

Appendix A

Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee (RPRSC) Scrutiny Tracker 2023-24

These tables are to track the progress of scrutiny recommendations to Cabinet, suggestions for improvement, and information requests made by the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee, with details provided by the relevant lead departments. It is a standing item on the Committee's agendas, so that the Committee can keep track of the recommendations, suggestions for improvement and information requests it has made, alongside the related decisions made and implementation status. The tracker lists the recommendations, suggestions for improvement and information requests made by the Committee throughout a municipal year and any recommendations not fully implemented from previous years.

The tracker documents the scrutiny recommendations made to Cabinet, the dates when they were made, the decision maker who can make each decision in respect of the recommendations, the date the decision was made and the actual decision taken. The executive decision taken may be the same as the scrutiny recommendation (e.g. the recommendation was "agreed") or it may be a different decision, which should be clarified here. The tracker also asks if the respective executive decisions have been implemented and this should be updated accordingly throughout the year.

Scrutiny Task Group report recommendations should be included here but referenced collectively (e.g. the name of the scrutiny inquiry and date of the agreement of the scrutiny report and recommendations by the scrutiny committee, along with the respective dates when the decision maker(s) considered and responded to the report and recommendations. The Committee should generally review the implementation of scrutiny task group report recommendations separately with stand-alone agenda items at relevant junctures – e.g. the Executive Response to a scrutiny report and after six months or a year, or upon expected implementation of the agreed recommendation of report. The "Expected Implementation Date" should provide an indication of a suitable time for review.

Key:

Date of scrutiny committee meeting - For each table, the date of the scrutiny committee meeting when the recommendation was made is provided in the subtitle header.

Subject – this is the item title on the Committee's agenda; the subject being considered.

Scrutiny Recommendation – This is the text of the scrutiny recommendation as it appears on the minutes – **in bold**.

Decision Maker – the decision maker for the recommendation, (**in bold**), e.g. the Cabinet (for Council executive decisions), Full Council (for Council policy and budgetary decisions), or an NHS executive body for recommendations to the NHS. In brackets, (date), the date on which the Executive Response was made.

Executive Response – The response of the decision maker (e.g. Cabinet decision) for the recommendation. This should be the executive decision as recorded in the minutes. The Executive Response should provide details of what, if anything, the executive will do in response to the scrutiny recommendation. Ideally, the Executive Response will include a decision to either agree/reject/or amend the scrutiny recommendation and where the scrutiny recommendation is rejected, provide an explanation of why. In brackets, provide the date of Cabinet/executive meeting that considered the scrutiny recommendation and made the decision.

Department – the Council directorate (and/or external agencies) that are responsible for implementation of the agreed executive decision/response. Also provided, for reference only, the relevant Cabinet Member and Corporate Director.

Implementation Status – This is the progress of any implementation of the agreed Executive Response against key milestones. This may cross reference to any specific actions and deadlines that may be provided in the Executive Response. This should be as specific and quantifiable as possible. This should also provide, as far as possible, any evidenced outcomes or improvements resulting from implementation.

Review Date - This is the expected date when the agreed Executive Response should be fully implemented and when the scrutiny committee may usefully review the implementation and any evidenced outcomes (e.g. service improvements). (Note: this is the implementation of the agreed Executive Response, which may not be the same as the scrutiny recommendation).

Recommendations to Cabinet from RPRSC

Subject	Scrutiny Recommendation	Cabinet Member, Lead Officer, and Department	Executive Response	Review date
<p>24 Jan 2023 – Budget Scrutiny Task Group Findings 2023/24</p>	<p>Borough Plan Alignment: The Council more clearly demonstrates how public money is being spent in line with the democratically agreed strategic priorities for the borough.</p>	<p>Cllr Muhammed Butt – Leader of the Council Cllr Mili Patel - Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources & Reform Minesh Patel – Corporate Director, Finance & Resources</p>	<p>To follow.</p>	<p>07/11/23</p>
	<p>Proposal Categorations: Each budget proposal is categorised as one of: Cut; Income generation; Service transformation; Efficiency; or Investment for transparency purposes. This language should also be used in Council communications in order for residents to distinguish between the proposals which are cuts/service reductions, those which are investments, and those which are efficiencies/service transformation.</p>	<p>Cllr Muhammed Butt – Leader of the Council Cllr Mili Patel - Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources & Reform Minesh Patel – Corporate Director, Finance & Resources</p>	<p>To follow.</p>	<p>07/11/23</p>
	<p>Income Generation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase parking fees/charges to a more comparable rate charged by surrounding boroughs to secure safe movement of traffic and adequate parking and; • Utilise our parks to generate additional income – as part of this process, the Council should draw comparisons with other local authorities to learn from good practice. 	<p>Cllr Muhammed Butt – Leader of the Council Cllr Mili Patel - Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources & Reform Minesh Patel – Corporate Director, Finance & Resources</p>	<p>To follow.</p>	<p>07/11/23</p>

	<p>Additional Financial Support for Residents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase funding and review the eligibility criteria for both the Council Tax Support scheme and the Resident Support Fund, should the financial modelling process allow and; • Explore options to provide additional support to children to tackle food poverty, such as extending universal free school meals provision. 	<p>Cllr Muhammed Butt – Leader of the Council</p> <p>Cllr Mili Patel - Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources & Reform</p> <p>Minesh Patel – Corporate Director, Finance & Resources</p>	<p>To follow.</p>	<p>07/11/23</p>
	<p>Additional Advice & Support for our Voluntary Sector partners:</p> <p>To assist in building voluntary sector resilience, develop:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An approach to increase the value of the commissioned contracts offered to the VCS to help them navigate the current volatile economic environment. The Council could also use this as an opportunity to tighten and improve its contract monitoring process to ensure further robustness and transparency in achieving outcomes. • A collaborative strategy with the VCS to enable these organisations to identify and secure new income streams. This should also include scope for increased opportunities to make joint bids for grant funding. • A transparent policy for distributing Council community assets to our voluntary partners in need of space. Specifically, offering capped peppercorn rents to the sector to expand their operations. 	<p>Cllr Muhammed Butt – Leader of the Council</p> <p>Cllr Mili Patel - Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources & Reform</p> <p>Minesh Patel – Corporate Director, Finance & Resources</p>	<p>To follow.</p>	<p>07/11/23</p>
	<p>Equal Access for All Residents:</p>	<p>Cllr Muhammed Butt – Leader of the Council</p>	<p>To follow.</p>	<p>07/11/23</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposed automated services (e.g. chat bots) are tested by residents ahead of implementation, especially by those who have accessibility needs to ensure that all residents have equal access to services and; • Additional advice and support is provided to disabled residents and those cohorts of residents with other access needs (e.g. literacy needs/English not a first language etc.) to navigate digital-form filling so they can maximise the benefits/grants they are eligible for and entitled to. 	<p>Cllr Mili Patel - Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources & Reform</p> <p>Minesh Patel – Corporate Director, Finance & Resources</p>		
	<p>Improving Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include an evidence base/rationale section in the EIA for each proposal where it has been deemed that there are no potential or likely impact on service users and employees with protected characteristics (e.g. how the Council arrived at such decisions) and; • Undertake a cumulative equality impact assessment of the budget decisions since 2018 to understand fully the medium and long-term impacts of its financial decisions. It is recommended a cumulative EqIA is completed during financial year 2023/24 and is included in the final budget report 2024/25. 	<p>Cllr Muhammed Butt – Leader of the Council</p> <p>Cllr Mili Patel - Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources & Reform</p> <p>Minesh Patel – Corporate Director, Finance & Resources</p>	To follow.	07/11/23
	<p>Increased Collaboration:</p> <p>To ensure a holistic approach to residents’ care, specifically ‘those with complex needs’:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a collaborative mechanism between the Council, NHS, and other relevant stakeholders to agree discharges/step down plans. If possible, this should be considered as 	<p>Cllr Muhammed Butt – Leader of the Council</p> <p>Cllr Mili Patel - Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources & Reform</p>	To follow.	07/11/23

	<p>part of the review process currently taking place with Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust (CNWL) in the Integrated Care Partnership and;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leverage sufficient financial contributions from the NHS (and other relevant anchor institutions) to improve the Health & Social Care function in Brent. 	<p>Minesh Patel – Corporate Director, Finance & Resources</p>		
	<p>Lobbying: Work closely with neighbouring local authorities, London Councils, and the Local Government Association (LGA) to seek:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional funding in the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG), notably the High Needs Block of the DSG which is currently in deficit. Although the Task Group is pleased with the activity 5 undertaken to manage the deficit and despite the fact that the Council will see increased funding from central government, there is still a need for additional financial support to meet rising demand. • Powers to levy proportionate charges on parked motorcycles/mopeds. If successful, this would enable the Council to expand the parking permit system in the borough to include other forms of vehicles. • Local Government funding reform, including reform of regressive taxes such as Council Tax. • Changes to gambling legislation and regulations that enable local authorities to generate additional income from gambling licensing fees. This money could then be used to reinvest in vital Council services. 	<p>Cllr Muhammed Butt – Leader of the Council</p> <p>Cllr Mili Patel - Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources & Reform</p> <p>Minesh Patel – Corporate Director, Finance & Resources</p>	<p>To follow.</p>	<p>07/11/23</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The introduction of 'Short Term Letting' legislation that will allow local authorities to establish licensing schemes for 'Air B&B' accommodation in their respective boroughs. This would enable the Council to generate additional income from 'Air B&B' businesses in Brent that could then be reinvested back into services for the benefit of residents. 			
	<p>Phased Reduction to Care Packages Provision:</p> <p>Utilise a proportion of the additional funding from the Local Government Finance Settlement to enable the Council to defer a proportion of the savings in proposal CYP03 to financial year 24/25. This is to ensure changes in provision are implemented in a phased way.</p>	<p>Cllr Muhammed Butt – Leader of the Council</p> <p>Cllr Mili Patel - Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources & Reform</p> <p>Minesh Patel – Corporate Director, Finance & Resources</p>	To follow.	07/11/23
	<p>Review Areas of Focus for Town Centre Management Function:</p> <p>The Task Group recommend reviewing the areas of focus for the town centre management function, whereby resource can be balanced against need; and work duplication prevented.</p>	<p>Cllr Muhammed Butt – Leader of the Council</p> <p>Cllr Mili Patel - Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources & Reform</p> <p>Minesh Patel – Corporate Director, Finance & Resources</p>	To follow.	07/11/23
	<p>Mitigate the impact of reducing the library stock budget:</p> <p>Explore external options to leverage additional resources for our most vulnerable residents, such as the promotion of schemes (e.g. Letterbox Club run by BookTrust) offering free books to vulnerable and disadvantaged children. This</p>	<p>Cllr Muhammed Butt – Leader of the Council</p> <p>Cllr Mili Patel - Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources & Reform</p>	To follow.	07/11/23

	could help offset the impact of the proposal on disadvantaged residents and children; and could assist with ensuring children in Brent have equal access to a broad range of reading material.	Minesh Patel – Corporate Director, Finance & Resources		
	<p>Mitigate the impact of reducing the Corporate Learning and Training budget:</p> <p>Be guided by staff satisfaction surveys when deciding what training courses to discontinue as part of the reduction to the Corporate Learning and Training budget (proposal GOV03).</p>	<p>Cllr Muhammed Butt – Leader of the Council</p> <p>Cllr Mili Patel - Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources & Reform</p> <p>Minesh Patel – Corporate Director, Finance & Resources</p>	To follow.	07/11/23
19 July 2023– Budget Update - Medium Term Financial Strategy	Continue to lobby central government for additional 'levelling up' investment in Brent to offset the impact of future budget proposals.	<p>Cllr Muhammed Butt – Leader of the Council</p> <p>Cllr Mili Patel - Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources & Reform</p> <p>Minesh Patel – Corporate Director, Finance & Resources</p>	To follow.	07/11/23
	Invite the scrutiny chairs to informal cabinet meetings (as appropriate) when budget challenges/complexities (and any other relevant matters) arise.	<p>Cllr Muhammed Butt – Leader of the Council</p> <p>Cllr Mili Patel - Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources & Reform</p> <p>Alex Freeman – Head of the Leader's Office,</p>	To follow.	07/11/23

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Suggestions for improvement from RPRSC to Council departments/partners

Meeting date and agenda item	Suggestions for improvement	Council Department/External Partner	Response / Status
19 July 2023– Budget Update - Medium Term Financial Strategy	Provide benchmarking data to accompany figures/statistics provided in all future scrutiny committee reports.	Minesh Patel – Corporate Director, Finance & Resources	Where possible, we will seek to include benchmarking data.
	Draft future scrutiny committee reports in lay man language, avoiding jargon where possible.	Minesh Patel – Corporate Director, Finance & Resources	Budget reports are drafted in a particular manner and format to meet statutory responsibilities such as demonstrating a legally balanced budget, value for money, financial resilience and sustainability etc. However, the recommendation is accepted to ensure reports can be understood by the general public and particularly the diverse communities in Brent.
	In relation to the development of the Council's Budget for 2024-25, and 2025-26: a. Ensure that each budget proposal is categorised as one of: Cut; Income generation; Service transformation; Efficiency; or Investment for transparency purposes. This language should also be used in Council	Minesh Patel – Corporate Director, Finance & Resources	These recommendations are accepted in full.

	<p>communications in order for residents to distinguish between the proposals which are cuts/service reductions, those which are investments, and those which are efficiencies/service transformation.</p> <p>b. Ensure that the Council's vision, mission, and strategic priorities (as outlined in the borough plan) are communicated clearly when consulting residents, partners, and businesses on the Draft Budget for 2024-25, and 2025-26. This should be inclusive of any current/planned activity to support the most vulnerable/marginalised residents in the borough.</p> <p>c. Explore further opportunities for investment/income generation to offset the impact that many of the upcoming proposals will have on vital council services.</p> <p>d. Set budgets based on realistic levels of growth in demand for services and inflation as well as realistic mitigations to contain overspends.</p>		
<p>19 July 2023– Shared Service Performance &</p>	<p>Involve the Committee in testing the Council's cyber-resilience plans.</p>	<p>Minesh Patel – Corporate Director, Finance & Resources</p>	<p>We will be conducting a cyber exercise later in the year which we will include members to participate or oversee. Learning and outcomes will be shared.</p>

Cyber Security	Deliver bespoke (in-person) cyber security training to all members in addition to the standard yearly training provided.	Minesh Patel – Corporate Director, Finance & Resources	We will carry out specific members development sessions and bespoke face to face training on Cyber Security, including responsibilities that members have to carry out for their roles.
	Improve internal and external communications, sharing more widely good practice studies relating to the Council's cyber security activities.	Minesh Patel – Corporate Director, Finance & Resources	Where able to we will share learning with staff to ensure that that they are educated on cyber issues.

Information requests from RPRSC to Council departments/partners

Meeting date and agenda item	Information requests	Council Department/External Partner	Responses / Status
15 Dec 2022 – Redefining Local Services: Update on the Integrated Street Cleansing, Waste Collections and Winter Maintenance Services Contract Procurement Programme	Provide additional information on the small percentage of residents who will be impacted by the proposed changes to the eligibility criteria in the bulky waste free collection policy from April 2024. <i>**this additional request was made at a later Committee meeting on 22 February 2023.</i>	Chris Whyte – Director of Environment & Leisure, Resident Services	Response to be provided by 01/09/2023.

19 July 2023– Budget Update - Medium Term Financial Strategy	Provide analysis of savings made since 2018, specifically a breakdown of the savings made which equate to service reductions.	Minesh Patel – Corporate Director, Finance & Resources	This recommendation is accepted and will be shared with the Committee in November 2023.
	Provide progress update on activities to reduce overspends in the Children & Young People’s directorate.	Minesh Patel – Corporate Director, Finance & Resources Nigel Chapman– Corporate Director, Children & Young People	This recommendation is accepted and will be shared with the Committee as part of the Budget Scrutiny Task Group review.
19 July 2023– Shared Service Performance & Cyber Security	Provide RAG rated version of the Brent Cyber Security Strategy 2022-2026: Implementation Plan for the Committee to understand progress made so far.	Minesh Patel – Corporate Director, Finance & Resources	We will provide an update with the RAG status by the end of September 2023.
	Provide further detail on how the Council is ensuring third party suppliers are adhering to Brent’s cyber security strategy and requirements. This should be inclusive of the findings from the third-party supplier survey currently underway.	Minesh Patel – Corporate Director, Finance & Resources	We have developed a third-party assurance framework and security board who will oversee deployment and actions coming out of the framework, an assessment report will be shared with the Committee in six months’ time.