

London Borough of Brent – Summary of Decisions taken by the Council held in the Conference Hall, Brent Civic Centre at 6:00pm on Monday 20 November 2023

PRESENT: Councillors Hylton (Mayor), Dar (Deputy Mayor), Aden, Agha, Ahmed, Ahmadi-Moghaddam, Akram, Bajwa, Begum, Benea, M.Butt, S.Butt, Chan, Chappell, Chohan, Choudry, Collymore, Conneely, Crabb, Dixon, Donnelly-Jackson, Ethapemi, Farah, Fraser, Gbajumo, Georgiou, Grahl, Hack, Hirani, Johnson, Kabir, Kansagra, Kelcher, Kennelly, Knight, Long, Lorber, Matin, Maurice, Miller, Mistry, Mitchell, Moeen, Molloy, Nerva, J.Patel, M.Patel, Rajan-Seelan, Rubin, Shah, Ketan Sheth, Krupa Sheth, Smith, Southwood and Tatler.

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1	Apologies for Absence	Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Afzal and Mahmood.
2	Minutes of the Previous Meeting	<p>AGREED that the minutes of the Council meeting held on Monday 18 September 2023 be approved as a correct record.</p> <p>Eligible for Call-In: No</p>
3	Declarations of Interest	<p>The following interests were declared at the meeting:</p> <p>(a) Agenda Item 11.1 Resources & Public Realm Scrutiny Committee – Chair's Update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councillor Lorber declared a personal interest as a member of the Friends of Barham Park and Director and Trustee of Barham Community Library given reference within the update report to the outcome of the call-in considered by the Scrutiny Committee on the Barham Park Trust Accounts 2022-23. <p>No other interests were declared at the meeting.</p>
4	Mayor's Announcements (including any petitions received)	<p>Announcements from the Mayor were noted in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remembrance Sunday • Conflict in the Middle East

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Black History Month and other Mayoral engagements • Islamophobia Awareness Month • Kings Award for Voluntary Service • LGIU Councillor Awards • 100th birthday celebration • Mayors Christmas Fundraising Ball • Petitions <p>Eligible for Call-In: No</p>
5	Appointments to Committees and Outside Bodies and Appointment of Chairs/Vice Chairs (if any)	<p>No membership changes were received for approval at the meeting.</p> <p>Eligible for Call-In: No</p>
6	Deputations (if any)	<p>6.1 Action to address the Climate Emergency</p> <p>NOTED the deputation received from Elaine Sheppard and Sylvia Gauthereau (representing Action for the Climate Emergency in Brent) outlining concerns regarding the urgency of the action being taken by the Council to address the climate emergency and achieve the target of becoming a net carbon zero borough by 2030. Referring to the coalition of groups represented by the newly established ACE Brent (which included Brent Friends of the Earth, Brent Cycling Campaign, Brent Parks Forum, Brent Pure Energy, Brent XR and Divest Brent) members were also reminded of the recent correspondence outlining the coalition’s detailed proposals along with the need to increase the pace of action over the coming five-year period. Whilst recognising that the government was not on track regarding the climate emergency, ACE Brent felt that Brent as a borough could be.</p>

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		<p>Although recognising the Council’s commitment towards achieving net zero (as outlined within its Climate Emergency Strategy, Green Vision Planning guidelines, Green Neighbourhood pilots and other initiatives) it was not felt these were sufficiently urgent in nature as a response or reflected (given the diversity within Brent) the global and local social justice obligations which underpinned tackling the climate emergency. Whilst aware of the financial pressures on the Council and impact of cost-of-living crisis, it was felt that working together to focus on more ambitious and urgent action did not mean having to spending more money, with calls for a revamped Climate Plan to galvanise and replace the current strategy that would bring together all current strategies and initiatives to more clearly prioritise SMART and costed actions that would deliver net zero and protect those residents most at risk. Prior to handing over to Sylvia Gauthereau to continue, Elaine Sheppard ended by expressing concern at the limited scope of the Climate Strategy Delivery Plan 2022-24 in terms of the activities covered and also at the recent decision to revise reporting on the climate action from an annual to biannual basis, reiterating that this decision negatively impacted the ability to effectively monitor delivery of the Climate Strategy in advance of 2030.</p> <p>Sylvia Gauthereau continued by advising that ACE Brent had welcomed the agreement at a recent Resources & Public Realm Scrutiny Committee seeking a more accessible accountability framework to monitor performance, especially with regard to clearer measurement of emissions which it was hoped was now in progress. It was also felt that the development of any new Plan should be initiated and informed by a new Climate Assembly which would have regular dialogue with, and report to, residents and stakeholders. In support of this proposal, reference was made to the establishment of dedicated Climate and Emergency Scrutiny Committees and Citizen Panels by other local authorities. As a result, ACE Brent felt that in order to effectively support the move towards net zero and ensure the necessary co-ordination and oversight was provided, Brent should also consider establishing a dedicated Climate and Ecological</p>

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		<p>Emergency Scrutiny Committee which met on a quarterly basis. To conclude, Sylvia Gauthereau outlined the main areas ACE Brent were seeking to address as part of any new Climate Plan which included enabling further choice for active travel, implementing a major programme of insulation and retrofitting within the housing stock, fully divesting Brent’s Pension Fund from the top 200 publicly traded fossil fuel emitters, ensuring the sustainability of new developments, encouraging the installation of solar panels on all public buildings in the borough and increasing the canopy cover and green spaces in Brent.</p> <p>In responding to the deputation, Councillor Krupa Sheth, as Cabinet Member for Environment, Infrastructure & Climate Action, welcomed ACE Brent’s continued interest and contribution as it was deemed crucial that residents and stakeholders supported the Council to effectively tackle the climate emergency and meet the Council’s ambitious target of net zero by 2030. In recognising this was not something the Council could deliver in isolation, the importance in ensuring all residents and stakeholders were engaged was recognised, with Councillor Krupa Sheth expressing her thanks for the work ACE Brent were undertaking as both a coalition and individual organisations in encouraging climate action. In expressing her pride at all those in the borough who were taking on the challenge through practical action to reduce emissions or make the borough greener, either as part of local initiatives or in their day-to-day lives, Councillor Krupa Sheth also felt it was important to recognise the local leadership role being played by the Council in coordinating, convening and empowering local groups to contribute through the Brent Environmental Network, the Faith Climate Action Plan and the Together Towards Zero small grant scheme.</p> <p>In reminding members that Brent’s Climate Strategy had been developed on a consensus basis, with the themes mirroring those areas the Brent Climate Assembly had viewed as being environmental priorities for the borough, the importance in</p>

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		<p>ensuring that the Strategy and Delivery Plan remained adaptable had been recognised with work already being undertaken to embed the actions in the Council’s Climate Adaptation and Resilience Plan more prominently in future climate delivery plans. With communication identified as key in order to maintain progress, the work being undertaken to develop a data dashboard on a host of key climate measures to demonstrate impact was also outlined, which it was hoped to provide for the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee early in 2024. This was being designed to supplement and provide greater transparency on existing progress reporting to Cabinet and via existing communication channels. In ending her response, Councillor Krupa Sheth thanked Elaine Sheppard and Sylvia Gauthereau for the deputation and reiterated that the Council was keen to continue working constructively and collaborative with all sections of the community and stakeholders on the climate agenda to make Brent a low carbon, greener borough.</p> <p>6.2 Implementation and Operation of the Blue Bag Recycling Scheme for paper and cardboard</p> <p>NOTED the deputation received from Sheila Darr (as a local resident) seeking to highlight a number of practical implementation and operational concerns relating to the recently introduced blue bag recycling scheme across the borough. In referring to comments which had been highlighted on the Nextdoor app and also various petitions in opposition to the blue bag recycling scheme, she began by outlining health and safety concerns regarding blue bags being blown onto the streets and not sufficiently holding their contents, which it was reported had resulted in waste being left on the street. As a result, queries were raised in relation to any risk assessment completed regarding the danger that lost bags and loose waste posed to the community. Furthermore, in reiterating the impact of the current housing crisis she pointed out concerns had also been raised in relation to storage of the bags in homes, given the</p>

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		<p>limited space often available when they were full, and queried why excess paper and card could not be placed in recycling bins as residential blocks had continued to use these rather than bags. In addition, the difficulty in keeping blue bags dry during wet weather and cold conditions was highlighted, especially where collection timetables had been altered causing bags to be left for a longer period of time, leading to increased contamination. In discussing the impact of the blue bag recycling scheme on the elderly within the borough, Sheila Darr highlighted how the elderly might struggle with the weight of the bags and questioned whether any risk assessment had also included the practical impact of the scheme on the elderly. Although recognising that support could be requested on the Council’s website, Sheila Darr reiterated that many elderly people struggled with internet usage and therefore may not be receiving the support they required. In concluding, it was felt further guidance was required with concerns highlighted in relation to the impact of the scheme on the elderly, those whose main language was not English and the extent of consultation undertaken prior to the implementation of the scheme. In highlighting the ongoing impact of the cost-of-living crisis on the health and well-being of local residents Sheila Darr ended by calling on the Council to reconsider the implementation of the blue bag scheme in order to avoid this compounding the challenges already being faced by many residents across the borough.</p> <p>In response to the deputation, Councillor Krupa Sheth, as Cabinet Member for Environment, Infrastructure & Climate Action, felt it important to start by highlighting that the changes made to recycling collections have been designed to improve the amount and quality of recycling and reduce levels of contamination in order to reduce the borough’s impact on the environment and contribute towards the goal of the Council becoming carbon neutral by 2030. These changes had been predicted to save the Council £1.2m per annum by 2024/25, the first full year of operation for the new service, which she felt was also an important consideration to recognise given the</p>

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		<p>wider financial challenges being faced by the Council as a result of the funding restrictions being imposed by Central Government.</p> <p>In terms of the consultation process undertaken on the future waste collection and street cleansing services, confirmation was provided that this had taken place in Summer 2022 with the outcome supported by a successful trial involving 5000 households in Autumn 2022 and reflected similar schemes being successfully operated by other local authorities. In confirming that the changes introduced had only been to street level properties and not to flats in communal blocks, which continued to receive the same comingled recycling collections as before, Councillor Krupa Sheth felt it important to recognise the need for any major service change, to fully bed in with the Council continuing to monitor the roll out of the new service very closely. Work was also being undertaken with the contractor, Veolia, to address any operational issues and listen to all feedback so that, where required, improvements could be identified in order to make the service better for both residents and the environment. The opportunity was also taken to highlight the positive impact of the scheme with a continued rise in the amount of separated paper and card being collected, mirroring the successful trial from last year. As an example, members were advised that in the last two weeks of October, the Council had seen a 50% increase in paper and cardboard collected in comparison to the first fortnight and further increases at the start of November with no reported issues in terms of either contamination or moisture.</p> <p>In addressing specific concerns raised within the deputation, Councillor Krupa Sheth confirmed that residents could choose whether to store their sack indoors or outdoors, so long as they were presented at the kerbside on the scheduled collection day. They could also order additional or replacement sacks for free with those residents who required it, also receiving extra assistance with their recycling arrangements, as before. In summing up, confirmation was provided of the Council's ongoing commitment,</p>

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		<p>despite the challenging nature of the budget pressures identified, towards the provision of key services across the borough whilst also seeking to protect the most vulnerable with Councillor Krupa Sheth advising she would welcome further feedback on the blue bag scheme as it continued to bed in across the borough.</p> <p>Eligible for Call-In: No</p>
7	Questions from Members of the Public & Brent Youth Parliament	<p>NOTED</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The written and supplementary verbal response provided by the Cabinet Member for Environment, Infrastructure & Climate Action to a public question submitted by Peggy Wylie regarding operation of the 206 bus route on Wembley Stadium event days and the completion of necessary infrastructure works along Bridge Road and North End Road to enable proposed changes to the route to be introduced on event days. 2. The written and supplementary verbal response provided by the Cabinet Member Children, Young People and Schools to a question submitted by Brent Youth Parliament regarding the support available for young people with Special Education Needs and Disabilities including the offer of inclusive educational provision and how those type of facilities would be determined and designed. <p>Eligible for Call-In: No</p>
8	Petitions (if any)	No petitions were presented at the meeting.
9	Reports from the Leader and Cabinet	NOTED the report and update provided at the meeting by Councillor Muhammed Butt, as Leader of the Council, highlighting the work being undertaken across each Cabinet portfolio to manage the Council's finances and provide ongoing support and services to

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		<p>meet the needs of residents across the borough.</p> <p>In referring to the draft 2024/25 – 2025/26 budget proposals which had been approved for consultation by Cabinet on 16 November 23, the opportunity was taken to remind members of the significant financial pressures and challenges currently faced by the Council as a result of the current economic uncertainty, increased demand in relation to homelessness and impact of the wider funding reductions which had been imposed by the Government since 2010 as a result of austerity. Despite these challenges, members were advised of the efforts being made to ensure the Council was able to deliver a balanced budget and ensure that the Council could continue to operate in a financially sustainable and resilient way whilst seeking to support and safeguard local residents as far as possible during such challenging times, in line with the Council's core strategic priorities.</p> <p>Eligible for Call-In: No</p>
10	Questions from the Opposition and other Non-Cabinet Members	<p>NOTED</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The written response provided by the Cabinet Member for Customers, Communities and Culture to a question submitted by Councillor Rajan-Seelan regarding the activities being planned to ensure the contribution of British Tamils was fully recognised by the Council as part of Tamil Heritage month. No supplementary question was received. 2. The written response provided by the Cabinet Member for Environment, Infrastructure & Climate Action to a question submitted by Councillor Ahmed regarding the changes to recycling arrangements across the borough and impact these were having at reducing the level of recyclable waste going to landfill in

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		<p>support of the Council’s environmental aim to become carbon neutral by 2030. No supplementary question was received.</p> <p>3. The written and supplementary verbal response provided by the Cabinet Member for Housing, Homelessness and Renters Security to a question submitted by Councillor Aden regarding the actions being taken by the Council to address the unprecedented increase in homelessness applications and use of Temporary Accommodation along with the contextual factors impacting on the housing crisis in Brent.</p> <p>4. The written and supplementary verbal response provided by the Cabinet Member for Environment, Infrastructure & Climate Action to a question submitted by Councillor Hirani regarding operational concerns and the financial and value for money considerations relating to implementation of the blue bag recycling scheme for card and paper across the borough.</p> <p>5. The written and supplementary verbal response provided by the Cabinet Member for Housing, Homelessness and Renters Security to a question submitted by Councillor Georgiou regarding the current position on the Altamira Morland Gardens housing scheme, including the associated impact in terms of costs, grant funding and on the current use of the Twybridge Way site.</p> <p>Responses were also provided by the relevant Cabinet Members on the following additional questions raised during the open session of this part of the meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councillor Jayanti Patel highlighting concerns regarding anti-social behaviour and nuisance being experienced by residents in Milky Way, Queensbury linked to Housing Association tenants living in the surrounding area and action that could

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		<p>be taken by the Council working with the relevant Housing Association and Safer Neighbourhood Team to address the problems being experienced.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councillor Chan regarding the powers and support available through the Council, working with the police and local residents, in seeking to prevent and cease the use of local retail shop premises along Park Parade, Harlesden for illegal and unregulated activities. • Councillor Kelcher regarding the powers available to the Council to support the ongoing campaign to save the Royal Oak Public House in High Street, Harlesden from closure and in seeking to protect and offer business support to other similar venues, recognising their importance not only as hospitality but also as local community hubs. • Councillor Rubin commending the Council for their ongoing efforts to support and work with the Brent Renters Union in seeking to ensure the necessary protections were provided for tenants in the private rented sector across the borough (including the landlord licensing scheme) in order to tackle serious health and safety concerns, provide protection from evictions and ensure access to interpretation services, and seeking further details on how this could continue to be developed. • Councillor Lorber highlighting concern at what he felt had been the limited scope of the discussion permitted in response to the call-in on the decision to approve the Barham Park Trust Accounts at the Resources & Public Realm Scrutiny Committee call-in meeting held to consider the matter. Details were also sought as to when it was anticipated the high-level consultancy based review, which had been commissioned by the Chief Executive in relation to the Trust Accounts would be available to support reconsideration of the decision referred back as an outcome of the call-in process. • Councillor Maurice seeking clarification on the eligibility for a family with four children to bid for a three rather than four bedroom property under the Council's

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		<p>Housing Allocation Policy in order to maximise the opportunities available to secure a suitable property.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Councillor Mistry highlighting concerns relating to the dumping of rubbish and impact of other environmental and health and safety hazards identified by local residents along an unadopted alleyway adjacent to shops located on Kingsbury Road close to Kingsbury roundabout and Gore Court and seeking details on what measures the Council could take to address the concerns outlined. <p>Eligible for Call-In: No</p>
11	Report from Chairs of Scrutiny Committees	<p>NOTED the update reports provided by the Chair of the Resources & Public Realm and Chair of the Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committees.</p> <p>During the open question time session Councillor Lorber took the opportunity to highlight the concerns previously raised at what he felt had been the limited scope of the discussion permitted in response to the call-in on the decision to approve the Barham Park Trust Accounts at the Resources & Public Realm Scrutiny Committee call-in meeting held to deal with the matter.</p> <p>Eligible for Call-In: No</p>
12	Report from the Vice-Chair of the Audit & Standards Advisory Committee	<p>NOTED the update report provided by the Vice Chair of the Audit & Standards Advisory Committee.</p> <p>Eligible for Call-In: No</p>
13	Non-Cabinet Member Debate	<p>Following the approval of an amendment moved by the Labour Group in relation to the original motion submitted, the following motion (as amended) was AGREED as the outcome of the non-cabinet member debate:</p>

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		<p><u>“Making our Borough Clean and Safe</u></p> <p>This Council notes:</p> <p>A major issue of utmost importance to Brent Council is the general condition of our area. Residents are increasingly frustrated that a small minority of individuals disregard their streets and use them for rubbish and illegal fly tipping. As ward councillors we are receiving daily updates from local people about dumping in the Borough, and we work tirelessly with Council Officers to resolve these enquiries and prevent the problem from getting worse.</p> <p>This includes large fly tips in hotspot locations that have been identified by the Council for a considerable time, but with limited resources it is an ongoing battle for our environmental enforcement teams to tackle. Nonetheless we do ensure that proactive action is taken to prevent further ongoing dumping at these sites.</p> <p>In some areas of the borough ‘paan spitting’ continues to be a major problem local people are forced to contend with. The Councils campaigns to reduce unsightly, unhygienic mess caused by this bad habit will encourage behaviour change.</p> <p>Rubbish on our streets contributes to how people view the area and can have a knock-on effect in terms of further Anti-Social Behaviour in the community.</p> <p>A key priority of this local authority must be to address to scourge of fly tipping and crack down forcefully on those who continue to disrespect our community.</p> <p>The new Waste Service Contract with Veolia is in place, and it is crucial that the</p>

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		<p>company are held to account in delivering the set-out terms of their contract, particularly around targets on street cleansing.</p> <p>The roll out of the new blue bags recycling service has already led to a 50% increase in the tonnage of paper and cardboard collected in the first month. While the scheme requires residents to adjust to the new regime more blue bin bags are already being collected without contamination, with a record low of 1% contamination. There is a risk of local people losing confidence in the Climate Emergency Strategy should we choose to do nothing to improve the revised recycling system and increase levels of recycling.</p> <p>It is likely that the new system will result in the Council’s stated aim of increasing the boroughs overall recycling rate.</p> <p>Prioritising making our borough clean will have a positive effect on the way people feel about where they live and how others who visit Brent view our area.</p> <p>Therefore, this Council believes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Keeping local streets clean and free of rubbish must be a continued focus, particularly in light of increased dumping locally. 2. The best way to discourage illegal behaviour is by a programme of mass fining and continuing a zero-tolerance approach to rubbish on our streets and in our open spaces and paan spitting. 3. The Brent Connects areas ensure Enforcement Teams are not overly stretched so that a targeted approach is deployed in hotspot fly tipping locations – such as deployment of additional resources in Wembley and Alperton.

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		<p>4. It is possible to change behaviours and educate people about how to treat our streets and opens spaces, through well run, targeted and engaging education campaigns.</p> <p>5. Volunteers who spend hours every week trying to keep our borough clean and tidy must be commended for the work that they do and assisted wherever possible by the Council.</p> <p>The blue bag scheme will be reviewed in 2024 with improvements to be considered by Cabinet and the recommendations by Scrutiny looked at again.</p> <p>This Council therefore resolves to call on the Cabinet Member for Environment, Infrastructure and Climate Action:</p> <p>1. To make a non commercially sensitive version of the new Waste Service Contract with Veolia publicly available to enable effective scrutiny of the company and so that we can be confident that they are meeting the set-out terms of their contract with Brent.</p> <p>2. To continue to work with partners across the Council and with outside agencies to identify additional resource to assist the existing Waste Enforcement teams across the borough in delivering effective enforcement against those who continue to disrespect our area.</p> <p>3. Where additional resource is needed to scope the possibility of employing apprentices to work alongside Neighbourhood Managers and Enforcement Teams in fly tipping hotspot locations in the borough.</p>

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		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Subject to further engagement work, to work with the Cabinet Member for Customers, Communities & Culture, to undertake an internal review of the Brent Connects areas, particularly the Wembley Connects area, to see whether splitting them into smaller geographical areas can help with more effective, targeted waste enforcement work. 5. To continue the education campaign including door to door communications about the Council’s renewed focus on dealing with rubbish dumping and fly tipping in the area, this will include details of fines individuals would face if caught not adhering to the law. 6. To ensure that until the New Year all blue bins are emptied according to criteria and scheduled times published in residents’ calendars. The Council will instruct the contractor to ensure that blue bags are not thrown about and that all bins are returned to the correct location. Above all the Cabinet will consider the feedback from residents and the emerging data from the roll out to consider all options that will support residents with recycling more cardboard and paper utilising the Capital budget of £1.6 million which has been allocated for this. 7. To lobby the government regarding the possibility of introducing a long awaited deposit scheme for cans and bottles, which would discourage dumping in our area. 8. To work with other London local authorities to gain insight on best practice around dealing with ongoing rubbish and fly tipping issues that are sadly prevalent in some areas in the capital.

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		<p>9. To continue our ongoing work with the Mayor of London to ensure areas in our borough under his jurisdiction are kept clean and safe, including TfL land.</p> <p>10. To write to Government urging that they consider banning the sale of paan, or at the very least require businesses who sell it to have a License.</p> <p>11. To write to Government about the ongoing fly tipping problems in Brent and request additional funding to support renewed efforts to get to grips with this issue.”</p> <p>Eligible for Call-In: No</p>
14	Statement of Gambling Principles 2024-2027	<p>Council RESOLVED following its referral by Cabinet on 16 November 2023 to approve formal sign off and adoption of the revised Statement of Gambling Principles (31 January 2022 – 31 January 2025) as set out within Appendix 1 of the report.</p> <p>Eligible for Call-In: No</p>
15	Changes to the Constitution	<p>Council RESOLVED</p> <p>(1) To approve the amendments to the Constitution as detailed within Appendix 1 of the report relating to speaking rights at Planning Committee (Standing Order 57) and the Procurement Rules within Contract Standing Orders.</p> <p>(2) Following on from (1) above, to authorise the Corporate Director of Governance to amend the Constitution accordingly, including making any necessary incidental or consequential changes.</p> <p>(3) To note that, to the extent that the changes related to executive functions of the</p>

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		<p>Council, they had been approved by the Leader.</p> <p>Eligible for Call-In: No</p>
16	Motions	<p>(1) The following Motion submitted by the Conservative Group, was declared LOST and not approved:</p> <p><u>“Expansion of the Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) – Don’t Punish Brent Drivers</u>”</p> <p>This Council notes that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. On 4th March 2022 the Mayor of London announced his plan to expand the Ultra-Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) from its current boundary of the North and South Circular Roads to cover almost all of Greater London. Despite the best efforts of Londoners, the Mayor of London (Sadiq Khan) pushed through and expanded the Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) on 29th August 2023 to all cover the whole of London. 2. Whilst the ULEZ was originally introduced covering the same area and with the same boundaries as the Congestion Charge Zone it was expanded on 25th October 2021 by 18 times its original size to its previous boundaries before the further expansion on 29th August 2023. The ramifications of this significant change are being felt in outer London Boroughs with the full extent still to be assessed. It goes without saying that the Mayor of London is on an anti-car rampage and won’t be satisfied until we are “all out of cars”! 3. The expansion of ULEZ means that those with non-compliant vehicles are paying £12.50 per day to drive within the ULEZ. Residents are being forced to pay more

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		<p>to get to work, attend hospital appointments, visit friends and family and are not being able to take advantage of local businesses and high streets. This is costing jobs with essential workers such as doctors, nurses, care workers, teachers who rely on their vehicles also affected, especially those working nights who rely on use of their cars. ULEZ is damaging the social fabric of our local area, and many businesses have been forced to locate elsewhere or plan to close.</p> <p>4. The ULEZ is a regressive tax, as the less well-off are disproportionately penalised. The expansion has also meant many more areas with poor public transport have been included within the zone which is fundamentally unfair as those residents unable to afford to keep or replace their car are being forced to rely on inadequate levels of public transport.</p> <p>5. It is disappointing, but not at all surprising, that the Mayor of London has left a black hole in TfL's finances and the Labour Mayor now expects millions of families to foot the bill with an exorbitant £12.50 daily charge.</p> <p>6. Drivers have paid an estimated £52 million in levies and fines in the first month of the ULEZ expansion. £52 million paid out of the pockets of the poorest Londoners is a disgrace with the scheme nothing more than a tax and money making scheme and nothing to do with protecting environment.</p> <p>7. During his time in office as Mayor of London Sadiq Khan has accumulated enough air miles to fly around the world fourteen times. He even chose to fly to Argentina for a hybrid meeting. All this whilst charging Londoners more and more to use their cars! That can't be right.</p> <p>8. The science behind the expansion and other anti-pollution measures more</p>

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		<p>generally is a case of pay your money, pick your scientist. Sadiq Khan has pointed towards figures suggesting ULEZ reduced Nitrous Oxide levels by more than a quarter in its first six months but a team at Imperial College. London looked at the data and suggested they fell by just 3%. Lies, damn lies, and emissions statistics.</p> <p>The Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan’s suggestion that a majority of voters back his crusade to tackle air pollution and that backing ULEZ places him on “the right side of history” and might work as a long-term strategy, is a fantasy.</p> <p>As a result of the concerns highlighted this Council believes that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Measures such as ULEZ which have been backed by the Labour leadership nationally, push up the cost of living in Brent by imposing taxes and charges on residents who rely on motor vehicles without providing them with realistic alternatives should continue to be opposed. 2. The £400 million set aside by the Mayor of London for the expansion of ULEZ and related projects would have been better spent on measures that would have a more positive impact on residents in Brent and across London such as <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a faster upgrade to a zero-emission bus fleet. • increasing the roll out of rapid electric vehicle charging points. • encouraging more freight consolidation schemes. • bringing back the previous Boiler Cashback Scheme to encourage Londoners to upgrade their boilers to reduce household emissions. • financing a generous scrappage scheme to support Londoners in replacing their non-compliant vehicles.

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		<p>Therefore, this Council resolves to call on the Leader of the Council to write to the Mayor of London Sadiq Khan outlining the concerns set out within the motion and crippling impact of the ULEZ tax on residents in Brent.”</p> <p>(2) The following Motion submitted by the Liberal Democrats, was declared LOST and not approved:</p> <p><u>“Making our Voting System Fairer and More Representative</u></p> <p>This Council believes:</p> <p>The next General Election is an opportunity to take our country on a different course after years of chaotic Tory rule. This is especially true in the aftermath of the Brexit referendum, which saw the UK crash out of the European Union, with a bad deal, that has left us diminished, poorer and less important on the world stage. The next General Election will be fought under the antiquated First Past the Post voting system.</p> <p>First Past the Post (FPTP) originated when land-owning aristocrats dominated parliament and voting was restricted to property-owning men. It is not fit for a ‘modern democracy’.</p> <p>In Europe, only the UK and authoritarian Belarus still use archaic single-round FPTP for general elections. This produces governments that have typically not had strong support across the country.</p> <p>Internationally, Proportional Representation (PR) is used to elect the Parliaments of more than 80 countries. It is a system that works and has fostered a more consensual,</p>

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		<p>pragmatic way of conducting politics and policy making.</p> <p>PR ensures that all votes count, have equal value, and that seats won match votes cast. Under PR, MPs and Parliaments better reflect the age, gender and protected characteristics of both local communities and of the nation. Whilst the UK has taken leaps forwards in terms of electing a more diverse Parliament, we are still behind many other countries.</p> <p>MPs better reflecting the communities they represent in turn leads to improved decision making, wider participation and increased levels of ownership of decisions taken. PR would also end minority rule. In 2019, 43.6% of the vote produced a government with 56.2% of the seats and 100% of the power. Fair, proportional votes also prevent ‘wrong winner’ elections such as occurred in 1951 and February 1974.</p> <p>PR is now the national policy of the Labour Party, Liberal Democrats, Green Party, SNP, Plaid Cymru and Women’s Equality Party along with a host of Trade Unions and pro-democracy organisations.</p> <p>There is a growing consensus that the UK’s voting system must change.</p> <p>PR is already used to elect the parliaments and assemblies of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Its use should now be extended to include Westminster and considered at a local level too.</p> <p>Our democracy is in a fragile state, with confidence in politics at a record low. Changing the voting system to guarantee that every vote counts equally can help to inspire renewed confidence in our political system, increase participation and ensure that the electorate are able to elect the type of government that the majority of the</p>

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		<p>British people want to see.</p> <p>This Council therefore resolves to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Join 29 other local authorities across the country, of different political persuasions, in supporting calls for a change to the UK’s voting system to Proportional Representation. 2) Request that the Leader of the Council write to H.M. Government calling for a change in our outdated electoral laws and to enable Proportional Representation to be used for UK general elections and local Council elections. 3) Request that the Leader of the Council write to H.M Leader of the Opposition to encourage that the Labour Party include changing the electoral system in their next election manifesto.” <p>(3) The following Motion submitted by the Labour Group was AGREED:</p> <p><u>“Save our Services</u></p> <p>This Council notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ongoing campaign by both Unison and the Local Government Association highlighting the devastating impact of cuts and the £3.5bn shortfall in funding for the local services we all rely on every day. • During the pandemic, councils spent billions of publicly accountable funds, to protect the most vulnerable residents – and now after 13 years of cuts, local

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		<p>services that were already stretched are at breaking point.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over the last thirteen years core funding from government has decreased by 78%. On top of the £210m of cuts made since 2010 we now must find a further £8m in cuts between 2024/25 and 2025/26. • While funding has decreased, demand for our services has exponentially increased. There are now 800,000 more Londoner’s and overall funding across the capital remains a fifth lower than 13 years ago. • Rather than fully fund local government from the centre, successive Conservative Chancellors have moved the responsibility onto residents – using Council Tax, a tax aimed not at the wealth of the occupants but based on your property value as rated in 1991. The Government has consistently declined other equitable alternatives to raise funding. • Successive Conservative Chancellors have insisted that Core Spending Power has increased in local government – but this metric is a smokescreen and reliant on all local authorities increasing Council Tax by the maximum amount. • In a recently published study, London Councils, a cross-party organisation representing all 32 boroughs, has found that councils across the capital face a £400m shortfall in 2023. Of this figure, nearly £90m is due to unprecedented pressures on Temporary Accommodation. They also found that 9 in 10 boroughs were expected to overspend on their budgets this year. • The cross-party Local Government Association has published analysis ahead of the Chancellors Autumn Statement, showing that inflation has added £15 billion

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		<p>nationally to the cost of delivering council services in just 2 years.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A survey of 47 local authorities in the SIGOMA group revealed that five are in the process of deciding whether to issue a Section 114 notice and a further nine councils may have to declare bankruptcy next year, with at least 12 other councils across the country also considering issuing a section 114 notice in 23/24. <p>This Council also notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over the last 13 years of austerity, difficult decisions have been taken to allow this council to pass a legally balanced budget each year. In doing so, funding has been directed to protect frontline statutory services and ensure no resident is left behind – with to date, £14.5m invested in the Residents Support Fund and £32m dedicated to our Council Tax Support Scheme each year. • Sadly, Brent like authorities up and down the UK, is experiencing an unprecedented demand for housing, driven by spiralling rents, catalysed by high interest rates. • If demand continues at the same rate, the housing needs service will receive a total of 7,700 applications this financial year, an average of 148 applications every week, the highest it has ever been. • In the last year, we saw more new homes built in Brent than anywhere else in the country. In contrast Liberal Democrat controlled Richmond, Kingston and Sutton built less than 200 between them. • Yet our increased supply cannot keep pace with unparalleled demand, with a
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		<p>22% increase in the number of residents presenting as homelessness, when compared to last year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Chair of the G15 group of major housing associations has said that the capital is now facing the “worst situation” in regards to housing, ever seen. With inflation in the construction sector running at between 25% and 43% many major projects will need to be paused to await more favourable economic conditions. • The seriousness of the Council’s financial position cannot be understated. Fulfilling our statutory duty to support those at risk of homelessness has driven a potential overspend estimated by officers at £13m. • As a result, we are bringing in additional spending controls across the council to help balance our budget this year. These sensible, proactive and prudent measures will ensure vital services are safeguarded at the same time as protecting our financial position. <p>This Council believes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Austerity was always a political choice not an economic necessity. • The government should be held accountable for its role in every Section 114 notice issued by councils of all political colours across the country. • It is the essential role of all Councillors to set a balanced budget, which ensures the long-term sustainability of this council. <p>This Council welcomes:</p>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The recommendations of Labour’s Commission on the UK’s future, chaired by Gordon Brown, setting out a plan for what Labour would do for local government – bringing decisions closer to the people affected by them; and with longer-term financial settlements, moving away from a model of ad-hoc bidding for funding pots. • The Leader of the Labour Party’s recent comments outlining how a Labour government would fix how councils are funded and move away from short-term funding settlements. In contrast, Prime Minister Rishi Sunak said “it was up to councils to manage their own finances”. <p>This Council resolves:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) To request that the Leaders of all Group’s should write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and call on the government to take responsibility for providing the long-term sustainable funding that councils so desperately need. 2) To ensure that budget proposals taken by Brent Council prioritise the protection of frontline services and the support available to residents most in need. 3) To support London Councils five-point plan to address the housing crisis in the capital: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raising Local Housing Allowance (LHA) • Supporting councils to buy accommodation sold by private landlords • Boost Homelessness Prevention Grant funding • Increase Discretionary Housing Payments

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bring forward a cross-departmental strategy to reduce homelessness.” <p>(4) The following Motion submitted by the Labour Group was AGREED:</p> <p><u>“Lift the Ban</u></p> <p>This Council notes that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brent has a proud history of embracing individuals seeking safety within our borough. Our diverse community of communities has contributed to the values which make Brent the open and welcoming borough it is today. • The Conservative Government’s attitude towards asylum seekers is unacceptable. It seeks to demonise families who have come to the UK for safety and a better life. This is reflected in both the UK-Rwanda partnership, which will criminalise refugees and threaten them with removal to Rwanda. It is also seen in the recent rhetoric of the Home Secretary who has said that multiculturalism has “failed”. • The government’s approach can be seen in the significant problems with the UK asylum system, with over 700 individuals residing indefinitely in hotels in Brent while awaiting the outcome of their application to remain. There is a record backlog of cases awaiting a decision alongside a de facto ban on working, all of which leads to a circle of impoverishment. • Since 2002, people seeking asylum have only been able to apply for the right to work after they have been waiting for a decision on their asylum claim for over a year, and only if they can be employed into one of the narrow, highly-skilled

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		<p>professions included on the government’s Shortage Occupation List.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That people seeking asylum are left to live on £5.39 per day, struggling to support themselves and their families, and left vulnerable to destitution, isolation, and exploitation. • The potential for economic gain of millions of pounds to the UK via increased taxable income and reduced payments of accommodation and subsistence support is foregone. <p>This Council believes that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Home Secretary’s view that multiculturalism has failed is an insult to the residents that have built their lives in Brent and contributed to this borough. • People seeking asylum want to be able to work so that they can use their skills and make the most of their potential, integrate into their communities, and provide for themselves and their families. • Restrictions on the right to work can lead to extremely poor mental health outcomes, a waste of potentially invaluable talents and skills for the economy, and greater poverty and homelessness in Brent. • Allowing people seeking asylum the right to work would therefore lead to positive outcomes for the local and national economy. • The UK needs an asylum system that empowers people seeking safety to rebuild their lives and enables communities to welcome them, not to isolate them.
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		<p>This Council therefore resolves to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Join the Lift the Ban Coalition (led by refugee action), which is campaigning to restore the right to work for everyone waiting for more than 6 months for a decision on their asylum claim. 2) Request that the Leader of the Council writes to the Home Secretary to request that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People seeking asylum and the right to work should be unconstrained by the shortage occupation list, after they have waited six months for a decision on their initial asylum claim or further submission. • The Home Office work with local authorities and communities to build a refugee protection system that treats all people with dignity and compassion. • Financial support be made available for councils like Brent, that will have more refugees that require wraparound support with housing, upon being awarded the right to remain. • The Home Secretary apologise for describing rough sleeping as a “lifestyle choice.” There are at least 1.5 million people residing in the UK that have no recourse to public funds, many facing homelessness and many whose visa status has not been determined.”
17	Urgent Business	No urgent items of business were raised at the meeting.