

Strategic Risk Update

September 2023



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1. Risk evaluation matrix

The following impact and likelihood criteria are used to evaluate and articulate the Council's Strategic Risks.

Risk Impact Matrix				
Impact	Financial	Service Delivery	Health and Wellbeing	Reputation
5	Major Financial loss (above £2m)	Major disruption to a number of critical services	Multiple deaths / serious life-changing injuries / extreme safeguarding concerns.	Long term damage – e.g. adverse national publicity.
4	Significant Financial loss (above £1m)	Major disruption to a critical service.	Multiple casualties with life changing injuries / significant safeguarding concerns.	Medium to long term damage – e.g. adverse local publicity.
3	Moderate Financial Loss (less than £1m)	Moderate disruption to a critical service	Moderate risk of injury / noticeable safeguarding risks.	Medium term damage
2	Small Financial loss (less than £500k)	Moderate disruption to an important service.	Low level injuries / safeguarding risks.	Short term damage
1	Minor financial loss (less than £100k)	Brief disruption to important service	No immediate impacts to health or wellbeing	Some damage to specific functions

Risk Likelihood Matrix		
5	Very Likely	This event is expected to occur in most circumstances.
4	Likely	There is a strong possibility this event will occur.
3	Possible	This event might occur at some point and/or there is history of occurrence of this risk at this and/or other Councils.
2	Unlikely	Not expected, but there's a slight possibility it may occur at some point.
1	Rare	Highly unlikely, but it may occur in exceptional circumstances. It could happen, but probably never will.

3. Strategic Risk Dashboard

Ref	Risk Title	CMT Sponsor	Previous Risk Score (January 2023)	Current Risk Score (September 2023)	Trend	Target Risk Score	Difference between current and target score
A.	Cost of Living Crisis	Corporate Director Resident Services	20 (I:4 x L:5)	20 (I:4 x L:5)	↔	15 (I:3 x L:5)	+5
B.	Increase in Dedicated Schools Grant High Needs Block (HNB) Deficit	Corporate Director Children and Young People	25 (I:5 x L:5)	20 (I:5 x L:4)	↓	16 (I:4 x L:4)	+4
C.	Lack of supply of affordable accommodation	Corporate Director Resident Services	20 (I:5 x L:4)	20 (I:5 x L:4)	↔	10 (I:5 x L:2)	+10
D.	Increase in the use of emergency Temporary Accommodation	Corporate Director Resident Services	<i>n/a – new strategic risk</i>	20 (I:5 x L:4)	<i>n/a – new strategic risk</i>	10 (I:5 x L:2)	+10
E.	Non-Compliance with Statutory Housing Duties	Corporate Director Resident Services	<i>n/a – new strategic risk</i>	15 (I:5 x L:3)	<i>n/a – new strategic risk</i>	5 (I:5 x L:1)	+10
F.	Cyber Attacks	Corporate Director Finance and Resources	16 (I:4 x L:4)	16 (I:4 x L:4)	↔	12 (I:3 x L:4)	+4
G.	Serious child protection incident or wider safeguarding concern	Corporate Director Children and Young People	<i>n/a – new strategic risk</i>	12 (I:4 x L:3)	<i>n/a – new strategic risk</i>	12 (I:4 x L:3)	=
H.	Safeguarding Incident - Adults	Corporate Director Adult Social Care and Public Health	<i>n/a – new strategic risk</i>	10 (I:5 x L:2)	<i>n/a – new strategic risk</i>	10 (I:5 x L:2)	=
I.	Financial Resilience and Sustainability	Corporate Director Finance and Resources	10 (I:5 x L:2)	10 (I:5 x L:2)	↔	10 (I:5 x L:2)	=
J.	Recruitment and Retention	Corporate Director Governance	12 (I:3 x L:4)	12 (I:3 x L:4)	↔	6 (I:3 x L:2)	+6
I.	Contract Management	Corporate Director Governance	9 (I:3 x L:3)	9 (I:3 x L:3)	↔	6 (I:3 x L:2)	+3

4. Strategic Risks Plans – detailed information and action plans

Key: Cause, event, consequence

A. Cost of living crisis			
Risk Summary	Risk update (recent developments, progress and concerns)	Risk Scores	Existing Controls:
<p>The cost of living crisis caused by the war in Ukraine, Covid-19, Brexit and high rates of inflation impacts on Brent residents resulting in more families and households falling into hardship, leading to increased levels of service demand on the Council and additional pressure on front-line services.</p>	<p>The cost of living crisis has continued to have an impact on the residents of Brent and the Council is committed to doing what it can to support those in greatest need. Inflation has continued to increase and this has affected the cost of food and fuel. The impact on Brent, with its higher than average unemployment levels and lower wages for those in employment, is particularly severe.</p> <p>Service demand continues to rise with particular pressures on adults' and children's social care. Pressure on the homelessness service has also increased considerably, with an 122% increase in demand from families and single people who are either threatened with homelessness, or actually homeless from 2021/22 (2,936 applications) to 2022/23 (6,529 applications).</p> <p>The support services we have in place, including food and fuel support and the Resident Support Fund (RSF) are continuing to be well used. The RSF has supported 7,930 households with the cost of living in the period from August 2020 to March 2023. Support can be provided for household bills, arrears in rent, mortgage, Council Tax, food, fuel, digital equipment and emergency funds. The Government's Household Support Fund has been used to provide support with the cost of food and fuel. During 2022-23 the Council supported 94,000 households with a £150 rebate, funded by Government grants, to help with the cost of energy bills. 27,014 households were receiving Council Tax Support as of 31 May 2023 and the total support provided in 2023-24 is forecast to be around £32.8m.</p> <p>Demand for support from Brent Hubs continues to be high, most common needs which residents present with at the Hubs are food and fuel support (25%), housing costs (18%), homelessness (11%), form filling – such as RSF applications (16%), debt and money (7%), welfare benefits (7%), and other, for example, employment, general support, immigration etc (16%). VCS services are also seeing high demand.</p>	<p>Previous: I: 4 L: 5 T: 20</p> <p>Current: I: 4 L: 5 T: 20</p> <p>Target: I: 3 L: 5 T: 15</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The Brent RSF has been in place since August 2020. Up to £3m is available via the RSF in 2023-24 along with approx. £5.6m from the Government Housing Support and Family Food funds. Other support has been provided via government grants and the Council Tax Support scheme. ➤ A cross council steering group, chaired by the Corporate Director for Resident Services, is in place to oversee the Council's response with a wide range of support measures already in place. ➤ A range of support has been put in place including a food and fuel poverty toolkit, the Brent Well and Warm scheme and warm spaces. ➤ As part of the Cost of Living Outcome Based review, a number of interventions are being tested including a community shop and kitchen based support scheme, a crisis response fund, and additional debt and immigration advice provision. This work will feed into the development of a new approach to Resident Support (see action 5 below) ➤ A Financial Inclusion Dashboard has been developed which draws together data from across various datasets, including council tax support and benefits. This is used to identify

	<p>A number of interventions are being tested as part of the Cost of Living outcome based review work. Evaluation will feed into development of options for resident support which will move from a focus on crisis support (based on Government grant funding) to a model which provides residents with the tools and support to improve their situation in the longer term.</p>		<p>residents who may need targeted supports (i.e. in arrears). It also provides a strategic oversight for senior management.</p>
Action Plan		CMT Sponsor: Corporate Director Resident Services	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To complete and evaluate a prototype wellbeing scheme based around a community shop and kitchen and use learning from this to develop longer term approaches (by November 2023). 2. To complete and evaluate a scheme to enable front line organisations to support residents in urgent need of access to support (by November 2023). 3. To prototype a training programme for frontline council and partner organisation staff to enable them to better spot signs of hardship and to refer to appropriate support. Alongside this, to increase the capacity for specialist money, and debt and immigration advice and support in Brent (By November 2023). 4. To continue to enhance the FI Dashboard by adding additional data sets and using this (as well as using data from the 2021 Census) to get a better understanding of the impact of the crisis in Brent and to target residents in need of support (by March 2024). 5. To develop a proposed future model for Resident Support, using learning from the prototyping activity, which will move from a focus on crisis support (based on Government grant funding) to a model which provides residents with the tools and support to improve their situation in the longer term (By November 2023). 			

B. Increase in Dedicated Schools Grant High Needs Block (HNB) Deficit

Risk Summary	Risk update (recent developments, progress and concerns)	Risk Scores	Existing Controls:
<p>There is a risk that current deficit will continue to rise due to an increase in the number of children needing Education and Health Care Plans (EHCP). This could have an adverse impact on the ability to meet the needs of pupils who require special educational support and the Council's legal obligation to meet the educational needs of children in the borough. There is also likely to be an adverse impact on the ability to meet the DfE's requirement to produce a balanced DSG budget.</p>	<p>At the end of the financial year 2022/23 the overall DSG deficit due to pressures in the High Needs Block was £13.8m, a reduction from the 2021/22 end of year position of £15.1m. The High Needs Block contribution to the reduction was £0.3m in response to a range of actions, including tighter financial management controls to ensure full cost recovery from other local authorities that place pupils in Brent special schools. However, cost avoidance continues to be required over the next 5 years, despite an increase of 10% of HNB funding in 2023/24. The LA's modelling includes a forecast assumption of an increase of 8% in HNB funding in 2024/25 and 3% thereafter.</p> <p>The current Management Plan assumes a slowdown in the growth of EHCPs from 16% to 7% in response to a range of targeted actions. The department continues to progress against the themes of the Management Plan, which are Managing Demand, Improving Sufficiency of Places and Financial Management. The forecast for the mitigating actions and cost avoidance actions in the Management Plan, which have been quantified, will realise a reduction in spend of circa £8m by 2025-26. However, a reduction in the HNB funding in future years would have an impact on the reduction against the cumulative deficit if demand for EHCPs continues to grow.</p> <p>The Council is participating in the Department for Education Delivering Better Value in SEND support programme (DBV), that commenced in autumn 2022. The DBV is a 3 year transformation programme aimed at supporting 55 local authorities with substantial deficit issues to reform their high needs systems. A comprehensive diagnostic process has been undertaken to identify the underlying cost drivers of the high needs system and potential reforms to manage/mitigate these cost drivers more effectively. The DfE has provided Brent with £1m grant funding to pilot and implement system changes aimed at realising efficiencies.</p> <p>There is limited opportunity to recover the historical deficit. This is due to the insufficient resources allocated to implement the Children and Family Act legislation in 2015. However, this is a national issue. The regulations that are in place to carry forward a deficit balance against the DSG were due to end in 2022/23. However, this statutory override has been extended for another three years until 2025/26.</p>	<p>Previous: I: 5 L: 5 T: 25</p> <p>Current: I: 5 L: 4 T: 20</p> <p>Target: I: 4 L: 4 T: 16</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Bi-Monthly task group led by Corporate Directors of CYP and Finance, the DSG management plan is realising some traction. There was no in-year deficit in 2022/23 despite additional cost burdens for special school staffing and pensions being funded through the HNB. ➤ A tighter oversight of the criteria of EHCP assessments and plans, including annual reviews, will support demand management. ➤ Brent's participation in the Delivering Better Value (DBV) programme. DBV analysis has demonstrated the impact of management controls – placement moves and number of EHCP – over the last 12 months. This will continue to be monitored as the DBV programme progresses.

Action Plan**CMT Sponsor: Corporate Director Children and Young People**

To reduce costs to set an in year balanced budget and then start to recover the cumulative deficit through:

1. Looking to establish more SEND provision in the borough as part of the School Place Planning Strategy Refresh, including developing new Additionally Resourced Provisions in the academic years 2023/2024- 2024/25. This will reduce the need for young people to be placed in schools in other boroughs and in high cost non-maintained independent special schools.
2. As part of the DBV programme the council has been awarded £1m non-recurrent grant to pump prime a change programme in Brent over the 2023/24 and 2024/25 financial years. The programme of activity includes piloting an early targeted intervention programme for children under 7; a new quality assurance team; a review of banding costs and new commissioning approaches. The programme is overseen by the Corporate Director of Children and Young People and Corporate Director of Resources.
3. The introduction of the SEN Support service with the expectation to manage demand, as part of the Graduated Response Programme; improved quality EHCP assessment; and person centred planning and SMART annual reviews. Therefore, young people will be provided with earlier support, thereby reducing the need for an EHCP to trigger additional support. £0.5m has been approved by the Schools Forum for SEN Support.
4. Continued tighter financial management controls.
5. Continued central government lobbying.

C. Lack of supply of affordable accommodation

Risk Summary	Risk update (recent developments, progress, and concerns)	Risk Scores	Existing Controls:
<p>There is a risk that because of the limited supply of affordable accommodation, in the PRS, settled Temporary Accommodation (TA) and Social Housing, there is insufficient supply of accommodation to meet the demand from homeless households and meet statutory duties. This has led to greater reliance on emergency temporary accommodation, which is having an impact on the wellbeing and quality of life for residents and is also an additional burden on the general fund.</p>	<p>The Housing Needs Service has seen a 122% increase in demand from families and single people who are either threatened with homelessness, or homeless from 2021/22 (2,936 applications) to 2022/23 (6,529 applications). Whilst the COVID – 19 pandemic, associated lockdowns and the ban on Private Rented Sector (PRS) evictions may have been a factor in this growth, demand for homelessness services continues to grow. There has been a 24% increase in demand in Q1 of 2023/24, compared with the same quarter last year. If demand continues at the same rate, the service will receive a total of 7,700 applications in 2023/24, an average of 148 applications every week.</p> <p>This increase in demand is being driven by affordability issues and rising rents. The fact that Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates have been frozen since April 2020, has significantly reduced the number of properties affordable in London under LHA. Between January and March 2023, only 2.3 per cent of London listings on Rightmove were affordable to people using benefits to pay their rent – falling from 18.9 per cent in 2020-21. The use of PRS properties are essential to help meet demand from homeless households. However. Rental listings have fallen across London, the overall reduction is 41 per cent down on the 2017 average, making it increasingly difficult to procure PRS properties to prevent or relieve homelessness as well as ending the main homelessness duty to move people on from TA.</p> <p>The greatest control we can exert on the model is building new Council-owned supply, and encouraging RSLs to build what we need. We can also exert control through social housing re-lets/voids, and private rented sector offers. The Housing Needs Team also support households to secure work, and to improve their economic circumstances as well as help at an earlier stage, to prevent homelessness. However, this is becoming increasingly more difficult due high demand and the lack of supply of affordable accommodation.</p> <p>The New Council Home Programme is under pressure financially due to significant changes in the market (both inflation and cost rises). As a result, the Council is having to consider cross subsidising schemes by converting some homes to shared ownership, reducing the number of homes available for homeless households.</p>	<p>Previous: I: 5 L: 4 T: 20</p> <p>Current: I: 5 L: 4 T: 20</p> <p>Target: I: 5 L: 2 T: 10</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A Housing Needs group, chaired by the Head of Housing Needs, is in place to monitor the Council's use of emergency accommodation. ➤ Homelessness services focused on prevention to decrease demand. ➤ Brent is a founder member of Capital Letters to increase supply of affordable PRS accommodation. ➤ I4B created to increase supply of affordable PRS accommodation. ➤ Two purpose built emergency TA schemes delivered, with a third due to be delivered in 2025.
Action Plan		CMT Sponsor: Corporate Director Resident Services	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To continue delivering the New Council Homes Programme to increase supply of affordable homes. 2. To continue to acquire street properties through i4B. 3. To ensure completion of a new temporary accommodation scheme that would provide an additional 100 units of temporary accommodation. 4. To continue to work with Private Sector property owners to procure affordable accommodation. 			

5. Continued emphasis on the prevention of homelessness and promote the Find Your Home scheme to encourage households who are threatened with homelessness to source their own PRS accommodation.
6. Determine the financial viability of bringing empty properties on the South Kilburn Regeneration scheme back into use as TA.

D. Increase in the use of emergency Temporary Accommodation

Risk Summary	Risk update (recent developments, progress, and concerns)	Risk Scores	Existing Controls:
<p>There is a risk that because of increased demand from homeless households coupled with a lack of supply of affordable accommodation, there is an increased use of emergency Temporary Accommodation (TA). This greater reliance on nightly paid emergency temporary accommodation is leading to increased pressure on the Council's financial position via a projected revenue overspend and a subsidy loss.</p>	<p>Once the Council accepts that a household is Eligible, Homeless, and in Priority Need, as defined by legislation, there is an immediate statutory duty to secure suitable interim accommodation, pending further enquiries into the application. All families, with dependent children are automatically in Priority Need, and therefore trigger the duty to secure suitable interim accommodation. Other people must prove they are 'vulnerable,' which means they would be at much greater risk of harm than most people if they become homeless. Therefore, single people who meet this vulnerability test trigger the duty to secure suitable interim accommodation.</p> <p>Once enquiries are complete and the main homelessness duty is accepted, the household is usually moved on into either a Private Rented Sector (PRS) property to end their homelessness, or into settled TA (leased from private owners). However, there has been a severe contraction of affordable PRS properties that are available, which coupled with increased demand from homeless households, has led to a silting up of emergency TA.</p> <p>As these issues are London wide, the availability of B&B and Annexe accommodation is severely restricted across the Capital, with many Councils being forced to book rooms in commercial hotels such as the Travelodge, to meet statutory duties. This lack of availability of accommodation has resulted in the service using an accommodation provider in High Wycombe, at higher rates than we would normally pay. This is leading to a projected overspend of £5.1m, as well as projected subsidy loss of £7.5m.</p> <p>Another important consequence is that non-self-contained accommodation is not deemed as suitable accommodation, for the purpose of the Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (England) Order 2003, for a homeless applicant who is pregnant or has children in his / her household for a period longer than 6 weeks. The Council is currently in breach of this Suitability of Accommodation Order, with over 40 families currently in B&B accommodation for over 6 weeks and this number continues to grow.</p>	<p>Previous: n/a – new risk</p> <p>Current: I: 5 L: 4 T: 20</p> <p>Target: I: 5 L: 2 T: 10</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A Housing Needs group, chaired by the Head of Housing Needs, is in place to monitor the Council's use of emergency accommodation. ➤ Homelessness services focused on prevention to decrease demand. ➤ Brent is a founder member of Capital Letters to increase supply of affordable PRS accommodation. ➤ I4B created to increase supply of affordable PRS accommodation. ➤ 2 purpose built emergency TA schemes delivered, with a third due to be delivered in 2025. ➤ The cohort of families in B&B over 6 weeks is closely monitored at a bi-weekly meeting on the use of emergency TA, where officers ensure that any self-contained rooms that become available, are allocated to these families.
Action Plan		CMT Sponsor: Corporate Director Resident Services	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To continue delivering the New Council Homes Programme to increase supply of affordable homes. 2. To continue to acquire street properties through i4B. 3. To continue to work with Private Sector property owners to procure affordable accommodation. 			

4. Continued emphasis on the prevention of homelessness and promote the Find Your Home scheme to encourage households who are threatened with homelessness to source their own PRS accommodation.
5. Determine the financial viability of bringing empty properties on the South Kilburn Regeneration scheme back into use as TA.
6. Ensure 100% of households living in TA have a live Housing Benefit claim to maximize income.

E. Non-compliance with Statutory Housing Duties

Risk Summary	Risk update (recent developments, progress and concerns)	Risk Scores	Existing Controls:
<p>Failure to comply with statutory Housing management service requirements and deadlines, may result in a serious health and safety incident, which may lead to serious injuries and/or fatalities, reputational damage, fines and/or imprisonment.</p>	<p>As a landlord we have to ensure we are complying with all of our statutory duties and health and safety compliance particularly Fire, Legionella, Asbestos, Gas and Electric (FLAGE) form part of those duties. Failure in any of the areas would be a breach of the consumer standards and the Council would be subject to sanctions from the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH).</p> <p>Following the Grenfell Tower inquiry findings published in October 2019, there was a number of recommendations made to prevent such a tragedy from ever happening again. The Government undertook to introduce new regulations based on these recommendations. These regulations take the form of the Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022 and extend duties imposed by the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.</p> <p>The Building Safety Act 2022 was introduced to improve the housing safety standards for residents giving them more rights and protections. The Building Safety Regulator (BSR) will oversee the safety and performance of all buildings with a special focus on high rise buildings.</p> <p>The above have stipulated actions that have to be completed by certain deadlines to show assurance that our buildings are safe and to avoid any further actions by the Building Safety Regulator. One example is the preparation of Building Safety Cases for our 41 High Rise Blocks by April 2024.</p> <p>We have introduced centralised compliance system to help monitor health and safety compliance. We are currently working to the deadlines of the Building Safety Act 2022 and the Fire Safety Regulation 2022. We have not been successful in the permanent recruitment of our Strategic Compliance Manager or Building Safety Manager posts, which are key post in delivering the above legislation. However, we have an Interim Strategic Compliance Manager started in September.</p>	<p>Previous: n/a – new risk</p> <p>Current: I: 5 L: 3 T: 15</p> <p>Target: I: 5 L: 1 T: 5</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Monthly compliance reporting to DMT. ➤ Monthly Building Safety Action Plan monitoring in HMB ➤ Weekly Building Safety Action Plan monitoring. ➤ CMT bimonthly monitoring of Building Safety Action Plan. ➤ Quarterly compliance updates to RSH
Action Plan		CMT Sponsor: Corporate Director Resident Services	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish an operational working group for all key officers to oversee the response to the Building Safety Act and Fire Safety Regulations (by September 2023). 2. Develop process for updating the vulnerable tenants list in secure boxes and providing evacuation information directly to all residents every 12 months (by September 2023). 3. Register all required buildings with the Building Safety Regulator including structural and safety data (by September 2023). 4. Ensure all compliance information is uploaded to True Compliance so it can be easily reported. (by September 2023) 5. Provide building safety case reports for all high-risk buildings (by April 2024) 6. Agree a joint strategy corporately for all new buildings to ensure Golden Thread/BIM information is available to BHM through one system (by December 2023) 7. Develop building safety engagement plans for all high-risk blocks which include how and when updates and information will be provided, and residents will be engaged with re. building safety decisions. Share engagement plan with all residents aged 16+ and agree schedule for review (by November 2023). 			

F. Cyber Attacks

Risk Summary	Risk update (recent developments, progress and concerns)	Risk Scores	Existing Controls:
<p>There is a heightened threat of Cyber-attacks. If attackers were successful, this would potentially impact all services, to the extent that service provision would be significantly affected in the first instance. Sensitive data may be published online resulting in significant fines from the ICO and reputational damage to the Council.</p>	<p>Several Councils have been subject to Cyber-attacks. The Cabinet Office are advising that there is a heightened security risk level at the current time. Shared Technology Services (STS) and strategic partners have deployed technologies and processes to enhance our cyber protection. The protection in place for the Council to prevent an intrusion is considered high however, recent attacks impacting councils and other public sector organisations have targeted backup systems and third party suppliers. STS and Brent have cyber strategies in place and are in the process of updating those strategies in light of the prevailing threats. Considerable investment has been made to improve cyber security; implementing a new backup solution and additional controls around the backup process, including taking and storing offline backups for added security.</p> <p>However, the level and type of threat continues to evolve, shifting our focus to perimeter monitoring and protection. Learning from recent security exercises have been used to develop new plans to mitigate attacks, enabling Brent to better manage incidents when they arise. Brent will continue to work with strategic partners to combat cyber-security threats.</p> <p>Brent continues to benchmark its approach and learn from the experiences of others. A recent Cyber 360 review by the LGA included positive feedback about the cyber security culture and governance within the council.</p>	<p>Previous: I: 4 L: 4 T: 16</p> <p>Current: I: 4 L: 4 T: 16</p> <p>Target: I: 3 L: 4 T: 12</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Implemented tools to monitoring and detects abnormal activity. ➤ Security Logging and Endpoint Management. ➤ Enhanced awareness and training across specialist IT and all Brent users. ➤ Continuous development and testing of Cyber Playbooks. ➤ Developing strategic partnership with third party security specialists. ➤ investment in an enhanced backup solution.
Action Plan		CMT Sponsor: Corporate Director Finance and Resources	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We have now implemented a suite of tools (enabled in part by the recent investment in M365 E5 licenses), allowing greater security logging and event management through a centralised alerting platform. 2. Develop cyber security monitoring capabilities of on-premise, cloud-based systems and third party environment. 3. Arranging a table-top exercise for our Cyber Playbooks with executive level involvement. 4. Enhanced training for IT staff within STS and Brent IT teams on cyber, security and technology. 5. Carry out independent peer reviews of Tier 1 systems. 6. Test disaster recovery of key line of business systems. 7. Obtain supply chain cyber security assurance from application vendors. 			

G. Risk of a serious child protection incident or wider safeguarding concern involving children and young people

Risk Summary	Risk update (recent developments, progress and concerns)	Risk Scores	Existing Controls:
<p style="color: green; font-weight: bold;">There is a risk of a serious child protection incident or wider safeguarding concern involving children and young people due to increased demand and/or a failure in quality assurance processes. This could have an adverse impact on multi-agency partnership working, community confidence in local safeguarding practice, weakening of existing systems resulting in a downgrading of the local authority's Ofsted rating and pressure on the departmental budget to mitigate for any wider system failure.</p>	<p>The ILACS Inspection of CYP took place in February 2023 and judged the service to be Good in all areas including overall effectiveness. A Practice Improvement Plan is in place to ensure that the service continues to improve and updates provided to senior leaders on a regular basis to check that progress and impact is on track. This is supported by strong multi agency working, both at an operational level about individual children and via the various strategic forums in place.</p> <p>Demand for services and the complexity of work has increased following the pandemic. There are controls in place to ensure that caseloads are kept at manageable levels coupled with strong management support, training and reflective supervision of staff. This is further strengthened with an ongoing programme of quality assurance activity and regular briefings on high profile incidents and referrals.</p> <p>There is a national shortage of social workers and high usage of agency staff as a result. The London Pledge is in place to maintain the consistency of agency rates being applied. There are a range of initiatives in place to recruit and retain permanent staff supported by a Workforce Development Plan, and a Workforce Development Group chaired by the Corporate Director of CYP. This includes a grow your own programme, step up to social work scheme and international recruitment from India.</p> <p>There is an overspend on the staffing budgets in social care teams due to the high use of agency staff. An Establishment Board is in place, chaired by the Director of Integration and Improved Outcomes to monitor spend against established posts with controls in place to prevent over establishment recruitment taking place. This is enabling a tighter grip on recruitment and providing opportunities to target agency staff for agency to permanent recruitment, as well as helping to shape recruitment campaigns in specific difficult to recruit areas. This in turn will achieve cost avoidance and reduce the current overspend on staffing. Seven agency staff have so far converted to permanent roles this year.</p>	<p>Previous: n/a – new strategic risk</p> <p>Current: I: 4 L: 3 T: 12</p> <p>Target: I: 4 L: 3 T: 12</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Bi-Monthly Workforce Development Group chaired by the Corporate Director of CYP to monitor initiatives in the Workforce Development Plan. ➤ A weekly Establishment Board to ensure tighter oversight of recruitment of posts against the establishment and available budget. ➤ Brent's participation in the London Pledge for agency staff recruitment to maintain day rates at agreed levels. ➤ Practice improvement plan and implementation of existing quality assurance framework.
Action Plan		CMT Sponsor: Corporate Director Children and Young People	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Monthly monitoring of performance data to review demand, trends, throughput of casework and caseloads. Exception reporting on areas where there is pressure or work in the system that is performing below expected targets with additional monitoring in place. 2. Learning on complex and high profile cases within service areas and within the existing safeguarding partnership structures. 3. Targeted recruitment campaigns and continued focus on agency to permanent recruitment. 4. Continued tighter financial management controls. 			

H. Safeguarding Incident - Adults

Risk Summary	Risk update (recent developments, progress and concerns)	Risk Scores	Existing Controls:
<p style="color: green; font-weight: bold;">There is a risk that there is a serious safeguarding incident involving a vulnerable adult in Brent, meaning the Council would be required to investigate and respond, and minimise the risk to the individual wherever possible. Depending on the incident and response, this may attract adverse publicity and/or require a Safeguarding Adults Review.</p>	<p>ASC have a Safeguarding Adult Team that operate according to the Pan-London Safeguarding procedures, and who have been recently audited and found to have no significant areas of concern. The service works to minimise safeguarding concerns and prevent abuse wherever possible, however there is a realistic acceptance that not all safeguarding incidents can be avoided.</p> <p>There has been a sustained increase in referrals to the Safeguarding service since the relaxing of Covid lock-down measures which has put the team under considerable pressure to respond within the necessary timeframes.</p> <p>Safeguarding is often termed to be 'everybody's business' and requires robust information sharing to ensure the statutory criteria for decision making is evidenced. Previous Safeguarding Adult Review (SAR) recommendations from 11th June 2019 have suggested in response to Adult B that Brent continues to collaborate with partner agencies and ensuring a co-production approach is maintained whenever possible, in line with commissioning services. Brent will need to continue to establish core-working relationships, and effective and creative care planning. It must also look to address the recording of information particularly safeguarding concerns and the way in which these are triaged. It must correlate with current GDPR and Equality Rights legislation by Adults Social Care officers. These areas are continually under review and work is ongoing. Not doing this could result in an increase in cross agency failing vulnerable adults within Brent.</p> <p>The challenges faced by services involved in safeguarding, noting the Board is to continually have a focus on obtaining assurances that all agencies continued to work effectively together, to ensure all adult safeguarding needs are met and continues to be managed effectively. If this is not done there is a risk of cases falling through the net and could result in incidence of near misses or untimely death.</p>	<p>Previous: <i>n/a – new strategic risk</i></p> <p>Current: I: 5 L: 2 T: 10</p> <p>Target: I: 5 L: 2 T: 10</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ There is a Safeguarding Adult Board in place, and it has an independent chair. ➤ The board set Annual priorities that are analysed across the system over the year. ➤ There is a Safeguarding Adults Review (SAR) Group in place that review all serious concerns and may recommend the case has a full review. These SAR enables the system to learn from any failings or near misses. ➤ Practice Audits are in place to drive a culture of personal and collective responsibilities and to identify areas for development across the service. ➤ The SAB has a responsibility to coordinate appropriate SA training for all partners annually. ➤ In addition, ASC commission SA training for staff based on training needs.

Action Plan	CMT Sponsor: Corporate Director ASC and Health
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1. The Department are due to undertake a 'Safety' self-assessment using the CQC framework to assure itself it has safe systems in place.
2. We have commissioned a Safeguarding review across the service, feedback will form our Safeguarding improvement plan

I. Financial Resilience and Sustainability

Risk Summary	Risk update (recent developments, progress and concerns)	Risk Scores	Existing Controls:
<p>The budget setting process may not account for emerging unknowns and/or there may be delays in delivering planned savings, which may impact on the Council's overall financial resilience and sustainability. This may result in the Council not having sufficient resources to fund all of its priorities or needing to find further savings to meet budget gaps.</p>	<p>Since 2010, Brent has delivered total cumulative savings of £196m. In 2021/22 and 2022/23, the Council saved £11.2m. £18m of savings are planned to be made in 2023/24 and 2024/25. In July 2023, the Corporate Director of Finance and Resources reported to Cabinet the overall financial position of the Council whilst highlighting the significant risks, issues and uncertainties with regards to the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) caused by economic turmoil resulting from war in Ukraine, high levels of inflation, rising interest rates, increased demand for key services, the effects of the cost-of-living crisis and uncertainty in government funding.</p> <p>The welcome decision by the government to provide two-year projections of government funding means that the Council can revert to its customary practice of setting a two-year budget covering 2024/25 and 2025/26. The high-level of uncertainty over the economic environment and the future funding of local government makes long-term financial planning difficult. As 2025/26 is an election year, the current budget plan front-loads the savings requirement. The current working assumption is that £8m of savings will be required between 2024/25 to 2025/26 to balance the budgets of those years. The exact gap is inherently uncertain, simply because of the number of variables to be estimated and the difficulty of doing so over longer periods of time. The accuracy of this is probably at best +/- 20%, and wider variations are entirely plausible.</p> <p>The new package of savings required to balance the budget for 2024/25 and 2025/26 will be the cornerstone of the Council's MTFS as it demonstrates that the Council is able to operate in a financially sustainable and resilient way.</p> <p>The Council monitors the delivery of planned savings, and mitigating actions where relevant, on a quarterly basis and these are reported to CMT and Cabinet. The significance of the financial risks cannot be underestimated and measures are being taken to ensure that the Council continues to operate in a financially sustainable and resilient way.</p>	<p>Previous: I: 5 L: 2 T: 10</p> <p>Current: I: 5 L: 2 T: 10</p> <p>Target: I: 5 L: 1 T: 5</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Each department monitors the delivery of planned savings, and mitigating actions where relevant, at its DMT. ➤ A Savings Tracker is reported to CMT and Cabinet. ➤ Savings proposals are subject to challenge and review prior to inclusion in the budget. ➤ Review of fees and charges and challenge of income assumptions. Workshops to review growth and savings proposals for realism and deliverability. ➤ Regular update reports to members on the economic environment and national and local challenges facing the Council.

Action Plan **CMT Sponsor: Corporate Director Finance and Resources**

1. To continue the ongoing robust budget monitoring regime and framework.
2. To set up a Budget Assurance Panel to provide oversight and scrutiny of its financial position, including in-year budget pressures and issues, mitigating actions and the delivery of agreed savings.

J. Recruitment and Retention

Risk Summary	Risk update (recent developments, progress and concerns)	Risk Scores	Existing Controls:
<p>Failure to recruit and retain sufficient permanent staff to a significant number of posts, including senior managers, leaves services without sufficient and/or sufficiently qualified staff leading to services being impaired and an overreliance on agency/interim staff.</p>	<p>Since a sharp increase in staff turnover in the first 3 months of 2022, this rate has persisted. We are also experiencing increasing challenges in recruitment, particularly in respect of traditionally hard to recruit sectors but also some roles in Housing and Finance. This is believed to reflect the increased aspirations of applicants in respect of their employment following the changes in the work environment during and since the pandemic and due to the current cost of living crisis.</p>	<p>Previous: I: 3 L: 4 T: 12</p> <p>Current: I: 3 L: 4 T: 12</p> <p>Target: I: 3 L: 2 T: 6</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A range of potential incentives have been implemented, including financial supplements that can be applied to 'hard to fill' posts, overseas recruitment and the Key Worker housing scheme. ➤ A number of new 'grow your own' incentives in Learning and Development have also been implemented, including coaching and mentoring programmes, leadership and development programmes, and expanding the upskilling of apprenticeships. ➤ Operationally, the new Oracle recruitment system is now in place which makes it easier for Managers to use, but also provides a better and more user-friendly experience for applicants. ➤ A new arrangement has been agreed with LinkedIn to promote Council adverts and vacancies. ➤ We have managed service provision for the supply of agency staff to mitigate the risks to services of vacancies while controlling cost and arrangements for approval of off contract spend. ➤ Head-hunting also continues via the MSP and external recruitment agencies for specialist/hard to recruit to roles.
Action Plan		CMT Sponsor: Corporate Director Governance	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Working with job board providers to maximise the functionality on offer to increase the profile of jobs at Brent. 2. Review of recruitment team operating model to increase the focus on direct sourcing activity. 3. Review of the Council's policies in relation to market supplements and other R&R allowances. 4. Review controls in respect of agency staff pay rates. 			

K. Contract Management

Risk Summary	Risk update (recent developments, progress and concerns)	Risk Scores	Existing Controls:
<p>There is a risk that due to operational, commercial, environmental or relationship issues, an important, high profile front line service may start to fail causing reputational problems for the council.</p>	<p>Internal Audit have reviewed the Contract Management tools and operational performance and provided some recommendations. A joint paper with Procurement was taken to CMT to review and agree next steps in December 2022. The paper set out various options. CMT agreed to the option of creating a Strategic Contracts Register, where evidence of contract performance will form part of the Annual Procurement Strategy report. A further paper was taken to CMT in May 23 providing a list of contracts that would form part of the Strategic Contracts Register and this was formally agreed.</p> <p>The latest version of Councils Contract Register has been updated and is shared with approved officers within the Council. A new process has also been implemented via MS Forms where the Procurement team can formally make changes and add to the contracts register. This process is also available to wider council to ask for changes to be made to the register if any errors are identified.</p> <p>The new Procurement Bill is in its final stages. There are various aspects in the Bill related to transparency on how we manage our contracts and make the public aware of how our key contracts are performing with various obligations the Council would need to adhere to. Once its given Royal Assent and becomes law early 2024 we will begin preparations to align ourselves with the requires of the Procurement Bill although we have already starting working on this now.</p>	<p>Previous: I: 3 L: 3 T: 9</p> <p>Current: I: 3 L: 3 T: 9</p> <p>Target: I: 3 L: 2 T: 6</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The contract management framework has been reviewed, revamped and updated. ➤ A Gateway 4 process has been agreed to work with the Directorates to review our commissioning intentions to determine if there are any opportunities through decommissioning, economies of scale or bottom line savings that can be delivered to support council objectives for contracts that require re-procuring for contracts up to Mar 24 ➤ Reconciliation of the Contracts register and Online register has been undertaken to ensure all the contracts published online are on the Contracts register. ➤ Segmentation of contracts has been undertaken from April 1 2022. ➤ A contract review template was created and signed off for 'Gateway 3'. This is conducted at the mid-term period of a contract valued above £2m and assesses if suppliers are adhering to the performance KPIs / outcomes set out in the contract and if we should be looking to invoke the extension clauses when they come up. ➤ All contracts that require a Gateway 3 and 4 will need to be presented at the

			<p>Commissioning and Procurement Board for comments and agreement.</p> <p>➤ Each Directorate will be sent their extract of the Contracts Register for review and feedback on a quarterly basis for feedback and sign off. This will support the requirement to ensure that all information is being kept relatively up to date.</p>
Action Plan		CMT Sponsor: Corporate Director Governance	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work with the various stakeholders across the Council to gather evidence to support good contract management is being undertaken across our Strategic Contracts Register. 2. Ensure Procurement are prepared to implement the requirements of the new Procurement Bill. 			