

London Borough of Brent

Summary of Decisions taken by the Cabinet held in the Conference Hall, Brent Civic Centre on Monday 9 February 2026 at 10am

PRESENT: Councillor Muhammed Butt (Chair), Councillor Mili Patel (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Benea, Grahl, Knight, Moeen, Nerva Rubin and Krupa Sheth.

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Rita Conneely (Chair of Budget Scrutiny Task Group and Resources & Public Realm Scrutiny Committee) and Andrew Hudson (Chair – First Wave Housing Ltd Board – for Item 10).

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1.	Apologies for Absence		Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Donnelly-Jackson (Cabinet Member for Housing).
2.	Declarations of Interest		No declarations of interest were made during the meeting.
3.	Minutes of the Previous Meeting		Cabinet RESOLVED that the minutes of the previous meeting held on Monday 19 January 2026 be approved as a correct record of the meeting.
4.	Matters Arising (if any)		None identified.
5.	Petitions (if any)		There were no petitions presented at the meeting.
6.	Reference of item considered by Scrutiny Committees (if any)		There were no items referred from either the Community Wellbeing or Resources & Public Realm Scrutiny Committees.
7.	Budget and Council Tax 2026-27	All Wards	<p>Cabinet NOTED the following comments made in advance of considering the main report on the Budget & Council Tax 2026-27:</p> <p>Councillor Conneely, as Chair, was invited to introduce the report from the Scrutiny Budget Scrutiny Task Group in relation to their review of the budget setting proposals for 2026-27, which had been</p>

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			<p>included as Appendix D to the Budget and Council Tax 2026 - 27 report. In introducing the report, Councillor Conneely began by thanking all members of the Budget Scrutiny Task Group along with everyone else who had participated in the evidence sessions as part of the scrutiny process. In welcoming the Government's reintroduction of multi-year funding settlements, which it was hoped would strengthen the ability for the Council to develop a longer term planning approach, the impact of the broader thematic nature of the budget proposals was also recognised in support of a more strategic approach and in breaking down departmental silos with the role of scrutiny also seen as key in continuing to monitor how these were implemented along with their impact on residents to ensure no challenges arose that would require a change in strategy</p> <p>Although supportive of the recent changes introduced in relation to the Local Government Funding regime, the Task Group had recognised the number of significant financial risks and pressures that continued to be faced by the Council and across local government as a whole, including rising demand for social care and the temporary accommodation crisis. It was felt these challenges had been further compounded by the increasing role of privatisation and private equity in publicly commissioned services, particularly social care, which the Task Group had felt continued to undermine quality and drive cost inflation highlighting the need for meaningful reform of commissioning frameworks.</p> <p>In terms of specific areas of focus, Cabinet was advised that the</p>

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			<p>Task Group had been particularly encouraged by the work being undertaken to address the challenges in relation to supported exempt accommodation, as a means of delivering value for money whilst enhancing the quality of support being provided and in ensuring the private sector was not taking advantage of the market. In addition, the Task Group had been keen to recognise and commend the work undertaken in relation to Children's Services to invest in early intervention and reduce the reliance on agency staff, with it hoped this approach would be adopted more widely as best practice.</p> <p>In concluding, whilst recognising the work still to be done in delivering the proposals, Councillor Conneely once again thanked all those involved for their participation in the Task Group and commended the recommendations made by the Budget Scrutiny Task Group to Cabinet for consideration as part of the budget setting process.</p> <p>Having welcomed and supported the challenge, comments and approach taken by the Budget Scrutiny Task Group Cabinet RESOLVED:</p> <p>(1) To recommend to Full Council an overall 4.99% increase in the Council's element of Council Tax for 2026/27, with 2% as a precept for Adult Social Care and a 2.99% general increase.</p> <p>(2) To recommend to Full Council the General Fund revenue</p>

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			<p>budget for 2026/27, as summarised in Appendices A and B of the report.</p> <p>(3) To recommend to Full Council the savings proposals for 2026/27 as set out in Appendix C (i) of the report.</p> <p>(4) To note the Equalities Impact Assessments on the budget proposals, as set out in Appendices C (ii) and C (iii) of the report.</p> <p>(5) To note the report from the Budget Scrutiny Task Group as set out in Appendix D of the report.</p> <p>(6) To recommend to Full Council the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget and business plan for 2026/27, as set out in section 12 and appendix P of the report.</p> <p>(7) To approve the HRA rents for council dwellings, tenant service charges and garages as set out in section 12 of the report.</p> <p>(8) To approve the rents set under the Housing General Fund for Brent Housing PFI and traveller's site pitches and to note the rents for Hillside dwellings as set out in section 12 of the report.</p> <p>(9) To note the Dedicated Schools Grant, as set out in section 13 of the report.</p>

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			<p>(10) To recommend to Full Council the changes to the existing Capital Programme in relation to additions of new schemes and reprofiling, as set out in section 14 and Appendix E of the report, and note the Capital Pipeline Schemes as detailed in Appendix F of the report.</p> <p>(11) To recommend to Full Council the use of £2.9m of unrestricted right to buy receipts for capital works to improve HRA housing and enfranchisement (renewal of leaseholds approaching expiry).</p> <p>(12) To recommend to Full Council the Capital Strategy, the Investment Strategy, the Treasury Management Strategy and the Minimum Revenue Provision Statement as set out in Appendices G, H, I and J of the report.</p> <p>(13) To recommend to Full Council the Reserves Strategy and schedule of reserves, as set out in Appendices K (i) and K (ii) of the report.</p> <p>(14) To approve, and where relevant agree to recommend to Full Council the Fees and Charges Policy and Schedule of Fees and Charges, as set out in Appendices L (i) and L (ii) of the report.</p> <p>(15) To note the results of the budget consultation, as set out in</p>

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			<p>section 11 and detailed in Appendix M of the report.</p> <p>(16) To note the legal advice from the Director of Law, as set out in Appendix N of the report.</p> <p>(17) To approve the new Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy (SCIL) allocations as set out in section 14 of the report, which include an uplift of up to £4.7m to £11.2m for the College of North West London, £0.2m for a new pedestrian crossing at the junction of Willesden Lane, Cavendish Road and The Avenue and £1.8m for Carlton Vale Boulevard in South Kilburn.</p> <p>To also note and approve the recommendations identified for consideration by Full Council as detailed in section 2.18 – 2.38 of the report.</p> <p>Eligible for call-in: No (report and recommendations referred to Council)</p>
8.	Approval for the Disposal of Council-Owned Commercial Properties	Kingsbury; Northwick Park; Preston	<p>Cabinet RESOLVED:</p> <p>(1) To delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Neighbourhoods and Regeneration, in consultation with the relevant Lead Member, to:</p> <p>(a) Determine the most suitable disposal strategy for each</p>

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			<p>property listed in this report, including the method of sale, timing, marketing approach, and disposal structure, taking account of the Council's Property Strategy, market conditions, and the goal of achieving the best consideration.</p> <p>(b) Agree on the final terms of each disposal, ensuring compliance with the Council's statutory obligation to obtain the best consideration reasonably obtainable, and that the terms serve the Council's overall financial and strategic interests.</p> <p>(c) Enter into and finalise all necessary legal agreements, contracts, and ancillary documentation required to give effect to the disposals.</p> <p>(2) To note that the net capital receipts, after deducting disposal and associated costs, would be retained within the General Fund and used in accordance with the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy and Capital Programme, as outlined in the Financial Implications section of the report.</p> <p>(3) Where the land to be disposed of constitutes, or forms part of, public open space, to delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Neighbourhoods and Regeneration to publish notices in a local newspaper for two consecutive weeks in accordance with section 123(2A) of the Local Government Act 1972, and to consider any objections received prior to a final decision being made.</p>

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			<p>Eligible for call-in: Yes</p> <p>Deadline for submission of call-in: 6pm on Monday 16 February 2026</p>
9.	Brent Creates - A Cultural Strategy for Inclusion, Wellbeing and Growth: 2026-31		<p>Prior to considering the report, Cabinet noted the representations and comments made by Bethany Haynes (as a Senior Producer at Punchdrunk Enrichment) speaking as a representative of ViBrent, a consortium of 9 cultural organisations within Brent, funded by the Arts Council England's Place Partnership Programme, in support of the Brent Cultural Strategy 2026-2031.</p> <p>In highlighting the role of the network represented through the ViBrent partnership, Cabinet was advised that their aim was to strengthen collaboration across the sector, build capacity and create inclusive cultural opportunities for all, from early years to early careers increasing equity of provision across Brent. As such, Bethany Haynes advised she was speaking on behalf of the network to advocate for the new cultural strategy given the challenges faced across the cultural sector with the strategy recognised as playing a critical role in safeguarding the future of culture in Brent through advocating for investment, measuring and championing impact and bringing people together.</p> <p>As examples of the work already being delivered through the ViBrent programme and its close alignment with the wider strategic</p>

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			<p>goals set out in the Brent Creates Cultural Strategy, reference was made to the fully-funded programme of cultural activities for schools (BrentBackpack) being delivered in collaboration with the Brent Cultural Education Partnership designed to increase schools' knowledge of cultural offers within the borough as well as the work being undertaken through the Bootcamps programme (led by the Awareness Tap and Garden Studios) and four paid training placements in supporting young people across Brent to pursue creative careers.</p> <p>Members were also advised of the work being undertaken through ViBrent to develop research in seeking best practice and offering training opportunities on race equity and environmental sustainability in addition to helping to remove barriers for participants speaking English as a second language and supporting those with neurodiversity and special educational needs alongside the provision of training, networking and opportunities to share skills amongst grass root creatives and organisations across Brent.</p> <p>In summing up Bethany Haynes expressed her full support for the strategy presented to Cabinet emphasising her wish to continue to collaborate with the Council on cultural initiatives given the wider impact it was felt these would generate in terms of improving social and economic outcomes for the whole borough.</p> <p>Having welcomed the support expressed and the collaboration from all partners involved in the development of the cultural strategy,</p>

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			<p>Cabinet RESOLVED to approve the Cultural Strategy 2026–2031 as detailed within the report having agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) To approve the Brent Cultural Strategy 2026- 2031 as the guiding framework for cultural development across the borough. (2) To endorse the establishment of a Brent Cultural Compact, bringing together council teams, cultural, health, education, business, and community partners to coordinate delivery. (3) To commit to working collaboratively to embed culture in wider council plans, including health and wellbeing strategies, regeneration projects, and cross-departmental initiatives, including enabling small-scale community-led activity through mechanisms such as a council-supported micro-grants programme. (4) To endorse the creation of an Impact Framework to measure cultural outcomes across wellbeing, participation, economic growth and environmental sustainability with this framework being developed in conjunction with Public Health in Q4 2025/6. (5) To endorse the publication of an Annual Cultural Impact Report, measuring progress against KPIs across wellbeing, inclusion, economic growth and environmental sustainability

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			<p>with the aim being to assess effectiveness, inform future investment and ensure transparency and accountability across partners.</p> <p>(6) To support advocacy for fair contributions from the visitor economy, including exploration of ticket levy or visitor tax mechanisms, in partnership with major venues and sector stakeholders, with options brought back to Cabinet for future consideration.</p> <p>Eligible for call-in: Yes</p> <p>Deadline for submission of call-in: 6pm on Monday 16 February 2026</p>
10.	Approval of proposal for First Wave Housing to offer supported exempt accommodation	All Wards	<p>Prior to considering the report, Cabinet noted the representations and comments made by Andrew Hudson (as Independent Chair of First Wave Housing Ltd Board) speaking in support of the proposal for First Wave Housing Ltd (FWH) to offer supported exempt accommodation (SEA) to help care experienced young people, residents in supported living arrangements, and residents at risk of or experiencing homelessness.</p> <p>In addressing Cabinet, Andrew Hudson began by confirming FWH's willingness to play a key role in supporting vulnerable residents and seeking to achieve the dual benefits it was felt the proposal would deliver in terms of providing better quality support for tenants and</p>

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			<p>also value for money for the Council. Cabinet was assured of the detailed level of scrutiny undertaken by the Board in developing the proposals to ensure the scheme was viable and would not create undue risk to the service provided for other FWH tenants. Having received those assurances, the Board was therefore confident in the being able to deliver the scheme as outlined within the report, which it was noted would proceed in stages with a formal evaluation at the end of the first phase. This process would also be supported through the provision of necessary resourcing, recognising the change and level of co-ordination required with further assurance provided as a result of the Council's backstop guarantee designed to mitigate any risk in relation to FWH's financial position.</p> <p>In concluding his remarks, Andrew Hudson confirmed that, having received the assurances required, the FWH Board were fully supportive of the scheme and committed to its successful implementation.</p> <p>Having welcomed the support expressed and the cross-departmental working approach being taken to deliver the scheme, Cabinet RESOLVED:</p> <p>(1) To approve that First Wave Housing launches and operates a supported housing scheme and request that officers vary First Wave Housing's 2026-27 business plan accordingly when presented to Cabinet in March 2026.</p>

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			<p>(2) To agree to work in partnership with First Wave Housing to provide supported exempt accommodation, including committing Council staff to meet the requirements of the proposal and signing a Memorandum of Understanding to that effect.</p> <p>(3) To approve the financial implications of the proposal as outlined in section 7 of the report, including staffing and legal costs.</p> <p>Eligible for call-in: Yes</p> <p>Deadline for submission of call-in: 6pm on Monday 16 February 2026</p>
11.	ICT Infrastructure Investment Programme 2026 -2028	All Wards	<p>Cabinet RESOLVED to approve the ICT Infrastructure Capital Investment for 2026-2028 totalling £6.7m.</p> <p>Eligible for call-in: Yes</p> <p>Deadline for submission of call-in: 6pm on Monday 16 February 2026</p>
12.	Authority to invite tenders for care and support at six supported living sites for adults with Mental Health Difficulties	Cricklewood & Mapesbury; Kenton; Roundwood;	<p>Cabinet RESOLVED</p> <p>(1) To approve inviting tenders for care and support services at six supported living sites for adults with mental health difficulties</p>

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		Wembley Central	<p>separated into 2 Lots on the basis of the pre-tender considerations set out in paragraph 3.4 of the report. The 2 Lots are set out below:</p> <p>Lot 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental Health Supported Living Service at 54 Braemar Avenue, Wembley. • Mental Health Supported Living Service at 18 Saint Gabriels Road, Cricklewood. • Mental Health Supported Living Service at 69 Craven Park Road, Roundwood. <p>Lot 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental Health Supported Living Service at 144 The Mall Kenton. • Mental Health Supported Living Service at 33 Essex Road Roundwood. • Mental Health Supported Living Service at 155 Walm Lane Cricklewood. <p>(2) To approve officers evaluating the tenders referred to in (1) above on the basis of the evaluation criteria set out in paragraph 3.4 section (vi) of the report.</p> <p>(3) To delegate authority to the Corporate Director for Service Reform and Strategy, in consultation with the Cabinet Member</p>

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			<p>for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Leisure to award the contract for each of the 2 Lots identified in (1) above for the provision of care and support services at the six supported living sites for adults with mental health difficulties for a term of five (5) years with the option to extend by two (2) years (on a 5+2).</p> <p>Eligible for call-in: Yes</p> <p>Deadline for submission of call-in: 6pm on Monday 16 February 2026</p>
13.	Exclusion of Press and Public		There were no items that required the exclusion of the press or public.
14.	Any other urgent business		There were no items of urgent business.