



LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

MINUTES OF THE CABINET

**Held in the Conference Hall, Brent Civic Centre on Monday 7 September 2026
at 10.00 am**

PRESENT: Councillor M Butt (Chair), Councillor Grahl (Vice Chair) and Councillors Amadi, Dixon, Johnson, Kelcher, Knight and Rubin.

1. Opening Comment and Apologies for Absence

Prior to opening the meeting, Councillor Muhammed Butt (as the Leader of the Council) took the opportunity to reflect on the tragic event which had recently taken place at the Civic Centre involving the fatal stabbing of 17 year old David Wynter and to offer his condolences on behalf of the Council to David's family and friends for their loss.

Recognising the nature of the incident and impact not only on those who had witnessed it but also supported the response, as well as on the wider community, Councillor Butt thanked all staff and partners, including the emergency services, for both their immediate and subsequent response with Councillor Dixon (as Cabinet Member for Community Safety & Public Health) also commending the wider response within the community along with the assurance and support provided.

The Leader then moved on to open the meeting with apologies for absence received from Rachel Crossley (Corporate Director Service Reform & Strategy) with Rhodri Rowland (Director Strategic Commissioning and Capacity Building) attending as her representative and Jehan Weerasinghe (Corporate Director Neighbourhoods & Regeneration) with Gerry Ansell (Director Inclusive Regeneration & Climate Action) attending as his representative.

2. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made during the meeting.

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Cabinet **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the previous meeting held on Monday 27 July 2026 be approved as a correct record of the meeting.

4. Matters Arising (if any)

None identified.

5. Petitions (if any)

5.1 Opposition to installation of perimeter fencing College Green Open Space

Councillor Muhammed Butt (as Leader of the Council) welcomed James Hogan (as lead petitioner and Chair of the College Green Preservation Society) to the meeting, who he advised was attending to present a petition opposing the installation of perimeter fencing around College Green Open Space.

In thanking the Leader of the Council for the opportunity to present the petition, James Hogan began by detailing the history of College Green Open space, which he advised had been established by All Souls College Oxford in 1913 and currently consisted of land provided for allotment, scout and open space provision as well as a nursery. He further explained the background to formation of the College Green Preservation Society, which members were advised had been in response to continued proposals to build on the open space and with a nursery subsequently encouraged to move to the Green as a means of achieving further protection, albeit with clarification provided that the open space currently shared with the local scout group did not form part of the existing nursery site.

In noting the vulnerability of open space in the area, reference was made to the loss of space within Willesden, Kensal Green and Harlesden and, in outlining the concerns of the petitioners, Mr Hogan felt it important to remind members that when establishing the land All Souls College had issued a legally binding covenant stating that nothing on it could be used for any purpose which could be regarded as nuisance, damage or annoyance to the vendors in the neighbourhood, or which may lessen the value on the estate. As a result, he advised local residents were opposed to a proposal being developed by the nursery in seeking to further screen their site, given the impact it was felt this would have in restricting access and blocking the view of the existing open space and associated detrimental impact on the character of the area and value of surrounding properties. These were concerns, he advised, the petitioners were also seeking to raise with All Souls College Oxford.

Given the petitioners concerns over the vulnerability of open space in the area, opposition was expressed to any further loss of open space arising from the erection of the proposed screening, with the expansion of buildings on the existing nursery site and installation of a fence, alongside further appropriation of land shared with the scouts, highlighted as having already created a physical and psychological barrier and residents concerned about the impact of further potential development, should any additional screening be permitted.

Reiterating that the open space to which the screening proposal related did not form part of the nursery site, Mr Hogan pointed out that the petitioners (alongside the Preservation Society) were therefore keen to ensure that the shared space remained open reflecting its value as an important part of the community and vital aspect of the character of the area. In concluding, he therefore called upon the Council and nursery to respect the wishes of the community and refrain from taking away one of the last remaining open spaces in the area in order to preserve its ongoing access for all to use and see.

In thanking Mr Hogan for his presentation, the Leader then invited Councillor Jake Rubin (as Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Employment and Climate Action) to respond to the points raised.

Having thanked James Hogan for attending the meeting to ensure that the views of all those who had signed the petition were represented, along with the Preservation Society for the care and commitment shown in seeking to protect and maintain College Green, Councillor Rubin began by assuring the petitioners that the potential impact of any additional screening on the open nature of the space, local amenity and wider impact on the community had been recognised. At the same time, however, he also felt it important to recognise the need to ensure the nursery was able to maintain appropriate safeguarding arrangements for children using their outdoor space.

In recognising the balance needing to be maintained and concerns highlighted, he therefore advised that Council officers were undertaking a review of the current fencing arrangements, which would include consideration of the necessary safeguarding requirements alongside relevant legislation and Department for Education guidance. Once that review had been completed, an assurance was provided that the findings along with any recommendations would be shared with all relevant stakeholders, including the nursery, scout group and local residents in order to enable a way forward to be identified.

As a final contribution and in summing up, Councillor Muhammed Butt (as Leader of the Council) reaffirmed the assurance provided to review the issues highlighted and engage further with all relevant stakeholders in seeking to identify a way forward.

6. Reference of item considered by Scrutiny Committees (if any)

There were no items referred from either the Community Wellbeing or Resources & Public Realm Scrutiny Committees.

7. Brent's Gypsy, Roma & Traveller Framework and Action Plan 2026-2030

Prior to considering the report, Councillor Muhammed Butt (as Leader of the Council) welcomed John O'Donnell (representing residents from the Lynton Close Travellers site) supported by Bernie Corcoran (as a fellow resident) and Rhianna Ketley (London Gypsy and Travellers Association) to the meeting whom he advised had requested to speak in relation to development of the Brent Gypsy, Roma & Traveller Framework.

Whilst welcoming the Council's acknowledgment of the need to do better in seeking to meet the needs of traveller communities in Brent and recognising that some progress had been made, John O'Donnell, having thanked the Leader for the opportunity to speak, advised he was also seeking to outline concerns which remained in relation to development of the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Framework. Members were advised these related to the limited progress made in terms of the identification and provision of temporary sites, despite this being raised as a priority by community members in view of the severe overcrowding on the Lynton Close site currently impacting on the health, safety and wellbeing of residents. As such he advised residents were keen to ensure the Council moved forward as quickly as possible in seeking to identify suitable temporary sites to address the overcrowding concerns outlined and avoid Travellers needing to move to unallocated transit sites whilst more permanent provision was being developed.

Having thanked Mr O'Donnell for attending the meeting and representations received, the Leader then invited Councillor Robert Johnson (as Cabinet Member for Housing, Homelessness and Renters Security) to respond to the comments made prior to formally introducing the report on the Framework.

In taking the opportunity to thank those present for attending, Councillor Johnson, in seeking to address the concerns highlighted, confirmed that an independent search company had been commissioned to support the identification of temporary traveller sites. Highlighting that the provision of any sites (once identified) would also require necessary planning consent to be obtained, Councillor Johnson advised that the Council remained committed to making alternative accommodation available, although it was acknowledged that this would be through the Council's temporary accommodation supply, as opposed to pitch sites. In highlighting examples of the other measures also introduced to support the community on the Lynton Close site, Councillor Johnson ended by once again acknowledging the concerns highlighted and committing to presenting the findings of the independent search company back to Cabinet, in order for any feasible sites identified to be taken forward.

Having noted the representations made and commitment identified to continue working with the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Communities to achieve positive outcomes, build trust and ensure their needs continued to be met the Leader then invited Councillor Johnson to introduce the report from the Corporate Director, Resident and Housing Services outlining Brent's new Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Framework and Action Plan.

In presenting the report, Councillor Johnson began by recognising that it had been more than a decade since Brent had a dedicated framework in place for its Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities acknowledging the impact on those residents in also feeling underrepresented, which it was felt the framework provided an opportunity to address. In seeking to be open about the past, members were advised that the report had been clear in acknowledging the mistakes made in terms of the Council's relationship with Brent's Gypsy and Traveller community and in accepting that the need to rebuild trust would take time, consistency and a willingness to listen.

Whilst recognising the progress which it had been possible to make in terms of engagement with residents, dedicated liaison roles and working with trusted organisations, the ongoing work required was acknowledged, with the framework setting out three clear priorities for this to be focused on. These had been structured around providing safe and suitable sites, building stronger relationships, and making sure Council services were accessible and culturally appropriate with members reminded that the commitments made had also been supported by up to £500,000 of capital investment for improvements at Lynton Close.

In highlighting that Brent also had the third largest Roma population in England and Wales, Councillor Johnson also acknowledged the limited understanding and engagement with Brent's Roma community with the commitment to develop a dedicated Roma community engagement plan also identified as an important element of the Framework. In support of the Framework, Councillor Johnson ended by outlining his commitment to ensure that the relationships being built with the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities in Brent were ones that would last and on

which progress would be reported back to Cabinet on an annual basis enabling members to assess how the commitments were translating into genuine improvements for residents.

In considering the report, Cabinet welcomed what was felt to be the constructive nature of the Framework and commitment in seeking to continue strengthening relationships with the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities across Brent recognising their historical exclusion and focus on improving outcomes, increasing inclusion and ensuring services were more responsive to community needs. Drawing attention to Brent's role as one of only a small number of London boroughs maintaining a dedicated traveller site, Members highlighted the trust and respect already established with the travelling community, whilst acknowledging that further work remained necessary to address accommodation needs and identify suitable permanent and temporary site provision. The importance of continued engagement with community representatives and ensuring their voices were heard directly within the decision-making process was also particularly welcomed.

The Framework's wider focus and contribution in seeking to enhance community cohesion, resident engagement and equality of access to services was also commended with members noting its close alignment with the Council's broader objectives relating to culture, inclusion and cost of living support and supportive of the commitment to ongoing consultation and communication. At the same time, the need was also identified to ensure the Framework avoided operating in isolation and instead formed part of a wider programme of community-focused activity designed to build more sustainable relationships and ensure that all residents felt respected, included and able to access the opportunities and support available across the borough.

Recognising that further work was required to improve understanding of the specific needs of different groups, such as Roma communities, Cabinet expressed support for the approach identified within the Framework to ensure services were not only able to better reflect community needs but also respond more effectively to concerns and priorities identified by residents. Members also welcomed the Framework's focus on recognising and celebrating the cultural heritage, identity and contribution of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities, with members keen to ensure the Council's approach extended beyond addressing disadvantage and service needs and also promoted opportunities to celebrate cultural identity through libraries, community facilities, cultural programmes and wider engagement activities recognising the importance of this approach as an additional means of fostering greater understanding, integration and community cohesion across the borough.

In closing the debate, Councillor Butt (as Leader of the Council) reiterated the commitment already made to continue working alongside communities with the aim of improving outcomes and strengthening trust and, as part of this approach, again reminded members of the intention to review progress on delivery of the Framework annually in order to maintain accountability and monitor delivery against the commitments identified. The Council's existing investment in services supporting the Traveller community at Lynton Close was also recognised alongside the need to continue work in seeking to further improve access to services, accommodation provision and community support and emphasis placed on the importance in turning strategic commitments into practical action, with the annual reporting arrangements

viewed as an important mechanism for ensuring progress was achieved and outcomes delivered.

In welcoming the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Community Framework as a strategic programme designed to improve inclusion, strengthen relationships with communities, enhance access to services, support the provision of safe and stable accommodation, celebrate cultural identity and establish a structured framework for ongoing engagement and accountability, Cabinet **RESOLVED** to approve Brent's new Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Framework and Action Plan 2026-2030 (as set out within Appendix A of the accompanying report).

8. Future Commissioning and Delivery Options for Best Start Family Hubs Support Services

Councillor Rubin (Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Employment & Climate Action) introduced a report from the Corporate Director Children, Young People & Community Development seeking approval to insource Best Start Family Hubs (BSFHs) support services, currently delivered by Barnardo's Services Limited, when the existing contractual arrangements come to an end in March 2027 in support of a more integrated, Council-led Family Hub and Early Help model from April 2027.

In presenting the report, Councillor Rubin began by outlining the basis on which the proposal to move towards an insourced support model had been developed, which had reflected the outcome of an in depth review of the different options available to deliver the service when the current contract expired at the start of April 2027. Members were advised these options had included approaches involving both re-tendering and insourcing the service, with the conclusion that the delivery of an in-house model would offer the best balance in terms of quality, accountability, integration and value for money. Although one of the considerations identified, the approach outlined was highlighted as not only focussed on value for money but also on strengthening the experience for families using the service and delivering a more integrated approach that would provide a better opportunity to provide seamless, holistic support for families. Highlighting the excellent work already being delivered through the Council's Family Hubs, it was felt the approach outlined would further enhance these efforts by delivering greater consistency and clearer accountability in terms of the way in which resources were targeted and allocated in a way that would not only enhance the connection between Family Hubs and other support services but also support the positive performance being delivered in engaging families, increasing family contact and supporting school readiness.

Having also recognised the importance of Best Start Family Hubs as community assets, given the role played in giving families a local place to access support across health, education, parenting and wider family needs, it was felt the proposed model also demonstrated the wider benefits associated with being able to insource service provision, where appropriate, in a way that would also deliver better integration, strong value for money whilst also serving the best needs for residents.

In considering the report, Cabinet welcomed the proposal to bring the Family Hubs service back in-house. Having noted the significant benefits associated with council-led service delivery, members were also keen to highlight that the approach reflected a growing recognition across local government that insourcing

represented an innovative, effective, and responsible use of public funds, with benefits extending beyond financial considerations to include improved service quality, greater flexibility, accountability, and long-term value for residents. Reference was made to wider evidence supporting insourcing as a pragmatic response to service delivery challenges, particularly where improvements in efficiency, performance, and cost effectiveness could be achieved.

In addition, members were keen to highlight the positive impact it was felt the proposal would have on the workforce delivering Family Hub services with the creation of high-quality council employment opportunities welcomed, particularly in relation to staff members living within the borough. In recognising the significant work and planning required to bring services back under direct council management, thanks were expressed to all those involved for their efforts in developing a model capable of delivering enhanced outcomes for residents.

Cabinet also highlighted the strategic importance of early intervention in supporting children and young people experiencing inequalities, vulnerabilities, and wider challenges with members also noting the key role played by the Family Hubs in providing preventative support and achieving further integration as a means of strengthening the ability to identify needs earlier and coordinate support more effectively. This was recognised as an approach that would not only improve outcomes for children and families but also reduce the need for more intensive and costly interventions, enhancing the provision of early support and access to mainstream education in order to achieve better long-term outcomes.

In support of the more integrated and coordinated service model outlined, members commended the approach in seeking to facilitate a more holistic response to residents needs, strengthen partnership working across services, and ensure support could be delivered in a joined-up and accessible manner with the emphasis on coordinated early intervention and integrated service delivery considered key to achieving improved outcomes for children, young people, and families across the borough.

In welcoming the proposal to bring Family Hub services back in-house, Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

- (1) To approve the insourcing of the majority of Best Start Family Hubs Support Services from 1 April 2027, creating a fully integrated Council-led Family Hub and Early Help model that strengthened accountability, consistency of practice, quality assurance, service integration and value for money.
- (2) To delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Community Development, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Employment and Climate Action, to take all necessary steps to implement the transition, including consultation, workforce arrangements, service mobilisation and any associated operational decisions required to ensure continuity of provision.

9. **Outcome of informal consultation on the amalgamation of Roe Green Infant School and Roe Green Junior School**

Councillor Rubin (Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Employment & Climate Action) introduced a report from the Corporate Director Children, Young People & Community Development providing a summary of the informal consultation undertaken between June and July 2026 on the proposal to amalgamate Roe Green Infant School and Roe Green Junior School as one primary school, including provision for nursery aged children, and recommending a move to formal consultation.

In presenting the report, Councillor Rubin advised members that approval was being sought to move to a formal consultation on the proposed amalgamation of Roe Green Infant and Junior Schools following the outcome of an informal consultation process. Highlighting the way in which the proposals had been designed to make the educational journey for both parents and children easier by bringing two schools that already shared the same building together and removing the need to go through a separate admission process when transitioning from Year 2 to Year 3 members were advised the approach outlined would automatically enable pupils to progress through the school from nursery or reception to Year 6. It was noted that the benefits of this approach, in terms of the greater continuity provided for children and in supporting the transition from infant to junior school, had also been reflected by parents and stakeholders in terms of the outcome from the informal consultation with 93.1% of those who responded expressing support for the amalgamation.

Reflecting on Roe Green's status as a popular and vibrant school, Councillor Rubin ended by commending the proposal to members as a means of seeking to build on the strengths identified and as a means of creating a more seamless educational journey whilst maximising use of available resources with officers also thanked for their support in developing the proposal.

Having noted the outcome of the informal consultation and approach outlined in seeking to create a more seamless educational journey, Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

- (1) To note the feedback received during informal consultation on the proposal to amalgamate Roe Green Infant and Roe Green Junior School.
- (2) To approve a period of formal consultation, through the publication of a statutory notice, on proposals to:
 - Close Roe Green Junior School.
 - Expand the age range of Roe Green Infant School to admit children aged between 3 – 11.
 - Change the name of Roe Green Infant School to Roe Green Primary School.

10. **Proposal to expand Phoenix Arch Special School on the Strathcona Site**

Councillor Rubin (Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Employment & Climate Action) introduced a report from the Corporate Director Children, Young People & Community Development providing a summary of the formal consultation undertaken between June and July 2026 on a proposal to expand Phoenix Arch

Special School by 50 places using the Strathcona site (Strathcona Road, Wembley, HA9 8QL) in response to increasing demand for specialist Special Educational Needs (SEND) provision across the borough and seeking approval to determine the statutory notice to expand the School through use of the Strathcona site in September 2027.

In presenting the report, Councillor Rubin began by reminding members of the new Administrations commitment to giving every child the best start possible in life and ensuring that children and young people could access the support they needed to thrive. In highlighting the increasing number of Educational Health Care Plans (EHCPs) across the borough and national, it was pointed out that Brent currently had over 4,000 children and young people with an EHCP, which represented a 10% increase in one year and was felt to demonstrate the importance of the proposed investment in seeking to respond to the demand whilst providing high-quality SEND provision in the borough. At the same time, members were also reminded of the number of children being placed in independent special schools and maintained special schools outside the borough with the increased capacity proposed through the expansion of Phoenix Arch School supporting children and their families to access high-quality education closer to home and improving their experience by avoiding the need to travel long distances.

Members were also advised of the financial case in support of the proposal, with independent special school placements costing on average £58,000 per place when compared with £37,000 for an in-borough school place. Once fully operational, it was therefore anticipated that the expansion would deliver around £1.5m in annual cost avoidance, helping to reduce pressure on the High Needs budget. The proposal was also highlighted as providing an important contribution to the government's wider SEND reforms, which had also recognised the need to expand specialist provision and ensure that children could access the right support at the right time and in the right way. In thanking all officers involved for their support in developing the proposals, Councillor Rubin ended by outlining what he felt to be the advantages of the expanded provision in terms of not only building capacity locally but investing in places that would meet specific need and ensure children were able to access specialist education closer to home, enabling them to learn, grow and build relationships within their own community, and with the specialist support they needed to thrive.

In considering the report, Cabinet welcomed the proposals noting the way in which they would not only contribute towards the wider SEND Capital Programme but also in terms of the ambitious and forward-thinking approach they were felt to represent in seeking to address the shortage of specialist SEND placements within the borough given the significant demand for additional SEND provision. Members were also keen to highlight and commend the role of Phoenix Arch Special School in delivering the provision, recognising the benefits of retaining the school within the community sector and ensuring that local democratic accountability remained at the heart of education provision alongside the advantages in the terms and conditions available for staff.

Members further welcomed the basis of the investment outlined in seeking to improve opportunities for children and families, noting the Council's commitment to promoting equity and addressing disadvantage with the development of enhanced SEND facilities highlighted as a practical demonstration of the Council's

commitment to supporting vulnerable children and their families. In addition, the opportunity was also taken to recognise the benefits associated with bringing the Strathcona site back into public use as an approach designed to ensure effective use of public assets whilst also creating additional educational capacity within the borough in a way that would enable those families and children requiring specialist educational provision to access it closer to home.

In closing the debate, thanks were extended to Phoenix Arch Special School and officers for their work in developing the proposals and their commitment to ensuring that the needs of children with SEND continued to be met as close to home as possible with the primary focus to improve outcomes for those children and their families requiring high-quality specialist educational provision within the borough

In support of the proposals as an important element of the wider SEND Capital Programme designed to increase specialist educational capacity, improve local access to SEND provision, enhance support for children and families, make effective use of public assets, and ensure that children with additional needs were able to receive appropriate support closer to home, Cabinet **RESOLVED**:

- (1) To note the responses received during formal consultation on the proposal to expand Phoenix Arch Special School.
- (2) To approve the expansion of Phoenix Arch Special School by 50 places utilising the Strathcona site from September 2027.

11. Delivering Brent's 2024-2028 EDI Ambitions: Two Years On

Councillor Grahl (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources) introduced a report from the Chief Executive setting out the progress made in delivering the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Strategy, Anti-Racism Action Plan and EDI Board priorities during Year 2 and also in support of the Council's obligation under the Public Sector Equality Duty to publish annual information demonstrating how we are complying with the equality duty

Introducing the report, Councillor Grahl began by advising members that the update marked the halfway point of Brent's 2024 -28 EDI strategy and was designed to set out the progress made as well as provide a focus on future actions. Highlighting the extent of activity and progress to date, reference was made, as examples, to the improved access to interpretation and translation, work to tackle digital exclusion, support for numerous community-led projects and way in which the Council had sought to strengthen the use of equality data to better understand the experiences of residents. In addition, the work undertaken across the Council as an organisation was also highlighted with more than 700 employees having completed anti - racism and inclusive practises training alongside the use of workforce data and dashboards to enhance understanding in terms of inequalities in recruitment, progression, representation and pay, recognising the workforce in Brent as one of the most diverse in the country and need to ensure progress was designed to actively challenge inequality and the wider issues highlighted.

The opportunity was also taken to highlight the significant progress being made and ongoing focus of the strategy in relation to developing opportunities for residents, particularly in the area of jobs and skills, recognising the Government's emphasis

on the importance in expanding supported internships and strengthening the pathways from education into employment, including for young people with SEND. As such the strategy was also commended for reinforcing the need to ensure young people were given the right opportunities to move into meaningful and sustainable work and the opportunity provided for Brent to lead by example in seeking to encourage and support the provision of inclusive employment opportunities for young people using all available levers not only as an employer but also partner and in terms of procurement. Given these objectives, members were therefore advised of the ongoing focus within the Strategy in delivery of measurable improvements and outcomes for residents designed to ensure residents and staff alike had the opportunity to fulfil their potential whilst also feeling empowered to make a difference across all communities within the borough.

Recognising the challenging and complex nature of the work in seeking to address inequalities, thanks were extended to all those involved in development and delivery of the Strategy for the progress made to date and for the level of knowledge and commitment demonstrated in seeking to ensure the interests and challenges being experienced across the range of diverse communities within Brent were fully represented and embedded in the work being undertaken across the Council.

In commending the progress made and ongoing level of commitment within the Strategy members, in considering the report were also keen to recognise the compliance in relation to the Council's public sector equality duty requirements as well as wider focus on equity and inclusion across all communities. Highlighting the ongoing commitment to ensure everyone had the opportunity to succeed and to provide the support and level of services required to prevent any community being left behind Cabinet **RESOLVED**:

- (1) To endorse the progress made in Year 2 of the EDI Strategy 2024-2028, Anti-Racism Action Plan, and EDI Board priorities.
- (2) To agree that the information in the accompanying report be turned into public-facing communications materials highlighting Year 2 achievements.

12. **Treasury Management Outturn Report 2025-26**

Councillor Grahl (as Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources) introduced a report from the Corporate Director Finance & Resources presenting the outturn for the Council's Treasury Management activities 2025-26, in accordance with the Local Authorities (Capital Financing and Accounting) Regulations 2003.

In presenting the report, Councillor Grahl began by reminding members of the importance of effective treasury management in delivery of the Council's priorities as a means of enabling continued to invest in Brent undertaken in a financially responsible way. Highlighting the ongoing challenges in terms of the wider economic background and context in relation to the current outturn position which included continuing economic volatility and challenges arising as a result of ongoing global geo-political tensions, members were advised of the approach being taken in seeking to manage the Council's finances as responsibly as possible and in accordance with agreed borrowing limits and the Treasury Management Strategy

and Prudential Indicators. In recognising the importance of the Treasury Management function in managing and planning for the level of funding required to support the Council's activities, services and affordability of the capital programme members noted that the activity looked to optimise the effect of borrowing costs and investment income whilst managing the associated risks enabling ongoing investment in key priorities such as the delivery of new and affordable housing, SEND provision, local infrastructure and other assets designed to deliver long term benefit for residents across the borough. During 2025-26 it was noted this had enabled the Council to deliver £209.6m of capital expenditure based on a prudent approach towards the financing of that investment using a "little and often" approach to borrowing, allowing the Council more flexibility in being able to respond to changes in interest rates, manage costs and reduce exposure to risk. This balance was recognised as important given the ambition to continue investing in homes, schools and infrastructure whilst also making sure the decisions being taken were affordable and sustainable.

Highlighting the practical benefits and outcomes of this approach for residents and on a wider basis in reducing reliance on the private sector and helping to manage costs moving forward, the opportunity was also taken to thank officers for their professionalism and diligence in support of the work being undertaken to deliver the Council's ambitions and management of the Council's Treasury Management activity.

In commending what members felt to be Brent's prudent financial stewardship the commitment made in seeking to ensure the Council continued to borrow in as sustainable a way as possible to deliver on key infrastructure projects and ambition without compromising the longer term stability of the debt portfolio and to ensure its investment portfolio remained as diversified as possible was also recognised given the continued nature of pressures faced.

Having considered the report Cabinet therefore **RESOLVED:**

- (1) To note the overall financial performance for 2025 - 26, as set out within the report.
- (2) To approve submission of the report to Full Council for approval in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice.

13. Exclusion of Press and Public

There were no items that required the exclusion of the press or public.

14. Any other urgent business

There were no items of urgent business.

The meeting ended at 10.45 am

COUNCILLOR MUHAMMED BUTT
Chair