



LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

MINUTES OF THE CABINET

**Held in the Conference Hall, Brent Civic Centre on Monday 16 June 2025 at
10.00 am**

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

Also present: Councillors Knight

1. Introduction & Apologies for Absence

Prior to commencing the meeting, Councillor Muhammed Butt (as Leader of the Council) welcomed Councillor Promise Knight back following her return from Maternity Leave. As a result of the changes introduced to the Cabinet Portfolios earlier in the year, the Leader advised that Councillor Knight would be returning as the newly established Cabinet Member for Customer Experience, Resident Support and Culture with Councillor Donnelly-Jackson continuing as Cabinet Member for Housing. Members noted these changes would formally take effect immediately following the Cabinet meeting.

The opportunity was also taken to thank Councillor Donnelly-Jackson for the work undertaken and support in covering Councillor Knight's portfolio, pending her return from maternity leave.

In addition, the Leader also took the opportunity to express his condolences to all members of the community across Brent either directly or indirectly affected by the tragic loss of life as a result of the crash of Air India Flight AI-171 in Ahmedabad. In recognising the impact across Brent, all those present at the meeting were invited to join the Leader in observing a moments silence in remembrance of those who had lost their lives and been affected by the tragedy.

All present at the meeting then stood to join the Leader in observing a moments silence.

Moving on to formally open the meeting, apologies for absence were received from Nigel Chapman (Corporate Director Children, Young People & Community Development) with Kibibi Octave (Director Community Development) attending as his representative.

2. Declarations of Interest

The following personal interest was declared in relation to Agenda Item 7 (Future of Bridge Park Leisure Centre):

- Councillor Farah – as a member and regular user of Bridge Park Leisure Centre.

No other declarations of interest were made during the meeting.

3. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

Cabinet **RESOLVED** that that the minutes of the previous meeting held on Monday 19 May 2025 be approved as a correct record of the meeting.

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

None identified.

5. **Petitions (if any)**

There were no petitions presented at the meeting.

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

There were no items referred from either the Community Wellbeing or Resources & Public Realm Scrutiny Committees.

7. **Future of Bridge Park Community Leisure Centre**

Prior to considering the report, Councillor Muhammed Butt (as Leader of the Council) welcomed Vengeance (representing the London Roller Derby league) to the meeting whom he advised had requested to speak regarding the impact the proposed closure of Bridge Park Leisure Centre would have on that organisation as a current user of the Leisure Centre.

In addressing Cabinet, the opportunity was taken by Vengeance (speaking using her Roller Derby name) to outline the background to the Roller Derby League and way in which the sport was played. Members were advised of the way the league operated in an open, inclusive and democratic manner along with their commitment to empowering women, those marginalised genders and the LGBTQ+ community through sport. The league had been established in 2006 as the first in the UK and, as a member of the Women Flat Track Roller Derby Association (which included teams from across the world), continued to be a driving force in the establishment of the sport across the UK and Europe with an international fan base and world class athletes using Bridge Park Leisure Centre as a training base to compete internationally.

Referring to the leagues current use of the Leisure Centre involving bookings for over 300 hours per year, the lack of suitable alternative training space was highlighted as a concern should the decision be made to close the Centre. Whilst recognising the challenges in terms of the current sustainability of the facilities available at the Centre, it was highlighted that the league stood in support of the Save Bridge Park Campaign and opposition to its closure but requested that should the decision be made to proceed, the Council support them (having outlined the specification required including the need for a facility with a solid floor) in seeking suitable alternative provision so they could continue operating and for which, it was pointed out, they would be grateful for any assistance available.

As a brief response in advance of consideration of the main report, Councillor Nerva (as Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health & Leisure) began by thanking Vengeance for the informative nature of her comments and advised (without seeking to prejudice any decision made by Cabinet) that should the decision be made to proceed with closure of the Leisure Centre, the Council would continue to support the league in seeking a suitable alternative venue, recognising the discussions already undertaken on the specification required. The league was also thanked for the frankness expressed regarding the current state of repair of the existing facilities at the Leisure Centre, which it was pointed out had also formed the basis for the recommended approach towards the provision of new sport facilities on the site.

Following on, Councillor Benea (as Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning & Property) also took the opportunity to thank Vengeance for the representations made on behalf of the London Roller Derby league. Highlighting the current unsustainable nature of conditions at the existing facility which needed to be addressed, she also confirmed the Council's ongoing commitment to work with the league in seeking suitable alternative provision should the decision be made to proceed with the closure and reprovision of a more sustainable and flexible sport and community facility on the site. The work of the league was also recognised and commended in support of their approach towards more inclusive and open access to sport.

Councillor Muhammed Butt (as Leader of the Council) also thanked Vengeance for taking the time to address Cabinet and confirmed that the written representations from the League also submitted in advance of the meeting regarding the content of the report on the agenda had been received and would be considered as part of any decision made on the way forward. In advance of considering the report included on the agenda, he also confirmed that additional representations had been received from Dawn Butler MP in support of the London Roller Derby League.

Moving on, Councillor Nerva (as Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health & Leisure) followed by Councillor Benea (as Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning & Property) were then invited to introduce the report from the Corporate Director Service Reform and Strategy & Corporate Director, Neighbourhoods and Regeneration providing an update regarding progress on the development of the new leisure centre at Bridge Park, proposals for closing the existing Bridge Park Community Leisure Centre and outcomes from the recent public consultation on the emerging plans for the Hillside Corridor Masterplan, including the Bridge Park site along with proposed transitional arrangements for centre users impacted by any closure.

In presenting the report, Councillor Nerva highlighted the importance of the proposals presented for consideration in representing what he felt was a significant step towards the regeneration of the Bridge Park site and the revitalisation of the surrounding Stonebridge area as a key component of the Hillside Regeneration Corridor. In outlining the proposals, the opportunity was first taken to acknowledge the significance of Bridge Park Community Leisure Centre in the history of the borough given the important role it had played, particularly in empowering Black residents and the local community since its creation in the 1980s. As such, members were advised of the commitment to ensuring that this heritage and history

was recognised and commemorated as part of the redevelopment proposals, with the Council seeking to work closely with the community to make that a reality.

In terms of the current proposals, members were advised these had been designed to reflect that it was no longer felt the current facility was able to meet local community needs, with the leisure centre running at a significant loss and essential repairs identified as required amounting to over £1.5 million. Given the longer term plans for regeneration of the site (which would involve demolition and reprovision of the facility) the continued level of investment required had no longer been assessed as representing a good use of public funds. Following a process of consultation and planning, members were advised that the Council was therefore at a stage where it needed to look to the future and begin the redevelopment process.

Turning to the regeneration proposals for Bridge Park, it was pointed out these had been designed to deliver not only a new, state-of-the-art leisure centre but also contribute towards the delivery of much-needed affordable homes as well as training and employment opportunities. In line with the vision outlined, members were therefore advised that the proposals presented involved closure of the leisure centre in July 2025 enabling the site to be cleared and work to commence in preparing for the construction of a new leisure centre, with that work expected to begin as early as September 2027. Whilst recognising and acknowledging the disruption this would cause, the proposals had been identified as necessary to ensure the longer term benefits outlined for the community could be delivered with the report also providing a comparison of current and future leisure provision on the site as well as alternative provision available in the surrounding area.

The opportunity was also taken to thank all residents and community groups who had engaged in the consultation process, with the outcome having reinforced the Council's commitment to delivering a redevelopment that would meet the needs of the community, both now and in the future whilst also enhancing future leisure provision.

Following on, Councillor Benea (as Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning & Property) also welcomed the report highlighting that the regeneration proposals had been designed to deliver not only a new leisure centre but also contribute towards the broader and forward looking vision for the Hillside Regeneration Corridor in seeking to provide opportunities for the delivery of Affordable Housing as well as training and employment opportunities as part of the approach in providing a foundation for a thriving, inclusive neighbourhood, with enhanced facilities that would also support the health and well-being of local residents whilst securing the future of the Bridge Park site as a vital community asset. The opportunity was also taken to thank all those who had contributed for their engagement in the consultation process, with the feedback provided stated to have been invaluable in shaping the future of the site. As an outcome of the consultation process, reference was made to 96% of respondents having agreed that the site was in need of significant investment, and 100% of respondents supporting the idea of new parks and green spaces for the area. The proposals outlined in the report had therefore been designed to reflect these outcomes along with the commitment to ensure the heritage of the site was also recognised and commemorated.

In considering the report, Cabinet recognised the impact that closure of the current leisure centre would have on the wider local community but also supported the

basis of the proposals in terms of state of repair of the current facility and nature and level of the investment that would be required to secure its continued use, pending delivery of the planned new leisure centre. Members were also keen to recognise the wider contribution of the site in terms of the transformative impact and regeneration of the surrounding area as part of the Hillside Regeneration Corridor, including the provision of Affordable Housing and training and employment opportunities, which Councillor Knight (as local ward councillor) advised she also welcomed.

In recognising and valuing the history and heritage of the site, tribute was paid to the young people from the Black community within Harlesden and Stonebridge who had originally started the centre with the assurance provided that the plaque on the current Bridge Park Community Leisure Centre marking the achievement of the late Leonard Johnson, community activist and Chair of Harlesden Peoples Community Council, in creating the space would be retained and included in the new facility. Support was also expressed for the efforts being made to ensure that the site's history and heritage was commemorated in the new development.

Having once again thanked Vengeance for the representations made on behalf of the London Roller Derby league and the organisations commitment to the leisure centre, the Leader ended by acknowledging the difficult nature of the decision faced by Cabinet given the legacy and valued nature of the asset by both the local community and users of the existing facility. At the same time, however, he felt it was also important to recognise the existing risks posed by the poor condition of the building which was nearing the end of its expected lifespan and would require significant capital investment and work to bring up to an acceptable condition to maintain operations. Given the extent of the issues outlined, it was felt that this investment and maintenance work would no longer be cost effective to sustain, especially recognising the wider regeneration of the site and alternative supporting leisure provision available in the surrounding area.

In seeking to moved forward with the proposals, further assurance was provided in relation to the commitment provided regarding commemorating the heritage of the original site as part of the provision of a new fit for purpose leisure facility which would also reflect the changing nature and requirement of the surrounding local communities. Once again, the opportunity was taken to thank all those who had engaged in the consultation process, which the Leader advised he was keen to ensure continued moving forward as part of the wider regeneration of the area. Thanks were also expressed to officers for their support in developing the proposals recognising the complex nature of the process and stages that would still need to be completed prior to moving forward.

Having considered the representations received, contents of the report, outcome of consultation, proposed transitional arrangements for impacted users Cabinet, In support of the positive impact and contribution which it was felt the provision of a new enhanced leisure facility would deliver for the local community in Stonebridge as well as in support of the wider Hillside Regeneration Corridor, **RESOLVED:**

- (1) To proceed with the closure date of Bridge Park Community Leisure Centre agreed as 31 July 2025.

- (2) To approve the revised facility mix for the council led development at Bridge Park.
- (3) Following on from (1) above and subject to the outcome of the decision of the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (as outlined in paragraph 3.2.4 of the report) to approve the demolition of the council owned buildings at Bridge Park, subject to securing the relevant consents for undertaking demolition works.
- (4) To approve the Council entering a deed of variation to the CLSA with Stonebridge Real Estate Development (SRED) as detailed in paragraphs 3.2.12 – 3.2.15 of the report.
- (5) To delegate authority to the Corporate Director, Neighbourhoods and Regeneration, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning and Property to agree any further variations that are required to update the CLSA with SRED.
- (6) To approve the proposed site use options for the Twybridge Way, Morland Gardens and Bernard Shaw House sites that form part of the Hillside Corridor Masterplan and approve a capital budget of £1m to commence design work for these sites.

8. NCIL 2025/2026 Allocation Priorities

Councillor Rubin (Cabinet Member for Climate Action and Community Power) introduced a report from the Corporate Director Service Reform and Strategy seeking approval to the updated process developed to determine NCIL allocations for financial year 2025-26.

In presenting the report, Cabinet were advised that the proposals detailed a streamlined approach to the allocation Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy (NCIL) funding for 2025-2026 seeking to not only build on neighbourhood priorities but also accelerate project delivery, improve flexibility, and ensure alignment with strategic borough-wide objectives. In recognising the role of NCIL as a vital mechanism to ensure communities across Brent were able to benefit directly from the range of development happening throughout the borough, members were advised that the recommended approach involved a shift from the previous ward-based allocations to a more flexible borough-wide model, which was felt to offer the greatest flexibility to meet needs and priorities across Brent. It was pointed out the approach had also been designed to provide a less complex method of distribution, providing equal opportunity for communities across the borough to access funding whilst taking into account the cumulative impacts of development across different areas.

Although mindful of the need to ensure projects were prioritised and allocated in a way that would avoid specific areas being disproportionately advantaged or disadvantaged, the proposed removal of the cap on total funding for individual projects also included within the revised approach had, it was pointed out, been designed to enable delivery of larger, higher-impact projects than could deliver real change. As a further rationale supporting introduction of a more streamlined process, members were advised of the way it had also been designed to support

urgent investment in key physical infrastructure whilst remaining aligned with existing neighbourhood and Brent Connects priorities and contributing to wider Borough Plan objectives. Under the revised process, NCIL projects would also be expected to contribute to reducing pressure on council revenue budgets, helping protect vital services for the most vulnerable residents.

To ensure delivery of the approach outlined, members were advised that officers would also be seeking to proactively engage with councillors at an earlier stage in the process to identify initiatives that would have the greatest impact, guided by data including resident complaints, member enquiries, and the Brent Social Progress Index. This would also be supported by a process of improved communication around NCIL-funded projects so that residents were able to understand how the funds being allocated would be able to translate into tangible improvements within their neighbourhoods in a fair and more flexible manner.

In support of the more streamlined approach outlined within the report, Cabinet welcomed what they recognised to be the less complex and more transparent process along with the earlier engagement with local ward councillors. Members also commended the move towards what was felt to be a fairer and more flexible approach to the distribution of NCIL funds which, whilst continuing to be informed by community priorities (including crime and safety, active travel, public realm and seeking to address wider health and social inequalities across the borough), also recognised the cumulative impacts of development across the borough.

Members also commended the success achieved in terms of the generation and collection of CIL receipts, which was recognised as a further benefit of the efforts being made to deliver the ambitious programme of regeneration across Brent. In acknowledging the way in which the streamlined process would support local communities as well as the delivery of key infrastructure and ensure that growth being delivered worked for all sections of the community Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

- (1) To approve the administration process for NCIL funding for financial year 2025/26 as outlined in section 7 of the report.
- (2) To approve the requirement that all NCIL funded projects must demonstrate contribution to the neighbourhood priorities outlined in section 4 of the report.
- (3) To approve option 1 (as outlined in section 6 of the report) – a borough wide model for the distribution of funding in 2025/26.
- (4) To approve that a cap on the total funding allocation available for any individual project or programme of work would not be applied (other than not exceeding the total available funding pot).
- (5) To note the proposed timeframes in the process, as detailed in section 7 of the report, had been significantly streamlined compared to previous years and as such the potential risk of slippage.
- (6) To note the proposed approach to building appropriate communication / promotional material around projects to demonstrate they were funded via NCIL (Council) as set in section 13 of the report.

9. **Q4 Performance Report**

Councillor Rubin (Cabinet Member for Climate Action & Community Power) introduced a report from the Corporate Director of Service Reform & Strategy, which provided Cabinet with an overview of corporate performance in Quarter 4 2024-25.

In presenting the report, Cabinet noted that the performance monitoring update provided a detailed assessment against the full suite of Key Performance Indicators developed to monitor delivery of the desired outcomes and corporate priorities within the new Borough Plan 2023-2027 focussed around the delivery of prosperity, sustainability, and thriving communities across Brent. In terms of a brief overview, members attention was drawn to the 49 Borough Plan key indicators included with the performance scorecard of which 24 had been identified as green (on or above target), 3 as amber (just off target) and 9 as red (off target) with 13 included as contextual information.

In recognising the efforts outlined within the report to focus on performance in the delivery of key services and priorities within the context of the wider financial and demand led challenges faced by services across the local authority, specific reference was made to the positive performance achieved over the latest monitoring period in relation to a number of targets. These included the provision of job placements secured through Brent Works as well as apprenticeship and in relation to the Council's environmental objectives, including installation of EV charging points and wider public realm improvements in terms of Category 2 Highway Repairs and the retrofitting of homes for energy efficiency.

Other highlights in terms of performance included School inspection outcomes as well as positive engagement in Brent Youth Parliament and Care Quality Ambassador programmes along with health and community engagement targets (including structured drug and alcohol treatments and reablement service visits) as well as health check outreach.

Whilst keen to acknowledge the achievements outlined, members also recognised the need to avoid complacency with a number of areas identified for improvement. These included the ongoing challenges in relation to housing void turnarounds and delays in affordable housing completions (which it was noted reflected wider construction and viability issues) although it was noted that the Council remained on course to meet its longer-term target by 2028 boosted by the delivery of an additional 115 properties over the previous week within Alperton. Other challenges identified included the ongoing impact of the cost-of-living crisis. Whilst community hubs remained a vital safety net the surge in demand for support from the Resident Support Fund had resulted in processing times remaining high with members welcoming the action and additional resource provided to address the resulting backlog in applications. Similarly, members also noted the action outlined in relation to addressing Care Act assessment completion times involving review of core systems and supporting IT.

Whilst noting the challenges outlined, members welcomed the performance data provided as a means of providing a clear foundation for action and as a basis for the effective targeting of resources and focus for improvement of services to build a fairer, greener, and more resilient borough.

Highlighting the open and transparent nature of the report and opportunity provided to ensure work continued to be undertaken jointly by Cabinet Members with their relevant Corporate Directors in seeking to manage delivery of the highest standards of service, whilst also seeking to mitigate against the financial challenges and strategic risks identified as part of the overall approach towards supporting local residents and in support of the priorities within the Borough Plan, Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

- (1) To note the Borough Plan 2024-25 performance reporting for Q4 as set out in section 3 and Appendix A of the report.
- (2) To note the current and future strategic risks associated with the information provided and agree the remedial actions on strategic risks identified as appropriate alongside the challenge on progress being provided with responsible officers as necessary.

10. **Revised Black Community Action Plan**

Councillor Muhammed Butt (as Leader of the Council) introduced a report from the Corporate Director Children, Young People & Community Development outlining the work undertaken to re-prioritise the Black Community Action Plan (BCAP).

In presenting the report to Cabinet members were reminded of the background and context which had led to the emergence of the Black Community Action Plan as a strategic initiative aimed at addressing systemic issues of racism and inequality within the borough. In acknowledging the ongoing contribution from community leaders, activists, and residents across the borough who had engaged in development of the original plan, members were advised the opportunity had been taken to pause in order to reflect on the progress made with the revised plan and lessons learnt during the first phase of implementation.

As part of this process, consultation had been undertaken which had identified that whilst the original ten-year delivery plan remained ambitious there was a need to re-prioritise in order to provide a more defined focus on the top five themes over the next four years (2025-29). As a result, the revised Action Plan presented for consideration had been developed with the aim of being able to deliver more tangible and measurable outcomes that would ensure the work being delivered was better aligned to the key priorities and what mattered most to Black residents and communities across Brent representing a core commitment to both equity and community ownership.

Whilst recognising that accountability ranked lower in priority as an outcome of the consultation process, members were advised the revised Action Plan included more robust governance structures, workstreams and timelines. Having listened to comments made (and in line with previous recommendations) it was also proposed that an Independent Advisory Steering Group (IASG) be established. It was intended that the Group would provide consultative support, helping to inform and guide the officer-led Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion work, while also attracting external funding opportunities (recognising the constraints on funding) with its creation also felt to highlight the Council's commitment to co-design and co-

production in order to make sure that the voices of the community remained at the heart of the process.

In commending the revised Action Plan to Cabinet, members were advised of the intention not just to continue as before but to evolve and ensure that its delivery was embedded in council-wide frameworks with the progress made also being transparent and accountable to all communities and designed to provide a lasting impact.

In considering the report, Cabinet welcomed the revised focus within the Action Plan on efforts to address the systemic and structural issues that it was recognised continued to affect the Black community in Brent including the focus on health inequalities, education, employment, and representation and need to engage and challenge external partners such as the Health Service in support of its delivery.

In thanking all those who had engaged in the consultation and review process and recognising the way in which the revised Action Plan had been co-designed in conjunction with individuals and organisations representative of Brent's Black communities, Cabinet **RESOLVED**:

- (1) To approve the revised Black Community Action Plan (BCAP), including workstreams, new governance structures and timelines.
- (2) To approve, as requested through the community consultation in November 2024, extending the delivery period by at least 1 year to redress time lost, providing a remaining delivery period of 8 years in total (2025-33)
- (3) To approve that the plan concentrates on delivering the top 5 themes over a 4-year period (2025-29).
- (4) Whilst recognising as an outcome of the community consultation, that "accountability" ranked lower in terms of priority, in line with recommendations made previously during 2024 to approve the creation of an Independent Advisory Steering Group (IASG) with Council representation to help inform officer-led Equity, Diversion and Inclusion work. The purpose of the IASG would be to inform and advise on delivery, attract funding opportunities, and provide assurance and transparency to the community. This would also demonstrate the Council's commitment to co-design and co-produce activity informed by the community, including local experts and those with lived experience.

11. Brent Council's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Progress Update for 2024-25

Councillor Mili Patel (as Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources) introduced a report from the Chief Executive providing an update on how the Council was delivering its 2024- 2028 Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) strategy, Anti-Racism Action Plan and four EDI Board priorities including the actions taken, the challenges that remained, and future steps. Members were advised the report also supported the Council's obligation under the Public Sector Equality Duty to publish annual information demonstrating how it was complying with the equality duty.

In presenting the report Cabinet were advised the strategy and update reflected the Council's commitment towards building a fairer, more inclusive and equitable borough, recognising its vibrant and diverse nature as an area, along with the clear focus on the work that remained to continue the progress made over the first year of the strategy. In highlighting the work being undertaken to turn aspirations into action, members noted what was felt to have been the meaningful progress made toward delivering the EDI commitments which it was pointed out had included the launch of the Community Wellbeing Hub at New Horizons, bringing together housing, health, and wellbeing services under one roof; the successful accreditation of 19 venues under the Dementia Friendly Venues Charter and the delivery of over 37,000 books to vulnerable residents through the Home Libraries and Outreach Service. The Brent Schools Race Equality Programme had also successfully engaged 51 schools to tackle disproportionality in education, while nearly 1,000 digital devices had been distributed to residents facing digital exclusion with employment services having also reached out to significant numbers of residents with health conditions in an effort not only to address inequalities but also build opportunity. Internally, it was noted the council had also introduced mandatory anti-racism and inclusive workplace training, relaunched staff networks, and made progress in closing the gender pay gap. As such, the update was felt to provide a useful checkpoint in the Council's EDI journey with a focus on the data required to keep pushing for the necessary change.

Moving forward, however, members remained aware of the work still required to ensure that equity was embedded into everything the Council delivered, ensuring that policies, partnerships, and practices continued to deliver meaningful change for all Brent residents. This included a focus in seeking to investigate and address disparities in recruitment at senior levels, particularly for Asian applicants, along with trends in terms of pay gaps in relation to disability and ethnicity.

As part of this approach, reference was also made to the importance of community engagement in seeking to ensure that resident voices were embedded into the design and delivery of services. As examples of this approach, members were reminded of the successful campaign run by care-experienced young people for their status to be recognised as a protected characteristic and the formation of Brent's first Brazilian community group alongside the refresh of the Black Community Action Plan and establishment of the new Independent Advisory Steering Group co-designed with community representatives which was felt to demonstrate the way in which power and accountability were being placed in the hands of those most affected by systemic inequalities and to ensure that every person, no matter their background or circumstance felt that they belonged.

In support of the progress made to date and work identified moving forward into the second year of the strategy, members commended the achievements outlined and ongoing efforts being made to ensure that equity, inclusion and accessibility continued to be embedded into everything the Council was doing as a means of ensuring services remained accessible, communities were empowered, and the workforce was able to reflect the diversity of the people served across the borough.

Having recognised the positive progress made to date and focus required moving forward Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

- (1) To endorse the progress made in Year 1 of the EDI Strategy 2024-2028, Anti-Racism Action Plan, and EDI Board priorities.
- (2) To agree that information in the report be turned into public-facing communications materials highlighting Year 1 achievements.

12. Staples Corner Growth Area Infrastructure Projects

Councillor Benea (as Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning & Property) introduced a report from the Corporate Director Neighbourhoods and Regeneration seeking approval, following the designation of Staples Corner as a strategic Growth Area in Brent's Local Plan and adoption of the accompanying Masterplan vision and framework, to fund the delivery of four priority infrastructure projects in Staples Corner, working in partnership with Transport for London and the London Borough of Barnet.

In introducing the report, Cabinet was advised that approval was being sought for the allocation of up to £2.835m of Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy (SCIL) funding for the priority infrastructure projects outlined, following adoption of the Staples Corner Masterplan setting out the vision in seeking to transform the area into a high-quality industrial and urban district with new homes, modern workspaces, and better transport connections. Recognising the momentum built over the last year in terms of the engagement with developers and planning process, members noted the need identified to ensure growth being sought was supported by provision of the necessary infrastructure in order to unlock and enable the required development and also ensure communities were connected in seeking to shape a more sustainable future and turn the vision into reality.

Outlining the four projects being recommended for funding, members were advised these had been designed to remove long standing physical barriers created by the North Circular and Edgware Road, making it safer and easier for pedestrians and cyclists to travel across the area. The proposed works included new at-grade crossings, improved junctions and streetscapes, and upgrades to existing infrastructure such as the footbridge over the A406 which were recognised as key in improving access to Brent Cross West station and Brent Cross Town, enhancing walking and cycling routes and would also lay the foundations for new homes and job opportunities. The inclusion of public realm improvements such as tree planting and wheelchair accessibility was also felt to demonstrate the Council's commitment to inclusive design and climate conscious investment with the proposals also recognised as contributing towards Borough Plan priorities in relation to prosperity and stability through economic regeneration and to a cleaner, greener future by promoting sustainable travel and improved air quality.

In welcoming the proposals, members were also keen to recognise the strategic nature of the schemes outlined given their ability to unlock development potential while supporting long-term connectivity, active travel, inclusion, and resilience with the use of SCIL also supported as a means of ensuring that regeneration and growth in Brent was directly able to benefit the boroughs residents and specifically (in relation to Staples Corner) helping to shape the area into a place where people could live, work and travel with greater ease and more safety as a result of the core infrastructure being delivered.

Having considered the proposals outlined Cabinet **RESOLVED** to approve up to £2,835,000 Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy (SCIL) to design, plan, construct and maintain the four proposed priority infrastructure projects detailed within the report.

13. **Cecil Avenue Estate Management Company**

Councillor Benea (as Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning & Property) introduced a report from the Corporate Director Neighbourhoods and Regeneration outlining the proposal to establish a dedicated Estate Management Company (EMC) for the Cecil Avenue redevelopment as part of the broader Wembley Housing Zone (WHZ) regeneration project.

In introducing the report members were advised of the way in which the proposal represented another key milestone in the Council's regeneration programme for Wembley and mission to build homes, foster community, and deliver lasting public value. The proposal for which approval was being sought involved establishment of the Cecil Avenue Estate Management Company as a purpose-built, non-profit organisation that would provide seamless, high-quality management as well as embedding long-term stewardship for one of the borough's most significant regeneration sites creating not just new buildings, but a thriving, safe and well-managed place.

In recognising the progress being made in delivery of the regeneration programme at Cecil Avenue and Ujima House (working in partnership with Wates and the Mayor of London) including the provision of over 290 homes, as well as a new community centre, public courtyard garden, commercial space, and enhanced public realm, members were advised that this remained on track to be completed by 2026. The establishment of the management company was therefore identified as representing the next stage in delivery of the key long-term management structure with the new company responsible for acting as a central source of estate services, ensuring maintenance, safety, and communal upkeep were consistent and accountable as well as taking on legal responsibility under the Building Safety Act, with a clear governance framework to ensure resident safety was not compromised. Members were advised that the company would also be expected to run on a financially sustainable basis, with costs recovered through fair service charges, rather than falling on the Housing Revenue Account. As further assurance, it was pointed out that the Council would serve as a founding member with the intention to eventually take over full ownership and control of the company, securing its long-term influence and accountability as well as establishing mechanisms for resident voices to be heard, with a dedicated residents' group to engage directly with the managing agent.

In welcoming and supporting the approach outlined, members were keen to recognise the way it served to demonstrate how public-led regeneration could achieve strategic control, financial prudence, and social responsibility in a joined up way whilst also delivering a positive outcome for residents and as part of the wider regeneration programme across the area. On this basis Cabinet therefore **RESOLVED**:

- (1) To endorse arrangements for the proposed Cecil Avenue Estate Management Company, set out at paragraphs 3.4 and 3.5 of the report.

- (2) To approve Brent Council becoming a member of the Cecil Avenue Estate Management Company.
- (3) To delegate authority to the Corporate Director, Neighbourhoods & Regeneration to appoint two Council Officers and/or external individuals as Company Directors of the Cecil Avenue Estate Management Company.
- (4) To approve the entering into of a deed of variation to the Overarching Hybrid Development Agreement dated 13th March 2023 in respect of the Ujima House and Cecil Avenue sites, made between the Council, Wates Construction Limited and Wates Group Limited, to update the Estate Management Company arrangements therein, for the reasons detailed in paragraph 3.4 of the report.

14. Exclusion of Press and Public

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

15. Any other urgent business

There were no items of urgent business.

The meeting ended at 11.15 am

COUNCILLOR MUHAMMED BUTT
Chair