

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
24 Jan 2023 – Budget Scrutiny Task Group Findings 2023/24	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.	Cllr Muhammed Butt – Leader of the Council Cllr Shama Tatler - Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources & Reform Minesh Patel – Corporate Director, Finance & Resources	Response received on 27/10/23: This recommendation has been noted by the Cabinet and future reports will articulate how the budget aligns with the Borough Plan and any other applicable strategies. As members of the committee will have seen, the report template brought to Cabinet has also been refreshed – incorporating new elements around our Climate Emergency strategy.	07/11/23
	Proposal Categorisations: 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.	Cllr Muhammed Butt – Leader of the Council Cllr Shama Tatler - Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources & Reform Minesh Patel – Corporate Director, Finance & Resources	Response received on 27/10/23: Each year we publish hundreds of pages in budget analysis, including full Equalities Impact Assessments on each and every proposal. We will always take on feedback that helps maximise transparency and demystify the budget in any way we can. In this year’s budget proposals, we will set out the categorisation of each proposal and the nature of what it entails.	07/11/23
	Income Generation: <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 	Cllr Muhammed Butt – Leader of the Council Cllr Shama Tatler - Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources & Reform	Response received on 27/10/23: Parking The Council recently awarded new Parking Services contracts for Traffic and Civil Enforcement and Cashless Parking (Permits and Pay by Phone) services which commenced on 4th July 2023. The new contracts focus on improving operational	07/11/23

	<p>comparisons with other local authorities to learn from good practice.</p>	<p>Minesh Patel – Corporate Director, Finance & Resources</p>	<p>performance and efficiencies and improving the customer experience. It is anticipated that the new contracts will also result in savings that will be taken into consideration as part of the Councils medium term financial planning. There are various charges made by the service; Penalty Charge Notice charges are set under legislation but there is scope to review charges for permits, on-street and car park tariffs and suspensions. The Healthy Streets and Parking service intend to carry out a benchmarking exercise by December 2023 and consider reviewing charges.</p> <p>Parks The Parks team will undertake a benchmarking exercise across London boroughs to compare charges for events; whilst gaining a more in depth understanding of the range of opportunities that exist in other boroughs to allow us to understand how we could open our parks to more interested groups and organisations.</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 Shama Tatler - Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources & Reform</p> <p>Minesh Patel – Corporate Director, Finance & Resources</p>	<p>Response received on 27/10/23: The 2023/24 budget agreed by Full Council in February 2023 provided a further £3m for the Resident Support Fund and £1m for the new Family Food Fund to support families experiencing food poverty. We will continue calling on the government to increase the funding available for all schemes aimed at providing additional financial support for residents.</p>	<p>07/11/23</p>
	<p>Additional Advice & Support for our Voluntary Sector partners:</p>	<p>Cllr Muhammed Butt – Leader of the Council</p>	<p>Response received on 27/10/23: Of the 4 VCS Contracts held in Strategy and Partnerships (Healthwatch, Voluntary Sector</p>	<p>07/11/23</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 Shama Tatler - Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources & Reform</p> <p>Minesh Patel – Corporate Director, Finance & Resources</p>	<p>Infrastructure, Independent Complaints and Advocacy and Independent Advice and Guidance) 3 were uplifted through the 2022 procurement exercise to reflect current need and inflationary pressures.</p> <p>Improvements are being made to the contract monitoring process to share impact and outcomes more widely.</p> <p>The Council already works closely with VCS organisations through Thematic Leads Networks which provides a structure that seeks to improve collaboration. The Council works very closely with CVS Brent on Income Generation for the Sector. One example is the Council Leading a community event to support organisations to access a new Mayor of London Fund called London Go. We will continue to support VCS organisation to collaborate and access funding.</p> <p>The priorities for the new Property Strategy will seek to include opportunities for partnership working with CVS groups that can demonstrate sustainable links to promoting Social Value in line with Brent's strategic priorities. To manage expectations, there will not be a blanket policy providing Council property at peppercorn rents as this will lead the Council taking fiscal responsibility for each tenant's operating costs, which is unsustainable, especially in an economy with high inflation and energy prices.</p>	
	<p>Equal Access for All Residents:</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 	<p>Cllr Muhammed Butt – Leader of the Council</p> <p>Cllr Shama Tatler - Deputy Leader and</p>	<p>Response received on 27/10/23:</p> <p>The approach set out in Brent's digital strategy 2023-26 is to provide improved digital access for those who want to transact online while</p>	<p>07/11/23</p>

	<p>accessibility needs to ensure that all residents have equal access to services and;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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>Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources & Reform</p> <p>Minesh Patel – Corporate Director, Finance & Resources</p>	<p>also making sure support is available both by phone and in person for those who need it.</p> <p>All of our digital solutions, including chat bots, involve extensive user testing and these are an additional access channel, they are not replacing more traditional channels. We provide face to face support for residents who need it via our network of Brent Hubs and via our digital champions and digital inclusion is a key strand of our digital programme.</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 Shama Tatler - Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources & Reform</p> <p>Minesh Patel – Corporate Director, Finance & Resources</p>	<p>Response received on 27/10/23: We welcome the suggestion for improving the EIA Template to capture their evidence where no impact is declared.</p> <p>The request for a cumulative equality assessment spanning the last 5 years will require a significant officer resource that is not available in the current iteration of the Equalities team.</p> <p>We will keep this recommendation under review, should resource or capacity within the wider team become available to support the request.</p> <p>In light of the constrained resources and publicised spending controls, we would ask that the Committee reconsider a more flexible timeframe and welcome any other ongoing suggestions to improve Equality Impact Assessments in any way we can.</p> <p>As always each proposal will include an individual Equality Impact Assessment.</p>	07/11/23
	<p>Increased Collaboration:</p>	<p>Cllr Muhammed Butt – Leader of the Council</p>	<p>Response received on 27/10/23: We are actively engaged with local partners – both statutory and providers – in driving</p>	07/11/23

<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 part of the review process currently taking place with Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust (CNWL) in the Integrated Care Partnership and; • Leverage sufficient financial contributions from the NHS (and other relevant anchor institutions) to improve the Health & Social Care function in Brent. 	<p>Cllr Shama Tatler - Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources & Reform</p> <p>Minesh Patel – Corporate Director, Finance & Resources</p>	<p>continuous improvement in care and support for Brent residents.</p> <p>Our Corporate Director is the co-chair of the Brent Integrated Care Partnership (ICP) and actively represents social care in local integrated developmental work. Additionally, each member of the department's management team is engaged in at least one of the ICP's workstreams. This gives us a strong social care voice in the ICP.</p> <p>We are represented by a Head of Service at the Health and Wellbeing Executive monthly meeting as chaired by the ICB, and at the Inclusion Strategic Board.</p> <p>Health and social care work teams work closely together to ensure the Winter Funds and the Better Care Fund are allocated to improve the system flow and better outcomes for residents.</p> <p>Beyond the borough, we also seek to learn from regional support bodies like London ADASS and are active contributors to its various workstreams.</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 	<p>Cllr Muhammed Butt – Leader of the Council</p> <p>Cllr Shama Tatler - Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources & Reform</p> <p>Minesh Patel – Corporate Director, Finance & Resources</p>	<p>Response received on 27/10/23: Much of this work is ongoing and iterative. Members will have noted that in the May 2023 local elections, the political leadership of the LGA changed. Members of the Cabinet participate in a variety of LGA Boards and London Councils committees – unashamedly with the aim of advancing the needs of Brent Council.</p> <p>DSG</p>	<p>07/11/23</p>

	<p>from central government, there is still a need for additional financial support to meet rising demand.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • 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>The DfE currently have 3 programmes running to support local authorities in deficit to understand the cost drivers of the deficits as this is a national challenge.</p> <p>This includes the safety valve programme for local authorities with very severe deficits, the Delivering Better Value (DBV) in SEND programme for less severe deficits and an ESFA programme to work with local authorities at risk of going into a deficit.</p> <p>Brent is part of the DBV programme with 54 other councils and Brent has been successful in receiving a £1million grant to support delivery of the actions against the Management Plan in place to recover the deficit.</p> <p>The learning gathered from the programme will provide two-way intelligence to government regarding the pressures and this has also enabled the increase in the funding for the next few years e.g. The 2022 Autumn Statement increased core funding to schools by £2 billion nationally for the next two financial years 2023/24 and 2024/25 of which £0.4 million is allocated to the HNB. For Brent, the means that the initial funding announcement for the HNB for 2023/24 was increased from a proposed 5% increase to a 10% increase.</p> <p>Parking Motorcycles are considered efficient users of road and parking space and, in general, produce less carbon and pollutant emissions than most motor vehicles. As such, the council has not considered introducing a new permit</p>	
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			<p>for motorcycles and they can park for free in pay and display bays, resident and shared use bays and council run car parks.</p> <p>Historically, it was not practical to issue these permits as the majority of permits were paper based and a paper permit would be difficult to display on a motorcycle. Now that the majority of permits are issued digitally (virtual permits), it is feasible to consider introducing charges. The introduction of motorcycle permits has recently been introduced by City of Westminster Council, Lewisham Council and Kensington and Chelsea. It is proposed to undertake a benchmarking review, and if the review supports the introduction of a motorcycle permit, a report to Cabinet with a recommendation to undertake a public consultation would be made in 2024.</p> <p>Funding Reforms</p> <p>The Cabinet continues to lobby the government through multiple channels, including through our Members of Parliament, the Mayor of London and through our GLA member.</p> <p>We work hand in glove with London Councils, the LGA and other organisations that are interested in the reform of local government resources.</p> <p>Gambling Licensing</p> <p>Brent Council is legally obliged to set its gambling licensing fees in accordance with The Gambling (Premises Licence Fees) (England and Wales) Regulations 2007.</p>	
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			<p>These Regulations provide discretion for the Council to set its fees at varying levels subject to statutory maximum amounts. In our case, Brent's fees are already set at the maximum amounts, often higher than other London boroughs who have chosen not taken the same approach to us. Unless new legislation prescribes otherwise, we cannot apply any further fee increases.</p> <p>It should also be noted we are seeing a decline in the number of new applications for gambling licences. This would limit the scope to increase gambling fee revenue which is currently circa £60K. If greater income was achieved, this is likely to be commensurate with an increase of processing costs which would be needed to cover the Licensing team costs.</p> <p>Short-Term Letting Licensing Short-Term Letting' legislation is not anticipated in the foreseeable future. The government launched a review into short-term tourist accommodation last year, however we have had no further update.</p> <p>The Scottish government set out legislation requiring all local authorities in the country to establish a licensing scheme for Airbnb type accommodation by October 2022, however there are currently no plans to do something similar in England.</p> <p>If it were to be implemented in England, it is likely to run like our licensing schemes for HMOs, however it is difficult at this stage to estimate what the market is like in Brent and therefore what the revenue might be. In</p>	
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			addition, if it was to be run like HMO licensing, it cannot be profit making and will only be allowed to cover the costs of running the scheme.	
	<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 Shama Tatler - Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources & Reform</p> <p>Minesh Patel – Corporate Director, Finance & Resources</p>	<p>Response received on 27/10/23:</p> <p>This was actioned in final budget agreed by Full Council in February 2023.</p>	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 Shama Tatler - Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources & Reform</p> <p>Minesh Patel – Corporate Director, Finance & Resources</p>	<p>Response received on 27/10/23:</p> <p>A review of which town centres are supported with reduced resources is ongoing.</p>	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 could help offset the impact of the proposal on disadvantaged residents and children; and could</p>	<p>Cllr Muhammed Butt – Leader of the Council</p> <p>Cllr Shama Tatler - Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources & Reform</p>	<p>Response received on 27/10/23:</p> <p>Brent Libraries work closely and often with external partners i.e. Booktrust, National Literacy Trust and Arts Council England, etc, to enable the service to target the most vulnerable children, young people and their families, and adults. The libraries team will continue to explore with funders, and other potential external funding partners, additional initiatives to help mitigate the reduced stock</p>	07/11/23

	assist with ensuring children in Brent have equal access to a broad range of reading material.	Minesh Patel – Corporate Director, Finance & Resources	budget. Libraries will also look for ways to improve how it works across the Council to ensure a more cohesive approach to service delivery with regards to supporting primary literacy. If members know of any other institutions or organisations which could support the work of the Brent Libraries team, please get in touch.	
	<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 Shama Tatler - Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources & Reform</p> <p>Minesh Patel – Corporate Director, Finance & Resources</p>	<p>Response received on 27/10/23:</p> <p>Learning and Development programmes run by the Council are guided by requirements that are either legal duties (e.g. Health and Safety) or as a result of the outcomes of our performance management scheme to ensure individual employees have the opportunity to develop. We also run several bespoke programmes each year aimed at upskilling managers and continue to make more use of internal training where possible.</p> <p>All programmes and courses are subject to rigorous review by those who attend. Where the programmes and courses do not meet the required need, they are no longer offered. The reduction in the budget will be mitigated by improved procurement and redefining learning objectives, in light of employee feedback.</p>	07/11/23
19 July 2023– Budget Update - Medium Term	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 Shama Tatler - Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources & Reform</p>	<p>Response received on 27/10/23:</p> <p>At a select committee hearing earlier this year, the Mayor of London said "levelling up adds little value to London communities".</p> <p>The London has warned of "levelling down" in the capital after the government's White Paper excluded our city from the levelling up fund for</p>	07/11/23

<p>Financial Strategy</p>		<p>Minesh Patel – Corporate Director, Finance & Resources</p>	<p>research and development, education, and arts and culture.</p> <p>The Levelling Up Fund awarded £1.7bn to projects in October 2021 and another £2.1bn in January 2023.</p> <p>The Mayor of London said:</p> <p>"For the levelling up rounds one and two, we received four per cent in round one and seven per cent in round two," he said.</p> <p>"We aren't seeing the benefits of the levelling up of our people or places."</p> <p>The process and time needed for bid applications to be completed was also criticised by the mayor as he told MPs it cost on average £45,000 per bid.</p> <p>He said London placed 49 bids, costing an estimated £2.2m, "for the privilege of having a begging bowl".</p> <p>In response, the Secretary of State said: "Not everything by be decided in the local town hall or by the local Mayor".</p> <p>In summary, we will unapologetically use every forum, channel and medium to call upon the government to reform funding for local government – and begin to redress the 13 years of austerity.</p>	
	<p>Invite the scrutiny chairs to informal cabinet meetings (as appropriate) when budget challenges/complexities (and any other relevant matters) arise.</p>	<p>Cllr Muhammed Butt – Leader of the Council</p> <p>Cllr Shama Tatler - Deputy Leader and</p>	<p>Response received on 27/10/23: This will be actioned across the course of the budget scrutiny process.</p>	<p>07/11/23</p>

		<p>Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources & Reform</p> <p>Alex Freeman – Head of the Leader’s Office, Executive & Member Services</p>		
<p>6 Sept 2023– Planning Enforcement</p>	<p>Work more closely with London Councils to identify effective ways of collecting/collating planning enforcement performance data from all London authorities; and to identify practical solutions to common challenges (e.g. backlogs).</p>	<p>Cllr Harbi Farah- Cabinet Member for Safer Communities and Public Protection</p> <p>Zahur Khan – Corporate Director, Communities & Regeneration</p>	<p>Response received on 27/10/23:</p> <p>This action is ongoing through our regular engagement with London Councils officials and partners in our neighbouring boroughs. It is well reported that planning enforcement across the country is in a state of crisis, with almost 90% of authorities reporting a backlog of cases. In a Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) survey, a further 70% of local authorities have reported struggling to recruit career grade enforcement officers (including Brent) and 80% of respondents reported that there were not enough officers to carry out the basic function of enforcement.</p> <p>The survey also reported that 96% of respondents said they would benefit from a central government pot that they could use to fund direction action.</p> <p>Unfortunately, the common challenges have a golden thread across the country, too much demand and not enough resource to respond.</p> <p>As the committee will be aware Brent Council issues more planning enforcement notices than almost every other council in the country. Such is the volume of enforcement notices issued, that there are specialist enforcement appeal agencies, which advertise their services to defend homeowners and</p>	<p>07/11/23</p>

			<p>developers who have fallen foul of our robust planning system.</p> <p>According to publicly available data from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, Brent Council issued 111 enforcement notices in 2021/22. We will always work closely with people to help them with the planning applications process, but when landlords and businesses unfairly break the rules and create an unfair environment for everyone else, our enforcement team will take action.</p> <p>Tragically though, as the RTPI highlight in their report, the failure of the planning enforcement sector means the failure of the planning system as a whole. I'm sure members of the committee will join me in saying, it's time for the government to enforce some action of its own.</p>	
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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– Shared Service Performance & Cyber Security	Involve the Committee in testing the Council's cyber-resilience plans.	Minesh Patel – Corporate Director, Finance & Resources	<p>Response received on 24/08/23: 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> <p>Updated response received on 12/09/23: A new emergency planning officer has been appointed and we are scheduling the exercise to be conducted in the coming months, we will include members in the exercise.</p>

	Deliver bespoke (in-person) cyber security training to all members in addition to the standard yearly training provided.	Minesh Patel – Corporate Director, Finance & Resources	<p>Response received on 24/08/23: 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.</p> <p>Additional response received on 13/09/23: October is the Cyber security awareness month as such we are planning a raft of communications activities. One of the items within the plan will be to conduct cyber security training for members.</p>
	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	<p>Response received on 24/08/23: Where able to we will share learning with staff to ensure that that they are educated on cyber issues.</p> <p>Updated response received on 13/09/23: All staff are trained on cyber security and regular communications on best practice high lighting the importance of cyber security will be carried out.</p> <p>Communications and news articles shared with staff will include some of the case studies that other sectors and councils have experienced regarding cyber.</p>
6 Sept 2023– Community Engagement Framework	Revisit the current format of Brent Connects meetings; this should include a review of how agendas can be co-designed and driven by residents. Additionally, how the Council can address the gaps in engagement caused by the current geographical boundaries of Brent Connects areas. For instance, residents being assigned to areas which do not necessarily reflect what they consider their neighbourhoods.	Amira Nassr – Head of Strategy & Partnerships, Communities & Regeneration	<p>Response received on 26/10/23: A refresh of the Brent Connects meeting was undertaken in July.</p> <p>An outcome from the refresh enables residents to co-design the agendas and marketing of future meetings. This discussion topic will be tabled on each Brent Connects meeting agenda in January/February.</p> <p>Additionally, we have enhanced the awareness raising of the meetings through improved publicity by creating localised flyers focusing on specific BC area issues to inspire residents' interest, engagement, and participation.</p> <p>We are guided by the Brent Connect areas as set by the Council re the geographical boundaries. Engagement will continue using various methodologies inclusive of, outreach community engagement, utilisation of community champions, councillors, and social media platforms.</p> <p>It is recognised, that due to the geographical boundaries, residents may feel it more appropriate to attend Brent Connects that reflect their considered</p>

			neighbourhoods. Residents can attend a Brent Connects meeting of their choice.
	<p>As an initial list, include the following groups in consultation and engagement activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Carers, including young carers b. Young people c. Brazilian communities d. Goan communities e. Any other emerging communities identified f. Neighbourhood forums g. Trade Unions (in line with HR compliance) h. Businesses 	Amira Nassr – Head of Strategy & Partnerships, Communities & Regeneration	<p>Response received on 26/10/23: A range of stakeholders have already been engaged with.</p> <p>The recommendation is accepted, and further consultation meetings will (and since the meeting has been) be arranged with the community groups identified by the committee.</p> <p>Trade Unions will be invited to partake in the consultation review meeting which will be led by the commissioned consultant. The consultation meeting date is yet to be confirmed.</p>
	Undertake a member survey to engage councillors on the development of the Framework, including stakeholders the Council should be engaging as part of this work.	Amira Nassr – Head of Strategy & Partnerships, Communities & Regeneration	<p>Response received on 26/10/23: In response to the recommendation made, a survey was developed and completed by Cllrs. The survey was extended for a further few days as no responses had been received.</p> <p>The survey was constructed on Microsoft forms and shared with Cllrs via the Members' Bulletin and WhatsApp. There were reminders send via WhatsApp and the deadline extended (over the initial two weeks). Only two Members responded. Their responses reflected the views of other participants.</p> <p>Responses were analysed using a miro board and excel software. During the overall process it became clear that two versions of the framework were needed: a public version setting out the principles and pledges, and an internal version that served as a toolkit/guide to support staff in strengthening their practice.</p>

<p>Pending the results of the survey suggested above, explore delivering a workshop to engage councillors on the development of the Framework, including stakeholders the Council should be engaging as part of this work.</p>	<p>Amira Nassr – Head of Strategy & Partnerships, Communities & Regeneration</p>	<p>Response received on 26/10/23: Due to the lack of responses received to the survey it is proposed that an additional session with Members is held. We can do this on the actual framework alongside sending it to those who participated in the interviews. Both sets of feedback can be shared at the residents focus group.</p>
<p>Work with departments to make improvements to Brent's online consultation platform and to the general approach to consultations:</p> <p>a. Where residents are clearly informed of the timescales related to the initiatives/policies/strategies they are being consulted on and;</p> <p>b. Where consultation feedback/results are made readily available to residents/partners in one central place.</p>	<p>Amira Nassr – Head of Strategy & Partnerships, Communities & Regeneration</p>	<p>Response received on 26/10/23: A review of the consultation platform was carried out in 2022 in collaboration with internal services.</p> <p>The platform informs residents on the timescale of the related initiative/policy or strategy being consulted on.</p> <p>It is recognised that a more robust and consistent method to access feedback and share finding on consultations is required.</p> <p>Guidance will be created and shared with internal departments to encourage a consistent survey/consultation feedback approach cross-council. This will include attendance by the Community Engagement Team at departmental team meetings to share good practice, creation of a feedback consultation page for residents, and utilisation of the internal comms platform to promote the good practice feedback consultation model.</p>
<p>Liaise with the Local Government Association (LGA) and other relevant external bodies to identify good practice to inform the upcoming Community Engagement Framework.</p>	<p>Amira Nassr – Head of Strategy & Partnerships, Communities & Regeneration</p>	<p>Response received on 26/10/23: Other Councils have been looked at to understand their approach to a CE Framework.</p> <p>Contact has been made with the LGA who have shared some examples of good community engagement. These have been shared with the consultant and will inform how we best approach and enact our own CEF moving forward and will be incorporated.</p>
<p>As far as possible, review Council documents (including the new Community Engagement Framework) for jargon and update accordingly.</p>	<p>Amira Nassr – Head of Strategy & Partnerships, Communities & Regeneration</p>	<p>Response received on 26/10/23: A review of the framework document will be undertaken to remove jargon from the Community Engagement Framework content will be undertaken prior to approval and launch.</p> <p>We will explore the feasibility of reviewing all documents but will ensure future refreshed or new documents are free from jargon.</p>







<p>6 Sept 2023– Planning Enforcement</p>	<p>Where possible, include benchmarking data to accompany figures/statistics provided in all future scrutiny committee reports. In the absence of benchmarking data, provide context behind figures/data provided in reports e.g. percentages.</p>	<p>Gerry Ansell – Head of Planning and Development, Communities & Regeneration</p>	<p>Response received on 24/10/23: Yes we will do this where possible.</p>
	<p>To avoid unnecessary back and forth dialogue between officers and residents, improve communications around the standard of evidence required to proceed with planning breach complaints. This should include public education, and improvements to the planning enforcement webpage including the reporting mechanism.</p>	<p>Gerry Ansell – Head of Planning and Development, Communities & Regeneration</p>	<p>Response received on 24/10/23: Yes we will look into this, and report back to the Committee by February 2024. However the evidence required will depend on the nature of the particular case that is under investigation. We can standardise it as much as we can – our existing acknowledgment letter goes some way in addressing this issue. An example copy is attached.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"></p> <p style="text-align: center;">CompAcknLetter - revised temp.pdf</p>
	<p>Review the effectiveness of the Planning Enforcement Investigation Guide to better manage residents' expectations of the planning enforcement process (e.g. providing clarity on planning enforcement timescales).</p>	<p>Gerry Ansell – Head of Planning and Development, Communities & Regeneration</p>	<p>Response received on 24/10/23: Yes we will look into this, and report back to the Committee by February 2024. An example of the guide is also included in the attachment.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"></p> <p style="text-align: center;">CompAcknLetter - revised temp.pdf</p>
	<p>Undertake an audit to determine the wards with the highest amount of planning breach complaints, and the wards with the highest amount of enforcement activity. This intelligence should be used to develop a targeted strategy to prevent planning breaches e.g. targeted planning education and/or communications campaigns etc. The Audit should also categorise</p>	<p>Gerry Ansell – Head of Planning and Development, Communities & Regeneration</p>	<p>Response received on 24/10/23: We will look to do this but are currently waiting for our new software to be introduced. Currently scheduled for April 2024.</p>


	the types of breaches receiving enforcement notices.		
	Explore additional ways to increase staffing capacity in the Planning Enforcement team to address backlogs.	Gerry Ansell – Head of Planning and Development, Communities & Regeneration	Response received on 24/10/23: We will look at any potential funding opportunities. Under current financial conditions this looks extremely unlikely.

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 information to local councillors on the new zone classifications outlined in the report once these have been finalised by March 2023.	Chris Whyte – Director of Environment & Leisure, Resident Services	<p>Response received on 11/07/23:</p> <p>The new intelligence-led street cleansing regime went live as planned on 3 July, supported by new operational arrangements which are being managed and monitored jointly by Veolia and our Neighbourhood Management team on a daily basis as the new service beds in, and as part of the regular weekly Contract Management Board going forward.</p> <p>These new operational arrangements are based on prescribed land use categories matched with an historical understanding of operational need. These operational arrangements will be reviewed on an ongoing basis and will be open to revision when it's clear that might be needed to sort a sustained problem at any location, and if the overall level of resource can accommodate that revision.</p> <p>Members can support this overall process by encouraging the public to report any cleanliness issues that might arise. That will help our overall awareness and help build the data underpinning our intelligence-led approach.</p> <p>Further information will be provided to the Scrutiny Committee in September when we will be able to provide a full update on how the new arrangements have been working. We would welcome Scrutiny providing strategic challenge,</p>

			<p>supporting development by reviewing performance over time and by validating the overall approach to 'intelligent cleansing'.</p> <p>Updated response received on 30/10/23: The new intelligence-led street cleansing service implemented since July 2023 has been working well. Demand for Rapid Response Team (RRT) work comes from four sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hot Spots – proactive work from Veolia to tackle issues before they become complaints. A review meeting is held every two weeks between Neighbourhood Managers and Veolia to ensure the hot spot list remains relevant - existing hot spots are reviewed for their ongoing inclusion and new sites are added as required. • Proactive work from Veolia to tackle issues as they are out and about in the borough – such as fly tip removal, etc. • Issues reported by Neighbourhood Managers. • Fix My Street reports from residents and Councillors which are triaged to Veolia who will visit the section of street reported and clean with a RRT. <p>We encourage residents and members to report litter as usual using 'Fix My Street' using the following link: https://report.brent.gov.uk</p> <p>The cleansing contract therefore now has a flexible and more prioritised approach to cleansing which is less reliant on fixed schedules and focuses more on local conditions and solving problems.</p> <p>A new performance hub for the contract has been established and is now fully staffed. It is now in the process of collating service data and creating a comprehensive dashboard for the new service which we can share with Scrutiny Committee members as soon as this has been finalised later this year.</p>
<p>15 Dec 2022 – Redefining Local Services: Update on the</p>	<p>Provide additional information on the small percentage of residents who will be impacted by the proposed changes to the eligibility criteria in the bulky</p>	<p>Chris Whyte – Director of Environment & Leisure, Resident Services</p>	<p>Response received on 30/10/2023: Based on sampling undertaken, less than 5% of residents will be impacted by the proposed changes to the eligibility criteria in the bulky waste free collection policy from April 2024.</p>

<p>Integrated Street Cleansing, Waste Collections and Winter Maintenance Services Contract Procurement Programme</p>	<p>waste free collection policy from April 2024.</p> <p><i>**this additional request was made at a later Committee meeting on 22 February 2023.</i></p>		
<p>19 July 2023– Budget Update - Medium Term Financial Strategy</p>	<p>Provide analysis of savings made since 2018, specifically a breakdown of the savings made which equate to service reductions.</p>	<p>Minesh Patel – Corporate Director, Finance & Resources</p>	<p>Response received on 24/08/23: This recommendation is accepted and will be shared with the Committee in November 2023.</p> <p>Updated response received on 27/10/23:</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <div style="text-align: center;"> Analysis of budget Appendix A 2018-19 savings 2018-2023 R</div> <div style="text-align: center;"> Savings.pdf</div> <div style="text-align: center;"> Appendix B 2019-20 Savings.pdf</div> <div style="text-align: center;"> Appendix C 2020-21 Savings.pdf</div> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center; margin-top: 10px;"> <div style="text-align: center;"> Appendix D 2021-22 Savings.pdf</div> <div style="text-align: center;"> Appendix E 2022-23 Savings.pdf</div> </div>
<p>19 July 2023– Shared Service Performance & Cyber Security</p>	<p>Provide RAG rated version of the Brent Cyber Security Strategy 2022-2026: Implementation Plan for the Committee to understand progress made so far.</p>	<p>Minesh Patel – Corporate Director, Finance & Resources</p>	<p>Response received on 24/08/23: We will provide an update with the RAG status by the end of September 2023.</p> <p>Updated response received on 05/10/23: RAG rated version of the Brent Cyber Security Strategy 2022-2026: Implementation Plan provided to committee members on 5/10/23.</p>
	<p>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</p>	<p>Minesh Patel – Corporate Director, Finance & Resources</p>	<p>Response received on 24/08/23: 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.</p>

	the third-party supplier survey currently underway.		
6 Sept 2023– Community Engagement Framework	Provide further detail on where 'Your Brent' magazine fits into the Community Engagement Framework, and what specific reviews of the magazine will take place as part of the development of the new framework.	Amira Nassr – Head of Strategy & Partnerships, Communities & Regeneration	<p>Response received on 26/10/23: Brent Magazine will be used to advertise the launch of the Community Engagement Framework. The promotional material will aim to build a common understanding by our residents on how we can improve engagement by setting principles and standards.</p> <p>The magazine will continue to be reviewed to ensure the external messaging and participation opportunities are advertised correctly to encourage greater cross-borough resident engagement and sharing of information.</p>
	Provide detailed information on the emerging communities in Brent (e.g. who they are, and how are they currently being engaged etc).	Amira Nassr – Head of Strategy & Partnerships, Communities & Regeneration	<p>Response received on 26/10/23: An initial analysis of 2021 census data related to country of birth has been published on the council's open data site. This identifies the borough's largest communities and provides summary data on change.</p> <p>A second analysis is planned to identify communities who have seen significant change in their populations since 2011. This will make use of new data recently released and will include information on some of the borough's smaller communities. This in turn will provide an evidence-based approach to community engagement.</p> <p>Lack of trust has been the most consistent factor when engaging with communities. Relationship building with key community champions will aid to develop healthy and stable relationships to rebuild the trust between the council and the communities.</p>
6 Sept 2023– Planning Enforcement	Provide a copy of the Planning Enforcement Investigation Guide.	Gerry Ansell – Head of Planning and Development, Communities & Regeneration	<p>Response received on 24/10/23: See attached (it's on 2nd and 3rd page of the letter):</p> <p> CompAcknLetter - revised temp.pdf</p>

	<p>Provide a breakdown of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Planning breach complaints by ward and; 2. Types of breaches that have received enforcement notices by ward 	<p>Gerry Ansell – Head of Planning and Development, Communities & Regeneration</p>	<p>Response received on 24/10/23: Need to await for new software to be installed. This is scheduled for April 2024.</p>
	<p>Provide planning enforcement timescales.</p>	<p>Gerry Ansell – Head of Planning and Development, Communities & Regeneration</p>	<p>Response received on 24/10/23: We will need to review this and find away of recording it on our new database. We shall aim to close cases within 8 weeks if no evidence of breach. If evidence of breach, direction will be made on where we are going with the case.</p> <p>A site visit if one is required, is to take place within one month.</p>
	<p>Provide information on the training provided to planning enforcement staff in Brent.</p>	<p>Gerry Ansell – Head of Planning and Development, Communities & Regeneration</p>	<p>Response received on 24/10/23: All staff are professionally trained. They also go on external training once or twice a year as required for CPD. They also attend internal training course to ensure compliance with corporate standards.</p>