



Brent

SUMMONS TO ATTEND COUNCIL MEETING

Thursday 19 September 2024 at 6.00 pm

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

Please note that this meeting will be held as a physical meeting with all members of the Council required to attend in person.

To the Mayor and Councillors of the London Borough of Brent and to each and every one of them.

I hereby summon you to attend the MEETING OF THE COUNCIL of this Borough.

KIM WRIGHT
Chief Executive

Dated: 11 September 2024 (agenda subsequently republished on 13 & 18 September 2024)

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

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[Council meetings and decision making | Brent Council](#)

Limited space will be available at the meeting for the press and public to attend or alternatively it will be possible to follow the meeting via the live webcast. The link to follow proceedings via the live webcast is available [here](#)

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 a Prejudicial Interest (i.e. it affects a financial position or relates to determining of any approval, consent, licence, permission, or registration) then (unless an exception at 14(2) of the Members Code applies), 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 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 of trade union).
- (b) The interests a of a person from whom you have received gifts or hospitality of at least £50 as a member in the municipal year;

or

A decision in relation to that business might reasonably be regarded as affecting, to a greater extent than the majority of other council tax payers, ratepayers or inhabitants of the electoral ward affected by the decision, 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 employs or has appointed any of these or in whom they have a beneficial interest in a class of securities exceeding the nominal value of £25,000, or any firm in which they are a partner, or any company of which they are a director
- any body of a type described in (a) above

Agenda

Apologies for absence.

1 Apologies for Absence

2 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

1 - 34

To confirm as a correct record, the minutes of the previous Council Meeting held on Monday 8 July 2024.

(Agenda republished to include the Council minutes from 8 July 24 on 18 September 2024)

3 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.

4 Mayor's Announcements (including any petitions received)

To receive any announcements from the Mayor.

5 Appointments to Committees and Outside Bodies and Appointment of Chairs/Vice Chairs (if any)

To agree any appointments to Committees and Outside Bodies (if any) in accordance with Standing Order 30 (g).

6 Deputations (if any)

To hear any deputations requested by members of the public in accordance with Standing Order 32.

Members are asked to note that there are no deputation(s) due to be received at the meeting.

7 Questions from Members of the Public

35 - 42

To receive and consider the question(s) submitted by the public for response by the relevant Cabinet Member, in accordance with Standing Order 33.

Members are asked to note that four public questions have been received, which have been attached to the agenda along with the written

responses provided.

8 Petitions (if any)

For Members to consider any petitions with more than 200 signatures on which a debate has been requested, in accordance with the Council's petition rules and Standing Order 68.

Members are asked to note that the following petition is due to be presented at the meeting:

Divest for Palestine (Brent & Harrow Palestine Solidarity Campaign
Lead petitioner – Sheila Guhadasan)

9 Motions

43 - 50

Following the change in procedure for dealing with Motions agreed as part of the changes to the Constitution at the Annual Council Meeting in May 2024, the debate on motions submitted to Full Council, in accordance with Standing Order 30(k) and 41 will now be undertaken at this stage of the meeting.

Members are asked to note:

- The motions submitted for debate have been attached.
- Where a motion concerns an executive function, nothing passed can be actioned until approved by the Executive or an officer with the relevant delegated power.

(Agenda republished to include the motions submitted for debate on 13 September 2024)

10 Annual Report on the Borough from the Leader of the Council

To receive an annual report on the Borough from the Leader of the Council, in accordance with Standing Order 38.

11 Reports from the Leader and Cabinet

51 - 62

To receive a report from the Leader of the Council in accordance with Standing Order 31 providing an update on any key or significant issues arising from any matter within the responsibility of the Cabinet.

12 Questions from the Opposition and other Non-Cabinet Members

63 - 68

For questions to be put to members of the Cabinet by Opposition and Non-Cabinet Members in accordance with Standing Order 35.

Five advance notice questions have been received under this item, which have been attached along with the written responses provided.

Members are asked to note that this session will also include an opportunity (within the time available) for other Non-Cabinet members and the Opposition to ask questions of Cabinet Members without the need for advance notice.

13 Report from Chairs of Scrutiny Committees

To receive reports from the Chairs of the Council's Scrutiny Committees in accordance with Standing Order 36. The reports have been attached as follows:

13.1 Resources & Public Realm Scrutiny 69 - 78

(Agenda republished to include the update report from the Resources & Public Realm Scrutiny Committee on 18 September 2024)

13.2 Committee Community & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee 79 - 90

Members are asked to note that this session will include an opportunity (within the time available) for Non-Cabinet Members to ask questions of relevant Scrutiny Chair's in relation to the remit of their Committees.

14 Report from the Vice Chair of the Audit & Standards Advisory Committee 91 - 94

To receive a report from the Vice Chair of the Audit and Standards Advisory Committee updating Council on the work of the Committee, in accordance with Standing Order 37.

15 Non-Cabinet Member Debate 95 - 96

To enable Non-Cabinet Members to raise an issue of relevance to Brent for debate on which notice has been provided in accordance with Standing Order 34 and to receive updates from Cabinet members, as required, on any issues previously raised.

Members are asked to note that the subject identified for debate at this meeting is as follows:

Cutting the Winter Fuel Payment

Please note: The motion submitted as the basis for this debate has been attached.

16 Brent Youth Justice Plan 2024-25

97 - 166

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

Following its submission to the Youth Justice Board and consideration by Cabinet on 9 September 2024 Council is being asked to formally adopt the Plan.

Ward Affected: All Wards
Contact Officer: Palvinder Kudhail, Director
Early Help & Social Care
Palvinder.Kudhail@brent.gov.uk

17 Treasury Management Outturn Report 2023-24

167 - 202

To receive a report from the Corporate Director of Finance & Resources updating members on Treasury Management activity and confirming that the Council has complied with its Prudential Indicators for 2023 - 24.

Members are asked to note that this report was received and noted by the Audit & Standards Advisory Committee on 24 July 2024 and Cabinet on 9 September 2024 and has been forwarded to Council in compliance with CIPFAs Code of Practice on Treasury Management.

Ward Affected: All Wards
Contact Officer: Nadeem Akhtar, Senior
Finance Analyst
Tel: 020 8937 5957
Nadeem.Akhtar@brent.gov.uk

18 Urgent Business

At the discretion of the Mayor to consider any urgent business, in accordance with Standing Order 37(s).



Please remember to switch 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](#)



LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

Minutes of the ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL
held in the Conference Hall, Brent Civic Centre on Monday 8 July 2024 at 6.00 pm

PRESENT:

The Worshipful the Mayor
Councillor Tariq Dar MBE

The Deputy Mayor
Councillor Diana Collymore

COUNCILLORS:

Aden	Afzal
Ahmed	Akram
Bajwa	Begum
Benea	M Butt
S Butt	Chan
Choudry	Conneely
Crabb	Dixon
Donnelly-Jackson	Ethapemi
Farah	Fraser
Gbajumo	Georgiou
Grahl	Hack
Hirani	Hylton
Kabir	Kansagra
Kelcher	Kennelly
Long	Lorber
Mahmood	Matin
Maurice	Miller
Mistry	Mitchell
Moeen	Molloy
Nerva	J.Patel
M Patel	Rubin
Ketan Sheth	L.Smith
T.Smith	

1. **Mayors Introductory Statement**

The Mayor welcomed all those present to the meeting and thanked everyone for their attendance.

2. **Apologies for Absence**

The Mayor reported that apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Agha, Ahmadi Moghaddam, Chohan, Chappell, Johnson, Knight, Rajan-Seelan, Shah, Krupa Sheth and Tatler.

3. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the of the Annual Council meeting held on Wednesday 22 May 2024 be approved as a correct record.

4. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

5. **Mayor's Announcements (including any petitions received)**

The Mayor made the following announcements:

(i) Queens Park By-Election result

The Mayor began his announcements by congratulating and welcoming Lesley Smith as the newly elected councillor for Queens Park ward, following the outcome of a by-election held on Thursday 4 July 2024.

The opportunity was also taken to formally thank the Chief Executive and all other staff involved in the successful delivery of not only the by-election but also the Parliamentary elections held at the same time, recognising the enormous amount of effort to organise both events in such a short timescale.

(ii) Kings Birthday Honours List

On behalf of both himself and the Council, the Mayor asked all members to join him in congratulating all those with a connection to Brent who had received an honour in the Kings 2024 Birthday Honours list.

(iii) London Youth Games

In concluding his announcements, the Mayor took the opportunity to congratulate Brent Schools Girls FA for making history by winning the girls London Youth Games competition for the first time.

The team from Brent had comprised of girls from all over the borough and had defeated several other boroughs on their way to the final with the squad looking forward to visiting the Civic Centre in order to receive certificates and celebrate their historic victory. Recognising the achievement, the Mayor also thanked the coaches and other volunteers involved for their efforts and dedication in support of the team.

(iv) Petitions

As a final announcement, the Mayor referred members to the list of current petitions tabled at the meeting, in accordance with Standing Orders which also detailed the action being taken to deal with them.

6. **Appointments to Committees and Outside Bodies and Appointment of Chairs/Vice Chairs (if any)**

The Mayor advised that there were no appointments to Council Committees, Sub Committees and other bodies which had been received for consideration.

7. **Deputations (if any)**

The Mayor advised that he had accepted the request for a deputation to be presented at the meeting. The request had been received from the Save Byron Court Campaign Group (represented by Tanisha Phoenix & Vina Vekria at the meeting) and related to school communication and the provision of parent representation within community schools.

Unless otherwise indicated by members, the Mayor advised that he intended to allow up to five minutes for presentation of the deputation before then allowing the relevant Lead Cabinet Member up to two minutes to respond.

As no objections were raised on the approach outlined, the Mayor moved on to welcome the deputation.

Save Byron Court Campaign Group – Parent representation within Community Schools.

In thanking the Mayor for the opportunity to address the meeting Vina Vekria & Tanisha Phoenix advised they were presenting the deputation on behalf of the Save Byron Court, campaign who had been established as a collective effort by parents, community members and school staff (who had also been taking strike action in support) to oppose the Government's forced academisation of Byron Court Primary School by Harris Federation representing.

Referring to the campaign undertaken to date, it was felt this had highlighted many issues including chronic underfunding, a punitive inspection regime, a national rush to privatise education despite widespread opposition and no opportunity for school improvements to be made along with what was felt to be a worrying lack of transparency and impartiality in terms of decision making regarding the future of Byron Court Primary School.

In recognising and acknowledging the support of the campaign by Barry Gardiner (as local MP), Councillor Grahl (as the Council's Cabinet member for Children, Young People and Schools) amongst other politicians the Campaign Group now hoped the new Labour government would be willing to intervene in order to protect the school and provide a renewed commitment to community schools as a whole.

Addressing the meeting, Vina Vekria advised that one of the issues identified, in relation to Byron Court Primary School had involved membership of the School's Governing Body, which for the current academic year had only included one parent governor representative compared to five in previous years. This followed a reduction in their number without, it was claimed, consultation with the parent community. The Campaign Group had highlighted this as an important issue, given the need for successful Governing Bodies to act as custodians for the school with the necessary links to parents and the wider community. Whilst recognising the

challenges in attracting volunteers, the importance in being able to attract good quality individuals to support the role of the Governing Body outside of the school community was highlighted as necessary to provide a broad range of skills and experience. As such the Campaign Group were calling on the Council to undertake a review of school governing bodies across the borough to ensure that the voices of parents were sufficiently represented and to encourage a more diverse range of experience and knowledge.

Following on, Tanisha Phoenix then spoke to highlight additional concerns regarding the lack of meaningful communication with parents at Byron Court Primary School and the Campaign Group from the school following publication of the Ofsted report. Despite assurances regarding more open communication and a meeting with the Council in April 2024, at which further assurances were provided regarding the prioritisation of improvement initiatives at the school over the academisation process, it was not felt this had been delivered with notice provided in July that the focus on communications moving forward would be in relation to the ongoing strike action. Irrespective of views regarding Ofsted and academisation, the Campaign Group felt there remained a responsibility on the Local Authority and School to ensure that parents and carers were informed about improvement initiatives that were being developed and introduced in response to the schools Ofsted rating as “inadequate”. Whilst recognising that a majority of schools in Brent were rated as “good” or “outstanding” it was pointed out Byron Court’s inspection had been whilst under local authority control with many of the issues identified involving a lack of engagement, communication and transparency between the parent body, school and Local Authority.

As a result, the Campaign Group (through the deputation) were also keen to explore the lessons that could be learnt from the Primary School’s journey post Ofsted inspection including the benchmarking, developing and sharing of best practice around communications to ensure other schools avoided the same issues.

The Mayor thanked Vina Vekria & Tanisha Phoenix for their contributions then invited Councillor Grahl, as Cabinet Member for Children, Young People & Schools to respond.

In response, Councillor Grahl (as Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools) thanked the Save Byron Campaign Group for attending the meeting to present the deputation and for their advocacy to date on behalf of the school community. In highlighting the support already expressed for the campaign, Councillor Grahl recognised the issues and concerns raised in relation to communication and advised that Shirley Parks, Director Education Partnerships and Strategy had written to all parents at the school about the improvements that it was planned to introduce across a range of areas, linked to the inspection assessment.

In regards to parent representation, Councillor Grahl felt it important to refer to the DfE guidance on Governing Bodies, which included a need for at least two parent governor representatives on each Governing Body. As such she ended her response by once again thanking the Campaign Group and advising that the Council would continue to work with them and the school to ensure the necessary representation was in place on the governing body and to ensure that parents had a voice.

Having thanked the Save Byron Park Campaign Group for their deputation and Councillor Grahl for her response the Mayor advised that this concluded consideration of the deputation.

8. Questions from Members of the Public & Brent Youth Parliament

8.1 Questions from the Public

The Mayor advised that two questions had been received from members of the public, which were as follows:

Question 1 from James Walerych regarding use of funding generated by the award of the advertising lease for Bobby More Bridge.

Question 2 from Daniela Stuppia regarding the Restrictions it was possible to place on Gambling Shops

Members noted the written responses provided to the questions, which had been circulated with the agenda. The Mayor advised that whilst both members of the public had been invited to the meeting in order to ask any supplementary question both had unfortunately been unable to attend. Members were advised that whilst unable to attend a written supplementary question had subsequently been received from James Walerych, on which a response would be provided outside of the meeting.

Having noted the written responses provided, the Mayor thanked James Walerych & Daniela Stuppia for submitting their questions and then moved on to deal with the question submitted by Brent Youth Parliament.

8.2 Questions from Brent Youth Parliament

The Mayor advised that the following question had been received from Brent Youth Parliament:

Question 1 from Brent Youth Parliament to Councillor Farah, Cabinet Member for Public Safety & Partnerships, relating to the support available for Brent Youth Parliaments local crime and safety campaign.

The Mayor thanked Brent Youth Parliament (BYP) for their question, with members noting the written response provided, and advised that representatives from the Youth Parliament had also been invited to attend the meeting in order to ask a supplementary question. As a result, the Mayor welcomed Kenechi Ezeajughi (BYP Deputy Chair), Reem Mustafa (BYP Deputy Media & Communications Lead) and George Main Sin (Youth Parliament member for Brent) to the meeting who asked the following supplementary question.

Question 1 Supplementary Question from George Main Sin & Kenechi Ezeajughi to Councillor Farah, Cabinet Member for Public Safety & Partnerships regarding practical measures in support of the Youth Parliament campaign.

Having thanked Councillor Farah for his written response and advising that they welcomed the support highlighted for BYPs local crime and safety campaign, further details were sought on progress with implementation of the practical measures being developed to reflect the overall strategic objectives included as part of the Safer Brent Community Safety Strategy. Amongst the specific measures on which details were sought were the introduction of safe spaces for young people along with the reestablishment of a boroughwide youth service, with the Youth Parliament highlighting how keen they were to continue working with the Council on the campaign and development of these measures.

In response, Councillor Farah thanked Brent Youth Parliament for the question and work they were undertaking to represent young people across the borough. In commending the Youth Parliaments local crime and safety campaign he reiterated the Council's commitment to continue supporting and engaging with young people in relation to the campaign, which included identifying key activities aligned with the wider community strategy. This included the development of safe spaces for young people in Brent on which the Council was continuing to work with key stakeholders and would be keen to engage with the Youth Parliament, prior to sharing the proposals once finalised.

Councillor Farah ended his response by confirming that both he and the Community Safety Team would also be happy to meet with the Youth Parliament to discuss how they could ensure their ongoing engagement in the development of these measures.

The Mayor thanked Councillor Farah for his response and with no further questions to be considered, advised that this now concluded the public question session.

9. **Petitions (if any)**

The Mayor advised that no requests for debates on any petitions had been received for consideration at the meeting.

10. **Motions**

Before moving on to consider the motions listed on the summons, the Mayor advised members that a total of 40 minutes had been set aside for consideration of the four motions submitted for debate, based on an initial allocation of 10 minutes per motion. Should the time taken to consider the first motion be less than 10 minutes he advised that the remaining time available would be rolled forward for consideration of the remaining motions.

10.1 1st Motion (Conservative Group) – Action to address dockless e-bike parking within Brent.

The Mayor invited Councillor Mistry to move the first motion which had been submitted on behalf of the Conservative Group. Councillor Mistry began by providing context to the motion and thanking Councillor Long for her support in relation to the amendment submitted, on the basis it was seeking to highlight many of the same concerns. In highlighting the increase in number of dockless e-bikes being abandoned in parks and streets across the borough, Councillor Mistry (as ward councillor) highlighted specific issues being experienced within Queensbury

with the Conservative Group motion (supported by the amendment) seeking stronger action in relation to management of the scheme by the bike operator given the problems and safety issues being experienced. In acknowledging the support within the amendment to the five actions which had been identified within the Conservative Group motion and discussions which had now commenced between the Council and operator to address concerns regarding management of the current scheme across the borough, Councillor Mistry advised that the Conservative Group would also be willing to support the amendment moved.

The Mayor thanked Councillor Mistry for moving the motion and then drew members' attention to an amendment submitted by Councillor Long on behalf of the Labour Group, which had been circulated in advance of the meeting.

In moving the amendment, Councillor Long thanked Councillor Mistry for highlighting the issues raised within her motion. Whilst acknowledging the popularity of the dockless e-bike scheme across the borough and supporting the efforts being made to reduce pollution and encourage more active modes of travel, there was, she felt, a need to address the current management and operation of the scheme recognising the problems being created by those not using it as they should and abandoning or dangerously parking bikes in parks and streets across the borough negatively impacting on pedestrians. As such, it was felt better regulation and management of the scheme was required, including a review and update of the Memorandum of Understanding and Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) governing operation of the scheme in Brent, which it was pointed had been agreed prior to the pandemic and was subject to regular and ongoing breaches. As an example, reference was made to the need, if parking was to be allowed on pavements, for the impact on pedestrians to be reflected within the EIA which currently only included reference to cyclists. In terms of improvements being sought, the amendment had also been designed to seek the necessary protection for pedestrians, recognising walking as an important mode of active travel and to call for not only better management of the scheme but also the provision of marked parking bays and the impounding of bikes that had been abandoned. In addition, the amendment was seeking to ensure that necessary enhancements were made to IT systems with measures introduced to prevent the hacking and improve the tracking of bikes operated under the scheme to ensure the scheme was able to continue operating effectively across the borough. Whilst supportive of the introduction of e-bikes Councillor Long, in urging members to support the amendment, felt management of the scheme required improving in order to safeguard pedestrians and address the wider concerns highlighted in relation to its operation. The amendment moved by Councillor Long was therefore as follows:

To add the wording underlined and delete the wording indicated:

“Action to address dockless e-bike parking within Brent

Whilst we support and recognise that dockless e-bike schemes were introduced across London in an effort to reduce pollution and get more people active, and that the majority of users are using the service as they ought to, there is ~~an annoying trend of e-bikes supplied~~ work to be done by Lime+ Uber under the scheme in Brent to tackle the small number of bikes being parked in dangerous locations, as well as bikes from schemes operated in other boroughs being dumped in our parks and streets. ~~No action appears~~ Stronger action needs to be taken against those

~~selfish~~ users who leave their e-bikes in locations causing immense danger, obstructions and annoyance to residents walking on our streets.

Lime+ Uber e-bikes are found across most wards in Brent obstructing busy streets and road crossings, with a small number of riders inconsiderately parking anywhere and blocking pavements and pedestrian crossings, impacting particularly on the disabled and parents with buggies leaving little remedy except to move them out of their path or manoeuvre around them. This has generated a large number of complaints to both the scheme operator and Council which, ~~to date, appears to have resulted in little effective action being taken~~ has been brought to the immediate attention of the operator for future term negotiations.

We understand that Brent Council are contacting the current operator to see what can be done but ~~there appears to have been little response~~ the Council continues to be in ongoing negotiations with the operator before a substantial operational update can be given. We also understand that Transport for London ~~appears not to be taking any responsibility for this problem~~ are involved in similar negotiations in Brent and across other London boroughs.

As a result of the concerns highlighted this Council therefore resolves to call on the Cabinet:

- (1) ~~To work with the support of other London boroughs, in seeking to include a~~ uphold our powers within a Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) that would enable the Council to lawfully impound bikes that are abandoned on our streets, and store them in a secure place, for example, at the boroughs car pound and not release them until a fine is paid by the operator.
- (2) To require that any dockless bike operator in the borough should be required to electronically chip all their bikes ~~and allow end-of-ride parking only in designated areas,~~ such as with Transport for London's official hire e-bike service.
- (3) To ensure increase data sharing with the operator so that when reported, obstacles and hazards caused to pedestrians and the disabled by the inconsiderate parking or dumping of hired e-bikes are addressed and cleared with the Council continuing to raise concerns with the scheme operator and ensure the necessary enforcement action is taken.
- (4) To consider, in any future contract, the introduction of additional measures such as "parking bays" in busy locations and further line markings to be funded by the operator, that would encourage riders to leave their hired bikes in certain areas. ~~Whilst aware there is no legal requirement and the bikes can, in theory, still be parked anywhere,~~ This would encourage and promote a discipline in riders to behave responsibly and leave these bikes in a safe place.
- (5) To ensure that when large number of e-bikes at one location or badly parked e-bikes are reported to the operator by residents, councillors or the Council, the e-bikes should be immediately collected."

The Mayor thanked Councillor Long for moving the amendment and then opened the debate for contributions from other members in relation to both the original motion and amendment.

In opening the debate, Councillor Lorber expressed support for the concerns highlighted within the motion and subsequent amendment regarding the management and current operation of the dockless e-bike scheme within Brent. Reference was made to the successful operation of other schemes across London, which demonstrated how their operation could be managed including the provision of docking stations which enabled better planning and were able to take account of the impact on the surrounding area. Councillor Lorber advised he was also keen to ensure that the concerns identified were raised with the current operator of the scheme in Brent and necessary measures taken in response to enable their continued operation of the scheme in Brent.

Also speaking in support of the motion, Councillor Hirani took the opportunity to highlight specific concerns regarding criminal activity and anti-social behaviour involving use of the bikes within her ward as well as safety concerns regarding the way in which bikes were being abandoned on pavements, creating hazards for pedestrians, including those with disabilities. In outlining the number of complaints received from local residents on these issues, Councillor Hirani advised that she would also be supporting the motion (and subsequent amendment) and called upon the Council to ensure that the operator of the current scheme was held accountable and forced to address the concerns highlighted.

As no other members had indicated they wished to speak, the Mayor then invited Councillor Mistry (as mover of the original motion) followed by Councillor Long (as mover of the amended) to exercise their right of reply.

In exercising her right of reply, Councillor Mistry welcomed the cross-party support expressed in terms of the need to address the concerns highlighted regarding the current management and operation of the dockless e-bike scheme across Brent and on this basis hoped that all members would be willing to support the motion, including the amendment moved by the Labour Group.

On the basis of the comments made and cross-party support expressed for the amendment, Councillor Long advised that she did not wish to exercise any further right of reply so the Mayor, having thanked councillors for their contributions, then moved to the vote on the motion starting with the amendment moved by the Labour Group. The amendment, as set out above, was then put to the vote and declared **CARRIED**.

The Mayor then moved on to put the substantive motion, as amended and set out below, to a vote which was declared **CARRIED**.

It was therefore **RESOLVED** to approve the following motion:

“Action to address dockless e-bike parking within Brent

Whilst we support and recognise that dockless e-bike schemes were introduced across London in an effort to reduce pollution and get more people active, and that the majority of users are using the service as they ought to, there is work to be

done by Lime+ Uber under the scheme in Brent to tackle the small number of bikes being parked in dangerous locations, as well as bikes from schemes operated in other boroughs being dumped in our parks and streets. Stronger action needs to be taken against those users who leave their e-bikes in locations causing immense danger, obstructions and annoyance to residents walking on our streets.

Lime+ Uber e-bikes are found across most wards in Brent obstructing busy streets and road crossings, with a small number of riders inconsiderately parking anywhere and blocking pavements and pedestrian crossings, impacting particularly on the disabled and parents with buggies leaving little remedy except to move them out of their path or manoeuvre around them. This has generated a large number of complaints to both the scheme operator and Council, which has been brought to the immediate attention of the operator for future term negotiations.

We understand that Brent Council are contacting the current operator to see what can be done but the Council continues to be in ongoing negotiations with the operator before a substantial operational update can be given. We also understand that Transport for London are involved in similar negotiations in Brent and across other London boroughs.

As a result of the concerns highlighted this Council therefore resolves to call on the Cabinet:

- (1) To uphold our powers to lawfully impound bikes that are abandoned on our streets and store them in a secure place until a fine is paid by the operator.
- (2) To require that any dockless bike operator in the borough should be required to electronically chip all their bikes, such as with Transport for London's official hire e-bike service.
- (3) To increase data sharing with the operator so that when reported, obstacles and hazards caused to pedestrians and the disabled by the inconsiderate parking or dumping of hired e-bikes are addressed and cleared with the Council continuing to raise concerns with the scheme operator and ensure the necessary enforcement action is taken.
- (4) To consider, in any future contract, the introduction of additional measures such as "parking bays" in busy locations and further line markings to be funded by the operator, that would encourage riders to leave their hired bikes in certain areas. This would encourage and promote a discipline in riders to behave responsibly and leave these bikes in a safe place.
- (5) To ensure that when large number of e-bikes at one location or badly parked e-bikes are reported to the operator by residents, councillors or the Council, the e-bikes should be immediately collected."

10.2 2nd Motion (Liberal Democrats Group) - Dealing with increasing rubbish on Brent streets

The Mayor then invited Councillor Georgiou to move the second motion which had been submitted by the Liberal Democrats Group. In moving the motion, Councillor Georgiou began by outlining the extent of concern being raised by local residents

regarding the cleanliness of streets across the borough, which he felt were now dirtier than ever. In highlighting Brent had been placed at the top of a list produced by the BBC for instances of reported fly-tipping across the country, he felt the recent changes to the contract with Veolia had made things worse with the new contract having reduced the need for regular cleaning of all streets across the borough and introducing an intelligence led approach to the targeting of resources, which he believed had not worked. As a result, it was felt further action needed to be taken to prioritise keeping streets clean and to enhance the enforcement and prosecution of fly tipping. Given the concerns highlighted, Councillor Georgiou advised that the motion had outlined five practical measures which it was felt would achieve these aims. These included the reintroduction of regular street cleaning in all roads and areas across the borough, scrapping the intelligence led approach towards the targeting of resources, enhancing enforcement activity, working with other London boroughs, such as Newham, in seeking to identify best practice and adapt the approach towards tackling fly tipping and finally to work more closely with relevant stakeholders to ensure they took the necessary action to keep the land they owned across the borough well maintained and free of rubbish and dumping. In summing up, Councillor Georgiou hoped all members would support the motion recognising the importance of the issue local residents.

The Mayor thanked Councillor Georgiou for moving the motion before inviting other members to speak, with the following contributions received.

Speaking in support of the motion, Councillor J.Patel opened the debate by highlighting concerns which had been expressed by residents regarding overall cleanliness and frequency of fly-tipping across a number of streets and areas within his ward. Whilst these were being dealt with when reported through the "Fix my Street" app it was felt more action was required to tackle repeat offending in these locations, including the use of CCTV to monitor, enforce and prosecute those involved. The opportunity was also taken to express support for the Community Skip initiative with a call for the dumping of litter around the children's play area in Roe Green Park to also be targeted and addressed.

Councillor Matin, also speaking in support of the motion, expressed further concern at the introduction of the intelligence led approach towards the targeting of resources under the new contract with Veolia, which she also felt was not working highlighting the increasing number of complaints being received from residents regarding the build-up of rubbish and levels of fly-tipping across her ward. As a further measure, Councillor Matin advised she would welcome the introduction of additional street bins across the borough with concerns also expressed (from a personal perspective) at the detrimental impact the build-up of rubbish (including broken glass) on streets was having on blind or partially sighted individuals and their support animals. In noting the practical nature of the measures outlined she hoped all members would support the motion, as moved.

As a further speaker in support of the motion, Councillor Mistry also outlined her concerns regarding operation of the new street cleansing contract which she felt was not working in relation to the levels of rubbish and fly-tipping across her ward. Highlighting the importance in maintaining healthy and clean spaces, concern was also expressed at the accumulation and dumping of rubbish in long grass on verges and within open spaces, with particular issues reported around the Eton Grove

outdoor gym facility which, it was felt, demonstrated the need for a review of the existing street cleansing contract arrangements.

In response to the issues raised during the debate, Councillor Muhammed Butt (who, following her apologies for absence, advised he was speaking on behalf of Councillor Krupa Sheth in her role as Cabinet Member for Environment & Enforcement) thanked members for their contributions and felt it important to start by recognising the commitment within the Borough Plan towards ensuring a Cleaner and Greener Brent. In addressing the concerns raised he felt it important to highlight how, rather than neglecting the need to keep Brent's streets clean, the new street cleansing contract had been able to deliver a more strategic, effective and cost-efficient approach by targeting and focussing the resources available in areas where they were most needed on an intelligence led basis supported by data analysis and a process of continual monitoring and inspection. In terms of the enforcement strategy, this had also been enhanced with a zero-tolerance approach being taken in relating to littering and fly tipping. This had been supported by an enforcement regime designed to ensure that investigations and prosecutions were successfully pursued with Fixed Penalty fines also having been increased to a maximum of £1,000 as an additional deterrent supported by the introduction of a new campaign "Don't mess with Brent". In summing up, given the measures and approach outlined, Councillor Muhammed Butt advised that the Labour Group would not be supporting the motion.

As the time limit for debate had been reached and there were no other members who had indicated they wished to speak the Mayor then invited Councillor Georgiou to exercise his right of reply. In summing up, Councillor Georgiou once again highlighted what he felt was a need to recognise the extent of concerns being highlighted by local residents and impact of the current approach in terms of the reduction in frequency and failure of the intelligence led approach towards street cleansing across the borough. Having outlined what were felt to be a number of practical measures to tackle the concerns highlighted he ended by urging all members to support the motion.

Having thanked members for their contributions the Mayor then moved on to put the motion, as set out below, to a vote which was declared **LOST** and not therefore approved.

"Dealing with increasing rubbish on Brent streets

This Council notes:

Brent streets are filthier than ever. It is hard to walk by any road, whether residential or close to a busy shopping area or High Road, in the borough, without coming across a fly tip or a pile of dumped rubbish. Sadly, even the BBC have noticed and place Brent at the top of their list of dirtiest boroughs in the country!

Recent changes made by the Administration to the contract with Veolia have made things even worse. Rather than prioritising the need to keep Brent clean, the new contract has in fact reduced the need for Veolia to regularly cleanse local streets and made it harder for the Council to hold them to account when the contractors are not doing a good enough job.

Residents are not happy. Over the course of the last few weeks, councillors have been out speaking with local people. The message from them is clear. It is time Brent Council got to grips and dealt with increasing rubbish on our streets.

This Council therefore believes that:

1. Keeping local streets clean and free of rubbish and illegal fly tipping must be a priority.
2. We need urgent action to address the rubbish problem and redouble our efforts to prosecute those who continue to illegally fly tip in our area.
3. The new modified contract with Veolia, which scraps regular street cleaning on all streets in the borough, both residential and close to busy shopping areas, and the introduction of the 'intelligence-led' approach, is not working.

This Council therefore calls on Cabinet to:

1. Seek a variation in the current contract with Veolia to:
 - *Reintroduce regular street cleaning on all roads and in all areas of the borough.*
 - *Scrap the 'intelligence-led' approach which is not working.*
 - *Ensure the contractor can be held to account better, when they are not fulfilling their set out obligations. Particularly in relation to the length of time it takes to clear fly tips and accumulated rubbish.*
2. Beef up enforcement, by employing more officers (apprentices) to assist Neighbourhood Managers in their activities on the ground across the borough.
3. Adapt our approach to tackling fly tipping in our borough by working with other London boroughs who have similar issues and are achieving better results.
4. Prioritise enforcement and the collection of evidence, to better guarantee successful prosecution of those who continue to illegally dump rubbish locally.
5. Request that the Mayor of London and other stakeholders, including TfL, Housing Associations, local businesses, take responsibility for land that they manage and ensure it is free of rubbish and dumping. This will ensure a joint up approach to dealing with this growing issue in our area and feed into the wider objective to keep Brent clean and tidy at all times."

10.3 3rd Motion (Labour Group) – The path we choose with a new government

The Mayor then invited Councillor Hack to move the first motion submitted on by the Labour Group. In moving the motion, Councillor Hack began by welcoming the outcome of the recent General Election and by-election result in Queens Park ward which he felt provided a much needed opportunity to start addressing the decline in public and health services, increased levels of child poverty and living standards being faced by residents as a result of the cost-of-living crisis and approach of the previous Conservative government. In seeking to reverse these declines and breath life back into public services Councillor Hack, whilst recognising the ongoing

challenges faced giving the increasing demand on services and financial pressures faced across public sector, highlighted the focus within the motion on the opportunity now available to rebuild in order to address inequality and poverty and deliver the change required by residents across Brent. As such he commended the motion to Council for approval.

The Mayor thanked Councillor Hack for moving the motion before inviting other members to speak, with the following contributions received.

Councillor Maurice in opening the debate felt it important, whilst acknowledging the result of the General Election, to also reflect on the fact that Labour's share of the vote nationally had increased by less than 2% and even less in Brent. He then moved on to highlight an amendment which the Conservative Group had submitted in relation to the original motion which he advised had been rejected by the Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer. This had sought to amend the wording of the original motion relating to the conflict in Gaza to call for the immediate release of all hostages taken by Hamas on 7 October 2023 and the brokering of a bilateral ceasefire.

At this stage in proceedings, Kim Wright (as Chief Executive) intervened to advise that as the amendment had already been rejected (following consideration by herself and Debra Norman as the Monitoring Officer) the debate should continue based solely on the wording of the original motion. Prior to moving on Councillor Georgiou, as a Point of Order, sought further details on the basis of the decision given the inclusion of reference to the conflict in Gaza within the wording of the original motion. In response, Debra Norman referred to the provisions within Standing Order 41 which enabled a motion (or amendment) to be rejected if it was not felt to relate to a matter on which the Council had responsibility or which was felt to affect the area as a whole. The reference to seeking a resolution of the conflict in Gaza within the original motion had been accepted on the basis of its link to the impact on residents in Brent and in terms of addressing increased tensions within the community whilst the focus of the amendment it was felt had been related to foreign policy issues, on which the Council had no remit. The amendment had therefore been rejected on that basis.

Whilst noting the advice provided, Councillor Maurice ended his contribution by highlighting what he felt was the inconsistency in approach given (as an example) the lack of reference to the conflict in Ukraine within the same motion given its similar impact on communities across the borough.

Moving back to the content of the original motion, Councillor Grahl continued the debate by highlighting what she felt to be the hope offered through the new Labour government and opportunity to unite the country and reform those public sector institutions failed by the previous Conservative government. In highlighting the extent of issues faced in terms of inequalities and increase in poverty, particularly in terms of the impact on children and young people, arising from the previous Conservative governments mismanagement and infighting, it was felt the new Labour government provided an opportunity to rebuild trust. As part of the approach outlined within the motion it was recognised that local government would be a key partner in seeking to address many of the challenges, which would require not only a fairer long term funding settlement but also a need to tackle the housing crisis as well as develop, recognising the wider impact on community tensions, a

foreign policy focussed on building a consensus to create a long-lasting peace in the Middle East. On this basis, Councillor Grahl advised she would be supporting the motion.

Councillor Georgiou then spoke and whilst pleased to have seen the end of the previous Conservative government felt it important to recognise that the Labour victory in the General Election had been achieved with only 34% of the vote highlighting what he regarded as the unfairness of the current electoral system and need for electoral reform, including the introduction of Proportional Representation as a means of preventing further disenfranchisement of the electorate. The opportunity was also taken to celebrate the number of Liberal Democrats MPs returned to Parliament given the important role it was felt they would play in seeking to hold the new Labour government to account on delivery of its green pledges and additional investment and reform of health services along with the social care system, including support for carers.

As a final contribution, Councillor Afzal concluded the debate by welcoming the demise of the previous Conservative government given what he regarded as their record of economic mismanagement and the impact created by the cost-of-living crisis and austerity on public services across the UK. In highlighting the increased levels of inequality and deprivation experienced during the Conservative governments time in office with, as an example, the increase and reliance on foodbanks across all parts of the county Councillor Afzal believed this had directly contributed to the rise of the Far Right with the need for deep rooted structural and institutional change required. In highlighting his support for the motion, he ended by recognising the importance in the Council seeking to work in partnership with the new Labour government to reverse the devastation caused by the Conservative government legacy, ensure necessary funding provision for essential local services and the introduction of a more progressive taxation system (including the establishment of a windfall and wealth tax) in order to continue the support of a welfare system for those most in need.

As the time limit for debate had been reached the Mayor then invited Councillor Hack to exercise his right of reply. In summing up Councillor Hack advised that he was pleased to have been able to move the motion and urged all members to consider their social conscience in terms of supporting Brent's participation in contributing towards a bold new vision for government.

Having thanked members for their contributions, the Mayor then moved on to put the motion, as set out below, to a vote, which was declared **CARRIED**.

It was therefore **RESOLVED** to approve the following motion:

“The path we choose with a new government

This Council notes:

There has never been a more difficult time for local government. Rising demand, increasing costs and reductions in funding have left councils with impossible choices, between cutting one essential service and another.

Wages, living conditions, and opportunities have stalled and entered serious decline for over a decade now. 1 in 3 children are now living in destitution.

The challenges any new government will face will take a long time to put right. From the collapse of Thames Water, flat-lining public sector pay, a crisis in prisons and both universities and local government in financial crisis. Councils now face an overall deficit of £4bn over the next two years, and more councils issued bankruptcy notices last year than in the previous 30 years.

We have always argued the only limit to our ambition is the golden thread of funding. With the right resources, we stand ready to help rebuild alongside a new government after fourteen lost years; and truly bring about the change Brent deserves.

This Council further notes:

Now is the time for a brighter future for Brent and for the country. Local government is the key to solving some of our national challenges, rooted in a democratic mandate in the heart of our communities; delivering tailored services for our residents. But this task requires a strong partnership with a bold new government, and a mutual understanding of the shared obstacles we face.

We call on the new government to:

1. Set out a fair, multi-year funding settlement for councils, reforming Council Tax once and for all.
2. Extend the Household Support Fund for at least another 12-months or introduce a new scheme.
3. Fix the housing and homelessness crisis, supporting shovel-ready schemes and new developments.
4. Invest in fixing public infrastructure like schools, the NHS, police and councils.
5. Transform life chances by reversing the decline in living standards and rising poverty across the country.
6. Make Britain a clean energy superpower to cut bills and deliver security with cheaper, zero-carbon electricity.
7. Push for an urgent ceasefire and resolution to the conflict in Gaza, particularly in recognition of those Brent residents with family and friends trapped in Gaza and who continue to be impacted by increased tensions in the community.
8. Put prevention and the health of the nation at the heart of all future plans.
9. Unlock funding for the Mayor of London to fulfil transport commitments such as the Bakerloo upgrade and extension, the West London Orbital, and the electrification of the Chiltern Railway Line.

This Council resolves:

- (1) To work with the new government on their missions to improve the country and to deliver for Brent.
- (2) To continue using the limited resources we have in the best way possible to protect life-saving services and those affected by the cost-of-living crisis.
- (3) To continue working in partnership with organisations such as the LGA, London Councils and our new MPs on lobbying opportunities to strengthen Brent's voice on the national stage."

10.4 4th Motion (Labour Group) – Brent - A Borough of Sanctuary

The Mayor then invited Councillor Benea to move the second and final motion submitted by the Labour Group. In moving the motion Councillor Benea, began by highlighting her support for the commitment involved in seeking to continue working to provide a welcoming environment and support as a Borough of Sanctuary. This involved not only providing access to essential services but also a process in fostering cultural understanding and celebrating the strength of diversity across the borough, recognising that everyone had the fundamental right to pursue a life of dignity, health and happiness regardless of their background or immigration status. The motion had also been designed to recognise the importance and collaborative effort of schools, businesses, faith-based organisations and residents in seeking to stand against what Councillor Benea felt had had become the increasing hateful rhetoric in political discourse supported by policies that had sought to exclude and discriminate against migrants, immigrants and refugees which had no place in Brent. In concluding Councillor Benea also took the opportunity to recognise and commend the work undertaken by Brent Multi-Faith Forum, who had endorsed the City of Sanctuary Charter along with other community groups across the borough for the work undertaken to support those who have been displaced and were seeking sanctuary, with all members urged to support the motion on this basis.

The Mayor thanked Councillor Benea for moving the motion before inviting other members to speak, with the following contributions received.

Councillor Kansagra in opening the contributions, felt it important to recognise and acknowledge Brent's longstanding role as a Borough of Sanctuary, which had included many families displaced from Uganda and seeking refuge in the 1970's. Whilst outlining his broad support for the motion, Councillor Kansagra rejected the specific criticism of the previous Conservative governments Rwanda scheme which he felt had represented a legitimate attempt to address increasing levels of illegal immigration and highlighted a need for the new Labour government to be clear on how they planned to deliver the necessary controls. Whilst not able to support the preamble in the motion he advised that the Conservative Group were supportive of the outcomes being sought in seeking to recognise Brent's longstanding role as a Borough of Sanctuary.

Councillor Lorber then spoke taking the opportunity to outline his personal experience as a refuge and the Liberal Democrats support for the motion. Highlighting a need for urgent action to be taken by the new Labour government in addressing the issues with the current operation of what he felt to be a broken asylum and immigration system, he also sought to challenge use of the term 'illegal'

when referring to those seeking asylum and hoped that any changes introduced were designed to produce a more sympathetic, fairer and effective system that would resolve unnecessary bureaucracy and confusion and create a system that people would accept.

In view of the remaining time available within the block allocated for consideration of motions, the Mayor advised that it would not be possible take any further contributions and with Councillor Benea advising that she did not wish to exercise her right of reply he moved straight on to the vote.

Having thanked all members for their contributions, the Mayor put the motion to a vote which was declared **CARRIED**.

It was therefore **RESOLVED** to approve the following motion:

“Brent - A Borough of Sanctuary

This Council notes:

- That Brent is proud of its diversity, and its history of welcoming refugees and displaced people from around the world fleeing conflict, climate change, discrimination, and violence.
- That, as a Council, we will stand up for those travelling to this country to make a better life for themselves, and champion the contribution of refugees to our Borough.
- That this Council and our communities have worked hard to provide homes and support to refugees – including rehousing **14** Syrian refugee families in London since 2016, **23** Afghan families arriving since 2021 and now supporting **571** Ukrainian individuals through Homes for Ukraine.
- That this Council is committed to supporting refugees, from ESOL classes in our libraries to direct support in our hubs.
- That this Council has consistently condemned the Rwanda resettlement scheme as an economically illiterate and morally reprehensible failure in statecraft; with our borders no more secure, while also simultaneously failing in our international obligations to refugees.
- Failings by the Home Office have a direct impact on both the council and the people of Brent. This includes a record backlog of cases awaiting a decision, a de facto ban on working, and increased homelessness in the borough.
- This Council’s previous support of Refugee Action’s ‘Lift the Ban’ campaign, allowing refugees to work while awaiting an asylum decision.

This Council welcomes:

- The work of our residents and community partners to provide services, support, care and advice to refugees and displaced people arriving in our

Borough. Brent Council could not provide an effective welcome and support offer to refugees without the active support and participation of countless community organisations.

- The growing movement of Boroughs across London and the country becoming Boroughs of Sanctuary, as a rebuke to anti-refugee rhetoric.

This Council celebrates:

- Our refugees' contributions to making Brent the dynamic and diverse place that we call home.
- The resolve of the Council's elected members to provide a welcoming civic community and home for refugees in Brent.
- The previous work undertaken by the Brent Multi-Faith Forum, who have endorsed the City of Sanctuary Charter and who work tirelessly with organisations throughout the borough to support those who have been displaced.

This Council resolves to:

- (1) Build on our existing commitment and work with partners to provide real sanctuary and support to refugees in Brent.
- (2) Join the network of cities and towns which promote the inclusion and welfare of people who are fleeing violence and persecution and become a recognised Borough of Sanctuary.
- (3) Work with key partners, commissioned services, and our voluntary sector to achieve Borough of Sanctuary accreditation, celebrating the contribution of those seeking sanctuary.
- (4) Stand ready to provide any support needed and open our arms to innocent people displaced because of the conflict in Gaza.
- (5) To write to the Secretary of State, to encourage the UK to join other nations and bring children injured in Gaza, Sudan and other conflicts around the world to sanctuary in the UK, in order to receive urgent and lifesaving medical treatment."

11. Reports from the Leader and Cabinet

The Mayor then invited Councillor Muhammed Butt, as Leader of the Council, to introduce the report updating members on the work being undertaken across each Cabinet portfolio in order to provide ongoing support and services to meet the needs of residents across the borough.

Following on from approval of the motion outlining the Council's commitment to work with the new government, the opportunity was taken to remind members of the work already being undertaken in this respect and to deliver for Brent. This

included lobbying for a fairer funding formula and financial settlement for local government, the development of further employment and skills opportunities, the measures being taken to enhance community safety and tackle anti-social behaviour, the ongoing support being provided for schools and young people and (working in partnership with local providers) the delivery of health services and adult and children social care; the provision of financial support for those residents most in need through the Resident Support Fund, work to address the climate emergency and manage the public realm along with the Council's heritage assets whilst also seeking to deliver an extensive programme of regeneration and growth across the borough, including the provision of affordable and social housing. As such he felt the Council, in line with its core strategic priorities was well placed to continue working to take advantage of any opportunities identified to strengthen Brent's voice on the national stage.

As part of the update, members were also asked to note that no Executive decisions had been taken under the Council's urgency procedures, since the previous update provided for the Council meeting in July.

The Mayor thanked the Leader for the report and it was **RESOLVED** to formally note the update provided.

12. **Questions from the Opposition and other Non-Cabinet Members**

Before moving on to consider the questions submitted by non-Cabinet members, the Mayor reminded Members that a total of 30 minutes had been set aside for this item, which would begin with consideration of the written questions submitted in advance of the meeting along with any supplementary questions. Once these had been dealt with, the remaining time available would then be opened up for any other non-Cabinet members to question Cabinet Members (without the need for advance notice) on matters relating to their portfolio.

The Mayor advised that five written questions had been submitted in advance of the meeting for response by the relevant Cabinet Member and the written responses circulated within the agenda were noted. The Mayor then invited supplementary questions on the responses provided:

11.1 Councillor Kelcher thanked Councillor Nerva as the Cabinet Member for Community Health & Wellbeing, for the written response to his question about the measures being taken to support Brent in becoming an age friendly borough. In welcoming the detailed nature of the response and progress being made in seeking to secure age friendly status alongside work being led by Dr Tony Burch to help shape the approach further details were sought on the progress of the Planning Group in developing the approach and any experience gained from other boroughs.

In response, Councillor Nerva, in welcoming the interest shown advised that he had invited the Planning Group to present to the Health and Wellbeing Board in the Autumn to help engage other public sector partners in seeking the development of a joined-up approach to ensure Brent (along with key stakeholder and partners) continued to play an active role in developing its own response towards ensure age friendly status for the borough.

- 11.2 Councillor Begum thanked Councillor Muhammed Butt, as Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing, for the written response to her question on the work underway to address the increase in homelessness and work being undertaken through the “Built for Zero” programme and as a supplementary question sought further details on the steps being taken during the 2024-25 financial year to support vulnerable households at risk of homelessness and rough sleepers.

In response, Councillor Muhammed Butt, having highlighted the ongoing pressures in relation to the increase in homelessness advised that in addition to the programme of work and overall strategy already established to address the challenges identified the Council were also set to launch a new communications campaign which aimed to raise awareness of the deepening homelessness emergency in Brent and the practical realities and life changing consequences this had for homeless households. The *Find a place you can afford* campaign would also seek to break the perceived link between homelessness and social housing. In addition, support continued to be provided to those residents seeking alternative accommodation within the private rented sector through a Deposit Guarantee Scheme, with the Council also continuing to work closely with organisations such as St Mungo’s and Advice for Renters in relation to the provision of support, advice and guidance for those households living within temporary accommodation or at risk of homelessness. In order to support the work being undertaken a count of rough sleepers across the borough was also in the process of being undertaken with the Council also seeking to work with a broad range of stakeholders across Brent to ensure that the homeless crisis was more fully understood. As a final issue, Councillor Muhammed Butt also highlighted the importance of work continuing on a regional basis and with the new Labour government to ensure a coordinated and more holistic approach was adopted towards the way in which homelessness pressures were being addressed, including the support available for refugees and asylum seekers.

- 11.3 Having thanked Councillor Krupa Sheth, as Cabinet Member for Environment and Enforcement, for the response provided on her question seeking details on the measures being taken to tackle fly tipping and enforce and educate around the dumping of rubbish Councillor Kabir, as a supplementary question, sought confirmation on the planned continuation of the Community Skip initiative.

In response, Councillor Muhammed Butt (who, following her apologies for absence, advised he was speaking on behalf of Councillor Krupa Sheth in her role as Cabinet Member for Environment & Enforcement) thanked Councillor Kabir for her question and in recognising the positive impact of the measures outlined within the written response assured members of the plans to continue the Community Skips programme as a much valued initiative by residents. This would, he highlighted, also include a focus on the recycling and reuse of items disposed of through the skips. The additional focus on enforcement activity and increase in fines for fly-tipping outlined within the written response would also, he pointed out, be supported by the launch of a new campaign “Don’t Mess with Brent” which would include enhanced targeted communications to residents and businesses educating them on

their responsibilities in relation to waste management and seeking their support in the identification of persistent fly-tipping offenders.

- 11.4 Whilst noting the written response provided by Councillor Muhammed Butt, Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing, to his question regarding the rationale for Wembley Park ward not having been included within the Private Sector Landlord Licensing Scheme Councillor Maurice, as supplementary question, sought further details on the data supporting the decision with, he felt, that ward experiencing many of the same issues as other surrounding areas included within the scheme.

In response, Councillor Muhammed Butt highlighted what he felt to have been the comprehensive nature of the written response setting out the basis on which the Private Rented Sector Selective Landlord Licensing Scheme had been implemented. He confirmed this had included extensive research looking at the Private Rented Sector (PRS) and factors that could be taken into account when selecting the areas for its introduction which had included as key factors housing conditions and significant and persistent problem caused by anti-social behaviour. Highlighting the availability of supporting data within the Fix My Street App, Councillor Muhammed Butt advised the supporting data had identified no grounds supporting the introduction of selective licensing within the Wembley Park ward which had therefore been excluded from the designation. He advised that he would, however, be willing to provide further details on the supporting data should Councillor Maurice identify the specific details required with members also advised of the benefits of the Landlord Licensing Scheme in terms of improving living standards and safeguards for residents within the Private Rented Sector.

- 11.5 Councillor Georgiou in noting the written response from the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning & Growth to the question submitted regarding the impact of any increase in large scale events permitted to be hosted at Wembley Stadium highlighted the importance of the issue for local residents with the response being clear that no further consultation or detailed impact assessment was due to be undertaken by the Council prior to the planning application being considered seeking approval to the change. In outlining what he felt was the need for consideration of the application to be informed by a detailed consultation process with local residents and assessment of the wider impact any increase in the number of event days would have, further details were sought as supplementary question, on why (given the pre application meeting between the applicant, Leader and Chief Executive and favourable outcome reported as a result) it would not be possible for the applicant to also meet with local residents who would be directly impacted by any increase in events hosted at the Stadium.

In response, Councillor Muhammed Butt (who following her apologies for absence, advised he was speaking on behalf of Councillor Tatler in her role as Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning & Growth) whilst highlighting the successful way a majority of large-scale events hosted by the Stadium were delivered also recognised the impact on local residents. As a result, he highlighted the efforts being made to ensure that the planning application submitted by the Stadium seeking approval to increase the permitted number of events contained the necessary supporting mitigations and struck a

healthy balance in terms of seeking to minimise the impact and disruption for the local community and wider benefits for the borough. The issues and concerns identified in relation to transport provision, such as capacity issues highlighted by Chiltern Railway, were also acknowledged with the Council committed to continue working in partnership with the Stadium and other partners to ensure that these were addressed and efforts to engage with local residents were continued moving forward.

Having thanked members for their written questions and Cabinet Members for the responses provided to the supplementary questions, the Mayor then advised that the remainder of time available would be used for an open question time session to the Cabinet. Questions relating to the following issues were raised and responses provided, as set out below:

- (i) Councillor Chan regarding efforts being made to address the harm associated with the increase in Adult Gaming Centres within the borough and specifically across Harlesden and Kensal Green, given the detrimental impact on local residents and benefits being created by wider investment and regeneration in the town centres and the high streets affected.

In response Councillor Nerva, as Cabinet Member for Community Health & Wellbeing, recognised the concerns raised given the social, economic, and public health impacts of gambling but highlighted that the Council did not currently have the powers required to prevent these type of premises from seeking to operate across the borough. Work was ongoing in seeking to lobby the new Labour government on the need for reform of the current Gambling Act including the introduction of a public health approach with Councillor Nerva advising that he would be willing to work with local councillors on the issue and visit any sites of ongoing concern.

- (ii) Councillor Jayanti Patel regarding the increase in developments that included basement design works without seeking the necessary planning and building regulation permissions with specific reference made, as an example to sites in Barnhill ward and a request for enforcement action to be taken.

In response Councillor Muhammed Butt (responding on behalf of Councillor Krupa Sheth as Cabinet Member for Environment & Enforcement) advised that if details were provided he would ensure the issues raised were investigated.

- (iii) Councillor Choudry who, in commending the more collaborative approach and work already undertaken by the new Labour government in relation to proposals for planning and infrastructure, energy and transport reform, was keen to explore how the Council would be seeking to engage and work with the new government to ensure Brent was also able to engage and take advantage of the opportunities identified.

In response, Councillor Mili Patel, as Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources also commended the progress being made by the new government to deliver economic stability and growth, particularly through planning and infrastructure reform, which she felt was in direct contrast to the

approach taken by the previous Conservative government. An assurance was provided that the new proposals and reforms being introduced would be carefully studied to identify any opportunities available to support the continued delivery of housing and infrastructure across the borough, with the Council also keen to work with the new Energy Secretary to explore ways in which energy bills could be reduced through investment in greener technology. The new governments more collaborative approach with the regions and regional Mayors was also welcomed, especially in relation to proposals seeking wider devolution of powers relation to employment skills and training.

- (iv) Councillor Mistry regarding concerns and issues being raised by businesses around Queensbury Station Parade in relation to a rough sleeper currently using the roundabout. Whilst St Mungo's and the Neighbourhood Manager were aware of the situation it was felt action was required to ensure the individual was provided with the necessary support and the impact on neighbouring businesses was addressed.

In response, Councillor Farah, as the Cabinet Member for Public Safety and Partnerships, advised of the need to recognise the person involved as an individual for whom he would ensure the necessary engagement and support was offered.

- (v) Councillor Lorber regarding concerns about the planning and coordination of recent road works being undertaken at the same time along Harrow Road and East Lane which had gridlocked areas across the borough, including parts of Northwick Park, Preston and Sudbury wards and caused wider transport delays. As a result, the relevant Lead Member was asked to ensure that when future requests were made by utility companies for these types of works ward members were consulted in advance so they were aware and could highlight any potential issues in an attempt to minimise disruption and the impact on local residents and the surrounding areas.

In response Councillor Muhammed Butt (responding on behalf of Councillor Krupa Sheth as Cabinet Member for Environment and Enforcement) advised that he recognised the concerns raised, which had also been highlighted by a number of other ward councillors facing the same issues along Harrow Road. Confirming it was current practice to inform ward councillors of these types of road works, where planned in advance, some had involved the need for emergency works for which more limited notice was available. Work would, however, continue to ensure that as far as possible future works were coordinated with advance notice continuing to be provided via the Council's website and via social media recognising the current level of infrastructure upgrade works being undertaken by utility companies across the borough.

- (vi) Councillor Miller regarding the difficulties he was experiencing in being able to support a family who had been placed in unsuitable temporary accommodation within his ward (with issues relating to mould, poor ventilation and lack of space) by another local authority.

In response Councillor Muhammed Butt, as Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Housing, felt this highlighted the ongoing challenges

being experienced by local authorities across London as a result of the current housing crisis and limited supply of temporary accommodation available. In issues, such as the case highlighted involving safety concerns, he advised that these should be raised with the Council's Private Sector Housing team so they could investigate and, if necessary, take the necessary enforcement action. As a further measure, he also highlighted the introduction of the Private Sector Landlord Licensing Scheme as a means of safeguarding tenants and ensuring landlords were aware and maintained necessary standards in terms of the quality and safety of their accommodation through which enforcement action could also be taken, as required.

- (vii) Councillor Georgiou in also recognising the scale of the current housing crisis and need to increase the supply of affordable and social housing units sought details on the reasons for the 523 properties currently identified as vacant across Brent and measures being taken to bring them back into use.

In response Councillor Muhammed Butt, as Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Housing, felt it important to recognise that the total number of vacant properties referred to had included the decanted units within the South Kilburn development that had been scheduled for demolition which, he pointed out, had been clarified within the response to a recent Freedom of Information Request. Recognising the different reasons why properties may be vacant (including issues such as probate) he advised members the Council had introduced various schemes designed to incentivise landlords to bring vacant properties back into use. This had included an increase in the Council Tax charge on empty properties, with the need to take all available measures to increase the supply of housing recognised, given the 33,000 people currently on the housing waiting list.

At this stage in the proceedings, the Mayor advised that the time available for the open question session had expired. The Mayor therefore thanked all members for their contributions and advised that the meeting would now move on to the next item.

13. Report from Chairs of Scrutiny Committees

Before being presented with the updates from each Scrutiny Committee, the Mayor reminded members the time set aside for this item was 12 minutes, with each Chair having up to three minutes in which to highlight any significant issues arising from the work of their Committees. Once these updates had been provided, the remaining time available would then be opened up for any other non-Cabinet members to question (without the need for advance notice) the Scrutiny Committee Chairs on matters relating to the work of their Committee.

Councillor Ketan Sheth was then invited to introduce the update report on the work being undertaken by the Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee, with the following issues highlighted:

- The Chair took the opportunity to thank those members who had stepped down at the end of the previous Municipal Year for the support provided during their time on the Committee and also to welcome those members who had subsequently joined the Committee.

- The work being undertaken to finalise the Committee’s work programme for 2024-25 which, recognising its flexible and broad ranging nature, had already included engagement with Brent Youth Parliament to ensure the views of young people across the borough were included and planned engagement with a range of other key stakeholders including local health providers, housing, social care and the local community.
- The significant work already undertaken by the Committee, since the start of the 2024-25 Municipal Year which had included a focus on the Annual School Standards and Achievement report, implementation of the Brent Carer’s Strategy and update on the Brent Reablement Service with options also being considered to provide a more localised focus for future scrutiny meetings and review activity.

The Mayor thanked Councillor Ketan Sheth for his update and then invited Councillor Conneely as chair of the Resources & Public Realm Scrutiny Committee to introduce the update report on the work being undertaken by that Committee. The following issues were highlight as part of the update:

- The work also being undertaken to finalise the Committee’s work programme for 2024-25 which, again recognising its dynamic and broad ranging nature, the Chair was keen to ensure included engagement with relevant stakeholders and also input from the local community.
- The wide-ranging nature of scrutiny activity undertaken by the Committee since the last update, with key issues highlighted as an outcome of this work including:
 - the need identified to address and provide a consistent methodology across London for assessing viability in relation to the delivery of affordable housing alongside stricter building standards and quality measures and more stringent targets for the delivery of affordable social housing;
 - the work being undertaken to develop a ‘Public Health’ approach towards delivery of the Safer Brent Community Safety Strategy, involving work with key partners to act earlier, identify wider support needs and improve interventions to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour, with a particular focus on knife crime aligned with regional and national strategies.
- The ongoing focus and work of the Committee in seeking to encourage, where identified as required, change and improvements in the way services were being delivered for local communities across the borough involving all relevant stakeholders.

The Mayor thanked Councillors Ketan Sheth and Conneely for presenting their updates and it was **RESOLVED** that the contents of both reports be noted.

Following the updates provided, the Mayor advised that the remainder of time available would be open for questions from non-cabinet members to the Scrutiny Chairs. As no questions were raised, the Mayor thanked the Scrutiny Chair’s for their contribution and moved to the next item.

14. **Annual Report from the Chairs of the Audit & Standards Advisory and Audit & Standards Committees**

The Mayor invited Councillor Chan, as Vice-Chair of the Audit & Standards Advisory Committee and Chair of the Audit and Standards Committee to introduce the joint annual report from both Committees, updating members on the work undertaken during the 2023-24 Municipal Year.

Prior to introducing the report Councillor Chan welcomed David Ewart to the meeting in his role as Independent Chair of the Audit & Standards Advisory Committee and in terms of issues highlighted drew members' attention to the important role and work undertaken by the Committee in relation to monitoring and advising on various governance matters relating to audit activity, the Council's finance, accounting and regulatory framework as well as members standards of conduct.

Members were advised that the approach adopted towards the work undertaken had also included consideration of the Council's risk management structure and strategic risk management process with an increasing focus not only on the effectiveness of governance processes relating to the first but also "second line" of defence in terms of the monitoring and reporting of information and data. Other key areas of focus highlighted in terms of risk had included the challenges linked to the ongoing uncertain economic climate in which the Council was having to operate, including the current rate of inflation and high interest rates, along with the Council's financial forecast position and medium-term financial outlook given the current £13m overspend forecast and unprecedented nature of demand driving these pressures in relation to the rise in homelessness, cost of temporary accommodation and reduction in the supply of suitable alternative accommodation. In recognising these were pressures being experienced on a national and regional basis, and not unique to Brent, the Councillor Chan advised the actions being taken in seeking to address and mitigate against the risks identified would continue to be monitored as part of the efforts being made to maintain a financially resilient, balanced and sustainable budget position.

In concluding, Councillor Chan thanked David Ewart and the other members of the Committee along with officers for their support over the year and advised that both Committees were looking forward to continuing their work with members and other key stakeholders to ensure the necessary focus was maintained in relation to compliance and control of the Council's key governance arrangements.

The Mayor thanked Councillor Chan for the update provided and it was **RESOLVED** to note the Joint Annual Report provided by the Chairs' of the Audit & Standards and Audit & Standards Advisory Committees outlining the work undertaken by both Committee's during 2023-24.

15. **Non Cabinet Members' Debate**

In accordance with Standing Order 34, the Mayor advised that the next item on the agenda was the non-cabinet member debate, with the subject chosen for consideration being the Declaration of a Housing Emergency.

Members were advised that the motion submitted as the basis for the debate had been circulated with the agenda and that the time available for the debate was 25 minutes.

The Mayor then invited Councillor Dixon to introduce the motion which had been submitted as the basis for the Non-Cabinet Member debate. In moving the motion, Councillor Dixon began by recognising the ongoing pressures being experienced by the Council given the 150 families currently presenting as homeless each week and number of households needing to be supported in temporary accommodation by Councils across London and the country as a whole. In highlighting the way in which her casework was currently dominated in seeking to advocate and provide support for residents in housing need, Councillor Dixon took the opportunity to provide some specific examples of the impact on individuals and families relating to their health and wellbeing, attainment and employment. In welcoming the pledges made by the new Labour government the motion, in seeking to support the declaration of a housing emergency and delivery of the necessary interventions following what was felt to be the failure of the previous Conservative government in this respect, had been designed to highlight the Council's support for the changes proposed in relation to the National Policy Planning Framework (including restoring mandatory housing targets) and work to reform Local Plans and strengthen the planning presumption in favour of sustainable development alongside tackling Section 21 no fault evictions. As a result, Councillor Dixon hoped all members would support the motion submitted as the basis for the debate.

The Mayor thanked Councillor Dixon for introducing the motion on behalf of the Labour Group and then opened the debate for contributions from other members.

In opening the contributions, Councillor Kelcher began by paying tribute to Councillor Dixon for the way in which she had introduced the debate and recognised that the approach required to address the housing emergency in terms of encouraging affordable and social housing development would not always be easy and would require strong leadership as, he felt, had been demonstrated in Brent. The support already identified by the new government had also been recognised and welcomed in terms of the reintroduction of mandatory housing targets, consultation on a new growth-focused planning system, creation of a new task force to accelerate the delivery of new housing sites and programme of funding to increase capacity across planning departments as well as proposals to open up grey belt sites for new housing. Taken together he felt the benefits arising from the proposed reforms in relation to planning and infrastructure planning reform would help to stabilise and grow the economy delivering wider social benefits. Support was also expressed for the approach adopted by the new government and intervention by the Deputy Prime Minister in relation to the delivery of major infrastructure projects, including new data centres in Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire and for more of these type of decisions to be brought under the remit of the critical infrastructure process in order to ensure they were delivered at pace and encouraged further investment. As part of the new government's approach, the lifting of restrictions on the development of in shore wind facilities within the UK was also supported and whilst recognising that some of the decisions needing to be made would attract opposition he hoped members, in support of the motion, would recognise the need for action to deliver the necessary changes in seeking to address the challenges outlined.

As a further contribution to the debate, Councillor Maurice highlighted what he felt was a need to address the lack of family sized dwellings being delivered within housing schemes being approved across the borough and also the failure of many schemes being able (based on current viability) to meet the required target for

provision of affordable housing units, which he felt also needed to be considered as an approach towards alleviating the current housing crisis. Concern was also expressed at the proposal within the motion seeking to suspend the right-to-buy discount, which Councillor Maurice advised he did not support given what he felt were the wider benefits in seeking to encourage home ownership including, as an example, the way in which properties were maintained. In outlining further concerns relating to the motion, it was also felt further clarification was required in relation to the proposal focused on the provision of financial support to purchase more homes from private landlords and how that would be delivered.

As a further contribution in support of the motion, Councillor Molloy also highlighted the frustration being faced by ward councillors in seeking to support families in housing need, including those where the only solution involved an out of borough placement moving them away from their extended families and other support networks. Reflecting on the scale of the crisis (including the associated financial pressures) he hoped all councillors would support the motion in seeking to recognise and declare a housing emergency and endorse the actions and approach being sought in response.

Following on, Councillor Mahmood also spoke to highlight the extent of issues being raised at his ward surgeries, in relation to housing need and suitability of available accommodation. The current level of households presenting to the Council as homeless was also felt to represent an indictment of the previous Conservative government's housing policy with Councillor Mahmood outlining his hope that the policies being developed by the new Labour government would be able to assist and support local authorities in tackling the crisis including the ability and support to prioritise the delivery of more affordable housing.

Councillor Ethapemi, also speaking in support of the motion, was keen to support the pledge made by the new Labour government to get Britain building again and actions being introduced to support this including the restoration of mandatory housing targets, especially within the context of the financial pressures being faced by local authorities in relation to the cost of temporary accommodation. As part of the approach outlined, he was keen to ensure the housing being built was genuinely affordable with a focus on increasing the supply of good quality temporary as well as permanent accommodation and on this basis hoped all members would support the motion recognising the pledges made by the government as a means of seeking to tackle the housing crisis.

In highlighting his support for the principle and sentiments expressed within the motion, Councillor Georgiou also felt there was a need to reflect on the ongoing number of households who continued to present to the Council as homeless each week and challenging and often very difficult nature of housing need related casework being received by all councillors. Whilst supporting the need for action to address the crisis, he felt the motion had failed to focus on an important issue in relation to the need to increase the supply of genuinely affordable and also social housing in order to assist in reducing the Council's growing housing waiting list, with some residents facing a wait of 10-15 years for a suitable property. In highlighting specific examples, reference was made to the limited level of social housing being provided within the development of the Council owned site at Cecil Avenue and also at the delay in delivery of the Morland Gardens scheme, given the planned inclusion of social housing on that site. Concern was also expressed at the number

of development schemes being approved which contained less than the required level of genuinely affordable and very little or no social housing with a need identified, he felt, for more ambition in seeking to press developers to meet the 50% target for provision of affordable housing within any schemes being approved.

As a final contribution, Councillor Fraser spoke briefly to outline her concerns at the comments made by Councillor Maurice earlier in the debate relating to the interest of Council tenants as opposed to home owners in maintaining their properties believing that respect needed to be given to all residents irrespective of their housing tenure.

As there were no further contributions, the Mayor then invited Councillor Muhammed Butt, as Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing, to summarise and close the debate.

In drawing the debate to a close, Councillor Muhammed Butt thanked Councillor Dixon and members for their support in recognising the ongoing challenges and pressures faced by the Council in relation to the housing crisis along with the impact on those residents and households directly affected. As a Council, Councillor Muhammed Butt felt it important to recognise the efforts being made to deliver as much social and affordable housing as possible within the borough, with the Council having received one of the highest levels of New Homes Bonus (£7.8m) in the country. Comparing this to the lack of action and support provided by the previous Conservative government he assured members of the Council's commitment to work alongside the new Labour government in support of their plans to build 1.5million new homes and in continuing to demonstrate Brent's ambitious approach in terms of the ongoing delivery of affordable and social housing within developments across the borough. In addition, he also highlighted the advice, guidance and support being provided to residents which he pointed out would also need to include a focus on use of the private rented sector (supported within the borough through the landlord licensing scheme) as a means of maximising the supply of available and suitable properties to address current levels of housing need. Taken together it was felt the approach outlined within the motion would best serve the borough in terms of addressing the current housing emergency which he hoped all members would support, as a final outcome of the debate.

Having thanked members for their contributions, the Mayor then moved to the vote on the motion moved as the basis for the Non-Cabinet Member debate which was declared **CARRIED**.

It was therefore **RESOLVED** to approve the following motion as the outcome of the non-cabinet member debate:

“Declaration of a Housing Emergency

This Council notes:

- London is the epicentre of the country's housing crisis, with a quarter of Londoners living in poverty after paying for their homes.

- In one of the wealthiest cities in the world, more than one child in every classroom is homeless and living in temporary accommodation, while rough sleeping is up 50% over this decade.
- Councils in London are spending £90m per month on temporary accommodation for homeless people - up almost 40% on last year.
- The dream of homeownership is out of reach for young people. The government have failed to act despite the housing crisis acting as one of the country's biggest barriers to growth.
- The government has spent billions of pounds on housing benefit every year, which goes into the pockets of private landlords without creating any new assets.
- Without intervention, the number of new affordable homes built will fall sharply in coming years thanks to high interest rates and runaway construction cost inflation.

This Council further notes:

- The Housing Needs Service in Brent has seen a 12% increase in homelessness approaches in 2023/-24 (7,300) compared to 2022/-23 (6,529). The total number of homeless families living in B&B and Annexe accommodation has risen to 485.
- Many Councils are being forced to book rooms in commercial hotels to meet statutory duties. In Brent this has driven a £13.4m overspend. These issues are not unique to Brent and have impacted the whole of the country – but especially London.
- There are 5,688 households in A-C banding on the waiting list. At Band C, the average waiting time for a 2-bed home is 8 years, with a 4-bed home rising to 24 years.
- GLA grant funding per unit of affordable housing is approx. £195k, with typical build costs per average unit in the region of £450k. Brent Council has planning permission ready or has submitted applications for 423 more affordable units, but many face a significant funding gap, and will not be viable without an increase in available subsidy.

This Council welcomes:

Pledges made during the current election campaign:

- To update the National Policy Planning Framework, including restoring mandatory housing targets.
- To get Britain building again, creating jobs across England with 1.5 million new homes over the next parliament.

- To work with local authorities to reform Local Plans and strengthen the planning presumption in favour of sustainable development, supported by additional planning officers.

This Council resolves to:

- (1) Work with other local authorities in London that have declared a housing emergency to calling on the incoming government to unlock the funding needed to deliver the affordable homes Brent desperately needs.
- (2) Write to the Secretary of State to recommend the following steps:
 - The suspension of the right-to-buy discount.
 - A new Housing Revenue Account funding settlement to increase the supply of housing, improve standards and support retrofitting.
 - Financial support to immediately purchase more homes from private landlords.
 - To review the Local Housing Allowance available for Temporary Accommodation.”

16. Maternity and Paternity Arrangements for Councillors - Allowances, Leave and s85 Local Government Act 1972

The Mayor invited Councillor Mili Patel, as Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources, to introduce a report from the Corporate Director Law & Governance outlining changes in the maternity/paternity policy within the Members Allowances Scheme and also, as part of the changes for which approval was being sought) to absence on the ground of approved maternity leave being agreed as a reason for non-attendance by a member under the requirements within s.85 of the Local Government Act 1972.

In introducing the report, members were advised that the proposals outlined for consideration had been based on a review of current provisions in the Members Allowances Scheme which had included feedback from Members who had undertaken maternity or paternity leave, as well as benchmarking across other London boroughs. In highlighting the importance of parental leave in terms of the support available for members and in ensuring the role of local councillor was able to continue retaining and attracting as diverse a range of individuals as possible, it was hoped all councillors would support the proposals outlined.

The Mayor thanked Councillor Mili Patel for introducing the report and then opened the debate for contributions from other members.

In supporting the proposals outlined, Councillor Miller took the opportunity to highlight (based on his personal experience) the importance, value and benefits provided through the parental leave provisions in relation to the family unit as a whole. These comments were echoed by Councillor Afzal (also speaking from a personal experience as a new parent) who hoped all members would support the proposals outlined.

Councillor Mitchell (highlighting the benefits provided from her personal experience) also spoke to outline her support for the parental leave provisions given their importance as a means of ensuring inclusivity and also the wider benefits in relation to care provision, which she was keen to ensure included a wider and more holistic approach.

As a final contribution, Councillor Kelcher (again highlighting his personal experience) also felt it important to reflect on the importance in ensuring the provision of parental leave remained as accessible and wide as possible in terms of supporting councillors in being able to maintain and fulfil their roles. He was therefore keen to ensure that the provisions remained subject to ongoing review with it made clear, when members were on parental leave, of the reason for them being unable to engage in their role as councillor during that period.

As no other members indicated they wished to speak the Mayor thanked members for their contribution and invited Councillor Mili Patel to exercise her right of reply. In closing the debate, Councillor Mili Patel thanked members for their support and advised of the intention to ensure that the provisions for parental leave remained subject to ongoing review and feedback. Whilst welcoming the proposal to include approved maternity leave as a permitted reason to waive the requirement within s.85 of the Local Government Act 1972 for councillor attendance at meetings, she advised the need had also been recognised to ensure that when members were unable to engage in their role as councillor due to parental leave this was clearly communicated.

Having thanked Councillor Mili Patel for closing the debate, the Mayor then put the recommendations in the report to the vote and they were unanimously declared **CARRIED**.

Council therefore unanimously **RESOLVED**:

- (1) In accordance with s.85 of the Local Government Act 1972, to agree (in relation to each and every relevant member) absence on approved maternity leave as a reason for non-attendance at any meeting of the Council, Cabinet, Committee or Sub-Committee from 8th July 2024 onwards.
- (2) To adopt the changes to the Members Allowance Scheme in relation to the maternity & paternity provisions contained in the appendix to the report.
- (3) To authorise the Corporate Director of Law & Governance to amend the Constitution accordingly if required, including making any necessary incidental or consequential changes.

17. **Representation of Political Groups on Committees**

The Mayor advised that as a result of the outcome from the Queens Park by-election not having affected the previous overall balance of membership on the Council there would be no requirement to undertake a further review of the existing representation of political groups on committees. As a result, members were informed the item listed had been withdrawn from consideration on the agenda.

18. **Urgent Business**

There were no urgent items of business raised at the meeting so the Mayor, in closing the meeting, thanked all members for their co-operation and support and advised that he looked forward to seeing everyone again in person at the next Full Council which would be held at 6pm on Thursday 19 September 2024

The meeting closed at 8.30 pm

COUNCILLOR TARIQ DAR MBE
Mayor



Questions from Members of the Public

Full Council – 19 September 2024

1. **Question from Smita Patel to Councillor Nerva (Cabinet Member for Community Health & Wellbeing)**

Can the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care please advise:

- (a) What is the role of Adult Social Care in monitoring the placement and quality of care of vulnerable adults (particularly those affected by mental health issues) by private care providers in small converted residential care facilities (e.g. single 3 bedroom family homes) within the borough along with the adequacy of the facilities provided and wider wraparound support available from GPs and the NHS.
- (b) The CQC makes an annual visit to privately cared for houses. Being registered with the CQC does not necessarily mean that the company has had stringent and regular testing in respect to the qualifications of staff in their employment, looking after these vulnerable persons. Who independently checks the staff providing care to assure they have sufficient expertise and qualifications to be adequately providing care to these vulnerable adults, including CRB checks?
- (c) The CQC does not make decisions on whether a property is safe or suitable for the provision of care. Who ensures that any single family homes converted to support these individuals are safe and have sufficient communal facilities and separate areas for care providers and therapists in the house? What is the role of Adult Social Care regarding vulnerable adults placed in premises run by private CQC registered companies?

Response:

- (a) In England the Care Quality Commission is responsible for the regulation of care home services, and regulated personal care delivered from supported living services. There is comprehensive guidance for providers, who have a responsibility to register if they are delivering regulated services.

Information on CQC regulations can be found here - <https://www.cqc.org.uk/guidance-regulation/providers/regulations>

The Brent Adult Social Care Commissioning, Contracting and Market Management Service is responsible for the commissioning and quality assurance of care services and placements for Brent Adult Social Care. The approach in Brent is different to many other council's and our commissioning model incorporates "traditional" commissioning functions, such as quality assurance, contract management and end to end commissioning, with tasks more associated with social care teams, such as placement reviews and safeguarding enquiries. Bringing together information from a range of sources enriches the information held about services and their clients and helps the service to take an overview of the quality of care provision in Brent.

Each provider in Brent has an allocated Placement Relationship Officer (PRO), who is responsible for quality assurance and service user reviews within their allocated portfolio of services, overseen by managers in each of the Commissioning teams.

Having an allocated PRO is a particularly effective way of working with the care sector. With over 50 care homes, 75 supported living locations, eight extra care services and 99 homecare providers registered in the borough, having a good oversight of the sector is crucial in managing quality issues. With each PRO managing a portfolio of 12-15 providers this becomes more manageable. It also gives registered managers a route to contact the council when seeking support. This way of working helps to manage provider issues effectively, and there is a single point of contact for understanding quality issues with providers in the borough.

Each team within the Commissioning, Contracting and Market Management Service runs a robust quality assurance (QA) process with providers working in their sector, including mental health service providers. Each provider based in Brent is visited at least once a year for quality assurance purposes, with each team working through a specific QA checklist with providers that operate in their care sector. Providers are RAG rated based on the findings, and if rated Red are given more support through the year to address quality concern issues. Details of the quality assurance checklists and sample reports have been made available to support the CQC inspection.

In addition to information gathered from the QA visits, officers bring together information from placement reviews, views from service users and their family members and safeguarding information to build up a comprehensive picture of quality within care services. This information is collated into a report for each provider, with actions to be addressed as part of the monitoring process. As set out above Placement Relationship Officers take the lead on this work with support from managers in the Commissioning service, who provide oversight and guidance during the quality monitoring process.

Brent Council's Adult Social Care service is responsible for residents placed in CQC regulated services by the local authority following a Care Act assessment. This includes a care review on an annual basis. CQC registered accommodation may also be used by residents placed by other local authorities. In such cases the placing authority, not Brent, continues to be responsible for managing Care Act responsibilities.

The council does not inspect GP or NHS services, but care plans will include services to complement those delivered by the NHS.

- (b) Checks on care provision includes an audit of staff files, which includes making sure staff are recruited using safer recruitment principles, Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks are in place for all staff and training records are up to date. If providers are not able to demonstrate these measures are in place actions are taken to ensure that shortfalls are addressed.

The CQC also undertake a Fit and proper employer test. Details on this regulation can be found here - <https://www.cqc.org.uk/guidance-providers/regulations/regulation-19-fit-proper-persons-employed>

The intention of this regulation is to make sure that providers only employ 'fit and proper' staff who are able to provide care and treatment appropriate to their role and to enable them to provide the regulated activity. To meet this regulation, providers must operate robust recruitment procedures, including undertaking any relevant checks. They must have a procedure for ongoing monitoring of staff to make sure they remain able to meet the requirements, and they must have appropriate arrangements in place to deal with staff who are no longer fit to carry out the duties required of them.

It is important to note that "person employed" will include any member of staff who currently works in the service as a volunteer or a contractor, as well as agency or bank staff. This is based on the broad meaning of "employment" set out in Regulation 2, which extends the scope to those engaged who are not under a contract.

Employing unfit people, or continuing to allow unfit people to stay in a role, may lead CQC to question the fitness of a provider.

- (c) If premises are to be converted into a care home, then planning consent needs to be sought. Brent Council's Planning Service will oversee this process. Supported accommodation services are not always subject to planning conditions. In these cases, the Adult Social Care commissioning service will carry out due diligence, which includes property checks, before considering whether to place with a care provider.

The CQC also has regulations to manage the quality of accommodation - <https://www.cqc.org.uk/guidance-providers/regulations/regulation-15-premises-equipment>

The intention of this regulation is to make sure that the premises where care and treatment are delivered are clean, suitable for the intended purpose, maintained and where required, appropriately located, and that the equipment that is used to deliver care and treatment is clean, suitable for the intended purpose, maintained, stored securely and used properly. Providers retain legal responsibility under these regulations when they delegate responsibility through contracts or legal agreements to a third party, independent suppliers, professionals, supply chains or contractors. They must therefore make sure that they meet the regulation, as responsibility for any shortfall rests with the provider.

Officers from Adult Social Care would be happy to meet with any service users or their carers who are concerned about the quality of their care home or supported living service to see what can be done to address those concerns.

2. **Question from Carol McKoy to Councillor Krupa Sheth (Cabinet Member for Environment & Enforcement)**

Why does there seem to be more investment in street cleaning and grounds maintenance in some parts of the borough compared to others, especially given the poor state of Malvern Road and Carlton Vale.

The hedges, bushes and trees are over hanging with overgrown grass verges and it appears no one is taking responsibility with different street cleaning schedules (as an example) for roads including Malvern Place and Malvern Road. Please could the Cabinet Member explain the basis for this approach.

Response:

Street Cleansing:

We have adopted an intelligence led approach to street cleansing which means that resources are now directed to where they are needed, when they are needed. This new approach enables us to provide cleansing teams that can prioritise localised issues efficiently.

In addition to regular cleansing, an additional deep clean of Malvern Road was conducted as recently as 23rd July this year as part of this intelligence led approach.

Grounds Maintenance:

All areas of the borough receive the same service delivery of grounds maintenance. The shrubs at Kilburn Open Space that were overhanging Malvern Road were cut back in late August.

Shrub maintenance is generally undertaken in the Autumn and we are working on the schedule to make sure all expected maintenance is, or will shortly, be taking place.

All verges have been cut in the Malvern Road area and we are not aware of any that are not being maintained.

We do rely on members of the public to help us by being our eyes and ears on the ground, and both grounds maintenance and litter/waste issues can be reported at <https://report.brent.gov.uk>

3. Question from Andy Brommage to Councillor Krupa Sheth (Cabinet Member for Environment & Enforcement)

Please could the Cabinet Member explain the reason why the pavements either side approaching and under the bridge between Draycott Avenue and Windermere Avenue in South Kenton appear to have been so poorly maintained.

Response:

We maintain our pavements through planned and reactive maintenance programmes.

For planned maintenance, independent condition surveys are carried out and the data is used to identify priorities for inclusion in yearly programmes. The current data indicates this section of Windermere Avenue is considered "good to fair" and would not be a priority for planned works.

Reactive maintenance is to address specific safety issues and scheduled walked inspections take place every twelve months or as a result of a customer report of a particular problem. Defects identified are repaired on a priority basis, subject to meeting investigation levels.

In the last two years there have been 29 High priority defects raised along Windermere Avenue all of which have been repaired. A further 20 Medium priority defects were raised of which 4 were repaired and 16 were not prioritised for repair at the time.

4. **Question from Martin Francis to Councillor Tatler (Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning & Growth)**

In relation to progress on the delivery of various regeneration schemes across the borough, please could the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning and Growth:

- (1) Provide an update on the plans for the Bridge Park, Technology House, car breakers and Unisys site in Stonebridge noting that the Unisys building has been unused for 26 years. See 2013 Decision: <https://democracy.brent.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?AllId=9146>
- (2) In respect of (1) above:
 - (a) Confirm whether Brent Council remains in a relationship with Grand Mediterranean Holdings as a partner, joint developer or otherwise in this development.
 - (b) Provide a timeline for the development of a new sports centre, housing and hotel on the site including planning permission and completion.
- (3) Also provide an update on the plans and timeline for the development, including housing and adult college, at Altamira, 1 Morland Gardens, Stonebridge, NW10

Response:

(1) & (2) Bridge Park Update

Brent Council and General Mediterranean Holdings (GMH) exchanged the Bridge Park Conditional Land Sale Agreement (CLSA) in June 2017. Therefore, the Council is in a contractual relationship with GMH as its developer partner for the Bridge Park site.

Completion of the CLSA is subject to the following 4 conditions:

1. Vacant Possession
2. Trust Claim Condition
3. Financial Viability
4. Planning

Brent Council completed the Vacant Possession and Trust Claim conditions and is progressing delivery against the two outstanding conditions (Financial Viability and Planning) to enable CLSA completion.

A target milestone plan has been outlined below for the New Bridge Park Centre, and this is based on current information so may be subject to change based on progress against each milestone:

- Complete RIBA 2 - Concept Design Fix: Autumn 2024

- Complete Pre-Planning Resident Consultation: Winter 2025
- Complete RIBA 3 Spatial Co-ordination Design Fix: Spring 2025
- Submit Planning Application: Summer 2025
- Contractor Procurement: Autumn 2025
- Complete RIBA 4 – Technical Design Fix: Spring 2026
- Complete RIBA 5 – Commence on-site Construction: Summer 2026 – Summer 2028 (assuming 24-month construction programme)

The immediate priority is to progress scheme plans for a pre-planning resident consultation towards the end of 2024, which will include the latest New Bridge Park Centre Bridge proposals and target dates for planning submission, planning determination and on-site delivery.

(3) Morland Gardens Update

The Council is reviewing its options and proposals for the Morland Gardens site. Once the Council has completed its review, officers intend on providing an update to the public later this year.

In parallel with this review, the Council is continuing to monitor the condition of the Altamira building so it remains structurally safe.



Item 9.1

Full Council – 19 September 2024

Conservative Group Motion

Council's participation in Brent River Catchment Area

In recognising the impact of Brent having withdrawn from the 3 Borough agreement to help improve the Brent River Catchment Area, this Council welcomes:

- The river restoration works being jointly undertaken by Harrow and Barnet Councils to improve the waterways in their boroughs which will not only help with flood alleviation but also contribute to improving biodiversity.
- The proposed flood attenuation works in Byron Recreation ground in Harrow which will hold back up to 20,000 litres of potential flood water from the Wealdstone Brook and surrounding streams and welcomes the river works in Chandos Park involving the restructuring of the Edgware Brook which runs into the River Brent. Further, we applaud the decision of Barnet Council in partnership with Thames 21 to undertake river restoration work in Watling Park to help with flood alleviation in the Edgware/Burnt Oak area.
- All of the proposed river project works in Harrow and Barnet which will directly benefit the residents of Brent. Council since these flood alleviation projects will help reduce the likelihood of flooding from the River Brent and its tributaries in Brent.

Whilst welcoming the volunteer work of Thames 21, CURB (Clean up the River Brent) and LagerCan in helping to keep our waterways clear of illegally dumped fly-tipped waste, this Council regrets the termination of Brent's partnership with Harrow and Barnet Council's under the River Brent Catchment Area Partnership.

This Council therefore resolves:

- That the Cabinet Member for Environment and Enforcement commence negotiations seeking the Council's return to the River Brent Catchment Area Partnership before the end of 2024.

Councillor Sunita Hirani
Kenton Ward

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Full Council – 19 September 2024

Liberal Democrats Group Motion

Stop the betrayal of Brent's elderly residents

This Council believes:

The new Labour Government has launched an attack on the ability of elderly people to keep their homes warm over this and future winters, at a time when gas and electricity prices are rising yet again.

Sir Keir Starmer and his Chancellor made no mention of scrapping the Winter Fuel Allowance during the recent election campaign and are now betraying thousands of Brent residents who voted for them in good faith.

The current macroeconomic situation is dire, after years of Tory mismanagement and incompetence, however, it is cruel to be targeting elderly members of society to fill the black hole in our public finances - of which all parties were warned about prior to the election.

Last week, 100% of Liberal Democrat Members of Parliament voted to reject the government's cruel plans, because elderly residents should not be the first target of Labour's austerity.

Once again it is now down to local authorities to pick up the mess created by the Labour Government and assist the most vulnerable residents as best we can.

This Council therefore resolves to:

- Write to the Prime Minister and Chancellor to make them aware of the number of Brent residents who will lose out as a result of their actions.
- Lobby the Labour Government to provide additional funding for local Councils and Citizens' Advice Bureaus to carry out targeted outreach work to help elderly residents claim what they are entitled to.
- Lobby the Labour Government to change the current system so Pension Credit is paid automatically to eligible residents, without the need to apply.
- Work with the Department of Works and Pensions to identify residents in receipt of Universal Credit, Housing Benefit, Council Tax Support, for a targeted

campaign to ensure that all those entitled to receive help in claiming Pension Credit get it, so they can heat their homes this winter.

Cllr Anton Georgiou
Liberal Democrat Group

Full Council – 19 September 2024

Labour Group Motion (1)

Cracking down on gambling harms

This Council notes:

- The clustering of gambling premises and Licensed Betting Operators (LBOs) has become a significant issue across all councils, including Brent.
- In Harlesden, on a 600 meter stretch, six gambling premises exist. Residents have long been campaigning to prevent the opening of further premises.
- The social, economic, and public health impacts of gambling are well documented. Numerous studies have highlighted links between gambling and suicidality, depression, anxiety, and poor physical health.
- Online gambling harms are an increasingly insidious epidemic. Research has found 60% of the profits from online gambling come from the 5% of consumers experiencing harm, with half of more than £6 billion online gambler losses attributable to slots.

This Council further notes:

- While the previous government's Gambling Act Review white paper sought to amend our gambling laws so they are fit for a digital age, they did not afford sufficient Parliamentary time to formalise the legislation while in office.
- Various delays to the review – namely five different ministers overseeing the legislation since 2020 – has meant outdated and insufficient laws failing to protect vulnerable gamblers.
- The statutory 'Aim to Permit' policy restricts local authority powers required to prevent the opening of LBOs and the subsequent clustering of premises.

This Council supports the following reforms:

- The introduction of limits to stakes, prizes and speed of play online, as already exists on venue-based machines. Online slots should be capped at £2 a spin, in line with Fixed Odds Betting Terminals.

- A standardised threshold at which enhanced affordability checks take place for all licensed online gambling operators - the Social Market Foundation's suggests these checks should take place when a person's losses exceed £100 within a month.
- The introduction of a statutory levy on gambling operators for research, education and treatment that should be administered through an independent public body. This levy should initially be set at 1% of gross revenue but should be increased in line with need, in accordance with the 'polluter pays' principle.
- An end to gambling advertising, promotion, and sponsorship. Children should not be exposed to gambling advertising at all, given the degree of harm which arises from online gambling.
- The creation of a dedicated Gambling Ombudsman to ensure consumers who have been treated unfairly by gambling operators are able to access a means for redress.
- Reform to the statutory 'Aim to Permit', so local authorities have the power to reject premise license applications if the Statement of Gambling Principles were put at risk.

This Council resolves to:

- (1) Write to the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, to inform them of our priorities for reform and ask the government to consider gambling a public health issue, as well as wider reform of the Gambling Act.
- (2) Support implementation of a revised Statement of Gambling Principles (pending public consultation). Tightening our policy will ensure applicants and operators whose premises are used for gambling have taken stringent steps to prevent gambling becoming a source of crime and disorder and protect people from gambling related harm.

Councillor Matt Kelcher
Harlesden Ward

Full Council – 19 September 2024

2nd Labour Group Motion

End the 21-hour rule for young adult carers

This Council notes:

Young adult carers aged 16-24 provide unpaid care to someone, usually a family member, on a regular basis. The 2021 Census identified 272,731 young adult carers in England and Wales – at least 171 of whom live in Brent. Around 37,000 young people provide over 50 hours of care each week. That's over £3.5bn of unpaid care per year.

Young adult carers often give up their childhoods to care for others. Yet, through no fault of their own, they consistently miss out on opportunities in learning and work (29)

- Young carers have significantly lower educational attainment at GCSE, the equivalent to nine grades lower overall than their peers.
- 24% of young carers in school say they cannot afford to go to college or university.
- Young carers are three times as likely to be NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training).
- Young carers are four times more likely to drop out of college and university than non-carers.
- Young carers are 38% less likely to gain a degree qualification than non-carers. This is magnified for those providing high levels of care, with those caring for 35+ hours per week 86% less likely to gain a degree.

This Council further notes:

Current rules mean young carers cannot claim Carer's Allowance if they study for more than 21 hours per week. This limits their ability to study 'gold standard' qualifications, like A-levels and T-levels, risks limiting their chances to progress to higher education; and could harm their long-term employment prospects and financial independence.


No young adult carer should miss out on learning because they care for their families. The Scottish Government has recently announced that this change will be implemented from 2024. Urgent action should be taken to ensure that young adult carers in England and Wales are not left behind.

The Learning and Work Institute estimates that the cost of providing Carer's Allowance to all eligible young carers in further education would be £54m per year. To extend this to all young carers, studying at any level, would be £85m per year.

Therefore this Council resolves:

- (1) To write to the Secretary of State, calling on the Government to exempt young adult carers from the 21-hour rule; to ensure that young carers' educational outcomes are being regularly reviewed alongside other vulnerable groups; and to ask that ambitious social care reform becomes a priority from day one.
- (2) To support the Carer's Trust and the Learning and Work Institute in their provision for young carers across the board, regardless of employment or education status.
- (3) To continue supporting the crucial work of Brent Carers Centre, who deliver a holistic range of support services to address the social, emotional and financial issues that carers experience; our Early Help service; and the Brent Gateway Services, who offer guidance on benefit eligibility to our carers.
- (4) To support a holistic place-based approach to healthcare and social care, where integrated services will improve the care patients receive and will be rooted in communities.

Councillor Janice Long
Willesden Green Ward

 <p style="font-size: 24pt; font-weight: bold; margin-top: 10px;">Brent</p>	<p style="font-size: 18pt; font-weight: bold; margin: 0;">Full Council</p> <p style="font-size: 16pt; margin: 0;">19 September 2024</p>
<p style="font-size: 18pt; font-weight: bold; margin: 0;">Report from the Leader of the Council</p>	
<p style="font-size: 18pt; font-weight: bold; margin: 0;">Update report from the Leader and Cabinet</p>	

Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	Council
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: Cabinet Member Update reports
Background Papers:	N/A
Contact Officer(s): <small>(Name, Title, Contact Details)</small>	N/A

1.0 Purpose of the Report

1.1 This report provides an update on the work being undertaken by the Leader and Cabinet, in accordance with Standing Order 31.

2.0 Recommendation(s)

2.1 Council is asked to note this report.

3.0 Detail

3.1 In accordance with Standing Order 31, this report presents an outline by the Leader and Cabinet Members on the key and significant issues identified as arising from their remits and that of the Cabinet, including their contribution to the Borough Plan and other Strategic Priorities.

3.2 Up to 3 minutes is provided at the Council meeting for the Leader, or any other Cabinet Member(s) identified to present the report highlighting any issues felt to be of significance.

3.3 Set out in Appendix One are the written updates provided.

4.0 Stakeholder and ward member consultation and engagement

4.1 The relevant Lead Cabinet members have provided the updates detailed within Appendix 1 of the report.

5.0 Financial Considerations

5.1 As the report is for information purposes there are no direct financial implications.

6.0 Legal Considerations

6.1 As the report is for information purposes there are no direct legal implications.

7.0 Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Considerations

7.1 As the report is for information purposes there are no direct equality, diversity or inclusion implications.

8.0 Climate Change and Environmental Considerations

8.1 As the report is for information purposes there are no direct implications.

9.0 Human Resources/Property Considerations (if appropriate)

9.1 As the report is for information purposes there are no direct implications.

10.0 Communication Considerations

10.1 As the report is for information purposes there are no direct implications.

Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing – Councillor Muhammed Butt

To be covered within the “Annual report on the State of the Borough” statement.

Contact: Cllr.Muhammed.Butt@brent.gov.uk

Deputy Leader and Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources – Councillor Mili Patel

Top news since my last report:

- **Budget update:** The formal process for the 2024-25 budget has now begun, with our service and Cabinet Leads currently in consultation with our Finance Director and wider Finance team before the proposals go to public consultation early next year. After £210m worth of cuts from our core spending budget since 2010, this year's budget will be the most difficult yet. We will be working incredibly hard to safeguard the frontline services our residents rely on while upholding fiscal responsibility with the public purse.
- **Property Strategy:** The draft Property Strategy was presented to our Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee back in February and was passed by the Cabinet earlier this month. As we work hard to use every penny we have, driving more income generation through existing assets becomes an even more crucial part of this role.
- **Shared IT Services:** We are delighted that Brent has achieved all of its Service Level Agreement targets in our shared IT services scheme with Lewisham and Southwark councils, and the LGA. Following a remodelling and restructure of parts of the service, we have built additional capability and put in additional controls for asset management to better respond to IT issues, large-scale IT incidents, and the uptime of the systems we are responsible for. This work has been particularly crucial in light of the CrowdStrike and Microsoft outage earlier this year, with an emphasis on safeguarding our security systems and digital networks.

Other news:

- **Elections:** Our Elections team and the wider Democratic Services department carried out a phenomenal job for the General Election and additional by-election in Queens Park ward on the 4th of July 2024, coming straight off the back of the Greater London Assembly and Mayoral elections in May. We are delighted to welcome Councillor Lesley Smith to Brent Council following her victory in Queens Park; to return Barry Gardiner MP and Dawn Butler MP to their seats in the House of Commons; and to welcome Georgia Gould MP to the newly created seat of Queen's Park and Maida Vale.

If you have any other questions, please feel free to contact by the email address below.

Contact: Cllr.Mili.Patel@brent.gov.uk

Cabinet Member for Employment, Innovation and Climate Action – Councillor Jake Rubin

Top news since my last report:

- **Camden & Brent Business Climate Challenge** (CBCC) allocates up to 40 Brent businesses with £6,000 worth of support each to help them understand where energy is being used and how this can be reduced to achieve cost and carbon savings of at least 10%. Expressions of Interest to the programme have now closed and we are engaging with the **85 businesses who registered** an interest to move onto the programme.
- **An Outcome Based Review on unemployment, economic inactivity and opportunities** was carried out in Stonebridge. This involved an in-depth piece of research and analysis on why unemployment and economic inactivity remains high in Stonebridge. We will now be taking the review forward and taking steps to support residents into gainful employment, providing opportunities for learning key skills and ways in which support for families can help to boost prospects for Stonebridge's residents. I will be in touch with Stonebridge ward councillors to discuss the review and the impact of the next steps.
- **Climate Action:** Roots of Brent - Youth Climate Film Project (ran 6-20 August). The aim was to showcase local community climate projects across Brent via the medium of film; and to train up to 20 young people in how to make a short film, conduct interviews and present to camera, and how to edit footage. The young people who participated will be invited to be our future Youth Climate Ambassadors. Film to be premiered at the Climate Showcase event in the Civic Centre (December).

Other news:

- **New Development:** Harlesden Hairdressing Academy – we have acquired a unit at 16 Craven Park Road to establish a hairdressing academy for local residents to train with a view to starting their own business.
- **The Employment and Skills team** has commissioned a specialised employment service focused on the Somali economically inactive population. This service will be delivered by Step Up Hub for a year thanks to GLA (People and Skills) funding.
- **New strategic director in post:** A new strategic director for Strategic Procurement and Capacity Building is now in post. The team will be looking at ways in which we can expand our community wealth building agenda, achieve maximum value for money, and work to build and support our voluntary and community sector in the borough.

If you have any other questions, please feel free to contact by the email address below.

Contact: Cllr.Jake.Rubin@brent.gov.uk

Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools – Councillor Gwen Grahl

Top news since my last report:

- **Expansion of Early Years Entitlements – Brent Council supporting providers.** We are continuing to support our Early Years providers to ensure enough places are available for families following an expansion of eligibility for working parents of 2, 3- and 4-year-olds. The DfE have estimated an additional 85,000 places will be required nationally to meet their aims, however the sector in Brent is in a good place to meet demand. Support is being offered to coordinate provision and provide information to eligible families. Wraparound support is also being offered at many educational settings, with breakfast clubs soon due to become available in every school as per the Labour Government's Children's Wellbeing Bill. We have a resilient and diverse Early Year sector in Brent, and a generous package of support for our community of providers from the Council.
- **Care-Experienced as a Protected Characteristic - levelling the playing field for Looked After Children and Care Leavers.** Corporate Parenting Committee included a workshop with care-experienced young people to discuss making it a protected characteristic within the borough of Brent. This is a policy that has already been adopted by over 80 other local authorities and intends to place care-experienced young people at the heart of local authority policy making. The initiative will be led and shaped by our Looked After Children and Care Leavers. Care-experienced young people spoke of the stigma they have faced for their experiences as well as their aspirations for greater recognition of their resilience, and enhanced support for those with experience of care. Careful and collaborative work will continue to take place with these young people to ensure that the policy is meaningful and reflective of their needs.

Other news:

- The Children's Residential Centre is currently on track and set to be delivered by 2025.
- The Dedicated Schools Grant is due to break even at the end of the 2023-24 school year, despite ongoing school funding challenges. There are ongoing pressures on the High Needs Block, with the number of EHCP applications still rising.
- The Household Support Fund will be continuing to support children with meal vouchers in the summer holidays. This will be for those on free school meals as well as under 5's from eligible families and will support some of the most vulnerable children in our borough.

If you have any other questions, please feel free to contact by the email address below.

Contact: Cllr.Gwen.Grahl@brent.gov.uk

Cabinet Member for Community Health and Wellbeing – Councillor Neil Nerva

Top news since my last report:

- **CQC Report:** Following our recent Adult Social Care assessment, the Care Quality Commission (CQC) have rated our services as “Requires Improvement”. While this is a disappointing result, it is worth noting the details of the report itself on the Council’s website. It is also worth noting that the margin between our score and a 'good' rating was just 1%. We maintain our concerns that the rating does not fully reflect the progress we have made in recent years, although it does document several areas of achievement.

Other news:

- **Food Strategy:** Progress is being made internally on Brent’s Food Strategy, following a meeting with officers in recent weeks, with more news to follow.
- **The Public Health team** have been working hard to give Brent residents access to Anya, an app which will be available later this year. It aims to establish a pathway for all pregnant people in Brent to receive equal access and support in breastfeeding. The focus will be to promote and encourage breastfeeding for at least 6 months, as recommended by UNICEF. Premium access will also be extended to the infant feeding workforce including healthcare professionals such as midwives and health visitors. Some of the Anya app features include access to AI technology providing 24/7 advice, a forum for parents to learn and share experience, and LatchAid 3D tool which shows parents what to look for when breastfeeding.
- **National Drink and Drug conference:** The National Drink and Drug Conference took place in Birmingham on 11 July 2024 and Brent was well represented by B3 Service Users with 21 members making their way to the event to showcase all the progress being made. There was a huge interest in their presentation with many questions about how to get similar services off the ground in other parts of the country. B3 have also been working with our service provider to produce a community event in September as part of Brent’s contribution to National Recovery Month.
- **Pocket guide to sexual health services in Brent:** The Public Health team have developed a wonderful pocket-sized community leaflet outlining the Sexual and Reproductive Health services in Brent, which will also be translated into the top spoken languages in Brent.
- **DSC Girls Club:** London-based charity, Disabled Sports Coach (DSC) has partnered with Nike to open a movement club for disabled girls, launching the pilot for the project in Brent. This aims to empower disabled girls and young women through sport, as well as being a place to socialise, make friends, and connect with the community. Sessions run on Mondays from 4.30-6pm at Kingsbury High School, NW9 9AT.

If you have any other questions, please feel free to contact by the email address below.

Contact: Cllr.Neil.Nerva@brent.gov.uk

Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning and Growth – Councillor Shama Tatler

Top news since my last report:

- **The Greater London Authority have awarded £3.1m** Civic Partnership Programme grant funding for improvements to Neasden Town Centre. The Neasden Town Centre Action Plan proposes to invest the funding in green spaces, realign and improve crossings at the eastern road junction, and refresh the high street to include a community training kitchen.
- **Draft Staples Corner Growth Area Masterplan & Design Code Supplementary Planning Document** was approved by Cabinet 28/5/24 for public consultation which launched 4/6/24 and closed 16/7/24.

Other news:

- **Brent Investment Prospectus launched:** Our 10-point pledge for potential partners sets out our vision, values and commitment to ensuring we are open for business. If you can support our ambitions, then we would be delighted to welcome your views on how we can work together to accelerate great growth in Brent. URL: <https://capitalwestlondon.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Brent-Investment-Prospectus-2024.pdf>
- **Planning Committee 10 July 24:** Permission was granted for a London Square development at 370 High Road in Willesden (Roundwood Ward) comprising 301 homes, around 2,000 sqm of industrial space, a small supermarket, a gym and a café. 48 of the homes will be at London Affordable Rents, with 25 of those being family sized 3-bedroom homes. The planning committee also secured a financial contribution of £6 million towards the provision of Affordable Housing.

If you have any other questions, please feel free to contact by the email address below.

Contact: Cllr.Shama.Tatler@brent.gov.uk

Cabinet Member for Environment and Enforcement – Councillor Krupa Sheth

Top news since my last report:

- **Contamination campaign:** Contamination ‘monsters in recycling’ launched on 18 July, with a feature in the Brent magazine, JCD boards across the borough, social media and printed communications. The campaign aims to highlight key ‘monsters’ that continuously contaminate recycling which leads to whole loads of recycling being rejected and incinerated as refuse instead.
- **Green and Healthy School Streets:** Following our successful application for GLA funding and securing £0.61m the following schemes to widen pavements, provide trees, rain gardens and planting on routes to schools have been completed: Hawkshead Road (Leopold Primary), Dollis Hill Ave (Our Lady of Grace Infants), and Oakington Manor Drive (OM Primary).
- **Lime** has been notified that it must remove its dockless e-bikes from Brent by 31 October 24 if it continues to ignore Brent Council's safety concerns and suggestions for improvements to the scheme. Brent has partnered with Lime since 2019 and currently hosts 750 e-bikes in the borough as part of its commitment to promoting sustainable and active travel and reducing pollution.

Of particular concern is the already high and increasing number of incidents of inconsiderately parked and abandoned e-bikes reported to the council daily and the often slow response time by Lime to remove these.

The council has written to Lime proposing several changes to ensure the safe and efficient operation of the scheme in Brent, while also meeting its wider transport and environmental objectives of creating healthier, more resilient and more welcoming streets and neighbourhoods.

These requests included:

- The introduction of dedicated e-bike parking bays: This would ensure e-bikes are parked safely in dedicated, cordoned-off areas which attract a high number of journeys and with high footfall, such as stations, town centres, employment areas and other visitor attractions. A ‘no parking zone’ would be introduced in all other areas of the borough with any e-bikes left in this zone removed by Lime in an agreed timeframe. This would also support a new London-wide e-mobility contract being developed by Transport for London, London Councils and boroughs to make the usage of e-bikes and e-scooters safer and more consistent across the capital. Planned to launch in 2026, a central element of the scheme is a requirement to provide dedicated, controlled parking for rental e-bikes and e-scooters.
- Dedicated in-borough resources to manage day-to-day operations: Dedicated local resources would help ensure that any e-bikes reported to be inconsiderately parked or abandoned be removed swiftly, which is not currently the case. Brent has also requested that Lime increases penalties for users who fail to leave their e-bikes in the correct location from the current fine which is set at £10 and which the council does not feel provides an adequate deterrent.

- A commitment from Lime to give back to the local community: In line with the council's commitment to all its partnerships adding value to the local community, the council asked Lime to consider providing local training and employment opportunities and community engagement events as part of its activities in the borough. This would include a Brent Resident Forum where users and non-users can meet with the council and Lime to share their views on how the scheme is working locally and any improvements.

Other news:

- **Food hygiene Inspection Programme:** Good progress has been made on tackling the backlog of overdue food hygiene inspections as well as carrying out inspections due this year. The food team have reduced the overdue risk category 'D' inspections from 492 at the beginning of March to 246 (50%) and 'E' from 449 to 289 (36%). The team is on target to complete all food hygiene inspections by 31 March 2025.

If you have any other questions, please feel free to contact by the email address below.

Contact: Cllr.Krupa.Sheth@brent.gov.uk

Cabinet Member for Resident Support and Culture – Councillor Fleur Donnelly-Jackson

Top news since my last report:

- **Becoming Brent:** is a series of related events, each exploring the impact of the British Empire in Brent, Britain's colonial past and the harsh realities and ugliness of racism. Wembley Park and the world-famous Wembley Stadium were built to host the British Empire Exhibition and welcomed 27 million visitors during 1924 and 1925.

To mark the 100th anniversary of the British Empire Exhibition at Wembley Stadium a new hard-hitting project has been awarded £250,000 funding from The National Lottery Heritage Fund.

The Exhibition was designed to showcase Britain's dominance and success as a major power. We must acknowledge that much of this economic prosperity and success is built on the exploitation of peoples across Africa, the Caribbean, Ireland, and Asia. The British Empire encoded class and racial hierarchies still often experienced in Britain's diverse communities today.

Residents will get the opportunity to review the materials and take part in a series of workshops, resulting in a creative community-led exhibition, an art installation and walking tours to illustrate local people's thoughts and feelings about the past and how it resonates today.

The grant will go towards digitising the collections held by Brent Museum and Archives making it easier for current and future generations to explore the texts, videos, images, and other materials that paint a bittersweet picture of how Brent has developed over the past hundred years.

Other news:

- The Deputy Leader and I shadowed the Housing Benefits, Housing Repairs, and Housing Needs phone enquiry lines in the contact centre – it was incredibly insightful to hear how officers handle the range of enquiries, adapting sensitively to when callers have vulnerabilities.
- Demand within the Contact Service Centre increased to 6180 in July 2024, compared to 5853 in June 2024.

If you have any other questions, please feel free to contact by the email address below.

Contact: Cllr.Fleur.Donnelly-Jackson@brent.gov.uk

Cabinet Member for Public Safety & Partnerships – Councillor Harbi Farah

Top news since my last report:

- Brent Council hosted a partner reassurance meeting following the recent violent disorder, extreme far right initiated protests over the summer period.
- **Community Grants:** We are in the final stage of approving the outstanding Community Grant financial agreement, with some payments being issued shortly.

The Funders Fair will be held at the Civic Centre on 25 September between 4-8pm and the Edward Harvist grant will be launched late autumn.

- Grant agreement has been signed by Brent Council's Community Safety and Prevention Team to deliver the £200,000, 2-year funding Robbery Project, which will commence later this year.

Other news:

- **Prevent Projects:** Following the far-right protest and disorder targeting a mosque in Southport and street-based riots in Hartlepool and London, the Council worked with the Prevent team and the police to assess community tensions and mitigate any risks.
- Prevent e-Learning training has now been made mandatory for all new Council employees. However, the face-to-face training and workshop will continue for frontline staff, including social care and housing professionals, to promote a greater understanding of Prevent.

If you have any other questions, please feel free to contact by the email address below.

Contact: Cllr.Harbi.Farah@brent.gov.uk



Questions from the Opposition and Other Non-Cabinet Members

Full Council – 19 September 2024

1. Question from Councillor Long to Councillor Nerva (Cabinet Member for Community Health & Wellbeing)

Following the recent assessment of Brent's Adult Social Care services by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) will the Cabinet Member for Community Health and Wellbeing set out how the service will accelerate its improvement journey for the benefit of Brent residents; and outline how the council will work with its partners and commissioned services to drive forward positive changes?

Response:

The Council is committed to accelerating its improvement journey, focusing on several key areas. These include enhancing customer service by strengthening partnerships with the community, improving the capacity for advocacy and support, and increasing accessibility for residents who may need services or provide informal care. Brent will also expand its use of digital tools and assistive technology and roll out a new "Front Door Model" to better serve residents at the local level. These new service models will be co-produced with residents.

Collaboration with partners and the voluntary sector remains central to driving positive change. The Council is also prioritising workforce development to increase recruitment and retention, particularly in safeguarding and specialist care. A governance structure is in place to oversee the improvement plan, which will be presented to myself and other key stakeholders later this year, with timelines and key milestones clearly outlined. Through this plan, the Council will work with partners to ensure Brent's Adult Social Care services continue to evolve for the benefit of residents.

2. Question from Councillor Hylton to Councillor Rubin (Cabinet Member for Employment, Innovation and Climate Action):

Following on from the success of the recent Wembley Jobs Fair could the Cabinet Member for Employment, Innovation and Climate Action provide an update on the outcomes and the emerging plans for future events?

Response:

The recent Wembley Jobs Fair was a great success, delivering good outcomes and paving the way for future events. Key outcomes include:

- 214 job offers made, with 155 verified job starts across various sectors.
- Awaiting outcomes from partners such as DWP, Slenky, Veolia, NHS Trusts, Howarth Homes (sponsor), Pladis (sponsor), and Countryside (sponsor). There is an expectation to surpass previous job outcomes as further data comes in.
- Participant feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with 92% of respondents rating the event as good to outstanding. Suggestions for future fairs included the addition of more sectors like admin, sales, and tech. Over 4,600 responses were received.
- Employer feedback was also encouraging, with 150 employers providing their views via JOT forms. Of those, 72 responded to a thought-of-the-day survey, all expressing satisfaction and indicating a willingness to participate in future events.

Importantly, the event was fully funded by sponsorship, incurring no cost to the council.

Looking ahead, plans for the next Wembley Jobs Fair are already in motion, with sponsorship funding secured. A final options paper is being prepared, but the next event is anticipated for July 2025 at Wembley Stadium. Plans are to expand the number of sectors represented and increase the number of stallholders while capping attendance at 8,000 for health and safety reasons and to ensure optimal customer experience.

In addition, Brent Works have a number of other events scheduled, including:

- 16th October – SEND Branching Out
- 17th October – Stonebridge "Back to Work" event for parents and carers
- National Apprenticeship Week
- National Careers Week
- International Women's Day
- Various locally planned events
- DWP-led events

3. Question from Councillor Mahmood to Councillor Krupa Sheth (Cabinet Member for Environment & Enforcement)

Will the Cabinet Member for Environment and Enforcement set out how many fixed-penalty notices have been delivered since the inception of the “Don’t Mess with Brent” campaign and the introduction of higher fines and additional enforcement officers?

Response:

A total of 1,900 fixed penalty notices for waste offences have been issued since 28 May 2024 to date. Please note the 28 May is the date that the additional enforcement officers started issuing fines in the borough. The higher fees were introduced in June.

4. Question from Councillor J.Patel to Councillor Krupa Sheth (Cabinet Member for Environment & Enforcement):

Brent was dubbed the fly-tipping capital of England last year over the sheer amount of mess being dumped on its streets. Brent saw the highest number of total incidents in the country, with 34,830 reports of fly-tipping.

The Council is able to issue fines of up to £1,000 but in 2023-24, fly-tipping cost local taxpayers more than £1.5m, which could have been spent on important frontline services.

Fixed Penalty Notices are being issued for fly tipping and the dumping or rubbish traced back to properties across London with £1m awarded to help more councils combat fly-tipping and grants provided for 26 local authorities to target fly-tipping hotspots by the previous Conservative Government. Some councils have also started using artificial intelligence (AI) to help tackle fly-tipping for a new trial. These new cameras have been installed in fly-tipping hotspots, where they will recognise suspected cases of fly-tipping and record the registration plates of offending vehicles. Currently, the council installs fly-tip cameras at an average cost of £35k.

Can the Cabinet Member for Environment & Enforcement therefore advise:

- (1) Why Brent can not use mobile cameras that can be placed in several locations as a cheaper option? How much does it cost to install a mobile hotspot camera that can be monitored by council officers, resident campaigners and doesn't need to be centrally monitored?
- (2) How many prosecutions have there been since the launch of the 'Don't Mess with Brent campaign'?
- (3) How much money has been raised from prosecutions?

Response:

- (1) The Environmental Enforcement Team have been using a range of monitoring cameras to capture fly-tipping offences for 5-6 years. It costs approximately 7k a year to operate these cameras, including installation and maintenance.
- (2) No cases have been heard at court for waste offences for the same period above. (Please note that it can take up to 6 to 12 months for a case to be heard at court)
- (3) Following on from the response under (2), no money has been raised from prosecutions for waste offences for the period above.

5. Question from Councillor Lorber to Councillor Muhammed Butt (Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing):

Can the Cabinet Member for Housing explain why a Council with a major housing crisis would purchase a house with two flats in Sudbury for £500,000 and then keep it empty for around 12 months?


Does the Cabinet Member for Housing agree that it is a scandal and a tragedy for two homeless families that could have been provided with a home there?

Response:

Housing Management have been dealing with these properties since June 2023. The properties were in a very dilapidated condition with a significant rat infestation which took several weeks to resolve in the first instance. In addition, there have been significant delays caused by discrepancies in the way in which the addresses were registered with both the Royal Mail and the utility suppliers and this led to further delays in the utility suppliers doing their relevant test to allow for the installation of both gas and electricity meters.

Whilst new gas meter have now been installed the Council are still waiting for the individual and communal electric meters to be fitted. At present, the utility supplier is unable to give an appointment date, however the team are chasing every few days.

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 <p style="font-size: 24pt; font-weight: bold; margin-top: 10px;">Brent</p>	<p style="font-size: 18pt; font-weight: bold; margin: 0;">Full Council</p> <p style="font-size: 16pt; margin: 0;">19 September 2024</p> <hr style="border: 1px solid black; margin: 10px 0;"/> <p style="font-size: 16pt; font-weight: bold; margin: 0;">Report from the Corporate Director of Law & Governance</p>
<p style="font-size: 16pt; font-weight: bold; margin: 0;">Resources and Public Realm Committee Chair’s Update Report</p>	

Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	Council
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: Resources & Public Realm Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2024/25
Background Papers:	None
Contact Officer(s): <small>(Name, Title, Contact Details)</small>	<p>Jason Sigba, Strategy Lead – Scrutiny, Law & Governance 020 8937 2036 Jason.Sigba@brent.gov.uk</p> <p>Amira Nassr, Deputy Director, Democratic Services, Law & Governance 020 8937 4595 Amira.Nassr@brent.gov.uk</p> <p>James Kinsella Governance & Scrutiny Manager, Law & Governance 020 8937 2063 James.Kinsella@brent.gov.uk</p>

1.0 Executive Summary

1.1 To present Full Council with progress updates on the activities of the Resources and Public Realm Committee since the last Full Council meeting held on 8 July 2024.

2.0 Recommendation(s)

2.1 To note the update from the Chair of the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee.

3.0 Detail

3.1 Contribution to Borough Plan Priorities & Strategic Context

3.1.1 The work of the Committee contributes to the delivery of all of the strategic priorities set out in the Borough Plan 2023-2027. It seeks to ensure Council decision-making remains transparent, accountable and open, resulting in improved policies and services.

3.2 Background

3.2.1 Brent Council has two scrutiny committees; the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee and the Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee. The Council is also a member of the North West London Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (NWL JHOSC).

3.2.2 A scrutiny committee can look at anything which affects the borough or its inhabitants, subject to its remit.

3.2.3 Brent Council Standing Orders allow for the chairs of the scrutiny committees to report to ordinary Council meetings on the activities of their committees¹.

The Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee

3.2.4 The remit of the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee is set out in the Council Constitution under the Terms of Reference for scrutiny committees². The remit of the Committee includes:

Corporate policy, partnerships and resources; Budget; Customer services; Commercial services; Planning policy; Environmental policy; Public realm; Employment and skills; IT; Recycling; Regeneration; Transport and highways; Community safety; Property; Emergency planning and business continuity.

3.2.5 The Committee is also the Council's "crime and disorder committee" for the purposes of Section 19 of the Police & Justice Act 2006 and as such may review or scrutinise decisions made, or other action taken, in connection with the discharge of the crime and disorder functions by the responsible authorities (as defined by section 5 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998) who make up the Safer Brent Partnership, in order to make reports or recommendations to Full Council.

¹ Brent Council Constitution, Part 2, paragraph 36.

<https://democracy.brent.gov.uk/documents/s123308/Part%202%20April%202022%20Procedural%20Rules.pdf>

² Brent Council Constitution Part 4.

<https://democracy.brent.gov.uk/documents/s123310/Part%204%20May%202022%20Terms%20of%20Reference%20.pdf>

- 3.2.6 Since the last update to Full Council on 8 July 2024 the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee has met two times (17 July 2024, and 4 September 2024).

17 July 2024

- 3.2.7 The Committee heard from the Deputy Leader and Cabinet member for Finances & Reform, Councillor Mili Patel, and received a report from the Corporate Director of Finance & Resources on Brent's overall financial position, examining the financial outturn position for 2023/24, the Q1 financial forecast for 2024/25 and the medium-term financial outlook. It was reiterated that the Council continues to operate in a challenging financial environment with an uncertain funding outlook (e.g. lack of clarity around long-term funding for social care) and the potential for significant spending pressures in demand-led services such as social care and homelessness. Despite incorporating growth into the medium term financial strategy to help alleviate some of these pressures, it was noted that the Council is unable to avoid making significant savings over the next few years to deliver a balanced budget. Members questioned how close the authority was to s.114 territory, and separately asked for comment on the healthiness of reserves in dealing with the current financial situation. Discussions also covered the robustness of budget assumptions, the Budget Assurance Panel's role in temperature checking financial forecasts, significant overspends in areas such as Housing, and Care, Health, and Wellbeing (and mitigations in place), the management of the Dedicated School Grant (DSG) legacy deficit, social worker recruitment and retention, poor Council Tax and Business Rates collection rates, and grant funding.
- 3.2.8 In light of the discussion, the Committee made the following Cabinet recommendations and suggestions for improvement to council departments:

Recommendations to Cabinet:

1. Lobby central government to end the privatisation of Children's social care services.
2. As part of work with London Councils, lobby for a greater co-ordinated approach between local authorities in the commissioning of services that curbs profiteering by private companies, creates new insourcing opportunities, enables mission-led procurement outcomes, and that delivers greater cost efficiencies overall.
3. Continue lobbying efforts for the urgent reform of local government finance that provides local authorities with greater options for how they raise and spend their resources (e.g. fiscal devolution options leading to more freedoms over local revenues such as 100% business rates retention and flexible use/spend of community infrastructure levy (CIL) monies).

Suggestions for Improvement:

1. To address low collection rates, review relevant strategies for debt collection to ensure robust interventions are in place to target those evading Council Tax/Business Rates. This should also include a review of the protocol in place to engage local councillors and to utilise their local knowledge in identifying those avoiding the payment of council tax or business rates.

4 September 2024

- 3.2.9 The scrutiny work programme for the 2024/25 municipal year was formally agreed by the Committee (please see Appendix 1). The programme itself is a living document, responsive to the needs of Brent residents, which will be regularly reviewed and updated accordingly where necessary. In practice, this means planned agenda items could be subject to change.
- 3.2.10 As part of the discussion, the Chair highlighted that the work programme would typically have been agreed in July, but due to the election, the process was delayed until the September meeting.
- 3.2.11 Committee members then agreed the establishment of the Budget Scrutiny Task Group to review the Cabinet's Draft Budget for 2025/26. It was noted that the full membership of the Task Group has yet to be finalised and will be confirmed in a future meeting. The Task Group is expected to present an evidence-based recommendations report on the Cabinet's Draft Budget to the Resources and Public Realm Committee at its meeting on 28 January 2025. Subject to approval, a report from the Committee will then be forwarded to Cabinet for consideration on Monday 10 February 2025, alongside the report from the Corporate Director of Finance and Resources on final budget proposals.
- 3.2.12 The Committee heard from the Leader of the Council, Councillor Muhammed Butt, and received a report from the Corporate Director of Neighbourhoods & Regeneration on the first year performance of the Grounds Maintenance Contract. Representatives from Continental Landscapes ('the contractor'), Brent Parks Forum, Friends of Gladstone Park, and Dollis Hill Copse (DHCG) were also in attendance to provide comments and insights on the report. The Committee examined the major differences between the new and old contracts and evaluated the improvements in the new contract. Members also reviewed key challenges in delivery, such as the inability of machinery to meet performance standards, assessed the effectiveness of mitigation measures, and investigated if the Council was incurring additional costs due to such challenges. Other key discussion areas included contract monitoring; IT-related issues and the accuracy of the performance data outlined in the report; as well as the need for better collaboration with community payback teams and park volunteer groups to tackle littering and fly-tipping.
- 3.2.13 In light of the discussion, the Committee made the following suggestions for improvement:
 1. Publish a user-friendly summary of the annual report for residents highlighting expected standards, performance, key

achievements, challenges and priorities of the Grounds Maintenance contract.

2. Improve coordination and scheduling between Continental Landscapes and Veolia for verge cutting and street cleansing operations across the borough.
3. Work more closely with probation and community payback teams to create a focused work programme for offenders, exploring opportunities for relevant training and skills development.
4. Enhance communication and collaboration with volunteer groups (e.g., Friends Of Park Groups, Thames 21, etc.)
5. Consider introducing larger and more varied bins in problem areas in parks/open spaces to reduce littering and fly-tipping.

3.2.14 The Committee proceeded to deliberate upon the matter of affordable housing delivery by i4B Holdings Ltd (i4B) and First Wave Housing Ltd, with the item introduced by the Leader of the Council and Peter Gadsdon, Director and Board Member of i4B/First Wave Housing Ltd. Members examined whether investing in i4B and First Wave Housing was financially sound, addressing the challenges highlighted in the report, such as the issues identified with financial controls and billing arrangements for the companies in an internal audit. Other lines of enquiry included whether there are further opportunities to enhance performance relative to strategic priorities, the unique benefits obtained that might not have been realised through in-house operations, and how profits from both i4B and First Wave Housing are reinvested.

3.2.15 In light of the discussion, the Committee made the following suggestions for improvement:

1. Explore further opportunities for i4B/First Wave Housing Ltd to reduce temporary accommodation costs and expand the supply of affordable housing in a sound yet non-risk adverse manner.
2. Consider revising the viability assessment criteria to account for factors like temporary accommodation cost avoidance in order to support the delivery of more affordable housing via i4B/First Wave Housing Ltd.
3. Explore carrying out targeted work to source/purchase specific properties for households wishing to downsize and relocate outside of the borough.
4. i4B/First Wave Housing directors to strengthen their oversight of policies and procedures to prevent a recurrence of the issues identified in the internal audit.

Next meeting: 5 November 2024

3.2.16 The next meeting of the Resources and Public Realm Committee will be held on 5 November 2024. As it currently stands, members will review the following items:

- Budget 2024/25: In-Year Monitoring Update
- Employment & Skills
- People Strategy (formerly known as Workforce Strategy)

4.0 Stakeholder and ward member consultation and engagement

4.1 Members of the Committee continue to be fully engaged in the development and delivery of the scrutiny work programme.

5.0 Financial Considerations

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

6.0 Legal Considerations

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

7.0 Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Considerations

7.1 There are no EDI considerations for the purposes of this report.

8.0 Climate Change and Environmental Considerations

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

9.0 Communication Considerations

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

Report sign off:

Debra Norman

Corporate Director, Law & Governance

Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2024/25

17 July 2024

Agenda Item	Cabinet Member/Non-Executive Member	Chief Executive/Corporate Director	External Organisations
Budget 2024/25 Update: Medium Term Financial Strategy	Cllr Muhammed Butt, Leader of the Council Cllr Mili Patel, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources	Minesh Patel, Corporate Director – Finance and Resources	

4 September 2024

Agenda Item	Cabinet Member/Non-Executive Member	Chief Executive/Corporate Director	External Organisations
Committee Work Programme 2024/25	Cllr Rita Conneely, Chair of Resources and Public Realm Committee	Debra Norman, Corporate Director – Law and Governance	
Establishment of Budget Scrutiny Task Group	Cllr Rita Conneely, Chair of Resources and Public Realm Committee	Debra Norman, Corporate Director – Law and Governance	
Grounds Maintenance Contract – Year One Performance	Cllr Krupa Sheth, Cabinet Member for Environment and Enforcement	Alice Lester, Corporate Director – Neighbourhoods and Regeneration	Continental Landscapes
I4B & First Wave Housing	Cllr Shama Tatler, Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning and Growth	Alice Lester, Corporate Director – Neighbourhoods and Regeneration	I4B/First Wave Housing

5 November 2024

Agenda Item	Cabinet Member/Non-Executive Member	Chief Executive/Corporate Director	External Organisations
Budget 2024/25: In-Year Monitoring Update	Cllr Mili Patel, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources	Minesh Patel, Corporate Director – Finance and Resources	
Employment & Skills	Cllr Jake Rubin, Cabinet Member for Employment, Innovation and Climate Action	Alice Lester, Corporate Director – Neighbourhoods and Regeneration	
Workforce Strategy	Cllr Mili Patel, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources	Debra Norman, Corporate Director – Law and Governance	

28 January 2025

Agenda Item	Cabinet Member/Non-Executive Member	Chief Executive/Corporate Director	External Organisations
Budget Scrutiny Task Group Findings	Cllr Rita Conneely, Chair of Resources and Public Realm Committee	Debra Norman, Corporate Director – Law and Governance	
Complaints Annual Report 2023/24	Cllr Mili Patel, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources	Debra Norman, Corporate Director – Law and Governance	
Safer Brent Partnership Annual Report 2023/24	Cllr Harbi Farah, Cabinet Member for Public Safety and Partnerships	Peter Gadsdon, Corporate Director – Partnerships, Housing, and Resident Services	Metropolitan Police


25 February 2025

Agenda Item	Cabinet Member/Non-Executive Member	Chief Executive/Corporate Director	External Organisations
Budget 2024/25: In-Year Monitoring Update	Cllr Mili Patel, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources	Minesh Patel, Corporate Director – Finance and Resources	
Community Wealth Building and Social Value	Cllr Jake Rubin, Cabinet Member for Employment, Innovation and Climate Action	Rachel Crossley, Corporate Director – Community Health and Wellbeing	

23 April 2025

Agenda Item	Cabinet Member/Non-Executive Member	Chief Executive/Corporate Director	External Organisations
Build Quality	Cllr Shama Tatler, Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning and Growth	Alice Lester, Corporate Director – Neighbourhoods and Regeneration	
Community Infrastructure Levy and Section 106	Cllr Shama Tatler, Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning and Growth	Alice Lester, Corporate Director – Neighbourhoods and Regeneration	

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	Full Council 19 September 2024
	Report from the Corporate Director of Law and Governance
Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee Chair's Report	

Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	Council
Open or Part/Fully Exempt: <small>(If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)</small>	Open
List of Appendices:	One Appendix A: Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2024/25
Background Papers:	None
Contact Officer(s): <small>(Name, Title, Contact Details)</small>	Chatan Popat Strategy Lead – Scrutiny, Democratic Services 020 8937 5068 chatan.popat@brent.gov.uk Amira Nassr Deputy Director Democratic Services 020 8937 4595 Amira.nassr@brent.gov.uk James Kinsella Governance & Scrutiny Manager 020 8937 2063 james.kinsella@brent.gov.uk

1.0 Executive Summary

1.1 To present Full Council with the Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee's 2024-25 work programme, and to provide an update on meetings and activities undertaken by the committee since the last meeting of Full Council on 8 July 2024.

2.0 Recommendation(s)

That Full Council

- 2.1 Note the report and the updates provided for both the Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee and North West London Joint Health and Overview Scrutiny Committee (NWL JHOSC).
- 2.2 Note the Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee's 2024-25 work programme, attached as Appendix 1 to the report.

3.0 Detail

3.1 Contribution to Borough Plan Priorities & Strategic Context

- 3.1.1 The work of the committee contributes to the delivery of all of the strategic priorities within the Borough Plan as it seeks to support, advise and enhance the Council's activity. The recent activity outlined in this report contributes most specifically to the "A Healthier Brent," "The Best Start in Life," "Prosperity and Stability in Brent" strategic priorities within the plan.

3.2 Background

- 3.2.1 Brent Council has two scrutiny committees: the Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee and the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee. The council also participates as a full voting member in the North West London Joint Health Overview Scrutiny (NWL JHOSC). Councillor Ketan Sheth was re-elected as chair of the Community Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee at the Annual Council Meeting on 22 May 2024 and also continues to serve as chair of the NWL JHOSC.

- 3.2.2 A scrutiny committee can review anything which affects the borough or its inhabitants, subject to its remit. The remit of the Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee is set out in the Council Constitution under the Terms of Reference for Scrutiny Committees which includes:

Adult social care; Safeguarding; Children's services; Cultural services; Education; Health; Housing; Public Health and Wellbeing.

- 3.2.3 As part of its remit set out in the constitution, and its role to review the provision and operation of health services within the borough, the Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee can scrutinise, and make recommendations to NHS organisations or relevant health service providers.

- 3.2.4 The Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee's 2024-25 work programme is detailed in Appendix A. In developing its work programme, the committee held a work programming meeting, attended by committee members, Cabinet members and Corporate Directors. At this session committee members prioritised items to include on the work programme based on a set of criteria. Prioritisation ensured that items included on the committees work programme were (i) a strategic priority as set out in the council's 2023-27 Borough Plan (ii) of concern for a significant number of the borough's residents (iii) a significant cabinet decision or (iv) part of a forthcoming policy review or a new strategy being developed by the Cabinet. This was undertaken to ensure that scrutiny

has a significant impact and adds value to the council's policy process. Statutory guidance on overview and scrutiny recommends that for scrutiny to be effective, scrutiny committees focus on conducting fewer in-depth reviews on highly significant topics¹.

- 3.2.5 The Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee met for its first meeting of the 2024-25 municipal year on 30 July 2024. The meeting focused on two annual safeguarding reports. The first of these reports was the Brent Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB) Annual Report; April 2023 – March 2024. Members welcomed Nicola Brownjohn, the newly appointed Independent Chair of the Brent Safeguarding Adults Board to the meeting, who has been in post since January 2024. She reminded the committee that SABs became statutory in 2014 under the Care Act, with the remit of SABs including production of an annual report every year, to set strategic priorities, to undertake Safeguarding Adults Reviews (SARs) and to take forward learning. Her role ensured that the safeguarding system in Brent was established and working well, and part of her role was to challenge the partners working within the SAB. The committee were delighted to hear from the new Independent Chair that she had been pleased to see the positive way partners worked together. Since joining Brent, she had some ideas for changes which had been taken forward quickly, with partners accepting them and adapting to them well. She had found exceptionally good listening and meaningful conversations were taking place between partners and was pleased at the range of agencies involved with SAB and the commitment from those agencies. She continued by stating that her 'wow' factor for Brent's arrangements was the relationship the partners had with voluntary services. Members were informed that Brent was doing relatively well in all aspects within the remit of the Board but there was always a desire for continuous improvement and there were things that Brent could improve on. While there were areas for improvement, the Independent Chair had confidence in Brent's processes.
- 3.2.6 The second item discussed at the Committee meeting was the Brent Safeguarding Children Partnership Report; October 2022 – March 2024. As with the first item, members welcomed Keith Makin, the newly appointed Independent Chair and Scrutineer for the Brent Safeguarding Children Forum. He began by highlighting the similarities and coherence between the children's and adult's safeguarding arrangements, whilst also noting the different legislation and guidance. He advised members that the key role of the partnership was to ensure that the three statutory partners – police, health, and the local authority worked closely together on safeguarding and were well sighted on strategic priorities that needed to be developed and achieved. Councillor Grahl (Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools) added that there were some very longstanding relationships within the Brent safeguarding partnership and an institutional culture of openness and honesty, which she saw as crucial to safeguarding. She added learning that took place within the partnership filtered through to all aspects of children's social care in Brent. The new Chair informed the committee that he had witnessed

¹ *Statutory Guidance on Overview and Scrutiny in Local and Combined Authorities* (Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government), p21

partnerships at various stages of development and was extremely impressed that in Brent colleagues had been very welcoming, open, and the discussions he had with different agencies and partners had been very mature. He was also impressed by the level of involvement from GPs which he highlighted was strong in Brent compared to other places he had worked. The Partnership Managers were supportive, and he offered thanks for their work. In terms of work in progress and areas for focus and improvement, there had been some areas of development recommended by the most recent Ofsted inspection which was influencing the way the partnership was developing and working for the next twelve months. One of the areas of focus for the partnership was around working more closely with adults' safeguarding colleagues and continuing the good work already started around the transition from childhood to adulthood, with a recommendation for that transition age range to be between 14 – 25 years old. A second focus area was around data collection, refining the data so that more meaningful analysis could take place, learning from various audits and rapid reviews to feed in to that data analysis. Another area of development for partners was to engage more with children and young people across the borough and getting the lived and felt experience of children and young people into the various partnership settings.

- 3.2.7 Noting that there were separate but similar arrangements for safeguarding children and safeguarding adults, the aim across the next year for the two Boards would be to work more closely together. Members asked how the partnerships collaborated and communicated to resolve safeguarding issues so that work was not done in isolation between the two Boards. It was explained that this workstream was building on the work done previously around transitional safeguarding, recognising that if, for example, a child was running county lines then there may well be an adult who was being cuckooed as well. The two partnerships wanted to look at exploitation together as it was clear that this did not stop once the young person reached the age of eighteen. The Committee were advised that a Joint Executive Group was also being established, including senior leaders for both adults and children's safeguarding and both Board Chairs to meet on a semi-regular basis and discuss joint or overlapping issues. The committee recommended that an Internal Communications Strategy was drawn up for data sharing between partners and the two Boards.
- 3.2.8 The Committee will meet for its second meeting of the year on 18 September 2024. At this time, members will focus on two items prepared by the Children's and Young People Department. These items are; Overview of SEND provision in Brent and secondly, Early Years Provision and progress towards meeting the expansion of childcare entitlements.
- 3.2.9 Councillor Ketan Sheth is Brent's representative and Chair of the North West London Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (NWL JHOSC). The first meeting of the municipal year will be hosted by North West London NHS on 22 October 2024. At this meeting, the committee will review reports on; Primary Access and the Same Day Access Model, the North West London Mental Health Strategy and the North West London Adult Community-Based Specialist Palliative Care (CSPC) review.

4.0 Stakeholder and ward member consultation and engagement

4.1 Members of the Committee continue to be fully engaged in the development and delivery of the scrutiny work programme.

5.0 Financial Considerations

5.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

6.0 Legal Considerations

6.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

7.0 Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Considerations

7.1 There are no equity, diversity or inclusion implications arising from this report.

8.0 Climate Change and Environmental Considerations

8.1 There are no climate change or environmental implications arising from this report.

9.0 Human Resources/Property Considerations (if appropriate)

9.1 There are no human resources implications arising from this report.

10.0 Communication Considerations

10.1 There are no communication implications arising from this report.

Report sign off:

Debra Norman
Corporate Director, Law and Governance

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Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee: 2024/25 Work Programme

Confirmed Meeting Dates:

- Wednesday 30 July 2024, 6pm
- Wednesday 18 September 2024, 6pm
- Wednesday 20 November 2024, 6pm
- Wednesday 22 January 2025, 6pm
- Wednesday 05 March 2025, 6pm
- Monday 2 April 2025, 6pm

Wednesday 30 July 2024

Agenda Item	Cabinet Members / Non-Executive Members	Corporate Directors / Directors	External Organisations / Participants
Brent's Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements for Children Annual Report	Councillor Gwen Grahl, Cabinet Member, Children, Young People & Schools	Nigel Chapman, Corporate Director Children and Young People Palvinder Kudhail, Director, Early Help and Social Care	Keith Makin, Independent Chair and Scrutineer, Brent Safeguarding Children Forum Metropolitan Police NHS
Brent Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report	Councillor Neil Nerva, Cabinet Member, Community Health and Wellbeing	Rachel Crossley, Corporate Director, Community Health and Wellbeing Claudia Brown, Director, Adult Social Care	Nicola Brownjohn, Independent Chair, Brent Safeguarding Adults Board Metropolitan Police NHS

Wednesday 18 September 2024

Agenda Item	Leader/Deputy Leader/Cabinet Members	Corporate Directors / Directors	External Organisations / Participants
Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2024/25	Councillor Ketan Sheth, Chair of the Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee	Debra Norman, Corporate Director Law and Governance	-
Overview of SEND provision in the borough	Councillor Gwen Grahl, Cabinet Member, Children, Young People & Schools	Nigel Chapman, Corporate Director Children and Young People Shirley Parks, Director, Education, Partnerships and Strategy	TBC
Early years provision and progress towards meeting the expansion of childcare entitlements	Councillor Gwen Grahl, Cabinet Member, Children, Young People & Schools	Nigel Chapman, Corporate Director Children and Young People Palvinder Kudhail, Director, Early Help and Social Care	TBC

Wednesday 20 November 2024

Agenda Item	Leader/Deputy Leader/Cabinet Members	Corporate Directors / Directors	External Organisations / Participants
<p>Housing Management: Tenant Satisfaction Measures Brent Housing Management (BHM) performance I4B and First Wave Housing - Performance and Standards of New Acquisitions</p>	<p>Councillor Muhammed Butt, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member, Housing</p> <p>Councillor Shama Tatler, Cabinet Member, Regeneration, Planning and Growth</p>	<p>Peter Gadsdon, Corporate Director, Partnerships, Housing and Resident Services</p> <p>Alice Lester, Corporate Director, Neighbourhoods and Regeneration</p> <p>Spencer Randolph, Director, Housing Services</p>	<p>TBC</p>
<p>Temporary Accommodation Provision and update on Homeless Service and Prevention - both Families and Single Homeless Prevention Service (SHPS)</p>	<p>Councillor Muhammed Butt, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member, Housing</p>	<p>Peter Gadsdon, Corporate Director, Partnerships, Housing and Resident Services</p> <p>Laurence Coaker, Director, Housing Needs and Support</p>	<p>TBC</p>

Wednesday 22 January 2025

Agenda Item	Leader/Deputy Leader/Cabinet Members	Corporate Directors / Directors	External Organisations / Participants
CQC Assurance following Local Area Assessment	Councillor Neil Nerva, Cabinet Member, Community Health and Wellbeing	Rachel Crossley, Corporate Director, Community Health and Wellbeing Claudia Brown, Director, Adult Social Care	TBC
Co-production and Transformation for Adult Social Care.	Councillor Neil Nerva, Cabinet Member, Community Health and Wellbeing	Rachel Crossley, Corporate Director, Community Health and Wellbeing Claudia Brown, Director, Adult Social Care	TBC
Community Health and Wellbeing Performance – all services	Councillor Neil Nerva, Cabinet Member, Community Health and Wellbeing	Rachel Crossley, Corporate Director, Community Health and Wellbeing Claudia Brown, Director, Adult Social Care Melanie Smith, Director, Public Health	TBC


Wednesday 5 March 2025

Agenda Item	Leader/Deputy Leader/Cabinet Members	Corporate Directors / Directors	External Organisations / Participants
Maternity Provisions including update from NCL NHS Start Well Programme	Councillor Neil Nerva, Cabinet Member, Community Health and Wellbeing	Rachel Crossley, Corporate Director, Community Health and Wellbeing Melanie Smith, Director, Public Health	NCL NHS
Vaping and Nicotine Cessation	Councillor Neil Nerva, Cabinet Member, Community Health and Wellbeing	Rachel Crossley, Corporate Director, Community Health and Wellbeing Melanie Smith, Director, Public Health	TBC
Leisure and Physical Activity	Councillor Neil Nerva, Cabinet Member, Community Health and Wellbeing	Rachel Crossley, Corporate Director, Community Health and Wellbeing Melanie Smith, Director, Public Health	TBC

Monday 28 April 2025

Agenda Item	Leader/Deputy Leader/Cabinet Members	Corporate Directors / Directors	External Organisations / Participants
Meeting the Adult's and Children's Social Care Workforce challenges	<p>Councillor Gwen Grahl, Cabinet Member, Children, Young People & Schools</p> <p>Councillor Neil Nerva, Cabinet Member, Community Health and Wellbeing</p>	<p>Nigel Chapman, Corporate Director Children and Young People</p> <p>Rachel Crossley, Corporate Director, Community Health and Wellbeing</p>	TBC
Annual School Standards and Achievement report	<p>Councillor Gwen Grahl, Cabinet Member, Children, Young People & Schools</p>	<p>Nigel Chapman, Corporate Director Children and Young People</p> <p>Shirley Parks, Director, Education, Partnerships and Strategy</p>	Headteachers from Brent schools

*Placeholder slots have been saved as per the request of Lead Members and Corporate Directors

 <p>Brent</p>	<p>Full Council 19 September 2024</p> <hr/> <p>Report from the Corporate Director of Finance and Resources</p>
<p>Audit and Standards Advisory Committee – Vice Chair’s Report</p>	

Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	Council
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:	None
Background Papers:	None
Contact Officer(s): <small>(Name, Title, Contact Details)</small>	Minesh Patel, Director of Finance and Resources Tel: 020 8937 4043 Email: minesh.patel@brent.gov.uk

1.0 Executive Summary

1.1. This report provides a summary of the activities carried out by the Council’s Audit and Standards Advisory Committee and the Audit and Standards Committee since the start of the 2024-25 Municipal Year and Chair’s Annual Report provided on 8 July 2024.

2.0 Recommendation(s)

2.1 Council is asked to note the contents of the report.

3.0 Detail

3.1 Contribution to Borough Plan Priorities & Strategic Context

3.1.1 The Council’s Audit and Standards Advisory Committee (ASAC) and the Audit and Standards Committee (ASC) play an important role in ensuring the good governance of the Council. The committees are a key component of the Council’s governance framework. They contribute to the overall success of the Council by providing an independent and high-level focus on the adequacy of governance, risk and control arrangements to provide assurance and confidence to those charged with governance.

3.1.2 The ASAC is responsible for considering and advising the relevant council bodies on various governance matters relating to audit activity, the council's regulatory framework, and members' standards of conduct. The ASC is responsible for various governance matters including reviewing and approving the Annual Statement of Accounts, adopting the council's Annual Governance Statement and promoting high standards of conduct by members and co-opted members.

3.2 Background

3.2.1 The ASAC has met twice since the start of the 2024-25 Municipal Year, and the ASC has met once. A summary of the items discussed and considered at these meetings is set out below.

3.2.2 Audit and Standards Advisory Committee – 12th June 2024

a. **Standards Report (including gifts and hospitality)**

The purpose of this report was to update the Audit and Standards Advisory Committee on gifts and hospitality registered by Members in Q4 2023-24. The report also provided an update on member training.

b. **Annual Counter Fraud Report 2023-24**

This report summarised the counter fraud activity undertaken across multiple fraud types (including internal fraud, housing tenancy fraud, external fraud, blue badge fraud, and proactive work) for the financial year 2023-24.

c. **Internal Audit Annual Report**

This report summarised the activity of the Council's Internal Audit Function for the financial year 2023-24. In addition, the report set out the Annual Internal Audit opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's framework for governance, risk management and control, provided by the Council's Head of Internal Audit. This statement is used to support the Council's Annual Governance Statement.

The report also presented a revised Internal Audit Charter, reflecting recent changes in the role of the Head of Internal Audit.

d. **External Audit Enquiries of Management**

The purpose of this report was to finalise the responses provided by the Council to the external auditors Enquiries of Management in order to meet expectations of the Financial reporting Council (FRC).

e. **Draft Statement of Accounts 2023-24 Update**

In accordance with good practice, the Committee required the draft Statement of Accounts for 2023-24 for members initial consideration and feedback, in advance of the main audit which was scheduled to commence at the end of June.

f. Annual Report of the Chairs of the Audit and Standards Committee and Audit and Standards Advisory Committee

This report summarised the work of both Committees for the municipal year 2023-24 in accordance with the requirements and principles set out within CIPFA's position statement regarding Audit Committees.

g. Annual Governance Statement 2023-24

This report set out the draft Annual Governance Statement for 2023-24 as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. The Committee was asked to consider the report in advance of referral to the Audit and Standards Committee for formal approval.

h. External Audit Progress and Sector Update

The purpose of this report was to provide a progress update in respect of Grant Thornton delivering their responsibilities as the Council's External Auditors.

3.2.3 Audit and Standards Committee – 12th June 2024

a. Annual Governance Statement 2023-24

This report sought formal approval of the Council's Annual Governance Statement for 2023-24, following its consideration by the Audit and Standards Advisory Committee.

3.2.4 Audit and Standards Advisory Committee – 24th July 2024

a. Dedicated Schools Grant Deficit Management Plan Update

This report informed the Committee of the Dedicated Schools Grant deficit which has arisen mainly from overspend against the High Needs Block of the Grant that is used to support children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities.

The report also provided the historical context to the deficit and an update on the progress that has been made against the Deficit Management Plan.

b. Treasury Management Outturn Report 2023-24

This report set out the outturn for the Council's Treasury Management Activities for 2023-24 updating Members on both borrowing and investment decisions.

c. External Audit Progress Report and Sector Update

The Committee received a verbal update providing progress in delivering Grant Thornton's responsibilities as the Council's external auditors.

3.2.5 Forward Plan Items

The following items are due to be presented to the Audit and Standards Advisory Committee meeting on 25th September 2024:

- Standards Update (including Gifts and Hospitality)
- Internal Audit Progress Update
- Stakeholder and Guarantor governance report of i4b and First Wave Housing
- Audit Findings Report
- Emergency Preparedness

4.0 Stakeholder and ward member consultation and engagement

4.1 None.

5.0 Financial Considerations

5.1 The report is for noting and so there are no direct financial implications.

6.0 Legal Considerations

6.1 The report is for noting and there are no direct legal implications.

7.0 Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Considerations

7.1 None.

8.0 Climate Change and Environmental Considerations

8.1 None

9.0 Human Resources/Property Considerations (if appropriate)

9.1 None

10.0 Communication Considerations

10.1 None

Report sign off:

Minesh Patel

Corporate Director of Finance and Resources



Full Council – 19 September 2024

Motion for Non-Cabinet Member debate

Cutting of Winter Fuel Payments

This Labour government is planning to scrap the Winter Fuel Payment (WFP) which will impact 10 million pensioners including over 30,000 in Brent, despite promising to protect the benefit during the general election. One in five winter deaths are directly attributable to cold homes, and one in ten to fuel poverty. While some pensioners currently in receipt of WFP may not require it, many thousands across Brent just sit above the cut off for Pension Credit and will now lose their allowance.

Just weeks after the election, the Labour Chancellor Rachel Reeves has announced a cut to the WFP which will reduce it by up to £300, money that would have helped pensioners with heating bills during winter.

Between 2010 and 2023, the Conservative Government lifted over 200,000 pensioners out of absolute poverty. The Conservative governments unprecedented cost of living support following Putin's illegal invasion of Ukraine also prevented 400,000 pensioners from falling into absolute poverty in 2022 to 2023.

The WFP was introduced in 1997 by Gordon Brown. Ironically it is now a Labour government that is withdrawing the same WFP.–Previously paid to all pensioners it is now being restricted to those on income related benefits or tax credits to ease fiscal pressures. This is a shameful betrayal of British pensioners.

For two and a half years, Labour have accused the Conservatives of making people choose between 'eating and heating'. As a pensioner you are now being penalised for not claiming benefits. Labours policy will mean more pensioners will unnecessarily die in Brent from the cold this winter.

This council therefore notes:


- The Labour government decision to restrict the WFP to only pensioners in receipt of means tested benefit, which disproportionately affects Brent's most vulnerable residents.
- That all pensioners deserve to live in warm safe homes, and that removing support will increase the risk of cold related illnesses and excess winter deaths among the elderly population.

- The criticism from Age UK, Countryside Alliance and other charities highlights the social injustice and potential health risks posed by this sudden policy change.

This Council resolves:

- (1) To request the Leader of the Council writes to the Chancellor, urging a review of the decision to means test the WFP and to ask the government to ensure that vulnerable pensioners, particularly those who do not claim Pension Credit are protected from fuel poverty.
- (2) To condemn the removal of WFP from pensioners who do not claim means tested benefits recognising the disproportionate impact this will have on our most vulnerable residents.
- (3) To write to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government to seek funding for local advertising and outreach campaigns to raise awareness about Pension Credit and other benefits, targeting pensioners who may be eligible but are not currently claiming.
- (4) To recommend that provision is made in Brent Council's finances to support struggling residents with 'top-ups' to the loss of the WFA either through the Resident Support Fund or similar provision.

Cllr Jayanti Patel
Queensbury ward

 Brent	Council 19 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:	Council
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 Council is asked to approve (following its consideration and referral by Cabinet on 9 September 2024) formal sign off and adoption of the Brent Youth Justice Plan 2024-25 as detailed within Appendix A of the report.

3.0 Detail

3.1 Contribution to the Borough Plan and Strategic Priorities

3.1.1 The Youth Justice Plan 2024/25 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 Feedback from young people through surveys and individual engagement has been encouraging with some comments from parents and children highlighted below:

- *'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 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.

3.1.5 **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.

3.1.6 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).

3.1.7 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.

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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			
Total Offences	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 (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 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.

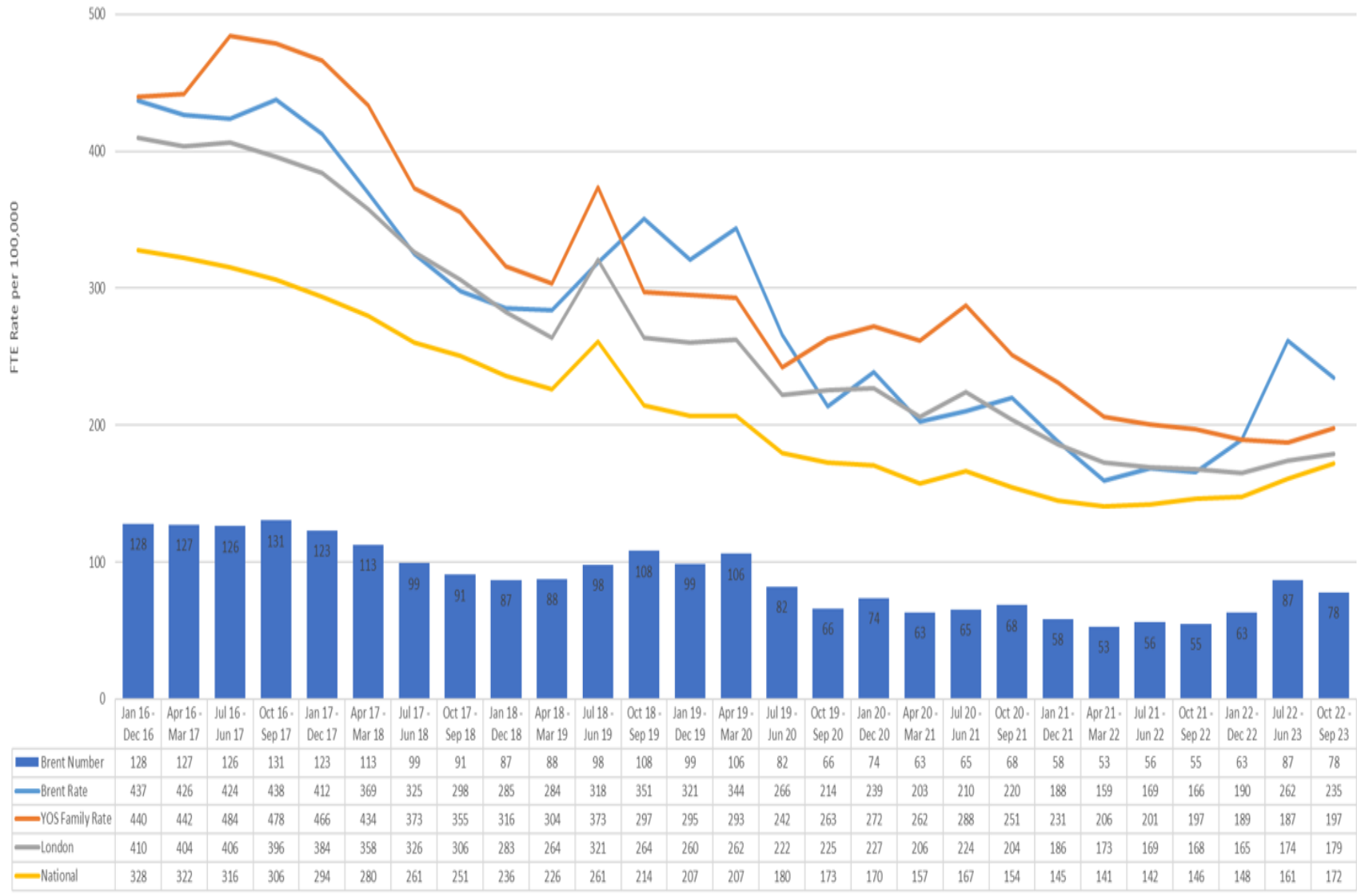
Work in this area has benefitted from the continued use of the YJB live reoffending tracker to analyse data at the level of individual young people. YJS has also created the YJS Transitions Panel to manage various transitions (often a vulnerable time for children and young people), listened to the voice 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 O OCDs. 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.

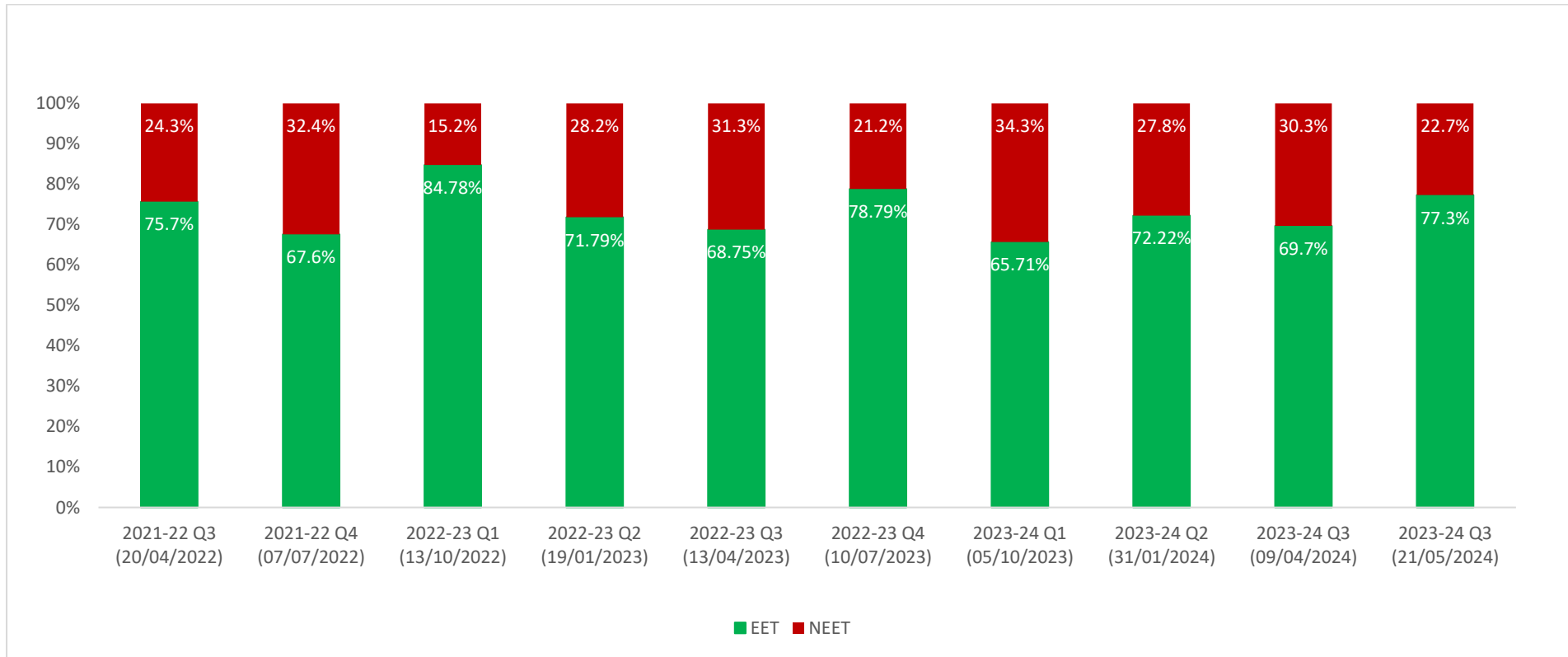
10.16 Education, Training and Employment

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



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.

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

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

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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
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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	

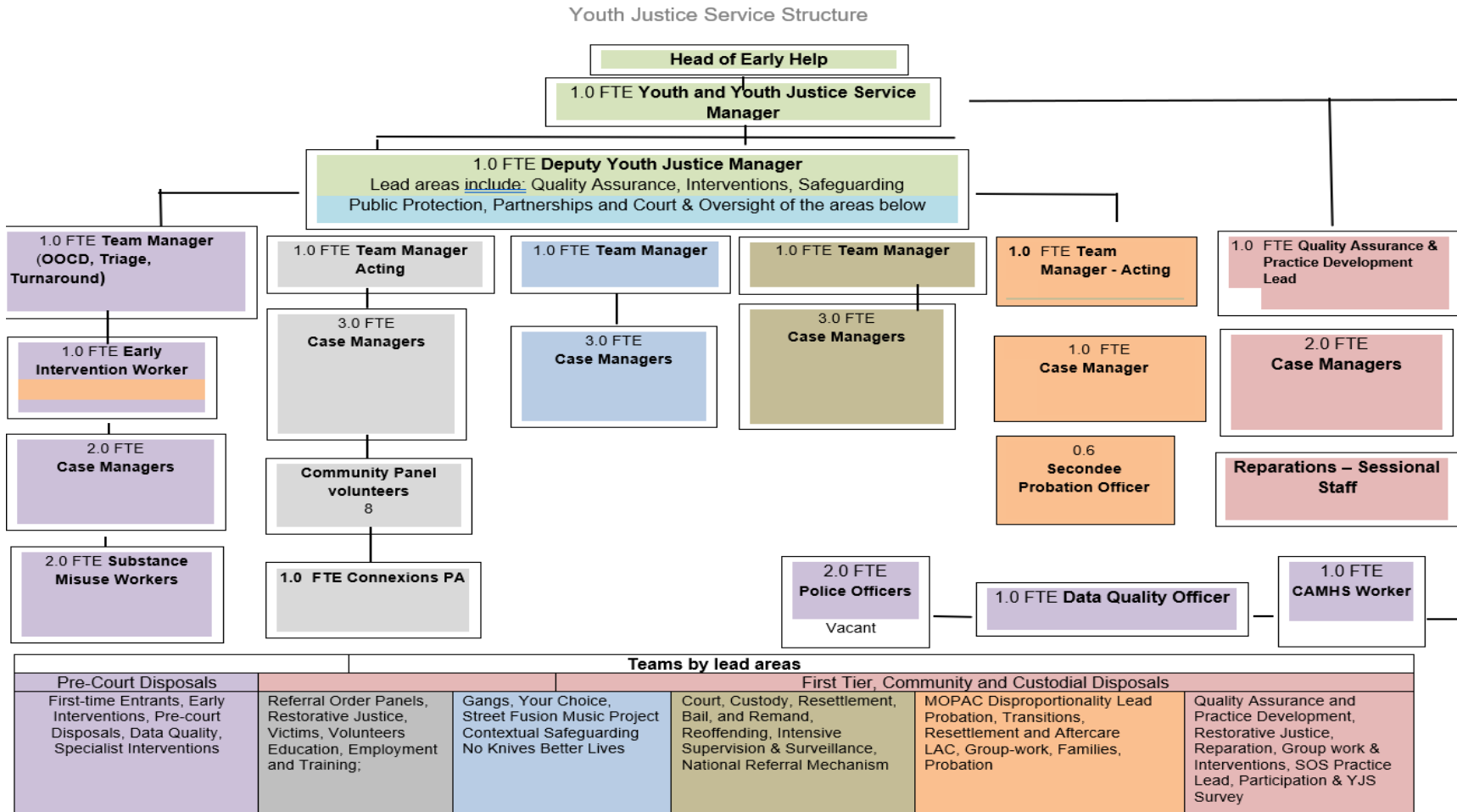
Staff by gender and ethnicity (There are no staff currently registered as disabled)

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	Council 19 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
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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)

2.1 Full Council is asked to note and approve, following its consideration by Audit & Standards Advisory Committee (24 July 2024) and Cabinet (9 September 2024) the 2023-24 Treasury Management Outturn report in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice

3.0 Contribution to the Borough Plan and Strategic Priorities

- 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

- 4.1.1 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

5.1 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

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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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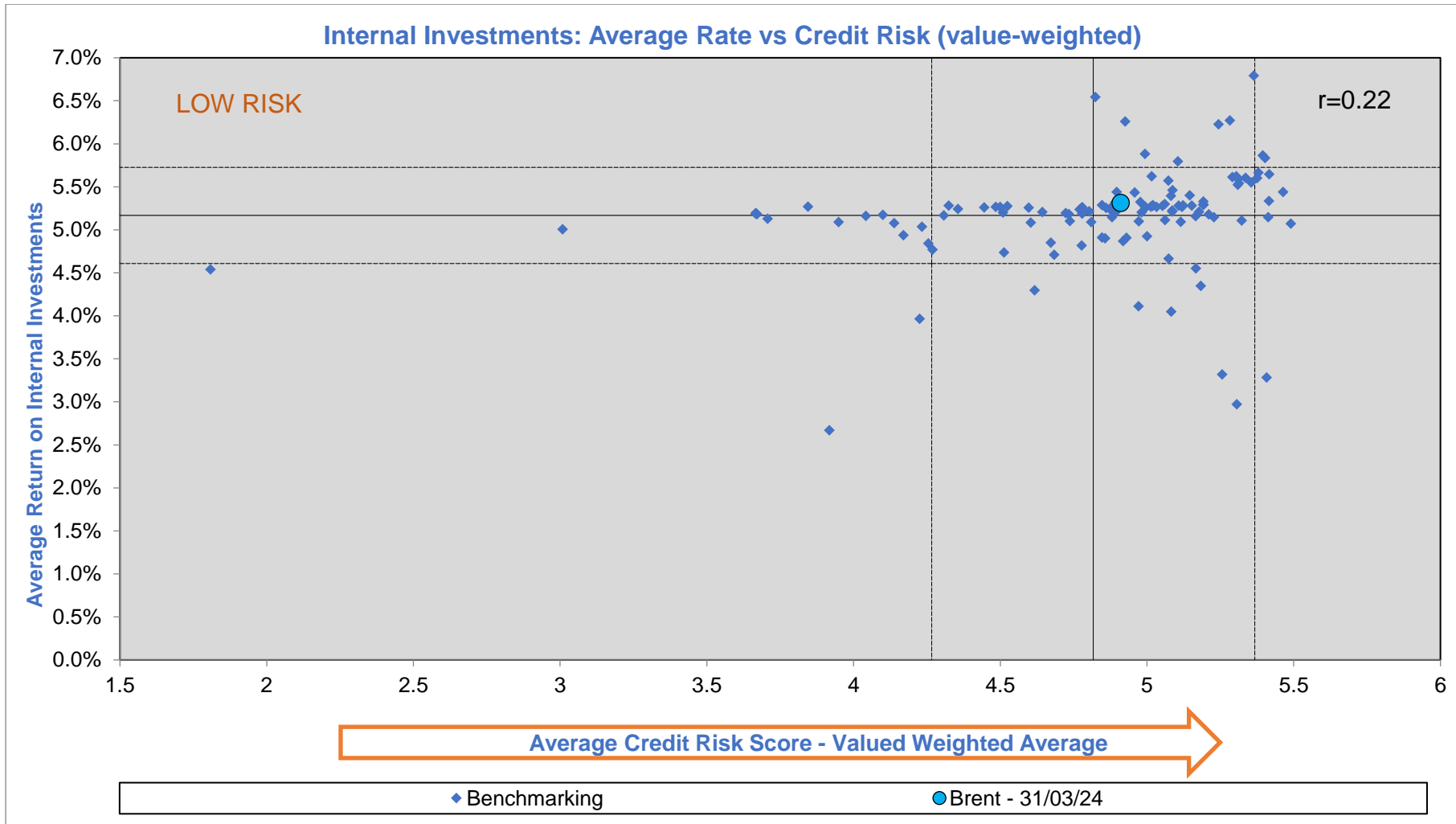
Appendix 2

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)	2023/24	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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