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SUMMONS TO ATTEND COUNCIL MEETING

Monday 14 September 2026 at 6.00 pm
Conference Hall - Brent Civic Centre, Engineers Way, Wembley, HA9 0FJ

Please note that this meeting will be held as a physical meeting with all members of the Council required to attend in person.

To the Mayor and Councillors of the London Borough of Brent and to each and every one of them.

I hereby summon you to attend the MEETING OF THE COUNCIL of this Borough.

Kim Wright

KIM WRIGHT
Chief Executive

Dated: 4 September 2026

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

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

Notes for Members - Declarations of Interest:

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

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

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

***Disclosable Pecuniary Interests:**

(a) **Employment, etc. -** Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit gain.

(b) **Sponsorship -** Any payment or other financial benefit in respect expenses in carrying out duties as a member, or of election; including from a trade union.

(c) **Contracts -** Any current contract for goods, services or works, between the Councillors or their partner (or a body in which one has a beneficial interest) and the council.

(d) **Land -** Any beneficial interest in land which is within the council's area.

(e) **Licences-** Any licence to occupy land in the council's area for a month or longer.

(f) **Corporate tenancies -** Any tenancy between the council and a body in which the Councillor or their partner have a beneficial interest.

(g) **Securities -** Any beneficial interest in securities of a body which has a place of business or land in the council's area, if the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body or of any one class of its issued share capital.

****Personal Interests:**

The business relates to or affects:

(a) Anybody of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management, and:

- To which you are appointed by the council;
- which exercises functions of a public nature;
- which is directed is to charitable purposes;
- whose principal purposes include the influence of public opinion or policy (including a political party of trade union).

(b) The interests a of a person from whom you have received gifts or hospitality of at least £50 as a member in the municipal year;

or

A decision in relation to that business might reasonably be regarded as affecting, to a greater extent than the majority of other council tax payers, ratepayers or inhabitants of the electoral ward affected by the decision, the well-being or financial position of:

- You yourself;
- a member of your family or your friend or any person with whom you have a close association or any person or body who employs or has appointed any of these or in whom they have a beneficial interest in a class of securities exceeding the nominal value of £25,000, or any firm in which they are a partner, or any company of which they are a director
- any body of a type described in (a) above

Agenda

1	**Apologies for Absence**	
2	**Minutes of the Previous Meeting**	To Follow

To confirm as a correct record, the minutes of the Council Meeting held on Monday 6 July 2026.

3 Declarations of Interest

Members are invited to declare at this stage of the meeting, the nature and existence of any relevant disclosable pecuniary or personal interests in the items on this agenda and to specify the item(s) to which they relate.

4 Mayor's Announcements 1 - 4

To receive any announcements from the Mayor, including (for reference) the list or petitions received and decisions taken under the Council's urgency procedure since the previous meeting.

5 Appointments to Committees and Outside Bodies and Appointment of Chairs/Vice Chairs 5 - 10

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

6 Deputations (if any)

To receive any deputations requested by members of the public in accordance with Standing Order 32.

Members are asked to note that one deputation is due to be presented at the meeting, relating to the following issue:

(a) Progress towards divestment (requested by Sheila Guhadasan representing the Brent & Harrow Palestine Solidarity Campaign)

(b) Engagement of council members in monitoring progress on the delivery of the Council's climate and biodiversity commitments and in setting future priorities in relation to Brents Climate & Ecological Strategy and delivery plan (requested by Elaine Sheppard, representing Action on the Climate and Ecological Emergency (ACE) Brent)

7 Questions from Members of the Public 11 - 16

To receive and consider the question(s) submitted by the public for response by the relevant Cabinet Member, in accordance with Standing Order 33.

Members are asked to note that two public questions have been received, which have been circulated as part of the agenda along with the written responses provided.

8 Petitions

To consider any petitions with more than 200 signatures for which a request has been received for their presentation, in accordance with the Council's petition rules and Standing Order 66.

Members are asked to note that at the time of agenda publication there are no petition(s) due to be presented at the meeting.

9 Motions

To debate the Group motions submitted in accordance with Standing Order 41.

Members are asked to note:

- The motions submitted will be circulated as part of a republished agenda in advance of the meeting, in accordance with Standing Order 41(c).

- Where a motion concerns an executive function, nothing passed can be actioned until approved by the Executive or an officer with the relevant delegated power.

10 Questions from the Opposition and other Non-Cabinet Members 17 - 30

For questions to be put to members of the Cabinet by Opposition and Non-Cabinet Members in accordance with Standing Order 35.

Five advance notice questions have been received under this item, which have been attached along with the written responses provided.

Members are asked to note that this session will also include an opportunity (within the time available) for other Non-Cabinet members and the Opposition to ask questions of Cabinet Members without the need for advance notice.

11 Report from Chairs of Scrutiny Committees

To receive reports from the Chairs of the Council's Scrutiny Committees in accordance with Standing Order 36. The reports have been attached as follows:

1.1 Community & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee 31 - 36

11.2 Resources & Public Realm Scrutiny Committee To Follow

12 Report from the Vice Chair of the Audit & Standards Advisory Committee 37 - 42

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

13 Treasury Management Outturn Report 2025-26 43 - 78

To receive a report from the Corporate Director of Finance & Resources detailing the 2025-26 outturn for the Council's Treasury Management Activities.

Members are asked to note that this report was received and noted by the Audit & Standards Advisory Committee on 27 July 2026 and is due to be considered by Cabinet on 7 September 2026 and has been forwarded to Council in in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice.

Ward Affected: All Wards	**Contact Officer**: Oliver Simms, Head of Finance (Capital, Treasury and Commercial) Tel: 020 8937 1679 Email: Oliver.Simms@brent.gov.uk

14 Changes to the Constitution 79 - 96

To receive a report from the Corporate Director Finance & Resources detailing a number of constitutional changes including the Planning Scheme of Delegation, Council Procedure Rules and Members' Allowance Scheme.

Ward Affected: All Wards	**Contact Officer**: Marsha Henry, Director of Law and Monitoring Officer 020 8937 4078 Marsha.Henry@brent.gov.uk

15 s85 Resolution to approve reason for councillor non-attendance at meetings 97 - 100

This report seeks approval, pursuant to Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972, to a reason for the non-attendance of a councillor at meetings of the Council, Cabinet, and committees or sub-committee arising from significant family health and wellbeing circumstances.

Ward Affected: All Wards	**Contact Officer**: Amira Nassr, Deputy Director, Democratic & Corporate Governance 020 8937 5436 amira.nassr@brent.gov.uk

16 Exclusion of the Press & Public

No items have been identified in advance of the meeting that will require the exclusion of the press and public.

17 Urgent Business

At the discretion of the Mayor to consider any urgent business, in accordance with Standing Order 37(s).

- Please remember to switch your mobile phone to silent during the meeting.
- The meeting room is accessible by lift and seats will be provided for members of the public. Alternatively, it will be possible to follow proceedings via the live webcast **HERE**

Full Council: 14 September 2026

List of petitions received

Standing Order 66 requires that any petition received by the Governance & Scrutiny Manager and containing 51 or more signatures is reported to Full Council for information.

The list of petitions received since the last update is as follows:

Petition no.	Date closed	Online/Paper submission	Subject	Status
439	07.07.2026	online	Cavendish Road pavement resurfacing	
440	12.08.2026	paper	Stop perimeter fence of College Green Open Space	Referred to Director Education, Partnerships & Strategy & due to be presented at Cabinet on 7.9.2026
442	13.08.2026	paper	The Avenue, NW2 (condition of the pavements along The Avenue, between Aylestone Avenue and Willesden Lane)	Referred to Highways for direct response
443	Petition still live on Change.org	online	Harris Primary Academy South Kenton School Streets Scheme	Healthy Streets & Parking for direct response
446	29.06.2026	online	Winchester Ave NW6 - Extend CPZ times weekdays and all day Saturday	Healthy Streets & Parking for direct response
447	21.08.2026	online	Undertake road safety improvements at the junction of College Road and Mortimer Road	Healthy Streets & Parking for direct response

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Full Council: 14 September 2026

List of Decisions taken under the Council's Urgency Procedures

In accordance with Standing Order 31 (iv) and paragraph 38 (b) of the Access to Information Rules, to report on any Urgent Decisions taken since the last report to Council on 6 July 2026, under this part of the Council's Constitution

The decisions taken which have been subject to use of the urgency procedure are as follows:

(1) Authority to award contract for Provision of Early Years (decision taken by Corporate Director Children, Young People and Community Development) – 16 July 2026

Approval obtained to waive the requirement for advance notice of the decision on the Forward Plan and also requirement in relation to call-in.

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Brent

Full Council – 14 September 2026

Agenda Item 5 – Appointments to Committees and Outside Bodies

Standing Order 30(g) states that, if necessary, Full Council is required to agree appointments to committees and outside bodies

Such appointments are set out below:

Committee Membership

(1) Scrutiny Committees

Following the establishment of the Housing Scrutiny Committee and approval of the subsequent reduction in membership on both the Community & Wellbeing and Resources & Public Realm Scrutiny Committee, members are asked:

(a) To approve the change in membership on the Community & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee, as set out below:

COMMUNITY AND WELLBEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (9 Full Members)	
FULL Members Nominated	
Labour	Bajwa
Labour	De Souza
Labour	Ibrahim
Labour	McLeish
Conservative	Madabhushi **(Chair)**
Conservative	Chadha

Liberal Democrats*	Clinton
Liberal Democrats*	Unger
Greens	Alexandre
Education Statutory Co-optees (Voting-Education matters only)	Vacancy (x 2 Parent Governors) Alloysius Frederick (Roman Catholic Diocese)(May 2027) Venerable Archdeacon Catherine Pickford (CoE Diocese) (February 27)
Non-Voting Co-optees	Sayed Jaffar Milani (Muslim Faith Schools)(May 2027) Rachelle Goldberg (Jewish Faith Schools)(May 2027)
Substitute Members Nominated	
Labour	Anderson
Labour	Blackman
Labour	Burn
Labour	Thomas
Conservative	Chowdhury
Conservative	Do Rosario
Liberal Democrats	Georgio
Liberal Democrats	Lorber

Greens	Mitchell
Greens	Ryan

(b) To approve the change in membership on the Resources & Public Realm Scrutiny Committee, as set out below:

RESOURCES AND PUBLIC REALM COMMITTEE (9 Full Members)	
FULL Members Nominated	
Labour	I.Ahmed
Labour	Anderson
Labour	Blackman
Labour	Burn
Conservative	A.Patel **(Chair)**
Conservative	Chowdhury
Liberal Democrats	Chauhan
Liberal Democrats	Mulaisho
Greens	Mitchell
	Substitute Members Nominated
Labour	Bajwa
Labour	De Souza
Labour	Ibrahim
Labour	McLeish
Conservative	Kansagra
Conservative	Mishra

Liberal Democrats	Georgiou
Liberal Democrats	Lorber
Greens	Alexandre
Greens	Ryan

(c) To approve the membership of the Housing Scrutiny Committee, as set out below:

HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (9 Full Members)	
FULL Members Nominated	
Labour	I.Ahmed
Labour	Dar
Labour	Donnelly-Jackson
Labour	Ibrahim
Conservative	Madabhushi
Conservative	Mishra
Liberal Democrats	Georgiou
Liberal Democrats	Want
Greens	Malonga
	Substitute Members Nominated
Labour	Anderson
Labour	Blackman
Labour	Burn
Labour	Thomas

Conservative	Maurice
Conservative	H.Patel
Liberal Democrats	Lorber
Liberal Democrats	Unger
Greens	Alexandre
Greens	Ryan

(d) To consider any nominations received in relation to the following positions. *(Members are asked to note that nominations will be considered in the order they are received. Each nomination will be put to the vote with the final appointment to be agreed on the basis of a simple majority of votes being achieved. If a straightforward majority of votes is not achieved, then the next nomination will be put to the vote and this will continue until an appointment is made)*

(i) Chair of the Housing Scrutiny Committee – nominations received to date are as follows:

- Councillor Georgiou
- Should any further nominations be received either in advance or during the meeting these will be dealt with in accordance with the process outlined above.

(ii) Vice Chair of the Community & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee – subject to any nominations received.

(iii) Vice Chair of the Resources & Public Realm Scrutiny Committee – subject to any nominations received.

(iv) Vice Chair of the Housing Scrutiny Committee – subject to any nominations received.

(2) Corporate Parenting Committee

Councillor Unger to replace Councillor N.Patel as a full member on the Corporate Parenting Committee.

Councillor N.Patel to replace Councillor Unger as a substitute member on the Corporate Parenting Committee.

(3) Health & Wellbeing Board

Radhika Balu to be appointed as a voting representative of the West and North London Integrated Care Board

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

Item 7.1: Questions from Members of the Public

Full Council – 14 September 2026

1. **Question from Stephen Thomas to Councillor Liz Dixon (Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Public Health)**

Can the Cabinet Member advise what the Council is doing to address the inconsiderate and dangerous use of e-bikes, scooters and pedal bikes across the Alperton area by individuals often riding at great speed and with no helmets or lights, both on and off the pavements and with other riders as passengers. The use of these bikes and scooters in this way is a significant safety concern for other road users and pedestrians alike. Will the Council therefore consider undertaking a period of targeted enforcement action to address the safety concerns outlined, including the confiscation of illegal bikes and scooters to set an example to other users.

Response:

The Council recognises residents' concerns regarding the dangerous and inconsiderate use of e-bikes, scooters and other vehicles in the Alperton area, particularly where they are ridden at excessive speeds, on pavements, without appropriate lighting or safety equipment, or in a manner that places pedestrians and other road users at risk.

As an immediate step, the concerns raised in Alperton will be referred to the next Brent Joint Action Group meeting. This multi-agency forum, chaired by the local Neighbourhood Police Inspector, brings together key partners to coordinate responses to community safety issues. Through this partnership approach, we will seek to develop targeted enforcement activity focused on dangerous vehicle use and breaches of the borough's Nuisance Vehicles Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO).

Alongside this, the Council will engage with local businesses and commercial premises in the Alperton area to raise awareness of the current PSPO requirements and encourage their support in reducing vehicle-related anti-social behaviour and improving compliance.

In addition, last year the Leader of Brent Council wrote to all major food delivery platforms operating in the borough, raising concerns about rider behaviour and public safety and calling on companies to establish and enforce clear rider codes of conduct aligned with the Highway Code, alongside stronger measures to improve compliance and accountability.

Looking beyond these immediate actions, the Council has commenced a review of the borough's Nuisance Vehicle PSPO. This forms part of a medium to long-term programme of work to assess the effectiveness of the current arrangements, identify opportunities to strengthen enforcement and consider whether additional measures may be required to respond to emerging issues, including the increasing use of e-bikes and scooters.

The review is being undertaken against a backdrop of reduced police resources and the disbandment of the Roads and Transport Policing Command's Roads and Transport Enforcement Team. This has affected enforcement capacity such as challenges relating to cloned registration plates, which can make the identification and prosecution of vehicle-related offences more difficult.

Whilst powers to seize illegal e-bikes, scooters and vehicles primarily rest with the Metropolitan Police Service, the Council will continue to work closely with police colleagues and other partners to identify enforcement opportunities, support targeted operations and improve safety for residents and visitors. Through both immediate partnership activity and the longer-term review of the PSPO framework, the Council remains committed to addressing dangerous and anti-social vehicle use across Alperton and the wider borough.

2. **Question from Sushil Rapatwar to Councillor Gwen Grahl (Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member Finance & Resources)**

Brent's council tax arrears reached £85.3 million at the end of 2024/25 — the highest of any London borough. Over the same period, enforcement agent (bailiff) return rates fell to 16.8%, and the council's unallocated reserves are forecast to fall to £7.5 million, with a risk of depletion by 2027/28.

Can the Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources confirm these figures and set out the specific plan and timetable to reduce Brent's council tax arrears, which are the highest in London?

Response:

Council Tax Arrears

Brent's historic council tax debt stood at £84.3m as at 1 April 2025. During 2025/26, the Council reduced historic arrears by £13.1m, lowering the balance from £84.3m to £71.2m. However, £21.7m of uncollected 2025/26 council tax liability was carried forward into 2026/27. As a result, total council tax debt at 1 April 2026 increased to £92.9m.

The Council does not recognise the 16.8% enforcement agent return rate referred to in the question. During 2025/26 Brent utilised four enforcement agent suppliers and monitored performance across all providers. The average collection rate achieved was 22.3%, which exceeds the commonly cited sector average of 20% for enforcement agent recovery activity. The Council continues to monitor enforcement activity closely to ensure recovery action remains effective, proportionate and represents value for money, while balancing the need to maximise collection rates with appropriate support for vulnerable residents.

Taking into account the 4.99% Council Tax increase for 2026/27, the 2026/27 collection target of 93.5% represents an increase in the value of income to be collected during the year.

In relation to the Council's plans to reduce council tax arrears, the Council has implemented a performance improvement programme to strengthen collection performance and reduce outstanding debt.

Key actions include:

- Targeted focus on segmented arrears with increased use of automated technologies facilitating text message, email and outbound telephone contact campaigns, which have already contributed to a £3.4m reduction in debt from 1 April 2026.

- Establishment of a dedicated six-month Council Tax Engagement & Recovery Team focused on early intervention, payment arrangements, increasing Direct Debit take-up and identifying vulnerable residents for support.

- A data-cleansing exercise to obtain missing email and mobile contact details for approximately 27,000 customers, enabling more effective engagement and recovery activity.

- Increased use of charging orders, repayment plans and targeted recovery action against higher-value debtors, with charging orders to the value of £3.5m secured.

- Further automation of recovery processes, including the introduction of AI-enabled statement generation and exploration of enhanced case management systems.

- Ongoing support for residents facing genuine financial hardship through the Council Tax Hardship Fund, which provided 13,154 awards worth £1.5m during 2025/26.

The improvement plan is focused on delivering service improvements throughout 2026/27, during which performance will be closely monitored to ensure collection levels remain on target. The increased in-year Council Tax collection target of 93.5% is expected to generate approximately £2.5 million in additional income compared with the previous year's target.

The Improvement Programme has established a stronger foundation for delivery through enhanced governance and performance management arrangements, the introduction of repeatable recovery campaigns and earlier interventions, improved debt segmentation and targeted recovery strategies, and a greater focus on reducing avoidable customer contact while increasing the use of automated payment methods and self-service channels.

The service will prioritise performance to ensure collection remains on trajectory. Early warning indicators will be monitored closely, with escalation routes and targeted recovery campaigns deployed promptly where emerging risks are identified. This approach will also include the early monitoring of applications and uptake of the Council Tax Hardship Fund to ensure support is targeted appropriately while maintaining collection performance.

Progress will be monitored through monthly Income and Debt Board meetings, operational performance reviews, and regular reporting to senior management and members. While council tax debt remains a significant challenge, the initiatives commenced in 2025/26 and continued throughout 2026/27 demonstrates that reductions in historic debt balances are achievable with sufficient resources, governance and performance monitoring in place.

Reserves

At the end of 2025/26, the Council held £24.3m of unallocated reserves (reserves that are not earmarked for a specific purpose). Of this, £20.7m is the General Fund Balance, the Section 151 officer’s assessment of the adequate level of reserves required to maintain the Council’s financial sustainability. At Quarter 1 in 2026/27, the

Council was reporting a forecast overspend of £9.5m. If left unmitigated, this would result in a reduction of the unallocated reserves to £14.8m at the end of 2026/27. However, the Council is taking a number of mitigating actions, including continuing to implement spending controls and a further update will be provided to Cabinet in the Quarter 2 Financial Forecast report in October.

As stated in the Medium Term Financial Outlook report to Cabinet in July 2026, in the event that any overspend in 2026/27 is not mitigated, the Council would need to make provision for replenishing the General Fund balance in 2027/28. The existing budget gap identified in the report is inclusive of some provision to increase reserves, but any further unmitigated pressures would add to this budget gap. At present, the risk of the council's unallocated reserves being depleted by 2027/28 is considered to be low, based on the actions being taken, but any increase to the forecasted overspend in 2026/27 will increase this risk. The Council will need to consider how this risk can be mitigated, while committing to increase reserves over the next two years to enhance its financial resilience and sustainability.

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Questions from the Opposition and Other Non-Cabinet Members

Full Council – 14 September 2026

1. **Question from Councillor Donnelly-Jackson to Councillor Liz Dixon (Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Public Health)**

Better, the UK's largest public swimming operator, recorded its busiest-ever summer for lidos and outdoor swimming in 2025, with 542,998 visits between June and August, up 30% from 416,847 over the same period in 2024. There is clear and growing public demand for outdoor swimming that existing provision is not meeting. Across the country, communities are organising, fundraising and campaigning for new and restored lidos, demonstrating an appetite for safe, accessible outdoor swimming that goes well beyond nostalgia.

There is also an important public health and water-safety case for widening access to swimming. Recent data suggests that children from Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities in England are 3.5 times more likely to drown than their white counterparts.

Brent has a proud history of outdoor swimming, with public lidos once serving communities at Gladstone Park, Vale Farm, Harlesden and Kingsbury among others.

With warmer summers, growing demand for outdoor swimming and the significant physical and mental health benefits of swimming, could the Cabinet Member consider commissioning a feasibility study into creating a new public lido or "People's Pool" in Brent?

As we develop our ambition to make Brent a borough of play, such a study could look at latent demand, potential locations, costs, operating models and opportunities for external or partnership funding.

Response:

Thank you to Councillor Donnelly-Jackson for raising this important and timely question.

Yes. I am pleased to confirm that the Council will take this work forward. The administration made a clear manifesto commitment to launch a feasibility study for a new lido and we will now begin turning that commitment into a deliverable programme of work. This forms part of our wider ambition to make Brent the borough of play and to create a fairer, healthier borough.

Brent has a rich history of public outdoor swimming. Gladstone Park's swimming pool opened in 1903, followed by King Edward VII Recreation Ground in 1911, Vale Farm Lido in 1932, Harlesden Lido in 1935 and Kingsbury Lido in 1939. These were important public places where generations of Brent residents came together to swim, play and spend time with family and friends.

That history gives us a strong foundation, but our ambition is firmly focused on our future. Outdoor swimming is growing in popularity, London is experiencing hotter summers and residents need safe and affordable places to swim and cool down. As the question notes, Better recorded 542,998 visits to some lidos and outdoor swimming facilities between June and August 2025, an increase of 30% on the previous year.

There is also a clear public health and water-safety case. Royal Life Saving Society (RLSS) UK reports that almost three in ten Year 6 children nationally cannot confidently swim 25m or perform safe self-rescue, with a substantial attainment gap between children from the least and most deprived communities. The unequal drowning risk experienced by children from some ethnic minority communities is particularly relevant in a diverse borough such as Brent.

A future lido must therefore be more than a summer attraction. It should support affordable swimming, learning, water confidence, self-rescue, play, physical activity and social connection. It must also be accessible to the communities currently least likely to benefit from swimming provision.

The Council is already acting to widen access to swimming. We have expanded free school-holiday swimming for children and young people across Vale Farm, Willesden and Moberly sports centres. We will build on this further during 2027 as we progress the administration's wider commitments on access to swimming.

Our strategic work has also included a Facilities Planning Mode (FPM), which identified an indicative borough-wide shortfall of around 650m² of pool water space by 2041. While the model focuses on conventional swimming pools, it provides further evidence of the need to plan strategically for Brent's long-term swimming provision.

We are already responding, the new Bridge Park Leisure Centre will include a 25-metre, six-lane pool and a dedicated learner pool, alongside wider fitness, wellbeing and community facilities.

The lido feasibility study will therefore be developed through our wider Strategic Outcomes Planning Model (SOPM) work and be reflected in our infrastructure strategies. This will ensure that the proposition is grounded in evidence and connected to our plans for leisure centres, parks, public health, play and community infrastructure.

The study will consider demand, potential locations, capital and operating costs, different delivery and operating models, and opportunities for external and partnership funding.

We also want to consider what may be achievable before a permanent lido could be delivered. Alongside the longer-term feasibility study, officers will explore whether safe and affordable temporary or pilot outdoor-swimming provision could be introduced sooner at a suitable location.

We will learn from successful schemes elsewhere across the country, while developing an approach that reflects Brent’s communities and our own history. Residents, community organisations and groups interested in reviving Brent’s lido heritage will have opportunities to contribute as the work develops.

I have asked the Active Wellbeing service to lead the scope and delivery plan for the feasibility study, working with colleagues across the Council and with external partners. The first stage will establish the evidence, governance, resources and commissioning route needed to move the study forward.

This is how we will turn the administration’s manifesto commitment into tangible action: establishing the case, identifying deliverable options, building the right partnerships and creating a clear basis for future decisions and investment. Our aim is to establish how Brent can once again provide a public outdoor swimming facility that is safe, inclusive, affordable and sustainable for future generations.

2. Question from Trevor Blackman to Councillor Jake Rubin (Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Employment & Climate Action)

The Government's Youth Guarantee represents a major opportunity to ensure that every young person has a route into education, training or work, backed by £2.5 billion of investment to tackle youth unemployment.

This includes expanded Youth Hubs, a new £3,000 Youth Jobs Grant for employers who recruit eligible 18-to-24-year-olds, and a Jobs Guarantee expected to provide more than 90,000 young people with fully funded paid employment over the next three years.

On this basis:

(a) Would the Cabinet Member set out what work Brent is undertaking to ensure that the Youth Guarantee is fully rolled out in our borough, that local employers are encouraged to participate, and that Brent's young people benefit from the opportunities and funding now available?

(b) Will the Council also develop a Brent Youth Opportunity Guarantee of its own, bringing together schools, colleges, employers, Brent Works, youth services and community organisations to create a clearer pathway from education into meaningful work experience, apprenticeships, training, mentoring and sustained employment?

(c) In particular, how can we ensure that young people who face the greatest barriers, including those with SEND, care-experienced young people, those at risk of becoming NEET and those without established professional networks, are at the front of the queue for these new opportunities?

Response:

(a) The Council welcomes the Government's Youth Guarantee and the opportunities it presents for Brent's young people. Supporting residents into good work is a key priority within our emerging Employment and Skills Strategy, which places a strong emphasis on improving outcomes for young people and those facing barriers to employment. We will be introducing our strategy, which sets out the Council's ambition to support residents into more and better jobs, over the coming weeks.

We are working closely with Jobcentre Plus, the West London Alliance, education providers and employers to maximise the opportunities arising from the Government's Youth Jobs Guarantee. This includes promoting the new Youth Jobs Grant to local employers and engaging with the Department for Work and Pensions as it progresses the selection of delivery partners for the national rollout.

No providers have yet been appointed, but the Council, through the Employment and Opportunities Service, retains an active interest following a collaborative bid with West London neighbours. We expect announcements on successful bids imminently and will keep Members informed as the delivery landscape becomes clearer.

We will also continue to use Brent Works and our employer relationships to encourage local businesses to create opportunities for young people and make the most of the funding available.

(b) We are keen to develop a Brent Youth Opportunity Offer, bringing together and strengthening the range of work already taking place across the Council and with our partners. This will provide a clearer, more joined-up offer for young people, while identifying where existing provision can be enhanced.

We will work with Cllr Blackman, Members, officers and partners including schools, colleges, training providers, employers, Brent Works, youth services and community organisations to develop this offer. Subject to consultation with officers and available resources through the Council's budget-setting process, we will also explore where additional activity could strengthen it.

This work will be supported by the Youth Employment and Progression Taskforce, which we are establishing with Young Brent Foundation. The Taskforce will help us:

- Strengthen transitions from education into employment and training.
- Increase access to work experience, apprenticeships and industry placements.
- Improve employer engagement and create more opportunities.
- Align local provision with national initiatives such as the Youth Jobs Guarantee.
- Identify gaps in support and develop solutions collaboratively.
- Improve progression into sustained and higher-quality employment.
- Provide partnership oversight, performance monitoring and accountability.

We are also exploring how a targeted Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA) could incentivise and support young people who are at risk of becoming NEET or are already NEET, as well as those considering vocational and further education routes. This could help young people remain engaged in education and training and support stronger progression into employment.

(c) A key principle of this work will be ensuring that those facing the greatest barriers are not left behind. This includes young people with SEND, care-experienced young people, those at risk of becoming NEET, young people undertaking vocational training, and those without established professional networks.

Through targeted outreach, tailored support and stronger partnership working, we will seek to ensure these young people are prioritised for opportunities and receive the support they need to succeed.

The Taskforce will also help identify gaps in provision and improve connections to employers, mentoring, work experience and apprenticeships, with a focus on progression into sustained and higher-quality employment.

Ultimately, our ambition is for every young person in Brent to have a clear route into education, training or good work, with additional support for those who face the greatest barriers.

3. Question from Councillor Jayanti Patel to Councillor Promise Knight (Cabinet Member for Cleaner Streets, Transport & Public Realm)

For each of the last three financial years, can the Cabinet Member confirm:

1. How many occasions Brent Council has identified highway works carried out by its contractors as defective or below the required standard, and how many times have contractors subsequently been required to return and rectify those works at their own cost under contractual warranty or defect provisions?

2. What financial deductions, penalties or other contractual sanctions have been imposed on highways contractors as a result of defective or substandard work, including the total value in each year?

3. How many defective highway reinstatements undertaken by utility companies have been identified by the Council, how many have subsequently been rectified, and what total amount has been recovered or charged to utility companies as a result?

4. What proportion of completed highway works are currently subject to post-completion inspection or quality assurance checks?

5. Does the Council maintain a central record of repeat defects, remedial works and financial penalties by individual contractors, and if so, will this information be made publicly available to enable councillors and residents to assess contractor performance and value for money?

Response:

1. How many occasions Brent Council has identified highway works carried out by its contractors as defective or below the required standard, and how many times have contractors subsequently been required to return and rectify those works at their own cost under contractual warranty or defect provisions

The Council monitors the quality of highway works through a combination of inspections, quality assurance processes and contract management activities. Where works are found to be defective, incomplete, not carried out to the required standard, failing prematurely, or not undertaken in accordance with the agreed scope of works, contractors are required to return and undertake the necessary remedial works at their own expense.

The number of recorded occasions where completed highway works required the contractor to return and undertake remedial works during the last three financial years was as follows:

Financial Year	Reactive Maintenance Defects	Planned Maintenance / Improvement Defects	Total
2023/24	119	0	119
2024/25	15	0	15
2025/26 (to date)	7	6	13
Total	**141**	**6**	**147**

All of the above defects were rectified by the relevant contractor at its own expense in accordance with its contractual obligations and at no additional cost to the Council. 2023/24 was the first year of the contract.

It should be noted that defects identified and corrected during the construction process before completion and acceptance of the works are not included within these figures, as they are dealt with as part of normal site supervision and quality control procedures.

2. What financial deductions, penalties or other contractual sanctions have been imposed on highways contractors as a result of defective or substandard work, including the total value in each year

During the last three financial years, the Council has not imposed any specific financial penalties or deductions on its principal highways maintenance contractors solely in relation to defective workmanship.

Where defects or quality issues have been identified, contractors have undertaken the necessary remedial works at their own expense in accordance with their contractual obligations. Where appropriate, payment for repairs is withheld until remedial works are completed to the satisfaction of officers. As defects identified by the Council were accepted by the contractor and rectified within the required timescales, no additional financial sanctions were applied.

3. How many defective highway reinstatements undertaken by utility companies have been identified by the Council, how many have subsequently been rectified, and what total amount has been recovered or charged to utility companies as a result?

NRSWA Officers will conduct a sample number of Category B inspections for completed works. This is carried out within 6 months of the interim or permanent reinstatement. The charge for Cat B inspections is £50. The relevant utility is notified of the inspection fail and required to programme and complete correction works. Follow Up inspections to monitor repair work and ensure the defect has been fully rectified is charged at £120 per visit.

The table below shows data for the number of Cat B inspections and failures requiring Follow Up inspections. All correction works are at the utility contractor’s expense.

Cat B	Inspections completed	Inspections Failed
Data for 2024-2025	1111	121
Data for 2025-2026	869	31

NRSWA Officers will also conduct a sample number of Category C inspections. These are carried out within the three months preceding the end of the guarantee period, which is normally 2 years. The failure process as applied for Cat B defects also applies for Cat C defects.

Cat C	Inspections completed	Inspections Failed
Data for 2024-2025	866	25
Data for 2025-2026	621	17

The figures below relate to statutory inspection and follow-up inspection charges levied under the New Roads and Street Works Act 1991. Where reinstatements fail inspection, the utility company is responsible for carrying out any remedial works at its own expense. The Council does not undertake these remedial works and therefore does not separately recover the cost of the corrective works.

The total amount of inspection and follow-up inspection charges invoiced to utility companies was £53,580 in 2024/25 and £41,180 in 2025/26.

4. What proportion of completed highway works are currently subject to post-completion inspection or quality assurance checks?

All planned highway maintenance, carriageway resurfacing and capital improvement schemes are subject to post-completion inspection and quality assurance processes before final acceptance by the Council.

Given the high volume of reactive maintenance works undertaken across the borough, it is not practical to physically inspect every individual repair. Contractors are required to provide completion records and photographic evidence for all reactive maintenance works, which are reviewed by Council officers.

Approximately 50% of reactive maintenance repairs are subject to a desktop audit of the photographic completion records. Where photographic evidence is considered insufficient, where concerns are identified during the audit process, or where complaints or enquiries indicate that works may be defective, further site inspections may be undertaken and remedial works required where appropriate.

This risk-based approach enables resources to be targeted towards locations where there is evidence that further investigation may be necessary whilst maintaining oversight of completed highway works across the network.

5. **Does the Council maintain a central record of repeat defects, remedial works and financial penalties by individual contractors, and if so, will this information be made publicly available to enable Councillors and residents to assess contractor performance and value for money?**

The Council maintains records of highway inspections, defects and maintenance activities through its asset management systems, including Symology.

Whilst the history of a particular location can be reviewed, the Council does not maintain a specific register of "repeat defects" by contractor and the system does not contain a dedicated repeat-defect recording function.

The presence of multiple defects at the same location does not necessarily indicate defective workmanship or contractor failure. Defects may arise for a variety of reasons including utility works, third-party damage, traffic loading, environmental conditions, or the deterioration of surrounding highway assets over time.

Information relating to highway inspections, maintenance activities and contractor performance is recorded and monitored through the Council's asset management and Street Works management systems, including Symology and Aurora.

Requests for recorded information are considered in accordance with the relevant information access legislation.

4. Question from Councillor Barbara Want to Councillor Matt Kelcher (Cabinet Member for Regeneration & Planning)

Can the Cabinet Member set out what actions Brent Council has taken, is taking or will take to address fears by Brent residents about the potential release of toxic dust and airborne contaminants during the proposed redevelopment of the former Kensal Gas Works site at Ladbroke Grove in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (RBKB), just over the border from Brent?

The site is known to contain arsenic, cyanide, benzene, toluene and asbestos and expert opinion suggests disturbed contaminants released into the air can travel up to 4 miles from the site. More than 100 lorries a day will transport waste away along Brent roads and past Brent homes. The works will last up to 15 years. Residents are understandably anxious about the public-health implications.

In light of this, can the Cabinet Member confirm whether Brent Council will:

(1) Approach RBKC to establish a cross-borough air-quality monitoring and oversight group for the duration of the excavation works.

(2) Ensure this group includes Brent officers, Brent residents and independent environmental or public-health experts.

(3) Work with RBKC to agree a shared monitoring framework, including real-time air-quality monitoring at multiple Brent locations, transparent publication of data and incident reports, and clear thresholds for escalation and joint response.

(4) Create a clear route for Brent residents to raise concerns, ensuring issues are logged, investigated and addressed through the cross-borough structure rather than redirected to the developer.

Response:

The potential impacts of contamination and air quality were considered by the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (RBKC) as part of its assessment of the application. These matters were addressed in the Planning Committee reports and discussed at the committee meeting itself. The concerns raised in relation to contamination and air quality were thoroughly assessed, and the relevant technical consultees concluded that there were no significant risks associated with either issue.

RBKC's Planning Committee resolved to grant planning permission subject to a number of conditions, including a requirement for air quality monitoring. Where air quality monitoring is required for development proposals, it is normally undertaken close to the development site, as these locations are most likely to experience dust and other construction-related impacts. Monitoring is not normally required along transport routes to and from the site, as locations further from the development are less likely to be affected.

Planning permission was also granted subject to a condition requiring the contractor to join the Considerate Constructors Scheme. The scheme requires contractors to provide contact details for local residents, enabling any concerns or complaints arising during the construction period to be raised directly with them.

5. **Question from Councillor Najib Warsame to Councillor Jake Rubin (Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Employment & Climate Action) & Councillor Liz Dixon (Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Public Health):**

The fatal stabbing of 17-year-old David Wynter at Brent Civic Centre in Wembley on 25 August is an unprecedented tragedy for the communities we represent, and for all of us as residents in Brent. Our thoughts and prayers are with David's family and we commend the council and police services for their swift and thorough response to these events.

This is the second fatal stabbing of a young person in Brent this year. In light of these tragedies will the Cabinet Member:

(1) commit to reviewing the Youth Justice strategy, currently due to end in 2028, including its monitoring mechanisms to ensure the council's responsibilities are being upheld and accept that meaningful youth violence prevention requires a comprehensive, not siloed, strategy to the wider social and economic conditions that produce this horrendous violence.

(2) accept that meaningful prevention requires that young people have access to youth services, trusted adults, community spaces and constructive social outlets that are both affordable and readily available?

(3) commit to identifying specific gaps in affordable youth provision and using NCIL/SCIL funding where available?

Response:

The murder of David Wynter is a tragedy and all of our thoughts are with his family and friends as they grieve his loss.

The police investigation remains ongoing and at this stage it is not possible to draw firm conclusions around what led to this terrible event. Formal safeguarding processes have been established and partners will work closely to analyse the information that emerges and how this will support our wider partnership learning as a result.

(1) The Youth Justice Plan 2025-2028 was agreed at Cabinet on 13 October 2025 and an annual review was carried out in June 2026, overseen by the multi-agency Youth Justice Partnership Board. There is a stronger focus on prevention activity including alignment of interventions as part of the families first partnership programme. It is accepted that a broad partnership approach is needed to tackle the causes of serious youth violence.

(2) It is correct to say that meaningful prevention requires that young people have access to youth services in the way described. Brent Council's budget has been cut drastically since 2010 meaning that many services that were once provided directly by the council are now provided by partners and voluntary organisations. Despite this our ambition for Brent's young people, including in preventing acts of serious violence, remains as strong as ever. The Brent Youth Strategy was launched in 2025 (approved by Cabinet in March 2025). Driven and informed by

the views of young people, the strategy focuses on what is most important to young people in their local community with priorities being: (1) Being heard and taking part (2) Reaching goals and enjoying yourself (3) Feeling good (4) Staying safe. The delivery plan, working closely with local partners including schools and youth organisations co-ordinated by the Young Brent Foundation, sets out how the priorities are being delivered. The Brent Youth Strategy Delivery Group includes young people who are activity monitoring progress with the strategy outcomes. The Council is supporting Young Brent Foundation to bid for additional funding from the Mayor's investment fund.

(3) An example of how the Council supports local youth organisations is the recent £4.5m SCIL capital investment into local youth facilities, including the new Youth Anchor at Church End which is due to open in the autumn. In total 5 organisations were approved for this funding. The Council will continue to encourage youth organisations to bid for NCIL and other funding opportunities, working in partnership to support the strategic aims of the Youth Strategy.

(4) In addition, Brent's new Community Safety Strategy for 2027-2030 is currently out for public consultation. The strategy will help shape how the Council and its partners work together to tackle crime, anti-social behaviour and violence, and to support safer communities across the borough. We welcome feedback from residents, community groups and stakeholders, and in light of recent events would particularly encourage people to share their views and experiences. All feedback received through the consultation will be carefully considered as the strategy is finalised. Residents can take part via the consultation at Brent Community Safety Strategy Consultation.

Brent	**Full Council** 14 September 2026
	Report from the Corporate Director of Finance and Resources

Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee Chair's Update

Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	Council
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:	None
Contact Officer(s): (Name, Title, Contact Details)	Chatan Popat, Strategy Lead – Scrutiny, Democratic and Corporate Governance 020 8937 5068 chatan.popat@brent.gov.uk James Kinsella,Governance and Scrutiny Manager, Democratic and Corporate Governance 020 8937 2063 james.kinsella@brent.gov.uk Amira Nassr,Deputy Director, Democratic and Corporate Governance 020 8937 5436 amira.nassr@brent.gov.uk

1.0 Executive Summary

1.0. To update Full Council on the meetings and activities of the Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee and North West London Joint Health and Overview Scrutiny Committee since the last update to Full Council on 06 July 2026.

2.0 Recommendation(s)

That Full Council

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

2.2 Note that the Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee's work programme for the 2026/27 municipal year will be provided as part of the next update report to Full Council once it has been officially agreed at the next meeting scheduled for 16 September 2026.

3.0 Detail

3.1 Contribution to Borough Plan Priorities & Strategic Context

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

3.2 Background

3.2.1 Brent Council has two scrutiny committees: the Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee and the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee. The council also participates as a full voting member in the North West London Joint Health Overview Scrutiny Committee (NWL JHOSC). Councillor Sai Karthik Madabhushi has been appointed as chair of the Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee at the Annual Council Meeting in May 2026. Councillor Sapna Chadha has been appointed to serve as Brent's representative at the North West London Joint Health and Overview Scrutiny Committee (NWL JHOSC).

3.2.2 A scrutiny committee can review anything which affects the borough or its inhabitants, subject to its remit. The remit of the Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee is set out in the Council's Constitution under the Terms of Reference for Scrutiny Committees which includes:

Adult social care; Safeguarding; Children's services; Cultural services; Education; Health; Housing; Public Health and Wellbeing.

Members are reminded that Housing will remain within the remit of the Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee until the new Homes Scrutiny Committee has been established, a schedule of meeting dates has been agreed, and work programme exercises have been completed.

3.2.3 As part of its remit set out in the constitution, and its role to review the provision and operation of health services within the borough, the Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee can scrutinise, and make recommendations to NHS organisations or relevant health service providers.

3.2.4 The Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee's 2026/27 work programme has been finalised. Scheduled to be formally agreed at the committee's next meeting on 16 September 2026, it will outline the policy areas and council decisions the committee plan to review during the 2026/27 municipal year. In developing its work programme, the committee held a work programming meeting, attended by Committee members, Cabinet members and Corporate Directors. At this session Committee members prioritised items to include on the work programme based on a set of criteria. Prioritisation ensured that items included on the committees work programme were (i) a strategic priority as set out in the council's 2023-27 Borough Plan (ii) of concern for a significant number of the borough's residents (iii) a significant cabinet decision or (iv) part of a forthcoming policy review or a new strategy being developed by the Cabinet. This was undertaken to ensure that scrutiny has a significant impact and adds value to the council's policy process. Statutory guidance on overview and scrutiny recommends that for scrutiny to be effective, scrutiny committees focus on conducting fewer in-depth reviews of highly significant topics[1].

3.2.5 The Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee met for its first meeting of the 2026-27 municipal year on 30 June 2026. The meeting focused on two annual safeguarding reports. The first of these reports was the Brent Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB) Annual Report; 2025-2026.The Committee heard from representatives across the safeguarding partnership, including the Council, Metropolitan Police and NHS Integrated Care Board. Members were advised that safeguarding partners continued to operate within a challenging environment characterised by increasing demand, growing case complexity and significant organisational change. Despite these pressures, partners remained committed to maintaining effective safeguarding arrangements and ensuring services were delivered in ways that were safe, accessible and responsive to residents' needs. The importance of strong leadership, oversight and collaboration across agencies was repeatedly emphasised, particularly in relation to supporting vulnerable adults and ensuring that safeguarding services were provided in settings where people felt safe and supported.

3.2.6 The Committee were informed that the Board had completed its previous strategic priorities relating to self-neglect, housing, substance misuse and learning from Safeguarding Adult Reviews (SARs), and had embedded this work into business-as-usual activity. Examples included the development and launch of a self-neglect toolkit, strengthened multi-agency approaches to homelessness and substance misuse, revised SAR referral and learning processes, and expanded engagement with people who draw on care and support services. Members were advised that extensive community engagement had informed the Board's new one-year strategic plan, which prioritises safeguarding adults with complex care and support needs, with a particular focus on mental health, homelessness and suicide prevention, alongside wider work to prevent harm before crises occur. The Board also highlighted ongoing efforts to strengthen community engagement, inclusivity and workforce development, while continuing to promote learning through regular multi-agency briefings, training events and "lessons learned" sessions.

3.2.7 Throughout the discussion, Members welcomed the progress being made but sought greater assurance regarding outcomes, performance information and the effectiveness of partnership working. Members also questioned the low

[1] *Statutory Guidance on Overview and Scrutiny in Local and Combined Authorities* (Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government), p21

conversion rate of safeguarding referrals to Section 42 enquiries and the extent to which learning from SARs and national reviews was being translated into practice. Officers acknowledged the challenges associated with collecting meaningful multi-agency data and explained that the newly established Performance and Audit Sub-Group was beginning to analyse trends and identify areas requiring further scrutiny, including modern slavery, cuckooing and referral pathways. The Committee were also pleased to hear that all partners had reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening information sharing, improving operational partnership arrangements and ensuring future reports provide clearer trend analysis, stronger performance data and a more cohesive account of multi-agency safeguarding activity.

3.2.8 The second item discussed at the Committee meeting was the Brent Safeguarding Children Partnership Report; 2025-2026. The Committee were informed that whilst the number of formal Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews remained relatively low, there was extensive safeguarding activity taking place across the partnership. Members were advised that the Case Review Group routinely considered referrals and cases of concern, with learning being identified through thematic multi-agency audits, case reviews and ongoing scrutiny activity. This learning was then embedded through training programmes, briefings and wider workforce development initiatives. The Committee also heard that Brent had taken a leading role on online safety, engaging directly with children, young people, parents and schools to shape its approach. This had resulted in the development of the Brent Phone Pledge, which goes beyond national guidance by promoting safer and more consistent use of technology across school communities. The Partnership highlighted its commitment to strengthening learning from reviews, advancing transitional safeguarding arrangements and ensuring the experiences of children and young people were better reflected in future safeguarding work, including through proposals to introduce Young Scrutineers.

3.2.9 Members heard that partnership working remained a key strength and would become increasingly important as reforms associated with the Families First Partnership Programme continue to be implemented. Officers explained that Brent had already introduced aspects of these reforms, bringing early help and children's social care services closer together and strengthening multi-agency working through co-location and joint decision-making arrangements. The Committee was advised that improved information-sharing practices had been supported through the involvement of a wider range of partners at the Front Door, including housing, adult social care and domestic abuse specialists. Members were pleased to hear that the Children Young People and Community Development department was also playing a more prominent role within safeguarding arrangements, supported by designated safeguarding lead networks and strengthened links between schools and safeguarding partners. Members welcomed the recent positive Ofsted judgement and heard that stronger relationships had also been established with community safety partners, youth organisations and the voluntary sector. Whilst progress was acknowledged, officers recognised that there remained further opportunities to strengthen engagement across the partnership and continue improving information sharing between agencies.

3.2.10 The Committee also explored the key risks affecting children and young people in Brent and how the Partnership was responding to them. Neglect was identified as a priority area, with officers highlighting the importance of early intervention, professional curiosity and effective family support to prevent concerns from escalating. Members also discussed the ongoing risks associated with child exploitation, serious youth violence, missing children and gang-related activity, hearing about the work of contextual safeguarding panels, exploitation mapping exercises and enhanced partnership responses designed to identify and support vulnerable young people. Considerable attention was given to online harms and emerging risks linked to artificial intelligence, with partners stressing the importance of equipping parents, schools and professionals to recognise signs of online exploitation and abuse. The discussion also considered the safeguarding implications of unmet or undiagnosed SEND and neurodiversity needs, with officers emphasising the need for earlier identification and intervention.

3.2.11 The Committee will meet for its second meeting of the municipal year on 16 September 2026. At this time, members will focus on three items: The Brent Youth Strategy, The Brent Culture Strategy and Childhood Asthma in Brent.

3.2.12 Officers from across the North West London region, led by Brent, are working closely with the newly established West and North London Integrated Care Board (ICB) to re-establish the North West London Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (NWL JHOSC). Membership of the committee has now been confirmed, and preparations are underway to convene a work programming session, agree updated Terms of Reference, and establish a schedule of meetings for the remainder of the year.

4.0 Stakeholder and ward member consultation and engagement

4.1 Members continue to be fully engaged in the development and delivery of the scrutiny work programme, which is intended to be a flexible, living document that can adapt and change throughout the municipal year in response to the Committee’s needs.

5.0 Financial Considerations

5.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

6.0 Legal Considerations

6.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

7.0 Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Considerations

7.1 There are no equity, diversity or inclusion implications arising from this report.

8.0 Climate Change and Environmental Considerations

8.1 There are no climate change or environmental implications arising from this report.

9.0 Human Resources/Property Considerations (if appropriate)

9.1 There are no human resources implications arising from this report.

10.0 Communication Considerations

10.1 There are no communication implications arising from this report.

Report sign off:

Minesh Patel
Corporate Director, Finance and Resources

	Full Council 14 September 2026
Brent	**Report from the Corporate Director of Finance and Resources**

Audit and Standards Advisory Committee – Vice Chair's Report

Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	Council
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:	None
Contact Officer(s): (Name, Title, Contact Details)	Minesh Patel, Director of Finance and Resources Tel: 020 8937 4043 Email: minesh.patel@brent.gov.uk

1.0 Executive Summary

1.1. This report provides a summary of the activities carried out by the Council's Audit and Standards Advisory Committee and the Audit and Standards Committee since the last update provided to Full Council in November 2025.

2.0 Recommendation(s)

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

3.0 Detail

3.1 Contribution to Borough Plan Priorities & Strategic Context

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

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

3.2 Background

3.2.1 The Audit and Standards Advisory Committee met on 3 December 2025 and 3 February, 24 March, 16 June and 27 July 2026. A summary of the substantive items considered at these meetings is set out below.

3.2.2 Audit and Standards Advisory Committee – 3 December 2025

a. Standards Report, including an Update on Gifts and Hospitality
The report provided an update on gifts and hospitality registered by Members, together with the outcome of the Government's consultation, "Strengthening the Standards and Conduct Framework for Local Authorities in England", and the Government's response.

b. Interim Counter Fraud Report 2025–26
The report presented the Council's Interim Counter Fraud Report for the 2025–26 financial year.

c. Internal Audit Interim Report 2025–26
The report presented the work undertaken by Internal Audit up to the end of October 2025.

d. Treasury Management Mid-Year Report 2025–26
The report updated Members on treasury management activity during the first half of the 2025–26 financial year.

e. Treasury Management Strategy 2026–27
The report presented the draft Treasury Management Strategy for 2026–27 for consideration prior to its inclusion within the final budget report.

f. Audit Findings Report: London Borough of Brent and Brent Pension Fund 2024–25
The Committee received an update on progress in finalising the External Audit Findings Report and the Council's Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2025. Following consideration of the report, the Audit and Standards Committee approved the 2024–25 audit fees and delegated approval of the draft letters of representation to Grant Thornton to the Corporate Director of Finance and Resources. Sign-off of the final Statement of Accounts for 2024–25 was delegated to the Chair of the Audit and Standards Committee, subject to written assurance that all outstanding matters and adjustments in the Audit Findings Report had been addressed and any material adjustments arising from the final Audit

Findings Report being reported back to the Audit and Standards Committee and notified to all members of the Audit and Standards Advisory Committee.

3.2.3 Audit and Standards Advisory Committee – 3 February 2026

a. Member Complaints and Code of Conduct
The report provided the Committee with an update on complaints received under the Members' Code of Conduct during 2025 and the operation of the Council's complaints procedure.

b. Update on the Response to Housing Regulator Findings
The report provided an update on the Council's response to the findings of the Regulator of Social Housing and the improvement activity being undertaken following the Council's C3 regulatory judgement.

c. Artificial Intelligence Strategic Risk
The report provided the Committee with an update on the Council's strategic risk relating to artificial intelligence, including the arrangements in place to manage the associated governance, security and operational risks.

d. Internal Audit Interim Report 2025–26 – Addendum
The report provided additional information requested by the Committee on the ownership and implementation dates of agreed audit actions reported within the Internal Audit Interim Report. It also reinstated the basis of the audit classifications and assurance definitions.

e. External Audit Progress Update
The Committee received an update on progress in finalising the External Audit Findings Report and the Council's Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2025.

3.2.4 Audit and Standards Advisory Committee – 24 March 2026

a. Performance and Management of i4B Holdings Ltd and First Wave Housing Ltd
The report provided the Committee with an update on the performance and management of the Council's housing companies, including delivery against their business plans and the key risks and issues being managed.

b. Procurement Strategy Progress Review
The report provided an update on progress in strengthening the Council's procurement arrangements, including the delivery of improvement actions and the development of the Procurement Strategy 2026–2030.

c. Review of the Use of Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act Powers
The report provided the Committee with its annual update on the Council's use of powers under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act and associated investigatory legislation.

d. Annual Standards and Governance Report for 2025
The report provided an update on Member conduct issues, gifts and hospitality registered by Members, Member training and the work undertaken on standards and governance matters during 2025.

e. Internal Audit Plan 2026–27 and Internal Audit Strategy 2024–27 Year 2 Review
The report presented the proposed Internal Audit Plan for 2026–27 and provided an assessment of progress made during the second year of the Internal Audit Strategy 2024–27.

f. External Audit Update Report
The Committee received an update from the Council's external auditors on external audit activity and relevant developments across the local government sector.

g. Audit Findings Report for the London Borough of Brent 2024–25
The Committee received the final Audit Findings Report relating to the audit of the Council's financial statements for 2024–25.

h. Evaluating the Effectiveness of the Audit and Standards Advisory Committee 2025–26
The Committee reviewed the outcome of its annual self-assessment and considered opportunities to strengthen its effectiveness and future work programme.

3.2.5 Audit and Standards Advisory Committee – 16 June 2026

a. Annual Standards Report for 2025
The report provided an update on Member conduct issues and the work of the Monitoring Officer during 2025. It also included updates on gifts and hospitality, Member training and a proposed amendment to the Members' Code of Conduct Complaints Procedure.

b. Internal Audit Annual Report 2025–26, including the Annual Head of Internal Audit Opinion
The report summarised Internal Audit activity during 2025–26, including delivery of the Internal Audit Plan, key findings and the implementation of agreed management actions. It also presented the Head of Internal Audit's annual opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's governance, risk management and control arrangements.

c. Annual Counter Fraud Report 2025–26
The report summarised proactive and reactive counter-fraud activity undertaken during 2025–26 and provided assurance on the arrangements in place to prevent, detect and respond to fraud.

d. Chair's Annual Report 2025–26

The Committee received the Chair's independent annual report covering the work of the Audit and Standards Advisory Committee and the Audit and Standards Committee during the 2025–26 municipal year.

e. Annual Governance Statement 2025–26
The report presented the draft Annual Governance Statement for 2025–26 and summarised the outcome of the annual review of the effectiveness of the Council's governance framework and system of internal control. Following consideration and comment by the Audit and Standards Advisory Committee the Annual Governance Statement was subsequently approved by the Audit and Standards Committee,

3.2.6 Audit and Standards Advisory Committee – 27 July 2026

a. Standards Update Report, including Gifts and Hospitality
The report provided an update on gifts and hospitality registered by Members during the first quarter of 2026–27 and on the delivery of Member training.

b. Emergency Preparedness Report
The report provided an update on the work and priorities of the Emergency Planning team since July 2025, including emergency preparedness, resilience and business continuity arrangements.

c. Treasury Management Outturn Report 2025–26
The report set out the outturn for the Council's treasury management activities during 2025–26, including borrowing and investment decisions, prevailing economic conditions and treasury performance.

d. Update on the Statement of Accounts and External Audit Progress Report
The report provided an update on progress towards completing the annual Statement of Accounts, together with an update from the Council's external auditors on developments relevant to Brent.

3.2.7 Forward Plan Items

The next meeting of the Audit and Standards Advisory Committee is scheduled for 23 September 2026. Based on the draft 2026–27 Forward Plan and Work Programme, the following items are currently scheduled for consideration:

- External Audit Progress Report
- Performance and Management of i4B Holdings Ltd and First Wave Housing Ltd
- Treasury Management Strategy
- Strategic Risk Register Update

4.0 Stakeholder and ward member consultation and engagement

4.1 None.

5.0 Financial Considerations

5.1 The report is for noting and so there are no direct financial implications.

6.0 Legal Considerations

6.1 The report is for noting and there are no direct legal implications.

7.0 Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Considerations

7.1 None.

8.0 Climate Change and Environmental Considerations

8.1 None

9.0 Human Resources/Property Considerations (if appropriate)

9.1 None

10.0 Communication Considerations

10.1 None

Report sign off:

Minesh Patel
Corporate Director of Finance and Resources

Brent	**Cabinet** 7 September 2026 **Full Council** 14 September 2026
	Report from the Corporate Director, Finance and Resources
	Lead Cabinet Member – Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources (Councillor Gwen Grahl)

Treasury Management Outturn 2025-26

Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	Key Decision
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:	Four: Appendix 1: Economic Commentary Appendix 2: Debt and Investments Portfolio Appendix 3: Average Rate vs Credit Risk Appendix 4: Prudential Indicators
Background Papers:	None
Contact Officer(s): (Name, Title, Contact Details)	Karima Mbarak, Senior Finance Analyst Capital, Treasury & Commercial Email: Karima.mbarak@brent.gov.uk Tel: 020 8937 1192 Oliver Simms Head of Finance (Capital, Treasury and Commercial) Capital, Treasury & Commercial Email: Oliver.Simms@brent.gov.uk Tel: 020 8937 1679

1.0 Executive Summary

1.1 This report presents the outturn for the Council's Treasury Management activities for 2025/26. The Council undertakes its treasury management activities in accordance with the CIPFA Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice, as required under the Local Government Act 2003 and associated Regulations. Regular reporting to the relevant Committee forms part of this framework and supports transparency, accountability and prudent financial management.

1.2 This report updates Members on both the borrowing and investment decisions made by the Corporate Director, Finance and Resources under delegated authority and considers the Council's Treasury Management performance. The Council can only borrow for capital investment, it cannot borrow to fund operational, day to day expenditure. The borrowing supports the Council's capital investment programmes for both Council Housing (HRA) and General Fund.

1.3 Key emerging points are as follows:

- The Council has complied with its Prudential Indicators for 2025/26.

- Borrowing at 31 March 2026 was £1,074.0m an increase of £174.0m compared to 31 March 2025.

- Cash Investments at 31 March 2026 was £43.8m, a decrease of £3.5m compared to £47.3m at 31 March 2025.

- The Council's Capital Financing Requirement (CFR), representing the underlying need to borrow, increased by £58.5m to £1,412.3m.

- The average rate for the Council's total borrowing was 3.9% as at 31 March 2026, an increase from 3.85% at 31 March 2025, caused by high interest rates.

- The Council's rate of return on cash investments decreased during the year from 4.53% (31 March 2025) to 3.81% (31 March 2026).

- Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) charge (excluding PFI/Leases) to the General Fund for 2025/26 was £16.5m.

2.0 Recommendation(s)

2.1 Full Council is asked to note and approve, following its consideration by Audit & Standards Advisory Committee (27 July 2026) and Cabinet (7 September 2026), the 2025-26 Treasury Management Outturn report in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice.

3.0 Detail

3.1 **Cabinet Member Foreword and Contribution to the Borough Plan and Strategic Priorities**

3.1.1 Effective treasury management is a key component of the Council's overall financial strategy. Through regular reporting, Members are able to scrutinise borrowing and investment decisions and ensure that they continue to support the Council's priorities while maintaining a prudent approach to risk and affordability. The Council has once again operated within its approved prudential indicators and in accordance with the CIPFA Treasury Management Code.

3.1.2 During 2025/26, the Council continued to borrow to support the delivery of its ambitious capital programme, investing in projects that provide long-term benefits for Brent residents. This includes investment in new and affordable homes, regeneration schemes, infrastructure and other assets that support economic growth and help improve outcomes for local communities. Such investment is essential if we are to meet growing demand for housing and deliver on our Borough Plan priorities.

3.1.3 We recognise that increasing levels of borrowing bring additional financial pressures and exposure to risks associated with higher interest rates and the wider economic environment. However, borrowing decisions are taken carefully and only where they support the Council's statutory functions and long-term investment objectives. Throughout the year, the Council has continued to take a prudent and measured approach to managing its debt portfolio while ensuring funding is available to deliver key priorities for residents.

3.1.4 While the financial challenges facing local government remain significant, I am reassured by the strong financial management and treasury expertise demonstrated by our finance teams. I would like to thank colleagues across the Finance service for their continued hard work and diligence in managing the Council's resources and supporting sound financial decision-making across the organisation. However, effective financial management is not solely the responsibility of the Finance team. Every member of staff has a role to play in ensuring that the Council's resources are managed effectively, that value for money is achieved and that every pound spent supports better outcomes for Brent residents. Together, this collective commitment will help ensure the Council remains on a sustainable financial footing while continuing to invest in the future of our borough.

3.1.5 This report demonstrates that, despite a challenging economic environment, the Council has continued to manage its treasury activities responsibly and prudently. By balancing the need to invest in Brent's future with the need to protect the Council's long-term financial sustainability, we are ensuring that investment today delivers lasting benefits for current and future generations of residents.

3.1.6 The regular reporting of treasury management activities assists Members to scrutinise officer decisions and monitor progress on the implementation of the borrowing and investment strategy approved by Full Council. Effective governance and scrutiny of treasury management activities supports achievement of the borough plan as it reduces risk and controls costs ensuring resources are available to deliver the Council's priorities.

3.1.7 Treasury management plays a key role in the delivery of the Council's ambitious Capital programme as it ensures funds are available and borrowing is affordable. The Capital Programme represents the Council's strategic investment designed to address key Council priorities, from improving the public realm to investing in affordable housing.

3.1.8 The Council's treasury management activity is underpinned by the CIPFA Code, which requires authorities to produce annually Prudential Indicators and a Treasury Management Strategy Statement on the likely financing and investment activity.

3.2 **Background**

3.2.1 The Council borrows money over the long term to support investment in the Council's ambitious capital programme and invests cash balances held for short periods. It is therefore exposed to financial risks including the loss of invested funds, insufficient cash balances to meet payment obligations, and the revenue impact of changing interest rates. The successful identification, monitoring and control of risk are central to the Council's treasury management strategy.

3.2.2 In line with the CIPFA Code, the Council approves three key Treasury Report:

- Treasury Management Strategy (approved alongside the budget) for the upcoming year;
- Mid-year Treasury Outturn Report which provides a half-year update on Treasury Performance; and
- Treasury Management Outturn Report which updates Members on the full years activity and Treasury performance

3.2.3 The 2021 Prudential Code includes a requirement for local authorities to provide a Capital Strategy, a summary document approved by full Council covering capital expenditure and financing, treasury management and non-treasury investments. The Council's Capital Strategy and Treasury Management Strategy were approved by full Council at a Budget and Council Tax Setting Council meeting on 10 February 2025.

3.3 **Economic Background**

3.3.1 Appendix 1 provides a full and detailed economic commentary for the financial year

3.3.2 UK annual Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation generally eased during the year but remained above the Bank of England's 2% target. The US/Israel-Iran conflict increased inflationary risks through higher oil and commodity prices.

3.3.3 The Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) Bank Rate at the start of the financial year was 4.5% and at the end of the year was 3.75% . It has been held at this level since due to uncertainty following escalating geopolitical tensions.

3.3.4 Credit conditions remained resilient despite market volatility. Arlingclose, the Council's Treasury Advisors, maintained their recommended counterparty duration limits, with the Authority continuing to invest within approved credit risk parameters.

3.4 Local Context

3.4.1 At 31 March 2026, the Council had a net borrowing position of £1,030.3m. The underlying need to borrow for capital purposes is measured by the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR). This is the amount of the Capital Programme, past and present, that is funded by borrowing. Alternatively, the Capital Programme can be funded by internal borrowing. Internal borrowing is the use of an authority's own cash resources, such as revenue balances, reserves, and earmarked funds (including General Fund balances and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) receipts), to temporarily finance capital expenditure instead of taking out external borrowing. Internal borrowing reduces interest costs in the short-term because it reduces the need to finance the capital programme through borrowing. Balance sheet resources are the underlying resources available for investment. These factors are summarised in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Balance Sheet Summary

	31-Mar-25 Actual £m	**31-Mar-26 Actual £m**
General Fund CFR	1,010.5	1,044.0
HRA CFR	343.3	368.3
Loan CFR (excluding PFI and leases)	**1,353.8**	**1,412.3**
PFI & Lease Liabilities	70.6	61.7
Total Loan CFR	**1,424.4**	**1,474.0**

	31-Mar-25 Actual £m	**31-Mar-26 Actual £m**
External borrowing (Excluding accrued interest and PFI/Leases) *	900.0	1,074.1
Investments (or new borrowing)	47.3	43.8
Net borrowing (borrowing less investments)	**852.7**	**1,030.3**

	31-Mar-25	31-Mar-26
	Actual	**Actual**
	£m	**£m**
Loan CFR (excluding PFI and leases)	1,353.8	1,412.3
External borrowing (Excluding accrued interest and PFI/Leases) *	900.0	1,074.1
Internal Borrowing (Loans CFR less external borrowing)	**453.8**	**338.2**

3.4.2 The General Fund CFR was reduced by £16.5m following the application of Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) charges excluding PFI/Leases. MRP is a prudent charge to revenue for the repayment of borrowing in the General Fund. When we charge MRP, we are effectively setting aside money from the revenue budget to repay part of that borrowing need. This reduces our underlying need to borrow, so the CFR reduces as well.

3.4.3 The Housing Revenue Account is a ringfenced account to record income and expenditure related to social housing. As permitted by regulations, the Council appropriates HRA land to the General Fund for the purposes of regeneration and development. During the year, several completed housing schemes appropriated from the General Fund to the HRA. In total, assets with a certified value of £30.0m were appropriated from the General Fund to the HRA and the respective CFRs were adjusted.

3.4.4 The movement in the Loan CFR of £58.5m between 31 March 2025 and 31 March 2026 is shown in table 2 below.

3.4.5 The Council's net borrowing position (less investments) increased from £852.7m to £1,030.3m. The Council's external borrowing as 31 March 2026 £1,074.1m excluding £61.7m PFI and Leases and was within the Prudential Indicator for external borrowing. Actual loan CFR as at 31 March 2026 stood at £1,412.3m. This can be split between the General Fund (£1,044.0m) and the HRA (£368.3m). The difference between the Loan CFR and external loans is internal borrowing. Internal borrowing occurs due to timing differences when capital expenditure that is meant to be financed through external debt is instead paid for through cash resources that are intended for other purposes. Cash is replenished later. The Council's borrowing position is further discussed later in the report in the borrowing section.

3.4.6 In addition, working capital increased from £89.6m at 31 March 2025 to £159.2m at 31 March 2026, primarily due to a £70m increase in debtors during the year. This was partially offset by a £10m reduction in creditors, resulting in an overall increase in net working capital. Working capital represents the difference between current assets and current liabilities and is an important indicator of the Council's short-term liquidity position. An increase in working capital generally reflects a higher level of resources due to the Council relative to obligations falling due in the short term. While these balances are expected to convert into cash in due course, the timing of receipt can influence the Council's cash flow and treasury management activities, including the level of investments held and the need for short-term borrowing. As such, movements in working capital are an important consideration in managing the Council's day-to-day liquidity.

Table 2: Movement in CFR

Movement in CFR	£m
Opening Loan CFR 1 April 2025	1,353.8
Closing Loan CFR 31 March 2026	1,412.3
Change in Loan CFR	**58.5**
Capital expenditure 2025/26	209.9
Capital expenditure Financing	(108.8)
MRP	(16.5)
Service Loans Repaid	0.0
Accounting adjustments (PFI/Leases)	(26.1)
Total Movements in CFR	**58.5**

3.4.7 The treasury management position at 31st March 2026 and the change during the year is shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Treasury Management Summary

	31-Mar-25 Actual	**Movement**	**31-Mar-26 Actual**
	£m	**£m**	**£m**
Short-term Borrowing	130.4	21.8	152.2
Long-term Borrowing	769.6	152.2	921.9
Total External Debt	**900.0**	**174.1**	**1,074.1**
Money Market Funds	47.3	(3.5)	43.8
Local Authority Cash Investments	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total Cash Investments	**47.3**	**(3.5)**	**43.8**
Net Debt	**852.7**	**177.6**	**1,030.3**

3.4.8 Borrowing increased during 2025/26 to support the Council’s long-term capital investment programme as internal cash resources continued to be utilised. The additional borrowing requirement was driven by the delivery of the capital programme where expenditure was not funded through grants, contributions, capital receipts or reserves. New borrowing was undertaken throughout the year in line with the Council’s treasury management strategy, adopting a "little and often" approach to manage exposure to continued interest rate volatility. Although market interest rates remained volatile during the year, this approach enabled the Council to secure funding as required while managing borrowing costs and ensuring sufficient liquidity to support the delivery of the capital programme. More detail on borrowing is provided in section 3.5 onwards.

3.4.9 Cash investments decreased over the year following the repayment of maturing debt and ongoing investment in the Council's capital programme. Although the Council's working capital increased during 2025/26, this was primarily driven by higher year-end debtor balances rather than additional cash resources. As a result, the increase in working capital did not translate into higher cash available for investment, with cash balances continuing to be utilised to support the capital programme and debt repayments.

3.4.10 Appendix 2 details the debt and investment portfolio as at 31 March 2026.

3.5 **Borrowing Strategy and Activity**

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

3.5.2 Gilt yields slightly decreased over most of the period; reflecting expectations of lower interest rates, limited economic growth and, to some extent, an improvement in the UK governments fiscal position following tax rises in the autumn budget. Subsequent to the war in the Middle East however, gilt yields rose rapidly.

3.5.3 The PWLB certainty rate for 10-year maturity loans was 5.38% at the beginning of the period and 5.72% at the end. Rates for 50-year maturity loans ranged from 5.46% to 6.24%. The cost of short-term borrowing from other local authorities has been a little above Base Rate for most of the period, with interest rates between 4.0% and 4.5%. However, as is commonly seen due to high demand level, rates on inter-authority borrowing rose higher towards the end of the financial year to rates of over 5.0%.

3.5.4 The average interest rate on the Council's external borrowing increased marginally from 3.85% at 31 March 2025 to 3.90% at 31 March 2026. This was primarily due to the Council undertaking new borrowing to finance its capital programme. Whilst interest rates fell during the year, the rates available for new PWLB borrowing remained higher than the average rate payable across the Council's existing debt portfolio. Consequently, the addition of new borrowing increased the overall weighted average cost of debt, albeit only marginally. The table below shows the interest rate changes in Bank rate and PWLB rates between financial year ends provided by Arlingclose.

Table 4: Interest rate changes

Interest rate changes	**31-Mar-25**	**31-Mar-26**
Bank Rate	4.5%	3.8%
1-year PWLB certainty rate, maturity loans	4.8%	5.0%

5-year PWLB certainty rate, maturity loans	4.9%	5.3%
10-year PWLB certainty rate, maturity loans	5.4%	5.7%
20-year PWLB certainty rate, maturity loans	5.9%	6.2%
50-year PWLB certainty rate, maturity loans	5.6%	6.1%

3.5.5 The CIPFA code of practice (2025/26) defines the Housing Revenue Account as statutory obligation to maintain a revenue account for local authority housing provision in accordance with Part 6 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 (England and Wales) (Section 3.5.11 of the Code). The PWLB currently provide a discounted a rate for new HRA loans.

3.5.6 The PWLB HRA rate which is 0.4% below the certainty rate is available up to March 2027. This discounted rate is to support local authorities borrowing for the HRA and for refinancing existing HRA loans. In 2025/26, the Council did not take out any new HRA loans. However, the Council will continue to monitor the opportunity to do so in line with the treasury management strategy and the council's HRA business plan and objectives.

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

3.5.8 The Council held loans of £1,074.1m as at 31 March 2026, an increase of £174.1m in year. Table 6 provides the breakdown of loan balances.

Table 5: Borrowing Position

Loan Type	**01-Apr-25**	**New Loans**	**Repaid loans**	**31-Mar-26**
	£m	**£m**	**£m**	**£m**
PWLB	675.5	230.0	(31.0)	874.5
LOBO	59.5	0.0	(20.0)	39.5
Banks & Pension Funds	95.0	0.0	0.0	95.0
Local Authority	70.0	65.0	(70.0)	65.0
Total Debt Outstanding	**900.0**	**295.0**	**(121.0)**	**1,074.1**

3.5.9 External borrowing increased from £900.0m to £1,074.1m during the year, reflecting the raising of £295.0m of new loans and the repayment of £121.0m of existing debt. Of the new borrowing undertaken, £230.0m was raised from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) on an Equal Instalment Principal (EIP) basis to support the Council's approved capital programme. EIP borrowing was preferred as it provides a structured repayment profile, with debt reducing progressively over the life of the loan, helping to manage the Council's long-term borrowing requirement and limiting future refinancing risk. No maturity (MAT) loans were raised during the year. Whilst MAT loans defer principal repayment until the end of the loan term, prevailing rates remained relatively high and would have locked the Council into higher long-term borrowing costs. The use of EIP borrowing therefore provided a more balanced approach, supporting capital investment while managing both financing costs and future debt repayment obligations.

3.5.10 In addition, £65.0m of short-term loans were raised from local authorities as part of the Council's treasury management strategy. Maintaining a proportion of borrowing on a short-term basis provides flexibility in managing cash flow requirements and the debt portfolio, while benefiting from lower borrowing rates than those available on longer-term loans. This approach helps balance cost and risk within the overall borrowing strategy. Local authority loans were raised at an average rate of 4.4% with an average duration of 365 days.

3.5.11 **Loan Restructuring:** No loans were restructured during 2025/26. The Council will continue to monitor and evaluate the opportunity to reschedule existing loans.

3.5.12 **LOBO Loans:** LOBO loans give the lender the option of increasing rates at a specified date and the Council the option to either accept the increased rate or repay the loan without penalty. As at 31 March 2026 the Council was holding £39.5m of LOBO loans. The Council repaid two LOBO loans in 2025/26 after the lender exercised their option. As a result, the Council's borrowing requirement increased, with the additional financing being met through borrowing from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) during the year within our overall borrowing need. The table below shows further information on the 2 LOBO loans repaid in 2025/26.

Table 6: LOBO Loans repaid:

LOBO loans repaid 2025/26	Amount	Rate	Original Maturity	LOBO Call date 2025/26	New rate proposed	Action taken by Authority
	£m	%				
Loan 1 - Dexia	10.0	4.1%	19/05/2055	19/05/2025	6.41%	Repaid
Loan 2 - Dexia	10.0	5.2%	26/02/2066	27/02/2025	6.24%	Repaid

3.5.13 The authority has one LOBO loan totalling £9.5m that is due for an interest rate review in 2026/27. The Authority has liaised with our treasury management advisors Arlingclose over the likelihood of the options being exercised. If the option is exercised, the Council will undertake an analysis, in consultation with Arlingclose, over whether to repay the loan with available cash or further borrowing or accept the higher interest rates.

3.5.14 **Forward Borrowing:** There were no forward agreed loans as at 31 March 2026.

3.5.15 **Other loans:** The council has explored further opportunity to mitigate against interest rate risk. In early 2026/27, the GLA's Green Finance Fund approved a £12.0m loan at reduced interest rates to support the financing of the South Kilburn District Heat Network.

3.5.16 **Maturity Profile of Debt**

3.5.17 The table below shows the maturity profile for the Council's debt at 31 March 2026.

Table 7: Debt maturity profile

Maturity Profile at 31 March 2026 (£m)	**2025/26**	**Proportion as a percentage %**
<1 Year	152.1	14.2%
1-2 Years	114.8	10.7%
2-5 years	106.7	9.9%
5-10 Years	191.1	17.8%
10-20 Years	93.8	8.7%
20-30 Years	198.3	18.5%
30-40 Years	112.3	10.5%
40+ Years	105.1	9.8%
Total Debt	**1,074.1**	**100.0%**

3.5.18 The Councils average debt pool rate at 31 March 2026 was 3.9%. Further detail is shown in Appendix 2.

3.6 Treasury Management Investment Activity

3.6.1 **Investment Activity**

3.6.2 The CIPFA Treasury Management Code now defines treasury management investments as those investments which arise from the Authority's cash flows or treasury risk management activity that ultimately represents balances that need to be invested until the cash is required for use in the course of business. The Council holds invested funds, representing income received in advance of expenditure plus balances and reserves. Cash balances as at 31 March 2026 was £43.8m held primarily in liquid money market funds. The treasury investment position is shown in table 7 below.

Table 8: Treasury investment position

Treasury Investment Activity	31-Mar-25	Movement	31-Mar-26
	£m	£m	£m
Money Market Funds	47.3	(3.5)	43.8
Total Cash Investments (Excluding accrued interest)	**47.3**	**(3.5)**	**43.8**

3.6.3 The CIPFA Treasury Management Code requires local authorities to consider their counterparty policies in light of environmental, social and governance (ESG) information. The council makes additional considerations 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.

3.6.4 Both the CIPFA Code and government guidance require the Council to invest its funds prudently, and to have regard to the security and liquidity of its treasury investments before seeking the optimum rate of return, or yield. The Council's objective when investing money is to strike an appropriate balance between risk and return, minimising the risk of incurring losses from defaults and the risk of receiving unsuitably low investment income. As a result, the Council invests in short-term investments with high credit ratings, providing security and liquidity.

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

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

Table 9: Investment benchmarking

	Credit Score	Credit Rating	Bail-in Exposure	Weighted Average Maturity (days)	Rate of Return
31.03.2025	4.88	A+	100%	1	4.53%
31.03.2026	4.85	A+	100%	1	3.80%
Similar Local Authorities*	4.62	A+	80%	192	4.29%
All Local Authorities*	4.60	A+	64%	10	4.46%

*Arlingclose clients only

3.6.7 The Council's investment security remains strong and is broadly comparable with both similar London authorities and the wider group of local authorities advised by Arlingclose. Brent continues to maintain a slightly stronger average credit score (4.85) than both comparable London authorities (4.62) and the wider local authority average (4.60), whilst maintaining an average credit rating of A+. The weighted average maturity of investments remained at 1 day, significantly shorter than comparable London authorities (192 days) and the wider local authority average (10 days). The Council's cash balances naturally fluctuated throughout the year, ranging from £28.0m to £98.5m, reflecting the volatility in the timing of significant cash inflows and outflows. Variations are driven by the receipt of income, such as grants and local taxation, and payments relating to operational services, capital investment and borrowing.

3.6.8 Bail-in exposure is the risk that, if a financial institution experiences financial difficulty, certain liabilities may be written down or converted into equity to absorb losses. For local authorities, this means that investments with institutions subject to the bail-in regime could be at risk if the institution were to fail.

3.6.9 Whilst this highly liquid investment strategy provides maximum flexibility, it also means that 100% of Brent's investments remain subject to bail-in exposure, compared with 80% for similar London authorities and 64% across all Arlingclose local authority clients. Other authorities achieve lower bail-in exposure by diversifying into instruments such as strategic pooled funds, covered bonds and other non- -in investments. Brent's rate of return reduced from 4.53% to 3.80% during the year, reflecting the general decline in short-term investment rates as Bank of England interest rates eased.

3.6.10 Although this return is lower than the benchmark groups (4.29% and 4.46%), it is consistent with the Council's low-risk, highly liquid investment strategy. Although this return is lower than the benchmark groups (4.29% and 4.46%), it is consistent with the Council's low-risk, highly liquid investment strategy. The Council's significant capital programme, coupled with the volatility of daily cash flows and relatively limited surplus cash balances, requires investments to remain readily accessible. Consequently, the Council invests predominantly in same-day access money market funds, in line with the CIPFA Treasury Management Code's requirement to prioritise security and liquidity over yield. As liquidity improves and longer-term surplus cash becomes available, opportunities to diversify into alternative investment products will continue to be kept under review, where this can be achieved without compromising security or liquidity.

3.7 **Non-Treasury Investment Activity**

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

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

3.7.3 The Council held £287.5m in the following service investments as at 31 March 2026:

- Shareholding in subsidiaries: £43.9m (£36.4m in 2024/25).
- Loans to subsidiaries £212.6m (£216.2m in 2024/25).
- £17.1m loans to Schools academies and colleges
- £13.9m loan to West London Waste Authority.

3.7.4 I4B Holdings Limited is a company wholly owned by Brent Council that was incorporated on 16 December 2016. The Company was set up with the purpose of acquiring, letting, and managing a portfolio of affordable, good quality PRS properties. Properties would be let to homeless families at Local Housing Allowance (LHA) levels. This would enable the Council to either prevent or discharge its homelessness duty and therefore reduce TA costs.

3.7.5 As of 31st March 2026, the Council had provided loan financing of £179.2m to i4B (£182.4m in 2024/25) which is secured against the company's properties. In 2025/26, I4B converted £3.2m of working capital facility into shares, constituting a loan repayment. No other loans were repaid in 2025/26 as the loans are arranged on a maturity structure and repayable at the end of the loan term. The Council received £5.3m (£5.3m in 2024/25) in interest for loans to I4B. The loans are secured against the properties held within the company. The Council also holds an equity investment of £43.9m (£36.4m in 2024/25) that comprises of £1 shares. The increase in equity investment is the result of the £3.2m working capital conversion and an additional £4.3m shares that were issued by I4B to Brent in the year.

3.7.6 First Wave Housing (FWH) is a registered provider of social housing in Brent and is wholly owned by Brent Council. FWH's primary purpose is to provide good quality, affordable, secure, and well managed homes to Brent residents and to contribute to Brent's Housing Strategy. It does this by managing, maintaining and improving its stock of 216 rental properties.

3.7.7 As at 31 March 2026, Brent Council had loaned FWH £33.4m (£33.8m in 2024/25),secured against the properties held within the company. The Council received £0.7m in interest for loans to FWH (£0.7m in 2024/25) and a capital repayment of £0.4m (£0.4m in 2024/25). There were no new loans advanced to FWH.

3.7.8 These investments generated £6.0m of income for the Council in 2025/26 (£6.0m in 2024/25). This investment income covers the borrowing cost of investing in housing through wholly owned subsidiaries. These borrowing costs would be incurred by the Council regardless of the method through which the Council develops new housing; however, this is the vehicle of choice for such investments.

3.7.9 Additional information is provided in Appendix 4 for West London Waste Authority and School/Academy service loans.

3.8 Treasury Performance: Capital Financing costs

3.8.1 The Authority measures the financial performance of its treasury management activities both in terms of its impact on the revenue budget and its relationship to benchmark interest rates, as shown in table 10 below.

Table 10: 2025/26 Capital financing Costs

Capital Financing Costs at Q4 2025/26 (£m)	**2025/26 Actual**
Total Interest Payable & Expenses	41.1
Total Interest Receivable	(24.1)
Net Interest	17.0
MRP (Excluding PFI)	16.5
Total Interest & MRP	**33.5**
Total Capital Financing Costs	**33.5**
Transfer to earmarked reserves	5.4
Total outturn	**38.9**
Budgeted costs	**38.9**
Variance	**0.0**
Budgeted rate debt	5.0%
Average rate debt* (full portfolio excluding PFI and Leases)	3.1%
Average rate investments	3.8%

**Additional detail available in Appendix 2*

3.8.2 Treasury performance reflects on capital financing costs which primarily comprises interest payable on borrowing and the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP), which is the statutory charge for the repayment of borrowing used to fund the Council's capital programme. During 2025/26, global economic uncertainty, limited availability of other sources to fund the capital programme and higher interest rates continued to place pressure on borrowing costs and the Council's medium-term financial position.

3.8.3 Forecasting capital financing costs remains complex due to the sensitivity of interest rates, the timing of borrowing, capital programme delivery, grant receipts and capital receipts. The Council's historic portfolio of LOBO loans also adds uncertainty as lenders retain the option to request refinancing under certain conditions.

3.8.4 The Council continues to actively manage these risks through its treasury management strategy by closely monitoring daily and medium-term cash flow requirements and adopting a "little and often" borrowing approach to take advantage of short-term reductions in interest rates and avoid holding cash for longer than necessary. This approach also provides flexibility to respond to changing market conditions and helps minimise overall borrowing costs. While maintaining sufficient funding to support the delivery of the capital programme.

3.9 **Compliance**

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

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

4.0 Stakeholder and Ward Member Consultation and Engagement

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

5.0 Financial Considerations

5.1 The financial implications are noted in the report.

6.0 Legal Considerations

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

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

7.0 Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Considerations

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

8.0 Climate Change and Environmental Considerations

8.1 As part of the Council's Treasury Management Strategy, the Council will ensure an assessment is made with regards to environmental, social and governance (ESG) matters for the council's long-term investments.

9.0 Communication Considerations

9.1 No additional communication strategies are required for this report.

Report sign off:

Minesh Patel
Corporate Director, Finance and Resources

Legal considerations provided by:
Elizabeth Benjamin

Finance considerations provided by:
Amanda Healy

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Appendix 1: Economic Commentary 2025/26

Economic background: The financial year was largely dominated by two periods of significant uncertainty and volatility. The first being the US trade tariff 'Liberation Day' in April 2025 and the second was the US/Israel war with Iran at the end of February 2026.

After the initial fallout from US trade tariffs, the following months saw some improvements as equity markets made gains and bond yields eased modestly. However, in the UK this trend in bond yields reversed somewhat as an uncertain economic outlook together with concerns around the government's fiscal position and autumn Budget saw 'term premia' rise as investors demanded a higher return for holding gilts.

The Budget itself was more muted than had been expected. Despite a weak economic outlook, this helped UK markets perform better with gilt yields trending downwards, inflation easing, and expectations for cuts in Bank of England (BoE) Bank Rate increasing.

The end of February 2026 saw the start of the war between US/Israel and Iran. The conflict caused oil and other commodity prices to rise sharply as the shipping lanes in the region became effectively closed, restricting global oil supply. At the end of the period, the economic outlook remained highly uncertain in terms of its impact on inflation as well as countries' fiscal and monetary policy conditions around the globe.

Prior to the start of the war, headline UK consumer price inflation (CPI) inflation had generally been trending downwards, albeit the 3% in February 2026 was unchanged from January. Core CPI also stayed put at 3.1%. Inflation was expected to fall further over the coming months to the BoE's 2% target, but the war changed this. Inflation is now expected to rise again, but how quickly and by how much depends on the duration of the war and how long commodity prices are elevated.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) reported the UK economy expanded by 0.1% in Q4 2025. This followed previous modest gains of 0.2% in Q2 and by 0.1% in Q3. Of the subsequent monthly figures, the ONS estimated that GDP showed no growth in January 2026. As this is from before the war started the impact on growth will not be seen formally in the data for a couple more months.

While the most recent labour market figures were slightly better than expected, the general trend has been one of persistent weakness. In the three months to January 2026, the unemployment rate rose to 5.2% (from 5.1%), while the employment rate held at 75.1%. Despite inflation being expected to rise in the coming months, labour market conditions remain loose and so any upward pressure on wages from general inflation is likely to be tempered by the weaker labour market environment.

After cutting Bank Rate to 3.75% in December 2025, the BoE's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) voted 5-4 to hold rates in February 2026 and then unanimously to do so again in March. Until the war started, financial markets were expecting Bank Rate to be cut to 3.5% at the March meeting. However, the conflict in the Middle East quickly changed this. The MPC noted the risks to both inflation and growth and indicated they could move rates either up or down depending on the conditions. Financial markets quickly responded to this by pricing in rate hikes.

Following the March MPC meeting, Arlingclose, the authority's treasury adviser, revised its central interest rate view and now predicts Bank Rate will be held at 3.75%. However, the conflict makes the outlook for rates highly uncertain. In the short-term the risks are to the upside with the chance of higher Bank Rate should the MPC decide it wishes to quickly quash potential second-round effects from higher inflation. Further out, if Bank Rate is hiked quickly, the pace and magnitude of subsequent cuts could take it far lower than was previously anticipated as policymakers add significant stimulus to a much weaker economic growth outlook.

The US Federal Reserve had been cutting rates over the period, reducing Fed Funds Rate target range by 0.25% at its December meeting to 3.50%-3.75%. At the three subsequent meetings, the rate was held at the same range. Policymakers noted that while inflation was elevated, economic activity had been expanding but the war with Iran made the path of monetary policy highly uncertain. Despite this, the Fed still suggested that further rate cuts were likely in 2026 and 2027.

The European Central Bank (ECB) has kept its key interest rates on hold since June 2025, maintaining the deposit rate at 2.0% and main refinancing rate at 2.15%. At its March 2026 meeting, the ECB noted the war in the Middle East had significantly increased uncertainty, creating upside risks for inflation and downside risks for growth, leading it to revise up its forecasts accordingly.

Financial markets: After declining sharply early in the financial year following the announcement of US tariffs, sentiment in financial markets had improved but equity and bond markets remained volatile throughout. However, the latter part of the period was dominated by the US/Israel war with Iran, which saw equity markets fall sharply, and bond yields rise as concerns over the inflationary impact from sharply higher oil and other commodity prices outweighed the flight-to-quality into government bonds often seen in conflicts.

Equity markets had been registering gains after the declines during the April sell-off, but the war reversed this and markets saw another sharp drawdown. Both the FTSE 100 and 250 fell by around 10% over the month from the start of the conflict to the end of the financial year.

The period saw significant volatility in gilt yields. The 10-year UK benchmark gilt yield started the year at 4.65% and ended at 4.86%. However, over this time the 10-year yield hit a low of 4.23% and a high of 4.95% in the space of a month. It was a similar picture for the 20-year gilt which started at 5.18% and ended at 5.45% with a low and high of 4.92% and 5.55% respectively. The Sterling Overnight Rate (SONIA) averaged 4.01% over the 12 months to 31st March.

Credit review: Arlingclose maintained its recommended maximum unsecured duration limit on most of the banks on its counterparty list at 6 months. The other banks remain on 100 days.

Earlier in the period, Fitch upgraded NatWest Group and related entities to AA- from A+ and placed Clydesdale Bank's long-term A- rating on Rating Watch Positive. Fitch later upgraded Clydesdale Bank and HSBC, but downgraded Lancashire CC and Close Brothers.

Moody's affirmed OP Corporate's rating at Aa3 In May 2025. Later in the period, Moody's upgraded Transport for London, Allied Irish Banks, Bank of Ireland, Toronto-Dominion Bank, DZ Bank, Nordea and HSBC and downgraded Close Brothers. In the last quarter of 2025 S&P upgraded Clydesdale Bank, Allied Irish Banks and Bank of Ireland, and assigned Warrington Council a BBB+ rating.

After spiking in April 2025 following the US trade tariff announcements, UK credit default swap (CDS) prices had trended down before picking up modestly in October and November. After declining again in December and into the new calendar year, they rose sharply once again when the war in the Middle East started. They were still elevated at the end of the period, but prices for all banks on Arlingclose's counterparty list remained within limits deemed satisfactory for maintaining credit advice at current durations.

Overall, European banks' CDS prices have generally been flatter and lower compared to the UK, as have Singaporean and Australian lenders while some Canadian bank CDS prices have remained elevated since the beginning of the period in part due to ongoing trade tensions with the US.

Financial market volatility is expected to remain, and CDS levels will be monitored for signs of ongoing credit stress. As ever, the institutions and durations on the Authority's counterparty list recommended by Arlingclose remain under constant review.

Appendix 2

Debt and Investment Portfolio 31/03/26

	Actual Portfolio as at 31 March 2026 (£m)	Average Rate as at 31 March 2026
External Borrowing:		
PWLB Maturity Loans	415.9	4.3%
PWLB Equal Instalment Principal Loans	458.6	
Fixed Rate Market Loans	95.0	2.6%
LOBO Loans	39.5	4.4%
Local Authority Loans	65.0	4.4%
Total External Debt	**1,074.0**	
Accrued Interest	10.2	0.0%
Total External Borrowing and Accrued Interest	**1,084.3**	
Other long-term liabilities		
PFI	34.7	3.78%
Finance Leases	6.1	5.38%
Total Long-term Liabilities	**40.7**	
Total Gross External Debt	**1,125.0**	
Investments		
Money Market Funds	43.8	3.8%
Fixed Term Deposits – LA	0.0	0.0%
Total Investments	**43.8**	
Net Debt	**1,081.2**	

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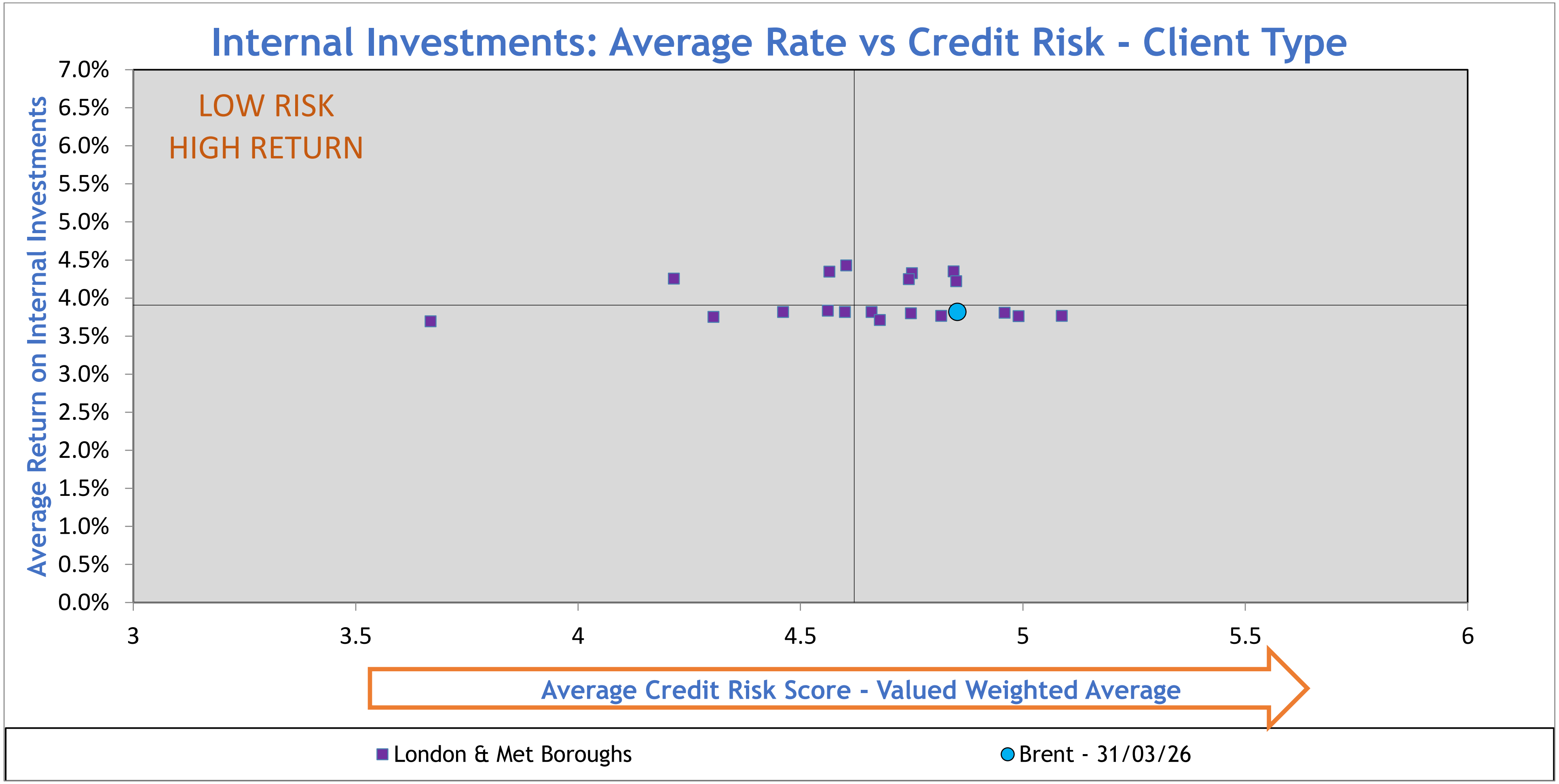
Appendix 3: Internal Investments: Average Rate vs Credit Risk as at 31/03/2026

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



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Appendix Four –2025/26 Outturn Prudential Indicators

Legislative Update

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

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

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

Prudential Indicators

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

Prudential indicators have been calculated using the capital programme data as at quarter four of 2025/26 (Outturn). Revised capital programme budgets at quarter four for future years have been provided.

Capital Expenditure & Financing at Q4 2025/26 (£m)	**2024/25**	**2025/26**	**2026/27**	**2027/28**	**2028/29**	**Total 2024/25 to 2028/29**
	Actual	**Actual**	**Estimated**	**Estimated**	**Estimated**	
Corporate Landlord	11.6	11.9	15.6	12.6	2.7	54.5
Housing GF	71.0	50.1	9.7	21.1	17.5	169.4
Schools	22.1	20.5	29.3	9.3	5.3	86.5
Regeneration	34.6	73.5	92.3	46.5	16.6	263.5
Public Realm	18.0	22.9	10.2	3.7	6.0	60.9
South Kilburn	20.4	12.3	36.8	23.7	11.4	104.6
St Raphael's	0.2	0.4	6.9	12.5	0.0	20.0
Housing HRA	60.9	18.3	88.8	11.6	0.4	180.0

Total Capital Expenditure	**238.8**	**209.9**	**289.5**	**141.1**	**59.9**	**939.2**
Financed By:						
Grants	52.0	65.6	38.3	11.3	6.1	173.4
Section 106	11.9	29.2	37.7	25.4	14.4	118.6
Capital Receipts	17.3	1.2	11.3	34.4	2.1	66.3
Earmarked Reserves	1.2	1.1	4.3	1.0	1.0	8.6
Major Repairs Reserve	16.6	11.2	17.2	0.0	0.0	45.0
Revenue Contributions	11.4	0.5	4.6	1.6	0.6	18.7
Borrowing	128.3	101.1	176.1	67.4	35.8	508.7
Total Capital Financing	**238.8**	**209.9**	**289.5**	**141.1**	**59.9**	**939.2**

(a) Capital Financing Requirement (CFR)

The underlying need to borrow for capital purposes is measured by the Capital Financing Requirement. This is the amount of the Capital Programme that is funded by borrowing. The Council’s maximum external borrowing requirement for 2025/26 is shown in the table below. The indicator is set to ensure that the level of proposed capital expenditure remains within sustainable limits and to consider the impact on Council tax and in the case of the HRA, housing rent levels.

CFR Movement at Q4 2025/26 (£m)	**2024/25 Actual**	**2025/26* Actual**	**2026/27 Estimated**	**2027/28 Estimated**	**2028/29 Estimated**
Opening CFR	**1,254.5**	**1,353.8**	**1,412.3**	**1,570.4**	**1,619.2**
Capital Expenditure	238.8	209.9	289.5	141.1	59.9
External Resources	(63.9)	(94.8)	(76.0)	(36.7)	(20.6)
Internal Resources	(46.5)	(14.0)	(37.4)	(37.0)	(3.6)
MRP	(24.9)	(16.5)	(18.0)	(18.6)	(19.1)
Capital Loans Repaid	(0.8)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Accounting Adjustments	(3.3)	(26.1)	0.0	0.0	0.0
Closing CFR	**1,353.8**	**1,412.3**	**1,570.4**	**1,619.2**	**1,635.8**

**2025/26 draft accounts*

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

(b) Gross Debt and the Capital Financing Requirement

To ensure that over the medium term, debt will only be for a capital purpose, the Council should ensure that debt does not, except in the short term, exceed the total of capital financing requirement in the preceding year plus the estimates of any additional capital financing requirement for the current and next two financial years. This is a key indicator of prudence. The table below shows that the Council expects to comply with this recommendation during 2025/26.

Gross Debt & the Capital Financing Requirement at Q4 2025/26 (£m)	**2024/25**	**2025/26**	**2026/27**	**2027/28**	**2028/29**
	Actual	**Actual**	**Estimated**	**Estimated**	**Estimated**
External Loans	900.0	1,074.1	1,174.0	1,235.2	1,274.6
PFI & Leases	70.6	61.7	60.0	60.0	60.0
Total External Debt Liabilities	**970.6**	**1,135.8**	**1,234.0**	**1,295.2**	**1,334.6**
Internal Borrowing	383.2	276.5	336.5	324.0	301.2
Capital Financing Requirement	**1,353.8**	**1,412.3**	**1,570.4**	**1,619.2**	**1,635.8**

(c) Liability Benchmark

The liability benchmark is an important tool to help establish whether the Council is likely to be a long-term borrower or long-term investor in the future, and so shape its strategic focus and decision making. The liability benchmark itself represents an estimate of the cumulative amount of external borrowing the Council must hold to fund its current capital and revenue plans while keeping treasury investments at the minimum level required to manage day-to-day cash flow.

Liability Benchmark at Q4 2025/26 (£m)	**2024/25**	**2025/26**	**2026/27**	**2027/28**	**2028/29**
	Actual	**Actual**	**Estimated**	**Estimated**	**Estimated**
CFR	**1353.8**	**1412.3**	**1570.4**	**1619.2**	**1635.8**
Less: Balance Sheet Resources	(496.1)	(453.6)	(453.6)	(453.6)	(453.6)
Net Loan Requirement	857.7	958.7	1,116.8	1,165.6	1,182.2
Plus Liquidity Allowance	20.0	20.0	20.0	20.0	20.0
Liability Benchmark	**877.7**	**978.7**	**1,136.8**	**1,185.6**	**1,202.2**

(d) Authorised limit and Operational Boundary for External Debt

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

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

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

Authorised Limit at Q4 2025/26 (£m)	**2024/25**	**2025/26**	**2026/27**	**2027/28**	**2028/29**
Authorised Limit	1,700.0	1,800.0	1,800.0	2,000.0	2,000.0
Operational Boundary	1,500.0	1,600.0	1,600.0	1,800.0	1,800.0

The Corporate Director for Finance and Resources confirms that there were no breaches to the Authorised Limit and the Operational Boundary during Quarter four of 2025/26.

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

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

Upper Limits on one-year revenue impact of a 1% movement in interest rates on Maturing Debt at Q4 2025/26 (£m)	**2025/26**	**2025/26**
	Approved Limit	**Actual**
Upper limit on one-year revenue impact of a 1% rise in interest rates	5.0	0.5
Compliance with limits:		Yes
Upper limit on one-year revenue impact of a 1% fall in interest rates	(5.0)	(0.5)
Compliance with limits:		Yes

(f) Maturity Structure of Fixed Rate Borrowing

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

Maturity Structure of Fixed Rate Borrowing at Q4 2025/26	Upper Limit	Lower limit	2025/26 Actual borrowing at 31.03.2026	Actual borrowing at 31.03.2026	Compliance with limits
	%	%	£m	%	
Under 12 months	40.0%	0.0%	152.1	14.2%	Yes
12 months & within 24 months	40.0%	0.0%	114.8	10.7%	Yes
24 months and within 5 years	40.0%	0.0%	106.7	9.9%	Yes
5 years and within 10 years	60.0%	0.0%	191.1	17.8%	Yes
10 years and within 20 years	75.0%	0.0%	93.8	8.7%	Yes
20 years and within 30 years	75.0%	0.0%	198.3	18.5%	Yes
30 years and within 40 years	75.0%	0.0%	112.3	10.5%	Yes
Over 40 years	75.0%	0.0%	105.1	9.8%	Yes
Total			**1074.1**	**100.0%**	

(g) Ratio of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream

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

Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream at Q4 2025/26	Actual 2024/25	Actual 2025/26	Forecast 2026/27	Forecast 2027/28	Forecast 2028/29
Financing Costs (Interest & MRP) (£m)	41.5	38.9	41.9	41.9	41.9
Net Revenue Stream (£m)	383.3	431.4	501.8	535.2	568.6
Proportion of net revenue stream (%)	10.8%	9.0%	8.3%	7.8%	7.4%

Financing costs can be further broken down as follows.

Capital Financing Costs at Q4 2025/26 (£m)	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
	Actual	**Actual**	**Estimated**	**Estimated**	**Estimated**
Total Interest Payable & Expenses	35.3	41.1	47.7	53.4	52.3
Total Interest Receivable	(17.8)	(24.1)	(25.8)	(31.4)	(31.4)
Net Interest	17.5	17.0	22.0	22.0	20.9
MRP (Excluding PFI)	15.1	16.5	18.0	18.6	19.1
Total Interest & MRP	**32.6**	**33.5**	**40.0**	**40.6**	**40.0**
Revenue Contributions to Capital Programme	8.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Transfer to earmarked reserves	0.0	5.4	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total Capital Financing Costs	**41.5**	**38.9**	**40.0**	**40.6**	**40.0**

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

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

Upper Limit for Total Principal Sums invested over 364 Days at Q4 2025/26 (£m)	2024/25	2024/25	2025/26	2025/26
	Approved	**Actual**	**Approved balance**	**Actual**
Upper Limit for Total Principal Sums Invested Over 364 Days	50.0	0.0	50.0	0.0

(i) Security

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

Credit Risk Indicator at Q4 2025/26	2024/25	2024/25	2025/26	2025/26
	Approved	**Actual**	**Approved**	**Actual**
Portfolio average credit rating	A	A+	A	A+

(j) Liquidity

Liquidity Risk Indicator at Q4 2025/26 (£m)	2024/25	2024/25	2025/26	2025/26
	Approved minimum balance	**Actual**	**Approved minimum balance**	**Actual**
Total cash available within 3 months	20.0	47.3	20.0	43.8

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.

(k) Investment Forecast

This indicator demonstrates the Council's investment exposure broken down by category for Treasury and non-treasury investments. Non-Treasury investments are directed under the Council's Investment Strategy 2025/26, whilst treasury investments are managed under the Treasury Management Strategy 2025/26.

Total Investment Exposure Indicator at Q4 2025/26(£m)	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
	Actual	**Actual**	**Estimated**	**Estimated**	**Estimated**
Treasury management cash investments	47.3	43.8	20.0	20.0	20.0
Loans and Investments for service purposes	252.6	256.5	296.0	295.6	295.1
Service investments other	32.9	31.0	30.4	29.7	28.9
Commercial investments: Property	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total Investments	**332.8**	**331.3**	**346.4**	**345.2**	**344.0**
Commitments to lend	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total Exposure	**332.8**	**331.3**	**346.4**	**345.2**	**344.0**

Service investments are further broken down in the tables below.

Loans & Investments for service purposes: Category of borrower at Q4 2025/26 (£m)	2024/25	2025/26	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
	Actual	**Approved Balance**	**Actual**	**Estimated**	**Estimated**	**Estimated**
i4b Holdings Ltd Subsidiary Loans*	182.4	500.0	179.2	211.2	211.2	211.2

i4b Holdings Ltd Subsidiary Equity**	36.4		43.9	51.9	51.9	51.9
First Wave Housing Ltd Subsidiary Loans	33.8		33.4	32.9	32.5	32.0
Total	**252.6**	**500.0**	**256.5**	**296.0**	**295.6**	**295.1**

Service Investments Other Loans £m at Q4 2025/26 (£m)	2024/25	2025/26	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
	Actual	**Approved Balance**	**Actual**	**Estimated**	**Estimated**	**Estimated**
Local Businesses	0.0	10.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Schools, Academies and Colleges	17.6	55.0	17.1	16.9	16.7	16.4
West London Waste Authority	14.4	20.0	13.9	13.5	13.0	12.5
Local Charities	0.0	10.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Housing Associations	0.0	50.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Local Residents	0.0	5.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total	**32.0**	**150.0**	**31.0**	**30.4**	**29.7**	**28.9**

(l) Investment Funding

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

Investments Funded by Borrowing at Q4 2025/26 (£m)	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
	Actual	**Actual**	**Estimated**	**Estimated**	**Estimated**
I4B Loans	182.4	179.2	211.2	211.2	211.2
I4B Equity	36.4	43.9	51.9	51.9	51.9
First Wave Housing (FWH)	33.8	33.4	32.9	32.5	32.0
Schools, Academies and Colleges	17.6	17.1	16.9	16.7	16.4
West London Waste Authority	14.4	13.9	13.5	13.0	12.5
Total Service investments	**284.6**	**287.5**	**326.4**	**325.2**	**324.0**
Total Funded by Borrowing	**284.6**	**287.5**	**326.4**	**325.2**	**324.0**

(m) Investment Rate of Return

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

Investments net rate of return at Q4 2025/26	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
	Actual	Actual	Estimated	Estimated	Estimated
Treasury management investments	4.53%	3.82%	3.75%	3.75%	3.75%
Service investments	2.40%	2.60%	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%

(n) Other Investment Indicators

Other investment indicators at Q4 2025/26 (£m)	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
	Actual	Actual	Estimated	Estimated	Estimated
External Debt (Loans)	900.0	1,074.1	1,174.0	1,235.2	1,274.6
Net Service Expenditure	387.3	431.4	501.8	535.2	568.6
Debt to net service expenditure ratio	2.3	2.5	2.3	2.3	2.2

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Brent	**Full Council** 14 September 2026
	Report from the Corporate Director of Finance & Resources

Changes to the Constitution

Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	Council
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:	One Appendix 1: Proposed tracked changes relating to Planning Committee reforms
Background Papers:	None
Contact Officer(s): (Name, Title, Contact Details)	Marsha Henry, Director of Law and Monitoring Officer 020 8937 4078 Marsha.Henry@brent.gov.uk

1.0 Executive Summary

1.1. This report proposes constitutional changes to the terms of reference of the Planning Committee (Part 4 of the Constitution), including consequential changes, Full Council meeting standing orders (Part 2 of the Constitution) and the Members' Allowance Scheme (Part 6 of the Constitution).

2.0 Recommendation(s)

2.1 To review and agree the changes to the Constitution set out in this report and Appendix 1.

2.2 To authorise the Director of Law and Monitoring Officer to amend the Constitution accordingly, including making any necessary incidental or consequential changes.

3.0 Detail

3.1 Contribution to the Borough Plan and Strategic Priorities

3.1.1 Ensuring the Constitution is kept up to date and supportive of good governance contributes to the delivery of all the strategic priorities within the Borough Plan by supporting and enhancing the Council's activity.

3.2 Background

3.2.1 A general review of the provisions of the Constitution and its operation is being undertaken on an on-going basis to not only ensure it remains up to date and fit for purpose but also to secure improvements and deliver the objectives of the Council.

3.2.2 The proposals set out in this report have been informed by cross-party discussion at the Constitution Oversight Group (COG). COG is an informal officer/member working group. The political membership of the COG is balanced and it has met twice since the last Full Council meeting.

4.0 Proposals

Planning Committee Reforms

Background

4.1 The Planning and Infrastructure Act 2025 amends the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and allows the Secretary of State to make regulations implementing a National Scheme of Delegation of planning functions. The Town and Country Planning (Discharge of Local Planning Authority Functions) (England) Regulations 2026 (the regulations) are due to come into force on **31 October 2026**.

4.2 The regulations are also supported by statutory guidance, namely, Planning Committees and the National Scheme of Delegation of Planning Functions: Guidance for local planning authorities in England published on 1 June 2026 (the guidance). The council must have regard to the guidance in making and operating arrangements for the delegation of planning decisions and can be accessed via this link: Planning Committees and the National Scheme of Delegation of Planning Functions: Guidance for local planning authorities in England - GOV.UK.

4.3 These reforms will introduce national changes to planning powers, with new rules on which applications must be delegated to officers in all cases and which types of planning applications *may* be referred to the Planning Committee.

Summary of new delegation arrangements

4.4 The regulations set out types of applications where decisions:

4.4.1 **must** be delegated to officers in all cases (these are referred to as any 'Schedule 1 application'); and

4.4.2 are **presumed** to be delegated to officers (these are referred to as any 'Schedule 2 application') **unless**:

- exceptionally, 'the nominated member and nominated officer' **agree** at least one of the criteria in regulation 5(3) is met; **or**
- it is 'an own-interest application' which is an application made by or on behalf of the council, a member or officer of the council (whether or not jointly with any other person) or, in the view of the nominated member and the nominated officer, the council or any of its members or officers has an interest in the application. This could, for example, include an entity owned or controlled (whether wholly or partly) by the council or any of its members or officers; **and**
- the nominated member and nominated officer **agree** they should be referred to a planning committee or sub-committee for determination.

4.5 The regulation 5(3) criteria are as follows:

4.5.1 The application raises a significant planning matter having regard to the development plan and any other material considerations.

4.5.2 The application raises an economic, social or environmental issue of significance to the local area.

4.6 In considering whether to make a referral, the nominated member and nominated officer must have regard to the guidance.

4.7 References to 'the nominated member and nominated officer' include more than one member or officer and allow substitutes to be nominated. According to the guidance:

4.7.1 the nominated officer should be the Chief Planning Officer or equivalent officer who has extensive professional planning experience. However, local planning authorities will also need to ensure they have other senior planning officers who can provide cover if needed to avoid any unnecessary delays in the referral process; and

4.7.2 the nominated member should be the Chair of the Planning Committee. As in the case of nominated officers, the authority will need to ensure there are arrangements in place for other members to cover should the nominated member not be available.

4.8 The regulations state expressly that where an application is to be determined by an officer, "the authority must not make arrangements that limit the officer's discretion as to how to determine that application".

4.9 Where a planning function is not listed in either Schedule 1 or 2, it is for the local planning authority to decide whether it should be delegated to an officer or referred to a committee or sub-committee for a decision as part of its Constitution.

4.10 Under the national scheme of delegation, current practices set out in local authority constitutions, such as the power for ward councillors to require cases to be called in for committee consideration or having trigger points for referral to committee if a certain number of objections is reached, will not be possible. Local authorities are required to amend their constitutions to align with the national scheme of delegation.

4.11 It is for individual local planning authorities to put in place their own arrangements for how the consideration of cases for referral to committee will operate in practice.

4.12 The guidance highlights where local planning authorities anticipate that there may be a significant number of applications which meet the criteria in regulation 5(3) or own-interest applications and which could therefore, be considered for referral to committee, they may wish to put in place a triage system to ensure that the nominated officer and nominated member are not overwhelmed and to avoid any unnecessary delays in planning decision making.

4.13 The guidance sets out as a minimum, the local planning authority should keep a record of the cases the nominated officer and nominated member have considered for referral to committee, the outcome of their consideration and the reasons for their decision. They should report this to the Planning Committee on a regular basis and make it available on their website.

4.14 The tracked changes to the Constitution relating to the Planning Committee reforms are attached as **Appendix 1**.

Size of committees

4.15 The regulations also prescribe that the number of members on a planning committee or sub-committee must not be more than 13. This is a maximum figure and there is no requirement for the council to increase the size of its Planning Committee from 8 members.

Training

4.16 For completeness, Members are advised that section 53 of the Planning and Infrastructure Act 2025 allows the Secretary of State to make regulations regarding the training of, among others, planning committee members. The regulations must provide for the satisfactory completion of the training to be evidenced by a certificate valid for a prescribed period.

4.17 If and when such regulations are made, a member who does not hold a valid certificate will be prohibited from exercising the council’s planning functions.

Full Council meeting standing orders

Appointment of the Mayor and Committee and Sub-Committee Chairs and Vice Chairs

4.18 The appointment of the mayor and committee chairs and vice-chairs is a Full Council function. Whereas, the relevant committee appoints sub-committee chairs and vice chairs. The council's standing orders relating to meetings would benefit from expressly stating the nomination and voting procedure for these appointments as follows:

"SO 27 The Annual Meeting
(a)* Mayor
To elect the Mayor for the following year.

Nominations for the Mayor shall be considered in the order in which they are received by the Deputy Director Democratic & Corporate Governance. Each nomination shall be put to the vote separately. Where a nomination receives a simple majority of the members present and voting, the nominee shall be appointed and no further nominations shall be considered. If a nomination is not approved, the next nomination shall be put to the vote until an appointment is made."

"SO 30(g) Appointments to Committees and Outside Bodies and Appointments of Chairs/Vice Chairs
If necessary, to agree appointments to committees and outside bodies and to agree the appointment or replacement of Chairs and/or Vice Chairs of committees.

Nominations for committee Chairs and/or Vice Chairs shall be considered in the order in which they are received by the Deputy Director Democratic & Corporate Governance. Each nomination shall be put to the vote separately. Where a nomination receives a simple majority of the members present and voting, the nominee shall be appointed, and no further nominations shall be considered. If a nomination is not approved, the next nomination shall be put to the vote until an appointment is made."

"SO 49 Appointments to and chairs of Council Committees and Sub-Committees
…
Nominations for sub-committee Chairs and/or Vice Chairs shall be considered in the order in which they are received by the Deputy Director Democratic & Corporate Governance. Each nomination shall be put to the vote separately. Where a nomination receives a simple majority of the members present and voting, the nominee shall be appointed and no further nominations shall be considered. If a nomination is not approved, the next nomination shall be put to the vote until an appointment is made."

Council tax debate

4.19 SO 28(d) states that: *"The Chair of the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee shall be allowed up to 10 minutes to present the findings of the committee. A procedural motion shall address the right to speak of the Group Leaders and the Lead Member for Resources including time limits. There will then be [a] general debate. Provision shall also be made in the procedural* *motion for the Leader of the Council to have the right to make closing remarks with a time limit specified. Following which a vote will be taken."*

4.20 It is recommended that the Council Tax Setting debate rules be codified in standing orders in the interests of transparency, consistency and certainty. It is proposed therefore that the above be replaced with the following*:*

"The debate on the budget and council tax proposals shall proceed as follows:

(i) *the Leader of the Council may move the report and speak for up to 15 minutes;*

(ii) *the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources may speak for up to 10 minutes;*

(iii) *the Leader of the Principal Opposition Group may respond to the report and, where applicable, move an amendment or alternative budget proposals and speak for up to 5 minutes;*

(iv) *the Leader of each other political group may respond to the report and, where applicable, move an amendment or alternative budget proposals and speak for up to 5 minutes;*

(v) *the Chair of the Budget Scrutiny Task Group may speak for up to 5 minutes;*

(vi) *there shall then be a general debate during which the rules in standing order 42 shall apply; and*

(vii) *at the conclusion of the debate the Leader of the Council shall have a right of reply and may speak for up to 5 minutes before the vote is taken. Amendments or alternative budget proposals will be taken en bloc in the order set out in (ii) and (iii) of this paragraph before a final vote on the substantive budget proposals."*

Remuneration of the Independent Chair of Audit and Standards Advisory Committee

Summary

4.21 It is proposed that the Members' Allowance Scheme (in Part 6 of the Constitution) be amended so that the remuneration payable to the Independent Chair of the Audit and Standards Advisory Committee be increased from £1,561pa to £5,332pa.

4.22 The proposed allowance aligns the remuneration of the Independent Chair with the existing Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) paid to the Chair of the Audit and Standards Committee, recognising the strategic importance, responsibility, independence and time commitment associated with leading the Council's principal governance, audit, risk and standards forum.

4.23 The current Independent Chair has indicated an intention to step down following the December Committee meeting, following a successful period in office, creating the need to recruit a successor.

4.24 If approved, the increased allowance will take effect when a new Independent Chair is appointed.

Background

4.25 The council has operated a distinctive governance model for a number of years which includes the appointment of an Independent Chair to lead the Audit and Standards Advisory Committee.

4.26 This approach goes beyond minimum statutory requirements and reflects the council's commitment to strong governance, independent assurance and good decision-making.

4.27 The Committee plays a key role within the council's governance framework, providing independent scrutiny and challenge in relation to:

- Audit activity and assurance
- Risk management
- Internal control
- Financial governance
- Corporate governance arrangements
- Standards and ethical conduct

4.28 The Constitution describes the Audit and Standards Advisory Committee as the body responsible for considering and advising on governance matters relating to audit activity, the council's regulatory framework and members' standards of conduct. The Committee also includes independent co-opted members, reflecting the council's long-standing commitment to independent oversight. The Constitution specifically provides for the appointment of up to five independent voting co-opted members to the Committee.

4.29 The council's arrangements are therefore more extensive than those found in many authorities and represent an established commitment to governance best practice.

Importance of Independent Leadership of Audit Committees

4.30 Over recent years there has been increasing national focus on the effectiveness of local authority audit committees following a series of high-profile governance and financial failures across the sector.

4.31 CIPFA identifies audit committees as a key component of an authority's governance framework, providing an independent and high-level focus on the adequacy of governance, risk management and control arrangements. Audit committees provide assurance to those charged with governance and help strengthen public confidence in an authority's governance arrangements.

4.32 The CIPFA Position Statement and accompanying Practical Guidance emphasise the value of independent voices within audit committees and recommend the inclusion of independent members to strengthen expertise, objectivity and challenge. Independent members help:

- Reinforce independence and objectivity.
- Provide continuity outside electoral and political cycles.
- Bring specialist governance, audit and financial expertise.
- Promote a non-political focus on governance, risk and control matters.
- Strengthen challenge and oversight of financial management and assurance arrangements.

4.33 These principles are also consistent with the recommendations arising from the Redmond Review and the subsequent strengthening of audit committee expectations across local government. Government has encouraged authorities to align their arrangements with CIPFA's guidance as sector best practice.

4.34 Whilst CIPFA's guidance specifically focuses on independent members, the rationale applies even more strongly to an independent chairing arrangement. An independent chair can provide:

- Visible independence from party political interests.
- Enhanced public confidence in governance arrangements.
- Objective leadership of discussions.
- Constructive challenge to officers, auditors and members alike.
- Stability and continuity over a number of municipal cycles.

4.35 In an environment of increasing financial complexity, heightened regulatory scrutiny and growing governance expectations, the role of an Independent Chair has become increasingly important.

Brent's Current Arrangements and Successes

4.36 The council has benefited significantly from the leadership and expertise provided by its current Independent Chair over a number of years.

4.37 During this period the Committee has helped the council navigate:

- Significant financial pressures affecting the local government sector.
- External audit delays and national issues affecting local audit.
- Implementation of the CIPFA Financial Management Code.
- Ongoing governance and risk management developments.
- Standards and member conduct matters.
- Increasing scrutiny of local authority financial resilience.

4.38 The Committee's annual reporting to Full Council has consistently highlighted the importance of effective governance, risk management and financial oversight in supporting organisational resilience and long-term sustainability.

4.39 The effectiveness of the existing arrangements has been widely recognised internally and has contributed positively to the Council's overall governance framework.

4.40 The current Independent Chair has indicated an intention to step down following the December Committee meeting, following a successful period in office, creating the need to recruit a successor.

4.41 This presents an opportunity to review the remuneration attached to the role to ensure it remains attractive and proportionate to the responsibilities involved.

Future Importance of the Role

4.42 Looking ahead, the Council faces a range of significant challenges including:

- Continued pressure on local government finances.
- Greater expectations around financial resilience and sustainability.
- Evolving audit and assurance requirements.
- Increased public scrutiny of governance arrangements.
- Rising expectations regarding standards and ethical leadership.

4.43 In this context it is important that the council continues to benefit from strong, independent leadership of its Audit and Standards Advisory Committee.

4.44 Maintaining an independent chairing arrangement helps ensure the Committee can continue to operate in a balanced and non-political manner while providing robust support and challenge to both officers and members.

4.45 An effective Independent Chair can also assist the Council in maintaining credibility with:

- External auditors.
- Regulators and inspectorates.
- Residents and stakeholders.
- Members across all political groups.

4.46 The role therefore represents an important investment in good governance rather than simply a committee appointment.

Benchmarking and Market Considerations

4.47 The market for suitably qualified independent audit, governance and assurance professionals is becoming increasingly competitive. Whilst the council's decision to appoint an Independent Chair remains ahead of current practice in many authorities, the direction of travel across local government is towards greater independent oversight of audit and governance arrangements. This is expected to increase demand for individuals with significant expertise in governance, audit, finance, risk management and regulatory assurance.

4.48 Remuneration arrangements vary considerably across the sector, reflecting differences in role scope and responsibility. Recent examples include Hillingdon Council, which has advertised an Independent Chair of its Audit, Finance and Performance Committee at £24,318 per annum, and Croydon Council, which pays £8,200 per annum for Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee. These examples demonstrate the increasing value being placed on independent governance roles and the need for councils to remain competitive when seeking to attract suitably experienced candidates.

4.49 Against this backdrop, the proposed allowance of £5,332 represents a proportionate and balanced approach. It:

- Reflects the significance of the role and its responsibilities.
- Recognises the level of professional expertise required.
- Supports the recruitment and retention of appropriately qualified individuals.
- Remains modest when compared with remuneration levels being offered elsewhere in the sector.

4.50 Importantly, the proposal does not create a new remuneration benchmark within the council. Rather, it aligns the Independent Chair allowance with the SRA already paid to the Chair of the Audit and Standards Committee, providing greater consistency between the two roles while recognising the value of independent challenge and oversight.

5.0 Stakeholder and ward member consultation and engagement

5.1 The proposed changes have been considered by the Constitution Oversight Group.

6.0 Financial Considerations

6.1 The financial issues are addressed in the body of the report. The proposed change to the Members' Allowance Scheme remains within the budget set.

7.0 Legal Considerations

7.1 The legal issues are addressed in the body of the report.

8.0 Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Considerations

8.1 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, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act and advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not. This is the public sector equality duty. The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

8.2 “Due regard” is the regard that is appropriate in all the circumstances. The weight to be attached to the effect is a matter for the council. As long as the council is properly aware of the effects and has taken them into account, the duty is discharged. Depending on the circumstances, regard should be had to the following:

- the need to enquire into whether and how a proposed decision disproportionately affects people with a protected characteristic. In other words, the indirect discriminatory effects of a proposed decision;

- the need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;

- the need to take 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 taking account of disabled persons’ disabilities. There can be a positive duty to take action to help a disabled person. What matters is how they are affected, whatever proportion of the relevant group of people they might be;

- the need to encourage persons who share a protected characteristic to participate in public life (or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low); and

- the need to tackle prejudice and promote understanding.

8.3 No equalities implications arise directly from this report.

9.0 Climate Change and Environmental Considerations

9.1 None

10.0 Human Resources/Property Considerations (if appropriate)

10.1 None

11.0 Communication Considerations

11.1 None

<u>Report sign off:</u>

Minesh Patel
Corporate Director, Finance & Resources

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Appendix 1 – Planning Committee Reforms

Proposed changes to the terms of the Planning Committee (Part 4 of the Constitution)

PLANNING COMMITTEE

References to:

- the '2026 Regulations' are to the Town and Country Planning (Discharge of Local Planning Authority Functions) (England) Regulations 2026;

- the 'nominated member' are to the Chair of the Planning Committee or, in their absence, the Vice-chair of the Planning Committee. In addition, the Chair of the Planning Committee may also appoint up to two other members of the Planning Committee to act if neither they nor the Vice-chair of the Planning Committee is able to act;

- the 'nominated officer' are to the Head of Planning and Development Services, Development Management Services Manager, Development Management Area Manager and Development Management Planning Manager or such other successor or equivalent posts; and

- 'own-interest applications' have~~s~~ the same meaning as regulation 6 of the 2026 Regulations.

Membership

- The committee comprises 8 councillors or such other number of councillors as Full Council may determine from time to time.

Terms of Reference

1. If, exceptionally, the nominated member and nominated officer agree to a referral because at least one of the criteria in regulation 5(3) of the 2026 Regulations is met, t~~T~~o determine the following:

   a. Applications for Planning Permission made under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990; and

   b. Applications for Listed Building Consent made under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990,

   where the recommendation is for approval and the application falls within at least one of the following categories:

   i. construction of 20 or more dwellings

   ii. outline residential development with a site larger than 0.5~~1~~ hectare

   iii. construction of a non-residential building exceeding 1,000sq. metres in floorspace outside a designated Strategic Industrial location or Locally Significant Industrial site;

   iv. outline non-residential development with a site larger than 0.5~~1~~ hectare, outside a designated Strategic Industrial location or Locally Significant Industrial site;

   ~~iv.~~

   v. reserved matters application relating to a large outline planning permission with over 500 dwellings or development creating 50,000sqm of floorspace;

vi. own-interest applications where they fall within categories i. to v, above; and

an application made under Section 73, 73A, 73B of Town and Country Planning Act 1990 in relation to categories i. to vi above.

~~v.~~

~~vi. the matter relates to a proposal falling within one of the categories i. to iv. above, and would, if approved, represent a significant departure from one or more of the policies in the Development Plan and, in the opinion of the Corporate Director Neighbourhoods and Regeneration or the Head of Planning constitute a substantial conflict with the aims and objectives of the relevant policy or policies; or~~

~~vii. 8 or more written objections or a petition containing at least 51 signatures have been received, in accordance with the criteria set out below but only if the application does not relate to:~~

~~a. alterations to residential buildings including extensions, outbuildings (including garages), walls, vehicular accesses, hardstandings, porches, aerials;~~

~~b. satellite television dishes or aerials;~~

~~2. To determine the following:~~

~~a. Applications for Planning Permission made under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990; and~~

~~b.~~vii. ~~Applications for Listed Building Consent made under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990,~~

~~where at least three Brent Councillors have requested, in accordance with the criteria set out below, that the application be considered by the Planning Committee.~~

2. If, exceptionally, the nominated member and nominated officer agree to a referral because at least one of the criteria in regulation 5(3) of the 2026 Regulations is met, to determine an application to amend or discharge a planning obligation under section 106A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 in relation to a planning permission arising from a development falling within categories 1. i. to vii above.

3. If, exceptionally, the nominated member and nominated officer agree to a referral because at least one of the criteria in regulation 5(3) of the 2026 Regulations is met, t~~T~~o determine ~~or consider~~ any other planning application or planning matter which is not a Schedule 1 application or Schedule 2 application as defined in the 2026 Regulations, including pre-application presentations and proposals subject to non-determination appeals, referred to the committee by the Corporate Director, Neighbourhoods and Regeneration or the Head of Planning and Development Services.

~~3.~~4. To receive a record of the cases the nominated member and nominated officer have considered for referral to the Planning Committee, the outcome of their consideration and the reasons for their decision.

~~4. To determine any other planning application or planning matter which the Planning Committee has specifically indicated it wishes to consider itself with the exception of proposals subject to non-determination appeals which in the opinion of the Corporate Director, Neighbourhoods and Regeneration or the Head of Planning require an urgent response.~~

~~Limitations~~

~~With the exception of applications falling within paragraphs 1. vi. or 2. above, section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 applications for minor material amendments are excluded unless, in the view of the Corporate Director, Neighbourhoods and Regeneration or the Head of Planning, the minor material amendment raises issues of planning significance not previously considered.~~

~~Criteria for written objections~~

~~For the purposes of paragraph 1. vi. above, an objection is valid only if, in the opinion of the Corporate Director, Neighbourhoods and Regeneration or the Head of Planning, all of the following criteria are met:~~

- ~~it is submitted on-line via the Council's Planning Public Access System or it is received by letter or an email*;~~
- ~~it is in response to a current application that has been publicised by the Council;~~
- ~~it includes the person's name and postal address;~~
- ~~it is from a person who lives or works or carries on a business:~~
  - ~~in Brent; or~~
  - ~~in a ward which is actually and directly affected by the application and adjoins Brent but is in a neighbouring authority's area;~~
- ~~it raises planning considerations that are material and related to the application;~~
- ~~it clearly states what is being objected to and gives reason(s) which are relevant planning considerations; and~~
- ~~any material planning objection raised cannot be overcome by imposing planning condition(s) or securing planning obligation(s).~~

~~* Identical, similar or pro-forma letters or emails, which also meet all of the above criteria, will each be treated as a single signature in support of a petition and not as individual objections in their own right.~~

~~Criteria for Councillor referral (Call- in procedure)~~

~~An application will fall within paragraph 2. above if, in the opinion of the Corporate Director, Neighbourhoods and Regeneration or the Head of Planning, all of the following criteria are met:~~

- ~~it clearly states that the Councillor wishes the application to be determined by the Planning Committee and explains why it is not appropriate for the application to be determined under officer delegated powers;~~
- ~~it states whether or not the Councillor has been in contact with the applicant, agent, objector(s) or any other interested party concerning the application and, if so, provides details of the approach(es), including the identity of the person(s);~~
- ~~it is in response to a current application that has been publicised by the Council; and~~

- ~~it raises planning considerations that are material and related to the application.~~

Consequential changes

Having reviewed the Constitution, these are the only proposed amendments directly arising from the new delegation arrangements:

Part 5 – Planning Code of Practice

Delete the following paragraph:

"5. A detailed protocol for call-in, which enables a decision to be reviewed before it is implemented, is set out in the "Protocol on Call-in" (Part 5 of the Constitution); and the Planning Committee terms of reference (Part 3 of the Constitution)."

Add the following paragraph after 7.3:

"7.3A Where a planning application may be referred to the Planning Committee Councillors should not put improper pressure on the nominated member or nominated officer to make a referral or do anything which compromises, or is likely to compromise the nominated member or nominated officer's impartiality."

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Brent	**Full Council** 14 September 2026
	Report from the Corporate Director, Finance & Resources

Resolution to approve reason for non-attendance at meetings

Wards Affected:	N/A
Key or Non-Key Decision:	Council
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:	None
Background Papers:	None
Contact Officer(s): (Name, Title, Contact Details)	Amira Nassr, Deputy Director, Democratic & Corporate Governance 020 8937 5436 amira.nassr@brent.gov.uk

1.0 Purpose of the Report

1.1 Section 85(1) of the Local Government Act 1972 requires a member of a Local Authority to attend at least one meeting of that Authority within a six month consecutive period in order to avoid being disqualified as a Councillor.

1.2 This requirement can be waived if any failure to attend was due to a reason approved by the Authority in advance of the six month period expiring.

1.3 This report asks the Council to consider and approve, pursuant to Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972, a reason for the non-attendance of the councillor identified in this report at meetings of the Council, Cabinet, and committees or sub-committees of the Council, where that non-attendance arises from significant family health and wellbeing circumstances.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 To approve, in accordance with Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972, the reason set out at paragraph 3.3 in respect of Councillor Mahmood's non-attendance at meetings until the Council's Annual Meeting in May 2027.

3.0 Detail

Contribution to the Borough Plan and Strategic Priorities

3.1 The waiver being sought is supportive of good governance and contributes to the delivery of all the strategic priorities within the Borough Plan by supporting the Council's activity and representational role of councillors.

Background

3.2 Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972 (section 85) provides that if a member of a local authority fails, throughout a period of six consecutive months from the date of their last attendance, to attend any meeting of the authority, they shall, unless the failure was due to some reason approved by the authority before the expiry of that period, cease to be a member of the authority. Attendance as a member at a meeting of any committee, sub-committee, joint committee, joint board or other body which is discharging functions of the authority or which is appointed to advise the authority also counts, as does attendance as representative of the authority at a meeting of any body of persons.

3.3 Council is asked to approve, in relation to Councillor Mahmood, that where failure to attend a relevant meeting prior to the Council's Annual Meeting in May 2027 is due to the circumstances described in paragraph 3.3, such failure to attend shall be treated as a reason approved by the Council for the purposes of Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972.

3.4 Councillor Mahmood is unable to attend meetings due to significant family health and wellbeing circumstances which require their ongoing support and presence.

3.5 Councillor Mahmood has continued to fulfil his duties as a ward councillor and supporting residents and dealing with ward matters. His current six-month attendance period does not expire until February 2027. However, given the ongoing family health and wellbeing circumstances outlined above, it is anticipated that he may require additional flexibility beyond that date and therefore it is considered appropriate to seek Council's approval in advance.

3.6 If Council does not approve the reason for non-attendance and Councillor Mahmood does not attend a qualifying meeting before the expiry of the six-month period, he would cease to be a member of the Council pursuant to Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972. Once any councillor loses office, through failure to attend for the six month period, the disqualification cannot be overcome by the councillor subsequently resuming attendance nor can retrospective approval of the Council be sought for an extension in time.

This would result in a vacancy arising in the ward and would reduce representation for residents until such time as the vacancy was filled in accordance with the relevant electoral provisions. The purpose of this report is therefore to enable Councillor Mahmood to continue serving his constituents whilst providing ongoing support in relation to exceptional family health and wellbeing circumstances

3.7 In light of these exceptional circumstances and recognising Councillor Mahmood's continuing commitment to his role and his intention to return to full attendance at meetings when circumstances allow, Council is requested to approve this reason for non-attendance for the purposes of Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972 until the Council's Annual Meeting in May 2027.

4.0 Financial Considerations

4.1 None.

5.0 Legal Considerations

5.1 These are contained in the body of the report.

6.0 Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Considerations

6.1 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, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act and advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not. This is the public sector equality duty. The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

6.2 No equalities implications arise directly from this report, although approval of the reason for non-attendance set out in this report will ensure that a councillor is not disqualified from office as a consequence of exceptional family health and wellbeing circumstances which have prevented attendance at relevant meetings.

7.0 Consultation with Ward Members and Stakeholders

7.1 Group Leaders and relevant ward members have been advised.

8.0 Human Resources/Property Implications (if appropriate)

8.1 None.

9.0 Climate Change and Environmental Considerations

9.1 None

10.0 Communication Considerations

10.1 None

<u>Report sign off:</u>

Minesh Patel
Corporate Director Finance &
Resources