



## Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee

**Wednesday 21 January 2026 at 6.00 pm**

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

Please note this will be held as a physical meeting which all Committee members will be required to attend in person.

The meeting will be open for the press and public to attend or alternatively the meeting can be followed via the live webcast. The link to follow proceedings via the live webcast is available [HERE](#)

### Membership:

*Please note the agenda has been republished to reflect the membership changes agreed at the Extraordinary Council Meeting on 13 January 2026, following the change in political balance on the Council.*

#### Members

Councillors:

Conneely (Chair)  
Kennelly (Vice-Chair)  
S Butt  
Dixon  
Long  
Lorber  
Maurice  
Mitchell  
Molloy  
Shah  
L Smith

#### Substitute Members

Councillors:

Aden, Afzal, Chohan, Collymore, Mahmood,  
Ketan Sheth, T Smith, and 1 vacancy.

Councillors:

Kansagra and J Patel

Councillors:

Clinton and Matin

Councillors:

Ahmadi Moghaddam and Gbajumo

**For further information contact:** Rebecca Reid, Governance Officer  
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### **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 significant enough to affect your judgement of a public interest and either it affects a financial position or relates to a regulatory matter then 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 of 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 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 is the subject of a registrable personal interest.

# Agenda

Introductions, if appropriate.

Item	Page
<b>1 Apologies for absence and clarification of alternate members</b>	
<b>2 Declarations of interests</b>  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.	
<b>3 Deputations (if any)</b>  To hear any deputations received from members of the public in accordance with Standing Order 67.	
<b>4 Minutes of the previous meeting</b>  To approve the minutes of the previous meeting held on Tuesday 4 November 2025 as a correct record.	1 - 34
<b>5 Matters arising (if any)</b>  To consider any matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting.	
<b>6 Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee Work Programme Report</b>  To provide an update on the changes to the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee's work programme.	35 - 42
<b>7 Scrutiny Progress Update - Recommendations Tracker</b>  This report presents the scrutiny recommendations tracker for review by the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee.	43 - 70
<b>8 Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) in Brent Report</b>  The purpose of this report is to provide a detailed account of the scale, nature, and management of antisocial behaviour (ASB) in the borough, enabling the Committee to assess performance, understand key	71 - 130

responsibilities and identify areas for improvement.

## **9 Budget Scrutiny Task Group Findings Report**

131 - 152

To present the Budget Scrutiny Task Group Findings report for adoption by the Committee.

## **10 Any other urgent business**

Notice of items to be raised under this heading must be given in writing to the Deputy Director of Democratic and Corporate Governance or their representative before the meeting in accordance with Standing Order 60.

**Date of the next meeting: Tuesday 24 February 2026**



- Please remember to set 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 RESOURCES AND PUBLIC REALM SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** **Held in the Conference Hall, Brent Civic Centre on 4 November 2025 at 6.00 pm**

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

#### **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 Councillor Maurice.

Apologies were also recorded from Councillor Ketan Sheth during the meeting.

#### **2. Declarations of Interests**

Councillor Kennelly declared a personal interest in respect of Agenda Item 8: Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector in Brent noting that he worked for Brent Food Bank, which had received Council grant funding.

Similarly, Councillor Lorber declared a personal interest in respect of Agenda Item 8: Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector in Brent, noting that he served as a trustee for a number of charities operating within Brent.

Councillor Long also declared a personal interest in respect of Agenda Item 8: Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector in Brent as a member of Brent Mencap and Elders Voice.

Councillor Dixon further declared a personal interest in respect of Agenda Item 8: Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector in Brent, noting that she was a trustee of Friends of Gladstone Park.

The Chair also declared a personal interest as she worked at the Brent Centre for Young People, a voluntary organisation within the Borough.

Councillors Kennelly, Lorber, Long, Dixon and Conneely had not sought to take any predisposed position in the consideration of the information item and therefore felt able to consider the matters relating to the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector in Brent impartially and without any form of pretermination.

#### **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 Wednesday 16 July 2025 and Tuesday 2 September 2025 be approved as a correct record.

#### **5. Matters Arising (If Any)**

There were no matters arising raised at the meeting.

#### **6. Order of Business**

The Chair agreed to vary the order of business on the agenda to enable the Procurement Improvement Programme and Emerging Procurement Strategy (Agenda Item 10) to be considered prior to the Social Value: Draft Policy and Whole-Council Approach Report (Agenda Item 9). The minutes therefore reflect the order in which the items were dealt with at the meeting.

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

The Chair began by reporting that changes had been made to the scrutiny work programme for the current year. It was noted that the Kerbside Management Task Group Findings report would now be due for consideration at the January 2026 meeting, as the report was currently in the process of being finalised.

The Chair further advised that, following officer requests, the Safer Brent Partnership report had been rescheduled from the January 2026 meeting to the April 2026 meeting. Consequently, the Anti-Social Behaviour item would be brought forward from the April 2026 meeting to the January 2026 meeting.

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.

#### **8. Quarter 2 Financial Forecast 2025/26**

Councillor Mili Patel (Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources) was invited to introduce the report relating to the Quarter 2 Financial Forecast 2025-26, which provided a detailed update on the Council's revenue, capital and reserves position. The report also tracked progress against the Medium-Term Financial Strategy and identified the key pressures driving expenditure. It was noted that, despite the financial challenges, Brent remained on course to develop a balanced budget position following the application of the mitigations set out in the report. It was further highlighted that temporary accommodation and adult social care continued to present significant cost pressures but that these were being managed through targeted action plans. Controls on vacancies as they arose were in place, alongside the use of earmarked reserves. External income and grants continued to support the Council's spending requirements.

The Committee were further advised that the Government had announced the National Pride in Place Impact Fund, from which Brent had received £1.5 million. In addition,

recent announcements had confirmed capital investment into youth housing and environmental priorities.

Having thanked Councillor Mili Patel for introducing the report, the Chair then moved on to invite questions and comments from the Committee in relation to the Quarter 2 Financial Forecast Report 2025-26, with the following comments and issues discussed:

- As an initial query, the Chair questioned the implications of approximately 19% of planned savings targets not being achieved and asked what impact this would have on the Council's overspend position. In response, Rav Jassar (Deputy Director Corporate and Financial Planning) advised that the report set out the savings delivery tracker, noting that four savings within the tracker were marked as amber. It was explained that this represented delays in implementation rather than non-delivery. By way of example, he referred to the in-house children's care home, which had not yet opened, and confirmed that this matter had previously been discussed at the Scrutiny Committee. It was further stated that services were expected to put forward mitigating actions where delays or implementation issues arose, and these were monitored as part of the budget monitoring process to assess impact. It was acknowledged that, in some cases, delays could result in an impact that extended into the following financial year and created an overspend. In such circumstances, this would be taken into account when updating the Medium Term Financial Strategy. It was confirmed that an assessment of this had been undertaken as part of the savings review and would be factored into the draft budget scheduled for Cabinet consideration next month.
- Following on from the previous question, the Chair queried whether there was confidence that the four savings identified in the tracker could be delivered within the current financial year or whether there was concern that any might roll over into the next year. In response, Rav Jassar (Deputy Director Corporate and Financial Planning) confirmed that the narrative in the report indicated delays rather than non-delivery. It was stated that the savings would eventually be implemented, although some issues required resolution and mitigating actions needed to be applied to avoid a negative impact on the overall forecast.
- The Chair then sought details on what financial benefit the Council would gain from operating its own residential children's home. In response, Councillor Grahll (Cabinet Member for Children, Young People & Schools) referred to the committee report, which forecasted an overspend of £2.2 million within the department, the majority of which related to the high cost of residential placements for children in care. It was explained that significant action had been planned for some time, which had resulted in match funding being secured to build an in-house residential children's centre. The centre was close to completion, although recent barriers had delayed the final stages of opening. It was additionally noted that the Council was working with other local authorities on a project to open a secure residential home for a small number of children requiring secure accommodation, where placement costs were also extremely high. It was confirmed that this project was being delivered at pace.

Nigel Chapman (Corporate Director Children Young People and Community Development) further advised that the main financial benefit of the children's home would be cost avoidance, based on the difference between private sector placement costs and in-house provision. It was confirmed that calculations had been undertaken and the saving applied to the current year's budget based on the difference in the costs occurred against both private sector placement costs and in-house provision, which had contributed to the overspend position. The two main factors causing delays were outlined, both largely outside the Council's control. The first related to Ofsted registration, which was required before the home could open. Ofsted had experienced a backlog following the Department for Education's expansion programme but had assured that registration would be completed by early in the new year. The second factor was an accident in which a neighbour's car collided with the front of the building, causing significant damage. Surveying work had been completed, and repairs were scheduled for completion by January 2026. The Committee was reassured that every effort was being made to expedite the opening of the home.

- Further information regarding the cost of the delay and the mitigation measures being taken was sought by members, including any reduction of services elsewhere. In response, Nigel Chapman (Corporate Director Children Young People and Community Development) explained that the cost of the delay was a pro rata impact on the savings expected this year had the home opened at the start of the financial year. Each month of delay represented a 1/12 reduction in the anticipated saving. In terms of mitigation, it was confirmed that the Council sought to place children in the most suitable accommodation and negotiated with private providers to secure the best possible price. It was noted that the commissioning team adopted a robust approach in negotiations to prevent excessive profiteering, although it was acknowledged that the national undersupply of children's homes continued to affect market prices.
- Members sought details around whether there would be a loss at the end of the financial year that would need to be funded from reserves. In response, Councillor Grahl (Cabinet Member for Children, Young People & Schools) advised that the original projection for savings was £400,000 per year, equating to approximately 1/12 of that amount per month. It was further explained that it was difficult to predict the precise impact because the number of children requiring residential care was relatively small, with the majority of children in care placed in foster homes. It was additionally noted that the cost of residential placements varied significantly depending on individual needs, with some placements costing upwards of £10,000 per week. It was confirmed that the high cost of residential placements continued to exert pressure on the Council's finances and was the primary factor contributing to the overspend of £2.2 million within the department.
- As an additional issue, the Chair observed that, historically, overspends within adult social care had not been identified until later in the financial year. It was acknowledged that monitoring and tracking of savings appeared to have improved and questions were raised around what the primary concerns were for the directorate at the current time. Councillor Nerva (Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Leisure) stated that the primary concern was the



winter period, which represented the most challenging time of year for adult social care services and the NHS nationally. The importance of ensuring that systems operated effectively to avoid unplanned care, particularly unplanned institutional care such as hospital admissions or residential placements was emphasised. It was confirmed that a paper would be presented to the Health and Wellbeing Board later in the month, setting out local investment to reduce unplanned care and promote independence and early intervention. It was also reported that significant work was underway to improve the resident experience and ensure that customer services worked closely with adult social care to provide early advice. The risks relating to savings anticipated for 2025-26 were acknowledged, which were taking longer to deliver than expected. It was further noted that financial resources for service development and commissioning were limited and the impact of the insolvency of a major provider of community equipment which had affected Brent and 2/3 of London boroughs was highlighted. It was additionally explained that this had been a critical issue for adult social care and the NHS locally, as the provision of equipment was essential for successful hospital discharge and prevention of admission.

- The Chair questioned at what point delays in commissioning new arrangements would become a serious financial risk given the overall adult social care budget. In response, Rachel Crossley (Corporate Director Service Reform and Strategy) conveyed that expenditure on equipment was jointly funded with health partners, with approximately 60-70% funded by health and the remainder by the local authority. It was confirmed that negotiations were ongoing regarding the funding split and that interim arrangements had been in place following the insolvency of the previous provider. It was reported that a new provider had been secured through a consortium of 8 boroughs and that agreement with the NHS on funding had been escalated to the Chief Executive of the Integrated Care Board. It was additionally stated that the cost of £500,000 related to the period during which alternative providers were used while payments continued under the previous contract. Confidence was expressed that this figure was sufficient and confirmed that the new contract would commence once funding arrangements were agreed.
- The Chair raised queries around the cost implications for the Council of insufficient discharge arrangements and disputes with the NHS over discharge, and why this was such a priority. In response, Councillor Nerva (Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Leisure) emphasised that delays in discharge had a detrimental impact on residents and created significant pressure on the local authority. It was noted that disputes sometimes arose between families, carers, the local authority and hospitals regarding readiness for discharge. It was further explained that delays prevented new admissions to hospital and required the local authority to provide intensive support to individuals who should have been receiving medical treatment to improve their health and independence.
- As a further issue highlighted, the Chair questioned what financial pressure had been created for the Council by the need to provide intensive support for residents discharged too early during the first two financial quarters. In response, Rachel Crossley (Corporate Director Service Reform and Strategy) reported that there were two main aspects to the financial impact. It was explained that

reablement and support services were largely funded through the Better Care Fund and general funds, although some local authority funding was involved. It was confirmed that the greatest financial pressure related to short-term placements, which were traditionally intended to last eight weeks but, in some cases, had extended significantly longer. It was also noted that this was partly a practice issue requiring improved review and follow-up and partly due to difficulties in securing placements for certain groups. It was further reported that short-term placements were costing approximately £4.5 million per year. While some of this had been budgeted for, the figure needed to be managed. The importance of moving individuals out of short-term placements either to their own homes with support or into permanent placements, as short-term arrangements were typically more expensive than long-term placements, was emphasised. It was confirmed that approximately 50 cases had been identified for targeted action to reduce costs.

- The Chair sought clarification on the adequacy of resources to deliver the required outcomes to relieve the significant financial pressure in relation to short-term placements. In response, Rachel Crossley (Corporate Director Service Reform and Strategy) informed that the approach was centred on prioritisation. Weekly meetings were being held to review relevant figures. It was confirmed that she and Minesh Patel (Corporate Director Finance and Resources), were conducting sessions with Heads of Service. It was noted that additional resources were not necessarily required; rather, emphasis was placed on the effective use of data management and consideration of placement strategies. It was highlighted that there remained capacity within dementia services and for providers willing to accept complex cases. Further work was required with providers in relation to Care Quality Commission (CQC) registration for specific placements, as providers were exercising discretion in accepting cases. It was stressed that complex cases were associated with significantly higher costs.
- The Chair queried the anticipated timeframe for outputs arising from provider renegotiations. In response, Rachel Crossley (Corporate Director Service Reform and Strategy) advised that negotiations with providers for the 2026-27 period would commence shortly. Challenges due to inflation and National Insurance costs impacting the cost of care model were acknowledged. Benchmarking indicated that placement costs compared favourably with neighbouring authorities. In respect of short-term placements, improvements had already been observed, with individuals moving through the system more quickly. No placement was now permitted without an agreed end date and a scheduled review, which had strengthened controls.
- The Chair sought details around whether the impact of mitigation measures could be identified in the next quarterly report or whether this was more likely to be evident in the April 2026 report. In response, Rachel Crossley (Corporate Director Service Reform and Strategy) stated that winter pressures and other factors around placements remained uncertain; however, the relevant placement cohort and associated budget were being tracked closely through the dashboard. The Chair suggested that the Quarter 3 report should include an assessment of the impact of high-cost placements on the budget and expenditure.

- Members sought clarification on the spending controls currently in place and requested evidence of measurable results demonstrating their impact on the budget. In response, Rav Jassar (Deputy Director Corporate and Financial Planning) confirmed that spending controls had been implemented since 2023 and had mitigated overspend in the last two financial years. Enhancements introduced this year included additional sign-off requirements for non-standard staff payments, such as overtime and honorariums, which now required approval by a Head of Service, a Director, and a Corporate Director. Recruitment requests continued to require Corporate Director approval, and rejected requests were now recorded to monitor effectiveness. Agency expenditure had reduced significantly in both numbers and overall cost. Reviews by the Council Management Team (CMT) were now more frequent. It was emphasised that incremental reductions collectively had a substantial impact. Senior managers had been briefed through a dedicated meeting to ensure consistent understanding. Estimated cost avoidance was approximately £8 million in the last financial year and just under £4 million in the previous year. Quarter 2 estimates were not yet available but would be reflected in future reports.

Minesh Patel (Corporate Director Finance and Resources) further added that the Council delivered over 700 services through numerous staff, making rigorous controls essential. He stressed the importance of maintaining discipline under pressure and noted that additional layers of approval, while sometimes perceived as bureaucratic, were beneficial in ensuring value for money. Incremental changes were key to achieving overall financial control.

- Highlighted concerns regarding risks arising from the Fair Funding Review led to queries around the potential impact on future budgets, the need for further tightening of spending controls, and key risks if funding requirements were not met. In response, Minesh Patel (Corporate Director Finance and Resources) reported that the Government had committed to a multi-year settlement, which would assist planning by providing clarity on the funding envelope for the next three years. However, the anticipated announcement had been delayed until after the national budget. It was further noted that all local authorities would need to reconsider service delivery models to ensure statutory obligations were met within available resources. Once the funding envelope was confirmed, the Council would need to determine how to deliver services sustainably. Failure to do so could result in Section 114 notices and Exceptional Financial Support situations, which were recognised as unsustainable and difficult to recover from.
- The Chair enquired regarding the likelihood of receiving a funding settlement at the end of December 2025 or the beginning of January 2026. In response, Minesh Patel (Corporate Director Finance and Resources) indicated that all projections were based on assumptions and stated that the Government had committed to a transition period following the Fair Funding Reform, with full implications expected to take effect in 2027-28. It was confirmed that interim arrangements would allow the Council to continue operating with either slightly reduced or slightly increased funding during the transition. Members were advised that the settlement was now expected to be delivered in the week preceding Christmas, consistent with previous years. The importance of having a draft budget and engaging in discussions at this stage was emphasised, as this

would provide an opportunity to make adjustments if required. It was also noted that the final budget would not be presented to Full Council until February 2026, allowing scope for further amendments should significant discrepancies arise. The Chair additionally confirmed that the matter would be examined in detail by the Budget Scrutiny Task Group, which would report back to the Committee in January 2026.

- Clarification was sought around whether the reduction in agency expenditure was attributable to improved recruitment practices or to more effective negotiation of agency rates. In response, Rav Jassar (Deputy Director Corporate and Financial Planning) clarified that the reduction was due to a combination of factors and highlighted that enhanced oversight, increased rigour, and greater challenge regarding agency usage had contributed significantly. Particular attention had been given to high-cost and long-term usage of agency staff, resulting in reduced overall costs by implementing stricter controls and oversight to these cases.
- Members observed that six organisations had received business rates relief and sought clarification on the decision-making process and applicable criteria. In response, Rav Jassar (Deputy Director Corporate and Financial Planning) explained that the organisations listed in the committee report were entitled to mandatory relief of 80% under existing national regulations. It was clarified that this entitlement was determined by central government rather than by the Council. The discretionary element related to the remaining 20% of the bill and was subject to criteria published on the Council's website. The Committee heard that there were nine criteria, which included requirements for the organisation to be a charity, a non-profit entity, a voluntary organisation, or organisations such as a local sports club. Applications meeting these criteria were submitted for Cabinet approval annually. It was further confirmed that checks were undertaken each year to ensure continued compliance, including verification of charity registration with the Charity Commission.
- Details were sought on whether the community impact of organisations receiving discretionary relief was monitored on an ongoing basis. In response, Rav Jassar (Deputy Director Corporate and Financial Planning) confirmed that compliance checks were conducted annually and that one of the criteria for discretionary relief was demonstrable impact on the community.
- The Chair summarised supplementary questions raised and observed that all councils had experienced significant reductions in base funding over the past 14 years, which had adversely affected service delivery, increased staff workloads, and extended waiting times. The Chair noted that the report outlined mitigations being implemented by the Council, as well as associated risks, including potential impacts on reserves arising from overspends in areas such as children's placements and hospital discharge placements. The Chair emphasised that these financial risks were real and that mitigations were essential. It was confirmed that the Budget Task Group would continue to examine the implications for service delivery and that councillors would have the opportunity to express their views on proposed measures and their potential impact. In citing an example relating to delays in processing council tax arrears and repayments,

the Chair requested clarification on the experience of the Council Tax team and the impact of financial constraints on service delivery. In response, Tom Cattermole (Corporate Director Residents and Housing Services) provided reassurance that there were currently no vacancies within the Community Hubs teams and that no cuts had been made to these teams. It was confirmed that the teams were fully staffed, subject to occasional vacancies arising from staff turnover. In relation to the Council Tax team, it was acknowledged that efficiencies had been introduced over time. Members were advised that additional resources had recently been allocated to manage changes to the Council Tax Support Scheme introduced in the previous year, in response to increased demand for support and invited members of the Committee to share examples of any specific issues for further review.

- Members raised queries regarding the significant overspend in adult social care and questioned whether any restructuring of service delivery was anticipated. In response, Councillor Nerva (Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Leisure) informed that adult social care was eligibility-led and delivered in accordance with the Care Act (2014), which provided clear statutory criteria for all local authorities. It was noted that funding was finite and that Brent, along with other authorities, had been engaged for several years in efforts to transform adult social care. The principal challenge was balancing investment in prevention with the statutory obligation to meet eligible care needs. Councillor Nerva emphasised the importance of partnership working with the NHS and advocated for a one public purse approach. It was observed that successive governments had failed to implement a sustainable settlement for adult social care and stressed that the need for such reform was now critical.
- The Chair referred to recommendations made at previous committee meetings regarding shared budgets for health and social care and questioned whether there was any indication from the Casey Review or other plans of a move towards a one public purse approach. In response, Rachel Crossley (Corporate Director Service Reform and Strategy) reported that discussions had taken place regarding neighbourhood health initiatives and the Better Care Fund, including to split the fund and apply similar mechanisms. However, no detailed plans had been established. Concern was expressed that reallocating existing funding could impact the Council's ability to support hospital discharge and community care. It was confirmed that positive discussions had recently been held with the new Chief Executive of the Integrated Care Board regarding adopting a total place approach and greater financial transparency.
- Members observed that council tax collections had decreased compared to the previous two years and requested information on actions taken to address this. In response, Tom Cattermole (Corporate Director Residents and Housing Services) advised that a Council Tax Improvement Plan had been developed, incorporating short-term, medium-term, and long-term measures. Short-term actions included targeted campaigns using automated tools such as SMS to prompt payment of debts under £1,000, increased use of ethical enforcement agents for debt recovery, and resource reallocation. Medium-term measures focused on digital transformation, including the introduction of online contact forms and redesigning the customer journey to reduce reliance on telephone

contact. It was acknowledged that call waiting times were currently high due to increased demand following changes to the Council Tax Support Scheme, which required some residents to pay 35% council tax for the first time. Communications had been improved using behavioural insights to make letters and scripts more effective. Long-term objectives included enabling customers to self-serve online and writing off unrecoverable low-level debts. It was confirmed that the aim was to meet the current year's collection target and build on this in subsequent years.

- Following on from the previous question, members questioned whether the long-term target of approximately 97% council tax collection was achievable and expressed concern that failure to meet this target could lead to medium-term financial pressures. In response, Tom Cattermole (Corporate Director Residents and Housing Services) further advised that the new council tax scheme would require ongoing review and confirmed that targets would be reassessed based on end-of-year performance data.
- The Chair expressed concern that the Committee had not yet received evidence or data demonstrating the analysis of the population that was not paying council tax, specifically distinguishing between those unable to pay (the 'can't pay' group) and those unwilling to pay (the 'won't pay' group). The Chair emphasised the importance of targeting measures at those unwilling to pay, while recognising that if the proportion of residents unable to pay was significant, achieving the 97% council tax collection target might not be feasible given the level of deprivation in the borough. The Chair questioned what progress had been made in understanding this breakdown and whether the 97% council tax collection target remained achievable. In response, Tom Cattermole (Corporate Director Residents and Housing Services) explained that the council tax collection target was aspirational and confirmed that the campaigns outlined in his earlier response were aimed at customers unwilling to pay, while those unable to pay were encouraged to visit a community hub or contact the Council by telephone. It was noted that support was available through discretionary council tax reduction payments, such as the Council Tax Hardship Fund. The Committee were advised that further automation would be introduced once the automation plan was complete, ideally within the next 12 months.
- With reference to the forecast overspend of £4 million in Residents and Housing Services, members questioned how confident the department was that the in-year mitigation measures outlined in the report, including i4B, the Private Rented Sector (PRS) partnership, supply expansion initiatives, and leasing, were realistic and achievable. In response, Lawrence Coaker (Director Housing Needs and Support) explained that the primary drivers of homelessness were the contraction of the private rented sector and evictions from that sector, followed by exclusions from family, friends, and parents. It was stated that the Council was focusing on early intervention, particularly in cases of family and parental exclusions, as these were more amenable to prevention than private rented sector evictions, which were often the result of landlords exiting the market. It was additionally noted that this trend was influenced by rising mortgage rates, interest rates, capital gains tax implications, and the forthcoming Renters Rights Act 2025, which had recently received Royal Assent and would come into effect

in stages from January 2026. The most significant provision, the abolition of Section 21 no-fault evictions, was not expected to take effect until April or May 2026, meaning there would be no impact before the next financial year. The Council's work with voluntary sector organisations and community groups, including recent events around homelessness FAQs and internal collaboration with adult social care and children's services, as part of a whole-council approach to tackling homelessness, was further highlighted.

- As a further query, members drew attention to the report's comments on acquisitions for temporary accommodation through the Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF), the Council Homes Acquisition Programme (CHAP), leasing arrangements, and i4B holdings, and questioned what was meant by the statement that few opportunities had met the Council's affordability criteria. In response, Lawrence Coaker (Director Housing Needs and Support) explained that the issue largely related to the structure of leasing deals proposed by developers and providers. Some providers sought lease terms of up to 40 years, which the Council would not accept. Concerns regarding Consumer Price Index (CPI) rent increases, which would raise the Council's liabilities annually while income remained tied to Local Housing Allowance rates, which did not increase at the same pace. This widening gap made such arrangements financially unviable.
- Following up, members questioned whether further funding could be secured through the LAHF and CHAP programmes to provide temporary accommodation within the borough and reduce reliance on costly bed and breakfast placements outside London. In response, Amanda Healy (Deputy Director Investment and Infrastructure) highlighted that under the LAHF programme, the Council had not been able to specify the level of funding sought, as allocations were determined centrally. It was confirmed that Brent had received a comparatively significant allocation and had expressed interest in future rounds, although details of the allocation process were awaited. Regarding the CHAP programme, it was explained that this was a rolling programme with the Greater London Authority (GLA) and that opportunities were assessed for financial viability, including whether they offered cost avoidance or reduced long-term expenditure. It was further noted that challenges remained with lease options, as projected costs did not align with expected Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates, creating significant financial risk. It was confirmed that current efforts focused on identifying arrangements that provided the greatest benefit, which at present were limited to cost avoidance rather than achieving a break-even position.
- As a separate issue highlighted, members queried whether any actions were currently being undertaken to address challenges within resident and housing services, particularly in relation to homelessness and the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). In response, Tom Cattermole (Corporate Director Residents and Housing Services) reported that the HRA was precariously balanced. An analysis had been undertaken, and two key approaches had been identified: increasing income collection, similar to council tax, and improving void management to avoid costs associated with vacant properties. Significant work had already been carried out to reduce income loss from void properties, which also reduced council tax payments for which the housing department was responsible. These

two areas had been prioritised over the past six months and would remain a focus for the coming year. Lawrence Coaker (Director Housing Needs and Support) further explained that the main drivers of homelessness were private rented sector evictions and exclusions by family, friends or parents. Other contributing factors included poor quality accommodation, overcrowding and domestic abuse. The Renters' Rights Act 2025 was expected to address no-fault evictions and introduce new statutory duties for private housing services to enforce standards and tackle disrepair. Overcrowding remained a significant challenge due to the lack of large, affordable properties with a dedicated team to support victims of domestic abuse. Whilst Brent's strong reputation for support had led to advocates directing victims to the borough, discussions were ongoing with advocates and London-wide partners to ensure shared responsibility for domestic abuse services.

- Members noted the substantial contribution of i4B in reducing temporary accommodation pressures and questioned whether any financial flexibility could be applied to enable i4B to relax its acquisition criteria and purchase more properties. In response, Amanda Healy (Deputy Director Investment and Infrastructure) explained that the council benefited from cost avoidance through reduced overspend, which mitigated the need for additional reserves or wider measures. However, as i4B was a separate legal entity, the council could not intervene financially beyond existing arrangements. The company needed to break even, and interactions between the council and i4B were subject to state aid rules. Loan arrangements had been confirmed as compliant, but strict rules limited what could be done to support the company financially.
- With reference to paragraph 8.21 of the committee report, which highlighted i4B's role in reducing temporary accommodation costs and expanding housing supply, members questioned how the council ensured that resident experience in i4B-managed homes was consistent with council-managed properties, particularly regarding repairs, communication and accountability. In response, Tom Cattermole (Corporate Director Residents and Housing Services) confirmed that any i4B property within Brent was managed in the same way as a council property. Different arrangements applied to properties outside Brent, but residents in Brent could expect equivalent services.
- Members highlighted that the loss of affordable private rented housing and landlords leaving the market were key drivers of temporary accommodation overspends. In light of recent changes to affordable housing targets for London, members queried what assessment had been made of the impact of shrinking supply and how acquisition and development programmes were being adapted. In response, Lawrence Coaker (Director Housing Needs and Support) stated that Brent was involved in work led by London Councils to scrutinise the contraction of the private rented sector. A report commissioned from Savills confirmed that most properties leaving the private rented market were being purchased by homeowners for personal occupation. This resulted in the permanent loss of units available for private rent, reducing the overall supply of accommodation.
- Members were keen to seek details regarding the reason for the significant decrease in supported exempt accommodation expenditure from £4 million to



£1.8 million. In response, Lawrence Coaker (Director Housing Needs and Support) informed that the reduction was the result of a two-pronged approach. Firstly, the Council had adopted a more robust process for assessing new providers entering the market. Applications were scrutinised by the Benefits team to ensure compliance with the criteria for supported exempt status. Secondly, the Council reviewed whether individuals placed in such accommodation genuinely required the level of support offered, as there had been instances where accommodation was used primarily to address homelessness for those who did not always require the supported element. In addition, the Council had engaged with providers incurring the highest subsidy costs to broker arrangements with housing associations. Where providers partnered with housing associations or became registered providers (RPs) themselves, the financial responsibility for subsidy shifted from the local authority to the Department for Work and Pensions. This approach not only mitigated subsidy loss for Brent Council but also improved the quality of care and support.

- Members queried whether any exploitative landlords had been identified. In response, Lawrence Coaker (Director Housing Needs and Support) confirmed that the Council had identified providers whose level of support was deemed inadequate. The Council had ceased referrals to these providers and entered negotiations to improve support standards or alter their operating model. In some cases, properties were converted into Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) or privately rented accommodation, thereby increasing supply for single homeless individuals who did not require support. This dual approach aimed to enhance accommodation quality for those in need while optimising housing availability.
- Members requested information on the implications of the recent announcement regarding the new build of social housing properties and its impact on affordable housing availability over the next four years. Clarification was sought on the extent to which the Council had forecast and prepared for this outcome. In response, Tom Cattermole (Corporate Director Residents and Housing Services) undertook to raise the matter with Jehan Weerasinghe (Corporate Director Neighbourhoods and Regeneration) and noted that 892 homes were scheduled to come online within the current year under the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).
- Details were sought around which actions within the High Needs Block Deficit Recovery Management Plan were expected to deliver a tangible reduction in the current financial year. In response, Councillor Grahl (Cabinet Member for Children, Young People & Schools) stated that the principal financial pressure related to the cost of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) provision. Demand for Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) had risen steadily for over a decade, increasing by approximately 10% annually. The Council's previous SEND strategy included a capital investment programme to create over 400 new specialist placements within the borough, aimed at improving support and reducing the deficit. However, demand continued to grow, necessitating further investment in specialist placements and additional resource provision within mainstream schools. Nigel Chapman (Corporate Director Children Young People and Community Development) further added that a government White Paper on SEND reform had been delayed until after

Christmas. It was acknowledged that the SEND system was widely recognised as unsustainable. While Brent had succeeded in slowing the growth of EHCPs compared to national averages, the financial pressure persisted. Each EHCP incurred an additional cost of £10,000 to £15,000 per child, compared to £6,000 for a child without an EHCP. Current measures focused on tightening assessment processes, ensuring eligibility criteria were rigorously applied, and reducing support where appropriate within plans. A further priority was to expand local capacity, to reduce the placement of children in out-of-borough independent special schools, which significantly increased costs. The forthcoming School Place Planning Strategy Refresh, scheduled for Cabinet consideration next week (at the time of writing), would outline proposals for additional specialist placements. Collaborative work with other boroughs was also being explored to address challenges around the sufficiency of school places.

- Clarification was sought around what early intervention measures were currently in place to moderate the influx of need for school places and whether any additional actions were being taken to address increasing demand later in life. In response, Nigel Chapman (Corporate Director Children Young People and Community Development) reported that Brent had participated in the Department for Education's (DfE's) Delivering Better Value programme, which supported approximately half of local authorities nationally. Brent had been subject to a lower level of intervention within that programme. One of the funded projects was titled Intervention First, which focused on early years and the first two years of primary education. This initiative was introduced in response to a notable increase in children presenting with speech and language difficulties, some of which were attributed to the impact of the pandemic and reduced socialisation. Members heard that a dedicated team had been established and deployed across several Harlesden primary schools to provide targeted support. The intervention had demonstrated positive outcomes, including the identification of cases where presenting issues were linked to trauma rather than learning needs. Addressing these underlying issues had enabled children to manage better in school, reduce behavioural challenges and avoid escalation to an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). Evidence had indicated that the model was effective, and the Department for Education had expressed interest in its outcomes. The Council aimed to expand the programme, subject to investment, and was exploring the use of the High Needs Block to sustain and extend provision across the borough.
- The Chair questioned whether the Intervention First programme had been delivered partly through the Wellbeing and Emotional Support Team (WEST). In response, Nigel Chapman (Corporate Director Children Young People and Community Development) clarified that some elements had been delivered through WEST and others through educational psychologists. It was noted that future arrangements would involve funding through the High Needs Block rather than the General Fund.

The Chair further queried whether the WEST team was being disbanded. In response, Nigel Chapman (Corporate Director Children Young People and Community Development) advised that the service would continue in some form but would be subject to a retendering process in the new year. The Dedicated

Schools Grant (DSG) would continue to support the needs of children in schools, and the intention was to maintain continuity between the conclusion of the current contract and the commencement of a new provider. Savings requirements had been identified within the General Fund, and discussions were ongoing with health partners to bridge funding gaps.

- The Chair raised questions around the discussions with other local authorities regarding the development of a joint school offer to reduce reliance on costly independent placements and sought an indication of likely success and timeframes. In response, Nigel Chapman (Corporate Director Children Young People and Community Development) explained of the challenges in establishing new schools due to the introduction of academies and free schools. However, the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill 2024 presented an opportunity for local authorities to assume a greater role in planning provision. Brent was working with neighbouring boroughs, including Ealing, Barnet and Harrow, to assess collective needs and develop a strategic approach. It was further mentioned that land availability remained a significant constraint, but collaboration aimed to ensure more efficient planning. In the short term, efforts would focus on cost avoidance, projected at approximately £2 million, through measures such as ceasing unnecessary plans, reducing support where appropriate and preventing the emergence of new plans.
- The Chair questioned whether a timeframe of 3 to 5 years for establishing a new school was realistic. In response, Nigel Chapman (Corporate Director Children Young People and Community Development) confirmed that Wembley Manor School had been delivered relatively quickly, with construction completed within 3 years of the decision to proceed. Advances in modular building techniques had accelerated delivery, although securing land and planning permission remained the most significant challenges.
- Details were sought by members on which locations within Brent were being considered for potential new school sites. In response, Nigel Chapman (Corporate Director Children Young People and Community Development) advised that the upcoming Planning Strategy Refresh would provide further detail. Current considerations focused primarily on sites with spare capacity within the primary school sector, as certain areas of the borough had experienced a reduction in primary school enrolments. This created opportunities to utilise existing space within primary schools. It was further mentioned that the availability of new land for school development was extremely limited. While one or two sites alternative sites existed, the principal approach would involve maximising capacity within the existing primary sector.
- Reference was made to the detail provided within the committee report, which stated that Bridge Park Community Leisure Centre had closed with an overspend of £0.25 million, and that Willesden Sports Centre continued to face financial pressures with a forecast assuming a full drawdown of the £0.4 million reserve. Members queried why the table on page 66 of the report reflected an overspend of £0.2 million and requested clarification of the figures. In response, Rachel Crossley (Corporate Director Service Reform and Strategy) explained that the £0.2 million figure related to Bridge Park. The budget had assumed closure in

April 2025; however, the centre remained operational until July 2025 due to an extended consultation period. No operating budget had been allocated for Bridge Park for the current year, but costs were incurred during the first quarter, which accounted for the overspend shown in the table. It was also confirmed that the reserve for Willesden Sports Centre ensured a break-even position, which was why it did not appear in the table, although financial pressures were expected to continue into the next year.

This raised related questions around whether the loss forecast for Willesden Sports Centre was excluded from the forecast because it was covered by reserves. In response, Rachel Crossley (Corporate Director Service Reform and Strategy) clarified that the reserve had been applied to mitigate the gap under the terms of the Private Finance Initiative (PFI) contract. Rav Jassar (Deputy Director Corporate and Financial Planning) further added that the forecast reflected the position after the use of reserves. While there was an underlying pressure, this had been offset for the current financial year, and the £0.2 million figure related solely to Bridge Park.

- Members observed that part of the financial pressure appeared to result from energy cost volatility and questioned to what extent engagement had taken place with the Climate Action Team to explore solutions such as installing solar panels on leisure centres. Members noted that funding was available from Swim England and potentially other sources to reduce emissions and mitigate utility cost volatility. In response, Rachel Crossley (Corporate Director Service Reform and Strategy) confirmed that solar panels were being installed at both Willesden and Vale Farm Leisure Centres. The Council was working closely with the Property Team and the Climate Change Team and had secured grants to support these installations.

Following up, members requested information on the projected cost savings arising from these measures. In response, Rachel Crossley (Corporate Director Service Reform and Strategy) undertook to review available data and provide this information following the meeting.

- Members noted an overspend of £2.6 million on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) as at Quarter 2 and questioned whether this was attributable to performance in relation to rent collection and void management. In response, Tom Cattermole (Corporate Director Residents and Housing Services) stated that historical factors, including rent-setting practices and investment in housing stock, had contributed to the position. A comprehensive review of the HRA and its finances was underway to identify measures to restore financial stability. The Chair confirmed that a paper on the HRA was scheduled to be presented to the Committee in February 2026.
- Members queried the risks associated with the new repairs contracts and questioned what steps were being taken to mitigate these risks. In response, Tom Cattermole (Corporate Director Residents and Housing Services) acknowledged that rising repair costs represented a significant risk. The Council intended to strengthen contract management processes, including closer oversight of contractors such as Wates and Mears. These measures aimed to prevent cost

escalation throughout the year. It was also noted that this issue had been discussed at the Committee's July 2025 meeting when Wates attended.

- Members observed that the Council's HRA reserves were relatively low compared to other local authorities and questioned what steps were being taken to increase reserves to manage unforeseen pressures. In response, Tom Cattermole (Corporate Director Residents and Housing Services) confirmed that the Council recognised the need to bolster reserves. Actions currently being implemented were expected to support reserve growth and inform the development of an improved HRA business plan, which would be presented to the Committee in February 2026.

In seeking to bring consideration of the item to a close, the Chair thanked officers and members for their contributions towards scrutiny of the Quarter 2 Financial Forecast Report 2025/26. As a result of the outcome of the discussion, the following information requests and suggestions for improvement identified were **AGREED**:

### **INFORMATION REQUESTS**

- (1) Provide the percentage of those struggling to pay Council Tax Rates due to financial hardship and the percentage evading or refusing payment.
- (2) Provide a scenario-based assessment of the estimated financial impact of temporary CIL relief and the reduction in the affordable housing threshold (from 35% to 20%) on Brent's council finances over the next three years, including key assumptions, risks, and implications for affordable housing availability.
- (3) Provide additional details on the strategy and approach for reducing costs related to short-term placements.
- (4) Provide estimated cost savings from any existing and/or planned climate initiatives at Willesden Sports Centre and Vale Farm.

### **SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT**

- (1) Work with the NHS to establish additional shared or pooled budgets for Adult Social Care, with the aim of reducing financial pressures, improving resource efficiency, enhancing coordinated planning, and delivering a fully integrated health and social care offer across the borough.
- (2) Prioritise effective void management to reduce forecasted Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget pressures and ensure the long-term financial sustainability of the HRA.
- (3) Assess the opportunities, as they may present themselves, in the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill, to establish additional Community Special School capacity, and to work collaboratively with neighbouring local authorities to help alleviate Dedicated Schools Grant pressures.

- (4) Conduct a comprehensive review of HRA finances to address forecasted budget pressures and ensure long-term sustainability, with findings reported to the Committee at its February 2026 meeting. The review should examine the HRA's purpose, funding sources, performance, key pressures, risks, and mitigation measures, including an in-depth analysis of void management and income generation.

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

## **9. Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector in Brent**

Councillor Rubin (Cabinet Member for Climate Action and Community Power) was invited to introduce the report relating to the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector in Brent, which provided detailed updates on work to develop and support the VCSE sector in Brent. The report additionally provided information on the sector, current VCSE and community grant funding and capacity building support. The report also noted the initial findings from the recent VCSE Shaping the Future Summit and subsequent steps and initiatives that were planned to further develop and support the sector in line with the Council's shared vision – "a thriving, resilient VCSE sector that has the resources, skills and confidence to deliver better outcomes for local communities – supporting individuals, grassroots groups and organisations to build skills, realise goals, and drive aspirations in their neighbourhoods". The report also summarised how the Council was responding to the Local Government Association's (LGA) Corporate Peer Review recommendations in respect of reviewing and strengthening relationships and support for the VCSE sector.

In presenting the report, Councillor Rubin (Cabinet Member for Climate Action and Community Power) emphasised that maintaining a strong and vibrant Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector was of significant importance in delivering many of the administration's priorities. It was noted that numerous community organisations and charities were sometimes able to engage with residents in ways that the Council could not. It was stated that having a sector that was vibrant, well managed and effectively led was essential. It was noted that the report provided an overview of the current state of the VCSE sector within Brent. Additional context was provided regarding Brent CVS, the organisation utilised by the Council to lead engagement with the voluntary sector. It was confirmed that Brent CVS was currently undergoing a review, with recommendations expected in the near future. These recommendations would inform decisions on the future direction of the organisation.

Having thanked Councillor Rubin (Cabinet Member for Climate Action and Community Power) for introducing the report, the Chair then moved on to invite questions and comments from the Committee in relation to the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector in Brent, with the following comments and issues discussed:

- As an initial question, the Chair enquired whether there were any early indications of the recommendations expected within the forthcoming review commissioned by Brent CVS. In response, Rhodri Rowlands (Director of Strategic Commissioning Capacity Building and Engagement) clarified that Brent CVS was a separate entity from the Council. The review and associated report

had been commissioned by Brent CVS, with the Council contributing a modest grant to facilitate the review. The rationale for this contribution was the Council's recognition of the critical role played by Brent CVS and other social infrastructure organisations in advancing the shared vision of a thriving, independent, diverse and vibrant sector. It was confirmed that the full report had not yet been received, but copies were anticipated within weeks. The report was expected to include recommendations for consideration by the trustees and Board of Brent CVS. Emerging feedback suggested a need for more effective capacity building within the borough, and discussions would focus on identifying the nature of that need and determining how the Council and its partners should respond. This would inform the future commissioned offer from 2026.

- The Chair further queried the contractual arrangements, noting that the contract was due to expire in April 2026, despite an earlier anticipated end date of April 2025. The Chair requested details of the financial contribution made towards the internal review and the cost of the contract extension. In response, Rhodri Rowlands (Director of Strategic Commissioning Capacity Building and Engagement) confirmed that the Council had contributed £10,000 towards the internal review commissioned by Brent CVS. In respect of the contract, two payments had been made during the current 12-month period, totalling approximately £40,000, subject to ongoing contract monitoring.
- The Chair additionally enquired about what specifically was being delivered under the Brent CVS contract and whether contractual obligations were being fulfilled. In response, Rhodri Rowlands (Director of Strategic Commissioning Capacity Building and Engagement) advised that the Council had adopted a collaborative approach from the outset, with Brent CVS supporting the process. The Cross-Sector Steering Group, chaired on a rotating basis, had contributed to shaping the structure of the VCSE event and would oversee the resulting action plan. Brent CVS had undertaken a range of activities during the contract period, and monitoring visits were ongoing and would continue.

Tessa Awe (Specialist Project Officer) further added that a 6 month contract review was scheduled for completion by the end of November 2025. This review would assess performance over the previous 6 months, identifying areas of strength and any shortcomings.

- The Chair sought clarification on future plans for a new tendered offer, including the anticipated contract value and scope. In response, Tessa Awe (Specialist Project Officer) explained that the Council had convened an event named 'Shaping the Future of Brent's VCSE Sector' to gather intelligence on sector needs. The Steering Group would develop an action plan based on this feedback, with work continuing until the end of the financial year to design a model that addressed the needs of the sector.

Rhodri Rowlands (Director of Strategic Commissioning Capacity Building and Engagement) further mentioned that emerging themes were likely to include robust information, advice and guidance, training and development opportunities, and networking support for the VCSE sector. These would align with the shared vision of a thriving, independent sector capable of supporting residents and

attracting external investment. Consideration would also be given to innovative models, such as consortia of local organisations or temporary external expertise, to strengthen capacity building and financial resilience.

Councillor Rubin (Cabinet Member for Climate Action and Community Power) emphasised the importance of a thriving sector, noting that strategic investment could generate a multiplier effect by attracting additional funding into the borough. This approach would help support wider objectives, including the prevention of homelessness and community crisis.

- The Chair enquired regarding the plan for the tendering process, noting that the current contract was due to conclude in April. In response, Rhodri Rowlands (Director of Strategic Commissioning Capacity Building and Engagement) informed that arrangements for the tendering process would be developed in the new year when a definitive timetable would be been established.
- Members referred to paragraph 7.6.1 of the committee report, which stated that Brent CVS currently held the capacity building contract until April 2026 and that both the Council and Brent CVS were reviewing the model to inform a future offer. In light of this, it was questioned whether the Council had considered the potential benefits of an in-sourced or hybrid CVS offer, which could strengthen accountability and integration with other Council-led programmes. In response, Rhodri Rowlands (Director of Strategic Commissioning Capacity Building and Engagement) noted that the approach could be explored further. It was confirmed that best practice models from other areas would be examined and applied to the review findings. A common theme emerging from feedback was the principle that the sector, being closest to residents and communities was best placed to understand their needs. Consideration would be given to an in-house model for capacity building, alongside an assessment of the Council's internal capacity and resources to ensure the most effective service delivery. This could include enhanced contract management and collaborative initiatives.
- Details were sought around whether targeted in-sourcing of services could be explored to reduce duplication and alleviate pressure on the voluntary sector, given that the Council was already undertaking related work. In response, Councillor Rubin (Cabinet Member for Climate Action and Community Power) confirmed that this could be considered with potential areas of overlap recognised during the review period.

Rachel Crossley (Corporate Director Service Reform and Strategy) additionally mentioned that training was an example where the Council could extend its existing provision to the voluntary sector rather than commissioning additional services. Similarly, events organised by the Council could be opened to the sector. It was acknowledged that the Council should identify what could be delivered internally and adopt a targeted approach to commissioning services that required specialist skills and sector-specific expertise, such as trustee and charity support.

- Further details were sought around whether the review would examine the frequency of updates to the Brent CVS website. In response, Tessa Awe



(Specialist Project Officer) confirmed that the review was assessing the overall strategy and operations of Brent CVS, including organisational functioning. It was therefore likely that website management would be considered within the scope of the review.

- Reference was made to the detail provided within committee report around market rent reduction pilots and social value, which referred to three new lettings and an approach for reduced market rent. Members enquired to what extent the review would consider existing lettings. In response, Rhodri Rowlands (Director of Strategic Commissioning Capacity Building and Engagement) advised that the three properties currently operating under the pilot scheme were intended to enable collective learning and inform future practice. Lessons drawn from the pilot would potentially be applied to new community spaces using the same principles. It was noted that further consideration was required regarding the implications for existing properties and spaces, and this would be explored in collaboration with colleagues in the Property Team. It was confirmed that this matter was recognised within the context of the social value policy work. It was emphasised that the approach sought to acknowledge the inherent value contributed by community organisations and VCSE groups through their presence, long-standing relationships and impact on residents' lives, which could not be quantified solely in financial terms. Incorporating these principles into procurement processes was identified as a priority. Rhodri Rowlands undertook to follow up with the Director of Property & Assets on this matter.
- Members queried the position regarding existing organisations renting from Brent and expressed concern that some were being priced out. Members questioned what discussions were taking place with the Property Team to ensure that the priorities and concerns of the voluntary sector were considered. Members further asked whether the pilot would influence existing lettings or apply solely to new lettings. In response, Rhodri Rowlands (Director of Strategic Commissioning Capacity Building and Engagement) confirmed that discussions were ongoing and that Property Team colleagues were engaged in groups receiving initial findings and feedback from the VCSE event. It was noted that this issue had been raised as a significant concern by many organisations during the engagement event held on 30 September 2025. The next step would involve determining an appropriate response and considering how the market rent reduction framework, which incorporated social value, could inform this work. It was acknowledged that a forward-looking approach to the pilot applying to existing buildings would be taken under consideration, although no final position had been reached. Rhodri Rowlands undertook to review this further and assured the Committee that the matter was being actively addressed.

The Chair requested information on the number of organisations currently renting from Brent, noting that this would assist in assessing the potential impact of an ethical lettings policy. The Chair also requested details of the number of organisations expected to occupy reduced rent spaces.

- Members further suggested that consideration be given to proactively incorporating social value within procurement processes to ensure that VCSE organisations benefited from this approach. In response, Rhodri Rowlands

(Director of Strategic Commissioning Capacity Building and Engagement) assured that one of the proposed priorities within the social value policy was to strengthen and build VCSE sector capacity, giving this objective prominence within the framework. A shift towards a more flexible approach was promoted, moving away from rigid performance measures to negotiated social value commitments that reflected community needs. This would support VCSE organisations through property arrangements and other mechanisms.

- Member expressed concern regarding the absence of a clear policy underpinning the pilots, noting the risk of inconsistency and potential discrimination between organisations. The need for a transparent policy to ensure equitable treatment of all voluntary sector organisations was emphasised. In response, Rachel Crossley (Corporate Director Service Reform and Strategy) confirmed that the pilots were consistent with the Property Strategy agreed 18 months previously. The framework applied was the same as that used for existing leases, which began at market rent but allowed for requests for reduced rates under defined principles. The difference in this instance was that the properties were designated exclusively for community use, rather than private rental. It was further noted that the pilots would inform future practice, including consideration of the capacity of voluntary sector organisations to manage buildings. This learning would inform discussions with the sector regarding potential models for council involvement in property management going forward.
- In response to further questioning around how organisations would be selected to benefit from the available spaces, Rachel Crossley (Corporate Director Service Reform and Strategy) confirmed that the process had been conducted through a tendering exercise. Organisations had submitted applications and were assessed on their ability to manage the space and the outcomes they proposed to deliver.
- The Chair expressed concern that there appeared to have been limited support for smaller organisations lacking national lobbying capacity or parliamentary connections to understand legislative changes and how they might benefit from them. In response, Rachel Crossley (Corporate Director Service Reform and Strategy) acknowledged that this represented a gap in current provision.
- The Chair further asked what other gaps had been identified over the past three years that should be prioritised for future investment. In response, Tessa Awe (Specialist Project Officer) highlighted areas including partnerships, fundraising, networking and representation as priorities requiring attention.

Rhodri Rowlands (Director of Strategic Commissioning Capacity Building and Engagement) further added that previous initiatives, such as Brandiun, had supported local businesses and organisations to bid for procured contracts. Reference was made to training programmes delivered by an external organisation, which had enabled over 60 organisations to participate in 'ready to bid' sessions. Brent CVS had contributed to early work undertaken by the Council on social value approaches, but it was acknowledged that further and stronger support would be expected in future.

- Details were sought on the Brent CVS budget and the level of Council contribution towards its running costs. In response, Rhodri Rowlands (Director of Strategic Commissioning Capacity Building and Engagement) advised that a well-functioning social infrastructure organisation would typically secure funding from multiple sources. Brent CVS had accessed alternative funding streams, and the review was expected to identify historic funding patterns and future opportunities. It was noted that the Council's funding allocation for the current contract period was approximately £140,000, which was comparatively smaller when benchmarked against other London boroughs. The Chair suggested that benchmarking data be obtained to determine whether other London boroughs provided higher levels of funding. The Chair also requested confirmation of the proposed contract value for the tender scheduled for January 2026, in order to assess whether the amount would be sufficient to deliver the required outcomes.
- The Chair also took the opportunity to query the quality monitoring information received from funded organisations, given that many organisations routinely provided reports to multiple funders and how this related to the Council's monitoring requirements. In response, Rhodri Rowlands (Director of Strategic Commissioning Capacity Building and Engagement) acknowledged that the position was mixed and confirmed that the grants review was seeking to adopt a proportionate approach to monitoring requirements. It was noted that very small grants, sometimes as low as £1,000, created a disproportionate administrative burden for organisations. Feedback had indicated that the Council's processes were not sufficiently streamlined. For higher-value grants, appropriate monitoring arrangements were necessary. It was expected that capacity building organisations such as Brent CVS would provide support to funded organisations in meeting monitoring requirements. It was acknowledged that the Council's historically rigorous approach had sometimes resulted in onerous expectations, leading to incomplete or inadequate data returns. The aim was to develop a more balanced approach that worked effectively for both the Council and funded organisations.

In seeking to bring consideration of the item to a close, the Chair thanked officers and members for their contributions towards scrutiny of the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector in Brent. As a result of the outcome of the discussion, the following information requests and suggestions for improvement identified were **AGREED**:

## **INFORMATION REQUESTS**

- (1) Provide a breakdown of Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisations currently renting assets from Brent, including use type where possible, grouped as follows:
  - a) Post-Property Strategy: paying full market rent
  - b) Post-Property Strategy: paying below market rent – renegotiated and adjusted to reflect organisational financial circumstances
  - c) Post-Property Strategy: paying below market rent under the Market Reduction Framework Pilot
  - d) Pre-Property Strategy: historical, unexpired rent arrangements

- (2) Provide the percentage of historical leases held by VCS organisations, with unexpired rent arrangements (pre-property strategy), that are due for renewal within the next 5 years and within the next 10 years.
- (3) Outline the joint work of Strategic Commissioning, Capacity Building and Engagement, and Property and Assets teams to support VCS organisations renting council-owned assets in sustaining their premises and addressing affordability concerns.
- (4) Provide a detailed analysis of the strengths, challenges, and opportunities within current council commissioning arrangements.
- (5) Provide an overview of all VCS-commissioned services across the council, including details on scope, objectives, key outcomes, funding levels, contract duration, and how these services align with Borough Plan priorities.
- (6) Provide detailed information on the current Voluntary Community Infrastructure Support (VCIS) contract, including its scope, objectives, expected outcomes, funding levels, duration, performance measures, monitoring arrangements, and evidence of value and impact delivered to the VCS.
- (7) Provide benchmarking data on VCSE capacity building contracts commissioned by other London authorities, covering:
  - a) Value and scope
  - b) Duration
  - c) Priority themes
  - d) Delivery models (e.g., direct delivery vs. commissioned providers; single provider vs. consortium)
  - e) Performance and impact measures.
- (8) Provide information on the anticipated value and scope of the forthcoming VCSE capacity building contract.
- (9) Provide an update on the Market Rent Reduction Pilot for the three new lettings (Harmony Kitchen, Brent Civic Centre, Roy Smith House, and Picture Palace), detailing the communities each organisation will support, the agreed measures to deliver community value, and how these commitments will be monitored.
- (10) Provide a detailed overview of VCS grant programmes, focusing on grant operations and outcomes. This should include eligibility criteria, key dates (such as application windows, decision timelines, and funding start/end dates), a summary of awards over the past three years, and the time taken to disburse funds to recipient organisations, highlighting any significant delays.

## **SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT**

- (1) Integrate employment and climate goals into the forthcoming VCSE capacity building offer.

- (2) Implement a strengthened, comprehensive, and transparent monitoring framework for the forthcoming VCSE Capacity-Building Contract, drawing on lessons learned from existing practices.
- (3) Leverage the forthcoming VCSE capacity-building contract to strengthen local VCSE organisations' ability to engage effectively in council-led social value negotiations and procurement processes.

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

## **10. Procurement Improvement Programme and Emerging Procurement Strategy**

Councillor Rubin (Cabinet Member for Climate Action and Community Power) was invited to introduce the report relating to the Procurement Improvement Programme and Emerging Procurement Strategy, which he advised provided an update on the developments following the Procurement Peer Review and the established Procurement Improvement Programme, emerging Procurement Strategy and opportunities arising from adopting a new definition of "local" suppliers and engagement of Brent businesses.

Having thanked Councillor Rubin (Cabinet Member for Climate Action and Community Power) for introducing the report, the Chair then moved on to invite questions and comments from the Committee in relation to the Procurement Improvement Programme and Emerging Procurement Strategy, with the following comments and issues discussed:

- As an initial query, members enquired what tangible improvements had been delivered under the Procurement Improvement Programme to date and requested clarification on measurable impacts or key successes achieved. In response, Rhodri Rowlands (Director of Strategic Commissioning Capacity Building and Engagement) reported that the recommendations underpinning the Procurement Improvement Programme were extensive and wide-ranging, forming a substantial programme of work over an extended period. It was confirmed that positive progress had been made. One of the core recommendations was to strengthen the capacity of the procurement function by appointing individuals with the required skills to contribute effectively to the Council's objectives. This had previously been a significant challenge. New management had been appointed and three new roles established, which had begun to promote improved relationships and enhanced support for services, particularly in relation to key procurements currently underway.

In continuing the response, members were further advised that the programme had prioritised early opportunities to achieve savings and efficiencies. A notable example was the collaboration with Oxygen Finance on the fast-track payments initiative, which encouraged suppliers to adopt early payment terms to support their cash flow. The Council benefitted through discounted invoices, generating income. Since April 2025, this initiative had achieved growth of 111%, contributing approximately £250,000 in income and savings that would not

otherwise have been realised. Additional practical improvements included the introduction of tools and resources to support procurement delivery and social value objectives. The “Match My Project” initiative was highlighted as an intentional intervention designed to facilitate engagement between suppliers and community groups by providing a mechanism for suppliers to identify local needs and projects they could support. Members also heard that contract management was identified as a major focus area. 15 key contract managers had completed initial training delivered by a sector best practice organisation. It was emphasised that substantial work remained to improve the contract register and implement segmentation of contracts to enable better resource alignment to those requiring the greatest attention. This approach aimed to strengthen performance, quality, delivery, value for money and social value contributions. A new model had been adopted, and 57 contracts had been processed through an initial pilot, with expansion planned for the new year.

- Members referred to paragraph 4.9 of the committee report and sought clarification on the relationship between the emerging Procurement Strategy and the Procurement Improvement Programme, including the systems or processes that ensured alignment between the two. In response, Rhodri Rowlands (Director of Strategic Commissioning Capacity Building and Engagement) acknowledged that refreshing the Council’s procurement strategy was overdue, noting that the existing strategy was outdated and that the procurement landscape had changed significantly. It was confirmed that developing a new Procurement Strategy was a key recommendation arising from the procurement review. The Procurement Improvement Programme was designed to implement improvements that would enable delivery of the priorities and aspirations set out in the upcoming strategy. For example, without sufficient staffing capacity, the strategy could not be implemented effectively. Similarly, improvements in contract management were essential to achieving best value. Enhanced engagement with suppliers, including pre-market engagement, was also critical to enabling suppliers to bid successfully for Council contracts. In concluding the response, Rhodri Rowlands conveyed that the improvement programme provided the foundational capacity and processes necessary to deliver the new Procurement Strategy.

Councillor Rubin (Cabinet Member for Climate Action and Community Power) further emphasised that the tangible improvements achieved through the Procurement Improvement Programme were significant. It was noted that when preparing budget proposals for the current year, the Council had identified substantial efficiency savings attributable to the programme. These savings were crucial in mitigating the level of reductions to frontline services that would otherwise have been necessary. Satisfaction was expressed that the programme had delivered meaningful financial benefits.

- The Chair enquired whether any recent procurements had involved robust negotiations resulting in improved contractual efficiencies and enhanced value. In response, Rachel Crossley (Corporate Director Service Reform and Strategy) confirmed that negotiations had taken place in relation to several digital contracts. These negotiations had secured longer contract periods for the same cost and increased social value commitments. It was noted that the Council had

successfully challenged initial pricing proposals to achieve discounted rates and extended terms, thereby delivering improved value for money.

- The Chair sought clarification regarding concerns previously expressed about the number of companies currently paying business rates within Brent that could meet the Council's procurement requirements. The Chair further enquired what analysis had been undertaken to assess commissioning needs over the next 1 to 3 years and whether suitable companies already existed within Brent that paid business rates locally. In response, Rhodri Rowlands (Director of Strategic Commissioning Capacity Building and Engagement) advised that spend analysis was being undertaken to establish a clearer baseline of organisations currently delivering services under Council contracts, as well as those operating in other sectors, and to understand the associated expenditure. This analysis had been incorporated into the review being conducted by the Centre for Local Economic Strategies, the report from which was expected imminently. It was further explained that the next stage of work related to engagement with commissioning teams to identify future service requirements, which was generally undertaken on a service-by-service basis. For the upcoming 12 to 18 months, the procurement team had developed a procurement pipeline outlining contract opportunities scheduled for extension or recommissioning. Collaborative work with commissioners was focused on exploring potential delivery models, considering alternative approaches, and identifying ways to prepare small and medium-sized enterprises for participation in these opportunities. This work was integral to achieving the ambitions set out in the emerging procurement strategy, and further development in this area was required.
- Members considered that the definition of "localism" should include the organisations that pay business rates to Brent. It was noted that such an approach could potentially incentivise new business establishments within the borough and strengthen the local economy. In response, Councillor Rubin (Cabinet Member for Climate Action and Community Power) confirmed that this criteria was incorporated within Option Definition 1, Table 2 of the committee report and noted the Committee's endorsement of Option Definition 1 as the preferred definition of "localism". Rhodri Rowlands (Director of Strategic Commissioning Capacity Building and Engagement) also clarified that the proposed options for defining localism did not advocate an exclusive 'buy local' approach and emphasised that broader considerations, including quality and value for money, would remain fundamental elements of the procurement process at all times.

In seeking to bring consideration of the item to a close, the Chair thanked officers and members for their contributions towards scrutiny of the Procurement Improvement Programme and Emerging Procurement Strategy. As a result of the outcome of the discussion, the following suggestions for improvement identified were **AGREED**:

## **SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT**

- (1) Continue strengthening support for SMEs by reducing barriers and streamlining council procurement processes, ensuring easier access to contracts and opportunities.

- (2) Adopt a tiered definition of 'local' in procurement, prioritising:
  - a) Suppliers that operate and pay business rates within the borough, while ensuring value for money; followed by
  - b) Suppliers that deliver significant social and economic benefits to Brent, such as employing a substantial number of local residents
- (3) Explore introducing a threshold for certain higher-value contracts to ensure that businesses the Council engage with pay the London Living Wage.
- (4) Require all businesses the Council regardless of contract value to recognise trade unions as a standard condition of engagement, where possible.

*Please note that the specific wording of the suggestions for improvements were subject to refinement following the meeting, with the agreement of the Chair.*

## **11. Social Value: Draft Policy and Whole-Council Approach**

At this stage in proceedings, the Committee agreed to apply the guillotine procedure under Standing Order 62(c) in order to extend the meeting for a period of 30 minutes to enable conclusion of the final item and remaining business on the agenda.

Members concern regarding the limited time remaining for consideration of the item on social value was noted given the significance of the issue and substantial financial implications associated with social value.

In continuing, Councillor Rubin (Cabinet Member for Climate Action and Community Power) was invited to introduce the report relating to the Social Value: Draft Policy and Whole-Council Approach, which set out the case for a new approach to social value, rooted in national policy developments and Brent's local priorities. It proposed a shift from a narrow, procurement-only focus to a whole-council, place-based model that embedded social value in all Council activities. The report also responded to feedback from the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee (February 2025), Procurement Peer Review (April 2025) and the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge, which highlighted the need for a more consistent, strategic and outcomes-focused approach to social value across the Council.

Having thanked Councillor Rubin (Cabinet Member for Climate Action and Community Power) for introducing the report, the Chair then moved on to invite questions and comments from the Committee in relation to the Social Value: Draft Policy and Whole-Council Approach, with the following comments and issues discussed:

- As an initial question, members queried the absence of performance data within the report and asked whether detailed data on this matter was available. In response, Rhodri Rowlands (Director of Strategic Commissioning Capacity Building and Engagement) confirmed that the data currently held was more limited and explained that the Council had previously adopted a policy which, at the time of its introduction in 2019-2020, was considered robust on paper and aligned with procurement practices. The inclusion of social value requirements within tendering activities for contracts exceeding £100,000 had been



implemented effectively, and the procurement documentation was more robust in this regard. However, the delivery of meaningful social value commitments had been constrained by the adoption of a rigid set of performance measures. This rigidity had limited flexibility in negotiations with suppliers and hindered the incorporation of additional insights and contributions from residents and community groups. It was further noted that other councils and organisations, including the Cooperative Councils Network and the Social Value Portal, had moved away from reliance on nationally prescribed measures. Instead, they had adopted approaches that recognised local priorities and tailored engagement with suppliers to secure long-term legacy commitments through collaborative partnerships, rather than through rigid contractual arrangements.

- The Chair observed that specific performance data had been requested as part of the report but had not been provided. This had made it difficult to scrutinise gaps or make suggestions for improvement regarding the new social value policy, as the Committee lacked clarity due to the absence of data. In response, Councillor Rubin (Cabinet Member for Climate Action and Community Power) suggested that officers undertake analysis to address this gap and proposed the development of mechanisms to measure and monitor the implementation of social value as part of the strategy.
- Members highlighted that the current social value policy lacked clarity on how commitments would be monitored, which was considered essential. It was emphasised that a policy without monitoring provisions was inadequate and requested a commitment to monitoring, along with consideration of what such monitoring would entail. In response, Councillor Rubin (Cabinet Member for Climate Action and Community Power) confirmed that the Council could explore the development of similar measures.
- Members referred to the policy's reference to an annual report and questioned whether one would be forthcoming. In response, Rhodri Rowlands (Director of Strategic Commissioning Capacity Building and Engagement) clarified that reinstating an annual report was among the commitments the Council intended to make. Although detailed arrangements were not set out in the current draft policy document, the focus on contract management aimed to better equip officers to negotiate and recognise the importance of social value delivery, supported by appropriate mechanisms. Steps were already being taken to strengthen this approach, and further detail would be provided on measurement and impact information, as referenced by Councillor Rubin.
- Members referred to comments from the peer review within the committee report indicating that the Council's social value approach should be less risk-averse and more innovative. It was questioned where evidence of this shift could be found within the new policy. In response, Rhodri Rowlands (Director of Strategic Commissioning Capacity Building and Engagement) stated that the first indication of this change was the move away from rigid nationally prescribed measures previously adopted for Brent. The new approach promoted collaboration and sought opportunities to deliver meaningful outcomes. The framework provided scope to explore significant long-term legacy initiatives, such as a Social Care Innovation Academy or investment to build voluntary sector

capacity. These ambitions aimed to consolidate commitments towards impactful goals rather than numerous small-scale actions. It was further emphasised that the policy alone would not achieve these outcomes but reflected feedback from various sectors and organisations.

In continuing the response, Rachel Crossley (Corporate Director Service Reform and Strategy) addressed the issue of risk, noting that a more community-led approach was envisaged. Rather than prescribing, for example, a set number of apprenticeships or equipment, the Council intended to encourage community-driven ideas through initiatives such as “Match My Project”. While this approach carried inherent risks, including challenges in measurement and prioritisation, it was considered essential to focus on what mattered most to communities. This did not prevent employment and skills initiatives but aimed to move beyond prescriptive requirements towards more innovative and locally relevant solutions.

- Members enquired regarding the next iteration of the social value policy. In response, Rhodri Rowlands (Director of Strategic Commissioning Capacity Building and Engagement) advised that the next step would be to finalise the policy and ensure it was fully prepared for implementation at the start of the new financial year. It was stated that the revised policy would extend beyond the principles of the approach and would articulate the intended outcomes, including considerations relating to risk management.
- The Chair suggested that the social value annual report, once prepared, should demonstrate, on an annual basis, the delivery achieved through social value commitments. It was emphasised that the report should include numerical values, social value impact and community benefit, and that such a report should be submitted to scrutiny for review. In response, Councillor Rubin (Cabinet Member for Climate Action and Community Power) expressed his intention to review the report at the Board established to oversee commissioning, procurement and social value but confirmed that the matter could also be referred to the Scrutiny Committee, if required.
- The Chair questioned whether any consideration had been given to the mechanisms for monitoring social value within the Board established to review contracts. In response, Councillor Rubin (Cabinet Member for Climate Action and Community Power) confirmed that no firm decisions had been made and suggested that an annual report would be a sensible approach, as it would provide comprehensive data for review.
- Details were sought around where the resource for monitoring would originate. In response, Rhodri Rowlands (Director of Strategic Commissioning Capacity Building and Engagement) confirmed that suppliers would be required to contribute information and reiterated the principle of proportionality, stating that monitoring would be aligned with the scale and value of the contract. It was acknowledged that previous approaches had been bureaucratic and resource-intensive and confirmed that the Council was seeking alternative methods. Reference was made to practices within social value networks across London, where organisations collectively reviewed achievements which was then used to feedback into an annual report. It was suggested that similar collaborative

approaches could be adopted to ensure value for money and impact without imposing excessive burdens. It was additionally mentioned that officer time and priorities would need to be considered and that the process would require ongoing review and refinement.

- Members observed that both the Procurement Improvement Programme and the Social Value Policy emphasised local benefit, community wealth building and accountability, and questioned whether the Council had considered bringing key services in-house to deliver social value outcomes directly, such as stable local employment, apprenticeships and community wealth, rather than relying on external contracts. Examples cited included housing maintenance, temporary accommodation management and street services. In response, Councillor Rubin (Cabinet Member for Climate Action and Community Power) indicated that this consideration formed part of the ideas within the development of the Procurement Strategy and expressed support for strengthening this element within the report and reiterated the importance of evaluating the benefits of insourcing and alternative methods of commissioning services.
- Members referred to paragraph 7.0 of the committee report, which highlighted the Council's commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) within the new approach. Further detail was requested on the steps being taken to ensure that EDI was reflected not only in the policy language but also in measurable outcomes. In response, Rhodri Rowlands (Director of Strategic Commissioning Capacity Building and Engagement) assured that practical steps were already being taken and would be strengthened through the procurement and social value approach. It was stated that EDI considerations often formed part of the key performance indicators (KPIs) within contracts, which were monitored through the contract management process. It was emphasised the importance of ensuring that information on tender opportunities was published in an accessible manner and that suppliers were able to engage effectively. It was further mentioned that the Council intended to remove bureaucratic barriers that hindered smaller organisations, thereby creating a more equitable and inclusive procurement process. It was confirmed that KPIs could be developed to monitor the diversity of organisations contracted by the Council, including organisational structure, size and scale. These measures would support equity, diversity and inclusion aimed at addressing inequalities in areas such as housing and social care, which were fundamentally about inclusion.
- The Chair requested that, in order to assist the Committee and residents in understanding the practical impact of social value commitments, an example of an agreed contract be provided following the meeting. The Chair requested that this example include a breakdown of the social value commitments within the contract, their value to the Council and details of responsibility for delivery.

In seeking to bring consideration of the item to a close, given the remaining time available, the Chair thanked officers and members for their contributions towards scrutiny of the Social Value: Draft Policy and Whole-Council Approach. As a result of the outcome of the discussion, the following information requests and suggestions for improvement identified were **AGREED**:

## **INFORMATION REQUESTS**

- (1) Provide a sample of data from higher-value procurements since April 2020 (following implementation of the current strategy), detailing:
  - a) Social value delivered versus committed;
  - b) Performance against associated KPIs;
  - c) Where relevant, financial implications for the Social Value Fund where commitments were unmet; and
  - d) The resulting impact.
- (2) Provide case studies illustrating both successful and underperforming delivery of social value commitments under current contracts. Each case should outline:
  - a) The social value commitments made;
  - b) Actual delivery achieved;
  - c) Reasons for any variance; and
  - d) Lessons learned to inform the forthcoming Social Value Policy.
- (3) Provide further detail on how transparency and accountability will be maintained in measuring social value across services, given the shift from a purely quantitative approach to a mixed model that combines qualitative and quantitative outcomes.

## **SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT**

- (1) Leverage insights from leading councils and academic research to inform the development of the forthcoming Social Value Policy.
- (2) Embed co-production of social value commitments as a core principle in the forthcoming Social Value Policy. This should involve establishing a framework for involving communities and local organisations in shaping commitments during the tender stage, while requiring contractors to work collaboratively with these stakeholders throughout contract delivery to ensure commitments are implemented to reflect community priorities.
- (3) Establish a comprehensive monitoring framework to support the forthcoming policy, with mechanisms to guarantee consistent enforcement across the Council.
- (4) Submit an annual report on the forthcoming Social Value Policy for ongoing scrutiny, presenting detailed evidence of social value commitments made and outcomes achieved.

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

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

The Chair noted that the recommendations tracker had been cleared for the current meeting, as there were no outstanding actions or items to review. It was further confirmed that the tracker would be reviewed again at the beginning of the meeting scheduled for January 2026, ensuring any new recommendations were considered then.


**13. Any other urgent business**

No items of urgent business were identified.

The meeting closed at 9:30pm.

COUNCILLOR RITA CONNEELY  
Chair

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	<b>Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee</b> 21 January 2026
	<b>Report from the Deputy Director, Democratic and Corporate Governance</b>
<b>Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2025/26.</b>	

<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All
<b>Key or Non-Key Decision:</b>	Not Applicable
<b>Open or Part/Fully Exempt:</b> <small>(If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)</small>	Open
<b>List of Appendices:</b>	Appendix A – Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2025/26
<b>Background Papers:</b>	None
<b>Contact Officer(s):</b> <small>(Name, Title, Contact Details)</small>	Jason Sigba, Strategy Lead – Scrutiny, Democratic & Corporate Governance <a href="mailto:Jason.Sigba@brent.gov.uk">Jason.Sigba@brent.gov.uk</a>  Amira Nassr, Deputy Director, Democratic & Corporate Governance, Finance & Resources <a href="mailto:Amira.Nassr@brent.gov.uk">Amira.Nassr@brent.gov.uk</a>

## 1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1 To provide an update on the changes to the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee's work programme.

## 2.0 Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 That committee members note the report and the changes to the work programme within.

## 3.0 Detail

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

- 3.1.1 Borough Plan 2023-2027 – all strategic priorities.

## **3.2 Background**

3.2.1 The work programme outlines the items which the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee will consider during the municipal year.

3.2.2 It is intended to be a flexible, living document that can adapt and change as required. The following amendments set out in this report reflect this:

- Cllr Anthony Molloy has replaced Cllr Mary Mitchell as Chair of the Kerbside Management Scrutiny Task Group.
- Cllr Ishma Moeen has been appointed Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Cohesion, taking over from Cllr Abdi Farah and replacing the previous Safer Communities, Jobs and Skills portfolio.
- The agenda item titled *Kerbside Management Scrutiny Task Group Findings* has been rescheduled from the meeting on 21 January 2026 to the meeting on 2 April 2026.
- The agenda item titled *Community Engagement and Consultation* has been rescheduled from the meeting on 21 January 2026 to the meeting on 2 April 2026.

*All changes are highlighted in red in Appendix A.*

## **4.0 Stakeholder and ward member consultation and engagement**

4.1 Ward members are regularly informed about the committee's work programme in the Chair's report to Full Council. There is ongoing consultation with other relevant stakeholders.

## **5.0 Financial Considerations**

5.1 There are no financial considerations arising from this report. However, budget and financial implications are addressed in the 'Financial Considerations' section of any reports to the committee, requested as part of its work programme.

## **6.0 Legal Considerations**

6.1 There are no legal considerations arising from this report. However, legal implications are addressed in the 'Legal Considerations' section of any reports to the committee, requested as part of its work programme.

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



- 7.1 There are no EDI considerations for the purposes of this report. However, EDI implications are addressed in the 'EDI Considerations' section of any reports to the committee, requested as part of its work programme.

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

- 8.1 There are no climate change and environmental considerations for the purposes of this report. However, climate change and environmental implications are addressed in the 'Climate Change and Environmental Considerations' section of any reports to the committee, requested as part of its work programme.

## **9.0 Communication Considerations**

- 9.1 There are no communication considerations for the purposes of this report. However, communication implications are addressed in the 'Communication Considerations' section of any reports to the committee, requested as part of its work programme.

### **Report sign off:**

**Amira Nassr**

Deputy Director, Democratic and  
Corporate Governance

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## 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

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	
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	

## 21 January 2026

Agenda Item	Cabinet Member/Non-Executive Member	Corporate Director	External Organisations
Approach to tackling ASB across Brent	Cllr Ishma Moeen, Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Cohesion	Nigel Chapman, Corporate Director – Children, Young People and Community Development	
Budget Scrutiny Task Group Findings	Cllr Rita Conneely, Chair of Resources and Public Realm Committee	Minesh Patel, Corporate Director – Finance and Resources	


## 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	Jehan Weerasinghe, 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	Jehan Weerasinghe, Corporate Director – Neighbourhoods and Regeneration	
Safer Brent Partnership Report 2025/26	Cllr Ishma Moeen, Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Cohesion	Nigel Chapman, Corporate Director – Children, Young People and Community Development	Metropolitan Police
Community Engagement and Consultation	Cllr Ishma Moeen, Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Cohesion	Rachel Crossley, Corporate Director – Service Reform and Strategy	

Kerbside Management Scrutiny Task Group Findings	Cllr Anthony Molloy, Member of Resources and Public Realm Committee and Task Group Chair	Minesh Patel, Corporate Director – Finance and Resources	
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	<b>Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee</b> 21 January 2026
	<b>Report from the Deputy Director, Democratic and Corporate Governance</b>
<b>Scrutiny Recommendations Tracker</b>	

<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All
<b>Key or Non-Key Decision:</b>	Non-Key Decision
<b>Open or Part/Fully Exempt:</b> <small>(If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)</small>	Open
<b>List of Appendices:</b>	Appendix A - Scrutiny Recommendations Tracker
<b>Background Papers:</b>	None
<b>Contact Officer(s):</b> <small>(Name, Title, Contact Details)</small>	Jason Sigba, Strategy Lead – Scrutiny, Democratic & Corporate Governance <a href="mailto:Jason.Sigba@brent.gov.uk">Jason.Sigba@brent.gov.uk</a>  Amira Nassr, Deputy Director, Democratic & Corporate Governance, Finance & Resources <a href="mailto:Amira.Nassr@brent.gov.uk">Amira.Nassr@brent.gov.uk</a>

## 1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present the Scrutiny Recommendations Tracker to the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee for consideration.

## 2.0 Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 That the progress of any previous recommendations, suggestions for improvement, and information requests of the committee be noted (Appendix A).

## 3.0 Detail

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

- 3.1.1 Borough Plan 2023-2027 – all strategic priorities.

## **3.2 Background**

- 3.2.1 In accordance with Part 4 of the Brent Council Constitution (Standing Orders of Committees), Brent Council scrutiny committees may make recommendations to the Full Council or the Cabinet with respect to any functions which are the responsibility of the Executive, or of any functions which are not the responsibility of the Executive, or on matters which affect the borough or its inhabitants.
- 3.2.2 The Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee may not make executive decisions. Scrutiny recommendations therefore require consideration and decision by the appropriate decision maker; the Cabinet or Full Council for policy and budgetary decisions.
- 3.2.3 The Scrutiny Recommendations Tracker provides a summary of any scrutiny recommendations made to Cabinet/Full Council/external stakeholders and implementation progress. It also includes suggestions for improvement and information requests to council departments/external stakeholders, as captured in the minutes of the committee meetings.
- 3.2.4 Recommendations, suggestions for improvement, and information requests are removed from the tracker when they have either been actioned or rejected.

## **4.0 Procedure for Recommendations from Scrutiny Committees**

- 4.1 Where scrutiny committees make recommendations to the Cabinet, these will be referred to the Cabinet (and/or relevant cabinet member/s) requesting an Executive Response. If relevant, the item will be published on the Council's Forward Plan.
- 4.2 Regarding recommendations to Full Council (e.g. in the case of policy and budgetary decisions), the same process will be followed, where a report containing the scrutiny recommendations will then be forwarded to Full Council alongside the Cabinet's responses to those recommendations.
- 4.3 Where scrutiny committees have powers under their terms of reference to make reports or recommendations to external decision makers (e.g. NHS bodies), the relevant external decision maker shall be notified in writing, providing them with a copy of the respective Committee's report and recommendations, and requesting a response.
- 4.4 Once responses are received, they will be added to the Recommendations Tracker for review and consideration.

## **5.0 Stakeholder and ward member consultation and engagement**

- 5.1 None for the purposes of this report.

## **6.0 Financial Considerations**



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

## **7.0 Legal Considerations**

7.1 Section 9F, Part 1A of the Local Government Act 2000, *Overview and scrutiny committees: functions*, requires that Executive arrangements by a local authority must ensure that its overview and scrutiny committees have the power to make reports or recommendations to the authority or the executive with respect to the discharge of any functions which are or are not the responsibility of the executive, or on matters which affect the Authority's area or the inhabitants of that area.

7.2 Section 9FE, *Duty of authority or executive to respond to overview and scrutiny committee*, requires that the authority or executive;-

- (a) consider the report or recommendations,
- (b) respond to the overview and scrutiny committee indicating what (if any) action the authority, or the executive, proposes to take,
- (c) if the overview and scrutiny committee has published the report or recommendations, publish the response, within two months beginning with the date on which the authority or executive received the report or recommendations.

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

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

## **9.0 Climate Change and Environmental Considerations**

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

## **10.0 Communication Considerations**

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

### **Report sign off:**

**Amira Nassr**

Deputy Director, Democratic and  
Corporate Governance

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## Appendix A

### Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee (RPRSC) Recommendations Tracker 2025/26

The Recommendations Tracker is a standing item on committee agendas, and documents the progress of scrutiny recommendations, suggestions for improvement, and information requests made by the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee at its public meetings and as part of task and finish group reviews. Scrutiny recommendations, suggestions for improvement, and information requests will not be removed from the tracker until full responses have been provided to the committee by either the Cabinet, Full Council, council departments, and/or external partners.

#### Suggestions for improvement from RPRSC to Council departments/partners

Meeting date and agenda item	Suggestion for improvement	Council Department/External Partner	Response / Status
25 Feb 2025 - <b>Commissioning, Procurement, Community Wealth-Building, and Social Value</b>	Revise the official council report template to include dedicated sections for Community Wealth Building and Social Value Considerations, ensuring these factors are assessed and reported in all council reports where relevant.	Amira Nassr – Deputy Director, Democratic & Corporate Governance, Finance & Resources	<b>Response received on 11/06/2025:</b>  This will be revisited in April 2026 once the procurement and social value policies have been formally adopted.
23 April 2025 – <b>Build Quality in Brent</b>	Conduct a survey to identify which council-owned buildings may fall within the scope of the Building Safety Act 2022 and/or the Defective Premises Act 1972 in relation to relevant defects, and assess whether there is potential for legal recourse.	Tanveer Ghani – Director, Property & Assets, Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	<b>Response received on 07/07/25:</b>  Officers have identified two projects (Housing and Education) that may fall within the scope of the Building Safety Act 2022 and/or the Defective Premises Act 1972. Work is being undertaken to assess if/where they may be potential for legal recourse.  <del>A further update will be provided by 9 January 2026.</del>  <b>Updated response received on 08/12/25:</b>

			A further update will be provided by 19 March 2026.
	Undertake a sampling review to assess design changes from the planning stage through to practical completion, and determine whether these changes have impacted build quality.	Tanveer Ghani – Director, Property & Assets, Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	<p><b>Response received on 07/07/25:</b></p> <p>Officers propose to undertake a sampling of three projects, one from each the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education</li> <li>• Housing</li> <li>• Regeneration</li> </ul> <p><del>A further update will be provided by 9 January 2026.</del></p> <p><b>Updated response received on 08/12/25:</b></p> <p>A further update will be provided by 19 March 2026.</p>
4 November 2025 – Q2 Financial Forecast 2025/26	Work with the NHS to establish additional shared or pooled budgets for Adult Social Care, with the aim of reducing financial pressures, improving resource efficiency, enhancing coordinated planning, and delivering a fully integrated health and social care offer across the borough.	Claudia Brown – Director, Adult Social Care, Service Reform & Strategy	<p><b>Response received on 11/12/25:</b></p> <p>Adult Social Care Brent has already made some progress in working with the NHS to establish shared and pooled budgets for Adult Social Care. We have a joint panel for Section 117 cases, regular meetings between council and NHS finance teams to agree invoices on joint packages and clarified processes for reclaiming health budgets between commissioning and health commissioners. The Better Care Fund (BCF) is actively monitored through dedicated meetings that review spend and scheme effectiveness, with the flexibility to adapt or end schemes based on delivery and emerging needs. In addition, several schemes are already funded by Public Health, including the SMART team and social prescribers, who are now embedded within our hubs to support residents' wellbeing. Looking ahead, we will be exploring further collaboration with Public Health, particularly around prevention and early intervention, and developing new pathways in mental health and learning disability services—through our revised memorandum of understanding with some focus on prevention- due to be completed in January 2026. To move towards a fully integrated health and social care offer across the borough, we will further explore joint approaches to continuing healthcare, ensuring seamless pathways and shared responsibility for outcomes.</p>

	<p>Prioritise effective void management to reduce forecasted Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget pressures and ensure the long-term financial sustainability of the HRA.</p>	<p>Spencer Randolph – Director, Housing Services, Residents &amp; Housing Services</p>	<p><b>Response received on 11/12/25:</b></p> <p>There are currently 161 void properties in total. Of these, 56 (36%) are ready for handover and awaiting formal sign-off, 76 (47%) are works in progress, 14 (8%) are delayed due to specific issues such as roof leaks, damp, and meter installations, and 15 (9%) are new voids awaiting full specification. The number of voids at stage 2 has reduced significantly from 199 in March to 105 currently, with notable reductions across both I4B and FWH stock.</p> <p>A range of operational improvements has been implemented to accelerate turnaround times, including direct management of British Gas meter registrations, reinstated weekly coordination meetings with contractors and partners, improved collaboration with Housing colleagues on viewings, decants and handovers, daily tracker reviews, the use of temporary compliant void doors to avoid long manufacturing delays, improved access arrangements through Sitex keys, and closer coordination with Oakrays to complete gas works during the void period. Long-term voids have also been separated and allocated to a specialist contractor to prevent skewing overall performance data.</p> <p>Since September 2025, contractor average working times are now 14 days for major voids and 10 days for minor voids with Wates, and 18 days for major and 10 days for minor voids with Greyline. This has contributed to a significant reduction in average turnaround time, falling from 217 days in March 2025 to 20 days in November 2025, demonstrating sustained and substantial performance improvement.</p>
	<p>Assess the opportunities, as they may present themselves, in the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill, to establish additional Community Special School capacity, and to work collaboratively with neighbouring local authorities to help alleviate Dedicated Schools Grant pressures.</p>	<p>Shirley Parks – Director, Education Partnerships &amp; Strategy, Children. Young People &amp; Community Development</p>	<p><b>Response received on 31/12/25:</b></p> <p>The School Place Planning Strategy 2024-28 (refreshed in November 2025) sets out the need for additional special school places in Brent to meet growing demand. In line with the Strategy, the Local Authority has completed Phase I of the SEND Capital Expansion Programme through delivery of almost 400 additional local places, including the new Wembley Manor secondary special school and new additionally reduced provisions (ARPs) in mainstream schools, at a cost of circa £44m.</p> <p>A number of projects have been identified for Phase II of the SEND Capital Programme, aimed at providing more local special school places to reduce dependency on out-of-borough special schools or independent special school day placements that are at a higher cost to the Dedicated Schools Grant than</p>

			<p>local state-funded provision. The proposed projects include use of the Strathcona site, that was previously used for primary school provision, for SEND provision, as well as expansions of other local special schools at a cost of circa £11m.</p> <p>Demand analysis suggests that further local special school provision is likely to be needed. The Local Authority will consider opportunities arising from both the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill and the Schools and SEND White Paper, that is anticipated in January, to determine how this might be provided. This could include consideration of establishing new local special school provision through repurposing spare primary capacity across the school estate and working with neighbouring local authorities to explore joint commissioning of SEND provision. This would help to alleviate further Dedicated Schools Grant budget pressures and pressure on the SEND Transport budget.</p>
	Conduct a comprehensive review of HRA finances to address forecasted budget pressures and ensure long-term sustainability, with findings reported to the Committee at its February 2026 meeting. The review should examine the HRA's purpose, funding sources, performance, key pressures, risks, and mitigation measures, including an in-depth analysis of void management and income generation.	Spencer Randolph – Director, Housing Services, Residents & Housing Services	<p><b>Response received on 11/12/25:</b></p> <p>To be provided in scrutiny report for discussion at Resources and Public Realm Committee meeting on 24 February 2026.</p>
4 November 2025 – <b>VCSE in Brent</b>	Integrate employment and climate goals into the forthcoming VCSE capacity building offer.	Rhodri Rowlands – Director, Strategic Commissioning, Capacity Building & Engagement, Service Reform & Strategy	<p><b>Response received on 04/12/25:</b></p> <p>The suggestion is noted, and will be further considered through the scoping and development of the future VCSE capacity building service in conjunction with the cross-sector steering group that is leading on it; joint action planning with the VCSE sector following the VCSE Summit in September 2025 and the support provided through a range of other initiatives including the social value policy.</p>

	Implement a strengthened, comprehensive, and transparent monitoring framework for the forthcoming VCSE Capacity-Building Contract, drawing on lessons learned from existing practices.	Rhodri Rowlands – Director, Strategic Commissioning, Capacity Building & Engagement, Service Reform & Strategy	<b>Response received on 04/12/25:</b>  The suggestion is noted, and will be further considered through the scoping and development of the future VCSE capacity building service in conjunction with the cross-sector steering group that is leading on it; joint action planning with the VCSE sector following the VCSE Summit in September 2025 and the support provided through a range of other initiatives including the social value policy.
	Leverage the forthcoming VCSE capacity-building contract to strengthen local VCSE organisations' ability to engage effectively in council-led social value negotiations and procurement processes.	Rhodri Rowlands – Director, Strategic Commissioning, Capacity Building & Engagement, Service Reform & Strategy	<b>Response received on 04/12/25:</b>  The suggestion is noted, and will be further considered through the scoping and development of the future VCSE capacity building service in conjunction with the cross-sector steering group that is leading on it; joint action planning with the VCSE sector following the VCSE Summit in September 2025 and the support provided through a range of other initiatives including the social value policy.
4 November 2025 – <b>Social Value: Draft Policy and Whole-Council Approach</b>	Leverage insights from leading councils and academic research to inform the development of the forthcoming Social Value Policy.	Rhodri Rowlands – Director, Strategic Commissioning, Capacity Building & Engagement, Service Reform & Strategy	<b>Response received on 04/12/25:</b>  The suggestion is noted. This is already reflected in the development of the draft social value policy, which has been informed by extensive evidence and sector best practice and will be further considered and addressed through the supporting guidance supporting its implementation.
	Embed co-production of social value commitments as a core principle in the forthcoming Social Value Policy. This should involve establishing a framework for involving communities and local organisations in shaping commitments during the tender stage, while requiring contractors to work collaboratively with these stakeholders throughout contract delivery to ensure commitments are implemented to reflect community priorities.	Rhodri Rowlands – Director, Strategic Commissioning, Capacity Building & Engagement, Service Reform & Strategy	<b>Response received on 04/12/25:</b>  The suggestion is noted. This is already reflected in the development of the draft social value policy, which has been informed by extensive evidence and sector best practice and will be further considered and addressed through the supporting guidance supporting its implementation. The principle of co-production and collaboration is a key guiding principle underpinning the policy.

	Establish a comprehensive monitoring framework to support the forthcoming policy, with mechanisms to guarantee consistent enforcement across the Council.	Rhodri Rowlands – Director, Strategic Commissioning, Capacity Building & Engagement, Service Reform & Strategy	<b>Response received on 04/12/25:</b>  The suggestion is noted. This is already reflected in the development of the draft social value policy, which has been informed by extensive evidence and sector best practice and will be further considered and addressed through the supporting guidance supporting its implementation.
	Submit an annual report on the forthcoming Social Value Policy for ongoing scrutiny, presenting detailed evidence of social value commitments made and outcomes achieved.	Rhodri Rowlands – Director, Strategic Commissioning, Capacity Building & Engagement, Service Reform & Strategy	<i>Awaiting response.</i>
4 November 2025 – <b>Procurement Improvement Programme and Emerging Procurement Strategy</b>	Continue strengthening support for SMEs by reducing barriers and streamlining council procurement processes, ensuring easier access to contracts and opportunities.	Rhodri Rowlands – Director, Strategic Commissioning, Capacity Building & Engagement, Service Reform & Strategy	<i>Awaiting response.</i>
	Adopt a tiered definition of 'local' in procurement, prioritising: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Suppliers that operate and pay business rates within the borough, while ensuring value for money; followed by</li> <li>Suppliers that deliver significant social and economic benefits to Brent, such as employing a substantial number of local residents</li> </ul>	Rhodri Rowlands – Director, Strategic Commissioning, Capacity Building & Engagement, Service Reform & Strategy	<i>Awaiting response.</i>



	Explore introducing a threshold for certain higher-value contracts to ensure that businesses the Council engage with pay the London Living Wage.	Rhodri Rowlands – Director, Strategic Commissioning, Capacity Building & Engagement, Service Reform & Strategy	<b>Response received on 04/12/25:</b>  The suggestion is noted. This is already under consideration in the development of the draft Procurement Strategy and will be addressed through its final drafting and the development of supporting guidance and activity to support its implementation.
	Require all businesses the Council regardless of contract value to recognise trade unions as a standard condition of engagement, where possible.	Rhodri Rowlands – Director, Strategic Commissioning, Capacity Building & Engagement, Service Reform & Strategy	<b>Response received on 04/12/25:</b>  The suggestion is noted. This is already under consideration in the development of the draft Procurement Strategy and will be addressed through its final drafting and the development of supporting guidance and activity to support its implementation.

#### Information requests from RPRSC to Council departments/partners

Meeting date and agenda item	Information request	Council Department/External Partner	Response / Status
4 Sept 2024 – <b>Delivery of Affordable Housing by i4B Holdings Ltd and First Wave Housing Ltd (FWH)</b>	Provide Asset Management Strategy upon completion.	Sadie East – Director, Communications, Insight & Innovation, Service Reform & Strategy	<p><b>Response received on 07/10/24:</b></p> <p>This will be presented to the i4B/FWH Board meeting on Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> November and, dependent on any feedback from directors and further work required, will be available to share with the committee in December 2024.</p> <p><b>Updated response received on 14/02/25:</b></p> <p><del>The draft strategy was presented at the December i4B/FWH Board meeting. The Board have requested more detailed financial analysis which is to be implemented into the business plan. The strategy is expected to return to the Board in February/ March 2025 for approval.</del></p> <p><b>Updated response received on 15/04/25:</b></p>


			<p><del>The draft strategy was presented at the December i4B/FWH Board meeting. The Board has requested more detailed financial analysis. The strategy is expected to return to the Board in early summer 2025 for approval.</del></p> <p><b>Updated response received on 05/09/25:</b></p> <p>This item has had to be rescheduled on the Forward Plan and is now expected to be picked up in October 2025.</p> <p><b>Updated response received on 13/01/26:</b></p> <p>Housing Companies Asset Management Strategy circulated to Committee by email on 13/01/26.</p>
	Provide a breakdown of the expected costs associated with enhancing energy performance and retrofitting the i4B/First Wave Housing stock.	Sadie East – Director, Communications, Insight & Innovation, Service Reform & Strategy	<p><b>Response received on 07/10/24:</b></p> <p>This information will be included in the asset management strategy, which will be presented to the i4B/FWH Board meeting on Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> November and, dependent on any feedback from directors and further work required, will be available to share with the committee in December 2024.</p> <p><del><b>Updated response received on 14/02/25:</b></del></p> <p><del>The draft strategy was presented at the December i4B/FWH Board meeting. The Board have requested more detailed financial analysis which is to be implemented into the business plan. The strategy is expected to return to the Board in February/ March 2025 for approval.</del></p> <p><del><b>Updated response received on 15/04/25:</b></del></p> <p><del>The draft strategy was presented at the December i4B/FWH Board meeting. The Board has requested more detailed financial analysis. The strategy is expected to return to the Board in early summer 2025 for approval.</del></p> <p><b>Updated response received on 05/09/25:</b></p> <p>This item has had to be rescheduled on the Forward Plan and is now expected to be picked up in October 2025.</p>

			<p><b>Updated response received on 13/01/26:</b></p> <p>Housing Companies Asset Management Strategy circulated to Committee by email on 13/01/26.</p>
25 Feb 2025 - <b>Commissioning, Procurement, Community Wealth-Building, and Social Value</b>	Provide a detailed breakdown of commissioned services income received over the last three years, categorised by organisation type.	Rhodri Rowlands – Director, Strategic Commissioning, Capacity Building & Engagement, Service Reform & Strategy	<i>Awaiting response.</i>
	Provide a detailed breakdown of funding allocated to externally commissioned services, distinguishing between organisation types—private companies (small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and large enterprises/corporations), VCS organisations, and social enterprises—while also indicating whether each organisation is local or non-local.	Rhodri Rowlands – Director, Strategic Commissioning, Capacity Building & Engagement, Service Reform & Strategy	<i>Awaiting response.</i>
25 Feb 2025 – <b>Emerging Employment Strategy 2025-2030</b>	Provide an update on the Roy Smith House initiative after its reopening, measuring its effectiveness in addressing the challenges outlined in the Stonebridge Outcome Based Review (OBR) and reviewing the outcomes of the council's Market Rent Reduction Framework.	Sadie East – Director, Communications, Insight & Innovation, Service Reform & Strategy	<p><b>Response received on 14/04/25:</b></p> <p>The commercial unit at Roy Smith House is part of the test of the council's new Market Rent Reduction Framework, which is designed to allow local voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations to have a reduced rent for council assets where they can demonstrate delivery of significant community value from their proposed use of the asset.</p> <p>Three bids were received for Roy Smith House from VCS organisations and were evaluated in March 2025. All bidders have been notified of the outcome of their bids and the comparative merits of their bid in comparison to the highest scoring bid.</p> <p>Officers are due to meet with the highest scoring bidder later this month to understand their proposal in more detail and discuss/agree heads of terms for a new lease.</p>

			<p>The organisation with the highest scoring bid demonstrated a proven track record of delivering community value and positive outcomes for residents, including opportunities to build confidence, skills and become more employable.</p> <p>Pending the outcome of negotiations, agreed deliverables will be included as a Schedule in the lease to be monitored by the lead service.</p> <p>The commercial unit at Roy Smith House is currently empty and in need of fit-out works. A procurement exercise to appoint a provider to complete the fit-out works is currently live. The works are anticipated to complete in Summer 2025, which is the earliest the highest scoring bidder would be able to move in to the unit and begin delivering their proposed service.</p> <p><b>Updated response received on 13/08/25:</b></p> <p>Discussions with the highest scoring bidder are ongoing with a view to agree heads of terms by the end of September 2025. A Procurement exercise for a contractor for fit-out works to the space was carried out between February and March 2025. During this process officers identified a pre-existing engineering issue on site, which delayed progress in the contract award until satisfactory resolution of this issue. Officers are now in a position to award the works contract, which once commenced is expected to last a minimum of 12-weeks.</p> <p>A further update to be provided.</p> <p><b>Updated response received on 11/01/26:</b></p> <p>The Spring 2025 procurement exercise to appoint a provider for the fit-out-works for the ground floor unit at Roy Smith House identified that water at the site had only been supplied/connected to the residential units and not the ground floor space.</p>
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			<p>Brent officers have been engaging Thames Water to survey the site, complete trial pits and install the water supply, which Thames Water completed in December 2025.</p> <p>On completion of the water connection <a href="#">Authority to Award contracts for fit-out-works was agreed on 9 January 2026</a>.</p> <p>Works are now expected to commence within the next few weeks and once started, are expected to take a minimum of 12 weeks to complete.</p> <p>During this time lead council officers aim to finalise lease negotiations with Step up Hub.</p>
	Share data on the number and types of roles secured through training at the Green Skills Centre, facilitated by the partnership between the Council and the College of North West London.	Kibibi Octave – Director, Community Development, Children, Young People & Resident Community Development	<p><b>Response received on 14/04/25:</b></p> <p>We have asked the college for a response and await a return on this data.</p> <p><b>Updated response received on 31/01/26:</b></p> <p>The Green Skills Centre delivers entry-level to Level 3 training in green construction and environmental technologies. Courses include Construction Skills (L1), Environmental Technology Systems (L3), Health &amp; Safety, CSCS preparation, and practical exposure to insulation, air source heat pumps, and EV charging.</p> <p>In 2024/25, the Green Skills Centre tracked 70 job outcomes and 32 Apprenticeships with sustainability-focused units. This includes roles such as Electrical Installation, Plumbing, Carpentry, Dry Lining and Plant Fitters.</p>
23 April 2025 – <b>Build Quality in Brent</b>	Share examples that demonstrate how feedback on build quality issues has led to tangible improvements in design and processes, helping to enhance build quality in subsequent projects or schemes.	Tanveer Ghani – Director, Property & Assets, Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	<p><b>Response received on 07/07/25:</b></p> <p>Officers will collate examples from different schemes where we have either self-delivered or acquired from the open market and share with RPRSC to demonstrate how feedback / lessons learned have been incorporated into future projects/schemes.</p> <p><del>A further update will be provided by 9 January 2026.</del></p> <p><b>Updated response received on 08/12/25:</b></p>

			A further update will be provided by 19 March 2026.
4 November 2025 – Q2 Financial Forecast 2025/26	Provide the percentage of those struggling to pay Council Tax Rates due to financial hardship and the percentage evading or refusing payment.	Kirsteen Roe – Interim Director, Resident Services, Residents & Housing Services	<p><b>Response received on 11/12/25:</b></p> <p>Brent has 136,049 households (properties) that are residential. 78.2% of these households have made payments towards Council Tax in this financial year. 16,956 households have either paid in full or have a 100% exemption (eg the whole property is occupied by students).</p> <p>14,483 (10.6%) households have not paid anything for 2025/26. They have all been sent reminders and/or final notice and/or summons. This figure includes customers who are entitled to Council Tax Support (CTS) and those who aren't. This suggests that they are potentially won't pay households.</p> <p>As at end of November 2025, of the 23,912 households are in receipt of Council Tax Support (CTS), 8,746 are in arrears. This is 36.58% of CTS customers or 6.4% of all Brent households. This suggests that these are low-income households that may be struggling to pay Council Tax due to financial hardship.</p>
	Provide a scenario-based assessment of the estimated financial impact of temporary Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL relief and the reduction in the affordable housing threshold (from 35% to 20%) on Brent's council finances over the next three years, including key assumptions, risks, and implications for affordable housing availability.	Gerry Ansell – Director, Inclusive Regeneration & Climate Resilience, Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	<p><b>Response received on 13/01/26:</b></p> <p>Future CIL income in the borough is linked to future development activity. Forecasts are inherently subject to high levels of uncertainty and should be treated with caution.</p> <p>Officers have reviewed historical CIL data, the existing stock of unimplemented planning permissions, potential future planning permissions, current and future CIL liabilities, planning permission implementation rates, affordable housing delivery levels, and CIL payment timings.</p> <p>Depending on the amount of development activity coming forward over the next three years we forecast future Brent CIL income in the borough broadly as follows :</p> <p>FY2627 - £10-20m FY2728 - £10-20m FY2829 - £15-30m</p>

			<p>Please see below document:</p>  <p>20260113 BCIL Illustrative Scenarios.r</p>
	Provide additional details on the strategy and approach for reducing costs related to short-term placements.	Claudia Brown – Director, Adult Social Care, Service Reform & Strategy	<p><b>Response received on 11/12/25:</b></p> <p>ASC is working to reduce costs associated with short-term placements, through the following implementation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A robust review process to ensure all placements have clear end dates,</li> <li>• a guidance has been written once signed off will be implemented across ASC to ensure cases are reviewed every 4–6 weeks in line with the Care Act 2014. This includes regular audits of packages with no end date, prompt discharge planning, and exploring alternatives such as reablement, home care, or community-based support before considering residential options.</li> <li>• Strengthening joint working with health partners to secure NHS contributions for eligible cases,</li> </ul> <p>We aim to improve data quality in Mosaic and develop assistive technology for lower-need cases will further help manage demand and avoid unnecessary extensions, ensuring resources are targeted where most effective.</p>
	Provide estimated cost savings from any existing and/or planned climate initiatives at Willesden Sports Centre and Vale Farm.	Ruth du Plessis – Director, Public Health, Service Reform & Strategy	<p><b>Response received on 31/12/25:</b></p> <p>The Council has secured external investment through Sport England's Swimming Pool Support Fund (SPSF) Phase II to deliver energy efficiency and decarbonisation measures at Willesden Sports Centre and Vale Farm Sports Centre, reducing energy demand, carbon emissions, and long-term operating costs.</p> <p><b>Willesden Sports Centre:</b> £271,011 of SPSF II funding has been used to install photovoltaic (PV) panels and replace fluorescent lighting with LED lighting. Installation works were completed in Q2 (Jul–Sept 25) and the measures became fully operational in Q3 (Oct–Dec 25).</p>

			<p><b>Vale Farm Sports Centre:</b> In Q2, a further £179,200 of SPSF II funding was secured for the installation of PV panels. Installation is due to be completed in Q3 (Oct–Dec 2025), with the system expected to be fully operational in Q4 (Jan–Mar 26).</p> <p>At this stage, robust cost savings cannot yet be confirmed, as energy generation has been modelled in terms of expected electricity generation rather than cost savings. A full year of operational data is required to reflect seasonal variation, on-site consumption patterns, and energy prices. The Council therefore plans to undertake a full benchmarking exercise in Q1 2027/28, following a complete full year of operation in 2026/27.</p> <p>A one-off utility consumption reconciliation will be undertaken in April 2027 to establish a consistent post-installation baseline. This will align assessment across Willesden and Vale Farm and enable like-for-like comparison from 2026/27 onwards.</p> <p>Additionally at Vale Farm, the implementation of a new leisure contract via an agency agreement from 2026/27 will enable clearer monitoring of energy consumption and savings, with utilities data remaining transparent and auditable.</p>
4 November 2025 – <b>VCSE in Brent</b>	<p>Provide a breakdown of Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisations currently renting assets from Brent, including use type where possible, grouped as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post-Property Strategy: paying full market rent</li> <li>• Post-Property Strategy: paying below market rent – renegotiated and adjusted to reflect</li> </ul>	<p>Tanveer Ghani – Director, Property &amp; Assets, Neighbourhoods &amp; Regeneration</p>	<p><b>Response received on 08/01/26:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post-Property Strategy: paying full market rent - <b>15</b></li> <li>• Post-Property Strategy: paying below market rent – renegotiated and adjusted to reflect organisational financial circumstances - <b>0</b></li> <li>• Post-Property Strategy: paying below market rent under the Market Reduction Framework Pilot - <b>3</b></li> <li>• Pre-Property Strategy: historical, unexpired rent arrangements - <b>43</b></li> </ul>

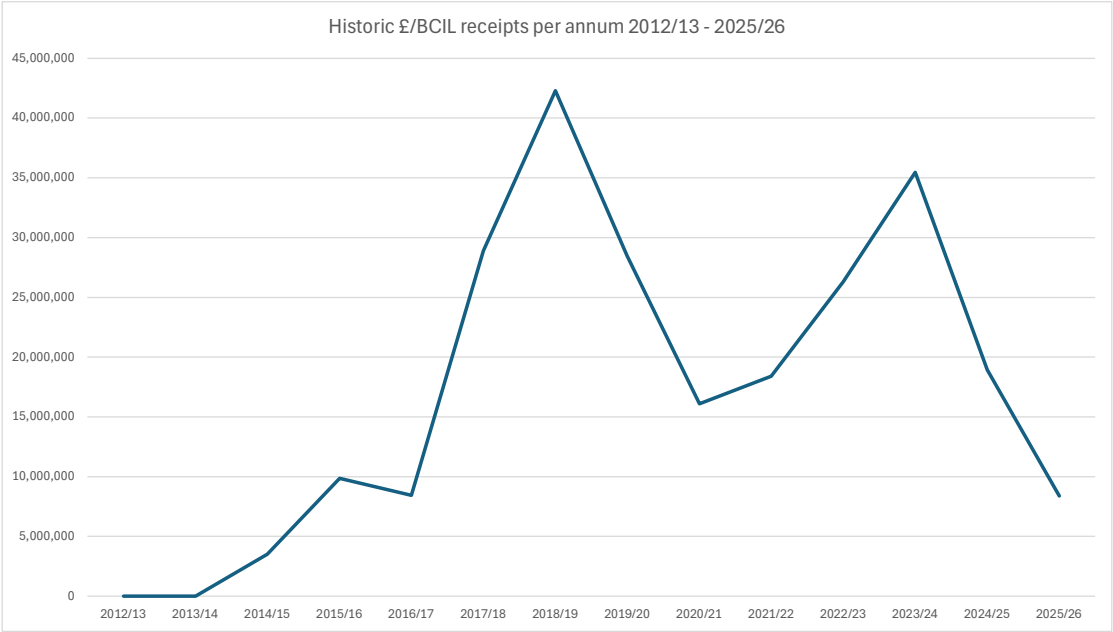


	<p>organisational financial circumstances</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post-Property Strategy: paying below market rent under the Market Reduction Framework Pilot</li> <li>• Pre-Property Strategy: historical, unexpired rent arrangements</li> </ul>		
	Provide the percentage of historical leases held by VCS organisations, with unexpired rent arrangements (pre-property strategy), that are due for renewal within the next 5 years and within the next 10 years.	Tanveer Ghani – Director, Property & Assets, Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	<p><b>Response received on 08/01/26:</b></p> <p>5 historical leases (8%) held by VCS organisations with unexpired rent arrangements (pre-property strategy) are due for renewal within the next 5 years. 7 leases (11%) are due for renewal within the next 10 years.</p>
	Outline the joint work of Strategic Commissioning, Capacity Building and Engagement, and Property and Assets teams to support VCS organisations renting council-owned assets in sustaining their premises and addressing affordability concerns.	Rhodri Rowlands – Director, Strategic Commissioning, Capacity Building & Engagement, Service Reform & Strategy	<i>Awaiting response.</i>
	Provide a detailed analysis of the strengths, challenges, and opportunities within current council commissioning arrangements.	Rhodri Rowlands – Director, Strategic Commissioning, Capacity Building & Engagement, Service Reform & Strategy	<i>Awaiting response.</i>

	Provide an overview of all VCS-commissioned services across the council, including details on scope, objectives, key outcomes, funding levels, contract duration, and how these services align with Borough Plan priorities.	Rhodri Rowlands – Director, Strategic Commissioning, Capacity Building & Engagement, Service Reform & Strategy	<i>Awaiting response.</i>
	Provide detailed information on the current Voluntary Community Infrastructure Support (VCIS) contract, including its scope, objectives, expected outcomes, funding levels, duration, performance measures, monitoring arrangements, and evidence of value and impact delivered to the VCS.	Rhodri Rowlands – Director, Strategic Commissioning, Capacity Building & Engagement, Service Reform & Strategy	<i>Awaiting response.</i>
	Provide benchmarking data on VCSE capacity building contracts commissioned by other London authorities, covering: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Value and scope</li> <li>○ Duration</li> <li>○ Priority themes</li> <li>○ Delivery models (e.g., direct delivery vs. commissioned providers; single provider vs. consortium)</li> <li>○ Performance and impact measures.</li> </ul>	Rhodri Rowlands – Director, Strategic Commissioning, Capacity Building & Engagement, Service Reform & Strategy	<i>Awaiting response.</i>

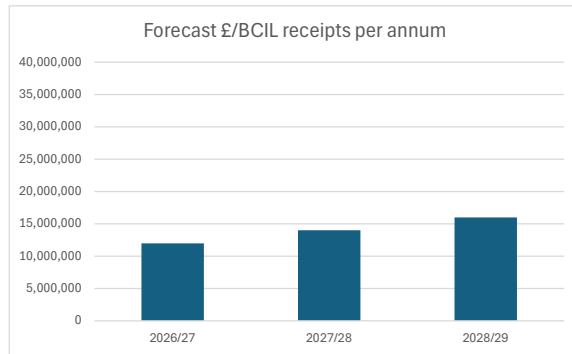
	Provide information on the anticipated value and scope of the forthcoming VCSE capacity building contract.	Rhodri Rowlands – Director, Strategic Commissioning, Capacity Building & Engagement, Service Reform & Strategy	<i>Awaiting response.</i>
	Provide an update on the Market Rent Reduction Pilot for the three new lettings (Harmony Kitchen, Brent Civic Centre, Roy Smith House, and Picture Palace), detailing the communities each organisation will support, the agreed measures to deliver community value, and how these commitments will be monitored.	Rhodri Rowlands – Director, Strategic Commissioning, Capacity Building & Engagement, Service Reform & Strategy	<i>Awaiting response.</i>
	Provide a detailed overview of VCS grant programmes, focusing on grant operations and outcomes. This should include eligibility criteria, key dates (such as application windows, decision timelines, and funding start/end dates), a summary of awards over the past three years, and the time taken to disburse funds to recipient organisations, highlighting any significant delays.	Rhodri Rowlands – Director, Strategic Commissioning, Capacity Building & Engagement, Service Reform & Strategy	<i>Awaiting response.</i>
4 November 2025 – <b>Social Value: Draft Policy</b>	Provide a sample of data from higher-value procurements since April 2020 (following implementation of the current strategy), detailing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social value delivered versus committed;</li> </ul>	Rhodri Rowlands – Director, Strategic Commissioning, Capacity Building & Engagement, Service Reform & Strategy	<i>Awaiting response.</i>

and Whole- Council Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performance against associated KPIs;</li> <li>• Where relevant, financial implications for the Social Value Fund where commitments were unmet; and</li> <li>• The resulting impact.</li> </ul>		
	<p>Provide case studies illustrating both successful and underperforming delivery of social value commitments under current contracts. Each case should outline:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The social value commitments made;</li> <li>• Actual delivery achieved;</li> <li>• Reasons for any variance; and</li> <li>• Lessons learned to inform the forthcoming Social Value Policy.</li> </ul>	Rhodri Rowlands – Director, Strategic Commissioning, Capacity Building & Engagement, Service Reform & Strategy	<i>Awaiting response.</i>
	Provide further detail on how transparency and accountability will be maintained in measuring social value across services, given the shift from a purely quantitative approach to a mixed model that combines qualitative and quantitative outcomes.	Rhodri Rowlands – Director, Strategic Commissioning, Capacity Building & Engagement, Service Reform & Strategy	<i>Awaiting response.</i>



Year	BCIL
2012/13	£0
2013/14	£15,119
2014/15	£3,513,885
2015/16	£9,868,695
2016/17	£8,453,330
2017/18	£28,890,729
2018/19	£42,279,415
2019/20	£28,461,466
2020/21	£16,104,767
2021/22	£18,389,246
2022/23	£26,286,874
2023/24	£35,455,951
2024/25	£18,933,136
Est. 2025/26	£8,377,466

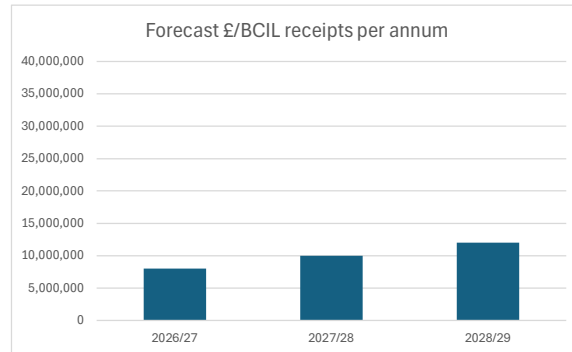
Scenario 1a - Continued downturn in development ; no policy intervention



	Housings Starts	20% Affordable Housing	BCIL receipts
2026/27	900	180	£12,000,000
2027/28	1000	200	£14,000,000
2028/29	1100	220	£16,000,000

Assumptions  
Continued downturn in development  
No policy intervention  
Development activity @ 40% implementation extant planning permissions  
20% affordable housing

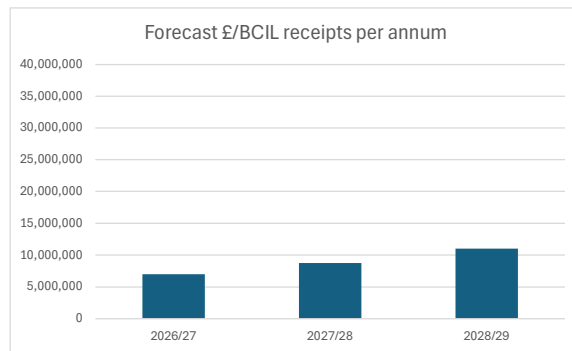
Scenario 1b - Continued downturn in development ; 50% BCIL reduction ; 20% affordable housing



	Housing Starts	20% Affordable Housing	BCIL receipts	BCIL foregone
2026/27	900	180	£8,000,000	£4,000,000
2027/28	1000	200	£10,000,000	£4,000,000
2028/29	1100	220	£12,000,000	£4,000,000

Assumptions  
Continued downturn in development  
50% BCIL reduction  
Development activity @ 40% implementation extant planning permissions  
20% affordable housing

Scenario 1b - Continued downturn in development ; 50% BCIL reduction 35% affordable housing

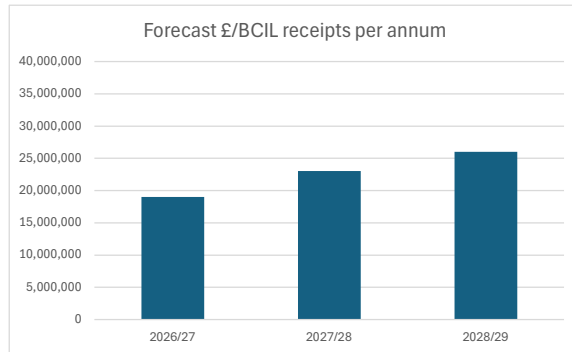


	Housing Starts	35% Affordable Housing	BCIL receipts	BCIL foregone
2026/27	900	315	£7,000,000	£5,000,000
2027/28	1000	350	£8,750,000	£5,250,000
2028/29	1100	385	£11,000,000	£5,000,000

Assumptions  
Continued downturn in development  
50% BCIL reduction  
Development activity @ 40% implementation extant planning permissions  
35% affordable housing



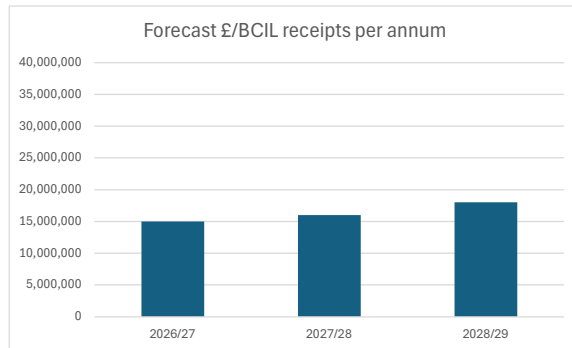
Scenario 2a - Return to recent development activity ; no policy intervention



	Housings Starts	20% Affordable Housing	BCIL receipts
2026/27	1500	300	£19,000,000
2027/28	1600	320	£23,000,000
2028/29	1700	340	£26,000,000

Assumptions  
 Return to recent development levels  
 No policy intervention  
 Development activity @ 60% implementation extant planning permissions  
 20% affordable housing

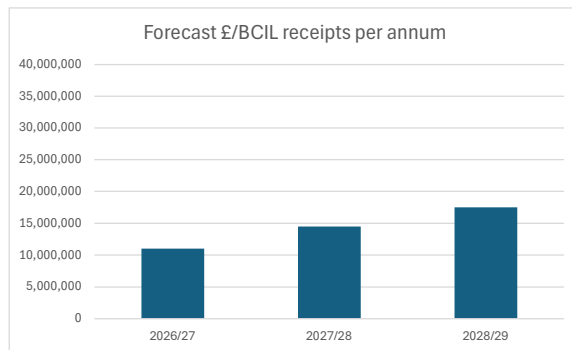
Scenario 2b - Return to recent development activity ; 50% BCIL reduction ; 20% affordable housing



	Housing Starts	20% Affordable Housing	BCIL receipts	BCIL foregone
2026/27	1500	300	£15,000,000	£4,000,000
2027/28	1600	320	£16,000,000	£7,000,000
2028/29	1700	340	£18,000,000	£8,000,000

Assumptions  
 Return to recent development levels  
 50% BCIL reduction  
 Development activity @ 60% implementation extant planning permissions  
 20% affordable housing

Scenario 2b - Return to recent development activity ; 50% BCIL reduction ; 35% affordable housing



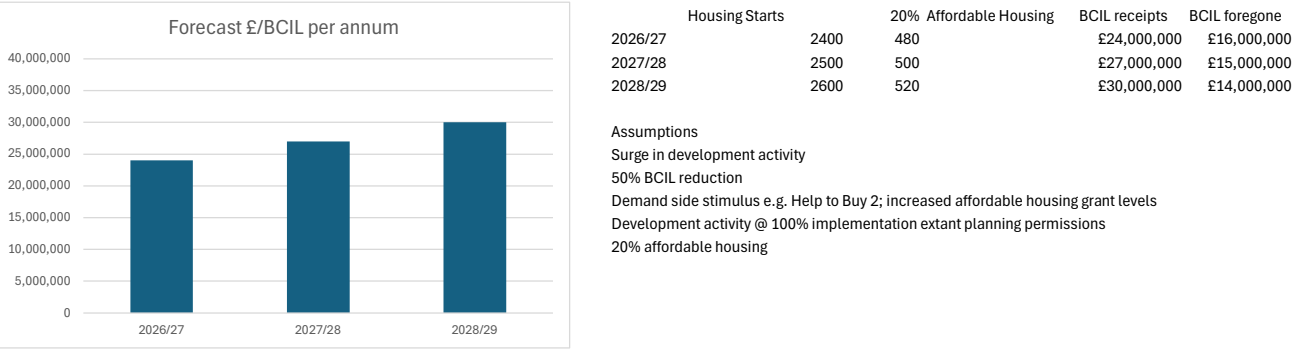
	Housing Starts	35% Affordable Housing	BCIL receipts	BCIL foregone
2026/27	1500	525	£11,000,000	£8,000,000
2027/28	1600	560	£14,500,000	£8,500,000
2028/29	1700	595	£17,500,000	£8,500,000

Assumptions  
 Return to recent development levels  
 50% BCIL reduction  
 Development activity @ 60% implementation extant planning permissions  
 35% affordable housing

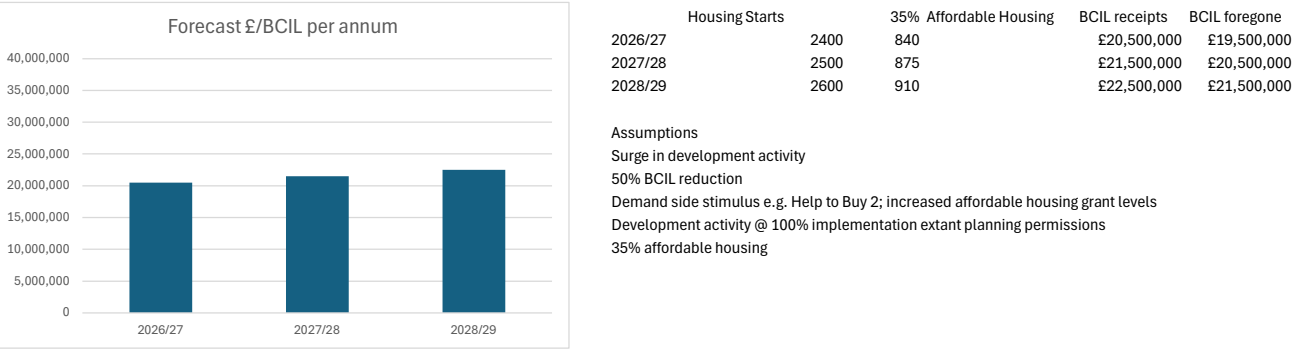





Scenario 4b - Surge in development activity ; 50% BCIL reduction ; 20% affordable housing



Scenario 4b - Surge in development activity ; 50% BCIL reduction ; 35% affordable housing



	<b>Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee</b> 21 January 2026
	<b>Report from the Corporate Director, Children, Young People and Community Development</b>
	<b>Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Cohesion (Cllr Ishma Moeen)</b>
<b>Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) in Brent</b>	

<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All
<b>Key or Non-Key Decision:</b>	Non-Key
<b>Open or Part/Fully Exempt:</b> <small>(If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)</small>	Open
<b>List of Appendices:</b>	Appendix A – Anti-Social Behaviour Policy Appendix B– CMARAC Cases Jan - Dec 2025 Appendix C – BJAG Cases Jan – Dec 2025 Appendix D – Fixed Penalty Notice PSPO
<b>Background Papers:</b>	None
<b>Contact Officer(s):</b> <small>(Name, Title, Contact Details)</small>	Kibibi Octave, Director of Community Development <a href="mailto:Kibibi.Octave@brent.gov.uk">Kibibi.Octave@brent.gov.uk</a>  Simon Egbor, Head of Community Safety and Prevention <a href="mailto:Simon.Egbor@brent.gov.uk">Simon.Egbor@brent.gov.uk</a>  Noah Okunromade, ASB Localities Manager <a href="mailto:Noah.Okunromade@brent.gov.uk">Noah.Okunromade@brent.gov.uk</a>

## 1.0 Purpose of the report:

To provide 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.

## **1.1 Background and Overview**

Brent Council recognises the serious impact that ASB has on individuals, no one should have to suffer from ASB and the Council will take a swift and proportionate response where incidents that meet our definition of ASB are reported. The Council works in partnership with other agencies and uses appropriate tools and powers available to address anti-social behaviour.

## **1.2 Definition of ASB**

The definition of ASB that is contained within Part 1 of the ASB, Crime and Policing Act 2014:

- (a) conduct that has caused, or is likely to cause, harassment, alarm or distress to any person,
- (b) conduct capable of causing nuisance or annoyance to a person in relation to that person's occupation of residential premises, or
- (c) conduct capable of causing housing-related nuisance or annoyance to any person.

This definition is different depending on whether the behaviour has taken place in a residential or non-residential setting and/or whether it is housing-related (meaning that it is affecting our housing management function as a social housing landlord).

- 1.3 Where the behaviour is housing-related or occurring in a residential setting (regardless of tenure), the definition is one of whether the behaviour is capable of causing nuisance or annoyance.
- 1.4 Where the behaviour is non-housing related and happening in a non-residential area, such as a town centre, the definition is one of whether the behaviour has caused, or is likely to cause harassment, alarm, or distress.
- 1.5 It is recognised that the harassment, alarm, or distress threshold is higher than the nuisance or annoyance threshold. There may, therefore, be behaviours that are affecting people in their home that we consider to be ASB, whereas if they were happening in a non-residential setting, we would not.

## **1.6 What is not anti-social behaviour**

- 1.7 The behaviours below are recognised as not being ASB. The Council would not investigate these unless there is evidence that the behaviour is deliberately

intended to cause damage, intimidate or is taking place at an unreasonable hour of the night or early morning:

- Behaviours that are acceptable everyday activities/household noise, including children playing in their gardens, use of domestic appliances etc
- Reports that amount to parking disputes, where the placement of the offending vehicle/s is not contravening any regulations or causing serious detriment.
- Reports about garden boundaries or over growing hedges
- DIY occurring at a reasonable time of day.
- Matters relating to lifestyle choices that are lawful, but the complainant takes exception to

1.8 The Council is also unlikely to intervene in neighbour disputes. Neighbour disputes is a situation, usually between 2 parties, where each party is taking exception to the other. As a local authority, our role is not to manage relationships like these and expect everyone to take some social responsibility by being courteous to each other.

1.9 If the Council decide that a report of ASB does not meet our definition we will inform the complainant at the earliest opportunity, clearly explaining our reasoning. The Council will also provide advice and guidance that may assist, such as referring them to local mediation services.

### **1.10 Categories of Antisocial behaviour**

The National Standards for Incident Recording ([NSIR](#)) classifies ASB as falling into one of three general categories:

- Personal.
- Nuisance.
- Environmental.

Personal is designed to identify ASB incidents that either deliberately targeted at an individual or group or having an impact on an individual or group rather than the community. Its incidents that cause concern, stress, disquiet and/or irritation through to incidents which have a serious adverse impact on people's quality of life. For example, intimidation or harassment

Nuisance involves annoyance or suffering to the community rather than an individual victim. It captures those incidents where an act, condition, thing or person causes trouble, annoyance, inconvenience, offence or suffering to the

local community in general. These incidences can interfere with public interests including health, safety and quality of life. For example, drug or substance misuse, vehicle related nuisance.

Environmental – incidents where individuals or group impact their wider environment, such as public spaces or buildings. This includes environmental damage and the misuse of public spaces or buildings. For example, abandoned vehicles, unauthorised music events, criminal damage or vandalism such graffiti, littering etc.

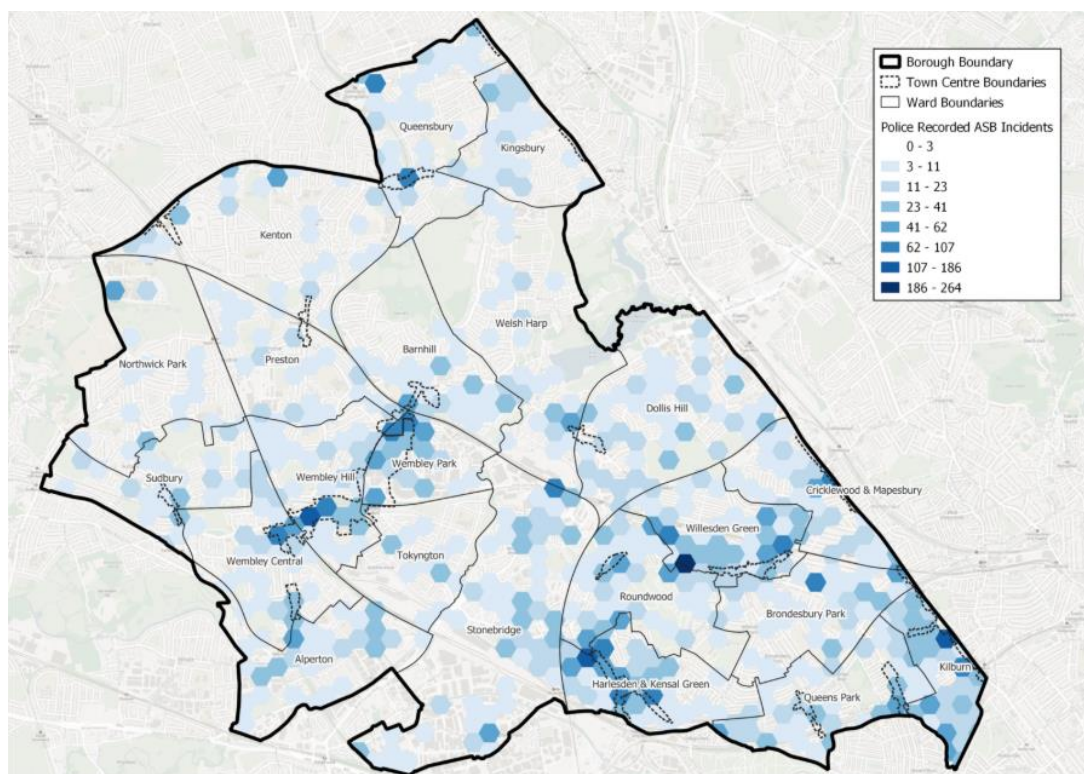
### 1.11 Why is tackling ASB important?

ASB is a key driver for community confidence in public services. Failure to tackle ASB leads to increased crime, especially violence with injury and criminal related incidents. Anti-social behaviour may or may not constitute criminal activity. It is the impact of the behaviour on others that will determine whether or not that ASB is criminal.

Robust legislation, statutory guidance and related protocols are in place. These are used to inform, regulate and support action against anti-social behaviour

### 1.12 Areas of highest ASB activity within the borough

Heat Maps (police and council data analysed Jan – Dec 2025)



- 1.13 A hotspot is classified as an area with six or more reports of ASB. The hotspots are often located near, town centres, transport hubs, and parks during summer. Both reports to the ASB team and reports to the Police were used to identify the hotspots areas, highlighted in deep blue above.
- 1.14 All the hotspots of ASB are in or adjacent to town centres with issues such as street drinking, illicit drug activity, graffiti and fly tipping having a detrimental impact on residents, businesses and visitors to the Borough.
- 1.15 There is a high proportion of vulnerable individuals who are either perpetrators or victims of anti-social behaviour, nuisance or low-level crime. These individuals often those with substance misuse, mental health and other complex needs and can fall below the threshold to access treatment from support services.
- 1.16 Primary ASB concerns affecting local communities**

*Brent ASB Team Top reported Categories 2025:*

ASB Category	
Environmental ASB (Street Based)	1
Drug related activities	2
Neighbour Dispute	3
Non-Statutory Noise	4

### ASB Categories

ASB Categories received By Brent Council	Number of reports made to the council	
	2024	2025
Environmental ASB (Street Based)	98	212
Hate Incident related ASB	0	1
Cuckooing	6	16
Dog Nuisance	8	7
Drugs	185	167
Intimidation/ Harassment	76	40
Neighbour Dispute	86	102
No ASB Present	15	80
Noise	94	73
Pet Animals	1	0
Rowdy Behaviour	29	33
Sexual	3	4

Vandalism	16	13
Vehicle Nuisance	25	26
Verbal Abuse	1	0
Violent & Criminal Activities	9	5

1.17 Environmental ASB or street based ASB such as street drinking, inappropriate use of fireworks, public health nuisance (defecation, urination, spitting and littering) are the most regularly reported incidents of ASB. These behaviours have visual effects which are having a detrimental effect on the local community's quality of life.

1.18 As a result of these behaviours, the council implemented the Public Space Protection Order. The order gives the council the power to address such behaviour that causes a nuisance and a breach of a PSPO prohibition without a reasonable justification is an offence which is enforced by serving a Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN) or prosecution.

[View the Public Space Protection Order official notice](#)

1.19 Reports made regarding Environmental ASB (Street Based) doubled in 2025, this could be as a result of successful campaign of "Don't Mess With Brent"

1.20 Drug related ASB such as drug use and suspected drug dealing, is the second most reported ASB issue. This includes use in properties, estates or on the streets. Others include Neighbour Dispute and Non-Statutory Noise.

### **1.21 Relevant policy and operational framework**

The current antisocial behaviour policy is under review will be approved and signed off before the end of financial year 2025/2026 (Appendix A). Other strategic and operational frameworks are the Safer Brent-Community Safety Strategy 2024-2026, the terms and reference for the ASB & CCTV Delivery Group, Brent Joint Action Group and Community Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (CMARAC).

1.22 A bi-weekly tasking meeting is held with Brent Police and Community Safety Team to review emerging hotspots and develop a partner response. The creation of the Wembley and Harlesden Town Centre Police Teams have also had a positive impact in reducing crime and ASB in those town centres.

## **2.0 Clarifying Roles and Responsibilities (Council and Police)**

2.1 The council's Antisocial Behaviour (ASB) team is dedicated to managing and addressing issues related to antisocial behaviour. We deal with all cases of



reports of ASB from residents and visitors to the borough. We investigate and respond to reports, including noise disturbances, harassment, vandalism, and other disruptive activities.

- 2.2 The team is equipped with various tools and powers under Antisocial Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014 to address serious cases of ASB. This may include issuing warning letters, working with the police, and pursuing court action when necessary.
- 2.3 The ASB team provides support and guidance to victims, offering information, including support services and referral options.
- 2.4 In cases where ASB has criminal elements, the police lead on such cases however, through strong partnership work with the local authority, instances are reviewed collectively to ensure that the correct agency respond to the issues.
- 2.5 It should be noted where cases of ASB that are linked to mental health issues or substance misuse, individuals are referred to the appropriate support service - Via (New beginnings), the Community Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference, (CMARAC) or Council's Adult Social Care.

## **2.6 Council Partnership Working**

- 2.7 A Community Safety Partnership (CSP) is a multi-agency strategic group set up following the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. In Brent, this partnership is called the Safer Brent Partnership (SBP). The partnership approach is built on the premise that no single agency can deal with, or be responsible for dealing with, complex community safety issues and that these issues can be addressed more effectively and efficiently through working in partnership.
- 2.8 The SBP is the governance body that ensure the delivery of the various delivery groups delivering the priorities contained within the Safer Brent Strategy 2024 – 2026. The SBP is made up of both statutory agencies and other non-statutory groups in the borough. The statutory agencies are:
  - i. Brent Police
  - ii. London Borough of Brent
  - iii. National Probation Service
  - iv. London Fire Brigade
  - v. NHS Integrated Care Board (ICB)
  - vi. Housing Association (by rotation)
  - vii. Non statutory bodies

The SBP sits quarterly and reviews activity on a Brent Connects Area locality basis.

- 2.9 There are two main partnerships working to tackling ASB in Brent: **Brent Joint Action Groups (BJAGs)** and **Community Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (CMARAC)**.
- 2.10 **Brent Joint Action Groups** BJAGs) which deal with locality- based problems through a multi-agency, evidence-led problem-oriented approach and individuals who cause the most alarm, harassment and distress to residents in Brent. This includes prevention through diversion and support, and utilising enforcement options where necessary. These are co-terminus with police cluster boundaries and cover Kilburn, Harlesden and Wembley localities. Currently the three police inspectors chair the BJAG. In their absence the ASB localities manager co-chair with a police sergeant.
- 2.11 **The Community Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (CMARAC)** brings agencies together monthly to discuss those who are most vulnerable in Brent. This can include victims of ASB, cuckooing, hoarders, and those being exploited who do not reach safeguarding thresholds. A sergeant from each of the clusters co-chair the Community Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (CMARAC) with the ASB localities manager. These meetings are held on monthly basis.
- 2.12 Information is shared to increase the safety, health and well-being of vulnerable individuals, including adults and children each partner agency to undertake research and bring relevant, proportionate and up-to-date information to support CMARAC in their decision-making.
- 2.13 Brent's Police Safer Neighbourhood Team have increased the number of inspectors covering the borough. Since 2024 there are now three inspectors with police boundaries realigned to local authority ward boundaries.
- 2.14 Other partnership working between the council and the police include.
- A daily Police, ASB and Community Safety partner call to discuss urgent issues in need of prioritisation.
  - A weekly ASB and Police meeting to discuss complex cases, map hotspots using both Police and Council data.
  - Biweekly cuckooing meeting for vulnerable individuals whose properties have been identified as magnet for ASB.
  - Biweekly meeting of police inspectors and managers within Community Safety and Prevention
  - Monthly Precision Crime Fighting Forum Meeting

- 2.15 There are also joint patrols held between the Safer Neighbourhood Police and ASB Officers.

### **3.0 ASB Team Activity**

- 3.1 The Council's ASB team consisting of 7 officers

- 5 X ASB localities officers, each covering one of the 5 Connects areas
- 1 CMARAC Co-ordinator
- 1 ASB Localities Manager

### **3.2 Core functions and priorities**

- **Identification of ASB Incidents:** Enable allegations of Anti-Social Behaviour to be reported in a complete and timely manner.
- **Management of ASB Incidents:** incidences of allegations Anti-Social Behaviour reported to the Council are managed in accordance with Council policy, legislation and best practice; and that information regarding each allegation is addressed in a timely and accurate manner. Where allegations are substantiated that appropriate action is taken.
- **Enforcement:** Effective enforcement actions taken in respect of Anti-Social Behaviour in compliance with legislative requirements and Council policy.
- **Multiagency Working:** Adopt a multiagency approach for the Anti-Social Behaviour where allegations are made working with partners (Internal and External) to address ASB.
- **Publicity & Awareness:** Appropriate arrangements for raising publicity and awareness of Anti-Social Behaviour.

### **3.3 Overview of ongoing work and initiatives**

#### ASB within private, social and council housing stock

- 3.4 We have a Service Level Agreement in place between the Council's Anti- Social Behaviour Team (ASB) and Brent Housing Services (BHS). The agreement was for all housing medium and high-risk cases to be managed by the Council's ASB team. The decision was taken in light of the core ASB team's established relationships with the Police, commissioned services and ability to utilise tools and powers under the ASB Crime and Policing Act 2014 to effectively deal with repeat offenders.
- 3.5 A Service Level Agreement was also signed with Private Housing Services in 2024 to jointly address ASB in private rented accommodation, particularly within

Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs). Since the SLA was established, officers from ASB and PHS have been conducting joint visits to properties known for ASB, to carry out a review of licences and action ASB enforcement measures as necessary.

- 3.6 We also retain a service level expectation protocol, developed in partnership with Registered Housing Providers, who own and manage large housing stock in the borough. The protocol provides a greater focus on tenancy management under the Housing Act to help deal more swiftly with tenants displaying anti-social behaviours.

3.7 Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs)

The boroughwide, Wembley Park and Parks and Open Spaces Public Spaces Protection Orders end on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2026, however these PSPOs will be extended on 1 February 2026 for another 3 years with increased prohibitions to tackle drug activity, street drinking, public health concerns such as spitting, urination and other behaviours.

- 3.8 PSPO orders are currently enforced by the Council's Neighbourhood Patrol Team, Neighbourhood Managers, ASB Team and the police. An enforcement protocol has also been developed between Brent Police and Brent Council Environmental Enforcement team to process any breach of the PSPO enforced by the police.

- 3.9 PSPO to tackle vehicle nuisance was extended on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2026 for another 3 years. CCTV cameras and intelligence led operations will be utilised to enforce any breaches.

- 3.10 Regular on-street engagement and enforcement operations across all wards in hotspot areas are planned and delivered. This programme of multiagency operations (MAOs) involves officers from Brent Police, the Anti-Social Behaviour Team, Neighbourhood Management, Environmental Enforcement, Patrol Team and Public Health Commissioned Providers such as via – New beginnings and St Mungos. Over 42 MAOs have been conducted in financial year 25/26.

- 3.11 The value of support services being part of these operations ensures a person - centred approach is taken to safeguard and support vulnerable individuals who are either perpetrators or victims of anti-social behaviour. Some of these perpetrators who meet the qualifying criteria are supported through our CMARAC.

- 3.12 In addition, a Cuckooing Protocol is being developed to ensure vulnerable individuals are not being taken advantage of in their own homes. Cuckooing is the practice of taking over the home of a vulnerable person to establish a base for illegal drug dealing or drug activity. These issues in Brent mainly occur in council owned homes or housing association owned properties, due to a higher proportion of vulnerable clients living in social housing.

### **3.13 Key performance data for the past two calendar years**

#### **3.14 Community Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (CMARAC).**

The CMARAC shows an improvement in effective partnership working between a range of agencies. The meeting is solutions-focused and considered how to achieve the best outcomes to complex cases. It enables access to services and improves agency collaboration.

- 3.15 Community MARAC meetings are held once a month within the 3 localities which are

Locality 1 - Brondesbury Park, Cricklewood & Mapesbury, Dollis Hill, Kenton, Kilburn, Kingsbury, Preston, Queens Park, Queensbury, Welsh Harp

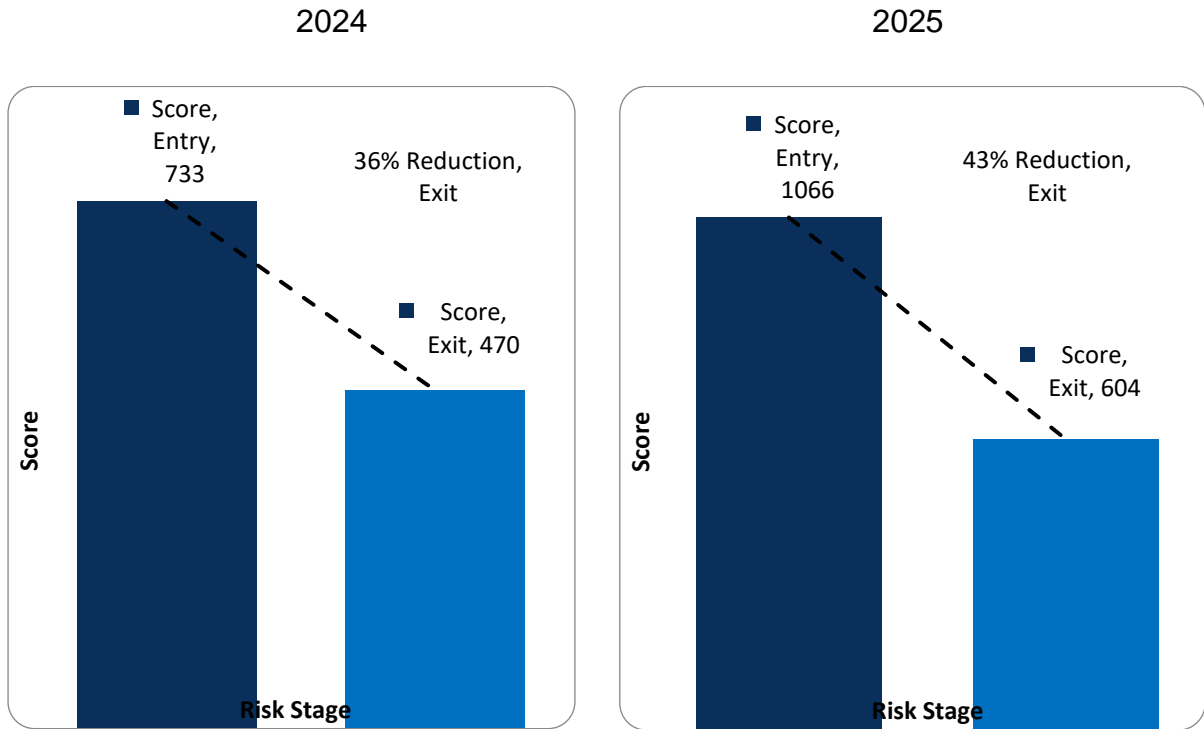
Locality 2 - Harlesden and Kensal Green, Roundwood, Stonebridge, Willesden Green

Locality 3 - Alperton, Barnhill, Northwick Park, Sudbury, Tokyngton, Wembley Central, Wembley Hill, Wembley Park

- 3.16 Appendix B gives a snapshot of case discussed in CMARAC from Jan – Dec 2025
- 3.17 Early intervention pathway for cuckooing cases. This could include a dedicated worker who can monitor cases and offer support to individuals who are likely to be cuckooed.
- 3.18 The CMARAC success is measured through evidence of risk reduction.

CMARAC	Year	
	2024	2025
Entry Score	733	1066
Exit Score	470	640

Percentage Risk Reduction	36%	43.34%
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## Case Study 1

### Background

D is a 75-year-old woman with paranoid schizophrenia, diabetes, and substance use issues. She was referred to CMARAC in March 2024 due to concerns of exploitation. Despite a Partial Closure Order issued in February 2024, drug users continued to access her home, with one violent individual arrested after breaching the order.

### Intervention

D remained socially isolated and insisted that the individuals exploiting her are friends. Despite multiple offers of support and relocation, she refused assistance. An initial mental capacity assessment deemed her to have the capacity to make choices. Her property was linked to ongoing criminal activity, including drug use and suspected sex work.

### Outcome

Legal action was pursued with a court hearing scheduled for July 2025. D's care package was reviewed as a safeguarding measure while the case was under the Court of Protection. Her son supported the process due to escalating risks. Despite these measures, unwanted individuals kept being found at the

property. Several violent criminals were found inside the property by the police on various occasions. Drug paraphernalia and a knife were also found; a full closure order was applied for April 2025, and D was housed in supported living accommodation as it was found she lacked capacity to keep herself safe from unknown individuals gaining access into her accommodation.

## **Case Study 2**

### **Background**

X is a vulnerable individual facing physical and mental health issues with opioid dependence. Following the death of her partner, X's flat was taken over by drug dealers. As a result, she became financially dependent on one of the dealers, which led to her exploitation, erratic lifestyle, poor physical health, and suicidal thoughts. The case was referred to CMARAC in March 2025, for coordinated multi-agency support. The key risks observed were cuckooing, financial abuse, substance misuse, mental health crisis, homelessness, poor physical health and risk to violence from the perpetrators.

### **Intervention**

Emergency accommodation was arranged with referral made to substance misuse service and adult social care for care and support needs assessment to include a capacity assessment. Regular police checks were also conducted to ensure X was not explored by the dealers.

### **Outcome**

X is currently in safe accommodation engaging with support services. In November 2025, X was offered a place in a supported accommodation and mental capacity assessment was also completed. An application for appointeeship is being progressed as social worker is gathering the necessary documents to support the application.

The overall goal is to ensure holistic safeguarding for X, stabilise accommodation, and support recovery.

### **3.19 Brent Joint Action Group (BJAG)**

Information is shared via the Brent Joint Action group where statutory and non-statutory partners discuss locality-based problems. The information seeks to understand ASB generally, considering what could be driving ASB and how it might be addressed. The intelligence provides information on

- **Time** – when is ASB taking place and how does it align to contextual factors.
- **Place** – where are incidents taking place

- **Person** – who is affected. Is there evidence that different groups of people, perpetrators or victims affected by ASB.

3.20 Seventy - one locations were heard from Jan – Dec 2025, thirty-nine cases were closed with further multiagency meetings to collaboratively resolve the issues at these locations see Appendix C.

## **Case Study 1**

### **Background:**

In November 2024, Ethelred Court came to the attention of Brent Anti-Social Behaviour team due to complaints of anti-social behaviour and drug related activities reported by the Housing Association (Hyde Housing) who are the landlords. A referral was made to BJAG, Ethelred Court was accepted with follow up actions.

A door knock exercise was conducted encouraging residents to report the ASB and was followed by a letter drop to the residents by the Housing Association as the CCTV had also been damaged. At the BJAG meeting held on 04.12.2024 it was decided a Closure Order would be explored to address the ASB and drug related issues.

A consultation meeting was held on January 2025 with relevant stakeholders on the intention of the police seeking a Closure Order which included the police, council and Hyde Housing Association, the landlords to support the 3-month Closure Order being put in place.

The Closure Order was successfully obtained in January 2025 for the communal areas within the block of flats in Ethelred Court for a 3-month period which gave respite to the residents locally that were experiencing intimidation, gang activity including drug dealing (Class A drugs).

### **Closure Order Extension:**

In April 2025 the Closure Order was extended for another 3-month period to all the communal areas, roofs, corridors, landing and stairs including the resident car parks for Ethelred Court, The Mall, HA3. The reason for the extension was that during onsite visits to the block, the police, council and landlord were coming across drug paraphernalia, weapons and litter that was left behind or stashed in communal areas. The Closure Order has been well policed with regular routine patrols combining a variety of resources and tactics therefore the extension would allow the same level of patrolling tactics and continued sharing of information with partners.



### **Current Situation**

The ASB Team, Hyde Housing and the police are concentrating on an address in Ethelred Court which may be the magnet for the ASB / drugs at the location and will be looking at any enforcement action that can be used in order to deal with the problems / issues.

## **Case study 2 Café – ASB & Enforcement:**

### **Background**

February 2023, complaints received about café involved in shisha smoking indoors, noise nuisance and parking contraventions. Community Protection Warning was issued however this did not stop the activities as a petition was received from residents living within the vicinity of the café in Jan 2024 citing noise nuisance, ASB and parking issues.

### **Interventions**

In April 2024 a joint late-night inspection was conducted by the Police and Council. Large quantity of khat were seized and two individuals were arrested for possession of the khat with three vehicles issued Penalty Charge Notice for parking violations. The café ceased trading and relocated to Park Royal.

In March 2025, the Café reopened with subsequent complaints received in relation to noise nuisance. Nuisance Control Team executed a warrant in May 2025 to seize amplified sound equipment. A multi-agency meeting was held with the owners in July 2025 to advise them about ASB reports and apply for planning permission. However, the nuisance persists so in September 2025, another joint late-night visit was conducted by the Police and Council. Shisha pipes, khat, and amplified sound equipment were seized during the visit.

A 600-page evidence bundle prepared and presented in court for a closure order application which was contested by the café, however Brent Magistrates Court granted a full closure order in November 2025 for 3 months.

### **Outcome & Next Steps**

Closure Order is monitored for compliance, and an extension will be considered if the order is breached. In addition, the evidence obtained have being shared with planning enforcement team as it seems, planning permission was not obtained by the café for change of use.

## **3.21 Public Space Protection Order**

The reporting period has seen an increase in use of tools and powers such as in fixed penalty notices (FPN) issued under the PSPOs in Brent, led by the Neighbourhood Patrol Team enforcement team.

3.22 During the period 1<sup>st</sup> Feb 2024 – 31<sup>st</sup> Oct 2025, 3370 FPNs were issued for failure to comply with the various prohibitions. See Appendix D.

### 3.23 **Assessment of impact and effectiveness of ASB Tools and Powers**

Non-legal and quasi-legal tools

3.24 There are several non-legal tools available that can be used to try to resolve cases of ASB. These include, but are not limited to:

- Practical problem-solving steps, such as encouraging parties to put rugs on laminated flooring or wear headphones if listening to music late at night.
- Encouraging parties to discuss the situation between each other.
- Referring parties to mediation
- Warning letters
- Meetings and interviews with the perpetrator
- Acceptable Behaviour Agreements (ABAs)

Legal tools

3.25 We use several legal powers, including but not limited to tools and powers under the ASB, Crime and Policing Act 2014:

3.26 **Community Protection Notice** – a notice that is issued by an officer in the Community Safety Prevention Team and requires the offender to do certain things. It can be issued to a person over the age of 16 or a business. A breach can result in a fixed penalty notice or prosecution

3.27 **Injunction** – an order against a person over the age of 10, which requires them to do certain things (positive requirements) or stop doing certain things (prohibitions). Breaching the order can result in a fine, custodial sentence or youth sanctions (depending on the age of the respondent)

3.28 **Public Spaces Protection Order** – after extensive consultation, we can apply a PSPO to a specific area, meaning that certain behaviour is prohibited in that area (such as drinking alcohol) and/or certain behaviours mandated (such as putting a dog on a lead). A breach of this order can lead to a fixed penalty notice being issued.

3.29 **Criminal Behaviour Order** – an order that can contain similar provisions to an injunction but must be applied for alongside a criminal prosecution. We may ask the Police/Crown Prosecution Service to consider an application where we

know a perpetrator has been charged with a criminal offence, or we may make our own application if we are prosecuting in relation to breach of noise abatement powers or a community protection notice.

- 3.30 **Closure Powers** – we can issue a closure notice (and apply for a closure order) against a ‘premise’ that is causing serious ASB, nuisance, disorder, or criminality. This includes residential property, non-residential property, and open space. The closure order prohibits access, making it a criminal offence to enter the premises unless permitted by the order.
- 3.31 **Closure Orders** are an effective way to order a premises causing severe anti-social behaviour, nuisance, or crime (like drug dens or prostitution) to remain closed for three to six months to protect communities by quickly restricting entry, even for owners/tenants, to stop disorder. The order is granted by the magistrate court after an application is made by the police or council within 48 hours after the service of a closure notice.
- 3.32 Closure Order could either be a Full or Partial Closure Order.
- 3.33 Full closure order prohibits everyone including the tenant access to the premises at all times during the duration of the order.
- 3.34 Partial Closure Orders are an effective way to manage behaviours where the main tenant or landlord appears to have lost control of activity within their premises. This prohibits everyone except the tenant and specified persons only on the order.
- 3.35 Where a vulnerable individual whose regular visitors to the property engaged in antisocial behaviour, but the tenant appeared to have no control over who visited the address or their disruptive ASB. The effect of the partial closure order is that the defendant can now use this to refuse access to all visitors to his flat and enables him to call the police if they do not listen.

### Case Study

#### **Ryde House – ASB Intervention Summary**

In June 2025, Ryde House came to the attention of Brent’s Anti-Social Behaviour Team following a referral from the Area Tenancy Manager within Brent Housing Services. The referral highlighted concerns about non-tenants gaining access to the car park and communal areas to consume drugs and engage in ASB. Reports also indicated that a vulnerable male tenant might be a victim of possible cuckooing. Ryde House was referred to Brent Joint Action Group in October 2025.

A joint visit/walkabout was arranged involving the ASB Officer, Area Tenancy Manager, and Housing Performance Manager. Subsequently ASB officer with the Kilburn Safer Neighbourhood Team did a follow up visit to the block to scan the problems associated with the estate. During the visit, several security issues were identified, including vandalised doors and windows. Residents spoken to on-site confirmed concerns about drug-related activities, break-ins, and vandalism. An attempt was made to visit the property of the suspected cuckooed victim, but there was no response. However, discussions were held with a neighbouring friend acting as the victim's carer.

Following consultation with the local police ward sergeant, it was confirmed that the victim was being cuckooed, with drug dealers and users using his flat to store drugs and weapons.

BJAG requested a task and finish multi-agency meeting to be convened which was attended by Met Police Officers, Brent Council's Safeguarding Team Manager, Social Worker, ASB Manager, and ASB Localities Officer. At the meeting it was agreed a Partial Closure Order application for a flat in Ryde House identified to be source of the ASB and a Closure Order for the communal areas.

During a door-knocking exercise, additional concerns were raised about another flat where a family member appeared to be contributing to ASB. After further discussions with the local Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT), Brent's CPT agreed to pursue a closure order for this second flat.

November 2025, Brent Magistrate's Court granted closure orders for both flats and the communal areas of Ryde House which is due to expire on **February 2026**.

The block is included in the footprint of Operation Terminos for regular visits and patrols in policing the closure orders.

A community-led approach shows when residents, local council and police, work together to address ASB and Crime in their estate, strategies are developed to address ASB and crime in a way that respects and supports the people who live in estate or surrounding community

- 3.36 Anyone who is found by the police or council to be in the flat who are not authorised to be in the property are committing a criminal offence and, if found guilty, are liable on summary conviction to imprisonment for up to 51 weeks or an unlimited fine.

- 3.37 In legal terms the defendant is not committing the offence, the visitors are by entering the property, ignoring notices on both the front door and on the flat itself, indicating that to enter is an offence.

### Enforcement Outcome

Enforcement		
	2024	2025
Community Protection Warnings	19	17
Community Protection Notice	3	2
Fixed Penalty Notices	1111	2259
Criminal Behaviour Orders	0	10
Closure Notices	29	37
Closure Orders	29	37
Closure Order Extension	8	3
Breach of Closure Order	0	1
Mandatory Grounds for Possession	4	0
Community Triggers	4	11

- 3.38 The last 12 months have seen a significant increase in the use of tools and powers under the ASB Crime and Policing Act 2014.
- 3.39 The Public Space Protection Orders period saw an increase in fixed penalty notices (FPN) issued by the Neighbourhood Patrol Team to provide visible evidence showing disorder is being challenged by the Council to ensure a clean and safe environment which is the Council's responsibility to keep the local environment clear of litter, anti-social behaviour, including other local environmental quality issues affecting the lives of residents and other members of the public.
- 3.40 Closure Orders on premises are being used as disruptive and intervention mechanism to stop drug related activities such as drug dealing or use in premises where neighbours are experiencing the effects of associated crime and ASB. Closure orders are also helping to safeguard individuals as an effective tool for complex cases where vulnerable individuals have been cuckooed, and premises becomes a hub of antisocial behaviour
- 3.41 Developing communications on ASB issues may help to build trust and confidence that action is being taken as some residents did not have a clear understanding of what might happen when they report ASB, what enforcement action might look like, or how long it would take.

## 4.0 Resident Reporting Routes

- 4.1 Residents can report ASB through email, telephone, or the online web-form.
- 4.2 Email continues to be the most common method of communication, however web-form reporting is positively increasing. Currently the team is reliant on manual processing, which is time-consuming. However, as part of the Council's Change Programme the whole department are reviewing ways in which a better system would ensure more efficient use of officer time, and improved collaboration with other services. For example, the ASB team are exploring a new case management system with better functionality to track and resolve issues, including nuisance related issues where audio and visual evidence can be submitted with their report.
- 4.3 ASB officers aim to contact residents within 7 working days, a slight shift from the current policy, which is due to be updated, and which states 3 - 5 working days (Appendix A). The reason is due to the work demand placed on officers who have seen increasing caseloads, including complex ASB cases. The caseload of the team had effectively increased by 25% over the 3 years.

## 5.0 ASB Reports received by council ASB Team

### 5.1 ASB Reports received by council ASB Team

ASB Report	Number of reports made directly to the team	
	2024	2025
Total	677	795

ASB Report	Number of reports made via Members Enquires	
	2024	2025
Total	278	442

ASB Report	Number of reports made via Service Request
------------	--

	2024	2025
<b>Total</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>81</b>

## 5.2 ASB Case Reviews

The ASB Case Review is a multi-agency case review process which involves various agencies such as local police, local authority, housing provider to review their responses to complaints of anti-social behaviour (including incidents of hate). A review meets the threshold if you have made three reports of ASB to either the local police, local authority or a registered housing provider and no effective action has been taken to address the ASB report or no response from the agencies.

5.3 All ASB case reviews were raised via the web form on the Brent Council webpage.

5.4 All ASB case review applications were evaluated from information obtained from the respective organisations to ensure there is an effective action plan in place to address the ASB concern reported.

<b>ASB Case Review Applications</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2025</b>
Total number of applications received	4	11
Cases met threshold	0	0
Case review carried out	0	0
ASB Case Appeal Applications	0	0

5.5 All applications for the ASB case reviews showed effective plans were in place and did not meet the threshold for review.

## 6.0 Future Challenges and Opportunities

6.1 Most housing estates in Brent need to be supported by efforts to structurally design out crime and anti-social behaviour which requires financial commitment.

6.2 Lower cost, to medium scale measures might involve installation of gates in estates to restrict access or strengthen weaker boundary access points.

6.3 Police reprioritisation of resources might also have significant impact in responding to ASB. The Met police launched "Right Care Right Person" in

November 2023, however, the Police no longer respond to mental health related callouts unless a person is at risk of harm.

- 6.4 Since the pandemic people's working patterns have changed as more people work from home. This has resulted in an increase in high – demand for the service for investigating and resolving complaints of statutory noise nuisance including instigating prosecution proceedings against persistent offenders.
- 6.5 Technology for dynamic processes such as good case management systems can support more efficient and effective ways of working and contribute to better outcomes through the use of robust data.
- 6.6 Sharing emerging trends, concerns, and insights with reflective lessons learned from complex or high-impact cases.
- 6.7 Digital Escalation Process: Implement a tech-enabled escalation system to ensure timely responses to urgent cases and emerging risks.
- 6.8 ASB team operates 9 - 5pm, Monday to Friday. However, ASB often occurs after office hours, and therefore we successfully bid for NCIL funding to commission patrol officers from 5pm - 1 am, Mondays – Sundays to support efforts to reduce ASB occurring at night. Although the funding is for 12 months.
- 6.9 The project will be reviewed at the end of the 12 months with a business case made should we need the council to continue with this ASB suppression approach.

## **7.0 Financial Considerations**

- 7.1 The budgets held within the Children, Young People and Community Development Directorate for ASB primarily fund staffing costs and supplies and services, with a total value of £592k.
- 7.2 This budget includes funding for two ASB officers to meet the requirements of the service level agreement (SLA) with BHS. The ASB officer who support the PHS contract are funded directly by the Housing Services Department.
- 7.3 The FPNs issued by the Neighbourhood Patrol Team (NPT) are based on a prescribed statutory rate £100 which cannot be increased. The income generated contributes towards the cost of the NPT team.

## **8.0 Legal Considerations**



- 8.1 As required by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, the Safer Brent Partnership (SBP) brings agencies and organisations together to develop and oversee ASB reductions strategies. Wider legislation underpinning this activity is Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014.
- 8.2 Article 11 of ECHR (Freedom of assembly and association) states the following:
1. Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and to freedom of association with others, including the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests.
  2. No restrictions shall be placed on the exercise of these rights other than such as are prescribed by law and are necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security or public safety, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals or for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others. This Article shall not prevent the imposition of lawful restrictions on the exercise of these rights by members of the armed forces, of the police or of the administration of the State.
- 8.3 The Human Rights Act 1998 requires the Council (and anyone exercising Council functions) to act compatibly with Convention rights. Article 11 is relevant, but so are Article 8 (private/family life and home) and Article 1 of Protocol 1 (peaceful enjoyment of possessions), particularly where actions affect access to premises, living arrangements, or the use of land/property.
- 8.4 The Council must act lawfully, rationally and fairly when using ASB powers. Decisions should be evidenced, recorded, and proportionate to the impact and risk.
- 8.5 Where restrictions are imposed (for example, through enforcement in public space or restrictions on access), the Council must be able to show a clear legal basis, a legitimate aim (e.g. prevention of disorder/crime), and that the measure is necessary and proportionate in the circumstances.
- 8.6 The report already identifies a suite of tools and powers, and these should be treated as the primary “legal toolkit” for managing ASB, applied case-by-case: informal interventions (problem-solving, mediation, warning letters, ABAs) and formal powers (CPNs, injunctions, PSPOs, CBOs, closure powers).
- 8.7 For PSPO activity, there are specific statutory requirements around consultation and publication. This is important where enforcement is used as part of a wider hotspot strategy.

- 8.8 Multi-agency working (SBP / BJAG / CMARAC) involves sharing personal data. Information sharing must be necessary and proportionate, and handled consistently with the UK GDPR / Data Protection Act 2018. Section 115 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 provides a power to disclose information for community safety purposes, where the legal tests are met.
- 8.9 The report highlights vulnerability and complex needs. Where enforcement action is considered against or around vulnerable individuals, safeguarding duties and capacity issues should be actively considered and evidenced, including referral routes and support options alongside enforcement

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

- 9.1 The public sector equality duty, as set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, requires the council, when exercising its functions, to have “due regard” to:
- a) eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the Act,
  - b) advance equality of opportunity and
  - c) foster good relations between those who have a “protected characteristic” and those who do not share that protected characteristic. The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.
- 9.2 Consideration must also be given as to how the proposals contained within this report might impact adversely on those persons with protected characteristics as set out in the Equalities Act 2010 and whether there should be any mitigated actions proposed in relation to any potential adverse impacts of such proposals.
- 9.3 Management of antisocial behaviour (ASB) in the borough is in accordance with the Equality Act 2010. There will be no discrimination in line with our Public Sector Equality duty.
- 9.4 Initiatives ensure compliance with the Equality Act and address health inequalities by:
- a) Supporting marginalised groups with protected characteristics through tailored outreach and partnerships with organisations like AWRC, Young Brent Foundation and Plias.
  - b) Addressing systemic issues, including racial injustice and barriers to reporting ASB, with culturally sensitive programs.

## **10.0 HR & Property Considerations**

- 10.1 Anti-social behaviour, Crime and Policing act 2014, gives powers to a police constable or a person authorised by the local authority to enforce on the tools and powers within the legislation.
- 10.2 Brent Police and Brent Council Staff will jointly enforce against all prohibitions as referenced, while the Council Neighbourhood Patrol officers will be the lead agency to enforce against PSPO prohibitions.

## **11.0 Climate Change and Environmental Considerations**

- 11.1 ASB supports environmental objectives by:
- Reducing ASB & crime hotspots linked to environmental neglect.
  - Promoting sustainable practices during community events and projects.

## **12.0 Communication Considerations**

- 12.1 The strategy includes:
- Publishing key findings and outcomes through Council channels and local media.
  - Utilising social media to promote awareness of ASB
  - Engaging with community groups, educational providers and 3<sup>rd</sup> sector partners to disseminate information and promote safety initiatives.
- 12.2 A communications exercise and awareness with residents will also be undertaken across the borough to outline the Brent enforcement policy. Enforcement will be data driven and targeted in hotspot areas as outlined in the report.

### **Report sign off:**

#### **Corporate Director**

Nigel Chapman, Children, Young People and  
Community Development

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# ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR POLICY

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Brent Council recognises need to challenge any form of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) in an effective robust and proportionate manner. Resident have a right to a quiet and peaceful enjoyment of their environment which they live in making sure cases are resolved through effective intervention and support services.

Brent Council ASB policy applies to all residents – Homeowners, Private renting tenants, Council tenants and leaseholders and other tenants of Registered Social Leaseholder.

### **Brent Anti-Social Behaviour Team (ASB), Community Protection**

The Brent ASB Team (Community Protection) is a multi-agency Team comprising of Head of Community Protection, ASB Nuisance and Crime Manager, 5 dedicated anti-social behaviour localities officers.

## **1. POLICY STATEMENT**

Brent Council will not tolerate anti-social behaviour directed towards residents, or their visitors. This policy sets out:-

- Our pledge in tackling anti-social behaviour;
- The approaches we will use to tackle anti-social behaviour.

We will ensure 3 key approaches are used in tackling all cases of ASB

- Early intervention and prevention to resolve the problem as quickly as possible;
- Partnership working with appropriate agencies;
- Enforcement using the full range of non-legal and legal tools available.

## **2. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY**

Brent Council is committed to promoting equality within the delivery of its services to ensure all resident are treated with respect, dignity, fairness and above all not discriminated against.

The Equality Act 2010 provides a framework to ensure Council services are not provided in a discriminatory manner ensuring approach to be taken when considering legal action against an individual who is disabled. This means under this policy the council will:-

- demonstrate that we have considered any vulnerability identified within the Act when deciding to proceed with legal action;
- have concluded that legal action is needed due to the effect of the anti-social behaviour on either the health of the victim and/or the perpetrator;
- ensure that the proposed legal action is a proportionate response to the anti-social behaviour.

### 3. ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR DEFINITION

The Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 defines ASB as:-

- (a) conduct that has caused, or is likely to cause, harassment, alarm or distress to any person;
- (b) conduct capable of causing nuisance or annoyance to a person in relation to that person's occupation of residential premises, or
- (c) conduct capable of causing housing-related nuisance or annoyance to any person.

#### **Hate Related Incidents/Reports**

A hate incident is *any behaviour* that is perceived by the victim or any other person as being motivated by prejudice or hostility based upon the victim's real or perceived:-

- Race / Ethnicity – including ethnic origin, skin colour, nationality, culture, and/or language;
- Sexual orientation / Homophobia;
- Faith, religion or belief;
- Disability;
- Transgender / Gender identity.

All ASB incidents and reports which involve a hate-related element will be processed as an urgent enquiry and will be responded to within 1 working day in accordance with the ASB Team service standards.

### 4. REPORT INCIDENTS OF ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

The Council may take the lead in investigating the reports of anti-social behaviour in the following circumstances:-

- When the person experiencing and / or perpetrating anti-social behaviour is a Council tenant, or if the ASB is perpetrated by another person when visiting a Council tenant and such ASB is within the Medium or High category;
- When both the person experiencing and the person perpetrating anti-social behaviour are owner occupiers or reside in privately rented accommodation;
- When the ASB is taking place in any public place or place to which the public have access.

When either the person experiencing ASB or the perpetrator of ASB is a tenant of another social landlord or lives in a property managed by Tenant Management Organisation (TMO) the report of ASB should be made to the relevant social landlord or TMO.

Anti-Social Behaviour involving criminal conduct should be reported to Police by calling 101 or 999 in an emergency.

#### **How to report ASB**

Reports of ASB can be made to Brent ASB Team Community Protection by:-

- Completing the Online application form;

- Council Tenant(s) and Leaseholder(s) can complete the Brent Housing Management on line allocation form;
- ASB Team can also be contacted on 0208 937 1058, Monday to Friday (8am to 6pm).

You can report antisocial behaviour to the police on the following telephone numbers:-

- Non-emergency number – 101
- Crimestoppers – 0800 555 111
- If there is an immediate risk – 999.

### **Types of Reports investigated**

Brent ASB Team will typically deal with anti-social behaviour which could include (but is not limited to) those listed below:-

- Street drinking;
- Drug dealing;
- Drug taking / Substance misuse;
- Brothel;
- Prostitution / Soliciting / Kerb Crawling;
- Harassment / Intimidation;
- Suspected Cuckoo;
- Nuisance Premises;
- Vulnerable Individual causing ASB;
- Anti-Social Shisha Venue;
- Neighbour disputes;
- Groups or individuals making threats;
- Rough sleeping;
- Begging;
- Travellers Encampments.

We expect a reasonable level of tolerance among people and will seek to make a fair evaluation on whether complaints made are reasonable. Brent ASB Team will therefore not investigate the following:-

- Actions that are considered to be normal everyday activities or household noise;
- Complaints which are not a breach of the terms of tenancy, for example Neighbours staring at you or you don't like the way you were spoken too;
- Actions which amount to people not being pleasant to each other but are not sufficiently serious to likely cause harm to justify our involvement;
- Complaints about other people having lifestyles that offend others, for example, who people socialise with, how people dress or what they do in their own homes;
- Fly tipping, overcrowding and disrepair. These will be referred to other departments within the Council responsible for investigating these types of problems.

Brent ASB Team will investigate an anonymous report if the concerns can be verified. The council will wish to have contact with the individual experiencing antisocial behaviour to seek appropriate intervention to stop the perpetuating of the ASB.



## 5. ASB REPORT CATEGORISED AND PRIORITISED

Reports of ASB can be classified Low, Medium or High risk. ASB localities officers will contact the complainant to ask series of questions to assess the potential risk of harm caused by the ASB.

If the ASB involves the use or threat of violence or there is a significant risk of harm for example, a hate crime / incident, an officer will aim to contact the complainant within 1 working day. For all other reports of ASB, an officer will aim to contact the complainant within 5 working days.

## 6. RESPONDING TO ASB REPORTS

### Enquiry handling

Full details of any report of ASB, however it is received, will be recorded by the ASB Localities Officers on the council's casework management system.

Council officers receiving a verbal report (via telephone or face-to-face) will make a detailed record of incidents. A risk assessment form will also be completed to categorise effectively the severity of the case.

For all cases which score "high risk" on the referral form, the case officer will contact the complainant/referring agency, by telephone or face-to-face visit within -	<b>1 working day</b>
For all cases which score "low" or "medium risk" on the referral form, the case officer will contact the complainant/referring agency by telephone or face to face visit within -	<b>3 to 5 working days</b>

### Case Investigation

Brent ASB Team recognises that the complexities involved in investigating ASB cannot be readily mapped out as a "one size fits all" process.

Whilst each case will require a tailored and proportionate response, there are up to six strands of activity that need to be considered/followed in tandem to ensure investigations are thorough and effective:-

- i. Victim contact, Risk & Vulnerability Assessments;
- ii. Accused contact & Vulnerability Assessments;
- iii. Evidence collation & statement taking;
- iv. Accused interventions;
- v. Partnership Working & ASB Panels;
- vi. ASB Enforcement.

### Victim Contact & Vulnerability Assessments

Unless contact or a visit has already taken place during the initial response to the incoming enquiry / referral, the investigating case officer will contact or arrange to visit the complainant/victim(s) within 10 working days of the initial response to fully explain the investigative process and manage expectations.

During the initial contact or visit to named victims, the case officer will ensure that all actions outlined in the following checklist are carried out:-

<b>Case officers Initial Contact Checklist (Victims/Complainants)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Introduce themselves to the victim and provide their contact details should the victim need further information or wish to report further incidents.	
Explain the purpose of and complete a Victim Vulnerability risk assessment and equality monitoring data form.	
Obtain as much detail as possible about the alleged ASB including where appropriate photographic evidence of any reported damage.	
Establish whether any other professional body / solicitor / Councillor / MP has been contacted or is already involved in this case.	
Agree with the victim how the case will be investigated, discussing with the victim their expectations in relation to the case.	
Advise the victim on how the case may progress and what options are available at this stage, including independent mediation.	
Fully explain not only what the customer can expect from us, and what we will require from them.	
Advise the victim that the accurate completion of ASB diary sheets will form a vital part of the evidence-gathering process, noting that if ASB diary sheets are completed correctly and are of good quality, with detailed evidence of recent incidents, only a few should be required.	
Ensure that the victim understands that should the ASB Team decide to take legal action, it may be necessary for the victim to provide evidence at a court hearing later in the case	
Identify any risk factors, which would prevent the victim giving evidence at court.	
Obtain consent of the victim to approach the accused. Advise the victim that whilst their identity will not be disclosed to the accused (unless they have given consent that they are happy for their identification to be disclosed) they may be identified to the accused through the disclosure of specific incidents or, if legal proceedings are scheduled, (given the legal requirement to disclose evidence to the defence) through the evidence provided to the court.	
Provide the victim with leaflets and information relating to currently available support services/organisations that may be able to assist the victim.	

Advise that all victims will be offered a referral to Victim Support, who, once involved, will continue to liaise with the case officer to advise of any vulnerability issues or additional support needs.	
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### **Alleged Perpetrator Contact & Vulnerability Assessments**

Contact or interviews will be arranged with the alleged perpetrator within 10 days of case creation, unless the nature of reported incidents indicates victims/witnesses/communities may be at risk though disclosure of allegations. Where swift action is need to protect victims, the ASB Manager may authorise action to be taken 'without notice' being given to the alleged perpetrator.

Case Officers will undertake an investigation in response to the nature and severity of the allegations or any concerns arising from the accused's previous contact history, to minimise any potential risks relating to interviews with alleged perpetrators.

Wherever practicable, subject to any known or identified risks, interviews with alleged perpetrators will be pre-arranged by telephone/ email to minimise the potential for failed appointments. Where time permits, scheduled interviews should be confirmed in writing. As with arranging meetings with victims, it may be necessary to meet with alleged perpetrators away from their home or at a neutral venue.

Where contact with alleged perpetrators is likely to take longer than 10 working days after the initial enquiry response, the case officer will advise the victim of the reasons for this.

During the initial visit to/meeting with the alleged perpetrator, the case officer will ensure that all actions outlined in the following checklist are carried out:-

<b>Case Officers Initial Contact Checklist (Accused)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Explain the role of ASB Localities Officers and the purpose of the interview / meeting.	
Inform the alleged perpetrator of the allegations made and obtain their version of events / incidents, noting any admissions or counter allegations.	
Explain the purpose of, and endeavour to identify any vulnerabilities or support needs that may have a bearing on their behaviour, giving due consideration to what support can be provided.	
Advise the alleged perpetrator on how the case may progress and what options are available at this stage, including mediation (if not already considered).	
Explore with the alleged perpetrator any options to prevent further ASB through diversionary and/or supportive interventions, and voluntary agreements and/or contracts. Record on Action Plan.	

Where the alleged perpetrator is under the age of 18, discuss the allegations with the parent / guardian, seeking an assurance of support to ensure no further ASB is perpetrated.	
[Council tenants] Advise the alleged perpetrator of the consequences of further ASB resulting in a breach of tenancy and any potential actions against the named tenant and signpost to the Brent Housing Management.	
Advise the alleged perpetrator that their individual support needs and vulnerabilities will be assessed and re-assessed throughout the investigation, taking account of any change in circumstances, formal warnings and escalation of incidents.	

Where allegations are received pertaining to the behaviour of children under the age of 18, the alleged perpetrator will be interviewed with their parent(s) or appropriate adult present. Where children are known to attend full-time education interviews will, where practicable, be arranged to take place out of school hours.

All interviews, discussions and or attempted discussions with the accused, including instances where the alleged perpetrator fails to attend or refuses to discuss any allegation, will be recorded as evidence of attempts made to conduct an impartial and balanced investigation. A written record will be kept of all interviews and agreed actions will, where appropriate be confirmed in writing where it is reasonable to do so.

Following the initial visit or contact, the case officer will (unless emergency legal action is to be taken without notice to the alleged perpetrator) continue to liaise with the alleged perpetrator throughout the investigation to discuss further evidence obtained, to consider appropriate interventions, and/or to reiterate any conditions / sanctions the alleged perpetrator is expected to adhere to.

The alleged perpetrator vulnerability assessment and resulting support provision will be reviewed when appropriate to ensure support is effective and remains relevant to the accused's needs.

Where the alleged perpetrator either in person or through their solicitor, denies all allegations, the case officer will discuss the case with the ASB manager to evaluate the strength of the evidence against that individual and agree how to progress. All requests from solicitors acting on behalf of the accused will be responded to and confirmed in writing by the ASB Nuisance and Crime Manager.

### **Evidence Collation**

Case officers will ensure all investigations are thorough and all avenues of potential evidence are explored to determine the most effective means to resolve complaints of ASB. Sources of evidence include, but are not restricted to:-

- Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Diary Sheets;
- Statements taken during interviews with case participants (see below);
- Personal observations during visits;
- Photographs;

- Professional evidence (Police, Out of Hours Response Officers, Housing Officers etc.);
- Professional witnesses;
- Fraudulent documents / records;
- Visits to neighbours and wider area;
- Hearsay;
- Shared intelligence;
- CCTV;
- Section 115s.

### **ASB Diary Sheets**

Where victims report regular incidents of nuisance or anti-social behaviour, ASB diary sheets can be issued to victims and appropriate witnesses, with clear guidance provided as to how to record incidents they witness (times, type and nature of incidents, duration and details of all involved, other witnesses etc.). Each incident should be signed and dated.

If the victim has problems completing the form, the case officer will consider what other forms of help/assistance could be available and ascertaining whether a relative/friend could assist.

All nuisance diary books issued by case officers should be returned within 20 working days in accordance with service standards. Diary sheets can be returned via email to [community.safety@brent.gov.uk](mailto:community.safety@brent.gov.uk) or to the Community Protection Team, Brent Civic Centre, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor North, Wembley HA9 0FJ.

### **Statements**

Where victims are able to provide a witness account of incidents observed (as logged within ASB diary sheets) or reported to them (hearsay) a witness statement will be taken to support any legal proceedings. Statements should be a signed, contemporaneous and accurate account of events as witnessed by the complainant (written in their own words) and include comment on how those events made them feel. Handwritten notes used to prepare a typed statement will be retained on file.

### **Surveillance**

Where surveillance operations are to be used to obtain covert CCTV evidence of incidents of ASB, an appropriate RIPA authorisation should be sought.

Responsibility for completing a RIPA application rests with the case officer who will submit the application to the ASB Nuisance and Crime Manager for approval prior to it being authorised by the Head of Community Protection. The application will then be presented to the Magistrates Court where a decision will be made.

All collated evidence will be recorded on Brent ASB Team's case management system. All documents/evidence including statements will be copied, scanned and uploaded, and 'originals' returned to the author.

### **Alleged Perpetrator interventions**

ASB Case officers will identify and liaise with partner agencies to establish any support mechanisms and/or interventions already in place with the alleged perpetrator. Case officers will then consider whether those interventions could contribute to resolving identified ASB issues.

Case Officers will consider those supportive and diversionary interventions and referrals that are appropriate to the alleged perpetrator's tenure, age, and support needs, balancing the support needs of the alleged perpetrator against the seriousness of the ASB and the need to protect victims and witnesses.

Interventions used could include diversionary activities and or pre-enforcement contracts and agreements, including referrals to support and intervention providers such as Youth programmes, Families Front door, Drug programmes, Housing advice, Homelessness charities etc.; referrals to intervention panels; use of verbal and written warnings (Acceptable Behaviour Agreements (ABA's).

Where accused individuals are engaged with supportive or diversionary interventions, case officers will consult with service providers to assess the impact of engagement against reported behaviour, recognising the potential to undertake enforcement action in conjunction with on-going intervention and support where appropriate.

### **Community Remedy**

Where low level ASB has occurred, and is admitted to, Brent ASB Team will work with its police partners to consider whether a community resolution is appropriate.

The community remedy document is prepared by the local policing body in conjunction with the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), and can be revised at any time.

The community remedy document is a list of actions which might be appropriate to be carried out by a person who has engaged in anti-social behaviour or has committed an offence and is to be dealt with without court proceedings – either as part of an informal community resolution or a more formal conditional caution.

## **7. ASB ENFORCEMENT**

Where it is deemed that interventions are unlikely to resolve reported problems or indeed the on-going ASB warrants a more formal response to protect victims and witnesses, ASB Nuisance and Crime Manager's approval will be sought to proceed to enforcement action.

The ASB Nuisance and Crime Manager will provide appropriate advice and guidance with regards to appropriate legal measures, taking full account of the accused's age and tenure, and reflecting the nature and the seriousness of the ASB.

Once enforcement options have been approved, the case officer will compile a full case file with all documentary evidence obtained during the investigation (photographs, statements, letters, ABA's, cautions, CCTV evidence etc.) and follow

the enforcement protocols under the ASB, Crime and Policing Act 2014 (ASBCPA 2014).

Enforcement tools used by Brent ASB Team will primarily fall under the ASBCPA 2014, which seeks to ensure legislation is victim-centred, easy to use and dependent upon local decision-making.

### **Power of arrest**

The court can attach a power of arrest to any prohibition in the injunction, but not to a positive requirement.

The court can only attach a power of arrest if:-

- the anti-social behaviour in which the respondent has engaged, or threatens to engage, consists of or includes the use, or threatened use, of violence against other persons; or
- there is a significant risk of harm to other persons from the respondent.

### **Acceptable Behaviour Agreements**

These are written agreements between an individual (and a responsible adult if they are under 18), Brent ASB Team and the Police. Although not legally binding, the agreement is a promise that the individual will not carry out certain acts, which could be seen as anti-social. The agreement may include support for the individual in tackling the behaviour. Agreement terms will be agreed with accused through face-to-face meetings, where behaviours are fully discussed and their impact recognised.

It is not always necessary to use an ABA before taking other action (e.g. where the behaviour is very serious) but it is a step that would be considered in most cases involving young people.

### **Community Protection written warning**

A Community Protection Warning (CPW) is intended to deal with particular, ongoing problems or nuisances which negatively affect the community's quality of life by targeting those responsible. A written warning must be issued to the person/s or group/s committing anti-social behaviour. The written warning must make clear to the individual that if they do not stop the anti-social behaviour, they could be issued with a Community Protection Notice (CPN). This can be issued by the Police or authorised officers within the Council.

### **Community Protection Notice**

If the CPW is breached a full CPN must be issued to the person/s or group/s committing anti-social behaviour. The notice must make clear to the individual that they have breached the CPW and highlight the nature of the on-going problem, requesting them to stop, and informing them of the consequences of continuing.

The CPN can then be issued, where it is satisfied on reasonable grounds that the conduct of the individual, business or organisation;

- is having a detrimental effect on the quality of life of those in the locality;

- is persistent or continuing in nature; and
- is unreasonable.

The CPN can also include requirements to ensure that problems are rectified.

### **Breach**

Failure to comply with the requirements of a Community Protection Notice will make one liable on a summary conviction:-

- To a fine not exceeding level 4 on the standard scale, in the case of an individual;
- To a fine, in the case of a body.

If the terms of the Community Protection Notice are not complied with, and the land is open to air, Brent Council may have work carried out to ensure that the failure is remedied. For premises other than land open to air, where a CPN is issued which specifies work intended to ensure that the failure is remedied, Brent Council may have the work carried out if the necessary consent is given.

Brent Council will issue a Fixed Penalty Notice under Section 52(1) of the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime & Policing Act (ABC&PA) 2014, for breach of a CPN which gives the opportunity to discharge any liability to prosecution by payment of the fixed sum of **£100** within fourteen (14) days of the date of the Fixed Penalty Notice, or the discounted sum of **£75** within ten (10) days. If an individual pays one of these two amounts within the period specified, they will not be prosecuted for the offence.

### **Non Payment of fines**

Failure of an individual or business to pay the Fixed Penalty Notice within 14 days will result in legal proceedings being issued by the London Borough of Brent's Legal Team. Failure to pay the notice may result in prosecution, the penalty for which at a Magistrates Court is a fine not exceeding £2500 in the case of an individual. There is no limit to fines for a body.

### **Appeals**

Anyone issued with a CPN has the opportunity to appeal it. Appeals are heard in a magistrate's court. The CPN includes details of the process and how an individual can appeal.

An appeal can be made on the following grounds:-

- The behaviour did not take place;
- The behaviour has not had a detrimental effect on the quality of life of those in the locality;
- The behaviour was not persistent or continuing;
- The behaviour is not unreasonable;
- The individual cannot reasonably be expected to control or affect the behaviour;
- Any of the requirements are unreasonable;
- There is a material defect or error with the CPN;
- The CPN was issued to the wrong person.



## **Civil Injunction**

Civil injunctions can be applied for under Part 1 of the ASB Crime and Policing Act 2014 to stop a person's anti-social behaviour escalating and to set a clear standard of expected behaviours. The injunction is designed to offer fast and effective protection for victims and communities.

To meet the threshold for an injunction under Part 1 of the 2014 Act, the behaviour must have caused, or be likely to cause, harassment, alarm or distress.

ASB in a non-housing related context would affect any person and would occur in a public place, such as a town or city centre, shopping mall, or local park. This type of ASB does not affect the housing management functions of a social landlord or people in their homes.

ASB in a housing context affects persons in relation to their occupation of residential premises.

Applications where the defendant is aged between 10 and 17 will be applied for through the Youth Court; applications for defendants aged 18 and over will be applied for through the County Court.

Injunctions will include appropriate prohibitions to stop the ASB, but can also include positive requirements to help the individual deal with the underlying cause of their behaviour. The lead officer **must** liaise with Brent's Youth Offending Team for applications where the defendant is under 18, to ensure positive requirements are both appropriate and achievable.

Prohibitions or requirements in the injunction can be for a fixed or indefinite period for accused adults. In the case of under 18s, prohibitions and positive requirements must have a specified time limit, the maximum term being 12 months.

Brent ASB Team recognises that making the public aware of the accused and the terms of the order helps local people to identify and report breaches, but can also reassure communities that action is being taken in response to reported anti-social behaviour.

Unless the court has made a section 39 order under the Children and Young Persons Act 1933, which prohibits publication, the decision to publicise injunctions will be taken by the police or council through its regular communications processes.

### ***'Without notice' applications***

Some injunctions may be applied for without notice being given to the accused, where there is a concern or belief that disclosure could put the victim or witnesses at further risk. The notification and consultation requirements that apply to 'with notice' applications do not apply to 'without notice' applications.

### ***Interim injunctions***

If a 'without notice' application is successful, the court will grant an interim injunction. An interim injunction may also be granted where a standard application is adjourned. Interim injunctions can only include prohibitions, not positive requirements.

### ***Variation and discharge of injunctions***

Where a person's behaviour improves and Brent ASB Team (through its review process) deems it appropriate to vary or discharge an injunction, it can apply to the courts or advise the accused to apply. Where an application is made by Brent ASB Team, it will notify the people and organisations that were consulted as part of the initial application process.

If the court dismisses an application to vary the injunction, the relevant party is not allowed to make a further application without the consent of the court or the agreement of the other party.

### **Criminal Behaviour Orders**

A Criminal Behaviour Order (CBO) can be applied for on conviction, in order to tackle the most persistently anti-social individuals who are also engaged in criminal activity. This includes a wide range of anti-social behaviours, for example threatening violence against others in the community, being persistently being drunk and aggressive in public or causing criminal damage. (A CBO does not require there to be a link between the criminal behaviour which led to the conviction and the anti-social behaviour for it to be issued by the court). Orders can include both prohibitions and positive requirements.

Prosecutions will usually be brought by the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), but in some cases, Brent Council may apply for the CBO after the offender has been convicted of a criminal offence. The CPS can apply for a CBO at its own initiative or following a request from a council or the police. The CBO hearing will occur after, or at the same time as, the sentencing for the criminal conviction

Orders will be granted where the court is satisfied beyond reasonable doubt that the offender has engaged in behaviour that has caused or is likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to any person, and where the court considers that making the order will help prevent the offender from engaging in such behaviour.

Where an offender is under 18, the Brent ASB Team will consult with the local youth offending team (YOT) and ensure consultation with other local organisations that may be in contact with the individual, such as schools and colleges, providers of probation services, social services, mental health services, housing providers etc.).

### **Dispersal powers**

The dispersal power is a flexible police power, authorised by an officer of at least the rank of inspector that can be used in a range of situations to disperse anti-social individuals and provide immediate short-term respite to a local community. The authorising officer must consider the impact on the local community before using the dispersal power.

The power allows police officers in uniform, as well as Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) if designated by their chief constable, to deal instantly with someone's behaviour and nip the problem in the bud before it escalates.

In areas where there are regular problems, Brent police will inform the BCPT when a dispersal has been implemented.

### **Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO)**

A Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) is an order intended to protect public spaces from anti-social individuals or groups, who create a particular nuisance or problem in a particular area that is detrimental to the local community's quality of life. This might include individuals allowing dogs to roam without a lead and foul, drinking alcohol or engaging in drug use.

A PSPO can be made by the council if they are satisfied on reasonable grounds that the activities carried out or likely to be carried out in a public space:-

- have or are likely to have, a detrimental effect on the quality of life of those in the locality;
- is, or is likely to be, persistent or continuing in nature;
- is, or is likely to be, unreasonable and
- justifies the restrictions imposed.

Before making a PSPO, the council must consult with the local police. This should be done formally through the Police and Crime Commissioner, but details could be agreed by working level leads. This is an opportunity for the police and council to share information about the area and the problems being caused as well as discuss the practicalities of enforcement. In addition, the owner or occupier of the land should be consulted.

The council must also consult whatever community representatives they think is appropriate. This could relate to a specific group, for instance the residents' association, or an individual or group of individuals, for instance, regular users of a park or people who participate in specific activities such as busking or other types of street entertainment. Before the PSPO is **made**, the council also has to publish the draft order in accordance with regulations published by the Secretary of State.

Where an individual breaches the conditions of a PSPO (e.g. allowing dog to roam without a lead, dumping rubbish, consuming alcohol) and is witnessed doing so by a Police officer, designated PCSO or Council officer, their behaviour will be challenged. The individual might be asked to leave the area, hand over alcohol or put dog on a lead.

If the individual refuses to comply with the instruction, they will be committing an offence, for which they could be issued with a fixed penalty notice (Local Authority FPN) that can be issued by a Police officer, designated PCSO or Council officer. A more serious breach could on conviction result in a court-imposed fine.

## **Closure Power**

The closure power is a fast, flexible power that can be used to protect victims and communities by quickly closing premises that are causing nuisance or disorder.

The power comes in two stages: the closure notice and the closure order. The closure notice can be used by the council or the police out of court. Following the issuing of a closure notice, an application must be made to the magistrates' court for a closure order, unless the closure notice has been cancelled.

A closure notice can be issued where the council or police officer (of at least the rank of inspector) is satisfied on reasonable grounds:-

- that the use of particular premises has resulted, or is likely soon to result, in nuisance to members of the public; or
- that there has been, or is likely soon to be, disorder near those premises associated with the use of those premises, and that the notice is necessary to prevent the nuisance or disorder from continuing, recurring or occurring.

The closure notice can be issued in the first instance for 24 hours or extended up to a maximum of 48 hours by the council's chief executive officer (head of paid service) or designate thereof, or by a police superintendent.

The closure notice should:-

- identify the premises;
- explain the effect of the notice;
- state that failure to comply with the notice is an offence;
- state that an application will be made for a closure order;
- specify when and where the application will be heard;
- explain the effect of the closure order and
- give information about the names of, and means of contacting, persons and organisations in the area that provide advice about housing and legal matters.

A closure order can subsequently be issued to close the premises for up to 3 months, if the court is satisfied:-

- that a person has engaged, or is likely to engage, in disorderly, offensive or criminal behaviour on the premises; or
- that the use of the premises has resulted, or is likely to result, in serious nuisance to members of the public; or
- that there has been, or is likely to be, disorder near those premises associated with the use of those premises, and that the order is necessary to prevent the behaviour, nuisance or disorder from continuing, recurring or occurring.

A closure notice cannot prohibit access of anyone who routinely or regularly lives at those premises. However, a closure order, granted by the court, can prohibit access to those who routinely live at premises.

In prohibiting access through a closure notice, it will be important to consider who is responsible for the premises and who may need access to secure a premise. This might not always be the owner, for example a managing agent.

Breaching a closure order is a criminal offence carrying a penalty of either imprisonment for a period of up to six months or an unlimited fine, or both.

A closure notice cannot be appealed. A closure order can be appealed, as long as appeals are made to the Crown Court within 21 days beginning with the date of the decision to which the appeal relates.

### **Absolute Grounds for possession**

As outlined within the ASB Procedure document, prevention and early intervention is at the heart of our approach to dealing with anti-social behaviour.

In some persistent or serious anti-social behaviour cases, it may become necessary to seek possession. Brent Housing Management (BHM), when responding to the most serious cases of anti-social behaviour, will consider new absolute ground for possession included within the ASBCPA 2014, designed to speed up the possession process in cases where anti-social behaviour or criminality has been already been proven by another court.

The court must grant possession (subject to any available human rights defence raised by the tenant, including proportionality) provided the landlord has followed the correct procedure and at least one of the following five conditions is met:-

- the tenant, a member of the tenant's household, or a person visiting the property has been convicted of a serious offence;
- the tenant, a member of the tenant's household, or a person visiting the property has been found by a court to have breached a civil injunction;
- the tenant, a member of the tenant's household, or a person visiting the property has been convicted for breaching a criminal behaviour order (CBO);
- the tenant's property has been closed for more than 48 hours under a closure order for anti-social behaviour; or
- the tenant, a member of the tenant's household, or a person visiting the property has been convicted for breaching a noise abatement notice or order.

The offence or anti-social conduct must have been committed in, or in the locality of, the property, affected a person with a right to live in the locality of the property or affected the landlord or the landlord's staff or contractors.

BHM has well-established working relationships with the police, Brent ASB Team and council departments, and other local agencies that will ensure the landlord is always aware when one or more of the triggers for the new absolute grounds has occurred.

### **Possession Proceedings**

The council can consider eviction where the person accused of anti-social behaviour is a council tenant or someone living with or visiting a tenant, and the behaviour complained of is a breach of the terms of the tenancy agreement, or, in the case of secure tenants, one of the grounds for possession as defined by the Housing Act 1985. The grounds for possession include where the tenant or a person living with or visiting the tenant is guilty of anti-social behaviour.

The type of tenancy held determines the course of legal action. When an application is made to court for possession of an Introductory Tenancy, the Court should grant possession, as long as BHM have correctly followed the council's introductory tenancy procedures.

When the tenant is a secure tenant the court must also be satisfied that it is reasonable to evict the tenant on the basis of the anti-social behaviour that has been evidenced.

Examples of cases where eviction would be considered include:

- Dealing drugs from council property;
- Using violence or severe intimidation against neighbours or staff;
- Using council property for serious criminal activity;
- Where properties have been closed under crack house or anti-social behaviour closure powers;
- Where the anti-social behaviour is persistent and other attempts to prevent it have failed.

### **Demoted tenancies**

A demoted tenancy is a less secure form of tenancy. A secure tenancy can be demoted where there is anti-social behaviour, and is done by serving a Demotion Notice and making a court application for a Demotion Order. The court must also be satisfied that it is reasonable to demote the tenancy.

Once the tenancy is demoted to a less secure form of tenancy, any future request for possession of that property would follow a similar procedure to that for introductory tenancies. Demotion generally lasts for a period of 12-18 months.

### **Injunctions for trespass**

The council can send a prohibition letter banning individuals from entering council-owned property. If the letter is ignored, this will be viewed as trespassing and the council can apply for an injunction banning the individual from continuing the trespass. In the case of schools, the law requires the parent of a child to be consulted before such a ban is made.

## **8. COMMUNITY TRIGGER**

The Brent ASB Team has established a Community Trigger mechanism introduced within the ASB, Crime and Policing Act 2014.

The community trigger provides victims of ASB with the ability to hold agencies dealing with their reports to account. Where a resident has made 3 reports relating to the same issue within the last six months to either the council, police or a registered housing provider (social landlord) and believes no action has been taken, they can request a review under the community trigger.

Where a review meets the community trigger threshold, partners and involved agencies must submit their actions to a formal review meeting.

## **9. CASE CLOSURE**

Cases can only be closed by the Anti-Social Behaviour Localities Officers once it has been determined that the investigation has found insufficient evidence to warrant further investigation, reported problems have been satisfactorily resolved or have abated, and/or following the expiry/execution of a legal order.

ASB Localities Officers may also close a case where the issues are centred around a one-on-one dispute with no wider community involvement and no risks to either party, where an offer of mediation has been offered to both parties but has been declined by the complainant.

In some cases, where reported problems have been significantly resolved but residual tenancy issues prevail, it may be appropriate to refer the case back to the appropriate property owner, for additional tenancy action and/or monitoring.

Owner-occupiers may be advised to consult their own solicitor about taking private action where the reported problems fall outside of the scope of ASB.

Victims and those agencies involved in the initial referral of enquiries will always be contacted and advised of the reasons for case closure prior to case closed.

The accused will also be informed of the decision to close cases prior to case closure.

## **10. MULTI AGENCY WORKING**

Dealing with anti-social behaviour cases sometimes requires involvement from statutory and non-statutory partnership agencies working closely with enforcement agencies such as the police and registered social landlords have access to a more appropriate enforcement action within tenancy breaches. We acknowledge sometimes both complainants and perpetrators may be vulnerable thus may benefit referring appropriate to support services.

Reports of anti-social behaviour are discussed at multi-agency forum to ensure that a coordinated response is taken involving the relevant partners to resolve the anti-social behaviour problem. The Forums are:-

- Brent Joint Action Group
- Brent Community MARAC

### **Brent Joint Action Group**

Referrals can be made to Brent Joint Action Group (BJAG) to deal with anti-social behaviour in Brent's hotspot areas and persistent ASB perpetrators. BJAG cover all wards in Brent and are managed by the ASB Localities Officers. These meetings are

held monthly and look at ASB data provided by the BCPT Crime Analyst, as well as referrals by partner agencies.

Deployable CCTV camera applications are also considered at the BJAG to deter and monitor areas of crime and antisocial behaviour.

### **Brent Community MARAC**

The Brent Community MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference) is a process where professionals share information on high risk cases of vulnerable individuals whose personal safety is at risk and put in place a risk management plan.

The aim of the process is to address the safety and protection of the individual and to review and co-ordinate a case management plan. Examples of vulnerable individuals that can be referred to the panel are those who are victims of ASB, victims of hate crime, those at risk of fire related incidents and those at risk of financial abuse/fraud.

The meetings are held monthly and managed by the Community MARAC coordinator with the ultimate aim of reducing the risk of harm for individuals referred.

### **Publicity and Media Strategy**

Brent Communications Team will wherever appropriate, liaise with Police press offices to publicise its work, to promote positive case outcomes and provide reassurance to residents in its ability to tackle and prevent anti-social behaviour.

## **11. INFORMATION SHARING AND CONFIDENTIALITY**

Information sharing should not be seen as a barrier to successful action. In cases where informed consent is not given (i.e. a request for information is done without the subject's knowledge or consent), for the prevention of crime and disorder or to protect vulnerable people, lack of consent should not be seen as a barrier to action.

Brent ASB Team treat all information received with the strictest of confidence. At times it is imperative to understand that in certain circumstances we may have a legal obligation to share relevant information with other statutory agencies especially where there is need of prevention and detection of crime or safe guarding concerns.

We have a duty to share information with partnership agencies as defined in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and also in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and data sharing protocols.

### **Crime and Disorder Act 1998**

Section 115 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 allows for the exchange of information where the disclosure is necessary or expedient for the purposes of any provision of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, or amendments to that legislation.

The information whether from a private individual or member of a public body can be disclosed to a relevant authority or a person acting on behalf of such an authority.



Under the Act and Community Safety Partnership information sharing protocol, 'relevant authority' for the London Borough of Brent means:-

- Chief Executive, London Borough of Brent;
- Borough Commander, Brent Borough, Metropolitan Police;
- Borough Commander, Brent Borough, London Fire Brigade;
- Chief Executive, Brent Clinical Commissioning Group;
- Chief Probation Officer, National Probation Service (Barnet, Brent and Enfield);
- Assistant Chief Officer, London Community Rehabilitation Company (Barnet & Brent LDU).

### **Data Protection Act 1998**

The non-disclosure provision of the 1998 Data Protection Act does not apply where a disclosure is for the purposes of (section 29):

- the prevention and detection of crime, or
- the apprehension or prosecution of offenders,
- where failure to disclose would be likely to prejudice those objectives in a particular case

In order to satisfy these terms, any request for personal information where the purpose is the prevention or detection of crime should specify as clearly as possible how failure to disclose would prejudice this objective.

For example, if a social landlord wanted information from the police to assist them in civil proceedings their request should make clear why the proceedings are and how a successful action could prevent crime.

### **Human Rights Act 1998**

Article 8(1) of the Human Rights Act 1998:

- "Everyone has the right to respect for his private and family life, his home and his correspondence."
- This right is not absolute – interference can be justified in the interests of the prevention of disorder or crime.

## **12. MONITORING THE SERVICE**

### **Case Supervision**

The ASB Nuisance and Crime Manager will conduct monthly reviews of ongoing case work to assess progress/identify any barriers to progress, providing further direction and guidance to case officers through scheduled supervisions.

ASB Nuisance and Crime Manager conducting reviews of cases will check that:

- Service standards have been/are being adhered to
- All actions arising during the course of the case investigation are accurately recorded.
- All avenues of investigation have been explored, with all witnesses contacted and any problem solving opportunities considered.

- All documents, letters, statements and evidence have been scanned in and attached to the case, and all hard copy documents retained for future legal file creation.
- All guidance and direction previously provided to the investigating officer has been actioned and cases are progressing in accordance with any planned timescales.

All staff will also be subject to regular supervision and appraisals in accordance with corporate HR policies. Supervisions will be conducted on a monthly basis whilst appraisal will be carried out annually but reviewed every six months.

### 13. COMPLAINTS

Brent ASB Team is committed to providing the best possible service at all times, but sometimes mistakes are made. If this happens, we want customers to contact us and let us know.

Where complaints cannot be resolved by local managers and exhaust the council's complaints procedure, complainants will be referred to either the Local Government Ombudsman, dependent upon the case issues and the complainant's tenure.

If you have a complaint, compliment or a comment about Brent ASB Team, you can talk to the member of staff concerned or their manager, you can:

- Contact us on: **0208 937 1058 or 0208 937 1234**
- Use the online form on the Council - Website at [www.brent.gov.uk](http://www.brent.gov.uk)
- Email us at: [community.safety@brent.gov.uk](mailto:community.safety@brent.gov.uk)
- Write to us at: Brent Community Safety and Public Protection Team

Brent Civic Centre  
Engineers Way  
Wembley  
Middlesex  
HA9 0FJ

### 14. PERFORMANCE MONITORING

Brent's BCPT analyst performance team is responsible for all ASB performance measurement and will collate regular quantitative and qualitative performance data at weekly, monthly and quarterly intervals, providing advice and guidance to senior managers in respect of any fluctuations in performance or any identified issues.

The analyst will ensure that all collated performance data is purposeful and adds value to the work of Brent ASB Team in so far as it ensures senior managers and key partners are fully informed of ASB performance and can be used to influence procedural improvements.

Data relating to enquiries and cases logged within Brent ASB Team's case management systems will be extracted through tailored reports for performance measurement, management purposes and corporate monitoring.

**ASB Procedure and Policy Review**

This document will be reviewed as a minimum, on an annual basis to ensure it remains relevant and up to date.

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**CMARAC Cases**  
**Jan – Dec 2025**

**Localities 1- Brondesbury Park, Cricklewood & Mapesbury, Dollis Hill, Kenton, Kilburn, Kingsbury, Preston, Queens Park, Queensbury, Welsh Harp**

Wards	Total	Open	Closed
Brondesbury Park	2	0	2
Cricklewood and Mapesbury	6	3	3
Dollis Hill	8	2	6
Kenton	1	0	1
Kilburn	9	5	4
Kingsbury	1	0	1
Queens Park	3	2	1
Welsh Harp	1	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>19</b>

**Locality 2 - Harlesden and Kensal Green, Roundwood, Stonebridge, Willesden Green**

Wards	Total	Open	Closed
Harlesden and Kensal Green	6	2	4
Roundwood	9	3	6
Stonebridge	1	1	0
Willesden Green	10	7	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>13</b>

**Locality 3 - Alperton, Barnhill, Northwick Park, Sudbury, Tokyngton, Wembley Central, Wembley Hill, Wembley Park**

Wards	Total	Open	Closed
Barnhill	5	2	3
Northwick Park	1	0	1
Sudbury	1	1	0
Tokyngton	1	0	1
Wembley Hill	2	0	2
Wembley Park	2	1	1
<b>Total</b>			

**No ward – Roughsleeping**

	Total	Open	Closed
NFA	4	2	2
<b>Total</b>	4	2	2

**BJAG Cases**  
**Jan – Dec 2025**

**Localities 1- Brondesbury Park, Cricklewood & Mapesbury, Dollis Hill, Kenton, Kilburn, Kingsbury, Preston, Queens Park, Queensbury, Welsh Harp**

Wards	Total	Open	Closed
Brondesbury Park	3	3	0
Cricklewood and Mapesbury	2	2	0
Dollis Hill	2	2	0
Kenton	3	2	1
Kilburn	10	6	4
Kingsbury	3	2	1
Preston	1	0	1
Queens Park	3	2	1
Queensbury	7	3	4
Welsh Harp	1	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>13</b>

**Locality 2 - Harlesden and Kensal Green, Roundwood, Stonebridge, Willesden Green**

Wards	Total	Open	Closed
Harlesden and Kensal Green	5	5	0
Roundwood	2	2	0
Stonebridge	1	1	0

Willesden Green	9	7	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>2</b>

**Locality 3 - Alperton, Barnhill, Northwick Park, Sudbury, Tokyngton, Wembley Central, Wembley Hill, Wembley Park**

Wards	Total	Open	Closed
Alperton	3	1	2
Barnhill	3	2	1
Northwick Park			
Sudbury	2	0	2
Tokyngton	2	1	1
Wembley Central	5	2	3
Wembley Hill	2	0	2
Wembley Park	2	0	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>13</b>



# Fixed Penalty Notice

1 Feb 24 - 31 Jan 25

Breach	No. of FPNs issued
Street drinking	600
Spitting	298
Urination or defecation	94
Illegal trading (food or other)	49
Pyrotechnics	31
Obstruction of the public highway (Wem	16
Aggressive begging	6
Use of illegal drugs	4
Distribution of literature	3
Littering (item)	2
Walking more than 4 dogs	2
Use of megaphone or microphone	1
Ambush marketing	1
Busking without consent	1
Dog Fouling	1
Feeding wild animals	1
Letting a dog off a lead	1
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1111</b>

Ward	No. of FPNs issued
Alperton	84
Barnhill	3
Brondesbury Park	0
Cricklewood & Mapesbury	2
Dollis Hill	31
Harlesden & Kensal Green	19
Kenton	18
Kilburn	7
Kingsbury	3
Northwick Park	16
Preston	22
Queens Park	1
Queensbury	78
Roundwood	4
Stonebridge	7

1 Feb 25 - 31 Oct 25

Breach	No. of FPNs issued
Street drinking	1285
Spitting	484
Urination or defecation	203
Use of illegal drugs	76
Feeding wild animals	57
Pyrotechnics	55
Illegal trading (food or other)	51
Dog fouling	16
Littering (item)	7
Distribution of literature	6
Use of barbeques/fires	5
Use of megaphone or microphone	5
Obstruction of the public highway (V	4
Walking more than 4 dogs	4
Flying drones	1
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>2259</b>

Ward	No. of FPNs issued
Alperton	209
Barnhill	25
Brondesbury Park	13
Cricklewood & Mapesbury	5
Dollis Hill	23
Harlesden & Kensal Green	16
Kenton	63
Kilburn	3
Kingsbury	32
Northwick Park	41
Preston	30
Queens Park	5
Queensbury	128
Roundwood	6
Stonebridge	5

<b>Sudbury</b>	67
<b>Tokyington</b>	18
<b>Welsh Harp</b>	9
<b>Wembley Central</b>	459
<b>Wembley Hill</b>	105
<b>Wembley Park</b>	144
<b>Willesden Green</b>	10
<b>Ward not captured</b>	4
<b><u>Grand Total</u></b>	<b>1111</b>

<b>Sudbury</b>	131
<b>Tokyington</b>	17
<b>Welsh Harp</b>	32
<b>Wembley Central</b>	954
<b>Wembley Hill</b>	259
<b>Wembley Park</b>	254
<b>Willesden Green</b>	3
<b>Ward not captured</b>	5
<b><u>Grand Total</u></b>	<b>2259</b>

Ward and Breach	FPNs issued	Referred to Legal Team	Court result - Guilty	Reduced to warning
<b>Alpertown</b>	<b>84</b>		<b>1</b>	<b>8</b>
Letting a dog off a lead	1			1
Spitting	29		1	3
Street drinking	52			3
Urination or defecation	2			1
<b>Barnhill</b>	<b>3</b>			<b>1</b>
Illegal trading (food or other)	1			1
Spitting	1			
Walking more than 4 dogs	1			
<b>Cricklewood &amp; Mapesbury</b>	<b>2</b>			
Street drinking	1			
Use of illegal drugs	1			
<b>Dollis Hill</b>	<b>31</b>		<b>2</b>	<b>12</b>
Illegal trading (food or other)	1			
Spitting	6		1	2
Street drinking	18			8
Urination or defecation	6		1	2
<b>Harlesden &amp; Kensal</b>	<b>5</b>			
Spitting	1			
Street drinking	4			
<b>Harlesden &amp; Kensal Green</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>
Use of megaphone or microphone	1			
Spitting	1			
Street drinking	11	1	1	2
Urination or defecation	1			
<b>Kenton</b>	<b>18</b>			
Spitting	7			
Street drinking	10			
Urination or defecation	1			
<b>Kilburn</b>	<b>7</b>			<b>6</b>

Ward and Breach	FPNs issued	Reduced to warning
<b>Alpertown</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>8</b>
Distribution of literature	1	
Dog fouling	3	
Illegal trading (food or other)	1	
Spitting	50	
Street drinking	135	8
Urination or defecation	7	
Use of illegal drugs	12	
<b>Barnhill</b>	<b>25</b>	
Dog fouling	4	
Spitting	7	
Street drinking	6	
Urination or defecation	3	
Use of megaphone or microphone	1	
Walking more than 4 dogs	4	
<b>Brondesbury Park</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>1</b>
Dog fouling	1	
Littering (item)	1	
Spitting	5	
Street drinking	4	1
Use of illegal drugs	1	
Use of megaphone or microphone	1	
<b>Cricklewood &amp; Mapesbury</b>	<b>5</b>	
Spitting	1	
Street drinking	3	
Urination or defecation	1	
<b>Dollis Hill</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>1</b>
Dog fouling	1	
Illegal trading (food or other)	1	
Spitting	2	

Illegal trading (food or other)	4		4
Spitting	1		
Street drinking	1		1
Use of illegal drugs	1		1
<b>Kingsbury</b>	<b>3</b>		
Street drinking	2		
Urination or defecation	1		
<b>Northwick Park</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>
Illegal trading (food or other)	2		2
Obstruction of the public highway (Wemb)	1		1
Spitting	5		
Street drinking	4		1
Urination or defecation	4	2	
<b>Preston</b>	<b>22</b>		<b>1</b>
Illegal trading (food or other)	2		
Pyrotechnics	1		
Spitting	5		1
Street drinking	9		
Urination or defecation	4		
Use of illegal drugs	1		
<b>Queens Park</b>	<b>1</b>		<b>1</b>
Spitting	1		1
<b>Queensbury</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>11</b>
Spitting	26		4
Street drinking	46	1	7
Urination or defecation	6		
<b>Roundwood</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	
Street drinking	3		
Urination or defecation	1	1	
<b>Stonebridge</b>	<b>7</b>		<b>2</b>
Illegal trading (food or other)	2		
Spitting	1		
Street drinking	4		2
<b>Sudbury</b>	<b>67</b>		<b>1</b>
Spitting	17		
Street drinking	48		1
Urination or defecation	2		
<b>Tokyington</b>	<b>18</b>		<b>1</b>
Littering (item)	2		
Spitting	4		
Street drinking	10		1
Urination or defecation	2		
<b>Welsh Harp</b>	<b>9</b>		<b>2</b>
Spitting	2		1

Street drinking	16	1
Urination or defecation	3	
<b>Harlesden &amp; Kensal</b>	<b>2</b>	
Use of barbeques/fires	1	
Use of megaphone or microphone	1	
<b>Harlesden &amp; Kensal Green</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>1</b>
Illegal trading (food or other)	3	
Street drinking	10	1
Urination or defecation	1	
<b>Kenton</b>	<b>63</b>	
Dog fouling	3	
Spitting	16	
Street drinking	37	
Urination or defecation	5	
Use of illegal drugs	2	
<b>Kilburn</b>	<b>3</b>	
Illegal trading (food or other)	2	
Littering (item)	1	
<b>Kingsbury</b>	<b>32</b>	
Illegal trading (food or other)	1	
Spitting	3	
Street drinking	24	
Urination or defecation	2	
Use of illegal drugs	2	
<b>Northwick Park</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>1</b>
Illegal trading (food or other)	1	
Spitting	11	
Street drinking	24	1
Urination or defecation	2	
Use of illegal drugs	3	
<b>Preston</b>	<b>30</b>	
Dog fouling	1	
Illegal trading (food or other)	1	
Spitting	7	
Street drinking	17	
Urination or defecation	2	
Use of illegal drugs	2	
<b>Queens Park</b>	<b>5</b>	
Spitting	1	
Street drinking	2	
Urination or defecation	2	
<b>Queensbury</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>1</b>
Feeding wild animals	5	
Illegal trading (food or other)	1	

Street drinking	4			
Urination or defecation	2			1
Walking more than 4 dogs	1			
<b>Wembley Central</b>	<b>459</b>		<b>4</b>	<b>15</b>
Aggressive begging	4			1
Illegal trading (food or other)	2			1
Spitting	141		4	5
Street drinking	287			5
Urination or defecation	24			3
Use of illegal drugs	1			
<b>Wembley Hill</b>	<b>105</b>		<b>1</b>	<b>8</b>
Aggressive begging	2			1
Ambush marketing	1			1
Dog Fouling	1			
Feeding wild animals	1			
Illegal trading (food or other)	5			2
Pyrotechnics	6			
Spitting	31		1	2
Street drinking	55			2
Urination or defecation	3			
<b>Wembley Park</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>30</b>
Busking without consent	1			
Distribution of literature	3		1	1
Illegal trading (food or other)	29	1	1	8
Obstruction of the public highway (Wemb	15			5
Pyrotechnics	24			3
Spitting	15		1	3
Street drinking	23			3
Urination or defecation	34		3	7
<b>Willesden Green</b>	<b>10</b>		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>
Illegal trading (food or other)	1			1
Spitting	3		1	1
Street drinking	5			
Urination or defecation	1			
<b>Ward not captured</b>	<b>4</b>			<b>2</b>
Spitting	1			1
Street drinking	3			1
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1111</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>109</b>

Spitting	30	
Street drinking	79	1
Urination or defecation	7	
Use of barbeques/fires	1	
Use of illegal drugs	5	
<b>Roundwood</b>	<b>6</b>	
Street drinking	3	
Use of barbeques/fires	3	
<b>Stonebridge</b>	<b>5</b>	
Spitting	1	
Street drinking	4	
<b>Sudbury</b>	<b>131</b>	
Feeding wild animals	3	
Littering (item)	2	
Spitting	32	
Street drinking	88	
Urination or defecation	2	
Use of illegal drugs	4	
<b>Tokington</b>	<b>17</b>	
Littering (item)	1	
Spitting	2	
Street drinking	13	
Use of illegal drugs	1	
<b>Welsh Harp</b>	<b>32</b>	
Feeding wild animals	3	
Illegal trading (food or other)	1	
Spitting	5	
Street drinking	19	
Urination or defecation	2	
Use of illegal drugs	2	
<b>Wembley Central</b>	<b>954</b>	<b>2</b>
Distribution of literature	3	
Dog fouling	2	
Feeding wild animals	33	
Illegal trading (food or other)	16	
Spitting	242	1
Street drinking	583	1
Urination or defecation	40	
Use of illegal drugs	35	
<b>Wembley Hill</b>	<b>259</b>	<b>1</b>
Distribution of literature	1	
Feeding wild animals	13	
Illegal trading (food or other)	2	
Littering (item)	1	

Spitting	54	
Street drinking	173	1
Urination or defecation	8	
Use of illegal drugs	6	
Use of megaphone or microphone	1	
<b>Wembley Park</b>	<b>254</b>	<b>1</b>
Distribution of literature	1	
Flying drones	1	
Illegal trading (food or other)	20	
Obstruction of the public highway (W	4	
Pyrotechnics	55	
Spitting	13	
Street drinking	42	1
Urination or defecation	116	
Use of illegal drugs	1	
Use of megaphone or microphone	1	
<b>Willesden Green</b>	<b>3</b>	
Dog fouling	1	
Illegal trading (food or other)	1	
Street drinking	1	
<b>Ward not captured</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>
Littering (item)	1	
Spitting	2	
Street drinking	2	1
<b><u>Grand Total</u></b>	<b><u>2259</u></b>	<b><u>18</u></b>

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	<b>Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee</b> 21 January 2026
	<b>Report from the Deputy Director, Democratic and Corporate Governance</b>
<b>Budget Scrutiny Task Group Findings</b>	

<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All
<b>Key or Non-Key Decision:</b>	Not Applicable
<b>Open or Part/Fully Exempt:</b> <small>(If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)</small>	Open
<b>List of Appendices:</b>	Appendix A – Budget Scrutiny Task Group Findings Report (Draft Budget 2026/27)
<b>Background Papers:</b>	None
<b>Contact Officer(s):</b> <small>(Name, Title, Contact Details)</small>	Jason Sigba, Strategy Lead – Scrutiny, Democratic & Corporate Governance <a href="mailto:Jason.Sigba@brent.gov.uk">Jason.Sigba@brent.gov.uk</a>  Amira Nassr, Deputy Director, Democratic & Corporate Governance, Finance & Resources <a href="mailto:Amira.Nassr@brent.gov.uk">Amira.Nassr@brent.gov.uk</a>

## 1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1 To present the Budget Scrutiny Task Group Findings report for adoption by the Committee (please see Appendix A).

## 2.0 Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 That the Budget Scrutiny Task Group Findings report is agreed and submitted to Cabinet and Full Council as part of the budget setting process.

## 3.0 Detail

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

- 3.1.1 Borough Plan 2023-2027 – all strategic priorities

## **3.2 Background**

3.2.1 The Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee established a Budget Scrutiny Task Group on 2 September 2025 to review the Council's Draft Budget 2026/27.

3.2.2 The Task Group has now concluded and agreed 7 recommendations for adoption by the Committee, and for referral to Cabinet for consideration at its meeting on 9 February 2026. These can be found on page 3 of Appendix A.

## **4.0 Stakeholder and ward member consultation and engagement**

4.1 While the Task Group engaged with ward councillors, more substantive engagement with partners will take place through the RPR Committee as savings plans are developed and refined throughout 2026/27.

## **5.0 Financial Considerations**

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

## **6.0 Legal Considerations**

6.1 There are no legal implications 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:**

**Amira Nassr**

Deputy Director, Democratic and  
Corporate Governance



# Budget Scrutiny Task Group Findings Report

**Draft Budget 2026/27**



## Foreword

The return of multi-year funding settlements through the recent Local Government Finance Settlement is a welcome shift away from short-term funding cycles. This change provides Brent with a greater degree of certainty, supporting more strategic budget setting, helping to break down departmental silos, and strengthening long-term planning. However, this alone cannot compensate for more than a decade of cuts and underfunding, rising demand for social care, and the mounting pressures created by the temporary accommodation crisis. These challenges are further compounded by the increasing role of privatisation and private equity in publicly commissioned services, particularly in social care, which continue to undermine quality and drive cost inflation. Meaningful reform of local government financing and commissioning frameworks therefore remains essential if councils are to sustain services and ensure value for money for residents.

The Task Group supports the move away from the 'salami-slicing' approach to budget setting that defined the austerity years, and towards broader, thematic categories of savings. Our primary concern, however, remains the impact of this year's budget on residents. How that impact is monitored, reviewed, and mitigated will be central to Scrutiny's ongoing work with local stakeholders. We also emphasise the importance of protecting council owned assets and land as long term public assets, supporting community organisations, enabling service delivery, and creating opportunities for sustainable income generation that will benefit residents for decades to come. Alongside this, strengthening the Council's approach to social value, ensuring robust procurement, and improving productivity, efficiency, and value for money across all services remains critical to delivering a sustainable financial strategy.

Throughout the review, the Task Group has sought to balance financial discipline with the Council's responsibility to residents. Protecting frontline services, supporting the most vulnerable, and ensuring that decisions are made with a clear understanding of their long-term impact on communities have remained central considerations. This report places particular emphasis on prevention, early intervention, and partnership working, especially with the voluntary and community sector (VCS), reflecting both local experience and wider best practice in responding sustainably to financial pressures.

We were particularly encouraged by the work of the Children, Young People and Community Development directorate, including its investment in early intervention, the halving of reliance on agency staff over the past two years, and the development of a council-owned children's home in response to private-equity-driven cost escalation in the sector. This provides a strong example of how strategic investment and public provision can improve outcomes while strengthening financial resilience, and we look forward to seeing how this approach can be applied and embedded across other departments.

I would like to thank the members and officers who contributed to this review. Their engagement and insight have been vital in shaping the Task Group's findings and ensuring that scrutiny continues to play a constructive and evidence-based role in supporting sound decision-making in the best interests of Brent's residents.



**Cllr Rita Conneely**  
Chair – Resources and  
Public Realm Scrutiny  
Committee

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### **Budget Scrutiny Task Group Membership**

The Budget Scrutiny Task Group brought together expertise from the Resources and Public Realm Committee (RPR) and the Community and Wellbeing Committee (CWB), with additional representation from the Audit and Standards Advisory Committee to provide assurance on financial governance. The Group consisted of the following members:

**Councillor Rita Conneely – Chair**

**Councillor Ketan Sheth – Vice Chair**

**Councillor Paul Lorber**

**Councillor Anthony Molloy**

**Councillor Ihtesham Afzal**

**Councillor Michael Maurice**

**Councillor Sandra Kabir – Co-opted Member (ASAC)**

### **Task Group Terms of Reference**

The following terms of reference were agreed at the RPR meeting on 2 September 2025:

1. Consider the Cabinet's budget proposals for 2026/27
2. Receive evidence from cabinet members, senior departmental officers, and any other relevant stakeholders
3. Agree a draft report to comment on the budget proposals for submission to the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee for ratification and submission to Cabinet



# **1. Introduction**

## **Context and Financial Background:**

- 1.1. The Council continues to navigate a highly challenging financial landscape, shaped by factors such as the cost-of-living crisis, escalating service demand, and increasingly complex client needs. Pressures are most pronounced in demand-led areas. Homelessness remains a significant cost driver, with over 2,460 households in temporary accommodation and a 36% rise in families placed in emergency accommodation over the past year. Adult Social Care and Children's Services are similarly under strain, impacted by demography and rising contractual costs.
- 1.2. Escalating costs are also undermining the affordability of the Capital Programme and constraining the Council's ability to invest in preventative measures, heightening the risk of greater financial pressures ahead.
- 1.3. In December 2025, the Government announced a multi-year settlement as part of the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement, covering the period from 2026/27 to 2028/29. This represents the first multi-year settlement since 2016 and provides greater certainty for financial planning. Under the settlement, Brent's Core Spending Power is forecast to increase by 9.9% in 2026/27, 7.7% in 2027/28, and 7.3% in 2028/29. This equates to a cumulative increase of £113.6 million (27%) over the three-year period, with approximately 40% attributable to Council Tax and 60% to grant funding.
- 1.4. While welcomed, this does not offset the cumulative impact of prolonged austerity and sustained demand pressures. Officers are still working through the detailed implications of the settlement, and it remains unclear to what extent the additional funding will alter the savings proposals currently under consideration, or whether additional monies will be used to strengthen the Future Funding Risks Reserve.
- 1.5. The Task Group's findings are therefore based on the assumptions set out in the Draft Budget 2026/27, with the final budget due to be considered by Cabinet on 9 February 2026. The Draft Budget proposes a Council Tax increase of 4.99% (comprising a 2.99% general increase and a 2% Adult Social Care Precept), alongside £10.4 million of savings to be delivered through a series of cross-cutting themes, including commissioning and procurement, digital transformation, efficiency improvements, workforce productivity, income maximisation, resident experience, and service-specific proposals.

## **Role and Approach of the Budget Scrutiny Task Group:**

- 1.6. Brent's decision-making framework gives a clear and important role to Overview and Scrutiny in budget-setting. The process for developing proposals for the budget and capital programme is outlined in the Brent Council Constitution, Part 2, Standing Order 19. This requires that the Cabinet's budget proposals be considered by the council's RPR Scrutiny Committee.
- 1.7. At its meeting on 2 September 2025, the RPR Committee established a Budget Scrutiny Task Group to scrutinise the Draft Budget 2026/27<sup>1</sup>. The Task Group held a series of meetings between November and December 2025 with the Cabinet and

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<sup>1</sup> Establishment of Budget Scrutiny Task Group Report (September 2025):  
<https://democracy.brent.gov.uk/documents/s152059/06.%20Establishment%20of%20Budget%20Scrutiny%20Task%20Group.pdf>

senior officers to prepare this report (a full list of participants is provided at section 6). In line with its remit, the Task Group sought to understand the Council's overall financial position, identify key budget pressures, risks and uncertainties, and consider the assumptions and strategic approach underpinning the Draft Budget and proposed savings.

- 1.8. Unlike previous years, a more limited number of service-specific savings proposals were published. The majority of proposed savings were instead presented as overarching thematic categories applicable across departments, with detailed plans still under development. Consequently, the Task Group was unable to fully assess the potential impact on services and residents. Members therefore focused on the Council's approach to delivering these proposals, examining the emerging evidence base, key dependencies, feasibility, sustainability, early risks and mitigations, anticipated impacts, and alignment with Borough Plan priorities.
- 1.9. Early engagement with stakeholders and partners, beyond the formal consultation, during the scrutiny review period was considered to add limited meaningful value. While the Group engaged with ward councillors, more substantive engagement with partners will take place through the RPR Committee as savings plans are developed and refined throughout 2026/27. This approach ensures input at an appropriate stage, focused on deliverability, mitigation, and impact rather than speculation, and provides a clear audit trail of how partner and resident feedback informs scrutiny recommendations and oversight.
- 1.10. In accordance with the Constitution, this report will be considered by the RPR Committee on 21 January 2026 and submitted to Cabinet on 9 February 2026, alongside the Corporate Director of Finance and Resources' report on final budget proposals. Cabinet will recommend a budget for approval at Full Council on 23 February 2026.
- 1.11. The Task Group has sought to act as a constructive and independent 'critical friend' in its scrutiny of the Draft Budget, with the aim of supporting robust decision-making and improving transparency. It invites Cabinet to consider the recommendations below and support continued oversight as savings plans evolve.



## **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1. The Budget Scrutiny Task Group makes seven recommendations to strengthen financial governance and promote a transparent, preventative, and sustainable approach to budget planning, placing residents at the heart of decision-making:

### **Recommendation 1 – Budget Oversight, Transparency and Accountability**

The shift to high-level, collaborative and thematic savings is welcomed, as it has the potential to drive strategic, cross-cutting transformation, foster collaboration, and enable integrated service delivery. By focusing on broader themes rather than isolated reductions, the Council can promote innovation and achieve longer-term efficiencies. However, the absence of detailed delivery plans limits members' ability to assess deliverability, risk, and potential impacts, particularly given current overspends in high-demand services reported at [Quarter 3 25/26](#) and continued reliance on reserves.

**The Task Group therefore recommends that the Council:**

- **Where reasonable, ensure that detailed delivery plans for all thematic savings categories are developed and sighted to scrutiny at the earliest opportunity, including clear timelines, quantified risks, and mitigation measures, to reduce the risk of in-year slippage and unplanned service impacts.**
- **Commit to regular in-year reporting to scrutiny on the delivery of savings, particularly where proposals were not fully developed at the time of budget approval, to enable early identification of under-delivery and corrective action.**
- **Strengthen financial forecasting in high-demand services, particularly Housing, Adult Social Care and Children's Services, to better reflect demand growth and reduce recurring reliance on reserves to manage overspends.**

### **Recommendation 2 – Consultation and Resident Engagement**

It is recognised that Brent is among the few councils to publish a draft budget as early as November, enabling scrutiny, consultation and engagement during a period of significant uncertainty before any government settlements are confirmed. This proactive approach supports transparency and informed debate. Nonetheless, members noted that the high-level presentation and layout of some proposals within the document did not provide the clarity needed for effective consultation and scrutiny, particularly where impacts and options were not able to be clearly set out.

**The Task Group therefore recommends that the Council:**

- **Improve the clarity and transparency of budget consultation materials, ensuring residents and partners understand what is being proposed, the likely impacts, and how feedback can influence outcomes, particularly where proposals remain high-level or under development.**
- **Publish Fees and Charges proposals alongside future draft budgets or consultations, to enable meaningful scrutiny and public engagement on affordability, impact, and mitigation.**

### **Recommendation 3 – Debt Recovery and Collection**

Enhanced debt recovery efforts have delivered significant progress and are recognised as vital in supporting the Council's financial position. Effective debt collection is critical, as failure to do

so not only impacts the Council's immediate cash flow but also undermines long-term financial stability, potentially increasing reliance on external borrowing or reducing eligibility for government grant funding. While recognising these risks, Members emphasised that the current approach must continue to distinguish clearly between those unwilling to pay and those unable to pay, underpinned by a strong ethical framework.

**The Task Group therefore recommends that the Council:**

- **Sustain and embed the enhanced debt recovery approach beyond March 2026, while maintaining a policy that makes a clear distinction between those unwilling and those unable to pay.**
- **Ensure the Debt Recovery Policy continues to balance financial recovery with fairness and protections for vulnerable residents, and report outcomes to scrutiny.**

## **Recommendation 4 – Property Strategy 2024–27 Implementation**

The Council's commitment to maintaining investment in regeneration and infrastructure through the delivery of its Capital Programme is welcomed, particularly amid significant challenges such as market volatility, rising costs and high borrowing rates. However, asset disposal as a means of generating capital receipts to finance capital expenditure is not regarded as a preferred option. In many cases, subject to viability, retaining assets can deliver greater strategic value (for example, converting them into residential accommodation to help alleviate temporary accommodation pressures) providing both financial and wider community benefits.

Nonetheless, the Council's Property Strategy, developed in collaboration with stakeholders, sets out a strategic, systematic and data-led approach to managing the Council's assets. Effective implementation of the Strategy is essential in ensuring that any proposed disposals are assessed rigorously and balanced against wider strategic objectives.

**The Task Group therefore recommends that the Council:**

- **Ensure any proposed asset disposals deemed strictly necessary are supported by a clear, evidence-based rationale setting out short-term financial benefits alongside long-term strategic, regeneration and place-based implications.**
- **Where reasonable, ensure that the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee has sight of significant asset disposal proposals at the appropriate stage, to enable review and meaningful challenge.**

## **Recommendation 5 – Digital Transformation and Resident Access**

Digital transformation offers significant potential to deliver efficiencies and improve service accessibility, but these benefits rely on careful implementation to avoid unintended consequences. While there are clear opportunities for innovation and cost savings, there are also risks of digital exclusion and system vulnerabilities.

**The Task Group therefore recommends that the Council:**

- **Adopt a phased and risk-managed approach to digital transformation and automation of services, ensuring that non-digital access routes remain available for vulnerable residents and those unable to use digital services.**
- **Strengthen cyber security and digital resilience arrangements as an integral part of efficiency and digital programmes, recognising the financial and service risks associated with system failure or cyber-attack.**



## **Recommendation 6 – Fees, Charges and Fair Income Generation**

Detailed proposals on fees and charges are often unavailable at the draft budget stage because these can only be finalised once funding assumptions are clearer following the settlement and inflation expectations. This timing reflects the reality that fees and charges are frequently used to help close funding gaps identified later in the process. While recognising these timing constraints, it remains a priority for members that income generation measures are fair, proportionate, and aligned with strategic priorities, with careful consideration of their impact on low-income and vulnerable residents.

**The Task Group therefore recommends that the Council ensures any changes to fees and charges are evidence-based and proportionate, balancing the need for financial resilience with equity considerations. Where changes are likely to have regressive impacts, these should be clearly understood and, where possible, mitigated for low-income and vulnerable residents, informed by consultation and consistent with the Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy.**

## **Recommendation 7 – Jobs, Skills and Financial Resilience**

Prevention and early intervention are critical to reducing long-term demand on services, with employment and skills identified as key drivers of resident financial resilience. In this context, there are opportunities to better use commissioning and procurement to deliver wider social and economic benefits, while ensuring these approaches remain proportionate and cost-effective within the Council's financial constraints.

**The Task Group therefore recommends that the Council strengthen the alignment between its budget strategy and jobs and skills agenda, acknowledging that employment, skills development and improved financial resilience are critical preventative measures but require sustained investment and partnership working. As part of this approach, the Council should make more consistent and strategic use of social value, ensuring that, where proportionate and deliverable, contracts support local employment, apprenticeships, training and skills development opportunities that help residents into sustainable work, contribute to long-term financial sustainability, and remain aligned with the Council's Community Wealth Building objectives.**

## **3. Evidence Gathering**

- 3.1. The Budget Scrutiny Task Group held a series of meetings with the [Cabinet](#) and senior officers, including the [Corporate Management Team \(Chief Executive and Corporate Directors\)](#) between November and December 2025 to help inform its findings for this report. These discussions formed part of a wider evidence-gathering process, supported by written stakeholder submissions, reports, and briefings, including detailed financial data, forecasts, benchmarking, narrative explanations, and risk information relevant to the Draft Budget 2026/27.
- 3.2. Central to the review was the Medium-Term Financial Outlook—the framework guiding the Council's financial strategy. It provides forecast projections for the General Fund and underpins financial planning for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG), and Capital Programme. The review also considered the draft budget, including the budget-setting process and approach for 2026/27, and the proposed budget measures, comprising of corporate savings category proposals

applicable to all council departments, as well as a small number of service-specific proposals.

### **Budget Approach and Consultation**

- 3.3. The Task Group queried the different approach applied to this year's budget-setting process differing from previous years, moving from detailed, service-specific savings proposals to a thematic, cross-cutting approach with savings categories applied across all directorates. The Deputy Leader explained that earlier budget rounds addressed the most difficult frontline service decisions, enabling a greater focus this year on internal efficiencies rather than further service reductions, though some impacts on services and residents could remain. The thematic approach is intended to support cross-departmental working, shared planning, and best practice in alignment with the council's change programme, rather than isolated service-by-service savings.
- 3.4. While recognising the opportunities, members highlighted challenges, including that many savings categories remain under development and lack detailed delivery plans, increasing uncertainty and risk of slippage. This absence of detail limits scrutiny's ability to fully assess feasibility and makes it challenging for residents to understand what is being consulted on, the potential impacts, and how they can influence outcomes. To address this, the Group sought assurance that planned engagement events will clearly communicate the practical implications of proposals and equip stakeholders with the information needed to provide informed feedback. In parallel, ongoing scrutiny by the Resources and Public Realm Committee will be essential as proposals develop, ensuring risks and impacts are assessed and providing a channel for residents' and partners' concerns.

### **Council Tax**

- 3.5. Members queried the proposed Council Tax increase of 4.99% (comprising a 2.99% general increase and a 2% Adult Social Care Precept), including its practicality, and sought to understand the evidence supporting the view that this level of increase struck an appropriate balance between protecting services and maintaining affordability.
- 3.6. While acknowledging the role of the Council Tax Support Scheme in mitigating hardship from recurring Council Tax increases, the Group sought further clarity on whether this approach delivered a genuine net benefit or primarily redistributed resources between schemes. This was considered in the context of ongoing challenges with Council Tax collection rates, which remain below target. The collection target was reduced from 94% in the previous year to 92.5%, yet current performance still falls short of this revised target.

### **Strategic Use of CIL Funding in the Context of Budget Pressures**

- 3.7. Echoing previous Task Group recommendations on maximising the community benefit of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding, members raised concerns that, where CIL balances remain unspent while Council Tax continues to increase and services are reduced, residents may question why these funds are not being used to support projects or mitigate service impacts. The Group noted that CIL (both Strategic CIL and Neighbourhood CIL) has accumulated over several years, often from areas of deprivation heavily reliant on statutory services most affected by reductions. Members therefore sought clarity on how the Council is aligning its strategic approach to CIL expenditure with areas and projects experiencing the greatest impact from service reductions.

- 3.8. In response, officers emphasised that the use of CIL funding is subject to strict statutory and regulatory requirements governing allocation and expenditure. While acknowledging these constraints, the Task Group maintained that, where legally permissible, CIL could be deployed more widely to support infrastructure with invest to save opportunities to help mitigate budget reductions or prevent specific service cuts. By way of example, members highlighted Cabinet's decision in September 2025 to approve funding for 50 NCIL projects, including 'Don't Mess with Brent' initiatives, where NCIL funding was leveraged to alleviate cost pressures in delivering infrastructure around waste collection services. The Task Group noted this illustrated how CIL can offset financial pressures on services while remaining compliant with the regulatory framework. There was a clear desire to see this proactivity applied more widely to support services and communities most affected by budget pressures.

### **Debt Recovery**

- 3.9. The Task Group acknowledged the significant commitment to debt recovery, consistent with its recommendation from the previous year, and sought to understand the return on this investment to date. Since April 2025, the Debt Recovery Service launched a focused improvement plan to tackle the most persistent areas of debt: Adult Social Care, Housing Benefit Overpayments, Sundry Debt and Council Tax. At the start of the programme, the total outstanding balance across the four areas stood at £173m, which reduced by £11m at the end of the programme, almost double the reduction achieved over the same period last year.
- 3.10. While commending efforts to maximise recovery, the Group emphasised the need to focus on those who refuse to pay rather than those struggling, and to ensure appropriate support for the latter. The Council's Debt Recovery Policy remains vital for securing income for essential services while upholding a fair, ethical, and compassionate approach to collection.

### **DSG**

- 3.11. Officers assured members that the Council continues to monitor and implement its High Needs Block (HNB) Deficit Recovery Management Plan, which sets out long-term actions to reduce the cumulative deficit. Since its introduction, Brent's annual growth in Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) has remained below the national average, reflecting the impact of Council-led initiatives. One example is the 'Intervention First' pilot in Harlesden, running for the past 18 months. This programme targets early primary-aged children, enabling professionals to address speech and language needs earlier and prevent escalation to the point where an EHCP is required. In light of anticipated Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) reforms, expected in early 2026, the Council will continue to develop and strengthen its deficit recovery plan to ensure it remains fit for purpose and responsive to changing circumstances.
- 3.12. The government's decision to extend the statutory override on DSG deficits until 2028 was acknowledged by the Task Group, allowing these deficits to remain outside main revenue budgets and helping protect the Council's wider financial position during reform. However, members highlighted the important caveat that this measure does not resolve the structural deficit and only postpones the financial impact, leaving the long-term position dependent on broader reform and continued government responsibility for costs

## **HRA**

- 3.13. The Task Group noted The HRA continues to face significant cost pressures, driven by rising repairs and maintenance costs on the existing housing stock and compounded by increased compliance obligations, including enhanced building safety and energy efficiency standards. Voids also remain a key contributing factor. While acknowledging ongoing efforts to reduce voids, the Task Group highlighted that this issue continues to have a material financial impact on the HRA and implications for service delivery. To address these concerns, the Resources and Public Realm Committee will undertake a detailed review of housing voids and their impact on financial pressures at its meeting in February 2026. This review aims to inform future activity and provide assurance that decisions are financially sound and effective.
- 3.14. The final budget requirement and associated savings for the draft HRA budget and the 2026/27 HRA Business Plan are still being finalised and will be presented to Cabinet in February 2026. In the absence of this detail, strengthening reserve levels remains critical to enhance financial resilience and provide flexibility in managing future challenges. Despite £4.5m in operating reserves, this is £9.6m short of the peer average. Nonetheless, the February 2026 scrutiny review will provide an opportunity to explore options for bolstering these balances alongside measures to reduce financial pressures.

## **Capital Programme**

### **Viability, Risk, and Affordability:**

- 3.15. The Task Group noted ongoing viability issues and delays within the Capital Programme, resulting in postponed cost avoidance and increased completion costs. These pressures have been exacerbated by enhanced building safety regulations, causing further delays and, in some cases, rendering projects no longer viable.
- 3.16. Future demographic changes are expected to increase pressure on Capital delivery, with a resulting impact on the capital financing budget from 2026/27 onwards. While interest rates remain high, the impact of the Capital Programme on the revenue budget is expected to grow over time. Work is ongoing to mitigate these pressures, and growth in capital financing costs for 2026/27 is currently forecast to be relatively low (£0.5m). However, there is a significant risk that, if mitigations are not achieved, the capital financing budget will require additional growth or the Capital Programme will need to be scaled back to ensure affordability within the revenue budget. This remains a particular concern for members, given the potential implications for delivering affordable housing.

### **Implementation of Property Strategy 2024-27:**

- 3.17. The Task Group noted that a key part of implementing the Council's Property Strategy will be identifying suitable properties for disposal which will result in capital receipts which could then be used to finance capital expenditure, among other purposes. The Group emphasised that disposing of land or property may not always align with the Council's longer-term strategic responsibilities to residents, particularly the need to support regeneration and sustained place-based investment over the long term (for example, over the next 10 years and beyond). Members therefore stressed the importance of ensuring that any future asset disposals that are deemed necessary are supported by a clear, evidence-based rationale and subject to appropriate scrutiny, where reasonable, to assess their soundness and longer-term implications.

## **Savings Proposals**

### **Commissioning & Procurement (£3.06m Council-Wide Saving):**

- 3.18. The Task Group queried the proposed saving of £1.56m, to be delivered through a reduction in third-party spend via targeted contract reviews, enhanced supplier engagement, and more strategic procurement planning. Members noted that the proposal represented a modest 0.5% reduction in overall third-party spend and questioned whether it struck the right balance between ambition and deliverability, given the scale of contracts across the Council and the capacity of the procurement service. In response, officers explained that, as this was a relatively new approach, a cautious and measured target had been set. While acknowledging that the saving accounted for a small proportion of overall spend, it was considered reasonable and achievable within existing procurement capacity, supported by recent improvements through the Procurement Improvement Programme (PIP). Achieving this will depend on continued collaboration with service areas over the next 12 months, applying varied strategies and market intelligence to drive down contract costs.
- 3.19. The Group sought assurance that reductions in third-party spend would not be passed on to residents through increased costs or negatively impact the workforce. Officers acknowledged the risk but advised that all savings proposals would undergo Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Impact Assessments to identify and mitigate potential impacts on residents and staff. It was further explained that the approach will prioritise savings through changes to contract specifications and management practices, designed to minimise adverse impacts on service users.
- 3.20. Separately, members asked for clarification on the proposed £0.6m saving relating to tail spend rationalisation, including the intended benefits, how the process would operate in practice, who would be affected, and whether there would be any disproportionate impacts on residents, businesses or partners. Members raised concerns that a number of suppliers within the Council's tail spend were likely to be local businesses and emphasised that the approach should not undermine the Council's Community Wealth Building objectives. In response, it was confirmed that support for small and medium-sized enterprises remained a core principle of the upcoming refreshed Procurement Strategy and that appropriate monitoring arrangements would be put in place to ensure this was reflected in implementation.
- 3.21. While not part of the specific commissioning and procurement savings proposal, the Task Group explored broader approaches to support financial sustainability and reduce pressure for direct service reductions. This included discussion on the more intentional and strategic use of social value commitments within contracts. Members noted that, when applied proportionately, social value requirements could help ease pressure on service budgets by delivering wider community benefits alongside core services, such as local employment, apprenticeships, training opportunities, and preventative support, which could, in turn, reduce demand on council services over time. Officers advised, however, that any increased emphasis on social value would need careful management to ensure expectations were appropriately scoped and costed. Without this balance, there is a risk that providers could offset social value commitments through higher core service costs, undermining the intended financial benefits.

### **Digital Programme (£1.43m Council-Wide Saving):**

- 3.22. The Task Group recognised the potential of technology, automation, and artificial intelligence to deliver efficiencies across the Council but stressed the need to balance associated risks. Members highlighted the importance of contingency measures to ensure that those unable to access digital or automated services do not face barriers, particularly in areas supporting vulnerable cohorts such as Adult Social Care and Children's Services. The Group therefore endorsed a phased implementation approach, allowing risks to be managed, lessons learned, and adverse impacts on residents mitigated.
- 3.23. It was confirmed that, as the Council increases its use of technology and automation, alternative non-digital options will remain available for those with the greatest needs, and assurances were provided that appropriate systems, safeguards, and oversight arrangements will be in place. Officers also offered an alternative perspective, explaining that the introduction of new processes and pathways, in the context of ongoing real-terms funding pressures across the Council, would enable services to focus resources on residents with the most complex and acute needs. Adult Social Care was cited as one example, where the use of automation and technology to reduce lengthy waiting times, particularly for telephone access, could improve the customer experience while supporting efficiency savings. Another instance from Adult Social Care was the implementation of the Magic Notes software, which is used to record discussions with service users and support the production of assessments and care plans. The technology received positive feedback from staff and residents and significantly improved productivity, enabling social workers to complete up to four assessments a day. It also strengthened clinical governance by reducing the risk of human error.
- 3.24. In light of the Council's growing reliance on technology, automation, and digital systems to deliver efficiencies, the Task Group emphasised the importance of strengthening cyber security and wider risk management arrangements. With local authorities increasingly targeted by cyber attacks, the potential consequences of system failure or data breaches could outweigh any financial savings achieved. Cyber security and resilience must therefore be treated as integral to the implementation of technological change and carefully managed as part of any transformation programme.

### **Service Efficiency (£3.20m Council-Wide Saving):**

- 3.25. The Task Group raised questions about how this saving proposal would be implemented, how it aligns with other savings proposals, and what implications it may have on services. It was noted that departments are required to deliver efficiency savings of 1% of their budgets this year. With detailed proposals yet to be developed, concerns about feasibility and potential impact remain.
- 3.26. Building on these concerns, the Group explored how the Council would ensure that efficiency measures did not result in hidden service reductions or compromise service quality, particularly in relation to potential disproportionate impacts on protected groups. Members highlighted services such as Social Care and sought assurance that safeguarding would not be adversely affected. In response, officers advised that achieving the 1% target would be challenging and acknowledged that workforce impacts, including reductions in posts or holding vacancies, could not be ruled out at this stage as part of efforts to streamline services. Any changes would be subject to

appropriate assurance processes, including impact assessments and safeguarding considerations.

- 3.27. Members highlighted that some departments, such as Housing and Adult Social Care, face significantly higher levels of demand, meaning that a 1% efficiency requirement could have a disproportionate impact compared with other services. In response, officers advised that the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) focuses on understanding growth pressures for the upcoming financial year and beyond, and on ensuring that budgets are aligned to support areas of greatest need. This approach enables the Council to recognise differential pressures across services and balance efficiency requirements with targeted investment, so that services experiencing the highest demand can continue to meet their duties.
- 3.28. In light of this, the Task Group stressed the importance of ensuring that financial forecasting accurately reflects growth in these high-pressure areas. Members noted that failure to do so increases the risk of in-year overspends, which could undermine planned efficiency savings and lead to continued reliance on reserves—an issue that has been a recurring concern in recent years.

#### **Workforce (£400k Council-Wide Saving):**

- 3.29. The Task Group explored the feasibility of this proposed saving, particularly the aspect dependent on strengthening recruitment and retention and reducing reliance on agency staff. Members noted that services such as Adult Social Care and Children and Young People's Services had experienced persistent difficulties in recruiting and retaining permanent staff and had therefore relied on agency workers to maintain service delivery and meet statutory obligations, with this continuing to feature as a recurring risk within the Council's budgets. The Group agreed that agency spend constituted a considerable drain on resources and highlighted that further innovative approaches to recruitment and retention would need to be explored in order for the proposed saving to be achieved.
- 3.30. Members' concerns were acknowledged, and they were assured that significant progress has already been made, with council agency spend reducing substantially. For example, agency spend in Children and Young People's Services has halved over the past two years, driven by efforts to transition agency staff into permanent roles, supported by stable management and strong leadership.

#### **Income Maximisation (£500k Council-Wide Saving):**

- 3.31. The Task Group recognised that the Council's expected precarious financial position in 2026/27 will require maximising income from fees and charges as part of the income maximisation savings proposal. In this context, members noted that a fundamental review of the Council's fees and charges policy is planned, with £0.5m of savings assumed through policy changes to help meet the Council's savings requirement for 2026/27 and beyond.
- 3.32. In the absence of detailed Fees and Charges proposals accompanying the draft budget, the Group set out a clear red line: any changes should not be regressive. Where increases are unavoidable, members stressed these should be accompanied by appropriate mitigation measures, particularly to protect the most vulnerable residents. Members emphasised that fees and charges must be fair, should not disproportionately penalise the poorest in society, and, where possible and appropriate, should be subject to consultation.

### **Resident Experience Channel Shift (£655k Council-Wide Saving):**

- 3.33. Similar to previous discussions on digital transformation savings, the Task Group sought assurance that the proposal to encourage digital-first pathways would not restrict access for vulnerable residents with support needs or those in crisis. Members were advised that approximately 50% of users currently access self-service council services without assistance, highlighting the need to maintain appropriate non-digital routes for those unable to do so. Officers confirmed that existing infrastructure, including call centres and in-person support at the Civic Centre and Hubs, would be retained for residents unable to transition to self-service.
- 3.34. The Council will continue to digitise processes where appropriate while preserving human interaction for services where this remains essential. The intention behind channel shift is to encourage digital use for those able to access it, while prioritising frontline, customer-facing services for residents with the greatest need. Importantly, the proposal is designed to enhance service quality for vulnerable residents by freeing up resources for personalised support, rather than excluding them from access.

### **Lane Rental Scheme (£350k Service-Specific Saving)**

- 3.35. The Task Group sought clarification on the evidence underpinning the projected saving from the proposed Lane Rental Scheme. Officers confirmed that the Council had drawn on insight and learning from similar schemes implemented in other boroughs and noted that, despite delays in implementation, financial returns elsewhere had been substantial. The £350k figure was described as a conservative estimate, reflecting the complexities of implementation; however, officers were confident that savings would increase year on year once the scheme is fully established.
- 3.36. Beyond financial returns, the scheme offers a range of benefits for residents. By incentivising utilities companies to complete roadworks more quickly and during off-peak periods, it will help reduce emissions associated with traffic congestion and vehicle idling. Shorter and fewer disruptions will also support active travel, as improved access to safe and clear routes can encourage walking and cycling.

### **Asset Utilisation (£190k Service-Specific Saving)**

- 3.37. The Task Group firstly acknowledged the aspect of the saving related to the upcoming review of parking policy aimed at generating additional income through parking charges. While this saving specifically relates to off-street parking, the Group noted that further measures could be explored or expanded. The scrutiny function is currently undertaking a review of Kerbside Management in the borough, which will consider parking arrangements and is expected to provide insights to inform both the parking review and the development of a new parking policy.
- 3.38. Members were also pleased to note that the Council was also exploring opportunities for parks commercialisation, echoing sentiments previously expressed by the Task Group. The emerging strategy focuses on optimising built assets within parks, including proposals to introduce padel courts in suitable locations. Officers advised that, given the growing popularity of padel, a typical court could generate approximately £60 per hour, and based on an indicative assumption of around 80 parks and 50 open spaces with three courts per site, this could generate income in the region of £400k for the Council. The Group commended the Council for adopting revenue-generating approaches from the private sector and welcomed its ambition to lead in this area in local government to maximise income opportunities. Beyond financial



returns, members also recognised the potential health and wellbeing benefits for residents, aligning with the Council's Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

#### **Reduce Subsidy Loss (£130k Service-Specific Saving):**

- 3.39. The Task Group supports the proposed saving to reduce subsidy loss on Supported Exempt Accommodation (SEA). Regarding the plan to utilise a Council subsidiary to deliver provision, it was noted that much of the current non-commissioned SEA in Brent offers poor value for money for both the Council and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), and raises concerns about the quality and standards delivered by some providers.
- 3.40. Members acknowledged that the proposal could significantly enhance the quality of care, support and supervision for residents, while helping individuals progress towards independent living. They also recognised that this approach aligns with ongoing work by the SEA Working Group to address overspends in this area.

#### **Homelessness Prevention (£200k Service-Specific Saving):**

- 3.41. The Task Group queried the feasibility of this saving in preventing homelessness through friends and family evictions and emphasised the need for robust mitigation measures to be developed in order to reduce the risk of in-year savings slippage. It was noted that many of the factors contributing to such exclusions, such as overcrowding, are often beyond the Council's control in preventing homelessness.
- 3.42. Even in cases where prevention activity may otherwise be appropriate, housing benefit regulations frequently treat family-and-friends accommodation arrangements as non-commercial, rendering them ineligible for housing benefit. This significantly limits the Council's ability to financially sustain such arrangements as a homelessness prevention measure once eviction becomes imminent. This raises questions about whether the Council should focus its resources on areas that are more directly within its control. One such area is the work of the Housing Department to reduce housing stock voids.

#### **Housing Benefit Claim Reduction (£270k Service-Specific Saving):**

- 3.43. The Task Group noted the uncertainty associated with this saving and stressed the need for early identification of mitigation measures and alternative options, rather than waiting until March 2026 for a review. The proposal states that if caseloads do not reduce by March, the strategy would need to be reconsidered. As this review would occur after final budget approval in February 2026 but only weeks before the 2026/27 budget takes effect in April 2026, any shortfall would leave little time to adjust plans, forcing the Council to identify alternative savings at pace and increasing the risk of short-term, reactive measures rather than well-planned, sustainable solutions.

## **4. Other Meetings**

- 4.1. Outside of the sessions detailed in section 3, the Chair of the Budget Scrutiny Task Group hosted a drop-in session for ward councillors to share their local insights on the Draft Budget 2025/26.

## 5. Conclusion

- 5.1. The Task Group commends the Council for its prudent approach in navigating a challenging financial environment. Sustained fiscal discipline and careful planning have helped maintain a comparatively robust position at a time when many councils nationally are reliant on, or signalling the need for, Exceptional Financial Support from Government to achieve a balanced budget. Enhanced spending controls and the establishment of a Budget Assurance Panel have strengthened oversight of high-pressure areas and supported a more coordinated approach to managing service demands, resulting in cost avoidance of over £8 million to date. Members also note positive developments such as the investment in debt recovery, which has contributed to improved financial resilience.
- 5.2. Despite the proactivity of the council to manage overspends, the Council's Quarter 3 2025/26 financial position demonstrates the volatile environment the Council is operating in, highlighting the need for further action to prevent the budget gap over the Medium Term from significantly worsening. Persistent overspends in demand-led services, particularly Housing and Social Care, driven by rising demand and high contractual costs, continue to place significant pressure on the Council's finances. This has led to ongoing reliance on reserves, an unsustainable approach that reinforces the urgency of rebuilding both the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account reserves.
- 5.3. While the additional funding provided through the multi-year settlement is welcomed and may help mitigate some acute pressures, the Task Group notes that the largely ringfenced nature of this funding limits flexibility in addressing the overall budget gap for 2026/27, though it may, within these constraints, support the Council in rebuilding reserves and addressing key areas of overspends.
- 5.4. The Task Group also welcomes the adoption of a thematic approach to savings, marking a positive shift from previous 'salami-slicing' methods toward more strategic, cross-cutting transformation. Yet, as many detailed plans remain under development, this approach carries uncertainty and risk of slippage, underscoring the need for ongoing scrutiny, particularly around impacts on services and residents.
- 5.5. Against this backdrop, the Task Group supports the Draft Budget 2026/27 in principle as a framework for decision-making, subject to the outcomes of the final consultation, acceptance of the recommendations set out in section two of this report, and the timely provision of sufficient detail on savings proposals as they emerge at future committee meetings. This will be necessary to enable effective scrutiny of risks, impacts on residents and services, and proposed mitigation.
- 5.6. In the absence of detailed proposals setting out how the savings categories will be delivered, the Task Group has at this stage established clear red lines to guide ongoing scrutiny. These include ensuring transparency and clear, evidence based rationale for any disposal of Council-owned assets with the default position being that there should be no disposals; appropriate mitigation for the most vulnerable residents where regressive fees and charges are proposed; and no reductions to frontline services without adequate mitigation and scrutiny, including opportunities, where reasonable, for resident and partner engagement.
- 5.7. Alongside these principles, it is emphasised that the recommendations should not be considered in isolation, but alongside those made through earlier Budget Scrutiny Task Group reviews. A consistent theme is the importance of closer collaboration with the VCS, particularly as reliance on the sector continues to increase. Year-round

engagement, supported by the multi-year settlement, will enable more meaningful dialogue on budgetary matters, improve outcomes, and strengthen financial resilience. Drawing on the VCS's frontline insight can also support effective resident engagement and the co-design of solutions aligned to local needs, with a stronger focus on prevention and early intervention. This includes supporting approaches that improve residents' financial resilience and reduce future demand on services, such as pathways into employment, skills development, and other preventative interventions, thereby reducing the need for more costly remedial and crisis responses and delivering longer-term savings.

### Key Contacts

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