



## SUMMONS TO ATTEND COUNCIL MEETING

**Monday 15 September 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: 5 September 2025 (republished 9 and 15 September 2025)

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

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

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

## **Notes for Members - Declarations of Interest:**

If a Member is aware they have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest\* in an item of business, they must declare its existence and nature at the start of the meeting or when it becomes apparent and must leave the room without participating in discussion of the item.

If a Member is aware they have a Personal Interest\*\* in an item of business, they must declare its existence and nature at the start of the meeting or when it becomes apparent.

If the Personal Interest is also a Prejudicial Interest (i.e. it affects a financial position or relates to determining of any approval, consent, licence, permission, or registration) then (unless an exception at 14(2) of the Members Code applies), after disclosing the interest to the meeting the Member must leave the room without participating in discussion of the item, except that they may first make representations, answer questions or give evidence relating to the matter, provided that the public are allowed to attend the meeting for those purposes.

### **\*Disclosable Pecuniary Interests:**

- (a) **Employment, etc.** - Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit gain.
- (b) **Sponsorship** - Any payment or other financial benefit in respect expenses in carrying out duties as a member, or of election; including from a trade union.
- (c) **Contracts** - Any current contract for goods, services or works, between the Councillors or their partner (or a body in which one has a beneficial interest) and the council.
- (d) **Land** - Any beneficial interest in land which is within the council's area.
- (e) **Licences** - Any licence to occupy land in the council's area for a month or longer.
- (f) **Corporate tenancies** - Any tenancy between the council and a body in which the Councillor or their partner have a beneficial interest.
- (g) **Securities** - Any beneficial interest in securities of a body which has a place of business or land in the council's area, if the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body or of any one class of its issued share capital.

### **\*\*Personal Interests:**

The business relates to or affects:

- (a) Anybody of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management, and:
  - To which you are appointed by the council;
  - which exercises functions of a public nature;
  - which is directed is to charitable purposes;
  - whose principal purposes include the influence of public opinion or policy (including a political party or trade union).
- (b) The interests of a person from whom you have received gifts or hospitality of at least £50 as a member in the municipal year;

or

A decision in relation to that business might reasonably be regarded as affecting, 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 - 50

To confirm as a correct record, the minutes of the previous Council Meeting held on Monday 7 July 2025.

(Agenda republished to include attached minutes on 15 September 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.

## **5 Appointments to Committees and Outside Bodies and Appointment of Chairs/Vice Chairs**

51 - 52

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

(Agenda republished to include the attached item on 15 September 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**

53 - 56

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 two public questions have been received, which have been attached to the agenda along with the written responses provided.

## **8 Petitions**

57 - 60

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 66.

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

- (a) Retain the heritage Victorian villa, Altamira, as part of Morland Gardens redevelopment
- (b) Save Welsh Harp Education Centre

Supporting details on each petition have been attached, for reference.

## **9 Motions**

61 - 74

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 Group motions submitted for debate on 9 September 2025 along with amendments moved by the Labour Group on the Conservative & Liberal Democrats motions and Liberal Democrats on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Labour Group motion on 15 September 2025)

## **10 Reports from the Leader and Cabinet**

75 - 92

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 9 September 2025)

## **11 Questions from the Opposition and other Non-Cabinet Members**

93 - 102

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 Resources & Public Realm Scrutiny Committee 103 - 116

12.2 Community & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee 117 - 128

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 Report from the Vice Chair of the Audit & Standards Advisory Committee 129 - 134**

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

## **14 Non Cabinet Member Debate 135 - 136**

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:

### **Deterrence, Integration and Accommodation Impacts of Illegal Immigration on Brent**

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

## **15 Treasury Management Outturn Report 2024-25 137 - 170**

To receive a report from the Corporate Director of Finance & Resources detailing the 2024-25 outturn for the Council's Treasury Management Activities.

Members are asked to note that this report was received and noted by the Audit & Standards Advisory Committee on 23 July 2025 and is due to be considered Cabinet on 8 September 2024 and has been forwarded to Council in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice.

**Ward Affected:**  
All Wards

**Contact Officer:** Oliver Simms, Head of Finance  
(Capital, Treasury and Commercial)  
Tel: 020 8937 1679  
[Oliver.Simms@brent.gov.uk](mailto:Oliver.Simms@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 ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL**  
**held in the Conference Hall, Brent Civic Centre on Monday 7 July 2025 at 6.00 pm**

### **PRESENT:**

**The Worshipful the Mayor**  
Councillor Ryan Hack

**The Deputy Mayor**  
Councillor Narinder Bajwa

### **COUNCILLORS:**

|              |                  |
|--------------|------------------|
| Aden         | Afzal            |
| Agha         | Ahmadi-Moghaddam |
| Ahmed        | Akram            |
| Begum        | Benea            |
| M Butt       | S Butt           |
| Chan         | Chappell         |
| Chohan       | Choudry          |
| Clinton      | Collymore        |
| Dar          | Dixon            |
| Ethapemi     | Farah            |
| Fraser       | Gbajumo          |
| Grahl        | Hirani           |
| Johnson      | Kabir            |
| Kansagra     | Kelcher          |
| Kennelly     | Knight           |
| Long         | Lorber           |
| Mahmood      | Matin            |
| Maurice      | Miller           |
| Mistry       | Mitchell         |
| Molloy       | Nerva            |
| J.Patel      | M Patel          |
| Rajan-Seelan | Ketan Sheth      |
| Krupa Sheth  | L.Smith          |
| T.Smith      | Tatler           |

#### **1. Mayors Introductory Statement**

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

#### **2. Apologies for Absence**

The Mayor reported that apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Conneely, Crabb, Donnelly-Jackson, Hylton, Moeen, Rubin and Shah.

### 3. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the of the Annual Council meeting held on Wednesday 14 May 2025 be approved as a correct record.

### 4. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest made at this stage of the meeting.

### 5. **Mayor's Announcements**

The Mayor made the following announcements:

#### (i) Appointment of Deputy Mayor

The Mayor began his announcements by advising members that he had appointed Councillor Narinder Bajwa to fill the vacancy as Deputy Mayor for the remainder of the 2025-26 Municipal Year.

In raising a Point of Order on the basis of the appointment process for the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Lorber sought further explanation on the reason for the vacancy having occurred and ongoing role and requirement for a Deputy Mayor, given this had been the second successive year in which a change in appointment had been required. In response, Marsha Henry (as Director of Law) confirmed that the appointment of the Deputy Mayor was a decision made by the Mayor. Under Standing Order 27(b) the Mayor was required to provide written notice of the appointment, which had been received, with the matter then reported to Council and the appointment a constitutional requirement. In addressing the reason for the appointment, it was confirmed this followed a vacancy having been declared.

*Having confirmed the appointment, the meeting was paused briefly to enable Councillor Bajwa to be robed and receive the Deputy Mayors Chain of Office prior to him joining the Mayor on the dais for the remainder of the meeting.*

The Mayor then invited all members to join him in welcoming and congratulating Councillor Bajwa on his appointment as Deputy Mayor.

*Members then joined the Mayor in a round of applause welcoming the new Deputy Mayor.*

#### (ii) Outline of Mayoral events attended

The Mayor then moved on to provide an outline of recent events he had attended and supported, which he advised (based on values demonstrated across the borough in relation to community, justice, and compassion) had included visits to Claremont High School, being welcomed as the new Mayor by Neasden Temple; celebrating the achievements of the Brent District Scouts as well as marking 30 years of the first Brazilian church in Brent, joining the Lexi Cinema community run,



visiting the Open Gardens in Mapesbury and celebrating International Reggae Day outside the iconic Hawkeye Record Store.

In terms of his first official engagement, he was pleased this had involved joining young people, the Brent Multi-Faith Forum and local residents on a Knife Crime Awareness Walk along Kilburn High Road and Cricklewood Broadway in order to raise awareness and focus on the devastating impact of knife crime as part of a collective commitment to keeping the borough's communities safe. In addition, the Mayor advised that as grandson of a Dunkirk veteran, he had also been proud to attend an event to mark the 85<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Operation Dynamo hosted at ACE Café, Stonebridge.

In the wake of the Air India Flight AI171 tragedy, the Mayor advised that he had also joined other civic leaders at a vigil led by the Mayor's Office to honour and remember all those who lost their lives in the disaster. Recognising the community spirit demonstrated across Brent, he commended the way the borough had come together to mourn and support all those who had been impacted with the Mayor offering his heartfelt condolences to the families directly affected recognising the way that Brent and India were bound by ties of faith, friendship, and shared humanity.

The Mayor advised that he had also been honoured to have joined two local residents (Martha as a proud Jewish resident in Kingsbury and Esson as a devout and proud resident of Jamaican heritage in Willesden) to celebrate their 100<sup>th</sup> birthdays with them. The opportunity was also taken to wish all residents who had recently celebrated Eid-Al Adha joy, peace, and love, with the Mayor advising that he had been touched following a visit to Sufra's Eid Community Meal in order to witness food being shared between Muslims and non-Muslims demonstrating true unity and offering what he felt was a powerful reminder of the true meaning of Eid in being able to come together in compassion and kindness.

The Mayor advised he had also been pleased to join the recent Windrush Day celebrations at the Learie Constantine Centre to honour the powerful legacy of the Windrush Generation and recognise the courage and resilience along with immeasurable contribution made by the Caribbean community not only within Brent but the country as a whole. Highlighting that the Willesden Temple was marking its 50th anniversary the Mayor advised he had also been honoured to accept an official invitation from the local Mandir to the Festival of Golden Hearts representing the borough. Being able to welcome devotees to the Mayor's Parlour to rekindle the light, as they looked ahead to the temple's centenary was also highlighted as a special moment, with the temple recognised as more than a place of worship given its beacon of kindness, peace, and love that had touched so many lives.

The Mayor advised that he had also been proud to host a recent flag raising ceremony to celebrate Pride, reflecting on the history of the movement in terms of liberation and a renewed commitment to protest and progress. The opportunity was also taken to reaffirm Brent as a borough where the LGBTQ community was also seen, valued, and always welcome in recognition that everyone deserved the freedom to love and live as their true selves.

Turning to other cultural events, the Mayor advised he had also been deeply honoured to have been able to organise an evening of Irish Culture at Katie's Bar in

Neasden recognising not only his own, but Brent's identity and spirit as having been profoundly shaped by the Irish community, whose culture, history, and resilience. As Mayor, he advised he had also been privileged to attend the Service of Celebration marking 30 Years of Resilience at Montserrat's Soufrière Hills Volcano Anniversary. Members were advised of the fondness in which he held Montserrat, known as the Emerald Island, as the only place outside Ireland where St. Patrick's Day was celebrated as a national bank holiday providing a reminder of the deep bonds between Irish culture and African-Caribbean heritage, which had been forged through strength and unity over generations.

In terms of upcoming events, the Mayor advised he was also looking forward to hosting an Irish Afternoon Tea Party at the Cricklewood Railway Club.

In ending , the Mayor also took the opportunity to highlight the honour he felt in being able to welcome Brent's newest citizens in his role hosting the borough's Citizenship Ceremonies with Brent, he pointed out, proudly standing as a beacon of diversity and inclusion and where individuals from whatever background would always continue to be welcomed.

(iii) Petitions

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

**6. Appointments to Committees and Outside Bodies and Appointment of Chairs/Vice Chairs**

The Mayor referred members to the list of changes circulated in relation to appointments to Council Committees, Sub Committees and other bodies.

Having considered the changes outlined it was **RESOLVED**:

- (1) To note that effective from 16 June 2025 the Leader of the Council had 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.
- (2) To approve the following changes in committee membership:
  - (a) 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.
  - (b) Councillor Collymore to replace Councillor Fraser as a substitute member of the Resources & Public Realm Scrutiny Committee.
  - (c) Councillor Fraser to be replaced by a vacancy as substitute member on the Northwest London Joint Health Overview Scrutiny Committee

- (d) Resources & Public Realm Scrutiny Committee - Councillor Teo Benea to replace Councillor Diana Collymore as a substitute member.
- (3) To approve the following changes in the membership on outside bodies:
  - (a) Councillor Fraser to be replaced by a vacancy as one of the Council representatives on the Chalkhill Community Trust Fund.
- (4) To approve the re appointment of David Ewart as Independent Chair of the Audit & Standards Advisory Committee and Pension Board for an additional 15-month term of office, ending on 31 December 2026.

In response to a Point of Order raised by Councillor Lorber in relation to the filling of vacancies identified within the appointments outlined, Marsha Henry (as Director of Law) advised that these remained seats to be filled by the Labour Group and were being held vacant in advance of appointments being made in due course.

## **7. Deputations (if any)**

The Mayor advised that no requests had been received for the presentation of any deputations at the meeting.

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

### **8.1 Questions from the Public**

The Mayor advised that one question had been received from a member of the public, for consideration at the meeting which was as follows:

#### **Question 1 from Ms T.J.Chaudhry regarding the Council's approach towards debt management, recovery & enforcement.**

In noting the written response provided by the Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources, as circulated with the agenda, the Mayor informed members that Ms Chaudhry had also been offered the opportunity to attend the meeting in order to ask a follow up supplementary question and advised he was therefore pleased to welcome Ms Chaudhry to the meeting.

Following the Mayors introduction, the following supplementary question was raised:

#### **Question 1 supplementary Question from Ms T.J Chaudhry to Councillor Mili Patel, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources**

Given the legal obligations under Paragraph 7(2) of Schedule 12 to the Tribunals, Courts and Enforcement Act 2007 and the proportionality duty in Section 15 of the Public Law Act 1998, can the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources:

- (1) State how many enforcement agent contracts have been revoked since 2021 for failing to produce proper written authority or breaching debt collection regulations, as required by law.

- (2) Confirm if Brent's policy on small debts has been updated since the 2021 High Court ruling against blanket approaches without individual assessments; and
- (3) Explain why it uses Experian's system rather than the Financial Conduct Authority's full vulnerability criteria, and whether it will adopt proper 'breathing space' schemes given that current alternatives lack these legal protections?

In raising the question, Ms Chaudhry also referred to various examples of case law in support including:

- (per *R (Kamby) v Birmingham Magistrates' Court* [2021]) or breaches of the *Taking Control of Goods Regulations 2013*.
- 'sub-threshold debt' policy *R (CPAG) v Secretary of State* [2021], which ruled blanket approaches unlawful without individual vulnerability assessments.
- *FCA's holistic vulnerability definition* (e.g., health crises, literacy barriers, per *R (Bridges)* [2020]), breathing space' schemes (*Leeds City Council v Broadley* [2022])

In response, Councillor Mili Patel thanked Ms Chaudhry for the questions and advised that given the detailed nature of the legal and technical issues raised, she would need to arrange for a full written response to be provided following the meeting.

In terms of the Council's broader approach towards Council Tax collection and debt recovery the opportunity was taken to highlight the importance of the "one borough, one community" way in which the system operated, stressing the importance in the way residents were currently expected (under the current funding regime) to contribute, as local taxpayers, for services being provided through the Council. The impact of ongoing social and economic pressures along with the cost-of-living crisis and programme of austerity introduced under the previous government had, however, been recognised in terms of many residents struggling financially and the resulting effect in terms of areas such as Council Tax arrears and enhanced debt.

In response to these ongoing pressures, the Council had therefore actively moved towards debt resolution strategies that prioritised early engagement, support, and long-term financial stability as part of the Council's Ethical Debt Recovery policy in order to provide a more supportive approach to debt recovery. This included an aim to reduce the need for enforcement, assisting residents in the management of their debts in a way that was fair and sustainable.

The opportunity was also taken to offer to meet with Ms Chaudhry in order to discuss any further issues or concerns regarding the approach outlined.

Having thanked Councillor Mili Patel for the response provided and Ms Chaudhry for attending the meeting to ask her supplementary question, the Mayor then moved on to deal with a question submitted by Brent Youth Parliament.

## **8.2 Questions from Brent Youth Parliament**

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

**Question 1 from Brent Youth Parliament to Councillor Grahl, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People & Schools, relating to the engagement of young people under the Brent Youth Strategy in shaping local policies, especially in areas like crime and safety.**

The Mayor thanked Brent Youth Parliament (BYP) for their question, with members noting the written response provided, and advised that representatives from the Youth Parliament had also been invited to attend the meeting in order to ask a supplementary question. As a result, the Mayor welcomed Kiran Govan from BYP to the meeting who asked the following supplementary question.

**Question 1 Supplementary Question from Kiran Govan to Councillor Grahl, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People & Schools regarding the steps taken by Brent Council in supporting the promises made in their Brent Youth Strategy to include young people in policy making decisions.**

Having thanked Councillor Grahl for her written response and referenced the Brent Youth Strategy, Kiran Govan highlighted the pledge which had been made by the Council to ensure positive activities were made available for young people. Based on the written response provided by the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People & Schools, which indicated that the Council was now in the planning stages of developing further opportunities for young people's involvement, in advance of the new academic year, details were sought on how the Council planned to obtain funding for these activities, how much new funding the Council planned to allocate toward these initiatives and what specific kinds of positive activities the Council planned to offer the younger generation in Brent.

In response, Councillor Grahl thanked Brent Youth Parliament for the question and work they were continuing to undertake to represent young people across the borough. Acknowledging the importance of the issues raised, the opportunity was taken, in responding to the question, to outline the different type of funding opportunities and activities being explored along with the existing and extensive nature of support already being provided for youth activities. This included funding being provided for over 70 different grassroots organisations across the borough with these organisations providing a diverse range of activities for young people and the Council having successfully secured approx. £1m in grant funding from the Mayor of London specifically to contribute towards youth organisations and additional activities, with Councillor Grahl advising she would be happy to provide a more detailed outline (given time constraints at the meeting) in relation to the activities being developed outside of the meeting.

The Mayor also took the opportunity to acknowledge and commend BYP for the work undertaken in seeking to represent young people across the borough and, in outlining his support for the contribution made, thanked Councillor Grahl for her response and Kiran Govan for attending the meeting in order to ask his supplementary question. With no further questions to be considered, the Mayor advised that concluded the public question session.

**9. Petitions**

The Mayor advised that he had accepted requests for the presentation of three separate petitions at the meeting, which had all met the threshold for consideration at Full Council based on them containing more than 200 signatures.

The petitions to be presented, were as follows, with the Mayor advising that unless otherwise indicated by members, he intended to allow up to five minutes for the presentation of each petition by the lead petitioner before then providing the relevant Cabinet Members up to two minutes to respond on each matter:

- 1<sup>st</sup> petition - No to Twinning with Nablus
- 2<sup>nd</sup> petition – Save East Lane Theatre; and
- 3<sup>rd</sup> petition – Save Barham Park

#### **(1) No to Twinning with Nablus**

As no objections were raised on the approach outlined, the Mayor then moved on to welcome Ian Collier to the meeting to present the first petition. Prior to the petition being presented the Mayor felt it important to remind everyone, given the matter related to the Council's proposed twinning arrangement with Nablus (and as he had done when the issue had been considered at the Annual Council meeting) of his focus in seeking to celebrate the diverse nature of the borough and recognise the peaceful relationships that existed between the many different communities residing in Brent, reflecting the strong level of community cohesion across the borough. As such he hoped all those present would be able to remember those principles during consideration of the petition, for which he thanked everyone in advance for their support.

Ian Collier was then invited to present the petition, who began by thanking the Mayor for the opportunity to represent a significant group of residents in Brent who he advised were completely opposed to, as well as upset by, the Council's recent decision to twin the borough with the town of Nablus. In referring to comments made by the sponsor of the twinning initiative about "twinning affirming the commitment of the borough to solidarity and shared values" he highlighted concerns regarding Nablus being a focus of militancy, hatred, terror and racism which he felt need to be taken into account in order to reflect that Brent as a borough did not share these values or stand in solidarity with them and with the normal reasons for twinning (including tourism, education and cultural influences) it was felt also not being met.

As a result, he advised the petitioners in opposition to the arrangement had been forced to conclude that the process was nothing more than political symbolism reflecting religious sectarianism in a way that was unrepresentative of the majority of Brent's residents. In referring to the most recent example of sectarian politics in the UK, he outlined the impact of the troubles in Northern Ireland and called on the Council to avoid a return to religious sectarian politics feeling that the recent decision to twin with Nablus had created division across the borough and driven a wedge between different communities.

Highlighting that the names of those who had signed the petition represented a diverse array of faiths and communities from different ethnic backgrounds across the borough he highlighted what he felt had been the underrepresentation of those from the Muslim community, which he felt also served as a reminder of the division

which the twinning decision had appeared to create within the local community. It was, however, felt this should not be a surprise given the report presented at the time the decision had been approved had suggested that the twinning process ran the risk of causing disharmony amongst Brent's rich mix of ethnic communities. It was therefore with regret, given the potential risk identified, that the Council had decided to proceed with the twinning arrangement, which he felt was also potentially open to challenge under the Council's duties under the Equalities Act.

The assertion that objecting to the twinning arrangement may be regarded as Islamophobic was also challenged, with it pointed out that those who had signed the petition would have had no objection to a similar arrangement being pursued with other more peaceful Muslim regions or cities across the world. Concern was also expressed regarding the status of the governance arrangements in Nablus and alleged links to a Proscribed Organisation alongside the establishment of a Community Interest Company (CIC) to facilitate the twinning arrangement given the less regulated nature of this as a mechanism and associated difficulty in ensuring the necessary governance, with the example provided of the "Save one Life" charity which he advised was currently under investigation by the Charities Commission and Counter Terrorism police.

At this stage in proceedings the Mayor advised Ian Collier than the time available to complete presentation of the petition had expired. Using the discretion available to him as Chair he advised that he would, however, allow a brief final statement to be provided by Ian Collier in summing up.

In thanking the Mayor for the opportunity to conclude, Ian Collier advised that on balance the petitioners felt the twinning application was controversial, damaging to community cohesion, divisive, destabilising, disruptive, inflammatory as well as sectarian in nature. As such, he felt its approval had brought the borough into disrepute with those who had signed the petition urging the Council to immediately overturn their original decision to approve the twinning arrangement with Nablus in order to avoid any more harm and damage to community relations and the Council's reputation being caused.

The Mayor thanked Ian Coillier for presenting the petition and then invited Councillor Muhammed Butt, as Leader of the Council to respond.

In response, the Leader began by acknowledging the strength of feeling identified within the petition on the issue and took the opportunity to thank all also those in attendance at the meeting for consideration of the item, whether seeking to support the petition or twinning arrangement. Referring to the comment regarding the limited number of signatures from members of the Muslim community contained within the petition, he expressed concern given it appeared, at one stage, that the names of most Brent councillors from a Muslim background had been added without their consent but was pleased to note that this issue and any misunderstanding had subsequently been resolved.

In terms of the petition, the Leader felt that irrespective of the views represented it was important that everyone had the opportunity to express their voice with an assurance provided that the petitioners were recognised as caring deeply about the borough, its values and shared future and the opportunity taken to welcome the diversity and plurality of views that existed across the borough. Given the concerns

expressed within the petition he felt it important to acknowledge and value the deep rooted and vibrant Jewish community within the borough which could be traced back many generations and he was also keen to see continue to grow and flourish.

In recognising Brent as a place of many cultures and faiths, the Leader highlighted what he regarded as the duty on the Council to therefore make sure that all residents felt safe, respected and heard emphasising that the forthcoming twinning of Brent with Nablus (or under any other future arrangement) was not about endorsing any religious belief or political ideology and was instead based on the principles of peace, cultural exchange, and mutual understanding. Assuring the petitioners that the promotion of these principles had been the basis on which the borough's international relationships had, and would continue, to be based the Leader also felt it important to recognise Brent's long standing humanitarian tradition and role in seeking to advocate for and enhance a spirit of community cohesion and togetherness.

At the same time, the Leader advised he was aware of the anxieties which had been highlighted and assured the petitioners that these were not being ignored with him shortly due to meet representatives of Jewish community groups and the opportunity also extended to meet with representatives of the petition group.

In terms of the actual twinning arrangements, it was confirmed that the Council had been in dialogue with those responsible for the governance of Nablus, following receipt of the petition, in order to address and seek a response on the concerns identified, with the twinning arrangement also subject (as had been detailed in the original report) to a live and continuous equalities impact assessment. Petitioners were reminded that the arrangements would also be subject to the new International Partnering Protocol introduced in order to set clear expectations for any twinning process and included safeguards to ensure that no link would undermine cohesion or Brent's values as a borough. It was pointed out that the Protocol would also allow for any arrangement to be reviewed (and where necessary annulled) if it was assessed as failing to promote peace, understanding, and constructive exchange.

The petitioners were also reminded that other cities across the UK, such as Dundee and Sheffield, had already been able to establish successful ties with Nablus, in the same spirit of cultural bridge-building and mutual learning as proposed within Brent's arrangement with the ultimate aim being to build relationships that would support and not divide and that process being led by the Brent-Nablus Twinning Association.

In highlighting the need to recognise the development of each twinning arrangement as an ongoing process, the arrangements involving Nablus were acknowledged as representing the start of the conversation with Leader once again recognising the level of diversity as one of the borough's greatest strengths. In ending he also felt it important to reflect on Brent's proud tradition as a place where different communities were able to live and thrive side-by-side in peace, which he advised he was committed to ensure continued as part of the wider role in promoting peace and community wellbeing on an increasingly complex world stage.



Having thanked Ian Collier for presenting the petition and all those in attendance for the item as well as Councillor Muhammed Butt (as Leader of the Council) for his response the Mayor then moved on to deal with the next petition.

## **(2) Save East Lane Theatre**

The Mayor then welcomed Sue O'Connell to present the second petition, seeking support for the campaign to save the East Lane Theatre Club (ELTC). In thanking the Mayor for the opportunity to present the petition, Sue O'Connell began by highlighting that the petition had been signed by over 1,700 residents from across Brent and the surrounding area recognising that ELTC had been operating in Wembley since 1936 and on its current site in Vale Farm since the 1960's when the Club had entered into a lease to secure use of the original tennis pavilion. Following plans to demolish the Elms Hall venue in 1988, the Club decided to build their own venue as a 75-seat theatre with associated dressing rooms and audience areas.

Referring to a document circulated in advance of the meeting, containing additional information in support of the petition, Sue O'Connell highlighted the plan detailing the current location of the theatre and nature of land occupied, which she advised included restricted access given the proximity to Vale Farm Sports Centre and Wembley Football Club. Those in support of the petition were also keen to highlight that East Lane Theatre Club remained the only purpose-built amateur theatre in the Borough delivering a wide range of performances with the Club, now operating as a charity, run by volunteers and open to anyone offering the ability to develop a wide range of skills.

Highlighting the support for the Theatre from its loyal and increasingly diverse audience, the petitioners were also keen to remind members that the Club had never been in receipt of any subsidies from the Council, with all funding generated through ticket sales, membership fees and donations. Concern was also expressed that whilst their lease had expired in 2022 the Club had not heard from the Council, prompting them to approach officers regarding renewal of the lease with initial negotiations having been based on a proposed rent of £2,300 pa. The Club had therefore been surprised when (during these negotiations) they had received a Section 25 notice, including a proposed rent of £75,000 pa. Sue O'Connell advised that this change in position had created significant concern amongst the ELTC membership, who had subsequently contacted the Leader of the Council and been urged to continue negotiations with officers. Despite requests being submitted, the evidence used as the basis for the revised valuation had not been provided to the Club or their Chartered Surveyor. Whilst acknowledging that the original demand had subsequently been reduced from £75,000 to £25,000 (following appointment of a second surveyor) and then reduced again in June to £5,000 it was highlighted this still reflected a significant increase from the current rent being paid, with the Council also having declined to extend the Section 25 notice period to enable further negotiation and consideration of the offer. As a result, the Club had felt they had no option other than to instigate legal proceedings in an effort to protect their position and require the Council to justify the basis of the differing valuations provided.

Concern was also expressed by the petitioners that the latest offer had included the condition for an additional use of the site as a nursery, which it was felt the current building would be unsuitable to provide given the additional safeguarding

requirements that would need to be fulfilled meaning the Theatre, in its current form, would cease to exist.

Whilst understanding that the Council needed to ensure maximum gain from its property portfolio, the petitioners expressed concern that the new Property Strategy appeared to work against small community groups such as the Theatre given the difficulty they faced in being able to achieve commercial returns despite being recognised as providing useful community or cultural services. Given the focus on Brent as a borough of culture, it was felt the Strategy needed to consider each property on the basis of the individual benefits provided, with it highlighted, as an example, that other Council's (such as Barnet) were actively supporting amateur theatre groups through Community Benefit Schemes rather than seeking to price them out, as the petitions felt the current position adopted by Brent appeared to be doing.

In concluding presentation of the petition, Sue O'Connell therefore advised that the petitioners were asking the Council to seek a proper negotiated settlement through a process of dialogue, rather than legal proceedings, taking account of the Theatre's community cultural value and on the basis of realistic terms and a rental value that could be afforded by the Club.

The Mayor thanked Sue O'Connell for presenting the petition and then invited Councillor Benea (as Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning & Property) to respond.

In response, Councillor Benea began by thanking the petitioners for their defence of East Lane Theatre, recognising the depth of feeling and support which had been highlighted and also the long standing contribution made by the Theatre in terms of the community offer available to all those who used it.

Whilst keen to highlight the value placed on the cultural sector by the Council and commitment towards growing the borough's cultural offer, the need to recognise and balance this against the financial challenges and pressures faced not only by Brent but many other Council's was also highlighted as a key consideration given the ongoing impact of the previous governments programme of austerity (including the loss by the Council of over £200m in funding).

As a result, Councillor Benea acknowledged this had led the Council to having to make a number of difficult choices involving a balance between keeping services running, housing families in need, and maintaining their assets. Referring specifically to the building occupied by East Lane Theatre, it was recognised that this has been leased for over 30 years at a rate of just £1,500 per annum or less but that the original legally binding lease had now expired. Officers had therefore been required to review the property as part of the Council's borough-wide Property Strategy (which it was pointed out applied to all community assets) with a view to discussing a new rent that reflected the current realities and Council's legal duty to ensure best value for public property.

Whilst aware of the concern highlighted by the Theatre and appreciating the strength of feeling which had been expressed, Councillor Benea felt it important to make clear in response that the Council's position was not aimed at pricing or pushing community groups out but instead reflected a desire to work with

organisations in order to ensure their sustainability in a new financial reality. As a result, the Theatre was encouraged to continue actively engaging with officers in order to explore available options and the different potential pathways available, including partnership, phased arrangements, or external fundraising support in as collaborative a way as possible.

In ending her response, Councillor Benea assured the petitioners that whilst no decision was taken lightly by the council there was also a need to protect the Council's financial position and public money. This approach had, however, also been designed to reflect the Council's ongoing commitment to supporting grassroots arts, which it was pointed out had included East Lane Theatre benefitting from a lease over many years that had shielded it from the rising cost of property in London. Despite the financial constraints faced, Councillor Benea advised the Council would continue to act in a way that was fair and sustainable for all with the petitioners and volunteers therefore urged to continue working and talking to the Council in order to address the issues highlighted.

Having thanked Sue O'Connell for presenting the petition as well as Councillor Benea for her response, the Mayor then moved on to deal with the third and final petition.

### **(3) Save Barham Park**

As the final petition, the Mayor then invited Councillor Paul Lorber (representing Friends of Barham Park) to present a petition containing 530 signatures opposing the proposed modification and discharge of the restrictive covenants on the site of 776-778 Harrow Road and seeking to prevent development and protect the future use of Barham Park.

In presenting the petition, Councillor Lorber began by expressing his support for the East Lane Theatre Club given his previous involvement as a volunteer and involvement of his ex-wife as a former secretary, for which he also took the opportunity to declare a personal interest. Taking a moment to reflect on the issues raised during presentation of the previous petition he felt these were similar to those faced by other voluntary and community sector organisations across the borough including the Barham Park Community Library which he represented as a trustee and founding member. Highlighting what he felt was the difference in approach between how other Community Libraries were treated, reference was made to what Councillor Lorber felt was the selective way market rental charges were being applied (using the example of Preston Community Library) despite introduction of the Property Strategy highlighting the need for a consistent approach across different organisations.

Moving on to address the issues within the petition relating to Barham Park, Councillor Lorber advised he was speaking as a representative of the Friends of Barham Park to highlight the disappointment expressed by a significant number of local residents and park users at the recent decision taken by the Barham Park Trust Committee to modify and discharge the restrictive covenants restricting development on the site at 776-778 Harrow Road. Despite the site having been sold, he felt the meaning of the original covenant put in place by the Trust Committee when the site was disposed of in seeking to restrict future development of the site would have been clear and accepted by the owner at the time of

purchase. On this basis, he felt that the decision by the current Trustees to modify and discharge the restrictive covenant in exchange for funds went against the original aim in seeking to protect the whole Park for the benefit of local people.

Concerns were also raised regarding what he felt to be the mismanagement of Barham Park as an asset by the current Trust Committee with reference made, as examples, to the recharging of funding incurred in relation to consultant fees in support of development of the Strategic Property Review to the Trust rather than Council alongside concerns raised about the effective use of other funding.

In outlining the support for the Park expressed by the petitioners and number of volunteers who were actively involved in maintaining the Park as a valued community asset, Councillor Lorber ended by highlighting the support being sought in seeking to protect Barham Park with the Council and Trust Committee urged to listen and take account of the views expressed.

At this stage in proceedings Councillor Kelcher in raising a Point of Order, sought clarification of the basis on which Councillor Lorber had presented the petition given, he felt, this had been designed as a process to allow members of the public rather than councillors (who already had an opportunity to participate during the meeting) to raise issues of local concern.

In response, Marsha Henry (Director of Law), whilst recognising Councillor Lorber's role as a councillor, advised that he had been recognised as a representative of the Friends of Barham Park in presenting the petition.

Having addressed the Point of Order, the Mayor thanked Councillor Lorber for presenting the petition and then invited Councillor Muhammed Butt (in his role as Chair of the Barham Park Trust Committee) to respond.

In response, Councillor Muhammed Butt started by outlining the Council's and Trust's pride in having Barham Park as an asset within the borough given its status as a much valued green space and as part of the borough's heritage. In terms of the petition, however, he felt its relevance in seeking to protect and secure the Park's future needed to be queried based on the issues highlighted and way in which it was felt facts had been misrepresented in its presentation. In terms of the current position, the opportunity was taken to clarify that at the time the site at 776 & 778 Harrow Road was sold (in 2011) the cottages located there were no longer in use for park staff with the properties identified as no longer providing any direct benefit to park users or providing a viable operational reason to retain them. This was felt to provide an important context, with the restrictive covenant (which formed the basis of the concerns raised within the petition) having been introduced in 2011 at the point of sale, once the buildings had consciously been taken out of park use and disposed off to raise funds for the Park.

As a result, Councillor Muhammed Butt felt it was possible to question the basis of the petition in seeking to protect green space given that no part of the open space in Barham Park was under threat and with the cottage buildings at the point of sale in 2011 being in private ownership and no longer part of Barham Park Estate. In highlighting that the current development proposals, which the modification and discharge of the restrictive covenants had been designed to enable, only impacted on the two residential properties contained within the site at the edge of the Park

and outside of the boundary used by the public, the value in terms of generating vital funding for the Trust in support of maintaining the wider Park as an asset was also highlighted as a key consideration. The decision which had been taken was also felt to reflect the difference in approach between the Administration and Liberal Democrats Group towards development, with the reference within the petition to honouring the original legacy left by Titus Barham in gifting the Park to the borough felt to be best represented through the generation of the additional income secured through the modification and discharge of the restrictive covenant in a way that would support the ongoing future of the Park rather than sticking with the status quo.

In highlighting that the decision taken by the Trust involved a legal and reasonable modification to a restriction no longer felt to serve the public interest he assured the petitioners that the decision made by the Trustees had been designed to ensure Barham Park was able to survive and continue thriving in serving the significant number of local residents who used and enjoyed the Park on a daily basis.

In ending his response, Councillor Muhammed Butt advised that whilst the Trustees remained committed to listening to views and concerns regarding future use of the Barham Park Estate and engaging with tenants and Park users, there was also a need to recognise the funding required to support its ongoing maintenance and use with the Trust therefore continuing to explore all avenues to support this process and the future of the Park.

The Mayor thanked Councillor Muhammed Butt for his response and having once again thanked everyone of their contributions advised that as this had been the final petition for presentation he would now move on to deal with the remainder of the agenda.

## 10. **Motions**

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

### **10.1 1<sup>st</sup> Motion (Conservative Group) – Protecting Equality and Community Cohesion in Brent's International Partnerships**

The Mayor invited Councillor Kansagra to move the first motion, which had been submitted on behalf of the Conservative Group. Councillor Kansagra began by acknowledging the decision already taken by the Council to enter into a twinning partnership with Nablus, and advised members that the motion being moved was focused on ensuring all international partnerships undertaken by the Council followed a consistent, fair and inclusive process with community cohesion at the heart. Highlighting the findings of the Equality Impact Assessment that had been conducted ahead of the Nablus twinning decision, Councillor Kansagra felt it had raised legitimate concerns that the partnership had the potential to cause emotional harm to some Brent communities, may risk compounding antisemitism and could be viewed as favouring one group over another. He also felt that it was not clear what

steps would be taken to mitigate the identified risks, with residents in Brent raising questions around why the Council was committing time and resource to a town that Foreign Office guidance had currently placed a travel advisory against travelling to. In view of concerns relating to the consultation and engagement process, Councillor Kansagra in concluding his remarks, commended the motion as a way forward to ensure a consistent, transparent and inclusive framework for all future twinning subject to consultation and community engagement.

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

In moving the amendment, Councillor Muhammed Butt began by advising that the response he had provided to the petition regarding twinning with Nablus had been intended to provide clarity on the Council's approach and once again reassured the chamber that all twinning arrangements the Council approved would be subject to a live, continuous equalities impact assessment, as outlined in the original report approved by Council. In addressing the proposed motion, he highlighted that community cohesion and values were at the forefront of the twinning approach with relationships built to foster understanding, and not to divide. Councillor Muhammed Butt also highlighted his pride at Brent being one of the most diverse boroughs in the country where people came to build a life and were able to live in peace alongside each other. Whilst acknowledging the complexity associated with any partnering arrangements he felt the amendment, as moved, would help to clarify the Council's position in terms of seeking to build understanding in taking the arrangements forward. On this basis the amendment moved by Councillor Butt was as follows:

To add the wording underlined 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,~~ 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 boroughs 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.

The Mayor thanked Councillor Muhammed Butt for moving the amendment before inviting other members to speak, with the following contributions received.

In opening the debate Councillor Maurice advised that, whilst not against twinning in principle, he had concerns about twinning with towns that were recognised as unsafe for travel and highlighted the need to be able to fully embrace any twinning arrangement by being able to visit the area in order to positively engage. For this reason he advised he would be supporting the original motion as opposed to the amendment moved, and stressed the need to ensure consultation undertaken on any twinning arrangements was as wide as possible and not only focussed on specific groups.

At this stage, the Mayor advised that the time limit allocated for debate on the motion had been reached. In drawing the debate to a close, he therefore invited Councillor Kansagra (as mover of the original motion) followed by Councillor Muhammed Butt (as mover of the amendment) to exercise their right of reply.

In summing up, Councillor Kansagra thanked Councillor Muhammed Butt for his response to the petition and motion and endorsed the community engagement approach but advised he was not minded to accept the amendment moved on behalf of the Labour Group given the focus of the original motion in seeking to ensure the Council followed the new twinning protocol in terms of any arrangements moving forward.

Councillor Butt in closing the debate and exercising his right of reply on the amendment outlined how he felt this would enable the motion to be more reflective of the diverse communities across the borough and ensure any partnership or twinning arrangements was given the opportunity to thrive and succeed. He emphasised the ambition to ensure every community was recognised and their contributions were valued and, on this basis, hoped all members would support the amendment as moved.

Having thanked councillors for their contributions, the Mayor then moved to the vote on the motion starting with the amendment moved by the Labour Group.

The amendment, as set out above, was then put to the vote and declared **CARRIED**.

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

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



## **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.
- The Council's decision to twin with Nablus has triggered welcome conversation about Brent Council's ongoing plan to build new international relationships with cities and towns across the world.
- 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.
- For now, the UK Foreign Office advises against all travel to all parts of the West Bank, 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 boroughs values.
- Global engagement 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, requiring:
  - A published Equalities Impact Assessment before entering into any future twinning arrangements.
  - Engagement 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).

- (2) To regularly reviews the International Partnering Protocol and framework, ensuring it is in alignment with Brent's equality duties and community priorities.
- (3) To reaffirm support for partnerships reflecting shared values of democracy, inclusion and access for all residents.

## **10.2 2<sup>nd</sup> Motion (Liberal Democrats Group) – Stop messing up Brent**

The Mayor then invited Councillor Clinton to move the second motion, which had been submitted on behalf of the Liberal Democrats Group. As context for the motion, Councillor Clinton began by expressing concern that the 'Don't Mess with Brent' campaign, which was being run alongside the Public Space Protection Orders, 'Fix my Street' and nuisance reporting apps were not felt to be working as they should. Speaking in support of the motion, he highlighted concerns that streets across Brent were not clean and anti-social behaviour (ASB) was worsening, with the 'fix my street' app now working as what he felt to be an 'on demand' rubbish clearance service and those reporting ASB seeing no meaningful action or response.

In proposing a way forward, Councillor Clinton whilst supporting the need highlighted by the Council for residents to take ownership and responsibility felt that the Council also needed to acknowledge its own difficulties and challenges in tackling the problem with specific reference to the reduction in street collections, introduction of the complex blue bag recycling system, HMOs not being provided with sufficient bins and enforcement failing to tackle late night nuisance and ASB. As a result, he advised the motion being moved on behalf of the Liberal Democrats Group was seeking to identify solutions that had been proven to work in other boroughs and included proposed funding streams including NCIL and the proposed introduction of a tourist levy, which he hoped all members would recognise and support.

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

In moving the amendment, Councillor Jayanti Patel began by welcoming the focus of the motion on the need to keep streets in Brent clean and tackling ASB. Concerns were, however, raised about the proposed introduction of a local tourist tax without relevant scrutiny and meaningful consultation with local residents and businesses. In outlining the amendment, he felt there was a need to recognise the potential impact any tax aimed at visitors may have in terms of the local economy, highlighting that other Councils who had introduced similar schemes had experienced mixed results, which he felt required the need for a more considered approach. The amendment moved by Councillor Jayanti Patel on behalf of the Conservative Group was therefore as follows:

To add the wording underlined 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 for Public 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.

The Mayor thanked Councillor Jayanti Patel for moving the amendment before inviting other members to speak, with the following contributions received.

In responding to the points raised, Councillor Krupa Sheth (as Cabinet Member for Public Realm & Enforcement) affirmed that the Council had been clear that nobody wanted to see litter or dumped waste on the streets of Brent, and highlighted that the problems outlined were not unique to Brent but faced by local authorities across the country who were challenged with rising costs and a history of cuts in funding. She highlighted that Brent now spent over two-thirds of its budget on protecting the most vulnerable through children's and adult's social care, which left significant funding gaps to deal with some of the issues raised through the motion. In highlighting that the Council was not standing still on those issues she felt it important to recognise the zero-tolerance approach being taken towards those

harming Brent's streets, providing examples of the increase in fines for fly-tipping, additional CCTV and enforcement officers and a continuation of the Community Skip scheme as ways the Council was making it easier to keep Brent's streets clean. In addition, Councillor Krupa Sheth outlined the actions being taken in relation to HMOs, paan spitting, and hoped all members would support the proposed introduction of a visitor levy due to be discussed later during the meeting on the basis of it providing the funding to do even more. In bringing her response to a close, she highlighted litter as a social justice issue given the more pronounced impact on deprived communities and emphasised that pride of place should not depend on someone's postcode with the Council continuing to do everything it could to keep Brent clean.

As a further contribution, Councillor Lorber (speaking in support of the original motion) reminded members that the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee had looked carefully at the proposals to introduce the blue bag recycling scheme and been advised of the proposed benefits in terms of potential increase in materials being recycled, which he felt was yet to be delivered. In addition, concerns were highlighted that despite funding being set aside the promise to consult with residents on the scheme following a trial period, did not appear to have taken place.

Councillor Maurice also took the opportunity to highlight concerns relating to the current opening hours of the recycling centre in Abbey Road, which he felt made it more difficult for residents to recycle.

As a final contribution to the debate, Councillor Matin (also speaking in support of the original motion) detailed her personal experience in using a local park with her guide dog, highlighting concerns regarding the level of broken glass, cans, bottles, food and even used syringes she had experienced. As such, she commended the sentiment and proposals within the original motion.

At this stage, the Mayor advised that the time limit allocated for debate on the motion had been reached. In drawing the debate to a close, he therefore invited Councillor Clinton (as mover of the original motion) followed by Councillor Mistry (speaking on behalf of the Conservative Group as mover of the amendment) to exercise their right of reply.

In summing up, Councillor Clinton advised he would be willing to accept the amendment put forward by the Conservative Group and raised concerns regarding the level of unallocated CIL funds held the Council, which he advised the Liberal Democrats Group had felt could be used to fund some of the solutions listed in the motion. As such he commended the proposals within motion to all members.

Councillor Mistry in closing the debate and exercising the right of reply on the amendment, highlighted the Conservatives Groups support for the principles set out within the motion with the need highlighted for urgent action to address issues being regularly reported through the Fix my Street app.

Having thanked councillors for their contributions, the Mayor then moved to the vote on the motion starting with the amendment moved by the Conservative Group.

The amendment, as set out above, was then put to the vote and declared **LOST**.

The Mayor then moved on to put the substantive motion, as originally moved, to a vote which was declared **LOST**.

It was therefore **RESOLVED** to reject the following 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 for Public 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.

### **10.3 3<sup>rd</sup> Motion (Labour Group) – Tackling Smartphone Use to Improve Outcomes for Brent's Children**

The Mayor then invited Councillor Begum to move the first motion submitted by the Labour Group. In moving the motion, Councillor Begum began by highlighting the way she felt the motion would resonate with many, particularly parents, who were witnessing how smartphones were a part of almost every moment of a child's life whilst they were still developing mentally, physically and emotionally. She acknowledged that smartphones were not designed with children in mind but appeared to have reshaped childhood rapidly, with almost 90% of 12-year-olds in

the UK owning a smartphone and 25% of 6-year-olds with the average time spent by UK teenagers on their smartphones having been assessed as 35 hours per week impacting on other opportunities to socialise.

Other concerns raised including the potential for smartphones to cause conflict in the home alongside the level of bullying being reported by young people involving the use of a device with a continual process of catch up by parents in terms of the developing technology.

Referring to action already being taken within Brent, Councillor Begum highlighted that many schools had already taken steps to limit excessive smartphone use, with data showing that children at smartphone-free schools were achieving higher outcomes in relation to average GCSE results. Recognising the inconsistency in the application of this approach, however, she advised that the motion was advocating for a more joined-up approach between schools, parents, community organisations and the local authority that informed and educated parents, empowered teachers and protected children from the harms of excessive screentime. In commending the motion to members she felt it important to end by clarifying that the motion was not seeking a complete ban on smartphone use in schools but endorsing an approach encouraging action to be taken where necessary, in order to deliver the best start in life for Brent's children.

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

Speaking in support of the motion, Councillor Clinton opened the debate by highlighting the recent discussion on the topic of smartphones and online safety at the Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee and advocated for a continual focus on this to protect children in the evolving digital sphere.

In recognising and supporting the concerns highlighted within the motion, Councillor Hirani agreed schools should have the power to control use of smartphones in schooltime and recognised the impact of cyber bullying on children's mental health. At the same time, however, concerns were raised regarding the funding of the proposals given existing pressures on school budgets which she felt would also need to be address in seeking to take the proposed action forward.

As a further contribution, Councillor Mistry also highlighted her support for the motion whilst referring to previous attempts to introduce similar measure by the previous Conservative Government which had been blocked by the Labour Party when in opposition. She also advocated for decisions on smartphone bans to remain with school heads and governors as individual schools would have different requirements.

In supporting the motion, Councillor Tatler also welcomed the proposals in her role as both a parent and former teacher. Highlighting that many schools already had the power to restrict the use of smartphones, she welcomed the fact that the motion went further by also seeking to empower parents to support children in the responsible use of smartphones.

At this stage, as the time limit for debate had been reached, the Mayor then invited Councillor Begum to exercise her right of reply. Councillor Begum advised that she



wished to provide Councillor Grahl (as Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools) with the opportunity to speak on her behalf in exercising the right of reply. Following a Point of Order raised by Councillor Lorber on this process, a procedural motion was moved by Councillor Nerva seeking to suspend Standing Order 41 & 42 in relation to motions and the conduct of debates at Council meetings to enable Councillor Grahl to exercise the right of reply on the debate. In accordance with Standing Order 42 (d) the procedural motion was put to the vote without further discussion and declared **CARRIED**.

The Mayor then invited Councillor Grahl to exercise the right of reply and close the debate on the motion. In thanking Councillor Begum for bringing forward the motion and for her commitment to addressing the issue, Councillor Grahl highlighted the contact with parents, teachers and young people supporting the concerns raised in terms of the impact from excessive use of smartphones and the dangers posed on the academic and emotional development of children and young people, with data showing a direct relationship between screentime and anxiety, depression, eating disorders and cyber bullying. In considering how Brent was responding, she commended the action already being taken but agreed there was more that could be done, given the inconsistency in smartphone policies across schools creating a patchwork of vulnerabilities that needed to be addressed. In advocating and supporting the need for a more joined-up approach that included schools, parents, community organisations, trade unions and mental health experts she highlighted her support for the approach towards creation of a borough-wide strategy that aimed to inform and educate whilst empowering teachers and safeguarding Brent's children and affirmed that the Council would seek to draw on the learnings and best practice from other local authorities to find an approach that could be tailored to Brent. On this basis she hoped all members would join her in support of the motion moved.

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

It was therefore **RESOLVED** to approve the following 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.

#### **10.4 4<sup>th</sup> Motion (Labour Group) – Protecting the working rights of delivery riders and the safety of pedestrians in Brent**

Prior to undertaking the debate on the fourth and final motion, Councillor Kansagra raised a Point of Order regarding the overall time allocated for the debate on motions, which he highlighted had left only 5 minutes to consider the final motion. Having sought advice from the Chief Executive and Director of Law it was therefore agreed to extend the time available to complete consideration of the motions by an additional 5 minutes.

The Mayor then invited Councillor Ethapemi to move the second and final motion submitted by the Labour Group. In moving the motion, Councillor Ethapemi began by outlining the purpose of the motion which he advised was aimed at improving the working rights of delivery riders as well as recognising the importance of and protecting the safety of pedestrians in Brent. Highlighting the rapidly changing nature of the delivery and gig economy, he raised concerns about the fragmented way of working for many delivery drivers and riders. In raising these concerns, he highlighted that many were poorly paid, lacked basic protections and were often mislabelled as self-employed to deny them fundamental workers' rights such as sick or holiday pay. He highlighted growing public concern over the platforms in use, including inadequate screening of candidates, account sharing, and dangerous use of e-bikes which posed serious safeguarding risks for both workers and residents.

In raising awareness of the issues, he felt this was a symptom of the economic failure experienced during the previous Conservative government where deregulation and low-paid work had been allowed to continue but was pleased to support Labour's New Deal for Working People in backing change to labour laws and working with trade unions and businesses to deliver partnerships based on mutual respect, cooperation and negotiation. As an example the opportunity was taken to commend GMBs agreement with Deliveroo which brought workers one step closer to fair and secure work, but highlighted the need for more to be done, including is seeking a safer public realm and on this basis commended the motion to members.

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

In opening the debate, Councillor Chan (speaking in support of the motion) highlighted the many contributions towards a functioning of society, including local democracy, civic participation, volunteering, faith settings and libraries which were all identified as key elements binding communities and society together. He added that, for himself and many colleagues, another part of that process were trade unions with their key role in supporting and protecting workers rights. He felt that by passing the motion, the Council would therefore help to shine a light on otherwise isolated workers in order to grant them more security, dignity and respect.

The Mayor then then drew members attention to an amendment submitted by Councillor Maurice on behalf of the Conservative Group, which had been circulated in advance of the meeting.

In moving the amendment, Councillor Maurice began by welcoming the focus on improved safety and tackling illegal working practices as well as ensuring streets remained safe for residents and those working in the gig economy. Whilst recognising that the motion addressed some key and complex issues, he advised that the Conservative Group did not support what they felt to be an attempt to frame these on previous Government policy highlighting that many chose to work in the gig economy because of the freedom and flexibility it offered and therefore a more balanced approach was needed. In recognising and supporting the need for stronger protection for workers and residents in terms of their rights, road safety and preventing criminal activity he felt this also required stronger enforcement, education and targeted action. As a result, he advised the amendment had been designed to retain the objective of the original motion whilst removing what he felt to be the overly party political focus with the amendment moved therefore as follows:

To add the wording underlined 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.
- 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.

At this stage, the Mayor advised that the additional time allocated for debate on the motion had been expired. In drawing the debate to a close, he therefore invited Councillor Ethapemi (as mover of the original motion) followed by Councillor Maurice (as mover of the amendment) to exercise their right of reply.

In summing up, Councillor Ethapemi advised that the essence of the motion had been about fairness and safety and he did not believe it to be overly political but in favour of safety, fairness and regulations for workers.

Councillor Maurice in closing the debate and exercising his right of reply on the amendment outlined additional concerns regarding the need to ensure the compliance of drivers (with a particular focus on learners) with the highway code. In once again highlighting the nature of the gig economy, he ended by once again advising that the focus of the amendment had been to address what he felt to be the unfair focus on the previous Conservative government within the original motion, with the main objective in terms of protection and support for workers and residents supported and the suggestion also made that the Council should consider engaging with insurance companies to ask them to refrain from issuing business insurance unless riders had passed their test.

Having thanked councillors for their contributions, the Mayor then moved to the vote on the motion starting with the amendment moved by the Conservative Group. The amendment, as set out above, was then put to the vote and declared **LOST**.

The Mayor then moved on to put the substantive unamended motion to a vote, which was declared **CARRIED**.

It was therefore **RESOLVED** to approve the following 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.

## 11. **Reports from the Leader and Cabinet**

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

In congratulating Councillor Bajwa on his appointment as Deputy Mayor, Councillor Muhammed Butt began by thanking all members of the Cabinet for the work being undertaken across their portfolios to continue supporting and safeguarding local residents in line with the Council's core strategic priorities, recognising the ongoing nature of the financial pressures faced by the Council. In commending the work being undertaken to manage demand and address the pressures identified whilst also delivering on their commitments, members were assured that the need for continued financial discipline and careful stewardship (often involving difficult decisions) had also been recognised in order to sustain and ensure the Council's ongoing financial sustainability.

The opportunity was also taken to formally welcomed Councillor Promise Knight back following her return from Maternity Leave. As a result of the changes introduced to the Cabinet Portfolios earlier in the year, the Leader advised that Councillor Knight had been appointed as the newly established Cabinet Member for Customer Experience, Resident Support and Culture with Councillor Donnelly-Jackson continuing as Cabinet Member for Housing. The opportunity was also taken to thank Councillor Donnelly-Jackson for the work undertaken and support in covering Councillor Knight's portfolio, during her period of maternity leave.

As part of the update, members were also asked to note (as tabled at the meeting) the Executive decisions which had been taken under the Council's urgency procedures, since the previous update provided for the Council meeting in November 2024.

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

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

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

The Mayor advised that five written questions had been submitted in advance of the meeting for response by the relevant Cabinet Member and the written responses



circulated within the agenda were noted. The Mayor then invited supplementary questions on the responses provided:

- 12.1 Councillor Lesley Smith thanked Councillor Benea (as Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning & Property) for the written response regarding the Council's recent investment in the West London Orbital rail project and support for the Bakerloo Line upgrade and extension. In welcoming the Council's commitment to these schemes details were also sought, as a supplementary question, on the Council's position regarding support for the campaign to secure step free access at Queens Park Station given the significant passenger numbers using the station, including families and older members of the community.

In response, Councillor Benea in welcoming the support expressed for the Council's ongoing commitment towards West London Orbital and the Bakerloo Line extension given the importance of the economic, social and environmental benefits associated with their delivery, also highlighted her willingness to work with the campaign to secure step free access at Queens Park station. In referencing the support and investment provide by the Council, working in collaboration with TfL, to secure step free access at Alperton Station Councillor Benea expressed hope that similar improvements could be secured at Queen Parks and ended her response by once again reiterating her support for the lobbying efforts being undertaken by the local campaign.

- 12.2 Councillor Long thanked Councillor Krupa Sheth (as Cabinet Member for Public Realm and Enforcement) for the written response to her question seeking an update on the provision of parking bays for dockless e-bikes across the borough, ongoing work to hold e-bike operators to account for safety and operation of the scheme and measures to promote active travel. In referring to the management of dockless e-bikes and the promotion of cycling and sustainable travel in Brent, Councillor Long, highlighted particular concerns regarding pedestrian safety given the way in which dockless e-bikes were being unsafely left on the street and the ease with which they could be hacked. As a supplementary question, Councillor Long therefore sought details on the measures being pursued by the Council with Lime (as the scheme operator in Brent to address the concerns highlighted, particularly in relation to the problems being created through the hacking of their dockless e-bikes and whether any requirement could be included moving forward to ensure the bikes provided include anti-hacking measures.

In response, Councillor Krupa Sheth acknowledged the concerns raised by Councillor Long and assured members of the ongoing engagement between the Council and Lime (as the current dockless e-bike provider within the borough) in an attempt to address the concerns relating to the issues being created by the hacking of their bikes and to ensure the necessary preventative measures were introduced moving forward.

- 12.3 As Councillor Moeen had submitted her apologies for absence the written response to her original question regarding the provision of free school meals and pilot breakfast clubs was noted without any follow up supplementary question being raised.

- 12.4 In noting the written response provided to her question regarding the equality impact assessment relating to the town twinning arrangements with Nablus Councillor Mistry felt it important to clarify the issues raised did not relate to the twinning arrangement in principle but were instead focussed on whether the Council had fulfilled its obligations regarding assessments in relation to equality, impartiality, and the impact on community cohesion. As a supplementary question she therefore asked Councillor Muhammed Butt (as Leader of the Council) to clarify (a) the steps being taken to mitigate the risks identified in the equality impact assessment supporting the twinning arrangement; (b) the basis of the decision made in seeking to pursue a partnership arrangement which excluded many of Brent residents, including sections of the LGBT+ and Jewish community; and (c) the perceived lack of consultation with key communities and steps being taken to verify the total number of signatures included as part of the petition supporting the original twinning arrangement. In summing up Councillor Mistry queried how a decision that had appeared to exclude many residents, divided the community, and raised serious equality concerns could be justified on the basis of creating unity and fostering community cohesion.

In response, Councillor Muhammed Butt began by referring to what he felt had been the comprehensive written response provided to the original question which were also felt to have covered the supplementary issues raised by Councillor Mistry. The opportunity was, though, also taken to once again emphasise Brent's commitment to protecting and serving all residents across the borough regardless of their beliefs, faith or background. In addressing the concerns raised in relation to the equality impact assessment he reminded members of the intention for this to be a continuous and live process designed to reflect any concerns and issues being raised and once again extended an offer to meet with anyone who had specific concerns (as he had done earlier during presentation of the petition opposing the twinning arrangements) to ensure all voices and opinions were heard. In ending his response, Councillor Muhammed Butt once again reiterated the commitment made to continue listening to Brent residents and doing everything possible to safeguard, protect, and serve all communities across the borough.

- 12.5 In thanking Councillor Benea for her written response to his question regarding the definition of shared ownership as an affordable housing model and delivery of shared housing units across the borough, Councillor Lorber began by highlighting what he felt was a need to review the accuracy of the data provided on the delivery of units by ward, with specific reference to the figures relating to Alperton. Reference was also made to issues recently highlight within a BBC report into the hidden costs and financial hardship increasingly being experienced by people who had purchased shared ownership units and, in view of the concerns, raised asked Councillor Benea, as a supplementary question, whether as a result Brent still, irrespective of the planning rules, defined "shared ownership" as an affordable housing model.

In response, Councillor Benea (as Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning & Property) felt it important to clarify that the Council was not responsible for the current definition of shared ownership as an affordable housing model which it was pointed out fell within the definition of an

affordable housing product within the National Planning Policy Framework and London Plan and which Brent's Local Plan was therefore consistent with. Whilst aware of the concerns raised, it was pointed out that the Council's emphasis remained on providing the maximum number of homes at social or London affordable rents of which shared ownership currently formed part of the overall picture. In terms of the issues raised relating to accuracy of the data provided, Councillor Benea ended her response by advising she would arrange for the figures provided to be reviewed and should any issues be identified come back to update Councillor Lorber.

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

- (i) Following the Council's recent self-referral to the Regulator of Social Housing and subsequent C3 regulatory grading Councillor Jayanti Patel felt it had become clear that serious failings had occurred, particularly in relation to breaches in compliance with building safety standards and significant inaccuracies with the True Compliance system. This included 12,500 fire actions having been wrongly updated to indicate that works had been completed despite missing the required supporting evidence in addition to the council being unable to reconcile performance data on asbestos management, water safety and detectors for smoke and carbon monoxide.

Given the scale and seriousness of the issues identified he therefore asked for a clear assurance to be provided on the actions being taken to address the position and that a clear and that a transparent response would be provided, recognising this as vital in restoring public confidence in the Council's ability to safeguard its residents and comply with its regulatory obligations.

The Mayor advised that as this question would require a response from Councillor Donnelly-Jackson (as Cabinet Member for Housing) who had submitted her apologies for absence, a written response would be arranged following the meeting.

- (ii) Councillor Chan who in highlighting the condemnation being expressed by residents and businesses he represented in Harlesden & Kensal Green towards those responsible for fly-tipping and littering and welcoming the zero tolerance approach towards enforcement prescribed within the "Don't Mess with Brent" campaign, sought assurance on the feasibility and approach being adopted in seeking to increase the number of enforcement officers currently employed along with an extension in enforcement hours.

In response, Councillor Krupa Sheth (as Cabinet Member for Public Realm & Enforcement) advised of the measures already introduced to increase the level of enforcement activity and number of officer available supported by enhanced CCTV coverage. Night patrols were also confirmed to have been introduced during summer months with the Council continuing to explore how to increase shift coverage during enhanced periods of activity.

- (iii) In taking the opportunity to welcome Councillor Knight back from maternity leave, Councillor Kennelly took the opportunity to celebrate the opening of Preston Community Library with thanks expressed to the Residents Association for their support of the campaign along with officers for their hard work in delivery of the project. Highlighting the significant achievement in delivery of the scheme, Councillor Kennelly asked if this was recognised as evidence of the Council's effective collaboration with the Voluntary & Community Sector and what could be achieved through effective support of the sector.

In response, Councillor Knight (as Cabinet Member for Customer Experience, Resident Support and Culture) thanked Councillor Kennelly and colleagues for the warm welcome back and agreed that delivery of the scheme highlighted the importance of the strong relationship between the Council and Voluntary & Community Sector as well as the library service and volunteers involved in running community libraries, across the borough who were recognised as essential in ensuring local needs continued to be met.

- (iv) In referring to the Conservative Group alternative budget proposals which had been moved at the Budget Setting Council meeting in February 2025, Councillor Mistry sought further details on the progress being made in addressing concerns relating to the collection of Council Tax & Business Rate arrears as well as benefit overpayments. Citing a recent press article highlighting Brent's performance in relation to Council Tax collection, the recovery of arrears and debt collection, details were sought on the action being taken by the Council to address the concerns outlined in relation to performance and recovery of the level of arrears identified.

In response, Councillor Milli Patel (as Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources) assured members that the whilst the approach towards debt recovery was guided by the Council's ethical debt policy and aimed to support those residents genuinely experiencing financial hardship, the Council also remained focussed in taking robust action against those who had made a conscious decision not to pay.

- (v) Councillor Johnson in noting the increase in pupils awaiting an EHCP (Education, Health and Care Plan) assessment and pressures being faced by school leadership teams across the borough sought details on the support being provided to schools in Brent in relation to the offer of Additional Resource Provision designed to meet the increasingly complex needs identified.

In response, Councillor Grahl (as Cabinet Member for Children, Young People & Schools) felt it important to begin by outlining the Council's improved performance in processing EHCPs within required timescales with current performance having increased to 70%. Highlighting the Council's commitment to providing children with opportunities to learn in mainstream settings wherever possible, the importance of Additional Resource Provision was recognised with 69% of SEND children in Brent attending mainstream schools, and Brent's % aligning with the national average. Whilst providing investment to deliver a new SEN school in the borough other support measures being provided within mainstream schools included speech and

language therapy, classroom conversions for neurodiverse children, and modifications for hearing-impaired children. Councillor Grahl also took the opportunity to praise the response being provided by individual schools to the challenges and pressures identified and to remind members of the outcome from a recent Ofsted inspection which had recognised provision within Brent as ensuring SEND children received appropriate levels of support when required. Whilst acknowledging the pressures being created by the continuing increase in EHCP demand, Councillor Grahl ended by commending the progress being made in Brent in seeking to address the challenges identified to ensure every child had the best start in life.

- (vi) In expressing concern at the nature of recent opposition to the decision made to approve the twinning arrangement between the Council and Nablus, Councillor Afzal sought details on the Council's position regarding the tactics which he felt had been deployed in an attempt to derail and delay the twinning process, including what he claimed to be the spreading of fear and misinformation regarding the governance arrangements in Nablus and sought reassurance that Brent remained committed to the twinning arrangement and ensuring the views of those communities in support of the process were also recognised and heard. Referring to the petition presented earlier in the meeting opposing the twinning arrangements, he felt this contained inaccurate information about the political affiliations of Nablus's governing authority and that the engagement with Nablus residents would endanger Brent residents with concerns also raised, as a further example, that the petition opposing the arrangements had included the names of many councillors from a Muslim background without their consent.

In response, Councillor Muhammed Butt (as Leader of the Council) felt it important to recognise the stance taken by the Council in seeking to stand against division and any form of racism with an assurance provided of the Council's ongoing commitment to stand united against all forms of hatred and division in order to maintain Brent as one of the best examples of unity across London.

Regarding the concerns expressed in relation to the petition opposing the twinning arrangement with Nablus, confirmation was provided that officers had investigated the issues raised and identified some anomalies related to signatures having been added without apparent consent. These individuals had been contacted to verify whether they had submitted their names, and unverified names had subsequently been removed as signatories from the petition. This had prompted the Council to review the current verification system with proposals to review and implement a more secure and robust e-petition system moving forward. In ending his response, Councillor Muhammed Butt felt it was essential for everyone to work together to ensure that no individual seeking to divide the community be allowed to succeed, regardless of their background or origin.

- (vii) Supporting the concerns previously raised regarding the operation of the dockless e-bike scheme by Lime across the borough, Councillor Lorber sought details on the measures being taken to address the various issues highlighted and when it would be made clear to Lime that the operation of their scheme was not working as intended prior to consideration being given to

their removal. Whilst recognising some of the issues arising from irresponsible use it was felt these were exacerbated by the ease with which the bikes could be hacked and lack of dedicated parking bays with queries raised as to why the system of dockless bikes had been accepted when compared to other more successful schemes operating a docking system which were felt to encourage more responsible behaviour.

In response, Councillor Krupa Sheth (as Cabinet Member for Public Realm & Enforcement) advised that the issues raised had been recognised and raised with Lime in relation to their future operation across the borough. As part of the measures being introduced in response, parking bays were being introduced across the borough to encourage more responsible behaviour. Whilst keen to support and recognise the benefits in encouraging more active modes of travel she advised the Council remained committed to tackling the concerns highlighted with Lime in order to hold them to account for operation and management of the scheme. As part of this process reference was made to the recent public Forum held with Lime and commitment to hold further meetings, which it was hoped Councillor Lorber would seek to engage with moving forward.

- (viii) Referring to concerns previously raised at the Annual Council meeting, Councillor Kansagra once again took the opportunity to query the current arrangements for the chairing of the Council's Scrutiny Committee's given the impact which he felt the removal of the vice-chair roles from the Opposition Groups had had in undermining the independence and democratic accountability of the scrutiny function. Highlight a request made for these arrangements, along with the current level of Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) payable to members in certain roles (including those serving on Planning Committee) to be reviewed by the Constitutional Working Group (CWG) details were sought on any progress made.

In response, Councillor Muhammed Butt (as Leader of the Council) referred to the response he had provided at the same meeting regarding the need to recognise the democratic mandate of the current Administration, which he felt 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. In response to the concerns identified in relation to SRAs he reminded members the current Members Allowance Scheme had been designed to ensure allowances remained in line with recommended percentage bands whilst also reflecting the scope and workload undertaken by members in their various roles. In confirming that he would have no objection to a further review of allowances being undertaken by CWG it was, however, pointed out this had the potential for movement in either direction.

- (ix) In response to a previous question raised by Councillor Afzal in relation to the petition which had been presented earlier in the meeting regarding opposition to the Council's twinning arrangement with Nablus, Councillor Maurice felt it important to clarify that the concerns highlighted regarding signatories to the petition were not the fault of the petitioners and instead exposed a flaw in the system hosting the online petition. Acknowledging the Council's actions to address the issue and role of the petitioners in also highlighting the

discrepancies identified as soon as they had been identified, which he felt may have represented a deliberate act to undermine the petition, he welcomed the commitment made to reviewing security of the current e-petition system. From his perspective, the petitioners had acted fairly, honestly, and openly when seeking support for the petition opposing the twinning arrangements which he felt had been a more open process than that undertaken by the original petition in support of the twinning arrangement and in ending sought assurance that the Council would not only address the issues highlighted in terms of the petition system but had also recognised that those petitioners opposed to the arrangement had acted honestly and fairly throughout the process.

In response, Councillor Muhammed Butt (as Leader of the Council) thanked Councillor Marice for his contribution, acknowledging the issues highlighted in relation to the petitions system given their potential to undermine the process. As a result, he confirmed that officers were reviewing future procedures in order to identify a more robust system that could be used to prevent similar issues in the future with the aim of restoring confidence and trust in the process.

- (x) Given the remaining time available the Mayor advised that he would accept one further question with Councillor Mistry taking the opportunity to highlight concerns regarding the potential for the twinning arrangement with Nablus to create division and tension between local communities within the borough. Given the repeated commitment made to protecting and serving all residents across the borough regardless of their beliefs, faith or background, an assurance was sought that in order to reflect this approach the need to ensure full and extensive consultation was undertaken on the current and all future twinning arrangements had been recognised.

In response, Councillor Muhammed Butt (as Leader of the Council) ended the session by thanking Councillor Mistry for her comments and once again assuring members and the local community that the forthcoming twinning of Brent with Nablus was not about endorsing any religious belief or political ideology and that any future twinning arrangements would be undertaken on the basis of the updated Protocol adopted.

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

Prior to moving on the Mayor took a short comfort break, with the Deputy Mayor taking over as Chair during his absence.

### **13. Report from Chairs of Scrutiny Committees**

Having returned the Mayor moved on to deal with the updates from each Scrutiny Committee Chair, reminding members that the time set aside for this item was 12 minutes, with each Chair having up to three minutes in which to highlight any significant issues arising from the work of their Committees. Once these updates had been provided, he advised the remaining time available would then be opened up for any other non-Cabinet members to question (without the need for advance

notice) the Scrutiny Committee Chairs on matters relating to the work of their Committee.

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

- Having congratulated Councillor Bajwa on his appointment as Deputy Mayor, and welcoming Councillor Afzal as the newly appointed Vice-Chair on the Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Ketan Sheth updated members on the work being undertaken to finalise the Committee's work programme for 2025-26 which, recognising its flexible and broad ranging nature, had included engagement with Brent Youth Parliament to ensure the views of young people across the borough were included as well as engagement with a range of other key stakeholders including local health providers, housing, social care and the local community.
- The significant work undertaken by the Committee, since the start of the 2025-26 Municipal Year with the most recent meeting focussed on the Brent Safeguarding Adults Board (Multi-agency safeguarding arrangements) Annual Report 2024 - 25 and Brent Safeguarding Children Partnership (Multi-agency safeguarding arrangements) Annual Report 2024 – 25. The Committee had been pleased to welcome the Independent Chairs of both Boards to the meeting with the primary focus on the multi-agency partnership arrangements in place to address the various safeguarding challenges identified.
- The ongoing and active engagement of the Committee in the work of the North West London Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee Brent, which Councillor Ketan Sheth continued to Chair. This had included a review of proposals relating to Palliative Care, the Health Equity Programme and on the recent proposals regarding the restructuring of NHS England (NHSE) and impact of funding reductions to the Integrated Care Strategy and Board structure along with NorthWest London Planned Care Strategy and NHS Ten Year Plan. Members were advised the work programme for the Joint Committee had also now been finalised for 2025-26 on which further updates would continue to be provided.

The Mayor thanked Councillor Ketan Sheth for his update and then, in the absence of Councillor Conneely (who it was noted had submitted apologies for absence at the meeting) invited Councillor Kennelly (as Vice Chair of the Resources & Public Realm Scrutiny Committee) to introduce the update report on the work being undertaken by that Committee with the following issues highlighted:

- The wide-ranging nature of scrutiny activity undertaken by the Committee since the last update, as set out within the update report circulated with the agenda. In noting the debate scheduled to take place on the introduction of a visitor levy, Councillor Kennelly highlighted this was a proposal which had also been considered and recommended by the Scrutiny Committee when considering the budget consultation proposals in previous years.



- In addition, attention was drawn to the next meeting of the Committee which would be scrutinising the performance of the Council's current housing repairs contractor as part of a broader review of complaints handling performance across the Council and tenant feedback arising from consideration of the 2023-34 Complaints Annual Report.
- Other items scheduled for consideration as part of the Committee's work programme during 2025-26 included an update on recycling initiatives and performance as well as ongoing monitoring of Brent's overall financial position based on a detailed review of the current 2025-26 financial forecast.
- The ongoing focus and work of the Committee in seeking to encourage, where identified as required, change and improvements in the way services were being delivered for local communities across the borough involving all relevant stakeholders with members also advised of the establishment of a Scrutiny Task Group (chaired by Councillor Mitchell) which was shortly due to commence, on Kerbside Management and thanks expressed to members and other key stakeholders for their engagement to date.

The Mayor thanked Councillor Kennelly for the updated provided and it was **RESOLVED** that the contents of both reports be noted.

Following the updates provided, the Mayor advised that the remainder of time available would be open for questions from non-cabinet members to the Scrutiny Chairs. The Mayor reminded members of the need to ensure that questions raised were focused on the updates provided or the work being undertaken by the relevant Committee.

As a result, Councillor Lorber took the opportunity to remind members of a recent call-in relating to Barham Park, which had been considered by the Resources & Public Realm Scrutiny Committee in April 25 and had included access to an exempt document relating to the valuation obtained on the modification to the restrictive covenant on 776-778 Harrow Road. Councillor Lorber advised that his understanding was that the valuation had been produced shortly in advance of the Barham Park Trust Committee which had taken the decision to approve modification of the covenant that met in February 25 and had formed the basis of the subsequent call-in. As a result of discussions with the owner of the site, however, Councillor Lorber now understood that the valuation had been agreed in advance of that timescale with clarification therefore sought on the timing of the valuation and whether this required further investigation by internal audit.

Given the nature of the issue raised, Councillor Kennelly advised (in response) that the clarification being sought would need to be followed up with officers and a written response provided given the matter was not one that fell directly within the remit or current work programme of the Scrutiny Committee.

With no further questions raised, the Mayor advised that he would move to the next item and thanked all members for their contribution.

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

The Mayor invited Councillor Chan, as Vice-Chair of the Audit & Standards Advisory Committee and Chair of the Audit and Standards Committee to introduce the joint annual report from both Committees, updating members on the work undertaken during the 2024-25 Municipal Year.

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

Members were advised that the approach adopted towards the work undertaken had also included consideration of the Council's risk management structure and strategic risk management process with an increasing focus not only on the effectiveness of governance processes relating to the first but also "second line" of defence in terms of the monitoring and reporting of information and data. Other key areas of focus highlighted in terms of risk had included the ongoing nature of the financial challenges and pressures faced by the Council given the demand on services, with the need identified (as a recommendation by the External Auditor in their Value for Money Report) for a focus to be maintained on the Council's overall financial resilience and sustainability in terms of future budget options and decisions. In recognising these were pressures being experienced on a national and regional basis, and not unique to Brent, Councillor Chan advised the actions being taken in seeking to address and mitigate against the risks identified would continue to be monitored as part of the efforts being made to maintain a financially resilient, balanced and sustainable budget position and to ensure maximum value was being driven in the way services were being commissioned and procured supported by ongoing lobbying for reform of the local government finance system.

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

The Mayor thanked Councillor Chan for the update provided and it was **RESOLVED** to note the Joint Annual Report provided by the Chairs' of the Audit & Standards and Audit & Standards Advisory Committees outlining the work undertaken by both Committee's during 2024-25.

Prior to moving on the next item the Mayor advised that as the remaining time available for the meeting was shortly due to expire he intended to move the suspension of Standing Order 44 (Council Guillotine Procedure) in order to extend the time of the meeting by a period of 15 minutes to provide sufficient time for consideration of the remaining items on the agenda. In accordance with Standing Order 42 (d) the procedural motion was put to the vote without further discussion and declared **CARRIED**.

## 15. **Non Cabinet Members' Debate**

In accordance with Standing Order 34, the Mayor advised that the next item on the agenda was the non-cabinet member debate, with the subject chosen for consideration being “Empowering Brent with visitor levy powers to support our communities”.

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

The Mayor then invited Councillor Mitchell to introduce the motion which had been submitted as the basis for the Non-Cabinet Member debate. In moving the motion, Councillor Mitchell began by highlighting its aim in seeking to unlock an additional source of income and funding which could be utilised by the Council given its location as a cultural and economic hub. Highlighting the growing number of events taking place in Wembley, which formed a vital part of Brent’s local economy, it was pointed out these had attracted almost 2.9 million visitors during the previous year all of which supported jobs (including 1,800 Brent jobs from the Stadium), businesses and hospitality across the borough with each additional non-sporting event at Wembley Stadium estimated to generate £4.35m through direct local expenditure.

Whilst recognising the significant economic benefits, however, the additional impact these events and visitors created for local residents, including disruption, waste, congestion, noise and increased demand on council services was also recognised with the Council working proactively to mitigate these challenges in partnership with the Stadium. In addition, however, Councillor Mitchell advised the Council was also keen to explore the potential introduction of a modest visitor levy on overnight hotel and short-stay accommodation (as had been successfully introduced elsewhere) designed to generate additional income that would be ringfenced to support investment in Brent’s public realm in areas such as street trees, green infrastructure, enhanced street cleaning, and additional waste enforcement officers.

Highlighting that studies had demonstrated the use of these type of levies did not reduce tourism, Councillor Mitchell advised that the motion moved as the basis for the debate sought to recognise the benefits associated with the introduction of a visitor levy in ensuring that those benefiting from Brent’s world-class facilities were also able to contribute a small amount towards maintaining high-quality services and a cleaner, greener borough supplementing Council funding (in a progressive and practical way) at a time when the Council was also facing sustained financial pressures. As such, she commended the motion to members for debate.

The Mayor thanked Councillor Mitchell for introducing the motion and then opened up the debate for contributions from other members.

Opening the debate in support of the motion, Councillor Knight highlighted the way in which she felt such a levy would enhance the local economy whilst also celebrating the borough’s rich cultural history, pointing out its importance in not just raising revenue but also empowering the community and ensuring that the benefits of world class events could be felt by all residents. In celebrating Brent’s diverse history, reference was made to exhibitions at both Kingsbury and Willesden Green Library as a showcase, with support also expressed for the London Assembly campaign in seeking a voluntary levy on arena and stadium tickets to support

grassroots music venues and the potential value of a modest visitor levy also recognised in terms of being able to support the development of further cultural opportunities and in honouring the legacy of Brent.

As a further contribution, Councillor Clinton advised that the Liberal Democrats Group would be supporting the motion subject to assurance regarding the necessary financial prudence and due diligence, recognising they had also been campaigning on the same issue and with support also expressed for the long awaited introduction of a music venue levy. In seeking action to progress the proposal, Councillor Clinton felt the Council should also consider writing to the Prime Minister as well as Mayor for London and Stadium seeking support, including the introduction of a voluntary levy on arena and stadium tickets to support local venues and organisations such as East Lane Theatre Club.

Also speaking in support of the motion, Councillor Nerva thanked Councillor Mitchell for highlighting the benefits of the visitor levy which he pointed out would benefit not just the immediate area surrounding the Stadium complex in Wembley but also areas across the rest of the borough, recognising the rise of Brent as a hospitality destination similar to other cities in and outside of the UK and as a borough capable of delivering such a scheme.

In welcoming the motion and subject of the debate, Councillor Kelcher also spoke in support highlighting his previous engagement in the idea as part of a wider Tourist Strategy. Whilst recognising the benefits identified, it was pointed out that the level of any levy would need to be carefully managed, with Brent's strength in terms of the assets available for tourists to enjoy highlighted. In expressing his support for the motion, Councillor Kelcher hoped all members would recognise the benefit for Brent residents, as a means of balancing the demand placed on service following events taking place with the approach already successfully delivered in many other cities across the UK and other parts of the world.

In reiterating the support expressed by the Liberal Democrats Group for the proposed introduction of a levy Councillor Lorber, also supported the need to ensure this was not seen as excessive in order to avoid any detrimental impact on the local economy and in making the current cost-of-living crisis any worse on individual households with the administrative burden on businesses in the borough also, he felt, needing to be carefully assessed. As a final comment in support, the need was also identified to ensure the VAT implications arising from any levy were also fully considered in order to ensure this could be claimed by the Council rather than central government.

Councillor Mistry spoke next and whilst recognising the unique value and benefits delivered through the location of the Stadium complex in Brent in terms of the local economy, jobs and in placing Brent on the map also felt it important to recognise the risks associated with the proposal given its effective status as an additional local tax on visitors for any type of overnight stay, which had the potential to impact not just those visiting the area to attend events at the Stadium or other venues. As such, the Conservative Group felt there was a need to ensure a joined up approach with the Mayor of London and London Councils to avoid the development of a confusing and uncoordinated approach to the implementation of charges across London. In addition, further assurance was sought regarding the way in which the levy would be used to provide funds to support the Public Realm, street cleaning,

waste enforcement and parks rather than being absorbed into the General Fund. Highlighting the increasing tax burden on households across the borough, Councillor Mistry also felt consideration should be given to the opportunities available, working in partnership with organisations such as the Football Association and other local partners, to seek support in improving Brent's public realm rather than relying on the introduction of a visitor levy. Given the potential risks identified in terms of the impact on the local economy and uncertainty for those visiting the borough whilst also avoiding what they felt to be the real challenge in delivering value for money, Councillor Mistry advised that the Conservative Group would not therefore be supporting the motion.

In view of the remaining time available the Mayor then invited Councillor Benea (as Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning & Property) to summarise and close the debate.

In closing the debate, Councillor Benea thanked Councillor Mitchell for bringing forward such a timely and important motion for debate. In recognising Brent's pride at being able to host what were recognised as major world class events at the Stadium complex and the value generated for not only the local but also London's economy as a result (involving the creation of significant numbers of jobs as well as additional revenue) she felt there was no doubting the way in which Brent was able to thrive from its status as one of the world's leading event destinations.

Whilst these events were, however, recognised as boosting the economy, the pressure being placed on key local services, the public realm and residents was also acknowledged given the additional demand placed on local infrastructure. As a result, it was felt that the introduction of a modest visitor levy would represent a practical, fair and progressive measure and approach in seeking to ensure that those who benefitted from Wembley's global pull also helped to invest back into the boroughs neighbourhoods, whether that was keeping Brent clean and green, improving parks or boosting enforcement with the same approach already common in cities like Amsterdam, Lisbon and Venice. Members were also reminded that cities such as Glasgow had already been given the powers to act in a similar way with the motion therefore aimed at ensuring Brent and London was not left behind.

Highlighting her commitment to pushing for the necessary powers, working on a cross party and collaborative basis with the Council's partners, residents and Mayor of London, Councillor Benea ended by hoping all members would support the motion in seeking to secure a fair deal for Brent which would enable residents to feel the benefit of sharing their home with a world class venue and in making sure this success could be shared moving forward.

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

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

### **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.

#### 16. **Representation of Political Groups on Committees**

Moving on the final item of business, the Mayor then invited Councillor Muhammed Butt (as Leader of the Council) to introduce a 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 following any change in balance between the political groups on the Council. Members were advised that the report had been presented due to a recent change in membership impacting on the current number of councillors within the Labour Group serving on the Council. In presenting the report, it was, however, noted that the change identified had not resulted in any amendment needing to be made to the existing allocation of seats base on the revised overall composition of political groups.

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 straight 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, having noted these remained unchanged from the previous review undertaken at the Annual Council meeting in May 2025.
- (2) To confirm 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.
- (3) To note that the political balance on Council Sub-Committees would be reviewed at the first available meeting of the General Purposes Committee and Licensing Committee.

**17. Exclusion of the Press & Public**

There were no items that required the exclusion of the press and public from the meeting.

**18. Urgent Business**

There were no urgent items of business raised at the meeting so the Mayor, in closing the meeting, thanked all members for their co-operation and support and advised that he looked forward to seeing everyone again in person at the next Full Council which would taking place at 6pm on Monday15 September 2025.

The meeting closed at 9.10 pm

COUNCILLOR RYAN HACK  
Mayor



## **Full Council – 15 September 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:

#### Committee Membership

- (1) Vacancy to replace Councillor Long as Vice-Chair of the Brent Connects - Willesden Forum

#### Outside Bodies

- (1) To note that the Leader has appointed Councillor Mili Patel as the Council's full member representative on London Councils Grant Committee which Councillor Rubin appointed as one of the Council's two Deputy Members.

*Please note: If required, any further membership changes notified at the meeting*

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## Item 7: Questions from Members of the Public

**Full Council – 15 September 2025**

**1. Question from L. Varsani to Councillor Krupa Sheth (Cabinet Member for Public Realm & Enforcement)**

Can the Cabinet Member for Public Realm and Enforcement advise what is being done to address the increasing number of cyclists riding pedal bikes and semi motorised bikes on the pavements?

As one example, cyclists are using the footpaths along Kingsbury Road even though there is a cycle lane.

It appears that pavements (including narrow footpaths) are increasingly being used as cycle lanes, resulting in difficulties for pedestrians using the pavement and concerns in relation to safety.

Whilst recognising the difficulties in monitoring and taking enforcement action to prevent this type of behaviour, could signage be provided to remind cyclists that the footpath should not be used for cycling.

**Response:**

It is the police who enforce the law against cycling on pavements, which is illegal under the Highways Act 1835.

The Highway Code also states you "MUST not cycle on a pavement". Enforcement is at the discretion of the police, who may issue a warning, a fixed penalty notice, or even take legal action if the offence is serious or if you are a repeat offender.

The Law states the following:

- **Highways Act 1835:** Section 72 makes it an offence to "wilfully ride" on a footpath or causeway meant for pedestrians.
- **Highway Code:** Rule 64 clearly states that cyclists "MUST not cycle on a pavement".
- **Penalties:** A fixed penalty notice of £50 can be issued for this offence, though the maximum fine could be up to £500.

If residents have concerns about pavement cycling in their area, they can contact the Council who will make the police aware, or contact their local Safer Neighbourhood Team directly for advice.

Any concerns relating to misuse of Lime Bikes should be directed to Lime via:

<https://help.li.me/hc/en-gb/categories/360004847814-Reporting-and-Complaints>

2. **Question from R. Furness to Councillor Krupa Sheth (Cabinet Member for Public Realm & Enforcement)**

Can the Cabinet Member for Public Realm and Enforcement advise what measures it is possible to take to prevent what appear to be ex-minicab Toyota Prius cars being stored in and around the streets surrounding Tewkesbury Gardens Kingsbury NW9 0QU.

Whilst acknowledging that if vehicles are taxed and insured they can be parked on the public highway, can clarification be provided on any checks being undertaken to ensure these vehicles are lawfully registered and taxed given they severely limit any available spaces for residents or visiting tradespeople to park. Many are also in a state of disrepair and are often removed by the local authority when notified reported to the DVLA by residents, but can more forceful enforcement action be taken (including the use of fines) to prevent our roads being used as a maintenance free, unpaid car compound.

**Response:**

We acknowledge the concern this raises for residents, especially when such vehicles occupy valuable parking spaces and appear to be in poor condition.

Vehicles that are taxed, have a valid MOT, or are not causing an obstruction are legally permitted to park on the public highway.

**Current Enforcement Measures:**

**Vehicle Inspections:** Our enforcement teams regularly inspect reported vehicles to verify whether they are taxed and have a valid MOT. Where vehicles are found to be untaxed, abandoned, or in disrepair, we initiate removal procedures in coordination with the DVLA, the enforcing agency. Residents are encouraged to report suspect vehicles directly to the DVLA who support our enforcement efforts. <https://www.gov.uk/report-untaxed-vehicle>

The DVLA website also provides a link for reporting uninsured vehicles or vehicles without an MOT to the police.

**Abandonment Criteria:** Vehicles that are stationary for extended periods, visibly neglected, or which are missing registration plates may be classified as abandoned and removed following investigation. The following link gives advice:

<https://www.brent.gov.uk/parking-roads-and-travel/roads-and-streets/street-cleaning/abandoned-vehicle#reportanabandonedvehicle>

In addition, our parking enforcement contractors enforce parking restrictions on behalf of the council and information on reporting a vehicle parked in contravention or obstructing access is available on our website:

[Report an illegally parked car | Brent Council](#)

Members of the public who feel their area would benefit from regulated parking can formally request the introduction of a Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ). This process involves consultation with residents and an assessment of parking pressures. To initiate a request, please contact the council's Health Streets and Parking Service via our website or customer service channels:

<https://www.brent.gov.uk/parking-roads-and-travel/parking/where-you-can-park/controlled-parking-zones>

## **List of Petitions to be presented at Full Council - 15 September 2025:**

### **(1) Retain the heritage Victorian villa, Altamira, as part of redeveloping 1 Morland Gardens.**

**Lead Petitioner - Irina Porter (on behalf of Willesden Local Historical Society). Petition contains 251 signatures. NB Petition to be presented by Mr Philip Grant.**

#### **Statement:**

We the undersigned petition the Council and its Cabinet, when considering the regeneration of 1 Morland Gardens, as part of the Hillside Corridor proposals, to retain the beautiful and historic locally listed Victorian villa, Altamira, as part of the redevelopment of that site for affordable housing and youth facilities. The 150-year-old landmark building is part of the original estate which gave Stonebridge Park its name, and its sense of place can be an inspiration to local young people who would use it, while there is plenty of space behind the Victorian villa to build a good number of genuinely affordable homes.

#### **Justification:**

Between 1872 and 1876, the noted Victorian architect, Henry Kendall Jnr, developed an estate of middle-class homes on a field beside the Harrow Road, just to the west of Harlesden. He called the estate Stonebridge Park, and that was the origin of the name for the area which grew up near it.

Although there are other late 19th century houses in Brent which are described as being of Italianate style, numbers 1 and 2 Morland Gardens, originally “Altamira” and “Hurworth”, are the only surviving examples with distinctive belvedere towers. Seen from the crossroads at the top of Hillside, and with the trees of the community garden in front, they provide one of the best streetscape views in the area.

“Altamira” remained as a private house until around the time of the First World War, then became a members’ club for many decades. In the 1990s, this beautiful Victorian villa was chosen by Brent Council, and sympathetically restored and extended, with funding from Harlesden City Challenge, to become the home of the Brent Adult and Community Education Service, in an inspirational Stonebridge setting.

In 2018, it was decided to upgrade the facilities for what is now the Brent Start college, and an architect was chosen, through a competition, with experience of combining heritage and modern buildings. Sadly, at an early stage, a planning officer wrongly advised that the locally listed building could be demolished, without taking into account Brent’s adopted heritage planning policies or the heritage significance of the Victorian villa.

As a result, the scheme which was given the go-ahead by Brent’s Cabinet in January 2020, and received planning consent later that year, despite numerous valid objections, would have seen the heritage asset demolished and a new concrete building of up to ten storeys constructed over the site and the adjacent community garden, providing a new college facility and 65 homes.

That scheme saw a number of problems and even though an award was made for the first stage of a two-stage design and construct contract in the summer of 2022, no actual construction had begun on the site when the planning consent expired at the end of October 2023.

A review of what to recommend for the future of the 1 Morland Gardens site was begun in November 2023, and a year later the outline of “affordable homes and community facilities” was included as part of a large consultation exercise on Bridge Park and the Hillside Corridor. The second consultation in March 2025 has refined this further to “affordable homes and youth facilities” for 1 Morland Gardens, but without giving any indication over whether Council Officers will recommend retaining the heritage building, “Altamira”, as part of their proposals.

This locally listed Victorian villa is a much loved and much valued part of the Stonebridge streetscape, and this petition has been set up by Willesden Local History Society so that people who live, work or study in Brent can express their support for it to be retained as part of the Council’s latest proposals for redeveloping 1 Morland Gardens.

#### Altamira & community gardens





## **(2) Save the Welsh Harp Environmental Education Centre for future generations**

**Lead Petitioner - Martin Francis currently contains 399 signatures but due to close on 5 September 25**

### **Statement:**

We the undersigned petition the Council to scope out all opportunities to maintain primary provision at the Welsh Harp Environmental Education Centre following the withdrawal of Thames21 as a provider.

### **Justification:**

We, as residents and people who work or study in Brent, call on the Council to undertake a full scoping exercise to enable the work of the Welsh Harp Environmental Education Centre (WHEEC) with primary age children to continue. This work, which has been going on for more than half a century is even more important at a time of a climate and ecological emergency. It is imperative that the generation that will be dealing with this emergency in the future are enabled to experience and appreciate the natural world that is now under threat.

The scoping exercise should include talks with Careys, the local groundworks company that previously made a bid for the Centre and other local companies, organisations or charities that wish to make a commitment to children's education and combatting climate change.

The Council should also revive the Consortium who were interested in a shared resource that would be based at the new build 16-25 Skills Centre to be used at times outside school hours including evenings and weekends.

A primary classroom with separate entrance and toilets should be provided within the new 16-25 Skills Centre for use by the WHEEC during school hours and school term times (60 primary pupils per day) as envisaged in the current plans. Thames21 withdrew from the WHEEC in July 2025 because they could no longer sustain the losses. Running costs should be less in a shared 16-25 new build Skills Centre compared with the dilapidated wooden classrooms that are due to be demolished.

Rental income could be earned both from letting out space at the Centre at evenings, weekends and during school holidays and from letting out the grounds for activities such as camping for guides, scouts, and Woodcraft Folk.

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## Item 9.1

**Full Council – 15 September 2025**

### **Conservative Group Motion**

#### **Addressing Safety and Fly-Tipping Risks in Bee Corridor Management in Brent**

##### **This Council notes**

That the Conservative Group have supported and encourage the environmental value of Brent's bee corridors and wildflower initiatives in promoting biodiversity and supporting pollinator populations.

##### **This Council further notes, however**

That the recent unmanaged long grass and overgrown vegetation along designated bee corridors in our parks and open spaces along with uncut grass verges have led to increased instances of:

- Fly-tipping of cans, bottles, and concealed waste such as dog fouling, which poses hygiene risks where children play and track contamination into homes.
- Residents reporting reduced visibility near footpaths, crossings, and residential boundaries — notably along Fryent Way, creating hazards for pedestrians and vehicles.
- Fire risks during dry periods, as evidenced by the fire in Roe Green Park on 25th August.
- Concerns raised by residents regarding safety and accessibility, particularly in overgrown areas such as Eton Grove Park, Queensbury Station Parade, Kingsbury and other roundabouts in Brent.

##### **This Council recognises**

That similar challenges have been addressed successfully elsewhere:

- Newham Council's fly-tipping campaign used pavement stencils, "crime scene" tape, and community-led clean-up events to reduce dumping by over 60%.
- Camden Council's visibility motion mandated regular trimming near junctions and crossings, supported by resident-led audits to identify problem areas.

- Brent's own corridor strategy has previously trialled rotational sowing and visible placement of wildflower zones to balance biodiversity and public engagement.

**This Council, therefore, resolves to request that the Cabinet Member for Public Realm and Enforcement:**

- (1) Implement a zoned maintenance strategy, ensuring regular trimming near pedestrian routes, junctions, and residential grass verges while preserving biodiversity in core areas — such as the open spaces on Fryent Way away from built-up zones.
- (2) Introduce clear signage and QR-coded educational materials to inform residents about the purpose of bee corridors and discourage illegal dumping which residents across Brent are witnessing.
- (3) Publish a transparent annual maintenance schedule and designate points of contact for reporting fly-tipping and safety concerns arising from these bee corridors.
- (4) Engage with local communities to co-develop monitoring and feedback mechanisms, ensuring resident voices shape future bee corridor management.
- (5) Explore creative deterrents such as pavement stencils, visual markers, and community-led stewardship initiatives to discourage fly-tipping and promote shared responsibility.

Cllr Jayanti Patel  
Conservative Councillor – Queensbury Ward

**Full Council – 15 September 2025**

**Amendment submitted by the Labour Group to the Conservative Group Motion**

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

**Addressing Safety and Fly-Tipping Risks in Bee Corridor Management in Brent**

**This Council notes**

- That ~~the Conservative Group~~ all political groups have supported and encouraged the environmental value of Brent's bee corridors and wildflower initiatives in promoting biodiversity and supporting pollinator populations.
- The Council's commitment to doing everything in its power to offset the impacts of climate change; and to protect biodiversity across the borough.

**This Council further notes, however**

That the recent ~~unmanaged~~ long grass and overgrown vegetation along designated bee corridors in our parks and open spaces along with uncut grass verges have in some cases led to increased instances of:

- Fly-tipping of cans, bottles, and concealed waste such as dog fouling, which poses hygiene risks where children play and track contamination into homes.
- Residents reporting reduced visibility near footpaths, crossings, and residential boundaries — notably along Fryent Way, creating hazards for pedestrians and vehicles.
- Fire risks during dry periods, as evidenced by the fire in Roe Green Park on 25th August.
- Concerns raised by residents regarding safety and accessibility, particularly in overgrown areas such as Eton Grove Park, Queensbury Station Parade, Kingsbury and other roundabouts in Brent.

**This Council recognises**

That similar challenges have been addressed successfully elsewhere:

- Newham Council’s fly-tipping campaign used pavement stencils, “crime scene” tape, and community-led clean-up events to reduce dumping by over 60%.
- Camden Council’s visibility motion mandated regular trimming near junctions and crossings, supported by resident-led audits to identify problem areas.
- Brent’s own corridor strategy has previously trialled rotational sowing and visible placement of wildflower zones to balance biodiversity and public engagement.

And that Brent Council has introduced a number of successful initiatives in recent years to tackle these issues, such as the popular Community Skip scheme, and Green Corridors and Neighbourhoods in Church End, Roundwood, and Kingsbury.

**This Council, therefore, resolves to request that the Cabinet Member for Public Realm and Enforcement produces a report to explore:**

- (1) Implementing a zoned maintenance strategy, ensuring continued regular trimming near pedestrian routes, junctions, and residential grass verges while preserving biodiversity in core areas — such as the open spaces on Fryent Way away from built-up zones.
- (2) ~~Introduce~~ Increasing the amount of clear signage and QR-coded educational materials, which are already in place by all of Brent’s bee corridors, to inform residents about the purpose of bee corridors and discourage illegal dumping which residents across Brent are witnessing.
- (3) Republishing a transparent annual maintenance schedule and designate points of contact for reporting fly-tipping and safety concerns arising from these bee corridors; which was made available to residents when the bee corridors were launched and sets out the cycle of maintenance and how to raise concerns with fly-tipping or safety.
- (4) Engage The ways in which the Council already engages with local communities, “Friends of” groups, and residents to co-develop monitoring and feedback mechanisms, ensuring resident voices shape future bee corridor management.
- (5) Exploring creative deterrents such as pavement stencils, visual markers, and community-led stewardship initiatives to discourage fly-tipping and promote shared responsibility through our Don’t Mess with Brent campaign.

Cllr Sandra Kabir  
Queensbury Ward

**Full Council – 15 September 2025**

**Liberal Democrats Group Motion**

**Standing United against Racism and Xenophobia in Brent**

In recent years, particularly after the Brexit referendum, there has been a disturbing rise in racist and xenophobic rhetoric in public discourse, much of it amplified by political parties and figures on the far right and reactionary elements who seek to divide our communities. These groups have used inflammatory language, scapegoating migrants and minority communities, in a calculated attempt to stoke fear and resentment for political gain.

Brent is one of the most diverse boroughs in the UK. Over many decades, people from across the globe – from South Asia, Africa, the Caribbean, Eastern Europe, the Middle East and beyond – have made their home here, contributing immensely to our local economy, public services, cultural life, and social fabric. Whether as NHS workers, teachers, carers, builders, artists, entrepreneurs, or community leaders, migrants have played a vital role in shaping modern Brent into the vibrant, resilient, and forward-looking borough it is today.

**This Council believes:**

- Racism, xenophobia, and all forms of bigotry must be challenged wherever and whenever they arise, including when they come from mainstream or elected political figures.
- The demonisation of immigrants and refugees not only undermines social cohesion but also endangers the safety and well-being of residents across Brent.
- Brent's diversity is not a challenge to be managed, but a strength to be celebrated.

Brent has always been stronger because of its diversity – not in spite of it. At a time when fear and hatred are being weaponised in national discourse, we in Brent choose a different path: one of solidarity, mutual

**As a result, this Council resolves to:**

- (1) **Proudly reaffirm Brent's commitment to being an inclusive, anti-racist borough**, where all residents – regardless of background, nationality, or immigration status – are welcomed, valued, and protected.

- (2) **Publicly condemn the racist and xenophobic rhetoric** being spread by Reform UK and other groups on the far/right and make clear that such divisive narratives have no place in our borough or our politics.
- (3) **Celebrate the contributions of immigrants to Brent**, through public awareness campaigns, community events, and educational initiatives that promote understanding, solidarity, and historical awareness.
- (4) **Encourage all councillors and community leaders** to speak out against hate speech and misinformation targeting migrants and to work proactively to build unity across all of Brent's communities.
- (5) **Continue to support migrant and refugee communities** through council services, advocacy, and partnerships with local organisations working on inclusion, integration, and support.

Cllr Paul Lorber  
Sudbury Ward



**Full Council – 15 September 2025**

**Amendment submitted by the Labour Group to the Liberal Democrats Group Motion**

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

**Standing United against Racism and Xenophobia in Brent**

In recent years, particularly after the Brexit referendum, there has been a disturbing rise in racist and xenophobic rhetoric in public discourse, much of it amplified by political parties and figures on the far right and reactionary elements who seek to divide our communities. These groups have used inflammatory language, scapegoating migrants and minority communities, in a calculated attempt to stoke fear and resentment for political gain.

Brent is one of the most diverse boroughs in the UK. Over many decades, people from across the globe – from South Asia, Africa, the Caribbean, Eastern Europe, the Middle East and beyond – have made their home here, contributing immensely to our local economy, public services, cultural life, and social fabric. Whether as NHS workers, teachers, carers, builders, artists, entrepreneurs, or community leaders, migrants have played a vital role in shaping modern Brent into the vibrant, resilient, and forward-looking borough it is today.

**This Council believes:**

- Racism, xenophobia, and all forms of bigotry must be challenged wherever and whenever they arise, including when they come from mainstream or elected political figures.
- The demonisation of immigrants and refugees not only undermines social cohesion but also endangers the safety and well-being of residents across Brent.
- Brent's diversity is not a challenge to be managed, but a strength to be celebrated.

Brent has always been stronger because of its diversity – not in spite of it. At a time when fear and hatred are being weaponised in national discourse, we in Brent choose a different path: one of solidarity, mutual respect.

**As a result, this Council resolves to:**

- (1) **Proudly reaffirm Brent's commitment to being an inclusive, anti-racist borough through our affirmed status as a Borough of Sanctuary and a proud signatory of the Unison Anti-Racism Charter**, where all residents – regardless of background, nationality, or immigration status – are welcomed, valued, and protected.
- (2) **Publicly condemn the racist and xenophobic rhetoric** being spread by Reform UK and other groups on the far/right and make clear that such divisive narratives have no place in our borough or our politics.
- (3) **Celebrate the contributions of immigrants to Brent**, through public awareness campaigns, community events, and educational initiatives that promote understanding, solidarity, and historical awareness as part of the Council's refreshed approach to EDI, and as historically celebrated during Brent's Borough of Culture status in 2020.
- (4) **Encourage all councillors and community leaders** to speak out against hate speech and misinformation targeting migrants and to work proactively to build unity across all of Brent's communities.
- (5) **Continue to support migrant and refugee communities** through council services, advocacy, and partnerships with local organisations working on inclusion, integration, and support; as well as working to close the health inequality gaps exposed in the 2020 Brent Poverty Commission through initiatives such as Brent Health Matters.

Cllr Teo Benea  
Sudbury Ward

**Full Council – 15 September 2025**

**1<sup>st</sup> Labour Group Motion**

**Backing healthy, sustainable high streets in Brent**

**This council notes:**

- That our high streets and local town centres are the heart of our communities, providing essential services, employment, and social spaces for Brent residents.
- That a diverse and vibrant mix of businesses, from independent shops to established retailers, is crucial for the economic and social well-being of the borough.
- That the proliferation of fast-food outlets and the rise of cash-intensive businesses, alongside high concentrations of Adult Gaming Centres, can impact the character of our high streets, create unfair competition for legitimate traders, and pose risks to public health, safety, and consumer welfare.
- That Brent Council has a responsibility to protect its residents and support the growth of a sustainable and prosperous local economy.
- That Brent Council is already taking a leading role in this fight, having partnered with over 40 local and combined authorities to lobby central government for urgent gambling reform, and working with the Social Market Foundation to research the true impact of these businesses on our communities.

**This council believes:**

- That a proactive approach is needed to foster a supportive environment for legitimate businesses to flourish.
- That clamping down on illegal and illicit trading activities is essential to creating a level playing field for all businesses and to safeguard our communities.
- That strong collaboration between the Council, local businesses, residents, and the police is key to tackling these issues effectively.

**This council resolves:**

- (1) To develop and implement a Brent High Streets Charter in consultation with local business groups and residents, outlining a shared vision for safe, clean, and vibrant high streets and our ambition to declutter inaccessible spaces.
- (2) To establish a dedicated multi-agency task force, including officers from Trading Standards, Licensing, the police and other law enforcement agencies, to actively identify and take action against businesses that operate illegally, sell counterfeit goods, or engage in other illicit activities.
- (3) To review and, if necessary, amend Brent's Local Plan to ensure a more balanced and diverse mix of businesses on our high streets, with a particular focus on addressing the over-concentration of certain types of businesses, such as takeaways and adult gaming centres.
- (4) To explore local measures to deal with high-risk cash businesses, to address any risk of financial crime and/or community harm.
- (5) To explore new and innovative ways to support and promote our borough's legitimate businesses, including targeted business grants, skills training, and marketing campaigns.
- (6) To launch a public awareness campaign to inform residents about the dangers of using illicit services and purchasing illegal products such as disposable vapes and snus, and to encourage them to report suspicious business activities.
- (7) To contribute to the Mayor of London's Plan for London consultation, feeding Brent's voice into the future of the capital's high streets.

Councillor Amar Agha  
Welsh Harp Ward

**Full Council – 15 September 2025**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Labour Group Motion**

**Breathing new life into Brent’s transport infrastructure projects**

This Council notes:

- That a robust and integrated transport network is fundamental to the economic prosperity, environmental sustainability, and social well-being of Brent's residents.
- The significant challenges posed by climate change and the urgent need to transition to more sustainable modes of transport, reducing reliance on private cars.
- The Government’s £2.2bn multi-year capital funding settlement to Transport for London earlier this year, which made note of support for high priority new rolling stock and signalling procurements on the Bakerloo Line.
- That both the proposed Bakerloo Line Extension and the West London Orbital projects have been identified as key strategic transport schemes that would deliver transformative benefits for Brent and the wider region.
- The compelling economic case for both projects, delivering on tens of thousands of new homes and jobs, and unlocking growth in key areas across the borough and beyond, including creative and cultural hubs in Park Royal and Soho.
- That reports estimate upgrading the Bakerloo line will create capacity for an additional 150,000 daily journeys, connecting some of London’s least served areas to the TfL network.
- That the Council has already demonstrated its commitment to the West London Orbital, having approved a contribution of £465,516 plus a £150,000 contingency from its Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy to fund the next stage of its development, in collaboration with the West London Alliance.
- That the upcoming Autumn Budget presents a crucial opportunity for the Government to demonstrate its commitment to investing in strategic transport infrastructure.

This Council believes:

- The Bakerloo Line is an iconic part of London's underground, its history, and culture, connecting landmarks from Wembley to the West End and beyond.
- The West London Orbital is a crucial, shovel-ready rail link that would connect strategic growth areas in West and North West London, providing a sustainable transport corridor, reducing congestion on local roads, and offering our residents new, direct journey opportunities.
- The combined delivery of both projects would create a resilient and interconnected transport network that serves the needs of our current residents and supports the sustainable growth of our borough for decades to come.
- The delivery of these projects aligns with the Labour Government's policy of creating a unified, simplified, and publicly accountable rail network, as outlined in its commitment to establish Great British Railways.

**This Council resolves:**

- (1) To formally and unequivocally support the delivery of both the Bakerloo Line Upgrade and Extension and the West London Orbital projects.
- (2) To ask the Leader of the Council to write to the Mayor of London, the Secretary of State for Transport and the Chancellor to express Brent's strong support, and to urge the Government to use the upcoming Autumn Budget to deliver on its rail commitments and prioritise funding for these critical projects.
- (3) To commit to working collaboratively with Transport for London and other partners to ensure that Brent's interests are at the forefront of the planning and implementation of these schemes, including additional lobbying on providing step-free access at transport stations across the borough.

Councillor Lesley Smith  
Queens Park Ward

**Full Council – 15 September 2025**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Labour Group Motion**

**Amendment submitted by the Liberal Democrats to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Labour Group Motion**

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

**Breathing new life into Brent's transport infrastructure projects**

This Council notes:

- That a robust ~~and integrated~~ transport network is fundamental to the economic prosperity, environmental sustainability, and social well-being of Brent's residents.
- The significant challenges posed by climate change and the urgent need to transition to more sustainable modes of transport, reducing reliance on private cars.
- The Government's £2.2bn multi-year capital funding settlement to Transport for London TfL earlier this year, which made note of support for high priority new rolling stock and signalling procurements on the Bakerloo Line.
- That both the ~~proposed~~ Bakerloo Line Extension and the ~~West London Orbital~~ (WLO) projects have been identified as key ~~strategic~~ transport schemes that would deliver transformative benefits for Brent ~~and the wider region~~.
- The compelling economic case for both projects, delivering ~~on~~ tens of thousands of new homes and jobs, and unlocking growth in ~~key areas~~ across the borough. ~~and beyond, including creative and cultural hubs in Park Royal and Soho.~~
- That reports estimate upgrading the Bakerloo line will ~~create capacity for an additional~~ increase capacity by 150,000 daily journeys, connecting some of London's least served areas to the TfL network.
- That the Council has ~~already~~ demonstrated its commitment to the ~~West London Orbital~~, WLO ~~having approved~~ with a contribution of £465,516 plus a £150,000

contingency from its Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy to fund the next stage of its development, in collaboration with the West London Alliance.

- That the ~~upcoming~~ Autumn Budget presents a ~~crucial~~ opportunity for the Government to demonstrate its commitment to investing in strategic transport infrastructure.
- The poor reliability of tube services and the lack of night tubes on the Uxbridge branch of the Picadilly line.
- The thousands of (much needed) flats being built on that branch, increasing demand on existing services.

This Council believes:

- The Bakerloo ~~& Picadilly lines are~~ Line is critical transport links ~~an iconic part of London's underground, its history, and culture, connecting landmarks from Wembley to the West End and beyond.~~
- The ~~West London Orbital~~ WLO is a crucial, ~~shovel-ready~~ rail link that would connect strategic growth areas in West and North West NW London, providing a sustainable transport corridor, reducing congestion on local roads, and offering our residents new, direct journey opportunities.
- The combined delivery of both projects, and improvements to tube services would create a resilient and interconnected transport network that serves the needs of our current residents and supports the sustainable growth of our borough ~~for decades to come.~~
- The delivery of these projects aligns with the Labour Government's policy of creating a unified, simplified, and publicly accountable rail network, as outlined in its commitment to establish Great British Railways.

**This Council resolves:**


- (1) To ~~formally and~~ unequivocally support the delivery of both the Bakerloo Line Upgrade and Extension and the ~~West London Orbital~~ WLO projects.
- (2) To ask the Leader of the Council to write to the Mayor of London, the Secretary of State for Transport and the Chancellor to express Brent's strong support, and to urge the Government to use the ~~upcoming~~ Autumn Budget to deliver on its rail commitments, and prioritise ing funding for these ~~critical~~ projects.
- (3) To ~~commit to working collaboratively with Transport for London~~ TfL and other partners to ensure that Brent's interests are at the forefront of the planning and implementation of these schemes, including ~~additional lobbying on providing~~ for step-free access at transport stations across the borough.
- (4) To also ask the Leader of the Council to write to the Mayor requesting:



- Services on the Uxbridge branch line be on par with the Heathrow Branch
- The extension of the night tubes to the Uxbridge branch.

Councillor Charlie Clinton  
Alperton Ward

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|---|--|
| <br><b>Brent</b> | <b>Full Council</b><br>15 September 2025     |
|   | <b>Report from the Leader of the Council</b> |
| <b>Update report from the Leader and Cabinet</b>  |  |

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Wards Affected:</b>  | All  |
| <b>Key or Non-Key Decision:</b>   | Council  |
| <b>Open or Part/Fully Exempt:</b><br><small>(If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)</small> | Open   |
| <b>No. of Appendices:</b>   | One<br>Appendix 1: Cabinet Member Update reports |
| <b>Background Papers:</b>   | N/A  |
| <b>Contact Officer(s):</b><br><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:

- **Visitor Levy and Voluntary Ticket Contributions:** I wrote to the Secretary of State with fellow London borough leaders to press for new fiscal powers, specifically the ability to introduce a visitor levy and a voluntary ticket contribution. A levy on hotel and Airbnb stays would help ensure residents and local services benefit fairly from London's global tourism economy, while a small contribution on large event tickets could restore support for grassroots culture after years of cuts. We argued that these measures are about fairness, sustainability, and reinvestment – ensuring councils can protect services, nurture local talent, and maintain the vibrancy that draws millions of visitors to London each year. I will keep council updated on progress with the campaign and building a broad set of support for it, in the coming months.
- **Transport for London Commissioner meeting:** I used a visit from London's Walking and Cycling Commissioner, Will Norman, to spotlight local walking and cycling improvements, like School Streets and new cycle routes, and to press the case for further investment in our transport network. We acknowledged that residents rely on public transport, and with thousands more homes planned, demand will only rise. I highlighted that Brent is one of the capital's biggest housebuilders, and that schemes like the West London Orbital and the Bakerloo line upgrade and extension would not only support that growth but also boost economic opportunities for our residents. I noted our commitment of over £465,000 to keep the West London Orbital moving forward with this shovel-ready scheme, using an existing freight line. It is backed by 69 per cent of residents, could deliver 15,800 new homes and 23,000 jobs. We have also joined 32 London councils calling for the Bakerloo extension to be approved and fast-tracked, it's estimated to generate £1.5 billion for the national economy and support 150,000 new jobs.
- **Huge cash injection into Brent:** I am proud that Cabinet has agreed a transformational £14.5 million investment to revitalise Brent's roads, parks, and public safety infrastructure. Funded through our Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy, this programme will deliver real improvements residents can see and feel every day, smoother roads, safer pavements, vibrant parks, and smarter CCTV. Building on the £15 million we've already invested since 2022, we're putting another £10.7 million into highway maintenance, £730,000 into our award-winning parks, and £3.1 million into expanding and modernising our CCTV network. This is about restoring pride in Brent's streets and creating a cleaner, safer, greener borough where residents feel connected and proud of where they live. We'll keep residents and members updated as projects get underway.
- **Cabinet Meeting 8<sup>th</sup> September:** I would like to take the opportunity to remind all Members of the Brent Cabinet meeting on Monday 8 September at 10am in the Conference Hall at Brent Civic Centre, where we'll be taking more decisions that will shape Brent's future. On the agenda is our new Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Strategy, including proposals for Lynton Close that demonstrate our

commitment to fairness and safe living conditions for every community. We'll be considering the relocation of Islamia Primary School to Brentfield Road, securing long-term stability for a much-loved local institution, and agreeing new NCIL funding to invest directly in grassroots projects across our neighbourhoods. Cabinet will also look at procurement of leisure facilities, while also pressing forward with the expansion of our Council Homes Acquisition Programme backed by GLA funding, another step in tackling London's housing crisis. Alongside this, we will kickstart a review of the Local Plan to ensure Brent continues to harness the growth in our borough. Finally, we'll take stock of how we respond to residents' concerns through the Complaints Annual Report and scrutinise our strong financial management in the Treasury Outturn. These are big decisions about homes, schools, fairness and local investment, and I encourage you to come along and see Brent's leadership in action.

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

Contact: [Cllr.Muhammed.Butt@brent.gov.uk](mailto:Cllr.Muhammed.Butt@brent.gov.uk)

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

### Top news since my last report:

- **Fair Funding Review:** As part of its recognition of the state of local government finances, and its commitment to restabilising them, the Government launched a Fair Funding Review earlier this year which Brent's finance officers have responded to. We welcome many of the proposals in the consultation, which will go a real way to reforming the sector, and we will ensure that the challenges Brent faces are heard loud and clear.
- **Budget 2026/27:** Our Finance team are beginning to work through the details as we look to the next financial year, ensuring that Brent's careful financial stewardship and relative stability are not endangered as we continue to face a wave of challenges. From increased reliance on Adult Social Care to an unrelenting housing waiting list of over 30,000 people, the work begins once more to set out the blueprint for the Council's finances.
- **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.

If you have any other questions, please feel free to contact me at the email address below:

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

### **Top news since my last report:**

- **Well and Warm Energy Advice Service:** Over 1,000 consultations have been undertaken with vulnerable residents who may struggle to heat their homes ahead of the winter months, successfully surpassing our target ahead of time.
- **Launch of Brent Energy Efficiency Grant for Buildings:** This August, we marked the launch of the Energy Efficiency Grant for Buildings. This builds on the previous Brent for Business Energy Efficiency Scheme which ran in 2022-23 and is designed to help local organisations and businesses make sustainable improvements to their premises. Grants of up to £9,000 are available to implement recommendations from energy efficiency audits, and we have already received strong interest from over 20 organisations.
- **Brent Schools Climate Action Summit:** We were proud to have held the first ever Brent Schools Climate Action Summit, as part of London Climate Action Week, bringing together 200 students and teachers for an engaging day about how we can collectively tackle climate change in Brent. Grants will now be distributed to schools in September, for projects such as gardening clubs and rewilding zones.
- **SCIL investment into Church End and Roundwood:** Brent has committed significant SCIL funding to enhance Church End and Roundwood's appearance, and residents' quality of life. 'Green Corridors' will focus on better walking and cycling access, cleaner air, increased safety, and overall community wellbeing.
- **NCIL Investment at September Cabinet:** This year's NCIL programme represents one of the most ambitious investments we have made directly in our neighbourhoods, with over £8 million allocated to projects that respond to residents' priorities and show Brent is serious about fairness, growth and pride in place. We are funding 39 public realm projects, from pothole repairs, new cycle hangars, four new School Streets, expanded CCTV, Neighbourhood Patrol Officers and tougher waste enforcement through Don't Mess with Brent. We are backing our young people and cultural life through Brent Beats and Roots, supporting Cricklewood Irish heritage, the Kilburn Music Mile, and Buskers Corners, while also investing in classrooms for Brent Start and cost of living support including school uniforms and debt advice. We are making Brent greener with 1,500 new trees, green corridors in Church End and Kingsbury, a Habitat Bank to rewild the borough, new rain gardens, park upgrades and community planting schemes. Other highlights include new digital noticeboards and maps at park entrances, investment in town centre spring cleaning, crime reduction partnerships in Kilburn, outdoor gyms, repair cafes, and murals celebrating our diverse identity. These are investments that touch every ward, tackle crime, climate and cost of living together, and show how this council is delivering the basics while investing in our future.



- **Social Progress Index:** We were excited to publish the first Brent Social Progress Index – a multi-layered tool that will help measure and track key indicators on what contributes towards residents' quality of life. Data is available at ward level and can be found on the Brent website.

If you have any other questions, please feel free to contact me at the email address below:

Contact: [Cllr.Jake.Rubin@brent.gov.uk](mailto:Cllr.Jake.Rubin@brent.gov.uk)

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

### Top news since my last report:

- **The success of Brent's libraries:** Brent's libraries saw over 110,000 visits in July, with even more expected for August. This number is a testament to the hard work of our Libraries and Heritage teams, opening up our community spaces to residents of all ages. Our Summer Fun Reading Festival, which promotes the free and diverse programme of events and reading for fun throughout the school holidays, reached over 11,000 Brent pupils at 21 schools; and a number of ESOL, exercise classes, and art classes have taken place at libraries across the borough.
- **New Horizons Centre:** The Community Wellbeing Service at the New Horizons Centre continues to grow as a collaborative, multi-agency hub, supporting some of Brent's most vulnerable residents. As well as exploring their housing options, families are able to speak to council officers from Adult Social Care, making sure we can identify a whole host of potential issues under one roof.
- **A new story for Kilburn Library:** Kilburn Library has now temporarily closed 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.

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 with further details and updates to follow.

If you have any other questions, please feel free to contact me at the email address below:

Contact: [Cllr.Promise.Knight@brent.gov.uk](mailto:Cllr.Promise.Knight@brent.gov.uk)

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

### Top news since my last report:

- **GCSE results:** I am so proud to celebrate our borough's young people on GCSE Results Day, which has once again shown Brent's strength and resilience. All 15 of our secondary schools with Year 11 students have now reported their provisional results, and Brent continues to outperform the national picture. This year our students achieved strong pass grades at 9 to 5 that are 10.7 percentage points above the national average, and standard pass grades at 9 to 4 that are 8.4 percentage points higher. These results are a credit not only to the hard work and determination of our young people, but also to the teachers, support staff, parents and carers who have supported them throughout their journey. This is not just a moment of celebration, it is proof that when communities rally, schools deliver, and ambition meets opportunity, Brent's next generation can and will shine.
- **A-Level and BTEC results:** I am delighted to celebrate the success of Brent's young people on A Level and BTEC Results Day, which has once again shown the strength of our schools and the determination of our students. Across all 15 of our schools offering A Levels, the overall pass rate stands at 98.4 per cent, higher than the national average of 97.4 per cent. An impressive 32.2 per cent of results were at the very top A\* or A grades, compared with 28.2 per cent nationally, and 83.4 per cent of results were A\* to C, 5.7 percentage points above the national average. Our vocational learners also excelled, with a 99.4 per cent overall pass rate and nearly three quarters of grades awarded at Distinction or Distinction\*. These achievements are a tribute to the talent and resilience of Brent's next generation, and to the teachers, support staff, parents and carers who have helped them thrive. This is not just a day of celebration, it is proof that Brent's young people are ready to lead the way into the future.
- **Islamia Primary School:** I am proud that we have secured the future of Islamia Primary School, Brent's only Muslim state funded primary school, by agreeing plans to relocate it to the Gwenneth Rickus site on Brentfield Road by September 2027. Without this move, the school faced closure following an eviction notice from its current site on Salusbury Road. Parents, staff and residents told us clearly that the existing split site was overcrowded and unsuitable, and the new site will provide modern facilities, more outdoor space and better provision for children with special educational needs. By making use of a site that would otherwise have stood empty due to falling rolls, we are both protecting diversity of choice in our family of schools and ensuring children receive the safe, high-quality environment they deserve.

If you have any other questions, please feel free to contact me at the email address below:

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

### **Top news since my last report:**

- **Oral health in Brent libraries:** I am determined to tackle Brent's poor oral health outcomes for children, which are sadly among the worst in the country. That is why we have launched family oral health events in our libraries this summer, bringing free dental check-ups, nutrition advice and oral hygiene support straight to families who might not otherwise access a dentist. At our first event in Willesden, 47 children were seen, and many families were helped to register with an NHS dentist. This is about fairness, breaking down barriers to healthcare and making sure every child in Brent has the best start in life.
- **Drug and alcohol services and B3 turning 17:** I am proud that our drug and alcohol services in Brent have not only met but exceeded national targets, with 1,426 residents engaged in structured treatment and hundreds of new treatments starts in the last year. Our ambition now is to get even more people struggling with opiates and crack cocaine into recovery. Alongside this, I want to pay tribute to B3, our brilliant service user council, which has just celebrated its 17th birthday and is attended by 30 to 40 residents every week. This is community power in action, residents supporting each other to rebuild their lives, and it deserves national recognition.
- **Launch of the EVE project:** We have just launched the EVE Project in Harlesden and Craven Park, a bold new initiative to support women engaged in sex work with practical help, food, clothes and hygiene products, as well as interventions to support them into treatment or out of sex work altogether. This is about dignity, compassion and tackling hidden inequalities head on. By providing outreach, building trust and linking women into vital services, we are showing that Brent will not turn its back on those most at risk.
- **Tri Borough Leisure Contract Procurement:** I am proud that we are taking the bold step of withdrawing from the Tri Borough leisure procurement with Ealing and Harrow so that Brent can begin its own standalone procurement for Vale Farm Sports Centre. This decision means we keep local control over pricing, programming and investment while securing continuity of service for residents. It also puts us firmly on the path to an Active Wellbeing model, which is about much more than gyms and pools, it is about prevention, tackling health inequalities and embedding community wellbeing in everything we do. From 2031, when Willesden and the new Bridge Park come into scope, we will be able to bring all our major facilities together under one borough wide model that delivers fairness, inclusion and sustainability. Already we are making progress, including securing £180,000 from Sport England to install solar panels at Vale Farm, cutting costs and emissions. This is Brent showing leadership, taking back control, and preparing to lead nationally on the shift from traditional leisure to Active Wellbeing.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at the email address below:

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## **Cabinet Member for Public Realm and Enforcement – Councillor Krupa Sheth**

### **Top news since my last report:**

- **Healthy Streets and EV Chargers:** 140 EV chargers have already been installed across the borough, with the installation of 20 Uber EV chargers also underway. This is in addition to 17 new bike hangars being installed, taking the total up to 170 across the borough. We are also continuing to work collaboratively with Lime to ensure residents are at the heat of the e-bike revolution, with plans for around 200 bays underway after consultation at the Lime Residents Forum.
- **Recycling and Cleansing:** Food waste collection has expanded across Brent estates and pilots for flats above shops are progressing with support from ReLondon. Time-banding changes in Harlesden and nighttime Veolia collection have seen visual improvement in the look and feel of public realm across the borough, with good feedback also received from residents.
- **Regulatory services:** Brent's Trading Standards team have been working with the Metropolitan Police to raise awareness of scams among frontline staff, and have recently signed up to the scam's hub, which works in partnership with the Royal Mail. This has already enabled two successful postal scams interceptions, returning hundreds of pounds to vulnerable residents.

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

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## Cabinet Member for Housing – Councillor Fleur Donnelly-Jackson

### Top news since my last report:

- **New Homes:** Delivery is on track for 900 new social homes this year. Nearly all 115 homes at Clearwater House are now let, Queensbrook Building is more than half occupied, and the Arlington Building handover is expected soon.
- **Brent pledges rapid improvement following housing regulator's report:** Work is continuing to ensure there are rapid and sustained improvements in the way Brent manages housing services, following a judgement published by the Regulator of Social Housing.

The judgement, published on 28 May 2025, found that the council had not met all 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 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 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.

- **Private Renters Fair:** Preparations are underway for October's Renters' Fair, which will be a one-stop shop for everything our private renting community needs, combining exhibits, stalls and presentations. The fair will provide essential support and guidance on renter rights, tenancy agreements, and how to navigate challenging situations with landlords.
- **Council Homes Acquisition Programme (CHAP) Delivery:** I am proud that we are pressing ahead with Brent's Council Homes Acquisition Programme, which will see us buy 15 good quality homes to provide safe and stable temporary accommodation for families who would otherwise be placed in costly hotels. With £1.8 million of support from the GLA and a total capital budget of £11.7 million, this investment is part of our pledge to deliver 5,000 affordable homes in Brent by 2028, including 1,700 directly from the Council. At a time when one in 50 Londoners is homeless and over 83,000 children are growing up in temporary accommodation, this is a clear sign that this council is determined to act. These

homes will not only reduce costs to the Council, saving around £15,000 per property per year, they will also give families dignity, security and a platform to thrive. This is about fairness, tackling the housing crisis head on and making sure no family in Brent is left behind.

If you have any other questions, please feel free to contact me at the email address below:

Contact: [Cllr.Fleur.Donnelly-Jackson@brent.gov.uk](mailto:Cllr.Fleur.Donnelly-Jackson@brent.gov.uk)



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

### **Top news since my last report:**

- **Wembley Jobs Fair:** The highly anticipated Wembley Jobs Fair 2025 returned to Wembley Stadium on Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> July 2025. More than 150 companies showcased their current vacancies, including the Brent-based IKEA and global brands such as M&S, KPMG and Coca-Cola. Jobseekers were 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 were also on hand to provide one-to-one personalised career advice, with 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.
- **New knife amnesty bin installed in Willesden:** An amnesty bin designed for the safe disposal of ninja swords has been installed in Willesden. The launch of the new bin in Willesden Community Gardens in Denzil Road near The College of Northwest London follows the recent ban on ninja swords in the UK. Funded by the Home Office, this dedicated bin adds to the seven existing knife amnesty bins across the borough. The ninja sword amnesty bin features a specialised chute at the top built to accommodate larger weapons, including ninja swords and machetes. A separate slot is also available for disposing of standard knives. This new bin provides residents with a safe and discreet way to surrender dangerous and now-illegal weapons. If you or someone you know is in possession of a ninja sword, please take this opportunity to dispose of it responsibly. Every weapon taken off the streets helps make our community safer.

If you have any other questions, please feel free to contact me at the email address below:

Contact: [Cllr.Harbi.Farah@brent.gov.uk](mailto:Cllr.Harbi.Farah@brent.gov.uk)

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

### **Top news since my last report:**

- **Regeneration:** Major progress has been made on the Wembley Housing Zone, with Ujima House and Cecil Avenue works advancing. Cecil Avenue is due to 'top out' in September. The schemes have generated £45,000 in funding for Community projects, supported by Wates – with more rounds due to follow.
- **Improved infrastructure:** Playground works at One Tree Hill and Mount Pleasant were completed in August, with further tree planting planned for the autumn.
- **Town Centres and Creative Enterprise Zones:** Across Kilburn, Harlesden, Willesden Green, Church End, Wembley, Neasden and Ealing Road, a wide program of investment and engagement is underway. Highlights include Kilburn Music Mile Festival in September, Harlesden's Reggae Walk of Music, Willesden Green Festive Lights, Wembley's thriving business engagement, and Neasden's Civic Partnership workshops. Artist Studio Company support programmes also launch in September, with exciting affordable workspaces fitted out in Wembley Park and Watkin Road to enhance Brent's creative offer.
- **5 million for Major Alperton Station Accessibility Overhaul:** Commuters using Alperton 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 be completed by Summer 2027. 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.
- **Brent Development Plan Documents Review:** I am clear that reviewing Brent's Local Plan is essential to keeping us in control of our future. Without an up-to-date plan, power shifts away from local decision makers, and residents lose the protections they deserve. That is not acceptable, which is why we are acting now, backed by an £880,000 budget to take this review forward. The last few years have been shaped by building safety rules, viability pressures and a very challenging housing market, but Brent is not standing still. Through this review we will reset our framework so that we can continue to deliver affordable homes, family homes and the infrastructure that our communities need, from schools and GP surgeries to green spaces and transport connections. It is also a chance to strengthen policy where residents have real concerns, like the over concentration of student accommodation or the harm caused by adult gaming centers.

We are proud to have delivered more homes than almost any other London borough in recent years, and we are determined to go further, supporting the government's target of 1.5 million new homes nationally. This is not about tower blocks in quiet streets, it is about shaping growth in the right places, around transport hubs and growth areas, where new jobs, schools, health centers and parks come with it. When the consultation launches, I will strongly encourage residents, businesses and community groups to take part and help shape a Local Plan that delivers growth fairly and sustainably for everyone in Brent.

If you have any other questions, please feel free to contact me at the email address below:

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**Questions from the Opposition and Other Non-Cabinet Members****Full Council – 15 September 2025****1. Question from Councillor Kennelly to Councillor Grahl (Cabinet Member for Children, Young People & Schools)**

In light of our neighbours in Harrow Council being issued an improvement notice following an inadequate rating by Ofsted for their Children's Services Department, and with increasing pressures on councils more broadly, can the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People & Schools set out the steps Brent is taking to ensure we're doing everything in our power to protect our most vulnerable children?"

**Response:**

Brent was last inspected under Ofsted's 'Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS)' framework in February 2023 where it received an overall 'Good' rating.

Inspectors noted that *"Children in the London Borough of Brent benefit from good-quality help, support and care from children's services. They are helped by practitioners who are passionate and committed to improving children's lives and futures"*.

Annual engagement meetings are also held with Ofsted which includes the production of a yearly self-assessment document for discussion. The Local Authority still considers its early help, safeguarding and services for children looked after and care experienced to be at least 'Good'.

It is anticipated that a 2-day focused visit under the ILACS framework will be conducted this autumn, prior to the next full inspection in 2026. Consistent data reporting alongside a clear quality assurance framework ensures there is management oversight of the quality and consistency of services to vulnerable children. Benchmarking data is also scrutinised to ensure Brent's performance remains consistent with statistical neighbours.

The ring-fenced social care grant, provided to all local authorities by government earlier this year, is being used to support the implementation of the national 'Families First Partnership Programme', including enhancing family support, early intervention and other services to ensure children are brought up by their families and those who know them best. The integrated model of working within Children, Young People and Community Development aims to maximise co-operation and pooling of resources, so that the most efficient use of funding is achieved.

**2. Question from Councillor Choudry to Councillor Krupa Sheth (Cabinet Member for Public Realm & Enforcement) and Councillor Farah (Cabinet Member for Safer Communities, Jobs & Skills)**

Will the Cabinet Member for Public Realm and Enforcement and the Cabinet Member for Safer Communities, Jobs and Skills provide an update to Members on the recent announcements by Cabinet to enhance CCTV across the borough using Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy funding from developers; as well as the criteria that will be used to determine the priority locations for these installations?

**Response:**

I am pleased that we will be using SCIL funding from developers to undertake a two to three-year improvement programme to modernise and strengthen our CCTV network.

Our priorities are clear:

- We will replace outdated analogue and early digital cameras that no longer meet the standards required.
- We will expand coverage in areas where there are clear gaps; and
- We will ensure a fair balance of cameras across the borough, guided by both crime data and local needs.

Precise locations for new or replacement cameras will be decided following engagement with key stakeholders and a full survey and review to identify where investment is most needed.

Key factors will be considered when choosing where to deploy cameras, such as the bespoke outcomes we want to achieve - whether that's deterrence, detection, or recognition; the environmental conditions such as lighting and visibility; the technical requirements for storage and future upgrades; and importantly, the legal and privacy safeguards that must be in place.

This scheme will be managed within a realistic and sustainable budget, covering not just installation but also maintenance and the ability to upgrade in future years.

This programme will deliver a modern, effective, and sustainable CCTV system that supports community safety right across the borough.

**3. Question from Councillor Kabir to Councillor Donnelly-Jackson (Cabinet Member for Housing)**

After years of financial strain, the gap between the amount of money councils are paying to cover housing benefits for Temporary Accommodation and the amount they are reimbursed from the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) has now increased to £266 million.

Given the soaring levels of homelessness in Brent, and the council's duty to house families who present as homeless, can the Cabinet Member for Housing provide an update to Members on the impact of this subsidy gap?

**Response:**

The cost of Temporary Accommodation for homeless families is calculated as the difference between what Brent Council spends on procuring accommodation and the income we receive through housing benefit subsidy and, where applicable, rent contributions from tenants. For Bed and Breakfast accommodation, subsidy income is capped at 90 per cent of the January 2011 Local Housing Allowance rate for one bedroom properties in the relevant Broad Rental Market Area. For short term leased accommodation, the cap is 90 per cent of the January 2011 Local Housing Allowance for the relevant property size and Broad Rental Market Area.

The unprecedented surge in homelessness has dramatically increased reliance on Temporary Accommodation. In 2024/25, we spent £17.8m against a budget of £2.4m, an overspend of £15.4m. For 2025/26, the Housing Needs and Support budget has been increased to £13.1m, but forecast expenditure currently projects an outturn of £18.1m, potentially another £5m overspend.

Brent like much of London, is experiencing record levels of homelessness, driven by rising private rents, a broken private rental sector, and years of underinvestment by the last governments in genuinely affordable housing. We are turning the page on this chapter, but it will take time to put right. While we are implementing a range of interventions to increase supply and reduce costs, the timeframe to realise savings are too slow to match rising demand.

This crisis is not sudden, it is decades in the making. Central to the problem is the long-term dismantling of social housing, particularly through the Right to Buy policy. According to Common Wealth's Wrong to Sell report, they estimate that the council homes sold by English local authorities through RTB since 1980/81 are now worth a total of £430 billion (in 2024 prices). Of this sum it is estimated that £194 billion in public equity was effectively given away for free through the discount. In effect, the policy not only decimated councils' asset base but also shifted housing equity into the private sector, fuelling inflation, shrinking social housing capacity, and paving the way for soaring Housing Benefit bills to plug demand.

We remain on the frontline of bearing the financial brunt of these national policy failures. Brent continues to deliver one of London's most ambitious council

housing programmes, generating new homes and systemic solutions, but reforms are essential.

We welcome the new Labour Government's commitment to tackling homelessness at its root. Legislation such as the Renters Rights Bill, particularly ending Section 21 no fault evictions, will strengthen tenant security and help reduce inflows into homelessness. We have raised the subsidy gap with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, as has London Councils, and we will continue to press for reform of the outdated subsidy framework.

Locally, Brent remains proactive. Our Homelessness Forum, chaired by Crisis, brings together local housing associations, charities and statutory services. This collaborative approach is building prevention pathways and innovative support for people at risk, showing that we are responding with action rather than waiting for others to solve the problem.

The scale of Temporary Accommodation expenditure is having ripple effects across the council's finances. To manage the shortfall, all departments must deliver service specific savings and contribute to cross cutting measures totalling £10m this year.

Brent's subsidy loss for Temporary Accommodation for the last five years is set out below:

| <b>Year</b> | <b>Expenditure (£)</b> | <b>Subsidy (£)</b> | <b>Loss (£)</b> |
|-------------|------------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| 2024/25     | 23,047,652             | 19,235,705         | 3,811,947       |
| 2023/24     | 27,900,054             | 16,909,246         | 10,990,808      |
| 2022/23     | 18,135,981             | 14,402,839         | 3,733,142       |
| 2021/22     | 16,246,129             | 13,390,914         | 2,855,215       |
| 2020/21     | 18,674,044             | 15,372,812         | 3,301,232       |

It should be noted that in 2023/24, post Covid, expenditure and subsidy loss rose sharply due to unprecedented demand for Temporary Accommodation.



**4. Question from Councillor Jayanti Patel to Councillor Krupa Sheth (Cabinet Member for Public Realm & Enforcement):**

Brent Council has announced a transformational £14.5m investment to revitalise roads, parks, and public spaces. While this is welcome, disabled residents and parents with young children continue to face serious safety risks due to damaged pavement slabs obstructing wheelchair and buggy access. Several residents have suffered injuries from trips and falls, which we have flagged to Brent Highways for urgent action.

The SCIL funded Footway Reconstruction Programme for 2025/26 commits £4.8m to improve 7 miles of footway, that is less than 1.5% of the total network.

Between 2020 and 2025, Brent Council paid out £593,505.82 in compensation for pedestrian injuries caused by pavement defects and potholes. 328 claims were made specifically for pavement defects — 88% of all pedestrian accident claims. Brent's injury claim success rate is 14%, notably above the national average of 8%.

Brent's Local Highways Maintenance Transparency Report estimates the borough's total footway network at approximately 525 miles and acknowledges the need for continual investment to prevent deterioration.

Can the Cabinet Member for Public Realm & Enforcement therefore advise what is the Council's long-term strategy to close this funding gap and prioritise repairs in areas with high vulnerability and accessibility needs, including those with high footfall, proximity to schools, care homes, and transport hubs?

**Response:**

The Planned Footway Maintenance spend (£11m) is being funded from the £15m additional investment in maintenance and is a three-year programme running from 2023-26.

All local highway authorities have a backlog of highways maintenance, this having built up over many years when scarce capital resources have been utilised for higher priority projects. Brent suffers the same problems as other authorities and the ongoing imbalance between repair need and resource availability means that repairs have to be prioritised. This process is made as objective as possible to ensure as far as possible that aims and objectives are being met, and to ensure the process is transparent.

The process followed in Brent in prioritising footway planned maintenance schemes is below.

**Prioritisation process:**

Each year, the footway network has been assessed to determine the current condition of pavements. A range of factors is then taken into account to define priorities for maintenance:

- Network Condition - condition-based on outcomes of annual condition surveys carried out to national UKPMS standards;
- Network hierarchy - takes into account traffic usage, and proximity of local schools / colleges;
- Risk - Level of risk in terms of numbers of accident claims, historic reactive maintenance repair records; and
- Councillor nominations for maintenance;

All roads which are either highlighted by their condition score as being in high priority for maintenance, or councillor nominated, are also subjected to a site visit by a highway engineer, as a validation of the condition survey and to allocate a reconstruction priority rating.

### **Prioritisation Factors:**

#### **Treatment benefit factor**

The treatment benefit is based on the condition index score, which is the percentage by length where maintenance needs to be considered (i.e. percentage in “poor” or “red” condition).

#### **Claims Priority**

Roads with a recent history of public accident claims for loss or damage on the highway are allocated a score in this category

#### **Defects Priority**

Roads with a recent history of reactive maintenance defects identified (on the footway or carriageway as appropriate) are allocated a score in this category. Reactive maintenance defects could be potholes or pavement trips, and are identified either through reactive safety inspections in response to customer reports or scheduled safety inspections

#### **Nominations Priority**

Roads which have been named in that year’s round of councillor nominations are allocated a score in this category

#### **Hierarchy Priority**

Brent footway and carriageway hierarchies have been determined according to the principles in the industry Code of Practice “Well Managed Highway Infrastructure” by Metis Consultants Ltd

The hierarchy takes into account current and expected use, resilience, and local economic and social factors such as industry, schools, hospitals and similar, as well as the desirability of continuity and of a consistent approach for walking and cycling.

**5. Question from Councillor Lorber to Councillor Krupa Sheth (Cabinet Member for Public Realm & Enforcement):**

Since at least 2020, when a Liberal Democrat Councillor was elected back on to Brent Council - the Liberal Democrat Group has been calling for the use of CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) to deal with the day to day concerns being raised by residents.

The Group has continually called for potholes and pavements be fixed, CCTV to be installed, enforcement patrols to be increased. Each time, however, we were advised that use of CIL for these purposes was not allowed and that it would be financially irresponsible to use the funds in this way.

The Cabinet decision taken in July 2025 to use £15m worth of CIL on the very areas that we have been highlighting is therefore surprising, coming as it does just a few months prior to the next local election and following the 2025-26 budget having been approved.

Whilst the decision to spend this money is welcomed it still only represents a fraction of the amount available.

Can the Cabinet Member for Public Realm and Enforcement therefore please explain:

- (a) Why was the decision not made as part of the budget setting process over the previous 5 years?
- (b) How have you come to the decision to spend the £15m in this way?
- (c) What is the total cost to the Council, for all remedial backlog works (dangerous pavements, potholes) to be completed?
- (d) Why has a one year “election program” been agreed rather than committing at least £15m extra every year for the foreseeable future?
- (e) How will you measure the impact of installing CCTV at the limited locations identified?
- (f) What will the total cost of increasing environmental enforcement patrols be and will these include night time cover when most of the environmental crime takes place?

**Response:**

This is a targeted, time-bound SCIL investment that addresses the most pressing public realm needs now—prioritising infrastructure to support investment in the borough, enhance safety and accessibility. The rationale was set out in the Cabinet report on the 28 July 2025.

In terms of the specific issues raised:

**(a) Why was the decision not made as part of the budget setting process over the previous 5 years?**

Community Infrastructure Levy is a capital reserve and not a revenue budget; an allocation can provide for qualifying projects within those capital financial limits rather than an ongoing revenue maintenance fund. Cabinet have responsibility for making decisions on CIL allocations over a certain amount. In this case Cabinet in July agreed to a one-off allocation of SCIL funding to support infrastructure improvement in relation to highways, parks, and CCTV.

**(b) How have you come to the decision to spend the £15m in this way?**

The programme is risk and need led, aligned to the Local Plan and related strategies.

The Cabinet report breaks the allocation down as follows:

- Highways (£10.683m): priority carriageways and footways (growth and intensification areas), 264 “at-risk” lamp columns, tree-stump removal programme.
- Parks & Play (£0.73m): path maintenance and accessible play upgrades.
- CCTV (£3.12m): Replace 130 analogue cameras, add 50 new in identified coverage gaps, network upgrades and enhanced delivery capacity, based on collected evidence.

**(c) What is the total cost to the Council, for all remedial backlog works dangerous pavements, potholes to be completed?**

Current reporting does not quantify a whole-network “backlog” figure. A precise backlog valuation would require an up to date condition survey for all our carriageways and footways. In preparation of drafting our provisional 2026/27 planned maintenance programmes, we have recently completed video condition surveys of our carriageways, and condition surveys for our footways will be completed later this year. Therefore, we can produce this figure when reporting our future programmes to Cabinet next year.

It should be noted the figure (£) will account for 20m sections categorised as “red” i.e. in need of immediate repair. However, we pick up full sections of road when doing planned maintenance, which would include sections of green and amber, as it is not practical to just do the red sections. Therefore, the actual cost to bring the boroughs roads up to a steady state would be more than the backlog figure.

**(d) Why has a one year “election program” been agreed rather than committing at least £15m extra every year for the foreseeable future?**

SCIL is for infrastructure to support development and can be used as targeted capital injections aligned to growth and evidence of need. It is not as an indefinite annual baseline. Future SCIL availability depends on development receipts and competing growth-related priorities. Current low levels of construction starts and a slowing of the economy will mean lower receipts.


**(e) How will you measure the impact of installing CCTV at the limited locations identified?**

In general terms, we would measure CCTV effectiveness by analysing trends in reported crime and public perceptions of safety through police records, victim surveys, and resident feedback. We would also evaluate the quality of footage for evidence, check for crime displacement, and assess operational compliance with standards set by the Surveillance Camera Commission. Measuring effectiveness involves understanding if CCTV deters, detects, or displaces crime, using multiple data points rather than just one method.

**(f) What will the total cost of increasing environmental enforcement patrols be and will these include night time cover when most of the environmental crime takes place?**

This SCIL proposal does not include resourcing for environmental enforcement patrols; it funds capital upgrades (plus time-limited project delivery support for CCTV).

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|---|--|
|  | <b>Full Council</b><br>15 September 2025                                 |
|   | <b>Report from the Corporate Director<br/>of Finance &amp; Resources</b> |
| <b>Resources and Public Realm Committee Chair's Update</b>                        |  |

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Wards Affected:</b>  | All  |
| <b>Key or Non-Key Decision:</b>   | Council  |
| <b>Open or Part/Fully Exempt:</b><br><small>(If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)</small> | Open   |
| <b>List of Appendices:</b>  | One<br>Appendix A : Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2025/2  |
| <b>Background Papers:</b>   | None   |
| <b>Contact Officer(s):</b><br><small>(Name, Title, Contact Details)</small>   | <p>Jason Sigba, Strategy Lead –Democratic &amp; Corporate Governance<br/>020 8937 2036<br/><a href="mailto:Jason.Sigba@brent.gov.uk">Jason.Sigba@brent.gov.uk</a></p> <p>James Kinsella<br/>Governance and Scrutiny Manager, Democratic and Corporate Governance<br/>020 8937 2063<br/><a href="mailto:james.kinsella@brent.gov.uk">james.kinsella@brent.gov.uk</a></p> <p>Amira Nassr<br/>Deputy Director, Democratic and Corporate Governance<br/>020 8937 5436<br/><a href="mailto:amira.nassr@brent.gov.uk">amira.nassr@brent.gov.uk</a></p> |

## 1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1 To present Full Council with progress updates on the activities of the Resources and Public Realm Committee since the last Full Council meeting held on 7 July 2025.

## **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 committees<sup>1</sup>.

#### The Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee

- 3.2.4 The remit of the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee is set out in the Council Constitution under the Terms of Reference for scrutiny committees<sup>2</sup>. 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

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<sup>1</sup> Brent Council Constitution, Part 2, paragraph 36.

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

<sup>2</sup> Brent Council Constitution Part 4.

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



Safer Brent Partnership, in order to make reports or recommendations to Full Council.

- 3.2.6 Since the last update to Full Council on 7 July 2025 the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee has met two times (16 July 2025 and 2 September 2025).

#### **16 July 2025**

- 3.2.7 The Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee met for its first public meeting of the new municipal year on 16 July 2025.

#### **Resources & Public Realm Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2025/26**

- 3.2.8 The Committee Work Programme for 2025/26 was formally agreed by members (see Appendix A). The programme itself is intended to be a flexible, living document that can adapt and change according to the needs of a committee. It will therefore be regularly reviewed throughout the municipal year by the Committee and updated accordingly where necessary. In practice, this means planned agenda items could be subject to change.

#### **Scrutiny Progress Update - Recommendations Tracker**

- 3.2.9 The Committee then proceeded to review the Scrutiny Recommendations Tracker, with a particular focus on the suggestions for improvement arising from the April 2025 meeting relating to the Complaints Annual Report 2023/24. In response to a prior request, senior officers from the Council's Residents & Housing Services (Tom Cattermole - Acting Corporate Director, Residents & Housing Services, and Spencer Randolph - Director of Housing Services) attended alongside representatives from Wates, the Council's current housing repairs contractor, to address service-specific questions related to Housing Management Complaints Annual Report 2023/2024. Members sought clarity on the overall strategic plan to reduce complaints, address root causes, and rebuild resident trust. Officers confirmed that a service-wide review had been undertaken, informed by resident feedback through surveys and other engagement activities. As part of the review process, a range of targeted improvement measures have been identified and are currently being rolled out across the service, including enhanced staff training, and upgrades to core IT infrastructure. The Committee undertook a deeper dive specifically into how Wates and the Council are working together to analyse complaints data, identify trends, and implement shared solutions. Weekly operational meetings were cited as a mechanism for tracking repairs, reviewing service failures, and refining processes. Further improvements in collaboration were pledged as part of the review.
- 3.2.10 While close partnership working was welcomed, members expressed concerns regarding existing accountability mechanisms, particularly around upheld complaints and the limited enforcement of contractual penalty clauses. The Committee recognised opportunities within the review to strengthen these areas. In response, Officers highlighted challenges within the current

complaints system, particularly around data gaps that limited the Council's ability to identify patterns of service failure and enforce contractual remedies more effectively. Nonetheless, members were assured that planned improvements to data systems would enhance analytical capabilities, supporting more effective contract management and enabling greater accountability through potential penalties or reallocation of work to alternative contractors.

3.2.11 Additional areas explored by the Committee included the connection between staff turnover in the repairs service and rising complaint volumes, alongside the cost implications of repeat repairs and service failures. Regarding the latter, members were informed that under the fixed-price-per-property contract model, contractors absorb the cost of repeat visits, thereby incentivising quality at first contact. The Council is currently paying approximately £5,000 per week in compensation, a figure it hopes to reduce through ongoing review and improvement efforts. Members expressed support for proposals to establish a resident group to co-design service improvements, monitor standards, and receive regular updates on complaints to promote greater accountability and responsiveness.

3.2.12 In light of the discussion, the following suggestions for improvement were made, all of which have now received responses from the relevant departments (as detailed within the Recommendation Tracker presented to the Committee at its meeting on 2 September 2025 available to view via the following [LINK](#)):

- Collaborate with the procurement and complaints teams to assess how complaints data and areas of underperformance can be more effectively embedded into the management and monitoring processes of the Wates contract, and the upcoming Mears contract.
- Develop a communication standard in collaboration with key contractors, such as Wates and Mears, to ensure consistent, transparent, and high-quality engagement with residents throughout the repairs and complaints journey.
- Establish mechanisms that enable residents to play a meaningful role in monitoring the performance of the repairs service and in holding both the council and contractors accountable.
- Ensure regular reporting on the performance management of the Wates and Mears contracts to the Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee.
- Develop and implement a robust guidance framework for succession planning to be rolled out across relevant internal teams and extended to contractors, with a specific focus on managing staff turnover and maintaining continuity of service in the delivery of repairs for residents.

### **Update on Recycling in Brent**

- 3.2.13 The Committee heard from the Cabinet member for Public Realm & Enforcement, Councillor Krupa Sheth, and received a report from the Corporate Director of Neighbourhoods & Regeneration on the Council's recycling performance by waste type (food, paper and card, dry mixed recycling, Garden Waste) and service delivery. As part of its oversight responsibilities, the Committee examined the metrics used to assess recycling progress. Members noted that year-on-year comparisons of recycling tonnages failed to account for the growing number of households. Requests were made for more insightful benchmarking. Officers acknowledged the concern, agreeing that measuring tonnage alone was insufficient. It was highlighted that metrics such as kilograms of waste per household per year would provide a more accurate reflection of performance trends, especially when considered alongside population growth and increasing housing stock.
- 3.2.14 Concerns were raised about Brent's low recycling rates, with members seeking clarity on the financial implications of this underperformance and exploring opportunities for targeted improvements. Officers acknowledged the significant cost burden and agreed on key opportunities to improve performance, specifically reducing contamination in communal blocks and increasing food waste recycling. The department provided assurances that the estimated £3.6 million from the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) scheme will be directed towards supporting overall recycling improvements, with a particular focus on these priority areas. Members welcomed this commitment, particularly through strategic interventions such as pilot schemes and partnership initiatives designed to drive measurable change.
- 3.2.15 Building on the importance of strategic investment, it was stressed that behaviour change is critical to improving recycling performance, particularly in key opportunity areas. The Committee questioned the effectiveness of the current communication and engagement strategy, exploring how council-led efforts could be strengthened to secure greater resident buy-in for recycling initiatives. In response, officers reported that approximately 80% of households required to recycle do so correctly, allowing in-person engagement efforts to focus on the remaining 20% where behaviours need improvement. The Committee acknowledged the success of targeted communications in addressing key issues, such as the incorrect disposal of items like nappies, and welcomed the effectiveness of localised, tailored interventions. However, members encouraged the department to strengthen outreach to underrepresented groups and diversify its communication strategy to enhance overall engagement and drive further improvements in recycling performance.
- 3.2.16 Other barriers to performance explored by members included the lack of enforcement of recycling standards among housing associations. Officers acknowledged this concern and explained that, while legal limitations restrict enforcement, managing agents are regularly reminded of their responsibilities to provide adequate waste and recycling facilities.
- 3.2.17 In light of the discussion, the Committee made the following Cabinet recommendations and suggestions for improvement to council departments, all of which have received responses (as detailed within the Recommendation

Tracker presented to the Committee at its meeting on 2 September 2025 available to view via the following [LINK](#)):

**Recommendations to Cabinet:**

- Lobby central government for legislation to restrict the distribution of single-use plastic bags by businesses and promote recyclable alternatives as the standard where feasible.

**Suggestions for Improvement:**

- Deliver a member briefing session on the council's recycling initiatives, outlining current efforts and opportunities for members to support promotion to constituents.
- Strengthen collaboration between recycling, housing management, and regeneration teams to improve the robustness and accessibility of waste and recycling infrastructure in new builds and estate upgrades.
- Strengthen outreach and boost engagement with young people to increase awareness and participation in recycling initiatives.
- Enhance and diversify communication efforts, and strengthen collaboration with local partners to raise awareness about nappy disposal and recycling options.
- Strengthen enforcement to ensure council waste and recycling requirements are consistently upheld across housing association premises.
- Explore the provision of a more robust alternative to the compostable caddy liners currently supplied to residents as part of the food waste recycling service.

**Budget Monitoring Update**

3.2.18 The Corporate Director of Finance & Resources briefed the Committee on Brent's overall financial position, presenting a report examining the financial outturn position for 2025/26, the Q1 financial forecast for 2025/26 and the medium-term financial outlook. Key financial pressures persist in temporary accommodation, Adult Social Care, and Children's Services, driven largely by rising demand. In this context, it was expressed that the forthcoming Fair Funding Review may not offer the financial relief that Brent requires, with the Government expected to revise local authority funding allocations through a reassessment of relative need, adjustments for Council Tax-raising capacity, and transitional arrangements over a three-year settlement period to support effective financial planning. The Fair Funding Review consultation has now closed, and the Council has submitted a response aligned with local priorities, aiming to influence the development of a multi-year settlement from 2026/27. The Government is expected to respond in late October or early November 2025.

3.2.19 Given the scale of change anticipated through the Fair Funding Review and the fact that the estimated £30 million budget gap over the next three years requires £10 million in annual savings, members sought clarity on the Council's forthcoming communications and engagement strategy. Specifically, early thinking focused on how best to engage residents, businesses, and stakeholders in developing the draft 2026/27 budget, with the aim of promoting transparency and securing meaningful input amid ongoing financial uncertainty and pressures. The Leader emphasised the need for robust and early engagement with residents, providing clear explanations about the challenges facing council finances and the difficult decisions that lie ahead.

3.2.20 Other areas of debate included Brent's Housing Revenue Account (HRA) surplus of £4.9 million, with discussions exploring its potential to fund targeted improvements in housing services, and the borough's low council tax collection rates, with arrears now totalling approximately £92.2 million. On the latter, members questioned the effectiveness of previous interventions and the impact of changes to the Council Tax Support Scheme. In response, officers outlined plans to improve collection by balancing support for residents with stronger enforcement measures, aimed at strengthening the borough's overall financial resilience.

3.2.21 In light of the discussion, the following suggestions for improvement were made, all of which have now received responses from the department (as detailed within the Recommendation Tracker presented to the Committee at its meeting on 2 September 2025 available to view via the following [LINK](#)):

- In future finance reports, provide detailed information on the balance of unallocated CIL funds, how they are being factored into financial planning, and their contribution to achieving the Council's strategic priorities and long-term objectives.
- In future finance reports, provide detailed analysis of Council Tax collection, including any ongoing assessment of the current Council Tax Support Scheme's impact on collection rates, and the outcomes of initiatives aimed at improving collection performance.

## **2 September 2025**

### **Establishment of Budget Scrutiny Task Group**

3.2.22 The Committee agreed the establishment of the Budget Scrutiny Task Group to review the Cabinet's Draft Budget for 2026/27. It was noted that the full membership of the Task Group has yet to be finalised but in the interests of transparency will be confirmed in the written minutes of the meeting. The group is expected to present an evidence-based recommendations report on the Cabinet's draft budget to the Resources and Public Realm Committee at its meeting on 21 January 2026. Subject to approval, a report from the Committee will then be forwarded to Cabinet for consideration on Monday 9 February 2026,

alongside the report from the Corporate Director of Finance & Resources on final budget proposals.

### **Brent Local Plan Review**

- 3.2.23 The Committee heard from the Cabinet member for Regeneration, Planning & Property, Councillor Teo Benea, and received a report from the Corporate Director of Neighbourhoods & Regeneration outlining of the Local Plan's performance to date, along with the key priorities, proposed scope, approach, and governance arrangements for the upcoming review. Members reflected on the current Local Plan, identifying both areas of success and underperformance to inform the next phase. A key concern was the borough's ongoing difficulty in meeting both local and London Plan affordable housing targets. This prompted a wider discussion on the disproportionate delivery of shared ownership and student accommodation units compared to genuinely affordable homes, particularly larger family-sized units (3+ bedrooms).
- 3.2.24 Viability challenges were discussed extensively, with officers acknowledging the economic constraints that continue to hinder the delivery of affordable housing. Members sought clarity on potential policy interventions or incentive mechanisms that could improve viability and support increased delivery. Officers noted that detailed responses would depend on the forthcoming London Plan, to which the Local Plan must be aligned, but committed to keeping the Committee informed throughout the policy development process, particularly when analysing the policy options. Nonetheless, the department committed to exploring innovative approaches within the review. Proposals included the use of financial contributions from student accommodation developments to support the construction of affordable homes, and the potential merging of designated growth areas to maximise development potential. The Corporate Director highlighted that, beyond the scope of the review, there are additional opportunities to increase affordable housing supply. This includes reassessing the council's existing assets with a view to potential disposal or redevelopment, where appropriate, to support housing objectives.
- 3.2.25 Other key areas of exploration included: how climate change and sustainability objectives will be strengthened in the review, with officers confirming these will be central to the process and aligned with the council's Climate Resilience and Adaptation Plan, drawing on best practice from boroughs such as Islington; how policies will be updated to address the over-concentration of gambling establishments, particularly adult gaming centres; the importance of inclusive engagement, especially with underrepresented groups, with commitments made by officers to improve digital communications; and key risks and mitigations associated with the review, most notably funding, with Cabinet approval for general fund allocation identified as the only viable option.
- 3.2.26 In light of the discussion, the Committee made the following suggestions for improvement:

- That land value mapping be included in the evidence base supporting the upcoming Local Plan.
- Set targets for Local Plan priorities that are realistic, achievable, and clearly deliverable to support effective implementation and buy-in.
- Strengthen consultation and engagement with local neighbourhood groups throughout the Local Plan development process, drawing on lessons from previous efforts to ensure their input meaningfully informs the revised plan and supports ongoing, transparent dialogue.
- Enhance outreach with underrepresented groups throughout the upcoming Local Plan development process, applying lessons learned from prior communications and engagement efforts.
- In the interests of transparency and accountability, ensure that the Committee is regularly updated on delegated decisions made by Cabinet Members and Corporate Directors throughout the Local Plan development process.
- That councillors, via the Brent Local Plan Working Group, be actively involved in reviewing the findings of viability assessments, financial modelling, and policy options throughout the Local Plan review and the development of the updated Local Plan.
- Explore, through the Local Plan review, opportunities to strengthen policy mechanisms that ensure all parts of Brent, not only designated Growth Areas, benefit equitably from development.
- Explore innovative approaches through the Local Plan review to further strengthen the delivery of genuine affordable housing, climate resilience, sustainability, social infrastructure (such as community facilities), and green spaces across Brent, while addressing issues such as gambling overconcentration and other uses associated with social harm.
- For the Local Plan Review to consider strategies for providing a balanced mix of green spaces across all areas of the borough, meeting community needs equitably.
- Enhance developer requirements through the Local Plan review process by introducing higher standards for sustainability, climate adaptation and resilience, and build quality.
- Leverage the Local Plan review process to limit the use of the carbon offset fund to a last resort for developers.

**Next meeting: 4 November 2025**

3.2.27 The next meeting of the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee will be held on 4 November 2025. As it currently stands, members will review the following items:

- Budget 2025/26: In-Year Monitoring Update
- Social Value Policy
- Procurement Strategy
- Funding and Support for the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS)
- Kerbside Management Scrutiny Task Group Review Findings

#### **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



## Appendix A

### Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2025/26

#### 16 July 2025

| Agenda Item  | Cabinet Member/Non-Executive Member   | Corporate Director   | External Organisations |
|--|---|--|------------------------|
| Committee Work Programme 2025/26                     | Cllr Rita Conneely, Chair of Resources and Public Realm Committee           | Minesh Patel, Corporate Director – Finance and Resources           |                        |
| Recycling in Brent                                   | Cllr Krupa Sheth, Cabinet Member for Public Realm and Enforcement           | Alice Lester, Corporate Director – Neighbourhoods and Regeneration |                        |
| Budget 2025/26 Update: Medium Term Financial Outlook | Cllr Mili Patel, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources | Minesh Patel, Corporate Director – Finance and Resources           |                        |

#### 2 September 2025

| Agenda Item                                 | Cabinet Member/Non-Executive Member                                    | Corporate Director   | External Organisations |
|---|--|--|------------------------|
| Establishment of Budget Scrutiny Task Group | Cllr Rita Conneely, Chair of Resources and Public Realm Committee      | Minesh Patel, Corporate Director – Finance and Resources           |                        |
| Local Plan Review                           | Cllr Teo Benea, Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning and Property | Alice Lester, Corporate Director – Neighbourhoods and Regeneration |                        |

**4 November 2025**

| <b>Agenda Item</b>   | <b>Cabinet Member/Non-Executive Member</b>  | <b>Corporate Director</b>   | <b>External Organisations</b> |
|--|---|---|-------------------------------|
| Budget 2025/26: In-Year Monitoring Update                        | Cllr Mili Patel, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources             | Minesh Patel, Corporate Director – Finance and Resources          |                               |
| Social Value Policy  | Cllr Jake Rubin, Cabinet Member for Climate Action and Community Power                  | Rachel Crossley, Corporate Director – Service Reform and Strategy |                               |
| Procurement Strategy   | Cllr Jake Rubin, Cabinet Member for Climate Action and Community Power                  | Rachel Crossley, Corporate Director – Service Reform and Strategy |                               |
| Funding and Support for the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) | Cllr Jake Rubin, Cabinet Member for Climate Action and Community Power                  | Rachel Crossley, Corporate Director – Service Reform and Strategy |                               |
| Kerbside Management Scrutiny Task Group Findings                 | Cllr Mary Mitchell, Member of Resources and Public Realm Committee and Task Group Chair | Minesh Patel, Corporate Director – Finance and Resources          |                               |

**21 January 2026**

| <b>Agenda Item</b>                     | <b>Cabinet Member/Non-Executive Member</b>                              | <b>Corporate Director</b>  | <b>External Organisations</b> |
|--|---|--|-------------------------------|
| Budget Scrutiny Task Group Findings    | Cllr Rita Conneely, Chair of Resources and Public Realm Committee       | Minesh Patel, Corporate Director – Finance and Resources                             |                               |
| Safer Brent Partnership Report 2025/26 | Cllr Harbi Farah, Cabinet Member for Safer Communities, Jobs and Skills | Nigel Chapman, Corporate Director – Children, Young People and Community Development | Metropolitan Police           |

|                                       |  |   |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|--|
| Community Engagement and Consultation | Cllr Jake Rubin, Cabinet Member for Climate Action and Community Power | Rachel Crossley, Corporate Director – Service Reform and Strategy |  |
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#### 24 February 2026

| Agenda Item                               | Cabinet Member/Non-Executive Member   | Corporate Director   | External Organisations |
|---|---|--|------------------------|
| Budget 2025/26: In-Year Monitoring Update | Cllr Mili Patel, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources | Minesh Patel, Corporate Director – Finance and Resources           |                        |
| Complaints Annual Report 2024/25          | Cllr Mili Patel, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources | Minesh Patel, Corporate Director – Finance and Resources           |                        |
| Littering and Fly Tipping                 | Cllr Krupa Sheth, Cabinet Member for Public Realm and Enforcement           | Alice Lester, Corporate Director – Neighbourhoods and Regeneration |                        |

#### 2 April 2026

| Agenda Item                           | Cabinet Member/Non-Executive Member                                     | Corporate Director   | External Organisations |
|---------------------------------------|---|--|------------------------|
| Allotments Management                 | Cllr Krupa Sheth, Cabinet Member for Public Realm and Enforcement       | Alice Lester, Corporate Director – Neighbourhoods and Regeneration                   |                        |
| Approach to tackling ASB across Brent | Cllr Harbi Farah, Cabinet Member for Safer Communities, Jobs and Skills | Nigel Chapman, Corporate Director – Children, Young People and Community Development |                        |

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|  | <b>Full Council</b><br>15 September 2025                               |
|   | <b>Report from the Corporate Director<br/>of Finance and Resources</b> |
| <b>Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee Chair's Report</b>                  |  |

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Wards Affected:</b>  | All  |
| <b>Key or Non-Key Decision:</b>   | Council  |
| <b>Open or Part/Fully Exempt:</b><br><small>(If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)</small> | Open   |
| <b>List of Appendices:</b>  | One<br>Appendix A: Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2025/26   |
| <b>Background Papers:</b>   | None   |
| <b>Contact Officer(s):</b><br><small>(Name, Title, Contact Details)</small>   | <p> Chatan Popat<br/> Strategy Lead – Scrutiny, Democratic and Corporate Governance<br/> 020 8937 5068<br/> <a href="mailto:chatan.popat@brent.gov.uk">chatan.popat@brent.gov.uk</a> </p> <p> James Kinsella<br/> Governance and Scrutiny Manager, Democratic and Corporate Governance<br/> 020 8937 2063<br/> <a href="mailto:james.kinsella@brent.gov.uk">james.kinsella@brent.gov.uk</a> </p> <p> Amira Nassr<br/> Deputy Director, Democratic and Corporate Governance<br/> 020 8937 5436<br/> <a href="mailto:amira.nassr@brent.gov.uk">amira.nassr@brent.gov.uk</a> </p> |

## 1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1 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 07 July 2025.

## 2.0 Recommendation(s)

That Full Council

2.1 Note the report and the updates provided for both the Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee and North West London Joint Health and Overview Scrutiny Committee (NWL JHOSC).

2.2 Note the Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee's work programme for the 2025/26 municipal year, attached as Appendix A to the report.

### **3.0 Detail**

#### **3.1 Contribution to Borough Plan Priorities & Strategic Context**

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

#### **3.2 Background**

3.2.1 Brent Council has two scrutiny committees: the Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee and the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee. The council also participates as a full voting member in the North West London Joint Health Overview Scrutiny 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 is detailed in Appendix A. In developing its work programme, the Committee held a work programming meeting, attended by Committee members, Cabinet members and Corporate Directors. At this session Committee members prioritised items to include on the work programme based on a set of criteria. Prioritisation ensured that items included on the committees work programme were (i) a strategic priority as set out in the council's 2023-27 Borough Plan (ii) of concern for a significant number of the borough's residents (iii) a significant cabinet decision or (iv) part of a forthcoming policy review or a new strategy being developed by the Cabinet. This was undertaken to ensure that scrutiny

has a significant impact and adds value to the council's policy process. Statutory guidance on overview and scrutiny recommends that for scrutiny to be effective, scrutiny committees focus on conducting fewer in-depth reviews on highly significant topics<sup>1</sup>.

- 3.2.5 The Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee met for its first meeting of the 2025-26 municipal year on 02 July 2025. The meeting focused on two annual safeguarding reports. The first of these reports was the Brent Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB) Annual Report; 2024-2025. Nicola Brownjohn, the Independent Chair of the Brent Safeguarding Adults Board informed the Committee that she was pleased with the work that the board had carried out in the past year, her first full year as the Independent Chair. The Committee were given details on the development of the new SAB Strategic Plan 2024-26 and the three main priorities within it that the board will be concentrating on: self-neglect, substance misuse and housing and learning from safeguarding reviews. The Committee were also pleased to hear that the backlog of reviews dating back to the time of covid had now been reduced significantly.
- 3.2.6 Members were also informed that throughout the year the board had been working on strengthening governance aspects such as performance and audit standards. The Independent Chair was also very pleased to report that the main partners of the board; the ICB, Police and Brent Adult Social Care had come together and worked endlessly on self-assessment and improvement programmes. She continued to say that many aspects of the board were working very well together and highlighted better quality of Safeguarding Adults Reviews (SARs) and a much better use of the high-risk panel. The Committee were also informed of one of the most important projects of the year which was the Community Engagement Project. Again, the Independent Chair was pleased with the progress made and praised the assistance and guidance provided by Healthwatch in making it a success. She went on to say that Healthwatch was imperative in ensuring she was able to engage with residents of the borough whilst also ensuring that she was introduced to the right people within community groups for her to engage with. Members were also updated on one of its key concerns from previous years which was transitional safeguarding. They were pleased to hear that both the Adults and Children's partnerships were working closer together ensuring a strengthening of transitional safeguarding into adulthood. They were informed of the three main cohorts being targeted; people with additional needs, care leavers and those exposed to higher risks of exploitation. The Chair went on to say that Brent was doing well in all aspects within the remit of the Board but there is always a desire for continuous improvement and that she had confidence in Brent's processes.
- 3.2.7 The second item discussed at the Committee meeting was the Brent Safeguarding Children Partnership Report; 2024-2025. Keith Makin, the Brent Safeguarding Children Partnership Independent Scrutineer started by advising members that the key role of the partnership was to seek assurance and to

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

ensure that the three statutory partners; Health, Police and the Council worked closely together on safeguarding and were well sighted on strategic priorities that needed to be developed and achieved. He also took the opportunity to inform the Committee that he was pleased with the work and progress the partnership had achieved in the past year, his first full year as the Independent Scrutineer. Members were advised of the many achievements that have been made in the past year including the development of a new data dashboard aided by PHEW. This will be used by all partners and groups to better understand the landscape of Brent, understanding issues and concerns whilst also assisting in targeting areas of improvement. The Committee were pleased to hear that the partnership were developing plans to work more closely with children and young people within the borough and with the Brent Youth Parliament to ensure their voices and opinions are heard. This will be further enhanced by the creation of a system of having young scrutineers working with the Independent Scrutineer assisting him to scrutinise the partnership as a whole. This initiative is uncommon and unique but is something that he has successfully introduced in three other boroughs prior to working with Brent.

Members were also informed that the partnership had continued to work closely with Community Safety through the Safer Brent Partnership ensuring representation at the Safeguarding Children's Forum and Case Review Group. He also emphasised the collaboration with the SAB on transitional safeguarding, highlighting not only on its importance but to also stress that it was not common practice for boards and partnerships to work so closely together.

- 3.2.8 The Committee were updated on the work the partnership has done to date on complying with the new Working Together 23 guidance whereby they have implemented important changes such as the introduction of Lead Safeguarding Partners who will meeting throughout the year focussing on the inclusive strategic overview of the partnership and its work. They were also advised that the partnership are leading on the work needed to introduce the statutory requirements of the Children's Wellbeing and Education Bill. Members were pleased to hear the priorities and key targets for the next twelve months which include the creation of an online safety group focussing on online safety and mobile phone usage, further emphasis on data collation and analysis, the introduction of the young scrutineers and a special focus on neurodiversity, especially on girls with hidden autism in primary schools, something that has been picked up through multi-agency audits.
- 3.2.9 The Committee will meet for its second meeting of the year on 17 September 2025. At this time, members will focus on three items: Children's Oral Health, Period Dignity and The Impact of Youth Justice Service Delivery in Brent.
- 3.2.10 Councillor Ketan Sheth is Brent's representative and Chair of the North West London Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (NWL JHOSC). The first meeting of the municipal year was hosted by the London Borough of Hillingdon on 17 July 2025. The Committee had very productive discussions on Maternity provisions in North West London including outcomes and equity across the region, Adult Mental Health and the Reconfiguration of the ICB and



the possible implications on services. The NWL JHOSC will meet for its second meeting of the year on 09 September 2025 at London Borough of Harrow where they will be reviewing Special School Nursing, The future of Place Based Partnerships and Dentist Commissioning and Children's Dental Health.

#### **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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## Appendix A: Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee: 2025/26 Work Programme

### Confirmed Meeting Dates:

- Wednesday 02 July 2025, 6pm
- Wednesday 17 September 2025, 6pm
- Wednesday 19 November 2025, 6pm
- Monday 19 January 2026, 6pm
- Wednesday 04 March 2026, 6pm
- Thursday 09 April 2026, 6pm

### Wednesday 02 July 2025

| Agenda Item  | Cabinet Members / Non-Executive Members   | Corporate Directors / Directors  | External Organisations / Participants   |
|--|---|--|---|
| Brent Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report 2024/25  | Cllr Neil Nerva<br>Cabinet Member, Adult Social Care, Public Health and Leisure | Rachel Crossley, Corporate Director, Service Reform and Strategy                   | Nicola Brownjohn, Brent Safeguarding Adults Board Independent Chair<br>Metropolitan Police<br>NW London NHS         |
| Brent Safeguarding Children Partnership Report 2024/25 | Cllr Gwen Grahl<br>Cabinet Member, Children, Young People & Schools             | Nigel Chapman, Corporate Director Children, Young People and Community Development | Keith Makin, Brent Safeguarding Children Partnership Independent Scrutineer<br>Metropolitan Police<br>NW London NHS |

Wednesday 17 September 2025

| Agenda Item   | Leader/Deputy Leader/Cabinet Members  | Corporate Directors / Directors   | External Organisations / Participants |
|---|---|---|---------------------------------------|
| Children's Oral Health  | Cllr Neil Nerva<br>Cabinet Member, Adult Social Care, Public Health and Leisure | Rachel Crossley, Corporate Director, Service Reform and Strategy<br><br>Melanie Smith, Director of Public Health                                  |                                       |
| Period Dignity  | Cllr Mili Patel<br>Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member, Finance and Resources      | Rachel Crossley, Corporate Director, Service Reform and Strategy  |                                       |
| The Impact of Youth Justice Service Delivery in Brent             | Councillor Gwen Grahl,<br>Cabinet Member, Children, Young People & Schools      | Nigel Chapman, Corporate Director Children, Young People and Community Development<br><br>Palvinder Kudhail, Director, Early Help and Social Care |                                       |
| Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2026/26 | Councillor Ketan Sheth, Chair of the Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee | Minesh Patel, Corporate Director, Finance and Resources   |                                       |

Wednesday 19 November 2025

| Agenda Item   | Leader/Deputy Leader/Cabinet Members  | Corporate Directors / Directors  | External Organisations / Participants |
|---|---|--|---------------------------------------|
| Leisure and Physical activity                                 | Cllr Neil Nerva<br>Cabinet Member, Adult Social Care, Public Health and Leisure | Rachel Crossley, Corporate Director, Service Reform and Strategy<br><br>Melanie Smith, Director of Public Health   |                                       |
| Response to Housing regulator findings and Brent graded at C3 | Cllr Fleur Donnelly-Jackson<br>Cabinet Member, Housing                          | Tom Cattermole, Corporate Director, Residents and Housing Services<br><br>Spencer Randolph, Director, Housing Services   |                                       |
| Update from the Housing Improvement Board                     | Cllr Fleur Donnelly-Jackson<br>Cabinet Member, Housing                          | Tom Cattermole, Corporate Director, Residents and Housing Services<br><br>Spencer Randolph, Director, Housing Services<br><br>Laurence Coaker, Director, Housing Needs and Support |                                       |

Monday 19 January 2026

| Agenda Item  | Leader/Deputy Leader/Cabinet Members   | Corporate Directors / Directors  | External Organisations / Participants |
|--|--|--|---------------------------------------|
| Emergency Planning and update on Casey Review  | <p>Cllr Muhammed Butt<br/>Leader and Cabinet Member, Regeneration, Planning and Property</p> <p>Cllr Krupa Sheth<br/>Cabinet Member, Public Realm and Enforcement</p> <p>Cllr Harbi Farah<br/>Cabinet Member, Safer Communities, Jobs and Skills</p> | <p>Jehan Weerasinghe, Corporate Director, Neighbourhoods and Regeneration</p> <p>Chris Whyte, Director, Public Realm</p>                                 |                                       |
| Update on poverty commission project and Brent's response to the Cost of Living Crisis | <p>Cllr Promise Knight<br/>Cabinet Member, Customer Experience, Resident Support and Culture</p> <p>Cllr Fleur Donnelly-Jackson<br/>Cabinet Member, Housing</p>  | <p>Rachel Crossley, Corporate Director, Service Reform and Strategy</p> <p>Tom Cattermole, Corporate Director, Residents and Housing Services</p>        |                                       |
| Tackling Child Poverty in Brent  | <p>Councillor Gwen Grahl,<br/>Cabinet Member, Children, Young People &amp; Schools</p>   | <p>Nigel Chapman, Corporate Director Children, Young People and Community Development</p> <p>Palvinder Kudhail, Director, Early Help and Social Care</p> |                                       |


Wednesday 4 March 2026

| Agenda Item   | Leader/Deputy Leader/Cabinet Members                   | Corporate Directors / Directors  | External Organisations / Participants |
|---|--|--|---------------------------------------|
| Housing Management: Tenant Satisfaction Measures and Brent Housing Management (BHM) performance | Cllr Fleur Donnelly-Jackson<br>Cabinet Member, Housing | Tom Cattermole, Corporate Director, Residents and Housing Services<br>Spencer Randolph, Director, Housing Services         |                                       |
| Area Tenancy Management Model   | Cllr Fleur Donnelly-Jackson<br>Cabinet Member, Housing | Tom Cattermole, Corporate Director, Residents and Housing Services<br>Spencer Randolph, Director, Housing Services         |                                       |
| Temporary Accommodation, Supported Exempt Accommodation and Homelessness Prevention             | Cllr Fleur Donnelly-Jackson<br>Cabinet Member, Housing | Tom Cattermole, Corporate Director, Residents and Housing Services<br>Laurence Coaker, Director, Housing Needs and Support |                                       |

Thursday 09 April 2026

| Agenda Item  | Leader/Deputy Leader/Cabinet Members                                       | Corporate Directors / Directors  | External Organisations / Participants |
|--|--|--|---------------------------------------|
| Annual Setting and School Standards Achievement Report | Councillor Gwen Grahl,<br>Cabinet Member, Children, Young People & Schools | Nigel Chapman, Corporate Director<br>Children and Young People<br>Shirley Parks, Director, Education,<br>Partnerships and Strategy | Headteachers from Brent schools       |
| Year 1 update on The Brent Youth Strategy              | Councillor Gwen Grahl,<br>Cabinet Member, Children, Young People & Schools | Nigel Chapman, Corporate Director<br>Children and Young People<br>Shirley Parks, Director, Education,<br>Partnerships and Strategy |                                       |



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|  | <b>Full Council</b><br>15 September 2025                               |
|   | <b>Report from the Corporate Director<br/>of Finance and Resources</b> |
| <b>Audit and Standards Advisory Committee – Vice Chair’s Report</b>               |  |

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Wards Affected:</b>  | All  |
| <b>Key or Non-Key Decision:</b>   | Council  |
| <b>Open or Part/Fully Exempt:</b><br><small>(If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)</small> | Open   |
| <b>List of Appendices:</b>  | None   |
| <b>Background Papers:</b>   | None   |
| <b>Contact Officer(s):</b><br><small>(Name, Title, Contact Details)</small>   | Minesh Patel, Director of Finance and Resources<br>Tel: 020 8937 4043<br>Email: <a href="mailto:minesh.patel@brent.gov.uk">minesh.patel@brent.gov.uk</a> |

## 1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1. This report provides a summary of the activities carried out by the Council’s Audit and Standards Advisory Committee and the Audit and Standards Committee since the start of the current Municipal Year.

## 2.0 Recommendation(s)

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

## 3.0 Detail

### 3.1 Contribution to Borough Plan Priorities & Strategic Context

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

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

## **3.2 Background**

- 3.2.1 The ASAC has met twice since the last update was provided, and the ASC has met once. A summary of the items discussed and considered at these meetings is set out below.

### **3.2.2 Audit and Standards Advisory Committee – 16<sup>th</sup> June 2025**

a. Self-Referral to the Regulator of Social Housing

The purpose of the report was to notify the Audit & Standards Advisory Committee of the circumstance surrounding the necessity to self-refer to the Regulator of Social Housing for breaches in compliance with building safety, potentially breaching the Quality and Safety Standard.

b. Standards Report (including gifts and hospitality)

The purpose of this report was to update the Audit and Standards Advisory Committee on gifts and hospitality registered by Members during Q1 2025-26 and on member training.

c. Internal Audit Annual Report

This report summarised the activity of Internal Audit for the financial year 2024-25, including an update on work completed since the previous updated provided in December 2024.

The report also provides the annual audit opinion, provided by the Deputy Director Organisational Assurance and Resilience (Head of Internal Audit), on the adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's framework for governance, risk management and control, which is used to support the Council's Annual Governance Statement.

d. Annual Counter Fraud Report 2023-24

The report set out a summary of the counter fraud activity undertaken in 2024-25, which fulfilled the requirements of the Local Government Transparency Code 2015, which requires local authorities to publish details of their counter-fraud activity.

e. Chair's Annual Report

The Committee received the annual report from Chair of the Audit and Standards and the Audit and Standards Advisory Committees. The report covered the work of both Committees for the municipal year 2024-25 and was prepared independently by the Chairs'. This was subsequently approved by Council at their meeting on 7 July 2025.

f. Annual Governance Statement 2023-24

This report set out the draft Annual Governance Statement (AGS) for 2024-25 as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, in advance of referral on to the Audit and Standards Committee for formal approval

g. Update on 24-25 Statement of Accounts

The purpose of this report was to provide the Committee with an update on the progress made on the 2024-25 Statement of Accounts.

h. Draft External Audit Plan (including Pension Fund) year ending 31 March 2025

The Committee received and considered the Indicative External Audit Plan (including Pension Fund) for the year ending 31 March 2025.

3.2.3 Audit and Standards Committee – 16<sup>th</sup> June 2024

a. Annual Governance Statement 2024-25

This report sought formal approval of the Council's Annual Governance Statement for 2024-25, following its consideration by the Audit and Standards Advisory Committee.

3.2.4 Audit and Standards Advisory Committee – 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2025

a. Procurement Review Update

The committee received a report from the Director Strategic Commissioning, Capacity Building and Engagement providing an update on progress with the Procurement Review.

b. Treasury Management Outturn Report

This report set out the outturn for the Council's Treasury Management Activities for 2024-25 updating Members on both borrowing and investment decisions in the context of prevailing economic conditions and the Council's Treasury Management performance.

c. Financial Management Code Update

The Committee received a report providing an update on implementation of the Financial Management Code.

d. Emergency Preparedness Report

This report continued the cycle of regular updates that the Emergency Planning team provide for the Audit and Standards Advisory Committee. The report provided the Committee with an update on the work and priorities of the team since the last update in September 2024.

e. Evaluating the Effectiveness of the Audit and Standards Advisory Committee

This report summarised the outcomes of the evaluation of the effectiveness of the Audit and Standards Advisory Committee for the municipal year 2024-25.

3.2.5 Forward Plan Items

The following items are due to be presented to the Audit and Standards Advisory Committee meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> September 2025:

- Performance and management of i4b Holdings Ltd and First Wave Housing Ltd
- Strategic Risk Report update
- Annual Auditor's report
- Update on Statement of Accounts and External Audit process

**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 Human Resources/Property Considerations (if appropriate)**

9.1 None

## **10.0 Communication Considerations**

10.1 None

**Report sign off:**

***Minesh Patel***

Corporate Director of Finance and Resources

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## Full Council – 15 September 2025

### Motion for Non-Cabinet Member debate

#### **Deterrence, Integration and Accommodation Impacts of Illegal Immigration on Brent**

##### **Background:**

Brent has seen growing pressures on its housing stock, primary care and policing, in part due to hotels used for those arriving by irregular channel crossings by boats.

Hotels are used by the Home Office to place asylum seekers and those who arrive through illegal routes. This burdens the wider public purse and taxpayers and may create resentment towards those who follow these illegal routes.

There is currently no clear policy to integrate people arriving illegally, leading to cultural tensions, fears and safety concerns. Although not in Brent, the high-profile case of sexual assault by a recent arrival has amplified public anxiety.

##### **This Council Notes:**

- Illegal immigrants increase the demand for emergency hotel accommodation, diverting resources from Brent residents in need.
- Brent households face extended waits for temporary housing while hotels remain filled with asylum claimants which could include those arriving by small boats.
- The answer is deterrence to stop the boats, faster decisions that ensure people are not waiting for clarity on their immigration status for long periods of time and firm humane returns for those with no right to remain.
- Safe and legal routes should exist for the most vulnerable, with clear caps linked to local capacity.
- Other European countries have adopted deterrent and processing measures without veering into extreme policy e.g.
  - Italy agreed with Albania to process arrivals in centres under Italian jurisdiction, moving decisions away from beach landings.
  - Denmark legislated for third country processing, explored partnership with Rwanda while seeking a path that fits with European rules.

- The European Union has struck migration partnerships with Tunisia and Egypt to curb dangerous journeys upstream.

**This Council Believes:**


- Genuine refugees fleeing persecution deserve protection and swift humane processing.
- The integrity of our asylum system must be upheld by deterring dangerous journeys and prevent abuse of legal channels.
- Faster decision-making is required to process asylum claims and that people arriving illegally should be deported. Quick humane returns for those with no right to remain will restore public confidence.
- Those in genuine danger should be protected and shown the integrity of the system.
- That residents should not be made to subsidise national policy failures which result in inflated rental costs and overstretched public services.
- The Government has removed the Rwanda option without putting a credible solution to remove illegal immigrants in its place. This does not serve the national interest.
- If a workable model can cut the pull of illegal routes, a serious government should test it and be honest about results.

**This Council therefore resolves:**

- (1) To publish data on the number of hotels used for asylum accommodation in Brent and, once they are granted leave to remain, the impact on the housing waiting list.
- (2) To secure monthly data from the Home Office and an exit plan for hotel use in Brent with dates and milestones.

Councillor Suresh Kansagra  
Kenton Ward



|   |   |
|---|---|
|  | <p align="center"><b>Full Council</b><br/>15 September 2025</p>   |
|   | <p align="center"><b>Report from the Corporate Director,<br/>Finance and Resources</b></p>  |
|   | <p align="center"><b>Lead Member – Deputy Leader &amp;<br/>Cabinet Member for Finance &amp;<br/>Resources<br/>(Councillor Mili Patel)</b></p> |
| <p><b>Treasury Management Outturn 2024/25</b></p>                                 |   |

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Wards Affected:</b>  | All   |
| <b>Key or Non-Key Decision:</b>   | Key   |
| <b>Open or Part/Fully Exempt:</b><br><small>(If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)</small> | Open  |
| <b>List of Appendices:</b>  | Four:<br>Appendix 1: Economic Commentary<br>Appendix 2: Debt and Investments Portfolio<br>Appendix 3: Average Rate vs Credit Risk<br>Appendix 4: Prudential Indicators  |
| <b>Background Papers:</b>   | None  |
| <b>Contact Officer(s):</b><br><small>(Name, Title, Contact Details)</small>   | Nadeem Akhtar, Senior Finance Analyst<br>Capital, Treasury & Commercial<br>Email: <a href="mailto:nadeem.akhtar@brent.gov.uk">nadeem.akhtar@brent.gov.uk</a><br>Tel: 020 8937 5957<br><br>Oliver Simms<br>Head of Finance (Capital, Treasury and Commercial)<br>Capital, Treasury & Commercial<br>Email: <a href="mailto:Oliver.Simms@brent.gov.uk">Oliver.Simms@brent.gov.uk</a><br>Tel: 020 8937 1679 |

## 1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out the outturn for the Council's Treasury Management Activities for 2024/25. The Local Government Act 2003 and the Local Authorities (Capital Financing and Accounting) Regulations 2003 require that regular reports be submitted to the relevant Council Committee detailing the Council's treasury management activities.

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

1. The Council has complied with its Prudential Indicators for 2024/25.
2. Borrowing outstanding at 31 March 2025 was £900.02m and had increased from £814.3m over the course of the financial year, a change of £85.8m. The change in debt was due to raising £170.0m of new loans and repaying £84.2m of maturing debt.
3. Cash Investments outstanding at 31 March 2025 was £47.3m and had decreased from £95.3m over the course of the financial year, a change of £48.0m.
4. The Council's Capital Financing Requirement (CFR- representing the underlying need to borrow) changed from £1,254.5m to £1,351.4m, a change of £96.9m.
5. The Council's average debt pool rate was 3.85% as a 31 March 2025 and had changed from 3.89% (31 March 2024), caused by borrowing in rising interest rate environment.
6. The Council's rate of return on cash investments decreased during the year from 5.31% (31 March 2024) to 4.53% reflecting the numerous Bank of England Bank Rate changes during the financial year (3 times – from 5.25% to 4.50%).
7. Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) charge for 2024/25 for the General Fund was £19.8m in accordance with the Council's approved MRP Policy (date of approval 29/02/2024). The charge comprised of £15.1m that was chargeable on schemes funded by prudential borrowing and £4.7m on finance leases. A further £0.9m was recognised for Service Loans, where no MRP was charged but principal payments reduced the debt liability in accordance with Statutory regulations.

## 2.0 **Recommendation(s)**

- 2.1 Full Council is asked to note and approve, following its consideration by Audit & Standards Advisory Committee (23 July 2025) and Cabinet (8 September 2025) the 2024-25 Treasury Management Outturn report in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice.

### **3.0 Detail**

#### **3.1 Contribution to the Borough Plan and Strategic Priorities**

- 3.1.1 The regular reporting of treasury management activities assists Members to scrutinise officer decisions and monitor progress on the implementation of its borrowing and investment strategy as approved by Full Council.
- 3.1.2 The Council's treasury management activity is underpinned by Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice (the CIPFA Code), which requires authorities to produce annually Prudential Indicators and a Treasury Management Strategy Statement on the likely financing and investment activity.

#### **3.2 Background**

- 3.2.1 The Council has borrowed money over the long term to support investment in the Council's infrastructure and invests cash balances held for short periods. It is therefore exposed to financial risks including the loss of invested funds and the revenue effect of changing interest rates. The successful identification, monitoring and control of risk are central to the Council's treasury management strategy.
- 3.2.2 The Council has adopted the CIPFA Code which requires the Authority to approve, as a minimum, treasury management semi-annual and annual outturn reports.
- 3.2.3 The 2021 Prudential Code includes a requirement for local authorities to provide a Capital Strategy, a summary document approved by full Council covering capital expenditure and financing, treasury management and non-treasury investments. The Council's Capital Strategy and Treasury Management Strategy, complying with CIPFA's requirement, was approved by full Council at a Budget and Council Tax Setting Council meeting on 29 February 2024.
- 3.2.4 The Council has borrowed and invested substantial sums of money and is therefore exposed to financial risks including the loss of invested funds and the revenue effect of changing interest rates. The successful identification, monitoring and control of risk remains central to the Council's treasury management strategy.

#### **3.3 Economic Background**

- 3.3.1 Key points emerging for 2024/25:
- UK annual Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation continued to stay above the 2% Bank of England (BoE) target in the later part of the period.

- The BoE's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) held Bank Rate at 4.5% at its March 2025 meeting, having reduced it in February. This follows earlier 0.25% cuts in November and August 2024 from the 5.25% peak.
- Financial market sentiment was reasonably positive over most of the period, but economic, financial, and geopolitical issues meant the trend of market volatility remained.
- Credit conditions improved during the financial year resulting in investment duration remaining at 100 days.
- Credit default swap prices generally trended lower over the period but did start to rise modestly in March, but not to any levels considered concerning.

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

### 3.4 Balance Sheet Summary

3.4.1 As at 31 March 2025, the Council had a net borrowing position of £852.7m arising from its revenue and capital income and expenditure. The underlying need to borrow for capital purposes is measured by the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR), while balance sheet resources are the underlying resources available for investment. These factors are summarised in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Balance Sheet Summary

|  | <b>31 March<br/>2024<br/>Actual<br/>(Original)<br/>£m</b> | <b>31 March<br/>2024<br/>Actual<br/>(Revised)<br/>£m</b> | <b>31 March<br/>2025<br/>Actual<br/>£m</b> |
|--|---|--|--|
| General Fund CFR                                       | 935.7   | 957.8  | 1,015.1                                    |
| HRA CFR  | 300.9   | 296.7  | 342.0                                      |
| <b>Loan CFR</b>  | <b>1,236.6</b>  | <b>1,254.5</b>   | <b>1,357.1</b>                             |
| PFI & Lease Liabilities                                | 32.5  | 32.5   | 28.5                                       |
| <b>Total Loan CFR</b>                                  | <b>1,269.11</b>   | <b>1,287.0</b>   | <b>1,385.6</b>                             |
| External borrowing (Excluding accrued interest) *      | <b>814.3</b>  | <b>814.3</b>   | <b>900.0</b>                               |
| Internal Borrowing (Loans CFR less external borrowing) | <b>422.3</b>  | <b>440.2</b>   | <b>457.1</b>                               |
| Less Usable Reserves                                   | (513.3)   | (528.7)  | (585.6)                                    |
| Less Working Capital                                   | (4.3)   | (6.8)  | 81.2                                       |
| Investments (or new borrowing)                         | 95.3  | 95.3   | 47.3                                       |

3.4.2 The treasury management position at 31st March 2025 and the change during the year is shown in Table 2 below.

**Table 2: Balance sheet summary**

|                                  | <b>31 March<br/>2024<br/>Actual</b> | <b>Movement</b> | <b>31.March<br/>2025<br/>Actual</b> |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------------|
|                                  | <b>£m</b>                           | <b>£m</b>       | <b>£m</b>                           |
| Short-term Borrowing             | 84.2                                | 46.3            | 130.5                               |
| Long-term Borrowing              | 730.0                               | 39.5            | 769.5                               |
| <b>Total External Debt</b>       | <b>814.3</b>                        | <b>85.8</b>     | <b>900.0</b>                        |
| Money Market Funds               | 90.3                                | (43.0)          | 47.3                                |
| Local Authority Cash Investments | 5.0                                 | (5.0)           | 0.0                                 |
| <b>Total Cash Investments</b>    | <b>95.3</b>                         | <b>(48.0)</b>   | <b>47.3</b>                         |
| <b>Net Debt</b>                  | <b>719.0</b>                        | <b>133.8</b>    | <b>852.7</b>                        |

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

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

3.4.5 Appendix 2 details the debt and investment portfolio as at 31 March 2025.

### **3.5 Borrowing**

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

3.5.2 CIPFA's 2021 Prudential Code is clear that local authorities must not borrow to invest primarily for financial return and that it is not prudent for local authorities to make any investment or spending decision that will increase the capital financing requirement and so may lead to new borrowing, unless directly and primarily related to the functions of the Authority. PWLB loans are no longer available to local authorities planning to buy investment assets primarily for yield unless these loans are for refinancing purposes.

3.5.3 The Authority has not invested in assets primarily for financial return or that are not primarily related to the functions of the Authority. It has no plans to do so in future.

3.5.4 After substantial rises in interest rates since 2021 many central banks have now begun to reduce their policy rates, albeit slowly. Gilt yields were volatile but

have increased overall during the period. Much of the increase has been in response to market concerns that policies introduced by the Labour government will be inflationary and lead to higher levels of government borrowing. The election of Donald Trump in the US in November is also expected to lead to inflationary trade policies.

- 3.5.5 The PWLB certainty rate for 10-year maturity loans was 4.80% at the beginning of the period and 5.42% at the end. The lowest available 10-year maturity rate was 4.52% and the highest was 5.71%. Rates for 20-year maturity loans ranged from 5.01% to 6.14% during the period, and 50-year maturity loans from 4.88% to 5.88%.
- 3.5.6 The cost of short-term borrowing from other local authorities has generally risen with Base Rate over the year. Interest rates peaked at around 6% towards the later part of March 2025 as many authorities required cash at the same time. These rates are expected to fall back to more normal market levels in April 2025.
- 3.5.7 The Council had a borrowing position of £814.3m as at 1 April 2024. This had increased to £900.0m as at 31 March 2025. Table 3 provides the breakdown of loan balances.

Table 3- breakdown of debt

| Loan Type  | 01-Apr-24    | New Loans    | Repaid loans  | 31-Mar-25    |
|--|--------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|
|  | £m           | £m           | £m            | £m           |
| PWLB   | 589.8        | 100.0        | (14.2)        | 675.5        |
| LOBO   | 59.5         | 0.0          | 0.0           | 59.5         |
| Private Placement                                  | 95.0         | 0.0          | 0.0           | 95.0         |
| Local Authority                                    | 70.0         | 70.0         | (70.0)        | 70.0         |
| <b>Total Debt Outstanding</b>                      | <b>814.3</b> | <b>170.0</b> | <b>(84.2)</b> | <b>900.0</b> |
| Accrued Interest                                   | 10.0         |              |               | 8.1          |
| <b>Total Debt and Accrued Interest Outstanding</b> | <b>824.3</b> | <b>170.0</b> | <b>(84.2)</b> | <b>908.1</b> |

- 3.5.8 The Council raised £170.0m of new loans during the Year. Four long-term loans totalling £100.00m were raised with the PWLB on an Equal Instalment Principal (EIP) and Maturity structure. A further £70.0m of short-term loans were raised with various local authorities to support the Council's daily cashflow activity as cash balances had depleted. This borrowing requirement was driven by the demands of delivering the capital programme not already funded through grants, contributions, capital receipts or reserves. Local authority loans were raised at an average rate of 4.9% with an average duration of 365 days. The interest rates reflect the current rising interest rate environment.

3.5.9 The four PWLB loans raised for the General Fund consisted of the following:

- £30.0m 9.5-year EIP Loan at 4.90% drawn December 2024
- £43.0m 5-year EIP loan at 4.81% drawn February 2025
- £22.0m 2-year Maturity at 4.87% drawn March 2025
- £5.0m 2-year Maturity at 4.81% drawn March 2025

3.5.10 During 2024/25 the Council repaid £84.2m of loans that were held with the PWLB (£14.2m); and local authorities (£70.0m). The PWLB loans consisted of EIP loans whilst the local authority loans were temporary loans held for cashflow purposes. Overall, the total debt movement was an increase of £85.8m.

3.5.11 The PWLB HRA rate which is 0.4% below the certainty rate is available up to March 2026. This discounted rate is to support local authorities borrowing for the Housing Revenue Account and for refinancing existing HRA loans, providing a window of opportunity for HRA-related borrowing and to replace the Council's maturing HRA debt. No PWLB loans were drawn for the HRA during the reported period.

3.5.12 **Loan Restructuring:** No loans were restructured during 2024/25. The Council will continue to monitor and evaluate the opportunity to reschedule existing loans.

3.5.13 **LOBO Loans:** As at 31 March 2025 the Council was holding £59.5m of LOBO loans. There were no LOBO loans repaid in 2024/25 but there are five LOBO loans totalling £35.0m that are due for an interest rate review in 2025/26.

3.5.14 **Forward Borrowing:** There were no forward agreed loans as at 31 March 2025.

### 3.6 Maturity Profile of Debt

3.6.1 As at 31 March 2024 the Council had 72 loans spread over 50 years with the average maturity being 23.7 years. The maturity profile allows the Council to spread the risk of high interest rates when debt matures in any one year.

**Table 4: Debt maturity profile**

| <b>Maturity Profile at 31 March 2025 (£m)</b> | <b>2024/25</b> |
|---|----------------|
| <1 Year                                       | 130.5          |
| 1-2 Years                                     | 62.0           |
| 3-5 years                                     | 61.0           |
| 5-10 Years                                    | 97.3           |
| 10-15 Years                                   | 71.7           |
| 15-20 Years                                   | 62.0           |
| 20-25 Years                                   | 91.9           |
| 25-30 Years                                   | 41.6           |

|                         |              |
|-------------------------|--------------|
| 30-35 Years             | 171.0        |
| 35-40 Years             | 6.1          |
| 40-45 Years             | 5.0          |
| 45+ Years               | 100.0        |
|                         |              |
| <b>Debt outstanding</b> | <b>900.0</b> |

3.6.2 The Councils average debt pool rate at 31 March 2025 was 3.85%.

### 3.7 Capital Financing Requirement

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

3.7.2 The Council's external borrowing was £900.0m and was within the Prudential Indicator for external borrowing, namely, that borrowing should not exceed the original estimated gross loan CFR for 2024/25 of £1,442.1m. Actual loan CFR as at 31 March 2025 stood at £1,351.4m. This can be split between the General Fund (£1,008.0m) and the HRA (£343.4m). The difference between the Loan CFR and external loans is internal borrowing. Internal borrowing occurs due to timing differences when capital expenditure that is meant to be financed through external debt is instead paid for through cash resources that are intended for other purposes. Cash is replenished later. Internal borrowing at 31 March 2025 was £451.4m as shown in Table 5.

3.7.3 During the year there were a number of assets (land and buildings) that moved between the HRA and the General Fund for the purpose of regeneration and development. In total assets with a certified value of £29.9m were transferred from the General Fund to the HRA, and the respective CFRs were adjusted.

3.7.4 The General Fund CFR was reduced by £19.8m following the application of Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) charges and service loan repayments. MRP is discussed further below.

**Table 5: Capital Financing Requirement**

| Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) | 31/03/2024<br>(Draft Accounts) | 31/03/2024<br>Revised<br>(Audited Accounts) | 31/03/2025<br>(Draft Accounts) |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|--------------------------------|
|                                     | £m                             | £m  | £m                             |
| General Fund                        | 935.7                          | 957.8                                       | 1,015.1                        |
| Housing Revenue Account             | 300.9                          | 296.7                                       | 342.0                          |
| <b>Loan CFR</b>                     | <b>1,236.6</b>                 | <b>1,254.5</b>                              | <b>1,357.1</b>                 |
| Other Debt Liabilities              | 32.5                           | 32.5  | 28.5                           |
| <b>Total CFR</b>                    | <b>1,269.1</b>                 | <b>1,287.0</b>                              | <b>1,385.6</b>                 |
| External Borrowing                  | 814.3                          | 814.3                                       | 900.0                          |
| Internal Borrowing                  | 422.3                          | 440.2                                       | 457.1                          |



| <b>2024/25 Council Approved Limits (Capital Strategy)</b> |                |                |                |
|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Approved Operational Boundary Limit                       | 1,200.0        | 1,200.0        | 1,700.0        |
| Approved Authorised Limit                                 | 1,400.0        | 1,400.0        | 1,500.0        |
| Forecasted CFR  | <b>1,125.6</b> | <b>1,125.6</b> | <b>1,442.1</b> |

- 3.7.5 The movement in the Loan CFR of £96.9m between 31 March 2024 and 31 March 2025 can be explained in Table 6.

Table 6: Movement in CFR

|                                | <b>£m</b>    |
|--------------------------------|--------------|
| Opening Loan CFR April 2024    | 1,254.5      |
| Closing Loan CFR 31 March 2025 | 1,357.1      |
| <b>Change in Loan CFR</b>      | <b>102.6</b> |
|                                |              |
| Capital expenditure 2024/25    | 258.0        |
| Capital expenditure Financing  | (110.5)      |
| MRP                            | (24.9)       |
| Service Loans Repaid           | (0.9)        |
| I4B Technical Adjustment       | (19.1)       |
| Other                          |              |
| <b>Total Movements in CFR</b>  | <b>102.6</b> |

### 3.8 Minimum Revenue Provision

- 3.8.1 The Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) is the charge to revenue made in respect of paying off the principal sum of the borrowing undertaken to finance the capital programme. The statutory guidance provides options for calculating a charge that is considered prudent. The approach for this calculation is approved as part of the budget setting process each February by Full Council in the Minimum Revenue Provision Statement.
- 3.8.2 On 10th April 2024 amended legislation and revised statutory guidance were published on Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP). The majority of the changes take effect from the 2025/26 financial year, although there is a requirement that for capital loans given on or after 7th May 2024 sufficient MRP must be charged so that the outstanding CFR in respect of the loan is no higher than the principal outstanding less the Expected Credit Loss (ECL) charge for that loan.
- 3.8.3 The regulations also require that local authorities cannot exclude any amount of their CFR from their MRP calculation unless by an exception set out in law. Capital receipts cannot be used to directly replace, in whole or part, the prudent charge to revenue for MRP (there are specific exceptions for capital loans and leased assets).
- 3.8.4 The total MRP charge for 2024/25 was £19.8m and consisted of £15.1m for capital programme borrowings (historical supported borrowings and

unsupported borrowings); and £4.7m for finance leases. A further £0.9m was received by the Council for service loan repayments. Total debt repayments equated to £20.7m. The Council did not make any voluntary MRP during the year.

### 3.9 Cost of Borrowing

3.9.1 The Councils debt management and treasury investment income budget is managed centrally. Total budget available during the year inclusive of budget virements was £27.8m. At 31 March 2025 the total interest payable on the Council's debt portfolio and debt related expenses amounted to £35.3m. Total income generated from cash investments and service investments amounted to £17.8m. Net Interest was £17.5m. MRP due on capital programme borrowings equated to £15.1m (excluding PFI; finance leases and service loan repayments). A further £8.9m was used as Revenue Contributions to Capital Outlay to support the financing of the 2024/25 capital programme, resulting a total capital financing cost of £41.5m for the financial year. The budget variance of £13.7m was offset against a drawdown from the capital reserves. Details are provided in Table 7. Growth has been added to the capital financing budget in 2025/26 of circa £7m to recognise the increase in costs of delivering past and future capital programmes and ensuring the current five-year capital programme remains affordable. The increase in cost is due to the current high-interest rate environment; and legislative changes around MRP and the recognition that the two thirds of the Council's capital programme is dependent on debt finance.

Table 7: 2024/25 Capital financing

| Capital Financing Costs at Q4 (£m)         | 2024/25 |
|--|---------|
|  | Actual  |
| Total Gross External Debt Interest         | 32.4    |
|  |         |
| Total Interest Payable & Expenses          | 35.3    |
|  |         |
| Total Interest Receivable                  | (17.8)  |
| Net Interest                               | 17.5    |
| MRP (Excluding PFI)                        | 15.1    |
| Total Interest & MRP                       | 32.6    |
| Revenue Contributions to Capital Programme | 8.9     |
| Total Capital Financing Costs              | 41.5    |

3.9.2 Higher interest rates throughout 2024/25 have increased the cost of short-term loans. The Council pursued its strategy of keeping external borrowing lower than its underlying level by temporarily using cash held for other purposes, known as internal borrowing, in order to reduce risk and minimise the interest costs incurred from external borrowing.

3.9.3 Interest on treasury cash investments has been generated on cash balances held mainly within money market funds and investments with the Debt Management office. The Council has generated a rate of return of 4.53% for 2024/25 (5.31% for 2023/24). The reduction in the investment return reflects the decrease in the Bank of England's Bank Rate during 2024/25.

3.9.4 Investment income has also been generated on service investments that includes loans advanced to I4B and First Wave Housing, two wholly owned Council companies; Brent schools, Alperton Academy and the West London Waste Authority.

### 3.10 Investment Activity

3.10.1 CIPFA published a revised Treasury Management in the Public Services Code of Practice and Cross-Sectoral Guidance Notes on 20th December 2021. These define treasury management investments as investments that arise from the organisation's cash flows or treasury risk management activity that ultimately represents balances that need to be invested until the cash is required for use in the course of business.

3.10.2 The Council holds invested funds, representing income received in advance of expenditure plus balances and reserves. During the year, the Council's investment balances ranged between £8.9m and £131.6m due to timing differences between income and expenditure. The investment position is shown in table 8 below.

Table 8: Treasury investment activity

|  | 31-Mar-24   | Movement      | 31-Mar-25   |
|--|-------------|---------------|-------------|
|  | £m          | £m            | £m          |
| Local Authority and DMADF Deposits                             | 5.0         | (5.0)         | 0.0         |
| Money Market Funds   | 90.3        | (43.0)        | 47.3        |
| <b>Total Cash Investments<br/>(Excluding accrued interest)</b> | <b>95.3</b> | <b>(48.0)</b> | <b>47.3</b> |

3.10.3 The CIPFA Treasury Management Code requires local authorities to consider their counterparty policies in light of environmental, social and governance (ESG) information. The Council has regard to funds who have signed up to ESG related initiatives, including the UN Principles for responsible investment, the UK Stewardship Code, and the Net-Zero Asset Managers Initiative.

3.10.4 Both the CIPFA Code and government guidance require the Council to invest its funds prudently, and to have regard to the security and liquidity of its treasury investments before seeking the optimum rate of return, or yield. The Council's objective when investing money is to strike an appropriate balance between risk and return, minimising the risk of incurring losses from defaults and the risk of receiving unsuitably low investment income.

3.10.5 Increasing interest rates have led to improved returns on our short-dated holdings. At 31st March 2025, the Council achieved circa 4.53% from cash

investment holdings, which compares to compares to 5.31% a year earlier. Rates have decreased throughout the year in line with the decrease in Bank Rate. Appendix 3 details the average rate earned on investments against credit risk exposure.

3.10.6 Given the higher interest rate environment and the Council's need to hold cash for day-to-day requirements, deposits have been held in short term investments, providing the Council with improved liquidity. This has also led to increased investment income given the increased deposit rates that followed from changes in the Bank of England Bank Rate. There was also a focus on holding funds with high credit ratings, providing increased security over the Council's investment portfolio.

3.10.7 The Authority expects to be a long-term borrower and new treasury investments are therefore primarily made to manage day-to-day cash flows using short-term low risk instruments. The existing portfolio of money market funds will be maintained to allow access to cash to fund daily cashflow outgoings.

3.10.8 The progression of risk and return metrics are shown in the extracts from Arlingclose quarterly investment benchmarking in the table 9 below.

**Table 9: Investment benchmarking**

|                            | <b>Credit Score</b> | <b>Credit Rating</b> | <b>Bail-in Exposure</b> | <b>Weighted Average Maturity (days)</b> | <b>Rate of Return</b> |
|----------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|---|-----------------------|
| 31.03.2022                 | 5.06                | A+                   | 100%                    | 1                                       | 0.52%                 |
| 31.03.2023                 | 5.03                | A+                   | 100%                    | 1                                       | 4.08%                 |
| 31.03.2024                 | 4.91                | A+                   | 95%                     | 10                                      | 5.31%                 |
| 31.03.2025                 | 4.88                | A+                   | 100%                    | 1                                       | 4.53%                 |
| Similar Local Authorities* | 4.90                | A+                   | 73%                     | 13                                      | 4.80%                 |
| All Local Authorities*     | 4.77                | A+                   | 64%                     | 8                                       | 4.65%                 |

\*Arlingclose clients only

3.10.9 The Council's investment return and credit risk exposure is broadly the same as other London Councils, and better on average than all local authorities that are advised by Arlingclose. The exception to the 2024/25 benchmarking performance against other London Councils is that Brent is able to access its cash investments for liquidity purposes within 1 day whereas other London Councils require 13 days on average to access their cash investments. Other Local Authorities require on average 8 days. This reflects the type of investment instruments used by Brent in 2024/25 which was money market funds only. However, Brent has 100% Bail-in exposure risk which means that 100% of cash holdings is exposed to some monetary loss in the event that the underlying assets within the fund were to default. Other London Councils have diversified investments that reduce Bail-in risk to 73% through the use of Strategic Funds and other instruments. Other local authorities have a Bail-in risk exposure of 64%.

### **3.11 Non-Treasury Investment Activity**

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

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

3.11.2 The Council also held £252.6m of such investments as at 31 March 2024:

- Shareholding in subsidiaries: £36.4m (£36.4m in 2024/25).
- Loans to subsidiaries £216.2m (£216.3m in 2023/24).

3.11.3 I4B Holdings Limited is a company wholly owned by Brent Council that was incorporated on 16 December 2016. The primary purpose of the company is to deliver the housing options defined in the Temporary Accommodation reform plan. As of 31st March 2025, the Council had provided loan financing of £182.4m to i4B (£182.1m in 2023/24) which are secured against the company's properties. No loans were repaid in 2024/25 as the loans are arranged on a maturity structure and repayable at the end of the loan term. A new loan of £0.3m was raised in 2024/25. The Council received £5.3m (£5.3m in 2023/24) in interest for loans to I4B. The loans are secured against the properties held within the company. The Council also holds an equity investment of £36.4m (£36.4m in 2023/24) that comprises of £1 shares.

3.11.4 First Wave Housing (FWH) is a registered provider of housing in Brent and is wholly owned by Brent Council. FWH was formally known as Brent Housing Partnership (BHP). As of 31 March 2025, there were outstanding loans to Brent Council totalling £33.8m (£34.3m in 2023/24) which are secured against the properties held within the company. The Council received £0.7m in interest for loans to FWH (£0.7m in 2024/25) and a capital repayment of £0.4m (£0.4m in 2023/24). There were no new loans advanced to FWH.

3.11.5 These investments generated £6.0m of income for the Council in 2024/25 (£6.0m in 2023/24). This investment income covers the borrowing cost of investing in housing through wholly owned subsidiaries. These borrowing costs would be incurred by the Council regardless of the method through which the Council develops new housing; however, this is the vehicle of choice for such investments.

### **3.12 Treasury Management Training**

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

3.12.2 Training for Members is also kept under review. In 2024/25 Officers delivered two treasury management training sessions to the Audit and Standards Advisory Committee (July and December 2024) and one training session to all Members (February 2025)

### **3.13 Compliance**

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

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

## **4.0 Stakeholder and Ward Member Consultation and Engagement**

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

## **5.0 Financial Considerations**

5.1 The financial implications are noted in the report.

## **6.0 Legal Considerations**

6.1 The legal basis for producing council reports on its Treasury Management Activities is founded on a combination of statutory requirements and professional codes which ensure that local authorities manage their financial resources effectively, maintaining public trust and uphold the principles of good governance.

6.2 The Local Government Act 2003 and the Local Authorities (Capital Financing and Accounting) Regulations 2003 require that regular reports be submitted to the relevant Council Committee, ensuring transparency, accountability and prudent financial management. Brent Council has adopted the CIPFA Code of Practice for Treasury Management in the Public Sector and operates its treasury management service in compliance with this code. As such, this report forms an element of the Council's reporting structure which involves, in due course and following consideration by Cabinet, a report setting out the Council's

Treasury Management activity for the year to be submitted to Full Council for approval.

## **7.0 Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Considerations**

- 7.1 There are no equality, diversity and inclusion considerations arising from this report.

## **8.0 Climate Change and Environmental Considerations**

- 8.1 As part of the Council's Treasury Management Strategy, the Council will ensure an assessment is made with regards to environmental, social and governance (ESG) matters for the council's long-term investments. There were no new long-term investments made during 2024/25.

## **9.0 Human Resources/Property Considerations**

- 9.1 None other than outlined in the report.

## **10. Communication Considerations**

- 10.1 No additional communication strategies are required for this report.

### **Report sign off:**

***Minesh Patel***

Corporate Director, Finance and Resources

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## **Appendix 1: Economic Commentary 2024/25**

### **Economic Background**

Both the UK and US elected new governments during the period, whose policy decisions impacted the economic outlook. The Chancellor of the Exchequer delivered her Spring Statement in March 2025, following her Budget in October 2024. Based on the plans announced, the Office for Budget Responsibility downgraded its predictions for UK growth in 2025 to 1% from 2%. However, it upgraded its predictions for the four subsequent years. Inflation predictions for 2025 were pushed up, to 3.2% from 2.6%, before seen as falling back to target in 2027. The market reaction to the Spring Statement was more muted compared to the Budget, with very recent market turbulence being driven more by US trade policy decisions and President Trump.

After revising its interest rate forecast in November following the Budget, the council's treasury management advisor, Arlingclose, maintained its stance that Bank Rate will fall to 3.75% in 2025.

UK annual Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation continued to stay above the 2% Bank of England (BoE) target in the later part of the period. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) reported headline consumer prices at 2.8% in February 2025, down from 3.0% in the previous month and below expectations. Core CPI also remained elevated, falling slightly in February to 3.5% from 3.7% in January, just below expectations for 3.6% but higher than the last three months of the calendar year.

The UK economy Gross Domestic Product (GDP) grew by 0.1% between October and December 2024, unrevised from the initial estimate. This was an improvement on the zero growth in the previous quarter, but down from the 0.4% growth between April and June 2024. Of the monthly GDP figures, the economy was estimated to have contracted by 0.1% in January, worse than expectations for a 0.1% gain.

The labour market continued to cool, but the ONS data still require treating with caution. Recent data showed the unemployment rate rose to 4.4% (3mth/year) in the three months to January 2025 while the economic inactivity rate fell again to 21.5%. The ONS reported pay growth over the same three-month period at 5.9% for regular earnings (excluding bonuses) and 5.8% for total earnings.

The BoE's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) held Bank Rate at 4.5% at its March 2025 meeting, having reduced it in February. This follows earlier 0.25% cuts in November and August 2024 from the 5.25% peak. At the March MPC meeting, members voted 8-1 to maintain Bank Rate at 4.5%, with the one dissenter preferring another 25 basis points cut. The meeting minutes implied a slightly more hawkish tilt compared to February when two MPC members wanted a 50bps cut. In the minutes, the Bank also upgraded its Q1 2025 GDP forecast to around 0.25% from the previous estimate of 0.1%.

The February Monetary Policy Report (MPR) showed the BoE expected GDP growth in 2025 to be significantly weaker compared to the November MPR. GDP is forecast to rise by 0.1% in Q1 2025, less than the previous estimate of 0.4%. Four-quarter GDP growth is expected to pick up from the middle of 2025, to over 1.5% by the end of the

forecast period. The outlook for CPI inflation showed it remaining above the MPC's 2% target throughout 2025. It is expected to hit around 3.5% by June before peaking at 3.7% in Q3 and then easing towards the end of the year, but staying above the 2% target. The unemployment rate was expected to rise steadily to around 4.75% by the end of the forecast horizon, above the assumed medium-term equilibrium unemployment rate of 4.5%.

Arlingclose, the authority's treasury adviser, maintained its central view that Bank Rate would continue to fall throughout 2025. From the cuts in August and November 2024 and February 2025, which took Bank Rate to 4.50%, May is considered the likely month for the next reduction, with other cuts following in line with MPR months to take Bank Rate down to around 3.75% by the end of 2025.

The US Federal Reserve paused its cutting cycle in the first three months of 2025, having reduced the Fed Funds Rate by 0.25% to a range of 4.25%-4.50% in December, the third cut in succession. Fed policymakers noted uncertainty around the economic outlook but were anticipating around 0.50% of further cuts in the policy rate in 2025. Economic growth continued to rise at a reasonable pace, expanding at an annualised rate of 2.4% in Q4 2024 while inflation remained elevated over the period. However, growth is now expected to weaken by more than previously expected in 2025, to 1.7% from 2.1%. The uncertainty that President Trump has brought both before and since his inauguration in January is expected to continue.

The European Central Bank (ECB) continued its rate cutting cycle over the period, reducing its three key policy rates by another 0.25% in March, acknowledging that monetary policy is becoming meaningfully less restrictive. Euro zone inflation has decreased steadily in 2025, falling to 2.2% in March, the lowest level since November 2024. Over the current calendar year, inflation is expected to average 2.3%. GDP growth stagnated in the last quarter of the 2024 calendar year, after expanding by 0.4% in the previous quarter. For 2025, economic growth forecasts were revised downwards to 0.9%.

## **Financial Markets**

Financial market sentiment was reasonably positive over most of the period, but economic, financial and geopolitical issues meant the trend of market volatility remained. In the latter part of the period, volatility increased and bond yields started to fall following a January peak, as the economic uncertainty around likely US trade policy impacted financial markets. Yields in the UK and US started to diverge in the last month of the period, with the former rising around concerns over the fiscal implications on the UK government from weaker growth, business sentiment and higher rates, while the latter started falling on potential recession fears due to the unpredictable nature of policy announcements by the US President and their potential impact.

The 10-year UK benchmark gilt yield started the period at 3.94% and ended at 4.69%, having reached a low of 3.76% in September and a high of 4.90% in January in between. While the 20-year gilt started at 4.40% and ended at 5.22%, hitting a low of

4.27% in September and a high of 5.40% in January. The Sterling Overnight Rate (SONIA) averaged 4.90% over the period.

The period in question ended shortly before US President Donald Trump announced his package of 'reciprocal tariffs', the immediate aftermath of which saw stock prices and government bond yields falling and introduced further uncertainty over the economic outlook.

## **Credit Review**

In October, Arlingclose revised its advised recommended maximum unsecured duration limit on most banks on its counterparty list to six months. Duration advice for the remaining five institutions, including the newly added Lloyds Bank Corporate Markets, was kept to a maximum of 100 days. This advice remained in place at the end of the period.

Fitch revised the outlook on Commonwealth Bank of Australia (CBA) to positive from stable while affirming its long-term rating at AA-, citing its consistent strong earnings and profitability.

Other than CBA, the last three months of the period were relatively quiet on the bank credit rating front, with a small number of updates issued for a number of lenders not on the Arlingclose recommended counterparty list.

On local authorities, S&P assigned a BBB+ to Warrington Council, having previously withdrawn its rating earlier in 2024, and also withdrew its rating for Lancashire County Council due to the council deciding to stop maintaining a credit rating. However, it still holds a rating with Fitch and Moody's. Moody's withdrew its rating of Cornwall Council after it chose to no longer maintain a rating.

Credit default swap prices generally trended lower over the period but did start to rise modestly in March, but not to any levels considered concerning. Once again, price volatility over the period remained generally more muted compared to previous periods.

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

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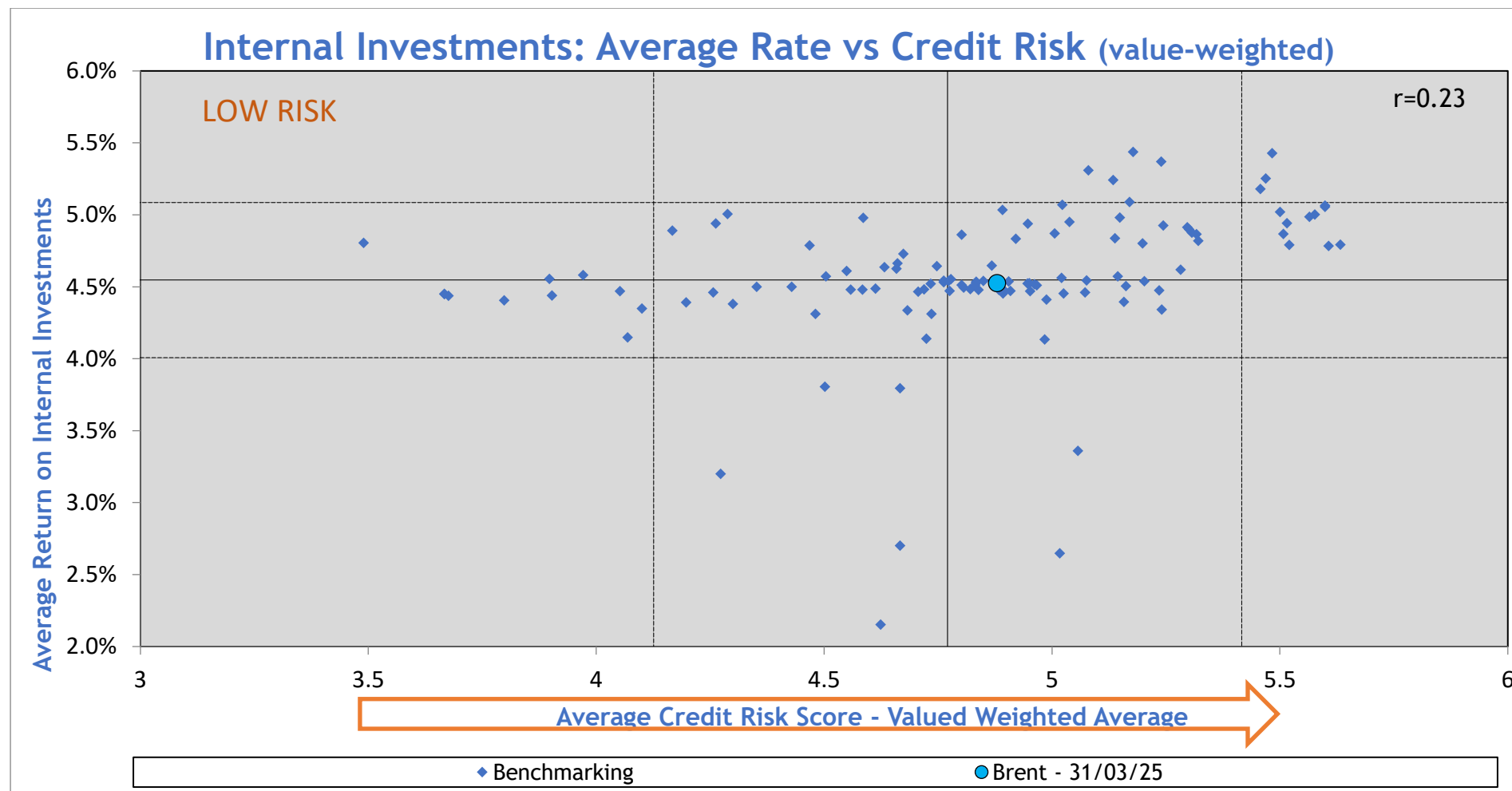
## Appendix 2

### Debt and Investment Portfolio 31/03/25

|  | Actual<br>Portfolio<br>as at 31<br>March<br>2025 (£m) | Average<br>Rate as<br>at 31<br>March<br>2025 |
|--|---|--|
| <b>External Borrowing:</b>                           |   |  |
| PWLB Maturity Loans                                  | 405.9   | 4.0%   |
| PWLB Equal Instalment Principal Loans                | 269.6   |  |
| Fixed Rate Market Loans                              | 95.0  | 2.8%   |
| LOBO Loans   | 59.5  | 4.5%   |
| Short-term Loans                                     | 70.0  | 5.3%   |
|  |   |  |
| <b>Total External Debt</b>                           | <b>900.0</b>  |  |
| Accrued Interest                                     | 8.0   | 0  |
|  |   |  |
| <b>Total External Borrowing and Accrued Interest</b> | <b>908.0</b>  |  |
|  |   |  |
| <b>Other Long-Term Liabilities:</b>                  |   |  |
| PFI  | 20.8  | 9.5%   |
| Finance Leases                                       | 7.7   | 4.1%   |
| <b>Total Long-term Liabilities</b>                   | <b>28.5</b>   |  |
| <b>Total Gross External Debt</b>                     | <b>936.5</b>  |  |
|  |   |  |
| <b>Investments:</b>                                  |   |  |
| Money Market Funds                                   | 47.3  | 4.5%   |
| Fixed Term Deposits – LA                             | 0.0   |  |
| <b>Total Investments</b>                             | <b>47.3</b>   |  |
| <b>Net Debt</b>                                      | <b>889.2</b>  |  |

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### Appendix 3: Internal Investments: Average Rate vs Credit Risk as at 31/03/2025



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

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## **Appendix Four –2024/25 Outturn Prudential Indicators**

### **Legislative Update**

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

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

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

### **Prudential Indicators**

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

Prudential indicators have been calculated using the capital programme data as at quarter four of 2024/25 (Outturn). Revised budgets have been provided from 2025/26 onwards.

| Capital Expenditure & Financing at Q4 2024/25 (£m) | 2023/24      | 2024/25      | 2025/26      | 2026/27      | 2027/28      | Total 2024/25-2027/28 |
|--|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-----------------------|
|  | Actual       | Actual       | Estimated    | Estimated    | Estimated    |                       |
| Corporate Landlord                                 | 10.0         | 11.6         | 13.0         | 36.1         | 24.3         | 85.0                  |
| Housing GF   | 111.2        | 98.3         | 97.7         | 36.5         | 2.8          | 235.3                 |
| Schools  | 11.7         | 22.1         | 23.0         | 28.6         | 5.8          | 79.5                  |
| Regeneration                                       | 4.5          | 34.6         | 119.4        | 39.5         | 26.1         | 219.7                 |
| Public Realm                                       | 25.1         | 18.1         | 25.0         | 4.7          | 1.6          | 49.3                  |
| South Kilburn                                      | 18.9         | 20.4         | 25.1         | 20.2         | 16.9         | 82.5                  |
| St Raphael's                                       | 0.6          | 0.2          | 3.5          | 3.9          | 12.5         | 20.0                  |
| HRA  | 31.0         | 33.6         | 39.8         | 86.6         | 28.0         | 187.9                 |
| <b>Total Capital Expenditure</b>                   | <b>213.0</b> | <b>238.9</b> | <b>346.4</b> | <b>256.0</b> | <b>118.0</b> | <b>959.3</b>          |
|  |              |              |              |              |              |                       |
| <b>Financed By:</b>                                |              |              |              |              |              |                       |
| Grants   | 57.3         | 52.0         | 33.2         | 32.9         | 7.1          | 125.2                 |
| Section 106  | 8.9          | 11.9         | 13.8         | 29.6         | 19.1         | 74.4                  |
| Capital Receipts                                   | 4.9          | 17.3         | 36.3         | 29.9         | 35.4         | 118.9                 |
| Earmarked Reserves                                 | 0.9          | 1.2          | 0.9          | 0.9          | 0.9          | 3.9                   |
| Major Repairs Reserve                              | 10.4         | 16.6         | 11.1         | 0.0          | 0.0          | 27.7                  |
| Revenue Contributions                              | 9.1          | 11.4         | 0.6          | 0.6          | 0.6          | 13.2                  |
| Borrowing  | 121.5        | 128.5        | 250.5        | 162.1        | 54.9         | 595.8                 |
| <b>Total Capital Financing</b>                     | <b>213.0</b> | <b>238.9</b> | <b>346.4</b> | <b>256.0</b> | <b>118.0</b> | <b>959.3</b>          |

#### (a) Capital Financing Requirement (CFR)

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

| CFR Movement at Q4<br>2024/25 (£m) | 2023/24        | 2024/25        | 2025/26        | 2026/27        | 2027/28        |
|------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
|                                    | Actual         | Actual         | Estimated      | Estimated      | Estimated      |
| <b>Opening CFR</b>                 | <b>1,144.0</b> | <b>1,254.5</b> | <b>1,357.2</b> | <b>1,580.0</b> | <b>1,712.9</b> |
| Capital Expenditure                | 213.0          | 238.9          | 346.4          | 256.0          | 118.0          |
| External Resources                 | (66.2)         | (63.9)         | (47.0)         | (62.5)         | (26.2)         |
| Internal Resources                 | (25.3)         | (46.5)         | (48.9)         | (31.4)         | (36.9)         |
| MRP                                | (18.1)         | (24.9)         | (26.7)         | (28.3)         | (28.5)         |
| Capital Loans Repaid               | (0.9)          | (0.9)          | (1.0)          | (1.1)          | (1.3)          |
| Use of Capital Receipts            | 0.0            | 0.0            | 0.0            | 0.0            | 0.0            |
| Accounting Adjustments             | 8.0            | 0.0            | 0.0            | 0.0            | 0.0            |
| <b>Closing CFR</b>                 | <b>1,254.5</b> | <b>1,357.2</b> | <b>1,580.0</b> | <b>1,712.7</b> | <b>1,738.1</b> |

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

## **(b) Gross Debt and the Capital Financing Requirement**

To ensure that over the medium term, debt will only be for a capital purpose, the Council should ensure that debt does not, except in the short term, exceed the total of capital financing requirement in the preceding year plus the estimates of any additional capital financing requirement for the current and next two financial years. This is a key indicator of prudence. The table below shows that the Council expects to comply with this recommendation during 2024/25.

| Gross Debt & the<br>Capital Financing<br>Requirement at Q4<br>2024/25 (£m) | 2023/24 | 2024/25 | 2025/26   | 2026/27   | 2027/28   |
|--|---------|---------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
|  | Actual  | Actual  | Estimated | Estimated | Estimated |
| External Loans   | 814.3   | 900.0   | 1,201.1   | 1,292.8   | 1,302.5   |
| PFI & Leases   | 36.2    | 32.5    | 28.5      | 24.7      | 22.7      |
| Total External Debt<br>Liabilities   | 850.5   | 932.5   | 1,229.6   | 1,317.5   | 1,325.2   |
| Internal Borrowing   | 404.1   | 424.7   | 350.5     | 395.4     | 412.9     |
| Capital Financing<br>Requirement   | 1,254.5 | 1,357.2 | 1,580.0   | 1,712.9   | 1,738.1   |

## **(c) Liability Benchmark**

The liability benchmark is an important tool to help establish whether the Council is likely to be a long-term borrower or long-term investor in the future, and so shape its strategic focus and decision making. The liability benchmark itself represents an estimate of the cumulative amount of external borrowing the Council must hold to fund

its current capital and revenue plans while keeping treasury investments at the minimum level required to manage day-to-day cash flow.

| <b>Liability Benchmark at Q4 2024/25 (£m)</b> | <b>2023/24</b> | <b>2024/25</b> | <b>2025/26</b>   | <b>2026/27</b>   | <b>2027/28</b>   |
|---|----------------|----------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
|   | <b>Actual</b>  | <b>Actual</b>  | <b>Estimated</b> | <b>Estimated</b> | <b>Estimated</b> |
| CFR   | 1,254.5        | 1,357.2        | 1,580.0          | 1,712.9          | 1,738.1          |
| LOBO Loans                                    | 59.5           | 59.5           | 24.5             | 15.0             | 5.0              |
| Non LOBO Loans                                | 754.8          | 840.5          | 801.8            | 745.1            | 715.4            |
| Balance Sheet Resources                       | (490.1)        | (689.2)        | (688.2)          | (687.2)          | (686.2)          |
| Net Loan Requirement                          | 719.0          | 852.7          | 806.3            | 740.1            | 700.4            |
| Plus Liquidity Allowance                      | 20.0           | 20.0           | 20.0             | 20.0             | 20.0             |
| Liability Benchmark                           | 739.0          | 872.7          | 826.3            | 760.1            | 720.4            |

#### **(d) Authorised limit and Operational Boundary for External Debt**

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

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

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

| <b>Authorised Limit at Q4 2024/25 (£m)</b> | <b>2023/24</b> | <b>2024/25</b> | <b>2025/26</b> | <b>2026/27</b> | <b>2027/28</b> |
|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Authorised Limit                           | 1,700.0        | 1,700.0        | 1,800.0        | 1,900.0        | 1,900.0        |
| Operational Boundary                       | 1,500.0        | 1,500.0        | 1,600.0        | 1,700.0        | 1,700.0        |

The Corporate Director for Finance and Resources confirms that there were no breaches to the Authorised Limit and the Operational Boundary during Quarter four of 2024/25.

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

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

| Upper Limits on one-year revenue impact of a 1% movement in interest rates on Maturing Debt at Q4 2024/25 (£m) | 2024/25        | 2024/25 |
|--|----------------|---------|
|  | Approved Limit | Actual  |
| Upper limit on one-year revenue impact of a 1% rise in interest rates  | 5.0            | 0.8     |
| Compliance with limits:  |                | Yes     |
| Upper limit on one-year revenue impact of a 1% fall in interest rates  | 5.0            | (0.8)   |
| Compliance with limits:  |                | Yes     |

**(f) Maturity Structure of Fixed Rate Borrowing**

This indicator is to limit large concentrations of fixed rate debt needing to be replace at times of uncertainty over interest rates. The Council uses the option date as the maturity date for its LOBO loans. Loans based on existing debt portfolio as at the reported period.

| Maturity Structure of Fixed Rate Borrowing at Q4 2024/25 | Upper Limit | Lower limit | 2024/25                          | 2024/25                          | 2024/25                |
|--|-------------|-------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------|
|  |             |             | Forecast Borrowing at 31.03.2025 | Forecast Borrowing at 31.03.2025 | Compliance with limits |
|  | %           | %           | £m                               | %                                |                        |
| Under 12 months  | 40.0        | 0.0         | 130.5                            | 14.5%                            | Yes                    |
| 12 months & within 24 months                             | 40.0        | 0.0         | 62.0                             | 6.9%                             | Yes                    |
| 24 months and within 5 years                             | 40.0        | 0.0         | 61.0                             | 6.8%                             | Yes                    |
| 5 years and within 10 years                              | 60.0        | 0.0         | 97.3                             | 10.8%                            | Yes                    |
| 10 years and within 20 years                             | 75.0        | 0.0         | 133.7                            | 14.8%                            | Yes                    |
| 20 years and within 30 years                             | 75.0        | 0.0         | 133.5                            | 14.8%                            | Yes                    |
| 30 years and within 40 years                             | 75.0        | 0.0         | 177.1                            | 19.7%                            | Yes                    |

|               |      |     |              |               |     |
|---------------|------|-----|--------------|---------------|-----|
| Over 40 years | 75.0 | 0.0 | 105.0        | 11.7%         | Yes |
| <b>Total</b>  |      |     | <b>900.0</b> | <b>100.0%</b> |     |

### (g) Ratio of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream

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

| <b>Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream at Q4 2024/25</b> | <b>Limit</b>   | <b>Actual</b>  | <b>Forecast</b> | <b>Forecast</b> | <b>Forecast</b> |
|--|----------------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
|  | <b>2024/25</b> | <b>2024/25</b> | <b>2025/26</b>  | <b>2026/27</b>  | <b>2027/28</b>  |
| Financing Costs (Interest & MRP) (£m)                      | 39.1           | 32.6           | 40.5            | 46.1            | 46.2            |
| Net Revenue Stream (£m)                                    | 383.3          | 387.0          | 431.4           | 448.7           | 465.8           |
| Proportion of net revenue stream (%)                       | 10.2%          | 8.4%           | 9.4%            | 10.3%           | 9.9%            |

Financing costs can be further broken down as follows.

| <b>Capital Financing Costs at Q4 (£m)</b>  | <b>2023/24</b> | <b>2024/25</b> | <b>2025/26</b>   | <b>2026/27</b>   | <b>2027/28</b>   |
|--|----------------|----------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
|  | <b>Actual</b>  | <b>Actual</b>  | <b>Estimated</b> | <b>Estimated</b> | <b>Estimated</b> |
| Total Gross External Debt Interest         | 30.3           | 32.4           | 51.5             | 57.5             | 59.9             |
|  |                |                |                  |                  |                  |
| Total Interest Payable & Expenses          | 33.6           | 35.3           | 53.3             | 58.7             | 61.0             |
|  |                |                |                  |                  |                  |
| Total Interest Receivable                  | (24.5)         | (17.8)         | (29.9)           | (32.0)           | (35.9)           |
| Net Interest                               | 9.1            | 17.5           | 23.4             | 26.7             | 25.2             |
| MRP (Excluding PFI)                        | 13.4           | 15.1           | 17.1             | 19.4             | 21.1             |
| <b>Total Interest &amp; MRP</b>            | <b>22.4</b>    | <b>32.6</b>    | <b>40.5</b>      | <b>46.1</b>      | <b>46.2</b>      |
| Revenue Contributions to Capital Programme | 8.0            | 8.9            | 8.6              | 3.5              | 3.5              |
| <b>Total Capital Financing Costs</b>       | <b>30.4</b>    | <b>41.5</b>    | <b>49.1</b>      | <b>49.6</b>      | <b>49.7</b>      |

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

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

| Upper Limit for Total Principal Sums invested over 364 Days at Q4 2024/25 (£m) | 2023/24  | 2023/24 | 2024/25  | 2024/25 |
|--|----------|---------|----------|---------|
|  | Approved | Actual  | Approved | Actual  |
| Upper Limit for Total Principal Sums Invested Over 364 Days                    | 50.0     | 0.0     | 50.0     | 0.0     |

### (i) Security

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

| Credit Risk Indicator at Q4 2024/25 | 2023/24  | 2023/24 | 2024/25  | 2024/25 |
|-------------------------------------|----------|---------|----------|---------|
|                                     | Approved | Actual  | Approved | Actual  |
| Portfolio average credit rating     | A        | A+      | A        | A+      |

### (j) Liquidity

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

| Liquidity Risk Indicator at Q4 2024/25 (£m) | 2023/24  | 2023/24 | 2024/25  | 2024/25 |
|---|----------|---------|----------|---------|
|   | Approved | Actual  | Approved | Actual  |
| Total cash available within 3 months        | 20.0     | 95.3    | 20.0     | 47.3    |

### (k) Investment Forecast

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

| Total Investment Exposure Indicator at Q4 2024/25 (£m) | 2023/24      | 2024/25      | 2025/26      | 2026/27      | 2027/28      |
|--|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
|  | Actual       | Actual       | Estimated    | Estimated    | Estimated    |
| Treasury management cash investments                   | 95.3         | 47.3         | 20.0         | 20.0         | 20.0         |
| Service investments                                    | 285.6        | 284.6        | 323.4        | 322.2        | 321.0        |
| Commercial investments: Property                       | 0.0          | 0.0          | 0.0          | 0.0          | 0.0          |
| <b>Total Investments</b>                               | <b>380.9</b> | <b>331.9</b> | <b>343.4</b> | <b>342.2</b> | <b>341.0</b> |
| Commitments to lend                                    | 50.0         | 50.0         | 50.0         | 50.0         | 50.0         |
| <b>Total Exposure</b>                                  | <b>430.9</b> | <b>381.9</b> | <b>393.4</b> | <b>392.2</b> | <b>391.0</b> |

Service investments are further broken down in the table below.

| Loans & Investments for service purposes: Category of borrower at Q4 2024/25 (£m) | 2023/34      | 2024/25        | 2024/25      | 2025/26      | 2026/27      | 2027/28      |
|---|--------------|----------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
|   | Actual       | Approved Limit | Actual       | Estimated    | Estimated    | Estimated    |
| I4B Subsidiary Loans  | 182.1        | 400.0          | 182.4        | 222.4        | 222.4        | 222.4        |
| I4B Subsidiary Equity   | 36.4         |                | 36.4         | 36.4         | 36.4         | 36.4         |
| FWH Subsidiary Loans  | 34.3         |                | 33.8         | 33.4         | 32.9         | 32.5         |
| Local Businesses  | 0.2          | 10.0           | 0.0          | 0.0          | 0.0          | 0.0          |
| Schools, Academies and Colleges   | 17.9         | 55.0           | 17.6         | 17.4         | 17.1         | 16.8         |
| West London Waste Authority   | 14.8         | 20.0           | 14.4         | 13.9         | 13.5         | 13.0         |
| Local Charities   | 0            | 10.0           | 0            | 0            | 0            | 0            |
| Housing Associations  | 0            | 50.0           | 0            | 0            | 0            | 0            |
| Local Residents   | 0            | 5.0            | 0            | 0            | 0            | 0            |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>285.6</b> | <b>550.0</b>   | <b>284.6</b> | <b>323.4</b> | <b>322.2</b> | <b>321.0</b> |

### (I) Investment Funding

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



| Investments Funded by Borrowing at Q4 2024/25 (£m) | 2023/24      | 2024/25      | 2025/26      | 2026/27      | 2027/28      |
|--|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
|  | Actual       | Actual       | Estimated    | Estimated    | Estimated    |
| I4B Loans  | 182.1        | 182.4        | 222.4        | 222.4        | 222.4        |
| I4B Equity   | 36.4         | 36.4         | 36.4         | 36.4         | 36.4         |
| First Wave Housing (FWH)                           | 34.3         | 33.8         | 33.4         | 32.9         | 32.5         |
| <b>Total Service investments</b>                   | <b>252.7</b> | <b>252.6</b> | <b>292.1</b> | <b>291.7</b> | <b>291.2</b> |
| <b>Total Funded by Borrowing</b>                   | <b>252.7</b> | <b>252.6</b> | <b>292.1</b> | <b>291.7</b> | <b>291.2</b> |

### (m) Investment Rate of Return

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

| Investments net rate of return at Q4 2024/25 | 2023/24 | 2024/25 | 2025/26   | 2026/27   | 2027/28   |
|--|---------|---------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
|  | Actual  | Actual  | Estimated | Estimated | Estimated |
| Treasury management investments              | 5.31%   | 4.53%   | 3.94%     | 3.75%     | 3.75%     |
| Service investments                          | 2.4%    | 2.4%    | 2.6%      | 2.6%      | 2.6%      |

### (n) Other Investment Indicators

| Other investment indicators           | 2023/24 | 2024/25 | 2025/26   | 2026/27   | 2027/28   |
|---------------------------------------|---------|---------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
|                                       | Actual  | Actual  | Estimated | Estimated | Estimated |
| External Debt (Loans)                 | 814.3   | 900.0   | 1,220.0   | 1,311.6   | 1,321.0   |
| Net Service Expenditure               | 358.4   | 387.0   | 431.4     | 448.7     | 465.8     |
| Debt to net service expenditure ratio | 2.3     | 2.3     | 2.8       | 2.9       | 2.8       |

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