



Brent

Cabinet

Monday 9 September 2024 at 10.00 am

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

Please note this will be held as a physical meeting which all Cabinet 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:

Lead Member Councillors:

Portfolio

M Butt (Chair)	Leader of the Council & Cabinet Member for Housing
M Patel (Vice-Chair)	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources
Donnelly-Jackson	Cabinet Member for Resident Support & Culture
Farah	Cabinet Member for Public Safety & Partnerships
Grahl	Cabinet Member for Children, Young People & Schools
Nerva	Cabinet Member for Community Health & Wellbeing
Rubin	Cabinet Member for Employment, Innovation and Climate Action
Krupa Sheth	Cabinet Member for Environment & Enforcement
Tatler	Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning & Growth

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

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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

2 Declarations of Interest

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

3 Minutes of the Previous Meeting 1 - 8

To approve the minutes of the previous meeting held on Monday 15 July 2024 as a correct record.

4 Matters Arising (if any)

To consider any matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting.

5 Petitions (if any)

To consider any petitions for which notice has been received, in accordance with Standing Order 66.

6 Reference of item considered by Scrutiny Committees (if any)

To consider any items referred by either the Community & Wellbeing or Resources & Public Realm Scrutiny Committees.

Finance & Resources reports

7 Property Strategy 2024-2027 9 - 54

This report presents the Council's updated Property Strategy, developed in collaboration with stakeholders, which aims to optimise the social, economic, and environmental benefits of the Council's assets through a strategic, systematic, and data-led approach to decision-making.

Ward Affected:
All Wards

Lead Member: Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources (Councillor Mili Patel)

Contact Officer: Denish Patel, Head of Property
Tel: 020 8937 2529

8 Treasury Management Outturn 2023-24

55 - 90

This report sets out the outturn for the Council's Treasury Management activities for 2023-24 in accordance with the Local Authorities (Capital Financing and Accounting) Regulations 2003.

Ward Affected: All Wards
Lead Member: Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources (Councillor Mili Patel)
Contact Officer: Nadeem Akhtar, Senior Finance Analyst
Tel: 020 8937 5957
Nadeem.Akhtar@brent.gov.uk

Children and Young People reports

9 Brent Youth Justice Plan 2024-25

91 - 160

This report presents the annual Brent Youth Justice Plan 2024-25 providing an overview of local youth justice services, priorities and arrangements for monitoring performance.

Members are asked to note that in accordance with regulations, the Plan has also been subject to consideration and approval by the Youth Justice Board.

Ward Affected: All Wards
Lead Member: Cabinet Member for Children, Young People & Schools (Councillor Gwen Grahl)
Contact Officer: Palvinder Kudhail, Director Early Help & Social Care
Palvinder.Kudhail@brent.gov.uk

Neighbourhoods & Regeneration reports

10 Parking Enforcement on Housing Estates: Programme Update

161 - 178

This report provides an update on the introduction of parking controls and enforcement following the Cabinet decision in July 2020, to approve the pilot of off street-controlled parking on four Council estates: Joules House, Landau House, Alexandra Court, and Summit Court with the scheme extended to include other estates under Phase 2 of the programme. On the basis of the review, Cabinet approval is being sought to introduce Phase 3 and expand the programme to introduce further parking controls and enforcement on Housing Estates that either previously did not support controls, but where there is now evidence of resident support, or were not included due to planned development.

Ward Affected:
All Wards

Lead Member: Cabinet Member for Environment & Enforcement (Councillor Krupa Sheth)

Contact Officer: Sandor Fazekas, Head of Healthy Streets and Parking

Tel: 020 8937 5113

sandor.fazekas@brent.gov.uk

Partnership, Housing & Resident Services reports

11 Community Space at Roy Smith House

179 - 192

This report concerns proposals for the use of the unoccupied ground floor commercial unit at Roy Smith House, 71 Hillside, London, NW10 8LN towards community initiatives and seeks Cabinet approval for use of Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy (SCIL) funding towards works to fit out the commercial unit at Roy Smith House including invitation of tenders for the works.

Ward Affected:
Stonebridge

Lead Member: Leader & Cabinet Member for Housing (Councillor Muhammed Butt)

Contact Officer: Marta Portalska, Change and Improvement Project Manager

Tel: 020 8937 4354

Marta.Portalska@brent.gov.uk

12 Exclusion of Press and Public

No items have been identified in advance of the meeting that will require the exclusion of the press or public.

13 Any other urgent business

Notice of items to be raised under this heading must be given in writing to the Deputy Director Democratic Services or their representative before the meeting in accordance with Standing Order 60.

Date of the next meeting: Monday 14 October 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](#)

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LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

MINUTES OF THE CABINET

Held in the Conference Hall, Brent Civic Centre on Monday 15 July 2024 at 10.00 am

PRESENT: Councillor M Butt (Chair), Councillor M Patel (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Donnelly-Jackson, Farah, Grahl, Nerva, Rubin and Tatler.

1. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Krupa Sheth (Cabinet Member for Environment & Enforcement) and Alice Lester (Corporate Director Neighbourhoods & Regeneration). The Leader of the Council advised that Gerry Ansell (Director Inclusive Regeneration & Employment) was attending to represent Alice Lester.

2. **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were made during the meeting.

3. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

Cabinet **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the previous meeting held on Monday 17 June 2024, be approved as a correct record.

4. **Matters Arising (if any)**

None.

5. **Petitions (if any)**

No petitions were submitted for consideration at the meeting.

6. **Reference of item considered by Scrutiny Committees (if any)**

There were no references from the Community & Wellbeing or Resources & Public Realm Scrutiny Committees submitted for consideration at the meeting.

7. **Financial Year End Outturn 2023-24**

Councillor Mili Patel (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources) introduced a report presenting the outturn for income and expenditure for 2023-24 and other key financial data. In introducing the report, Cabinet was advised that the Council's General Fund and Dedicated Schools Grant outturn had achieved break even with the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) reporting an underspend of £2m. The Council's Capital Programme spend had been £213m in 2023-24, equating to 95% of the approved budget.

Whilst the General Fund have achieved a break-even position, Cabinet noted the service overspends identified in relation to Resident Services, primarily driven by high demand for homelessness services, as well as the Community Health and Wellbeing department and the Children and Young People department with the use of earmarked reserves set aside to manage unexpected pressures having resulted in the overall break even General Fund position.

In considering the outturn position, Members acknowledged the significant level of financial challenge faced by the Council with the report highlighting the scale and depth of the pressures identified. These included pressures resulting from the increased demand in relation to homelessness, which was recognised as a national and regional issue, with demand for housing continuing to increase against a reducing supply across the whole housing market and increasing pressure on the supply of temporary accommodation leading to a greater reliance on the private rented sector which was often less affordable for those residents on low income or Housing Benefit.

In highlighting the potential changes that a newly elected government may implement, Cabinet felt that the prospect of a multi-year Local Government financial settlement would assist in providing greater stability with members recognising the need for continued lobbying to ensure the necessary levels of funding required to support residents across the borough was provided. Support was also expressed for the anticipated change in planning laws and reintroduction of mandatory housing targets proposed by the new Government as a means of encouraging growth, with members also keen to see tighter regulation on the housing rental sector and reform of the funding regime for local government, including Council Tax. Considering the new government's approach, Cabinet felt it was clear there was a commitment to long-term infrastructure investment and the exploration of devolution but, in highlighting section 3.16 of the report which detailed the Council's limited powers in relation to funding, made clear the Council's commitment to lobby for secure and adequate funding and the autonomy to grow the local economy and eradicate homelessness in the borough.

In recognising the efforts made to continue managing and mitigating against the final challenges identified, members welcomed the approach outlined by the incoming Government in relation encouraging the growth in house building, infrastructure and regeneration in support of the wider benefits identified, which it was highlighted the Council also remained committed to pursue Cabinet thanked all those involved for their efforts and as a result **RESOLVED** to note the overall financial outturn position for 2023-24, as detailed in the report.

8. **Medium Term Financial Outlook**

Councillor Mili Patel (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources) introduced a report which set out the overall financial position facing the Council and highlighted the significant risks, issues and uncertainties with regard to the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). The report also set out the proposed budget setting strategy for 2025-26, which included the proposed consultation with residents, businesses and other key stakeholders.

In presenting the report, Councillor Mili Patel highlighted the challenging financial environment in which the Council was operating. Members noted that there was the potential for significant spending pressures from demand-led services, particularly social care and homelessness, and new burdens impacting on the budget as a result of the cost-of living crisis. It was added that, whilst growth had been built into the MTFS to alleviate the pressures identified, these continued to present a significant budget risk meaning the Council was likely to require further significant savings moving forward to deliver a balanced budget.

Having explained the context of the report, Councillor Mili Patel again raised the issue of housing, which continued to be a significant area of risk for the Council with demand for housing services increasing and the number of homelessness applications rising. The economic climate was also impacting rent collection rates, resulting in increases in rent arrears, leading to increased reliance on the private rented sector for supply to address demand. With more people placed in temporary accommodation, higher costs and less supply, it was expected that housing would continue to cause financial pressure on the Council's budget.

Concluding the presentation of the report, Councillor Mili Patel felt it was important to recognise the £210m worth of cuts already delivered in relation to the Council's budget since 2010 and further savings already agreed amounting to £12.5m spread across 2024-25 and 2025-26 to alleviate pressures. She highlighted that the lack of clarity around the future level of local government funding and uncertainty in the economic environment made it hard to be precise about future financial targets, with the Council having therefore continued to adopt a prudent approach over the 2025-2028 MTFS in order to deliver a sustainable medium-term position. Longer term, the anticipated funding allocations and current forecast assumptions estimated a budget gap of £16m in 2025-26, rising to a cumulative £30m by 2027-28, with the Council looking to identify and deliver savings of £16m to enable it to set a balanced budget for 2025-26. The financial impact and budget beyond 2026-27 would be subject to further review once the Local Government Financial Settlement was known but in the meantime it was pointed out that the Council would need to continue taking difficult decisions about which services to prioritise and protect in order to continue delivering an affordable and sustainable budget and package of support for local communities across the borough.

Concern was expressed at the substantial nature of the ongoing financial challenges outlined during presentation of the report given the impact on the Council's budget and potential need to deliver additional savings. In highlighting the need to continue focussing on the way in which support (including that available through the Council Tax and Resident Support Schemes) was being provided for residents moving forward, members were also aware of the need to ensure this continued to be targeted effectively on those most in need, supported by a range of other wider holistic measures designed to provide residents with the opportunities to succeed.

Officers were thanked for their work in preparing the report and it was **RESOLVED** that Cabinet:

- (1) Note the contents of the report and the potential financial impact on the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy, as set out within the report.

- (2) Agree the budget setting process for 2025-26, as set out in section nine of the report.
- (3) Endorse the response to the Minister for Local Government on Brent's productivity plans, as set out in Appendix A of the report.
- (4) Note and agree the proposed 2023-24 capital budget carry forwards and capital virements for 2024-25 as set out in section ten of the report.
- (5) Note the financial position with regards to the Housing Revenue Account, as set out in section eleven of the report.
- (6) Note the financial position with regards to Schools and the Dedicated Schools Grant, as set out in section twelve of the report.

9. **Quarter 1 Financial Forecast 2024/25**

Councillor Mili Patel (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources) introduced a report which 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 1 2024-25.

In introducing the report, Councillor Mili Patel highlighted that despite the considerable efforts to maintain financial control, the operating environment and wider economic context continued to be volatile with small changes in demand disproportionately materialising in large financial pressures. These remained particularly acute in relation to Children's and Adult social care packages, and costs associated with the provision of temporary accommodation, with the Council also continuing to deal with the impact of rising costs due to the high level of provider inflationary pressures and the impact of the cost-of-living crisis, which had also affected important income streams for the Council.

In considering the report, Cabinet noted the challenges identified in seeking to manage demand and address the pressures identified, with members committed to continue the positive work with relevant Corporate Directors to ensure the monitoring and management of budgets in each service area.

Having noted the information provided and also the comments raised during consideration of the previous financial update reports (included as Items 7 & 8 on the agenda) Cabinet **RESOLVED**:

- (1) To note the new grant funding received in year, the overall financial position and the actions being taken to manage the issues arising as detailed within the report.
- (2) To note the savings delivery tracker as detailed in Appendix A of the report.
- (3) To note the Prudential Indicators for Treasury Management, as set out in Appendix B of the report.

10. **Brent Post-16 Skills Strategy**

Councillor Rubin (Cabinet Member for Employment, Innovation & Climate Action) introduced a report outlining the main elements, vision and outcomes within the draft Brent Post-16 Skills Strategy.

In introducing the report, members noted that the Strategy had been developed (contributing towards the Council's anti-poverty strategy) working with businesses, educational providers and other stakeholders in order to equip residents with the skills necessary to secure high-quality employment opportunities that would also contribute towards the local economy. With unemployment rates across the Borough remaining high, the Strategy also aimed to provide the type of skills needed by both employers and employees in order to reflect the evolving needs of the local economy.

Members were advised that the strategy had also been designed to represent an investment programme in economic recovery that would contribute to a thriving economy and bridge the gap between skills supply and skills demand with one of the key outcomes being the establishment of a Skills Board bringing together key stakeholders, through which skills training and provision would be directed. Reference was also made to the specific focus within the Strategy aimed at increasing female participation in the workforce as well as the measures designed to support the participation and provision of employment opportunities for young people with Special Educational Needs as well as through the Black Community Action Plan. Members also noted the focus on high quality in-work training enabling employees to continue upskilling themselves with Cabinet asked to note the accompanying research prior to endorsing the strategy for progression to publication.

In considering the report, members welcomed and commended the progress made in terms of the Strategy seeking to tackle unemployment, enhance opportunities for career progression as well as in seeking to address poverty and social exclusion. Members also highlighted their support for the focus on community wealth building within the borough, which it was felt demonstrated a multi-faceted approach to post-16 skills.

In relation to children and young people, members highlighted the challenge in delivering secure employment for care leavers and were pleased to see potential opportunities in this area included in the report. Cabinet also felt it important to recognise and endorse the work of the Youth Justice Service in seeking to prevent reoffending through the provision of training and employment programmes. Members were also keen to commend the emphasis within the Strategy on creative and digital industries as growth areas and welcomed the introduction of a Skills Board that would include a wide range of external stakeholders, highlighting the importance of alignment with the new Culture Strategy that was being developed.

in concluding the discussion, Cabinet thanked the Employment and Skills Team and Cabinet Member for Employment, Innovation & Climate Action for the work undertaken in relation to development of the post-16 skills strategy with the opportunity also taken to remind members of the upcoming Brent Jobs Fair being hosted at Wembley Stadium.

Cabinet therefore **RESOLVED:**

- (1) To note the progress of the work on the Post-16 Skills Strategy and the accompanying research commission.
- (2) To endorse the Post 16 Skills Strategy for progression to publication.

11. **Authority to award contracts for the provision of Parking and Traffic CCTV Enforcement Services**

In Councillor Krupa Sheth's (Cabinet Member for Environment & Enforcement) absence, Councillor Muhammed Butt (as Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing) introduced a report which sought approval for the award of contracts for the provision of Parking CCTV camera equipment and software services and the supply of new cameras and associated software. In introducing the report, members noted the scope of contract in relation to continued enforcement of parking and moving traffic contraventions alongside the proposed improvements to parking and on road CCTV infrastructure to support delivery of the Council's Long Term Transport Strategy and traffic management across the borough.

In welcoming the report, Cabinet emphasised the positive impact that the use of CCTV was having in relation to Safer School Streets with members also commending the wider engagement with residents on the approach being taken towards the changes in parking and traffic enforcement activity.

In concluding the discussion, Cabinet were also keen to highlight and support the positive impact the contract would have in relation to the social value benefits identified and in addressing climate action across Brent through encouraging more active modes of travel.

Having considered and noted the exempt information contained within the appendix of the report, Cabinet **RESOLVED**:

- (1) To note the benefits of using CCTV cameras for the effective enforcement of parking and traffic contraventions and in terms of meeting the Council's strategic objectives.
- (2) To approve the award of a four-year contract with the option for 2 one-year extensions for the goods and services detailed within the report to DSSL Group Limited to a value of up to £9,746,610 following the conclusion of a tender process via an ESPO framework, to commence on 1 November 2024.

12. **Community Grants Fund (NCIL) 2023-24 - Projects over £100,000**

Councillor Farah (Cabinet Member for Public Safety and Partnerships) introduced a report seeking approval for projects recommended to receive a Community Grants Fund (NCIL) award over £100,000 in value.

In presenting the report, members noted the use of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) to fund the Community Grants (Neighbourhood CIL) programme. In highlighting the significant community benefits provided as a result, particular attention was drawn to the opportunity available to support local communities and the voluntary sector in seeking to create better economic opportunities and stronger, more connected communities with it noted that the community grants had

been awarded on the basis of priorities agreed for local facilities in consultation with the local community and the evaluation of each application having been subject to a five-stage assessment process, as detailed within Appendix A of the report. This had resulted in a total of 35 projects being recommended for funding with two applications, Step Up Hub and Forest United Youth Football Club involving funding above £100k for which, members were advised, final approval would be required by Cabinet.

In outlining the projects for which funding approval was being sought, Cabinet were advised that both supported outcomes within the Borough Plan, specifically relating to Strategic Priority 3 – Thriving Communities.

In support of the community grants (NCIL) programme, Cabinet were keen to recognise the positive impact being created through the use of CIL as part of the wider programme of regeneration activity and its associated benefits for local communities across the borough, with thanks expressed for the work being undertaken to deliver the ongoing programme of growth and regeneration across the borough, including the generation and collection of CIL, given the wider associated benefits identified for both current and future residents.

In recognising the positive contribution of both projects within the local community for which funding approval was being sought Cabinet **RESOLVED** to approve and confirm the final award of Community Grant (NCIL) funding to the following schemes:

- (1) Step Up Hub - £114,000.
- (2) Forest United (1973) Youth Football Club Ltd - £146,976, subject to additional funding being secured for the total amount of the project cost of £1.2m.

13. **Uncollectable Debt Write-Offs**

Councillor Donnelly-Jackson (Cabinet Member for Residents Support and Culture) introduced a report informing Cabinet of the debts written off between 1 October 2023 and 31 March 2024 that exceeded £20,000 in relation to council tax, sundry debts, adult social care client contributions, and housing benefits overpayments.

In considering the report Cabinet noted the recovery action taken as a means of seeking to protect the Council's financial position prior to any debt being considered for write-off which also complied with the Council's Ethical Debt Recovery Policy and Write Off procedure.

Having reviewed the exempt information contained within Appendix 1 of the report relating to individual debt write-off and commended the transparent approach towards the process of debt recovery and write-off, Cabinet **RESOLVED**:

- (1) To note the debt written off as listed in Appendix 1 of the report.
- (2) To note a total write-off of £606,101.94 of debt for the period October 2023 to March 2024.

14. **Exclusion of Press and Public**


There were no items that required the exclusion of the press or public.

15. **Any other urgent business**

There were no items of urgent business.

The meeting ended at 10.30 am

COUNCILLOR MUHAMMED BUTT
Chair

 Brent	Cabinet 9 September 2024
	Report from the Corporate Director of Finance and Corporate Resources
	Lead Member – Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources (Councillor Mili Patel)
Property Strategy	

Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	Key
Open or Part/Fully Exempt: (If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)	Open
List of Appendices:	Two Appendix 1: Property Strategy Appendix 2: Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment
Background Papers:	None
Contact Officer(s): (Name, Title, Contact Details)	Denish Patel, Head of Property 020 8937 2529 Denish.patel@brent.gov.uk Tanveer Ghani, Director of Property and Assets 020 8937 1722 Tanveer.ghani@brent.gov.uk

1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1. The Council's property assets are fundamental in supporting the delivery of the 2023-27 Borough Plan objectives, providing essential business accommodation and community infrastructure. The property strategy, developed in collaboration with stakeholders, aims to optimise the social, economic, and environmental benefits of the Council's assets through a strategic, systematic, and data-led approach to decision-making.

- 1.2 The volatile external context and an initial review of the Council's property portfolio highlighted the need for a more agile and adaptive property strategy. The strategy proposes categorising assets into four themes: 1) Strategic Hold, 2) Actively Manage, 3) Invest, and 4) Dispose. This categorisation will help manage assets proactively to meet the Borough Plan's objectives and compete effectively in an evolving market.
- 1.3 A significant strength of the proposed property strategy is that its strategic themes are underpinned by a set of principles which can be adapted to changing needs and socio-economic factors without altering the overall strategic direction.
- 1.4 A diverse set of principles for each strategic theme emphasises the importance of local context in decision-making (place-based leadership), contrasting with the more placeless or detached standard asset management decision-making, which tends to focus on limited performance criteria.
- 1.5 A detailed asset review forms an essential part of the action plan. We will develop a scoring system to assess individual assets' strengths and weaknesses, cost and benefits, and consider how best to balance various, sometimes competing, critical elements to ensure the portfolio provides maximum impact and value to the community and the Council.
- 1.6 As part of our property strategy, we are committed to driving significant improvements in the operational performance of our property portfolio. Our approach encompasses vital areas critical to ensuring our portfolio's long-term sustainability, such as health and safety, accessibility and energy performance.
- 1.7 Following the completion of estate condition surveys and building fabric assessments in July 2021, the Facilities Management (FM) team has identified the need for £8.2 million in capital funding for the fiscal years 2024/25 to 2026/27. This funding will support essential building improvement projects to maintain optimal operating standards and ensure staff satisfaction across the retained properties.

2.0 Recommendation(s)

Cabinet is asked to:

- 2.1 Note the contents of this report, the new vision, strategic objectives, and themes.
- 2.2 Adopt the property strategy in Appendix 1.
- 2.3 Approve a capital budget allocation of £8.2 million over the next three fiscal years to fund necessary asset maintenance and building improvement projects regarding FM operational estate buildings, as set out in paragraphs 3.2.18 to 3.2.20.

3.0 Detail

3.1 Cabinet Member Foreword

- 3.1.1 In navigating unprecedented change, the Council must implement a progressive property strategy to build a thriving and sustainable property portfolio for Brent's diverse community. This strategy is more than asset management for rental income; it provides a framework for leveraging our properties to drive economic growth, environmental sustainability, and social value.
- 3.1.2 Our vision is to create a sustainable, compliant, diverse, and carbon-neutral property portfolio that fosters thriving communities, enhances the local economy, and improves prosperity. Achieving this vision requires a collaborative approach, engaging residents, businesses, and community organisations to align our efforts with community needs and enhance our collective potential.
- 3.1.3 The property strategy sets a course for adaptation, evidence-based decision-making, embracing change, and reimagining the potential of our property assets. Central to this strategy is a proactive approach to asset management, ensuring every decision supports our Borough Plan 2023-27 and paves the way for a more equitable future for all of Brent.
- 3.1.4 The Council's property portfolio is a significant and tangible resource owned outright by the Council. It represents a source of revenue income and is a crucial component in delivering socio-economic objectives. The portfolio comprises diverse uses—community centres, retail units, leisure, and office space—and has the potential to contribute to all strands of the Borough Plan.
- 3.1.5 The Council's varied property assets can contribute to Council priorities in various ways, such as generating tax revenue (non-domestic rates), providing employment opportunities and essential services, supporting town centre regeneration and meanwhile uses, enhancing the quality of life for residents, fostering economic and social development, and enhancing the vibrancy and diversity of communities. The Council's diverse property portfolio has supported health inequalities by providing a range of facilities for use by public sector bodies and charitable organisations, ensuring services are accessible to all community groups.
- 3.1.6 The Council's budget and the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for future years depend on rent income from the assets. Therefore, the assets must generate sufficient income for maintenance and upgrading, which ensures the successful delivery of Council services from the assets in the long term.
- 3.1.7 In the face of rapid changes in market conditions, economic uncertainty, evolving regulations, accelerating technological trends, and shifting demands, the Council must adopt an agile and adaptive property strategy to respond to the dynamic property landscape. This may involve doing things very differently than they have been done in the past or doing the same things more efficiently and effectively.

3.1.8 The Property Strategy will form a vital part of the Council's Change Programme, a cross-council, multi-year programme that will support the Council to become more resident-centric, drive community power, and contribute to place-making ambitions. The specific Property & Assets workstream will also support Asset Management, Asset Sustainability, and Community Engagement around the estate and enable the co-location of services in targeted localities.

3.2 Background

Vision

3.2.1 The consultation process has led to the creation of a unifying and galvanising vision for the property portfolio as follows:

“Our vision is to create a sustainable, compliant, diverse, and carbon-neutral property portfolio that contributes to thriving communities, enhances the local economy, and improves prosperity.”

3.2.2 The vision will enable the integration of decisions, coordination, information exchange, issue and risk management, and actions across the Council.

Strategic Objectives

3.2.3 The strategy offers a formal logic for the Council's property goals and seeks to orientate stakeholders around them by seeking to adopt the following strategic objectives:

- **Manage by robust processes, good data, and insights** — this means working collaboratively across the Council to drive up the quality of decision-making and understanding of Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) needs.
- **Create a leaner, compliant, and financially sustainable portfolio** — this means buildings that are legally compliant, fully functional, optimally utilised, generate the necessary income and support Council priorities.
- **Dispose, repurpose, or redevelop properties no longer fit for purpose** — this means building in flexibility to enable the Council to adapt to changing needs or redevelop or dispose of surplus land and buildings to preserve the portfolio.

Strategic Themes

3.2.4 The quest for productivity, quality, and more excellent value for stakeholders has led to developing key themes, as set out below. They enable choosing a different set of activities to deliver a unique mix of value and boost efficiency in various circumstances under the following strategic themes:

- **Strategic Hold:** This segment comprises properties vital to delivering the Council's priorities and unlikely to be easily replaced.
- **Actively Manage:** Active management opportunities have the potential to improve performance and secure "quick wins" for relatively little investment.
- **Invest:** Investment and repurposing opportunities have the potential to unlock significant upside and meet strategic priorities.
- **Dispose:** Low-value¹, high-cost properties with poor growth prospects should be disposed of to avoid degradation and raise capital for investing in retained assets.

3.2.5 The property strategy is an ambitious document that will realign our work with new priorities and the realities of living, working, and investing in the borough. Under the new strategy, the property portfolio will be managed to ensure that properties are fit-for-purpose, secure, and compliant with present and forthcoming environmental policies and regulations.

3.2.6 As part of the strategy delivery, we will develop a scoring methodology to ensure that buildings are appropriately aligned to one of four strategic themes. The approach will be required to balance economic and community benefits and ensure that properties are used to benefit the local areas in which they reside.

3.2.7 The Property and Assets Team have begun an improvement journey, identifying necessary operational improvements to support the strategy under a dedicated continuous improvement project called 'Alaska 6' with a member of staff driving the progress full-time. The key enhancements include:

- Health and safety compliance
- Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards Regulation (MEES) compliance
- Reducing rent arrears and improving income management
- Implementing rent reviews
- Improving accessibility
- Lease renewals and regularisation of tenancies

3.2.8 The project is expected to be completed within 12 to 18 months. These operational enhancements support the property strategy, improve legal compliance, and generate financial, social and environmental benefits.

3.2.9 As of Q2 2024/25, the outstanding debt totals £824,090. Repayment plans covering £450,453 have been established, with a maximum repayment term of two years. Efforts are actively being made to address the remaining balance of £373,637, including legal action, rigorous enforcement of rent repayment schedules, and the write-off of irrecoverable debts.

¹ Relative to cost.

- 3.2.10 A survey has been sent to all tenants to evaluate the accessibility of the properties they occupy. This feedback will help us identify areas for improvement, ensure compliance with the Equality Act 2010, and enhance the overall customer experience. The Council's property strategy is dedicated to improving the management and accessibility of our assets to serve the entire community better.
- 3.2.11 Out of 109 properties, 45 have Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs) with ratings ranging from A to E. Additionally, two properties are rated G, with one being void and exempt. An independent EPC surveyor is assessing the remaining properties at a rate of 2-3 per week. Extrapolating from current data, most assets will likely meet or exceed the current minimum standards. Properties below the minimum E rating will be assessed for energy efficiency upgrades. If the costs of these upgrades cannot be recouped through energy savings within seven years, the "7-Year Payback" exemption under Regulation 28 may apply. Given the likelihood of rising minimum rating standards, the EPC surveyor's recommendations will be considered to ensure the properties are future-proofed when upgrades are implemented.
- 3.2.12 Commercial tenants are legally responsible for health and safety compliance, though the Council, as the landlord, shares this responsibility in buildings with communal spaces and shared services. Officers gather essential documentation from tenants, such as electrical and gas certifications, asbestos reports, and legionella risk assessments. If tenants fail to provide the required information and proof of compliance, they may be issued a formal Section 146 notice. This notice gives tenants a reasonable period to address any non-rent covenant breaches of their lease. Failure to comply with the notice could lead to forfeiture, potentially terminating the lease before its agreed end date.
- 3.2.13 An independent surveyor was appointed to assess the commercial portfolio for any Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) risks. Based on his expertise, historical knowledge of the portfolio, and several site visits, he identified no RAAC risk. Since RAAC planks were used from the mid-1950s to the early 1990s, buildings or extensions constructed outside this period are likely unaffected. Concerns about RAAC are limited to its durability and structural integrity, with no evidence of other health risks. We will continue to monitor this risk as more data becomes available through the 'Alaska 6' project.
- 3.2.14 There are currently 48 outstanding lease renewals, managed through negotiated agreements and the issuance of formal Section 25 notices, which enforce statutory lease renewal timelines. So far, 14 Section 25 notices have been served, with the remaining renewals set to receive notices to ensure leases are renewed within the required timeframe. To be effective, the Council must fully leverage available legal tools, including Section 25 notices, Section 146 notices, and forfeiture proceedings, to regularise leases, recover debts, and ensure compliance. Current analysis suggests that tenants who fail to comply in one area are likely to also show non-compliance in other aspects.
- 3.2.15 Following a comprehensive lease review, ten out of fourteen outstanding rent review memorandums for non-expired leases have been prepared, with notices

issued to initiate the rent review process. The remaining memorandums will be completed shortly. This review is expected to increase rent by approximately £60,000 per annum. Rent reviews for expired leases are strategically aligned with the lease renewal process, where final rents will be determined through independent market valuations and negotiations. This approach allows us to negotiate terms that reflect current market conditions and support long-term strategic interests, supporting sustainable outcomes.

3.2.16 Table 1: Property Portfolio (in scope)

Use	No. of Assets	sq m	Total Passing ² Rent p/a
Community	54	19,110	£528,081
Leisure	12	10,347	£216,851
Retail	17	3,462	£47,410
Office	12	33,568	£1,448,382
Other	14	2,205	£83,248
Total:	109	68,692	£2,323,972

3.2.17 Properties out of scope include residential housing assets, community schools and academies, day centres, family wellness centres, most highways and assets sold under long leases.

3.2.18 Properties within the FM Operational Estate need ongoing significant investments into the assets and audio-visual equipment updates, as identified following the comprehensive estate condition surveys and building fabric assessments conducted by the Facilities Management team in July 2021. These assessments detail the necessity of upgrading and replacing building systems, components, and fabric to maintain operational standards and staff satisfaction.

The proposed funding is provisionally structured as follows (the funding structure may need to be adjusted depending on the timing of the works and other project-related factors):

- £2.9 million for the fiscal year 2024/25
- £2.2 million for the fiscal year 2025/26
- £3.1 million for the fiscal year 2026/27
- **£8.2 million in total**

² Rent receivable in accordance with the lease(s) which may be different from the market rent.

3.2.19 This budget is to be prioritised for the FM Operational Estate. The properties currently affected for the fiscal year 2024/25 include:

- Brent Civic Centre
- Family Well-Being Centres
- Kingsbury Library
- Design Works
- Bridge Park
- Willesden Green Cultural Centre
- Freeman Family Centre
- Other retained estate buildings

3.2.20 This investment will enable the Property & Assets Team to replace ageing equipment, upgrade essential building components, and enhance spaces to meet current standards and reduce disruptions. The planned improvements are critical to maintaining operational standards, reducing building failures to a minimum, ensuring legal compliance and improving staff satisfaction across the operational estate. These upgrades will also support the proactive corporate landlord strategy, ensuring that our buildings remain fit for purpose and continue to meet our staff's and the community's needs.

3.2.21 The action plan for the strategy delivery is set out below.

Table 2: Timetable

Activity	Commencement	Target completion date
Seek Cabinet adoption of Property Strategy	Sep-24	Sep-24
Asset review (strategic themes) & scoring framework	Sep-24	Mar-25
EPC reviews	Apr-24 ³	Dec-24
Accessibility audit and review	Jun-24	Dec-24
Lease renewals (s25s)	Apr-24	Jun-25
Income management (debt)	Apr-24	Ongoing
Compliance and H&S	Apr-24	Ongoing
Rent reviews	Jun-24	Nov-25
Condition surveys, additional spending required (either by landlord or tenant depending on type of lease)	Oct-24	Oct-25
Data and systems periodic review	Jan-25	Mar-25
Case management implementation	Sep-24	Mar-25

³ Note that many operational improvement activities have already begun.

4.0 Stakeholder and ward member consultation and engagement

4.1 Consultation with stakeholders has taken place to gather feedback and input, shaping the property strategy's vision and objectives. The engagement has included one-to-one interviews and workshops with the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and senior lead members. In collaboration with CVS Brent, Officers from Property and Assets and Strategy and Partnerships have obtained feedback from the VCS. The following table of events summarises the engagement that has taken place in developing the strategy:

- Avison Young interviews with the Senior Leadership Team – August 2023
- Workshop 1 (SLT) – 20th September 2023
- Workshop 2 (PCG) – 28th November 2023
- Senior lead members – 24th January 2024
- Scrutiny – 27th February 2024
- Meeting and survey with VCS sector to obtain feedback – 29th May 2024
- Senior lead members – 24th July 2024

4.2 Throughout the development of this strategy, we have engaged in extensive discussions with a diverse range of stakeholders. Their valuable feedback has been instrumental in shaping our approach and ensuring that our strategy is responsive to the needs and expectations of all parties involved. We are committed to continuing this collaborative dialogue as we implement and refine our property strategy initiatives. In brief, stakeholder insights are summarised as follows:

- Stakeholders emphasised the importance of transparency and support for tenants in arrears, leading us to focus on proactive communication and assistance programs.
- Feedback highlighted the need for collaborative efforts with tenants to achieve energy efficiency.
- Stakeholders stressed the importance of inclusivity and compliance with accessibility standards, influencing our commitment to ongoing engagement and upgrades.
- Tenant feedback revealed a preference for flexibility and early engagement in lease renewals, shaping our proactive approach.
- Stakeholders stressed the need for transparency and timeliness in rent reviews, guiding us to adopt a structured and communicative approach.
- VCS stakeholders want affordable rents, regular feedback mechanisms, and forums for organisations to provide input and collaborate on initiatives.

5.0 Financial Considerations

5.1 If the strategy is approved, there will be cost implications that need to be funded.

5.2 Some condition data, such as condition and compliance surveys, will be costly and time-consuming; this could be mitigated through prioritisation based on desk-top surveys and existing condition information.

- 5.3 The strategic options are likely to result in future capital expenditure. These will be subject to a business case through the capital programme governance process. The capital pipeline and forward plan of capital projects include a provision for strategic property and asset management priorities. The property strategy consists of the option to dispose of surplus properties, which would generate capital receipts to fund other aspects of the plan.
- 5.4 A professional case management system to improve data quality and management would require funding, and a business case and procurement exercise to establish the cost would be necessary.
- 5.5 Funding would be required to ensure compliance, such as for energy performance (EPC), RAAC (Reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete) and electrical safety where risks are identified. These would be assessed on a case-by-case basis, and the cost of specialist surveys will vary depending on the property type and size. Once we comply with specific properties, we may unlock opportunities for further income generation.
- 5.6 To address the critical maintenance and improvement needs within our FM Operational Estate, a capital investment of £8.2 million is required over the next three fiscal years: £2.9 million for 2024/25, £2.2 million for 2025/26, and £3.1 million for 2026/27. This funding will replace ageing equipment, upgrade building and audio-visual components, and ensure compliance with current standards, thereby maintaining operational efficiency and staff satisfaction while reducing future unexpected maintenance costs.
- 5.7 This report requests total capital funding of £8.2 million for these projects, in addition to existing FM capital budgets. The associated debt financing cost will result in an annual cost of approximately £548,783 by 2026/27. Part of this will be mitigated by allocating any additional revenue generated by the Civic Centre to reduce the borrowing requirement or cover the yearly debt financing costs.

6.0 Legal Considerations

- 6.1 The occupation of the portfolio is primarily regulated by the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954 and s123 of the Local Government Act 1972 (best consideration), amongst other legislation.
- 6.2 The Council has a broad power to dispose of property held in the general fund in any manner it wishes, subject to an obligation to do so for the best consideration reasonably obtainable. This obligation is concerned with outcome and not process, and consideration means commercial or monetary payment rather than broader policy benefits.
- 6.3 The Council can also dispose of property held in the general fund for less than market value, provided consent is obtained from the Secretary of State. The Local Government Act 1972 General Disposal Consent (England) 2003 is a wide-reaching consent that allows disposal at an undervalue to promote economic, social or environmental well-being. The difference between the market value and the consideration must not exceed £2 million, and a

"professionally qualified valuer" must show the likely amount of the undervalue. If open space will be disposed of, then there are additional publicity requirements.

- 6.4 The key EPC regulations are the Energy Performance of Buildings Regs 2012, SI 2012/3118, and the Building Regs 2010, SI 2010/2214. An EPC is required when an existing building is sold or rented out. Enforcement of the EPC regime is by the local weights and measures authorities (through trading standards officers). These officers can request that a copy of the EPC recommendation report or inspection report be provided within seven days of request. Penalties are set out in EPC Regs 2012, SI 2012/3118, reg 38, and breaches connected to non-dwellings could lead to fines of between £500 and £5,000, depending on the rateable value of the building. In most cases, the fine is set at 12.5% of the rateable value of the building, subject to a minimum fine of £500 and a maximum fine of £5,000, with a default penalty of £750 where the formula cannot be applied.
- 6.5 The relationship between landlord and tenant is typically governed by leases, licences or tenancy at will, which set out the rights and obligations of the parties, lease renewal and termination procedures, and health and safety obligations. The relevant acts are the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954 and the Law and Property Act 1925.
- 6.6 The Landlord and Tenant Act 1954 can confer tenants with protection known as security of tenure, limiting the landlord's options. An alternative is to grant commercial premises leases to tenants outside the Act and not confer any tenure security to the tenants.
- 6.7 The Council can use various legal tools to actively manage the portfolio, such as Section 25 and Section 146 notices, forfeiture, surrender, break rights, or a tenant's notice to quit.
- 6.8 The Council's Constitution limits delegated authority powers for individual property transactions unless the Cabinet waives them. These limits are set out in Part 3 of the Constitution.

7.0 Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Considerations

- 7.1 Officers have conducted an initial equality impact assessment to investigate whether the property strategy and associated policy framework disproportionately affect people with a protected characteristic under the s149 Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty. It is noted that people who share protected characteristics benefit from the services provided by organisations that are Council lessees. EDI considerations are integral to the property strategy's purpose, content, and recommendations.
- 7.2 The initial assessment concludes that the property strategy has a neutral to positive impact on EDI considerations. This is because it highlights the importance of promoting equality, eliminating discrimination, and fostering inclusivity in managing and utilising Council-owned buildings. By implementing

the recommendations outlined in this report and adopting a proactive approach to equality and diversity, the Council can ensure that buildings serve as inclusive and accessible spaces that benefit all community members, regardless of their protected characteristics.

- 7.3 EDI considerations will be ongoing throughout the asset review process. Through the asset review (underpinned by a scoring methodology), officers will aim to identify any differential effects or barriers experienced by individuals or groups with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. This will lead to proactive steps to promote equality and eliminate discrimination.
- 7.4 Some properties beyond economical repair or surplus to requirement may need to be disposed of, but the proceeds will be reinvested into improving the remaining properties. This approach ensures that our assets are better maintained and more accessible, ultimately serving the community more effectively and helping to reduce inequalities. A phased approach to disposal will minimise disruption and allow communities to adapt. By reinvesting in our retained properties, we will create a higher quality, more accessible portfolio that meets the diverse needs of our community, driving long-term benefits and promoting equality.
- 7.5 Given that many of our assets serve the public, we will consistently update, review, and seek to ensure their accessibility. This commitment is central to our strategy. As outlined in the Equality Impact Assessment (EIA), the engagement we plan to undertake, especially with the VCS, will be crucial in understanding diverse needs and using these insights to inform and shape our projects and workstreams.

8.0 Climate Change and Environmental Considerations

- 8.1 Leading by example is an essential principle within Brent's Climate & Ecological Emergency Strategy (2021-2030). The Council is committed to doing all in our gift to be carbon neutral as a borough by 2030. The Council is working towards a decarbonisation strategy for Brent's corporate estate as part of our 2022-2024 climate and ecological delivery plan approved by Cabinet in June 2022.
- 8.2 The carbon footprint for the Council's estate and operations (corporate estate, street lighting and fleet) was reduced by 71.4% in the most recent year, 2022/23, compared to the 2010/11 baseline. Carbon emissions from the corporate estate were decreased by 67% in this period. 2023/24 carbon emissions data will be available later this summer.
- 8.3 The Council has recently successfully bid for decarbonisation grant funding for its corporate estate; for instance, £3.2m was secured from the Public Sector Decarbonisation Programme in 2021. However, applications for such funding sources have become increasingly competitive in recent years, with schemes often oversubscribed several times. Nevertheless, the Council will continue to identify and bid for all available external funding sources to continue investing in making our corporate estate carbon neutral.

8.4 Unless exempt, the property strategy seeks to ensure properties in use meet the current minimum EPC 'E' or above rating requirements.

8.5 The minimum EPC standards will likely become more challenging over the next few years, and the property strategy must be flexible to meet these changing standards.

9.0 Human Resources/Property Considerations (if appropriate)

9.1 Immediate human resource implications pertain to the requirements for a suitably qualified and multi-skilled workforce to enable change and the delivery of the property strategy, and this is in place.

10.0 Communication Considerations

10.1 Communication has been a critical component in developing the vision and strategy, and this will continue via Cabinet and through the implementation and delivery phases.

Report sign-off:

Minesh Patel

Corporate Director of Finance and Resources

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PROPERTY STRATEGY

2024-2027



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FOREWORD

In navigating unprecedented change, Brent Council must implement a progressive property strategy. This strategy aims to build a thriving and sustainable property portfolio for Brent's diverse community.

The strategy goes beyond just managing assets for rental income. It serves as a framework for using our property portfolio to unlock opportunities for economic growth, environmental sustainability, and social value.

Our vision is to create a sustainable, compliant, diverse and carbon-neutral property portfolio that contributes to thriving communities, enhances the local economy, and improves prosperity. Achieving this vision requires a collaborative approach, engaging with residents, businesses and community organisations to align our efforts with needs and enhance our collective potential.

Our Property Strategy sets a bold path towards adaptation, evidence-based decision-making, embracing change, and reimagining the potential of our property assets.

At the core of our strategy is a proactive approach to asset management. This ensures that every decision supports our Borough Plan 2023-27 and paves the way for a more equitable future for all of Brent.

I look forward to working with you to make this strategy successful for all.



Cllr Mili Patel
Deputy Leader and Cabinet
Member for Finance and
Resources

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Brent Council has developed its Property Strategy to align with the Borough Plan priorities and address the impacts of significant global shifts, including Brexit, the pandemic, and the cost-of-living crisis. These events have reshaped how we live and work and have profoundly affected how we use our properties and make decisions about our properties.

Our strategy is focused on using property assets to benefit our communities, support the economy and improve prosperity. Our approach goes beyond just managing buildings; it is about creating vibrant, secure and inclusive environments where our communities can grow, thrive and connect.

To optimise each property's use, benefits, safety, and inclusiveness, an asset review process, organised around four strategic themes, will be used to appraise each property. These four themes are supported by core principles that promote a responsive, data-driven approach to asset management. This framework not only aids in day-to-day decision-making but also endorses reimagining and reshaping our property portfolio to sustainably maximise its benefits to residents, businesses, and the voluntary and community sectors.

The Property Strategy is a crucial step towards creating social value and meeting the commitments of our Borough Plan. It fosters inclusivity, empowering communities on the starting premise of financial sustainability. We aim to work closely with stakeholders and the wider community to invigorate our property portfolio, ensuring it contributes to a legacy for Brent's present and future generations.

MISSION AND AIMS

As we continue to navigate through a period of scarce resources and environmental challenges, the strategic context in 2024 highlights the necessity for a balanced approach that aligns community expectations and financial sustainability, and ensures our property portfolio is well-maintained, accessible, inclusive, environmentally resilient, and compliant with regulations.

The gradual deterioration of some assets, especially vacant ones, combined with the pressures of environmental obsolescence and the need for budgetary prudence, presents a complex challenge.

Our community rightly expects spaces that support social well-being and economic activity. Yet, we must also secure a financial return to fund front-line services and maintain these spaces to futureproof against increasing environmental and statutory requirements.

The strategy provides a direction and a framework to address these challenges. It acknowledges that maintaining the status quo is not an option. Instead, we must strive for a dynamic management approach that can adapt to changing needs and priorities. This involves making difficult decisions and trade-offs about how we use, maintain, and invest in our properties to ensure they serve the best interests of our community – now and in the future.

“Without strategic intervention, we risk experiencing a decline in revenue, reduced available space, diminished social benefits, and potential issues with statutory compliance. By recognising and leveraging the untapped potential within our property portfolio, we can secure the necessary resources for essential investments in our assets, people, processes, and systems.”



Image top
Knowles House, Harlesden

Middle
Pakistan Community
Centre, Willesden

Bottom
Granville Centre, Kilburn

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Market trends in recent years have impacted not only the financial performance of our property assets but also the availability and quality of the spaces we can viably let to community-based organisations, businesses and residents.

Hybrid Working Styles

The shift towards hybrid working has altered the demand for premises in Brent. The emerging trends have led to changes in office design expectations, digitisation, Internet connectivity, and a growing demand for more ways to foster inclusivity, energy efficiency, collaboration, and communication.

Environmental Sustainability

Properties failing to meet Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) risk becoming obsolete, while 'green' buildings now command higher demand and maintenance costs. The Council's commitment to becoming carbon-neutral by 2030 and leading by example in retrofitting and reducing energy usage is crucial to changing attitudes and behaviours.

Whole Life Asset Management

Rising materials and labour costs make it more difficult to maintain buildings in good condition. Compliance with ever-increasing health and safety regulations and environmental performance is not only a legal responsibility but is increasingly becoming a determinant of property value and attractiveness to tenants.

Technological Advancements

With increasing choices, prospective tenants are expecting more from our buildings. To remain competitive, our buildings must offer robust Internet connectivity, access to essential amenities and flexibility to meet evolving needs.

Retail Shifts

Despite challenges posed by the pandemic on retail and high streets – and the growth of online shopping, retail spaces remain vital for local businesses. The "meanwhile uses" concept for our vacant spaces continues to be integral to our long-term regeneration approach, supporting entrepreneurship and community engagement.

Image far right top
Church End Road
market.

Image far right bottom
Freeman Family Centre,
Longstone Avenue



VISION

The direction of our property portfolio is clear: towards a more efficient and impactful collection of financially and environmentally viable assets aligned with the Council's key priorities. This does not necessarily mean reducing the number of properties we own; it is about strategically managing our assets to deliver more for our communities.

“TO CREATE A SUSTAINABLE, COMPLIANT, DIVERSE AND CARBON-NEUTRAL PROPERTY PORTFOLIO THAT CONTRIBUTES TO THRIVING COMMUNITIES, ENHANCES THE LOCAL ECONOMY, AND IMPROVES PROSPERITY.”

Image far right top
Volunteer at the Sikh Community Centre,
Stag Lane.

Image far right bottom
London Community Kitchen,
Civic Centre

This vision aligns with the Council's Borough Plan 2023-27 ambitions and priorities. It acknowledges the invaluable role our property portfolio plays not just in financial terms but in creating social benefits that touch every corner of our community.



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Our properties are crucial to Brent's well-being and vibrancy, from supporting the voluntary and community sectors to providing commercial spaces that drive employment and economic activity. The strategy aims to support our communities by effectively and efficiently using our property assets.

The strategy will realign our work with context and prioritisations. It establishes a framework for the council to develop its property efficacy by:



Implementing Robust Processes

This means working collaboratively across the Council to drive up the quality of decision-making and understanding of broader social needs. It means establishing appropriate metrics to support decision-making with greater emphasis on condition survey data and ensuring the portfolio is responsive to changing market demands and needs.

Managing Portfolio Compliance

This means buildings that are legally compliant, fully functional, accessible, optimally utilised, and generate the necessary income and support Council priorities. The portfolio must be right-sized to respond to available budgets and ensure that it is maintained in a good and safe condition, reflecting the highest needs, minimising waste, and promoting resource efficiency.

Investing Sustainably

This means building flexibility to enable the Council to pivot and adapt to changing needs by redeveloping and repurposing our assets or disposing of assets not aligned with our corporate priorities.

Image far right
One Public Realm Estate
proposals, Northwick Park



THE PORTFOLIO



Our property portfolio delivers various benefits to diverse organisations and businesses each year, including spaces occupied by the voluntary and community sector (VCS).

Assets in scope

The properties in scope of this strategy include the following types of general fund assets:

- Community buildings
- Leisure and recreation facilities
- Retail units
- Offices
- Other, e.g. markets, farmland, industrial

A standout feature of our portfolio is the Civic Centre in Wembley, which plays a crucial role in our Property Strategy. It is a financial pillar and a hub for essential services and community activities. Table 1 below shows the number of different types of assets and the income generated by each sort.

TABLE 1: PORTFOLIO OVERVIEW

Use	No. of Assets	Sq.m	Total Passing Rent p/a
Community	54	19,110	£528,081
Leisure	12	10,347	£216,851
Retail	17	3,462	£47,410
Office	12	33,568	£1,448,382
Other	14	3,302	£83,248
Total	109	68,692	£2,323,972

Including our multi-let buildings, the portfolio's total number of leases is approximately 128.

When we break down the portfolio, we find that 49.5% (54 units) is dedicated to community use, highlighting the Council's focus on fostering social well-being and community engagement (Chart 1). Over two-thirds of our property space is geared towards office and community space (Chart 2).

CHART 1: DISTRIBUTION BY TYPE

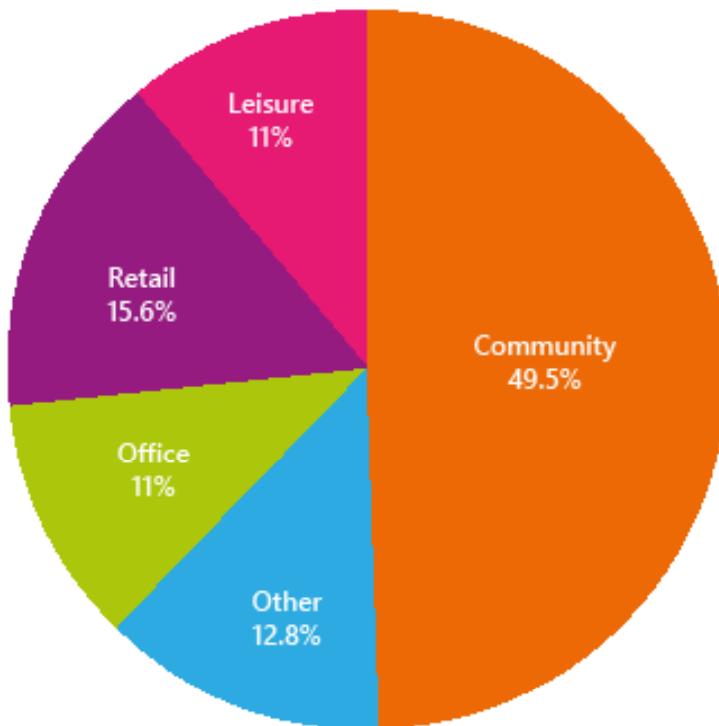


CHART 2: DISTRIBUTION BY SQUARE METERS.

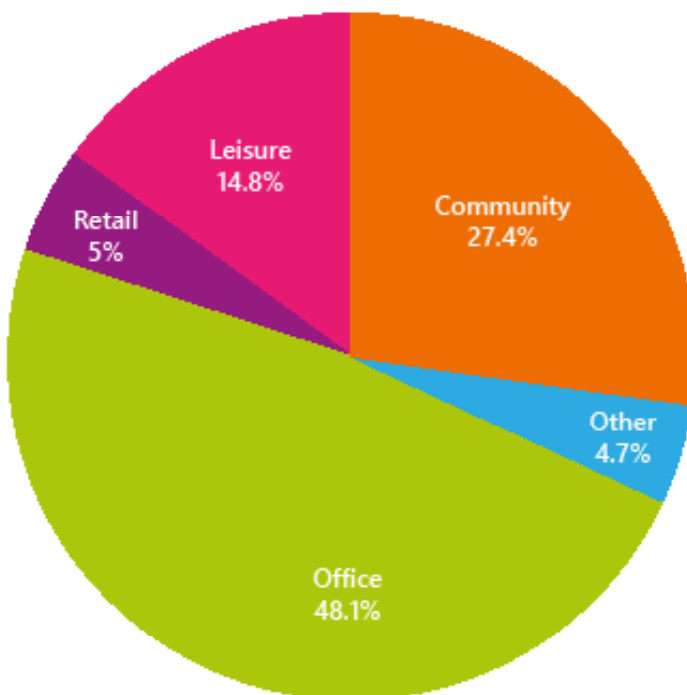


CHART 3: RATIO OF INCOME TO TYPE.

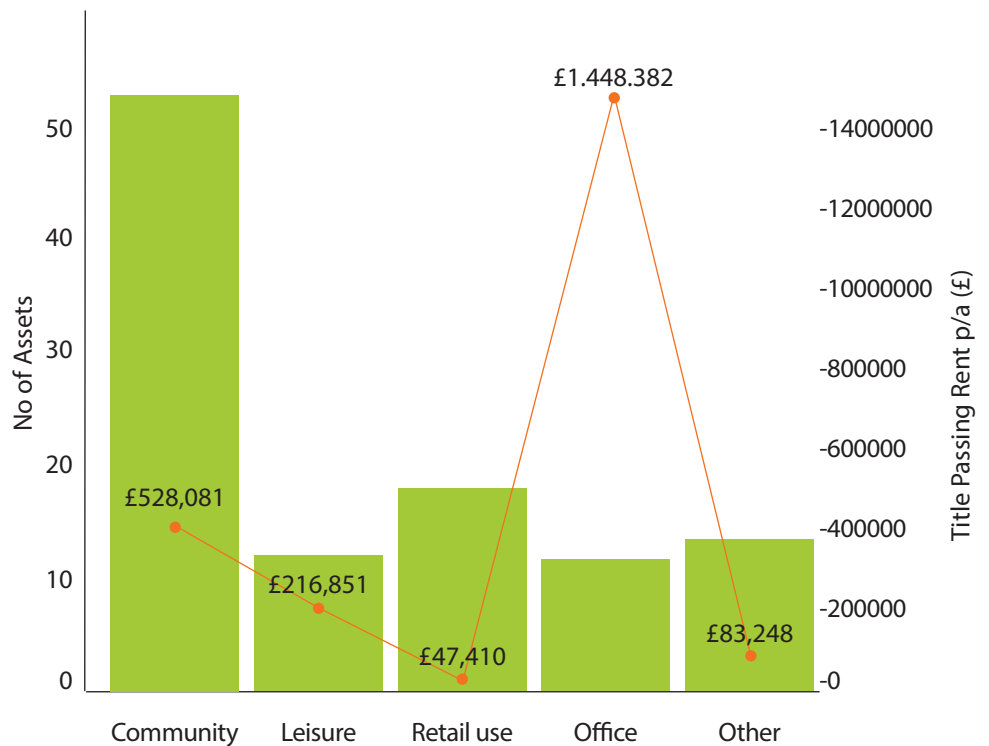


Chart 3 shows that we can no longer depend on income from our office spaces due to evolving work behaviours and arrangements. To ensure the sustainability of our portfolio, it is essential to diversify our revenue streams across all categories.

Assets out of the scope of this strategy

- Housing assets (Housing Revenue Account)
- Community schools and academies
- Day centres
- Family well-being centres
- Majority of Highways
- Most assets sold under long leases

Image far right top
Alric Avenue

Image far right bottom
Abbey Community Centre



STRATEGIC THEMES

Appraise every asset on its own merits for efficacy.

Segmenting the portfolio allows us to tailor strategies to maximise value and reduce risks associated with different asset types. Our approach revolves around four pivotal themes. This methodology categorises properties based on similar characteristics into distinct segments to allocate resources efficiently. The four segments and their strategic focus are shown below.

- Strategic Hold
- Actively Manage
- Invest
- Dispose

By adopting this segmentation approach, we are not just managing properties; we are strategically stewarding assets to serve the aims of our Borough Plan. Properties will be placed into strategic themes using a thorough asset review process and scoring methodology. The stages of this process include reviewing the following:

- Strategic relevance
- Financial and social benefits
- Condition and energy efficiency
- Accessibility
- Risks
- Opportunities

By applying this review process, we can identify properties that are working well, those that could work better, those that hold untapped potential (through improvement or alternative use) and those that provide no social or financial benefits and are surplus to requirement.

We have embedded principles under each objective to govern how we approach each decision related to that objective. These principles will provide a consistent approach to decision-making across the portfolio so that we can deliver the overarching strategy. The distinct themes and their principles are set out on the following pages.

Image far right top
WISE, Alric Avenue

Image far right bottom
Asian People Disability
Alliance, Alric Avenue



STRATEGIC HOLD



Image top
Learie Constantine Centre
Willesden

Middle
Brent Indian 'Swagat' Centre
Willesden

Bottom
Design Works
Harlesden

Comprising properties essential for the Council's long-term objectives, this segment includes assets critical for place shaping, economic benefits, or regeneration that are irreplaceable or currently provide substantial economic and social benefits.

Properties in this segment are suitable for current purposes, are in good condition, and require minor maintenance and infrequent reviews and intervention.

PRINCIPLES

Strategic Alignment

We will retain buildings that align with the Council's vision, mission, and values and contribute to economic development, prosperity, and stability.

Community Benefit

Buildings shall be retained when they provide essential goods or services to the community, support local businesses, e.g. meanwhile uses, or enhance the quality of life for residents.

Economic Viability

Buildings shall be retained when they generate revenue for the Council and are cost-effective to run, create jobs, stimulate economic activity, or attract investment.

Environmental

Retention decisions shall consider buildings' environmental impact, including their energy efficiency, ecological footprint, and potential for adaptive reuse or sustainable redevelopment.

Social

Buildings shall be retained when they provide accessible, affordable, culturally relevant goods or services to under-served populations or marginalised groups.

ACTIVELY MANAGE

Properties in this category can achieve more robust performance with relatively minor investments or management adjustments. Whether addressing arrears, tenant non-compliance, accessibility and energy efficiency, the right actions can enhance social and financial returns.

There is potential for improvement – operationally or strategically. These properties typically perform sub-optimally and need consideration to determine what the improvement could be and what is required to deliver it.

PRINCIPLES

Strategic Alignment

This policy aims to ensure that the management and operation of the Council’s buildings comply with legislation and represent responsible use of scarce resources.

Community Benefit

Prioritise building spaces to organisations that provide goods or services that meet the local community’s needs and gaps in the market. Support initiatives that promote social inclusion, diversity, and accessibility within buildings.

Economic Viability

Rent will be set and based on (1) open market value and (2), with some specific exceptions, a range of social factors reflecting the value the use of the premises may bring to the community, at all times satisfying legal requirements. Where necessary, take legal action to recover debts, regularise occupation, and enforce compliance.

Environmental

Implement energy-efficient practices and technologies where the energy efficiency measures meet the financial payback test to reduce buildings’ ecological footprints.

Social

Foster economic growth and job creation by providing opportunities for organisations to use vacant buildings awaiting redevelopment (e.g. meanwhile use) to attract businesses and create employment.



Image top
Granville Centre, Kilburn

Middle
Community cafe, Monks Park

Bottom
Former Medical Centre
Chapter Road

INVEST



Image top
Grove Park building
Kingsbury

Middle
Brent Indian Swagat Hall
Willesden

Bottom
WISE (sensory room), Alric
Avenue

This segment highlights properties with significant upside potential that align with strategic priorities but require capital investment. These include development projects that can benefit from land assembly or redevelopment to meet emerging community needs.

These assets have the potential for significant improvement or redevelopment to unleash the true potential of the building or the overall site. Options appraisals and feasibility studies will be undertaken to inform the business case and the benefits to the community, as well as other cross-cutting benefits, such as delivering more homes.

PRINCIPLES

Strategic Alignment

Land and buildings shall be redeveloped when their existing use no longer aligns with our goals and when alternative forms of spaces and uses offer more excellent value to the community.

Community Benefit

Investment and repurposing decisions shall prioritise uses and activities that provide tangible social benefits to the community.

Economic Viability

Investment and repurposing decisions shall consider the potential for generating revenue, improving building conditions or use and attracting investment to the area through innovative uses and partnerships.

Environmental

Investment and repurposing decisions shall promote ecological sustainability and resilience, incorporating green building practices and energy efficiency measures.

Social

Decisions shall prioritise affordable housing, community services, cultural amenities, and public spaces.

DISPOSE

This segment targets properties that represent a financial strain rather than a benefit due to high costs, low growth prospects, or significant liabilities. These properties might also have limited connection to our regeneration agenda or our communities and have been vacant for long periods.

Therefore, these properties do not meet the criteria for the preceding three themes and are surplus to requirement. Such properties are rarely cost-neutral, often depreciate in capital value over time, and represent significant future liabilities for the Council.

PRINCIPLES

Strategic Alignment

Decisions shall be guided by legislation and the Council's strategic objectives, priorities, and long-term plans for capital or revenue generation and the level of investment in the assets.

Community Benefit

Equality impact assessments will identify local community needs and the needs and preferences of residents, businesses, and stakeholders affected by the transaction.

Economic Viability

Buildings shall be assessed for their current condition, market value, potential for redevelopment, and any outstanding liabilities or obligations that may affect their value or suitability for sale.

Environmental

Decisions shall consider buildings' environmental impact, energy efficiency, ecological footprint, and potential for adaptive reuse or sustainable redevelopment.

Social

Disposal opportunities shall be open and accessible to all qualified buyers, developers, and stakeholders without discrimination or favouritism.



Image top
Fortune Gate Road
Harlesden

ACTION PLAN

As part of the property strategy, we are committed to driving significant improvements in the operational performance of our property portfolio. Our approach encompasses vital areas critical to ensuring the portfolio's long-term sustainability, such as improving rent collection, energy performance and accessibility. Our portfolio management is active and forward-looking, pinpointing and leveraging opportunities to fill underutilised, under-rented, or vacant properties. We are dedicated to realising the full potential of our assets by renting them at their maximum market value while delivering meaningful social returns. Concurrently, we seek to make our spaces more energy-efficient and inclusive, catering to the varied requisites of our community. This includes deploying interim solutions that align with and bolster our broader regeneration initiatives.

As we prepare to implement the Property Strategy's transformative recommendations, we have begun a thorough review of our assets and data. We look forward to collaborating with you in the months and years ahead to make the strategy a great success for residents.

Indicative Timeline 2024/25

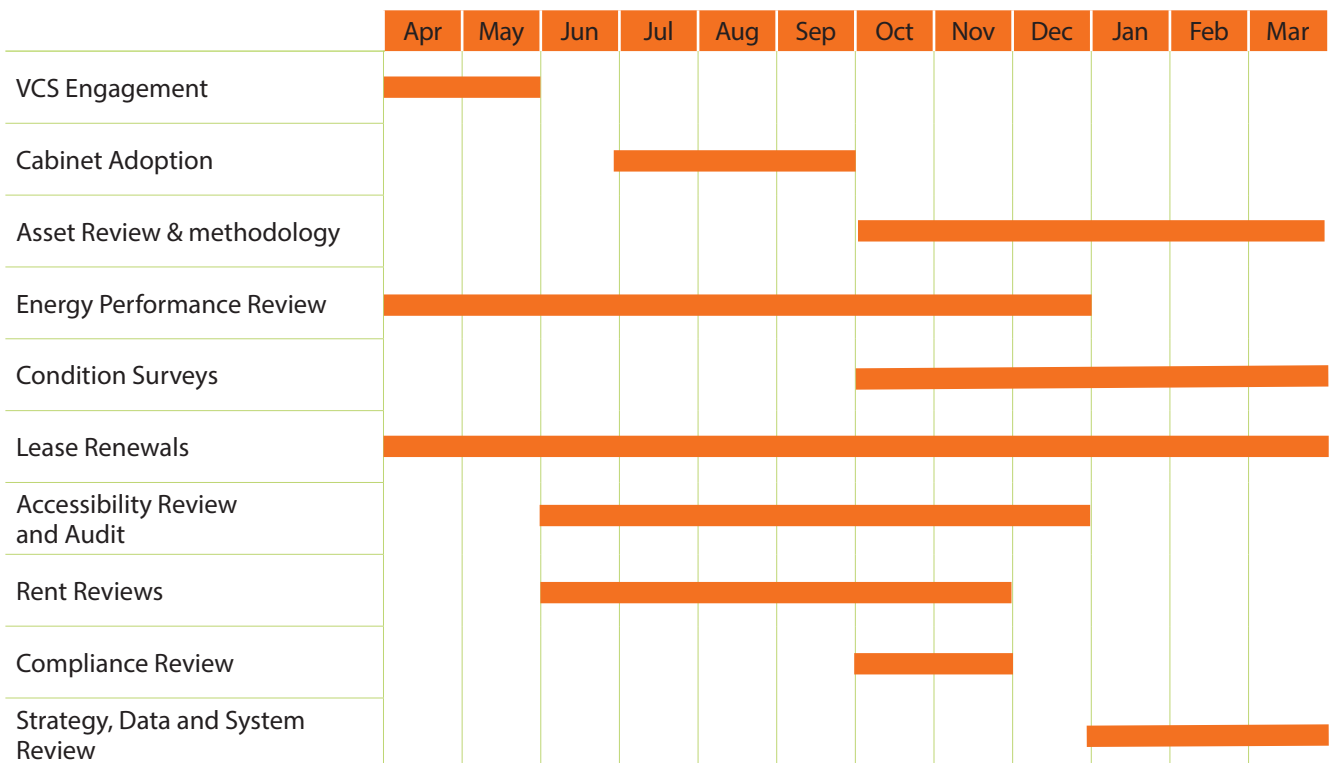




Image Top
Roundwood Park Cafe

Image Left
Kingsbury Manor, Kingsbury



London Borough
of Brent
Civic Centre
Engineers Way
Wembley
HA9 0FJ

www.brent.gov.uk

EQUALITY ANALYSIS (EA)

POLICY/PROPOSAL:	Property Strategy
DEPARTMENT:	Property and Assets
TEAM:	Commercial Property
LEAD OFFICER:	Denish Patel
DATE:	24th August 2024

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

SECTION A – INITIAL SCREENING

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

The proposal aims to ensure that the Council-owned commercial property assets meet the strategic aims of the Borough Plan. This includes generating revenue for the delivery of services and meeting the most pressing of social needs.

The proposal aims to strengthen safeguards for individuals with protected characteristics by ensuring Council-owned commercial buildings are safe spaces that serve as inclusive and accessible spaces that benefit all members of the community.

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

All persons who use, or benefit from, the commercial properties owned and let by the Council. This can include tenants, employees, visitors and those receiving services by businesses and the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS).

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

Yes there is a strong relevance to the Council's public sector equality duty. Many of the Council's commercial property are let to voluntary and community sector organisations that provide services to the community, including those residents with

protected characteristics. The proposal aims to ensure that Council-owned commercial buildings are accessible to all. Many council assets are used by the public or for the public, therefore we have a responsibility to ensure they are accessible. The proposed strategy and framework for commercial property and asset related activities will guide and shape services in accordance with priority needs, thereby having an overall positive impact on equality and diversity. Individual decisions will determine how scarce assets are utilised and operated on a day-to-day basis to meet legislative and specific service needs. There will be communities or residents that will be disadvantaged by strategic and operational decisions, as is the case now.

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

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

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

Screening Checklist

	YES	NO
Have you established that the policy or proposal <i>is</i> relevant to the council’s public sector equality duty?	X	
Does the policy or proposal relate to an area with known inequalities?	X	
Would the policy or proposal change or remove services used by vulnerable groups of people?	X	
Has the potential for negative or positive equality impacts been identified with this policy or proposal?	X	

If you have answered YES to ANY of the above, then proceed to section B.
If you have answered NO to ALL of the above, then proceed straight to section D.

SECTION B – IMPACTS ANALYSIS

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

Data and direct evidence on equality impact in respect of individual Council-owned commercial buildings is lacking. The analysis is based on the fact that the proposal is an over-arching framework for ensuring the portfolio remains financially sustainable and available for use by communities in the long-term. The proposal does not affect individual decisions on buildings but instead sets out a framework within which effective decisions can be made, and equality and inclusivity is a vital consideration within the proposed framework policies. Further evidence is required where the portfolio directly impacts on groups with protected characteristics.

Our strategy is focused on using property assets to benefit our communities, support the economy and improve prosperity and is designed to have a positive impact. Properties which are under-utilised, poorly managed and maintained, or vacant for long periods, invariably have a negative impact on equality.

A survey is being carried out on all of our properties, working with our tenants, to establish user needs and the current accessibility standards of our properties. This data will be invaluable to inform where improvements are required.

The Property and Assets Team will work closely with the Community and Partnerships Team and the VCS to seek additional evidence wherever possible to validate or refine the proposals and ensure stakeholders support and continue informing approach and actions e.g., engaging with Brent Mencap to understand accessibility needs and engaging with the Brent Multi Faith Forum to understand how our assets can be more conducive for holding events and making them accessible for particular faiths (e.g., prayer rooms).

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

AGE

Details of impacts identified	Improving accessibility will have a positive impact on people of all ages, particularly the elderly and those with disabilities. Enhanced facilities, such as ramps, wider doorways, and accessible restrooms, ensure that older adults and individuals with disabilities can navigate spaces with ease and dignity. This not only promotes inclusivity but
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	<p>also supports their independence and encourages greater participation in community activities. By prioritising accessibility, we create environments that cater to the diverse needs of all age groups, fostering a more inclusive and supportive community for everyone.</p>
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DISABILITY

<p>Details of impacts identified</p>	<p>Improved accessibility allows individuals with disabilities to use facilities independently, enhancing their quality of life and enabling greater participation in community activities.</p>
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RACE

<p>Details of impacts identified</p>	<p>By creating properties that are welcoming, accessible, and inclusive, we can enhance the quality of the space, making it more appealing and conducive for people to use for events such as for cultural activities and celebrations.</p> <p>Improved properties can attract diverse businesses, providing economic opportunities and fostering a multicultural business environment.</p> <p>By maintaining high-quality properties, the strategy can attract businesses and services that provide employment opportunities and stimulate local economies, benefiting all community members.</p> <p>Ensuring that all community members, regardless of age, race, religion, or disability, have access to well-maintained and inclusive spaces promotes social equity and reduces inequalities.</p>
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SEX

<p>Details of impacts identified</p>	<p>Not known as these would only be known on a case by case basis.</p>
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SEXUAL ORIENTATION

<p>Details of impacts identified</p>	<p>Not known as these would only be known on a case by case basis.</p>
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PREGANCY AND MATERNITY

<p>Details of impacts identified</p>	<p>Not known as these would only be known on a case by case basis.</p>
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RELIGION OR BELIEF

Details of impacts identified	<p>By providing well-maintained, inclusive spaces, the strategy can enhance community cohesion through shared use of these spaces.</p> <p>Well maintained and accessible properties include facilities that accommodate various religious and cultural activities and practices.</p>
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GENDER REASSIGNMENT

Details of impacts identified	Not known as these would only be known on a case by case basis.
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MARRIAGE & CIVIL PARTNERSHIP

Details of impacts identified	Not known as these would only be known on a case by case basis.
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3. Could any of the impacts you have identified be unlawful under the Equality Act 2010?

No

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

Yes further engagement is required. Participants in engagement initiatives may be representative of the people who will be affected by the proposals.

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

Enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of the property portfolio can significantly advance equality across age, race, religion, and disability dimensions. Additionally, improving energy efficiency in our buildings will benefit those from lower income groups, small businesses and charitable organisations by lowering energy bills and reducing service costs, which are often passed onto residents and customers who access these services.

Collecting data through a comprehensive survey on the accessibility standards of our properties will provide insights into where improvements are needed. This ensures that the benefits of enhanced property management are widely felt, contributing to a more inclusive and equitable society.

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

Managing and utilising finite and scarce property resources will inevitably involve making difficult choices, which cannot be avoided. The purpose of the proposal is to ensure that decisions made are in line with the Borough Plan priorities thereby supporting those most in need.

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

The Property and Assets Team will need to work closely with stakeholders to gather evidence and monitor impact of the strategic proposals and interventions.

SECTION C - CONCLUSIONS

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

Mitigating actions are not required at this stage. Negative impacts can only be known when individual property decisions are made. No individual decisions on properties are being made by this proposal. The desired outcome of the proposal is to create and enhance positive impacts and minimise negative impacts by ensuring that assets are managed in a way that supports the long term use of commercial assets for the benefit of the community. The proposal also seeks to ensure that the decision-making process involves relevant stakeholders.

SECTION D – RESULT

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

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

SECTION E - ACTION PLAN

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


Action	Expected outcome	Officer	Completion Date
Engage with stakeholders and with the VCS throughout the process of refining and developing the proposal prior to seeking Cabinet approval.	To understand the concerns of the VCS and other stakeholders and incorporate their feedback into the proposal.	Denish Patel	May 2024
Survey on accessibility followed by analysis and review.	Improve knowledge and insight into current accessibility standards and where improvements are needed.	Denish Patel	Dec 2024
Carry out energy performance assessment (EPC) on all properties within the portfolio.	Understanding of where improvements can be made cost-effectively to improve energy efficiency and assist with the cost of living which disproportionately affects those from lower income groups.	Denish Patel	Dec 2024

SECTION F – SIGN OFF

Please ensure this section is signed and dated.

OFFICER:	Denish Patel
REVIEWING OFFICER:	Angela Chaudhry, Agnieszka Spruds, Tom Pickup
HEAD OF SERVICE / Operational Director:	Tanveer Ghani, Director of Property and Assets

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	Cabinet 9 September 2024
	Report from the Corporate Director Finance and Resources
	Lead Member – Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources (Councillor Mili Patel)
Treasury Management Outturn 2023-24	

Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	Key
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:	Four: Appendix 1: Economic Commentary Appendix 2: Debt and Investments Portfolio Appendix 3: Average Rate vs Credit Risk Appendix 4: Prudential Indicators
Background Papers:	None
Contact Officer(s): <small>(Name, Title, Contact Details)</small>	Nadeem Akhtar, Senior Finance Analyst Capital, Treasury & Commercial Email: nadeem.akhtar@brent.gov.uk Tel: 020 8937 5957 Alex Essilfie-Bondzie Interim Head of Finance (Capital, Treasury and Commercial) Capital, Treasury & Commercial Email: Alex.Essilfie-Bondzie@brent.gov.uk Tel: 020 8937 1679

1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out the outturn for the Council's Treasury Management Activities for 2023/24. The Local Government Act 2003 and the Local Authorities (Capital Financing and Accounting) Regulations 2003 require that regular reports be submitted to the relevant Council Committee detailing the Council's treasury management activities.

1.2 This report updates Members on both the borrowing and investment decisions made by the Corporate Director Finance and Resources under delegated authority in the context of prevailing economic conditions and considers the Council's Treasury Management performance. The Council can only borrow for capital investment, it cannot borrow to fund operational, day to day expenditure. The borrowing supports the Council's capital investment programmes for both Council Housing (HRA) and General Fund.

1.3 Key emerging points are as follows:

1. The Council has complied with its Prudential Indicators for 2023/24.
2. Borrowing outstanding at 31 March 2024 was £814.3m and had increased from £774.9m over the course of the financial year, a change of £38.9m. The change in debt was due to raising £130.0m of new loans and repaying £91.1m of maturing debt.
3. Cash Investments outstanding at 31 March 2024 was £95.3m and had decreased from £116.2m over the course of the financial year, a change of £20.9m.
4. The Council's Capital Financing Requirement (CFR- representing the underlying need to borrow) changed from £1,138.8m to £1,236.6m, a change of £97.8m.
5. The Council's average debt pool rate was 3.89% as a 31 March 2024 and had changed from 3.49% (31 March 2023), caused by borrowing in rising interest rate environment.
6. The Council's rate of return on cash investments was 5.31% from 4.08% (31 March 2023) reflecting the numerous Bank of England Bank Rate changes during the financial year (3 times).
7. Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) charge for 2023/24 for the General Fund was £18.1m in accordance with the Council's approved MRP Policy (date of approval 23/02/2023). The charge comprised of £13.4m that was chargeable on schemes funded by prudential borrowing; and £4.7m on PFI schemes. A further £0.9m was recognised for Service Loans, where no MRP was charged but principal payments reduced the debt liability in accordance with Statutory regulations.

2.0 Recommendation(s)

That Cabinet:

2.1 Note and comment in the overall financial performance for 2023/24.

- 2.2 Approve the submission of the report to Full Council for approval in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice

3.0 Cabinet Member Foreword

- 3.1 The contribution of the Treasury Management function is critical to ensuring the Council's cash flow is adequately planned and managed. The function's activities underpin all Borough Plan priorities in providing cash management for all Council services and ensuring affordability for projects within the Capital Programme. The operations look to optimise the effect of borrowing costs and investment income whilst managing the risks associated with those activities in line with the Council's Treasury Management Strategy approved by Full Council in February 2023. The economic climate has been extremely volatile with the ongoing geo-political tensions across the world and the impact of managing rising inflation and interest rates. The report sets out details of how the function managed the Council's activities in accordance with the relevant professional codes and legislation during 2023/24.
- 3.2 The regular reporting of treasury management activities assists Members to scrutinise officer decisions and monitor progress on the implementation of its borrowing and investment strategy as approved by Full Council.
- 3.3 The Council's treasury management activity is underpinned by Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice (the CIPFA Code), which requires authorities to produce annually Prudential Indicators and a Treasury Management Strategy Statement on the likely financing and investment activity.

4.0 Detail

4.1 Background

- 4.4.1 The Council has borrowed money over the long term to support investment in the Council's infrastructure and invests cash balances held for short periods. It is therefore exposed to financial risks including the loss of invested funds and the revenue effect of changing interest rates. The successful identification, monitoring and control of risk are central to the Council's treasury management strategy.
- 4.1.2 The Council has adopted the CIPFA Code which requires the Authority to approve, as a minimum, treasury management semi-annual and annual outturn reports.
- 4.1.3 The 2021 Prudential Code includes a requirement for local authorities to provide a Capital Strategy, a summary document approved by full Council covering capital expenditure and financing, treasury management and non-treasury investments. The Council's Capital Strategy and Treasury Management Strategy, complying with CIPFA's requirement, was approved by full Council at a Budget and Council Tax Setting Council meeting on 23 February 2023.

4.1.4 The Council has borrowed and invested substantial sums of money and is therefore exposed to financial risks including the loss of invested funds and the revenue effect of changing interest rates. The successful identification, monitoring and control of risk remains central to the Council's treasury management strategy.

4.2 Economic Background

4.2.1 Key points emerging for 2023/24:

- UK inflation continued to decline from the 8.7% rate seen at the start of 2023/24. By the last quarter of the financial year headline consumer price inflation (CPI) had fallen to 3.4% in February.
- The UK economy entered a technical recession in the second half of 2023.
- Bank Rate was maintained at 5.25% through to March 2024 having increased from 4.25% at the start of the financial year.
- Sentiment in financial markets remained uncertain and bond yields continued to be volatile over the year.
- Credit conditions improved during the financial year resulting in investment periods increasing from 35 days to 100 days.

4.2.2 Appendix 1 provides a full economic commentary for the financial year.

4.3 Balance Sheet Summary

4.3.1 As at 31 March 2024, the Council had a net borrowing position of £719.0m arising from its revenue and capital income and expenditure. The underlying need to borrow for capital purposes is measured by the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR), while balance sheet resources are the underlying resources available for investment. These factors are summarised in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Balance Sheet Summary

	31.3.23 Actual (Original) £m	31.3.23 Actual (Revised) £m	31.3.24 Actual £m
General Fund CFR	851.4	844.6	935.7
HRA CFR	294.9	294.9	300.9
Total CFR	1,146.4	1,139.5	1,236.6
PFI & Lease Liabilities	36.2	36.2	32.5
Total Loan CFR	1,182.6	1,175.72	1,269.11

External borrowing (Excluding accrued interest)*	781.0	774.9	814.3
Internal Borrowing (Loans CFR less external borrowing)		364.6	422.3
Less Usable Reserves	(491.2)	(491.2)	(513.3)
Less Working Capital	(173.6)	10.4	(4.3)
Investments (or new borrowing)	116.2	116.2	95.3

*Original 2022/23 includes £6.1m accrued interest

4.3.2 The treasury management position at 31st March and the change during the year is shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Balance sheet summary

	31.3.23 Actual £m	Movement	31.3.24 Actual £m
Short-term Borrowing	91.1	(6.9)	84.2
Long-term Borrowing	683.8	46.2	730.0
Total External Debt	774.9	39.4	814.3
Money Market Funds	116.2	(25.9)	90.3
Local Authority Cash Investments	0.0	5.0	5.0
Total Cash Investments	116.2	(20.9)	95.3
Net Debt	658.7	60.3	719.0

4.3.3 Borrowing has increased in the past year, in order to meet the requirements of the Council's long-term Capital investment programme as internal cash resources were utilised.

4.3.4 Cash investments decreased over the year following the repayment of maturing debt and ongoing investment in the Council's capital programme in lieu of borrowing.

4.3.5 Appendix 2 details the debt and investment portfolio as at 31 March 2024.

4.4 **Borrowing**

4.4.1 The Council's main objective when borrowing is to strike an appropriately low risk balance between securing low interest costs and achieving cost certainty over the period for which funds are required, with flexibility to renegotiate loans should the Council's long-term plans change being a secondary objective. The Authority's borrowing strategy continues to address the key issue of affordability without compromising the longer-term stability of the debt portfolio.

4.4.2 CIPFA's 2021 Prudential Code is clear that local authorities must not borrow to invest primarily for financial return and that it is not prudent for local authorities to make any investment or spending decision that will increase the capital financing requirement and so may lead to new borrowing, unless directly and

primarily related to the functions of the Authority. PWLB loans are no longer available to local authorities planning to buy investment assets primarily for yield unless these loans are for refinancing purposes.

- 4.4.3 The Authority has not invested in assets primarily for financial return or that are not primarily related to the functions of the Authority. It has no plans to do so in future.
- 4.4.4 The Council had a borrowing position of £774.9m as at 1 April 2023. This had increased to £814.3m as at 31 March 2024. Table 3 provides the breakdown of loan balances.

Table 3- breakdown of debt

Loan Type	01-Apr-23	New Loans	Repaid loans	31-Mar-24
	£m	£m	£m	£m
PWLB	538.7	60.0	(8.9)	589.8
LOBO	70.5	0.0	(11.0)	59.5
Private Placement	95.0	0.0	0.0	95.0
Local Authority	70.0	70.0	(70.0)	70.0
Salix	0.7	0.0	(0.7)	0.0
Total Debt Outstanding	774.9	130.0	(90.6)	814.3
Accrued Interest	6.1	10.0	(6.1)	10.0
Total Debt and Accrued Interest Outstanding	781.0	140.0	(96.7)	824.3

- 4.4.5 The Council raised £130.0m of new loans during the Year. Two long-term loans totalling £60.0m (£40m and £20m) were raised with the PWLB on an Equal Instalment Principal (EIP) structure. A further £70.0m of short-term loans were raised with various local authorities to support the Council's daily cashflow activity as cash balances had depleted. This borrowing requirement was driven by the demands of delivering the capital programme not already funded through grants, contributions, capital receipts or reserves. Local authority loans were raised at an average rate of 5.70% with an average duration of 365 days. The interest rates reflect the current rising interest rate environment.
- 4.4.6 The two PWLB EIP loans raised in November 2023 were at a rate of 4.60% and 4.41% for a loan duration of 20 and 12 years respectively. The loans were applied for on the behalf of the HRA and the Council took advantage of the PWLB HRA concessionary rate. The PWLB HRA rate which is 0.4% below the certainty rate was made available from 15th June 2023. This rate will now be available to June 2025. The discounted rate is to support local authorities borrowing for the Housing Revenue Account. The loans have been applied to fund the following HRA capital expenditure that was initially financed by internal borrowing at the respective time:

- i. 2021/22 and 2022/23 capital expenditure that was designated to be financed through borrowing: £25.1m and £26.2m respectively.
 - ii. 2023/24 capital expenditure- Out of a total of £16.5m that was financed through internal borrowing, £8.6m has been replaced with the PWLB loans.
- 4.4.7 During 2023/24 the Council repaid £90.6m of loans that were held with the PWLB (£8.9m); local authorities (£70.0m); LOBO loan (£11.0m) and Salix loans (£0.7m). The PWLB loans consisted of EIP loans whilst the local authority loans were temporary loans held for cashflow purposes. A LOBO loan held with Commerzbank AG was repaid following the Lender exercising the Call Option in accordance with the loan agreement. An alternative rate was offered by the Lender, which was higher than the current loan rate, but the offer was declined by the Council following an option appraisal of alternative options that were available to the Council at the time that offered better value. The LOBO loan was repaid from existing cash balances.
- 4.4.8 Overall, the total debt movement was an increase of £39.4m.
- 4.4.9 Interest rates have risen substantially over the last two years, although these rises have now begun to plateau. Gilt yields fell in late 2023, reaching April 2023 lows in December 2023 before rebounding to an extent in the first three months of 2024. Gilt yields have remained volatile, seeing upward pressure from perceived stickier inflation at times and downward pressure from falling inflation and a struggling economy at other times.
- 4.4.10 The cost of short-term borrowing from other local authorities has generally risen with Base Rate over the year. Interest rates peaked at around 7% towards the later part of March 2024 as many authorities required cash at the same time. These rates are expected to fall back to more normal market levels in April 2024.
- 4.4.11 **Loan Restructuring:** No loans were restructured during 2023/24. The Council will continue to monitor and evaluate the opportunity to reschedule existing loans. The Council received a proposal to restructure one of its LOBO loans on the loan review date, but the Council chose not to accept the proposal. Further details are below.
- 4.4.12 **LOBO Loans:** As at 31 March 2024 the Council was holding £59.5m of LOBO loans. A £11.0m LOBO loan was borrowed from Commerzbank AG on 12th February 2003 with an interest rate of 4.99% and was expected to mature 12th February 2067. The loan was structured with periodic rate review dates, with first one being February 2008 and then every four years thereafter. The loan was due for a rate review on 12th February 2024. The Bank had approached the Council prior to the review date and proposed a new rate of 5.76% for the remainder of the loan duration (subject to further periodic reviews). Upon consideration, the Council had declined the offer as it had sufficient cash balances at the time, as well as that the PWLB loans were trading between 4.67% and 5.35% depending on loan duration and loan structure, with a further expectation of loan rates coming down in the near to medium term future. The

expectation being that the Council would defer the need to borrow until such time depleted cash (due to internally borrowing) was to be replaced.

4.4.13 There are no LOBO call reviews in 2024/25 but £35m is expected to be reviewed in 2025/26. Therefore, there is no immediate risk to these loans requiring early repayment or experiencing rate rises in 2024/25. The Council will keep LOBO loans under review in 2024/25 and consider any premature opportunities that arise to prepay or restructure the LOBOs rather than carrying an ongoing substantial interest risk.

4.4.14 **Forward Borrowing:** There were no forward agreed loans as at 31 March 2024.

4.5 Maturity Profile of Debt

4.5.1 As at 31 March 2024 the Council had 72 loans spread over 50 years with the average maturity being 25 years. The maturity profile allows the Council to spread the risk of high interest rates when debt matures in any one year.

Table 4: Debt maturity profile

Maturity Profile at 31 March 2024 (£m)	2023/24
<1 Year	84.2
1-2 Years	48.7
3-5 years	47.0
5-10 Years	73.4
10-15 Years	75.8
15-20 Years	68.5
20-25 Years	92.9
25-30 Years	29.4
30-35 Years	183.2
35-40 Years	6.1
40-45 Years	0.0
45+ Years	105.0
Debt outstanding	814.3

4.5.2 The Councils average debt pool rate at 31 March 2024 was 3.89%

4.6 Capital Financing Requirement

4.6.1 The underlying need to borrow for capital purposes is measured by the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR). This is the amount of the Capital Programme, past and present, that is funded by borrowing and has not been paid for by revenue or other resources.

4.6.2 The Council's external borrowing was £814.3m and was within the Prudential Indicator for external borrowing, namely, that borrowing should not exceed the original estimated gross loan CFR for 2023/24 of £1,389.0m. Actual loan CFR

as at 31 March 2024 stood at £1,236.6m. This can be split between the General Fund (£935.7m) and the HRA (£300.9m). The difference between the Loan CFR and external loans is internal borrowing. Internal borrowing occurs due to timing differences when capital expenditure that is meant to be financed through external debt is instead paid for through cash resources that are intended for other purposes. Cash is replenished later. Internal borrowing at 31 March 2024 was £422.3m as shown in Tale 5.

4.6.3 During the year there were a number of assets (land and buildings) that moved between the HRA and the General Fund for the purpose of regeneration and development. In total assets with a certified value of £10.8m were transferred from the HRA to the General Fund, and the respective CFRs were adjusted.

4.6.4 The General Fund CFR was reduced by £18.9m following the application of Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) charges and service loan repayments. MRP is discussed further below.

Table 5: Capital Financing Requirement

Capital Financing Requirement (CFR)	31-Mar-23	31/03/2024 (Draft Accounts)
	£m	£m
General Fund	844.6	935.7
Housing Revenue Account	295.0	300.9
Total CFR	1,139.5	1,236.6
Other Debt Liabilities	36.2	32.5
Loan CFR	1,175.7	1,269.1
External Borrowing	774.9	814.3
Internal Borrowing	364.6	422.3
2023/24 Council Approved Limits (Capital Strategy)		
Approved Operational Boundary Limit	1,200.0	1,500.0
Approved Authorised Limit	1,400.0	1,700.0
Forecasted CFR	1,125.6	1,389.0

4.6.5 The movement in the Loan CFR of £97.0m between 31 March 2023 and 31 March 2024 can be explained in Table 6.

Table 6: Movement in CFR

	£m
Opening Loan CFR April 2023	1,139.6
Closing Loan CFR 31 March 2024	1,236.6
Change in Loan CFR	97.0
Capital expenditure 2023/24	213.0
Capital expenditure Financing	(91.5)
MRP	(18.1)
Service Loans Repaid	(0.9)

I4B Technical Adjustment	(5.8)
Other	0.3
Total Movements in CFR	97.0

4.7 Minimum Revenue Provision

4.7.1 The Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) is the charge to revenue made in respect of paying off the principal sum of the borrowing undertaken to finance the capital programme. The statutory guidance provides options for calculating a charge that is considered prudent. The approach for this calculation is approved as part of the budget setting process each February by Full Council in the Minimum Revenue Provision Statement.

4.7.2 The 2023/24 MRP charge was reviewed and some amendments were made to the assets where prudential borrowing has been undertaken. The changes include an update to asset lives and the MRP interest rate was aligned with the average annual PWLB Annuity rate for the respective asset life. The charge for the year totalled £18.1m and consisted of £13.4m for capital programme borrowings (historical supported borrowings and unsupported borrowings); and £4.7m for the PFI schemes. A further £0.9m was received by the Council for service loan repayments. Total debt repayments equated to £19.0m. The Council did not make any voluntary MRP during the year.

4.7.3 In December 2023 the Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities (DLUHC) published two consultations: a “final” consultation on proposed changes to regulations and statutory guidance on MRP closing on 16th February 2024 and a “call for views” on capital measures to improve sector stability and efficiency closing on 31st January 2024. The Council responded to both consultations by putting forward its views.

4.7.4 Draft regulations and draft statutory guidance are included in the MRP consultation. The proposals remain broadly the same as those in June 2022 – to limit the scope for authorities to firstly make no MRP on parts of the capital financing requirement (CFR) and secondly to use capital receipts in lieu of a revenue charge for MRP.

4.7.5 In its call for views on capital measures, government wishes to engage with councils to identify and develop options for the use of capital resources and borrowing to support and encourage ‘invest-to-save’ activity and to manage budget pressures without seeking exceptional financial support. Whilst Government has identified some options including allowing authorities to capitalise general cost pressures and meet these with capital receipts, there is no commitment to take any of the options forward.

4.8 Cost of Borrowing

4.8.1 Total debt costs for the year were £31.2m, comprising of £30.3 interest costs and £0.9m non-interest costs. Details are provided in Table 7. The average interest rate paid on total external debt in 2023/24 was 3.89% (3.49% in 2022/23). Table 4 shows the Council’s total cost of maintaining its debt portfolio,

as well as how the debt cost has been recharged to the HRA. The overall cost to the General Fund was £22.2m, whilst the HRA was recharged £8.9m for its share of debt.

Table 7: Debt costs

Capital Financing Costs at 31 March 2024 (£m)	2023/24
	Actual
Total Gross External Debt Interest	30.3
Other Interest Payments	3.3
Total Interest Payable & Expenses	33.6
Interest Earned on Treasury Cash Investments	(6.4)
Interest Earned on Subsidiary and Service Loans	(18.1)
Total Interest Receivable	(24.5)
Net Interest	9.1
MRP (Excluding PFI)	13.4
Revenue Contributions to Capital Programme	8.5
Total Capital Financing Costs	30.9
Budget	25.0
Revenue Contribution from Service	0.5
Total Budget	25.5
Variance	(5.4)
Drawdown from Capital Reserve	5.4
Net Position at Outturn	0.0
General Fund Share of Capital Financing Cost	22.5
HRA Share of Capital Financing Cost (Net)	7.9
Total Capital Financing Cost	30.4

4.8.2 Other interest payable and expenses relates to the following items:

- i. Barham Park Fund- Interest: £0.02m
- ii. Professional fees £0.1m
- iii. Loan premiums £0.8m

- 4.8.3 Higher interest rates throughout 2023/24 have increased the cost of short-term loans. The Council pursued its strategy of keeping external borrowing lower than its underlying level by temporarily using cash held for other purposes, known as internal borrowing, in order to reduce risk and minimise the interest costs incurred from external borrowing.
- 4.8.4 Interest on treasury cash investments has been generated on cash balances held within money market funds, investments with other local authorities and the Debt Management office. The Council has generated a rate of return of 5.31% for 2023/24.
- 4.8.5 Interest on subsidiary loans relate to I4B and First Wave Housing, two wholly owned Council companies. The interest relates to loans advanced to the Companies.
- 4.8.6 Service loan interest relates to loan advances to Brent schools, the West London Waste Authority and Alperton Academy.

4.9 Investment Activity

- 4.9.1 CIPFA published a revised Treasury Management in the Public Services Code of Practice and Cross-Sectoral Guidance Notes on 20th December 2021. These define treasury management investments as investments that arise from the organisation's cash flows or treasury risk management activity that ultimately represents balances that need to be invested until the cash is required for use in the course of business.
- 4.9.2 The Council holds invested funds, representing income received in advance of expenditure plus balances and reserves. During the year, the Council's investment balances ranged between £86.4m and £192.8m due to timing differences between income and expenditure. The investment position is shown in table 8 below.

Table 8: Treasury investment activity

	31-Mar-23	Movement	31-Mar-24
	£m	£m	£m
Local Authority and DMADF Deposits	0.0	5.0	5.0
Money Market Funds	116.2	(25.9)	90.3
Total Cash Investments (Excluding accrued interest)	116.2	(20.9)	95.3

- 4.9.3 The CIPFA Treasury Management Code requires local authorities to consider their counterparty policies in light of environmental, social and governance (ESG) information. The Council has regard to funds who have signed up to ESG related initiatives, including the UN Principles for responsible investment, the UK Stewardship Code and the Net-Zero Asset Managers Initiative.
- 4.9.4 Both the CIPFA Code and government guidance require the Council to invest its funds prudently, and to have regard to the security and liquidity of its treasury

investments before seeking the optimum rate of return, or yield. The Council's objective when investing money is to strike an appropriate balance between risk and return, minimising the risk of incurring losses from defaults and the risk of receiving unsuitably low investment income.

- 4.9.5 Increasing interest rates have led to improved returns on our short-dated holdings. At 31st March 2024, the Council achieved circa 5.3% from cash investment holdings, which compares to 4.1% a year earlier. Rates have increased throughout the year in line with the increase in Bank Rate. Appendix 3 details the average rate earned on investments against credit risk exposure.
- 4.9.6 Given the higher interest rate environment and the Council's need to hold cash for day-to-day requirements, deposits have been held in short term investments, providing the Council with improved liquidity. This has also led to increased investment income given the increased deposit rates that followed from changes in the Bank of England base rate. There was also a focus on holding funds with high credit ratings, providing increased security over the Council's investment portfolio.
- 4.9.7 The Authority expects to be a long-term borrower and new treasury investments are therefore primarily made to manage day-to-day cash flows using short-term low risk instruments. The existing portfolio of money market funds will be maintained to allow access to cash to fund daily cashflow outgoings.
- 4.9.8 The progression of risk and return metrics are shown in the extracts from Arlingclose quarterly investment benchmarking in the table 9 below.

Table 9: Investment benchmarking

	Credit Score	Credit Rating	Bail-in Exposure	Weighted Average Maturity (days)	Rate of Return
31.03.2022	5.06	A+	100%	1	0.52%
31.03.2023	5.03	A+	100%	1	4.08%
31.03.2024	4.91	A+	95%	10	5.31%
Similar Local Authorities*	4.80	A+	70%	24	5.13%
All Local Authorities*	4.82	A+	61%	9	5.03%

*Arlingclose clients only

4.10 Non-Treasury Investment Activity

The definition of investments in CIPFA's revised 2021 Treasury Management Code covers all the financial assets of the Council as well as other non-financial assets which the Council holds primarily for financial return. Investments that do not meet the definition of treasury management investments (i.e., management of surplus cash) are categorised as either for service purposes (made explicitly to further service objectives) and or for commercial purposes (made primarily for financial return). The non-Treasury investments are held to

further service objectives and are therefore categorised as for service purposes. The non-Treasury investments are classified under shareholdings to subsidiaries and loans to subsidiaries, detailed in the paragraph below.

4.10.1 Investment Guidance issued by DLUHC and the Welsh Government also broadens the definition of investments to include all such assets held partially or wholly for financial return.

4.10.2 The Council also held £257.0m of such investments in:

- Shareholding in subsidiaries: £103.5m (£103.5m in 2022/23).
- Loans to subsidiaries £153.5m (£152.8m in 2022/23).

4.10.3 I4B Holdings Limited is a company wholly owned by Brent Council that was incorporated on 16 December 2016. The primary purpose of the company is to deliver the housing options defined in the Temporary Accommodation reform plan. As of 31st March 2024, the Council had provided funding of £182.1m to i4B (£182.1m in 2022/23) which are secured against the company's properties. The Council received £5.3m (£5.2m in 2022/23) in interest for loans to I4B. The loans are secured against the properties held within the company.

4.10.4 First Wave Housing (FWH) is a registered provider of housing in Brent and is wholly owned by Brent Council. FWH was formally known as Brent Housing Partnership (BHP) The Council received £0.7m in interest for loans to FWH (£0.7m in 2022/23). As of 31 March 2024, there were outstanding loans to Brent Council totalling £34.3m (£34.7m in 2022/23) which are secured against the properties held within the company.

4.10.5 These investments generated £6.0m of income for the Council in 2023/24 (£5.9m in 2022/23). This investment income covers the borrowing cost of investing in housing through wholly owned subsidiaries. These borrowing costs would be incurred by the Council regardless of the method through which the Council develops new housing; however, this is the vehicle of choice for such investments.

4.10.6 There were no new loans given to the Council's subsidiaries in 2023/24, and loan repayments (capital and interest) were received in a timely manner.

4.11 Treasury Management Training

4.11.1 The needs of the Council's treasury management staff for training in investment and debt management are kept under review. These are considered as part of the staff appraisal process and additionally when the responsibilities of individual members of staff change.

4.11.2 Training for Members is also kept under review.

4.12 Compliance

4.12.1 The Corporate Director for Finance and Resources reports that all treasury management activities undertaken during the year complied fully with the CIPFA Code of Practice and the Council's approved Treasury Management Strategy.

4.12.2 Compliance with the approved prudential indicators, and in particular the authorised limit and operational boundary for external debt is demonstrated within Appendix 4 (Prudential Indicators) as required by the 2021 CIPFA Treasury Management Code.

5 Stakeholder and Ward Member Consultation and Engagement

5.2.1 Given the nature of this report, there has been no stakeholder and ward member consultation and engagement.

6 Financial Considerations

6.1 The financial implications are noted in the report.

7 Legal Considerations

7.1 The Local Government Act 2003 and the Local Authorities (Capital Financing and Accounting) Regulations 2003 require that regular reports be submitted to the relevant Council Committee. Brent Council has adopted the CIPFA Code of Practice for Treasury Management in the Public Sector and operates its treasury management service in compliance with this code and as such, following consideration by Cabinet, a report setting out the Council's Treasury Management activity for the year should be submitted to Full Council for approval.

8 Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Considerations

8.1 There are no equity, diversity and inclusion considerations arising from this report.

9 Climate Change and Environmental Considerations

9.1 As part of the Council's Treasury Management Strategy, the Council will ensure an assessment is made with regards to environmental, social and governance (ESG) matters for the council's long-term investments. There were no new long-term investments made during 2023/24.

10 Communication Considerations

10.1 No additional communication strategies are required for this report.

Report sign off:

Minesh Patel

Corporate Director Finance and Resources

Appendix 1: Economic Commentary 2023/24

Economic Background

UK inflation continued to decline from the 8.7% rate seen at the start of 2023/24. By the last quarter of the financial year headline consumer price inflation (CPI) had fallen to 3.4% in February but was still above the Bank of England's 2% target at the end of the period. The core measure of CPI, i.e., excluding food and energy, also slowed in February to 4.5% from 5.1% in January, a rate that had stubbornly persisted for three consecutive months.

The UK economy entered a technical recession in the second half of 2023, as growth rates of -0.1% and -0.3% respectively were recorded for Q3 and Q4. Over the 2023 calendar year GDP growth only expanded by 0.1% compared to 2022. Of the recent monthly data, the Office for National Statistics reported a rebound in activity with economy expanding 0.2% in January 2024. While the economy may somewhat recover in Q1 2024, the data suggests that prior increases in interest rates and higher price levels are depressing growth, which will continue to bear down on inflation throughout 2024.

Labour market data provided a mixed message for policymakers. Employment and vacancies declined, and unemployment rose to 4.3% (3mth/year) in July 2023. The same month saw the highest annual growth rate of 8.5% for total pay (i.e., including bonuses) and 7.8% for regular pay growth (i.e., excluding bonuses). Thereafter, unemployment began to decline, falling to 3.9% (3mth/year) in January and pay growth also edged lower to 5.6% for total pay and 6.1% for regular pay, but remained above the Bank of England's forecast.

Having begun the financial year at 4.25%, the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) increased Bank Rate to 5.25% in August 2023 with a 3-way split in the Committee's voting as the UK economy appeared resilient in the face of the dual headwinds of higher inflation and interest rates. Bank Rate was maintained at 5.25% through to March 2024. The vote at the March was 8-1 in favour of maintaining rates at this level, with the single dissenter preferring to cut rates immediately by 0.25%. Although financial markets shifted their interest rate expectations downwards with expectations of a cut in June, the MPC's focus remained on assessing how long interest rates would need to be restrictive to control inflation over the medium term.

In the Bank's quarterly Monetary Policy Report (MPR) released in August 2023 the near-term projection for services price inflation was revised upwards, goods price inflation widespread across products, indicating stronger domestic inflationary pressure with second-round effects in domestic prices and wages likely taking longer to unwind than they did to emerge. In the February 2024 MPR the Bank's expectations for the UK economy were positive for the first half of 2024, with a recovery from the mild recession in calendar H2 2023 being gradual. Headline CPI was forecast to dip below the 2% target quicker than previously thought due to declining energy prices, these effects would hold inflation slightly above target for much of the forecast horizon. Following this MPC meeting, Arlingclose, the authority's treasury adviser, maintained its central view that 5.25% remains the peak in Bank Rate and that interest rates will most likely start to be cut later in H2 2024. The risks in the short-term are deemed to

be to the downside as a rate cut may come sooner than expected, but then more broadly balanced over the medium term.

The US Federal Reserve also pushed up rates over the period, reaching a peak range of between 5.25-5.50% in August 2023, where it has stayed since. US policymakers have maintained the relatively dovish stance from the December FOMC meeting and at the meeting in March, economic projections pointed to interest rates being cut by a total of 0.75% in 2024.

Following a similarly sharp upward trajectory, the European Central Bank hiked rates to historically high levels over period, pushing its main refinancing rate to 4.5% in September 2023, where it has remained. Economic growth in the region remains weak, with a potential recession on the cards, but inflation remains sticky and above the ECB's target, putting pressure on policymakers on how to balance these factors.

Financial markets

Sentiment in financial markets remained uncertain and bond yields continued to be volatile over the year. During the first half of the year, yields rose as interest rates continued to be pushed up in response to rising inflation. From October they started declining again before falling sharply in December as falling inflation and dovish central bank attitudes caused financial markets to expect cuts in interest rates in 2024. When it emerged in January that inflation was stickier than expected and the BoE and the Federal Reserve were data dependent and not inclined to cut rates soon, yields rose once again, ending the period some 50+ bps higher than when it started. Over the financial year, the 10-year UK benchmark gilt yield rose from 3.44% to peak at 4.75% in August, before then dropping to 3.44% in late December 2023 and rising again to 3.92% (28th March 2024). The Sterling Overnight Rate (SONIA) averaged 4.96% over the period to 31st March.

Credit review

In response to an improving outlook for credit markets, in January 2024 Arlingclose moved away from its previous temporary stance of a 35-day maximum duration and increased its advised recommended maximum unsecured duration limit on all banks on its counterparty list to 100 days.

Earlier in the period, S&P revised the UK sovereign outlook to stable and upgraded Barclays Bank to A+. Moody's also revised the UK outlook to stable, Handelsbanken's outlook to negative, downgraded five local authorities, and affirmed HSBC's outlook at stable while upgrading its Baseline Credit Assessment. Fitch revised UOB's and BMO's outlooks to stable.

In the final quarter of the financial year, Fitch revised the outlook on the UK sovereign rating to stable from negative based on their assessment that the risks to the UK's public finances had decreased since its previous review in October 2022, the time of the mini- budget.

Moody's, meanwhile, upgraded the long-term ratings of German lenders Helaba, Bayern LB and LBBW on better solvency and capital positions, despite challenges

from a slowing German economy and exposure to the commercial real estate sector. Moody's also upgraded or placed on review for an upgrade, Australian banks including ANZ, CBA NAB and Westpac on the back of the introduction of a new bank resolution regime.

Credit default swap prices began the financial year at elevated levels following the fallout from Silicon Valley Bank and collapse/takeover of other lenders. From then the general trend was one of falling prices and UK lenders' CDS ended the period at similar levels to those seen in early 2023. Earlier in the year some Canadian lenders saw their CDS prices rise due to concerns over a slowing domestic economy and housing market, while some German lenders were impacted by similar economic concerns and exposure to commercial real estate towards the end of the period, with LBBW remaining the most elevated.

Heightened market volatility is expected to remain a feature, at least in the near term and, credit default swap levels will be monitored for signs of ongoing credit stress. As ever, the institutions and durations on the Authority's counterparty list recommended by Arlingclose remain under constant review.

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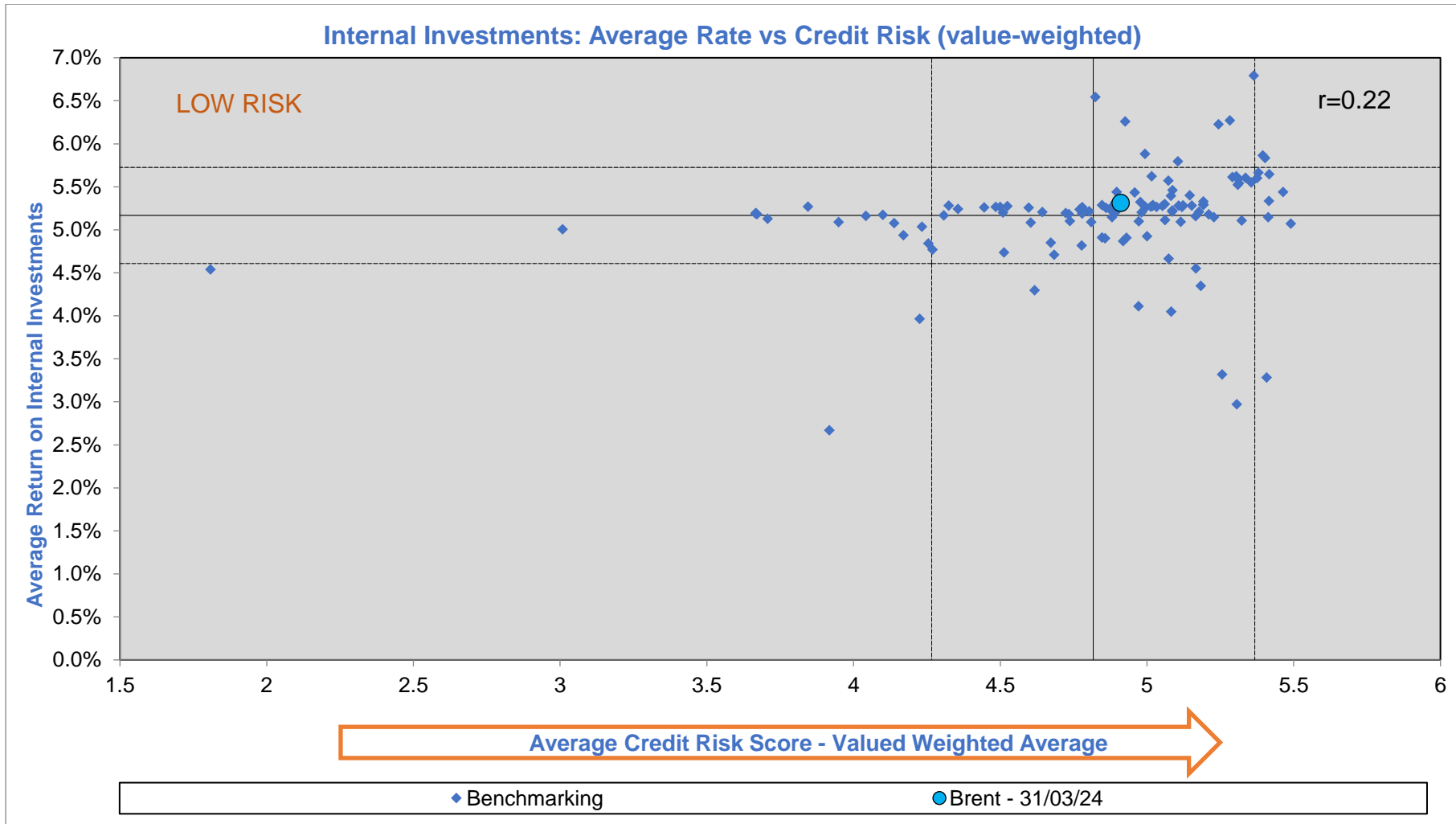
Appendix 2

Debt and Investment Portfolio 31/03/24

	Actual Portfolio as at 31 March 2024 (£m)	Average Rate as at 31 March 2024
External Borrowing:		
PWLB Maturity Loans	378.9	4.6%
PWLB Equal Instalment Principal Loans	210.9	1.7%
Fixed Rate Market Loans	95.0	2.4%
LOBO Loans	59.5	5.0%
Short-term Loans	70.0	2.9%
Total External Debt	814.3	
Accrued Interest	10.0	0
Total External Borrowing and Accrued Interest	824.3	
Other Long-Term Liabilities:		
PFI	22.8	9.5%
Finance Leases	7.7	4.1%
Total Other Long-term Liabilities	30.5	
PFI Short-term Liability	2.0	
Total Gross External Debt and Liabilities	856.8	
Investments:		
Money Market Funds	90.7	4.9%
Fixed Term Deposits – LA	5.0	
Total Investments	95.7	
Net Debt	761.1	

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Appendix 3: Internal Investments: Average Rate vs Credit Risk as at 31/03/2024



The Council measures the financial performance of its treasury management activities against similar Council's through benchmarking provided by its Treasury Management Advisor, Arlingclose limited.

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Appendix 4 – Prudential Indicators

Legislative Update

In December 2021, CIPFA published its revised Prudential Code and Treasury Management Code of Practice following concerns around the commercial activity undertaken by several local authorities and the affordability of borrowing plans.

The Code required authorities to not borrow to invest primarily for financial return and all capital expenditure undertaken must be related to the functions of the authority. The Council has not undertaken any activities to invest for a yield or have any commercial plans within the capital programme.

The Code required the Prudential Indicators (which are approved as part of the Council's Treasury Management Strategy) to be reported quarterly (from semi-annually) as part of the financial updates and will be a recurring addition to the quarterly financial reports.

Prudential Indicators

The Council has a significant borrowing requirement and is therefore exposed to financial risks including the loss of invested funds and the revenue effect of changing interest rates. The successful identification, monitoring and control of risk remains central to the Council's treasury management strategy.

Prudential indicators have been calculated using the capital programme data as at quarter one of 2024/25 (May 2024) and include 2023/24 Outturn data.

Capital Expenditure & Financing at 31 March 2024 and Q1 2024/25 (£m)	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	Total 2024/25-2027/28
	Actual	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast	
Corporate Landlord	10.0	14.3	19.0	10.8	28.2	72.3
Housing GF	99.4	108.0	48.1	30.7	3.6	190.4
Schools	11.7	25.4	26.3	7.3	3.3	62.2
Regeneration	4.5	62.2	117.4	7.3	0.0	186.9
Public Realm	25.1	25.4	11.7	1.0	1.0	39.2
South Kilburn	18.9	33.4	3.9	3.9	0.0	41.2
St Raphael's	0.6	0.5	3.2	3.9	12.5	20.0
HRA	42.8	53.7	96.5	29.5	9.9	189.7
Total Capital Expenditure	213.0	322.8	326.1	94.4	58.5	801.9
Financed By:						
Grants	57.3	50.3	33.6	7.3	3.3	94.5
Section 106	8.9	28.1	16.7	0.0	0.0	44.8
Capital Receipts	4.9	1.8	28.2	23.3	26.1	79.4
Earmarked Reserves	0.9	2.5	1.3	1.4	0.0	5.1
Major Repairs Reserve	10.4	24.0	21.4	0.0	0.0	45.4
Revenue Contributions	9.0	11.6	1.7	9.0	0.5	22.8
Borrowing	121.5	204.6	223.3	53.5	28.6	510.0
Total Capital Financing	213.0	322.8	326.1	94.4	58.5	801.9

(a) Capital Financing Requirement (CFR)

The underlying need to borrow for capital purposes is measured by the Capital Financing Requirement. This is the amount of the Capital Programme that is funded by borrowing. The Council's maximum external borrowing requirement for 2024/25 is shown in the table below. The indicator is set to ensure that the level of proposed capital expenditure remains within sustainable limits and to consider the impact on Council tax and in the case of the HRA, housing rent levels.

CFR Movement at 31 March 2024 and Q1 2024/25 (£m)	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
	Actual	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast
Opening CFR	1,139.6	1,236.6	1,419.7	1,619.0	1,646.2
Capital Expenditure	213.0	322.8	326.1	94.4	58.5
External Resources	(66.3)	(78.4)	(50.3)	(7.3)	(3.3)
Internal Resources	(25.3)	(39.9)	(52.5)	(33.6)	(26.6)
MRP	(18.1)	(20.5)	(23.1)	(25.2)	(26.7)
Capital Loans Repaid	(0.9)	(0.9)	(1.0)	(1.1)	(1.2)
I4B Adjustment	(5.8)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Accounting Adjustments	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Closing CFR	1,236.6	1,419.7	1,619.0	1,646.2	1,646.9

External resources consist of grants and Developer contributions. Internal resources consist of use of reserves, capital receipts and revenue contributions.

(b) Gross Debt and the Capital Financing Requirement

To ensure that over the medium term, debt will only be for a capital purpose, the Council should ensure that debt does not, except in the short term, exceed the total of capital financing requirement in the preceding year plus the estimates of any additional capital financing requirement for the current and next two financial years. This is a key indicator of prudence. The table below shows that the Council complied with this recommendation during 2023/34.

Gross Debt & the Capital Financing Requirement at 31 March 2024 and Q1 2024/25 (£m)	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
	Actual	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast
External Loans	814.3	930.6	1,098.9	1,120.6	1,116.3
PFI & Leases	32.5	28.5	24.7	22.7	20.4
Total External Debt Liabilities	846.8	959.0	1,123.5	1,143.3	1,136.7
Internal Borrowing	422.3	489.2	520.1	525.6	530.6
Capital Financing Requirement	1,236.6	1,419.7	1,619.0	1,646.2	1,646.9
Borrowing in Excess of CFR ?	No	No	No	No	No

(c) Liability Benchmark

The liability benchmark is an important tool to help establish whether the Council is likely to be a long-term borrower or long-term investor in the future, and so shape its

strategic focus and decision making. The liability benchmark itself represents an estimate of the cumulative amount of external borrowing the Council must hold to fund its current capital and revenue plans while keeping treasury investments at the minimum level required to manage day-to-day cash flow.

Liability Benchmark at 31 March 2024 and Q1 2024/25 (£m)	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
	Actual	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast
Loans CFR	1,236.6	1,419.7	1,619.0	1,646.2	1,646.9
Less Balance Sheet Resources	(470.5)	(470.5)	(470.5)	(470.5)	(470.5)
Net Loan Requirement	766.1	949.3	1,148.5	1,175.8	1,176.4
Plus, Liquidity Allowance	20.0	20.0	20.0	20.0	20.0
Liability Benchmark	786.1	969.3	1,168.5	1,195.8	1,196.4

(d) Authorised limit and Operational Boundary for External Debt

The Operational Boundary for External Debt is based on the Council's estimate of most likely i.e., prudent, but not worst-case scenario for external debt. It links directly to the Council's estimates of capital expenditure, the capital financing requirement and cash flow requirements and is a key management tool for in-year monitoring.

Other long-term liabilities comprise finance leases, Private Finance Initiative contracts and other liabilities that are not borrowing but form part of the Council's debt.

The Authorised Limit for External Debt is the affordable borrowing limit determined in compliance with the Local Government Act 2003. It is the maximum amount of debt that the Council can legally owe. The authorised limit provides headroom over and above the operational boundary for unusual cash movements.

Operational Boundary and Authorised Limit at 31 March 2024 and Q1 2024/25 (£m)	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
	Actual	Approved	Approved	Approved	Approved
Authorised Limit	1,700.0	1,700.0	1,800.0	1,900.0	1,900.0
Operational Boundary	1,500.0	1,500.0	1,600.0	1,700.0	1,700.0
Actual Debt and Other Debt Liabilities	846.8				
Breach in Debt Limits	No				

The Corporate Director for Finance and Resources confirms that there were no breaches to the Authorised Limit and the Operational Boundary during 2023/24 financial year.

(e) Upper Limits on one-year revenue impact of a 1% movement in interest rates

This indicator is set to control the Council’s exposure to interest rate risk. The impact of a change in interest rates is calculated on the assumption that maturing loans in the current year will be replaced at current rates.

Upper Limits on one-year revenue impact of a 1% movement in interest rates on Maturing 31 March 2024	2023/24	2023/24
	Approved Limit	Actual
Upper limit on one-year revenue impact of a 1% rise in interest rates	5.0	0.9
Compliance with limits:		Yes
Upper limit on one-year revenue impact of a 1% fall in interest rates	5.0	(0.9)
Compliance with limits:		Yes

(f) Maturity Structure of Fixed Rate Borrowing

This indicator is to limit large concentrations of fixed rate debt needing to be replaced at times of uncertainty over interest rates. The Council uses the option date as the maturity date for its LOBO loans.

Maturity Structure of Fixed Rate Borrowing at 31 March 2023/24	Lower limit	Upper Limit	2023/24	2023/24	2023/24
			Actual Borrowing	Actual Borrowing	Compliance with limits
	%	%	£m	%	
Under 12 months	0.0	40.0	84.2	10.3%	Yes
12 months & within 24 months	0.0	40.0	48.7	6.0%	Yes
24 months and within 5 years	0.0	40.0	47.0	5.8%	Yes
5 years and within 10 years	0.0	60.0	73.4	9.0%	Yes
10 years and within 20 years	0.0	75.0	144.3	17.7%	Yes
20 years and within 30 years	0.0	75.0	122.3	15.0%	Yes
30 years and within 40 years	0.0	75.0	189.3	23.3%	Yes
Over 40 years	0.0	75.0	105.0	12.9%	Yes
Total			814.3	100.0%	

(g) Ratio of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream

This is an indicator of affordability and highlights the revenue implications of existing and proposed capital expenditure by identifying the proportion of the revenue budget required to meet financing costs, net of investment income.

Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream at 31 March 2024 and Q1 2024/25 (£m)	Limit	Actual	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast
	2023/24	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
Financing Costs (Interest & MRP) (£m)	57.3	30.4	36.3	43.2	41.8	41.7
Net Revenue Stream (£m)	306.4	358.4	387.0	395.0	407.3	420.1
Proportion of net revenue stream (%)	18.7%	8.5%	9.4%	10.9%	10.3%	9.9%

Financing costs can be further broken down as follows.

Capital Financing Costs at Q1 2024/25 (£m) at 31 March 2024 and Q1 2024/25 (£m)	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
	Actual	Estimated	Estimated	Estimated	Estimated
Total Gross External Debt Interest	30.3	37.2	42.7	47.3	48.1
Other Interest Payments	3.3	2.3	1.9	1.3	1.2
Total Interest Payable & Expenses	33.6	39.5	44.6	48.6	49.3
Interest Earned on Treasury Cash Investments	(6.4)	(4.3)	(3.3)	(2.7)	(2.7)
Interest Earned on Subsidiary and Service Loans	(18.1)	(22.8)	(25.1)	(27.9)	(29.9)
Total Interest Receivable	(24.5)	(27.2)	(28.4)	(30.6)	(32.6)
Net Interest	9.1	12.3	16.2	18.0	16.7
MRP (Excluding PFI & Service Loans)	13.4	15.5	18.0	20.3	21.5
Revenue Contributions to Capital Programme	8.5	9.0	9.5	4.0	4.0
Total Capital Financing Costs	30.9	36.8	43.7	42.3	42.2
Budget	25.0	26.2	27.4	28.6	29.8
Revenue Contribution from Service	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
Total Budget	25.5	26.7	27.9	29.1	30.3
Variance	(5.4)	(10.1)	(15.8)	(13.2)	(11.9)

(h) Upper Limit for Total Principal Sums invested over 364 Days

The purpose of this limit is to contain exposure to the possibility of loss that may arise as a result of the Council having to seek early repayment of the sums invested.

Upper Limit for Total Principal Sums invested over 364 Days at 31 March 2024	2023/24	2023/24
	Approved	Actual
Upper Limit for Total Principal Sums Invested Over 364 Days	50.0	0.0

(i) Security

The Council has adopted a voluntary measure of its exposure to credit risk by monitoring the value-weighted average credit rating of its investment portfolio. This is calculated by applying a score to each investment (AAA=1, AA+=2, etc) and taking the arithmetic average, weighted by the size of each investment. Unrated investments are assigned a score based on their perceived risk.

Credit Risk Indicator at 31 March 2024	2023/24	2023/24
	Approved	Actual
Portfolio average credit rating	A	A+

(j) Liquidity

The Council has adopted a voluntary measure of its exposure to liquidity risk by monitoring the amount of cash available to meet unexpected payments within a rolling three-month period, without additional borrowing.

Liquidity Risk Indicator at 31 March 2024 (£m)	2023/24	2023/24
	Approved	Actual
Total cash available within 3 months	20.0	95.3

(k) Investment Forecast

This indicator demonstrates the Council's investment exposure broken down by category for Treasury and non-treasury investments. Non-Treasury investments are directed under the Council's Investment Strategy 2024/25, whilst treasury investments are managed under the Treasury Management Strategy 2024/25.

Total Investment Exposure at 31 March 2024 and Q1 2024/25 (£m)	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
	Actual	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast
Treasury management cash investments	95.3	20.0	20.0	21.0	21.0
Service investments: Loans	285.6	284.5	283.3	269.1	267.7
Commercial investments: Property	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total Investments	380.9	304.5	303.3	290.1	288.7
Commitments to lend	50.0	50.0	50.0	51.0	51.0
Total Exposure	50.0	50.0	50.0	51.0	51.0

Service investments are further broken down in the table below.

Loans & Investments for service purposes: Category of borrower at Q1 2024/25 (£m)	2023/34	2024/25	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
	Actual	Approved Limit	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast
I4B Subsidiary Loans	182.1	400.0	182.1	182.1	182.1	182.1
I4B Subsidiary Equity	36.4		36.4	36.4	36.4	36.4
FWH Subsidiary Loans	34.3		33.8	33.4	32.9	32.5
Local Businesses	0.2	10.0	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
Schools, Academies and Colleges	17.9	55.0	17.6	17.4	16.7	16.5
West London Waste Authority	14.8	20.0	14.4	13.9	0.8	0.0
Local Charities	0.0	10.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Housing Associations	0.0	50.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Local Residents	0.0	5.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total	285.6	550.0	284.5	283.3	269.1	267.7

(l) Investment Funding

This indicator demonstrates the amount of exposure to borrowing because of investments made for service purposes. These investments are the loans to the Council's subsidiaries i4B Holdings Ltd and First Wave Housing Ltd.

Investments Funded by Borrowing at at 31 March 2024 and Q1 2024/25 (£m)	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
	Actual	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast
I4B Loans	218.4	218.4	218.4	218.4	218.4
First Wave Housing (FWH)	34.3	33.8	33.4	32.9	32.5
Total Service investments: Loans	252.7	252.3	251.8	251.4	250.9
Total Funded by Borrowing	252.7	252.3	251.8	251.4	250.9

(m) Investment Rate of Return


This indicator demonstrates the rate of return obtained from the different investment categories.

Investments net rate of return at 31 March 2024 and Q1 2024/25	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
	Actual	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast
Treasury management investments	5.31%	4.81%	3.63%	3.00%	3.00%
Service investments: Loans	2.4%	2.4%	2.4%	2.4%	2.4%
Commercial investments: Property	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

(n) Other Investment Indicators

Other investment indicators at 31 March 2024 and Q1 2024/25 (£m)	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
	Actual	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast
External Debt (Loans)	814.3	903.5	1,097.7	1,119.5	1,115.2
Net Service Expenditure	358.4	387.0	395.0	407.3	420.1
Debt to net service expenditure ratio	2.3	2.3	2.8	2.7	2.7
Commercial income as a % of net service expenditure ratio	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

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 Brent	Cabinet 9 September 2024
	Report from the Corporate Director of Children and Young People
	Lead Member – Cabinet Member for Children, Young People & Schools (Councillor Gwen Grahl)
Brent Youth Justice Plan 2024/25	

Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	Key
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: Brent Youth Justice Plan 2024/25
Background Papers:	Youth justice plans: guidance for youth justice services. Updated 19 March 2024 https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/youth-justice-plans-guidance-for-youth-justice-services/youth-justice-plans-guidance-for-youth-justice-services
Contact Officer(s): <small>(Name, Title, Contact Details)</small>	Palvinder Kudhail Director, Early Help and Social Care Palvinder.kudhail@brent.gov.uk

1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1 Local authorities have a statutory duty to submit, to the Youth Justice Board (YJB), an annual youth justice plan relating to their provision of youth justice services. Updated guidance to youth justice services, first published in March 2023, and updated in March 2024, confirmed that plans must be signed off by full council in accordance with Regulation 4 of the ‘Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000’.
- 1.2 This report explains the rationale for creating the Brent Youth Justice Plan (BYJP) 2024/25 which includes an overview of local youth justice progress and priorities and arrangements for monitoring performance.

- 1.3 In line with agreed regulations, the plan was submitted to the Youth Justice Board (YJB) in July 2024, with the approval of the Board Chair. An updated version of the Plan will be submitted after it has been signed off by Full Council.
- 1.4 Sign off by the Chair of the Youth Justice Service (YJS) Management Board indicates that the YJS Management Board have approved all sections outlined in the BYJP 2024/25.

2.0 Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 That Cabinet considers the content of the Brent Youth Justice Plan 2024/25 (see Appendix: Brent Youth Justice Plan 2024/25).
- 2.2 That Cabinet agrees that the Brent Youth Justice Plan 2024/25 is presented to Full Council on 19 September 2024 for formal sign off and adoption.

3.0 Detail

3.1 Cabinet Member Foreword

I am pleased to share the Youth Justice Plan 2024/25 that demonstrates the commitment and achievements of our Youth Justice Service (YJS) and the wider partnership to support children and young people who are at risk of or have entered the youth justice system. Performance remains strong overall, particularly in respect of the low number of young people entering the criminal justice system for the first time, as well as the number of young people in custody. This is due to the strong focus on prevention and engagement with children and young people so that their views are heard and interventions personalised to their needs and environment. Young people involved in drug related offences and children and young people involved in criminal exploitation/gang activity has been declining year on year. The use of peer mapping tools to better understand the nature of the activity that is influencing children and young people as well as trauma informed and restorative approaches are used to ensure that the most appropriate interventions are put in place. Work on reducing the disproportionate number of young people in the criminal justice system from Black backgrounds continues with rigour and pace.

- 3.1.2 I am encouraged by the feedback from young people through surveys and individual engagement and wish to highlight some comments from parents and children:

- *'I learnt a lot more awareness and safety tips - I would like to continue with these meetings so I can get a more detailed understanding about our children today. Overall, the meeting was a blessing because I came out knowing more than I did going in'* – workshop attended by a parent.
- *'I have learnt a lot of things from these offences. I've learnt that I should go down the right path. I should walk the other way and ignore negative friends,'* A young person.

- *'I completed the Victim Awareness Group, and I liked the people doing the group, they were nice. I also learned different ways victims are impacted.'* A young person
- *'I thought they (panel members) were fair, and they were engaged. What I liked was that they came across as though they really care. They were not judgemental, and we didn't feel judged. They came across as extremely supportive.'* A parent

3.1.3 New relationships have been formed within the partnership, including with the Raheem Sterling Foundation and Word 4 Weapons, resulting in amnesty knife bins installed across the borough to promote community safety and encourage young people to anonymously dispose of knives.

3.1.4 I would like to thank all the staff working for our Youth Justice Service for their hard work, diligence and innovation supporting young people, in what continues to remain a challenging context.

3.1.5 The Youth Justice Plan 2024/25 is closely aligned to three priorities within the Borough Plan 2023-27:

Thriving Communities

Brent Youth Justice Service (YJS) is working closely with community partners to make Brent safer. This includes delivering *Your Life You Choose*, and other preventative workshops in schools in partnership with the Accelerated Support Team (Early Help), Willesden Magistrates Court, the Police, and the local voluntary sector. *Unlocking Your Potential* groupwork sessions led by YJS introduce young people to inspirational members from local and wider London communities. YJS also supports young people to access positive recreational activities at Family Wellbeing Centres.

The Best Start in Life

Young people within the Brent Youth justice system are seen and heard. A trauma informed approach to supporting children is embedded within YJS. Supported by a YJS Participation Officer, children and young people communicate with members of the YJS Management Board via a range of multi-media platforms including podcasts and short films. Joint work undertaken with the Brent Community Safety Team includes exploring options for broadening Brent's mentoring offer to young people affected by gangs and other forms of criminal exploitation, and the ongoing provision of early intervention preventative support to children and young people who receive police issued Triage Out of Court Disposals.

A Healthier Brent

Young people known to criminal justice services often have poor access to mental health provision. An NHS funded Youth Liaison and Diversion Officer, based within the YJS offers mental health screening to children who attend police custody. A co-located CAMHS Mental Health Practitioner offers a range

of support and refers those with more complex needs for specialist CAMHS support. Children with substance misuse needs are supported by commissioned service providers VIA and EACH Counselling Services.

3.1.6 Brent Youth Strategy

The Youth Justice Plan 2024/25 is aligned to the current Brent Youth Strategy which includes youth participation, contextual safeguarding risk management, and the provision of educational support to children not in employment, education, and training.

3.1.7 The Brent Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy 2024 – 2028

Brent YJS is committed to tackling inequalities. The service's work is closely aligned to two objectives within the Brent Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy 2024 – 2028:

Objective 2: Narrowing the Gap: Tackling Inequalities

The Brent Youth Justice Plan 2024/25 details how Brent YJS monitors inequalities within the Brent youth justice system. This includes work undertaken to reduce the overrepresentation of children from Black Heritage groups (pp.45-53).

Objective 3: Establishing an Inclusive Workforce

Brent YJS Plan has an inclusive and diverse workforce. This is outlined in the Brent Youth Justice Plan 2024/25 (p.62).

3.1.8 Safer Brent Community Safety Strategy 2024-26

The Brent Youth Justice Service Management Board is responsible for delivering Roundtable Discussions within Priority 1 of the Safer Brent Partnership Overarching Action Plan 2024-26: *Tackling violent crime with a specific focus on knife crime*. Due to commence in autumn 2024, the meetings seek to enhance the understanding of crime and exploitation in Brent through discussion with children and young people known to Brent YJS.

3.2 Background

3.2.1 The Brent Youth Justice Service is a multi-disciplinary, multi-agency service that works with children and young people aged 10-17 years and their families. Brent YJS provides support in relation to out of court disposals, court work, bail and remand, the assessment of children and young people who offend, the provision of court reports, the planning and delivery of community interventions, and custody and resettlement. The YJS sits within the Children and Young People's (CYP) Directorate and is managed by the Head of Early Help.

- 3.2.2 The CYP Director of Early Help and Social Care chairs the YJS Management Board. The Board meets quarterly and has representation across the partnership at senior levels.
- 3.2.3 The YJS Management Board provides strategic direction and support for the YJS. This includes monitoring progress to ensure the effective delivery of youth justice services that aim to reduce re-offending and safeguard children and young people.
- 3.2.4 A summary of the achievements and ambitions detailed within the Brent Youth Justice Plan 2024/25 is outlined in View from the Chair of the YJS Management Board – *‘Our continuous drive to be the best we can be’* (pp.2-8).
- 3.2.5 The principal aims and commitments that will shape the Brent YJS partnership are outlined in the Brent Youth Justice Plan 2024/25 (pp.56-57). These include:
- Tackling the over representation of children from Black heritage groups in the Brent youth justice system.
 - Collaborating with children’s social care services to reduce the criminalisation of children in care and care leavers.
 - Continuing to promote evidence-based Child First approaches as the best means to reducing victims, promoting public protection, keeping communities safe and supporting children towards positive outcomes.
 - Developing pathways and creating access for speech and language therapy.
 - Maintaining and developing new partnerships with the community and voluntary sector.
 - Expanding participation and youth coproduction capabilities.
 - Continuing to build a YJS partnership culture that encourages diversity in its workforce and in its thinking; is inclusive and supportive, encourages personal responsibility and is delivery focused.

4.0 Stakeholder and ward member consultation and engagement

- 4.1 Members of the Youth Justice Service Management Board were involved in the drafting of the Youth Justice Plan 2023/24. During the Board’s meeting on the 25 July 2024, a final draft was agreed by the Board ready for submission to Full Council.

5.0 Financial Considerations

- 5.1 In 2023/24 the YJB introduced a new funding condition, requiring Youth Justice Plans to receive Full Council sign off.
- 5.2 The YJB Partnership gross budget for the 2024/25 financial year is a total of £1.6m. This is made up of a net contribution of £0.803m from the Council’s general fund, £0.577m from the YJB grant, £0.114m from Brent Schools via the Dedicated Schools Grant and £0.050m MOPAC and the National Probation service. There are also in-kind partnership contributions amounting to £0.270m

from the Police, Health, and National Probation Service. In-year commitments would need to remain within these allocated funds.

6.0 Legal Considerations

6.1 The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 introduced a requirement that all local authorities must establish a Youth Offending Team (YOT) comprising members from the police, social services, probation, health and education. Most local authorities, including Brent, have renamed YOT provision as Youth Justice Services.

6.2 The Act also created the Youth Justice Board to oversee and monitor youth justice services in England and Wales. One of the YJB's key functions is to provide local authorities with funding to enable YOTs to deliver statutory services.

6.3 Section 40 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 places a statutory duty on local authorities to submit an annual youth justice plan.

7.0 Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Considerations

7.1 The proposed Youth Justice Plan 2024/25 supports Brent Council's commitment to equality equity, diversity, and inclusion. It is also consistent with the statutory duties under the Equality Act 2010. Brent YJS considers all individuals when conducting their day-to-day work. This includes YJS Management Board oversight of YJS work to reduce the overrepresentation of children from Black Heritage groups in the youth justice system, child-centred operational policies, and a commitment to trauma informed work practices.

7.2 Brent YJS seeks to reduce health inequalities through the provision of good assessment and intervention planning for all children who enter the local youth justice system. This includes referral to substance misuse services, CAMHS, and CNWL mental health screening,

8.0 Climate Change and Environmental Considerations

8.1 The Brent Youth Justice Plan details efforts to encourage young people within the youth justice system to share their views and opinions on issues of most relevance to them.

8.2 Youth participation and co-production is an evolving initiative within the Youth Justice Service. This work is aligned to the Brent Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy 2021-2030, which aims to equip children and young people with the skills and opportunities needed to take action to protect the environment and tackle climate change.

9.0 Human Resources/Property Considerations (if appropriate)

9.1 N/A

10.0 Communication Considerations

10.1 The Brent Youth Justice Plan will be shared with all services and organisations represented on the Youth Justice Service Management Board.

Report sign off:

Nigel Chapman

Corporate Director of Children and Young People

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Brent Youth Justice Plan 2024/25

1.0 Introduction

The Youth Justice Plan 2024/25 is a statutory requirement under Section 40 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 relating to the provision of youth justice services. This annual plan sets out how the Brent Youth Justice Service (YJS) operates, functions and is funded within Brent.

2.0 Recommendation(s)

- i. That the Brent YJS Management Board supports, enables, and monitors delivery of the Brent Youth Justice Plan 2024/25.
- ii. Youth Justice Partner organisations support the Brent Youth Justice Service to achieve the aims outlined in the Plan.

3.0 Vision and Strategy

View from the Chair of the YJS Management Board: *‘Our continuous drive to be the best we can be’.*

We hope you will enjoy reading our review of the last year and our plans for this year in the Youth Justice Plan 2024/25 that outlines our work with children and young people and our response to their personalised needs. We are proud of our achievements which include child-first successful community projects, actions to reduce reoffending and serious youth violence, and addressing disproportionality.

Like all services based within the Children and Young People directorate, the child-centred workplace culture that is evident in Brent YJS has been shaped by our newly revised ways of working: *This is Brent CYP - This is How We Grow*. This ensures that service development conforms to our common values of Contribution to Society, Integrity, Creativity and Achievement. It also encourages all staff to remain Curious, Courageous and Kind in all aspects of our work, including anti-racist practice. Our quality assurance tools continue to evolve and now include a new reflective supervision template and new requirements for robust management oversight.

In terms of our workforce development, it is important we recruit the right staff who will go the extra mile to safeguard children and work co-productively with them to improve outcomes. We provide a supportive, compassionate, and positive work environment that nurtures talent, values all contributions equally and strives for excellence where

Brent Youth Justice Plan 2024/25

everyone is accountable for the delivery of their work. This is key to collaborating with the Youth Justice Board (YJB) to deliver the three the strategic objectives outlined in the Youth Justice Board Strategy 2024-2027:

1. Supporting improvement of youth justice services in local communities.
2. Focusing on addressing persistent racial disparities across the youth justice system.
3. Influencing development of policy and practice to advance the adoption of *Child First* principles throughout the youth justice system.

Brent's operational responsibilities have remained broadly similar in their focus since they were introduced by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. This required each local authority in England and Wales to deliver youth justice services in line with a statutory framework outlining youth justice responsibilities in relation to out of court disposals, court work, bail and remand, the assessment of children and young people who offend, the provision of court reports, the delivery of community interventions, and custody and resettlement.

Our approach to delivering youth justice services shares much in common with the child-first ambitions announced by the Youth Justice Board in 2021. We see children as children first, treat them fairly and help them to build on their strengths so they can make a constructive contribution to society. It is also a method that provides Brent YJS with the necessary means to achieve its statutory aims:

- Reducing the likelihood of children offending or re-offending
- Protecting children and young people
- Protecting the public
- Ensuring that sentences are served.

During 2023/24, we performed strongly across several key areas:

Reoffending

Reoffending rates are prone to fluctuation and tracked over a period of 18 months. The low rates of reoffending Brent experienced in the last year are likely to have been influenced by the considerable programme of preventative work undertaken at this time. This included the COVID-19 Pathfinder for Overrepresented Children, the MOPAC Funded Disproportionality Project, and the Your Choice cognitive behavioural therapy programme.

Brent Youth Justice Plan 2024/25

Custody and Remands

Our custodial population is at a historical low. This has been influenced by our work to tackle disproportionality in the youth justice system, the implementation of the constructive resettlement approach, effective interventions, and multi-agency At Risk of Custody meetings. We are currently building upon these successes by responding to recommendations in the HMIP joint thematic inspection of work with children subject to remand in youth detention (November 2023).

First Time Entrants

The number of children entering the Youth Justice System is low overall and reflects the effective decision making and wide-ranging interventions offered by the Out of Court Disposal team.

Out Of Court Disposals

Our procedures and processes highlight the voice of the victim, enhance our restorative justice offer, and develop a holistic and inclusive service involving a range of partners. We recently introduced the YJB Prevention and Diversion Assessment Tool to make our assessments even more child-first and to ensure interventions are needs led.

Disproportionality

Our Disproportionality Action Plan is refreshed annually and covers a wide range of work. It is regularly monitored at the YJS Management Board and contains wide-ranging actions across the partnership. Earlier this year we conducted analysis of our police diversionary interventions which showed that children from Black Heritage Groups in Brent have access to Out Of Court Disposals (OOCd). This is encouraging as access to diversionary activities reduces the likelihood of criminalisation. However, analysis also raised a wider concern that their participation in OOCd interventions is disproportionately high when compared to children from White Heritage Groups. We will build upon this in 2024/25 by seeking to understand whether disproportionate access to OOCds is the result of child-first policing, or the product of children from Black and Asian Minority Heritage groups being subjected to a disproportionately high number of stop and searches .

Violence and Gangs

We are committed to safeguarding young people affected by gangs and violence by understanding their challenges through a trauma informed lens and responding to neurodiverse needs. Serious youth violence has declined year on year since we adopted the YJB Serious Youth Violence Tool in 2016/17. Safety

Brent Youth Justice Plan 2024/25

mapping is undertaken to better understand the nature of exploitation some children and young people are subject to.

Courts

We receive a considerable amount of positive feedback from the magistrates at Willesden Youth Court about the quality of our court reports and our knowledge of the children who appear before the Youth Bench. Our approach to sharing court facilities with Barnet and Harrow is collaborative and ensures all children are given the best possible opportunity to receive a fair outcome regardless of where they live. We are fortunate that our judiciary supports our strive for improvements in many ways which has included the adoption of trauma informed court reports and bail letters.

Participation

The voices of children and their families are heard and used to develop and shape service provision. YJS workers interact with our children and young people with increasing creativity, which last year included sharing short films made by Brent children with the YJS Management Board.

Partnership and joint working

The growing proportion of high-risk children and young people on our caseloads has resulted in a growing reliance on good partnership work and close collaborations with wider Council services. We continue to extend our partnership with the local voluntary sector to provide access to exiting and newly emerging preventative support.

Restorative Justice

Our determination to support victims through direct and indirect mediation is underpinned by our Restorative Justice Policy. It is particularly pleasing that our YJS Restorative Justice Workers convened our first face to face Restorative Justice Conference earlier this year.

Brent Youth Justice Plan 2024/25

The YJS Management Board will focus on the following in 2024/25

Council Services

Children's Social Care

Safeguarding children and young people from serious youth violence and contextual harm is central to our work. Brent YJS will continue to jointly take forward our plans to reduce the criminalisation of children in care in collaboration with our Looked After Children and Leaving Care Service. Ongoing work undertaken with our Safeguarding and Localities Teams to keep children safe, such as peer mapping and supporting children at court, will be subject to case auditing.

Community Protection

Brent YJS and Community Protection will work closely to identify and support services that combat antisocial behaviour, serious youth violence, knife crime, and county lines. Both services are committed to jointly promoting engagement with local communities and victims on the development of local youth justice services. This includes delivering one of the priorities in the Overarching Safer Brent Action Plan 2024-2026: facilitating *Roundtable* conversations between children known to the police and key stakeholders.

Improving Educational Outcomes

YJS will continue to increase participation for those young people out of school or college, using the support of commissioned Prospects EET Advisors. This combined with close oversight from the YJS NEET Working Group provides YJS with the tools and resources needed to further reduce our NEET cohort. YJS will continue to deliver preventative workshops to mainstream and alternative schools. This will include working in partnership with the Accelerated Support Team to deliver the Your Life You Choose programme. This is a multi-agency presentation day which seeks to deter young people from crime, raise awareness of the consequences of their choices and empower them to make better decisions and keep themselves safe.

Victim Support

Our Restorative Justice Offer is open to all victims of crime and will include both direct and indirect mediation. Brent YJS has extended its reparations offer to include community work at Family Wellbeing Centres. We are also working in collaboration with colleagues in our Looked After Children and Leaving Care Services to reduce the unnecessary criminalisation of children living in supported accommodation.

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Public Health

We will continue to work with Public Health funded initiatives to support the physical and emotional health of children, especially those who are missing or excluded from school, or misusing drugs and alcohol. Additionally, we will review longstanding service arrangements to ensure access to substance misuse support best meets the needs of all children within the youth justice system.

Partnership Services

Courts

We will improve the court experience and outcomes for children through ever closer working with Court Services partners. Issues of disproportionality affecting children from Black heritage groups will continue to be tackled. More widely we will build upon our work to enable all children to better understand what will happen at court and facilitate their active participation in ensuring they are involved and listened to during court proceedings.

Probation

The partnership between Brent YJS and the Brent Probation Delivery Unit (PDU) is strong. For many years this has enabled Brent YJS to benefit from the provision of effective staffing resources and operational processes that ensure our children transition seamlessly from the youth justice system into adult services.

Voluntary Sector

The continued sharing of community wide knowledge is vital to achieving good outcomes for children. This includes information relating to contextual safeguarding, deprivation and the quality and sufficiency of safe spaces and activities for children and young people.

Improved Mental Health and Wellbeing

The Brent YJS Mental Health Practitioner seconded from the CAMHS Enhanced Treatment Team will continue to provide onward referral and advice and support for all children likely to require high Tier 3 specialised CAMHS interventions. YJS Case Managers holding cases where children are suspected to possess less acute mental health needs can access general advice and guidance about emotional wellbeing and other community support.

Police

We will assist the police to ensure the safety of children and better protect the public. This will include supporting the implementation of the child-centred ambitions contained within the proposed, new MPS Children Strategy. Support

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will be given to facilitate the establishment of a 'strategic needs assessment' that identifies the drivers of serious violence in the local area and the cohort of people most at risk or most affected by serious violence.

Importantly, the plans and priorities of Brent YJS will continue to be guided by good practice outlined in the *YJB Youth Justice Strategy for delivering positive outcomes for children by reducing offending and creating safer communities (2024–2027)*, and recommendations made in recent HMIP thematic and area-based inspections. These include: *The experiences of black and mixed heritage boys in the youth justice system (October 2021)*, the *Joint thematic inspection of work with children subject to remand in youth detention (November 2023)*, and the *HMIP Annual Report: inspection of youth justice services (March 2022)*. As in previous years we will continue to learn from case audits, Rapid Reviews and other safeguarding learning opportunities, Key Performance Information data, and through engagement with children, young people, and their families.

Furthermore, our commitment to improving outcomes for children in the Brent youth justice system will continue to shape our resourcing and focus. We believe that despite the passage of time the comments made by HMIP in our 2020 inspection report still apply: '...overall, Board members know how their service contributes to the work of the YJS and can judge if their service's contribution is effective'. It is my view that this Plan provides the Brent Youth justice partnership with the clarity needed to work together to achieve good outcomes for children, it also provides a very clear framework to provide strategic oversight, guidance and the support needed to improve the lives of children and young people who enter the criminal justice system.

Palvinder Kudhail Director – Early Help and Social Care Children and Young People London Borough of Brent

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4.0 Local Context: Brent Children and Young People

4.1 Children and Young People Profile (2024)

- 339,818 people live in Brent. It is the 5th largest Borough in London¹
- Brent is one of the most diverse local authority areas in the country with 65% of the total population consisting of people from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic heritage groups².
- Brent's child population aged 0-17 years based on Census 2021 is 73,056 with a 10-17 years population projection of 32,249.
- Brent's child population (0-17) represents 22% of the total Brent population.
- Brent's population aged 10-17 represents 10% of the total Brent population.
- Brent's child population (0-17) represents 4% of the 0-17 London population.
- Brent's population aged 10-17 represents 4% of the 10-17 London population.

4.2 GLA Population Projection for 2021:

Table 1. Brent Projected Population by age.

	Projected Population 2021	
	Brent	London
Aged 0-19	81,300	2,085,300
Aged 10-19	41,500	1,024,800
All Ages	339,818	8,799,800

In 2023/24 the YJS cohort consisted of 111 young people. This is 0.33% of the Brent 10-17 population.

¹ ONS 2021 Census

² GLA Population Projections 2022, published 2016.

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4.3 Looked After Children in Brent

In January 2024 there were 300 Looked After Children (LAC) – eight fewer than in January 2023 (308). Brent has a smaller LAC cohort than its statistical neighbours and less than the national average. In January 2024, Brent had a rate of 41.0 LAC per 10,000 children under 18-years with the London average at 51.

4.4 The LAC / YJS Cohort

Within an overall YJS open caseload of 63 children and young people in May 2024 there were ten LAC young people supervised by the YJS - compared to 11 LAC in June 2023, Looked after Children are one of the most vulnerable groups in Brent with many children experiencing high levels of harm and exploitation. In some cases children enter the care system due to their offending (e.g. they are remanded because of an offence and become LAC during their period on remand). Analysis of this cohort shows:

- 80% were male.
- 80% were aged 16 or 17 years.
- 60% were of Black African or Black Caribbean Heritage (62% in June 2023, 44% in February 2022, 50% in February 2021 and 64% in April 2020).
- 70% had committed a violent offence (83% in June 2023, 72% in February 2022, 37% in February 2021 and 76% in April 2020).
- 30% had committed a drugs offence (17% in June 2023, 39% in February 2022, 23% in February 2021 and 32% in April).
- 10% had committed a robbery offence (33% in June 2023, 39% in February 2022, 9% in February 2021 and 24% in April 2020).

4.5 Substance Misuse

National substance misuse treatment data shows that young people often enter specialist substance misuse services with a range of problems or vulnerabilities related to (or in addition to) their substance use. These include:

- using multiple substances
- having a mental health treatment need
- being a looked after child

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- not being in education, employment or training (NEET)
- self-harming behaviour
- sexual exploitation
- offending
- domestic abuse

Analysis of the 113 children and young people supported by Brent YJS between January and December 2023 found that:

- 31 (27.4%) of those children had committed a drugs offence with 29 (93%) of the offence type being possession.
- 100 children were male, 13 children were female.
- 64 children were from a Black Heritage Group, 14 were of 'Other' Heritage, 13 were from a White Heritage Group, 13 were of Mixed Heritage, and nine were from an Asian Heritage group.
- Cannabis was the predominant substance - used or possessed by 25 (52%) children and young people in Brent. This is consistent with the national picture where cannabis is the most common substance used by children referred for treatment (87%).
- 72% had concerns around physical health.
- 64% had mental health concerns.
- 12% had a special educational need.
- 3.5% had some difficulty with speech and language.
- 8% had been or currently were in LA care
- 31% were previously or currently subject to a CIN.
- 8% were previously or currently subject to CP.

4.6 All children and young people: May 2024 open caseload

One hundred and sixty-two children and young people received a court sentence, OOC, Triage or Community Resolution in 2023/24.

A snapshot of the active caseload taken in May 2024 showed there were 63 open cases. Analysis of the caseload showed that:

- 67% were aged 16 or 17 years compared to 64% in June 2023, 64% in February 2022, 57% in February 2021 and 53% in February 2020

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- 89% were male compared to 87% in June 2023, 78% in February 2022, 86% in February 2021 and 84% in February 2020
- 54% of children and young people were from a Black Caribbean or other Black Heritage Group compared to 46% in June 2023, 48% in February 2022, 46% in February 2021 and 63% in February 2020.
- 16%, inclusive of caretaking cases, were LAC.
- 23% were NEET (in academic years 12 and 13 and including children and young people residing out of Brent) compared to 29% in June 2023, 39% in February 22, 24% in February 2021 and 29% in February 2020.
- 11% of the caseload (7) had an EHCP or Statement of SEN compared to 6% in June 2023, 5% in February 2022, 12% in February 2021 and 8% of the caseload in February 2020. SEND / Additional Learning Needs is one the ten newly introduced KPIs monitored by the YJB.

The wards containing the highest proportion of children in the May 2024 cohort were Alperton, Barnhill, Tokyngton, Stonebridge and Wembley Park. Children and young people residing in these wards represent over 33% of all open cases. A significant proportion (almost a quarter) reside outside of Brent.

4.7 Brent YJS 2023/24 case level data:

Table 2: Brent YJS Case Level Data 2023/24

Brent YJS 2023/24 Case-level data (Offences and Offending Populations)															
Offences	Disposals					Offending population by ethnicity						Offending population by gender			
	No. of Pre-court disposals	No. of First-tier disposals	No. of Community disposals	No. of Custody disposals	Total Disposals	White	Mixed	Asian	Black	Chinese or Other	Unknown	Female	Male	Unknown	
168	19	67	10	4	100	12 (14.6%)	8 (9.8%)	5 (12.5%)	39 (47.6%)	17 (20.7%)	1 (1.2%)	6 (7.3%)	76 (92.7%)	0 (0.0%)	82

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4.8 Reducing caseloads and increasing complexity

The significant reduction in caseloads in recent years is to a large extent a reflection of changes to national sentencing policy which is now focused on more serious offences and children who are most at risk to others. This has led to smaller, more complex cohorts of children who often present with multiple vulnerabilities and are at high risk of harm to themselves and others. In recent years, the proportion of young people assessed as posing a high or very high risk has increased - especially amongst 16 to 18-year-olds. Inspection data taken from the *HMIP Annual Report March 2022*, showed that 'nearly 80 per cent of children sentenced to a court order were assessed as presenting some form of concern to others, and 30 per cent were considered to present a high or very high risk of harm'.

In Brent, the most prolific types of youth crime are offences of violence against the person, drug possession and supply, robbery, and motoring offences. Serious youth violence (often with links to gangs, drugs and county lines) is a persistent problem and has increased the amount of statutory provision children and young people receive.

5.0 Child First

5.1 Brent YJS delivers services to children and young people in accordance with *Child First principles*

Brent recognises that taking a Child First approach requires services to prioritise the best interests of children and recognise their needs, capacities, rights and potential. All work is child focused and recognises structural barriers to full participation. This is reflected in the CYP training offer which includes anti-racist and cultural competency training. Furthermore, YJS practice development sessions are delivered regularly, frequently making use of YJB effective practice resources to enhance the skill with which practitioners consider the importance of structural inequalities, racial discrimination, and the impact of trauma. YJS assessments are commenced after a young person, and their parent / carer's self-assessments have been completed.

More recently Brent has emphasised that recognising neurodivergent characteristics is a fundamental part of taking a Child First approach. This increased focus upon neurodiversity, which refers to the way people think, move, act, see, hear and process information varies from person to person which means some people do things differently from others. The term 'neurodiversity' covers many different conditions including attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), autistic spectrum disorder (ASD), dyspraxia, dyslexia and developmental language disorder (DLD). The impact of having one or more condition for the individual can vary substantially:

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- About one in six people are thought to be neurodivergent
- One in four in the unemployed population are thought to be neurodivergent
- At least one in three people moving through the justice system are thought to be neurodivergent - many will not have been diagnosed during school days.

Brent YJS takes an inclusive approach to service delivery and design to engage more people in an accessible manner, promoting a child's individual strengths and capacities to develop their pro-social identity for sustainable desistance, leading to safer communities and fewer victims. All work is constructive and future-focused, built on supportive relationships that empower children to fulfil their potential and make positive contributions to society. Brent's continued focus on trauma and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) in our work with children and young people assists practitioners to identify those at higher risk of harm. Specific work can then be identified where the young person has complex issues, is 'stuck' or where there is high anxiety within the professional network. Joint 'signs of safety' group supervision with social work colleagues helps YJS workers to understand concerns and the importance of the joint planning process.

Brent YJS recognises the importance of Speech and Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) in our work with children. SLCN is described as difficulty understanding or using language. It is a type of neurodiversity, which can only be diagnosed by a Speech and Language therapist. SLCN can also be deemed to be a hidden disability. There were 16 children out of 210 children known to the YJS who were identified as having SLCN needs between September 2022 and August 2023. During the April 2024 YJS Management Board meeting members supported the joint efforts of YJS and the Brent Inclusion Service to develop access to assessment and support pathways for children within the youth justice system who display signs of undiagnosed SLCN.

5.2 Encouraging children's active participation, engagement, and wider social inclusion

The Brent CYP Participation strategy describes how young people and children have meaningful and inclusive involvement throughout the decision-making process for services that impact them. It provides a structured approach to creating an environment that enables children, young people and their families to have active involvement which influences decision making, policy and service development. Overall, participation offers numerous benefits for young people, giving them a voice and platform to be actively heard, fostering personal growth promoting social connections and enabling them to have a meaningful impact on their own lives and the wider community.

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Adopting the approach outlined in the Brent CYP Participation strategy has strengthened YJS's ability to form meaningful and creative collaborations with children. Our children have told us they want the YJS to move from a one-dimensional reliance on user surveys to youth led consultations including podcasts and campaigns organised by celebrities. This year children from Black Heritage groups identified the need for music and creative activities to form a greater part of the YJS offer. As a result of this, all YJS young people can attend music recording and production courses delivered by our community partner Street Fusion. Furthermore, children from YJS have been supported to access an extensive range of music, sport and creative activities at Family Wellbeing Centres All programmes have been designed to respond more specifically to children's needs and provide an open space for self-awareness.

Children supported by the YJS Participation Officer have developed short films about their experiences within the youth justice system. It is intended that in 2024/25 topics will include policing, crime, and suggestions for making courts more youth friendly. Closer links with the Raheem Sterling Foundation are being formed, and 'Roundtable' discussions with the police and young people will afford children from the YJS the opportunity to share their views on crime and exploitation with senior decision makers.

5.3 Promoting a childhood removed from the justice system through prevention, diversion and minimal intervention

Possession of cannabis represents approximately 70% of all First Time Entrants to the youth justice system. Since August 2021, Brent children and young people arrested for the possession of cannabis have received Community Resolutions. These are non-criminal disposals that function as an alternative to entering the youth justice system. Despite the voluntary nature of Community Resolutions, children who receive them are offered a level of support that is commensurate to other OOCs. This includes assessment, and co-produced intervention and safety plans. Interventions offered to children include referrals substance misuse counselling, police led crime awareness sessions, and mental health screening and referral.

The work of the Brent Out of Court Disposal Joint Decision-Making Panel includes discussion about mitigating factors for children who have offended. The Panel adopts a child-first approach to identifying and balancing the personalised needs of the child against the wishes of the victim. Relevant professionals such as CAMHS workers, Social Workers, Substance Misuse Workers, Inclusion Service Officers, and Mentors are invited to Panel meetings to enable a holistic understanding of a child's background, neurodivergent characteristics, trauma concerns, learning needs or mental health issues. This

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enables the Panel to make child focused decisions that prevent children from being unnecessarily criminalised when they break the law. Children on an OOC who experience difficulties in school or have issues with their school place are referred to the Inclusion Service so their family can receive advice and specialist support. This includes managed moves, being home educated, and obtaining school places.

6.0 Voice of the Child

6.1 Brent YJS listens to children and young people.

Brent listens closely to the voice of the child. It is heard through a range of activities that are designed and implemented by young people. This has enabled Brent YJS to move beyond hearing their views to ensuring young people are part of decision making, planning and implementation, resulting in the implementation of a range youth led projects. Young people now communicate with members of the YJS Management Board via podcasts and short films, have made films about online exploitation for the Contextual Safeguarding Strategic Group, and will discuss crime and disorder with local politicians and senior Police this summer as part of Safer Brent *Roundtable* discussions.

Brent YJSs commitment to coproduction and youth participation was enhanced by bringing together the YJS with the Council's responsibility for coordinating and monitoring youth services in 2022. Approval was also given by the Board for Early Help to develop a small team to establish youth led activities at Family Wellbeing Centres. This has enabled YJS to promote service user access to a much wider range of youth participation opportunities than was previously possible. It has also created close alignment to a range of universal provision that had previously been difficult for many children from the YJS to access.

6.2 Disproportionality interventions at Family Wellbeing Centres (FWCs)

The MOPAC funded 'Disproportionality' project (2022-2023) funded a range of activities in Brent FWCs, including sports, art, mentoring, emotional health and wellbeing, beauty, music production and photography sessions, co-designed by young people in the community with sessions facilitated by Brent-approved partners of the voluntary sector, to ensure the inclusion of all young people in the borough. Voluntary sector partners included Sport at the Heart, Jason Roberts Foundation, Always Furthering and Nurturing Development, and JKing the Artist. One hundred and seven young people were involved in co-design and 172 young people across Brent took part in activities during summer 2023. More than fifty children from YJS participated in activities.

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6.3 Raheem Sterling Foundation

In May 2024, the YJS Participation Worker, together with YBF and the Raheem Sterling Foundation, organised for a small group of young people to travel to the Foundation's headquarters to discuss crime and community safety with the footballer Raheem Sterling. They spent a couple of hours being mentored, sharing their views on the challenges young people face, and hearing inspirational stories.

In collaboration with Raheem Sterling Foundation and Word 4 Weapons, seven new Knife Amnesty bins were unveiled in Brent at an event attended by young people, council and community workers, and representatives from Word 4 Weapons and Raheem Sterling Foundation. These knife bins are located at: Denmark Road, Kilburn; Wellspring Crescent, Chalkhill Estate; Neasden Lane, Neasden; Fortunegate Road, Harlesden; Old North Circular Road, Monks Park; Hillside, Stonebridge; and Park Lane, Wembley. The knife amnesty bins provide an anonymous way for knives to be safely disposed of, with the addition of a QR code signposting young people towards support away from knife crime towards mentoring, education, and work opportunities. The bins align with the Raheem Sterling Foundation's Power of 7 objectives - social mobility, employment, education, community, creativity, leadership, and enterprise.

Commenting on the partnership, Raheem Sterling said, "I want this project to make a real difference to young people in Brent by guiding them to take positive actions and have better access to a powerful support network of opportunities. Growing up in Brent, I understand the challenges that young people experience every day, I truly hope our work enables change and I'm grateful to all our partners and the organisations supporting us to help improve the lives and increase opportunities for young people."

6.4 Brent Youth Parliament (BYP)

BYP meets monthly and represents schools and youth groups for young people aged 10-19, (up to 25 with SEND), with 63 members in 2023 attending nine BYP meetings and five Council meetings, including Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee, full council, and Budget Task Force. The young people lead on discussions about the issues they want to look at, and then work with Councillors and council officers to create change for the improvement of young people's services in Brent. One of BYP's priorities for 24/25 is reducing crime and improving safe spaces and this will be considered with Community Safety and Brent YJS this year.

6.5 The Brent Youth Zone

This website is a platform for Brent young people to access universal information about employment, learning, support and advice and activities to get involved with. The Brent Youth Zone website is also used as an engagement tool for young people by providing online access to youth surveys to gather the voice and views of young people.

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6.6 Brent Care Journeys 2.0

The Children in Care Council for Brent works to make sure children and young people in care and care leavers have the chance to be involved in making decisions and in sharing views about the services and support received. These groups use flyers, newsletters and arrange meetings to share information and experiences.

6.7 Christmas Tree Appeal

In December 2023, Brent Early Help worked with the MET Police as part of their Christmas Tree appeal, reaching 3,000 young people in Brent CYP (including all YJS children) and across the borough in Family Wellbeing Centres. The aim of the work was to ensure that as many young people as possible received an age-appropriate book (for 0–12-year-olds) or a £10 online shop voucher for 13+ year olds, as well as toys, games and learning resources. This was a large undertaking involving logistics and planning and was a great success. This will be a yearly event and planning is expected to begin again in October 2024 for Christmas 2024.

6.8 Music Project

Feedback from children led to the YJS commissioning music providers Street Fusion to deliver a music recording and audio production pilot programme. From the involvement of eight children during 2022, the past year has seen 21 children take part. This has proven to be highly successful, especially with young men from Black Heritage groups. The project also provides a safe space which is conducive to discussing sensitive discussions around themes such as emotional wellbeing, contextual safeguarding, and desistance from offending.

- *I learnt that I can stop being on road chilling with Bad People.*
- *I've improved my flow learnt & confidence.*
- *Nutini at all - I love the vibes and energy and I make new friends.*
- *How I sound on my songs. I can relax better when I'm here.*
- *How to express myself.*

7.0 Governance, Leadership and Partnership Arrangements

7.1 The Brent Youth Justice Service (YJS) is a multidisciplinary, multiagency service that works with children and young people aged 10-17 years and their families. Brent YJS provides support in relation to diversion, prevention, out of court disposals, court work, bail and remand, the assessment of children and young people who offend, the

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provision of court reports, the planning and delivery of community interventions, indirect and direct work with victims and custody and resettlement.

The YJS sits within the Children and Young People's Directorate and is managed by the Head of Early Help. The Director of Early Help and Social Care Chairs the YJS Management Board. The Board provides strategic direction and support for the YJS, ensuring that planning is undertaken to deliver effective youth justice services - which firstly aim to reduce re-offending and safeguard children and young people. Secondly, the Board are informed by an understanding of the type and level of risk to children and young people and ensure proportionality in disposals for all children and young people in Brent.

- 7.2** The YJS Management Board has representation across the partnership at senior levels and has maintained a stable and engaged membership with awareness and knowledge of children in the youth justice system. Board members have developed an effective teamwork approach and contribute service area responses to Inspectorate recommendations, wider planning, and challenges. This consistent approach is embedded operationally reflecting the partnership's strategic focus on addressing disparity and disproportionality. All Board members have been encouraged to observe practice. A case study is presented by a member of the YJS at each Management Board meeting, promoting a wider understanding of interventions and their impact.
- 7.3** A review of the YJS Management Board's Terms of Reference, in adherence to YJB guidance, was approved in January 2023. The Board continues to monitor the original four KPIs reported to the YJB as well as overseeing the introduction and performance of ten new KPIs. One of which is Management Board Attendance - which was met in full in 2023/24.

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Table 3: YJS Management Board Attendance 2023/24 by Quarter

Brent YJS Management Board Attendance 2023/24				
Senior Management Board Attendance	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4
Health	1	1	1	1
LA Children’s Social Care	1	1	1	1
LA Education	1	1	1	1
Police	1	1	1	1
Probation	1	1	1	1
Total	5	5	5	5

7.4 Youth and Youth Justice Services

The rationale for merging statutory Youth Service responsibilities with the YJS was that closer alignment of these two areas of work would strengthen the offer of Early Help preventative services, enable stronger links with schools, and offer positive early intervention opportunities to reduce exclusions and entry in the criminal justice system. It also enables further integration with the FWC and other providers ensuring the most vulnerable young people are targeted.

7.5 Brent Council is strongly committed to supporting the local youth sector with the principles in the Brent Youth Strategy. These include supporting a programme of refurbishment of existing voluntary sector youth facilities as well as converting spaces such as empty buildings or offices into modern accommodation that the voluntary sector could use for the benefit of young people across the borough. These developments - through the SCIL Youth Provision Project – will see up to £2.15 million spent on physical infrastructure to improve youth provision in growth areas. The youth voluntary sector will be able to apply for funding to improve or upscale their buildings to deliver social infrastructure and to improve the quality of life for children and young people in Brent in line with the Brent Borough Plan 2023-2027.

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- 7.6 The YJB's revised Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) were introduced in England from April 2023, and approved by the YJS Management Board in January 2023. This stated that the existing four current KPIs: binary reoffending rate, frequency of reoffending, first time entrants and use of custody, will continue to be used in conjunction with ten new KPIs. These are accommodation, education, training and employment, SEND/additional learning needs, mental health and emotional wellbeing, substance misuse, out of court disposals, management board attendance, wider services, serious youth violence, and victims.
- 7.7 Brent's intention, alongside other YOTs nationally, is to align performance with the Youth Justice Board oversight framework. This framework - informed by the YJB's vision (April 2023), will monitor youth justice system performance, oversight, assurance, and compliance. It will additionally highlight the YJB's two specific monitoring functions: operation of the youth justice system and the provision of youth justice services and the extent to which the system aims are being achieved and any such standards met. The framework has provided clarity on how the YJB's monitoring function is fulfilled, outlining how oversight of local youth justice services is undertaken and delivery across the wider system is understood. The framework – consolidated through the YJB Strategic Plan 2024-27 - is a new way of working for the YJB which involves challenge and support and helping systems and practices to be embedded. Continued effective relations with the YJB, who attend Board meetings and regularly meet with the Youth and Youth Justice Manager, provides clear support and challenge.
- 7.8 The Brent YJS Youth Justice Plan is informed by and linked to The Brent Borough Plan 2023 – 2027: 'Moving Brent Forward Together'.
- 8.0 Workforce development**
- 8.1 In line with the YJB Business Plan 2023/24, Brent YJS has a diverse workforce that reflects the communities it serves. Brent YJS shared its staffing profile by ethnicity with the Youth Justice Board in September 2023. This showed it is diverse and representative of children in the Brent Youth Justice System. Brent has a Disproportionality Action Plan which it regularly monitors and continues to ensure that everyone who works for the YJS has planned and recorded individual development.
- 8.2 Brent YJS benefits from partner staffing contributions equivalent to 10.6 FTE within the YJS and senior members from partnership agencies at Board level. The YJS is compliant with the minimum staffing requirement set out in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 – with multi agency staff from Education, Health, Probation, and the Police.

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- 8.3** Brent Police continue to provide a continuous staffing contribution that exceeds the minimum statutory requirement of 1.0 FTE. There are 3.0 FTE Police Officers.
- 8.4** There are two mental health practitioners within the YJS, A seconded CAMHS practitioner and a NHSE funded Youth Justice and Liaison and Diversion Worker who undertakes mental health screening. Both officers offer children and young people 1:1 sessions, develop staff knowledge around emotional wellbeing, and support the wider professional network.
- 8.5** A 0.6 FTE National Probation Service officer is seconded to YJS. The officer holds a case load, advises YJS officers about transitions to the adult estate, and makes positive contributions to wider YJS work including team meeting attendance and providing duty cover.
- 8.6** Since the formation of YOTs in 2001, educational support services have fulfilled their statutory requirement to support YJS via annual financial contributions from the DSG.
- 8.7** Reporting to the Head of Early Help, the Youth and Youth Justice Manager has overall management oversight of 25.5 FTE staff members.
- 8.8** Brent YJS has maintained a stable workforce of largely permanently employed staff. All staff have accessed training through the Brent Council CYP training programme and INSET training recommended by the Youth Justice Board. The team have received more specialist training this year such as, Restorative Justice Practice, Youth Justice Legal Training, Cultural Competency Training, anti-racist training, and neurodiversity. YJS monthly practice development sessions during 2023/24 have provided a wide and comprehensive focus upon case practice issues including restorative justice, understanding the new YJB KPIs, assessment and planning, Referral Order Panel best practice, reviews, management oversight, and reflective supervision.
- 8.9** The YJS will continue to develop its practice in line with the neurodiverse and personalised needs of children and young people during 2023/24. This will include building upon our understanding of cultural competency and anti-racist training.
- 8.10** YJS Case Managers have access to a range of one to one and group work interventions which cover a range of themes. These include offending behaviour, risk and safety interventions, victim awareness, decision and problem solving, anger and emotional management, and weapon and knives interventions.

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9.0 Resourcing and Services

9.1 The YJS benefits from well-established partnerships with agencies within the voluntary sector including:

9.2 Brent EACH

EACH is a counselling and support agency that delivers counselling services and support for YJS children and young people receiving Out of Court Disposals. Thirty-seven of these children received substance misuse counselling in 2023/24. As part of ‘whole family working’, parents, carer(s), and siblings are also offered support. Two EACH staff members have delivered services in Brent YJS since 2006.

9.3 VIA (formerly known as Westminster Drug Project)

VIA are a drug and alcohol charity. They contribute the equivalent of 1.0 FTE advice, assessment and treatment support for Brent children and young people who received a court order and were assessed as needing drug and alcohol support. Services are delivered at the Brent Civic Centre, and within the local community. Between April and December 2023, WDP delivered support to 23 children and young people.

Table 4: VIA Substance Misuse Targeted Interventions: April to December 2023 – no. of children by tier and quarter

	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Total
Tier 1	8	3	6	17
Tier 2	2	1	3	6
Total	10	4	9	23

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9.4 Brent Centre for Young People (BCYP)

BCYP offers a range of psychotherapeutic mental health interventions, designed specifically for children and young people who offend and who often struggle to engage with mental health services. Like EACH they have delivered services within the YJS since 2006.

9.5 St. Giles Trust

St. Giles offer gang affected mentoring for children and young people involved in or at risk of criminal exploitation. Provision is accessible via the Exploitation, Violence and Vulnerability Panel.

9.6 Young Brent Foundation (YBF)

YBF are an umbrella organisation for local voluntary organisations and community groups. They provide mentors from across member organisations to match young people with mentors best suited to support them. The work, support, and guidance they provide to YJS is informed and guided by their extensive community knowledge. YBF is the primary link between YJS and the local youth sector. Community information is routinely shared with YJS Staff and at a strategic level through membership of the YJS Management Board.

9.7 **Multi-agency Panels** Brent YJS leads or contributes to a wide range of multi-agency panels with specific strategic and operational functions. These were reviewed during 23/24 and include:

- **Resettlement and Aftercare panel** - This monthly panel discusses all children in custody and ensures the accommodation and wider needs of children and young people due to be released from custody are identified and planned for in a timely and transparent fashion in line with the YJB's principles around constructive resettlement. The Panel also provides senior oversight on bail and remand work. Regular panel members

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include Feltham YOI, the Police, Social Care, Early Help, the NHS, CAMHS, Restorative Justice Workers, and the CYP Placement Service. The Panel will be guided by Brent's response to the findings and recommendations from the *Joint thematic inspection of work with children subject to remand in youth detention (November 2023)*.

- **YJS and LAC Managers meeting** Meetings between Heads of Services and Service Managers identify joint actions to be tackled as part of the MOPAC Criminalisation of Children in Care Action Plan.
- **Strategy and Professionals meetings** These meetings are convened as and whenever necessary to share risk, court outcomes, and other information needed to keep children and young people in the criminal justice system safe. Members include YJS, Social Care, Police, Health, and Education.
- **Exploitation, Violence and Vulnerability Panel** This Panel coordinates the sharing of information between partners about children and young people at risk of sexual or criminal exploitation, trafficking and modern slavery, and missing children to ensure identified risks are appropriately managed.
- **YJS Risk, Safety and Wellbeing Multi-agency Management Risk Forum** This YJS led multiagency forum meets monthly. It provides senior management oversight of risk and safety and wellbeing for some of the most vulnerable children and young people in Brent. Attendance includes Social Care, Police, CAMHS, Probation, Inclusion Service and YJS staff
- **YJS Transitions Panel** Chaired by YJS with attendance from Probation, Police (IOM) and Leaving Care colleagues, the Panel discusses young people transitioning from the YJS to Probation in accordance with the

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new local YJS and Probation Protocol – which is informed by the Joint National Protocol for transitions in England (June 2021).

- **Restorative Justice (RJ) Improvement Group** This is a group comprised of Referral Panel members, YJS, Police and the Courts. Members consider meaningful reparation opportunities within the community that are beneficial for both the community and young people. It is also a forum for discussion and reflection about RJ good practice. The Panel enables children and young people to consider different ways of repairing the harm caused by their offending, acquire the opportunity to reflect on their offence(s), and see the wider consequences of their offending for themselves and others.
- **NEET Working Group** The NEET Working Group consists of the YJS, the Virtual School, Prospects and PLIAS (mentoring). It provides a child-focused consideration of NEET young people on a case-by-case basis, inclusive of planning work and educational initiatives to help young people engage in education and training.
- **Out of Court Disposals (O OCD) Decision Making Panel** This weekly Panel is chaired by YJS and attended by Police, Health, YJS, Social Care, Early Help staff and Restorative Justice workers to jointly consider and determine O OCD decisions guided by the ACPO police child matrix. It additionally identifies young people who are eligible to attend the Turnaround project.
- **The Safer Brent Partnership (SBP)** Community Safety Partnerships are multi-agency, strategic groups that oversee the approach to reducing crime and antisocial behaviour in a particular area. SBP is made up of representatives from many agencies, including the London Borough of Brent, Metropolitan Police, London Fire Brigade, National Probation Service, Voluntary Services and Victim Support. SBP aims to build an involved

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community, with less fear of crime and greater confidence in services, which takes responsibility for its own actions. It also pledges to bring to justice those who cause the most harm to our community, using restorative approaches and out-of-court disposals where appropriate. Its work is intelligence-led and evidence-based, identifying real issues and taking a problem-solving approach to reducing them. The YJS Management Board is linked to SBP via its Chair who is also a member of SBP.

10.0 Progress on priorities in previous plan

10.1 Nationally

Progress has been made over the last twelve years across the national youth justice system:

- The number of proven offences committed by children has fallen by approximately 65%. From 98,937 in 2012/13 to around 34,300 in 2022/23.
- There have been substantial falls in the number of children entering the justice system. This amounts to a reduction of around 77% between the years ending March 2012 and March 2023.
- There were approximately 11,900 occasions where children were sentenced at court in the year ending March 2023. This is 73% lower than in the year ending March 2012.
- The number of children being sentenced to custody has also reduced. In the year ending March 2023, the average monthly population of the youth secure estate was the lowest it has ever been at around 440 children.

10.2 Brent

In 2023/24, Brent YJS performed well in relation to reducing youth re-offending, the number of first-time entrants to the justice system and the use of youth custody (see data tables and charts below).

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- **Reducing Reoffending** The binary rate of reoffending is the official measure of reoffending and the proportion of 'reoffenders' who make up the total cohort. Brent's overall trend is decreasing. This is due to the small size of the cohort creating an effect of instability. Relatively small increases or decreases to the number of reoffenders, or the number of reoffences committed, can produce significant changes each quarter. For instance, in a quarter during which most reoffenders committed no or few offences, the rate of reoffending will increase considerably if one child is criminally prolific. This explains the large variations Brent has experienced during the last six years. In this time the binary reoffending rate was 50% in January to March 2017, 62.2% in January to March 2018, 32.6% in January to March 2019, 39.6% in January to March 2020, 14.9% in January to March 2021, and 13.9% in January to March 2022.

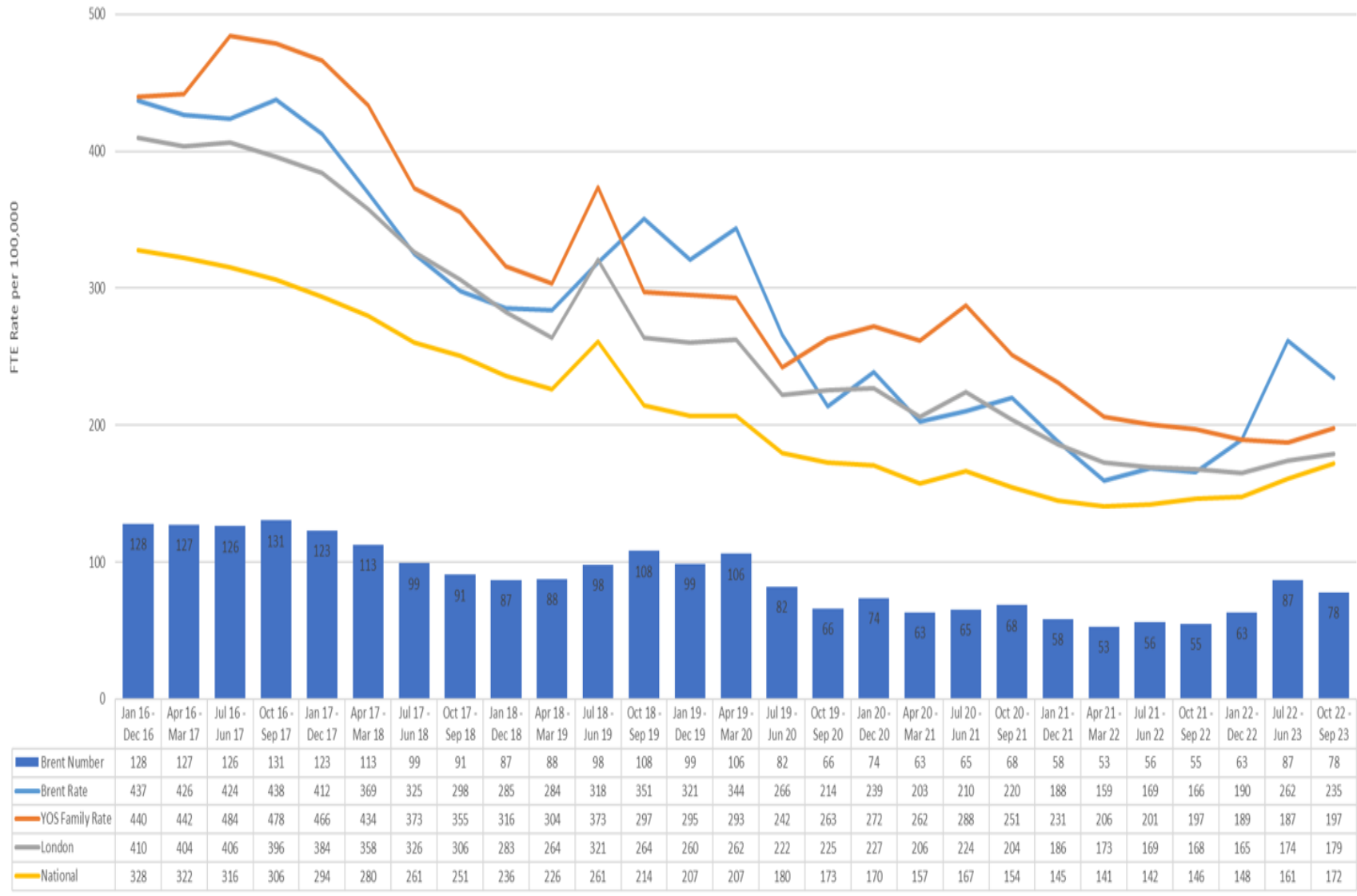
Work in this area has benefitted from the continued use of the YJB live reoffending tracker to analyse data at the level of individual young people. YJS has also created the YJS Transitions Panel to manage various transitions (often a vulnerable time for children and young people), listened to the voice of the child, responded to substance misuse and disproportionality issues, and conducted regular monthly audits.

- **Reducing First Time Entrants (FTEs)** Although Brent recorded a small increase in the number of FTEs in 2023, the long-term trend is declining. Brent's FTE rate per 100,000 children was 201 for the twelve-month period January 2023 to December 2023, compared to 190 per 100,000 children in the period January 2022 to December 2022. The data for this KPI comes from the Police National Computer and is shown in rolling full years.

The latest data published by the Ministry of Justice shows there were 79 new entrants to the youth justice system between October 2022 and September 2023. This is an annual increase of 24 children when compared to the period between October 2021 and September 2022 – 55 FTEs were recorded during this time.

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Table 5. No. of Brent Children Entering the Youth Justice System: January 2016 to September 2023.



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10.3 Reducing Custody

Despite continued serious youth violence, criminal exploitation and gang affectedness, the number of Brent young people sentenced to custody has reduced from a high of 54 in 2013/14, to four in the twelve-month period ending January 2022 to December 2022, to two in the latest period (January 2023 to December 2023).

The number of remands in 2023/24 (5 children) increased by three when compared to 2022/2023 (2 children). This was however, 10 fewer than the 15 children who were remanded to custody in 2020/21. Children from Black or other minority ethnic groups comprised 80% of children remanded in 2023/24.

Table 6. Number of Children Remanded 2020 to 2024 by Heritage Group.

	2020/2021 Remands	2021/2022 Remands	2022/2023 Remands	2023/2024 Remands
Black Heritage	9 (60%)	1 (25%)	2 (100%)	2 (40%)
Other BAME	4 (26.6%)	3 (75%)	0 (0%)	2 (40%)
Total BAME	13 (86.6%)	4 (100%)	2(100%)	4(80%)
White Heritage	2 (13.3%)	0 (0%)	0(0%)	1(20%)
Total	15	4	2	5

Brent YJS prepares written bail packages and bail letters whenever children are at risk of remand. Other proactive measures include management oversight and quality assurance of all bail applications, including a narrative of the child’s history and lived experience in bail letters, and having a default approach that ‘children will be given bail’ in most instances. At Risk of Custody, meetings are held regularly to help avoid the unnecessary use of custody.

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10.4 Embedding Resettlement Practice

The 2021 HMIP Annual Inspection report of youth justice services, highlighted resettlement as an area across YOTs that needed improvement. This was reinforced by the YJB in its 2023/24 Business Plan, and in February 2023 the Minister for Prisons and Probation directed YOTs to work 'with the Youth Custody Service to ensure every child has a clear plan ahead of their release and can access the right education, healthcare and accommodation support'. Brent YJS updated its Resettlement Policy in March 2023 in response to this and continues to actively participate in the London Resettlement Partnership. Support is shaped by the five characteristics that have been identified as key to effective practice: Constructive, Co-created, Customised, Consistent and Co-ordinated.

The Brent Resettlement and Aftercare Panel is an effective and well-structured forum for coordinating and reviewing resettlement planning with representation from key partners with an appropriate level of seniority. This is vital when considering that the YJB in its Strategic Plan 2024-27, described the patterns of violence, self-harm and trauma that is seen in custodial settings as 'unacceptable.' The Resettlement and Aftercare Panel will continue to review any safeguarding issues for children within the secure estate and ensure matters are escalated within the system. Systems are in place and adhered to in accordance with the Brent Probation and YJS joint protocol - under which all children are eligible for transition, and planning is initiated early.

10.5 Accommodation

Safe, suitable, and sustainable accommodation forms the foundations for delivering effective support to children and young people. In the period April to December 2023, 76 children and young people supported by Brent YJS were placed in suitable accommodation. Accommodation can however be deemed unsuitable for a range of reasons including proximity to contextual safeguarding risks, familial safeguarding risks, being placed in custody, or poor living circumstances such as overcrowding. All four children who resided in unsuitable accommodation in 2023/24 were remanded into custody.

Brent YJS is working closely with other CYP services to overcome barriers to unsuitable accommodation which include encouraging placement providers to accommodate children with challenging behaviour, and the practical difficulties associated with placing children in accommodation at weekends. Early Help offer a wide range of support that helps families address their housing and cost of living issues. Accommodation is one the ten newly introduced KPIs monitored by the YJB.

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10.6 Reducing disproportionality in custodial outcomes including remands and sentencing

In 2022, a workshop with defence lawyers, CPS, and the court representatives on anti-racist legal representation (Just for Kids Law) provided important messaging regarding the role of defence lawyers to advocate for children and addressing the trust deficit within Black Heritage groups towards lawyers and Court Services.

During 2024/25 there will be a determined partnership response to some of the key recommendations in the *HMIP thematic inspection of work with children subject to remand in youth detention (November 2023)*. These will be outlined in both the Youth Justice Improvement Plan 2024/25, and the Brent Disproportionality Action Plan to ensure there is a specific focus on a wide range of actions that address the needs of all children. This will include actions addressing drug and alcohol support, monitoring release arrangements, greater consultation on bail conditions, mandatory online training for police officers around child trafficking, bail and remand training across CYP, early identification of accommodation options at the first court appearance, briefings to defence solicitors about the impact of 'no comment' interviews, and offering voluntary support to those acquitted.

10.7 Reducing serious youth violence, exploitation and contextual safeguarding

Serious youth violence (SYV) is defined as any drug, robbery or violence against the person offence that has a gravity score of five or more. The Youth Justice Board SYV toolkit shows that serious youth violence in Brent decreased in the year ending December 2023 compared with the previous year. The tool also indicated that robbery offences have increased significantly in the year ending December 2023 compared to the previous year. An over representation of children from Black Heritage groups involvement in SYV persists. Sixty-eight percent of children and young people who committed SYV offences in Brent were from Black Heritage groups in 2023. This is a year-on-year increase of 15% when compared to 2022 (53%) - and 9% less than 2020 (77%). Males make up the biggest proportion of children and young people committing SYV offences. In the year ending December 2023, 100% of the cohort were male compared to 96% in 2022 and 82% in 2021. During the first 3 quarters of the 23/24 period there were 10 drug related offences: 8 robbery offences and 34 offences of violence against the person.

Working in partnership is key to reducing SYV in Brent. Along with Social Care colleagues and youth justice workers from Barnet and Harrow, Brent YJS attends daily SYV police briefings from the North-West London Borough Command Unit. Daily briefings function as an intelligence sharing forum and allow partners to coordinate the management of violence and tensions within Brent. Other strands to the concerted and joined up effort across the partnership to reduce SYV include supporting events such as Carnival, the deployment of various outreach activities

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in response to local needs, utilising peer mapping, summer programmes and communicating with neighbouring boroughs and courts. The YJS also employs safety mapping to identify risks and keep children safe. Brent has also set up a Violence Reduction Steering Group to advise and agree on prevention-based actions and activities to reduce knife and lethal weapon carrying, co-design programmes and activities that address violent crime and prevent exploitation and harm. Brent YJS will also support the implementation of any actions required from the Brent's Serious Violence Duty to complete a strategic needs assessment (SNA) by March 2025. The SNA will provide an enhanced focus on the reduction of SYV by identifying the drivers of serious violence in Brent and those people most at risk of, or most affected by, serious violence.

10.8 Reducing Knife Crime

Knife crime remains a persistent problem in Brent. Forty-one knife offences were committed by young people in 2023/24, compared to 54 in 2019/20, 39 in 2020/21, 41 in 2021/22 and 38 in 2022/23.

Brent YJS has worked to reduce knife crime. Among other things, YJS staff accompany children to the monthly 'No Knives Better Lives' knife crime intervention at the Central Criminal Court ('Old Bailey'), all young people arrested for knife-related offences are required to attend a mandatory groupwork session led by professionals and members of the public who provide differing perspectives on knife crime – presenters have included a trauma surgeon, an ex-gang member, and the parent of a teenage victim of knife crime. Children who have committed knife offences are also referred to the Brent YJS Weapons Awareness Programme. This is an eight-week programme delivered by YJS Case Managers about the dangers of knife crime and offers participants strategies for preventing or resolving conflict without violence.

10.9 Unlocking Your Potential

This is a monthly programme for up to ten young people from the YJS to attend motivational sessions with guest speakers from the local area. To date 64 young people have attended the sessions. It seeks to inspire young people with entrepreneurial skills to achieve their ambitions. At one session the author Nabil Al-Kinai spoke about his journey of growing up in the Chalk Hill estate and being involved in the criminal justice system at the age of 17 years. His key message was that young people are authors of their own story, and they must take ownership rather than allowing other people to write their stories.

The impact of these sessions has helped one of the participants develop his current business idea to set up his own jewellery business. The young person has now completed his court order; However, he is keen to return back to the YJS to be a guest speaker at one of the future unlocking your potential workshops.

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I think the programme is good because it gives you different perspectives on someone who has committed a crime(s) and is still able to achieve in society and make something of themselves. I learnt a lot about myself and my potential'.

'it's motivating seeing someone do well'

'Learnt about new people and what is going on in my local area, such as the history of Wembley and the book Nabil wrote 'Authors of the estate'. I found it really interesting, and I enjoyed it'

10.10 Radicalisation or extremist activity

The Youth Justice Board issued practice advice in April 2023 to support youth justice services to identify and manage children at risk of, or involved in, terrorist-related activity. This includes dealing with children posing a terrorist risk and those arrested and convicted under the Terrorism Act 2000. The YJS has adopted this guidance and is also a member of the Prevent Operational Group. This allows youth justice perspectives to influence the shape of local anti-extremism provision and training. No Brent YJS children were referred to Channel in 2023/24.

10.11 Out of Court Disposals (O OCD)

In each of the last four years the YJS Management Board has received a report examining practice, procedures, and performance on OOCDS. The Youth Engagement Fund toolkit shows that pre-court diversion nationally leads to greater reductions in reoffending (by 13%) than sentencing young people through court services. Furthermore, when children who have attended diversionary schemes do commit another offence, their offending is likely to be less serious.

The Brent YJS Out of Court Disposal Service offers effective assessment and early interventions to children and young people and their families. Its effectiveness is monitored by a Metropolitan Police led Multi-Agency Scrutiny Panel, comprised of senior representatives from the Police, CPS, Court Services, Judiciary, MOPAC and the YJB. The Scrutiny Panel audited six O OCD cases in November 2022 and further six cases in June 2023. On both occasions decision making was agreed as correct without any comment for five cases, and the remaining one case was agreed as correct with some comment about process. Four out of six cases were adjudged to have correct decisions when the Panel met in December 2023.

The Child Gravity Matrix is the tool Police use to determine the most appropriate outcome or disposal for children and young people who offend. The Matrix outlines the options available to the decision makers for both statutory (caution, conditional cautions, or prosecution) and non-statutory outcomes which in Brent include Community

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Resolutions and Triage. In November 2023, the Matrix was updated and now allows greater emphasis to be placed on mitigating factors which include vulnerabilities such as undiagnosed and diagnosed neurodiversity needs.

Brent YJS has adopted the YJB Prevention and Diversion Assessment Tool for Out of Court disposals. It enables greater analysis of how a child's behaviour can be the result of their life circumstances and helps identify their strengths. Furthermore, it provides a structured framework for assessment, interventions, planning, and the identification of risk factors.

Interventions for young people who receive OOCs reflect their specific needs. For those referred for drug related offences or where assessment has identified substance misuse, one-to-one sessions are offered by the EACH Counselling substance misuse team. Sessions include the law and drugs, county lines drug dealing, gang culture, criminal exploitation, abstinence, and harm minimisation. Other sessions delivered in 2023/24 included decision making, peer pressure, making better choices, online safety, sexually harmful behaviour, knife crime, weapon awareness, victim awareness, police one to one sessions, crime presentations, police led group sessions, and safety mapping.

There were 74 referrals to the OCCD Team in 2023/24:

Table 7: Out of Court Disposals 2023/24

Out of Court Disposals 2023/24	
Community Resolutions	30
Triage	24
Youth Caution	3 (100% successfully completed)
Youth Conditional Cautions	17 (100% successfully completed)
Total	74

Assessment and interventions are offered to all children and are mandatory for those who receive a Youth Conditional Caution. Seventy-four young people undertook Safety Mapping – a contextual safeguarding tool that enables young people to identify non-familial risks in the community. Thirty-seven young people who were referred by the Police for drug related offences or where assessments identified substance misuse were offered one to one substance misuse

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counselling and groupwork sessions. Out of Court Disposals are one the ten newly introduced KPI's monitored by the YJB – no. of young people successfully completing OOCDS.

10.12 YJS Triage Programme

Triage is an OOCDS that is offered to young people who would otherwise be likely to receive a criminal justice disposal. It is available to young people who admit guilt to low gravity offences. The most common offence committed by children who take part in the Triage programme is possession of cannabis. The service is currently funded by MOPAC and has been identified as the most significant cause of the steep decline in the number of young people from Brent entering the criminal justice system. Children who complete Triage receive the same level of multiagency risk management that young people within the youth justice system receive. Triage is a short-term intervention that should not last longer than three-months.

10.13 Policing

Three Police Officers are based within Brent YJS. They work closely with YJS staff to administer and deliver OOCDS, share intelligence, enforce non-compliance, and engage with children known to YJS - this includes the delivery of groupwork and individual sessions. The draft MPS Children's Strategy is currently under targeted consultation. Its aim is to keep children in London safe, build their trust and bring to justice those who abuse and exploit them. It proposes a child first approach with strategic aims and actions around building relationships, tackling discrimination, further increasing the use of OOCDS, strengthening schools and education provision, delivering precise and fair stop and search, and promoting routes into policing careers and volunteering. The success of this strategy will be measured through increasing the percentage of children surveyed by MOPAC who have a good opinion of the police, feel they can trust the Met and believe the police treat everyone fairly.

10.14 YJS Referral Order Programme

Referral Orders are a community sentence that require a young person to agree a contract of rehabilitative and restorative elements during a Referral Order Panel meeting. The YJS trains and recruits a diverse cohort of Panel members who reflect the diversity of Brent. There are currently fifteen volunteer Panel members.

Panels take place on a weekly basis and consist of the following:

- Initial panels (where the RO contract of interventions is agreed with the young person).

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- Review Panels.
- Non-compliance Panels
- Compliance review Panels.
- Final Panels.

A young person and their parent were recently asked if they would change anything about the Panel they attended:

Young Person: 'Not really, I felt everything went well. In my opinion there's nothing that needs to be improved. It was better than I thought it would be'.

Mum 'I thought they (panel members) were fair, and they were engaged. What I liked was that they came across as though they really care. They were not judgemental, and we didn't feel judged. They came across as extremely supportive'.

Table 8. Referral Order Outcomes April 2023/24

Outcome	Disposals	percentage
Active intervention	38	57%
Completed Early Discharge Good Behaviour	1	1%
Completed Other	2	3%
No intervention	3	4%
Not Completed (Other)	1	1%
Not Completed Breached Order Revoked and Resentenced to Community Penalty (Terminated)	2	3%
Successfully Completed	19	28%
Transfer to other agency/home YOT	1	1%
Total	67	

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10.15 Restorative Justice (RJ) and Victims

Through engagement with RJ, Brent YJS seeks to empower victims and reduce reoffending by developing empathy within our children and young people.

Brent YJS revised its Restorative Justice and Victim Policy in 2022/23 with plans to extend meaningful reparation opportunities that were beneficial for both the community and young person, ensure dedicated staff were in post, and to produce youth led and coproduced RJ resources for Brent young people. Brent YJS reparation activities have now extended into face-to-face work at a dementia Café with elderly people and at foodbanks operating out of Family Well-being Centres. These foodbanks enable young people to give back to the community in a meaningful way in a safe environment.

Brent YJS Victim Awareness Groupwork occurs on a quarterly basis for a period of six weeks. Feedback has been positive with good completion rates. Topics covered include establishing boundaries, values, the young persons', and the victim's experience, repairing harm and giving back to the community.

The following quotes are typical of many victims and children and young people who took part in restorative justice in 2023/24:

Victims

"I'm glad you called me as didn't know RJ existed".

"I don't know if me and the victim would have ever spoken again if it weren't for RJ".

"It's good to know that young people have RJ to explore ways to repair harm. I'm happy to engage in any RJ of the young person's choosing".

"It's good to know that the young person is reflecting on their behaviour with the YJS and wants to repair the harm he caused to me".

"I am happy that I went ahead with the RJ process, it brought me closure."

"Although I wanted to rebuild the friendship, I understand that this is not possible now, but I am pleased that I could tell my side of the story."

"I was really frustrated throughout the investigation as I didn't feel that I was listened to. I am pleased that you called, and I can say what I need."

"I needed help at the time the incident happened. I wanted to prevent further harm. I am not happy with what happened at the time, but I think everybody involved has grown and now I can move on thanks for your work."

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“It is good that you called and asked my opinion. I am pleased that the YP’s intervention will address my concerns.”

Young People

“Writing the letter (of apology) was the right thing to do”.

“I feel better for writing a letter as that’s what I would have wanted”.

“RJ got me thinking about my mum and how I would have felt if someone did that (his offence) to her”.

“I wanted to put things right and I think my letter did that”.

“I’m glad I could write a letter as I am sorry for what I did”.

“I completed the Victim Awareness Group, and I liked the people doing the group, they were nice. I also learned different ways victims are impacted.”

“I liked engaging with the other participants of the Victim Awareness Group where I learnt that crime can affect a lot of people that you would not have thought of.”

“I wanted to meet the victim as I wanted to apologise. This was a great closure for the whole incident.”

“I was sorry and embarrassed, and I wanted to say sorry from the beginning. I wrote a letter of apology to a community member as the victim didn’t want any communication. I would have met the victim if he wished for it. RJ helped me to think about the impact of my actions on others.”

“It’s good to know that RJ is available.”

Brent YJS Restorative Justice workers have been delivering ‘Lunch and Learn’ sessions to the whole CYP department. It has been well received and is now featured in the CYP training offer. Brent seeks to build a restorative community by embedding restorative practice within both strategic and operational planning and delivery. We have also supported our full time Restorative Justice Worker to achieve the Restorative Justice Council’s *Certified Advanced Practitioner* status.

Plans for 2024/25 will include promoting the RJ offer to care homes and foster carers and extending the RJ Offer - currently offered to all victims of crime - to carers and key workers as a non-criminal remedy.

“I have learnt a lot of things from these offences. I’ve learnt that I should go down the right path. I should walk the other way and ignore negative friends,” 17-year-old male.

“Since the offence I have not been in any trouble and do not intend on getting into any trouble. I have learnt not to fight as it can affect many people including the victim, offender, community, and it can impact my future,” 17-year-old male.

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“RJ has helped me look at the offence and my behaviour so I can put it in the past and get on with my life,” 16-year-old female.

“The main outcome for me was how an offence like this can truly affect the community. It really gave me a completely new angle on how to look at the crime from the perspective of someone that is a stranger to me and looks at the situation upon face value,” 18-year-old male.

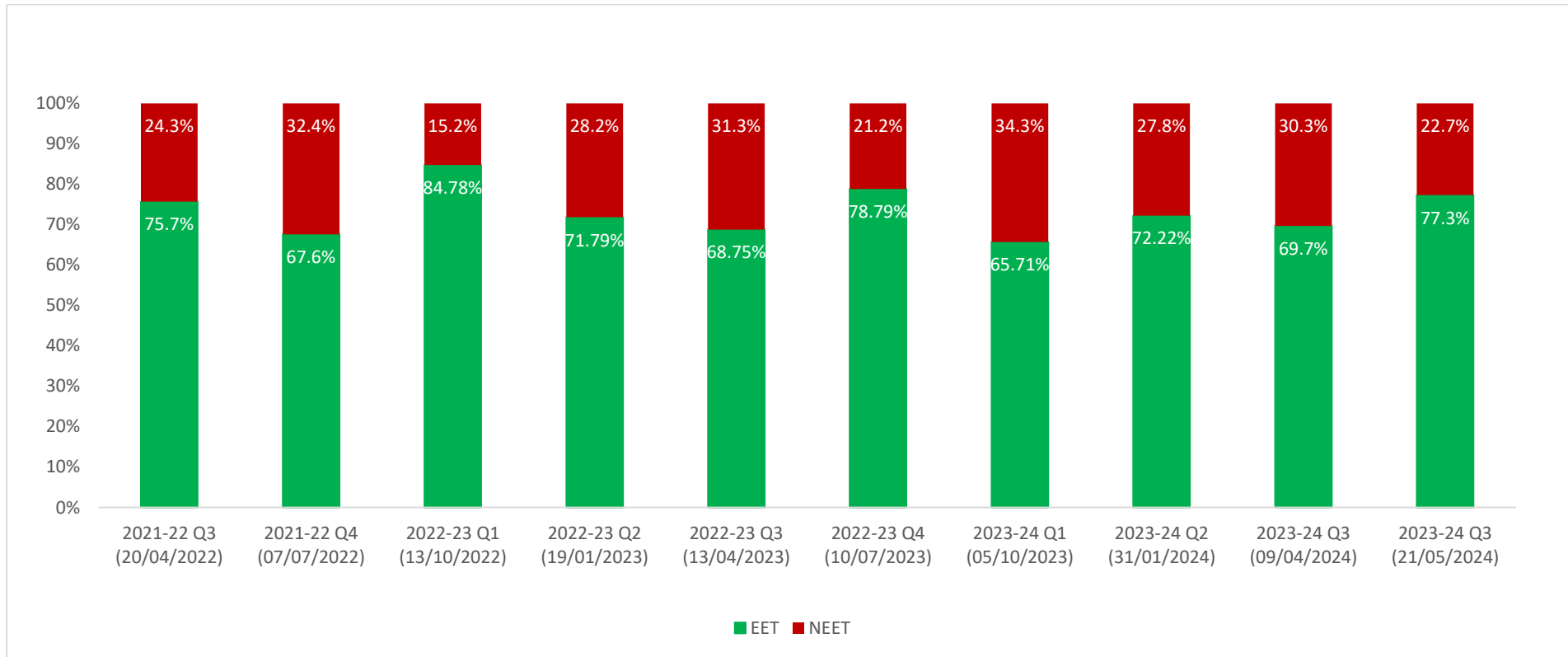
10.16 Education, Training and Employment

Accessing good ETE provision, is crucial to the life chances of children under statutory supervision. It is consistently identified as one of the top three factors that need to be addressed by inspectors and the YJB. However, many children and young people have had negative educational experiences and a disrupted educational experience. In June 2022, a *HM Inspectorate of Probation, Estyn, and Ofsted joint inspection of education, training, and employment services in youth offending teams*, involving 180 children from six local authorities, highlighted many of the strengths and challenges of ETE provision from a youth justice perspective and learning has been used to inform Brent’s approach.

The YJS Management Board scrutinizes the NEET cohort every quarter. This oversight has been extended to all children due to the national inclusion of education as a YJS Key Performance Indicator. The Board also ensures staffing levels are sufficient and there is access to a wide and varied training offer. Clear pathways between Brent YJS and mainstream and alternative education providers means that significant progress has been made towards making HMIP and Ofsted’s recommended improvements. This includes increasing commitment to participation work in schools and a new quality assurance regime which ensures all assessment and case actions are undertaken within agreed timescales. Operational work is monitored by a supportive Board that maintains tight oversight of the relatively small but challenging number of NEET young people known to Brent YJS.

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Table 9. Brent NEET population 2021 to 2024: YJS children and young people



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Operationally, ETE is shaped by intensive joint working between YJS, commissioned ETE provider Prospects, and the Virtual School for Looked After Children. Staffing capacity has increased and there is greater emphasis on access, monitoring and quality of provision. This includes:

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- A NEET working group which meets monthly to monitor vulnerable young people not in education and ensure that plans are in place.
- The provision of employment and training data from the YJS to Prospects on a fortnightly basis so that interventions are put in place at the earliest opportunity and any children who have no recorded provision are identified.
- Working closely with custodial units to ensure children and young people have a transition destination at the point of resettlement.
- Ensuring that Prospects advisors are working closely with parents and YJS Case Managers, other professionals, and families.
- Deploying additional staffing when children and young people are already receiving support from a generic Prospects Advisor.
- The NEET group has extended its scope to include a PLIAS Employment Advisor who can provide specialist support to those seeking employment and the construction CSCS card.
- EHCP work is now more comprehensively reflected in Asset Plus and PSRs.
- Close working with the Brent Inclusion Team. This includes the Inclusion Team Manager attending the Multi agency High-Risk Panel.
- The ASER programme offers a series of individually developed units preparing long-term YJS NEET young people for work or training.
- Brent Connexions delivered a re-engagement programme between February and April 2024. This included a series of employability groupwork job skills sessions for young people known to Brent YJS.

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Table 10. Brent YJS ETE Suitability April to December 2023

ETE suitability	
ETE Suitability	No. of Young People
Suitable	57
Unknown	1
Unsuitable	23
Total	79

10.17 Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing

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The Children and Young People’s Mental Health and Wellbeing Local Transformation Plan 2024/25 has the ambition for better mental health and wellbeing for every child and young person living in North-West London. These include developing inclusive, fair, and equitable services that are reasonably adjusted to support people with more complex needs, including those with learning disabilities and autism. The National Thrive Framework is a key component, providing a set of principles for creating coherent and resource-efficient communities of mental health and wellbeing support for children, young people, and families. Thrive aims to talk about mental health and mental health support in a common language that everyone understands. This, and plans from the NW London CYP Mental Health Steering Group to embed the CYP Mental Health pathway within Family Wellbeing Centres will enable better access to mental health services for children supported by YJS.

The CAMHS Mental Health Practitioner (MHP) based within YJS supports young people who have severe or complex problems to access specialised CAMHS provision.

Table 11. CAMHS Mental Health Support April to December 2023: YJS young people

Mental Health Support:	No. of Young People
Advice / Consultation	12
Referrals and Signposting to other services	3
Referral to FCAMHS / Ongoing liaison	3
Referral to Tier 3 CAMHS	2
Total:	20

Other positive outcomes achieved by the seconded CAMHS MHP include:

- Efficient information sharing, better care, and more effective multi-agency collaboration between YJS and CAMHS, as all young people who come under the CAMHS Effective Treatment Team are case managed by the MHP working across both teams. This allows the MHP to access specialist, multi-disciplinary advice from CAMHS which is shared with YJS Staff to facilitate cohesion and psychoeducation.
- Upskilling and psychoeducation provided to YJS case managers around mental health needs; including discussions alongside Social Care to promote a sense of stability and safety prior to intensive therapeutic interventions. This helps better outcomes and more robust treatment plans.
- Dedicated liaison with FCAMHS to improve care and outcomes for young people; Including initial referrals, individual consultations with FCAMHS clinicians, dissemination of key information and advice, arranging and chairing network

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meetings, and navigating differences between services to allow collaboration around safety plans and risk mitigation. This helps alleviate workload from core network members, allowing for greater care provided to each specialism whilst also promoting cohesion and multi-agency collaboration.

- The MHP provides direct access to the CAMHS young adult pathway lead (16-25), for specialist advice, signposting, and support.
- Brent YJS will explore opportunities to expand referral pathways to mental health and other health provision and seek public health funding to resource participation projects such as Podcasting to improve mental health for YP make support more accessible.

Liaison and Diversion

The NHS England funded Youth Justice Liaison and Diversion scheme in Brent offers mental health screening to young people held in police custody at Wembley Police Station, or those young people referred to YJS for an Out of Court or Turnaround disposal. The CNWL employed Youth Justice Liaison and Diversion (YJLD) Mental Health practitioner identifies any unmet mental health and neurodiversity needs a young person may have (ASD, ADHD, learning difficulties, or SALT) and refers on to appropriate health services. The service is monitored by the Brent ICS Lead, NHS and YJS.

Children are risk assessed and seen at a range of locations including the Brent Civic Centre, school, home, care homes, or community facility. Engagement takes place with parents, schools, Social Care, and other agencies where necessary - especially when there are unmet needs that require attention. The YJLD worker also attends CP, CIN conferences, professionals' meetings, and other meetings to help meet a young person's additional needs.

During the period April 2022 to March 2023, the YJLD worker engaged 148 young people. One hundred and twenty-nine of these were males (87.2%) and 19 were females (12.8%). Sixty-two (41.9%) assessments were completed. Over the period April 2023 to March 2024 the YJLD worker engaged 161 young people. Seventy-eight (49.8%) assessments were completed. The three key offences children accessing YJLD were charged with were drug possession, violence against the person, and possession of an offensive weapon.

10.18 Substance Misuse

Each child that enters the Youth Justice System is referred to a YJS Substance Misuse worker for an initial Information and Guidance session. Children with substance misuse issues or those who have been arrested for offences involving illegal

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substances are offered substance misuse sessions covering a variety of topics that include Information advice and guidance on common substances that young people are exposed to, county lines and exploitation, harm minimisation and future goal setting.

10.19 Wider Services

One-hundred and sixty-two children and young people received a court disposal, Out of Court Disposal, Triage disposal, or a Community Resolution in 2023/24. Of these, 13% were on a Child Protection Plan, 30% were Children in Need, and 14% were Looked after Children. These services are classified as ‘wider services’ by the YJB. More than half of all children supported by YJS (57%) accessed wider statutory provision. Wider Services are one of the YJB’s ten new KPIs.

Table 12. YJS Alignment with Wider Services 2023/24

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Wider Services 2023/24		
Wider Service	No of children	%
Total no. of children receiving a court sentence, OOC, Triage or Community	162	
Child Protection	21	13%
Child in need	49	30%
Looked after child	23	14%

10.20 Disproportionality in the Brent Youth Justice System

Reducing disproportionality in the youth justice system is a highly challenging priority across London. The failure to achieve equity of treatment for all children in the youth justice system can also be found in Brent when using the Summary Ethnic Disparity Tool to analyse children aged 10 to 17 years. This is particularly evident amongst Black

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African and Caribbean children and young people who are significantly overrepresented in the youth justice system. Overall, Black Heritage group children represented 50% of the Brent YJS cohort in March 2024. This compares unfavourably to the 32% of all children and young people from these mixed heritage groups living in Brent according to the mid-year 2021 census.

Table 13. No. of Brent Children in the Youth Justice System 2018 to 2023 by ethnicity

Ethnic group	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Percentage change year ending March 2018 to March 2023	Percentage change year ending March 2022 to March 2023	2021 midyear 10-17 population by ethnic group
Asian	11	11	19	13	6	17	▲ +55%	N/A	10,322
Black	114	106	92	70	46	60	▼ -47%	▲ +30%	7,982
Mixed	17	13	14	10	11	12	▼ -29%	▲ +9%	2,764
Other	23	13	17	9	16	14	▼ -39%	▼ -12%	4,287
Total BAME Heritage Groups	165	143	142	102	79	103	▼ -38%	▲ +30%	25,355
White	46	26	26	22	18	20	▼ -56%	▲ +11%	7,899
Unknown	7	6	0	2	3	1	N/A	N/A	-

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All Heritage Groups	218	175	168	126	100	124	▼ -43%	▲ +24%	33,254

What Brent YJS is doing to tackle disproportionality

Improving practice

- Trauma informed practice has improved the ability of YJS practitioners to tell the story behind the crime within the pre-sentence reports and the wider assessment and planning process. This includes explaining the experiences of children who have been adversely impacted by gang exploitation or have suffered trauma.
- Practice Development Sessions. These are held regularly and includes themes including Social Graces, and cultural competency (delivered by Young Brent Foundation).
- Background information has been expanded to include any experiences of discrimination or trauma to the courts.
- YJS case studies are shared at YJS Board meetings where attention is given to exploring whether the diverse needs of children have been considered.
- The CYP and YJS Audit programme monitors the quality of provision children receive.
- Magistrates training.
- Child first approaches. Relationship building, coproduced intervention plans, listening to children, participation work and annual surveys:
- Group supervision. Social Care and the Brent YJS work collaboratively whenever Looked After Children (LAC) enter, or are at risk of entering, the youth justice system. This was enhanced in January 2022 by the adoption of joint case supervision. These arrangements formalised existing good practice by regularising ongoing joint risk management and decision making. Practitioners from partner agencies including CAMHS and the PDU participate in group supervision whenever this is in the best interests of the child.
- Out of Court Disposal Decision Making Panel. This weekly Panel is chaired by Brent YJS and attended by Police, Health, YJS, Social Care, Early Help staff and Restorative Justice workers to jointly consider and determine Out of Court Disposal (OCD) decisions. Social Workers attend the Panel - or complete a Professionals Information Form - since November 2021. This has strengthened our ability to take mitigating factors into consideration and identify appropriate interventions and disposal conditions.

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- *The Joint working protocol between Brent Youth Offending Team and The Probation Service (Brent Probation Delivery Unit PDU)*. Created in May 2022, this Protocol outlines the operational procedures and standards required when transferring supervision from the YJS to Brent PS.
- Since December 2021, LAC Social Workers have contributed to all transfer meetings between the YJS and PDU. This ensures that planning is as supportive as possible for LAC Young People moving from the youth justice system to the adult criminal justice system.
- Access to Family Support Workers has enabled the YJS to support the whole family, not just the young person.
- The early identification of neurodevelopmental disorders and help in education at an early stage could combat the entry of Black heritage group children into the criminal justice system.
- The Brent Youth Justice Service (YJS) Disproportionality Action Plan 2024/25 (DAP) has been created to understand the extent to which youth justice disposals are disproportionately served, monitor the effectiveness of initiatives undertaken by YJS to support children from Black Heritage groups, and to consolidate actions youth justice partners are undertaking to tackle overrepresentation. The central themes and activity over the past year have included establishing a commitment to disproportionality targets across the partnership, preventing Black Heritage group children entering the criminal justice system, preventing re-offending amongst the Black Heritage cohort, preventing school exclusions, improved ETE outcomes, improving access to early support for ASD or neuro disabilities to prevent entry and re-entry into the criminal justice system, reducing disproportionality in custodial outcomes, and listening to children's voices and understanding their experiences.

The delivery of effective preventative services is key to redressing inequalities. Brent YJS works closely with partners in delivering a range of initiatives including:

Turnaround

Developed by the Ministry of Justice, Turnaround is based on similar principles to those underlying the Supporting Families programme, including the view that children on the cusp of offending often have complex needs that should be supported. It also recognises that supporting the needs of the whole family is an effective means of reducing the likelihood of children entering the youth justice system.

Brent Turnaround is a three-year programme which has been funded by the MoJ until April 2025 to:

- Work and offer additional support to young people who are on the edge of entering the criminal justice system.
- Support young people who come to police attention.
- Prevent further offending.
- Help young people and their families where there are concerns around behaviour at school, in the community or at home.

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- Achieve positive outcomes for young people.

Turnaround extends support offered through the Out of Court Disposal Team to young people aged 10 to 17 years who are:

- Subject to a No Further Action (NFA) decision.
- Subject to a Community Resolution.
- Receiving a first-time youth caution.
- Released under investigation (RUI) or those subject to pre-charge bail (PCB).
- Discharged by a court.
- Acquitted at court.
- Fined by a court.

A total of 46 families have received Turnaround support to date – 24 completed or partially completed in 2023/24. Staff work to encourage families to access Turnaround. As it is a voluntary intervention consent from a young person and their family is required.

Table 14. Turnaround Referrals April 2023 to March 2024

Outcome	No of Young People
Refused intervention / Not started intervention / Not Completed intervention	7
Partially Completed	1
Successfully Completed or in still in active intervention	23
Total no. of young people	31

Turnaround staff meet with young people and their parents to ensure the whole family participates in a holistic assessment. A fulltime Family Support Worker has been employed to complement assessment, planning and intervention work undertaken by the YJS Out of Court Disposal Team. This is to identify needs and identify any family issues or factors affecting a child or young person’s behaviour. Turnaround Family Support Workers complete an

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Early Help Assessment. Young people who have received and Out of Court Disposal will be assessed using the Brent YJS Rapid Assessment.

Turnaround participants are offered support including an NHS Mental Health screening assessment, substance misuse assessment and interventions, education training and employment advice, mentoring, and positive activities. Outcomes include:

- Young people getting back into education or training.
- Increased self-esteem and confidence.
- Young people identifying their goals and creating a plan for their future. Having something to aspire to gives them more purpose and motivation to change their behaviour and engage with services.
- Providing children and families with a safe space to express their thoughts and feelings, wishes and hopes. This is something they may not have been able to do before.
- Helping children to identify their trusted adults and support network.
- Understanding what makes healthy family relationships. This enables participants to assess their current relationships and identify those that may be exploitative and unhealthy.

Disproportionality Challenge Fund

Brent received funding from MOPAC to establish a 12-month project tackling disproportionality within the youth justice system. There were two components to the programme that ended in November 2023. The first of these was delivered by the Young Brent Foundation and sought to make systems change through the offer of cultural competency training to professionals. The other element consisted of supporting YJS young people from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Heritage groups to coproduce activities within Family Wellbeing Centres. Supported by a Youth Participation Officer, 12 young people formed a Youth Panel that advised the YJS Management Board as to their personal experience of the YJS as well as making recommendations for service improvements.

Engage

Engage is a MOPAC Funded project that since September 2023 has provided a range of youth work support in Police custody suites across the NW Borough Command Unit. Barnet are the lead borough and have recruited youth workers who are based in the Wembley and Colindale custody suites. Youth workers meet young people in custody and offer a further two meetings post custody. During this time, they are given information, advice and signposted to Brent

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Early Help and Youth Justice Service interventions. Engage is open from 8am to 8pm weekdays with a reduced level of cover over weekends. Brent has an Engage SPOC working collaboratively with the Barnet Service Manager who reports progress to the YJS Management Board via the Brent Youth and Youth Justice Manager. Engage is funded until the end of 2024-25.

Your Choice

Your Choice (YC) provides training in Cognitive Behavioural Techniques (CBT) to youth practitioners working with young people aged 11-17 years at elevated risk of harm. Comparing the outcomes of the treatment and control group measures the impact of Your Choice so long as the two groups are similar to each other. Teams of practitioners are randomly allocated to train and deliver Your Choice. Young people matched to trained practitioners will receive Your Choice. Young people matched to untrained practitioners will be supported as per business as usual.

YC was delivered at Brent within the AST Team between January and June 2022. Eighteen young people who engaged with the programme were at risk of contextual harm. The Programme commenced in YJS in August 2022 and ran until March 2023. YJS successfully recruited seven children for the Treated Group and seven children for the Control Group. Seventy percent of participants completed the 12-week programme.

Feedback from YJS Case Managers was very positive:

"I have seen a noticeable difference in the behaviours and responses of the YP engaged with the YC Programme. Particularly, those children who are part of the treatment group have been afforded the opportunity to explore their thoughts and behaviours and the emotions attached. As a result, I have found the programme to be an effective method of engaging YP that are willing to explore these areas of their lives."

With ongoing oversight from a YJS Project Lead, YC was transferred to the LAC Service in April 2023 and will continue until December 2024. Fourteen children have been recruited to date.

Preventing school exclusions

Brent's Inclusion service works closely with schools to reduce permanent and fixed term exclusions. Regular data reports any disparities in the background of pupils when compared to the general school population. Brent YJS has developed a range of workshops for schools to work with children in high-risk groups. This was first rolled out with Brent River College PRU in 2021 and Alperton School in 2022. The positive impact of these sessions inspired a larger

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commitment which since 2023 has seen Brent YJS and the Accelerated Support Team deliver monthly school workshops on topics including gangs, knives, crime and substance misuse.

Provision of parent workshops

These workshops are popular with parents who appreciate meeting other parents in a blame free environment and learn about a variety of themes such as online grooming, county lines drug dealing, parenting styles and the negative impact of social media. These workshops have been a response to *the Children Commissioners report on Young Lives (April 2022)*, that found families often do not know where they can get help and then feel blamed when engaging in programmes. Brent YJS has an ongoing commitment to providing parent workshops as well as offering the Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities Programme which is focused specifically on parents who have concerns about youth violence.

There are four workshop per year as part of the Parenting Support Training Programme.

In 2023/24, 11 families attended 4 parenting workshop sessions. All have parents benefited from the work that covered topics on exploitation and county lines. Below is some feedback from parents.

– Learned and was shocked about the drug houses and the dirty conditions young people are made to stay in. Also, young people staying with stranger who also might have risky behaviours themselves.

– Surprised to learn about the way in which the gangs were so well organised. Helped me reflect on my son's behaviour and there were signs there that he could have been groomed and how the groomers behave to exploit young people.

– Didn't know that these gangs were so well organised. Learned to be more alert. Learned that it is adults who are in charge of grooming not just teenagers.

– Learned about the numbers of young people being groomed is high and how well organised they are.

In 2023/24 89 parents engaged in one-to-one sessions, there were 460 one to one sessions

The extent to which parent workshops are valued by attendees was described by one mother as:

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'I learnt a lot more awareness and safety tips - I would like to continue with these meetings so I can get a more detailed understanding about our children today. Overall, the meeting was a blessing because I came out knowing more than I did going in'.

10.21 Case Work Practice and Quality Assurance

The YJS audit framework has been shaped by revised case management guidance and HMIP lines of enquiry and is closely aligned to the Brent CYP Quality Assurance Framework 2023-2026.

The CYP Quality Assurance cycle supports Brent to be an outstanding learning organisation through understanding what is working well, what needs to change, identifying new ways to measure the impact of our work. It drives the gathering and analysis of information, the development of action plans for individual children, staff and services and a review of outcomes. Brent YJS contributes to the quality assurance outcomes achieved as part of the CYP Annual Audit Programme. This is an intensive programme of monthly auditing of CYP service areas which in May 2024 included the topic: Quality of work with LAC and care leavers on remand or in prison. The YJS Management Team sought to assess the effectiveness of this by undertaking a dip sample of 30 Social Care case files. As part of her analysis, the YJS Quality Assurance & Practice Development Manager concluded that the quality of work with LAC and Care Leavers in custody was good overall.

YJS cases have also been subject to ongoing audits undertaken by the YJS Quality Assurance and Practice Development Manager. These focused on risk, safeguarding, education, mental health, trauma, cultural competency, and diversity. Audits undertaken during 2023/24 included a full case audit on management supervision and oversight, Pre-Sentence Reports, and Out of Court Disposals. Learning from case audits is a standing agenda item at YJS Team Meetings. Overall, audit results show an upward trajectory of good practice - especially around the quality of recorded outcomes. Areas requiring improvement identified as part of the auditing process are addressed by line managers and during monthly practice development sessions led by the Quality Assurance & Practice Development Manager.

The YJB funded Brent COVID-19 Pathfinder for Overrepresented children project concluded in March 2023. An independent evaluation of the programme, undertaken by social research organisation Cordis Bright found that the programme was successful in several key areas including the successful engagement of children previously unsupported:

“Flexible engagement strategies, the provision of a range of activities led by children’s preferences, and the building of individual trusting relationships facilitated the successful engagement of children with the EACH counsellor, YBF mentors, and the youth participation worker. Some of these children had previously struggled to engage with other services available in Brent.”

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These findings were the subject of a sector wide YJB Webinar, and subsequently available on the YJB Effective Practice Portal.

10.22 National Standards Audit and Subsequent Reviews

The Youth Justice Board required Brent YJS to assess how well they complied with 2019 National Standards. The review in Brent took place between November 2019 and March 2020, across five new Youth Justice National Standards themes. Members of the YJS Management Board led the review. They were supported by YJS Managers and operational staff to form one small working group for each standard. The review covered strategic and operational practice. All five National Standards: Out of court disposals, at Court, the Community, in Secure Settings, and Transitions, were rated good for both the strategic and operational self-assessments. YOS Team managers have been trained to audit national standards and have undertaken subsequent reviews of their lead areas - led by the Quality Assurance & Practice Development Manager. A review of the Court National Standard was completed in July 2023 and shared with Board members. Two improvements relating to the management oversight of court processes were identified and subsequently remedied. Overall, the audit showed good compliance with National Standards.

12.0 Service Improvement Plan and Looking Forward 2024/25

Brent is committed to the priorities outlined in the YJB Strategic Plan 2024-27, Thematic and Area Based Inspection recommendations, and the Brent ways of working, this is Brent, this is how we grow.... In keeping with this, the following are the principal aims and commitments that will shape the Brent YJS partnership in the year ahead.

- Tackling the over representation of children from Black Heritage groups in the Brent Youth Justice System.
- In conjunction with other CYP services to reduce the criminalisation of children in care and care leavers.
- Continuing to promote evidence-based *Child First* approaches as the best means to support victims, promoting public protection, keeping communities safe and supporting children towards positive outcomes.
- Ensuring the YJS Management Board, wider partnership, and YJS staff are prepared for the next round of HMIP Inspection through a YJS focused programme of case file audits, practice observation, delivery of thematic Practice Development sessions, and focused individual supervision.
- Developing pathways and creating access for speech and language therapy.
- Maintaining and developing new partnerships with the community and voluntary sector.

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- Expanding youth participation and youth coproduction capabilities.
- Refreshing the Youth Participation Strategy and the Brent Youth Strategy.
- Continuing to build a YJS partnership culture that encourages diversity in its workforce and in its thinking; is inclusive and supportive, encourages personal responsibility and is delivery focused.
- Supporting MPS Children’s Strategy recommendations to help keep children in London safe, build their trust and bring to justice those who abuse and exploit them.
- Refreshing, implementing, and monitoring the Brent YJS Disproportionality Action Plan.
- Responding to the HMIP Thematic Inspection recommendations around custody and remand.

The above aims and actions will be included within the annual Brent Youth Justice Improvement Plan 2024/25. Activity will continue to focus upon our key themes to improve our performance, tackle serious youth violence, strengthen our partnership culture, improve our prevention offer, strengthen our staff and workforce, become more evidenced based and creative in our practice, and be inspection ready.

13.0 Evidence-based Practice and Innovation

Brent has learnt much from evidence-based practice and will seek to adopt any new approach that has the potential to improve outcomes for Brent residents. To this end Brent will closely monitor research commissioned by the Youth Engagement Fund via their research toolkit. This provides access to many promising approaches to addressing offending behaviour - including methods that prevent serious youth violence. Work with community organisations to identify alternative forms of engagement with young people will also be explored. This will include coproduction and participation methods, such as the use of podcasts and multimedia, that enable young people to learn and express their views about offending and its impact upon their communities. YJS will continue to extend access to the Brent Your Choice programme across the CYP Directorate. Funded by the Youth Endowment Fund, it has shown promising signs that the use of CBT techniques, as part of a 12-week programme, can achieve positive results with children and young people confronting complex challenges.

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14.0 YJS Partnership Budget 2024/25

Brent uses Youth Justice Board funding exclusively for the delivery of a range and variety of youth justice provision, aligned to effective practice and the achievement of the youth justice core outcomes.

Agency	Cash	In-Kind Contributions	Partnership Funding	Total
Brent Council	£793,406	-	-	£793,406
Police	-	£120,000	-	£120,000
National Probation	£5,000	£50,000	-	£55,000
Health Service	-	£100,000	-	£100,000
MOPAC	£45,000	-	-	£45,000
Youth Justice Board	£577,467	-	-	£577,467
Other Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)	£114,000	-	-	£114,000
Total	£1,534,873	£270,000	£0	£1,804,873

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Sign off, submission and approval



Signed

Palvinder Kudhail

Chair of the Brent Youth and Youth Justice Service Management Board

Date: 01/07/2024

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Appendix 1 YJS Management Board Membership

Name	Job Title	Sector / Partnership Area
Palvinder Kudhail	Director – Early Help and Social Care	CYP Brent Council
Serita Kwofie	Head of Early Help	CYP Brent Council
Simon Egbor	Head of Community Safety	Community Safety and Public Protection
Vivien Dean	Head Teacher of Brent River College	Education
Alexandra Johnson	Head of Probation Delivery Unit	Probation Service
Sarah Nyandoro	Head of Joint Commissioning Brent ICB	CCG – Health
Andy Brown	Head of Substance Misuse	Public Health
DI Warren Kennard:	Detective Inspector Northwest Borough Command Unit Metropolitan Police	Metropolitan Police
Sgt Karl Jameson:	YJS Supervisor – NW BCU	Metropolitan Police
Kelli Eboji	Head of Looked After Children and Permanency	CYP Brent Council
Stephen Gordon	Head of Localities	CYP Brent Council
Trish Davies	Service Manager Brent CAMHS	Brent and Kensington and Chelsea CAMHS
Rachel Summerfield	Magistrate – Chair of the Youth Bench	Willesden Magistrates Court
James Salter	Youth and Youth Justice Manager	CYP Brent Council

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Catherine Williams-Baffoe	Deputy Youth Justice Manager	CYP Brent Council
Antoinette Morgan	Quality Assurance & Practice Development Manager	CYP Brent Council
Chris Murray	Chief Executive Young Brent Foundation	Young Brent Foundation – Voluntary Sector
Sanjay Shah	Performance and Management Information Officer	CYP Brent Council
Bhavita Gohel	Performance Advisor Youth Justice Board	Youth Justice Board
Daniel Thomas	Head of Resettlement	Feltham A

Dates of the YJS Management Board Meetings

Meetings 2024/25
28 April 2024
25 July 2024
24 October 2024
30 January 2025

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Appendix 2: Staff Structure

The Youth and Youth Justice Manager reports to the Head of Early Help

YJS Staffing Structure 2023 – 24		
Post	FTE	Funding Source
Youth & Youth Justice Manager	1	YJB/Brent Council
Deputy Youth Justice Manager	1	YJB/Brent Council
Quality Assurance & Practice Development Manager	1	YJB/Brent Council
Team Managers	5	YJB/Brent Council
Restorative Justice Lead	1	YJB/Brent Council
Case Managers	13	YJB/Brent Council
Data Quality Officer	1	YJB/Brent Council
Family Support Key Worker 1	1	Turnaround / MoJ
Early intervention Officer – Triage	1	MOPAC
Reparations Worker	0.5	YJB/Brent Council
Total	25.5	

The service wide YJS staff group of 25.5 FTE is supplemented by the following 10.6 FTE secondments and co-location arrangements:

Post	FTE
Police Officer	3.0
Seconded Probation Officer	0.6

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Prospects Employment Advisor	2
CAMHS Practitioner	1
YJLD Liaison and Diversion (CNWL)	1
WDP Substance Misuse	1
EACH Counselling – family support	2
10.6	

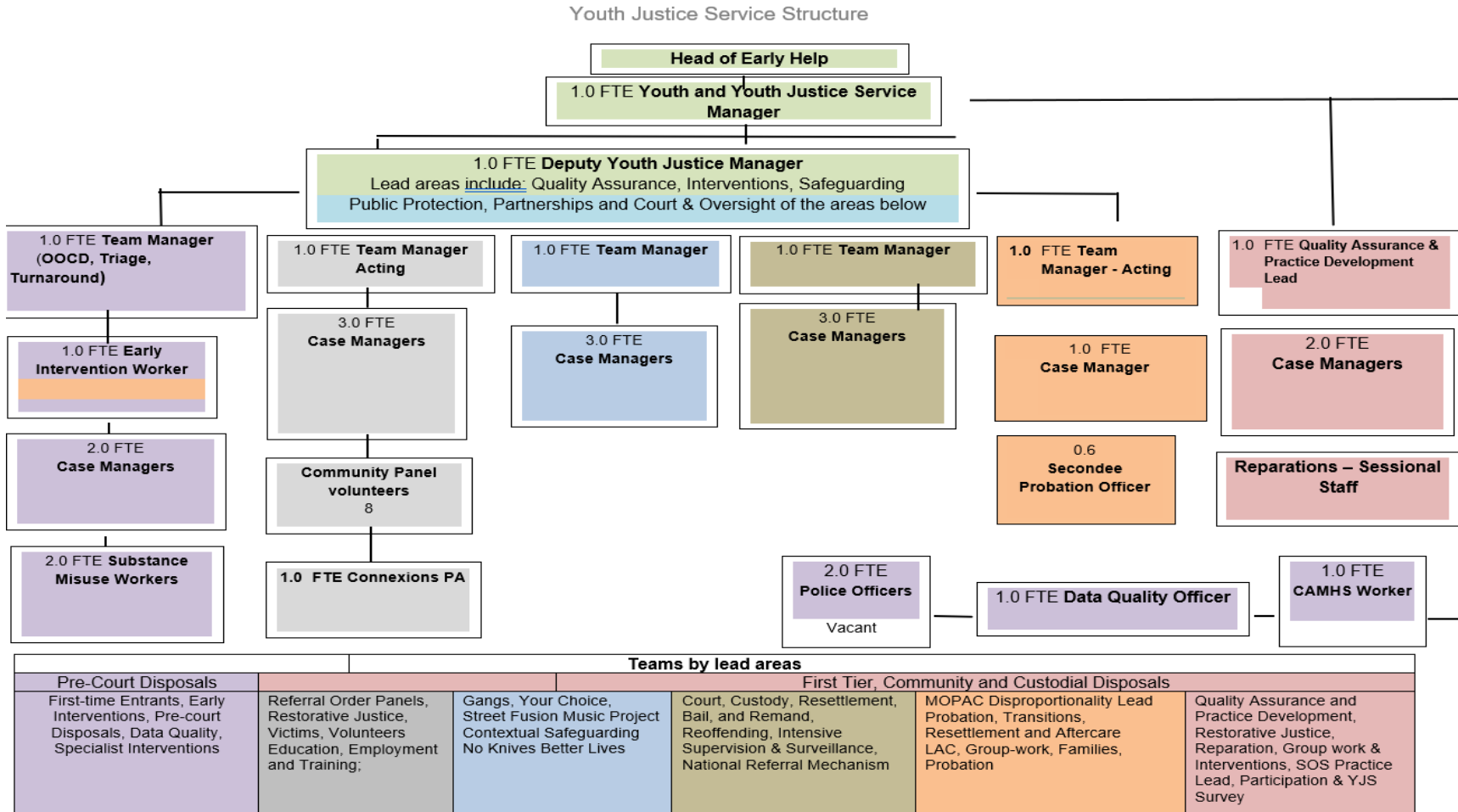
Staff by gender and ethnicity (There are no staff currently registered as disabled)

Gender	Total
Female	28
Male	9
Total	37

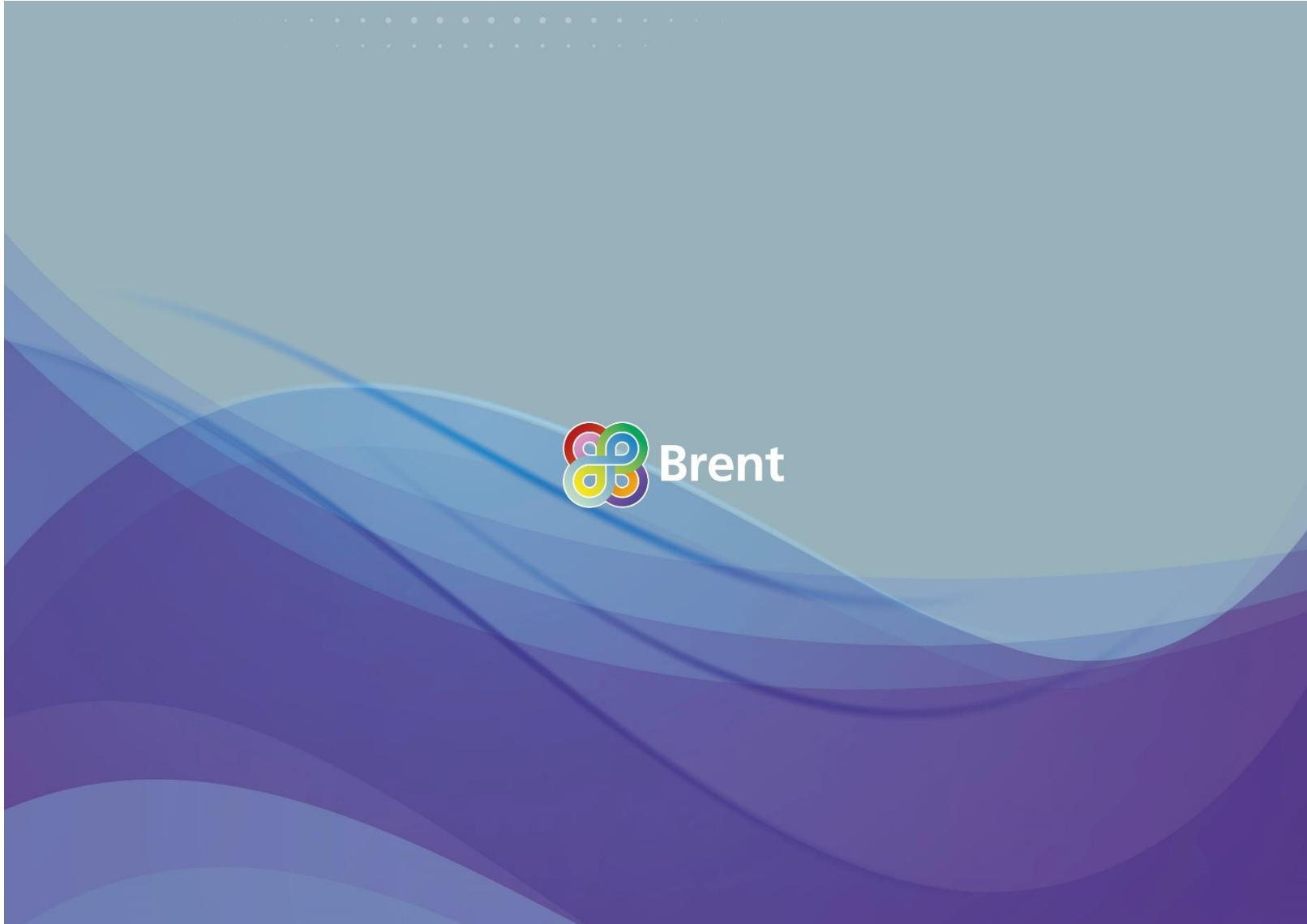
Ethnicity	Total
BAME	30
Prefer not to say	0
White	7
Total	37

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Brent Youth Justice Service Staff Structure 2024/25



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 Brent	Cabinet 9 September 2024
	Report from the Corporate Director of Neighbourhoods and Regeneration
	Lead Member – Cabinet Member for Environment and Enforcement (Councillor Krupa Sheth)
Parking Enforcement on Council Housing Estates: Programme Update	

Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	Key
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:	Four Appendix 1: Housing Estates that have introduced Off Street Controlled Parking Appendix 2: Phase 3 Off Street Controlled Parking - Housing Estate Programme Appendix 3: Proposed Phase 4 Off Street Controlled Parking - Housing Estate Programme Appendix 4: Parking Enforcement on Housing Estates
Background Papers:	None
Contact Officer(s): <small>(Name, Title, Contact Details)</small>	Chris Whyte Director of Public Realm 020 8937 5432 chris.whyte@brent.gov.uk Simon Finney Head of Neighbourhood Management 020 8937 5072 simon.finney@brent.gov.uk Sandor Fazekas Head of Healthy Streets and Parking 020 8937 5113 Sandor.fazekas@brent.gov.uk

1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1. This report provides Cabinet with an update on the introduction of parking controls and enforcement following the Cabinet report of 20 July 2020, which approved the pilot of off street-controlled parking on four Council estates: Joules House, Landau House, Alexandra Court, and Summit Court. Further to this pilot scheme, Brent Housing reviewed the progress of off-street controlled parking on the initial four estates and extended the project to include other estates where there has been evidence of parking pressure and support from residents which were delivered under Phase 2.
- 1.2. The report provides information on the outcome of the Off-Street Controlled Parking (OSCP) project that has introduced parking controls through a Traffic Management Order (TMO) on land owned by the Council, within the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).
- 1.3. The report also provides information on implementation of Phase 1 (pilot phase) and Phase 2 (follow on rollout to 15 housing estates) carried out in collaboration with our Highways Management and Healthy Streets & Parking services, and Project Centre Limited (PCL), who are parking consultants.
- 1.4. Finally, the report seeks approval for Phase 3 and the expansion of the programme to introduce further parking controls and enforcement on Housing Estates that either previously did not support controls, but there is now evidence of resident support or were not included due to planned development.

2.0 Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 That Cabinet note the contents of the report in relation to;
 - i) The successful delivery of Phase 1 (pilot) and Phase 2 of the project and the introduction of effective parking controls and enforcement on the pilot estates and an additional fifteen housing estates from January 2023 to May 2023 (See Appendix 1 for current list of all OSCP estates)
- 2.2 That Cabinet approves the future roll out of OSCP on;
 - i) A further nine Brent estates where residents previously did not support parking controls, but there is now evidence of parking pressure and support, following a re-consultation between November 2023 and February 2024. This would be Phase 3 (see Appendix 2)

- ii) Nine Brent estates that were previously excluded due to regeneration plans, subject to the outcome of consultation with residents. (Appendix 3 provides a list of sites) This would be a potential Phase 4.

Cabinet is asked to note that the list for Phase 4 could change depending on progress with regeneration plans and funding availability.

- 2.3 Delegates authority to the Corporate Director of Neighbourhoods and Regeneration in consultation with the Corporate Director of Resident Services to carry out public consultation and statutory consultation for Phase 3 and subsequent phases, to approve the implementation of Traffic Management Orders necessary to introduce parking controls on land owned by the Council within its Housing Revenue Account, subject to funding availability.
- 2.4 Approves the use of income generated from sale of permits to fund maintenance on OSCP estates, and for the future introduction of OSCP on estates where there is evidence of support by residents.

3.0 Detail

Cabinet Member Foreword

- 3.1 The Council agreed in 2020 to introduce and enforce parking controls, as a pilot initiative, on Housing Managed estates, to address access and safety issues and regulate and reserve parking for residents and visitors, and to introduce further schemes, subject to evaluation, a positive response to consultation, and funding availability.
- 3.2 This report provides information on the programme, the successful outcomes where parking controls have been introduced, and arrangements for future schemes to improve parking management on Housing Estates, where these are supported by our residents.
- 3.3 Effective parking management and enforcement of parking and traffic contraventions in the borough supports the aims of our Borough Plan 2023-2027, for a cleaner, greener future and a Healthier Brent.
- 3.4 Our Parking Policy 2020 contributes towards the strategic objectives of the Long-Term Transport Strategy 2015-2035 as effective parking management encourages modal shift towards sustainable transport and active travel, including walking and cycling.
- 3.5 This supports the objectives of the councils Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy 2021-2030 by reducing the harmful effect of emissions from road transport on the environment.

4.0 Background

- 4.1 Brent Housing Partnership (BHP) contracted Wings to undertake enforcement action on Council owned Housing estates from 01 August 2012 – 10 December 2022. The Council now contracts Parking Enforcement Services with NSL (Marston Group).

- 4.2 In 2012, the government introduced The Protection of Freedoms Act 2012, which reduced Wing Parking's ability to take any meaningful and effective enforcement action. The Act stopped Wings from accessing information from the Driving Vehicle Licensing Agency (DLVA) and as such, any parking tickets issued cannot be pursued unless driver's details are already known.
- 4.3 This made it difficult to control parking from non-residents on Housing estates. Meaning, Wings could only enforce parking tickets against the residents who have purchased permits, having provided their details in doing so. The 2012 Act also makes it illegal for the Council or its contractors to remove or clamp vehicles on private land without a TMO.
- 4.4 Following on-going complaints from residents, Councillors, and emergency services, regarding obstructive and inconsiderate parking by both residents and non-residents of the estates, BHM proposed options for parking enforcement on Council housing sites via the Cabinet report dated 20th July 2020.
- 4.5 The Cabinet report focused on five sites that were identified as a priority by BHM, residents and Members. These sites were used as a pilot for the new approach to parking enforcement with the intention to introduce parking controls on other Brent Housing sites where needed. The controls included: the designation of parking bays within the estates and signage, necessary repairs, and the making of a Traffic Management Order to enable the controls to be effectively enforced by the Councils Parking Enforcement contractor.
- 4.6 Following consultation with elected Members and residents, parking controls were introduced on the following sites;
- Alexandra Court
 - Summit Court
 - Landau House
 - Joules House
- 4.7 The introduction of OSCP required residents to purchase a permit which was initially fixed at £50.00 per annum but is subject to inflationary increases in line with other permit products.
- 4.8 The pilot scheme was evaluated as being effective in resolving complaints relating to unauthorised parking, and further schemes programmed and introduced subject to a positive outcome to consultation and funding availability.
- 4.9 Where parking controls were introduced, maintenance repairs of the road surface were arranged prior to the installation of parking bays, yellow line restrictions, and parking signage.
- 4.10 Following the restructure in April 2024, project management now falls under Neighbourhoods and Regeneration, with Resident Services an internal Client.
- 4.11 This provides the opportunity to improve the management of the public realm on housing estates and officers have been working to introduce new protocols

to improve efficiency and customer satisfaction. This includes the replacement of signs and lines and addressing parking issues.

Issues, Improvements and Progress

- 4.12 Four pilot schemes were launched on the 1 December 2021, followed by another thirteen sites on the 23 of January 2023, with a further two sites launched on the 29 May 2023.
- 4.13 The pilot schemes showed a significant improvement in issues associated with parking on the pilot estates; residents at Alexandra Court especially noted a marked improvement in availability of parking spaces for residents. Furthermore, importantly, the parking controls accommodate improved access for emergency and service vehicles.
- 4.14 Following the success of the pilot estates, further consultation was carried out concurrently with residents of over one hundred estates between September – November 2021 as a prelude to extending the scheme across the borough. As a result of the consultation, another fifteen estates voted to proceed with the introduction of off-street controlled parking on their estates.
- 4.15 Under Phase 2, 13 of the 15 estates went live on the 23 January 2023; a grace period of 2-3 weeks provided for residents to apply for their new permits and get used to the new scheme.
- In Phase 2, visitor parking and disabled bays were introduced on all eligible estates after feedback from residents.
 - Phase 2 has been largely successful. However, two objections were received, which temporarily delayed the go live on two of the estates. This issue was subsequently resolved, and new parking enforcement went live on these estates from the 29 May 2023.
- 4.16 Following implementation of Phase 2, there have been largely no issues apart from queries around applying for permits and PCN's issued, which has since settled down as people purchased their permits and gained a better understanding of the new parking scheme and adhere to terms and conditions of off-street controlled parking. A resident of Alan Preece court wrote in commending the implementation of OSCP on her estate, and the benefits of a tidier and more organised/effective parking enforcement enjoyed as a result. This is in line with most of the feedback from residents on estates where OSCP has been implemented.
- 4.17 Table 1 in Appendix 4 displays statistics of NSL (parking enforcement contractor) operational activity since inception of OSCP on the 19 estates that are currently operational as of 15 July 2024.
- 4.18 The sites with high volumes of activity such as Alpha place, Summit court, and Addis and Arnoux court, Joules, Landau house, and Alexandra court relate to larger or problem estates, where more regular enforcement is required. In the

case of Joules and Landau house, and Alpha Place, these are estates with close proximity to train stations which had a lot of external traffic and parking on their estate, which has drastically reduced since the introduction of controlled parking on the estates.

- 4.19 Overall, the OSCP scheme, is proving to be a more robust and effective form of parking enforcement, when compared to our previous parking contract with Wings. Residents are now able to make enforcement requests to NSL who can attend and enforce under the Traffic Management Orders, issuing Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) or removing obstructively parked vehicles.
- 4.20 There is income to the council from the sale of permits and the issuing of PCNs, an income of £16,440.00 received from sale of permits across the nineteen sites for the period January 2023 – January 2024, with income of around £83, 070.00 for the same period through PCNs.

Options/proposals going forward.

- 4.21 With the successful completion of Phase 1 (pilot phase) and Phase 2 (roll out to fifteen additional estates) significant improvements to parking management have been evidenced on Brent Council estates where parking controls have been introduced. It is clear that a TMO is the only way to resolve the parking issues on our Housing estates.
- 4.22 To maintain a continuous level of quality and service delivery in parking control on our estates, officers believe there are three options available to consider.

Option One - the Council does not continue with Phase 3 and exits the project at Phase 2.

- 4.23 This is not a viable option as there are estates that were excluded from previous consultation exercises in Phase 1 and 2. Some of these estates were excluded as there was development work going on in the estate, which would have impacted on the consultation and implementation process. We are obliged to consult estates in this category to ensure all residents are given the opportunity to determine the type of parking regime they want on their estate, whether this is controlled parking or no form of parking enforcement.
- 4.24 There are also estates that were undecided on whether to adopt OSCP during Phase 2 consultation exercise that were promised a review in the notification letters sent out about 12 months ago. We have since revisited these sites to determine if there is any change of opinion following a year of no parking enforcement on their estate. As a result, we have had another tranche of nine estates that have voted to go ahead with the introduction of off-street controlled parking on their estate.

Option Two – the Council only consults with estates that were excluded during Phase 2.

- 4.25 This is not considered a viable option as we made a promise to revisit Estates in these categories. Furthermore, there are estates that were excluded from consultation due to wrong geographical mapping, such as Lodge and Manor court estates. We are obliged to consult with these estates.

Option Three – Implement further phase; the Council includes all categories such as, former development sites, undecided estates, estates that initially voted “No” but are now willing to reconsider.

- 4.26 This is the preferred option and provides continuity and builds on the success of Phase 1 and 2. It ensures that other housing estates that have not had the opportunity to take part in the consultation process are involved in the decisions around parking enforcement on their estate.
- 4.27 The Parking Services providers (NSL and RingGo) have demonstrated the capability to manage parking on estates, and that they would be able to cope with further roll outs of OSCP.
- 4.28 The options appraisal aims to establish the most efficient and effective option for the future service delivery in line with the Council’s broader service delivery objectives.
- 4.29 It is also recommended that following completion of the OSCP project, arrangements are put in place for ‘business as usual’ with future requests being considered by Healthy Streets and Parking and further schemes consulted on and implemented, subject to consultation and funding.

Implementation of preferred option

- 4.30 The preferred option (option three) would first be rolled out on the nine sites listed for Phase 3 of the project, (See Appendix 2) following formal consultation with residents, which demonstrated support.
- 4.31 This would then be subject to amendment of the existing Traffic Management Order (TMO) to incorporate the new sites following approval of the proposed approach by CMT.
- 4.32 Due to various dependencies, such as carrying out survey, construction work on site, consultation process, and amending the TMO, the completion of Phase 3 is likely to take between 4 – 6 months from project inception, at an estimated cost of £0.1m.
- 4.33 PCL has previously completed the survey for some of the sites, (Undecided estates, and No estates) The survey, inventory plan and recommendations for the remaining sites listed for Phase 3 has also been completed.
- 4.34 To implement the above plan, PCL has drafted an amendment to the existing TMO for Healthy Streets & Parking to approve, before going to advert. They will follow the same process for all remaining Council sites on a rolling basis after Phase 3, as agreed by Cabinet.

4.35 PCL will also assist with the preparation of consultation documents, providing information including FAQs on their website, arranging face to face consultation meetings with residents, and responding to enquiries and the final analysis of the consultation.

5.0 Stakeholder and ward member consultation and engagement

5.1 Ward members and stakeholders (residents, and other interested parties), were consulted on proposed plans with meetings arranged, as necessary to discuss proposals.

5.2 Schemes were progressed where there was a positive response to consultation, approximately 102 estates were consulted of which 19 schemes were progressed under Phase 1 and Phase 2.

5.3 Future schemes will also be subject to engagement and consultation with ward members and resident, and progressed if supported.

6.0 Financial Considerations

6.1 The cost of implementing the project to date is £0.57m. Estimated cost of consulting and introducing further controls under Phase 3 is £0.1m and will be funded from existing resources within Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

6.2 Revenue from PCN is received in the Council General Fund to cover costs in relation to notice processing and appeals, any surplus will be transferred over to the HRA. It is anticipated that unauthorised parking will significantly reduce once Council has the powers to successfully pursue enforcement. Reduction of PCN's will mean that it is unlikely there will be sufficient surpluses generated to fully cover capital outlay and ongoing maintenance costs incurred in the HRA.

6.3 There will be a requirement for ongoing funding in the HRA to maintain the off-street parking infrastructure, budget requirements will be incorporated as part of the annual budget setting for planned maintenance programme

7.0 Legal Considerations

7.1 The proposal (option 3) aims to address problems associated with obstructive and inconsiderate parking by both residents and non-residents of the various estates within the borough. Since this is conduct which affects the ability of residents to fully enjoy the benefits attached to their place of residence, it is conduct that falls within the definition of anti-social behaviour in law under section 2 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014.

7.2 The Council has a duty to take steps to abate such behaviour and the proposed option 3 will assist in achieving this goal and will extend the current success under phase 1 and 2 to other areas in the borough.

- 7.3 Under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (RTRA 1984), a local authority has powers to designate parking places on and off the highway, to charge for use of them, and to issue parking permits for a charge.
- 7.4 The proposed option 3 is neither legally contentious nor problematic, especially as the first two phases have proved to be quite successful.
- 7.5 The need for proper and transparent consultation is required in line with common law requirements. This provides that a fair consultation is required when a local authority is proposing a line of action which is likely to impact on people/parties in the locality and other stake holders (e.g. emergency services, statutory bodies and the general public). Further, the procedures for making traffic management orders and the form that they should take are set out within the Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996. This includes a statutory duty to consult.
- 7.6 A process of consultation is planned should the proposal be approved.
- 7.7 Any amendment to the current TMO will also need to be adequately published in the local newspapers, the gazette and /or any relevant social media platform.
- 7.8 The Council will only be able to enforce parking control on its housing estates and take enforcement action if it is able to target such action against the registered keeper of an unauthorised vehicle. This is achieved by making Traffic Management Orders under the relevant provision of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and then enforcing them under the provisions of the Traffic Management Act 2004. Under the 2004 Act the Council has access to DVLA records to find the registered keeper of the vehicle.
- 7.9 The proposals in this report relate to off street-controlled parking and do not involve on street-controlled parking and as a result, income, and expenditure in relation to off street parking can be made within the Council's Housing Revenue Account ("HRA") if the areas of land that are subject to off-street controlled parking are on HRA land.
- 7.10 Under section 55 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, parking enforcement local authorities must keep account of their income and expenditure in respect of on-street parking places and any surplus must be applied towards specific purposes as set out in section 55(4) of the 1984 Act and the proposals in this report will be outside the ambit of section 55 of the 1984 Act.
- 7.11 The Council's proposal to proceed with Option 3 to commission NSL to implement Phase 3 is within the scope of the Parking Enforcement Services Contract between Brent Council and Marston (Holdings) Limited dated 17th May 2024.

8.0 Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Considerations

- 8.1 The proposal will lead to an enhanced service to council tenants and leaseholders with the permit revenue paying for much more effective

enforcement, maintaining parking infrastructure, and therefore protecting residents' own parking facilities.

- 8.2 BHM will assess the need for the 'Disabled Parking Bays' and ensure residents with Blue Badge' have sufficient parking bays on each site, as well as assessing need for personalised disabled bays as needed.

9.0 Climate Change and Environmental Considerations

- 9.1 Parking management and effective enforcement supports modal shift and therefore a reduction in transport related emissions.

10.0 Human Resources/Property Considerations (if appropriate)

- 10.1 There are no implications arising from this report.

11.0 Communication Considerations

- 11.1 Ward members and stakeholders (residents, and other interested parties) are consulted during the relevant phases of the project.

Related document(s) for reference

Cabinet Report of 20 July 2020 - [Parking Enforcement on Council Housing Estates](#)

Report sign off:

Alice Lester

Corporate Director for Neighbourhood and Regeneration

Cabinet Report 9 September 2024 - Parking Enforcement on Council Housing Estates

Appendix I:

Nos	Housing Estates that have introduced Off Street Controlled Parking (OSCP)	Comments
1	Alexandra Court	Full enforcement started on 01 st Dec 2021
2	Summit Court	Full enforcement started on 01 st Dec 2021
3	Landau House	Full enforcement started on 01 st Dec 2021
4	Joules House	Full enforcement started on 01 st Dec 2021
5	Hyde Court	Full enforcement started on 23 rd Jan 2023
6	Leadbetter Court	Full enforcement started on 23 rd Jan 2023
7	255 – 261 East Lane	Full enforcement started on 23 rd Jan 2023
8	Petherton Court	Full enforcement started on 23 rd Jan 2023
9	Field House	Full enforcement started on 23 rd Jan 2023
10	Alpha House, Gorefield House, Canterbury Court.	Full enforcement started on 23 rd Jan 2023
11	Alan Preece Court	Full enforcement started on 23 rd Jan 2023
12	Fountain House	Full enforcement started on 23 rd Jan 2023
13	Marley Walk	Full enforcement started on 23 rd Jan 2023
14	Addis Court and Arnoux Court	Full enforcement started on 23 rd Jan 2023
15	Waverley Court	Full enforcement started on 23 rd Jan 2023
16	12-26 Kingsbury	Full enforcement started on 23 rd Jan 2023
17	119-133 Clarendon Gardens	Full enforcement started on 23 rd Jan 2023
18	William Dromey Court	Full enforcement started on 29 th May 2023
19	Ellerslie Gardens (<i>Plus Imperial Lodge and Westward Apartments – launched on 21/08/23</i>)	Full enforcement started on 29 th May 2023

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Cabinet Report 9 September 2024 - Parking Enforcement on Council Housing Estates

Appendix 2

Phase 3 OSCP - Housing Estate Name
Slade Court
Athelstan Gardens and Leff House
Mapes House, Weston House and Braeburn House
Bellamy House
Essoldo Way
John Barker Court
Knowles & Anansi House
Henry Cooper House
The Mall - (615 - 685 Kenton Road and 42 – 64 The Mall)

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Cabinet Report 9 September 2024 - Parking Enforcement on Council Housing Estates

Appendix 3

Proposed Phase 4 OSCP - Housing Estate Name
Austen House
Dickens House
John Ratcliffe House
Blake Court
William Dunbar House
William Saville House
Crone Court
Craik Court
Zangwill House

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Cabinet Report 9 September 2024 - Parking Enforcement on Council Housing Estates

Appendix 4

Table 1 – Enforcement Activities

Location	Vehicle Observations	PCNs Issued
Hyde Court	33	13
William Dromey Court	222	115
Alan Preece Court	82	37
Alexandra Court	372	158
Alpha Place	488	141
119 -133 Clarendon Gardens	130	78
Field House	43	22
Fountain House	3	2
255 – 261 East Lane	1	4
Joules House	168	68
Landau House	453	154
Leadbetter Court	227	91
Marley Walk	60	21
Petherton Court	3	1
Summit Court	291	109
Waverley Court	4	2
12 – 26 Kingsbury Road	33	14
Addis Court and Arnoux Court (Grunwick Close)	339	146
Ellerslie Garden	70	102

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 <p>Brent</p>	<p>Cabinet 9 September 2024</p>
	<p>Report from the Corporate Director, Partnerships, Housing & Residents Services</p>
	<p>Lead Member - Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing (Councillor Muhammed Butt)</p>
<p>Community Space at Roy Smith House</p>	

Wards Affected:	Stonebridge
Key or Non-Key Decision:	Key
Open or Part/Fully Exempt: <small>(If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)</small>	Open
No. of Appendices:	One Appendix 1: Stonebridge demographics and need
Background Papers:	None
Contact Officer(s): <small>(Name, Title, Contact Details)</small>	<p>Jon Cartwright, Head of Change and Customer Insight 020 8937 1742 Jonathan.cartwright@brent.gov.uk</p> <p>Marta Portalska, Change and Improvement Project Manager 020 8937 4354 Marta.portalska@brent.gov.uk</p>

1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report concerns proposals for the use of the unoccupied ground floor commercial unit at Roy Smith House, 71 Hillside, London, NW10 8LN towards community initiatives.
- 1.2 This report requests Cabinet approval for use of Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy (SCIL) funding towards works to fit out the commercial

unit at Roy Smith House and to invite tenders for the fit out works as required by Contract Standing Orders 88 and 89.

2.0 Recommendation(s)

That Cabinet:

- 2.1 Approve the use of £624,000 of Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy for works to fit out the commercial unit at Roy Smith House.
- 2.2 Approve inviting tenders for a contract for works to fit out the commercial unit at Roy Smith House on the basis of the pre-tender considerations set out in paragraphs 3.2.14 of the report.
- 2.3 Approve Officers evaluating the tenders referred to in 2.2 above on the basis of the evaluation criteria set out in paragraphs 3.2.14 of the report.
- 2.4 Delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Partnerships Housing and Resident Services in consultation with the Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing to award the contract for works to fit out the commercial unit at Roy Smith House.

3.0 Detail

3.1 Cabinet Member Foreword

- 3.1.1 Proposals in this report align with the Council's commitment to create long lasting positive change to local areas, for the benefit of local communities and align with the Borough Plan 2023 - 2027 priorities of 'Thriving Communities', 'A Healthier Brent' and 'Prosperity and Stability in Brent'.
- 3.1.2 Fit out of the commercial unit at Roy Smith House will help to meet the outcomes of 'Thriving Communities' and 'Prosperity and Stability' in Brent by supporting the creation of community spaces, as well as helping to achieve objectives within Brent's Local Plan and Infrastructure Delivery Plan of providing community facilities for Brent's increasing population.

3.2 Background

- 3.2.1 The Brent Local Plan outlines proposals to accommodate development in the borough up to 2041. Over this time, the borough will continue to see a significant increase in its population, similar to levels seen over the last 20 years. This will require a substantial number of new homes, jobs and associated physical and social infrastructure to meet population increases.
- 3.2.2 Stonebridge is one of the most ethnically diverse wards in Brent, with 79% of residents coming from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic

backgrounds, compared to the borough-wide figure of 65%. 26.3% of residents living in Stonebridge are Black African, a significant proportion of whom are from Somalian backgrounds. Stonebridge also has the highest proportion of residents from Black groups (43.5%) of any ward in Brent.

- 3.2.3 Census 2021 data shows that of all Brent wards, Stonebridge had the lowest employment rate among 16-64 year olds, standing at just 56%. Meanwhile, as of February 2024, 32% of the working age population in Stonebridge received Universal Credit, of which 67% were not in work. Of the Stonebridge households in receipt of Universal Credit payments, 31% were single parents and 10% were couple households with children. (Further details of local need and demographics included in Appendix).
- 3.2.4 In response to these findings, an Employment and Skills themed Outcome Based Review (OBR), focussing on delivering better employment outcomes for Stonebridge residents has been launched. OBR discovery work has included significant engagement of Stonebridge residents and Voluntary and Community Sector partners to develop a detailed understanding of the issues facing local people, including key barriers to employment and skills. These include a lack of awareness of local opportunities, childcare and care responsibilities, poor levels of English language proficiency, difficulties converting qualifications from abroad and lack of work experience opportunities.
- 3.2.5 In May 2024 an OBR Visioning Event, bringing together a range of internal and external partners to share learning and develop new solutions, was held in Stonebridge. The outputs from this event and the key findings of earlier discovery work has fed into the proposals for Roy Smith House, including development of the service specification which will be included as part of the marketing exercise to let the unit.
- 3.2.6 Brent Council's recently completed Milton and Hillside development provides modern, energy efficient homes and comprises of 51 one, two and three bedroom homes in the Roy Smith House block in Hillside, Stonebridge and 22 four-bedroom townhouses on Milton Avenue, delivering 73 new homes to Brent residents. The ground floor of Roy Smith House hosts an approx. 250m² Shell and Core only commercial unit, and is currently unoccupied.
- 3.2.7 It is proposed this unit is converted and fitted out to provide a community venue and flexible event space for use by the local community, in particular those living on the new Milton and Hillside development.
- 3.2.8 Design development includes a full fit-out for the venue to comprise of a commercial kitchen, café bar and servery area with seating, an event space, a training suite, toilets and a staff office with a kitchenette. Moveable partitions have formed part of the design to allow the space to be tailored to various community events or activities.

- 3.2.9 An indicative cost plan has been provided to Brent by an external surveyor, which estimates the refurbishment and fit out costs in the region of £624,000. SCIL funding of this amount is requested ahead of beginning a procurement exercise for these works.
- 3.2.10 A separate exercise will be undertaken to market the property and attract bids from suitable provider (s) to manage and deliver services for the local community. Brent's Property Team will support in carrying out a marketing exercise to publish the opportunity for letting the unit on the Council's "Commercial Council Properties" website page. This will include publication of details of the property, a specification for the Council's desired use of the space, the guide market rent and any social outcomes expected to be delivered by the successful bidder amongst other criteria. The provider(s) will be expected to deliver a range of activities for local communities including provision of advice and guidance, services for young people, employment and skills support, as well as other tailored and community offers.
- 3.2.11 Following Cabinet approval, procurement for the fit-out works and the marketing exercise to let the unit will commence - creative and tailored bids over and above the specification will be welcomed. The successful provider(s) will be expected to manage the fitted-out unit on a lease or license basis, with rent payable to the Council. The level of rent will reflect the fact that the organisation is likely to be a voluntary or community sector organisation which will be providing facilities for the local community.

Table 1: Indicative Timeline

Activity	Date
Cabinet approval of SCIL funding and procurement exercise	September 2024
Procurement exercise for refurbishment and fit-out works	September – November 2024
Marketing exercise to lease unit to a Lead Tenant(s) to manage space and deliver services	September – November 2024
Estimated completion date of fit out works	April 2025
Community unit ready for use	May 2025

SCIL considerations

- 3.2.12 The Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy (SCIL) is a charge which can be levied by local authorities on new development in their area and helps to deliver vital infrastructure. It can be used to fund a broad range of improvement or replacement of infrastructure projects including education, transport facilities, medical facilities, schools, parks and green spaces, cultural and sports facilities and other community facilities. This flexibility gives local authorities the opportunity to prioritise

what vital infrastructure is needed, supported by the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP).

3.2.13 This project aligns with the Brent Local Plan Policy BP5 South¹ - Community and Cultural Facilities, which focuses on meeting social infrastructure requirements by securing provision for needs arising from new housing development, especially the provision of new education, health, cultural and community facilities. Community activities will be delivered by local organisations and for the local community, and will include use of the commercial kitchen to provide food support, advice and guidance as well as supporting local residents with skills and employment. Although the location of Roy Smith House is on Hillside, Stonebridge (within the South Place as outlined in the Local Plan) which is not determined as a growth area, it neighbours the Church End, Alperton and Wembley growth areas. Developments in the vicinity include the Grand Union development in the Alperton growth area, redevelopment of Bridge Park Leisure Centre, as well as Wembley Point. Local regeneration and growth areas can be found at: <https://www.brent.gov.uk/business/regeneration/growth-areas>

Pre-tender considerations: refurbishment and fit-out works

3.2.14 In accordance with Contract Standing Orders 88 and 89, pre-tender considerations for the procurement of the contract for the fit-out works have been set out below.

Ref.	Requirement	Response	
(i)	<i>The nature of the services / supplies / works.</i>	Works	
(ii)	The estimated value.	£624,000 + VAT	
(iii)	The contract term.	Works to be performed under the contract are estimated to take approximately 12 weeks.	
(iv)	The tender procedure to be adopted.	Single Stage Tender process	
(v)	The procurement timetable.	Stage in Procurement	Indicative dates
		Invite Tenders	7 th October 2024
		Deadline for submission of Tenders	4 th November 2024
		Evaluation of Tenders	4 th – 18 th November 2024
		Approval of award	18 th – 29 th November 2024

¹ Brent Local Plan 2019 – 2041, Available at: [legacy.brent.gov.uk/media/16420376/brent-local-plan-2019-2041.pdf?_ga=2.215832919.1958981786.1719909268-1677223408.1641832831](https://www.brent.gov.uk/media/16420376/brent-local-plan-2019-2041.pdf?_ga=2.215832919.1958981786.1719909268-1677223408.1641832831)

Ref.	Requirement	Response								
		Mobilisation period 2 nd December 2024								
		Contract start date 6 th January 2025								
(vi)	The evaluation criteria and process.	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Evaluation Criteria</th> <th>Weighting</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Price</td> <td>60%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Quality</td> <td>30%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Social Value</td> <td>10%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Evaluation Criteria	Weighting	Price	60%	Quality	30%	Social Value	10%
Evaluation Criteria	Weighting									
Price	60%									
Quality	30%									
Social Value	10%									
(vii)	Any business risks associated with entering the contract.	No specific business risks are considered to be associated with entering into the proposed Contract.								
(viii)	The Council's Best Value duties.	The Council is procuring through a competitive procurement process in order to comply with the Council's Best Value duties.								
(ix)	Consideration of Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012	The Council is under duty pursuant to the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 ("the Social Value Act") to consider how services being procured might improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of its area; how, in conducting the procurement process, the Council might act with a view to securing that improvement; and whether the Council should undertake consultation. This duty does not strictly apply to the proposed Contract as it is not a services contract. Nevertheless, Officers have had regard to considerations contained in the Social Value Act in relation to the procurement and social value forms 10% of the evaluation score.								
(x)	Any staffing implications, including TUPE and pensions.	As detailed in Section 9 below.								
(xi)	The relevant financial, legal and other considerations	As detailed in Sections 5 and 6 below.								
(xii)	Sustainability	The contract will be procured in line with the Sustainable Procurement Policy.								
(xiii)	Key Performance Indicators / Outcomes	Appropriate Key Performance Indicators and Outcomes will be included in the contract.								
(xiv)	London Living Wage	The Contract will require the payment of the London Living Wage.								
(xv)	Contract Management	A contract manager will be appointed and appropriate contract management provisions will be included in the contract.								

4.0 Stakeholder and ward member consultation and engagement

- 4.1 The Employment and Skills Outcomes Based Review process included early stakeholder and community engagement, and co-development of prototype ideas with stakeholders. Ward members are regularly updated on actions the Council is taking regarding improving employment support, and activities available to our local communities and Council tenants.

5.0 Financial Considerations

- 5.1 The £624,000 funding required for the project will be disbursed through the Council's capital programme as it will enhance the value of the community space at Roy Smith for the benefit of the community over several years. The report therefore seeks cabinet approval for a capital budget to be created for this project funded from the SCIL allocation requested in this report.
- 5.2 No borrowing costs is assumed for this project given the planned use of SCIL income to fund the project.

6.0 Legal Considerations

- 6.1 As detailed in paragraph 3.2.11, SCIL is a charge which can be levied by local authorities on new development in their area that helps to deliver a wide range of infrastructure needed to support development. Officers consider that this project aligns with the Brent Local Plan Policy BP5 South - Community and Cultural Facilities, which focuses on meeting social infrastructure requirements by securing provision for needs arising from new housing development, especially the provision of new education, health, cultural and community facilities.
- 6.2 The estimated value of the proposed Contract falls below the threshold for Works under the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (the "PCR 2015") and the procurement is therefore governed in part only by the PCR 2015.
- 6.3 The procurement is subject to the Council's own Standing Orders and Financial Regulations in respect of Medium Value Contracts given the procurement is valued at £624,000. For Medium Value Contracts, approval is required for the pre-tender considerations set out in paragraph 3.2.14 above (Standing Order 89) and the inviting of tenders (Standing Order 88).
- 6.4 Once the tendering process is undertaken, Officers will report back to the Corporate Director explaining the process undertaken in tendering the Contract and recommending award.

7.0 Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Considerations

7.1 Pursuant to s149 Equality Act 2010 (the “Public Sector Equality Duty”), the Council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the Act
- (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and
- (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it,

7.2 The Public Sector Equality Duty covers the following nine protected characteristics: age, disability, marriage and civil partnership, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

7.3 Having due regard involves the need to enquire into whether and how a proposed decision disproportionately affects people with a protected characteristic and the need to consider taking steps to meet the needs of persons who share a protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it. This includes removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by persons who share a protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic.

7.4 There is no prescribed manner in which the council must exercise its public sector equality duty but having an adequate evidence base for its decision is necessary.

7.5 The proposals in this report are likely to result in positive implications. The proposed new community space will be located in Stonebridge - this is an ethnically diverse ward, with a large Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic population, but also an area with challenges around economic inactivity and deprivation.

7.6 The new community space will aim to help resolve the challenges in the areas. It will be delivered by local organisations and for the local community, including a commercial kitchen that will provide food support, advice and guidance as well as supporting local residents with skills and employment. Combined, this will all likely have a positive impact on the local community.

8.0 Climate Change and Environmental Considerations

8.1 This contract will be procured in line with the Sustainable Procurement Policy. In addition, there is scope for one of the Social Value KPIs to be

selected from the measures listed under the Cleaner, Greener Brent theme in the Social Value Pro Forma.

- 8.2 The specification for the services to be delivered will include requirements to support individual and collective climate action, in particular climate action that supports households with the cost of living.

9.0 Human Resources/Property Implications (if appropriate)

- 9.1 There are no implications for Council staff arising from the tendering of the contract for works or the contract for the management and delivery of services.

- 9.2 Any provider appointed for the management and delivery of services at at Roy Smith House will be required to enter into such lease or licence as the Director Property and Assets considers appropriate.

10.0 Communication Considerations

- 10.1 A marketing exercise will be undertaken to market the property and attract bids from suitable provider(s) to manage and deliver services for the local community, and will be published on the Council's ' Commercial Properties to let' webpage. The successful Provider(s) will be expected provide community activities, and to manage appropriate communications to local residents regarding the activities and opportunities available.

Report sign off:

Peter Gadsdon

Corporate Director, Partnerships,
Housing & Residents Services

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Appendix 1: Stonebridge demographics and need

Image 1: Overview of Universal Credit claimants in Stonebridge

Universal Credit claimants in Stonebridge

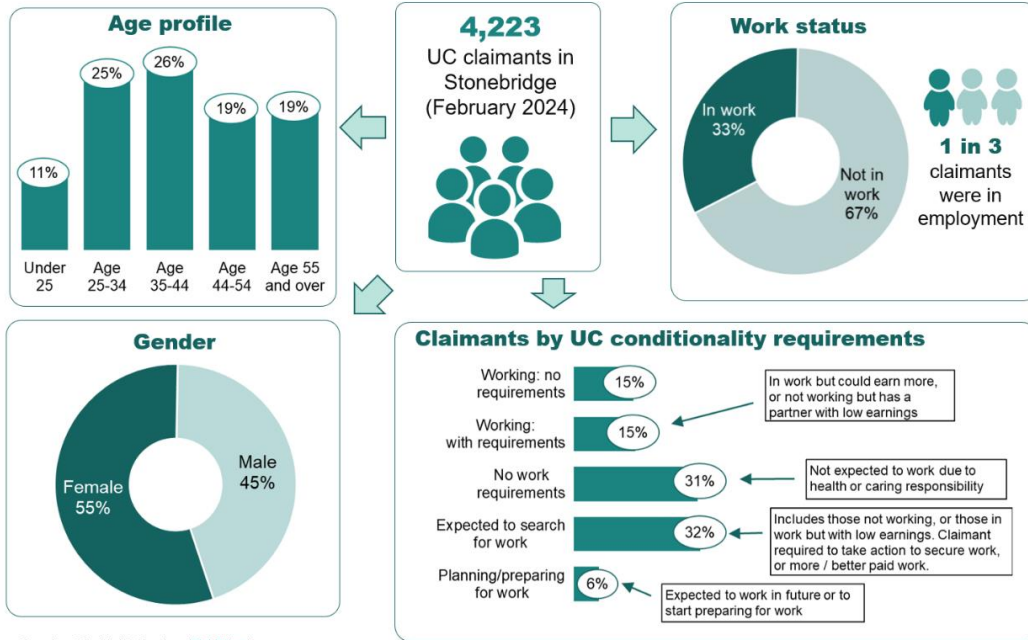


Image 2: Overview of Universal Credit households in Stonebridge

Universal Credit households in Stonebridge

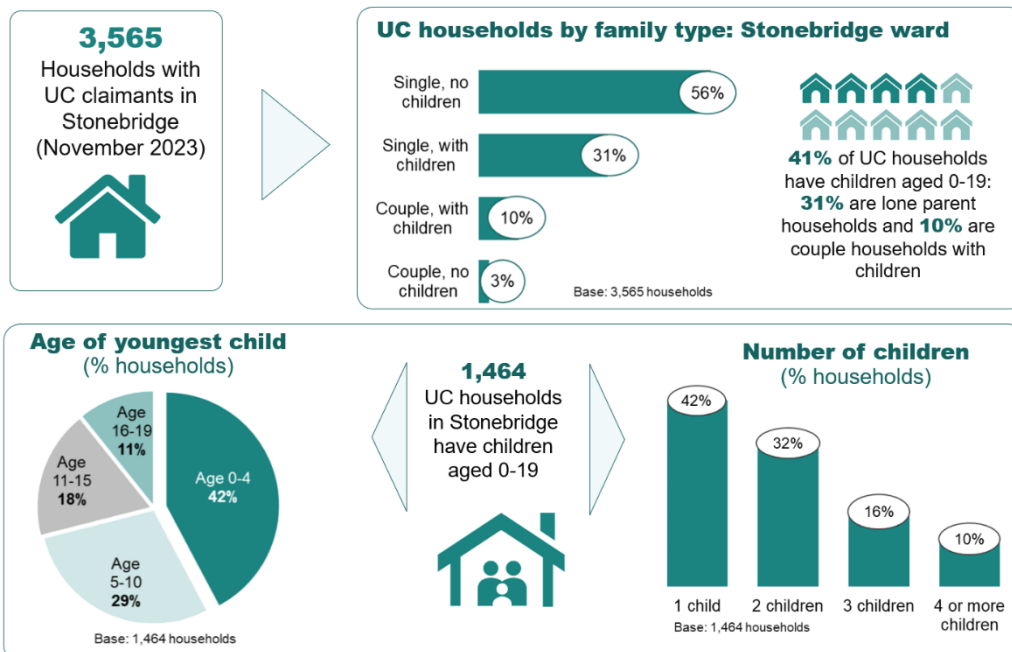


Image 3: Overview of Universal Credit claimant rates by ward

Universal Credit claimants by ward: rates



48,830 Brent residents are reliant on Universal Credit (UC) - **21%** of the working age population. The percentage of residents on UC is highest in the wards of Roundwood, Dollis Hill and Stonebridge: in these wards, around **1 in 3** working age residents are UC claimants.

UC claimants as a percentage of the population aged 18-65, by ward and LSOA, February 2024

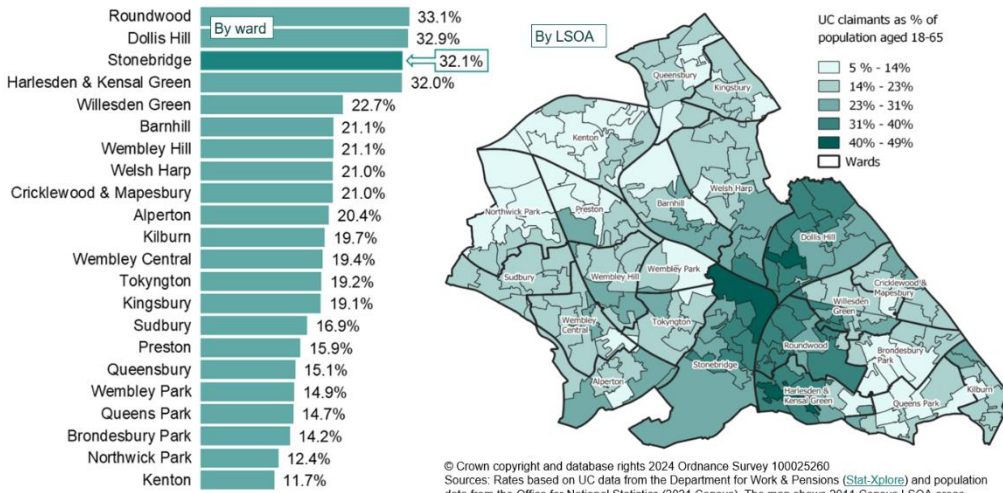
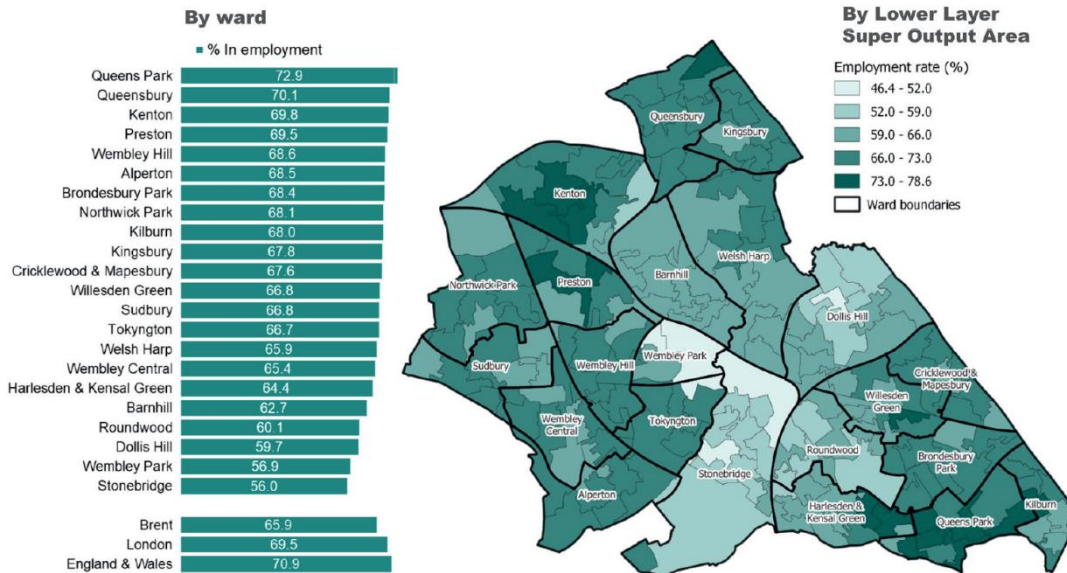


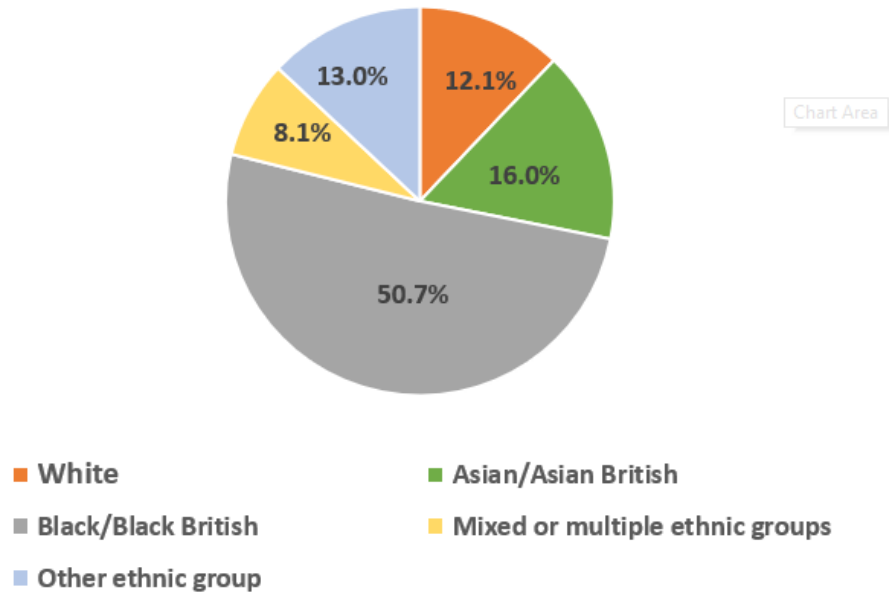
Image 4: Employment rate by ward and Lower Layer Super Output Area



Source: Office for National Statistics, 2021 Census

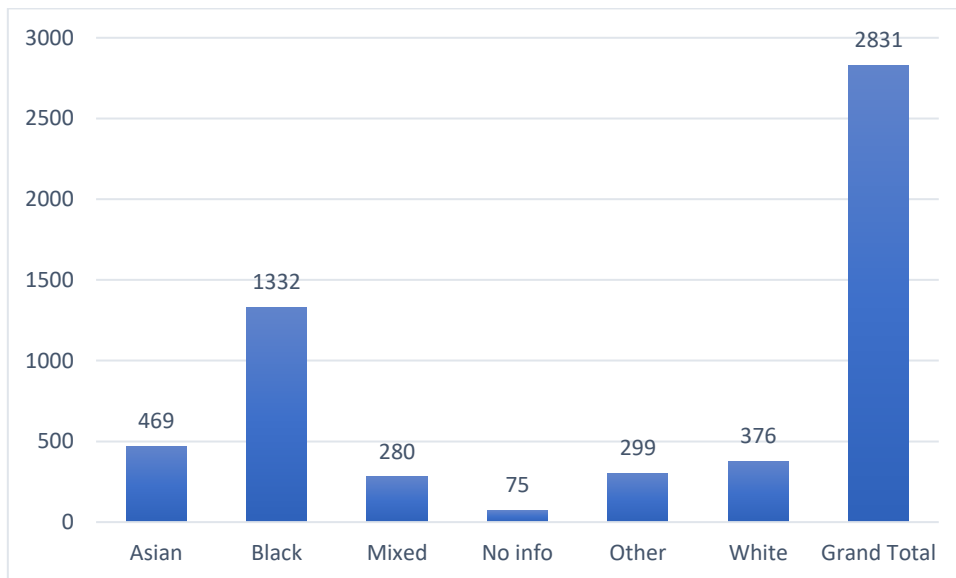
Image 5: Ethnicity by age (5-17 years old) of those living in the Stonebridge Ward (Census 2021)

Ethnicity of children aged 5-17, Stonebridge ward, Census 2021



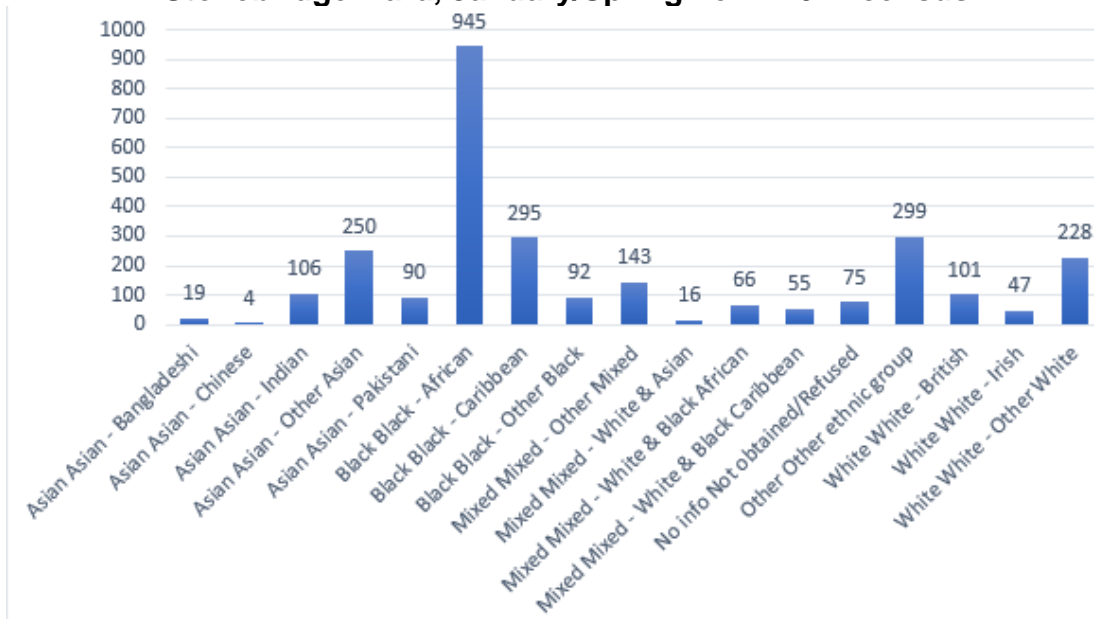
Source: Office for National Statistics, 2021 Census (Custom dataset)

Image 6 – Ethnicity (5 categories) of pupils (4-16 years old) residing in Stonebridge ward



Source: January/Spring Term 2024 Schools Census

Image 7 - Ethnicity (17 categories) of pupils (4-16 years old) residing in Stonebridge ward, January/Spring Term 2024 census



Source: January/Spring Term 2024 Schools Census