LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

MINUTES OF THE CABINET
Held in the Conference Hall, Brent Civic Centre on Monday 12 October 2026 at 10.00 am

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

Also Present: Councillor Georgiou

1. **Apologies for Absence**

   Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Grahl along with Kim Wright (Chief Executive) and Rachel Crossley (Corporate Director Service Strategy & Reform).

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 7 September 2026 be approved as a correct record of the meeting.

4. **Matters Arising (if any)**

   None identified.

5. **Petitions (if any)**

   There were no petitions presented at the meeting.

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

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

7. **Change in Order of Business**

   NOTED the change in order of business on the agenda, with Councillor Muhammed Butt (as Leader of the Council) advising that Agenda Item 10 (Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Action Plan 2026-2031) would be considered in advance of the remainder of the agenda, due to Councillor Georgiou having requested to speak on that item.

The minutes therefore reflect the order in which items were considered at the meeting.

8. **Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Plan 2026 - 2031**

Prior to considering the report, Councillor Muhammed Butt (as Leader of the Council) welcomed Councillor Georgiou to the meeting who he advised had requested to speak in relation to the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Plan.

Whilst recognising the positive commitments contained within the Action Plan and thanking frontline officers and voluntary organisations for their ongoing work supporting residents experiencing homelessness, Councillor Georgiou began by highlighting what he felt was a need to ensure the Council's approach remained focused on the prevention of homelessness rather than purely managing the consequences of an escalating housing crisis.

Expressing concern at the numbers of households with children living in temporary accommodation and recorded level of rough sleeping, emphasis was placed on the impact these circumstances had on families with children whose education was disrupted, and people whose health, security and dignity were also being put at risk. Whilst therefore welcoming the commitment to improve temporary accommodation standards and ensure no child was required to share kitchen or bathroom facilities with another household, it was noted that improvements in the quality of accommodation being offered would not reduce the overall number of people experiencing homelessness or families living in temporary accommodation. As such, Cabinet was urged to place greater emphasis on prevention and early intervention measures aimed at stopping residents from falling into homelessness. This included calls for a more proactive and coordinated approach across Council services and partner agencies, including housing, benefits, education, health and voluntary sector organisations, with the importance of creating clear pathways to support residents facing rent arrears, eviction, financial hardship or changing personal circumstances also highlighted.

Reference was also made to successful approaches adopted across other London boroughs in seeking to recognise best practice and tackle the challenges identified. Measures outlined included the expansion of mediation between landlords and tenants, access to debt and benefits advice and the potential establishment of a homelessness prevention fund to support residents facing short-term financial pressures, with it noted that preventative interventions could not only deliver positive outcomes but also longer-term financial savings for the Council in terms of cost avoidance relating to emergency accommodation and also prolonged housing insecurity.

In addition, the need was identified to ensure sustained support was available following the prevention or resolution of homelessness, particularly for refugees, care leavers, single people, residents experiencing mental ill health and those with multiple disadvantages, with Members advised that long-term housing outcomes depended not only on securing accommodation but also ensuring residents were able to successfully sustain their tenancies.

Following on, Councillor Georgiou also highlighted what he felt was a need to provide more regular and publicly accessible reporting on homelessness prevention outcomes, including the number of households assisted before becoming homeless, evictions prevented, lengths of stay in temporary accommodation and progress in reducing overall homelessness-related expenditure, with the importance of transparency regarding performance monitoring identified as key.

As a final issue, reference was made to the ongoing need to address the shortage of genuinely affordable housing within the borough with a call to accelerate council housebuilding, improve the use of empty properties, increase suitable move-on accommodation and work collaboratively with housing associations and responsible private landlords to increase the supply of affordable homes for local residents. It was noted that, without addressing underlying housing supply pressures, the Council would continue to face increasing costs associated with managing homelessness rather than resolving its root causes. In concluding, Councillor Georgiou advised that whilst recognising the positive commitments and overall aims within the Action Plan, he was keen to ensure the approach adopted focussed on key outcomes in seeking to prevent and reduce homelessness, improve support for those experiencing housing insecurity and increase access to secure, affordable housing for Brent residents.

Having thanked Councillor Georgiou for his comments, Councillor Muhammed Butt (as Leader of the Council) acknowledged the challenge provided in seeking to ensure the Council's approach remained as focussed and wide as possible, with Councillor Johnson (as Cabinet Member for Housing, Homelessness and Renters) also highlighting the alignment of the Action Plan with many of the issues raised. These included not only a focus on joined up working but also early intervention and prevention alongside the support needed to sustain tenancies and improve the affordability, standard and quality of available accommodation.

Having noting the representations made, the Leader then invited Councillor Johnson to introduce the report from the Corporate Director, Resident and Housing Services outlining Brent's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Plan 2026-2031, which detailed how the Council would deliver the commitments within its homelessness strategy focussed on prevention, improving the quality and reducing the use and cost of temporary accommodation and tackling long term rough sleeping.

Introducing the report, Councillor Johnson began by highlighting the aim of the Action Plan in seeking to turn the ambition within the Council's strategy for tackling homelessness into action through clear targets, responsibilities and measures of progress. Whilst acknowledging the challenges as significant, given the impact on those directly affected by the housing crisis, the complex range of social and economic factors involved with individuals or families becoming homeless was also recognised with the approach developed in response needing to involve more than simply providing suitable accommodation. Members were therefore advised of the aim within the Action Plan to focus on more holistic, wraparound support, bringing together not only housing but health, financial and other services enabling earlier intervention designed to prevent homelessness where possible and help people maintain a safe, secure and stable home.

Members were advised that the approach outlined had also been reflected in the targets set within the Action Plan, which had been focussed on preventing homelessness for 42% of households who approached the Council at risk of homelessness; halving rough sleeping by December 2027 and working towards functional zero for long-term rough sleeping by 2031 with the targets also aligned to support the Government's national "Get Everyone In for Christmas" drive and funding commitment to provide settled accommodation and practical support.

Whilst highlighting that the context remained extremely challenging with homelessness demand continuing to rise across London, placing significant pressure on Councils and residents affected by housing insecurity, the progress being made was also noted including eliminating the use of B&B and shared accommodation for families with children beyond the legal limit and members assured of the Council's commitment in support of the national ambition to provide the stability and support required. As such, Councillor Johnson ended by commending the Action Plan as a means of building on the progress achieved to date and delivering the ambition to strengthen homelessness prevention, improve and reduce reliance on temporary accommodation, support residents in being able to sustain settled housing and working to reduce and end long term rough sleeping enabling more Brent residents to live in a safe, secure and stable home.

In supporting presentation of the report, Thomas Cattermole (as Corporate Director Housing & Residents Services) welcomed the tribute paid to frontline staff and partner organisations for the work being undertaken to support residents facing homelessness and housing insecurity. In highlighting the key focus on prevention, members were reminded this included work to not only support households seeking to maximise income but also in relation to enhancing the quality and affordability of temporary accommodation, supporting move on from poorer quality accommodation and improving access to the supply of permanent accommodation.

Acknowledging the projected increase in homelessness presentations and temporary accommodation usage highlighted, these were felt to reflect a realistic rather than more aspirational modelling and whilst welcoming legislative changes such as the Renters Right Act, members were advised that the primary objective remained reducing preventable homelessness and the number of households requiring temporary accommodation. In support of this approach reference was made to the positive impact being achieved through initiatives such as the Household Income Maximisation Team currently being piloted as a means of providing a multi-agency approach bringing together services across benefits, housing, adult social care, and children's services to address complex household challenges before they escalated on an individual case basis.

Members welcomed and commended the approach outlined in supporting vulnerable families and individuals to retain greater financial stability and prevent homelessness, which they were keen to see developed and expanded. Support was also expressed for the work being undertaken in partnership with charities and the voluntary and community sector, with particular reference made to organisations supporting homelessness prevention, rough sleeping services, and wider community outreach. Members highlighted the value of collaborative working between the Council, charities, housing providers, and other stakeholders in delivering coordinated support to residents and helping individuals secure and maintain stable accommodation.

In terms of additional comments highlighted by Cabinet in support of the Strategy and Action Plan, members were keen to highlight the importance of secure accommodation as fundamental to the health, wellbeing, safety, and long-term stability for residents and families. Whilst recognising the difficult decisions often required in securing suitable accommodation, including placements outside residents' preferred locations, members acknowledged the need to prioritise safe and stable housing outcomes with officers and partner organisations commended for their ongoing efforts in responding to increasing demand and supporting vulnerable households.

In once again highlighting the importance in ensuring the Council continued to challenge itself whilst doing everything possible to address rising demand and improve outcomes for residents, the Leader ended by outlining the Council's ongoing commitment, as demonstrated within the Strategy and Action Plan, to reducing reliance on costly temporary accommodation, improving accommodation quality, supporting households to move more quickly into settled housing, and increasing the supply of suitable homes and the continued engagement with partners, stakeholders, and service providers identified as essential in ensuring the Council was able to deliver the most effective response possible to homelessness challenges across the borough.

In recognising the challenges identified, representations received and focus identified in relation to early intervention, prevention and increasing the supply of affordable accommodation Cabinet **RESOLVED**, having also noted the future engagement of scrutiny in the process, to approve and sign off the Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Action Plan for publication before 1 December 2026, as detailed within Appendix 1 of the report.

9. **Authority to award a contract for a Single Delivery Partner for the South Kilburn Regeneration Programme**

Councillor Kelcher (as Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Planning) introduced a report from the Corporate Director Neighbourhoods and Regeneration regarding the award of a contract for a Single Delivery Partner in relation to the South Kilburn Regeneration Programme.

In presenting the report, Councillor Kelcher began by outlining the significant progress already achieved through the South Kilburn regeneration programme, including the delivery of almost 2,000 new homes, of which over 1,200 had been at social rent, and with over 900 South Kilburn tenants having been moved into new, modern high-quality accommodation. Whilst recognising the difference regeneration could make in terms of transforming neighbourhoods and providing a sense of place, and way in which the Council had worked with residents, developers and housing providers to secure these achievements, members were advised that substantial work remained to complete the regeneration programme involving a new delivery approach designed to deliver the pace and scale of development required in order to deliver the required outcomes and ensure residents did not feel their neighbourhood had been overlooked.

Members were informed that, as a result, the report presented the outcome of a comprehensive and rigorous procurement exercise undertaken to identify a single

development partner capable of delivering the remainder of the regeneration programme through one coordinated long-term partnership. The proposed approach was intended to replace the existing site-by-site delivery model, providing greater consistency, pace, efficiency and certainty in delivering the Council's vision for the neighbourhood, with the aim to support delivery of another 1,600 plus new homes over the next 10 to 15 years, alongside affordable and social rented housing, community facilities, employment space, high-quality public realm improvements and green infrastructure.

In setting out the strategic vision for the proposal, Councillor Kelcher highlighted that successful regeneration involved more than the delivery of housing and was focused on creating thriving communities where residents felt safe, connected and proud of where they lived. In outlining the in-depth and significant nature of the procurement process and strength of bids submitted alongside their evaluation against a set of criteria developed in partnership with local residents, members were advised that the recommended award of contract and partnership was therefore intended to support place-shaping objectives, strengthen community infrastructure and help create a neighbourhood that residents could continue to identify with and take pride in for generations to come supported by a partner who had demonstrated they would be able to deliver against those outcomes.

In considering the report, Cabinet noted the process as one of the of the most significant housing and regeneration procurements currently taking place in London and welcomed the recommended appointment of a single delivery partner and move towards a more coordinated delivery model given the complexity and extended timescales associated with delivering regeneration through multiple site-based arrangements. In support of a single strategic partnership approach, members were, however, also keen to ensure a focus was maintained on the outcome for residents and in ensuring that the regeneration programme remained centred on the needs and aspirations of the South Kilburn community. In this respect, support was expressed for proposals relating to community facilities, opportunities for young people, support for local organisations, community capacity-building and wider social value commitments with the need identified to ensure the area's diverse community identity was also maintained and strengthened as a key objective throughout implementation of the programme.

Being invited to respond on this point, Jehan Weerasinghe (as Corporate Director, Neighbourhoods and Regeneration) took the opportunity to outline the way in which community engagement had formed a fundamental element of the procurement process and been reflected within the four core pillars against which the evaluation process had been undertaken which had included Brilliant Places, Empowered Communities, Resilient Partnerships and Value Creation. Members were also advised that the process had involved establishment of a Community Panel designed to maximise resident engagement and provide assurance that community priorities had directly informed the evaluation process, with the recommended partner having demonstrated a strong commitment to continued engagement and to keeping residents at the heart of future delivery arrangements.

Focussing on the key evaluation criteria, Cabinet also welcomed the emphasis on developing a resilient long-term partnership capable of sustaining delivery through changing economic and political circumstances, with it noted that the recommended partner had demonstrated a clear understanding of the Council's long-term

ambitions for South Kilburn and had evidenced an ability to support place-making, community development and regeneration objectives.

The wider benefits associated with the programme were also recognised, including contributions towards community wellbeing, public health, community safety, climate resilience, employment opportunities and enterprise growth. Members considered that the focus on social value and community benefit would be critical in ensuring that residents experienced tangible benefits from investment in the area and that regeneration outcomes extended beyond the delivery of new homes alone.

In summing up, Councillor Muhammed Butt (as Leader) thanked officers, residents and all bidders who had participated in the procurement process for their engagement and support. In acknowledging the challenges and issues identified by residents in relation to the delivery of the regeneration programme in South Kilburn to date, the Leader highlighted the importance in now being able to move forward at pace through procurement of a single delivery partner in order to address the issues identified and with the approach also considered key in creating a strong delivery vehicle and resilient partnership capable of achieving high-quality development, improved affordability, enhanced resident experience, greater accountability and long-term value for the community. The commitments secured in relation to affordable housing, place-making, public realm improvements, joined up estate management, social value, climate resilience and ongoing community involvement were also highlighted and welcomed with all those who had participated in the procurement thanked for their interest in what was recognised to have been a highly competitive process.

As a final contribution, Councillor Kelcher ended by noting that the appointment represented the beginning of the next stage of the regeneration programme rather than the end of the process with the strength of market interest from a number of highly credible bidders felt to reflect the confidence in the Council's regeneration programme, track record of delivery and long-term vision for South Kilburn.

In noting the recommended appointment of the preferred delivery partner as an important milestone in completing the transformation of the South Kilburn and wider area and delivering sustainable long-term benefits for residents along with key performance measures identified in relation to the quality and pace of delivery, resident experience, affordability and accountability Cabinet RESOLVED (having also noted the information contained within the exempt appendix to the report):

(1) To note the procurement process undertaken to appoint a preferred bidder for the procurement of a Single Delivery partner.

(2) Following on from (1) above, to approve awarding the contract to Ballymore Limited subject to satisfactory finalisation of contract terms and conclusion of the preferred bidder stage of the procurement exercise.

(3) To delegate authority to the Corporate Director, Neighbourhoods and Regeneration in consultation with the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Regeneration & Planning to finalise all the relevant aspects of legal and commercial agreements and enter into the contract with Ballymore Ltd as required by Contract Standing Order 88 following satisfactory completion of the preferred bidder stage.

10. **Community Led Housing in Brent - Brentfield Road Site Agreement**

Councillor Kelcher (as Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Planning) introduced a report from the Corporate Director Neighbourhoods and Regeneration providing an update on the progress made by Brent Community Land Trust (BCLT) towards delivery of a Community Led Housing (CLH) development on the Brentfield Road site and seeking approval for delegated arrangements to support ongoing delivery of the scheme.

In presenting the report, Councillor Kelcher opened by highlighting what he felt to be the innovative nature of the scheme in seeking to deliver genuinely affordable housing and making better use of land owned by the Council with the Brentfield Road site identified as one which had been underused for an extended period of time. As a collection of disused garages, the area had become vulnerable to fly tipping and anti-social behaviour with the Community Led Housing scheme providing an opportunity to transform the site into 19 affordable one -bedroom homes, including wheelchair accessible accommodation, alongside communal facilities and landscaping.

The scheme was also commended in terms of the model behind its delivery involving the Brent Community Land Trust as a community-led organisation established by local residents and stakeholders with the aim of creating affordable homes on a ground up rather than top down basis, enabling the homes delivered to be controlled for community benefit with the aim to give the community a meaningful role in how the new homes were managed and stewarded in the future.

Working with BCLT and Sapphire Independent Housing, the aim was to bring council -owned land, community knowledge and housing expertise together to meet the identified need to increase the support of affordable homes whilst also meeting real local need. Recognising the significant progress made since Cabinet had last considered the scheme, members were advised that planning work and funding discussions had progressed with a Registered Provider partner now also in place and lease arrangements being developed. Alongside this process community engagement had also remained central to the project, with consultation continuing to help shape the proposals with the dedication of all those involved in its continued progression acknowledged and commended. Whilst recognising the issues still to be resolved, particularly around planning, funding and some of the historic rights affecting the site, members were advised the proposals within the report had been designed to provide the flexibility required to address the remaining matters and move the project forward towards delivery in a timely and efficient way.

In considering the report, Cabinet welcomed the initiative with specific support highlighted by Councillor Knight, as local ward councillor, for the scheme in seeking to utilise a long-standing underused site that would involve its transformation into affordable one-bedroom and accessible homes. Thanks were also extended to the Brent Community Land Trust for its continued engagement with ward councillors throughout the development of the scheme.

Cabinet were also keen to express ongoing support for the proposal as a genuine community-led housing model providing an opportunity to increase the supply of affordable housing whilst also supporting residents on the housing waiting list with

the additional benefit of the Council being able to secure nomination rights for a number of the homes due to be provided through the scheme. On this basis the development was also regarded as an important pilot that could support the expansion of community land trust housing projects across the borough.

Members also noted the alignment with the Council's Housing Compact and wider ambition to increase affordable housing delivery through innovation, partnership working and local community involvement. Whilst recognising challenges remained in securing planning permission and development funding, Cabinet considered the scheme to offer significant benefits through the provision of the affordable homes due to be delivered, the productive use of underutilised council land and the delivery of accessible accommodation. Members were also keen to highlight the ongoing importance of working collaboratively with community organisations, housing partners and other stakeholders to address housing need across the borough, with the proposal recognised as demonstrating how innovative community-led approaches could complement the Council's own housing delivery programme whilst supporting broader objectives around affordability, accessibility and sustainable development.

In further support of the approach outlined, Cabinet recognised the potential for the scheme to act as a blueprint for future community-led housing initiatives and acknowledged the value of continuing to explore opportunities to maximise the use of council-owned land in support of innovative affordable housing delivery whilst also providing local people with a meaningful stake in their community. Having considered the report Cabinet therefore **RESOLVED** to:

(1) Note the substantial progress made by Brent Community Land Trust towards delivering Community Led Housing at Brentfield Road.

(2) Confirm the Council's continuing commitment to the delivery of Community Led Housing at Brentfield Road and to entering into a long lease arrangement broadly consistent with the principles previously approved by Cabinet.

(3) Authorise officers to continue negotiations with neighbouring property owners regarding the release of historic rights affecting the development site and, if successful in these negotiations, to enter into the appropriate agreements (e.g. deeds of release) with the neighbouring property owners to release such rights.

(4) Delegate authority to the Corporate Director, Neighbourhoods and Regeneration, in consultation with the relevant Cabinet Lead to determine whether reasonable attempts to secure voluntary release of private rights had been exhausted and, where considered necessary to facilitate delivery of the development and subject to planning approval, agree to appropriation of the site for planning purposes under section 122 Local Government Act 1972 and thereafter, engage the powers conferred by section 203 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 to override easements and other rights together with any associated statutory actions required to address affected rights, subject to payment of any compensation properly due.

(5) Delegate authority to the Corporate Director, Neighbourhoods and Regeneration to certify satisfaction of the conditions previously established by

Cabinet regarding planning permission, funding, viability and community engagement requirements.

(6) Delegate authority to the Corporate Director Neighbourhoods and Regeneration in consultation with the relevant Cabinet Lead to finalise and complete Heads of Terms, the Agreement for Lease, and all ancillary legal documentation required to facilitate delivery of the development.

(7) Delegate authority to the Corporate Director, Neighbourhoods and Regeneration to approve minor amendments to the scheme, contractual documentation or funding arrangements where required by statutory processes, funding bodies or delivery partners, provided such amendments do not materially alter the objectives of the scheme.

11. Quarter 2 Financial Forecast 2026-27

Given Councillor Grahl (as Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources) had submitted her apologies for absence, Councillor Muhammed Butt (as Leader of the Council) introduced a report from the Corporate Director Finance & Resources detailing the Q2 Financial Forecast 2026-27 in relation to the General Fund revenue budget, Housing Revenue Account, Dedicated Schools Grant and Capital Programme.

In presenting the report, Councillor Butt began by advising members that whilst recognising the nature of pressures identified, there were also signs that the approach taken over recent months was continuing to make a difference. Although highlighting that the General Fund was forecasting a £9m overspend, which was not where the Council wanted to be, it was felt important to recognise this represented an improvement of £0.5m since Q1. This movement had reflected a new overspend of £1.6m in Service Reform and Strategy, offset by a reduction of £1.8m in the forecast overspend in Residents and Housing Services and a new underspend of £0.3m in Finance and Resources. Whilst recognising that the ongoing pressures identified demonstrated a need to look beyond managing the immediate costs currently faced to address the underlying causes identified, the mitigating actions being taken (including the continued implementation of spending controls) were recognised which had involved the identification of £2.7m in-year savings, as a means of helping to mitigate budget pressures and prevent the financial position deteriorating further.

In noting the update on progress towards delivery of savings agreed by Full Council (as detailed within Appendix B of the report) members were advised that budget pressures continued to be reported within the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) with the Dedicated Schools Grant also forecasting an in year overspend due to continued pressures against budgets held for children with Education, Health and Care Plans.

In concluding, Councillor Butt recognised that there was more to do and the Council needed to maintain a firm grip on spending throughout the year but highlighted that the Council was not standing still and remained focussed in not only managing the current pressures but also on delivery of the longer term changes needed to reduce them whilst protecting the services residents relied upon and continuing to invest in Brent's future.

The Leader then invited Minesh Patel (Corporate Director Finance and Resources) to comment, who took the opportunity to remind members that as part of the 2026-27 budget setting process members had been advised about the required submission of a plan, under the Governments SEND reform package, to show how it was managing the cumulative deficits in respect of the DSG High Needs Block up to the end of 2025-26. The Government had announced they would look to cover up to 90% of these deficits, subject to approval of the plan, with Members advised that the plan had now been submitted and the Government having indicated it had been accepted. Whilst welcomed, members were reminded that significant issues remained in relation to the forecast for the High Needs Block for 2026-27 and beyond with further details still awaited on the proposals for addressing any deficit for 2026-27, 2027-28 and beyond. Whilst recognising the ongoing nature of the pressures identified, members welcomed the approach adopted by the Government in terms of the commitment to SEND reform and to support local authorities in seeking to address the High Needs Deficit position.

Having thanked officers and Cabinet Members for their continued effort in seeking to manage the pressures identified and maintain financial resilience Cabinet **RESOLVED** to:

(1) Note the overall financial position and the actions being taken to mitigate the issues arising, as detailed within the report.

(2) Endorse and approve the budget changes set out in section 12 of the report.

(3) Note the prudential indicators for treasury management in Appendix A of the report.

(4) Note the update in relation to the savings delivery tracker in Appendix B of the report.

(5) Approve the virements set out in sections 9.9 - 9.12 of the report.

12. Update to Brent's Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Framework and Action Plan 2026 - 2030

Councillor Johnson (as Cabinet Member for Housing, Homelessness and Renters) introduced a report from the Corporate Director Resident & Housing Services seeking Cabinet approval for an amendment to the Brent Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Framework and Action Plan, following its initial approval by Cabinet on 7 September 2026.

In presenting the report, Councillor Johnson advised that following adoption of the Framework at the previous Cabinet meeting London Gypsy and Travellers had approached the Council with a request to amend the section dealing with unauthorised encampments. Highlighting the importance in being able to ensure the voices of communities affected by the policy were heard, the representations received from the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities had been considered recognising the opportunity identified for the Council to improve the initial approach outlined. As a result, it was pointed out the proposed changes would involve removal of Appendix B from the original Framework and Action Plan, which set out

the Council's current approach to unauthorised encampments, and introduction (in its place) of a commitment to explore negotiated stopping approaches for household pursuing a nomadic way of life. Whilst the changes proposed would provide officers with scope to consider the implications of allowing negotiated stopping, members were advised this would not involve committing to a particular site or removing the council's existing legal powers. It would, however, demonstrate the Council willingness to explore whether negotiated stopping could work in Brent taking account of the wider implications in relation to housing, parks, environmental health, community safety and legal services.

Highlighting a need to ensure that the Council's policies were capable of evolving as a result of feedback received from those communities affected, it was felt the proposed amendment would provide an opportunity to do that in a pragmatic way while retaining the appropriate safeguards and oversight and demonstrating the Council's ongoing commitment to improving relationships with its Gypsy, Roma and traveller communities.

In considering the report members welcomed the approach outlined, which it was felt reflected a positive and responsive approach to engagement and commitment to listening, learning, and adapting to feedback as well as to the work being undertaken to reach and engage diverse communities. In that respect the work undertaken to strengthen engagement was also recognised as supporting wider outcomes including those relating to ongoing peer review activity in terms of public health and in the context of community involvement and inclusion.

In support of the approach outlined, Cabinet **RESOLVED**:

(1) To approve the following amendments to the Gypsy, Roma & Traveller Framework and Action Plan:

(a) to remove Appendix B, which set out the Council's approach to unauthorised encampments; and

(b) to introduce a new commitment to explore negotiated stopping approaches to accommodate households pursuing a nomadic way of life.

(2) To delegate authority to the Corporate Director for Residents and Housing Services to make any further amendments to the Framework and Action Plan, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing, Homelessness and Renters.

13. Brent Collaboration Charter

Councillor Amadi (as Cabinet Member for Communities, Culture & Cost of Living Support) introduced a report from the Corporate Director Service Reform and Strategy seeking Cabinet endorsement of the Draft Brent Collaboration Charter 2026– 2029 as a shared agreement between Brent Council, the Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise (VCFSE) sector and other local partners, including the NHS, designed to establish a shared vision, principles and commitments guiding how all would work together towards shared goals and better outcomes for residents.

In presenting the report, Councillor Amadi began by acknowledging the vital role voluntary community, faith and social enterprise organisations played in supporting residents highlighting the trusted relationships, local knowledge, and deep understanding of the communities they served and as key partners in tackling inequality, supporting well-being, and strengthening neighbourhoods. Having outlined the key role the sector played, members were advised that the Charter had been designed to set out a clear framework in terms of how the Council and VCFSE partners worked together in order to establish clear expectations and ensure the partnership was able to deliver clear outcomes for residents.

Members were advised that the Charter had been developed through an extensive process of engagement and co-production with the opportunity taken to thank all those who had contributed for their engagement. Highlighting the three key ambitions at the heart of the Charter focussed around the delivery of a thriving and sustainable community sector; meaningful role for the sector in shaping local decisions and ensuring an active role for residents in shaping the places they lived, members were advised of the way in which the Charter had also been designed to provide clear responsibilities, stronger accountability and measurable outcomes to demonstrate what was being achieved and where further support or action was required. In supporting the development of a stronger network of support around the sector, the flexibility within the Charter to review and adapt priorities was also highlighted, enabling responses to develop as circumstances and needs changed.

Members were advised the Charter also recognised that the VCFSE sector in Brent contained organisations of varying size and capacity, with the approach developed in response focussed on bringing organisations together to share knowledge and experience to provide additional capacity and support, where needed. As an example of this in practice reference was made to the number of small grassroot organisations with strong community connections who often needed practical support with governance, funding applications and demonstrating their impact and ensuring size would not therefore limit the opportunity to contribute.

Members were also advised of the important role identified for the Council as a facilitator and a convener in seeking to bring organisations together, connecting expertise and helping partners to share knowledge and resources on the basis of a One Council approach designed to provide consistent support across all services with success measured by the collective outcomes being delivered for residents and support being provided for organisations across the sector in seeking to make a meaningful difference.

In considering the report, Cabinet welcomed the extensive engagement and co-production undertaken during the development of the Charter. Support was also expressed for the emphasis placed on building the capacity of smaller VCFSC organisations, recognising the important role they played in reaching and delivering tailored support to local communities across a number of key areas including community safety, crime and anti-social behaviour and the youth offer and engagement. It was recognised that many smaller, locally based organisations were deeply embedded within their communities and were often able to reach residents and groups that larger organisations could not. The Charter was therefore welcomed as a mechanism for ensuring a broader and more inclusive approach to partnership working across the borough.

Cabinet also noted the importance of strong governance and oversight arrangements within the Charter, with Members recognising the need to establish clear accountability whilst retaining the flexibility required to respond to emerging issues and changing local priorities and the enhanced governance framework therefore considered an important step in strengthening the relationship and joint working arrangements between the Council and VCFSC sector.

In response to questions regarding capacity building, Councillor Amadi outlined the Council's commitment to supporting smaller organisations that may lack the resources, infrastructure or recognition of larger providers but possessed valuable local knowledge, community relationships and expertise. Members noted that support would include assistance with funding applications, bid development and access to facilities, enabling a wider range of organisations to contribute to delivering services and support for residents.

Members were also keen to support the Council's ambition to move towards a stronger convening and facilitating role, enabling it to work more strategically with delivery partners and align resources towards key borough priorities, including youth services, crime prevention, health inequalities and substance misuse with the opportunity provided within the Charter to strengthen partnership working and improve outcomes for residents also commended.

In summing up, Councillor Butt (as Leader) welcomed the direction of travel set out within the Charter, noting that it provided an opportunity to strengthen relationships with the VCFSC sector whilst also addressing gaps between previous partnership arrangements and the Council's wider policies and strategies. Members also noted the focus on participatory budgeting, commissioning and greater resident involvement in decision-making, which was seen as a means of enhancing transparency, strengthening partnerships and ensuring local communities could influence the services delivered within the borough.

In recognising the way in which the Charter would provide an opportunity to strengthen collaboration, improve governance and oversight arrangements, and establish a more strategic and sustainable approach to partnership working across the borough Cabinet **RESOLVED** to:

(1) Agree and endorse the draft Brent Collaboration Charter, as set out in Appendix 1 of the report, and ensure a one council approach to supporting its implementation.

(2) Note and endorse the establishment of a Voluntary, Community, Faith & Social Enterprise (VCFSE) Strategic Advisory Forum linked to emergent Brent Strategic Partnership structures that would provide overall oversight and ownership of the Charter, its implementation and delivery.

14. Authority to invite tenders for Homecare Services for Adult Social Care and Children and Young People with Disabilities

As the final item, Councillor Muhammed Butt (as Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care) introduced a report from the Corporate Director Service Reform and Strategy seeking approval to retender the contracts for

Homecare Services for Adult Social Care and Children and Young People with Disabilities.

In presenting the report, Councillor Butt began by highlighting the context to the procurement approach outlined, which had come at a time when demand for homecare was continuing to grow, care needs were becoming more complex and providers were faced by rising costs. In recognising the reform of adult social care as one of the great challenges facing public services, the opportunity was taken to outline how the framework for provision of the services outlined had been designed to support those needing support to live as independently and with as much dignity as possible. Reminding members of the size of the homecare service contract, reference was made to the annual £29m spend involving support being provided for around 1,700 adults and almost 250 children along with the responsibility to ensure the services remain sustainable, responsive and focused on the people who depended upon them. As such, the opportunity was also taken to outline the way in which the procurement process had been designed to align more closely with the neighbourhood operating model being introduced across the Council and work being undertaken with health partners to look at delivery of a more preventative early intervention approach to support those residents most in need. Members were advised that the approach also included a commitment to the London Living Wage, focus on maintaining CQC standards and to make better use of technology where it was recognised to benefit residents and deliver more reliable, responsive and consistent standards of care.

As a further contribution, Nigel Chapman (Corporate Director Children, Young People and Community Development) also welcomed the opportunity provided through the procurement process to secure good quality, cost effective packages of care support for children and families recognising the increasing demand for services and ability to provide the support required for them to lead more independent lives.

In support of the approach outlined, Cabinet therefore **RESOLVED** to:

(1) Approve inviting tenders for Homecare Services for Adult Social Care and Children and Young People with Disabilities on the basis of the pre - tender considerations set out in section 3.3.1 of the report.

(2) Approve Officers evaluating the tenders referred to in (1) above on the basis of the evaluation criteria set out in section 3.3.1(vi) of the report.

(3) Delegate authority to the Corporate Directors, Service Reform and Strategy and Children Young People and Community Development, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and the Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Employment and Climate Action to award the contracts for Homecare Services for Adult Social Care and Children and Young People with Disabilities for a term of three years, with the option to extend for a further three years and a final extension period of up to 24 months.

15. **Exclusion of Press and Public**

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

16. **Any other urgent business**

There were no items of urgent business.

The meeting ended at 11.10 am

COUNCILLOR MUHAMMED BUTT
Chair