Public Document Pack

Cabinet

Monday 9 February 2026 at 10.00 am
Conference Hall - Brent Civic Centre, Engineers Way, Wembley, HA9 0FJ

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

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

Membership:

Lead Member Councillors:	Portfolio
M Butt (Chair)	Leader of the Council
M Patel (Vice-Chair)	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources
Benea	Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning & Property
Donnelly-Jackson	Cabinet Member for Housing
Grahl	Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education & Employment
Knight	Cabinet Member for Customer Experience, Resident Support and Culture
Moeen	Cabinet Member for Community Safety & Cohesion
Nerva	Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Leisure
Rubin	Cabinet Member for Climate Action and Community Power
Krupa Sheth	Cabinet Member for Public Realm & Enforcement

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

For electronic copies of minutes and agendas please visit:
Council meetings and decision making | Brent Council

recycle for Brent

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 of 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
1	**Apologies for Absence**	
2	**Declarations of Interest**	
	Members are invited to declare at this stage of the meeting, the nature and existence of any relevant disclosable pecuniary or personal interests in the items on this agenda and to specify the item(s) to which they relate.	
3	**Minutes of the Previous Meeting**	
	To approve the minutes of the previous meeting held on Monday 19 January 2026 as a correct record.	To Follow
4	**Matters Arising (if any)**	
	To consider any matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting.	
5	**Petitions (if any)**	
	To receive and consider any petitions for which notice has been provided under Standing Order 66. Members are asked to note that there are currently no petition(s) due to be presented at the meeting.	
6	**Reference of item considered by Scrutiny Committees (if any)**	
	To consider any reports referred by either the Community & Wellbeing or Resources & Public Realm Scrutiny Committees.	
	Finance & Resources reports	
7	**Budget and Council Tax 2026-27**	1 - 286
	This report sets out the Council's budget proposals for 2026 - 27. It also sets out the overall financial position facing the Council for the medium term and highlights the significant risks, issues and uncertainties as well as details the results of the consultation, scrutiny and equalities processes. Subject to approval by Cabinet, these will form the basis of the budget to be considered at the Full Council meeting on 23 February 2026.	

Ward Affected: All Wards	**Lead Member**: Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources (Councillor Mili Patel) **Contact Officer**: Ravinder Jassar, Deputy Director Corporate and Financial Planning Tel: 0208 937 1487 ravinder.jassar@brent.gov.uk

Neighbourhoods & Regeneration reports

8 Approval for the Disposal of Council-Owned Commercial Properties 287 - 304

This report seeks approval to dispose of three surplus General Fund property interests. The proposed disposals are necessary to reduce financial pressures, mitigate increasing asset liabilities, and support strategic priorities outlined in the Council's Property Strategy 2024–27 and Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).

Ward Affected: Kingsbury; Northwick Park; Preston	**Lead Member:** Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning & Property (Councillor Teo Benea) **Contact Officer:** Denish Patel, Head of Property 020 8937 2529 Denish.Patel@brent.gov.uk

Housing & Residential Services reports

9 Brent Creates - A Cultural Strategy for Inclusion, Wellbeing and Growth: 2026-31 305 - 386

This report presents the Brent Cultural Strategy 2026–31 which sets out a bold and essential roadmap for the next stage of the borough's cultural development following on from the legacy of Brent's year as London Borough of Culture. The Strategy has been co-produced to provide a long terms focus, sustain momentum, respond to community demand and position culture as a driver of inclusion, wellbeing and growth.

Members are asked to note this report also includes an additional background paper, which has been published and circulated as a separate attachment.

Ward Affected: All Wards	**Lead Member**: Cabinet Member for Customer Experience, Resident Support & Culture (Councillor Promise Knight) **Contact Officer**: Colin Chester, London Borough of Culture Legacy Manager 020 8937 6377 Colin.Chester@brent.gov.uk

10 Approval of proposal for First Wave Housing to offer supported exempt accommodation 387 - 404

The purpose of this report is to seek approval for First Wave Housing to offer supported exempt accommodation to help care experienced young people, residents in supported living arrangements, and residents at risk of or experiencing homelessness. The scheme aims to increase availability and improve the quality of supported accommodation while reducing costs to the Council.

Ward Affected:
All Wards

Lead Member: Cabinet Member for Housing (Councillor Fleur Donnelly-Jackson)
Contact Officer: Laurence Coaker, Director - Housing Needs & Support
Tel: 020 8937 2788
laurence.coaker@brent.gov.uk

Service Reform & Strategy reports

11 ICT Infrastructure Investment Programme 2026 -2028 405 - 418

This report presents an updated Technology Roadmap 2026-2028 for approval setting out a targeted, two-year plan focusing on investment in five core areas: modernising data centres, enhancing cloud infrastructure, upgrading networks, strengthening cybersecurity, and supporting vital business applications which have been identified as key in enabling hybrid working, safeguarding sensitive data, and ensuring the council can deliver responsive, joined-up public services.

Ward Affected:
All Wards

Lead Member: Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources (Councillor Mili Patel)
Contact Officer: Derrick Boyce, Head of IT Solutions
Tel:020 8937 6045
derrick.boyce@brent.gov.uk

12 Authority to invite tenders for care and support at six supported living sites for adults with Mental Health Difficulties 419 - 452

This report seeks approval to the procurement of care and support for six supported living sites for adults with mental health difficulties.

Ward Affected:
Cricklewood & Mapesbury;
Kenton;

Lead Member: Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Leisure (Councillor Neil Nerva)
Contact Officer: Edwin Mensah, Acting Head of

Roundwood; Wembley Central	Commissioning Contracting and Market Management Tel: 0208 937 4132 Edwin.Mensah@brent.gov.uk

13 Exclusion of Press and Public

The following item(s)are not for publication as they relate to the category of exempt information set out below, as specified under Part 1, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972:

Agenda Item 9: Approval for the Disposal of Council-Owned Commercial Properties (Appendix 1 – Valuations)

This appendix has been classified as exempt under Paragraph 3 of Part 1 Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, namely: "Information relating to the financial or business affairs of and particular person (including the authority holding that information).

14 Any other urgent business

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

Date of the next meeting: Monday 9 March 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**

	Cabinet 9 February 2026
	Report from the Corporate Director, Finance and Resources
	Lead Member - Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources (Councillor Mili Patel)

Budget and Council Tax 2026/27

Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	Key
Open or Part/Fully Exempt: (If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)	Open
List of Appendices:	22 – See list attached
Background Papers:	None
Contact Officer(s): (Name, Title, Contact Details)	Minesh Patel, Corporate Director, Finance and Resources Tel: 020 8937 4043 Email: minesh.patel@brent.gov.uk Rav Jassar, Deputy Director, Corporate & Financial Planning Tel: 020 8937 1487 Email: ravinder.jassar@brent.gov.uk Amanda Healy, Deputy Director, Investment and Infrastructure Tel: 020 8937 5912 Email: amanda.healy@brent.gov.uk

1.0 Executive Summary

1.1 This report sets out the Council's budget proposals for 2026/27. It also sets out the results of the statutory processes of consultation, scrutiny and equalities analyses. These proposals will form the basis of the budget to be agreed by Full Council on 23 February 2026. The report also sets out the overall financial position facing the Council for the medium-term and highlights the significant risks, issues and uncertainties.

1.2 Aside from the updating of and adjustments to various technical assumptions the key features of this budget are:

- A Council Tax rise of 4.99% for the Brent element, making a Band D Council Tax of £1,724.76. Additionally, the Council will levy a Council Tax precept currently expected to be £510.51 at Band D on behalf of the Greater London Authority (GLA). Therefore, the total Council Tax at Band D is expected to be £2,235.27, which is an overall increase of 4.8%.
- New budget savings proposals with an aggregate value of £10.4m to be delivered in 2026/27, as set out in Appendix C (i).

1.3 This report is structured as follows:

- Foreword from the lead Cabinet member
- Strategic overview of the financial and macro-economic climate;
- Summary of the processes taken to develop the budget;
- Update on the 2025/26 revenue budget and review of the key budget assumptions;
- The results of consultation, scrutiny and equalities impact assessments;
- Updates from the Council's ring fenced budgets, specifically the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG);
- The capital programme is set out, along with the associated capital strategy, investment strategy and treasury management strategy.

2.0 Recommendation(s)

Cabinet

2.1 Agree 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.

2.2 Agree to recommend to Full Council the General Fund revenue budget for 2026/27, as summarised in Appendices A and B.

2.3 Agree to recommend to Full Council the savings proposals for 2026/27 as set out in Appendix C (i).

2.4 Note the Equalities Impact Assessments on the budget proposals, as set out in Appendices C (ii) and C (iii).

2.5 Note the report from the Budget Scrutiny Task Group in Appendix D.

2.6 Agree to recommend to Full Council the HRA budget and business plan for 2026/27, as set out in section 12 and appendix P of this report.

2.7 Agree the HRA rents for council dwellings, tenant service charges and garages as set out in section 12 of this report.

2.8 Agree 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 this report.

2.9 Note the Dedicated Schools Grant, as set out in section 13 of this report.

2.10 Agree 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 of this report and Appendix E, and note the Capital Pipeline Schemes in Appendix F.

2.11 Agree to recommend to Full Council to approve 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).

2.12 Agree 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.

2.13 Agree to recommend to Full Council the Reserves Strategy and schedule of reserves, as set out in Appendices K (i) and K (ii).

2.14 Agree, 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).

2.15 Note the results of the budget consultation, as set out in section 11 and detailed in Appendix M.

2.16 Note the legal advice from the Director of Law, as set out in Appendix N.

2.17 Approve new Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy (SCIL) allocations as set out in section 14, 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.

Full Council

2.18 Agree 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.

2.19 Agree the General Fund revenue budget for 2026/27, as summarised in Appendices A and B.

2.20 Agree the savings proposals for 2026/27, as set out in Appendix C (i).

2.21 Note the Equalities Impact Assessments on the budget proposals, as set out in Appendices C (ii) and C (iii).

2.22 Note the report from the Budget Scrutiny Task Group in Appendix D.

2.23 Agree the HRA budget and business plan for 2026/27 as set out in section 12 and Appendix P of this report.

2.24 Agree the Dedicated Schools Grant, as set out in section 13 of this report.

2.25 Agree the changes to the existing Capital Programme in relation to additions of new schemes and reprofiling, as set out in section 14 of this report and Appendix E, and note the Capital Pipeline Schemes in Appendix F.

2.26 Agree 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).

2.27 Agree 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.

2.28 Agree the Reserves Strategy and schedule of reserves, as set out in Appendices K (i) and K (ii).

2.29 Agree the Fees and Charges Policy and Schedule of Fees and Charges, as set out in Appendices L (i) and L (ii).

2.30 Note the results of the budget consultation, as set out in section 11 and detailed in Appendix M.

2.31 Note the legal advice from the Director of Law, as set out in Appendix N.

2.32 Agree the Pay Policy Statement for 2026/27, as set out in Appendix O.

Council Tax recommendations

2.33 That the Council notes that, at the time of despatch of this report, the GLA has not issued its precept for 2026/27. The GLA is scheduled to agree its precept on 26 February 2026.

2.34 That the Council refer to the Council Tax Setting Committee, the setting of the Council Tax for the year 2026/27, in accordance with section 67(3) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

2.35 That the Council Tax Setting Committee meet on 27 February 2026 to allow Council Tax notices to be issued in line with the normal statutory timetable.

2.36 That the Council notes the Terms of Reference of the Council Tax Setting Committee for 2026/27 in Appendix Q (i).

2.37 That the Council notes the composition of the Council Tax Setting Committee as appointed at the Annual Council Meeting on 14 May 2025.

2.38 That the Council recommends the formal resolution set out in Appendix Q (ii), to the meeting of the Council Tax Setting Committee, to formally set the Council Tax for 2026/27.

3.0 Cabinet Member Foreword

Where we are today

3.1 Brent enters the 2026/2027 Financial Year at a moment of greater stability, but with continuing pressure on the services our residents rely upon the most. Over the past fifteen years, Brent Council has delivered almost a quarter of a billion pounds in cumulative cuts, efficiencies and savings, while continuing to protect frontline services and invest in our borough. This has required difficult decisions, strong fiscal discipline and a relentless focus on value for money. It has also required enormous commitment from our partners, the voluntary sector and our own officers – and I want to acknowledge the scale of that herculean effort.

3.2 This year's Budget is shaped by the most significant reform of local government funding this century. In December 2025, the government delivered the Fair Funding Review 2.0, with a clear intention of directing more resources to

councils with the highest levels of need, simplifying the funding system and resetting business rates for the first time since 2013. Nationally, this reform has provided £3.4 billion of additional funding over the next three years. This represents a clear signal that this government recognises the pressures facing local councils - including places like Brent where housing costs, deprivation and inequality are inextricably linked – and wants to tackle these issues.

3.3 For Brent, this has resulted in a £67.9 million increase in core funding between 2025/26 and 2026/27. Of this, £18.4 million was baked into the draft Budget. The remaining £49.5 million reflects changes between the draft and the final Budget. Within this, £26.6 million relates to simplification of funding streams previously held outside the settlement into Revenue Support Grant and new ringfenced grants. **After these adjustments, the net additional funding for Brent as a direct result of Fair Funding Review 2.0 is £22.9 million.**

3.4 As you have come to expect from this administration, this very welcome additional funding is being directed in a responsible and balanced way, namely, to address immediate service pressures, to support vulnerable residents and to strengthen the Council's long-term financial resilience. Some of this funding will be ringfenced, with £5.8 million used for specific reasons, including £4.5 million for children's social care prevention through the Families First Partnership and £1.3 million to support residents facing housing cost pressures through the Crisis and Resilience Fund. Alongside this, we are also allocating £10 million to meet ongoing social care pressures identified since the draft Budget, including £8 million for adult social care and £2 million for children's social care, ensuring that our frontline services remain sustainable and deliver for those in greatest need.

3.5 The settlement also confirms that councils can increase Council Tax by up to 2.99%, alongside a 2% Adult Social Care precept. In the context of unprecedented social care pressures and ongoing demand for our housing needs services, the budget is built upon a 4.99% Council Tax increase, recognising that even this does not cover the growth in costs. Taken together, this provides recurring funding of £12.2 million, of which £3.1 million comes from growth in the tax base and £9.1 million from the increase itself.

3.6 At a time when public services remain under real pressure, our priorities are clear: we are **protecting** the services that matter most, **investing** in Brent's future, and **supporting** people in need.

The challenges we face

3.7 Despite this improved settlement, the challenges facing local government remain serious and structural. Brent Council delivers services to more than 110,000 households, an extraordinary responsibility that this Council has carried against the backdrop of austerity, rising demand and repeated national and international crises. Throughout that period, we have continued to balance our budget, protect frontline services and invest in the borough, even as pressures have intensified year after year.

3.8 Adult social care and children's services continue to experience sustained growth in demand. More residents are living longer with complex needs, and more children and families require support. Inflation in care markets, workforce shortages and rising provider costs have significantly increased the price of delivering these services, and these pressures are expected to continue.

3.9 Housing remains one of the most urgent challenges we face. The Housing Needs Service has seen a 21% increase in homelessness presentations, with cases expected to reach 8,840 by the end of 2025/26. The number of households in temporary accommodation has risen to 2,054, and the number of families in emergency accommodation has increased by 36%. Across London, the scale of this crisis is stark. In March 2025 alone, councils spent £196 million in a single month on temporary accommodation, an increase of 86% compared with the previous year. These costs represent both families in crisis and an unsustainable strain on public finances.

3.10 Critically though, Brent is not seeking Exceptional Financial Support. Thirty councils nationally have required Exceptional Financial Support totalling £1.5 billion, including seven London boroughs. Brent's improved funding position and our ability to deliver savings and efficiencies mean we have not had to take this step. This reflects the strength of our financial management and the difficult but responsible decisions taken over many years.

3.11 Looking ahead, uncertainty does remain. While the Fair Funding Review 2.0 has brought welcome stability in the short term, local government remains an unprotected department nationally, and future settlements will impact Brent greatly. In this context, fiscal discipline is essential. As you would expect from this administration, we have set a minimum level of reserves at 5% of net expenditure, equivalent to £22.5 million in 2026/27, to ensure we can manage risk and protect services in the face of unexpected shocks.

3.12 To remain strong and sustainable into the future, Brent will continue to deliver £10 million of savings each year, as set out in the Medium-Term Financial Strategy in the following pages.

3.13 We will continue to evolve and adapt to the challenges of the future following our core values and principles – fairness, discipline, delivering for the most vulnerable, being ambitious for Brent and our residents. We look forward to delivering a new Council plan as part of the next Budget.

Our opportunities to invest in tomorrow

3.14 This Budget shows that Brent Council is not standing still. It responds directly to residents' call for us to move faster and fix more of the things that matter, while continuing to invest in the future of our borough. Even at a time of intense financial pressure, we have chosen progress over retreat and action over delay. We are protecting the frontline services people rely on, while making visible improvements to cleaner streets, safer neighbourhoods, better public spaces and more new council homes. This is a Budget that looks after people today and builds opportunity for tomorrow.

3.15 The programme of investment that follows shows clearly what this council will be delivering in the years ahead:

- We are investing **£3 million in the Public Realm and Street Cleansing** to deliver clearer and more visible improvements in cleanliness across the borough.

- We are investing **£10.5 million in shared public spaces** to modernise libraries, leisure centres and family wellbeing centres, ensuring public buildings are safe, welcoming and fit for the next generation.

- We are investing **£3 million in the Willesden Health and Wellbeing Hub** to bring NHS and community services together in one modern facility at Gladstone Park.

- We are investing **£16.3 million in Digital and Technology Transformation** to improve how residents access services, strengthen cyber security and enable smarter and more efficient ways of working.

- We are investing more than **£4.3 million a year in Highways and Transport Infrastructure** to resurface roads, repair pavements and upgrade street lighting across the borough.

- We are investing over **£1.5 million in 'Green Corridors'** to create safer streets and healthier neighbourhoods in Church End and Roundwood.

- We are investing **£2.6 million in CCTV and Public Safety** to expand coverage and protect communities.

- We are **investing £5.1 million in Neighbourhood CIL projects** and **£1.5 million through Pride in Place** to improve parks, high streets and public spaces.

- We are investing **£9.2 million in our capital pipeline** to prepare future projects, including **£2.1 million for energy efficiency upgrades across council buildings**, **£1.5 million for improvements to Vale Farm Sports Centre** and **£1.8 million for investment in parks and outdoor sports facilities**.

- We are investing **£23.1 million in Wembley Housing Zone** to deliver 291 new homes, nearly half of them affordable.

- We are investing **£45.6 million in Bridge Park Regeneration** to deliver a new leisure centre and drive wider regeneration.

- We are investing **£10.5 million in Neasden Civic Partnership**, **£6.9 million in the Grand Union Canal Footbridge**, and **£2.7 million in the Staples Corner Masterplan** to transform key town centres.

- We are investing **£600,000 in the West London Orbital** to progress a new rail link to Old Oak Common and HS2.

- We are investing **£11.2 million in the College of North West London Regeneration** to unlock a £150 million redevelopment delivering education facilities and nearly 2,000 new homes.

- We are investing **over £81.3 million in South Kilburn Regeneration and Public Realm**, including new school, public realm improvements and a district heat network for over 2,600 homes.

- We are investing over **£4 million in SEND and Schools** to create more than 200 new SEND places and a new Post-16 Skills Centre.

- We are investing **£4 million in Youth Facilities** to modernise youth centres across the borough.

- We are investing nearly **£60 million in Housing Supply and Temporary Accommodation** to reduce reliance on costly temporary accommodation and provide more stable homes for families.

- We are investing **£18.3 million in Major Repairs and Fire Safety** to improve council homes and protect residents.

- We are investing **£2.9 million in Energy Efficient Heating** to cut emissions and lower energy bills.

- We are investing in **Aids and Adaptations** and **£500,000 in Lynton Close improvements** to support independence and dignity for all residents.

3.16 None of these investments would have been possible had this administration not taken the many tough decisions over the past fifteen years to ensure our finances remained on a strong and stable footing. None of these investments would have been possible if we had splurged our reserves. None of these investments have been possible if we had not taken a positive approach to development in our borough and secured the wider community investment that comes with building new homes**.**

4.0 Strategic Overview

MTFS Update

4.1 In February 2025, Council agreed the budget for 2025/26, which included a total of £20.4m of budget reductions.

4.2 In the Medium Term Financial Outlook presented to Cabinet in July 2025, the MTFS model was extended to 2028/29 to cover the anticipated three-year settlement from 2026/27. Budget assumptions on income and expenditure were reviewed and updated and it was estimated that a further £30m of savings would be required across the MTFS period. Table 1 shows how this budget gap is distributed across the MTFS period.

Table 1: Budget gap 2026/27-2028/29 per July 2025 Medium Term Financial Outlook

	2026/27 (£m)	2027/28 (£m)	2028/29 (£m)
In year budget gap	10.0	10.0	10.0
Cumulative budget gap	10.0	20.0	30.0

4.3 Reports are brought to Cabinet quarterly on the budget position with the most recent update in January 2026 detailing the quarter 3 position setting out the forecast overspends of £12.5m on the General Fund revenue budget, £4.8m against the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) and £2.3m on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), for a total forecast overspend of £19.6m. The forecast overspend on the General Fund revenue budget is primarily within Adult Social Care due to increases in the cost of placements and significant challenges with the delivery of savings and Housing, which has been experiencing high levels of demand since 2023 due to a rise in homelessness and a reduction in the supply of suitable temporary accommodation. Additionally, new pressures have arisen on the residential and secure placement budgets within the Children, Young People and Community Development directorate. The forecast overspend on the DSG is within the High Needs Block, with the main contribution (£3.5m) from the cost of placing Brent children in out-of-borough schools. The forecast overspend on the HRA is a result of increased capital financing and repairs and maintenance costs, offset partially by increased rental income.

4.4 At the Draft Budget in November 2025, £10.4m of savings were proposed to close the budget gap in 2026/27. In contrast to previous years, a new collaborative approach has been developed to address the Council's medium-term financial challenge and identify sustainable savings. This approach focuses on identifying high-impact opportunities, including cross-directorate working, improving productivity, better use of digital solutions, and increasing income generation. This approach to delivering savings enables the Council to meet its obligation to balance the budget in a way that supports transformative change, but it must be acknowledged that delivering these savings will be challenging and non-delivery of savings is a key risk to the 2026/27 budget and the MTFS.

4.5 The new savings proposals to be approved by Full Council in February 2026 are summarised in Appendix C (i), with their associated equalities impact assessments in Appendices C (ii) and C (iii).

4.6 Brent has delivered total cumulative savings of £238m between 2010 and 2026. The proposed savings for 2026/27 (Appendix C (i)), will take this total to £248m (50% of the net revenue budget for 2026/27).

4.7 During 2025/26 the government has delivered the most significant reform of local government funding (Fair Funding Review 2.0) in more than a decade,

with particular focus on diverting resources to authorities that need them most, simplifying funding through the consolidation of grants and delivering the first reset of the business rates retention system since it was created in 2013. A consultation exercise was carried out in the summer of 2025 on the draft proposals, to which Brent provided a comprehensive response. Following the results of the consultation, the proposals were revised, with the outcome being positive for Brent Council, most notably due to the revision of the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) to include Housing costs. Further details of the funding reforms are outlined in section six.

4.8 The estimated savings requirement was calculated before the outcome of Fair Funding Review 2.0 to ensure that the Council could set a balanced budget in 2026/27, within the MTFS assumptions, including significant ongoing service pressures in social care and homelessness prevention.

4.9 The provisional local government finance settlement for 2026/27 was the first multi-year settlement in a decade, covering the three-year period from 2026/27 to 2028/29. This development is a welcome one for Brent Council, providing much needed clarity on what funding will be available to support the budget over the MTFS period.

4.10 The provisional settlement increased Core Spending Power for Brent by 9.9% in 2026/27, compared to the revised 2025/26 baseline, inclusive of a 'referendum limit' for Council Tax of 4.99% (where 2% is ring fenced for Adult Social Care). Like last year, the Government's financing assumption is that all Councils would act on this. The decision on Council Tax will be taken by Full Council, but the budget has been constructed based on a 4.99% rise in the Brent element of Council Tax. In addition, this is based on considering the rising inflationary pressures that the Council is subject to, the financial position in the round, the need to protect frontline services such as social care and homelessness prevention and the results of consultation through specific budget briefings, drop-in sessions and other meetings held by the date of despatch of this report. Further details regarding decisions on Council Tax, including support for residents that are financially vulnerable, are set out in section six of this report.

4.11 The Mayor of London has announced plans for an increase in his precept of 4.1% (slightly different rules on the limits for the GLA apply due to its role as the police authority) making the overall increase in Council Tax 4.8%. This equates to £2,235.27 at Band D, or the equivalent of £42.99 per week, and the overall increase equates to £1.96 per week.

4.12 The provisional settlement for Brent also delivers increases in Core Spending Power in 2027/28 (7.7%) and 2028/29 (7.3%), inclusive of 4.99% increases in Council Tax in both years. The increases in Core Spending Power in the second and third year of the settlement are lower due to the increases in overall funding for local government at the national level being front-loaded in the early years of the Spending Review, which was delivered in Summer 2025. This reflects the revised assessment of Brent's relative funding need and is an indicator that Brent was previously not receiving the funding it required, exacerbating the significant challenges created by the financial environment the Council has operated within in recent years.

4.13 The government chose to implement the funding reforms across the multi-year settlement, with the transitional arrangements resulting in a steady increase to Brent's funding up to 2028/29 when the funding reflects the government's revised assessment of Brent's funding needs in full. In the consultation, Brent supported the transitional arrangements, as they protect Councils who are losing funding, providing them with time to adjust their budget plans. At the time of the consultation, all available information indicated that Brent Council would be in this position, in which case the transitional arrangements would have been essential to Brent being able to continue to deliver a balanced budget across the MTFS period.

4.14 The settlement provided additional funding of £3.4bn nationally across the three years, with approximately half of this funding being used to provide the transitional and funding floor protections. The other half of the funding is providing additional funding for Adults and Children's social care. There remains considerable uncertainty about what happens beyond 2028/29, following the next Spending Review, when government may be faced with increasingly difficult decisions on how to allocate departmental spending, with local government being an unprotected department.

4.15 The Draft Budget was prepared in advance of the provisional settlement, using prudent funding assumptions. Therefore, the provisional settlement results in an improved funding position across the settlement. However, the pressures arising in 2025/26 outlined earlier in this section, many of which are likely to continue into 2026/27, have resulted in increased growth requirements. Therefore, to enable Brent to return to a sustainable budget position over the medium-term, the savings requirement remains the same as proposed in the Draft Budget in November 2025 (£10m per year).

4.16 Development of the 2027/28 budget will be undertaken from summer 2026, following the Council elections in May 2026. The new Council administration will set its priorities for the years ahead, at which time the MTFS will be revised taking into consideration all information available at that time. Further details will be presented in the Medium Term Financial Outlook in July 2026.

4.17 Given the significant financial uncertainties that have been highlighted throughout this process, this is a balanced and proportionate approach to the demanding choices that must be confronted in budget setting. It should be recognised, however, that forecasting over the medium term has been, and continues to be, extremely difficult. There is a high level of uncertainty due to multiple military conflicts, stubbornly high inflation, continued high interest rates, low growth in the economy, the effects of the cost-of-living crisis on residents and businesses in the borough and demographic changes. Whilst the provisional settlement for 2026/27 provides an improved funding position, the significance of the financial challenge cannot be underestimated. However, the measures outlined in this report aim to ensure that the Council continues to operate in a financially sustainable and resilient way.

4.18 The budget gap identified in Table 1 includes items known at the time of despatch of this report. Throughout 2026/27 new pressures may arise, or additional in-year savings may be achieved, which will either increase or decrease the forecast budget gap. It is important to note that these figures include several assumptions around future budget growth requirements,

interest rates and inflation, which could get worse as well as better. For example, if interest rates remain high and inflation rises again, this would increase the budget gap further. It is also important to note that the financial assumptions could improve, for example if demand led pressures are less than anticipated, this would reduce the forecasted budget gap.

4.19 During spring 2026, these estimates will be refined and a Medium Term Financial Outlook report will be presented to Cabinet in July 2026, at which point the savings target for 2027/28 will be revised. The process of identifying these savings will be a major factor in the construction of the 2027/28 budget, enabling the Council to set a balanced budget for 2027/28, with the Draft Budget presented to Cabinet in autumn 2026.

4.20 Following the final local government finance settlement for 2026/27 to 2028/29 in January 2026 and the Council elections in May 2026, it will be possible for Brent to plan more effectively across the remaining years of the settlement. In this scenario, the Council may decide to allocate funding to priorities and set savings targets for both 2027/28 and 2028/29 in February 2027, to provide greater certainty to services and residents on what the required changes will be over the following two years.

Economic Environment

4.21 Growth in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for the UK in 2026 is expected to ease from 1.4% before improving again later, reflecting the delayed effects of lower interest rates, looser monetary conditions, stronger global activity, and higher consumer spending. This is similar to the forecast for 2025 (forecast growth 1.3%), which may not be sufficient to significantly help many of those people still suffering from the cost-of-living crisis. Low growth in the economy reduces the opportunity for the Government to invest in public services, with unprotected departments like local government susceptible to reductions in funding. Where this occurs, this limits the ability of local authorities like Brent to provide services and support to residents, particularly outside of statutory services including social care and homelessness prevention.

4.22 CPI inflation in 2026 is expected to average 2.5%, which is lower than the 2025 average of 3.5%, but remains above the Bank of England's target of 2.0%, with the rate projected to not return to this level until 2027. The high rate of inflation is driven by rising energy and food prices, which are prolonging the cost-of-living crisis for Brent's residents. For Brent's services, high inflation also means that the cost of providing existing services increases and the ability to invest in service improvements is limited. Some services are also experiencing cost increases that outpace the rate of inflation, resulting in a need for savings to be made for the Council to balance its budget overall.

4.23 In December 2025, the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) voted to reduce the base rate to 3.75% from 4.00%. This was influenced by falling inflation, weaker labour market, and reduced fiscal uncertainty. The 2026 interest rate outlook is for a gradual easing towards a stabilisation at 3.25%. The Council's borrowing rates are not directly impacted by this movement which are linked to Government Gilts.

Exceptional Financial Support (EFS)

4.24 Local authorities across the country continue to face growing financial pressures caused by decades of underfunding by central government and increasing demand for services such as social care and temporary accommodation. These pressures are further exacerbated by rising costs driven by higher inflation and interest rates.

4.25 The financial challenge faced by all local authorities has resulted in some turning to the government for Exceptional Financial Support (EFS). EFS is a form of temporary financial assistance provided by the government to local authorities facing severe financial distress. It is designed to help councils avoid insolvency; meet immediate financial obligations, set legally balanced budgets, and continue the delivery of its statutory functions.

4.26 Thirty local authorities have had to request EFS totalling £1.5bn in 2025/26, of which seven are London councils. It should be noted that EFS is not additional funding from the government in the form of grants. The main mechanism for EFS is through a Capitalisation Direction, which allows councils to:

- Treat revenue costs as capital costs
- Fund these costs via borrowing or capital receipts (e.g. asset sales)
- Spread the financial burden over several years instead of one budget cycle

4.27 This flexibility helps councils to manage extraordinary pressures without breaching their statutory duty to balance budgets.

4.28 As part of measures to deal with the funding concerns, six of the thirty councils receiving EFS in 2025/26 were granted specific government permission to raise council tax above the current 4.99% cap, with the increased rates ranging from 7.5% to 10%. There is the likelihood in 2026/27 that more councils will have to request permission to raise council tax above the 4.99% threshold.

4.29 For the avoidance of doubt, Brent is not in the position to seek EFS due to the improved funding position over the medium-term and the prudent measures set out in this and previous budget reports to balance the overall budget.

Administration Priorities

4.30 The budget process is designed to ensure that it is priority led so that resources are aligned with statutory responsibilities and council priorities, which are set out in the four-year Borough Plan (2023-2027).

4.31 The Borough Plan 2023-27 sets out the Council's vision for the four-year period covered by the plan. There is an emphasis on how the Council will work with others to support people through the cost-of-living crisis and harness the diverse range of communities in Brent. Central to these ambitions is making Brent the best it can be for everyone who lives and works in the borough.

4.32 The overarching theme of the plan is 'Moving Brent Forward Together'. The plan focuses on how the Council will take forward delivery through five priority areas being of fundamental importance to Brent and its people. Each priority area has set outcomes the Council will work towards, tackling cross-cutting issues such as homelessness and health inequalities. The five priorities are:

- Prosperity and Stability in Brent
- A Cleaner, Greener Future
- Thriving Communities
- The Best Start in Life
- A Healthier Brent

4.33 During 2025/26, the Council delivered the following in line with the Borough Plan priorities:

Prosperity and Stability in Brent

- Helped over 3,500 residents gain new skills through 435 courses
- Delivered 418 affordable homes

A Cleaner, Greener Future

- Cleared over 17,000 fly tips
- Cut our carbon emissions by 71.6% since 2010
- Collected 68,000 tonnes of rubbish and recycling from over 130,000 homes & kept streets clean
- £9.3m looking after 315 miles of road and 529 miles of pavement
- £75k for community-led climate projects

Thriving Communities

- Our libraries welcomed 710,000 visitors
- £8.4m for community projects
- £60k on cultural activities like Race Equality Week

The Best Start in Life

- Created over 400 new school places for children with special educational needs
- Delivered over 4,500 school holiday activity places for children, including over 770 for children with special educational needs and disabilities
- 97% of Brent schools are good or outstanding
- Took care of 305 children in care
- Supported over 5,600 new children, young people and adults through our Family Wellbeing Centres

A Healthier Brent

- Provided vital social care support to 5,922 adults with care and support needs, including older people
- Our sports centres welcomed 1.2 million visitors
- 3,500 free exercises classes

4.34 As is customary during the budget setting process, the MTFS will need to ensure it provides a framework to enable and support the delivery of these programmes.

4.35 Following the Council elections in May 2026, the new Council will identify the priorities for the next four years from 2027 to 2031. These priorities will be developed into a new Council Plan covering this four-year period and the 2027/28 budget will be developed in strategic alignment with the new Council Plan. It is possible that this will result in different budget requirements for 2027/28 and 2028/29 than the assumptions in the MTFS, which are based on the current Borough Plan. As this is developed, the MTFS will be updated and progress on the development of the 2027/28 and 2028/29 budgets will be reported as usual through the Medium Term Financial Outlook (July Cabinet), Draft Budget (November Cabinet) and Budget and Council Tax (February Cabinet and Full Council).

Strategic Change Programme

4.36 To respond to the significant financial and service delivery challenges facing local government, the Council's Strategic Change Programme from 2024/25 has evolved into the Embrace Change Portfolio. This portfolio represents the Council's roadmap for driving transformation, improving outcomes for residents, and supporting long-term financial sustainability.

4.37 The Embrace Change Portfolio brings together a series of cross-cutting change programmes, projects and enablers that focus on transforming how the Council works with residents, communities, and partners. It is underpinned by a clear set of principles: values-based delivery, collaborative working, community power, and a prevention-first approach. Together, these principles ensure that transformation activity is resident-focused, outcome-driven and designed to make the greatest possible impact with every pound spent.

4.38 The portfolio plays a critical role in supporting the delivery of required savings and service transformation. It provides the framework through which services are challenged to work differently, prevent demand, redesign services around residents and strengthen partnerships, rather than relying solely on incremental efficiencies.

4.39 For 2026/27, the objectives of the Embrace Change Portfolio are to:

- Support the delivery and assurance of approved savings proposals, ensuring benefits are clearly defined, tracked, and realised.
- Align transformation activity directly to the new Council Plan, enabling delivery of Council priorities while improving outcomes for residents.
- Strengthen prevention-led approaches in areas of highest demand and spend, including Adult Social Care, Children's Services, and homelessness prevention.
- Embed community-powered approaches, ensuring residents and communities are actively involved in shaping services and solutions.
- Build a culture and workforce fit for the future, supported by the right skills, governance, and ways of working.

5.0 Budget Development Process 2026/27

5.1 The budget development process for the Council to set its budget and Council Tax for 2026/27 was as follows:

- A collaborative approach has been adopted for the budget development process with regards to the identification of savings. This approach promotes a shift from centralised budget control to a more service-led approach to identifying savings and efficiencies. This approach of distributing savings responsibility across services is intended to increase organisational ownership of financial challenges, enhance resilience for future budget planning, and support the identification of sustainable, service-specific efficiencies.
- Meetings involving Cabinet and Corporate Management Team members to consider the key service and budget issues likely to affect the Council in future years.
- Development of budget proposals by officers and relevant Lead Members for individual services within the context of the Borough Plan and the overall resources available.
- Development of the budget approach, based on the updated medium term financial outlook, which was considered by the Cabinet on 17 November 2025.
- The publication of a schedule of savings proposals at Cabinet in November 2025 for the purposes of consultation, scrutiny and equality analyses.
- Debates through the Budget Scrutiny Task Group of the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee.
- Approval of the taxbase for the 2026/27 budget at General Purposes Committee on 8 December 2025.
- Public consultation via specific budget briefings, drop-in sessions and other meetings.
- Review of the schools' budgets by the Schools Forum.
- Considering feedback from residents, businesses and other key stakeholders, whether received from the online consultation portal or other direct representations.
- Conducting individual equality impact assessments (Appendix C (ii)) on the budget proposals and a cumulative equality impact assessment (Appendix C (iii)) on the overall budget to ensure that the consequences of the budget proposals were properly understood.
- Implementation of the External Auditor's Value for Money recommendations on financial sustainability.

5.2 This report updates the position on the core estimates that drive the MTFS assumptions, including the outcome of the final settlement and the consultation, scrutiny and equalities analyses processes.

6.0 Update and Review of Key Budget Assumptions – Core Funding

Overview

6.1 The 2026/27 Local Government Finance Settlement provided confirmed core funding allocations for local authorities covering the three-year period from 2026/27 to 2028/29. The settlement followed the conclusion of Fair Funding Review 2.0, which introduced the most substantial reforms to local government finance for more than ten years, significantly improving certainty for Brent's medium-term financial planning.

6.2 As a result of these reforms, Brent's Core Funding has increased between 2025/26 and 2026/27. A detailed breakdown of these changes by funding stream is provided in Appendix A.

Changes from 2025/26 to 2026/27

6.3 Between 2025/26 and 2026/27, Brent's Core Funding increased by £67.9m, representing a 16% increase in overall resources. This compares the approved 2025/26 budget with the proposed 2026/27 budget and includes both Core Spending Power and grant funding that sits outside of Core Spending Power.

6.4 The increase comprises two main elements. First, Core Spending Power increased by 9.9%, reflecting changes in assessed relative need, growth in Council Tax income and additional support for social care pressures. Second, there was a 6% increase attributable to the rolling-in of existing grants that were previously outside of the settlement into the multi-year settlement framework, amounting to £26.6m.

6.5 There were significant shifts within individual funding streams. Revenue Support Grant increased substantially, largely due to the consolidation of funding and the outcomes of Fair Funding Review 2.0. Business Rates income increased following the reset of the Business Rates retention system and an uplift to the Baseline Funding Level based on updated assessments of need. Council Tax income increased in line with the assumed 4.99% increase included in the Draft Budget and growth in the tax base.

6.6 These increases were partially offset by a reduction in specific grants, reflecting the consolidation of funding into RSG and new ringfenced grants. Most of the existing grants have been consolidated into four new ringfenced grant streams: the Children, Families and Youth Grant; the Homelessness, Rough Sleeping and Domestic Abuse Grant; the Crisis and Resilience Fund; and the Public Health Grant.

6.7 In addition to consolidation, further grant funding has been received from the £3.4bn national allocation to local government announced at Spending Review 2025 for the period 2026/27 to 2028/29. For Brent, this funding supports both Children's Social Care (through the Children, Families and Youth Grant) and Adult Social Care (within RSG).

6.8 Full details of the changes to Core Funding from 2025/26 to 2026/27 are set out in Appendices A and B.

Changes from Draft Budget to Final Budget

6.9 Of the total £67.9m increase between 2025/26 and 2026/27, £18.4m (27%) had already been assumed in the Draft Budget. This included £12.0m from the proposed increase in Council Tax and £5.0m resulting from the application of CPI inflation of 3.8% to the 2025/26 Business Rates baseline.

6.10 The remaining £49.5m represents changes between the Draft and proposed Final Budget positions. Of this, £26.6m reflects the consolidation of funding that was previously held outside the settlement into Revenue Support Grant and the new ringfenced grants. As this consolidation is largely technical in nature, the net additional funding available in 2026/27 as a direct result of Fair Funding Review 2.0 is £22.9m. The additional funding is proposed to be allocated in a way that addresses immediate service pressures, supports residents, and strengthens the Council's financial resilience.

6.11 £5.8m of this funding is ringfenced. This includes £4.5m within the Children, Families and Youth Grant to invest in additional Children's Social Care prevention activity through the Families First Partnership, and £1.3m within the Crisis and Resilience Fund to provide further support to vulnerable residents facing housing cost pressures.

6.12 £10m is allocated to meet ongoing social care pressures identified since the Draft Budget. This includes £8m to address Adult Social Care overspends reported in the Q3 Financial Forecast to Cabinet in January 2026, and £2m to address continuing pressures in Children's Social Care that are expected to carry forward into 2026/27.

6.13 Up to a further £3m will be invested in the public realm, with a focus on strengthening street cleansing operations. This investment will increase proactive cleansing frequencies, enhance operational coverage later in the day and at weekends, and improve the management of rubbish on marginal land. These actions are expected to deliver a clearer and more visible improvement in cleanliness across the borough.

6.14 A minimum of £4.1m is proposed to be allocated to a combination of contingency provision for 2026/27 and the replenishment of earmarked reserves. Reserves have been significantly depleted in recent years due to sustained funding pressures, demographic growth and cost inflation across the sector. Rebuilding reserves will improve the Council's ability to manage in-year risks and support more robust medium-term financial planning.

6.15 The contingency will also help mitigate risks associated with the delivery of planned savings. While a new collaborative and cross-cutting approach to identifying savings has been developed, delivering these savings remains challenging and represents a key risk to the 2026/27 budget and the MTFS.

6.16 Extended Producer Responsibility funding for 2026/27 is expected to total £5.3m, an increase from £5.2m in 2025/26 in line with inflation. This funding is not included in Core Funding but will be built into the Neighbourhoods and Regeneration base budget to support the Waste Service by covering the net costs of managing household packaging waste and supporting improvements to recycling infrastructure and resident engagement.

6.17 This approach to budget setting is prudent and proportionate. The additional funding provided through Fair Funding Review 2.0 has been used to recognise and address emerging service pressures since the Draft Budget, begin the process of rebuilding depleted reserves to strengthen financial resilience, and create capacity for future investment in transformation and new priorities.

6.18 This positions the Council more strongly to manage ongoing risks, respond to in-year pressures, and support the development of a new Council Plan and longer-term financial sustainability.

6.19 The following sections set out further details on the changes to funding from Council Tax and Business Rates included in the 2026/27 budget presented in this report.

Council Tax

6.20 The settlement confirmed that Local Authorities will be able to increase Council Tax in 2026/27 by up to 2.99% without a local referendum. In addition, local authorities will be able to levy a 2% adult social care precept. This will provide total recurring funding of £12.2m, of which £3.1m relates to the increase in the tax base and £9.1m relates to the increase in council tax including the adult social care precept.

6.21 Like last year, the Government's financing assumption is that all councils will act on this and increase Council Tax by the maximum amount possible. It should be noted that the additional income generated through the Adult Social Care precept alone (£3.6m) does not cover the total growth requirement for Adult Social Care pressures. However, the increase would permanently increase the Council Tax income and it would also help to reduce the significant funding pressures in 2026/27 and beyond. Taking into account the unprecedented pressures within social care, the financial position in the round and the Government's financing assumptions, the recommendation of this report is that the budget should be constructed on the basis of a Council Tax increase of 4.99% in 2026/27.

6.22 Following the changes to the Council's Council Tax Support Scheme in April 2025, which resulted in a fully delivered saving of £5m in the Council's 2025/26 budget, the Council invested £1.1m in 2025/26 in a Council Tax Support Hardship Fund. The GLA also invested £0.4m of its own funding to support Brent with the objectives of the fund, taking the total available funding to £1.5m. This partnership with the GLA has allowed the Council to provide further support to an estimated 14,500 residents during 2025/26, using the Council's existing powers to provide discretionary Council Tax discounts under Section 13A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

6.23 The Council Tax Support Hardship Fund will continue into 2026/27, in partnership with the GLA, ensuring that when residents need support with their Council Tax bills, they are able to access it.

6.24 Since the Draft Budget was presented to Cabinet in November 2025, a review of the calculation of the Council Tax Base for 2026/27 was approved by General Purposes Committee on 8 December 2025. The report acknowledged that several actions are currently being undertaken to strengthen debt management capacity and improve the collection rate, with the long-term collection rate held at 97.0%. The growth in the tax base was assumed to be 1.7%, which is slightly

lower than the government's assumption used in the provisional settlement. The government used a 5-year average which includes the effects of the one-off change to the Council Tax Support scheme in 2025. The result is a tax base for budget setting purposes of 110,475 for 2026/27.

6.25 The long-term collection rate target and the tax base growth assumptions in the MTFS will be kept under review throughout 2026/27, with a view to updating the assumptions again if necessary for the 2027/28 budget setting cycle.

6.26 Each financial year, the Mayor and London Assembly must prepare and approve a budget for each of the constituent bodies and a consolidated budget for the authority as a whole. At the date of despatch of this report, the Mayor has proposed to increase the GLA precept by 4.1% to £510.51 per Band D property in the 32 London Boroughs. This would mean that the overall Council Tax would increase by 4.8%. These figures are subject to change following the consultation process and confirmation of London Boroughs' tax bases. The final GLA budget will be considered by the London Assembly on 26 February 2026.

6.27 As the London Assembly meeting takes place after the meeting of Full Council to receive this report, Full Council will only be able to calculate the Brent share of the Council Tax precept and will not be able to formally approve the Council Tax precept for 2026/27 at the meeting. Instead the recommendations are for the Council to refer to the Council Tax setting committee, the setting of the Council Tax for the year 2026/27, in accordance with section 67(3) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992. The proposed terms of reference for the committee and the formal resolution to be approved by the committee, including the calculation of the Brent precept, are set out in Appendices Q (i) and Q (ii). Tables 2 to 4 show the proposed Council Tax for 2026/27 as per the formal resolution.

Table 2: Proposed Council Tax Valuation Bands: Brent

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
1,149.84	1,341.48	1,533.12	1,724.76	2,108.04	2,491.32	2,874.60	3,449.52

Table 3: Proposed Council Tax Valuation Bands: GLA

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
340.34	397.06	453.79	510.51	623.96	737.40	850.85	1,021.02

Table 4: Proposed Council Tax Valuation Bands: Total Charge

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
1,490.18	**1,738.54**	**1,986.91**	**2,235.27**	**2,732.00**	**3,228.72**	**3,725.45**	**4,470.54**

6.28 The Council Tax Setting Committee will meet on 27 February 2026 to formally approve the Council Tax for 2026/27 and allow Council Tax notices to be issued in line with the normal statutory timetable.

Business Rates

Reset of the Business Rates Retention system

6.29 Alongside the Fair Funding Review, the government committed to a reset in 2026/27 of the Business Rates Retention System (BRRS) for the first time since it was created in 2013. The reset of the BRRS has resulted in the following changes:

- Historic growth in business rates above the Business Rates Baseline for each authority rolled into the national total of Business Rates funding for redistribution by relative need.
- New growth in business rates above the Business Rates Baseline for each local authority to be retained in full by the local authority, until the next reset.
- However, a levy will be payable on all growth, by all authorities whether a top-up or tariff authority, with a higher levy payable as growth increases in bands, with the rates the same for all authorities. Previously only tariff authorities paid a levy, at a bespoke rate for that authority. As such Brent did not pay a levy on any growth.
- New Business Rates Baselines for all authorities calculated based on the 2025/26 Business Rates income, uplifted by September 2025 CPI (3.8%).
- The new BRRS is based on a Gross Rates Payable system, rather than a Net Rates Payable system. This means that Section 31 grant compensation for mandatory discounts will be included in the definition of NNDR income and paid to the Collection Fund. As a result of this, the Business Rates Baselines will be higher and top-up grants lower/tariffs higher than under the previous system.
- Baseline Funding Levels adjusted to reflect the new relative needs assessment in the Fair Funding Review 2.0. As 2026/27 is the first year of the new BRRS, the business rates income the government assumes the local authority will receive in 2026/27 is equal to the Baseline Funding Level. The actual amount included in the authority's budget may be higher because of forecast growth included in the NNDR1 form and the actual income received per the year end NNDR3 form may also be higher.
- In 2026/27, the Safety Net level, by which an authority's total income from Business Rates cannot fall below that proportion of their Baseline Funding

Level, is set at 100%. This is a transitional mechanism designed to protect authorities against any short-term reductions in funding because of the reset. This means that every authority is guaranteed to receive at least their Baseline Funding Level in 2026/27. Safety Net payments are paid from the Levies collected on growth. Initially under the new BRRS the higher safety net payments will come from the surplus on the Levy/Safety Net account, which has arisen due to the build-up of growth in the system and has been partially distributed to authorities in recent years.

- In 2027/28, the Safety Net will be set at 97% of the Baseline Funding Level, before returning to the pre-reset level of 92.5% in 2028/29.
- Historic compensation for under-indexation of the Business Rates multipliers, which was previously included as a separate grant within Core Spending Power and included as part of Business Rates income within Brent's Core Funding, is rolled into RSG from 2026/27.

Baseline Funding Level

6.30 The share of the total national business rates that Brent receives is called the Baseline Funding Level (BFL). This represents Brent's assessed relative need for funding from the BRRS.

6.31 Under the BRRS, each local authority also has a Business Rates Baseline, which is the amount of Business Rates that the authority is expected to collect based on the local tax base for Business Rates. Where the Business Rates Baseline exceeds the Baseline Funding Level for an authority, that authority must pay a tariff equal to the difference, which reduces the authority's funding back to its relative need. Where the Business Rates Baseline is lower than the Baseline Funding Level for an authority, the authority receives a top-up grant equal to the difference, which is funded for from the tariffs collected from tariff authorities.

6.32 Brent is a top-up authority. Therefore, it is allowed to keep its share of the business rates that it collects and in addition receives a top-up from the national business rates pool to bring funding back up to the BFL level. In the Local Government Finance Settlement, the new Baseline Funding Level for Brent following the reset of the BRRS is £132.4m, a £7.3m increase from 2025/26, of which £5m was assumed in the Draft Budget as a CPI increase (3.8%) on the 2025/26 Baseline Funding Level.

Pooling

6.33 Until 2025/26, Brent has been part of the Eight Authority Business Rates Pool. In forming a pool, the group of authorities were seen as a single entity from a business rates perspective and as a result have previously benefitted from retaining and sharing the levies some members would otherwise have to pay on their growth. The budgeted gain from this arrangement for Brent was £2.3m in 2025/26.

6.34 The changes to the levy system in 2026/27 mean that all of the eight authorities will now pay a levy on any growth. At best, this would reduce the benefit of such an arrangement, but at worst it would result in the authorities within the pool being worse off than they would have been if they had either formed a different pool or operated as single authorities.

6.35 As a result, the decision was taken to end the Eight Authority Pool arrangement at the end of 2025/26, which results in a reduction in income for Brent of £2.3m. This reduction in income was assumed in the Draft Budget presented to Cabinet in November 2025.

6.36 Whilst pooling may not have been considered appropriate for 2026/27, Brent will continue to consider the options ahead of the 2027/28 budget, with those options including reforming the Eight Authority pool (subject to agreement with the other authorities), forming a new pool with a different set of authorities and not joining a pool if it continues to be financially unviable.

Revaluation

6.37 From 1 April 2026, liabilities for business rates are based on the rateable value (RV) of properties on 1 April 2024, the first revaluation to take place following the introduction of the Non-Domestic Rating Act 2023, which made three-yearly revaluations a statutory requirement. Revaluations are carried out by Government, with Brent Council not having any responsibility for the setting of business rates.

6.38 This revaluation will result in a change to the business rates bills for individual businesses in line with the change in the open market annual rental value of the property between 2021 and 2024. Overall, Brent's RV increased to £452.6m, an increase of 21% on 2023.

6.39 The sector with the largest absolute increase in RV in Brent was the industrial sector, with smaller increases for the retail, office and other sectors. However, in percentage terms, it is the offices sector which sees the most significant increase, followed by the industrial sector. Within each sector, some RVs will have increased, while others decreased. In 2026/27, some businesses will receive transitional relief to partially offset large increases in their bills, which will then unwind over the revaluation period to 2029. Businesses not eligible for transitional relief or the Supporting Small Business Scheme will pay a transitional relief supplement of 1p on top of their normal multiplier. Bills will also take into account any other reliefs that a property is eligible for, such as small business rates relief, ensuring that individual businesses are not disproportionately affected by changes to their RV.

6.40 Under the BRRS, revaluations have a nil impact on the funding received by the Council as the government adjusts the amount receivable by the Council to its Baseline Funding Level.

Business Rates Multipliers

6.41 In 2026/27, the Government has increased the number of multipliers to five, by introducing new small business and standard multipliers for Retail, Hospitality and Leisure (RHL) hereditaments at 5p below the National small business and standard multipliers and a High-value multiplier set 2.8p above the National standard multiplier, applicable to all hereditaments with an RV of £500k or above. The RHL multipliers permanently replace the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure relief for which a Section 31 grant was previously paid by government.

6.42 The Government's changes to the RHL multipliers mean that Retail, Hospitality and Leisure businesses will permanently pay lower rates than businesses in other sectors occupying properties with similar rateable values, recognising the

significant impact that higher rates can have on the ability of that sector to operate. However, the new RHL multipliers represent a significantly lower reduction than the relief they replace, which coupled with the revaluation has resulted in some very large increases in business rates bills for some of the businesses in the sector.

6.43 On 27 January 2026, the Government confirmed details of a new additional relief for pubs and live music venues for the next three financial years. This relief will provide an additional discount of 15% to the business rates bills of pubs and live music venues from April 2026, once the Retail Hospitality and Leisure multiplier and eligibility for other reliefs have been applied. Additionally the bills for eligible businesses will be frozen in real terms in 2027/28 and 2028/29, meaning that they will only rise in line with inflation for the rest of the revaluation period. Local authorities will be fully compensated for the reduction in income through Section 31 grants.

6.44 The announcement also confirmed other measures and funding to support high streets, but at the time of despatch of this report, no further support for any other sector with business rates bills is expected before the new rates come into effect in April 2026.

6.45 Under the new system, government will compensate local authorities through Section 31 grants for the income lost because of the application of the lower RHL multipliers and will collect from them the supplementary income because of the application of the High Value multiplier.

6.46 In accordance with the regulations, the business rates multipliers should increase by CPI each year, which was 3.8% in September 2025. The government can however choose to freeze the multipliers. When it does this, it compensates local authorities for the income foregone. However, at a revaluation, the exercise is revenue neutral, meaning that the Government calculates what the multipliers must be to ensure that local authorities are fully compensated for the expected inflationary increase on their Business Rates income. This means that increases to the tax base between revaluations result in a reduction in the multipliers. Table 5 shows the multipliers for 2026/27.

Table 5: 2026/27 Business Rates multipliers

Multiplier	**2025/26**	**2026/27**	**Scope**
Small Business RHL multiplier		38.2p	RHL hereditaments with Rateable Values (RVs) below £51k
Standard RHL multiplier		43.0p	RHL hereditaments with Rateable Values (RVs) between £51k and £499,999

National small business multiplier	49.9p	43.2p	Non-RHL hereditaments with Rateable Values (RVs) below £51k
National standard multiplier	55.5p	48.0p	Non-RHL hereditaments with Rateable Values (RVs) between £51k and £499,999
High-value multiplier		50.8p	All hereditaments with RVs of £500k or above

Brent Liabilities

6.47 Brent Council is liable to pay the Collection Fund for the business rates on its commercial properties, where Brent is also the tenant, or the property is unoccupied. The largest of these liabilities is for the Brent Civic Centre, which will be subject to the High-value multiplier in 2026/27. The estimated increase in overall rateable value for Brent is 3%, while the reduction in the multiplier is approximately 8%. This results in a small reduction to the business rates bill for Brent.

Overall Funding from Business Rates

6.48 In 2026/27 the additional Section 31 grant to compensate for the income lost due to the under-indexation of the multipliers in 2025/26 and for previous years is rolled into RSG. Following this and the full reset of the BRRS, the total funding received by Brent under the business rates retention system in 2026/27 is £132.4m, a 6% increase on 2025/26.

7.0 Update and Review of Key Budget Assumptions – Departmental Pressures

7.1 Managing ongoing demand-led pressures remains a key aspect of the MTFS. The existing annual growth assumptions are in fact estimated increases in unavoidable expenditure. Those built into the MTFS cover areas such as contract inflation, pay inflation and demographics (by which is meant meeting the cost of providing existing services for a growing and changing population). These expenditure assumptions represent the annual costs that must be incurred just to stand still.

7.2 As the two areas most affected by the changes in demography and increasing contractual costs, the Service Reform and Strategy and Children, Young People and Community Development directorates undertook scenario and sensitivity analysis of the effects of different levels of inflation and demographic change. This determined a central case (that is a position between possible best and worst cases), which has been used as the basis of the contract inflation and demographic changes in these areas.

7.3 There are also considerable pressures in other areas. The unprecedented demand for temporary accommodation is putting considerable pressure on the budget for Residents and Housing Services. In addition, the rise in interest rates since the inflation crisis began in 2021 has also led to an increase in the cost of borrowing required for the Capital Programme.

7.4 A summary of these growth and cost pressures and a comparison to the Draft Budget are shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Growth / Cost Pressures

GROWTH			
	2026/27 Draft Budget	**2026/27 Final Budget**	**Difference**
Categories	**£m**	**£m**	**£m**
Demographics – Adult Social Care	4.2	8.2	4.0
Demographics – Children's Social Care	2.7	4.6	1.9
Demographics – Temporary Accommodation	4.0	4.0	0.0
Demographics - Other	0.2	0.2	0.0
	11.1	**17.0**	**5.9**
Inflation – Adult Social Care	8.3	12.3	4.0
Inflation – Children's Social Care	2.0	2.1	0.1
Inflation – Temporary Accommodation	4.0	4.0	0.0
Inflation – Other	2.8	4.6	1.8
	17.1	**23.0**	**5.9**
Capital Programme Financing	0.5	0.5	0.0
Service Changes - Other	0.0	11.2	11.2
Grand Total	**28.7**	**51.7**	**23.0**

7.5 The Service Changes - Other heading includes increases for the allocation of ringfenced grants, one-off investment in Public Realm, concessionary fares, amounts set aside as contingency and replenishing reserves.

7.6 As with the previous year, directorates will be required to control expenditure within their areas, without seeking additional growth from central budgets when risks or issues emerge that are not already recognised within the MTFS. Therefore, it is paramount to ensure that all directorates have adequate plans in place for any expected pressures and significant risks.

7.7 The following sections set out the pressures, mitigations and risks expected in 2026/27, as well as medium to long-term pressures and mitigations, for each service area.

Summary of Service Area Pressures

Residents and Housing Services

Homelessness Prevention

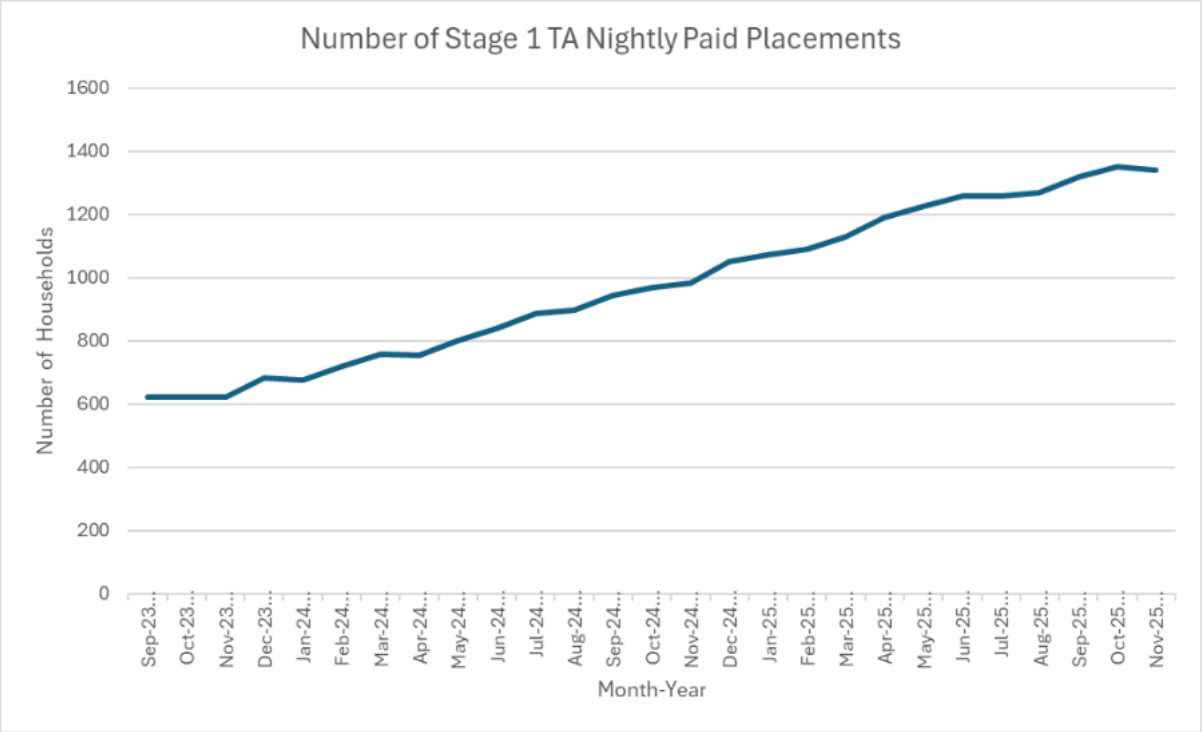
7.8 Housing Needs and Support continues to be the most significant area of risk and pressure for the Residents and Housing Services department. It is forecast to result in a £5m budgetary pressure in 2025/26, after £15m has been added to the service budget in comparison to the previous financial year. This is primarily driven by an exceptionally high and sustained level of demand for housing services and emergency accommodation, a challenge that is experienced nationally but particularly acute within London. The Housing Needs Service in Brent has seen a 21% increase in the number of homelessness presentations received in 2025/26 compared to 2024/25. By the end of 2025/26, this number of presentations is expected to reach 8,840. The total number of households in temporary accommodation in Brent has increased to 2,054 (by 8%) over the same period, and the number of families in emergency temporary accommodation has increased by 36%. As at the end of November 2025, the total number of homeless households living in emergency type accommodation had risen to 1,204, with the service placing an average of 30 households every week. This is a 121% rise in comparison to November 2023 that had 545 households in stage 1 temporary accommodation and a 10% increase when compared to November 2024.

7.9 For 2026/27, based on assumptions around current demand trends, exit rates remaining broadly stable, the current average cost of temporary accommodation, and known new supply of social housing, the average number of homeless households in emergency accommodation is forecast to rise to 1,575, creating an estimated £6.7m additional pressure on the Housing Needs and Support budget. Despite ongoing efforts to manage demand through a range of prevention and early intervention strategies, demand remains difficult to control, and the service is heavily dependent on the availability of suitable and affordable accommodation within the private rented sector. Under a worsening scenario, reflecting higher demand growth and reduced exits, household numbers could increase to 1,654, resulting in a budget pressure of approximately £7.5m. In a best-case scenario, assuming improved exits and moderated demand, household numbers are projected at 1,497, generating an estimated £5.5m pressure on the 2026/27 budget.

7.10 In addition, inflationary pressures arising from an increase in provider costs are expected to result in a further £1.4m cost to the 2026/27 budget.

7.11 In both cases, the central case has been built into the MTFS, which is based on projecting forward the expected increase in homelessness presentations, the additional cost of temporary accommodation and factoring in the impact of various interventions being put in place to manage the demand and costs.

7.12 Chart 1 illustrates the current trend in Stage 1 TA numbers:



7.13 As part of the provisional local government finance settlement, a number of housing grants are being brought together. The Homelessness, Rough Sleeping and Domestic Abuse Grant brings together existing resources: Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation (£0.04m in 2025/26), part of Homelessness Prevention Grant (£7.1m in 2025/26), Rough Sleeping Prevention, Recovery and Accommodation Grant (£1.6m in 2025/26). Including the TA element of the grant (£6.6m in 2025/26), total funding in 2025/26 was £15.34m.

7.14 The ring-fenced allocation for Brent in 2026/27 is £7.7m. Together with the TA element that is now within RSG (£6.6m), total funding for 2026/27 is £14.4m. This represents a decrease in overall funding of £1m as compared to 2025/26. Growth in the budget for homelessness prevention and temporary accommodation was included in the draft budget at the level required, but excluding any expectation of a change in grant funding. Additional growth is now included in the final budget to offset the reduction in grant.

7.15 London Councils conduct ongoing analysis and benchmarking against peer authorities to provide insight into the housing situation across the capital. Their latest findings indicate that housing pressures are escalating significantly beyond budgeted projections. Specifically, Councils' net deficits on homelessness prevention service expenditures are forecasted to increase by at least £170m (18.9%) in 2025/26 compared to 2024/25. Brent, in particular, has experienced a considerable 15% rise in its deficit between the 2023/24 and 2024/25 financial years. In March 2025, the total monthly expenditure on temporary accommodation (TA) across London reached £196m, marking a significant 86% increase compared to the same month in the previous year. During this period, the number of households placed in temporary accommodation rose by 13%. New research estimates a £740m temporary accommodation shortfall across London, equivalent to £202 per household. The equivalent of 11% of the average household's council tax bill is now spent

on temporary accommodation - equal to one in every nine council tax pounds spent. Further analysis shows boroughs now spending £5.5 million a day on homelessness prevention.

7.16 Given that these challenges are experienced across London, the availability of Bed and Breakfast (B&B) and annex accommodation is severely limited throughout the capital. This shortage of suitable accommodation is driving reliance on higher-cost providers and, in some cases, placements outside of Brent. Such arrangements not only increase financial pressures due to elevated accommodation costs but also impose additional burdens on families, including increased travel expenses for children attending schools in Brent.

7.17 The supply of settled TA properties, leased from private owners and used to move families out of B&B and Annexe accommodation has also contracted. This is due to fewer new properties being available under Private Sector Leasing (PSL) schemes, as owners are not renewing the lease for existing stock when the lease ends and there is less appetite from landlords on any new approaches. London's Private Rented Sector (PRS) is affected by multiple factors driving a reduction in the availability of properties for rent. The demand for housing is continuing to increase while supply is reducing across the whole market. Greater reliance on the PRS to house lower income households and increasingly limited housing benefits are making accommodation less affordable and available. Factors such as taxation, interest rate changes and uncertainties about future regulation are reducing availability at the lower end of the PRS.

7.18 Findings from London Councils indicate that the PRS in London is being impacted by multiple factors contributing to a decline in the availability of rental properties. While demand for housing continues to rise, the overall supply across the market is contracting. Increased dependence on the PRS to accommodate lower-income households, combined with tightening housing benefit provisions, is further limiting affordability and availability of rental properties. Supply-side pressures such as changes in taxation, rising interest rates, and uncertainties surrounding future regulatory frameworks are notably constraining the supply of lower-end PRS properties.

The Renters' Rights Act 2025

7.19 The Renters' Rights Act 2025 has now become law and whilst it is anticipated that some landlords will exit the private rented sector market, resulting in a possible increase of homeless applications, it is anticipated the new legislation will have an overall positive impact on homelessness demand. This is because the ban of Section 21 'no fault' evictions in the private rented sector, which is due to be implemented on 1 May 2026 means that all new possession claims will have to proceed under Section 8 instead. Landlords will be able to serve a Section 8 notice for reasons such as rent arrears, anti-social behaviour, selling the property or where a close family member needs to move back in. However, there will need to be clear evidence to support the grounds, and the claim can still be contested by the tenant. Recent analysis of 100 temporary accommodation cases showed that a notable proportion of PRS placements were triggered by Section 21 notices, meaning many of these avoidable evictions should no longer occur once the ban is in force. In addition, wider measures in the Act such as longer Section 8 notice periods, higher arrears

thresholds and limits on unfair rental practices are expected to help reduce preventable homelessness pressures. According to the Office for National Statistics average private rents across the UK increased by 5% in the 12 months to November 2025. In London, rent inflation rose by 4.3%, with the average monthly rent in Brent reaching £1.9k.

Managing Pressures

7.20 The Council has designed a programme of works to focus on containing the projected pressures. Several workstreams covering affordability of Temporary Accommodation and new and alternative supply have been set up. Officers are actively looking to renegotiate prices and identify alternative arrangements that would allow the Council to move some of the most expensive households with the aim of reducing costs for the Housing Needs service. Officers also continue to carefully consider and assess the needs of homelessness applications. In 2024/25, 49% of approaches were successfully prevented or relieved. At the end of November 2025, the average percentage of approaches that had successfully been prevented or relieved in 2025/26 reached 51%.

7.21 The Council is expecting 892 new properties to be added to its portfolio during 2025/26 and 2026/27 as part of the capital programme. These are mostly HRA properties, some of which may house people in temporary accommodation, depending on allocations, therefore alleviating pressures on this service. So far in 2025/26, of the 66 social housing allocations made to homeless households from one of the new developments, 26 were direct offers targeting households in the most expensive forms of temporary accommodation. These households were prioritised based on their placement in higher priority bands (A and B), with the aim of reducing overall accommodation costs. The remaining 40 properties were allocated through Locata via the Choice-Based Lettings (CBL) system. These were offered to households who submitted bids and are in the highest priority banding, with allocations made in order of longest waiting time. Every allocation to a homeless household saves approximately £17k in the Housing Needs and Support budget.

7.22 The increase in supply for new temporary accommodation is also achieved by seeking new accommodation via acquisition or leasing. Two grant-funded programmes are currently supporting the delivery of temporary accommodation: the Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) and the Council Homes Acquisition Programme (CHAP). In 2025/26, it is expected that 17 properties will have been successfully acquired under these programmes and for 2026/27, the number of acquisitions are anticipated to be in the region of 13.

7.23 Various leasing options continue to be assessed to secure cost-effective nightly paid placements and the Council has a number of options currently under consideration. Negotiations, assessments and evaluations require time and a sizeable impact is not anticipated to be achieved in 2025/26, however it is forecast to be more prominent in 2026/27.

7.24 The Council's wholly owned housing company, i4B, that is set up to acquire, let, and manage a portfolio of affordable, good quality PRS properties, is continuing its street property acquisition programme and had a target to acquire 15 homes in 2025/26. Properties are let to homeless families at Local Housing Allowance (LHA) levels. This enables the Council to either prevent or discharge

its homelessness prevention duty and therefore reduce temporary accommodation costs whilst also ensuring families have a secure and responsible landlord. As LHA rates for 2025/26 were frozen, acquisition price caps went down due to increased cost of borrowing relative to previous favourable rate loans that had been used up. However, as at the end of December 2025, six properties have been acquired and a further nine are in progress. If these are all completed, then i4B will meet their annual target for the financial year. Negotiations are in progress for additional properties in the borough. The company's current portfolio results in an annual saving in excess of £6m in Temporary Accommodation costs.

7.25 Whilst building, leasing and new acquisitions would not solely resolve the homelessness crisis, the Council is doing everything within its powers and the funding available to source new supply. Any new supply would help to avoid additional housing costs and mitigate the risk of further overspends. The assumptions around new supply have been built into the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Supported Exempt Accommodation

7.26 The supported exempt accommodation properties are another area leading to pressures on the Council finances and presented a new budgetary risk for 2024/25. This is due to providers not being constrained by the LHA caps like other landlords and are therefore able to charge a higher rent once they justify that they are providing support. The amount of Housing Benefit subsidy is dependent on the Rent Officer decision from the Valuation Office Agency and is awarded based on the claim related rent. This is a national challenge as there is a need for better regulation around the agreed criteria that a provider should meet to be considered as a Supported Exempt Accommodation provider and further clarity on what constitutes as minimal care that would enable a universal approach when considering an individual's support needs. At Brent a detailed review has taken place within the Adult Social Care and Single Homelessness Team to ensure providers can adequately fulfil the care and support duties required for Supported Exempt Accommodation. The main routes of referrals are coming from the Voluntary Sector from services such as Crisis, Thames Reach and Single Homeless Prevention Service (SHPS). Historically, this has not been a significant budget pressure for the Council. However, an overspend of £4m occurred in 2024/25, and a pressure of £2.1m is anticipated in 2025/26. For 2026/27, this pressure is projected to reduce to £1.9m, based on assumptions of improved service efficiencies delivered through the dedicated working group mentioned in the paragraph below, stabilising demand, and the continuation of current mitigation measures that have encouraged landlords to partner with a registered provider so that Housing Benefit can be fully reclaimed.

7.27 A dedicated working group has been established within the Council with the objective of minimising opportunities for exploitative landlords to enter the Supported Exempt Accommodation market. The group has developed a clear strategy outlining the Council's processes for reviewing both new landlords seeking to join this market and those already operating within it. Senior managers have met with the providers with the greatest subsidy loss to the Council to discuss options to reduce this loss. The reviews process will also

assess individuals' care needs and verify that providers are delivering the appropriate level of care. This strategy and reviews process should bring the cost of SEA under control and, in time, should lead to cost avoidance and/or savings.

7.28 A consultation on the implementation of the Supported Exempt Accommodation Act was launched in February 2025 seeking views on plans to implement measures set out in the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023 and on the government's proposal to introduce a locally led licensing regime for supported housing across England, and new National Supported Housing Standards for the support provided. Brent Council submitted a substantial response to this outlining the Council's broad support for the Act and areas where it could go further. As the Government analyses the responses to the consultation on standards and licensing, the Council is proactively preparing to develop and implement the new licensing team. At the same time, the Council continues to make sure its activities and strategies remain aligned with emerging regulatory requirements.

Household Support Fund

7.29 The Household Support Fund (HSF) is a key programme of discretionary support designed and administered within Resident Services but financed by central government. In recent years, it has helped support Brent's most 'vulnerable' households, including funding free school meals provision outside of term time, dispensing welfare benefits and debt advice (for instance, through contracting with organisations such as Citizens Advice, the Credit Union).

7.30 In 2026/27, the Household Support Fund has been merged with the Discretionary Housing Payments into the consolidated Crisis and Resilience Fund (CRF). The primary objective of this fund is to both provide a safety net for those on low incomes who encounter a financial shock and to invest in building local financial resilience to enable individuals and communities to better deal with crises in the long-term, reducing crisis need. Brent's allocation from the Crisis and Resilience Fund is £7.8m, an increase of £1.3m (19%) on the 2025/26 allocation.

7.31 Authorities must allocate the CRF funding across the following CRF components:

- Crisis Payment: Providing support to those in crisis
- Housing Payment: Providing financial support towards housing needs, to those who face a shortfall in meeting their housing costs
- Resilience Services: Funding for services delivered by Authorities or external providers to improve financial resilience
- Community Coordination: Investment in activities that connect and enhance the local support landscape

7.32 At the date of despatch of this report, detailed proposals for how this funding will be allocated across these components are not available. However, these will be brought forward before 2026/27 to ensure that Brent uses the funding to support Brent's residents in the most appropriate way and in accordance with the grant conditions.

Savings

7.33 The department has a £2.4m savings requirement for 2026/27, supported by a range of proposals developed to deliver this target. The proposals primarily focus on reducing expenditure through more efficient commissioning and procurement practices, the implementation of digital improvements, enhancements to resident experience, and the delivery of wider operational efficiencies. Of the total savings, £0.5m is expected to be delivered through the transition of households from Stage 1 accommodation into more sustainable Stage 2 accommodation under lease arrangements. A further £0.8m saving is forecast through increased uptake of digital self-service and improvements in data quality, while £0.1m is anticipated from a reduction in losses associated with supported exempt accommodation subsidy.

Children, Young People and Community Development

Children, Families and Youth consolidated grant

7.34 The government has announced a new consolidated Children, Families and Youth Grant.

7.35 The first three grants highlighted in Table 7 (within core spending power) have now been branded as one Families First Partnership grant. It is unclear why MHCLG has chosen to brand these elements as a single grant as each grant is ring fenced. Each of these elements will be subject to its own conditions, effectively making the grant a branding of three separate grants. The forecast allocations are based on the current year's published allocations for the predecessor grants.

Table 7: Brent allocations of Children, Families and Youth Grant and predecessor grants 2024/25 to 2028/29

Brent's Children, Families and Youth Consolidated Grant (all ringfenced)	**Included in core spending power**	**2024/25 (£m)**	**2025/26 (£m)**	**2026/27 (£m)**	**2027/28 (£m)**	**2028/29 (£m)**
Children's social care prevention grant	Yes		1.40	1.40	1.40	1.40
FFPP (previously Supporting Families grant within C&F grant)	Yes	1.84	1.84	1.84	1.84	1.84
Transformation fund - new funding for children's social care	Yes			4.49	4.49	3.37

The Pupil Premium Plus Post-16 Grant	No		0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08
Holiday activities and food programme	No		1.01	1.12	1.08	1.08
Total		**1.84**	**4.33**	**8.93**	**8.89**	**7.77**

7.36 The 'Families First Partnership' portion of the consolidated Children, Families and Youth Grant comprises of the 2025/26 Children's Social Care Prevention grant and the Supporting Families ('Family Help') element of the 2025/26 Children and Families grant. The total pot is subject to redistribution using purely the children and young people's services relative needs formula used in the Fair Funding Review. This grant has grown nationally by £330m in 2026/27, staying cash flat in 2027/28 and then reducing by £124m in 2028/29. Local authorities are guaranteed their 2025/26 allocation of the grants as a minimum as reflected in the table above for Brent.

7.37 The 'Holiday Activity and Food' (HAF) portion of the grant is a direct replacement for the Holiday Activities and Food grant. The 2026/27 amount is slightly higher due to a temporary introduction of additional administrative funding, with its own distribution method. The HAF grant is within the baseline of the Revenue Support Grant.

7.38 The 'Pupil Premium Plus Post-16' element is a direct rolling in of the grant, at existing allocations and amounts.

7.39 The government has confirmed the continuation of the Start for Life services, now branded: "Best Start in Life: Healthy Babies", into 2026/27. This is a key part of the Giving Every Child the Best Start in Life strategy, which sets out the government's continued focus on enhancing early years and family services. The objective of the programme is to join up and enhance services delivered through transformed family hubs in local authority areas, ensuring all parents and carers can access the support they need when they need it. Brent's provisional grant allocation for the programme next year is £1.9m, a £0.3m increase from 2025/26. This grant allocation will be £1.8m in 2027/28 and increasing back to £1.9m in 2028/29 as shown in Table 8.

Table 8: Distribution of Best Start in Life: Healthy Babies funding 2026/27 to 2028/29

Strand	**%**	**2026/27 Allocation (£'000)**	**2027/28 Allocation (£'000)**	**2028/29 Allocation (£'000)**
Best Start Family Hubs delivery grant - programme	22%	454.5	371.7	381.7
Best Start Family Hubs delivery grant – capital	5%	90.9	92.7	94.5
Parenting support	17%	314.9	318.9	332.9

Home learning environment support	13%	231.4	234.3	244.5
Perinatal mental health and parent-infant relationships	28%	530.2	530.2	530.2
Infant feeding support	14%	259.9	259.9	259.9
Healthy babies offers and parent and carer panels	1%	26.6	26.6	26.6
Total	**100%**	**1,908.4**	**1,834.3**	**1,870.3**

7.40 The children's social care placement costs that relate to support for LAC and Children with Disabilities are projected to rise by 10.8% in 2026/27, driven by demographic changes and inflationary uplifts aligned with agreed rate increases with providers and the September 2025 CPI. In addition to this, the current quarter 3 forecast has presented a £2.1m placements budget pressure due to increased demand. The anticipated growth to balance the CYP placements budgets for the upcoming year equates to £6.7m and this has been accounted for in the council's MTFS.

7.41 Also included in the MTFS is an allocation of £0.3m against the SEN Transport budget, towards forecast increases against the contract cost, in consideration of the increase in the London Living Wage in the new financial year.

Service Reform and Strategy

Adult Social Care and Strategic Commissioning & Capacity Building

7.42 The budgets for Adult Social Care and Strategic Commissioning in 2026/27 face significant pressures due to the service being primarily demand-driven, with pressures stemming from both demographic and inflationary factors.

7.43 Brent is experiencing an ageing population, leading to an expected rise in residents aged 65 and over. Longer life expectancies and complex care needs contribute to increased costs. Despite the Council anticipating growth within the budget, there is a risk of demand surpassing planning assumptions, and needs becoming more complex, which could lead to budget pressures. There has been a 4% increase in the number of residents supported in 2025/26. At the same time, the average weekly cost of Supported Living, Residential and Nursing care have increased considerably. Supported Living is up 20% compared to last year, Residential and Nursing have increased by 27%.

7.44 As at Quarter 3, the forecast overspend for 2025/26 has increased to £8.1m. This has worsened over the course of the year, as a result of increases in the cost of care, especially the cost of new packages of care and the non-delivery of some savings. Changes to the employers' contributions for National Insurance has caused significant financial strain for the care sector and this has resulted in the increased care costs for the Council. At the time of the Draft Budget, growth for demographic and inflationary pressures was modelled at £12.5m. Since the publication of the Draft Budget, a review of the financial position underpinning the forecast reported at Quarter 3 has been conducted

and additional growth of £8m has been identified to specifically account for the cost increases seen this year that will carry over into 2026/27.

7.45 Opportunities have been identified which include using technology to pre-empt demand for adult social care and provide preventative insight. Costs will continue to be managed through commissioning approaches, working in partnership with other councils in the West London Alliance to set residential and nursing price bands/ negotiate prices for the care home Dynamic Purchasing Vehicle on an annual basis. This aims to balance fair and sustainable rates of care through a greater degree of control over current and future increases and help mitigate the risks to the council of exposure to market forces that drive up costs. Brent will also continue to work with other West London boroughs and through wider London networks, sharing information available to commissioning teams and brokers to help manage placement prices sustainably.

7.46 Within adult social care there is a national challenge with the recruitment and retention of staff, in particular Qualified Social Workers and Occupational Therapists. This has meant that during 2025/26, 15% of the staffing establishment has been filled by agency staff. There has been management action to convert agency staff to permanent staff and there have been 9 conversions in 2025/26 so far. This work will continue to review the agency staff, reducing the number and cost within the department. Without these measures there is a risk of agency staff numbers increasing as well as the associated costs of recruiting agency staff.

7.47 The department also manages the Better Care Fund (BCF), a national programme aimed at developing health and social care integration. It is a pooled budget arrangement between the North West London Integrated Care Board (ICB) and the Council. The overall approved pooled budget for 2026/27 has increased in cash terms by 4.4%. However, assuming pay uplifts of 5% next year, this will be a real-terms reduction. The Discharge Fund which was previously a separate grant has now been consolidated within the improved BCF. DFG (Disabled Facilities Grant) is yet to be announced for 2026/27.

7.48 During the 2025/26 financial year the Council's Community Equipment provider declared insolvency. Alternative provision for the equipment was secured; however this has come at an increased cost. Growth of £0.5m has been included in the budget for 2026/27 to account for this.

Public Health

7.49 The budget for this department includes the ring-fenced Public Health Grant. From 2026/27, previously separate public health grants have been consolidated into the Public Health Grant, therefore the uplift partly reflects consolidation rather than all new funding. For Brent, the published allocation increases from £26.2m in 2025/26 to £28.5m in 2026/27, rising to £29.1m in 2027/28 and £29.6m in 2028/29, however on a like-for-like basis (adjusting for Drug and Alcohol Treatment Recovery Improvement Grant (DATRIG) and Stop Smoking now included within Public Health Grant) the underlying increase into 2026/27 is around £0.5m (2%). Most expenditure is committed through commissioned arrangements, including NHS-delivered services, and there remains a risk that future grant uplifts may be insufficient to meet pay and wider contract inflation

and demand-led pressures, particularly where Agenda for Change related increases continue to outpace annual funding growth. Some of the Public Health funds will be used do a survey with young people in regard to Vaping, Smoking and chewing tobacco.

Leisure

7.50 The Leisure service is reliant on income generation to offset running costs and remains sensitive to demand and wider cost pressures. From March 2026, Vale Farm Leisure Centre is expected to transition to a new agency delivery model (subject to contract award), under which the Council will act as principal and retain leisure income and VAT responsibility. The new arrangement is expected to improve the financial position by around £0.5m per annum compared with the current Tri-Borough contract. Willesden Sports Centre continues to face significant pressure from PFI contract indexation and utilities, and the MTFS includes growth provision to meet the Council's contractual obligations on a prudent basis.

Neighbourhoods and Regeneration

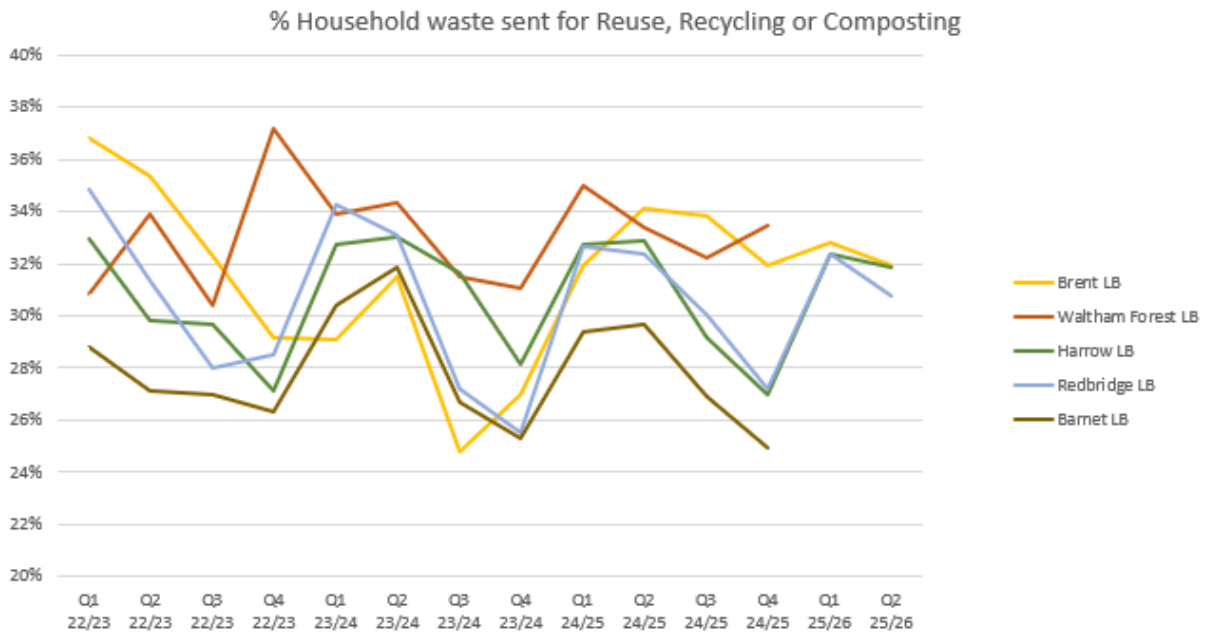
Public Realm

7.51 New contractual arrangements for several key Public Realm services, including parking and waste management, commenced in 2023/24. The most significant of these is the waste management contract, which is driving a financial pressure. These issues stem from the challenges around reducing residual waste and increasing the amount of waste diverted for recycling.

7.52 The service continues to implement a range of engagement and enforcement activities aimed at reducing residual waste volumes. These measures have contributed to actual tonnages collected between April and October 2025 being at a better, lower level than originally forecast. This reduction is further evidenced by the 'Pay As You Throw' rebates received for Q1 & Q2 2025/26.

7.53 Based on current performance and trajectory, the service anticipates a continued helpful downward trend in residual waste tonnages for the remainder of the financial year. The revised forecast for 2025/26 reflects a 3% reduction compared to the original projection.

7.54 Chart 2 shows the percentage of household waste sent for recycling alongside statistical nearest neighbours, as per ONS data:



7.55 As is shown in Chart 2, Brent shows similar seasonal fluctuations in their data as the other comparator Boroughs. The recycling rates tend to peak in Q1 & 2 with increased garden waste recycling over the summer months, and also the impact of school holidays on recycling tonnages and composition. This tends to slow in Q3 as we head into the winter months.

7.56 The data shows a steady increase in Brent's recycling rate from the end of 23/24, demonstrating the effect of recent service changes, including the introduction of blue recycling sacks within the Borough. The rate has been able to be maintained to an extent, with a smaller decline in the rate over Winter compared to other Boroughs. Targeted engagement remains a priority for Brent to ensure that recycling is maximised going forward.

7.57 An upgrade to the food waste recycling service at communal properties was introduced in 2024/25 which has seen performance improve. The upgrade saw the installation of 140 new communal food units in estates and the distribution of 28,000 indoor caddies and rolls of liners to flat residents. Following this roll-out the amount of food waste collected from communal properties between July and December 2025 was 38% higher than over the same period last year (an increase of 54 tonnes). There is still work to do to improve recycling at flats above shops, such as rolling out food waste at these properties to further improve performance. In addition, the waste education team are running several small projects to combat negative behaviours and reduce rates of contamination.

7.58 A compounding problem is that the price per tonne disposal cost continues to rise significantly. In 2024/25 it was up by 8.5% compared to the previous year and in 2025/26 up by a further 1%. For 2026/27, draft figures suggest the costs will rise by a further 2.7%. These costs are largely beyond the Council's control and reflect high levels of inflation in recent years. This therefore reflects the importance of the management of Brent's recycling rate to reduce the residual tonnage and the associated disposal costs.

7.59 In addition to this, the recyclate reprocessing contract has seen fluctuations in material volumes, rejection rates, and market prices. In the first year of the contract some financial pressures were faced due to challenges around a lower tonnage collected for recycling and more loads were being rejected.

7.60 There has been a significant improvement however in the second year of the contract and processing costs have reduced. In 2023/24, 33% of recyclable material collected was downgraded upon arrival at the processor. Considering the high percentage of rejected loads, specific measures were introduced with a focus on trying to get better quality material to the reprocessing facilities. This can be seen in the reduction of processing costs for 2024/25 due to a lower gate rejection rate of 18%, which has in turn helped the Council to achieve a higher rebate value, through the sale of recyclates. In 2025/26 the gate rejection rate achieved to date has reduced further to 5.9%.

7.61 Table 9 shows the improvement in tonnage and cost reduction from 2023/24 to 2024/25. Co-mingled tonnage refers to the weight of mixed recyclable materials collected together in a single stream, rather than being separated by type.

Table 9: Improvement in tonnage and cost reduction from 2023/24 to 2024/25

Year	Total Tonnage Collected	Co-mingled collected tonnage	% Co-mingled downgraded	Paper & Card collected Tonnage	% Paper & Card Downgraded	Processing costs	Rebate
2023/24	19,822	13,823	23%	5,999	0%	£2,270,173	£493,364
2024/25	20,629	14,611	18%	6,018	0%	£1,555,804	£739,926

7.62 As is shown in table 9, the percentage of the co-mingled recycling that has been downgraded has reduced which shows that more of it is able to be processed. Furthermore, it is positive that the tonnages reported are consistent. This indicates that residents have taken to the new requirements and are actively recycling, with indicators showing Paper and Card recycling participation amongst kerbside properties at 80%.

7.63 There is still work to be done to further improve the contamination in the accepted tonnage and further reduce costs. There has been a downturn in DMR (Dry Mixed Recycling) tonnage across the country, and this is largely due to a change in purchasing habits and manufacturers utilising less packaging.

7.64 To reduce contamination rates further, a programme is currently being rolled out to educate residents on placing their recycling loose in the containers rather than in plastic bags. It has been shown that the use of plastic bags can lead to recycling being marked as contaminated and therefore rejected. The next phase will be to target food waste in recycling bins. Food waste makes up approximately 5% of the prohibited items in the recycling bin, so a targeted campaign is being devised with the aim of rolling that out in the spring / summer of 2026.

7.65 Whilst there has been an upturn in recycling more of these materials than previously, rebate values are largely dictated by market material prices, which are not within service control. Table 10 highlights three different material types which have experienced the largest movements in terms of unit price.

Table 10: Material types with the largest movements in unit price (per tonne)

	Aluminium Cans		Pot, Tubs and Trays		PET Clear	
Year	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low
2023/24	£17.22	£6.41	£4.61	-£0.67	£16.21	£6.71
2024/25	£31.34	£13.84	£4.15	-£4.75	£33.75	£11.71

7.66 In 2025, the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) policy was introduced which shifts the financial and physical responsibility for managing products, such as packaging, to the producers themselves after they have been used. The goal is to encourage more sustainable practices, by making producers pay the costs of collection and recycling. Brent will receive £5.2m of EPR funding for 2025/26. Local authorities will receive this funding in quarterly payments with funding for Q1&2 received in December 2025, followed by two instalments expected between January and March.

7.67 EPR funding for 2026/27 has been confirmed at £5.3m which reflects a 1.93% uplift to account for the impact of inflation. Going forward payments may be adjusted based on updated data, and while initial funding is Treasury backed, future income may decline as producers reduce packaging costs.

7.68 Additional waste reforms include the introduction of the Emissions Trading Scheme for energy-from-waste facilities from 2028, adding costs to fossil-based emissions to incentivise reductions, and the implementation of a Deposit Return Scheme from October 2027, encouraging container recycling through a refundable deposit scheme. Work alongside the WLWA is ongoing to plan for these future reforms, but currently limited detail is available.

7.69 Parking continues to perform well, however, as it acts as a deterrent, its effectiveness may shift over time alongside behaviour changes. Ongoing monitoring and potential adjustments to enforcement measures, such as camera locations, will be important to maintain performance.

7.70 Since the Draft Budget was presented to Cabinet in November 2025, the 2025/26 financial forecast for Neighbourhoods & Regeneration improved, as is reported in the Quarter 3 Financial Report. N&R are reporting a £2m positive variance which largely comes from additional income generated by the Parking service based on PCN issuance . Improved performance measures implemented by Parking include installing new CCTV cameras to support the expansion of School Streets, relocating cameras from areas where compliance has increased, and introducing CCTV enforcement at yellow box junctions that were not previously monitored.

7.71 It is important to note that any surplus on the parking account is governed by Section 55 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 which specifies how this surplus may be used. Brent uses this surplus to meet the cost of concessionary fares; providing the London ‘Freedom Pass’ to residents. The concessionary fares cost has risen by 44% over the past two years, and is budgeted to increase by a further 14% for 2026/27.

Inclusive Regeneration & Climate Action

7.72 Economic pressures have led to the scaling back or cancellation of several major developments, significantly impacting Inclusive Regeneration &

Employment. The directorate is highly reliant on commercial planning income and associated streams, such as Building Control fees. This challenge is compounded by regulatory changes under the Building Safety Regulator (BSR), which now allocates most major project work directly to Local Authorities, removing the department's ability to compete for additional projects. Projects offered to the Council from the BSR are declined due to staff shortages and insufficient capacity to deliver the chargeable work. In response, the service is advancing recruitment initiatives to strengthen the Council's market position and build capacity to deliver chargeable work assigned by the BSR, thereby supporting income generation.

7.73 Whilst it is hoped that the economy will recover there is uncertainty about when this could reflect in a recovery of planning income. In the short term, an increase in planning fees could help to mitigate some of the impact. In response, the department is actively reviewing it's workforce planning to accommodate the shift in demand. This includes reviewing recruitment processes, enhancing career development pathways, increasing agency pay rates, and considering a commissioning-based delivery model to improve resilience and capacity. By increasing staffing levels and improving retention, the team will be better positioned to accept chargeable projects offered by the BSR, thereby maximising income generation. Although income is unlikely to return to pre-regulatory change levels, a strengthened workforce will enable the Council to optimise income from chargeable work where possible.

7.74 The three options that are being discussed to support Building Control are 1) all in-house with recruitment and salary review, 2) full commissioning out of the service or 3) a hybrid delivery model. A full options appraisal will be undertaken by the end of Q1 2026/27, to allow the proposed solution to be taken forward.

7.75 Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) income is expected to remain constrained in the coming years, primarily due to a reduction in housing delivery and planning approvals. As CIL income is directly linked to new development, any decrease in construction activity directly impacts income levels. CIL income for 2026/27 is forecast to be in the range of £10–£20 million; however, this is highly dependent on planned developments commencing as anticipated. Any delays or non-delivery of development would result in this income not being realised, which limits the reliability of the forecast.

7.76 Furthermore, the implementation of new building safety regulations and ongoing delays within the planning system have contributed to a slower pace of housing development. These factors are contributing towards the challenges to maintaining a robust development pipeline, thereby reducing the potential for future CIL receipts. Governments proposed emergency measures in London to provide some temporary relief from CIL until 2029 would place further downward pressure on CIL receipts.

7.77 Under CIL regulations local authorities are permitted to retain up to 5% of CIL receipts to cover administrative costs. This supports staffing costs and other necessary overheads within the Council. Continued lower levels of CIL receipts would place pressure on the services that rely on this element of funding, requiring alternative sources to maintain those services.

Property & Assets

7.78 Within Property & Assets, the Commercial Property team has experienced pressures on income collection in recent years, driven by lease expiries and wider market conditions following the pandemic, including a sustained decline in demand for commercial space. These conditions have required the service to adapt its approach, including the selective use of rent-free incentives to attract and retain tenants. While necessary in a competitive market, such incentives have a direct impact on service revenue and therefore require careful financial oversight to ensure long-term sustainability.

7.79 In response, the service is delivering a focused programme of active asset management to stabilise and grow income. This includes progressing new lettings and future development opportunities, using formal legal routes to secure lease renewals and regularise long-standing informal arrangements, and strengthening returns through rent reviews and the recovery of historic and disputed arrears via structured repayment plans. These measures are complemented by a targeted programme of capital disposals to reduce exposure to under-performing assets, alongside carefully managed, time-limited rent concessions that support community use while protecting long-term income growth.

Finance and Resources

7.80 Continued investment in the council's debt recovery function remains a critical component of the Council's overall financial strategy. The business case approved last year has demonstrated clear and measurable success, with enhanced recovery processes, strengthened case management, and better use of data analytics contributing to improved collection rates across council tax, business rates, housing benefit overpayments, adult social care debt, and sundry debts. This improvement has supported the council's broader financial resilience by reducing arrears, improving cashflow, and limiting the need for more costly interventions later in the cycle. The return on investment achieved to date provides a strong foundation for further targeted enhancements to systems and capacity.

7.81 Building on this positive trajectory, it is proposed to allocate £0.5m of funding for continued investment that focuses on sustaining momentum and embedding long-term efficiencies. Additional resources will enable further automation, improved customer engagement, and the expansion of early intervention approaches that prevent debts from escalating. These measures not only support higher collection levels but also contribute to a more consistent resident experience by ensuring timely communication and support for those in financial difficulty. Continued investment will therefore strengthen the council's financial position while aligning with the Council's commitment to responsible, fair and proactive debt management.

Capital Financing

7.82 The Capital Financing budget covers the Council's revenue expenditure related to prudential borrowing used for capital projects. This budget covers interest payments on past loans taken to finance historical capital expenditure, interest payments on new loans required for the capital programme, loan premiums

from prematurely refinanced loans, and Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP), a prudent charge for the repayment of borrowing. Additionally, the budget receives interest income expected from the Council's treasury cash balances and loans advanced to third parties, including the Council's subsidiary companies.

7.83 As the Council becomes increasingly dependent on prudential borrowing to fund the capital programme as internal funding sources such as reserves has been depleted, and the availability of suitable grants has reduced, the Capital Financing budget is anticipated to come under severe pressure. In addition, the annuity method of MRP and high interest rates means an increasing cost of financing historical capital expenditure. For example, the current cost of a 30-year maturity Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) loan is 6.10% compared to 2.29% only four years ago.

7.84 Officers are seeking to mitigate the impact of these factors including by prioritising invest to save capital projects, robustly assessing the viability of major capital schemes and seeking alternative ways of financing capital expenditure. As part of the Property Strategy, officers are developing a disposals strategy within the Council's asset management strategy to generate capital receipts to finance capital expenditure. In addition, growth of £0.5m in capital financing has been factored into the budget for 2026/27.

7.85 More details about the current challenges facing the Capital Programme and the impact of high capital financing costs are contained in section 14.

8.0 Overall summary of the budget position

8.1 The main general fund revenue budget for 2026/27 is set out in detail in Appendices A and B. The budget includes £51.7m of growth items, £10.4m of savings and £26.6m of increases to service area budgets as a result of the consolidation of service area funding into Core Funding in the Fair Funding Review. Provided that the key assumptions set out in this report remain reasonably stable, then expenditure in 2026/27 should be contained within budget. The overall revenue budget for 2026/27 is set out in Table 11:

Table 11: Net Revenue Budget

REVENUE BUDGET	2026/27 £m
Service Area Budgets	
Service Reform and Strategy	204.5
Children, Young People and Community Development	110.8
Neighbourhoods and Regeneration	35.8
Finance and Resources	32.3
Residents and Housing Services	59.9
Total Service Area Budgets	**443.3**
Capital Financing	39.4
Central Budgets	16.6
Total Budget Requirement	**499.3**
Funding	
Revenue Support Grant	(101.0)
Business Rates	(132.4)
Council Tax	(190.6)
Specific Grants	(75.3)
Total Funding	**(499.3)**

8.2 At Quarter 3 the Council was forecasting a net overspend of £12.5m on the general fund budget, arising mainly from pressures within Adult Social Care, Children's Social Care and Housing.

8.3 Significant additional growth for temporary accommodation costs of £8.0m has been built into the 2026/27 budget to recognise that the pressures on the homelessness prevention budget are ongoing and are not likely to reduce in the immediate future. However, together with the funding received through the Homelessness, Prevention and Domestic Abuse Grant, it is expected that the revised budget will be sufficient to cover the forecasted expenditure in 2026/27.

8.4 Of the total £51.7m of growth included in the proposed 2026/27 budget, growth of £20.5m has been built into the 2026/27 budget for Adult Social Care and £6.7m for Children's Social Care, with £10m of this added since the Draft Budget and following the provisional settlement, which provided additional funding for Brent. The 2% Adult Social Care precept will generate an additional £3.6m of Council Tax income to support this investment in the service. As with Temporary Accommodation, it is expected that the revised budget will be sufficient to cover the forecasted expenditure in 2026/27.

8.5 Outcome of the Fair Funding Review has provided additional funding to support Brent in returning to a more sustainable budget position in the medium-term and that is to be welcomed. However, that alone will not be sufficient to avoid requiring additional savings to cover further unexpected increases in costs. If the current overspending continues, then the budget position will continue to be unsustainable and additional savings will be required in future years for Brent to be able to balance the budget in those years.

9.0 Other Key Budget Themes

Employee Costs

9.1 The Local Government pay award for 2025/26 had a flat percentage increase of 3.2% on all pay grades. This is a change from recent years, when the pay award included a combination of a fixed absolute increase at lower pay grades and a flat percentage at higher pay grades. The estimated cost to Brent's General Fund revenue budget is £3.8m in 2025/26 and is contained within the growth that was included in the 2025/26 budget in February 2025.

9.2 The pay award for 2026/27 has yet to be agreed and the type of pay award is also unknown, which makes budgeting for future pay awards challenging. However, an estimate can be made based on inflation expectations. The MTFS for 2026/27 in respect of pay inflation does not include any growth, because of an expected decrease in the employer's pension contributions following the pension fund valuation in March 2026. From 2027/28 onwards, the MTFS is assuming increases in line with a return to the Bank of England's 2% inflation target.

Fees and Charges

9.3 The Council provides a wide range of services and the ability to charge for some of these services has always been a key funding source to support the cost of providing the service.

9.4 The Council provides both statutory and discretionary chargeable services. Where fees and charges apply to statutory services these are often set nationally, for example some planning and licensing fees. Discretionary Services are those that an authority has the power to provide but is not obliged to. These cover a wide range of services such as Libraries, Waste, Culture, Sport & Recreation, and Parking etc.

9.5 Where the Council has discretion over charges for services provided, detailed advice and guidance will be issued. In setting fees and charges consideration is given to the recovery of both direct costs (staffing, materials, bought in services) and indirect costs (office accommodation, back-office support) of the service.

9.6 Setting fees and charges at an optimum and fair level can be challenging due to all variables that need to be considered. Whilst the Council is committed to supporting the borough's residents through the current economic challenges, a freeze on increases in fees and charges is not an affordable option.

9.7 A comprehensive review of the Council's fees and charges is currently being undertaken to identify opportunities for the maximisation of income and deliver at least £0.5m of additional recurring income for 2026/27 and beyond. This will be informed by data analysis to ensure full cost recovery, and benchmarking with other Councils. In addition, the Council will consider the likely impact of any increase in fees and charges, and to what extent these will be affordable to the customers it serves. Where relevant, appropriate mitigations will be considered in line with the fees and charges policy.

9.8 The opportunities that can be implemented from 2026/27 are captured within Appendix L (ii) while those that require consultation and Cabinet approval will be reported as appropriate during 2026/27 in line with the Council's governance protocols.

10.0 Financial Management

Adequacy of reserves

10.1 Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 requires the Corporate Director, Finance and Resources to provide Council with an opinion on the adequacy of reserves and the robustness of the estimates underpinning the budget. This report sets out that assessment, supported by an overview of the macroeconomic context (Section four), governance arrangements (Section five), scrutiny processes (Section 11), and an assessment of compliance with relevant codes and standards (this section).

10.2 In line with CIPFA's Financial Management Code, the Council has reviewed its approach to reserves and adopted a formal Reserves Strategy (Appendix K(i)). This strategy defines the purpose of reserves and the methodology for determining appropriate levels, ensuring alignment with the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).

10.3 Whilst reserves are held for a variety of purposes, they can be grouped under two main headings:

- Planned Reserves: Integral to medium and long-term financial planning, enabling funds to be carried forward for planned expenditure and smoothing demand fluctuations. These include statutory and accounting code requirements.
- Contingency Reserves: Held to mitigate unforeseen events, including maintaining a working balance for cash flow variations. The level of contingency reserves is based on professional judgement, considering risks such as delivery of savings, demand pressures, funding uncertainty, and exceptional events. It is neither practical nor prudent to hold reserves sufficient for catastrophic events (e.g., major natural disasters or pandemics), which would require central government support through mechanisms such as the Bellwin Scheme.

10.4 The Council has determined that a minimum of 5% of net expenditure should be held as generally usable reserves—equivalent to £21.6m for 2025/26 and £22.5m for 2026/27. These increases will be built into the MTFS to meet the requirement to maintain balances at this level. It is the opinion of the Corporate Director, Finance and Resources, as required by Section 25 of Local Government Act 2003, that this level of generally usable reserves constitutes the amount that is sufficiently robust to maintain the Council's financial sustainability.

10.5 The Council undertakes an annual review of all reserves to ensure that the purpose for which they are being held remains valid. Any changes to reserves are reflected in appendix K(ii).

10.6 Appendix K(ii) sets out the Council's schedule of earmarked reserves, their purpose and a forecast for the use of each reserve. In accordance with the Council's financial regulations and scheme of transfers and virements, this report sets out the use and purpose of these reserves. In addition, should an overspend arise, it is determined that it can be set against the General Fund balance or the Future Funding Risks reserve, which are defined as the Council's generally usable reserves for these purposes. Approval of these arrangements is required for compliance with the Council's financial regulations and scheme of transfers and virements. Should the use of reserves become necessary due to overspending which cannot be contained in the overall 2026/27 budget, this will be funded from reserves with the assumption that any ongoing overspending will have to be funded by additional savings in 2027/28.

10.7 Brent has total reserves of £496.7m as at 31 March 2025. On the face of it this would appear to be a high figure, but the following analysis shows that in practice the figure for all practical purposes is substantially lower. £356.8m (72%) of these reserves are for the funding of the Council's capital programme. £43.1m (9%) is legally ring fenced for bodies such as our maintained schools, the Housing Revenue Account and Public Health. £76.8m (15%) of reserves have been earmarked for a specific purpose or future expenditure commitment. This includes reserves managed by departments (for example unspent government grants with ring fenced commitments or funds set aside to meet known expenditure pressures) and reserves used to smooth out expenditure

that by its nature will vary considerably from year to year and avoid uncontrollable under and over spends, for example insurance claims, PFI contracts and redundancy, etc. Finally, £20m (4%) is a general reserve, which is held as a contingency against unforeseen events (for example unexpected in-year overspends, failure to identify sufficient savings to balance the budget in-year or future funding risks) and to ensure that the Council has sufficient funds available to meet its cash flow requirements.

Robustness of estimates

10.8 Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 requires the Section 151 officer to report to Council on the robustness of estimates made for the purposes of the calculations included in the budget.

10.9 This report sets out the key assumptions (Section seven) around growth, inflation and the impact of macroeconomic conditions, as well as assumptions on income from fees and charges, anticipated demand and the impact of pricing. The Council has made various assumptions around grant funding (Section six).

10.10 The Council has used a variety of techniques to ensure that the estimates made in setting the budget are robust. These include revised forecasts of the resources available to the Council, which sets the financial envelope in which the Council has to operate, and identification of areas subject to significant demand and cost pressures. In addition MTFS budget workshops have been held where forecasts on income and expenditure are reviewed and challenged. Sensitivity analysis has been used to ascertain the impact of changes to demographics and the level of inflation. A central case scenario has been used, which is the anticipated most likely outcome, to determine any growth requirements in these areas. Departmental bids for growth and corporate provisions for cost pressures, such as the pay award, have been subject to challenge.

10.11 The 2026/27 budget uses the key macro-economic metrics to estimate inflation for both pay and non-pay costs. This aligns with forecasts from the Office of Budget Responsibility.

10.12 Finally, the impact of the Local Government Finance Settlement has been reviewed to ensure that the estimates made in the budget remain robust and appropriate.

10.13 The budget has been constructed on the basis of the most realistic scenarios for the most significant cost drivers (adults and children's social care and temporary accommodation). In the event that the worst case scenario were to transpire during 2026/27, the Council would need to enhance existing spending controls (such as a recruitment freeze and pausing all non-essential spend) and direct departments to identify and deliver further in-year savings. The need for these interventions will be determined as part of the budget monitoring process, however it is important to acknowledge at this stage of the budget process the inherent risks involved in setting the 2026/27 budget and the actions that will be required if the worst-case scenario transpires.

CIPFA Financial Management Code – Financial Resilience Assessment

10.14 CIPFA recommends that local authorities undertake a Financial Resilience Assessment (FRA) each year. The FRA builds on the one-year assessments required under section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 of the robustness of the estimates used in the budget calculations and the adequacy of the proposed levels of financial reserves.

10.15 The Financial Management Code states that "Effective governance and financial management is focused on ensuring that the authority is able to operate sustainably in the long term. This means that the authority needs to look beyond the limited time horizons of its funding arrangements and to consider the longer-term financing of its operations and activities".

10.16 The Financial Resilience Assessment considers long-term financial stability. It does so by considering warning signs such as the symptoms of financial stress and reviewing how effectively the authority manages its finances. This includes explicit consideration of capital resources, reserves, savings plans and the use of performance information.

10.17 The Council undertook a Financial Resilience Assessment in light of the Fair Funding Review 2.0 and following the Provisional Financial Settlement in December 2025. The latter assessment found that the Council's finances were stable and sustainable over the longer term though this should continue to be monitored as part of best practice. Areas for improvement were identified as part of the review especially around forecasting expenditure in areas of high-cost pressure and volatility. The Council used the information in this budget report as part of its Financial Resilience Assessment to ensure that the Council benefits from long-term financial sustainability.

10.18 The outcome of the Fair Funding Review has provided additional funding to support Brent in returning to a more sustainable budget position in the medium-term and that is to be welcomed. The assumptions relied upon in the Draft Budget were conservative but with the Council's settlement being more positive than expected, there is now the opportunity to rebuild the council's reserves which have been drawn upon considerably over the last three financial years to absorb the year-end overspends.

10.19 The budget presented in this budget report has been constructed on the basis that the estimates and assumptions made are robust and that if approved, this will ensure Brent has a balanced budget for 2026/27. Furthermore, the update in sections six and seven on the Medium-Term Financial Strategy provides details of how Brent Council has looked beyond the immediate budget cycle to determine the likely actions required over the following three years to ensure the budget remains balanced over the MTFS period.

10.20 The budget will be monitored closely throughout 2026/27, with updates brought to Cabinet on a quarterly basis. In the unlikely scenario that the budget cannot be contained within the resources available to fund it, the Council would bring forward additional in-year savings to pull the budget back to a balanced position.

Value For Money

10.21 The Council's external auditors, Grant Thornton, are required to report in more detail on whether the Council has put in place proper arrangements to secure Value for Money (VfM) in respect of economy, efficiency and effectiveness in

its use of resources. This includes taking properly informed decisions and managing key operational and financial risks so that the Council can deliver its objectives and safeguard public money. This is assessed under the following areas: Financial Sustainability; Governance; and Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

10.22 As is customary, their report is to be presented to Full Council on 23 February 2026 to be considered at the same time as setting the 2025/26 budget. The annual report put forward a key recommendation, highlighting the use of reserves in recent years to fund in-year overspends arising from pressures in homelessness prevention and social care. This has been acknowledged as a key risk to the Council's financial sustainability and resilience. The continued use of reserves to manage these pressures is unsustainable and in order to stabilise the financial position of the council, additional growth has been factored into the MTFS to stabilise these demand led budgets and replenish reserves over the medium term.

11.0 Statutory process of consultation, scrutiny and equalities analyses

Equalities

11.1 The Council has a duty to pay due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination and advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who have a protected characteristic and those who don't when making decisions. The Council also recently adopted the Socio-Economic Duty which ensures that it actively considers how decisions affect people experiencing socio-economic disadvantage. The budget proposals set out in Appendix C (i) have been subject to an initial equality impact assessment (EIA) to assess their potential or likely impact on service users and employees with protected characteristics. Where the EIA process identified a disproportionate impact, the proposals were subject to a full EIA.

11.2 Some of the proposals are in their formative stages and are still to be developed or are subject to consultations. In particular, cross-cutting proposals have not been assessed at this point because they span multiple services and business cases for individual initiatives within them are still being developed. Consequently, as the proposals are developed, EIA screening will be undertaken for each initiative to assess whether there any equality impacts.

11.3 In addition to individual EIAs, a cumulative (or overall) EIA has been produced to assess and understand the potential cumulative and compounding impact on groups with a protected characteristic that arise from either changes across a range of services or a group of savings proposals. These EIA reports are set out in Appendices C(ii) and C(iii), alongside the actual proposals. It has been concluded that the proposals that have so far been assessed are considered reasonable and have shown due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Scrutiny

11.4 In line with the Council's statutory scrutiny responsibilities, a Budget Scrutiny Task Group was established on 2 September 2025 to review the Draft Budget 2026/27. The group, comprising of members from both scrutiny committees (Resources and Public Realm, and Community and Wellbeing) and the Audit

and Standards Advisory Committee, held a series of meetings with the Cabinet and senior officers between November and December 2025 to help inform its findings. 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. A report summarising the outcomes of the scrutiny process and setting out the Task Group's recommendations was agreed by the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee on 21 January 2026 for Cabinet to consider as part of their decision making.

Consultation

11.5 The Council recognises consultation as a key part of policy formulation and makes considerable effort to ensure that the views of residents, businesses and other key stakeholders are taken into account. The Council has consulted on the budget options in a variety of ways. Legally, the results of consultation are something that Members must have due regard to in making budget decisions. However, consultation need not legally be the single or even most significant determining factor in choosing between difficult options, although at Brent considerable emphasis is usually placed on the results of consultation.

11.6 The Council conducted a broad consultation between November 2025 and January 2026 to present the 2026/27 budget proposals. These were published on Brent's Have Your Say portal and supported by targeted promotion to previous Brent Connect attendees, as well as direct email communications to key community stakeholders and partners. To maximise awareness and participation, engagement activities included two in-person drop-in sessions at Kingsbury and Harlesden libraries and an online Budget briefing, designed to explain the proposals and actively encourage feedback from a wide range of stakeholders and residents.

11.7 The detailed budget proposals were published on the Council's website, inviting comments and feedback through the online consultation portal. A number of people accessed the online consultation and provided responses. Appendix M contains further information about the results of consultation and sets out a summary of emerging themes and other key findings.

11.8 There are various business forums and associations that the Council regularly engages with that include a wide range of both small and large local businesses. These include West London Business (a non-profit business membership organisation), the Federation of Small Businesses, the Chamber of Commerce, and town centre business associations. The consultation on the budget was published in a newsletter that is sent to a large number of Brent businesses, explaining why the views of local businesses were important and how they could have their say.

11.9 The local voluntary sector is closely engaged with Brent's communities and has considerable experience of the impact of the Council's difficult choices against a background of funding reductions. Engagement with the local voluntary sector has therefore been an important part of the consultation process. Invitations to participate in the consultation were sent to all Brent voluntary and

community sector organisations. In addition, the consultation was publicised in the CVS Brent newsletter, inviting responses through the online portal.

11.10 Overall, the most commented theme was the proposed increase in Council Tax. It is acknowledged that increasing Council Tax will be difficult for some households to manage in the current circumstances and section seven of this report sets out the rationale the Council considered as part of its decision making. In summary, the additional income (£12.2m) will provide much needed funding to limit the impact of the significant pressures expected in 2026/27, in particular for the provision of social care and homelessness prevention services, as well as preventing the wholesale cuts to the key services the Council provides that many other Councils are having to consider.

11.11 One of the main aims of the consultation and communications strategy was to raise awareness of the Council's financial position, inform residents on how the Council spends its budget and ensure residents and other key stakeholders were fully aware of the opportunities to have their say, by knowing how to respond and when the consultation events were taking place. This was delivered through a variety of communication channels, including publicity on the Council's website, on screens in Council buildings, and via its magazine, e-newsletter, Facebook and WhatsApp accounts, as well as press release to local media.

12.0 Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget

12.1 The proposed HRA annual budget for 2026/27 sets out proposed expenditure for housing management services, stock investment, maintenance work and new council housing development programmes, as well as rent and service charge setting proposals for 2026/27.

12.2 The HRA budget is set each year in the context of the 30-year business plan (included in Appendix P). The business plan is reviewed annually allowing for horizon scanning and the identification and mitigation of risks in the short, medium and long term. Early identification of risks enables planning and implementation of mitigations to ensure the HRA can continue to remain financially secure and deliver on its priorities to provide a safe, suitable and secure place to call home.

12.3 After four consecutive years of rent reductions, between 2016/17 to 2019/20, the Government set out its rent policy, which originally allowed rent levels to be increased by CPI plus 1% for the next five years starting from April 2020. However, in the light of exceptional inflation levels, the Government amended its rent setting policy for 2023/24 to introduce a 7% rent rise limitation, compared to 11.1% if CPI plus 1% was applied. This was estimated to equate to a circa £2m reduction in income in that year. The loss of rental income for Brent over the four years of rent reductions was already £23m when compared to the income that would have been due to the Council if this was not imposed. Rent increases in those years did not only affect those financial years, but also had an impact on future rent levels. Therefore, rent reductions between 2016/17 and 2019/20 and a lower rent increase in 2023/24 meant that the base for a rent increase in future years was also lower and so on for future years. There was then a reversion to the standard rent setting arrangements in 2024/25, and the Government originally extended the current CPI plus 1% rent settlement by

one year to cover 2025/26. Following a consultation, from April 2026, the Government has, for the first time, provided a 10-year settlement on social housing rent policy. From 1 April 2026, social housing rents will be allowed to increase by CPI plus 1% each year for 2026 - 2036. For 2026/27, rents are being increased by CPI plus 1%, which equates to a 4.8% rent uplift.

12.4 In addition, the Government confirmed at the Spending Review that it will implement a rent convergence mechanism as part of the new rent settlement. Convergence would allow rents for Social Rent properties that are currently below 'formula rent' to increase by an additional amount each year, over and above the CPI plus 1% limit, until they 'converge' with formula rent. Formula rent refers to the formula that is used to calculate the rent that may be charged for a given property when it is let to a new tenant. The government has now provided an update and the increase will be implemented from 2027/28 at £1 per week above CPI + 1% and increasing to £2 per week from 2028/29 until formula rent is reached. This helps to increase the sustainability of the HRA and adds £18.6m of income over the first ten years of the Business Plan starting from 2027/28, net of voids and bad debt provision, or £1.86m per annum.

12.5 Table 12 shows a snapshot of current average rent levels from occupied properties and the proposed increase of 4.8% for 2026/27. All new re-lets are charged at Formula Rent and new builds are charged at Formula or Affordable Rent that are in line with Greater London Authority (GLA) benchmarks and are adjusted annually in line with rent standards. Updated rent levels are reflected in the current average rent for 2025/26; average rent can change depending on the time of reporting. The average proposed rent rate for 2026/27 is £6.97 per week (4.8%) higher than the current financial year.

Tenant Rents for 2026/27

Table 12: Rents

Bed Size	Current average rent 2025/26	Proposed average rent 2026/27 (4.8%)	Rent uplift
	£	£	£
Bedsits	109.08	114.32	5.24
1	128.41	134.57	6.16
2	146.52	153.55	7.03
3	161.54	169.29	7.75
4	177.19	185.70	8.51
5	188.66	197.72	9.06
6	206.59	216.51	9.92
7	248.72	260.66	11.94
Average rent	**145.28**	**152.25**	**6.97**

12.6 A rent increase of 4.8% is estimated to result in an additional £2.91m of income when compared to current levels of income. This is due to national inflation

increasing by 3.8% compared to the previous year, which reflects the current economic climate.

12.7 For tenants in receipt of housing support to help pay their rent, the cost of the rent increase will be met by their housing benefit or the housing element of universal credit, unless the level of support is reduced by factors that may apply to individual circumstances such as the benefit cap. Brent Housing Management provide support to tenants who are struggling to pay their rent. The primary objective is to ensure that tenants have all the support that they are entitled to, rather than pursuing an eviction. Support options include assessing whether the tenant is claiming all the welfare benefits that they are entitled to, assisting them to claim from the Council's resident support fund and arranging a suitable payment plan. Brent Housing Management endeavour to identify vulnerable tenants and maintain contact with tenants to ensure that they continue to get the required support to sustain their tenancy.

12.8 The net rent amounts exclude service charges. Service charges are recharged to tenants and leaseholders, which are based on the actual costs incurred for providing specific services, such as estate cleaning.

Tenants Service Charges 2026/27

12.9 Individual service charge elements are adjusted to bring them in line with the estimated contract costs of providing these services to tenants in 2026/27. The tables below show a snapshot of the current average service charges for occupied properties, compared to proposed rates, this is analysed below for services provided to tenants. The current average can change depending on the time of reporting, to reflect re-lets and stock movements such as new additions and right to buy sales. With the recent changes to right to buy which has led to a significant increase in right to buy applications, tenant service charges income could potentially reduce in future due to the reduction in properties available to tenants. However, there would be a compensating effect from service charges to leaseholders due to the transfer of the stock.

Service charges for 2026/27

12.10 Grounds maintenance service is included within the Council's wider corporate contract. The annual contribution from the HRA is estimated to offset against the HRA's proportion of the contract cost through existing charges.

12.11 The cost of maintenance and servicing for the laundry room is forecasted in line with CPI+1%.

12.12 The estate cleaning/caretaking service was in-sourced in 2019/20, with a commitment to pay staff at the London Living Wage before being integrated into Local Government pay scales. The proposed increase of 3% reflects the salary uplift for 2026/27.

12.13 The proposed 2026/27 increase for concierge charges is 3%, in line with the salary uplift. There are currently 92 additional new build properties receiving concierge services in Assembly and Braunston House. Proposed service charges on this block are estimated at £13.76 per week.

12.14 The average helpline monitoring service charge is currently £2.14 per week. An increase of CPI+1%, being 4.8%, is proposed for 2026/27, providing an average charge of £2.24.

12.15 Electrical heating & communal lighting charges and Gas heating & hot water charges are market-driven and therefore subject to change in line with energy market performance. These costs are adjusted based on forecast energy supplier inflation and prevailing market conditions, ensuring that charges reflect fluctuations in energy prices as accurately as possible. As energy costs have decreased, this reduction has been reflected in the service charges, resulting in a corresponding decrease to ensure residents are charged fairly and in line with market rates.

12.16 The communal TV aerial repairs and maintenance service charge is currently £0.80 per week on average. An increase of £0.04 per week on average is proposed, at CPI+1%, being 4.8%.

Table 13: Service Charges

Service	No. of Properties	Current Average Charge 2025/26	Estimated Average Charge 2026/27	Increase / (Decrease)
		(£/Week)	(£/Week)	%
Grounds Maintenance	5,406	1.53	1.58	3.00%
Laundry	25	2.59	2.71	4.80%
Estate Caretaking	5,209	10.17	10.47	3.00%
Concierge	673	7.37	7.59	3.00%
Helpline Monitoring	15	2.14	2.24	4.80%
Electrical Heating & Communal Lighting	6,024	3.59	3.17	-11.96%
Gas Heating & hot water	380	21.67	17.49	-19.26%
TV Aerial	3,511	0.80	0.84	4.80%

District Heat Network

12.17 Heat networks provide heating, cooling and hot water to multiple properties in a building or to multiple buildings from a single source. From January 2026, Ofgem will begin regulating heat networks. Work is ongoing to review the meters and associated properties to ensure the correct variable and standing charge elements of the heat tariff are attributed to each property. In the meantime, the heating charges are being decreased in line with the latest energy prices, as per Table 13 and in line with leaseholder charges.

Brent Supported Living

12.18 There are currently 28 Extra Care and Supported living properties with 418 units of accommodation. These homes are all one-bedroom, self-contained residential flats developed as part of previous New Accommodation for Independent Living (NAIL) programme and are held within the HRA. The properties are fully adapted, and the homes benefit from communal facilities, including a garden area. There is access to 24-hour care, allowing residents to contact care staff from anywhere in the building.

12.19 Table 14 compares the current gross rent levels (including service charges) for these homes against the proposed increase of 4.8% for 2026/27. This equates to an increase of £17.64 per week when compared to the current financial year.

Table 14: Gross Rent

Current Gross Rent 2025/26	Proposed Gross Rent 2026/27 (4.8%)	Proposed vs Current Rent
(£/Week)	(£/Week)	(£/Week)
367.45	385.09	17.64

Garage Rent for 2026/27

12.20 HRA currently has 197 occupied garages with an estimated annual income of £225k for 2026/27.

12.21 Table 15 shows the current rate and the proposed uplift of CPI + 1% (4.8%) for garage rents.

Table 15: Garage Rents

Garage Charge (net)	Current Rate (2025/26)	Proposed Rate (2026/27) (4.8%)
	(£/Week)	(£/Week)
LBB Tenants & Leaseholder	19.19	20.11
LBB Resident	25.58	26.81
Non - Resident	31.98	33.52

HRA Budget 2026/27

12.22 The detailed proposed budget for 2026/27 is set out in Table 16.

Table 16: HRA budget 2026/27

Technical Adjustments	**£m**
Gross tenant rent uplift (4.8% increase)	(10.2)
Additional rent from new builds	(4.8)
Leaseholder service charge uplift to reflect cost incurred	(0.2)
Increase in service charges for major works in line with profiled works and other contributions	(0.9)
Growth	

Repairs and Major works inflation, additional units and increased demand	6.8
Bad Debt Provision increase	0.7
Void losses	1.2
Increase in debt and other financing costs	3.6
Increase in depreciation charges	0.4
Pay Award and other supervision and management costs	1.9
Increases in insurance costs, council tax, decant costs and other charges	1.5
Total Net Movement	**0.0**

12.23 The proposed 2026/27 HRA budget summarised in Table 16 ensures a break-even balance at year end. The opening reserve balance is currently £4.5m, which represents 7% of gross rent.

Table 17: HRA Budget 2025/26 v Draft Budgets for 2026/27

HRA Budget 2025/26 v Draft Budgets 2026/27	(1) Budgets 2025/26	(2) Proposed Budgets 2026/27	(2-1) Variance	Variance Explanation (2-1)
Description	**£'000**	**£'000**	**£'000**	
Rents and Service Charge	(64.1)	(78.0)	(13.9)	Tenant rents and service charges offset by rent loss through voids and RTB sales
Non-Dwelling Rents	(0.3)	(0.3)	(0.0)	Garage rents
Leaseholders' Charge for Services and Facilities	(4.7)	(4.9)	(0.2)	Uplift to reflect increased cost of rechargeable services
Major Works and Other Contribution Towards Expenditure	(0.8)	(1.7)	(0.9)	The charge increase based on additional profiled major works
Total Income	**69.9**	**(84.9)**	**(15.0)**	
Repairs and Maintenance	17.4	24.2	6.8	Repairs contract uplifts, additional units, repairs delivery model and provision for disrepairs and voids
Supervision and Management	17.3	19.2	1.9	Operational cost inflation
Rent and Rates and Other Charges	5.7	7.2	1.5	Council tax, insurance contract and other costs inflation
Depreciation of Fixed Assets	16.1	16.5	0.4	Increase in depreciation costs

Bad or Doubtful Debts	1.4	2.1	0.7	Provision for non-payments
Capital Financing and Debt Management	12.0	15.6	3.6	Increase in interest costs and other financing costs
Total Expenditure	**(69.9)**	**84.8**	**14.9**	
(Surplus)/or Deficit for the Year on HRA	**0.0**	**0.0**	**0.0**	
Housing Revenue Account brought forward	(4.5)	(4.5)	0.0	Operating reserve brought forward
(Surplus)/or Deficit on HRA	0.0	0.0	0.0	
Closing balance	(4.5)	(4.5)	0.0	Operating reserve closing balance

HRA Stock Improvement and Major Works Budget 2026/27

12.24 The Council is investing £18.3m capital funded in 2026/27 in major repairs and other improvements in existing housing stock. This investment is funded by the major repairs reserve, HRA depreciation and unrestricted right-to-buy receipts meaning HRA revenue budgets avoid any additional interest costs from borrowing. This investment carries significant revenue benefits as it will reduce ongoing maintenance costs, whilst £0.5m budget for voids works will enable currently empty housing to generate rental income. More details about the Council's capital investment in housing are contained in Section 14.

Affordable Housing Supply

12.25 The development and management of new council homes and affordable housing remains a key priority in the Council's Housing Strategy and the HRA Asset Management Strategy. The Council has invested heavily in the development of new affordable housing. Brent has delivered substantial new affordable housing with 721 new homes (663 within the HRA and 58 supported living) expected in 2025/26 and this will continue with 312 new affordable homes in 2026/27.

12.26 These new homes will mean estimated additional rental income but also additional interest, maintenance and management costs. As reported to Cabinet in July 2025, significant viability gaps in some schemes will have a major impact on HRA revenue budgets. Forecasting and calculating future HRA interest costs of such a large housing programme, including several housing sites appropriating between the general fund and HRA, is extremely challenging so an external review will be commissioned and factored into future budgets. Growth of £1.8m has been assumed to cover additional interest costs.

12.27 The Alperton Bus garage development which will deliver 155 social rented homes is set to complete during 2025/26. To finance the purchase, the Council

has taken a 50-year lease with annual lease payments set at a proportion of current social rent levels and indexed at CPI + 1% annually. After the 50-year lease ends, a reversionary 949-year lease will be granted at a nominal rate. The Council has established a reserve within the financing structure to address the ongoing repayments required under the lease. This reserve is particularly important in mitigating potential risks, particularly in scenarios where social rent policies may deviate from the current CPI + 1% increase.

Housing General Fund

Temporary Accommodation

12.28 In 2021 two purpose-built developments in Harlesden, Anansi House (92 Units), for families, and Knowles House (57 Units), for single people, became available. These properties were developed specifically to meet the statutory duty to secure suitable interim accommodation for homeless households and replace the use of privately owned Bed & Breakfasts and Annexes.

12.29 The proposal is to continue to hold rents at Local Housing Allowance (LHA) levels. LHA rates for 2026/27 will be frozen at the 2024/25 levels, following their increase in April 2024.

Table 18: Temporary Accommodation rents

Bed Size	Number of Units	LHA 2024 rate
Bedsits	57	331.39
1	69	331.39
2	23	412.86
Average Rent		**372.12**

12.30 In 2024/25 it was proposed to add additional charges to meet all outgoings applying to the Premises including both communal and personal utility water charges, heating charges and Wi-Fi charges. In 2026/27, a 5% increase to Utilities and a 3.8% increase to Water is proposed to meet the outgoing costs. The below uplifts are proposed for 2026/27:

Table 19: Temporary Accommodation weekly charges

Service	No. of Units	Current Weekly Charge for 24/25	Estimated Weekly Charge for 25/26	Increase / (Decrease)
				%
Utility	149	£14.26	£14.90	5.0%
Water	149	£27.56	£28.61	3.8%
WiFi	149	£3.48	£3.61	3.8%

12.31 Once the main housing duty is accepted, a further charge for council tax is proposed. There are 126 units that are band C properties, which has a proposed Council Tax charge of £1,986.91 for 2026/27. There are 23 units that are band D properties, which has a proposed Council Tax charge of £2,235.27

for 2026/27. In addition, once the main housing duty is accepted tenants will be expected to meet all outgoings applying to the Premises including water charges and electric and other costs whether metered or billed, directly, in line with the licensee's obligations.

Hillside Rent Setting

12.32 In addition to the dwellings contained within the HRA, the Council also continues to hold general needs and older persons dwellings in the General Fund (GF). These dwellings were formerly held by the Stonebridge Housing Action Trust (HAT) and were transferred to Brent Council in August 2007 when the HAT was dissolved. The Council currently owns 346 properties under this scheme and Hillside Housing Trust (wholly owned subsidiary of Hyde Housing Group) manages these properties on the Council's behalf.

12.33 Table 20 sets out the rent levels for 2025/26, with an average increase of £7.15 per week for 2026/27.

Table 20: Average Rent Increase

	Weekly Rent 2025/26 (£)	Weekly Rent 2026/27 (£)	Increase (£)	Increase (%)
1 Bed Flat	£122.65	£128.54	£5.89	4.8%
2 Bed Flat	£143.67	£150.57	£6.90	4.8%
1 Bed S/croft Elders	£122.56	£128.44	£5.88	4.8%
2 Bed S/croft Elders	£143.67	£150.57	£6.90	4.8%
2 Bed House	£156.05	£163.54	£7.49	4.8%
3 Bed House	£172.72	£181.01	£8.29	4.8%
4+ Bed House	£181.82	£190.54	£8.73	4.8%

12.34 Hillside are also responsible for setting service charges across the stock, including those retained by the Council. The average service charge per week for 2026/27 are yet to be confirmed.

Housing Private Finance Initiative (PFI)

12.35 The Housing PFI refers to 364 units of rented accommodation managed by Hyde under a PFI contract. The stock is made up of a mixture of Temporary Accommodation which we let at LHA rates; Discounted Market Rent and Affordable Rent properties, both of which are set at a percentage of the market rent, with Affordable rents capped at LHA. Given the current housing emergency in Brent and the number of households living in emergency accommodation all new voids are generally filled by way of a direct offer to a suitable household.

12.36 The Council reviews and sets annual rents based on the property's tenure type. When properties become vacant, rents are adjusted in accordance with the tenancy agreement. For 2026/27, all rents have been increased by CPI + 1% where applicable.

12.37 This is after an increase in 2024/25 where the rates were raised to the 30th percentile of local market rents from April 2024 after being frozen since April 2020.

Travellers' Site Pitch Rent

12.38 Following benchmarking against other London boroughs, in September 2025, Cabinet approved to decrease the weekly rent by 25% to £138.96 for 2026/27. It is not being proposed to change this as part of this paper. Travellers' site pitch rent is estimated to generate an annual income of £0.2m.

13.0 Schools and Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)

13.1 The Department for Education (DfE) has confirmed school funding increases for 2026/27 based on updated pupil data and formulae assumptions and integrating existing additional grants received within the current financial year such as the Schools Budget Support and National Insurance grants into the National Funding Formula (NFF). Brent's confirmed allocation is £452.2m, an increase of 4.7% compared to last year.

13.2 Table 21 sets out next year's budget allocations for Brent compared to the current financial year.

Table 21: DSG allocations, before recoupment and deductions for national non-domestic rates, and for direct funding of high needs places by DfE

	2025/26	**2026/27**		
	Updated Nov 2025 (£m)	**Dec 2025 (£m)**	**Increase (£m)**	**Increase %**
Schools block	298.2	309.0	10.8	3.6%
Central school services block allocation	2.4	2.5	0.1	1.4%
High needs block allocation	91.0	95.2	4.2	4.7%
Early years block	40.3	45.5	5.2	12.9%
Total DSG allocation	**431.9**	**452.2**	**20.3**	**4.7%**

Schools Block

13.3 Brent's Schools Block allocation for 2026/27 reflects updated pupil counts from the October 2025 census and the NFF factor values. The national increase in per-pupil funding is expected to provide funding uplift to support teacher's pay, inflation, and core school costs.

13.4 All primary schools will attract at least £5,115 per pupil, and all secondary schools at least £6,640 per pupil. The minimum per pupil funding levels incorporate the rolled in Core Schools Budget Grant (CSBG) and NICs grant funding, but no further percentage uplift has been applied to the minimum per pupil funding levels for 2026/27.

13.5 In 2026/27, the Council will continue to implement a locally determined funding formula (LFF) for mainstream schools. However, the total funding envelope will be set by the NFF. In accordance with national policy direction, local authorities are required to progressively align their LFF with the structure and factors of the NFF, as part of the transition towards a fully centralised direct NFF model. The LFF will determine the exact budget shares distributed to individual Brent maintained schools and academies.

13.6 In June 2025, the government announced that from September 2026, Free School Meals (FSM) will be extended to all children in households receiving Universal Credit. For 2026/27, there will be no changes to FSM allocations within the schools NFF through the DSG. Instead, the additional funding required for this expansion will be provided through a separate grant, with details on its calculation to be published in 2026.

High Needs Block (HNB)

13.7 The government has suspended the high needs NFF, which was previously used to determine local authorities' high needs allocations. In the interim, allocations will be based on 2025/26 funding levels, pending a review of the high needs funding methodology to ensure alignment with the wider SEND reforms. Brent's £95m high needs allocation for 2026/27 is therefore based on its 2025/26 funding, with adjustment mechanisms applied rather than a full NFF calculation.

13.8 The £4.2m year-on-year increase in funding largely reflects the consolidation of the annualised 2025/26 Core Schools Budget Grant (CSBG), National Insurance Contributions (NICs) Grant and Schools Budget Support Grant (SBSG) relating to special units and resourced provision. Consequently, this increase does not provide sufficient capacity to meet new demand pressures or inflationary cost increases in 2026/27.

13.9 Brent's High Needs Block remains under significant pressure due to rising demand for statutory SEND support. The cumulative DSG deficit is forecast to rise to £18.3m by the end of 2025/26, following an in-year forecast overspend of £4.7m in 2025/26. As of January 2025, the number of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) had increased by 8% compared to January 2024, with demand continuing to grow.

13.10 Table 22 shows the year-on-year increase in EHCPs over the past 5 years compared to the national average. Between January 2021 and January 2025, the number of children with EHCPs increased by 1,011 (36%). In July 2025 the number reached 4,000 for the first time and currently 4,073 as of end of December 2025.

Table 22: Growth in EHCPs (SEN2 annual return to the DfE)

	January	**January**	**January**	**January**	**January**
Financial year	**2021**	**2022**	**2023**	**2024**	**2025**
Number of EHCP	2,784	2,938	3,251	3,500	3,791
Brent Year on Year % increase	15%	6%	11%	8%	8%

National Year on Year % increase	10%	10%	9%	11.4%	11.5%

13.11 The growth in EHCPs is a national and London wide trend whereby the number of children assessed as meeting the threshold for support continues to increase. Over the years, this has created financial pressures with many authorities holding deficit balances as funding has not increased at the same pace as the increase in EHCPs. In addition, the increase in wages due to changes in the employer's national insurance contributions could see independent providers continuing to request high inflationary price increases in the new year.

13.12 Since 2020, a statutory override has been in place that allows local authorities to hold deficit balances against their DSG budgets, separating this from their general revenue budgets. This override has been extended to 2028 under the current government, pending wider reform of the system. In the recent budget announcement, the government confirmed that future funding implications for SEND will be managed within the overall government Departmental Expenditure Limits (DEL), meaning local authorities will not be expected to fund future SEND costs from general funds once the statutory override ends in 2028. The government will also set out details on how it will provide limited support to local authorities with historic and accruing SEND deficits, including conditions for accessing support, in Spring 2026. Importantly, the government provided clarification that this approach does not involve reallocating money from the core schools budget, therefore mainstream school funding remains protected.

13.13 The government has announced that it will invest at least £3bn over the next four years to create tens of thousands of new specialist places for children with SEND in mainstream schools. This funding will support the development of "calm learning spaces", such as breakout rooms tailored for students with autism, ADHD, and other SEND needs, enabling them to access mainstream education alongside their peers.

13.14 Also announced, was a £38bn capital investment in the education estate between 2025/26 and 2029/30, to deliver on all the new places planned through special free schools, either by building the schools or by providing local authorities with funding to create equivalent specialist places. This initiative forms part of a wider SEND system reform, with further details to be set out in the upcoming Schools White Paper. The aim is to make specialist places in mainstream schools a core part of the local school offer across the country. The £38bn allocation includes an expansion of the existing School Rebuilding Programme. Three Brent schools are currently included, and applications for a further 250 nationwide school rebuilding projects are expected to open in the new year.

Early Years Block

13.15 The 2026/27 funding allocation for Early Years Block was announced on 17th December 2025, with Brent's indicative allocation set at £45.4m, representing a 12.9% increase compared to the previous year. This rise reflects two major changes introduced by the DfE. Firstly, the Early Years NICs and Teachers' Pay Grant (EYNTPG), previously provided as a separate grant in 2025/26, has now been rolled into the national average funding rates for all age groups, increasing the baseline rates. Secondly, from April 2026, the DfE will implement

a termly funding system for all early years entitlements, based on termly census headcounts rather than annual data. To manage the increased volatility introduced by the new termly funding system and higher pass-through requirement, Brent is proposing to set up a contingency budget for 2026/27. This is primarily to cover the cost of late joiners who are not captured on census day but still require funded places. Under the termly model, allocations are based strictly on headcount at census point, so any increase in numbers after the census will not attract additional funding. A contingency budget will help absorb these pressures and maintain service stability.

13.16 The approach to setting the Early Years budget for 2026/27 is set to change. In previous years, Brent allocated the full indicative funding announced by the DfE and set provider rates based on that allocation. For 2026/27, the budgets will be based on estimated hours rather than the hours funded by the DfE. This change reflects the introduction of termly census based funding and aims to reduce the risk of overcommitting if participation is lower than funded hours. As the early years block will now be based on termly data, final local authority allocations from the DfE for 2026/27 will be announced in July 2027.

Central School Services Block (CSSB)

13.17 The CSSB allocations to support ongoing LA statutory duties and some historic commitments is set to see a small increase of £34k. Brent's confirmed allocation is £2.5m.

14.0 Capital Programme Budget 2026/27– 2030/31

14.1 The Capital Programme represents the Council's strategic investment initiative designed to address key Council priorities and improve public services. This programme enables the Council to fulfil its statutory responsibilities concerning housing residents and providing educational facilities to fulfil local needs, while also prioritising the enhancement of town centres, public roads, public buildings, and community spaces.

14.2 The programme utilises various funding sources, including capital receipts, grants, Section 106 (S106) and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), revenue reserves and prudential borrowing. As internal funding sources such as CIL and revenue reserves have been depleted, and the availability of suitable external grants has reduced, the Council is becoming increasingly dependent on prudential borrowing to fund the capital programme. Officers are seeking to explore alternative funding sources including identifying suitable properties to dispose of to generate capital receipts to fund capital projects in line with the Council's property strategy.

14.3 The Capital Programme plays a critical role in supporting the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) by enabling invest-to-save initiatives. For example, investment in digital solutions can deliver process efficiencies, while new social housing can help avoid costs associated with temporary accommodation. Further details of the Council's approach to capital investment to support the Council's objectives can be found in the Capital and Non-Treasury Investment Strategies in appendices G & H.

14.4 However, due to the increasing dependence on prudential borrowing, high longer-term interest costs and viability gaps in housing and regeneration

schemes, the capital programme is placing significant pressure on both General Fund and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budgets. More details about the impact on revenue budgets are contained in Section seven.

14.5 Despite the current financial challenges, the Council's Capital Programme remains ambitious, reflecting its importance to achieving the objectives in the Brent Borough Plan. The Council plans to invest £813.3m over the next five years. The budget for 2026/27 is £293.8m compared to £328.9m for 2025/26, with the reduction reflecting the financial pressures and diminishing funding sources, as well as the completion of several major housing projects in 2025/26. This budget is subject to modifications as new projects receive approval before Full Council in February 2026. The Council also has a Capital Pipeline for potential future schemes whilst feasibility and funding sources are reviewed. This currently holds 16 projects with a provisional value of £472.2m.

14.6 Officers carried out a review of the governance of the capital programme in 2025/26 with the objectives of strengthening risk and project management and streamlining processes. Following this review, changes to the Board structure include the merger of the Public Realm Board with the Corporate Landlord Board to create a new Corporate Assets Board responsible for overseeing the management of council owned assets. The remit of the housing boards have been clarified so that the Affordable Housing Supply Board will cover the capital programme to deliver new housing whilst the HRA and Housing Management Board will cover capital investment in Brent's existing housing stock. There are no changes to the remit of the Infrastructure and Regeneration Board. This report follows this revised board structure.

14.7 A comprehensive overview of the Capital Programme, categorised by portfolio and board for the five-year period from 2025/26 to 2030/31, is provided in Table 23. Detailed information about the Capital Programme and its financing can be found in Appendix E.

Table 23: Summary of the Capital Programme 2025/26 to 2030/31

Portfolio	Board (Programme)	2025/26 Budget £m	2026/27 Budget £m	2027/28 Budget £m	2028/29 Budget £m	2029/30 Budget £m	2030/31 Budget £m	Total 2025/26 to 2030/31 £m
Resources: Cllr Mili Patel	Corporate Assets	13.26	23.34	14.40	5.71	5.56	-	**62.27**
Climate Action & Community Power: Cllr Jake Rubin	Corporate Assets	0.15	2.63	1.70	2.07	-	-	**6.55**
Regeneration, Property & Planning: Cllr Teo Benea	South Kilburn	19.48	34.02	27.90	15.55	8.20	3.06	**108.21**
Regeneration, Property & Planning: Cllr Teo Benea	Infrastructure & Regeneration	84.22	68.22	21.25	29.87	25.41	-	**228.98**
Climate Action & Community Power: Cllr Jake Rubin	South Kilburn	7.46	11.00	3.80	3.80	3.80	3.80	**33.66**
Community Safety and Cohesion: Cllr Ishma Moeen	Corporate Assets	0.50	2.62	-	-	-	-	**3.12**
Regeneration, Property & Planning: Cllr Teo Benea	Corporate Assets	26.11	11.92	6.76	4.72	3.71	3.50	**56.72**
Public Health: Cllr Neil Nerva	Corporate Assets	0.17	0.50	0.60	-	-	-	**1.27**
Public Realm: Cllr Krupa Sheth	Corporate Assets	8.13	9.05	8.13	10.99	5.00	-	**41.30**
Children's Services, Education & Employment: Cllr Gwen Grahl	Children, Young People & Schools	25.51	34.28	26.98	18.60	5.00	-	**110.36**
Housing: Cllr Fleur Donnelly-Jackson	Affordable Housing Supply	115.35	51.31	67.02	63.20	32.79	-	**329.67**
Housing: Cllr Fleur Donnelly-Jackson	Housing HRA & Management	27.61	44.91	35.45	23.40	23.00	5.00	**159.37**
Adult Social Care: Cllr Neil Nerva	Affordable Housing Supply	0.92	-	-	-	-	-	**0.92**
Total		**328.87**	**293.79**	**213.99**	**177.91**	**112.48**	**15.36**	**1,142.40**

Corporate Assets

14.8 Brent's Corporate Assets programme is about maintaining and improving the Council's non-housing assets, improving the environment for residents and addressing the climate emergency. There are key programmes for the upkeep of the Council's popular buildings, as well as parks and the very busy highways, footways, carriageways and local transport network in this area of northwest London.

Retained Estate

14.9 £10.5m is being invested over the next five years to fund necessary building improvements works across the Councils retained buildings including libraries, family wellbeing centres and leisure centres. This investment will enable the Property & Assets Team to carry out condition surveys, replace ageing equipment, upgrade essential building components, and enhance spaces to meet current standards and reduce disruptions. These upgrades will also support the proactive corporate landlord strategy, ensuring that the Council's buildings remain fit for purpose.

Willesden Health & Wellbeing Hub (Gladstone Park)

14.10 Brent Council will invest £3.0m SCIL into the redevelopment of the Gladstone Park Youth and Community Centre site to deliver a new Health and Wellbeing Integrated Hub. The Hub will provide modern health services, community amenities, and wellbeing spaces for some of Brent's most disadvantaged communities, while supporting growth in nearby regeneration areas. Approximately 60% of the scheme costs will be funded by the NHS and Willesden Green Surgery.

Digital Strategy

14.11 £9.6m is being invested into a two-year Digital Strategy Roadmap to transform ways of working and enable revenue savings. The Roadmap is based around three core ambitions to transform the resident experience, use digital to empower the organisation and harness the power of our data to support new, more preventative ways of working. The investment will fund a digital team including additional business analysis, service design, user experience design and data specialists as well as project managers and developers. It will also cover systems costs and external development expertise.

Technology Roadmap and Oracle

14.12 The Council is investing £6.7m over the next two years into the Technology Roadmap to improve the Shared Technology Service (STS) infrastructure. STS is an IT shared service for Brent, Lewisham, and Southwark Councils hosted by Brent. Under the agreement, each Council only pays for their own IT and their share of joint systems. This investment will ensure that Brent's IT systems and infrastructure are up to date, reliable, resilient and robust, enabling officers to carry out their duties as well as protecting Council systems against growing cyber threats.

14.13 An annual budget of £0.9m has been earmarked for essential IT licenses. There are also investments in Oracle of £0.5m, as well as smaller investments totalling £0.1m a year in project management and contract register systems to improve

risk, contract and financial management as well as increasing automation and reducing manual processing.

Highways Management

14.14 Highway infrastructure is the most visible, well used and valuable physical asset owned by the Council. The latest value of Brent's asset is estimated at around £4.7bn and includes 505 km of roads; 847 km of pavements; 20,700 road gullies, and 90 bridges and structures. In the last three years there has been significant additional investment in the highways budget including additional SCIL funding for infrastructure investment aligned with growth areas for highways maintenance and street lighting of £10.0m in 2025/26. This investment enables the Council to return to the £3.5m base Brent capital funding each year, topped up by funding received from the Department for Transport which has been estimated at £0.8m a year. This funding enables works including carriageways and highways replacement, drainage, and road condition surveys.

Environmental Health & Green Corridors

14.15 The Integrated Street Cleansing & Waste Vehicle acquisition programme continues, with £1.0m of the £21m to be spent in 2026/27. The borrowing costs to fund the purchase of the fleet over eight years are funded by revenue contributions. The expansion of the Northwick Park Hospital Mortuary (£2.5m) has been delayed due to NHS not coming forward with survey information so it is now expected to complete in 2027/28. This is a tri-borough project, funded equally by neighbouring Harrow and Barnet, with the Brent contribution funded by SCIL. 2026/27 will be the second year of the 'Green Corridors' scheme with £1.5m SCIL funding for the Church End and Roundwood Green wards in Willesden. The Green Corridors strategy is integral to supporting sustainable growth, addressing the climate and ecological emergency while contributing to a healthier, greener, and more cohesive community in Brent via a range of traffic management, active travel and inclusive green infrastructure improvements.

Healthy Streets & Parking

14.16 TfL are expected to continue to fund a number of ongoing Healthy Streets schemes (£2.3m), including Local Safety, Bus Priority, School Travel Plan, School Streets Development, Cycle Parking Scheme and Bike Networks. There are many risks within the programme due to the lack of certainty regarding TFL funding. Announcements often provide very little notice for planning as well as a lack of certainty on value and Brent having to compete against other London boroughs to win new funding for new schemes.

14.17 Some Healthy Streets schemes have seen tangible successes in traffic reduction, inclusivity and good levels of resident satisfaction. The Council is investing £0.2m SCIL in a new pedestrian crossing at the junction of Willesden Lane, Cavendish Road and The Avenue. The Beresford Avenue/Mount Pleasant Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) scheme (£0.7m) is to be funded by s106. The budget also includes an additional £0.3m a year for the next three years from s106 for additional CPZ schemes.

CCTV & Public Safety

14.18 The Council is investing £2.6m in 2026/27 funded by SCIL into replacing analogue CCTV cameras with ultra-high definition digital CCTV cameras, as well as increasing the overall number of cameras in the Borough. This includes new cameras in Sudbury, Alperton and Queensbury where there is a known absence of CCTV. This will improve the safety and security of these areas by ensuring that these areas are regularly monitored and any incidents of crime are reported to the police either as they happen or passed on as evidence.

NCIL Projects

14.19 Cabinet approved a capital budget of £5.1m for mostly public realm projects from the 2025/26 Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy (NCIL) funding award. The majority of these projects are expected to conclude in 2025/26 but the Trees for Brent (£0.2m) and School Streets (£0.3m) are multi-year schemes with budgets in 2026/27.

Pride in Place

14.20 The Council has been awarded £1.5m of Pride in Place Impact Fund Grant from central government for 2025/26 and 2026/27 to fund improvements in public spaces, community spaces and high street and town centre revitalization. The £1.0m budget for 2026/27 covers £0.3m from the first tranche of projects awarded funding in 2025/26 and £0.7m for new projects. Priority thematic areas will be “Pride in Parks”, “Pride in High Streets” and “Don’t mess with Brent”.

Pipeline Schemes

14.21 £9.2m has been factored into the budget for the next two years for pipeline schemes across the corporate assets area. This includes £2.1m for energy efficiency measures across the retained estate, £1.5m for Vale Farm Sports Centre capital improvements and £1.8m for various parks and outdoor sports investments. These projects depend on the identification of suitable funding with significant uncertainty over available grants and will be subject to approval by Cabinet before they are formally added to the programme.

Infrastructure & Regeneration

Wembley Housing Zone

14.22 Wembley Housing Zone is a major capital project costing a total of £130.9m funded by a broad mix of SCIL, capital receipts from the private housing, GLA grants, S106 and borrowing. The scheme will deliver 291 new homes (of which 141 will be affordable and owned by Brent), new commercial spaces, community centre and a new publicly accessible courtyard garden. Work has been well underway since May 2024, and the scheme is expected to complete in September 2026. The 2026/27 capital budget is £23.1m in respect of the delivery of the Wembley Housing Zone programme.

Bridge Park Regeneration

14.23 The Bridge Park Regeneration project to deliver a new state-of-the art leisure centre including a 6-lane swimming pool and substantially larger fitness provision has a capital budget of £45.6m from 2026/27 – 2028/29. This budget is funded by SCIL, capital receipts from conditional land sale agreements and prudential borrowing though officers will seek suitable grants to reduce the

borrowing need. Following the decision of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport not to list the building, designs can proceed and a planning application is expected to be submitted in 2026/27. The scheme is part of the wider regeneration of the area in partnership with Stonebridge Real Estate Development Limited (SRED) that intends to deliver an improved adult education centre, a hotel, fully accessible public spaces, gardens and 100s of new affordable homes.

Staples Corner Masterplan

14.24 The Staples Corner Growth Area Masterplan is centred around accessibility between the Staples Corner industrial business park and the new Brent Cross Village. The proposed scheme is expected to cost £2.7m over the next 5 years funded by SCIL. The A5 Toucan Crossing will provide a direct pedestrian / cycle link from Staples Corner Growth Area to Brent Cross West Thameslink Station.

Neasden Civic Partnership

14.25 The Neasden Civic Partnership Programme, regenerating Neasden town centre, is to cost £10.5m, and to be delivered over three years to 2028/29. The programme will deliver public realm improvements, a new community space and proposes reconfiguration of the gyratory at the gateway to the town centre. The scheme has secured £7.4m SCIL funding and £3.1m regeneration grant from the GLA.

Grand Union Canal Footbridge

14.26 The Council is progressing a new pedestrian and cycle footbridge over the Grand Union Canal as part of the wider regeneration of the area including recently delivered new affordable housing. This £6.9m scheme funded by SCIL is expected to move into the construction phase in 2026/27.

West London Orbital

14.27 Following commitments made by TFL and the GLA to progress the West London Orbital overground service, the Council has committed £0.6m funded by SCIL towards developing detailed route options and funding strategy .

College of North West London (CNWL) Regeneration

14.28 Up to £11.2m of SCIL funding over the next two years has been allocated towards United Colleges Group's (UCG's) programme to consolidate the CNWL into a new, modern, purpose-built Further Education College Campus in Wembley Park. The Council's £11.2m funding is a relatively small part of the over £150m scheme costs, which is set to unlock substantial benefits for the Council including SCIL income, Council Tax receipts and 1,934 new homes (20% affordable) on existing campus sites. The £11.2m is subject to other funding partners, such as the GLA and the Department for Education, also contributing. Following discussions with UCG, the £50m bridging loan included in previous budgets has been removed as changes in legislation mean the Council cannot be the lender of the loan to the College who have had to seek this from the Department for Education instead.

Section 106 projects

14.29 The Council enters into Section 106 obligations with developers - a mechanism which makes a development proposal acceptable in planning terms. The

developer pays the Section 106 levies to the Council (as opposed to carrying out the mitigations themselves) for site-specific mitigation of the impact of development such as affordable workspace, carbon offset or requiring improvements to an access road. A budget of £8m for 2026/27 has been assumed for Brent capital projects funded by Section 106. All projects will be subject to a robust commissioning process which ensures compliance with the Section 106 requirements.

South Kilburn

Single Delivery Partner

14.30 2026/27 is an important year for the South Kilburn regeneration programme as Brent intends to appoint a Single Delivery Partner (SDP). Capital budget of £26.1m over the next five years for the seven sites is focussed on buying out the remaining 30 leaseholders to obtain vacant possession of the sites, rehousing tenants and clearing the sites in preparation for the SDP. The SDP model is a new way of the Council delivering a major regeneration programme intended to streamline delivery and improve co-ordination. However, until the partner is appointed and their plans are clear, the budget is subject to significant uncertainty and £2.6m contingency has been built into the budget. The budget also included £1m a year for staff costs and £1.6m for 2026/27 to cover service charges and council tax from vacant properties. The costs of this budget will be initially met by borrowing but the intention is to recover as much as possible through land receipts received by the developer for private housing.

South Kilburn Public Realm Improvements (New)

14.31 £6.4m SCIL and £0.3m S106 has been allocated to the projects to improve Kilburn Open Space and Carlton Vale Boulevard that will be delivered by the single delivery partner. These schemes are crucial to achieving the placemaking objectives of the South Kilburn regeneration and maximising the land receipts from the developer because they improve the attractiveness of private housing. The pipeline includes proposed additional budget for Carlton Vale Boulevard, subject to identifying a suitable funding source, recognising its importance to the South Kilburn regeneration. The budget for the next 5 years also includes £4.4m for the Queen's Park Gyratory funded by Housing Infrastructure Grant from the GLA.

On site developments

14.32 Budget of £11.7m over the next three years has been set to bring the two major on-site schemes to completion. The Neville, Winterleys, Carlton House and Carlton Hall (£2.4m remaining budget) scheme to deliver 95 new affordable homes is progressing well with the first homes expected in early 2026/27. The contract dispute on the Carlton and Granville development (£9.3m remaining budget) has been resolved and the scheme to deliver new community spaces and 18 affordable homes is set to complete in 2027/28. This remaining budget is funded by £2.5m SCIL, £1.4m grant from the GLA from a recent successful Safeguarding Bid and a mix of capital receipts and borrowing.

South Kilburn Schools

14.33 Brent will invest £12.8m of SCIL and s106 funding over the next four years into the construction of a new South Kilburn Primary School on the site of Carlton

Vale Infant School. The School will have improved facilities to support children with Special Educational Needs (SEND) and a new Multi-Use Games Area.

South Kilburn Energy Network

14.34 £36.0m of capital funding over the next ten years will go towards the development of a District Heat Network in South Kilburn to supply heat to over 2,600 homes, two schools and multiple commercial units. The investment will include two sets of Air Source Heat Pumps connected to the same energy centre's controls, peak gas boilers, and thermal storage, maintaining the project running with a high proportion of heat generated from renewables. The project has a variety of funding sources including Warm Heat Networks Fund Grant, SCIL, s106 generated from the regeneration, income generated from the tariffs, Carbon Offset Fund and prudential borrowing from the Green Finance Facility. The costs of this borrowing and the maintenance of the network will be financed by the income generated by Brent operating the network.

Children & Young People & Schools

SEND Expansion

14.35 Phase 1 of the Special Educational Needs (SEND) programme continues with £4.0m capital budget allocated in 2026/27 (funded by the DfE's Basic Needs grant). The new SEND school at London Road completed in 2025/26 and the remaining budget is for Additionally Resourced Provisions (ARPs). An ARP is a provision, within a school, designed to provide specialist and targeted support for children with long term special educational needs. Phase 2 of the Send programme starts in 2026/27 with a budget of £10.6m (funded by the DfE's High Needs Capital Grant) over the next three years to deliver a further 212 SEND places at 5 sites. These projects are forecast to reduce the cost of SEND provision by £4.1m a year.

Schools Asset Management Plan & Devolved Formula Capital (New)

14.36 The Schools Asset Management Plan (AMP) budget is £2.5m a year for the next three years fully funded by the DfE's School Condition Funding Allocation. The School Condition Funding is used to improve the condition of school buildings, ensuring the buildings are weathertight and provide a safe environment for education. The Devolved Formula Capital funding, at £0.6m a year funded by the DfE, covers the capital funding devolved to schools to use at their school site.

Post-16 Skills Centre

14.37 The budget for the Post-16 Skills Centre in 2026/27 is £2.8m as build work is expected to start. The Centres will support young people aged 16– 25 with SEND and will include facilities for students to get horticultural work experience. This budget is funded by the DfE High Needs Capital grant.

Consolidation of Leopold School

14.38 Following Cabinet's decision to relocate Islamia School to the Gwenneth Rickus site, £1m of DfE Basic Needs Grant will be invested in 2026/27 in consolidating the Leopold School on to a single site on Hawkshead Road.

Youth Facilities

14.39 The Council will invest £4.0m of SCIL funding over the next two years in the youth facilities capital programme to improve facilities at premises used by five youth organisations in the borough. The five projects have been selected following a robust competitive bidding process. This capital investment is a key pillar of the refreshed Brent Youth Strategy 2025-2028, approved by Cabinet in March 2025.

Housing Programme

14.40 The development and management of housing remain central to the Council's strategy, with significant investment across various programmes to address housing needs and enhance living standards. Brent has delivered substantial new affordable housing with 721 new homes expected in 2025/26 and this will continue with 312 new affordable homes in 2026/27. However, high build costs, rising interest costs and changes in grants are having a significant impact on viability across schemes. These factors, and the current financial position of the HRA, make it extremely challenging to make delivery or acquisition of new housing viable. As a result, the focus of the capital programme over the next five years is therefore likely to be investing in condition improvements and fire safety in Brent's existing housing with a £5.1m increase in the major repairs budget for 2026/27 compared to 2025/26. Officers will however continue to explore ways to increase the supply of housing, particularly temporary accommodation, to address the housing emergency and alleviate revenue pressures.

Affordable Housing Supply

Local Authority Housing Fund

14.41 The Council has been initially allocated £19.9m of grant funding from MHCLG's Local Authority Housing Fund to purchase 80 units over the next four years for use as temporary accommodation and resettlement. The grant level is equivalent to 40% of the median property price in the area (plus £21k to cover refurbishment and other costs). The Council intends to supplement the grant with £28.6m of general fund borrowing. The homes attract Local Housing Allowance rents and price caps have been calculated to ensure the scheme is financially viable for the Council. The priority will be larger properties as these better address local housing needs and generate higher temporary accommodation savings but the Council's ability to purchase them is limited by the supply of suitable properties.

Edgware Road

14.42 The Edgware Road project is intended to provide 120 affordable homes for temporary accommodation along with ground floor commercial space. A revised planning application was submitted in November 2024 and approved in April 2025. The scheme has a total remaining budget of £39.9m funded from borrowing and is expected to complete in 2029/2030. The viability on the scheme is challenging despite the substantial cost avoidance benefits from Brent providing the units rather than paying for private provision.

i4B

14.43 i4B is actively involved in acquiring properties throughout the borough and purchasing street properties, which are then offered as affordable rented homes. This initiative aims to alleviate the housing pressures in our community, reduce temporary accommodation costs for the Council, and decrease the number of families in temporary accommodation. The Council issued a new loan and equity facility of £40m in 2025/26 to fund i4B's capital programme and we expect a significant portion of that will be utilised in 2026/27.

New Council Homes Programme

14.44 A significant number of schemes completed in 2025/26 but the Church End Regeneration remains on site with a budget for 2026/27 of £6.9m funded by GLA grant and prudential borrowing. 99 new affordable homes are expected to be delivered in the first part of 2026/27. Church End is one of the Council's flagship projects and a key priority, aligning with Brent's Local Plan. The Council's objective is to rejuvenate the local centre, stimulate the local economy, and offer new housing, workspace, and other amenities to support the local community.

14.45 High build and interest costs have made it extremely difficult and put pressure on the viability of existing schemes. The Council has been able to address some of the viability gaps through over £8m worth of successful safeguarding grant bids to the GLA. This grant programme recognises the shift in market environments since the New Council Homes programme grant was agreed and is designed to ensure existing housing projects are seen through to completion.

14.46 Despite the increase in the quantum of the available grant under the GLA's new £11.7bn Social and Affordable Homes Programme, the terms of the grant prospectus with requirements for 50% match funding and the prioritisation of social rent, do not support viable housing schemes. As a result, budgets have been removed from schemes that have been assessed as not viable such as Comber Close and Longley Avenue. Officers continue to explore alternative ways of funding housing developments such as using capital receipts from disposing surplus sites and taking advantage of new Government rules that allow Right-to-Buy receipts to be combined with grant. A provisional budget of £25m a year has been included for pipeline schemes.

Housing HRA & Management

Major Repairs & Fire Safety

14.47 The budget for major repairs for HRA housing for 2026/27 has been set at £18.3m. This is an increase of £5.1m compared to 2025/26 reflecting the importance of investing in improvements following the self-referral to the Regulator of Social Housing in April 2025. Of this £18.3m budget, £2.1m will be dedicated to fire safety works and £0.6m for stock condition surveys. The stock condition survey budget is over double that of previous years, enabling the Council to conduct a full survey of its housing stock and take a more proactive approach to asset maintenance. The major repairs budget also includes £5.6m for essential remediation works on Granville New Homes and £3m for each of the next two years for improvement works at Windmill Court. In addition to the usual funding, the additional £5.1m funding does not involve external borrowing, avoiding additional pressure on HRA budgets. The funding consists

of £3.0m brought forward major repairs reserve and £0.4m of unrestricted Right-to-Buy receipts as well as £1.14m for I4B's contribution to Granville New Homes for the houses it owns and £0.6m of central government cladding remediation grant.

Enfranchisements

14.48 £2.5m funded by unrestricted Right-to-Buy receipts will be invested in renewing long-term leases that are reaching the end of their lives. The enfranchisement programme enables the Council to maintain housing stock numbers in a cost-efficient manner and avoid unnecessary rehousing of residents. The £2.5m budget is a £1.8m increase on 2025/26 enabling a more proactive approach whereby the Council renews leases when they have more time to run securing better value for money.

Energy Efficient Heating for Oaks and Pharamond

14.49 £2.9m over the next three years will be invested in a project to install energy efficient heating to replace the existing outdated and inefficient oil, gas and electric heating in the Council owned blocks of flats known as The Oaks and Pharamond. The preferred heat source of ground source heat pumps will be complemented by cavity wall insulation to reduce the heat demand. The project is funded by £1.1m of Warm Homes Social Fund with the remainder coming from the Brent Carbon Offset Fund.

Aids & Adaptations

14.50 The Council receives Disabled Facilities Grant funding each year to cover the expenses associated with adapting the homes of vulnerable Brent residents. This initiative aims to help individuals maintain their independence and quality of life by supporting home adaptations, allowing them to stay in their homes, reducing the need for more intensive care. The budget is based on the estimated grant level but is subject to change as the Government is consulting on changes to the formula for Disabled Facilities Grant which could severely reduce Brent's funding.

Lynton Close

14.51 As part of the new Brent Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Strategy, Cabinet approved a budget of £0.5m funded by General Fund borrowing for site improvements at Lynton Close as part of our improved approach to site management.

Statutory Capital & Treasury Reports

14.52 In recognition of the importance of capital investment in asset and treasury management to Council activities, CIPFA and central government have compiled codes of practice and regulations for Councils to follow. These ensure that Councils have effective processes and practices in place to control, manage and govern capital investment decisions, that include borrowing and treasury management practices.

14.53 The requirement on local authorities in relation to this statutory guidance is that they should "have regard" to such guidance and each year must produce a number of documents/strategies for approval by council or a nominated body.

14.54 The various statutory reports are as follows:

- Capital Strategy (Appendix G): High-level report covering the basics of capital programme, treasury management and investments for service commercial reasons.
- Non-Treasury Investment Strategy (Appendix H): Disclose the contribution that investments make “towards the service delivery objectives and / or place making role of the local authority.
- Treasury Management Strategy (the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy’s Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice 2021 Edition (the CIPFA Code) (Appendix I): Requires the Council to approve a treasury management strategy before the start of each financial year. The strategy outlines a framework within which the Council manages its cash flows, borrowing and investments, and the associated risks.
- Minimum Revenue Provision Statement (Appendix J): The process for calculating the annual charge to the revenue account of provision to repay debt incurred in respect of capital expenditure financed by borrowing or other long term credit arrangements (such as PFI).

14.55 The statutory capital and treasury reports have been included here for noting in Appendices G – J.

15.0 Pay Policy Statement 2026/27

15.1 Section 38 of the Localism Act 2011 requires local authorities to publish an annual ‘Pay Policy Statement’, setting out their policies in respect of chief officer remuneration and other specified matters. Regard must be had to guidance to be published by the Secretary of State in preparing the statement, which must be approved by Full Council. The Council is then constrained by its pay policy statement when making determinations on chief officer pay, although the statement may be amended at any time by a further resolution of the Full Council. No new guidance has been published since the statement was adopted for 2025/26 and so there are no proposed changes to the statement related to the guidance. The Draft Pay Policy Statement, attached as Appendix O, contains minor updating and cosmetic changes from the Statement adopted by full Council for the last financial year.

16.0 Stakeholder and ward member consultation and engagement

16.1 Section 11 of this report provides more details of the statutory consultation process with regards to setting the 2026/27 budget.

17.0 Financial Considerations

17.1 The Council’s financial position has been set out in this report and Members are under a legal obligation to set a balanced budget. In doing so they are obliged, under normal administrative principles, to take into account the various relevant factors, particularly in respect of consultation and equalities. In doing so Members are, of course, entitled to exercise their political judgement, paying regard to the relevant factors rather than being absolutely determined by them.

17.2 The budget report sets out a comprehensive picture of the council's finances over the short, medium and long term to assist in the decision making process in setting the 2026/27 budget.

17.3 In considering the budget report, a key consideration should be the delivery of the savings programme as it presents substantial management challenges. Again, considerable management attention has been, and is being, devoted to ensuring that these can be delivered, but it is important to stress again the inherent risks in delivering such a complex programme. The cross-cutting approach to developing savings makes this a particularly acute risk for the 2026/27 budget and the Council will need to manage this through effective budget monitoring throughout the financial year.

17.4 The budget now proposed is realistic and affordable, albeit challenging. The increases in Council Tax set out, if agreed, will generate significant additional revenue over time, minimising the number of difficult new decisions about funding for specific services to be proposed. If agreed, this budget would provide for affordable services in 2026/27.

17.5 Formally, this section of the report is the report of the Section 151 officer to which the Council is required by Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 to have regard, confirming that, if the budget as proposed were to be agreed, the estimates made for the purposes of the calculations are robust and the proposed financial reserves are adequate. The Section 151 officer concludes that the proposed level of reserves are adequate and the estimates underpinning the proposed budget are robust.

18.0 Legal Considerations

18.1 These are set out in Appendix N.

19.0 Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Considerations

19.1 Section 11 of this report provides more details of the approach to complying with the Equalities Act 2010 and the outcome of equalities impact assessments.

20.0 Climate Change and Environmental Considerations

20.1 Climate change and environmental considerations are taken into account as part of the budget development process. Each of the savings proposals set out in Appendix C will have had regard to these considerations as they were developed. Where detailed proposals are yet to be developed for the cross-cutting savings, climate change and environmental considerations will be taken into account as the detailed proposals are developed.

21.0 Human Resources Considerations

21.1 Of the proposals set out in Appendix C, there are some where there is an impact on staffing and could be subject to redundancy.

21.2 The Council will apply its Managing Change Policy and Procedure in the application of all restructuring arrangements which have an impact on staff, consulting with staff and trade union representatives accordingly.

22.0 Communication Considerations

22.1 Section 11 of this report provides more details of how the budget proposals have been communicated with residents, businesses and other key stakeholders.

Related document(s) for reference:

Draft Budget 2026/27 - Agenda for Cabinet on Monday 17 November 2025, 10.00 am

Report sign off:

Minesh Patel
Corporate Director, Finance and Resources

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix	Description
Appendix A	Overall Revenue Budget 2026/27
Appendix B	Medium Term Financial Strategy Model
Appendix C (i)	2026/27 Savings
Appendix C (ii)	Full Equalities Impact Assessments
Appendix C (iii)	Cumulative Equalities Impact Assessment
Appendix D	Budget Scrutiny Task Group Findings Report
Appendix E	Detailed Capital Programme 2025/26 to 2030/31
Appendix F	Capital Programme Pipeline
Appendix G	Capital Strategy 2026/27
Appendix H	Non-Treasury Investment Strategy 2026/27
Appendix I	Treasury Management Strategy 2026/27
Appendix J	Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statement 2026/27
Appendix K (i)	Reserves Strategy 2026/27
Appendix K (ii)	Schedule of reserves
Appendix L (i)	Fees & Charges Policy
Appendix L (ii)	Fees & Charges Schedule
Appendix M	Summary of Budget Consultation
Appendix N	Legal Advice
Appendix O	Pay Policy Statement 2026/27
Appendix P	HRA Business Plan

Appendix Q (i)	Council Tax Setting Committee Terms of Reference
Appendix Q (ii)	Council Tax Setting Committee Formal Resolution

Appendix A: Overall Revenue Budget 2026/27

The table below sets out the revenue budget for each directorate in 2026/27 and how this has changed from the 2025/26 budget.

	2025/26 Current Budget £m	Growth £m	Savings £m	Changes in Funding £m	2026/27 Approved Budget £m
Service Area Budgets					
Service Reform and Strategy	181.0	25.7	(2.2)	0.0	204.5
Children, Young People and Community Development	97.0	11.2	(1.6)	4.2	110.8
Neighbourhoods and Regeneration	31.5	6.8	(2.5)	0.0	35.8
Finance and Resources	32.3	1.5	(1.5)	0.0	32.3
Residents and Housing Services	32.5	9.3	(2.6)	20.7	59.9
Total Service Area Budgets	**374.3**	**54.5**	**(10.4)**	**24.9**	**443.3**
Capital Financing	38.9	0.5	0.0	0.0	39.4
Central Budgets	18.2	(3.3)	0.0	1.7	16.6
Total Budget Requirement	**431.4**	**51.7**	**(10.4)**	**26.6**	**499.3**
Funding					
Revenue Support Grant	(31.5)			(69.5)	(101.0)
Business Rates	(125.1)			(7.3)	(132.4)
Council Tax	(178.4)			(12.2)	(190.6)
Specific Grants	(96.4)			21.1	(75.3)
Total Funding	**(431.4)**	**0.0**	**0.0**	**(67.9)**	**(499.3)**

Departments

Service Reform and Strategy		The services within this directorate include: Adult Social Care, Strategic Commissioning, Capacity Building & Engagement, Integrated Care Partnership, Public Health, Leisure and Parks, Communications, Insight & Innovation and the Corporate Change programme.
Children, Young People and Community Development		The services within this directorate include: Children's Social Care, communities, strategy and partnerships and employment skills and enterprise.
Neighbourhoods and Regeneration		The services within this directorate include: inclusive regeneration & climate resilience, property & assets and public realm.
Finance and Resources		The services within this directorate include: finance, legal, shared IT services, democratic services, HR & organisational development and organisational assurance & resilience.
Residents and Housing Services		The services within this directorate include Resident Services, Housing Needs and Support, as well as Housing Services (Housing Revenue Account)

Appendix B: MTFS Model

CHANGES TO THE BUDGET YEAR-ON-YEAR	BUDGET 2025/26 £m	ADJUSTMENTS Growth £m	 Savings 2026/27	 Changes in Funding £m	BUDGET 2026/27 £m	Relative Changes 2025/26 to 2026/27
Base Budget	**431.4**				**431.4**	
Growth						
Demographics						
- Adult Social Care		8.2			8.2	
- Children's Social Care		4.6			4.6	
- Temporary Accommodation		4.0			4.0	
- Other Departments		0.2			0.2	
Sub-total		17.0			17.0	
Inflation						
- Adult Social Care		12.3			12.3	
- Children's Social Care		2.1			2.1	
- Temporary Accommodation		4.0			4.0	
- Contracts		4.6			4.6	
Sub-total		23.0			23.0	
Capital Programme Financing		0.5			0.5	
Service Changes - Other		11.2			11.2	
		51.7			**51.7**	
Savings						
Commissioning & procurement			(3.1)		(3.1)	
Digital programme			(1.4)		(1.4)	
Efficiency			(3.2)		(3.2)	
Workforce			(0.4)		(0.4)	
Income Maximisation			(0.5)		(0.5)	
Resident Experience			(0.7)		(0.7)	
Service specific			(1.1)		(1.1)	
			(10.4)		**(10.4)**	
Changes in Funding						
Reductions in service area income budgets due to funding consolidation				**26.6**	**26.6**	
	431.4	**51.7**	**(10.4)**	**26.6**	**499.3**	
Funding						
Revenue Support Grant	(31.5)			(69.5)	(101.0)	
Business Rates	(125.1)			(7.3)	(132.4)	
Council Tax	(178.4)			(12.2)	(190.6)	
Specific Grants	(96.4)			21.1	(75.3)	
	(431.4)	**0.0**	**0.0**	**(67.9)**	**(499.3)**	

MTFS ASSUMPTIONS	
Growth	The growth proposals in the budget are largely responsive in nature rather than introducing new service provision. This is a direct result of the volatile and unpredictable economic climate faced by the Council where rising demand and demographic pressures increase the cost of providing existing services to current service standards.
Demographic Growth	This largely relates to changes in the make up of the population due to ageing (Adult Social Care) and demand pressures on the placements, transitions, homecare and children with disabilities budgets (Children's Social Care).
Inflation	General inflation is above the Bank of England's target with CPI in September 2025 at 3.8%, although this has fallen to 3.4% in December 2025. Specific inflationary pressures are being experienced in social care where rising demand and a shortage of supply puts upwards pressure on prices. These inflationary pressures have direct effects on goods and services bought by the council and indirect effects via increased prices for services and supply contracts.
Capital Programme Financing	The inflation crisis since 2021 resulted in the Bank of England raising the base rate from a historic low below 1% up to 5.25% at its recent peak. As of December 2025, the base rate is at 3.75%, down from 4.5% in February 2025, but is expected to remain at a higher level than before the crisis began. This means that, coupled with the inflationary pressures on the programme itself, the cost of financing the Capital Programme has increased significantly since the plans were produced and growth is required to ensure the budget is sufficient to ensure the continued affordability of the programme.

Temporary Accommodation	In recent years, Brent has seen a surge in cases of homelessness in which the authority has a statutory duty to provide accommodation. Due to a severe lack of available and affordable properties, high inflation and the limitations of the Housing Benefit system, Brent has been required to use a growing amount of expensive temporary accommodation, including B&Bs, the cost of which has increased rapidly at the same time.
Service Changes - Other	These are unavoidable changes resulting from new burdens, increases in ringfenced grants and externally driven changes to service levels, for example concessionary fares. It includes the pay award, which has been higher than the norm in recent years as a response to inflation and the cost-of-living crisis. With inflation remaining above the Bank of England's 2% target, growth for the pay award in 2026/27 is at a higher level than before the inflation crisis
Savings - Full Details in Appendix C	New savings proposals for agreement total £10.4m.
Commissioning & procurement	Cross-cutting savings that aim to reduce commissioning and procurement spend.
Digital programme	Cross-cutting savings that support council-wide digital transformation focused on unlocking productivity, automating low-value tasks and maximising return on previous technology investments.
Efficiency	Standardised 1% efficiency target across the council's controllable budget.
Workforce	Cross-cutting savings that support the council's ambition to modernise its operating model by establishing a leaner, more agile workforce.
Income Maximisation	A focused programme to increase and safeguard income through targeted updates to fees and charges, stronger recovery processes, improved payment oversight, and higher collection performance.
Resident Experience	Enhancing the overall customer experience while reducing the cost of handling interactions.
Service specific	Savings attributable to specific services. Full details of these savings are in Appendix C.
Funding	The changes to Core Funding are detailed in full in Section six of the report. The table below shows the changes from 2025/26 to 2026/27 in Specific Grants.

SPECIFIC GRANTS	**2025/26**	**2026/27**	**Difference**
	£m	£m	£m
Children, Families and Youth Grant	0.0	8.9	8.9
Local Authority Better Care Grant	16.5	16.5	(0.0)
Social Care Grant	34.4	0.0	(34.4)
ASC Market Sustainability and Improvement Fund	5.9	0.0	(5.9)
Children's Social Care Prevention Grant	1.4	0.0	(1.4)
Total Social Care Grants	**58.2**	**25.4**	**(32.8)**
Recovery Grant	5.8	5.8	(0.0)
Homelessness, Rough Sleeping and Domestic Abuse Grant	0.0	7.8	7.8
Crisis and Resilience Fund	0.0	7.8	7.8
Public Health Grant	26.0	28.5	2.5
Other grants	6.4	0.0	(6.4)
Total Specific Grants	**96.4**	**75.3**	**(21.1)**

Reference	Saving category	Brent Lead	Service Areas Impacted	Lead Members	Proposal name	Brief description	2026/27
CC01 26-27	**Commissioning & procurement**	**Rhodri Rowlands**	All	Cllr Jake Rubin Remainder Cross Council	Holistic grant management	Ensure a consistent charging methodology & community investment.	£0.5
					Tail spend rationalisation	Reduce administration burden through consolidation of low value purchases with a target of 10% reduction in spend.	£0.6
					Review procurement and third party spend	A reduction in third-party spend is proposed through targeted contract reviews, improved supplier engagement, and strategic procurement planning.	£1.6
					Oxygen finance early payment	Faster payment of supplier invoices to generate pre-agreed rebate fee.	£0.3
CC02 26-27	**Digital programme**	**Sadie East**	All	Cllr Mili Patel - Oracle Optimisation Remainder Cross Council	Optimising Oracle	Ongoing Oracle optimisation through assessing Oracle's current deployment and aligning to improvement opportunities.	£0.3
					Use of technology and AI	Digital transformation focused on unlocking productivity and building a more agile organisation based on successes of co-pilot and existing AI deployment roll out across Council.	£0.5
					Robotic Process Automation	Expanding Brent's RPA programme by delivering 25 new automations focused on high-volume, rules-based tasks to improve efficiency where traditional system integration is not feasible.	£0.7
CC03 26-27	**Efficiency**	**Darren Armstrong**	All	Cross Council	Council wide efficiency target model	A standardised 1% efficiency target across the Council's controllable budget, equating to approximately	£3.1

						£60k per Head of Service. It is designed to support consistent financial management, with an emphasis on local accountability and value-based practices.	
CC04 26-27	**Workforce**	**Musrat Zaman**	All	Cross Council	Agency control	Strengthening internal recruitment and retention, supported by tighter controls on agency use and off-contract bookings.	£0.4
CC05 26-27	**Income Maximisation**	**Rav Jassar**	All	Cllr Mili Patel	Strategic Review of fees and charges	This proposal sets out a focused programme to increase and safeguard income through targeted updates to fees and charges, stronger recovery processes, improved payment oversight, and higher collection performance.	£0.5
CC06 26-27	**Resident Experience Channel Shift**	**Kirsteen Roe**	All	Cllr Promise Knight	Resident experience channel shift	Channel Shift customers from face-to-face and phone to digital self-service channels to streamlining communication channels, and enhancing use of existing tools like CRM and telephony systems.	£0.7
NR01 26-27	**Service Specific**	**Chris Whyte**	N&R	Cllr Krupa Sheth	Lane Rental Scheme	Adopting a Lane Rental scheme to reduce disruption and improve coordination for works on high-traffic routes.	£0.4
NR02 26-27		**Tanveer Ghani**	N&R	Cllr Teo Benea	Asset utilisation	Optimising the use of physical assets to support the generation of recurring income and explore financially sustainable opportunities that enhance community access, activity and wellbeing.	£0.2

PHRS01 26-27		**Laurence Coaker**	R&HS	Cllr Fleur Donnelly-Jackson	Reduce subsidy loss	Reduction in supported exempt accommodation subsidy loss through utilising the Registered Provider First Wave Housing.	£0.1
PHRS02 26-27		**Laurence Coaker**	R&HS	Cllr Fleur Donnelly-Jackson	Homelessness prevention	Reduce homelessness using data-driven indicators to identify households under stress and intervening early with tailored support.	£0.2
PHRS03 26-27		**Kirsteen Roe**	R&HS	Cllr Promise Knight	Housing Benefits claim reduction	Streamlining Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support services through automation and workforce optimisation, in line with expected caseload reductions as residents are moved to Universal Credit	£0.3
Total							**£10.4**

This page is intentionally left blank

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA)

POLICY/PROPOSAL:	Underutilized Car Parks Project
DEPARTMENT:	Neighbourhoods & Regeneration
TEAM:	Healthy Streets and Parking
LEAD OFFICER:	Sandor Fazekas
DATE:	18/12/2025

EIA Guidance is available online, please reach out to equality@brent.gov.uk for any further support.

SECTION A – SCREENING

1. Briefly and clearly describe the policy, proposal, change, or initiative, and what it is trying to achieve.

As a council, we are continuously seeking opportunities to enhance revenue streams, deliver savings and review service areas to identify innovative approaches for improvement.

Recently, we have undertaken a review of the use of Brent council public car parks. Our analysis of annual income across these sites revealed that several Brent car parks are underperforming.

To address this, we are in the process of exploring options to increase the use and income from our car parks. This includes proposals to explore strategic partnerships with digital platforms such as Just Park and Your Parking Space and includes prebooking spaces. These collaborations will form part of a pilot scheme for a period of 12 months, aimed at increasing the use of our public car parks.

Additionally, we will be reviewing and changing tariffs for the car parks within the pilot project, and this will include a Wembley Event Day tariff, designed to offer all-day parking at a competitive and more affordable rate compared to existing car parks around Wembley Stadium. This initiative is intended to provide event day attendees with a compelling incentive to utilise Brent's car parks, thereby improving occupancy and revenue.

The results of the pilot scheme will inform the Parking Policy review summer in 2026 and the establishing of new tariffs.

2. Are there any groups who may be impacted by your proposal? For reference, Q4 lists all protected groups.

Socio-economically disadvantaged groups

3. If no groups are affected, explain why.

N/A

4. Mark with an “X” the potential impact of the policy or proposal on different groups. You can mark more than one box for each group.

Characteristic	IMPACT		
	Positive	Neutral/None	Negative
Age - People of different age groups.		**X**	
Care Experience - People who have been in care for any period of their childhood.		**X**	
Disability - People with physical, sensory, learning, and mental health disabilities, long-term conditions, and non-visible disabilities.		**X**	
Gender reassignment - Transgender and non-binary people, including anyone who is proposing to, started, or who has completed a process to change their gender.		**X**	
Marriage and Civil Partnership - Applies mainly in the workplace, people who are married or in a civil partnership.		**X**	
Pregnancy and Maternity - People who are pregnant, on maternity leave, or new parents.		**X**	
Race and Ethnicity - People of different ethnicity, nationality, and skin colour.		**X**	
Religion or belief - People of all faiths, and those with no religious belief.		**X**	
Sex - Differences between men and women, including		**X**	

disparities in pay, career progression, and health outcomes.			
Sexual Orientation - People who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, asexual, or any other non-heterosexual identity.		**X**	
Socio-Economic Status – People who are experiencing poverty or socio-economic disadvantage.		X.	**X**
Other relevant groups* *[replace this text and specify where appropriate]*		**X**	

* Other relevant groups could include Carers, Refugees or Asylum Seekers, Veterans, among others. Review the EIA Guidance for more information.

5. Complete **each row** of the checklist with an "X".

SCREENING CHECKLIST		
	YES	**NO**
Does the policy or proposal have implications for eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity, or fostering good relations among different groups?		X
Does it relate to an area with known inequalities?		X
Would it add, change, or remove services used by any groups listed in Q4?	**X**	
Does it have negative or positive equality impacts on any groups listed in Q4?	**X**	
If you have answered YES to ANY of the above, proceed to section B. **If you have answered NO to ALL the above, proceed straight to section C.**		

SECTION B – IMPACTS ANALYSIS

6. What data and evidence have you used to understand potential impacts? This could include service user data where relevant. If there is little or no evidence, explain why, and note any plans to improve data collection in future, adding this to the Action Plan in Section E.

As this is a new proposal, there is currently limited evidence to suggest that increasing off-street parking fees will have a significant negative impact, particularly as these car parks are already in existence and currently underutilised. For sites that experience higher demand, a modest increase in tariffs is expected to generate additional income, delivering cost savings for the council without disproportionately affecting usage. To ensure fairness and mitigate any potential impact on residents from lower socio-economic backgrounds, the pre-booked space taken in the pilot car parks will be limited and existing tariffs will be apply for other spaces, which will help maintain accessibility for Brent residents while supporting our revenue objectives.

7. For each characteristic:
    a. Provide detail for the impact listed in the response to Q4 in the left-hand box.
    b. Provide data and evidence to explain how you reached your conclusion in the right-hand box.

   Relevant data sources for Brent and its residents can be found in the EIA Guidance document.

Age	
Provide detail for the impact listed in Q4.	Provide supporting data and evidence.
N/A	

Care Experience	
Provide detail for the impact listed in Q4.	Provide supporting data and evidence.
N/A	

Disability	
Provide detail for the impact listed in Q4.	Provide supporting data and evidence.
N/A	

Gender Reassignment	
Provide detail for the impact listed in Q4.	Provide supporting data and evidence.
N/A	

Marriage and Civil Partnership	
Provide detail for the impact listed in Q4.	Provide supporting data and evidence.
N/A	

Pregnancy and Maternity	
Provide detail for the impact listed in Q4.	Provide supporting data and evidence.
N/A	

Race and Ethnicity

Provide detail for the impact listed in Q4.	Provide supporting data and evidence.
N/A	

Religion or Belief	
Provide detail for the impact listed in Q4.	Provide supporting data and evidence.
N/A	

Sex	
Provide detail for the impact listed in Q4.	Provide supporting data and evidence.
N/A	

Sexual Orientation	
Provide detail for the impact listed in Q4.	Provide supporting data and evidence.
N/A	

Socio-Economic Status	
Provide detail for the impact listed in Q4.	Provide supporting data and evidence.

It is worth noting that residents that own and maintain a private vehicle will have the financial means to sustain such a personal benefit. Brent residents from lower-income backgrounds and/or single-parent households may be affected by an increase in parking tariffs. To mitigate any potential impact, we may be able to consider the introduction of a discounted rate specifically for Brent residents from lower socio-economic groups, subject to the results of the test cases.	N/A

Other Relevant Groups	
Provide detail for the impact listed in Q4.	Provide supporting data and evidence.

8. Summarise any engagement activities with relevant groups (this may replicate some of the information listed in Q7). State whether those involved represent the people affected by your proposal, or whether more engagement is needed, which should be added to the Action Plan in Section E.

We can inform members and staff using internal communication channels such as Viva Engage, In the Loop videos, screen monitors and emails. For residents, we can engage them via newsletters, Your Brent Magazine and Council webpage(s) so that they are informed of the test cases, increase in charging tariffs, and aware of the proposed parking policy updates.

9. Provide more detail on any areas identified as requiring further data or detailed analysis.

SECTION C – CONCLUSIONS

10. Summarise your overall conclusions based on the analysis:

- If there are no impacts, state that here, and **do not complete sections E or G.**
- If you decide not to move forward, explain why, and **do not complete sections E or G.**
- If there are negative impacts, explain what you'll do to reduce them. If you choose to continue despite negative impacts, or if negative impacts remain following your action plan, provide a justification for your decision.
- If there are positive impacts, explain how these could be strengthened, where possible.

The pilot scheme is designed to have minimal effect on protected groups, as only a limited number of spaces per site will be included, and disabled bays will remain unchanged. Additionally, an Event Day parking rate will be introduced at these car parks, offering a more affordable option for those attending Wembley Stadium events compared to existing stadium parking facilities.

It is worth noting that residents that own and maintain a private vehicle will have the financial means to sustain such a personal benefit. The introduction of a discount code is contingent upon the outcome of the proposed tariff increase. While the potential impact on lower socio-economic groups is expected to be minimal, given London's extensive public transport network and the lower rates of car ownership among these groups, this measure ensures that any unforeseen negative effects are mitigated.

SECTION D - RESULT

Select one of the following options with an "X".		
A	**CONTINUE WITH THE POLICY/PROPOSAL UNCHANGED**	
B	**JUSTIFY AND CONTINUE THE POLICY/PROPOSAL**	**X**
C	**CHANGE/ADJUST THE POLICY/PROPOSAL**	
D	**STOP OR ABANDON THE POLICY/PROPOSAL**	

SECTION E - ACTION PLAN AND MONITORING

Unless your proposal has no equality impacts or you are not moving forward, complete the table below to track specific actions to:

- Reduce negative impacts and increase positive outcomes.
- Monitor actual or ongoing impacts.
- Record plans to improve data collection.
- Plan any further engagement or analysis that may be required.

Use the 'Status' column on the right to indicate whether the action is yet to start, is in progress, or has been completed.

Issue Identified	Action	Lead Officer	Completion Date	Status
Those from a lower socio-economic background may be affected by increase in parking tariffs.	Collect baseline data on current usage	Parking Team		Not yet started
	Review complaints/feedback	Customer service team		Not yet started.
	Explore a discount parking rate for Brent residents from a lower socio-economic background.	Parking Team		Not yet started

11. Describe how you will monitor the actual, ongoing impact of the policy or proposal?

The policy will be monitored monthly through the following measures:

- **Data Collection**: Monitor usage of car parks following implementation of the pilot project.
- **Customer Feedback Analysis**: Working in collaboration with the Customer Services team to review feedback and complaints, evaluating whether responses are positive, negative, or if there is no significant response at all.
- **6 month review:** Assess overall impact on lower socio-economic groups and evaluate effectiveness of the discount scheme to inform policy direction.

This approach will enable the council to identify any emerging issues and determine whether further adjustments or targeted communication are required.

SECTION F – SIGN OFF

	Signature	Date
Officer:	Celine Ladele	06.01.2026
Reviewing Officer or Head of Service	Sandor Fazekas	06.01.2026

SECTION G – REVIEW

EIAs are live documents and should be reviewed regularly, especially if there are actions still to be completed or if the proposal has significant equality impacts.

When to review

- Review every 6 months until all actions in the Action Plan above are complete.
- If new data, feedback, or changes to the service arise, revisit the EIA to make sure it's still accurate.

Who should review

- The same officer who completed the EIA should carry out the review. If there's been a staffing change, the new lead officer should take over.

What to update

- Use the Status column in the Action Plan above to show progress (e.g. Not Started, In Progress, Completed). Add comments and updates in the table below — include any new data, evidence, or feedback.

When reviews can stop

- Once all actions are complete and no further equality impacts are expected, you can stop reviewing the EIA.
- Add rows to the table below as necessary until all actions are completed.

Date of 1st Review:	
Officer:	
Comment on progress toward specific actions, and provide any data and evidence updates:	
Reviewing Officer or Head of Service:	
Date of 2nd Review:	
Officer:	
Comment on progress toward specific actions, and provide any data and evidence updates:	
Reviewing Officer or Head of Service:	
Date of 3rd Review:	
Officer:	
Comment on progress toward specific actions, and provide any data and evidence updates:	
Reviewing Officer or Head of Service:	

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA)

POLICY/PROPOSAL:	To increase Council Tax by 4.99% in 2026/27
DEPARTMENT:	Council wide
TEAM:	N/A
LEAD OFFICER:	N/A
DATE:	09/01/2026

EIA Guidance is available online, please reach out to equality@brent.gov.uk for any further support.

SECTION A – SCREENING

12. Briefly and clearly describe the policy, proposal, change, or initiative, and what it is trying to achieve.

The council is required to make significant savings to deliver a legally required balanced budget. To help overcome this it is proposed to increase council tax by 4.99%, where 2% is ring fenced for Adult Social Care and 2.99% is a general increase. This is the maximum increase allowed by government. The proposal will generate an additional £12.1m of recurring income for the Council and therefore avoid having to make further savings to key council services such as adult social care, children's services, etc.

This will impact all residents within Brent who are eligible to pay council tax. Under the changes that are being made to local government funding, there is more emphasis on generating more funding locally (i.e. becoming more self-determinant). This proposal is linked to one aspect of local government funding where the Council has some discretion to raise additional funds by increases to council tax.

13. Are there any groups who may be impacted by your proposal? For reference, Q4 lists all protected groups.

All households in Brent, apart from those who are of state pension age; these households are eligible for 100% council tax discount, however, the discount is only applied following financial assessment of their income.

Band	Amount payable in 2025/26 (Brent share)	Amount payable in 2026/27 (Brent share)	Increase per annum	Increase per month	Increase per week
A	£1,095.18	£1,149.84	£54.66	£4.55	£1.05
B	£1,277.71	£1,341.48	£63.77	£5.31	£1.23
C	£1,460.24	£1,533.12	£72.88	£6.07	£1.40
D	£1,642.77	£1,724.76	£81.99	£6.83	£1.58
E	£2,007.83	£2,108.04	£100.21	£8.35	£1.93
F	£2,372.89	£2,491.32	£118.43	£9.87	£2.28
G	£2,737.95	£2,874.60	£136.65	£11.39	£2.63
H	£3,285.54	£3,449.52	£163.98	£13.67	£3.15

If this proposal is approved, it will affect all households in Brent's residential dwellings, that will see their council tax bills increase, unless they are eligible for council tax support.

14. If no groups are affected, explain why.

Council tax is applicable to all properties, it is not considered that the increase targets any one particular group rather it is an increase that is applied across the board. At the same time because the increase is applied to all properties it is not possible to exempt any particular groups. However, on the latter point there is a council tax support scheme that offers support to vulnerable people and people on low incomes for both pensioners and those of working age. Brent Resident Support Fund (RSF) and Hardship Fund could provide further assistance to vulnerable residents, including but not limited to help with the cost of their council tax bill.

15. Mark with an "X" the potential impact of the policy or proposal on different groups. You can mark more than one box for each group.

Characteristic	IMPACT		
	Positive	Neutral/None	Negative
Age - People of different age groups.		**X**	
Care Experience - People who have been in care for any period of their childhood.		**X**	
Disability - People with physical, sensory, learning, and mental health disabilities, long-term conditions, and non-visible disabilities.		**X**	
Gender reassignment - Transgender and non-binary people, including anyone who is proposing to, started, or who has completed a process to change their gender.		**X**	
Marriage and Civil Partnership - Applies mainly in the workplace, people who are married or in a civil partnership.		**X**	
Pregnancy and Maternity - People who are pregnant, on		**X**	

maternity leave, or new parents.			
Race and Ethnicity - People of different ethnicity, nationality, and skin colour.		**X**	
Religion or belief - People of all faiths, and those with no religious belief.		**X**	
Sex - Differences between men and women, including disparities in pay, career progression, and health outcomes.		**X**	
Sexual Orientation - People who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, asexual, or any other non-heterosexual identity.		**X**	
Socio-Economic Status – People who are experiencing poverty or socio-economic disadvantage.			**X**
Other relevant groups* *[replace this text and specify where appropriate]*		**X**	

* Other relevant groups could include Carers, Refugees or Asylum Seekers, Veterans, among others. Review the EIA Guidance for more information.

16. Complete **each row** of the checklist with an "X".

SCREENING CHECKLIST		
	YES	**NO**
Does the policy or proposal have implications for eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity, or fostering good relations among different groups?	**X**	
Does it relate to an area with known inequalities?	**X**	
Would it add, change, or remove services used by any groups listed in Q4?		**X**
Does it have negative or positive equality impacts on any groups listed in Q4?	**X**	
If you have answered YES to ANY of the above, proceed to section B. **If you have answered NO to ALL the above, proceed straight to section C.**		

SECTION B – IMPACTS ANALYSIS

17. What data and evidence have you used to understand potential impacts? This could include service user data where relevant. If there is little or no evidence, explain why, and note any plans to improve data collection in future, adding this to the Action Plan in Section E.

The Council has analysed the statutory council tax base return which shows the total number of households that are required to pay council tax and the households who are eligible for council tax support. Other than this, it is not possible to conduct further impact analyses as the proposed council tax increase will affect households in Brent in different ways based on their financial circumstances. However, low income households will continue to be eligible to apply for council tax support to offset this increase

18. For each characteristic:
    a. Provide detail for the impact listed in the response to Q4 in the left-hand box.
    b. Provide data and evidence to explain how you reached your conclusion in the right-hand box.

Relevant data sources for Brent and its residents can be found in the EIA Guidance document.

Age	
Provide detail for the impact listed in Q4.	Provide supporting data and evidence.
N/A	

Care Experience	
Provide detail for the impact listed in Q4.	Provide supporting data and evidence.
N/A	

Disability	
Provide detail for the impact listed in Q4.	Provide supporting data and evidence.

N/A	

Gender Reassignment	
Provide detail for the impact listed in Q4.	Provide supporting data and evidence.
N/A	

Marriage and Civil Partnership	
Provide detail for the impact listed in Q4.	Provide supporting data and evidence.
N/A	

Pregnancy and Maternity	
Provide detail for the impact listed in Q4.	Provide supporting data and evidence.
N/A	

Race and Ethnicity	
Provide detail for the impact listed in Q4.	Provide supporting data and evidence.

N/A	

Religion or Belief	
Provide detail for the impact listed in Q4.	Provide supporting data and evidence.
N/A	

Sex	
Provide detail for the impact listed in Q4.	Provide supporting data and evidence.
N/A	

Sexual Orientation	
Provide detail for the impact listed in Q4.	Provide supporting data and evidence.
N/A	

Socio-Economic Status	
Provide detail for the impact listed in Q4.	Provide supporting data and evidence.

An increase in Council Tax is likely to have a negative impact on residents experiencing socio-economic disadvantage. These households typically have lower disposable income and are already managing multiple financial pressures. Additional financial burdens could exacerbate existing inequalities by reducing their ability to meet essential living expenses. Currently 23,912 households receive Council tax Support, based on their income. Any increase in Council tax base means that 35% minimum contribution creates disadvantage for this group	National and local data shows that socio-economically disadvantaged groups spend a higher proportion of their income on fixed costs, leaving them less resilient to unexpected or increased charges. The Index of Multiple Deprivation highlights that areas with higher deprivation often have higher concentrations of low-income households, single-parent families, and individuals reliant on benefits. To mitigate the risk, £1.5m has been allocated to the Hardship fund to support households who cannot afford to pay.

Other Relevant Groups	
Provide detail for the impact listed in Q4.	Provide supporting data and evidence.
N/A	

19. Summarise any engagement activities with relevant groups (this may replicate some of the information listed in Q7). State whether those involved represent the people affected by your proposal, or whether more engagement is needed, which should be added to the Action Plan in Section E.

Council Tax increase is generally part of budget consultation and no specific referendum needed as below 5%.

The residents impacted by the changes are informed about 13A Hardship payments in our correspondence, hubs, phones and Customer Service Centre. Council Tax Support customers also are aware of this through our website and Cost of Living page.

20. Provide more detail on any areas identified as requiring further data or detailed analysis.

We are already supporting residents who cannot pay through 13A payments with £1.5m for the year 2025/26. Detailed analysis on ward basis will be produced to show results.

SECTION C – CONCLUSIONS

21. Summarise your overall conclusions based on the analysis:

- If there are no impacts, state that here, and **do not complete sections E or G.**
- If you decide not to move forward, explain why, and **do not complete sections E or G.**
- If there are negative impacts, explain what you'll do to reduce them. If you choose to continue despite negative impacts, or if negative impacts remain following your action plan, provide a justification for your decision.
- If there are positive impacts, explain how these could be strengthened, where possible.

If the proposal is rejected, the Adult Social Care budget will have less resources to utilise, which could pose challenges to the service to meet growing demand of current and future service users. Failure to meet the increasing demand and diverse needs of current and future service users, would have a negative impact on those most in need. It will also likely lead to increased crisis costs and further impact upon budget pressures.

The 2.99% increase in council tax for general use should have a positive impact on some equality groups as it prevents an additional reduction in the Council's budget. Without a specific alternative proposal, the exact benefit to specific groups of residents, staff and external stakeholders is uncertain, but a reduction in budget at short notice will limit the scope of the Council to reduce the impact on services used by vulnerable groups of people.

Whilst the council tax proposal will increase the financial pressure on some households, the council tax support scheme will partially or fully mitigate this impact for those households who are living on low incomes and are eligible for council tax support. Households experiencing financial hardship can apply for section 13A Hardship payment for Council tax, Resident Support Fund and other mechanisms through Cost of Living support through our website, Hubs, Partners and Customer Services.

Some residents who live on their own or no one else in the property counts as an adult, will have the impact mitigated by the 25% discount offered to single households.

SECTION D - RESULT

Select one of the following options with an "X".		
A	**CONTINUE WITH THE POLICY/PROPOSAL UNCHANGED**	
B	**JUSTIFY AND CONTINUE THE POLICY/PROPOSAL**	**X**
C	**CHANGE/ADJUST THE POLICY/PROPOSAL**	
D	**STOP OR ABANDON THE POLICY/PROPOSAL**	

SECTION E - ACTION PLAN AND MONITORING

Unless your proposal has no equality impacts or you are not moving forward, complete the table below to track specific actions to:

- Reduce negative impacts and increase positive outcomes.
- Monitor actual or ongoing impacts.
- Record plans to improve data collection.
- Plan any further engagement or analysis that may be required.

Use the 'Status' column on the right to indicate whether the action is yet to start, is in progress, or has been completed.

Issue Identified	Action	Lead Officer	Completion Date	Status
Inability to pay the council tax increase	Review impact of council tax increase, with a particular focus on understanding the ability to pay for those in arrears by utilising credit reference agencies, monitoring payment patterns and any other information available.	Jasvanti Varsani/Ryan Stephenson	April – June 2026	To be continued in the new financial year

22. Describe how you will monitor the actual, ongoing impact of the policy or proposal?

If the council tax proposal is approved, the Council will continue to monitor the impact on equality groups to ensure that any unexpected consequences and/or adverse impact are promptly identified and mitigated. The existing powers under Section 13A of the Local Government Act 1992 allow the Council to reduce council tax by up to 100%. The process for applying is detailed on the Council's website. Applications will be online and managed alongside the Resident Support Fund.

SECTION F – SIGN OFF

	Signature	Date
Officer:	Asha Vyas	12/01/2026
Reviewing Officer or Head of Service	Ravinder Jassar	12/01/2026

SECTION G – REVIEW

EIAs are live documents and should be reviewed regularly, especially if there are actions still to be completed or if the proposal has significant equality impacts.

When to review

- Review every 6 months until all actions in the Action Plan above are complete.
- If new data, feedback, or changes to the service arise, revisit the EIA to make sure it's still accurate.

Who should review

- The same officer who completed the EIA should carry out the review. If there's been a staffing change, the new lead officer should take over.

What to update

- Use the Status column in the Action Plan above to show progress (e.g. Not Started, In Progress, Completed). Add comments and updates in the table below — include any new data, evidence, or feedback.

When reviews can stop

- Once all actions are complete and no further equality impacts are expected, you can stop reviewing the EIA.
- Add rows to the table below as necessary until all actions are completed.

Date of 1st Review:	
Officer:	
Comment on progress toward specific actions, and provide any data and evidence updates:	
Reviewing Officer or Head of Service:	
Date of 2nd Review:	
Officer:	
Comment on progress toward specific actions, and provide any data and evidence updates:	

Reviewing Officer or Head of Service:	
Date of 3rd Review:	
Officer:	
Comment on progress toward specific actions, and provide any data and evidence updates:	
Reviewing Officer or Head of Service:	

This page is intentionally left blank

Cumulative Equality Impact Assessment: Budget Proposals 2026/27

1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this equality impact assessment is to provide an analysis of the likely impact of the council's budget savings proposals on residents and community groups with 'protected characteristics' as defined by the Equality Act 2010. The nine protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership[1], race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity. Section 149, Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) of the Equality Act 2010 requires the council in the exercise of its functions to have regard to the need to:

1. Eliminate discrimination, harassment, and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the act;
2. Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not;
3. Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.

Whilst not a statutory requirement, Brent council has formally committed to treating both care experience and socio-economic status as internally recognised protected characteristics, as recognised in our Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) template, and screening.

The council is committed to equity, diversity, and inclusion. It seeks to ensure that all residents, employees and stakeholders are treated fairly and receive appropriate, accessible services and fair and equal opportunities. This commitment requires that equality considerations play a key role in our decision-making processes; and in understanding the effect of our policies and practices.

Approach to considering equalities

The council must carefully consider and have due regard to the impact of its savings proposals on the PSED; and take a reasonable and proportionate view regarding the overall impact and seek to mitigate impacts where possible. As such, the budget savings proposals have been subject to an Equality Impact Assessment screening, which helps to establish their relevance to the council's equalities duties and determine whether a full EIA is required. The screening assesses the potential or likely impact on service users and employees with protected characteristics. EIAs are living documents that are reviewed every 6 months, so that as projects/proposals develop and further evidence of impacts becomes available these are documented, along with progress toward actions listed in the EIA's action plan.

[1] Bullet point 2 and 3 does not apply to marriage and civil partnerships.

Relevant leads for the budget savings proposals requiring an EIA were provided with guidance and information on the practical steps to fill out the template and were supported by the EDI team to complete the assessment.

This document provides an analysis of the equality impacts for the 2026-27 budget proposals as we currently understand them, but due to the nature of six cross-cutting thematic budget proposals which are still being finalised, we are not yet able to determine an overall cumulative impact. As initiatives within each of the cross-cutting proposals progress, they will be subject to screening and EIAs will be completed for those with any impacts on protected groups. We will complete a cumulative impact assessment covering the cross-cutting thematic areas to present to Cabinet in July 2026.

At this stage, two proposals have been identified as requiring a full EIA, which are attached. The equality impacts concerned with these proposals are summarised in this report.

Overall Assessment

No direct discrimination has been identified in relation to the budget proposals. Two of the savings proposals may have a negative impact on equality of opportunity, particularly for residents experiencing socio-economic disadvantage; however, proportionate mitigation measures have been identified. Overall, the proposals are considered reasonable and demonstrate due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty.

This is an interim assessment based on the information currently available. Several proposals are still in development, and full equality impacts cannot yet be determined. Impacts will be monitored throughout implementation, and further assessment will be undertaken as proposals progress.

2 DEMOGRAPHY OVERVIEW

Key facts about Brent's demographic profile are taken from the data sources **Population change in Brent** and the **Equality profile of Brent**. They show the make-up of the borough, help us to identify potential impacts; and identify the increasing pressures and demand for council services.

- Brent is home to around 353,000 residents and is the fifth largest borough in London.

- The borough has a population density of 8,164 people per square kilometre – the 14th highest density in England, and the highest in Outer London.

- Brent has high levels of population mobility: During 2023-24, 50,200 people moved into the borough and 48,300 residents moved out. This equates to a population turnover rate of 279 per 1000 population, the 17th highest rate in England, and the highest across Outer London Boroughs. This high level of mobility contributes to shifting demographics, with Indian and Romanian migrant populations increasing by 23% and 187% respectively since 2011.

- While Brent sees very significant numbers moving in and out of the borough every year, in the past, these flows have often cancelled each other out, resulting in quite small changes in the overall population due to net migration. However, post-pandemic, migration flows have begun to rise again and net migration to Brent has turned positive, with a rise of +6,600 during 2022-24.

- Estimates suggest that the Brent population fell by around 8,200 between mid-2019 and mid-2021 (-2.4%), mainly reflecting pandemic impacts on migration flows into London. Since then, the population has recovered and has been rising. Between mid-2021 and mid-2024, the Brent population rose by around 13,700, a rise of 4%. London and England saw similar rises of 3.2% and 3.7% over the same period. The population of Brent grew by 7% over the last ten years (2014-24), similar to the rise across London (6.3%) and England (7.8%).

- The latest projections for Brent suggest strong population growth going forward. The population is projected to grow between 24%-30% over the period 2024-2041, with the 'central' scenario predicting that the population will grow by around 26%, with the population expected to reach around 452,000 by 2041. If realised, this would lead to an additional 94,600 residents by 2041 – around 5,600 additional residents per year.

- In line with national trends, the population is ageing: by 2041, the number of residents aged 65 and over is projected to increase by 57% – an additional 24,400 older residents. More than half this increase is within the age 75+ age group. Over the same period, the child population aged under 16 is expected to see less change, increasing by 14% between 2024 and 2041. The population aged 16-64 is expected to grow by around 25% by 2041.

- Population growth is expected to be concentrated in the areas where significant housing development is planned. The three wards likely to see the biggest population growth are Alperton, Wembley Park and Roundwood. Considered together, these three wards are projected to accommodate an additional 44,600 residents by 2041 (47% of the total growth across Brent).

A summary of the key protected characteristics in Brent are as follows:

Age

- In common with other London Boroughs, Brent has a relatively young population: the median age of the population is 34.9, similar to London (35.7), but over five years lower than the national trend (40.2). Compared with England, Brent has proportionately more young adults and fewer over 50s. One in four Brent residents are aged 20-34 compared with around one in five nationally (26% vs. 20%), while 29% of the borough population is aged 50 or over compared with 38% nationally.

Care Experience

- According to the Brent Looked After Children Annual report 2024/2025, 328 children and young people were looked after by Brent at the end of March 2025, down from 368 the previous year. 59% of Brent's looked-after cohort are school-age (5-16), while 24% are over 16, and 17% are under 5.
- Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children remain a significant subgroup, averaging around 50 cases at any one time, making up approximately 14% of Brent's looked-after population.

Disability

- Around one in seven Brent residents have a long-term health problem or disability that limits their day-to-day-activities in some way. The prevalence of disability rises sharply with age: more than half of all residents aged 65 and over had a long-term health problem or disability.

Gender reassignment

- The 2021 census found that approximately 0.5% of the population in England and Wales are identified as transgender. In Brent, this would equate to roughly 1,750 people.

Marriage and civil partnership

- Of Brent residents aged 16 years and over, 43.5% said they had never been married or in a civil partnership in 2021, up from 42.1% in 2011. The increase in the percentage of people who had never been married or in a civil partnership was higher across London (2.1%) than in Brent (1.4%). These figures include same-sex marriages and opposite sex civil partnerships.

Pregnancy and maternity

- Brent has higher fertility rates than the national average. During 2024, there were 4,445 births in Brent – which equates to a general fertility rate of 53.2 births per 1,000 women aged 15 to 44, higher than the rate across London (48.7) and England (49.0). However, in line with national trends, the birth rate has been falling: in Brent, the general fertility rate dropped from 64.3 to 53.2 between 2014 and 2024. Similar trends are evident across London and England.

Race

- Brent has one of the most ethnically diverse populations in the country. The majority of residents are from ethnic minority groups: 65% are from Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic groups (the 2nd highest rate in England & Wales, after Newham at 69%), and 19% are from White minority groups. Brent and Newham have the smallest White British populations nationally (15%).

Religion or belief

- Brent residents are more likely to have a religion than those elsewhere: overall, 80% of residents had a religion compared with 57% nationally – the 4th highest rate in England & Wales.
- Brent's largest religious group is Christian (39%), though the borough has a smaller Christian population than nationally (46%). Around one in five residents are Muslim (21%), well above both the London and national averages, and the 15th highest rate nationally, and around 16% of residents are Hindu - the 3rd highest rate in England & Wales. Other smaller, but significant, religious groups in Brent include, Jewish (1.1%); Buddhist (0.9%); Jain (0.7%) and Sikh (0.5%) populations.

Sex

- The Brent population is 49% male and 51% female. Females comprise just over half (51%) of the population but make up a higher proportion of the elderly population: 60% of those aged 80 and over are female and this rises to two thirds for the over 90s (67%). The sex ratio in Brent is similar to that across London and England & Wales (both 51% female).

Sexual orientation

- In the 2021 census, 96.4% of adults who answered the sexual orientation question identified as straight or heterosexual, and 3.6% identified as LGB+. This is below the London average (4.3%) but above the national rate (3.3%).

Socio-Economic Status

- Brent has a poverty rate of 33%, the seventh highest in London. This indicator presents the percentage of people living in poverty (Trust for London, 2023/24).
- Brent has become relatively more deprived compared to 2019, according to the latest Index of Multiple Deprivation 2025 analysis. The overall pattern of deprivation is concentrated in Stonebridge, Roundwood, Harlesden, Kensal Green, Dollis Hill, and Welsh Harp.

3 IMPACT OF SAVING PROPOSALS

Summary 26/27 budget proposals

Although initial equality screenings have been undertaken to determine impact in terms of the PSED, some of the proposals are in their formative stages and are still to be developed or are subject to consultations. In particular, cross-cutting proposals, which are identified below, have not been assessed at this point because they span multiple services and business cases for individual initiatives within them are still being developed. Consequently, as the proposals are developed, EIA screening will be undertaken for each initiative to assess whether there any equality impacts. Overall, the majority of proposals that have been reviewed consist of utilising vacant roles, and delivering services with a stronger focus on income generation.

Where a full EIA has been carried out, this is noted next to the proposal.

The proposals are:

Cross-cutting Proposals, specific initiatives will be screened as they are developed:

CC01 Commissioning and Procurement: Brings together four savings proposals that aim to reduce commissioning and procurement spend through: direct supplier engagement / contract management; reduction of spend on low value (under £25k) contracts; the consideration of a management overhead charge on applicable grants; the introduction of stretch targets through the existing Fast Track payments initiative. The programme will be aligned to the Procurement Improvement Programme (PIP).

CC02 Digital Programme: Supports council-wide digital transformation focused on unlocking productivity, automating low-value tasks and maximising return on previous technology investments. It brings together three key strands – Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) optimisation, Artificial Intelligence (AI) deployment, and Robotic Process Automation (RPA) expansion - to drive efficiency, reduce manual workloads, improve productivity, and build a more agile organisation.

CC03 Service Efficiency: Sets a standardised 1% efficiency target across the council's controllable budget. The proposal promotes a shift from centralised budget control to a more service-led approach to identifying efficiencies. Services will assess core activities to identify low-value areas for simplification, cessation, or redesign. This includes reviewing spending patterns, minimising inefficiencies and duplication, and embedding value-for-money principles across all decision-making.

CC04 Workforce Model: Supports the council's ambition to modernise its operating model by establishing a leaner, more agile workforce. It aims to address inefficiencies embedded in legacy staffing models, particularly in management structures, administrative functions, agency usage, and vacancy control. This programme forms part of a wider organisational development strategy and offers a major opportunity to reduce cost while improving responsiveness, accountability, and staff deployment.

CC05 Income Maximisation: Sets out a focused programme to increase and safeguard income through targeted updates to fees and charges, stronger recovery processes, improved payment oversight, and higher collection performance. By updating pricing strategies, enforcing permitted charges, and strengthening post-payment controls, the council can generate significant additional revenue while ensuring that public funds are protected and used efficiently.

CC06 Resident Experience Channel Shift: This proposal aims to enhance the overall customer experience while reducing the cost of handling interactions. It focuses on three key areas: promoting channel shift by improving online services to make digital self-service the preferred option; reducing failure demand through process redesign and first-time resolution; and creating a strategic, consistent 'front door' for residents, particularly those with complex needs. These initiatives will be driven by data and customer insight and will build on existing investments in digital infrastructure, such as website re-platforming, upgraded contact centre systems, and self-service tools.

Individual Proposals:

NR01 Lane Rental Scheme: This proposal seeks to generate savings through the introduction of a Lane Rental Scheme, which will apply charges of up to £2,500 per day for roadworks carried out on high-traffic routes during peak hours. The scheme is designed to reduce congestion and improve network efficiency by discouraging works at critical times.

NR02 Asset Utilisation: This programme aims to increase net revenue by aligning off-street parking with market-aligned tariffs and the introduction of digital booking systems. It also seeks to commercialise parks assets where this is financially sustainable and consistent with public health objectives. **Full Equality Impact Assessment completed**.

PHRS01 Subsidy Loss Reduction: Brent currently faces significant housing benefit subsidy losses linked to non-commissioned Supported Exempt Accommodation (SEA) placements, many of which offer poor value and inadequate support for vulnerable residents. The council is exploring using a subsidiary to deliver SEA, enabling full cost recovery from DWP.

PHRS02 Homelessness Prevention: This proposal aims to reduce homelessness by targeting the 30% of cases caused by friends and family evictions. The approach involves using 'at risk' indicators to identify households under stress and engage proactively with tailored support, addressing issues like financial strain, conflict, or overcrowding before eviction occurs.

PHRS03 – Housing Benefit Claim Reduction: This proposal offers savings through efficiencies in Housing Benefit administration as caseloads reduce. Savings will be achieved through IT enhancements and automation, with no anticipated negative impact on service users due to appropriate resource levels. **Flagged for HR Equality Impact Assessment.**

Council Tax: *Increase Council Tax by 4.99%, where 2% is ring fenced for Adult Social Care and 2.99% is a general increase.* The council is required to make significant savings to deliver a legally required balanced budget. To help overcome this it is proposed to increase council tax by 4.99%, where 2% is ring fenced for Adult Social Care and 2.99% is a general increase. The proposal will generate an additional £12.1m of recurring income for the Council and therefore avoid having to make further savings to key council services such as adult social care, children's services, etc. **Full Equality Impact Assessment completed**.

Proposals Requiring a Full Equality Impact Assessment

Two budget savings proposals completed a full EIA due to the potential impact they may have on service delivery through the change in the service being provided. Attached to this report are the supporting EIA screenings for each savings proposal as well as the full EIA (the latter of which are summarised below).

NR02 Asset Utilisation

The council has undertaken a review of current off-street parking tariffs, and analysis of annual income across these sites has revealed that several Brent car parks are underperforming, indicating significant potential for growth. To address this, our parking policy is being revised, which includes proposals to increase off-street parking tariffs and explore strategic partnerships with advertising platforms such as Just Park and Your Parking Space which will form part of a pilot scheme aimed at driving greater traffic to the council's car parks.

Additionally, the council is developing a Wembley Event Day tariff, designed to offer all-day parking at a competitive and more affordable rate compared to existing Wembley Stadium car parks.

Impact on protected groups: An increase in fees is likely to negatively impact socio-economically disadvantaged residents, who are less likely to have disposable incomes to cover the increased off-street parking fees, which could disproportionately affect their ability to afford parking.

Overall impact: The overall impact is expected to be neutral, particularly as many of these car parks are currently underutilised. The pilot scheme is designed to have minimal effect on protected groups, as only a limited number of spaces per site will be included, and disabled bays will remain unchanged. To ensure fairness and mitigate potential impacts on residents from lower socio-economic backgrounds, the council is exploring the introduction of a discount incentive for Brent residents, which will help maintain accessibility while supporting our revenue objectives.

Increase in Council Tax by 4.99% in 2026/27

To deliver a legally required balanced budget, it is proposed to increase Council Tax by 4.99%, where 2% is ring fenced for Adult Social Care and 2.99% is a general increase. The proposal will generate an additional £12.1m of recurring income for the Council and therefore avoid having to make further savings to key council services such as adult social care, children's services, etc.

Impact on protected groups: The increase in Council Tax will impact all Brent residents who are eligible to pay Council Tax. While the increase has universal application and no particular group is targeted, the change is likely to have a negative impact on residents experiencing socio-economic disadvantage. These households typically have lower disposable income and are already managing multiple financial pressures. Additional financial burdens could exacerbate existing inequalities by reducing their ability to meet essential living expenses. It is also likely that some residents who do not qualify for Council Tax support (i.e. do not meet the threshold to receive financial support), will struggle to pay the additional Council Tax amount.

Overall impact: Although the overall impact has been suggested as neutral, an increase in Council tax will impact on socio-economically disadvantaged groups, as well as middle to low-income earners who are also being impacted by the cost-of-living crisis. However, for the most vulnerable residents, the Council Tax Support scheme will partially mitigate this impact for those households who are living on low incomes and are eligible for Council Tax Support. The Council is also proposing to set aside £1.5m for a hardship fund to support

residents under the Section 13A Discretionary Policy, where justified this will mean reducing residents' council tax liability to zero. Further mitigating actions are also available for residents and are highlighted in the socio-economic implications section.

4 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

The two completed EIAs have identified the potential for negative impacts on socio-economically disadvantaged residents. While there are specific justifications for the negative impacts, in summary they stem from the need to make necessary financial savings because of high inflation, increased demand for services, and pressures in temporary accommodation, among other contributing factors. Corresponding mitigation activities have been identified in the case of these proposals, as documented in the EIAs and in Section 5 of this report, with the goal of minimising the impacts felt by this group.

At this stage, it is not possible to provide a full cumulative equality impact assessment of the budget proposals. Only two individual EIAs have been completed, and the cross-cutting proposals remain under development. These proposals span multiple service areas and depend on business cases that are still being finalised. As a result, the information required to understand combined impacts across protected characteristics is not yet available.

Moving forward, our approach is to maintain a live cumulative assessment that evolves as proposals are developed. Initial screening is being applied to all proposals to identify potential risks, and the EDI team will support relevant service leads to complete EIAs as necessary. A complete cumulative analysis will be completed by July 2026, aligned with the next budget update.

5 SOCIO–ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS

In November 2025, Brent voluntarily adopted the socio-economic duty, which is reflected in our integration of socio-economic status into the updated Equality Impact Assessment screening and template. Adopting the duty means Brent now formally treats socio-economic disadvantage as equivalent to a protected characteristic in how it is assessed and addressed.

According to the 2025 English Indices of Multiple Deprivation, Brent's average score makes it the 41st most deprived local authority in England, with neighbourhoods like Stonebridge, Roundwood, Harlesden, Kensal Green, Dollis Hill, and Welsh Harp experiencing particularly acute disadvantage. The income deprivation affecting children index score is 58.7%, the fifth highest in the country. We are

also aware that certain groups within the population are more likely than others to live in a low-income household. In Brent, survey analysis shows that those living on lower incomes are more likely to be from Black ethnic groups; residents with a disability or long-term illness; older residents; those with no qualifications; those who are not in work; and those who live in social housing.

Brent's Black Community Action Plan (BCAP) has been refreshed following consultation and now focuses on nine priorities including employment and enterprise, developing community led and managed spaces, and council workforce diversity. Delivery runs until 2033, supported by a newly appointed Independent Advisory Steering Group (IASG) to oversee progress and advise on funding. BCAP plays an important role in addressing socio-economic disadvantage by tackling structural inequalities that disproportionately affect Brent's Black communities, including barriers to employment, housing, and health outcomes, thereby supporting inclusive economic growth. The IASG will convene its first official meeting in early 2026 to agree delivery priorities and shape engagement with external partners.

Brent is delivering a range of initiatives to support residents with learning disabilities, autism, mental health conditions, and who are neurodiverse into paid employment. These include the Supported Internships programme for young people with Education, Health and Care Plans, tailored direct payments to encourage engagement and employment, and navigation services within day services in partnership with the Department for Work and Pensions. The council has also appointed an Autism Coordinator within Adult Social Care to develop a community-based network focused on employment, education, and training, and is launching a Digital Skills & Employment programme funded through Neighbourhood CIL to improve access to work opportunities.

The proposal to increase Council Tax negatively impacts socio-economically disadvantaged residents, and has the potential to negatively impact on middle to low-income earners and families who are also impacted by the cost-of-living crisis. This will be mitigated by early and accessible communication with residents affected, continuing to offer support for vulnerable residents, and more effective working with partners to ensure resources are used effectively.

The Council is aware of the cumulative impact of the cost-of-living crisis and the support that our residents and service users may require at this time. The following support is available:

Financial Support:

Households across Brent can access financial assistance through the following funds:

- Resident Support Fund: this is available to Brent residents who are having difficulty due to unforeseen financial circumstances.

- Discretionary Housing Payment: A one off payment can be provided to assist with rent shortfall, rent deposits and rent in advance if a Brent resident needs to move home.

- Council Tax Hardship Fund: The Council is also proposing to set aside £1.5m for a hardship fund to support residents with Council Tax payments under the Section 13A Discretionary Policy of the Local Government Finance Act.

Certain eligibility criteria must be met to access financial support.

Support and Advice: Brent Hubs can provide support and advice to Brent residents who are struggling to pay their utility bills. This can include assistance with completing funding applications for support from local and national schemes, including the Brent Resident Support Fund, referral routes to other advisory agencies who specialise in energy support such as Green Doctors and SHINE, referral routes to food banks and emergency supermarket vouchers and urgent support with topping up pre-payment gas and electricity meters.

Brent's Family Wellbeing Centres also provide a range of community-led services to families that live in Brent and offer support for a range of topics including help with finding childcare and free nursery entitlements, sessions with employment advisers and support in returning to work, as well as sector specific recruitment events and programmes.

In addition, the New Horizons Centre offers an expanded range of support services, including a Community Wellbeing Service. This initiative, a partnership between the Council and local charity Sufra NW London is designed to support low-income households with access to affordable groceries, healthy meals, and one-to-one support through a £4 per week membership model. Throughout 2026, the centre will continue to add new services, including family housing needs assessments, employment support, and debt and immigration advisors.

6 STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

Of the budget proposals that were subject to an equality screening, one (PHRS03) was flagged as having staffing implications arising from staff restructures or service redesign. A full EIA has not yet been completed because the proposal is still at an early stage. If it progresses, a full EIA will be carried out alongside formal consultation to assess workforce impacts in detail and identify appropriate mitigations.

Where proposals have staffing implications for a third party, the council will work with the third-party organisation to ensure that the equality implications are understood, and appropriate steps taken to minimise any adverse impacts.

Overall, to mitigate against compulsory staff redundancies, proposals aim to achieve a reduction by giving up vacant posts or through natural turnover. In these cases, it is considered that there will be no impact on protected groups. When the council is required to undertake compulsory redundancies, full EIAs are undertaken as part of the consultation process, as noted above for PHRS03.

This page is intentionally left blank

Budget Scrutiny Task Group Findings Report

Draft Budget 2026/27



Brent

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

Contents

Introduction	1
Recommendations	3
Evidence Gathering	5
Other Meetings	13
Conclusion	14
Key Contacts	16



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[1].The Task Group held a series of meetings between November and December 2025 with the Cabinet and

[1] 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. Nonethless, 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 helps 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

For further information, clarification, or follow-up in relation to this report, the following key contacts are provided:

Jason Sigba, Strategy Lead - Scrutiny, Democratic & Corporate Governance
020 8937 2036
Jason.Sigba@brent.gov.uk

Amira Nassr, Deputy Director, Democratic & Corporate Governance
020 8937 5436
Amira.Nassr@brent.gov.uk



Portfolio Holder	Portfolio	Capital Board	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	Total
			£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Resources: Cllr Mili Patel	Civic Centre - Capital	Corporate Assets	3.2	2.5	2.5	1.9	0.6	-	**10.7**
	Digital Strategy - Capital	Corporate Assets	2.8	5.3	4.3	-	-	-	**12.4**
	ICT - Capital	Corporate Assets	2.4	4.7	4.3	0.8	-	-	**12.2**
	Libraries - Capital	Corporate Assets	0.9	-	-	-	-	-	**0.9**
	Oracle Cloud Programme - Capital	Corporate Assets	0.2	0.5	-	-	-	-	**0.7**
	Family Wellbeing Centre - ICT Infrastructure - Capital	Corporate Assets	0.4	-	-	-	-	-	**0.4**
	Barham Park Trust - Capital	Corporate Assets	0.3	-	-	-	-	-	**0.3**
	Pipeline	Corporate Assets	-	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	-	**20.0**
	Property Management - Capital	Corporate Assets	1.5	6.0	-	-	-	-	**7.5**
Climate Action & Community Power: Cllr Jake Rubin	Energy - Capital	Corporate Assets	1.7	2.1	-	-	-	-	**3.8**
Regeneration, Property & Planning: Cllr Teo Benea	South Kilburn Phase 3a - Capital	South Kilburn	0.1	2.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	**2.1**
	South Kilburn Phase 3b - Capital	South Kilburn	2.5	6.2	4.9	4.7	0.2	0.1	**18.6**
	South Kilburn Phase 4 - Capital	South Kilburn	8.8	11.3	4.5	1.0	-	-	**25.7**
	South Kilburn Phase 5 - Capital	South Kilburn	1.6	0.9	2.1	2.2	0.1	0.1	**6.9**
	South Kilburn Phase 6 - Capital	South Kilburn	-	1.4	0.8	0.4	0.3	0.5	**3.4**
	South Kilburn Phase 7 & 8 - Capital	South Kilburn	6.6	12.2	15.6	7.2	7.6	2.3	**51.5**
Climate Action & Community Power: Cllr Jake Rubin	South Kilburn Energy - Capital	South Kilburn	7.5	11.0	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.8	**33.7**
Regeneration, Property & Planning: Cllr Teo Benea	Bridge Park Regeneration - Capital	Regeneration	2.2	1.3	4.0	20.0	20.4	-	**47.8**
	Capacity Fund - Capital	Regeneration	0.7	4.8	2.8	2.4	-	-	**10.7**
	Grand Union Canal Pedestrian / Cycle Bridge	Regeneration	0.7	6.1	-	-	-	-	**6.8**
	Growth Infrastructure - Capital	Regeneration	0.1	19.0	6.3	5.0	5.0	-	**35.5**
	Harlesden Regeneration - Capital	Regeneration	2.1	-	-	-	-	-	**2.1**
	Housing Zones - Capital	Regeneration	73.9	23.1	-	-	-	-	**97.0**
	S106 Affordable Workspace - Capital	Regeneration	0.4	-	-	-	-	-	**0.4**
	SCIL - Capital	Regeneration	2.7	-	-	-	-	-	**2.7**
	Step Free Access	Regeneration	-	-	2.5	2.5	-	-	**5.0**
	UKSPF Communities & Place - Capital	Regeneration	1.2	-	-	-	-	-	**1.2**
	CNWL - Capital	Regeneration	0.0	5.6	5.6	-	-	-	**11.2**
	New NCIL Schemes	Regeneration	0.2	-	-	-	-	-	**0.2**
	S106 Projects	Regeneration	-	7.7	-	-	-	-	**7.7**
	West London Orbital	Regeneration	-	0.6	-	-	-	-	**0.6**
Safer Communities and Public Protection: Cllr Ishma Moeen	CCTV - Capital	Corporate Assets	0.5	2.6	-	-	-	-	**3.1**
Regeneration, Property & Planning: Cllr Teo Benea	Landscaping - Capital	Corporate Assets	0.7	0.3	0.0	-	-	-	**1.1**
	Highways Management	Corporate Assets	16.5	5.9	4.5	4.3	3.5	3.5	**38.1**
	Healthy Streets & Parking	Corporate Assets	6.1	2.6	0.7	0.5	0.2	-	**10.1**
	Healthy Streets & Parking - S106	Corporate Assets	0.8	0.7	-	-	-	-	**1.5**
	Healthy Streets & Parking - Parking	Corporate Assets	0.1	-	-	-	-	-	**0.1**
	Healthy Streets & Parking - TfL	Corporate Assets	1.8	2.5	1.5	-	-	-	**5.8**
Public Health: Cllr Neil Nerva	Sports & Culture - Capital	Corporate Assets	0.2	0.5	0.6	-	-	-	**1.3**
Environment and Enforcement: Cllr Krupa Sheth	Parks - Capital	Corporate Assets	3.6	1.3	-	-	-	-	**5.0**
	Cemetries - Capital	Corporate Assets	0.1	0.3	2.1	-	-	-	**2.5**
	Environmental Health - Capital	Corporate Assets	1.7	1.0	1.0	6.0	-	-	**9.7**
	Completed projects - Public Realm	Corporate Assets	-	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	-	**20.0**
	Climate Emergency	Corporate Assets	2.7	1.5	-	-	-	-	**4.1**
Children's Services, Education and Emplyment: Cllr Gwen Grahl	Children & Youth Facilities - Capital	Schools	0.4	0.5	3.5	-	-	-	**4.4**
	Phase 3 Permanent Primary - Capital	Schools	-	5.8	5.4	5.0	5.0	-	**21.3**
	SEND Expansion - Capital	Schools	21.2	11.9	5.0	0.5	-	-	**38.5**
	School Capital Improvement - Capital	Schools	3.9	6.1	3.1	3.1	-	-	**16.2**
	Pipeline	Schools	-	10.0	10.0	10.0	-	-	**30.0**
	Aids & Adaptations - Capital	Affordable Housing Supply	9.3	-	-	-	-	-	**9.3**
	Empty Property - Capital	Affordable Housing Supply	0.8	-	-	-	-	-	**0.8**
	Mixed Development - Capital	Affordable Housing Supply	21.8	6.5	-	-	-	-	**28.3**
	New Council Homes Programme (NCHP) - Phase 3 (GF) - Capital	Affordable Housing Supply	0.1	2.0	20.4	17.5	-	-	**39.9**
	PRS I4B - Capital	Affordable Housing Supply	41.9	-	-	-	-	-	**41.9**
	Supported Living - Capital	Affordable Housing Supply	0.6	-	-	-	-	-	**0.6**
	In Borough Acquisition Strategy - Capital (GF)	Affordable Housing Supply	40.4	10.9	9.2	20.7	7.8	-	**89.0**

Housing, Homelessness and Renters Security: Cllr Fleur Donnelly-Jackson	New Council Homes Programme - Capital	Affordable Housing Supply	-	25.0	25.0	25.0	25.0	-	**100.0**
	St. Raphael's Estate Regeneration - Capital	Affordable Housing Supply	0.4	6.9	12.5	-	-	-	**19.8**
	Enfranchisement - Capital	Housing HRA & Management	0.7	2.5	-	-	-	-	**3.2**
	New Council Homes Programme (NCHP) - Phase 3 - Capital	Housing HRA & Management	5.9	-	-	-	-	-	**5.9**
	Major Repairs & Maintenance - Capital	Housing HRA & Management	12.4	28.3	24.8	13.4	13.0	-	**91.9**
	Major Repairs & Maintenance - Adaptations - Capital	Housing HRA & Management	0.8	0.8	-	-	-	-	**1.6**
	New Council Homes Programme - Capital	Housing HRA & Management	7.3	-	-	-	-	-	**7.3**
	HRA Central Fund - Capital	Housing HRA & Management	-	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	-	**20.0**
	Travellers Site - Capital	Housing HRA & Management	-	0.5	-	-	-	-	**0.5**
	Empty Property - Capital	Housing HRA & Management	-	0.7	0.7	-	-	-	**1.4**
	Aids & Adaptations - Capital	Housing HRA & Management	-	6.6	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	**26.6**
	IT & Software	Housing HRA & Management	0.5	0.5	-	-	-	-	**1.0**
Adult Social Care: Cllr Neil Nerva	NAIL - Capital	Affordable Housing Supply	0.9	-	-	-	-	-	**0.9**
Total			**328.9**	**293.8**	**214.0**	**177.9**	**112.5**	**15.4**	**1,142.5**

		2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	Total
Funding Sources	Grants & Other Contributions	83.3	46.4	28.0	18.9	9.0	5.6	**191.1**
	S106 & CIL	43.6	43.4	29.6	30.8	24.2	3.8	**175.5**
	Capital Receipts	3.6	14.5	37.4	6.0	0.4	-	**61.8**
	Reserves	5.3	3.0	2.5	1.0	0.1	0.7	**12.6**
	Major Repairs Allowance	13.7	16.6	13.0	13.0	13.0	-	**69.3**
	Revenue Contribution	6.5	1.4	1.6	0.6	0.6	-	**10.6**
	Prudential Borrowing	173.0	168.6	101.9	107.6	65.2	5.3	**621.6**
Total		**328.9**	**293.8**	**214.0**	**177.9**	**112.5**	**15.4**	**1,142.5**

Pipeline Project ID	Project Name	Portfolio	Programme and purpose of scheme	Proposed Budget (M)	Funding Proposals (M)	Business Case to CPB	Borough Plan Objectives	Strategic Alignment	Statutory Obligations	Risk	Financial Return	Demand Management	Rating
Corporate Assets Board													
PL021	Land & Property strategic acquisitions (general)	Corporate Assets Board	**Strategic Acquisitions**: Papers will be taken forward to the Capital Programme Board when strategic land opportunities arise and are developed within regeneration areas. The key focus areas are Alperton and Staples Corner.	44.5	TBC	Ongoing	**Prosperity and Stability in Brent -**Invest in new land ownership opportunities to deliver more joined up projects and services with localities and neighbourhoods.	Borough Plan Local Plan	None	1. Opportunities are market led and this difficult to predict 2. Generally investment opportunities in the targeted areas are popular as property assets are high performing or present good asset-management potential (re-development etc.)	Some opportunities will have income as part of the asset opportunity - this will be assessed on a case by case basis	Local Plan identifies these areas as in need of growth and regeneration to deliver benefits and help to accommodate significant numbers of new homes to meet housing targets	2
PL061	Net Zero Roadmap - Energy Conservation Measures (ECMs) Works across the Brent Corporate Estate, to do all in our gift to achieve Net Zero by 2030	Corporate Assets Board	**Energy Capital -** In 2019, Brent Council declared a Climate Emergency and pledged to take all reasonable actions within its power to work towards making the borough carbon neutral by 2030, while also collaborating with the national government to support the UK's 2050 net-zero target. Linked to this aim, Brent Council has committed to lead by example in reducing the carbon footprint for their own corporate estate and operations, which comprises corporate accommodation, fleet and street lighting. Brent have made good progress to date in achieving a 71.9% carbon reduction, using the latest available data for financial year 2024/25, against the 2010/11 baseline. To help build on this good progress, in September 2024 Brent Council commissioned Turner & Townsend to undertake an Estate Heat Decarbonisation Plan Project, to understand the energy efficiency and decarbonisation options available for Brent's corporate buildings specifically to inform a Net Zero Roadmap for achieving further carbon emission reductions. The Net Zero Roadmap recommends the following measures: Energy efficiency in buildings including: • Switching to energy-efficient appliances like LED lighting • Improving insulation in buildings to reduce heating/cooling • Smart meters to improve energy data and identify savings • Behaviour changes, BMS upgrades, heating & timer controls Low carbon heating and cooling • replacing the end of their life (10 years) gas boilers and install heat pumps across the corporate estate. The identified carbon reductions can deliver a combined 96% carbon reduction, including the grid to decarbonisation, leaving the 4% addressed by Carbon Offset initiatives.	5.7 (including contingency)	Carbon Offset Fund, Prudential Borrowing, Grants	TBC	**A Cleaner, Greener Future.** • A Cleaner Borough • Climate-friendly, Sustainable Borough • Keeping Brent on the Move	Brent Council's Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy target to do all in its gift achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2030, including leading by example achieving net zero by 2030 across its own corporate estate.	None	PSDS grant scheme has ended meaning future grant is unavailable. Carbon Offset Fund money may be unavailable in future years. - Alternative sources of funding will be required, which could be capital borrowing, or interest free loans. Alternative funding sources and strategies are currently being investigated.	The energy cost savings that could be achieved by the completion of the energy conservation measures works on corporate sites. Savings need to be calculated in business cases.	None	2
PL062	Vale Farm Sports Centre Capital Improvements	Corporate Assets Board	**Vale Farm Centre Improvements:** As part of the standalone leisure contract procurement for Vale Farm Sports Centre, the Council commissioned updated building condition surveys to inform future asset and service planning. These surveys (October 2025) have validated the requirement for approximately £1.4m of capital investment over the next five years to address priority lifecycle works, maintain statutory compliance, manage asset risk, and ensure the facility remains operational and capable of delivering high-quality leisure and Active Wellbeing outcomes for residents through to 2031. This investment supports the effective implementation of the new leisure contract, awarded to Sports and Leisure Management Ltd (trading as Everyone Active) on an agency agreement basis commencing 1 March 2026 through to 31 October 2031. The proposed funding supports planned, evidence-led investment, reduces the risk of unplanned failure, and provides a clear basis for future phasing and delivery, which will be set out in a detailed business case to be brought forward to the Capital Programme Board.	1.4	Prudential borrowing/Supplier Contribution	Apr-26	**A Healthier Brent -** Provision of high-quality sports facilities encourages physical activity, helps to improve the physical and mental wellbeing of the community and seeks to reduce health inequalities.	Borough Plan 2023-2027 Health and Wellbeing Plan Climate + Ecological Emergency Strategy	None.	The key risk for the feasibility of this project is that it is entirely dependent on capital funding. Should funding not be awarded, the project will be unlikely to go ahead. The lack of investment in the Sports Centre will affect provider bidding for a management contract to run the sports centre.If the sports centre does not improve the condition of the building, there is potential that it could close and thus deny residents the opportunity to learn to swim, swim and use the sports and leisure facilities.	The provision of improved sports facilities will result in an increase in activities and revenue generated from charges, which will be detailed in the business case.	Our Leisure Centres contribute to the mental and physical health of our residents. Realising their full potential requires leisure centres to be utilised by the whole community. Maintaining the leisure provision to a good standard in the borough is essential in enabling residents to access quality and safe provision.	4
PL090	Willesden Sports Centre Capital Improvements (Gym Reconfiguration)	Corporate Assets Board	**Willesden Centre Improvements:** As part of the Council's approach to maximising the long-term value of Willesden Sports Centre ahead of the 2031 PFI expiry, this proposal focuses on the relocation and expansion of the gym to address sustained capacity constraints and the under-utilisation of the indoor athletics space. The proposal involves a shared capital investment with the operator to reconfigure internal space, delivering a new purpose-built gym, enhanced studio provision and improved flexibility of use within the existing building footprint. This intervention supports improved service delivery over the remaining life of the PFI contract and ensures the Council is returned a materially enhanced and commercially stronger facility at hand back in 2031. A detailed business case will be brought forward to the Capital Programme Board setting out the funding structure, financial returns and risk mitigation.	0.4	Prudential borrowing	Apr-26	**A Healthier Brent -** Provision of high-quality sports facilities encourages physical activity, helps to improve the physical and mental wellbeing of the community and seeks to reduce health inequalities.	Borough Plan 2023-2027 Health and Wellbeing Plan Climate + Ecological Emergency Strategy	None.	The reconfiguration cannot proceed without Council capital investment. This risk is mitigated through a shared investment model with the operator and will be managed through the detailed business case.	The reconfiguration enables income growth by removing existing capacity constraints within the facility. The Council's capital contribution will be structured to secure repayment of capital and interest over the remaining PFI term, with any additional financial benefit flowing through the surplus share arrangement. The full financial return, including the payback profile and sensitivities, will be set out in the business case to be brought forward to the Capital Programme Board.	Demand for health and fitness provision at Willesden Sports Centre exceeds existing gym capacity at peak times, while other internal spaces remain under-utilised. The proposed reconfiguration rebalances internal space by increasing gym capacity and improving flexibility of use, enabling demand to be managed more effectively across the facility over the remaining PFI term.	4
PL046	Barham Park	Corporate Assets Board	**Improvements to Barham Park:** There is a need to improve the buildings and landscaped grounds at Barham Park. Funding required for a strategic review and the refurbishment of the Barham Park Estate, estimated at £1m to £3m.	1.0	SCIL, S106	Mar-27	**Thriving Communities -** Improved building and grounds at this community hub will encourage visitors and participation, support community cohesion and increased resident satisfaction **A Healthier Brent -** Provision of community space and attractive grounds encourage visitors, walking and supports the health of Brent Residents and reduce health inequalities.	Borough Plan 2021-2022, Brent Climate & Ecological Emergency Strategy 2021-2030	Local authorities in England have a statutory duty to provide a range of services to their communities.	1. Dependant on a strategic review of existing facilities and identifying improvements to the building and grounds.	The capital investment is necessary to maintain the building and grounds for continued use as important community space, retaining income to the Barham Park Trust for which the Council is the sole trustee.	Barham Park is an important community hub providing a range of services and recreational activities. There is a growing need for the renovation of the building and grounds to address deterioration, reduce energy costs, and the risk of a loss of tenants including the ACAVA charity, Barham Community Library, the Veterans Club, Tmu Samaj and the Children's Centre.	2

PL085	Family Wellbeing Centres	Corporate Assets Board	**Family Wellbeing Centres (FWC) -** There are 8 FWC in Brent, Alperton, Church Lane, Preston Park, Willow, Granville, Three Tree's, St Raphael's and Curzon Crescent/ Fawood. The funding will be used to: **1.**Improve and maintain the FWC buildings and infrastructure **2.**Enable adaptions to be made to some rooms, for example more health services are being delivered from the FWC, some rooms may require additional sinks, specialist flooring, also some rooms/ spaces need adapting to host more youth centred provision **3.**Replace failing heating systems, some of which are coming to the end of their life, and potentially replacing these with more sustainable options i.e. Heat Pumps **4.**Enhance, refurbish and maintain outside play areas to ensure these are modern, fit-for-purpose, and enable children, most of whom live in cramped overcrowded accommodation, to access outside play space, engage with environmental projects, encourage more free flowing play and health lifestyles **5.**Explore options to install LED lighting, solar panels, etc to make the FWC more efficient and cost effective to run, becoming more sustainable, and reducing carbon emissions.	1.0	Prudential borrowing, capital receipts	Jun-26	**Prosperity and Stability in Brent** **Thriving Communities** **The Best Start in Life** **A Healthier Brent**	Black Community Action Plan, Poverty Commission Action Plan, Youth Strategy Early Help Strategy, Inclusion strategy, Carers (Young) strategy, Digital Inclusion strategy, family First Partnership, Reducing Parental Conflict, Family Hubs and Start for Life.	Family Hubs and Start for Life.	None	Non-financial, recurring benefits to the council will be realised through supporting improved outcomes for children, young people and families through the FWC delivery model	There is increasing demand from families for support with the cost-of-living crisis, addressing growing health inequalities, and recovering from the pandemic. Particularly vulnerable children and young people who were disproportionately impacted. There are also more families accessing services as the number of residential properties in Brent increases.	3
PL069	Infrastructure Improvements supporting active travel	Corporate Assets Board	**Infrastructure Improvements Supporting Active Travel**: The council is taking a progressive and pioneering approach to tackling the climate and ecological emergency through the delivery of several Green Neighbourhood pilots (the first phase being Church End & Roundwood; and Kingsbury) which have been allocated £3m SCIL funding following Cabinet approval. With significantly reduced TfL funding there is a need to invest in our infrastructure to support walking and cycling in the wider borough and it is currently anticipated that an additional £2m will be required over the next 4 years to deliver our strategic objectives outlined in the Brent Active Travel Implementation Plan . Proposed interventions will be subject to agreement by the Infrastructure and Regeneration Programme Board (IRPB) (for potential CIL funding) and the CPB for project approval reviews.	0.5	SCIL	Sep-26	**A Cleaner, Greener Future** This investment in measures to support safe and sustainable transport will contribute to the desired borough plan outcome of; Keeping Brent on the Move, delivering the Long Term Transport Strategy and Healthy Streets programme to encourage more active travel, walking and cycling in safe, inclusive, designed environments. **A Healthier Brent** This investment will help tackle health inequalities through improving active travel amenities to support general well being.	Brent Borough Plan 2023-2027 Brent Climate & Ecological Emergency Strategy 2021-2030 Brent Long Term Transport Strategy 2015-2035 Brent's Third Local Implementation Plan 2019-2041 Brent Active Travel Implementation Plan 2024-27.	The Climate Change Act 2008 (the Act) is the statutory basis for the UK's approach to tackling and responding to climate change. The Act places a legal duty on central government to set legally binding targets to reduce UK greenhouse gas emissions to net-zero by 2050 The Greater London Authority Act 1999 ("the GLA Act") requires that in exercising any function, London local authorities must have regard to the Mayor's Transport Strategy which sets out the transport policy framework for London.	There is a risk to the council achieving its strategic aspirations if there is insufficient funding invested in improving the public realm to support safer and greener travel. Schemes should be developed and implemented alongside the community wherever possible, to minimise risk of public opposition.	There is no specific financial return to the Council, however, creating a safer and greener environment will reduce injury accidents and emissions which benefit health and contribute to reducing significant costs to the UK economy. The programme will support the wider Council objectives to encourage sustainable travel, improve air quality, the local economy and community health and general well-being.	The Council receives numerous requests for implementing improvement schemes which are mainly funded by Transport for London LIP corridors and neighbourhood's improvements programme, with the aim of improving people's health and wellbeing and facilitating social inclusion. The focus will be on delivering schemes that support growth in the borough and our strategic objectives to improve the environment.	2
PL068	Flood Alleviation Scheme (FAS) at Byron Recreation Ground (LB Harrow)	Corporate Assets Board	**Flood Alleviation Scheme**: LB Brent is working with neighbouring LB Harrow to improve flood risk defences and water quality in the Wealdstone brook. This will involve a joint partnership bid to secure funding to design and construct the flood storage apparatus including the rehabilitation of sewers in the catchment zone.	0.5	Prudential Borrowing	Nov-26	**A Cleaner, Greener Future**	Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy	None	Price inflation/materials	None	None	3
PL079	HVM Completion of Wembley Park scheme	Corporate Assets Board	**Hostile Vehicle Mitigation:** To complete the installation of Hostile Vehicle Mitigation (HVM) measures in Wembley Park to enhance public safety and confidence in the surrounding area around the stadium and arena.	0.5	Prudential Borrowing	May-26	**A Cleaner, Greener Future** **Thriving Communities** **A Healthier Brent**	Borough Plan Draft Long Term Transport Strategy Draft Local Plan	Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999: Mandates that employers conduct risk assessments to identify potential hazards and implement adequate controls for both employees and the public	There is a risk to the council achieving its strategic aspirations if there is insufficient funding invested in improving the public realm to support safer and greener travel. Schemes should be developed and implemented alongside the community wherever possible, to minimise risk of public opposition.	None	None	2
PL088	Commercialising Park Assets (Padel)	Corporate Assets Board	**Park Assets:** To invest in any required site development to allow for new padel courts to be built by commercialising Park assets (e.g. Padel) where financially sustainable and aligned to public health outcomes.	0.5	Prudential Borrowing	Apr-26	**A Healthier Brent**	Strategic Outcomes Planning Model	None	The council invests in a padel court in a location in an area where there is not demand The council invests unnecessarily, when the investment could be provided by the supplier	There is the potential to generate income from a padel court. Questions need to be asked of potential providers as to how much investment they would be prepared to front, and how much return could be provided to the council.	Padel is a growing sport and initial market review suggests there would be demand for this sport if padel courts were created.	2

PL070	Replacement of water pipes in Parks Pavilions	Corporate Assets Board	**Park Pavilions improvements:** Budget is required to replace water piping and heating systems in a number of parks pavilions, which are currently causing issues with high legionella readings. The investment will allow for an upgrade of piping and water tanks, providing more connections directly to the mains and removing the issue of legionella which is currently causing our pavilions to be regularly closed.	0.8	SCIL / Prudential Borrowing - TBC	Sep-26	**A Cleaner, Greener Future** **Thriving Communities** **A Healthier Brent**	Health and Wellbeing Plan	None	The risks are that the pavilions will need to permanently close if investment is not made, meaning that sports bookings will not take place, revenue to the service will decrease and Brent's reputation will be adversely impacted as we will no longer be able to offer the hire of grass sports pitches to any clubs.	The investment would allow our pavilions to remain open all the time, thereby facilitating the Parks Service to be able to increase hire opportunities and increase revenue possibilities. Investment would also reduce the expenditure from revenue on the cost of remedial works required after every positive test result. Figures are still being prepared in relation to the proposed additional income that could be achieved.	We are trying to increase community use of our sports pitches and can only achieve this if people can also use our facilities at the same time.	2
PL020	Sports Programme	Corporate Assets Board	**Green spaces:** Improvement works to a range of grounds (including football, cricket and rugby) and their facilities, feasibility studies and longer-term improvement works. Discussions with Middlesex FA have also raised the possibility of match funding to allow us to improve the quality of many more of our pitches than previously anticipated. The Service continues to assess any potential external funding, or savings elsewhere to mitigate the cost, to cover the costs of these works, and in the understanding that whilst works are to be funded through Council borrowing, that the Council is unlikely to commence these works.	1.1	Prudential Borrowing	Sep-26	**A Healthier Brent -** Provision of high-quality sports facilities encourages physical activity, helps to improve the physical and mental wellbeing of the community and seeks to reduce health inequalities.	Borough Plan 2023-2027	None.	Without investment, many community clubs will seek to play their games elsewhere and issues with pitch quality have already led to the cancellation of many games last season, leading to a loss of income to the Parks Service and reduced opportunities for grass roots sports provision.	The provision of improved sports facilities will result in an increase in activities and revenue generated from charges, which will be detailed in the business case.	Brent has a growing population and demands for community sports provision in our parks will increase in future years.	1
Corporate Assets Board Total				52.2									
Affordable Housing Supply Board													
PL012	St Raphael's estate	Affordable Housing Supply Board	**Mixed Development:** The St Raphael's project aims to not only enhance existing housing and public spaces but also contribute to new housing supply. This project presents an opportunity to bring about fundamental improvements in the area, encompassing upgrades to housing and local infrastructure and has the potential to positively impact the economic, social, and environmental aspects of the Borough. These were approved at Cabinet in November 2022. The significant financial gap in the viability of redevelopment makes it necessary to prioritise infill development, which does not require a public ballot. The design work for Phase 1 of the project began in the summer of 2020/21, with a planning submission made in February 2023, and a decision expected in February 2026. It is important to note that the proposal, which involves substantial regeneration efforts, will only proceed once the development approach for Phase 1 has been finalised and agreed.	120.0	SCIL, Capital Receipts, Prudential Borrowing	TBC	**Prosperity and Stability in Brent -** Increase and improvement in housing supply and reduction in number of households in temporary accommodation. **Thriving Communities** - There was an increase in resident involvement ahead of the decison between redevelopment or infill.	Borough Plan 2023-2027 Brent Climate & Ecological Emergency Strategy 2021-2030 Poverty Commission Housing Asset Management Strategy 2020-2025	St Raphs development will provide the following statutory provision: - Housing for families in Brent	1. Subject to planning permission 2. Cost of development - prices have increased following pandemic 3. Possiblity of residents objecting proposals	Schemes - partially funded by GLA. This assumes a resonable cost to build, however if development prices increase, viability will be challenged.	The provision of affordable housing is linked to the future need hilighted by housing waiting list.	4
PL077	Kilburn Square	Affordable Housing Supply Board	**Provision of 139 affordable homes:** Previous project approved as part of Capital programme but paused due to scheme being unviable. Placing on pipeline should financial climate change.	65.0	GLA, Borrowing, Capital Receipts	TBC	**Prosperity and Stability in Brent -** Increase and improvement in housing supply and reduction in number of households in temporary accommodation.	Borough Plan 2023-2027 Brent Climate & Ecological Emergency Strategy 2021-2030 Housing Asset Management Strategy 2020-2025	Housing for families in Brent	1. Continued unviability of scheme / lack of sufficient funding 2. Construction cost inflation 3. Potential for new planning permission due to current one expiring 4. Impact of redesign to accommodate 2nd staircase and fire safety standards	Schemes - partially funded by GLA. This assumes a resonable cost to build, however if development prices increase, viability will be challenged.	The provision of affordable housing is linked to the future need hilighted by housing waiting list.	4
PL078	Windmill Court	Affordable Housing Supply Board	**Provision of 60 affordable homes:** Previous project approved as part of Capital programme but paused due to scheme being unviable. Placing on pipeline should financial climate change	40.0	GLA, Borrowing, Capital Receipts	TBC	**Prosperity and Stability in Brent -** Increase and improvement in housing supply and reduction in number of households in temporary accommodation.	Borough Plan 2023-2027 Brent Climate & Ecological Emergency Strategy 2021-2030 Housing Asset Management Strategy 2020-2025	Housing for families in Brent	1. Continued unviability of scheme / lack of sufficient funding 2. Construction cost inflation 3. New planning permission due to current one expiring 4. Impact of redesign to accommodate 2nd staircase and fire safety standards	Schemes - partially funded by GLA. This assumes a resonable cost to build, however if development prices increase, viability will be challenged.	The provision of affordable housing is linked to the future need hilighted by housing waiting list.	4
Affordable Housing Supply Board Total				225.0									
Infrastructure & Regeneration Programme Board													
PL064	Hillside Corridor	Infrastructure & Regeneration Board	**Hillside Corridor:** To deliver a variety of council and community facilities across a number of sites along Hillside, Stonebridge. The proposal includes for a new leisure centre, council homes, community facilities, new adult education centre, workspace and youth facilities	195.0	SCIL/ Sport England / Land Sale Receipt / Borrowing / GLA Affordable housing grant(s)	Mar-26	**Prosperity and Stability in Brent** **Thriving Communities** **A Healthier Brent**	Local Plan Infrastructure Delivery Plan	Provision of Council Homes	Sufficient CIL to fund projects – working to ensure a cost-effective solution is proposed and withing CIL budgets / availability. Reliance on Land Sale Agreement – liaising with Developer to maximise land sale receipt whilst enabling planning to be obtained Planning approval – extensive pre-app process, planning consultant appointed	Leisure centre operation is expected to generate a surplus annually – compared with existing centre which costs £500k per annum. Under assumption operation will be outsourced. Community facilities potential to bring in revenue from leasing space(s)	Need to provide new Council Homes A new leisure centre will offer greater opportunities for health and wellbeing outcomes in Stonebridge	4
Infrastructure & Regeneration Programme Board Total				195.0									
Grand Total				472.2									

Priority Ranking: 5 = high priority and 1 = low priority

This page is intentionally left blank

Capital Strategy Report 2026/27

Introduction

1. The Capital Strategy Report gives a high-level overview of how capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activity contribute to the provision of local public services. The report provides an overview of how associated risk is managed and the implications for future financial sustainability.

2. Decisions made this year on capital and treasury management will have financial consequences for the Council for many years into the future. They are therefore subject to both a national regulatory framework and to local policy framework, summarised in this report.

Capital Expenditure and Financing

3. Capital expenditure is where the Council expends money on assets, such as property, vehicles or other assets that will be used for more than one year. In local government this includes spending on assets owned by other bodies, and loans and grants to other bodies enabling them to buy assets. The Council has some limited discretion on what counts as capital expenditure, for example assets costing below £5,000 are generally not capitalised and are charged to revenue in year. A review is currently being undertaken as to appropriate de-minimis level below which capitalisation will not take place. Details of the Council's policy on capitalisation is set out in the annual Statement of Accounts.

4. In 2026/27, the Council has a capital budget of £293.8m as summarised below:

Table 1: Prudential Indicator: Estimates of Capital Expenditure

Capital Expenditure & Financing (£m)	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	Total 2025/26-2030/31
	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget	
Corporate Assets	48.3	50.1	31.6	23.5	14.3	3.5	**171.2**
South Kilburn	26.9	45.0	31.7	19.4	12.0	6.9	**141.9**
Infrastructure and Regeneration	84.2	68.2	21.3	29.9	25.4	0.0	**229.0**
Schools	25.5	34.3	27.0	18.6	5.0	0.0	**110.4**
Housing HRA & Management	24.5	44.9	35.5	23.4	23.0	5.0	**156.3**
Affordable Housing Supply	119.3	51.3	67.0	63.2	32.8	0.0	**333.7**

Total Capital Expenditure	**328.9**	**293.8**	**214.0**	**177.9**	**112.5**	**15.4**	**1,142.5**

5. For more information and detail of budgets please refer to section 14 of the main budget and council tax report.

6. All capital expenditure must be financed, either from external sources (government grants and other contributions), the Council's own resources (revenue, reserves and capital receipts) or debt. The planned financing of the above expenditure is as follows:

Table 2: Capital financing

Capital Financing (£m)	**2025/26**	**2026/27**	**2027/28**	**2028/29**	**2029/30**	**2030/31**	**Total 2025/26-2030/31**
	Budget	**Budget**	**Budget**	**Budget**	**Budget**	**Budget**	
Grants	83.3	46.5	27.9	18.9	9.0	5.6	**191.2**
Section 106 & CIL	43.6	43.4	29.6	30.8	24.2	3.8	**175.4**
Capital Receipts	3.6	14.5	37.4	6.0	0.4	0.0	**61.9**
Earmarked Reserves	5.3	3.0	2.5	1.0	0.1	0.7	**12.6**
Major Repairs Reserve	13.7	16.6	13.0	13.0	13.0	0.0	**69.3**
Revenue Contributions	6.5	1.4	1.6	0.6	0.6	0.0	**10.7**
Borrowing	172.9	168.4	102.0	107.6	65.2	5.3	**621.4**
Total Capital Financing	**328.9**	**293.8**	**214.0**	**177.9**	**112.5**	**15.4**	**1,142.5**

7. Debt is only a temporary source of finance. Since loans and leases must be repaid, they are therefore replaced over time by other financing, usually from revenue which is known as minimum revenue provision (MRP).

8. Planned MRP to 2030/31 is as set out in the table 3. Capital receipts will be used to finance the capital programme as set out in the table above rather than to repay debt. The Council's MRP Policy is set out in Appendix J to the Budget and Council Tax report 2026/27.

Table 3: Funds available for the replacement of debt

Debt Repayments (£m)	**2025/26**	**2026/27**	**2027/28**	**2028/29**	**2029/30**	**2030/31**	**Total 2025/26-2030/31**
	Estimate	**Estimate**	**Estimate**	**Estimate**	**Estimate**	**Estimate**	

MRP on Prudential Borrowing	16.9	20.5	24.7	31.4	39.3	47.7	**180.5**
MRP on PFI Schemes & Leases	9.8	9.8	9.8	9.8	9.8	9.8	**58.8**
Total MRP	**26.7**	**30.3**	**34.5**	**41.2**	**49.1**	**57.5**	**181.8**

9. The Council's Minimum Revenue Policy Statement for 2026/27 is presented as an Appendix J to the annual Council Tax and Budget Setting Report.

10. The Council's cumulative outstanding amount of debt finance is measured by the capital financing requirement (CFR). This increases with new debt-financed capital expenditure and reduces with MRP used to replace debt. The CFR is expected to increase to £1,641.4m during 2026/27 and then to reduce to £1,739.1m by 2020/31. Based on the above figures for expenditure and financing, the Council's estimated CFR is as follows:

Table 4: Prudential Indicator: Estimates of Capital Financing Requirement

CFR Movement (£m)	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31
	Estimate	**Estimate**	**Estimate**	**Estimate**	**Estimate**	**Estimate**
Opening CFR	1,357.1	1,503.3	1,641.4	1,708.8	1,775.3	1,791.4
Capital Expenditure	328.9	293.8	214.0	177.9	112.5	15.4
External Resources	(126.9)	(89.9)	(57.5)	(49.7)	(33.2)	(9.4)
Internal Resources	(29.1)	(35.5)	(54.5)	(20.6)	(14.1)	(0.7)
MRP (including PFI/Leases)	(26.7)	(30.3)	(34.5)	(41.2)	(49.1)	(57.5)
Closing CFR	**1,503.3**	**1,641.4**	**1,708.8**	**1,775.3**	**1,791.4**	**1,739.1**

Capital Programme Governance and Prioritisation

11. The capital programme is updated annually for new schemes, revised profiling, slippage, and changes in expenditure projections. The capital programme and budget is set out in section 14 in the main Budget and Council Tax 2026/27 report.

Pipeline Schemes

12. During the year the individual capital sub-boards developed a comprehensive list of opportunities and proposals for future aspirational capital investment to meet the

council's strategic objectives. These outline bids are then collated by the Capital Programme Management Office. Currently there are 16 schemes on the Pipeline totalling £472.2m which would potentially be funded through grants, levies, section 106 contributions or borrowing. At this stage these strategic pipeline schemes are only indicative and will proceed through Sub-boards, Capital Programme Board and or Cabinet for approval. Furthermore, Officers will be required to produce detailed business cases, undertake feasibility and consult as appropriate before getting to this stage. The capital budget includes contingency for pipeline schemes approved in the year.

Capital Programme Board & Governance

13. This Board is the key governance forum for the capital programme. The Board reviews all capital investment and new opportunities, oversees and maintains the list of pipeline schemes and ensures outcomes are aligned with Council's aspirations and reflective of the circumstances within Brent.

14. Officers carried out a review of the governance of the capital programme in 2025/26 with the objectives of strengthening risk and project management and streamlining processes. Following this review, changes to the Board structure include the merger of the Public Realm Board with the Corporate Landlord Board to create a new Corporate Assets Board responsible for overseeing the management of council owned assets. The remit of the housing boards has been clarified so that the Affordable Housing Supply Board will cover the capital programme to deliver new housing whilst the HRA and Housing Management Board will cover capital investment in Brent's existing housing stock. There are no changes to the remit of the Infrastructure and Regeneration Board.

Prioritisation criteria

15. The general criteria for scoring proposals are summarised below, higher scores were applied based on the following criterion:

- **Strategic Alignment** - How the scheme meets the outcomes of a key service objective as stated in a strategy document, business plan or action plan.
- **Statutory Obligations** - How the delivery of a scheme is essential to ensuring the Council meets the statutory need and without the project, the Council would otherwise be at risk of failing to meet.
- **Risk** - Whether the success of the project is dependent on mitigating high associated risks.
- **Financial Return -** Whether the scheme generates ongoing revenue savings, a capital receipt or attract external funding (partial or fully).
- **Demand and Demographic Changes** - whether the scheme is required following a change in demographic, economic or social change that impact the borough and will reduce the demand for services in the borough.

Asset management

16. To ensure that capital assets continue to be of long-term use, the Council has a Property Strategy. The Strategy sets out a proactive, data-driven framework aligned with its Borough Plan to transform its property portfolio into a sustainable, carbon-neutral, and financially viable resource that delivers social, economic, and environmental value. It classifies assets across four strategic themes of Strategic Hold, Actively Manage, Invest, and Dispose to ensuring each property is reviewed and managed according to its community benefit, condition, and alignment with council priorities.

Asset disposals

17. In line with the Council's Property Strategy, the Council would dispose of a building when it no longer meets service needs, is financially unviable to maintain, or does not align with strategic objectives for community benefit and regeneration. The proceeds from a disposal are known as capital receipts and can be re-invested on new assets or to repay debt. Repayments of capital grants, loans and investments also generate capital receipts.

18. The Council expects to receive £21.2m of capital receipts in the current financial year, and a further £20.0m in 2026/27 and £28.4m in 2027/28. A significant proportion of these arise from land receipts sold to assist with a regeneration project, on the South Kilburn site as well as housing sold under the right to buy (RTB) scheme. For more information on programme budgets please refer to section 14 of the main Budget and Council Tax report. The Council is highly likely to have capital receipts in future years and this will be profiled accordingly into future strategies as the information becomes readily available. The capital receipts expected in future financial years (at this point in time) are as follows:

Table 5: Capital receipts

	2025/26	**2026/27**	**2027/28**	**2028/29**	**2029/30**	**2030/31**	**Total 2025/26 - 2030/31**
	Estimate (£m)	**Estimate (£m)**	**Estimate (£m)**	**Estimate (£m)**	**Estimate (£m)**	**Estimate (£m)**	
Capital Receipts	21.2	20.0	28.4	9.2	9.8	9.2	**97.8**

Treasury Management

19. Treasury management is concerned with keeping sufficient but not excessive cash available to meet the Council's spending needs, while managing the risks involved. Surplus cash is invested until required, while a shortage of cash will be met by borrowing, to avoid excessive credit balances or overdrafts in the bank current account.

20. The Council is typically cash rich in the short-term as revenue income is received before it is spent, but cash poor in the long-term as capital expenditure is incurred before being financed. The revenue cash surpluses are offset against capital cash shortfalls to reduce overall borrowing.

21. At 31 December 2025, the Council held £1,003.2m of borrowing (£938.1m long term and £65.0m short term) at an average rate of 4.0%. The Council also held £42.0m of short term cash investments at an average rate of 4.2%.

Borrowing strategy

22. The Council's main objectives when borrowing is to achieve a low but certain cost of finance while retaining flexibility should plans change in future. These objectives are often conflicting, and the Council therefore seeks to strike a balance between short-term loans (currently available at around 4.3% to 4.5%) and long-term fixed rate loans where the future cost is lower (PWLB Annity Standard Rate currently around 4.6% to 6.0%). The Authority does not borrow to invest for the primary purpose of financial return and therefore retains full access to the Public Works Loans Board.

23. Projected levels of the Council's total outstanding debt (which comprises borrowing, PFI liabilities and leases) are shown below, compared with the capital financing requirement.

Table 6: Prudential Indicator: Gross Debt and the Capital Financing Requirement

Gross Debt & the Capital Financing Requirement (£m)	**2025/26**	**2026/27**	**2027/28**	**2028/29**	**2029/30**	**2030/31**
	Estimate	**Estimate**	**Estimate**	**Estimate**	**Estimate**	**Estimate**
External Loans	1,043.1	1,211.7	1,313.6	1,421.2	1,486.4	1,491.7
PFI & Leases	24.7	22.7	20.4	17.0	15.6	15.6
Total External Debt Liabilities	**1,067.8**	**1,234.4**	**1,334.0**	**1,438.3**	**1,502.0**	**1,507.3**
Internal Borrowing	**435.5**	**407.0**	**374.9**	**337.0**	**289.4**	**231.8**
Capital Financing Requirement	**1,503.3**	**1,641.4**	**1,708.8**	**1,775.3**	**1,791.4**	**1,739.1**

Statutory guidance prescribes that debt should remain below the capital financing requirement, except in the short-term. As can be seen from Table 6, the Council expects to comply with this regulation.

Affordable borrowing limit

24. The Council is legally obliged to set an affordable borrowing limit (also termed the authorised limit for external debt) each year. In line with statutory guidance, a lower "operational boundary" is also set as a warning level should debt approach the limit.

Table 7: Prudential Indicators: Authorised limit and operational boundary for external debt

£m	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31
	Limit	Limit	Limit	Limit	Limit	Limit
Authorised Limit	1,800.0	2,000.0	2,000.0	2,000.0	2,000.0	2,000.0
Operational Boundary	1,600.0	1,800.0	1,800.0	1,800.0	1,800.0	1,800.0

25. Further details on borrowing are contained within the Council's treasury management strategy.

Treasury Investment Strategy

26. Treasury investments balances arise from receiving cash before it is required to be paid out again. Investments made for service reasons or for pure financial gain are not generally considered to be part of treasury management.

27. The Council's policy on treasury investments is to prioritise security and liquidity over yield and to focus on minimising risk rather than maximising returns. Cash that is likely to be spent in the near term is invested securely, for example with the government, other local authorities or selected high-quality banks, to minimise the risk of loss. Money that will be held for longer terms is invested more widely, including in bonds, shares, and property, to balance the risk of loss against the risk of receiving returns below inflation. Both near-term and longer-term investments may be held in pooled funds, where an external fund manager makes decisions on which investments to buy, and the Council may request its money back at short notice.

Table 8: Treasury management investments

£m	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31
	Counterparty Limit	Counterparty Limit	Counterparty Limit	Counterparty Limit	Counterparty Limit	Counterparty Limit
Short term investments	20.0	20.0	20.0	20.0	20.0	20.0
Long term investments						
UK central Government	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited
Other long term treasury investments	20.0	20.0	20.0	20.0	20.0	20.0

28. Further details on treasury investments are contained within the Council's treasury management strategy.

Risk management: The effective management and control of risk are prime objectives of the Council's treasury management activities. The treasury management strategy therefore sets out various indicators and limits to constrain the risk of unexpected losses and details the extent to which financial derivatives may be used to manage treasury risks.

29. Decisions on treasury management investment and borrowing are made daily and are therefore delegated to the Corporate Director of Finance and Resources, who must act in line with the treasury management strategy approved by Council. Reports on treasury management activity are presented quarterly to Cabinet and Full Council, whilst the Audit & Standards Advisory Committee is responsible for scrutinising treasury management decisions.

Investments for Service Purposes

30. The Council makes investments to assist local public services, including making loans to council subsidiaries to promote economic growth. In light of the public service objective, the Council is willing to take more risk than with treasury investments, however it still plans for such investments to break-even after all costs.

31. Decisions on service investments are either made by Cabinet or under delegated authority or set down in the approved investment strategy. Most loans and shares are capital expenditure and purchases will therefore also be approved as part of the capital programme. Further details on service investments are contained within the investment strategy.

32. The risk of incurred unexpected losses is managed by working closely with counterparties and through the securing the loans where necessary, which would allow the Council to recover significant funds in the event of a default. A limit of £650m is placed on total investment for service purposes, to ensure that plausible losses could be absorbed within budgets or reserves without unmanageable detriment to local services.

33. The Council issued a new loan and equity facility of £40m in 2025/26 to its subsidiary i4B Holdings Ltd for the acquisition of properties, which are then offered as affordable rented homes in line with the Council's temporary accommodation reform plan. This is an invest to save initiative as i4B Holdings Ltd alleviates affordable housing pressures for the Council. Neither the Council nor i4B Holdings Ltd anticipate a requirement for a further facility in 2026/27.

34. The Council has an existing property portfolio to support regeneration and develop community assets and these properties also secure a financial return. Such properties generate £3.3m per annum in rental income. The Council does not invest in commercial property primarily for yield and does not plan to in the future.

35. The principal risk exposures include voids, high maintenance costs and diminution of capital values. These risks are managed by the existing risk management framework. In order that property investments remain proportionate to Brent's size, they are under constant review and contingency plans are in place should expected yields not materialise.

Other Liabilities

36. In addition to debt of £1,043.1m detailed in Table 6 above, the Council is committed to making future payments to cover its pension fund deficit (valued at £162.0m –latest report available Report March 2022 and revalued every three years).

37. Decisions on incurring new discretional liabilities are taken by Service Managers in consultation with the Corporate Director, Finance and Resources. The risk of liabilities crystallising and requiring payment is monitored by Corporate Finance and reported quarterly to Cabinet.

Revenue Budget Implications

38. Although capital expenditure is not charged directly to the revenue budget, interest payable on loans and MRP payments are charged to revenue, offset by any investment income receivable. The net annual charge is known as financing costs. The table below compares this to the net revenue stream (the amount funded from Council Tax, business rates and general government grants).

Table 9: Prudential Indicator: Proportion of net revenue stream to financing costs

Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream	**Estimate 2025/26**	**Estimate 2026/27**	**Estimate 2027/28**	**Estimate 2028/29**	**Estimate 2029/30**	**Estimate 2030/31**
Financing Costs (Interest & MRP) (£m)	36.2	39.1	49.6	56.1	61.5	68.6
Net Revenue Stream (£m)	431.4	499.3	533.7	568.4	589.5	611.5
Proportion of net revenue stream (%)	**8.4%**	**7.8%**	**9.3%**	**9.9%**	**10.4%**	**11.2%**

39. Due to the very long-term nature of capital expenditure and financing, the revenue budget implications of expenditure incurred in the next few years will extend for up to 50 years into the future. The detailed information contained within the Treasury Management Strategy and the Budget & Council Tax Report 2026/27, as well as the

prudential indicators included above demonstrates how the Corporate Director for Finance and Resources is satisfied the proposed capital programme is prudent, affordable, and sustainable.

Knowledge and Skills

40. The Council employs professionally qualified and experienced staff in senior positions with responsibility for making capital expenditure, borrowing and investment decisions. Staff working in the Capital and Treasury finance teams keep their continued professional development up to date through external training, such as that provided by CIPFA and Arlingclose Limited as well as other providers. The Council also pays for junior staff to study towards relevant professional qualifications including, for example, Chartered Institute Public Finance & Accountancy (CIPFA).

41. Where Council staff do not have the knowledge and skills required, use is made of external advisers and consultants that are specialists in their field. The Council currently employs Arlingclose Limited as treasury management advisers. This approach can be more cost effective than employing such staff directly and ensures that the Council has access to knowledge and skills commensurate with its risk appetite.

Non-treasury Investment Strategy Report 2026/27

Introduction

1. The Council invests its money for three broad purposes:

   - because it has surplus cash as a result of its day-to-day activities, for example when income is received in advance of expenditure (known as **treasury management investments**).
   - to meet the wider Brent Strategy and Borough Plan (2023–2027), the Council seeks to strengthen local public services through lending to or acquiring shares in other organisations (service investments).This includes the investments in Council's housing subsidiaries, i4B Holdings Limited and First Wave Housing Limited, which provide affordable housing within the borough.
   - to earn investment income (known as **commercial investments** where this is the main purpose).

2. This investment strategy meets the requirements of statutory guidance issued by the Government in January 2018.

3. The statutory guidance defines investments as "all of the financial assets of a local authority as well as other non-financial assets that the organisation holds primarily or partially to generate a profit; for example, investment property portfolios." The Council interprets this to exclude (a) trade receivables which meet the accounting definition of financial assets but are technically not investments; and (b) property held partially to generate a profit but primarily for the provision of local public services. This aligns the Authority's definition of an investment with that in the 2021 edition of the CIPFA Prudential Code, a more recent piece of statutory guidance.

Treasury Management Investments

4. The Council typically receives its income in cash (e.g. from taxes and grants) before it pays for its expenditure in cash (e.g. through payroll and invoices). It also holds reserves for future expenditure and collects local taxes on behalf of other local authorities and central government. These activities, plus the timing of borrowing decisions, lead to a cash surplus which is invested in accordance with guidance from the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy. The balance of treasury management investments is expected to fluctuate between £20m and £110m during the 2026/27 financial year.

5. The contribution that these investments make to the objectives of the Council is to support effective treasury management activities.

6. Full details of the Council's policies and its plan for Treasury management investments are covered in a separate document, the Treasury Management Strategy 2026/27 contained in Appendix I.

Service Investments: Subsidiary Companies

7. The Council issues loans and equity to its housing subsidiary, i4B Holdings Limited, to enable it to purchase street properties, which are then offered as affordable rented homes. This initiative aims to alleviate the housing pressures in our community, reduce temporary accommodation costs for the Council, and decrease the number of families in temporary accommodation. The Council issued a new facility of £40m in 2025/26, consisting of £32m loan commitment and £8m equity, to fund i4B Holdings Ltd's capital programme. We anticipate that the loan will be drawn down in 2026/27.

8. The council holds £43.9m shares in i4B Holdings Ltd One of the risks of investing in shares is that they fall in value meaning that the initial outlay may not be recovered. To limit this risk and ensure that the total exposure of service investment, shares remain proportionate to the size of the Council.

9. The table below outlines the loans and equity in relation to Subsidiary Companies:

Table 1: Service Investments: Subsidiary Companies

Service Investments: Subsidiary companies £m	**2024/25**	**2025/26**	**2026/27**	**2026/27**	**2027/28**	**2028/29**	**2029/30**
	Actual	**Estimated**	**Approved Limit**	**Estimated**	**Estimated**	**Estimated**	**Estimated**
i4B Holdings Ltd) Subsidiary Loans	182.4	179.2	500.0	211.2	211.2	211.2	211.2
i4B Holdings Ltd) Subsidiary Equity	36.4	43.9		51.9	51.9	51.9	51.9
First Wave Housing Subsidiary Loans	33.8	33.4		32.9	32.5	32.0	31.5
Total	**252.6**	**256.5**	**500.0**	**296.0**	**295.6**	**295.1**	**294.6**

Service Investments: Other loans and loans schemes

10. An invest to save loan was given to the West London Waste Authority (WLWA) which is the statutory body responsible for waste disposal in a number of West London boroughs. The funding assisted the development of a new waste treatment facility. The loan is expected to be repaid back by December 2041.

11. The School and Academies Loan Scheme has helped support significant improvements to school facilities ensuring the buildings are suitable for modern teaching and learning and accessible for pupils with disabilities.

12. The main risk when making service loans is that the borrower will be unable to repay the principal lent and/or the interest due. In order to limit this risk and ensure that total exposure to service loans remains proportionate to the size of the Council, upper limits on the outstanding loans to each category of borrower have been set as follows.

13. Service investments: other loans approved limits and estimated investment values are detailed below:

Table 2: Service Investments: Other loans

Service Investments: Other loans £m	**2024/25**	**2025/26**	**2026/27**	**2026/27**	**2027/28**	**2028/29**	**2029/30**	**2030/31**
	Actual	**Estimated**	**Approved Limit**	**Estimated**	**Estimated**	**Estimated**	**Estimated**	**Estimated**
Local Businesses	0.0	0.0	10.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Schools, Academies And Colleges	17.6	17.4	55.0	17.1	16.8	16.5	16.2	15.9
West London Waste Authority (WLWA)	14.4	13.9	20.0	13.9	13.5	13.0	12.4	11.8
Local Charities	0.0	0.0	10.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Housing Associations	0.0	0.0	50.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Local Residents	0.0	0.0	5.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total	**32.0**	**31.3**	**150.0**	**31.0**	**30.3**	**29.5**	**28.6**	**27.7**

Service Investments: Other equity

14. The Council does not hold any other equity service investments apart from its investment in i4B Holdings Ltd.

Service Investments: Property

15. The Council does not invest in property primarily for yield. The Council invests in property that generates a financial return as part of wider investments in regeneration and community assets. More information is contained in the Capital Strategy in Appendix G.

Service Investments: Additional Considerations

16. The Council does not have any other types of service investments nor any current plans to do so. Any decision to make other types of investments will be subject to Cabinet approval. The Council may in future consider the following types of service investments:

- Lending to Joint ventures (JVs), Associates and Similar entities: The Council can invest in such organisations where there is minimal risk. Moreover, there are instances when the Council is de facto required to invest or to deliver an alternative scheme.

- The Council may lend to non-Council Companies or Charities, which deliver services supporting the Medium-Term Financial Plan. The loans must be on a commercial basis and that the Council must require assurances that the loan principal will be repaid.

- The Council may make small loans to organisations that are at a higher risk to support the local economy, possibly in relation to a complex regeneration scheme.

Risk assessment - Risk of loss:

17. The Council assesses the risk of loss before entering into and whilst holding service loans by undertaking various financial checks and utilising specialists (where required) to advise on technical aspects of the investment. Projects funded by service loans are monitored within the Council's existing capital programme and governance reporting regime. The following risk assessment methods are used:

- Evaluation of business plans/cashflow forecasts
- Ability to demonstrate repayment of principal and interest
- Use of credit ratings and financial data
- Wholly owning the company having a sizeable share in company
- Council having first right to call on assets in the event of default / charge on assets (relevant for i4B Holdings Ltd)
- Obtaining assurance that there is sound governance and in controls in place.
- Determination of an exit strategy

- Use of external advisors for accounting/taxation; legal (including Subsidy Control); and technical advice
- Use of on-lending / loan agreements to manage the respective transaction and financial monitoring of such agreements.

Loan Commitments and Financial Guarantees

18. Although not strictly counted as investments, since no money has exchanged hands yet, loan commitments and financial guarantees carry similar risks to the Council. The only loan commitments held by the Council are to i4B Holdings Ltd.

Expected Credit Loss

19. Accounting standards require the Council to recognise an expected credit loss allowance for loans, reflecting the likelihood of non-payment. The Council makes every reasonable effort to collect the full sum lent and has appropriate credit control arrangements in place to recover overdue repayments. The expected credit loss to date has been immaterial.

Investment Indicators

20. The Council has set the following quantitative indicators to allow elected members and the public to assess the Council's total risk exposure as a result of its investment decisions.

21. **Total risk exposure:** The first indicator shows the Council's total exposure to potential investment losses. This includes amounts the Council is contractually committed to lend but have yet to be drawn down and guarantees the Council has issued over third-party loans.

Table 3: Total investment exposure

Total Investment Exposure	**2025/26**	**2026/27**	**2027/28**	**2028/29**	**2029/30**	**2030/31**
	Estimated	**Estimated**	**Estimated**	**Estimated**	**Estimated**	**Estimated**
Treasury management cash investments	20.0	20.0	20.0	20.0	20.0	20.0
Service investments: Loans (all service loans)	287.8	327.0	325.8	324.6	323.2	321.9

Commercial investments: Property	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total Investments	**307.8**	**347.0**	**345.8**	**344.6**	**343.2**	**341.9**

22. **How investments are funded:** Government guidance states that these indicators should include details of how investments are funded. Since the Council does not normally associate particular assets with particular liabilities, this guidance is difficult to comply with. However, the following investments could be described as being funded by borrowing. The remainder of the Council's investments are funded by usable reserves, grants and other income.

Table 4: Investments funded by borrowing

Investments Funded by Borrowing (Service loans: Subsidiaries) (£m)	**2024/25**	**2025/26**	**2026/27**	**2027/28**	**2028/29**	**2029/30**	**2030/31**
	Actual	**Estimated**	**Estimated**	**Estimated**	**Estimated**	**Estimated**	**Estimated**
i4B Holdings Ltd Loans	182.4	179.2	211.2	211.2	211.2	211.2	211.2
i4B Holdings Ltd Equity	36.4	43.9	51.9	51.9	51.9	51.9	51.9
First Wave Housing (FWH)	33.8	33.4	0.0	32.9	32.5	32.0	31.5
Total Service investments: Subsidiaries	**252.6**	**256.5**	**263.1**	**296.0**	**295.6**	**295.1**	**294.6**
Total Funded By Borrowing	**252.6**	**256.5**	**263.1**	**296.0**	**295.6**	**295.1**	**294.6**

23. **Rate of Return:** This indicator shows the investment income received less the associated costs, including the cost of borrowing where appropriate, as a proportion of the sum initially invested. Note that due to the complex local government accounting framework, not all recorded gains and losses affect the revenue account in the year they are incurred. Table 5 sets out the expected rate of return on service investments whist Table 6 sets out other investment indicators.

Table 5: Investment rate of return (net of all costs)

Investments net rate of return	**2025/26**	**2026/27**	**2027/28**	**2028/29**	**2029/30**	**2030/31**
	Estimated	**Estimated**	**Estimated**	**Estimated**	**Estimated**	**Estimated**
Treasury management investments (%)	3.93%	3.50%	3.25%	3.25%	3.25%	3.25%
Service investments: Loans (%)	3.28%	3.30%	3.30%	3.30%	3.30%	3.30%
Commercial investments: Property (%)	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%

Table 6: Other investment indicators

Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream	**Estimate 2025/26**	**Estimate 2026/27**	**Estimate 2027/28**	**Estimate 2028/29**	**Estimate 2029/30**	**Estimate 2030/31**
Financing Costs (Interest & MRP) (£m)	36.2	39.1	49.6	56.1	61.5	68.6
Net Revenue Stream (£m)	431.4	499.3	533.7	568.4	589.5	611.5
Proportion of net revenue stream (%)	**8.4%**	**7.8%**	**9.3%**	**9.9%**	**10.4%**	**11.2%**

Capacity, skills and culture

24. The Council employs professionally qualified and experienced staff in senior positions with responsibility for making recommendations and decisions on Treasury Management investments and Service Investments. The Council pays for junior staff to study towards relevant professional qualifications including CIPFA and all senior members of the finance team are qualified accountants. In conjunction with the knowledge and skills of Council staff, use is made of external advisers and consultants that are specialists in their field. The Council currently employs Arlingclose Limited as treasury management advisers. This approach can be more cost effective than employing such staff directly and ensures that the Council has access to knowledge and skills commensurate with its risk appetite.

25. The Council provides a training and awareness programme for elected Members, including training in relation to scrutiny of the Treasury Management function and the annual Statement of Accounts.

26. The Council's treasury activity (including investments and borrowing) is reported to the Audit & Standards Advisory Committee and full Council twice a year via a mid-year report (recently published 3rd December 2025) and the full year outturn report.

This page is intentionally left blank

Appendix I - Treasury Management Strategy 2026/27

Introduction:

1. Treasury management is the management of the Council's cash flows, borrowing and investments, and the associated risks. The Council has borrowed and invested substantial sums of money and is therefore exposed to financial risks including the loss of invested funds and the revenue effect of changing interest rates. The successful identification, monitoring and control of financial risk are therefore central to the Council's prudent financial management.

2. Treasury risk management at the Council is conducted within the framework of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice 2021 Edition (the CIPFA Code) which requires the Council to approve a treasury management strategy before the start of each financial year. This report fulfils the Council's legal obligation under the Local Government Act 2003 to have regard to the CIPFA Code.

3. Investments held for service purposes are considered separately within the Investment Strategy.

Economic Background

4. The impact on the UK from the government's Autumn Budget will influence the Authority's treasury management strategy for 2026/27. Other influences will include lower short-term interest rates alongside higher medium- and longer-term rates, slower economic growth, together with ongoing uncertainties around the global economy, stock market sentiment, and ongoing geopolitical issues.

5. The Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) cut Bank Rate to 3.75% in December 2025, as expected. The vote to cut was 5-4, with the minority instead favouring holding rates at 4.0%. Those members wanting a cut judged that disinflation was established while those preferring to hold Bank Rate argued that inflation risks remained sufficiently material to leave rates untouched at this stage.

6. Figures from the Office for National Statistics showed that the UK economy expanded by 0.1% in the third quarter of the calendar year, this was unrevised from the initial estimate.

7. The accompanying Monetary Policy Report projected modest economic growth, with GDP expected to rise by 0.2% in the final calendar quarter of 2025. Annual growth is forecast to ease from 1.4% before improving again later, reflecting the delayed effects of lower interest rates, looser monetary conditions, stronger global activity, and higher consumer spending.

8. CPI inflation was 3.2% in November 2025, down from 3.6% in the previous month and below the 3.5% expected. Core CPI eased to 3.2% from 3.4%, contrary to forecasts of remaining at 3.6%. Looking forward, the MPC continues to expect inflation to fall, to around 3% in calendar Q1 2026, before steadily returning to the 2% target by late 2026 or early 2027.

9. The labour market continues to ease with rising unemployment, falling vacancies and flat inactivity. In the three months to October 2025, the unemployment rate increased to 5.1%, higher than the level previously expected by the BoE, while the employment rate slipped to

74.9%. Pay growth for the same period eased modestly, with total earnings (including bonuses) growth at 4.7% and while regular pay was 4.6%.

10. The US Federal Reserve also continued to cut rates, including reducing the target range for the Federal Funds Rate by 0.25% at its December 2025 meeting, to 3.50%-3.75%, in line with expectations. The minutes of the meeting noted that most Fed policymakers judged that further rate cuts would be likely in 2026 if inflation continues to ease, however they were still divided in their assessment of the risks between inflation and unemployment.

11. The European Central Bank (ECB) kept its key interest rates unchanged in December for a fourth consecutive meeting, maintaining the deposit rate at 2.0% and the main refinancing rate at 2.15%. The ECB maintained that future policy decisions will remain data-dependent, that inflation is close to its 2% target and that the euro area economy continues to expand despite a challenging global environment, including heightened geopolitical risks and trade tensions.

Credit outlook

12. Credit Default Swap (CDS) prices, which spiked in April 2025 following President Trump's 'Liberation Day' tariff announcements, have since trended lower, returning to levels broadly consistent with their 2024 averages. Although CDS prices rose modestly in October, the overall credit outlook remains stable, and credit conditions are expected to remain close to the range seen over the past two years.

13. While lower interest rates may weigh on banks' profitability, strong capital positions, easing inflation, steady economic growth, low unemployment, and reduced borrowing costs for households and businesses all support a favourable outlook for the creditworthiness of institutions on Arlingclose's (the Council's Treasury Management Adviser) counterparty list. Arlingclose's advice on approved counterparties and recommended investment durations is kept under continuous review and will continue to reflect prevailing economic and credit conditions.

14. Interest rate forecast (December 2025): Arlingclose, the Authority's treasury management adviser, currently forecasts that the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee will continue to reduce Bank Rate in 2026, reaching around 3.25%. This forecast reflects amendments made following the Autumn Budget and an assessment of the fiscal measures and their market implications, and following the BoE MPC meeting held on 18th December.

15. Long-term gilt yields, and therefore interest rates payable on long-term borrowing, are expected to remain broadly stable on average, though with continued volatility, and to end the forecast period marginally lower than current levels. Yields are likely to stay higher than in the pre-quantitative tightening era, reflecting ongoing balance sheet reduction and elevated bond issuance. Short-term fluctuations are expected to persist in response to economic data releases and geopolitical developments.

16. A more detailed economic and interest rate forecast provided by Arlingclose is in Appendix I.2 at the end of this report.

17. For the purpose of setting the budget, it has been the Council has assumed that new treasury investments will be made at an average rate of 4.0%, and that new long-term loans will be borrowed at an average rate of 5.0% in 2026/27.

18. Local Context

19. At 31 December 2025, the Council held £1003.2m of borrowing (£938.2m long term and £65.0m short term) and £42.0m of short-term cash investments. This is set out in further detail at Appendix 4 at the end of this report. Forecast changes in these sums are shown in the balance sheet analysis in Table 1.

20. As per Table 1, the Council will need to borrow up to £503m by 2030/31 to support the financing of the capital programme.

21. Table 1: Balance sheet summary and forecast

£m	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31
	Forecast	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate
Capital Financing Requirement	1,503.3	1,641.4	1,708.8	1,775.3	1,791.4	1,739.1
Other debt liabilities*	24.7	22.7	20.4	17.0	15.6	15.6
Loans CFR	**1,527.9**	**1,664.1**	**1,729.2**	**1,792.3**	**1,807.0**	**1,754.7**
(less) External borrowing**	(969.5)	(893.6)	(839.2)	(799.7)	(770.3)	(740.4)
Internal (Over) Borrowing***	533.7	747.8	869.7	975.6	1,021.1	998.7
(less) Balance Sheet Resources	(495.7)	(495.7)	(495.7)	(495.7)	(495.7)	(495.7)
New borrowing (or Treasury Investments)**	**78.0**	**252.1**	**374.0**	**479.9**	**525.4**	**503.0**

** Other debt liabilities include leases and PFI liabilities that form part of the Authority's total debt*

*** This table shows only loans to which the Authority is committed and excludes optional refinancing and additional capital programme debt*
****Internal (over borrowing) is calculated by using CFR less external borrowing.*
*****New borrowing in 2025/26 also includes a £40m buffer for additional capital programme debt.*

22. The underlying need to borrow for capital purposes is measured by the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR), while usable reserves and working capital are the underlying resources available for investment. The Council's strategy has been to maintain borrowing and investments below their underlying levels, sometimes known as internal borrowing. This means the Council has minimised its interest costs by utilising internal resources over the short term instead of undertaking more expensive external borrowing. As our internal resources continue to be depleted, there is an increasing need for the Council to undertake new external borrowing to fund the capital programme. However, whilst deferring external borrowing and using internal resources minimises debt interest costs, internal resources will need to be replenished later. This could expose the Council to interest rate risk whereby interest rates could be higher (or lower) than the present day where they have been relatively high and expensive for longer term duration of loans and debt financing.

23. CIPFA's Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities recommends that the Council's total debt should be lower than its highest forecast CFR over the next three years. Table 1 shows that the Council expects to comply with this recommendation during 2026/27.

24. Table 2 sets out the Councils current and future years capital programme and capital financing. The Capital strategy 2026/27 Appendix G to the main report and section 14 of the main Budget and Council Tax report 2026/27 has additional information on the council's capital programme.

Table 2: Capital Programme Expenditure and Financing

Capital Expenditure & Financing (£m)	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	Total 2025/26-2030/31
	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget	
Corporate Assets	48.3	50.1	31.6	23.5	14.3	3.5	**171.2**
South Kilburn	26.9	45.0	31.7	19.4	12.0	6.9	**141.9**
Infrastructure and Regeneration	84.2	68.2	21.3	29.9	25.4	0.0	**229.0**
Schools	25.5	34.3	27.0	18.6	5.0	0.0	**110.4**
Housing HRA & Management	24.5	44.9	35.5	23.4	23.0	5.0	**156.3**
Affordable Housing Supply	119.3	51.3	67.0	63.2	32.8	0.0	**333.7**
Total Capital Expenditure	**328.9**	**293.8**	**214.0**	**177.9**	**112.5**	**15.4**	**1,142.5**

Capital Financing (£m)	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	Total 2025/26-2030/31
	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget	
Grants	83.3	46.5	27.9	18.9	9.0	5.6	**191.2**
Section 106 & CIL	43.6	43.4	29.6	30.8	24.2	3.8	**175.4**
Capital Receipts	3.6	14.5	37.4	6.0	0.4	0.0	**61.9**
Earmarked Reserves	5.3	3.0	2.5	1.0	0.1	0.7	**12.6**
Major Repairs Reserve	13.7	16.6	13.0	13.0	13.0	0.0	**69.3**
Revenue Contributions	6.5	1.4	1.6	0.6	0.6	0.0	**10.7**
Borrowing	172.9	168.4	102.0	107.6	65.2	5.3	**621.4**
Total Capital Financing	**328.9**	**293.8**	**214.0**	**177.9**	**112.5**	**15.4**	**1,142.5**

25. Table 3 details the cost of delivering the Council's proposed capital programme as well as servicing existing debt relating to past capital programme.

Table 3: Capital financing costs

Capital Financing Costs (£m)	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31
	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate
Total Gross External Debt Interest	41.2	48.9	54.1	54.8	53.2	51.8
Other Interest Payable and expenses	2.5	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.7

Total Interest Payable & Expenses	**43.7**	**50.5**	**55.7**	**56.4**	**54.8**	**53.5**
Total Interest Receivable	**(23.6)**	**(27.7)**	**(30.3)**	**(31.3)**	**(32.2)**	**(32.2)**
Net Interest	**20.1**	**22.8**	**25.3**	**25.2**	**22.7**	**21.4**
MRP (Excluding PFI)	16.9	20.5	24.7	31.4	39.3	47.7
Total Capital Financing Costs (Interest & MRP)	**37.0**	**43.3**	**50.1**	**56.5**	**62.0**	**69.0**

26. The cost of new loans is based on a budgeted interest rate of 5.0%. The Council also has an ongoing obligation to service existing long dated fixed rate debt that has been raised secured to fund capital programmes of the past. The increase in capital financing costs is also attributable to Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP), a statutory charge to the Revenue Account for the repayment of debt. MRP is increasing due to new capital spend that is being financed through borrowing, as well as existing borrowing associated with past capital programmes that requires to be repaid over the life of the assets that have enhanced or constructed. The Council uses the annuity method to determine the MRP charge, which results in a lower charge in the earlier period of the repayment schedule but increases the charge over time.

27. Rising interest rates and limited available reserves and grant funding makes delivering the Council's ambitious capital programme very challenging. The Council manages its borrowing position proactively and pressures are incorporated into the Medium-Term Financial Strategy. Through this proactive approach, the Council aims to maintain a balanced budget while continuing to invest in essential infrastructure and services for the community through the capital programme.

Liability Benchmark

28. To compare the Council's actual borrowing against an alternative strategy, a liability benchmark has been calculated showing the lowest risk level of borrowing. This assumes that cash and investment balances are kept to a minimum level to maintain sufficient liquidity but minimise credit risk.

29. The liability benchmark is an important tool to help establish whether the Council is likely to be a long-term borrower or long-term investor in the future, and so shape its strategic focus and decision making. The liability benchmark itself represents an estimate of the cumulative amount of external borrowing the Council must hold to fund its current capital and revenue plans while keeping treasury investments at the minimum level required to manage day-to-day cash flow.

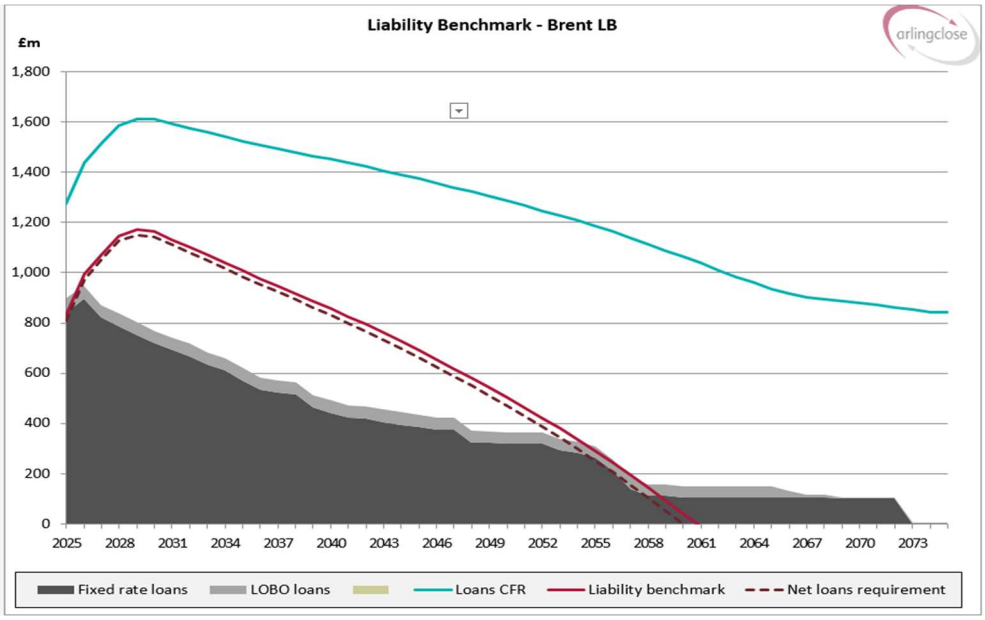
30. Following on from the medium-term forecasts in Table 3, the long-term liability benchmark assumes Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) on new capital expenditure based on estimated asset lives in line with the Council's MRP policy. Most asset lives are estimated between 5 and 50 years. The chart below shows the profile of the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR).

31. Table 4: Prudential Indicator: Liability benchmark

Liability Benchmark (£m)	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31
	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate
CFR	1,503.3	1,641.4	1,708.8	1,775.3	1,791.4	1,739.1
LOBO Loans*	34.5	25.0	10.0	10.0	0.0	0.0
Non LOBO Loans	1,008.6	1,186.7	1,303.6	1,411.2	1,486.4	1,491.7
Balance Sheet Resources	(495.7)	(495.7)	(495.7)	(495.7)	(495.7)	(495.7)
Net Loan Requirement**	**1,023.1**	**1,191.7**	**1,293.6**	**1,401.2**	**1,466.4**	**1,471.7**
Plus Liquidity Allowance	20.0	20.0	20.0	20.0	20.0	20.0
Liability Benchmark***	**1,043.1**	**1,211.7**	**1,313.6**	**1,421.2**	**1,486.4**	**1,491.7**

*As at 31 December 2025 the council held £49.5m LOBOs. There is a possibility that £15m may called before the end of 2025/26 bringing the total to £34.5m, similarly in the future. The Treasury code guidance notes encourages that maturity should be normally determined by reference to when the lender can require payment which is the LOBO next call date
**Net loan requirements is calculated by adding LOBO loans and non-LOBO loans less liquidity allowance.
***In comparison, the liability benchmark is calculated by adding the net loan requirement and the liquidity allowance.

31. The Loan CFR represents the need to fund capital expenditure through borrowing. The Liability benchmark represents the level of borrowing requirement once reserves and working capital has been considered. Where the liability benchmark exceeds the Council's current borrowing levels this indicates the real need to borrow. The graph below from Arlingclose shows the council's liability benchmark at 31 December 2025.



Borrowing Strategy

32. At 31 December 2025, the Council held £1,003.2m of loans, an increase of £103.2m compared to balances held at the start of the financial year (£900m). The Council's future

borrowing is dependent on the progression and development of the capital programme. The Council may also borrow additional sums to pre-fund future years' requirements as well as replenish the internal borrowing position, providing this does not exceed the authorised limit for borrowing in the years ahead.

33. **Objectives:** The Council's main objective when borrowing money is to prioritise security, liquidity and yield. This is done by ensuring appropriately low risk balance between securing low interest costs and achieving certainty of those costs over the period for which funds are required. The flexibility to renegotiate loans should the Council's long-term plans change is a secondary objective.

34. **Strategy:** The Council's borrowing strategy continues to prioritise security, liquidity and yield as well as address the key issue of affordability without compromising the longer-term stability of the debt portfolio.

35. Interest rates have increased across the yield curve over the past year. Interest rates are currently high for longer term durations making it expensive for the council to borrow over 10 years. Therefore, short term borrowing is a cheaper option for the Council and the Council has varied its portfolio by securing local authority loans with a 1-year duration. This does however expose the Council to interest rate risk should rates rise in the future.

36. The Council will continue to work closely with our Treasury advisors, Arlingclose, to ensure borrowing occurs at optimal points avoiding the worst of the market volatility. The Council follows the advice of Arlingclose and takes a "little and often approach" to borrowing. This means borrowing relatively small amounts regularly with varying maturities. This enables the Council to take advantage of temporary reductions in interest rates and vary the terms of the loans to limit the risk of large sums needing to be repaid or refinanced at the same time.

37. The Council's Borrowing Strategy for 2026/27 is to maintain its debt portfolio Pool Rate within this range of 4.0% to 5.5%. At 31 December 2025, the average debt Pool Rate (excluding PFI) was 4.06%.

38. To ensure long term stability of the debt portfolio, a proportion of the portfolio will be funded by long term borrowing using a little and often approach.

39. **Sources of borrowing:** The approved sources of long-term and short-term borrowing are:

- HM Treasury's PWLB lending facility (formerly the Public Works Loan Board)
- National Wealth Fund (previously known as the UK Infrastructure Bank Ltd)
- Any institution approved for investments (see below)
- Any other bank or building society authorised to operate in the UK.
- Any other UK public sector body including the Greater London Authority
- UK public and private sector pension funds (except the local Brent Pension Fund)
- Capital market bond investors.
- Retail investors via a regulated peer-to-peer platform
- Any other special purpose companies created to enable local authority bond issues.

40. **Other sources of debt finance:** In addition, capital finance may be raised by the following methods that are not borrowing, but may be classed as other debt liabilities:

- Leasing
- Hire purchase

- Similar asset-based finance

41. The Council has previously raised most of its long-term borrowing from the PWLB but will consider long-terms loans from other sources including banks, pension funds and local authorities should they offer more favourable rates and not significantly increase the admin burden. In line with the requirements of the Prudential Code, the Council does not borrow primarily for yield and has no plans to in future. This ensures continuing access to PWLB borrowing facilities.

42. In addition to the above, the Council may borrow short-term loans to cover temporary cash flow pressures from other local authorities or public sector bodies and banks.

43. The Council may arrange forward starting loans, where the interest rate is fixed in advance, but the cash is received in later years. This would enable certainty of cost to be achieved without suffering a cost of carry in the intervening period.

44. **LOBOs:** As at 31 December 2025 the Council held £49.5m of LOBO (Lender's Option Borrower's Option) loans where the lender has the option to propose an increase in the interest rate at set dates, following which the Council has the option to either accept the new rate or to repay the loan at no additional cost.

45. Two LOBOs totalling £14.5m may undergo rate reviews in 2026/27 resulting in a potential change in the loan rate. Due to higher interest rates, there is an elevated risk that the LOBOs will be called, resulting in higher interest rates or refinancing. The Council will assess the financial implications of the best approach and either repay the LOBO loans using existing cash resources (where applicable) or raise new loans.

46. **Short-term and variable rate loans:** These loans leave the Council exposed to the risk of short-term interest rate rises and are therefore subject to the interest rate exposure limits in the treasury management indicators below.

47. **Debt rescheduling:** The PWLB allows authorities to repay loans before maturity and either pay a premium or receive a discount according to a set formula based on current interest rates. Other lenders may also be prepared to negotiate premature redemption terms. The Council may take advantage of this and replace some loans with new loans, or repay loans without replacement, where this is expected to lead to an overall cost saving or a reduction in risk. Future rescheduling opportunities will be kept under review by Officers as the interest rate environment changes. Any decision to undertake debt rescheduling will be the subject of a separate report by the Corporate Director for Finance and Resources in consultation with the Lead Member for Finance.

Treasury Investment Strategy

48. The Council holds invested funds, representing income received in advance of expenditure plus balances and reserves held. When cash balances are high the Council will defer the decision to borrow for the capital programme until such time cash balances deplete. Cash balances are forecasted to reduce over time as the Council is a net borrower.

49. **Objectives:** The CIPFA Code requires the Council to invest its treasury funds prudently, and to have regard to the security and liquidity of its investments before seeking the highest rate of return, or yield. The Council's objective when investing money is to strike an appropriate balance between risk and return, minimising the risk of incurring losses from defaults and the risk of receiving unsuitably low investment income. Where balances are expected to be invested for more than one year, the Council will aim to achieve a total return that is equal or higher than the prevailing rate of inflation, to maintain the spending power of the sum invested.

The Council aims to be a responsible investor and will consider environmental, social and governance (ESG) issues when investing. The ESG Policy is discussed below.

50. **Strategy:** As demonstrated by the liability benchmark above, the Council expects to be a long-term borrower and new treasury investments will therefore be made primarily to manage day-to-day cash flows using short-term low risk instruments such as Local Authority deposits or Money-Market Funds. Cash invested beyond the liquidity duration will be in accordance with the investment instruments set out in Table 5. However, it is anticipated that the Council will not have significant cash balances to invest into long durations. The Council will maintain a minimum investment balance of £10m to ensure the Council complies with the requirements to be a professional client under MIFID II regulations.

51. **ESG Policy -** Environmental, social and governance (ESG) considerations are increasingly a factor in global investors' decision making, but the framework for evaluating investment opportunities is still developing and therefore the Council's ESG policy does not currently include ESG scoring or other real-time ESG criteria at an individual investment level. When investing in banks and funds for greater than a year, the Council will prioritise banks that are signatories to the UN Principles for Responsible Banking and funds operated by managers that are signatories to the UN Principles for Responsible Investment, the Net Zero Asset Managers Alliance and/or the UK Stewardship Code.

52. Currently, most of the Council's surplus cash remains invested in short-term money market funds. The average rate of interest received on short-term investments during the year to 31 December 2025 was 4.2% with an average duration of 1 day and an average weighted risk rating of A+. Due to the Council's borrowing requirement, there is unlikely to be scope to improve the short-term investment returns achieved as liquidity of the surplus funds will play a key role.

53. **Business models:** Under the IFRS 9 standard introduced in 2019, the accounting for certain investments depends on the Council's "business model" for managing them. The Council aims to achieve value from its treasury investments by a business model of collecting the contractual cash flows and therefore, where other criteria are also met, these investments will continue to be accounted for at amortised cost.

54. **Approved counterparties:** The Council may invest its surplus funds with any of the counterparty types in table 5, subject to the limits shown

	Credit Quality	Cash limit	Time Limit †
Any single organisation, except a Government entity	A- Or equivalent	£20m	n/a
UK Government	Any	Unlimited	50 years
Local Authorities & other government entities	Any	Unlimited	25 years
Banks (unsecured)*	A- Or equivalent	£20m	13 months
Building Societies (unsecured)*	A- Or equivalent	£20m	13 months
Registered providers and registered social landlords*	A- Or equivalent	£20m	5 years

Investment limit			
Secured investments*	A- Or equivalent	£20m	5 years
Money market funds*	A- Or equivalent	Lower of 5% of total net assets of the fund or £20m	n/a
Strategic pooled funds*	A- Or equivalent	£20m	n/a
Real estate investment trusts*	A- Or equivalent	£20m	n/a
Other Investments*	A- Or equivalent	£50m	5 years

Table 5:

† Time limits: These start on the earlier of date that the Authority is committed to make the investment and the date that cash is transferred to the counterparty.
*Please refer to Minimum credit rating paragraph below.

55. ***Minimum Credit Rating:** Treasury investments in the sectors marked with an asterisk will only be made with entities whose long-term credit rating is no lower than A-. The Council uses the lowest rating quoted by the main rating agencies, as recommended by CIPFA. The Council uses the credit rating relevant to the specific investment or class of investment, or, if unavailable, the counterparty credit rating. However, investment decisions are never made solely based on credit ratings, and all other relevant factors including external advice will be considered. Within these criteria the Corporate Director for Finance and Resources has discretion to accept or reject individual institutions as counterparties based on any information which may become available.

56. **Government:** Loans to and bonds and bills issued or guaranteed by, national governments, regional and local authorities and multilateral development banks. These investments are not subject to bail-in, and there is a lower risk of insolvency, although they are not zero risk. Investments with the UK Government are deemed to be zero credit risk due to its ability to create additional currency and therefore may be made in unlimited amounts for up to 50 years.

57. **Local authorities and other government entities**: Loans to, and bonds and bills issued or guaranteed by, other national governments, regional and local authorities and multilateral development banks. These investments are not subject to bail-in, and there is generally a lower risk of insolvency, although they are not zero risk.

58. For authorities subject to local government reorganisation, the counterparty limit for loans to local authorities will be increased to an unlimited amount where (a) the government has announced that this authority will merge with the borrowing authority and (b) the loan is scheduled to be repaid after the expected date of the merger.

59. **Banks and building societies (unsecured):** Accounts, deposits, certificates of deposit and senior unsecured bonds with banks and building societies, other than multilateral development banks. These investments are subject to the risk of credit loss via a bail-in should the regulator determine that the bank is failing or likely to fail. There is no upper limit to the maximum credit loss that the Council could suffer in the event of a bail-in scenario. See section 68 below for arrangements relating to operational bank accounts. Investments in unsecured deposits will be limited to £20m.

60. **Registered providers (unsecured):** Loans to, and bonds issued or guaranteed by, registered providers of social housing or registered social landlords, formerly known as housing associations. These bodies are regulated by the Regulator of Social Housing (in England), the Scottish Housing Regulator, the Welsh Government and the Department for Communities (in Northern Ireland). As providers of public services, they retain the likelihood of receiving government support if needed. Investments with registered providers will be limited to £20m in 2026/27.

61. **Secured investments:** Investments secured on the borrower's assets, which limits the potential losses in the event of insolvency. The amount and quality of the security will be a key factor in the investment decision. Covered bonds and reverse repurchase agreements with banks and building societies are exempt from bail-in. Where there is no investment specific credit rating, but the collateral upon which the investment is secured has a credit rating, the higher of the collateral credit rating and the counterparty credit rating will be used. The combined secured and unsecured investments with any one counterparty will not exceed the cash limit for secured investments. The Council and its advisors remain alert for signs of credit or market distress that might adversely affect the Council. Investments in secured deposits will be limited to £20m. A higher limit applies for investments fully secured on UK or other government collateral.

62. **Money market funds (MMFs):** Pooled funds that offer same-day or short notice liquidity and very low or no price volatility by investing in short-term money markets. They have the advantage over bank accounts of providing wide diversification of investment risks, coupled with the services of a professional fund manager. Although no sector limit applies to money market funds, the Council will take care to diversify its liquid investments over a variety of providers to ensure access to cash at all times. Deposits will not exceed 0.5% of the net asset value of the MMF. In addition, each Fund will be limited to a maximum deposit of £20m. As of the 31 December 2025 the council held £42.0m in MMFs with no more than £20m in each fund available to the council.

63. The investment strategy will provide flexibility to invest cash for longer periods to access higher investment returns. The upper limit for lending beyond a year is £50m. In practice, lending for more than one year will be only to institutions of the highest credit quality and at rates which justify the liquidity risk involved. Marketable instruments may have longer maturities, though the maturity will be considered in conjunction with the likely liquidity of the market and credit quality of the institution. Other than UK Central Government the Council may invest its surplus funds subject to a maximum duration of 25 years.

Alternative investment options will include:

64. **Strategic pooled funds:** Bond, equity and property funds that offer enhanced returns over the longer term but are more volatile in the short term. These allow the Council to diversify into asset classes other than cash without the need to own and manage the underlying investments. Because these funds have no defined maturity date, but are available for withdrawal after a notice period, their performance and continued suitability in meeting the Council's investment objectives will be monitored regularly. Although considered as pooled funds, Money Market Fund's (MMFs) are discussed separately in the previous two paragraphs. Investments in pooled funds will be limited to £20m in 2026/27.

65. The IFRS9 Statutory Override was originally in place until 31 March and has been extended for existing pooled funds until 31 March 2029. Any new pooled fund investments made after 1 April 2024 will not be subject to the override. This means gains and losses will need to be recognised in the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Account, impacting revenue outturn. As of 31 December 2025, the Council currently has no investments in Pooled Funds (other than MMFs) at present but may make prudent use of them in the future.

66. **Real estate investment trusts (REITs):** Shares in companies that invest in real estate and pay the majority of their rental income to investors in a similar manner to pooled property funds. As with property funds, REITs offer enhanced returns over the longer term but are more volatile especially as the share price reflects changing demand for the shares as well as changes in the value of the underlying properties. The risk with any investments in REITs is that shares cannot be withdrawn but can be sold on the stock market to another investor which leaves the Council open to market risk. Investments in REITs will be limited to £20m in 2026/27.

67. **Other investments:** This category covers treasury investments not listed above, for example unsecured corporate bonds and company loans. Non-bank companies cannot be bailed-in but can become insolvent placing the Council's investment at risk.

68. **Operational bank accounts:** The Council may incur operational exposures, for example though current accounts, collection accounts and merchant acquiring services, to any UK bank with credit ratings no lower than BBB- and with assets greater than £25 billion. These are not classed as investments but are still subject to the risk of a bank bail-in. The Bank of England has stated that in the event of failure, banks with assets greater than £25 billion are more likely to be bailed-in than made insolvent, increasing the chance of the Council maintaining operational continuity. The Council currently continues to bank with National Westminster Bank (NatWest) who meet the Council's minimum credit criteria. Should NatWest's creditworthiness deteriorate below the Council's minimum credit criteria, then as far as is consistent with operational efficiency, no money will be placed with NatWest and credit balances in the various Council accounts will be kept to a minimum level.

69. **Unrated Counterparties**: For entities without published credit ratings, investments may be made either (a) where external advice indicates the entity to be of similar credit quality; or (b) to a maximum of £200,000 per counterparty as part of a diversified pool e.g., via a peer-to-peer platform.

70. **Risk Assessment:** Credit ratings are obtained and monitored by the Council's treasury advisers, who will notify changes in ratings as they occur. Any institution will be suspended or removed should any factors give rise to concern, and caution will be paramount in reaching any investment decision regardless of the counterparty or the circumstances. Should an entity's credit rating be downgraded so that it does not meet the Council's approved criteria then:

    - No new investments will be made.
    - Full consideration will be made to the recall or sale of existing investments with the affected counterparty.

71. Where a credit rating agency announces that a credit rating is on review for possible downgrade (also known as "negative watch"), this could result in the rating falling below the council's approved rating criteria. In these circumstances, investments may be withdrawn on the next working day, until the outcome of the rating review is announced. This policy will not apply to negative outlooks, which indicate a long-term direction of travel rather than an imminent change of rating.

72. **Other information on the security of investments:** The Council understands that credit ratings are good, but not perfect, predictors of investment default. Full regard will therefore be given to other available information on the credit quality of the organisations in which it invests, including credit default swap prices, financial statements, information on potential government support, reports in the quality financial press and analysis and advice from the

Council's treasury management adviser. No investments will be made with an organisation if there are substantive doubts about its credit quality, even though it may otherwise meet the above criteria.

73. When deteriorating financial market conditions affect the creditworthiness of all organisations, as happened in 2022; 2008 and 2020, this is not reflected in credit ratings, but can be seen in other market measures. In these circumstances, the Council will restrict its investments to those organisations of higher credit quality and reduce the maximum duration of its investments to maintain the required level of security. The extent of these restrictions will be in line with prevailing financial market conditions. This will cause a reduction in the level of investment income earned but will protect the principal sum invested.

74. **Reputational Risk:** The Council is aware that investment with certain counterparties, while considered secure from a purely financial perspective, may leave it open to criticism, valid or otherwise, that may affect its public reputation, and this risk will therefore be considered when making investment decisions.

75. **Investment limits:** The Council's revenue reserves available to cover investment losses are forecast to be £451.6m on 31st March 2026. In order that no more than 10% of available reserves will be put at risk in the case of a single default, the maximum that will be lent to any one organisation (other than the UK Government and Council subsidiaries) will be £20 million. A group of banks under the same ownership will be treated as a single organisation for limit purposes.

76. **Liquidity management:** The Council uses internal purpose-built cash flow modelling tools to determine the maximum period for which funds may prudently be committed. The forecast is compiled on a prudent basis to minimise the risk of the Council being forced to borrow on unfavourable terms to meet its financial commitments. Limits on long-term investments are set by reference to the Council's medium-term financial plan and cash flow forecast. The Council aims to spread its liquid cash over at least two providers (e.g., bank accounts and money market funds) to ensure that access to cash is maintained in the event of operational difficulties at any one provider.

TREASURY MANAGEMENT PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS

77. The Council measures and manages its exposures to treasury management risks using the following indicators.

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

Table 6: Credit risk indicator

Credit risk indicator	Target
Portfolio average credit rating	A

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

Table 7: Liquidity risk indicator

Liquidity risk indicator	Target
Total cash available within 3 months	£20m

80. **Interest rate exposures:** This indicator is set to control the Council's exposure to interest rate risk. The upper limits on the one-year revenue impact of a 1% rise or fall in interest rates will be:

Table 8: Interest rate risk indicator

Interest rate risk indicator	Limit
Upper limit on one-year revenue impact of a 1% rise in interest rates	£5m
Upper limit on one-year revenue impact of a 1% fall in interest rates	£5m

The impact of a change in interest rates is calculated on the assumption that maturing loans and investments will be replaced at current rates.

81. **Maturity structure of borrowing:** This indicator is set to control the Council's exposure to refinancing risk. The upper and lower limits on the maturity structure of borrowing will be:

Table 9: Refinancing rate risk indicator

Refinancing rate risk indicator	Upper limit	Lower limit
Under 12 months	40%	0%
12 months and within 24 months	40%	0%
24 months and within 5 years	40%	0%
5 years and within 10 years	60%	0%
10 years and within 20 years	75%	0%
20 years and within 30 years	75%	0%
30 years and within 40 years	75%	0%
Over 40 years	75%	0%

**Time periods start on the first day of each financial year. LOBOs are classified as maturing on the next call date i.e., the earliest date that the lender can require repayment to ensure prudent and careful planning as part of managing the council's security and liquidity risk.*

82. **Principal sums invested for periods longer than a year:** The purpose of this indicator is to control the Council's exposure to the risk of incurring losses by seeking early repayment of its investments. The limits on the long-term principal sum invested to final maturities beyond the period end will be:

Table 10: Price risk indicator

Price risk indicator	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31
Limit on principal invested beyond year end	£50m	£50m	£50m	£50m	£50m	£50m

Related Matters

83. The CIPFA Code requires the Council to include the following in its treasury management strategy.

84. **Financial Derivatives:** A Derivative is a contract between two or more parties to hedge against the risk associated with the performance of an underlying asset.

85. Local authorities have previously made use of financial derivatives embedded into its loans and investments both to reduce interest rate risk and to reduce costs or increase income at the expense of greater risk. Brent Council has not previously used such instruments.

86. In line with the CIPFA Code, the Council will seek external advice and consult with Members before entering financial derivatives to ensure that it fully understands the implications however there are no current plans to enter this type of arrangement. This will include analysis of the impact on interest rate, refinancing, counterparty, market, regulatory and legal risks, together with an assessment on the effectiveness of the derivative.

87. **Housing Revenue Account:** On 1st April 2012, the Council notionally split each of its existing long-term loans into General Fund and HRA pools. New long-term loans borrowed will be assigned in their entirety to one pool or the other. Interest payable and other costs/income arising from long-term loans (e.g., premiums and discounts on early redemption) will be charged/ credited to the respective revenue account. Differences between the value of the HRA loans pool and the HRA's underlying need to borrow (adjusted for HRA balance sheet resources available for investment) will result in a notional cash balance which may be positive or negative. This balance will be measured and interest transferred between the General Fund and HRA at the Council's average interest rate on investments, adjusted for credit risk.

88. The Council is eligible for the PWLB HRA rate, which is 0.4% below the Standard Rate. This discounted rate can be used to support local authorities borrowing for the Housing Revenue Account's capital programme and for refinancing existing HRA loans. The Council may choose to raise PWLB loans for the HRA in 2026/27 under the HRA concessionary rate subject to it being beneficial for the HRA and Government maintaining the concessionary rate.

89. **Markets in Financial Instruments Directive:** The MiFID II regulations took effect from January 2018 which saw the council reclassified as a retail client with the opportunity to opt up to professional client status. Retail clients have access increased protection however this would be balanced against potentially higher fees and access to a more limited range of products. The Council has opted up to professional client status with its providers of financial services, including advisors, banks, brokers and fund managers. Given the size and range of the Council's treasury management activities, the Corporate Director for Finance and Resources believes this to be the appropriate status for the Council's treasury management activities.

90. **Financial Implications:** A draft capital financing budget of £39.1m for 2026/27 has been determined to enable the Council to service its debt in a timely manner; to ensure it complies with the Statutory MRP Guidance and to allow the Council to continue with the delivery of its proposed capital programme in a prudent and affordable manner.

91. **Other Options Considered:** The CIPFA Code does not prescribe any particular treasury management strategy for local authorities to adopt. The Council believes that the above strategy represents an appropriate balance between risk management and cost effectiveness. Some alternative strategies, with their financial and risk management implications, are listed below.

Table 11: Alternative Strategies

Alternative	Impact on income and expenditure	Impact on risk management
Invest in a narrower range of counterparties and/or for shorter times	Interest income will be lower	Lower chance of losses from credit related defaults, but any such losses may be greater
Invest in a wider range of counterparties and/or for longer times	Interest income will be higher	Increased risk of losses from credit related defaults, but any such losses may be smaller
Borrow additional sums at long-term fixed interest rates	Debt interest costs will rise; this is unlikely to be offset by higher investment income	Higher investment balance leading to a higher impact in the event of a default; however long-term interest costs may be more certain
Borrow short-term or variable loans instead of long-term fixed rates	Debt interest costs will initially be lower	Increases in debt interest costs will be broadly offset by rising investment income in the medium term, but long-term costs may be less certain
Reduce level of borrowing	Saving on debt interest is likely to exceed lost investment income	Reduced investment balance leading to a lower impact in the event of a default; however long-term interest costs may be less certain

Appendix 2: Economic Commentary Economic & Interest Rate Forecast December 2025

Underlying assumptions:

- The Bank of England duly delivered on expectations for a December rate cut, but, despite softer economic data over the past two weeks, the minutes highlighted increased caution surrounding both the inflation outlook and the speed of future easing. With a close vote of 5-4 in favour of a rate reduction, this suggests that the bar for further monetary easing may be higher than previously thought despite the possibility of the CPI rate falling to target in 2026.

- Budget policies and base effects will mechanically reduce the CPI rate in 2026, on top of the downward pressure arising from soft economic growth and the looser labour market. However, many policymakers appear concerned that household and business inflation and pricing expectations are proving sticky following recent bouts of high price and wage growth, which may allow underlying inflationary pressure to remain elevated. While, the Bank's measure of household expectations ticked lower in December, it remains above levels consistent with the 2% target at 3.5%.

- While policymakers hold valid concerns, these appear somewhat out of line with current conditions; CPI inflation fell to 3.2% in November, private sector wage growth continued to ease amid the highest unemployment rate since the pandemic, and the economy contracted in October after barely growing in Q3. Business surveys pointed to marginally stronger activity and pricing intentions in December but also suggested that the pre-Budget malaise was not temporary. These data are the latest in a trend suggesting challenging economic conditions are feeding into price and wage setting.

- Risks to the growth and inflation outlook lie to the downside, which may ultimately deliver lower Bank Rate than our central case. However, the minutes suggest that the bar to further rate cuts beyond 3.25% is higher and the near-term upside risks to our Bank Rate forecast have increased. Having said that, we believe inflation expectations will naturally decline alongside headline inflation rates.

- Investors appear to have given the UK government some breathing space following the Budget, with long-term yields continuing to trade at slightly lower levels than in late summer/early autumn. Even so, sustained heavy borrowing across advanced economies, the DMO's move towards issuing more short-dated gilts and lingering doubts about the government's fiscal plans will keep short to medium yields above the levels implied by interest rate expectations alone.

Forecast:

- In line with our long-held forecast, Bank Rate was cut to 3.75% in December.

- Continuing disinflation, rising unemployment, softening wage growth and low confidence suggests that monetary policy will continue to be loosened.

- Arlingclose expects Bank Rate to be cut to 3.25% by middle of 2026. However, near-term upside risks to the forecast have increased.

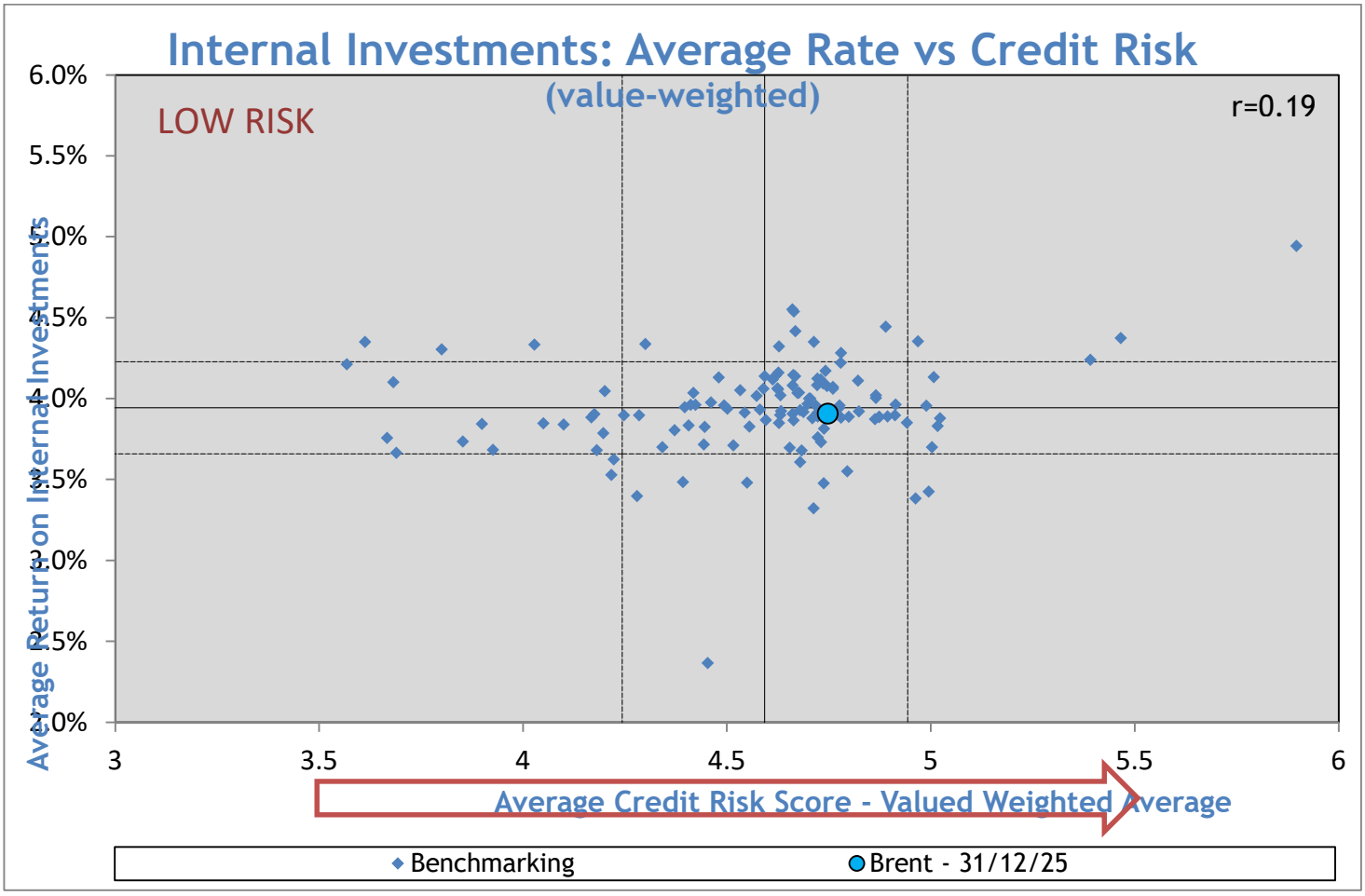
  • Medium and long-term gilt yields continue to incorporate premia for UK government credibility, global uncertainty and significant issuance. These issues may not be resolved quickly and we expect yields to remain higher

	Current	Dec-25	Mar-26	Jun-26	Sep-26	Dec-26	Mar-27	Jun-27	Sep-27	Dec-27	Mar-28	Jun-28	Sep-28
Official Bank Rate													
Upside risk	0.00	0.25	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50
Central Case	4.00	3.75	3.50	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25
Downside risk	0.00	0.00	-0.25	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50
3-month money market rate													
Upside risk	0.00	0.25	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50
Central Case	3.90	3.65	3.50	3.40	3.35	3.35	3.35	3.35	3.35	3.35	3.35	3.35	3.35
Downside risk	0.00	0.00	-0.25	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50
5yr gilt yield													
Upside risk	0.00	0.40	0.45	0.50	0.55	0.60	0.65	0.70	0.70	0.70	0.70	0.70	0.70
Central Case	3.92	3.90	3.85	3.80	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.80	3.80
Downside risk	0.00	-0.50	-0.60	-0.70	-0.80	-0.85	-0.85	-0.85	-0.85	-0.85	-0.85	-0.85	-0.85
10yr gilt yield													
Upside risk	0.00	0.40	0.45	0.50	0.55	0.60	0.65	0.70	0.70	0.70	0.70	0.70	0.70
Central Case	4.48	4.40	4.35	4.30	4.25	4.25	4.25	4.25	4.25	4.25	4.25	4.30	4.30
Downside risk	0.00	-0.50	-0.60	-0.70	-0.80	-0.85	-0.85	-0.85	-0.85	-0.85	-0.85	-0.85	-0.85
20yr gilt yield													
Upside risk	0.00	0.40	0.45	0.50	0.55	0.60	0.65	0.70	0.70	0.70	0.70	0.70	0.70
Central Case	5.13	4.90	4.85	4.80	4.75	4.75	4.75	4.75	4.75	4.75	4.75	4.80	4.80
Downside risk	0.00	-0.50	-0.60	-0.70	-0.80	-0.85	-0.85	-0.85	-0.85	-0.85	-0.85	-0.85	-0.85
50yr gilt yield													
Upside risk	0.00	0.40	0.45	0.50	0.55	0.60	0.65	0.70	0.70	0.70	0.70	0.70	0.70
Central Case	4.73	4.50	4.50	4.45	4.45	4.45	4.45	4.45	4.45	4.45	4.45	4.50	4.50
Downside risk	0.00	-0.50	-0.60	-0.70	-0.80	-0.85	-0.85	-0.85	-0.85	-0.85	-0.85	-0.85	-0.85

PWLB Standard Rate = Gilt yield + 1.00%
PWLB Certainty Rate = Gilt yield + 0.80%
PWLB HRA Rate = Gilt yield + 0.40%
National Wealth Fund (NWF) Rate = Gilt yield + 0.40%

Appendix 3 - Average Rate vs Credit Risk

The Council measures the financial performance of its treasury management activities against similar Council's through benchmarking provided by its Treasury Management Advisor, Arlingclose limited. The latest data as at 31 December 2025 is presented below:



A credit rating of 4 is equivalent to credit score of AA-. The Council has a target rating of A which is a rating of 6. The current portfolio has a credit rating of A+ (Credit score 5) which exceeds our target rating.

Appendix 4: Existing Investment & Debt Portfolio

Existing Investment & Debt Portfolio	31/12/2025 Actual Portfolio £m	31/12/2025 Average Rate %
Long-term borrowing:		
Public Works Loan Board	798.7	4.2
LOBO's	49.5	3.2
Private Placement	90.0	
Short-term borrowing:		
Local Authorities	65.0	4.7
Total External Borrowing	**1003.2**	**4.0**
Other long-term liabilities:		
Private Finance Initiative	52.0	N/A
Finance Leases	18.6	
Total other long-term liabilities		
Total gross external debt (including PFI and leases)	**1073.8**	**4.0**
Treasury investments:		
Money Market Funds	42.0	4.2
Total treasury investments	**42.0**	
Net debt	**1115.8**	**4.1**

Appendix J

Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statement – 2026/27

1. Where the Council finances capital expenditure by debt, it must put aside resources to repay that debt in later years. The amount charged to the revenue budget for the repayment of debt is known as Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP), although there has been no statutory minimum since 2008. The Local Government Act 2003 requires the Council to have regard to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's Guidance on Minimum Revenue Provision (the MHCLG Guidance) most recently issued in April 2024.

2. The broad aim of the MHCLG Guidance is to ensure that capital expenditure is financed over a period that is reasonable commensurate with that over which the capital expenditure provides benefits.

3. The MHCLG Guidance requires Full Council (or a delegated body) to approve an MRP policy statement in advance of each financial year and recommends several options for calculating a prudent amount of MRP but does not preclude the use of other appropriate methods.

4. MRP is calculated by reference to the capital financing requirement (CFR) which is the total amount of past capital expenditure that has yet to be permanently financed, noting that debt must be repaid and therefore can only be a temporary form of funding. The CFR is calculated from the Council's balance sheet in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's Prudential Code for Capital Expenditure in Local Authorities, 2021 Edition.

5. In accordance with the current guidance for the calculation of MRP the following policy for non-HRA assets will be applied with effect from 1 April 2026:

    a. For supported borrowing, the Council will use the asset life method (Option 3) and an 'annuity' approach for calculating repayments. Based on the useful economic lives of the council's assets, a single annuity has been calculated, which results in the outstanding principal being repaid over the course of fifty years. The interest rate applied under this approach is 5.00% (fixed for the duration of the debt).

    b. For prudential borrowing incurred after 1 April 2008, the Council will adopt Option 3, 'the asset life method', and an 'annuity' approach for calculating repayments. This option allows provision for repayment of principal to be made over the estimated life of the asset, stated in Table 1, and using an interest rate equal to the average relevant PWLB Annuity Rate for the year of expenditure. The use of the 'annuity' method is akin to a mortgage where the combined sum of principal and interest are equalised over the life of the asset.

6. Where the PWLB rate is unknown the MRP for future years prudential borrowing will be based on the assumed rate of borrowing for the respective asset.

7. MRP on purchases of freehold land will be charged over 50 years. MRP on expenditure not related to fixed assets but which has been capitalised by regulation or direction will be charged over 20 years.

8. MRP is charged in the financial year following the one in which the expenditure was incurred. Capital expenditure incurred during 2026/27 will not be subject to a MRP charge until 2027/28 (or later depending on when the asset becomes operational).

9. For newly constructed assets that have been financed through borrowing, MRP commences in the financial year following the year the asset first becomes operational. “Operational” is defined as when an asset transfers from “Assets under Construction” categorisation to an “Assets in Use” category under normal accounting rules.

10. In accordance with Regulations the Council reserves the right to charge a £nil MRP where:

    a) the Capital Finance Requirement (CFR) is nil or negative on the last day of the preceding financial year; or

    b) an overpayment has occurred in the previous financial year equivalent to the current year’s charge. Where an offset of the previous year’s overpayment takes place, this will be disclosed and reported to Full Council at the earliest opportunity.

11. In accordance with the 2024 revised Guidance, for capital expenditure on loans to third parties which were made primarily for financial return rather than direct service purposes, MRP will be charged in accordance with the policy for the assets funded by the loan, including where appropriate, delaying MRP until the year after the assets become operational. This MRP charge will be reduced by the value any repayments of loan principal received during in the year, with the capital receipts so arising applied to finance the expenditure instead.

12. For capital expenditure on loans to third parties which were made primarily for service purposes, the Council will make nil MRP except as detailed below for expected credit losses. Instead, the Council will apply the capital receipts arising from the repayments of the loan principal to finance the expenditure in the year they are received.

13. For capital loans made on or after 7th May 2024 where an expected credit loss is recognised during the year, the MRP charge in respect of the loan will be no lower than the loss recognised. Where expected credit losses are reversed, for example on the eventual repayment of the loan, this will be treated as an overpayment.

14. For capital loans made before 7th May 2024 and for loans where expected credit losses are not applicable, where a shortfall in capital receipts is anticipated, MRP will be charged to cover that shortfall over the remaining life of the assets funded by the loan.

15. For assets acquired by leases or the Private Finance Initiative, MRP will be determined as being equal to the element of the rent or charge that goes to write down the balance sheet liability.

16. Where former operating leases have been brought onto the balance sheet due to the adoption of the IFRS 16 Leases accounting standard, and the asset values have been adjusted for accruals, prepayments, premiums and/or incentives, then the annual MRP charges will be adjusted so that the overall charge for MRP over the life of the lease reflects the value of the right-of-use asset recognised on transition rather than the liability.

17. MRP will include a charge equal to any capital lifecycle additions within the lease.

18. No MRP will be charged in respect of assets held within the Housing Revenue Account but depreciation on those assets will be charged instead in line with regulations.

19. The Council reserves the right to make a voluntary MRP to accelerate the repayment of debt.

20. The asset lives which will be applied to different classes of assets are shown in table 1, however, the Council reserves the right to determine useful life periods and prudent MRP in exceptional circumstances where the recommendations of the guidance would not be appropriate.

Appendix J

Table 1: Asset lives.

Asset Type	**Years**
Vehicles and equipment	5 to 10 years
Highway Infrastructure Assets	25 years
Acquisition of or enhancement to buildings	30 to 40 years
New construction	50 years
Purchase of land	50 years

21. Asset lives will only exceed the maximum useful life of 50 years as stated under the Regulations for debt write down in two scenarios:

    (a) where the Council has an opinion from an appropriately qualified professional advisor that an asset will deliver service functionality for more than 50 years then the life suggested by its professional advisor will be used; and

    (b) for a lease or PFI asset, where the length of the lease/PFI contract exceeds 50 years. In this case the length of the lease/PFI contract will be used.

22. Proceeds from the sale of capital assets are classed as capital receipts and are typically used to finance new capital expenditure. Where the Council decides instead to use capital receipts to repay debt and hence reduce the CFR, the calculation of MRP will be adjusted as follows:

    - Capital receipts arising on the repayment of principal on capital loans to third parties will be used to lower the MRP charge in respect of the same loans in the year of receipt, if any.

    - Capital receipts arising on the repayment of principal on finance lease receivables will be used to lower the MRP charge in respect of the acquisition of the asset subject to the lease in the year of receipt, if any.

    - Capital receipts arising from other assets which form an identified part of the Council's MRP calculations will be used to reduce the MRP charge in respect of the same assets over their remaining useful lives, starting in the year after the receipt is applied.

- Any other capital receipts applied to repay debt will be used to reduce MRP in ten equal instalments starting in the year after receipt is applied.

23. Based on the Council's latest estimate of its capital financing requirement (CFR) on 31st March 2026, the MRP charge for 2026/27 on prudential borrowing; PFI schemes; and leases has been set at £30.3m.

This page is intentionally left blank

BRENT RESERVES STRATEGY

What are reserves?

CIPFA states in the *Financial Management Code* that "the aim of the authority's financial reserves is to provide funding for investment in future activities and to act as a safety net in case of short-term financial challenges."

What is a reserves strategy?

The *Reserves Strategy* defines the level and purposes for which the Council holds reserves. It consists of three key elements:

1. ***Strategy***: what the Council is seeking to achieve through holding reserves;

2. ***Financial Planning***: linking the level of reserves with plans for their use over the period of *Medium Term Financial Strategy* (MTFS); and

3. ***Operational Framework***: how the Council determines the level of reserves, manages those reserves and plans for their use in line with best practice and statutory requirements.

Together these elements set out the Council's ambition for reserves, the nature of that ambition and how we will provide assurance.

STRATEGY

Why do we need a reserves strategy?

The Council plans its finances over the short term, medium and long term so that it has adequate resources to deliver services for the residents of the borough. As a large, complex organisation, there will always be variations between our actual spending/income and our plans due to variations in demand, demographic change, changes in costs and the funding decisions of third parties as well as the need to deliver projects and investments spanning more than one financial year.

To ensure we can manage these financial risks, whilst being able to maintain services, requires that the Authority holds funds in reserve to meet these costs as and when they arise and to deal with any unexpected emergency that may occur. A reserves strategy enables us to do this in a planned way.

Do we have to have a reserves strategy?

The requirement for financial reserves is acknowledged in statute. Sections 32 and 43 of the *Local Government Act* 1992 require precepting authorities and billing authorities in England and Wales to have regard to the level of reserves needed for meeting estimated future expenditure when calculating the budget requirement.

There are other safeguards in place that help to prevent the Council from over-committing itself financially. These include:

a) The balanced budget requirement (*Local Government Act* 1992 s32 and s43);

b) Chief Finance Officer's duty to report on the robustness of estimates and adequacy of reserves (*Local Government Act* 2003 s25) when the Council is considering the budget requirement;

c) Legislative requirement to make arrangements for the proper administration of the Council's financial affairs and that the Chief Finance Officer has responsibility for the administration of those affairs (*Local Government Act* 1972 s151);

d) The requirements of the *Prudential Code*;

e) Auditors' consideration of whether the audited body has established adequate arrangements to ensure that its financial position is sustainable. Financial sustainability is covered as part of the *Value for Money Audit*; and

f) CIPFA's *Financial Management Code* requirement that the effective management of reserves is reviewed as part of a formal Financial Resilience Assessment (FRA).

These requirements are reinforced by section 114 of the *Local Government Finance Act* 1988, which requires the Chief Finance Officer to report if there is likely to be unlawful expenditure or an unbalanced budget. This would include situations where reserves have become seriously depleted and it is forecast that the Council will not have the resources to meet its expenditure in a particular financial year.

Whilst it is primarily the responsibility of the Chief Finance Officer to maintain a sound financial position, the external auditors will, as part of their wider responsibilities, consider whether the audited body has established adequate arrangements to ensure that its financial position is soundly based. However, it is not the responsibility of the external auditors to prescribe the optimum or minimum level of reserves for the Council.

FINANCIAL PLANNING

How does it fit with our other strategies?

The *Reserves Strategy* is part of a suite of supporting strategies that supplement the *Borough Plan* and the *Medium Term Financial Strategy*. These detailed strategies provide an additional level of granularity that helps to create a bridge between the over-arching strategies and operational delivery plans

CIPFA's *Prudential Code* requires the Chief Finance Officer to have regard to affordability when making recommendations about the future capital programme. Such consideration includes the level of long-term revenue commitments. Indeed, in considering the affordability of its capital plans, the Council is required to consider all of the resources available to it and estimated for the future, together with the totality of its capital plans and revenue forecasts for the forthcoming year and the following two years.

There is a requirement for three-year revenue forecasts across the public sector and this is achieved through the *Medium Term Financial Strategy* and the annual budget.

How are the level of reserves set?

CIPFA's Local Authority Accounting Panel does not accept that there is a case for introducing a generally acceptable minimum level of reserves. Instead, it is for the Council, on the advice of its Chief Finance Officer, to make its own judgement on such matters, taking into account all relevant local circumstances. What are relevant circumstances will vary between areas. A well-managed organisation with a prudent approach to budgeting should be able to operate with a minimal level of general reserves which are appropriate to the risks (both internal and external) to which it is exposed. In assessing the appropriate level of reserves, a well-managed organisation will ensure that the reserves are not only adequate, but also are necessary.

It is worth noting that not all reserves are usable. Some reserves arise out of the interaction of legislation and proper accounting practice. These are termed 'unusable reserves' as they cannot be used for any other purpose. They are not considered further as there is no need to set their level and no discretion over their creation, purpose or usage.

Types of Reserve

When reviewing the medium term financial plans and preparing the annual budgets, the establishment and maintenance of reserves should be considered. These can be held for five main purposes:

a) **Working Balance** - to help cushion the impact of uneven cash flows and avoid unnecessary temporary borrowing – this forms part of general reserves.
b) **Contingency Reserve** - to cushion the impact of unexpected events or emergencies – this forms part of general reserves.
c) **Sinking Fund and Smoothing Reserves** – these allow a response to uncertainty in the economic climate and provide assurance on the safety of the Council's financial assets. These are closely linked with the *Treasury Management Strategy* and *Capital Strategy* - these form part of general reserves.
d) **Statutory and Ring-fenced Reserves** – these are held for specific purposes, often set by statute. Examples include grant funding where the expenditure has yet to be incurred (Capital Grants Unapplied), the HRA Balance and the Schools Balances. Although these are legally part of the general reserves, the restrictions and limitations on their use mean that they should be accounted for separately and not viewed as generally usable.
e) **Earmarked Reserves** – these represent a means of building up funds to meet known or predicted requirements, such as planned investment, capital projects and change programmes; earmarked reserves are accounted for separately and viewed as largely not generally usable. They remain legally part of the general reserves.

In addition the Council holds the following two usable reserves:

a) **Major Repairs Reserve** – this reserve records the unspent amount of HRA balances for capital financing purposes in accordance with statutory requirements for the reserve. This is an HRA specific reserve.
b) **Capital Receipts Reserve** – this reserve holds the proceeds from the sale of assets, and can only be used for those purposes specified in the capital finance and accounting regulations.

OPERATIONAL FRAMEWORK

When establishing reserves, there needs to be compliance with the *Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting* and in particular, the need to distinguish between reserves and provisions.

The split of reserves into five categories is helpful as each category has its own nature, purpose and planned usage that can be used to determine the required level of reserves.

Working Balance

The cash flow forecast is key to understanding the level of reserve required to cushion the impact of uneven cash flows. The overall size of the net expenditure budget should be used as the reference point for determining the percentage required to be retained as the working balance.

Contingency Reserve

Determining a suitable level of reserve to cover the unexpected is an inexact science. At best this will be an estimate created using risk management techniques to determine the likelihood and impact of potentially disastrous events. Past experience demonstrates the ability of the Council to deliver savings, while dealing with resource reductions and demographic and other demand changes. How these issues have been tackled without overspending the budget will be an important consideration in deciding how much needs to be set aside in reserves as contingency. A reasonableness check also needs to be considered - retaining adequate funds to cover a calamitous event such as a second pandemic may be overly cautious and therefore not prudent as it ties up scarce resources unnecessarily. The contingency requirement should be referenced to a percentage of net expenditure.

The first two types of reserve, although different in nature, involve dealing with the unplanned and unexpected. The Council also hold reserves for planned purposes. It defines these usable reserves under the following headings:

- General Fund Balance
- Schools Balances
- HRA Balance
- Capital
- Ring-fenced and Statutory
- Sinking fund and Smoothing
- Service reserves
- Budget stabilisation

When considering reserves held for specific purposes that could be freely utilised to fund unexpected expenditure, only the final three headings (service reserves, transformation and the general fund balance) can be used without limitation. The other reserves are either restricted to a specific use or already committed. Theoretically, the General Fund balance could be viewed as the working balance, whilst the other two types of reserve constitute amounts available for contingency purposes.

As stated already, the reference point for determining the target level for the working balance and contingency reserves should be a percentage of net expenditure. The end result will be a single target percentage of net expenditure that should be held. Although CIPFA oppose an arbitrary figure, 5% is widely used in local authorities as such a target. This is viewed as a starting point and tested for adequacy by considering past data and future forecasts. When considering past experience, use has been made of both benchmarking data for other London boroughs, provided by London Councils and CIPFA's Financial Resilience Index, and historic data for the Council. The comparative data shows that the level of reserves at Brent is good and provides strong foundations for long-term financial sustainability.

Uncertainty and Smoothing Reserves

At Brent, reserves for insurance, redundancy and welfare reform are examples of this type of reserve. Each is set on the basis of an individual calculation that takes in to account relevant factors and local circumstances. The *Reserves Strategy* recommends that this policy continues with a requirement to demonstrate need and adequacy are a part of the working paper for the calculation of any reserve under this heading.

Statutory and Ring-fenced Reserves

As these arise from circumstances largely prescribed by statute, there is no need to provide further policy on their level or use. The Council divides these reserves between s106/CIL, Ring-fenced and capital reserves. They are presented in the accounts as part of the earmarked reserves.

Earmarked Reserves

Under this heading fall service specific reserves including carry forwards and more general amounts set aside for transformation, service pressures and future funding

risks. The need for and level of these reserves should be justified by a calculation demonstrating the requirement for the reserve, its intended purpose, how its level has been determined and plans for its profiled release. This should be aligned with corporate plans and strategies such as the *Borough Plan*, the *MTFS* and the *Capital Strategy* as appropriate. All earmarked reserves should be reviewed annually as part of the closure of the accounts.

MONITORING

The level of all reserves is kept under continuous review by the Director of Finance. This is achieved through revisions to the *Medium Term Financial Strategy* and the budget monitoring reports. Periodic updates will be provided to the Cabinet and the Audit and Standards Advisory Committee. The planned level of reserves will reported to the Council annually via the *Budget Report*.

USE OF RESERVES

The maintenance and use of reserves play a key role in long-term financial sustainability. Just as the creation and maintenance of reserves arises in a structured way through the Council's financial planning process, so the release of reserves needs to be subject to a similarly planned and controlled process. Such a process is provided by the *Scheme of Transfers and Virements,* which sets out specific requirements for the use of reserves. The main points are:

1. Reserves cannot be used to fund overspends without a plan

   Section 3 of the Scheme of Transfers and Virements requires that "Reserves must not be used to fund ongoing overspends unless there is an agreed, realistic plan to eliminate the overspend before the reserve is exhausted (this applies to all reserves, both earmarked and non-earmarked). The Corporate Director, Finance and Resources must review planned uses of reserves to ensure that these are not being used to hide or obscure systemic overspends. The Corporate Director, Finance and Resources must report to Full Council report any areas with inadequate plans to address overspends."

2. Budget report must identify the reserves against which overspends can be charged

   Section 5 of the Scheme of Transfers and Virements states that "In certain circumstances where such overspends on Funds arise, there is a choice as to which reserve the charge should be made. The annual Budget Report will identify which reserves overspends will and will not be charged against, for approval by Full Council. In the event of inadequate reserves to fund overspends, the Corporate Director, Finance and Resources may have to use additional reserves to fund overspends, any such action is to be reported to Full Council. "

3. Budget report must specify how reserves are to be used

   Section 6 of the Scheme of Transfers and Virements directs that "Reserves have been established to aid the smooth running of the Council's finances, and it will be normal to charge costs to those reserves subject to financial regulations and local procedures and policies. Further, the council has capital monies, such as capital grants and capital receipts held in the council's useable reserves. The Schedule of Earmarked Reserves in the Budget Report must specify how the council's useable reserves are to be used, including if they can be used to fund overspends, and this needs to be approved by Full Council as part of the Budget Report. Officers may make transfers from these reserves up to the amounts in the Budget Report for the specified purposes."

This page is intentionally left blank

BRENT RESERVES	PURPOSE AND PLANNED USAGE	Actual 31/03/2025 £m	Movement 2025/26 £m	Forecast 31/03/2026 £m	Movement 2026/27 £m	Forecast 31/03/2027 £m
BALANCES						
General Fund Balance	This both provides the Council's working balance and represents an amount held against unexpected overspends or inability to identify sufficient savings to balance the budget in year. On a net budget of £499.3m, even a 3% variance would rapidly erode this and would leave the Council dangerously exposed. For this reason the Council aims to retain at least 5% of its net expenditure as a contingency reserve.	(20.0)	0.0	(20.0)	(2.5)	(22.5)
Schools Balances	Balance carried forward of Dedicated Schools Grant delegated to individual schools. Forecast to decline in response to school funding pressures and not directly in the control of the Council.	(11.9)	2.0	(9.9)	0.0	(9.9)
Housing Revenue Account Balance	This is the accumulated surplus of income over expenditure for the HRA. This can only be used for the HRA. The balance is used as a contingency against overspending and unexpected events that affect the HRA.	(4.5)	2.0	(2.5)	0.0	(2.5)
TOTAL BALANCES		**(36.5)**	**4.0**	**(32.5)**	**(2.5)**	**(35.0)**
CAPITAL RESERVES						
Capital Receipts Reserve	The proceeds from the disposal of land or other assets. Capital receipts can only be used to finance new capital expenditure, to provide loans or grants or to repay debt. They cannot be used to fund revenue expenditure.	(37.6)	(17.6)	(55.2)	(5.5)	(60.7)
Major Repairs Reserve	The unspent amount of the Major Repairs Allowance provided for capital renewal of HRA properties.	(3.6)	0.0	(3.6)	3.6	(0.0)
Capital Grants Unapplied	Capital grants received from central government agencies unapplied as not yet used to fund capital projects. Major elements include Basic Needs Grant for additional school places, School Condition Grants, DFG – Disabled Facilities Grant and others.	(95.7)	33.9	(61.8)	4.4	(57.4)
TOTAL CAPITAL RESERVES		**(136.8)**	**16.3**	**(120.5)**	**2.5**	**(118.0)**
EARMARKED RESERVES						
Capital and other statutorily ring-fenced reserves						
S106/Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)	This reserve is made up of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and S106 planning contributions made under legally binding agreements. The accumulated S106/CIL receipts that have not yet been spent are committed to finance planned capital expenditure, as set out in the *Capital Strategy* . Community Infrastructure Levy is made up of an amount paid over to the Mayor of London on a quarterly basis (MCIL), and an amount retained by the Borough (BCIL). BCIL is divided into Strategic CIL (SCIL) for use borough-wide, and a local amount termed Neighbourhood CIL (NCIL). A Cabinet decision is required to allocate Strategic CIL to finance new capital expenditure before it can be added to the Brent capital programme. There is also an allowance for administration costs which can be deducted from CIL. The S106 reserve balance at 31 March 2025 was £13.6m. The majority of this is committed to financing capital expenditure, with some revenue projects also benefitting. The reserve must be used to offset the impact of new development (there are some very specific exceptions which apply to some older S106 agreements, but these will invariably be very restrictive in any event). There are limits to the discretion as to what S106 contributions can subsequently be used to finance which are written into the individual S106 legal agreements. The balance on each category at 31 March 2025 was: £m SCIL (157.0) NCIL (18.5) BCIL **(175.5)** MCIL 0.0 Admin (1.1)	(190.2)	17.7	(172.5)	17.5	(155.0)

BRENT RESERVES	PURPOSE AND PLANNED USAGE	Actual 31/03/2025 £m	Movement 2025/26 £m	Forecast 31/03/2026 £m	Movement 2026/27 £m	Forecast 31/03/2027 £m
	Total CIL **(176.6)**					
	S106 (13.6)					
	Total S106 & CIL **(190.2)**					
Ring-fenced						
HMO Licensing	Income is received on a five yearly cycle and released annually to meet expenditure. The service does not have a mainstream budget for this activity, and the reserve is ring-fenced by law and operationally required to match the different cycles of income and expenditure. When setting fees regard must be had to the European Union Services Directive. Fees must be reasonable and proportionate and cannot be set to act as an economic deterrent to deter certain business types from operating within an area. However, fees can be set at a level enabling the authorities to recover from licensed operators the full costs of managing and enforcing the licensing scheme, including the cost of investigating and prosecuting those operating without the necessary licence.	(10.2)	(0.7)	(10.9)	0.0	(10.9)
HRA Earmarked	This reserve has been set aside to cover contingent liabilities for insurance claims and other possible pressures.	(5.9)	0.0	(5.9)	0.0	(5.9)
Public Health	Reflects carry forward of ring fenced funds for Public Health	(10.4)	0.0	(10.4)	0.0	(10.4)
Edward Harvist Trust	Brent distributes grant monies from the Edward Harvist Trust	(0.1)	0.0	(0.1)	0.0	(0.1)
Total Ring-fenced		**(26.6)**	**(0.7)**	**(27.3)**	**0.0**	**(27.3)**
Capital Finance Related						
South Kilburn	This reserve smooths annual payments on the programme, which is any given year may be more or less than the budget. It is allocated to South Kilburn and, assuming that the remaining 7 years of the programme run to budget, will be spent in full.	(5.8)	(0.1)	(5.9)	(0.1)	(6.0)
General Fund Capital funding	This reserve is used to finance existing or future expenditure on projects within the Capital Programme.	(24.0)	(3.7)	(27.7)	(0.1)	(27.8)
Total Capital Finance Related		**(29.8)**	**(3.8)**	**(33.6)**	**(0.2)**	**(33.8)**
Total Capital and other statutorily ring-fenced reserves		**(246.6)**	**13.2**	**(233.4)**	**17.3**	**(216.1)**
Committed reserves						
Sinking fund and other smoothing reserves						
PFI	In the financial models for the council's PFIs, income and expenditure do not match in any given year. This is normal under such arrangements, as the PFI contractor is bearing the up-front cost of the capital investment. This reserve is ring-fenced to provide funds to cover this mismatch.	(6.2)	3.3	(3.0)	0.0	(3.0)
UC staffing	This reserve is fully committed to paying for staff working on Housing Benefit claims. As more cases transfer to Universal Credit, managed by the DWP, less staff will be required to work on Housing Benefit claims.	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Redundancy	The reserve is used to fund redundancy costs. Without it, many planned savings would take a year longer to start delivering their benefits (assuming that the average redundancy cost is about one year's salary).	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Insurance	The insurance reserve sets aside funds to cover self-insured items and any excesses on externally insured cover. This differs from the Insurance provision which covers amounts set aside upon review by the Council's insurance actuary to make sure that we have enough to deal with the pipeline of known cases that are not yet settled.	(5.2)	0.0	(5.2)	0.0	(5.2)

BRENT RESERVES	PURPOSE AND PLANNED USAGE	Actual 31/03/2025 £m	Movement 2025/26 £m	Forecast 31/03/2026 £m	Movement 2026/27 £m	Forecast 31/03/2027 £m
Collection Fund Reserve	This reserve is used to manage volatility in the amounts retained within the council tax and business rates retention regimes, in particular the impact of backdated revaluation appeals, appeals relating to Material Change of Circumstances and collection rates.	(10.8)	7.6	(3.3)	1.9	(1.3)
Total Sinking fund and other smoothing reserves		**(22.2)**	**10.8**	**(11.4)**	**1.9**	**(9.4)**
Total Committed reserves		**(22.2)**	**10.8**	**(11.4)**	**1.9**	**(9.4)**
Other earmarked reserves						
Service reserves						
Service Reform and Strategy	These reserves comprise of restricted balances held to support agreed health and wellbeing programmes, principally NHS funding transferred to the Council under Section 256 arrangements which must be applied in line with the relevant agreements. The reserves also include ring-fenced grant balances supporting substance misuse treatment and recovery, rough sleeping drug and alcohol treatment pathways, stop smoking services, and early years and perinatal mental health initiatives. Forecast movements reflect planned drawdowns to deliver approved programme activity.	(7.8)	1.5	(6.4)	0.0	(6.4)
Children, Young People and Community Development	These reserves are mainly comprised of: - £3.2m for Homes for Ukraine, providing support services to refugees from Ukraine - £1.9m which relates to the ring-fenced DSG held against this reserve. The overall DSG is in deficit, however the DfE requires the historic deficit balance against the DSG to be held against the unusable reserves i.e. £13.6m carried forward from 2024/25 and at the removal of the statutory override, the £1.9m will used in the future to set balanced DSG schools' budgets. - The rest of the reserves are linked to a combination of previous and current specific government grants, including the Youth Justice fund grant, troubled families programme and Best Start for life programme.	(10.9)	0.0	(10.9)	0.0	(10.9)

BRENT RESERVES	PURPOSE AND PLANNED USAGE		Actual 31/03/2025 £m	Movement 2025/26 £m	Forecast 31/03/2026 £m	Movement 2026/27 £m	Forecast 31/03/2027 £m
Residents and Housing Services	This reserve is comprised of: Cemeteries Maintenance: to fund the long term maintenance of cemeteries. Some fees & charges income in the years that burial plots are sold are set aside to fund a proportion of the maintenance in the future – (i) any large maintenance expenditure that cannot be funded by in-year income and (ii) ongoing maintenance costs once cemeteries are full and no longer receiving income. Brent Resident Support Fund Rough Sleeping Initiative Grant Various ringfenced government grants for Resident Services and Housing	(2.9) (0.5) (0.3) (0.3) **(4.0)**	(4.0)	0.1	(3.8)	0.0	(3.8)
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	These reserves are comprised of reserves for Neighbourhoods & Regeneration, covering a range of services. This includes Proceeds of Crime Act (POCA) funds which is ringfenced and used to fund financial investigators and enforcement officers, and other grants received notable around waste imporvement. There are also reserves that were created to cover the embedding of the new contracts in Public Realm and the expected financial challenges with those, and further reserves built by the department to cover short-term expected pressures.		(10.7)	3.0	(7.7)	0.0	(7.7)
Finance and Resources	These reserves are comprised of reserves held for investigations, elections and an improvement project in Governance.		(1.7)	(0.7)	(2.4)	0.0	(2.4)
Total Service reserves			**(35.1)**	**4.0**	**(31.1)**	**0.0**	**(31.1)**

BRENT RESERVES	PURPOSE AND PLANNED USAGE	Actual 31/03/2025 £m	Movement 2025/26 £m	Forecast 31/03/2026 £m	Movement 2026/27 £m	Forecast 31/03/2027 £m
Budget stabilisation						
Future funding risks	This is a general reserve to cover any future service pressures, such as demand pressures and demographic changes, which are in excess of any provision already made in the annual budget.	(19.5)	(3.2)	(22.7)	0.0	(22.7)
Total Budget stabilisation		**(19.5)**	**(3.2)**	**(22.7)**	**0.0**	**(22.7)**
Total other earmarked reserves		**(54.6)**	**0.8**	**(53.8)**	**0.0**	**(53.8)**
TOTAL EARMARKED RESERVES		**(323.4)**	**24.8**	**(298.6)**	**19.2**	**(279.4)**
GRAND TOTAL		**(496.7)**	**45.1**	**(451.6)**	**19.2**	**(432.4)**

This page is intentionally left blank

Brent Council Fees and Charges Policy

1. Introduction

1.1. By using its powers to charge for goods and services and imposing fines, fixed penalties and other such financial sanctions, Brent Council is able to generate additional income to support investment in services and/or reduce the overall level of expenditure to be met by local taxpayers.

1.2. The aim of this Fees and Charges Policy is to ensure that the Council makes use of all the powers available to it in order to recover the full cost of providing services. In using these powers however, the Council will wish to take care to ensure that the consequences of charging on individuals, the wider aims of the Council itself and / or organisations do not adversely impact on those who are vulnerable or in difficulties.

2. Background

2.1. The overriding aim of the charging policy is to maximise income generation and collection to enhance the social and economic wellbeing of the community the council serves, whilst ensuring a fair price for all services reflecting the ability of the community to pay and the relative demand for the service. Maximisation of income, following a decision to charge, is also dependent on a charge being raised and that amount being collected, both in a timely way.

Legal Position

2.2. The majority of the Council's statutory services, Building Control being a key exception, are funded directly from the Council's other main sources of revenue, i.e. government grants and local taxation.

2.3. Income received by Brent from fees and charges is generated by both statutory and discretionary services. Where fees and charges apply to statutory services these are often set nationally, for example, some planning and licensing fees.

2.4. The remaining income generating services where the Council levies fees and charges are of a discretionary nature. Discretionary services are those that an authority has the power to provide but is not obliged to. They include services provided directly to the public in general such as leisure services as well as charges for the costs incurred by the council (such as legal costs) when entering into planning or highways agreements with specific persons.

2.5. The legal powers that the Council has to raise fees and charges are set out in the final section of this policy.

3. Managers' Guidance

Overview

3.1. The Managers' Guidance has been written to provide information to managers in Brent Council responsible for applying fees and charges to goods and services delivered. The aim is to encourage a consistent and cost effective approach to the setting of charges for services provided by:

a. Specifying the process and frequency for reviewing existing charges for all areas of the council's work for which charges could in principle be set
b. Providing guidance on the factors that need to be taken into consideration

when charges are being reviewed
c. Requiring more active use of market intelligence when setting charges
d. Establishing parameters for calculating different levels of charges
e. Recommending the criteria for applying concessions or discounted charges consistently across the council

Cost of Living Crisis

3.2. In response to the cost of living crisis facing Brent's residents and the current high levels of economic uncertainty, supplementary guidance was issued to managers on how to set fees and charges for 2026/27. This recognised that whilst the Council was facing substantial increases in costs, Brent's residents were also facing a similarly challenging economic environment. Whilst a freeze in fees and charges increases would not be affordable, the guidance advised managers to take a holistic approach which reviewed any proposed price increases in the round considering the effect on both the Council and its customers.

3.3. The supplementary guidance recommended a step-by-step approach to considering the extent to which the cost of providing the service was increasing for the council and the cost pressures faced by the Council's customers. These factors and any other pertinent issues would then to be considered together to determine an appropriate increase in prices. This approach permits managers to avoid following the normal full cost recovery approach if they can manage a lower level of increase within their budget. The intention was that for most fees and charges, where the Council has freedom to set the increase, the proposed increase will be below current levels of inflation.

3.4. The cost of living crisis will be considered when setting fees and charges next year, but at this stage it is unclear whether there will need to be any departure from the normal process to set price increases.

Calculation of Fees and Charges

3.5. Fees and charges raised must be based on the full cost of the service. Charges cannot be set at a level to recover more than cost if that is all the Council has the legal power to do, but the definition of cost includes direct costs of service provision together with overhead and central costs. The cost recovery limit applies to the overwhelming majority of services which the Council can set a charge for. If, however, the Council has the legal power to do so careful consideration should be given to charging more than the full cost of the service. For example, charging could be used as a tool to manage excess demand for limited spaces on leisure centre classes. In overview there are 3 ways in which fees and charges may be set:

a. Fees and charges prescribed by legislation, usually in a regulatory context, and varied from time to time which the person liable has an obligation to pay;
b. Fees and charges reviewed and set by members (e.g. Individual Cabinet Members, Cabinet or Full Council) from time to time (usually annually); and
c. Fees and charges reviewed and set by officers from time to time acting under delegated powers.

3.6. As part of the annual budget cycle each department will carry out a recalculation of existing fees and charges together with opportunities to raise additional income from new areas of charging, and present proposals for revised charges.

Approvals

3.7. In broad terms setting fees for regulatory services (i.e. licensing, planning, etc) are non-executive functions. These therefore need to be submitted to Full Council for approval. Full Council can, however, delegate this function to a committee, officer etc.

3.8. Fees and charges for discretionary services are usually executive functions and therefore need to be approved by Cabinet or Cabinet Members. Cabinet and Cabinet Members can, however delegate this function.

Concessionary Charging

3.9. The purpose of offering concessions must be to support council priorities. Generally the reasons for operating concessionary charges will fall into one of two categories: to influence the level of demand for a service or to reflect the circumstances of service users. Concessions must also be reviewed at least on an annual basis, to confirm both the level of subsidy and also their ongoing relevance.

3.10. The Finance Department will maintain a list of concessions in operation and keep under review requests for concessions to be offered. For customer / clients who cannot pay, action must be taken to ensure that there are sufficient safeguards in place to allow access to service, and that appropriate steps are taken to recognise the realistic payment capacity of vulnerable individuals.

3.11. Concessionary charges should not normally apply at times when it would result in a loss of income from customers paying the full charge, unless prior approval has been given by a senior Council officer.

3.12. No concessions will be provided to non-Brent residents.

Education related services

3.13. With regards to education related services, services and packages will be based around the academic year and not on the municipal financial year.

VAT

3.14. Managers must ensure that the correct treatment of VAT is applied to the fees and charges they are responsible for. The correct treatment should be agreed with Finance in advance of application.

Other statutory requirements

3.15. Managers must also ensure that when setting fees and charges or reporting to members they are aware of any special statutory requirements that need to be complied with. For example, before changes to some fees and charges can be implemented, there may be a statutory requirement to consult and/or publish a notice in a local newspaper.

4. Payment Methods

4.1. All collection methods and payment terms must be effective, efficient and appropriate for the service. The preferred methods of payment are those direct to the bank such as direct debits and standing orders.

4.2. Wherever practical to do so payment for services provided should be sought in advance to minimise debt recovery issues.

4.3. The full cost recovery analysis will need to factor in the cost of processing payments and that some payment methods are preferred.

5. Equality impact Assessments

5.1. Under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the Council has a duty when exercising its functions to have 'due regard' to the need to eliminate discrimination and other conduct prohibited under the Act and advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a "protected characteristic" and those who do not. This is the public sector equality duty. The protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. The purpose of the duty is to enquire into whether a proposed decision disproportionately affects people with a protected characteristic. In other words, the indirect discriminatory effects of a proposed decision. Due regard is the regard that is appropriate in all the circumstances.

5.2. Whilst not a statutory requirement, Brent council has formally committed to treating both care experience and socio-economic status as internally recognised protected characteristics, as recognised in our Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) templates, and screening.

5.3. Before the Council exercises its fees and charging powers, the impact on individuals or groups of individuals who share a protected characteristic must be carefully considered and properly factored into the decision making process using the Council's EA screening template.

6. Review of Policy

6.1. This Policy is to be reviewed a minimum of every two years to ensure consistency with wider council and departmental objectives and priorities.

7. Fees and Charges - Legal Powers

7.1. Under the Localism Act 2011 there is a general power of competence which explicitly gives councils the power to do anything that an individual can do which is not prohibited by other legislation. This activity can include **charging** (i.e. to recover the costs of providing a discretionary service which the person has agreed to) or can be undertaken for a commercial purpose (i.e. to generate efficiencies, surpluses and profits) through a special purpose trading company. This is what is more commonly known as **trading**. Charging and trading activities can be aimed at benefiting the Council, the borough or its local communities.

7.2. These powers are in addition to similar powers set out in the Local Government Act 2003. The 2003 Act empowers councils to charge for any discretionary services (i.e. services councils have the *power* to provide but do not have a *duty* to provide by law) on a cost recovery basis. For example, the Council could decide to provide a new discretionary service, that is an addition to or enhancement of a statutory service, and then charge for it.

7.3. The 2011 Act power and the 2003 Act power cannot be used where charging is prohibited or where another specific charging regime applies. Statutory guidance published in 2003 outlines how costs and charges should be established and that guidance remains in force (see: '*General Power for Best Value Authorities to Charge for Discretionary Services'*,

ODPM, 2003). The Council must have regard to the guidance when charging for discretionary services under the 2003 Act.

7.4. In particular, the guidance contains useful advice on setting charges. It explains that for each discretionary service for which a charge is made, councils need to secure that, taking one year with another, the income from charges for that service does not exceed the costs of provision. The requirement to take one year with another recognises the practical difficulties council will face in estimating the charges. It establishes the idea of balancing the books over a period of time (not less than 1 year and no more than 3 years). Any over or under recovery that results in a surplus or deficit of income in relation to costs in one period should be addressed by the council when setting its charges for future periods so that over time income equates to costs.

7.5. The 2003 Act also enables councils to trade in activities related to their functions on a commercial basis with a view to profit through a company.

7.6. Under the Local Authorities (Goods and Services) Act 1970 councils also have powers to enter into agreements with each other and a long list of designated bodies. These activities are not limited to cost recovery and a profit can be generated from these activities.

7.7. In terms of leisure and recreational facilities, section 19 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 permits councils to charge for these beyond cost recovery limitations.

This page is intentionally left blank

Fees and Charges for 2026 - 2027

Setting fees & charges for regulatory services (such as licensing or planning) is a non-executive function and must be approved by Full Council, unless Full Council delegates this responsibility to a committee or officer. In contrast, fees & charges for discretionary services are usually executive functions and therefore require approval from Cabinet or Cabinet Members, who may also delegate this authority.

DIRECTORATE	SERVICE CATEGORY	SERVICE PROVIDED	26/27 PROPOSED CHARGE £ (Excl. VAT)
CHILDREN,YOUNG PEOPLE & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT	**EARLY HELP**		
Children,Young People & Community Development	Early Help	Childcare Nursery places (Willows Nursery) 0 to 2 Years 8am to 4pm	£331.20
Children,Young People & Community Development	Early Help	Childcare Nursery places (Willows Nursery) 0 to 2 Years 9am to 3pm	£248.40
Children,Young People & Community Development	Early Help	Childcare Nursery places (Willows Nursery) 0 to 2 Years 8am to 6pm	£414.00
Children,Young People & Community Development	Early Help	Childcare Nursery places (Willows Nursery) 2 to 3 Years 8am to 4pm	£303.60
Children,Young People & Community Development	Early Help	Childcare Nursery places (Willows Nursery) 2 to 3 Years 9am to 3pm	£227.70
Children,Young People & Community Development	Early Help	Childcare Nursery places (Willows Nursery) 2 to 3 Years 8am to 6pm	£379.50
Children,Young People & Community Development	Early Help	Childcare Nursery places (Willows Nursery) 3 to 4 Years 8am to 4pm	£276.00
Children,Young People & Community Development	Early Help	Childcare Nursery places (Willows Nursery) 3 to 4 Years 9am to 3pm	£207.00
Children,Young People & Community Development	Early Help	Childcare Nursery places (Willows Nursery) 3 to 4 Years 8am to 6pm	£345.00
Children,Young People & Community Development	Early Help	Childcare Nursery places (Willows Nursery/Sunshine room) 3-4 Years 9AM to 3PM	£207.00
CHILDREN,YOUNG PEOPLE & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT	**GORDON BROWN OEC**		
Children,Young People & Community Development	Gordon Brown OEC	Residential stays for Brent Schools	£271.85
Children,Young People & Community Development	Gordon Brown OEC	Residential stays for non Brent Schools	£286.49
Children,Young People & Community Development	Gordon Brown OEC	Non-residential day visit for non Brent Schools	£20.60
Children,Young People & Community Development	Gordon Brown OEC	Non-residential day visit for Brent Schools	£20.60
Children,Young People & Community Development	Gordon Brown OEC	Holiday Activities (Family Residential)	£84.50
Children,Young People & Community Development	Gordon Brown OEC	Childrens Laser Party (per child)	£24.20
Children,Young People & Community Development	Gordon Brown OEC	Weekend groups	£110.00
CHILDREN,YOUNG PEOPLE & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT	**SCHOOL ATTENDANCE SERVICE**		
Children,Young People & Community Development	School Attendance Service	Early Bird Educaton Welfare Service (Attached Education Welfare Officer) - Maintained Infant, Junior, Primary, Special, PRU	£2,911.94
Children,Young People & Community Development	School Attendance Service	Early Bird Educaton Welfare Service (Attached Education Welfare Officer) - Maintained Primary + Annexe	£2,993.87
Children,Young People & Community Development	School Attendance Service	Early Bird Educaton Welfare Service (Attached Education Welfare Officer) - Maintained Secondary	£6,341.85
Children,Young People & Community Development	School Attendance Service	Early Bird Educaton Welfare Service (Attached Education Welfare Officer) - Academy Primary, Academy Special, Free School Primary, Independent/Private Primary	£3,086.91
Children,Young People & Community Development	School Attendance Service	Early Bird Educaton Welfare Service (Attached Education Welfare Officer) - Academy Primary + Annexe	£3,173.00

DIRECTORATE	SERVICE CATEGORY	SERVICE PROVIDED	26/27 PROPOSED CHARGE £ (Excl. VAT)
Children,Young People & Community Development	School Attendance Service	Early Bird Educaton Welfare Service (Attached Education Welfare Officer) - Academy Secondary, Free School Secondary, Independent/Private Secondary, Colleges	£7,150.02
Children,Young People & Community Development	School Attendance Service	Early Bird Educaton Welfare Service (Attached Education Welfare Officer) - Academy Primary & Secondary (All Through)	£8,337.30
Children,Young People & Community Development	School Attendance Service	Late Payer Educaton Welfare Service (Attached Education Welfare Officer) - Maintained Infant, Junior, Primary, Special, PRU	£3,290.50
Children,Young People & Community Development	School Attendance Service	Late Payer Educaton Welfare Service (Attached Education Welfare Officer) - Maintained Primary + Annexe	£3,383.07
Children,Young People & Community Development	School Attendance Service	Late Payer Educaton Welfare Service (Attached Education Welfare Officer) - Maintained Secondary	£7,166.29
Children,Young People & Community Development	School Attendance Service	Late Payer Educaton Welfare Service (Attached Education Welfare Officer) - Academy Primary, Academy Special, Free School Primary, Independent/Private Primary	£3,488.21
Children,Young People & Community Development	School Attendance Service	Late Payer Educaton Welfare Service (Attached Education Welfare Officer) - Academy Primary + Annexe	£3,585.49
Children,Young People & Community Development	School Attendance Service	Late Payer Educaton Welfare Service (Attached Education Welfare Officer) - Academy Secondary, Free School Secondary, Independent/Private Secondary, Colleges	£8,079.54
Children,Young People & Community Development	School Attendance Service	Late Payer Educaton Welfare Service (Attached Education Welfare Officer) - Academy Primary & Secondary (All Through)	£9,421.15
CHILDREN,YOUNG PEOPLE & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT	**SETTING AND SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS SERVICE**		
Children,Young People & Community Development	Setting and School Effectiveness Service	Brent Music Service Instrumental/vocal tuition	£874.80
Children,Young People & Community Development	Setting and School Effectiveness Service	Brent Music Service Large group tuition	£969.20
Children,Young People & Community Development	Setting and School Effectiveness Service	Brent Music Service Music's Cool' where class teacher remains with BMS teacher	£2,049.00
Children,Young People & Community Development	Setting and School Effectiveness Service	Brent Music Service Music's Cool' where BMS teacher provides PPA cover	£2,499.11
Children,Young People & Community Development	Setting and School Effectiveness Service	Brent Music Service Wider Opportunities	£1,403.44
Children,Young People & Community Development	Setting and School Effectiveness Service	Compliance and Governor Training Annual package. Maintained Brent Schools 1-50 Pupils	£1,640.00
Children,Young People & Community Development	Setting and School Effectiveness Service	Compliance and Governor Training Annual package. Maintained Brent Schools 51-100 Pupils	£2,090.00
Children,Young People & Community Development	Setting and School Effectiveness Service	Compliance and Governor Training Annual package. Maintained Brent Schools 101-200 Pupils	£2,460.00
Children,Young People & Community Development	Setting and School Effectiveness Service	Compliance and Governor Training Annual package. Maintained Brent Schools 201-3000 Pupils	£3,110.00
Children,Young People & Community Development	Setting and School Effectiveness Service	Compliance and Governor Training Annual package. Non Brent Schools 1-50 Pupils	£1,720.00
Children,Young People & Community Development	Setting and School Effectiveness Service	Compliance and Governor Training Annual package. Non Brent Schools 51-100 Pupils	£2,290.00
Children,Young People & Community Development	Setting and School Effectiveness Service	Compliance and Governor Training Annual package. Non Brent Schools 101-200 Pupils	£2,800.00
Children,Young People & Community Development	Setting and School Effectiveness Service	Compliance and Governor Training Annual package. Non Brent Schools 201-3000 Pupils	£3,270.00
Children,Young People & Community Development	Setting and School Effectiveness Service	Compliance and Governor Training Pay as you go rate Maintained Brent Schools (blended course rate) Half Day/Twilight	£140.00
Children,Young People & Community Development	Setting and School Effectiveness Service	Compliance and Governor Training Pay as you go rate Maintained Brent Schools (blended course rate) 2 Session/Full Day Courses	£285.00
Children,Young People & Community Development	Setting and School Effectiveness Service	Compliance and Governor Training Pay as you go rate Non Brent Schools (blended course rate) Half Day/Twilight	£155.00
Children,Young People & Community Development	Setting and School Effectiveness Service	Compliance and Governor Training Pay as you go rate Non Brent Schools (blended course rate) 2 Session/Full Day Courses	£300.00
Children,Young People & Community Development	Setting and School Effectiveness Service	Moderation of Teacher Assessment - One Form of Entry	£530.00
Children,Young People & Community Development	Setting and School Effectiveness Service	Moderation of Teacher Assessment - Two Forms of entry	£660.00
Children,Young People & Community Development	Setting and School Effectiveness Service	Moderation of Teacher Assessment - Three Forms of Entry	£790.00
Children,Young People & Community Development	Setting and School Effectiveness Service	Moderation of Teacher Assessment - Four Forms of Entry	£930.00

DIRECTORATE	SERVICE CATEGORY	SERVICE PROVIDED	26/27 PROPOSED CHARGE £ (Excl. VAT)
Children,Young People & Community Development	Setting and School Effectiveness Service	Moderation of Teacher Assessment - Five Forms of Entry	£1,060.00
Children,Young People & Community Development	Setting and School Effectiveness Service	Compliance and Governor Training Pay as you go rate Maintained Brent Schools (blended course rate) 2 Full Day Courses	£357.00
Children,Young People & Community Development	Setting and School Effectiveness Service	Compliance and Governor Training Pay as you go rate Maintained Brent Schools (blended course rate) 3 Full Day Courses	£441.00
Children,Young People & Community Development	Setting and School Effectiveness Service	Compliance and Governor Training Pay as you go rate Academies/ Free Schools/ Independent Schools Brent Schools (blended course rate) 2 Full Day Courses	£393.75
Children,Young People & Community Development	Setting and School Effectiveness Service	Compliance and Governor Training Pay as you go rate Academies/ Free Schools/ Independent Schools Brent School3 Full Day Courses	£483.00
Children,Young People & Community Development	Setting and School Effectiveness Service	Phonics Screening Check 1 form entry	£106.00
Children,Young People & Community Development	Setting and School Effectiveness Service	KS2 SATS Monitoirng visits	£106.00
CHILDREN,YOUNG PEOPLE & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT	**SHORT BREAK CENTRE**		
Children,Young People & Community Development	Short Break Centre	Respite Care - Other LA (Weekday) 3pm - 9am 2:1 support day and 2:1 night	£1,943.04
Children,Young People & Community Development	Short Break Centre	Respite Care - Other LA (Weekend - Friday, Saturday, School Holidays 24 hours, Sunday 3pm - 3pm) 2:1 support day and 2:1 night	£2,121.74
Children,Young People & Community Development	Short Break Centre	Respite Care - Other LA (Weekday 3pm - 9am) 2:1 support day and 1:1 at night	£1,798.81
Children,Young People & Community Development	Short Break Centre	Respite Care - Other LA (Weekend - Friday, Saturday, School Holidays 24 hours, Sunday 3pm - 3pm) 2:1 support day and 1:1 at night	£1,895.69
Children,Young People & Community Development	Short Break Centre	Respite Care - Other LA (Weekday) 3pm - 9am 2:1 support at day time,	£1,595.86
Children,Young People & Community Development	Short Break Centre	Respite Care - Other LA (Weekend - Friday, Saturday, School Holidays 24 hours, Sunday 3pm - 3pm 2:1 support at day time, regular support at night time	£1,692.74
Children,Young People & Community Development	Short Break Centre	Respite Care - Other LA (Weekday) 3pm - 9am 1:1 support day time as a standard requirement, regular support at night time.	£1,372.61
Children,Young People & Community Development	Short Break Centre	Respite Care - Other LA (Weekend - Friday, Saturday, School Holidays 24 hours, Sunday 3pm - 3pm 1:1 support as a standard requirement, regular support at night time.	£1,469.49
Children,Young People & Community Development	Short Break Centre	Overnight respite care - Other LA (Weekday) 3pm - 9am 3:1 support day and 2:1 night	£2,266.44
Children,Young People & Community Development	Short Break Centre	Overnight respite care - Other LA (Weekend - Friday, Saturday, School Holidays , Sunday 3pm - 10am) 3:1 support day and 2:1 night	£2,445.14
CHILDREN,YOUNG PEOPLE & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT	**BRENT START**		
Children,Young People & Community Development	Brent Start	Learning and skills - Accredited courses	£4.37
Children,Young People & Community Development	Brent Start	Learning and Skills - Personal and community development learning	£6.06
Children,Young People & Community Development	Brent Start	Learning and Skills - Personal and community development learning - concessions (A)	£3.03
Children,Young People & Community Development	Brent Start	Learning and Skills - Personal and community development learning - concessions (B)	£1.51
Children,Young People & Community Development	Brent Start	Learning and Skills - targeted community development courses	£4.37
Children,Young People & Community Development	Brent Start	Learning and Skills - targeted community development courses - concessions (A)	£2.21
Children,Young People & Community Development	Brent Start	Room hire	£46.61
CHILDREN,YOUNG PEOPLE & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT	**COMMUNITY PROTECTION**		
Children,Young People & Community Development	Community Protection	Enforcement of ASB Tools and Powers . Fixed penalty notices of breach of CPN.	£100.00
Children,Young People & Community Development	Community Protection	Community Safety Officers hourly rate	£53.30
Children,Young People & Community Development	Community Protection	Enforcement of statutory nuisance to residents	£100.00
Children,Young People & Community Development	Community Protection	Enforcement of statutory nuisance to Businesses	£400.00
NEIGHBOURHOODS & REGENERATION	**CCTV**		

DIRECTORATE	SERVICE CATEGORY	SERVICE PROVIDED	26/27 PROPOSED CHARGE £ (Excl. VAT)
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	CCTV	Processing of CCTV footage for insurance companies.	£134.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Neighbourhood Management	CCTV Download and Release Fee	£31.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	CCTV	Public Spaces Protection Order Enforcement Nuisance Vehicles .	£100.00
FINANCE & RESOURCES	**LEGAL SERVICES**		
Finance & Resources	Legal Services	Third Party Charges for Legal Work - Housing Management - Residential Conveyancing. Loft cellers garden	£2,028.00
Finance & Resources	Legal Services	Third Party Charges for Legal Work - Housing Management - Residential Conveyancing. Deed of rectification	£866.25
Finance & Resources	Legal Services	Third Party Charges for Legal Work - Housing Management - Residential Conveyancing. License for Alteration	£1,249.50
Finance & Resources	Legal Services	Third Party Charges for Legal Work - Section 38 and Section 278 Agreements.	£5,000.00
Finance & Resources	Legal Services	Third Party Charges for Legal Work - Commercial Property Transactions, Lease	£1,600.00
Finance & Resources	Legal Services	Third Party Charges for Legal Work - Commercial Property Transactions. Licence to Assign	£1,500.00
Finance & Resources	Legal Services	Third Party Charges for Legal Work - Commercial Property Transactions. Licence for alteration	£1,700.00
Finance & Resources	Legal Services	Third Party Charges for Legal Work - Commercial Property Transactions. Licence to underlet	£1,500.00
Finance & Resources	Legal Services	Third Party Charges for Legal Work - Commercial Property Transactions. Development Agreement subject to Lease	£4,888.00
Finance & Resources	Legal Services	Third Party Charges for Legal Work - Commercial Property Transactions. S123 LGA Notice	£488.80
Finance & Resources	Legal Services	Third Party Charges for Legal Work - Housing Management - Residential Conveyancing. Single Lease extension for enfranchisement of a single house	£2,110.50
Finance & Resources	Legal Services	Third Party Charges for Legal Work - Housing Management - Residential Conveyancing. Collective Enfranchisement	£2,131.50
Finance & Resources	Legal Services	S106 Legal Fee (per hour)	£350.00
Finance & Resources	Legal Services	Third Party Charges for Legal Work - Commercial Property Transactions Deeds of variation	£1,500.00
Finance & Resources	Legal Services	Third Party Charges for Legal Work - Commercial Property Transactions Agreements for Lease	£3,750.00
NEIGHBOURHOODS & REGENERATION	**BUILDING CONTROL**		
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Building Control	Building Regulations Table A - Charges for the erection of one or more new dwelling units (<250m2) Full Plan charge ranging from 1 - 15 units	£2,431.85
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Building Control	Building Regulations Table A - Charges for the erection of > 15 units or units > 250m2) Full Plan & Inspection charge	£176.72
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Building Control	Building Regulations Table C (Domestic Alterations)	£289.95
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Building Control	Building Regulations Table D (Other Works)	£533.35
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Building Control	Demolition Notices	£579.91
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Building Control	Dangerous Structures	£347.11
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Building Control	Copy of Decision Notice (Post 2002)	£116.40
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Building Control	Copy of Section 25 PHA certificate/notice	£116.40
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Building Control	Existing Premises Name Change -Single house or premises per property	£289.95
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Building Control	Existing Premises Name Change –Multiple property involving more than one premises / address.	£289.95
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Building Control	Existing Premises - Street Name Change	£1,157.72

DIRECTORATE	SERVICE CATEGORY	SERVICE PROVIDED	26/27 PROPOSED CHARGE £ (Excl. VAT)
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Building Control	Existing Premises - Regularisation of previously unauthorised use of address / Retrospective application.	£1,737.63
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Building Control	Building Regulations Table B (Domestic Multi Storey Extension)	£1,274.12
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Building Control	Building Regulations Table B (Domestic Loft Conversions)	£949.25
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Building Control	Building Regulations Table B (Domestic Basement Extension)	£1,274.12
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Building Control	Building Regulations Table B (Domestic Single Storey Extension)	£995.82
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Building Control	Building Regulations Table B (Domestic Multi Storey Extension)	£1,274.12
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Building Control	Building Regulations Table B (Domestic Loft Conversions)	£949.25
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Building Control	Building Regulations Table B (Domestic Basement Extension)	£1,274.12
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Building Control	Conversion of Existing Building Into Self-Contained Flats/Dwelling Units - Single Unit	£972.52
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Building Control	Retrieval of Microfiche Record	£39.15
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Building Control	Correspondence requiring technical research / review of casefile	£154.50
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Building Control	Complex queries requiring extensive research – individually assessed. Per Hour	£193.65
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Building Control	Completion Certificates Pre 2002 -£80.00 PLUS £20.00 Retrieval	£231.74
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Building Control	Completion Certificates Post 2002	£116.40
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Building Control	Copy of Decision Notice (Pre 2002)	£139.67
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Building Control	Copy of Decision Notice (Post 2002)	£116.40
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Building Control	Providing Copy of SNN Decision Notice + Agreed Plans (where available)	£193.65
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Building Control	Copy of AI Final Certificate per plot (where available)	£116.40
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Building Control	Confirmation regarding LA acceptance of CPS record	£97.34
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Building Control	Cancellation / Withdrawal Charge BEFORE validation	£193.65
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Building Control	Cancellation / Withdrawal Charge AFTER validation	£289.95
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Building Control	Cancellation / Withdrawal Charge AFTER Plans / Details or Calculations checked	Min £250 or 50% of building notice charge
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Building Control	Calculation of refund following request where charge exceeds expenditure – refer to Fee Regulations.	£193.65
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Building Control	Additional charge in respect of cancellation / non-payment / bounced cheque (refer to drawer)	£116.40
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Building Control	Cross Boundary working (including site inspections and Host Borough Administration Charge)	£116.40
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Building Control	Supplementary Charge per hour	£231.74
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Building Control	Resurrection Charge (or 50% whichever is greater)	£578.85
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Building Control	Dangerous structures - Surveying Costs (09:00 to 17:00) Mon-Fri	£231.74
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Building Control	Dangerous structures - Surveying Costs (17:00 to 09:00) Mon to Fri, Weekends and Bank Holidays (min 2 hours)	£289.95
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Building Control	Dangerous structures - Mileage	£1.36

DIRECTORATE	SERVICE CATEGORY	SERVICE PROVIDED	26/27 PROPOSED CHARGE £ (Excl. VAT)
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Building Control	Dangerous structures - Charge where excessive number of visits required to gain compliance	£386.26
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Building Control	Certify and Service of formal DS Notice	£579.91
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Building Control	Court Action (minimum fee)	£965.11
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Building Control	Removing Danger, shoring or hoarding in accordance with London Building Acts	15% of contractors net costs
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Building Control	Brent Administration costs in respect of contract, supervision of works, payments, etc.	15% of contractors net costs
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Building Control	SOL numbers confirmation of address for Land registry	£116.40
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Building Control	Existing Premises - Providing Copy of SNN Decision Notice + Agreed Plans (where available) charge per application.	£231.74
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Building Control	Street Naming & Numbering (New property 1-2 plots)	£382.03
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Building Control	Street Naming & Numbering (New property 3-5 plots)	£579.91
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Building Control	Street Naming & Numbering (New property 6-10 plots)	£775.70
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Building Control	Street Naming & Numbering (New property 11-20 plots)	£1,157.72
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Building Control	Street Naming & Numbering (New property 21-50 plots)	£1,737.63
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Building Control	Street Naming & Numbering (New property 51-100 plots)	£2,697.47
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Building Control	Street Naming & Numbering (New property 100+ plots plots)	£2,697.47
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Building Control	Street Naming & Numbering (New property additional charge where this includes naming a street)	£775.70
NEIGHBOURHOODS & REGENERATION	**PLANNING**		
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Planning	Pre-app 1 - Householder (extensions and alterations to a dwelling) (written response)	£163.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Planning	Pre-app 2 - Small Minor development (I home / up to 99 sqm) (written response)	£375.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Planning	Pre-app 3 - Medium Minor development (2 to 4 homes/ 100 – 499 sqm) - written and meeting	£1,443.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Planning	Pre-app 4 - Large Minor development (5 to 9 homes / 500 – 999 sq.m.) - written and meeting	£2,550.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Planning	Pre-app 5 - Major development (10 to 24 homes / 1,000 - 1,999 sqm) - written and meeting	£6,238.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Planning	Pre-app 6 - Large major development (25 to 49 homes / 2,000 - 3,999 sqm) - written and meeting	£7,431.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Planning	Pre-app 7 - Medium major development (50 to 149 homes / 3,000 - 4999 sqm) - written and meeting	£10,197.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Planning	Pre-app 8 - Strategic development (150 units + / 5,000 sqm) - written and meeting	£13,017.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Planning	Pre-app 9 - Reserved matters (pursuant to an outline consent) - written and meeting	Half full price
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Planning	Meeting (Pre-app 1 to 2)	£163.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Planning	Revised submission from same applicant within 6 months of written feedback (Pre-app 2 to 8)	Half full price
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Planning	Multiple options for pre-application request (pre-app 2 to 8)	Half full price
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Planning	Issue related meeting - Major development (10+ homes, 1,000+ sqm)	£2,495.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Planning	Presentation to Planning Committee	£2,495.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Planning	Copies of planning decision notices	£33.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Planning	Copies of archived documents	£33.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Planning	Advice on discharge of a planning condition (per condition)	£519.00

DIRECTORATE	SERVICE CATEGORY	SERVICE PROVIDED	26/27 PROPOSED CHARGE £ (Excl. VAT)
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Planning	Pre-app advice on varying an existing planning permission	Half price full
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Planning	Planning Performance Agreement Administration Fee (Mayor of London referral scheme)	£4,224.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Planning	Planning Performance Agreement Adminstration Fee (non - referral Mayor of London referral scgemes major of 50 or more homes/3000sqm or more)	£3,527.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Planning	Planning Performance Agreement Adminstration Fee (under 50 homes or under 3000sqm)	£2,810.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Planning	QRP/CRP Full Review Planning Fee	£2,065.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Planning	QRP/CRP Chair review Planning Fee	£1,221.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Planning	QRP/CRP Workshop Planning Fee	£1,108.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Planning	Invalid fee - Alteration or extension to a dwelling, dicharge of condition or non-material amendment	£135.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Planning	Invalid fee - minor application	£159.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Planning	Invalid fee - major (non-referrable)	£356.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Planning	Invalid fee - major (referrable)	£627.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Planning	Telecommunication Mast and equipment Pre-app (same as PRE-APP 2)	£368.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Planning	High Hedges Application	£623.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Planning	Pre-Application Listed Building Consent not associated with a plannng application written advice	£187.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Planning	Pre-Application Listed Building Consent not associated with a plannng application written advice+phone or meeting	£234.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Planning	Pre-Application Listed Building Consent not associated with a plannng application written advice + site visit	£281.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Planning	Pre-Application TPO or Conservation Area tree works not associated with a planning application written advice	£99.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Planning	Pre-Application TPO or Conservation Area tree works not associated with a planning application written advice+phone or meeting	£161.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Planning	Pre-Application TPO or Conservation Area tree works not associated with a planning application written advice + site visit	£193.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Planning	Building Safety Levy Administrative Expensese Cost recovery per BSL Regulations £69 from 1st October 2026	£69.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Planning	Confirmation of compliance with clauses in a S106	£597.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Planning	S106 Planning Negotiation Fee - Simple (1-3 obligations)	£1,092.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Planning	S106 Planning Negotiation Fee - Moderate (4-7 obligations)	£1,856.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Planning	S106 Planning Negotiation Fee - Complex (8+ obligations / review mechanisms)	£2,550.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Planning	S106 Planning Negotiation Fee - Simple Deed of Variation	£543.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Planning	S106 Monitoring Fee - General - Non-financial contribution (Per each HoT) that's not specific under 10 units or under 1,000 sqm	£619.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Planning	S106 Monitoring Fee - General - Non-financial contribution (Per each HoT) that's not specific between 10-100 units or between 1,000- 10,000 sqm	£931.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Planning	S106 Monitoring Fee - General - Non-financial contribution (Per each HoT) that's not specific between in excess of 100 units or in excess of 10,000 sqm	£1,233.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Planning	S106 Monitoring Fee - General - Standard Simple Obligation	5% of the total financial contribution amount up to £100,000
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Planning	S106 Monitoring Fee - General - Standard Moderate Obligation	3% of the total financial contribution amount on the remainder of the contributions between £100,000 and £1 million

DIRECTORATE	SERVICE CATEGORY	SERVICE PROVIDED	26/27 PROPOSED CHARGE £ (Excl. VAT)
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Planning	S106 Monitoring Fee - General - Standard Complex Obligation	1% of the total financial contribution amount on the remainder of the contributions over £1 million. Total fees on financial contributions capped at £100,000 per development
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Planning	S106 Monitoring Fee - Specific - Viability Review	£1,629.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Planning	S106 Monitoring Fee - Specific - Sustainability	£1,090.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Planning	S106 Monitoring Fee - Specific - Energy	£1,090.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Planning	S106 Monitoring Fee - Specific - Sustainability and Energy	£2,179.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Planning	S106 Monitoring Fee - Specific - Travel Plan	£2,322.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Planning	S106 Monitoring Fee - Specific - Car Club (Off Site)	£1,090.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Planning	S106 Monitoring Fee - Specific - Training and Employment	£1,090.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Planning	Provision of advice on drainage to developers prior to planning application Category A (large scale developments) - initial meeting	£5,212.42
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Planning	Provision of advice on drainage to developers prior to planning application Category A (large scale developments) - follow-up meeting	£1,489.23
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Planning	Provision of advice on drainage to developers prior to planning application Category B (other developments) - initial meeting	£3,310.74
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Planning	Provision of advice on drainage to developers prior to planning application Category B (other developments) - follow-up meeting	£1,067.25
NEIGHBOURHOODS & REGENERATION	**PLANNING ENFORCEMENT**		
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Planning Enforcement	Checking Compliance with use Enforcement Notices	£600.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Planning Enforcement	Checking Compliance with development Enforcement Notices	£268.00
NEIGHBOURHOODS & REGENERATION	**TRAFFIC PLANNING/ SCHEME DESIGN**		
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Traffic Planning/ Scheme Design	Highways Searches	£91.70
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Traffic Planning/ Scheme Design	S38/S278 approval and supervision fees	9% cost of the proposed works with a £2,500 minimum fee
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Traffic Planning/ Scheme Design	Highway Licences for building oversailing and private utilities in the highway	£2,612.50
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Traffic Planning/ Scheme Design	Traffic Orders	£4,493.50
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Traffic Planning/ Scheme Design	Diversion of footpaths approvals	£6,061.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Traffic Planning/ Scheme Design	Stopping Up Orders	£10,450.00
NEIGHBOURHOODS & REGENERATION	**PEST CONTROL**		
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Pest Control	Pest - Cockroaches (1 visit)	£180.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Pest Control	Pest - Fleas (2 visits)	£242.50
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Pest Control	Pest - Mice (3 visits)	£161.67
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Pest Control	Pest - Rats (3 visits)	£161.67
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Pest Control	Pest - Wasps (1 visit)	£75.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Pest Control	Pest treatment, Pharaoh Ants	£277.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Pest Control	Pest treatment, Squirrels	£229.17
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Pest Control	Pest treatment - appointment missed/treatment not carried out	£50.00

Fees and Charges for 2026 - 2027

DIRECTORATE	SERVICE CATEGORY	SERVICE PROVIDED	26/27 PROPOSED CHARGE £ (Excl. VAT)
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Pest Control	Admin fee for offline bookings	£21.67
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Pest Control	Pest - Clothes Moths up to 3 bedrooms (2 visits booked online)	£261.67
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Pest Control	Pest - Clothes Moths 4 - 6 bedrooms (2 visits booked online)	£297.50
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Pest Control	Pest - Combined rodents and cockroaches (3 visits booked online)	£269.17
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Pest Control	Any Pest treatment at a house with multiple tenants - Houses in multiple occupation (HMO)	Price on Application
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Pest Control	Cockroaches 2 Visits	£180.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Pest Control	Bedbugs (1-3 rooms) Light Infestation 2 Visits	£260.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Pest Control	Bedbugs (4-6 rooms) Light Light Infestation 2 Visits	£296.67
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Pest Control	Bedbugs (1-3 rooms) Heavy Infestation 4 Visits	£483.33
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Pest Control	Bedbugs (4-6 rooms) Heavy Infestation 4 Visits	£570.83
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Pest Control	Airbrick Covers (per cover)	£22.50
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Pest Control	Pest - Garden Ants (1 visit booked online)	£95.83
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Pest Control	Pest - Bird Control	Price on Application
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Pest Control	Technician Charges per hour	£65- £85p/h
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Pest Control	Treatment outside of London Borough of Brent	Discretionary Charge to Cover Additional Costs
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Pest Control	Insect Sample Tube Postal Examination	£40.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Pest Control	Residential Survey for Pest Examination	£63.33
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Pest Control	Pest - Combinded Rat and Mice (3 Visits)	£237.50
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Pest Control	Pest - Combinded Rodents and Bedbugs (3 Visits)	£345.83
NEIGHBOURHOODS & REGENERATION	**ANIMAL WELFARE**	**ANIMAL WELFARE**	
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Animal Welfare	Collection and Return of stray dog	£175 - £205
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Animal Welfare	Kennelling Fees per dog per night	£25.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Animal Welfare	Vets Fees for Stray Dogs	Recharge at Cost
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Animal Welfare	Transport of Dog Per Journey	£50.00
NEIGHBOURHOODS & REGENERATION	**SAFETY AT SPORTS GROUNDS**		
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Safety at Sports Grounds	Stadium Safety Certification (General/New Style) (Per hour)	£125.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Safety at Sports Grounds	Stadium Safety Certification (Special) (Per hour)	£125.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Safety at Sports Grounds	Revision of Safety Certificate (Per hour)	£125.00
NEIGHBOURHOODS & REGENERATION	**FOOD SAFETY**		
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Food Safety	Cadaver certificate (3 working days' notice)	£86.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Food Safety	Cadaver certificate (urgent next day service)	£167.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Food Safety	Food Export Health Certificates (3 working days)	£87.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Food Safety	Food Export Health Certificates (urgent next day service)	£169.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Food Safety	Food destruction certificate	£325.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Food Safety	Freezer breakdown certificate	£325.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Food Safety	Pool water analysis single pool	£289.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Food Safety	Pool water analysis double pool	£489.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Food Safety	Schools Legionella Water Sampling	£1,890.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Food Safety	Schools Drinking Water Sampling	£630.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Food Safety	Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS) rating re-assessment	£375.00

DIRECTORATE	SERVICE CATEGORY	SERVICE PROVIDED	26/27 PROPOSED CHARGE £ (Excl. VAT)
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Food Safety	Food Business Start-up Scheme	£375.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Food Safety	Food Hygiene Coaching Service	£597.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Food Safety	Special treatments exhibition including any treatment from categories B, C or D	£1,722.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Food Safety	Special treatments exhibition including any treatment from categories B, C or D per applicant administering	£115.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Food Safety	Special treatments - lasers (Cat A)	£1,050.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Food Safety	Special treatments - massage, acupuncture, tattooing etc (cat B)	£850.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Food Safety	Special treatments - beauty treatments, etc (Cat C)	£510.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Food Safety	Special treatments - manicure, nose and ear piercing, etc (Cat D)	£281.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Food Safety	Special treatments - licence variation including addition or change of therapist	£148.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Food Safety	Primary Authority - bulk purchase (per hour)	£81.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Food Safety	Primary Authority - pay as you go (per hour)	£100.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Food Safety	Officer Court attendance fees (per hour)	£105.00
NEIGHBOURHOODS & REGENERATION	**ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH**		
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Environmental Health	Contaminated Land Basic Enquiry	£71.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Environmental Health	Contaminated Land Residential Property Search	£140.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Environmental Health	Contaminated Land Commercial Property Search	£281.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Environmental Health	Part B Permits for Mobile Plant and Solvent Emission Activities. Various fees as per DEFRA's charging Scheme	Various fees from £52 to £625
NEIGHBOURHOODS & REGENERATION	**WORK IN DEFAULT**		
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Work In Default	Interest charged for Work in Default to property owner	Bank of England rate plus 8%
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Work In Default	Works in Default Officer Rate (per hour subject to grade)	£62.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Work In Default	Works in Default Admin Charge (Single property or shared dwellings)	£179.00
NEIGHBOURHOODS & REGENERATION	**LICENSING**		
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Licensing	Performing Animals Registration	£495.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Licensing	Pet Animals (Pet Shop Licence)	£495.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Licensing	Dangerous Wild Animals	£505.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Licensing	Leaflet distribution (application)	£260.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Licensing	Leaflet distribution per person	£98.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Licensing	Occasional sales (application) (Discretionary reduction of educational, charitable organisations)	£235.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Licensing	Occasional sales (per person) (Discretionary reduction of educational, charitable organisations)	£13.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Licensing	Sex establishments	£580.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Licensing	Street trading (new application)	£87.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Licensing	Street trading (variation)	£57.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Licensing	Scrap Metal Site Licence	£770.00

DIRECTORATE	SERVICE CATEGORY	SERVICE PROVIDED	26/27 PROPOSED CHARGE £ (Excl. VAT)
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Licensing	Scrap Metal Collectors Licence	£450.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Licensing	Explosives Licence	Various Fees from £59 - £594
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Licensing	Film Classification (per 15 minutes)	£75 minimum charge, £15 per 15 minutes thereafter
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Licensing	Premises Licence - Licensing Act 2003 (see the Licensing pages on the Brent Website for specific charges)	Various Fees from £10.50 to £64,000
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Licensing	Premises Licence - Gambling Act 2005 (see the Licensing pages on the Brent Website for specific charges)	Various Fees from £15 - £15,000
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Licensing	Marriage Licence (see the Registration pages on the Brent Website for specific charges)	Various Fees from £600 to £1,500
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Licensing	Licensing Surgeries (to help businesses with applications) per hour	£68.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Licensing	Enforcement Officer hourly rate	£74.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Licensing	Pavement Tables and Chairs Licences - New application	£500.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Licensing	Casual Street Trading for Wembley Event per day	£207.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Licensing	Casual Street Trading per day	£184.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Licensing	Casual Street Trading (Discretionary charge for educational, not for profit or charitable organisations	£184.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Licensing	Temporary Shop Front (1-6 Months plus admin fee. New applications receive one months free trading if they pay for five months)	£105.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Licensing	Temporary Independent Pitch (1-6 Months plus admin fee. New applications receive one months free trading if they pay for five months)	£3.50 per sqm/per day
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Licensing	Permanent Shop Front (12 months plus admin fee)	£1,228.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Licensing	Permanent Independent Pitch (12 months plus admin fee)	£3.25 per sqm/per day
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Licensing	Leaflet distribution on Sundays and Bank holidays and Wembley event day	£230 + £183
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Licensing	Street Trading Renewal Fee	£42.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Licensing	Surcharge for late application	£37.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Licensing	Pavement Tables and Chairs Licences Renewal Application	£350.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Licensing	Animal Boarding Licence including Inspection, New Licence, Home Boarder	£525.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Licensing	Animal Boarding Licence including inspection, Renewal Licence, Home Boarder	£440.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Licensing	Franchisee Arrangers Licence, including inspection, New Licence	£450.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Licensing	Franchisee Arrangers Licence, including inspection Renewal Licence	£290.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Licensing	Dog Day Care Licenece including Inspection, New Licence, Less than 10 Dogs	£450.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Licensing	Dog Day Care Licenece, including Inspection, New Licence, More than 10 Dogs	£575.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Licensing	Dog Day Care Licence, including Inspection, Renewal Licence	£350.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Licensing	Dog Breeding Establishment Licence, New Licence, Domestic Dwelling	£470.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Licensing	Dog Breeding Licence including Inspection, Renewal, Domestic Dwellling	£350.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Licensing	Other Animal Licences including Inspection, Subject to Requirements	£425 - £700 POA
NEIGHBOURHOODS & REGENERATION	**ENVIRONMENTAL ENFORCEMENT**		
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Environmental Enforcement	Temporary Crossing – Commercial:	£725.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Environmental Enforcement	Crane Oversail	£725.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Environmental Enforcement	Crane (mobile platform):	£435.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Environmental Enforcement	Scaffold Licence Fee (0-10m)	£305.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Environmental Enforcement	Scaffold Licence Fee (10-15m)	£390.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Environmental Enforcement	Scaffold Licence Fee (15m+)	£770.00

DIRECTORATE	SERVICE CATEGORY	SERVICE PROVIDED	26/27 PROPOSED CHARGE £ (Excl. VAT)
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Environmental Enforcement	Hoarding Licence Fee(0-10m)	£305.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Environmental Enforcement	Hoarding Licence Fee (10-15m)	£389.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Environmental Enforcement	Hoarding Licence Fee (15m+)	£769.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Environmental Enforcement	Skip Licence Fee	£72.80
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Environmental Enforcement	Building Material licences (Residential)	£214.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Environmental Enforcement	Builders Material Licences (Commercial)	£378.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Environmental Enforcement	Skip Company - Annual Registration fee:	£365.50
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Environmental Enforcement	Container/Portacabin licences:	£434.15
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Environmental Enforcement	Admin fee for refunds processing	£85.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Environmental Enforcement	Temporary Crossing – Domestic	£214.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Environmental Enforcement	Crane /mobile platform (per week)	£650.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Environmental Enforcement	Building Material licences (Residential/week)	£58.50
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Environmental Enforcement	Builders Material Licences (Commercial/week)	£112.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Environmental Enforcement	Container/Portacabin licence (per week)	£197.22
NEIGHBOURHOODS & REGENERATION	**TRADING STANDARDS**		
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Trading Standards	Registration of Premises for Auction	£430.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Trading Standards	Primary Authority - bulk purchase (per hour)	£81.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Trading Standards	Primary Authority - pay as you go (per hour)	£100.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Trading Standards	Verification of Weights & Measures Equipment (per hour)	£84.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Trading Standards	Calibration of Weights for Business 9per Hour	£84.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Trading Standards	Testing of Working Standards and Testing Equipment for other Las (per hour)	£84.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Trading Standards	Extra Staff Member assisting with above W&M fees (per hour)	£53.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Trading Standards	Use of Safety Lab (per hour)	£88.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Trading Standards	Licence to store explosives	Various Fees from £59 - £594
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Trading Standards	Financial Investigator (per hour, plus contract fee)	£53.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Trading Standards	Redress Schemes for Lettings Agency Work and Property Management Work (Requirement to Belong to a Scheme etc) (England) Order 2014, Full Charge Penalty Notice	Up to £5,000
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Trading Standards	London Local Authorities Act 2004 (Street Trading Fixed Penalty Notices)	£100.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Trading Standards	Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 (Street Trading Fixed Penalty Notices)	£100.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Trading Standards	Penalty Charge Notice under Part 3, Chapter 3 Consumer Rights Act 2015 (Maximum Penalty)	Up to £5,000
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Trading Standards	Full financial penalty issued under the Tenant's Fees Act 2019 (Maximum Penalty)	Up to £30,000
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Trading Standards	Full financial penalty issued under the Client Money Protection Schemes for Property Agents (Requirement to Belong to a Scheme etc.) Regulations 2019	Up to £30,000
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Trading Standards	Enforcement Officer hourly rate	£74.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Trading Standards	Senior Enforcement Officer hourly rate	£99.00
NEIGHBOURHOODS & REGENERATION	**HEALTHY STREETS AND PARKING**		
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Healthy Streets and Parking	Permanent Orders	£4,731.00

DIRECTORATE	SERVICE CATEGORY	SERVICE PROVIDED	26/27 PROPOSED CHARGE £ (Excl. VAT)
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Healthy Streets and Parking	Stopping Up Orders	£6,382.00
NEIGHBOURHOODS & REGENERATION	**HIGHWAYS MANAGEMENT**		
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Highways Management	Section 50 Licence Application, varies on depth	£525.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Highways Management	NRSWA CAT 1+2 Roads - DfT Maximum £105	£105.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Highways Management	NRSWA CAT 1+2 Roads - DfT Maximum £240	£223.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Highways Management	NRSWA CAT 1+2 Roads - DfT Maximum £130	£130.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Highways Management	NRSWA CAT 1+2 Roads - DfT Maximum £65	£65.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Highways Management	NRSWA CAT 1+2 Roads - DfT Maximum £60	£60.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Highways Management	NRSWA CAT 3+4 Roads - DfT Maximum £75	£75.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Highways Management	NRSWA CAT 3+4 Roads - DfT Maximum £150	£150.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Highways Management	NRSWA CAT 3+4 Roads - DfT Maximum £45	£45.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Highways Management	NRSWA CAT 3+4 Roads - DfT Maximum £40	£40.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Highways Management	NRSWA Section 72 Inspection of defective reinstatement	£120.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Highways Management	NRSWA Section 72 Defective reinstatement reported	£120.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Highways Management	NRSWA Section 74 charges	varies £100 - £2,500 per day
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Highways Management	NRSWA Major offence (discount for early pay)	£600 - £1,000
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Highways Management	NRSWA Minor offence (discounted for early pay)	£160 - £240
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Highways Management	Non-refundable admin charge Domestic Vehicle Crossing	£200.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Highways Management	non-refundable admin charge Industrial Vehicle Crossover	£200.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Highways Management	Crossings - White Line Access Bar <6m fixed £	£150.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Highways Management	Crossings -White Line Access Bar 6-10m	£150.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Highways Management	Crossings - White Line Access Bar >10m	Price on Application
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Highways Management	Crossings - Markup on Constructing a crossing	Price on Application
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Highways Management	Temporary Traffic Management Order	£3,065.85
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Highways Management	Emergency Traffic Management. Order s14(2)	£1,568.83
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Highways Management	TM, cost of officer resource at events	£4,401.07
NEIGHBOURHOODS & REGENERATION	**LAND CHARGES**		
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Land charges	Full Official Search (LLC1 and CON29 2016)	£348.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Land charges	Full Official Search and each additional Parcel	£71.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Land charges	LLC1	£100.00

DIRECTORATE	SERVICE CATEGORY	SERVICE PROVIDED	26/27 PROPOSED CHARGE £ (Excl. VAT)
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Land charges	LLC1 Additional Parcel	£33.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Land charges	CON 29 - 2016	£250.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Land charges	Con 29 - 2016 each additional Parcel	£37.96
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Land charges	CON 29O requested each question submitted with LLC1 and CON 29 - 2016 forms	£37.96
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Land charges	CON 29 O each question requested separately	£49.90
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Land charges	Copy Search of replies	£49.90
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Land charges	CON29 O requested separately for each additional parcel	£37.96
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Land charges - EIR	CON29 2016 Individual first question	£32.54
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Land charges - EIR	CON29 2016 Individual each additional question	£3.80
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Land charges - EIR	CON29 2016 Individual All questions listed on our website under Environmental Informational Regulations details 'Local Land Charges	£124.74
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Land charges - EIR	CON29 2016 Individual each additional parcel	£7.59
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Land charges - EIR	Copy of replies CON29 2016 individual replies	£22.00
NEIGHBOURHOODS & REGENERATION	**SHARED CONTRACT & DATA HUB (WASTE)**		
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Shared Contract & Data Hub (Waste)	Garden Waste Collection	£69.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Shared Contract & Data Hub (Waste)	Bulky Waste Collection (Up to 5 items)	£60.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Shared Contract & Data Hub (Waste)	Refuse Bin Purchase Charges 240L	£80.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Shared Contract & Data Hub (Waste)	Refuse Bin Purchase Charges 770L-1100L	£500.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Shared Contract & Data Hub (Waste)	Charge for 240L Recycling bin purchase	£30.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Shared Contract & Data Hub (Waste)	Charge for 23L Food caddy purchase	£6.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Shared Contract & Data Hub (Waste)	Charge for 140L Refuse bin purchase	£65.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Shared Contract & Data Hub (Waste)	Refuse Bin Purchase Charges 360L	£100.00
RESIDENTS & HOUSING SERVICES	**PRIVATE HOUSING SERVICES**		
Residents & Housing Services	Private Housing Services	Houses in Multiple Occupation Mandatory licences	£1,040.00
Residents & Housing Services	Private Housing Services	Houses in Multiple Occupation Additional licences	£1,040.00
Residents & Housing Services	Private Housing Services	Other Houses Selective licences	£640.00
Residents & Housing Services	Private Housing Services	Admin charge for Work in Default	£300.00
Residents & Housing Services	Private Housing Services	Notices	£330.00
Residents & Housing Services	Private Housing Services	Specifications for Empty Property Grant	£550.00
Residents & Housing Services	Private Housing Services	DFG and SWG Agency Service	£650.00
RESIDENTS & HOUSING SERVICES	**LIBRARIES**		

DIRECTORATE	SERVICE CATEGORY	SERVICE PROVIDED	26/27 PROPOSED CHARGE £ (Excl. VAT)
Residents & Housing Services	Libraries	Audio Visual loans	£1.05
Residents & Housing Services	Libraries	Printing and photocopying charges	£0.30
Residents & Housing Services	Libraries	Printing and photocopying charges - A3	£0.50
Residents & Housing Services	Libraries	Colour Printing and photocopying charges - A3	£1.00
Residents & Housing Services	Libraries	Colour Printing and photocopying charges - A4	£0.50
Residents & Housing Services	Harlesden Library	Carolyn Downs' Room - per hour commercial hire charges	£43.60
Residents & Housing Services	Harlesden Library	Carolyn Downs' Room - per hour concessionary hire charges	£33.25
Residents & Housing Services	Kilburn Library	Studio 42- per hour commercial hire charges	£43.60
Residents & Housing Services	Kilburn Library	Studio 42- per hour concessionary hire charges	£33.25
Residents & Housing Services	The Library at Willesden Green	Education Room - per hour commercial hire charges	£43.60
Residents & Housing Services	The Library at Willesden Green	Performance Space- per hour commercial hire charges	£68.55
Residents & Housing Services	The Library at Willesden Green	Performance Space - per hour concessionary hire charges	£41.55
Residents & Housing Services	The Library at Willesden Green	Reading Room- per hour commercial hire charges	£43.60
Residents & Housing Services	The Library at Willesden Green	Education Room - per hour concessionary hire charges	£33.25
Residents & Housing Services	The Library at Willesden Green	Reading Room- per hour concessionary hire charges	£33.25
Residents & Housing Services	The Library at Willesden Green	Room 7 - per hour commercial hire charges	£36.40
Residents & Housing Services	The Library at Willesden Green	Room 7 - per hour concessionary hire charges	£27.75
RESIDENTS & HOUSING SERVICES	**MUSEUM & ARCHIVES**		
Residents & Housing Services	Museum & Archives	Printing and photocopying charges: Black & White A4	£0.30
Residents & Housing Services	Museum & Archives	Printing and photocopying charges: Black & White A3	£0.55
Residents & Housing Services	Museum & Archives	Printing and photocopying charges: Colour A4	£0.99
Residents & Housing Services	Museum & Archives	Printing and photocopying charges: Colour A3	£2.00
Residents & Housing Services	Museum & Archives	Scanning (per document)	£4.15
Residents & Housing Services	Museum & Archives	Charge to purchase USB and upload images	£7.79
Residents & Housing Services	Museum & Archives	Use of personal camera	£9.90
Residents & Housing Services	Museum & Archives	Digital Copies (per image): Non-Commercial Use	£8.30
Residents & Housing Services	Museum & Archives	Digital Copies (per image):Commercial Use	£49.85
Residents & Housing Services	Museum & Archives	Research Service (charge per hour for max of 2 hours)	£33.25
Residents & Housing Services	Museum & Archives	Bespoke archive workshops	£207.60
Residents & Housing Services	Museum & Archives	Personal use - non-commercial	£10.90
Residents & Housing Services	Museum & Archives	Publication - front cover	£83.05
Residents & Housing Services	Museum & Archives	Publication - inside	£60.20

DIRECTORATE	SERVICE CATEGORY	SERVICE PROVIDED	26/27 PROPOSED CHARGE £ (Excl. VAT)
Residents & Housing Services	Museum & Archives	Leaflets and brochures (Digital image reproductions)	£60.20
Residents & Housing Services	Museum & Archives	Presentations and internal reports (Digital image reproductions)	£60.20
Residents & Housing Services	Museum & Archives	Advertising in newspapers and periodicals (Digital image reproductions)	£60.20
Residents & Housing Services	Museum & Archives	Temporary Exhibitions (up to A1) (Digital image reproductions)	£60.20
Residents & Housing Services	Museum & Archives	Temporary Exhibitions (A1-A0) (Digital image reproductions)	£83.05
Residents & Housing Services	Museum & Archives	Interior decoration of commercial premises (Price applies to use in one location - use in more than one location subject to discount) :	
Residents & Housing Services	Museum & Archives	Up to A3 (Digital image reproductions)	£60.20
Residents & Housing Services	Museum & Archives	A2 (Digital image reproductions)	£114.20
Residents & Housing Services	Museum & Archives	A1 (Digital image reproductions)	£207.60
Residents & Housing Services	Museum & Archives	A0 (Digital image reproductions)	£373.80
Residents & Housing Services	Museum & Archives	Larger than A0 (Digital image reproductions)	
Residents & Housing Services	Museum & Archives	TV - 5 year unlimited transmission (excluding video and DVD) (Digital image reproductions)	£373.70
Residents & Housing Services	Museum & Archives	Videos, DVDs and Films (Digital image reproductions)	£155.70
Residents & Housing Services	Museum & Archives	Web use (Digital image reproductions)	£57.10
Residents & Housing Services	Museum & Archives	Supply of Images of a CD (Digital image reproductions)	£8.30
	APPLICABLE TO ONLY BRENT RESIDENTS		
	Applicable to only Brent residents		
Residents & Housing Services	Cemeteries - Brent Residents	Burial rights Carpenders Park Lawn Cemetery	£4,620.00
Residents & Housing Services	Cemeteries - Brent Residents	Burial rights Willesden New, Alperton, Paddington Old Cemetery - Reclaim	£4,510.00
Residents & Housing Services	Cemeteries - Brent Residents	Burial rights Willesden New, Alperton, Paddington Old Cemetery - New Plot	£6,750.00
Residents & Housing Services	Cemeteries - Brent Residents	Interment	£1,400.00
Residents & Housing Services	Cemeteries - Brent Residents	Burial rights - Path side graves Carpenders Park Lawn Cemetery	£5,830.00
Residents & Housing Services	Cemeteries - Brent Residents	Burial rights - Path side graves Willesden New, Alperton, Paddington Old Cemetery	£7,750.00
Residents & Housing Services	Cemeteries - Brent Residents	Interment - Path side graves	£1,400.00
Residents & Housing Services	Cemeteries - Brent Residents	Burial rights - Woodland grave for 1 interment (includes 1 tree)	£4,500.00
Residents & Housing Services	Cemeteries - Brent Residents	Woodland grave for (1 interment) Interment	£1,400.00
Residents & Housing Services	Cemeteries - Brent Residents	Burial rights - Woodland grave for ashes	£3,630.00
Residents & Housing Services	Cemeteries - Brent Residents	Woodland grave for ashes Interment	£425.00
Residents & Housing Services	Cemeteries - Brent Residents	Grave Reopen	£2,300.00
Residents & Housing Services	Cemeteries - Brent Residents	Vault (reopen)	£1,150.00
Residents & Housing Services	Cemeteries - Brent Residents	Common Grave	£2,155.00
Residents & Housing Services	Cemeteries - Brent Residents	Cremated Remains In New Half Grave Space Burial Rights & Internment	£2,875.00
Residents & Housing Services	Cemeteries - Brent Residents	Cremated Remains In existing Grave Space Interment	£425.00
Residents & Housing Services	Cemeteries - Brent Residents	Cremated remains in existing vault	£580.00
Residents & Housing Services	Cemeteries - Brent Residents	Niche in Columbaria for First Five Years	£1,095.00
Residents & Housing Services	Cemeteries - Brent Residents	Each Additional Five Years for Niche in Columbaria	£545.00
	Applicable to Non Brent residents		

DIRECTORATE	SERVICE CATEGORY	SERVICE PROVIDED	26/27 PROPOSED CHARGE £ (Excl. VAT)
Residents & Housing Services	Cemeteries - Non-Residents	Burial rights Carpenders Park Lawn Cemetery	£8,800.00
Residents & Housing Services	Cemeteries - Non-Residents	Burial rights Willesden New, Alperton, Paddington Old Cemetery - Reclaim	£8,910.00
Residents & Housing Services	Cemeteries - Non-Residents	Burial rights Willesden New, Alperton, Paddington Old Cemetery - - New Plot	£9,900.00
Residents & Housing Services	Cemeteries - Non-Residents	Interment	£2,200.00
Residents & Housing Services	Cemeteries - Non-Residents	Burial rights - Path side graves Path side graves Carpenders Park Lawn Cemetery	£8,910.00
Residents & Housing Services	Cemeteries - Non-Residents	Burial rights - Path side graves Path side graves Willesden New, Alperton, Paddington Old Cemetery	£9,920.00
Residents & Housing Services	Cemeteries - Non-Residents	Interment - Path side graves (earth)	£1,940.00
Residents & Housing Services	Cemeteries - Non-Residents	Burial rights - Woodland grave for 1 interment (includes 1 tree)	£6,930.00
Residents & Housing Services	Cemeteries - Non-Residents	Burial rights - Woodland grave for ashes	£4,290.00
Residents & Housing Services	Cemeteries - Non-Residents	Interment - Woodland grave for ashes	£561.00
Residents & Housing Services	Cemeteries - Non-Residents	Grave Reopen	£3,410.00
Residents & Housing Services	Cemeteries - Non Residents	Interment	£3,300.00
Residents & Housing Services	Cemeteries - Non Residents	Burial rights - Cremated Remains In new half grave space	£4,115.00
Residents & Housing Services	Cemeteries - Non Residents	Interment - Cremated Remains In new half & existing grave space	£891.00
Residents & Housing Services	Cemeteries - Non Residents	Cremated remains in existing vault	£583.00
Residents & Housing Services	Cemeteries - Non Residents	Niche in Columbaria for First Five Years	£1,720.00
Residents & Housing Services	Cemeteries - Non Residents	Each Additional Five Years for Niche in Columbaria	£891.00
	Applicable for both Brent residents & non residents		
Residents & Housing Services	Cemeteries - Additional Charges	Earth Grave for 3 where applicable	£1,180.00
Residents & Housing Services	Cemeteries - Additional Charges	Grave surround	£280.00
Residents & Housing Services	Cemeteries - Additional Charges	Transfer burial rights	£190.00
Residents & Housing Services	Cemeteries - Additional Charges	Burial Register search fee	£70.00
Residents & Housing Services	Cemeteries - Additional Charges	Chapel hire up to 2 hours	£240.00
Residents & Housing Services	Cemeteries - Additional Charges	Saturday burials at Alperton, Paddington and Willesden	£1,155.00
Residents & Housing Services	Cemeteries - Additional Charges	Cancellation of an interment or late arrival of funeral cortege of more than 20 mins	£515.00
Residents & Housing Services	Cemeteries - Additional Charges	Memorial [full with Landing]	£555.00
Residents & Housing Services	Cemeteries - Additional Charges	Non Residents - Vaults Package Paddington Old Cemetery	£22,750.00
Residents & Housing Services	Cemeteries - Additional Charges	Vaults Package Paddington Old Cemetery	£19,650.00
Residents & Housing Services	Cemeteries - Additional Charges	Additional Internment of Ashes	£170.00
Residents & Housing Services	Cemeteries - Memorial Permits	Headstone / plaque	£460.00
Residents & Housing Services	Cemeteries - Memorial Permits	Inscriptions / works	£390.00
Residents & Housing Services	Cemeteries - Memorial Permits	Memorial removal for interment	£540.00
Residents & Housing Services	Cemeteries - Memorial Permits	Memorial replacement after interment	£540.00
Residents & Housing Services	Cemeteries - Memorial Permits	Memorial raise and level (full memorials)	£195.00
Residents & Housing Services	Cemeteries - Memorial Permits	Memorial raise and level (plaques)	£110.00
Residents & Housing Services	Cemeteries - Memorial Permits	Tree Plaque at Carpenders Park (Inc. VAT) (Single)	£575.00

Fees and Charges for 2026 - 2027

DIRECTORATE	SERVICE CATEGORY	SERVICE PROVIDED	26/27 PROPOSED CHARGE £ (Excl. VAT)
Residents & Housing Services	Cemeteries - Memorial Permits	Tree Plaque at Carpenders Park (Inc. VAT) (Double)	£620.00
Residents & Housing Services	Cemeteries - Memorial Permits	Bench with plaque on to existing landing (Inc. VAT)	£2,950.00
Residents & Housing Services	Cemeteries - Memorial Permits	Bench Plaques only at Carpenders Park (Inc. VAT - 5 years)	£485.00
Residents & Housing Services	Cemeteries - Memorial Permits	Grave tendering 1 x per year, all cemeteries except Carpenders Park	£157.00
Residents & Housing Services	Cemeteries - Memorial Permits	Grave tendering 1 x per year, Carpenders Park	£115.00
Residents & Housing Services	Cemeteries - Memorial Permits	Grave tendering 2 x per year, Carpenders Park	£180.00
Residents & Housing Services	Cemeteries - Memorial Permits	Concrete based bench with plaque (inc. VAT not at Carpenders Park)	£4,550.00
RESIDENTS & HOUSING SERVICES	**REGISTRATION AND NATIONALITY**		
Residents & Housing Services	Registration and Nationality	Bank Holidays any time	£1,065.00
Residents & Housing Services	Registration and Nationality	Ceremonies held between 7am-9am and 7pm -9pm at any venue	£1,168.00
Residents & Housing Services	Registration and Nationality	Private Ceremonies (M- F)	£159.00
Residents & Housing Services	Registration and Nationality	Citizenship Private Ceremony-weekend	£208.00
Residents & Housing Services	Registration and Nationality	Issue of Letter	£36.00
Residents & Housing Services	Registration and Nationality	Secure Deposit	£180.00
Residents & Housing Services	Registration and Nationality	Change of date	£67.00
Residents & Housing Services	Registration and Nationality	Notice priority fee per notice	£25.00
Residents & Housing Services	Registration and Nationality	Repository Certificates	£12.50
Residents & Housing Services	Registration and Nationality	Repository Certificates priority	£38.50
Residents & Housing Services	Registration and Nationality	Marriages/CPs - Register Office	£56.00
Residents & Housing Services	Registration and Nationality	Marriages/CPs -Religious buildings	£104.00
Residents & Housing Services	Registration and Nationality	General Search	£20.00
Residents & Housing Services	Registration and Nationality	Correction local authority completed	£83.00
Residents & Housing Services	Registration and Nationality	Correction General Registration completed	£99.00
Residents & Housing Services	Registration and Nationality	Space 17	£44.00
Residents & Housing Services	Registration and Nationality	Foreign divorce - local authority completed	£55.00
Residents & Housing Services	Registration and Nationality	Foreign divorce -General Register office completed	£83.00
Residents & Housing Services	Registration and Nationality	Notices Standard	£42.00
Residents & Housing Services	Registration and Nationality	Notices DRO	£57.00
Residents & Housing Services	Registration and Nationality	Citizenship	£130.00
Residents & Housing Services	Registration and Nationality	Approved Premises Ceremonies Internal Monday - Friday Before 4pm	£383.00
Residents & Housing Services	Registration and Nationality	Approved Premises Ceremonies Internal Monday - Friday After 4pm	£680.00
Residents & Housing Services	Registration and Nationality	Approved Premises Weddings Internal Saturday Before 4pm	£532.00
Residents & Housing Services	Registration and Nationality	Approved Premises Weddings Internal Saturday After 4pm	£760.00
Residents & Housing Services	Registration and Nationality	Approved Premises Weddings Internal Sunday Before 1pm	£653.00
Residents & Housing Services	Registration and Nationality	Approved Premises Weddings Internal Sunday After 1pm	£824.00

DIRECTORATE	SERVICE CATEGORY	SERVICE PROVIDED	26/27 PROPOSED CHARGE £ (Excl. VAT)
Residents & Housing Services	Registration and Nationality	Approved Premises Weddings external Monday - Friday Before 4pm	£585.00
Residents & Housing Services	Registration and Nationality	Approved Premises Weddings external Monday - Friday After 4pm	£659.00
Residents & Housing Services	Registration and Nationality	Approved Premises Weddings external Saturday Before 4pm	£659.00
Residents & Housing Services	Registration and Nationality	Approved Premises Weddings external Saturday After 4pm	£796.00
Residents & Housing Services	Registration and Nationality	Approved Premises Weddings external Sunday Before 1pm	£723.00
Residents & Housing Services	Registration and Nationality	Approved Premises Weddings external Sunday After 1pm	£940.00
Residents & Housing Services	Registration and Nationality	License of approved premises for civil marriage or partnership* up to 50	£700.00
Residents & Housing Services	Registration and Nationality	License of approved premises for civil marriage or partnership* 51 to 100	£800.00
Residents & Housing Services	Registration and Nationality	License of approved premises for civil marriage or partnership* 101 to 200	£900.00
Residents & Housing Services	Registration and Nationality	License of approved premises for civil marriage or partnership* 201 to 300	£1,000.00
Residents & Housing Services	Registration and Nationality	License of approved premises for civil marriage or partnership* 301 to 400	£1,100.00
Residents & Housing Services	Registration and Nationality	License of approved premises for civil marriage or partnership* 401 to 500	£1,200.00
Residents & Housing Services	Registration and Nationality	License of approved premises for civil marriage or partnership* Over 500	£1,600.00
Residents & Housing Services	Registration and Nationality	Late Ceremony Fee	£183.00
Residents & Housing Services	Registration and Nationality	Approved Premises external Garden Monday - Friday Before 4pm	£415.00
Residents & Housing Services	Registration and Nationality	Approved Premises external Garden Monday - Friday After 4pm	£704.00
Residents & Housing Services	Registration and Nationality	Approved Premises external Garden Saturday Before 4pm	£554.00
Residents & Housing Services	Registration and Nationality	Approved Premises external Garden Saturday After 4pm	£782.00
Residents & Housing Services	Registration and Nationality	Approved Premises external Garden Sunday Before 1pm	£667.00
Residents & Housing Services	Registration and Nationality	Approved Premises external Garden Sunday After 1pm	£857.00
Residents & Housing Services	Registration and Nationality	Amore Suite (Venue Hire up to 2 hours)	£375.00
Residents & Housing Services	Registration and Nationality	Own catering or Caterer from the Brent Civic List	£475.00
Residents & Housing Services	Registration and Nationality	Outside Caterer	£100.00
Residents & Housing Services	Registration and Nationality	Room 10 Tue (All Year)	£325.00
Residents & Housing Services	Registration and Nationality	Room 10 Mon - Wed (Low Season November - January)	£325.00
RESIDENTS & HOUSING SERVICES	**FUNERAL SERVICE**		
Residents & Housing Services	Funeral Service	Direct Cremation (Unattended Cremation)	£1,250.00
Residents & Housing Services	Funeral Service	Baseline Private Funeral Costs	£2,000.00
Residents & Housing Services	Funeral Service	Deceased Transfer fee	£300.00
Residents & Housing Services	Funeral Service	Baseline Private Funeral Costs	£2,000.00
Residents & Housing Services	Funeral Service	Hearse or Funeral Limosine Hire	£300.00
Residents & Housing Services	Funeral Service	Direct Cremation (Attended Cremation with celebrant)	£1,500.00
RESIDENTS & HOUSING SERVICES	**PARISH LIAISON SERVICE**		
Residents & Housing Services	Parish Liaison Service	Public Health Funeral Administration Fee	£920.00

DIRECTORATE	SERVICE CATEGORY	SERVICE PROVIDED	26/27 PROPOSED CHARGE £ (Excl. VAT)
Residents & Housing Services	Parish Liaison Service	Public Health Funeral Storage Fee	£182.00
Residents & Housing Services	Parish Liaison Service	Public Health Funeral Officer Search Fee	£355.00
RESIDENTS & HOUSING SERVICES	**MORTUARY SERVICE**		
Residents & Housing Services	Mortuary Service	Long Stay Charges (daily after 30 days)	£50.00
SERVICE REFORM & STRATEGY	**COMMUNICATIONS**		
Service Reform & Strategy	Communications	Film Licence	£103.86
Service Reform & Strategy	Communications	Location Fees (high) per day	£5,193.00
Service Reform & Strategy	Communications	Location Fees per day (Medium)	£3,115.80
Service Reform & Strategy	Communications	Location Fees per day (low)	£2,077.20
Service Reform & Strategy	Communications	Parking Fees (per parking bay suspension)	£62.32
Service Reform & Strategy	Communications	Full Page Advertising in Your Brent Magazine	£1,838.32
Service Reform & Strategy	Communications	Half Page Advertising in Your Brent Magazine	£1,010.56
Service Reform & Strategy	Communications	Quarter Page Advertising in Your Brent Magazine	£667.82
Service Reform & Strategy	Communications	Eighth Page Advertising in Your Brent Magazine	£285.62
Service Reform & Strategy	Communications	Late Notice Admin Fee	£166.18
Service Reform & Strategy	Communications	Additional/Film Officer time fee/site visits/ per hour	£77.90
Service Reform & Strategy	Communications	Film Officer out of hours fee weekdays (between 9pm-7am) and all weekend per hour	£166.18
Service Reform & Strategy	Communications	No Notice of Objection (subject to online payment system going ahead)	£72.70
Service Reform & Strategy	Communications	Parks A Filming (large crew): Roundwood Gladstone Barham Park Fryent Country Welsh Harp	£3,635.10
Service Reform & Strategy	Communications	Parks A Filming (medium crew): Roundwood Gladstone Barham Park Fryent Country Welsh Harp	£3,115.80
Service Reform & Strategy	Communications	Parks A Filming (small crew): Roundwood Gladstone Barham Park Fryent Country Welsh Harp	£2,077.20
Service Reform & Strategy	Communications	Parks B Filming (large crew) All other park and recreation grounds	£3,635.10
Service Reform & Strategy	Communications	Parks B Filming (medium crew) All other park and recreation grounds	£3,115.80
Service Reform & Strategy	Communications	Parks B Filming (small crew) All other park and recreation grounds	£2,077.20
Service Reform & Strategy	Communications	Parks Unit base	£934.74
Service Reform & Strategy	Communications	Brent Civic Centre	£7,789.50
Service Reform & Strategy	Communications	Cemeteries / Libraries / Sports Centres (large crew)	£3,635.10
Service Reform & Strategy	Communications	Cemeteries / Libraries / Sports Centres (medium crew)	£3,115.80
Service Reform & Strategy	Communications	Cemeteries / Libraries / Sports Centres (small crew)	£2,077.20

DIRECTORATE	SERVICE CATEGORY	SERVICE PROVIDED	26/27 PROPOSED CHARGE £ (Excl. VAT)
Service Reform & Strategy	Communications	Willesden Sports Centre (large crew)	£3,635.10
Service Reform & Strategy	Communications	Willesden Sports Centre (medium crew)	£3,115.80
Service Reform & Strategy	Communications	Willesden Sports Centre (small crew)	£2,596.50
Service Reform & Strategy	Communications	Housing Estates (large crew)	£3,635.10
Service Reform & Strategy	Communications	Housing Estates (medium crew)	£3,115.80
Service Reform & Strategy	Communications	Housing Estates (small crew)	£2,077.20
Service Reform & Strategy	Communications	Drone admin fee per application	£259.65
Service Reform & Strategy	Communications	Late notice admin fee (less that 3 days)	£160.00
Service Reform & Strategy	Communications	Admin fee - dispensations	£120.00
Service Reform & Strategy	Communications	Late notice admin dispensation	£160.00
Service Reform & Strategy	Communications	Admin fee - suspensions	£160.00
SERVICE REFORM & STRATEGY	**CONFERENCE AND EVENTS**		
Service Reform & Strategy	Conference and Events	The Grand Hall 10 hours hire package (Monday to Sunday)	£7,414.57
Service Reform & Strategy	Conference and Events	The Grand Hall 12 hours hire package (Saturday and Sunday only)	£10,179.32
Service Reform & Strategy	Conference and Events	The Grand Hall additional set up or de-rig hire (per hour)	£377.01
Service Reform & Strategy	Conference and Events	The Grand Hall bank holiday surcharge fee	£1,294.41
Service Reform & Strategy	Conference and Events	The Grand Hall (per hour, min 6 hours required)	£754.02
Service Reform & Strategy	Conference and Events	Conference Hall (per hour, min 5 hours required)	£326.74
Service Reform & Strategy	Conference and Events	The Bridge (available only with the Grand Hall)	£628.35
Service Reform & Strategy	Conference and Events	One Board Room (per hour)	£51.41
Service Reform & Strategy	Conference and Events	Two Board Rooms together (per hour)	£102.82
Service Reform & Strategy	Conference and Events	Three Board Rooms together (per hour)	£154.23
Service Reform & Strategy	Conference and Events	Four Board Rooms together (per hour)	£205.64
Service Reform & Strategy	Conference and Events	Foyer stall hire (8 hours)	£194.22
Service Reform & Strategy	Conference and Events	Day Delegate Rate (with sandwich lunch and 3 servings of tea and coffee) per person, min numbers apply	£88.28
Service Reform & Strategy	Conference and Events	Day Delegate Rate (with finger buffet lunch and 3 servings of tea and coffee) per person, min numbers apply	£88.28
Service Reform & Strategy	Conference and Events	Charitable discount. A discount of 20% - 50% on Conference Hall and Board Rooms hire are available for charitable purpose events that are closely aligned to the Council's Borough Plan and will benefit the borough and its local residents.	
Service Reform & Strategy	Conference and Events	Discretionary discount on Conference Hall and Board Rooms hire - during quite time to attract bookings	
SERVICE REFORM & STRATEGY	**SPORTS LEISURE CENTRE**		
Service Reform & Strategy	Sports leisure centres	B.Active card (Resident standard card)	£46.02

Fees and Charges for 2026 - 2027

DIRECTORATE	SERVICE CATEGORY	SERVICE PROVIDED	26/27 PROPOSED CHARGE £ (Excl. VAT)
Service Reform & Strategy	Sports leisure centres	B.Active card (Non resident standard card)	£79.04
Service Reform & Strategy	Sports leisure centres	B.Active card (60+ or disabled resident Concession)	£7.38
Service Reform & Strategy	Sports leisure centres	B.Active card (Resident Concession - 6 months)	£3.85
SERVICE REFORM & STRATEGY	**CULTURE, SPORTS AND RECREATION**		
Service Reform & Strategy	Culture, Sports and Recreation	Sports Hall Hire - Peak	£67.51
Service Reform & Strategy	Culture, Sports and Recreation	Sports Hall Hire - Juniors Peak	£46.74
Service Reform & Strategy	Culture, Sports and Recreation	Sports Hall Hire - Off Peak	£41.02
Service Reform & Strategy	Culture, Sports and Recreation	Sports Hall Hire - Juniors Off Peak	£31.16
Service Reform & Strategy	Culture, Sports and Recreation	Dance Studio Peak	£41.54
Service Reform & Strategy	Culture, Sports and Recreation	Dance Studio - Off Peak	£25.97
Service Reform & Strategy	Culture, Sports and Recreation	Badminton Court Peak	£13.50
Service Reform & Strategy	Culture, Sports and Recreation	Badminton Court - Off Peak	£8.83
Service Reform & Strategy	Culture, Sports and Recreation	Table Tennis Peak	£8.31
Service Reform & Strategy	Culture, Sports and Recreation	Table Tennis - Off Peak	£6.23
Service Reform & Strategy	Culture, Sports and Recreation	Gym Membership	£28.56
Service Reform & Strategy	Culture, Sports and Recreation	Gym Membership - Joint	£46.74
Service Reform & Strategy	Culture, Sports and Recreation	Gym Membership - Annual	£285.62
Service Reform & Strategy	Culture, Sports and Recreation	Gym Membership - concessions	£23.37
Service Reform & Strategy	Culture, Sports and Recreation	Gym Membership - off peak use	£20.77
Service Reform & Strategy	Culture, Sports and Recreation	Gym Membership - corporate	£25.97
Service Reform & Strategy	Culture, Sports and Recreation	Gym Membership - Junior	£16.62
Service Reform & Strategy	Culture, Sports and Recreation	Gym Induction - Adults	£12.98
Service Reform & Strategy	Culture, Sports and Recreation	Gym Induction - Youth 14-16	£8.31
Service Reform & Strategy	Culture, Sports and Recreation	Gym casual use - Adults Peak	£7.79
Service Reform & Strategy	Culture, Sports and Recreation	Gym casual use - Adults Off Peak	£5.19
Service Reform & Strategy	Culture, Sports and Recreation	Gym casual use - Youth 14-16	£4.15
Service Reform & Strategy	Culture, Sports and Recreation	Sauna and Steam - Peak	£7.79
Service Reform & Strategy	Culture, Sports and Recreation	Sauna and Steam - Off Peak	£5.71
Service Reform & Strategy	Culture, Sports and Recreation	Parties	£129.83
Service Reform & Strategy	Culture, Sports and Recreation	Junior Classes/session	£4.15

DIRECTORATE	SERVICE CATEGORY	SERVICE PROVIDED	26/27 PROPOSED CHARGE £ (Excl. VAT)
Service Reform & Strategy	Culture, Sports and Recreation	Boardroom - Full Day	£129.83
Service Reform & Strategy	Culture, Sports and Recreation	Community Suite - Full Day	£181.76
Service Reform & Strategy	Culture, Sports and Recreation	Tropics Suite - Full Day	£207.72
Service Reform & Strategy	Culture, Sports and Recreation	Syndicate Room - Full Day	£181.76
Service Reform & Strategy	Culture, Sports and Recreation	Conference Room - Full Day	£285.62
Service Reform & Strategy	Culture, Sports and Recreation	Function Hall - Full Day	£410.25
Service Reform & Strategy	Culture, Sports and Recreation	Boardroom - Per Hour	£18.18
Service Reform & Strategy	Culture, Sports and Recreation	Community Suite - Per Hour	£33.75
Service Reform & Strategy	Culture, Sports and Recreation	Tropics Suite - Per Hour	£43.62
Service Reform & Strategy	Culture, Sports and Recreation	Syndicate Room - Per Hour	£41.54
Service Reform & Strategy	Culture, Sports and Recreation	Conference Room - Per Hour	£72.70
Service Reform & Strategy	Culture, Sports and Recreation	Function Hall - Per Hour	£57.12
Service Reform & Strategy	Culture, Sports and Recreation	Room Hire Kitchen	£389.48
Service Reform & Strategy	Culture, Sports and Recreation	Room Hire Servery	£285.62
NEIGHBOURHOODS & REGENERATION	**PARKS (RECREATION)**		
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Parks (Recreation)	Tennis Court - adult, per hour	£7.50
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Parks (Recreation)	Tennis Court - junior, per hour	£4.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Parks (Recreation)	Tennis Court - where no more than 50% of players are Adults	£5.50
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Parks (Recreation)	Hire of pavilion per hour	£72.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Parks (Recreation)	Hire of pavilion per hour after 8pm in Winter, after 10pm in summer per hour	£90.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Parks (Recreation)	Partial cost recovery of events in parks - Category 2	£1,400.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Parks (Recreation)	Partial cost recovery of events in parks - Category 3	£5000 - £20,000
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Parks (Recreation)	Special events hosted by commercial groups	Price on application
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Parks (Recreation)	Small Events	£85.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Parks (Recreation)	Soccer Adult Single	£107.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Parks (Recreation)	Soccer Junior 11-a-side Single	£64.50
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Parks (Recreation)	Soccer Junior 9-a-side Single	£57.50
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Parks (Recreation)	Soccer Junior 7-a-side Single	£39.50
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Parks (Recreation)	Soccer Junior 5-a-side Single	£27.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Parks (Recreation)	Rugby Adult Single	£118.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Parks (Recreation)	Rugby junior Single	£70.00

DIRECTORATE	SERVICE CATEGORY	SERVICE PROVIDED	26/27 PROPOSED CHARGE £ (Excl. VAT)
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Parks (Recreation)	Gaelic Adult single (with changing)	£138.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Parks (Recreation)	Gaelic Adult single (without changing)	£100.50
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Parks (Recreation)	Gaelic junior single (with changing)	£85.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Parks (Recreation)	Gaelic junior single (without changing)	£65.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Parks (Recreation)	Hurling Adult single	£100.50
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Parks (Recreation)	Hurling Junior single	£85.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Parks (Recreation)	Cricket single	£159.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Parks (Recreation)	Cricket Adult [11 week season]	£1,590.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Parks (Recreation)	Cricket Junior (11 week season)	£800.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Parks (Recreation)	Cricket junior single	£80.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Parks (Recreation)	Artificial cricket wicket (Adults) per match	£106.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Parks (Recreation)	Artificial cricket wicket (juniors) per match	£69.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Parks (Recreation)	Bowls - per green	£2,440.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Parks (Recreation)	Bowls - per rink per season	£510.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Parks (Recreation)	Adult training soccer/rugby/Gaelic/Hurling not on a pitch (per 2 hours including changing rooms, excluding floodlights)	£95.50
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Parks (Recreation)	Junior training soccer/rugby/Gaelic/hurling not on a pitch (per 2 hours including changing rooms, excluding floodlights)	£53.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Parks (Recreation)	Floodlights per hour	£53.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Parks (Recreation)	Unmarked ground school/sports use (Morning or afternoon - 3 hours including changing rooms)	£85.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Parks (Recreation)	Hire of changing rooms only (during normal staffing hours)	£70.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Parks (Recreation)	Late cancellation fees	25% of the total cost
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Parks (Recreation)	Boot camp/ personal fitness sessions (per hour)	£68.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Parks (Recreation)	Model Aircraft Licence Fee	£56.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Parks (Recreation)	Volleyball	£45.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Parks (Recreation)	Netball	£35.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Parks (Recreation)	Indemnity - per container per week	£320.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Parks (Recreation)	Access through park land - hand tools only up to 3 hours	£110.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Parks (Recreation)	Indemnity through land - vehicle access only (car /van) per week	£160.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Parks (Recreation)	Indemnity - Utility company works	£1,400.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Parks (Recreation)	Indemnity Scaffold Licence Fee (0-10m)	£325.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Parks (Recreation)	Indemnity Scaffold Licence Fee (10-15m)	£400.00

DIRECTORATE	SERVICE CATEGORY	SERVICE PROVIDED	26/27 PROPOSED CHARGE £ (Excl. VAT)
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Parks (Recreation)	Indemnity Scaffold Licence Fee (15m+)	£625.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Parks (Recreation)	Indemnity Hoarding Licence Fee(0-10m)	£350.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Parks (Recreation)	Indemnity Hoarding Licence Fee (10-15m)	£400.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Parks (Recreation)	Indemnity Hoarding Licence Fee (15m+)	£650.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Parks (Recreation)	Indemnity Skip Licence Fee (per skip per week)	£190.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Parks (Recreation)	Skips (fines) Per skip per week	£500.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Parks (Recreation)	Memorial Plaque	£350.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Parks (Recreation)	Memorial bench in a park	£1,800 - £2,700
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Parks (Recreation)	Reinstatement (Refundable deposit)- category 3	£5,000 - £20,000
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Parks (Recreation)	Reinstatement (Refundable deposit)- category 1 (+£200)	up to £10,000
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Parks (Recreation)	£500 -Reinstatement (Refundable deposit)- category 2 (+500)	£600.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Parks (Recreation)	Deposit for indemnity per container	£650.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Parks (Recreation)	Deposit - Access through park land - hand tools only	£200.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Parks (Recreation)	Deposit - Indemnity through land - vehicle access only (car /van)	£270.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Parks (Recreation)	Deposit Indemnity - Utility company works	£6,000.00
NEIGHBOURHOODS & REGENERATION	**PARKS - ALLOTMENTS**		
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Parks - Allotments	Allotment site per pole (annual) - Brent residents	£26.50
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Parks - Allotments	Allotment site per pole (annual) - Non-Brent residents	£37.00
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Parks - Allotments	Allotment site per pole (annual) for Brent residents (concessions)	£19.87
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Parks - Allotments	Charges for additional per pole above 5 poles (annual)	£26.50
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	Parks - Allotments	Allotment shed rental fees (annual)	£42.50
FINANCE & RESOURCES	**SCHOOL HR SERVICE**		
Finance & Resources	School HR Service	Annual Subscribtion of HR service to schools - Enhanced (per school employee)	£108.03
Finance & Resources	School HR Service	Annual Subscribtion of HR service to schools - Standard (per school employee)	£62.34
Finance & Resources	School HR Service	Annual Subscribtion of HR service to schools - Policy Only	£1,131.72
Finance & Resources	School HR Service	Attendance at training	£108.64
FINANCE & RESOURCES	**SCHOOL LEGAL SERVICE**		
Finance & Resources	School Legal Service	Legal Advice Annual Subscription - Academies	£1,950.00
Finance & Resources	School Legal Service	Legal Advice Annual Subscription - Maintained	£1,850.00
Finance & Resources	School Legal Service	Legal Advice Annual Subscription - Nurseries	£625.00
Finance & Resources	School Legal Service	Consultancy and legal advice - Deputy Director Law (Partner) Per Hour	£200.00
Finance & Resources	School Legal Service	Consultancy and legal advice - Chief Lawyer Per Hour	£165.00
Finance & Resources	School Legal Service	Consultancy and legal advice - Senior Lawyer Per Hour	£155.00
Finance & Resources	School Legal Service	Consultancy and legal advice - Lawyer Per Hour	£140.00
Finance & Resources	School Legal Service	Consultancy and legal advice - Senior Legal Assistant Per Hour	£115.00
FINANCE & RESOURCES	**RECRUITMENT**		
Finance & Resources	Recruitment	DBS new joiners - Enhanced or Standard	£66.38
Finance & Resources	Recruitment	DBS new joiners - Volunteers	£14.92
Finance & Resources	Recruitment	DBS Yearly Update Services	£12.17
Finance & Resources	Recruitment	DBS Quaterly Update Service	£15.09
Finance & Resources	Recruitment	DBS Monthly Update Service	£16.54
Finance & Resources	Recruitment	DBS Weekly Update Service	£22.99
Finance & Resources	Recruitment	Work Permit Sponsorship (New)	£4,455.08

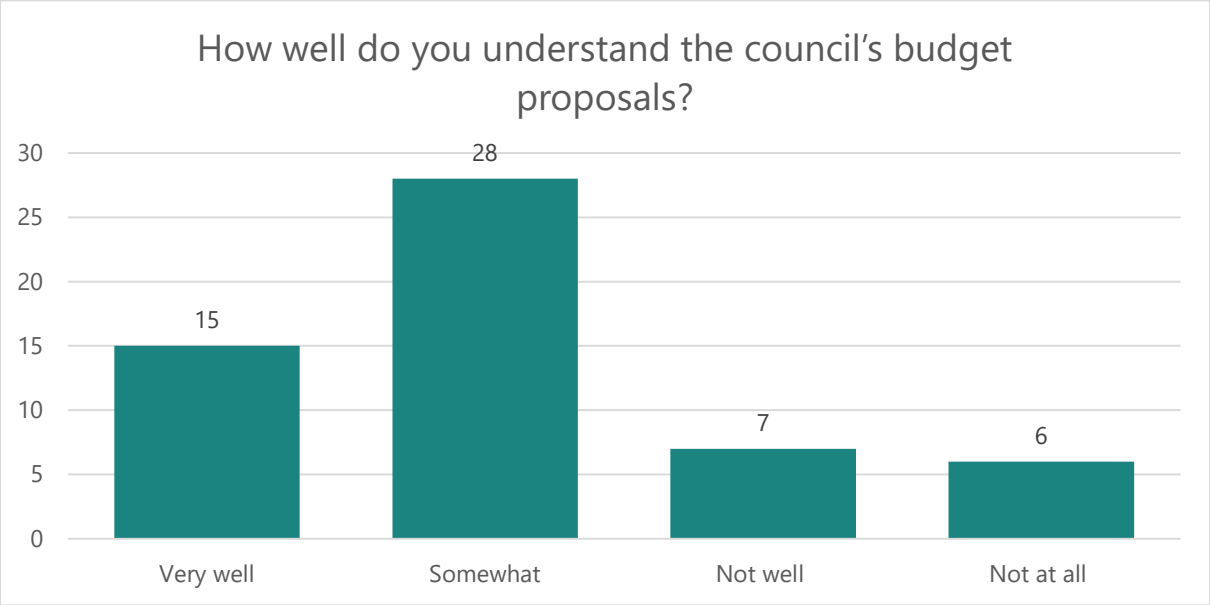
DIRECTORATE	SERVICE CATEGORY	SERVICE PROVIDED	26/27 PROPOSED CHARGE £ (Excl. VAT)
Finance & Resources	Recruitment	Work Permit Sponosrship (Renewal) + £1,000 for each year of renewal (max 3 years)	£595.81

2026/27 Budget Consultation Survey Analysis

Responses

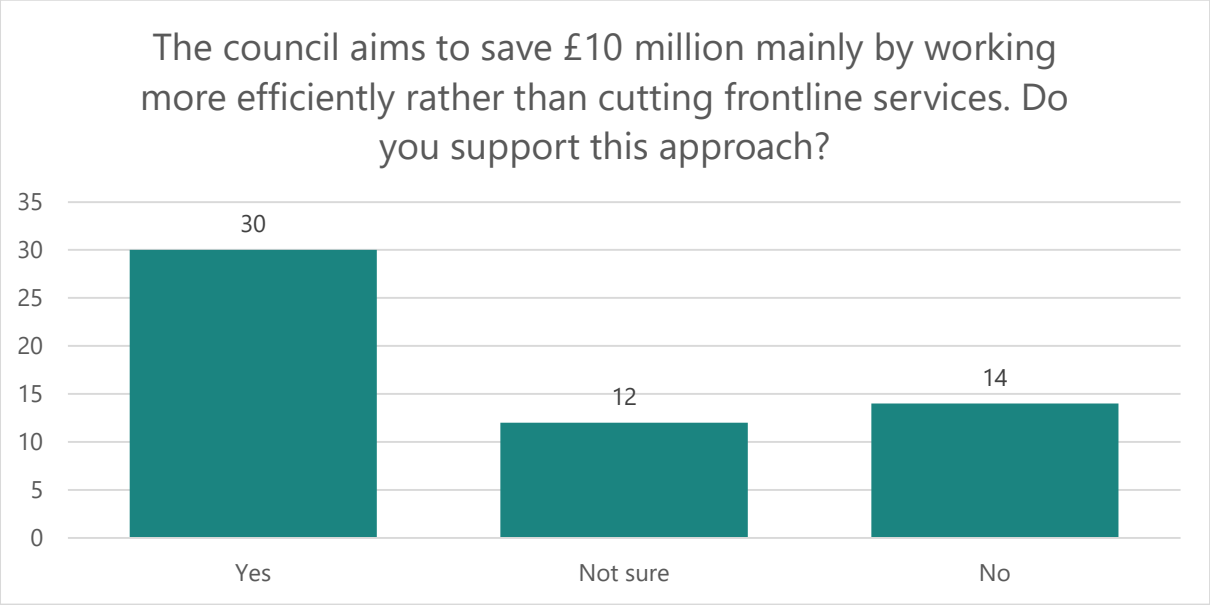
As of 23 January 2026, there were 57 responses to the budget consultation survey.

How well do you understand the council's budget proposals?



One respondent declined to complete the question. Nearly four-fifths of residents felt they understood the council's budget proposals (43) compared to those that didn't (13).

The council aims to save £10 million mainly by working more efficiently rather than cutting frontline services. Do you support this approach?



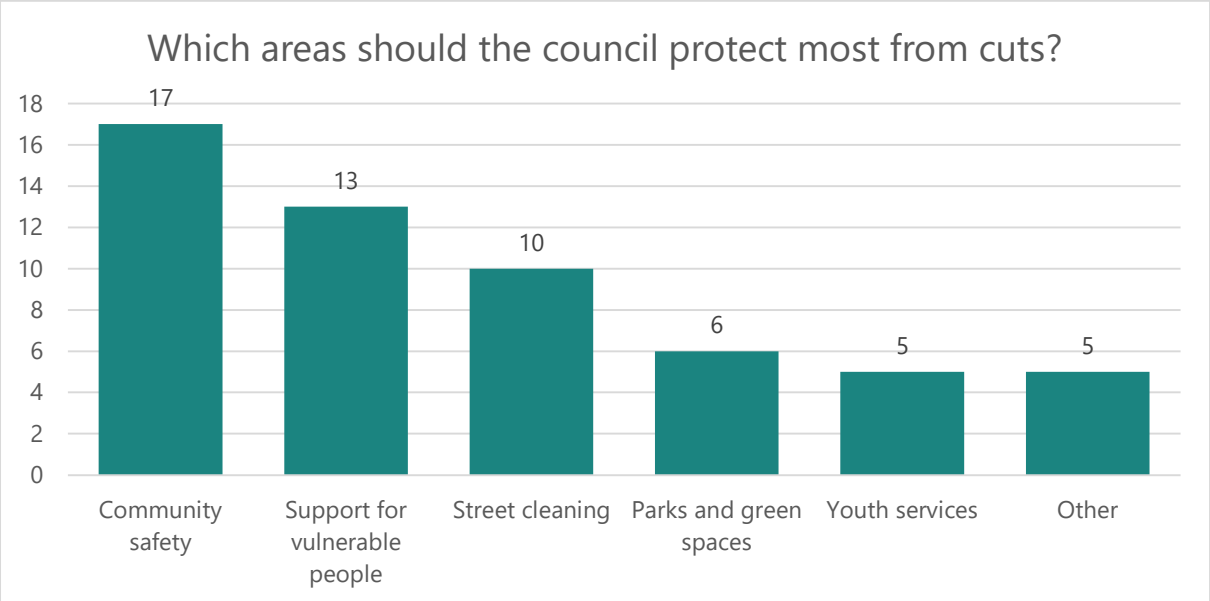
One respondent declined to complete the question. Residents were most likely support this approach with 30 selecting this option, compared to the 14 who did not support this approach.

Cross Reference

		Level of support		
		Yes	**Not sure**	**No**
Level of understanding	**Very well**	10	2	3
	Somewhat	17	6	5
	Not well	3	2	2
	Not at all		2	4

The chart above compares the number of respondents that agreed with the budget with how well those respondents said they understood it. The segments with the highest response were those that felt they understood the proposals somewhat and supported the budget proposals (17 responses), and those that felt they understood the proposals very well and supported the budget proposals (10 responses).

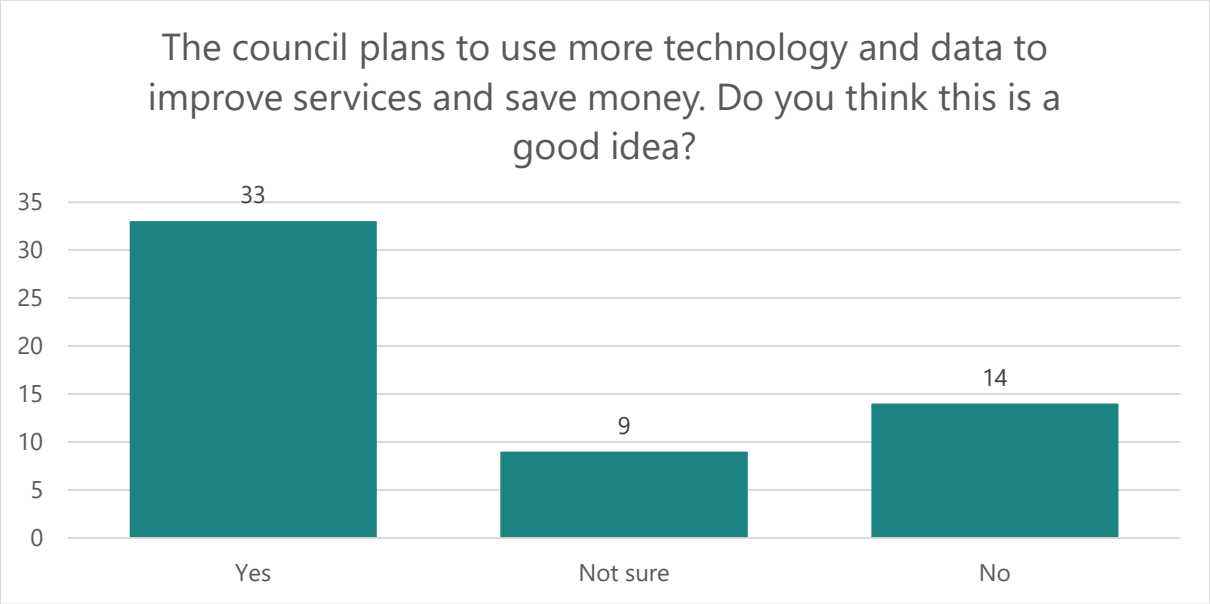
Which areas should the council protect most from cuts?



One respondent declined to complete the question. The most popular responses were community safety (17 responses), support for vulnerable people (13) and street cleaning (10).

Of the five respondents that chose other, two responded by saying 'all of the above', one person said homelessness, one said policing, and one said 'I don't know'.

The council plans to use more technology and data to improve services and save money. Do you think this is a good idea?



One respondent declined to complete the question. The majority of residents (33) agreed that using technology and data to improve services and save money was a good idea. 14 residents disagreed.

Comments

Please tell us any ideas or suggestions you have for using technology to improve services.

This question received 31 comments. Comments or themes that occurred multiple times included:

- Concerns about how this would affect vulnerable and digitally excluded residents and how it was important to support them, asking for 'fair opportunities for the most vulnerable in the community to learn and adapt to the rapidly growing changes.
- Concerns about the cost for the implementation of new technology and how this may cost the council more long term.
- The use of AI with CCTV, with suggestions for more cameras and traffic lights and facial recognition to help handle antisocial behaviour
- A Brent app to make it easier to residents to access services, for example 'A single Brent customer portal where residents can see all open cases across services, track progress in real time, upload documents once, and know who is dealing with their case'
- Suggestions that AI could be used in debt recovery.

How can the council make it easier for you to access services or get help when needed?

This question received 28 comments. Comments or themes that occurred multiple times included:

- The ability to speak to someone directly, wanting to be able to access well-informed and 'empathetic' staff members who are able to resolve problems, including a desire to keep phone lines open. Direct quotes include 'have more accessible platforms that are not online' and 'ensure that phone lines remain available and open'
- A Brent app to make it easier to residents to access services

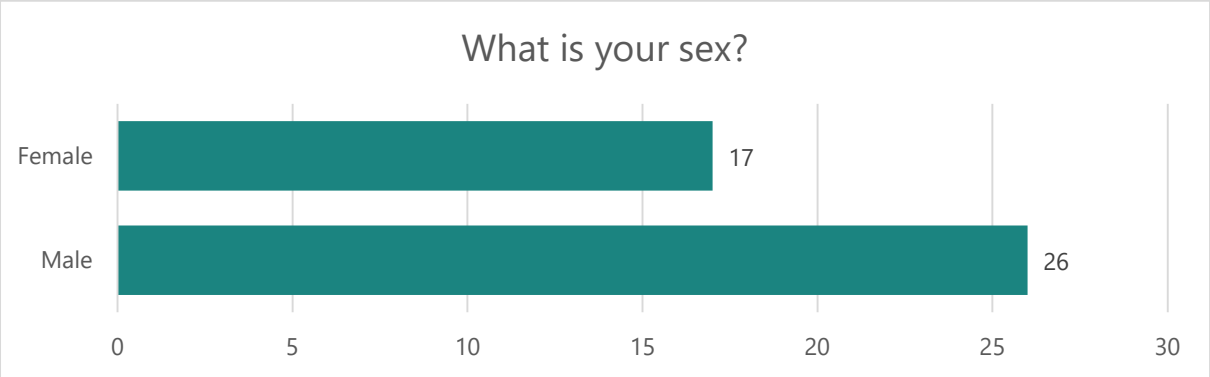
Do you have any other comments or suggestions about how the council could work more efficiently?

This question received 40 comments. Comments or themes that occurred multiple times included:

- Concerns around the increase in council tax, with respondents saying 'it is already very high and budgets are already extremely tight for families' and 'council tax for homes should increase according to inflation'
- More work should be done to collect council tax and business rates arrears
- Concerns about wastage across the council, with the suggestion that staff should work more efficiently
- Support for the most vulnerable in the community – this included respondents who were both in favour of it, in particular mentioning the Hubs as a success, but also respondents who felt that some of the most vulnerable were either undeserving ('You should think of cutting social care for homeless people') or not sincere in their need ('Cut help for fake vulnerable people')

Equality Monitoring Questions

Sex

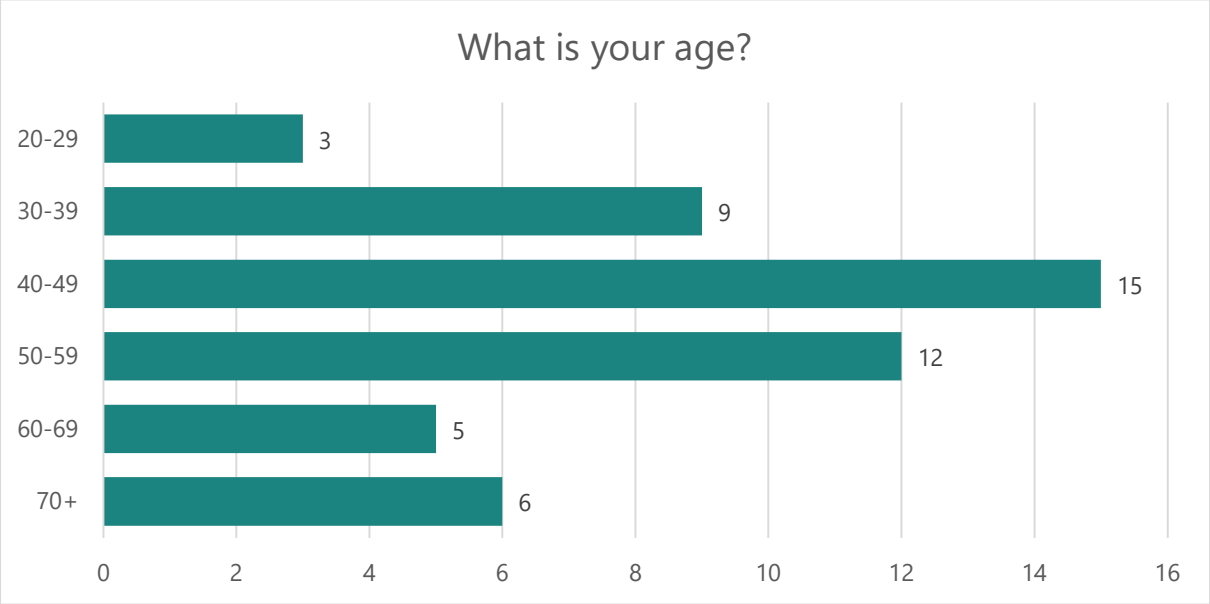


26 respondents identified as male and 17 as female. Six selected 'prefer not to state', and eight declined to complete the question.

Gender Identity

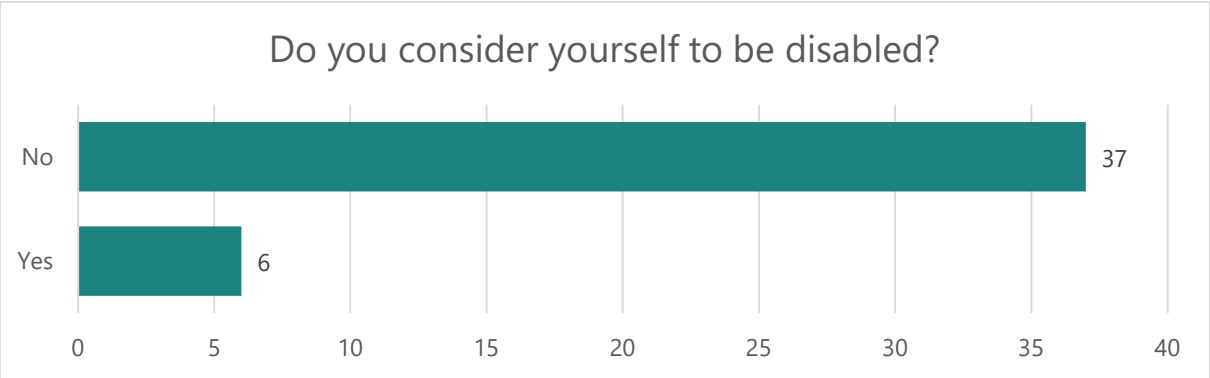
41 respondents said that the gender they identified with matched their sex registered at birth. Five selected 'prefer not to state', and 11 declined to complete the question.

Age Group



The greatest number of respondents (15) are aged between 40 – 49. Seven declined to complete the question.

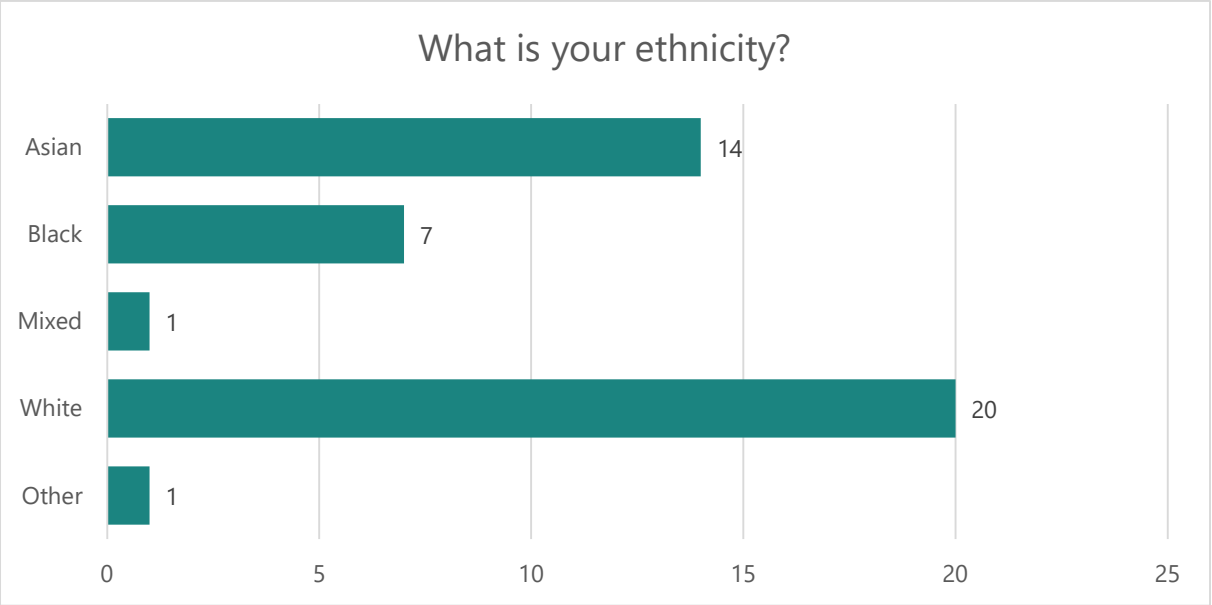
Disability



Six respondents said they had a disability, with 37 respondents saying they did not. Six respondents chose 'prefer not to state' and eight declined to answer the question.

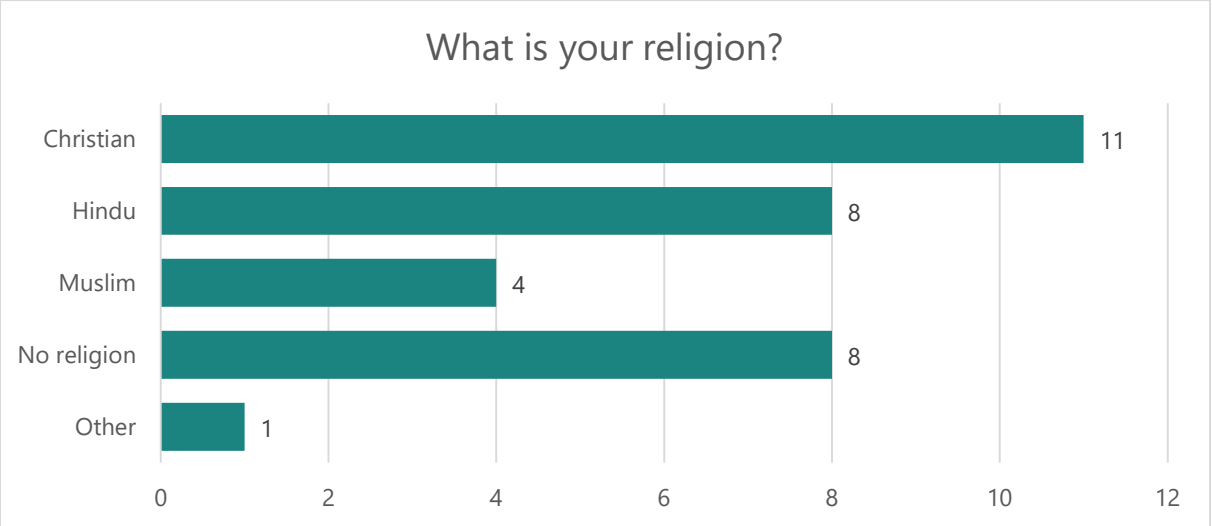
When asked for additional details, there were six responses. Two respondents chose mental health condition (including anxiety, bipolar disorder and depression), two chose physical impairment (including arthritis, cerebral palsy and using a wheelchair), and two chose sensory impairment (including hearing, sight and speech impairments).

Ethnicity



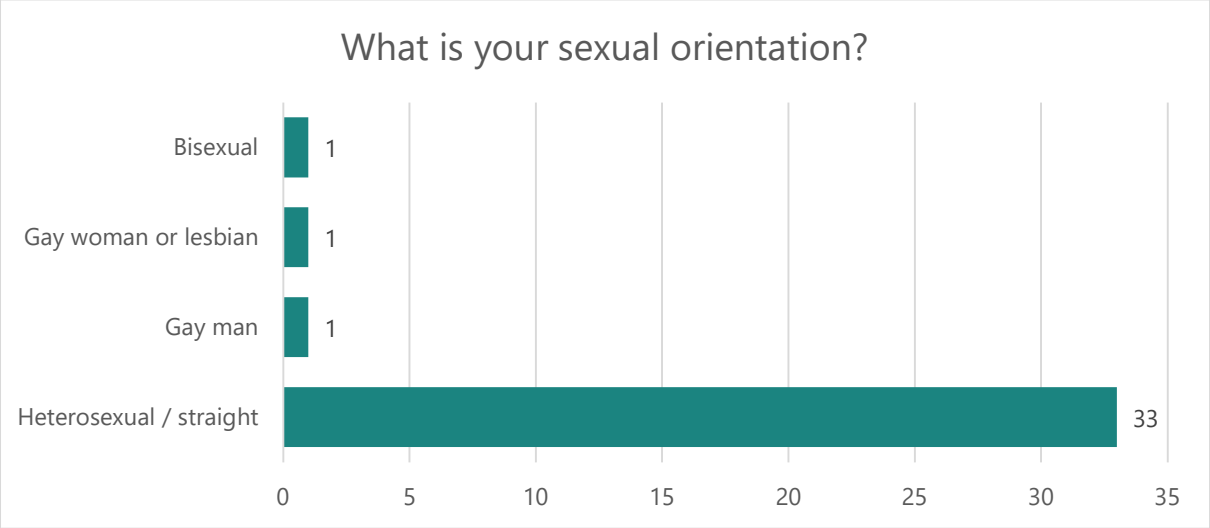
The largest group of respondents were white (20 respondents). Four respondents chose 'prefer not to state' and ten declined to complete the question.

Religion



Most respondents specified their religion as Christian (11 responses). Eight respondents chose 'prefer not to state' and 17 declined to complete the question.

Sexual Orientation



33 respondents identified as heterosexual, with one respondent choosing gay man, one respondent choosing gay woman or lesbian, and one respondent choosing bisexual. Ten respondents chose 'prefer not to state' and 11 declined to complete the question.

This page is intentionally left blank

ADVICE FROM THE DIRECTOR OF LAW

1. INTRODUCTION

This appendix sets out in some detail Members' individual responsibilities to set a legal budget and how Members should approach the task. It also reminds Members about the rules concerning pecuniary and other interests.

2. WHEN THE BUDGET MUST BE SET

Under Section 31A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, budget calculations have to be made before 11th March, but they are not invalid merely because they are made on or after 11th March. However, it is a legal duty to set the Council Tax by that date and delay in setting the Council Tax will have very serious financial consequences. It will render the Council vulnerable to legal proceedings requiring it to set the tax. In any event, it is important that the tax is set well in advance of 1st April as no sum is payable for Council Tax until 14 days after the date of posting bills. Serious financial losses will accrue very soon from a late setting of Council Tax as income is delayed and interest is foregone.

An important feature of Council Tax is that the statutory budget calculation must be followed exactly. If not the Council Tax resolution will be invalid and void.

3. SETTING OF THE COUNCIL TAX

Section 30 of the Local Government Finance Act (the Act) provides that no amount of council tax may be set before the earlier of the following—
(a) 1st March in the financial year preceding that for which the amount is set;
(b) the date of the issue to the authority of the last precept capable of being issued to it (otherwise than by way of substitute) by a major precepting authority for the financial year for which the amount is set.

This year the GLA meeting at which the precept will be set will take place on 26th February 2026. As this meeting takes place after the Full Council meeting at which the budget for 2026/27 will be set, the Council will only be able to calculate the Brent element of the council tax at that meeting.

Section 67 of the Act permits the setting of the council tax to be delegated to a special council tax setting committee established under that section. It is therefore proposed that the Council refer the setting of the Council Tax for the year 2026/27 to the Council Tax setting committee and that the Council Tax Setting Committee meet on 27 February 2026 to allow Council Tax notices to be issued in line with the normal statutory timetable.

4. NOTICE

There is a requirement to publish notice of the amount set for Council Tax in at least one local paper within 21 days of the Council's decision under section 38(2) of the Local Government and Finance Act 1992. There is also a duty to consult with representatives of Non-Domestic Ratepayers about the proposed revenue and capital expenditure before the budget requirement is calculated under section 65 of the Local Government and Finance Act 1992.

5. MEMBERS' FIDUCIARY DUTIES

The obligation to make a lawful budget each year is shared equally by each individual Member. In discharging that obligation, Members owe a fiduciary duty to the Council Taxpayer.

The budget must not include expenditure on items which would fall outside the Council's powers. Expenditure on lawful items must be prudent, and any forecasts or assumptions such as rates of interest or inflation must themselves be rational. Powers to spend money must be exercised bona fide for the purpose for which they were conferred and any ulterior motives risk a finding of illegality. In determining the Council's overall budget requirement, Members are bound to have regard to the level of Council Tax necessary to sustain it. Essentially the interests of the Council Taxpayer must be balanced against those of the various service recipients.

Within this overall framework, there is of course considerable scope for discretion within the 2026/27 financial year, especially on the part of the Cabinet. Setting a budget is not the same as deciding what expenditure will in fact be incurred. To budget for expenditure is to estimate likely expenditure and/or make financial provision for such expenditure. However, Members will bear in mind that in making the budget commitments are being entered which will have an impact on future years. Some such commitments are susceptible to change in future years, such as staff numbers which are capable of upward or downward adjustment at any time. Other commitments however impose upon the Council future obligations which are binding and cannot be adjusted, such as loan charges to pay for capital schemes. For some specific proposals within the overall Budgetary framework, Cabinet decisions have already been made. For some other proposals, subject to relevant consultation where necessary, decisions by the Cabinet will need to be made, especially where the making of such a decision would result or would be likely to result in the permanent closure of a facility used by the public or a permanent and significant reduction in the level of services or facilities provided to the public other than where such closure or reduction in service is considered necessary by the relevant corporate director for reasons of health and safety.

In making those subsequent decisions the Cabinet will be required to consider all relevant matters including the results of any consultation and the Council's equality duties. Should the Cabinet (or other decision maker) consider it

appropriate, for example when being asked to make service changes to achieve a budget reduction and having taken into account all relevant facts (including but not limited to the results of any consultation and after due consideration of the Council's equalities duties) they have the option of not making the budget reductions detailed within the overall budget. They will still be required to balance the budget overall using the appropriate constitutional procedures, for example, finding the savings from elsewhere or using reserves and otherwise complying with the Council's rules on budget setting and management.

Only relevant and lawful factors may be taken into account and irrelevant factors must be ignored. A Member who votes in accordance with the decision of his or her political group but who does so after taking into account the relevant factors and professional advice will be acting within the law. Party loyalty and party policy are capable of being relevant considerations for the individual Member provided the member does not dogmatically toe the party line without considering the relevant factors and professional advice and without properly exercising any real discretion.

Under the Brent Member Code of Conduct members are required when reaching decisions to have regard to relevant advice from the Corporate Director, Finance and Resources and the Monitoring Officer (the Director of Law). If the Council should fail to set a budget at all or fail to set a lawful budget, contrary to the advice of these two officers there may be a breach of the Code by individual members if it can be demonstrated that they have not had proper regard to the advice given.

6. ARREARS OF COUNCIL TAX AND VOTING

In accordance with section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 ("the 1992 Act"), where a payment of Council Tax that a member is liable to make has been outstanding for two months or more at the time of a meeting, the Member must disclose the fact of their arrears (though they are not required to declare the amount) and cannot vote on any of the following matters if they are the subject of consideration at a meeting:

(a) Any decision relating to the administration or enforcement of Council Tax.

(b) Any budget calculation required by the Local Government Finance Act 1992 underlying the setting of the Council Tax.

(c) Any recommendation, resolution or other decision which might affect the making of the Annual Budget calculation.

Members should note the following points:

(i) These rules are extremely wide in scope. Virtually any Council decision which has financial implications is one which might affect the making of the budget underlying the Council Tax for next year and thus is caught. The former DoE (now MHCLG) shared this interpretation as it made clear in its letter to the AMA dated 28th May 1992.

(ii) The rules do not apply just to full Council meetings but extend to committees and sub-committees of the Council and to the Cabinet.

(iii) Members who make a declaration are not entitled to vote on the matter in question but are not prevented by the section from taking part in the discussion.

(iv) Members will have a defence under section 106 of the 1992 Act if they did not know that the section applied to them (i.e., that they were in arrears to the relevant extent) at the time of the meeting. Thus unwitting Members who for example can prove that they did not know and had no reason to suppose at the time of the meeting that their bank has failed to honour a standing order will be protected should any prosecution arise.

(v) It is not enough to state that a benefit application has been submitted which has not yet been determined, as Members remain liable to pay pending determination.

(vi) Breach of the rules is a criminal offence under section 106 of the 1992 Act which attracts a maximum fine at level 3 on the standard scale, currently £1,000.

Members' attention is also be drawn to the effect of the Local Authorities (Standing Orders)(England)(Amendment) Regulations 2014 which came into effect on 25 February 2014 which is that where any vote is taken at a Council meeting on setting the budget for the authority, the Minutes of the meeting will record the names of all Councillors present at the vote and how each Councillor voted (for or against) or the fact that they abstained from voting.

7. DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

Members are reminded to consider whether they have a disclosable pecuniary interest or a personal interest in the setting of the council's budget. If a member has a relevant interest they must disclose the interest at the meeting, subject to the provisions in the Code in respect of sensitive interests. If the interest is:

- a disclosable pecuniary interest; or
- a personal interest which a member of the public knowing the facts would reasonably regard it as so significant that it is likely to prejudice their judgement of the public interest (and it affects their financial position or the financial position of a connected person (as defined in the Code) or relates to a regulatory matter affecting or likely to affect them or a connected person.

The member may not participate in the discussions or vote on the matter, although if the interest is prejudicial but not a disclosable pecuniary interest, the member may remain for the purposes of making representations or asking questions.

Members should seek early advice to avoid any confusion on the night of the meeting if they consider they have a relevant interest.

Dispensations

The Council's Monitoring Officer may, on written request from a Member, grant a dispensation to relieve the applicant from the restrictions on participation and voting. Dispensation may be granted if:-
- Without the dispensation the number of persons prohibited from participating would be so great a proportion to impede the effectiveness of the meeting;
- The representation of different political groups would be affected and likely to alter the likely outcome of any voting at the meeting;
- Granting the dispensation is in the interests of persons living in the Borough;
- Every Member of the Council's Cabinet would be precluded from participating in the meeting;
- It is appropriate to grant a dispensation.

Dispensation may be granted for up to 4 years. A dispensation will mean that the Member to whom it is granted can speak and vote on a matter in which they have a relevant interest. Where the Monitoring Officer is undecided on the best response, and time is not of the essence, the decision could be passed to Audit & Standards Committee for decision. There is no Audit & Standards Committee meeting currently fixed before the budget setting meeting.

8. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR, FINANCE AND RESOURCES, MONITORING OFFICER AND AUDITORS' POWERS

Corporate Director, Finance and Resources and Monitoring Officer

Section 114 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 places the Corporate Director, Finance and Resources under an obligation to prepare a report (to full Council) if it appears to them that the expenditure the Authority proposes to incur in a financial year is likely to exceed its resources available to meet that expenditure. A failure to take note and act on such a report could lead to a complaint under the Member Code of Conduct. Similarly, the Council's Monitoring Officer is required to report to Full Council if it appears to them that a decision has been or is about to be taken which is or would be unlawful or would be likely to lead to maladministration.

Under section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 the Corporate Director, Finance and Resources is required to report to the authority on the robustness of the estimates made for the purposes of the calculations required to be made by the Council and the adequacy of the proposed financial reserves. These are the estimates which the Cabinet is required to determine and submit to Full Council and are contained within this report. However, if the Council were minded to agree a budget based on different estimates e.g. if Council did not agree with the estimates provided by the Cabinet then those estimates which the Council would adopt would effectively become 'the estimates' for the purpose of Section 25 and as such should be subject to a report by the Corporate Director, Finance and Resources.

External Auditors' Powers

Section 91 of the Local Government Act 2000 and section 19A of the Audit Commission Act 1998 provide that an External Auditor may issue an "Advisory Notice" if they have reason to believe that an Authority is about to take a course of action which, if pursued to its conclusion, would be unlawful and likely to cause a loss or deficiency. This power is to be used where the matter is significant either in amount or in principle or both.

While the advisory notice has effect it is not lawful for the authority to implement or take the course of action in question unless it has considered the issues raised in the notice and given the auditor notice that it intends to proceed with that course of action in a specified period and that period has expired.

In addition, it is also open to the Auditor to apply for judicial review on any decision of an Authority or failure to act which it is reasonable to believe would have an effect on the accounts of an Authority.

9. SPECIFIC BUDGET ADVICE

Balances and Other Budget Calculations

A local authority must budget so as to give a reasonable degree of certainty as to the maintenance of its services. In particular, local authorities are required by section 31A(2)(b) and (c) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 to calculate as part of their overall budget what amounts are appropriate for contingencies and reserves. The Council faces various contingent liabilities set out in the main budget report. Furthermore, the Council must ensure sufficient flexibility to avoid going into deficit at any point during the financial year. Members will need to pay careful attention to the advice of officers here. As set out previously, under section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 the Corporate Director, Finance and Resources is required to report to the authority on the adequacy of the proposed financial reserves.

In addition to advising on the robustness of the estimates as set out above, the Corporate Director, Finance and Resources is also required to report on the robustness of the proposed financial reserves. The same advice applies to these as to the other calculations required to be made by the Council.

Having considered the officer's report the Council is then required to *"have regard to the report"* but it is not required to adopt the recommendations in it. However, Members must demonstrate they have acted reasonably if they do not adopt the recommendations.

Localism Act 2011

Sections 72 to 79 and Schedules 5 to 7 of the Localism Act 2011 amended the legislation regarding the calculation of council tax. Schedule 5 of the Localism Act provides for a council tax referendum to be held if an authority increases its

relevant basic amount of council tax in excess of principles determined by the Secretary of State. Authorities will not be able to exceed the Secretary of State's principles without having held such a referendum. The principles applicable for 2026/27 are discussed at paragraphs 6.20 to 6.21 of the main report.

Alternative Proposals

If alternative proposals to those contained in this report are moved at the budget setting meeting, the Corporate Director, Finance and Resources will need to consider if the estimates or proposed financial reserves contained in this report are affected and whether a further report (which may be oral) is required under section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003. If the Corporate Director, Finance and Resources is unable to report on the estimates or the reserves because of the lateness of the alternative proposals then they will not be able to comply with this statutory requirement. The Act does not say what happens if this duty is not fulfilled and nor does it say whether the Council can set the budget without that advice. It follows from this then that there is no express statutory prohibition. However, the authority is at risk of a Judicial Review by an interested person, e.g. a resident, if the Council has failed to have regard to a report of the Corporate Director, Finance and Resources on the estimates and reserves used for its budget calculations.

Capital Programme

The requirements of the *"Prudential Code"* established in the Local Government Act 2003 are set out in the report.

Expenditure Charged to the Housing Revenue Account

Members will be aware that the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) is by law to be maintained separately from the General Fund and there are strict rules which determine to which account any expenditure must be charged. There are only very limited areas of discretion here. Members should bear in mind that if they wished to review any current determination which affects the apportionment of charges between the General Fund and HRA, they would need to do so on the basis of an officers' report and specific legal advice. The Housing Revenue Account must be maintained in balance throughout the year and the Council is under a duty to prevent a debit balance in the Housing Revenue Account pursuant to Section 76 Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

Equalities Legislation

Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 sets out the public sector equality duty which requires the Council, when exercising its functions to have 'due regard' to the need to eliminate discrimination (both direct and indirect discrimination), harassment and victimization and other conduct prohibited under the Equality Act, and to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between

those who share a ‘protected characteristic’ and those who do not share that protected characteristic.

A ‘protected characteristic’ is defined in the Equality Act as:

- age;
- disability;
- gender reassignment;
- pregnancy and maternity;
- race; (including ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality)
- religion or belief;
- sex;
- sexual orientation.

Marriage and civil partnership are also a protected characteristic for the purposes of the duty to eliminate discrimination.

Having due regard to the need to ‘advance equality of opportunity’ between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, includes having due regard to the need to remove or minimize disadvantages suffered by them. Due regard must also be had to the need to take steps to meet the needs of such persons where those needs are different from persons who do not have that characteristic, and encourage those who have a protected characteristic to participate in public life.

Complying with the duty may involve treating some people better than others, as far as that is allowed by the discrimination law.

Due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality, and foster good relations must form an integral part of the decision making process. The Council must consider the effect that implementing a particular policy will have in relation to equality before making a decision.

There is no prescribed manner in which the equality duty must be exercised. However, the council must have an adequate evidence base for its decision making. This can be achieved by gathering details and statistics on who use the facilities. A careful consideration of this assessment is one of the key ways in which the Council can show “due regard” to the relevant matters. Where it is apparent from the analysis of the information that the proposals would have an adverse effect on equality then adjustments should be made to avoid that effect (mitigation).

The duty is not to achieve the objectives or take the steps set out in s.149. Rather, the duty on public authorities is to bring these important objectives relating to discrimination into consideration when carrying out its functions. “Due regard” means the regard that is appropriate in all the particular circumstances in which the authority is carrying out its functions.

There must be a proper regard for the goals set out in s.149. At the same time, the council must also pay regard to any countervailing factors, which it is proper and reasonable for them to consider. Budgetary pressures, economics and

practical factors will often be important. The weight of these countervailing factors in the decision making process is a matter for the Council.

The equality and diversity implications of budget proposals are considered at all stages of the budget process, from the development of the initial budget strategy, through consideration of individual growth and savings proposals, to the production of service development plans. The processes in place are therefore aimed at ensuring that the budget proposals in this report do not discriminate against communities or individuals because of age, ethnicity, gender, disability, religion, or sexual orientation, and support the council in meeting its other duties to promote equal opportunities and good race relations.

This page is intentionally left blank

BRENT COUNCIL PAY POLICY STATEMENT

Financial Year 2026/27

April 2026

Contents

Purpose 6
Strategic Context 6
Employee Benefits 7
Pay Rates and Scales 7
Remuneration of Senior Management (Chief Officers) 7
Remuneration of Lowest Paid Employees 8
London Living Wage 8
Pay Multiple 8
Job Grading 9
Local Conventions for the GLPC Job Evaluation Scheme 9
Pay on Appointment 10
Annual Pay Progression 10
Performance Related Pay and Bonuses 11
National / Regional Pay Agreements 11
Market Supplements 11
Fees for Election Duties 11
Pensions 11
Payments on Termination of Employment 12
Re-employment of Employees 12
Tax avoidance 12
Publication and access to information 13

BRENT COUNCIL PAY POLICY STATEMENT
Financial Year 2026/27

Purpose

The Council's pay policy outlines Brent's policy on pay and benefits for all employees (excluding schools) and has been developed to meet the relevant statutory provisions of the Localism Act 2011.

The pay policy will be reviewed on an annual basis and will be approved by Full Council in advance of each new financial year.

The pay policy statement can be amended during the course of any financial year, but only by a resolution of the Full Council. The revised version of the statement will be published as soon as reasonably practicable.

Strategic Context

The current and future pay and benefit arrangements are embodied in the Council's Strategies and Policies which reflects the Borough Plan priorities. The Council's Borough Plan provides the strategic framework for the Council's workforce and people priorities.

The overarching objective for the People Strategy is to ensure we have a strong, effective, and resilient workforce that can meet the needs of our communities and deliver the best possible services.

Key themes in the People Strategy were developed through collaborative input from staff, data-driven insights, and alignment with organisational goals and priorities.

The key themes of the People Strategy are:

- Inclusive culture and sense of belonging;
- Future Workforce;
- Inspirational leadership;
- Recruitment and resourcing;
- Employer of choice;
- Health and wellbeing;
- Pay and reward.

Our People Strategy is driven by a commitment to creating an inclusive, supportive workplace where everyone feels valued, empowered, and connected to our shared purpose. By investing in learning, development, inspirational leadership, and fair rewards, we aim to help our people reach their full potential and deliver their best.

Through attracting, developing, and retaining talented individuals, we are building a workplace where people are proud to work and excited to grow their careers with us.

Employee Benefits

The Council's pay arrangements and terms and conditions play a key role in enabling the Council to fully realise its objectives and ensuring the workforce is 'fit for purpose'. The Council is committed to fair and equitable pay and benefits arrangements to maintain a flexible, talented and performance focused workforce. The Council published its Gender Pay Gap Report in January 2026. This revealed that the overall mean gender pay gap based on data taken from the HR databases on 31 March 2025 was 2.2% and the median gender pay gap was 6.9%.

All the Council's pay arrangements are contained within a single policy document.

Pay Rates and Scales

Pay scales are reviewed annually in line with the relevant national agreements and any changes are usually effective from 1 April or 1 September each year depending on the pay scales applicable to different groups of staff.

The following pay scales have been adopted by the Council:

- Greater London Provincial Council (GLPC) London Pay Scales (main pay scales)
- Senior Manager Pay Scales (senior managers including Chief Officers)
- Soulbury Pay Scales (Education Psychologists, Advisors and Inspectors)
- Teaching Pay Scales (for centrally employed local authority teachers)
- Brent Start Pay Scales (for college lecturers)

The Senior Manager Pay Scale includes adoption by the Council of a revised pay scale for the Council Management Team, effective from July 2025, which takes account of the scale of roles and provides clear delineation between Council Management posts and those of other senior managers.

Remuneration of Senior Management (Chief Officers)

The Council defines its senior management as the top 3 tiers in the management structure. This includes all statutory and non-statutory roles. It comprises the Chief Executive, Corporate Directors and Directors.

Currently the pay, expenses and key benefits for the Council Management Team are published on the Council's website. The Council Management Team comprises the

Chief Executive and the Corporate Directors.

The rates of pay of the Chief Executive and Corporate Directors and other Senior Managers are in accordance with the Council's senior manager pay scales. The Council may, from time to time, engage senior managers under contracts for services. The Council generally will aim to pay such individuals at a rate consistent with the pay of directly employed staff performing a comparable role, although there may be exceptional circumstances which support a higher pay rate for a short-term period to ensure continuity of service and meet any statutory obligations.

Remuneration of Lowest Paid Employees

The Council defines its lowest paid employees as those staff paid on the lowest established grade and scale point which in Brent is Scale 1 spinal column point 2 of the Greater London Provincial Council (GLPC) Pay Scales which is currently £28,221 per annum or the pay of its lowest paid employee where they are on a higher salary which is currently Scale 2, spinal column point 3 at £28,617.

London Living Wage

The Council has implemented the London Living Wage. All staff (including Apprentices) are paid at or above the London Living Wage. The Council is an accredited London Living Wage Employer and asks its contractors supplying services to the Council to pay their staff the London Living Wage. As contractors are employers in their own right, the Council cannot force contractors to pay the London Living Wage but has built into its procurement procedures a requirement to do so in relation to council contracts where possible. The Council also encourages schools to pay the London Living Wage.

Pay Multiple

The 'pay multiple' is the ratio between the highest paid salary and the lowest/median average salary of the Council's workforce. The Council's highest paid employee is the Chief Executive. The current median salary is £47,750.

The lowest pay multiple is 1:8.4; the median pay multiple is 1:5.3.

This is within what is regarded as good practice for the median salary multiple as described by Will Hutton in his 2011 Fair Pay Review in the Public Sector which identified multiples at or around 8.00. The Council has not set a target for a maximum multiple. The lowest pay multiple has decreased from 1:10:6 in 2016/2017.

Job Grading

Single Status was introduced in 2009 for staff on the main pay scales. Single Status introduced common job evaluation schemes and pay scales for the Council's former manual workers, administrative, professional, technical and clerical employees with the exception of education psychologists, nursery nurses, youth and community workers, chief officers and the chief executive.

There are a small number of staff who have yet to move over to Single Status. We also have a small number of employees who have TUPE'd into the Council. These employees remain on their original terms and conditions until agreed otherwise.

Senior managers including chief officers have locally determined rates of pay which are linked to national negotiations for the determination of pay awards. A revised pay and grading structure for senior managers was introduced on 1 April 2013. The aim of the review was to reduce costs whilst ensuring the Council's pay arrangements remained competitive.

Also in 2013, the Council rationalised the terms and conditions for senior managers. Those senior management posts which fall within the Joint National Committee (JNC) Chief Officer definition are employed on JNC terms and conditions and all other senior managers are employed on National Joint Committee (NJC) for Local Government Services terms and conditions with some local variations. The senior management posts which fall within the JNC definition are predominately the Corporate Directors and Directors. This means that the majority of senior managers have terms and conditions which are largely consistent with those for other staff. A number of changes were also made to the JNC for Chief Officer terms and conditions to align them more with the terms and conditions for all other staff. In 2025, the pay structure for Senior managers was further revised to meet the needs of the organisation at this level.

Local Conventions for the GLPC Job Evaluation Scheme

Virtually all local authorities and organisations that use the GLPC Scheme have local conventions in place. A convention is the term given to the local interpretation of the wording of a job evaluation scheme, which are usually written down. Without local conventions, evaluators may interpret the scheme's factor level definitions differently.

This exposes the authority to the potential risk of inconsistency and can lead to inaccurate gradings.

The Council in March 2013 introduced local conventions to ensure that the scheme is applied consistently and fairly to all employees. These have been reviewed and amended in accordance with refreshed guidance notes on the job evaluation scheme issued by the GLPC in 2016.

Pay on Appointment

All employees are normally appointed on the lowest pay spinal column point for their job evaluated grade. Employees may be appointed at a higher point, where they are currently earning more than the lowest pay spine for the role and/or where it is considered that they already possess the skills and experience needed to justify a higher salary within the grade. Appointment at a higher point on the salary scale has to be authorised by the Director or Corporate Director responsible for that service.

The Council delegates authority to the Senior Staff Appointments Sub-Committee to make appointments to the Council of all officers at Director level and above, except for the Chief Executive, in which case a recommendation to appoint is made to Full Council for its final decision to confirm the appointment or not. The starting salary for new appointments to these posts is agreed by the body making the appointment. The starting salary for any other post where the overall remuneration package on new appointment (excluding pension contributions in accordance with the Local Government Pension Scheme regulations) is to exceed £100,000 will normally be agreed by full council or a committee of the Council unless the Chief Executive agrees otherwise.

Annual Pay Progression

Brent's pay policy is primarily based on evaluated pay grades, each having a salary range comprising a number of incremental points. Other pay grades are nationally prescribed and also have incremental progression arrangements. Most employees incrementally progress through the pay grade for their job. Progression will normally be one increment (pay spine column point) on the 1st of April each year until the top of the grade is reached for those on the main pay scales. Separate arrangements

apply during the first year of service where the start date is between 1 October and 31 March and on the anniversary of joining for those on senior manager pay scales.

Performance Related Pay and Bonuses

Council employees including the Chief Executive and directors do not receive performance related payments or bonuses.

National / Regional Pay Agreements

The Council operates the national (JNC/NJC) and regional (GLPC) collective bargaining arrangements for pay and conditions of service for all employees, including senior managers. Pay is increased in line with national and regional pay agreements.

Details of the national pay award for 2026/27 are not yet known. All proposals received from the trade unions will be considered in the context of “fair and affordable” pay rises of the public sector as announced by the Chancellor in the 2021 Spending Review.

Market Supplements

The Council re-introduced a market supplement policy in 2018 and the General Purposes Committee has agreed recruitment and retention allowances for social work staff. Individual service areas do not have discretion to apply market supplements or other recruitment and retention payments and there is a governance structure in place to agree any new supplements based on a sound business case.

Fees for Election Duties

Election fees paid to employees (including chief officers) who assist in elections are in line with the rates agreed by the Government whenever general, regional or European elections occur. Where local elections occur fees will be determined using the cross- London agreed rates.

Pensions

All non-teaching employees are able to join the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS). Teachers are able to join the Teachers’ Pension Scheme. Benefits for both schemes are paid in accordance with government regulations. National Health Service employees who transferred to the Council under TUPE have access to the NHS Pension Scheme under special provisions agreed as part of the transfer into local government. Employees joining Public Health after the transfer are employed on Council terms and conditions and do have access to the LGPS.

Payments on Termination of Employment

In the event that the Council terminates the employment of an employee on the grounds of redundancy the terms of the Council's redundancy and early retirement arrangements will apply. Termination payments are also subject to any caps or repayment requirements introduced by government legislation. Where practicable, and unless the Chief Executive agrees otherwise, termination payments which exceed £100k will normally be agreed by full council or a committee of the Council. Where a termination payment includes a special severance payment, due regard will be given to Statutory Guidance on the Making and Disclosure of Special Severance Payments by Local Authorities in England.

Re-employment of Employees

Section 7 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 requires that every appointment to paid office or employment in a local authority shall be made on merit.

The re-engagement of employees including chief officers who are made redundant is subject to the Council's re-engagement arrangements (contained within the Council's Managing Change Policy). The policy sets out the minimum period a former employee must wait before being eligible to work for the Council again, as well as outlining other restrictions.

Employees who are made redundant may not be re-engaged within twelve months of their termination of employment for reasons of redundancy. After twelve months the employee may be re-engaged via the normal recruitment procedures either to carry out similar work or a different job. Re-engagement is subject to the approval of the relevant Director and the Director with responsibility for HR.

Tax avoidance

All permanent Brent staff including senior managers are paid through payroll which means that all taxes are deducted at source. A review of temporary staff is regularly conducted and it is Brent's policy to cover vacancies through the use of approved agency workers or by appointing staff on fixed term contracts. Temporary workers providing services through their own companies will be carrying out projects and generally not covering permanent roles other than in exceptional circumstances e.g. where interim cover is essential whilst a permanent appointment is recruited. Where these situations do occur they will be limited in duration, usually to less than 6 months.

The Council's approach to dealing with His Majesty's Revenue and Customs' (HMRC) changes to regulations for provision of personal services from April 2017 and further changes to off-payroll working introduced in April 2021, is to use the HMRC online assessment tool to determine the employment status of individuals for income tax purposes. Most agency workers, consultants and interims are required to pay tax on a PAYE basis, like Council employees.

Publication and access to information

Brent's annual Pay Policy Statement will be published on the website where it can be easily accessed. Information about chief officers' remuneration is published on the Council's website www.brent.gov.uk in the section Senior Managers' pay.

Summary of the HRA Business Plan

1. Introduction

1.1 This report sets out the HRA rent setting strategy for 2026/27 and provides an update to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan, along with highlighting the key assumptions required to reflect national policies and financial impacts to the HRA. The business plan projections reflect the income and expenditure required to manage the landlord function and, at the same time, work towards the Council's objectives to increase Council housing supply in Brent.

1.2 This report does not attempt to summarise all aspects of the HRA business plan but aims to highlight areas where issues should be noted and consider options for future budget strategy.

2. National and local policies that can impact the HRA Business Plan

2.1 The HRA self-financing system for Council Housing was implemented in April 2012. Under HRA self-financing, the Council's HRA continues to be a ring-fenced account (income and expenditure) for Council dwellings. HRA self-financing is intended to allow local authority landlords to manage and maintain their own stock from the rental income they generate.

2.2 In October 2018, the government announced that the HRA borrowing cap would be lifted, revoking the previous determinations that specified local authorities' limits on indebtedness. This has provided councils with new borrowing powers to increase their housing supply, with a focus on mixed-tenure development including homes for social rent, affordable rent and shared equity products.

2.3 The Welfare Reform Act 2012 introduced radical changes to the welfare system, which included a reduction of housing benefits for social tenants if their accommodation is considered larger than required. It also introduced a new universal credit system to be implemented over time, where benefit payments would be made directly to the tenant, rather than the landlord. This change increases the risk of non-collection, which could lead to a rise in rent arrears.

2.4 The Welfare Reform Act 2016 imposed a 1% rent reduction a year for 4 years from April 2016 to March 2020. The final financial year of reductions being 2019/20. The resulting loss of rental income for Brent over this period was £23 million when compared to the income that would have been due to the Council if this was not imposed.

2.5 It was therefore necessary to make revenue savings within the HRA to compensate for the loss of rental income. A combination of these savings and the use of HRA reserves have helped to achieve a balanced budget during the period of rent reduction, as required by legislation.

2.6 In October 2017, the government announced a return to the option of increasing rent by CPI plus 1% for 5 years for all local authorities, starting in April 2020. A return to the CPI plus 1% model has helped to provide some stability and

certainty over planned investment in the current stock, service improvements and new developments, at least in the short to medium-term.

2.7 Due to exceptional inflation levels and cost of living crisis experienced during the 2022/23 financial year, the government implemented a 7% rent rise limitation for 2023/24, compared to 11.1% if CPI plus 1% was applied. This ceiling resulted in an estimated £2m reduction of income when compared to the standard policy of CPI plus 1%. Like most other housing providers, difficult decisions were required to reduce costs to close the gap between rental income and the increasing cost of service delivery. Brent Housing Management services identified £3m worth of cost reductions during budget setting for 2023/24. There was then a reversion to the standard rent setting arrangements in 2024/25 and the government extended the current CPI plus 1% rent settlement by one year to cover 2025/26.

2.8 Following a consultation, from April 2026, the government has, for the first time, provided a 10-year settlement on social housing rent policy. From 1 April 2026, social housing rents will be allowed to increase by CPI plus 1% each year for 2026 - 2036. For 2026/27, rents are being increased by CPI plus 1%, which equates to a 4.8% rent uplift.

2.9 In addition, the government confirmed at the Spending Review that it will implement a rent convergence mechanism as part of the new rent settlement. Convergence would allow rents for Social Rent properties that are currently below 'formula rent' to increase by an additional amount each year, over and above the CPI plus 1% limit, until they 'converge' with formula rent. Formula rent refers to the formula that is used to calculate the rent that may be charged for a given property when it is let to a new tenant. The government has now confirmed that rent will converge at CPI plus 1% and an additional £1 per week in 2027/28 and an additional £2 per week from 2028/29 onwards, until formula rent is achieved. This helps to increase the sustainability of the HRA and over a ten-year period, the additional income from rent convergence is forecast to be £18.6m, an average of £1.86m per year.

2.9 In the context of the 30-year business plan, whilst a CPI plus 1% model helps to provide some stability and certainty, it does not entirely mitigate other risks which are present in the current economic climate. Factors such as increases in energy and material costs, repair and maintenance contracts and anticipated wage increases, mean that any decision to set rents at less than the maximum permitted, provides a significant risk to the sustainability of the HRA. Local authorities still need to cover the inflationary pressures within the HRA whilst delivering on their operational requirements and strategic priorities, some of which are additional legislative requirements, from repairs and maintenance, to building safety, fire safety and decarbonisation. A rent cap or lower than a CPI plus 1% increases combined with increasing costs lead to even greater pressures on the HRA and a likely situation of spend exceeding income generated through rent and service charge collection.

2.10 The independent review of building regulations and fire safety, also known as the Hackitt Report, was published in 2018. The report set out over 50 recommendations for the delivery of a robust regulatory system. As a result, in

June 2019, the government published the 'Building a Safer Future' consultation detailing proposals to achieve long-term reform of the building safety system. This document sets out the government's proposals for a reformed building safety system covering the performance of all buildings, as well as the management of fire and structural safety risks in new and existing buildings in scope.

2.11 A low-rise fire safety programme was developed by Brent Housing Management to address risks in 1,208 converted and purpose-built blocks. With regard to high rise blocks, it was decided to go over and above regulatory standards by carrying out Type 4 Fire Risk Assessments across all tower blocks over 12 storeys, the outcome of which found no fundamental issues or safety concerns.

2.12 The Building Safety Act 2022 (BSA 2022) introduces fundamental reforms to the law and regulation of building safety, which seek to secure the safety of people in or about buildings and improve the standard of buildings. The scope and impact of the BSA is far-reaching. Its provisions will affect the design, planning, construction, occupation and alteration of future buildings. The Building Safety Regulator will be responsible for all regulatory decisions during the design, construction, occupation and refurbishment of High-Rise Buildings (HRBs), which has been defined pursuant to the legislation as buildings over 18 meters or has at least 17 storeys.

2.13 The Council Housing Asset Management Strategy (AMS) 2022-2026 sets out a vision for responsive repairs, investment in high rise blocks, reform and improvement of the stock and its performance. The AMS consists of a 5-year budget requirement totalling £104m and spend re-profiling for this has been incorporated into the business plan. The Kilburn Square tower block project is scheduled to complete by the end of 25/26. Work on the Windmill Court tower block improvement is expected to start in 26/27, alongside an increased investment in fire safety works (£2.1m) and essential remediation works on Granville New Homes (£5.6m).

2.14 Brent's high-rise blocks that are being retained require significant investment in terms of external fabric, internal works, and mechanical and electrical services. These high-rise blocks built in the 1960's and 1970's require major works if they are to achieve a further lifecycle beyond 40 years. The external walls of most of these blocks are in poor condition. Without refurbishment, these will deteriorate further and beyond the point of affordable refurbishment. The dwellings are generously sized and with refurbishment will continue to offer good accommodation to residents. The mechanical and electrical services are nearing the end of their usable life. Officers plan to undertake the major refurbishment and fire safety measures such as installing sprinklers. The business plan incorporates investment starting from 2025/26 on tower block refurbishment programme.

2.15 As part of the South Kilburn regeneration programme, the Gloucester House & Durham Court site has been redeveloped to provide 235 new affordable homes to assured social tenants. These have been occupied by Brent's residents in 2021/22. Brent Council owns the freehold and the Council's housing team,

together with the Council's energy team, provide the billing for heat to the residents. The associated costs are funded by service charges and through the HRA asset management strategy, in line with other communal heating networks.

2.16 In May 2019, the UK government declared a climate change emergency, committing to target net zero carbon emissions by 2050. In July 2019, Brent declared a local climate and ecological emergency and has committed to working towards carbon neutrality by the year 2030.

2.17 London Councils have included a target of an average EPC Band B rating for London's housing stock by 2030 as part of its joint statement with the London Environment Directors' Network on climate change. Currently, 68% of Brent's Council housing stock has had an energy survey, of which 58% is performing better that the national average of Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) band D. However, 96% falls short of EPC band B. A key feature of the borough-wide climate strategy will be to achieve an average level of EPC band B by retrofitting all housing properties by 2030.

2.18 Decarbonisation works to Council homes, including energy efficiency works that reduce demand for heat, is an important part of the AMS. The AMS plays an important role in the delivery of the Brent Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy. Homes account for 42% of direct carbon emissions in the Borough. The target is to achieve an average EPC band B rating by 2030 for Brent council stock, as it is important that the Council leads by example. Energy efficiency works will be important in helping tenants and leaseholders with the cost of living crisis by helping to reduce fuel costs. Supporting households with the cost of living crisis is a key priority in the Council's Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy 2021-2030.

2.19 Whilst major refurbishment work on tower blocks are undertaken, there are opportunities to decarbonise properties to as high a standard as is practicable and achievable targeting at least an EPC B. The five-year Asset Management Plan therefore includes climate emergency works within the tower block programme now rather than having to return in later years with associated disruption and increased costs. The Council has been awarded £1.3m from the Social Housing Decarbonisation Funding grant. This will provide some contribution towards key energy efficiency measures such as external wall insulation, high performance windows, and renewable energy equipment. £880k of the fund has already been drawn down in the last two financial years.

2.20 The Council has a commitment to deliver 5,000 affordable homes in the borough by 2028, of which 1,700 will be delivered directly by the Council. As of November 2025, 1,186 affordable homes have already been delivered by the Council, with an additional 293 expected by the end of 25/26 and 312 in 26/27. The Council is therefore on track to exceed both delivery targets. The projected capital investment for acquiring and constructing new council homes in 2025/26 is £38.8m and a further £31.5m allocated for 2026/27.

2.21 Following the identification of urgent remedial works required to Granville New Homes, Cabinet reviewed the proposed options presented in October 2021. It

was agreed to dispose of the blocks at Granville New Homes owned by First Wave Housing (FWH) to the Council's HRA, subject to a consultation with residents. The transfer was finalised on 1 April 2022, which involved the transfer of 84 social housing and 1 leasehold property, along with associated income and expenditures to maintain the stock. Remediation works are currently estimated to cost the HRA £20.1m.

2.22 In April 2025, the Council has self-referred to the Regulator of Social Housing due to breaches in building safety compliance. Investigations revealed that a number of fire safety actions were incorrectly marked as completed and there were inconsistencies in asbestos management, water safety, and smoke and carbon monoxide detector data. This led the Regulator to request additional performance information, culminating in a regulatory judgement of C3 issued on 28 May 2025. This represents a significant risk to the HRA and financial pressures associated with addressing the identified compliance issues.

2.23 On 2 July 2025 the government has published a five-point plan on delivering A Decade of Renewal for Social and Affordable Housing, an ambitious, long-term plan to address the systemic under provision of social and affordable housing. The plan includes launching a £39bn Social and Affordable Homes Programme (2026–2036), targeting the construction of 300,000 homes, of which at least 60% will be for Social Rent. However, it is recognised that Brent would need changes to the design of affordable housing grants, such as permitting reduced match funding or permitting London Affordable Rent rather than social rent for new social housing to be viable. A modernised regulatory framework is being established to ensure safety, tenant protection, and long-term decency of homes, including Awaab's Law and electrical safety regulations to commence from late 2025, updated Decent Homes Standard and Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (EPC C by 2030) and professionalisation of staff, with mandatory qualifications from 2026. These additional requirements put further pressures on the HRA.

2.24 The government has also proposed some reforms to the Right to Buy (RTB) scheme to address concerns about the depletion of social housing stock and to support the delivery of new homes. Key measures include reverting discounts to pre-2012 levels, extending tenant eligibility from 3 to 10 years, capping discounts at 15%, and restricting repeat use of the scheme. New and market-rent homes will be protected from RTB for 35 years, and ALMOs will be able to use receipts for new affordable housing. Councils will retain 100% of RTB receipts with greater spending flexibilities, alongside extended protections on resales and an indefinite right of first refusal. These reforms should help to reduce premature stock loss and enhance longer-term capacity to maintain and expand the social housing supply. A new long-term rent settlement (CPI+1% for 10 years from 2026), reintroduction of a rent convergence mechanism and renewed partnership with sector are also part of the government's five-point plan.

3. Rent setting proposal for 2026/27

3.1 The table below shows a snapshot of current average rent levels from occupied properties and the proposed increase of 4.8% for 2026/27. All new re-lets are charged at Formula Rent and new builds are charged at Formula or Affordable

Rent that are in line with Greater London Authority (GLA) benchmarks and are adjusted annually in line with rent standards. Updated rent levels are reflected in the current average rent for 2025/26, average rent can change depending on time of reporting. The average proposed rent rate for 2026/27 is £6.97 per week (4.8%) higher than the current financial year.

Tenant Rents for 2026/27

Bed Size	Current average rent 2025/26	Proposed average rent 2026/27 (4.8%)	Rent uplift
	£	£	£
Bedsits	109.08	114.32	5.24
1	128.41	134.57	6.16
2	146.52	153.55	7.03
3	161.54	169.29	7.75
4	177.19	185.70	8.51
5	188.66	197.72	9.06
6	206.59	216.51	9.92
7	248.72	260.66	11.94
Average rent	**145.28**	**152.25**	**6.97**

3.2 A rent increase of 4.8% is estimated to result in an additional £2.91m of income when compared to current levels of income. This is due to national inflation increasing by 3.8% compared to last year, which reflects the current economic climate.

3.3 For tenants in receipt of housing support to help pay their rent, the cost of rent increase will be met by their housing benefit or the housing element of universal credit, unless the level of support is reduced by factors that may apply to individual circumstances such as benefit cap. Brent Housing Management provide support to tenants who are struggling to pay their rent. The primary objective is to ensure that tenants have all the support that they can get, rather than pursuing an eviction. Support options include assessing whether the tenant is claiming all the welfare benefits that they are entitled to, assisting them to claim from the Council's resident support fund and arranging a suitable payment plan. Brent Housing Management endeavour to identify vulnerable tenants and maintain contact with tenants in order to ensure that they continue to get the required support to sustain their tenancy.

3.4 The net rent amounts exclude service charges. Service charges are a recharge to tenants and leaseholders based on actual costs incurred in providing specific services, such as estate cleaning.

3.5 It is recognised that the current economic environment and increased rental charges can have an adverse impact on the level of rent collections. Approximately 23% of rent charges are covered through housing benefit payments in 2025/26, which is estimated at £13.4m. The remaining 77% of income estimated at £45.5m are paid directly by tenants who are in employment or in receipt of universal credit and would be at risk of non-collection.

3.6 Collection rates 2025/26 on average stand at 95%. If this level of rent collection remained consistent for the year, this would result in an additional budget requirement of up to £0.9m to allow for risk of non-payments. The Council's Resident Support Fund helps to alleviate some of financial hardship being faced by tenants. However, collection rates are still expected to continue to be impacted. For every 1% drop in collection, the loss of income is estimated at £0.67m. Bad debts have been assumed at 2.5% in 2026/27 and 2.0% of rental income per annum thereafter. This equates to an average £2.69m rent loss per annum over the course of the business plan.

3.7 Supervision and management costs include allowances for pay inflation uplifts in the business plan. The Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) RPI inflation forecast of 3.20% is estimated to amount to an additional £0.72m budget requirement in 2026/27. Future pay inflations, also based on OBR RPI forecasts, are 3.06% for 2027/28, 2.85% for 2028/29 and 2.84% thereafter.

3.8 Repairs, maintenance and general costs include annual inflationary uplifts based on the OBR RPI rates of 3.2% for 2026/27, 3.06% for 2027/28, 2.85% for 2028/29 and 2.84% thereafter.

3.9 The HRA business plan aims to set aside appropriate funds and incorporate a voluntary debt repayment policy that mirrors the General Fund approach. Calculations involve profiling debt repayments for new builds over 55 years, and debt repayment for major works over 25 years, based on the rate of borrowing for the debt. The repayment modelling commences from debt incurred from 2019/20 onwards, reflecting the period when HRA borrowing exceeded the previously set debt cap of £199.3m. In practice, repayments will be possible in years where there is capacity within accumulated operating reserve.

3.10 The operating reserve as at 31 March 2025 was £4.5m. Due to the anticipated deficit of £2.3m in 2025/26, it is projected that the balance will reduce to £2.2m by the end of 2025/26.

3.11 The operating reserve is necessary to manage unexpected deficits, or for smoothing in-year budget pressures due to timing differences between the cost of building new homes and receiving rental income, so that it can offset the increased borrowing costs. In addition, the need for the HRA to balance competing demands, such as investing in supply of new homes, regulatory and legislative pressures, as well as inflation have further stressed the importance of

maintaining adequate level of reserves. The target operating reserve balance is set at 5% of rental income in the business plan, which is approximately £3.6m for 2026/27. The operating reserve balance is currently not projected to reduce below £2.2m. However, due to increased cost pressures in the current economic climate, the 2023/24 rent cap of 7%, along with increased investment to improve high rise blocks, target reserve levels are projected to be achieved by 2027/28 onwards, at an estimated reserve balance of £5.3m.

4. Summary of key assumptions in the HRA Business Plan

4.1 The HRA business plan provides long-term financial forecasts resulting from the implications of the Council's spending, investment and rent-setting decisions, based on the authority's current income, expenditure and investment expectations. The data is combined with key assumptions on how costs and income might change in the future to illustrate what the authority can reasonably expect to happen, using the best available information at the time.

4.2 Regular review of assumptions is important to help the Council to make early decisions that help keep the HRA in balance, whilst also delivering substantial levels of investment in Council housing.

4.3 A summary of the key assumptions that underpin the 30 Year Business Plan are presented below:

Description	How it impacts the Business Plan	Assumptions used in the Business Plan
HRA stock movements	Projected rental income is based on stock numbers at different rent designations (low-cost social/affordable/London affordable rent/other)	Baseline stock numbers in the current year are adjusted for projected RTB sales and new affordable housing supply
Inflation on supplies and services	Income and expenditure are adjusted for inflation to reflect general cost increases. CPI forecast is based on rate in September of previous year.	Rental income uses CPI+1%. All other expenditure is assumed at RPI. CPI 3.8% in year 1, reducing to 2% from year 4 onwards. RPI 3.2% in year 1, reducing gradually to 2.85% from year 3 onwards.
Minimum Working Balance	Target level of minimum reserve for any overspends	Working balance requirements assumed at 5% of income giving circa £3.7m

Description	How it impacts the Business Plan	Assumptions used in the Business Plan
Rental Income	Tenant rent projections are driven by stock numbers and average rent. Tenant rent is the largest source of income for the HRA.	Average rent is currently set at £145.28 per week. Rent is adjusted as per government policy. Assumed CPI+1% for duration of business plan.
Supervision and Management Costs	Rental income is allocated to management costs of providing a landlord service	Cost assumed to increase by RPI each year
Service Charges	Cost of specific services are charged back to tenants and leaseholders	Service charge uplift is in line with anticipated cost increases at RPI
Voids	Level of void properties have an impact on rental income that can be charged	Rent loss through voids estimated at 3.5% of rent for 2026/27 and 3% thereafter
Description	**How it impacts the Business Plan**	**Assumptions used in the Business Plan**
Bad Debts	Rent arrears that are not collected results in loss of income	Assumed 2.5% in 2026/27 and 2% thereafter
Repairs and Maintenance Costs	Rental income is allocated to repairs budgets	Expenditure is adjusted in line with RPI and stock movements

Description	How it impacts the Business Plan	Assumptions used in the Business Plan
Right to Buy Sales	Stock reductions reduce rental income and set a target for the Council to achieve 1-4-1 replacements	Projected 50 sales in 2025/26, 80 sales in 2026/27, and 7 sales per year thereafter
Interest rate on borrowing	Rental income is allocated to financing debt	New debt is assumed at average interest rate of 4.8%.
Capital Programme - Major Works	Investment to maintain housing stock	Profiling over 5 years based on Asset Management Strategy.
HRA Debt Balance	The HRA debt balance as at 31 March 2025 was £348m	Accumulated reserve balances will determine capacity for debt repayments
RTB Receipts	Rolling five year spend targets are set by MHCLG based on RTB sales	It is currently assumed in the business plan that spend targets will be met to achieve 1-4-1 replacement of homes.
Description	**How it impacts the Business Plan**	**Assumptions used in the Business Plan**
Affordable Housing Supply	834 affordable homes will have been completed in the financial years 2025/26 and 2026/27.	583 of these homes will complete in 2025/26 and a further 251 will complete in 2026/27. Of these, 594 are at London Affordable Rent and 240 at Low-Cost Social rent.

5. Sensitivity Analysis

5.1 Alongside the baseline assumptions, a sensitivity analysis has been undertaken to explore the impact on reserve balances from a range of assumptions. Considering each of these in turn enables to read the baseline financial projections in the context of potential changes and so gives an indication of key risks. The key sensitivities analysed are:

A) Baseline assumptions

B) RPI cost inflation plus 0.5%: 3.7% in 2026/27, 3.56% in 2027/28, 3.35% in 2028/29, and 3.34% thereafter.

C) Voids 0.5% higher than baseline

D) Bad debt 1% higher than baseline

E) Rent at CPI from year 11 onwards

5.2 The sensitivity analysis demonstrates that:

A) Baseline assumptions provide consistently small surpluses over 30 years, with a projected reserve balance of £154.7m in year 30, which could potentially be used to reduce debt.

B) Cost inflation at RPI plus 0.5% is projected to result in year-on-year deficits from 2034/35, and HRA reserves running out by 2042/43.

C) Voids 0.5% higher than baseline leads to reduced surpluses, with a reduction of the projected reserve balance to £139.4m in year 30. A net impact of £15.3m over the 30-year period.

D) Bad debt 1% higher than baseline leads to reduced surpluses, with a net reduction of the projected reserve balance to £113.6m in year 30. A net impact of £41.1m over the 30-year period.

E) Rent increasing at CPI from year 11 (rather than CPI+1% in the baseline assumptions) results in increasing deficits from year 15 with reserves depleted by 2049/50.

5.3 In summary, if voids run 0.5% higher than baseline, bad debt write off is 1% higher than baseline, and RPI is 0.5% higher than baseline, there will be consistent deficits on the HRA with a negative reserve of £0.9m by 2035/36. The only remaining mitigation would be to reduce the Revenue contribution to capital outlay (RCCO) included in the Depreciation charge.

6. Risks

6.1 The business plan is based on a set of assumptions, and there will always be an element of risk of significant changes in cashflow projections in the revenue and capital accounts, if any of the assumptions fail to materialise.

6.2 The main variables that could affect the long-term viability of the Business Plan are rent levels and long-term major works and repairs. There has already been a change to the Council's power to increase rents annually up to a maximum of CPI plus 1%, with an introduced rent rise limitation of 7% in 2023/24, however the government has now provided a 10-year settlement on social housing rent policy allowing social housing rents to increase by CPI plus 1% each year for 2026 - 2036. However, collection rates remain volatile.

6.3 Global conflicts, the long-term impact of pandemic, Brexit, high levels of inflation, labour shortages and rising interest rates present the Council with a volatile and uncertain economic environment. The cost of living crisis will impact residents of Brent and the Council is committed to doing what it can to support those in greatest need. Cost pressures and risk of income collection losses are continuously monitored.

6.4 Inflation over the past few years has experienced such high levels that have not been seen since the 1980's. Besides rising energy costs, other goods are also experiencing increases in prices, due to factors such as labour shortages, pay rises, logistic issues and a general trend to increase prices and restore profit margins where previously slumps in demand had suppressed price levels.

6.5 In September 2025 CPI stood at 3.8% against a Bank of England target of 2%. The September inflation figures are important as they are used for the following years uplift on formula rent levels, 2023/24 being an exception with a 7% ceiling, as opposed to 11.1%. The gap between inflation on rent levels and inflation on costs is a significant risk to the long-term business plan. Inflation rates assumed in the current business plan is informed by projections from Bank of England, which is currently forecasting CPI inflation to return to the 2% target by the second quarter of 2026.

6.6 The impacts of Universal Credit and cost of living crisis can affect the HRA Business Plan, as the number of rent arrears may increase considerably. A number of mitigations are in place to help support tenants on universal credit, along with Council Resident Support Fund to help with financial hardship.

6.7 As the Council adds more stock to its portfolio and complexities of new additional requirements to building standards are increasing, such as fire safety works and decarbonisation, the cost of major works are rising. At the moment, there is insufficient government subsidy available to address these changes. The Asset Management Strategy and investment plans must be approached cautiously and allow for flexibility to scale back on schemes where required.

6.8 Impacts of national housing policies and any changes proposed in future Government papers can have an adverse impact on the HRA and could require additional resources to address any unexpected changes.

6.9 Whilst the Council is confident in its ability to continue delivering affordable homes for Brent residents, there are social and economic factors, which are increasingly placing pressure on both current schemes that are on site and those in the Council's pipeline. Brexit, inflation, shortage of labour, materials and global events such as the Cpvod-19 pandemic and wars have had an adverse effect on costs and therefore the financial viability of capital schemes. Developing affordable housing remains challenging within the current market which is resulting in the tenure of schemes being revisited and some pipeline schemes pausing. Though cost of materials have recently stabilised, they remain high.

6.10 Significant grant funding is essential to pay for new build schemes. The Council has entered into grant agreements with the Greater London Authority governing the award of such funding to include the requirement to deliver specified numbers of new homes with start on site dates specified. Failure to observe grant conditions or achieve specified delivery numbers may lead to a requirement to repay grant funding and therefore efficient and timely delivery approaches are essential to mitigate the risk.

6.11 The HRA debt cap has been removed and significant borrowing is required to invest in stock to increase housing supply in Brent. The HRA is exposed to interest rate fluctuations, which can have a significant impact on revenue budgets and the overall business plan. Brent Council operates a one-pool approach to its borrowing, where the HRA receives a proportion of the Council's overall borrowing but with a reduced rate. Having remained at 1% or less since February 2009, base rates began rising in June 2022. The forecast borrowing rate for the HRA is based on the medium to long term PWLB borrowing rate at the discounted value for the HRA, at an average of 4.8%.

6.12 Spend targets for 1-4-1 receipts set by Government mean that the Council may need to transfer receipts with compounded interest, if spend targets are not met within 5 years of receiving the receipt. There are currently sufficient schemes in pipeline to be able to utilise receipts towards adding affordable housing in Brent.

6.13 There are also demographic changes and a general recognition that there should be better integration of housing, social care and health services. As time goes on, a proportion of the population who are elderly or vulnerable increases and there is an increased need for appropriate housing. However, with limited clarity on the government's funding of supported housing, it is likely that the problem of how to house vulnerable elderly people will intensify.

This page is intentionally left blank

COUNCIL TAX SETTING COMMITTEE – TERMS OF REFERENCE

Membership

The committee comprises of the five councillors (four labour and one conservative).

Terms of Reference

This committee is established under Section 67 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992:

1. To note the annual budget 2026/27 for Brent agreed by Full Council on 23 February 2026

2. To note the formal resolution by Full Council for Brent Council tax in 2026/27

3. To note the Greater London Authority precept level for 2026/27

4. As a consequence, to set an amount of council tax for the financial year 2026/27 in accordance with Section 30 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

5. To agree the formal resolution for council tax in 2026/27

This page is intentionally left blank

Council Tax Setting Committee Formal Resolution

1.1 In relation to the Council Tax for 2026/27 we resolve:

That the following amounts be now calculated as the Council's element by the Council for the year 2026/27 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as amended:

(a) £1,173,480,007 being the aggregate of the amount that the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) of the Act.

(b) £982,937,146 being the aggregate of the amounts that the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) of the Act.

(c) £190,542,861 being the amount by which the aggregate at (a) above exceeds the aggregate at (b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act, as its Council Tax requirement for the year.

(d) £1,724.76 being the amount at (c) above, divided by the amount for the tax base of 110,475, agreed by the General Purposes Committee on the 8 December 2025, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year.

(e) Valuation Bands

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
1,149.84	1,341.48	1,533.12	1,724.76	2,108.04	2,491.32	2,874.60	3,449.52

being the amounts given by multiplying the amount at (d) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation band D, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands.

1.2 That it be noted that for the year 2026/27 the proposed GLA precept issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, in respect of the GLA, for each of the categories of dwellings are as shown below. The GLA intends to agree its precept on 26 February 2026.

Valuation Bands

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H

£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
340.34	397.06	453.79	510.51	623.96	737.40	850.85	1,021.02

1.3 That, having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at paragraph 1.1(e) and 1.2, the Council, in accordance with Section 30(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the following amounts as the amounts of council tax for the year 2026/27 for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:

Valuation Bands

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
1,490.18	1,738.54	1,986.91	2,235.27	2,732.00	3,228.72	3,725.45	4,470.54

1.4 That it be noted that the Corporate Director, Finance and Resources has determined that the Council element of the basic amount of Council Tax for 2026/27 is not excessive in accordance with the principles approved under Section 52ZB of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

(a) That the Corporate Director, Finance and Resources be and is hereby authorised to give due notice of the said Council Tax in the manner provided by Section 38(2) of the 1992 Act.

(b) That the Corporate Director, Finance and Resources be and is hereby authorised when necessary to apply for a summons against any Council Taxpayer or non-domestic ratepayer on whom an account for the said tax or rate and any arrears has been duly served and who has failed to pay the amounts due to take all subsequent necessary action to recover them promptly.

(c) That the Corporate Director, Finance and Resources be and is hereby authorised to collect revenues and distribute monies from the Collection Fund and is authorised to borrow or to lend money in accordance with the regulations to the maximum benefit of each fund.

	Cabinet 9 February 2026
	Report from the Corporate Director of Neighbourhoods and Regeneration
	Lead Member - Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning and Property (Councillor Teo Benea)

Approval for the Disposal of Council-Owned Commercial Properties

Wards Affected:	Preston, Kingsbury, and Northwick Park
Key or Non-Key Decision:	Key
Open or Part/Fully Exempt: (If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)	Part Exempt: Appendix 1 is not for publication as it contains the following category of exempt information as specified in Paragraph 3, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, namely: "Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).
List of Appendices:	Two Appendix 1: Valuations (Exempt) Appendix 2: Site plans
Background Papers:	None
Contact Officer(s): (Name, Title, Contact Details)	Denish Patel, Head of Property 020 8937 2529 Denish.Patel@brent.gov.uk Tanveer Ghani, Director Property and Assets 020 8937 1722 Tanveer.Ghani@brent.gov.uk

1.0 Executive Summary

1.1 This report seeks Cabinet approval to dispose of three surplus General Fund property interests. The proposed disposals are necessary to reduce financial pressures, mitigate increasing asset liabilities, and support strategic priorities outlined in the Council's Property Strategy 2024–27 and Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).

1.2 The properties proposed for disposal are as follows (see Appendix 2 for site plans):

- 176 Preston Road (Lincoln Parade), Wembley HA9 8UA – Vacant single-storey retail unit (Preston Ward).

- Grove Park Pavilion, Grove Park NW9 0JP – Vacant two-storey building formerly used as a nursery (Kingsbury Ward).

- Freehold interest at 280 Watford Road, Northwick Park HA1 3TZ (golf course) – site is subject to a long lease; opportunity to realise capital value of the reversionary interest (Northwick Park Ward).

1.3 Subject to Cabinet approval, the disposals will be conducted through open and competitive marketing. Sale structures will be decided in consultation with appointed agents and may include:

- Freehold sale (a one-off capital receipt), or

- Long-leasehold disposal (premium plus ongoing ground/base rent).

- Consideration will be given, as part of the disposal structure, to the inclusion of overage (clawback) provisions linked to any future change of use or uplift in value, where appropriate.

1.4 All capital receipts will be retained within the General Fund and used in accordance with the MTFS and treasury management principles. Disposal generates cashable savings compared to the “retain” option by:

- Removing ongoing revenue costs (security, insurance, compliance, void rates)

- Reducing future capital liabilities; and

- Allowing capital receipts to be used to reduce borrowing, lowering interest costs and Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) obligations.

2.0 Recommendation(s)

2.1 That Cabinet delegates authority to the Corporate Director of Neighbourhoods and Regeneration, in consultation with the relevant Lead Member, to:

2.1.1 Determine the most suitable disposal strategy for each 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.

2.1.2 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.

2.1.3 Enter into and finalise all necessary legal agreements, contracts, and ancillary documentation required to give effect to the disposals.

2.2 To note that the net capital receipts, after deducting disposal and associated costs, will be retained within the General Fund and used in accordance with the Council's MTFS and Capital Programme, as outlined in the Financial Implications section of this report.

2.3 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.

3.0 Detail

Cabinet Member Foreword

3.1 This paper sets out a programme of property disposals that will release underused or non-viable Council assets, while supporting the delivery of our wider financial and sustainability goals. These sites, which are vacant, costly to maintain, or no longer aligned with service needs, represent an opportunity to make the best use of public resources and reinvest in the priorities that matter most to our residents.

3.2 By disposing of surplus assets, we can reduce ongoing costs and liabilities, generate income, and create new investment opportunities. This approach ensures that every Council asset contributes to the Borough's long-term wellbeing and financial resilience.

3.3 The disposal proposal also reflects commitment to sustainability: disposing of obsolete, energy-inefficient buildings reduces the Council's carbon footprint and enables new, modern development that can meet higher environmental standards through the planning process.

3.4 The programme directly supports the Brent Borough Plan (2023–27) and Property Strategy priorities:

- **A Cleaner, Greener Future:** reducing operational carbon emissions by releasing inefficient assets and supporting the delivery of sustainable redevelopment.
- **A Prosperous, Inclusive Brent:** using capital receipts to reinvest in housing, regeneration, and local economic opportunity.
- **Thriving Communities:** ensuring land and assets are used effectively to support community wellbeing and future growth.

- **A Responsible, Resilient Council:** managing our resources prudently, maximising value for money, and protecting essential services for residents.

4.0 Background

4.1 176 Preston Road, HA9 8UA

4.1.1 176 Preston Road, Wembley HA9 8AU (formerly 3-7 Lincoln Parade) is a vacant single-storey retail unit, forming the end of a commercial terrace on Preston Road, with a rear car park.

4.1.2 There is no current or future requirement for this property. It has been vacant for several years and previously supported short-term “meanwhile” uses that were unsustainable due to the building’s declining condition. No statutory or commissioned services rely on the site.

4.1.3 A structural inspection undertaken in February 2024 identified ongoing condition-related issues that would require significant capital investment before the building could be returned to operational or lettable use. Initial advice indicates that a full roof replacement is likely to be required, with estimated costs in excess of £100,000, excluding wider structural, internal and compliance-related works. When these are taken together, the overall capital exposure is likely to be several hundred thousand pounds.

4.1.4 In addition to the capital repair liability, the Council continues to incur annual holding and security costs of approximately £5,000–£7,000 while the property remains vacant. Although it could be argued that capital investment might be recovered over time through rental income, this would rely on a number of assumptions, including timely reletting, sustained demand and no further unplanned costs. For the Council, pursuing this approach would require committing scarce capital and management resource to a non-operational asset with uncertain outcomes and extended payback periods.

4.1.5 The site’s layout and relationship with surrounding land means that continued Council ownership would require further investment and ongoing management input to support any future use. Retention would therefore perpetuate holding costs and financial exposure. Disposal enables the Council to release capital value and allows the site’s longer-term potential to be explored through the market.

4.1.6 The site layout and its connection to neighbouring land reduce its suitability for Council operational use and limit opportunities for cost-effective re-letting without substantial investment or lengthy tenant rent free periods. Keeping the site would therefore increase ongoing holding costs; while selling it would release capital value and allow the market to unlock the site’s longer-term potential.

4.1.7 Disposal on the open market is therefore considered the most economically and strategically appropriate option, as it removes ongoing liabilities, generates a

capital receipt, and aligns with the *Dispose* theme of the Council's Property Strategy 2024–27 for non-operational assets. The estimated market value is set out in Confidential Appendix 1.

4.2 Grove Park Pavilion, NW9 0JP

4.2.1 There is no current or foreseeable requirement for this property. The asset, which previously served as a nursery and community centre, has been vacant for an extended period and is secured by a live-in guardian arrangement. An adjoining self-contained residential flat, occupied by a warden formerly engaged through the Parks Service, is part of the overall property (part first floor) and is excluded from the disposal. This residential occupation further limits potential for redevelopment**.** The site is designated open space, as a local policy designation.

4.2.2 The two-storey pavilion (approximately 400m^2) would need significant capital investment to be operational or suitable for letting. Although £500,000 of SCIL funding was previously allocated for refurbishment and approved by Cabinet, inflation in construction costs since then suggests the investment will be higher. Considering current budget constraints and broader estate rationalisation goals, allocating additional Council capital to this asset would not be an efficient use of resources. Therefore, further Council investment is not advisable.

4.2.3 The property is surplus to operational needs and fits within the '*Dispose*' category of the Council's Property Strategy, which targets vacant, high-liability, low-benefit assets with ongoing hold costs (e.g., in this case c.£5,000-£7,000 per annum) for rationalisation. Disposal through the open market is therefore advised, subject to statutory open space procedures. The adjoining residential flat will be excluded from the disposal boundary, with its future use to be managed separately. The previously allocated SCIL funding should be returned or reallocated in accordance with funding conditions.

4.2.4 A building survey undertaken in June 2023 identified an estimated £363,000 of minimum repair and refurbishment works required to return the building to operational use. Given construction cost inflation since that assessment, together with the need for fit-out and compliance works, the overall capital requirement is now likely to exceed the previously approved £500,000 SCIL allocation. Even if such investment were made, the site's location within a public park would limit the scope of Council-led uses and require ongoing management input. Retention would therefore expose the Council to continued tenant, void, lifecycle maintenance and management risk, with uncertain financial and social returns.

4.2.5 When considered on a risk-adjusted basis, further Council investment in this non-operational asset cannot be justified, and disposal represents the most appropriate option, subject to statutory open space procedures. The estimated market value is set out in Confidential Appendix 1.

4.3 280 Watford Road, Northwick Park HA1 3TZ – Freehold Interest

4.3.1 The Council owns the freehold reversion to the Northwick Park Golf Course. Playgolf (Northwick Park) Limited occupies the site under a 99-year full repairing and insuring (FRI) lease from 7 November 2005 to 6 November 2104. The demised premises include the golf course, driving range, and a two-storey building of approximately 2,600 m^2. The permitted use is for golf and driving-range activities, with controlled rights to underlet retail units.

4.3.2 Under the terms of the lease, the Council receives a combination of base rent, turnover-linked rent (above thresholds set out in the lease) and income from permitted underletting. Rent reviews are linked to inflation and, in certain circumstances, can provide scope for rental growth over time. In favourable market conditions, this structure has the potential to support a stronger long-term income stream, subject to the lease remaining secure and the operator continuing to trade successfully. However, the extent and timing of any future growth are inherently uncertain and dependent on market conditions and operator performance over a very long-term horizon.

4.3.3 Although retention of the freehold provides access to future rental growth, this income is spread over the next 80 years, and its real value is sensitive to business performance, macroeconomic conditions, and the longevity of golf-related activity at the site. The Council has no control over operational decisions, investment levels, or market shifts that may impact long-term viability.

4.3.4 Disposing the freehold would:

- Capitalise the entire income stream upfront.
- Remove long-term exposure to sectoral or tenant risk.
- Simplify the Council's asset base by disposing of a non-operational, non-strategic freehold; and
- Align with the *Dispose* theme of the Council's Property Strategy 2024–27, which identifies assets generating limited strategic or social value and carrying long-term uncertainties as appropriate for disposal.

4.3.5 The freehold interest is not essential for service delivery and provides limited strategic influence for the Council. Disposal is recommended based on value optimisation rather than reducing liabilities, recognising the trade-off between future rental growth and the certainty of an immediate capital receipt. Disposing the freehold offers a guaranteed, immediate capital receipt, reduces financial exposure to the leisure/golf market, and aligns with the Council's MTFS amid significant revenue and capital pressures.

4.3.6 The land subject to the proposed freehold disposal inherits established public rights of way. These are statutory highways, and the proposed disposal of the freehold will not of itself affect their current status or availability. The freehold will be disposed of subject to all existing public rights of way.

4.3.7 On balance, disposal through the open market is advised considering the Council's priorities, subject to statutory open space procedures. The estimated market value is set out in Confidential Appendix 1.

4.4 Option(s) Appraisal

4.4.1 A range of strategic approaches has been evaluated, considering service alignment, financial performance, deliverability, and risk. The properties are non-operational (or non-strategic), incur ongoing holding costs, and have no identified service requirement.

Option 1: Do Nothing - Not Recommended

4.4.2 Regarding vacant properties, retention would continue revenue leakage through security, insurance, and compliance costs, while exposing the Council to further deterioration and loss of capital value. This option does not fulfil Best Value requirements or support the MTFS.

4.4.3 In respect of Northwick Park (Playgolf), if the Council retained the freehold, the site would revert to the Council at the expiry of the lease (in approximately 80 years), at which point the Council would regain full ownership and control of the land, subject to the planning framework in place at that time.

Option 2: Invest or Redevelop (Refurbishment, Redesign, Planning, or Council-led Development) – Not Recommended

4.4.4 Restoring the assets to operational use or redevelopment would entail significant capital expenditure, with limited strategic benefit or assured financial return. Reconfiguration, redesign, or seeking new planning permissions would cause delays and increase risks without enhancing viability. Overall, these options offer poor value for money and prolong financial exposure.

Option 3: Disposal (Freehold or Long-Leasehold) - Recommended

4.4.5 Disposing of the freehold or long-leasehold would unlock capital value and eliminate ongoing liabilities. Freehold disposal is the preferred approach as it provides the greatest financial certainty and aligns directly with the Property Strategy and MTFS. However, long-leasehold disposal will also be considered for the vacant properties owned outright by the Council, particularly for Grove Park Pavilion which combines both commercial and residential uses**.**

4.4.6 Given current budget pressures, the need to generate capital receipts, and the absence of identified service requirements, priority must be given to options that provide financial certainty. Retaining the properties would also risk further deterioration and erosion of capital value, reducing the level of receipt achievable in future years. For these reasons, disposal represents the most prudent and Best Value option.

4.4.7 Following an appraisal of the plausible options, freehold disposal remains the preferred option for the properties. It provides the most deliverable, lowest-risk, and highest-value outcome, guarantees compliance with Best Value duties, and releases capital for reinvestment into Council priorities. Competitive marketing, via private treaty, auction, or sealed bids, will be used to secure the

best consideration, with protections such as overage considered where appropriate.

4.5 Proposed Timescales (subject to Council procedures)

Milestone	Start	Finish
Cabinet Approval	9 Feb 2026	9 Feb 2026
Publish required notices – Section 123(2A) of the Local Government Act 1972, consider any objections and make final decision	Feb 2026	March 2026
Marketing	Mar 2026	May 2026
Completions	Jul 2026	Sep 2026

4.5.1 Given current market conditions and wider viability pressures in the development sector, disposals may take time to progress. Adopting a flexible approach, using auction, private treaty or tender as appropriate, will help manage risk and maximise competitiveness.

5.0 Stakeholder and ward member consultation and engagement

5.1 If any part of the land is public open space – such as at Grove Park Pavilion, the Council must publish notices for two consecutive weeks under Section 123(2A) and consider any comments received before making a final decision. Please refer to Section 7 for more details.

5.2 When a disposal involves land that is public open space, the Council will issue the necessary statutory notices under Section 123(2A) of the Local Government Act 1972, or, if the land has been or is to be appropriated for planning purposes, under Section 233(4) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

5.3 The Northwick Park Golf Course forms part of Metropolitan Open Land (MOL)**.** MOL designation does not impose additional statutory consultation requirements for disposal (other than those stated in Section 7.) The Council's role as landlord is limited to the disposal of its freehold interest and does not predetermine or influence any future planning outcomes.

5.4 The Council's Property Strategy encourages engagement with service areas to identify long-term service needs at an early stage, before assets deteriorate and/or are constrained in a way that limits alternative use. The properties proposed for disposal are highly specific in nature and subject to complex constraints or long-term risks, with alternative uses having been considered and eliminated following appraisal.

6.0 Financial Considerations

6.1 The Council's current financial position necessitates identifying additional funding sources and reduce reliance on borrowing. Increasing available capital receipts will enhance the Council's ability to finance capital investments and lower long-term revenue costs through reduced borrowing and associated interest and MRP charges.

6.2 The proposals in this report directly address a recommendation from external audit for the Council to identify surplus assets for disposal. This aims to generate capital receipts, support the capital programme, and reduce long-term borrowing commitments.

6.3 Indicative receipt ranges (subject to valuation and marketing) are shown in Appendix 1. Up-to-date independent market valuations or guides will be obtained prior to marketing to ensure that the Council secures the best consideration and maximises the capital receipts from disposal.

6.4 The costs of sale, including valuation, marketing, legal and survey fees, and agent commission (usually 1–2% of the sale price), will be paid from the capital receipt, subject to the statutory limit of 4% on allowable disposal costs. A one-off contingency of £15,000 per property has been included in the financial modelling.

6.5 The Finance and Property teams will ensure proper accounting treatment. Assets that are not in use will remain classified as surplus assets until there is a management commitment to sell them in their current condition, and a sale is considered highly probable within 12 months. At that point, they will be classified as Assets Held for Sale in accordance with the Council's accounting policies.

7.0 Legal Considerations

7.1 Grove Park Pavillion is public open space land. Open space is defined in section 336(1*)* of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (TCPA 1990) as any land laid out as a public garden, or used for the purposes of public recreation, or land which is a disused burial ground. Northwick Park Golf Course forms part of Metropolitan Open Land (MOL). MOL is considered a type of open space within London as it falls within the definition of open space under section 336 of the TCPA 1990. It is predominantly undeveloped land, except for buildings or structures that are ancillary to the open space. The London Plan explicitly recognises MOL as protected open space and supports its preservation and protection from developments that could adversely impact its openness.

7.2 Lincoln Parade is not public open space land but is held under the Council's books as general fund land. As with public open space and MOL, general fund land disposal must comply with legal requirements set out in paragraph 7.4 below.

7.3 Additionally, section 123(2B) of the Local Government Act 1972 (LGA 1972) specifies that if the Council disposes of land held under certain statutory trusts,

such as for public recreation or as open spaces under the Public Health Act 1875 or the Open Spaces Act 1906, the land will be freed from the trust upon disposal, provided the advertising and objection consideration requirements under section 123(2A) are met.

7.4 Under Section 123 of the LGA 1972, the Council has a statutory duty to obtain the best consideration reasonably obtainable when disposing of land. If a proposed disposal (whether the land is open space or otherwise) is considered to be at an undervalue it must comply with the LGA 1972: General Disposal Consent (England) 2003**,** which permits such disposals only where the undervalue does not exceed £2 million and where the disposal contributes to the promotion or improvement of the economic, social, or environmental well-being of the area. Disposals falling outside these criteria would require specific consent from the Secretary of State. Any disposal at less than best consideration must also comply with UK subsidy control rules. This is because if publicly owned land is disposed of at less than best consideration, the Council will be providing a subsidy to the purchaser. Prior to any disposal of any land, the Council must exercise options for establishing market value using benchmarking and/or other standard valuation methodologies. To justify the price that the land has been sold for, it must be able to provide evidence showing that its decision to carry out the transaction was taken based on an economic evaluation comparable to that which a rational market economy operator would have considered.

7.5 Where the land to be disposed of constitutes or forms part of public open space**,** the Council must comply with Section 123(2A) of the LGA 1972. This includes MOL, as it falls within the definition of open space under section 336 of the TCPA 1990. This requires the publication of public notices in a local newspaper for two consecutive weeks, and the consideration of any objections received before a final decision is made.

Governance and Delegation

7.6 In accordance with the Council's Constitution (Part 3, paragraph 11.3)**,** Cabinet approval is required for disposals with a capital value exceeding £1 million. Cabinet may delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Neighbourhoods and Regeneration to agree final terms and complete transactions, in consultation with the relevant Lead Member, subject to achieving the best consideration in line with Part 3, paragraph 11.6 of the Constitution.

8.0 Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Considerations

8.1 No equalities, diversity, or inclusion implications have been identified. All proposed assets for disposal are vacant and not used for any statutory or commissioned services, so no service users or protected groups will be displaced or adversely affected by their disposal. Based on current evidence, no mitigation actions are required.

9.0 Climate Change and Environmental Considerations

9.1 Disposing of these vacant and non-operational assets will decrease the Council's operational carbon footprint by eliminating associated energy use such as utilities, security, and maintenance, and by avoiding the embodied carbon that would result from extensive refurbishment or new construction on sites that are no longer suitable for Council-led delivery.

9.2 Future redevelopment or refurbishment of the properties will fall under the responsibility of the purchaser**,** with environmental performance and emissions managed through the planning and building control process**,** including compliance with EPC/MEES standards and broader sustainability policies.

9.3 Known environmental constraints, such as ground conditions, potential contamination, trees and ecology, drainage, and flood risk, will be disclosed to prospective purchasers. The Council will monitor compliance throughout the planning process but will not hold any ongoing environmental liabilities after completion.

9.4 Any open space considerations and known biodiversity features will be reflected in the marketing information and incorporated into purchaser obligations where appropriate.

10.0 Human Resources/Property Considerations (if appropriate)

10.1 As set out in the main body of this report.

11.0 Communication Considerations

11.1 Ward Members and the relevant Lead Member will be briefed ahead of marketing. Secretary of State consent is not required for these disposals under the General Consents. Disposal opportunities will be publicised on the Council's website and promoted through appointed agents or auctioneers to ensure transparency and maximise market reach.

Report sign off:

Jehan Weerasinghe
Corporate Director of Neighbourhoods & Regeneration.

This page is intentionally left blank

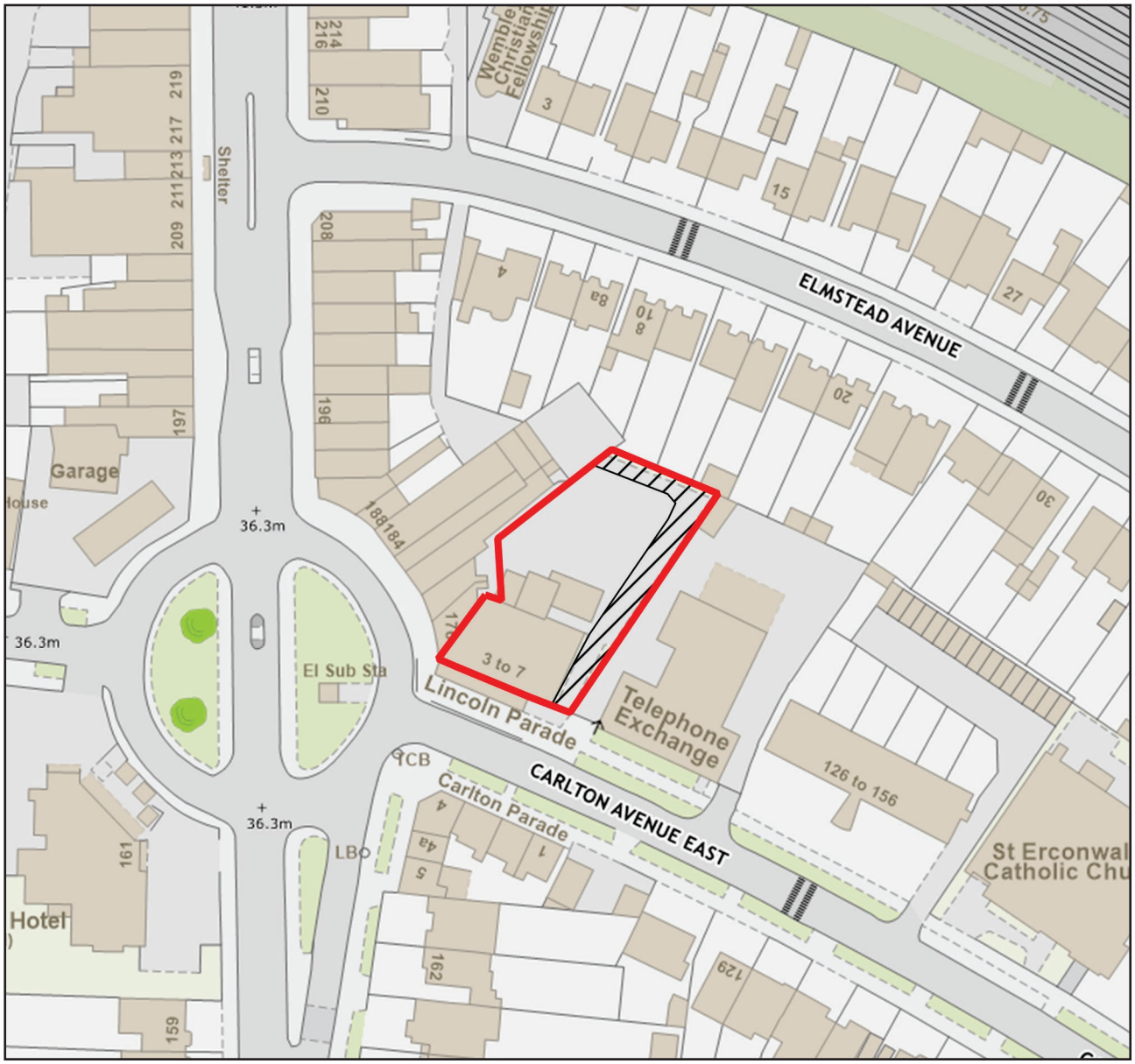
By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

Plan is indicative only

3-7 Lincoln Parade, Preston Road, Wembley, Middlesex HA9 8UA



PSMA OS copyright statement
© Crown copyright and database rights 2019 Ordnance Survey 100025260
OS Open data copyright statement:
Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2019

Plan is indicative only

Grove Park Pavilion, Grove Park, London, NW9 0JP.



Red line boundary

0 5 10 15 20 metres

Brent

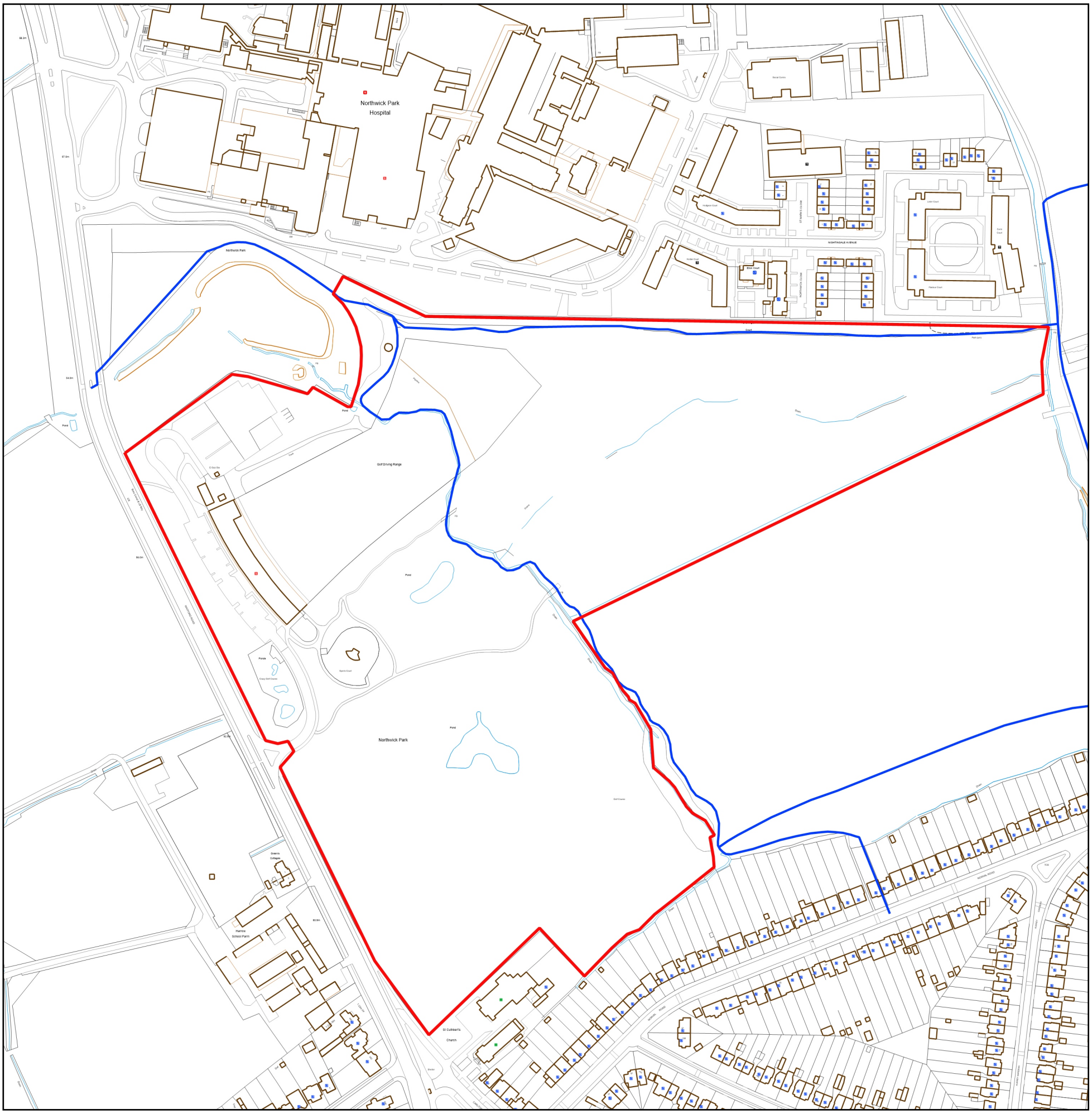
1:1250
Plan to stated scale if printed at A4

N

PSMA OS copyright statement
© Crown copyright and database rights 2019 Ordnance Survey 100025260
OS Open data copyright statement:
Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2019

Plan is indicative only

Northwick Park Golf, 280 Watford Rd, Harrow HA1 3TZ



Red line boundary

0 20 40 60 80 metres

N

1:3000
Plan to stated scale if printed at A3

PSMA OS copyright statement
© Crown copyright and database rights 2019 Ordnance Survey 100025260
OS Open data copyright statement:
Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2019

This page is intentionally left blank

	Cabinet 9 February 2026
	Report from the Corporate Director of Housing and Resident Services
	Lead Member – Cabinet Member for Customer Experience, Resident Support & Culture (Councillor Promise Knight)

Brent Creates – A Cultural Strategy for Inclusion, Wellbeing and Growth: 2026-31

Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	Key
Open or Part/Fully Exempt: (If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)	Open
List of Appendices:	Five Appendix 1: Draft Brent Culture Strategy: 2026-31 Appendix 2: The Role of Schools and Young People within the Culture Strategy – Delivery Through Vi-Brent and the LCEP Appendix 3: Embedding Public Health – Reducing Loneliness and Supporting Mental Health Through Creative People & Places (CPP) Appendix 4: Alignment with key corporate strategic policies Appendix 5: Consultation Process
Background Papers:	Final Report: Creative, Cultural and Visitor Economy Research (June 2025) – ***Please note: this document has been circulated as a separate attachment.***
Contact Officer(s): (Name, Title, Contact Details)	Colin Chester, London Borough of Culture Legacy Manager 020 8937 6377 Colin.Chester@brent.gov.uk Amit Bhagat, Head of Libraries, Culture and Heritage Services 020 8937 3545 amit.bhagat@brent.gov.uk

1.0 Executive Summary

1.1 Brent must act now to build on the momentum of its London Borough of Culture year and respond to growing demand for a clear long-term vision. Culture is not optional — it is central to Brent's identity and future. It fosters civic pride, strengthens social connections, improves health and wellbeing, supports learning and skills development, and regenerates local spaces. It is also a proven economic driver, contributing over **£238m annually** to the local economy. Without a new strategy, Brent risks losing momentum and missing opportunities for growth, funding, and community engagement.

1.2 The Cultural Strategy 2026–31 sets out a bold, shared vision to make culture in Brent truly inclusive, accessible and reflective of the borough's rich diversity. It embeds culture across health, education, regeneration and environmental agendas, ensuring that cultural activity is not only available to local people, but shaped by them through a strong community led approach. The strategy also explores long-term sustainability, including advocating for fair contributions from the visitor economy to reinvest in cultural infrastructure and community access.

1.3 Delivery will be driven through partnerships including ViBrent, Creative Community Brent (CPP) and the Brent Cultural Compact — ensuring culture is enabled through schools, community organisations, health services, local businesses, anchor institutions and grassroots groups across all wards. The strategy is supported by practical delivery mechanisms, including partnerships, co- commissioning models and a proposed annual micro- grants programme to enable grassroots cultural activity at a neighbourhood level.

1.4 The strategy focuses on widening participation, strengthening creative skills and employment pathways, and embedding culture in everyday life. It builds on recent investment in spaces such as Harlesden Picture Palace, Neasden Cultural Hub and Wembley studios, alongside public facing initiatives like shutterart commissions and community programmes that support placemaking and freelance opportunities.

1.5 **Strategic Context & Goals**

The strategy provides a clear framework for cultural development aligned with the Borough Plan. To achieve this, the strategy is structured around six strategic goals that collectively widen participation, strengthen skills, support wellbeing and help culture contribute to community identity, place-making and environmental responsibility:

- Inclusive Cultural Access
- Creative Skills & Careers
- Cultural Health & Wellbeing
- Community-Led Placemaking
- Infrastructure & Investment
- Environmental Sustainability

2.0 Recommendation(s)

2.1 Cabinet is asked to review and agree the proposed Cultural Strategy 2026–2031 having commented on and endorsed the following recommendations to:

a) Approve the Brent Cultural Strategy 2026- 2031 as the guiding framework for cultural development across the borough.

b) Endorse the establishment of a Brent Cultural Compact, bringing together council teams, cultural, health, education, business, and community partners to coordinate delivery.

c) 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.

d) Endorse the creation of an Impact Framework to measure cultural outcomes across wellbeing, participation, economic growth and environmental sustainability. This framework will be developed with colleagues from Public Health in Q4 2025/6.

e) Endorse the publication of an Annual Cultural Impact Report, measuring progress against KPIs across wellbeing, inclusion, economic growth and environmental sustainability. The report will assess effectiveness, inform future investment and ensure transparency and accountability across partners.

f) 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 PCG/Cabinet for consideration.

3.0 Detail

3.1 Cabinet Member Foreword

3.1.1 Culture is integral to everyday life in Brent and central to the borough's identity. It is shaped by our diverse communities and experienced across our neighbourhoods, high streets, schools and public spaces. From Wembley's global profile to the grassroots creativity of Kilburn High Road, the entrepreneurial character of Ealing Road and Harlesden's internationally influential Black music heritage, Brent's cultural life reflects both local pride and global reach. This rich creative legacy supports community cohesion and continues to shape the borough's character and sense of place.

3.1.2 The Cultural Strategy 2026–2031 builds on this legacy and recent investment in cultural infrastructure, creative spaces and community-led programmes. It

sets out a clear vision for culture to improve wellbeing, create opportunity and contribute to inclusive growth. The council will act as a facilitator, embedding culture across health, education, regeneration and sustainability and supporting strong partnerships that place residents at the centre of cultural life. Informed by national evidence on the social, economic and health benefits of cultural participation, the strategy commits to measuring local impact to guide investment and long-term decision-making, recognising culture as central to Brent's future prosperity and wellbeing.

3.1.3 The strategy embeds culture across health, education, regeneration and sustainability, aligning with the Borough Plan and wider corporate strategies. It positions culture as a driver of social equity, economic opportunity, community pride and environmental responsibility.

Priority Audiences

To deliver equity in cultural access, the strategy targets six priority audiences facing the greatest barriers to participation:

- Children and young people (0–24)
- Adults on lower incomes
- Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities
- Eastern European communities
- People with mental health needs
- Local artists and freelancers

Delivery Partnerships

3.1.4 Delivery is powered by strong cross-sector partnerships that ensure cultural activity is created with and for communities:

- **Vi-Brent (Place Partnership):** expanding access to cultural learning, festivals, creative career pathways and schools' engagement.

- **Creative Community Brent (CPP):** embedding culture in everyday spaces to support public health priorities, reduce loneliness and improve mental wellbeing.

- **Brent Cultural Compact:** aligning cultural, health, education, business and community partners with shared governance and delivery responsibility.

- **Develop a major strategic partnership:** with a higher-education institution or leading cultural/creative-industry organisation—such as the University of Westminster, a film studio, museum or gallery—to expand outreach, skills pathways, placements, research, innovation and community engagement in Brent.

3.1.5 These partnerships form a borough-wide network that builds capacity, strengthens collaboration and ensures community leadership.

Implementation Roadmap Summary

3.1.6 The strategy includes a phased delivery plan with the following key phases:

- **Phase 1:** Foundations (2026) – Establish governance, launch Vi-Brent and CPP programmes, embed culture in health pathways. Design and launch a Brent Micro- Grants Programme to support small- scale, community- led cultural activity, aligned with the Brent Cultural Compact and priority audiences.

- **Phase 2:** Expansion (2027–2029) – Scale programmes, deliver borough-wide events, strengthen creative health pilots.

- **Phase 3:** Evaluation & Legacy (2030) – Publish final impact report and inform future cultural strategy.

Key Performance Indicators:

- Growth in participation among priority audiences

- Engagement on **BrentCreates.com** (6,000 users by 2026; 9,000 by 2027)

- Delivery of Creative Careers bootcamps and mentoring placements

- Cultural programmes embedded in social prescribing (360 residents engaged)

- Eight co-commissioned community projects delivered by 2029

Measurable Outcomes and Performance

3.1.7 To ensure accountability and value for money, delivery of the Cultural Strategy will be guided by a clear set of measurable outcomes. These will include agreed performance indicators relating to participation, skills development, health and wellbeing, economic value and environmental sustainability. See appendix 2 of the Strategy for key performance indicators and measures.

3.1.8 In addition to programme-level outcomes, the council will track organisational actions within its control, including:

- The **number of external funding applications submitted annually** to national, regional and philanthropic funders.

- The **value of external investment secured or leveraged** to support cultural delivery in Brent.

- The **number of strategic partnership agreements developed**, including with higher education, creative industries and major cultural institutions.

3.1.9 These measures will be included within the Cultural Impact Framework and reported annually to ensure progress is transparent and evidence-led.

3.2 Background

3.2.1. Brent's 2020 Borough of Culture year demonstrated the power of creativity to bring diverse communities together and celebrate local identity. The end of the Metroland Cultures legacy programme in 2023 created a natural moment to define the next phase of cultural development. The LGA Peer Challenge strongly recommended a long-term co-produced strategy, and extensive stakeholder engagement — including sector roundtables, one-to-one interviews, workshops and surveys — has shaped the priorities and delivery model of this strategy.

3.2.2. Significant external funding has already been secured to underpin delivery:

- **£554,000** through the Vi-Brent Place Partnership
- **£750,000** through Creative People & Places

3.3. Economic Impact of Brent's Cultural Sector:

3.3.1. To understand the economic contribution of Brent's cultural sector, Achates (a specialist consultancy engaged by the council) applied Arts Council England's methodology for calculating Gross Value Added (GVA). This approach estimates the additional economic value generated by cultural organisations beyond their state funding. The calculation subtracts state funding from organisational turnover and then applies a 1.3 multiplier to account for indirect and induced impacts, combining this with the adjusted turnover to produce total GVA.

3.3.2. Brent's cultural sector contributes approximately **£238 million annually** to the local economy:

- **£38 million** from charitable cultural organisations.
- **£200 million** from Wembley non-sporting events.

3.3.3 This is equivalent to around **£700 per resident**, demonstrating the substantial economic value of culture and the importance of sustained strategic investment.

3.4 Key Performance Indicators and Benchmarks

Headline indicators include:

- Growth in participation among priority audiences.

- BrentCreates.com engagement: 6,000 users by 2026; 9,000 by 2027.
- Delivery of four Creative Careers bootcamps and 60 mentoring placements by 2027.
- Cultural programmes embedded in social prescribing (360 residents engaged).
- Eight co-commissioned community projects delivered by 2029.
- BrentCreates.com reaching 20,000 annual users by 2031.

4.0 Stakeholder and ward member consultation and engagement

4.1 The development of Brent's Cultural Strategy was underpinned by extensive consultation with stakeholders across the borough, carried out by Achates ensuring the strategy reflects local needs and priorities.

4.2 Stakeholder Consultation

4.2.1 **Roundtables:** Extensive consultation underpinned strategy development:

- **Cultural Sector** – Kiln Theatre, Mahogany Carnival Design, Deafinitely Theatre, Lexi Cinema, Punchdrunk Enrichment, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra.
- **Civic Organisations** – ASC Studios, We Restart, Unique Community, Brent Artist Network, local educators.
- **Creative Industries** – Garden Studios, CEZ managers, regeneration officers.

Each session explored cultural strengths, barriers to engagement, priority audiences, and desired outcomes.

4.2.2. **One-to-one interviews:** Achates conducted interviews with key leaders and funders, including University of Westminster, Fresh Arts, Greater London Authority, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, and Unique Community. These provided deeper insights into sector challenges and partnership opportunities

4.2.3. **Workshops:** Facilitated sessions co-created the Statement of Purpose, Theory of Change, and priority-audience segments with council Officers and cultural partners, ensuring shared ownership of the strategy framework.

5.0 Financial Considerations

5.1. The Cultural Strategy 2026–31 is underpinned by a financially sustainable model that combines the London Borough of Culture (LBOC) Legacy Budget with significant secured external investment. This approach ensures Brent can

continue to grow its cultural offer without creating additional financial pressure on core council budgets. The strategy also strengthens Brent's ability to attract further national and philanthropic funding by setting out a clear, partnership led vision for cultural development.

5.2. **Legacy Budget**.

5.2.1 **LBOC Legacy Budget**The annual **£200,000 LBOC Legacy Budget**, funded through the Olympic Way commercialisation agreement with Quintain, provides the core financial foundation for delivery. This budget supports cultural infrastructure, sector capacity building and community led programmes across all wards. It also enables the council to meet existing match funding requirements and leverages external grants by demonstrating long-term commitment to culture.

5.2.2 A small proportion of the Legacy Budget will be used to enable light- touch, high- impact activity, including an annual micro- grants programme offering up to 10 awards of £500. This approach supports grassroots participation and early- stage ideas while remaining proportionate and financially contained within existing resources.

Forecast expenditure 2026/27:

Item	Amount	Comments
Staffing costs	£106,000	Forecast for 2026/7
Vi-Brent partnership match-funding	£10,000	Payable to Punchdrunk Enrichment annually until 2027
Creative Place Partnership match-funding	£19,000	Payable to Fresh Arts annually until 2029
Music Mile Festival contribution	£10,000	-
Curate Brent - year 2	£25,000	-
Strategy delivery project costs	£20,000	-
Micro-grants programme	£10,000	New
Total	**£200,000**	-

5.3 **External Funding and Investment Leverage**

5.3.1 A key principle of the strategy is to maximise external investment through a strong, coordinated partnership model. By acting as a facilitator, the council will continue to broker partnerships, advocate for culture across regeneration and public-health agendas, and support local organisations to access national funding streams. This includes funding from Arts Council England, National Lottery programmes and philanthropic partners.

5.3.2 Confirmed external funding includes:

- **£554,005** National Lottery funding via Arts Council England's Place Partnership Fund for Vi-Brent

- **£750,000** for Creative People & Places (CPP) to deliver long-term, community-led programmes

- In-kind contributions from partners (venues, staffing, resources)

5.3.3 These secured funds significantly reduce financial risk and increase programme reach, ensuring Brent delivers wide-ranging cultural, economic and social outcomes.

5.4 **Future Funding Opportunities**

5.4.1 To create a sustainable long term model, the council will continue exploring options for fair contributions from the visitor economy — including mechanisms such as a ticket levy — in collaboration with major venues and sector stakeholders. Any future proposals will be subject to further legal, financial and equity assessments before returning to PCG/Cabinet for consideration.

6.0 Legal Considerations

6.1. There is no duty on the council to provide arts or cultural events, but the council may provide (or arrange for the provision of) entertainment, the development and improvement of the knowledge, understanding and practice of the arts, and otherwise attract visitors to the area for recreation etc under S144 and 145 of the Local Government Act 1972.

6.2. As detailed at paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3, the council is included as a partner within both consortia. The council's powers to apply for grant funding and enter into a Grant Agreement derive from section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 and the power of general competence set out in section 1 of the Localism Act 2011. In accordance with Section 9 of paragraph 9.5 of Part 3 of the Constitution, submission of bids for additional resources from government or other bodies is a decision for a Corporate Director in consultation with the individual Cabinet Members in relation to their portfolio area. Upon approval, the Corporate Director has delegated authority pursuant to paragraph 9.5 of Part 3 of the Constitution and Financial Regulation 8.2.2 of Part 2 of the Constitution to enter into a grant funding arrangement. In doing so, the Corporate Director must ensure that the objectives of the grant agreement are consistent with the council objectives and priorities in accordance with Financial Regulation 9.1.2 and must only exercise delegated powers where the Corporate Director, Finance and Resources approves entry into such arrangement.

6.3. Contracts Standing Order 85 (a), provides No Partnership Arrangements may be entered into unless they are approved by the Corporate Director Finance and Resources and a formal agreement covering the arrangements is signed by the parties.

7.0 Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Considerations

7.1. The Cultural Strategy is fully aligned with Brent's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy (2024–28), embedding fairness, representation and inclusive access throughout its design and delivery. It prioritises removing barriers for residents who have historically been underserved by cultural provision and ensuring that cultural opportunities are genuinely accessible across all communities. Practical measures include:

- Free cultural programmes (e.g., Cultural Backpack).
- Multilingual resources and co-commissioning models giving communities a direct voice.
- Inclusive career pathways and workforce diversity through Vi-Brent and CPP initiatives.

7.2 By linking culture to health, education and regeneration agendas, the strategy advances Brent's EDI commitments, fostering a stronger sense of belonging, supporting wellbeing and ensuring that cultural leadership and creative opportunities reflect the diversity of the borough.

8.0 Climate Change and Environmental Considerations

8.1 The strategy supports Brent's Climate and Ecological Emergency plan to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030. Commitments in the strategy include:

- Reducing waste and reusing materials at cultural events.
- Encouraging sustainable travel (walking, cycling, public transport).
- Using parks and open spaces for cultural activities to connect culture with nature.
- Designing cultural spaces to promote recycling and resource efficiency.

9.0 Human Resources/Property Considerations (if appropriate)

9.1 There are no specific Human Resources implications.

10.0 Communication Considerations

10.1 We will promote opportunities for residents and cultural organisations to shape delivery of the strategy through existing communication channels, including social media and e-newsletters, the new dedicated cultural section of the *Your Brent* magazine and BrentCreates.com.

10.2 The strategy contains an ambition to attract funding which will enable the establishment of a Brent Cultural Fund. The council will use its communication channels to promote the fund and any visitor economy contribution agreements,

ensuring residents, venues and cultural partners understand eligibility, application routes and impact reporting requirements.

10.3 Strategy Launch and Socialisation

10.3.1 Subject to Cabinet approval, the Cultural Strategy will be formally launched in March 2026. This will include targeted briefings for cultural partners, schools and community organisations, online promotion via BrentCreates.com, and integration into existing forums such as Vi-Brent and Creative Community Brent. This phased approach will ensure the strategy is widely understood, owned and activated across the borough.

11. Summary

11.1 The Brent Cultural Strategy 2026–31 sets out a bold and essential roadmap for the next stage of the borough's cultural development. Following the success of Brent's London Borough of Culture year and the strong legacy that followed, there is now a clear need for a long-term, co-produced strategy that sustains momentum, responds to community demand and positions culture as a driver of inclusion, wellbeing and growth. Without this framework, Brent risks losing the progress, partnerships and investment secured over recent years.

11.2 The strategy directly advances the Borough Plan priorities by widening access to culture, strengthening community cohesion, supporting skills and employment pathways, improving health and wellbeing through creative engagement, and contributing to regeneration and environmental sustainability. It provides a clear structure for how culture will support thriving communities, reduce inequalities and enhance local identity.

11.3 Developed collaboratively with residents, cultural organisations, health partners, educators and community groups, the strategy is rooted in local voice and shared leadership. Through delivery partnerships such as Vi-Brent, Creative Community Brent and the Brent Cultural Compact, it brings together expertise from across sectors, ensuring cultural activity is shaped with and for communities, and that resources and opportunities reach those who face the greatest barriers.

11.4 With significant external funding already secured and a strong model for further investment, the strategy establishes a sustainable, partnership-driven approach that strengthens Brent's cultural ecosystem. Approval will enable Brent to build on its national profile, deliver meaningful cultural participation across all wards, and embed culture at the heart of the borough's social, economic and environmental ambitions.

Report sign off:

Thomas Cattermole
Corporate Director of Resident and Housing Services



BRNT.

THIS IS THE BOROUGH OF CULTURES

BRENT CREATES

A CULTURAL STRATEGY FOR INCLUSION, WELLBEING & GROWTH | 2026-31

Foreword

Culture in Brent is woven into everyday life; it is lived, heard, experienced, and shared across our borough. From our high streets and schools to our parks, faith spaces and community centres, culture connects people, creates belonging, and opens doors to opportunity. Our diversity is central to Brent's character and identity, bringing together long-established communities and newer arrivals to share traditions, creativity, and stories.

From the world-famous roar of Wembley Stadium, which places Brent on the global stage, to Kilburn High Road's long-standing music scene that continues to nurture grassroots creativity, culture is woven into the borough's streets. Ealing Road's restaurants and shops reflect stories of migration and entrepreneurship, while Harlesden stands as a vital centre of Black culture and music, whose sound systems, venues, and studios have helped shape reggae, soul, and jazz, influencing artists and movements far beyond Brent. This creative legacy remains a source of pride, identity, and inspiration for generations of Brent residents.

Brent has a rich and diverse cultural life, shaped by grassroots organisations, artists and communities. Grassroots culture is a crucial part of Brent's local economy. Small music venues, creative workspaces, pubs, restaurants, and festivals form dense networks of small businesses and voluntary organisations that provide jobs, develop skills and support entrepreneurship. These grassroots cultural ecosystems help animate high streets and keep wealth circulating locally. They are often the entry point for young people and underrepresented communities into creative careers, and they play a vital role in sustaining Brent's night-time and visitor economies.

This new strategy for culture builds on tangible investments such as Harlesden Picture Palace, the new cultural hub in Neasden, and affordable studio spaces in Wembley, alongside initiatives like artist callouts for high street shutter commissions that animate public spaces and create freelance opportunities for local creatives.

Our Cultural Strategy 2026–2031 sets out a vision for culture to bring people together, improve wellbeing and create opportunity. Brent Council will act as a facilitator, brokering partnerships and empowering residents to drive cultural life. The strategy will embed culture across health, education, regeneration, and sustainability, ensuring every resident can access, shape and benefit from cultural experiences that matter to them.

New research for the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) shows that regular engagement with culture and heritage delivers significant health and wellbeing benefits. They estimate the value of these benefits is £1,000 per adult per year, and more than £8 billion nationally.

Brent's strategy will apply this methodology locally to measure the impact of programmes such as Vi-Brent, Creative Community Brent, the Cultural Backpack and creative health pilots. This will create a robust evidence base to demonstrate the value of culture in Brent, guide investment and support long-term decision-making. This strategy recognises culture as central to economic growth, health outcomes, community cohesion, and the borough's evolving identity.

Councillor Promise Knight

Lead Member for Customer Experience, Residents Support and Culture



Executive Summary

Brent's Cultural Strategy 2026–2031 positions culture as central to the borough's ambitions for health, education, regeneration and sustainability. The strategy isn't just the council's strategy. It has been developed through engagement with a range of local people and organisations who contribute to the borough's cultural landscape. It is intended to underpin a partnership approach to building on Brent's rich and diverse cultural heritage and its designation as the London Borough of Culture in 2020.

Key Points:

- **Economic strength:** Brent's cultural economy contributes at least an estimated **£238 million** annually, supporting jobs, skills, businesses and tourism.
- **Strategic goals:** Six core goals underpin this strategy:
  - Inclusive Cultural Access
  - Creative Skills and Careers
  - Cultural Health and Wellbeing
  - Community-Led Placemaking
  - Infrastructure and Investment
  - Environmental Sustainability
- **Partnership delivery:** Programmes will be led through Vi-Brent, Creative Community Brent, and the Brent Cultural Compact.
- **The council's role:** Rather than directly commissioning cultural activity, the council will act as a facilitator and convenor – connecting partners, advocating for and leveraging investment that can support cultural activity, empowering grassroots activity

[1] See Appendix 6 for a list of cultural organisations that participated in the research phase of this strategy and the engagement methods undertaken



Vi-Brent Network Meeting

and measuring impact. Successful delivery of this strategy depends on collaboration across sectors, including internal departments such as Public Health, Education, and Regeneration, alongside cultural organisations, community groups, and major venues. The council will work closely with key sector representatives to support the development of the Cultural Compact, co-creating a strong network that can advocate for creativity and culture and be well positioned to attract external funding.

- **Investment and advocacy:** The council will work with the Cultural Compact to co-create a strategy to secure external grant funding to resource our collective longer-term aspirations and new projects and support creative and cultural activity. We will explore opportunities to develop a Brent Cultural Fund and to support creative projects and organisations to access other sources of funding. In addition, we will advocate for fair contributions from the visitor economy, including consideration of ticket levy or visitor tax mechanisms, working with major venues and cultural partners to develop an equitable model that reinvests in community-led cultural activity.
- **Accountability:** Annual Cultural Impact Reports will measure economic, social, environmental and wellbeing outcomes.

> *"We want to see the Council effectively using its role to bring organisations and communities together."*
>
> *Stakeholder interview insight*

The Economic Value of Culture in Brent

Culture is a cornerstone of Brent's economic vitality.

- Charitable cultural organisations in Brent generate approximately **£38 million** in economic value annually.
- Major venues further amplify this impact: each non-sporting event at Wembley Stadium brings an estimated **£4.35 million** into the local economy, with around 46 such events per year – totalling roughly **£200 million.**
- Combined, Brent's cultural economy delivers an estimated **£238 million** per year, equivalent to £700 per resident or **£1,980** per household.

Investment in collaborative frameworks – **Vi-Brent, Creative Community Brent,** the **Creative Enterprise Zone (CEZ),** and Brent's three **Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisations** (Kiln Theatre, Fresh Arts and Royal Philharmonic Orchestra) – helps ensure these benefits reach communities across the borough.

Our Role as a Facilitator

Brent Council will not be the primary funder or producer of major cultural events. Others are much better placed to do this. Instead, the council's role will be to:

- **Connect –** convene partners across culture, education, health, business and community.
- **Advocate –** lobby for fair investment and inclusive cultural infrastructure (e.g., ticket levies, regeneration levers).
- **Enable –** broker partnerships, signpost funding and deliver a small annual micro-grants programme to unlock grassroots activity.
- **Measure –** evidence impact (economic, social, health, environmental) and publish an Annual Cultural Impact Report.

Delivery will be partnership-led, working with the sector through the Cultural Compact. A wide range of teams in the council are already involved in supporting and promoting cultural and creative activity, Regeneration, Children's Services, Skills and Employment, and Public Health. The council will continue to ensure that cultural and creative activity are woven into approaches to deliver wider social outcomes across all directorates, ensuring that cultural projects and organisations can benefit from relevant community funding streams.



Punchdrunk Enrichment's Fireside Tales

[2] See appendix 7 for a list of cultural organisations in the borough as of Summer 2025
[3] See appendix 3 for a detailed overview of each of the listed borough-wide partnerships

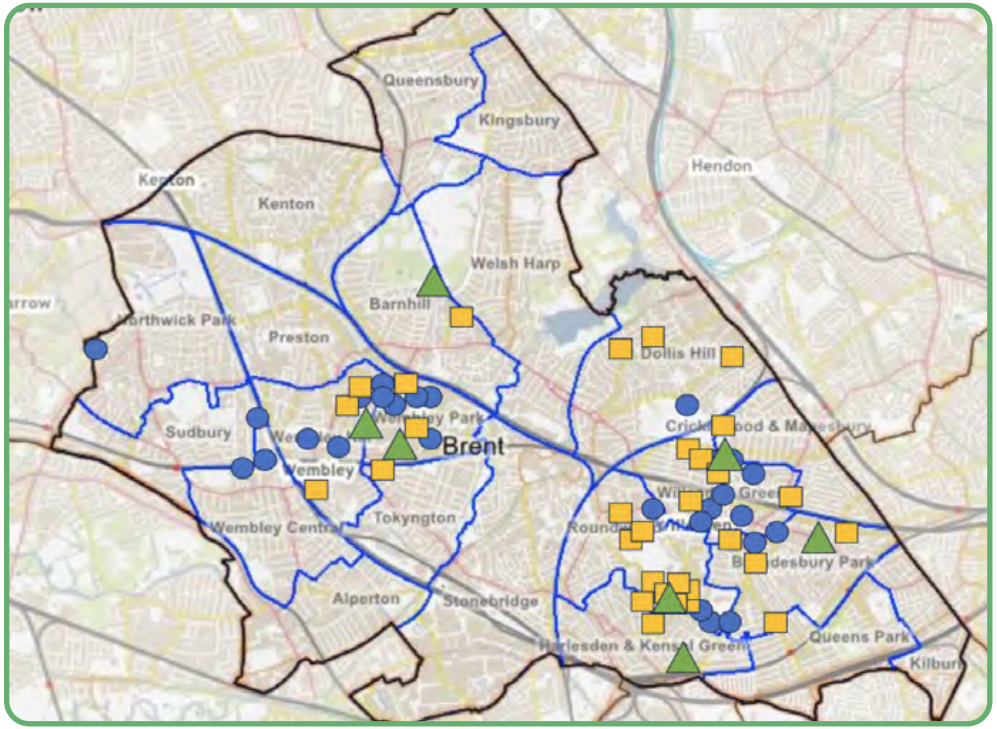
Brent's Cultural Network and Governance

Culture in Brent is delivered by a rich ecosystem of organisations, freelancers, community groups and major venues

Key borough-wide partnerships:

- **Vi-Brent –** supporting sector collaboration, schools' programmes, participation pathways, skills development, creative-industry bootcamps and networking (including Punchdrunk Enrichment, Fresh Arts, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Unique Community, Mahogany Carnival Arts, Young Brent Foundation, Garden Studios, The Awareness Tap and Brent Council).
- **Creative Community Brent (CCB) –** led by Fresh Arts C.I.C with Brent Culture, Young Brent Foundation, Brent Public Health, Westminster University and The Compass Learning Trust; embeds community-led programming and co-commissioning and creative health.
- **Brent Cultural Compact –** aligning culture with health, education, regeneration and sustainability through inclusive governance and shared decision-making.

We will monitor cultural provision across all wards, with a particular focus on underserved areas and will undertake a comprehensive review at the end of the strategy period.



Symbol	Key
●	**Charity or Society**
■	**For Profit Company/Not for Profit Company**
▲	**Local Authority**

Statement of Purpose

This shared strategy aims to:

- Remove barriers so that culture is **inclusive and accessible,** enabling every resident to participate and shape experiences.
- Celebrate and invest in Brent's cultural strengths while creating **learning, skills and career pathways.**
- Harness culture as a force for **wellbeing, equity and economic growth,** aligned with borough priorities and drawing on the strengths that come with being a diverse borough.
- Work as **one cultural network** through Vi-Brent, Creative Community Brent and the Cultural Compact.

> *Great art can be a window and a mirror; an opportunity to understand other peoples' stories and perspectives, and to enable us to tell our own stories. Through art we can challenge, expose and help to heal societal problems and divisions.*
>
> *Arts Council England – an independent review, 2025*



RPO Relaxed performance

Strategic Alignment

Brent's Cultural Strategy is not a standalone document—it is a cross-cutting framework that strengthens and complements the council's wider ambitions.

Borough Plan 2023–2027

The Cultural Strategy contributes directly to the Borough Plan's five priorities:

1. **Prosperity and Stability** – by expanding creative skills programmes, apprenticeships, and freelance support, the strategy drives economic growth and widens employment opportunities in Brent's creative industries.
2. **A Cleaner, Greener Future** – cultural initiatives promote sustainability by embedding green principles into placemaking and programming and encouraging circular-economy practices.
3. **Thriving Communities** – cultural activity fosters civic pride, reduces isolation and celebrates Brent's diversity through inclusive, community-led projects.
4. **The Best Start in Life** – youth-focused cultural programmes improve educational outcomes, support mental health and create pathways into creative careers.
5. **A Healthier Brent** – by integrating arts into social-prescribing and wellbeing strategies, the strategy addresses health inequalities and promotes resilience.

Youth Strategy 2025–2028

The Cultural Strategy amplifies youth voice and participation by creating safe spaces for expression and learning. It offers clear pathways into creative careers, embeds mental-health support through arts-based interventions, and ensures young people co-design cultural experiences that reflect their needs and aspirations.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) 2024–2028

Culture is a powerful tool for tackling inequality. The strategy prioritises underserved communities, removes barriers to participation, and promotes workforce diversity through training and leadership opportunities. Its Impact Framework ensures accountability and tracks progress towards inclusive outcomes.

Health and Wellbeing Priorities

Culture is embedded in Brent's health strategies as a driver for mental wellbeing, social connection, and community resilience. Through partnerships with the NHS and local health providers, cultural programmes support social prescribing, co-design health messaging, and activate community hubs as spaces for wellbeing.

Strategic Goals

The strategy is built around six core goals designed to remove barriers and open-up access to cultural participation:

1. **Inclusive Cultural Access**
2. **Creative Skills and Careers**
3. **Cultural Health and Wellbeing**
4. **Community-Led Placemaking**
5. **Infrastructure and Investment**
6. **Environmental Sustainability**







Punchdrunk Enrichment events

Goal 1: Inclusive Cultural Access

Increase cultural participation across all communities, with a focus on groups that have had fewer opportunities

Why This Matters

Inclusive cultural access sits at the heart of Brent's Cultural Strategy. By removing financial, social and language barriers, we can ensure that every resident has meaningful opportunities to participate in cultural life. Inclusive participation strengthens belonging, reduces isolation and supports learning and wellbeing. When culture is accessible to all, it becomes a powerful driver of equity, cohesion and civic pride, directly supporting the Borough Plan priorities for Thriving Communities and a Healthier Brent.

The strategy identifies six priority groups based on evidence of need and gaps in access, as established through research and consultation:

1. **Children and young people (0–24)** – to build cultural habits early, support education, and provide positive pathways.
2. **Adults on lower incomes** – to address financial barriers and ensure culture is not a privilege.
3. **Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities** – to reflect Brent's diversity and address historic under-representation.
4. **Eastern European communities** – to reach groups often excluded from mainstream cultural provision.
5. **People with mental-health needs** – using culture as a tool for wellbeing and resilience.
6. **Local artists and freelancers** – to sustain Brent's creative economy and ensure that diverse voices shape cultural life.

These groups were identified through consultation, data analysis, and stakeholder engagement as those facing the greatest barriers to participation and standing to benefit most from inclusive cultural opportunities. By championing these communities, Brent can create a cultural ecosystem that is fair, representative, and transformative – where every resident feels they belong and can contribute to the borough's vibrant cultural identity.

What We Want to Achieve

We want every resident to have simple, meaningful access to culture, wherever they live and whatever their circumstances. This means bringing cultural activity into everyday spaces – libraries, schools, parks and community hubs – and removing barriers through free or low-cost programmes, multilingual support and co-designed opportunities. Our actions will focus on the six priority groups and ensure that cultural participation across Brent is equitable, representative and sustainable.

Key Actions

To achieve this goal, the council and its partners will:

- Launch the Brent Cultural Compact in 2026 to connect cultural organisations with public- and private-sector partners, creating a borough-wide platform for collaboration and shared opportunities.
- Support the rollout of Vi-Brent's Cultural Backpack programme providing free cultural experiences for schoolchildren and embedding culture in early learning.
- Enable delivery of a Young People's Festival in 2026, showcasing local talent and creating inclusive spaces for youth engagement.

[4] See appendix 4 for an overview of how schools, youth organisations, and education stakeholders are involved in shaping, governing and delivering the cultural programmes set out in the Strategy.

- Support Creative Community Brent to bring arts and cultural activities programming into everyday spaces from 2026, including parks, schools, and community hubs.
- Support co-commissioning of cultural activities through community panels as part of the Creative Community Brent programme, ensuring residents have a direct voice in shaping cultural content and delivery within the CPP framework.
- Encourage and explore schemes to distribute lower cost tickets to cultural experiences to those that can benefit the most.

> *"As an organisation that has been spearheading inclusive practice in Brent since 2018, we believe this cultural strategy reflects many of the borough's needs. We work with children, young people, and adults from marginalised backgrounds, but our service is open access, and we want to see this happen on a wider scale. Culture should unite all communities, celebrate differences, and provide a point of connection. However, if some individuals feel excluded, we lose their voices, which is a significant loss. The only way to ensure a level playing field is by taking extra steps toward equity. This strategy will work towards just that, and we are overjoyed to be a part of it."*
>
> *Natalya Kharina, Artistic Director, Unique Community*





Unique Community

Goal 2: Creative Skills and Careers

Support pathways into creative industries, particularly for young people and underrepresented groups, through training, apprenticeships, and visibility of creative career options.

Why This Matters

Creative industries offer significant economic and employment potential, yet access to these careers is often unequal. In a borough as diverse and talented as Brent, widening entry routes ensures that creative work is not restricted to those with existing networks or financial advantage. Strengthening pathways into creative roles helps tackle inequality, supports local employment and grows the borough's cultural economy.

Vi-Brent and Creative Community Brent are central to this ambition. Their bootcamps, paid placements, mentoring and hands-on learning opportunities give young people and under-represented groups the skills, confidence and experience they need to progress. Together, these programmes link culture with education and regeneration, opening opportunities that can transform lives and communities.

> *"There is an opportunity as a growing industry – but we need to engage parents as well as young people to address barriers as they may not see culture as a career."*
>
> *Cultural research round table participant*

What We Want to Achieve

We want creative careers in Brent to be visible, accessible and achievable for everyone. This means offering practical training, paid opportunities and clear routes into the creative industries, with a particular focus on young people, freelancers and underrepresented groups.

Through Vi-Brent and Creative Community Brent, the council and its partners will deliver structured programmes that blend technical skills with real-world experience. Success will mean not only more people entering creative work but also greater confidence, aspiration and a more diverse and equitable creative workforce across the borough.

Delivery of this goal will be supported through partnerships with Brent Start, schools, further education providers and higher education institutions, including the University of Westminster, to create joined up pathways from education into creative employment. This will include careers advice, work placements, mentoring, bootcamps and sector led training aligned to local creative industries and studios.

Key Actions

To achieve this goal, we will:

- support the delivery of creative careers bootcamps and mentoring through the Vi-Brent partnership.
- promote paid work placements with our cultural partners to give young people hands-on professional experience.
- support the launch of the Creative Careers Programme in partnership with Garden Studios and Vi-Brent in 2026.
- support skills development through Creative Community Brent projects embedding creative learning in schools and community hubs from 2026.
- support the pilot of Youth Creative Hubs from 2027 offering safe spaces for training, collaboration and creative development.

As one of Brent's Arts Council England National Portfolio organisations, we very much welcome this important cultural strategy for Brent - which aligns with much of the work we deliver at Kiln. We believe that arts and culture can be for anyone, and we are committed to presenting world class theatre, nurturing talent, providing training, education and employment pathways to create a thriving creative ecology within the borough. We look forward to contributing towards the success of Brent Creates by working alongside the council and wider partners on cultural activity in support of this strategy for the benefit of Brent communities, which sits at the heart of Kiln's mission.

Amit Sharma (Artistic Director/CEO) and Iain Goosey (Executive Director), Kiln Theatre



Kiln Theatre - Driftwood

Goal 3: Cultural Health and Wellbeing

Use arts and cultural participation to improve mental health, reduce isolation, and strengthen community resilience through creative health initiatives and social prescribing.

Why This Matters

Culture plays a powerful role in improving mental health, reducing isolation and supporting resilience. Embedding arts into social prescribing and community-health pathways provides accessible, non-clinical routes to wellbeing, particularly for residents with mental-health needs, SEND, or wider health inequalities. Creative Community Brent's participatory programmes – from music and movement to storytelling – support holistic approaches that benefit individuals and reduce pressure on health services.

What We Want to Achieve

We aim to make culture a recognised and accessible tool for health improvement across Brent. Our focus is to integrate creative participation into everyday settings and health pathways, resulting in measurable gains in wellbeing, social connection and resilience for residents.

Key Actions

To achieve this goal, we will:

- integrate arts into social-prescribing pathways from 2026.
- support the delivery of participatory programmes through Creative Community Brent from 2026.
- co-create a Cultural Impact Framework with colleagues in Public Health and evaluate impact annually.

> *"At Fresh Arts, we believe that the arts should be accessible to all. We recognise the power of arts and culture to give young people the best start in life, level the playing field, build skills and encourage meaningful participation. We also recognise the profound impact that engaging in the arts can have on people's health and wellbeing. Creative participation can reduce isolation, improve confidence, support emotional resilience, and provide a sense of purpose and belonging – benefits that are felt across all ages and communities"*
>
> *Davinia Khan, Principal & Artistic Director, Fresh Arts*

[5] Mughal R., Polley M., Sabey A. & Chatterjee H.J. (2022) How Arts, Heritage and Culture can support health and wellbeing through social prescribing. NASP.

[6] Polley, M., Seers, H., Toye, O., Henkin, T., Waterson, H., Bertotti, M. and Chatterjee, H.J. (2023). Building the economic evidence case for social prescribing. Report — October 2023. London: National Academy for Social Prescribing.

Goal 4: Community-Led Placemaking

Give residents the power to create cultural experiences that reflect their own stories, identities, and needs by supporting community-led projects and local cultural leadership.

Why It Matters

Placemaking empowers residents to shape cultural life in ways that reflect local identity, stories and needs. When communities lead cultural activity, it builds civic pride, strengthens social ties and helps ensure regeneration benefits local people. Co-design and community leadership create authentic cultural experiences and increase trust, belonging and visibility for under-represented voices.

What We Want to Achieve

We want cultural spaces and programmes to be shaped directly by the communities who use them. This requires establishing shared governance structures, expanding co-design and co-commissioning, and ensuring residents play an active role in decision-making.



Willesden Gallery

Key Actions:

To achieve this goal, we will:

- support the establishment of a Creative Community Steering Group within Creative Community Brent programme in 2026.
- promote and support co-commissioning of cultural activities through community panels under Creative Community Brent from 2026
- support the delivery of borough-wide, community-led festivals and events that amplify local voices.
- explore artist callouts for public art commissions, including high street shutter projects, to combine placemaking with freelance opportunities for local artists.

> *"As we look ahead, we see enormous potential in deepening community involvement. The move towards co-creating and co-commissioning work with local residents is an exciting next step – one that ensures cultural activity reflects the lived experiences, voices, and aspirations of the people it serves."*
>
> *Davinia Khan, Principal & Artistic Director, Fresh Arts*

Goal 5: Infrastructure and Investment

Cultivate a dynamic cultural ecosystem by harnessing regeneration opportunities and driving strategic investment.

Why It Matters

A thriving cultural sector depends on access to affordable spaces, sustainable funding and strong digital platforms. Brent's regeneration programmes present opportunities to embed cultural infrastructure into new developments, while digital tools such as BrentCreates.com extend access by sharing opportunities and connecting communities. Securing investment and expanding resources will help local organisations grow and ensure that cultural activity reaches every ward.

What We Want to Achieve

Brent's cultural future depends on robust infrastructure and sustainable funding. Recent investments in cultural infrastructure – including Harlesden Picture Palace, Neasden's cultural hub, and Wembley studios – provide strong foundations for a thriving cultural ecosystem that this strategy seeks to build upon. Alongside physical spaces, digital platforms are critical to engagement. We will activate BrentCreates.com as the borough's central cultural hub – providing listings, opportunities and storytelling to connect communities and showcase talent.

We aim to strengthen the borough's cultural infrastructure by expanding physical and digital access, securing meanwhile and affordable spaces, and increasing investment in local creativity. The potential creation of a Brent Cultural Fund is being explored as a future mechanism to support grassroots cultural activity.

Key Actions:

To achieve this goal, we will:

- promote **BrentCreates.com** as the borough's digital cultural platform, ensuring it becomes the go-to space for cultural listings, opportunities, and storytelling.
- advocate for cultural infrastructure in regeneration
- investigate whether external funding opportunities might enable the creation of a Brent Cultural Fund in future.
- support Vi-Brent tackle digital exclusion through its digital poverty fund initiative.
- support Creative Community Brent in offering multilingual resources and hybrid cultural experiences to increase participation.
- introduce a Brent Micro-Grants Programme, offering 10 grants per year of up to £500 to support grassroots cultural activity, early-stage ideas and light-touch community-led projects, with a focus on reducing barriers for individuals, freelancers and small groups.



Artist's studio

Goal 6: Environmental Sustainability

Promote environmentally friendly practices and help local communities thrive by using sustainable methods and recycling resources wherever possible.

Why It Matters

Culture can champion sustainable behaviours and model environmentally responsible practice. Embedding green approaches in cultural delivery helps reduce waste, promote circular-economy principles and build pride in a greener Brent. Outdoor and nature-based arts activity supports climate goals while creating inclusive spaces for participation.

What We Want to Achieve

We want cultural organisations and events to demonstrate environmental leadership by reducing emissions, promoting reuse and embedding sustainability in design and delivery of cultural activity.

Key Actions and Milestones

To achieve this goal, we will:

- use **BrentCreates.com** as a low-carbon engagement tool, reducing reliance on printed materials.
- advocate for green-design principles in any future cultural spaces, including energy-efficient buildings and the use of renewable energy.
- embed reuse and recycling in cultural programming (e.g., upcycled art projects and sustainable materials for festivals).
- Promote the use of parks and green spaces for outdoor cultural activities, aligning with the strategy's nature and biodiversity goals.

Funding & Investment Model

Brent will prioritise external investment and targeted local support to maximise grassroots impact.

- **External grants:** Arts Council England, government programmes, philanthropic funds.
- **Planning-linked contributions:** explore Section 106/NCIL to support cultural infrastructure where appropriate.
- **Ticket levy advocacy:** work with cultural partners and major venues to lobby for fair contributions from the visitor economy, ring-fenced for community-led cultural activity.
- **Aspirational Brent Cultural Fund:** The Cultural Compact will explore strategies for attracting external investment that could support the future development of a Cultural Fund, including considering the feasibility of a microgrant programme.

"Since 2020, Brent Council officers have secured £2.2 million in external investment for culture and heritage – fuelling festivals, creative education and community projects that strengthen our borough's cultural life."

Evaluating our Success

Evaluation ensures accountability, learning and long-term investment. We will track outcomes across:

- Intrinsic value (emotional and creative impact)
- Economic impact (jobs, skills, local growth)
- Social benefit (inclusion and cohesion)
- Community building (civic pride and local identity)
- Mental health (wellbeing and resilience)
- Environmental benefit (sustainable practices)

How we will measure success:

- **Logic models** for each goal (inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes)
- **Quantitative data** (participation, demographics, employment, GVA)
- **Qualitative insight** (surveys, interviews, case studies)
- **Wellbeing tools** (e.g., WEMWBS)
- **Annual Cultural Impact Report** (progress, learning, recommendations)

Evaluation is not just about reporting – it drives learning and improvement. By understanding what works and what doesn't, we can refine our approach, strengthen partnerships, and ensure resources deliver maximum benefit. It also builds credibility with funders and stakeholders, helping secure long-term investment and positioning Brent as a leader in inclusive cultural practice.

Endnote

As Cabinet Lead for Culture (2022–2025), I've seen Brent's commitment to creativity grow – from the legacy of our Borough of Culture year to the strong partnerships shaping this new Culture Strategy. Working with Brent's brilliant artists, freelancers, and organisations like Kiln, Punchdrunk Enrichment, the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and Fresh Arts CIC has been a joy, and I'm proud that culture sits firmly at the heart of Brent's future.

This strategy is rooted in listening and understanding our creative landscape. Following the 2023 LGA/Arts Council Peer Review, we used its recommendations to strengthen our approach. Through extensive engagement, we explored the challenges and ambitions of our sector, building a strategy shaped by many collaborative conversations – expertly guided by Achates – and infused with the energy and optimism of Brent's cultural community.

We are now laying foundations for long-term cultural infrastructure and for the council's role as convenor – supporting studio spaces, backing projects like Harlesden Picture Palace, developing the Ealing Road Creative Enterprise Zone and supporting the Kilburn Music Mile festival.

Brent's diversity shines through our shared love of culture – from steel pan to the Wembley Mela, K Pop and reggae. This strategy sets out how the council will collaborate with creative organisations of all sizes, with a focus on those most at risk of missing out on grant funding, ensuring everyone can experience culture and pursue creative ambitions.

It also shows how culture links to wider priorities: health and wellbeing, skills and careers, placemaking, investment and climate action. Culture connects us as imaginative citizens, and this strategy outlines how Brent will continue to grow as a vibrant creative hub, nurturing the next generation of artists and innovators.



Councillor Fleur Donnelly-Jackson
Cabinet Member for Housing



Wemba's Dream

Appendices

Appendix 1: Brent Cultural Strategy Implementation Roadmap

This roadmap translates the ambitions of the Brent Cultural Strategy into a clear, phased plan for delivery. It aligns strategic goals with practical actions, milestones and partnerships, ensuring that culture becomes a driver for inclusion, wellbeing, and opportunity across the borough.

Phase 1: Foundations (2026)

Focus: establishing governance, launch flagship programmes, and embed culture in health and education.

Key Actions
Brent Cultural Compact (lead: Brent Culture) Includes: • Launches • Publish strategy for attracting funding • Publish Year 1 Cultural Impact Report • Commence options appraisal for visitor-economy contributions (ticket levy/visitor tax) with major venues and partners • Design and launch a Brent Micro-Grants Programme (10 grants annually, up to £500), including eligibility criteria, assessment process and alignment with Cultural Compact priorities.
Creative Community Brent (lead: Fresh Arts) Includes: • Programme foundations are set up, Director appointed, planning begins • Establishment of steering group • Plan programme delivery: Dance Together, Laugh Together, Act Together, Make Together • Plan embedding culture in social prescribing pathways (lead: Brent Public Health)
Vi-Brent (lead: Punchdrunk Enrichment) Includes: • Roll out the Creative Careers Programme

- Advance digital inclusion through BrentCreates.com (Brent Culture & Punchdrunk Enrichment)

Phase 2: Expansion (2027)

Focus: scaling up programmes, deepen community leadership, and strengthen cultural-health integration

Key Actions
Brent Cultural Compact (lead: Brent Culture) Includes: • Promote use of existing cultural infrastructure (Harlesden Picture Palace, Neasden hub, Wembley studios) as anchors for community-led programming and creative commissions. • Year 2 Cultural Impact Report published (Brent Culture)
Creative Community Brent (lead: Fresh Arts). Includes: • Expand CCB programme into additional wards and communities • Diwali outdoor event hosted • Strengthen creative health pilots targeting mental-health and long-term conditions
Vi-Brent (lead: Punchdrunk Enrichment) Includes: • Deliver borough-wide community-led festivals and exhibitions

- Youth Creative Hubs piloted
- Launch school-based cultural programmes

Phase 3: Consolidation and Legacy (2028-29)

Key Actions
Brent Cultural Compact (lead: Brent Culture) Includes: • Host borough-wide cultural summit to share learning and best practice • Publish final evaluation report and recommendations for 2030+ strategy
Creative Community Brent (lead: Fresh Arts) Includes: • Consolidate CCB outcomes and develop a legacy framework • Increased participation in programme • Social prescribing reach increased
Vi-Brent (lead: Punchdrunk Enrichment) Includes: • Expand Vi-Brent skills bootcamps and creative career pathways

Appendix 2: Key Performance Indicators and Benchmark Table

Goal	KPIs	Benchmarks
Goal 1 Inclusive Cultural Access	• Increase in participation among priority audiences • Number of free/low-cost cultural programmes • Engagement on BrentCreates.com • Number of people engaged	• By 2027, 2,910 pupils from five pilot schools will participate in a combined total of 25 cultural activities through the Cultural Backpack programme (Vi-Brent) • BrentCreates.com reaches 6k annual users by 2026 and 9k annual users by 2027 • 12 major public inclusive festivals/events by 2029 (CCB) • 38,680 people engaged in-person + online by 2029 (CCB) • 4,200 participants + audience of 5,000 (families and communities) in Young People's Festival in 2026 (Vi-Brent
Goal 2 Creative Skills and Careers	• Number of Creative Careers Bootcamps • Paid placements offered • Mentoring placements offered	• 4 bootcamps cohorts, 60 participants by 2027 (Vi-Brent) • 60 young people mentored/trained by 2027 (Vi-Brent) • 20 paid work opportunities for young people by 2027 (Vi-Brent)
Goal 3 Cultural Health and Wellbeing	• Number of cultural programmes in social prescribing • Residents engaged in creative health activities	• Culture embedded in social prescribing pathways through • 360 people engaged through social prescribing pathways by 2029 (CCB)
Goal 4 Community-Led Placemaking	• Number of community steering groups • Number of co-commissioned projects	• 50 members recruited to the Community Panel by 2026(CCB) • 12 Core Consortium Meetings held by 2029 (CCB) • 8 co-commissioned projects delivered by 2029 (CCB)
Goal 5 Infrastructure amd Investment	• Affordable creative spaces secured • BrentCreates.com engagement • External funding leveraged • Brent Cultural Fund established	• Additional affordable creative spaces secured – 1 per year • BrentCreates.com reaches 20,000 annual users by 2031 • External funding secured to set up a Brent Cultural Fund
Goal 6 Environmental Sustainability	• Outdoor cultural activities delivered	• Events meet sustainability criteria • 9 key outdoor cultural events annually (CCB)

[7] Creative Community Brent. This is the name of the Arts Council England's funded Creative Place Partnership, led by Fresh Arts

Appendix 3: Cultural Networks

Vi-Brent Network

Vi-Brent is a borough-wide cultural network launched in 2025 through Arts Council England's Place Partnership programme. It represents a major investment in Brent's creative future, bringing together nine leading organisations: Punchdrunk Enrichment, Fresh Arts, the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Unique Community, Mahogany Carnival Arts, Young Brent Foundation, Garden Studios, The Awareness Tap and Brent Council.

The network's mission is to strengthen collaboration across the sector, build capacity and create inclusive cultural opportunities for residents. Over the next three years, Vi-Brent will deliver a wide range of initiatives — including immersive theatre, orchestral music, carnival arts and filmmaking — ensuring Brent's diverse communities can access and participate in high-quality cultural experiences.

A central aim of Vi-Brent is to empower young people and open pathways into creative careers. The programme includes free arts provision for primary schools, a children's arts festival engaging thousands of participants and skills bootcamps in music production, film, TV and theatre. By connecting local artists, freelancers and cultural organisations through regular networking and collaborative projects, Vi-Brent aims to transform Brent into a thriving hub of creativity. This initiative not only addresses barriers to participation but also nurtures the next generation of talent, ensuring culture acts as a driver of inclusion and opportunity across the borough.

The Primary Festival is a flagship Vi Brent initiative that sparks creativity, confidence and cultural participation among Brent's youngest residents. Delivered through 16 weeks of artist led workshops in five primary schools, plus sessions from local cultural partners, the festival centres children's voices in creative development. Using stories from diverse cultures, pupils co create performances that celebrate identity and imagination, culminating in community and public realm showcases. The festival strengthens schools' roles in Brent's cultural ecosystem—supporting teachers, building partnerships and widening cultural access for families. Engaging over 5,000 children, families and community members, it helps build early cultural habits and supports wellbeing while contributing to Brent's ambition for every child to have a meaningful cultural entitlement.

Creative Community Brent

Creative Community Brent is a flagship programme funded by Arts Council England through the Creative People and Places (CPP) initiative. Led by Fresh Arts C.I.C in partnership with Brent Culture, Young Brent Foundation, Brent Public Health, Westminster University and The Compass Learning Trust, the programme aims to embed cultural activity into everyday life and make participation truly inclusive.

From Autumn 2026, Creative Community Brent will bring co-commissioned and co-created cultural experiences into non-traditional spaces such as parks, schools, homes and community centres. It focuses on engaging groups who have historically had fewer opportunities — including children and young people, Black and Asian communities, people with SEND and residents experiencing health inequalities.

Creative Community Brent will also integrate cultural activity into health and wellbeing strategies, supporting social prescribing and mental-health pathways. By prioritising co-design and community leadership, it ensures cultural experiences reflect local needs and identities. The programme contributes to Brent's Impact Framework through robust research and evaluation, informing future cultural policy and national best practice in arts, health and community engagement.

Cultural Compact

Partnership is at the heart of Brent's Cultural Strategy. Through Vi Brent and Creative Community Brent, we will create opportunities that reflect the borough's diversity and make cultural participation a habit from early childhood onwards.

A key mechanism for delivering this vision is the Brent Cultural Compact – a borough wide alliance that brings together public, private and community partners to align cultural development with wider priorities, including health, education, regeneration and sustainability. The Compact provides a governance framework for shared decision making, resource coordination and inclusive leadership, ensuring investment in culture contributes to social equity, economic opportunity and community wellbeing.

By convening partners and creating the conditions for cultural activity to thrive, the council supports skills development, confidence and civic pride across Brent. This collective approach enriches residents' lives and positions culture as a cornerstone of the borough's long term vision – driving inclusion, healthier communities and a stronger local economy.

Appendix 4: Young People's Governance Framework

This appendix outlines how schools, youth organisations and education stakeholders shape, govern and deliver the cultural programmes within the Strategy.

Overview: Why Schools Governance Matters

Children and young people (0–24) are identified as a priority audience for cultural access, skills development and wellbeing support. Schools are therefore central to:

- delivering early cultural engagement
- identifying and reducing access barriers
- embedding creative learning into daily education
- shaping youth-focused cultural programmes

The Vi-Brent partnership and the Cultural Compact ensure these outcomes are coordinated across schools, cultural organisations and council services.

Lead Coordinating Organisation: Young Brent Foundation (YBF)

Young Brent Foundation plays a core leadership role across school engagement for the Vi-Brent cultural education partnership.

Key responsibilities include:

- Acting as the coordinating body for school and youth engagement.
- Leading the Local Cultural Education Partnership (LCEP).
- Managing governance, outreach and alignment between schools, cultural partners and the council.
- Ensuring school and youth voices shape cultural programmes.
- Convening education stakeholders and cultural organisations to align cultural learning with local priorities.

Governance Structure

Steering Committee Membership

Council Services

- Brent Music Service
- School Improvement Service
- Director of Education Partnership
- Brent Culture Service

External Partners

- Local cultural delivery organisations (Punchdrunk Enrichment, Fresh Arts, RPO, Mahogany Arts, Unique Community, Garden Studios and youth-led organisations)

Education Sector Stakeholders

- Primary, secondary and special schools
- Multi-Academy Trusts
- Supplementary and alternative learning providers

Steering Group Functions

- Strategic Oversight: Ensuring education priorities are embedded in Vi-Brent planning.
- Co-Design and Decision-Making: Schools, youth representatives and partners jointly shape programmes.
- Quality Assurance: Reviewing curriculum alignment, safeguarding and evaluation.
- Youth Voice: Ensuring co-design across all programme strands.
- Monitoring & Evaluation: Feeding into the Annual Cultural Impact Report.

How Schools Shape Delivery

- Cultural Backpack Programme (Vi-Brent)
- Schools co-design timetables, select artforms and shape content for free cultural experiences for pupils aged 5–11.

Creative Careers Pathways

Secondary schools and colleges contribute through:

- curriculum-linked modules
- creative bootcamps
- mentoring
- paid placements
- Youth Creative Hubs

Co-Commissioning Panels

- Schools nominate representatives to community cultural panels.
- Pastoral and SEND Partnerships
- Schools help shape wellbeing-focused and SEND-inclusive cultural opportunities.

Appendix 5: Public Health Integration & Creative Health Delivery

This appendix outlines how Public Health priorities – particularly reducing loneliness, improving mental health and supporting residents facing health inequalities – are embedded within the Cultural Strategy.

Why Public Health Integration Matters

Cultural participation is shown to improve:

- mental health and emotional resilience
- social connection
- confidence and belonging
- healthy ageing
- non-clinical support for long-term conditions

Embedding Public Health into cultural delivery ensures Brent takes a whole-council approach to wellbeing.

Strategic Alignment with Public Health

This appendix strengthens alignment with:

- Mental Health & Wellbeing Strategy
- Loneliness Reduction agenda
- SEND and inclusion priorities
- Population Health Management
- NHS social prescribing pathways
- Brent Health & Wellbeing Board priorities

Delivery Mechanisms

Brent will deliver creative-health outcomes through:

1. Creative Community Brent (CCB)

The primary vehicle for health-focused cultural delivery and funded from Arts Council England's Creative Place Partnership funding programme.

Core CPP wellbeing activities include:

- participatory arts for wellbeing (dance, music, movement, storytelling, visual arts)
- community meals and gatherings to reduce loneliness
- targeted activities for:
  - older residents
  - Black and Asian communities
  - people with SEND
  - new parents and carers
  - residents facing health inequalities
- sessions delivered in community hubs, parks and homes
- integration with NHS social prescribing pathways

Why CCB Matters

CCB:

- targets communities with historically low engagement
- operates year-round
- embeds evaluation aligned with wellbeing indicators

2. Vi-Brent: Young People's Wellbeing

Vi-Brent supports young people's health through:

- free creative school-based opportunities
- youth-focused wellbeing programmes
- structured creative spaces for teenagers
- collective creative experiences that reduce youth loneliness

3. Brent Cultural Compact: Health in Governance

The Cultural Compact ensures:

- shared leadership across sectors
- alignment of Public Health and cultural delivery
- targeted cultural provision in priority neighbourhoods
- integrated evaluation of health outcomes

Integration with Social Prescribing

From 2026 Brent will embed arts into social prescribing pathways, involving:

- GP practices and PCNs
- link workers referring into CPP and Vi-Brent
- community hubs offering creative health activities
- use of recognised wellbeing tools such as the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS)

Public Health Role in Delivery

Co-Design & Prioritisation

Public Health will:

- identify priority groups
- shape programme themes
- ensure cultural appropriateness across Brent's communities

Commissioning & Partnerships

Public Health will collaborate on:

- commissioning wellbeing-focused programmes
- referral pathways
- identifying suitable venues

Evaluation

Public Health will support:

- data sharing
- interpreting wellbeing evaluation
- contributing to health metrics in the Annual Cultural Impact Report

What Success Looks Like

- measurable reductions in loneliness
- improved mental health outcomes
- increased participation in arts-based social prescribing
- stronger community resilience
- expanded access to creative health activity
- reduced reliance on clinical services for mild–moderate mental health needs

These outcomes directly map to the Strategy's evaluation domains, including Mental Health, Social Benefit and Community Building.

Appendix 6: Cultural Organisations and Representatives Engaged in the Development of the Strategy

To ensure Brent's Cultural Strategy is grounded in sector insight, community experience and practitioner expertise, Achates undertook a comprehensive consultation process. This involved a steering group, sector roundtables, one-to-one interviews, and open surveys for creatives and audiences. Together, these activities formed a robust evidence base for the development of the Strategy.

1. Engagement Methods

a. Steering Group

The Steering Group guided the research framework and ensured alignment with borough priorities. Members included:

- **Cllr Fleur Donnelly-Jackson**
- **Amit Bhagat**, Head of Libraries, Culture & Heritage
- **Colin Chester,** Acting London Borough of Culture 2020 Legacy Manager

b. Roundtables

Three themed roundtables were held to enable focused discussion across different parts of Brent's cultural and creative ecosystem. Participants explored strengths, challenges, gaps, and opportunities relating to cultural access, infrastructure, audiences, and partnership working.

Roundtable 1 – Cultural Sector Representatives

- **Iain Goosey**, Executive Director, Kiln Theatre
- **Clary Salandy**, Founder, Mahogany Carnival Design
- **Sophie Flack**, General Manager, Deafinitely Theatre
- **Zoe Cook**, Co-Director (Venue & Events), Lexi Cinema
- **Bethany Haynes**, Senior Producer, Punchdrunk Enrichment
- **Tom Philpott**, Director of Artistic Planning & Partnerships, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra
- **Sarah Smith**, Stock & Reader Development Manager, Brent Council
- **Diana Manipuld**, Archive Officer, Brent Council
- **Thomas Mabey**, Regeneration Officer, Brent Council
- **Colin Brown**, Founder, UK Reggae History
- **Peter Baxter,** Culture Project Manager
- **Diane Shrouder**-Johnson, Serene-One
- **Ronald Amanze**, Arts for Dementia trustee

Roundtable 2 – Civic and Community Organisations

- **Peter Flack**, ASC Studios
- **Nicola Moore**, ASC Studios
- **Alan Medley**, Kilburn State of Mind
- **Cristina Antonini**, We Restart
- **Nataliya Kharina**, Unique Community
- **Clare**, Brent Artist Network
- **Jessica Rabello**, Educator, Brazilian Community
- **Yoel Berhane**, Senior Programme Manager, Brent
- **Hilary Seaton**, Principal Planner, Brent
- **Leone Buncombe**, Head of Talent & Community, Garden Studios

Roundtable 3 – Creative Industries & Town Centre Stakeholders

- **Rubie Charalambous**, CEZ and Town Centre Manager
- **Ellishia Stewart**, Principal Regeneration Officer, Brent
- **Ace Ruel**, Creature Bionics
- **Richard Hay**, Kilburn Town Centre Manager

c. One-to-One Interviews

To deepen understanding of Brent's cultural infrastructure, audience needs, and economic context, Achates conducted interviews with key leaders of cultural organisations and funders:

- **Prof Gregory Sporton**, Associate Head of College (Research & Knowledge Exchange), University of Westminster
- **Davinia Khan**, Artistic Director, Fresh Arts
- **Angie Farrance**, Senior Policy Officer, Greater London Authority
- **Chris Stones**, Director of Community and Education, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra
- **Nataliya Kharina**, Artistic Director, Unique Community

These interviews provided granular insight into sector capacity, partnership potential, skills needs and gaps in provision.

d. Online Surveys

Two open surveys—one for creative practitioners and one for audiences—were distributed by Brent Council.

- 22 creative practitioners and 19 audience members responded.

While not statistically representative, the surveys offered valuable indicative trends regarding participation patterns, barriers to engagement, perceptions of Brent's cultural offer, and views on future priorities.

The consultation phase engaged a broad range of cultural organisations, practitioners, civic partners, funders, and residents. Their contributions have been central to shaping a strategy that reflects Brent's creativity, diversity, challenges, and ambitions. The insights gathered across these engagement methods underpin the Strategy's focus on inclusion, partnership, infrastructure, skills development, and cultural wellbeing.

Appendix 7: Comprehensive list of cultural organisations in the borough as of Summer 2025

Name of Organisation	FORM	Status Notes	Priority Audiences
3 Sixty Studios Ltd	Music recording studios	For profit company	Musicians, performers and voice over artists
Abbey Fabrics / Cleared Art / Modern Props Limited / Old Times / Super hire	Prop hire	For profit company	TV and film industry
ACAVA (Barham Park / Honeypot Lane)	Visual arts and studio spaces	Registered charity	Creative practitioners, cultural organisations
ACME Harrow Road	Artist studios	Registered charity	Artists in Brent
Action Space	Visual arts and studio spaces	Registered charity	Learning disabled artists across London, arts and culture organisations
Artistic Spaces (Oxgate House)	Visual arts and studio spaces	For profit company	Artists, designers, makers and content creators
Artists Studio Co. (Ealing Road Studios & Alperton)	Visual arts	Registered charity	Artists and makers, schools

Name of Organisation	FORM	Status Notes	Priority Audiences
BANG	Media, culture and heritage leadership and training - also has an earth and environment strand	Registered charity	Young people, community leaders
Battery Studio	Music studios	For profit company	Musicians
Be Lifted	Music, fitness and community led interaction projects	Registered charity	Women from the age of 16-70 years old • Domestic Violence survivors • Single mothers • Women living in poverty • At risk women and women ex-offenders
Blue Ocean Waves	Music, dance and art	Not for profit company	Children and young people
Brent Artist Network	Visual arts	Unincorporated group	A group of creative practitioners (individuals and grassroots organisations) who live or work in the borough. BAN provides a platform for artists to connect, collaborate, share resources, and support each other's creative endeavours
Brent Artists Resource Company	Creative co-working desk space	Not for profit company	Artists in north west London

Name of Organisation	FORM	Status Notes	Priority Audiences
Brent Indian Association	Dance	Not for profit company	Indian diaspora communities
Brent Museum and Archives	Museum and archive collections relating to Brent	Local authority	Communities in Brent, academia, social researchers
Brent Music Academy	Music education	Registered charity	Young people, musicians
Capital City Academy	Dance and performance rehearsal studios	Not for profit company	Performing arts groups in Brent
Chalkhill Community Radio	Community radio	Not for profit company	Radio station for Brent communities
Children's Bookshow, The	Literature	Registered charity	School children and children's authors
Cineworld Wembley	Cinema	For profit company	General public
Clube dos Brasileirinhos	Brazilian community and culture support center in London - Music	Registered charity	Brazilian communities in Brent
Creative Performance	Performing arts	Registered charity	Children and young people
Cuban Vibes Dance School	Dance	For profit company	Children and young adults, communities in Brent
CVS Brent	Fashion and heritage	Registered charity	Diverse communities in Brent

Name of Organisation	FORM	Status Notes	Priority Audiences
Deafinitely Theatre	Theatre	Registered charity	Deaf artists and theatre makers, deaf and hearing audiences of all ages, families and schools
Ealing Road Library	Libraries	Local authority	Local communities, families, schools, young people, community groups, older people
Exib	Set and exhibition building	For profit company	TV theatre film and event industry
Film Medical / Curious Science / Electro props	Prop and costume making	For profit company	TV theatre film and event industry
Fresh Arts	Combined arts	CIC	Fresh arts offers a wide range of arts and education programs for all ages
FUBU Nation	Dance	Not for profit company	A Brent-based dance company that offers workshops, classes, and dance intensives for professional and non-dancers
Garden Studios	Visual arts, film and TV	For profit company	Film and TV production industry
Granger Hertzog	Prop and costume making	For profit company	

Name of Organisation	FORM	Status Notes	Priority Audiences
Harlesden High Street	Gallery	For profit company	Bridge the social and culture gaps within the field of contemporary art by working with underrepresented artists
Harlesden Library	Libraries	Local authority	Local communities, families, schools, young people, community groups, older people
Hillside Performing Arts	Theatre	CIC	Young families, older people, schools, community organisations in Brent and neighbouring boroughs
Institute of Contemporary Music (Kilburn Campus)	Music education	For profit company	Adult learners
Kilburn Library	Libraries	Local authority	Local communities, families, schools, young people, community groups, older people
Kilburn State of Mind	IT, computing and music	Registered charity	Children – babies (and caregivers) and children under 11 and adults
Kiln Theatre	Theatre, cinema and comedy	Registered charity	Brent and Camden residents, schools, young people, emerging creatives, older people, underserved audiences

Name of Organisation	FORM	Status Notes	Priority Audiences
Kingsbury Library	Libraries	Local authority	Local communities, families, schools, young people, community groups, older people
Kinspiration	Literature, drama and crafts	CIC	Provide workshops and sessions to engage and inspire children, young people and adults alike, to fulfil their potential using creative learning activities such as storytelling, story writing, drama, arts and crafts and through collaborations with other facilitators
Lexi Cinema	Film	Social Enterprise (all profits go to charity)	Offering mainstream, independent and world cinema alongside a diverse programme of special screenings including black history studies, a women-only refugee film club, a neighbourhood film school and events for LGBT seniors, carers and the hard of hearing
Light Factory Studios	Artist studios	CIC	Artists designers and makers
Lin Kam Art	Festival arts, sound system and culture	For profit company	Local communities

Name of Organisation	FORM	Status Notes	Priority Audiences
Magic Sound	Asian music and culture	For profit company	
Mahogany	Combined arts and carnival	Not for profit company	Group of multi-disciplinary artists who design and create large scale kinetic sculptures/carnival costumes utilising the human body in the art form of "Mas Making", Masquerade or Street Theatre
MAMA Youth Project	Media training	Registered charity	Young people
Met Film School	Academia and film	For profit company	Emerging film TV and media artists
Metroland Cultures	Visual arts	Registered charity	Brent's artistic community
Papatango Theatre Company	Theatre	Registered charity	New writers, emerging talent
Pirate Studios - Wembley	Music studios	For profit company	Musicians - runs a residency programme and recording facilities for podcasts, dance, DJs and rehearsal space
Produbbing	Music studios	For profit company	Voice over and dubbing studio
Prop Hire and Deliver	Prop and costume making	For profit company	Film and TV production industry

Name of Organisation	FORM	Status Notes	Priority Audiences
Punchdrunk Enrichment	Theatre	Registered charity	Schools Families and Communities
Red Lotus Events	South asian music and dance	Not for profit company	Families – focus on second generation South Asian residents in Brent
RPO (Brent)	Music	Registered charity	Moved headquarters to Wembley Park to become even more embedded in the community - Brent workers, Musicians and community groups
Scenic Sets	Set and exhibition building	For profit company	TV theatre film and event industry
Second Floor Studios & Arts	Artist studios	CIC	Artists and makers in Wembley
Sherine's Dance School (formerly Adele's)	Dance	For profit company	Children aged 3-16 year olds
SKLPC Saturday School	Dance (Bollywood)	Registered charity	Children aged 5-18 year olds
Sparks Film School	Film and media education for young people	For profit company	Youth film and media courses for children aged 5-18 year olds
St Michael and All Angels Steel Orchestra	Steel band orchestra	Registered charity	Provide access for children, young people and adults to play steel pan and perform in the community

Name of Organisation	FORM	Status Notes	Priority Audiences
Stockyard Backdrops	Prop and costume making / Set and exhibition making and design	For profit company	TV, Film, theatre and events industry
Synergy Theatre Project	Theatre	Not for profit company	Ex-offenders, young people at risk of offending - work with Young Foundation in Brent but based in South London
TAIT	Set and exhibition building	For profit company	Event production companies and large scale venues
The Granville	Workspace and community hub within a converted Victorian church hall in South Kilburn	Registered charity	Local community Entrepreneurs, community groups
Theme Traders	Prop and costume making	For profit company	TV theatre film and event industry
Troubadour Wembley Park Theatre	Theatre	For profit company	General public
TurtleKey Arts	Combined arts	Registered charity	Disabled, disadvantaged and socially excluded people
Unique Community	Theatre	Registered charity	Young people and emerging artists
We Restart	Visual art, performing and video art, video	Registered charity	Refugee artists

Name of Organisation	FORM	Status Notes	Priority Audiences
Wembley Library	Libraries	Local authority	Local communities, families, schools, young people, community groups, older people
Wembley Operatic Society	Music	Registered charity	Amateur musical theatre group
Wembley Arena (OVO Arena)	Music venues	For profit company	Local audiences, community groups
Willesden Green Library	Libraries	Local authority	Local communities, families, schools, young people, community groups, older people
Wow Wembley	Workspaces for creative professionals	For profit company	Creative businesses, including content creators, photographers, videographers, and other professionals in similar fields
Yogi Divine Society	Drama, dance and music	Registered charity	Families, faith community

This page is intentionally left blank

Appendix 2: The Role of Schools and Young People within the Culture Strategy

1. Purpose

During recent presentations of the Culture Strategy (2026–31) at CMT, stakeholders requested clearer articulation of:

- How schools are involved in delivering the strategy, and
- How opportunities for children and young people are being coordinated, particularly through the Vi-Brent Place Partnership and the Local Cultural Education Partnership (LCEP).

This appendix sets out the proposed governance model for meaningful, structured and long□term involvement of young people in Brent's cultural decision□making. The model ensures young people have a formally recognised role in shaping cultural priorities, delivery, investment and evaluation in line with the Brent Culture Strategy's commitments.

2. Our Strategic Aim for Schools and Young People

Culture is a core enabler of education, aspiration, wellbeing and skills development. Through Vi-Brent and the LCEP, the Council aims to ensure that:

2.1 Every child and young person in Brent has access to high-quality, meaningful cultural opportunities

This includes:

- Early years and primary arts engagement (e.g., the Cultural Backpack, Young People's Festival)
- Curriculum-aligned activity and teacher CPD
- Creative pathways for 11–25-year-olds, including training, mentoring, skills bootcamps and paid work placements in the cultural and creative industries

2.2 Schools are active decision-makers, not passive recipients

Our approach ensures that cultural opportunities are co-shaped with schools, not imposed on them. Schools select the offers most relevant to their pupils, and through representation in governance structures they influence the wider design of cultural provision.

2.3 We remove long-standing structural barriers to engagement

The programmes explicitly target:

- Economically disadvantaged pupils
- Pupils with SEND and those in PRUs
- Schools currently underserved by cultural offers or with lower levels of arts engagement
- Young people needing clear routes into creative careers, paid placements and industry exposure

2.4 Cultural learning and careers guidance is embedded across the borough

By working through the LCEP, Vi-Brent directly supports Brent's Borough Plan goals relating to The Best Start in Life, raising aspirations, and widening participation in skills and employment pathways.

3. How This Work is Coordinated: The Role of the LCEP Manager

The LCEP Manager, based at Young Brent Foundation, is the central coordinating role bringing schools, cultural organisations, council departments and young people together. Analysis of the LCEP Steering Group minutes and the Vi-Brent delivery plan shows that Lashay leads or co-leads work across five domains:

3.1 School Engagement and Outreach Lead

The LCEP Manager directly:

- Introduces the LCEP to headteachers and senior leaders (e.g., through Headteachers' Meetings)
- Conducts targeted outreach to under-engaged and hard-to-reach schools
- Coordinates school representatives from primary, secondary and special schools to sit on the LCEP Steering Group
- Works with School Effectiveness teams to align messaging and ensure schools receive timely information

This ensures consistent access to schools and avoids duplication of approaches from multiple cultural partners.

3.2 Governance and Programme Oversight

The LCEP Manager:

- Chairs or co-ordinates the multi-agency LCEP Steering Group, which includes representatives from Brent Music Service, School Improvement, Education Partnerships, Brent Culture Service, and major cultural delivery partners
- Produces action logs, circulates documents, and ensures partners progress agreed tasks
- Monitors delivery of the Cultural Backpack, Young People's Festival, and school-based projects alongside Vi-Brent partners

The LCEP Manager ensures Vi-Brent's activity is aligned with:

- The new Brent Cultural Strategy 2026–31
- The Borough Plan (particularly education, inclusion, wellbeing)
- The SEND Strategy and Youth Strategy
- National frameworks for cultural education (e.g., Arts Council England's Let's Create)

Their role guarantees that school- and youth-facing cultural provision contributes directly to borough-wide objectives.

3.4 Embedding Youth Voice and Community Representation

The LCEP Manager oversees the development of meaningful youth voice structures, using:

- Brent Youth Parliament
- Faith-based CYP groups (identified as a gap through LCEP data and discussions)
- Partner organisations with existing relationships with young people in non-formal settings

Their governance approach ensures decisions are not only multi-agency but co-shaped by young people themselves.

3.5 Mapping Need and Targeting Resources

Through the LCEP, the LCEP Manager coordinates:

- Cultural mapping of schools – identifying which schools are underserved, where gaps or inequities exist, and where targeted offers are required
- Use of demographic, deprivation and participation data to prioritise resources (building on the extensive needs analysis within the Vi-Brent application)

- The creation of an “opportunity log” to link school needs with partner capacity and future funding opportunities

4. How Schools Are Involved in Vi-Brent Delivery

4.1 Cultural Backpack Programme

Schools receive free access to:

- At least one cultural visit or workshop per term
- Teacher CPD
- Bespoke programme choices determined by the school—especially for pupils less likely to engage in the arts

4.2 Young People’s Festival

Up to 4,000 primary pupils will create and present work, with a community audience of around 5,000. This is led with school arts leads and teachers in partnership with Fresh Arts and RPO.

4.3 Secondary School Strategy and Careers Pathways

Schools benefit from:

- Creative skills bootcamps
- Mentoring for 16–25 year olds
- Paid work placements
- Careers events, showcases and industry links

These respond directly to gaps identified in Brent’s evidence-base around creative careers awareness and access for young people.

4.4 Teacher Networks and CPD

A borough-wide Teacher Arts Network is being re-established, with a focus on sustainability and workforce development, prioritising arts leads in schools. This was a specific LCEP action led by the LCEP Manager and council colleagues.

5. Council Involvement and Oversight

Council officers from:

- Education Improvement Service
- Brent Music Service
- Children & Young People's Department (Employment & Skills)
- Brent Culture Service

sit on the LCEP Steering Group, ensuring decisions, resources and opportunities are joined-up and structurally embedded across Council departments.

This strengthens safeguarding, quality assurance, accountability, monitoring, and alignment with borough priorities.

6. Summary: Why the LCEP Manager is Integral

Across all evidence reviewed, the LCEP Manager is the linchpin ensuring that:

- Schools' voices shape programme development
- Cultural offers reach those children who need them most
- Delivery partners work in a coordinated, not fragmented, way
- Decision-making is inclusive of education, culture, youth and community perspectives
- Governance structures are maintained and effective
- Young people's progression pathways—from first engagement to creative careers—are coherent, equitable and strategically aligned

Without this role, the risk of duplication, inconsistency, and inequitable access across schools would be significantly higher.

This page is intentionally left blank

Appendix 3: Embedding Public Health – Reducing Loneliness and Supporting Mental Health Through Creative People & Places (CPP)

The Creative People and Places (CPP) programme—Creative Communities Brent—forms a central pillar of how the Culture Strategy (2026–31) delivers against Brent Council's health and wellbeing priorities. The programme is explicitly designed to address isolation, poor mental health, health inequalities, and low arts engagement, particularly among Black and Asian communities, people with SEND, older adults, carers, and residents with long-term health conditions.

This aligns directly with Public Health Brent's objectives to reduce loneliness, strengthen social connection, improve mental wellbeing, and widen participation in protective, community-based activities.

CPP is co-funded by Brent Culture and Brent Public Health, and the evaluation is supported by Public Health's research team, ensuring continuous learning and a strong evidence base for future strategy delivery.

1. CPP's Public Health Focus

The CPP application explicitly identifies improvements to mental health, respiratory health, obesity, hypertension, and social isolation as core intended outcomes. It highlights that the programme is created "to improve health outcomes tackling some of the health inequality highlighted in the borough particularly mental health…" and is shaped around populations at risk of isolation and poor wellbeing.

The programme uses participatory arts, social connection, shared cultural experiences and community decision-making as evidence-based mechanisms for improving wellbeing.

Brent Public Health provides:

- Match funding (50% of total match)
- Research oversight, including mixed-methods evaluation and segmentation research to understand health inequalities and the drivers of isolation
- Expertise in embedding inclusive and intersectional health approaches throughout delivery

2. Programme Elements Addressing Loneliness & Mental Health

Through extensive review of the activity plan, the CPP delivery model uses four major strands that directly support Brent's health and wellbeing goals:

A. Participatory Arts for Wellbeing

CPP delivers a large, recurring portfolio of participatory activities designed to reduce isolation, improve mood, and support residents with mental health conditions.

Key components include:

1. Weekly and Monthly Creative Workshops

Beginning April 2027, the programme delivers:

- 4 x weekly community dance sessions across the borough (with a focus on physical activity, stress reduction and connection)
- Monthly making workshops (craft, textiles, lantern-making, visual arts)
- 2 x weekly singing-for-wellbeing sessions (targeting respiratory issues, anxiety, low mood)
- 3 x monthly music workshops (including reggae, percussion, DJing)
- Weekly comedy workshops exploring humour as a tool for mental health and confidence-building
- SEND adult creative clubs (monthly) to reduce isolation for disabled adults and carers

These form a sustained, borough-wide schedule of activity shown in the CPP plan.

2. Targeted Mental Health-Focused Groups

Activities include:

- Singing sessions for people with mental health-related difficulties and respiratory conditions
- Dance activity for people experiencing stress, anxiety, obesity or hypertension
- Comedy groups for young carers and adults with mental health concerns, culminating in public sharings that build confidence and social inclusion
- Music sessions for people with SEND and mental health challenges

These offer regular social contact, physical activation, positive affect, and self-expression—all recognised protective factors for mental wellbeing.

B. Regular Lunch Clubs, Participatory Meals & Community Dine-and-Talk Events

One of the most significant CPP mechanisms for combating loneliness is its structured programme of community meals, present throughout the three-year timetable.

Community Panel “Dine & Talk Events” (Lunch Clubs)

From January 2027 and repeated every quarter (July, December, April etc.), CPP hosts lunch clubs where:

- Local residents dine together
- Share views about culture and wellbeing
- Take part in light creative activities (crafts, music)
- Contribute to decision-making around commissioned projects

These events specifically target:

- Older adults
- Isolated residents
- People with mental health challenges
- People experiencing socio-economic disadvantage
- Disabled adults and carers

They create a culturally inclusive, safe environment where social connection is prioritised.

Community Meals & Listening Events

The application also highlights open listening events with food, designed to reduce anxiety, increase comfort levels, and encourage participation—particularly for residents who would not normally attend civic or cultural forums. These begin as early as 2025 and continue through the programme.

C. Targeted Events for Marginalised & At-Risk Groups

CPP includes specific cultural events and participatory programmes designed for communities at heightened risk of isolation or mental health inequalities.

1. **Afro-Caribbean Elders Dance Events (Simmer Down)**

Quarterly participatory and professional music/dance gatherings designed to bring older Afro-Caribbean residents together, celebrate heritage, and reduce loneliness.

2. **SEND Saturday Clubs & Creative Workshops**

Monthly SEND creative clubs for disabled adults and children, reducing isolation and providing respite for parents/carers.

3. **Intergenerational Festivals & Celebrations**

Including:

- Windrush Day events
- Celebrating Lights / Diwali Festival

- Black History Month programme
- Eid Crafts events

These festivals are co-designed and include participatory elements that actively bring together diverse communities who might otherwise remain disconnected.

4. Pantomime & Schools Engagement (Act Together)

The pantomime/play includes:

- A community cast
- A community choir
- SEND participation
- A schools' touring version reaching 7,500 children

This supports young people facing isolation, improves confidence, and creates shared social experiences for families.

D. Social Prescribing Alignment

CPP plans to directly engage at least 360 residents via social prescribing, connecting GP-referred or socially isolated individuals with regular creative activity. This aligns with national practice in arts-based health interventions.

The participatory programme structure (sustained, welcoming, local, and relational) is intentionally designed to be compatible with Brent's social prescribing pathways.

3. Mechanisms for Reducing Loneliness and Improving Mental Health

Based on the activity plan, CPP's approach includes the following embedded mechanisms:

- Regular, repeated, localised sessions → builds routine, confidence and relational continuity
- Community-led decision-making → increases agency, trust and belonging
- Food-based gatherings → lowers psychological barriers and fosters informal social bonding
- Arts as a low-pressure connector → provides a non-clinical entry point for wellbeing support
- Targeted outreach through partners (e.g., SEND centres, care homes, faith groups) → reaches people most at risk of isolation
- Activities in parks and public realm → supports physical activity, nature connection and mental health
- Digital offer → supports housebound or isolated residents to engage at home (four community-chosen online creative courses)

4. Strategic Value for Brent Council

CPP delivers directly against:

- Borough Plan: A Healthier Brent (reducing health inequalities, improving mental wellbeing)
- Thriving Communities (reducing loneliness, improving social cohesion)
- Cultural Strategy Goals (inclusion, accessibility, community voice)
- Public Health Strategy (intersectional health improvement, targeted actions for vulnerable groups)

The programme embeds cross-sector infrastructure that will last beyond the CPP funding period, with:

- A community steering group
- A network of activity leaders
- Evidence-based evaluation
- New models for public health × culture integration

This page is intentionally left blank

Appendix 4: Draft Culture Strategy 2026-31 – Alignment with Key Corporate Strategic Policies

1. Alignment with Brent Borough Plan 2023–2027

The Borough Plan is structured around five key priorities:

1. Prosperity and Stability in Brent

Borough Plan Goals:

- Tackle inequality and reduce poverty
- Support employment and skills development
- Strengthen local businesses and high streets

Cultural Strategy Contributions:

- **Economic Impact**: The cultural sector contributes £38m GVA from charitable organisations alone. Further calculations can be made for the wider cultural GVA contributions.
- **Skills Development**: Programmes at Garden Studios and Fresh Arts offer training, apprenticeships, and career pathways in creative industries.
- **Freelancer Support:** Calls for low-cost workspaces, operational training, and networking platforms directly support Brent's freelance and SME creative economy.
- **Inclusive Growth:** Cultural organisations are engaging underserved groups (e.g. Eastern European, BAME, SEND) in creative employment and enterprise.

2. A Cleaner, Greener Future

Borough Plan Goals:

- Promote sustainability and environmental awareness
- Embed green principles in development and regeneration

Cultural Strategy Contributions:

- **Environmental Impact**: Culture is positioned as a cross-cutting theme in sustainability, with potential for circular economy and community wealth building.
- **Creative Placemaking:** Projects like Fresh Arts & Quintain use cultural hubs to animate public spaces and promote sustainable urban development.
- **Youth Engagement:** Cultural organisations are embedding environmental themes in programming.

3. Thriving Communities

Borough Plan Goals:

- Build civic pride and community cohesion
- Support vulnerable and underserved groups
- Promote equity and inclusion

Cultural Strategy Contributions:

- **Community Building:** Culture is used to reduce isolation, foster belonging, and celebrate Brent's diversity.
- **Inclusive Programming:** Organisations like Unique Community and Deafinitely Theatre engage ESL, SEND, and LGBTQIA+ communities.
- **Civic Identity:** The strategy promotes redefining "culture" to include local heritage, intangible traditions, and grassroots creativity.
- **Co-creation:** Emphasis on lived experience and community-led design ensures authentic engagement.

4. The Best Start in Life

Borough Plan Goals:

- Support children and young people
- Improve educational outcomes
- Address youth disengagement

Cultural Strategy Contributions:

- **Youth Focus**: Programmes like Brent Music Academy support early years, school readiness, and youth development.
- **Mental Health Support**: Cultural activities are used as preventative interventions for children and young people.
- **Career Pathways**: Initiatives like MAMA Youth Project and RPO's Brent Music Academy offer creative career routes and skills training.

5. A Healthier Brent

Borough Plan Goals:

- Address health inequalities
- Promote mental and physical wellbeing
- Integrate health and community services

Cultural Strategy Contributions:

- **Creative Health**: Culture is embedded in wellbeing strategies (e.g. RPO's Sound Sanctuary, UC's therapeutic theatre).
- **Social Prescribing:** Cultural organisations are positioned to partner with NHS and social care providers.
- **Mental Health Impact**: Culture is shown to build resilience, reduce isolation, and support emotional wellbeing across age groups.

Cross-Cutting Opportunities

- **Strategic Partnerships**: The strategy calls for cross-sector collaboration (e.g. NHS, education, regeneration) aligned with Borough Plan ambitions.
- **Evaluation & Impact**: The Theory of Change and Impact Framework provide tools to measure cultural contributions to borough-wide outcomes.
- **Place-Based Investment**: Cultural hubs and CEZs (Creative Enterprise Zones) support regeneration and local identity.

2. Alignment with Brent Youth Strategy 2025–2028

The Youth Strategy outlines a vision for Brent to be a safe, inclusive, and opportunity-rich borough for young people. The Cultural Strategy supports this through:

Creative Spaces for Young People

- Safe, inclusive hubs for expression, learning, and connection.

Pathways into Creative Careers

- Focus on skills development, paid roles, and access to creative industries, especially for underrepresented youth.

Mental Health Support

- Arts-based programmes like those from the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and Unique Community directly address youth wellbeing.

Youth Voice and Co-Design

- The strategy reflects feedback from young people and promotes community-led cultural planning, echoing the Youth Strategy's emphasis on youth participation.

Examples

Youth Strategy Priorities	Cultural Strategy Examples
Being Heard and Taking Part	The strategy is shaped by community voices, including young people, and promotes **youth-led cultural planning** and **co-creation**.
Reaching Goals and Enjoying Yourself	Offers **creative career pathways**, paid roles, and joyful cultural experiences that build confidence and aspiration.
Feeling Good	Supports **mental health** through arts-based programmes like Sound Sanctuary and inclusive workshops for young people with SEND or ESL needs.
Staying Safe	Proposes **safe, inclusive creative hubs** for young people to express themselves, connect, and grow in a supportive environment.

3. Alignment with Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2024–2028

The proposed Brent Cultural Strategy outlined in the Final Report (June 2025) strongly supports the ambitions and objectives of Brent's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2024–2028 in the following ways:

1. Inclusive Representation

EDI Strategy Goal: Ensure services reflect the diversity of Brent's population and promote inclusive representation.

Cultural Strategy: Prioritises historically underserved groups including people from BAME, Eastern European communities, LGBTQIA+, and those with mental health conditions.

2. Tackling Inequality

EDI Strategy Goal: Reduce inequalities in access to services, employment, and wellbeing.

Cultural Strategy: Identifies barriers such as low income, lack of access, and digital exclusion, and proposes targeted interventions like free cultural programming, subsidised workspaces, and community-led placemaking.

3. Community Engagement and Co-Design

EDI Strategy Goal: Empower communities to shape services and policies that affect them.

Cultural Strategy: Emphasises co-creation, community-led programming, and authentic engagement with lived experience.

4. Workforce Diversity and Skills Development

EDI Strategy Goal: Improve diversity in employment and leadership across sectors.

Cultural Strategy: Supports freelancers, young creatives, and underrepresented groups through training, apprenticeships, and career pathways in the creative industries.

5. Mental Health and Wellbeing

EDI Strategy Goal: Promote mental health equity and culturally competent support.

Cultural Strategy: Positions culture as a tool for mental health support, with programmes like Kilburn Music Mile Festival and Unique Community's trauma-informed workshops.

6. Data and Impact Measurement

EDI Strategy Goal: Use data to monitor progress and improve outcomes for diverse communities.

Cultural Strategy: Includes an Impact Framework and Theory of Change to track progress and ensure accountability.

Examples

EDI Strategy Objectives	Cultural Strategy Examples
Inclusive Representation	Prioritises underserved groups including BAME, Eastern European, LGBTQIA+, and those with mental health conditions.
Tackling Inequality	Identifies barriers such as low income, lack of access, and proposes free programming and subsidised workspaces.
Community Engagement and Co-Design	Emphasises co-creation and community-led programming shaped by lived experience.
Workforce Diversity and Skills Development	Supports freelancers and underrepresented groups through training and career pathways.
Mental Health and Wellbeing	Positions culture as a tool for mental health support with trauma-informed programmes.
Data and Impact Measurement	Includes an Impact Framework and Theory of Change to track progress and ensure accountability.

4. Alignment with the Brent Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy Refresh

1. Healthy Lives

Culture Strategy Contribution: Promotes inclusive access to cultural activities that support mental health, confidence, and community engagement.

Alignment: Cultural participation can encourage healthier lifestyles, reduce isolation, and improve emotional wellbeing—especially for underserved groups.

2. Healthy Places

Culture Strategy Contribution: Supports community-led placemaking and investment in creative spaces.

Alignment: Cultural infrastructure (e.g. creative hubs, public art, events) can transform public spaces into vibrant, safe, and inclusive environments that promote relaxation and social interaction.

3. Staying Healthy

Culture Strategy Contribution: Embeds culture into health and social care strategies, including social prescribing.

Alignment: Cultural activities (e.g. music, art, storytelling) can be part of therapeutic interventions and support mental health recovery.

4. Understanding, Listening and Improving

Culture Strategy Contribution: Uses participatory arts and storytelling to amplify community voices.

Alignment: Cultural engagement can be a tool for co-production, helping residents shape services and express lived experiences.

5. Healthy Ways of Working

Culture Strategy Contribution: Builds creative career pathways and supports wellbeing in the workforce.

Alignment: Creative industries can offer meaningful employment and wellbeing benefits, especially for young people and freelancers.

5. Alignment with the Health & Wellbeing Board Priorities

1. Mental Health and Wellbeing

Relevant HWB Items:

- Adult Mental Health Workstream Update
- Community Wellbeing Service
- Integrated Neighbourhood Teams (INTs)
- Men United and Music Mile case studies

Culture Strategy Support:

- Strategic Goal: Cultural Health and Wellbeing: Embeds culture into health strategies, supports mental health, reduces isolation, and builds resilience.
- Actions: Creative programmes (e.g. Music Mile), partnerships with mental health services, and social prescribing initiatives.
- Opportunities: Expand creative mental health interventions (e.g. music, storytelling, visual arts) in INTs and community hubs.

2. Children and Young People's Health and SEND

Relevant HWB Items:

- SEND Inspection Update
- Brent Children's Trust Progress Report
- Child Health Hubs

Culture Strategy Support:

- Priority Audience: Children and young people (0–24), including those with SEND.
- Strategic Goal: Inclusive Cultural Access: Focus on underserved groups including schoolchildren.
- Actions: Youth Creative Hubs, creative careers pathways, and co-designed cultural programmes in schools.
- Opportunities: Embed cultural activities in SEND outreach, co-produce arts-based interventions with schools, and support the Welsh Harp Skills Hub with creative programming.

3. Community Engagement and Place-Based Health

Relevant HWB Items:

- Integrated Neighbourhood Teams (INTs)
- Radical Place Leadership (RPL)
- Community Wellbeing Service
- Healthwatch Work Programme

Culture Strategy Support:

- Strategic Goal: Community-Led Placemaking: Empowers residents to shape cultural experiences.
- Cultural Compact: Aligns cultural strategy with civic goals (health, education, regeneration).
- Actions: Vi-Brent network, local cultural leadership, co-location of cultural and health services.
- Opportunities: Use cultural programming to activate INTs and RPL pilots (e.g. Harlesden), support community hubs with arts-based engagement, and amplify Healthwatch's grassroots work through creative storytelling.

4. Health Inequalities and Inclusion

Relevant HWB Items:

- Better Care Fund Planning
- Primary Care Transformation
- Cervical and Bowel Cancer Screening
- Social Prescribing in ASC

Culture Strategy Support:

- Theory of Change: Justice-based approach to underserved communities (BAME, Eastern European, mental health, low-income).
- Impact Framework: Tracks social benefit, mental health, and inclusion.
- Actions: Creative outreach in deprived areas, culturally competent programming, and partnerships with health providers.
- Opportunities: Collaborate on targeted campaigns (e.g. screening awareness), embed cultural activities in social prescribing, and co-design inclusive health messaging.

5. Workforce Development and Skills

Relevant HWB Items:

- Primary Care Workforce Strategy
- Community Champions and Health Educators
- Creative Careers Programme

Culture Strategy Support:

- Strategic Goal: Creative Skills and Careers: Supports pathways into creative industries.
- Actions: Apprenticeships, training, and visibility of creative careers.
- Opportunities: Align with GP SPIN Fellowships, offer creative placements in health settings, and support workforce wellbeing through cultural engagement.

6. **Suggested Recommendations for Integration**
    - Embed Culture in INTs and RPL Pilots: Use arts and heritage to support community power, storytelling, and trauma-informed engagement.
    - Support Mental Health Through Creative Programmes: Expand Music Mile, Men United, and similar initiatives borough-wide.
    - Co-Design with SEND and CYP Services: Partner with schools and youth hubs to deliver inclusive cultural programming.
    - Align Cultural Compact with HWB Strategy: Ensure representation from health partners in the Compact and use it to coordinate delivery.
    - Use Impact Framework to Track Cultural Health Outcomes: Align with HWB KPIs and share data across sectors.

Appendix 5: Consultation Process

The engagement process included:

- 3 Roundtables (Cultural Sector, Civic Organisations, Creative Industries)
- One-to-One Interviews with key cultural leaders and funders
- Two Online Surveys (Creative Practitioners and Audiences)
- Steering Group (Councillor Fleur Donnelly-Jackson, Amit Bhagat, Libraries Manager, Colin Chester)

Estimated total engaged: ~79 individuals (plus wider networks via survey promotion and partner outreach).

Roundtables

Number of sessions: 3

Format: 2-hour discussions on priorities, barriers, and opportunities

Participants: ~30 people

Roundtable 1 Cultural Sector	**Roundtable 2 Civic Organisations**	**Roundtable 3 Creative Industries**
Iain Goosey – Executive Director, Kiln Theatre	Peter Flack – ASC Studios	Rubie Charalambous – CEZ and Town Centre Manager
Clary Salandy – Founder, Mahogany Carnival Design	Nicola Moore – ASC Studios	Ellishia Stewart – Principal Regeneration Officer, Brent
Sophie Flack – General Manager, Deafinitely Theatre	Alan Medley – Kilburn State of Mind	Ace Ruel – Creature Bionics
Zoe Cook – Co-director Venue & Events, Lexi Cinema	Cristina Antonini – We Restart	Richard Hay – Kilburn Town Centre Manager
Bethany Haynes – Senior Producer, Punchdrunk Enrichment	Nataliya Kharina – Unique Community	
Tom Philpott – Director of Artistic Planning & Partnerships, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra (RPO)	Clare Barstow – Brent Artist Network	
Sarah Smith – Stock and Reader Development Manager, Brent Council	Jessica Rabello – Educator, Brazilian Community	
Thomas Mabey – Regeneration Officer, Brent Council	Yoel Berhane – Senior Programme Manager, Brent Public Health	

Roundtable 1 Cultural Sector	Roundtable 2 Civic Organisations	Roundtable 3 Creative Industries
Diana Manipud – Archive Officer, Brent Council	Hilary Seaton – Principal Planner, Brent	
Colin Brown – Founder, UK Reggae History	Leone Buncombe – Head of Talent and Community, Garden Studios	
Peter Baxter – Culture Project Manager		
Diane Shrouder-Johnson – Serene-One		
Ronald Amanze – Arts for Dementia trustee		

Key Themes Emerging from Roundtables:

- **Cost of Living & Inequality:** Financial barriers to participation, lack of affordable workspaces, and pressure on schools.
- **Mental Health & Wellbeing:** Growing need for cultural interventions in social prescribing and community health.
- **Youth Engagement:** Lack of youth services, need for free, high-quality creative spaces, and pathways into cultural careers.
- **Access & Inclusion:** Digital literacy gaps, language barriers (ESL), and physical accessibility challenges.
- **Cultural Identity & Cohesion:** Desire to celebrate Brent's diversity while addressing fragmentation and building civic pride.
- **Infrastructure & Spaces:** Shortage of performance and visual arts spaces; need for better use of libraries and green spaces.
- **Trust & Co-Creation:** Communities want authentic involvement and transparency in decision-making.

One-to-One Interviews

Number of interviews: 5

Organisations represented:

- University of Westminster
- Fresh Arts
- Greater London Authority
- Royal Philharmonic Orchestra
- Unique Community

Key Themes Emerging from One-to-One Interviews:

- **Mental Health and Wellbeing:** High demand for mental health support among children and parents; rising anxiety and low mood linked to cost-of-living crisis.
- **Social and Economic Inequality:** Significant wealth disparities; limited access to affordable cultural activities; cultural careers seen as financially unviable.
- **Youth Disengagement:** Drop-off in participation despite opportunities; disconnect between proximity and access.
- **Lack of Strategic Coordination:** Fragmented partnerships; poor alignment of cultural initiatives; underdeveloped cultural infrastructure policy.
- **Transparency and Engagement:** Residents feel excluded from decision-making; limited visibility of plans.
- **Cultural Space Deficit:** Shortage of affordable creative spaces; gentrification reducing free community spaces.
- **Environmental and Technological Gaps:** Green infrastructure lacking; digital upskilling opportunities need scaling.

Surveys

- **Creative Practitioner Survey:** 22 responses
- **Audience Survey:** 19 responses
- **Total survey participants:** 41 people

Top Issues Identified in Surveys:

- Cost-of-living crisis
- Mental health and wellbeing
- Unemployment and social isolation

What Brent Needs Most:

- Enhanced cultural and heritage facilities
- More opportunities for creativity and skill development
- Support for mental wellbeing and community cohesion

Barriers to Participation:

- Financial expense
- Limited availability of provision
- Travel and accessibility challenges

What Would Encourage Engagement:

- More free cultural opportunities
- Better promotion of events
- High-profile and culturally relevant programming

	Cabinet 9 February 2026
	Report from the Corporate Director Resident and Housing Services
	Lead Member -Cabinet Member for Housing, (Councillor Fleur Donnelly-Jackson)

Approval for First Wave Housing to operate supported accommodation

Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	Key
Open or Part/Fully Exempt: (If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)	Open
List of Annexes:	None
Background Papers:	None
Contact Officer(s): (Name, Title, Contact Details)	Laurence Coaker, Director of Housing Needs and Support 020 8937 2788 Email: laurence.coaker@brent.gov.uk Jamie Slagel. Change and Improvement Project Manager 020 8937 2950 Email: Jamie.Slagel@brent.gov.uk

1. Executive Summary

1.1. The purpose of this report is to seek Cabinet's approval for First Wave Housing to offer supported exempt accommodation to help care experienced young people, residents in supported living arrangements, and residents at risk of or experiencing homelessness. The scheme aims to increase availability and improve the quality of supported accommodation while reducing costs to the Council.

2. Recommendation(s)

Cabinet is asked to:

2.1. Approve that First Wave Housing launches and operates a supported housing scheme and to ask that officers vary First Wave Housing's 2026-27 business plan accordingly for Cabinet in March.

2.2. 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.

2.3. Agree to the financial implications of the proposal as outlined in section 7, including staffing and legal costs.

3. Cabinet Member Foreword

3.1. For many residents, a home is more than just a house. Having grown up in social housing myself, I know just how vital a stable home and the right support can be in helping people to live well independently. The homelessness emergency we continue to face means that increasing numbers of residents now require additional support to be able to live independently.

3.2. In recent years, supported exempt accommodation has expanded rapidly. With much of this growth having taken place outside Council commissioning and regulation practices, it has often led to poor quality provision and poor value for public money. And where providers are not registered, this can cost the Council millions in public money. These challenges sit alongside increasing homelessness pressures and demands for temporary accommodation, support for care leavers, and adult social care supported housing.

3.3. This proposal therefore sets out a coherent way of meeting the genuine demand for supported accommodation, ensuring that it offers the good quality support residents expect and deserve so they can move towards independent living, all while being financially sustainable and properly regulated.

3.4. The scheme will also support adults with mental health needs, physical or learning disabilities, care-experienced young people, and vulnerable residents at risk of homelessness, including survivors of domestic abuse and former asylum seekers. By providing appropriate, supported alternatives to temporary accommodation, it will also help to relieve pressure on homelessness services.

3.5. Establishing a trusted provider that the Council can refer into will ultimately ensure support is tailored to the core needs of residents who require supported accommodation. With clear expectations around quality, consistency and value, the scheme will help to lead the market and develop a model of integrated, person-centred support. In doing so, it will support more residents to move into independent living, reduce reliance on temporary accommodation, ease pressure on homelessness services, and strengthen the Council's financial resilience.

3.6 The proposal aligns with the Borough Plan's Healthier Brent and Thriving Communities strategic priorities. Specifically, it improves outcomes for vulnerable residents by improving the quality of care, support and supervision for residents with complex needs to help them progress into independent living. This would be true for residents who are referred into supported exempt accommodation (SEA) in the future but also for some residents currently in temporary accommodation, who do not currently receive any care, support, or supervision. It will also provide particular support for care experienced young people and residents with physical disabilities, mental health challenges, or learning disabilities.

3.7 The proposal will help to improve the health and wellbeing of vulnerable residents by improving access to good quality support services to help residents before challenges escalate. The proposal will also reduce health inequalities for vulnerable residents, specifically care experienced young people, households fleeing domestic abuse and homeless residents, by providing them with support services to help them progress to independent living.

3.8 The proposal provides a long-term strategic response to the unsustainably high losses in Housing Benefit subsidy, which would in turn free up resources to meet other priorities and deliver other services.

3.9 In addition to the Borough Plan priorities, the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023 places a responsibility upon Brent Council to develop a strategy for supported housing. The proposal outlined here would play a key role in that strategy.

4 Background

4.1 Pathways to support

4.1.1 There are several established pathways depending on residents' needs. First, residents who meet the threshold for care receive a care package – including residents in supported living arrangements. Second, residents who don't meet the threshold for care but who need medium-to-high levels of support to live independently can receive a commissioned package of support through Housing Related Support Services e.g., for substance misuse, mental health challenges, or residents fleeing domestic violence. Third, residents with slightly lower levels of support needs, but who cannot live independently without more than minimal care, support or supervision, are often referred into non-commissioned supported exempt accommodation (see below) before they are able to live independently. Finally, residents are supported into independent living, typically in the private rented sector.

4.1.2 The ideal pathway is to support residents down the ladder of support, although for some groups this is not possible. At the same time, many residents may not progress linearly, sometimes requiring more or less

support. This proposal is intended to support residents in first and third rungs of the ladder outlined above.

4.2 What is Supported Exempt Accommodation?

4.2.1 The National Audit Office notes that "Supported housing is accommodation that is provided alongside support, supervision or care to help people with specific needs to live as independently as possible in the community. This includes, for example, older people, people with a learning disability, people with a physical disability, people at risk of or who have experienced homelessness, or people recovering from drug or alcohol dependence. Supported housing can be short term or long-term, depending on a person's needs."[1]

4.2.2 Supported exempt accommodation is so called because it is exempt from locally set caps on housing benefit. Legally, SEA is:

Accommodation which is provided by a non-metropolitan county council in England, a Housing Association, a registered charity or voluntary organisation where that body or a person acting on its behalf also provides the claimant with care, support or supervision.[2]

4.2.3 As it is exempt from locally set caps on housing benefit, providers of exempt accommodation can reclaim higher costs. This has made it attractive to independent providers. A Select Committee inquiry has identified several significant concerns around independent provision of SEA, including:[3]

- Inadequate provision of support, untrained support workers and, in some cases, neglect
- Rapidly increasing costs
- Financially unstable organisations
- Links to organised crime
- Conversion of affordable family homes to exempt accommodation

4.3 Payment for SEA

4.3.1 The National Audit Office explains: "Local authorities pay Housing Benefit for specified supported housing, in most cases, directly to the provider. DWP reimburses local authorities for these payments in line with the Housing Benefit subsidy rules which are set out in legislation. In some cases, the rules mean that the amount of subsidy paid to the local authority may be restricted. If the housing provider is registered with the Regulator of Social Housing, DWP reimburses the full amount." For those cases where the housing

[1] Investigation into supported housing - NAO report, p.4
[2] The Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit (Consequential Provisions) Regulations 2006, Schedule 3
[3] Exempt Accommodation - Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee. See e.g. p.11 and 41

provider is not registered, an independent rent officer determines how much the local authority can claim as rent, based on similar properties in the area. The local authority can reclaim 100% of the rent officer determination from DWP. Who pays for the amount above the rent officer determination depends on the vulnerability of the resident. The NAO explains: "If the resident is classed as 'vulnerable', the local authority can claim a further 60% of the amount above the rent officer determination. Therefore, local authorities experience a gap in subsidy from DWP of 40% above rent officer determination for particular vulnerable groups, and 100% above this determination, for other residents."[4]

4.3.2 If the provider is a Registered Provider, the entire cost falls to the DWP. If the provider is not a Registered Provider, the cost is shared between the council and the DWP, with the DWP covering more if the resident has a vulnerability.

4.4 SEA in Brent

4.4.1 At the end of 2024/25, there were around 1,400 SEA units in Brent. Following work to address some of the challenges above, there are around 1,100 SEA units at the time of writing. These figures include Housing Related Support Services that are commissioned by Brent as well as non-commissioned services run by independent providers.

4.4.2 In 2023/24, subsidy loss to Brent Council associated with SEA amounted to £3.486m. In 2024/25, the figure was £3.967m. The Council is projecting subsidy loss of £2.07m for 2025/26.

5 Details of proposal

5.1 Officers propose that First Wave Housing (FWH) launches a supported accommodation scheme. The new scheme would be used to support four groups:

- Residents already in Brent Supported Living arrangements
- Care experienced young people
- Residents who are currently being referred into supported exempt accommodation
- Residents in temporary accommodation who have more than minimum care, support and supervision needs

5.2 As First Wave Housing is a Registered Provider, DWP would cover the full costs of housing and housing management, although not the costs of care, support and supervision – which will instead be funded by reduction in the cost of housing. See more details at section 9.

[4] Investigation into supported housing - NAO report, p.9

5.3 An explanation of each proposal is included as follows:

5.3.1 **Residents already in Brent Supported Living arrangements**: by restructuring the provision of Brent Supported Living, Brent Council can reclaim higher housing benefit to make existing arrangements more financially sustainable. Staff estimate that once fully transitioned, the Council could reduce costs / increase income by around £750,000 per year (150 units at £100 per week). While this proposal wouldn't have any direct impact on quality, it should be easily implemented and a good test case for rollout of the proposed model for other groups.

5.3.2 **Care experienced young people**: to offer support to young people who are not yet ready for fully independent living, to support them to develop independent living skills, supporting our role as Corporate Parent. This proposal has been produced in collaboration with and endorsed by the Operational Children's Senior Leadership Team.

5.3.3 **Residents who are currently being referred into supported exempt accommodation**: currently these residents are referred into poor quality and expensive independent, non-commissioned providers. Many stay in this accommodation for many years and, unfortunately, some enter deleterious circles and are not supported back into independent living. Some have told the Council they are not actually receiving care, support and supervision. The proposal is to instead refer these residents into First Wave Housing, over which the Council would have much greater oversight, and support should be significantly improved. The goal is to create person-centred support that enables residents to move into independent living within ~2 years.

5.3.4 **Residents in temporary accommodation who have more than minimum care, support and supervision needs**: there are some residents in temporary accommodation with support needs who may struggle to maintain a tenancy without support. General needs temporary accommodation is not suitable to meet their needs. This cohort has grown, as has demand for supported accommodation, while supply of good quality supported accommodation has not kept pace. The goal is to work with First Wave Housing to create a pathway of step-down accommodation to support residents to regain skills for independent living and move them from temporary accommodation into the private rented sector. Overall, supported accommodation should be more beneficial to residents than temporary accommodation that does not include support and may be outside the borough.

5.3.5 Proposed phasing for roll-out, as agreed with First Wave Housing's Board, is as follows:

- **Phase 1 (trial)**: care experienced young people (5-6) and supported living arrangements (25-30) – 5 months
  - **Dedicated evaluation**: 1 month

- **Phase 2**: full transfer of care experienced young people (~30) and supported living arrangements (150) – 3-6 months

- **Phase 3**: 30 residents currently in temporary accommodation or at risk of homelessness – 3-6 months
  - **Dedicated evaluation**: 1 month

- **Phase 4**: Around 100 residents per year, either in temporary accommodation or at risk of homelessness – 9 months

5.4 **Key benefits and opportunities**

5.4.1 Supported housing provides invaluable housing and support for disabled people, homeless people, people with mental health problems, people who have experienced domestic abuse and many others. For many residents, a home is more than just accommodation. The Council is seeing more residents who don't meet the threshold for formal care but do need support to live by themselves. This kind of accommodation is crucial to support these groups and this proposal is intended to create a scheme to deliver this support and housing in a manner that is financially sustainable to the Council into the future.

5.4.2 Some existing provision is poor quality. Given the Council has limited regulatory options to intervene and the significant subsidy loss to the Council, there is a strong case to be made for the Council to form a close partnership with an SEA provider which can enter the market. FWH providing SEA itself could shake up the market by offering an alternative to current provision and catalyse improved standards across existing providers. This will help to improve outcomes for vulnerable residents. In turn, this creates space for FWH and the Council to work closely together on developing a model of supported housing that provides holistic support to the resident on the foundation of secure accommodation, supporting them into more sustainable long-term independent living.

5.4.3 In many cases, there are small but meaningful gaps that mean people are not yet ready to live independently. This proposal intends to fill those gaps by bringing together housing, support and access to benefits. It also intends to provide more relational services to residents, recognising that relationships between support workers and residents are often the key to successful outcomes.

5.4.4 There are other substantial benefits of FWH providing SEA. It would enable more opportunity to negotiate with existing providers to improve quality/conditions or stop them from unreasonably increasing costs each year. It would also mitigate against various existing risks, such as a major provider of SEA failing financially (as has occurred in Birmingham), failing the forthcoming licensing scheme (some may fail), or shifting some of its stock from a Registered Provider to a non-Registered Provider. In such cases, FWH could step in to continue to provide supported accommodation for residents.

5.5 **Staffing requirements**

5.5.1 This proposal will require dedicated staffing. There are three staff 'groupings' to consider:

- **Intensive housing management**, including property liaison, tenancy management, repairs and maintenance, compliance – eligible service charges under housing benefit.

- **Management**, commissioning, administration, legal & finance – eligible as management costs under housing benefit (within reason, typically 10-15% of total costs).

- **Care, support & supervision** – not funded by housing benefit, but rather by the Council.

5.5.2 The Council would provide staffing resource for the first two groups. As regards care, support and supervision, FWH will be responsible for commissioning the staffing resource, which may sit with an external organisation or with the Council. This will require amendments to the existing SLA between FWH and Brent Council.

5.5.3 Costs related to intensive housing management and administration/ management are all eligible to be reclaimed under housing benefit, although administration/management must be reasonable. FWH should be able to access up to £180 per week per resident for such costs.

6 Care, support and supervision needs and plans

6.1 It is important that FWH and the Council have the skills and resources to ensure good quality of care, support, and supervision for residents. This section outlines how FWH and the Council have planned to meet this.

6.2 **Needs assessment**: staff in Commissioning and Market Insight have completed a needs assessment of two groups:

- Residents in supported exempt accommodation who were referred by Brent's Housing Needs and Support Department

- Residents in temporary accommodation

In addition, staff have conducted a visit to one of the largest non-commissioned providers in Brent to see their properties, meet their staff, and meet with one of their residents. Staff have separately met with two residents with lived experience of supported exempt accommodation to understand their experiences and what support would be beneficial to them.

6.3 **Demographic groups**: the needs assessment has identified seven key demographic groups, and this proposal intends to focus on three: refugees

with mental health needs, people experiencing homelessness, and young people over 18 (including care leavers). This would be in addition to the existing Brent Supported Living arrangements.

6.4 Commissioning plan

6.4.1 The Commissioning and Market Insight team would complete the commissioning on behalf of FWH, based on their extensive expertise commissioning care, support, and supervision, including for supported living and housing related support services. The Council's Children's directorate would continue to commission support for care experienced young people. Each would be respectively responsible for monitoring quality of provision on an ongoing basis.

6.4.2 Care, support, and supervision for residents who were at risk of homelessness or in temporary accommodation would be commissioned from the market following market research.

One option is for the Council itself to provide this care, support and supervision. The Council has now run an in-house supported accommodation service for rough sleepers for over a year and, learning from this experience, intends to develop a strong proposal to deliver the support itself.

7 Costs and cost reduction

7.1 The Council's proposed contribution to the new scheme, above and beyond what is covered by housing benefit, is as follows:

7.2 Set-up costs:

- Cost for a 12-month coordinator role – est. £75,000
- Cost for external legal counsel to draft scheme documentation – est. £10,000
- External legal support for FWH – est. £5,000
- Contingency costs for additional agency support for Brent Legal Department – est. £10,000

All of which will be funded through cost reduction achieved in 2026-27 by this proposal.

7.3 The Council would dedicate some existing resources to deliver the new scheme, including finance, legal, housing management, commissioning (ASC and Children's) and housing benefit.

7.4 For phases 3 and 4, the Council would cover the cost of care, support and supervision from costs that otherwise would be spent on subsidy loss, as follows:

- For the third phase (redirecting existing demand for SEA to FWH), where money is currently spent on SEA subsidy loss as part of central items, instead use some of that money to commission care, support and supervision, and return the remainder as savings to the Council. In 2024/25 subsidy loss was £3.95m and in 2025/26 it is estimated to be about £2.07m.

- For the fourth phase (supporting residents out of temporary accommodation and into FWH supported accommodation), some of the money that would have been spent on temporary accommodation would be redirected towards the cost of care, support, and supervision for residents.

7.5 It remains open which organisation would provide care, support and supervision in 2027-28 for phases 3 and 4. It is possible that Brent Council could be the organisation and if so, dedicated resource would be brought in to provide and manage that care, support and supervision, funded as outlined in the two paragraphs above.

7.6 First Wave Housing would operate this scheme cost neutrally. Other than start-up costs as outlined above and the cost of care, support and supervision (as above), housing benefit should cover all costs. In addition, FWH have requested that the Council underwrite any losses they are unable to cover via Housing Benefit and operational overheads.

Officers recommend this as a sensible approach as the likely cost reduction is significantly greater than the size of any potential losses. Potential losses may be caused by:

- Management and administration costs that are deemed “unreasonable” by Housing Benefit.

- Bad debt on service charges housing benefit cannot cover, including utility costs.

- Excessive repairs costs if not covered by the service charges claimed from housing benefit.

7.7 Mitigation: to mitigate the risk of the above, officers plan to:

- Use the trial phase as an opportunity to calculate the real costs of housing management, including repairs, per unit, for use in future rent and service charge schedules.

- Include a reasonable overhead in the rent and service charge schedule for repairs and housing management costs.

- Include a sink fund at 10% to cover unanticipated costs such as the above.

7.8 Officers have looked at VAT implications and believe that income related to provision of housing will be exempt from VAT. It is likely that most payments related to provision of care, support and supervision will be exempt too, but this depends on the exact commissioning arrangements. There is a likelihood that a small amount of the costs will include VAT, but these should not be prohibitive.

Cost reduction

7.9 Long-term the proposal should achieve cost reductions that would contribute to existing savings targets in Adult Social Care and Children's Commissioning as well as helping to reduce overspends on temporary accommodation. It would also enable increased savings towards existing subsidy loss related to SEA from 2027-28.

In total, by 2028-29 the proposal should be reducing costs to the Council totalling around £2.2m pa.

7.10 Cost reduction for Adult Social Care relates to increasing housing benefit recoup by around £100 per week for around 150 units. This is because SEA allows recoup of higher levels of housing benefit than at present. Cost reduction for Children's Commissioning involves the reduced cost of supporting care experienced young people out of existing provision and into supported accommodation. This is because the cost of housing and housing management for their interim accommodation can be fully rather than wholly covered by housing benefit, and so the only cost to the Council is the cost of care, support, and supervision. Staff estimate that this will lead to an average unit cost saving of £500 per week.

7.11 Cost reduction for Housing Needs relates to the fact that nightly paid accommodation for a single household is on average more expensive than the cost of the Council commissioning support from First Wave Housing. Current cost £13,000 (after housing benefit recoup) for temporary accommodation vs ~£6,000 for a supported accommodation support package. Savings for SEA: at present Brent Council spends ~£2m pa on subsidy loss associated with SEA. FWH is a Registered Provider and so the full cost, except costs of care, support and supervision will be covered by housing benefit. The average unit cost related to subsidy loss is around £8,500 at present vs ~£6,000 for a supported accommodation support package.

7.12 Overall estimated cost reduction:

Phase	**Cost reduction** *(£000s)*		
	2026-27	**2027-28**	**2028-29**
Phases 1 & 2	300 – ASC 450 – Children's **750**	450 - ASC 350 – Children's **800**	
Phases 3 & 4	-	190 – TA	300 – TA

		55 – SEA **245**	120 – SEA **420**
TOTAL	**750**	**1,045**	**420**

By 2028-29, total cost reduction per year should be around £2.2m.

N.B. All the above are cost reduction goals contributing to existing budget targets rather than new savings targets, except the SEA savings in 2027-28 onwards.

8 Implications

8.1 Approval of this scheme would require several changes to be made:

8.2 Provision of supported accommodation relates to, but is an expansion of, FWH's current purpose to provide good quality, affordable, secure, and well-managed homes for residents in line with the Council's housing aspirations. Approving this scheme will mean making a variation to FWH's business plan to pilot the provision of supported exempt accommodation and, where successful, expand.

8.3 Such a decision would also require an update to the Service Level Agreement between FWH and the Council and a Memorandum of Understanding between FWH and the Council to ensure that the scheme operates cost neutrally and the Council provides staffing adequate to good quality provision.

9 Risks

9.1 **Access to SEA properties**: new demand for SEA would require working with landlords that are already providing SEA, moving them away from their current SEA provider. Given that lease agreements will be in place, this may prove challenging.

- **Proposed mitigation**: FWH would focus on working with landlords where lease agreements are up for renewal, or where landlords have agreements with providers that fail Brent's review/licensing scheme. Further, FWH should be able to make a compelling offer to private landlords given that it would be operating in partnership with the Council.

9.2 **Access to new properties**: to support care leavers and some residents in temporary accommodation, new properties will need to be leased. This requires finding, negotiating, and securing new properties at around the current Local Housing Allowance.

- **Proposed mitigation**: 2024 Local Housing Allowance (LHA) is more generous than 2011 LHA. Given the Council is restricted to the latter for temporary accommodation, officers are aware of various properties not suitable for temporary accommodation but suitable for supported exempt accommodation that FWH could access. This proposal will not

use FWH's or the Council's existing stock nor will it require acquiring new properties.

9.3 **Care, support, and supervision**: Taking on responsibility for care, support, and supervision would be new for FWH—and represents a level of risk. Moreover, it can be challenging to provide care, support, and supervision to this cohort due to a variety of intersecting challenges the current environment poses to residents. In some cases, residents may display anti-social behaviour. It would be very important to ensure that residents are appropriately screened to check that they have low- to medium-support needs, rather than a high level that this scheme would not be suitable for, at least initially.

- **Proposed mitigation**: work closely with the Council's Housing Needs and Support and Commissioning and Market Insight departments respectively, drawing on their expertise with commissioning, overseeing, and providing supported accommodation and housing related support services.

9.4 **Move-on**: The goal of supported exempt accommodation is to see most residents move on into independent living (excluding supported living arrangements for older adults and adults with learning disabilities). However, it can be challenging to support some residents for independent living – and even if residents are ready to move on, the existing housing crisis can make it very challenging to find affordable and suitable accommodation. This risks a bottleneck.

- **Proposed mitigation**: work in tandem with the Council's existing expertise supporting residents to move on once they are able to live independently and are in the appropriate financial position.

9.5 **Employment barriers**: many residents will want to enter employment, which is often important to becoming independent. However, employment can affect access to housing benefit which, in turn, can 'trap' residents in supported accommodation.

- **Proposed mitigation**: Careful, well-planned sequencing so that employment and independent living can come together. Further, the Chancellor announced changes to mitigate this issue in her Budget on 26 November 2025.

9.6 **Access to full housing benefit:** There is a risk that scheme documentation is not correctly drawn up in such a way that the Council can fully reclaim housing benefit from DWP.

- **Proposed mitigation:** To mitigate this risk, Brent Legal Department will continue to instruct external legal counsel with significant expertise in this area to support with drawing up documentation so that the Council can fully reclaim housing benefit from DWP.

10 Stakeholder and ward member consultation and engagement

10.1 Staff have undertaken significant work to understand residents, their needs, put in place the right commissioning plans, and create detailed plans to meet supported accommodation needs. That has involved speaking to some residents with lived experience of supported accommodation as well as visiting a provider to ensure that those voices have inputted and continue to input into the development of this proposal.

10.2 Staff have engaged extensively internally, including with Housing Benefit; Housing Needs; Housing Management, Adult Social Care (Commissioning), Children's (including Commissioning and Looked after Children team), Finance and Legal.

10.3 Staff have also attended the Brent Supported Living Board and Operational Children's Senior Leadership Team, who have both engaged with and endorsed the proposal.

10.4 Staff have engaged extensively with FWH and their Board, attending the Board at the end of July and September. FWH are supportive of the scheme and approved moving forward with the scheme on 9 January 2026, subject to approval from the Guarantor.

10.5 Next steps:

- Implementation of phase 1, starting 9 February (if approved)
- Evaluation of phase 1, Autumn 2026

Officers estimate the scheme will take 2-3 months to go live after the final decision has been made, to hire relevant staff and get systems up and running.

11 Financial Considerations

11.1 Under current arrangements, if the SEA provider is not a registered provider, the Council experiences a gap in housing benefits subsidy received from DWP of 40% above rent officer determination for particular vulnerable groups, and 100% above this determination for other residents. This gap needs to be covered by the Council. Housing Benefit subsidy loss associated with SEA in 2024/25 was £3.95m, linked to 654 placements. In 2024/25, this was funded from Council reserves. In 2025/26, this subsidy loss is estimated to be between £1.8m and £2.1m.

11.2 It is estimated that the Council could achieve £2.2m in cost avoidance over three years by diverting clients and sending referrals for Supported Accommodation from Temporary Accommodation, Adult Social Care and Children's Social Care directly to FWH. Whilst this would not represent cashable savings against the existing budgets, it is forecast that the proposals set out in this paper would help to avoid costs in the future that the Council

would have otherwise had to incur to deal with demand, increasing costs and the existing subsidy gap within this area.

12 Legal Considerations

12.1 Brent Legal Department advise that there is no need to amend First Wave Housing's Articles of Association.

12.2 Independent, external legal advice from Matt Hutchings KC confirms that FWH can act as a provider of SEA and that, in such a case, the Council could fully recover Housing Benefit Subsidy. This is because FWH qualifies as a housing association and is a registered provider of social housing.

12.3 A housing company like FWH can be used to acquire and provide temporary accommodation to those to whom Brent owes duties under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996. Section 206(1)(b) of the Act confirms that Brent may perform its homelessness duties by ensuring that suitable accommodation is obtained from someone else (including a housing company owned by Brent).

12.4 To meet SEA requirements, FWH would be contractually obligated to provide a more than minimal level of care, support and supervision (CSS) in its occupational agreement. This includes the possibility of FWH arranging for an external provider to provide the care, support and supervision.

12.5 Under section 189A of the Housing Act 1996 Brent must undertake a detailed housing needs assessment to support referrals for SEA and provide evidence of the CSS requirement.

12.6 Provided that FWH leases properties from private landlords for SEA and the rents are set at local SEA market rates, the Council should be able to reclaim the full amount as HB. CSS costs are not eligible for subsidy under Housing Benefit and must be covered separately either by the resident or the Council, or a combination of both.

12.7 In this project officers understand that FWH will lease properties for SEA for a minimum term of 2 years and a maximum term of 30 years without the use of public funding for acquisition.

12.8 There would be no conflict of interest in Brent using FWH as an SEA provider, given that the Council administers Housing Benefit and that, under new regulations, Brent will act as the licensing authority for SEA providers. There would not be a requirement for Brent to procure the opportunity as it would satisfy the requirements of the *Teckal* exemption, in accordance with paragraph 2 of Schedule 2 to the Procurement Act 2023.

12.9 Counsel has strongly advised that all documentation for the scheme should undergo comprehensive legal review prior to implementation, to mitigate the risk of non-compliance. Overall, there are no substantial legal barriers that would inhibit the progression of the scheme, but due diligence - particularly

regarding contracts, compliance and governance - is required to ensure long-term viability.

12.10 Wherever First Wave Housing has a need for legal advice or legal input where the other party would be the Council, including the signing of leases and contracts with the Council, they would need to seek independent legal advice as the Council's legal team would not be able to advise due to a conflict of interest.

12.11 Cabinet will have the requisite authority to approve the Council's entry into any funding agreement, the nomination agreement(s) and management agreement specified at Recommendation 2.4 on the basis of paragraph 1.4 of Part 3 of the Council's Constitution which specifies that the Leader has agreed to delegate all executive functions to the Cabinet. Moreover, section 1(1) of the Localism Act 2011 empowers the Council to do anything an individual can do unless prohibited by law and subject to public law principles. Further, section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 sets out subsidiary powers of local authorities which allow the Council to do anything which is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to, the discharge of any of its functions.

13 Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Considerations

13.1 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 the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the Act, to advance equality of opportunity and 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.

13.2 Having due regard involves the need to inquire into whether and how a proposed decision disproportionately affects people with a protected characteristic and the need to consider taking steps to meet the needs of persons who share a protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it. This includes removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by persons who share a protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic.

13.3 SEA is used to house residents with a wide range of needs, including:

- housing with care for older people
- people with a learning disability and/or autistic people
- people with mental ill health and/or physical disability
- young people leaving care or who are at risk of homelessness
- people experiencing or at risk of homelessness
- people with drug and alcohol dependency needs
- people with multiple complex needs

- domestic abuse refuges and safe accommodation with support

13.4 Supported accommodation is more likely to be accessed by residents who are from Back, Asian, Mixed or Other ethnic backgrounds, who are disabled, and who are asylum-seekers. As supported accommodation is provided by independent providers, Brent council does not collect demographic information about residents in supported accommodation in Brent.

13.5 Many of the residents eligible for SEA are protected under the 9 protected characteristics laid out in the Equality Act, and these groups are more likely to experience health inequalities, social exclusion, and complex support needs.

13.6 For the first scheme – supported living arrangements – a number of residents will have physical disabilities. As those residents will remain in their existing properties, this scheme will not impact those residents or their physical disabilities. It is not anticipated that the other schemes will be focused on residents with physical disabilities – where that is the case, the Council will work to identify and lease modified properties that meet their needs working with procurement specialists within the Housing Needs and Support Department.

13.7 The goal of the proposals above is to improve the quality of care, support, or supervision—and the accommodation—received by these residents and to support them into independent living. The proposals also aim to start offering more suitable accommodation and to start offering care, support, and supervision to some residents currently in temporary accommodation, which should have a strong positive impact on groups protected under the 9 protected characteristics laid out in the Equality Act.

14 Climate Change and Environmental Considerations

14.1 The proposal does not impact the Council's environmental objectives and climate emergency strategy.

15. Communication Considerations

15.1 Where Brent Council intends to ask residents in supported living arrangements to sign a new tenancy agreement with First Wave Housing, it is important that communication is clear, simple, and sensitive, making clear that there will be no reduction in provision or security of accommodation or care, support and supervision.

Report sign off:

Thomas Cattermole
Corporate Director, Residents and Housing Services

This page is intentionally left blank

	Cabinet 9 February 2026
	Report from the Corporate Director of Service Reform and Strategy
	Lead Member – Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources (Councillor Mili Patel)

ICT Infrastructure Investment Programme 2026 -2028

Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	Key
Open or Part/Fully Exempt: (If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)	Open
List of Appendices:	None
Background Papers:	N/A
Contact Officer(s): (Name, Title, Contact Detail')	Derrick Boyce, Head of ICT Solutions 020 8937 6045 Derrick.Boyce@brent.gov.uk Fabio Negro, Managing Director Shared Technology Services 07557 633506 Fabio.Negro@sharedtechnology.services

1.0 Executive Summary

1.1 Brent Council's current 5-year ICT Infrastructure Investment Programme ends in March 2026. This report sets out an updated Capital Investment programme for 2026-2028, recommending Cabinet approves a £6.7M investment over two years.

1.2 The ICT Investment Programme sets out a targeted, two-year plan focusing on five core areas detailed in this report: modernising data centres, enhancing cloud infrastructure, upgrading networks, strengthening cybersecurity, and supporting vital business applications. These investments are crucial for enabling hybrid working, safeguarding sensitive data, and ensuring the council can deliver responsive, joined-up public services.

1.3 To illustrate the essential nature of this investment, one might liken the council's ICT infrastructure to keeping the lights on in a house, upgrading the wiring and securing the building, equivalent to delivering essential services, replacing

critical components e.g. laptops, updating the network and deploying robust cyber security measures.

1.4 Failure to proceed with this investment would expose the council to significant risks, including:

(a) increased vulnerability to frequent and sophisticated cyber-attacks, similar to incidents experienced by the London Borough of Hackney and the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, where recovery efforts may span several years and incur costs exceeding £15 million.

(b) IT systems may become less reliable with slow connectivity to line of business applications.

(c) a likelihood of major incidents or service outages and disruptions to ongoing council programmes.

1.5 Inaction is not a viable option. Such events could undermine public confidence, compromise essential service delivery, and result in substantial financial and reputational costs.

1.6 Recognising current financial pressures, the council is working to make substantial savings over the next three years. By adopting innovative solutions and new technologies, the investment runs alongside the 2-year Digital Roadmap 2026-2028 and serves as an enabler in supporting delivery of savings and benefit realisation. The ICT Infrastructure Investment Programme supports and aligns with these cross-cutting measures.

2.0 Recommendation(s)

That Cabinet:

2.1 Approves the ICT Infrastructure Capital Investment for 2026-2028 totalling £6.7m.

3.0 Cabinet Member Foreword

3.1 In an era marked by escalating cyber threats and rapid technological change, Brent Council remains steadfast in its commitment to delivering secure, reliable, and innovative digital services. Our aim is to strengthen IT infrastructure, enhance resilience, and empower staff to serve residents more effectively.

3.2 Our approach is grounded in the lessons learned from recent high-profile cyber incidents affecting other councils, and it acknowledges the urgent need to invest in robust technology to safeguard essential services. By embracing new solutions and aligning our efforts with the Digital Roadmap 2026-2028, we will not only address current risks but also support the council's broader ambitions to achieve significant savings and deliver value for money in a challenging financial climate.

3.3 This investment programme is closely aligned with the council's overarching strategic objectives and directly supports the borough plan themes of Prosperity

and Stability in Brent and Thriving Communities. By equipping staff with modern tools for safer, more effective collaboration, the initiative underpins the council's ambition to deliver high-quality, responsive services to residents. The measures also complement sustainability, efficiency, and future-proofing initiatives, ensuring the council remains adaptable and resilient as technology evolves.

3.4 Key to this transformation is the transition to integrated, faster digital platforms and accessible services for residents. Targeted technology upgrades and process improvements will streamline service delivery, enabling quicker and easier online interactions with the council. Enhanced integration of service platforms will facilitate efficient information sharing between departments such as social care, housing, education, and environmental services, resulting in a more coordinated response to residents' needs.

3.5 Upgrading to cloud-based, energy-efficient solutions will minimise system outages and ensure essential services are available when needed. Improved monitoring and management tools will allow IT teams to proactively address issues, while providing staff with secure, up-to-date digital tools for effective support, both remotely and in person. These enhancements also foster a preventative approach through data-driven decision-making, helping to identify and resolve issues early. Ultimately, this capital investment underpins a more robust, agile, and responsive frontline service, supporting Brent's goal of building a secure, prosperous, and resilient borough for all. It will also support work to ensure that residents' data is stored and used safely and appropriately.

4.0 Detail

Objectives

4.1 The Council's commitment to maintaining a capital budget for technology investments ensures IT systems remain current, reliable, resilient, and secure, thereby enabling staff to work effectively and efficiently. The proposed investment for 2026–2028 builds on the final phase of the ICT Infrastructure Capital Investment 2021–2026, focusing on the Shared Technology Service (STS), which acts as a centralised hub for IT infrastructure and support across Brent, Lewisham, and Southwark. This encompasses data centres, cloud infrastructure, networks, and core business applications.

4.2 The investment will enable STS to implement modern management and monitoring tools for data centres, cloud environments, networks, and devices, ensuring operational efficiency and robust security. Given the persistent threat of cyber attacks, it is crucial for Brent to maintain resilient IT systems with strong security measures, necessitating continued and substantial investment in infrastructure.

4.3 Ongoing ICT projects from the current ICT Infrastructure Capital Investment will carry forward into the 2026–2028 plan, ensuring continuity and a seamless transition between phases. The outcomes and benefits of these initiatives are detailed in table 1.

Table 1 - Ongoing ICT projects

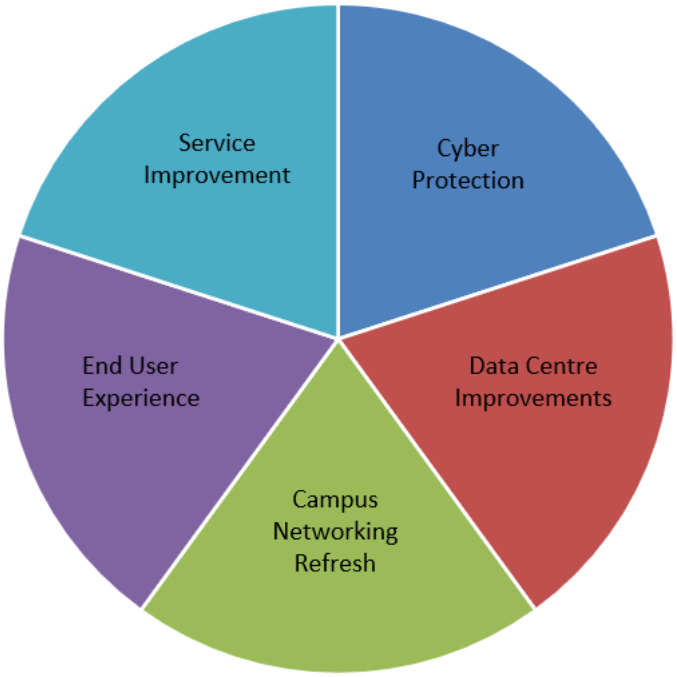
Project/Initiative	Description	Intended Outcomes/ Benefit	Next Steps / Investment Required
Ongoing ICT Projects	Continuation of current roadmap projects into the 2026–2028 plan	Ensures seamless transition and builds on successful existing work	Further investment needed for continuity and expansion
Laptop and Mobile Refresh Programme	Regular replacement and update of staff laptops and mobile devices	Provides reliable, up-to-date devices to support effective performance of duties	Ongoing funding to maintain cycle
Upgrading Internet & Wi-Fi Connectivity	Enhancing network infrastructure across all Brent council buildings	Facilitates seamless and flexible working for staff, regardless of location	Investment in new connectivity solutions
Cybersecurity Enhancements	Implementation of robust cybersecurity measures with partners and national agencies	Safeguards council systems against cyber threats and secures digital infrastructure	Continued collaboration and investment in cyber protection

Options Appraisal

4.4 STS considered a number of options for each individual project, which makes up the overall Programme. As the Programme is developed in detail, the options will be reappraised to ensure that they remain the best solution for the organisation. The investment will provide a secure, stable and resilient IT infrastructure for the Council. Any initiatives may involve new procurements.

4.5 As with the previous ICT Infrastructure Investment, the new plan uses the following 5 categories in table 2:

Table 2 - Technology Roadmap Categories



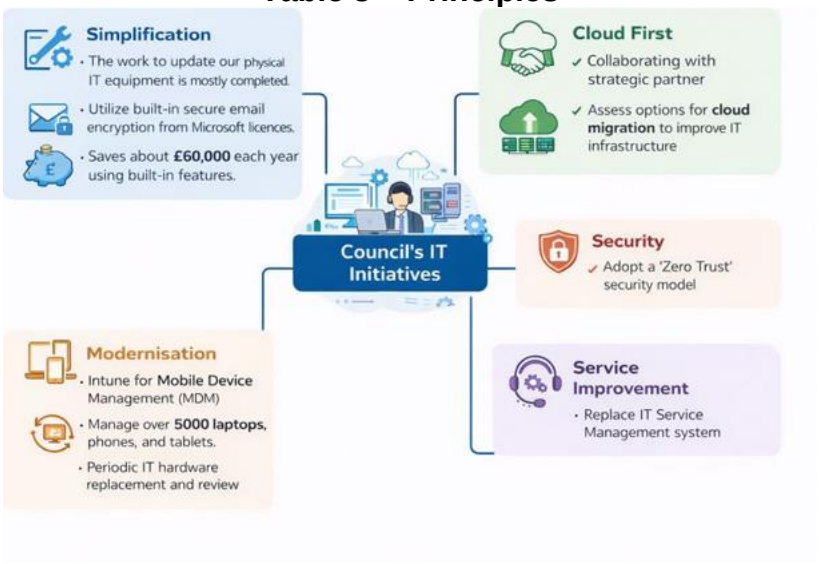
4.6 For each category, STS have detailed below the initiatives / projects that will be required over the next 2-year period. See Milestones in section 6.1 for a breakdown of IT projects.

4.7 The next phase of investment, continuing from the original ICT Infrastructure Capital Investment, has the following principles:

- Simplification of systems
- Cloud first approach to hosting
- Modernise and rationalise our assets
- Security is paramount
- Continuous service improvement

4.8 The main components of the key principles are summarised below.

Table 3 – Principles



4.9 Brent has largely completed updates to its physical IT equipment and is now seeking to further simplify operations and reduce costs by leveraging additional features within its Microsoft user licences, such as integrated secure email encryption. This shift is expected to save the council approximately £60,000 annually. As cloud technology evolves, Brent is working with a strategic partner to assess its data centre infrastructure and consider cloud migration options, with the aim of transforming rather than merely replicating existing systems.

4.10 The council follows a 'cloud first' strategy for new implementations but continues to manage both on-premises and cloud hosting to maximise value across partner councils. The growth in end user devices has led to the adoption of Intune for streamlined device management and enhanced security. Ongoing hardware replacement cycles are used as opportunities to modernise solutions and services.

4.11 With cyber security threats increasing in complexity and volume, Brent is preparing to implement a 'Zero Trust' model, whereby every attempt to connect to our network to access line of business systems must be treated with zero trust, until that attempt can be verified. Unlike traditional methods that rely on a single "perimeter" defence—like a city wall—the ‘Zero Trust’ approach establishes individual lines of defence for every building within the city. Additionally, the council plans to replace its current IT Service Management platform with a more advanced solution that can automate processes and leverage AI to improve service delivery.

5.0 Benefits to the Council

5.1 The ICT Infrastructure Capital Investment Programme is delivering the following benefits:

Table 4 – Benefits to the Council



- Rollout of new laptops and upgraded network infrastructure, enabling staff to work more efficiently both in the office and remotely. This future-proofed the IT infrastructure, delivering greater speed, reliability, and adaptability for evolving requirements, while supporting faster and more reliable connectivity to internal systems, which in turn improved user experience and productivity. Refreshed iPhone devices with a comprehensive review and realignment to staff roles, ensuring devices meet users' specific needs.

- Upgraded outdated Wi-Fi across the Brent Civic Centre and six public buildings, including Willesden Green Library, Ealing Library, John Billam Centre, Kilburn Library, Kilburn Square Housing, and Kingsbury Library, resulting in robust connectivity and seamless roaming between floors.

- Strengthened our cybersecurity resilience through the establishment of a Security Operations Centre in partnership with Microsoft and NCC, alongside investment in advanced threat detection and protection solutions.

- Significantly increasing the capacity of the security and vulnerability team to proactively identify and address emerging risks.

- Achieved shared investment and procurement efficiencies by collaborating with strategic partners, such as the London Borough of Lewisham and Southwark, to develop improved working practices. For example, the join mobile telephony contact has yielded saving of £200,000, whilst the print contact is expected to achieve saving of £30,000 per annum over the next 3 years.

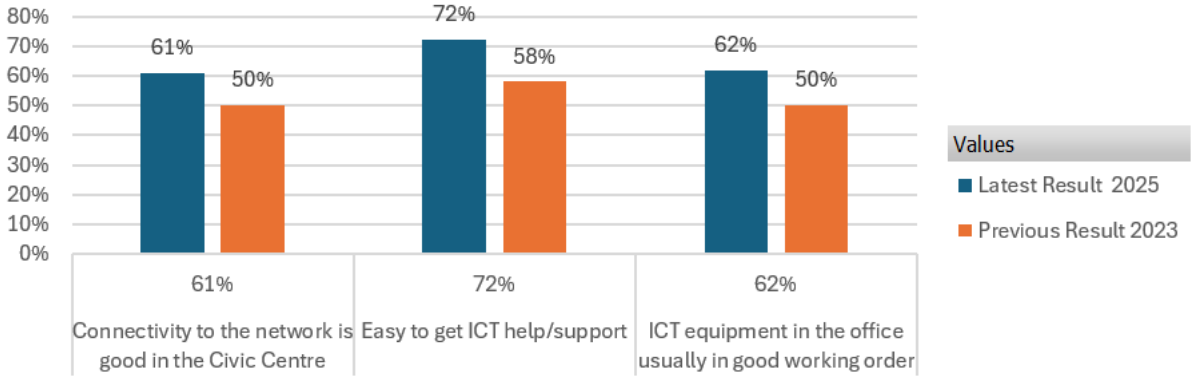
- Maximised resource utilisation through joint IT initiatives with Shared Service and Brent IT Solutions.

- By establishing key partnerships and focusing on strategic collaboration and resource deployment, STS has created opportunities for long-term savings, optimised return on investment and innovation across the organisation.

- Ensured alignment with our Digital and Data strategies to support organisational objectives and best practice.

5.2 Analysis of our IT survey shows Brent staff satisfaction has risen significantly over the past two years.

Table 5 - Improved Staff IT Satisfaction Survey



5.3 The new investment will continue to realise these high-level benefits over a 5-year period. The benefit realisation include:

Description of Benefit	Financial/ non-financial benefit?	Estimated benefit amount?	When will the benefit be realised?	One-off or recurring?
Data centre Improvement (Resilient IT) Creating a platform to enable the council's digital ambitions.	Non-Financial	N/A	2026-2027	One off
Campus networking refresh (Reliable/ Robust IT) Enabling a reliable, robust	Non-Financial	N/A	2026-2027	One off

environment to facilitate staff accessing systems.				
End User Modernisation (Worker efficiency) Equipping the workforce with fit for purpose tools.	Non-Financial	N/A	2026-2027	One off
Cyber Protection Protecting our residents' data and reducing the council's risk of cyber incidents.	Non-Financial	N/A	2026-2027	One off
Service Improvement (Efficiencies in service provision) Ensure the delivery of digital and IT services are cost effective and provides value.	Financial	370,000	2026/2027	One off One off

6.0 Timescales

6.1 The programme is a 2-year roadmap commencing in 2026/2027, designed to deliver a series of strategic technology initiatives including enhanced device management, adoption of advanced cybersecurity measures, and transition to cloud-based solutions, all aimed at improving operational efficiency and safeguarding council services.

Table 6 – Milestones

Milestone	Start	Finish
Campus Networking refresh (Projects)	2026/2027	2027/2028
Cyber Protection (Projects)	2026/2027	2026/2028
Data Centre Improvements (Projects)	2026/2027	2027/2028
End User Experience (Projects)	2026/2027	2027/2028
Service Improvement (Projects)	2027/2028	2027/2028

7.0 Risks

7.1 The risks associated with not investing in the IT Roadmap are significant for the council's operations. It is essential to keep the IT infrastructure up to date and well maintained, not only to support the operational efficiency of employees, Councillors and residents, but also to mitigate the growing threat of cybersecurity attacks. Maintaining robust IT systems helps ensure full and secure access to council IT services, which underpin the ability of staff to perform their roles effectively and efficiently.

7.2 Throughout the IT Roadmap programme, each new project will be subject to rigorous scrutiny, including a mandatory project initiation and approval process at the Operational Management Group and Joint Governance Board. This approach will ensure that every proposal is reassessed to confirm it remains the most appropriate option for the Council, delivers value for money, and incorporates the necessary safeguards to address emerging cybersecurity risks.

7.3 A summary of risks is provided in table 7.

Table 7- Summary of Risks

Risk/issue description (incl. impact)	Planned mitigation or resolution	Owner
Outdated IT infrastructure could lead to reduced operational efficiency and increased vulnerability to cyber threats.	Ensure regular upgrades and maintenance of IT systems; implement robust cybersecurity measures.	Head of ICT Solutions
A cyber-attack similar to recent high profile incidents could lead to extensive data breaches, harm the council's reputation, and interrupt vital services.	Continue proactive monitoring, conduct regular penetration testing, enhance staff cyber awareness training, maintain up-to-date backups, and ensure robust incident response and recovery plans are in place.	Head of ICT Solutions

Failure of IT services may disrupt council operations, impacting service delivery to employees, Councillors, and residents.	Adopt proactive monitoring, introduce redundancy systems, and establish rapid incident response protocols.	Head of ICT Solutions
Non-compliance with procurement governance may lead to legal or financial repercussions.	Follow established procurement rules and conduct regular compliance reviews for each phase.	Procurement Officer
Delays in securing necessary funding may postpone project milestones, leading to missed deadlines or incomplete deliverables.	Establish regular funding reviews, maintain close communication with finance teams, and identify alternative funding sources if required.	Programme Board Chair
Insufficient stakeholder engagement could result in lack of buy-in, low adoption rates, or misalignment with user needs.	Implement ongoing stakeholder communication plans, conduct regular feedback sessions, and adjust project scope based on input.	Head of ICT Solutions
Rapid changes in technology or regulatory requirements may render planned solutions obsolete or non-compliant, affecting project outcomes.	Monitor technology trends and regulatory updates, build flexibility into project design, and schedule periodic roadmap reviews. The decision to focus on a two-year plan, provides flexibility to adjust plan or continue to review our approach to changes in technology.	Head of ICT Solutions

8.0 Financial Considerations

8.1 The requested budget is £1,820,061 for 2026/27 and £4,867,225 for 2027/28. The table below sets out the planned spend profile for key areas:

Table 8 – Investment Profile by Programme Area

Programme area	2026-2027	2027-28	Total
Cyber Protection	77,395	829,850	**907,245**
Data Centre Improvement	333,182	1,389,133	**1,722,315**
Campus Networking Refresh	375,164	1,369,861	**1,745,025**
End User Modernisation	1,034,320	612,400	**1,646,720**
Service Improvement	-	665,980	**665,980**
Total	**1,820,061**	**4,867,225**	**6,687,285**

8.2 The costs, including staff costs, are valid capital expenditure under local government accounting requirements because they involve investment in intangible assets, hardware and multi-year licences. Regulations allow software licenses lasting for at least one year to be treated as capital. The IT team will keep track of costs for each project and work with Finance to ensure each separate asset is added to the asset register.

8.3 The capital budget only relates to Brent's share of the investment. Where STS invests in improvements for all partner councils (Brent, Lewisham and Southwark), these costs will be apportioned as determined in the Inter Authority Agreement (IAA).

8.4 The proposed £6.7m budget will be funded by prudential borrowing. Once all the investment is made, this will create an ongoing revenue pressure of approximately £0.6m per year assuming 5% interest costs and minimum revenue provision (a prudent charge to revenue for the repayment of borrowing) of 4%. The ongoing pressure will be reflected within the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy.

8.5 Throughout this process, all potential cost efficiencies will be rigorously assessed and quantified, ensuring that every opportunity for financial optimisation is captured. Notably, this proactive approach is expected to deliver savings, with current projections indicating that the council will achieve cumulative savings of £370,000 in 2026/2027.

9.0 Stakeholder and ward member consultation and engagement

9.1 The Lead Member for ICT has been engaged on these proposals via the Joint Committee.

10.0 Legal Considerations

10.1 The ICT Infrastructure Investment Programme 2026-2028 sets out a series of initiatives which may require the Council to procure or vary a number of contracts. Any decisions to enter into new contractual arrangements, extend or vary existing contracts, or undertake procurement exercises must comply with

the Procurement Act 2023 (PA23) or Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (where applicable) and the Council's Contract Standing Orders within Part 2 of the Constitution.

10.2 Under the Procurement Act 2023, all procurements above the relevant threshold need to be conducted via a tender process with support from the procurement and legal teams, including publication of appropriate notices on the central digital platform in accordance with Contract Standing Order 115. Where Officers wish to direct award a contract above threshold, advice must be sought from the legal and the procurement team to determine whether any of the Direct Award justification grounds in Schedule 5 of the PA23 apply.

10.3 For procurements valued below threshold, Officers must ensure compliance with the Council's governance procedures and Part 6 of the PA23 relating to Regulated Below Threshold Contracts. This includes publishing any notice requirements for below threshold contracts in accordance with Contract Standing Order 115.

10.4 Where systems or services are shared with partner authorities under the Shared Technology Service (STS), Officers must ensure that any procurement and contractual arrangements comply with the Inter-Authority Agreement (IAA). This includes the apportionment of costs, risk allocation, governance, and decision-making protocols agreed between the partner councils.

10.5 Each project and proposal pursued under the road map will need to consider and comply with the Data Protection Act 2018 which may include individual Data Protection Impact Assessments, as well as specific legislation and guidance relating to the specific proposal.

11.0 Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Considerations

11.1 In this instance, there are no identified equality, diversity, or inclusion (EDI) considerations. The proposal does not give rise to any concerns under the Equality Act or the Public Sector Equality Duty, nor has an Equality Impact Assessment indicated any adverse effects on protected groups. The initiative is designed to be inclusive and accessible to all, ensuring that no group is disadvantaged or unfairly impacted by the proposed changes.

11.2 There are no health equalities implications associated with this proposal. The recommended actions do not affect health equality or disproportionately impact the health outcomes of any particular group. As such, the proposal upholds principles of equality and does not require further mitigation in relation to health equalities.

12.0 Climate Change and Environmental Considerations

12.1 This proposal directly advances the Council's environmental objectives by promoting digital transformation, which aligns with the Council's commitment to reduce waste and improve operational efficiency. By minimising the use of paper and other consumables, the Council actively supports its ambition to reduce carbon emissions. Furthermore, prioritising energy-efficient technology and cloud infrastructure demonstrates a proactive approach to reducing the

Council's overall carbon footprint. These measures are integral to the Council's climate emergency strategy, ensuring that all new investments are evaluated for their environmental impact and contribute positively towards a more sustainable future for the community.

13.0 Communication Considerations

13.1 A clear and comprehensive communication strategy will be developed to ensure all stakeholders are informed of the proposal and its implications. This will involve timely updates to staff, service users, partners, and residents through appropriate channels. The communications will be designed to be accessible and transparent, allowing opportunities for questions and feedback to be addressed effectively.

13.2 Where necessary, tailored messages will be crafted to address the specific needs of different audiences, ensuring inclusivity and clarity throughout the process. Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms will be put in place to assess the effectiveness of communications and to make improvements as required.

Report sign off:

Rachel Crossley
Corporate Director, Service Reform & Strategy

	Cabinet 9 February 2026
	Report from the Corporate Director, Service Reform and Strategy
	Lead Member - Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Leisure (Councillor Neil Nerva)
Authority to invite tenders for care and support at six supported living sites for adults with Mental Health Difficulties.	

Wards Affected:	Cricklewood & Mapesbury, Kenton, Roundwood, Wembley Central
Key or Non-Key Decision:	Key
Open or Part/Fully Exempt: (If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)	Open
No. of Appendices:	Two Appendix 1: Location of Sites Appendix 2: Equality Impact Assessment
Background Papers:	None
Contact Officer(s): (Name, Title, Contact Details)	Edwin Mensah, Acting Head of Commissioning Contracting and Market Management Tel: 0208 937 4132 Edwin.Mensah@brent.gov.uk

1.0 Purpose of the Report

1.1 This report concerns the procurement of care and support for six supported living sites. This report requests approval to invite tenders as required by Contract Standing Orders 88 and 89 for care and support at the following six supported living sites:

- 5 bed mental health supported living service at 54 Braemar Avenue HA0 4QN

- 8 bed mental health supported living service at 18 St Gabriels Road, NW2 4RY

- 6 bed mental health supported living service at 69 Craven Park, NW10 8SR

- 5 bed mental health supported living service at 144 The Mall HA3 9TH

- 6 bed mental health supported living service at 33 Essex Road NW10 9PG

- 6 bed mental health supported living service at 155 Walm Lane NW2 3AY.

The anticipated value of the contracts for the full term of seven years is estimated at £7,566,793.

2.0 Recommendation(s)

That Cabinet:

2.1 Approve inviting tenders for care and support services at six supported living sites for adults with mental health difficulties 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:

Lot 1:

- 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.

Lot 2:

- 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.

2.2 Approve officers evaluating the tenders referred to in 2.1 above on the basis of the evaluation criteria set out in paragraph 3.4 section (vi) of the report.

2.3 Delegate authority to the Corporate Director for Service Reform and Strategy, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health

© London Borough Of Brent

and Leisure to award the contract for each of the 2 Lots identified in 2.1 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).

3.0 Detail

3.1 Cabinet Member Foreword

3.1.1 This tender which is for care and support services at the six supported living sites for adults with mental health difficulties, as outlined above, is strategically positioned to significantly contribute to Brent Council's Borough Plan 2023-2027 Strategic Priority 5, A Healthier Brent, by achieving Desired Outcome 1 Tackling Health Inequalities and desired outcome 2 Localised Services for Local Needs. The tender will also align with theme 3 of the Brent Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy Refresh-Tackling Health Inequalities, Staying Healthy, which is committed to working towards improving mental health awareness in Brent, supporting people to look after their mental health and wellbeing and ensuring support for people with mental illness is holistic and responds to their physical health needs as well as their wider aspirations.

3.1.2 The six sites are dedicated to serving vulnerable adults with varying levels of mental illness and who may: be in receipt of clinical treatment, have previously been detained under the Mental Health Act 1983, use drugs and/or alcohol, have a ‘dual diagnosis’, have been or be involved in the criminal justice system. These adults may be using secondary mental health services coordinated by Brent Mental Health Service staff and will have been assessed as eligible to move into supported accommodation

3.1.3 The services were designed to provide supported living accommodation which enable service users to move on to live more independently, promote opportunities for positive mental health well-being, including involvement with the community, and friends, reducing the use of institutional care and adult social care funding.

3.1.4 Whilst delivering cost-effective accommodation-based housing management and social care support, providers will be expected to engage with service users with severe and enduring mental health illness and through the Recovery Model work to support them to move on and lead independent lives in the community within a defined period.

3.1.5 By providing an inclusive and accessible environment, the services actively work towards reducing health inequalities strengthening community ties through supporting people closer to home, engagement initiatives and robust partnerships with local organisations. Furthermore, the settings supports employment in the local community through job creation and specialised training whilst enhancing the resilience of local communities by fostering supportive networks. This tender will ensure the continued alignment with and

© London Borough Of Brent

contribution to the Council's aspirations, promoting a healthier, more equitable, and unified community.

3.2 Background

3.2.1 The Council requires the provision of care and support services at six supported living sites for adults with mental health difficulties. Three sites have contracts that are due to expire on 31 August 2026, one site has a contract expiring on 31 May 2026, one site has a contract expiring on 30 June 2026 and one site currently has no contract in place. Officers have explored alternative options, including the potential for home care and whether the Council could directly provide care and support at these sites. However, due to the specific needs of this client group, supported living services remain essential to ensure appropriate care and stability. After careful consideration, it has been concluded that care and support services at these sites are best delivered by experienced contractors. The appointed providers will have staff with the necessary expertise to support adults with mental health difficulties effectively

3.2.2 Approval is being sought to tender six supported living services for adults with mental health needs in two separate Lots. All six sites currently accommodate 33 existing service users. The proposed approach of combining some services within the same Lot will deliver economies of scale, enable more effective and targeted contract management across two suppliers, and support the development of a service model that meets the needs of individuals requiring both high and lower levels of support. This structure also enhances the attractiveness of the opportunity to a broader range of providers due to the higher contract values. The configuration of the Lots has been determined based on geographical proximity and the number of units at each site to ensure operational efficiency and continuity of care. The location of each site can be found at Appendix 1 of this report.

3.2.3 It is proposed that in line with the current contracts these new contracts will be based on a core and flexible model with the flexible component incorporating the service user assessed needs. The core element will be commissioned through this procurement. The core hours are designed to meet the essential daily living needs of all the residents, unplanned and emergency care needs and night support, with the assessed hours used to support client with their own individual support plan out comes.

3.2.4. The flexible hours are based on service users' individual assessed needs, with their care and support plan outlining support required to ensure their outcomes are achieved. The additional support is primarily provided by the service provider who delivers the core support, but the service user can exercise personal choice and choose a different provider via a Direct Payment. The distinction between core and assessed hours will be made explicitly clear in the tender documents.

© London Borough Of Brent

3.2.5 The services deliver support in line with the principles of the Rehabilitation and Recovery Model where service users are supported on a planned basis to develop skills towards building independence. This support includes risk management, daily living skills, finance and benefit maintenance. It also includes effective co working with partner agencies to support their mental health needs.

3.2.6 The duration of the contracts for the 2 Lots will be for a period of five years with the option to extend for two years (on a 5+2 basis) subject to satisfactory performance of the contract by the successful providers. The length of this contract will be attractive to the market, whilst at the same time maintaining a degree of flexibility for the Council. The total contract value for all services for the initial contract term of five years and two year extension (7 years) is estimated to be £7,566,793. Individual contract values are listed under paragraph 3.4.1 section (ii) and under Financial Considerations in section 5. Officers anticipate that the contracts and service commencement date for the 2 Lots will be 1st September 2026.

3.2.7 Co-production is at the heart of the Brent approach. Stakeholder engagement has been ongoing throughout the last 12 months and concluded in November 2025. Officers have visited all six services to seek the views of service users and their family members. Representatives from the Council's Co-production Team, health and social care partners were also consulted. The output of these discussions has influenced the service delivery model and service specification. Feedback from service users about what was important to them included the following:

- The desire to step down into independent accommodation.
- Demonstrating an ability to maintain independent living skills and personal hygiene and self-care.
- Social activities and housing meetings in services and externally.
- Night support such as a concierge service.

3.2.8 In addition to the benefits that this model gives to service users, the schemes generate efficiency savings to Adult Social Care (ASC) through the provision of high-quality care and support, rather than more expensive option such as residential mental health care homes and therapeutic communities. As such this approach to service delivery is cost effective and offers value for money. Whilst the Council fund care and support, further savings will be achieved within the supported living scheme, as service users are supported to claim Housing Benefit to pay accommodation costs.

3.2.9 Should consent be given to proceed to tender, a preliminary market engagement session will be held to alert potential suppliers to the opportunity.

© London Borough Of Brent

3.2.10 In order to ensure diversity in the adult social care market, the Council is looking to appoint one different provider per Lot. Providers will be permitted to bid for both Lots and will be asked to indicate their preferred Lot should their bid be successful if fewer than 2 bids are received, the Council reserves the right to award the contracts to the same provider. In order to be awarded the contract, providers will need to meet minimum quality thresholds set out in the Invitation to Tender.

3.3 The individual procurement opportunities

3.3.1 Lot 1 Braemar Avenue, St Gabriels and Craven Park Road

Braemar Avenue, St Gabriels and Craven Park Road will be tendered as one Lot with one provider delivering care at all 3 services. The services are accessible to each other with the distance between the sites meaning that the staff can travel easily between locations.

3.3.2 The Maximum Combined Annual budget envelope for Lot 1 is £528,751 ex VAT and for the full term including the option to extend is £3,701,257 ex VAT**.**

3.3.3 **Service 1 Braemar Avenue** is owned by the Council. Braemar Avenue is currently being operated as a step-down service and has recently been refurbished. Braemar Avenue provides support for 5 females aged 18-65 years with a primary mental health diagnosis, who receive clinical treatment and have low level assessed mental health care and support needs.

3.3.4 There was strong evidence highlighting the benefits of Braemar Avenue becoming a commissioned mental health service. This service and accommodation would prevent a specific demographic of customers from relapsing and requiring hospital intervention, alleviating some of the pressure in securing hospital provision within borough.

3.3.5 Braemar Avenue is a service that requires staffed support for 42 hours per week for the following hours: 3 hours Morning/am and 3 Hours afternoon/PM 7 days a week x 365 days per annum with no specific Night Support. However, once the contract is underway the Council may agree that these hours may be used in a different way.

3.3.6 The whole service will include Night Support Worker across all 3 locations to respond as needed to incidents from 10pm to 7am the following day.

3.3.7 **Service 2 Saint Gabriels Road** is owned by Sanctuary Housing. The current contract is due to expire on 4th May 2026, and Officers are in the process of extending the contract until 31st August 2026.

3.3.8 St Gabriels Road provides support for 8 male and females aged 18-65 years with a primary mental health diagnosis, who receive clinical treatment and have medium level mental health care and support needs.

© London Borough Of Brent

3.3.9 St Gabriels Road will have staffed support for 140 hours per week and will have staff on site including: 1 Support Worker on duty between 8am and 8pm x 7 days a week and 1 Support Worker 8 hours per day at essential times. There is no specific Night Support Worker as additional night-time staffing is provided through concierge via the landlord, Sanctuary Housing from 8pm until 8am.

3.3.10 The whole service will include a Night Support Worker across all 3 locations to respond as needed to incidents- from 10pm to 7am the following day.

3.3.11 The Council wishes to work with providers who can evidence their experience in Mental Health support provision so that the social care 'Recovery Pathway' is embedded within the service delivery model. Providers will be working with clients with severe and enduring mental illness and they will be expected to support them through their recovery to enable them to step down into lesser intensive supported living accommodation such as housing related support, within a two-year period.

3.3.12 **Service 3 Craven Park Road** is an existing Mental Health service and operates at full capacity**.** The current contract is due to expire on 31st August 2026

3.3.13 The property is owned by the Council. Craven Park Road provides support for 6 males aged 18-65 years with a primary mental health diagnosis, who receive clinical treatment and have high to medium mental health care & support needs.

3.3.14 Craven Park Road will have staff on site 24 hours, 365 days per annum. The Waking Night Support Worker availability will be from 21:30 to 07:30 the following morning. The Waking Night Support worker should be 50% funded through Housing Benefit.

3.3.15 **Lot 2 The Mall, Essex Road and Walm Lane**

3.3.16 The Mall, Essex Road and Walm Lane will be tendered as one Lot with one provider delivering care at three services. The services are just over 2.5 miles of each other. The Maximum Combined Annual budget envelope for Lot 2 is £552,220 ex VAT and for the full term including the option to extend is £3,865,535 ex VAT.

3.3.17 **Service 1 The Mall** is owned by Network Homes. The current contract is due to expire on 31st August 2026. The Mall provides support for 5 Males aged 18-65 years with a primary mental health diagnosis, who receive clinical treatment and have low to medium mental health care and support needs.

3.3.18 The Mall is a service that requires staffed support for 49 support hours per week and staff on site for the following hours: 4 hours morning/am and 3 hours afternoon/PM, 7 days a week, 365 days per annum.

© London Borough Of Brent

3.3.19 **Service 2 Essex Road** is owned by Network Homes. The current contract is due to expire on 31st August 2026. Essex Road provides support for 6 females aged 18-65 years with a primary mental health diagnosis, who receive clinical treatment and have medium to high mental health care and support needs.

3.3.20 Essex Road will have staffed support for 168 support hours per week and will have staff on site 24 hours a day, 365 days per annum. Waking Night staff availability will be from 21:30 to 07:30 the following morning Nighttime staffing should be 50% funded through housing benefit.

3.3.21 **Service 3. Walm Lane** is owned by Notting Hill Genesis. The current contract is due to expire on 30th June 2026 and Officers are in the process of extending the contract until 31st August 2026. Walm Lane provides support for 6 males aged 18-65 years with a primary mental health diagnosis who receive clinical treatment and who have mental health care and support needs.

3.3.22 Walm Lane requires staff support for 217 support hours per week and will have the following staff on site: 1 Support Worker 24 hours a day including nights, 365 days per annum. The Waking Night Support Worker availability will be from 21:30 to 07:30 the following morning. 1 Support Worker 7 hours a day.

3.3.23 The Council wishes to work with providers who can evidence their experience in mental health support provision so that the social care 'Recovery Pathway' is embedded within the service delivery model. Providers will be working with clients with severe and enduring mental health illness and they will be expected to support them through their recovery to enable them to step down into lesser intensive supported living accommodation such as housing related support, within a two-year period.

3.3.24 On this same agenda, Cabinet is being asked to approve a variation in the FWH Business Plan to include the provision of supported accommodation. Subject to approval, this development will enable the delivery of high-quality and financially sustainable supported housing for residents who require low to medium levels of support. These new arrangements align with the Council's wider commissioning approach for supported living and create an opportunity for First Wave Housing to potentially manage Braemar Avenue and Craven Park in the future—both of which are Council-owned properties associated with this project. Although the project is still at an early stage, there is significant scope for collaboration as we develop the model further and explore the operational and financial implications.

3.4 Pre-tender Considerations

3.4.1 In accordance with Contract Standing Orders 88 and 89, pre-tender considerations for the procurement of the contracts for the 2 Lots outlined above (the "Contracts") have been set out below for the approval of the Cabinet.

© London Borough Of Brent

Ref.	Requirement	Response	
(i)	The nature of the Goods / Services / Works.	Delivery of care and support services at six supported living sites which have been separated into 2 Lots with 3 sites in each Lot, as outlined in paragraph 2.1. The services are for vulnerable adults with mental health difficulties and a primary mental health diagnosis. This will include adults who receive clinical treatment.	
(ii)	The estimated value.	**Lot 1:** Mental Health Supported Living Service at Braemar Avenue, Craven Park Road and St Gabriels Road Up to £528,751 ex VAT annually Up to £3,701,257 ex VAT over the full contract period including the option to extend (5+2) **Lot 2** Mental Health Supported Living Service at The Mall, Essex Road and Walm Lane Up to £552,219 ex VAT annually Up to £3,865,536 ex VAT over the full contract period including the option to extend (5+2)	
(iii)	The contract term.	Five years with the option to extend for two years (on a 5+2 basis)	
(iv)	The tender procedure to be adopted.	Competitive Flexible procedure	
v)	The procurement timetable.		**Indicative dates are:**
		Publish Preliminary Market Engagement Notice	23 January 2026
		Cabinet Approval seeking Authority to Tender	9 February 2026
		Market Engagement event	11 February 2026
		Adverts placed	18 February 2026
		Publish Tender Notice	18 February 2026
		Publish Procurement Specific Questionnaire	18 February 2026

© London Borough Of Brent

Ref.	Requirement	Response	
		Procurement Specific Questionnaire deadline	24 March 2026
		Procurement Specific Questionnaire evaluation and moderation	By 14 April 2026
		Publish Invitation to tender to shortlisted Tenderers	21 April 2026
		Deadline for tender submissions	19 May 2026
		Panel evaluation and shortlist	20 May - 02 June 2026
		Report recommending Contracts award circulated internally for comment	By 16 June 2026
		Corporate Director approval	by 23 June 2026
		Publish Contract Award Notice	30 June 2026
		Voluntary 8 working days standstill period – notification issued to all tenderers and additional debriefing of unsuccessful tenderers	31 June - 09 July 2026
		Publish Contract Details Notice	10 July 2026
		Contract Mobilisation	11 July 2026
		Contract start date	01 September 2026
(vi)	The evaluation criteria and process.	At selection stage shortlists are to be drawn up in accordance with the Council's Contract Procurement and Management Guidelines by the use of a Procurement Specification Questionnaire to identify organisations	

© London Borough Of Brent

Ref.	Requirement	Response
		meeting the Council's financial standing requirements, technical capacity and technical expertise • At tender evaluation stage, the panel will evaluate the tenders against the following criteria: 50% Quality, 10% Social Value and 40% Price
(vii)	Any business risks associated with entering the Contracts.	The following business risks are considered to be associated with entering into the Contracts. Some risks may include failure to select a suitable provider to provide one or both of the Lots. Mitigations are • selection criteria case studies will be used as part of the evaluation to assess previous experience and how providers plan to achieve and sustain objectives. • The tender evaluation criteria for the award section will ensure that all tenderers have experience and skills available to deliver the services specified. Financial Services and Legal Services have been consulted concerning the Contracts.
(viii)	The Council's Best Value duties.	The Council will be awarding the Contracts for each Lot to providers that have the Most Advantageous Tender (MAT)
(ix)	Consideration of Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012	It is the intention within this tender that 10% of the total evaluation criteria will be reserved for social value considerations. Bidders will be asked to provide a social value action plan and method statement which then be measured for impact and delivery over the life of the Contracts through the Contract Management function.
(x)	Any staffing implications, including TUPE and pensions.	There will be TUPE implications for the awarded providers which have been taken into consideration within the time scales. See Section 9 below.
(xi)	The relevant financial, legal and other considerations.	See sections 5 and 6 below.

© London Borough Of Brent

Ref.	Requirement	Response
(xii)	Sustainability	This has been assessed in line with the Procurement Sustainability Policy and determined that a quality measure for sustainability is not required.
(xiii)	Key Performance Indicators / Outcomes	Appropriate Key Performance Indicators / Outcomes will be included in the Contracts.
(xiv)	Policy requirements including the National Procurement Policy Statement; prompt payment; London Living Wage; modern slavery; and carbon reduction	The potential supplier will be required to provide Services in accordance with all relevant policy requirements, to include those detailed in the National Procurement Policy Statement, to comply with a 30 day payment requirement, to provide evidence of wage compliance, evidence due diligence in supply chain (including modern slavery) and provide report on carbon emission and sustainability initiatives during contract delivery. The Contracts will require the payment of the London Living Wage.
(xv)	Sharing information to allow understanding of the Council's procurement policies and decisions	All relevant policies and information will be shared with the potential supplier during the procurement process.
(xvi)	Steps undertaken to remove or reduce barriers for SME participation in the procurement	Officers have considered whether any steps can be taken to remove or reduce barriers for SME participation in the procurement. We will facilitate market warming events which will include SME, VSCE as well as the wider market. It is considered that the procurement process recommended is appropriate for Services required and upholds the principles of equal treatment, transparency, and non-discrimination.
(xvii)	Contract Management	A Contract Manager will be appointed for the Contracts and appropriate contract management provisions will be included in the Contracts.

3.4.2 Cabinet is asked to give its approval to these proposals as set out in the recommendations and in accordance with Standing Order 89.

4.0 Stakeholder and ward member consultation and engagement

© London Borough Of Brent

4.1 Co-production is at the heart of the Brent approach. Officers visited the six service sites, met with the service users and liaised with some family members and advocates. The feedback received has been considered in the development of the specification and delivery model proposed. Please see paragraph 3.2.8 for a summary of the feedback the consultation and engagement activity.

5.0 Financial Considerations

5.1 The value of the Contracts for the full term of seven years including the option to extend (5+2) is estimated to be up to £7,566,793.1 which amounts to £ 1,080,970.44 annually. This has been calculated based on the number of hours required within each lot and these are listed in Section 3.3 above. Each resident will have an equal share of core hours which includes the waking night where included. Assessed hours as required by individual support plans will be purchased based on the hourly rate that is agreed as part of the new Contracts.

5.2 Brent is committed to ensuring all contractors pay London Living Wage (LLW) as a minimum. These Contracts will be LLW compliant. The annual cost of these Contracts is likely to increase each year when the London Living Wage Commission announce the annual uplift. The likely increase to contract values each year to ensure Brent's commitments to LLW are adhered to. This is taken into consideration as part of the Council's Medium Term Financial Planning

6.0 Legal Considerations

6.1 The care and support services at six supported living sites for adults with mental health difficulties that Officers propose to procure are classified as "Light Touch Services" under Schedule 1 of the Procurement Regulations 2024 (the "PR 2024"), which means the procurement is subject to the special regime for Light Touch Contracts as defined in section 9 of the Procurement Act 2023 (the "PA23").

6.2 The estimated value of the proposed Contracts is above the threshold for Light Touch Services, currently set at £663,540 (including VAT) under the PA23. Accordingly, the procurement is subject to the general rules of the PA23, but with important flexibilities and some exemptions. This means:

- The Council must follow the procedures and transparency requirements set out in the PA23 and PR 2024 and that include: publication of notices (Tender Notice, Contract Award Notice, Contract Details Notice) identifying the contract as light touch on the central digital platform; setting an award criteria on the basis of the Most Advantageous Tender and if the contract benefits a particular user may consider the views and needs of the end user); consideration of the mandatory and discretionary exclusion grounds for suppliers.

© London Borough Of Brent

- The Council must ensure compliance with the specific rules for Light Touch Contracts, which allow for more flexible procedures than standard contracts for example, no mandated minimum time limits for participation or tendering periods, and more freedom on the design of the competitive procedure but still require adherence to principles of transparency, equal treatment, and non-discrimination.

6.3 The procurement is subject to the Council's own Standing Orders and Financial Regulations in respect of High Value Contracts given the procurement is valued at £7,566,793 ex VAT. For High Value Contracts, Cabinet must approve the pre-tender considerations set out in paragraph 3.4 above (Contract Standing Order 89) and the inviting of tenders (Contract Standing Order 88).

6.4 In accordance with Recommendation 2.3, once the tendering process is undertaken, Officers will report to the Corporate Director, Service Reform and Strategy, in consultation with the Lead Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Leisure, explaining the process undertaken in tendering the Contracts and recommending award.

6.5 As this procurement is a Light Touch Contract, the Council is not required to observe the requirements of the mandatory minimum 8 working day standstill period before the Contracts can be awarded. However, the Council will voluntarily observe such standstill period for this procurement. The standstill period provides unsuccessful tenderers with an opportunity to challenge the Council's award decision if such challenge is justifiable. However, if no challenge or successful challenge is brought during the period, at the end of the standstill period the Council can issue a letter of acceptance to the successful tenderer and the Contracts may commence.

6.6 The Council is required to provide all tenderers that submitted an assessed tender with an assessment summary notifying them of the Council's decision to award and providing the scores and reasons. The contract award notice that the Council is required to publish must confirm that assessment summaries have been provided to all suppliers who submitted an assessed tender and state the standstill end date.

6.7 Following the expiry of the standstill period, and once the Council enters into the Contracts, the Council will be required to publish a Contract Details Notice pursuant to Section 53 of the PA23 before the end of the period of 120 days. If the Light Touch contract is over £5 million including VAT, the Council will need to publish a copy of the contract within 180 days of signature

6.8 As the decision that is being sought here is a Key Decision, the decision may not be taken by Cabinet unless this matter has been published on the Forward Plan. The Key Decision must be published on the Forward Plan (Paragraph 30 of the Access to Information Rules) and must be included on the Forward Plan not less than 28 days before the decision is to be made. (Paragraph 34 of the

© London Borough Of Brent

Access to Information Rules). The decision has been placed on the Forward Plan for the requisite period.

6.9 As the decision to award will be a Key Decision, the decision will be subject to a 5 clear day call-in period and the Council will undertake the voluntary standstill period concurrently. The decision to award the Contracts may not be implemented until after expiry of the call-in period provided that no call in has been made.

6.10 Officers have set out in section 9 that the proposed service will be provided by an external provider. As such, the proposed procurement process is unlikely to have a direct impact on Council staff. There are likely to be TUPE implications as a result of the procurement process due to a continuation of services from the current contract and the new Contracts being procured. In this respect, Officers have set out in section 9.2 how TUPE issues would be managed as a result of the procurement process.

6.11 Officers advise that the successful tenderers of Lots 1 and 2 will be required to enter into housing management contracts, that will accompany the tender packs, with the landlords of the properties. The housing management contracts will contain template tenancy agreements / licences for the service users. For the services that will be carried out from the Council-owned premises the care provider will need to enter into either a housing management contract or a lease with the Council.

7.0 Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Considerations

7.1 Pursuant to s149 Equality Act 2010 (the "Public Sector Equality Duty"), the Council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

(a) eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the Act
(b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and
(c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it,

7.2 The Public Sector Equality Duty covers the following nine protected characteristics: age, disability, marriage and civil partnership, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

7.3 Having due regard involves the need to enquire into whether and how a proposed decision disproportionately affects people with a protected characteristic and the need to consider taking steps to meet the needs of persons who share a protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it. This includes removing or minimising

© London Borough Of Brent

disadvantages suffered by persons who share a protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic.

7.4 The very nature of supported living services for adults with mental health difficulties means that they are accessed as vulnerable adults who are also more likely experience multiple disadvantage due to their health conditions. Equalities issues have been taken into account throughout the review of the services and have been a key focus in the service model and service specification.

7.5 Officers are in the process of completing an Equalities Analysis, where negative and positive impacts will be considered and addressed. All the current service users and their families at these sites have had the chance to participate in consultation and engagement activities and their view have been reflected in the specification.

7.6 The proposed service model will not remove services, but it will enhance the way services are delivered and will place greater emphasis on a personalised approach using the Recovery Pathway.

7.7 The new service model is expected to deliver improved quality of service provision, improved service user experience, and establish more productive working relationships with providers. Impacts will be monitored throughout the implementation period and beyond through ongoing service user and provider engagement and the application of the Quality Assurance Framework, the Outcomes Framework and Performance Management Framework that are included in the service specification and associated schedules.

8.0 Climate Change and Environmental Considerations

8.1 Given the nature of the services to be delivered, Officers do not envisage that there will be any direct Climate Change and Environmental Considerations.

9.0 Human Resources/Property Implications (if appropriate)

9.1 These services will be provided by an external provider and there are no direct staffing implications for the Council arising from the tender process.

9.2 As part of the procurement process, employee liability information will be sought from current contractors and provided to the tenderers. The TUPE process and any issues that may arise from it will be managed during the mobilisation phase.

9.3 Officers envisage that there are likely to be property implications as a result of the procurement process and are liaising with the Property Legal team to obtain relevant advice on implications.

10.0 Communication Considerations

© London Borough Of Brent

10.1 To enhance the existing communication plan, given our familiarity with the resident population, a tailored communication plan will be put in place with service users and their families.

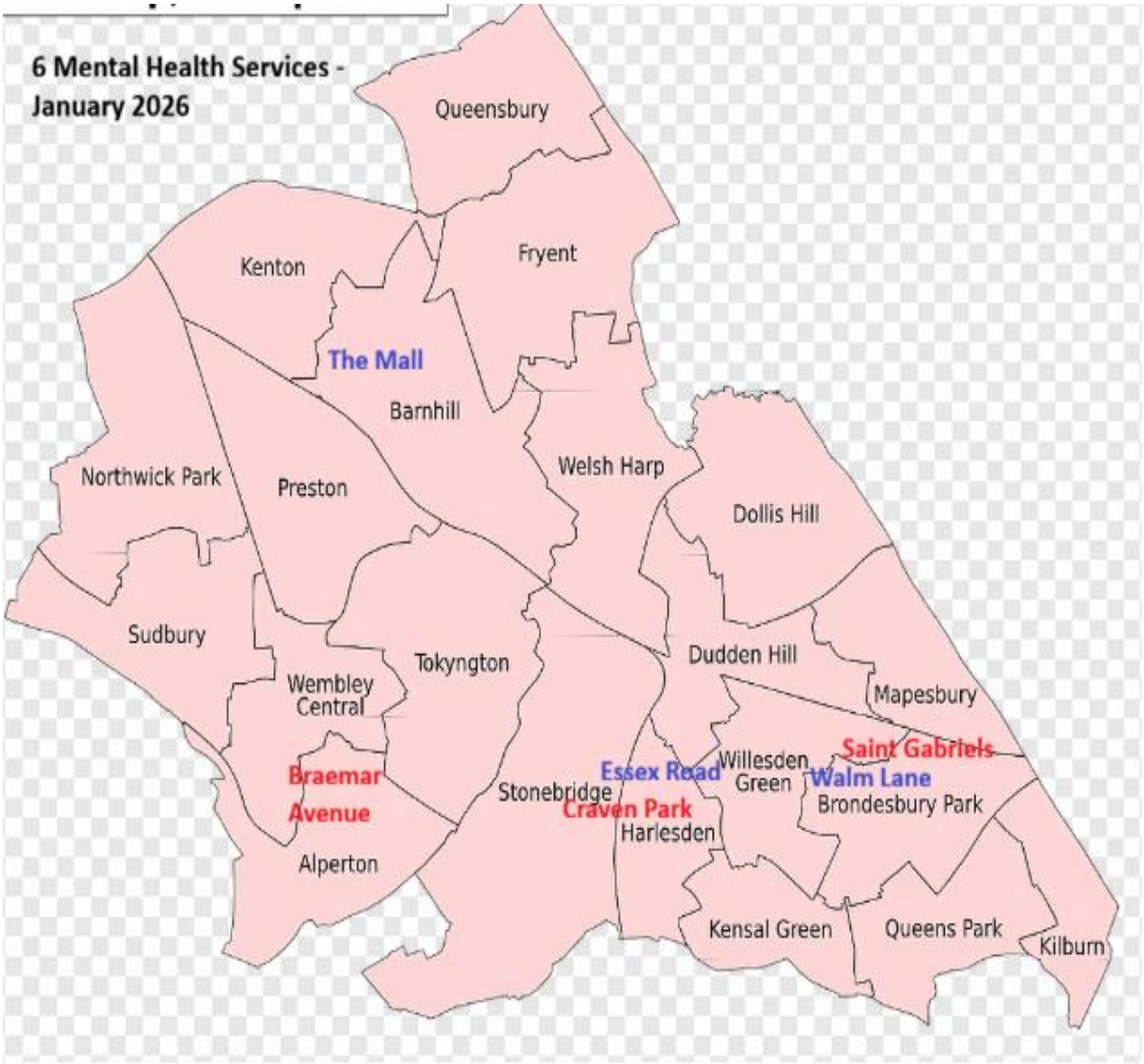
Report sign off:

Rachel Crossley
Corporate Director, Service Reform and Strategy

© London Borough Of Brent

This page is intentionally left blank

Appendix 1 – Location of Sites



This page is intentionally left blank

Appendix 2 – EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA)

POLICY/PROPOSAL:	Authority to Tender
DEPARTMENT:	Service Reform and Strategy
TEAM:	ASC Commissioning and Contracts
LEAD OFFICER:	Marica Lennon
DATE:	19 January 2026

EIA Guidance is available online, please reach out to equality@brent.gov.uk for any further support.

SECTION A – SCREENING

1. Briefly and clearly describe the policy, proposal, change, or initiative, and what it is trying to achieve.

To tender for care and support services at six supported living sites for adults with Mental Health Difficulties. We are going out to tender because the current contracts are due to end on 31/08/2026. The tender process may result in a change of provider, though the services provided will remain the same or be improved due to the changes in the specification that have been made as a result of consultation with the service users at each site.

2. Are there any groups who may be impacted by your proposal? For reference, Q4 lists all protected groups.

There are 36 units with 29 service users currently living at these sites. Service users are of mixed ages (between aged 18-65 years). All existing service users and any new service users will have a primary mental health diagnosis, receive clinical treatment and have low, medium or high mental health care and support needs. Service users are a mix of age, gender, race, religion, and disability. The care and support being commissioned onsite ranges from minimal hours to care and support 24hrs a day 365 days per year.

3. If no groups are affected, explain why.

4. Mark with an “X” the potential impact of the policy or proposal on different groups. You can mark more than one box for each group.

Characteristic	IMPACT		
	Positive	Neutral/None	Negative
Age - People of different age groups.		X	
Care Experience - People who have been in care for any period of their childhood.		X	
Disability - People with physical, sensory, learning, and mental health disabilities, long-term conditions, and non-visible disabilities.	X		
Gender reassignment - Transgender and non-binary people, including anyone who is proposing to, started, or who has completed a process to change their gender.		X	
Marriage and Civil Partnership - Applies mainly in the workplace, people who are married or in a civil partnership.		X	
Pregnancy and Maternity - People who are pregnant, on maternity leave, or new parents.		X	
Race and Ethnicity - People of different ethnicity, nationality, and skin colour.		X	
Religion or belief - People of all faiths, and those with no religious belief.		X	
Sex - Differences between men and women, including disparities in pay, career		X	

© London Borough Of Brent

progression, and health outcomes.			
Sexual Orientation - People who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, asexual, or any other non-heterosexual identity.		**X**	
Socio-Economic Status – People who are experiencing poverty or socio-economic disadvantage.		**X**	
Other relevant groups* *[replace this text and specify where appropriate]*		**X**	

* Other relevant groups could include Carers, Refugees or Asylum Seekers, Veterans, among others. Review the EIA Guidance for more information.

5. Complete **each row** of the checklist with an "X".

SCREENING CHECKLIST		
	YES	**NO**
Does the policy or proposal have implications for eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity, or fostering good relations among different groups?	X	
Does it relate to an area with known inequalities?	X	
Would it add, change, or remove services used by any groups listed in Q4?		X
Does it have negative or positive equality impacts on any groups listed in Q4?	X	
If you have answered YES to ANY of the above, proceed to section B. **If you have answered NO to ALL the above, proceed straight to section C.**		

© London Borough Of Brent

SECTION B – IMPACTS ANALYSIS

6. What data and evidence have you used to understand potential impacts? This could include service user data where relevant. If there is little or no evidence, explain why, and note any plans to improve data collection in future, adding this to the Action Plan in Section E.

Brent Council is committed to working with residents, their families, advocates and representative to embed coproduction of services design and delivery. The Council continues to work closely with innovative providers and is committed to asset-based commissioning. This approach is based on the principles of building and maintaining family and community connections, relationships, and valuable engagement of activities as well as developing confidence, knowledge, skills and resilience of Brent residents.
There are 29 current service users who will be affected by the tender for a new service provider at six supported living mental health sites in the Borough. The services are going out to tender because the current contracts will end on 31st August 2026. The six sites are:

- 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.
- 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.
-

The following provides outline information about the service users
Gender

- Female 7
- Male 21

Ethnicity

- Asian or Asian British 9
- Black or Black British 13
- White 5
- Mixed -White and black African 1
- Other Ethnic Groups / Arab 1

As part of the recommissioning of six mental health sites in Brent a co-productive review of the service and service specifications has taken place. This included several engagement sessions with a range of stakeholders. Stakeholders included service users, their family members or representatives, the current care provider staff, health and social care partners.
The engagement took place at the sites and visits were arranged in advance with the relevant providers. The focus of the engagement sessions was to understand what had

© London Borough Of Brent

worked well and what had not been effective in relation to the current delivery of care. The sessions also focused on what changes these stakeholders would like to make.

Consultation Summary
Brent Public Mental Wellbeing Strategy and Action Plan 2018-2023 estimated 16% of the adult population in Brent has a common mental health disorder, which is slightly higher than the national comparison of 15.1%. As such, engagement sessions were coordinated to get the service user feedback.

All sites were visited and arrangements made to meet the service users in groups and individually. Service user family members and representatives were given an opportunity to discuss the changes via telephone call if they were unable or unwilling to attend the engagement session. Contact details were left at the service-to-service users and family members to make subsequent contact to share further information.

The key themes – feedback
The output of these discussions has influenced the service delivery model and service specification.
Feedback from service users about what was important to them included the following:

- The desire to step down into independent accommodation
- Demonstrating an ability to maintain independent living skills and personal hygiene and self-care
- Social activities and housing meetings in services and externally.
- Night support such as a concierge service.

An anonymized pen picture of all the services users will be available as part of the tender, and the provider's ability to work with this cohort of service users will be tested as part of the tender process. Implementation will happen in consultation with the service users.
It is likely that TUPE will apply so it is likely that most of the staff will remain unchanged, providing continuity. Handover of the service will only be complete when the council is satisfied that the new provider is ready.
It is likely that the procurement of a new service provider will positively impact on service delivery and the service user experience.

7. For each characteristic:
    a. Provide detail for the impact listed in the response to Q4 in the left-hand box.
    b. Provide data and evidence to explain how you reached your conclusion in the right-hand box.

    Relevant data sources for Brent and its residents can be found in the EIA Guidance document.

Age	
Provide detail for the impact listed in Q4.	Provide supporting data and evidence.

© London Borough Of Brent

This tender has considered the demographic make-up in relation to the age of service users. All the people who use these services are between the ages of 18 and 65 at the point of inception. Older people are therefore not disproportionately impacted by the tender of a new service provider at each of the 6 sites. By continuing to have these services there is a positive impact of services for the adults.	

Care Experience	
Provide detail for the impact listed in Q4.	Provide supporting data and evidence.
There is no recorded information on this protected characteristic. The service specification will ensure that the council and its contracted providers will aim to provide an inclusive service	

Disability	
Provide detail for the impact listed in Q4.	Provide supporting data and evidence.
The service is dedicated to serving vulnerable adults with low, medium to high mental health care and support needs due to varying levels of mental illness. This includes service users with severe and enduring mental health illness, who may have previously been detained under the Mental Health Act 1983, and may use drugs and/or alcohol, may have a 'dual diagnosis' and/or may have been or be involved in the criminal justice system. These individuals may be using secondary mental health services coordinated by Brent Mental Health Service staff and will have been assessed as eligible to move into supported accommodation.	

Gender Reassignment	
Provide detail for the impact listed in Q4.	Provide supporting data and evidence.

© London Borough Of Brent

Not known. There is no recorded information on the gender identity for this cohort of service users. The service specification will ensure that the council and its contracted providers will aim to provide services that are LGBTQ+ inclusive and accommodate the needs of those who are transitioning or have had gender reassignment.	

Marriage and Civil Partnership	
Provide detail for the impact listed in Q4.	Provide supporting data and evidence.
There is no recorded information on this protected characteristic. The service specification will ensure that the council and its contracted providers will aim to provide an inclusive service.	

Pregnancy and Maternity	
Provide detail for the impact listed in Q4.	Provide supporting data and evidence.
There is no recorded information on this protected characteristic as it is not specifically applicable to this service	

Race and Ethnicity	
Provide detail for the impact listed in Q4.	Provide supporting data and evidence.
The service specification requires that providers place the person at the center of support planning with staff responding to individual needs and desired outcomes. Staff must receive training in equalities and diversity. Providers are also required to respond to future demographic changes.	

© London Borough Of Brent

Religion or Belief	
Provide detail for the impact listed in Q4.	Provide supporting data and evidence.
There is no recorded information on the religion or belief of this cohort of service users. However, the service specification will ensure that the council and its service providers deliver culturally and religiously sensitive services, wherever possible.	

Sex	
Provide detail for the impact listed in Q4.	Provide supporting data and evidence.
This tender has taken into account the demographic make-up, of service users and the demographic make-up of care workers when considering the final recommendations and the development of the service model and specification. Some services are specifically designated for female service users. These offer a proportionate means of achieving the legitimate aim of reducing health inequalities for women, with mental ill health.	

Sexual Orientation	
Provide detail for the impact listed in Q4.	Provide supporting data and evidence.
There is no recorded information on the sexual orientation of this cohort of service users. The provider will be expected to foster an inclusive, equitable, and effective environment that will help to address the higher rates of mental ill-health in the LGBTQ+ community	

Socio-Economic Status	
Provide detail for the impact listed in Q4.	Provide supporting data and evidence.

© London Borough Of Brent

The service specification will ensure that the council and its service providers deliver the same services to service users from all socio-economic backgrounds	

Other Relevant Groups	
Provide detail for the impact listed in Q4.	Provide supporting data and evidence.
No other groups will be specifically impacted by this tender.	

8. Summarise any engagement activities with relevant groups (this may replicate some of the information listed in Q7). State whether those involved represent the people affected by your proposal, or whether more engagement is needed, which should be added to the Action Plan in Section E.

As part of the recommissioning of six mental health sites in Brent a co-productive review of the service and service specifications has taken place. This included a number of engagement sessions with a range of stakeholders. Stakeholders included service users, their family members or representatives, the current care provider staff, health and social care partners. The engagement took place at the sites and visits were arranged in advance with the relevant providers. The focus of the engagement sessions was to understand what had worked well and what had not been effective in relation to the current delivery of care. The sessions also focused on what changes these stakeholders would like to make. The output of these discussions has influenced the service delivery model and service specification.

9. Provide more detail on any areas identified as requiring further data or detailed analysis.

No further areas require analysis.

SECTION C – CONCLUSIONS

© London Borough Of Brent

10. Summarise your overall conclusions based on the analysis:

- If there are no impacts, state that here, and **do not complete sections E or G.**
- If you decide not to move forward, explain why, and **do not complete sections E or G.**
- If there are negative impacts, explain what you'll do to reduce them. If you choose to continue despite negative impacts, or if negative impacts remain following your action plan, provide a justification for your decision.
- If there are positive impacts, explain how these could be strengthened, where possible.

The positive impacts could not be strengthened further at this time.

SECTION D - RESULT

Select one of the following options with an "X".		
A	**CONTINUE WITH THE POLICY/PROPOSAL UNCHANGED**	**X**
B	**JUSTIFY AND CONTINUE THE POLICY/PROPOSAL**	
C	**CHANGE/ADJUST THE POLICY/PROPOSAL**	
D	**STOP OR ABANDON THE POLICY/PROPOSAL**	

SECTION E - ACTION PLAN AND MONITORING

Unless your proposal has no equality impacts or you are not moving forward, complete the table below to track specific actions to:

- Reduce negative impacts and increase positive outcomes.
- Monitor actual or ongoing impacts.
- Record plans to improve data collection.
- Plan any further engagement or analysis that may be required.

Use the 'Status' column on the right to indicate whether the action is yet to start, is in progress, or has been completed.

Issue Identified	Action	Lead Officer	Completion Date	Status

© London Borough Of Brent

Quality and contract monitoring visits will consider protected characteristics	Confirm that quality and performance measures are being achieved	Edwin Mensah	Ongoing	
Quality monitoring information will be monitored by the Head of Service and Safeguarding Adults Board	Quality and equality issues will be identified quickly and action taken.	Edwin Mensah	Ongoing	

11. Describe how you will monitor the actual, ongoing impact of the policy or proposal?

The Service Specification and associated Schedules include

- A Quality Assurance Framework, that defines processes, standards used to ensure consistent quality in service delivery and continuous improvement,
- An Outcomes Framework with metrics and performance indicators that define measured outputs
- A Performance Management Framework that, monitors progress and provides continuous feedback, through clear expectations, regular review and evaluation.

In addition, a team of Placement Relationship Officers will monitor the contract and the quality of service provision. They will undertake regular provider audits, which will include face to face discussions with service users, deal with complaints with the aim of preventing escalation and participate in safeguarding investigations. Placement Relationship Officers will develop and deep and ongoing relationship with the provider making recommendations for improvement and monitoring the implementation of those recommendations.
Ongoing service user engagement will take place during the implementation period and beyond.
A regular Brent Provider Forum will be held all providers will be invited to attend. The Provider Forum will encourage the sharing of good practice and develop an agenda that will focus on quality and improvement. This will include speakers and workshops that focus on current issues, common challenges and emerging issues including those

SECTION F – SIGN OFF

	Signature	Date
Officer:	Marcia Lennon	
Reviewing Officer or Head of Service	Edwin Mensah	

SECTION G – REVIEW

© London Borough Of Brent

EIAs are live documents and should be reviewed regularly, especially if there are actions still to be completed or if the proposal has significant equality impacts.

When to review

- Review every 6 months until all actions in the Action Plan above are complete.
- If new data, feedback, or changes to the service arise, revisit the EIA to make sure it's still accurate.

Who should review

- The same officer who completed the EIA should carry out the review. If there's been a staffing change, the new lead officer should take over.

What to update

- Use the Status column in the Action Plan above to show progress (e.g. Not Started, In Progress, Completed). Add comments and updates in the table below — include any new data, evidence, or feedback.

When reviews can stop

- Once all actions are complete and no further equality impacts are expected, you can stop reviewing the EIA.
- Add rows to the table below as necessary until all actions are completed.

Date of 1st Review:	
Officer:	
Comment on progress toward specific actions, and provide any data and evidence updates:	
Reviewing Officer or Head of Service:	
Date of 2nd Review:	
Officer:	
Comment on progress toward specific actions, and provide any data and evidence updates:	
Reviewing Officer or Head of Service:	

© London Borough Of Brent

Date of 3rd Review:	
Officer:	
Comment on progress toward specific actions, and provide any data and evidence updates:	
Reviewing Officer or Head of Service:	

© London Borough Of Brent

This page is intentionally left blank