

London Borough of Brent
Summary of Decisions taken by the Cabinet held in the Conference Hall, Brent Civic Centre on Monday 10
February 2025 at 10am

PRESENT: Councillor Muhammed Butt (Chair), Councillor Mili Patel (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Benea, Donnelly-Jackson, Farah, Grahl, Nerva, Rubin and Krupa Sheth.

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Lorber (for item 7 & 8), Councillor Conneely (as Chair of the Scrutiny Budget Task Group for item 8) and Councillor Mahmood.

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1.	Apologies for Absence		Apologies for absence were received from Kim Wright (Chief Executive) with Rachel Crossley (Corporate Director Community Health & Wellbeing) acting on her behalf.
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 Wednesday 15 January 2025 be approved as a correct record of the meeting. Eligible for Call-In: No
4.	Matters Arising (if any)		None identified.
5.	Petitions (if any)		There were no petitions presented at the meeting.
6.	Reference of item considered by Scrutiny Committees (if any)		There were no items referred from either the Community Wellbeing or Resources & Public Realm Scrutiny Committees.
7.	Review of working age Council Tax Support Scheme for 2025-26	All Wards	In considering the report Cabinet noted the following comments made by Councillor Lorber (who had requested to speak on the item).

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			<p>Councillor Lorber began his remarks by highlighting the significant impact he felt the proposed changes to the Council Tax Support Scheme would have on local residents already struggling as a result of the cost-of-living crisis. In considering mitigations to the impact of the proposed changes, he suggested that the Universal Credit system should not be used as the basis of the backdating rules for new CTS claims as the system was not felt to work effectively. In considering the report, Councillor Lorber felt that there had not been enough time to make residents aware of the changes to allow them to make any necessary adjustments, with concerns expressed about the extent and meaningfulness of the consultation process given the preferred option which had been identified as the basis of that process following the initial modelling undertaken. In highlighting the response provided as part of the consultation by Brent Citizens Advice, Councillor Lorber concluded by urging Cabinet to consider as minimum increasing the level of the financial hardship Support Fund for residents from £1.5m to £3m.</p> <p>Having noted the representations received, Cabinet RESOLVED to approve and recommend the following changes to the Council Support Scheme for consideration any approval by Full Council on 27 February 2025:</p> <p>(1) That the revised Local Council Tax Support (CTS) Scheme for 2025-26 incorporate the following changes: introduce a standard 35% minimum payment for working age households</p>

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			<p>and apply a percentage reduction to each of the income bands. This means all CTS claimants would be expected to contribute a minimum of 35% towards their Council Tax liability. Their CTS would then be calculated based on their income and that would determine which income band they fall into. This would reduce the cost of the scheme by £7.6m with detailed explanations and calculations, number of residents impacted and the proposed weekly reduction in CTS outlined in Appendix A of the report.</p> <p>(2) Simplification of the non-dependant charges incorporating two flat rate non-dependant deductions for most households with other adults living in the property, £8 per week for non-dependants “out of work” and £20 per week for non-dependants “in work”. This would remove the need to verify income for non-dependants for CTS claims and reduce the administrative burden. Adopting this proposal would reduce the cost of the scheme by £0.7m with detailed explanation and calculations of the proposed non-dependant deduction, number of households affected and proposed weekly reduction in CTS support outlined within Appendix B of the report.</p> <p>Technical and administrative changes</p> <p>(3) To note that the amendments to CTS scheme would include the Universal Credit notification received from DWP for Council tax, as start date of claim for Council tax reduction if there was</p>

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			<p>entitlement to it.</p> <p>(4) To note the alignment of the backdating rules for new CTS claim with the Housing Benefits and Universal Credit regulations i.e. for a maximum of one calendar month. The backdating request is made at the time of submission of a new claim. This change would reduce the administrative burden, and customers would not lose out as the start date would be accepted as per DWP notification date to start date of entitlement. In exceptional circumstances, the Council would consider revising the claim for more than a month e.g. bereavement of close relative.</p> <p>(5) To note that the income bands for households was reviewed every year in line with the Consumer Pricing Index (CPI) from September of previous year to be considered for the new financial year.</p> <p>(6) To note that a review and update of section 13A policy for hardship fund for Council tax, including an additional £1.5m fund to support residents, would be considered at the March 2025 Cabinet meeting.</p> <p>Eligible for call-in: No (report and recommendations referred to Council)</p>
8.	Budget & Council Tax 2025-26	All Wards	Cabinet NOTED the following comments made in advance of

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			<p>considering the main report on the Budget & Council Tax 2025-26:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Councillor Conneely, as Chair of the Scrutiny Budget Scrutiny Task Group, summarising the main recommendations from the Task Group in relation to the budget process which had been included as Appendix D to the Budget and Council Tax 2025 - 26 report. In introducing the report, Councillor Conneely began by thanking all members of the Budget Scrutiny Task Group along with everyone else who had participated in the evidence sessions as part of the scrutiny process. In emphasising the ongoing nature of the financial challenges and pressures faced by the Council, Councillor Conneely reiterated the need for fundamental reform of the current way in which local authorities were funded, given the inadequacy of the existing funding regime. <p>In outlining the comprehensive nature of the process undertaken by the Task Group in reviewing the budget proposals, it was hoped Cabinet would actively seek to take forward the recommendations made as a result which, it was highlighted, had included a focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The impact of the proposed changes to the Council Tax Support Scheme and package of support being provided for more vulnerable residents in seeking to manage the impact, which it was noted the Resource & Public Realm Scrutiny Committee would continue to monitor.

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The need to review the way in which the use of funding generated through Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy could be maximised to provide optimal community benefit; and •The way in which the Council’s commissioning and procurement arrangements could be enhanced to provide greater cost efficiency, value for money and social value. <p>In concluding, Councillor Conneely once again thanked all those involved for their participation in the Task Group and commended the recommendations made by the Budget Scrutiny Task Group to Cabinet for consideration as part of the budget setting process.</p> <p>2. Councillor Lorber who, whilst recognising the financial crisis faced by local government, felt it important to highlight the £150m reserve of Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy (SCIL) funding held in Brent. Whilst aware of the restrictions in the permitted use of this funding, Councillor Lorber felt stronger representations needed to be made to the Government in seeking to ease the restrictions and provide greater flexibility and autonomy in how the Council could use this funding given the wider pressures and demands faced by key local services and in addressing what he felt to be the current poor state of the borough. In closing, he felt the £150m SCIL reserve</p>
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			<p>identified could make a significant contribution towards addressing the issues residents were concerned about and therefore was keen to encourage ongoing lobbying of Government to allow Councils to decide how to spend that money and avoid the need for further cuts to services.</p> <p>Having noted the comments made by Councillor Lorber and welcoming and supporting the approach taken and recommendations made by the Budget Scrutiny Task Group, Cabinet RESOLVED:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) To recommend to Full Council an overall 4.99% increase in the Council's element of Council Tax for 2025/26, with 2% as a precept for Adult Social Care and a 2.99% general increase. (2) To recommend to Full Council the General Fund revenue budget for 2025/26, as summarised in Appendices A and B of the report. (3) To recommend to Full Council the savings proposals for 2025/26 as set out in Appendices C (i) and C (ii) of the report. (4) To note the Equalities Impact Assessments on the budget proposals, as set out in Appendices C (iii) and C (iv) of the report. (5) To note and endorse the report from the Budget Scrutiny Task

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			<p>Group in Appendix D of the report.</p> <p>(6) To recommend to Full Council the HRA budget and business plan for 2025/26, as set out in section eight and appendix O of the report.</p> <p>(7) To agree, for final approval by Council, the HRA rents for council dwellings, tenant service charges and garages as set out in section eight of the report.</p> <p>(8) To agree the rents set under the Housing General Fund for Brent Housing PFI and traveller’s site pitches and to note the rents for Hillside dwellings as set out in section eight of the report.</p> <p>(9) To note the Dedicated Schools Grant, as set out in section nine of the report.</p> <p>(10) To recommend to Full Council the changes to the existing Capital Programme in relation to additions of new schemes and reprofiling, as set out in section ten of this report, and note the Capital Pipeline Schemes in Appendix E of the report.</p> <p>(11) To recommend to Full Council the Capital Strategy, the Non-Treasury Investment Strategy, the Treasury Management Strategy and the Minimum Revenue Provision Statement as set out in Appendices F, G, H and I of the report.</p>

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			<p>(12) To recommend to Full Council the Reserves Strategy and schedule of reserves, as set out in Appendices J (i) and J (ii) of the report.</p> <p>(13) To agree, and where relevant agree to recommend to Full Council the schedule of fees and charges, as set out in Appendix K (ii) of the report.</p> <p>(14) To note the results of the budget consultation, as set out in section seven and detailed in Appendices L (i) and L (ii) of the report.</p> <p>(15) To note the legal advice from the Corporate Director, Law and Governance, as set out in Appendix M of the report.</p> <p>(16) To note the decision of the Corporate Director, Finance and Resources to continue as part of the Eight Authority Business Rates pool in 2025/26 as set out in section six of the report.</p> <p>(17) To note the changes to waste policy, notably the Extended Producer Responsibility (ERP) for packaging from 2025 and agree to recommend to Full Council for the funding to be transferred to reserves in 2025/26.</p> <p>To also note and approve the recommendations identified for consideration by Full Council as detailed in section 2.18 – 2.37 of</p>

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			<p>the report.</p> <p>Eligible for call-in: No (report and recommendations referred to Council)</p>
9.	Treasury Management Mid-Year Report 2024 - 25	All Wards	<p>Cabinet RESOLVED</p> <p>(1) To note the 2024-25 Mid-Year Treasury report and approve its referral on to Full Council.</p> <p>(2) To note that the Council had been fully compliant with the prudential indicators set as part of the annual strategy.</p> <p>Eligible for call-in: No (report and recommendations referred to Council)</p>
10.	Authority to award contract for the provision of Speech & Language Therapy (SLT) for Children & Young People in Brent and Out of Borough Schools	All Wards	<p>Cabinet RESOLVED to approve the direct award of a contract for the provision of Speech and Language Therapy (SaLT) for children and young people in Brent schools, Additionally Resourced Provision and out-of-borough schools (the “Contract”) following the Provider Selection Regime (PSR) process C for an initial period of three (3) years from 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2028 with an option to extend by a further one (1) year in the sum of £6,569,499 exclusive of VAT to Central London Community Healthcare Trust NHS (CLCH).</p> <p>Eligible for call-in: Yes</p>

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Agenda Item No	Item	Ward(s)	Decision
			Deadline for submission of call-in: 6pm on Monday 17 February 2025
11.	Authority to Tender contracts for the Provision of Extra Care Housing Support for six Extra Care Schemes	Kingsbury; Stonebridge; Sudbury; Wembley Central; Wembley Hill; Willesden Green	<p>Cabinet RESOLVED</p> <p>(1) To approve inviting tenders for the provision of Extra Care Housing (ECH) support services for six extra care schemes split into two contracts/lots on the basis of the pre - tender considerations set out in paragraph 3.4 of the report.</p> <p>(2) To approve Officers evaluating the tenders referred to in (1) above on the basis of the evaluation criteria set out in section (vi) of the table at paragraph 3.4.1 of the report.</p> <p>(3) To delegate authority to the Corporate Director, Community Health and Wellbeing in consultation with the Lead Member for, Community Health and Wellbeing to award the contract for each of the two lots for the provision of ECH support services for the six extra care schemes for a term of three (3) years with the option to extend by a maximum of two (2) years on a one plus one basis (3+1+1).</p> <p>Eligible for call-in: Yes</p> <p>Deadline for submission of call-in: 6pm on Monday 17 February 25</p>

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Agenda Item No	Item	Ward(s)	Decision
12.	Authority to Award Housing Repairs and Maintenance Contracts	All Wards	<p>Cabinet RESOLVED</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) To approve the award the contract for Lot 1 Responsive Repairs to Wates Property Services Limited for a term of five years plus an option to extend for three years and one further two year extension for the estimated annual value detailed in paragraph 6.1 of the report. (2) To approve the award the contract for Lot 2 Planned Works to Wates Property Services Limited for a term of five years plus an option to extend for three years and one further two year extension for the estimated annual value detailed in paragraph 6.1 of the report. (3) To approve the award the contract for Lot 3 Voids Repairs to Wates Property Services Limited for a term of five years plus an option to extend for three years and one further two year extension for the estimated annual value detailed in paragraph 6.1 of the report. (4) To approve the award the contract for Lot 4 Responsive Repairs to Masher Brothers Limited for a term of five years plus an option to extend for three years and one further two year extension for the estimated annual value detailed in paragraph 6.1 of the report. (5) To approve the award the contract for Lot 5 Planned Works to

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			<p>Mears Limited for a term of five years plus an option to extend for three years and one further two year extension for the estimated annual value detailed in paragraph 6.1 of the report.</p> <p>(6) To approve the award the contract for Lot 6 Voids Repairs to Greyline Group Limited for a term of five years plus an option to extend for three years and one further two year extension for the estimated annual value detailed in paragraph 6.1 of the report.</p> <p>Eligible for call-in: Yes</p> <p>Deadline for submission of call-in: 6pm on Monday 17 February 25</p>
13.	Authority to Tender for the Provision and Management of Temporary Accommodation Housing Association Leasing Scheme	All Wards	<p>Cabinet RESOLVED</p> <p>(1) To approve inviting tenders for Procurement and Management of Temporary Accommodation in support of the Council’s Housing Association Leasing Scheme (HALS) on the basis of the pre - tender considerations set out in paragraph 4.20 of the report.</p> <p>(2) To approve Officers evaluating the tenders referred to in (1) above on the basis of the evaluation criteria set out in paragraph 4.20 of the report.</p> <p>(3) To delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Partnerships,</p>

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			<p>Housing and Resident Services, in consultation with the Lead Member for Housing, to award contracts for Procurement and Management of Temporary Accommodation for an acquisition and management term of 3 years, with an option to extend for up to 2 years, and a further management term of 3 years following expiry of the acquisition and management term.</p> <p>Eligible for call-in: Yes</p> <p>Deadline for submission of call-in: 6pm on Monday 17 February 25</p>
14.	Any other urgent business		There were no items of urgent business.
15.	Exclusion of Press and Public		<p>Cabinet RESOLVED that under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of Agenda Item 16 on the grounds that it would involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 6a and 6b, Part 1 of Schedule 12A, as amended, of the Act, namely:</p> <p>“Information which reveals that the authority proposes: (a) to give under any enactment a notice under or by virtue of which requirements are imposed on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction under any enactment”</p> <p>The webcast was ended at this stage of the meeting.</p>
16.	Addressing the risk of Anti Social	Stonebridge	Having noted the timescales in terms of the project flowchart had

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	Behaviour in the Stonebridge area		<p>been provided on an indicative basis and concern to ensure a process of ongoing engagement with Cabinet was established at key stages in the process, Cabinet RESOLVED</p> <p>(1) That officers provide fortnightly project updates for Cabinet members with a further report to be provided on the longer term options identified once that information was available.</p> <p>(2) That an amended project flowchart and associated project plan be circulated with updated timelines.</p> <p>(3) In noting the update provided, to approve the proposed actions outlined within the report to address the issues and risks identified and funding for the estimated costs as detailed within the report.</p> <p>Eligible for call-in: No (Call-in waived on the grounds of urgency)</p>