



Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday 20 October 2026 at 6.00 pm

Conference Hall - Brent Civic Centre, Engineers Way,
Wembley, HA9 0FJ

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

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

Membership:

Members

Councillors:

A Patel (Chair)

I Ahmed

Anderson

Blackman

Burn

Chowdhury

Chauhan

Mulaisho

Mitchell

Substitute Members

Councillors:

Bajwa, De Souza, Ibrahim, McLeish

Councillors:

Kansagra and Mishra

Councillors:

Georgiou and Lorber

Councillors:

Alexandre and Ryan

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Notes for Members - Declarations of Interest:

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

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

If the Personal Interest is also significant enough to affect your judgement of a public interest and either it affects a financial position or relates to a regulatory matter then after disclosing the interest to the meeting the Member must leave the room without participating in discussion of the item, except that they may first make representations, answer questions or give evidence relating to the matter, provided that the public are allowed to attend the meeting for those purposes.

***Disclosable Pecuniary Interests:**

- (a) **Employment, etc.** - Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit gain.
- (b) **Sponsorship** - Any payment or other financial benefit in respect of expenses in carrying out duties as a member, or of election; including from a trade union.
- (c) **Contracts** - Any current contract for goods, services or works, between the Councillors or their partner (or a body in which one has a beneficial interest) and the council.
- (d) **Land** - Any beneficial interest in land which is within the council's area.
- (e) **Licences** - Any licence to occupy land in the council's area for a month or longer.
- (f) **Corporate tenancies** - Any tenancy between the council and a body in which the Councillor or their partner have a beneficial interest.
- (g) **Securities** - Any beneficial interest in securities of a body which has a place of business or land in the council's area, if the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body or of any one class of its issued share capital.

****Personal Interests:**

The business relates to or affects:

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

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

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

or

A decision in relation to that business might reasonably be regarded as affecting the well-being or financial position of:

- You yourself;
- a member of your family or your friend or any person with whom you have a close association or any person or body who is the subject of a registrable personal interest.

Agenda

Introductions, if appropriate.

Item	Page
1 Apologies for absence and clarification of alternate members	
2 Declarations of interests	
Members are invited to declare at this stage of the meeting, the nature and existence of any relevant disclosable pecuniary or personal interests in the items on this agenda and to specify the item(s) to which they relate.	
3 Deputations (if any)	
To hear any deputations received from members of the public in accordance with Standing Order 67.	
4 Minutes of the previous meeting	1 - 22
To approve the minutes of the previous meeting held on 2 September 2026 as a correct record.	
5 Matters arising (if any)	
To consider any matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting.	
6 Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee Work Programme Report	23 - 32
To provide an update on the changes to the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee's work programme.	
7 Establishment of Budget Scrutiny Task Group	33 - 36
The purpose of this report is for the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee to establish a task group to consider the Cabinet's budget proposals for 2027/28.	
8 Brent Climate and Ecological Emergency Programme and Strategy Update	37 - 110
This report provides a comprehensive update on Brent's Climate and Ecological Emergency programme. It focuses on the Council's approach	

and achievements to date, particularly in relation to emissions reduction, nature and biodiversity, and climate resilience and adaptation.

9 Quarter 2 Financial Forecast 2026/27 111 - 182

This report sets out the Council's financial forecast as at Quarter 2 2026/27, covering the General Fund revenue budget, Housing Revenue Account, Dedicated Schools Grant and Capital Programme. It supports the Committee in fulfilling its role in scrutinising the Council's financial position and budget performance throughout the year.

10 Council Tax Collection and Debt Recovery Performance 183 - 210

This report provides an overview of Council Tax collection and debt recovery performance, including progress against targets, the effectiveness of current arrangements, and the Council's approach to maximising collection, recovering debt and supporting residents.

11 Scrutiny Progress Update - Recommendations Tracker TO FOLLOW

The purpose of this report is to present the Scrutiny Recommendations Tracker to the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee for consideration.

12 Any other urgent business

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

Date of the next meeting: Tuesday 26 January 2027



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MINUTES OF THE RESOURCES AND PUBLIC REALM SCRUTINY COMMITTEE Held in the Conference Hall, Brent Civic Centre on Wednesday 2 September 2026 at 6.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillor A.Patel (Chair) and Councillors I.Ahmed, Anderson, Blackman, Burn, Chowdhury, Georgiou, Mitchell, Ryan and Want.

1. Apologies for absence and clarification of alternate members

Councillor A Patel (as Chair) welcomed members of the Scrutiny Committee to the meeting.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Dar during the meeting. Further details regarding the absence were provided under the Any Other Business item.

2. Declarations of interests

Councillor Georgiou declared a personal interest in respect of Agenda Item 7: Call-In: Individual Cabinet Member Decision to vary the contract for Integrated Street Cleansing, Waste Collection and Winter Maintenance Service with Veolia as he was one of the Councillors who had signed the call-in request.

In addition, Councillor Mitchell declared a personal interest in respect of Agenda Item 9: Value for Money in Procurement and Contracts, on the basis that she was employed by Deloitte, which had on a number of occasions been subcontracted by Brent Council.

3. Deputations (if any)

No deputations were received at the meeting.

4. Minutes of the previous meeting

RESOLVED that the minutes of the previous meetings held on 27 July 2026 be approved as a correct record.

5. Matters arising (if any)

There were no matters arising raised at the meeting.

6. Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee Work Programme Report

The Committee received a report from the Deputy Director, Democratic and Corporate Governance, which presented the 2026/27 work programme for the Resources & Public Realm Scrutiny Committee.

The Chair began by noting that an additional agenda item had been included for the 2 September 2026 meeting to consider the call-in of the decision by Councillor Promise Knight (Cabinet Member for Cleaner Streets, Transport and Public Realm) to approve a contract variation relating to the Integrated Street Cleansing, Waste Collection and Winter Maintenance Service provided by Veolia Environmental Services (UK) Limited, in accordance with Paragraph 13 of Part 3 of the Constitution. All changes were highlighted in red within Appendix A.

Having reviewed the work programme report, it was **RESOLVED** to note the Resources & Public Realm Scrutiny Committee work programme for the 2026/27 Municipal Year.

7. **Call-in: Individual Cabinet Member Decision to vary the contract for Integrated Street Cleansing, Waste Collection and Winter Maintenance Service with Veolia**

In opening the item, the Chair advised that the meeting had been arranged, in accordance with Standing Order 14, to consider a call-in submitted by six members of the Council relating to a decision taken by Councillor Promise Knight (Cabinet Member for Cleaner Streets, Transport and Public Realm) on 6 August 2026 regarding the following item:

- (a) Individual Cabinet Member Decision to vary the contract for Integrated Street Cleansing, Waste Collection and Winter Maintenance Service with Veolia

In considering the call-in, the Chair reminded the Committee that the line of questioning must remain specifically within the remit of the call-in and that issues raised on anything wider would not be valid and ruled out for consideration.

Having clarified the basis of the call-in, the Chair then proceeded to invite Councillor Lorber to outline the reasons for the call-in as representative of the members who had supported its submission.

In presenting the call-in, Councillor Lorber highlighted the following key issues as the basis for which the decision had been called-in:

- In representing the members who had called in the decision, Councillor Lorber began by outlining a number of concerns relating to street cleaning services. It was noted that he had received a significant number of reports and complaints from residents expressing concern regarding the cleanliness of local streets and shopping areas. Having been a resident of Brent since 1969, he stated that he shared the view of local residents that the borough's streets were in a poorer condition than in the past. It was felt that any opportunity to invest additional resources in improving street cleanliness should be fully and properly considered.

- Councillor Lorber expressed his dissatisfaction that no consultation had been undertaken with councillors prior to the decision being made by the Cabinet Member for Cleaner Streets, Transport and Public Realm. It was noted that the matter had not been considered by Cabinet and that the decision had instead been taken by the lead member alone.
- In referring to the existing contract Councillor Lorber advised that local streets were required to be maintained to a Grade A standard and should not fall below a Grade B standard. It was noted that where standards fell below the required level, the contractor should be required to undertake further cleaning works. The view was expressed that litter picking alone did not achieve a Grade A standard of cleanliness and that the proposed variation would result in an increased emphasis on litter picking rather than more effective street sweeping operations.
- Councillor Lorber also advised that the contract required the cleaning of litter bins located on the borough's high streets. However, it was felt that this element of the contract was not being delivered and that, notwithstanding the contractual requirement for the cleaning of the affected streets, the required standards were not being achieved in practice. As a result, concern that consideration was being given to a variation of the contract before ensuring that the existing contractual requirements were being fully implemented, adequately supervised and properly enforced. In his view, action should first be taken to ensure that all contractual obligations were being fulfilled and that the required standards of street cleanliness were consistently achieved.
- In summing up, Councillor Lorber maintained that all street cleaning issues should be considered as part of a comprehensive review of the service. It was stated that the review should focus on improving the cleanliness of the borough's streets, working collaboratively with residents and addressing all factors relevant to the delivery of clean and well-maintained streets across the Borough of Brent. Members in considering the call-in were, therefore, urged to refer the matter back to the Cabinet Member for Cleaner Streets, Transport & Public Realm to reconsider the decisions made.

The Chair thanked Councillor Lorber for summarising the reasons for the call-in and invited Members to ask any questions they had in relation to the information presented:

- As an initial query, the Chair sought clarification on whether the issues raised stemmed from shortcomings within the existing contract or from a failure to deliver the required service standards. In response, Councillor Lorber advised that, where rubbish had not been specifically reported, the contractor would not remove them as no instruction had been issued. It was suggested that a revised approach could require workers to remove all visible waste encountered during scheduled cleaning activities rather than only waste specifically identified and reported. It was felt there were gaps within the contract, some of which related to contractual requirements not being properly fulfilled and others which reflected weaknesses in the specification itself. It was considered that any proposed contract variation should be used as an opportunity to review and address those issues.

- Views were sought by members regarding the specific aspects of the proposed variation to which the members who had called in the decision objected. In response, Councillor Lorber advised that concerns remained regarding cleanliness standards, the condition of bins and the cleanliness of pavements within shopping areas. It was stated that the existing contract was not achieving the required standards and referred to one of the proposals to provide 5 additional litter pickers within each Brent Connect area to support town centre and high street cleaning. Concern was expressed that additional litter picking alone would not address the underlying issues. Councillor Lorber opined that greater emphasis should instead be placed on sweeping operations, cleansing of litter bins and periodic jet washing of pavements. It was also noted that mechanical sweepers were unable to access all areas of the high street environment and that some locations required manual cleaning by workers.
- In response to a further question seeking clarification on whether his concerns related to the effectiveness of the proposed measures or to broader service priorities, Councillor Lorber advised that he did not believe certain elements of the contract variation would achieve the intended outcomes. It was stated that where high streets were failing to meet the existing cleanliness standards required under the contract, the primary response should be to require the contractor to fulfil its current obligations rather than provide additional funding through a contract variation. It was also suggested that any review undertaken should consider closer working between street cleansing services and other functions, including planning, licensing and enforcement.
- Following a point of order regarding the scope of the call in, a revised question was put to Councillor Lorber by members seeking to establish whether, before additional expenditure was committed, a review of service delivery under the existing contract should first be undertaken. In response, Councillor Lorber agreed and stated that, if a contract variation was considered necessary, it would be appropriate to examine the underlying issues and determine whether the current contract was adequately meeting the needs of local residents. It was further added that any additional expenditure should be directed towards measures that would deliver meaningful improvements.
- Members observed that delaying the proposed contract variation could postpone the introduction of additional resources intended to improve street cleanliness, whilst a separate review of the contract could still be undertaken. In response, Councillor Lorber advised that it was important for the proposed investment of £1.54 million to be directed towards measures that would provide the greatest benefit in improving street cleanliness. It was further noted that, exclusive of VAT, the value of the proposed measures would be lower than £1.54 million and that the unspent sum could potentially be invested in additional services.

As no further issues were raised, the Chair thanked Councillor Lorber for responding to the Committee's queries and then proceeded to invite Councillor Muhammed Butt (Leader of the Council and deputising for Cabinet Member for Cleaner Streets, Transport & Public Realm) to respond to the issues raised within the call-in.

In responding to the call-in and explaining the basis of the decision made by the Cabinet Member for Cleaner Streets, Transport & Public Realm, Councillor Muhammed Butt felt it was important to begin by highlighting that the Council's objective was to secure cleaner streets, estates and town centres and to improve environmental quality across the borough. It was stated that the need for improvements was not in dispute, with the key consideration being how those improvements should be delivered. It was noted that the proposed expenditure of £1.54 million had been requested in order to increase investment in cleaning services, including additional mechanical sweeping, litter picking resources and night-time cleaning operations. Councillor Butt noted that the Council was responding directly to concerns consistently raised by residents through correspondence, ward engagement, reports submitted through FixMyStreet and issues observed by councillors during visits to their local areas. Councillor Butt emphasised that the proposal did not involve the procurement of a new contract but instead represented an operational variation to the existing arrangements, designed to direct investment towards areas identified as requiring improvement. It was further mentioned that mechanical sweepers had already been trialled within Brent and had demonstrated improvements in the cleanliness of residential roads and side streets. The importance of additional litter picking in improving the condition and appearance of town centres and high streets and in supporting civic pride amongst local communities was also stressed. It was additionally noted that mechanisms were already in place to record and monitor issues affecting unregistered land, with town centre managers maintaining records and monitoring identified concerns.

Having thanked Councillor Muhammed Butt for the initial response on the call-in the Chair then invited comments from the Committee with the following points covered:

- The Chair observed that there appeared to be a significant disconnect between residents' perceptions of street cleanliness and the reported successful performance of the contract. Clarification was therefore sought as to why this discrepancy existed. In response, Councillor Muhammed Butt (Leader of the Council and deputising for Cabinet Member for Cleaner Streets, Transport & Public Realm) advised that the Council had been operating within a challenging financial environment since 2023. It was noted that the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) required the Council to identify savings of between £30 million and £50 million over the next 4 years. Within that context, it was explained that the current contract represented the best arrangement that the Council had been able to secure. It was noted that the KPIs demonstrated that Veolia was meeting its contractual requirements and that, should members consider additional measures necessary, consideration could be given to how performance information was presented and monitored. It was emphasised that the proposal sought to address concerns that had been consistently raised by residents and councillors. It was explained that a number of initiatives had already been trialled and that the intention was to test whether these approaches could be successfully applied across the borough. The importance

of acting promptly was stressed, with it being noted that residents continued to raise concerns regarding waste collection, street cleansing, jet washing and weekend services. The proposals therefore sought to provide greater confidence that the Council and its contractor were responding to these concerns and delivering the best possible outcomes.

- The Chair subsequently queried whether there had been a shift away from a predominantly intelligence-led approach towards a more scheduled approach to service delivery. In response, Councillor Muhammed Butt (Leader of the Council and deputising for Cabinet Member for Cleaner Streets, Transport & Public Realm) acknowledged the value of intelligence-led reporting and noted that resident reports continued to play an important role in helping the Council identify and address local issues. However, it was advised that introducing scheduled activities, including weekend cleansing and night-time cleansing operations, would strengthen the Council's ability to improve local street conditions. It was added that feedback from residents, businesses and town centres would continue to provide valuable intelligence and help assess whether the measures were delivering the intended outcomes. It was reiterated that the proposals had been developed in response to issues raised by residents, councillors and reporting mechanisms, such as Fix My Street, and were intended to proactively address those concerns.
- A Member noted that many residents in Roundwood and Church End shared the concerns expressed regarding visible street cleanliness. It was stressed that residents wanted to feel that their local area was being cared for and that visible improvements remained important. The Member took the opportunity to commend a local resident, Khalil, for voluntarily collecting litter on the Church Road Estate. Whilst recognising the value of such community contributions, the Member stressed the importance of stronger enforcement measures and promoting a greater sense of pride in place. It was suggested that further consideration should be given to how residents could be encouraged to recognise that littering was unacceptable.
- The Member followed up by asking how the effectiveness of the additional resources would be measured over the following 12 months in order to enable effective scrutiny of whether residents were experiencing a visible improvement in local environmental conditions. In response, Chris Whyte (Director Public Realm) advised that street cleanliness could be measured through an established grading system that was already used on a regular basis. It was explained that this would enable the Council to assess whether cleanliness scores improved as a result of the additional investment. It was further noted that, given members' interest in the visible impact of the proposals, it would also be important to work closely with ward councillors to gather feedback regarding local conditions and any day-to-day improvements observed within communities.
- The Chair then questioned with interest whether evidence relating to KPIs had been presented to the Lead Member or Cabinet when the original decision had been taken and whether a clear record existed of the information that had been considered. In response, Chris Whyte (Director Public Realm) advised that the

Veolia contract was not regarded as a poorly performing contract and that there had been no concerns regarding compliance with the KPIs or the delivery of the contract specification. It was explained that the additional resources were intended to address gaps within the existing specification and deliver wider improvements to the street scene. This included services on housing estates and areas of unregistered land which were not currently covered by the existing contract. It was further advised that the Council had sought the contractor's professional advice on initiatives that would provide the most immediate and visible improvements to the public realm.

- Clarification was sought by members regarding the total cost to the Council of the proposed measures set out within the committee report. In response, Rashmi Agarwal (Head of Service Development and Contract Performance) advised that the costs set out within the committee report were inclusive of VAT. It was explained that the £1.54 million presented in the report therefore included VAT and that the amount payable to Veolia for the projects would be £1.54 million minus the 20% VAT element. Following up, members questioned why this distinction had not been made clearer within the report. In responding, Rashmi Agarwal noted that the committee report did state that the figures were inclusive of VAT. However, it was acknowledged that the position could have been expressed more clearly and that it could have been made more explicit that the actual payment value would be £1.54 million minus the 20% VAT element.
- Views were sought from Councillor Muhammed Butt on whether he was satisfied with the current condition of Brent's streets. In response, Councillor Muhammed Butt (Leader of the Council and deputising for Cabinet Member for Cleaner Streets, Transport & Public Realm) advised that there was always scope for improvement and explained that the proposals under consideration were intended to address identified gaps in service provision. It was noted that these included issues relating to housing estates, unregistered land, weekend cleansing, litter collection on side streets and concerns regarding fly tipping.
- Examples were requested on where trials had taken place and evidence was sought regarding the effectiveness of the measures proposed for additional investment. In response, Councillor Muhammed Butt (Leader of the Council and deputising for Cabinet Member for Cleaner Streets, Transport & Public Realm) advised that a number of initiatives had already been trialled across Brent, including the use of mechanical sweepers, night time cleansing operations, weekend response crews, community skips and estate cleansing activities. Chris Whyte (Director Public Realm) further added that several of the initiatives had been trialled during the previous financial year. It was reported that night-time waste clearance had delivered visible improvements in town centres and had brought about positive feedback from residents. It was also advised that plans were in place to use mechanical sweepers more extensively within residential streets that currently received less frequent cleansing services. Particular focus had been placed on areas such as Roundwood, where interventions were already being undertaken. It was explained that the proposals were intended to deliver noticeable improvements to local streets over a limited period using a limited level of funding. Whilst a broader review of

how streets were cleaned across the borough was supported, it was considered that such a review would be more appropriately undertaken as part of preparations for the next contract, when wider stakeholder engagement and more fundamental changes could be considered.

- Members then sought clarification regarding unregistered land and queried whether the Council maintained a record of such land within the borough. In response, Jehan Weerasinghe (Corporate Director Neighbourhoods and Regeneration) advised that the Council had access to Land Registry information which enabled gaps in ownership records to be identified and assessed. It was explained that unregistered land had not been included within the scope of the existing contract introduced in 2023 and represented one of the gaps now being addressed. It was added that the treatment of unregistered land would form part of wider contract review discussions with members.
- The Chair subsequently questioned what arrangements had previously been in place for dealing with waste and cleanliness issues on unregistered land. In response, Chris Whyte (Director Public Realm) advised that the Council had historically resisted requests to clear unregistered land, as it was neither resourced nor under a statutory duty to undertake that work. However, it had become increasingly apparent that neglected areas of unregistered land were having a detrimental impact on the overall street scene. It was explained that there would need to be a selective approach on a case-by-case basis rather to cleanse unregistered land. It was additionally noted that decisions regarding any works would be agreed with Veolia and based on an assessment of appropriateness and value.
- Queries were raised on whether a break clause existed within the contract and whether consideration should be given to reviewing the contract and associated KPIs before the scheduled review period. In response, Chris Whyte (Director Public Realm) advised that the contract contained provision for either extension or termination after year 8. It was explained that a contract of this scale would typically require more than 3 years of preparation prior to re-tendering. As a result, the Council would effectively begin preparing for future contract decisions during the following year. It was further advised that, as with the development of the current contract, political groups would be involved in shaping future specifications and arrangements to ensure the most effective outcomes were secured.
- In a supplementary question, members noted that the contract spanned 8 years and asked what formal review opportunities existed within the contract and when members could expect to become involved in discussions regarding future arrangements. In response, Chris Whyte (Director Public Realm) advised that the contract was due either to be re-tendered or brought to an end in 2031. Given the scale and complexity of the arrangement, preparatory work would ordinarily commence around 3 years prior, meaning that a substantive review could be expected to begin in 2028. It was added that by 2027 the Council would be entering a significant period of consideration regarding the future of the contract, including whether it should be extended, amended or re-tendered,

and there was no reason why preparatory work could not begin during the course of next year.

- Members were keen to seek details about the implications of delaying implementation of the proposals for approximately 3 months in order to allow a more detailed review of contract performance, identified gaps and the proposed initiatives. In response, Chris Whyte (Director Public Realm) stated that delaying implementation would likely result in existing standards continuing without the improvements that the interventions were intended to deliver. Whilst it was acknowledged that there was an opportunity to consider additional initiatives through the remaining funding that had not yet been allocated, it was considered that this should not prevent the immediate implementation of the measures already proposed. It was concluded that delaying the proposals would simply result in local streets remaining in their current condition for a longer period.
- A Member reminded the Committee that concerns regarding the performance of Veolia had previously been raised through scrutiny. It was noted that, in 2022, information had been requested regarding sub contractual mechanisms used to address localised underperformance and that the response received in 2023 had only contained partial year data in relation to contractor fines. The Member reiterated that contract performance had been subject to previous scrutiny and remained an area that warranted ongoing consideration.
- In referring to the concerns raised by residents, previous scrutiny discussions and performance information relating to the Veolia contract, the Chair sought clarification regarding how this information was collated, analysed and used to inform decisions on service improvements and future contract arrangements. In response, Chris Whyte (Director Public Realm) advised that previous scrutiny discussions had consistently demonstrated that Veolia was a responsive, reliable and trusted contractor that generally met the contractual KPIs. It was acknowledged that limitations existed within the contract specification and that these had been recognised when the contract was procured in 2023, following the need to reduce costs in response to financial constraints. It was further highlighted that one of the most significant weaknesses within the existing specification related to weekend cleansing. It was advised that limited weekend cleaning often resulted in cleansing teams having to undertake substantial catch-up work on Mondays, continuing through Tuesday and Wednesday due to the amount of waste and street cleanliness issues building up in Brent over weekends. Whilst cleanliness standards generally improved later in the week, the pattern regularly repeated itself over subsequent weekends. It was considered that the proposed interventions would help address this gap and improve overall street conditions. It was stressed that this issue related to limitations within the specification rather than any failure on the part of the contractor to meet its obligations.
- Councillor Muhammed Butt (Leader of the Council and deputising for Cabinet Member for Cleaner Streets, Transport & Public Realm) added that information was gathered through a variety of sources, including residents, councillors, Fix

My Street reports and complaints performance reports which were considered at Cabinet meetings.

- The Committee was keen to support conducting a broader review involving councillors and members to identify more efficient ways of addressing shortcomings within the contract and to explore additional service gaps. In response, Chris Whyte (Director Public Realm) advised that £3 million had been allocated to support improvements to the public realm. Of this amount, approximately £1.2 million had been identified through discussions with Veolia as funding that could be used to address specific gaps within the existing contract and deliver immediate improvements to street cleanliness. It was also advised that additional funding had been allocated to grounds maintenance services to support improvements within parks and open spaces. It was further mentioned that a proportion of the overall funding allocation remained available for allocation. Committee input was therefore welcomed regarding additional initiatives that could be supported through the remaining budget. However, it was emphasised that such discussions should not delay or compromise the implementation of the measures already proposed. It was further stressed that this current approach would not prevent a wider and more fundamental review of the contract from taking place.
- Members questioned whether, in future, ward members could be consulted whenever discussions took place regarding contract variations or similar proposals. In response, Councillor Muhammed Butt (Leader of the Council and deputising for Cabinet Member for Cleaner Streets, Transport & Public Realm) reiterated that the variation of the contract had been brought forward to address recognised service gaps and respond to issues consistently raised by residents and councillors. It was advised that the measures would also help produce data that would assist future decision making as the Council moved towards consideration of arrangements beyond 2031. It was confirmed that members would be engaged in discussions regarding the remaining unallocated funding and that, as part of future planning for the contract, all members would have the opportunity to contribute regardless of political affiliation.
- As a final query, members questioned whether the funding remained available beyond the current 12-month period and whether implementation could be deferred to a later date, such as January 2027, without losing access to the funding. In response, the meeting heard that the priority should be ensuring that funding was spent wisely rather than quickly. It was advised that a persuasive case could be made for spreading expenditure over a longer period if doing so would maximise value and improve outcomes for street cleanliness.

With no further issues raised, and having had regard to the advice of the Head of Litigation and Dispute Resolution, the Committee noted that Option 3 of the proposed recommendations, namely referring the matter to Full Council on the grounds that the decision may be contrary to the Council's Budget or Policy Framework, was not applicable in the circumstances. This was because the contract was not considered contrary to the budget, given that paragraph 6.1.3 of the Full Council Budget 2026 had allocated £3 million for this type of work. In addition, the contract was not considered contrary to the Policy Framework, as Part 3, Table 3 of the Constitution set out the

matters that constituted the Policy Framework and the contract did not fall within any of those categories.

Having considered the grounds for the call-in, the response given, and legal advice provided at the meeting in outlining the basis for the decision which had been taken by the Cabinet Member for Cleaner Streets, Transport & Public Realm, the Committee (in summing up and considering the options available under the call-process), indicated they were minded to confirm rather than refer back the original individual Cabinet Member decision in relation to varying the contract for Integrated Street Cleansing, Waste Collection and Winter Maintenance Service with Veolia.

It was therefore RESOLVED by majority vote to confirm as a final outcome of the call-in the original decision made by the Cabinet Member for Cleaner Streets, Transport & Public Realm on 6 August 2026 in relation to approving the variation of the contract for Integrated Street Cleansing, Waste Collection and Winter Maintenance Service with Veolia Environmental Services (UK) Limited to undertake additional works at the cost of £1,540,000 for a period of 12 months as detailed within the Individual Cabinet Member Decision report on which the decision was based. It was noted that this decision would therefore take immediate effect following the meeting.

Voting on the above decision was as follows: 6 in favour of confirming the original decision made and 4 in favour of referring the matter back to the Cabinet Member for Cleaner Streets, Transport & Public Realm for reconsideration.

8. Parking Provision & Policy Review

In the interests of time, the Chair proceeded directly to questions and comments from the Committee regarding the Parking Provision and Policy Review report, with the following main comments and issues discussed:

- In referring to the ongoing development and review of parking policy, members sought clarification regarding what further action would be taken to address concerns relating to inconsistent parking enforcement, including reports that Civil Enforcement Officers were reluctant to issue penalty notices where there was a perception that fines would not be paid. In response, Sandy Fazekas (Head of Healthy Streets and Parking) advised that a range of measures had been introduced to improve enforcement response times. These included increased deployment of mobile enforcement units using e-bicycles and e-scooters, enabling officers to attend reported issues more quickly, often within 20 minutes. In relation to concerns regarding inconsistent enforcement, it was explained that Civil Enforcement Officers would issue penalty notices where appropriate and would not have knowledge of whether a penalty charge would ultimately be paid. Members were encouraged to report any examples where comments of that nature had been made so that they could be investigated. The importance of ensuring that enforcement was undertaken fairly and consistently was emphasised and it was advised that appropriate action would be taken with the contractor against the Civil Enforcement Officer where any failings were identified. It was further advised that enforcement resources were routinely targeted towards known hotspot locations. It was additionally mentioned that there was ongoing work to explore the use of technology to

improve enforcement, including scanning technology that could assist in identifying permit holders and illegally parked vehicles. This would allow resources to be deployed more effectively to locations where enforcement action was most needed. The meeting also heard that efforts were being made to increase the frequency of patrols across the borough, with the aim of encouraging greater compliance and reducing the likelihood of motorists taking risks in relation to parking restrictions.

- Clarification was sought on how the emerging Parking Strategy would be aligned with the wider kerbside management approach and what data would be collected and used to inform future policy development. In response, Jehan Weerasinghe (Corporate Director Neighbourhoods and Regeneration) advised that an officer-led group had been established to ensure that strategies and frameworks were appropriately aligned with other relevant policies. Chris Whyte (Director Public Realm) added that the previous kerbside management scrutiny review would provide a valuable foundation for the development of future parking policies and proposals. Sandy Fazekas (Head of Healthy Streets and Parking) further advised that the parking review would take account of a range of existing strategies, including the long-term Transport Strategy and the Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy. It was explained that consideration would be given to competing demands for kerbside space and the need to ensure that it was used fairly and in a manner that reflected local needs. It was also advised that extensive benchmarking would be undertaken to examine approaches adopted elsewhere in London. In relation to data collection, it was stated that information from the Council's parking systems would be analysed, including permit types and vehicle registration data, in order to support future decision making and encourage cleaner forms of transport. Members were also informed that a new map-based traffic order system was due to be introduced in autumn 2026, which would be public-facing and provide information on parking restrictions and electric vehicle charging points. It was anticipated that the system would also assist in monitoring and assessing kerbside usage.
- Noting concerns raised by businesses including concerns around the affordability of parking and the challenges faced by business owners who were required to park some distance from their stores, the Chair sought clarification on whether the Council would be open to considering measures such as free parking on high streets and business parking permits in order to support local businesses. In response, Councillor Muhammed Butt (Leader of the Council and deputising for Cabinet Member for Cleaner Streets, Transport & Public Realm) advised that more than 56,000 residents already lived within Controlled Parking Zones (CPZs) and paid for parking permits. Concern was expressed that allowing unrestricted free parking elsewhere could be viewed as inequitable to those residents. It was further noted that more than 50% of Brent residents did not own a vehicle and that any move towards greater free parking would have financial implications, potentially affecting the Council's ability to fund the Freedom Pass scheme and Highways initiatives. It was advised that any reduction in parking income would require alternative funding sources to be identified.

- In acknowledging the response received, the Chair highlighted the economic pressures facing local high streets and reiterated concerns raised by businesses regarding accessibility. Assurance was sought that these concerns, including the potential introduction of business permits and other support measures, would be considered as part of the parking policy review. In responding, Chris Whyte (Director Public Realm) advised that the purpose of the parking review was to ensure that all relevant issues were open for discussion and consultation. It was confirmed that matters such as business permits and parking provision to support local businesses would form part of the review process and would be considered alongside feedback before any decisions were made.
- The Chair subsequently referred to locations across the borough where significant numbers of Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) had been issued and queried whether detailed analysis was undertaken to identify any issues relating to signage, road markings or the communication of parking restrictions. In response, Sandy Fazekas (Head of Healthy Streets and Parking) advised that enforcement data was monitored closely. Referring specifically to School Streets, it was confirmed that all signage complied with statutory requirements and that additional advance warning signs were installed where appropriate. It was advised that engagement work was undertaken with schools, parents and carers to increase awareness of restrictions and reduce the number of breaches. Weekly monitoring of enforcement activity was carried out and appeal outcomes were reviewed on a regular basis to identify any areas where improvements might be required.
- In highlighting that approximately 73,000 PCNs had reportedly been issued in relation to School Streets during the past year and whilst acknowledging that signage may comply with statutory requirements, members contended that the high volume of PCNs issued suggested that many motorists were failing to observe the restrictions. Concerns were expressed that this could undermine the objective of protecting children and give rise to perceptions that revenue generation was being prioritised over road safety. In response, Sandy Fazekas (Head of Healthy Streets and Parking) disputed the suggestion that School Street enforcement was intended to generate income. It was advised that compliance levels were monitored closely and that compliance generally improved over time as awareness increased. It was further explained that the borough now operated more than 31 School Streets and that the overall number of PCNs had increased partly because additional School Streets had been introduced in response to strong support from schools, parents and carers. It was reiterated that all signage complied with statutory requirements and that extensive communication and engagement activity was undertaken before restrictions came into force. However, it was acknowledged that reductions in non-compliance did not always occur as quickly as anticipated and that some motorists continued to enter restricted areas despite the signage and awareness raising efforts.
- Members noted that the report indicated that 93% of parking transactions had been undertaken using cashless methods by 2024, compared with 71% in 2018, and that the Council was therefore considering reducing the number of

operational pay and display machines. Whilst recognising the rationale for this approach, clarification was sought regarding how the needs of the remaining 7% of users, including older residents, disabled residents and those experiencing digital exclusion, would be considered. In response, Sandy Fazekas (Head of Healthy Streets and Parking) advised that the increasing use of cashless payment methods reflected wider changes in customer behaviour. It was noted that the Council continued to operate a number of pay and display machines, many of which were coin operated and therefore vulnerable to maintenance issues and blockages. It was further mentioned that more modern alternatives were available, including contactless payment machines, and that a range of options would be considered as part of the review. It was explained that options could include retaining a number of high use machines, replacing cash payments with contactless payments, or introducing alternative payment arrangements such as pay points located in local shops. It was stressed that all options would be carefully considered to ensure that an appropriate level of service continued to be provided.

- Concerns were highlighted regarding delivery drivers occupying parking bays intended for visitors to local high streets and asked what further enforcement powers were available to the Council to address the issue and whether this matter would form part of the wider Parking Strategy review. In response, Sandy Fazekas (Head of Healthy Streets and Parking) advised that delivery vehicles were permitted to use pay and display bays for loading and unloading purposes for up to 20 minutes. It was explained that the key issue was ensuring that sufficient loading and unloading places were available within town centres and commercial areas. It was advised that, as part of highway improvement schemes, the Council routinely reviewed whether additional loading bays were required and considered opportunities to convert existing spaces where shortages were identified. Councillor Muhammed Butt (Leader of the Council and deputising for Cabinet Member for Cleaner Streets, Transport & Public Realm) further added that the Council regularly engaged with food delivery companies to ensure that appropriate controls were put in place regarding where delivery drivers could park. It was advised that the companies were aware of concerns relating to the impact of delivery drivers on local communities and residents.
- Further questions were raised regarding whether the parking policy review would consider differentiated parking charges based on vehicle emissions, weight and size. In response, Sandy Fazekas (Head of Healthy Streets and Parking) confirmed that all these factors would be considered as part of the review. It was explained that some local authorities had already begun introducing differential charges based on vehicle weight. While vehicle size could be more difficult to measure consistently, vehicle weight was readily available through existing recorded data. It was confirmed that benchmarking and best practice would form part of the review process before any proposals were developed.
- Members further requested that the parking policy review consider the potential impact of autonomous vehicles on future kerbside management and parking provision. In response, Sandy Fazekas (Head of Healthy Streets and Parking)

advised that autonomous vehicle trials were already taking place in London. Confirmation was provided that consideration would be given to how autonomous vehicles might affect parking policy and kerbside management arrangements in future.

- Turning to the use of Public Transport Accessibility Levels (PTAL) in determining parking provision for new residential developments, the Chair expressed concerns that wider parking implications arising from large scale housing schemes, including the impact of visitors travelling by car, were not always fully considered. Clarification was sought on whether the parking review would take these issues into account and whether SCIL funding could be considered for parking improvements associated with major developments. In response, Jehan Weerasinghe (Corporate Director Neighbourhoods and Regeneration) advised that parking standards associated with new developments were governed by the London Plan and that the Council was required to ensure that its planning policies remained consistent with those requirements. It was noted that a review of the Local Plan was underway and that consultation had already commenced. It was explained that parking provision within new developments remained subject to the policy framework established through the London Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Councillor Muhammed Butt (Leader of the Council and deputising for Cabinet Member for Cleaner Streets, Transport & Public Realm) added that consideration should also be given to Brent's diverse communities and family structures when assessing parking needs and highlighted the importance of ensuring that parking arrangements should not inadvertently discourage family and friends visiting residents attending events and gatherings. Sandy Fazekas (Head of Healthy Streets and Parking) further advised that, where car free developments were approved, it was common for the Council to secure section 106 funding to support the introduction and operation of CPZs around those developments. This helped to manage parking pressures and prevent residents of car free schemes from obtaining parking permits. It was also explained that the design of CPZs typically included a combination of shared use parking bays or pay-by-phone bays to accommodate visitor parking, local shoppers and access to nearby amenities.

In seeking to bring consideration of the item to a close, the Chair thanked officers and members for their contributions towards scrutiny of the Parking Strategy report. As a result of the outcome of the discussion, the following Cabinet recommendations, and information requests identified were **AGREED**:

Recommendations to Cabinet Member

- 1) Develop, as part of the Parking Policy Review, a coordinated approach to addressing issues arising from food delivery and courier riders, as well as dockless hire bikes, including inappropriate parking, obstruction and wider public realm nuisance, through consideration of designated parking arrangements, engagement with operators and users, and alignment with wider transport, community safety and public realm policies.

- 2) Explore, as part of the Parking Policy Review, opportunities to further enhance the visibility, clarity and effectiveness of School Streets signage and supporting measures beyond statutory requirements, improving driver awareness and reducing inadvertent non-compliance.
- 3) Explore, as part of the Parking Policy Review, opportunities to strengthen the role of vehicle emissions, size and weight in future parking charges and permit arrangements, in support of the Council's environmental, transport and public realm objectives.
- 4) Explore, as part of the Parking Policy Review, how parking and permit arrangements can best support residents and businesses in town centres and local high streets, balancing access needs through appropriate resident and business permit provision whilst supporting thriving local economies.
- 5) Assess, as part of the Parking Policy Review, the potential long-term implications of autonomous vehicle technology for parking demand, kerbside activity and the allocation of road space, ensuring future parking policies remain adaptable to emerging transport trends.

Information Requests

- 1) Provide an assessment of any emerging trends relating to autonomous vehicles and their potential implications for parking demand, kerbside management and future parking policy, highlighting any significant developments for the Committee's attention.
- 2) Provide ward-level data on the availability and usage of RingGo and pay-and-display parking payment methods across the borough over the last two years, including information on measures to ensure that there are no barriers for digitally excluded residents and available data on customer enquiries, complaints or reported difficulties relating to digital-only parking payment systems and planned improvements.

Please note, whilst the Cabinet recommendations and information requests agreed as an outcome of each item were based on discussions and issues identified during the meeting, the final requests have been refined following the meeting to improve clarity and readability, while remaining consistent with the Committee's discussions and intended outcomes.

9. Value for Money in Procurement and Contracts

In the interests of time, the Chair proceeded directly to questions and comments from the Committee regarding the Value for Money in Procurement and Contracts report, with the following main comments and issues discussed:

- As an initial query, the Chair sought clarification regarding the duration of the Procurement Improvement Programme, the achievements delivered since its commencement and whether any efficiencies, savings or additional value had

been demonstrated as a result of the work undertaken. In response, Rhodri Rowlands (Director of Strategic Commissioning Capacity Building and Engagement) advised that the Procurement Improvement Programme had commenced in May/June 2025 and had originally been established as a 24-month programme. However, it had subsequently been decided to conclude the programme and transition the remaining development priorities into usual business activity over the following 12 months. It was explained that one of the main recommendations arising from the procurement review that came before the programme had been the need to strengthen procurement capacity and expertise. It was reported that all vacancies within the Procurement Team had now been filled, following a prolonged period during which vacancy levels had exceeded 50% and reliance had been placed on agency staff. The successful recruitment of permanent staff, including a permanent Head of Procurement, had improved capacity, stability and expertise within the service, and no newly recruited staff had subsequently left the organisation. The meeting heard that a further area of focus had involved strengthening relationships between the corporate procurement function and service areas in order to support more effective procurement planning and improve contract management arrangements across the Council. It was advised that progress had also been achieved through the Council's partnership with Oxygen Finance. Increased supplier participation had contributed to income generation, with income returned to the Council increasing to around £200,000 during the first year. It was added that additional benefits had been realised within areas such as Adult Social Care and printing contracts, where increased capacity had enabled greater support to be provided to services.

- The Chair subsequently questioned whether the Procurement Improvement Programme had delivered improvements in relation to supplier engagement. In response, Rhodri Rowlands (Director of Strategic Commissioning Capacity Building and Engagement) highlighted that the first 12 months had largely focused on recruitment, service capacity and establishing frameworks, tools and resources. It was noted that progress had also been made in updating the Council's Procurement Strategy and strengthening contract management arrangements. Alongside these improvements, work had commenced to increase engagement with local suppliers and small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) through collaboration with Economic Development teams. The Committee were informed that an early market engagement event had recently been held which had been well attended and had provided an opportunity to establish relationships, and outline requirements at an early stage.
- The Chair sought details regarding the number of contracts managed by the Council, to which Melissa Sage (Head of Procurement) confirmed that approximately 2,500 contracts had been identified across the organisation.
- The Chair proposed that the Procurement Team consider making greater use of social media and other digital communication channels to promote procurement opportunities to local businesses. This would include raising awareness of how businesses could register their interest, offer services and access opportunities to bid for Council contracts. It was requested that an

update on progress and outcomes be reported back to the Committee within 3 to 6 months. In response, Rhodri Rowlands (Director of Strategic Commissioning Capacity Building and Engagement) advised that this work had already commenced. He highlighted recent improvements to procurement websites and ongoing efforts to encourage local businesses to register as potential suppliers. It was emphasised that proactive engagement with local businesses formed a key element of the Procurement Strategy and that increased staffing capacity had strengthened the Council's ability to undertake this work. It was also advised that the Council remained committed to working with larger suppliers to encourage local employment opportunities and strengthen local supply chains.

At this stage of the meeting, the Committee agreed to apply the guillotine procedure under Standing Order 62(c) in order to extend the meeting by 30 minutes and allow sufficient time for consideration of the item and the remaining business on the agenda.

- Considering the quarterly reporting arrangements for platinum contracts, members queried whether the information received resulted in changes to the management of those contracts. In response, Rhodri Rowlands (Director of Strategic Commissioning Capacity Building and Engagement) advised that a revised approach to managing platinum contracts had recently been introduced in order to strengthen oversight, assurance, consistency and visibility of reporting. It was explained that the Procurement Team worked with service-based contract managers to undertake reviews of platinum contracts every 6 months, using reporting templates. It was further mentioned that the reports were reviewed by the Commissioning, Procurement and Contract Management Assurance Board, which provided scrutiny before reports were escalated to the Council's Assurance Board. It was confirmed that where underperformance or opportunities for improvement were identified, action would be monitored as part of the contract management approach. It was further advised that a risk-based and proportionate approach to contract management was being developed across the organisation, recognising that different contract types required different levels of oversight. The Council's contract management arrangements remained devolved, with responsibility sitting primarily within service areas, whilst the corporate procurement function provided guidance, tools, templates and support to help contract managers monitor supplier performance effectively. Melissa Sage (Head of Procurement) additionally noted that a Contract Management Forum acting as a Community of Practice had been established to enable contract managers from across services to share experiences, learn from one another and promote a consistent approach to contract management. Further events were planned to strengthen learning and embed good practice across the organisation.
- Further clarification was sought regarding the Council's approach to environmental sustainability and the circular economy within procurement. In response, Melissa Sage (Head of Procurement) advised that sustainability formed a component of every procurement exercise, with 5% allocated to sustainability considerations. It was noted that a separate policy governed this area and that the policy would be reviewed and refreshed in the coming months. It was explained that principles around the circular economy sat within the

Social Value Statement. It was stated that sustainability criteria could be weighted more heavily where appropriate to the nature of a particular procurement. It was confirmed that, as a minimum, contracts valued at over £100,000 included a 5% sustainability weighting. In relation to environmental considerations, Melissa Sage (Head of Procurement) advised that procurement exercises regularly included questions regarding matters such as vehicle emissions, use of electric vehicles and recycling arrangements, where relevant to the service being procured. It was explained that sustainability requirements were developed in conjunction with service areas to ensure that the criteria reflected the specific nature and needs of each procurement.

- Members proposed a recommendation that case studies be provided to the Committee, demonstrating examples of collaborative working between departments, including the development and delivery of projects supported through funding opportunities. The Committee noted that case studies could be shared with the Committee, following the meeting.
- In response to a recommendation from the Chair that the contract database currently under development be shared with the Committee, including details relating to contracts awarded to Brent local suppliers, associated social value commitments, monitoring arrangements and a breakdown by Directorate, Melissa Sage (Head of Procurement) advised that the Procurement Improvement Review had identified the need for a contract database. It was explained that contract information had previously been held across a number of Excel spreadsheets and that a new database had now been commissioned, with data from the various spreadsheets currently being uploaded. Additional fields had been incorporated to enable contracts to be filtered by Brent local suppliers and by social value commitments requiring monitoring. It was advised that the completed dashboard would provide information relating to approximately 2,500 contracts and would also include a breakdown by Directorate. The Committee noted that this information would be shared once available.

Responding to the recommendation from the Chair, Councillor Muhammed Butt (Leader of the Council and deputising for Cabinet Member for Cleaner Streets, Transport & Public Realm) highlighted that the Council's Open Data Portal provided quarterly information on council expenditure over £500. It was stated that only information relating to individuals involved in fostering and adoption arrangements was redacted. It was further confirmed that information on how to access the Council's Open Data Portal would be provided to the Committee, following the meeting.

- In considering a question regarding the management of bribery and corruption risks during procurement and contract management processes, Rachel Crossley (Corporate Director Service Reform and Strategy) advised that mandatory training on bribery, fraud and corruption formed part of the Council's induction process. It was explained that risks and conflicts of interest relating to providers were actively managed and that appropriate safeguards were embedded within moderation processes involving the relevant teams. Melissa Sage (Head of Procurement) added that, from a procurement perspective, all

members of the Chartered Institute of Procurement & Supply (CIPS), representing approximately 75% of the team, undertook an annual ethical procurement assessment, which exceeded the standard training requirements applicable across the Council.

- In response to a question regarding the monitoring of social value commitments within major contracts and the consideration to require suppliers to report consistently on the outcomes for Brent residents, Brent businesses, Rhodri Rowlands (Director of Strategic Commissioning Capacity Building and Engagement) advised that the Council had recently updated its social value guidance and was working with a network of social value champions possessing specialist knowledge within their respective service areas, including employment and skills, climate change and sustainability. It was stated that the Council was committed to strengthening the monitoring of social value delivery and was embedding this approach within strategic contract reports, contract management requirements and Procurement Strategy. It was further advised that a Social Value Annual report would be developed in 2026/27, which would include supplier case studies and data relating to expenditure, support for the local economy and engagement with SMEs. As an example of social value outcomes, the work of Citizens Advice Bureau was highlighted, which had trained 72 local volunteers during the previous year. Of those volunteers, 65% had progressed into permanent employment. It was also noted that the organisation provided a number of apprenticeships, with more than 70% taken up by Brent residents.
- As a final query, members sought details regarding the assessment of insourcing opportunities. In responding, Melissa Sage (Head of Procurement) advised that consideration of whether a service could be insourced formed part of the business case developed jointly with service areas prior to the commencement of any tendering exercise. It was explained that, once the tendering process had commenced, the procurement approach could not be altered. There was no standard insourcing evaluation framework applied across all contracts as the extent of the assessment undertaken depended on the nature of the service being considered.

In seeking to bring consideration of the item to a close, the Chair thanked officers and members for their contributions towards scrutiny of the Value for Money in Procurement and Contracts report. As a result of the outcome of the discussion, the following suggestions for improvement and information requests identified were **AGREED**:

Suggestions for Improvement

- 1) Strengthen communications and engagement around forthcoming procurement opportunities, including the development of shareable content and resources that can be used by Council services and local councillors to raise awareness among local businesses of opportunities to become Council suppliers.

Information Requests

- 1) Provide a series of case studies demonstrating how the Council has responded to the LGA corporate peer review's emphasis on curiosity and innovation through its procurement activity, including examples of initiatives supported or enabled through the Procurement Improvement Programme (PIP).
- 2) Provide an overview of the data structure within the new contract management system, including the categories, tabs, data fields and reporting information that will be captured, to enable the Committee to understand the scope of data collection and identify whether any additional information would support effective contract oversight and scrutiny.

Please note, whilst the suggestions for improvement and information requests agreed as an outcome of each item were based on discussions and issues identified during the meeting, the final requests have been refined following the meeting to improve clarity and readability, while remaining consistent with the Committee's discussions and intended outcomes.

10. Scrutiny Progress Update - Recommendations Tracker

In the interests of time, the Chair proceeded directly to questions and comments from the Committee regarding the Scrutiny Progress Update - Recommendations Tracker report, with the following main comments and issues discussed:

- The Chair referred to a longstanding request from the Committee for information relating to the Council's commissioned services, including the number of commissioned services, the income generated through those arrangements and the relationship between that income and the delivery of thematic savings. Concern was expressed that, despite previous requests, the information had not yet been provided in the agreed format. Clarification was therefore sought regarding the reasons for the delay, when the information would be available and whether a commitment could be given to provide the information in the format originally requested. In response, Rhodri Rowlands (Director of Strategic Commissioning Capacity Building and Engagement) advised that the requested data was not available in the format sought by the Committee and emphasised the need to work more closely with the Chair and Committee regarding future requests. A continued commitment to providing the information requested was expressed. Focusing on the primary outstanding request relating to income generating contracts, particularly concessionary contracts, it was advised that work was underway through category managers and the Council's new contract management system to capture the relevant information. Whilst the financial information remained a work in progress, it was confirmed that an initial overview of the Council's concessionary contracts could be provided.
- The Chair sought further clarification regarding how thematic savings proposals had been developed and agreed if the underlying financial information relating to contract values was not yet readily available. In response, Rhodri Rowlands (Director of Strategic Commissioning Capacity Building and Engagement)

explained that procurement officers worked with service areas to identify contracts where opportunities existed either to reduce costs or review specifications in order to find efficiencies. It was added that the introduction of the new contract management platform would provide a more comprehensive and strategic overview of the Council's procurement pipeline, including details of contract renewal dates and upcoming procurement activity. This would enable a more targeted and proactive approach to identifying opportunities for cost avoidance, efficiencies and savings.

In seeking to bring consideration of the item to a close, the Chair thanked officers and members for their contributions in relation to the Scrutiny Progress Update - Recommendations Tracker report.

The Committee agreed to note the progress of the previous recommendations, suggestions for improvement, and information requests of the Committee.

11. Any other urgent business

The opportunity was taken by a member of the Committee to raise a matter on behalf of Councillor Dar. It was stated that his absence from the meeting had arisen as a result of a genuine and inadvertent communication failure and that he had not, in any way, been neglecting his duties.

The meeting closed at 9.33 pm.

COUNCILLOR ANUP PATEL
Chair

	Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee 20 October 2026
	Report from the Deputy Director, Democratic and Corporate Governance
Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2026/27	

Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	N/A
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:	Appendix A: Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2026/27
Background Papers:	None
Contact Officer(s): (Name, Title, Contact Details)	Jason Sigba (Strategy Lead – Scrutiny, Democratic & Corporate Governance) Tel: 020 8937 2036 Email: Jason.Sigba@brent.gov.uk Amira Nassr (Deputy Director, Democratic & Corporate Governance, Finance & Resources) Tel: 020 8937 5436 Email: Amira.Nassr@brent.gov.uk

1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1 To provide an update on the changes to the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee's work programme.

2.0 Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 That committee members note the report and the changes to the work programme within.

3.0 Detail

3.1 Contribution to Borough Plan Priorities & Strategic Context

- 3.1.1 Borough Plan 2023-2027 – all strategic priorities.

3.2 Background

3.2.1 The work programme outlines the items which the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee will consider during the municipal year.

3.2.2 It is intended to be a flexible, living document that can adapt and change according to the needs of the Committee. The amendments set out within this report are consistent with that approach and include:

- Removal of the meeting scheduled for 27 April 2027, reflecting Full Council's decision on 6 July 2026 to reduce the number of committee meetings from six to five per municipal year.
- Rescheduling of the Waste Management and Enforcement item from the Committee's meeting on 27 April 2027 to 1 March 2027.

All changes are highlighted in red in Appendix A.

4.0 Stakeholder and ward member consultation and engagement

4.1 Ward members are regularly informed about the committee's work programme in the Chair's report to Full Council. There is ongoing consultation with other relevant stakeholders.

5.0 Financial Considerations

5.1 There are no financial considerations arising from this report. However, budget and financial implications are addressed in the 'Financial Considerations' section of any reports to the Committee, requested as part of its work programme.

6.0 Legal Considerations

6.1 There are no legal considerations arising from this report. However, legal implications are addressed in the 'Legal Considerations' section of any reports to the Committee, requested as part of its work programme.

7.0 Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Considerations

7.1 There are no EDI considerations for the purposes of this report. However, EDI implications are addressed in the 'EDI Considerations' section of any reports to the Committee, requested as part of its work programme.

8.0 Climate Change and Environmental Considerations

8.1 There are no climate change and environmental considerations for the purposes of this report. However, climate change and environmental

implications are addressed in the 'Climate Change and Environmental Considerations' section of any reports to the Committee, requested as part of its work programme.

9.0 Communication Considerations

- 9.1 There are no communication considerations for the purposes of this report. However, communication implications are addressed in the 'Communication Considerations' section of any reports to the Committee, requested as part of its work programme.

Report sign off:

Amira Nassr

Deputy Director, Democratic and Corporate Governance

Appendix A

Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2026/27

Agenda Item	Cabinet Members/Non-Executive Members	Corporate Directors	External Organisations/Participants
Committee Work Programme 2026/27	Cllr Anup Patel, Chair of Resources and Public Realm Committee	Minesh Patel, Corporate Director – Finance and Resources	
Budget 2026/27: Medium Term Financial Outlook and In-Year Monitoring Update (Q1)	Cllr Gwen Grahl, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources	Minesh Patel, Corporate Director – Finance and Resources	
Highways Maintenance	Cllr Promise Knight, Cabinet Member for Cleaner Streets, Transport and Public Realm	Jehan Weerasinghe, Corporate Director – Neighbourhoods and Regeneration	
Revitalising High Streets and Town Centres	Cllr Matt Kelcher, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Planning	Jehan Weerasinghe, Corporate Director – Neighbourhoods and Regeneration	

Wednesday 02 September 2026

Agenda Item	Cabinet Members/Non-Executive Members	Corporate Directors	External Organisations/Participants
Call-in: Decision to vary the contract for the Integrated Street Cleansing, Waste Collection & Winter Maintenance Service with	Cllr Promise Knight, Cabinet Member for Cleaner Streets, Transport and Public Realm	Jehan Weerasinghe, Corporate Director – Neighbourhoods and Regeneration	

Veolia Environmental Services (UK) Ltd			
Parking	Cllr Promise Knight, Cabinet Member for Cleaner Streets, Transport and Public Realm	Jehan Weerasinghe, Corporate Director – Neighbourhoods and Regeneration	
Value for Money in Procurement and Contracts	Cllr Muhammed Butt, Leader of Brent Council and Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care	Rachel Crossley, Corporate Director – Service Reform and Strategy	

Tuesday 20 October 2026

Agenda Item	Cabinet Members/Non-Executive Members	Corporate Directors	External Organisations/Participants
Establishment of Budget Scrutiny Task Group	Cllr Anup Patel, Chair of Resources and Public Realm Committee	Minesh Patel, Corporate Director – Finance and Resources	
Budget 2026/27: In-Year Monitoring Update (Q2)	Cllr Gwen Grahl, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources	Minesh Patel, Corporate Director – Finance and Resources	
Council Tax Collection and Recovery	Cllr Tina Amadi, Cabinet Member for Communities, Culture and Cost-of-Living Support Cllr Gwen Grahl, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources	Tom Cattermole, Corporate Director – Residents and Housing Services Minesh Patel, Corporate Director – Finance and Resources	

Climate Resilience and Infrastructure (with a focus on Flooding Risk Management)	Cllr Jake Rubin, Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Employment and Climate Action Cllr Promise Knight, Cabinet Member for Cleaner Streets, Transport and Public Realm	Jehan Weerasinghe, Corporate Director – Neighbourhoods and Regeneration	TBC
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Tuesday 26 January 2027

Agenda Item	Cabinet Members/Non-Executive Members	Corporate Directors	External Organisations/Participants
Complaints Annual Report 2025/26	Cllr Gwen Grahl, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources	Minesh Patel, Corporate Director – Finance and Resources	
ASB in Brent	Cllr Liz Dixon, Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Public Health	Nigel Chapman, Corporate Director – Children, Young People and Community Development	TBC
Borough of Sanctuary: Support for Migrant Communities	Cllr Tina Amadi, Cabinet Member for Communities, Culture and Cost-of-Living Support Cllr Jake Rubin, Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Employment and Climate Action	Nigel Chapman, Corporate Director – Children, Young People and Community Development	TBC

Monday 01 March 2027

Agenda Item	Cabinet Members/Non-Executive Members	Corporate Directors	External Organisations/Participants
Budget 2026/27: In-Year Monitoring Update (Q3)	Cllr Gwen Grahl, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources	Minesh Patel, Corporate Director – Finance and Resources	

Safer Brent Partnership Report 2026	Cllr Liz Dixon, Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Public Health	Minesh Patel, Corporate Director – Finance and Resources	TBC
Employment and Skills	Cllr Jake Rubin, Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Employment and Climate Action Cllr Matt Kelcher, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Planning	Nigel Chapman, Corporate Director – Children, Young People and Community Development Jehan Weerasinghe, Corporate Director – Neighbourhoods and Regeneration	
Waste Management and Enforcement	Cllr Promise Knight, Cabinet Member for Cleaner Streets, Transport and Public Realm	Jehan Weerasinghe, Corporate Director – Neighbourhoods and Regeneration	

Tuesday 27 April 2027

Agenda Item	Cabinet Members/Non-Executive Members	Corporate Directors	External Organisations/Participants
Regeneration in Brent: Strategy, Delivery and Community Impact	Cllr Matt Kelcher, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Planning	Jehan Weerasinghe, Corporate Director – Neighbourhoods and Regeneration	
Waste Management and Enforcement	Cllr Promise Knight, Cabinet Member for Cleaner Streets, Transport and Public Realm	Jehan Weerasinghe, Corporate Director – Neighbourhoods and Regeneration	

Review of Community Infrastructure in Brent	Cllr Muhammed Butt, Leader of Brent Council and Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care Cllr Matt Kelcher, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Planning	Jehan Weerasinghe, Corporate Director Neighbourhoods and Regeneration	
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*** **Waste Management and Enforcement** rescheduled for consideration at the Committee's meeting on 1 March 2027. **Regeneration in Brent: Strategy, Delivery and Community Impact** and **Review of Community Infrastructure in Brent** items deferred to the first meeting of the 2027/28 work programme in July 2027 (specific date TBC).

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	Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee 20 October 2026
	Report from the Deputy Director, Democratic and Corporate Governance
Establishment of Budget Scrutiny Task Group	

Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	N/A
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)	Jason Sigba, Strategy Lead – Scrutiny, Democratic & Corporate Governance Tel: 020 8937 2036 Email: Jason.Sigba@brent.gov.uk Amira Nassr, Deputy Director, Democratic & Corporate Governance, Finance & Resources Tel: 020 8937 5436 Email: Amira.Nassr@brent.gov.uk

1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is for the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee to establish a task group to consider the Cabinet's budget proposals for 2027/28.

2.0 Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 For the Resources and Public Realm Committee to agree the establishment of the Budget Scrutiny Task Group, noting the membership and terms of reference outlined below.

3.0 Detail

3.1 Contribution to Borough Plan Priorities & Strategic Context

- 3.1.1 Borough Plan 2023-2027 – all strategic priorities.

3.2 Background

3.2.1 The process for developing the Council's annual budget and capital programme is set out in the Brent Council Constitution ([Part 2, Paragraph 19](#)). As part of this process, the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee is required to meet, on more than one occasion, if necessary, to consider reports to Cabinet from the Corporate Director, Finance and Resources setting out the Council's financial position, financial forecasts for the following year, the Executive's potential expenditure priorities, and the draft budget proposals. In undertaking this role, the Committee may receive evidence from Cabinet Members, Council officers and other relevant stakeholders before submitting its views, comments and recommendations on the budget priorities and any other issues it considers relevant.

3.2.2 A Budget Scrutiny Task Group is proposed to undertake detailed consideration of the Cabinet's draft budget proposals for 2027/28 once published. The Task Group will support the Committee by reviewing the proposals, gathering evidence and developing comments and recommendations for consideration by the Committee prior to their submission to Cabinet.

Terms of Reference

3.2.3 The Task Group will operate in accordance with the following terms of reference:

- Consider the Cabinet's budget proposals for 2027/28
- Receive evidence from cabinet members, senior departmental officers, and any other relevant stakeholders
- Agree a draft report to comment on the budget proposals for submission to the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee for ratification and submission to Cabinet

Membership

3.2.4 It is proposed that the Task Group comprise the following non-executive members:

- Cllr Anup Patel (Chair of the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee)
- Cllr Krishna Chauhan (Liberal Democrats representative)
- Cllr Sai Madabhushi (Chair of the Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee)
- Cllr Paul Ryan (Green Group representative)
- Cllr Fleur Donnelly-Jackson (Chair of the Housing Scrutiny Committee)
- Cllr Saqlain Choudry (Chair of the Audit and Standards Committee)

The membership includes representation from each of the three scrutiny committees and all political groups, together with the Chair of the Audit & Standards Committee.

Timeline

- 3.2.5 A report from the Corporate Director, Finance and Resources setting out the Council's Draft Budget for 2027/28 is scheduled for consideration by Cabinet on 9 November 2026. Subject to Cabinet approval, the draft budget proposals will form the basis of the Task Group's review.
- 3.2.6 Between November and December 2026, the Task Group will undertake a programme of evidence-gathering sessions with Cabinet Members, senior officers and any other relevant stakeholders.
- 3.2.7 It is envisaged that the Task Group will report its findings and recommendations to the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee for consideration at its meeting on 26 January 2027. Subject to the Committee's approval, its comments and recommendations will be referred to Cabinet for consideration on 9 February 2027.
- 3.2.8 Cabinet will recommend a final budget for approval by Full Council on 25 February 2027.

4.0 Stakeholder and ward member consultation and engagement

- 4.1 The Budget Scrutiny Task Group may consider any consultation undertaken, underway or planned as part of the Council's budget-setting process, together with any other relevant evidence gathered during the review.
- 4.2 Ward Members and other relevant stakeholders will be engaged as part of the Budget Scrutiny Task Group's review.

5.0 Financial Considerations

- 5.1 There are no financial considerations for the purposes of this report.

6.0 Legal Considerations

- 6.1 There are no legal considerations for the purposes of this report.

7.0 Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Considerations

- 7.1 There are no Equity, Diversity & Inclusion considerations for the purposes of this report.

8.0 Climate Change and Environmental Considerations

- 8.1 There are no climate change and environmental considerations for the purposes of this report.

9.0 Communication Considerations

9.1 There are no communication considerations for the purposes of this report.

Report sign off:

Amira Nassr

Deputy Director, Democratic and Corporate Governance

	Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee 20 October 2026
	Report from the Corporate Director, Neighbourhoods and Regeneration
	Lead Member – Cabinet Member for Children’s Services, Employment and Climate Action (Councillor Jake Rubin)
Brent Climate and Ecological Emergency Programme and Strategy Update	

Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	N/A
Open or Part/Fully Exempt:	Open
No. of Appendices:	Three Appendix A: Brent Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy Update (2026-2030) – Document for Engagement Appendix B: Brent Climate Action Annual Data Dashboard Appendix C: Overview Flood Risk Management in Brent
Background Papers:	None
Contact Officer:	Tom Welsh (Climate Emergency Strategy Manager) Tel: 0208 937 6607 Email: Tom.Welsh@brent.gov.uk Oliver Myers (Head of Environmental Strategy and Climate Action) Tel: 0208 937 5323 Email: Oliver.Myers@brent.gov.uk <i>For appendix C:</i>

	Tony Kennedy (Head of Highways Management) Tel: 0208 937 5151 Email: Tony.Kennedy@brent.gov.uk
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1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report provides a comprehensive update on Brent's Climate and Ecological Emergency programme. It focuses on the council's approach and achievements to date, particularly in relation to emissions reduction, nature and biodiversity, and climate resilience and adaptation.
- 1.2 The report also summarises the current draft framework for updating the council's Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy for the next four calendar years, which is currently subject to a wider public engagement period (running from 28 September until 16 November). The full framework document can be found within **Appendix A**. The report also sets out the plan for this engagement period and the next steps for the development of the strategy. This includes how it will be implemented, governed and monitored going forward.
- 1.3 A specific focus on the council's Flood Risk Management arrangements, as requested by the Committee, can be found within **Appendix C**.

2.0 Recommendation

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to consider and comment on the content of this report; and provide input on the proposals for updating the council's Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy (2026-2030).

3.0 Contribution to the Borough Plan Priorities & Strategic Context

- 3.1 The Climate and Ecological Emergency programme remains a strategic and corporate priority for the council. The programme has links to each of the current Borough Plan themes but is most directly reflected in the Borough Plan theme 'A Cleaner, Greener Future'. This theme outlines Brent's ambition to *'ensure sustainability is central to the growth of our borough and local economy'* through working to ensure that our borough is cleaner, healthier, and more climate-friendly and environmentally sustainable.
- 3.2 The current Borough Plan (2023-2027) is currently being updated to create a new Council Plan document. This is due to be adopted by Full Council in November 2026. The work to update the council's Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy will align with the new Council Plan.
- 3.3 The council adopted a [Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy \(2021-2030\)](#) ('the Strategy') in April 2021 which has acted as the overarching umbrella document and route map to delivering on the council's climate ambitions for the past five years. Part of the purpose of this report is to provide further information on the plans to create an updated Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy for the remaining period (2026-2030) and provide the Resources and Public

Realm Scrutiny Committee with an opportunity to comment and feed into this process.

- 3.4 The council's existing Strategy also complements the objectives to a host of other key council strategy documents such as the Long-Term Transport Strategy, Health and Wellbeing Strategy, Active Travel Implementation Plan, Air Quality Action Plan, Flood Risk Management Strategy, Recycling and Reduction Plan, Housing Compact, Local Plan, Youth Strategy, Culture Strategy and Equity and Diversity and Inclusion Strategy.

4.0 Background

- 4.1 The council first declared a climate and ecological emergency in July 2019 and pledged to do all reasonable in our gift to aim for carbon neutrality by 2030, and work with government to achieve the national 2050 target.
- 4.2 Over the past seven years since this declaration, the council has worked alongside our communities to put this goal into action. This began with the Brent Climate Assembly in late 2019, where a demographically representative cohort of 53 residents came together over three weekends to provide community direction into the priorities for local climate action in Brent.
- 4.3 The Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy which followed mirrored the priorities for action put forward by the Brent Climate Assembly, and therefore aptly captured the views of Brent's residents. These five themes are set out below and have been the basis for arranging our Climate Action Delivery Plans to date.

Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy Key Themes

- Theme 1 – Consumption, Resources, and Waste
 - Theme 2 – Sustainable Travel
 - Theme 3 – Homes, Buildings and the Built Environment
 - Theme 4 – Nature and Green Space
 - Theme 5 – Supporting Communities
- 4.4 The development of the Strategy also factored in two other key factors in its initial creation: the biggest greenhouse gas emission sources in Brent; and the London-wide climate workstreams which were borne out of the [climate change declaration](#) made jointly by the London Environment Directors/London Councils Transport and Environment Committee.
- 4.5 With regards to emissions sources, there are two main considerations for emissions reduction in Brent: direct territorial emissions and indirect consumption emissions. Carbon dioxide (CO₂) is one of many greenhouse gases, but it is the biggest contributor to the climate emergency. Within Brent, direct carbon emissions arise from three major sources: energy use in homes, energy use in buildings and road transport.
- 4.6 The carbon emissions split of emissions within the borough boundary is as follows (*from the most recent dataset: 2024*):

- Domestic (Homes) = 38%
 - Transport = 26%
 - Commercial Buildings = 16%
 - Industrial Buildings = 12%
 - Public Sector Buildings = 7%
- 4.7 Indirect consumption emissions are greenhouse gas emissions which arise from the products we buy, how much we recycle, the types of food we eat and how we travel outside of the borough boundary. These wider indirect emissions arising from our daily behaviours are more difficult to measure but are estimated to be over four times as high as the direct emissions from homes, buildings and road transport.
- 4.8 We subsequently developed and delivered three sets of delivery plans 2021-2022, 2022-24 and 2024-26 which have underpinned the long-term Strategy and encompass all the considerations above.
- 4.9 As part of the 2022-24 and 2024-26 delivery plans, the council also began piloting a place-based approach to local climate action via a concept known as 'Green Neighbourhoods'. Brent currently has four Green Neighbourhood pilot areas, split into two types: Neighbourhood-led (Church End and Roundwood; and Kingsbury) and Development-led (St Raphael's Estate; and South Kilburn). These pilots have been running since early 2023.
- 4.10 Good climate action progress has been made in the two neighbourhood-led pilot areas, with progress slower than anticipated in South Kilburn and St Raphael's Estate due to the economic climate and slowdown in development schemes in recent years.
- 4.11 In the updated Strategy we are intending to retain the existing four Green Neighbourhood pilot areas. This will enable each area to complete key projects currently underway and for each area to realise its full potential of the concept. We will additionally review the potential for expanding the boundaries of the Church End and Roundwood and St Raphael's Estate areas to align to the Pride of Place programme, and the opportunities that this new programme may provide to make these local areas even greener and more environmentally sustainable.

5.0 The strategic role of the council on climate action

- 5.1 The core of comprehensive climate action can be broken down into three main elements: (1) emissions reduction, (2) supporting nature and biodiversity, (3) adapting to extreme weather. Via the five key themes, this is what the strategy's aims sought to tackle, with communities at the heart of each of these.
- 5.2 The council has a key role to play in tackling the climate and ecological emergency and leading by example wherever possible to affect the urgent and necessary change that is required. However, we have varying levels of influence over the three main elements listed above. The government's national climate advisory body, the Climate Change Committee, has identified six

'spheres of influence' that councils have over environmental sustainability in their local area. These include:

- Direct control: buildings, operations, fleet
- Procurement, commissioning and commercialisation
- Place shaping: using powers to control development and transport
- Showcasing: innovating, piloting, demonstrating and sharing good practice, scaling and replicating
- Partnerships: leading, bringing people and organisations together, coordinating and supporting others, joining others' partnerships
- Involving, engaging and communicating, translating global and national climate change targets for local relevance; with stakeholders to raise awareness, involving people and ideas for local solutions

5.3 We have always been clear that the council cannot tackle the climate emergency on its own. Tackling the climate emergency requires a joined-up response, ranging from international actors, national governments, regional governments, local authorities, schools, businesses, housing associations, voluntary organisations, faith communities and residents.

5.4 The section below will set out more detail on both the key strategic and delivery considerations and steps that the council has taken for each of the three core aspects to climate action. To a certain extent, these priorities overlap in different ways and should ultimately complement each other from an environmental sustainability perspective.

6.0 Emissions reduction

6.1 As outlined in paragraph 4.5, the main territorial emissions sources within the borough boundary are from energy use in homes, energy use in buildings and road transport. This means that 73% of the borough's emissions are derived from homes and other buildings, with the remainder coming from transport. The key consideration for reducing emissions in homes and buildings is for these settings to become more energy efficient, either through retrofitting existing homes and buildings, or through designing new builds to be as efficient and weather resilient as possible from the outset.

Homes – Domestic Retrofit (Social Housing)

6.2 There are approximately 127,000 properties in Brent. 22% are social rented, 37% private rented and 41% owner occupied. There are around 8,000 council properties and our overall housing stock is therefore just 6% of the borough's total number of domestic properties. Retrofit work is unfortunately prohibitively expensive given the level of capital resources at our disposal, and work on our stock is heavily dependent on the council obtaining grant funding to be able to undertake this. External grant funding is also typically dependent on match funding being provided by the council. Brent's housing stock energy efficiency average is EPC C, and in 2022 we commissioned work to better understand what it would take to get the stock to EPC B. It was estimated that this would

cost a minimum of £60m, but this is now likely to be substantially more in the current economic climate.

- 6.3 To date, we have successfully obtained around £2.5m in grant funding for 180 council properties via the two main government schemes which have been available to retrofit social housing in the past five years – the Social Housing Decarbonisation Scheme 2.1 and Warm Homes Social Housing Grant. Retrofit work has also been integrated into existing maintenance schemes and at least 1,729 properties are estimated to have received at least one energy efficiency measure within the same timeframe. The government's flagship Warm Homes Plan may provide further opportunities for social housing within this parliamentary term. Other social housing providers such as Housing Associations also face similar financial constraints.

Homes – Domestic Retrofit (Private Rented Sector/Owner Occupiers)

- 6.4 Without direct control of this tenure type, the council's role has been to seek to educate, encourage, incentivise and, where necessary, enforce private homeowners to improve the energy efficiency of their properties. We have developed the Brent Well and Warm Energy Advice service which has supported 1,667 households (across different tenure types) to access free, bespoke energy efficiency support with the aim of cutting both bills and emissions. The council is also part of the London-wide consortium for accessing the Warm Homes Local Grant (and Green Homes Grant prior to this), which can provide households with up to £30,000 for retrofit work. 31 Brent properties have been retrofitted as part of current Local Grant scheme, and the number of residents seeking to access the grant are among the highest in London. We also delivered retrofit work to 35 properties as part of the council's previous CO2GO energy efficiency scheme financed through the Brent Carbon Offset Fund.
- 6.5 We have also delivered educational webinars on improving energy efficiency, newsletters dedicated to different technologies and tips for keeping homes warm, held stalls at the annual Private Rented Sector Fair in the borough and provided signposting via the council's website to other available external grants and initiatives when they are available. The government has also confirmed that private landlords in England and Wales must meet a minimum EPC C rating by October 2030 for all rental tenancies, which should also support this move towards greater energy efficiency standards within the sector.

Homes – Heat Networks

- 6.6 A district heat network is a system that pipes hot water from a central energy source to multiple buildings for heating and hot water. Heat Networks are becoming an increasingly important component of decarbonising local energy systems and Brent's primary scheme is developing a new Heat Network as part of the South Kilburn Regeneration scheme. This is a £36 million scheme (part grant funded by the government's Green Heat Network Fund) which will pump low carbon, efficiently generated heat to homes across South Kilburn, replacing old heating systems with a modern network designed to protect residents from the volatility of the energy market. It is anticipated that carbon emissions will

also be cut by around 980 tonnes every year, delivering a total saving of more than 39,000 tonnes over the project's 40-year lifespan. We are also exploring potential opportunities for Heat Networks at appropriate locations in the borough in the future, such as part of the Staples Corner Regeneration Scheme.

Homes – New Builds

- 6.7 To support the delivery of new builds being as environmentally sustainable as possible from the outset and therefore avoiding the need to retrofit these properties in the future, the council has adopted a comprehensive Sustainable Environment and Development Supplementary Planning Document. This document brings together environmental sustainability requirements within the London Plan and Brent's Own Local Plan that developers must consider as part of the planning process. The document details the specifications covering Energy, to support emissions reduction, but also Air Quality, Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity, Water Management, Sustainable Movement, Waste and the Circular Economy and other environmental impacts.

Buildings – Non-Domestic Retrofit (Own Estate)

- 6.8 The council's own carbon footprint from its corporate estate and operations (buildings, fleet, streetlights) comprises around just 0.5% of the borough's overall carbon footprint. We have led by example through reduction of 75.8% of our carbon footprint since 2010, with a 13.8% reduction in the timeframe since the climate strategy was adopted. We have been successful in previous years in obtaining grant funding from the government's Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme, but this grant has been discontinued for the remainder of this parliament. We are currently working with Turner and Townsend on developing a comprehensive plan on the requirements of getting to net zero emissions across our estate and operations by 2030. This is presently expected to require between £6.6m and £7m of capital expenditure – the funding strategy and possibilities for this level of expenditure are currently being worked through by officers. Our ambition remains to do all reasonable in our gift to get to net zero across our corporate estate and operations by the 2030 target.

Buildings – Non-Domestic Retrofit (Schools)

- 6.9 There are 89 community schools in Brent, of which 34 are council maintained across 36 sites. Retrofitting school buildings is even more complex than the corporate estate and is also heavily funding dependent. For example, the council undertook a study in 2022 which outlined that to get our schools estate to PassivHaus standard (the gold standard for energy efficiency) this would cost an estimated £100million. This is likely to now be significantly higher in the current economic climate. Where possible, the council will continue to identify and incorporate energy efficiency works in Brent-maintained schools as part of the schools' capital delivery or maintenance programme. For example, we installed new Heat Pumps in Uxendon Manor Primary school in 2025, and 16 Brent-maintained schools already have solar panels. We are also in the process of following up this work and identifying a potential pipeline of opportunities,

should further grant funding become available from either the government's Local Power Plan or Education Estates Strategy (expected to launch in 2027).

- 6.10 We also support schools on improving their energy efficiency through our Schools Climate Action Guide, through the 'Our Schools, Our World' programme, of which 19 schools are a part, and have bought licences for five schools to access a tool called 'Energy Sparks' which allow schools to view their energy consumption in real-time. We are also aware that schools and pupils also undertake their own initiatives on their sites, like campaigns to switch lights off and moving to LED lightbulbs where possible.

Buildings – Non-Domestic Retrofit (Commercial/Industrial)

- 6.11 Commercial and industrial buildings comprise 28% of territorial emissions within Brent's boundary. 99% of Brent's businesses are either micro-businesses or Small and Medium Enterprises Businesses (SMEs). Much like our approach to private landlords/homeowners, the council's role is largely to seek to educate, encourage and incentivise businesses, where funding allows, to improve the energy efficiency of their properties.
- 6.12 We have supported businesses to decarbonise through: providing direct funding of between £9,000-£18,000 to 26 Brent businesses via two energy efficiency grants schemes. 33 Brent SMEs were accepted onto Camden and Brent Business Climate challenge, with a further 27 carbon reduction audits delivered as part of this scheme. We have supported businesses through developing five key Green Business Guides which were tailored to each of the five key business sectors operating in Brent. We run regular information webinars for businesses on reducing energy to reduce their operating costs. 126 organisations have signed the Brent Climate Charter and are being supported with free energy audit tools, and 41 Brent-based organisations are listed on our new Brent Green Directory.

Transport – Active Travel

- 6.13 27% of our direct territorial emissions are from petrol and diesel-powered modes of transport. The Climate programme complements Brent's wider ambitions for a healthier borough with cleaner air, reflected in a substantive shift towards cycling, walking and wheeling and away from petrol and diesel vehicles. There are two key factors to this: delivery of new sustainable travel infrastructure; and empowering people to travel sustainably.
- 6.14 The council's physical active travel infrastructure has improved in the last five years with 34 new school streets schemes, new green corridor routes in Church End and Roundwood and Kingsbury, 233 new bike hangars, new cycle parking, and 150 new Lime Bike docking bays, amongst other initiatives. The council's Parking Policy is also due to be reviewed in the coming years. From a strategic transportation planning perspective, the borough also works closely with TfL and other key stakeholders on the strategic routes for improving cycling in the borough, with funding confirmed for a flagship scheme known as Cycleway 72 from Wembley to Harlesden which is due commence in the next few years.

- 6.15 We also empower people to consider taking up active travel modes through for example improving access to cycling equipment (through initiatives like Brent Revive and Ride), providing more opportunities for beginner's rides and wider cycle training, and supporting schools in developing Sustainable School Travel Plans. We are proposing to also renew our focus on improving walking routes as part of the updated Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy. This work to date has contributed to the highest numbers of people utilising Sustainable Travel methods on a day-to-day basis in Outer London (71%) and air quality in the borough is improving across every key measurement.

Transport – Electric Vehicles

- 6.16 We know that the transition away from petrol and diesel vehicles will require a mix of travel modes. Electric vehicles are a lower emission alternative to petrol and diesel and are supported in Brent through the installation of 1,312 electric vehicle charge points. This is one of the highest numbers of installations of all London Boroughs. We intend to continue this work into future years supported by an additional £1.3m of Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure funding (LEVI funding) which is anticipated to deliver an additional 2,000 additional electric vehicle charge points.

Consumption Emissions

- 6.17 As stated in paragraph 4.7, consumption emissions are wider indirect emissions arising from daily behaviours of Brent residents that aren't covered by energy use in homes, energy use in buildings and road transport. We know that for many, a lack of understanding can make the climate emergency seem like a large, complex and overwhelming concept. We have sought to work with all our communities to make it as easy as possible for people to adopt simple sustainable changes to lifestyles that can make a big difference.
- 6.18 Brent's recycling rate remains lower than the national average and there remain issues with contamination in the waste stream. To support addressing some of these issues, the Waste and Recycling Team have delivered a new recycling service – collecting on average 500 tonnes of paper and card from the blue sack each month and a participation rate of 80%. The council has also delivered 24,000 new food waste caddies, 140 new communal food waste units on estates, and a new trial for food waste bins in flats above shops.
- 6.19 We have also supported these projects with communications campaigns such as the Contamination Monsters' communications campaign which was launched in July 2024. This campaign was directed at educating residents on the types of items which should not be placed in the recycling bin. We have also sought to move Brent towards a greener, more circular economy where items are re-used, repaired and recovered before recycling is even considered. This has been delivered through initiatives such as our successful Repair Café programme, Sharing Spaces, Clothes Swap Shops, partnering with Real Nappies for London who are giving Brent families a £50 voucher towards reusable nappies and the installation of the Library of the Things at Willesden Green Library which has been used 2,150 times by residents since opening in summer 2023. We will explore developing a new Re-use and Repair Hub in the

borough as part of the new 2026-2030 Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy Document.

- 6.20 These initiatives have been promoted to the almost 5,000 residents who are part of the Brent Environmental Network and receive a monthly newsletter packed with ideas and practical tips for residents to reduce their environmental impact, as well as inspiring stories from local people who are taking on the climate emergency. The newsletter also signposts residents to local environmental events and further opportunities to get involved in tackling the climate emergency in Brent. We have also delivered educational webinar series', co-produced three local documentaries to bring climate action to a local level, and co-developed the Brent to Bowl Community Cookbook, amongst other initiatives.
- 6.21 In the most recent Resident Attitudes Survey of Brent, there was a nine percent increase in residents agreeing with the question: *'the council makes it easier for me to be environmentally friendly'* since the previous Resident Attitudes Survey in 2021, which would indicate that this approach and these initiatives are paying off and are beneficial to residents.

Other Policies

- 6.22 In line with some of the other 'spheres of influence' for councils mentioned under paragraph 5.2, we have also adopted a Sustainable Procurement Policy and are signatories of the West London Sustainable Procurement Charter. Both are requirements for bidders to adhere to if they wish to be successful in major council procurements. This policy will be reviewed and updated as part of the wider update to the Climate Strategy.
- 6.23 Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) considerations are also embedded within the council's Pension Fund Investment Strategy and Responsible Investment (RI) Policy, and climate-risk considerations are integrated into all major investment decisions. The Pension Fund Sub-Committee have committed to continue to develop the climate-risk roadmap which sets out how the Fund will continue to address climate-related risks and support the climate action agenda in a way that remains aligned with its duty to safeguard returns and protect members' pensions.
- 6.24 Many of the initiatives in this section have contributed to the borough's in boundary carbon emissions falling by 18% since 2019, with an estimated reduction of 185,600 tonnes per annum, according to the most recent government dataset (2024).

7.0 Supporting Nature and Biodiversity

- 7.1 Brent has around 90 parks and open spaces, 21 council-managed allotments, and the River Brent, Wealdstone Brook, Wembley Brook, Grand Union Canal and Welsh Harp Reservoir as significant watercourses within the Borough. Natural green infrastructure and waterways play a vital role in creating healthier, more climate-resilient communities.

- 7.2 They can help to: support biodiversity by providing food, shelter and habitats for wildlife; cool urban areas and reduce the “urban heat island” effect (materials such as concrete and asphalt absorb and retain heat, making cities much hotter during heatwaves); improve air quality by absorbing pollutants and filtering harmful particles from the air through the natural processes of trees and plants; reduce flood risk by absorbing rainfall into the soil and slowing surface water runoff, helping to prevent or lessen flooding during heavy rain.
- 7.3 To support nature and biodiversity in the borough, we created a separate Green Infrastructure Vision (GIV) as a more detailed extension of the ‘Nature and Green Space’ theme within the council’s Climate Strategy. The Green Infrastructure Vision considers connecting with nature through engagement; flood management and alleviation programmes; active travel and the creation of green corridors; re-wilding Brent; expansion of the Bee Corridor and reduction in pesticide use; engagement in the planning process; developing community involvement and partnerships; sustainable buildings in parks; and air quality.
- 7.4 The GIV acting a focal point for the delivery of actions within the Nature and Green Space theme has seen us take tangible action to make Brent a greener and biodiverse borough. We have planted 3,600 new trees in past four years – including numerous community planting days, developed new community gardens and community orchards, delivered new climate-resilient rain garden schemes and swales, enhanced biodiversity and nature-based activities – such as bird, bat box and planting with schools and young people, piloted new wildflower verges and have funded 47 community projects which have nature and green space as their key focus, via the Together Towards Zero Small Grants scheme. Brent’s parks are biodiverse and award-winning - we have won a total of 25 Golds, 12 silver gilts and a category winner at the annual London in Bloom awards which have occurred since 2025 and awarded two Green Flags (King Edward VII Wembley and Bramshill Open Space, Harlesden) and a third Community Green Flag for Roe Green Walled Garden in 2025.
- 7.5 The delivery of the GIV and Nature and Green Space theme is also supported by several strategic planning policies. For example, the borough’s Sustainable Environment and Development Supplementary Planning document sets out in detail both the London Plan and Local Plan policies which are aimed at supporting local natural green infrastructure in the borough. These include considerations around the use of designated open spaces, the Urban Greening Factor, Biodiversity Net Gain, Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs), trees and woodlands, food growing, mitigating impacts on green infrastructure and biodiversity and development management.
- 7.6 Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) came into force in April 2024 to introduce nature-based solutions to developing land so that nature forms an integral element to developing land, making sure the habitat for wildlife is in a better state than it was before development. Developments were required to deliver a minimum 10% BNG compared to the baseline from 12 February 2024, unless exempt. It applied to small sites from 2 April 2024. However, changes to the National Planning Policy Framework in August 2026 have resulted in changes which have expanded the provisions for developments to be exempt. Brent has

established the Brent statutory BNG procedure for securing biodiversity and ecology enhancements through the planning process. To date, we have secured 15 s106 agreements with monitoring fees pending (dependent on if the developments are built out) amounting to £270k, with four additional agreements in the pipeline.

8.0 Climate Resilience: Adapting to extreme weather

- 8.1 What is clear, is that the climate emergency can no longer be considered a faraway concept. The effects of this have been felt acutely over the past two summers, and the El Niño extreme weather phenomenon is likely to make its presence known in Brent through what is predicted to be a very wet and stormy autumn/winter. The need to adapt and prepare for extreme weather future is therefore more important than ever. In December 2025, a new Climate Adaptation and Resilience Framework (CARF) for the borough was adopted. The Framework builds upon the previous Climate Adaptation and Resilience Plan (published in 2022 - we were the second London borough to develop a dedicated plan for climate adaptation and resilience) and focuses primarily on three direct climate hazards: flooding, extreme heat, and drought and water shortages. It also considers the growing risk of interconnected and unpredictable impacts caused by extreme weather.
- 8.2 These hazards are expected to have the most significant and immediate impacts on Brent's communities, affecting the health of our residents, the borough's property and infrastructure, the local economy (impacting the cost of living and cost of doing business), and the natural environment – all of which provide a risk or increased pressure on the day-to-day operation of council services. The London Climate Resilience review estimates that the effects of extreme weather are likely to impact London's GDP through a 2-3% reduction every year by the 2050s, with costs increasing further in late century.
- 8.3 The Framework is also informed by the latest climate projections for Brent, as provided by the Met Office Local Authority Climate Service and other authoritative sources. These projections indicate that, even in a best-case scenario, Brent will experience warmer, wetter winters and hotter, drier summers due to climate change, with more frequent and severe extreme weather events.
- 8.4 In response to the key climate hazards set out above, the Framework sets out four long-term strategic priorities to guide Brent's approach to climate adaptation:

Priority 1: Supporting People and Communities	We will support Brent's residents, communities, schools and businesses to prepare for and reduce the risks of climate impacts, with a focus on those who are most vulnerable and most exposed. Key goals include: Supporting vulnerable residents to stay healthy and safe during climate-related events through targeted interventions.
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	• Informing and empower residents to take steps to reduce their own climate risk. • Equipping schools, community groups and local organisations with tools and knowledge to prepare for and respond to climate impacts. • Supporting Brent's business community to build climate resilience and reduce disruption to local economic activity.
Priority 2: Adapting Infrastructure, Buildings and the Built Environment	We will focus on making Brent's homes, buildings, infrastructure and public spaces more resilient to the impacts of climate change. Key goals include: • Improving and upgrading Brent's highest risk homes and buildings to be resilient to extreme heat, flood, and drought. • Embedding climate resilience into planning, development, and regeneration projects to future-proof Brent's built environment. • Adapting Brent's public realm to reduce direct climate risks and protect vulnerable communities. • Working with partners to strengthen the resilience of transport networks and utilities against climate hazards.
Priority 3: Enhancing the Natural Environment	We will protect and enhance Brent's parks, green spaces and ecosystems, and deliver nature-based solutions that reduce climate risks, support biodiversity, and promote public health and community wellbeing. We will prioritise expanding green infrastructure in areas with low green cover and high vulnerability to ensure fairer access to nature. Key goals include: • Ensuring Brent's green spaces, trees and ecosystems are as resilient to climate change as possible. • Expanding and connecting Brent's green infrastructure to manage climate risks, support biodiversity, and increase equitable access to nature.
Priority 4: Embedding Adaptation and Resilience in Local Services and Governance	We will integrate climate risk into council services, operations and decision-making to ensure Brent is prepared for the challenges ahead. This means improving service resilience, strengthening partnerships, and enabling long-term, joined-up action across the borough. Key goals include: • Integrating climate risk into the council's day-to-day operations and decision-making to ensure that services remain resilient to climate impacts and disruptions. • Strengthening partnerships and borough-wide coordination to deliver joined-up climate adaptation.

- 8.5 Delivering on the ambitions set out in the Climate Adaptation and Resilience Framework will be challenging, particularly given the extremely difficult financial context facing the council and its partners. The Framework adopts a “now, next, later” approach, prioritising immediate, practical steps, while also outlining aspirations for the medium and longer term. These aspirations are heavily dependent on securing additional funding, building strong partnerships, and identifying viable financial solutions. The council will actively seek ways to fund or finance these actions, but flexibility will be central to ensuring actions remain relevant and achievable.
- 8.6 Delivery of the Framework (and entire climate programme) is overseen by the Corporate Sustainability Board, which provides strategic oversight for the council’s wider Climate and Ecological Emergency Programme, and is supported by a new Climate and Wellbeing workstream. This group brings together officers from across the council, including but not limited to: Public Health, Emergency Planning, Adult Social Care, Highways, Healthy Streets and Parking, Parks, Planning, Housing, Property, Children and Young People, Climate Action, Community Engagement and Neighbourhood Management.
- 8.7 This structure supports joined-up delivery, enables cross-service collaboration, and ensures that adaptation actions are embedded across council operations and services. The workstream will also provide a mechanism for ongoing review and refinement of the Framework as new evidence, risks, and opportunities emerge.
- 8.8 In the nine months since the CARF was adopted, the following initial actions have been delivered to support the aims of this document:
- Circa 700 new trees planted
 - Delivered 350-400m² of new climate-resilient rain gardens on Church Path as part of the Church End and Roundwood Green Corridors Scheme
 - Improved communications around heatwaves, including delivering 2 x Brent HeatWise community education events
 - Developed a new Extreme Heat Vulnerability Study with Arup, to better understand the types of interventions to tackle extreme heat in Harlesden and Stonebridge, and apply these learnings to the rest of the borough where possible
 - Increased Brent’s Cool Spaces to 10 community locations around the borough
 - Ran an internal Extreme Heat Simulation Exercise in March 2026, to bolster the council’s internal preparation for the heatwaves this summer
 - Ran a Climate Adaptation and Resilience workshop for Brent’s Schools in March 2026, to consider future adaptation and resilience requirements to extreme weather on school sites
 - Included strong requirements around climate resilience in the procurement of the South Kilburn Single Delivery Partner
 - Commissioned CIVIC Engineering to undertake an opportunity mapping study in the borough for Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDs) *(project ongoing)*

9.0 Regional and sub-regional partnerships

- 9.1 We will continue to collaborate ever more closely with our communities and with London Councils, the Greater London Authority, west London partners and to seize on any new opportunities introduced by national Government. Brent is represented at each of the four new key London Councils workstreams: Energy, Adaptation and Resilience, Green Growth and Investment and Public Support and is active within other regional and sub-regional climate networks.

10.0 Embedding climate action into our operations

- 10.1 Detail on action we are taking to reduce the council's overall carbon footprint across our estate is provided within paragraph 6.8. We have also made progress since the adoption of the current climate strategy in ensuring that climate action is better embedded more widely across the council's day-to-day operations.

- 10.2 Examples of this include:

- Prominence of environmental sustainability within the council's Borough Plan;
- All key committee reports now having a 'Climate Change and Environment' considerations section;
- Development of an internal Corporate Environmental Policy (which will also be reviewed and updated alongside the updated Strategy);
- Setting up of the Corporate Sustainability Board and underpinning cross-council workstreams to drive progress and internal oversight on climate action;
- Embedding climate work within departmental service plans;
- Environmental indicators within the quarterly corporate performance reporting;
- A quarterly assessment of climate-related risk within the council's overall Corporate Risk Register;
- Climate Action being embedded at corporate induction for new starters;
- The development of a new Green Corporate Travel Plan – including purchasing the council's first e-cargo bike for staff use;
- An annual staff awards category for 'outstanding contribution to reducing the council's environmental impact';
- Greater consideration of the impacts of extreme weather within specific business continuity plans;
- Refreshed engagement with staff and re-launched eco-champions scheme (*planned*)

11.0 Thematic summary of key achievements to date

- 11.1 Further *headline* achievements against each of the five strategy themes are detailed in the table below. This is not an exhaustive list, a longer list of achievements since 2022 can also be found on the council's website.

Theme 1 - Consumption, Resources and Waste	Theme 2 – Sustainable Travel
• New waste recycling service rolled out – collecting on average 500 tonnes of paper and card from the blue sack each month and a participation rate of 80%, • 24,000 new food waste caddies rolled out • Installed 140 new communal food waste units and are in the process of purchasing another 150 • Launched the Library of Things at Willesden Green Library with 2,150 borrows from 1,948 borrowers since opening • Free programme of re-use and repair cafes – 11 delivered to date • 10 x Eco-Refill Shops set up in Brent Schools • From Brent to Bowl Community Cookbook created • Street Swaps and Sharing Spaces events delivered, in some settings now on a weekly basis • Launched the 'Monsters' contamination communications campaign in July 2024	• Highest proportion of residents utilising Sustainable Travel in Outer London (71%) • 34 school streets schemes delivered • 233 bike hangars installed • 1,312 electric vehicle charge points installed • 150 new lime bike docking bays installed • Borough-wide air pollution improvements across NO₂, PM2.5, PM10 • 53% of Brent schools now hold a gold, silver or bronze School Travel Plan • Launched the Brent Revive and Ride scheme, with 40 refurbished bikes donated for free to local faith and community groups • Phase 1 of Church End & Roundwood Green Corridors scheme almost completed, with transformation of Church Path as an active travel route • 47 electric vehicles introduced as part of new integrated cleansing/waste, Grounds Maintenance and Parking Contracts • Ran the Brent for Business e-cargo bike scheme, engaging with 272 Brent businesses, 18 of which made the switch to e-cargo bikes
Theme 3 – Homes, Buildings, and the Built Environment	Theme 4 – Nature and Green Space
• 76% reduction in the council's own carbon footprint since 2010 with a variety of energy efficiency measures installed across council-owned sites • £36m allocated to the delivery of the South Kilburn Heat Network scheme • 1,729 council properties retrofitted with at least one energy efficiency measure	• Delivered award-winning enhancements to Brent's parks • 3,600 new trees planted since 2022 • New community gardening initiatives (e.g. North Brent Community Garden) • New community orchards (e.g. Fry's Orchard) • Enhanced biodiversity and nature-based activities – such as bird, bat box and planting (e.g. Willesden New Cemetery)

• 1,667 households supported by the Brent Well and Warm Energy Advice Scheme • Developed a Climate Adaptation and Resilience Framework for Brent • Developed and implemented a Sustainable Environment and Development Supplementary Planning Document • Local Area Energy Plans created (Phases 1 and 2) • Brent Energy Efficient Grant for Buildings small grants scheme launched	• New rain gardens and swales (e.g. Kensal Corridor, Church Path, Leybourne Open Space) • 4 new Green and Healthy Streets initiatives at Our Lady of Grace Catholic Infants School, Oakington Manor Primary School, Crownhill Road and Leopold Primary School • Developed a Green Infrastructure Vision for Brent • Delivered award-winning enhancements to Brent's parks, we have won a total of 25 Golds, 12 silver gilts and a category winner at the annual London in Bloom awards which have occurred since 2022 • Awarded two Green Flags (King Edward VII Wembley and Bramshill Open Space, Harlesden) and a third Community Green Flag for Roe Green Walled Garden in 2025
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Theme 5 – Supporting Communities

• 4,800 members of the Brent Environmental Network • 105 projects funded by the Together Towards Zero Small Grants Scheme • 127 organisations signed up to the Brent Climate Charter • 26 Brent businesses supported with energy efficiency grants • 40 businesses are part of the Brent Green Directory • Developed and launched the Brent Schools Climate Action Guide in March 2024 – which has supported 53% of our Schools to now have completed or draft Climate Action Plans • 19 schools have continued with the Our Schools Our World programme, with 14 earning a bronze award for their commitment to the programme so far • The first ever Brent Schools Climate Summit took place, bringing together 16 primary and secondary schools/over 170 pupils from across the borough. Schools that attended were eligible to apply for a climate action grant of up to £2000, with just under £10,000 being shared with schools to reduce emissions through pupil-centred projects • 25 Faith organisations utilising the Brent Faith Climate Action Plan • Community co-design of the Church End & Roundwood Green Corridors and community tree planting days

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 3 community focused Climate Action Films: This Ain't Normal, Roots of Brent, Faces of Climate Change |
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12.0 Ongoing Challenges

Funding

- 12.1 Funding remains the most significant barrier to accelerating climate action. A Local Area Energy Plan for Brent has recently estimated that it would cost between £10.2billion and £10.6billion of investment on a borough-wide scale to achieve carbon neutrality in the borough, across varying timeframes.
- 12.2 Estimates of the cost breakdowns for retrofit work and new infrastructure that would be required across domestic homes, non-domestic buildings and wider public realm within this plan include:
- 46,300 properties requiring wall insulation – £157million
 - 55,400 properties receiving loft insulation - £42million
 - 2,100 properties receiving glazing upgrades - £12million
 - 89,400 properties receiving low carbon heating upgrades - £1billion
 - 3,300,000 metres squared of non-domestic buildings requiring low carbon heating upgrades - £1.2billion
 - Borough-wide Heat Network Infrastructure - £500million
 - Energy Generation (including solar potential) - £170million
- 12.3 This is a level of capital investment that the council simply cannot provide on its own. We have been successful in obtaining £17million in external grant funding to support climate action in the borough, but this highlights the discrepancy between what is available and what is required.
- 12.4 Supporting nature through biodiversity initiatives and adapting the borough to enable it to become more resilient to extreme weather, also require funding both in terms of initial delivery and ongoing maintenance.
- 12.5 We do not have investment estimates in the same way as the Local Area Energy Plan sets out for these elements, but the upfront investment costs are likely to be a similar challenge, as will ongoing maintenance costs for natural infrastructure initiatives that support cooling (like tree planting).

Lack of statutory powers

- 12.6 Despite the government committing the UK to be net zero by 2050, tackling climate emergency at local level is not a statutory function for local authorities.
- 12.7 In 2025, the Local Government Association (LGA) opened a consultation on local government and legal responsibilities to act on climate change. The consultation closed in May 2025 after receiving 318 responses, including responses from 160 councils. Independent analysis found significant support for some form of statutory duty, but also unresolved questions about scope, funding, accountability and implementation.

- 12.8 Further work is being undertaken by the LGA to consider whether any duty or duties should be pursued via lobbying of the government and, if so, their form, statutory location and required new-burdens funding. The work is expected to conclude at some point in autumn 2026.

Behaviour Change

- 12.9 As this report has outlined, there are many positive shifts and action being taken by individuals and communities in the borough. However, this is still below the level required to move away from the dangerous climate trajectory that is currently predicted from experts. Significant, transformative behaviour change is still required for modal shift from polluting vehicles, adopting energy efficient behaviours in homes and buildings, and protecting the natural environment through a reduction in littering and fly tipping. The presence of fly tipping and litter continues to create a damaging perception of the council and the local area more widely when trying to engage with residents on climate/environmental issues.
- 12.10 Behaviour change is also challenging to monitor with limited resources, and we are reliant on the indicators with the annual Brent Climate Data Dashboard to provide an indication of the direction of travel where possible.

Capacity and Capacity Building

- 12.11 Despite progress being made, we have not yet reached the optimum point where widespread community climate action becomes self-sustaining without the council's input. However, there is scope to build on our innovative climate engagement work to both achieve greater reach into our communities and to create sustained, community-led action which will build on the work to date and have a greater chance of long-term success. Community stewardship of initiatives to support maintenance of infrastructure, alongside community-led grassroots activity to both lead the development and delivery of projects, plus support behaviour change within communities are proposed to be key aspects of the updated strategy.

13.0 Updating the Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy (2026-2030)

- 13.1 As detailed in section seven of this report, the climate strategy to date has been effective in providing a clear framework for delivery across a host of different environmental themes. The programme has successfully brought together disparate strands of work under one coherent document and driven progress to ensure that the borough is lower emission, greener and more climate-resilient than when the Strategy was adopted in 2021. The learnings over the past five years of delivery have helped to shape and inform the delivery plans that have underpinned this document and helped to drive action forward on the ground.
- 13.2 However, we know that the risks posed by the climate emergency are clearer than ever before – with extreme weather records of all kinds continuing to be broken regularly. We also recognise that with 2030 fast approaching, the current borough-wide carbon neutrality goal is no longer realistic and needs a reset.

- 13.3 We therefore believe it is the right time to be reviewing our existing Climate Strategy, and work with communities towards the creation of an updated document which will be the focal point for the next four calendar years. The challenges facing councils in 2026 are like those which faced us during the creation of the initial Climate Strategy in 2021 but have in many ways intensified. The rationale for constructing a four-year document (running in calendar years from early 2027 until the end of 2030) rather than another long-term strategy is to ensure that the programme has a sharper focus on what is realistically achievable, deliverable and will continue to accelerate pushing the borough's climate and environmental goals in the right direction within this period.
- 13.4 We want to go even further in the next four years in placing communities at the heart of this programme. We will seek to ensure that climate action reaches the broadest number of people and communities in the borough as possible and making sure that it is reflective of the diversity of our borough.
- 13.5 Our aim is to continue to make sure that climate action is inclusive, equitable and that communities are ultimately empowered with the knowledge, skills and resources to be able to act themselves wherever possible.

New draft key delivery priorities

- 13.6 As stated in paragraph 4.3, the five key themes in the current Strategy mirrored the top five priorities put forward by the Brent Climate Assembly. Based on our experience of delivery over the past five years, and how valuable the Climate Assembly was, we believe there is a strong rationale for retaining the existing five themes. All of them remain as relevant now to accelerating climate action as they were in 2021 and cover the breadth of topics where environmental action should be focused in the borough.
- 13.7 It is currently proposed that underneath each of the five key themes, there will be three Key Delivery Priorities, which will ultimately be supported by a Delivery Plan of specific actions as part of the final updated Strategy documentation.
- 13.8 The proposed Key Delivery Priorities that we will be engaging with the community on are set out below:

Key Theme 1 – Consumption, Resources and Waste

- Delivery Priority 1: WASTE INFRASTRUCTURE AND BEHAVIOUR CHANGE
- Delivery Priority 2: COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY
- Delivery Priority 3: EXPLORE DEVELOPING A NEW RE-USE AND REPAIR HUB

Key Theme 2 – Sustainable Travel

- Delivery Priority 1: NEW SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL INFRASTRUCTURE
- Delivery Priority 2: EMPOWERING PEOPLE TO TRAVEL SUSTAINABLY
- Delivery Priority 3: GREEN CORRIDORS

Key Theme 3 – Homes, Buildings and the Built Environment

- Delivery Priority 1: A NET ZERO COUNCIL ESTATE (NON-DOMESTIC)
- Delivery Priority 2: DECARBONISING HOMES AND OTHER BUILDINGS
- Delivery Priority 3: CLIMATE RESILIENT BUILDINGS AND PUBLIC REALM

Key Theme 4 – Nature and Green Space

- Delivery Priority 1: TREES, NATURE CONSERVATION AND BIODIVERSITY
- Delivery Priority 2: BLUE SPACES AND WATERWAYS
- Delivery Priority 3: NATURE-AWARE, CLIMATE-RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

Key Theme 5 – Supporting Communities

- Delivery Priority 1: ESTABLISHING A NEW BRENT CLIMATE ACTION FORUM
- Delivery Priority 2: SUPPORTING THE MOST VULNERABLE
- Delivery Priority 3: EMPOWERING EVERYONE TO TAKE ACTION

Key Principles

13.9 Taking action to tackle the climate emergency has wider ‘co-benefits’ for our communities beyond just emissions reduction. It is our intention that eight key principles will run through all council and community climate activity that will be delivered over the next four years. The proposed key principles are set out below:

1. Climate action that supports households with the cost of living and health and wellbeing
2. Climate action that boosts the local green economy and helps local businesses with the cost of doing business
3. Taking climate action within communities via the Green Neighbourhoods model, continuing and expanding the existing schemes in Church End & Roundwood; Kingsbury; St Raphael’s Estate; South Kilburn
4. Leading by example as a council with emissions reduction across its own corporate estate and operations
5. An intelligence-led approach to borough-wide action where it is needed most
6. Improving Brent’s resilience to the adverse impacts of climate change, particularly in support of the most vulnerable
7. Connecting people with nature via Brent’s open spaces and waterways
8. Inspiring and empowering Brent’s communities to deliver climate action by continuing to build community capacity and break down barriers

Engagement proposals for the development of a new strategy

13.10 Engaging with Brent’s communities on the development of an updated Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy is being undertaken through a combination of workshops, roadshows and online consultation, with participation seeking to reflect Brent's diverse communities throughout.

13.11 The aim of the public engagement is to seek the views and ideas of residents, businesses, community organisations and public sector partners, ensuring the

strategy reflects local priorities, addresses inequalities and supports collective action towards Brent's climate ambitions.

13.12 The success criteria of this public engagement centres around five key points:

- Attaining good level of engagement on updating the climate strategy with a wide cross-section of our community (i.e. residents, faith groups, schools, young people, businesses, trade unions etc)
- Obtaining community feedback on the proposed delivery priorities and shaping these with community buy-in and input
- Community-based ideas and feedback which will feed into the development of the underpinning delivery plans which will accompany the final version of the updated Strategy document
- Community feedback on whether a carbon neutrality target on a borough-wide basis should be retained, and if so, to which date. We are retaining our aspiration for doing all reasonable in our gift to achieve net zero across our corporate estate and operations by 2030
- An up to date understanding of the barriers for people acting on the climate in 2026, and how we can continue to build in ways to break these down within future delivery plans

13.13 The key objectives of the engagement are to:

- Engage at least 300 residents and stakeholders through a combination of workshops, roadshows and online engagement, with participation reflecting Brent's diverse communities, including young people, faith groups, disabled residents and other seldom-heard groups.
- Establish a Brent Climate Action Forum (BCAF), initially to contribute ideas to the climate strategy update, prior to its continuation as a Forum to share ideas and collaboration on climate action.
- We aim to deliver the following engagement sessions:
 - 1 x borough-wide Climate Strategy Workshop with the inaugural BCAF
 - 5 x community engagement events/roadshows across Brent Connects areas
 - 1 x youth engagement session – Brent Youth Parliament and SOS UK (a youth climate leadership organisation)
 - 1 x schoolteacher engagement session
 - School pupils focus groups
 - Business engagement
 - 1 x Trade Unions session / Teachers Unions
 - Staff engagement session(s)
 - Members engagement
 - 1 x online survey via the Have Your Say page

13.14 The membership of the BCAF as proposed will be open and is intended to be drawn from (but not limited to): Community, faith and voluntary sector organisations, local environmental sustainability groups, business networks, trade unions, housing providers, health sector representatives, residents' groups, local and regional partners, protected characteristics groups and schools and young people.

13.15 The engagement and consultation activities will be focused on shaping our approach to collaboration, seeking community views on the Delivery Priorities for each of the five strategy themes and informing our consideration around adopting a new borough-wide carbon neutral goal.

13.16 As part of this, we will also seek to understand the issues that communities feel that they themselves want to be empowered to do more on, and how we can collectively break down barriers to achieving this.

Phase 1 (End September 2026)

13.17 Launch an online engagement questionnaire via the council's Have Your Say web page where residents and organisations can provide their views. This survey is now live.

Phase 2 (October - November 2026)

13.18 Undertake a series of workshops and community engagement events across the borough – this will include a borough-wide Climate Strategy Workshop, at least one engagement event in each Brent Connects Areas, youth engagement sessions, schools focus groups, business focus groups, an engagement session with Councillors, engagement with council staff, and engagement with the borough's main trade unions.

Phase 3 (November 2026-January 2027)

13.19 The public engagement process will close, and the council will analyse and reflect on the feedback received, before using this feedback to form the updated Climate Strategy document. We will ensure that we close the feedback loop by demonstrating how the feedback informed the Strategy.

Phase 4 (February/March 2027 onwards)

13.20 Effective community engagement does not just stop there. With the ambition of the community continuing to be at the heart of climate action, the adoption of the strategy at Cabinet in early 2027 will see us turn to delivery in collaboration with the whole community.

13.21 Please note that the engagement timeline above may be subject to change.

14.0 Key questions for Members

14.1 The Framework for Engagement on updating the Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy forms **Appendix A** of this report. As part of this engagement process, we would welcome Member input into the development of this document. A bespoke Member and Learning Development Session is organised for 2 November, and Councillors can attend the roadshow events in the Brent Connects areas. There are 14 questions on the Have Your Say portal, which Members are also welcome to complete, but key considerations for

Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee at this stage in the process are:

- What do you think of the 15 overarching delivery priorities? (listed in the table under paragraph 13.8)
- Do you have a view on Brent setting a new carbon neutrality goal on a borough-wide basis? (2040, 2050, no definitive goal, or other)
- What do you feel are the biggest barriers preventing people from taking climate action locally, what are opportunities and solutions in tackling this?

15.0 Governance and Monitoring

- 15.1 The UK government produces an annual breakdown of carbon dioxide emissions by Local Authority area as a subset of its annual inventory of greenhouse gas emissions. The complexity of carbon accounting means that this dataset is only available with an 18-month time lag. It is through these figures that we have been able to deduce that Brent's territorial carbon emissions have reduced by 18% since 2021, when the current Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy was adopted. Providing that the government does not change this reporting system, this will be retained as a core measure that progress will be measured against over the coming four years.
- 15.2 Since the creation of the current Strategy, we have also created a new Climate Action Data Dashboard which outlines progress against 47 key indicators across each of the five key themes and covering all elements of climate action - emissions reduction, supporting nature and biodiversity and adapting to extreme weather. Where it is possible to do so, the dashboard not only shows Brent data, but provides benchmarking data against other Local Authorities – split according to the West London sub-region, and Inner/Outer London Boroughs.
- 15.3 The current dashboard has been live for approximately two years and is updated on an annual basis. It is published annually due to the capacity required to collate new data and because many of datasets are only available on an annual basis. An updated iteration for 2026 is included as **Appendix B**.
- 15.4 The data dashboard will be retained as part of the monitoring of a new Climate Strategy, with the current datasets to be comprehensively reviewed in advance of the 2027 iteration to ensure that they align with the updated Strategy.
- 15.5 The updated Strategy will be accompanied by a delivery plan that will be kept live and fluid for maximum flexibility, and we will report on delivery progress annually.
- 15.6 This will be complemented by regular news updates which are provided through the council's existing communications and engagement channels, such as, but not limited to, council news, social media, local Environmental network meetings, and the Brent Environmental Network newsletter.

16.0 Next steps

- 16.1 As outlined in paragraphs 13.17 to 13.20, it is the council's intention to complete the process for refreshing the council's strategy and for Cabinet approval to be obtained by February or March 2027, although the exact Cabinet meeting is subject to change depending on the number and nature of responses received. All residents who engage with this process, should they provide their contact details, will be kept up to date on the progress of this document and how community engagement feedback has supported the creation of a final document.

17.0 Stakeholder and ward member consultation and engagement

- 17.1 The background on how Brent has consulted, engaged with and delivered projects relating to the Climate and Ecological Emergency programme over the past five years is set out throughout report.

All Brent residents, businesses and other organisations are encouraged to engage with and respond to the engagement process on updating Brent's Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy which is currently underway. Further detail on the specifics for engagement across different sectors and key stakeholder groups is set out within section nine of this report.

18.0 Financial Considerations

- 18.1 Detailed financial implications were provided as part of the April 2021, June 2022, January 2023, and October 2024 Cabinet reports when the 2021-2022, 2022-2024 Delivery Plan, 2024-26 and the Green Neighbourhoods Action Plans were approved respectively.
- 18.2 The climate emergency team has an annual revenue budget in 2026-27 of £852k, and the programme is supported by approximately £102k in a dedicated climate reserve.
- 18.3 The costs of undertaking the current engagement proposals will be met from existing council budgets. The development of an updated strategy will be comprehensively costed as part of the governance process seeking Cabinet adoption in early 2027.
- 18.4 £17million has been raised as income from external grant funding to support different parts of the climate programme over the past five years.

19.0 Legal Considerations

- 19.1 The Climate Change Act 2008 (the Act) is the statutory basis for the UK's approach to tackling and responding to the climate and ecological emergency. The Act places a legal duty on central government to set legally binding targets to reduce UK greenhouse gas emissions to net-zero by 2050. The Council's commitment to carbon neutrality and the actions towards this as set out in the report are consistent with the Governments Net Zero Strategy and are

indicative of the important role local authorities play in achieving carbon neutrality.

- 19.2 Where consultation is carried out it must comply with the following 'Gunning' Principles and Common Law:
- Consultation must be undertaken at a time when proposals are still at a formative stage
 - Sufficient reasons for any proposal must be provided in order to allow proper and intelligent consideration and response
 - Adequate time must be given for consideration and response
 - The decision maker must give conscientious consideration to the responses.
- 19.3 The above principles apply to the public engagement we are currently undertaking as part of the update to the council's Climate Strategy.
- 19.4 The data provided from those who sign up to the Brent Environmental Network is managed in accordance with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and other relevant Data Protection legislation.
- 19.5 In delivering the Brent Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy, the Council continues to have regard to internal governance procedures and the Procurement Act 2023, in respect of any procurement.
- 19.6 Local authorities have a range of powers to support the approaches outlined in the report. In addition to the wide general power of competence under Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 which allows local authorities to do anything that individuals generally may do, there are specific powers to include those relating to Biodiversity Net Gain which now has a statutory footing in the planning system, having been created by the Environment Act 2021 and inserted on 12 February 2024 into the Schedule 7A Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
- 19.7 The climate programme has previously been supported by Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding via the Green Corridors schemes, and will explore this as future funding source to support eligible aspects of the 2026-2030 programme. Local authorities must spend the Community Infrastructure Levy on infrastructure needed to support the development of their area; accordingly the Council will decide what infrastructure is needed. The levy can be used to increase the capacity of existing infrastructure or to repair failing existing infrastructure, if that is necessary to support development.
- 19.8 The levy can be used to fund a wide range of infrastructure, including transport, flood defences, schools, hospitals, and other health and social care facilities as set out in section 216(2) of the Planning Act 2008, and regulation 59 of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010, as amended. This definition allows the levy to be used to fund a very broad range of facilities such as play areas, open spaces, parks and green spaces, cultural and sports facilities, healthcare facilities, academies and free schools, district heating schemes and police stations and other community safety facilities. This flexibility gives local

areas the opportunity to choose what infrastructure they need to deliver their relevant plan.

- 19.9 The council has an existing Carbon Offset Fund to support delivery of the Climate Programme. Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 enables the council to enter into a legal agreement with developers to mitigate the impacts of a development proposal. The Council can enter into section 106 agreements with developers to secure carbon offsetting contributions on the basis that they are to be spent on the implementation of projects to reduce carbon emissions in its area to offset the proposed shortfall in meeting London Plan targets. The proposals set out for the expenditure of those carbon offsetting contributions secured through the section 106 process are in compliance with the terms of the Council's section 106 agreements.
- 19.10 The council is working towards a decarbonisation strategy for Brent's estate and is proposing 'A Net Zero Council' as key delivery priority under the Homes, Buildings and Built Environment theme. Further consideration of the requirements for this delivery priority will be set out in due course should this be recommended as a delivery priority in the final strategy document which is developed with the community and presented to Cabinet for adoption in early 2027.

For appendix C

- 19.11 The Flood and Water Management Act 2010 (FWMA2010) aims to provide better, more comprehensive management of flood risk for people, homes and businesses. The FWMA 2010 identifies risk management authorities, which are bodies with an interest in flood risk management. It also places duties and responsibilities onto the Council as a Lead Local Flood Authority ('LLFA'). One of these duties is to maintain, apply and monitor a strategy for managing local flood risk within its area. Section 9 in the FWMA2010, sets out the components that Local Flood Risk Management Strategies should include.
- 19.12 Such matters are:-
- (a) the risk management authorities in the authority's area,
 - (b) the flood and coastal erosion risk management functions that may be exercised by those authorities in relation to the area,
 - (c) the objectives for managing local flood risk (including any objectives included in the authority's flood risk management plan prepared in accordance with the Flood Risk Regulations 2009 when they were in force),
 - (d) the measures proposed to achieve those objectives,
 - (e) how and when the measures are expected to be implemented,
 - (f) the costs and benefits of those measures, and how they are to be paid for,
 - (g) the assessment of local flood risk for the purpose of the strategy,

(h) how and when the strategy is to be reviewed; and

(i) how the strategy contributes to the achievement of wider environmental

19.13 Brent council is the LLFA and has the 'lead' role in managing local flood risk from surface water, groundwater and ordinary watercourses across Brent. The Act outlines the responsibility of it to "develop, maintain, apply and monitor" a strategy for local flood risk management as detailed above. Brent's Flood Risk Management Strategy was approved by Cabinet on 7 April 2025, the approval of which evidences the fulfilment of this duty.

20.0 Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Considerations

20.1 The council, as a public authority exercising public functions, is subject to a public sector equality duty (PSED) under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 (EqA). A full Equalities Impact Assessment was provided upon the adoption of the Climate and Ecological Strategy in 2021 and has been published on the council's website. We also undertook a subsequent EIA for the adoption of the Climate Adaptation and Resilience Framework, which has also been published on the council's website.

20.2 Both EIAs identified groups at greater risk from the impacts of climate change, including:

- Older adults, young children and babies
- People with disabilities or long-term health conditions
- Pregnant people
- Low-income households and those living in poor-quality housing
- People from ethnic minority backgrounds, who may face compounded risks due to existing social and economic inequalities
- Outdoor and manual workers, carers, refugees, asylum seekers, people experiencing homelessness, and those facing digital exclusion or language barriers

20.3 The updated strategy will be designed to reduce existing inequalities and support vulnerable groups, with positive or neutral impacts expected for those most at risk. The second key proposed delivery priority under theme 5 of an updated strategy will be 'Supporting the most vulnerable' and this should act as the focal point for actions in relation to this work.

20.4 As part of the process for adopting a new Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy, we will provide an updated EIA to supplement the new programme for 2026-2030.

21.0 Climate Change and Environmental Considerations

21.1 Climate change and environmental considerations are integral to the purpose, content and recommendations in this report.

22.0 Human Resources Considerations

22.1 There are no HR implications arising from this report.

23.0 Communication Considerations

23.1 A communications and engagement plan has been developed in support of the engagement programme described within this report. The council will utilise existing council communication channels and our networks, whilst also encouraging communities to spread the word about engaging with this process, during the time the engagement period is open. We will ensure that we close the feedback loop with residents by outlining how the feedback informed the Strategy.

Report sign off:

Jehan Weerasinghe

Corporate Director, Neighbourhoods and Regeneration

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Brent Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy Update (2026-2030)



**Brent
Together**
Towards Zero

Framework for Public Engagement
Autumn 2026

INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

The council first [declared a climate and ecological emergency](#) in July 2019 and pledged to do all reasonable in our gift to aim for carbon neutrality by 2030 and work with government to achieve the national 2050 target.

Over the past seven years since this declaration, the council has worked alongside our communities to put this goal into action. Following on from the invaluable work of the Brent Climate Assembly, the borough's first [Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy \(2021-2030\)](#) was adopted in April 2021. The Strategy mirrored the priorities for action put forward by the Brent Climate Assembly, and therefore aptly captured the views of Brent's residents on where to focus climate action over the coming years.

The Strategy provided a pathway of delivery towards the 2030 carbon neutrality goal and encapsulated Brent's ecological ambitions with the objective of also becoming 'one of the greenest, most biodiverse and climate-resilient boroughs in London'.

The core of comprehensive climate action can be broken down into three main elements: (1) emissions reduction, (2) supporting nature and biodiversity, (3) adapting to extreme weather. This is ultimately what the strategy's aims sought to tackle, with communities at the heart of each of these elements. We are pleased that substantial progress has been made on each of these three elements since it was adopted.

For example, firstly, the borough's carbon emissions have fallen by 18% since 2019 with an estimated 185,600 less tonnes of emissions emitted within the borough boundary according to the most recent government dataset (2024). The council's own footprint has also fallen by a further 13.8% (2025-26), having now reduced by 75.8% since 2010. Secondly, to support nature and biodiversity, we created a separate [Green Infrastructure Vision](#) and have put this into action through a range of actions delivered to enhance the borough's nature and biodiversity.

Finally, we created and adopted a [Climate Adaptation and Resilience Framework](#) which sets out the key considerations for the borough in dealing with flooding, extreme heat and drought in the face of a rapidly changing climate. This document complements the council's [Flood Risk Management Strategy](#). We were the second borough in London to develop a dedicated plan for climate adaptation and resilience, highlighting how seriously the borough is taking this issue.

More extensive detail on achievements to date across the five key themes, and in response to these three core elements can be observed within the sections for the five key themes which follow-on later in this document. An overarching summary can also be found on the [council's website](#).

However, we recognise that there is much more to do. The risks posed by the climate emergency are clearer than ever before – with extreme weather records continuing to be broken regularly. We also recognise that the key objectives of the 2021-2030 Climate Strategy were working to a timeline of aspiring to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030 on both a borough-wide basis, and for our own estate and operations. This date is fast approaching and no longer considered to be a realistic aim *on a borough-wide basis*. However, Brent Council remains committed to doing all reasonable in our gift to achieve net zero emissions from its own operations and estate by 2030.

We therefore believe it is the right time to review our existing Climate Strategy, and work with communities towards the creation of an updated document which will be the focal point for the next four years. The challenges facing councils in 2026 are like those which faced us during the creation of the initial Climate Strategy in 2021 and have in many ways intensified. The rationale for pursuing a document covering a shorter timeframe rather than another long-term strategy is to ensure that the document has a sharper focus on what is realistically achievable, deliverable and will continue to accelerate pushing the borough's climate and environmental goals in the right direction within this period.

The council cannot tackle the climate emergency on its own. It is integral that Brent's communities remain at the heart of both the creation and delivery of this new strategy, as this document will seek to convey.

DEVELOPING A NEW CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCY STRATEGY

AIMS OF THIS DOCUMENT

This document is a framework for engagement. It has been developed as a mechanism for engagement with residents as part of the development of an updated Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy. It aims to set out the key considerations for climate action in Brent as things stand in 2026 and the direction of travel for potential activity over the next four years, which will be further shaped with Brent's communities. It will also align to our new Council Plan, which will also cover the next four years and is due to be published this Autumn.

THE FIVE KEY THEMES

The five key themes in the Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy mirrored the top five priorities put forward by the Brent Climate Assembly. Based on our experience of delivery over the past five years, and how valuable the Climate Assembly was, we believe there is a strong rationale for retaining the existing five themes. All of them remain as relevant now to accelerating climate action as they were in 2021 and cover the breadth of topics where environmental action should be focused in the borough.

The five key themes are: (1) Consumption, Resources and Waste; (2) Sustainable Travel; (3) Homes, Buildings, and the Built Environment; (4) Nature and Green Space; (5) Supporting Communities. Adapting to climate change is interwoven throughout.

DELIVERY PRIORITIES AND ACTION PLANS

It is proposed that, to reflect our intention to develop an updated strategy that is achievable and deliverable, three key delivery priorities will sit underneath each of the key five themes. This will be supported by a more detailed and specific set of individual actions which will accompany the creation of the updated strategy document.

KEY PRINCIPLES

Taking action to tackle the climate emergency has wider 'co-benefits' for our communities beyond just emissions reduction. It is our intention that eight key principles will run through all council and community climate activity that will be delivered over the next four years. The proposed key principles are set out below:

1. Climate action that supports households with the cost of living and health and wellbeing
2. Climate action that boosts the local green economy and helps local businesses with the cost of doing business
3. Taking climate action within communities via the Green Neighbourhoods model, continuing and expanding the existing schemes in Church End & Roundwood; Kingsbury; St Raphael's Estate; South Kilburn
4. Leading by example as a council with emissions reduction across its own corporate estate and operations
5. An intelligence-led approach to borough-wide action where it is needed most
6. Improving Brent's resilience to the adverse impacts of climate change, particularly in support of the most vulnerable
7. Connecting people with nature via Brent's open spaces and waterways
8. Inspiring and empowering Brent's communities to deliver climate action by continuing to build community capacity and break down barriers

BRENT'S INFLUENCE OVER TACKLING THE CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCY

Tackling the climate emergency requires a joined-up response, ranging from international actors, national governments, regional governments, local authorities, schools, businesses, housing associations, voluntary organisations, faith communities and residents. The London Borough of Brent is one part of a very complex picture, and it will be important for the creation of an updated strategy to be grounded in realities of what the council and its communities can directly influence, and what is more difficult to influence.

The council has varying levels of influence over each of the core of comprehensive climate action: (1) emissions reduction, (2) supporting nature and biodiversity, (3) and adapting to extreme weather.

There are two main considerations for emissions reduction in Brent: direct territorial emissions and indirect consumption emissions. Carbon dioxide (CO₂) is one of many greenhouse gases, but it is the biggest contributor to the climate emergency. Within Brent, direct carbon emissions arise from three major sources: energy use in homes, energy use in buildings and road transport. We have different levels of influence across and within these aspects.

This split is emitted within the borough boundary as follows:

- **Domestic (Homes)** = 38% of the borough-wide carbon footprint
- **Transport** = 26% of the borough-wide carbon footprint
- **Commercial Buildings** = 16% of the borough-wide carbon footprint
- **Industrial Buildings** = 12% of the borough-wide carbon footprint
- **Public Sector Buildings** = 7% of the borough-wide carbon footprint

The council's own carbon footprint from its corporate estate and operations comprises around 0.5% of the borough's overall carbon footprint, and the council's housing stock is around 6% of the borough's total number of domestic properties.

Indirect consumption emissions are greenhouse gas emissions which arise from the products we buy, how much we recycle, the types of food we eat and how we travel outside of the borough boundary. These wider indirect emissions arising from our daily behaviours are more difficult to measure but are estimated to be over four times as high as the direct emissions from homes, buildings and road transport.

A Local Area Energy Plan for Brent has recently estimated that it would cost between £10.2billion and £10.6billion of investment to achieve net zero in the borough, across varying timeframes. Funding remains the most significant barrier to accelerating climate action. This is a level of capital investment that the council simply cannot provide on its own. We have been successful in obtaining £17million in external grant funding to support climate action in the borough, but this also highlights the discrepancy between what is available and what is required.

Supporting nature through biodiversity initiatives and adapting the borough to enable it to become more resilient to extreme weather, also require funding both in terms of initial delivery and ongoing maintenance. We do not have investment estimates in the same way as the Local Area Energy Plan sets out for these elements, but the upfront investment costs are likely to be a similar challenge.

This is not to say we will not continue to be as ambitious as possible. The council will continue to utilise what direct levers it can pull to decarbonise via our estate, operations, policies and placemaking abilities alongside our role as a community convenor to support and empower different parts of the community to collectively do all that we can to tackle the climate emergency over the next four years. The work undertaken to date has already made Brent a lower-emission, greener and more resilient borough than we were five years ago; the updated strategy must continue to accelerate that trend wherever possible.

THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNITIES AND PARTNERSHIPS

Climate action must be a collective endeavour. The scale of the challenge and risk of inaction are too great for it not to be. Every single individual living, working or studying in Brent has a stake in tackling the climate emergency and avoiding the catastrophic effects of climate change.

The council has sought to put communities at the heart of its climate action work since the original declaration of a climate and ecological emergency in 2019. We have brilliant, inspiring individuals and communities here in Brent, and the last five years have shown just what can be achieved by working together. Just some of the examples include:

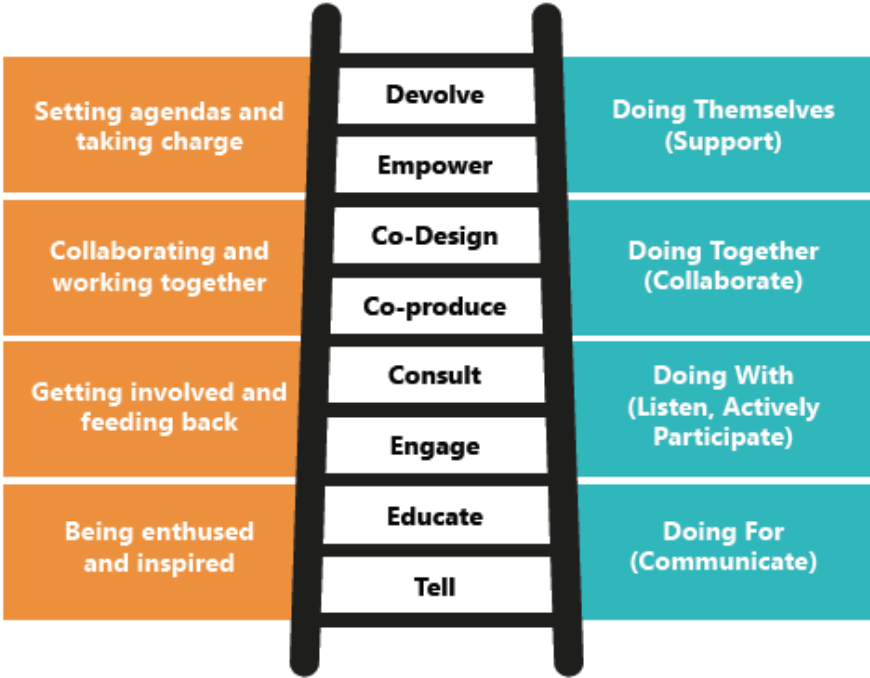
- 4,800 members of the Brent Environmental Network
- 105 community environmental projects funded by the Together Towards Zero Small Grants Scheme
- 127 organisations signed up to the Brent Climate Charter
- 40 businesses are part of the Brent Green Directory
- 53% of our Schools now with completed or draft Climate Action Plans
- 25 Faith organisations utilising the Brent Faith Climate Action Plan
- Exemplary community co-design of the Church End & Roundwood Green Corridors scheme
- Numerous Community Tree Planting Days
- 3 community focused Climate Action Films: This Ain't Normal, Roots of Brent, Faces of Climate Change

This has all contributed to Brent becoming a greener, more climate-conscious and climate-friendly borough.

We want the next strategy and next four years to go even further in placing communities at the heart of this programme. We will aim to ensure that climate action reaches the broadest number of people and communities in the borough as possible and making sure that it is reflective of the diversity of our borough.

Our aim is to continue to make sure that climate action is inclusive, equitable and that communities are ultimately empowered with the knowledge, skills and resources to be able to take action themselves wherever possible.

The ladder of community engagement:



PROCESS FOR PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

We will be engaging with Brent's communities on the development of an updated Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy over the next couple of months. We will do this through a combination of workshops, roadshows and online engagement, with participation seeking to reflect Brent's diverse communities throughout.

FOCUS OF THE ENGAGEMENT

The objective of this strategy update is to ensure that our actions are grounded in being realistic and deliverable.

We will therefore be seeking community views on the three *Delivery Priorities* under each of the key five themes, and what actions they would ideally like to be included. We will also seek to understand the areas that communities feel that they themselves want to be empowered to do more on, and how we can collectively break down barriers to achieving this.

We will also seek to get a sense on whether our communities wish for a specific target for carbon neutrality in the borough to be retained, and if so, their preference of timescale.

PHASE 1 (September 2026)

We will launch a questionnaire via the council's online 'Have Your Say' web pages where residents and organisations can provide their views.

PHASE 2 (October - November 2026)

We will undertake a series of workshops and community engagement events/roadshows across the borough – this will include a borough-wide Climate Strategy Workshop, at least one engagement event in each Brent Connects Areas, youth engagement sessions, schools focus groups, business focus groups, engagement with faith groups, an engagement session with Councillors, engagement with council staff, and engagement with the borough's main trade unions. We will also take this document for discussion to the Brent Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee.

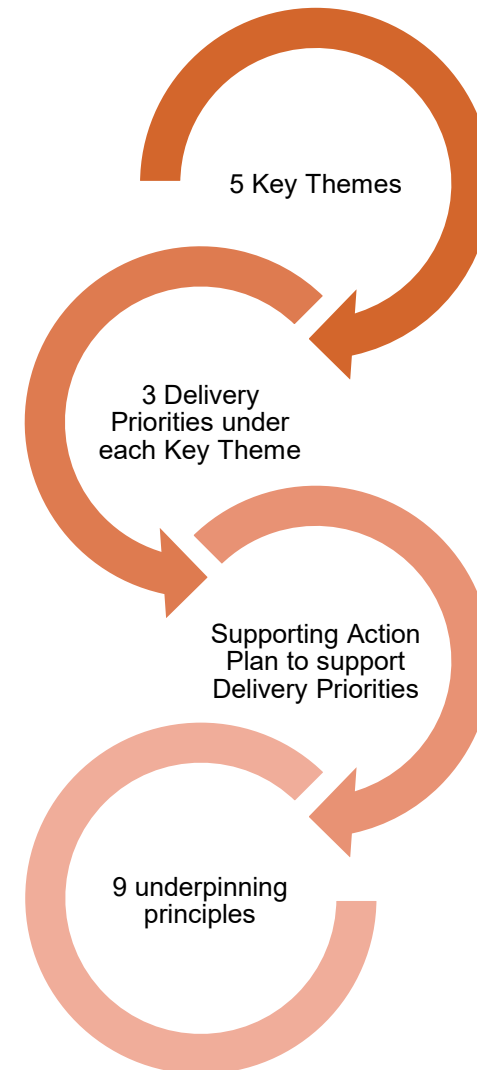
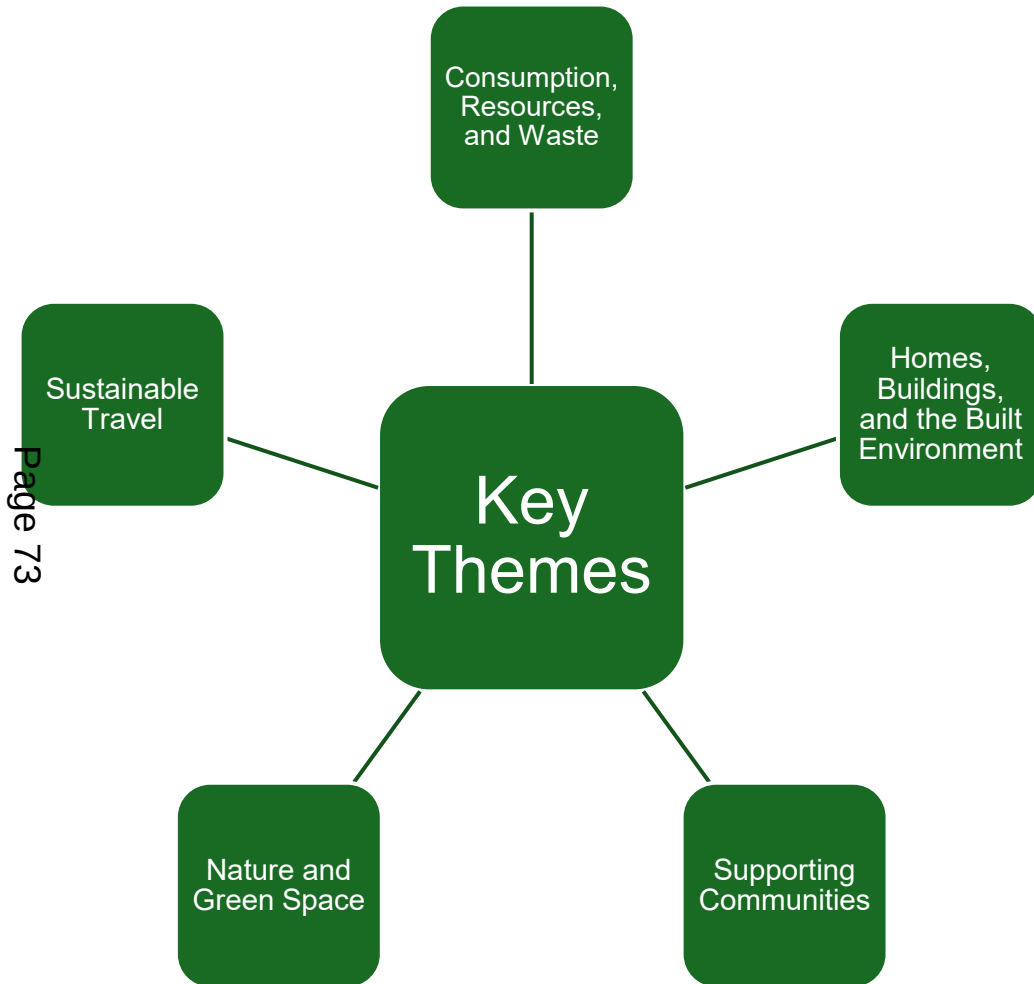
PHASE 3 (November 2026 – January 2027)

The public engagement process will close, and the council will analyse and reflect on the feedback received, before using this feedback to form the new Climate Strategy document. We will ensure that we close the feedback loop by demonstrating how the feedback informed the Strategy.

PHASE 4 (February/March 2027 onwards)

Effective community engagement does not just stop there. With the ambition of the community continuing to be at the heart of climate action, the adoption of the strategy will see us turn to delivery, in collaboration with the community wherever appropriate.





THE KEY THEMES

THEME 1 – CONSUMPTION, RESOURCES, AND WASTE



THEME 2 – SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL



THEME 3 – HOMES, BUILDINGS, AND THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT



THEME 4 – NATURE AND GREEN SPACE



THEME 5 – SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES



THEME 1 – CONSUMPTION, RESOURCES AND WASTE

Vision for the next four years: Greater awareness within Brent's communities of the need for a more circular economy and the 4Rs (Reduce, Re-Use, Recycle, Recover) with emerging behaviour change reflected within our key waste statistics and through increasing numbers of people engaged through related circular economy events and initiatives.

Desired outcomes: Improved annual household recycling rate; lower household waste per head; more residents borrowing from Library of Things; more residents attending repair cafes, swap shops and sharing spaces; more eco-refill shops established in schools

EXAMPLES OF ACHIEVEMENTS TO DATE • New waste recycling service rolled out – collecting on average 500 tonnes of paper and card from the blue sack each month and a participation rate of 80%, • 24,000 new food waste caddies rolled out • Launched the Library of Things at Willesden Green Library with 2,150 borrows from 1,948 borrowers since opening • Free programme of re-use and repair cafes – 11 delivered to date • 10 x Eco-Refill Shops set up in Brent Schools • From Brent to Bowl Community Cookbook created • Street Swaps and Sharing Spaces events delivered	DELIVERY PRIORITY 1: WASTE INFRASTRUCTURE AND BEHAVIOUR CHANGE We will seek to continue to improve the waste infrastructure which will support tackling the key environmental issues that remain within Brent's waste stream and aligning with the government's Simpler Recycling policies. For example, continuing to make it easier for people to recycle food waste (food waste caddies roll-out; on-street bins for flats above shops; trialling improved waste collection at communal sites) to reduce contamination. We will seek to combine this work with dedicated communications/engagement campaigns to embed more sustainable behaviours with regards to waste and recycling and work closely with the West London Waste Authority to support this aim too.
DELIVERY PRIORITY 2: COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY We will seek to build on the positive work done to date on involving communities in initiatives relating to the Circular Economy (i.e. an economy where products/materials are kept in use for as long as possible). For example, by taking the Repair Cafes to different locations around the borough to ensure everyone can benefit, empowering more residents to run their own local Repair Café events, continuing to boost engagement with the Library of Things at Willesden Green Library, expanding the Swap Shop model retaining and expanding the Sharing Spaces model, encouraging schools to undertake school uniform swaps and rolling out more School Eco-Refill shops where possible.	DELIVERY PRIORITY 3: EXPLORE DEVELOPING A NEW RE-USE AND REPAIR HUB We will seek to work with the West London West Authority to explore identifying, designing and developing a new re-use and repair hub at a suitable location in the borough, to act as a focal point for Re-Use and Repair Activities and mechanism to educate and engage residents on the importance of the 4Rs and the Circular Economy.

THEME 2 – SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL

Vision for the next four years: Delivery of more sustainable travel infrastructure (active travel, electric vehicle charge points, public transport improvements), complemented by an improved programme of initiatives to support people to shift to more sustainable modes of travel within the borough boundary.

Desired outcomes: Increased % of average daily trips made by active travel and public transport; increased % of residents doing at least two x 10 mins of active travel a day; increased number of bike hangars; increased number of EV charge points; increased number of School Streets; improved air quality; increased % of population within 400m of a strategic cycle network.

EXAMPLES OF ACHIEVEMENTS TO DATE

- Highest numbers of people utilising Sustainable Travel modes in Outer London (68.7%)
- 233 bike hangars installed
- 1,312 electric vehicle charge points installed
- 150 new lime bike docking bays installed
- 34 school streets schemes delivered
- Borough-wide air pollution improvements across NO₂, PM2.5, PM10
- 53% of Brent schools now hold a gold, silver or bronze School Travel Plan
- Launched the Brent Revive and Ride scheme, with 40 refurbished bikes donated for free to local faith and community groups

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DELIVERY PRIORITY 1: NEW SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL INFRASTRUCTURE

We understand that parts of the borough can be perceived as being a challenging environment for more sustainable modes of transport. We will therefore continue to improve sustainable travel infrastructure in the borough to make it easier and more desirable for communities to switch away from petrol and diesel vehicles when getting around. This will include starting work on the new Cycleway 72 cycle route from Wembley to Harlesden and developing new routes which provide better connectivity around the borough (particularly between the North and South). We will also seek to deliver more bike hangars, cycle parking, school street schemes, Lime Bike docking bays, and electric vehicle charge points (including trialling innovative solutions like Cross-Pavement Gullies).

DELIVERY PRIORITY 2: EMPOWERING PEOPLE TO TRAVEL SUSTAINABLY

We will complement new sustainable travel infrastructure by continuing to improve the council's support offer to communities to enable and empower more residents to feel confident using sustainable travel methods getting around the borough. This will include: providing residents with a supported pathway into cycling through provision of cycling equipment and support developing cycle confidence from Brent Hubs and faith centres, assessing the potential of the best walking routes in the borough, developing supportive communities for active travel users, working with schools to develop and improve sustainable school travel plans, encouraging and promoting Car Clubs and promotion of TfL initiatives for greater public transport use.

DELIVERY PRIORITY 3: GREEN CORRIDORS

Green Corridors are public realm projects which seek to connect key destinations across a neighbourhood by prioritising active travel infrastructure improvements whilst simultaneously improving the look and feel of an area through enhanced natural, climate resilient infrastructure. The council's first Green Corridor schemes are progressing well in Church End & Roundwood and Kingsbury. Over the next four years, we are seeking to complete the existing plans for these neighbourhoods before seeking to expand these routes outwards to maximise their impact and reach into communities. This will be aligned with strategic considerations for the borough's wider active travel network, to ensure that these plans are joined up.

THEME 3 – HOMES, BUILDINGS, AND THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Vision for the next four years: To decarbonise and futureproof the council's own estate and operations whilst delivering retrofit work to our housing stock via the Warm Homes Fund and Schools estate (*grant funding dependent*), alongside supporting residents in Fuel Poverty and encouraging buildings across all parts of the community to become more energy efficient.

Desired outcomes: A further reduction in the council's carbon footprint (own estate and operations); a reduction of Brent residents in Fuel Poverty; retrofit measures undertaken on Brent's housing stock; retrofit measures undertaken on Brent's school estate; more projects undertaken to address climate adaptation and resilience across Brent's homes, buildings and public realm.

EXAMPLES OF ACHIEVEMENTS TO DATE • 76% reduction in the council's own carbon footprint since 2010 • 1,729 council properties retrofitted with at least one energy efficiency measure • 1,667 households supported by the Brent Well and Warm Energy Advice Scheme • Developed a Climate Adaptation and Resilience Framework for Brent • Developed and implemented a Sustainable Environment and Development Supplementary Planning Document • Local Area Energy Plans created (Phases 1 and 2) • Brent Energy Efficient Grant for Buildings small grants scheme launched	DELIVERY PRIORITY 1: A NET ZERO COUNCIL ESTATE (NON-DOMESTIC) The council has undertaken a feasibility study with Turner and Townsend to look at what measures are required to reduce the council's carbon footprint to net zero. We anticipate that it will cost around £6.6m-£7m in capital expenditure to deliver the necessary energy conservation measures. We will therefore explore all the relevant funding routes to put this plan into action over the next few years. As a council, we understand the importance of leading by example as a net zero organisation going into the next decade and will do all reasonable in our gift to achieve net zero across our estate and operations by 2030.
DELIVERY PRIORITY 2: DECARBONISING HOMES AND OTHER BUILDINGS We will seek to deliver our allocation from the Warm Homes Fund and also seek to maximise any further opportunities that arise from the government's Warm Homes programmes. We will also deliver the South Kilburn Heat Network, eventually connecting and decarbonising 3,00 homes. We will also seek to review opportunities for funding for retrofit measures on the council's school estate via the Department for Education's Education Estates Strategy which is due to become available in 2027. Across wider housing tenure types, we will continue the Well and Warm Service and Warm Homes Local grant to support those in Fuel Poverty. We will also continue to encourage community sectors (such as businesses, housing associations, academies etc) to decarbonise their operations wherever possible.	DELIVERY PRIORITY 3: CLIMATE RESILIENT BUILDINGS AND PUBLIC REALM The extreme heat and subsequent drought of summer 2026 laid bare the need for buildings of all types and the wider public realm to be futureproofed for a changing climate. Brent will utilise our Climate Adaptation and Resilience Framework, Extreme Heat Study for Harlesden and Stonebridge, Opportunities Mapping Study for Sustainable Urban Drainage and upcoming review of both the London Plan and our Local Plan as a basis for solutions to start to adapt homes, buildings, new developments, and wider public realm to the threats posed by extreme heat, flooding, drought and extreme cold in particular.

THEME 4 – NATURE AND GREEN SPACE

Vision for the next four years: To make Brent a visibly greener borough, through more tree planting and enhancements of nature and biodiversity, with cleaner waterways and a new reinvigorated partnership with our residents on protecting nature and keeping the borough's environment clean.

Desired outcomes: More trees planted; cleaner waterways; increased number of improved green spaces; more residents engaging with nature education settings; more schools taking active steps to support nature and biodiversity on their sites; more community/council partnerships for local greening

EXAMPLES OF ACHIEVEMENTS TO DATE - Delivered award-winning enhancements to Brent's parks 3,600 new trees planted since 2022 - New community gardening initiatives (e.g. North Brent Community Garden) - New community orchards (e.g. Fry's Orchard) - Enhanced biodiversity and nature-based activities – such as bird, bat box and planting (e.g. Willesden New Cemetery) - New rain gardens and swales (e.g. Kensal Corridor, Church Path, Leybourne Open Space) - Green and Healthy Streets Schemes (e.g. Leopold Primary, Oakington Manor) - Developed a Green Infrastructure Vision for Brent	DELIVERY PRIORITY 1: TREES, NATURE CONSERVATION AND BIODIVERSITY Guided by our new Tree Strategy, over the next four years we will maximise the huge role that trees must play in response to a changing climate. We will take a strategic approach to planting, trialling species that can equally withstand extreme weather, provide shade for cooling, and avoid damage to adjacent property, whilst targeting the areas of the borough felt to be in most need. We will complement this by enhancing our natural environment wherever possible, seeking to support biodiversity, local ecosystems and habitats for wildlife. Ongoing maintenance of natural green infrastructure is key to its success and survival, and we will need to cultivate widespread community action to support this in the coming years.
DELIVERY PRIORITY 2: BLUE SPACES AND WATERWAYS Brent has several rivers and canals which flow through it, alongside an invaluable 'Site of Scientific Interest' in the Welsh Harp Reservoir. However, we also know that these blue spaces are not being maximised to their potential from an environmental perspective. We will work with the relevant external agencies to seek to resolve well known flooding issues in the borough in particular in relation to the Wealdstone Brook and Wembley Brook, alongside wider efforts to clean-up our waterways and support the biodiversity that thrives in these settings. Cleaning up our waterways will be a borough-wide effort, requiring agency and community support and a step-change in behaviour in relation to littering and increased care for our local environment.	DELIVERY PRIORITY 3: NATURE-AWARE, CLIMATE-RESILIENT COMMUNITIES Communities will continue to have a substantial role to play over the next four years in pushing Brent forward to be the greenest borough it can be. We will also ensure that communities are supported in understanding the ever-growing risks to nature as we know it and how extreme weather will be felt locally. By utilising and building on the work of settings like the Welsh Harp Environmental Education Centre and Roundwood Nature Connection Centre, we will use education and a tangible connection to nature to enable a greater focus on what residents can do to take action to urgently support protecting local ecosystems and natural resources like water.

THEME 5 – SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES

Vision for the next four years: To strengthen existing partnerships on climate action and continue to forge new ones, covering all key sectors of Brent's communities from Schools to Businesses, with a renewed emphasis on empowering and accelerating communities taking action themselves

Desired outcomes: Establishing a new public Climate Action Forum; increased membership of the Brent Environmental Network; more projects delivered via the Together Towards Zero scheme; more sign-ups to the Brent Climate Charter/Green Director; more schools with Climate Action Plans; more Faith communities actively engaged and utilising the Faith Climate Action Plan

EXAMPLES OF ACHIEVEMENTS TO DATE: • 4,800 members of the Brent Environmental Network • 105 projects funded by the Together Towards Zero Small Grants Scheme • 127 organisations signed up to the Brent Climate Charter • 40 businesses are part of the Brent Green Directory • 53% of our Schools now with completed or draft Climate Action Plans • 25 Faith organisations utilising the Brent Faith Climate Action Plan • Community co-design of the Church End & Roundwood Green Corridors and community tree planting days • 3 community focused Climate Action Films: This Ain't Normal, Roots of Brent, Faces of Climate Change	DELIVERY PRIORITY 1: ESTABLISHING A NEW BRENT CLIMATE ACTION FORUM Since 2021, the Brent Environmental Network has acted as the key means for bringing together environmental action across the borough. The Network now has 4,800 members since launching in 2021 and consists of residents, community groups, businesses, schools and faith groups amongst others. We will further strengthen this network by developing a new dedicated Climate Action Forum, to spearhead community climate action across the borough. The forum will be designed to be inclusive and representative of Brent's wonderful diversity, to ensure that all key sectors are empowered to play an active role in climate action across the borough.
DELIVERY PRIORITY 2: SUPPORTING THE MOST VULNERABLE Evidence suggests that the worst effects of extreme weather will affect some groups more than others. Older adults, young children and babies, people with disabilities or long-term health conditions, low-income households, people from ethnic minority groups, homeless people, carers and outdoor and manual workers, are known to be at most risk. We will seek to develop and deliver projects that are designed to offer support to the most vulnerable residents wherever possible – whether this be in relation to decarbonisation, adapting to extreme weather or protecting nature/accessing green space.	DELIVERY PRIORITY 3: EMPOWERING EVERYONE TO TAKE ACTION There are many fantastic individuals, groups, and organisations across the borough who have played a part in tackling the climate and ecological emergency. We will build on this foundation to empower even more people. Whether this be through making our procurement processes as environmentally sustainable and inclusive as possible, boosting green skills within our local economy, funding the Together Towards Zero small grants scheme, supporting schools to develop and implement School Climate Action Plans, supporting businesses via the Brent Climate Charter or through Faith Communities leading by example in local communities, united around protecting the environment.

GREEN NEIGHBOURHOOD PILOT EXPANSION

Green Neighbourhoods are specific local areas where we are testing new ways to tackle climate change and improve the environment. By focusing our efforts in these pilot areas, we can learn what works and seek to apply those lessons across the borough. The programme aims to make neighbourhoods greener, support local communities, and encourage more sustainable ways of living. Brent currently has four Green Neighbourhood pilot areas, split into two types: *Neighbourhood-led* and *Development-led*. These projects have been running since early 2023.

Neighbourhood-led Green Neighbourhood pilots are areas where there were already sustainability projects, community groups, or opportunities to make quick environmental improvements with support from residents. Church End and Roundwood and Kingsbury are our current Neighbourhood-led Green Neighbourhood pilot areas.

Development-led Green Neighbourhood pilots are areas with new developments planned, where sustainable features such as energy-efficient buildings, walking and cycling routes, green spaces, and low carbon infrastructure can, wherever possible, be built in from the start.

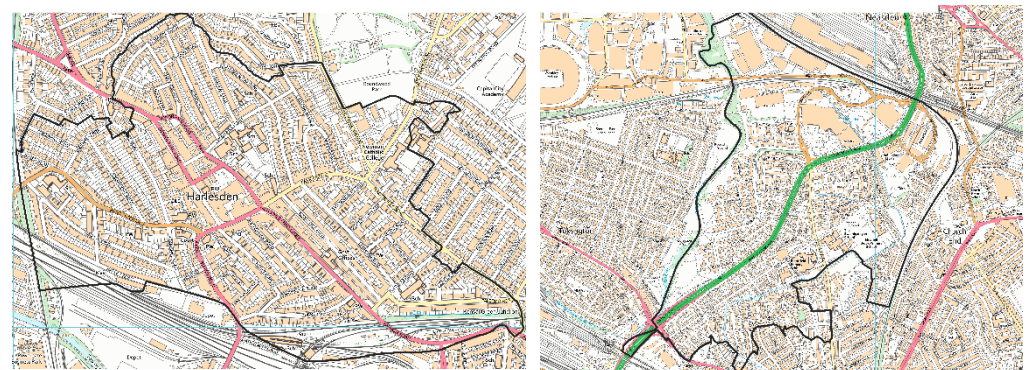
Good climate action progress has been made in the two neighbourhood-led pilot areas, with progress slower than anticipated in South Kilburn and St Raphael's Estate due to the economic climate and slowdown in development schemes in recent years. As things stand, as part of the development of a new programme we are intending to retain the existing four Green Neighbourhood pilot areas to enable each area to complete key projects currently underway and for each area to realise its full potential of the concept.

We will review the potential for expanding the boundaries of the Church End and Roundwood and St Raphael's Estate areas to align to the Pride of Place programme, and the opportunities that this new programme may provide to make these local areas even greener and more environmentally sustainable.

Existing Green Neighbourhoods boundaries



Pride In Place programme boundaries (left: Harlesden; right: St Raphael's)



OPTIONS FOR CARBON NEUTRALITY GOAL

Part of the necessity for undertaking this strategy review is the need to consider the achievability of the existing 2030 carbon neutrality aspiration (on a borough-wide basis) given this is only three years away.

The London Borough of Brent, along with four other West London Boroughs, have taken part in the development of a Local Area Energy Plan (LAEP) - working alongside Ramboll, Energy Systems Catapult, the Greater London Authority (GLA) and other stakeholders to create a shared, evidence-based pathway for achieving a carbon neutral energy system.

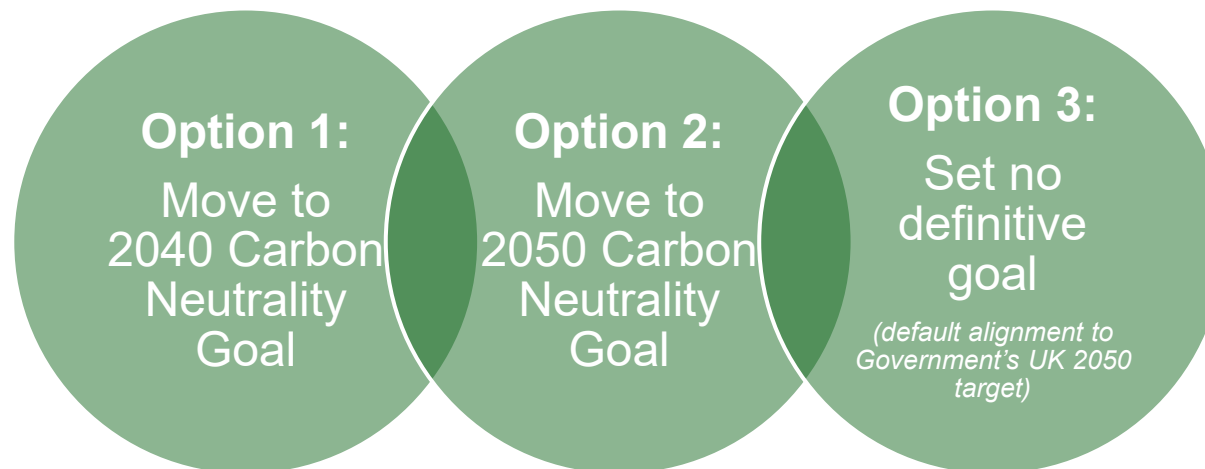
It is clear that the Council cannot deliver the full set of actions required to reach carbon neutrality on its own. Most of the changes identified in the LAEP, from large-scale retrofit and clean-heat deployment to network reinforcement, EV charging expansion and local renewable energy, depend on a wide coalition of actors, including residents, landlords, housing associations, private developers, community energy groups, technology providers, finance partners, and the electricity and gas network operators.

Many interventions also rely on regional coordination through the GLA and West London partners, and on national policy, regulation and funding frameworks led by Government and Ofgem.

The LAEP looked at a range of different scenarios to decarbonising the energy system in Brent, according to different timescales and interventions. The total cost of capital investment required for the local area ranged from an estimated £10.2bn - £10.6bn. As stated on page four on this document, this is a level of capital investment that the council alone simply cannot provide on its own.

- 2030 - £10.2bn = 2.7 megatonnes of CO₂ emitted over the timescale
- 2040 - £10.5bn = 4.7 megatonnes of CO₂ emitted over the timescale
- 2050 - £10.6bn = 7.4 megatonnes of CO₂ emitted over the timescale

We will engage with residents on these challenges and realities, and consider the feedback received. It will be important to be honest with residents throughout this process on the ongoing challenge that a lack of funding and resources poses.



MONITORING

CARBON EMISSIONS

The UK government produces an annual breakdown of carbon dioxide emissions by Local Authority area as a subset of its annual inventory of greenhouse gas emissions. The complexity of carbon accounting means that this dataset is only available with an 18-month time lag. It is through these figures that we have been able to deduce that Brent's territorial carbon emissions have reduced by 18% since 2019 and the adoption of the previous Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy. As long as the government do not change this reporting system, this will be retained as a core measure that progress will be measured against over the coming four years.

BRENT'S CLIMATE ACTION DATA DASHBOARD

Since the creation of the previous Strategy, we have also created a new [Climate Action Data Dashboard](#) which outlines progress from 47 key indicators across each of the five key themes. These indicators act as 'proxy' indicators for progress which contribute to the key environmental sustainability aims of the strategy. This will also be the mechanism to support reporting across the two other core elements of climate action, beyond just carbon emissions, supporting nature and biodiversity and adapting to extreme weather. Where it is possible to do so, the dashboard not only shows Brent data, but provides benchmarking data against other Local Authorities – split according to the West London sub-region, and Inner/Outer London Boroughs.

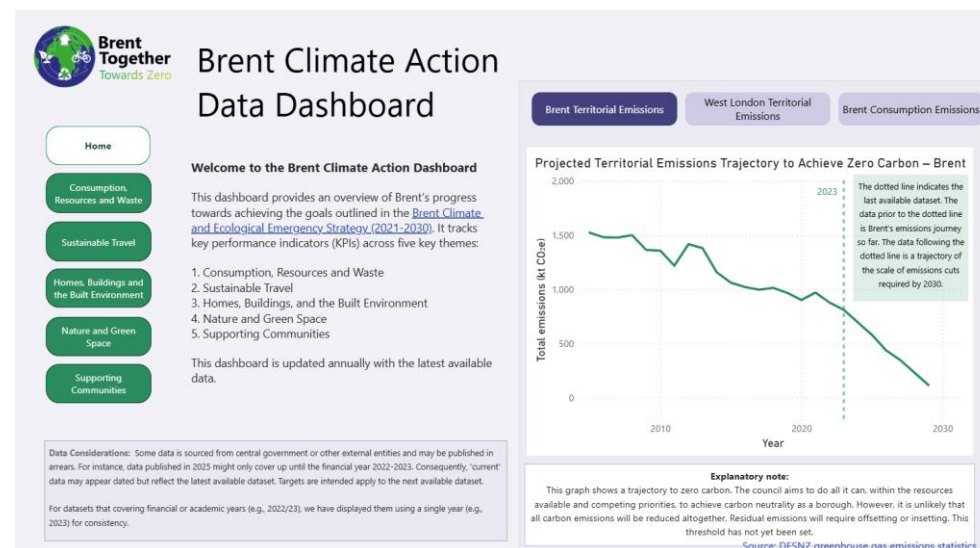
The current dashboard has been live for approximately two years and is updated on an annual basis. It is published annually due to the capacity required to collate new data and because many of datasets are only available on an annual basis.

The data dashboard will be retained as part of the monitoring of a new Climate Strategy, with the current datasets to be comprehensively reviewed in advance of the 2027 iteration to ensure that they align with the new strategy – due to be published in early 2027.

DELIVERY PLAN REPORTING

The Strategy will be accompanied by a delivery plan that will be kept live and fluid for maximum flexibility, and we will report on delivery progress annually.

This will be complemented by regular news updates which are provided through the council's existing communications and engagement channels, such as, but not limited to, council news, social media, local Environmental network meetings, and the Brent Environmental Network newsletter.



NEXT STEPS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE STRATEGY



[Timeline above subject to change]

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As outlined above and on page six of this document, it is our intention to complete the process for refreshing the council's strategy and for Cabinet approval to be obtained by February/March 2027. All residents who engage with this process, should they provide their contact details, will be kept up to date on the progress of this document and how community engagement feedback has supported the creation of a final document.

Climate Action can only be achieved through communities and public authorities working in tandem around common environmental goals. Much has been achieved in the past five years by working to this ethos. The next four years provide an opportunity to build on this and to accelerate climate action, and the transition towards a society which is low carbon, greener in every sense, and futureproofed to the risks posed by extreme weather.

We hope that you engage with this process and join on this journey both now and into the future.



**Brent
Together**
Towards Zero

GLOSSARY

Active Travel Making journeys in a physically active way, such as walking, cycling, wheeling or scooting.	Carbon Offset Fund A fund paid into by new developments in the borough, to be used for projects which reduce carbon.	Decarbonise To stop or reduce carbon dioxide being released into the atmosphere as the result of a process, for example the burning of fossil fuels.
Adaptation Preparing for the effects of climate change, reducing exposure and vulnerability to harmful climate impacts.	Carbon Neutrality Reaching a point where the amount of carbon in the atmosphere is no longer increasing.	Docking Bay A dedicated, marked out, signposted location for on-street bicycle parking, typically reserved for e-bikes such as those operated by Lime.
Air Quality A measure of air pollution levels, which affect human health and the environment.	Circular Economy Products/materials are kept in use for as long as possible, minimising resource consumption, waste and greenhouse gas emissions.	Drought A prolonged period of below-average rainfall, leading to water shortages that can affect people, businesses, and the natural environment.
Bike Hangar An on-street storage unit that can accommodate approximately six bicycles.	Climate and Ecological Emergency The crisis caused by human activity, which is threatening the environment, health, and livelihoods.	Eco-Refill Shop Somewhere that residents can buy many store-cupboard essentials and cleaning products without the packaging. Residents take along their own containers and refill them or borrow containers and return them.
Biodiversity The variety of living things in an area, including different plants and animals.	Climate Resilience The ability to anticipate, prepare for and address hazardous impacts related to the climate (e.g. flooding, drought, heatwaves).	Ecosystem An area where plants, animals and other organisms, work with weather and landscape to form a bubble of life.
Blue Space Natural or artificial water environments (i.e. rivers, canals, reservoirs etc).	Consumption Emissions Carbon emissions created in the making of the goods and products we buy, such as food, clothing, furniture and other products.	Emissions An amount of a substance that is produced and sent out into the air that is harmful to the environment, such as carbon dioxide
Built Environment The parts of the places in which we live that have been built by people, for example buildings and streets, rather than the parts that exist in nature.	Cool Spaces Public or community spaces designated as places where people can go to cool down during periods of extreme heat, helping to reduce health risks for vulnerable residents.	Energy Efficiency Using less energy to perform the same task.
Carbon Emissions Carbon dioxide released into the atmosphere from burning fossil fuels like oil, coal and gas.	Data Dashboard A collection of datasets stored collectively in one location.	Equitable Treating everyone fairly and in accordance to their needs.

Food Waste Caddy A small container that collects residual food waste from meals.	Net Zero The point at which a country, industry, company, etc. removes as many emissions from the atmosphere as it produces.	School Travel Plan A document developed by schools to enable staff and pupils to travel to school via environmentally sustainable methods.
Footprint (Carbon) Someone's carbon footprint is a measurement of the amount of carbon dioxide that their activities produce.	NO₂ Nitrogen Dioxide – a gas which is mainly produced during the combustion of fossil fuels and can cause harm to health, used as a scientific measurement of poor air quality.	Sharing Spaces Community events which enable residents to fix items, learn and gain skills from experts and other residents.
Fuel Poverty When a household cannot afford to keep adequately warm (or cool) due to low-income, high-energy costs, or inefficient housing, increasing vulnerability to extreme weather.	PM2.5 PM refers to Particulate Matter. PM is everything in the air that is not a gas, some of which can be toxic. Particulates are classified according to size. Less than 2.5 micrometres in diameter = PM2.5.	Sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS) Systems which use a natural approach to drainage to deal with water and prevent flooding.
Greenhouse gases Any gases that trap heat in the earth's atmosphere and cause global heating.	PM10 PM refers to Particulate Matter. PM is everything in the air that is not a gas, some of which can be toxic. Particulates are classified according to size. Less than 10 micrometres in diameter = PM10.	Swales Grass ditches which help to drain water and prevent flooding.
Habitat The natural environment in which an animal or plant usually lives.	Proxy Someone or something that takes the place of another person or thing, or has the same meaning, purpose, etc. as them or it.	Swap Shops A community event in which articles no longer wanted may be exchanged for other articles.
Heat Network A heat network is a system that pipes hot water from a central energy source to multiple buildings for heating and hot water	Repair Café A community event which allows residents to bring broken items (typically electricals, bikes or clothing) to be fixed.	Territorial emissions Emissions generated within a certain geographic area, principally from energy use in homes and buildings and from road transport.
Inclusive An inclusive group or organization tries to include many different types of people and treat them all fairly and equally.	Retrofit Altering existing buildings to reduce the amount of energy and carbon emissions they use.	Waterways Narrow areas of water, such as a river or canal.
Library of Things A storage kiosk that lets residents borrow household items for lower prices than buying the product new.	School streets School street closure schemes – where cars are prevented from going up to the school gates at drop off and pick up times.	

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Appendix B - Brent Climate Action Annual Data Dashboard – September 2026 edition (Iteration 4.0)

Contents

This is the fourth iteration of the Brent Climate Action Data Dashboard. The previous iterations have been February 2024, October 2024 and November 2025 with a new Power BI interactive version of the dashboard published on the council’s website in May 2025.

The commentary for each data metric outlines the time period covered by each individual dataset. The overarching time period that iteration 4.0 covers is September 2025-September 2026, with data provided that was up to date as of 1 September 2026.

The Brent Climate Action Data Dashboard includes the following tables and graphs:

Table 1: Borough-wide carbon emission statistics

Table 2: Key Performance Indicators by Climate & Ecological Emergency Strategy Theme

- Theme 1 – Consumption, Resources and Waste
- Theme 2 – Sustainable Travel
- Theme 3 – Homes, Buildings and the Built Environment
- Theme 4 – Nature and Green Space
- Theme 5 – Supporting Communities

Tables Key:

- * Counted as boroughs in **West London Climate Emergency Group** = *Barnet, Brent, Ealing, Hammersmith & Fulham, Harrow, Hillingdon, Hounslow, Richmond, Wandsworth*
- ** Counted as **Inner London Authorities** = *Camden, City of London, Greenwich, Hackney, Hammersmith and Fulham, Islington, Kensington and Chelsea, Lambeth, Lewisham, Newham, Southwark, Tower Hamlets, Wandsworth and Westminster*
- *** Counted as **Outer London authorities** = *Barking and Dagenham, Barnet, Bexley, Brent, Bromley, Croydon, Ealing, Enfield, Haringey, Harrow, Havering, Hillingdon, Hounslow, Kingston upon Thames, Merton, Redbridge, Richmond upon Thames, Sutton, Waltham Forest*

Annex 1: Graphs

- Grand Total CO₂ (kt) Emissions - Boroughs in West London Climate Emergency Group, 2005-2024 (DESNZ)
- Grand Total CO₂ (kt) Emissions - Boroughs in West London Climate Emergency Group, 2005-2024 (DESNZ)
- Theoretical territorial emission reduction trajectory – London Borough of Brent

Note:

The metrics contained within this dataset will be comprehensively reviewed and amended accordingly following adoption of the new Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy (2027-2030). New targets will also be reviewed and considered for inclusion depending on the outcome of the engagement on whether the council should retain a date for its carbon neutrality aspiration at a borough-wide level.

Table 1: Borough-wide carbon emission statistics

Ref	Measure	Current Brent Data (Data source)	Brent Data from previous reporting cycle	Brent July 2019 baseline (Data source)	Current average for boroughs in West London Climate Group* (Mean)	Current Inner-London average ** (Mean)	Current Outer-London average *** (Mean)	Target for end of 2027 next annual dataset	Projected Target by 2030 (unless otherwise stated)	Council role/influence in achieving target	Commentary
1.	Borough-wide territorial carbon emissions (Industrial, Commercial, Public sector, Domestic, Transport)	827 Kilotonnes CO₂ 	850 Kilotonnes CO ₂	1005 Kilotonnes CO ₂	807 Kilotonnes CO ₂	774.8 Kilotonnes CO ₂	727.9 Kilotonnes CO ₂	N/A	N/A	Indirect Medium Influence	Latest data: 2024 calendar year. These emissions only include CO ₂ emissions from the industrial, commercial, domestic and public sectors and transport. Other emissions from agricultural, waste and land-use are minimal within this dataset. Brent's emissions have continued to fall and are broadly in line with the West London sub-region.
2. Page 88	Borough-wide territorial carbon emissions per capita	2.3 Tonnes CO_{2e} 	2.4 Tonnes CO _{2e}	2.9 Tonnes CO _{2e}	2.6 Tonnes CO _{2e}	5.4 Tonnes CO _{2e}	2.5 Tonnes CO _{2e}	N/A	N/A	Indirect Medium Influence	Latest data: 2024 calendar year. These statistics cover CO ₂ emissions per capita that occur within Brent's borders. The inner London average is skewed by a very high figure for City of London. Brent's figures have continued to fall and Brent's data is lower than average for other comparable London-based datasets.
3.	Borough-wide consumption-based carbon emissions per capita	8.1 Tonnes CO₂ [No change – no new data]	8.1 Tonnes CO ₂	7.95 Tonnes CO ₂	9.13 Tonnes CO ₂	9.1 Tonnes CO ₂	9.17 Tonnes CO ₂	N/A	N/A	Indirect Medium Influence	Latest data: 2021 calendar year. No change between since the last iteration of the dashboard reporting as no new data released for comparison.

Table 2: Key Performance Indicators by each Climate Strategy Theme

Ref	Theme	Measure	Current Brent Data (Data source)	Brent Data from previous reporting cycle	Brent July 2019 baseline (Data source)	Current average for boroughs in West London Climate Group* (Mean)	Current Inner-London average ** (Mean)	Current Outer-London average *** (Mean)	Projected Target by 2030 (unless otherwise stated)	Council role/ influence in achieving target	Commentary
1.	Theme 1 – Consumption, Resources and Waste	Annual household recycling rate	32.9% 	30.3%	34.2%	35%	27.7%	37.3%	N/A	Indirect Medium Influence	Latest data: Financial Year (FY) 2024-25. The council has limited direct influence over resident's recycling behaviours but will continue to undertake education initiatives and innovate wherever possible. The data has improved slightly since the last reporting cycle and is higher than Inner London, but is still below the West London and Outer London averages.
	Theme 1 – Consumption, Resources and Waste	Annual household waste per head	241.5kg (Provisional) 	237.6kg	288.7kg	291.5	287.4	319.9	N/A	Indirect Medium Influence	Latest data: FY 2024-25. The Brent figures have risen slightly since the last reporting cycle, but are still positively well below average for West London, Inner and Outer London.
3.	Theme 2 – Sustainable Travel	% of average daily trips made by active travel measures	39.6% 	42%	33%	39.9%	49.9%	36%	42%	Indirect Medium Influence	Latest data: FY 2022/23 - 2024/25 (three-year average). The council has limited direct influence over Brent residents' daily travel choices but will continue to support the shift to more active travel trips by pulling the levers at its disposal. Brent's figures have fallen by 2% since the last reporting year.

4.	Theme 2 – Sustainable Travel	% of average daily trips made by public transport	31.4% 	27%	36%	25.7%	30.8%	23.2%	31%	Indirect Low Influence	Latest data: FY 2022/23 - 2024/25 (three-year average). The council works closely with TfL to ensure the smooth running of the public transport system. Brent's figures are lower than the 2019 baseline, but have increased by 4% since the previous reporting year. Brent residents also use public transport more than the average for West London, Inner and Outer London.
5.	Theme 2 – Sustainable Travel	Overall sustainable modeshare	71% 	69%	69%	65.6%	80.4%	58.2%	73%	Indirect Low-Medium Influence	Latest data: FY 2022/23 - 2024/25 (three-year average). This data measure reflects a combination of the two metrics above. Brent has the second highest sustainable mode share of all Outer London boroughs.
6.	Theme 2 – Sustainable Travel	% of residents doing at least two x 10 minutes of active travel a day	37% 	29%	31%	39%	49%	36%	48% 70% By 2041 (Long Term Transport Strategy)	Indirect Low Influence	Latest data: FY 2022/23 - 2024/25 (three-year average). Brent's figures have increased by 8% since the last reporting cycle.
7.	Theme 2 – Sustainable Travel	% of population within 400m of a strategic cycle network	14% [No change]	14%	6%	17%	53%	17%	43% 80% By 2041 (Long Term Transport Strategy)	Mixed Medium Influence	Latest data: 2024. Inner London's strategic cycle network is significantly more advanced than in Outer London, which is in part set by TfL funding and priority roll-out of schemes. The immediate proposals for improving the cycle network in Brent are the

											development of Cycleway 72 which will make it easier for local people to walk and cycle between Wembley and Willesden Junction. We are also delivering improved 'Green Corridors' for active travel improvements in Church End & Roundwood and Kingsbury Green Neighbourhoods.
8.	Theme 2 – Sustainable Travel	Annual vehicle kilometres travelled (millions)	967 	970	1024	1,182	641	1,174	901 824 By 2041 (Long Term Transport Strategy)	Indirect Low Influence	Latest data: 2024. Brent's residents are driving less than the previous dataset and less annually than both the West London and Outer London averages, but more than the Inner London average. The shift away from petrol and diesel vehicles does not necessarily mean a shift away from the car altogether, which means the promotion of zero-emission (at source) vehicles is important. However, reducing overall car dependency is also important in achieving wider climate, air quality and public health objectives.
9.	Theme 2 – Sustainable Travel	No. of cars owned	106,797 	106,020	97,348	109,674	57,904	111,471	84,048 73,011 By 2041 (Long Term Transport Strategy)	Indirect Low Influence	Latest data: 2024. The latest figures suggest that there are more cars owned in the borough than the previous reporting year. Car ownership in Brent remains lower than the West London and Outer London averages, but higher than the Inner London average. Note: TfL changed its data source for car ownership from 2023 onwards. This new source now includes tax exempt vehicles, explaining

											the higher figures than previous years.
10.	Theme 2 – Sustainable Travel	Average NO ₂ annual mean concentration	No data – air quality status report not published by 1 Sept '26	24.7	44.75	N/A	N/A	N/A	10 (WHO guideline s)	Indirect Medium Influence	Latest data: 2024 calendar year. Brent Air Quality Plan sets out air quality improvement plans. Brent's figures continue to drop alongside pollution levels in London as a whole. The 2026 Air Quality Annual Status Report is expected to be published later this year.
11.	Theme 2 – Sustainable Travel	Average PM _{2.5} annual mean concentration	No data – air quality status report not published by 1 Sept '26	8.7	19.8	N/A	N/A	N/A	5 (WHO guideline s)	Indirect Medium Influence	Latest data: 2024 calendar year. Brent Air Quality Plan sets out air quality improvement plans. Brent's figures continue to drop alongside pollution levels in London as a whole. The 2026 Air Quality Annual Status Report is expected to be published later this year.
12.	Theme 2 – Sustainable Travel	Average PM ₁₀ annual mean concentration	No data – air quality status report not published by 1 Sept '26	17.8	23.25	N/A	N/A	N/A	15 (WHO guideline s)	Indirect Medium Influence	Latest data: 2024 calendar year. Brent Air Quality Plan sets out air quality improvement plans. Brent's figures continue to drop alongside pollution levels in London as a whole. The 2026 Air Quality Annual Status Report is expected to be published later this year.
13.	Theme 2 – Sustainable Travel	% of borough covered by Healthy Neighbourhood (Low-Traffic) Schemes	12% [No change]	12%	9% (est.)	19%	34%	22%	N/A	Direct	Latest data: FY 2025-26. No change in % as no new schemes implemented. Brent's number is lower than all other comparable London datasets. We will soon be consulting on modal filters as part of phase 2 of the Green Corridors scheme in Church End and Roundwood Green Neighbourhood.

14.	Theme 2 – Sustainable Travel	Proportion of borough schools with school streets scheme	37.4% 	36%	0%	21.3%	31.7%	24.5%	50%	Direct	Latest data: FY 2025-26. Brent has a significantly higher proportion of School Street Schemes when compared to West, Inner and Outer London averages. Last year, funding was obtained via NCIL and TfL for more schemes to be rolled out.
15.	Theme 2 – Sustainable Travel	No. of Bike Hangars in Brent	233 	153	59 (est.)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Direct	Latest data: Sep 2026. Brent continues to build on the number of bike hangars installed since 2019. Demand for bike hangars significantly outweighs supply. Last year, NCIL funding was obtained for 70 new hangars and repairs to an existing 30.
16.	Theme 2 – Sustainable Travel	Overall no. of bike hangar spaces allocated	962 	918	354	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Indirect Medium Influence	Latest data: Sep 2026. See row above. Note: There are currently 1,398 spaces in total, of which 962 are occupied.
17.	Theme 2 – Sustainable Travel	% of Schools with a gold, silver or bronze accredited Sustainable School Travel Plan	No data – TfL accreditation s not yet published by 1 Sept '26 	53%	47%	N/A	N/A	N/A	75%	Indirect Medium-High Influence	Latest data: Sep 2024 - Sep 2025. Whilst the council continues to provide support, advice, and encouragement to schools on developing and submitting a travel plan, the responsibility to participate in this scheme ultimately lies with schools.
18.	Theme 2 – Sustainable Travel	No. of Electric Vehicle Charge Points in Brent	1,312 	1166	207	1,170	1,286	679	Between 1784-2194	Direct	Latest data: 1 April 2026. Brent's provision of electric vehicle charge points remains higher than the

											West London, Inner London and Outer London averages.
19.	Theme 3 – Homes, Buildings, and the Built Environment	No. of energy efficiency retrofit improvement projects undertaken on council buildings (non-domestic) since 2019	82  	78	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Direct	Latest data: Sept 2026. Last year, the council obtained Public Sector Decarbonisation Funding for Willesden Green Library and Willesden Cemetery, plus a carbon offset fund allocation and Mayoral Renewables Fund for two family wellbeing centres. The MRF projects are now complete.
20.	Theme 3 – Homes, Buildings, and the Built Environment	No. energy efficiency retrofit improvement projects undertaken on Council maintained schools (primary) since 2019	44  	43	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Direct (Primary)	Latest data: Sept 2026. Comparable benchmarking data from 2019 is not available for this measure.
21.	Theme 3 – Homes, Buildings, and the Built Environment	% Reduction in emissions from council own estate and operations emissions 2010-11 baseline	75.8%  	71.9%	56.9%	N/A	N/A	N/A	100%	Direct	Latest data: 2025-26 FY. Significant CO2 emissions reductions have once again been achieved during 2025/26. This has primarily been due to targeted energy reductions in several areas in the Civic Centre, plus further decarbonisation of the national electricity grid. The Council now has a Corporate Estate Net Zero Roadmap and Action Plan, which will strategically support the interventions required to continue to see this figure trend downwards in the coming years.
22.	Theme 3 – Homes,	No. of council housing stock	1729	1568	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1740	Direct	Latest data: Sept 2026. This data is drawn from the council's housing asset

	Buildings, and the Built Environment	(domestic) retrofitted with at least one energy efficiency measure since 2019									database and works as part of the asset management programme.
23.	Theme 3 – Homes, Buildings, and the Built Environment	% of council housing stock rated EPC C or above	62% 	54%	35%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Direct	Latest data: Sept 2026. A key reason for the increase in the last year is the handover of 400+ new build homes, which required a minimum EPC rating of C.
24.	Theme 3 – Homes, Buildings, and the Built Environment	% of council housing stock rated EPC B or above	4% [No change]	4%	0%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Direct	Latest data: Sept 2026. No discernible change from last year's data. EPC B is difficult to achieve without funding.
25.	Theme 3 – Homes, Buildings, and the Built Environment	Amount of total retrofit external grant funding secured for domestic and non-domestic, since 2019	£6.74m	[£9.27m listed in error]	£0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Direct	Latest data: Sept 2026. Since 2019, the council has secured funding from a range of external grant programmes to support energy efficiency and decarbonisation projects. This does not include s106 Brent Carbon Offset Funding.
26.	Theme 3 – Homes, Buildings, and the Built Environment	% of fuel poor households in Brent	11% (14,131) 	12.3% (15,716)	17.3% (20,322)	9% (10,955)	8% (9,508)	10% (11,197)	N/A	Indirect Low Influence	Latest data: 2023 calendar year. The overall number of Brent households in fuel poverty has fallen but remains one of the highest in London. Brent has no direct influence over levels of fuel poverty. The contributing factors are typically low income, energy inefficient homes and high energy costs. Brent is seeking to reduce fuel poverty through retrofit and we have also set up the Brent Well and Warm Advice service which provides free energy advice and support to

											fuel poor, vulnerable residents.
27.	Theme 3 – Homes, Buildings, and the Built Environment	No. of private properties that have received at least one energy efficiency measure via Green Homes Grant / Home Upgrade Grant/Carbon Offset Fund / Warm Homes Local Grant (cumulative total)	94 29 added from new Warm Homes Local Grant scheme 	65	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Mixed	Latest data: Sept 2026. The Warm Homes: Local Grant scheme delivered energy efficiency improvements to 29 private homes in Brent in the last year.
28.	Theme 3 – Homes, Buildings, and the Built Environment	% of annual major developments that include renewable energy sources	40% 	77%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Direct	Latest data: 2023-24. This data has reduced since the previous cycle due to several major developments completing via historical planning permissions which had been obtained prior to the more stringent environmental requirements of the current London and Local Plan policies
29.	Theme 3 – Homes, Buildings, and the Built Environment	% of annual major developments that were air quality neutral or positive	40% 	100%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Direct	Latest data: 2023-24. This data has reduced since the previous cycle due to several major developments completing via historical planning permissions which had been obtained prior to the more stringent environmental requirements of the current London and Local Plan policies
30.	Theme 4 – Nature and Green Space	No. of trees planted annually in public areas	625 	1257	800	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Direct	Latest data: Sep 2025 - Sep 2026. Although the figures for the past year have reduced since the previous year, last year's figures were

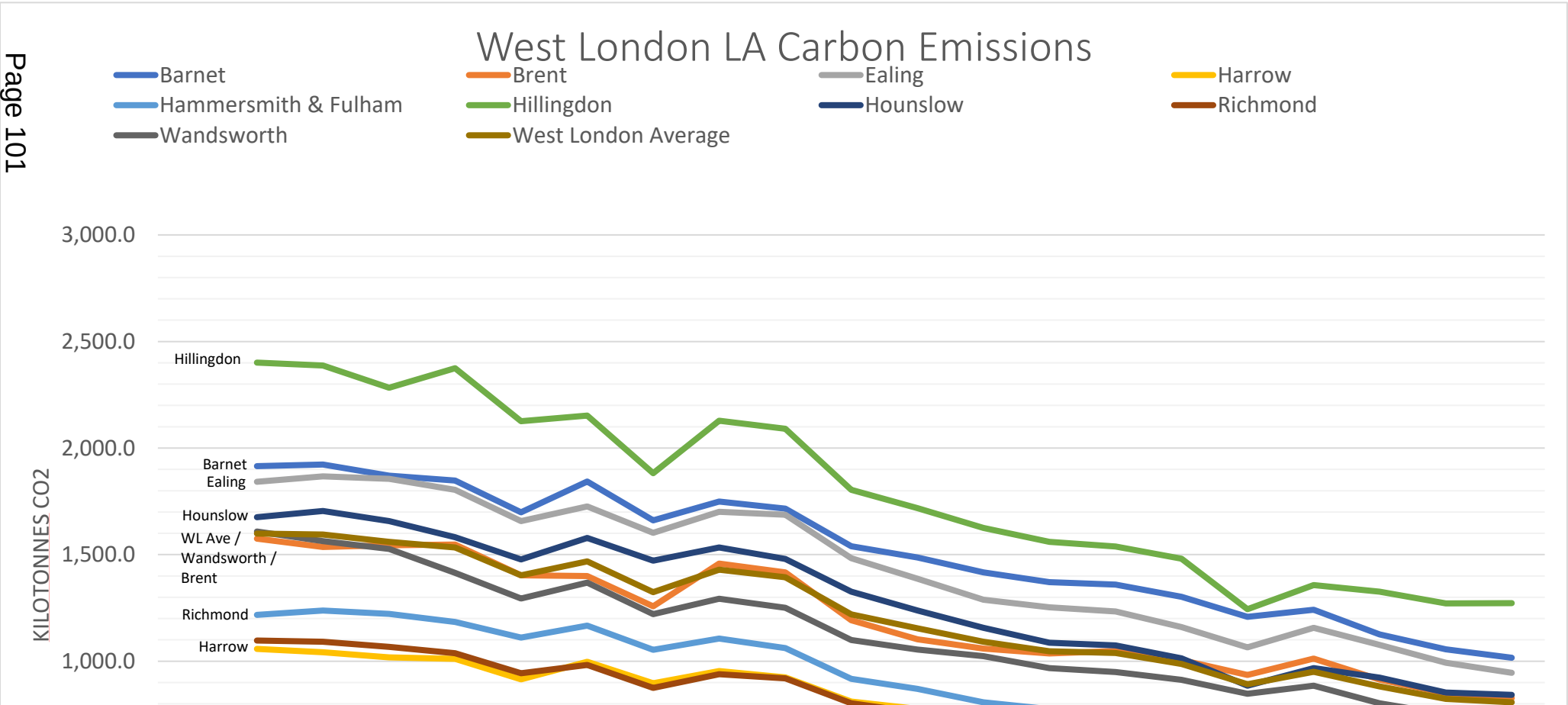
											unusually high due to tree planting in Longstone Avenue open space as part of the Church End & Roundwood Green Neighbourhood scheme. Brent is currently mid-way through an NCIL-funded programme to plant 1,500 trees between 2025 and 2027. A borough-wide draft tree Strategy for the borough is currently still being developed.
31.	Theme 4 – Nature and Green Space	Tree Equity Score	88 	81	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Indirect Low Influence	Latest data: Sept 2026. The Tree Equity Map is a relatively new tool which provides local authorities with an overall tree equity score based on demographics and number of trees planted. The scores were updated in 2026 for the first time since 2023, using new tree cover imagery. Brent's tree equity score has increased by 7% in the latest update. 6 of 181 LSOAs in Brent have a Tree Equity Score below 75.
32.	Theme 4 – Nature and Green Space	% tree canopy cover in Brent	15.28% [No change – no new data published by GLA]	15.28%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Indirect Low Influence	Latest data: 2022. This dashboard utilises the GLA Green Cover maps and Tree Canopy Cover data to map progress. The previous GLA dataset was published in 2024 using 2022 tree canopy data and has not been updated since. Brent's score is lower than the estimated London-wide canopy cover of 21%.

33.	Theme 4 – Nature and Green Space	Square metres of wildflower meadows created and planted	792,727 [No change]	792,727	792,727	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Direct	Latest data: Sep 2025 – Sep 2026. Brent's planting of wildflower meadows and bee corridors took place in and around when we declared a climate and ecological emergency in 2019. Biodiversity Net Gain requirements may provide opportunities to increase this figure in future years.
34.	Theme 4 – Nature and Green Space	Number of Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) sites in active positive management	62 [No change]	62	62	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Indirect Low-medium influence	Latest data: Sep 2026. No change since 2024.
35.	Theme 4 – Nature and Green Space	No. of green spaces with known community gardens / orchards	6  	5	2	N/A	N/A	N/A	9	Mixed Medium influence	Latest data: Sept 2026. There were two community gardens in 2019 at Chalkhill Open Space (St Davids Close and Harlesden Town Gardens). Three additional community gardens/orchards were then opened at Leybourne Open Space, North Brent Community Garden and Northwick Park. In the last year, one additional community orchard has been established at Longstone Avenue Open Space.
36.	Theme 4 – Nature and Green Space	No. of green flag schemes implemented in parks	5  	3	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	4	Direct	Latest data: Sep 2026. Brent currently has five Green Flag accredited sites, exceeding the target of four. These are: • King Edwards VII • Bramshill Open Space • Preston Park • Mapesbury Dell • Roe Green Walled Garden - maintained by Barn Hill Conservation

											Group (awarded Green Flag Community Award)
37.	Theme 4 – Nature and Green Space	No. of London in Bloom awards	11  	9	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	12	Direct	Latest data: Sept 2026. The London in Bloom awards referenced here were announced in October 2025, when Brent won 11 awards. This included 7 Golds (including 1 category winner) and 4 Silver Gilt Awards. In October 2026, Brent won 12 awards, including 8 Golds, two Category Winners, and 4 Silver Gilt Awards. This will be reflected in the next dashboard update.
38.	Theme 5 – Supporting Communities	No. of community projects awarded grant funding by Brent Together Towards Zero Grant scheme	105  	90	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Direct	Latest data: May 2026. The scheme went live in 2022 therefore there is no baseline for 2019. A further 15 schemes have been funded since the last dashboard update.
39.	Theme 5 – Supporting Communities	No. of Brent Environment Network Members	4836  	4084	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	10,000	Indirect High Influence	Latest data: Sept 2026. The Brent Environmental Network has continued to grow steadily, with almost 800 new sign-ups in the last 12 months.
40.	Theme 5 – Supporting Communities	No. of business signed up to Brent Business Climate Charter or Camden/Brent Business Challenge	114  	81	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Indirect Medium Influence	Latest data: May 2026. An increase of 33 new organisations signed up to the Climate Charter in the last 12 months.
41.	Theme 5 – Supporting Communities	No. of Brent businesses or institutions provided with	26 	15	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Direct	Latest data: Sept 2026. Cumulative total of business supported for energy efficiency grant schemes from the council.

		funding to undertake energy efficiency retrofit projects from the Brent for Business Energy Efficiency Scheme									
42.	Theme 5 – Supporting Communities	No. of faith-based organisations actively utilising Brent Faith Climate Action Plan	25  	14	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	96	Indirect Medium Influence	Latest data: September 2026. The Brent Faith Climate Action Plan was developed as a joint initiative with the Brent Faith Climate Action Group launched at the Wembley Sephardi Synagogue in July 2023. The number of sign-ups has increased by 11 in the last 12 months, from 14 to 25. Engagement work remains ongoing alongside the Brent Multi-Faith forum.
43.	Theme 5 – Supporting Communities	No. of annual hits on the Climate Emergency Website Landing Page	560   (no data recorded between Dec '25 – Feb '26 due to technical issue)	962	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	2000	Indirect Low influence	Latest data: Sep 2025 – Sep 2026. Figures indicate a reduction in engagement with the Climate Emergency Website. However, the data is not directly comparable with previous years due to a technical issue that caused no data to be recorded between December 2025 and February 2026.
44.	Theme 5 – Supporting Communities	Annual no. of students engaged with courses at	[No data received from college]	[No data received from college]	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Indirect Medium Influence	Latest data: No data supplied from the College of North West London despite requests.

Annex 1
Grand Total CO₂ (kt) Emissions - Boroughs in West London Climate Emergency Group, 2005-2024 (DESNZ)



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Appendix C – Overview of Flood Risk Management in Brent

1. Introduction

Brent Council updated its Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (LFRMS) in 2025. The Strategy sets out how Brent, in its role as Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA), will work with partners to manage local flood risk over the coming years. The Strategy is built around five key objectives: improving understanding of flood risk, reducing flood risk to people, businesses and infrastructure, clarifying responsibilities, ensuring effective emergency planning and response, and promoting sustainable and integrated flood management.

As Lead Local Flood Authority, Brent Council is responsible for:

- Developing and maintaining the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy
- Investigating significant flood incidents where appropriate
- Maintaining a register of structures and features that may affect flood risk
- Regulating works affecting ordinary watercourses
- Working with partners to identify and deliver flood alleviation schemes
- Providing planning advice on Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)

The Local Flood Risk Management Strategy is available on the Council's website. <https://www.brent.gov.uk/the-council-and-democracy/strategies-priorities-and-policies/flood-risk-management-strategy>

2. Flood Hotspots, Vulnerable Communities and Impacts Flood Risk Across Brent

Brent is exposed to multiple sources of varying levels of flood risk, including surface water flooding, river flooding, ordinary watercourses, groundwater flooding, sewer flooding and, to a lesser extent, reservoir flooding. Surface water flooding is considered the most significant risk to residents due to the borough's highly urbanised environment and the increasing intensity of rainfall associated with climate change.

Most Vulnerable Areas

The principal river flood risk corridors within Brent are associated with the River Brent and Wealdstone Brook. The River Brent corridor affects areas including Tokyngton, Stonebridge and Alperton, whilst Wealdstone Brook affects parts of Kenton, Wealdstone and Wembley.

Brent contains approximately 118,500 properties. Around 1,390 properties are at risk from river flooding during a 1 in 100-year flood event, increasing to approximately 2,000 properties during a 1 in 1,000-year event.

The borough also contains 27 Critical Drainage Areas where surface water flooding is considered a significant concern. Surface water flood risk is often concentrated within highway corridors and can be exacerbated by intense rainfall, topography and drainage capacity constraints.

Historic Flooding

Historic flooding has occurred along Wealdstone Brook at Woodcock Park and along Wembley Brook, affecting nearby land and infrastructure. Flooding resulting from significant storm events was recorded in 2007, 2010, 2019, 2021 and 2022, impacting locations such as Brondesbury Park, Kilburn, Sudbury, Kingsbury, Kenton and Wembley. In most cases the impacts were concentrated on highways, open spaces and gardens, although some incidents required emergency intervention to prevent flooding of residential properties. These historic incidents have informed the identification of priority locations for future flood risk mitigation investment.

Priority Locations for Intervention

Woodcock Park and Wembley Brook have been identified as priority flood risk locations and are currently the focus of Environment Agency-funded flood alleviation studies. Opportunities to introduce flood mitigation measures both within the watercourses and upstream catchments are being explored.

Additional strategic priority areas include Stonebridge, Alperton and Tokyngton due to their location within the River Brent floodplain, inclusion within Environment Agency flood warning areas, and the presence of key transport routes, community infrastructure and residential populations.

Communities Potentially Disproportionately Affected

An Equality Impact Assessment undertaken as part of the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy identified that some communities may be more vulnerable to the impacts of flooding than others. Older residents and people with disabilities may experience disproportionately greater impacts from flooding and may particularly benefit from measures that reduce flood risk.

Residents Least Able to Recover from Flooding

Recovery from flooding is influenced not only by exposure to flood risk but also by social and economic circumstances. Groups that may be less resilient to flooding include older residents, people with disabilities, low-income households, residents with existing health conditions, families with young children and residents facing language or communication barriers. These factors can affect a household's ability to prepare for, respond to and recover from a flooding incident.

3. Current and Planned Flood Risk Management Activity Highway Drainage Maintenance

The Highways Service delivers a cyclical gully cleansing programme across the borough to maintain the effectiveness of the highway drainage network. Cleansing frequencies range between six and eighteen months depending upon site conditions and historic levels of silt accumulation. In addition to planned

maintenance, reactive inspections and cleansing activities are undertaken in response to reports of flooding, blocked gullies and severe weather events.

Woodcock Park Flood Alleviation Scheme

The Woodcock Park Flood Alleviation Scheme is currently at feasibility and study stage. A flood alleviation study is being undertaken to investigate opportunities to reduce flood risk associated with Wealdstone Brook through Woodcock Park. The study is assessing a range of retrofit Sustainable Drainage System measures alongside hydraulic modelling and benefit-cost analysis. Grant funding of £80,000 has been secured from the Environment Agency to support this work.

Anticipated Benefits

- Reduction in downstream flood risk
- Increased flood storage capacity during storm events
- Improved climate resilience
- Enhanced biodiversity and environmental benefits

Wembley Brook Flood Alleviation Scheme

The Wembley Brook Flood Alleviation Scheme is currently at feasibility and study stage. A flood alleviation study is being undertaken to investigate upstream SuDS opportunities aimed at reducing peak flows and flood risk to adjacent properties. Grant funding of £50,000 has been secured through Environment Agency Levy Funding.

The study is currently under review and supported by additional investigations into existing infrastructure and future flood mitigation opportunities.

Anticipated Benefits

- Reduced flood risk to residential properties
- Improved resilience of the watercourse
- Improved management of surface water runoff
- Increased adaptation to future climate change impacts

4. Performance, Outcomes and Challenges

Progress Against the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy Action Plan

The Council has made progress against a number of the priorities identified within the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy Action Plan. Key achievements include advancement of the Woodcock Park and Wembley Brook Flood Alleviation Schemes, strengthened engagement with Risk Management Authorities and improvements in drainage maintenance performance.

Some actions are progressing more slowly than originally anticipated due to service capacity and resource constraints. Nevertheless, progress has continued in key priority areas including the development of the Woodcock Park and

Wembley Brook Flood Alleviation Schemes, improvements in drainage maintenance and strengthened partnership working with Risk Management Authorities.

Performance Improvements

Performance has improved significantly in several key areas when compared with previous years. A more proactive and structured approach to contract management and cyclical gully cleansing has resulted in reactive drainage maintenance requests reducing from approximately 50–70 cases per month to fewer than ten on average.

In 2025/26, Brent secured £85,000 of Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy funding to undertake drainage improvement works. This funding enabled repairs to approximately 140 defective gullies and contributed to improved network resilience.

Brent has continued to strengthen working relationships with key Risk Management Authorities, neighbouring councils and community organisations to support flood risk management activities, funding opportunities and scheme development. Further detail on partnership arrangements is provided later in this report.

Independent Reviews and Audits

Monthly audits are undertaken for both cyclical and reactive gully cleansing activities to ensure contractual standards are achieved and works are delivered in accordance with agreed requirements. The audit process provides quality assurance and supports effective contract management.

Areas Requiring Improvement

Whilst targeted investment has improved drainage assets in several locations, further investment remains necessary across the wider drainage network to enhance resilience and reduce future maintenance liabilities. In the absence of additional funding, improvement works will continue to be prioritised based upon assessed risk.

Capacity Constraints

Flood risk and drainage functions are currently delivered by a single Principal Flood and Drainage Engineer. Responsibilities include flood investigations, drainage maintenance programmes, resident and councillor enquiries, contractor management, funding applications, partnership engagement, project delivery and strategic flood risk responsibilities. Whilst statutory duties continue to be met, this creates limited resilience within the service and can restrict the pace at which strategic projects, investigations and improvement programmes are progressed. Periods of annual leave or staff absence can further increase these pressures and create temporary backlogs in service delivery.

Partnership and Delivery Risks

A key delivery risk relates to the successful progression of externally led flood mitigation initiatives where Brent may be a funding contributor rather than the delivery authority. Effective governance, monitoring and partnership arrangements are therefore important to ensure that anticipated benefits are realised and that projects are delivered in accordance with agreed objectives.

Infrastructure Limitations

Some drainage issues are attributable to capacity constraints within the wider public sewer network operated by Thames Water. Whilst Brent is responsible for highway drainage assets, the wider sewer network remains outside the Council's direct control. In some cases, persistent ponding may indicate limitations within downstream sewer infrastructure rather than defects within highway drainage systems.

Many parts of the sewer network were constructed during the Victorian era and were not designed for modern development patterns or the increasingly intense rainfall events associated with climate change. Consequently, climate change and continued urbanisation are likely to place increasing pressure on drainage infrastructure and may increase the frequency and severity of localised flooding incidents.

Remaining Risks

The principal risks affecting delivery of the flood risk management programme are:

- Limited specialist staffing capacity
- Funding constraints affecting delivery of drainage improvement works
- Dependence on third-party infrastructure owners and delivery partners
- Increasing flood risk associated with climate change and more intense rainfall events

5. Partnership Working, Governance and Accountability

Flood risk management is delivered through partnership working between Brent Council and a range of Risk Management Authorities, including the Environment Agency, Thames Water, Transport for London, utility companies, emergency services and private landowners.

Partnership Boards and Meetings

Brent has developed strong working relationships with key Risk Management Authorities, neighbouring Lead Local Flood Authorities, community groups and other stakeholders involved in flood risk management. These partnerships support information sharing, collaborative problem solving, project development and the identification of external funding opportunities.

Partnership Forums

The Council regularly participates in partnership forums including:

- Monthly meetings with the Environment Agency and Thames Water
- North West London Flood Partnership meetings
- Brent Catchment Partnership meetings
- Wealdstone Brook stakeholder meetings

Joint Programmes

Brent is currently considering a proposal to contribute up to £500,000 towards the London Borough of Harrow / Thames Water Byron Recreation Ground Flood Mitigation Project, subject to the Council's governance and approval processes. The project forms part of a wider catchment-based approach to reducing flood risk and improving water quality within the Wealdstone Brook catchment.

The scheme is located upstream of Woodcock Park and has the potential to provide flood risk reduction and environmental benefits to both Brent and Harrow. Should the proposal receive the necessary approvals, appropriate governance, monitoring and reporting arrangements would be established to provide assurance that the anticipated outcomes and benefits are delivered.

In addition to the Byron Recreation Ground proposal, Brent continues to work with the Environment Agency and other partners to develop and deliver flood alleviation projects across the borough where external funding opportunities are available.

How Disputes are Resolved

On occasion there can be differing views regarding asset ownership, responsibility or the underlying cause of drainage and flooding issues. In these circumstances Brent works closely with Thames Water, Affinity Water and other relevant organisations to investigate issues, clarify responsibilities and ensure appropriate remedial action is progressed.

Where concerns relate to the public sewer network or water supply infrastructure, Brent actively engages with the relevant water company, supported by evidence from inspections and investigations. Regular liaison meetings have improved communication, accountability and the timely resolution of issues affecting residents and highway users.

Examples of Successful Collaboration

The Woodcock Park Flood Alleviation Scheme has benefited from collaboration between Brent Council, the Environment Agency, Thames Water and the Friends of Woodcock Park. This partnership working has supported the development of the scheme and improved understanding of local flood risk issues.

Partnership working with Thames Water has also contributed to the resolution of a number of long-standing drainage and sewer-related issues affecting residents and

the highway network, including locations at Abbey Road/Central Way and Ealing Road. These examples demonstrate the value of coordinated working between organisations responsible for different elements of flood risk and drainage infrastructure.

6. Emergency Preparedness and Response

Brent has established arrangements for responding to flooding through its wider emergency planning framework. The Council maintains emergency response and recovery plans, including a Multi-Agency Flood Plan covering surface water, river and sewer flooding, as well as major reservoir and canal-related incidents.

As Lead Local Flood Authority, Brent is responsible for coordinating local flood risk management, undertaking qualifying flood investigations and maintaining flood-risk asset registers. During flood events, responsibilities are shared between Risk Management Authorities according to the source of flooding.

Resident communications form part of these arrangements through flood preparedness guidance, Environment Agency flood warnings and emergency communication channels where required. Following significant flooding incidents, Brent coordinates recovery activities with partner organisations and undertakes formal investigations where statutory criteria are met.

7. Conclusion

Brent faces increasing flood risk from climate change, urbanisation and pressures on ageing drainage and sewer infrastructure. Surface water flooding remains the most significant source of risk across the borough, with a number of locations identified as priorities for further investigation and intervention.

The Council continues to deliver its responsibilities as Lead Local Flood Authority through the implementation of the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy, improvements to drainage maintenance, the development of flood alleviation schemes and partnership working with key Risk Management Authorities.

Whilst challenges remain, including funding pressures, limited specialist capacity and increasing climate-related risks, ongoing investment and collaborative working will be important in improving resilience, reducing flood risk and supporting Brent's wider climate resilience objectives.

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	Resources & Public Realm Scrutiny Committee 20 October 2026
	Report from the Corporate Director, Finance and Resources
	Lead Member – Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources (Councillor Gwen Grahl)
Quarter 2 Financial Forecast 2026/27	

Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	N/A
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: Quarter 2 Financial Forecast 2026/27 (Cabinet Report) Appendix 1a: Prudential Indicators Appendix 1b: Savings Delivery Tracker
Background Papers:	N/A
Contact Officer(s): (Name, Title, Contact Details)	Minesh Patel (Corporate Director, Finance & Resources) Tel: 020 8937 4043 Email: Minesh.Patel@brent.gov.uk Rav Jassar (Deputy Director, Corporate & Financial Planning) Tel: 020 8937 1487 Email: Ravinder.Jassar@brent.gov.uk Amanda Healy (Deputy Director, Investment and Infrastructure) Tel: 020 8937 5912 Email: Amanda.Healy@brent.gov.uk

1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out the Council's financial forecast as at Quarter 2 2026/27, covering the General Fund revenue budget, Housing Revenue Account, Dedicated Schools Grant and Capital Programme. It supports the Committee in fulfilling its role in scrutinising the Council's financial position and budget performance throughout the year.

2.0 Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 That the committee note the report.

3.0 Detail

3.1 Contribution to Borough Plan Priorities & Strategic Context

- 3.1.1 The Quarter 2 financial forecast supports the delivery of the Council's Borough Plan priorities by providing oversight of the resources available to deliver agreed outcomes and services. Regular monitoring of revenue, housing, schools and capital budgets enables emerging financial pressures, risks and opportunities to be identified at an early stage and informs timely management action. This supports effective financial planning and ensures that the Council continues to align its available resources with its strategic priorities while maintaining financial sustainability.

3.2 Background

- 3.2.1 The Quarter 2 Financial Report for 2026/27 (Appendix 1) presents a challenging financial position. The Council's revised General Fund budget is £501.8m, with a forecast year-end overspend of £9.0m, an improvement of £0.5m from Quarter 1. If the overspend is not reduced, it would require the use of reserves and could increase the savings requirement in future years.

- 3.2.2 The principal forecast positions are:

Area	Q2 forecast
General Fund	£9.0m overspend
Dedicated Schools Grant	£20.8m deficit
Housing Revenue Account	£3.5m overspend
Capital Programme	£258.1m forecast against £267.7m revised budget

- 3.2.3 The General Fund position is primarily driven by a £7.7m overspend in Residents and Housing Services, principally Housing Needs and Support, and £1.6m in Service Reform and Strategy. These are partly offset by a £0.3m underspend in Finance and Resources. The wider environment remains challenging, with inflation and continuing cost-of-living pressures affecting both the cost of delivering services and the financial circumstances of residents.

- 3.2.4 Since Quarter 1, directorates have so far identified £2.7m of in-year savings, which are helping to mitigate budget pressures and prevent the financial position from deteriorating further. The current budget also reflects £10.4m of savings agreed by Full Council in February 2026, the status of which are set out in Appendix 3.

Key areas of financial pressure

Housing

- 3.2.5 This remains the Council's most significant General Fund pressure. Housing Needs and Support is forecasting a £7.7m overspend, although this is £1.8m better than at Quarter 1. The service continues to experience high demand for temporary accommodation alongside increasing provider costs. At the end of August, 1,517 households were in nightly paid accommodation.
- 3.2.6 A programme of mitigation is underway, including increasing housing supply, renegotiating costs, moving households from higher-cost accommodation and exploring alternative leasing arrangements.

Adult Social Care

- 3.2.7 Adult Social Care is forecasting a £1.5m overspend. Although client growth has moderated, new care packages are around 14 to 16% more expensive than packages ending, reflecting increased complexity and market prices. The Council is strengthening scrutiny of high-cost packages, short-term placements, health contributions and joint funding arrangements.

Children's Services

- 3.2.8 The directorate is currently forecasting break-even overall, although there are pressures in Children with Disabilities and SEN Transport and continuing risks around children's placements.
- 3.2.9 The more significant issue is the Dedicated Schools Grant, where the High Needs Block is forecasting a £20.8m deficit. Without government funding support, the cumulative DSG deficit is forecast to increase from £20.2m to £41.0m by March 2027.

HRA and Capital Programme

- 3.2.10 The HRA is forecasting a £3.5m overspend, driven by pressures including waking watch arrangements, Council Tax and service charges on new properties and additional borrowing costs. The report highlights repairs, statutory compliance, rent debt and the relatively low reserve position as continuing risks.
- 3.2.11 The Capital Programme is forecasting expenditure of £258.1m against a revised £267.7m budget, with the variance predominantly reflecting slippage

rather than overspending. £78.3m has been reprofiled from 2026/27 into future years to reflect updated delivery timetables.

Savings and management action

3.2.12 The Council's 2026/27 budget includes £10.4m of savings. At Quarter 2, £8.8m is either completed or on track for delivery. In response to the wider £9m forecast General Fund overspend, directorates have also identified £2.7m of additional in-year savings since Quarter 1, helping to prevent the financial position from deteriorating further.

3.2.13 The position at Quarter 2 is therefore broadly positive but not without delivery risk. The majority of the £10.4m programme is either delivered or on track, and directorates are actively identifying alternative savings where original proposals cannot be implemented as planned.

3.2.14 The key issue for committee is that delivery of the overall target does not necessarily mean delivery of the original individual savings proposals. In several areas, shortfalls are being offset by over-delivery elsewhere, alternative income, vacancies, grant maximisation or other mitigating action. This has been effective in protecting the overall position, but places greater importance on demonstrating that replacement savings are deliverable and sustainable and do not create additional pressures in future years.

4.0 Stakeholder and ward member consultation and engagement

4.1 There are no direct stakeholder and ward member consultation arising from this report.

5.0 Financial Considerations

5.1 The Quarter 2 forecast provides an updated assessment of the Council's financial position for 2026/27 across the General Fund, Housing Revenue Account, Dedicated Schools Grant and Capital Programme. It highlights forecast variances against the approved budget and identifies emerging financial pressures and risks requiring management action. Services are expected to take appropriate action to manage expenditure within agreed budgets, while identified pressures and risks will continue to be monitored and reflected, where appropriate, in the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy.

6.0 Legal Considerations

6.1 The law requires that the council must plan to balance its spending plans against resources to avoid a deficit occurring in any year. Members need to be reasonably satisfied that expenditure is being contained within budget and that the savings for the financial year will be achieved, to ensure that income and expenditure balance (Section 28 Local Government Act 2003: the council's Financial Regulation 2.3 Revenue Budget Monitoring, Forecasting and Overspends).

7.0 Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Considerations

7.1 There are no direct EDI considerations arising out of this report.

8.0 Climate Change and Environmental Considerations

8.1 There are no climate change or environmental considerations arising out of this report.

9.0 Human Resources/Property Considerations (if appropriate)

9.1 There are no direct HR or property considerations arising out this report.

10.0 Communication Considerations

10.1 There are no direct communication considerations arising out of this report.

Report sign off:

Minesh Patel

Corporate Director, Finance and Resources

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 Brent	Cabinet 12 October 2026
	Report from the Corporate Director, Finance and Resources
	Lead Member - Deputy Leader, Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources (Councillor Gwen Grahl)
Quarter 2 Financial Forecast 2026/27	

Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	Key
Open or Part/Fully Exempt: (If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)	Open
List of Appendices:	Two: Appendix A: Prudential Indicators Appendix B: Savings Delivery Tracker
Background Papers:	N/A
Contact Officer(s): (Name, Title, Contact Details)	Rav Jassar Deputy Director, Corporate and Financial Planning Tel: 020 8937 1487 Email: Ravinder.Jassar@brent.gov.uk Amanda Healy Deputy Director, Investment and Infrastructure Tel: 020 8937 5912 Email: Amanda.Healy@brent.gov.uk

1.1 Executive Summary

- 1.2 This report sets out the financial forecast for the General Fund revenue budget, the Housing Revenue Account, the Dedicated Schools Grant and the Capital Programme, as at Quarter 2 2026/27.
- 1.3 The Council's revised General Fund revenue budget for 2026/27 is £501.8m. There is a forecast overspend of £9.0m against the revenue budget at Quarter 2, representing an improvement of £0.5m since Quarter 1. The

movement reflects 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. If sustained until the year end, this would require a transfer from unallocated reserves. Equally, any overspend not dealt with in 2026/27 could potentially carry over into the following year, therefore increasing the requirement for further savings whilst at the same time depleting the Council's reserves. The Council is taking a number of mitigating actions, including the continued implementation of spending controls. Since Quarter 1, directorates have so far identified £2.7m of in-year savings, which are helping to mitigate budget pressures and prevent the financial position from deteriorating further.

- 1.4 The current budget also reflects £10.4m of savings agreed by Full Council in February 2026. In contrast to previous years, a new collaborative approach has been developed to address the Council's medium term financial challenge and identify sustainable savings. This approach focuses on identifying high-impact opportunities, including cross-directorate working, improving productivity, better use of digital solutions, and increasing income generation. An update on the progress towards delivery of the savings, including timelines, key risks and mitigating actions is included in the directorate updates in Section four. A summary of this is also included in Appendix B to this report.
- 1.5 Budget pressures continue to be reported within the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). Although the new ten-year social rent settlement provides greater income certainty from 2026/27, increased demand and the rising cost of repairs and maintenance, now sharpened by new statutory obligations under Awaab's Law, together with the cost of addressing building-safety compliance following the Regulator's C3 judgement, mean that considerable savings and careful financial management remain necessary to maintain a balanced budget. At Q2 the forecast outturn for the HRA is £3.5m. Further details are set out in section 11. The Dedicated Schools Grant is forecasting an in year overspend of £20.8m due to continued pressures against budgets held for children with Education, Health and Care Plans, which would increase the cumulative deficit to £41.0m by the end of the financial year. Further details are set out in section 10. The Capital Programme is forecasting an outturn of £258.1m compared to a revised budget of £267.7m. Further details are set out in section 12.
- 1.6 The tables below show the forecast position against budget for the General Fund, Dedicated Schools Grant and Housing Revenue Account.

Table 1: 2026/27 Quarter 2 forecast for the General Fund

	Budget	Forecast	Overspend / (Underspend)
	£m	£m	£m
Service Reform and Strategy	205.4	207.0	1.6
Children, Young People and Community Development	110.9	110.9	0.0
Neighbourhoods and Regeneration	35.4	35.4	0.0
Finance and Resources	35.6	35.3	(0.3)
Residents and Housing Services	62.3	70.0	7.7
Subtotal Service Area Budgets	449.6	458.6	9.0
Capital Financing	41.9	41.9	0.0
Central Budgets	10.3	10.3	0.0
Total Budget Requirement	501.8	510.8	9.0
Funding	(501.8)	(501.8)	0.0
Grand Total General Fund Budgets	0.0	9.0	9.0
Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Funded Activity	0.0	20.8	20.8
Housing Revenue Account (HRA)	0.0	3.5	3.5
Net Total*	0.0	33.3	33.3

*DSG and HRA budgets have been presented as net figures in the table above. Gross income and expenditure budgets for the DSG and HRA are shown below.

Table 2: 2026/27 Quarter 2 forecast for the Dedicated Schools Grant

DSG gross income and expenditure			
	Budget	Forecast	Overspend / (Underspend)
	£m	£m	£m
DSG			
Income	(262.2)	(259.0)	3.2
Expenditure	262.2	279.8	17.6
Total	0.0	20.8	20.8

Table 3: 2026/27 Quarter 2 Forecast for the Housing revenue Account

HRA gross income and expenditure			
	Budget	Forecast	Overspend/ (Underspend)
	£m	£m	£m
HRA			
Income	(84.4)	(84.4)	0.0
Expenditure	84.4	87.9	3.5
Total	0.0	3.5	3.5

Table 4: 2026/27 Quarter 2 forecast for the Capital Programme

Portfolio/Programme	Original Budget 2026/27	Revised Budget 2026/27	Current Forecast	FY Variance	
				(Underspend)/ Overspend	(Slippage)/ Brought Forward
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Corporate Assets	50.1	51.6	49.5	0.1	(2.2)
Affordable Housing Supply	41.7	35.7	33.1	(0.6)	(2.0)
Invest for Brent (I4B)	0	9.6	7.2	-	(2.3)
Housing HRA & Management	44.9	32.5	34.4	2.1	(0.1)
Regeneration	68.2	67.7	67.6	0.8	(0.9)
Children & Young People	34.3	17.2	17.2	-	-
South Kilburn	45.0	53.6	49.1	(2.2)	(2.3)
Grand Total	293.8	267.7	258.1	0.1	(9.8)

Current Economic Environment

- 1.7 Since Quarter 1, the wider economic situation has remained uncertain. Ongoing conflict in the Middle East has created volatility in global markets, particularly in energy prices. The full impact will depend on how the situation develops, but the immediate effect has been a rise in fuel costs and higher inflation.
- 1.8 CPI inflation increased in August 2026 to 3.1%, having previously fallen since the Quarter 1 report to 2.6% in June. Whilst this rate is 0.7% lower than the equivalent rate in July 2025, it remains significantly above the Bank of England's 2% target. The Bank of England now expects inflation to remain higher for the rest of 2026, reaching 3.2% in Q4 as higher energy prices feed through to consumers. Higher inflation increases the cost of delivering council services and creates a risk of overspending in 2026/27 compared with the budget agreed earlier in the year.
- 1.9 Interest rates also remain elevated at 3.75%, with the most recent cut occurring in December 2025. With inflation now likely to stay higher for longer, interest rates may remain at current levels for longer or even rise.

This would increase the cost of borrowing to fund the Council's Capital Programme beyond the assumptions built into the February budget.

- 1.10 Residents in Brent continue to face significant financial pressures. The cost-of-living crisis triggered by the 2022 energy price shock has not fully eased, and the latest rise in energy costs is adding further strain on household budgets. If the economy slows, more residents may require support from the Council. Any increase in demand for support services would place additional pressure on the Council's finances and reduce the resources available for investment in local services.

Maintaining Financial Control

- 1.11 The £10.4 million savings identified for 2026/27, developed in partnership with the Embrace Change Portfolio, were sufficient to balance the budget based on the forecasts available at the time the budget was set. However, as outlined in this report, the economic environment has become increasingly challenging, and is placing additional pressure on services during 2026/27.
- 1.12 Despite the considerable efforts of the Council to manage its financial position, the operating environment remains volatile, with relatively small changes in demand often resulting in significant financial pressures. This is particularly the case in Children's Social Care, Adult Social Care and Housing Needs, where increases in demand, complexity and the cost of provision continue to place pressure on budgets. The Council is also managing the impact of sustained provider inflation, alongside the continuing effects of the cost-of-living crisis on both expenditure and income streams.
- 1.13 The most significant forecast pressure is within the Housing Needs and Support service, where rising levels of homelessness and a shortage of suitable temporary accommodation are forecast to result in an overspend of more than £7.7m. Section 8 of this report sets out the Council's approach to addressing these pressures.
- 1.14 In response to budget pressures experienced in recent years, the Council introduced a range of spending controls which successfully reduced expenditure and helped mitigate overspending. These measures included proactive vacancy management, tighter controls over agency expenditure and staff payments, and increased scrutiny of spending decisions across all directorates. These controls are now considered business as usual and have been embedded within the Council's day-to-day financial management arrangements to support effective budget control, financial resilience and sound decision-making.
- 1.15 However, spending controls alone are unlikely to be sufficient to mitigate the scale of the challenge. Therefore, with the exception of expenditure required to maintain health and safety, meet statutory obligations or fulfil contractual commitments, all other spending decisions will be subject to enhanced challenge and may be deferred where possible. Directorates will also be

required to identify additional in-year savings, cost avoidance measures and opportunities to reduce expenditure wherever possible.

1.16 Progress against these actions, together with the financial benefits delivered, is set out in detail for each Directorate. Overall, since the Quarter 1 forecast, directorates have identified £2.7m of in-year savings which have helped, in part, to mitigate underlying budget pressures and prevent the Council's overall financial position from worsening.

1.17 The delivery of these actions will be challenging and will require sustained management focus throughout the remainder of the year. However, they are considered necessary to support a sustainable budget position and protect the Council's long-term financial resilience. Officers and Members will continue to work collectively to minimise the impact on residents while maintaining essential services within the resources available.

2.0 Recommendation(s)

2.1 That Cabinet note the overall financial position and the actions being taken to mitigate the issues arising.

2.2 That Cabinet endorse seeking Cabinet approval for the budget changes set out in section 12 of this report

2.3 That Cabinet note the prudential indicators for treasury management in Appendix A.

2.4 That Cabinet note the savings delivery tracker in Appendix B.

2.5 That Cabinet approve the virements set out in sections 9.9 - 9.12 of this report.

3.0 Cabinet Member Foreword

3.1 As we reach the second quarter of 2026/27, this report sets out a challenging financial position for Brent Council, alongside the action we are taking to protect essential services and maintain the Council's long-term financial resilience.

3.2 The forecast £9 million General Fund overspend reflects significant pressures on local government services. The largest pressure is within Housing Needs and Support, where rising homelessness, increased demand for temporary accommodation and higher accommodation costs are contributing to a £7.7 million overspend. Adult Social Care is also experiencing increased demand and higher placement costs, while continued growth in high-needs education means the Dedicated Schools Grant is forecast to have a £20.8 million in-year deficit.

- 3.3 These pressures show that we need to look beyond managing the costs we face today and address the underlying causes of demand, while continuing to provide the support residents need.
- 3.4 Housing is central to that work. A secure, good-quality home provides the foundation from which people can build their lives, support their families and contribute to their communities. Brent is already making significant progress in increasing the supply of council homes. We have delivered 549 new council homes this year, the highest number of completions of any London borough.
- 3.5 That achievement is particularly important given the pressures we are facing in temporary accommodation. Increasing the supply of council-owned homes gives more residents access to secure accommodation and, over time, can reduce our reliance on expensive temporary accommodation in the private market.
- 3.6 Adult Social Care is also facing rising demand and higher market costs. We are taking action to manage the market more effectively, strengthening oversight of high-cost packages, working closely with providers and ensuring that individual package costs are robustly challenged. This is about making sure every pound goes as far as possible, so the Council and families get the best value for the support people need, while ensuring residents receive the right support for their needs.
- 3.7 Alongside this, we are continuing to identify savings and efficiencies across the Council. Since Quarter 1, directorates have identified £2.7 million of additional in-year savings, while the savings programme has identified £10.4 million, of which £8.8 million is either completed or on track to be delivered.
- 3.8 We know there is more to do. Our task is to manage today's pressures while focusing on the long-term changes needed to reduce them. That means investing in homes, prevention and early intervention, improving how we deliver services, and making every pound go further. Managing today's pressures cannot come at the expense of Brent's future. We must continue to invest in our homes, services and communities, while managing day-to-day costs responsibly and protecting the services residents rely on.

4.0 Service Reform and Strategy

Table 5: 2026/27 Quarter 2 forecast for Service Reform and Strategy

Service Reform and Strategy	Budget (£m)	Forecast (£m)	Overspend / (Underspend) (£m)
Adult Social Care	144.6	146.1	1.5
Change Programme	2.5	1.8	(0.7)
Digital and Innovation	10.0	10.0	0.0
Integrated Care Partnerships	0.2	0.2	0.0

Leisure	1.8	1.8	0.0
Public Health	28.5	28.5	0.0
Strategic Commissioning & Capacity Building	16.3	17.1	0.8
Strategy and Partnership (Reform)	1.5	1.5	0.0
Total	205.4	207.0	1.6

Summary

- 4.1 The Service Reform & Strategy (SRS) directorate's budget for 2026/27 includes £2.3m of savings and £25.7m of growth. Of the growth allocation, £12.3m relates to inflationary pressures, while £8.2m reflects demand-led growth across Adult Social Care and Strategic Commissioning, driven by demographic change and rising market costs.
- 4.2 At Quarter 2, the directorate is forecasting an overspend of £1.6m by year end due to overspends in Adult Social Care (£1.5m) and Strategic Commissioning (£0.8m), being partially offset by (£0.7m) underspend forecast in the Change Programme. As a significant proportion of the budget funds demand led care packages, where activity levels and unit costs can fluctuate throughout the year, the forecast remains subject to a number of risks and uncertainties, which are outlined in the following sections and may impact the financial position as the year progresses.

Detailed narrative

Adult Social Care

- 4.3 Demand for social care services has been increasing as people live longer, complexity of needs increases and as children transition into adult social care services. In the 2025/26 financial year, the number of service users increased by 6% from the previous year. Although the increase in client numbers has reduced to 3% for 2026/27, there has been an increase in the average costs as new packages are around 14-16% more expensive than those ending due to complexity of need and rising market prices, meaning that even with stable placement numbers, overall expenditure continues to rise.
- 4.4 When setting the budgets for 2026/27, growth for both demography and inflation were factored in. Any increases above the modelled growth could cause budget pressures and as such, the trends for both are being carefully monitored with focused attention on higher cost packages. These reviews are being managed through additional oversight and focused reviews of high cost packages which is forecast to reduce placements costs by £0.7m for 2026/27 and this has been included in the forecast at Q2. This target will be monitored to track progress and delivery on a monthly basis.

- 4.5 In comparison with the 2026/27 placements modelling that informed budget setting, demand and cost pressures have increased across a number of adult social care cohorts.
- For older people, while the majority continue to be supported at home or through direct payments, there has been a growing demand for nursing placements and residential placements for people with dementia. Demand for dementia-related residential placements has increased by 30% this year, while the average cost of nursing and residential dementia placements has risen by 8% and 15% respectively.
 - For adults with learning disabilities, most service users continue to be supported through supported living arrangements or direct payments. However, demand for homecare and day services has increased, with day service costs in particular rising by 16% compared with the assumptions used in the budget.
 - For mental health clients, supported living, extra care and homecare remain the predominant forms of support. However, there has been an increase in demand for more complex residential and nursing placements, which are significantly more expensive due to the higher levels of care required to meet clients' needs.
- 4.6 Collectively, these changes in demand and placement costs have resulted in expenditure pressures above those assumed in the original 2026/27 budget modelling.
- 4.7 The service is taking a number of proactive steps to manage the current pressure, increase the oversight of demand and manage market pressures more effectively through the following actions:
- Continue to strengthen the role of the Quality Assurance Management Panel in the decision-making process by making it multi-disciplinary and reviewing high-cost packages of care to ensure that the level of care is appropriate for the clients, with exploration into alternative solutions also being made, whilst prioritising the well-being of the client.
 - Reviewing short-term placements that do not have a committed end date and ensuring all new short-term placements have an end date and are reviewed within eight weeks. Short term placements are defined as packages that are up to eight weeks and are generally more expensive than long term placements. Reviewing these short-term placements will reduce costs, either by re-purchasing on a long-term basis where appropriate or by ending the package of care where it is no longer needed. Client contributions can also be obtained from clients in long term care, where financial assessed as needing to contribute to their care, but not from clients receiving short term care.
 - Reviewing the top ten highest cost care packages in each type of care. This will be reviewed to assess whether they are eligible for continuing

health care and therefore funding should be received by the NHS. This review also serves as a data quality check to ensure that packages of care are recorded correctly in Mosaic (Adult Social Care's case management system) as focusing on the largest packages of care will bring the highest financial benefit if they are recorded correctly.

- Ensuring any funding allocated via Direct Payment but not being utilised is recouped from accounts to help reduce the overspend position currently forecast.
- Partnership working with the NHS is a key factor in management of finances within the social care sector, with linkages between the Council and NHS for Section 117 and Continuing Healthcare (CHC) clients. This relationship has seen significant improvement during the last year with joint funding arrangements now supporting 24% of expenditure on clients with complex mental health needs, and the continuation of this progress will be important to ensure that any financial pressures can be mitigated early on. Further work needs to be undertaken to jointly support Learning Disability clients with complex needs where there are currently fewer joint packages of care in place.
- Reviewing cases where clients are receiving a Nursing care placement but there is no recorded contribution from the NHS for Funded Nursing Care. Funded Nursing Care is an agreement with the NHS whereby the Nursing element of a Nursing Care placement is paid for by the NHS, for which the standard rate is £267.68 per week.
- Recruitment and retention of staff remains a risk nationally in the social care sector. The sector continues to be faced with high staff turnover and vacancy rates. The shortage of qualified staff can have detrimental effects on the care provided to adult service users and added stress on existing staff. The national shortage of care workers has changed the workforce model across social care leading to a reliance on agency staff that are more costly compared to permanent staff. Management continues to focus on agency to permanent conversions as part of its workforce planning strategy and to maintain stability for the clients. An internal realignment of staffing was also undertaken to better align the structure to Brent's priorities.

Strategic Commissioning, Capacity Building and Community Engagement

- 4.8 Strategic Commissioning & Capacity Building service is forecasting an overspend of £0.8m for 2026/27 mostly attributed to commissioned services, where there is overspend on Extra Care placements due to higher cost complex packages.

Public Health

- 4.9 Public Health is forecast to break even against the 2026/27 budget of £28.5m. The budget reflects the ring-fenced Public Health Grant allocation, including funding now consolidated within the grant for drug and alcohol services and smoking cessation.
- 4.10 The sexual health contract remains an emerging risk. If the proposed uplift is agreed, current modelling indicates a potential pressure of approximately £0.25m in 2026/27, subject to final contract, activity and tariff validation. No pressure has been included in the Q2 forecast pending agreement. Any confirmed impact will require mitigation within available Public Health funding.
- 4.11 The Public Health reserve opening balance is £10.3m, with £3.4m planned to be drawn down in 2026/27 and a projected closing balance of £6.9m. Delivery will be monitored against the current reserve plan and ring-fenced grant conditions, with particular focus on workstreams at risk of delay.

Integrated Care Partnerships

- 4.12 Integrated Care Partnerships is forecast to break even at Q2.

Leisure

- 4.13 Leisure is currently forecast to break even at Quarter 2. The position remains financially sensitive due to reliance on income generation, contract performance and inflation-linked costs. Bridge Park remains closed for 2026/27, reducing the overall leisure offer and placing greater reliance on maintaining income and participation levels across the remaining sites.
- 4.14 Willesden Sports Centre remains the principal financial risk within the Leisure Services forecast for 2026/27. The budget for the year includes provision for the underlying PFI pressure. Despite this provision, the service continues to manage a number of ongoing risks associated with the PFI arrangement. A formal review of the contract and financial position has now been completed, and work is underway to implement actions aimed at mitigating the budget pressures identified. This includes strengthened contract management, improved financial oversight and closer monitoring of operational performance. Given the scale and complexity of the PFI arrangement, the financial position will be closely monitored throughout the year, with updates provided as part of the Council's regular budget reporting cycle.
- 4.15 Vale Farm is operating under the new agency contract arrangement. The Quarter 2 forecast assumes the contract continues to operate within the agreed financial parameters, with performance monitored against the guaranteed minimum return and monthly income and expenditure statements.

Digital and Innovation

- 4.16 Following a corporate reorganisation, the former Communications, Insight and Innovation department is now reported as Digital and Innovation, with the Change Programme reported separately. The new Digital and Innovation department within SRS brings together digital, technology and data functions, while Communications and Policy transferred to the Finance and Resources directorate.

Change Programme

- 4.17 The Change Programme is forecasting a £0.7m underspend against its £2.5m budget. The underspend mainly reflects recruitment delays following the Change and Improvement restructure, together with restructure-related staffing reductions, and lower projected expenditure in other areas.

2026/27 Savings

- 4.18 The SRS budget includes a savings requirement of £2.2m for 2026/27, against which the service has identified £2.3m of savings proposals. At Quarter 2, £0.6m of savings have been delivered and a further £1.2m is on track for delivery. Of the remaining proposals, £0.4m is assessed as at risk but recoverable, while £0.1m is at risk. The £0.1m relates to the self-funder administration fee within Strategic Commissioning, where delivery has been delayed due to the consultation timetable. Alternative mitigating actions are currently being validated to address the potential shortfall.
- 4.19 Overall delivery is progressing, although some savings remain dependent on resolving operational and governance issues. Some savings relate to areas previously included within the Communications, Insight and Innovation (CII) structure and will therefore be transferred to Finance and Resources for monitoring and reporting.

In year savings

- 4.20 In addition to £0.7m identified through review of high-cost placements included in the Q2 forecast and the actions outlined above to mitigate the current year overspend, the department is undertaking further work to ensure all opportunities are taken to identify additional savings that can support the Council's overspend and help contain the forecast budget gaps over the medium term. This is being explored through the lens of delivering efficiencies, reducing costs, investing in digital solutions and income maximisation.

Summary of Key Assumptions

- 4.21 Table 6 sets out the principal assumptions used in preparing the forecast. Variations in these assumptions could have a significant impact on the projected financial position.

Table 6: Summary of key forecast assumptions for Service Reform and Strategy

Key Assumption	Downside if worse	Upside if better	Mitigations
Increases to the cost of social care packages above what has been modelled, with client numbers remaining in line with what was modelled	Due to increasing demand for supported living and residential placements rather than homecare placements there is a risk of £3.5m over the modelled forecast	If high cost packages can be reviewed to decrease costs to below the modelled cost of care packages this will result in costs less than what was anticipated. £0.7m impact of this mitigating action has been included in the forecast at Q2	The Council is working closely with the service providers and provides robust challenge of individual package costs based on evidence as part of placement reviews.
Increases to social care client numbers above what has been modelled, with package costs remaining in line with what was modelled	Additional budget pressures should there be clients beyond those modelled as part of the MTFS.	Client numbers falling below those modelled would reduce the cost to the Council.	The Council is working on developing PowerBI tools to allow for better monitoring of placements. Consistent monitoring and reporting will be made to facilitate early identification of pressures so mitigating actions can be taken.
ICP partner funding and employee recharges are agreed and posted in line with forecast.	Delayed or unrecovered income would create a pressure.	Timely recovery supports the break-even forecast.	Monthly reconciliation of payroll, grants, contributions and recharges.
Willesden PFI costs and Vale Farm income perform in line with forecast.	Higher PFI costs or lower income would create a pressure.	Stronger income or an agreed PFI variation could	Monthly contract and income reconciliation. Recognise benefits

		improve the position.	only when formally agreed.
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5.0 Children, Young People and Community Development (CYPCD) (General Fund)

Table 7: Quarter 2 forecast for Children, Young People and Community Development

CYP Department	Budget (£m)	Forecast (£m)	Overspend (Underspend) (£m)
Community Development	2.2	2.4	0.2
Early Help	11.3	10.5	(0.8)
Looked After Children and Permanency	8.4	8.4	0.0
Children With Disabilities	15.1	15.8	0.7
Safeguarding and Quality Assurance	2.3	2.3	0.0
Family Support and Child Protection	9.5	9.6	0.1
Forward Planning Performance and Partnerships	57.2	57.6	0.4
Inclusion	3.2	3.2	0.0
Setting and School Effectiveness	0.1	0.1	0.0
Virtual School	0.6	0.6	0.0
Central Management	1.0	0.4	(0.6)
TOTAL	110.9	110.9	0.0

Summary

- 5.1 The Children, Young People and Community Development (CYPCD) directorate's budget for 2026/27 includes £1.6m of savings and £11.2m of growth. Of the growth allocation, £2.1m relates to inflationary pressures, while £4.6m reflects demand-led growth for children's placements. The budget also includes £4.5m of new Social Care grant funding.
- 5.2 At Quarter 2, the CYPCD directorate is projecting a break-even position overall; however, emerging pressures have been identified in some areas of the

CYPCD General Fund budget. Additional risks and uncertainties may impact on this position further as the year progresses.

Detailed Narrative

Children with Disabilities

- 5.3 The Children with Disabilities (CWD) area is reporting an overspend of £0.7m mainly due to reduced income contributions from the Integrated Care Board (ICB) towards children's placement costs.
- 5.4 In recent years, there has been a significant financial risk associated with disputes and delays in agreeing cost-sharing arrangements with the ICB for care packages.
- 5.5 The principal source of income from the Integrated Care Board (ICB) relates to Complex Care funding. Under revised arrangements, cases that previously received ICB Complex Care funding in 2025/26 are now required to be referred to a Health Panel for reassessment and approval of funding for 2026/27. To date, cases that were funded in 2025/26 have not been approved by the ICB following reassessment. This has resulted in a more cautious income forecast being reflected within the current budget projections. Officers across Adult Social Care and Children's Services are continuing to work collaboratively with ICB colleagues to review individual cases, strengthen joint processes, and seek greater clarity and consistency in funding decisions, with the aim of improving funding outcomes and mitigating the financial impact on the Council.
- 5.6 In response to the issues identified, a number of mitigating actions have been implemented, including strengthened recording arrangements within Mosaic, the Council's social care management system. In addition, all existing care packages will be brought back to the Panel in accordance with timescales established by the Head of Service, with the aim of ensuring that every package is reviewed at least annually.
- 5.7 To enhance oversight and decision-making, the Head of Service now approves all cases submitted to the Panel, providing an additional level of scrutiny. This responsibility was previously delegated to the Service Manager.
- 5.8 A service reorganisation within the Children with Disabilities (CWD) teams has established a dedicated Transitions Team to support young people in preparing for adulthood and to facilitate appropriate post-18 funding arrangements, including support from health and SEND services where applicable.
- 5.9 Furthermore, the Head of Service is exploring the feasibility of introducing financial assessments for clients aged 18 and over to determine potential contributions towards the cost of their care. This work remains at an early stage of review.
- 5.10 While the service area is implementing measures to reduce expenditure, 2026/27 will be a transitional year to establish these processes, and the

financial impact of these changes is not expected to be fully realised until 2027/28.

Forward Planning, Performance & Partnerships (FPPP)

SEN Transport

- 5.11 The FPPP service is reporting an overspend of £0.4m due to pressures in SEN Transport. The main reason for this pressure is the increase in the numbers of solo taxi users compared to last year and an increase in the number of Personal Travel Allowance payments.
- 5.12 The increase in the number of solo taxi arrangements has arisen from a combination of factors, including new pupils attending schools where no existing transport provision is in place, pupils leaving shared transport routes resulting in a single remaining passenger, cases where challenging behaviour necessitates individual transport, and timetable changes or part-time attendance arrangements that prevent alignment with other pupils' travel schedules.
- 5.13 The Head of Service is currently undertaking a review of all solo taxi arrangements in collaboration with the service provider and will implement appropriate actions to reduce the number of solo taxi journeys wherever this can be achieved safely and appropriately.
- 5.14 There has been a significant increase in the number of Personal Travel Allowance (PTA) payments, which is a positive development. This may contribute to a reduction in expenditure on other more expensive alternative options later in the financial year. However, it is currently too early to quantify the potential financial impact, as data for the new academic year will not be available until October.

Placements

- 5.15 The main financial risk within the FPPP service continues to be the cost of children's placements, particularly residential care and secure placements for young people, although for quarter 2 a break-even position is being reported.
- 5.16 As reported in Quarter 1, it is expected that the Council will experience increases in the number of high-cost residential placements during the second half of the financial year, resulting in additional financial pressures. The 2026/27 budget includes growth funding to reflect expected demographic and inflationary pressures and allows for some increase in placements later in the year. Any significant financial impact is most likely to arise from new residential placements and secure placements for young people who are remanded.
- 5.17 As of July 2026, the number of residential placements has remained stable and the current forecast remains that the placements budget will break even by year-end. The same assumptions remain as reported in Quarter 1: based on the latest figures, the final outturn could range from an underspend of £1.5m if

residential placement numbers remain at the current level throughout the year, to an overspend of £2.4m if placement numbers increase beyond the budget growth allowance.

- 5.18 The placements budget is affected by a range of factors in addition to the number of residential care placements. These include fluctuations in the volume and cost of other placement types, changes in grant funding and external contributions, such as funding for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC), and the number of young people requiring secure placements following serious offending behaviour. Robust oversight arrangements remain in place, including a monthly Residential Placements Panel chaired by an Operational Director and a bi-monthly Placement Steering Group chaired by the Corporate Director, Children, Young People and Community Development. These forums provide ongoing scrutiny and monitoring of placement activity, demand trends, and associated expenditure.

Other pressures

- 5.19 The forecast pressure of £0.2m in Community Development includes undelivered savings against the reduction in contract for targeted services in the Employment and Enterprise area and staffing pressures in the Community Safety and Prevention area.
- 5.20 There is an overspend of £0.1m in the Family Support and Child Protection team mainly due to client subsistence and legal costs relating to Children in Need and Children in Care.

Areas of underspend

- 5.21 There is an underspend of £0.6m against the budgets held centrally to cover pressures within the directorate.
- 5.22 Of the £0.8m forecast underspend within the Early Help service, £0.6m relates to the strategic application of grant funding to offset expenditure that meets the eligibility criteria of the Children and Families Grant. The remaining £0.2m underspend is primarily attributable to staff vacancies within the Targeted Prevention Hub and the use of alternative grant funding streams to support posts that would otherwise be funded from the General Fund

Risks and uncertainties

Adult Education and Other Service Pressures

- 5.23 There are potential financial pressures arising from a reduction in Adult Skills Fund (ASF) grant funding, alongside increased staffing, supplies and service costs. There is also a risk that planned savings linked to the reduction of contracts for targeted services may not be fully delivered. An on-going review of this area will identify mitigating actions, including securing additional external funding opportunities and controlling expenditure where possible.

Legal Costs

- 5.24 There is an ongoing risk relating to expenditure on judicial review cases and substantial legal costs associated with age assessments for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC). This pressure is expected to be mitigated by utilising underspends from other areas across the directorate.

Other Service Risks

- 5.24 A number of other financial risks exist across specific service areas within the Directorate. However, at this stage, these are expected to be managed within existing service budgets and do not present a significant risk to the overall directorate's forecast.

Children's Social Care Transformation Funding

- 5.25 The Department has secured significant new government funding through the Families First Partnership programme. This includes £4.49m Children's Social Care Transformation Fund, in addition to the existing £1.4m Children's Social Care Prevention Grant. Together, these funding streams provide an important opportunity to strengthen early intervention and preventative services, including targeted early help, child in need support, and child protection activity.

2026/27 Savings

- 5.26 The directorate is required to deliver £1.6m of savings in 2026/27 as part of the Council's wider budget strategy. These savings are expected to come from a range of measures, including improved grant management, stronger procurement and contract management, rationalisation of lower value expenditure, greater use of technology and automation, tighter control of agency costs, a review of fees and charges, and improvements to customer access and service delivery.
- 5.27 The service is confident that about £1.2m of these savings can be delivered. However, overall savings for the directorate are particularly challenging due to the demand led and volatile nature of some of the children's budgets.

In year savings

- 5.28 The directorate has identified £600k of in-year savings through the strategic use of government grants to fund eligible expenditure that had previously been met from baseline budgets. These savings have already been incorporated into the current forecast position. The Directorate continues to maintain a robust review of expenditure, with particular focus on staffing costs, which represent a significant proportion of the overall budget. Appropriate controls are in place to ensure rigorous scrutiny and approval of all new recruitment activity. Work is ongoing to identify further in-year savings opportunities, which may enable an improvement in the Directorate's forecast outturn position by year-end.

Summary of Key Assumptions

- 5.29 Table 8 sets out the principal assumptions used in preparing the forecast. Variations in these assumptions could have a significant impact on the projected financial position.

Table 8: Summary of key forecast assumptions for Children, Young People and Community Development

Key Assumption	Downside if worse	Upside if better	Mitigations
LAC and Care Leaver placements forecast assumes numbers of 820 FTEs and unit costs reflect current trends. Forecast allows for 50 residential placements by the end of the financial year.	An increase in the number of high cost residential or secure placements would place additional pressure on the budget. e.g., an increase by 5 placements in year could cause an additional pressure of £1.9m.	Increased step-down arrangements result in falling number of residential placements. A single stepdown from a residential placement to a semi-independent placement could reduce expenditure by c£0.2m in-year	Ongoing review of packages for best outcomes and focus on stepdown arrangements to support children to transition from residential to foster and/or semi-independent placements. Supporting the transition of care leavers to their own tenancies, to improve outcomes and independence. Innovative support and partnering with Health for CYP Mental Health and Wellbeing, among other preventative measures.

			Use of the Council- run care home
Health contributions for CYP placements and Children with Disabilities (CWD) packages will be even lower than the current 2026/27 forecast assumptions.	The cost will not be mitigated by these contributions in proportion to the overall demand.	It will assist in mitigating overall net spend.	Maximising joint funding approaches with health to ensure contributions to placement costs where applicable.
Assume numbers of SEN clients requiring transport do not increase significantly (in particular solo taxi users) and the take up of Travel Assistance is in line with expectations.	An increase in the numbers would place additional pressure on the budget.	Underspend in the budget.	Tracking and monitoring KPIs through SEN Transport Boards. Continuing contract monitoring.

6.0 Neighbourhoods and Regeneration

Table 9: 2026/27 Quarter 2 forecast for Neighbourhoods and Regeneration

Neighbourhoods and Regeneration	Budget (£m)	Forecast (£m)	Overspend / (Underspend) (£m)
Public Realm	24.9	24.1	(0.8)
Inclusive Regeneration & Climate Action	3.2	3.1	(0.1)
Property & Assets	7.3	8.2	0.9
Total	35.4	35.4	0.0

Summary

- 6.1 Neighbourhoods and Regeneration Directorate are currently forecasting a breakeven position as at Quarter 2.
- 6.2 The 2026/27 budget includes growth funding of £6.8m. This includes £3.8m to account for the expected inflationary and demographic impact on contracts within the department, and an additional £3m investment in Public Realm and Street Cleansing agreed by Full Council in February 2026. This Public Realm investment is designed to deliver clearer and more visible improvements in cleanliness across the borough. The budget also reflects the savings target for the directorate of £2.5m.

Risks and uncertainties

- 6.3 Within Inclusive Regeneration & Climate Resilience, a forecast underspend of £0.1m is reported at Q2. There continue to be pressures within Building Control and Schools and Asset Management, however work continues to manage expenditure and maximise available income and funding to support the £0.1m underspend forecast position. There remains a risk to the position should existing pressures increase or the anticipated benefits not be fully achieved.
- 6.4 Building Control is forecasting an overspend of £0.5m due to income levels remaining below budgeted assumptions. Historic income targets were set during a period of higher levels of major development activity and stronger market share. However, following the introduction of the Building Safety Act in October 2023, applications relating to Higher Risk Buildings are now submitted directly to the Building Safety Regulator, with charges being levied on a cost recovery basis. Combined with a slowdown in major development activity, this has resulted in a sustained reduction in the level of income available to the service. Current income expectations are therefore being reviewed to ensure they remain realistic within the context of the new regulatory framework. In addition, the service is required to operate within the CIPFA Building Control accounting framework, which requires certain income streams to be ringfenced for specific chargeable activities, whilst non-chargeable functions must be funded through the General Fund. This limits the flexibility available to offset financial pressures and reinforces the need to ensure budgets accurately reflect current service requirements. The service also continues to face workforce-related pressures. Recruitment and retention of qualified Building Control surveyors remain challenging due to a nationwide shortage of suitably experienced professionals, resulting in difficulties filling vacancies and maintaining resilience within the existing team. An ageing workforce profile presents a further medium-term risk through potential loss of specialist knowledge and expertise. In order to mitigate the current year pressure, the service is implementing a range of in-year management actions, including tight control of vacancies and expenditure, reviewing service delivery arrangements, ensuring fee income is invoiced and collected promptly, and pursuing opportunities to maximise fee-earning activity. Whilst market conditions and the Building Safety Act reforms limit the extent to which income can be increased, the service

continues to identify opportunities to improve performance and reduce the forecast overspend. Longer-term options are also being considered through the wider review of the service under the new Property and Building Safety leadership structure, with the aim of securing a financially sustainable and fit-for-purpose service.

- 6.5 Planning and Development services continue to face similar pressures, with application and pre-application fee income remaining below historic levels due to the ongoing economic climate. No changes to the fee structure are proposed for 2026/27 and current arrangements will therefore continue, providing a stable position for the service during the year. Land Charges income is expected to remain stable during 2026/27; however, the transfer of the Local Land Charges Register (LLC1) service to HM Land Registry means that income of approximately £0.2m per annum will cease from 2027/28. Work is underway to identify opportunities to manage the resulting budget pressure. Looking ahead, planning fee reform for local authorities may be introduced in future years, although the outcome and financial implications remain uncertain at this stage.
- 6.6 Schools and Asset Management is forecasting an overspend of £0.4m, largely due to security and compensation payments associated with property assets, alongside legal and compliance-related costs. A number of these costs had previously been assumed to be capital in nature but are required to be charged to revenue, creating a budget pressure during the year. These pressures are partly offset by staffing underspends, and officers are reviewing expenditure and funding options to reduce the impact on the overall directorate position.
- 6.7 Within the Public Realm service, the Service Development and Contract Performance team is forecasting a budget pressure of £0.7m. This is primarily due to business rates associated with six depot operations, borrowing costs relating to capital investment in RLS vehicles and additional staffing costs arising from changes to shift patterns and increase in waste tonnages under the Veolia contract.
- 6.8 Ad-hoc waste contract costs are being monitored closely due to ongoing demands on the service to collect additional waste, the removal of graffiti, and increased new container requests. The service is adapting an improvement strategy through campaigns, promotion of waste diversion and increase recycling participation to absorb some of the above pressures within allocated budgets.
- 6.9 The Parks Service is forecasting an overspend of £0.2m due to pavilion hire income being below the budgeted level. Income generation is currently constrained by the condition of several park buildings, which require renovation and improvement. Capital and revenue investment will be necessary to bring these assets up to a suitable standard, enabling them to be effectively marketed and increasing future hire income opportunities.

- 6.10 Focus for waste programmes in 2026/27 include the roll-out of services required to comply to Simpler Recycling requirements such as the roll-out of food waste collection to flats above shops and properties on North Circular Road as well as the collection of flexible plastics. Other key projects include the roll-out of twin stream recycling to all 1,400+ communal properties, alongside improvements to bin infrastructure, signage, and containers. A dedicated project team will be established to ensure delivery, performance management, and long-term embedding of improvements. This will ensure that Brent is compliant with the required recycling policies but also improve the recycling performance leading to reduced disposal costs on residual waste.
- 6.11 A strong focus will be placed on driving sustained behaviour change and improving material quality. Key initiatives include expanded education and engagement activity across schools, estates, faith, and community groups. The programme will aim to increase participation, reduce contamination, and improve capture rates across all material streams. In parallel, the service will be enhanced through consistent free provision of reusable recycling sacks for paper and card, food caddies, and caddy liners. Collectively, these initiatives are designed to deliver measurable improvements in recycling performance while ensuring the service remains accessible and aligned with future national requirements.
- 6.12 Within waste contracts upcoming priorities for 2026/27 will centre around a program of works to utilise Packaging Extended Producer Responsibility (pEPR) funding to support the transformation of waste and recycling services. Funding for this was first allocated in 2025/26, with a further £5.3m expected to be received in 2026/27. The proposed approach is to allocate funding across a balanced programme.
- 6.13 Property and Assets is forecasting an overspend of £0.9m at Quarter 2. The most significant pressure relates to Commercial Property, where rental income is forecast to remain below budget due to vacancies and assets held for sale. The commercial income budget continues to reflect historic assumptions which have become increasingly challenging to achieve, particularly following structural changes in the office market since the pandemic and changing demand for office accommodation. The service continues to actively market suitable vacant accommodation, progress lease events and explore opportunities to maximise income across the portfolio. Facilities Management is also reporting pressures arising from repairs expenditure that is required to be charged to revenue rather than capital, together with staffing pressures across Cleaning and Security services. Recruitment activity has been impacted by the ongoing service reorganisation, resulting in delays in filling vacant posts and an increased reliance on temporary resources. In addition, a pressure remains within the Directorate relating to unachieved savings targets, partially offset by staffing vacancies.
- 6.14 These pressures are partially mitigated by an anticipated underspend within the Council's energy budgets. Based on the latest forecasts from the

Council's energy supplier and energy contracts secured for future supply, energy costs are expected to remain below budget in 2026/27, generating a forecast underspend of £0.6m. This favourable variance helps offset wider pressures across Property and Assets; however, the service continues to closely monitor both energy costs and overall expenditure to manage the forecast year-end position.

2026/27 Savings

- 6.15 As part of the savings programme for 2026/27, Neighbourhoods & Regeneration are required to deliver £2.5m of savings. Savings were identified within efficiency and income maximisation programmes, and also departmental specific savings.
- 6.16 The Healthy Streets and Parking Service is forecasting an in-year saving of £1.4m. The service is generating additional income through the installation of new enforcement cameras, the expansion of CCTV enforcement to a further 20 locations, the implementation of new AI ANPR software, and increased suspension income arising from construction activities across the borough.
- 6.17 Within the directorate specific savings, there are some risks to delivery:
- NR01 26-27 Lane Rental - It was expected the Lane Rental scheme would come into operation in Autumn 2026 and immediately generate income for the Council. There are delays to this scheme whilst its approval transfers from DfT to the London Mayor, and it is now unlikely to be operational and generate any income in 2026/27.
 - NR02 26-27 – Asset utilisation. A number of options were considered for this saving, with the final one identified as looking to establish Padel Courts within the Borough. The delivery model of this scheme has yet to be confirmed which is leading to delays. More options to progress this expediently will be put into action.
- 6.18 The department expects to be able to mitigate the Lane Rental saving in 2026/27, however the asset utilisation saving remains a pressure on the budget.
- 6.19 Inclusive Regeneration and Climate Action have identified a number of potential savings and budget management opportunities which are currently being developed assessed as part of the work to manage the underlying pressures within the service.. These include proposals relating to The Pages development, where an offer has been made to acquire 46 affordable housing units as part of the Wembley Housing Zones project, generating a positive financial impact through reduced General Fund land receipts and benefits to the Housing Revenue Account. In addition, a review of the Building Control service is planned alongside the recruitment of a new Director of Property and Building Safety, with the aim of reshaping the service to achieve a more financially sustainable balance between income

and expenditure. The only quantified saving identified to date is the funding of 65% of a Heat Network staff post through the Green Heat Network Fund grant, delivering an estimated saving of £63k in 2026/27. Other opportunities remain subject to further assessment and quantification and, as a result, there remains delivery risk associated with achieving the overall forecast position.

- 6.20 Property and Assets is progressing a range of measures to mitigate financial pressures and improve the long-term sustainability of the service. These include reducing reliance on external keyholding arrangements, agency staff and overtime, alongside ongoing work to identify efficiencies through energy management and workforce planning. The service continues to actively manage the property portfolio through lease renewals, rent reviews, marketing of vacant accommodation and consideration of alternative uses for under-utilised assets. Opportunities to generate additional income from the Council's estate are also being explored, including the letting of newly completed commercial units within the Wembley Housing Zone and Church End developments. While these initiatives are expected to improve the financial position over time, a number remain at an early stage of development, and their full financial impact has yet to be quantified. A key priority is the successful letting of 15 newly completed commercial units within the Wembley Housing Zone and Church End developments, which have the potential to generate approximately £650k of annual rental income once fully occupied.

In Year Savings

- 6.21 In year savings of £1.2m have been identified by the Directorate, which largely comes from the implementation of new CCTV enforcement cameras to immediately improve safety and assist with congestion issues. These cameras benefit from a short installation time allowing them to become operational in this financial year to achieve immediate safety results. Where offences are spotted PCNs will be issued and therefore bring an income source to the Council. This projected income is included in the Q2 forecast and is therefore assisting to alleviate some of the noted in-year pressures in the Directorate. Further work is ongoing to identify further in-year savings.

Summary of Key Assumptions

Table 10: Summary of key forecast assumptions for Neighbourhoods and Regeneration

Key Assumption	Downside if worse	Upside if better	Mitigations
That newly implemented in-year savings can be achieved. This also assumes that the service would otherwise have broken even.	If the savings are not achieved, it will put pressure on the Council's overall budget.	There are significant pressures on the Council's overall budget, so if further savings are achieved to will go towards alleviating this.	Work has already begun to implement the savings. And alternative proposals are sought where not fully achievable through the original proposal.
Building Control is able to mitigate pressure on its income generation.	In 2025/26 the department reported a £630k overspend, without mitigation the same could occur.	The department is able to generate more income providing additional revenue to the Council.	Cases arriving through the BSR are being closely monitored to ensure accurate forecasting. A reserve was created in 2023/24 to mitigate pressures whilst a longer term plan is implemented. In 2026/27 there is £340k remaining.
Recycling performance will improve and material prices for the recyclates will be in the forecast range.	There is a £529k difference between the central and worst case when modelling the cost of the recycle reprocessing budget.	If recycling improves it will reduce the cost of waste disposal, leading to a rebate on forecast charges. Based on prior years this could be up to £500k.	The monthly data around tonnage, rejections and market prices for recycling are closely monitored. With ongoing work to improve recycling performance.
The waste contract has some variable elements which are paid for as used, for example winter maintenance. It is	This is demand led service can create a financial pressure for the service due	The expected budget for this element would not be utilised. This could then be used to cover pressures	The service is aware of the costs of the variable elements. The volume is therefore closely monitored to

assumed that usage will be within the expected range.	to severe winter weather.	within the service which are mentioned above.	ensure that the usage is appropriate.
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7.0 Finance and Resources

Table 11: 2026/27 Quarter 2 forecast for Finance and Resources

Finance and Resources	Budget (£m)	Forecast (£m)	Overspend / (Underspend) (£m)
Finance Services	12.4	12.3	(0.1)
Organisational Assurance & Resilience	5.0	5.0	0.0
Shared Technology Services	0.0	0.0	0.0
Human Resources & Organisational Development	4.4	4.3	(0.1)
Legal Services	5.4	5.4	0.0
Democratic Services	8.4	8.3	(0.1)
Total	35.6	35.3	(0.3)

Summary

- 7.1 The Finance & Resources directorate is forecasting an underspend of £0.3m at Quarter 2.
- 7.2 Democratic Services and Organisational Assurance & Resilience now include Policy and Communication departments, which were previously reported within Service Reform & Strategy.

Risks & Uncertainties

- 7.2 Human Resources & Organisational Development is forecasting an underspend of £0.1m, mainly due to in-year savings arising from vacant posts. Although some vacancies have since been filled, this has been offset by additional income generated by the Recruitment Team.
- 7.3 Legal Services is currently forecasting a break-even position. Work continues to mitigate the pressures arising from a reduction in staff time working on capital projects and delays in implementing a new income stream from recharging procurement contract work to third parties.
- 7.4 The Insurance Service are currently forecasting a break-even position. However, the service has experienced increased claims activity and rising

repair and damage costs in the year to date. The position is being closely monitored, with regular reviews of individual claims and forecast expenditure to minimise the risk of an overspend and ensure spending remains within the approved budget.

2026/27 Savings

- 7.5 The directorate is required to deliver £1.5m of savings in 2026/27. These savings have all been identified within the directorate as part of the savings programme and include measures across the themes of commissioning & procurement, digital programme, efficiency, workforce and income maximisation.
- 7.6 Work is progressing to ensure saving plans are implemented and at Quarter 2 all savings are expected to be achieved in 2026/27. In particular, with commissioning savings, contracts have been reviewed to ensure the necessary amendments are made to ensure the saving is deliverable in year. On the digital programme, projects are expected to still progress but it may be beyond 2026/27 before the saving is fully achieved. Where any savings are not achievable through their original proposal or delays are anticipated, the department have looked for other opportunities to ensure the total savings are still delivered.
- 7.7 A review of in-year savings opportunities has identified £0.3m of savings which are included in the Quarter 2 forecast. Of these savings £0.2m have come from the holding of staffing vacancies within HR & Finance. A further £0.1m has come from an expected over achievement of income through bookings within Conference & Events.

8.0 Residents and Housing Services

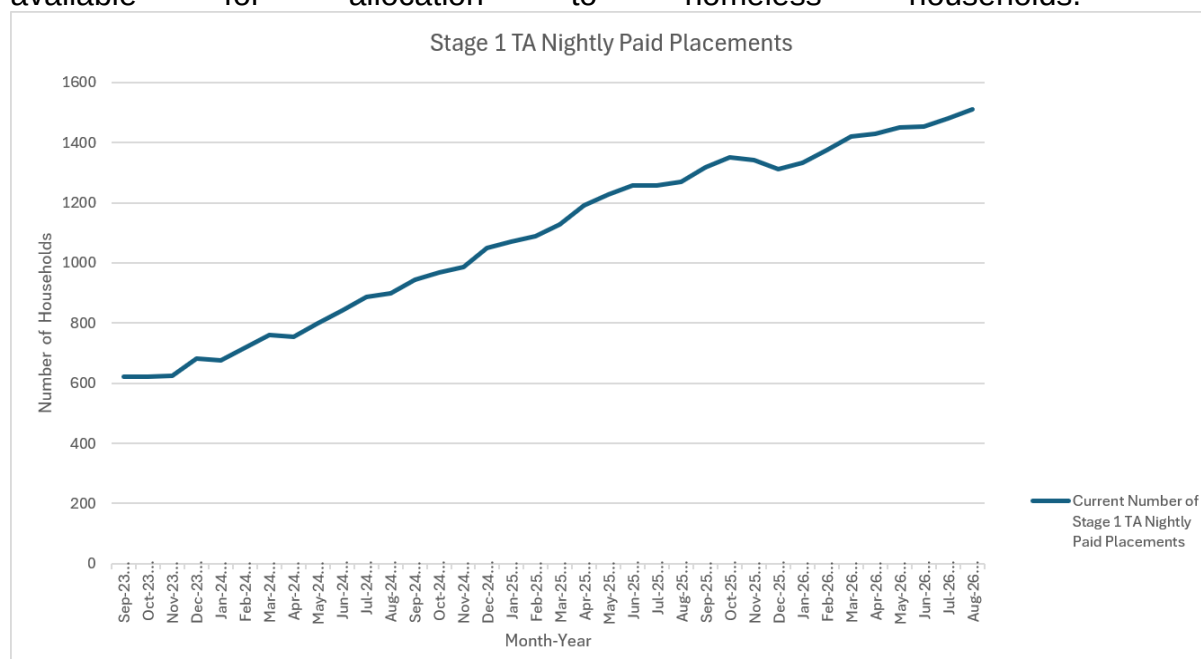
Table 12: 2026/27 Quarter 2 forecast for Residents and Housing Services

Residents and Housing Services	Budget (£m)	Forecast (£m)	Overspend / (Underspend) (£m)
Housing Needs and Support	37.2	44.9	7.7
Housing Partnership and Tenant Engagement	2.5	2.5	0.0
Private Housing Services	0.1	0.1	0.0
Residents Services	22.4	22.4	0.0
Housing and Resident Services Corporate Director	0.1	0.1	0.0
Total	62.3	70.0	7.7

Summary

- 8.1 Residents and Housing Services is forecasting a £7.7m overspend at Quarter 2, representing an improvement of £1.8m compared with the position reported at Quarter 1. Significant pressures continue to be experienced by this directorate, largely in the Housing Needs and Support service. While mitigation plans are in place, delivery risks remain, particularly in relation to housing supply and market conditions.
- 8.2 The Housing Needs and Support budget overspent by £11.7m in 2025/26 due to an extremely high level of demand for this service and a lack of affordable Private Rented Sector (PRS) offers. In 2026/27, £8m of growth was built into the base budget to deal with continuous pressures and demand. Projections and forecasts for 2026/27 are continuously under review, modelling the current demand and costs in comparison to projected trends and movements.
- 8.3 In April 2026, there were 1,428 households in nightly paid accommodation, compared with 1,182 households in April 2025. This represented an overall increase of 9% since December 2025, when 1,312 households were in accommodation, with approximately half of the annual increase occurring between Q3 and Q4. As a result, the 2026/27 financial year began with a projected overspend of £3.7m, with revised demand for 2026/27 estimated to cost a further £1.9m above initial assumptions. 1,517 households are currently in nightly paid accommodation as of the end of August.
- 8.4 Since the budget was set in February, there have been continued inflationary pressures, particularly relating to provider costs, although the scale remains subject to ongoing review. The original assumption of a £1.4m increase for 2026/27 reflected the best estimate at that time; however, more recent information suggests average costs have risen by around £10 a night per placement. Based on current activity levels, this could result in expenditure being up to £3.9m higher than initially anticipated for 2026/27. These figures remain indicative and will continue to be monitored as part of regular financial updates.
- 8.5 Demand continues to increase in the nightly paid accommodation cohort. There has been an overall increase of 2% (30 households) in the use of nightly paid accommodation since the beginning of the financial year, in line with the increase observed in 2025/26. While this represents a slower rate of growth compared to previous periods, the substantial increases seen in prior financial years have resulted in a significantly high baseline of households in Stage 1 accommodation. This, coupled with increases in nightly rates from current providers, remains a concern. The slower rate of growth is a direct result of the recent influx of new-build social housing, which has been

available for allocation to homeless households.



- 8.6 The Council is expecting 406 new properties to be added to its portfolio during 2026/27 as part of the Capital Programme. These are mostly HRA properties (e.g., Massey House, Willowbrook House), some of which may house people in temporary accommodation, depending on allocations, therefore alleviating pressures on this service. In 2025/26, of the 265 social housing allocations made to homeless households from the properties at Clearwater, Aneurin Bevan Court, and Fulton Road, 162 were direct offers targeting individuals in the most expensive forms of temporary accommodation. These households were prioritised based on their placement in higher priority bands (A and B), with the aim of reducing overall accommodation costs. The remaining 103 properties were allocated through Locata via the Choice-Based Lettings (CBL) system. These were offered to households who submitted bids and are in the highest priority banding, with allocations made in order of longest waiting time. The absence of mandatory auto-allocations for households in the highest priority bands within the Locata system continues to be a limiting factor in managing housing demand effectively. The options for implementing this approach are being explored. An annual cost saving of approximately £4.8m could be achieved on stage 1 accommodation as a result.
- 8.7 If the remaining social housing homes within the current pipeline are made available with an average occupancy of 3 months during the financial year and used to target the households in the most expensive forms of temporary accommodation, this could result in a cost avoidance of circa £1.8m in 2026/27. However, due to the increasing level of demand, the number of households in TA and the associated costs, there is a risk that this benefit could be counterbalanced.
- 8.8 In addition, if a household is moving out of a leased TA unit into the new council accommodation, then the void will be used to decant a family from

Stage 1. However, if there is less than six months left on the lease, and the owner does not renew, which has been the case as more landlords are leaving the PRS market, a hand back will be required. Therefore, there is no void to use for a decant resulting in no cost avoidance.

New Supply of Temporary Accommodation & PRS

- 8.9 The increase in supply for new temporary accommodation is achieved by seeking new accommodation via acquisition or leasing.

Acquisition:

- 8.10 While 42 properties have been successfully acquired under the LAHF programme, the transition to bringing these homes into active use has progressed more slowly than anticipated. Following acquisition, some properties have remained vacant due to a combination of process-related delays and timing constraints associated with the utilisation of grant funding. This has led to further pressures on temporary accommodation provision into 2026/27, as households remain in nightly paid accommodation awaiting move-on opportunities. To mitigate this going forward, the team are implementing strengthened reporting and monitoring arrangements and are reviewing end-to-end processes to support a timelier progression from acquisition to occupancy.

- 8.11 Leasing:

Various leasing options continue to be assessed to secure cost-effective nightly paid placements. However, negotiations, assessments and evaluations require time.

- 8.12 To help accelerate progress and strengthen commercial negotiations, Greenlight Commercial & Consulting have been engaged to support this workstream with a number of lease proposals in review. Greenlight also work to decant the top 100 most expensive nightly paid placements to cheaper accommodation. The aggregate cost reduction per night from this exercise is c£4,000.

- 8.13 Greenlight sourced over 300 units that are due for completion in 2026/27, with occupancy expected to be staggered throughout the year. These are 10-years plus one day leases, enabling the full LHA rate to be recovered under the housing benefits subsidy rules.

- 8.14 Private Rented Sector Acquisitions - I4B Holdings Ltd:

I4B Holdings Ltd continue with an acquisitions program and are on track to deliver 19 street property acquisitions to allow for discharge of duty to households from the housing waiting list into PRS. They regularly review the viability of new build/block purchases which could provide significant numbers of accommodation for the company. This route continues to provide steady investment in cost avoidance measures to mitigate our housing

waiting list which currently saves the Council circa £6m per annum on stage 1 accommodation costs.

- 8.15 In April 2024, a new model of support for Brent residents was developed for three years through the piloting of Cost-of-Living Outcome Based Review (OBR) projects and guided by a series of design principles. The approach has a single, joined-up model including the Community Wellbeing Programme aligned with the Resident Support Fund (RSF), to support residents to be more resilient in the longer term and aligns closely with strategic priorities and related projects. The RSF supports the Council's approach towards addressing key community needs through strategic funding and partnerships, ensuring impactful and sustainable support for residents. £1m of recurring funding has been allocated in the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) to support this model.
- 8.16 Other services within the department are projecting to achieve a break-even position for the year. The 2026/27 budget has been set considering assumptions around future demographic changes, the impacts of the cost-of-living crisis and inflationary trends. It is based on these assumptions and current trends that the Residents and Housing Services department is forecasting to achieve a balanced financial position. However, there are risks and uncertainties that could impact the year's final financial outturn position.

Risks and uncertainties

- 8.17 Housing Needs and Support continues to represent the most significant area of pressure within the department. This is primarily driven by an exceptionally high and sustained level of demand for housing services and emergency accommodation, a challenge that is experienced nationally but particularly acute within London. As of the end of 2025/26, Brent received 8,795 homelessness support applications, including 5,309 from single individuals and 3,486 from families. This volume equated to approximately 169 new applications per week, underscoring the sustained and intense demand for housing services. This level of demand reflects a 21% increase compared to the 7,285 applications recorded during the 2024/25 period, with the need for housing support and associated costs remaining elevated. The volume of individuals and families requiring assistance continues to place considerable strain on resources, leading to sustained high costs for the provision of services.
- 8.18 The Renters' Rights Act 2025 has now become law and whilst it is anticipated that some landlords will exit the private rented sector market, resulting in a possible increase of homeless applications, it is anticipated the new legislation will have an overall positive impact on homelessness demand. This is because the ban on Section 21 'no fault' evictions in the private rented sector, implemented on 1 May 2026 means that all new possession claims will proceed under Section 8 instead. As of 1 August 2026, old Section 21 notices are invalid. Landlords will be able to serve a Section 8 notice for reasons such as rent arrears, anti-social behaviour, selling the property or where a close family member needs to move back in. However, there will

need to be clear evidence to support the grounds, and the claim can still be contested by the tenant. Projections will be updated once more data becomes available on the impact of the legislation.

- 8.19 Given that these challenges are being experienced across London, the availability of Bed and Breakfast (B&B) and annexe accommodation is severely limited throughout the capital. This shortage of suitable accommodation is driving reliance on higher-cost providers and, in some cases, placements outside of Brent. Such arrangements not only increase financial pressures due to elevated accommodation costs but also impose additional burdens on families, including increased travel expenses for children attending schools in Brent.
- 8.20 The supply of settled TA properties, leased from private landlords and intended to transition families out of Bed and Breakfast (B&B) and annexe accommodation, has also declined. This reduction is primarily driven by a decrease in the procurement of new properties under Private Sector Leasing (PSL) schemes, coupled with landlords opting not to renew leases on existing properties upon expiration.
- 8.21 A targeted programme of work has been established to address and contain the projected overspend. Multiple workstreams have been initiated, focusing on improving the affordability of temporary accommodation and exploring new and alternative housing supply options. Council officers are proactively renegotiating contract prices and identifying alternative solutions to relocate some of the highest-cost cases, with the objective of reducing overall expenditure within the Housing Needs service. Officers continue to rigorously assess and manage homelessness applications to prevent or relieve demand where possible. In the 2025/26 financial year, 67% of homelessness approaches were successfully prevented or relieved.
- 8.22 In the 2026/27 financial year, i4B is continuing its street property acquisition programme with an initial target of acquiring 19 homes. i4B, a housing company wholly owned by Brent Council, was established to acquire, let, and manage a portfolio of affordable, high-quality PRS properties. These properties are leased to homeless families at Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates, enabling the Council to prevent or discharge homelessness duties, thereby reducing reliance on temporary accommodation and associated costs while ensuring families have access to secure and responsible landlords. i4B remains self-financing, with the current portfolio generating annual savings in temporary accommodation costs. This self-financing portfolio generates annual savings exceeding £6m by reducing reliance on temporary accommodation. While new builds and acquisitions alone will not fully resolve the homelessness challenge, the Council is actively utilising its available resources and powers to expand housing supply. Any additional supply secured through i4B will contribute to mitigating the risk of overspending and help manage future housing costs.
- 8.23 In addition, supported exempt accommodation properties continue to create financial pressures for the Council and represent a budgetary risk for

2026/27. Unlike other landlords, providers of supported exempt accommodation are not bound by Local Housing Allowance (LHA) caps and can charge higher rents once they demonstrate that support services are being provided. Housing Benefit subsidy levels depend on Rent Officer determinations, which are based on the rent claimed by providers. This issue reflects a national challenge, highlighting the need for clearer regulation regarding the criteria that providers must meet to qualify as Supported Exempt Accommodation. Greater clarity on what constitutes minimal care would enable a more consistent approach to assessing individual support needs across the sector. Historically, costs associated with supported exempt accommodation have not posed a significant budgetary pressure for the Council and have been managed within corporate central budgets. However, an overspend of £2.1m occurred in 2025/26 and this area of spend is being carefully monitored.

- 8.24 A dedicated working group has been established within the Council with the objective of minimising opportunities for exploitative landlords to enter the Supported Exempt Accommodation market. The group has developed a clear strategy outlining the Council's processes for reviewing both new landlords seeking to join this market and those already operating within it. Senior managers have met with the providers with the greatest subsidy loss to the council to discuss options to reduce this loss. The reviews process will also assess individuals' support care needs and verify that providers are delivering the appropriate level of care. This strategy and reviews process should bring the cost of SEA under control and, in time, should lead to cost avoidance and/or savings. The Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023 introduced a number of important reforms to the supported housing system, with a particular focus on reforming supported exempt accommodation (SEA). The strategy introduced the Government's requirement of councils to develop a local supported housing strategy by end of 2026/27. It also introduced the Government's intention to introduce a dedicated supported housing licensing scheme that Councils would be asked to deliver. To address this the Council has established a dedicated working group to focus on developing a clear strategy. This will involve reviewing both new and existing landlords and verifying the adequacy of care provision. The Council continues horizon scanning to ensure alignment with emerging regulatory requirements and to inform future operational and financial planning.

2026/27 Savings

- 8.25 A total of £2.6m in savings is planned to be delivered from the department's budgets in 2026/27. Savings delivery across the service areas is progressing broadly in line with planned timelines, with all proposals supported by defined delivery approaches and clear accountability. Income generation initiatives, including Registration, Cemeteries and Licensing, are performing positively, supported by uplifted fees and increased demand.
- 8.26 Workforce-related efficiencies, particularly agency control measures, are being realised through strengthened governance and recruitment to

permanent roles, reducing reliance on temporary staffing. Programme-based savings, such as the Resident Experience Board, are advancing, with benefits emerging incrementally as implementation is embedded, though these continue to require close oversight to ensure full financial realisation. Demand-led savings linked to the shift from Housing Benefits to Universal Credit have progressed. However, the Housing Benefit team's caseload remains high due to residual Housing Benefit work and a slight rise in Council Tax Support assessments. The team is monitoring impacts on assessment timescales, and mitigations include recruitment to vacancies and automation. Efficiency savings allocated per service level are largely on track, with delivery plans in place and monitored regularly. Commissioning and Procurement savings arising from long term temporary accommodation leasing deals are in line with planned timelines.

- 8.27 The original plan to deliver £0.2m of savings through the Xantura platform is no longer viable for 2026/27 due to development delays and increased integration costs. Instead, savings will be achieved through enhanced early intervention by increasing staffing capacity within the Family Wellbeing Centres to prevent homelessness.

Summary of Key Assumptions

Table 13: Summary of key forecast assumptions for Residents and Housing Services

Key Assumption	Downside if worse	Upside if better	Mitigations
The additional number of homeless people can be managed within the existing forecast.	Each person costs on average £326 per week to accommodate, therefore any further increases in demand would result in a circa £0.1m per quarter for every 20 people.	Faster progress on homeless pathways or any decrease in demand will reduce expenditure by £326 per week per person.	The service is focusing on moving homeless clients along the various pathways. Various project workstreams are focusing on sourcing additional housing supply to alleviate some of the pressures.
Rent collection rates for the Housing Needs service will not fall below the anticipated level.	A 5% worsening in the collection rate will cost £0.3m per quarter	A 5% improvement in the collection rate will recover £0.3m per quarter	Collection rates are being closely monitored and investigations into the drivers for the movements in the collection

			rates are ongoing.
Other inflation linked costs can be contained within existing budgets.	A 3% increase in costs above budgetary assumptions could cost an additional £1.2m per annum	A 3% cost reduction in costs would result in a circa £1.2m saving for the year.	The department continues looking for best way to achieve value for money, utilising the most efficient procurement and service delivery options and negotiations.

9.0 Central items

Collection Fund – Council Tax

- 9.1 The net collectible amount for Council Tax for 2026/27 (after exemptions, discounts and Council Tax Support) as at 31 August 2026 was £251m. As at the end of August 2026, the amount collected was 43.7% which is 0.5% higher than the amount collected in the same period in 2025/26, and 0.4% higher than the amount collected in the same period in 2024/25.
- 9.2 The collection rate for working-age Council Tax Support (CTS) claimants was 37.3% as at 31 August 2026, compared with 36.5% at the same point in 2025, representing an improvement of 0.8 percentage points. In total, 73% of working-age CTS households have made a payment towards their 2026/27 Council Tax liability.
- 9.3 To continue with offsetting the impact of the changes on the recipients of CTS, a Hardship Fund was agreed as part of the 2026/27 budget, providing £1.5m of support, £0.4m of which is funded by the Greater London Authority (GLA). As of 31 August 2026, 1,445 applications have been received for support from this fund and 1,094 (75%) have been approved. The dispatch of recovery notices and wider promotion of the fund have generated more applications for this support.
- 9.4 As at 31st March 2026 the total CTS awarded was £25.9m. As at 31st August 2026 the total awarded has increased to £28m (increase of 2.1m). Key factors contributing to this increase include the increases to the tax base; growth in the number of households applying for CTS; proactive ongoing work through the Income Maximisation Project to identify residents entitled to support; increased uptake from targeted campaigns and signposting through council services; continued cost of living pressures meaning more residents qualify and existing claimants assessed for higher levels of support; improved awareness of available financial support through initiatives revolving around welfare and hardship.
- 9.5 The Council Tax service has made clear progress following the implementation of the Council Tax Improvement Plan, with additional staffing

capacity, more proactive billing and recovery activity, and improved use of data all contributing to stronger performance. Backlogs have been reduced and are being managed, processing times have improved, and the increased volume and timeliness of reminders and summonses are supporting better in year collection. In this context, it is important to note that the total amount to collect in 2026/27 has increased by £13.9m. Arrears recovery has also strengthened, and while progress remains gradual, early evidence shows that the enhanced processes, targeted interventions and resident focused engagement are delivering a positive and sustainable improvement in overall collection performance.

Collection Fund – Business Rates

- 9.6 The budgeted net collectable amount for Business Rates (NNDR) for 2026/27 was £159.5m (after exemptions, reliefs and discounts). This was based on the forecast used for the NNDR1 form in January 2026 and has increased by £9.7m from £149.8m in 2025/26. This increase is largely due to the 2026/27 revaluations of the rateable values of non-domestic properties. The rateable value has increased by 20.6% on the rateable value for 2025/26 based on the NNDR1 forecasts. This is 1% above the national average increase for England.
- 9.7 The actual net collectible amount for NNDR as at 31 August 2026 was £155m, a decrease of £4.5m from the forecast used in the NNDR1. This is driven by additional empty properties and reductions in the gross rates payable by businesses. Further adjustments to this may occur during the year due to increases or reductions in the number of non-domestic properties and successful appeals against rateable values.
- 9.8 Any movement in the net collectible amount for NNDR does not directly affect the General Fund in the current financial year as the overall resources that the Council receives from the Business Rates retention system are determined in the Local Government Finance Settlement. However, where the actual income to the Collection Fund is different to the budgeted amount, Brent's share of the resulting surplus or deficit estimated in January is distributed to or from the General Fund in the following financial year.
- 9.9 As at 31 August 2026, the NNDR collection rate was 41.8%, compared with 43% at the same point in 2025/26, a decrease of 1.2 percentage points. It should be noted that the net collectable debit has increased by £10m since August 2025, reflecting growth in the business rates taxbase. The in-year collection target for 2026/27 is 95.5%. While collection performance is currently below the level achieved in the previous year, performance will continue to be monitored closely throughout the remainder of the financial year to support achievement of the annual target.
- 9.10 The 2026 Revaluation has also resulted in some businesses moving from 100% Small Business Rate Relief into a chargeable position. While this has increased liabilities for a number of ratepayers, the Council is actively engaging with affected businesses to support compliance and maximise

collection. Collection performance continues to be influenced by the significant volume of Checks, Challenges and Appeals (CCAs) submitted to the VOA following recent revaluations. The current estimated processing backlog remains at approximately 180 days. While this continues to delay the resolution of appeals and confirmation of rateable values, the Council is monitoring developments closely and managing the associated risks within its collection strategy.

- 9.11 The wider economic environment continues to present challenges for many businesses, contributing to increased volatility in in-year collection. Business failures, insolvencies, rates avoidance activity and company dissolutions continue to impact recovery. At the same time, a growing number of ratepayers are seeking extended payment arrangements to support cash flow management. Whilst these arrangements can affect in-year collection performance, they help sustain viable businesses, reduce the risk of default and support the maximisation of debt recovery over the longer term.

Virements

- 9.12 Table 14 shows the virements and adjustments which have been entered to adjust the budgets at Corporate Directorate level between 30 April 2026 and 31 July 2026. Cabinet are recommended to approve these virements.

Table 14: Virements and adjustments in 2026/27 budget between 30.04.2026 and 31.07.2026

	2026/27 In-Year Budget at 30.04.2026	In-year growth	Transfer of functions between services	Technical Adjustments	2026/27 In-Year Budget at 31.07.2026
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Service Reform and Strategy	205.7	1.0	(0.4)	(1.0)	205.4
Children, Young People and Community Development	111.0	0.1	(0.2)	0.1	110.9
Neighbourhoods and Regeneration	36.5	0.0	0.0	(1.1)	35.4
Residents and Housing Services	62.3	0.4	(0.2)	0.0	62.5
Finance and Resources	32.7	0.5	0.8	1.5	35.5
Capital Financing	41.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	41.9
Central Budgets	11.7	(2.0)	0.0	0.5	10.2
Core Funding	(501.8)	0.0	0.0	0.0	(501.8)
Total Budget	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

- 9.13 In-year growth items are budget movements from Central Budgets to Departmental budgets which were not actioned at the start of the financial

year. Table 14 includes the following in-year growth items added between 30 April 2026 and 31 July 2026:

- Permanent increase to salary budgets in Service Reform and Strategy for the Corporate Programme Management Office and Change Function (£1.0m)
- Increase to SEN Transport budget in Children, Young People and Community Development directorate to 2028/29 for business case (£0.1m)
- Permanent increase to the budget for members allowances in the Finance and Resources directorate in respect of the employers pension contributions, following the extension of eligibility for membership of the Local Government Pension Scheme to members, effective from 11 May 2026 (£0.1m).
- Temporary funding from reserves to Residents and Housing Services to establish a focused, dedicated Council Tax engagement team for a six-month pilot period (£0.4m)
- Temporary funding from reserves to Finance and Resources Directorate for the Finance Transformation Programme (£0.4m)

9.14 Transfers of functions between services are budget movements between Corporate Directorates, which occur when a department is moved from one service to the other. The virement ensures that the department and the related budget remain together. Table 14 includes the following transfers of functions between services added between 30 April 2026 and 31 July 2026:

- Transfer of salary budgets from Children, Young People and Community Development directorate to Service Reform and Strategy directorate (£0.2m)
- Transfer of ICT budgets from Residents and Housing Services to Service Reform and Strategy directorate (£0.2m)
- Transfer of Change Programme team from Service Reform and Strategy directorate to Finance and Resources directorate (£0.8m)

9.15 Technical adjustments are budget movements resulting from events which are provided for in the MTFs, but only confirmed during the year (e.g. pay award), budget movements resulting from changes to processes (e.g. centralisation of budgets) or other budget movements between directorates resulting from changes to the Council's structure. Table 14 includes the following technical adjustment items added between 30 April 2026 and 31 July 2026:

- Transfer of five cost centres from the Service Reform and Strategy directorate to the Finance and Resources directorate (£1.0m)

- Permanent adjustment to Children, Young People and Community Development Budgets (£0.1m)
- Permanent adjustment to budgets across the Finance and Resources directorate (£0.5m)
- Temporary pro-rata adjustments to Neighbourhoods and Regeneration directorate (-£0.3m) for the in-year growth for Corporate Programme Management Office/Change Function
- Temporary budget adjustment to create income budget in Neighbourhoods and Regeneration for additional income from the West London Waste Authority, which will be deposited into an earmarked reserve in 2026/27 (-£0.8m)

10.0 Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)

Table 15: 2026/27 Quarter 2 forecast for Dedicated Schools Grant by block

Funding Blocks	Overall DSG Funding 2026/27	Forecast Expenditure	Overspend/ (Underspend)
	£m	£m	£m
Schools Block	126.9	126.9	0.0
High Needs Block	84.1	104.9	20.8
Early Years Block	45.5	45.5	0.0
Central Block	2.5	2.5	0.0
Total DSG	259.0	279.8	20.8

Summary

- 10.1 The DSG funding has reduced by £3.2m from £262.2m in Q1 to £259.0m following a revised allocation in July 2026. The reduction is primarily due to a £2.7m decrease in the School Block allocation, resulting from two schools converting to academy status at the end of June 2026 and therefore no longer being funded through the local authority. The remaining £0.5m reduction relates to the import/export adjustment, reflecting changes in pupil movements between local authorities
- 10.2 The overall DSG budget reflects a forecast of £20.8m as of Quarter 2, compared to the £18.2m reported in Quarter 1 due to changes in the forecasts against the High Needs Block and Early Years Block as set out in the paragraphs below.
- 10.3 The High Needs Block of the DSG is forecast to report a funding deficit of £20.8m at Quarter 2, compared with a deficit of £19.6m at Quarter 1, representing an adverse movement of £1.2m. This is principally attributable to a £0.5m reduction in High Needs Block income, together with continued

and significant growth in top-up funding costs associated with school placements for children and young people with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs).

- 10.4 It should be noted that a deficit of £14.9m had already been identified during the budget-setting process for 2026/27. Although High Needs Block funding increased by £4.3m, this uplift largely reflects the incorporation of the annualised 2025/26 Core Schools Budget Grant (CSBG) for special units and resourced provision, rather than additional funding to address underlying demand pressures. As a result, the increase in funding has not been sufficient to offset the continued growth in EHCP numbers, rising placement costs and broader inflationary pressures, leading to a further deterioration in the forecast position.
- 10.5 At Quarter 2, the Early Years Block, Schools Block and Central Service Block are projected to achieve a breakeven position. At Quarter 1, Early Years Block was forecasting an underspend of £1.4m; however, this has subsequently reduced due to the Summer 2026 entitlement budget for 9 months to 2-year-olds being understated at budget-setting as take up was estimated to be lower for children within this cohort. The Quarter 2 forecast reflects an increase in the expected number of 9 months to 2-year-olds taking up the free childcare entitlements. This has led to the removal of the previously reported underspend. For 2026/27, DfE funding for Early Years Block is based on actual participation levels, and any increase in take up would result in additional funding being received through termly adjustment process.
- 10.6 The cumulative DSG deficit brought forward from 2025/26 is £20.2m. This includes an in-year deficit of £6.6m in 2025/26. Without funding support from the government, this is set to rise to £41m by year end March 2027.
- 10.7 The Council has submitted its local SEND Reform plan to the Department for Education within the required timeframe in support of its application for High Needs Stability Grant funding. Delivery of the SEND Reform Plan will be subject to ongoing monitoring and review by DfE, NHS regional SEND leads and specialist advisers through quarterly reviews. The reviews will assess progress against agreed performance metrics, delivery milestones, risk mitigations arrangements and implementation of the reform program.

Risk and Uncertainties

- 10.8 The DSG cumulative deficit of £20.2m as of March 2026 reflects a continued adverse financial position, driven primarily by pressures within the High Needs Block. Based on the forecast position at quarter 2, a further in-year overspend of £20.8m is expected in 2026/27, which would increase the cumulative deficit to £41.0m by the end of the financial year. This highlights the ongoing mismatch between funding and demand. While the Government has indicated that it will take an “appropriate and proportionate” approach to deficits arising in 2026/27, the lack of clarity on the scale and limits of this support creates uncertainty for financial planning and risk management.

- 10.9 Under the High Needs Stability Grant arrangements, local authorities are expected to fund 10% of eligible DSG deficits accrued to 31 March 2026 from their own resources, with Government support available for up to 90% of the deficit position, subject to the relevant conditions being met. The Council received a £2.1m increase in Revenue Support Grant arising from a technical adjustment to the Fair Funding Assessment baseline in 2025/26. Council has used this additional funding to establish a dedicated reserve which is expected to be sufficient to fund the Council's share of the historic DSG deficit not covered by the Government support. Subject to the confirmation of the High Needs Stability Grant allocation, this provision is expected to eliminate the Council's cumulative historic DGS deficit position.
- 10.10 The Council has submitted its SEND Reform Plan in support of its application and is awaiting confirmation of the final grant allocation. In addition, uncertainty remains regarding the treatment of deficits arising in 2026/27 and 2027/28, including the nature and extent of any Government support and the requirements attached to it. As a result, some financial planning uncertainty remains until the Government publishes further details.
- 10.11 The extension of the statutory override to March 2028 provides continued protection by allowing DSG deficits to be held outside the General Fund. The combination of anticipated High Needs Stability Grant funding and the Council's dedicated reserve provision is expected to eliminate the historic DSG deficit position. The principal remaining financial risk relates to deficits that may arise in 2026/27 and 2027/28, for which the nature and extent of future Government support have yet to be full defined.

11.0 Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

Table 16: 2026/27 Quarter 2 forecast for Housing Revenue Account

HRA gross income and expenditure			
	Budget	Forecast	Overspend/ (Underspend)
	£m	£m	£m
HRA			
Income	(84.4)	(84.4)	0.0
Expenditure	84.4	87.9	3.5
Total	0.0	3.5	3.5

Summary

- 11.1 Budgets for the Housing Management function sit within the ring-fenced Housing Revenue Account (HRA), which holds a balanced budget for 2026/27 of £84.4m of income matched by £84.4m of expenditure. This is up from £69.3m budgeted in 2025/26 (£73.3m outturn), reflecting the 4.8% rent increase permitted under the Government's new ten-year social rent settlement from April 2026, together with planned growth in the housing portfolio.

- 11.2 The HRA continues to face significant risks and financial pressures. The net forecast overspend of £3.535m is based on cost pressures which have arisen since the 2026/27 budget was agreed in February:

Warden support (Waking Watch) at Unity Place and Lexington	£0.770m
Council Tax for new properties added to the HRA	£0.500m
Service charges for new properties added to the HRA	£1.500m
Additional borrowing costs for new properties added to the HRA	£1.504m
SUB-TOTAL	£4.274m
Underspend on salaries – Customer Services	(£0.297m)
Underspend on salaries – Property Services	(£0.231m)
Housing Company Team – some costs covered by SLA with I4B and FWH	(£0.124m)
TA and Supported Living – Management Fee saving	(£0.087m)
Forecast Net Overspend	£3.535m

- 11.3 Offsetting underspends across the HRA reduces the net forecast overspending position to £3.535m. The overspends could be further partially offset by a potential £1.3m provision reversal that depends on the successful resolution of a contractual dispute related to a capital major repairs project. As the timing and final value of the settlement remain uncertain, this has not been included in the forecast. The Waking Watch, Council Tax and service charge pressures are 'one-off' and will not recur in future years. The additional borrowing costs will be offset by additional rental income streams but these will not be fully realised until financial year 2027/28 and future years.

Risks and uncertainties

- 11.4 While inflation and interest rates have eased from their recent peaks, they continue to exert pressure on both operational and capital costs. CPI inflation was 2.8% at the start of the financial year and has risen to 3.1% at August 2026. The Bank Rate has stayed at 3.75%, but both remain above the lows of the previous decade and there is renewed upside risk to inflation. The cost of materials and labour for repairs and maintenance, and of financing new build and improvement programmes, therefore, remains elevated.

- 11.5 The HRA is also contending with elevated demand for repairs and maintenance. A large volume of complex repairs, together with increased instances of damp and mould, continues to strain budgeted resources. This pressure is compounded by Awaab's Law, in force since October 2025, which requires damp and mould and all emergency hazards to be remedied within fixed statutory timescales, with its scope widening to further hazards through 2026 and 2027. These compliance obligations, alongside the underlying demand for responsive maintenance, are expected to continue throughout the year and may push costs beyond original estimates.
- 11.6 The repairs and maintenance contracts introduced for the service add further uncertainty. As they continue to embed, actual costs and the efficiencies they will deliver remain difficult to predict, which could affect expenditure forecasts.
- 11.7 Further pressures stem from the capital programme. While the Government has set out additional funding for the sector – including the Warm Homes Plan, the Warm Homes: Social Housing Fund for energy-efficiency works, and building-safety remediation funding – these streams are competitive, time-limited and, for many authorities, insufficient to meet the full cost of environmental priorities and statutory requirements such as carbon reduction and fire safety. Forthcoming standards, including the reformed Decent Homes Standard and proposed minimum energy-efficiency standards for the social rented sector, are expected to add further pressure. This shortfall strains the HRA's capital resources, complicating efforts to invest in sustainable, energy-efficient improvements while balancing other essential needs.
- 11.8 The financial and operational risks of adding 326 properties to the portfolio during the year must also be acknowledged. Portfolio growth can strain management and maintenance resources, raising operational costs and challenging consistent service quality. Careful planning and resource allocation will be critical to ensuring expansion supports long-term financial sustainability.
- 11.9 Managing rent debt is also crucial to the HRA's financial health. The 4.8% rent increase, while underpinning income, adds to affordability pressures for tenants and could raise arrears and bad-debt provisions, directly affecting revenue and the Council's capacity to fund services and maintenance. Persistent rent debt strains financial planning and drives higher write-offs. Robust, ethical debt recovery and proactive tenant engagement therefore remain essential to minimising arrears and safeguarding the service's financial stability.
- 11.10 The Council remains under regulatory scrutiny following its April 2025 self-referral to the Regulator of Social Housing, prompted by building-safety compliance failings – including fire-safety actions incorrectly recorded as complete and inconsistencies in asbestos, water-safety and detector data. The Regulator issued a non-compliant C3 consumer grade on 28 May 2025. The Council has since been delivering a Housing and Asset Management

Service Improvement Plan, with regular engagement with the Regulator, and reports that that good progress is being made, with stock-condition survey coverage now above 70% of homes with the target of 100% planned on being achieved this year. The programme nonetheless remains a significant risk and financial pressure on the HRA: remediation and recovery costs are still being quantified, with comparable authorities reportedly incurring around £2.3m in similar circumstances. There is also a risk to grant funding for housing development while the Council operates under regulatory scrutiny, until full compliance is demonstrated.

- 11.11 While the HRA's reserves stand at the target level of 5% of turnover, this is relatively low compared with the Council's peers. The smaller reserve base limits the Council's capacity to absorb unforeseen pressures or emergencies, particularly given the wider strain on its overall reserves. Strengthening reserves will be important to improve financial resilience and flexibility in managing future challenges. Unless addressed in-year, the forecast overspend at Q2 will have a significant impact on available reserves for future years.
- 11.12 These risks are continuously monitored and reflected in the HRA Business Plan and the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). The Government's ten-year rent settlement also provides greater certainty over future rental income, supporting longer-term investment planning.

12.0 Capital Programme

- 12.1 As at Quarter 2, the capital programme is forecasting expenditure of £258.1m against a revised budget of £267.7m for an overall variance of £9.7m. The £9.7m variance comprises net slippage of £9.8m and net overspend of £0.1m. Ongoing reviews are undertaken across capital boards to identify any issues that could affect delivery. Attention is given to the timing of projects, changes in market conditions and reliance on external or future funding. Where risks are identified, these are being addressed through continued monitoring and, where necessary, changes to the programme. This approach is intended to maintain progress while ensuring that activity remains consistent with the Council's wider objectives and expected outcomes.

Table 17: 2026/27 Quarter 2 forecast for the Capital Programme

Portfolio/Programme	Original Budget 2026/27	Revised Budget 2026/27	Current Forecast	FY Variance	
				(Underspend)/ Overspend	(Slippage)/ Brought Forward
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Corporate Assets	50.1	51.6	49.5	0.1	(2.2)
Affordable Housing Supply	41.7	35.7	33.1	(0.6)	(2.0)
Invest for Brent (I4B)	0	9.6	7.2	-	(2.3)
Housing HRA & Management	44.9	32.5	34.4	2.1	(0.1)
Regeneration	68.2	67.7	67.6	0.8	(0.9)
Children & Young People	34.3	17.2	17.2	-	-
South Kilburn	45.0	53.6	49.1	(2.2)	(2.3)
Grand Total	293.8	267.7	258.1	0.1	(9.8)

Budget Adjustments

- 12.2 Full Council, at its February 2026 meeting approved a 2026/27 capital budget of £293.8m. At its July 2026 meeting, Cabinet noted additional budget adjustments, predominantly brought forward slippage, to bring the revised budget to £346m. The total net reduction since July 2026 of £78.3m to £267.7m as at Quarter 2 is due to adjustments summarised in the table below.

Table 18: Budget Adjustments Breakdown 2026/27 to 2031/32

	2026/ 2027	2027/ 2028	2028/ 2029	2029/ 2030	2030/ 2031	2031/ 2032	Total
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
2025/26 Brought Forward	(7.5)						(7.5)
Correction of I4B 2025/26 Outturn	(7.5)						(7.5)
Additions (new grants)	2.4	1.3	2.9	2.9	2.9	0.0	12.5
Pride in Place Programme - Harlesden	0.1	0.7	1.5	1.5	1.5		5.2
Pride in Place Programme - St Raphael's	0.1	0.7	1.5	1.5	1.5		5.2
DfT Electric Vehicle Charging Panels trial	0.2						0.2
TfL-funded Kilburn High Road Transformation	2.0						2.0
Taken from Contingency	5.1	(1.3)	(2.9)	(2.9)	(2.9)	0.0	(5.0)
Additions and 2025/26 Brought Forward adjustments	5.1	(1.3)	(2.9)	(2.9)	(2.9)		(5.0)
Reprofiling	(78.3)	61.4	3.7	4.9	5.0	3.3	0.0
Gladstone Park Health and Wellbeing Hub	(2.9)	0.7	0.7	1.5			0.0
Grand Union Canal Footbridge	(3.2)	3.2					0.0
Staples Growth Corner Growth Area	(1.1)	(0.7)	1.0	0.8			0.0
Neasden Civic Partnership	(1.1)	(1.7)	0.3	2.6			0.0
Hillside Corridor Feasibility Studies	(1.0)	0.2	0.8				0.0
South Kilburn Heat Network	(6.9)	3.6				3.3	0.0
Welsh Harp Post-16 Centre	(1.0)	1.0					0.0

Footways reconstruction	(1.0)	1.0					0.0
Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure	(1.3)	1.3					0.0
SCIL-funded CCTV developments	(1.6)	1.6					0.0
Parks and pitch improvements	(0.8)	0.8					0.0
Granville Homes remediation	(4.2)	4.2					0.0
Windmill Court improvements	(2.7)	2.7					0.0
Contingency budgets	(49.5)	43.5	1.0		5.0		0.0
Total	(78.3)	61.4	3.7	4.9	5.0	3.3	0.0

12.3 The budget adjustments included in table 18 include the following new grants:

- The revised budget includes £10.4m of Pride in Place Programme (PIPP) capital grant funding over the next five years including £0.2m for 2026/27. Two locations in Brent, Harlesden and St Raphael', have been selected by the Government to be in the programme. In line with the Government's guidance, Independent Chairs for Neighbourhood Boards in Brent's two selected locations have been appointed. The Chairs will now finalise the membership of their Neighbourhood Boards which will oversee extensive local engagement and develop a plan to utilise the PIPP funding over the next 10 years. Plans are due to be submitted to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government for approval in February 2027.
- Brent, Camden and Westminster have been awarded an additional £6.5m by Transport for London (TfL) for the transformation of Kilburn High Road of which £2.0m is due to Brent.
- Brent has received £0.2m for a trial of electric vehicle charging panel. As agreed by Cabinet in July, this has been added to the capital budget.

12.4 Other changes included in Table 18 include:

- Reprofile of £78.3m of 2026/27 budget to future years to reflect updated delivery timetables. This includes budget for new housing delivery as Brent is still waiting for the outcome of its bid to the London Social and Affordable Homes Programme, meaning significant spend is unlikely to occur this year. In addition, £6.9m of the South Kilburn District Heat Network has been reprofiled due to delays in signing the contract.
- A reduction in brought forward budget of £7.5m for I4B Holdings Ltd loan and equity because of an audit adjustment related to the treatment of the purchase of equity under the previous facility.

Corporate Assets

12.5 The Corporate Assets Board consists of the Corporate Landlord portfolio and Public Realm. Corporate Landlord is responsible for overseeing the strategic

management and investment in leisure centres, digital strategy, libraries and other council properties. Public Realm relates to improvements to community infrastructure in Brent including roads, parks and CCTV.

- 12.6 Corporate Assets capital programme is reporting a net projected variance of £2.1m due mainly to slippage of £1.6m on the new Vale Farm Leisure centre with schedule of works yet to be finalised.
- 12.7 Compared to the total actual spend in 2025/26 (£34.8m), the revised 2026/27 budget of £49.5m reflects the Council's commitment to prioritising public realm improvements and digital transformation. Significant increases in the level of capital expenditure from one year to next puts pressure on capacity and increases the risk of slippage. The large number of small projects within the public realm element of the Board area can be difficult to forecast, especially because the area is especially prone to factors beyond the Council's control such as poor weather or specific grant conditions. Realising cashable savings from the Council's Digital Strategy remains a key challenge in the programme, which is monitored through quarterly updates to the Capital Programme Board.

Housing

- 12.8 The Affordable Housing Supply Board is forecasting a variance of £2.6m made up of a net underspend of £0.6m and slippage of £2.0m. Total underspend of £1.8m is projected mostly against temporary accommodation schemes; notably £1m on Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) Round 3, with 6 out of 8 properties in conveyancing completed and voids refurbishment progressing well within budget. The underspends are offset by overspend of £1.2m, including £0.5m each against Clock Cottages and Northwick Park Infrastructure Fund. The former's budget is exhausted due to multiple delays in handover and will be financed by available GLA safeguarding grant in reserves. Final payments are due on Northwick Park Infrastructure Fund with overspend to be recharged to the Council's development partners.
- 12.9 £2.0m slippage relates to the Edgware Road project, paused given viability concerns, with external consultants engaged to assess different options for delivering affordable housing on the site. £2.3m slippage on I4B is in line with the anticipated I4B loan drawdown schedule.
- 12.10 The Alpertown Bus Garage completed in May 2026, with 155 new homes near full tenancy. However, delays in handover are one of the most significant risks in the Affordable Housing Supply capital programme as completion on Church End and Pharamond has been delayed from the original timetable. The causes include developer delays and the need to seek agreements with multiple stakeholders, such as UK Power Networks. These delays have an impact on the viability of these schemes, which are already under severe pressure due to high build and borrowing costs.

- 12.11 The Housing HRA and Management Board is forecasting £1.9m overspend, of which £0.8m relates to Kilburn Square. Additional overspends are split equally over voids and repairs relating to self-insured properties as well as external fabric works. These projections reflect the financial pressures in the HRA and the need to invest in essential improvements in existing housing. Pressures are exacerbated by historic backlog of works, and officers continue to make challenging prioritisation decisions to match the scale of improvements required. The overspend is expected to be funded by the major repairs reserve without the need for further borrowing. This reserve is available due to the reprofiling of the Granville Homes and Windmill Court remediations.

Regeneration

- 12.12 The Regeneration programme is delivering new homes, infrastructure and community assets to support inclusive growth and sustainability. The current forecast is a net variance of under £0.1m; £0.9m slippage offset by £0.8m overspend.
- 12.13 The projected £0.9m slippage is primarily due to project delays on the Alpertown and South Kilburn Medical Centres with NHS negotiations still ongoing.
- 12.14 Wembley Housing Zones is projecting an overspend of £0.9m mainly due to contract variations agreed to date, the impact of a water leak and the acquisition of Ujima car park freehold. The project is expected to be completed by December 2026 with the delivery of 291 homes (50% affordable).

Children and Young People

- 12.15 The Children and Young People (CYP) Board oversees the planning, delivery, and monitoring of capital investment in Brent's school estate, including projects that support the expansion of school places, improvements to existing facilities, and the development of specialist provision such as SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) infrastructure. The programme ensures that educational environments across the borough are safe, inclusive, and fit for future learning needs. The capital delivery and CYP team liaise closely with schools and the Department for Education to deliver the programme. The CYP Board is forecasting a nil variance.

South Kilburn

- 12.16 The South Kilburn regeneration programme continues to deliver significant investment in new homes, infrastructure and community facilities.
- 12.17 The £2.2m projected underspend is driven largely by security costs on Single Delivery Partner (SDP) sites that are classified as revenue. Forecasting outturn against the SDP sites is very challenging because the timing of rehousing and leaseholder buybacks will depend on the order the partner

intends to redevelop the sites. Once the partner has been appointed, officers will liaise with them to reprofile and reset revenue budgets. In addition to the underspends, slippage of £2.2m is anticipated on South Kilburn Schools due to the longer-than anticipated time to enter the pre-contract service agreement with the contractor.

- 12.18 Longer delivery timetables on the SDP as the partner seeks to maximise land receipts (such as through planning variations to increase the quantity of homes) could impact the viability of the South Kilburn District Heat Network. The Council will keep the financial position under close review as the regeneration programme progresses. If income from the heat network is slower to materialise, this can be managed alongside other receipts generated through the development. A fortnightly co-ordination group will oversee this position, with the aim of identifying and addressing any emerging issues early and maintaining a balance between maximising development value and protecting the viability of the heat network.

Capital Financing

- 12.19 Capital financing, which consists of interest costs on borrowing for the capital programme and minimum revenue provision (a prudent charge for the repayment of borrowing), is currently forecasting a nil variance from the £41.9m budget. This forecast is however uncertain because of factors beyond the Council's control such as interest rates, whether lenders exercise options to call LOBO loans and the valuation of completed housing appropriating from the General Fund to the Housing Revenue Account.
- 12.20 The high, volatile interest rate environment caused by global economic factors has placed significant pressure on the budget. For example, the most recent inter-authority one year loan has interest rates of 4.90% compared to 4.35% on the same loan a year ago. This pressure is however offset by slippage and reprofiling on the capital budget, as well as the proactive approach to borrowing the Council has taken. This includes borrowing small amounts regularly to take advantage of short-term reductions in interest rates and ensuring we do not hold more cash than necessary. In addition, the Council has benefitted from cheaper borrowing including the £12m loan from the Green Finance Facility for the South Kilburn Heat Network, which offers a saving of over £60k per year compared to borrowing from the PWLB.

Treasury Management Prudential Indicators

- 12.21 In line with changes to the Prudential Code in 2021, the performance of the Council's treasury and capital activities against the approved prudential indicator for the year are now reported quarterly within these financial reports to members. Details of the performance against the indicators in the second quarter of the financial year are in Appendix A.

13.0 Stakeholder and ward member consultation and engagement

13.1 There are no direct stakeholder and ward member consultation arising from this report.

14.0 Financial Considerations

14.1 This report sets out the financial forecast for the General Fund revenue budget, the Housing Revenue Account, the Dedicated Schools Grant and the Capital Programme, as at Quarter 2 2026/27. Financial implications of agreeing to this report are included within the forecasts provided.

15.0 Legal Considerations

15.1 The law requires that the council must plan to balance its spending plans against resources to avoid a deficit occurring in any year. Members need to be reasonably satisfied that expenditure is being contained within budget and that the savings for the financial year will be achieved, to ensure that income and expenditure balance (Section 28 Local Government Act 2003: the council's Financial Regulation 2.3 Revenue Budget Monitoring, Forecasting and Overspends).

16.0 Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Considerations

16.1 There are no direct EDI considerations arising out of this report.

17.0 Climate Change and Environmental Considerations

17.1 There are no direct climate change or environmental considerations arising out of this report.

18.0 Human Resources/Property Considerations (if appropriate)

18.1 There are no direct HR or property considerations arising out this report.

19.0 Communication Considerations

19.1 There are no direct communication considerations arising out of this report.

Report sign off:

Minesh Patel

Corporate Director, Finance and Resources

Legal considerations provided by:
Marsha Henry

Finance considerations provided by:
Rav Jassar

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Appendix 1a: 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 based on revised capital budgets and forecasts in line with the Council's Quarter 2 monitoring report

Capital Expenditure & Financing at Q2 2026/27 (£m)	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	Total 2025/26-2030-31
	Actual	Estimated	Estimated	Estimated	Estimated	Estimated	
Corporate Assets	34.8	51.6	39.3	25.2	17.2	3.5	171.6
South Kilburn	12.3	53.6	35.3	19.4	12.0	6.9	139.4
Regeneration	73.5	67.7	22.2	31.9	28.8	5.0	229.1
Schools	20.5	17.2	48.3	19.5	5.0	0.0	110.5
Affordable Housing Supply (including I4B)	50.5	45.3	91.2	78.7	43.3	0.0	309.1
Housing HRA & Management	18.3	32.5	52.5	24.0	23.0	5.0	155.3
Total Capital Expenditure	209.9	267.7	288.9	198.7	129.3	20.4	1,114.9
Financed By:							
Grants	65.6	50.9	45.7	23.0	11.9	8.5	205.5
Section 106 & CIL	29.2	57.4	35.9	32.8	29.1	2.3	186.7
Capital Receipts	1.2	16.3	37.4	6.0	0.4	0.0	61.3

Earmarked Reserves	1.1	3.6	0.4	0.3	0.1	0.7	6.2
Major Repairs Reserve	11.2	13.9	18.9	13.0	13.0	0.0	70.0
Revenue Contributions	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.8	0.6	1.5	4.5
Borrowing	101.1	125.2	150.0	122.8	74.2	7.4	580.8
Total Capital Financing	209.9	267.7	288.9	198.7	129.3	20.4	1,114.9

(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 2026/27 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 Q2 2026/27 (£m)	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31
	Actual	Estimated	Estimated	Estimated	Estimated	Estimated
Opening CFR	1,353.8	1,412.3	1,519.4	1,650.8	1,753.0	1,806.4
Capital Expenditure	209.9	267.7	288.9	198.7	129.3	20.4
External Resources	(94.8)	(108.2)	(81.6)	(55.8)	(41.0)	(10.8)
Internal Resources	(14.0)	(34.3)	(57.2)	(20.1)	(14.1)	(2.2)
MRP excluding PFI and leases	(16.5)	(18.0)	(18.7)	(20.6)	(20.8)	(22.5)
Capital Loans Repaid	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Accounting Adjustments PFI/Leases	(26.1)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Closing CFR	1,412.3	1,519.4	1,650.8	1,753.0	1,806.4	1,791.3

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 capital purposes, 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 2026/27.

Gross Debt & the Capital Financing Requirement at Q2 2026/27 (£m)	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31
	Actual	Estimated	Estimated	Estimated	Estimated	Estimated
External Loans	1,074.1	1,163.2	1,260.7	1,359.0	1,418.4	1,424.3
PFI & Leases	61.7	60.0	60.0	60.0	60.0	60.0
Total External Debt Liabilities	1,135.8	1,223.2	1,320.7	1,419.0	1,478.4	1,484.3
Internal Borrowing	276.5	296.3	330.1	334.0	328.1	307.0
Capital Financing Requirement	1,412.3	1,519.4	1,650.8	1,753.0	1,806.4	1,791.3

(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 Q2 2026/27 (£m)	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31
	Actual	Estimated	Estimated	Estimated	Estimated	Estimated
CFR	1,412.3	1,519.4	1,650.8	1,753.0	1,806.4	1,791.3
LOBO Loans	59.5	39.5	30.0	15.0	10.0	0.0
Non-LOBO Loans	1,014.6	1,123.7	1,230.7	1,344.0	1,408.4	1,424.3
Balance Sheet Resources	(453.7)	(434.5)	(434.5)	(434.5)	(434.5)	(434.5)
Net Loan Requirement	1,054.1	1,143.2	1,240.7	1,339.0	1,398.4	1,404.3
Plus Liquidity Allowance	20.0	20.0	20.0	20.0	20.0	20.0
Liability Benchmark	1,074.1	1,163.2	1,260.7	1,359.0	1,418.4	1,424.3

(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 Q2 2026/27 (£m)	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31
Authorised Limit	1,800.0	2,000.0	2,000.0	2,000.0	2,000.0	2,000.0
Operational Boundary	1,600.0	1,800.0	1,800.0	1,800.0	1,800.0	1,800.0

The Corporate Director for Finance and Resources confirms that there were no breaches to the Authorised Limit and the Operational Boundary during Quarter One of 2026/27.

(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 Q2 2026/27 (£m)	2026/27	2026/27
	Approved Limit	Actual
Upper limit on one-year revenue impact of a 1% rise in interest rates	5.0	1.1
Compliance with limits:		Yes
Upper limit on one-year revenue impact of a 1% fall in interest rates	(5.0)	(1.1)
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 replaced 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 Q2 2026/27 (£m)	Upper Limit	Lower limit	2026/27	2026/27	2026/27	2026/27	2026/27
			Actual Borrowing 31.07.2026	Actual Borrowing 31.07.2026	Forecast Borrowing at 31.03.2027	Forecast Borrowing at 31.03.2027	Compliance with limits
	%	%	£m	%	£m	%	
Under 12 months	40.0	0.0	111.5	10.4%	198.1	17.0%	Yes
12 months & within 24 months	40.0	0.0	15.0	1.4%	26.2	2.3%	Yes
24 months and within 5 years	40.0	0.0	59.4	5.5%	54.1	4.7%	Yes
5 years and within 10 years	60.0	0.0	250.8	23.4%	248.9	21.4%	Yes
10 years and within 20 years	75.0	0.0	260.3	24.3%	260.3	22.4%	Yes
20 years and within 30 years	75.0	0.0	196.7	18.3%	196.7	16.9%	Yes
30 years and within 40 years	75.0	0.0	73.9	6.9%	73.9	6.3%	Yes
Over 40 years	75.0	0.0	105.0	9.8%	105.0	9.0%	Yes
Total			1,072.6	100.0%	1,163.2	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 Q2 2067/27 (£m)	Actual	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast
	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31
Financing Costs (Interest & MRP) (£m)	38.9	41.9	45.9	51.9	51.9	51.9
Net Revenue Stream (£m)	431.4	501.8	535.2	568.6	589.6	611.6
Proportion of net revenue stream (%)	9.0%	8.3%	8.6%	9.1%	8.8%	8.5%

Financing costs can be further broken down as follows.

Capital Financing Costs at Q2 2026/27 (£m)	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31
	Actual	Estimated	Estimated	Estimated	Estimated	Estimated
Total Interest Payable & Expenses	41.1	47.2	56.5	63.2	68.2	70.7
Total Interest Receivable	(24.1)	(25.8)	(26.2)	(26.6)	(26.9)	(27.1)
Net Interest	17.0	21.4	30.3	36.6	41.3	43.6
MRP (Excluding PFI/leases)	16.5	18.0	18.7	20.6	20.8	22.5
Total Interest & MRP	33.5	39.4	49.0	57.2	62.1	66.1
Net impact of internal useable reserves and growth	5.4	2.5	(3.1)	(5.3)	(10.2)	(14.2)
Total Capital Financing Costs	38.9	41.9	45.9	51.9	51.9	51.9

(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 Q2 2026/27 (£m)	2025/26	2026/27	2026/27
	Actual	Approved	Actual
Upper Limit for Total Principal Sums Invested Over 364 Days	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 Q2 2026/27	2025/26	2026/27	2026/27
	Actual	Approved	Actual
Portfolio average credit rating	A+	A	A+

(j) Liquidity

The Council has adopted a voluntary measure of its exposure to liquidity risk by monitoring the amount of cash available to meet unexpected payments within a rolling three-month period, without additional borrowing.

Liquidity Risk Indicator at Q2 2026/27 (£m)	2025/26	2026/27	2026/27
	Actual	Minimum Balance	Actual
Total cash available within 3 months	43.8	20.0	52.2

(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 2026/27, whilst treasury investments are managed under the Treasury Management Strategy 2026/27.

Total Investment Exposure Indicator as at Q2 2026/27 (£m)	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31
	Actual	Estimated	Estimated	Estimated	Estimated	Estimated
Treasury management cash investments	43.8	40.0	20.0	20.0	20.0	20.0
Service investments	31.0	30.4	29.7	28.9	28.1	27.3
Commercial investments: Property	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total Investments	74.8	70.4	49.7	48.9	48.1	47.3
Commitments to lend	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total Exposure	74.8	70.4	49.7	48.9	48.1	47.3

Service investments are further broken down in the tables below.

Loans & Investments for service purposes: Category of borrower at Q2 2026/27 (£m)	2025/26	2026/27	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31
	Actual	Approved Limit	Estimated	Estimated	Estimated	Estimated	Estimated
i4b Holdings Ltd Subsidiary Loans*	179.2	500.0	186.8	194.5	202.6	211.2	211.2
i4b Holdings Ltd Subsidiary Equity**	43.9		45.9	47.9	49.9	51.9	51.9
First Wave Housing Ltd Subsidiary Loans	33.4		32.9	32.5	32.0	31.5	31.1
Total	256.5	500.0	265.6	274.9	284.6	294.6	294.1

*new £32m capital loan and £8m equity loan included in 2026/27 onwards split accordingly subject to changes

Service Investments Other Loans £m at Q2 2026/27 (£m)	2025/26	2026/27	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31
	Actual	Approved Limit	Estimated	Estimated	Estimated	Estimated	Estimated
Local Businesses	0.0	10.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Schools, Academies and Colleges	17.1	55.0	16.9	16.7	16.4	16.2	15.9
West London Waste Authority	13.9	20.0	13.5	13.0	12.5	11.9	11.4
Local Charities	0.0	10.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Housing Associations	0.0	50.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Local Residents	0.0	5.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total	31.0	150.0	30.4	29.7	28.9	28.1	27.3

(I) 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 Q2 2026/27 (£m)	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31
	Actual	Estimated	Estimated	Estimated	Estimated	Estimated
I4B Loans	179.2	186.8	194.5	202.6	211.2	211.2
I4B Equity	43.9	45.9	47.9	49.9	51.9	51.9
First Wave Housing (FWH)	33.4	32.9	32.5	32.0	31.5	31.1
Schools, Academies and Colleges	17.1	16.9	16.7	16.4	16.2	15.9
West London Waste Authority	13.9	13.5	13.0	12.5	11.9	11.4
Total Service investments	287.5	296.0	304.6	313.5	322.7	321.4
Total Funded by Borrowing	287.5	296.0	304.6	313.5	322.7	321.4

(m) Investment Rate of Return

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

Investments net rate of return at Q2 2026/27	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31
	Actual	Estimated	Estimated	Estimated	Estimated	Estimated
Treasury management investments	3.82%	3.75%	3.75%	3.75%	3.75%	3.75%
Service investments	2.60%	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%

(n) Other Investment Indicators

Other investment indicators at Q2 2026/27 (£m)	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31
	Actual	Estimated	Estimated	Estimated	Estimated	Estimated
External Debt (Loans)	1,074.1	1,163.2	1,260.7	1,359.0	1,418.4	1,424.3
Net Service Expenditure	431.4	501.8	535.2	568.6	589.6	611.6
Debt to net service expenditure ratio	2.5	2.3	2.4	2.4	2.4	2.3

SECTION A: Cross-council thematic savings							
Finance & Resources							
	Commissioning & Procurement	Digital	Efficiency	Workforce	Income Maximisation	Resident Experience	Total
Savings Target	£498,000	£480,000	£440,000	£72,000	£10,000	£0	£1,500,000
Savings Identified	£458,000	£505,718	£526,000	£91,000	£10,000	£0	£1,590,718
Variance to Target	-£40,000	£25,718	£86,000	£19,000	£0	£0	£90,718
Value completed	£428,000	£154,718	£267,000	£0	£0	£0	£849,718
Value on track	£30,000	£229,000	£119,000	£91,000	£10,000	£0	£479,000
Subtotal completed/on track	£458,000	£383,718	£386,000	£91,000	£10,000	£0	£1,328,718
Value at risk but recoverable	£0	£122,000	£140,000	£0	£0	£0	£262,000
Value at risk	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Value not identified	£40,000	-£25,718	-£86,000	-£19,000	£0	£0	-£90,718
Subtotal at risk/not identified	£40,000	£96,282	£54,000	-£19,000	£0	£0	£171,282
RAG	Amber	Amber	Amber	Green	Green	N/A	Green
Comments on RAG	Saving identified under other themes for 2026/27. The overall Directorate target is expected to be achieved.	There are delays to the development of some of the Digital proposals, which may delay the implementation beyond 2026/27. However, departments expect to be able to mitigate these savings through alternative savings.	Saving identified under other themes for 2026/27. The overall Directorate target is expected to be achieved.	On track and deliverable	On track and deliverable	N/A	
Overall Comments	The directorate is required to deliver £1.5m of savings in 2026/27. At Quarter 2, £1.3m has either been delivered or is on track for delivery. The remaining £0.2m is currently assessed as at risk, however, mitigating actions have been identified to support delivery of the overall savings target.						

Service Reform & Strategy							
	Commissioning & Procurement	Digital	Efficiency	Workforce	Income Maximisation	Resident Experience	Total
Savings Target	£653,000	£250,000	£960,000	£137,000	£70,000	£130,000	£2,200,000
Savings Identified	£446,824	£250,000	£370,479	£557,992	£700,000	£0	£2,325,295
Variance to Target	-£206,176	£0	-£589,521	£420,992	£630,000	-£130,000	£125,295
Value completed	£94,324	£0	£0	£470,992	£0	£0	£565,316
Value on track	£222,500	£0	£370,479	£25,000	£600,000	£0	£1,217,979
Subtotal completed/on track	£316,824	£0	£370,479	£495,992	£600,000	£0	£1,783,295
Value at risk but recoverable	£130,000	£250,000	£0	£62,000	£0	£0	£442,000
Value at risk	£0	£0	£0	£0	£100,000	£0	£100,000
Value not identified	£206,176	£0	£589,521	-£420,992	-£630,000	£130,000	-£125,295
Subtotal at risk/not identified	£336,176	£250,000	£589,521	-£358,992	-£530,000	£130,000	£416,705
RAG	Red	Amber	Red	Green	Green	Red	Amber
Comments on RAG	Saving identified under other themes for 2026/27, however the delays in implementation mean that it is not expected to be fully delivered in 2026/27.	Delay in implementation means that it is not expected to be fully delivered in 2026/27.	Saving identified under Income Maximisation and Workforce for 2026/27.	On-track and achievable	On-track and achievable	Saving expected to be delivered through Commissioning & Procurement for 2026/27.	
Overall Comments	The directorate is required to deliver savings of £2.2m in 2026/27 and has identified £2.3m of savings. At Quarter 2, £1.8m has either been delivered or is on track for delivery. Of the remaining savings, £0.4m is assessed as at risk but recoverable, while £0.1m is at risk. The £0.1m relates to the self-funder administration fee within Strategic Commissioning, where delivery has been delayed due to the consultation timetable. Alternative mitigating actions are currently being validated to address the potential shortfall.						

Neighbourhoods & Regeneration							
	Commissioning & Procurement	Digital	Efficiency	Workforce	Income Maximisation	Resident Experience	Total
Savings Target	£632,000	£170,000	£780,000	£33,000	£280,000	£65,000	£1,960,000
Savings Identified	£0	£0	£387,000	£0	£1,705,000	£0	£2,092,000
Variance to Target	-£632,000	-£170,000	-£393,000	-£33,000	£1,425,000	-£65,000	£132,000
Value completed	£0	£0	£282,000	£0	£0	£0	£282,000
Value on track	£0	£0	£105,000	£0	£1,505,000	£0	£1,610,000
Subtotal completed/on track	£0	£0	£387,000	£0	£1,505,000	£0	£1,892,000
Value at risk but recoverable	£0	£0	£0	£0	£200,000	£0	£200,000
Value at risk	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Value not identified	£632,000	£170,000	£393,000	£33,000	-£1,425,000	£65,000	-£132,000
Subtotal at risk/not identified	£632,000	£170,000	£393,000	£33,000	-£1,225,000	£65,000	£68,000
RAG	Red	Red	Red	Red	Green	Red	Green
Comments on RAG	Saving identified under other themes for 2026/27.	Saving identified under other themes for 2026/27.	Saving largely identified under other themes for 2026/27.	Saving identified under other themes for 2026/27.	On track and deliverable	Saving identified under other themes for 2026/27.	
Overall Comments	Savings delivery remains broadly on track against the £2.0m target. Where savings have not been identified against the original cross-council thematic proposals, departments have identified mitigating actions, primarily through additional income generation, to support delivery of the overall target.						

Children, Young People & Community Development							
	Commissioning & Procurement	Digital	Efficiency	Workforce	Income Maximisation	Resident Experience	Total
Savings Target	£591,000	£290,000	£420,000	£119,000	£50,000	£130,000	£1,600,000
Savings Identified	£591,000	£0	£420,000	£119,000	£50,000	£0	£1,180,000
Variance to Target	£0	-£290,000	£0	£0	£0	-£130,000	-£420,000
Value completed	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Value on track	£591,000	£0	£310,000	£119,000	£50,000	£0	£1,070,000
Subtotal completed/on track	£591,000	£0	£310,000	£119,000	£50,000	£0	£1,070,000
Value at risk but recoverable	£0	£0	£110,000	£0	£0	£0	£110,000
Value at risk	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Value not identified	£0	£290,000	£0	£0	£0	£130,000	£420,000
Subtotal at risk/not identified	£0	£290,000	£110,000	£0	£0	£130,000	£530,000
RAG	Green	Red	Amber	Green	Green	Red	Red
Comments on RAG	On-track and achievable	The digital savings proposal is unlikely to be fully delivered at this stage. No implementation plans or specific areas for savings have been identified to date, creating a risk to achievement of the target within the required timeframe.	The £110k cost avoidance against care leavers' placements was based on the assumption that the savings would be achieved and take effect from April 2026. However, these savings are still progressing through the governance approval process.	On-track and achievable	On-track and achievable	The resident experience savings proposal is unlikely to be fully delivered at this stage. No implementation plans or specific areas for savings have been identified to date, creating a risk to achievement of the target within the required timeframe.	
Overall Comments	Savings delivery remains challenging, with around £1.2m of the £1.6m target expected to be achieved, while the remaining savings are subject to pressures arising from the demand-led and volatile nature of Children's Services budgets.						

Residents & Housing Services							
	Commissioning & Procurement	Digital	Efficiency	Workforce	Income Maximisation	Resident Experience	Total
Savings Target	£701,000	£240,000	£600,000	£39,000	£90,000	£330,000	£2,000,000
Savings Identified	£701,000	£0	£861,000	£39,000	£210,000	£330,000	£2,141,000
Variance to Target	£0	-£240,000	£261,000	£0	£120,000	£0	£141,000
Value completed	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Value on track	£701,000	£0	£861,000	£39,000	£210,000	£330,000	£2,141,000
Subtotal completed/on track	£701,000	£0	£861,000	£39,000	£210,000	£330,000	£2,141,000
Value at risk but recoverable	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Value at risk	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Value not identified	£0	£240,000	-£261,000	£0	-£120,000	£0	-£141,000
Subtotal at risk/not identified	£0	£240,000	-£261,000	£0	-£120,000	£0	-£141,000
RAG	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
Comments on RAG	On track and deliverable.	Unlikely to be fully delivered at this stage. No implementation plans or specific areas for savings have been identified to date, creating a significant risk to achievement of the target within the required timeframe.	On track and deliverable.	On track and deliverable.	On track and deliverable.	On track and deliverable.	
Overall Comments	Savings delivery remains on track against the £2.0m target, supported by strong performance in income generation, workforce efficiencies and temporary accommodation procurement savings.						

SECTION B: Service Specific savings							
	NR01 - Lane Rental Scheme	NR02 - Asset Utilisation	PHRS01 - Reduce Subsidy Loss	PHRS02 - Homelessness Prevention	PHRS03 - Housing Benefit Claims Reduction	Total	
Savings Target	£350,000	£190,000	£130,000	£270,000	£200,000	£1,140,000	
Savings Identified	£350,000	£190,000	£130,000	£200,000	£270,000	£1,140,000	
Variance to Target	£0	£0	£0	£70,000	£70,000	£0	
Value completed	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	
Value on track	£0	£0	£130,000	£200,000	£270,000	£600,000	
Subtotal completed/on track	£0	£0	£130,000	£200,000	£270,000	£600,000	
Value at risk but recoverable	£350,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£350,000	
Value at risk	£0	£190,000	£0	£0	£0	£190,000	
Value not identified	£0	£0	£0	£70,000	£70,000	£0	
Subtotal at risk/not identified	£350,000	£190,000	£0	£70,000	£70,000	£540,000	
RAG	Amber	Red	Green	Red	Green	Amber	
Comments on RAG	Delays to this scheme have meant that it is unlikely to be implemented in 2026/27. The Department expects to be able to mitigate for this saving for 2026/27.	Delays to the implementation of this saving mean that it is not expected to be fully delivered in 2026/27. More options to progress this expediently will be put into action	On track and deliverable.	At risk of not being fully delivered. Further actions are in train to improve the position and will be closely monitored for the remainder of the year.	On track to exceed savings target by £70k.		
Overall Comments	Delivery of the service-specific savings remains mixed, with the Lane Rental saving expected to be mitigated despite implementation delays, Asset Utilisation remaining at risk due to delays in establishing the Padel Courts delivery model, and the Reduce Subsidy Loss, Homelessness Prevention and Housing Benefit Claims Reduction savings all progressing, supported by strengthened oversight, enhanced early intervention and the ongoing transition from Housing Benefit to Universal Credit.						

 Brent	Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee 20 October 2026
	Report from the Corporate Director for Residents and Housing Services, and Corporate Director for Finance and Resources
	Lead Members – Cabinet Member for Communities, Culture and Cost-of-Living Support (Councillor Tina Amadi) Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources (Councillor Gwen Grahl)
Council Tax Collection and Debt Recovery Performance	

Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	N/A
Open or Part/Fully Exempt:	Open
List of Appendices:	One Appendix A: Glossary of technical terms
Background Papers:	Council Tax: Discretionary Reduction Policy
Contact Officer(s): (Name, Title, Contact Details)	Asha Vyas (Head of Council Tax and Financial Assessment) Tel: 020 8937 2705 Email: Asha.Vyas@brent.gov.uk Ryan Stephenson (Service Manager Revenue and Debt) Tel: 020 8937 1513 Email: Ryan.Stephenson@brent.gov.uk

1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1. This report provides an overview of Council Tax collection and debt recovery performance, including progress against targets, the effectiveness of current arrangements, and the Council's approach to maximising collection, recovering debt and supporting residents.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1. The Committee has been asked to:
 - 2.1.1. Note the improving 2026/27 collection position, alongside the £1.5m September shortfall, Brent's low comparative ranking and high level of historic arrears.
 - 2.1.2. Note the Council's balanced approach of early support and affordable repayment for residents in hardship, alongside proportionate recovery from those able to pay but unwilling to engage.
 - 2.1.3. Note the improvement measures introduced and their early impact, including proactive collection, flexible payment arrangements, digital engagement, improved customer data and targeted legal recovery.
 - 2.1.4. Comment on the proposed next steps including future updates on progress against collection targets and comparator authorities, the impact on historic debt and resident outcomes, and the effectiveness and value for money of individual interventions, with cash collected reported separately from other changes in debt.

3.0 Contribution to Borough Plan Priorities & Strategic Context

- 3.1. The effective administration, collection and recovery of Council Tax makes an important contribution to the delivery of the Council's wider strategic objectives. Council Tax is an important source of funding for local services and effective collection therefore supports the Council's ability to maintain financial sustainability and deliver services for residents.

4.0 Background and context

- 4.1. Council Tax provides 38% of the Council's core funding and is therefore vital to financial sustainability and the delivery of essential services. Effective collection also supports fairness by ensuring that those who can pay do so.
- 4.2. Brent has historically collected less Council Tax than many London boroughs. Performance is affected by high levels of deprivation, a large and mobile

population, demand for Council Tax Support and continuing pressure on household finances. Language barriers and differing levels of familiarity with the UK Council Tax system can also affect residents' understanding of their liability, the support available and the action they need to take. This makes a fair and effective approach to collection particularly important.

- 4.3. Over the past year, the Council has implemented a targeted Council Tax and debt recovery improvement programme to address historically poor performance and increase collection rates. The programme has introduced earlier contact with residents, improved customer and contact data, stronger recovery processes, flexible repayment options and better access to support for those in financial hardship.
- 4.4. This report sets out current performance and benchmarking, the action taken and early impact, and the next steps to improve collection and reduce arrears. It also explains how the Council balances support for residents who cannot pay with proportionate recovery from those who can pay but do not engage.

5.0 Detail

- 5.1. By 30 September 2026, Brent had collected £132.8m, or 52.2% of the £254.5m Council Tax due for the year. This was £8.1m more than at the same point last year and £21.9m more than two years ago.
- 5.2. Performance has improved even though the amount to be collected has risen by £37m in two years. However, the September collection rate was 0.6 percentage points below the 52.8% target – a cash shortfall of about £1.5m. Brent also remains below most comparable London councils and has a high level of older unpaid debt.
- 5.3. The full-year target is 93.5%, compared with 91.6% achieved in 2025/26. Reaching it would bring in about £4.8m more than repeating last year's performance, so further improvement continues to be needed throughout the rest of the year.
- 5.4. Brent's approach is to support residents who cannot afford to pay and take proportionate recovery action where people can pay but do not engage. A new dedicated team has recently been established to contact residents earlier, checks whether their bill is correct, identifies support or discounts, and agrees affordable repayment where appropriate. The team also targets other debtors such as landlords and estate executors to proactively increase collection.

Table 1: In year collection measures

Measure (at 30 Sept 2026)	Position
Cash Collected	£132.8m
Collection Rate	52.2%
Variance to Target	-£1.5m / 0.6% down
Historic Debt	£92.9m
CTS Support	£28m
Hardship Awards	£766k
Debt Under Payment Plan	£2.72m
Direct Debit Take-up	73%
Summons Reduction	50%
London Ranking	32/33

- 5.5. Council Tax provides 38% of the Council's core funding. The Government currently allows annual increases of up to 5%, including 2% specifically for adult social care.
- 5.6. The Council's financial plans assume increases up to this limit, reflecting the Government's expectation that councils maximise Council Tax income.
- 5.7. If Council Tax rises by 4.99% each year, annual income is forecast to be £52.6m higher by 2031/32. New homes are expected to add a further £20.4m, helping fund continuing pressures such as social care and homelessness.
- 5.8. It should be noted that a fall in the debt balance does not always mean more cash has been collected. It may also reflect corrected bills, discounts, support awards, write-offs or other account changes. This report separates these figures wherever possible.

6.0 Collection Performance in 2026/27

- 6.1. The September 2026 position shows that Brent has collected both more Council Tax income and a higher proportion of Council Tax due than at the same point in either of the previous two years. This improvement has been achieved despite the Council needing to collect significantly more Council Tax overall, with the annual amount due increasing from £217.4m in 2024/25 to £254.5m in 2026/27.

Table 2: Comparison of Sept 2026 position to previous years

Position	2024/25 @30 Sept 2024	2025/26 @30 Sept 2025	2026/27 @30 Sept 2026
Annual net collectable debit	£217.4m	£241.5m	£254.5m
Council Tax increase per year	4.99%	4.99% plus change in CTS scheme	4.99%
Additional income to be collected in year due to increase in Council tax	£15m	£24m	£13m
Amount collected	£110.8m	£124.7m	£132.8m
Collection rate	51.0%	51.6%	52.2%

6.2. The September target was 52.8%. Achieving that rate against the September debit would have required approximately £134.3m of Council Tax income collected. Actual collection was £132.8m, leaving a gap of approximately £1.5m.

6.3. Brent's annual Council Tax collection rate improved from 91.2% in 2024/25 to 91.6% in 2025/26, demonstrating positive progress. The 2026/27 target of 93.5% represents an increase of 1.9 percentage points on last year's collection rate, which is substantially greater than the 0.4 percentage point increase achieved last year.

7.0 Benchmarking and Comparative Context

7.1. National statistics published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government show that English local authorities achieved an average in-year Council Tax collection rate of 95.6% in 2025/26, representing a decrease of 0.3 percentage points compared with 2024/25.

7.2. Brent's collection performance continues to be influenced by a number of local factors, including a large and mobile resident population, higher levels of deprivation than many London authorities, relatively high demand for Council Tax Support and ongoing cost-of-living pressures affecting residents' ability to pay. These factors make direct comparison with higher-income boroughs less

meaningful and therefore benchmarking against a group of similar urban London authorities provides a more balanced assessment of performance.

- 7.3. Despite challenging economic conditions, Brent's annual Council Tax collection rate improved from 91.10% in 2024/25 to 91.63% in 2025/26, an increase of 0.53 percentage points. This improvement was achieved at a time when collection performance deteriorated across many other authorities, with average collection rates falling by 0.47 percentage points across London, 0.28 percentage points nationally, and 0.84 percentage points across Brent's comparator group. Brent's performance demonstrates that improvement activity is having a positive impact despite continued affordability pressures affecting residents across London.
- 7.4. Despite an improving position, Brent's collection performance remains significantly below benchmark levels. In 2025/26 Brent remained 2.7 percentage points below the London average and 2.8 percentage points below the comparator average.
- 7.5. In 2025/26 Brent ranked 32nd of 33 London boroughs, 289th of 296 billing authorities nationally and 8th lowest in England. Therefore, whilst direction of travel is positive, the authority remains one of the weakest performers on this measure.

Table 3: Brent's performance against comparator London authorities

Authority / Benchmark	2024/25	2025/26	Change
Brent	91.10%	91.63%	+0.53 pp
Hillingdon	96.31%	96.51%	+0.20 pp
Hounslow	97.17%	96.07%	-1.10 pp
Ealing	96.85%	95.88%	-0.97 pp
Harrow	96.49%	95.65%	-0.84 pp
Westminster	94.49%	93.33%	-1.16 pp
Camden	94.89%	93.05%	-1.85 pp
Barnet	94.01%	92.83%	-1.18 pp
Enfield	91.94%	92.12%	+0.19 pp
England Average	95.88%	95.60%	-0.28 pp
Comparator Average (excluding Brent)	95.27%	94.43%	-0.84 pp
London Average (weighted)	94.80%	94.33%	-0.47 pp

- 7.6. Brent participates in London-wide revenues networks and benchmarking discussions. The service changes Brent has introduced are aligned with widely used local-authority practice: earlier outbound contact, digital reminders,

targeted support, stronger customer profiling, Direct Debit promotion and proportionate escalation.

8.0 Learning and Outcomes from 2025/26

- 8.1. Key lessons from 2025/26 were that early contact is more effective than waiting for debt to age; accurate contact details and customer profiles are essential; success should be measured by outcomes, not activity; and different approaches are needed for residents in hardship than for those able to pay but unwilling to engage.
- 8.2. Historic arrears fell from £84.3m at 1 April 2025 to £71.2m at 31 March 2026. The Council collected £8.75m of arrears during 2025/26 – £2.45m (39%) more than in 2024/25. Debt is written off where it is no longer recoverable, for example following death or after six years in line with policy. Write-offs for 2025/26 were £3.1m, while total write-offs and adjustments were £13.1m. Debt reduction therefore reflects both improved recovery and account changes, not only Council Tax income collected.
- 8.3. Despite improved recovery, £21.7m of 2025/26 Council Tax remained unpaid at year end, taking total historic debt to £92.9m at 1 April 2026. This shows the continuing challenge: increased recovery of older debt can be offset when current-year arrears are added to the outstanding balance.

9.0 Proactive In-Year Collection

- 9.1. Brent has established an eight-person Proactive Collections Team to intervene earlier, focusing on 2026/27 debt while addressing older debt on the same account. The existing recovery team continues to focus mainly on historic debt and later-stage recovery.
- 9.2. The team comprises seven officers and a team leader; six officers are currently in post. Its £250,000 monthly financial-impact target combines Council Tax income collected following intervention with reductions in liability from corrections, discounts, exemptions or other reductions.
- 9.3. The team has already met this target despite operating below full capacity. It will be reviewed when the seventh officer is in post, with income collected and liability reductions reported separately below.
- 9.4. Account corrections do not generate income, but ensure bills and support are accurate. Recovery focuses on debt genuinely due, unnecessary action is avoided and the reported debt position is reliable.

Table 4: Proactive Team Activity

Task	Jul	Aug	Sep
Outbound calls	1176	1560	1479
New Direct Debits	61	99	45
Payment Arrangements	52	20	9
CTS / Hardship signposting	124	245	274
Discount / exemption applied	41	77	108
Discount / exemption applied £	£144,060.36	£84,200.37	£170,213.58
Council Tax Income collected	£57,605.30	£133,826.01	£128,455.42
Liability Change £	£201,665.66	£218,026.38	£298,669.00

9.5. Direct Debit accounts have increased from 76,249 to 81,185 this financial year, an increase of 4,936 accounts (6.5%). Direct Debit take-up now stands at 73%. This compares positively to the last recorded London average of 67%. Direct Debit remains important as it supports regular payment and reduces the risk of missed instalments. Take-up has been promoted through the annual Council Tax information booklet and a targeted text and email campaign sent out to 32,442 residents.

10.0 Supporting Residents Who Cannot Pay

10.1. Supporting residents who cannot afford to pay is central to Brent's collection approach. The Proactive Collections Team identifies individual circumstances and directs residents to Council Tax Support (CTS), hardship funding, discounts, exemptions, affordable repayment, debt advice or income-maximisation support. This enables recovery to reflect ability to pay, protects vulnerable residents and helps prevent debt escalating.

Table 5: Overview of Support Provided

Reductions, discounts and other support provided	Current position
Core pensioner and working-age Council Tax Support recorded at 30 September 2026	£28.1m
Council Tax Hardship Fund allocation for 2026/27	£1.5m

Hardship funding allocated to date	£765,746
Student discount or exemption accounts	3,922
Value of student discounts or exemptions	£7.4m
Single Person Discount accounts	37,505
Value of Single Person Discounts	£19.5m

- 10.2. At 30 September 2026, 23,449 households received CTS—8,982 pension-age and 14,467 working-age households—with awards totalling about £28.0m. This was £2.1m higher than in March 2026, reflecting increased demand, growth in the Council Tax base, cost-of-living pressures and improved take-up through targeted campaigns and referrals.
- 10.3. From April 2025, working-age CTS recipients were required to pay at least 35% of their Council Tax; pension-age recipients were unaffected. By September 2026, 73% of working-age CTS households had made a payment and their collection rate was 44.2%, up 1.2 percentage points from 43.0% a year earlier.
- 10.4. A £1.5m Council Tax Hardship Fund was agreed for 2026/27, including £0.4m from the Greater London Authority. By September, 2,228 applications had been received and 1,749 (78%) approved, with £765,746 awarded. At the same point last year, 187 applications (12%) had been approved and £40,297 awarded. The improvement reflects a simpler application process and stronger promotion; the full fund is forecast to be allocated in 2026/27.
- 10.5. Further targeted help includes a new Council Tax reduction scheme for households affected by terminal illness and automatic relief for Brent care leavers aged 18–24. The care-leaver scheme currently supports 106 young people, with awards totalling £124,644.
- 10.6. Brent also administers 3,922 student discounts or exemptions worth about £7.4m and 37,505 Single Person Discounts worth about £19.5m.
- 10.7. Single Person Discounts are reviewed annually using risk-based data, customer contact and evidence checks. In 2026, 5,367 accounts had been reviewed and 1,662 discounts removed—a 31% removal rate—providing assurance that awards are accurate and protecting the Council Tax base.
- 10.8. For residents willing to repay but unable to clear debt within standard timescales, Brent uses Payment Plan to offer longer, affordable arrangements before further enforcement. Working-age CTS recipients can be referred from summons stage to reduce the risk of added fees. By September 2026, 6,858

debtors had been referred: 1,387 plans were created, 1,284 remained active and 103 were completed. Plans covered £2.72m of debt and had collected £442,746; active plans represented 16.83% of the portfolio's debt value. Arrangements that are not adhered to return to Brent for review.

Table 6: Payment Plans

Payment Plan measure	Position
Debtors uploaded	6,858
Plans created	1,387
Active plans	1,284
Plans completed	103
Debt under arrangement	£2,719,010.61
Cash received to date	£442,745.95
Active plans as a share of outstanding portfolio debt	16.83%

11.0 Customers Who Will Not Engage

11.1. Where a customer can pay but does not engage, the Council escalates recovery progressively. It will seek payment or an affordable arrangement first, but may use summonses, liability orders, deductions from earnings or benefits, enforcement agents, charging orders, means inquiries, insolvency and other lawful remedies where proportionate to the case.

Landlords and corporate debtors

11.2. Brent is strengthening recovery where liabilities have accumulated across properties owned by landlords or limited companies. Known accounts are brought together so the total exposure is visible and action can be coordinated.

11.3. Internal and external Legal Services are progressing more cases. At the time of drafting, three properties owned by limited companies were being considered for forced sale to recover Council debt. This action targets landlords and corporate owners who have not engaged or agreed arrangements—not residents unable to pay—and remains subject to legal advice, statutory requirements and individual circumstances.

Charging orders

- 11.4. Debt secured through charging orders rose from about £0.5m to £3.5m over the last 12 months. As a charging order secures debt against a property but does not itself generate income, the Council will report debt secured and income realised separately.

12.0 Customer Information and Data Quality

- 12.1. Accurate liability, contact and customer-profile data is essential to effective recovery across Brent's approximately 137,000 Council Tax accounts. Over the last six months, the Improvement Programme has strengthened contact details and customer segmentation so accounts can follow the most appropriate support or recovery route. Progress is summarised below.

Table 7: Data Quality Improvements

Measure	Starting position (Jan 26)	August 2026	Improvement
Missing email addresses	48,673	42,142	6,531 fewer, 13.4% reduction
Missing telephone numbers	28,477	26,401	2,076 fewer, 7.3% reduction
Accounts without a confirmed customer profile	70,195	50,878	19,317 fewer, 27.5% reduction
Accounts On Hold/ prevented from progressing to summons	2,403	677	1,726 fewer, 71.8% reduction
Owner profiles	24,884	32,091	7,207 more, 29.0% increase
Tenant profiles	13,723	22,771	9,048 more, 65.9% increase

Customer profiles

- 12.2. Confirming whether the liable person is a homeowner, tenant or landlord enables recovery and support to be tailored. Depending on legal requirements and individual circumstances, this may include a charging order, deductions from earnings or benefits, or action against landlords and customers with significant assets. Unconfirmed accounts follow a less effective generic route.

- 12.3. Accounts without a confirmed profile fell from 70,195 to 50,878—a reduction of 19,317 (27.5%). Confirmed owner profiles increased by 7,207 (29%) and tenant profiles by 9,048 (65.9%), allowing thousands more accounts to follow the appropriate route. Further work continues to improve profiling and debt quality.

Accounts prevented from progressing to summons

- 12.4. A “No Summons” status pauses recovery where appropriate, for example following a death or while an account is investigated. A targeted review reduced these accounts from 2,403 to 677—1,726 fewer (71.8%)—allowing valid cases to re-enter recovery while protecting genuine exceptions.
- 12.5. Each “No Summons” status must now record a clear reason and receive team-leader approval. This strengthens control and ensures recovery is paused only where justified.
- 12.6. Many former restrictions related to housing associations with multiple liabilities. Statements are now produced for each organisation so undisputed balances can be settled in bulk and disputed liabilities separated for resolution. This improves recoverability and the accuracy of the debt portfolio.

13.0 Digital Communications Before Recovery Escalates

- 13.1. Brent introduced targeted text messages and emails in 2026 to complement statutory recovery notices. Sent at pre-summons and then pre-enforcement stages, they encourage earlier payment or contact, identify residents who need support and reduce escalation to more costly recovery action. Early results show improved engagement.
- 13.2. Before a summons is sought, customers receive texts and emails warning that court action is being prepared and inviting them to pay, agree an arrangement or seek support before costs are added. Since their introduction, the number of cases progressing from this stage to summons has fallen by approximately 50%.
- 13.3. This helps residents avoid court costs and reduces administrative demand, allowing resources to focus on more complex cases.
- 13.4. Before referral to enforcement agents, customers receive a further warning that additional fees may be incurred, giving them another opportunity to pay or agree an arrangement.

- 13.5. These communications support residents who cannot pay to seek help, while clearly warning those able to pay of the consequences and costs of continued non-engagement.

14.0 Debt Recovery Arrangements and Outstanding Debt

- 14.1. In-year activity begins with billing, instalments, reminders and early outbound contact. If payment is not made or an arrangement is not maintained, the account can progress to final notice, summons and liability order, followed by the recovery option most appropriate to the information held and the customer's circumstances.
- 14.2. On 1 April 2026, Brent held £92.9m of historic Council Tax debt, comprising £71.2m of arrears carried forward from previous years and a further £21.7m of unpaid 2025/26 Council Tax. This highlights the importance of both recovering historic debt and maximising in-year collection, as new arrears can offset improvements achieved through debt recovery activity.

Table 8: Council Tax Debt Movement

Council Tax Debt Movement	31.3.23	31.3.24	31.3.25	31.3.26
	£63.1m	£75.4m	£84.3m	£71.2m
Total Arrears	£63.1m	£12.3m ↑	£8.9m ↑	£13.1m ↓

15.0 Effectiveness and Value for Money

- 15.1. Targeted pre-summons texts and emails encourage customers to pay, agree an arrangement or seek support before court action. Since their introduction, cases progressing to summons have fallen by approximately 50%, indicating earlier engagement, helping residents avoid court costs and reducing recovery and court administration.
- 15.2. The Proactive Collections Team is meeting its £250,000 monthly financial-impact target, comprising Council Tax income collected and liability reductions, which are reported separately. Between July and September 2026, it delivered over £1.3m of combined impact: approximately £320,000 collected, over £718,000 in liability corrections, more than 4,200 outbound calls, 205 new Direct Debits and 643 support referrals. These early results show improved engagement, billing accuracy, payment and access to support.

- 15.3. Recovery of historic debt also improved: £8.75m was collected in 2025/26, £2.45m (39%) more than the previous year, while debt secured through charging orders rose from approximately £0.5m to £3.5m. As these measures reflect different stages of recovery, Council Tax income collected, payment arrangements, debt secured, write-offs and account adjustments will continue to be reported separately.

16.0 Governance, Performance Monitoring and Oversight

- 16.1. Council Tax collection and debt recovery are reviewed through weekly operational meetings, monthly oversight by the Income and Debt Improvement Board and Debt Dashboard Review Meeting, and regular reporting to senior leadership, the Budget Assurance Panel and Scrutiny. This provides ongoing challenge and enables risks or underperformance to be identified and addressed promptly.
- 16.2. Reporting covers collection against target, historic debt, resident support, payment arrangements, digital and Proactive Collections Team outcomes, data quality and legal recovery. Council Tax income collected is reported separately from liability corrections, debt secured and realised, write-offs and other adjustments, giving a clear view of performance and programme benefits.
- 16.3. The governance structure assigns and tracks actions and supports evidence-based resource and policy decisions. Payment Plan, hardship support and discounts are monitored within the overall customer-support and debt-management framework, rather than as stand-alone initiatives.

17.0 Next Steps and Measures of Success

No.	Next Step	Measure of Success / Expected Outcome
1	Bring the Proactive Collections Team to full establishment and review the current financial impact target.	Increased cash collection, greater customer engagement and higher volumes of debt resolved before progressing to recovery.
2	Continue to report cash collected, liability corrections, support awards, payment arrangements and debt secured separately.	Greater transparency and a clearer understanding of which activities generate income, reduce liability or support residents.

3	Continue and evaluate pre-summons and pre-enforcement digital communications.	Sustained reduction in cases progressing to summons and enforcement action, helping residents avoid additional costs and reducing operational demand.
4	Complete a detailed age, value and customer-profile analysis of the Council Tax debt portfolio.	Improved understanding of debt risk, enabling resources to be targeted where they will have greatest impact.
5	Continue customer-data matching, profiling and contact-data improvement activity, with appropriate data protection controls.	More customers routed through the most appropriate recovery or support pathway, improving recoverability and customer engagement.
6	Progress landlord, multi-property and limited-company debt through internal and external legal routes where appropriate.	Increased recovery of high-value debt and improved management of persistent non-payment cases.
7	Monitor both the value of debt secured and the value ultimately realised.	Better understanding of the effectiveness and financial return from charging orders and legal recovery activity.
8	Benchmark performance regularly against London and comparator authorities.	Identification of best practice, improved performance insight and evidence of whether Brent is closing the gap to peer authorities.
9	Use intervention-level evidence to inform 2027/28 budget and resource decisions.	Resources directed towards activities proven to improve collection, increase engagement and deliver value for money.
10	Expand performance reporting on the Proactive Collections Team and Payment Plan.	Clearer evidence of additional cash collected, repayment arrangements agreed, residents supported and overall return on investment.
11	Continue to strengthen governance through regular performance review and challenge.	Early identification of risks, prompt corrective action and continued delivery of improvement activity against target.

18.0 Conclusion

- 18.1. Brent's Council Tax collection performance is improving: by 30 September 2026, the Council had collected £132.8m—£8.1m more than a year earlier—and achieved a 52.2% collection rate despite a larger amount being due. However, this remained £1.5m below the September target. Brent's low comparative ranking and £92.9m of historic debt mean sustained improvement is still required to achieve the 2026/27 target and narrow the gap with other authorities.
- 18.2. The targeted improvement programme is delivering results through proactive collection, digital communications, better customer data, flexible repayment and stronger recovery. It has reduced cases progressing to summons by approximately 50%, improved collection of historic debt and strengthened engagement. This is balanced by substantial support for residents who cannot afford to pay through Council Tax Support, hardship funding, discounts, exemptions and affordable payment arrangements, alongside proportionate action against those able to pay but unwilling to engage.
- 18.3. The next period will focus on embedding these improvements, bring the Proactive Collections Team to full capacity and focus resources on interventions that achieve the strongest outcomes and value for money. Continued governance and transparent reporting – separating Council Tax income collected from liability corrections, payment arrangements, debt secured and realised, write-offs and other adjustments – will enable the Council to assess whether collection, debt reduction and resident outcomes are improving sustainably.

19.0 Stakeholder and ward member consultation and engagement

- 19.1. There are no direct stakeholder and ward member consultation and engagement considerations arising out of this report

20.0 Financial Considerations

- 20.1. Council Tax is an important source of funding for the Council and effective collection supports the Council's overall financial sustainability and the delivery of local services.
- 20.2. Improvements in collection and recovery can strengthen cash flow and reduce outstanding debt. However, recovery activity should remain fair and proportionate, distinguishing between residents experiencing financial hardship and those who have the means to pay.

Legal Considerations

- 20.3. Council Tax billing and recovery action must comply with the relevant statutory framework, the Council Tax (Administration and Enforcement) Regulations 1992 and public-law duties. Authorities are obliged to follow prescribed rules for billing, send reminder notices and if necessary, explore enforcement actions such as issuing summonses, obtaining liability orders in the event of non-payment and employ remedies such as attachment of earnings, charging orders, orders for sale and insolvency action to recover outstanding debt. Appropriate action is considered and applied on a case by cases basis with legal advice obtained where required. Where a debtor is deceased, the council seeks to recover the debt from the estate of the deceased or PR/ Executor of the estate.

21.0 Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Considerations

- 21.1. Brent has historically collected less Council Tax than many London boroughs. Performance is affected by high levels of deprivation, a large and mobile population, demand for Council Tax Support and continuing pressure on household finances. Language barriers and differing levels of familiarity with the UK Council Tax system can also affect residents' understanding of their liability, the support available and the action they need to take. This makes a fair and effective approach to collection particularly important.

22.0 Climate Change and Environmental Considerations

- 22.1. There are no direct Climate Change and Environmental considerations arising out of this report.

23.0 Human Resources/Property Considerations (if appropriate)

- 23.1. There are no direct Human Resources/Property considerations arising out of this report.

24.0 Communication Considerations

- 24.1. There are no direct Communication Considerations arising out of this report.

Report sign off:

Tom Cattermole

Corporate Director, Residents and Housing Services

Minesh Patel

Corporate Director, Finance and Resources

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Appendix A: Glossary of technical terms

This appendix explains technical terms used in the report.

Term	Plain-English meaning
Arrears / historic debt	Council Tax that remains unpaid after it was due. Historic debt is unpaid Council Tax carried forward from previous financial years.
Net collectable debit	The total Council Tax the Council expects to collect after allowing for discounts, exemptions, Council Tax Support and other adjustments.
Collection rate	The percentage of Council Tax due that has been collected.
Liability	The amount of Council Tax a person or organisation is legally required to pay.
Liability correction	A change to an account so it shows the correct amount due, for example after applying a discount, exemption or support award. It is not cash collected.
Council Tax Support (CTS)	A reduction in the Council Tax bill for eligible residents on a low income.
Section 13A relief	A discretionary power that allows the Council to reduce a Council Tax bill in exceptional circumstances, including through the Council Tax Hardship Fund.
Payment arrangement / Payment Plan	An agreement allowing a customer to repay Council Tax debt in affordable instalments over an agreed period. Payment Plan is the external platform used to provide some longer-term arrangements.
Reminder and final notice	Formal notices sent when instalments are missed. If payment is not made, the right to pay by instalments may be lost and further recovery can follow.
Summons	A court notice issued when Council Tax remains unpaid and the Council applies for legal authority to recover the debt.
Liability order	A court order confirming that Council Tax is owed. It gives the Council access to further recovery options.
Attachment of Earnings	A legal process requiring an employer to deduct Council Tax debt from a person's wages and send it to the Council.
Deductions from benefits	Small regular deductions from certain benefits to repay Council Tax debt.
Enforcement agent	An authorised person who may collect unpaid Council Tax after a liability order. Additional statutory fees may be charged.
Charging order	A court order securing Council Tax debt against a property. It protects the Council's claim but is not cash received.
Order for sale / forced sale	A court process that may allow a property to be sold so secured debt can be repaid. It is used only where legally available and appropriate.
Write-off	Debt removed from the accounts because it is no longer considered recoverable. It is not cash collected.
Debt secured / debt realised	Debt secured is protected by a legal charge. Debt realised is money actually received from that security.

Collection Fund	The statutory account into which Council Tax and business rates are paid before funds are distributed to the Council and other public bodies.
Bad debt provision	Money set aside in the accounts to recognise that some Council Tax may not be collected.
Percentage point	The simple difference between two percentages. For example, an increase from 91% to 93% is two percentage points.
Council Tax base	A measure of the number and taxable value of homes used to calculate how much Council Tax income can be raised.
Council Tax referendum limit	The maximum annual Council Tax increase normally permitted without holding a local referendum.
Adult Social Care Precept	The part of a permitted Council Tax increase intended to help fund adult social care.
Single Person Discount	A 25% Council Tax discount where only one adult is counted as living in a property.

**Council Tax: Discretionary Reduction Policy – Section 13A(1)(c)
Local Government Finance Act 1992**



**Council Tax: Discretionary Reduction
Policy – Section 13A(1)(c) Local
Government Finance Act 1992**

Approved by Cabinet: 10 March 2025: [Decision - Council Tax: Discretionary Reduction Policy - 2025-26, Household Support & Resident Support Fund](#)

Reviewed & Updated: [16 September 2026](#)

Council Tax: Discretionary Reduction Policy – Section 13A(1)(c) Local Government Finance Act 1992

1. Background

Section 13A) (1)(c) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992¹ (13A)(1)(c) as amended provides powers to the Council to reduce the amount of council tax payable for an individual or class of persons.

13A(1)(c) may be used for individual cases or the council may determine classes of case for which liability may be reduced.

The authority to make these awards is delegated to the Corporate Director of Housing and Resident Services and, or Corporate Director, Finance and Resources.

This policy notes there is a difference between writing off an uncollectable debt and reducing the amount payable under this provision. A write-off may be processed where a Council Tax amount is uncollectable, e.g. deceased, bankrupt, vacated and forwarding address unknown, etc. However, a reduction under section 13A(1)(c) will normally be applicable where the taxpayer has a continuing liability for the property.

Unless other non-council funding available, the cost of awards under this policy is borne in its entirety by the Council and therefore its council taxpayers. The granting of 13A(1)(c) reductions must be balanced against their financial impact on residents and will therefore only be granted in the circumstances described in this policy.

The Council makes a sum of money available each year for the provision of 13A(1)(c) reductions.

2. How to claim a discretionary reduction

The application should be made in respect of the current Council Tax year and must relate to the applicant's sole or main residence. However, in exceptional circumstances, and where sufficient supporting evidence is provided, the Council may consider applications in respect of previous Council Tax years.

It must be made in writing by the taxpayer or by someone authorised to act on their behalf to the principal council tax office and titled "Section 13A Application".

Applicants must provide a full explanation of their circumstances and demonstrate why they are unable to meet their Council Tax liability. The application must be supported by a completed income and expenditure statement, together with relevant

¹ 13A Billing authority's power to reduce amount of tax payable

(1)Where a person is liable to pay council tax in respect of any chargeable dwelling and any day, the billing authority for the area in which the dwelling is situated may reduce the amount which he is liable to pay as respects the dwelling and the day to such extent as it thinks fit.

(2)The power under subsection (1) above includes power to reduce an amount to nil.

(3)The power under subsection (1) may be exercised in relation to particular cases or by determining a class of case in which liability is to be reduced to an extent provided by the determination]

documentary evidence, such as bank statements, utility bills and any other information that assists the Council in assessing the applicant's financial position.

Alternatively, applicants may choose to provide their financial information through the Affordability Passport® using open banking, which can be used in place of submitting supporting financial documents

3. Discretionary Relief Policy

3.1. Individual cases

The Council considers all claims for relief and considers them on the circumstances of the council taxpayer. However, some or all the following criteria shall be met for each case:

- i. There must be evidence of financial hardship or personal circumstances that justifies a reduction in council tax liability. Where an application is made in respect of financial hardship, evidence of all income and expenditure will be required to enable a full assessment to be undertaken, examples would include:
 - a. Fire and flood,
 - b. Domestic violence,
 - c. Losses due to theft,
 - d. Safeguarding.
- ii. The taxpayer must satisfy the Council that all reasonable steps have been taken to resolve their situation prior to application.
- iii. All eligible discounts, reliefs, benefits (including and disregards are expected to have been applied have been awarded including Council Tax Support (CTS).
- iv. Where the situation may be resolved by some other legitimate means, such as the complaints procedure, if it can it is unlikely that an award will be made.
- v. The situation and reason for the application must be outside of the taxpayer's control.
- vi. The amount outstanding must not be the result of wilful refusal to pay or culpable neglect.
 - i. The power to reduce under this section will be considered taking account of all circumstances and any reduction will take into consideration all the borough's council taxpayers.
 - ii. The reduction is to be only applicable to the council taxpayer's primary home (sole and main residence),
 - iii. Whether the applicant has engaged with the Council in the application process, with applicants being able to use open banking to avoid the need to provide evidence from their bank and therefore speed up the process.
 - iv. If a Discretionary Housing Payment for Housing Benefit or Universal Credit (Housing Element) has already been awarded to meet a shortfall in rent,

- v. The income and expenditure of the applicant, their partner and any dependants or other occupants of the applicant's home, where non-dependents are resident and working their income shall be declared,
- vi. Whether or not reasonable expenditure exceeds income,
- vii. Any savings or capital that might be held by the applicant, their partner, and any member of their household, including non-dependents, irrespective of whether the capital may fall to be disregarded under the Council Tax Support scheme, the applicant and non-dependents shall be required to provide evidence including through Open Banking
- viii. Other debts outstanding for the applicant and their partner,
- ix. The length of time they have lived in the property.
- x. Where a 13A application is made for a previous period, exceptional hardship must have been proven to have existed throughout the whole of the period requested.
- xi. 13A awards are for short-term help to the applicant only.

The above list is not exhaustive, and officers will use their discretion in reviewing applications.

3.2 Classes of Reduction

3.2.1 Care Leavers

A discretionary relief is awarded to Brent care leavers aged between 18 and 24 years old who are liable for council tax in the borough. To be eligible the care leaver must be liable for council tax and have previously been in the care of Brent Council. Brent care leavers resident outside the borough, or care leavers resident in Brent who have left another authority's care, are not eligible.

The amount of relief is applied after all other discounts have been awarded and there is an amount to pay. If a care leaver is already in receipt of an exemption no relief is awarded. However, should that exemption end the care leaver would then be entitled to care leaver relief if they remain liable for council tax. The relief is awarded up until the end of the current financial year or on the care leaver's 25th birthday, whichever is earliest. Eligible care leavers are identified by the Council and relief is awarded automatically with no application needed. Section 13A(1)(c) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 allows the Council to reduce the amount payable, but not to amend who is named on the bill.

3.2.2 Terminal Illness

From 1 October 2026, the Council introduced a Terminal Illness Council Tax Reduction Scheme to support residents who have been certified as terminally ill and are experiencing financial hardship. The scheme provides up to 100% Council Tax relief in respect of the applicant's sole or main residence.

Applications for this reduction must be made in writing by a person named on the Council Tax account who is liable for the Council Tax charge, or by a third party acting on their behalf with the applicant's consent. The reduction may be awarded where the applicant, or another resident living at the property, has been diagnosed with a terminal illness.

The evidence required with the application is a Special Rules SR1 form. This is a medical evidence form used in the UK to support benefit claims made under the Special Rules for end of life. It is completed by a medical professional when a patient is believed to be nearing the end of life, which is defined as likely to die within the next 12 months

The reduction will apply from the date a SR1 form is issued but not before 01 October 2026 when the discount was introduced. The reduction will end on the last day of the month, two months after the date of the resident passing.

The qualifying criteria for a Terminally Ill reduction is:

- i. The person who is liable for Council Tax, or any member of their household, has been diagnosed as being terminally ill: and
- ii. The terminally ill person has been given a valid Special Rules SR1 form completed by an appropriate medical professional, confirming their terminal diagnosis and that they have a life expectancy of less than 12 months.
- iii. The reduction is to be applied to the council taxpayer or household member's primary home (sole or main residence).
- iv. The council taxpayer should be eligible for Council Tax Support

In exceptional circumstances, the Council may award a discretionary Council Tax reduction of up to 100% to households affected by terminal illness where the taxpayer is not eligible for Council Tax Support because their income or capital exceeds the scheme thresholds, and financial hardship can be demonstrated.

4. Amount of relief

- 4.1 The eligibility criteria is set out in paragraph 3. Any relief to be awarded is entirely at the Council's discretion, up to and including reducing liability to nil. The decision will be made, wherever possible, by front line staff dealing directly with taxpayers.
- 4.2 All taxpayers are entitled to make an application for a discretionary Council Tax relief reduction. Although the discretionary reduction will only be granted to taxpayers in exceptional circumstances and will only normally be for a short period.

5.0 Application Process

5.1 As part of the process of applying for additional support from the Council for a reduction in council tax liability all applicants must be willing to undertake the following:

- i. A Section 13A Council Tax Hardship Fund application is to be made online or in person at a hub,
- ii. All other Section 13A applications are to be made in writing and/or by email
- iii. Agree to the criteria set out in 3.1 above,
- iv. Accept assistance from either the Council or third parties such as the Citizens Advice or similar organisations to enable them to manage their finances more effectively including the termination of non-essential expenditure;
- v. Maximise their income through; the application for other welfare benefits and grants; cancellation of non-essential contracts and outgoings; and identifying the most economical tariffs (or rates) for the supply of utilities and services generally and the application of available council tax discounts and exemptions
- vi. An applicant must make a claim for a Council Tax Support Hardship fund award by submitting an application to the Council. The application form can be obtained online or in person at a hub. Telephone applications are not accepted.
- vii. Applicants can request assistance with the completion of the form from the Council.
- viii. The application form must be fully completed and supporting information or evidence provided, as reasonably requested by the Council. Open banking will be utilised to provide relevant information.
- ix. In most cases the person who claims the award under this policy will be the person entitled to Council Tax Support. However, a claim may be accepted from someone acting on another's behalf, such as an appointee, if it is considered reasonable by the Council.
- x. The Council may revise an award where the applicant's circumstances have changed which either increases or reduces their Council Tax Support entitlement.

5.2 Through the operation of this policy, the Council will look to:

- i. allow a short period of time for someone to adjust to unforeseen short-term circumstances and to enable them to "bridge the gap" during this time, whilst the applicant seeks alternative solutions;
- ii. enable households to be managing their finances in the longer term;
- iii. help applicants through personal crises and difficult events that affect their finances;
- iv. prevent exceptional hardship;

- v. help those applicants who are trying to help themselves financially; and
- vi. encourage and support people to obtain and sustain employment.

5.3 It cannot be awarded for the following circumstances:

- i) where full Council Tax liability is already being met by Council Tax Support;
- ii) for any other reason, other than to reduce Council Tax liability;
- iii) where the Council considers that there are unnecessary expenses/debts etc. and that the applicant has not taken reasonable steps to reduce these; or
- iv) will not be awarded to meet any additional Council Tax liability resulting from the applicant's failure to report a change in circumstances, the recovery of an overpayment, or the removal of a discount, exemption, or reduction due to fraud, misrepresentation, or the withholding of material information

6. Decision

- 6.1 The local authority must notify the applicant of its decision in writing within 14 days or as soon as it is reasonably practicable to do so. The letter must make it clear to the applicant, that there is a requirement to report any relevant changes in circumstances, and the implications if s/he does not do so, and how an appeal against the decision may be made.
- 6.2 An award under this policy will in most cases be less than the difference between the Council Tax liability and the amount of Council Tax Support paid.
- 6.3 The level of payment may be nil if the authority feels that, in its opinion, the applicant is not suffering 'exceptional hardship' or where the applicant has failed to comply with the section 13a process.

7. Appeal

- 7.1 Under Section 16 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, there is a right of appeal if a customer applying for a discretionary reduction under Section 13A) (1) (c) is aggrieved by the Council's decision. The appeal must be in writing to the council. The Council will then consider whether the customer has provided any additional information against the required criteria that will justify a change to its decision. If the original decision is upheld and the customer remains aggrieved, there is a further right of appeal to a valuation tribunal. This includes a decision on the exercise of an authority's discretion, that there is a liability for council tax, or the amount of council tax payable, as long as:
 - i. The Council will not allow an appeal
 - ii. The applicant is not satisfied with the steps your local authority is taking to resolve your grievance
 - iii. No decision to the appeal has been given and it has been more than two months
- 7.2 All appeals to the Valuation Tribunal are required to be in writing. Time limits to appeal to the valuation tribunal will vary depending on the reason you are making the appeal and the response of the Council.

- 7.3 An appeal against the decision of the Valuation Tribunal can be made to the Upper Tribunal and to the High Court if the appeal is in respect of a point of law only.
- 7.4 The Valuation Tribunal Service has published a booklet (see appendix 1) on preparing for an appeal against a council tax reduction scheme decision, this includes appeals against decisions relating to the Council's policy relating to 13A) (1)(c) and its local council tax support scheme.
- 7.5 Incorrectly paid Council Tax Support Hardship fund payments will generally be recovered directly from the applicant's Council Tax account, thus increasing the amount of council tax due and payable. Recovery will be undertaken in line with the remedies available for Council Tax.

8 Fraud

- 8.1 The Council is committed to protect public funds and ensure funds are awarded to the people who are rightfully eligible to them.
- 8.2 An applicant who tries to fraudulently claim an award under this policy by falsely declaring their circumstances, providing a false statement or evidence in support of their application, may have committed an offence under The Fraud Act 2006.
- 8.3 Where the Council suspects that such a fraud may have been committed, this matter will be investigated as appropriate and may lead to criminal proceedings being instigated.

9 Complaints

- 9.1 The Council's Corporate Complaints Policy (available on the Council's website) will be applied in the event of any complaint received about this policy.

10 Policy Review and Delegated Powers

- 10.1 This policy will be reviewed every year and updated as appropriate to ensure it remains fit for purpose. However, the review may take place sooner should there be any significant changes in legislation.
- 10.2 The Council's Section 151 Officer has the authority to make changes to this policy where necessary to ensure it remains up to date and continues to meet the Council's objectives and requirements.