



Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee

Wednesday 24 January 2024 at 6.00 pm

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

Please note this will be held as a physical 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)
Aden
Ahmadi Moghaddam
Akram
S Butt
Georgiou
Miller
Mitchell
J.Patel
Shah

Substitute Members

Councillors:

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

Councillors:

Kansagra & Maurice
Lorber & Matin

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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 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
1 Apologies for absence and clarification of alternate members	
2 Declarations of interests	
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.	
3 Deputations (if any)	
To hear any deputations received from members of the public in accordance with Standing Order 67.	
4 Minutes of the previous meeting	
To approve the minutes of the previous meetings as a correct record –	
• Call In – Barham Park Trust Accounts - 26 October 2023.	1 – 6
• Resources & Public Realm Scrutiny Committee – 7 November 2023.	7 – 14
• Call In – STRA Neighbourhood Forum Status – 18 December 2023.	15 – 20
5 Matters arising (if any)	
To consider any matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting.	
6 Safer Brent Partnership Annual Report 2022-23	21 - 86
To receive the Safer Brent Partnership (SBP) Annual Report and review delivery of the SBP priorities and objectives for 2022-23.	
7 Draft Property Strategy/Asset Review Findings	
This item will now be considered at the Resources & Public Realm Scrutiny Committee on 27 February 2024.	

8 Budget Scrutiny Task Group Findings

87 - 112

To present the findings and recommendations of the Budget Scrutiny Task Group, following its review of the Council's draft budget proposals for 2024/25.

9 Scrutiny Progress Update - Recommendations Tracker

113 - 142

The purpose of this report is to present the Scrutiny Recommendations Tracker to the Resources & Public Realm Scrutiny Committee.

10 Resources & Public Realm Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 23/24

143 - 150

To provide an update on any changes to the Resources & Public Realm Scrutiny Committee's work programme.

11 Any other urgent business

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

Date of the next meeting: Tuesday 27 February 2024



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 26 October 2023
at 6.00 pm**

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

Also Present: Councillor Tatler (Deputy Leader, Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources & Reform and Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning & Growth) and Councillor Lorber.

1. Apologies for absence and clarification of alternate members

Apologies were received from Councillors Aden, Miller and Shah with Councillor Fraser in attendance as an alternate member for Councillor Shah.

2. Declarations of interests

Councillor Georgiou declared a personal interest as one of the Councillors who had signed the Call In request.

Councillor Lorber (in representing the members who had called-in the decision due to be considered at the meeting) declared a personal interest as a member of the Friends of Barham Park Group and Director and Trustee of Barham Community Library.

No other interests were declared at the meeting.

3. Call-In: Barham Park Trust Committee – Barham Park Trust Annual Report & Accounts 2022-23

In opening the item, the Chair advised that the meeting had been arranged, in accordance with Standing Order 14, to consider a call-in submitted by five members of the Council in relation to a decision made by the Barham Park Trust Committee (established as a Cabinet Committee) on 26 September 2023 to approve the Barham Park Trust Annual Report and Accounts for 2022 – 23.

In considering the call-in the Chair reminded the Committee that lines of questioning must remain specifically within the remit of the call-in and that issues raised on anything wider than the Barham Park Trust Annual Report and Accounts for 2022-23 would not be valid and would be ruled out for consideration.

Having clarified the basis of the call-in, the Chair then proceeded to invite Councillor Lorber to outline the reasons for the call-in as representative of the members who had supported its submission.

In presenting the call-in, Councillor Lorber highlighted the following key issues for the Committee:

- As the Barham Park Trust had charity status, it was felt that the Council should ensure that it was managed responsibly and effectively, however Members who submitted the call-in had reservations about the Council's position as effective Trustees due to concerns that the accounts were not accurate.
- It was queried why the original accounts had been withdrawn when originally submitted for consideration at the Barham Park Trust Committee meeting on 5th September 2023 and had then been re-submitted on a different template for the subsequent Committee meeting on 26 September 2023.
- It was felt that the change from the accounts being produced on an accruals basis to a receivable basis had created ambiguity in being able to accurately compare the previous year's accounts.
- Concern was raised in relation to an error which it was felt had been made on the 2022/23 accounts in relation to the received income figure stated, which it was not felt had accurately reflected rental payments from tenant organisations such as Barham Community Library with clarity therefore required on the way that income had been accounted for and included within the final accounts.
- It was felt that the assets for the Barham Park Trust had been understated by approximately £100k as the result of rent reviews not taking place. It was therefore queried why the trust had failed to implement rent reviews.
- Concern was also raised in relation to the fees charged for the recent the architectural survey of the Barham Park buildings which had been incurred by the Trust when it had previously been agreed these would be covered by the Council.
- On the basis of the concerns raised and pending a response on the areas identified for further clarification the members who had called-in the Trust Committee decision felt the accounts could not be treated as final and therefore needed to be reviewed and reconsidered in advance of any submission to the Charity Commission.

The Chair thanked Councillor Lorber for presenting the call-in and then proceeded to invite Councillor Tatler, Deputy Leader, Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources & Reform and Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning & Growth to respond to the matters raised within the call-in.

Councillor Tatler began by advising that she was attending to respond to the call-in as Vice-Chair of the Barham Park Trust Committee and started her response by thanking officers for their hard work, professionalism and expertise in producing the accounts, before highlighting the following key points:

- The Committee was advised that the accounts had initially been withdrawn from consideration at the 5 September 2023 Barham Park Trust Committee as they had been produced on an out of date template. It was therefore felt to be appropriate to resubmit the accounts in the correct format and revised template at a subsequent meeting, which had been held on 26 September 2023.
- The revised report template introduced a clearer presentation of the accounts, that was considered to provide more clarity on Trust activities and be in a more easily digestible format.

- It was acknowledged that the revised template saw the accounts produced on a receipts and payments basis as opposed to the previous accruals based template, therefore comparing like for like was more challenging this year; however from next year it would be easier to compare the accounts with the established template.
- The change in template had no effect on the Trust's financial position or resources and the Charity Commission had not raised any concerns as a result of the issue having been raised with them.
- Following an Independent Examination of the accounts, in accordance with the regulations set out by the Charity Commission, there were no areas of concern identified.
- In view of the concerns raised in advance of the call-in, the Chief Executive had commissioned an additional high-level consultancy based review to assess the accuracy of the Barham Park Trust accounts for 2022/23 which was due to conclude in November 2023.
- It was felt important to highlight that the concerns raised were in relation to the presentation of the accounts and were not concerns with operational matters.

The Chair thanked Councillor Tatler for her comments and invited the Committee to ask Councillor Lorber any further questions or clarifying points they had in relation to the information heard. The Committee queried why the change in presentation from an accrual basis to receipts and payments was of high concern. In response, Councillor Lorber advised that the change in the presentation of the accounts did not allow equal comparison to be undertaken year on year. Additionally, it was felt that the income reported was not accurate in terms of the way rental payments from tenants in the Barham Park building had been reflected within the accounts which had led to concerns relating to their completeness and accuracy.

The Chair thanked Councillor Lorber for his response and invited Committee Members to ask officers any clarifying queries they had. The following points were discussed:

- Following a Committee question regarding the change in the accounts template, officers re-iterated that the correct template from the Charity Commission had been used, the presentational change made no material impact on the overall finances of the Trust and the revised template would support increased comparability and transparency going forward.
- The Committee questioned what more could have been done to demonstrate the comparisons this year against last year's accounts, considering the introduction of the revised template. In response the Committee was advised that a narrative report had been included to explain the main differences, however it was acknowledged that the narrative could have been expanded on.
- It was clarified that the Charity Commission had not raised any concerns in relation to the change in template being used.
- It was clarified that the consultancy review commissioned by the Chief Executive would investigate the concerns relating to the accuracy of the accounts, additional queries raised by the Committee would not form part of the review.
- The Committee queried with officers if they were confident that the income figure stated on the accounts was correct, given the combined value of rental

income and income generated from the Barham Park Funfair. Officers provided an assurance that the figures reflected the transactions in the financial year 2022/23.

- Following concerns raised around the architect fees charged to the Trust for the architectural survey of the Barham Park buildings to inform the ongoing strategic property review, officers advised that whilst the intention reported to the Barham Park Trust Committee on 27 January 2022 had been for these to have been met from the Council's Capital Programme this had not been possible to achieve. The fees had therefore been charged to the Trust.
- The Committee queried if the revised template changed the way that rental arrears were presented with officers clarifying that the level of arrears would not have changed due to the revised presentation.
- The Committee questioned if there had been concerns regarding the previous template's transparency which prompted the change to the revised template. Officers advised that no concerns had been raised with the previous template; it was simply felt that the new template was more concise and digestible; this in turn would support transparency and opportunities to effectively scrutinise the accounts.
- In response to concerns highlighted regarding the Trust's level of rental income and arrears the Committee was advised that, whilst recognising the issue raised, this would be a matter for the Trust Committee to address rather than an issue related to the call-in on accuracy of the Trust accounts.
- It was clarified that the income on the accounts was the net figure.

At this point in the meeting the Committee was reminded that lines of enquiry must be within the remit of the original call-in submitted and not cross over to operational matters. It was acknowledged that it was unfortunate that some Committee lines of enquiry could not be responded to as colleagues from the Property Team and the Head of Internal Audit (who had undertaken the independent examination of the Trust Accounts) were not available to attend with questions needing to be directed and focussed on the officers that were in attendance. On this basis, the Committee then raised the following issues, as additional lines of enquiry:

- The Committee queried how utilities charges and payments were reflected within the accounts. In response officers advised that utility figures were included under maintenance payments.
- Following a Committee query as to whether the consultancy review commissioned by the Chief Executive would be made public the Committee was advised that this would be a matter for the Chief Executive to determine once the review had been completed with the Committee keen to ensure that any reflections on the outcome were shared more widely and with the Trust Committee once available.

As no further comments were raised, the Chair thanked everyone for their contributions. In summarising the discussion, the Chair highlighted that although the Committee had confidence in the professionalism of officer's work in relation to the accounts and understood the rationale for using a revised accounts template, the Committee's ability to explore some of the key lines of enquiry had been impacted by not being able to further explore (due to pre-planned leave) the basis of the Independent Examiners opinion on the accounts. It was, however, noted that

the concerns raised in relation to the accounts as the basis for the call-in had been challenged by Councillor Tatler (as Vice-Chair of the Trust Committee) and the Deputy Director of Finance at the meeting, with the high-level consultancy-based review commissioned by the Chief Executive relating to the issues and concerns raised about the accuracy of the accounts also to be concluded.

As a result, in considering the options available to the Committee under the call-process, Members indicated they were minded to refer the decision to approve the accounts back to the Barham Park Trust Committee for reconsideration. It was therefore **RESOLVED** that the Committee recommend, in line with section 2.1.2 of the report:

- (1) To refer the called-in decision back to the Barham Park Trust Committee for reconsideration once the high level consultancy-based review commissioned by the Chief Executive had concluded with the Committee also keen to welcome the Chief Executive sharing her reflections on the outcome of the review with the Trust Committee.

4. **Any other urgent business**

None.

Date of the next meeting: Wednesday 7 November 2023

The meeting closed at 8:08 pm

COUNCILLOR RITA CONNEELY
Chair

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**MINUTES OF THE RESOURCES AND PUBLIC REALM SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Held in the Conference Hall, Brent Civic Centre on Tuesday 7 November 2023
at 6.00 pm**

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

Also Present: Councillor M Butt (Leader of the Council), Councillor Tatler, Deputy Leader, Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources & Reform and Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning & Growth and Councillor Ketan Sheth, Chair of the Community & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee.

1. Apologies for absence and clarification of alternate members

Apologies were received from Councillors Mitchell, Miller and Shah. Councillor Molloy attended as an alternate member on behalf of Councillor Shah.

2. Declarations of interests

Councillor S Butt declared an interest as one of the directors of First Wave and I4B Housing.

3. Order of Business

The Chair agreed to vary the order of business on the agenda to allow the Scrutiny Progress Update – Recommendations Tracker to be considered first. The minutes therefore reflect the order in which the items were dealt with at the meeting.

4. Minutes of the previous meeting

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the previous meeting held on Wednesday 6 September 2023 be approved as a correct record.

5. Matters Arising (if any)

None.

6. Scrutiny Progress Update – Recommendations Tracker

The Chair advised that all responses on the tracker were up to date, however raised one query in relation to a previous Committee request to receive a cumulative equality impact assessment spanning the previous 5 years to understand the impact of budget cuts on services to residents, that had since been deemed unfeasible. Councillor Tatler, Deputy Leader, Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources & Reform and Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning & Growth advised that the reason the recommendation was no longer feasible was due to reduced staffing and resourcing since the original recommendation had been

agreed. The Committee was advised that the recommendation would be kept under review and if capacity increased efforts would be made to deliver the request.

7. **Annual Complaints Report 2022-23**

Councillor Tatler introduced the report that provided the Committee with a breakdown of complaints received and the Annual Complaints report as approved by Cabinet on 16 October 2023 that detailed complaints performance for the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023, with a focus on the nature of complaints and the learning gained to support informing Brent 's future approach to service improvements.

The following key points were discussed:

- The Committee queried the effectiveness of the comms strategy in relation to how residents were informed of the different ways that a complaint could be made. In response the Committee was advised that residents could find information on how to make a complaint via the Brent website, options included using the dedicated complaints phone line or registering a complaint via the portal on the website, additionally residents who came to the Civic Centre could be supported by the Customer Services team to make a complaint.
- Officers agreed that steps could be taken to share the dedicated complaints line telephone number more clearly on the website and also to utilise the 'Your Brent' magazine to promote the complaints procedure.
- The Committee questioned if adequate efforts had been made to resolve residents' concerns at an early stage so that issues did not escalate to a formal complaint. Officers advised that it was a key priority of the Council to effectively manage residents' concerns and seek resolution before it reached the stage of a formal complaint, it was noted that in some areas of the Council service requests were regularly utilised by residents more than complaints.
- Following a Committee query in relation to the quality of the responses provided to residents, the Committee was advised that resident satisfaction was measured by how many complaints required further escalation. The Complaints Team were in the process of completing some focused work in relation to the quality of responses provided in order to identify training points that could be used to support training for officers in managing complaints more effectively to increase resident satisfaction; this included bespoke departmental training and checklist criteria to ensure comprehensive responses were provided.
- The Committee heard that patterns of complaints were looked at to identify particular themes that required attention, the learning achieved from this was used to inform service improvements moving forward.
- The Committee felt that where service improvements had been made as a result of residents' dialogue with the Council, it would be positive to promote this to residents to demonstrate the Council's desire to actively work with residents to improve service delivery.
- It was clarified that complaints in relation to commissioned services were treated with the same level of response by officers within their remit who would liaise with the commissioned services to seek a resolution.

- It was confirmed that the Annual Complaints report was published in full on the Brent website, the Committee felt it would be helpful to also publish a shorter user-friendly version of the report that listed key areas of concern.
- The Committee noted that over the years of austerity inflicted on local government, it was inevitable that service delivery would be affected and lead to increased resident complaints, despite the difficulties in managing increasingly reduced budgets the Committee was assured that the Council remained committed to delivering high quality services within the context of the difficult financial circumstances.
- The Committee was advised that equality data feedback received so far had not indicated any specific groups of particular concerns, however it was noted that not all complainants completed the form as it was not mandatory.
- In terms of inclusivity, it was felt that the different mechanisms to make a complaint were sufficient to support all residents, examples shared that demonstrated inclusivity were that digitally excluded residents could make a complaint over the phone or come in to the Civic Centre to receive support, visually impaired residents could receive communication in bigger print or on different coloured paper, translation services and an advocacy service were available and support could also be provided to residents from their local Ward Councillors.
- The Committee queried the disparity in relation to why some cases were considered if they were reported after a 12 month period, whereas others were rejected on this basis. In response the Committee was advised that they were required to work in accordance with the Social Care and Housing Ombudsman; whereby many cases that extended beyond 12 months would be difficult to thoroughly investigate; it was noted that there were exceptions to the rule and discretion was exercised where appropriate.
- The Committee felt it would be useful to understand any trends in compensation awarded and requested that this information was provided to the Committee at a future date. This was agreed to be taken forward as an information request.
- The Committee noted that Adult Social Care (ASC) were recognised as providing good practice in relation to complaints, however there was an identified theme that required improvement in terms of communication. Claudia Brown, Director of Adult Social Care advised that this was being responded to by increasing communication across teams and colleagues within ASC as well as providing increased communication with service users. Template letters had been developed advising service users of next steps and what to expect once a complaint had been made. The ASC team were committed to providing an improved standardised approach when responding to complaints ensuring clear communication was championed throughout the process.
- The Committee noted that ASC service improvements introduced as a result of service user feedback included the revised template letters for service users that they would receive following a complaint and additional staff training in specifically identified areas of development.
- Following a Committee query in relation to the increased number of Social Care Ombudsman complaints, the Committee was advised that this could be attributed to by the large staff turnover, due to high numbers of agency staff who were not carrying out their duties to the required Brent standards. This had been addressed with agreed steps to increase permanent staff

recruitment with a number of measures agreed recently at General Purposes Committee that would see an increased permanent staff team to deliver the high standards of service delivery expected in Brent.

- In terms of Children & Young People (CYP) complaints the Committee queried the increase seen in Looked After Children (LAC) complaints. The Committee was advised that the increase demonstrated that care leavers were confident in advocating for themselves which was felt to be a positive reflection of the strength in Brent's advocacy services, it was noted that the complaints were largely around the quality of semi-independent accommodation and the quality of the support received from care leaver's personal advisers. There had been a number of vacancies for personal advisors, following a recruitment exercise the majority of these had been filled and CYP were expecting to see fewer complaints this year.
- The Committee queried what was changing in CYP to reduce complaints and improve service delivery. In response the Committee was advised that similarly to ASC, measures had also been agreed to support the retention of permanent staff as well as communication training being provided to staff to support positive communication with parents/carers, particularly in relation to not getting drawn in to parental conflict.

In closing the discussion, the Chair thanked officers and Committee Members for their contributions towards the scrutiny on the items before summarising the outcomes of the discussions and additional actions, which were **AGREED** as follows:

Suggestions for Improvement

- (1) A user friendly, summarised version of the Annual Complaints Report to be published alongside the full version on the Brent Council website.
- (2) Publicise and promote service improvements made as a result of upheld complaints.
- (3) Improve the publicity and accessibility of the complaints procedure, including promoting the complaints procedure more regularly in 'Your Brent', and adding the customer service telephone number to the 'How to make a complaint' section of the Council website.
- (4) Liaise with other local authorities to share best practice to reduce the amount of ASC cases being referred to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO).

Information Requests

- (1) Provide a breakdown on compensation paid out during the period of 2020-2023 (broken down by issue type and department).
- (2) Out of the 56% of Stage 2 housing department complaints upheld, provide further detail on how many of these complaints were not upheld at Stage 1.

8. Q2 Financial Report

Councillor Tatler, Deputy Leader, Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources & Reform and Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning & Growth introduced the report that set out the financial forecast for the General Fund revenue budget, the Housing Revenue Account, the Dedicated Schools Grant and the Capital

Programme, as at Quarter 2 2023/24. Members were asked to note that the report was considered and approved by Cabinet on 16 October 2023.

In noting the particularly challenging financial circumstances the Council were in due to the national economic climate and limited funding from central government it was recognised that Brent's financial challenges were not unique and were in line with other Councils.

The following key points were discussed:

- It was confirmed that measures were in place to mitigate the £13m pressures as a result of temporary accommodation costs, however these measures were unlikely to have an impact until 24/25.
- The Committee queried if increased overspending was anticipated in the future, given the economic climate. In response the Committee was advised that despite the Council's prudent approach, the challenges in continued reduced piecemeal funding from central government and the pressures from statutory demand led services such as Housing, CYP and ASC could lead to Brent and many other councils incurring overspends in order to deliver essential services to residents.
- The Committee was assured that the Council held a healthy reserve fund at present, some of which would need to be used to support the temporary accommodation issues. If it was necessary to withdraw further funds to support other financially challenged areas of the Council, steps would be taken to action this, however this action would not be taken without thorough consideration as any withdrawal from reserve funding would have to be paid back and this would impact budgets across other council services.
- It was noted that some reserves were ringfenced for specific purposes and could not be used for broader purposes.
- The Committee queried if the Council could generate increased revenue via business rates and collecting increased council tax on vacant properties. In response the Committee was advised that the Council was bound by central government legislation, so were unable to change collection rates. The Committee was informed that central government were due to review business rates and consider the devolution of business rates to councils; if Council's were given the authority to manage this, Brent could explore increased business rates to generate more income, however this was not currently an option.
- Officers recognised there were a number of vacant homes in the borough and continued to explore ways to bring these vacant homes back in to use to support temporary accommodation as well as generating Council income. The identification of vacant homes was supported by public intelligence, Ward Councillors and the empty homes property team who went out into the community to identify vacant properties.
- The Committee felt it would be advantageous to reactivate a previously successful campaign to report vacant homes in the borough that the Council had promoted through the 'Your Brent' magazine.
- Work was being actively undertaken to ensure that the correct level of Council Tax was being collected, with officers investigating single person discount claims and converted properties.

- The Committee was advised that there may be a change in legislation that could support increased income generation through the collection of Council tax on vacant properties as the change would allow the Council to collect double the amount of council tax on vacant properties after 1 year as opposed to the current 2 year rule.
- In terms of generating income through commercialisation opportunities, the Committee was advised that the Council were often approached with commercial opportunities, however it was felt these often posed unnecessary financial risk to the Council. The Committee noted examples of other Council's that had tried this method of income generation with results being highly unfavourable to the Council's finances.
- To limit the cost pressures associated with the demand for temporary accommodation, the Committee queried what was being done to bring voids within Brent Housing's portfolio in to use more quickly. In response the Committee was advised that improvements had been made to procedures within the voids system, this had resulted in improved void turnaround times.
- It was hoped that the Mayor's Refugee Housing Programmes would support the Council in purchasing larger family sized homes for use in the borough that would in turn support a reduction in the excessive temporary accommodation costs.
- The Committee was advised that when viability and market conditions improved, further acquisitions would be made to Brent's Housing portfolio to source additional temporary accommodation.
- Following a Committee query in relation to the broader mitigations in places to manage the overspend, the Committee was advised that the Finance Team rigorously monitored the budget, looking for trends in demands to support future projections, however it was noted that there was an element of unpredictability in demand led areas of the budget.
- In addition to projections and financial modelling undertaken, service area managers were robustly challenged to ensure their services were providing the best value for money and continued to explore the most efficient ways to deliver services.

At this stage in proceedings, the Committee agreed to apply the guillotine procedure under Standing Order 62(c) in order to extend the meeting for a period of 15 minutes and enable the remaining business on the agenda to be completed.

- In recognition that the significant overspend in the current budget was not in relation to the typical areas of overspend (ASC and CYP) the Committee queried if this had caused additional pressure on budget holders in these areas to limit their costs, taking in to consideration the already projected overspend. In response Nigel Chapman, Corporate Director, Children & Young People advised that he felt he received an appropriate level of challenge and support to manage the CYP budget. Conscientious efforts continued to be made to manage risk within the community rather than bringing children in to care unnecessarily, however it was highlighted that it would only take a small number of emergency care or high cost residential placements to significantly impact the budget.
- CYP also continued to experience financial pressures in relation to EHCP funding, however this was actively being managed through the support of the

Delivering Better Value in SEND (DBV) Programme, with some traction starting to take place.

In closing the discussion, the Chair thanked officers and Committee Members for their contributions towards the scrutiny on the items before summarising the outcomes of the discussions and additional actions, which were **AGREED** as follows:

Recommendations to Cabinet

- (1) Continue to lobby central government to establish a locally controlled business rates system in order for local authorities to influence policy around the setting of Business Rates and to generate additional income.

Suggestions for Improvement

- (1) Explore new ways to increase collection rates for Business Rates, learning lessons from other local authorities.
- (2) Liaise with the Office for National Statistics (ONS) to explore whether further census data could be provided to the Council on the specific properties in the borough identified as 'unoccupied dwellings'.
- (3) Undertake a communications and engagement campaign to encourage owners to rent vacant properties to the Council to address the shortage in temporary accommodation supply.

9. Scrutiny Work Plan 2022/23 Update

The Committee noted there were no changes to the work plan since the last Committee meeting. The Committee noted that it was a live document and in addition to the agreed items, additional items may be added as and when necessary, when brought to the Committee's attention.

10. Any Other Urgent Business

None.

Date of the next meeting: Wednesday 24 January 2024

The meeting closed at 9.17pm

COUNCILLOR RITA CONNEELY
Chair

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**MINUTES OF THE RESOURCES AND PUBLIC REALM SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Held in the Conference Hall, Brent Civic Centre on Monday 18 December 2023
at 6.00 pm**

PRESENT: Councillor Long (Vice-Chair in the Chair) and Councillors Aden, Ahmadi Moghaddam, Akram, S Butt, Georgiou, Molloy and J.Patel.

Also Present: Councillor Tatler (Deputy Leader, Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources & Reform and Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning & Growth) and Councillor Lorber (representing the members who had called-in the decision for review).

1. Apologies for absence and clarification of alternate members

Apologies were received from Councillors Conneely, Miller, Mitchell and Shah with Councillor Molloy in attendance as an alternate member for Councillor Conneely.

Councillor Ahmadi Moghaddam was present for the majority of the meeting, however had to leave due to unforeseen circumstances prior to the final decision being made on the outcome of the call-in.

2. Declarations of interests

The following interests were declared by members of the Committee in relation to Item 3 (Call-In Cabinet Decision (16 November 23) – Sudbury Town Residents Association (STRA) application for Neighbourhood Forum status):

- Councillor Georgiou declared a personal interest as one of the Councillors who had signed the call-in request form.
- Councillor S. Butt declared a personal interest as a former Sudbury Ward Councillor from 2018-2022.

No other interests were declared at the meeting.

3. Call-In: Cabinet Decision (16 November 23) – Sudbury Town Residents Association (STRA) application for Neighbourhood Forum status.

In opening the item, the Chair advised that the meeting had been arranged, in accordance with Standing Order 14, to consider a call-in submitted by five members of the Council in relation to a decision made by Cabinet on 16 November 2023 to refuse the Sudbury Town Residents Association's application for Neighbourhood Forum status.

In considering the call-in the Chair reminded the Committee that lines of questioning must remain specifically within the remit of the call-in and that issues raised on anything wider would not be valid and ruled out for consideration.

Having clarified the basis of the call-in, the Chair then proceeded to invite Councillor Lorber to outline the reasons for the call-in as representative of the members who had supported its submission.

In presenting the call-in, Councillor Lorber highlighted the following key issues for the Committee as a basis for the call-in which had been submitted:

- The decision taken by Cabinet had meant there was currently no authorised Neighbourhood Forum in Sudbury.
- Sudbury Town Resident Association (STRA) had previously been very active in the community, not only in terms of developing a local plan in collaboration with Brent Council officers but also in representing local people in relation to planning issues and environmental improvements, as well as protecting Barham Park.
- Concerns were raised that consultation in relation to making the decision on STRA's status as a Neighbourhood Forum was not carried out with due diligence as it was felt ward councillors had not been adequately informed or included within the process.
- The limited number of responses to the reported consultation was felt to be representative of the fact that there had not, in the view of the members who had called-in the decision, been inadequate wider consultation with the public.
- Concerns were also raised about STRA not having been invited or informed about the Cabinet meeting on 16 November 2023 when the final decision to refuse their application had been decided.
- It was highlighted that STRA and Brent Council officers had previously enjoyed a positive working relationship until complaints from local councillors had been made in 2018/19. It was felt that after this point a communication breakdown had occurred; as such, it was questioned whether local politics had played a part in undermining STRA as a local Neighbourhood Forum.
- It was queried why council officers had not made a more concerted effort to discuss concerns with STRA ahead of their Neighbourhood Forum application having been recommended for refusal.
- It was felt that the separate application from Sudbury Matters to create a new Neighbourhood Forum covering the area should have been considered at the same time as STRA's application so that both parties could be considered equitably.
- On the basis of the concerns raised Councillor Lorber felt the original decision taken to refuse the application needed to be referred back to Cabinet for re-consideration.

The Chair thanked Councillor Lorber for presenting the call-in and invited Committee Members to ask any clarifying queries they had.

The following points were discussed:

- The Committee sought further details on how the consultation and decision to refuse STRA's application for Neighbourhood Forum status had been communicated to ward councillors. In response, Councillor Lorber advised that as Sudbury ward councillor he did not feel he had been kept informed about the public consultation or been directly engaged in the process and once again highlighted concerns at the thoroughness and outcome with only 23

responses received. In relation to the decision taken by Cabinet, Councillor Lorber advised that he was only aware after the decision had been made and had not received direct prior notification that a decision was due to be taken at the Cabinet meeting on 16 November 2023.

- In response to a further query, Councillor Lorber advised he was unaware whether the Chair of STRA had been notified ahead of the decision being made at Cabinet.
- Councillor Lorber shared that he was aware that Sudbury Matters had also applied for Neighbourhood Forum status, however he was unaware of the progress made with that application and why it had subsequently been withdrawn.
- Following a Committee query in relation to the effectiveness of the mediation process established to seek a joint solution between STRA and Sudbury Matters in relation to Neighbourhood Forum status, Councillor Lorber advised that he had not directly been involved with this and therefore felt unable to comment.
- The Committee queried if there was a requirement to notify ward councillors of pending decisions due to be taken by Cabinet in relation to matters impacting on their ward. In response Debra Norman, Corporate Director of Governance advised that there was no specific requirement to proactively notify ward councillors.
- The Committee queried the impact felt by Sudbury residents as a result of not having a Neighbourhood Forum over the past year since STRA's status had expired. Councillor Lorber advised that it was difficult to comment on the full impact, however, it was felt that the way the Council had managed consideration of STRA's application to renew their Neighbourhood Forum status had been poorly handled and ineffective for local residents.

As there were no further questions for Councillor Lorber at this point, the Chair thanked him for his responses and invited Councillor Tatler as Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning & Growth to respond to the matters raised within the call-in.

Councillor Tatler highlighted the following key points:

- It was not the Council's responsibility to create Neighbourhood Forums, which needed to be community led and representative of the area they covered, as well as having the capacity to be run effectively.
- It was not felt that STRA, in its current capacity, were able to perform this role sufficiently for Sudbury residents given concerns relating to their transparency, accessibility and diversity as an organisation along with what was considered to be a lack of focus on neighbourhood planning activities or clarity on the distinction between the Forum and wider Resident Association business. This had been the basis on which the decision had been taken by Cabinet to refuse their application for renewed Neighbourhood Forum status.
- In terms of advance notice being provided on the matter prior to its consideration by Cabinet, members were reminded that notice of all items due to be considered by Cabinet was published at least 28 days in advance of each meeting on the Forward Plan. All members received notification when the Forward Plan was published and it was therefore felt this should have provided adequate notice of the item prior to its consideration by Cabinet.

- STRA had been notified about concerns in relation to their application for Neighbourhood Forum status and had been given opportunities to respond and engage with officers in relation to the issues identified. The process has also included the opportunity to take part in external mediation in order to address the concerns raised and also work collectively with Sudbury Matters on the potential to create a Forum for the benefit of Sudbury residents. Despite repeated efforts from officers, no further approaches had been received from STRA to engage in the process.
- On the basis of the points outlined, Councillor Tatler therefore felt the decision taken by Cabinet had been the correct approach with the Committee therefore urged to consider upholding the original decision made to refuse STRAs application for Neighbourhood Forum status.

The Chair thanked Councillor Tatler for her comments and then opened up the debate for the Committee to seek responses on any clarifying queries they had, prior to a final decision being made on the outcome of the call-in.

The following points were discussed:

- Following a Committee query in relation to the consultation and engagement that took place in considering STRA's application for Neighbourhood Forum status, officers advised that there had initially been good engagement with STRA with it noted that the officers had attended STRA's AGM in May 2022 along with a bespoke meeting to discuss the process for constituting and re-applying for Neighbourhood Forum status. Despite the guidance and advice provided, their final application had not been received until the end of December 2022 following expiry of their Forum status. Following this, consultation on the application had started in January 2023, with website notifications, an email to all local ward councillors in the area covered by the Forum and a notice on the Members Bulletin. No existing councillors had responded to the consultation.
- In view of the limited public response to the consultation, the Committee sought further details on the breadth of the public engagement process with it noted that standard practice, as had been followed in this instance, was to notify subscribers to the Local Plan Database about the consultation process.
- In terms of local ward councillors being notified, the Committee recognised the email communication which had been sent and supported, as ongoing good practice, notification being provided individually for ward councillors of important issues affecting their ward, in addition to general notices in the Members Bulletin.
- The Committee queried how STRA were specifically informed about the consultation. In response officers advised that STRA would have received an email notification as they were on the Local Plan Consultation Database. On this basis, officers had not felt it necessary to send STRA further additional notification they had previously demonstrated experience in responding to consultations including those related to their previous Neighbourhood Forum applications.
- Members also noted the significant dialogue that had taken place between officers and STRA following submission of their initial application with it confirmed that STRA had also been notified about the alternative application for Forum status submitted by Sudbury Matters. It was at this point that

- officers had suggested mediation as a way forward in seeking to create a combined Neighbourhood Forum that would best serve the local community.
- In response to a query, the Committee was advised that mediation support had been sought from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities in order to support the two groups in progressing plans for one Neighbourhood Forum that could best represent the local community. Whilst both groups had initially agreed to work together, STRA had subsequently not played any active role in the process.
 - Following a Committee query in relation to the status of the Sudbury Matters Neighbourhood Forum application, the Committee was advised that following withdrawal of their initial application a revised submission had been received based on a new name. Officers were, however, awaiting the outcome of the call-in process on the Cabinet decision to refuse STRAs application before being able to progress the new application further.
 - The Committee was advised that if, following consultation, it was felt the new Forum's application was able to successfully serve the interests of Sudbury residents Cabinet could be asked to consider the application by March / April 2024.

As no further comments were raised, the Chair thanked everyone for their contributions to the discussion.

Having considered the grounds for the call-in and response provided at the meeting in outlining the basis for the decision and process followed in relation to its consideration the Committee, having considered the options available under the call-process, indicated they were minded to confirm rather than refer back the original decision taken by Cabinet to refuse the application received from Sudbury Town Residents Association for Neighbourhood Forum status.

It was therefore **RESOLVED** as a final outcome of the call-in to confirm the original decision made by Cabinet on 16 November 2023 to refuse the application received from Sudbury Town Residents Association for Neighbourhood Forum status with it noted that the decision would therefore take immediate effect following the meeting.

4. **Any other urgent business**

None.

Date of the next meeting: Wednesday 24 January 2024

The meeting closed at 7:24 pm

COUNCILLOR JANICE LONG
Vice Chair in the Chair

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 <p>Brent</p>	<p align="center">Resources & Public Realm Scrutiny Committee 24 January 2024</p>
	<p align="center">Report from the Corporate Director of Communities and Regeneration and the Chair of the Safer Brent Partnership, Detective Superintendent William Lexton – Jones</p>
	<p align="center">Lead Cabinet Member Cabinet Member for Safer Communities and Public Protection (Councillor Harbi Farah)</p>
<p align="center">Safer Brent Partnership Annual Report 2022 - 2023</p>	

Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	Not Applicable
Open or Part/Fully Exempt: <small>(If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)</small>	Open
List of Appendices:	Two Appendix 1: Annual Report 2022 – 2023 Appendix 2: GM Case Study
Background Papers:	None
Contact Officer(s): <small>(Name, Title, Contact Details)</small>	Kibibi Octave, Director of Communities 0208 937 4225 Simon Egbor, Head of Community Safety and Prevention 0208 937 5853

1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1. For the Committee to note the Safer Brent Partnership, Annual Report 2022 – 2023 and the activities undertaken to support agreed priorities.

2.0 Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 For the Committee to note the Annual Report, 2023 -2023 as part of the council’s Crime and Disorder and Serious Violence functions.

2.2 For the Committee to provide any recommendations.

3.0 Detail

3.1 Contribution to Borough Plan Priorities & Strategic Context

3.1.1 Thriving Communities is one of our key priorities under Brent's Borough Plan 2023-2027. The Borough Plan states that prevention is essential in tackling the causes of crime. In it we have we have told our residents that we will help people leave criminal lifestyles, pursue justice for victims, work with our communities to build trust, prevent criminality and improve our response to crime. The annual report informs how we have delivered on our objectives.

3.1.2 The Safer Brent Partnership (SBP) is the multi-agency strategic group that oversees our approach to reducing crime and antisocial behaviour. The focus of all of the partnerships' work is intelligence-led and evidence-based. The SBP is made up of representatives from several agencies including the London Borough of Brent, Metropolitan Police, London Fire Brigade, National Health Service, National Probation Service, Voluntary Services such as the Young Brent Foundation and Victim Support. The SBP also works with other strategic boards such as the Safeguarding Adults Board, and the Brent Safeguarding Children Forum.

3.2 Background

3.2.1 The annual report provides an insight into Community Safety activity. Overall, the report highlights an achievement in the reduction of violence with injury, rape, gun and hate crime. Although, we are concerned with an increase in knife crime with the offending cohort getting younger.

3.2.2 Key developments and challenges to delivery in 2022-23 were as follows:

- **Reducing Domestic and Sexual Abuse**

Achievement: In comparison to our most similar boroughs, Brent saw the largest reduction in domestic abuse incidents compared to the previous annual reporting period, sitting at a 6.6% reduction.

Area of development: Enhance community awareness and an understanding of domestic abuse and violence against women and girls, what those behaviours look like, what is unacceptable and how to access support.

- **Reducing the Impact of Gangs and Knives in our Community**

Achievement: Brent has seen a reduction in the number of knife crime with injury victims aged under 25 years.

Area of development: Knife related incidents have escalated across the borough in comparison to previous reporting periods. We need to do much more

to understand why this is happening, the drivers escalating knife related violence and do more to disrupt the accessibility and normalization of knife carrying.

- **Reducing Vulnerability and Increasing Safeguarding**

Achievement: Multi - Agency attendance to the Community MARAC has improved significantly over the year, partners work well to complete actions to support vulnerable individuals. There has been a -39.4% risk reduction for all cases referred and closed at the Community MARAC.

Area of development: More promotion of the Community MARAC with internal stakeholders and earlier identification of vulnerable cohorts involved in anti-social behaviour and crime.

- **Reducing Offenders and Perpetrators from Reoffending**

Achievement: The Integrated Offender Management (IOM) multiagency panel have continued to work together to deliver support to our IOM cohort. AIR Network have continued to deliver a mentoring, sports and wellbeing programme which has helped to support offenders in accessing education, training and employment opportunities as well as housing support. St Giles specifically provide mentoring to former gang nominals and similarity support individuals with education, training and employment and employment opportunities.

Area of development: More consistent participation from key agencies, Via, St Mungo's and Adult Social Care at panel meetings.

- **Reducing Anti-Social Behaviour**

Achievement: A decrease of 3.5% in recorded anti-social behaviour cases which was the 4th biggest decrease in London. There has been increased use tools and powers under the Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014, particularly Closure Order Powers to tackle anti-social behaviour and cuckooing in properties.

Area of development: Better understanding of the links between anti-social behaviour, intimidation, gang associations and links. Identify long term strategies to reduce repeat offending and entrenched hotspots.

3.23 Looking ahead, we will take a “Public Health” approach to deliver our Safer Brent –Community Safety Strategy 2024 – 2026; meaning that we will work with key partners to act earlier, identify wider support needs and improve interventions to prevent criminal and anti-social behaviour.

3.24 The Safer Brent Partnership's priorities, 2024 – 2025 are broken down into the following 4 priority areas:

- Priority 1: Tackling Violent Crime

- Priority 2: Challenging Domestic Abuse, Sexual Abuse and Preventing Violence Against Women and Girls.
- Priority 3: Focusing on Incidents Impacting our Community.
- Priority 4: Protecting those most Vulnerable.

4.0 Stakeholder and ward member consultation and engagement

4.1 The Safer Brent Annual report has been agreed by the Chair and shared with partners that attend the Safer Brent Partnership.

5.0 Financial Considerations

5.1 Aside from our Domestic Abuse Commissioned Services, that is made up of a contribution from Community Safety, Public Health and Children and Young People, the remainder of our commissioned services and related interventions commissioned are funded by external grants. These include MOPAC's - London Crime Prevention Fund (LCPF) and the Violence Reduction Unit (VRU), Serious Violence Duty and Crime Prevention fund awards. The detail of this is laid out under the Community Safety Commissioned Services list within the annual report.

6.0 Legal Considerations

6.1 As required by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, the Safer Brent Partnership (SBP) brings agencies and organisations together to develop and oversee local crime reductions strategies. Wider legislation underpinning this activity includes the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015, Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014.

7.0 Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Considerations

7.1 Data analysis shows an overrepresentation of black and black British suspects under 25, for all crime types. However, a significant number of all crimes recorded, have no suspect profile attached.

8.0 Climate Change and Environmental Considerations

8.1 N/A

9.0 Human Resources/Property Considerations (if appropriate)

9.1 N/A

10.0 Communication Considerations

10.1 Outcomes on the annual report will be publicised through Brent Connects and other localised communication platforms.

Report sign off:

Alice Lester

Corporate Director, Communities & Regeneration

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SAFER BRENT

PARTNERSHIP ANNUAL REPORT 2022 - 2023

Community Safety
LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

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1. Background

1.1 Brent is a multi-cultural and vibrant North West London Borough with around 339,800 people living in the borough. As of the 2021 Census, 56.1% of Brent residents were born outside of the UK and over 149 languages are spoken. 64% of residents are from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds, and Brent is home to just over 60,000 EU citizens.

According to the 2021 Census, Brent has a younger age profile when compared with England and Wales, characterised by more adults aged 20-44 and fewer older residents. Around 12% of Brent residents were aged 65 and over (39,500) compared with 19% nationally and 81,300 aged under 19.

1.2 Across Brent employment in industries related to distribution, transportation, accommodation, food and retail form the largest part of the local economy. At the same time, poverty, long-term unemployment, and adult skills levels remain key challenges for Brent.

1.3 The Safer Brent Partnership (SBP) is the multi-agency strategic group that oversees our approach to reducing crime and antisocial behaviour. The focus of the work is intelligence-led and evidence-based. It is made up of representatives from multiple agencies including the London Borough of Brent, Metropolitan Police, London Fire Brigade, Health, National Probation Service, Voluntary Services such as the Young Brent Foundation and Victim Support. The SBP also works with other strategic Boards such as the Safeguarding Adults Board, and the Brent Safeguarding Children Forum.

1.4 The SBP aims to ensure that our community can thrive and live with less fear of crime, greater confidence in services and take responsibility for its own actions. It pledges to bring to justice those who cause the most harm, using trauma informed and restorative approaches and out-of-court disposals where appropriate. The work is intelligence-led and evidence-based, identifying real issues and taking a problem solving approach to reducing them whilst reviewing wider contextual safeguards.

1.5 Each year the SBP reviews and agrees a set of local priorities. The priorities for the reporting period are:

- Priority 1: Reducing Domestic and Sexual Abuse
- Priority 2: Reducing the Impact of Gangs and Knives in our Community
- Priority 3: Reducing Vulnerability and Increasing Safeguarding
- Priority 4: Reducing Offenders and Perpetrators from Reoffending
- Priority 5: Reducing Anti-Social Behaviour

1.6 In addition to the above, the Safer Neighbourhood Board (SNB), that operates externally to the council, aims to bring police and local communities together to decide on localised policing and crime priorities and work collaboratively to problem solve issues. SNBs have been set up in every London borough with the support of the Mayor's Office of Police and Crime (MOPAC). They are expected to ensure that the public are involved in a wide range of community safety decisions. Additionally, MOPAC funds projects through these Boards, to help address crime and exploitation in the area.

2. Performance

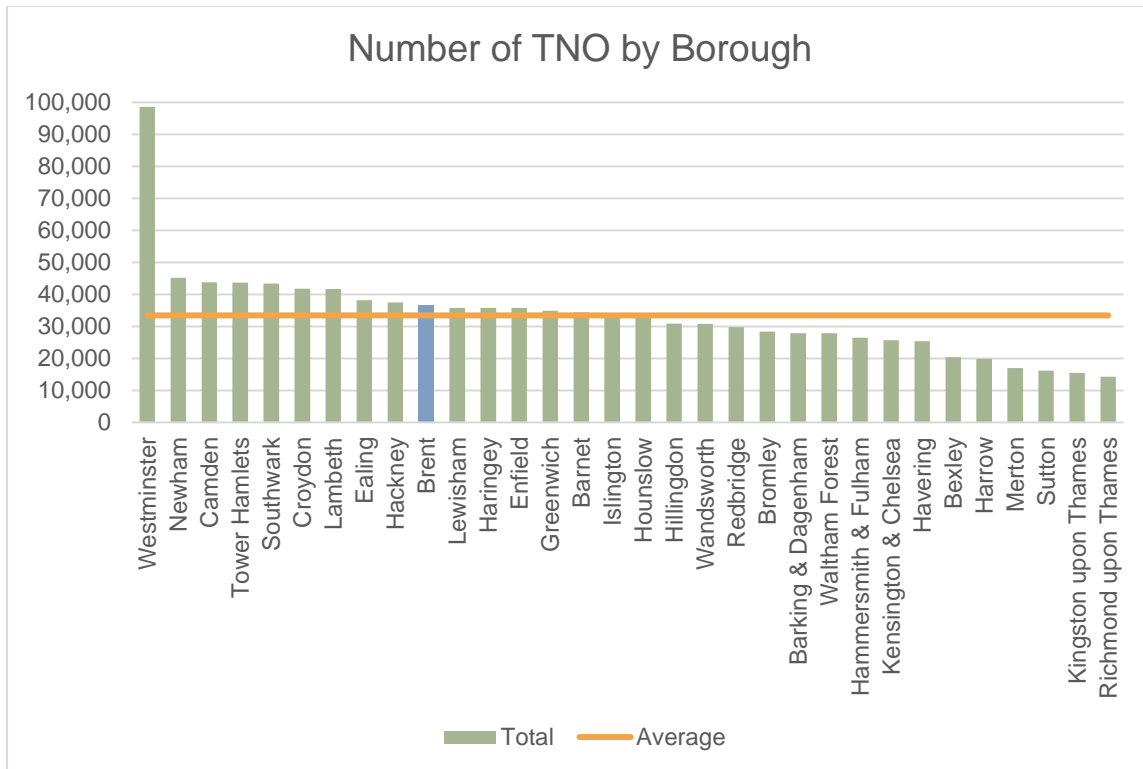
2.1 Performance Summary

Below is a summary of key outcomes as part of the Safer Brent Community Safety Strategy 2022 to 2023.

Priority	Measure	Reduction and Collection Method	Oct 21 – Sept 22	Oct 22 – Sept 23	RAG – London Borough Average
Reducing recorded crime	We will aim to be below the London borough average for the overall crime rate	Total Notifiable Offences per 1000 population, as per Home Office approved statistics	104.9 crimes per 1,000	106.4 crimes per 1,000	London Borough Average 113.4 crimes per 1000.
Reducing Gang Related Offending	Reduce the number of lethal-barrelled gun discharges	All recorded lethal barrel gun discharges in the borough reported to Metropolitan Police	16 (0.0 per 1000)	12 (0.0 per 1000)	0.0 per 1000
Reducing Anti-Social Behaviour	Reduce the number of calls to the police for ASB	All calls to Metropolitan Police which have been flagged as ASB related (personal, nuisance and environmental)	10389 (30.6 per 1000)	10029 (29.5 per 1000)	27.4 per 1000
Reducing Violence and Vulnerabilities	Reduce the number of Violence with Injury Domestic abuse offences	All Metropolitan Police recorded violent offences where the victim and suspects are intimate partners or are family members reported to the police and flagged as a domestic	868 (2.6 per 1000)	886 (2.7 per 1000)	2.7 per 1000
Reducing Acquisitive Offending	Reduce the number of personal robberies	All Metropolitan Police recorded personal robbery offences	819 (2.5 per 1000)	899 (2.7 per 1000)	3.2 per 1000
Reducing Acquisitive offending	Reduce the number of knife related robberies	All Metropolitan Police recorded personal robbery offences with a knife crime flag	21 (0.1 per 1000)	21 (0.1 per 1000)	0.1 per 1000
Reducing Acquisitive offending	Reduce the number of residential burglaries	All Metropolitan Police recorded residential burglaries	1471 (4.5 per 1000)	1483 (4.5 per 1000)	per 1000

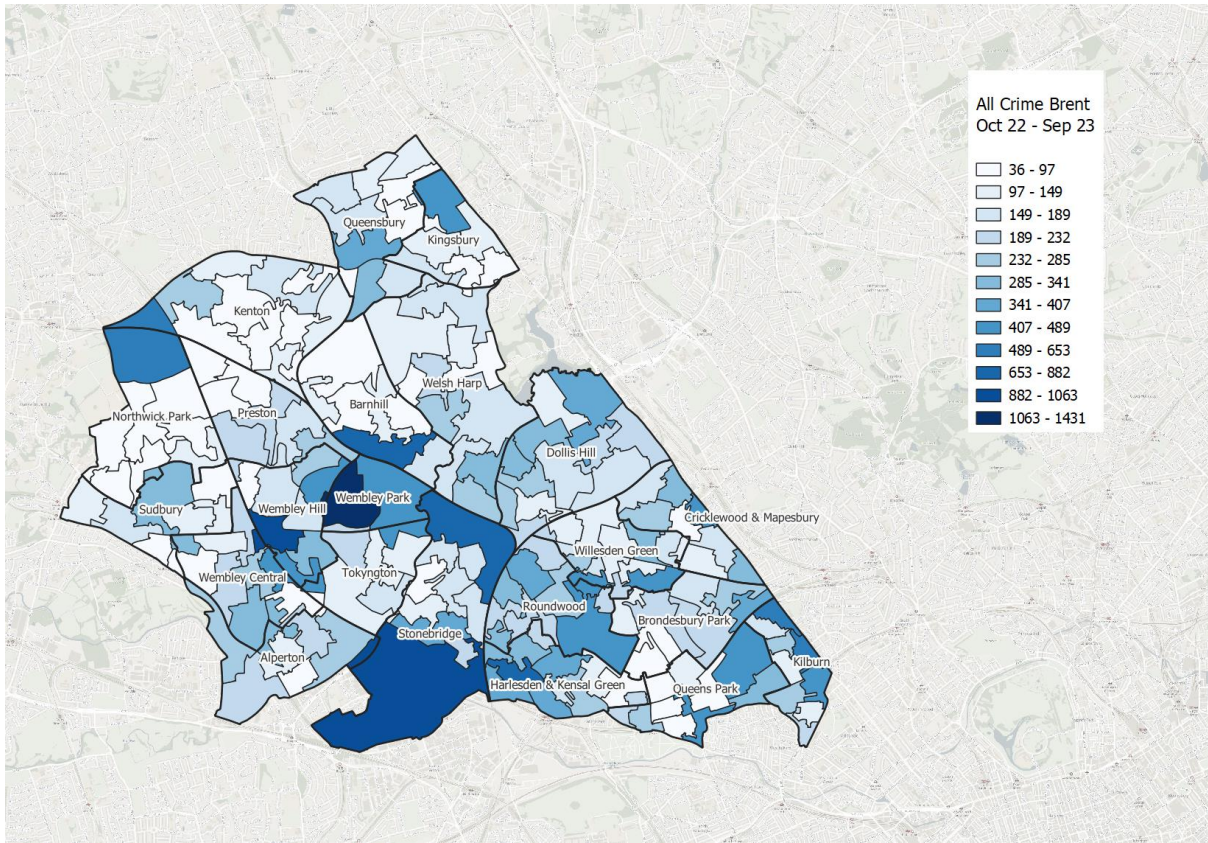
2.2. **Total Notifiable Offences (TNO) in Brent**

2.3 Brent is below the London average for total notifiable offences per 1000 population. However, offences per 1000 have increased between October 2022 and September 2023 compared with the same period last year (108 in the previous period compared with 113 in the current period)

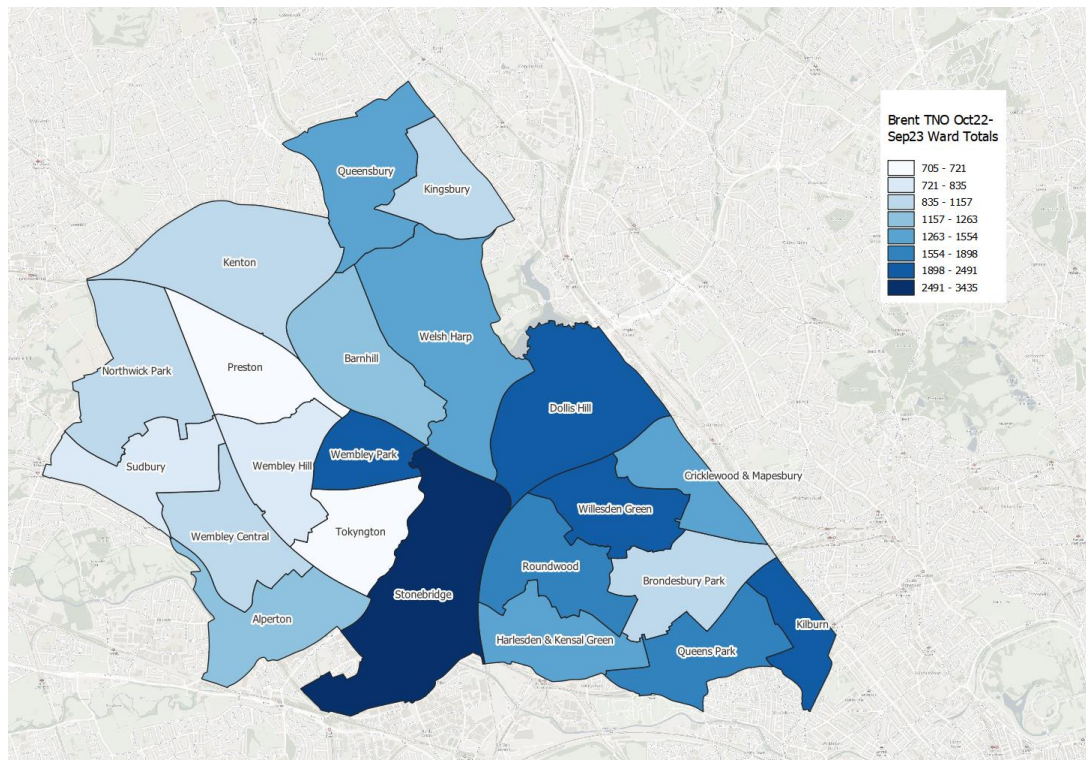


2.4 All London Boroughs saw an increase in Total Notifiable Offences throughout the period.

2.5 Hotspot areas are largely unchanged to previous reporting periods. Hotspots are often reflective of areas that have high levels of gang activity and deprivation – this applies to Chalk Hill and Harlesden. Other areas are crime hotspots due to high levels of footfall – Wembley High Road and Willesden High Road.



2.6 The below map highlights TNO at ward level October 2022 – September 2023.

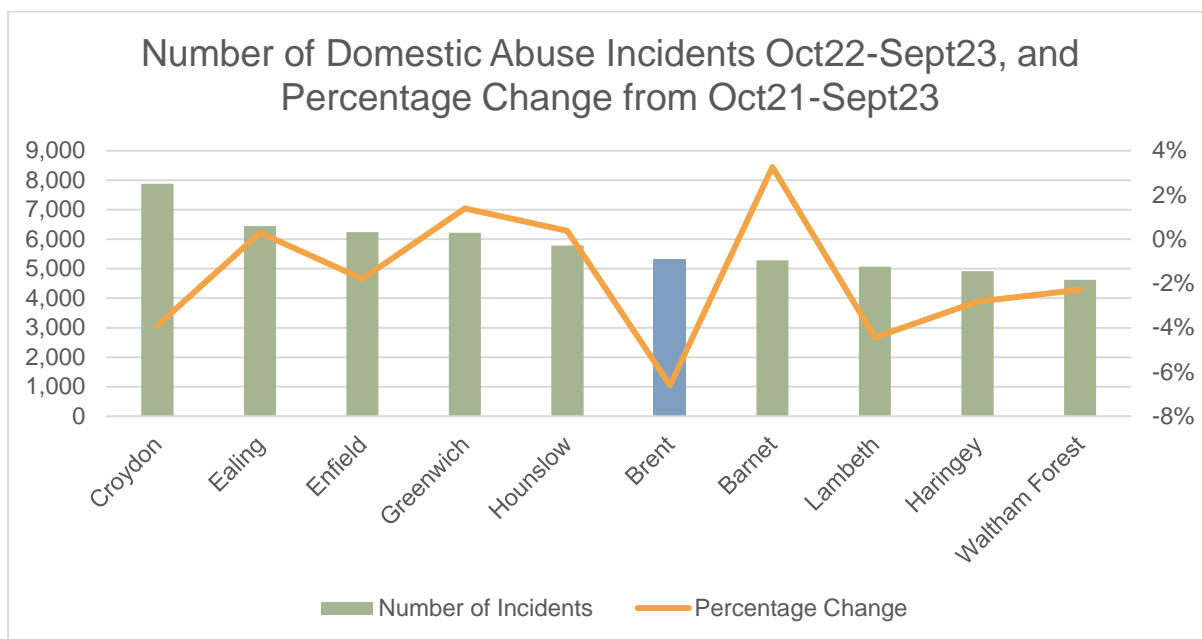


Ward	2.7 % of Total TNO
Stonebridge	9.5%
Dollis Hill	6.9%
Willesden Green	5.7%
Wembley Park	5.7%
Kilburn	5.7%
Roundwood	5.3%
Queens Park	5.2%
Wembley Town Centre	5.0%
Harlesden and Kensal Green	4.3%
Cricklewood and Mapesbury	4.2%
Welsh Harp	4.1%
Queensbury	3.8%
Harlesden Town Centre	3.7%
Alperton	3.5%
Barnhill	3.5%
Wembley Central	3.2%
Brondesbury Park	3.2%
Kenton	3.2%
Kingsbury	3.1%
Northwick Park	2.9%
Sudbury	2.3%
Wembley Hill	2.2%
Preston	2.0%
Tokyngton	2.0%

3. Priority: Reducing Domestic and Sexual Abuse

Why it remains a priority?

- 3.1 The commitment of the Safer Brent Partnership is to address all forms of domestic abuse and sexual violence. Our focus continues to be on forms of violence that disproportionately affect women and girls incorporating, stalking, prostitution, sexual exploitation and abuse, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), Honour-Based Violence (HBV), faith-based abuse, Forced Marriage (FM) and human trafficking. However, we continue to raise the profile of domestic abuse against males, promoting specialist services through Galop and also our commissioned service Advance.
- 3.2 Brent had the sixth highest number of domestic abuse incidents in comparison to our most similar boroughs in the period. Brent saw the largest reduction in DA Incidents compared to the previous period (6.6% reduction since the period Oct21 – Sept22)



3.3 **Raising awareness** of Domestic Abuse (DA) and Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) to increase a co-ordinated response:

3.4 The Community Safety Team have worked with the Communications Team and also alongside the Gender Equality Network at Brent Council to deliver a range of promotional **campaigns across the year**. This work has highlighted the importance of DA and VAWG initiatives both internally and externally, not only during key periods, but throughout the year. Including:

- The 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence, where local and national activities were promoted across the borough.
- Three VAWG webinars were delivered covering, stalking awareness, domestic abuse training and a sexual abuse workshop.
- An in-person presentation from a holocaust survivor focusing on her story as a woman, navigating her life difficulties and excelling in a field which has historically been male-dominated.
- A VAWG female only football tournament in partnership with the Metropolitan Police. Brent professionals and residents, encouraged to sign the White Ribbon pledge to never commit, excuse or remain silent about violence against women.

3.5 The Community Safety Team supported the work of the Gender Equality Network (Internal Network) to deliver a week of face to face and virtual events to celebrate International Women’s Day 2023. These events included a Marketplace held on the ground floor of the Brent Civic Centre. Local services and businesses led by women and people passionate about gender equality were invited to host a stall to publicise, promote, and/or sell their work and products.

An online panel discussion including MP Dawn Butler also took place based on the 2023 theme for International Women’s Day, ‘Embrace Equity’. The aim of the panel was to focus on the inclusion of those who have traditionally been excluded from mainstream discourse; invite discourse concerning how different aspects of a

person's identity interacts to change the way they experience the world - the barriers faced as a result; and how different forms of marginalisation can deepen and amplify each other to create compounding experiences of discrimination.

In order to reach a younger cohort, we also worked with the Young Brent Foundation to support their second annual "She is Summit". The event focussed on generating ideas to design multi-sectoral services to empower girls and women, improve safety, embrace equality and included guest speakers and workshops.

We also asked local female artist, Lakshmi Hussain to create artwork based on this year's theme, displayed on the Bobby Moore Bridge, in the Atrium, and featured on all International Women's Day 2023 literature.

- 3.6 Our commissioned domestic abuse support service ADVANCE delivered training sessions to professionals on Domestic Abuse awareness. This training was made available through the Safeguarding Partnerships annual training offer. ADVANCE have also delivered specialist and bespoke training to key partners. This has included the Metropolitan Police, Housing and Healthcare professionals. In addition to the training provided by ADVANCE, 112 professionals across Brent were trained on requirements to support the Domestic Abuse - Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (DA-MARAC) by the Community Safety, DA MARAC Coordinator.
- 3.7 **Supporting victims of DA and VAWG:**
- 3.8 Brent Council commissioned ADVANCE, a charity who specialises in support for Victim/ Survivors of DA. ([Home - Advance Charity](#)) Although domestic abuse victims are predominantly female and the crime is gendered in its nature, male victims of abuse are also offered support and couples in same sex relationships.
- 3.9 Brent Housing Management's Domestic Abuse Housing Service received 649 referrals between 01 October 2022 and 30 September 2023. Brent residents made up 441 of these referrals while non-Brent residents accounted for 208 referrals.
- 3.10 Brent Council has retained 19 specialist trained Domestic Abuse Champions who are internal employees ready and equipped to provide support to colleagues affected by domestic abuse. This network of champions is available for staff who do not wish to seek support from their line manager or HR representative. The champions have been providing emotional support, signposting and raising awareness about domestic abuse across the organisation.
- 3.11 In 2023 the Local Connection Refuge in Harlesden was opened and offers four rooms for victims of domestic abuse. The Domestic Abuse Housing Service has built a good working relationship with the refuge and are referring clients that have approached them for support. In the last year, several clients were successfully rehoused outside of London in an area of their choice via 'Bridge Housing'.
- 3.12 **Supporting children and young people affected by Domestic Abuse:**
- 3.13 Community Safety continue to oversee and ensure collaborative work between providers of Child Sexual Exploitation and Child Criminal Exploitation related support through the council's **Exploitation, Violence and Vulnerability Panel**. This takes place on a fortnightly basis to review cases in a multi-agency forum with consideration of any impacting or contextual safeguarding factors.

- 3.14 In addition to this, PLIAS Resettlement have continued to deliver the Phoenix (P&Act) Project. The project is targeted at women and girls from a Caribbean or African heritage background and is delivered in five London Boroughs. These include Barnet, Brent, Hammersmith and Fulham, Harrow, and Ealing. The project is a lifeline to women who are victims and survivors of domestic abuse and other harmful practices. They provide one to one support to help address isolation and poverty including, food parcels, top up for gas and electricity bills, money towards essential items, health and hygiene products and I.T equipment. Many of the women have limited resources which can create enormous pressures and compound already difficult circumstances.
- 3.15 **Diverted and engaged perpetrators of Domestic Abuse to reduce risk and to move on**
- 3.16 RISE Mutual have continued to deliver our local **Perpetrator Intervention Programme** with integrated victim support. The programme aids an increase in motivation for change, supporting the service user to reduce and eliminate repeat abuse, supporting healthier relationships through intervention-based group and 1-1 work. The continuation of this offer has provided many perpetrators with a greater understanding of the harm they have caused.
- 3.17 The **CIFA (Culturally Integrated Family Approach)** scheme is also delivered by RISE Mutual and was relaunched in Brent in May 2023. The scheme provides tailored services for minority communities through a focused, coordinated family and culturally sensitive approach. Between May 2023 and September 2023, 16 referrals were received. From these referrals, 11 were assessed and 6 were deemed suitable and have started the course.
- 3.18 Community Safety continues to engage those who have been abused and exploited through the **Exploitation, Violence and Vulnerability Panel (EVVP)** utilising interventions through commissioned providers. The panel sits every two weeks to review cases and identify the most appropriate support. Over the reporting period, the panel have recognised the need to help more individuals navigate healthy relationships and support their emotional wellbeing. The panel has formed a referral pathway to Brent Centre for Young People who work directly with young people to promote “healthy minds and brighter futures”.
- 3.19 **Helping those to exit from sexual exploitation, human trafficking, and prostitution:**
- 3.20 The Brent ISVA service has supported 32 women during the period from 01 October 2022 to 30 September 2023. Four women came over to the Brent ISVA service from the Brent “exiting service”. Not all women have felt able to continuously engage but the Brent ISVA continues to make proactive attempts to reach these women.
- 3.21 **Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHR)**
- 3.22 Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs) were established on a statutory basis under Section 9 (3) of the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act (2004). The Act states that a DHR should be conducted in accordance with Home Office guidance, and a review should be conducted of the circumstances in which the death of a person aged 16 or over has, or appears to have, resulted from violence, abuse or neglect by-
- (a) A person to whom she/he was related or with whom she/he was or had been in an intimate personal relationship; or

(b) A member of the same household as her/himself; with a view to identifying the lessons to be learnt from the death.

- 3.23 The Safer Brent (SBP) Partnership has the statutory responsibility to oversee the DHR process for any Domestic Homicide within the borough. Multi – agency partners are expected to assist all those involved in the review process to identify lessons that can be learned and impact practice with a view to preventing future homicides, abuse and violence.
- 3.24 Once the final report is received, the SBP should oversee any recommendations and learning from the review, ensure that partners understand and monitor improvement measures and that corresponding action is taken forward.
- 3.25 Currently the SBP awaits the final report of x1 DHR and is keen to understand any culturally specific and multi-agency recommendations. All published DHR's can be found [here](#)
- 3.26 **The Brent Domestic Abuse - Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (DA MARAC)**
- 3.27 The DA MARAC is chaired by the Metropolitan Police. It was previously coordinated by ADVANCE until the end of March 2023. As of April 2023, the DA MARAC was transferred into the Local Authority in efforts to provide the borough with greater agency and autonomy, recognising and supporting their highest risk victims of domestic abuse.
- 3.28 The DA MARAC steering group meets quarterly to allow for monitoring and evaluation of the DA MARAC process and outcomes. Following specialist recommendations provided by SafeLives, an associated action plan was created. Agencies provide updates at the DA MARAC Steering Group, this action plan has also been incorporated into the wider VAWG Action Plan.
- 3.29 The Domestic Abuse MARAC discusses on average, 21-25 high risk cases of domestic abuse at each two weekly panel meeting. Virtual meetings continue to ensure a high attendance of partners with clear contributions to reduce risk. However, partners attend a face to face meeting every three months; this enhances relationships and improves collaboration. The number of cases listed is above average levels.
- 3.30 **The Domestic Abuse Act 2021**
- 3.31 The Domestic Abuse Act places an additional duty upon the local authority to which a Domestic Abuse Act Officer post was initiated to support with the implementation and requirements of the act.
- 3.32 A workplan was devised to ensure information about the Domestic Abuse Act and how it impacts practice, in particular for Children's Services. Training sessions were also delivered to Children's Social Care at team meetings or allotted training sessions. Resources were provided to explain different forms of domestic abuse, including coercive control, how to manage risk informed responses to disclosures, and an understanding of what services are available. A similar model needs to be

extended to Adult Social Care and other front – facing teams across the council to ensure Brent is well - informed on the Domestic Abuse Act and adopts good practice based on Governmental guidance.

The Impact

3.33 Domestic Abuse Offences

Brent has seen an overall decrease in domestic abuse offences in the period, but an increase in domestic abuse offences with injury to the victim.

Brent	Oct21 – Sept22	Oct22 – Sept23	% Change
Domestic Abuse Offences	3,682	3,551	-3.6%
Domestic Abuse With Injury Offences	868	886	2.1%

All London	2021/22	2020/21	% Change
Domestic Abuse Offences	107,330	105,643	-1.6%
Domestic Abuse With Injury Offences	25,775	26,418	2.5%

3.34 Overall Domestic Abuse offences have decreased across London when compared to the previous period, however offences have decreased by slightly more in Brent.

3.35 Offences where the victim has sustained an injury have increased both in Brent and London but by slightly less in Brent.

3.36 Sexual Offences

Brent	Oct21-Sept22	Oct22-Sept23	% Change
Sexual Offences	788	793	0.6%
Rape Offences	289	282	-0.2%

All London	Oct21-Sept22	Oct22-Sept23	% Change
Sexual Offences	25,740	24,555	-4.6%
Rape Offences	9,369	8,982	-4.1%

3.37 We have seen a small increase in overall sexual offences reported in Brent however a decrease in rape offences in Brent and London as a whole.

3.38 Advance IDVA and Family Support Services

3.39 Within the reporting period, our main commissioned provider Advance delivered the following:

- 867 referrals to ADVANCE IDVA and Family Support services from October 2022 to September 2023.
- 79% of survivors were successfully contacted, following a referral to ADVANCE IDVA and Family Support services.
- 68% of those survivors contacted engaged with a worker.
- 100% of survivors report feeling safer after using the Services compared with intake.
- 100% of survivors report an improved quality of life after using the Services.
- 100% of survivors reported a positive change in their support needs as a result of support from the Services compared with intake.
- 100% of survivors reported positive health outcomes (improved physical, mental and emotional health, improved sexual health) at exit.

3.40 Chrysalis advice centre and one stop shop

- 138 individuals have been supported by the Chrysalis Advice Centre
- 206 sessions with professionals have been delivered
- 102 clients reported English as their first language, 58 clients reported requiring an interpreter.
- 81% of survivors who report that if they were aware a service like the One-Stop-Shop existed sooner, it would have encouraged them to seek support earlier
- An average of 75% of survivors reported satisfaction with the service they received (note: 25% (10 clients did not answer).
- 70% of clients are reporting that the location is accessible for them (virtual/remote appointments) (30% (12 clients) did not answer)

3.41 In-house Domestic Abuse Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference

- 760 referrals were received into the Domestic Abuse MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference) between October 2022 and September
- 617 cases were discussed at the fortnightly meetings, where service users are heard where they are at risk of serious harm and/or homicide
- 19% of cases were repeat referrals for cases which had been discussed within the last 12 months.
- 94% of survivors subject to a MARAC process report feeling safer as a result.

3.42 RISE Mutual - DA Perpetrator programme

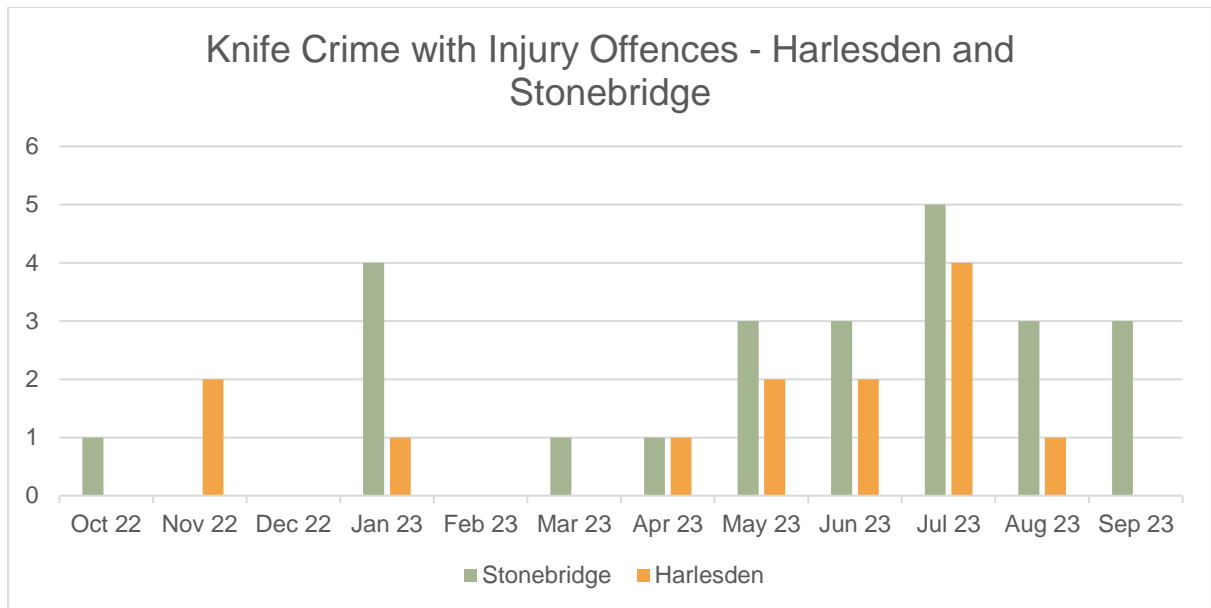
3.43 Delivering the domestic abuse perpetrator intervention programme. The programme supports perpetrators to change their behaviour and prevent repeat incidents through Intervention based group work and 1-1 support.

- 52 referrals for perpetrators were received between October 2022 and September 2023
- Of those contacted 36 attended assessments with 19 assessed as suitable
- 19 were enrolled into a course and 16 started a course
- 8 completed the course during this period

4. Priority: Reducing the Impact of Gangs and Knives in our Community

Why it remains a priority?

- 4.1 The vision remains to;
- Identify those affected by gangs/ criminal networks and encouraging exit through diversion or enforcement
 - Prevention and awareness raising with young people at risk of exploitation, weapon carrying (knives), or joining organised criminal networks
 - Disrupting and dismantling criminal networks
 - Identifying, targeting and tackling violent crime and exploitation
 - Reducing Serious Youth Violence
 - County Lines - understanding and responding
- 4.2. Gang related offending and exploitation continues to be linked to drug markets and new areas of 'supply and demand' across the borough. Offending in this space often links to other serious and violent offences, including lethal barrel discharges.
- 4.3. Brent has many well established, entrenched, and in some cases, generational and familial networks. Individuals linked to these networks are changing in terms of race and cultural background, however, as in previous reporting periods the majority are predominately black males over 25 years of age.
- 4.4. Previously, the Violence Reduction Unit required community safety partnerships to endorse and monitor a Violence reduction action plan (VRAP) with a particular focus on knife crime. However, in light of the new Serious Violence Duty, we are in a period of transition to the Serious Violence Duty Action Plan, which will be overseen by the SBP.
- 4.5. The council continue to attend the daily **North West Borough Command Unit - Partnership Call. This** provides NWBCU partners with an opportunity to share daily incident information, helping to inform decision making and manage risk, preventing escalation of serious violence across the borough.
- 4.6. Unfortunately, knife related incidents have escalated across the borough in comparison to previous reporting periods. We need to do much more to understand what is driving the increase, address this issue and reduce offences in the borough. To inform this, we will be conducting some targeted knife crime awareness sessions with schools and parents in the 1st quarter of the new financial year.



4.7. **Rescue and Response (R&R) - County Lines Project**

4.8. The project supports young people across London up to the age of 25 who are suspected or linked to involvement in county lines; including those who are at risk due to association. Brent currently, under a grant agreement, provides the team to operate the programme across London. It provides intervention, data, intelligence and analytical products to support county line disruption. The project is funded in its current form until June 2024. Thereafter it is due to transition into a new Violence and Exploitation Support Service funded by MOPAC.

4.9. Rescue and Response specialist thematic Partnership Coordinator roles have developed new networks across the project in the areas of Education and Young Adults. R&R is now working in partnership with 20 Pupil Referral Units, Secondary Schools and Colleges across ten London boroughs. R&R also works with all London based prisons to offer a 'through the gates' service to increase the chances of county lines offenders' rehabilitation back into the community.

4.10. Rescue and Response leads are members of Brent's Exploitation, Violence and Vulnerability Panel and support is offered to partners and professionals to ensure safety plans reflect an understanding of risk relating to County Lines.

4.11. Rescue and Response received 417 referrals across London within the reporting period, with Brent receiving the fourth highest number of referrals sitting at 26.

4.12. Brent remains in the top four boroughs for individuals linked to county lines, as it has done every year since the project started in September 2018. Between October 22 and September 23, 62 individuals residing in Brent were reported to have a confirmed, associated links to individuals involved in county lines, which was the second highest across all 32 boroughs. Brent individuals have been linked to sixteen county force areas with the most prevalent being Suffolk, Dorset, Thames Valley and Hampshire.

4.13. **Violence and Vulnerability Program**

- 4.14. A fortnightly meeting – the Exploitation, Violence and Vulnerability Panel is held to discuss individuals who are most vulnerable to exploitation. This is held alongside Child and Young People colleagues. Partners utilise the ‘VOLT’ approach (Victim, Offender, Location, Trends) to address wider contextual safeguarding concerns, utilising a trauma informed approach to apply interventions. Alongside this, a fortnightly IOM meeting is held with MPS, Probation partners, to action plan and dedicate resources to offenders of concern.
- 4.15. The resilience of our partnership has maintained the **Violence and Vulnerability Programme (VVP)** which continues to focus on reducing re-offending and serious youth violence through a coordinated, multi-agency and intelligence led approach. Support is offered to, gang nominals, habitual weapons carriers, prolific domestic abuse perpetrators and prolific repeat offenders (Integrated Offender Management - IOM) and an early intervention cohort to those on the periphery of crime and offending to prevent escalation.
- 4.16. **Intervention support programs for EVVP**
- 4.17. **St Giles – Gangs intervention Programme**
- 4.18. **St Giles Trust** are commissioned to provide a Gangs Intervention Programme, working with those involved in, or just on the periphery of gangs activity. Interventions aim to challenge and shape behaviours, enabling individuals to take responsibility for their actions. This project falls within the Violence and Vulnerability Programme, through this referral pathway a total of 32 referrals were specifically for those who were known to be gang affiliated. Within the reporting period 75% of those service users that engaged became significantly less gang affected and 87% showed improved understanding and awareness of the impact of gangs and gang offending.
- 4.19. Within the reporting period, St Giles Trust delivered the **Embedded Youth Violence Hospital Project**. A service to improve the identification of young people who present at Northwick Park Hospital as a victim of serious youth violence. Training and professional development programmes are also delivered to those professionals who have contact with young people. 209 referrals were made into the service, 86% of services users have reported an increased motivation to change, and 84% of service users reported improved mental health or well-being.
- 4.20. For engagement with the service, consent is required and this is not always gained by the medical professionals, particularly in the absence of the mentors. 17 training programmes have been delivered to medical staff and 94% have reported increased knowledge and awareness of vulnerability within the Accident and Emergency department and have supported increased referral and access to individuals at risk.
- 4.21. **Westminster Drugs Project (WDP) - Youth mental health outreach**
- 4.22. Via have delivered the **Mental Health Outreach Project** through their young person’s substance misuse and emotional wellbeing service, Elev8. The project addresses issues and initiates help for those with either diagnosed and non-diagnosed mental health conditions; reduce re-offending, increasing earlier intervention and identification. From June 2022 – June 2023 the project received referrals for **72 young people** through engagement in street outreach. Out of the young people engaged, **81.5%** have reported improved understanding of mental health and improved family functioning and **60%** have improved health and well-being following their intervention.

The Impact

- 4.23. Brent has seen a decrease in violent crime, however an increase in knife crime since the previous period.

Brent	Oct21-Sept22	Oct22-Sept23	% Change
Violence With Injury Offences	3,103	3,060	-1.3%
Knife Crime Offences	459	562	22.4%
Gun Crime Offences	56	61	8.9%

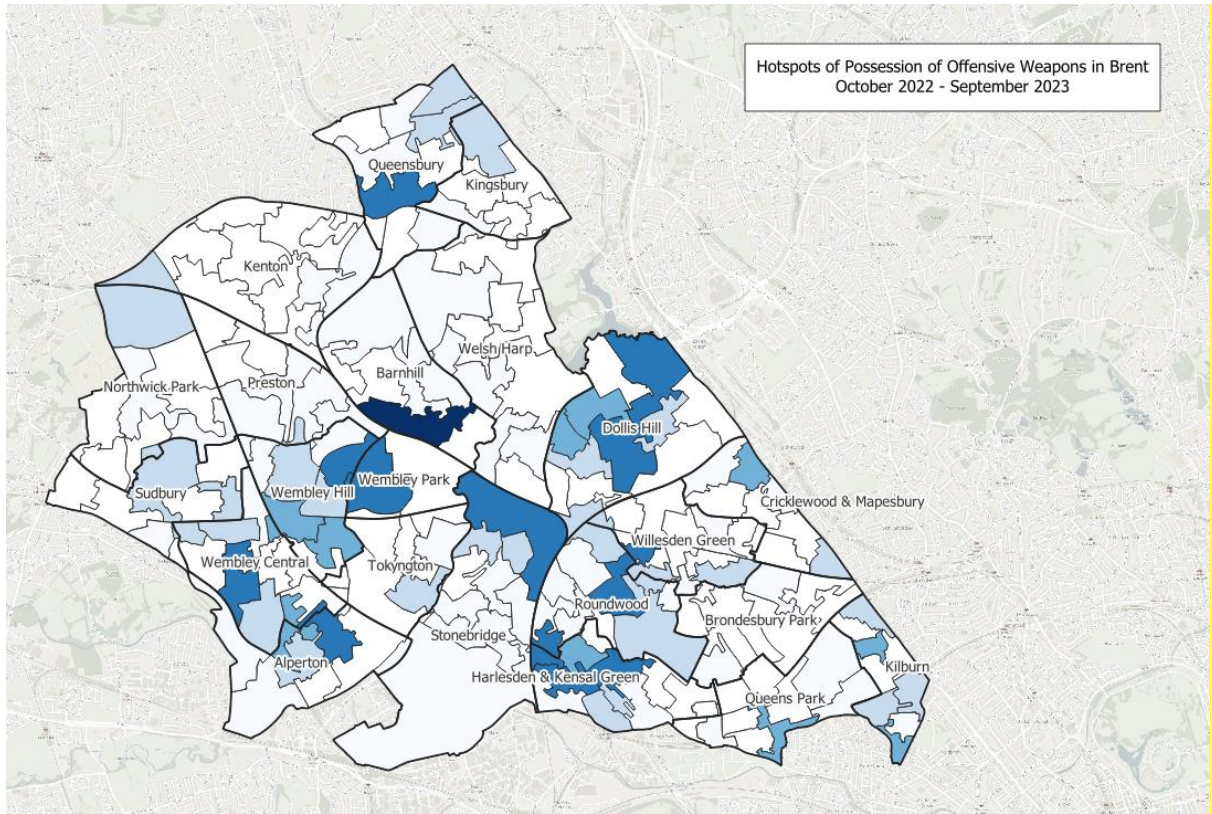
London	Oct21-Sept22	Oct22-Sept23	% Change
Violence With Injury Offences	77,849	79,322	1.9%
Knife Crime Offences	11,962	14,399	20.4%
Gun Crime Offences	1,391	1,499	7.8%

- 4.24. The top wards accounting for Violence with Injury, and Knife Crime incidents were Harlesden, Stonebridge and Tokyngton, with Dudden Hill (Neasden area) following. Additional interventions, focussing on these areas will be sought.
- 4.25. Brent has seen a significant increase in the number of knife crime with injury offences, particularly where the victim is under 25

Brent	Oct21-Sept22	Oct22-Sept23	% Change
Knife Crime Victims With Injury Under 25	39	57	46.2%
Knife Crime Victims	149	182	22.2%

London	Oct21-Sept22	Oct22-Sept23	% Change
Knife Crime Victims With Injury Under 25	1,370	1,495	9.1%
Knife Crime Victims	3,434	3,831	11.6%

- 4.26. The map below shows the hotspots for possession of weapons from October 2022 – September 2023. The main hotspots for offences are largely unchanged with Harlesden, Stonebridge, and Wembley being key locations of concern. As well as Queensbury and Dollis Hill.

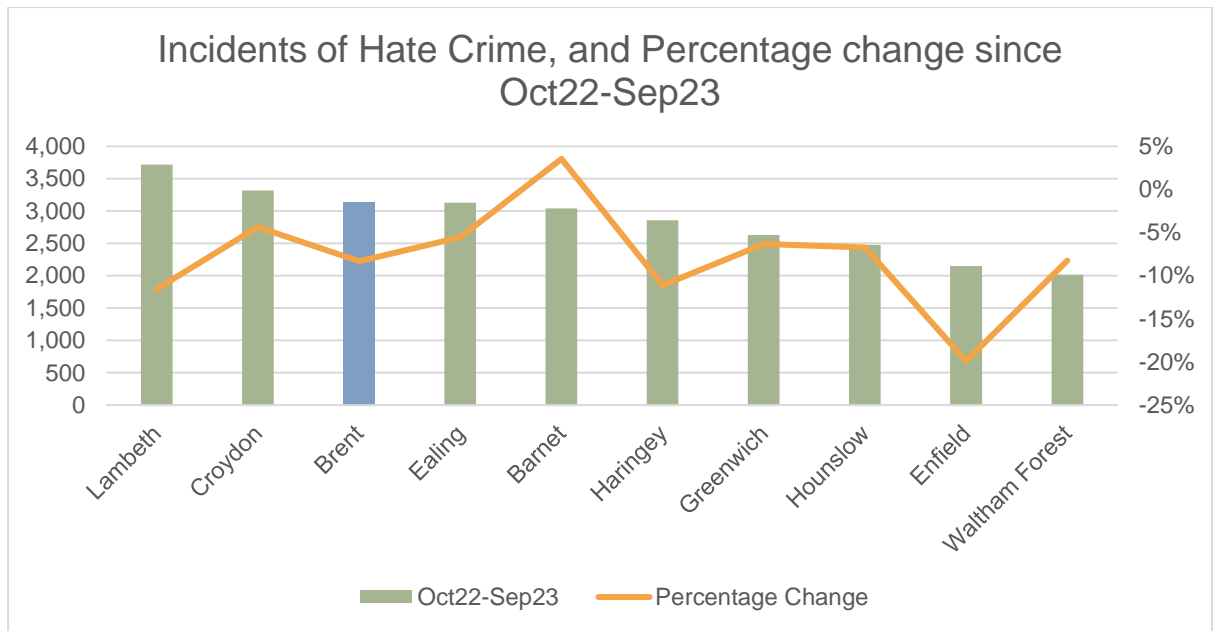


5. Priority: Reducing Vulnerability and Increasing Safeguarding

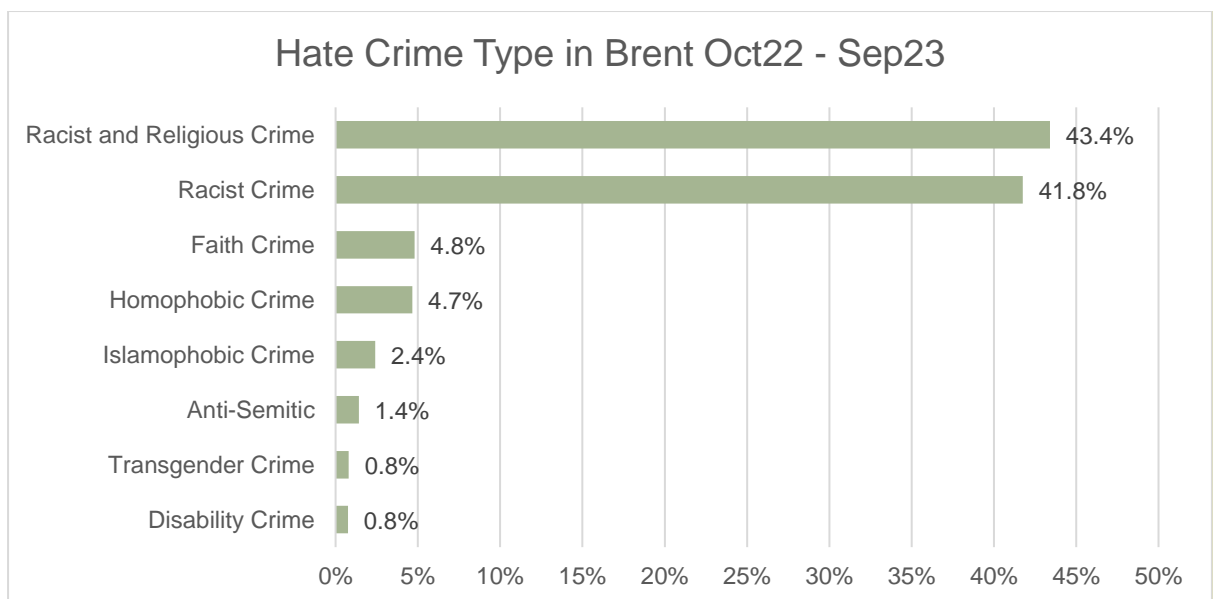
5.1. Hate Crime

5.2 All recorded Hate Crime reduced across Brent and similar boroughs from October 22 – September 23, with Brent having the third highest recorded incidents and fourth biggest reduction since the previous period.

5.3 Hate Crime Figures for the period.



5.4. The chart below shows the types of hate crime recorded in Brent. A significant majority are Racist and Religious crimes.



Updates to the [Victims Code](#) – more rights for victims.

5.5. Safeguarding Boards and Forum

5.6. The Safer Brent Partnership has link with other strategic partnerships with Chairs represented at one another’s equivalent board or forum. This avoids duplication and where there is scope to do so, agree work on shared aims and objectives, including any learning as a result of a Serious Adult Case Review, Child Death Review, Domestic Homicide Review or Offensive Weapon Homicide Review.

5.7. Brent Safeguarding Children Partnership

5.8. The Brent Safeguarding Children Forum is a wider partnership forum accountable to the Executive Group. The Forum co-ordinates and monitors multi-agency safeguarding oversight arrangements as set out in Working Together 2018 and is led by an Independent Convenor.

5.9. Serious Child safeguarding incidents - Working Together (2018) sets out the arrangements for handling serious child safeguarding cases. The purpose of these arrangements is to identify improvements to be made to safeguard and promote the welfare of children both at a local and national level.

5.10. Adult Safeguarding Board

5.11. Brent Safeguarding Adults Board is a multi-agency strategic partnership board with an independent chair. It has a statutory duty to commission a Safeguarding Adults Review where the criteria laid out in the Care Act 2014 are met. The purpose of a Safeguarding Adults Review is to explore how agencies worked together to protect a person with care and support needs from abuse or neglect and identify the lessons to be learned. Safeguarding Adults Reviews are not about blame. They are reviews completed by a person independent of agencies involved and of the local area. Safeguarding Adult Reviews are normally published on completion. Published reviews are available on the [Brent Safeguarding Adults Board](#) website.

5.12. Community Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (CMARAC)

5.13. **Community MARAC** - The Community MARAC has delivered coordinated partnership support to some of the most vulnerable residents in the borough with the complexity of referrals increasing.

5.14. We are expanding the range of agencies to include housing associations and other teams within the council including the Adult Social Care Mental Health Team and SMART. Agency attendance has improved drastically over the last 12 months and partners continue to work well to complete actions to support vulnerable individuals referred into Community MARAC.

5.15. The Community MARAC continues to receive a number of referrals each month to aid in the supporting of vulnerable individuals living in Brent. Referral into the Community MARAC has allowed vulnerable individuals access to support and services they were not otherwise aware of and has enabled agencies to expand their understanding of the support services available across Brent. Success is measured in terms of the reduction of risk which is measured through regular risk assessments completed as part of the initial referral, as required whilst a case is open and again at the end prior to closure. The risk reduction for closed cases in the reporting period is as follows:

Performance Indicator	Entry Score closed cases total OCT 22- SEP 23	Exit score closed cases total OCT 22- SEP 23	Percentage Reduction
We will reduce the risk to the most vulnerable	251	152	-39.4%

people referred to our Community MARAC			
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5.16. A summary of cases which have gone through the CMARAC from 1 October 22 to 30 September 2023. There were successful outcomes in moving vulnerable clients out of the Borough, moving clients into supported housing, rehabilitation programmes and implementing care and support packages through the Adult Safeguarding team. Cases which have been closed shown a total reduction

A list of cases managed through the CMARAC from 1 October 22 to 30 September 23 are as follows:

Status	Closure Reasons	Ward	Vulnerability	Referring Agency
Open		Northwick Park	Substance Misuse	ST Mungos
Open		Queens Park	Mental Health	SMART
Closed	Moved into supported accommodation		Mental Health	Brent Irish Advisory Service
Open		Barnhill	Mental Health	
Open		Alperton	Cuckooing	
Open		Barnhill	Mental Health	Metropolitan Thames Valley Housing
Closed	Organised referral to Adult Social Care, Care package in place and referred back to Housing association as a single agency intervention	Harlesden	Mental Health	St Mungos
Open		Wembley Central	Cuckooing	WDP (VIA)
Closed	Referred to BHM legal team and BHM to support going forward as single agency intervention	Brondesbury Park	Hate crime	Galop
Closed	Referred back to Network Homes to follow their ASB Policy.	Roundwood	Mental Health	Network Homes

Closed	Supported to moved out of the borough to stop cuckooing	Willesden Green	Cuckooing	Peabody Housing Trust
Closed	Organised referral to CMHT, accepted and receiving support from the Mental health team. Housing association moved him into temporary accommodation while his property is done up	Harlesden	Mental Health	Peabody Trust
Closed	Remanded in custody due to criminal offence.	Willesden Green	Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime, Other (please specify in the next field)	Metropolitan Police
Open		Church Road	Mental Health	St Mungos
Open		Willesden Green	Substance Misuse	Westminster Drug Project
Closed	Organised referral to ASC mental health referral accepted, care package in place and ASC mental health and BHM will continue monitoring.	Kilburn	Mental Health	Metropolitan Police
Closed	Organised ASC mental health referral accepted, and ASC mental health will council monitoring.	Alperton	Being exploited e.g., financially or losing control of home	SMART Adult Social Care
Open		Harlesden	Mental Health	Crisis Brent
Open			Mental Health	Crisis Skylight Brent
Open			Mental Health	Watling Gardens TMO
Open		Kensal Green	ASB, Substance Misuse	Thames Reach

Open		Dollis Hill	Being exploited e.g. financially or losing control of home	Housing Officer
Closed	St Mungos supported to end homelessness	Kenton	Mental Health	Brent HART Outreach Team
Open			Mental Health	St. Mungos
Open		Kilburn	Mental Health	Kilburn Square Housing Co-operative
Open		Kilburn	Mental Health	Metropolitan Police
Open		Willesden Green	Mental Health	Metropolitan Police - NW Willesden Green SNT
Open		Stonebridge	Homelessness	Via New Beginnings

5.17. Channel Panel

- 5.18. Channel Panel is an initiative of the Governments Counter Terrorism Strategy, Prevent. Referral figures and numbers supported are exempt from public disclosure. Brent remains a high priority area and received a grant from the Homeland Security Division of the Home Office to support and enhance Prevent delivery in Brent.
- 5.19. The Channel Panel meets monthly to discuss those considered most at risk of being drawn into terrorism and supporting terrorist groups. The Channel Panel sat 12 times across the reporting period. The local authority has a duty to offer support to 'at risk' individuals through the Channel Panel, however, participation remains voluntary.
- 5.20. Referrals predominantly related to concerns around online radicalisation and the accessing of extreme content. Cases were complex, having overlapping vulnerabilities with individuals known to existing services such as mental health. Individuals requiring longer-term support through the panel are predominantly those with history of chaotic family backgrounds, domestic abuse, or child-hood trauma.
- 5.21. Social and political issues taking place in the U.K and abroad, also feature as a point of grievance for individuals discussed at the panel. We know that it is often these grievances that extremist groups focus on to exploit individuals for their own gains. Through the programme, expert mentors are able to challenge extreme ideologies and offer alternative paths. Brent's Channel Panel heard cases within the reporting period that relate to, in the main, Islamist, extreme far right with some mixed or unclear ideologies. We have also had a low number of INCEL related cases.
- 5.22. Hindu (Hindutva) and Muslim tensions linked to a period of religious and ethnic tension that saw civil unrest, rioting, protest marches, sloganeering and violence in Leicester in September 2022. It was also preceded by social media campaigns, misinformation and hate propaganda. In Brent the majority of these tensions played out online and continued until early November 2022. A concerted effort was made by

the council to keep these two communities in dialogue with one another, including a large-scale community meeting. Unlike other areas, Brent received no referrals to the Channel Panel as a result of these tensions.

- 5.23. During the reporting period there has been a London wide increase in antisemitic and Islamophobic referrals. Brent has an expected level of referrals to the Channel Panel, but none within the reporting period have met acceptance for Channel Panel intervention. Lawful non-violent protest or activism does not meet the threshold for Prevent referrals. As it stands, holding strong political views is not an indicator of extremism provided they are not expressed or furthered by statements, deeds or actions which result in harassment, intimidation, or threats of violence against individuals or society itself.
- 5.24. The majority of cases referred and discussed for this reporting period were those with Islamist ideologies. Cases with mixed, or unclear ideologies are also on the rise. Mixed and unclear ideologies involve a combination of elements from multiple ideologies (mixed), shifts between different ideologies (unstable), or where the individual does not present a coherent ideology. This includes individuals that may be vulnerable out of a sense of duty, or a desire for belonging, including those obsessed with massacre or extreme/mass violence without aligning to a particular group.
- 5.25. The Prevent Oversight Board and Prevent Delivery Group oversees Prevent Duty requirements. Progress is monitored against a live risk assessment and action plan. This includes reviewing policy and practice in light of the Prevent duty, identifying training needs, emerging risks and strengthening Brent’s partnership approach to Prevent.
- 5.26. **Child Sexual Exploitation – (CSE)**
- 5.27. Young people considered by practitioners to be at risk of CSE based on Child Referrals, Child and Family Assessments, or Child Protection enquiry (Section 47 Enquiries), have been identified in the period, October 2022 – September 2023. There has been an increase since last year (148 in Oct 21 – Sept 22 compared with 157 in 22/23). The proportion of males to females has remained the same since the previous period (57% female, 43% male), however it should be noted that the recording of CSE as a factor identified at the point of referral, CFA or S47 means that there is no distinction of perpetrator of victim, therefore the gender proportions are unlikely to be accurate.

	October 2021 - September 2022	October 2022 - September 2023
Number of Brent children identified as at risk of CSE	148	157

- 5.28. In 19% of cases where CSE was identified as a factor, concerns around substance misuse (both alcohol and drugs) were also flagged. This is a decrease from the previous period which saw 23.6% of young people identified as at risk of CSE also considered to have substance misuse concerns.

- 5.29. Gang concerns were identified along with CSE in 14.6% of cases, which shows in decrease from the previous year where Gangs concerns were identified in 19.6% of cases where CSE was also a concern.
- 5.30. Mental health concerns amongst those at risk of CSE have increased significantly since the previous year – 23.6% of the cohort were flagged with mental health concerns in this period, compared with 15.5% last year.
- 5.31. In the cases identified in the period October 22 – September 23, 28.7% of young people identified as at risk of CSE had at least one missing or absent episode in the same period, a significant decrease from the previous period (42%).

Ethnicity	Female	Male	Oct 21 - Sept 22	Oct 22 - Sept 23
Black or Black British	31	18	29.1%	31.2%
White	23	13	31.1%	22.9%
Other Ethnic Groups	12	20	12.2%	20.4%
Asian or Asian British	14	10	8.1%	8.3%
Mixed/Multiple	9	4	14.2%	15.3%
Unknown	1	2	5.4%	1.9%
Total	90	67	100.0%	100.0%

- 5.32. Previous reports have shown that the largest proportion of young people identified at risk of CSE was those of Black or Black British ethnicity. The figures from this period are consistent with the previous period and there has been no significant change in the proportion of young people of any ethnicity.
- 5.33. **Priority: Reducing Offenders and Perpetrators from Reoffending**

[Why it remains a priority?](#)

- 5.34. The number of people reoffending within London continues to increase and remains a concern. The offenders linked to these crimes cause significant harm to our communities resulting in increased fear and victimisation. Offenders who are arrested or caught by the Metropolitan Police are usually identified as prolific offenders and can cost the London taxpayers the equivalent of £2.2 billion a year in criminal justice costs alone. Therefore, it requires intensive, targeted and specific support to assist them with breaking the cycle of their reoffending behaviour.

[Key Headlines for 2022/23](#)

- 5.35. At the end of summer 2022 Brent Integrated Offender Management (IOM) rolled out an online referral form using ECINS, an online case management system that allows the local authority and partner agencies to use it. By the end of 2022 all partner agency representatives were trained in and starting to use ECINS. Towards the end of 2022 and start of 2023 we started to utilise the ECINS database for the management of panel meetings. This meant that agendas and minutes were no longer circulated via email, but uploaded to the database for agency partners to

access. Agency partners were also using ECINS to add their own partner updates ahead of the meeting.

- 5.36. MOPAC aim to roll out their own online referral form on ECINS in 2024 which will be used pan London. Changes have also been requested by MOPAC in an attempt to take a more uniform approach to IOM pan London. Brent IOM has been highlighted by MOPAC as an example in the development and use of ECINS, with the IOM Coordinator being asked to share experiences with IOM partners pan London.
- 5.37. During the last year Central and North West London NHS Safeguarding team have become an IOM partner agency and this has been a valuable addition to the IOM.
- 5.38. IOM is led predominantly by the Metropolitan Police, Probation and the Violence and Vulnerabilities Coordinator leads IOM at Brent Council. Partners in regular attendance include Air Network, St Giles, Single Homelessness Team, Via (formally WDP), SMART, St Mungos.
- 5.39. The **IOM multiagency panel** have continued to work together to deliver support to IOM subjects. AIR Network have continued to deliver a Mentoring, Sports and Well Being Programme which has helped to support offenders in accessing not only mentors for education, training and employment, but aided in accessing housing support as well. St Giles continue to deliver their mentoring service aimed a current and former gang nominals, support individuals with education, training and employment and any further support they may require.
- 5.40. **Air Network – Sport mentoring**
- 5.41. **AIR Network** have delivered a **Mentoring, Sports, and Well-being programme** to support individuals known to our Violence and Vulnerability Programme. The aim is to engage and divert those referred from crime and reoffending, whilst offering, support around the nine pathways of reoffending, housing, education, training, employment, mental health or drug and alcohol needs.
- 5.42. From October 2022 – September 2023, **52 new referrals** were made into the service with 78% of the targeted cohort achieving positive Employment Training and Education (ETE) outcomes and 81% of supported offenders showing increased motivation for change. Between July and September 2023, 82% of service users that were engaging with Air Network, were significantly less affected by serious violence and exploitation. In the same period, 95% of service users showed an improved understanding and awareness of the impact of gangs and serious violence.
- 5.43. The **Ex-Offenders Accommodation Team** has joined the panel, a team within housing specifically focusing on aiding ex-offenders with accommodation and this has proven to be an invaluable addition to the IOM panel as lack of housing can have a significant detrimental effect on individuals who are trying not to reoffend. The team

have been working closely with the probation colleagues and commissioned providers to ensure assessments are completed and suitable accommodation sought for IOM subjects.

5.44. Triage Program

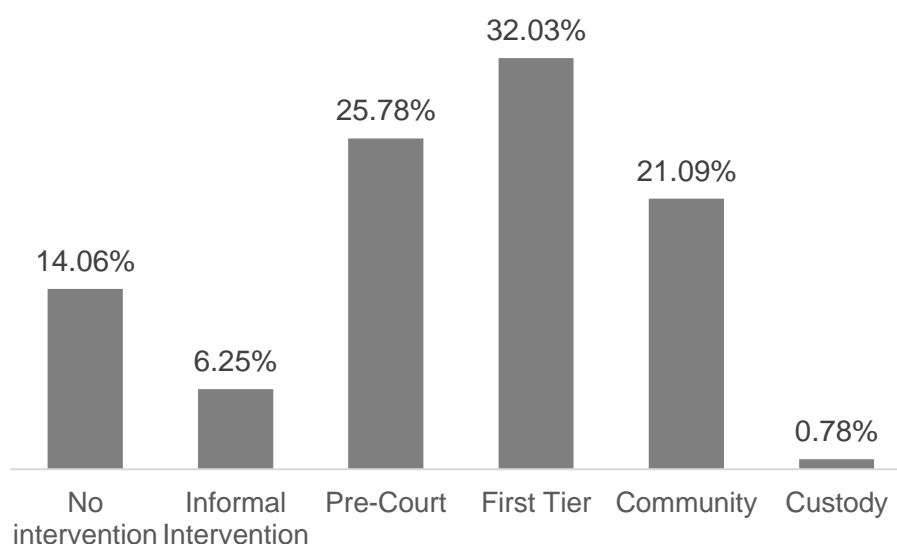
5.45. The continuation of the Enhanced Youth Justice Service (YJS) Triage Programme which offers assessment and a preventative provision to young people who would otherwise be likely to receive a criminal justice disposal. In 2022/23, 91 young people who accessed the programme participated in interventions that increased their safety and awareness of harm. 80 children attended victim awareness interventions. All 91 families were offered family support. 26 families accepted the offer and received whole family support from an Early Help Family Support Worker.

5.46. Youth Justice Service

5.47. Further analysis was undertaken into the proportion of marginalised groups in the service. An analysis of the ethnic groups within the service was highlighted.

- The cohort of young people (YP) from a Black background (**42.9%**) is almost twice as large as the cohort of YP from a White background (**28.5%**)
- Marked difference in the proportion of custodial sentences
- The difference in the proportions decrease marginally with the additional ethnic groups added to the Black cohort.

5.48. Reoffending by Outcome



5.49. The data above shows the reoffending rate based on outcome.

- It has been argued that custody is reserved as a last resort for those who commit serious Youth Violence, to serve as both a Punishment and Public Protection.

- Brent YJS is proactive when dealing with remands to custody through the preparation of written bail packages and applications. This includes management oversight and quality assurance of all bail and remand decisions, changing the bail template to include a narrative on the child's history, lived experience and trauma, and having a default approach that 'children will be given bail' in most instances.
- Reoffending amongst those who had received a custodial sentence is significantly lower in this period than the previous reporting period. This is in most part due to a significant drop in those receiving custodial sentences: Despite continued serious youth violence and gang involvement, the number of Brent young people sentenced to custody has reduced from three in the previous reporting period to just two in the period October 22 – November 23.

5.50 In the current reporting period, those subject to first-tier (Referral Orders) have reoffended at higher levels than those subject to pre-court and community disposals

Note: the Pre-court category includes Triage interventions

The Impact

5.51 Throughout the course of delivery there have been over 100 service users on the Violence and Vulnerability Programme. This has changed regularly since implementation with new referrals being monitored and offenders being removed due to successfully not offending

5.52 Reoffending is measured on the overall reoffending rate (measured as the percentage of offenders who reoffend) and broken down into cohort types. These are the standard performance measures used across the UK and recommended by the Ministry of Justice.

5.53 During the 2022/23 period a total of 2 Criminal Behaviour Order (CBO) applications were granted for individuals on the Brent cohort. CBOs were obtained for the most chaotic and prolific offenders, with most CBOs being issues for several years, usually in excess of five years. As a result there have been numerous success stories.

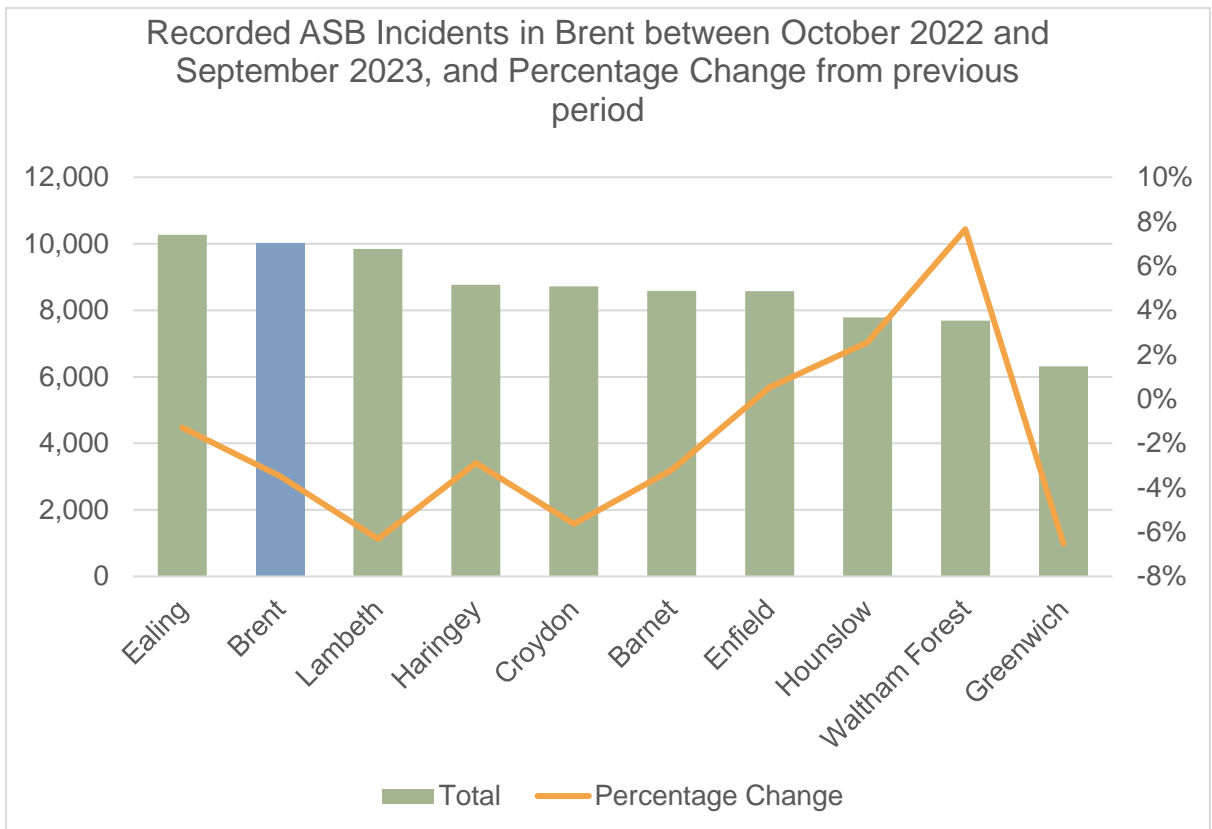
6. Priority 5: Reducing Anti-Social Behaviour

[Why it remains a priority?](#)

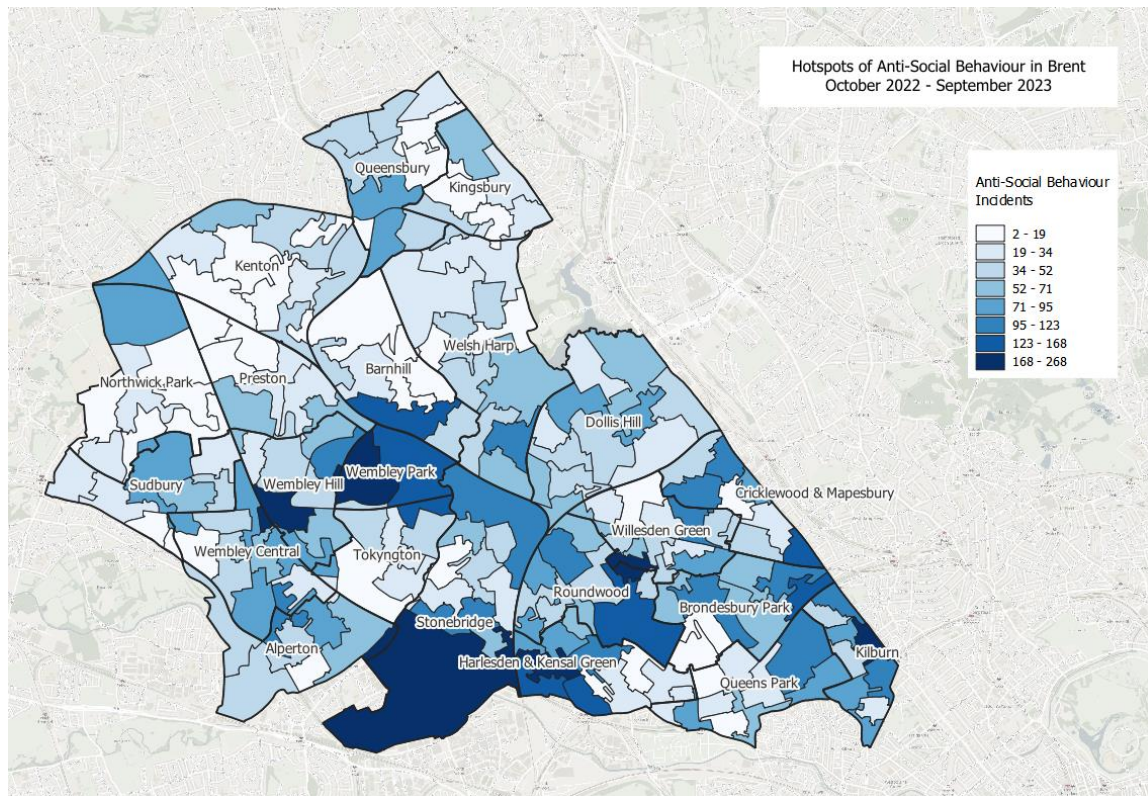
6.1. Antisocial behaviour is defined as 'behaviour by a person which causes, or is likely to cause, harassment, alarm or distress to persons not of the same household as the person. There are three main categories for antisocial behaviour, depending on how many people are affected:

- Personal antisocial behaviour is when a person targets a specific individual or group.
- Nuisance antisocial behaviour is when a person causes trouble, annoyance or suffering to a community.
- Environmental antisocial behaviour is when a person's actions affect the wider environment, such as public spaces or buildings.

- 6.2. Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) is highlighted as a key concern for residents of Brent and has increased across the Borough, locally and nationally. Visible evidence of disorder which goes unchallenged leads to less secure communities and can impact negatively on feelings of safety and mental health. Environmental ASB is expensive to react to and leads communities to consider their neighbourhoods negatively, which in turn leads to social disorganisation.
- 6.3. Brent has the second highest number of ASB calls, in comparison to the most similar London boroughs, in the last 12 months.
- 6.4. Most boroughs in this group recorded a decrease in anti-social behaviour for this period, compared to the previous year. Brent saw a decrease of 3.5%, being the fourth biggest decrease.



- 6.5. The map below shows the volume of anti-social behaviour incidents in Brent Wards in the reporting period.



[Key Headlines for 2022 - 2023](#)

- 6.6. From 1 October 22 to 30 September 23 the Anti-social Behaviour Team investigated **511** anti-social behaviour cases which has seen a 36% increase in anti-social behaviour cases recorded and managed from 1 October 2021 to 30 September 2022.
- 6.7. Neighbour disputes, drugs and intimidation/ harassment made up the highest proportion of anti-social behaviour reported cases.
- 6.8. The issue of Cuckooing is a persistent issue in Brent. Cuckooing is the practice of taking over the home of a vulnerable person in order to establish a base for illegal drug dealing or drug activity. These issues in Brent mainly occurred in Council owned homes or Housing Association properties due to a higher proportion of vulnerable clients living in Social Housing.
- 6.9. The Anti-Social Behaviour Team increased the use of Partial Closure Orders, restricting 3rd parties gaining access to properties housing vulnerable tenants and full closure orders restricting vulnerable tenants and 3rd parties which will often form the catalyst for review of those tenancies and possible relocation to supported housing or out of the borough.
- 6.10. Brent's Anti-Social Behaviour Team entered into a service level agreement in July 2018 with Brent Housing Management to manage all medium to high-risk anti-social behaviour cases. There have been good examples of joint working under the service level expectation protocol with Registered Providers with large housing stocks in the borough not owned or managed by the Council with a greater focus on tenancy management under the Housing Act to deal with anti-social tenants. From 1 October

22 to 30 September 23, 42 cases have been managed under the SLA. A full list of cases can be seen in the Appendix.

6.11. Brent ASB Team Top 3 reported Categories 1 October 22 to 30 September 23:

ASB Top Categories	
Drug Use and Dealing	1
Intimidation and Harassment	2
Neighbour Disputes and noise	3

6.12. Brent Joint Action Groups

6.13. The **Brent Joint Action Groups (BJAG)** which deal with locality-based problems through a multi-agency, evidence-led problem-oriented approach and individuals who cause the most alarm, harassment and distress to residents in Brent. This includes prevention through diversion and support, and utilising enforcement options where necessary. These are co-terminus with police cluster boundaries and cover Kilburn, Harlesden and Wembley. The BJAG has the ability to direct mobile CCTV resources. The Brent Joint Action Group (BJAG) is co-chaired by ASB Nuisance and Crime Manager and the Safer Neighbourhood Inspector for Brent.

6.14. There have been some challenges in accessing met systems to generate hotspot maps for BJAG delivery due to current restrictions by the Metropolitan Police. ASB and Crime police data is now obtained through Safer Stats by the Community Safety Analyst, but there are some data quality issues on Safe Stats. However Safe Stats data is now being used to identify ASB and crime hotspots within the Borough and in correlation with Council data. Drug dealing and drug use were predominant categories, with vulnerabilities such as mental health and substance misuse often a driver to these issues. Rough sleeping has also increased with more individuals not having recourse to public funds which is providing challenges to rehousing rough sleepers. Design out crime project on estates and the public realm have also been prioritised to tackle long term hotspots in Brent. There is a regular programme of targeted multi agency operations and use of ASB tools where required.

6.15. BJAG cases 1 October 22 to 31 September 23 as follows:

Harlesden and Kingsbury Locality

Case	Location	Issue	Status
Craven Park	Harlesden	On-street prostitution and drug related activity	Open
Church Road	Roundwood	selling and taking drugs	Open
Queensbury Station	Kingsbury	Robberies at Westmoreland Road	Open
St Raphael's Estate	Stonebridge	Motorbike being ridden	Open

		dangerously on the pavement		
Lakeside Drive	Stonebridge	Car Meets	Open	
Morrisons Car Park	Kingsbury	rough sleeping	Open	
Claygate Court, Blackbird Hill, NW9	Welsh Harp	Rough sleepers intimidating residents	Closed	St Mungos outreach to support individuals to end homelessness
Rook Close,	Barn Hill	Issues with drugs at this location	Open	
Apartments at Hilltop Avenue	Stonebridge	loitering, smoking of drugs	Open	
Shackleton and Amundsen House	Stonebridge	Rough sleepers intimidating residents	Closed	Design out crime recommendations shared with BHM to secure all exits by BHM
Church Road	Roundwood	Lots of activity during the night with people going into his property	Open	
Church Road	Roundwood	Cuckooing	Open	
Page Close	Kenton	Neighbour dispute over parking in Page Close	Closed	Recommendations sent to Parking to implement a scheme to redesign the bays.
Church Road	Roundwood	Lots of activity during the night with people going into his property	Open	
Wood Court	Harlesden	Accessing blocks and taking drugs	Open	
Hornby Court	Harlesden	Breaking the car park gate and drug related activities	Open	

Kilburn and Willesden Locality

Case	Location	Issue	Referred	
Joules House	Brondesbury Park	Several rough sleepers / drug dealing	Open	
Neasden Town	Dollis Hill			
Willesden Green	Willesden	Rough sleepers	Open	
Grunwick Close – Addis Court	Willesden	Drug dealing	Open	

Chapter Road				
Riffel Road	Willesden	ASB and nuisance	Open	
Chapter Road	Willesden	ASB and nuisance	Open	
Stuart Road –	Kilburn	ASB and nuisance	Open	
Teignmouth Road NW2	Cricklewood and Mapesbury	Drugs related	Open	

Wembley Locality

Case	Location	Issue	Referred	
Wembley High Road	Wembley	Mopeds Delivery Drivers parking on Wembley High Road	Open	
Ecclestone Mews Service Road	Wembley	Hotspot for bedding down and rough sleeping	Open	
Underneath the Bridge at Atlip Road	Alperton	Hotspot for bedding down and rough sleeping	Open	
Lyon Park Avenue	Alperton	Ball bearings fired at the windows	Closed	CCTV installed and referred on to the Metropolitan Police to investigate
Business Ealing Road	Wembley	Harassment of female staff	Closed	CPW served and no further breaches.
Alexandra Court – Empire Way		Drug related activities	Open	5 Closure orders obtained at court. Ongoing monitoring
Business Preston Road	Preston	ASB and Nuisance	Closed	Joint operation carried out by Business License, ASB and Police. Nuisance and ASB were not established.
Maybank Open Space and Barham Park	Sudbury	Physical attacks on residents	Open	

6.16. Multi Agency Operations

- 6.17. The Anti-Social Behaviour team conducted frequent multi agency operations over the calendar year with the Metropolitan Police, Council enforcement teams and third sector agencies such as Westminster Drug Project (WDP) now called VIA, St Mungos, NIA to tackle street drinking, drug markets, prostitution and substance misuse issues. There was more emphasis on officers having a regular on-street presence to address anti-social behaviour trends and emerging hotspots as opposed to a reactionary approach of responding to complaints which are reported to the team. In the reporting period, **39 multiagency operations were conducted** by the Antisocial Behaviour Team and Neighbourhood Managers.
- 6.18. **Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs):**
- 6.19. **Boroughwide PSPO Nuisance Vehicles:** A Public Spaces Protection Order was implemented on 1 April 2023 up until 31 March 2025 to prohibit nuisance vehicles. Over the years the Council have received numerous complaints regarding street racing, driving in a dangerous way, causing excessive noise for people. This has resulted in a number of accidents and fatalities. Reports range from racing, driving in a convoy, performing donuts, wheel spins and anti-social driving which was prevalent in every ward in Brent. Similarly, complaints regarding vehicles driving over footways, footpaths and verges, with limited action viable by the Council. The impact of this activity is damage to the verges and open spaces, which spoils the appearance of the street and involves the Council in additional expense in making good the damage. A full list of prohibitions can be seen at [here](#).
- 6.20. Central Way and the North Circular by Stonebridge Underground Station are the two main hotspots for this activity in the Borough. Three mobile CCTV cameras with ANPR have been installed in those areas to capture vehicles performing stunts or drifting. In the last six months there have been approximately eight reports of car meets in Brent. The CCTV cameras have captured vehicles in breach of the PSPO in both areas, with registered keeper details of vehicles, obtained through DVLA. Warnings have been issued to those motorists and some referrals made to the Metropolitan Police. From the 01 of January 2024 a fixed penalty notice of £100 will be issued to all vehicles identified breaching the order.
- 6.21. **Boroughwide PSPO, Wembley Park and Parks and Open Spaces Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO)**
- 6.22. To provide the Council with the appropriate measures to tackle visual anti-social behaviour the Boroughwide, Wembley Park and Parks and Open Spaces Public Spaces Protection Order was implemented on 1 February 2023 up until 31 January 2026 with increased prohibitions to tackle drug activity, littering, street drinking, street trading and other behaviours. This will widen our scope of enforcement and address issues affecting residents and businesses the most. A full list of prohibitions can be seen [here](#) .

[The Impact](#)

- 6.23. The reporting period has seen an increase in fixed penalty notices (FPN) issued under the PSPOs, led by the Neighbourhood Patrol Team enforcement team. The ASB team also increased the use of Closure Orders under the ASB Crime and Policing Act 2014. Some of these orders related to Council homes under Brent Housing Management with greater outcomes achieved by housing to tackle nuisance premises under the service level agreement.

6.24. 27 Community Trigger applications were received with none meeting the qualifying threshold to investigate due to satisfactory responses by the relevant agencies.

6.25. **Enforcement Outcomes 1 October 22 to 30 September 23:**

(PSPO Nuisance Vehicles)

Notice Type	Arrests	s.59 Warnings	Seizures	Minor Traffic Offences	Stop and search	Vehicle recovered
PSPO Nuisance Vehicles	2	12	5	12	3	1

(PSPO Boroughwide, Parks and Open Spaces and Wembley Park)

Ward	Notice Type	Fixed Penalty Notice	reduced to Warnings	PSPOs referred to legal
Alperton	Borough Wide PSPO - Alcohol consumption	83	17	6
	Parks PSPO - Littering (item)	1		
	Parks PSPO - Alcohol consumption	19	15	5
	PSPO Urination/Defecation FPN	3		
	Borough Wide PSPO - Littering (spitting)	13		8
Barnhill	Borough Wide PSPO - Dog fouling	1		
	PSPO Alcohol Consumption FPN	12		6
	PSPO Walking more than 4 dogs	2		1
	Wem Park PSPO - Alcohol consumption	1		
Brondesbury Park	PSPO Alcohol Consumption FPN	2		
	Borough Wide PSPO - Alcohol consumption	5		
	Borough Wide PSPO - Littering (spitting)	1		1
	Parks PSPO - Alcohol consumption	1		
Cricklewood and Mapesbury	Borough Wide PSPO - Alcohol consumption	2		

Dollis Hill	Borough Wide PSPO - Littering (spitting)	5		
	Urination/Defecation FPN	3		
	PSPO Alcohol Consumption FPN	39	7	7
	Borough Wide PSPO - Alcohol consumption	50		9
	No consumption of alcohol in open spaces	1	1	
	Borough Wide PSPO - Littering (urination or defecation)	6		2
Harlesden and Kensal Green	PSPO Alcohol Consumption FPN	19	2	1
	Borough Wide PSPO - Alcohol consumption	30	9	12
	Borough Wide PSPO - Illegal trading (food or other)	1	1	
	Borough Wide PSPO - Littering (urination or defecation)	1		1
	Wem Park PSPO - Littering (urination or defecation)	1		1
Kenton	PSPO Alcohol Consumption FPN	1	1	
Kilburn	Borough Wide PSPO - Littering (spitting)	1	1	
	PSPO Alcohol Consumption FPN	4	3	
Kingsbury	PSPO Alcohol Consumption FPN	0		
Northwick Park	Borough Wide PSPO - Littering (urination or defecation)	1	1	
	Parks PSPO - Alcohol consumption	7	5	
	Parks PSPO - Littering (urination or defecation)	3		2
	PSPO Alcohol Consumption FPN	6	1	
	PSPO Urination/Defecation FPN	1	1	
	Borough Wide PSPO - Alcohol consumption	6		

Preston	No street trading without a licence	2	2	
	Borough Wide PSPO - Illegal trading (food or other)	1	1	
	PSPO Alcohol Consumption FPN	5	1	
	Borough Wide PSPO - Alcohol consumption	5	3	
	Wem Park PSPO - Illegal trading (food or other)	3	3	
	Wem Park PSPO - Littering (urination or defecation)	3	1	1
	Wem Park PSPO - Pyrotechnics	1	1	
Queens Park	PSPO Alcohol Consumption FPN	1		
	Borough Wide PSPO - Alcohol consumption	1		
Queensbury	PSPO Alcohol Consumption FPN	15		
	Parks PSPO - Littering (urination or defecation)	2		
	Borough Wide PSPO - Alcohol consumption	50	23	2
	Borough Wide PSPO - Littering (spitting)	10	3	2
	Parks PSPO - Unauthorised use of motor vehicles	19	4	
	Parks PSPO - Walking more than 4 dogs	1		
Roundwood	Borough Wide PSPO - Alcohol consumption	6	3	
	Borough Wide PSPO - Littering (spitting)	1		
	Borough Wide PSPO - Use of illegal drugs	1		
	Parks PSPO - Walking more than 4 dogs	3	1	
Stonebridge	PSPO Alcohol Consumption FPN	2		
	No fireworks	1		
	Parks PSPO - Use of barbeques/fires	2	2	
	Borough Wide PSPO - Alcohol consumption	19	12	4
Sudbury	PSPO Alcohol Consumption FPN	1	1	
	Borough Wide PSPO - Alcohol consumption	3	1	
	Borough Wide PSPO - Littering (spitting)	1		1

Tokyngton	PSPO Alcohol Consumption FPN	14	3	
	PSPO Urination/Defecation FPN	1		
	Borough Wide PSPO - Alcohol consumption	17	8	2
	Borough Wide PSPO - Littering (item)	1		
	Borough Wide PSPO - Littering (spitting)	2		
	Parks PSPO - Alcohol consumption	7		
	Parks PSPO - Littering (urination or defecation)	2	1	
	Parks PSPO - Unauthorised use of motor vehicles	2		
	Borough Wide PSPO - Littering (urination or defecation)	1		
Welsh Harp	PSPO Alcohol Consumption FPN	1		
	Borough Wide PSPO - Alcohol consumption	4		
Wembley Central	No fireworks	7	2	
	Borough Wide PSPO - Illegal trading (food or other)	2		
	No urinating in open spaces	1	1	
	PSPO Alcohol Consumption FPN	102	25	
	PSPO Urination/Defecation FPN	2		
	Borough Wide PSPO - Alcohol consumption	128		12
	Borough Wide PSPO - Littering (spitting)	25	5	
	Borough Wide PSPO - Littering (urination or defecation)	6		
	PSPO Fireworks FPN	3		
	Borough Wide PSPO - Aggressive begging	2	2	
	Parks PSPO - Illegal trading (food or other)	1		
	Parks PSPO - Littering (urination or defecation)	2		
	Parks PSPO - Use of barbeques/fires	2	1	
	Wem Park PSPO - Alcohol consumption	1		
	Wem Park PSPO - Littering (urination or defecation)	1	1	
	Parks PSPO - Alcohol consumption	30	17	

Wembley Hill	Borough Wide PSPO - Littering (urination or defecation)	3		
	No street trading without a licence	4	1	
	PSPO Alcohol Consumption FPN	16	4	
	Borough Wide PSPO - Alcohol consumption	9		
	Borough Wide PSPO - Littering (spitting)	1		
	PSPO Fireworks FPN	3		
	Borough Wide PSPO - Littering (item)	1		
	Nuisance vehicle PSPO - Footpaths and verges	1	1	
	Parks PSPO - Alcohol consumption	4		
	Wem Park PSPO - Alcohol consumption	2		
	Wem Park PSPO - Littering (urination or defecation)	4		1
	Wem Park PSPO - Pyrotechnics	3		
	Wem Park PSPO - Use of illegal drugs	2		
	Parks PSPO - Unauthorised use of motor vehicles	2	1	

Wembley Park	No fireworks	2		
	No street trading without a licence	9		8
	Borough Wide PSPO - Aggressive begging	2	2	
	Borough Wide PSPO - Littering (spitting)	2		
	Nuisance vehicle PSPO - Footpaths and verges	2		
	Wem Park PSPO - Alcohol consumption	21	13	
	Wem Park PSPO - Littering (spitting)	3	3	
	Wem Park PSPO - Littering (urination or defecation)	19	9	
	Wem Park PSPO - Pyrotechnics	19	9	
	Wem Park PSPO - Use of megaphone or microphone	1	1	
	No urinating in open spaces	9	3	
	PSPO Alcohol Consumption FPN	3	3	
	PSPO Urination/Defecation FPN	3		
	Borough Wide PSPO - Alcohol consumption	9		
	No consumption of alcohol in open spaces	5		
	Borough Wide PSPO - Littering (urination or defecation)	2	1	
	Wem Park PSPO - Obstruction of the public highway	2	2	
	Wem Park PSPO - Illegal trading (food or other)	5	1	
Willesden Green	PSPO Alcohol Consumption FPN	17	3	
	PSPO Urination/Defecation FPN	1		
	Borough Wide PSPO - Alcohol consumption	15	8	
	Borough Wide PSPO - Illegal trading (food or other)	1		
	Borough Wide PSPO - Littering (urination or defecation)	2		
	Borough Wide PSPO - Littering (spitting)	2		
	Nuisance vehicle PSPO - Footpaths and verges	3		
	Parks PSPO - Unauthorised use of motor vehicles	2		
	PSPO Driving a Vehicle FPN	1		

Other enforcement ASB Crime and Policing Act 2015

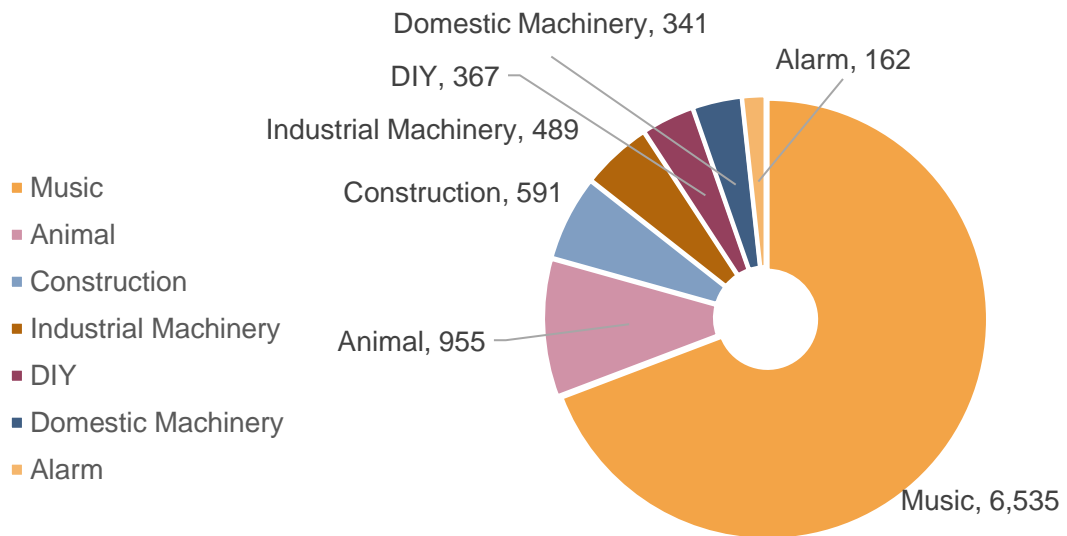
Closure Notices	22
Closure Orders	20
Breach of Closure Orders	0
Community Protection Warnings	7
Community Protection Notice	1
Criminal Behaviour Order	1
Community Triggers	27
Injunctions	0
Absolute Grounds of Possession	1

6.26. Nuisance Control Team

- 6.27. The Nuisance Control Team (NCT) is a high-demand service responsible for investigating and resolving complaints of statutory nuisance and ASB where noise, smoke, smell or dust is evidenced or demonstrated to be so unreasonable as to demand advisory or statutory intervention – including instigating prosecution proceedings against persistent offenders.
- 6.28. To manage demand the team have established a qualifying threshold for nuisance investigations: three or four separate nuisance-level incidents within a 4-week period are usually required, unless matters are demonstrably so significant as to warrant investigation before the qualifying period is met. One-off or infrequent incidents are logged for monitoring, with no further action taken.
- 6.29. NCT promote resident sign up on the **Brent Noise App** and make decisions under the Licensing Act 2003. NCT are a Responsible Authority ensuring licensed premises, premises licence or temporary event notice applications meet the licensing objective to prevent public nuisance. NCT routinely engage with private sector housing providers or their agents, and with registered social housing providers. NCT and local registered social housing providers in Brent have agreed to a Service Expectation, documenting our shared commitment to the management of noise and nuisance behaviours emanating from within or associated with use of RSL properties in the London borough of Brent, through appropriate tenancy management interventions.
- 6.30. NCT work closely with the Metropolitan Police on any intelligence or occurrence of Unlicensed Music Events within the borough.
- 6.31. They are consulted on all planning applications where technical advice/expertise on environmental issues is required; to provide a defence for planning decisions taken, should a challenge or appeal occur; ensure proposals granted do not result in statutory nuisance or persistent adverse impact upon quality of life.
- 6.32. The London Local Authorities Act 2004 (Sections 15, 16 and Schedule 2) empowers a local authority to issue a Notice of Opportunity to Pay a Fixed Penalty (FPN) for the offence of contravening or failing to comply with requirement of a Noise Abatement Notice under section 80(4) of the Environmental Protection Act 1990. From 1 April 2023 the Nuisance Control Team introduced use of fixed penalty notices for statutory nuisance evidenced on the noise app. This approach gives the team greater coverage in enforcing statutory nuisance and prioritising persistent offenders for prosecutions. There is also an emphasis on utilising post enforcement, where the team do not have

capacity to address in real time. Since April there have been 4 fixed penalty notices for statutory nuisance.

6.33. A breakdown of Brent Noise App cases investigated and service demand data 1 October 22 to 30 September 23 is provided:



6.34. Other reports not received through the Noise App and investigated by the Nuisance Control Team are as follows:

Service demand (Oct 2022 – Sept 2023)	Number
Music Noise	867
Animal Noise	136
Construction Noise	160
DIY Noise	59
Building Alarm	156
Vehicle Alarm	20
Commercial Noise	62
Prior Consent application for Noisy Works	85
Glare from Artificial Light	45
Low Frequency Noise	38
Dust Nuisance	42
Smell Nuisance	53
Smoke Nuisance	224
Planning Applications	275
Temporary Event Notice application	198
Premises Licence application	60
Premises Licence Minor Variation	19
TOTAL	2,499

7. Other Developments

CCTV

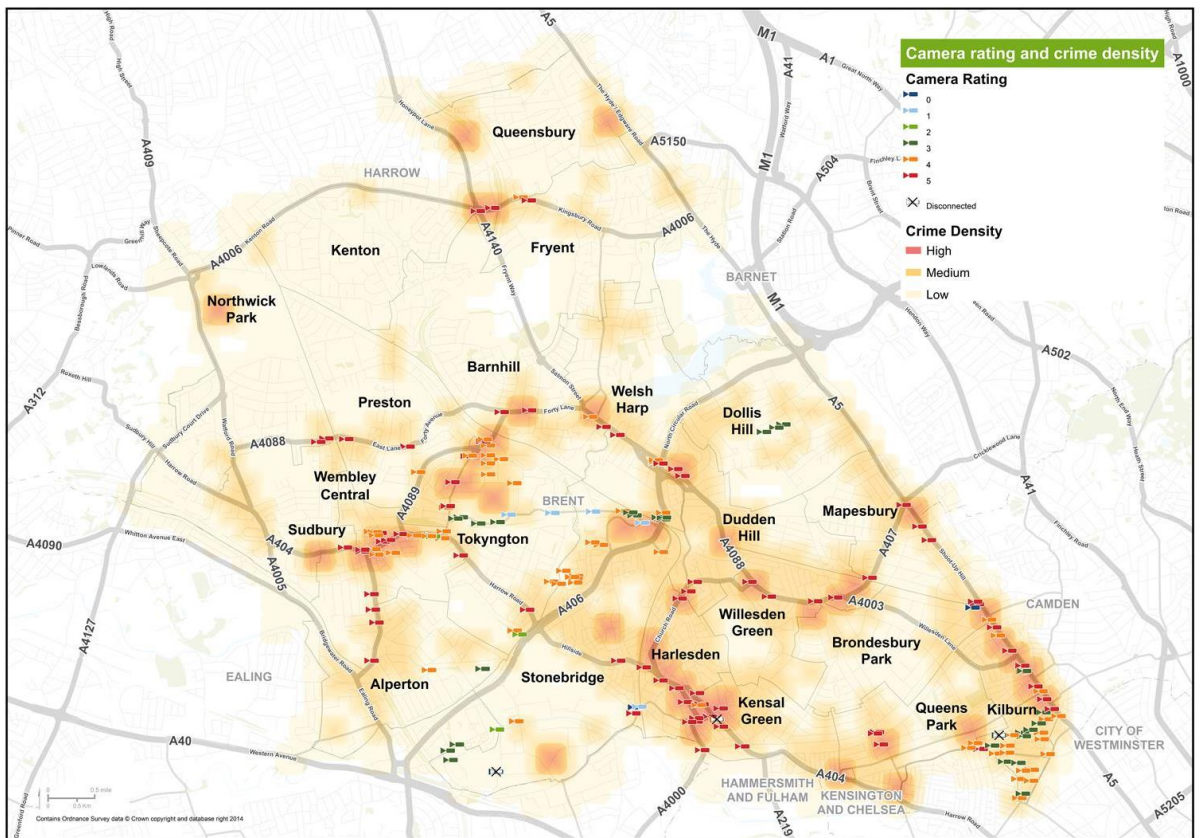
- 7.1. The CCTV control room is staffed by five control room officers, one senior control room officer, and one control room manager. Control room officers are currently assigned one of four shifts:
 - Early (8:00–16:00 Sunday–Thursday; 10:00–18:00 Friday–Saturday)
 - Cover (10:00–18:00 Sunday–Thursday; 12:00–20:00 Friday–Saturday)
 - Late (15:45–23:45 Sunday–Thursday; 17:45–1:45 Friday–Saturday)
 - Night (20:00–4:00 Sunday–Thursday; 22:00–6:00 Friday–Saturday)
- 7.2. The Council operates nearly 183 active CCTV cameras from its control room in the Civic Centre. These cameras are used primarily for community safety but are also used for the purposes of traffic and parking enforcement, housing estate monitoring, and environmental/fly tipping monitoring, among others. Brent also shares video feeds with external stakeholders such as Transport for London, the Metropolitan Police, and the borough of Camden to assist with their respective operations.
- 7.3. The Council has over 20 deployable cameras and the locations and movement of the cameras is coordinated through a monthly CCTV Working Group to ensure they are deployed to the locations in most pressing need.
- 7.4. Partnership working is at the core of ensuring that the provision of CCTV within Brent is effective. The CCTV control room has a direct link with the Metropolitan Police control room and can respond and communicate with police on the ground. The system is regularly accessed by police for investigations. Internally the CCTV is used to monitor staff when working in volatile situations to provide some support and safeguard them.
- 7.5. Quintin and Wembley Stadium have linked systems which are used during event days, when the CCTV Control room provides a central point of coordination.
- 7.6. Requests for mobile CCTV cameras in hot spot areas are decided monthly by the CCTV committee. 2 moves a month are absorbed within the existing CCTV contract with mobile cameras typically kept in the area for a minimum of 6 months.
- 7.7. The CCTV operatives' primary function is to monitor all cameras in Brent areas with CCTV, and in constant dialogue with the police control room to identify, report and monitor crime in real time throughout Borough.
- 7.8. The Council does not have responsibility for Brent Housing Management CCTV service or other Registered Providers. The Council own s11465 homes including leaseholders and camera systems are located on Council managed housing estates.
- 7.9. These cameras are a separate network and are not monitored by the CCTV control room. They have their own independent data storage and management arrangements at each of the sites. An objective for the Brent CCTV team is explore partnership opportunities to integrate CCTV systems with external stakeholders such as Registered Housing Providers particularly where crime and antisocial behaviour is prevalent. Meetings were held in 2021 with Brent Housing Management and large housing providers, to review their current CCTV systems and consider opportunities

to integrate cameras into the CCTV control room. Whilst their current systems are largely incompatible with the Borough's CCTV network, Housing Providers have shown a commitment to look at more opportunities to integrate CCTV systems, once they renew their maintenance contracts, subject to consultation with residents.

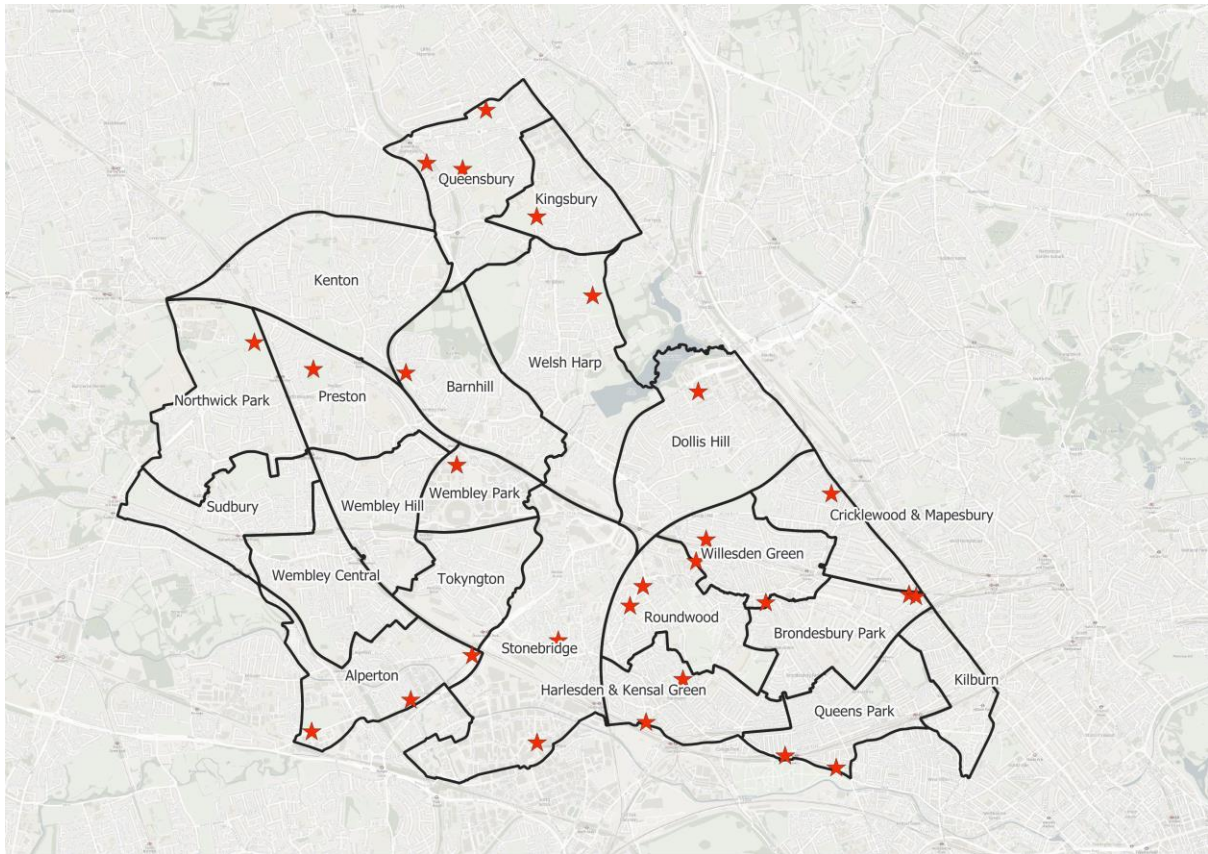
7.10. There are currently four Housing projects to integrate their CCTV systems into Brent's CCTV control. These locations are Cavendish Close, Kilburn Square, Westcroft and St Raphael's Estate. There is also a current review of the CCTV network to look at opportunities to upgrade cameras which are still on the analogue network, install more cameras in the north of the Borough and in parks and open spaces, where there is high volume of anti-social behaviour and crime. The CCTV surveys have been completed for all four estates and leaseholder consultations take place in November 2023

7.11. The Biometrics and Surveillance Camera Commissioners office conducted an audit of the CCTV Team on 7 March 2023. The audit was successfully passed with all policy, procedures and officer working protocols deemed compliant. The CCTV Team also passed a DVLA audit in March 2023, with all procedures to DVLA checks fully compliant.

7.12. A map of all fixed cameras in the borough is as follows:

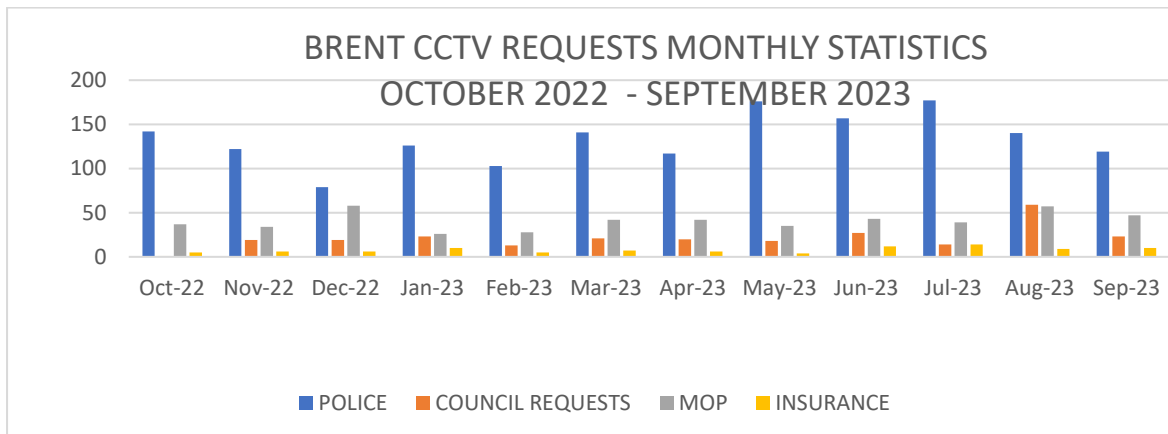


7.13. Below highlights the list of deployable cameras moved in October 22 to September 23 to emerging anti-social behaviour and crime hotspots.



7.14 The chart below shows number and type of queries that came in to the CCTV inbox from 1 October 2022 to 30 September 2023 and how they vary from month to month in relation to the following categories:

- Metropolitan Police
- Council Requests
- Member of Public (MOP)
- Insurance and Solicitors requests



Appendix 1: Case Studies

Reducing Domestic and Sexual Abuse :

Case Study - Advance

Referral into the Core IDVA Service

Maria was referred to Advance for support due to experiencing domestic abuse from her husband. Maria was introduced to the perpetrator via her brother abroad. They married in 2008 and arrived to the UK a few years later. Maria disclosed that shortly after getting married, her husband became physically, emotionally and verbally abusive. Maria shared that she did not know that her husband had a mental health diagnosis and discovered much later that he has a condition.

Maria disclosed that the worst incident occurred when Maria was not feeling well; she had recently had an operation and was experiencing some side effects. Maria stated that her husband hit her and kicked her in the vaginal area which caused Maria to bleed heavily. Maria said that she was bathing the children and she then collapsed. Maria said that her son pleaded with Maria to call the ambulance. Shortly after this, the police were called and her husband was arrested. The case went to court and the husband was found guilty of common assault and battery. A restraining order was granted for five years. After this, the perpetrator went to live abroad and returned to the UK in 2022.

The Domestic Abuse Safety Officer situated within HM Probation completed a referral to IDVA and to MARAC due to a new incident which took place when the perpetrator had returned to the UK. Maria reported that the perpetrator had waited outside her address until she returned from work that night. Maria said that she asked him to leave, he did not and followed her into the property when she opened the front door. Maria stated that she asked again for him to leave and he told her that he had come to visit the children. Maria stated that it was not a good time as it was their bedtime.

Maria said that she had a male friend who looked after the children while she was at work. She said that the perpetrator realised that her friend was in the house and he became

verbally abusive towards Maria accusing her of having an affair. Maria shared that the perpetrator then went in to the kitchen, took a knife making threats to kill both Maria and her friend while sharpening the knife. Maria said that this is when her friend called the police. Maria reported that the perpetrator had attended her property a few days before claiming to see the children and smashed her mobile causing damage beyond repair.

The police arrested the perpetrator who was put on remand and charged with two counts of breaching the restraining order, two counts of harassment and one count of criminal damage.

High risk factors identified:

- ❖ Threats to kill
- ❖ Jealousy/Control
- ❖ Weapons
- ❖ Escalation
- ❖ Breach of restraining order
- ❖ Stalking

Safeguarding concerns:

Maria confirmed that the children witnessed several incidents when the perpetrator was abusive. CSC had previously been involved and had closed the case.

Intervention and support provided by Advance:

- ❖ IDVA conducted relevant assessments such as initial assessment, DASH risk assessment and explored Maria's needs with her
- ❖ IDVA completed safety planning
- ❖ IDVA advocated at the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) that Children's Social Care needed to be involved due to the child safeguarding issues. This request was granted via the Brent MARAC Chair and the case was reopened with Children's Social Care
- ❖ IDVA assisted Maria with her homeless application
- ❖ IDVA provided Maria with a MARAC Housing Letter and ADVANCE Support Letter
- ❖ IDVA completed referral to Sanctuary Scheme

Multiagency work completed:

- ❖ Maria's allocated IDVA liaised with the Police, Social Services, Health and Housing to ensure a multi-agency response to safeguard Maria and the children
- ❖ IDVA attended meetings with MAPPA, MARAC and professional meetings to advocate for Maria

❖ IDVA also encouraged strong working partnerships with other agencies by ensuring communication was clear and concise particularly in regards to the client's homeless application

Challenges:

The main challenge in this case was receiving a timely response from the housing team at the client's borough of choice. The client was moved a total of 5 times and placed in hotels and caravans which made it difficult for Maria to access local amenities and also added unnecessary pressure on to Maria in an already traumatic situation. Maria was eventually placed in appropriate temporary accommodation out of area with the support of IDVA advocating for the client.

Outcome:

Maria's is now safely living in her borough of choice with her children and looks forward to new opportunities. The perpetrator does not know where Maria is. The perpetrator faces deportation due to being found guilty on several occasions of crimes against Maria and as such is considered a danger to society in the UK.

Reducing the impact of gangs and knives in our community

Case Study – Air Sports Network

FH is a 28-year-old, Muslim male from Albania. He was referred to AIR on the 3 February 2023. He was raised in our fortnightly IOM meeting as someone who could do with a positive intervention to help him take his best steps forward.

Before his last custodial sentence, he had a sever history of mental health challenges. He was well known to the community mental health team and had previously been under an intense medication program to help him manage his mental health troubles. This was presented as a major concern by his Offender manager (OM) as she was present for FH's ups and his mental deterioration. To add to this, he was living in a small 2-bedroom flat with his parents and brother which meant him having to live and sleep in the living room. Culturally he was seen as the problem in the family because of his previous behaviours (caused by mental health challenges) and time spent in prison, as a result his relationship with his parents and sometimes brother was awful. They couldn't really understand what he was going through.

He was referred to us so that he can gain access to a positive male mentor to get him involved in prosocial activities, act as a positive influence to his life and help him make better life decisions. Then support him with Education, training and employment.

I first met with FH on the 14 February through an introduction arranged by his OM. I then arranged for him to come and see me the next day (15th February) to give us time to have a thorough chat and set a plan of engagement.

He came early to that appointment, came across polite and respectful in conversation, but was slightly awkward and didn't really make eye contact, maybe indicating some anxieties. During our initial appointment we gave him instructions and set him the action of registering with a GP, so that he can start working towards getting back on the mental health

medication. He did just that and came back on the 15 to confirm it, which showed competency in him being able to go and independently complete life tasks.

When setting our engagement plan, he was quite adamant that he did not want to partake in any of our health and wellbeing activities, he just wanted support in working on his ETE pursuit. He did say that he may consider joining me in the gym at some point in the future. Before meeting me, he had already made quite a few job applications in the fields of warehouse and delivery work. He had a job with Asda the year prior but cut it short as he said it was too much for him. He told me that he had court fines all amounting to over £2,000. He also wanted to find housing away from his parents because of his terrible relationship with them and living on their couch.

We then found our way into a conversation about railway work because he had made it through 88% of a PTS course. He didn't think he would be able to get a job without completing the course. What he failed to realise is that all he needed was the sentinel card to be able to start working on track, which he said he has at home. This became our first mission to work towards. I gave him a couple of companies to contact and see if they have any roles available. He said this conversation was very encouraging for him and has given him motivation to put more effort into getting a railway role.

Overtime he became more and more comfortable speaking with me and being open in our conversations. We were both football fans and support arsenal, so we would regularly catch up on the progress of our club, which helped in breaking that ice. Additionally, I would help him ease the pressure on his reporting by offering to see him just before or after his probation appointments so that he can kill two birds with one stone. We would also speak a lot about music, the latest UK artists to release projects as well as movies released. FH would come to appointments and tell me about the five aside football he played on a Sunday with some friends that are more of a positive influence than some of his old peers. The ice breaking helped us get to a place where I could address his mental health medication with him. I would remind him that he has already registered with the GP, why have you not spoken with your doctor about the medication? I could see a resistance in his responses about it, then after a while he admitted that he doesn't feel he actually needs it. He would tell me that he is sure the route of all the mental health struggles came from him smoking cannabis which he no longer does and hasn't done since being released from custody. We then spoke about that being more motivation for him to find railway work, not only for financial gain but to keep him away from cannabis. Part of National Rail and any other railway company's policy is that cannabis use is strictly prohibited, and anyone tested positive for it will be let go effective immediately and will not be allowed back on the railway for the next five years.

Although it didn't completely align with probations wishes I chose to place less focus on the medication and more on the railway work and any other training / employment we can work on. I made this decision because FH had presented so well at every appointment we had scheduled and his communication was never a question. I then referred him to another careers coach we work closely with and began to aggressively work towards employment. During his time with me I always tried to encourage him to join me for a gym session, explaining its benefits and how it would further help him mentally. But part of the issue was that he had concerns of entering most areas in Brent because of previous gang ties. So, I offered to meet him at a gym near him to which he accepted and we were able to finally have a physical wellbeing session.

We were making good progress, he managed to get interviews with a warehouse company called Upex in Slough, and an amazon delivery team in Bow. Though they were

unsuccessful, there was a positivity in the progress. After a few weeks of reminding him to contact the railway companies I sent over to him he finally made contact with Coyle Rail who asked him to complete their online application / enrolment form, which he completed on the 6 March 2023. Whilst doing that he still managed to get another interview for a warehouse role in Kingston. But as he was awaiting a response for that role, Coyle Rail got back to him and offered him a part time role to begin with which he was completely ecstatic with and gladly accepted. By the 27 March they had offered him a full-time role which was a very big moment for him. He accepted every shift and bit of over time they offered him and travelled to several locations as well, showing great commitment.

He is now in a place where he is focusing on saving money and find more ways to upscale himself gaining more qualifications on the way.

- His relationship with his family has grown in to a really beautiful place as his family have a lot more faith that he is on a better path, he is able to support financially at home and speak with his parents about how they can progress together.
- He has gone from wanting to look for accommodation elsewhere to being a lot more patient and being happy staying at home and saving more money for now.
- He tells me that he is in the strongest mental space he has been in since he can remember
- Because of his positive progress, he has gone from weekly, to fortnightly and now monthly reporting with probation. He has also gone from a red nominal to amber / green on their risk metric, which is also positive.
- FH has also made a point to spend minimal time with negative peers and more time with the positive people he knows like the guys he plays football with.
- FH also signed up to the gym near him as he sees its benefit on the railway work, his confidence and mental health.

FH consistently shares his gratitude to AIR Network for supporting him into employment as it has really changed his life.

[Reducing vulnerability and increasing safeguarding case study – Community MARAC / Contextual safeguarding and multiple vulnerabilities –](#)

Case Study: Community MARAC

Mr D a Peabody tenant referred the case to CMARAC following reports of criminal damage to the block which he was living in, constant throwing of concrete blocks at residents and ongoing harassment to tenants in on the estate.

Peabody highlighted that Mr. D posed a risk of harm to himself and others, but the police were reluctant to make an arrest. Peabody contacted the Crisis Team for an urgent assessment, but no response was received from Community Mental Health Team (CMHT). The case was referred to CMARAC for a collaborative approach.

CMARAC confirmed that the case was open to Community Mental Health Team (CHMT). They emailed their concerns regarding Mr. D and CHMT scheduled a home visit. Peabody, police, and CMHT conducted a joint visit, and escalated the case, and took the following actions: they sent a urgent request was sent to the surveyor due to health and safety risks, a Complex Case Conference was organised by Peabody, and

CMARAC received confirmation from the mental health team that Mr D was seen by them and he was in crisis. They planned to revisit and complete a mental health assessment. Following their assessment, the case was escalated to the Approved mental health professionals (AMPH) for a potential in-patient care admission.

In January, the case was discussed on the CMARAC Panel and coordinated actions were agreed upon. The police coordinated with the CMHT/AMPH to support any visits, Peabody send logs to CMARAC and the police, providing reports regarding Mr D with evidence of photos of concrete being thrown out into communal areas.

In March, AMHP conducted a Mental Health Assessment for Mr D and concluded that he had the capacity to make his own decisions. However, his behaviour continued to escalate, and this was a cause for concern. Mr. D's daughter got involved and raised concerns about the support that was available for her father during a mental health crisis.

During the ongoing CMARAC meetings, the following actions were agreed upon and coordinated:

- Follow up with AMPH. The CMHT representative was able to liaise with the AMPH.
- Peabody was to explore housing enforcement options and provide an update at the next meeting.
- CMARAC followed up with the AMPH assessment with senior management.
- Case conferences were organised to have task and finished actions for partners to resolve the complex case.

Outcome of the CMARAC Referral

The actions coordinated by the CMARAC panel had a lengthy process but a positive outcome. Mr D was assessed by two AMPH independent doctors, who found no grounds for detention. Mr D was assigned a mental health case worker.

Mr D was deemed unfit for admission but agreed to take oral medication and engage with Home Treatment Team referred by the CMHT and they maintained weekly visits, Mr D expressed his willingness to take medication and is engaging well with his case worker. Peabody residents were given fire safety advice by the CMARAC London Fire Brigade Representative.

In May, Mr. D signed an Acceptance of Behaviour Agreement (ABA) and committed to collaborating with the Community Mental Health Team (CMHT) to ensure property safety during the decanting process. Peabody carried out the necessary repairs while Mr D was temporarily relocated.

The CMARAC panel monitored the case and given the positive engagement, the case was closed in September 2023.

Reducing Offenders and perpetrators from reoffending

Case Study – IOM

Case study will be provided as an additional appendix (due to length).

Reducing Anti-Social Behaviour

Case Study - BJAG

Mr M, is Brent council tenant, living in chapter road which is a known hotspot for nuisance drugs and anti-social Behaviour. He is register disabled as he suffers from polio from birth.

Has history of substance misuse, drug dealings (cannabis mostly) having constant parties, with loud music and visitors at odd hours. Hence several complaints received from residents, councillors, and MPs.

We received ASB referral from Brent Housing Management in August 2020 and the case was referred the Brent Joint Action Group. To progress the case, we carried out the following actions:

- Community Protection Team (CPT) arranged a welfare visit with the Safer Neighbourhood Police team (SNT), and BHM housing officers. During the visit housing officer was advised to carry out vulnerability assessment, including if there are any medical needs.
- Following on the visit Mr M was warned verbally, offered to be referred to support services including VIA and C-MARAC. Both referrals were made but Mr M did not engage.
- Several police involvements, including execution of warrant of entry in Dec. 2020 and around Feb. 2021 leading discovery of drugs (low levels), knives and an imitation firearm at the address.
- Mr M's parents intervened by sending him back to Africa for 8 months for re-habitation.
- Noise, Nuisance, and ASB continued as soon MR M returned, and the complaints started again.
- Mr M was issued with a warning letter by both the ASB and BHM officers. The SNT also did several visits to remind him of his responsibilities.
- He was then served with ABA, (acceptable Behavioural agreement) by both ASB and BHM as he continued to use his property to carry out ASB and nuisance incidents.
- The ASB team issued him with Community Protection Warning (CPW) with regards to the frequent parties, late and all day visitors using them property for alcohol and drug paraphernalia.
- He was then issued with Community Protection Notice (CPN) when he breached the CPW,
- CPT got the council's prosecution team involved to seek for a closure order as Mr M, seems not to care.
- CPT installed a moveable CCTV on the street to monitor and gather intel of the activities in and around the area, which helped a lot with evidence used in court for the closure order.
- We went to court with over evidence of nuisance and ASB related activities at this property, including videos, photographs, and complaints from residents, councillors and MPs.
- After 2 and half years of intelligence gathering, warnings, police involvement, support service involvement, we obtained a full closure order on the address on the 1 November 2023 with the help of the Prosecution team and the Local Safer Neighbourhood Police team.
- It also important to note that we helped Mr M to approach the council's Single Homelessness Reduction Team to be assessed for a temporary accommodation.
- We have passed all the case bundle to Brent housing Management team to seek for possession of the property.

Appendix 2 – Commissioned Services

Safer Brent Partnership (SBP) Priorities,

- Priority 1: Reducing Domestic and Sexual Abuse
- Priority 2: Reducing the Impact of Gangs and Knives in our Community
- Priority 3: Reducing Vulnerability and Increasing Safeguarding

- Priority 4: Reducing Offenders and Perpetrators from Reoffending
- Priority 5: Reducing Anti-Social Behaviour

Community Safety Commissioned services list

Provider	Services offered	Aligned to SBP priorities	Annual Grant £000
St Giles Trust	Gangs Intervention Programme This programme works with those involved in gangs, to exit gang lifestyle and to provide early intervention to people identified as being on the periphery of gang offending.	2 4	143,645.12 Grant funded
St Giles Trust	Embedded Youth Violence Hospital Project To deliver a service to improve the identification and engagement of young people who present at Northwick Park Hospital as a victim of serious youth violence	2 3	Currently funded through the VRU
Air Network	Mentoring, Sports, and Well-being programme We target our intervention towards those offenders who require the most intensive mentoring and support to help them achieve positive lifestyle changes and stop re-offending. This is built on the IOM model, includes a pre-release prison programme for a smoother transition and increased community support to aid reduced offending and integration.	2 4 5	103,160.00 Grant funded
VIA / ELEV8	Mental Health Outreach Project The project will address issues and initiate help for those with either diagnosed and non-diagnosed mental health conditions and reduce re-offending.	3 5	£45,000 Grant £90,000 Council £135,000.00 Total contract
RISE Mutual	Perpetrator Intervention program , deliver a domestic abuse perpetrator intervention programme with an integrated victim support service. The programme will aid an increase in motivation for change, supporting the service user to reduce and eliminate repeat abuse	1 4	£97,552.00 Grant funded
Nia	Exit Sex Working , Specialist outreach worker to support women engaged in on and off street level sex work to exit. Completed by a co-ordinated care planning approach to address the barriers to exiting sex work and support the women to access appropriate services.	1 3 4 5	£52,280.00 Council funded

Advance	Domestic Abuse Support service , delivers front line domestic abuse support to both male and female victims/survivors of domestic abuse aged 4 and over. They provide support and advice around crisis intervention, risk management, safety planning...	1	£456,450.00 Council funded
Advance – Chrysalis	One stop shop , offers a safe drop-in service, providing support and information in one place, for women, men and children experiencing domestic abuse and related issues such as harassment, stalking, forced marriage, 'honour' based violence.	1	Included in the above
Youth Justice Service	Triage Worker role , Early Interventions Officers within YOS to offer assessment and preventative provision to young people who would otherwise be likely to receive a criminal justice disposal.	3 4	£58231.81. Grant funded

Appendix 3: Abbreviations

EVVP	Exploitation Violence and Vulnerability Panel
MOPAC	Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime
SBP	Safer Brent Partnership
BAME	Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic
VAWG	Violence Against Women and Girls
DA	Domestic Abuse
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
FM	Forced Marriage
IDVA	Independent Domestic Violence Advisor
PRU	Pupil Referral Unit
YJS	Youth Justice Service
WDP	Westminster Drug Project
CMARAC	Community Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference
CP	Child Protection
LAC	Looked After Child
MARAC	Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference
DA Offence VWI	Domestic Abuse Offence violence with injury
BJAG	Brent Joint Action Group
IOM	Integrated Offender Management

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GM Case Study

I first met GM in person on 14.06.2022, after having a telephone introduction with both he and his Offender Manager (OM). GM was 27 at the time, he is a White British male, and was living with his mother and brother in a small 2-bedroom flat. In his referral it was stated that he falls into the persistent offender cohort with complex needs. He also had an offending history with matters relating to, historic domestic abuse, lack of constructive use of time, pro-criminal attitudes, and alcohol abuse. To add to this, GM was stopped and searched or arrested on several occasions at protests, rallies and marches, linked with far-right movements. There were concerns of either racial views, grooming by these movements or both. GM was deemed a high risk of offender.

GM was referred to us with the aim of giving him a positive mentor to work and speak with to hopefully counter all of the negative people he has around him. Alongside that aim to engage him in physical activities to help improve his health, encourage him to see the benefit of receiving support from an alcohol worker, as well as work towards ETE (Education Training and Employment) and housing.

When GM and I first sat down to enrol him to our programme and set a plan of engagement, I noticed he was quite sharp and disinterested with his answers, he found himself on his phone a couple of times whilst we were speaking. I addressed it as it was rude and unproductive, he respected my request but found himself looking at his phone repeatedly. GM was very overweight in appearance, his clothes weren't well kept and he seemed quite sweaty and nervous in the conversation. This could have been because of the heat at that time of the year, his health, or just being nervous doing a form with someone new.

We went through his needs and goals he wants to work on which included:

- Support with his alcohol misuse – The action was to set about referring him to WDP.
- ETE – He originally said he didn't want to work. But after I reminded him that he just told me he may sometimes struggle with travel to get to sessions, he then listed a few working fields he has thought about. Railway, SIA, Stewarding, Coaching Badges, Youth Work. I felt that was an early sign of him potentially attempting to bend the truth to benefit him. But it ended up positive goal setting, which is good.
- Accommodation – He would like to work towards attaining his own tenancy away from his mother's.

We originally set a plan to meet twice a week, one being for a table tennis session as that is a big passion of his, and the other being a 1-1 football session, as he feels that would be a good way of helping him lose weight. After making some progress on his health and wellbeing we will start working towards ETE, ID and Bank account applications etc. Simultaneously we will work on housing also.

After having to reschedule a couple of appointments, he finally made it to our first table tennis session. We had a slow start getting into the sports hall due to some booking issues. GM got visibly flustered and impatient whilst we were resolving the issue and threatened to leave because of his impatience. I managed to calm him down and get him to wait. He was quite loud and cheekily confident, and told me that he used to compete when younger, prior to getting in trouble and before putting on a lot of weight. He was very good as expected and the game was competitive and great for the physical and mental wellbeing improvement that it was intended for. During and after the session

I noticed a rude tone that he spoke with, saying things like “GET THAT BALL” with no please or thanks. At the end we sat down and had a chat about what is going on with him. GM said, “I won, GET me a Lucozade Sport from the vending machine now!” again with no please. I said firstly, we made no such arrangement for that. Secondly, I will never accept you speaking to anyone like that, let alone myself. I would happily buy you a drink as I usually bring spare water with me to sessions, but we are not going to continue a trend of you speaking to me in that manner. He began to smile and apologised saying he was playing.

To the session, I brought 4 table tennis balls with me, 3 orange 1 was white (all the same quality). Whiles playing I noticed an odd comment. He had a fixation on wanting to serve with the white ball at every opportunity. I asked him why that was so, and he replied “I prefer the white one, white ones first”. As there was nothing that followed, I made nothing of it and we continued. But this was the first concern I had about his racial views. We spoke a lot about football which really helped us build a strong rapport, catching up on the results every week. This helped us break barriers over time, and hopefully build his trust with someone from an African background. It would additionally open the door to us having a lot more uncomfortable conversations around his presentation, hair, beard, the condition of his clothes and his body odour. This happened over a long period of time and not straight away.

A few sessions down the line we had another concern about GM’s racial views. It was little while after the Euros where some of the black British, English players missed penalties in the finals of the competition. GM, myself and my colleague were having friendly football talk about how well England did in the competition. GM said “you see how they say white men can’t jump, because of the movie, well black men cannot take penalties!” referring to the Euro finals. My colleague and I said it was inappropriate and inaccurate, and explained why. This alongside the fact that he was still being spotted by the police at protests / rallies was concerning.

I challenged him on his comments in the next session and asked if he has any issues with ethnic groups. He said no he doesn’t, but said there is an issue with people coming from different countries illegally and taking a lot of the jobs in the UK, claiming benefits etc. He went on to say he has family from Caribbean backgrounds. I reminded him that the UK is heavily multicultural and there are many ethnic groups that have contributed to its growth. Yes, there are ethnic groups that have been disruptive to the UK, but asked him to look at himself and a lot of people that look like him and ask if you have contributed or been disruptive to the communities in the country, before judging others. He kind of took a step back and thought deeply about it as we got deeper into the conversation. GM messaged me later that day to apologise for his comments and said sometimes he says things without thinking and gets carried away and he didn’t mean any offence.

GM in conversation comes across quite youthful and immature, merging multiple talking points into one, struggling with listening and talking at the same time. He also makes these controversial statements, not really having much reasoning behind what he is saying, as if it weren’t really coming from him. This led me to believe that he could be being groomed by some racist groups where they may be taking advantage of his youthful thinking and planting racial beliefs in his mind.

Nonetheless, we continued working with GM and more often than not his engagement and communication was exceptional, He started noticing he was getting healthier as he could last longer playing table tennis. With this progress we (myself and his OM) Thought it best to start working on some of the goals that he set in our engagement plan. So, we referred him to WDP for support with his alcohol. He did not have any form of ID, a bank account or a national insurance card / number at the time. But with the partnership support of Shaw Trust, we were able to fund his Citizenship card

for ID, apply for a NI replacement, which then meant he could now apply for a bank account. We had also started the process of referring him to Brents AFEO Housing Team. He received the Citizenship card and it felt like really big moments of success for him. Prior to this GM had never had a real job, so this was all very new territory for him, doing all of it by himself would have been overwhelming for him.

Although he was appreciative of the support and was moving in the right direction, there were still many bumps in the road. GM would now and then get careless with his alcohol consumption at a bar and get into a fight with security, staff at a fast-food restaurant, or just someone at a bar, adding to the pile up of court cases and charges he already had against him. He would also often lie to services and give us different accounts of what took place to blame other people for his mistakes. For example, he would say that one service is not helping him with his ID, when in actual fact he had lost the ID after an incident and just needs to apply for another. This proved to be very disruptive of his progress. The IOM police team raised concerns and were monitoring him a lot more closely, services also began to lose faith in his motivation for self-betterment. At this point it was very important that partnership working and communicating was at its best as we were able to put together all of the stories he brought forward, so that he couldn't tell us differing stories without being challenged.

As time passed, I would challenge his statements and stories a lot more making him aware that all of the supporting partners are in communication. As a result, he was slowly understanding that if he really wanted to keep moving forward, he would need to be honest and actually work hard otherwise he could end up with negative reports from all services and end up back in prison with all of these court cases coming up. Despite how uncomfortable he was about it, I would have many serious conversations with him, motivating him to prove everyone wrong, and to prove to himself that he could better himself. After one of our table tennis sessions, we had an emotional conversation about his childhood and how his parents never had any money growing up. His dad never used to work, he stayed at home smoking cannabis drinking and sending GM's mum to go and get more for him to smoke. His dad was also very abusive to him and his sister and says that he was sexually inappropriate with his sister. As a result of this GM was stealing from very young age to have clothes and food. He would also link in with really negative peer groups and individuals that would influence him heavily. So, a lot of these positive changes he has made and still has to make, he has never been taught any of it. This day was a significant turning point for him, to really open up and look deeper in himself being the potential problem.


As we were in a good place with our rapport and trust, I was able to have a chat with him about the potential of seeing a counsellor. He was open to it and we very quickly re-registered him with his GP and requested a referral for it. From this point there was a change in GM's commitment, he was becoming a lot more open about everything. He would contact the IOM police to update them on progress, contact myself, probation, WDP (Drug & Alcohol Service), Shaw Trust (ETE Service) to let us all know of his next court dates and appointments, so that nothing clashes. He would be open about removing himself from certain negative groups of people he was spending time with, he also admitted that those people used him and didn't have his best interest at heart.

At this point things really started clicking he was still engaging with AIR via our usual table tennis sessions, but one day he turned around and said he is ready to have his first session in the gym as he really wanted to lose weight. We had a mini celebration then went straight to it; this was a huge outcome (FIRST EVER GYM SESSION!!!!). Not only did he attend sessions once / twice a week, but he was committing to eating better, and he had stopped drinking for over two months. GM would sit with me to chase up his housing referral after every session which finally lead to some progress. In October he had two viewings for studios in shared accommodations, despite them being

unsuccessful there was still positive movement, which helped motivation, he was beginning to see things were possible.

- After some encouragement we had him firmly linked in with WDP doing workshops and 1-1 working.
- We actioned both railway and forklift licence course referrals, through Shaw Trust.
- His NI came in the post, alongside his replacement citizenship card.
- In December he shared excitement about eating and spending quality time with the family for Christmas. This was new for him.
- After months of efforts on the 06.12.2022, GM finally had a successful viewing for a studio, not too far from his mother's place. This was a huge pillar that propelled his progress. This was the first time he had ever moved somewhere by himself.
- We supported him in doing his housing benefit claim and applying for funding for household goods such as cutlery, pots, pans, toaster, kettle etc.
- On the 22.02.2023, GM completed a forklift licence course and was ready to start looking for work. Which is exactly what he did.
- GM created a brand-new CV with the support of Shaw Trust.
- GM started taking pride in his appearance, shaving and showering more often. Taking care of his clothes and his hygiene.
- GM decided to open up a new bank account and a savings account, because he has ID to do so now.
- He is speaking a lot more respectfully to myself and everyone he speaks with

I can confidently say that GM has made complete 180 degree turn on his life and says he is happier for it. He is still currently open to us and we are still working on finding him employment. As the work is still in progress, I think it is important to recognise the transformation that he has made on his life.

	<p align="center">Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee 24 January 2024</p>
	<p align="center">Report from Head of Strategy & Partnerships</p>
<p align="center">Scrutiny Task Group Findings</p>	

Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	Not Applicable
Open or Part/Fully Exempt: <small>(If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)</small>	Open
List of Appendices:	One Appendix 1 – Budget Scrutiny Task Group Findings report
Background Papers:	None
Contact Officer(s): <small>(Name, Title, Contact Details)</small>	Jason Sigba, Strategy Lead – Scrutiny, Strategy and Partnerships Jason.Sigba@brent.gov.uk Janet Latinwo, Head of Strategy & Partnerships Janet.Latinwo@brent.gov.uk

1.0 Executive Summary

1.1 To present the Budget Scrutiny Task Group Findings report for adoption by the Committee (please see Appendix 1).

2.0 Recommendation(s)

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

3.0 Detail

3.1 Contribution to Borough Plan Priorities & Strategic Context

3.1.1 Borough Plan 2023-2027 – all strategic priorities

3.2 Background

3.2.1 The Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee established a Budget Scrutiny Task Group on 6 September 2023 to consider the Council's draft budget proposals for 2024/25 and 2025/26.

3.2.2 The Task Group has now concluded and agreed 11 recommendations for adoption by the Committee, and for referral to Cabinet for consideration at its meeting on 5 February 2024. These can be found on page 2 of Appendix 1.

4.0 Stakeholder and ward member consultation and engagement

4.1 Local stakeholders, community groups, and backbench councillors were consulted as part of the Budget Scrutiny Task Group Review (please refer to pages 15-19 of Appendix 1).

5.0 Financial Considerations

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

6.0 Legal Considerations

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

7.0 Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Considerations

7.1 There are no Equality, Diversity & Inclusion considerations for the purposes of this report.

8.0 Climate Change and Environmental Considerations

8.1 There are no climate change and environmental considerations for the purposes of this report.

9.0 Communication Considerations

9.1 There are no communication considerations for the purposes of this report.

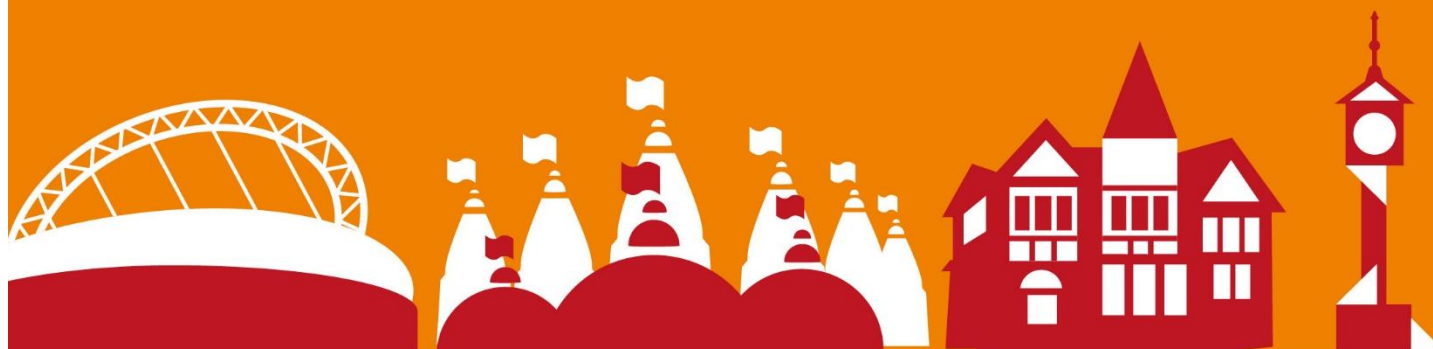
Report sign off:

Janet Latinwo
Head of Strategy & Partnerships
(Statutory Scrutiny Officer)

Budget Scrutiny Task Group Findings Report

Scrutiny of the Draft Budget
Proposals for 2024/25 and 2025/26

24 January 2024



Foreword

The last year has represented one of the worst years for local government finances. Nationwide we are seeing the collapse of councils as the financial viability & stability of local authorities is threatened.

Threatened by local government funding holes which central government fail to close. Threatened by the cumulative impact of another year of austerity, which sees Brent receive one of the smallest increases in government support across London, failing to match inflation. Threatened by imposed competition within the sector which leaves local authorities bidding against each other for essential funding for key services.

Despite the challenges, Brent has chosen to protect the most vulnerable residents, ensuring no staffing cuts to the homelessness teams, investing in community assets instead of selling them, and building a council-owned and delivered children's home, as just a few to mention. This work can be built upon by prioritising collaboration in a genuine partnership model across the sector to combat austerity policies.

On a separate note, I am pleased to see the progress already made by the Council to enhance the mitigations in the draft proposals as a result of the concerns raised by the Task Group in its evidence sessions.

I would like to give my thanks to our local stakeholders and community groups who contributed to this report and to the staff who supported the Task Group.



Cllr Rita Conneely

Chair – Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee

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Members of the Budget Scrutiny Task Group

The Budget Scrutiny Task Group was a joint effort between the Council's two scrutiny committees, with representation from both the Resources and Public Realm Committee (RPR) and the Community and Wellbeing Committee (CWB). The Task Group comprised of the following members:

Councillor Rita Conneely – Chair

Councillor Ketan Sheth – Vice Chair

Councillor Anthony Molloy

Councillor Jayanti Patel

Councillor Tazi Smith

Task Group Terms of Reference

The following terms of reference were agreed at the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee on 6 September 2023:

- Consider the Cabinet's budget proposals for 2024/25 and 2025/26
- Receive evidence from Cabinet Members, senior departmental officers, and any other relevant stakeholders
- Agree a draft report to comment on the budget proposals for submission to the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee for ratification and submission to Cabinet.

1. Introduction

Context

- 1.1. Brent continues to operate in an extremely challenging financial environment, navigating spiralling inflation, high interest rates, increasing demand for some services, insufficient government funding, and the ongoing impacts of the cost of living crisis. The latter has created even more challenges – we have an ageing population with more complex needs and rapidly rising homelessness, with an average of 148 households presenting as homeless every week.
- 1.2. In July 2023, the Council agreed its revised Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), outlining that £8m of savings would be required between 2024/25 to 2025/26 to legally balance the budgets of those years. The Council later published its draft Budget in November 2023, revising earlier budget assumptions, and setting out a series of budget proposals totalling £8m which, if approved following consultation and scrutiny, would be implemented in 2024/25 and 2025/26. It also proposed a Council Tax increase of 4.99% (consisting of a 2.99% general increase plus 2% for the Adult Social Care Precept). Nonetheless, the focus in the Budget is centred around delivering efficiency measures, service transformations, cost reductions and generating income whilst protecting front line services, staff and Council priorities as much as possible.
- 1.3. In addition to the Council's ever growing adult social care costs, the most significant new pressure identified in the Quarter 2 Financial Report 2023/24 was in the temporary accommodation (TA) area resulting in a forecasted overspend of £13.4m in 2023/24 alone (5% of the overall revenue budget). To mitigate this, the Council has been forced to introduce new spending controls and a Budget Assurance Panel to provide additional oversight and scrutiny of its financial situation and prevent its budget position deteriorating further. It has since been confirmed by finance colleagues that the Quarter 3 Financial Report 2023/24 (due to be published in January 2024) will not be materially different in terms of the issues raised in Quarter 2.
- 1.4. Upon release of the Autumn Statement in November 2023 and the Local Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement in December 2023, the Council has since confirmed no changes to the draft Budget will be required. The government updates provide no new funding for general local government services and no additional funding to tackle the persistent overspend pressures in social care and homelessness.
- 1.5. The Council will therefore be under intense pressure to continue to realise its planned savings whilst taking action to curb its expenditure in order to maintain a balanced budget.

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 2024/25 and 2025/26 through a Budget Scrutiny Task Group. This was established at the committee meeting on 6 September 2023.¹
- 1.8. The panel held a series of meetings between October and December 2023 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 to consider the main budget pressures, risks, and uncertainties to the Council; test assumptions, modelling and forecasting on which the draft Budget has been built; challenge how resources are prioritised/managed; and consider the overall impact of the proposals on residents and partners. The full list of participants is provided in section 6 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 Wednesday 24 January 2024. A report from the Committee will then be presented to Cabinet for consideration on Monday 5 February 2024, alongside the report from the Corporate Director of Finance and Resources on the final budget proposals for 2024/25 and 2025/26.
- 1.10. The Task Group seeks to act as a 'critical friend'. Therefore, it is hoped this report will enhance constructive debate on the proposals, where we would welcome the Cabinet's decision to take our recommendations on the proposed budget for 2024/25 and 2025/26 forward.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. The Budget Scrutiny Task Group makes the following recommendations to Cabinet.

Budget Presentation and Communications

Recommendation 1 – Improvements to budget communications:

The Task Group acknowledge the improvements that have been made to the consultation and engagement process following the Budget Scrutiny Task Group Review 2023/24, but believes further work is still needed to better communicate to residents what the vision, mission, aims and priority protection areas of the upcoming Budget are. This also includes ensuring communications meet agreed accessibility standards, such as writing documents in plain English in line with the average Brent reading age. These revisions will help build a greater understanding of the priority areas safeguarded in the proposals and enable residents to provide more meaningful/influential consultation feedback. As an example the Task Group received evidence that there was only one proposal from the Housing portfolio as the Council had made a concerted effort to protect housing services and the most vulnerable; Although it could be assumed that an area not featured in the proposals would be protected, such information should be made clearer in the draft Budget for the lay person. **The Task Group recommend that the Council includes a concise, summary page in the Budget (and in future budgets), adopting more accessible language which makes it clear what its vision, aims, and priority protection areas are.**

¹<https://democracy.brent.gov.uk/documents/s135401/6.%20Establishment%20of%20Budget%20Task%20Group%20v1.pdf>

Recommendation 2 – Developing clearer and concise proposals:

Some of the proposals are generally vague and lack clarity around the possible impact(s) on residents and partners (e.g. 2024-25 CR02, 2024-25 FR02, 2024-25 RS21, 2024-25 CHW03, 2025-26 CHW02 etc.) **The Task Group recommend that the Council review the proposals ahead of publication of the final Budget to ensure that the final proposals and their possible impact(s) can be clearly understood and are accessible to all Brent residents. This review could be actioned collaboratively with a lay-panel (e.g. resident focus group) and in future years by including additional questions in the consultation. These suggestions could also help achieve recommendation 1.**

Recommendation 3 - Alignment with climate action commitments in Borough Plan 2023-27:

Building on the recommendation made as part of the Budget Scrutiny Task Group Review 2023/24, there still needs to be greater alignment between the draft Budget and the Borough Plan 2023-27, particularly in relation to climate action. The Task Group appreciates changes being made to the corporate reporting template to include a 'Climate Change and Environmental Considerations' section - this good practice should also be applied in the budget setting process. **The Task Group recommend that the Council adopt a 'green budget' which clearly outlines the climate and environment implications of each proposal.** This will assist the Council in its urgent climate commitments, including the goal to become Carbon Net Zero by 2030.

Stronger Partnership Working with the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS)

Recommendation 4 - Shared Outcomes Framework:

Although the Council has understandably prioritised protecting the VCS and frontline services over other areas in its proposed budget, there is scope for stronger partnership working with the sector. During the Stakeholder Session (please see section 3), VCS partners expressed concerns that mitigations proposed in the draft Budget were centred around signposting to the VCS, however there had been no discussion or collaboration around how these mitigations would be delivered or achieved in practice. **The Task Group recommend that the Council explores a shared-outcomes framework with the voluntary sector for the benefit of residents/service users. As part of this work, the Council should urgently discuss and collaborate with the VCS in relation to budget proposals that involve them and/or may have an impact on their service provision. This discussion could build on the Task Group's recommendation from the Budget Scrutiny Task Group Review 2023/24 which suggested a collaborative strategy with the VCS to enable these organisations to identify and secure new income streams.**

A shared-outcomes approach could avoid future service cuts, avoid service duplication and save the Council money long-term. Additionally, it would ensure that a consistent dialogue is maintained with the VCS throughout each financial year around issues like council budgets rather than the current approach which has meant budget discussions with the sector take place after proposals have already been drafted.

Income Generation

Recommendation 5 – Establishing a strategic approach to income generation:

The Task Group commend the Council's creativity/efforts to generate additional income to bolster its finances, and particularly welcomes proposals such as 2024-25 FR01, 2024-25 RS13, and 2024-25 RS14. However, more could be done to generate even more income. **The Task Group recommend that the Council develops a longer-term, strategic approach to income generation (accompanied with yearly action plans) rather than focusing on piecemeal proposals year to year. The strategy should include a robust monitoring process that enables holistic working across all departments to create synergies for income generation. Specifically, allocating a dedicated, cross-departmental resource to work across the Council to investigate and identify additional opportunities for income generation e.g. compliance with mandatory HMO licensing, compliance with council tax on empty properties, and business rates evasion.**

Establishing a longer-term approach will help the Council to be more resourceful and self-sufficient in the absence of large central government funding pots. Strategic interventions could enable the Council to address areas of improvement in its operations and recoup income that would have been otherwise due, as well as identify new creative ways of generating income. The Task Group however recognise a balanced approach must be adopted that ensures the Council does not become over-commercialised and learns from local authorities that have experienced financial difficulties (i.e. entered s114 territory²) due to certain commercial choices.

Recommendation 6 - Renting out Civic Centre meeting rooms:

The Task Group acknowledge the efforts the Council has made to rent out spaces in the Civic Centre to generate additional income, however believes there are additional opportunities that can be realised. **The Task Group recommend that additional space, specifically meeting rooms, in the Civic Centre are made available for external hire given that staff no longer work 5 days per week in the office. To complement this suggestion, some council meetings could be moved outside of the Civic Centre to be held in other community assets in the borough.**

Not only could this recommendation generate additional income, but it could provide residents and businesses with office space and workspace solutions in the heart of the borough. It could also encourage members/officers to increase their use of other community facilities in the borough and spread the Council's visibility more equally throughout the borough.

Recommendation 7 – Implementing additional shared service arrangements:

The Council's efforts to generate additional income by offering shared services to other local authorities are welcomed. Notable examples include proposal 2025-26 CYP04 which intends to sell additional respite bed nights to other local authorities at the Ade Adepitan Short Break Centre. Another instance is the formation of the Shared Technology Services (STS), an IT shared service for the councils of Brent, Lewisham and Southwark, whereby Brent is the host borough for the service. **The Task Group recommend that the Council explores further opportunities for shared service arrangements, learning lessons from its current arrangements and from good practice of the shared service models that already exist across the country.**

It is acknowledged that there is not a single model that suits all councils, localities, or types of service provision, and that this recommendation will take time to scope out. However, if

² <https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/explainer/local-authority-section-114-notices>

delivered effectively, the Council would be able to generate additional income, reduce duplication, potentially increase investment in services, and reimagine services to better meet the needs of residents.

Lobbying and Advocacy

Recommendation 8 - Housing Subsidy Loss:

Although the Task Group welcomes the increase to Local Housing Allowance rates via the Autumn Statement 2023, further pro-active work could still be carried out with neighbouring local authorities, London Councils, and the Local Government Association (LGA) to seek reform to the Housing Benefit Subsidy rules. **The Task Group recommend that the Council works with the above mentioned associations to lobby for positive change to the Housing Benefit subsidy rules which currently caps the amount the Council can claim back from the Department of Work & Pensions (DWP) to 90% of the 2011 LHA rates per household for TA provided, and which places financially onerous restrictions on the types of TA the Council can provide to be eligible for housing benefit subsidy.** Such reform would enable Brent to significantly reduce its overspends, and to have access to a wider pool of affordable temporary accommodation to deal with increased demand in homelessness.

Recommendation 9 – Retaining use of New Millennium Day Centre

The Task Group accept that alternative provision will be put in place to mitigate the impacts of ceasing use of the New Millennium Day Centre. It would nevertheless be disappointing to lose a vital space in the borough that brings local communities together and which allows the Council to achieve its 'Borough of Culture' legacy ambitions. **The Task Group recommend that the Council explores options to retain the building for community use.**

Recommendation 10 – Wembley Stadium: 'Community Impact' Ticket Levy:

The Task Group welcome the financial contributions made by Wembley Stadium towards the Council's event day management costs (e.g. cleansing and waste management, highways management, enforcement etc.), however recognise that these contributions do not cover the full extent of the costs incurred by the Council for its operations on event days. **The Task group recommend that the Council explores options with the Stadium for a ticket levy, whereby the Council receives a proportion of each ticket sale in order to fully recover costs incurred or to provide for further enhancement of the Council's event day operations.**

Recommendation 11 - Delegation of budgets and decision making to Brent Integrated Care Partnership (ICP):

The Task Group note that the success of many of the proposals are dependent on effective partnership working with health partners (e.g. 2024-25 CHW01, 2024-25 CHW03, 2025-26 CHW03, 2025-26 CYP06 etc). It was heard that the established working arrangements and governance in the Brent ICP provide opportunities for closer working between the Council and NHS partners. These working arrangements have enabled health funding to be transferred to Adult Social Care to support residents and the local health and care system. However, the Task Group understand that the centralisation of decisions on NHS budgets away from the borough to North West London Integrated Care Board (NWL ICB) has reduced the ability of the Brent ICP to address local needs and may have increased future demand on the system. For example, in accordance with ICB processes, the ICP has

submitted robust business cases for paediatric continence services, nursing provision for children in special schools, and to manage pressures on CYP and adult mental health services. All of these business cases are still awaiting a decision after many months, while need continues to increase.

The Task Group recommend that the Council continues to advocate and make the case to NWL ICB for both a better alignment of NHS resources to population need and for an increased delegation of budgets and decision making to Brent ICP. Not only would devolution to place allow for more effective collaboration between the Council and local health partners but it would also allow for implementation of service change at greater pace. Additionally, the Task Group is of the view that the ICP is better able than NWL to tailor services to the needs of Brent's diverse communities with greater flexibility to respond to changing needs or circumstances.

3. Evidence Sessions

- 3.1. The Budget Scrutiny Task Group held a series of meetings with Cabinet Members, the Corporate Management Team, and partners to review the suitability of the budget proposals 2024/25 and 2025/26 and to inform its recommendations.
- 3.2. As part of this process, council officers provided the following reports for consideration:
 - [Q2 Financial Performance 2023/24](#)
 - [Medium Term Financial Strategy \(MTFS\)](#)
 - [Draft Budget 2024/25 and 2025/26 \(inclusive of the revised MTFS and the draft budget proposals for 2024/25 and 2025/26\)](#)

Work Planning Sessions

- 3.3. The work planning meeting was held on 23 October 2023.
- 3.4. Task Group members discussed and agreed the approach to be taken to scrutinise the Draft Budget 2024/25 and 2025/26. This consisted of:
 - A stakeholder session 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 Council's Treasury Management and borrowing; as well its updated Medium Term Financial Outlook, and the budget proposals put forward for the following directorates: Finance and Resources, Communities and Regeneration, and Resident Services
 - An evidence session on the remaining proposals for Governance, Care, Health, and Wellbeing, and Children and Young People
 - A final evidence session to hear any additional evidence and to discuss and agree the draft recommendations
- 3.5. There were a number of areas and themes that the Task Group agreed to review including:
 - Brent Council's **Medium Term Financial Outlook**, including the overall financial position
 - **The impact of inflation** on Brent Council's budget pressures and performance
 - **The impact of rising interest rates** on Brent Council's budget pressures and performance

- **The impact of the uncertainty in government funding** on Brent Council's operations and performance
 - **The impact of the cost of living crisis** on Brent Council's budget pressures and performance
 - **The impact of Covid-19** on Brent Council's budget pressures and performance.
 - Key departmental **overspends and underspends**
 - **Service Specific Pressures, Risks, Uncertainties, and Mitigations**
 - **Current/future budget assumptions** e.g. income assumptions, spending assumptions etc.
 - The **proposed budget development process for 2024/25**
 - **The impact of budget proposals for 2024/25 and 2025/26** on service delivery and customer satisfaction
 - Council **reserves** and **Reserves Strategy**
 - Ringfenced budgets e.g. **Housing Revenue Account (HRA), Schools and the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)**, and the **Public Health Grant**
 - The **Capital Programme** of the Council
 - Options for **Income Generation and debt collection** e.g. fees and charges, Council Tax, business rates etc.
 - **Treasury Management** e.g. investments, borrowing, minimum revenue provision (MRP) etc.
 - Budget **Consultation**
- 3.6. The Cabinet, Corporate Management Team and Statutory Scrutiny Officer were sighted on the scope and content of the Budget Scrutiny Task Group Review.

Evidence Session 1

- 3.7. Evidence session 1 was held on 21 November 2023.
- 3.8. Key attendees included the Leader, the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources, Regeneration and Planning, the Cabinet Member for Housing, Homelessness, and Renters Security, the Chief Executive, the Corporate Director for Finance and Resources, the Corporate Director for Communities and Regeneration, and the Corporate Director of Resident Services.
- 3.9. The session focused on several topics including:
- The Council's renewed MTFs (inclusive of the budget setting process)
 - Risk, issues and uncertainties faced by the Council e.g. inflation, interest rates, demand for services and uncertainty in central government funding
 - Core budget assumptions
 - Income Generation
 - Council reserves and the Reserves strategy
 - Council Tax
 - Housing Revenue Account
 - Dedicated Schools Grant
 - Capital Programme
 - Treasury Management (e.g. approach to council borrowing, minimum revenue provision (MRP) etc.)
- 3.10. The Task Group also undertook a deep dive exercise into the draft budget proposals for the directorates below:
- Finance and Resources
 - Communities and Regeneration

- Resident Services

3.11. This exercise involved assessing the impact of these proposals on residents, analysing the accuracy of the relevant equality impact assessment screenings and discussing whether the proposals were realistic.

Scene-setting

3.12. The Task Group heard evidence of the difficult financial situation facing the Council, with detail provided on the local and national context of the budgetary pressures facing local authorities.

Budget-Setting Process:

3.13. Despite these challenges, it was heard that the budget setting process commenced early with draft proposals for 2024/25 and 2025/26 being published in November 2023. It was also noted that as part of this process, the Task Group reviewed the Quarter 2 Financial Report in November 2023, and the original MTFS back in July 2023. Nonetheless, publishing the draft Budget in November enabled the Council to observe good practice in conducting robust consultation and engagement with residents and partners ahead of the final Budget being published in February 2024. It also enables the Council to carry out robust equality impact assessments (EIAs) to ensure that none of the proposals as currently developed disproportionately impact residents with protected characteristics. Further EIAs are carried out as appropriate as proposals adopted in the Budget are further developed for implementation.

3.14. The Task Group explored the priority protection areas in the draft Budget. These understandably were centred around the statutory services provided by the Council and supporting those in most need. For example, services in Housing Needs, Children & Young People (CYP) and Adult Social Care (ASC). Nonetheless, the Task Group was provided with assurance that 'cuts' in this draft Budget had been kept to a minimum due to more difficult decisions (e.g. library closures) being taken in earlier budget processes alongside the Council's continued proactivity to generate extra income.

3.15. The Task Group were satisfied with current reserves levels and on the soundness of the Council's reserves strategy.

Core Assumptions:

3.16. The Task Group discussed and sought clarity on the budget assumptions made in the draft Budget and revised MTFS. It was highlighted that scenario modelling and sensitivity analysis had been carried out as part of the budget assumptions, including best case, central case and worst-case scenarios. The central case was used to formulate the budget gap of £8m between 2024/25 and 2025/26. Due to the volatility in the economic environment the Task Group agreed with the Council going with a central case. Nonetheless, it was mentioned that the core assumptions were based on the information currently available to the Council during formation and would be reviewed following details of the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement.

3.17. Since Evidence Session 1 the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement 2023 has been published requiring updates to some of the assumptions made in the renewed MTFS from November 2023. For example, additional funding of £1.7m to ASC will be provided which is above the MTFS forecast. Despite slight changes being required to the assumptions in the draft Budget, it has since been confirmed that no

changes to the £8m savings target are actually required. This is because the Settlement does not adequately provide funding to cover inflationary pressures and offers no new funding to tackle persistent pressures in social care and homelessness. The Council will therefore be under pressure to continue to realise its planned savings whilst taking action to curb its expenditure in order to maintain a balanced budget.

Key Pressure Areas:

- 3.18. The Task Group noted the pressures in key service areas, namely in:
- CYP – e.g. placements for looked after children and care leavers account for circa £29m, with the average annual cost of a residential placement costing £320k
 - ASC – e.g. aging population (approximately 12% of Brent residents are over 65) yet ASC budget has reduced by over £11.3m over the last 5 years
 - Temporary Accommodation - 22% increase in homelessness demand, costs of temporary accommodation and Housing Benefit subsidy loss

Income Generation:

- 3.19. The Task Group sought assurances that the Council's proposed Fees and Charges maximised income generation and were relative to neighbouring boroughs. It was reiterated that Fees and Charges are reviewed on a yearly basis, which includes benchmarking activities and assessing market demand. It was, however, stressed that comparisons to inner London boroughs were not relevant to Brent, as these boroughs would be able to charge higher fees due to their location.
- 3.20. The Task Group also explored whether the Council is doing enough to generate additional income from enforcement activity. For example, Business Rates collection was discussed, and the need for additional enforcement to be carried out, specifically on commercial buildings deliberately left unusable and vacant. The Task group questioned whether it was worth creating additional resources for more thorough enforcement to take place around the collection of Business Rates.

DSG:

- 3.21. Although progress was acknowledged around the current management of the DSG deficit (e.g. the £1m provided to Brent as part of the 18 month Delivering better Value (DBV) in SEND Department for Education programme to support the Local Authority to return to an in-year balance), the Task Group had concerns around this budget pressure;- especially pertaining to the potential implications around local authorities not being able to hold DSG deficits after the 2025/26 financial year. This could mean Brent's deficit may have to be funded using General Fund reserves which is a major risk and added pressure to the Council's financial resilience.

HRA:

- 3.22. The Task Group noted comments that significant costs reductions are required in the Housing Revenue Account. This consists of £3.1m in 2024/25. The Group also noted the major challenges for the HRA which included the following:
- Rising inflation is affecting all expenditure types and contract costs
 - Increased utility costs to be passed on to tenants and leaseholders
 - No funding available in the account for carbon reduction work, fire safety or remediation works
 - Rising cost of living impacting rent collection rates
 - A 7% rent rise limitation for 2023/24 impacting 2023/24 and future rent levels

Capital Programme:

- 3.23. The Task Group noted the uncertainty within the capital programme because of factors such as inflation, making the viability of ongoing schemes challenging. For example, the financial environment has meant that grants which the Council had access to had not increased to reflect the increased costs as a result of inflation. It was also noted that the pressures in the capital programme have been further exacerbated by building safety regulations, meaning further slippages in schemes.
- 3.24. It was noted that such schemes which are no longer viable will need to reduce in scope, be paused, or discontinued. The Task Group acknowledged this but stressed the need for viability assessments to consider money saved elsewhere for the Council e.g. schemes which increase social housing stock and which relieve overspend pressures in Housing/temporary accommodation.

Treasury Management:

- 3.25. The Task Group received evidence on the Council's approach to treasury management and borrowing (including MRP). It was explored why the Council is borrowing to build housing. It was explained that borrowing made it easier for the Council to build social housing at affordable rates for residents. The panel endorsed this approach and were happy to see continued investment in this area.
- 3.26. Specifically, the Task Group were assured that the approach to MRP remains prudent and compliant with the statutory guidance for MRP.
- 3.27. Since Evidence Session 1 the Task Group Chair has met with the Chair of the Audit and Standards Committee and the Independent Chair of the Audit and Standards Advisory Committee to discuss the Council's Treasury Management. The Task Group are satisfied with the prudence of the Council's Treasury Management.

Finance and Resources

- 3.28. A total of £400k savings are proposed in the Finance and Resources Directorate for 2024/25.

Increasing Civic Centre Car Park Charging Tariffs:

- 3.29. It was confirmed that the proposal made around this in the 2023/24 budget was achieved. Task Group members also questioned whether electric cars were also subject to charges in the Civic Centre Car Park. It was confirmed electric vehicle spaces are charged by the Council.

Property Strategy to maximise rental return on council assets:

- 3.30. The Task Group challenged the soundness of this proposal and questioned what evidence existed that partners would take on council-owned businesses at market rent. The Corporate Director of Finance and Resources provided assurances around this, stating that the proposal was prudent and not overly ambitious.
- 3.31. It was acknowledged that the £50k income target took into consideration that community usage of buildings would be treated differently. Rental and management options will be explored further in the coming months; The draft Property Strategy will

be presented to the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee on 27 February 2024 to review whether it is fit for purpose for residents and partners.

Communities and Regeneration

3.32. A total of £170k savings are proposed in the Communities and Regeneration Directorate for 2024/25.

Volunteering platform:

3.33. It was confirmed that the discontinuation of the volunteering platform would not disproportionately impact young people in accessing volunteering opportunities. Alternative provision was highlighted such as the Mayor of London's volunteering platform. Additionally, it was stated that the Council worked with an independent organisation Social Change Agency who agreed with the Football Association to introduce a new online resource for Brent called 'Brent Giving'. This platform will also act as a volunteer brokerage tool and will replace the volunteering platform in question.

Reducing the headcount in Communities and Regeneration:

3.34. The Task Group questioned what impact the reduction in headcount, specifically the deletion of vacant posts within the Community Engagement team, would have on the delivery of the upcoming Community Engagement Framework. It was acknowledged that there has been a recent change in Corporate Director and the details of this saving will be informed by which roles are needed to achieve the Council's community engagement commitments.

Resident Services

3.35. A total of £2.1m savings are proposed in the Resident Services Directorate for 2024/25 and 2025/26.

3.36. It was confirmed that a holistic approach was taken to identify savings across the entirety of the directorate to ensure service areas such as Housing were protected as far as possible from cuts. The use of technology was also prioritised in the proposals to offset the need for forced redundancies which do not feature in the proposals.

Housing proposals:

3.37. The Cabinet Member for Housing, Homelessness, and Renters Security confirmed that the proposed draft Budget makes a concerted effort to adequately protect and safeguard housing services.

3.38. The Task Group went on to confirm whether the departments under the lead member's remit were utilising the grants available to generate additional income to improve services. It was confirmed this was the case, although the decisions on what grants to apply for were aligned with political priorities.

TA overspends:

3.39. The Task Group noted the seriousness of the current in year TA overspends and the financial implications that this will continue to have in future years. In discussing potential mitigations, the Task Group explored the potential impact the current expansion of universal credit could have on the Housing Benefit Subsidy Loss shortfall. For example, whether it was possible to transfer residents in TA from Housing Benefit

to Universal Credit to plug the shortfall created by Housing Benefit subsidy loss. It was confirmed that TA was not eligible for Universal Credit.

Community Hubs:

- 3.40. The Task Group questioned whether there were any plans to reduce the amount of Community Hubs. It was confirmed that this was not the case, and that hub buildings were not costly to run from a facilities management perspective.

ICT Solutions:

- 3.41. Assurances were provided around the achievability of this proposal where it was stated that the licences to realise this proposal had already been identified.

Libraries and Heritage - realignment of managerial responsibilities and posts:

- 3.42. Although this saving was noted, it was questioned whether other savings could be made around library services, specifically around reducing provision. It was noted a political decision had specifically been made to protect libraries from cuts (leading to reductions in operating hours) due to the wider implications on residents as some libraries are community hubs.

Generating income from Parks through organised cultural and entertainment events:

- 3.43. The Task Group welcomed this proposal considering that this was a recommendation of the Budget Scrutiny Task Group Review 2023/24 to further achieve 'Borough of Culture' legacy commitments.

Rental of Parks' building space:

- 3.44. It was questioned whether investment was needed in any of these assets to realise the saving. In response, it was stated that a business case could be presented to finance colleagues, if needed. Although it was acknowledged that the £30k saving was identified by an external company, the Task Group still had concerns whether this saving was financially worthwhile.
- 3.45. Despite this the Group welcomed investment in council assets to keep them in use, especially where matched funding is provided from other sources.

Increasing tennis/sports bookings:

- 3.46. The achievability of this proposal was questioned due to intelligence within the Task Group of tennis grounds being continually broken into and used free of charge. Although this concern was acknowledged, it was stressed that this proposal would enable the courts to be properly marketed with a simpler booking system.

Evidence Session 2

- 3.47. Evidence session 2 was held on 23 November 2023.
- 3.48. Key attendees included the Leader, the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources, Regeneration and Planning, the Cabinet Member for Public Health and Adult Social Care, the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools, the Corporate Director for Finance and Resources, the Corporate Director for

Governance, the Corporate Director for Care, Health, and Wellbeing, and the Corporate Director for Children and Young People.

- 3.49. The Task Group undertook a deep dive exercise into the draft budget proposals for the directorates below:
- Governance
 - Care, Health, and Wellbeing
 - Children and Young People
- 3.50. This exercise involved assessing the impact of these proposals on residents, analysing the accuracy of the relevant equality impact assessment screenings, and discussing whether the proposals were realistic.

Governance

- 3.51. A total of £435.8k savings are proposed in the Governance Directorate for 2024/25 and 2025/26.
- 3.52. The Task Group heard that legal services were likely to face the greatest impact from the proposed savings for the directorate, particularly in relation to general available resource. Implications included a potential loss of support for senior officers resulting in higher workloads. This will be mitigated by recruiting more experienced staff, compensating staff for any extra workloads and exploring outsourcing ad-hoc counsel that legal services provide.
- 3.53. The Group considered the solutions/mitigations put forward as feasible but stressed concerns for potential staff burnout and subsequent issues such as sick and stress leave. The Corporate Director of Governance acknowledged these.

Care, Health, and Wellbeing

- 3.54. A total of £3.03m savings are proposed in the Care, Health, and Wellbeing Directorate for 2024/25 and 2025/26.
- 3.55. It was highlighted that the majority of the proposals are centred around service transformation with an emphasis on technology-based services and provision to assist with increased demand in services and caseloads. This led the Task Group to question whether the Council were taking advantage of partnership opportunities and the grants offered by central government for digital transformation. In response to the issues raised, specific funds provided by the NHS and current examples of exceptional partnership working with companies such as BT, Amazon and Microsoft were highlighted.

ASC:

- 3.56. The Task Group were informed that ASC is the highest spend for the Council, whereby a substantial proportion of the budget goes towards statutory services which the Council has a responsibility to deliver under the Care Act.

Public Health:

- 3.57. The Task Group questioned how much unspent money there was in the Public Health reserve. It was confirmed that the Council has £10m in reserves of which £6m is ringfenced for prevention work. The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public

Health added that the Public Health grant has gone up by 1-2% which is not in line with inflation. However, the Council are still expected to meet the increased costs of contracts, including potential in-year increases resulting from NHS uplifts, meaning some funds need to be held back to allow for this.

- 3.58. It was confirmed that the public health grant is ring-fenced with clear criteria on how it can be spent.

Reducing building-based provision and day care opportunities:

- 3.59. It was highlighted that approximately only 80 people are accessing the New Millennium Day Centre and that the proposed saving aims to reassess how the service can be used more effectively. Options already exist to use other services including at the John Billam Resource Centre.

Continuing sustainable long-term care and support needs costs that promote independence – reducing high expenditure packages in mental health and learning disability:

- 3.60. The Task Group questioned whether reducing Mental Health services would lead to pressures on other services (e.g. Housing Needs and Homelessness provision). The Group were reassured that the proposal put forward is about re-assessing packages for areas such as supported living, and specific individual cases, rather than reducing overall service provision.
- 3.61. It was stressed that the proposals will also improve the use of direct payments and the possibility to access certain services at reduced costs by examining different options for service delivery (e.g. utilising more enhanced technology and digital support).

Children and Young People

- 3.62. A total of £1.85m savings are proposed in the Children and Young People Directorate for 2024/25 and 2025/26.
- 3.63. The Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools stated the proposals put forward for the department demonstrated that Brent have made effective use of the institutional knowledge ranging from targeting services, streamlining processes, effective budget management, and learning from other local authorities' good practice. It was stressed that outsourcing Children's Services vulnerably exposes the Council to the whims of the market, hence the proposal to build a flagship residential children's home.
- 3.64. The Task Group acknowledged the excellent work by the directorate in relation to grants provision (e.g. delivering services in collaboration with other local authorities) and in securing grants which has helped supplement the Budget. Reassurances were provided that dedicated resource/time will continue to be allocated for staff to secure grant funding. The Task Group welcomed these lessons being shared with other council departments, especially Care, Health, and Wellbeing.

Building a new Residential Children's Home:

- 3.65. The Task Group questioned the achievability of building a new residential children's home in the borough and whether such a project would be affordable to the Council. The Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools assured the Group that there was a separate fund for the project and that the Council had the funding

assurances for this. Residential care costs are extremely high, so having a Council-owned home would be more cost-effective by significantly reducing the cost of care per child. Also, it would enable a higher level of security for residents and ensure private firms do not profit at the detriment of the Council.

Usage of school premises and under used buildings:

- 3.66. The Task Group sought further information on school premises and other under used buildings and whether there was a possibility of generating additional income by using these spaces for community use. The Group were informed that some schools rely on this type of income i.e., renting football pitches, but not all schools participate in such schemes. It was stated that the use of such buildings and open spaces is dependent on governors of schools and the Council's role is solely to share good practice. The Task Group acknowledged this and encouraged further exploration of the Council's role in supporting schools to share good practice in this area.

Reductions in School Improvement Funds (SIF):

- 3.67. The Task Group sought assurances that a reduction in school improvement funds (including staffing) would not impact on education and delivery. The Corporate Director for Children and Young People reiterated that cuts were centred around a central government decision to reduce the School Effectiveness grant as the Department of Education (DfE) believe many schools and academy trusts are already providing these functions. The Group were therefore assured that School Effectiveness resource moving forward should be satisfactory.

Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs):

- 3.68. The Task Group raised significant concerns around the ballooning rates of EHCPs in the borough, their costs and general provisions. It was acknowledged by both cabinet members and officers that EHCPs create additional financial and resource pressure on the department, thus creating substantial backlogs. Taking this into consideration, assurances were sought on whether the Council had enough staff to review the plans. It was confirmed that current levels were manageable, although the department would like to reduce caseloads whilst increasing quality levels, leading to higher resident satisfaction and improved performance.
- 3.69. It was also highlighted to the Group that this workstream is funded through the DSG; Should local authorities not be able to hold DSG deficits beyond 2025/26, this is likely to have detrimental impacts on the Council as any overspend in the service would not be allowed to continue and would likely have to be covered by the General Fund.

Stakeholder Session

- 3.70. This session was held on 30 November 2023 and attended by colleagues from the VCS and business sectors (a full list of external witnesses who contributed to this report is outlined in section 6 of this report). The Deputy Director of Finance and Director of Communities were also present to provide independent support to the Task Group.
- 3.71. The Deputy Director of Finance opened the session with an overview of Brent's current financial situation. Key highlights included the main financial pressures faced by Brent:
- Rising demand for services, especially in the Care, Health, and Wellbeing, and Children and Young People directorates

- Rise in homelessness, and the associated overspends in temporary accommodation in the current budget to deal with the issue (as it currently stands approximately overspend of £13 million which totals 5% of the Councils budget).
 - Inflation
 - Uncertainty/lack of central government funding
- 3.72. The Task Group then sought to understand stakeholder views on the proposals and any potential gaps in the draft Budget 2024/25 and 2025/26; explore their experiences, pressures and priorities, and where they believe Council investment should be targeted over the next two years and beyond.
- 3.73. Key concerns raised by our stakeholders included:
- **Vagueness of proposals** – need for the Council to better communicate the impact of the proposals especially due to their importance and potential detrimental impact on residents. The ambiguity in the proposals not only makes it difficult for residents to understand what the Council’s plans are but also for local councillors to provide useful advice to residents in their wards. This oversight can be corrected by providing more detail of the impact under each proposal and listing alternative services that can be accessed should the proposals proceed.
 - **Achievability/soundness of proposals** – i.e. whether proposals such as 2024-25 CHW01, 2024-25 CHW02, 2024-25 CHW03 are actually achievable due to their reliance on partners.
 - **Safeguarding the ‘most vulnerable’** – with the level of proposed cuts in the proposals, stakeholders questioned whether it is possible to safeguard the most vulnerable in the borough. In explaining this view, increased homelessness in the country/borough, and the increased gatekeeping of temporary accommodation was highlighted as an exacerbating factor. Also, it was noted that crucial services, such as Elder’s Voice, are coming to an end or have been discontinued which leaves gaps in provision for vulnerable cohorts.
 - **Visible ‘cost shunting’** – i.e. signposting to the VCS in the proposals without any discussion or consideration with the VCS around their capacity to meet any increases in demand. This also raised questions about the achievability of such proposals.
 - **Limited financial support/investment into VCS and business sector** – concerns were raised about the limited financial support given to both sectors and the lack of proposals around this in the draft Budget 2024/25 and 2025/26. It was acknowledged that this could relate to the lack of clarity in the draft Budget around what the Council’s priority protection areas are. This issue was raised last year around the need for a clearer narrative and vision around budget.
 - **Robustness of Equality Impact (EI) screenings** – concerns were raised about proposals such as 2024-25 CHW01, 2024-25 CYP06, 2024-25 identifying no disproportionate adverse impacts on particular groups with ‘protected characteristics’.
 - **Alignment with strategic priorities in the Borough Plan 2023 - 27** – similar to last year, concerns were raised around the draft Budget 2024/25 and 2025/26 not being as strategically aligned with the priorities set out in the Borough Plan, mainly our climate commitments, including our goal to become Carbon Net Zero by 2030. For example, it was highlighted that the Council better demonstrate the impact of relevant proposals on emissions. Additionally, it was identified that some of the

proposals impact early years support and therefore contradicting the Council's strategic priority 'The Best Start in Life'.

- **Proposed 4.99% increase in Council Tax** - if approved this could result in many more residents slipping into poverty and homelessness. Key initiatives such as the Council Tax Support Scheme received honourable mentions due to it being one of the most generous schemes in London. However, it was stated by the Deputy Director of Finance that should Brent Council ever issue with a section 114 notice, initiatives such as the Council Tax Support scheme would be at risk of abolition due to the necessity to only prioritise statutory services in these circumstances.
- **Ceasing the use of New Millennium Day Centre** – although it was acknowledged alternative service provision will be provided and that this is an NHS asset, there is still concern around losing the use of this asset for the benefit of local communities, specifically vulnerable residents who currently access it.
- **Consultation and Engagement** – similar concerns raised last year, stakeholders reiterated the need to carry out additional bespoke engagement with vulnerable residents/service users. It was highlighted that the current budget consultation and engagement process is not fit for all residents. For instance, online surveys and attending in person/online meetings are not always suitable for many vulnerable residents. The Council could learn lessons and work in partnership with the VCS to establish an effective approach to consultation and engagement.
- **Accessibility** – similar to the above point and views raised by the VCS last year, more work is needed to improve the standard of accessibility of budget communications to residents with support needs (e.g. disabled residents) in communicating the proposals e.g. robust BSL interpreter/language support.

3.74. Our stakeholders' priorities for Council investment included:

- Additional investment into the VCS which could include financial assistance (e.g. longer-term grant funding for VCS) and/or community assets (with capped peppercorn rents) to the sector to help alleviate the financial burdens faced in a volatile economic environment. An example cited for exploration was transforming abandoned properties on Brent's high streets for community use. This type of initiative could assist with building a better offer for residents/service users.
- Better partnership working with the voluntary sector to represent the value it brings to residents of Brent and the money the sector saves the Council. A start to better partnership working could be relooking at the draft proposals that suggest signposting to the VCS, using evidence collated by the VCS, to make sure they are fit for purpose. Also, exploring a shared-outcomes framework between the Council and the sector for the benefit of residents/service users.
- Increased accessibility support to ensure those with specific needs (e.g. disabled residents) receive adequate assistance to navigate the process of digital form-filling. This could help avoid obstructions to such residents in accessing extra funds and entitlements, especially important during a cost-of-living crisis.
- Clearer alignment between climate commitments and early years commitments in the budget proposals for 2024/25 and 2025/26.

Final Evidence Session

- 3.75. The final evidence session was held on 11 December 2023.
- 3.76. Key attendees included the Leader, Deputy Leader, the Chief Executive, the Corporate Director of Finance and Resources, the Corporate Director of Communities and Regeneration, the Corporate Director of Children and Young People, the Corporate Director of Governance, the Corporate Director of Resident Services, and the Director of Public Health.
- 3.77. At this meeting, the Task Group discussed and agreed the provisional recommendations that would be made to Cabinet and Full Council, based on all of the evidence heard to date. For transparency purposes, it was highlighted by the Chair that possible amendments and changes are likely to be made to the recommendations discussed ahead of reviewing and digesting additional evidence outside of this meeting. Any additions would be reflected in this final report.
- 3.78. Final recommendations can be found in section 2 of this report.

4. Other Meetings

- 4.1. Outside of the sessions detailed in section 3, the Chair of the Budget Scrutiny Task Group met with the Independent Chair of the Audit & Standards Advisory Committee, the Chair of the Audit & Standards Committee and the Director of the Integrated Care Partnership to seek further intelligence, clarity, and assurances on the evidence provided by cabinet members/council officers as part of the Budget Scrutiny Task Group Review.
- 4.2. Additionally, the Chair held a drop-in session for backbench councillors to provide their thoughts and insights on the draft budget proposals for 2024/25 and 2025/26.

5. Conclusions

- 5.1. Given the extremely challenging circumstances that local authorities are facing with regards to budget pressures and financial planning, the Task Group agree that the Council has correctly balanced its responsibilities and risks and continues to maintain a prudent financial position despite ongoing austerity, financial uncertainty, and economic turmoil.
- 5.2. The Task Group commends the Council's creativity in identifying additional savings of £8m that will be applied over the next two financial years and its success in limiting the impact of these savings on service reductions and cuts to frontline services.
- 5.3. Despite the Council's great efforts, the persistent funding reductions from central government and the impact on the Council cannot be overstated. The Council continues to find itself in a position where it must do more with less. For instance, the £8m savings identified in the draft Budget are in addition to the £210m savings that have been delivered since 2010. During this period the Council has also experienced an increased demand for services with key pressures to navigate, such as high levels of inflation, high interest rates, delays in funding reforms and the ongoing impacts of the cost of living crisis. Consequently there is a high risk that the Council may need to

cut vital provision to meet its legal obligations in setting a balanced budget, should government not intervene and deliver overdue funding reforms in the sector.

- 5.4. The latest Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement, published in December 2023, is an extra blow to Brent as we will experience the lowest increase in government support across London boroughs (excluding the City of London). It does not adequately provide funding to cover inflationary pressures and offers no new funding to tackle persistent overspend pressures in social care and homelessness. Therefore, the Council will be under pressure to continue to realise its planned savings, with no choice but to curb its expenditure and increase its Council Tax by the maximum of 4.99% to desperately bring in funding to maintain vital services.
- 5.5. Partnership working is crucial for the Council within this extremely challenging financial environment, particularly with the VCS. It is important to recognise that such partners are also struggling in this current environment, where it is vital to establish a realistic, collaborative strategy with the sector to help realise our savings and ensure quality support is still available to our communities. Additionally, more progress can be made to make the draft Budget clearer. This includes specifically highlighting priority protection areas, ensuring that the language used to describe the impacts on residents/partners under the proposals is more accessible and concise, as well as add 'climate and environment implications' under each proposal in line with our fast-approaching climate action commitments.
- 5.6. We would also like to stress our feedback from last year's Review around the importance of continued lobbying with London Councils for funding reforms (inclusive of multi-year financial settlements); the need for identifying/developing additional opportunities to generate additional income/grant funding to help reduce overspend areas; and leveraging funding from our anchor institutions to deliver on joint initiatives for the common purpose of enriching our residents' lives.
- 5.7. In summary the Task Group supports the draft Budget, subject to the outcomes of final consultation and the acceptance of the recommendations outlined in section two of this report. Should our recommendations be accepted, we encourage the Cabinet to closely monitor their progress and to provide regular updates to the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee to ensure they are achieved in their entirety.
- 5.8. 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.

6. 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 when needed:

- Councillor Muhammed Butt – Leader of the Council
- Councillor Shama Tatler – Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources & Reform, Regeneration & Planning
- Councillor Promise Knight – Cabinet Member for Housing, Homelessness & Renters Security
- Councillor Gwen Grahl – Cabinet Member for Children, Young People & Schools

- Councillor Neil Nerva – Cabinet Member for Public Health & Adult Social Care
- Cllr Jumbo Chan – Chair, Audit & Standards Committee
- David Ewart – Independent Chair of the Audit & Standards Advisory Committee
- Kim Wright – Chief Executive
- Minesh Patel – Corporate Director, Finance & Resources
- Peter Gadsdon – Corporate Director, Resident Services
- Alice Lester – Corporate Director, Communities & Regeneration
- Debra Norman – Corporate Director, Governance
- Rachel Crossley – Corporate Director, Care, Health & Wellbeing
- Nigel Chapman – Corporate Director, Children & Young People
- Ravinder Jassar – Deputy Director of Finance
- Tom Shakespeare – Integrated Care Partnership Director
- Melanie Smith – Director of Public Health
- Janet Latinwo – Head of Strategy & Partnerships
- Tom Pickup – Policy, Partnerships and Scrutiny Manager
- Jason Sigba – Strategy Lead, Scrutiny
- Chatan Popat – 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 budget proposals:

- CVS Brent
- Crisis Skylight Brent
- Brent Friends of the Earth
- Brent Mencap
- Brent Parks Forum
- Brent Youth Parliament
- SUFRA North West London
- West London Business

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 Brent	Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee 24 January 2024
	Report from the Director of Communities
Scrutiny Recommendations Tracker	

Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	Non-Key Decision
Open or Part/Fully Exempt: <small>(If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)</small>	Open
List of Appendices:	One Appendix A – Recommendations Scrutiny Tracker
Background Papers:	None
Contact Officer(s): <small>(Name, Title, Contact Details)</small>	Jason Sigba, Strategy Lead – Scrutiny, Strategy and Partnerships Jason.Sigba@brent.gov.uk Janet Latinwo, Head of Strategy & Partnerships Janet.Latinwo@brent.gov.uk Kibibi Octave, Director of Communities Kibibi.Octave@brent.gov.uk

1.0 Executive Summary

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(s)

2.1 That the progress of the previous recommendations, suggestions for improvement, and information requests of the Committee be noted (Appendix A).

3.0 Detail

3.1 Contribution to Borough Plan Priorities & Strategic Context

3.1.1 Borough Plan 2023-2027 – all strategic priorities.

3.2 Background

- 3.2.1 The Recommendations Tracker tabled at the 24 January 2024 meeting relates to the current 2023 – 2024 municipal year. Although it also contains two updates from the previous 2022 – 2023 municipal year on the item relating to Budget Scrutiny.
- 3.2.2 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.
- 3.2.3 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.
- 3.2.4 The Scrutiny Recommendations Tracker (attached in Appendix A) provides a summary of scrutiny recommendations made in order to track executive decisions and any implementation progress. It also includes suggestions for improvement and information requests, as captured in the minutes of the committee meetings.
- 3.2.5 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 Stakeholder and ward member consultation and engagement

5.1 None for the purposes of this report.

6.0 Financial Considerations

6.1 There are no financial considerations for the purposes of this report.

7.0 Legal Considerations

7.1 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.

7.2 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.

8.0 Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Considerations

8.1 There are no Equality, Diversity & Inclusion considerations for the purposes of this report.

9.0 Climate Change and Environmental Considerations

9.1 There are no climate change and environmental considerations for the purposes of this report.

10.0 Communication Considerations

10.1 There are no communication considerations for the purposes of this report.

Report sign off:

Kibibi Octave
Director of Communities

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Appendix A

Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee (RPRSC) Scrutiny Tracker 2023-24

These tables are to track the progress of scrutiny recommendations to Cabinet, suggestions for improvement, and information requests 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 for improvement 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).

Recommendations to Cabinet from RPRSC

Subject	Scrutiny Recommendation	Cabinet Member, Lead Officer, and Department	Executive Response	Review date
<p>24 Jan 2023 – Budget Scrutiny Task Group Findings 2023/24</p>	<p>Improving Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 	<p>Cllr Muhammed Butt – Leader of the Council</p> <p>Cllr Shama Tatler - Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources & Reform</p> <p>Minesh Patel – Corporate Director, Finance & Resources</p>	<p>Updated response received on 12/01/24:</p> <p>The request for a cumulative equality assessment since 2018 will require significant officer resource. Having re-assessed the resource and capacity of the Equalities Team currently and wider service, delivering this recommendation will not be possible now or in the near future.</p> <p>Delivering this recommendation would require the team to de-prioritise key and statutory activity, such as the development of new EDI Strategy. Additionally, given the budgetary restraints and challenges, it is not possible to secure additional resource to complete this work.</p> <p>The Committee has received a summary report setting out the cumulative financial impact of cuts since 2018 and this can be made available again.</p> <p>As always, every budget proposal will feature an individual equalities impact assessment, as well as a summarising statement for the entire budget report.</p> <p>Initial response received on 27/10/23:</p> <p>We welcome the suggestion for improving the EIA Template to capture their evidence where no impact is declared.</p>	<p>24/01/24</p>

			<p>The request for a cumulative equality assessment spanning the last 5 years will require a significant officer resource that is not available in the current iteration of the Equalities team.</p> <p>We will keep this recommendation under review, should resource or capacity within the wider team become available to support the request.</p> <p>In light of the constrained resources and publicised spending controls, we would ask that the Committee reconsider a more flexible timeframe and welcome any other ongoing suggestions to improve Equality Impact Assessments in any way we can.</p> <p>As always each proposal will include an individual Equality Impact Assessment.</p>	
	<p>Review Areas of Focus for Town Centre Management Function:</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>Cllr Muhammed Butt – Leader of the Council</p> <p>Cllr Shama Tatler - Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources & Reform</p> <p>Minesh Patel – Corporate Director, Finance & Resources</p>	<p>Updated response received on 12/01/24:</p> <p>The reduction in Town Centre Manager positions from four to 2.6 Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) roles means the focus is now on five priority town centres.</p> <p>The emphasis is on bolstering the capabilities of business associations such as the Little India Traders and Wembley Traders Association, the newly established one in Church End, and in Kilburn the community improvement district initiative. This involves empowering them to raise and manage funds, organize events, and take charge of various initiatives. This capacity support is balanced with day to day support and project delivery</p>	<p>24/01/24</p>

			<p>e.g. shutter artwork, mural on Brondesbury railway bridge, and in Church End the implementation of the Youth Hub.</p> <p>Businesses in the priority town centres can also access the business support initiatives for the whole of Brent, which include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Providing free membership to the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) for micro-businesses• Facilitating access to the Rebel Business School for start-ups for support.• Collaborating with businesses to meet the Mayor of London's "Good Work Standard."• Initiatives also encompass shop-local marketing campaigns, <p>Green audits, and grants aimed at assisting micro-businesses in reducing their emissions.</p> <p>Initial response received on 27/10/23:</p> <p>A review of which town centres are supported with reduced resources is ongoing.</p>	
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<p>7 Nov 2023 – Quarter 2 2023/24 Financial Report</p>	<p>Continue to lobby central government to establish a locally controlled business rates system in order for local authorities to influence policy around the setting of Business Rates and to generate additional income.</p>	<p>Cllr Shama Tatler - Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources & Reform</p> <p>Minesh Patel – Corporate Director, Finance & Resources</p>	<p>Response received on 12/01/24:</p> <p>We continue to work hand in glove with London Councils, the LGA, CIPFA and other interested parties, to support any work that either constructively engages with the government, or that undertakes lobbying work on our behalf. Our lobbying work is always stronger as part of one collective group, than speaking out as one council.</p> <p>Sadly, it is unlikely that there will be any fundamental reforms to Local Government Finance prior to a General Election.</p> <p>At the last fiscal event before Christmas, the government said:</p> <p>“At the 2023 to 2024 Settlement, we heard calls from the sector for stability. Now is not the time for fundamental reform, for instance implementing the Review of Relative Needs and Resources or a reset of accumulated business rates growth. This continues to be the government’s position.”</p> <p>London Councils helps coordinate the APPG for London and engages with Parliamentarians to help amplify the voice of London. We have attached below the latest summary of London Councils lobbying position on Local Government Funding Reform:</p> <p><i>Beyond next year, London Councils believes the entire system of local government funding</i></p>	<p>24/01/24</p>
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			<p><i>needs to be reformed to ensure the ongoing sustainability of local services.</i></p> <p><i>Neither council tax nor business rates are fit for purpose. Social care continues to be propped up by a growing number of annual grants; the business rates retention scheme has not been reviewed since 2013; and, most importantly, core funding formulae are a decade old and no longer reflect need. The 2024-25 settlement will be the sixth annual funding settlement in a row, which inhibits strategic planning and investment in prevention.</i></p> <p><i>A reformed local government funding system - reflective of up-to-date measures of need, with medium term (largely un-ringfenced) funding allocations, and a fair incentive to grow business rates - would be a first step to enabling London boroughs to provide early preventative support that not only makes a huge difference to people's lives but, crucially, saves the wider public purse.</i></p> <p><i>More fundamentally, London boroughs operate in a highly centralised funding system compared with international peers. London Councils has long called for greater financial self-sufficiency for the sector. Devolving decision-making and spending powers closer to communities is the only way to deal with the huge challenges London is facing.</i></p> <p><i>We welcome the devolution trailblazers in Greater Manchester and the West Midlands and believe London and other areas should benefit from 100% business rates retention for</i></p>	
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			<p><i>10 years be able to have single “departmental style” multi-year settlements.</i></p> <p><i>Cities, and urban areas more broadly, are well placed to take advantage of smaller specific taxes that will directly support local economic growth. Three such examples are a tourism levy, the Apprenticeship Levy and Vehicle Excise Duty which we believe, if devolved to London government, would deliver additional economic benefit for the wider country as well as London.</i></p> <p><i>In the long term, we believe all councils should have access to a broader range of freedoms, flexibilities, and revenue raising powers, rather than being exposed to the flaws of anyone, centrally determined, tax. Towns, cities and local councils that are more responsible for their own destiny and more accountable for their own success, would design better taxes and provide better services.</i></p> <p><i>We believe all councils should have full control over (suitably reformed) business rates and council tax, and would also support the assignment of a proportion of national taxes, such as income tax and VAT.</i></p>	
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Suggestions for improvement from RPRSC to Council departments/partners

Meeting date and agenda item	Suggestions for improvement	Council Department/External Partner	Response / Status
6 Sept 2023– Community Engagement Framework	As far as possible, review Council documents (including the new Community Engagement Framework) for jargon and update accordingly.	Alice Lester – Corporate Director, Communities & Regeneration	<p>Updated response received on 15/01/24:</p> <p>The Community Engagement Framework will consist of a section for public use and a section for use by council officers and partners, and the language for each section will be tailored to suit the audience. One of the principles of the draft version of the Framework sets out that we will “communicate in clear, jargon-free language to ensure understanding by all”.</p> <p>We have not yet set a date for the launch of the Framework while we review the content and go through the approval stages.</p> <p>Initial response received on 26/10/23:</p> <p>A review of the framework document will be undertaken to remove jargon from the Community Engagement Framework content will be undertaken prior to approval and launch.</p> <p>We will explore the feasibility of reviewing all documents but will ensure future refreshed or new documents are free from jargon.</p>
6 Sept 2023– Planning Enforcement	To avoid unnecessary back and forth dialogue between officers and residents, improve communications around the standard of evidence required to proceed with planning breach complaints. This should include public education, and improvements to the planning enforcement webpage including the reporting mechanism.	Alice Lester – Corporate Director, Communities & Regeneration	<p>Response received on 24/10/23:</p> <p>Yes we will look into this, and report back to the Committee by February 2024. However the evidence required will depend on the nature of the particular case that is under investigation. We can standardise it as much as we can – our existing acknowledgment letter goes some way in addressing this issue. An example copy is attached as Document 1.</p>
	Review the effectiveness of the Planning Enforcement Investigation Guide to better manage residents’ expectations of the planning enforcement process (e.g. providing	Alice Lester – Corporate Director, Communities & Regeneration	<p>Response received on 24/10/23:</p> <p>Yes we will look into this, and report back to the Committee by February 2024. An example of the guide is also included in the attachment in Document 1.</p>

	<p>clarity on planning enforcement timescales).</p> <p>Undertake an audit to determine the wards with the highest amount of planning breach complaints, and the wards with the highest amount of enforcement activity. This intelligence should be used to develop a targeted strategy to prevent planning breaches e.g. targeted planning education and/or communications campaigns etc. The Audit should also categorise the types of breaches receiving enforcement notices.</p>	<p>Alice Lester – Corporate Director, Communities & Regeneration</p>	<p>Response received on 24/10/23:</p> <p>We will look to do this but are currently waiting for our new software to be introduced. Currently scheduled for April 2024.</p>																						
<p>7 Nov 2023 – Quarter 2 2023/24 Financial Report</p>	<p>Explore new ways to increase collection rates for Business Rates, learning lessons from other local authorities.</p>	<p>Peter Gadsdon – Corporate Director, Resident Services</p>	<p>Response received on 10/01/24:</p> <p>Background</p> <p>The Council's supplier of the Business Rates Service, Capita, is engaged with many local authorities for the billing, collection, and enforcement of business rates. In London this includes Westminster, Lambeth, Bexley, Barnet in addition to Brent, but also encompasses district and borough councils across England.</p> <p>By bringing synergies across business rates services, Capita look to deliver best practice and custom processes across each service. While each service will have its own challenges to collection, much can be shared to ensure best practice, particularly around reporting and analysis of debt.</p> <p>Further work carried out by Capita post the COVID-19 pandemic, identified differences in collection rates between councils and type of property/business.</p> <p>Prior to COVID-19, collection rates for Brent were typically in the upper 90%.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="1111 1257 2029 1294"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>2022/23</th> <th>2021/22</th> <th>2020/21</th> <th>2019/20</th> <th>2018/19</th> <th>2017/18</th> <th>2016/17</th> <th>2015/16</th> <th>2014/15</th> <th>2013/14</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Collection Rate</td> <td>93.00%</td> <td>91.25%</td> <td>87.25%</td> <td>98.23%</td> <td>99.07%</td> <td>98.57%</td> <td>98.74%</td> <td>98.32%</td> <td>98.11%</td> <td>97.50%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>From March 2020, significant changes were made to business rate liabilities as well as the suspension of formal recovery action during and post the pandemic.</p>		2022/23	2021/22	2020/21	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16	2014/15	2013/14	Collection Rate	93.00%	91.25%	87.25%	98.23%	99.07%	98.57%	98.74%	98.32%	98.11%	97.50%
	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16	2014/15	2013/14															
Collection Rate	93.00%	91.25%	87.25%	98.23%	99.07%	98.57%	98.74%	98.32%	98.11%	97.50%															

			<p>Additionally, much of the administration processes were centred on the payment of multiple government grant schemes to support businesses during unprecedented economic times caused by the pandemic. Resumption of formal recovery through court action and application for liability orders resumed slowly but with a significant increase in arrear to be collected, in addition to any current year liabilities. Whilst collection rates have begun to improve, resulting in a collection rate of 93% in 2022/23 any return to the heights of pre-pandemic levels are likely to remain difficult to achieve for some years yet.</p> <p>All collection and enforcement options available to billing authorities are limited within regulation. Any potential improvements are therefore restricted.</p> <p><u>2022/23 Year</u></p> <p>Whilst there has been a significant improvement in collection from the low of the first full COVID-19 year (2020/21), this remains below previous years. However, neighbouring boroughs similarly suffered significant reduction in collection rate compared to pre-covid levels.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="1111 756 2002 1155"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>2022/23 QRC4 Reported</th> <th>Pre COVID-19 (2019/20)</th> <th>Diff</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Brent</td> <td>93.00%</td> <td>98.23%</td> <td>-5.23%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Ealing</td> <td>94.82%</td> <td>96.63%</td> <td>-1.81%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Harrow</td> <td>91.94%</td> <td>96.67%</td> <td>-4.73%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Barnet</td> <td>93.74%</td> <td>95.95%</td> <td>-2.21%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Camden</td> <td>96.47%</td> <td>99.00%</td> <td>-2.53%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Westminster</td> <td>95.54%</td> <td>97.58%</td> <td>-2.04%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Hammersmith and Fulham</td> <td>93.27%</td> <td>96.69%</td> <td>-3.42%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Although Brent has seen the largest reduction, there are other factors which need to be considered when trying to draw conclusions between reported collection of other authorities.</p> <p>Further work undertaken by Capita identified that the majority of the collection issues (i.e. non-payment) experienced in 2022/23 were in relation to businesses</p>		2022/23 QRC4 Reported	Pre COVID-19 (2019/20)	Diff	Brent	93.00%	98.23%	-5.23%	Ealing	94.82%	96.63%	-1.81%	Harrow	91.94%	96.67%	-4.73%	Barnet	93.74%	95.95%	-2.21%	Camden	96.47%	99.00%	-2.53%	Westminster	95.54%	97.58%	-2.04%	Hammersmith and Fulham	93.27%	96.69%	-3.42%
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within property types typically not included in additional government support during post the coronavirus pandemic. While many businesses within the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors did (and continue to) receive support with reliefs, many other businesses received little or no further financial allowances. The following table shows the split of charges for the 2022/23 year in borough by property description. Whilst there will be large variances between any empty and occupied premises (typically empty being more difficult to collect) the split of property types in borough will affect the overall collection rate and make performance comparisons between other authorities difficult.

	% of Debit	% Collected
ADVERTISING RIGHTS	0.34%	98.25%
VEHICLE REPAIR WORKSHOP, PETROL STATIONS	2.26%	94.71%
HOTEL, BED & BREAKFAST	2.52%	96.94%
PUBLIC HOUSES, WINEBARS, CLUBS	1.13%	87.43%
MARKETS	0.02%	100.00%
OFFICES	9.23%	85.47%
CAR PARKS, SPACES	0.90%	93.72%
RESTAURANTS, CAFES	2.23%	77.00%
SHOPS, SHOWROOMS ETC	25.64%	89.27%
WAREHOUSE	32.36%	93.18%
COMMERCIAL-UNCLASSIFIED	0.87%	89.25%
SCHOOLS	1.64%	93.68%
MUSEUM, GALLERY, LIBRARY ETC	0.26%	100.00%
DAY NURSERY	0.45%	81.06%
SCHOOLS (PRIVATE)	0.38%	100.00%
UNIVERSITIES	0.12%	100.00%
EDUCATION	0.02%	100.00%
UTILITIES	0.11%	100.00%

			INDUSTRIAL, WORKSHOPS, FACTORIES	6.59%	89.43%
			INDUSTRIAL (VARIOUS)	0.67%	100.00%
			INDUSTRIAL (VARIOUS)	1.49%	98.68%
			LEISURE CENTRE, COMMUNITY HALL	0.62%	87.07%
			SPORTS, FITNESS CENTRE	3.05%	100.00%
			SPORTS GROUND	0.09%	93.48%
			THEATRE, CINEMA	0.34%	100.00%
			LEISURE - UNCLASSIFIED	0.54%	95.15%
			CREMATORIUM,	0.04%	100.00%
			HOSPITAL, HEALTH CENTRE, SURGERY	4.20%	99.12%
			COUNCIL OFFICES	0.08%	100.00%
			POLICE STATION	0.68%	100.00%
			HOSTEL	0.26%	23.19%
			FIRE STATION	0.15%	100.00%
			COMMUNICATION STATION, PHONE KIOSK	0.64%	99.92%
			SERVICE - VARIOUS	0.05%	100.00%
			BUS STATION, MOORING	0.00%	100.00%
			TRANSPORT - UNCLASSIFIED	0.02%	82.04%
		<p>A number of highlights from the above are that despite support (up to 50% relief in-year) rate liabilities for shops, restaurants and hospitality businesses were all below the overall 93% collection rate. Further support for 2023/24 and 2024/25 at 75% may have further helped such businesses after this, but any empty premises (due to business failure) would be subject to a full rate bill.</p> <p>Factories and offices, representing 6.59% and 9.23% of the collectable debit, would have received no post-COVID-19 support are behind the overall collection rate with less than 90% collected overall.</p> <p>Although representing a small part of the collectable (0.45%), Day Nurseries which received no support in-year only reached 81.06%, highlighting problems</p>			

			<p>within the sector as a whole, something experienced across all authorities when examined by Capita.</p> <p>Also in Brent warehousing representing a third of the debt was unsupported and remains significantly below pre-pandemic levels.</p> <p><u>2023/24 year to date</u></p> <p>A summary of the current monthly collection (to December 2023) is detailed below:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="1108 539 1720 1098"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>2023/24</th> <th>2022/23</th> <th>Change</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>April</td> <td>8.39%</td> <td>8.55%</td> <td>-0.16%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>May</td> <td>16.79%</td> <td>16.74%</td> <td>0.05%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>June</td> <td>25.93%</td> <td>25.64%</td> <td>0.29%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>July</td> <td>36.22%</td> <td>33.54%</td> <td>2.68%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>August</td> <td>46.78%</td> <td>44.02%</td> <td>2.76%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>September</td> <td>54.66%</td> <td>53.43%</td> <td>1.23%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>October</td> <td>63.51%</td> <td>60.81%</td> <td>2.70%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>November</td> <td>71.11%</td> <td>68.20%</td> <td>2.91%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>December</td> <td>79.60%</td> <td>77.76%</td> <td>1.84%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>January</td> <td></td> <td>86.55%</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>February</td> <td></td> <td>89.60%</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>March</td> <td></td> <td>93.00%</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Current year collection has exceeded 2022/23 monthly on month since May. On commencement of the year, Capita provided an estimate of 93.96% for end of year collection. This would represent a 0.96% increase on 2022/23. Currently collection is 0.35% above the original profile. There is currently no reason to expect that the original estimate of c.94% will not be achieved or exceeded although late changes to the valuation list (or liability changes) may impact the final position depending on timings of notification.</p>		2023/24	2022/23	Change	April	8.39%	8.55%	-0.16%	May	16.79%	16.74%	0.05%	June	25.93%	25.64%	0.29%	July	36.22%	33.54%	2.68%	August	46.78%	44.02%	2.76%	September	54.66%	53.43%	1.23%	October	63.51%	60.81%	2.70%	November	71.11%	68.20%	2.91%	December	79.60%	77.76%	1.84%	January		86.55%		February		89.60%		March		93.00%	
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			<p><u>The role of the London Revenues Group (LRG)</u></p> <p>Two sub-groups of the above bring together relevant experts in both “business rates” and “revenue collection” (business rates and council tax) matters on a regular basis. These are well attended both in-person and virtually via web and best practice and experience is shared across all of London.</p> <p>Financial information is also compiled for the Society of London Treasurers use, giving early insight and monthly collection comparisons. Typically, collection data is only available nationally on publication of the compiled QRC4 statistics towards the end of the first quarter following year end (i.e. June/July).</p> <p>The Council and Capita maintain a presence within the main LRG, sub-groups as well as the executive board and look to ensure that a collaborative approach is maintained along with other contractors and local authorities alike.</p> <p><u>Next steps</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capita will continue to provide forecasts and carry out in-year monitoring of collection and provide both monthly and mid-month statistics. • Continued collaborative engagement of both the Council and Capita at LRG and sub-groups which will include an examination of collections rates and best practice discussions. • Outstanding in-year debtors are monitored via bespoke scripts and early identification of payment issues picked up to seek alternative contact/resolution. • A full analysis of the end of year collection position will be undertaken post 1 April 2024, once again looking at collection rates across property types, empty/occupied premises and by postcode (and ward, if suitable look-up data available) area. Capita have advised they will be happy to undertake further engagement with Brent’s in-house economic teams for discussions around specific issues identified during their analysis. • We will look to improve communication and engagement between the Capita operational team and the Brent in-house inspection team to provide a closer working relationship and swifter notice of changes within the borough.
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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We await further advice following recent consultation on rates avoidance tactics on empty premises which have continued to increase due to both the increase in empty properties and the significant financial burden of such charges on landlords. <p><u>Conclusions</u></p> <p>It is evident from the analysis carried out by Capita that Brent has had specific issues with certain types of business/property post the coronavirus pandemic which have not received financial support. There also is evidence of lowered collection rates in the hospitality sector, even with the enhanced support suggesting financial stress within the sectors.</p> <p>The types of property in a local authority area will vary significantly which makes it difficult to conduct direct comparisons between even neighbouring authorities. It is evident that there remain collection issues post-pandemic across London as a whole and that any return to former levels will rely on matters such as government policy/support as well as changes resulting from revaluation (now due every 3 years from 2023).</p>
	<p>Liaise with the Office for National Statistics (ONS) to explore whether further census data could be provided to the Council on the specific properties in the borough identified as 'unoccupied dwellings'.</p>	<p>Peter Gadsdon – Corporate Director, Resident Services</p>	<p>Response received on 10/01/24:</p> <p>The 2021 Census provides an estimate of the number of unoccupied homes in Brent as at March 2021 (7.4% of dwellings - 9,425 in number). This data is not available for specific dwellings but has been published down to MSOA/LSOA level by the ONS. This information has been analysed by the Council's Data & Insight team. A summary paper is available on request.</p> <p>The census figure is more than three times higher than the administrative count of empty homes sourced from the Council Tax Base. The census took place when lockdown restrictions were still in place and the pandemic timing is known to have impacted on the census count, with some residents being temporarily away (e.g. some private renters). The ONS acknowledges that this would have had a significant impact on the number of unoccupied homes at that time, providing an atypical count.</p>

	Undertake a communications and engagement campaign to encourage owners to rent vacant properties to the Council to address the shortage in temporary accommodation supply.	Peter Gadsdon – Corporate Director, Resident Services	<p>Response received on 10/01/24:</p> <p>Engagement started in January 2024 will signpost property owners to council's offer for empty homes, which has three options: i) get support to refurbish then lease to the Council, ii) lease to the Council, or iii) sell to the Council so that they are brought back into use.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Wording for letters approved on 4.01.24. 2. The review of the 2,000 empty homes and 600 probate exempt properties commences on 5.01.24 with a status check on the properties. 3. Letters will be dispatched week commencing 22.01.24. 4. Fortnightly monitoring will take place between 22.01.24 and 31.03.24 with responses tracked. 5. Contacts to a designated mailbox will be monitored and forwarded to the relevant council team to take forward for the relevant options as above for refurb, rent or buy. This will include notifying the newly set up weekly meeting (following the December workshop) that discusses progression of any purchasing opportunities on the horizon.
7 Nov 2023 – Complaints Annual Report 2022/23	Moving forward publish a user-friendly summary version of the Complaints Annual Report to accompany the full version.	Debra Norman – Corporate Director, Governance	<p>Response received on 05/12/2023:</p> <p>The first page of the annual complaints report provides a simple easy to read summary. We have tried to strike a balance on a comprehensively detailed report but one that is also simple and easy to digest.</p>
	Publicise and promote service improvements made as a result of upheld complaints.	Debra Norman – Corporate Director, Governance	<p>Response received on 05/12/2023:</p> <p>The Complaints team will consider adding an additional web page to the Council's website to promote learning from complaints and we will also aim to feedback learning in the annual complaints report as well as communications/interactions with our residents.</p>

	Improve the publicity and accessibility of the complaints procedure. For example, promoting the complaints procedure more regularly in 'Your Brent', and adding the customer service telephone number to the 'How to make a complaint' section of the Council website.	Debra Norman – Corporate Director, Governance	<p>Response received on 05/12/2023:</p> <p>The switchboard contact number has been added to the Complaints Page of the Council's website. Banners have also been added to Housing Management officer's email signatures to promote the complaints procedure. The Housing Management service will also be adding information on their noticeboards to raise awareness of the complaints procedure and how to raise a service request. I have enquired with the Comms team to see if we can add something into the Your Brent magazine.</p>
	Liaise with other local authorities for learnings to reduce the amount of ASC cases being referred to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGCSO).	Debra Norman – Corporate Director, Governance	<p>Response received on 05/12/2023:</p> <p>The annual complaints report – appendix 2a, provided a comprehensive section on learning from complaints within ASC. The Complaints and Casework Manager is a member of the London Complaints Managers Group, where managers share best practice, learning and ask for advice and support on specific cases. According to the LGCSO's Adult Social Care Review 2022-23, Brent Council fair average compared to other London Councils.</p>

Information requests from RPRSC to Council departments/partners

Meeting date and agenda item	Information requests	Council Department/External Partner	Responses / Status
19 July 2023– Shared Service Performance & Cyber Security	Provide further detail on how the Council is ensuring third party suppliers are adhering to Brent's cyber security strategy and requirements. This should be inclusive of the findings from the third-party supplier survey currently underway.	Minesh Patel – Corporate Director, Finance & Resources	<p>Updated response received on 15/01/24:</p> <p>A data gathering and analysis for 3rd party supplier assurance is underway. This activity includes all suppliers receiving a Data Protection Impact assessment to review and complete. Information Governance then evaluates the response in collaboration with Shared Technology Services to assess and agree cyber resilience.</p> <p>As part of phase 1 of this programme we have prioritised 44 of the tier 1 and 2 applications that are hosted outside of Brent Network and/or are a hybrid solution. The reason for this is that any applications hosted by us (around 83 applications) is covered by Brent's cyber security framework and measures. Out of the 44 suppliers a detailed assessment has been completed for 20.</p>

			<p>There were no risks identified for them and a few of the suppliers require the processing agreement to be reviewed by legal. This is now underway.</p> <p>We have also contacted 63 tier 3 suppliers to complete the assessment framework. This activity is due to be concluded by Jan/Feb and a final report with the outcome and next steps will be shared by March 24.”</p> <p>Initial response received on 24/08/23: We have developed a third party assurance framework and security board who will oversee deployment and actions coming out of the framework, an assessment report will be shared with the Committee in six months' time.</p>
6 Sept 2023– Planning Enforcement	Provide a breakdown of: 1. Planning breach complaints by ward and; 2. Types of breaches that have received enforcement notices by ward	Alice Lester – Corporate Director, Communities & Regeneration	<p>Response received on 24/10/23:</p> <p>Need to await for new software to be installed. This is scheduled for April 2024.</p>
	Provide planning enforcement timescales.	Alice Lester – Corporate Director, Communities & Regeneration	<p>Response received on 24/10/23:</p> <p>We will need to review this and find away of recording it on our new database. We shall aim to close cases within 8 weeks if no evidence of breach. If evidence of breach, direction will be made on where we are going with the case.</p> <p>A site visit if one is required, is to take place within one month.</p>
7 Nov 2023 – Quarter 2 2023/24 Financial Report	Provide a list of empty properties in the borough (broken down by ward).	Peter Gadsdon – Corporate Director, Resident Services	<p>Response received on 15/01/24:</p> <p>Spreadsheet circulated to Committee via email.</p>
	Provide a summary on the strategy to address Brent's housing subsidy loss. This summary should include context e.g. details on the	Peter Gadsdon – Corporate Director, Resident Services	<p>Response received on 16/01/24:</p> <p>The Corporate Director, Resident Services, established a Temporary Accommodation Supply and Spend programme Chaired by the Director of Customer Access.</p>

	calculations of how subsidy loss works.		<p>The programme has 3 workstreams each focussing on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Affordability of TA - New and Alternative Supply of TA - Addressing voids and system improvements. <p>The purpose of the project is to reduce the cost of TA / Housing Benefit (HB) subsidy spend and increase supply of more cost-effective TA.</p> <p>This programme reports monthly to the Corporate Budget Assurance Panel chaired by the Chief Executive.</p> <p>The latest subsidy loss (for Temporary Accommodation) is 39.47%.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="1111 616 2029 943"> <thead> <tr> <th>Week</th> <th>Expenditure (£)</th> <th>Subsidy (£)</th> <th>Loss (£)</th> <th>Caseload movement</th> <th>Loss in %</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>wk16</td> <td>7,700,798</td> <td>5,274,481</td> <td>2,426,317</td> <td>1,375</td> <td>31.51%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>wk20</td> <td>9,892,557</td> <td>6,575,074</td> <td>3,317,483</td> <td>1,443</td> <td>33.54%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>wk24</td> <td>12,452,774</td> <td>7,882,869</td> <td>4,569,905</td> <td>1,522</td> <td>36.70%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>wk28</td> <td>15,005,510</td> <td>9,092,845</td> <td>5,912,665</td> <td>1,582</td> <td>39.40%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>wk32</td> <td>17,245,130</td> <td>10,416,791</td> <td>6,828,339</td> <td>1,633</td> <td>39.60%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>wk36</td> <td>19,309,631</td> <td>11,647,719</td> <td>7,661,912</td> <td>1,665</td> <td>39.68%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>wk40</td> <td>21,372,000</td> <td>12,913,722</td> <td>8,458,278</td> <td>1,740</td> <td>39.58%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Key actions to date have been to reduce the number of TA placements in the most expensive properties generating the highest HB subsidy loss. The group has engaged with registered providers and developers about the possibility of acquiring blocks or homes and convert to TA. A review of voids in South Kilburn has taken place with a view to possible TA placements. Furthermore, engagement with void property owners and probate properties across the borough with a view to sourcing new temporary accommodation properties.</p>	Week	Expenditure (£)	Subsidy (£)	Loss (£)	Caseload movement	Loss in %	wk16	7,700,798	5,274,481	2,426,317	1,375	31.51%	wk20	9,892,557	6,575,074	3,317,483	1,443	33.54%	wk24	12,452,774	7,882,869	4,569,905	1,522	36.70%	wk28	15,005,510	9,092,845	5,912,665	1,582	39.40%	wk32	17,245,130	10,416,791	6,828,339	1,633	39.60%	wk36	19,309,631	11,647,719	7,661,912	1,665	39.68%	wk40	21,372,000	12,913,722	8,458,278	1,740	39.58%
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7 Nov 2023 – Complaints Annual Report 2022/23	Provide breakdown on compensation paid out during the period of 2020- 2023 (broken down by issue type and department).	Debra Norman – Corporate Director, Governance	Response received on 05/12/23: Due to having two different systems during the period requested and the data spreading across various financial years, a comparison was provided to the Committee via email for 2021-2022 and 2022-2023.
	Out of the 56% of stage 2 housing department complaints upheld, provide further detail on how many of these complaints were not upheld at stage 1.	Debra Norman – Corporate Director, Governance	Response received on 05/12/23: There were 103 stage 2 complaints investigated for the Housing department which had an outcome recorded as upheld or partly upheld. Of these, 44 were recorded as not upheld at stage 1, this provides a rate of 43%.

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Planning and Development
Brent Civic Centre
Engineers Way
Wembley
Middlesex HA9 0FJ

Tel: 020 8937

Email: @brent.gov.uk

Web: www.brent.gov.uk

Owner/Occupier of
Address

Our Ref: E/XX/XXXX
Contact: Case Officer
Date

Dear Sir/Madam

Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)

Thank you for your complaint received , regarding:

Property address in question

I can confirm that it has been registered and given the reference number **E/XX/XXXX** . This case and it has been allocated to me for review and follow up an with an investigation, if it is warranted.

In the meantime in order to help me with my review and/or investigation/review, it would be helpful if you could provide me with the following information by email, if you have not already done so:

- **photographs of the issue of concern**
- **further details of the activities you are complaining about**
- **when they first commenced and**
- **what impact they have on you.**

Unfortunately due to the number of complaints the Council receive, it is necessary to prioritise cases. Therefore the cases which cause the greatest problems will be dealt with first. Other cases where limited or no harm has been identified will go to the back of the queue. Therefore it is important to provide the information requested above to allow a prioritisation procecess to take place.

If, from the evidence you have provided, there does NOT appear to be a harmful breach of planning control, I will close the case and take no further action on the matter.

If, from the evidence you have provided, it indicates that there IS a breach of planning control, then I will investigate the matter.

Please find printed on the back of this letter our standard leaflet – "*Planning Enforcement Investigation Guide*" with this letter which gives further information about the enforcement process and the service we can provide. This may answer any questions you have.

If you have any other queries, you may email or telephone me using the contact details at the top of this letter. Due to the volume of complaints received, you may be asked to leave a message and I will call you back. I will not automatically update you except at the stages identified on the attached Guide.

Please quote the enforcement reference number **E/XX/XXXX** in all correspondence.

If you would like more information on the Council's Enforcement Policy it can be viewed on the Brent Council web-site at www.brent.gov.uk.

Yours faithfully,

Case Officer's name/surname
Principal Planning Enforcement Officer
COMMUNITIES AND REGENERATION



Planning Enforcement Investigation Guide

The construction of buildings without planning permission or unauthorised changes in the use of buildings or land can have a damaging effect on the local area.

Brent Council's planning enforcement team works to protect the local environment and quality of life for people living in the borough by taking action to enforce planning rules where development which is taking place without permission and is causing harm to an area or to people.

This leaflet is an easy to use guide to how the service works. It tells you what the Council will do when a complaint is made that planning rules have not been followed.

Planning enforcement is a very complex area of law and we have tried to make it as easy to understand as possible. This guide gives a brief summary of planning enforcement and what you can expect from the Planning Service. For more detail please refer to the Council's Planning Enforcement Policy. This is available on the Planning section of the Council's website at www.brent.gov.uk.

What is a breach of planning control?

- **A breach of planning control** is when building works or use/activities are carried out without the necessary planning permission being obtained in advance. This could be the construction of a building without planning permission, a change in the use of land or a building or the display of an unlawful advertisement.
- **A breach of planning control** is not a criminal offence.
- **Planning permission** can be applied for after development has taken place –The Council may encourage this where it may help the issues to be examined.
- **No enforcement action** can be taken against works which have been largely completed more than 4 years ago (or 10 years in the case of changes of use or breaches of planning conditions).
- **Not all building works or uses** need planning permission. These are known as 'permitted development' and allow quite large alterations and extensions to be made to buildings as well as outbuildings under certain conditions. There are also other things which are **NOT** breaches of planning control. These include:
 - Internal works to most buildings unless they are listed (of high architectural or historic value).
 - Obstruction of a highway or public right of way.
 - Parking commercial vehicles on the highway in residential areas or on grass verges
 - Parking a caravan within the residential boundary of a property, provided that it is not lived in or used as part of the home.
 - Clearing land of vegetation, unless it is subject to planning protection.
 - Operating a business from home if the residential use remains the main use.
 - Boundary disputes.
 - High hedge disputes.
 - Deeds and covenants.
 - Trespassing on land
 - Health and safety issues

Priorities

The Council will focus its resources on the breaches which in their view cause the most serious planning harm. Not all breaches of planning control will be pursued. We will however, always tell you if we do not intend to follow up a breach. If we decide to take action, we will continue with that action until the situation is resolved or there is no longer a reasonable prospect of success.

What can I do if I think someone is breaching planning control?

The planning enforcement service is concerned with resolving serious breaches of planning control. It does not deal with neighbour or business disputes or a change to the environment that an individual or group of residents may not like. There must be **significant harm** to public amenity, safety or the environment for enforcement action to be justified.

As a first step, consider if the potential breach is something you could resolve yourself by speaking with your neighbour or the person who you feel is causing the harm. It is far better to resolve things by agreement if you can, than formerly involve the Council. Indeed in some instances, the Planning Service will be unable to help



you either because it does not require planning permission or it is not serious enough to warrant formal enforcement action.

If you feel unable to speak to your neighbour and you consider that significant harm is being caused, you can contact us by phone, letter, email or fax. We regret that we are unable to accept telephone complaints unless there is a good reason why you are unable to put your complaint in writing. We will not deal with anonymous complaints. Therefore we are not able to register or start to deal with your complaint unless we have your name and contact details, as well as the following information:

- *The site address or location*
- *What the development or activity is that is causing the harm, when it began and as much information as you can give about it and who you consider is responsible for it*
- *Details of the way in which the development or activity is having a harmful impact on you*

Details of how to contact us are at the end of this leaflet.

Will my details be made public?

- No, unless the Council need to release the information for the legal purposes.
- We may ask for your permission to make your details public if a case is pursued and your evidence is an essential part of the Council's case.

If you are worried about giving your details to the Council, you could contact your local ward councillor, who may make the complaint on your behalf.

If I am told action will be taken in respect of my complaint what form will it take?

This can vary but will normally take the form of an enforcement notice requiring action to remedy the breach/undo the development. You will be notified within 3 working days of any action taken or notices served by the Council in respect of your complaint.

How long will it take?

Planning enforcement is not a quick process. The initial investigation can take several weeks to complete and attempts will be made to resolve the situation without formal enforcement action first, sometimes through the submission of a retrospective planning application. If an enforcement notice is served, there are rights of appeal which can delay the matter even further. In some circumstances it may take one to 12 months to resolve.

How will I be kept informed of progress on dealing with my complaint?

The Council will aim to contact you by letter at the following stages of their investigation:

- To acknowledge your complaint within 7 working days of receiving it.
- To notify you whether we consider there has been a breach of planning control.
- Within 3 working days of the issue of any formal notice by the Council in respect of the breach.
- To notify you if an appeal has been made against an enforcement notice.
- To notify you of an enforcement appeal decision.
- To notify you of if the Council decide to prosecute or to carry out direct action to remedy the breach.


We will **NOT** routinely contact you other than at these stages in the process but you may contact the case officer to obtain an update on progress.

How to contact the planning enforcement team:

Telephone: 020 8937 5280 or **Email:** planningenforcement@brent.gov.uk

Post: Planning Enforcement Team, Planning and Regeneration, 7th Floor, Brent Civic Centre, Engineers Way, Wembley, HA9 0FJ

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 Brent	Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee 24 January 2024
	Report from the Director of Communities
Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2023/24.	

Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	Not Applicable
Open or Part/Fully Exempt: <small>(If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)</small>	Open
List of Appendices:	One Appendix A – Committee Work Programme 2023/24
Background Papers:	None
Contact Officer(s): <small>(Name, Title, Contact Details)</small>	Jason Sigba, Strategy Lead – Scrutiny, Strategy and Partnerships Jason.Sigba@brent.gov.uk Janet Latinwo, Head of Strategy & Partnerships Janet.Latinwo@brent.gov.uk Kibibi Octave, Director of Communities Kibibi.Octave@brent.gov.uk

1.0 Executive Summary

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 Contribution to Borough Plan Priorities & Strategic Context

3.1.1 Borough Plan 2023-2027 – all strategic priorities

3.2 Background

- 3.2.1 The work programme sets out the items which the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee will consider during the municipal year.
- 3.2.2 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.

Revisions made:

- 3.2.3 The agenda of the 24 January 2024 meeting has been updated to remove the item titled 'Draft Property Strategy/Asset Review Findings'; This item has been deferred to the committee meeting of 27 February 2024.
- 3.2.4 The agenda of the 27 February 2024 meeting has been updated to remove the item titled 'Regeneration in Brent'; This item has been postponed to the committee meeting of 23 April 2024.
- 3.2.5 The name of the Corporate Director of Communities and Regeneration has also been revised.

4.0 Stakeholder and ward member consultation and engagement

- 4.1 Ward members are regularly informed about the Committee's work programme in the Chair's report to Full Council. There is ongoing consultation with other relevant stakeholders.

5.0 Financial Considerations

- 5.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report. However, budget and financial issues are addressed in the 'Financial Considerations' section of any reports to the Committee, requested as part of its work programme.

6.0 Legal Considerations

- 6.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report. However, legal implications are addressed in the 'Legal Considerations' section of any reports to the Committee, requested as part of its work programme.

7.0 Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Considerations

- 7.1 There are no Equality, Diversity & Inclusion considerations for the purposes of this report.

8.0 Climate Change and Environmental Considerations

- 8.1 There are no climate change and environmental considerations for the purposes of this report.

9.0 Communication Considerations

- 9.1 There are no communication considerations for the purposes of this report.

Report sign off:

Kibibi Octave

Director of Communities

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Appendix A

Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2023-2024

19 July 2023

Agenda Item	Cabinet Member/Non-Executive Member	Chief Executive/Corporate Director	External Organisations
Committee Work Programme 2023/24	Cllr Muhammed Butt, Leader of the Council	Kim Wright, Chief Executive Zahur Khan, Corporate Director – Communities and Regeneration	
Budget 2023/24 Update	Cllr Mili Patel, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources and Reform	Minesh Patel, Corporate Director – Finance and Resources	
IT Shared Services and Cyber Security	Cllr Mili Patel, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources and Reform	Minesh Patel, Corporate Director – Finance and Resources	

6 September 2023

Agenda Item	Cabinet Member/Non-Executive Member	Chief Executive/Corporate Director	External Organisations
Establishment of Budget Scrutiny Task Group	Cllr Rita Conneely, Chair of Resources and Public Realm Committee	Zahur Khan, Corporate Director – Communities and Regeneration	
Planning Enforcement	Cllr Harbi Farah, Cabinet Member for Safer Communities and Public Protection	Zahur Khan, Corporate Director – Communities and Regeneration	
Community Engagement Framework	Cllr Fleur Donnelly-Jackson, Cabinet Member for Customers, Communities, and Culture	Zahur Khan, Corporate Director – Communities and Regeneration	

7 November 2023

Agenda Item	Cabinet Member/Non-Executive Member	Chief Executive/Corporate Director	External Organisations
Complaints Annual Report 2022/23	Cllr Shama Tatler, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources and Reform and Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning & Growth.	Debra Norman, Corporate Director – Governance	
Budget 2023/24 Update: Q2 Financial Report	Cllr Shama Tatler, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources and Reform and Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning & Growth	Minesh Patel, Corporate Director – Finance and Resources	

24 January 2024

Agenda Item	Cabinet Member/Non-Executive Member	Chief Executive/Corporate Director	External Organisations
Budget Scrutiny Task Group Findings	Cllr Rita Conneely, Chair of Resources and Public Realm Committee	Alice Lester, Interim Corporate Director – Communities and Regeneration	
Safer Brent Partnership Annual Report 2022-23	Cllr Harbi Farah, Cabinet Member for Safer Communities and Public Protection	Alice Lester, Interim Corporate Director – Communities and Regeneration	Will Lexton-Jones, Detective Superintendent - Brent Neighbourhoods, Metropolitan Police

27 February 2024

Agenda Item	Cabinet Member/Non-Executive Member	Chief Executive/Corporate Director	External Organisations

Climate Action	Cllr Krupa Sheth, Cabinet Member for Environment, Infrastructure and Climate Action	Peter Gadsdon, Corporate Director – Resident Services	
Draft Property Strategy/Asset Review Findings	Cllr Shama Tatler, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources and Reform and Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning & Growth	Minesh Patel, Corporate Director – Finance and Resources	

23 April 2024

Agenda Item	Cabinet Member/Non-Executive Member	Chief Executive/Corporate Director	External Organisations
Budget 2023/24 Update	Cllr Shama Tatler, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources and Reform and Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning & Growth.	Minesh Patel, Corporate Director – Finance and Resources	
Contracts Mobilisation	Cllr Krupa Sheth, Cabinet Member for Environment, Infrastructure and Climate Action	Peter Gadsdon, Corporate Director – Resident Services	
Regeneration in Brent	Cllr Shama Tatler, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources and Reform and Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning & Growth.	Alice Lester, Interim Corporate Director – Communities and Regeneration	

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