



SUMMONS TO ATTEND COUNCIL MEETING

Monday 7 July 2025 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: 27 June 2025 (republished on 2, 4 and 7 July 2025)

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

For electronic copies of minutes and agendas please visit:
[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

1 Apologies for Absence

2 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

1 -14

To confirm as a correct record, the minutes of the Annual Council Meeting held on Wednesday 14 May 2025.

(Agenda republished to include the attached minutes on 4 July 2025)

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

To receive any announcements from the Mayor, including details relating to the appointment of the Deputy Mayor.

5 Appointments to Committees and Outside Bodies and Appointment of Chairs/Vice Chairs 15 - 16

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

(Agenda republished to include the updated list of appointments on 2 July 2025)

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 at the time of agenda publication there are no deputation(s) due to be presented at the meeting.

7 Questions from Members of the Public & Brent Youth Parliament 17 - 22

7.1 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 one public question has been received, which has been attached to the agenda along with the

written response provided.

- 7.2 To receive question(s) submitted by the Brent Youth Parliament for response by the relevant Cabinet Member, in accordance with Standing Order 33(c).

Members are asked to note that one question has been received, which has been attached to the agenda along with the written response provided.

8 Petitions

23 - 26

For Members to consider any petitions with more than 200 signatures for which a request has been received for their presentation, in accordance with the Council's petition rules and Standing Order 68.

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

- (a) No to Twinning with Nablus
- (b) Save East Lane Theatre
- (c) Support Barham Park

Members are asked to note that the supporting details relating to each petition have been attached, for reference.

9 Motions

27 - 42

To debate the Group motions submitted in accordance with Standing Order 41.

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 2 July 2025 along with an amendment submitted by the Labour Group on the Conservative Group motion (Item 9.1) & Conservative Group on the Liberal Democrats motion (Item 9.2) & 2nd Labour Group motion (Item 9.4) on the on 7 July 2025)

10 Reports from the Leader and Cabinet

43 - 66

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.

(Agenda republished to include the attached report on 4 July 2025)

11 Questions from the Opposition and other Non-Cabinet Members 67 - 80

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.

12 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:

12.1 Committee Community & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee 81 – 88

12.2 Resources & Public Realm Scrutiny 89 - 96

(Agenda republished to include the report from the Resources & Public Realm Scrutiny Committee on 4 July 2025)

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.

13 Annual Report from the Chairs of the Audit & Standards Advisory and Audit & Standards Committees 97- 108

To receive the Annual Report jointly produced by the Chair of the Audit and Standards Committee and Audit and Standards Advisory Committee updating on the work of both Committees, in accordance with Standing Order 37.

14 Non Cabinet Members' Debate 109 - 110

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.

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

Empowering Brent with Visitor Levy Powers to Support Our Communities

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

15 Representation of Political Groups on Committees

111 - 118

Following a change in the political balance on the Council, to receive a report from the Corporate Director Finance & Resources reviewing (under Section 15 of the Local Government & Housing Act 1989) the allocation of seats on Council Committees and other relevant bodies.

Ward Affected:
All Wards

Contact Officer: Amira Nassr, Deputy Director
Democratic & Governance Services
Tel: 0208 937 5436
amira.nassr@brent.gov.uk

16 Exclusion of the Press & Public

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

17 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 ANNUAL MEETING OF THE COUNCIL
held in the Grand Hall, Brent Civic Centre on Wednesday 14 May 2025 at 6.00 pm

PRESENT:

The Worshipful the Mayor
Councillor Ryan Hack

The Deputy Mayor
Councillor Kathleen Fraser

COUNCILLORS:

Aden	Afzal
Agha	Ahmadi Moghaddam
Ahmed	Akram
Bajwa	Begum
M Butt	S Butt
Chan	Chappell
Choudry	Clinton
Collymore	Conneely
Crabb	Dar
Dixon	Farah
Gbajumo	Grahl
Hirani	Hylton
Kabir	Kansagra
Kennelly	Knight
Long	Lorber
Matin	Maurice
Miller	Mistry
Mitchell	Moeen
Molloy	Rubin
Shah	Ketan Sheth
Krupa Sheth	L.Smith
T.Smith	

1. Welcoming Statement

Prior to formally opening the meeting, the outgoing Mayor Councillor Dar took the opportunity to welcome all councillors and guests to the Annual Council meeting. He then invited Kim Wright (as the Council's Chief Executive) to provide a brief outline of the arrangements for the conduct of the meeting and Mayor Making ceremony. Having noted the outline provided, the Mayor then formally opened the meeting.

2. **Apologies for Absence**

The Mayor advised that apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Benea, Chohan, Donnelly-Jackson, Ethapemi. Johnson, Kelcher, Mahmood, Nerva, J Patel, M.Patel, Rajan-Seelan and Tatler.

An apology for lateness was received from Councillor T.Smith.

3. **To elect the Mayor of the Borough for the Municipal Year 2025 - 2026**

Prior to handing over to the Chief Executive for the conduct of the election process, Councillor Dar began by asking members for nominations to the office of Mayor of the London of Borough of Brent for the 2025 - 2026 Municipal Year.

Councillor Muhammed Butt proceeded to nominate Councillor Ryan Hack. In moving the nomination, he firstly took the opportunity to thank Councillor Dar for his hard work and dedication whilst serving as Mayor and commitment in seeking to represent local community groups and organisations. The Leader then moved on to advise how pleased he was to be able to nominate Councillor Hack for the position, recognising the qualities he would he bring to the role as the youngest Mayor in Brent's history and in seeking to represent a wide range of local causes and provide strong civic leadership across the borough.

Councillor Gbajumo then seconded the nomination of Councillor Hack for the office of Mayor of the London of Borough of Brent for the 2025 – 2026 Municipal Year also taking the opportunity to highlight what she felt would be his dedication and commitment to local communities across Brent.

There were no other nominations, and it was therefore **RESOLVED** that Councillor Ryan Hack be elected Mayor of the London Borough of Brent for the 2025 - 2026 Municipal Year.

Councillor Hack then proceeded to sign the statutory Declaration of Acceptance of Office of Mayor.

4. **To appoint a Councillor of the Borough to be Deputy Mayor**

Councillor Hack, as newly appointed Mayor, thanked members for his nomination and appointment as Mayor. He then announced the appointment of Councillor Kathleen Fraser to serve as Deputy Mayor for the 2025 - 2026 Municipal Year.

At this stage in proceedings the Mayors Chain of Office and robes were exchanged between the outgoing and newly appointed Mayor.

Councillor Hack then formally returned thanks for his appointment. Starting by welcoming all guests, he highlighted his pride and personal honour in being nominated as Mayor and thanked all members for their trust, confidence and faith in appointing him to take on the role as first citizen of the borough.

Highlighting the privilege he felt in being appointed as Mayor, Councillor Hack began by outlining his family history and welcoming his great grandparents as guests. Expressing pride at his strong Irish heritage, Councillor Hack advised he

had lived in Brent all his life, having studied at Preston Park Primary School Claremont High School and then St Dominic's Sixth Form College with his family's first home being a council property in Harlesden prior to them settling in Neasden. Referring to growing up in Brent, he outlined the strong sense of community and compassion he had experienced involving people from all walks of life which he hoped to be able to replicate during his time as Mayor.

Paying tribute to his family and mother Councillor Hack advised that, as a result of the support he had received, he had been the first person in his family to attend university where he had graduated with a Masters Degree from University College London. Whilst being the youngest Mayor in Brent's history, he hoped his story and journey in terms of perseverance over struggle and hardship along with similar experiences shared by many other across Brent would help to provide a sense of hope and aspiration to future generations.

Since being elected to serve on the Council, Councillor Hack advised that he had sought to use the platform to coordinate and campaign for improvements for many causes including residents access to food, mostly in areas of deprivation, which he advised had included working to open and support community kitchens as well as surplus food markets in order to support significant numbers of residents across Brent.

Councillor Hack then outlined the aims for his Mayoralty in terms of continuing to support the Council's overall vision and objectives. In this role he advised that he also intended to support the Brent Irish Advisory Service (BIAS) which had been formed in 1978 in response to the welfare needs of the Irish community and continued to work to improve the well-being of the Irish community across North London and beyond. Highlighting comments recently made by Colum Maloney, as one of the founders of BIAS and first Irish Mayor of Brent, as part of the St Patricks Day celebration at the Learie Constantine Centre, he supported the description of Brent being a borough "united as one", which he also believed represented the aspirations of those who had worked so hard to achieve the creation of Brent as a borough back in April 1965. Highlighting the important work undertaken through the Advisory Service he hoped all members would support him with his fund raising efforts during his year in office.

Highlighting his commitment and focus on the future driven by the belief that better days were ahead, Councillor Hack advised of the intention to use his role as Mayor to celebrate Brent as a welcoming borough bursting with pride, culture and diversity as well as to continue his support for refugees and those families seeking asylum particularly those living in temporary accommodation often with no access to their own kitchen facilities. This included work he had undertaken with a local community activist named Matilda in South Kilburn to expand the "In the Mix" social hub which provided support for refugees and asylum seekers in coming together to cook and socialise with the local community. As a result, he was proud to advise that the food provided for the reception following the Mayor Making ceremony had been prepared by the same organisation with the principle that "everyone was welcome at our table" felt to reflect modern Brent with its rich and diverse mixture of communities, nationalities and opportunities.

Recognising the effort required to ensure the aspirations and opportunities outlined were also delivered for the next generation, Councillor Hack advised he was keen

to use his time in office to support and encourage the work already being undertaken across neighbourhoods throughout the borough building on the success achieved by many communities in creating safe sanctuary within the borough from Ealing Road to “Little Brazil” in Willesden (areas recognised for their creativity and commerce) and Kilburn & Cricklewood Broadway. Taken together he felt the rich tapestry of different communities and faiths living side by side within the borough represented a spirit that was stronger than ever, including the tranquillity of areas such as Barnhill Pond and Mapesbury Dell, the volunteers supporting work to maintain the boroughs parks, green spaces and waterways, members of the local community supporting foodbanks, teachers running breakfast clubs alongside the cultural offer available through venues such as the Kiln Theatre and reggae singers from the BBMC family.

Reflecting on the goodness, justice and talent he felt was demonstrated by so many across the borough, the Mayor ended by taking the opportunity to once again thank his family and wider community for their support over the coming year and by once again highlighting how proud he was to have been elected as Brent’s First Citizen with Brent identified as a beacon of hope and his intention to continue using the role to support the work being undertaken by communities across the borough in a renewal of friendship.

5. Vote of thanks to the outgoing Mayor

The Mayor then invited Councillor Muhammed Butt, as Leader of the Council, to propose a vote of thanks to all co-opted and other members serving on the Council’s committees.

Councillor Muhammed Butt in once again congratulating Councillor Hack on his appointment as Mayor then moved on to highlight the valued work of the Council’s co-opted and independent committee members, given the core role they played as critical friends in the Council’s democratic process. In passing on his thanks, he advised how their independence and objectivity were seen as integral to the role of the bodies on which they served including Scrutiny, Audit & Standards and the various health and education bodies. Recognising the challenges which local government continued to face, he ended by thanking all of the co-opted and Independent Members for their work in supporting the Council’s democratic processes and drive towards continuous improvement.

The Mayor then invited the Leader of the Council to formally propose a vote of thanks for the outgoing Mayor, Councillor Dar. In doing so, Councillor Muhammed Butt began by highlighting the honour in serving as First Citizen of the Borough and in being able to advocate and serve as a champion for Brent. These were roles he felt Councillor Dar had worked hard to fulfil during his time as Mayor. Recognising the integrity, dedication, compassion and commitment demonstrated by Councillor Dar in serving the people of Brent during his time as Mayor, the Leader praised Councillor Dar for his warmth and the valued contribution made in representing the borough during his Mayoralty, which he advised had been appreciated by all members.

The Mayor then invited comments from other members in recognition of the role undertaken by the outgoing Mayor.

In response, Councillors Hirani, Maurice, Grahl, Lorber, Kabir, Choudry, Afzal. Saqib Butt, Agha, Clinton, Kennelly and finally Councillor Hylton all spoke to congratulate the new Mayor and Deputy Mayor on their appointment and thank Councillor Dar as outgoing Mayor for the dedication, compassion and commitment demonstrated in undertaking his civic role. Recognising his appointment as the youngest Mayor of Brent, members were keen to commend Councillor Hack on the dedication and commitment he had already displayed in seeking to stand against social injustice and challenge inequalities being experienced by local communities across the borough, which it was felt would continue to be demonstrated during his time as Mayor.

The Mayor then invited Councillor Dar to return thanks and review his time in office.

Councillor Dar, in returning thanks, began by expressing his pride at having been elected as Mayor and being able to serve the people of Brent during the previous year. Reflecting on the honour in being able to serve the borough, particular thanks were extended to all members for their support along with Kim Wright, as Chief Executive, the Leader of the Council, Amira Nassr and Fatema Limbada within Democratic Services along with Kim Gordan & Brian Kennedy in the Mayor's Office, which had been much valued. The opportunity was also taken to thank Councillor Grahl for her specific support as fellow Cricklewood and Mapesbury ward councillor as well as the management committee of the Pakistan Community Centre for their work whilst his attention had been focussed on Mayoral duties over the past year.

Reflecting on his time in office, Councillor Dar highlighted what he regarded as the privilege in being able to attend such a vast range of official community events (totalling nearly 1,100) which had involved him being able to meet so many inspiring, talented and generous local individuals, all of whom, he advised, had made him proud to call Brent home. Thanking everyone for the warmth in which he had been welcomed and received, Councillor Dar felt this represented the true heart of the borough reflecting on the diversity, unity and deep compassion he had had the opportunity to experience during his time in office.

Moving on to review his fundraising activities over the year, Councillor Dar reminded members of his pledge to support and raise the profile of the Pakistan Community Centre as his chosen charity during his year in office. As part of his fundraising activities he had welcomed the opportunity to highlight the important work and support the organisation provided to some of the most vulnerable people in the borough which he reminded members included the provision of food banks, homeless support, care for the elderly, disability services for children, health initiatives as well as community advice surgeries all being delivered as part of the centre's foundational work dating back to 1965. In thanking the community elders who had provided the platform to serve, Councillor Dar offered a blessing to the souls of those who had passed. All members then joined Councillor Dar in a round of applause to recognise the work undertaken by the Centre and all those who had supported his fundraising activities.

Highlighting the privilege he felt at having been able to serve as Mayor, Councillor Dar ended by advising how much he had enjoyed his time in office also taking the opportunity to thank his wife (as Mayoress) and family for their patience and support along with members, council staff, local community groups and residents for their kindness and service. In recognising the honour in being able to serve

Brent thanks were also expressed to Councillor Hack for his support as Deputy Mayor and to wish him and his family, along with Councillor Fraser as his deputy, all the best for his coming year as Mayor which he was sure he would serve with distinction.

The Mayor thanked Councillor Dar for his comments and highlighted how much he had enjoyed working with him during his time as Mayor. He ended by wishing him well for the future and then advised that as this now concluded the ceremonial part of the meeting, he would move on to deal with the remainder of the agenda.

Prior to moving on to deal with the remaining items on the agenda, the Mayor advised that the presentation of the Councillor Development Charter Plus Award, which had initially been scheduled for the meeting would now be undertaken as part of the Mayor's Announcements at the next Full Council meeting in July.

6. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no interests declared by Members at the meeting.

7. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the previous meeting held on Thursday 27 February 2025 be approved as a correct record.

8. **Annual Review of Constitution**

The Mayor invited Councillor Muhammed Butt (as Leader of the Council) to introduce the report from the Corporate Director of Finance & Resources. In presenting the report, Councillor Muhammed Butt advised this detailed proposed changes to the Constitution as a result of its annual review including changes to the Terms of Reference for the North West London Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee (Part 5 of Constitution) and a change to the Members Code of Conduct (Part 5 of Constitution) relating to the acceptance and registration of gifts and hospitality classified as "exceptional items" valued at £500 or more, with both changes commended as reasonable and sensible in terms of strengthening the Council's overall governance arrangements.

As no other members indicated that they wished to speak on the item the Mayor put the recommendations straight to the vote and they were declared unanimously **CARRIED**.

It was therefore **RESOLVED**:

- (1) To agree the changes to the Constitution set out in Appendix A of the report.
- (2) To note that the list of Cabinet Members and Portfolio Holders in Part 1 of the Constitution would be updated to reflect the appointments of, and allocation of functions to Cabinet Members by the Leader.
- (3) To authorise the Director of Law to amend the Constitution accordingly, including making any necessary incidental or consequential changes.

- (4) To note that, to the extent that the changes related to executive functions of the Council, they had been approved by the Leader.

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

The Mayor then moved on to invite Councillor Muhammed Butt (as Leader of the Council) to introduce the report from the Corporate Director of Finance & Resources which the Leader advised fulfilled the Council's duty to review and determine the representation of different political groups on certain Committees at its annual meeting. It was noted that no changes to the existing allocation of seats had been proposed reflecting the fact that there had been no change in the overall composition of political groups since the previous review.

The Mayor then opened the debate inviting other members to speak on the report, with the following contributions made.

In response to clarification sought by Councillor Lorber regarding the current size of the Labour Group, Marsha Henry (as Director of Law) confirmed that this remained as set out in the report with their currently being no members of the group identified as serving in an independent capacity.

As no other members indicated that they wished to speak on the item and the Leader of the Council advising he did not wish to exercise any right of reply the Mayor put the recommendations to the vote and they were declared **CARRIED**.

It was therefore **RESOLVED**:

- (1) To agree the size of each Committee, as detailed within the report.
- (2) To approve the allocation of seats on Committees to each of the Council's political groups (where the rules of political balance applied) as set out within the report and to make appointments to those committees (under agenda item 9 on the agenda) giving effect to the wishes of the political group allocated the seats.
- (3) To note that the political balance on Council Sub-Committees would be reviewed at the first meeting of the General Purposes Committee and Licensing Committee to be held following the Annual Council Meeting.

10. **Appointment to Committees and Outside Bodies including the appointment of Chairs & Vice-Chairs**

The Mayor then invited Councillor Muhammed Butt (as Leader of the Council) to introduce the report from the Corporate Director of Finance & Resources. In introducing the item, the Leader advised that the report set out the nominations for appointments to Committees and Outside Bodies and nomination for Chairs and Vice Chairs as well as co-opted members, where necessary, for the 2025 - 26 Municipal Year, with the nominations having been made (where required) in accordance with the political balance of the Council and requirements in relation to political proportionality.

The Mayor then opened the debate inviting other members to speak on the report, with the following contributions made.

In opening the debate Councillor Lorber highlighted his concern at the current arrangements relating to the allocation of Chairs on the Councils Scrutiny Committees. In referring to the importance of scrutiny as a key element in a healthy functioning democracy he felt there was a need to ensure, in seeking to deliver a strong, credible and effective scrutiny function, that it remained as independent as possible from the Executive. In order to safeguard the effectiveness, democratic accountability and independence of Brent's scrutiny function and reflect what he regarded as good practice elsewhere, he advised the Liberal Democrats were seeking to move an amendment to the proposed allocation of seats outlined within report requiring that the Chairs of the existing Scrutiny Committees should be Opposition Group appointments.

In response to clarification sought by the Chief Executive on the precise nature of the proposed amendment, Councillor Lorber advised the Liberal Democrats were seeking to amend the relevant Standing Order (49ii) within Part 2 (Procedural Rules) of the Constitution in order to provide that the Chairs of the Scrutiny Committees should be Opposition Group appointments.

Speaking in support of the proposed amendment, Councillor Clinton referred to a recent press article expressing concern at reported changes being introduced by a number of Labour led London Councils, which were felt to have impacted on the ability of opposition councillors to effectively scrutinise executive decisions within those authorities. Highlighting the importance in being able to safeguard the ability of all councillors to be able to meaningfully undertake their representational role and engage in the way scrutiny was being led, he urged all councillors to support the proposed amendment in seeking to ensure scrutiny remained as independent and democratically accountable as possible.

In raising a Point of Order, Councillor Kabir sought details on whether the proposed change had been subject to prior consideration at the Constitutional Working Group, which she felt would be the more appropriate body to review the proposal at this stage.

As a final contribution, Councillor Kansagra also speaking in support of the proposed change, as Leader of the Conservative Group, highlighted the concerns his Group had also previously raised in relation to impact which removal of the vice-chair roles on scrutiny from the Opposition Groups had had in undermining the independence and democratic accountability of the scrutiny function. As a result, he felt the amendment moved in relation to the arrangements for securing more effective and democratic scrutiny was reasonable, and proportionate and would deliver improved scrutiny along with better outcomes for all. He therefore advised the Conservative Group would be supporting the amendment and more detailed consideration of the proposals through the Constitutional Working Group.

As no further members indicated they wished to speak and having clarified the nature of the amendment moved during the debate, the Mayor then invited Councillor Muhammed Butt to exercise his right of reply in relation to the report and amendment moved at the meeting.

In summing up, Councillor Muhammed Butt queried the nature of the amendment which had been moved in relation to the report under consideration, which he felt was more of a constitutional issue rather than one impacting on the membership nominations for specific bodies. Recognising the democratic mandate of the current Administration, he felt this also covered member's participation in scrutiny and the wider democratic process highlighting the opportunities which were already available for members of the Opposition to fully participate and engage in the way scrutiny was being delivered. As such Councillor Muhammed Butt advised that the Labour Group did not feel any further changes were required to the current arrangements and were not therefore minded to support the proposal moved by Councillor Lorber during the meeting in relation to the charring arrangements for scrutiny.

Councillor Lorber, in exercising his right of reply in relation on the amendment felt that the current report did provide an appropriate opportunity to move the proposal and with no further comments, the Mayor thanked members for their contributions during the debate.

Having confirmed that the amendment was valid, the Mayor then moved to put the amendment and recommendations within the report to the vote.

On putting the amendment moved by Councillor Lorber regarding the charring arrangements for scrutiny to the vote this was declared **LOST**.

The substantive recommendations, as set out in the report and detailed below, were then put to the vote and declared **CARRIED**.

Council therefore **RESOLVED**:

- (1) To approve the appointments of members and substitutes as well as the continuing appointment of co-opted members to Council Committees and Outside Bodies for the 2025-2026 Municipal Year, as detailed within section 3.2.4 and Appendix 1 of the report.
- (2) To approve the appointments of Chairs and Vice Chairs to Council Committees for the 2025-2026 Municipal Year, as detailed within Appendix 1 of the report.
- (3) To note the appointments:
 - (a) To the Cabinet, Cabinet Committees and Joint Executive Committees and their respective Chairs and Vice Chairs for the 2025-2026 Municipal Year, as detailed in Appendix 2 of the report.
 - (b) to be confirmed by the General Purposes Committee for the 2025-2026 Municipal Year, as detailed in Appendix 3 of the report.
 - (c) to be confirmed by Licensing Committee for the 2025-2026 Municipal Year, as detailed in Appendix 4 of the report.

(The full list of appointments can be found as part of the appendices to the main report republished prior to the meeting)

11. **Calendar of Council Meetings for the 2025 -2026 Municipal Year**

The Mayor then invited Councillor Muhammed Butt (as Leader of the Council) to introduce the report from the Corporate Director of Finance & Resources which the Leader advised detailed the calendar of meeting dates for Full Council and other meetings during the 2025 - 26 Municipal Year.

As no members indicated that they wished to speak on the item the recommendations in the report were put straight to the vote by the Mayor and were unanimously declared **CARRIED**.

It was therefore **RESOLVED**:

- (1) To approve the dates for Full Council and other meetings to take place during the 2025-26 Municipal Year, as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report.
- (2) That the Deputy Director Democratic & Corporate Governance be authorised to make any alterations deemed necessary to the Municipal Calendar during the course of the year having consulted with the Leader of the Council, Leaders of the Opposition Group(s) and Chair of the affected meeting.

12. **International Partnering Arrangements**

The Mayor then invited Councillor Muhammed Butt (as Leader of the Council) to introduce the final report on the agenda from the Corporate Director of Finance & Resources. In introducing the item, Councillor Muhammed Butt advised that the report outlined the work undertaken to review and develop an International Partnering Protocol (IPP) for adoption by the Council designed to recognise Brents role as a diverse, dynamic and globally connected borough and as a basis for building partnerships with communities around the world. As such, he advised the IPP had been designed to provide a clear framework for developing future international partnership arrangements including appropriate review periods. The report also included, as has been agreed following the motion approved by the Council in November 2024, a review of a proposed twinning arrangement with Nablus, which had been subject to assessment in accordance with the protocol.

Referring to the proposed twinning arrangement with Nablus, Councillor Muhammed Butt advised members that the proposal had been subject to detailed review and, as set out within the report, was now felt to have met the threshold to take forward based on the criteria within the protocol and level of support identified and the partnership representing an opportunity to share and learn through a programme of community led active engagement. As such the proposal was felt to reflect the diverse nature of the borough whilst also celebrating the contributions made by the many different communities across the borough in seeking to foster and encourage a spirit of respect and understanding and the recommendations moved on that basis.

With the report having been moved, the Mayor then opened the debate inviting other members to speak on the report, with the following contributions made.

In opening the debate Councillor Kansagra, having taken the opportunity to thank Councillor Dar for his time as Mayor and ongoing service to the local community and to congratulate Councillor Hack on his appointment as Mayor for which he wished him very success, whilst not objecting to the spirit of the International Partnership Protocol felt there was a need to reflect on the process and priority relating to the proposed arrangements with Nablus. Whilst recognising the value of global exchange, he advised the Conservative Group believed that any partnership arrangements needed to be approached with transparency, balance and most importantly local consent. Reflecting on Brent's status as a proudly diverse borough with a range of long standing and well-established communities from nations across the world who all had made an important contribution to the boroughs identity, he felt there was a need to carefully reflect about the basis on which any future twinning or partnership arrangements was proposed and selected. Reminding members of the borough's longstanding twinning arrangement with South Dublin as a partnership grounded in significant cultural and historic links, he queried the basis on which Nablus had been selected as a further partnership. Whilst recognising the proposal would resonate with sections of the local community, he also highlighted the nature of other familiar cultural and community links with cities and regions across the world which he felt also needed to be considered as part of the process.

Whilst advising that the Conservative Group were not opposed to adoption of the protocol, Councillor Kansagra felt that was a need to ensure that any partnership arrangements coming forward were as inclusive, locally driven and representative as possible having been shaped and developed through local communities and based on international links forged through culture, education and exchange rather than more costly, civic delegation or top down symbolic gestures.

In highlighting the Conservative Groups support for more locally driven solutions and any international partnerships to be built from the ground up, Councillor Kansagra ended by advising it was his view that in order for any arrangement to be meaningful and bring clear benefits and value to the boroughs residents it would need to be community led in order to reflect the full spectrum of Brent's identity.

Having also congratulated the Mayor on his appointment, Councillor Maurice then spoke to raise a number of concerns in relation to the proposed twinning arrangement with Nablus. Highlighting that the Conservative Group had sought to move an amendment to the motion approved at the November 2024 Council meeting on the proposed twinning arrangement with Nablus, he reminded members of the alternative suggestion made that consideration be given to twinning with a town incorporating a broader mix of population and that was outside of an immediate conflict zone in order to better reflect the borough's diversity and local community links. Specific concerns were also raised in relation to the current governance arrangements within Nablus along with advice from the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office about the need for extreme caution for anyone considering travel to Nablus at the current time and current restrictions in being able to access the region. As a result, Councillor Maurice felt there was a need for careful reflection on any decision to proceed with the proposed twinning arrangement given the potential consequences and reputational damage associated with what he regarded as the divisive and discriminatory nature of the current proposal on certain sections of the community in Brent. As a final issue in concluding his contribution, Councillor Maurice also highlighted concerns relating to

the financial costs in supporting any twinning arrangements given the challenging nature of the Council's current financial position.

As a further contribution to the debate Councillor Mistry, having also congratulated Councillor Hack on his appointment as Mayor, advised that she also echoed the concerns raised in relation to the proposed twinning arrangement with Nablus. Whilst not seeking to reject the spirit of the proposal she also supported the need identified for careful reflection about the basis of the proposed arrangement with Nablus, having considered the accompanying protocol and views previously expressed relating to the diverse range of other communities within Brent which, it was felt, appeared not to have been identified for consideration in offering potential alternative twinning or partnership opportunities despite other regions across the world to which they were linked facing similar challenges in relation to conflict, poverty, education and climate. Highlighting reservations which Councillor Mistry advised had been raised by members of other communities across Brent regarding the safety of potential exchange visits being undertaken to Nablus at the current time, she felt there were opportunities to apply the principles within the protocol to potential twinning arrangements in other parts of the world that would also recognise the diverse nature of other well established communities across the borough and be better able to provide a more stable and secure basis for the range of engagement activity included as part of any partnership arrangement. In ending, Councillor Mistry advised that she would be keen to ensure a process of wider engagement with the local community prior to any final decision of the way forward being made.

Councillor Afzal, speaking in support of the proposed twinning arrangement with Nablus felt it was important, in rejecting the concerns identified relating to the governance of Nablus, to highlight the momentous nature of the decision for which approval was being sought in seeking to take forward the twinning arrangement between Brent and Nablus as a mean of confirming the boroughs commitment to solidarity, shared values and unity across borders and legacy in the journey that would follow. Recognising the Irish heritage of the new Mayor and existing twinning arrangement with South Dublin, Councillor Afzal reflected that the Irish and Palestinian stories shared a strong connection with the arrangement with Nablus designed to support the sharing of culture and history through a process of collaboration and exchange involving knowledge, skills and experience focussed around young people and local communities across the borough and to provide shared opportunities to grow together in building a strong and lasting partnership. As such, he felt the twinning process represented an opportunity to provide those growing up and living under the challenges faced in the region with a brighter future and one of freedom. Highlighting that the proposal had been supported by nearly 2,000 residents and several grassroots Brent organisations, Councillor Afzal concluded by pointing out that in his view twinning was about more than symbolism and represented a commitment to shared values, mutual understanding, and global solidarity. At a time when he was concerned so many were looking away, Councillor Afzal highlighted his pride that Brent was seeking to stand up and show what it meant to build peace and cooperation from the ground up in the name of peace, equality and solidarity.

Speaking next, Councillor Kennelly took the opportunity to commend the detailed nature of the report and protocol which had been developed given the appetite identified to develop further twinning arrangements and international partnerships

that reflected the level of diversity, equality and inclusion offered by Brent for promotion elsewhere. At the same time, however, he highlighted a need to ensure that any arrangements were designed to safeguard the rights of all groups moving forward, including the LGBTQ community to ensure they were truly reflective of the borough's inclusive values. Recognising concerns raised in relation to the stance of the Palestinian authorities in this respect, he felt it important to ensure these issues were addressed and the necessary assurance provided in relation to the safeguarding of these values, particularly in relation to the LGBTQ community.

As a final contribution, Councillor Lorber thanked Councillor Kennelly for the comments raised which he also felt was an issue that needed to be addressed. Expressing concern at the way in which the protocol had been developed following the initial decision to seek a partnership arrangement with Nablus rather than in advance of the process, he felt this highlighted a need for lessons to be learnt moving forward to ensure a meaningful partnership was established recognising the lack of twinning activity associated with the current arrangement involving South Dublin. In terms of the protocol developed he felt it important to ensure that all communities across the borough, as opposed to those with political backing, were given the opportunity to contribute towards the identification of any future twinning proposals with a clear limit set on the number of arrangements the borough would consider entering into to avoid devaluing the process. The concerns raised in relation to safeguarding the rights of all groups living in the area covered under the arrangement, including the LGBTQ community, were also shared with the need identified to ensure, in advance of any agreement being signed, that the rights of every citizen irrespective of their race, faith or sexual orientation would be valued and protected and undertakings therefore sought regarding the stance of the governing authorities in Nablus in respect of the Council's wider EDI objectives. Subject to these being obtained, Councillor Lorber ended by advising the Liberal Democrats would not object to pursuing the arrangement but, if not, he advised they would have no option but to oppose the proposal.

As no other members had indicated they wished to speak the Mayor thanked those who had participated in the debate for their contributions and then invited Councillor Muhammed Butt to exercise his right of reply in relation to the comments made on the report.

In summing up, Councillor Muhammed Butt felt it important to highlight that the protocol detailed within the report included a clear framework governing establishment of the proposed and any future twinning arrangements, including a limit on the number of twinning arrangements permitted to come forward under each Administration and clear requirements relating to the community and equality impact assessments that would be required in support of any proposal. In recognising the contributions made by all communities across Brent, members were assured of the opportunities available for representations to be made regarding any future twinning arrangements, once again highlighting the support which had been expressed for the proposal relating to Nablus as a community driven initiative involving a range of partner organisations across the borough. Referring to the extent of work undertaken to assess the proposal, Councillor Muhammed Butt ended by once again highlighting the rigorous nature of the process which he assured members had been designed to ensure the arrangements reflected the Council priorities and would not place any strain on Council resources. As such he commended the report to members for approval.

Having thanked the Leader for his closing remarks the Mayor then moved on to put the recommendations in the report to the vote which were declared **CARRIED**

It was therefore **RESOLVED** to:

- (1) Adopt the International Partnering Protocol as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report.
- (2) Note and endorse the Community and Equalities Assessment contained in Appendix 2 and 3 of the report.
- (3) On the basis of (1) & (2) above to agree that a Twinning Agreement be established with the city of Nablus.

13. **Urgent Business**

As there was no urgent business to be transacted the Mayor declared the Annual Meeting closed and advised that he looked forward to seeing all members at the next Council meeting on Monday 7 July 2025. He then invited all members and guests to join him at his reception.

The meeting closed at 7.47 pm

COUNCILLOR RYAN HACK
Mayor

Full Council – 7 July 2025

Agenda Item 5 – Appointments to Committees and Outside Bodies

Standing Order 30(g) states that, if necessary, Full Council is required to agree appointments to committees and outside bodies. In addition to the changes listed Council is being asked to confirm the appointment of an Independent Person

Such appointments are set out below:

Cabinet Membership

Council is asked to note that effective from 16 June 2025 the Leader of the Council has appointed Councillor Promise Knight (following her return from Maternity Leave) to fill the position of Cabinet Member for Customer Experience, Resident Support and Culture with Councillor Fleur Donnelly-Jackson to remain as Cabinet Member for Housing.

Committee Membership

- (1) Councillor Collymore to replace Councillor Fraser as a full member of the Community & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee, with Councillor Afzal to replace Councillor Fraser as Vice-Chair.
- (2) Councillor Collymore to replace Councillor Fraser as a substitute member of the Resources & Public Realm Scrutiny Committee.
- (3) Councillor Fraser to be replaced by a vacancy as substitute member on the Northwest London Joint Health Overview Scrutiny Committee

Outside Bodies

- (1) Councillor Fraser to be replaced by a vacancy as one of the Council representatives on the Chalkhill Community Trust Fund.

Please note: Any further membership changes notified will be circulated in advance of the meeting

Independent Chair Audit & Standards Advisory Committee & Pension Board

Full Council's agreement is being sought to the reappointment of David Ewart as Independent Chair of the Audit & Standards Advisory Committee and Pension Board for a further period of 15 months to expire 31 December 2026.

The Council has a long-standing arrangement for its Audit & Standards Advisory Committee and Pensions Board to be chaired independently to enhance the governance arrangements on both bodies. These arrangements are considered to operate effectively, with the position of Independent Chair on both bodies currently filled by David Ewart. Members of both the Audit & Standards Advisory Committee and of the Pensions Board are content that the current independent chair has fulfilled the respective role effectively, as are senior officers.

As the term of office for the Independent Chair's current appointment on both bodies is due to expire on 31 July 2021 it is recommended that the Independent Chair be re-appointed to both roles for a further 15-month term of office, ending on 31 December 2026. As these are not decision-making meetings there are no significant conflicts in appointing the same person to chair each body with the appointments also providing an opportunity to ensure continuity in terms of the operation of both bodies pending the current arrangements coming to an end and a full recruitment process being undertaken following the local borough elections in May 2026.

Full Council is therefore asked:

To agree the re appointment of David Ewart as an Independent Chair of the Audit & Standards Advisory Committee and Pension Board for an additional 15-month term of office, ending on 31 December 2026.



Item 7.1: Questions from Members of the Public

Full Council – 7 July 2025

1. **Question from T.J Chaudhry to Councillor Mili Patel (Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources)**

In view of concerns relating to practices operated by Brent in relation to debt recovery and enforcement, particularly regarding the cost effectiveness, proportionality and fairness of the process at a time when many residents face an unprecedented cost of living crisis, please could the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources clarify whether the Council has:

- (a) conducted a proper cost benefit analysis of pursuing sub-threshold debts, implemented adequate measures to verify enforcement agents' compliance with statutory documentation requirements and investigated the legality of their operational methods when acting under council officer direction; and
- (b) considered alternative, less confrontational debt resolution strategies that might better serve residents during this challenging economic period recognising that in some cases it may be more fiscally responsible and socially beneficial to redirect resources toward mediation services or debt advice programmes than rely on enforcement against vulnerable individuals.

Response:

- (a) The Council has estimated the staffing and operational costs associated with the recovery of aged debts. Taking into consideration the cost of resources the Council does not refer debts under the value of £250.00 to external agencies where the statutory fees applied under the taking of control goods act 2013 totals to £310.00.

The recovery service has considered the vulnerability of customers who may have debts under £250.00 and the likely impact of additional fees if referred to external agencies. To avoid any detrimental impact on customers already facing financial difficulty the Council has sought to utilise alternative recovery strategies entered a pilot partnership with Payment Plan to offer sustainable repayment arrangements at rate which is affordable to debtors.

The potential benefits of pursuing sub-threshold debts in this manner using the Payment Plan is re-engagement with customers who may experience

financial difficulty with a view to provision of support as well as improved recovery performance of aged debt.

The Council regularly meet with enforcement agents to monitor performance and activity to ensure they comply with statutory requirements. The enforcement agents are required to provide a number of reports on a monthly basis, or when requested detailing collection statistics, recovery case summaries or related activities carried out associated to:

- The accurate service of notices and documentation.
- Accurate record-keeping (the Council retains read only access to systems enabling.
- review of accounts, recorded notes, individual warrant, debtor and progress details).
- Compliance with fees and charges regulations.

Appointed enforcement agents are responsible for responding to enquiries and complaints received. Any matters raised associated to EA's operational methods are investigated to verify suitability of the EA's activity in accordance with their policies and procedures.

As part of contractual arrangements with the Council the suppliers must ensure enforcement agents receive adequate training and are regularly monitored to ensure compliance with statutory requirements and council policies.

- (b) In response to the ongoing economic pressures faced by many residents, the Council have actively moved towards debt resolution strategies that prioritise early engagement, support, and long-term financial stability as part of the Council's Ethical Debt Recovery policy. We know many residents are struggling financially, so we're taking a more supportive approach to debt recovery.

We are currently partnering with an organisation named Payment Plan as their platform allows residents set up and manage affordable repayment plans online. In addition we are piloting use an conversational platform offered by Webio who use SMS and WhatsApp AI interaction to make it easier for people to talk to us about their debts.

We also work closely with our enforcement agency partners to ensure vulnerable residents are identified early. We use Experian vulnerability markers and Open Banking data to better understand someone's financial situation and offer the right support.

We hold regular debt surgeries throughout the year in Brent Hubs around the borough where residents can speak directly to the team, enforcement agents and independent debt advisors. A recent event supported over 60 residents in one day and demonstrate how effective face to face support can be.

Our aim is to reduce the need for enforcement, assisting residents in the management of their debts in a way that's fair and sustainable.

Item 7.2: Questions from Brent Youth Parliament

Full Council – 7 July 2025

1. Question from Brent Youth Parliament to Councillor Gwen Grahl (Cabinet Member for Children, Young People & Schools)

The Brent Youth Strategy highlights the importance of amplifying youth voices and involving young people in decision-making, which is specifically mentioned on page 9 of the strategy. What specific steps has the Council taken since the strategy was published to ensure that young people's views are being actively used to shape local policies, especially in areas like crime and safety, which continue to be major concerns among youth?

Response:

Since the launch of the refreshed Brent Youth Strategy on 7th April 2025, a Round Table discussion was held with young people to explore their views on crime and safety, providing a platform for direct dialogue with professionals delivering youth services. The Round Table Project was developed by Brent Youth and Youth Justice Service and Community Safety to provide a safe space for young people to voice their concerns and issues, express their feelings comfortably and guide adults who work for the local authority to help young people in Brent. Mentoring sessions took place in advance with the young people to ensure they were fully prepared for the Round Table sessions.

The most recent session focused on young people involved in criminal activity or youth violence and included young people receiving support from the Youth Justice and Inclusion services. One young person stated it was *“fun...and reflective”* and they *“liked the concept of expressing ourselves to professionals.”* Discussions centred on the incidents young people had been involved in, when and where they took place, how it made them and their family feel, and their understanding about the wider consequences, including the impact on any victims and family members.

Young people spoke about their experiences with serious youth violence, knife and firearm crime, drugs, gangs and county lines, mental health and wellbeing, peer pressure, lack of support and activities after school, and challenging family dynamics. Deeper discussions explored the reasons young people felt led to their behaviour, the learning they have gained from reflecting on their experiences, how they accessed the right support to desist from further offending, and the additional support they considered would be beneficial for them moving forward towards positive outcomes.

The young people were positive about the experience, stating that “*we felt listened to*”.

The Round Table project has also facilitated young person-led discussions about online child exploitation, young people's relationship with the police, Stop and Search procedures, and the rights of young people in the legal system. Consent has been obtained by the young people involved and their parents / guardians to share short clips of the project to educate partner organisations working with young people about their experiences.

In addition, the Council continues to gather young people's views through a variety of community groups. “I am Brent” is a consortium of community organisations working to support vulnerable young people in Brent and champion their voices. The Council also has close links with the Young Brent Foundation. More recently, Designated Safeguarding Leads in Brent Schools asked children and young people about “hot spots” in their community and their journey to and from school. This has been shared with community safety and police with an aim for children and young people's voices to be stronger in ward panels in Brent. These are examples of how the Council is listening to make Brent a safer place for children and young people.

The Council has been working to establish a professional delivery group to oversee the implementation of the Brent Youth Strategy and is planning the creation of a Youth Advisory Board to embed youth perspectives in decision-making. Council officers have also engaged with young people at community events, such as the Jason Roberts Foundation Community Day, to gather feedback and understand their priorities for the action plan. One significant insight from these engagements is the need to improve awareness and understanding amongst professionals of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), which the Council continues to prioritise as part of its ongoing work.

Looking ahead, the Council is in the planning stages of developing further opportunities for youth involvement, particularly timed to coincide with the start of the new academic term, ensuring that young people's voices continue to be a central part of shaping the next phase of the youth strategy.

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List of Petitions to be presented at Full Council - 7 July 2025:

(1) No to Twinning with Nablus

Lead Petitioner Ian Collier – currently 1,427 signatures but due to close on 7 July 25

We, the undersigned, do not support Brent's twinning with Nablus and call on the Council to halt immediately any process leading to it. Nablus, is a town on the west bank of the River Jordan.

We do not support Brent's Twinning with Nablus on the following grounds:

Equity, Diversity & Inclusion: It is our opinion that considerations are not met. Brent is a diverse borough, and we believe that the majority of the various communities have not been consulted on this issue. The proposal to twin has not given due regard to the effects of this decision to those residents with protected characteristics which include, along with the Muslim community, Jews, Christians, Jains, Sikhs, Hindus and the LGBTQ community. Brent's objectives should be to enhance community relations and cooperation, and this proposal will undermine this objective as it appears sectarian in its nature.

Sharing knowledge: It has been reported that Nablus is the home of militant groups such as 'Lions' Den' and we would not wish Brent's residents and especially its children, to be subject to its rhetoric.

Tourism. In reality, tourism is not realistically possible for most people, including students of Brent, to Nablus. Jewish, Christian and LGBTQ communities are unlikely to be made welcome. This goes completely against the spirit of mutual co-operation and the rationale for twinning. In addition, Foreign Office advice is against all but essential travel to Nablus.

Peace should be Brent Council's aim for any twinning. Seven out of fifteen of Nablus's Council are Hamas backed ([Carter centre report](#)), a proscribed group by the UK Government. We therefore consider that it is inconsistent with reasons for twinning. Given constraints on Brent's resources, Brent should prioritise its time and money on local issues.

Furthermore, Brent's own report on this subject suggests that such a twinning might lead to disharmony amongst the people who make up Brent's diverse community.

(2) Save East Lane Theatre

Lead Petitioner Susan O'Connell – 1,714 signatures

We the undersigned petition the council to reconsider the rent increase of circa 5000% on the current rent of £1,500 per annum on our small, volunteer run theatre. An affordable rent for East Lane Theatre Company (ELTC), a valuable community asset, would ensure it can continue to serve the community of Brent.

East Lane Theatre Club (ELTC) has been in residence at the Vale Farm Tennis Pavilion since the early 1960s. ELTC have developed a theatre on the site and maintain & insure the buildings with no council funding. Although recognising the obligations on ELTC under the current lease to maintain the site on which the theatre is located, it is the theatre rather than the Council which has ensured the site remains in good order for many years.

ELTC were in negotiation over our lease renewal with Brent prior to their new Property Strategy being published with the Strategy having subsequently led to what the Club now feels is an unjustifiable high increase in their rental charge.

We the undersigned feel that Brent's new Property Strategy should therefore make allowance for buildings that have a specific role and are used by the community also, in the case of ELTC, recognising the link to Brent's Cultural Strategy.

The Club provides theatre at an affordable price, it supports its members' wellbeing and provides a safe place to explore new skills. It entertains and supports residents unable to afford West End ticket prices or travel to the West End, with other similar local theatres in Greater London and other areas supported by their Councils.

We urge the Council to reconsider the way in which the Property Strategy has been applied to ELTC in order to avoid the theatre being destroyed by a rent hike it just cannot afford.

(3) Support Barham Park

Lead Petitioner: Paul Lorber (on behalf of Friends of Barham Park) - 530 signatures

We the undersigned petition the council to listen to local residents, users and supporters of Barham Park and for the Barham Park Trust and Brent Council to respect the wishes of Titus Barham who gifted his home and gardens for our recreation, by upholding the Covenant which prevents the building of extra houses on the site of 776/778 Harrow Road and to continue to refuse any attempts to modify or discharge the restrictive covenants to increase the numbers of homes on the site of 776-778 Harrow Road.

The two cottages were built of the purpose of housing park keepers (gardeners and other staff) working in the Park and not to provide general housing. As the existing houses have not been used for that purpose for years we the undersigned feel there is a valid argument for their removal and for the park land to be reinstated with no valid justification to expand the number of houses from two to four.

The original Covenant was put in place by the Barham Park Trust Committee in 2011 (when the two cottages were being sold with the aim of generating match funding for a National Lottery Heritage Grant) with the clear intention of protecting Barham Park by NOT allowing the building of more houses or extensions on the existing site. The buyer of the two houses was fully aware of this and willingly signed and entered into the Restrictive Covenant. Any attempts by the appointed Trustees to modify or

discharge the restrictive covenant in exchange for cash go against the original aim in seeking to protect the whole Park for the benefit of local people as opposed to its use for the enrichment of a selected individual/family.

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Item 9.1

Full Council – 7 July 2025

Conservative Group Motion

Protecting Equality and Community Cohesion in Brent's International Partnerships.

This Council notes:

- Brent is one of the most diverse boroughs in the country, home to communities of several faiths, ethnicities and backgrounds.
- The importance of ensuring all Council decisions, particularly international partnerships, uphold values of equity, inclusion, and political neutrality.
- The Council's decision to twin with Nablus has caused division across the borough.
- The Equalities Impact Assessment provided as part of the decision to enter a twinning arrangement with Nablus stated the twinning 'may cause emotional harm to some groups in Brent' and 'may risk compounding antisemitism', while also suggesting rejecting the partnership 'may be viewed as Islamophobic'.
- As part of the process relating to the twinning arrangements with Nablus, there was no meaningful engagement with key groups including Hindus, Christians, and the Jewish community on the community assessment or proposal prior to the decision.
- The UK Foreign Office advises against all travel to all parts of the West Bank, raising concerns about the safety and viability of a mutual exchange arrangement with Nablus.

This Council believes:

- All twinning decisions must be guided by equalities compliance, transparency, and wide community support.
- Partnering with towns where access is unsafe for some Brent residents due to nationality, religion or sexual orientation contradicts our borough's values.

- Solidarity and global engagement are important but must not override our duties under the Equality Act or risk harming community cohesion.

This Council resolves:

- (1) To introduce a new Equalities Compliance Protocol for future international partnerships requiring:
 - A published Equalities Impact Assessment before any vote.
 - Formal consultation with Brent's major faith and community groups.
 - Assessment of safety and access for all protected groups, including LGBTQ+ residents.
- (2) To confirm that international partnerships should remain apolitical and avoid affiliation with any side in an ongoing foreign conflict.
- (3) To request that Council reviews the International Partnering Protocol and framework, including all current twinning arrangements, to ensure alignment with Brent's equality duties and community priorities.
- (4) To reaffirm support for partnerships reflecting shared values of democracy, inclusion and access for all residents.

Councillor Suresh Kansagra
Kenton Ward

Full Council – 7 July 2025

Amendment submitted by the Labour Group to the Conservative Group Motion

Proposed amendment – To add the wording underlined in red and delete the wording indicated:

Protecting Equality and Community Cohesion in Brent's International Partnerships.

This Council notes:

- Brent is proudly one of the most diverse boroughs in the country, home to communities of several faiths, ethnicities and backgrounds. People from across the globe are drawn to Brent, making it their home for work, family and the chance to build a safer life.
- The ongoing importance of ensuring all Council decisions, particularly international partnerships, uphold values of equity, and inclusion, ~~and political neutrality.~~
- The Council's decision to twin with Nablus has ~~caused division~~ triggered welcome conversation about Brent Council's ongoing plan to build new international relationships with cities and towns across the world ~~borough.~~
- ~~The Equalities Impact Assessment provided as part of the decision to enter a twinning arrangement with Nablus stated the twinning 'may cause emotional harm to some groups in Brent' and 'may risk compounding antisemitism', while also suggesting rejecting the partnership 'may be viewed as Islamophobic'.~~
- As part of the ongoing process relating to entering the twinning arrangements with Nablus, the Council will continuously update the completed equality impact assessment and, as part of that ongoing assessment the Council will routinely engage with community groups for feedback. ~~there was no meaningful engagement with key groups including Hindus, Christians, and the Jewish community on the community assessment or proposal prior to the decision.~~
- For now, ~~t~~The UK Foreign Office advises against all travel to all parts of the West Bank, raising concerns about the safety and viability of a meaning that our mutual

exchange arrangement with Nablus will utilise different methods of engagement and hosting activities.

This Council believes:

- All twinning decisions must be guided by equalities compliance, transparency, and wide community support.
- There is a need for the Council to ensure that an equality impact assessment is undertaken to assess the impact of the activities proposed in the twinning arrangements on Brent residents and those with protected characteristics in order to safeguard the borough's values ~~Partnering with towns where access is unsafe for some Brent residents due to nationality, religion or sexual orientation contradicts our borough's values.~~
- ~~Solidarity and g~~ Global engagement are is important but must not override our duties under the Equality Act or risk harming community cohesion.

This Council resolves:

- (1) To continuously review and update the equalities impact assessment in relation to each individual twinning or friendship agreement ~~introduce a new Equalities Compliance Protocol for future international partnerships requiring:~~
 - A published Equalities Impact Assessment before any vote entering into any future twinning arrangements.
 - Engagement ~~Formal consultation~~ with Brent's major faith and community groups.
 - Assessment of safety and access for all protected characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation). ~~groups, including LGBTQ+ residents.~~
- ~~(2) To confirm that international partnerships should remain apolitical and avoid affiliation with any side in an ongoing foreign conflict.~~
- (3) To request that Council regularly reviews the International Partnering Protocol and framework, ensuring it is ~~including all current twinning arrangements, to ensure~~ in alignment with Brent's equality duties and community priorities.
- (4) To reaffirm support for partnerships reflecting shared values of democracy, inclusion and access for all residents.

Councillor Muhammed Butt
Tokyngton Ward

Full Council – 7 July 2025

Liberal Democrats Group Motion

Stop Messing Up Brent

This Council notes:

- In 15 years, Labour-run Brent Council has contributed to the visible deterioration of our streets and public spaces through:
 - The blue bag fiasco.
 - Removing litter bins from our streets.
 - Reduced refuse collections.
 - Massive cost rises for the Too Big for the Bin Service.
- Labour-run Brent Council's failure to:
 - - Meet the recycling targets in volumes and costs.
 - Ensure Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs) have enough bins.
 - Tackle Chewing Tobacco spitting causing street cleaning & public health issue.
 - Tackle the rise in anti-social behaviour.
- Other Councils are taking creative steps to improve their local environment:
 - Kingston Council has piloted AI-powered cameras and achieved an 80% reduction in fly-tipping in targeted areas.
 - Manchester, Edinburgh, and Liverpool explored or implemented tourist taxes to raise funds for local services and public realm improvements.
- Liberal Democrats regularly raise these issues and call for action, but little effective action takes place.

This Council believes:

- Problems with fly-tipping, street mess, and anti-social behaviour are not isolated incidents, but the result of long-term neglect and poor decisions by the current administration. This neglect has created a vicious cycle - consistent with the “Broken Windows” theory, first applied in New York City, which demonstrated that visible signs of disorder encourage more disorder.
- Brent deserves better: residents expect and deserve clean, safe, and well-maintained neighbourhoods — and they are not getting it.

This Council resolves to:

1. Request that Cabinet consider the use of NCIL Funds to invest in:
 - Reinstalling litter bins where needed most.
 - Ensuring that all HMOs have sufficient bin capacity and that landlords take responsibility for waste management.
 - Deploying AI-powered cameras in fly-tipping hotspots.
2. Introduce a local Tourist Tax with income ringfenced for enforcement to keep the streets clean and free of anti-social behaviour - increasing funding for street cleaning teams and enforcement officers.
3. Request that the Cabinet Member Realm & Enforcement:
 - (a) revise working hours of the Council’s Enforcement Officers so they cover late night time shifts when dumping and anti-social activities take place.
 - (b) Give the choice of a wheelie bin in place of the blue bag as promised to Scrutiny prior to the introduction of the new recycling scheme.
4. Seek the introduction (subject to the necessary powers being identified) of planning/licensing requirements requiring all outlets with take aways service to provide recycling and litter bins outside their premises and take responsibility for daily emptying to keep the bin(s) and the area around them clean.
5. Introduce by-laws requiring outlet using or employing delivery drivers to take responsibility for their behaviour and a requirement that they cease to use them if they see them spitting or littering local streets or taking part in any form of anti-social behaviour including causing noise in residential areas late at night.
6. Call on the Government to implement a bottle and cans deposit scheme and pass on any surplus generated to local authorities to invest in improved litter management services.

Cllr Charlie Clinton
Alperton Ward

Full Council – 7 July 2025

Amendment submitted by the Conservative Group to the Liberal Democrats Group Motion

Proposed amendment – To add the wording underlined in red and delete the wording indicated:

Stop Messing Up Brent

This Council notes:

- In 15 years, Labour-run Brent Council has contributed to the visible deterioration of our streets and public spaces through:
 - The blue bag fiasco.
 - Removing litter bins from our streets.
 - Reduced refuse collections.
 - Massive cost rises for the Too Big for the Bin Service.
- Labour-run Brent Council's failure to:
 - Meet the recycling targets in volumes and costs.
 - Ensure Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs) have enough bins.
 - Tackle Chewing Tobacco spitting causing street cleaning & public health issue.
 - Tackle the rise in anti-social behaviour.
- Other Councils are taking creative steps to improve their local environment:
 - Kingston Council has piloted AI-powered cameras and achieved an 80% reduction in fly-tipping in targeted areas.
 - Manchester, Edinburgh, and Liverpool explored or implemented tourist taxes to raise funds for local services and public realm improvements.

- Liberal Democrats regularly raise these issues and call for action, but little effective action takes place.

This Council believes:

- Problems with fly-tipping, street mess, and anti-social behaviour are not isolated incidents, but the result of long-term neglect and poor decisions by the current administration. This neglect has created a vicious cycle - consistent with the “Broken Windows” theory, first applied in New York City, which demonstrated that visible signs of disorder encourage more disorder.
- Brent deserves better: residents expect and deserve clean, safe, and well-maintained neighbourhoods — and they are not getting it.

This Council resolves to:

1. Request that Cabinet consider the use of NCIL Funds to invest in:
 - Reinstalling litter bins where needed most.
 - Ensuring that all HMOs have sufficient bin capacity and that landlords take responsibility for waste management.
 - Deploying AI-powered cameras in fly-tipping hotspots where cost-effective and supported by clear evidence.
2. Subject to meaningful consultation with residents and local businesses, and the outcome of an independent impact assessment confirming no adverse effect on local tourism or economic activity: consider the introduction of Introduce a local Tourist Tax with income ringfenced for enforcement to keep the streets clean and free of anti-social behaviour - increasing funding for street cleaning teams and enforcement officers.
3. Request that the Cabinet Member Realm & Enforcement:
 - (a) revise working hours of the Council’s Enforcement Officers so they cover late night time shifts when dumping and anti-social activities take place.
 - (b) Give the choice of a wheelie bin in place of the blue bag as promised to Scrutiny prior to the introduction of the new recycling scheme.
4. Seek the introduction (subject to the necessary powers being identified) of planning/licensing requirements requiring all outlets with take aways service to provide recycling and litter bins outside their premises and take responsibility for daily emptying to keep the bin(s) and the area around them clean.
5. Introduce by-laws requiring outlet using or employing delivery drivers to take responsibility for their behaviour and a requirement that they cease to use them if they see them spitting or littering local streets or taking part in any form of anti-social behaviour including causing noise in residential areas late at night.

6. Call on the Government to implement a bottle and cans deposit scheme and pass on any surplus generated to local authorities to invest in improved litter management services.

Councillor Suresh Kansagra
Kenton Ward

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Full Council – 7 July 2025

1st Labour Group Motion

Tackling the excessive use of smartphones to improve outcomes for Brent's children

This Council notes:

- The Labour Government's commitment to put children's wellbeing at the heart of national education policy, including plans to improve school standards, reduce classroom disruption, and tackle the growing mental health crisis among young people.
- National and international evidence increasingly highlights the negative impact of excessive smartphone and social media use on young people's academic performance, concentration, overall health, and social development.
- That organisations such as Smartphone Free Childhood, the Royal College of Psychiatrists, and the Children's Commissioner have called for stronger restrictions on smartphone access during school hours to help reduce anxiety, cyberbullying, social isolation, and classroom distraction.
- That while many schools in Brent already take action to limit smartphone use, there is inconsistency between the different type of schools within Brent creating differing approaches, and outcomes between maintained schools, academies and independent schools across the borough.
- That Brent Council has strong partnerships with Brent Family Wellbeing Centres, youth organisations, parent groups, mental health services and school leaders, which provide a foundation for coordinated local action.
- That Barnet Council and Enfield Council have taken steps to introduce borough-wide guidance limiting smartphone use during the school day, providing a useful example for Brent to consider.

This Council believes:

- That the Labour Government's new approach provides an important opportunity for local councils to lead conversations with schools, parents, and communities about the best way to protect young people from the negative effects of excessive smartphone use in educational settings.

- That while respecting the autonomy of schools — particularly academies and multi-academy trusts — local authorities have a critical leadership role in convening evidence, setting out good practice, and providing parents and schools with clear guidance.
- That a consistent, borough-wide approach would help empower teachers, support parents, and protect young people, especially the most vulnerable children, from the risks associated with unsupervised smartphone use.

This Council therefore resolves:

- (1) To request that the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools commissions a deep dive into smartphone use in Brent's primary and secondary schools, gathering evidence from:
 - School leaders, teachers, students, parents, trade union representatives, youth services, mental health experts and public health professionals.
 - National best practice and research, including emerging guidance from the Labour Government.
- (2) That the council should examine the case for Brent Council issuing a borough-wide recommendation to primary and secondary schools by the start of January 2026, to adopt stricter smartphone use policies during school hours.
- (3) To recognise that achieving borough-wide consistency will require careful engagement with schools, teaching staff, and parents. Any recommendation made will be accompanied by practical support for school leaders, parents and pupils.
- (4) To work with the Secretary of State to undo years of dither and delay on the creation of a robust national framework on smartphone use in schools — one that empowers councils to act, protects children's mental health, and supports teaching staff and parents.

Councillor Rita Begum
Kilburn Ward

Full Council – 7 July 2025

2nd Labour Group Motion

Protecting the working rights of delivery riders and the safety of pedestrians in Brent

This Council notes:

- Delivery drivers and riders are an essential part of Brent's local economy, enabling thousands of residents to access food, groceries, and services. Yet, for too many of these workers, their employment is precarious, poorly paid and lacking basic protections. They are often classified as 'self-employed', leaving them without sick pay, holiday pay, or security.
- The growth of the gig economy reflects years of Conservative economic failure. Fourteen years of austerity, deregulation, and weak enforcement have allowed insecure, low-paid work to flourish.
- Research by the TUC shows three in 20 working adults now work via gig platforms at least weekly, compared to just one in 20 in 2016. For many drivers and riders, this insecurity is compounded by rising costs of living, long hours, and growing safety risks on London's busy roads.
- While some workers value flexibility, independent research by the Social Market Foundation confirms that 91% of gig economy delivery workers also want stronger rights and protections.
- The rising public concern over poor screening practices by gig economy platforms. Allegations of account sharing, subcontracting, and weak identity checks raise serious safeguarding risks for both workers and residents in Brent.
- That riders working illegally or through borrowed accounts are at heightened risk of exploitation, debt bondage, and coercion.
- Brent residents are raising concerns about poor riding behaviour by some delivery workers, including disregard for the Highway Code, riding on pavements, and dangerous use of e-motorbikes.

This Council welcomes:

- The GMB Union's ground-breaking recognition agreement with Deliveroo, providing a voice for drivers on pay, guaranteed earnings, and dispute resolution.
- Brent Council's long-standing London Living Wage accreditation, ensuring directly employed and contracted staff are paid fairly.
- Brent's programmes such as Brent Works, that help residents access good quality, secure employment outside the gig economy.
- The Government's recently introduced Employment Rights Bill as a step towards predictable working requests, improved redundancy protections for pregnant employees, flexible working rights, and unpaid carers' leave.

This Council resolves to:

- (1) Write to major delivery platforms operating in Brent – including Deliveroo, Uber Eats, Just Eat, Getir, Gopuff and others – urging them to:
 - Become accredited London Living Wage employers;
 - Strengthen identity checks, screening, and enforcement to prevent account misuse and protect both workers and the public;
 - To close loopholes that allow account rentals, including through regular selfie checks, live ID systems, and tamper-proof verification;
 - Take action to improve rider conduct and compliance with road safety rules, including consequences for riders who breach the Highway Code.
- (2) Work with trade unions, migrant rights groups, and enforcement agencies to highlight and address the hidden exploitation within the gig economy, particularly around account renting and subcontracting.
- (3) Explore how Brent's transport, public realm, and road safety strategies can better support delivery workers, including safe rest spaces and secure cycle parking.
- (4) Request an update from the Lead Member on the modern slavery risks associated with illegal delivery work within Brent, and options for targeted safeguarding outreach.

Councillor Tony Ethapemi
Stonebridge Ward

Full Council – 7 July 2025

Amendment submitted by the Conservative Group to the 2nd Labour Group Motion

Proposed amendment – To add the wording underlined in red and delete the wording indicated:

Protecting the working rights of delivery riders and the safety of pedestrians in Brent

This Council notes:

- Delivery drivers and riders are an essential part of Brent's local economy, enabling thousands of residents to access food, groceries, and services. Yet, for too many of these workers, their employment is precarious, poorly paid and lacking basic protections. They are often classified as 'self-employed', leaving them without sick pay, holiday pay, or security.
- The growth of the gig economy reflects changing consumer habits and a desire among many workers for flexible, app-based income opportunities. However stronger safeguards are needed to prevent abuse and ensure public safety. ~~years of Conservative economic failure. Fourteen years of austerity, deregulation, and weak enforcement have allowed insecure, low-paid work to flourish.~~
- Research by the TUC shows three in 20 working adults now work via gig platforms at least weekly, compared to just one in 20 in 2016. For many drivers and riders, this insecurity is compounded by rising costs of living, long hours, and growing safety risks on London's busy roads.
- While some workers value flexibility, independent research by the Social Market Foundation confirms that 91% of gig economy delivery workers also want stronger rights and protections.
- The rising public concern over poor screening practices by gig economy platforms. Allegations of account sharing, subcontracting, and weak identity checks raise serious safeguarding risks for both workers and residents in Brent.
- That riders working illegally or through borrowed accounts are at heightened risk of exploitation, debt bondage, and coercion.

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 - To close loopholes that allow account rentals, including through regular selfie checks, live ID systems, and tamper-proof verification;
 - Take action to improve rider conduct and compliance with road safety rules, including consequences for riders who breach the Highway Code.
- (2) Work with trade unions, migrant rights groups, and enforcement agencies to highlight and address the hidden exploitation within the gig economy, particularly around account renting and subcontracting.
- (3) Explore how Brent's transport, public realm, and road safety strategies can better support delivery workers, including safe rest spaces and secure cycle parking.
- (4) Request an update from the Lead Member on the modern slavery risks associated with illegal delivery work within Brent, and options for targeted safeguarding outreach.

Councillor Michael Maurice
Kenton Ward

 Brent	Full Council 7 July 2025
	Report from the Leader of the Council
Update report from the Leader and Cabinet	

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 of the Council – Councillor Muhammed Butt

Top news since my last report:

- **Changes to Cabinet** – I'm delighted to report that Councillor Promise Knight has now returned to Cabinet following a period of maternity leave. I'd like to thank the entire Cabinet for their support over this period, but in particular, Councillor Fleur Donnelly-Jackson, who has ably guided two portfolios over the period.

The full list of revised Cabinet responsibilities is printed overleaf.

- **Brent Council earns "well-performing" recognition following LGA Corporate Peer Challenge** - The Local Government Association (LGA) has recognised Brent Council as a well performing authority following a rigorous peer review earlier this year. The review praised the council's strong organisational culture, effective leadership and impressive achievements in regeneration, housing delivery and education. Brent's record on building new homes, among the highest in London, and its commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion were highlighted as particular strengths. The LGA also commended the council's collaborative approach with partners and communities, noting staff pride and engagement as key drivers of its success.

The review also identified areas for improvement, encouraging Brent to build on its progress by strengthening collaboration across departments, planning further ahead financially and accelerating its digital transformation. It urged the council to focus on improving housing management and addressing challenges in temporary accommodation while continuing to lead on equity and inclusion across the borough. We have welcomed the findings and published an action plan to respond to the recommendations, underlining our commitment to continuous improvement and delivering for its residents.

- **Brent Backs the Bakerloo Line Upgrade and Expansion** - Brent Council is firmly backing the Bakerloo Line Upgrade and Extension project, marking a major commitment to improving transport in the borough. On 3 June 2025, the council announced overwhelming support among residents and businesses, 81% of residents and Brent companies who believe the upgrade will improve accessibility, reduce journeys by car, and stimulate economic growth.

The project combines urgently needed modernisation—replacing ageing trains and outdated signalling with a planned southern extension through Old Kent Road to Lewisham, and eventually Hayes and Beckenham Junction. This strategic support underscores Brent's role in advocating for sustainable infrastructure that boosts connectivity, housing, jobs and secures a reliable future for the borough's transport network.

- **New chapter for Bridge Park Community Leisure Centre** - The closure will allow plans to provide a new leisure centre, adult education space and modern community facilities that better meets the needs of the local community to take a new step forward.

The redevelopment of Bridge Park is part of a wider masterplan to radically transform the local area, which could unlock £600 million of investment along the Hillside corridor in Stonebridge over the coming years.

The current leisure centre is based in a converted bus garage and its condition has deteriorated and now requires very substantial capital investment to keep the site open and safe on a sustainable basis. Major and expensive works to the lifts, roof and other key parts of the building would be needed. The report approved by Cabinet argues that this expense would not be a sensible use of limited council funding, particularly when there are proposals to build a new and larger, state-of-the-art centre for the community to use for years to come.

The proposals for the new development include:

- New flexible community spaces,
- An improved adult education centre,
- Fully accessible public gardens,
- Hundreds of new and affordable homes to meet the growing demand for housing

A significantly larger leisure centre, including a larger swimming pool, larger gym, sports hall, fitness studios and a cafe.

The proposals aim to create a vibrant, inclusive, and sustainable neighbourhood that will meet the needs of future generations. Additionally, the development will create a neighbourhood that helps tackle climate change with greener buildings, more trees, and areas that support wildlife.

- **Ministerial Visits** - I've been proactively meeting with Defra ministers to ensure Brent's message "Don't Mess With Brent" is heard loud and clear. In April, I met the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to secure their support for protecting Brent from unfair environmental regulations and ensuring our community gets its fair share of attention and resources.

In May, I join Baroness Fiona Twycross in Harlesden to discuss Brent's gambling-reform proposals, pressing for tougher restrictions on Adult Gaming Centres and a stronger public-health approach. Through these meetings (and future meetings planned) I put Brent's concerns at the heart of national conversations, advocating for the investment and policy changes our borough needs.

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

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

Cabinet Portfolios – June 2025

Leader: *Councillor Muhammed Butt*

- Communications
- Public Affairs
- London Councils and Partnerships
- Emergency Planning
- Strategic Change Programme
- Brent Black Community Action Plan [BCAP]
- All executive functions not allocated to any other portfolio

Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources: *Councillor Mili Patel*

- Finance
- Capital Investment
- Debt Recovery
- Shared IT Service
- Legal Services
- HR and Organisational Development
- Health and Safety
- Organisational Assurance and Resilience
- Democratic Services
- Complaints
- Equity, Diversity and Inclusion
- Diversity Ambassador

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

- Early Help
- Children's Social Care
- Family Wellbeing Centres
- Children's Safeguarding
- Looked after Children and Corporate Parenting
- Youth Offending
- Youth Provision and Strategy
- Brent Youth Parliament
- Pupil Referral Units
- SEND Provision (including Transport)
- Early Years
- Brent Family of Schools
- School Admissions and School Place Planning
- School Effectiveness
- School Attendance

Cabinet Member for Public Realm and Enforcement: *Councillor Krupa Sheth*

- Public Realm
- Parks
- Trees (cross-cutting responsibility)
- Air Quality
- Waterways
- Roads and Pavements
- Active Travel and School Streets
- Waste and Recycling

- Street Cleaning
- Waste Enforcement
- Parking
- Street Lighting
- CCTV
- Building Control and Enforcement
- Regulatory Services
- Pest Control
- Planning Enforcement
- Public Space Protection Orders

Cabinet Member for Climate Action and Community Power: *Councillor Jake Rubin*

- Climate and Ecological Strategy
- Procurement and Community Wealth Building
- Social Value
- Strategic Commissioning
- Community Engagement
- Brent Connects
- NCIL and Community Grants
- Voluntary Sector Liaison
- Corporate Performance
- Innovation and Insight
- Digital Transformation

Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Leisure: *Councillor Neil Nerva*

- Adult Social Care
- Public Health
- Sports, Leisure and Outdoor Activities
- Adults Safeguarding
- Supported Living
- Adaptations and Support
- Carers Support
- Brent Health Matters
- Mental Health and Dementia Support
- Alcohol and Substance Misuse
- Food Justice
- Liaison with Health Partners

Cabinet Member for Housing: *Councillor Fleur Donnelly-Jackson*

- Housing Services and Management (including Repairs, Engagement with Tenants and Leaseholders and Landlord Services)
- Housing Needs and Support
- Homelessness and Rough-Sleeping Support
- Private Rented Sector Support and Landlord Licensing
- Liaison with Registered Providers
- Housing companies: i4B, First Wave Housing
- Member Responsible for Complaints – Housing

Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning and Property: *Councillor Teo Benea*

- Regeneration
- Planning

- Property
- Facilities Management
- New Council Housing Programme
- Local Plan
- London Growth Plan
- Strategic and Economic Development
- Inward Investment
- Town Centre Managers
- Community Infrastructure Levy
- Affordable Workplaces

Cabinet Member for Safer Communities, Jobs and Skills: *Councillor Harbi Farah*

- Community Safety
- Liaison with Metropolitan Police Service (MPS)
- Prevent
- Noise Nuisance
- Violence Reduction Unit
- VAWG
- Refugees and Asylum Support
- Jobs and Skills
- Brent Starts and Brent Works
- Good Work Standard and London Living Wage
- Business Engagement
- Apprenticeships

Cabinet Member for Customer Experience, Resident Support and Culture:
Councillor Promise Knight

- Resident Services
- Citizenship and Registration Services
- Welfare Support
- Council Tax and Business Rates Support Service
- Debt Support
- Blue Badges
- Community Hubs
- New Horizons Centre
- Libraries, Heritage and Culture Services
- Mortuaries, Bereavement and Cemeteries Services

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

Top news since my last report:

- **Budget 2025/26:** The Council approved its budget for 2025/26 in February, safeguarding frontline services for our residents in the face of 15 years of cuts. Officers, Cabinet, and Members dedicated thousands of hours to ensuring that the foundations of our council remain strong, and that we can deliver the right services to our residents. A commitment to even more new, safe and secure homes; the highest number of social housing starts in London; raising standards for private renters; putting an arm around those in food and fuel poverty; equipping people of all ages with access to training and jobs; keeping Brent clean and on the move by looking after our infrastructure and environment; maintaining our award-winning parks and open spaces; and providing the best start in life for our children through to dignity in the last stages of life – this is a budget that safeguards what matters most to the residents of Brent.
- **Community Cohesion and Inclusion Event Strategy:** Brent is one of the most diverse boroughs in the country, a place where different cultures, faiths, and traditions come together to create a vibrant and inclusive community. Our diversity is our strength, and it is vital that we continue to celebrate and foster cohesion among all residents, from a breadth of backgrounds. The Council has refreshed its approach to community cohesion events, looking to work more effectively with community groups to celebrate EDI events throughout the calendar year.
- **Gambling Campaign:** Brent Council is leading the way on calling for urgent reform of the Gambling Act 2005, whose “Aim to Permit” policy makes it extremely difficult for councils to say no to new gambling premises. With the grassroots voices of residents in Harlesden and beyond, we’re proud to have joined forces with over 40 other councils and mayors across the country, making the case to Government that the time for change is now. The Council has also commissioned the Social Market Foundation think tank to produce a report, which will make a series of policy recommendations on how to empower councils to take back control of their high streets.

Other news:

- **Legal Services:** Our Legal Services team had their annual LEXCEL assessment in January 2025, where they once again performed extremely well in applying the principles of the LEXCEL Framework to a high standard.
- **People Strategy:** Brent is proud to have launched its new People Strategy, embedding inclusion and equality into everything we do as a workforce and facing outwards to our partners and communities. This refreshed Strategy is another component in our commitment to developing a skilled and engaged workforce that reflects the diversity of our borough.

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 Climate Action and Community Power – Councillor Jake Rubin

Top news since my last report:

- **Brent Schools Climate Summit:** The Brent Schools Climate Summit, held at the Civic Centre, brought together primary and secondary students from across the borough to discuss and plan climate actions. Focusing on sustainable transport, energy-efficient buildings, biodiversity, and waste management, the students, acting as eco ambassadors, developed practical strategies to implement in their schools. The best projects will receive financial support to help turn these ideas into reality, contributing to Brent's efforts to become a greener, more sustainable borough. A big thank you to our climate officers for organising and executing this successfully.
- **Youth-Led 'Roots of Brent' Documentary:** A powerful new documentary, *Roots of Brent*, created by local young people, highlights the effects of climate change on the youth of Brent and showcases the inspiring climate actions taking place in the community. Over six months, the participants - aged 7-25 - developed key skills in documentary production, from filming and editing to conducting interviews. Supported by Brent's climate action programme and sponsored by FM Conway, the project culminated in a premiere at the Brent Climate Showcase on 20th February 2025. This initiative shows the importance of engaging with/empowering young people to lead the charge in tackling climate change.
- **Love Where You Live Grant now open for Brent based community projects**
- Brent Council's Love Where You Live Grant gives power to residents and local organisations to brighten our borough and bring communities together. I encourage anyone who has a positive idea to apply and make use of the support Brent is making available. Thank you to Wembley Stadium for their partnership on this programme. The Love Where You Live Grant is now accepting applications for grants between £1,000 and £15,000 to support community-led projects that improve the lives of Brent residents.

Brent Council will partner with Wembley Stadium Foundation (WSF) to award grants to projects across Brent. Wembley Stadium Foundation is an independent grant-making charity, using the power of Wembley Stadium to empower grassroots communities, and create transformative experiences. This collaboration intends to increase funding, better support Brent-based organisations to improve community cohesion and empowerment and provide opportunities that are available to all.

The grants can be used for activities, events or equipment that contribute to key areas such as, developing community and social cohesion, tackling environmental issues, addressing inequalities and expanding local engagement, capacity-building, tackling social isolation and reducing health inequalities.

- **Up to £5,000 available for climate-friendly community projects** - Brent Council has launched Round 4 of its Together Towards Zero grant, making up to £5000 available to residents and community organisations in Brent to deliver one off climate and ecology projects. Eligible applicants including residents,

constituted community groups, faith organisations, charities, housing associations, social enterprises and local businesses can apply for grants of between £1 and £5000.

To date the scheme has supported 35 projects across the borough with a total value of £32,490. Proposed projects must align with the council's five theme climate strategy, deliver measurable carbon savings or biodiversity gains, and actively engage local people especially young people aged 5 to 25, older residents, and those from ethnic minority backgrounds or with disabilities. This funding programme demonstrates Brent Council's commitment to supporting community led climate action and empowering local people to deliver meaningful environmental improvements.

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 Customer Experience, Resident Support and Culture – Councillor Promise Knight

Top news since my last report:

- **£550,000 Arts Council Funding for ‘Vi-Brent’ Initiative:** At the start of 2025, nine leading arts organisations in Brent secured £550,000 of funding from Arts Council England's National Lottery Place Partnership. The funding will support the ‘Vi-Brent’ initiative, a three-year programme aimed at boosting the borough’s cultural sector and inspiring young people through the arts. The programme will engage over 7,000 children and young people in underserved communities, providing them with access to a diverse range of creative opportunities.

The initiative will be delivered by a coalition of organisations, including Brent Council, Punchdrunk Enrichment, Fresh Arts, the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Mahogany Arts, Unique Community, Young Brent Foundation, Garden Studios, and The Awareness Tap. Key projects include a pilot programme offering free arts provision for primary schools, a children’s arts festival involving 4000 young people, and skills bootcamps for careers in music production, film, TV, and theatre. This initiative is a fantastic opportunity to empower Brent’s young people through culture and creativity, opening pathways into the arts and creative industries.

- **A new story for Kilburn Library** - Kilburn Library will temporarily close soon for a landmark £1million refurbishment, creating a modern, inclusive and vibrant space for the entire community. This investment is made possible by £783,000 in funding from the council’s Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL, is a charge that local authorities can impose on new developments to fund infrastructure projects) and £231,500 from Arts Council England, the refurbishment will provide a range of exciting new features to better meet the needs of Brent’s growing and diverse communities in the south of the borough.

Library users asked for additional study spaces, exhibition areas, and enhanced digital facilities – and we are pleased to deliver on these requests.

This landmark investment in Kilburn Library will provide increased capacity for learning, a versatile new space for events and creative activities, and a dedicated digital zone for all.

Visitors can look forward to an exciting new outlook including:

- A brand-new digital area with upgraded IT facilities
- A new modernised, comfortable and welcoming children’s library, offering an engaging learning environment
- Flexible spaces for events, activities, community programmes and exhibitions
- More study areas for students and remote workers
- A new extension featuring a hireable community space

The new community space will be available for hire at competitive rates, offering local groups and residents an affordable venue for meetings, workshops and events.

During the refurbishment period, temporary alternative arrangements will be in place to continue serving the community and ensure access to key services. We are working on the details and updates will follow.

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

Contact: Cllr.Promise.Knight@brent.gov.uk

Top news since my last report:

- **Launch of Brent Youth Strategy 2025-2028:** The new Brent Youth Strategy was officially launched at St Raphael's Family Wellbeing Centre, with young people at the heart of its development. This travel-themed strategy is aimed at empowering 11-18-year-olds, and up to 25 for those with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND). It covers four key areas: youth engagement, skills and opportunities, safety, and health and wellbeing.

Developed in collaboration with Brent Youth Parliament members and local organisations, the strategy seeks to ensure that every young person in Brent has access to the support, advice, and opportunities needed to thrive. It is the second youth strategy for the borough, following the success of the 2021-2023 strategy, which was created in response to the Independent Brent Poverty Commission's recommendation to support young people through a comprehensive Youth and Community Strategy. This is a strategy made for young people, by young people. The launch was an important milestone in Brent's ongoing commitment to creating a brighter future for its youth.

- **SEND School Nearing Completion:** The new £22 million Wembley Manor School, a crucial addition to Brent's educational infrastructure, is nearing completion. Designed to meet the growing demand for SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) places in the borough, the school will provide an additional 150 places for local children. The final modular units for classrooms were installed earlier this month, marking a significant milestone in the project.

The school will provide much-needed, specialist support to students and their families, reducing the need for pupils to travel outside the borough for education. The site, which spans 3,801 square metres over three stories, has been designed to the highest sustainability standards, achieving a BREEAM design score of 98.9 and a perfect score of 45 out of 45 for the Considerate Constructors Scheme. These achievements highlight the quality and environmental sustainability of the new facility, which is on track to achieve an overall BREEAM Outstanding rating. The school is set to open in October 2025 and will be a valuable resource for Brent's SEND community, offering a nurturing, state-of-the-art learning environment.

- **Ending the 21-hour rule for young carers:** Following the Full Council motion passed in November calling for the end of the 21-hour rule for young carers, significant progress has been made. Brent has worked closely with the Social Security Advisory Committee (SSAC) to drive forward this policy change. We designed and distributed a survey to young carers, youth officers, career advisors, and schools, which has provided valuable insights into the challenges faced by young carers in the borough. This data has been used to inform SSAC's research on the issue, and as a result, Brent has been invited to participate in roundtable discussions with the Secretary of State. These discussions will be a critical next step in the policy development process, with recommendations expected later this year. In addition, Brent continues to work with the APPG for Young Carers/Young Adult Carers to improve the collection and use of data on

young carers and feed into their inquiry on policy improvements. This work is helping to ensure that young carers in Brent are given the support they need to thrive.

Other news:

- **Brent Pupils Offered Top Primary School Choices:** Brent Council has received positive feedback on primary school placements for the 2025-2026 academic year. A total of 96% of families entering Reception Year have been offered a place at one of their top three preferred schools, with 86% receiving their first choice. This is in line with pan-London averages and reflects the high quality of Brent's schools, many of which have been rated 'Good' or 'Outstanding' by Ofsted. This result shows our commitment to ensuring that every child in Brent receives the best start in life through access to excellent primary education. The allocation process, which was completed in early 2025, allows parents to have confidence in the local education system and provides families with a range of high-quality school options.

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 Adult Social Care, Public Health and Leisure – Councillor Neil Nerva

Top news since my last report:

- **Food Strategy Workshop:** On 3rd April 2025, 60 stakeholders gathered for the Food Strategy Workshop, where they worked collaboratively to co-design Brent's forthcoming Food Strategy. This ambitious strategy seeks to address the interconnected challenges across health, education, employment, food growing, the environment, community resilience, and poverty. The insights gathered reflect Brent's unique strengths and challenges, and the workshop served as a critical step in developing a comprehensive, equitable food system for the borough. Participants emphasised the need for an integrated approach to ensure that food security, sustainability, and public health are prioritised within the community.
- **The Belonging Project – Tackling Social Isolation:** Brent Council has launched a new service aimed at preventing social isolation and loneliness, particularly among adults. The Belonging Project, run by Ashford Place, will proactively connect isolated adults with local networks, peer support, activities, and vital services. By creating strong local connections, the project aims to enhance well-being and reduce loneliness in the borough, helping to build a community where everyone feels they belong. This initiative marks a significant step in addressing one of Brent's most pressing public health challenges.
- **Integrated Neighbourhood Dashboards – Tackling Health Inequalities:** In collaboration with the Integrated Neighbourhood Teams at the Integrated Care Partnership, Brent has launched the Integrated Neighbourhood Dashboards. These dashboards provide an evidence-based approach to identifying health issues and inequalities within each of our five neighbourhoods. By reviewing data on social determinants of health, life-course outcomes, and health disparities (including the CORE20Plus 5 framework), the dashboards will help local services target interventions and improve the overall health and well-being of Brent's communities. The launch of these dashboards marks a significant milestone in our efforts to reduce health inequalities and tailor interventions to the specific needs of each neighbourhood.

Other news:

- **Somali Community Welcomes Royal Visit:** On 4th February 2025, The Princess Royal visited Church End to learn about the Brent Health Matters (BHM) programme, which has been addressing health inequalities in the Somali community since its inception. The BHM programme, which was launched in response to the disproportionate impact of Covid-19 on the borough, has conducted over 10,000 health checks and continues to engage with local communities through co-produced events. Recently, a health event held at Chalkhill Community Centre saw 210 Somali residents attend, where health issues such as diabetes, hypertension, and mental health were discussed. The success of BHM lies in its partnership with local organisations, ensuring that the services are effectively reaching those most in need.
- **Assessment Days** - I was proud to join our Adult Social Care teams at one of Brent's Community Assessment Day events this spring at the Church End and

Roundwood Unity Centre. These events bring together social workers, health professionals and partner organisations to offer residents immediate support, advice and care assessments on the spot. We welcomed over 120 people on the day, many of whom were able to access help there and then, including free health and wellbeing checks from Brent Health Matters and financial advice from Citizens Advice. By using new tools like the Ask Sara digital assessment system and AI-powered note-taking, we were able to spend more time face to face with residents and less time on paperwork. I am proud that these fast-track events show our fresh approach to adult social care, making it more accessible, more responsive, and empowering residents with the information and support they need without long waits.

- **Age-friendly borough** - I am proud to lead Brent's work as an age friendly borough, making sure our older residents feel valued, included and supported. Earlier this year we launched the Age Friendly Brent steering group, bringing together local organisations such as Brent Pensioners Forum, Age UK and Elders Voice to develop a borough wide strategy based on the World Health Organisation's eight domains of age friendliness. We have already held focus groups with older residents who use adult social care and those who attend community Zumba classes to understand their priorities. We are also seeking additional funding to appoint a dedicated coordinator to drive this work forward. More than eleven per cent of our residents are already aged sixty five or over and this figure is expected to rise by seventy eight per cent between twenty twenty and twenty forty one, so it is essential that we act now. Through practical improvements such as safer pavements and more benches, better access to transport, social events to reduce loneliness and more inclusive communications, we are making Brent a place where everyone at every stage of life can live well and feel part of our community.

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 Public Realm and Enforcement – Councillor Krupa Sheth

Top news since my last report:

- **Low pollution routes** - A ground-breaking initiative, funded by Defra, has mapped out a number of low pollution walking routes for 93 schools across the borough. Tackling polluted air is so important because it can have such a negative effect without us even noticing. That is why I am delighted that so many local pupils have got involved in this plan to use low air pollution routes. Thank you to Zoe who made a beautiful mural which has brought more life to Harlesden.

As part of the campaign which has delivered 53 workshops and reached 6,200 students so they know how best to dodge pollution, a new mural has gone up in Harlesden.

Hand-painted by artist Zoe Alleyne from Bud Studio. Developed through workshops with pupils and local community groups, the artwork celebrates clean air and active travel. And in true eco-style, it was painted by hand to keep its environmental footprint low.

At Furness Primary School, pupils took part in a Citizen Science Day, using handheld monitors to track pollution levels on different walking routes. A real eye-opener on the dangers of pollution hotspots – and the benefits of steering clear.

Breathe Clean which aims to steer students and parents towards quieter, cleaner walking routes. Find out more on the Breathe Clean Brent website: <https://breathecleanbrent.org>

- **Millions in funding for a Better and Safer Kilburn** - In partnership with Camden and Westminster Councils, we have successfully bid to Transport for London for over £8 million funding for 'Better, Safer Kilburn', a scheme to improve the public realm and road safety in the neighbouring boroughs on Kilburn High Road.

The consultation, undertaken between July and August 2024 asked 'Overall, what are your feelings about the proposed scheme?', with 82% of responses being positive. There was also strong support for 'more trees, pocket parks and planting' and 'wider pavements, more pedestrian crossing and continuous pavements'.

Camden and Brent councils have already spent over £1.5 million on upgrading paving, lighting and street furniture in the upper section of Kilburn High Road, as an earlier phase of the overall scheme. Construction was also recently completed in the lower section, including a protected cycle lane and new street furniture funded by Camden and Westminster councils and TfL.

I know that residents will be delighted at the huge investment that has been secured to make Kilburn High Road greener, more accessible, and better for pedestrians. Residents have been crying out for investment here, so I am very excited to work closely with Camden and Westminster councils, and TfL.

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 Housing – Councillor Fleur Donnelly-Jackson

Top news since my last report:

- **Brent pledges rapid improvement following housing regulator's report -** Rapid and sustained improvements in the way Brent manages housing services have been promised by the council, following a judgement published by the Regulator of Social Housing.

The judgement, published on 28 May 2025, found that the council has not met all of its responsibilities as a landlord in delivering against the outcomes of the Safety and Quality Standard, saying 'significant improvement is needed'.

The council voluntarily referred itself to the Regulator last month, after its Housing Improvement Plan highlighted concerns with how building safety risk assessment actions had previously been managed. The regulator has said the council has 'engaged positively with us since making its self-referral and has plans in place to understand the wider impact of its current position.'

While all required safety checks had been completed across its housing estates, the council identified weaknesses in how follow-up actions were managed and recorded.

As soon as concerns were identified, the council notified tenants to explain what is being done and the council has committed to working closely with the Regulator to ensure rapid and lasting improvements for tenants. It has appointed and is working closely with health and safety specialists and is developing a robust recovery plan which will see internal processes and accountability strengthened in order to improve safety compliance. In addition, the council is appointing more contractors to address overdue actions and is committing to keeping tenants informed throughout the process.

- **115 new homes for families in Grand Union -** We are proud that over the past year, Brent Council has overseen the delivery of 434 new affordable homes in the borough. Developments such as Grand Union help us in our commitment to increasing affordable housing.

We are proud to have worked closely with the St George Grand Union team from the outset to ensure this new neighbourhood delivers what the community needs, allowing us to plan ahead and prepare for the future with the right homes, facilities, jobs and infrastructure in place to support the local people of today and tomorrow.

These affordable homes are much more than just bricks and mortar, they provide a safe and secure haven for our residents. What's more, they are also set within a serene, canalside location, with lots of exciting new restaurants, shops and amenities on their doorstep, helping them to thrive in their new home.

- **Major crackdown on unlicensed landlords -** Enforcement officers patrolled the streets of Brent in late May, as part of our ongoing borough-wide operation to identify and take action against landlords renting out properties without a licence.

The law states that every landlord who rents out a property in Brent must have a licence, except for properties located in Wembley Park. Multi-agency teams, including officers from private housing services, anti-social behaviour and environmental services, went door-to-door across targeted areas. They provided waste management advice, listened to residents' concerns about anti-social behaviour, checked whether properties were free from serious health or safety hazards and took enforcement action against unlicensed landlords.

Every landlord in Brent is legally required to have a licence to rent out their property. This law exists to protect people from landlords who put them at risk by ignoring safety standards, cramming too many people into one home, or failing to carry out essential repairs.

We know that poor housing conditions can be extremely stressful and harmful to people's health and wellbeing. No one should have to live in damp, overcrowded, or dangerous conditions while their landlord looks the other way. That's why we're using targeted intelligence to focus our patrols on streets where we suspect landlords are renting without a licence. This is about protecting our residents and making sure landlords take their responsibilities seriously.

Responsible landlords play a vital role in providing quality homes and helping to ease the housing crisis - we won't let rogue landlords ruin the reputation of those doing the right thing. If you're a landlord in Brent and you're breaking the law, we will find you and you will face prosecution and hefty fines.

- **A new beginning for families with launch of new homelessness service -** Brent Council has opened a new homelessness service for families by relocating the Families Homelessness Service from the Civic Centre in Wembley to the New Horizons Centre in Roundwood. The expansion is part of a broader Community Wellbeing Programme aimed at addressing the homelessness emergency caused by rising housing pressures and the cost of living crisis.

The service currently supports an average of 61 families per week, around 3,200 households per year, with priority given to families with dependent children and pregnant women. The new centre includes dedicated reception and triage facilities, private interview rooms and administrative areas funded through a £400,000 capital budget. Co-location with wider specialist services including food support, debt advice and public health initiatives is expected to deliver better preventative and sustainable outcomes, reducing the need for temporary accommodation, rough sleeping and longer term social care. Operating five days a week, the service can now support up to 1,000 families annually and demonstrates Brent's commitment to providing integrated and outcome focused support for its most vulnerable residents.

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 Safer Communities, Jobs and Skills – Councillor Harbi Farah

Top news since my last report:

- **Minister of State for Employment Visits Brent's Family Wellbeing Centre:** In May 2025, Alison McGovern, Minister of State for Employment, visited Brent's Family Wellbeing Centre in Harlesden, accompanied by Deputy Mayors of London Debbie Weekes-Bernard and Joanne McCartney. The ministerial delegation met with parents, children, and partners providing vital services at the centre, such as Jobcentre Plus, Citizens Advice, and charities offering support for refugee and migrant families. The centre provides a wide range of services, including food parcels, advice on budgeting, and family activities. McGovern emphasised the importance of such services in the face of the cost-of-living crisis, noting that poverty can isolate families from their communities. Brent's eight Family Wellbeing Centres continue to support families struggling with daily necessities while also offering access to arts and entertainment. The visit follows a similar one in October last year by the Secretaries of State for Education and Work and Pensions, who launched a 10-year plan to tackle child poverty in Brent. We are in touch with the Minister and with the Deputy Mayor for Skills and Employment for a follow-up visit.
- **Upcoming Wembley Jobs Fair 2025:** The highly anticipated Wembley Jobs Fair 2025 is set to take place on Tuesday 15th July 2025 at Wembley Stadium. More than 150 companies are lined-up to showcase their current vacancies, including the Brent-based IKEA and global brands such as M&S, KPMG and Coca-Cola. Jobseekers will be able to meet with employers in retail, construction, tech, travel, health and hospitality industries and in some cases, apply for roles on the spot. Brent Works, the council's employment service and partners will also be on hand to provide one-to-one personalised career advice, and there will be inspiring development workshops running throughout the day. We had a record-breaking turnout last year with over 8,000 attendees. 390 people secured good quality jobs, apprenticeships and training opportunities as a direct result of attending the jobs fair. The event provides an invaluable platform for job seekers to meet with employers, attend workshops, and network with industry professionals, offering new opportunities across various sectors. Prospective attendees are encouraged to sign up via Eventbrite, ensuring they bring ID and relevant documents with them.
- **Brent Start Enrolments for 2024/25 Academic Year:** Brent Start continues to provide access to high-quality education and training. For the 2024/25 academic year, there have been 5,464 enrolments across 615 courses, representing 1,906 individual learners. Brent Start is committed to providing accessible learning opportunities to residents and equipping them with the skills needed to succeed in the workforce.
- **Skills Bootcamp – Gas Engineering Graduation:** On 19th March 2025, we hosted a celebratory graduation for 18 learners who completed the Level 3 Gas Engineering Skills Bootcamp. This initiative, part of Brent Works, is aimed at providing local residents with the training needed to secure high-quality, well-paid jobs. To date, 79 Brent residents have been placed into employment following

their participation in the programme. Additionally, Brent Council has secured an additional £263,097 in funding from the Greater London Authority for Wave 6 of the programme, enabling 40 more residents to enrol in the Gas Engineering course. The grant agreement is currently pending, with the programme continuing to provide essential skills and employment opportunities to the community.

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

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

Top news since my last report:

- **£5 Million for Major Alpertton Station Accessibility Overhaul** - Commuters using Alpertton Underground Station are set for a transformative upgrade, with Brent Council announcing a crucial £5 million funding injection towards full step-free access and other vital improvements. This significant commitment, leveraging the Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy (SCIL), will be matched by Transport for London (TfL), unlocking a comprehensive station overhaul anticipated to complete by Summer 2027.

The decision, confirmed at the Cabinet meeting on 19 May 2025, marks a major victory for accessibility and urban regeneration in Brent. Alpertton Station, which serves over 3 million passengers annually, currently lacks step-free access and suffers from congestion at peak times and outdated facilities.

The approved plans will see the installation of new lifts, an increase in ticket gates to ease overcrowding, and the provision of upgraded, fully accessible toilet facilities, including baby changing amenities. TfL's concept designs promise to respect the station's historic character while delivering modern, inclusive infrastructure.

- **South Kilburn Single Delivery Partner** - Brent Council has launched the procurement process to appoint a Single Delivery Partner to deliver the remaining phases of the South Kilburn regeneration, one of the borough's largest and most ambitious projects. The partner will deliver at least 1,600 additional homes, alongside a new primary school, improved parks, community facilities, and enhanced public spaces, completing a transformation that has already provided over 1,900 homes delivered or under construction, 1,133 households permanently rehoused, and five new parks created. The regeneration has won 18 design and community awards to date and enjoys strong resident backing, with 84 percent voting in favour of the programme in a formal ballot. The Single Delivery Partner appointment reflects Brent's commitment to delivering a further 250 shovel ready homes at the Hereford and Exeter site, securing affordable housing, and embedding social value, long term stewardship and meaningful public realm improvements, ensuring South Kilburn becomes a thriving, sustainable and inclusive neighbourhood for generations to come.
- **Brent backs West London Orbital** - Brent Council has made a significant investment of £465,500 to progress the West London Orbital Overground line. This funding will support the next stage of the project, which aims to convert existing freight rail lines into a new passenger service, connecting areas such as Cricklewood and Neasden with Acton, Brentford and Hounslow. The line will bring a host of benefits, including connecting underserved communities to employment opportunities, accelerating the delivery of much-needed homes, and helping to ease congestion on London's roads. The project is backed by the West London Alliance, which includes Brent and neighbouring boroughs, and Transport for London aims to see the line carrying passengers in the early 2030s.

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

Contact: Cllr.Teo.Benea@brent.gov.uk

Questions from the Opposition and Other Non-Cabinet Members**Full Council – 7 July 2025****1. Question from Councillor Lesley Smith to Councillor Benea (Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning & Property)**

Will the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning and Property provide a response to Members on: the importance of the recent Brent Council investment into making the West-London Orbital Line a reality and the level of support amongst Brent residents, businesses and other London Boroughs, for the Bakerloo Line Upgrade and Extension project?

Response:**West London Orbital**

In April 2025, Cabinet agreed to make a funding contribution of £465,516 (plus contingency) payable in 2026-27, towards the next stage of development of the West London Orbital rail scheme (WLO).

The importance of the WLO cannot be underestimated. There is currently a lack of effective orbital public transport connections in West London, with many people who live in the area required to travel into central London and out again by rail or forced onto the often congested and unreliable highway network, to make what should be relatively short journeys to access work, education or leisure opportunities.

The WLO will also bring about significant economic, social and environmental benefits to Brent and its communities, including new homes and jobs; improved access to a range of employment and learning opportunities; enhanced social inclusion – particularly for some of the more deprived parts of the borough; and a significant reduction in car trips and harmful emissions. The case for investment in the scheme is therefore compelling.

A report recently published by Hammersmith & Fulham Council makes a compelling case for the economic potential of the West London Orbital (WLO) railway. It estimates that the project could help unlock nearly 16,000 additional homes along the route, generating up to £2.2 billion in added value, primarily through residential development concentrated near station hubs.

In addition to this uplift in land and housing value, the report anticipates wider economic benefits of approximately £16 million per year, reflecting the enhanced connectivity, increased access to jobs, and improved transport reliability that the new line would bring to the sub-region.

Transport for London (TfL) has reviewed the scheme's viability and confirmed that the economic case is relatively strong, with a benefit-cost ratio (BCR) ranging from 1.6 to 2.3. This places the WLO firmly in the "medium to high" value-for-money category used in transport appraisal, strengthening the argument for public investment in the scheme.

Bakerloo Line Upgrade and Extension project

The Bakerloo Line is in urgent need of investment. It currently runs the oldest trains in the country — rolling stock that dates back to 1972 — meaning Londoners are travelling every day on trains that are over half a century old. These trains are long past their intended lifespan, and the risks associated with continuing to rely on them are growing. Breakdowns, delays, and costly emergency repairs are becoming increasingly frequent, and there is a very real danger of a major system failure if action isn't taken soon.

This isn't just about outdated trains, it's about a lifeline for tens of thousands of Londoners who depend on the Bakerloo Line to get to work, school, and vital services. Communities from Kilburn Park to Kenton rely on it every day, yet the line remains one of the least reliable and least comfortable in the capital. With obsolete signalling, poor ventilation and outdated infrastructure, it is falling behind every other line on the network, and that gap is only widening.

In April 2025 Central London Forward commissioned population polling and business surveys to understand the level of support there is for the Bakerloo Line Upgrade and Extension project within the communities along the line and businesses across London.

The results indicated that 76% of residents and 89% businesses were in favor of the proposals and only 1% of residents and 2% businesses were in opposition. The results also indicated that Brent businesses and residents were more actively supportive of the campaign, and aware of it, and indicated that it would benefit them – than in other areas along the route.

Key findings included:

- 81% of Brent residents supported the proposals to upgrade and extend the Bakerloo Line (76% overall)
- 67% of Brent residents said their ability to travel to work or other frequently visited locations would be improved (57% overall)
- 48% of Brent residents said the upgrade and extension would reduce the number of journeys they made by car (45% overall)
- 57% of Brent residents said the upgrade and extension would improve their ability to access employment (45% overall)
- 81% of Brent businesses said that the upgrade and extension would have a positive impact on their business (74% overall)
- 58% of Brent businesses said that the upgrade and extension would result in more custom (52% overall), whilst 70% said it would result in increased growth (63% overall)

Further information about the surveys and the results can be found at [Back the Bakerloo Line - New independent research shows overwhelming London-wide support for Bakerloo Line Upgrade and Extension](#)

2. Question from Councillor Long to Councillor Krupa Sheth (Cabinet Member for Public Realm & Enforcement) and Councillor Rubin (Cabinet Member for Climate Action and Community Power)

Will the Cabinet Member for Climate Action and Community Power and the Cabinet Member for Public Realm and Enforcement, provide a response to members on the following: The progress towards the installation of a network of mandatory parking bays for dockless e-bike across the borough; the importance of the ongoing efforts to hold e-bike operators to the high standards of safety that Brent's residents expect; the ongoing programmes available to both residents and businesses, to promote cycling and encourage active transport; the total number of individual parking slots available through Brent's network of Bike Hangars and an update on the work underway alongside Transport for London to improve walking and cycling routes between Wembley Central and Harlesden Station.

Response:

Dockless e-bikes:

To address the issue of inconsiderate and unsafe parking of bikes, particularly on footways, the Council is working closely with Lime and other operators to implement a network of 200 dedicated parking bays which is being delivered on a phased basis across Brent. Bays are being rolled out in a range of locations, including those areas with high pedestrian activity - such as outside stations, main high streets, and other important trip generators; and where we have received a high level of complaints. As of the end of June 2025, around 100 bays have been installed, with more planned for installation in July and August, following consultation.

The Council recognises the importance of holding e-bike operators to high standards of safety. As a result of extensive negotiations with Lime, they have committed to a new operating plan which came into effect on 1 November 2024. Among the various commitments includes:

- A reduction in fleet size from 750 bikes to 500, until the new parking bays are in place and levels of complaints have been significantly reduced.
- Introduction of a ban on parking of bikes in areas where misuse is severe and parking poor and introduction of automatic speed controls in busy hotspots.
- Increasing operational staff on the ground from 14 to 24 to ensure greater coverage of the borough and to improve responsiveness.
- Agreed KPIs including the removal of inappropriately parked/abandoned bikes within 2 hours when reported.

We continue to work with Lime to drive forward improvements in their operating practises, but where Members or residents identify issues, please report these to:

- Email: brent@li.me
- Email: support@li.me
- Online: fixmystreet.com

Ahead of the expected introduction of e-bike and e-scooter regulations by the Government, TfL, London Councils and London boroughs are continuing work to introduce a pan-London micromobility contract which will see the introduction of a centrally managed, standardised approach to e-bike and e-scooter operations across the Capital. In the meantime, the Council will continue working closely with scheme operators to bring about continuous improvements in their operations.

Promoting Active Travel:

Our programme of cycling related activities to encourage active travel include the following:

- Cycle training, this is free to anyone who lives, works or studies in Brent [Cycle training, security and safety | Brent Council](#). Group sessions, school courses or individual 1:1 training are available
- Try before you bike managed by Peddle my Wheels [Try a bike for a month | Brent Council](#) provides the opportunity for residents to pay monthly for a bike until the value of the bike is paid off and/or this can be returned at any time if they change their mind.
- Also managed by Peddle my Wheels we have cycling influencers that are members of the local community that are provided with a free bike and safety equipment, and we follow them on their cycling journey (via social media posts) from beginner to hopefully becoming a regular cyclist and encouraging others to do similar. We are currently recruiting for a cycling influencer in St Raphaels and South Kilburn Green Neighbourhoods and 2 Brent Council staff to encourage colleagues to consider cycling to work or for work related journeys.
- Our schools programme which includes encouraging schools to develop a travel plans (TfL's Travel for Life) helps to promote active travel at an early age [TfL Travel for Life - Travel for Life](#). 42 schools in Brent currently have active school travel plans and 28 of those have achieved Gold accreditation.
- School streets help support active travel by improving the environment and safety around schools, we have 30+ in the borough. [School Streets programme | Brent Council](#) [Breathe Clean Brent](#)

- Brent's Breathe Clean project: [Breathe Clean Brent](#) includes a map to encourage active travel and includes details of healthier walking and cycling routes across the borough. This was promoted to schools and also includes community walking routes and Brent art trail which combines visiting places of interest with using sustainable travel.
- Revive and Ride: Launched in April 2025 as part of Brent Council's "Revive and Ride" initiative, the scheme refurbishes bikes discarded at Abbey Road's Waste & Recycling Centre and donates them - up to 10 free bikes per local faith or community group along with training and guided rides to encourage cycling and greener living.

Bike Hangars:

To date, the Council has installed 153 Bike Hangars across the borough, providing over 900 parking spaces for bikes. This comprises:

- 148 on street Bike Hangers, providing 888 individual parking slots.
- 5 hangars in Brent Housing Estates, providing 30 individual parking slots.

An additional 17 cycle hangars are planned for installation during 2025/26 utilising funding secured from Transport for London.

Wembley – Willesden Junction Healthy Streets Corridor Scheme:

Brent Council have been working closely with Transport for London (TfL) since April 2019 to develop a project that would make it safer and easier for local people to walk and cycle between Wembley and Willesden Junction. The project is being developed in phases, and the first phase is on the area between Wembley Central and Harlesden stations, where a new high-quality Cycleway and improvements for pedestrians are being proposed.

These changes will help us to reduce air pollution and carbon emissions, which could improve local people's health. It would also address congestion and help support new developments across the wider area by providing better walking and cycling links to local businesses and stations.

A public consultation on the proposals was held between 10th November and 21st December 2023 during which 313 responses were received, including ten from stakeholders. Some key findings from the responses received were:

- 83 per cent think the scheme will encourage more people to walk.
- 87 per cent think the scheme will encourage more people to cycle.
- 9 per cent think the scheme will encourage more people to use public transport.

- 60 per cent think the scheme will mean fewer people will choose to travel by motor vehicle for personal journeys and 46% (125 respondents) think it will have no impact on business journeys.

A link to the consultation report is here: -
<https://haveyoursay.tfl.gov.uk/28345/widgets/80430/documents/60985>

The Council will continue to work closely with TfL to develop these proposals for walking and cycling improvements between Wembley and Harlesden over the coming months with the aim to obtain agreement to commence detailed design shortly and progress towards construction in early 2027.

3. Question from Councillor Moeen to Councillor Grahl (Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools)

Will the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools provide an update to Members on the recent announcements by both government and the Mayor of London, to fund both free school meals and pilot breakfast clubs, and the importance of this new commitment to addressing food poverty in the borough?

Response:

All children nationally currently receive free school meals in Key Stage 1 (Reception, Year 1 and Year 2). Eligibility for free school meals for other year groups is based on a range of benefits received by families (such as income support and child tax credit where income is no more than £16,190). The children of families in receipt of Universal Credit are eligible for free school meals if household income is less than £7,400 a year. The UK government has recently announced an expansion of Free School Meals (FSM) in England, to remove the £7,400 cap so that all children whose families receive Universal Credit will be eligible for free school meals from September 2026. According to the Government this will affect over half a million more pupils, as part of a broader strategy to tackle child poverty and ensure all children have access to nutritious meals.

While this will contribute to addressing food poverty in Brent for many local families, families across the borough are already benefitting from schemes to ensure as many children as possible access free school meals. All primary aged children in Brent have free school meals through the London Mayor's Free School Meal policy, which commenced in 2023 and has now been made permanent. To ensure that as many children as possible in secondary schools also benefit from free school meals, the council has established an auto-enrolment scheme. This ensures that primary aged children whose families receive eligible benefits are also formally registered for free school meals so that their schools can access linked pupil premium funding to provide additional support to these pupils. The Brent auto-enrolment scheme to date has identified over 389 additional eligible children, generating over £500K additional funding for schools.

Research undertaken by the Mayor's office has identified the benefits of the scheme to provide universal free school meals for primary children across London, which include children not going hungry at school, reducing stigma and inequalities and supporting educational outcomes.

The government has also announced a national scheme of free breakfasts clubs in every primary school to ensure all primary aged children have access to a healthy breakfast to support their engagement in learning. An early adopter scheme is currently underway to pilot and test delivery of the programme in 750 schools across the county, which includes 5 Brent schools.

4. Question from Councillor Mistry to Councillor Muhammed Butt (Leader of the Council):

Given the findings of the Council's own Equalities Impact Assessment that the twinning of Brent with Nablus 'may cause emotional harm to some groups in Brent', 'may risk compounding antisemitism', and 'may be viewed as demonstrating greater support for one group over another', could the Leader of the Council:

- (1) Specify steps the Council is taking to mitigate these risks and ensure that community cohesion, equalities obligations and political impartiality are upheld?
- (2) Furthermore, given that travel to Nablus is dependent on approval from Israeli authorities, deemed unsafe for LGBTQ+ people by some, and subject to official Foreign Office guidance advising against travel to all parts of the West Bank, justify spending time and resources on a partnership that many Brent residents cannot safely or legally participate in; and
- (3) Finally, given the absence of meaningful engagement or consultation with many of Brent's communities, including its large Hindu, Jewish and Christian populations, respond to concerns that this has been on a one-sided political process, rather than a genuinely representative or inclusive one and considering support of the twinning arrangement advise what steps were taken to verify the authenticity and residency of those signatures in their petition?

Response:

We fully recognise the importance of ensuring that all communities in Brent feel heard, respected, and included in the decisions that affect civic life. Brent has a long and proud humanitarian tradition of standing up for dialogue, justice, and equality. We are equally proud of our diversity, both of people and plurality of views but, most importantly, we are committed to promoting our borough as a place where every resident can call their home.

We understand that the decision to twin with Nablus has caused some concern, particularly in light of current affairs and the links between many Brent households and families in the Middle East.

The twinning initiative is intended as a gesture aimed at fostering dialogue and mutual understanding, building bridges between communities, sharing experiences, and supporting grassroots collaboration.

The process around this twinning, is not a closed story and we know that there is still more to be done. The Council has engaged in ongoing dialogue with both the Nablus Governorate and the Brent-Nablus Twinning Association as the organisations responsible.

I have also personally made clear that the relationship must remain focused on community, cultural, educational, and municipal exchange, and that it must support, not undermine, our responsibilities to community cohesion here in Brent too.

It will not and should not endorse any political group or ideology over another and should follow in the footsteps of Dundee City Council and Sheffield City Council, which also have links with Nablus.

To ensure our community cohesion and equalities obligations are closely adhered to and before signing a Twinning agreement, in line with our continuing EIA obligations, we will be engaging with members of the community who may be particularly marginalised.

As set out in the assessment, which was appended to the initial report, the relationship is not solely based on physical exchanges or travel, something also highlighted in the body of the Council report, but also aspirational and multi-faith activities which can take place online. The assessment also sets out the aspiration of Brent Nablus Twinning Association to build on links with Brent's outstanding network of schools, and host school children from Nablus; to deepen links between our two homes.

If twinning is to be successful, it must be driven forward and resourced by volunteers within Brent's community – and the council has made this principle clear in our International Partnering Protocol. The resource from the council will be limited, and the impact will be under stringent review by the council. If at any stage it becomes clear that a twinning arrangement is failing in promoting constructive dialogue, or community and cultural exchange, the protocol allows for the arrangement to be reviewed and, if necessary, annulled.

The EIA sets out the advantages and disadvantages of building the twinning relationship and processes in place. A consistent approach is applied to all petitions received by the council to verify the authenticity of signatures, but where concerns have been raised, we have investigated accordingly. As set out in the petition guidance, postcodes of Brent and neighbouring boroughs are accepted, *'a random check will be carried out on very large petitions..... to ensure they are valid. If it is felt that a petition contains signatures from people who are remote from the area, are unlikely to be affected by the subject of the petition or are not genuine then the petition will be returned'*.

5. Question from Councillor Lorber to Councillor Benea (Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning & Property):

Can the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning & Property please confirm:

- (1) how many Shared Ownership units have been approved by the Planning Committee in the last 10 years in Brent to be built by:
 - (a) the Council in total and in each ward;
 - (b) developers and Housing Associations in total and in each ward
- (2) How many Shared Ownership units have been delivered in that period by the Council, Developers and Housing Associations in total and by ward, and:
 - (a) how many of these units are currently occupied and how many are empty in total and by ward;
 - (b) how many completed Shared Ownership units are still to find a buyer in Brent and what are the implications, if these units are unsaleable.

In view of this month's damning BBC report into hidden costs and financial hardship experienced by people who were led to believe that shared ownership was a stepping stone into home ownership, does Brent Council still define 'shared ownership' as an affordable housing model.

Response:

Question 1(a) & (b): The details are as shown in the spreadsheet attached as Appendix 1 and derived from planning approvals data broken down by ward and by Council or Housing Association.

Question 2(a): The attached spreadsheet also shows delivery by ward. The council does not hold data on occupancy rates for Housing Associations.

Question 2(b): The council does not hold details of sales rates for developers or housing associations.

In terms of the implications if shared ownership units are unsaleable - Brent's '[Shared Ownership Sales and Marketing Policy](#)' sets out the process in relation to marketing of Council units at an appropriate level in the market and verified by an independent valuer. Housing associations are responsible for managing their own sales.

In recognition of affordability pressures the Government has made changes to allow for smaller initial shares (down to 5%) and smaller staircasing purchases for those wishing to increase their share. At Brent, we have sought to provide the most affordable rates by reducing the amount of initial equity. This must of course

be balanced with scheme viability. This does allow it to be accessible to households at below market price.

In response whether the Council still defines 'shared ownership' as an affordable housing model – Shared ownership falls within the definition of an affordable housing product within the National Planning Policy Framework and London Plan and Brent's Local Plan is consistent with this. Since this is a discounted market product aimed at assisting households into home ownership it is not immune from changes in the market and therefore levels of affordability. Nevertheless, it is sold at a level below full market value so accessible to a sector of households that cannot afford the full market price.

The Council's emphasis is on providing the maximum number of homes at social or London affordable rents which, in reality, requires a significant amount of subsidy. Shared ownership is part of the overall picture. Moreover, keeping pace with housing delivery is an important factor ensuring homes of all types are made available and Brent has built more homes in the last 10 years than any other London borough except Tower Hamlets. This is over 20,000 homes including 4200 affordable (also 2nd highest in London).

1)a) Shared Ownership approvals provider Council

Ward	2020/21	Grand Total
Wembley Central	7	7
Wembley Hill	36	36
Grand Total	43	43

1)b) Shared Ownership approvals provider developers and Housing Associations

Ward	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Grand Total
Alperton	19*			10	235	7	171	217	4	663
Brondesbury Park			17							17
Dollis Hill					6		5			11
Dudden Hill		17		9*		10				36
Fryent	15*									15
Harlesden & Kensal Green							4			4
Kenton								4		4
Kilburn							98			98
Kingsbury								14		14
Northwick Park					4				111	115
Queensbury					20			93		113
Sudbury						3				3
Tokington				4	3		14	52		73
Welsh Harp					4			4	3	11
Wembley Central			29							29
Wembley Hill							78			78
Wembley Park					32		9	119		160
Willesden Green								4		4
Grand Total	34	17	46	23	304	20	379	507	118	1448

* = Intermediate that could be SO

2) Shared Ownership completions provider developers and Housing Associations

Ward	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	Grand Total
Alperton					19			376		195	590
Brondesbury Park				17							17
Dollis Hill		43*					5				48

Dudden Hill				17				9		10		36
Kilburn								34				34
Preston	25*											25
Queensbury		9					20					29
Stonebridge	70			21		50						141
Tokington			4	8, 19*	35			153		1		220
Wembley Central				12	29							41
Wembley Park								9		90		99
Willesden Green											4	4
Grand Total	43	95	9	21	96	64	75	581		296	4	1284

* = Intermediate that could be SO

 Brent	<p align="center">Full Council 7 July 2025</p>
	<p align="center">Report from the Corporate Director of Finance and Resources</p>
<p align="center">Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee 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>	<p>Chatan Popat Strategy Lead – Scrutiny Democratic and Corporate Governance chatan.popat@brent.gov.uk</p> <p>James Kinsella Governance and Scrutiny Manager Democratic and Corporate Governance james.kinsella@brent.gov.uk</p> <p>Amira Nassr Deputy Director, Democratic and Corporate Governance amira.nassr@brent.gov.uk</p>

1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.0. To update Full Council on the meetings and activities of the Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee and North West London Joint Health Overview Scrutiny Committee since the last update to Full Council on 18 November 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 that the Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee's work programme for the 2025-26 municipal year will be provided as part of the next update report to Full Council.

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 Committee (NWL JHOSC). Councillor Ketan Sheth was re-elected as chair of the Community and 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's 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 2025/26 work programme will be finalised during the month of July 2025. Once agreed, it will outline the policy areas and council decisions the committee plan to review during the 2025/26 municipal year. Statutory guidance on overview and scrutiny recommends that for scrutiny to be effective, scrutiny committees focus on conducting fewer in-depth reviews of highly significant topics¹.

- 3.2.5 In terms of work undertaken since the previous update, the Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee met for its third meeting of the 2024/25 municipal year on 20 November 2024. The meeting focused on housing-related

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

performance and challenges in Brent, with a particular emphasis on the work of i4B and First Wave Housing (FWH), Brent Housing Management (BHM), and the Temporary Accommodation and Homelessness Prevention Service. The Chair of i4B and FWH reported progress in property acquisitions, emergency repairs, and compliance monitoring, but acknowledged ongoing challenges in tenant satisfaction, void turnaround times, and rent collection. The Committee also discussed the companies' role in alleviating homelessness and their involvement in affordable housing schemes, with Brent Youth Parliament representatives also raising concerns about the impact of housing instability on young people's education and wellbeing.

- 3.2.6 The Committee also reviewed the performance of Brent Housing Management, particularly in light of the new Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) introduced in April 2024. The department acknowledged that while transactional satisfaction with repairs was high, perception-based TSM results were low, especially in areas such as complaints handling and anti-social behaviour. This discrepancy was attributed to limited tenant engagement and communication. In response, BHM had restructured its housing service, introducing 25 patch-based Housing Officers to improve tenant relationships and data collection. The Committee also explored issues such as void property management, succession rights, and the increase in evictions, with officers emphasising that evictions remained a last resort and were handled with cross-departmental coordination to prevent homelessness.
- 3.2.7 The final item addressed the Temporary Accommodation and Homelessness Prevention Service. The department outlined the severe housing pressures in Brent, driven by a post-pandemic contraction of the private rented sector, rising rents, and limited social housing supply. The Committee discussed the use of hotels for temporary accommodation, the impact of national policy on asylum seekers, and the challenges of securing permanent housing for homeless families. Throughout the meeting, the Committee stressed the need for improved communication, data transparency, and strategic planning.
- 3.2.8 The committee's fourth meeting of the municipal year held on 05 February 2025 focused extensively on Brent's Adult Social Care (ASC) services, particularly in response to the Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspection and the borough's ongoing transformation efforts. The Committee were introduced to the CQC Adult Social Care Improvement Plan, which noted that while Brent was rated as "requires improvement," it was only one percentage point away from a "good" rating. The inspection highlighted strengths in safeguarding and leadership, but also pointed to areas needing improvement, particularly in customer experience and service delivery. The department emphasised that many of the issues raised were already known and being addressed through a comprehensive improvement plan, which included better support for carers, enhanced community engagement, and a shift toward co-production with residents.
- 3.2.9 The Committee were informed of several initiatives that were already showing positive outcomes. For instance, satisfaction among carers had increased and assessment waiting lists had reduced significantly. A digital and assistive

technology programme was also being rolled out to support independent living. Committee members raised questions about performance metrics, benchmarking, and the need for clearer data. The department acknowledged these points and committed to sharing more detailed data and benchmarking comparisons, particularly with boroughs of similar demographics.

- 3.2.10 The Adult Social Care Transformation Programme was also reviewed at this meeting. The programme aims to reshape service delivery through early intervention, strength-based practice, and digital innovation. The department explained that the programme was designed to work within existing budgets, reallocating resources where needed and leveraging external grants. The Committee expressed concerns about the feasibility of delivering such an ambitious programme without additional funding, especially given rising demand for mental health and learning disability services. Officers and the Cabinet Lead responded by highlighting the cost-effectiveness of preventative services such as reablement and underlined the importance of cross-departmental collaboration and integrated funding models with health partners.
- 3.2.11 Finally, the Committee reviewed the Community Health and Wellbeing Performance Update for the period up to and including Q3 2024–25. The report provided a broad overview of key performance indicators (KPIs). Members and officers held a detailed conversation on the explanation and solutions for underperforming areas. The Committee also discussed real-life case examples, emphasising the importance of improving referral pathways and public awareness of ASC services.
- 3.2.12 The Committee's meeting on 5 March 2025 focused on several key health and wellbeing issues. A portion of the meeting was dedicated to updates from Pippa Nightingale, CEO of London North West University Healthcare NHS Trust, on the pressures facing Northwick Park Hospital's A&E and the progress of its maternity services. The hospital experienced a 9% increase in A&E attendance due to winter pressures and a norovirus outbreak, prompting the addition of new beds and the opening of a 32-bed acute ward. Despite these challenges, the Trust reported strong performance in its Urgent Care Centres and improvements in patient flow. On maternity services, she highlighted substantial investments and cultural reforms that have led to improved outcomes, including reduced stillbirth and neonatal mortality rates, and a significant drop in midwifery vacancy rates.
- 3.2.13 The Committee also received an update from North Central London (NCL) on the Start Well programme, which proposed changes to maternity and neonatal services, including the potential closure of units at the Royal Free and Whittington Hospitals. The Committee learned that the consultation revealed strong support for service improvements but mixed views on consolidation. Concerns were raised about travel times, cultural needs, and capacity at remaining units. NCL NHS assured that detailed modelling and impact assessments had been conducted, and mitigation plans were in place. The Committee emphasised the importance of maintaining choice and continuity of care, especially for vulnerable populations.

- 3.2.14 The final item of the meeting was one that was put forward by the Brent Youth Parliament (BYP). They led a discussion on nicotine addiction and vaping among young people. The Committee reviewed local data, national policy, and Brent's public health response, including the establishment of a new youth-focused service within Elev8. BYP raised concerns about accessibility and underage sales, health risks and lack of awareness, engagement and education for the younger cohort and community and school involvement. The Committee praised BYP's initiative and committed to further action and monitoring.
- 3.2.15 The Committee met for its final meeting of the municipal year on 28 April 2025. The first item was the Annual School Standards and Achievement report for the academic year 2023-24. Also in attendance were Brent Headteachers representing primary and secondary school provisions in Brent. The discussion highlighted Brent's strong overall educational performance across a number of educational settings, ranging from early years to Key Stage 5 with the performance across the borough remaining good with above average levels of attainment across most groups. However, persistent underachievement among boys of Black Caribbean heritage was a key concern. While initiatives such as the Brent Schools Race Equality Programme and targeted support strategies were acknowledged, committee members called for greater transparency in data reporting and a deeper analysis of long-term trends. Headteachers and officers emphasised the importance of early years education, parental engagement, and tailored interventions, while also acknowledging the impact of deprivation, the pandemic, and the cost-of-living crisis on school readiness and outcomes. The committee sought assurances that the department will continue to collaborate closely with schools to improve the attainment of these groups.
- 3.2.16 Brent Youth Parliament raised concerns about inconsistent access to careers advice and extracurricular opportunities across schools. The department acknowledged the variability in provision and highlighted the council's targeted support for young people at risk of becoming NEET. The committee also discussed the challenges of equitable school funding, the importance of early intervention, and the need for better use of technology to reduce administrative burdens on staff. There was a strong emphasis on the role of school leadership, governance, and community engagement in driving improvement, with calls for more structured collaboration between schools, the Council, and community organisations to support underperforming groups.
- 3.2.17 The second part of the meeting focused on the significant workforce challenges facing Brent's Adults and Children's Social Care services. The report presented to members outlined the national and regional context of social care staffing shortages, particularly among regulated professionals such as social workers, occupational therapists, and Approved Mental Health Professionals (AMHPs). The Committee were informed that Brent has responded with a range of strategic initiatives, including retention payments, career progression frameworks, the conversion of agency staff to permanent roles and other initiatives such as the London Pledge and the "grow your own" apprenticeship schemes. In Children's Social Care, reforms aligned with the national "Stable

Homes Built on Love” agenda have led to a restructure aimed at integrating early help and social work services which has successfully reduced agency reliance and improved workforce stability. In Adult Social Care, Brent has implemented targeted recruitment campaigns, launched a Skills Academy, and introduced financial incentives to attract and retain staff. Despite these efforts, challenges persist due to national funding constraints, regional competition, and pay disparities with NHS roles. Officers also highlighted the importance of supportive management, manageable caseloads, and professional development in retaining staff. The committee also explored the potential of digital tools like AI-assisted case recording to reduce workload and improve service delivery.

3.2.18 Members raised concerns about burnout, supervision quality, and the need for better coordination between the two social care teams, especially during transitions. Both departments highlighted that while national trends influence workforce challenges, Brent is actively working to build resilience through strategic planning, regional collaboration, and investment in staff wellbeing. Recommendations included conducting a wellbeing audit, improving exit interview analysis, and enhancing the use of digital technology to support frontline staff. Members concluded with a recognition of the complex landscape Brent operates within and a shared commitment to continuous improvement in both education and social care.

3.2.19 Since the last report to Full Council, the North West London Joint Health Overview Scrutiny Committee (NWL JHOSC) has met three times; at Westminster in December, Kensington and Chelsea in March and at Brent in May. At December’s meeting, the Committee reviewed the region’s winter health preparedness, ambulance service performance, and health equity initiatives. Members welcomed efforts to improve service integration, virtual wards, and targeted communications, but raised concerns gaps in critical care reporting. The Committee also discussed the Health Equity Programme’s work to reduce disparities in health outcomes, particularly in deprived and ethnically diverse communities, and called for better collaboration with local authorities and the voluntary sector.

3.2.20 At its March meeting, the Committee discussed key updates from the ICS including the recent announcement by Central Government to reduce ICS/ICB funding by 50%, the abolishing of NHSE and the NWL Planned Care Strategy. The Chief Executive of NWL ICS addressed concerns about the potential impact of the proposed government cuts to ICS and ICB budgets, assuring that frontline services would be protected. The Planned Care Strategy discussion focused on reducing waiting times, improving patient communication, and ensuring equitable access across boroughs. The Committee explored the use of Community Diagnostic Centres and AI tools for administrative and clinical tasks, while also raising concerns about potential biases and inequalities in AI applications. The Committee also raised concerns about disparities affecting Black and Minority Ethnic and economically deprived patients, and stressed the importance of inclusive consultation, better engagement with young people, and collaboration with local authorities and community groups.

3.2.21 At its May meeting, the Committee had further constructive discussions around the Compassionate Care for All (Community-based Specialist Palliative Care) proposals. Some good dialogue was had with NHS partners and the Committee gave their formal response to the ICB which included suggestions such as enhanced care bed locations, increased communications with residents, the development of borough-level specific strategies and more focus on travel and access inequalities. The Committee also had informative discussions around the proposed move of the Mount Vernon Cancer Centre to Watford General Hospital and the NWL Involvement Strategy.

3.2.22 The work programme for the NWL JHOSC has now been drafted and the Committee are in the process of formalising the programme upon agreement from partners at the North West London ICB.

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:

Minesh Patel

Corporate Director, Finance and Resources

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	Full Council 07 July 2025
	Report from the Corporate Director of Finance & Resources
Resources and Public Realm Committee Chair's Update 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:	None
Background Papers:	None
Contact Officer(s): <small>(Name, Title, Contact Details)</small>	<p>Jason Sigba Strategy Lead – Scrutiny Democratic and Corporate Governance 020 8937 2036 Jason.Sigba@brent.gov.uk</p> <p>James Kinsella Governance and Scrutiny Manager Democratic and Corporate Governance james.kinsella@brent.gov.uk</p> <p>Amira Nassr Deputy Director, Democratic and Corporate Governance amira.nassr@brent.gov.uk</p>

1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1 To present Full Council with a report providing updates on the meetings and activities of the Resources and Public Realm Committee since the last Full Council meeting held on 18 November 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's 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.
- 3.2.6 The Resources & Public Realm Scrutiny Committee's 2025/26 work programme will be finalised at the next meeting on 16 July 2025. Once agreed, it will outline the policy areas and council decisions the committee plan to review during the 2025/26 municipal year. Statutory guidance on overview and scrutiny

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>

recommends that for scrutiny to be effective, scrutiny committees focus on conducting fewer in-depth reviews of highly significant topics³.

- 3.2.7 Since the last update to Full Council on 18 November 2024 the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee has met four times (28 January 2025, 25 February 2025, 3 April 2025 (Call-in) and 23 April 2025).
- 3.2.8 The Committee met on 28 January 2025 where it focused on several key areas including community safety, workforce development, and budget planning. A significant portion of the meeting was dedicated to reviewing the Safer Brent Partnership Annual Report 2024. The report highlighted the adoption of a 'Public Health' approach to community safety, focusing on early intervention and multi-agency collaboration. Key priorities outlined included tackling violent crime, addressing domestic and sexual abuse, and protecting vulnerable groups. The Committee praised the multi-agency collaboration and community engagement initiatives such as mentoring, knife bins, and mental health support, whilst also raising concerns about gaps in service awareness, engagement with marginalised communities, and the need for improved data sharing and communication strategies. The discussion also covered the effectiveness of Operation Terminos, further cross-borough collaboration, and the challenges of managing anti-social behaviour and hate crime.
- 3.2.9 Secondly, the Committee examined the People Strategy 2025, which aims to future-proof the Council's workforce by aligning recruitment, retention, and development efforts with its Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) goals. The strategy includes initiatives such as expanding 360-degree feedback, enhancing career pathways, and addressing pay gaps. Members discussed the importance of local recruitment, flexible working, support for underrepresented groups and the integration of EDI principles into organisational practices. It was noted that the strategy also included a broader focus on issues including housing affordability and childcare, with proposals to explore key worker housing and on-site nursery options.
- 3.2.10 Finally, the Budget Scrutiny Task Group Findings Report was presented and approved. The report acknowledged the financial constraints facing the Council and emphasised the importance of maintaining financial control. The Task Group supported a more localised approach to service delivery and highlighted the potential of the Community Wealth Strategy. Members welcomed the shift away from competitive grant funding and stressed the need for continued investment in community-based solutions and financial resilience. The discussion concluded with a commitment to further collaboration and strategic planning to meet the evolving needs of Brent's residents.
- 3.2.11 At their next meeting on 25 February 2025 the Committee focussed on the Quarter 3 Financial Forecast 2024/25, the Council's approach to commissioning and procurement, and Brent's Draft Emerging Employment Strategy (2025–2030). Councillor Mili Patel presented the financial forecast,

³ *Statutory Guidance on Overview and Scrutiny in Local and Combined Authorities* (Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government), p21

highlighting a projected overspend of £17.6 million, primarily driven by rising costs in housing, children's services, and adult social care. Members raised concerns about the sustainability of current mitigation strategies, the effectiveness of forecasting models, and the role of the NHS in cost-sharing. Finance officers acknowledged the challenges and outlined efforts to improve monthly forecasting, invest in preventative care, and recovering funds from NHS partners. The Committee also discussed the financial implications of supported exempt accommodation and temporary housing, with concerns raised about property standards, enforcement capacity, and the ongoing subsidy gap.

3.2.12 The second item discussed was the evolving work being carried out by the Council on commissioning, procurement, community wealth building, and social value. The department and Cabinet Lead presented a report to the Committee which emphasised a shift toward preventative and locally focused procurement practices. The Committee welcomed the insourcing-first approach, the integration of social value into contracts, and the use of the new Procurement Act 2023 to support local small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and voluntary sector organisations. Members requested detailed breakdowns of procurement spending and stressed the importance of transparency, accountability, and long-term sustainability for local charities. The discussion also explored how social value commitments could be better monitored and aligned with community needs, including fair trade, employment, and asset utilisation. The Committee endorsed several improvement suggestions, including revising council report templates to include social value considerations and developing a public dashboard to track contract performance.

3.2.13 The final agenda item considered was Brent's Draft Emerging Employment Strategy (2025–2030). The Committee were informed that the strategy aimed to create a more inclusive and resilient workforce by addressing barriers such as childcare, language skills, and access to apprenticeships. Officers outlined initiatives such as the New Horizons Centre located on the former New Millennium Day Centre site and the Market Rent Reduction Framework, which is being piloted to support employment outcomes. Members raised concerns about the low number of apprenticeships, the need for better engagement with underrepresented groups, including the Traveller community, and the importance of aligning training with industry needs, such as bricklaying and green skills. The Committee also discussed the role of Brent Works, the effectiveness of job fairs, and the potential for stronger partnerships with local colleges and employers.

3.2.14 Throughout the meeting, the Committee made numerous suggestions for improvement and requested additional information to support ongoing scrutiny. These included enhancing tenant engagement, improving void property management, expanding the I4B housing initiative, and integrating employment-related social value into procurement.

3.2.15 The Committee next convened on 3 April 2025 to consider a call-in relating to decisions made by the Barham Park Trust Committee regarding operational

property matters and the modification of restrictive covenants at 776–778 Harrow Road. The meeting began with declarations of interest, leading to the withdrawal of several members due to prior involvement in related planning decisions. The call-in was presented by Councillor Lorber, who raised concerns about governance, transparency, and potential conflicts of interest in the Trust's decision-making with the Trust's actions, particularly regarding the modification of restrictive covenants, felt (by those members who had called in the decision) to contradict the related planning permission and to not be in the best interest of local park and community users. On this basis, the members who had called in the decision advocated for the appointment of an independent trustee and greater public consultation, citing Charity Commission guidance and a petition with over 700 signatures. The Committee also heard from a local resident who questioned the valuation process and the legal implications of modifying the covenants. She emphasised the need for transparency in the valuation brief and raised concerns about the potential for future development beyond what was permitted by planning. She also reiterated the importance of preserving Barham Park's heritage and the community's right to be consulted.

3.2.16 In response, the Committee heard from Councillor Muhammed Butt in his role as Chair of the Barham Park Trust Committee who responded to the call-in by assuring the Committee that the decisions which had been taken by the Trust were made in compliance with legal and charitable obligations. Council officers clarified that the covenant modifications would not exceed the scope of the planning permission and that the Trust had acted on professional advice. The Committee discussed the financial implications of the Year 1 estate works including lease renegotiations with ACAVA (Barham Park Studios). Concerns were raised about the clarity of the covenant modifications and the potential for misinterpretation, particularly regarding vehicle access and parking. Members also received assurance that the modifications were aligned with relevant planning conditions.

3.2.17 After extensive deliberation, the Committee resolved to confirm the original decisions made by the Barham Park Trust Committee, both in relation to the estate works and the modification of the restrictive covenants. While some members expressed reservations and a preference for referral, the majority supported the decisions, allowing them to take immediate effect. The meeting concluded with a reaffirmation of the need for robust governance and transparency in managing charitable assets and responding to community concerns.

3.2.18 The Committee met for its final meeting of the 2024-25 Municipal Year on 23 April 2025 and once again covered a wide-ranging agenda, with a focus on build quality in Brent, the Council's complaints performance, and the establishment of a new task group on kerbside management. Members approved the formation of the Kerbside Management Scrutiny Task Group, which has been established to explore how Brent's kerbside space can be better managed to support sustainability, accessibility, and public health aligned with the Borough Plan and key strategies such as the Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy and the Active Travel Implementation Plan.

3.2.19 A key item of discussion at the meeting was the scrutiny of build quality in Brent, particularly in council-led and developer-led housing and infrastructure projects. The Lead Member and senior officers outlined the Councils processes for ensuring quality through design, construction, and post-completion stages. Members raised concerns on several aspects including recurring issues in new developments, citing examples from South Kilburn and Granville New Homes. The Committee pressed for more performance data and evidence of how feedback from past projects had led to improvements. The department acknowledged the need for better tracking and learning mechanisms and committed to conducting sampling reviews to assess changes from design to delivery and their impact on build quality.

3.2.20 Finally, the Committee reviewed the Complaints Annual Report for 2023/24, including focus on complaint volumes in Housing Management, Housing Needs, and Adult Social Care. Members expressed concerns around communication failures, delays in assessments, and service delivery issues, particularly in social care and housing. Officers from all departments showcased measures that are being implemented to improve communication, record-keeping, and service monitoring, including the use of Power BI dashboards and standardised communication templates. The Committee also discussed the role of third-party providers and the potential for recovering compensation costs from contractors such as Wates, with a recommendation to invite them to a future meeting for further scrutiny. The meeting concluded with a strong emphasis on accountability, continuous improvement, and the importance of learning from complaints and past project outcomes to enhance service delivery and resident satisfaction.

3.2.21 The next meeting of the Resources and Public Realm Committee will be held on 16 July 2025. As it currently stands, the items due to be considered at that meeting will be as follows:

- Budget Monitoring Update 2025/26 (to be inclusive of the Q1 financial forecast for 2025/26 and the Medium-Term Financial Strategy MTFS)
- Recycling in Brent
- Update on Complaints Annual Report 2023-24 re Housing

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:

Minesh Patel

Corporate Director Finance & Resources

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	Full Council 7 July 2025
	Report from the Chair & Vice Chair of the Audit & Standards Advisory Committee
Annual Report of the Chairs of the Audit and Standards Committee and Audit and Standards Advisory Committee	

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, Corporate Director of Finance and Resources Tel: 020 8937 4043 Email: minesh.patel@brent.gov.uk

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This is the third annual report of the Audit and Standards (A&S), and the Audit and Standards Advisory (A&SA) Committees.
- 1.2 This report seeks to meet the requirements and principles as set out within CIPFA's Position Statement regarding Audit Committees ('Practical Guidance for Local Authorities and Police').
- 1.3 This report covers the work of the two Committees for the municipal year 2024-25. It has been prepared independently by the Chairs' of the A&S and A&SA Committees.

2. Recommendation

- 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 Introduction

- 3.2.1 The Audit and Standards Advisory Committee met eight times within the municipal year, and the Audit and Standards Committee met four times. During the year the Committees covered a large amount of work, often with very short notice which in view of some members has been in excess of the time available. Much of the work of the Committees has again highlighted the high and increasing – if often well-managed – level of risk being faced by the Council, in common with all other authorities.
- 3.2.2 As we stated last year the importance of the work of the Committees continues to grow. The pressures on local authority finances, and details of the failures of governance and financial control at other authorities has not only become increasingly clearer and has highlighted the fundamental problems with the current local government funding and audit systems.

3.3 Overview

- 3.3.1 2024-25 continued to be a very active year, and one which it is again difficult to summarise; however, the key points that have come through from the matters consider by the Committees are as follows:
- a. Brent is still in a relatively good position with regard to financial sustainability, with an adequate levels of reserves, but again did not bringing in expenditure within the budget. Brent was, however, one of the authorities to have the external audit of its accounts signed off before the backstop date.
 - b. Further a number of arising issues which may lead to future problems for the Council:

- i. Due to the pressures on Council services the level of expenditure has and is likely to continue to rise above the base line and pointed out Grant Thornton's annual (Value for Money) report with its **key** recommendation for action; and
 - ii. The level of external debt and hence the interest payments are due to the level of capital expenditure rising, which may be becoming an issue with higher interest rates looking like they will remain for some time.
- c. In terms of Governance, Brent also has sound arrangements in place, as confirmed by both the External Auditor's Value for Money report for 2023-24 (with the exception of the findings concerning Financial Stability) and Head of internal Auditor's report and opinion issued in June 2024. However, there are a number of areas requiring attention particularly:
 - i. The continuing need to address the 'second line' of defence (i.e. the monitoring and reporting of information and data, by management, in respect of the effectiveness of the 'first line' of defence), which although some improvement has been noted still require additional improvement;
 - ii. Implementation of internal audit recommendations/actions. In 2022-23 the HIA opinion identified as an area for improvement in relation to the implementation of audit actions, to ensure that the risks identified from internal audit work are appropriately mitigated. The rate of implementation of audit actions had fallen in 2023-24, this is an area which clearly needs to be addressed;
 - iii. The need to address the fact that policies and procedures are sometimes absent or outdated, and as such, roles and responsibilities are not always clearly defined and outlined, a point also identified in the Value for Money report;
 - iv. The need to review procedures where staff reductions may have weakened existing procures or controls;
 - v. The need to keep under review the governance arrangements for all the subsidiary companies;
 - vi. The continuing need to strengthen the oversight of contract and procurement management; and
 - vii. The continuing need for the A&SA Committees to review and improve its own performance, to further improve the Council's risk management.

3.4 Standards Matters

3.4.1 Although as we stated in previous years, though Standards matters are not covered by the CIPFA Statement, this is one of the Committees' key roles, and one which is taken very seriously.

3.4.2 During the year the Committees considered a number Standards issues including Complaints against Members, oversight of Gifts and Hospitality, as well as Member Training and attendance.

3.5 Audit Matters

3.5.1 The Audit and Standards Advisory Committee has continued to be well served by the Internal Audit and Investigation staff and have received regular updates on the progress of risk-based audits being undertaken during 2024-25.

3.5.2 2024-25 was the first year of the new procedure for planning the use of internal audit resources, partly designed to implement the new Global Internal Audit Standards due to come into force from January 2025. Details of the new procedure is set out in 3.5.6(b) below.

3.5.3 The audits planned to be delivered during 2024-25, included the following, all of which were risk based and linked to the Council's risks and priorities:

- Four key financial systems audits (with proposals for all key systems to be audited in three years);
- Three IT/cyber security related audits;
- Five core systems audits;
- 10 audits based on a risk assessment.

3.5.4 The plan also made provision for advisory work and follow up activities on previous recommendations as well as certification work.

(The above is as reported in the Internal Audit Interim Report for 2024-25 considered by the A&SA Committee in December 2024.)

3.5.5 The Annual Counter Fraud Plan for 2024/25 was considered at the June 2024 meeting, with the Committee updated by an interim progress report in December 2024.

3.5.6 The Committees also considered a large number of items with the most significant being as follows:

- a. In June, the Head of Internal Audit's Annual Report for 2023-24.

(It should be noted that the A&SA Committee will be considering the Head of Internal Audit's Annual Report for 2024-25 at its June meeting which renders the following somewhat historic in nature but it is included

for the record, particular as we believe a number of the same issues are likely to be raised again.)

The 2023-24 report concluded that:

“The overall arrangements for the Council’s systems of internal control, risk management and governance are sound. Any improvement or enhancement recommended relates to best practice only.”

However, in addition the following observations were noted:

In 2022-23 the HIA opinion identified an area for improvement in 2023-24 was in relation to the implementation of audit actions to ensure that the risks identified and emanating from internal audit work are appropriately mitigated.

As shown in the table below, the rate of implementation of audit actions has fallen in 2023-24:

Implementation of audit actions within agreed timescales								
	Previous Year - 2022-23				Current Year - 2023-24			
	H	M	L	Total	H	M	L	Total
Total Actions	41	100	32	173	23	122	18	163
Implemented	32 (78%)	69 (69%)	17 (53%)	118 (68%)	11 (48%)	54 (44%)	10 (56%)	75 (46%)
Partially Implemented	7 (17%)	27 (27%)	14 (44%)	48 (28%)	8 (35%)	34 (28%)	3 (16%)	45 (28%)
Not Implemented	2 (5%)	4 (4%)	1 (3%)	7 (4%)	4 (17%)	34 (28%)	5 (28%)	43 (26%)

Whilst there are a number of caveats and limitations in comparing the implementation of actions from year-to-year, as shown in the table above the rate of implementation of all audit actions (high, medium and low risk combined) within originally agreed timescales has fallen significantly from 68% to 46%. Furthermore, the rate of implementation of high risk actions has also fallen from 78% in 2022-23 to 48% in 2023-24.

The level of audit actions not implemented within original timescales has also significantly increased (in 2023/24) in terms of both a number and percentage of total actions, with 43 (26%) actions not implemented in-year compared to 7 (4%) in 2022-23. It is acknowledged that things can happen that may prevent actions from being implemented within original timescales, and it is accepted that some slippage will occur. However, this does not explain this level of increase in non-implementation and it

must therefore be attributable to a number of other factors, including the importance that is placed on implementing audit actions at an operational level. This view is further reinforced by the fact that as at 30th April 2024, only 15 actions are classified as overdue (actions not implemented past their revised target dates), which suggests that in some instances, actions are only implemented once details of non-implementation are reported to and scrutinised at a corporate level.

It is the view of the HIA that this is an area where improvement is required within 2024-25

Second line' gaps in control

The HIA has previously reported that where *gaps* in control were identified by Internal Audit (as opposed to the effectiveness of the operation of controls), these were generally found to be in relation to the Council's 'second line' (of defence). In brief, the 'first line' is the provision of services and the application of an internal control framework to manage associated risks; and 'second line' responsibilities include the monitoring, reporting and challenge of the effectiveness of 'first line' functions. The 'third line' is the independent and objective assurance provided by Internal Audit.

In work carried out during 2023-24, Internal Audit noted that there have been a number of enhancements to the Council's monitoring, reporting and challenge of first line controls at a corporate level. For example, the implementation of the new performance management framework and balanced score card approach, and the broadening of the scope of the Brent Assurance Board.

Despite these improvements, Internal Audit has continued to identify 'second line' gaps at departmental and operational levels. Internal Audit continues to report these gaps as part of routine updates brought to CMT and the Audit and Standards Advisory Committee.

The above relates to the 2023-24 report and members are encouraged to read the 2024-25 report.

- b. A report covering the Draft Internal Audit Strategic for 2024-27 and Plan for 2025-26, the key details of which are set out below.

The report identified the available resource for the Internal Audit function for 2025-26 as comprises an estimate of **700 days**, which is anticipated to be spread across the following areas:

Area	Days (approx.)	%
Core assurance	200	28%
Agile, risk-based Work	320	46%
Consultancy and advice	50	7%
Follow-up	130	19%

It also stated that the Internal Audit function continues to operate a co-sourced model, with a portion of the plan (approx. 200 days) delivered by our co-sourced partner, PwC.

With these resources the proposed audits for 2025-26, includes the following, all of which are risk based and linked to the Council's risks and priorities:

- Five key financial systems audits (with proposals for all key systems to be audited in three years);
- Seven core systems (Inherent Risk) audits, including cyber security and schools reviews;
- Eight risk based audits to be delivered in the first half of the year, together with three audit in progress from 2024/25.

The plan also makes provision for advisory work and follow up activities on previous recommendations as well as certification work.

- c. The Audit and Standards Advisory Committee continued to receive updates on the work of the Council's external auditors Grant Thornton, (the audit of the 2023-24 accounts is considered in the Accounts section below). The key item considered was the Annual Value for Money report, which gave an independent review of the state of the Council's governance. The report was also considered at the Full Council meeting in February 2025.

The report was less positive than in 2022/23, with the overall finding being for two areas (Governance and Improving the three "e") reviewed being: "No significant weaknesses in arrangements identified, but improvement recommendation made." In both cases the direction of travel was found to be stable, but not improving.

However, for the third area Financial Stainability the finding was "significant weakness in arrangements identified and key recommendations made". The weakness was in respect of ensuring the council does not continue its use of reserves to meet unplanned expenditure with the following key recommendation made.

"The Council needs to take the difficult decisions needed to ensure that a realistic budget can be set for 2025-26 and that this can be delivered

without the need to further draw on reserves. It must be aware of the significant financial sustainability risk posed by the savings required in the medium term to deliver a balanced budget for 2025-26.

- d. In the past few months, the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government confirmed a significant overhaul of the local audit system, introducing 16 measures designed to tackle the ongoing backlog and restore accountability across the sector. This follows a year in which just 1% of local public bodies filed audited accounts by the statutory deadline. These are likely to have a significant effect on the Council and the A&SA Committee with monitor them.

3.6 Regulatory Framework

3.6.1 The Committees continued to oversee a number of areas concerning the regulatory framework, including reviewing the use of RIPA powers by the Council.

3.6.2 The Audit and Standards Advisory Committee has continued to be deeply involved in the work of improving the Council's risk management structure, and the strategic Risk Management process. There have been major improvements in the strategic process over the last couple of years, which is now clearly linked to the Council's priorities, and considers a wider range of risks. However, concerns still remain over the risk management at departmental level, and the Chairs have continued liaising with the Chairs of the Scrutiny Committees over how to improve oversight of this area where there is overlap in roles. An area of particular concern during the year was cyber security.

3.6.3 The A&SA Committee also considered a report on the Council's Emergency Planning & Resilience arrangements, following an external review of this function undertaken in October 2023. The committee reviewed the action plan for improvements following this review and will be monitoring progress in this key area of the Council's duties.

3.6.4 The Committees also reviews the Annual Governance Statement, which is an important document as it set out the views of the Council's leadership and senior management on the state of the Council's governance. Although concluding that no significant governance issues have been identified, the covering report included the following areas identified for improvement for 2024/25:

- Better use of the Member Hub to ensure that Members are regularly kept up to date with developments and have easy access to necessary documents stored in one central place.
- Quarterly monitoring and reporting of reports (to Council) that are submitted after the given deadline.
- To further enhance our approach to risk management by assigning clear roles and responsibilities for the implementation of mitigating actions,

scrutinising mitigating actions to ensure they have had the anticipated impact, and transparently reporting on where mitigating actions have been both successful and unsuccessful.

- Development of a programme of coaching, mentoring and leadership development with a focus on EDI to support the EDI strategy.
- Embed new performance framework and balanced scorecard approach at corporate and directorate level.

The report also reported on the progress on the 2023/24 recommendations.

- 3.6.5 An area which has taken up a lot, but now significantly reduced amount of the Audit and Standards Advisory Committee's time was the oversight of i4B and First Wave Housing. With the overlap of responsibilities between the Audit and Standards Advisory Committee and the Scrutiny Committees at least partially resolved with the Audit and Standards Advisory Committee now concentrating on the council's overview, supervision and overall governance of Companies, which has both reduced the workload and clarified the roles.
- 3.6.6 The Audit and Standards Advisory Committee also considered a number of reports most of which were also considered by Full Council on the Council's Treasury Management. The very detailed reports show the clear and careful planning and execution of the Council's Capital and Treasurer Management.
- 3.6.7 However, the Committee did again raise concerns about the level of borrowing being planned by the Council, particularly in view of the continuing high level of interest rates. Although there is nothing to suggest this will be a problem in the short term, it is something the Council should keep under review.

3.7 Statement of Accounts

- 3.7.1 The oversight of the Council's accounts is one of the key functions of both Committees. Brent has a proud record of having its accounts fully audited and signed off by the statutory publication date, which for the 2023-24 account was 30th September 2024. However, although the accounts appeared ready and the audit was substantially complete by that date, a number of significant issues, primarily concerning the valuation of the Council's assets, resulted in the audit not being signed off at that time. (It should be noted that under 1% of audits were completed on time). Continued issues with asset valuations, and some other matters resulted in the accounts not being signed off until 28th February 2025, which was before the Backstop date. This at least meant the Council's accounts were not disclaimed by the auditors as happened with a significant number of authorities. (It should be noted that the Pension Fund accounts could properly have been signed by 30th September).
- 3.7.2 The Committees are clear that work is being undertaken to try and improve the performance in this area.

3.8 Review of the effectiveness of the Committees

- 3.8.1 The Committees are well placed, with the Audit and Standards Advisory Committee independently chaired, and both Committees now having the support of two independent, Standards-focused members, both of whom bring considerable experience. The Audit and Standards Advisory Committee has also received very valuable support from the departed Independent Advisor, and are pleased that a new audit focused independent member, with considerable relevant experience, has been appointed.
- 3.8.2 The two Committees have again been required to consider a large number of issues over the last year. This has resulted with some agendas being packed, and some members feeling strongly that they are overloaded. Furthermore, the need for additional training for members has been identified and is being planned.
- 3.8.3 To help overcome this and generally improve the performance of the work of the Committees, a self-assessment was undertaken at the end of 2024-25, the results of which are being considered and it is planned to report these to the July meeting of the Audit & Standards Advisory Committee.

3.9 Conclusion

- 3.9.1 We should like to thank the members of the two Committees, and the Independent Co-opted Members and Independent Persons for all their support and assistants.
- 3.9.2 We should also like to express our gratitude to all the Council officers who have so diligently supported the Committees. These include particularly the Governance Officers who have supported us with the very heavy workload, the Deputy Director Organisational Assurance and Resilience (Head of Internal Audit) and Audit and Investigation staff as well as the officers from the Finance and Legal Services.

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 Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Considerations

- 7.1 None.

8.0 Climate Change and Environmental Considerations

8.1 None.

9.0 Communication Considerations

9.1 None.

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Full Council – 7 July 2025

Motion for Non-Cabinet Member debate

Empowering Brent with Visitor Levy Powers to Support Our Communities

This Council notes:

- The growing number of successful events taking place in Wembley, which are a vital part of Brent's local economy, attracting visitors from across the country and around the world, supporting jobs (1,800 Brent jobs from the Stadium), businesses and hospitality across our borough.
- Each additional non-sporting event at Wembley Stadium generates an estimated £4.35 million through direct local expenditure. With Oasis, Coldplay and other acts arriving this summer, Wembley Park will be in the spotlight as a world-class cultural destination.
- Hotel occupancy is high across Wembley during events at the Stadium or the Arena and capacity is estimated at nearly 1,800 rooms.
- Aside from the significant economic benefits, major events in Wembley understandably bring additional pressures on residents, including disruption, waste, congestion, noise and increased demand on council services.
- Brent Council is working proactively to mitigate these challenges, partnering with Wembley Stadium to ensure tickets are shared in the local community, giving residents access to events happening on their doorstep.
- Glasgow City Council has been granted powers to introduce a modest Visitor Levy (on average £4.83 per night), which could generate £16m in additional income from overnight stays, with the funds ringfenced for services such as street sweeping, parks, infrastructure, and environmental enforcement.

This Council also notes:

- The recommendation made by the London Assembly, that the Mayor of London should 'advocate for London's live music industry to introduce a voluntary levy on arena and stadium tickets to support grassroots music venues in London.'


This Council believes:

- Brent should be empowered by government with powers to introduce a visitor levy on hotel and short-stay accommodation within the borough.
- The revenue generated should be invested into transforming Brent's public realm making Brent greener through investment in street trees and green infrastructure, enhanced street cleaning, and additional waste enforcement officers.
- A visitor levy would ensure those who benefit from Brent's world-class facilities also contribute a small amount towards maintaining high-quality services and a cleaner, greener borough.
- This is a progressive, and practical measure utilised across European cities and could supplement council funding at a time when local authorities like Brent face sustained financial pressures.

This Council therefore resolves to:

- (1) Write to the Secretary of State, calling for London boroughs, including Brent, to be granted the powers to introduce a discretionary visitor levy on overnight stays.
- (2) Write to the Mayor of London to support the London Assembly call for a voluntary levy on stadium and arena tickets to fund grassroots cultural opportunities.
- (3) Continue to work with partners including Quintain, the FA, event organisers, businesses and residents to ensure that the benefits of Wembley's success are shared fairly, and that residents' voices shape our work to establish a Visitors Levy here in Brent.
- (4) Work with London Councils, the GLA, and the LGA to build cross-party support for an amendment to the English Devolution Bill to grant the powers necessary to all local authorities to introduce Visitors Levies where supported.

Cllr Mary Mitchell
Welsh Harp ward

	Full Council 7 July 2025
	Report from the Corporate Director Finance & Resources
Representation of Political Groups on Committees	

Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	Council
Open or Part/Fully Exempt: (If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)	Open
No. of Appendices:	One Appendix 1: Political Balance Rules
Background Papers:	None
Contact Officer(s): (Name, Title, Contact Details)	Amira Nassr, Deputy Director Democratic & Corporate Governance Tel: 0208 937 5436 amira.nassr@brent.gov.uk James Kinsella, Governance & Scrutiny Manager, Democratic Services Tel: 020 8937 2063 james.kinsella@brent.gov.uk

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 As a result of a change in membership impacting on the current number of Labour councillors serving on the Council, there is now a requirement for the Council to undertake a review of the representation of different political groups on certain committees.
- 1.2 The current membership of the Council consists of 57 councillors, which has been used as the basis for this review. Following this review, the Council will then have a duty to make appointments (where necessary) to those committees giving effect to the wishes of the political group allocated the seats.

2.0 Recommendations

Full Council is asked:

- (1) To agree the size of each committee, which remains unchanged from the previous review undertaken at the Annual Council meeting in May 2025.
- (2) To confirm (where the rules of political balance apply) the allocation of seats on committees to each of the Council's political groups as set out in the report.
- (3) To make appointments, where identified as required, to those committees giving effect to the wishes of the political group allocated the seats; and
- (4) To note that the political balance on sub-committees will be reviewed at the first available meeting of the General Purposes Committee and the Licensing Committee.

3.0 Detail

3.1 Contribution to Borough Plan Priorities & Strategic Context

- 3.1.1 The allocation of seats on each of the Council's committees to which the political balance rules apply supports delivery of the borough plan by enabling the Council's decision making bodies to operate transparently and effectively whilst also supporting and promoting confidence in the good governance of the council.

3.2 Background

Representation of Political Groups

- 3.2.1 The Council is required to review and determine the representation of different political groups on certain committees as soon as possible following any change in Council membership and the balance of political groups.
- 3.2.2 As soon as practicable after the review, the Council then has a duty to determine the allocation to the different political groups of all seats on the relevant committees. The allocation is determined by applying the "political balance rules" prescribed by the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and supplemented by the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990. These rules are set out in Appendix 1 to this report and are designed to ensure that the political composition of the Council's decision-making and deliberative committees, as far as possible, replicates the political composition of Full Council. Subsequently, the Council has a duty to make appointments to those committees giving effect to the wishes of the political group allocated the seat(s).
- 3.2.3 The Committees that the political balance rules apply to have similar duties in relation to any sub-committees they may have.

- 3.2.4 Whilst the overall membership of the Council remains as 57 councillors, the composition of political groups as a percentage of overall membership following the recent change in membership of the Labour Group is as follows:
- 48 Labour Group councillors (reduced from 49) – representing 84.22% (reduced from 85.97%) of the total council membership.
 - 5 Conservative Group councillors – representing 8.77% of the total council membership.
 - 3 Liberal Democrat councillors – representing 5.26% of the total council membership.
- 3.2.5 According to the political balance rules, a political group for this purpose is a group of two or more members. As a result of a change in membership affecting the Labour Group, the Council's membership now also includes one independent councillor representing 1.75% of the total composition of the Council, which has triggered the need for the review.
- 3.2.6 Table 1 below sets out the 5 ordinary committees of the Council to which the political balance rules apply; the size of each committee (excluding any non-voting co-opted committee members in accordance with the political balance rules); the total number of seats required to be allocated and the number of seats each political group is entitled to based on the number of group members.
- 3.2.7 There are a total of **38** ordinary committee seats to which the political balance requirements will formally apply. Based on the overall council membership, the breakdown regarding the proportion of seats each political group is therefore entitled to on these committees remains as follows:
- Labour Group – 33 seats
 - Conservative Group – 3 seats
 - Liberal Democrat Group – 2 seats
- 3.2.8 In light of the rules relating to political balance it will not be possible to treat the single independent member as having formed a political group for the purposes of the review and, on this basis, they are not entitled to the allocation of any of the available seats.
- 3.2.9 Given the breakdown outlined in terms of the proportion of seats to be allocated between the eligible political groups, this has resulted in one seat on each of the 5 ordinary committees to which the political balance rules apply, being allocated between the Conservative and Liberal Democrat Groups. The allocation of seats between Committees has been agreed between the respective Groups, with the proposed division as follows.

Table 1

Ordinary Committees	Size	Labour Group 48 84.22%	Conservative Group 5 8.77%	Liberal Democrats Group 3 5.26%
General Purposes Committee	8	7	0	1
Planning Committee	8	7	1	0
Audit & Standards Committee	7	6	1	0
Corporate Parenting Committee	5	4	1	0
Licensing Committee	10	9	0	1
Total seats	38	33	3	2
Entitlement (based on a proportion of total members)		33	3	2

3.2.10 There are other committees which the political balance rules apply to but only principles (a), (b) and (d) (see Appendix 1, paragraph 3). Namely, the existing Scrutiny Committees and the Audit & Standards Advisory Committee.

3.2.11 Table 2 below confirms the size and make-up of these Committees, with the Conservative and Liberal Democrats groups both entitled (given the size of each committee) to be allocated a seat on both Scrutiny Committees.

Other Committees	Size	Labour Group 48 84.22%	Conservative Group 5 8.77%	Liberal Democrats Group 3 5.26%
Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee	11 (plus 4 voting co-opted members and 2 non-voting co-opted members)	9	1	1
Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee	11	9	1	1
Audit & Standards Advisory Committee	7 (plus up to 4 voting co-opted members)	6	1	0

3.2.12 Subsequent to allocating seats, the Council has a duty to make appointments to the specified committees giving effect to the wishes of the political group allocated the seats. This review has not led to any change in the overall allocation of seats on Committees, following the previous review undertaken at the Annual Council meeting in May 2025 but should the political groups be minded to change their membership on any of the committees, these will be detailed under the Appointments to Committees item on the agenda.

3.2.13 The political balance rules do not apply to the Health and Wellbeing Board but it has been previously agreed that this Board comprise four Cabinet Members and one opposition Member and this will continue following this review, with the Conservative Group as the Principal Opposition Group allocated the available seat.

4. Stakeholder and ward member consultation and engagement

4.1 The proposed allocation of seats between Committees has been subject to consultation with each political group.

5.0 Financial Considerations

5.1 There are no financial considerations arising directly from this report.

6.0 Legal Considerations

6.1 These are addressed in the main body of the report.

7.0 Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Considerations

7.1 Under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 (Act), the Council has a duty when exercising their functions to have 'due regard' to the need:

- a) To eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the Act;
- b) Advance equality of opportunity; and
- c) Foster good relations between those who share a "protected characteristic" and those who do not.

7.2 This is the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). The 'protected characteristics' are: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

7.3 The purpose of the duty is to enquire into whether a proposed decision disproportionately affects people with a protected characteristic. In other words, the indirect discriminatory effects of a proposed decision. Due regard is the regard that is appropriate in all the circumstances.

7.4 There are no direct equalities implications arising from this report at this stage.

8.0 Climate Change and Environmental Considerations

8.1 None directly arising from this report.

9.0 Human Resources/Property Considerations (if appropriate)

9.1 None directly arising from this report.

10.0 Communication Considerations

10.1 None directly arising from this report.

Report sign off:

Minesh Patel

Corporate Director Finance &
Resources

Appendix 1

The political balance rules prescribed by the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 ('the Act') and the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990 ('the 1990 Regulations')

1. The rules are that seats on relevant committees must be allocated to different political groups so far as reasonably practicable in accordance with the following four principles:
 - (a) that not all the seats on the body are allocated to the same political group;
 - (b) that the majority of the seats on the body is allocated to a particular political group if the number of persons belonging to that group is a majority of the Council's membership;
 - (c) subject to paragraphs (a) and (b) above, that each political group is allocated the same proportion of the total seats across all the ordinary committees of the Council as the proportion of the members of the Council that belong to that group; and
 - (d) subject to paragraphs (a) to (c) above, that each political group is allocated the same proportion of the seats on each relevant body as the proportion of the members of the Council that belong to that group.
2. Principle (c) refers to "ordinary committees" which under the Act means those appointed under section 102(1)(a) of the Local Government Act 1972, namely General Purposes Committee, Audit & Standards Committee, Corporate Parenting Committee, Planning Committee and Licensing Committee.
3. Principles (a), (b) and (d) apply to a "body" to which the Council makes appointments. The Act provides that the bodies to which this principle applies include ordinary committees (as defined above) and ordinary sub committees, advisory committees and sub-committees, and joint committees where at least 3 seats are filled by appointments made by the Council.
4. Principles (a), (b) and (d) therefore apply to the Audit and Standards Advisory Committee. Strictly speaking, according to principle (b), the Labour Group is entitled to a majority of the seats on the Committee. However, to maintain the current size of the Committee, Full Council can depart from the rules provided no member votes against the proposal.
5. By virtue of the Local Government Act 2000, principles (a), (b) and (d) also apply to the Scrutiny Committees.
6. According to principle (c) above, the General Purposes Committee, Audit & Standards Committee, Corporate Parenting Committee, Planning Committee and Licensing Committee first have to be taken together to determine the *number* of seats that should be allocated to each group. Then, in accordance with paragraph (d) above, the number of seats each political group is entitled to has to be allocated proportionately to individual committees so far as possible.
7. The political balance principles do not apply to the London Councils' Joint Committees or the Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee because only one appointment on each Committee is made by the Council.

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