



## LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

### MINUTES OF THE RESOURCES AND PUBLIC REALM SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD IN THE CONFERENCE HALL, BRENT CIVIC CENTRE ON 21 JANUARY 2026 AT 6.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor Conneely (Chair), Councillor Kennelly (Vice-Chair) and Councillors, S Butt, Dixon, Long, Lorber, Mitchell, and Molloy.

#### 1. **Apologies for absence and clarification of alternate members**

Councillor Conneely (as Chair) welcomed members of the Scrutiny Committee to the meeting.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Shah and Lesley Smith.

Apologies were also recorded from Councillor Maurice during the meeting.

#### 2. **Declarations of interests**

There were no declarations of interest made during the meeting.

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

No deputations were received at the meeting.

#### 4. **Minutes of the previous meeting**

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the previous meetings held on Tuesday 4 November 2025 be approved as a correct record.

#### 5. **Matters arising (if any)**

There were no matters arising raised at the meeting.

#### 6. **Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee Work Programme Report**

The Chair began by reporting that Councillor Moeen (Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Cohesion) had been appointed Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Cohesion, taking over from Councillor Farah and replacing the previous Safer Communities, Jobs and Skills portfolio.

The Chair confirmed that Councillor Mitchell had stepped aside as Chair in favour of Councillor Molloy in relation to the Kerbside Management Scrutiny Task Group. It was also noted that the agenda item titled 'Kerbside Management Scrutiny Task Group Findings' had been rescheduled from the meeting on 21 January 2026 to the meeting on 2 April 2026.

The Chair additionally reported that the agenda item titled 'Community Engagement and Consultation' had been rescheduled from the meeting on 21 January 2026 to the meeting on 2 April 2026.

It was further highlighted that all changes were highlighted within the Work Programme report and corresponding Appendix.

Having reviewed the work programme report, it was **RESOLVED** to note the Resources & Public Realm Scrutiny Committee work programme for the 2025/26 Municipal Year.

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

The Chair advised the Committee of several key changes reflected within the Scrutiny Recommendations Tracker and confirmed that the Committee had now received long outstanding information previously requested in relation to I4B and First Wave Housing, as well as the information concerning the Green Skills Centre. The Chair further reported that the Committee had received the update on the Quarter 2 financial forecast, together with the information that the Committee had requested on a previous agenda item concerning the Voluntary Sector in Brent, Social Value and Procurement.

The Chair, however, highlighted that several requests remained outstanding from the Committee's meeting in February 2025 relating to Commissioning and Procurement, and Community Wealth Building and Social Value. The Chair further explained that a number of items continued to be outstanding from the Voluntary Sector in Brent, and Social Value and Procurement discussions held in November 2025. The Chair expressed concern that there had been significant delays in receiving responses to a number of these matters.

Having introduced the report, the Chair then moved on to invite questions and comments from the Committee in relation to the Scrutiny Recommendation's Tracker, with the following comments and issues discussed:

- As an initial query, the Chair questioned what the key barriers had been to the Committee receiving requested information in a timely manner and how the department and the Committee might work together more effectively in order to prevent further delays. In offering his apologies for the delays in the Committee's receipt of the information requested, Rhodri Rowlands (Director of Strategic Commissioning Capacity Building and Engagement) stated that the February 2025 recommendations would be addressed in detail at a later date. Regarding the recommendations from the November 2025 meeting, shared with the department in writing, he explained that had been a misunderstanding of the timeframes and stated that he was not entirely clear which recommendations and information requests remained outstanding at this time. It was highlighted that a number of key initiatives discussed extensively in November 2025, including the Procurement Strategy, the Social Value Policy and the implementation of both, were designed to address the recommendations and areas for improvement.
- Details were sought on which areas of concern were the most significant in relation to the outstanding recommendations identified. In response, Rhodri Rowlands (Director of Strategic Commissioning Capacity Building and

Engagement) clarified that the principal concerns related to the February 2025 recommendations. It was stated that the initial delays were attributable to himself and the service and stemmed from an underestimation of the scale of data cleansing and data analysis required to present the information in the format requested by the Committee. Rhodri Rowlands reflected that there were lessons to be learned regarding operational viability and communication at the outset of the information gathering and information sharing process associated with the Committee's recommendations. It was explained that, in some cases, the service's systems had not stored data in a format that was readily accessible. Reference was made to updates previously provided to the Committee in February 2025 and in November 2025, which had outlined the Procurement Improvement Programme and the proposals to transition to a new contract management system. It was additionally confirmed that additional capacity had been brought in to support data cleansing, and that these combined factors had caused earlier time estimates to fall short. It was also stated that a full response was anticipated within the next four weeks. It was further reported that spend analysis had been commissioned from the Centre for Local Economic Strategies as part of the Procurement Improvement Programme and the Community Wealth Building work. It was additionally stated that the findings would support the outstanding requirements and that relevant updates would be incorporated into the analysis. In concluding the response, Rhodri Rowlands reiterated that no single factor had caused the delays, but that operational viability at the outset had been the predominant issue.

- Clarification was sought on whether there would be an increase in resourcing within the service, or if the key matter was ensuring clearer communication and more realistic timescales when recommendations were set. In response, Rhodri Rowlands (Director of Strategic Commissioning Capacity Building and Engagement) noted that the previous viability issues had largely been addressed through significant improvements to the data position. It was confirmed that increasing capacity had been a core priority within the procurement improvement work and that additional staff had been brought into the service, including staff dedicated to data analysis and data management. Confidence was expressed that the service would not face the same difficulties in future.
- The Chair emphasised that the Strategic Commissioning Capacity Building and Engagement department was responsible for several highly significant decisions and policies which the Committee viewed as priorities for both the Council and its future direction. The Chair noted that discussions could also occur outside formal meetings regarding how both parties might work together more effectively, particularly during the work planning process after May 2025. In response, Rhodri Rowlands (Director of Strategic Commissioning Capacity Building and Engagement) confirmed his full support for this approach and acknowledged the wider strategic context. It was noted that several requests from the November 2025 meeting would be addressed through annual reports and updates on procurement and social value which would be presented to the Committee in due course.

Having reviewed the Scrutiny Recommendations Tracker, it was **RESOLVED** to note the progress of the previous recommendations, suggestions for improvement, and information requests of the Committee.

## 8. **Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) in Brent Report**

Councillor Moeen (Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Cohesion) was invited to introduce the report relating to Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) in Brent, which provided a detailed account of the scale, nature, and management of antisocial behaviour (ASB) in the borough, enabling the Committee to assess performance, understand key responsibilities and identify areas for improvement. In presenting the report, the strong progress that had been made in tackling antisocial behaviour across Brent and the significant challenges that the service continued to manage were highlighted. Members were advised that the report demonstrated the increased use of antisocial behaviour tools and powers in responding to perpetrators who often presented with complex needs. It was observed that this reflected the issues most frequently raised by residents, namely repeat antisocial behaviour offenders within neighbourhoods who were frequently vulnerable individuals experiencing housing insecurity, mental health difficulties, and drug and alcohol dependency. It was emphasised that the report detailed the clear and effective network of partnerships that the Council had utilised in order to address residents' safety concerns while ensuring that offenders received the support necessary to rebuild their lives. It was explained that the effective use of statutory powers enabled housing services, environmental health, community safety, safeguarding, youth services and the police to work collaboratively to address both the immediate impact of antisocial behaviour on residents and the underlying causes that contributed to such behaviour. It was further stated that strong multi-agency partnerships remained central to the Council's approach to reducing antisocial behaviour and protecting local communities. The report also highlighted the detrimental impact that antisocial behaviour had upon communities. It was noted that antisocial behaviour caused residents to feel unsafe and could lead to further criminality. It was further stated that antisocial behaviour created an environment of fear, which was particularly felt by women and girls. Attention was then drawn to the successful bid for Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy (NCIL) funding that would enable the commissioning of patrol officers to support efforts to reduce antisocial behaviour occurring during night time hours. It was additionally stated that this would strengthen the Council's presence on the ground and enhance its ability to respond swiftly to matters as they arose. It was confirmed that the new patrol officers were expected to become operational by early next month.

In continuing the presentation, Nigel Chapman (Corporate Director Children Young People and Community Development) stated that antisocial behaviour remained a major issue for local residents and represented a significant concern that affected their daily lives. Hope was expressed that the Committee would recognise, through the report, that the increase in the number of fixed penalty notices and closure orders provided clear evidence of the impact of the ASB team's work. It was emphasised that, in relation to vulnerable residents who required both support and intervention, the report demonstrated how risk had been effectively managed and how the lives of residents had been improved as a result of the interventions undertaken.

Kibibi Octave (Director Community Development) further added that the report highlighted the importance placed by both the ASB team and the Council on understanding how antisocial behaviour affected residents and how addressing such behaviour contributed to increased public confidence in the Council's work to reduce crime and tackle antisocial behaviour. It was noted that the case studies included within the report provided an indication of the manner in which the ASB team addressed the issues presented to them, and that the work undertaken did not rely solely upon the front facing enforcement methods that were more commonly visible to the public. It was emphasised that the case studies illustrated the broader and more holistic approaches used by the service to support residents and reduce harm within communities.

Having thanked Councillor Moeen, Nigel Chapman and Kibibi Octave for introducing the report, the Chair then moved on to invite questions and comments from the Committee in relation to the Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) in Brent Report, with the following comments and issues discussed:

- As an initial query, clarification was sought around whether there was a standalone Anti-social Behaviour Strategy or whether antisocial behaviour activity was primarily being delivered through the Safer Brent Community Safety Strategy. In response, Kibibi Octave (Director Community Development) clarified that antisocial behaviour was addressed within the overarching Safer Brent Strategy and was identified as one of the priorities under that strategy. It was explained that the guiding principle running throughout the strategy was early intervention and prevention, which included the Council's approach to antisocial behaviour. It was highlighted that one of the priorities within the strategy was the protection of those who were most vulnerable, whether they were victims or, in some instances, perpetrators of antisocial behaviour. It was confirmed that the Council did not have a standalone strategy for antisocial behaviour, unlike the approach taken for VAWG. It was added that this was a matter that could be considered further and potentially discussed with the Safer Brent Partnership, should they consider a standalone antisocial behaviour strategy to be required.
- The Chair sought details on how officers distinguished between increases in reporting that reflected greater public confidence in reporting incidents and increases that indicated a genuine rise in the prevalence of antisocial behaviour. The extent to which the increase in recorded incidents reflected improved reporting as opposed to increased incidence of antisocial behaviour was questioned. In response, Simon Egbor (Head of Community Safety and Prevention) noted that the evaluation undertaken by officers indicated an overall increase in the reporting of antisocial behaviour. It was stated that environmental antisocial behaviour represented the highest concentration of cases, as reflected in the committee report. It was explained that the Council had operated Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPOs) for several years and that these orders were being expanded. This expansion had increased the range of prohibitions and had resulted in the need for greater enforcement activity, which in turn had led to an increase in the number of reports received. It was additionally highlighted that this increased reporting was considered positive, as it enabled the Council to better identify and respond to areas of concern. It was added that there remained further

work to be undertaken in assessing the impact of enforcement interventions, support measures and analytical processes, particularly in relation to reducing issues in identified hot spot areas. Members heard that the Safer Brent Strategy would conclude towards the end of the current year, and that issues concerning impact measures and the effectiveness of enforcement and support approaches would be set out in the annual report scheduled to be presented to the scrutiny committee in April 2026.

- As a further query, members drew attention to page 75 within the committee report concerning the number of reports made to the Council in 2024 and 2025. It was noted that reports relating to Environmental ASB (street based) had increased from 98 in 2024 to 212 in 2025. Clarification was sought on the reason for this significant increase. In response, Nigel Chapman (Corporate Director Children Young People and Community Development) opined that the increase reflected improved communication about the ways in which residents could report concerns. It was added that the Council's responsiveness in dealing with environmental antisocial behaviour, including clean-up work, had encouraged greater public engagement. It was noted that the increase from 98 to 212 was still relatively modest compared with the size of the Brent population and that overall numbers could be considerably higher. It was anticipated that numbers were likely to rise further given the focus on public engagement through the Council's campaign in this area. Noah Okunromade (Principal ASB Localities Officer) further added that improved reporting mechanisms, including the increased use of online platforms such as Fix My Street, had contributed significantly to the rise in reports relating to environmental antisocial behaviour.
- Members expressed disappointment that the report did not contain further analysis of the reasons for increases in specific categories of antisocial behaviour. It was noted that while a heat map provided a ward-based breakdown, there was no accompanying analysis explaining why particular increases had occurred. Details were sought on where this evidence could be found and, if not currently available, when it would be obtained, emphasising that understanding these trends was essential to reducing antisocial behaviour. In response, Nigel Chapman (Corporate Director Children Young People and Community Development) explained that in some areas, officers could identify clear reasons for increases. As an example, he cited the rise in fixed penalty notices, which could be attributed to focused enforcement activity by officers in locations such as Wembley Park. It was acknowledged that it was more difficult to determine the underlying cause of increases in other areas, and that it was not always clear whether rises reflected greater prevalence of antisocial behaviour or improved reporting by residents. It was noted that the ASB team intended to examine these issues further in advance of the annual report that would be presented to the committee in April 2026, in order to provide a more detailed understanding of trends and shifts. Kibibi Octave (Director Community Development) further explained that understanding the underlying factors required partnership working across the Safer Brent Partnership. It was highlighted that issues such as substance misuse, overcrowding, and concentrations of houses in multiple occupation were known to contribute to patterns of antisocial behaviour. It was stated that while heat maps and data analysis could identify patterns, understanding the causes required

information from partners as cases often evolved over time. It was emphasised that this analysis would be strengthened through further partnership engagement and incorporated into future Safer Brent Partnership data and reporting. Simon Egbor (Head of Community Safety and Prevention) additionally stated that drug related activity and labour disputes had remained consistent top categories of antisocial behaviour over several years. It was highlighted that environmental antisocial behaviour had become the highest category in the current reporting period, reflecting enforcement activity linked to Public Spaces Protection Orders. It was added that changes in working patterns following the Covid pandemic had resulted in more residents spending time at home, which had affected tolerance levels and influenced reporting patterns.

- Further information was sought by Members regarding what the success rate was in relation to the return of income from the issuing of fixed penalty notices, noting that this information had not been included within the committee report. In response, Noah Okunromade (Principal ASB Localities Officer) explained that Public Realm colleagues were responsible for issuing fixed penalty notices. Where a recipient had an identified vulnerability, they were referred to the appropriate support services. Where no vulnerability was identified, officers escalated matters to prosecution if fines remained unpaid. Simon Egbor (Head of Community Safety and Prevention) added that the service did not yet hold the percentage return rate. It was noted that there was generally a good level of compliance, and that in cases of systematic nonpayment individuals were considered for prosecution. It was additionally noted that proportionality was always taken into account when determining enforcement action and that referrals to support services were made where underlying issues were identified. Nigel Chapman (Corporate Director Children Young People and Community Development) further added that the latest data received indicated that the Council was recovering approximately 60% of fixed penalty notice income. He advised that further analysis would be undertaken as the collection and enforcement of fixed penalty notices sat within another directorate. It was confirmed that more detailed information would be obtained and shared with the committee following the meeting.
- The Chair then queried what types of cases were progressed to prosecution for consideration in court. In response, Councillor Krupa Sheth (Cabinet Member for Public Realm & Enforcement) explained that only higher-level offences were taken to court, as pursuing minor matters would not be a proportionate or efficient use of resources.
- In querying the apparent inconsistency in enforcement between the north and the south of the borough as shown in the fixed penalty notice data contained on pages 125 to 129 of the committee report, members sought clarification on the reasons for these discrepancies. In response, Simon Egbor (Head of Community Safety and Prevention) explained that there was a high level of enforcement activity in certain areas, particularly around Wembley Park, due to the significant events portfolio in that location. Members were advised that discussions were ongoing with Public Realm colleagues regarding how enforcement coverage could be more evenly distributed across the borough, particularly with the anticipated introduction

of additional Antisocial Behaviour officers. It was observed that data showed a higher prevalence of antisocial behaviour crime reports in the south of the borough, although such issues also occurred in the north. As an example, reference was made to persistent issues with street drinking around Ealing Road, which had resulted in increased enforcement. Members heard that the service was seeking to increase patrol flexibility and to encourage greater involvement from safer neighbourhood teams in enforcement activity. The need for a more equitable distribution of foot patrols across the borough was emphasised. It was also noted that a QR system was in place which enabled residents to report issues in real time. This intelligence informed the deployment of patrols and supported efforts to ensure fair coverage across the borough.

- The Chair further questioned what capacity existed within the team and within Council resources more broadly to deliver the level of enforcement currently seen in Wembley across the whole borough. In response, Nigel Chapman (Corporate Director Children Young People and Community Development) explained that additional officers funded through Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy (NCIL) allocations were expected to commence the following month. The intention was to use the Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy funding which arose from development in Wembley Park to expand enforcement presence across the borough. He advised that the aim was for officers to be visible in those areas that had historically experienced less enforcement activity. It was confirmed that this approach formed part of the broader strategy to ensure that resources were targeted in the areas where they were most needed.
- Clarification was sought on how long the work undertaken by the Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy (NCIL) funded officers would continue. In response, Kibibi Octave (Director Community Development) explained that while the work would run for one year from February 2026, the programme would provide an evidence base to support future funding bids, including the possibility of submitting a growth bid. It was stated that the information gathered over the course of the year would help shape future proposals and determine the longer-term approach. Councillor Moeen (Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Cohesion) added that there was a recognised need for increased visibility and enforcement in the borough. It was noted that the programme would operate as a pilot and that its performance would inform decisions about how the Council might sustain the work in future. It was further stated that the Council would explore the use of its own resources or alternative income generating measures to ensure continuity where necessary.
- Members queried how many NCIL officers there would be. In response, confirmation was provided that the intention was to recruit 4 officers. Simon Egbor (Head of Community Safety and Prevention) added that Public Realm colleagues currently had approximately 18 patrol officers across the borough. It was noted that their shift patterns meant that they finished at approximately 8PM or 9PM. It was explained that the service intended to distribute enforcement activity more evenly, increase the generation of fines, and expand borough wide coverage. It was additionally noted that there were numerous prohibitions and therefore significant opportunities to enhance

enforcement activity, improve fine collection, and use data to inform decisions.

- In noting the absence within the committee report of information relating to the impact of improperly parked dockless bikes, including those left on pavements and within residents parking bays, members were keen to seek details on what actions were being taken where bikes were not parked in the designated bays around the borough. In response, Councillor Krupa Sheth (Cabinet Member for Public Realm & Enforcement) explained that consultations were underway regarding the Lime bike bays and that the Council intended to complete the installation of bays shortly. Members were advised that once the bays were in place riders would be unable to end their journeys outside a designated bay. It was confirmed that, should issues persist, the Council would consider further actions to hold the operator accountable. It was further stated that the Council was also exploring a model similar to that adopted by Hackney Council for their mobility bike provider. Members were additionally informed that a procurement exercise might be undertaken in the future to ensure a more stringent framework and to secure appropriate returns for the borough. It was confirmed that the priority was to complete the installation of the docking bays and then monitor their effectiveness.
- Members enquired about the timeline for the installation of the docking bays, noting that concerns regarding dockless bikes had persisted for several months. In response, Councillor Krupa Sheth (Cabinet Member for Public Realm & Enforcement) explained that only one officer was responsible for progressing this work and that the department faced resourcing constraints. It was noted that the pace of delivery was affected by objections arising during consultations, particularly where ward councillors or residents did not support proposed bay locations. This required the team to continually reassess locations and recommence consultation. It was confirmed that the programme was in its final stages and that an update would be provided once all bays had been installed. Although a definitive completion date was unable to be provided, Councillor Krupa Sheth expressed the expectation that the bays would be installed within the next couple of months and in any case before Spring 2026.
- Assurance was then sought on whether, aside from fixed penalty notices, the Council operated any other schemes, and how learning was captured, including lived experience, to inform different approaches to the wide range of antisocial behaviour issues, some of which could escalate into criminal behaviour. In response, Kibibi Octave (Director Community Development) explained that the Council operated a dedicated antisocial behaviour team alongside the core community safety team, which undertook significant commissioning work for interventions. It was stated that enforcement alone was not sufficient for long term solutions, and that support and diversion, for both young people and adults, were essential elements of the approach. It was noted that both teams reported to Simon Egbor (Head of Community Safety and Prevention). Reference was made to the Community Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (CMARAC), which consistently reviewed joint intervention options and support pathways where antisocial behaviour concerns had been identified. It was emphasised that the Council

did not adopt an exclusively enforcement led approach but maintained a continual support offer. Simon Egbor (Head of Community Safety and Prevention) further added that multi agency operations were not solely enforcement based. It was explained that teams typically included outreach providers such as Via for substance misuse support, St Mungo's for rough sleeping issues, the police, and other commissioned organisations depending on the needs of the area. It was stressed that the Council adopted a holistic model, recognising issues such as the lack of safe spaces for children after school, which could contribute to heightened perceptions of crime and antisocial behaviour. Members heard that part of the response involved supporting providers to deliver training and employment pathways and other interventions. It was noted that the Council commissioned a range of providers and was seeking greater flexibility in service mobilisation to respond rapidly to increases in antisocial behaviour or serious violence. It was confirmed that a tender exercise was underway, with specifications designed to ensure providers could deploy flexibly across the borough.

- Members further commented on the value of victim impact statements but noted that the committee report did not include information regarding victim satisfaction or how trust was being built with residents. In response, Simon Egbor (Head of Community Safety and Prevention) highlighted that internal discussions had been held with housing colleagues regarding satisfaction measures. Members noted that the Council was exploring how best to survey residents and understand the impact of interventions. It was further stated that annual surveys had previously been undertaken, and that the service intended to rebuild and embed stronger satisfaction monitoring. It was additionally noted that this work would be reflected in future reports to the Committee.

At this point in the proceedings, the Chair took the opportunity to introduce a representative of the Brent Youth Parliament (BYP) and invited them to put forward their questions, particularly in relation to matters affecting schools, with the following points noted:

- As an initial query, the Brent Youth Parliament representative questioned what assurance could be provided that Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPOs) and closure orders were not disproportionately impacting individuals with protected characteristics such as age or complex needs. It was further queried whether the data presented by officers on antisocial behaviour enforcement specifically tracked age ranges or other protected characteristics in order to identify any potential discrimination. In response, Noah Okunromade (Principal ASB Localities Officer) explained that the Council had conducted an Equality Impact Assessment to ensure that protected characteristics were considered when Public Spaces Protection Orders were issued. It was stated that where a fixed penalty notice was issued to an individual who appeared to be vulnerable, the matter was escalated to him so that checks could be undertaken to ensure that vulnerable individuals were not inappropriately fined. Simon Egbor (Head of Community Safety and Prevention) further added that the Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) was reviewed annually to ensure that enforcement activity remained equitable and proportionate. It was acknowledged that officers faced challenges in gathering demographic information during enforcement

interactions, as in some cases individuals declined to provide such details. It was confirmed that efforts were underway to improve data collection and that where harder to reach groups were affected, bespoke interventions would be developed. It was emphasised that the Equality Impact Assessment examined all protected characteristics and considered both positive and negative impacts, and that the assessment was reviewed in light of enforcement data.

- Further information was then sought by the Brent Youth Parliament representative around whether demographic data collected for equality monitoring purposes would be publicly available. The Chair additionally queried what data informed the Equality Impact Assessment if officers were not consistently recording age, ethnicity, or other demographic characteristics. In response, Simon Egbor (Head of Community Safety and Prevention) informed that officers were advised to capture demographic information although individuals were not legally required to provide all the details requested. It was confirmed that individuals were required by law to provide their name and address, and that non-compliance constituted an offence which could be enforced by the police. Members were further advised that officers were being encouraged to collect as much demographic information as possible in order to ensure that enforcement activity did not result in the over representation or under representation of specific groups. Noah Okunromade (Principal ASB Localities Officer) added that the Equality Assessment was publicly available and that the relevant demographic data regarding enforcement would be shared with the Committee.
- The Chair sought details on which age group represented the largest proportion of recipients of fixed penalty notices and which age group was most frequently sanctioned under Public Spaces Protection Orders. In response, Simon Egbor (Head of Community Safety and Prevention) advised that this information would need to be examined in greater detail and would be brought back to the Committee as part of the annual report. Nigel Chapman (Corporate Director Children Young People and Community Development) further added that a greater depth of data collection and analysis was required to inform future work. The need to gather as much contextual and background information as possible was emphasised, noting that disclosure from individuals could at times be limited.
- In noting that reference to the removal of safer schools officers was not included within the section of the committee report titled 'Future Challenges and Opportunities', the Brent Youth Parliament representative questioned what impact the removal of safer schools officers had on antisocial behaviour enforcement involving young people and how this was being monitored. In response, Nigel Chapman (Corporate Director Children Young People and Community Development) reported that the withdrawal of safer schools' officers was a decision made by the Metropolitan Police. It was noted that while not all schools had previously had a dedicated officer, several secondary schools within the borough did. The Metropolitan Police had decided to redeploy officers from schools into neighbourhood policing teams. It was acknowledged that councils, including Brent, had expressed concerns about this change but confirmed that the decision rested with the Metropolitan Police. Nigel Chapman advised that police representatives

would be attending the Resources and Public Realm Committee meeting in April 2026 to present the Safer Brent Report, where this matter could be raised directly.

- As an additional issue highlighted, the Brent Youth Parliament representatives queried the reference to youth programmes on page 106 of the committee report and noted that no specific information was provided on the referral pathways for young people or on the level of council funding allocated to these programmes. In response, Nigel Chapman (Corporate Director Children Young People and Community Development) conveyed that the Youth Justice Service operated a range of interventions and programmes for young people assessed as being at higher risk of offending. It was reported that a new programme was due to commence in April 2026 in partnership with Camden and Westminster, jointly funded by the John Lyons Trust and the three councils. This would provide cross border activities for children and young people and would utilise facilities including the Oxford Kilburn Youth Trust in Kilburn (OK Club). It was further stated that the Council had invested approximately £4 million of Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy (NCIL) funding into five youth providers to improve youth facilities over the next two years. It was clarified that this funding was directed to improving buildings and facilities rather than individual programmes, although this investment would allow providers to redirect their own resources towards activities and support for young people.
- As a final issue raised, the Brent Youth Parliament representatives sought details on whether the Council tracked how allocated funds were ultimately used. In response, Nigel Chapman (Corporate Director Children Young People and Community Development) confirmed that a project team oversaw the allocation of funding and that clear monitoring arrangements were in place. It was noted that the Youth Strategy, which had been developed with input from young people, included an action plan relating to facilities and spaces, and that progress was monitored. It was additionally noted that the Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee also held the service to account for delivery of the Youth Strategy. Councillor Moeen (Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Cohesion) additionally noted that representatives of the Metropolitan Police would be present at the Metropolitan Police engagement event on 26 January 2026 at Brent Civic Centre and that this would present an opportunity for Brent Youth Parliament members to raise concerns about the removal of safer schools officers directly with police representatives. The Brent Youth Parliament representative confirmed that they normally attended the Brent Safer Neighbourhood Board meetings and would therefore be present at the upcoming engagement event.
- Returning to the issue of multi-agency partnership work, members queried the extent to which local councillors were able to feed local intelligence into multi agency partnership work undertaken through the Community Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (CMARAC) and the Brent Joint Action Group (BJAG), as highlighted in the committee report. In response, Noah Okunromade (Principal ASB Localities Officer) confirmed that councillors were able to feed intelligence into the Brent Joint Action Group. Members were advised that such contributions were valuable in identifying hotspots,

as issues raised through this route could be discussed at Brent Joint Action Group meetings, which included police and partner agencies. It was also noted that antisocial behaviour officers were available for the reporting of cases and that Members Enquiries provided alternative means through which issues could be raised. It was explained that some matters were subsequently considered through the multi-agency panel. Kibibi Octave (Director Community Development) added that Member Enquiries remained one of the key channels for intelligence. Members were further advised that residents also made use of the noise reporting app and the online antisocial behaviour reporting tool, and that repeated reports concerning a particular street or block were prioritised for consideration by the Brent Joint Action Group. It was additionally stated that, during a recent handover meeting with Councillor Moeen (Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Cohesion), discussions had taken place regarding how best to enhance engagement with ward councillors. It was explained that the Safer Brent Partnership had moved to an area-based model six months previously, aligned with the Brent Connects areas, enabling more detailed analysis at a neighbourhood level. It was indicated that consideration was being given to inviting ward councillors to receive updates relating to their respective ward areas or enabling Councillor Moeen, as Lead Member for Community Safety and Cohesion, to feedback key points and invite councillors to submit issues for discussion. It was emphasised that the intention was to build more consistent channels through which councillors could contribute intelligence.

- Questions were raised around how the Council dealt with issues that spanned multiple Brent Connects areas, noting that some matters involved several wards and more than one Brent Connects area. In response, Nigel Chapman (Corporate Director Children Young People and Community Development) explained that the Council sought to avoid artificial boundaries and confirmed that where an incident crossed ward or area lines, the relevant ward councillors would be notified. Members were advised that the Brent Connects structure was used primarily to analyse broader themes within an area rather than individual cases, which were addressed directly with the relevant ward councillors on an as required basis. Members further suggested that, given the importance of community intelligence, it would be valuable to engage not only ward councillors but also ward panel chairs, who had extensive community networks. It was further questioned whether opportunities could be explored to include ward panel chairs, should the terms of reference be reviewed. In considering the response, Kibibi Octave (Director Community Development) advised that Gill Close, Chair of the Safer Neighbourhood Board, held strong relationships with ward panel chairs, and that consideration could be given to briefing them in the same manner as councillors and enabling them to contribute intelligence relating to Brent Connects areas.
- Members queried the cross connection between community safety and housing services and sought further detail on how the two areas worked together. In response, Simon Egbor (Head of Community Safety and Prevention) explained that the team held a service level agreement to manage medium and high-risk cases for Brent Housing Services and that a service level agreement with Private Housing Services (PHS) had recently been established. Members noted that both housing services acted as

primary investigators where antisocial behaviour originated from those premises. It was confirmed that where a hotspot met the required threshold, it would be referred to the Brent Joint Action Group for coordinated action, with representatives from Private Housing Services and Brent Housing Services participating as appropriate. It was noted that Noah Okunromade (Principal ASB Localities Officer) accompanied private housing officers on joint visits to review licensing conditions, assess compliance and address any issues with landlords, which ensured a more integrated approach. It was emphasised that the team had invested in dedicated officer capacity for this work, as a service level agreement with Private Housing Services had not existed previously. Noah Okunromade (Principal ASB Localities Officer) further stated that representatives from Private Housing Services attended the Brent Joint Action Group and were therefore able to support the development of joint actions to resolve issues.

- The Chair sought details on when the service level agreement with the private rented sector team began, to which Noah Okunromade (Principal ASB Localities Officer) confirmed that it had commenced in 2025. Simon Egbor (Head of Community Safety and Prevention) additionally noted that the service level agreement with Brent Housing Services had been in place since 2018 and that the arrangement with Private Housing Services had been in place for just over one year. The Chair raised related questions around whether the service level agreement with the private rented sector team had been effective. In considering the response, Noah Okunromade (Principal ASB Localities Officer) stated that the arrangement had been successful, as it allowed for joint working and joint visits which had not been possible previously. It was explained that antisocial behaviour officers and enforcement officers were now able to undertake joint inspections, identify compliance issues and engage directly with landlords to resolve problems. Kibibi Octave (Director Community Development) further added that challenges often arose from the behaviour of other tenants within properties. It was stated that the support provided by housing colleagues had been positive, but a key issue under discussion was how the Council could strengthen its engagement with managing agents, particularly where landlords passed responsibility for property management to agents. The importance of ensuring that managing agents did not place tenants who were likely to cause antisocial behaviour was emphasised. Simon Egbor (Head of Community Safety and Prevention) additionally noted that the Antisocial Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014 provided tools and powers that could be used to enforce obligations on landlords. Members were advised that housing providers had been issued with notices where they had failed to take reasonable steps to address issues, for example, failing to secure bin chutes. It was confirmed that officers were being encouraged to consider applying these powers where necessary.
- Details were sought on whether the Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) licensing teams routinely consulted the antisocial behaviour teams before issuing a licence, specifically to determine whether an applicant was a suitable licensee and whether a property or landlord had any history of antisocial behaviour. Members further asked whether licensing officers engaged with other relevant council departments to ensure that properties or landlords linked to antisocial behaviour were appropriately identified. In

response, Simon Egbor (Head of Community Safety and Prevention) highlighted that this was an area that could be strengthened. Members were advised that there was an opportunity to review the service level agreement, including the volume of cases, the level of engagement, and the processes in place concerning the selection of landlords operating within the borough. However, it was confirmed that consultation of this nature was not currently undertaken. Councillor Muhammed Butt (Leader of the Council & Cabinet Member for Safer Communities, Jobs & Skills) added that housing associations operated their own antisocial behaviour teams and that the Council worked collaboratively with them to ensure a holistic response to issues. Reference was made to work with L&Q in the Tokyngton ward, where significant efforts were being made to gather evidence and data of sufficient quality to meet the threshold required for court action. The challenges that arose when working with organisations that did not utilise their own teams fully was acknowledged. It was also explained that Councillor Fleur Donnelly-Jackson (Cabinet Member for Housing) held monthly meetings with major housing associations in Brent to raise concerns regarding antisocial behaviour, and that senior level engagement with providers such as Quintain took place regularly, enabling issues to be escalated swiftly.

- The Chair posed the question of whether housing associations were sufficiently utilising their antisocial behaviour resources and whether the Council was absorbing costs that fell within the responsibility of those associations. In response, Councillor Muhammed Butt (Leader of the Council & Cabinet Member for Safer Communities, Jobs & Skills) opined that he did not consider the Council to be bearing an inappropriate cost, as the residents affected were Brent residents irrespective of the type of accommodation in which they lived. It was emphasised that it was incumbent upon the Council to work with partners regardless of cost considerations. It was further advised that Quintain and local housing associations also contributed resources to address antisocial behaviour, and that partnership working was not one sided.
- Clarification was sought by members on what other tools were available to address antisocial behaviour aside from closure orders. In response, Noah Okunromade (Principal ASB Localities Officer) explained that the tools used depended on the nature and severity of the antisocial behaviour. It was advised that closure orders were only one option and that the Council also utilised injunctions and a range of other tools and powers. Simon Egbor (Head of Community Safety and Prevention) further added that the evidence gathering process could influence the timescale for action, particularly where the removal of an individual from their home for a period of up to three months, for example, was being considered. It was noted that witness statements and accumulated evidence of antisocial behaviour or crime were often required. The use of community protection warnings and community protection notices were highlighted, which could be issued quickly and flexibly. It was also explained that intelligence gathering could be challenging in some estates, particularly where camera infrastructure was limited. Work was underway with housing colleagues to explore opportunities for integrating estate-based cameras into the Council's control room to enhance monitoring. It was further emphasised that antisocial behaviour tools operated on a civil standard and that officers were encouraged to intervene

as early as possible. The importance of proportionality was stressed, particularly with younger individuals, to avoid unnecessary criminalisation that could hinder future opportunities. Reference was also made to work on target hardening and the need to prioritise resources based on prevalence and data. It was additionally noted that closure notices could be cancelled prior to court proceedings where appropriate and that the legislation provided flexibility to act swiftly. The vital role of the police in identifying individuals and the importance of aligning council resources, patrol teams and police body worn camera evidence to support early intervention was also highlighted.

- The Chair queried whether confidentiality requirements hindered the Council's ability to reassure residents that appropriate action and support were being provided, and whether improvements could be made in how the Council communicated outcomes while still protecting vulnerable individuals. In response, Kibibi Octave (Director Community Development) informed that ward panels provided a suitable forum for sharing high level information without breaching confidentiality. It was explained that while the Council could not share personal details regarding individual cases, it was possible to inform residents that a multi-agency response had been undertaken, involving partners such as health services, which often provided reassurance. It was noted that some residents welcomed this approach while others were less concerned with the process and more focused on resolving the problem. It was highlighted that this type of communication demonstrated a partnership approach. It was also explained that the Safer Neighbourhood Board held the police to account and provided oversight of partnership activity, and that while the Council was not responsible for the Board's operations, it worked closely with it. It was suggested that the Safer Brent Partnership Annual Report could include a paragraph summarising the work of ward panels and their role in addressing crime in Brent. In continuing the response, Nigel Chapman (Corporate Director Children Young People and Community Development) added that the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) funded the work of neighbourhood panels and required the submission of monitoring returns. It was suggested that the Safer Brent Partnership report could include a summary of this information to demonstrate the effectiveness of the panels and areas for further focus.
- Details were sought by members on what safeguards had been in place to ensure that no inaccurate or malicious reporting occurred and to minimise any legal risk to the Council arising from any failure to follow established procedures correctly. In response, Noah Okunromade (Principal ASB Localities Officer) advised that all tools and powers utilised by Anti-Social Behaviour officers had been discussed with him for clarity. It was stated that, where any uncertainty arose regarding the proportionality of escalating the use of such tools and powers, legal services would be consulted to provide appropriate guidance. It was confirmed that this procedure acted as a safeguard to ensure that the Council took the correct steps and did not place itself at risk. Simon Egor (Head of Community Safety and Prevention) further confirmed that any closure order case had required ratification by the legal team before being submitted to the court. It was reported that quality checks had also been undertaken when considering safeguards for young people. It was added that, in relation to investigation processes and the

victim and offender profile, substantive evidence was required prior to taking any enforcement action. In considering the response received by officers, a Member referred to a recent live example in which a Community Protection Notice had been issued and subsequently withdrawn following a meeting with the legal team. The Member questioned what checks had been undertaken prior to issuing such a notice. In response, Simon Egbor (Head of Community Safety and Prevention) noted that he had been aware of the case and explained that in fact, a Community Protection Warning had been issued as opposed to a Community Protection Notice. It was clarified that the Community Protection Warning in question had been issued by the Nuisance Control Team rather than by the Anti-Social Behaviour Team. It was emphasised that one of the safeguards in place had been the assessment of proportionality prior to any escalation. It was clarified that a Community Protection Warning was not a legal notice and constituted only an initial warning intended to advise an individual of required behavioural changes before any formal notice might be issued. It was confirmed that this represented a first step intervention. Kibibi Octave (Director Community Development), in continuing the response, added that Fixed Penalty Notices, Community Protection Notices and other enforcement mechanisms were issued by multiple departments, including parks and neighbourhood patrol officers. It was suggested that the Public Space Protection Order working group could consider this matter further, as consistent cross departmental understanding was required. It was stated that the point would be taken forward to ensure that officers across the Council exercised full consideration before issuing any warnings or notices. In referring to a recent Cabinet report relating to the corporate peer challenge, Councillor Muhammed Butt (Leader of the Council & Cabinet Member for Safer Communities, Jobs & Skills) additionally noted that the report had highlighted organisational silos. Assurance was provided that he and the Council Management Team (CMT) had been reviewing how these silos could be reduced and how teams could be encouraged to work more effectively across departments.

- Members sought clarification regarding which operational pressures were most critical to be addressed in order to improve the service as quickly as possible. In response, Nigel Chapman (Corporate Director Children Young People and Community Development) reported that partnership working had presented ongoing challenges, although strong operational arrangements with the police had been maintained. It was noted that issues had arisen due to neighbourhood and borough boundaries, particularly at the Westminster and Camden borders, and within the Kilburn area. It was confirmed that officers, including Simon Egbor (Head of Community Safety and Prevention) had been working to manage the complexities created by three borough command units operating within one locality. It was further reported that resources remained a challenge, noting that the size of the team had been lean and had consequently limited the ability to undertake detailed analysis of work and its impact. It was further identified that income generation through Fixed Penalty Notices and the sustainability of the new enforcement team would form a key future consideration. Simon Egbor (Head of Community Safety and Prevention) further added that the historical staffing model had provided Anti-Social Behaviour officer presence only from Monday to Friday, with officers finishing work after 18:00PM. It was outlined that peaks in antisocial behaviour had typically occurred during late evenings

and weekends. It was reported that the service had been addressing this challenge by expanding operational coverage to 01:00AM, which had improved visibility and capacity to manage incidents. Members were further advised that, although closure orders could be put in place, they were ineffective if they could not be adequately monitored, particularly where unauthorised re-entry into blocks occurred. The importance of continued engagement with police regarding resource prioritisation was stressed, recognising that serious and violent crime would take precedence. It was confirmed that officers were lobbying the police to ensure that antisocial behaviour commitments were met on the ground. It was further emphasised that the Council also needed to strengthen its own visibility and presence, including joint working with VIA and other outreach providers.

- Members questioned why, despite rising Anti-Social Behaviour reports and increased case complexity, no Anti-Social Behaviour case reviews had met the statutory threshold. It was queried whether this reflected effective early intervention or whether barriers to escalation remained. In response, Noah Okunromade (Principal ASB Localities Officer) stated that early intervention had been the primary factor. It was explained that when cases had been presented for review, officers had first sought information from Registered Providers or internal Council services to establish what action had already been taken. In most cases, evidence had shown that steps were in progress. It was noted that the gathering of evidence for enforcement action could take time and that, when officers had been satisfied that activity was underway, an appropriate response had been provided. It was added that Noah Okunromade routinely assigned a named officer in his responses to ensure that residents with ongoing concerns had a direct point of contact. It was confirmed that residents had generally been satisfied with the responses provided. Kibibi Octave (Director Community Development) additionally noted that the pattern of cases indicated evidence of prevention. It was noted that the challenge lay in maintaining consistent monitoring of early intervention outcomes. It was stated that the public health early intervention model was well embedded, but the service needed to improve how it collated and celebrated the success of cases that had not escalated. Simon Egbor (Head of Community Safety and Prevention) further explained that Anti-Social Behaviour case reviews were governed by a prescribed statutory criteria determining which cases could progress. The importance of resident satisfaction monitoring was emphasised and confirmed that the team intended to undertake regular surveys to analyse service impact. It was stressed that the team had taken prompt action in accordance with customer service expectations, resulting in early intervention being applied in many cases. It was noted that the review process was publicly accessible through the Council's website. It was additionally reported that more work was required to gauge resident perceptions of performance and to use evaluation feedback to refine service delivery.
- Details were sought on whether any benchmarking had been undertaken with other boroughs. In response, Noah Okunromade (Principal ASB Localities Officer) confirmed that he attended the Anti-Social Behaviour Forum, through which case levels and practice with colleagues from other authorities were benchmarked. Simon Egbor (Head of Community Safety

and Prevention) added that the annual report could include comparative data on case reviews for further transparency.

- Members questioned how serious a problem Houses in Multiple Occupation had been for the borough. In response, Noah Okunromade (Principal ASB Localities Officer) reported that Houses in Multiple Occupation had been one of the principal reasons for establishing a new service level agreement. It was explained that, during the previous year, Houses in Multiple Occupation had been identified as a significant issue. Following this, officers had worked with Private Housing Services and had undertaken joint operations to visit properties and address antisocial behaviour concerns. In considering the response, a Member expressed concern that, despite licensing requirements, many Houses in Multiple Occupation in Brent remained unlicensed or unidentified. The Member highlighted that Houses in Multiple Occupation generated a range of issues beyond antisocial behaviour and questioned why the Council did not temporarily halt all further approvals of Houses in Multiple Occupation until outstanding problems had been fully addressed. The Member argued that the continued conversion of larger properties into Houses in Multiple Occupation reduced the availability of suitable accommodation for homeless households and urged the Council to adopt a temporary suspension of the approval of Houses in Multiple Occupation until all existing Houses in Multiple Occupation had been identified and appropriately managed. The Chair responded, clarifying that the Houses in Multiple Occupations known to the Council were those that had applied for licences or those that had been subject to review.
- The Chair noted previous evidence suggesting a high number of unlicensed Houses in Multiple Occupation within the borough and queried why additional resources had not been directed to identifying these properties and further asked why antisocial behaviour data identifying Houses in Multiple Occupation hotspots had not been routinely shared with licensing colleagues. In response, Kibibi Octave (Director Community Development) confirmed that information was shared routinely. It was explained that when a report of a House in Multiple Occupation was received, officers first checked whether a licence existed and initiated enforcement action where necessary. Members were informed that Housing Services were represented on the Safer Brent Partnership and analysed the prevalence of Houses in Multiple Occupation. It was further noted that areas with Edwardian and Victorian properties were more likely to contain Houses in Multiple Occupation. It was also confirmed that Willesden and Kilburn had shown the highest levels of demand. It was acknowledged that unlicensed properties were harder to identify unless reported by the community.
- A Member suggested that, given the housing crisis and the shortage of large accommodation for homeless households, the Council should suspend the approval of new Houses in Multiple Occupation for a period of 12 months until the situation had been stabilised. In response, Councillor Muhammed Butt (Leader of the Council & Cabinet Member for Safer Communities, Jobs & Skills) explained that a property could only be converted into a House in Multiple Occupation following an application for planning permission. Members were advised that a suspension on approvals would be a retrograde step and could deter compliant landlords who had invested in

meeting required standards. It was emphasised that the Council acted robustly against illegal conversions and confirmed that several properties had been returned to single dwelling use following enforcement action. It was added that the Council had successfully prosecuted landlords who had illegally converted properties and that significant fines had been issued. Members were referred to examples published on the Council's website. It was further stated that the Renters Rights Act 2025 had provided new powers that would support continued enforcement activity.

In seeking to bring consideration of the item to a close, the Chair thanked officers and members for their contributions towards scrutiny of the Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) in Brent Report. As a result of the outcome of the discussion, the following information requests and suggestions for improvement identified were AGREED:

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS TO CABINET:**

- (1) Develop a stand-alone Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) strategy structured around a clear three-pillar approach encompassing early interventions, formal enforcement and criminal justice interventions, and financial, housing, and social care-related interventions.
- (2) Strengthen planning policies relating to the location, concentration, design and management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs), enabling planning decisions to better consider and mitigate the risk of anti-social behaviour.

#### **SUGGESTIONS FOR INFORMATION:**

- (1) Strengthen liaison and information-sharing between anti-social behaviour, housing and neighbourhoods, and licensing enforcement teams, ensuring that relevant intelligence on landlord management history is consistently considered when applying licensing criteria, and that any concerns are appropriately flagged for continued oversight where licences are granted.

*Prior to considering the suggestion for improvement detailed above (as subsequently amended following consultation with the Chair) Councillor Lorber suggested the following as an alternative action - that the Committee consider a proposal to halt the approval of new Houses in Multiple Occupation for a period of 12 months until the housing crisis and the shortage of large accommodation for homeless households had been stabilised. Upon being put to the vote, the proposal was declared lost and therefore not agreed and the Committee RESOLVED to approve the suggestion for information as set out above.*

- (2) Review the current prioritisation and resourcing of licensing enforcement to ensure it is sufficient to address the scale and impact of anti-social behaviour associated with poor property management.
- (3) Improve the consistency and equity of anti-social behaviour enforcement across the borough, ensuring that Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) and related enforcement powers are applied fairly and proportionately, and that residents receive a comparable standard of service regardless of location.

- (4) Subject to evaluation of impact and value for money, explore and pursue all appropriate funding options, including Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy (NCIL)(where available, to sustain out-of-hours ASB enforcement activity beyond the initial 12-month NCIL-funded pilot period.
- (5) Actively encourage strategic multi-agency ASB partnerships (e.g. Community Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (CMARAC), Borough Joint Action Group (BJAG)) to strengthen engagement with local representatives, including councillors and ward panel chairs, to improve the flow of local intelligence and insight into emerging ASB issues and community impacts.
- (6) Ensure future reports to the Committee clearly set out the strategic context for the topic under consideration and are supported by sufficient background information, narrative explanation of figures and trends (including benchmarking where relevant), and insight into resident experience and satisfaction. As an initial step, include in the upcoming annual report the following information, where possible:
  - Assessment of the effectiveness of current anti-social behaviour interventions, drawing on available data and evidence to support understanding of what is working and where improvement may be needed.
  - Clear explanation of police and council community safety remits, including Safer Neighbourhood Team and ward panel activity as police functions, and how these link to and inform the work of the Safer Brent Partnership Board.
  - Analysis of Fixed Penalty Notices related to ASB, including offence type, enforcement outcomes, repeat enforcement, geographic distribution, time-based patterns, relevant demographic characteristics, and evidence of impact on anti-social behaviour.
  - Analysis of Fixed Penalty Notice income recovery, including payment rates, cases escalated to court, prosecution outcomes, and recovery rates for unpaid notices, with contextual information distinguishing, where available, between non-payment due to inability to pay and deliberate non-compliance.
  - Analysis of PSPOs, including geographic patterns of use, enforcement outcomes, repeat breaches, evidence of impact, relevant demographic trends, and community feedback.
  - Benchmarking of ASB case review outcomes against comparable authorities or relevant external benchmarks, where available.

## INFORMATION REQUESTS

- (1) Provide an update on the ‘Dockless Cycle Hire Bay’ consultation undertaken in Summer 2025 as part of the work to identify suitable locations for Lime bike parking bays across the borough, including engagement with residents and ward councillors and any emerging outcomes.

*Please note that the specific wording of the Cabinet recommendations, suggestions for improvement and information requests were subject to refinement following the meeting, with the agreement of the Chair.*

### 9. Budget Scrutiny Task Group Findings Report

The Chair opened the discussion by expressing gratitude to all Members who had contributed to the work of the Budget Scrutiny Task Group. In introducing the report, the Chair stated that, although some progress had been made as a result of the three-year settlement and certain improvements to core funding, these developments represented only an initial step. The Chair emphasised that such measures remained insufficient to compensate for the significant reductions in service funding experienced over many years and decades. The Council therefore continued to operate in an extremely difficult financial environment. The Chair noted that the budget had been presented in a revised format, which placed an increased responsibility upon the Committee to reconsider its approach to budget scrutiny in order to maintain best practice. The revised approach, in the Chair’s view, provided an opportunity to address organisational silos and to support more strategic cross departmental working than had previously been undertaken. The Chair commended the work of the Children and Young People service, which had achieved a significant reduction in the use of agency staff, lowering related expenditure by half within a two-year period, and had developed new proposals to counter the effects of privatisation within contracts. The Chair expressed the hope that similar approaches would be adopted more widely across the organisation. Early indications of comparable developments in Adult Social Care had been referenced, and further analysis was expected as part of the Quarter 3 Finance Report in February 2026. The Chair stressed that it was essential for the Committee to maintain a very close focus on the impact of financial decisions upon residents. The quarterly finance reports scheduled before May 2026, and thereafter, would be integral to this monitoring process.

Having introduced the report, the Chair then moved on to invite questions and comments from the Committee in relation to the Budget Scrutiny Task Group Findings Report, with the following comments and issues discussed:

- As an initial point, members stated that the report had been both fair and reasonable and commented that the conclusions had been particularly well summarised.
- A Member expressed the view that the Committee had not achieved meaningful scrutiny outcomes, stating that the Committee had not been provided with the appropriate information required to contribute effectively. The Member noted that, in response to the current year’s overspend,

Cabinet had approved a recommendation to halt non-essential expenditure. The Member stated that the Committee had not been given any opportunity to scrutinise what constituted non-essential expenditure, nor whether such expenditure reductions represented genuine savings or simply deferrals into the next financial year. The Member further stated that the Committee had not been able to scrutinise the overall change in spending arrangements or the use of strategic Community Infrastructure Levy (SCIL) funding. Additionally, the Member noted that the spending power of the Council had been presented as increasing by 9.9%. The Member questioned the accuracy of this figure, observing that it included an assumption that the Council would adopt the Government's recommended 5% increase in Council Tax. The Member noted that officers had initially advised that 1/3 of the 9.9% increase had been attributable to the Council Tax rise, whereas the current report indicated that 40% of the increase derived from the Council Tax uplift. The Member further stated that the report had not clarified that the Council's overspend for Quarter 2 had been estimated at £9 million, driven primarily by temporary accommodation pressures and costs relating to Adult Social Care. The Member noted that by Quarter 3 the overspend had increased to £12.5 million, representing an increase of £3.5 million. The Member sought clarification from officers as to whether this represented a recurring overspend arising from ongoing financial pressures such as increased employee costs, including the rise in National Insurance contributions imposed nationally. The Member argued that, if such pressures were recurrent, the 9.9% spending power improvement had already been diminished substantially.

In response, the Chair provided clarification that all the matters raised by the Member, except for the final point concerning the change between Quarter 2 and Quarter 3, had been discussed during the Budget Scrutiny Task Group meetings. The Chair explained that timing challenges existed between the scheduling of budget scrutiny and the availability of the Quarter 2 and Quarter 3 financial reports, meaning the Committee could only scrutinise the information available at the time of presentation. The Chair reiterated that the Committee had acknowledged that the Council remained in a highly vulnerable financial position. The Quarter 3 Report, due to be received in February 2026, would provide the Committee with the opportunity to scrutinise the increase in overspend between the two quarters, an increase which the Chair confirmed had been influenced in part by the rise in National Insurance contributions. The Chair stated that the Committee would return to these issues at the February 2026 meeting, where Members would be able to revisit the questions raised.

- Another Member stated that the financial settlement did not address the systemic financial challenges faced by Brent and by other local authorities nationally. The Local Government Association (LGA) had described the settlement as a 'sticking plaster' which did not provide a sustainable solution. The Member requested that this concern be noted formally on the record, emphasising the precarious financial context and the need for improved national policy that recognised the substantial pressures faced by local government.
- As a further issue highlighted, a Member further stated that the Committee had not been provided with sufficient detail about Council expenditure to

enable it to identify potential areas for savings or to contribute meaningfully to discussions regarding how material overspends might be mitigated. In response, the Chair reported that the Quarter 3 Report, to be presented in February 2026, would include early indications of departmental spending, along with identification of the service areas responsible for the overspend. The Chair confirmed that the relevant departments had already been requested to attend the upcoming meeting so that Members could question them directly regarding their expenditure, the causes of overspend, and the actions being taken to manage financial pressures. The Chair stated that they had already anticipated the risk areas and had taken steps to ensure appropriate officer attendance at the February 2026 meeting.

In seeking to bring consideration of the item to a close, the Chair thanked officers and members for their contributions towards the discussion of the Budget Scrutiny Task Group Findings Report. As a result of the outcome of the discussion, it was RESOLVED:

- (1) That the Budget Scrutiny Task Group Findings report be agreed and submitted to Cabinet and Full Council as part of the budget setting process.

10. **Any other urgent business**

No items of urgent business were identified.

The meeting closed at 8:36 PM

COUNCILLOR RITA CONNEELY  
Chair