s):	Property & Assets
Lead Member(s):	Cllr Mili Patel, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources and Reform

Savings Proposals:	Income Generation - Lease further floors of the Civic Centre to external organisations/tenants to generate revenue.
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### **Financial and Staffing Information**

2022/23	
Total budget for the service(s) £'000:	0
Total post numbers in the services(s) (FTE):	N/A

	2023/24
	£'000
Proposed saving:	680
	FTE
Proposed staffing reduction	N/A

### **Proposed savings**

Our current tenants are:

- AIR FRANCE UK
- NHS North West London CCG
- VALUATION OFFICE AGENCY
- OPDC Old Oak and Park Royal Development Corporation

The total rent achieved is £446,000. Air France are moving out of their 8<sup>th</sup> floor space in Oct 2022. This space will need to be re-let in-order to re-secure the income attributed to it.

If other floors areas are let, additional re-occurring income could be secured.

Historically we have priced the floor space of the Civic Centre at circa £200-250 per sq ft.

Additional income if the balance of the 7<sup>th</sup> floor is let – circa £236,000

Additional income if a another typical floor is let – circa £446,000

An agent has been commissioned to advise the Council and to seek potential tenants.

### **How would this affect users of this service?**

For modelling purposes we have looked at the balance of the 7<sup>th</sup> floor, currently occupied by Planning, Property & Assets and Finance (133 desks) and one whole other floor such as the 5<sup>th</sup> (242 desks) so a total of 375 desks.

Modelling would have be done to redistribute the remaining desks in the building amongst Council departments.

### **Key milestones**

- Agreement on what areas to market for let March 2022
- Appoint a letting agent April 2022
- Look to secure tenants by end of 2022

### **Key consultations**

- CMT regarding loss of space and the impact on team areas

### **Key risks and mitigations**

The market. Letting activity is not guaranteed, many business are rationalising space as the effects of the pandemic on their operation footprints is still being fully understood. However, the Civic Centre represents a well-located, good value, high quality product that should be competitive to those that are looking.

Competition has now increased in the micro market as new buildings such as the Hive have come on-line. These however are much higher priced.

### **Equality impact screening**

Is there potential for the proposed saving to have a disproportionate adverse impact on any of the following groups:	
Disabled people	N
Particular ethnic groups	N
Men or Women (include impacts due to pregnancy/maternity)	N
People of particular sexual orientation/s	N
People who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone a process or part of a process of gender reassignment	N
People in particular age groups	N
Groups with particular faiths/beliefs	N
Marriage / civil partnership	N

If the screening has identified a potentially disproportionate adverse impact, you will need to complete an Equality Impact Assessment.

EIA required?	No
EIA to be completed by:	N/A
Deadline:	N/A

Lead officer for this proposal:	Tanveer Ghani, Director Property & Assets
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## **Budget Options Information**

Reference:	2023-24 FR05
Service(s):	Property & Assets – Finance & Resources
Lead Member(s):	Cllr Mili Patel, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources and Reform

Savings Proposals:	Income Generation - Increase car park/EVCP charge for the spaces/facilities in the Civic Centre
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### **Financial and Staffing Information**

2022/23	
Total budget for the service(s) £'000:	369 (Income)
Total post numbers in the services(s) (FTE):	N/A

	2023/24
	£'000
Proposed saving:	100
	FTE
Proposed staffing reduction	0

### **Proposed savings**

Increase the full day tariff (including event days) in line with local competitors. Maintain the ethos of keeping short term parking costs as low as possible; however the short term parking tariffs can also be increased if preferred. If this option is approved, all charges will also be increased annually by CPI to the nearest 20p going forwards.

This proposal is based upon the additional income generated by the historically lowest number of visitors paying the existing tariff over the past 5 years (7901 whole day parkers plus a further 1034 event day parkers) and therefore the income generated could increase above the targeted £00k

Tariff as it is currently:

<b>Duration</b>	<b>Monday - Sunday</b>	<b>Wembley Stadium Event Days</b>
Up to 1 hour	£1.50	£1.50
Up to 2 hours	£4.00	£4.00
Up to 3 hours	£7.50	£7.50
Whole day	£15.00	£30.00

Proposed Tariffs:

<b>Duration</b>	<b>Monday - Sunday</b>	<b>Wembley Stadium Event Days</b>
Up to 1 hour	£1.50	£1.50
Up to 2 hours	£4.00	£4.00
Up to 3 hours	£7.50	£7.50
Whole day	£20.00	£40.00
For short term parking (up to 3 hours) electric vehicles will qualify for a 50% discount.		

We would also introduce a revised charge for electric vehicles to continue to promote the climate change agenda, whilst also benefiting from the increased usage of electric vehicles parking at the building. The qualification of income for this is currently unavailable as options are being researched. It is likely that another £30k - £50k could be realised if the provision is used to its full capacity.

### **How would this affect users of this service?**

Short time visits to the Civic Centre would not see an impact, only users who leave their cars for over 3 hours.

### **Key milestones**

Agreement on what charges to increase, and then implement – April 2023.

### **Key consultations**

Members, staff, other car park users

### **Key risks and mitigations**

Increased tariffs could deter users from the Civic Centre facilities and push them towards other car parks. The Civic car park is very well located however, and the loss of the Yellow car park, should cement this. The usage should be closely monitored and if a decreased usage is detected, then potentially the charges could be re-revised down.

### **Equality impact screening**

Is there potential for the proposed saving to have a disproportionate adverse impact on any of the following groups:	
Disabled people	N
Particular ethnic groups	N
Men or Women (include impacts due to pregnancy/maternity)	N
People of particular sexual orientation/s	N
People who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone a process or part of a process of gender reassignment	N
People in particular age groups	N
Groups with particular faiths/beliefs	N
Marriage / civil partnership	N

If the screening has identified a potentially disproportionate adverse impact, you will need to complete an Equality Impact Assessment.

EIA required?	No
EIA to be completed by:	N/A
Deadline:	N/A

Lead officer for this proposal:	Tanveer Ghani, Director Property & Assets
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### **Budget Options Information**

Reference:	2023-24 FR06
Service(s):	Property & Assets
Lead Member(s):	Cllr Mili Patel, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources and Reform

Savings Proposals:	Service Transformation - Security Service Review
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### **Financial and Staffing Information**

2022/23	
Total budget for the service(s) £'000:	0
Total post numbers in the services(s) (FTE):	N/A

	2023/24
	£'000
Proposed saving:	230
	FTE
Proposed staffing reduction	7

### **Proposed Savings**

A detailed review of the security provision across all Brent's operational buildings was conducted after staff TUPE'd across from the previous out-sourced provider in summer 2021.

The following will go live in Q1 2022/2023:

- Implementation of 40hr working week across all staff.
- Reduction in total number of security guards from the existing 26 guards to 20 guards, aligned to existing operational service needs (this includes the reduction of zero hour contract staff) and wider retained estate service changes in operational requirements from 1 Jan 2022.
- Service 'Management' realignment incorporate two existing posts of the security manager and cleaning manager in to new 'Soft Services' manager position.
- Hourly rates of pay to increase from existing LLW of £10.85 to £13.17- £14.15 aligning to Council pay Scale 6 (17-21). This will be subject to final role evaluation and grading.
- Reduction of all 'Zero Hours' contracts.
- Reduction on reliance of external agency staff.
- Shift patterns aligned to 40hr across a 5 day week (8hrs per day), with the exception of the weekends. Implementation of new rota schedules in line with the above.
- All guards to work to new contractual hours only, overtime by exception and only with prior approval from Head of FM Services.
- Ensure all licensing is up to date for all guards across the service.

### **How would this affect users of this service?**

No noticeable effects should be noticed by the users of the operational estate buildings.

### **Key milestones**

Implementation Q1 2022/2023.

### **Key consultations**

Staff

### **Key risks and mitigations**

A smaller pool of guards means monitoring operational resilience will be key. Agency staff will still be available, but will no longer be used as a regular part of the service.

### **Equality impact screening**

Is there potential for the proposed saving to have a disproportionate adverse impact on any of the following groups:	
Disabled people	N
Particular ethnic groups	N
Men or Women (include impacts due to pregnancy/maternity)	N
People of particular sexual orientation/s	N
People who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone a process or part of a process of gender reassignment	N
People in particular age groups	N
Groups with particular faiths/beliefs	N
Marriage / civil partnership	N

If the screening has identified a potentially disproportionate adverse impact, you will need to complete an Equality Impact Assessment.

EIA required?	No
EIA to be completed by:	N/A
Deadline:	N/A

Lead officer for this proposal:	Tanveer Ghani, Director Property & Assets
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### **Budget Options Information**

Reference:	2023-24 FR07
Service(s):	Property & Assets – Finance & Resources
Lead Member(s):	Cllr Mili Patel, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources and Reform

Savings Proposals:	Service Transformation - Rationalise “soft” FM service – Cleaning Staff
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### **Financial and Staffing Information**

2022/23	
Total budget for the service(s) £'000:	1,240
Total post numbers in the services(s) (FTE):	74

	2023/24
	£'000
Proposed saving:	150
	FTE
Proposed staffing reduction	5

### **Proposed savings**

A detailed review of the security provision across all Brent’s operational buildings was conducted after staff TUPE’d across from the previous out-sourced provider in summer 2021.

A similar review is proposed for the cleaning service, providing a smaller, better remunerated work force, on consistent terms and conditions – but with shift pattern flexibility.

**How would this affect users of this service?**

No noticeable effects should be noticed by the users of the operational estate buildings.

**Key milestones**

Implementation Q1 2023/2024.

**Key consultations**

Staff

**Key risks and mitigations**

A smaller pool of cleaners means monitoring operational resilience will be key. Agency staff will still be available, but will no longer be used as a regular part of the service.

**Equality impact screening**

Is there potential for the proposed saving to have a disproportionate adverse impact on any of the following groups:	
Disabled people	N
Particular ethnic groups	N
Men or Women (include impacts due to pregnancy/maternity)	N
People of particular sexual orientation/s	N
People who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone a process or part of a process of gender reassignment	N
People in particular age groups	N
Groups with particular faiths/beliefs	N
Marriage / civil partnership	N

If the screening has identified a potentially disproportionate adverse impact, you will need to complete an Equality Impact Assessment.

EIA required?	No
EIA to be completed by:	N/A
Deadline:	N/A

Lead officer for this proposal:	Tanveer Ghani, Director Property & Assets
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### **Budget Options Information**

Reference:	2023-24 FR08
Service(s):	Property & Assets
Lead Member(s):	Cllr Mili Patel, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources and Reform

Savings Proposals:	Re-structure - Commercial Staffing Review – Appointment of Permanent Staff and ensuring adequate resourcing for capital projects.
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### **Financial and Staffing Information**

2022/23	
Total budget for the service(s) £'000:	326
Total post numbers in the services(s) (FTE):	N/A

	2023/24
	£'000
Propose saving:	100
	FTE
Proposed staffing reduction	0

### **Proposed savings**

The commercial and residential property teams are in the process of being re-organised. Currently there are two agency members of staff in the commercial structure. When these staff are replaced by permanent employees, then there will be the ability to save some revenue costs. In addition to this, 50% of one of the roles is often involved in project work so work is required to ensure these costs are

incorporated into new project budget requests going forward to allow for these costs to be capitalised.

**How would this affect users of this service?**

See below in key risks.

**Key milestones**

Implementation Q1 2023/2024.

**Key consultations**

Staff

**Key risks and mitigations**

The two agency staff are vastly experience chartered surveyors. It is likely that the permanent replacements will be of either a lower quality or more junior. Quality will have to be monitored closely to ensure service remains consistent.

**Equality impact screening**

Is there potential for the proposed saving to have a disproportionate adverse impact on any of the following groups:	
Disabled people	N
Particular ethnic groups	N
Men or Women (include impacts due to pregnancy/maternity)	N
People of particular sexual orientation/s	N
People who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone a process or part of a process of gender reassignment	N
People in particular age groups	N
Groups with particular faiths/beliefs	N
Marriage / civil partnership	N

If the screening has identified a potentially disproportionate adverse impact, you will need to complete an Equality Impact Assessment.

EIA required?	No
EIA to be completed by:	N/A
Deadline:	N/A

Lead officer for this proposal:	Tanveer Ghani, Director Property & Assets
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### **Budget Options Information**

Reference:	2023–24 GOV01
Service(s):	Executive & Member Services
Lead Member(s):	Cllr Mili Patel, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources and Reform

Savings Proposals:	Reduction in posts and more efficient allocation of tasks
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### **Financial and Staffing Information**

2022/23	
Total budget for the service(s) £'000:	3,900
Total post numbers in the services(s) (FTE):	35.6

	2023/24	2024/25
	£000	£000
Proposed saving:	89	N/A
	FTE	FTE
Proposed staffing reduction	2.0	

### **Proposed savings**

Reduction in posts and more efficient allocation of tasks. This saving will reduce the civic and support establishment in Executive & Member Services by 2 posts.

### **How would this affect users of this service?**

This proposal may reduce the number of member learning and development activities we support and we may need to source extra resource to support activities during peak times (e.g. member induction following local elections). There would be little resilience at times of absence.

There is a risk that – particularly at peak times – residents who have hitherto had a quick turnaround in respect of their enquiries to the Leader and the Chief Executive experience a slower response.

### **Key milestones**

A restructure report will be required in late 2022.

### **Key consultations**

May need to consult the party groups regarding the changes. Consultation will be undertaken in accordance with the Managing Change policy.

### **Key risks and mitigations**

The biggest risks will be the workload for remaining posts and a reduction in resilience in the face of absence or sickness. Review of processes and task allocation will be undertaken to mitigate this.

### **Equality impact screening**

Is there potential for the proposed saving to have a disproportionate adverse impact on any of the following groups? Please indicate Y/N below:	
Disabled people	N
Particular ethnic groups	N
Men or women	N
Particular sexual orientations	N
People who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone a process or part of a process of gender reassignment	N
Particular age groups	N
Groups with particular faiths/beliefs	N
Pregnancy/maternity	N
Marriage/civil partnership	N

If the screening has identified a potentially disproportionate adverse impact, you will need to complete an Equality Impact Assessment. Template and guidance available from [staff intranet](#)

EIA required?	No
EIA to be completed by:	N/A
Deadline:	N/A

Lead officer for this proposal:	Natalie Zara, Head of Executive and Member Services
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### **Budget Options Information**

Reference:	2023-24 GOV02
Service(s):	Human Resources
Lead Member(s):	Cllr Mili Patel, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources and Reform

Savings Proposals:	Restructures in HR
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### **Financial and Staffing Information**

2022/23	
Total budget for the service(s) £'000:	3,700
Total post numbers in the services(s) (FTE):	56

	2023/24
	£'000
Proposed saving:	85
	FTE
Proposed staffing reduction	1

### **Proposed savings**

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.

### **How would this affect users of this service?**

It is anticipated that these changes would have no significant impact of service users. The reduction in 2023/24 would be to reflect a reduction in demand due to digital innovations, in particular the case management system planned to be introduced as part of phase 2 of the Oracle programme and the introduction of a chatbot function for straightforward HR enquiries. The change is designed to create a better career path within the service.

### **Key milestones**

Restructure reports would be required in the autumn of 2023/24.

### **Key consultations**

Consultation with staff would be required in the autumn of 2023/24.

### **Key risks and mitigations**

In the event that the introduction of the case management system was delayed and/or the implementation of a chatbot function were delayed or was not feasible the reduction in capacity in HR could result in inadequate advice and support for managers and employees.

The Case Management system is now operational and work commences on the chatbot function will begin later in this financial year and operational early in the 2023/34 period.

### **Equality impact screening**

Is there potential for the proposed saving to have a disproportionate adverse impact on any of the following groups? Please indicate Y/N below:	
Disabled people	N
Particular ethnic groups	N
Men or women	N
Particular sexual orientations	N
People who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone a process or part of a process of gender reassignment	N
Particular age groups	N
Groups with particular faiths/beliefs	N
Pregnancy/maternity	N
Marriage/civil partnership	N

If the screening has identified a potentially disproportionate adverse impact, you will need to complete an Equality Impact Assessment. Template and guidance available from [staff intranet](#)

EIA required?	No
EIA to be completed by:	N/A
Deadline:	N/A

Lead officer for this proposal:	Martin Williams, Head of Human Resources
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### **Budget Options Information**

Reference:	2023-24 GOV03
Service(s):	Human Resources
Lead Member(s):	Cllr Mili Patel, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources and Reform

Savings Proposals:	Reduce Corporate Learning and Development Budget
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### **Financial and Staffing Information**

2022/23	
Total budget for the service(s) £'000:	3,700
Total post numbers in the services(s) (FTE):	56

	2023/24
	£'000
Proposed saving:	40
	FTE
Proposed staffing reduction	-

### **Proposed savings**

This saving would reduce the budget held by HR for Corporate training by £40k.

### **How would this affect users of this service?**

This would reduce the training available to staff and managers.

**Key milestones**

None

**Key consultations**

None

**Key risks and mitigations**

A reduction in this budget will mean some of the programmes currently offered, for example in respect of leadership and management development, could not be offered corporately without an alternative funding source being identified.

**Equality impact screening**

Is there potential for the proposed saving to have a disproportionate adverse impact on any of the following groups? Please indicate Y/N below:	
Disabled people	N
Particular ethnic groups	N
Men or women	N
Particular sexual orientations	N
People who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone a process or part of a process of gender reassignment	N
Particular age groups	N
Groups with particular faiths/beliefs	N
Pregnancy/maternity	N
Marriage/civil partnership	N

If the screening has identified a potentially disproportionate adverse impact, you will need to complete an Equality Impact Assessment. Template and guidance available from [staff intranet](#)

EIA required?	No
EIA to be completed by:	N/A
Deadline:	N/A

Lead officer for this proposal:	Martin Williams, Head of Human Resources
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### **Budget Options Information**

Reference:	2023-24 GOV04
Service(s):	Governance
Lead Member(s):	Cllr Mili Patel, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources and Reform

Savings Proposals:	Administrative and Miscellaneous Efficiencies
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### **Financial and Staffing Information**

2022/23	
Total budget for the service(s) £'000:	14,500
Total post numbers in the services(s) (FTE):	188.4

	2023/24
	£'000
Proposed saving:	12
	FTE
Proposed staffing reduction	0

### **Proposed savings**

This proposal concerns a shift to increased use of LinkedIn for recruitment advertising which is expected to reduce reliance on other advertising media.

**How would this affect users of this service?**

No significant difference in service is likely to be experience.

**Key milestones**

None

**Key consultations**

None

**Key risks and mitigations**

- This would make LinkedIn the main medium the council uses for attracting applicants from 2023/24. This may reduce the range and diversity of candidates for roles. It is intended to monitor the sources through which candidates apply so that by 2023/24 we have a clearer picture of the right balance between LinkedIn and more traditional job boards and can utilise the remaining budget to best effect.”

**Equality impact screening**

Is there potential for the proposed saving to have a disproportionate adverse impact on any of the following groups? Please indicate Y/N below:	
Disabled people	N
Particular ethnic groups	N
Men or women	N
Particular sexual orientations	N
People who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone a process or part of a process of gender reassignment	N
Particular age groups	N
Groups with particular faiths/beliefs	N
Pregnancy/maternity	N
Marriage/civil partnership	N

If the screening has identified a potentially disproportionate adverse impact, you will need to complete an Equality Impact Assessment. Template and guidance available from [staff intranet](#)

EIA required?	No
EIA to be completed by:	N/A
Deadline:	N/A

Lead officer for this proposal:	Debra Norman, Corporate Director Governance
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## **Budget Options Information**

Reference:	2023-24 GOV05
Service(s):	Legal Services
Lead Member(s):	Cllr Mili Patel, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources and Reform

Savings Proposals:	Increase income target for recoverable legal work costs
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### **Financial and Staffing Information**

2022/23	
Total budget for the service(s) £'000:	5,619
Total post numbers in the services(s) (FTE):	83

	2023/24
	£'000
Proposed saving:	30
	FTE
Proposed staffing reduction	-

### **Proposed savings**

Legal Services provides a number of services to council departments for which the council is reimbursed by third parties. This is mostly in relation to s106 agreements and highways agreement, where the developer indemnifies the councils in respect of its legal costs and various property related services, such as agreeing lease variation documentation, where, in the same way, the external third party beneficiary of the agreement reimburses the council for its legal costs.

This saving would increase the contribution this income is recognised to have to make to the Legal Services budget.

**How would this affect users of this service?**

There would be no effect.

**Key milestones**

None

**Key consultations**

None

**Key risks and mitigations**

Although this income depends on activity by developers and other third parties, this proposed increase is considered low risk on the basis of actual income achieved in recent years.

**Equality impact screening**

Is there potential for the proposed saving to have a disproportionate adverse impact on any of the following groups? Please indicate Y/N below:	
Disabled people	N
Particular ethnic groups	N
Men or women	N
Particular sexual orientations	N
People who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone a process or part of a process of gender reassignment	N
Particular age groups	N
Groups with particular faiths/beliefs	N
Pregnancy/maternity	N
Marriage/civil partnership	N

If the screening has identified a potentially disproportionate adverse impact, you will need to complete an Equality Impact Assessment. Template and guidance available from [staff intranet](#)

EIA required?	No
EIA to be completed by:	N/A
Deadline:	N/A

Lead officer for this proposal:	Debra Norman, Corporate Director Governance
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### **Budget Options Information**

Reference:	2023-24 GOV06
Service(s):	Legal Services
Lead Member(s):	Cllr Mili Patel, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources and Reform

Savings Proposals:	Reduce Legal Fees Budget
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### **Financial and Staffing Information**

2022/23	
Total budget for the service(s) £'000:	5,619
Total post numbers in the services(s) (FTE):	83

	2023/24
	£'000
Proposed saving:	50
	FTE
Proposed staffing reduction	-

### **Proposed savings**

This would reduce the provision in the legal budget for payment of court fees and the costs of advice and representation by barrister in case brought by or against the council.

### **How would this affect users of this service?**

Based on trends in recent financial years, steps taken in Legal Services to develop expertise and increase in house advocacy, it is considered the budget can be reduced by this amount without demand exceeding the remaining budget. In this case there will be no impact on council departments.

### **Key milestones**

None

### **Key consultations**

None

### **Key risks and mitigations**

There is a risk that demand may exceed the remaining budget, for example if there is a surge in cases brought against the council where representation by barristers is needed. If there is inadequate funding in this budget to meet the demand for payment of fees and support from barristers, departments would be unable to obtain specialist advice and court representation without funding this from their own resources. Currently these items are only funded by departments here they relate to cases which are not part of the routine work of the service.

### **Equality impact screening**

Is there potential for the proposed saving to have a disproportionate adverse impact on any of the following groups? Please indicate Y/N below:	
Disabled people	N
Particular ethnic groups	N
Men or women	N
Particular sexual orientations	N
People who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone a process or part of a process of gender reassignment	N
Particular age groups	N
Groups with particular faiths/beliefs	N
Pregnancy/maternity	N
Marriage/civil partnership	N

If the screening has identified a potentially disproportionate adverse impact, you will need to complete an Equality Impact Assessment. Template and guidance available from [staff intranet](#)

EIA required?	No
EIA to be completed by:	N/A
Deadline:	N/A

Lead officer for this proposal:	Debra Norman, Corporate Director Governance
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### **Budget Options Information**

Reference:	2023-24 GOV07
Service(s):	Legal Services
Lead Member(s):	Cllr Mili Patel, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources and Reform

Savings Proposals:	Miscellaneous expenses reduction
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### **Financial and Staffing Information**

2022/23	
Total budget for the service(s) £'000:	5,619
Total post numbers in the services(s) (FTE):	83

	2023/24	2024/25
	£'000	£'000
Proposed saving:	3	
	FTE	FTE
Proposed staffing reduction	-	-

### **Proposed savings**

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.

**How would this affect users of this service?**

None

**Key milestones**

None

**Key consultations**

None

**Key risks and mitigations**

This reduction relies on the postal service and on-line means of transmission being available and cheaper for the sending of these documents which may change over time.

**Equality impact screening**

Is there potential for the proposed saving to have a disproportionate adverse impact on any of the following groups? Please indicate Y/N below:	
Disabled people	N
Particular ethnic groups	N
Men or women	N
Particular sexual orientations	N
People who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone a process or part of a process of gender reassignment	N
Particular age groups	N
Groups with particular faiths/beliefs	N
Pregnancy/maternity	N
Marriage/civil partnership	N

If the screening has identified a potentially disproportionate adverse impact, you will need to complete an Equality Impact Assessment. Template and guidance available from [staff intranet](#)

EIA required?	No
EIA to be completed by:	N/A
Deadline:	N/A

Lead officer for this proposal:	Debra Norman, Corporate Director Governance
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### **Budget Options Information**

Reference:	2023-24 GOV08
Service(s):	Legal Services
Lead Member(s):	Cllr Mili Patel, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources and Reform

Savings Proposals:	Miscellaneous expenses reduction
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### **Financial and Staffing Information**

2022/23	
Total budget for the service(s) £'000:	5,619
Total post numbers in the services(s) (FTE):	83

	2023/24
	£'000
Proposed saving:	19.2
	FTE
Proposed staffing reduction	-

### **Proposed savings**

This saving would remove a budget utilised for unplanned overhead expenses.

### **How would this affect users of this service?**

None

**Key milestones**

None

**Key consultations**

None

**Key risks and mitigations**

This reduction would reduce scope in Legal Services to manage unexpected budget pressure.

**Equality impact screening**

Is there potential for the proposed saving to have a disproportionate adverse impact on any of the following groups? Please indicate Y/N below:	
Disabled people	N
Particular ethnic groups	N
Men or women	N
Particular sexual orientations	N
People who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone a process or part of a process of gender reassignment	N
Particular age groups	N
Groups with particular faiths/beliefs	N
Pregnancy/maternity	N
Marriage/civil partnership	N

If the screening has identified a potentially disproportionate adverse impact, you will need to complete an Equality Impact Assessment. Template and guidance available from [staff intranet](#)

EIA required?	No
EIA to be completed by:	N/A
Deadline:	N/A

Lead officer for this proposal:	Debra Norman, Corporate Director Governance
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### **Budget Options Information**

Reference:	2023-24 GOV09
Service(s):	Human Resources
Lead Member(s):	Cllr Mili Patel, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources and Reform

Savings Proposals:	Administrative and Miscellaneous Efficiencies
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### **Financial and Staffing Information**

2022/23	
Total budget for the service(s) £'000:	3,700
Total post numbers in the services(s) (FTE):	56

	2023/24
	£'000
Proposed saving:	21.7
	FTE
Proposed staffing reduction	0

### **Proposed savings**

This proposal concerns aligning salary budgets with the establishment.

### **How would this affect users of this service?**

No significant difference in service is likely to be experienced.

### **Key milestones**

None

### **Key consultations**

None

### **Key risks and mitigations**

- Election of TU representatives on higher grades might mean a future increase in the associated salary budget.

### **Equality impact screening**

Is there potential for the proposed saving to have a disproportionate adverse impact on any of the following groups? Please indicate Y/N below:	
Disabled people	N
Particular ethnic groups	N
Men or women	N
Particular sexual orientations	N
People who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone a process or part of a process of gender reassignment	N
Particular age groups	N
Groups with particular faiths/beliefs	N
Pregnancy/maternity	N
Marriage/civil partnership	N

If the screening has identified a potentially disproportionate adverse impact, you will need to complete an Equality Impact Assessment. Template and guidance available from [staff intranet](#)

EIA required?	No
EIA to be completed by:	N/A
Deadline:	N/A

Lead officer for this proposal:	Debra Norman, Corporate Director Governance
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### **Budget Options Information**

Reference:	2023-24 GOV10
Service(s):	Procurement
Lead Member(s):	Cllr Mili Patel, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources and Reform

Savings Proposals:	Review structure of the Procurement team with overall impact leading to a reduction in the establishment by 1 FTE – Approximate saving £50k
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### **Financial and Staffing Information**

2022/23	
Total budget for the service(s) £'000:	1,284
Total post numbers in the services(s) (FTE):	14.6

	2023/24
	£'000
Proposed saving:	50
	FTE
Proposed staffing reduction	1

### **Proposed savings**

Review structure of the Procurement team with overall impact of reduction in the establishment by 1 FTE – Approximate saving £50k.

**How would this affect users of this service?**

These roles gather data and develop intelligence and training tools, this will be mitigated by absorbing some of these aspects across the team.

**Key milestones**

Q1 Restructure complete.

**Key consultations**

With the staff affected.

**Key risks and mitigations**

These roles gather data and develop intelligence and training tools, this will be mitigated by absorbing some of these aspects across the team.

**Equality impact screening**

Is there potential for the proposed saving to have a disproportionate adverse impact on any of the following groups? Please indicate Y/N below:	
Disabled people	N
Particular ethnic groups	N
Men or women	N
Particular sexual orientations	N
People who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone a process or part of a process of gender reassignment	N
Particular age groups	N
Groups with particular faiths/beliefs	N
Pregnancy/maternity	N
Marriage/civil partnership	N

If the screening has identified a potentially disproportionate adverse impact, you will need to complete an Equality Impact Assessment. Template and guidance available from [staff intranet](#)

EIA required?	No
EIA to be completed by:	N/A
Deadline:	N/A

Lead officer for this proposal:	Rajesh Shori, Head of Procurement
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### **Budget Options Information**

Reference:	2023-24 GOV11
Service(s):	Governance
Lead Member(s):	Cllr Mili Patel, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources and Reform

Savings Proposals:	Additional digital savings to be delivered through the Digital Transformation Programme. Detailed proposals currently being scoped but likely to be achieved through projects including electronic document management, further implementation of DocuSign, sharing documents with external parties via M365, chatbots for routine HR and Legal queries
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### **Financial and Staffing Information**

2022/23	
Total budget for the service(s) £'000:	14,500
Total post numbers in the services(s) (FTE):	188.4

	2023/24	2024/25
	£'000	£'000
Proposed saving:	75	N/A
	FTE	FTE
Proposed staffing reduction	Approx. 1.	N/A

### **Proposed savings**

Reductions in headcount through efficiencies delivered through digital solutions.

### **How would this affect users of this service?**

To be confirmed but unlikely to impact on external service users. May involve new ways of working for other council departments who are customers of this service.

### **Key milestones**

TBC

### **Key consultations**

TBC

### **Key risks and mitigations**

There is a risk that work to scope, develop and implement new systems cannot be made in time to enable savings to be delivered by the start of 2023/24. This will be mitigated by bringing in additional business analysis support and capacity to backfill posts in the service area to allow them to act as SMEs.

### **Equality impact screening**

This section will be completed when detailed more proposals have been developed.

Is there potential for the proposed saving to have a disproportionate adverse impact on any of the following groups? Please indicate Y/N below:	
Disabled people	N
Particular ethnic groups	N
Men or women	N
Particular sexual orientations	N
People who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone a process or part of a process of gender reassignment	N
Particular age groups	N
Groups with particular faiths/beliefs	N
Pregnancy/maternity	N
Marriage/civil partnership	N

If the screening has identified a potentially disproportionate adverse impact, you will need to complete an Equality Impact Assessment. Template and guidance available from [staff intranet](#)

EIA required?	No
EIA to be completed by:	N/A
Deadline:	N/A

Lead officer for this proposal:	Debra Norman, Corporate Director, Governance
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### **Budget Options Information**

<b>Reference:</b>	2023-24 CORP1, 2 and 3 combined
<b>Service(s):</b>	Cross department – commissioning services, performance and data analysis, communications and engagement services
<b>Lead Member(s):</b>	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources and Reform

<b>Savings Proposals:</b>	Thematic review of commissioning services, performance and data analysis, communications and engagement services across the council to identify opportunities for savings through improved alignment and effective, efficient services.
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### **Financial and Staffing Information**

<b>2022/23</b>	
<b>Total budget for the service(s) £'000:</b>	N/A
<b>Total post numbers in the services(s) (FTE):</b>	N/A

	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>2024/25</b>
	£'000	£'000
<b>Proposed saving:</b>	600	
	FTE	FTE
<b>Proposed staffing reduction</b>	6 (estimate)	

### **Proposed savings**

Reduction staff in commissioning roles based on estimate of 2 x PO4 posts. Reduction staff in performance and data analysis roles based on estimate of 2 x PO4 posts.

Reduction staff in communications and engagement services roles based on estimate of 2 x PO4 posts.

Capacity to be realised by better alignment of services and/or additional use of technology to increase efficiency. More detailed proposals will be developed as part of the review process.

### **How would this affect users of this service?**

To be determined, but unlikely to directly impact on external service users

### **Key milestones**

TBC

### **Key consultations**

TBC

### **Key risks and mitigations**

These will be identified as part of the review process.

### **Equality impact screening**

This section will be completed once more detailed proposals have been developed as part of the review.

Is there potential for the proposed saving to have a disproportionate adverse impact on any of the following groups? Please indicate Y/N below:	
Disabled people	N
Particular ethnic groups	N
Men or women	N
Particular sexual orientations	N
People who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone a process or part of a process of gender reassignment	N
Particular age groups	N
Groups with particular faiths/beliefs	N
Pregnancy/maternity	N
Marriage/civil partnership	N

*If the screening has identified a potentially disproportionate adverse impact, you will need to complete an Equality Impact Assessment. Template and guidance available from [staff intranet](#)*

EIA required?	No
EIA to be completed by:	N/A
Deadline:	N/A

Lead officer for this proposal:	Sadie East, Operational Director, Transformation
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## Budget Options Information

<b>Reference:</b>	2023-24 CORP4
<b>Service(s):</b>	Cross department – procurement
<b>Lead Member(s):</b>	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources and Reform

<b>Savings Proposals:</b>	Procurement savings
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### Financial and Staffing Information

<b>2022/23</b>	
<b>Total budget for the service(s) £'000:</b>	N/A
<b>Total post numbers in the services(s) (FTE):</b>	N/A

	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>2024/25</b>
	£'000	£'000
<b>Proposed saving:</b>	500	
	FTE	FTE
<b>Proposed staffing reduction</b>	Nil	

### Proposed savings

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

### How would this affect users of this service?

To be determined, but unlikely to directly impact on external service users

### Key milestones

TBC

### **Key consultations**

TBC

### **Key risks and mitigations**

These will be identified as part of the review process.

### **Equality impact screening**

This section will be completed once more detailed proposals have been developed as part of the review.

Is there potential for the proposed saving to have a disproportionate adverse impact on any of the following groups? Please indicate Y/N below:	
Disabled people	N
Particular ethnic groups	N
Men or women	N
Particular sexual orientations	N
People who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone a process or part of a process of gender reassignment	N
Particular age groups	N
Groups with particular faiths/beliefs	N
Pregnancy/maternity	N
Marriage/civil partnership	N

*If the screening has identified a potentially disproportionate adverse impact, you will need to complete an Equality Impact Assessment. Template and guidance available from [staff intranet](#)*

EIA required?	No
EIA to be completed by:	N/A
Deadline:	N/A

Lead officer for this proposal:	Debra Norman, Corporate Director, Governance
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## Budget Options Information

<b>Reference:</b>	2023-24 CORP5
<b>Service(s):</b>	Cross department – CMT Review
<b>Lead Member(s):</b>	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources and Reform

<b>Savings Proposals:</b>	These savings result from the changes to the Council’s officer structure and senior management posts agreed by Cabinet in June 2022.
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### Financial and Staffing Information

<b>2022/23</b>	
<b>Total budget for the service(s) £'000:</b>	N/A
<b>Total post numbers in the services(s) (FTE):</b>	N/A

	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>2024/25</b>
	£'000	£'000
<b>Proposed saving:</b>	200	
	FTE	FTE
<b>Proposed staffing reduction</b>	1	

### Proposed savings

These savings arise from the changes to the Council’s structure agreed by Cabinet in June 2022 as part of the report *Officer Structure of the Council and Senior Management*. The changes deleted four Strategic Director posts and the posts of Assistant Chief Executive, Director of Finance and Director of Legal HR, Audit and Investigations. They were replaced by six Corporate Director posts who together with the Chief Executive form the Council’s Management Team (CMT). This is a net reduction of 1 CMT post.

### How would this affect users of this service?

There is no direct impact on external service users.

### **Key milestones**

None – this restructure has already been completed

### **Key consultations**

No further consultations are required.

### **Key risks and mitigations**

None – this restructure has already been completed.

### **Equality impact screening**

This section will be completed once more detailed proposals have been developed as part of the review.

Is there potential for the proposed saving to have a disproportionate adverse impact on any of the following groups? Please indicate Y/N below:	
Disabled people	N
Particular ethnic groups	N
Men or women	N
Particular sexual orientations	N
People who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone a process or part of a process of gender reassignment	N
Particular age groups	N
Groups with particular faiths/beliefs	N
Pregnancy/maternity	N
Marriage/civil partnership	N

*If the screening has identified a potentially disproportionate adverse impact, you will need to complete an Equality Impact Assessment. Template and guidance available from [staff intranet](#)*

EIA required?	No
EIA to be completed by:	N/A
Deadline:	N/A

Lead officer for this proposal:	N/A
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## Budget Options Information

<b>Reference:</b>	2023-24 CORP6
<b>Service(s):</b>	Corporate
<b>Lead Member(s):</b>	Cross Directorate

<b>Savings Proposals:</b>	Efficiency savings from the former Regeneration & Environment Directorate budgets
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## Financial and Staffing Information

2022/23	
<b>Total budget for the service(s) £'000:</b>	50,763 (full R&E service)
<b>Total post numbers in the services(s) (FTE):</b>	439.9

	<b>2023/24</b>
	£'000
<b>Proposed saving:</b>	1,300
	FTE
<b>Proposed staffing reduction</b>	0

### Proposed savings

A review of budgets across the whole Directorate has been undertaken to take a top-slice of budgets. This has been in anticipation of the requirement to deliver savings in relation to the RLS programme contract awards in 2023.

As the savings has been delivered early, the budget has been taken corporately and included in overall package of savings for full transparency.

### How would this affect users of this service?

This exercise was intended to remove funds that have been deemed to be surplus to the structural revenue requirement of the directorate and so their removal would have no adverse operational impact.

### Key milestones

The budget review has been undertaken and saving identified.

### Key consultations

Budget holders

### Key risks and mitigations

None


## **Equality impact screening**

Is there potential for the proposed saving to have a disproportionate adverse impact on any of the following groups? Please indicate Y/N below:	
Disabled people	N
Particular ethnic groups	N
Men or women	N
Particular sexual orientations	N
People who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone a process or part of a process of gender reassignment	N
Particular age groups	N
Groups with particular faiths/beliefs	N
Pregnancy/maternity	N
Marriage/civil partnership	N

*If the screening has identified a potentially disproportionate adverse impact, you will need to complete an Equality Impact Assessment. Template and guidance available from [staff intranet](#)*

EIA required?	No
EIA to be completed by:	N/A
Deadline:	N/A

Lead officer for this proposal:	N/A
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 <b>Brent</b>	<b>Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee</b> 24 January 2023
	<b>Report from the Director of Communities</b>
<b>Updates to the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee's Work Programme 2022-23</b>	

<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All
<b>Key or Non-Key Decision:</b>	Non-Key Decision
<b>Open or Part/Fully Exempt:</b> <small>(If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)</small>	Open
<b>No. of Appendices:</b>	One Appendix A – Scrutiny Work Plan 2022-23
<b>Background Papers:</b>	None
<b>Contact Officer(s):</b> <small>(Name, Title, Contact Details)</small>	Jason Sigba, Strategy Lead – Scrutiny, Strategy and Partnerships <a href="mailto:Jason.Sigba@brent.gov.uk">Jason.Sigba@brent.gov.uk</a>  Tom Pickup, Policy Partnerships and Scrutiny Manager, Strategy and Partnerships <a href="mailto:Tom.Pickup@brent.gov.uk">Tom.Pickup@brent.gov.uk</a>  Lorna Hughes, Director of Communities <a href="mailto:Lorna.Hughes@brent.gov.uk">Lorna.Hughes@brent.gov.uk</a>

## 1.0 Purpose of the Report

1.1 To provide an update on the changes to the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee's work programme.

## 2.0 Recommendation(s)

2.1 That Committee members note the report and the changes to the work programme within.

## 3.0 Detail

- 3.1 The work programme sets out the items which the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee will consider during the municipal year.
- 3.2 The work programme of a scrutiny committee is intended to be a flexible, living document that can adapt and change according to the needs of a committee. The changes set out are reflective of this.
- 3.3. The agenda of the 24 January 2023 meeting has been updated to remove items on 'Climate Change' and 'Spaces for Community Use'.
- 3.4 The item titled 'Spaces for Community Use' has been rescheduled to the Committee Meeting on 22 February 2023 (please see Appendix A).
- 3.5 The 'Climate Change' item will now be heard at the Committee meeting on 25 April 2023 (please see Appendix A).
- 3.6. The agenda of the 22 February 2023 meeting has been updated to remove the Complaints Annual Report (please see Appendix A).
- 3.7 An additional item on the 'Cost of Living ' crisis has been added to the work plan, and will be heard at the Committee meeting on 25 April 2023 (please see Appendix A).

#### **4.0 Financial Implications**

- 4.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report. However, budget and financial issues are addressed in the 'Financial Implications' section of any reports to committee, requested as part of its work programme.

#### **5.0 Legal Implications**

- 5.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report. However, legal implications are addressed in the 'Legal Implications' section of any reports to committee, requested as part of its work programme.

#### **6.0 Equality Implications**

- 6.1 There are no equality implications arising from this report.

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

- 7.1 Ward members are regularly informed about the Committee's work plan in the Chair's report to Full Council. There is ongoing consultation with other relevant stakeholders.

**Report sign off:**

**Lorna Hughes**

Director of Communities

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Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee Work Plan 2022-2023

19 July 2022

Agenda Item	Leader/Deputy Leader/Cabinet Members	Chief Executive/Strategic Directors	External Organisations
Committee Work Programme 2022/23 – formal agreement	<p>Cllr Mili Patel, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources and Reform</p> <p>Cllr Shama Tatler, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Planning</p> <p>Cllr Krupa Sheth, Lead Member for Environment, Infrastructure and Climate Action</p> <p>Cllr Harbi Farah, Cabinet Member for Safer Communities and Public Protection</p> <p>Cllr Ellie Southwood, Cabinet Member for Jobs, Economy and Citizen Experience</p> <p>Cllr Fleur Donnelly-Jackson, Cabinet Member for Community Engagement, Equalities and Culture</p>	Shazia Hussain, Assistant Chief Executive	
Digital inclusion strategy	Cllr Mili Patel, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources and Reform	Peter Gadsdon, Strategic Director, Customer and Digital Services	
Wembley Events Review paper	<p>Cllr Krupa Sheth, Lead Member for Environment, Infrastructure and Climate Action</p> <p>Cllr Harbi Farah, Cabinet Member for Safer Communities and Public Protection</p>	Alan Lunt, Strategic Director, Regeneration and Environment	Football Association, Metropolitan Police
Medium Term Financial Strategy – summer update	Cllr Mili Patel, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources and Reform	Minesh Patel, Director of Finance	

**6 September 2022**

<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Leader/Deputy Leader/Cabinet Members</b>	<b>Chief Executive/Corporate Directors</b>	<b>External Organisations</b>
Budget Scrutiny Task Group	Cllr Mili Patel, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources and Reform	Minesh Patel, Corporate Director of Finance and Resources	
Cost of living crisis	Cllr Ellie Southwood, Cabinet Member for Jobs, Economy and Citizen Experience	Peter Gadsdon, Corporate Director, Resident Services	

**10 November 2022**

<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Leader/Deputy Leader/Cabinet Members</b>	<b>Chief Executive/Corporate Directors/Operational Directors</b>	<b>External Organisations</b>
An update on Brent Council grants programmes	Cllr Fleur Donnelly-Jackson, Cabinet Member for Community Engagement, Equalities and Culture	Lorna Hughes, Director of Communities	
Safer Brent Partnership Annual Report 2021/22	Cllr Harbi Farah, Cabinet Member for Safer Communities and Public Protection	Carolyn Downs, Chief Executive	Metropolitan Police
Police Engagement in Brent	Cllr Harbi Farah, Cabinet Member for Safer Communities and Public Protection	Carolyn Downs, Chief Executive	Metropolitan Police
Draft Borough Plan 2023-27	Cllr Muhammed Butt, Leader of the Council	Carolyn Downs, Chief Executive	

13 December 2022

Agenda Item	Leader/Deputy Leader/Cabinet Members	Chief Executive/Corporate Directors	External Organisations
Redefining Local Services	Cllr Krupa Sheth, Lead Member for Environment, Infrastructure and Climate Action	Peter Gadsdon, Corporate Director, Resident Services	

24 January 2023


Agenda Item	Leader/Deputy Leader/Cabinet Members/Non-Executive Members	Chief Executive/Corporate Directors/Operational Directors	External Organisations
Budget Scrutiny Task Group Findings	Cllr Rita Conneely, Chair of Resources and Public Realm Committee	Lorna Hughes, Director of Communities	

22 February 2023

Agenda Item	Leader/Deputy Leader/Cabinet Members	Chief Executive/Corporate Directors	External Organisations
Multi-Agency Flood Planning	Cllr Krupa Sheth, Cabinet Member for Environment, Infrastructure and Climate Action	tbc	Thames Water Environment Agency
Migration Scheme	tbc	tbc	tbc
Spaces for Community Use	Cllr Mili Patel, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources and Reform	Minesh Patel, Corporate Director, Finance and Resources	

25 April 2023

Agenda Item	Leader/Deputy Leader/Cabinet Members	Chief Executive/Corporate Directors	External Organisations
Budget Oversight <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Quarter 3 Financial Report 2022/23</li></ul>	Cllr Mili Patel, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources and Reform	Minesh Patel, Corporate Director, Finance and Resources	
Cost of Living Update	Cllr Ellie Southwood, Cabinet Member for Jobs, Economy and Citizen Experience	Peter Gadsdon, Corporate Director, Resident Services	
Climate Change	Cllr Krupa Sheth, Lead Member for Environment, Infrastructure and Climate Action	Peter Gadsdon, Corporate Director, Resident Services	

	<p align="center"><b>Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee</b> 24 January 2023</p>
	<p align="center"><b>Report from Communities &amp; Regeneration</b></p>
<p><b>Scrutiny Recommendations Tracker</b></p>	

<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All
<b>Key or Non-Key Decision:</b>	Non-Key Decision
<b>Open or Part/Fully Exempt:</b> <small>(If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)</small>	Open
<b>No. of Appendices:</b>	One Appendix A – Recommendations Scrutiny Tracker
<b>Background Papers:</b>	None
<b>Contact Officer(s):</b> <small>(Name, Title, Contact Details)</small>	<p>Jason Sigba, Strategy Lead – Scrutiny, Strategy and Partnerships <a href="mailto:Jason.Sigba@brent.gov.uk">Jason.Sigba@brent.gov.uk</a></p> <p>Tom Pickup, Policy Partnerships and Scrutiny Manager, Strategy and Partnerships <a href="mailto:Tom.Pickup@brent.gov.uk">Tom.Pickup@brent.gov.uk</a></p> <p>Lorna Hughes, Director of Communities <a href="mailto:Lorna.Hughes@brent.gov.uk">Lorna.Hughes@brent.gov.uk</a></p>

## 1.0 Purpose of the Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to present the Scrutiny Recommendations Tracker to the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee.

## 2.0 Recommendation

2.1 That the progress of the previous recommendations, suggestions, and information requests of the Committee be noted (Appendix A).

## 3.0 Detail

- 3.1 The Recommendations Tracker tabled at the 24 January meeting relates to the forthcoming 2022 – 2023 municipal year. It contains one update from the previous municipal year from the 9 February 2022 meeting on the item relating to flooding.
- 3.2 In accordance with Part 4 of the Brent Council Constitution (Standing Orders of Committees), Brent Council scrutiny committees may make recommendations to the Full Council or the Cabinet with respect to any functions which are the responsibility of the Executive, or of any functions which are not the responsibility of the Executive, or on matters which affect the borough or its inhabitants.
- 3.3 The Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee may not make executive decisions. Scrutiny recommendations therefore require consideration and decision by the appropriate decision maker; the Cabinet or Full Council for policy and budgetary decisions.
- 3.4 The Scrutiny Recommendations Tracker (attached in Appendix A) provides a summary of scrutiny recommendations made during the municipal year, in order to track executive decisions and any implementation progress. It also includes suggestions of improvement and information requests, as captured in the minutes of the committee meetings.
- 3.5 Recommendations are removed from the tracker when they have been rejected or when implemented successfully and the review date has passed. This is the same for suggestions of improvement and information requests.

#### **4.0 Procedure for Recommendations from Scrutiny Committees**

- 4.1 Where scrutiny committees make recommendations to the Cabinet, these will be referred to the Cabinet requesting an Executive Response and the issue will be published on the Council's Forward Plan. This will instigate the preparation of a report to Cabinet and the necessary consideration of the response.
- 4.2 Where scrutiny committees develop reports or recommendations to Full Council (e.g. in the case of policy and budgetary decisions), the same process will be followed, with a report to Cabinet to agree an Executive Response, and thereafter, a report to Full Council for consideration of the scrutiny report and recommendations along with the Cabinet's response.
- 4.3 Where scrutiny committees have powers under their terms of reference to make reports or recommendations to external decision makers (e.g. NHS bodies), the relevant external decision maker shall be notified in writing, providing them with a copy of the Committee's report and recommendations, and requesting a response.
- 4.4 Once the Executive Response has been agreed, the scrutiny committee shall receive a report to receive the response and the Committee may review

implementation of the Executive's decisions after such a period as these may reasonably be implemented (review date).

## **5.0 Financial Implications**

5.1 There are no financial implications for the purposes of this report.

## **6.0 Legal Implications**

6.1 Section 9F, Part 1A of the Local Government Act 2000, *Overview and scrutiny committees: functions*, requires that Executive arrangements by a local authority must ensure that its overview and scrutiny committees have the power to make reports or recommendations to the authority or the executive with respect to the discharge of any functions which are or are not the responsibility of the executive, or on matters which affect the Authority's area or the inhabitants of that area.

6.2 Section 9FE, *Duty of authority or executive to respond to overview and scrutiny committee*, requires that the authority or executive;-  
(a) consider the report or recommendations,  
(b) respond to the overview and scrutiny committee indicating what (if any) action the authority, or the executive, proposes to take,  
(c) if the overview and scrutiny committee has published the report or recommendations, publish the response, within two months beginning with the date on which the authority or executive received the report or recommendations.

## **7.0 Equality Implications**

7.1 There are no equality implications for the purposes of this report.

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

8.1 None for the purposes of this report.

**Report sign off:**

**Lorna Hughes**  
Director of Communities

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## Appendix A

### Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee (RPRSC) Scrutiny Tracker 2022-23

These tables are to track the progress of scrutiny recommendations and suggestions for improvement made by the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee, with details provided by the relevant lead departments. It is a standing item on the Committee's agendas, so that the Committee can keep track of the recommendations, suggestions for improvement and information requests it has made, alongside the related decisions made and implementation status. The tracker lists the recommendations, suggestions and information requests made by the committee throughout a municipal year and any recommendations not fully implemented from previous years.

The tracker documents the scrutiny recommendations made to Cabinet, the dates when they were made, the decision maker who can make each decision in respect of the recommendations, the date the decision was made and the actual decision taken. The executive decision taken may be the same as the scrutiny recommendation (e.g. the recommendation was "agreed") or it may be a different decision, which should be clarified here. The tracker also asks if the respective executive decisions have been implemented and this should be updated accordingly throughout the year.

Scrutiny Task Group report recommendations should be included here but referenced collectively (e.g. the name of the scrutiny inquiry and date of the agreement of the scrutiny report and recommendations by the scrutiny committee, along with the respective dates when the decision maker(s) considered and responded to the report and recommendations. The Committee should generally review the implementation of scrutiny task group report recommendations separately with stand-alone agenda items at relevant junctures – e.g. the Executive Response to a scrutiny report and after six months or a year, or upon expected implementation of the agreed recommendation of report. The "Expected Implementation Date" should provide an indication of a suitable time for review.

#### Key:

**Date of scrutiny committee meeting** - For each table, the date of the scrutiny committee meeting when the recommendation was made is provided in the subtitle header.

**Subject** – this is the item title on the Committee's agenda; the subject being considered.

**Scrutiny Recommendation** – This is the text of the scrutiny recommendation as it appears on the minutes – **in bold**.

**Decision Maker** – the decision maker for the recommendation, (**in bold**), e.g. the Cabinet (for Council executive decisions), Full Council (for Council policy and budgetary decisions), or an NHS executive body for recommendations to the NHS. In brackets, (date), the date on which the Executive Response was made.

**Executive Response** – The response of the decision maker (e.g. Cabinet decision) for the recommendation. This should be the executive decision as recorded in the minutes. The Executive Response should provide details of what, if anything, the executive will do in response to the scrutiny recommendation. Ideally, the Executive Response will include a decision to either agree/reject/or amend the scrutiny recommendation and where the scrutiny recommendation is rejected, provide an explanation of why. In brackets, provide the date of Cabinet/executive meeting that considered the scrutiny recommendation and made the decision.

**Department** – the Council directorate (and/or external agencies) that are responsible for implementation of the agreed executive decision/response. Also provided, for reference only, the relevant Cabinet Member and Corporate Director.

**Implementation Status** – This is the progress of any implementation of the agreed Executive Response against key milestones. This may cross reference to any specific actions and deadlines that may be provided in the Executive Response. This should be as specific and quantifiable as possible. This should also provide, as far as possible, any evidenced outcomes or improvements resulting from implementation.

**Review Date** - This is the expected date when the agreed Executive Response should be fully implemented and when the scrutiny committee may usefully review the implementation and any evidenced outcomes (e.g. service improvements). (Note: this is the implementation of the agreed Executive Response, which may not be the same as the scrutiny recommendation).

**Recorded Recommendations to Cabinet from RPRSC**

Subject	Scrutiny Recommendation	Decision Maker & Executive Response	Cabinet Member, Lead Officer, and Department	Implementation Status	Review date
6 Sept 2022 - Cost of Living crisis	Lobby central government for increase to the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates to help alleviate the burden of the cost of living crisis on residents	To follow.	<p>Cllr Ellie Southwood, Cabinet Member for Jobs, Economy and Citizen Experience</p> <p>Cllr Promise Knight, Cabinet Member for Housing, Homelessness &amp; Renters Security</p> <p>Peter Gadsdon, Corporate Director, Resident Services</p>	To follow.	24 February 2023
	Use Council's role and relationship with the NHS to lobby for more support for our residents to strengthen our efforts in helping them through the cost of living crisis.	To follow.	<p>Cllr Neil Nerva, Cabinet Member for Public Health &amp; Adult Social Care</p> <p>Phil Porter, Corporate Director, ASC &amp; Health</p>	To follow.	24 February 2023

**Recorded suggestions for improvement from RPRSC to Council departments/partners**

Meeting date and agenda item	Suggestions for improvement	Council Department/External Partner	Response / Status
8 Nov 2022 – Brent Council's grants programmes	Ensure monies distributed as part of the Carbon Offset Fund are targeted to communities/areas in most need.	Chris Whyte, Resident Services	The Council's Cabinet meeting on 17 October 2022 agreed new proposals for the future Brent Carbon Offset Fund allocations to ensure that the fund is being utilised in the most effective way going forward – both in terms of reducing carbon emissions and complying with the fund's criteria; and supporting areas of the climate emergency programme that require it the most.

		<p>Cabinet agreed that the spend within Brent's Carbon Offset Fund would be split three ways to focus on the following three key areas:</p> <p>A) Energy efficiency works within the council's own housing stock - <b>60%</b>  B) Energy efficiency works within the council's Community and Foundation schools' estate - <b>30%</b>  C) Other – such as grant schemes and project delivery for schemes which meet GLA criteria - <b>10%</b></p> <p>It is suggested that this policy remain in place for the first £3,000,000 generated and accessible through Brent's Carbon Offset Fund, and that following this funding limit being reached the policy would be reviewed and re-confirmed by the Council's Cabinet.</p> <p>The Cabinet report which contains further detail and the rationale can be found here:  <a href="https://democracy.brent.gov.uk/documents/s126198/13.%20Cabinet%20Proposals%20for%20the%20Brent%20Carbon%20Offset%20Fund%20and%20Together%20Towards%20Zero%20Grant.pdf">https://democracy.brent.gov.uk/documents/s126198/13.%20Cabinet%20Proposals%20for%20the%20Brent%20Carbon%20Offset%20Fund%20and%20Together%20Towards%20Zero%20Grant.pdf</a></p>
Introduce a ballot system into the 'You Decide' initiative, whereby residents who wish to attend decision days apply for tickets in a ballot. Tickets could then be allocated randomly to avoid block voting and popularity contests.	Lorna Hughes, Communities & Regeneration	A specialist organisation can be engaged to undertake the development of a ballot that will select a cohort of people who represent the borough profile. We will explore the feasibility and cost of this service and report back to the Committee by February 2023.
Capture and include information such as age and ethnicity in 'You Decide' data gathering to ensure attendees voting are representative of the borough's demographic.	Lorna Hughes, Communities & Regeneration	Demographic information will be requested from everyone who takes part in future events.
Add a requirement for those applying for monies as part of the 'You Decide' initiative to have someone with lived experience as part of their presentation.	Lorna Hughes, Communities & Regeneration	It will be made clear that service users/project beneficiaries must be part of all presentations for project funding.

Utilise local councillors in engaging hard to reach residents to participate in future 'You Decide' decision days.	Lorna Hughes, Communities & Regeneration	Councillors will be informed at the pre-launch stage of the next You Decide programme. Councillors will be kept informed through Members Bulletin and Member development sessions. Councillors will be given material to support their active role in reaching out to potential applicants and informing residents of the You Decide process.
Improve communications around the 'You Decide' application process so forthcoming applicants are aware of the eligibility criteria, and time commitments associated with the application process before applying. This includes setting out clear expectations around the documentation successful applicants need to provide, and the time it will take to receive funding.	Lorna Hughes, Communities & Regeneration	<p>A stronger and clearer communications approach will be adopted. An internal group, including the Head of Communications, will be established to oversee improvements across all stages of the programme.</p> <p>This will include reflecting on past 'You Decide' feedback and reviewing the application form. The application form and supporting information has already been improved; and moving forward will be shared with communities at the start of the process. We will also communicate with our communities on timescales and what the requirements will be to ensure eligibility criteria and due diligence is met.</p>
Strengthen criteria for allocating NHS funding through Love Where You Live grant funding to ensure monies are directed to the appropriate organisations for maximum impact in reducing health inequalities amongst Black African Heritage communities.	Lorna Hughes, Communities & Regeneration	<p>There are limitations to our response to this recommendation due to the criteria being set by NHS England. Where improvements can be made these suggestions will be shared with health colleagues.</p> <p>A meeting will be arranged with the NHS colleagues to explore the feasibility of this recommendation, with the outcome being reported back to the Committee.</p>
Support our voluntary and community sector organisations in building new income generation streams.	Lorna Hughes, Communities & Regeneration	CVS Brent are the commissioned provider of voluntary sector development. We work closely with CVS Brent and they will continue training and development to the sector. Training on income generation, outcomes frameworks and impact evaluation will be programmed for next year.

8 Nov 2022 – <b>Draft Borough Plan 2023-27</b>	Ensure the outcomes/success criteria under each strategic priority is more specific, measurable, and accountable.	Lorna Hughes, Communities & Regeneration	The final version of the Borough Plan 2023-27 will include more specific and clearer outcomes and success criteria. A key part of the engagement process is to understand what should be prioritised and what is achievable. As such, the findings will help frame final outcomes and success criteria that are more specific, measurable and accountable. Additionally, following finalisation of the Borough Plan 2023-27, the Council will develop and consolidate a performance monitoring framework, consisting of key performance indicators, to ensure the organisation can monitor and evaluate progress against the strategic priorities.
	Involve the worker community (i.e. trade unions) in the consultation/engagement process.	Lorna Hughes, Communities & Regeneration	Trade unions within the organisation (Unison & GMB) have been engaged with through internal engagement sessions available for all staff to attend. The online survey is also open to everyone for lives and works in Brent to complete.
	Make our climate action commitments more prominent throughout strategic priorities.	Lorna Hughes, Communities & Regeneration	We will amplify our climate action commitments, aligned with our Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy 2021-30, whilst ensuring the Borough Plan is reflective of our communities' priorities and feedback.
	Include 'togetherness' and 'community cohesion' throughout strategic priorities.	Lorna Hughes, Communities & Regeneration	We will include reference to the importance of togetherness and community cohesion. However, we are seeking to include a greater focus on this in our upcoming Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2023-27 which will be established in the new year.
	Ensure there is continuous engagement with the Brent Integrated Care Partnership (ICP) on the Borough Plan.	Lorna Hughes, Communities & Regeneration	The draft Borough Plan was presented at the ICP Board on the 6 December 2022 for feedback and engagement. Additionally, the strategic priorities – namely the current 'A Healthier Brent' - is directly aligned to Brent's Health and Wellbeing Strategy.  The draft Borough Plan will also be presented to the Health & Wellbeing Board on the 12 January 2023.
8 Nov 2022 – <b>Safer Brent Annual Report 2021/22</b>	For the Partnership to develop new proposals on how we specifically engage with communities in the crime hotspot areas identified in the Annual Report.	Kibibi Octave, Communities & Regeneration	We will develop proposals to engage with communities in hotspot areas as part of our two-year Action Plan to underpin our Safer Brent Strategy.  The action plan is due to be signed off by the Safer Brent Partnership in the new year and reviewed quarterly.

	Look further into the statistics of Homophobic, Biphobic, Transphobic, and Islamophobic Hate Crime in Brent, and should there be a strong evidence base, include these areas within the strategic priorities of the Strategy and related delivery for 2023 – 2025.	Kibibi Octave, Communities & Regeneration	To improve our use of Hate Crime data we will analyse identify trends sitting behind the data, to better inform activity against our priorities.  Findings will be reflected in the Safer Brent Action Plan.
	Reinstate a health representative on the Safer Brent Partnership Board.	Kibibi Octave, Communities & Regeneration	Three representatives from Health are members of the Safer Brent Partnership. However, at our next Board meeting we will revisit whether their roles and related Health remit is appropriate for the Board.
	Improve our communications in promoting safe ways of reporting domestic violence.	Kibibi Octave, Communities & Regeneration	We are in the process of revisiting our Communications approach across Community Safety. On the topic of Domestic Abuse and Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG), this includes information on how to access support.  Campaigns will also include promotional and awareness raising activity, including encouraging others to call out abuse or harassment when they see it. This work will be monitored as part of our Domestic Abuse and VAWG Action Plan.
15 Dec 2022 – <b>Redefining Local Services: Update on the Integrated Street Cleansing, Waste Collections and Winter Maintenance Services Contract Procurement Programme</b>	Produce and publish a diagram/flowchart detailing all milestones from May 2019 when the Redefining Local Services (RLS) programme was first initiated.	Chris Whyte, Resident Services	<b>Response to be provided by 10 February 2023.</b>
	Review household bulky waste collection charges, including consideration of a sliding scale of charges linked to the number of items to be collected, rather than the current fixed rate of £35 for up to five items.	Chris Whyte, Resident Services	<b>Response to be provided by 10 February 2023.</b>
	Undertake a feasibility study on the potential for introducing a mixed approach to paper/card recycling collections, to explore whether any recycling collection rounds in the	Chris Whyte, Resident Services	<b>Response to be provided by 10 February 2023.</b>

	borough would be more suited to the use of bins rather than sacks.		
	Arrange a session with ward councillors and neighbourhood managers to inform the design and development of the new recycling engagement and communication plan that will accompany the roll out of the new recycling service.	Chris Whyte, Resident Services	Response to be provided by 10 February 2023.
	Liaise with the West London Waste Authority (WLWA) to ensure access is reinstated for pedestrians and cyclists at the Abbey Road Household Reuse and Recycling Centre.	Chris Whyte, Resident Services	Response to be provided by 10 February 2023.
	Improve collaboration between in-house enforcement teams and collection operatives in identifying fly tipping hot spots and collating evidence, to remove the burden from residents.	Chris Whyte, Resident Services	Response to be provided by 10 February 2023.

#### **Information requests from RPRSC to Council departments/partners**

<b>Meeting date and agenda item</b>	<b>Information requests</b>	<b>Council Department/External Partner</b>	<b>Responses / Status</b>
9 February 2022 – <b>Flooding</b>	To receive a copy of the independent review into the events of and response to the floods experienced across London in July when published	Thames Water	Information has been requested and will be provided later in the calendar year. Ahead of the publication of the full report a series of interim reports will be published covering aspects of the flooding and the first one is due imminently. More details about the review can be found <a href="#">here</a> .

	and Thames Water's response to the review		<p>Stage 1 report can be found here: <a href="https://londonfloodreview.co.uk/stage-1-report/">https://londonfloodreview.co.uk/stage-1-report/</a></p> <p>Stage 2 report can be found here: <a href="https://londonfloodreview.co.uk/stage-2-report/">https://londonfloodreview.co.uk/stage-2-report/</a></p> <p>Stage 3 report can be found here: <a href="https://londonfloodreview.co.uk/stage-3-report/">https://londonfloodreview.co.uk/stage-3-report/</a></p> <p><b>Further updates:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The above web links are currently inactive. Awaiting response from officers at Thames Water to reinstate web pages and share final report (10/1/2023).</li> </ul>
6 Sept 2022 – <b>Cost of Living Crisis</b>	Provide the Committee with a copy of the Financial Inclusion (FI) Dashboard Presentation that was previously presented to the Audit and Standards Advisory Committee on 1 August 2022.	Sadie East & Tom Cattermole, Resident Services	Sadie East and Tom Cattermole presented the FI dashboard to Cllr Conneely – Chair of the Resources and Public Realm Committee. Additionally, the department provided a recorded presentation on the FI dashboard to the remaining committee members, as well as ward-based heat maps/data centred around the information in the FI dashboard.
	Provide feedback from the NHS on any support for residents to navigate the cost of living crisis.	Nipa Shah, ASC & Health	<p>An overview of the cost of living support offered by the Council was presented to the Health Inequalities and Vaccination Executive Group in mid-September. The group includes senior representatives from the council, NHS and Public Health. Following the presentation, it was agreed that the Brent Health Matters (BHM) team would support the communications drive once ready. The communications assets will be circulated to Local Councillors and Brent Health Matters stakeholders, which includes BHM staff, the community teams, voluntary community sector (VCS) organisations and NHS staff. Furthermore, the Director of Customer Access will present what support is available in an upcoming GP forum meeting and Primary Care stakeholder meeting, to raise further awareness across NHS staff.</p> <p>To my knowledge, the NHS hasn't got any specific initiatives or programmes to support people with cost of living issues.</p>

8 Nov 2022 – <b>Brent Council's grants programmes</b>	Provide voting data across all 'You Decide' sessions that have taken place so far in 2022. To be inclusive of the voting data related to the Carbon Offset Fund, NCIL, and Brent Health Matters Health and Wellbeing grants.	Lorna Hughes, Communities & Regeneration	Voting data to be distributed to the Committee by 20/1/23.
	Provide detailed information on the 'You Decide' project monitoring process in place.	Lorna Hughes, Communities & Regeneration	<p>The monitoring process for the You Decide Project depends on project value. All NCIL project schedules require a first monitoring visit and report due during their project lifecycles.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• &lt; 10K, 1 visit during life of project and a final project report</li> <li>• 10 to &lt; 20k, 1 visit during the project, a mid-point and end project report</li> <li>• 20 to 50K, 2 visits during the project, a mid-point and end project report</li> </ul> <p>All NCIL projects under 10k projects paid in full. The rest are in instalments which are dependent on monitoring reporting being complete.</p>
	Provide information on the difference between the standard NCIL application rounds versus the 'You Decide' application rounds, and the rationale why the monies are split in this way.	Lorna Hughes, Communities & Regeneration	<p><b>Process:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paper round applications are assessed by officers internally against a criteria. All applications are scored by officers. Where grant awards are under £100k the decision is taken by a senior officer. Where awards are above £100k the decision is made by Cabinet.</li> <li>• In the You Decide process all awards are under £50k. The public voting results are recommended to a senior officer and the decision to award is made.</li> </ul> <p><b>Monies Split:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Each round of NCIL (regardless of Paper or 'You Decide') is decided on a round by round basis. This is to reflect the amount of CIL collected.</li> <li>• The distribution of NCIL is governed by guidance on CIL regulations from National Government. As agreed by Cabinet in January 2019, the formulae dictate that Areas with a Neighbourhood Plan get 25% of the CIL received in their area. The areas without a Neighbourhood Plan get 15% of the CIL</li> </ul>

			<p>received across the remainder of the borough; 50% of this goes to Wembley and the remaining 50% is split equally between the other four Brent Connects areas: Kingsbury and Kenton, Willesden, Harlesden, and Kilburn and Kensal Rise</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You Decide: All 5 Brent Connect Areas received 20% of £2 million agreed. This was to provide equity across all 5. This formula did not impact on the overall allocation agreed by Cabinet in 2017.</li> </ul>
	Provide detail on the approach to prevent duplication in funding across Council directorates, especially in a time of oversubscription of grants with diminishing resource.	Lorna Hughes, Communities & Regeneration	<p>The NCIL working group examines awarded grants to help reduce a single project being awarded multiple council grants.</p> <p>As we are increasing cross-departmental collaboration we will gain awareness of where awarded grants could potentially overlap.</p>
	Provide a feasibility report into different options for voting on 'You Decide' decision days to increase accessibility.	Lorna Hughes, Communities & Regeneration	A feasibility report will be provided to the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee by March 2023.
8 Nov 2022 – <b>Draft Borough Plan 2023-27</b>	What have we done (or what are we planning to do) to involve communities who haven't been involved historically in the consultation process for previous borough plans?	Lorna Hughes, Communities & Regeneration	<p>We have targeted and reached out specifically to communities and community leaders to encourage participation from those communities who do not historically provide their 'voice'. They have been invited to focus groups and workshops we have been conducting and have attended forums. Specific groups we have targeted include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Asian</li> <li>Black</li> <li>Somalian</li> <li>Eastern European</li> <li>Brazilian</li> <li>Pensioners Forum</li> <li>Disability Forum</li> <li>Multi-Faith Forum</li> <li>Borough of Sanctuary</li> <li>Brent Youth Parliament (BYP)</li> </ul>

	Provide a breakdown on the amount of people consulted/engaged with so far in order for the committee to establish how representative the data set is of the borough's demographic.	Lorna Hughes, Communities & Regeneration	We have not yet analysed the data to capture a demographic breakdown, however this will be completed for the final Cabinet report (due in Feb 2023) and the final Borough Plan 2023-27.
15 Dec 2022 – <b>Redefining Local Services: Update on the Integrated Street Cleansing, Waste Collections and Winter Maintenance Services Contract Procurement Programme</b>	Provide the recycling communications/engagement plan that will be developed in February/March 2023.	Chris Whyte, Resident Services	Response to be provided by 10 February 2023.
	Provide figures from the twin stream recycling trial on the impact the Preferred Service had (e.g. in reducing contamination rates in comparison with the current service).	Chris Whyte, Resident Services	Response to be provided by 10 February 2023.
	Provide detail from the twin stream recycling trial on the nature of contamination in the recycling bins to assist the Council in communications and engagement around the new recycling proposals.	Chris Whyte, Resident Services	Response to be provided by 10 February 2023.
	Provide information to local councillors on the new zone classifications outlined in the report once these have been finalised by March 2023.	Chris Whyte, Resident Services	Response to be provided by 10 February 2023.
	Provide further details on the 'bin sensor' trial (e.g. the trial period, the areas/wards that	Chris Whyte, Resident Services	Response to be provided by 10 February 2023.

	will be included in the trial, and when the findings report will be published etc.) when this is available in March 2023.		
	Provide detail on how many fines the Council have issued to the contractor for contract breaches as part of the current Public Realm Contract. To be inclusive of the value of fines, and the reasons for the Council issuing such fines.	Chris Whyte, Resident Services	Response to be provided by 10 February 2023.
	Provide information on mechanisms within the new integrated contract that permit the council to deal with localised pockets of underperformance or specific areas of underperformance in the borough that emerge under the new integrated contract.	Chris Whyte, Resident Services	Response to be provided by 10 February 2023.

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