

Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Housing – Councillor Muhammed Butt

Top news since my last report:

I am deeply honoured to continue as Leader of Brent Council. It is a labour of love for me, pure and simple. Our borough is a special place – my family, children, and grandchildren all call it home, and I want to continue to give back to Brent so that others enjoy the same chances I have across my lifetime.

I have always believed that no one person is bigger than the mission itself - and with that in mind I am proud to announce another Cabinet of talents drawn from across the council; maintaining our reputation for promoting more women into Cabinet than the lion share of councils in London.

In the pages that follow I have set out a breakdown of responsibilities between each of the Cabinet Members, including those which will be re-distributed, or collectively shared while Councillor Knight is on maternity leave.

We face a historic challenge before us, after 14 years of austerity, residents are crying out for investment in the public services that we all rely on. Over the next 2 years, this council is facing its own perfect storm with demand for emergency housing and for adult social care outpacing our dwindling resources.

We know it won't be an easy path ahead, but there are still reasons to remain radically optimistic. Within this refreshed Cabinet, I have appointed Councillor Jake Rubin as the Cabinet Member for Employment, Innovation and Climate Action.

This role looks forward to a brighter future, promoting digital and green skills so residents can continue to thrive in an ever-changing world.

This new portfolio area combines these ambitions in one and will also be crucial to exploring how we unleash the power of innovation and embrace new technologies to work smarter, while also focusing on how we can do all in this council's power to play our part in tackling climate change.

Productivity in London Councils

Brent Council was written to by the former Minister for Local Government, Simon Hoare to set out our plans to increase productivity.

London boroughs have had to become more productive and more efficient over the past 14 years since the period of austerity began. London Councils have estimated that since 2010-11, London boroughs' Core Spending Power has reduced by £2.2bn (20%) in real terms from £11.1bn to £8.8bn in 2024-25.

Over the same period, London's population has grown by 884,000 (11%) – larger than the entire population of Leeds - with significant associated increases in demand for services. This means Core Spending Power per capita is now 28% lower than it was in 2010-11.

London boroughs have also taken on new duties and responsibilities without sufficient or sustained funding. Some examples include: the localisation of council tax support in 2013; the transfer of public health duties in 2013; duties resulting from the Homeless Reduction Act 2017; duties resulting from the 2014 Children & Families Act; changes to Youth Justice and Health policy that impact children's social care.

In total, it is estimated that new duties and responsibilities along with other new or underfunded burdens have added over £1bn of additional funding pressures.

London boroughs have also had to reduce employee numbers significantly as a result of these funding reductions. They now employ around 54,000 (29%) fewer Full Time Equivalent staff (FTE) than in 2010.

In Brent this means:

- Our core spending power in real terms has reduced by £74.3m (18%) from £410.9m in 2010/11 to £336.6m in 2024/25, whilst our population has increased by 13% in that time. This is a 27% real terms reduction per head of the population of Brent.
- Our FTE headcount number has reduced by 2774 (52%) since 2010/11 to 2612 in 2023/24.

To unlock greater productivity in the public sector, the fundamental relationship between local government and Whitehall needs to change; with a day-one requirement to put councils on a pathway to sustainable funding, alongside long-term investment into our public services.

The list below illustrates the scale of the challenge for both London Borough's and the incoming government to address:

- London's productivity has stalled in recent years and is lagging behind leading global counterparts, such as New York, Paris and Stockholm.
- There is significant persistent deprivation and inequality across London including concentrations of child poverty, fuel poverty and unemployment.
- London is the epicentre of homelessness in the UK, with an estimated 1 in 50 households living in temporary accommodation, including 1 in 23 children. Councils in London are spending £90m per month on temporary accommodation for homeless people - up almost 40% on last year.
- Fragmentation of funding and delivery means that we are retrofitting less than 1% of our housing stock every year and would not reach our net zero target until the 22nd century.
- It is estimated that it would cost around £49 billion to bring all of London's home to EPC "B" standard by 2030.
- 1.1 million Londoners are diagnosed with high blood pressure and 120,000 are economically inactive due to a heart, blood or circulatory disorder.
- Local Government finance is broken; funding no longer accurately reflects local need; annual funding settlements engender uncertainty; and both the council tax and business rates system are in dire need of reform.

If you have any other questions, please feel free to contact by the email address below.
Contact: Cllr.Muhammed.Butt@brent.gov.uk

Cabinet Porfolios

Councillor Muhammed Butt – Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing

Cross-cutting

- Communications
- Borough Plan 23-27
- Strategic change programme
- London Councils and partnerships
- Brent Black Community Action Plan
-

Housing Services (Maternity Cover from June 17th)*

- Corporate landlord performance
- Housing Services
-

Housing Needs and Support (Maternity Cover from June 17th)*

- Homelessness and Rough-Sleeping Strategy
- Private Rented Sector and Strategy
- Liaison with Housing Associations

Councillor Mili Patel - Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources

Finance & Resources

- Capital Investment
- Pensions
- Shared IT Service with London Boroughs
-

Organisational assurance and resilience

- Health and Safety
- Emergency Planning
- Counter-Fraud and Investigation

Governance and Legal Services

- Democratic Services
- Legal Services
- Complaints

Human Resources

- Workforce and Equalities
- Organisational Development
- Diversity Ambassador

Property

- Property and assets Strategy
- Income generation
- Facilities Management

Councillor Fleur Donnelly-Jackson - Cabinet Member for Resident Support and Culture

Residents Services

- Customer accessibility

- Customer services
- Citizenship and Registration
- Welfare support
- Debt support
- Council Tax and Business Rates
- Brent Community Hubs
- Brent Libraries
- Heritage and Culture Services
- Mortuaries, Bereavement services and Cemeteries

Councillor Harbi Farah - Cabinet Member for Public Safety and Partnerships

Public Protection

- Community Safety and Anti-Social Behaviour
- Liaison with Metropolitan Police Service (MPS)
- Prevent
- Noise Nuisance
- Violence against Women and Girls

Communities and Partnerships

- Community Engagement
- Community Grants
- Voluntary sector
- Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (external)

Councillor Gwen Grahl - Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools

Early Help & Social Care

- Early Years Learning
- Family Wellbeing Centres
- Children's Safeguarding
- Children's Social Care
- Looked after Children and Corporate Parenting

Education, Partnerships and Strategy

- Youth offending
- Brent Youth Strategy
- Brent Youth Parliament
- Pupil referral units
- SEND provision and Strategy
- Brent Family of Schools
- School Admissions and school place planning
- Schools Forum and schools' improvement

Councillor Neil Nerva - Cabinet Member for Community Health and Wellbeing

Adult Social Care

- Safeguarding
- Supported living
- Adaptation and support
- End of life care
- Carers support
- Dementia

Public Health

- Brent Health Matters
- Mental Health
- Substance Misuse
- Healthy Start
- Vaccination campaign
- Food justice
- Sport, physical activity and leisure facilities

Integrated Care Partnership

- Liaison with health partners
- Health and Wellbeing Board

Councillor Jake Rubin - Cabinet Member for Employment, Innovation and Climate Action

Insight, Innovation and Priorities

- Transformation, digital, IT, data, and innovation
- Corporate performance
- Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy

Strategic Commissioning and Capacity Building

- Community Wealth Building and Inward Investment
- Procurement strategy
- Social value

Employment and Skills

- Brent Starts and Brent Works
- Economic Development
- Good work standard and London Living Wage
- Apprenticeships

Councillor Krupa Sheth - Cabinet Member for Environment and Enforcement

Public Realm

- Trees and Ecology
- Parks and green spaces
- Clean Air

Transport planning, strategy and operations

- Roads and pavements
- Waste and recycling
- Street cleaning
- Waste enforcement
- West London Waste Authority
- Parking, Street Lighting

Regulatory Enforcement

- Building Control
- Regulatory Services and Trading Standards
- Pest Control
- Planning Enforcement

Councillor Shama Tatler - Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning and Growth

Inclusive, Regeneration and Planning

- Estate Regeneration
- Planning
- Local Plan
- Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)
- High streets and town centre improvement
- Strategic growth
- Affordable workplaces
- West London Economic Prosperity Board

Strategic Housing (Maternity cover from June 17th)

- New Council Housing Programme
- I4B/First Wave Housing

Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources – Councillor Mili Patel

Top news since my last report:

- **New Council Homes Programme:** Despite affordability issues and rising build costs impacting the Council, there are currently 986 affordable homes being built by Brent across 12 sites. There are 263 affordable homes with planning permission across 14 sites; and a further 195 affordable homes within the St Raphael's Estate that have been submitted for planning.
- In line with our corporate restructure, a vacancy was advertised for a new Director for Strategic Commissioning and Capacity Building. I am pleased that an individual has been appointed, subject to pre-employment checks, and will be starting with us later this year. This new colleague will work with the Senior Leadership Team and Cabinet to build greater capacity and resilience within the public and third sector, leading the Council's social value and community wealth building strategies while encompassing the specific needs and ambitions of the Borough.
- **Elections:** The Elections team and the wider Democratic Services department are in full swing preparing for the General Election on the 4th of July 2024, coming straight off the back of the Greater London Assembly and Mayoral elections in May, and with an additional by-election in Queens Park ward.

Other news:

- Brent Council has successfully renewed its status as a Disability Confident Leader, as well as adopting UNISON's Anti-Racism Charter earlier this year. Our HR team are also working hard to achieve Fairer Hours Accreditation.
- The draft Property Strategy was presented to our Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee on the 27th February 24, and it will be coming to Cabinet later this year for final approval. As we work hard to use every penny we have, driving more income generation through existing assets becomes an even more crucial part of this role.
- In May, the Council introduced new Carer's Leave and Miscarriage Support Policies. According to the 2021 Census, there are 2.5 million unpaid carers in employment in England and Wales. In April, new legislation entitled employees to 5 days' carer's leave to arrange or provide care for a dependent with a long-term need. The Council enhanced this entitlement to provide 5 days' paid leave.
- Under UK law, there is no obligation for employers to give someone bereavement leave if they or their partner loses a baby before the 24th week of pregnancy. Our new Miscarriage Support policy will look to support Council employees and councillors who experience miscarriage in the first 24 weeks of pregnancy.

If you have any other questions, please feel free to contact by the email address below.
Contact: Cllr.Mili.Patel@brent.gov.uk

Cabinet Member for Resident Support and Culture - Councillor Fleur Donnelly-Jackson

Top news since my last report:

- Summer What's ON is out now and available at all libraries and a copy can be downloaded from: <https://www.brent.gov.uk/libraries-arts-and-heritage/libraries>
- During the closure of Wembley Library, we have been working with the Public Health Team on supporting refugees at the Hotel in Wembley. Library staff have been providing arts and craft activities for the refugees as well as essential signposting to other council services and departments such as The Brent Hubs and the digital hub in Wembley central and our own inhouse IT classes and ESOL classes. In May, colleagues interacted with 113 refugees (34 adults and 26 children) over four sessions.

Other news:

- An evening with Paul Merson - Former Arsenal and England midfielder, and pundit, returned to his roots in Harlesden, where his journey in the beautiful game began. On Wednesday, May 22nd, Harlesden Library hosted an evening with Paul Merson as part of the legend's series of the Inspire 2 Achieve Heritage Exhibition, organised by the Jason Roberts Foundation.
- Becoming Brent: The first project Board meeting took place on 3rd June. This served as an opportunity to agree the Board's purpose and operating procedures for the future. A draft Terms of Reference was shared, and Board members were asked to review and comment on this after the meeting. Positive feedback was received from board members following the meeting, thanking officers for running it so efficiently and confirming they felt encouraged by the proposals which were presented.
- World African Heritage Day display in Kingsbury Library. The display ran from 3rd May- 3rd June and featured items from Brent Museum's collections relating to our African communities.

If you have any other questions, please feel free to contact by the email address below.
Contact: Cllr.Fleur.Donnelly-Jackson@brent.gov.uk

Cabinet Member for Public Safety and Partnerships - Councillor Harbi Farah

Top news since my last report:

- The Community Safety Team have been successful in securing £200,000 over two years from the Mayor of London's Violence Reduction Unit, to work on a robbery reduction project.
- The Nuisance Control Team recently led two successful prosecutions relying solely on noise app evidence - a first in the country.
- In relation to delivering our new Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) as well as our Anti-Racism ambitions, our focus is on establishing a suite of key performance indicators that can measure progress and feature within a new EDI performance monitoring dashboard. The new dashboard will be considered by the new Corporate EDI Board for sign off in September.

Other news:

- A refreshed model for the Brent Connects meetings is being considered in readiness for a re-launch in the autumn.
- All three User forums are continuing their work. This includes the Disability, Multi-Faith and Pensioners Forums. We have seen an increase in attendance and participation across all three forums. Residents are particularly satisfied with the revised models of the Disability and Pensioners Forum and the collaborative approach taken with them to achieve this.
- Community Outreach continues to capture the voices of as many residents as possible. I am currently working closely with the Communications and Electoral Services Team to help promote engagement in readiness for the forthcoming General Election in July.
- A Grant Agreement for 2024-2025 has been finalised and confirmed with the Home Office. This enables the Prevent team and project partners to commence full delivery of funded projects to help mitigate against radicalisation and provide a counter narrative to extremism in the borough.

If you have any other questions, please feel free to contact by the email address below.
Contact: Cllr.Harbi.Farah@brent.gov.uk

Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools - Councillor Gwen Grahl

Top news since my last report:

- **Launch of 'MyEnds 2.0' Funding Initiative from GLA** - We are pleased to announce that Brent's bid for youth funding from the £96m pot offered by the Mayor of London was successful, with six local youth centres involved in the bid. This programme aims to support young people in areas of Brent most at risk of being drawn into serious youth violence with mentoring, training and recreational activities.
This is an excellent opportunity for investment in valuable and innovative youth initiatives by grassroots organisations in our borough. A launch event for professionals and stakeholders was also held at the Civic Centre on 20th May to ensure the programme is effective in its aims for youth engagement and violence reduction.
- **Transport Assistance Policy approved by Cabinet** - Our refreshed Transport Assistance Policy, outlined our plans for supporting children and young people with SEND with transport to school, has now been approved by cabinet. The policy is designed to reflect changes in the cohort of its users, empowering some of our young people to use active travel and equip them with the skills for independent living that they need for the future. It also reflects the council's renewed commitment to active travel and tackling the climate crisis.
- **Brent's Family Wellbeing Centres continuing to provide outstanding services to local families** - The most recent data showed over 15,000 contacts were made at Family Wellbeing Centres in the last 12 months, smashing our target of 10,767. We have continued to offer a range of children's services at these relaunched family hubs, despite nearly two in five council-run children's centres having closed nationally since 2010 according to a FoI request by Unison. Our Best Start in Life programme includes a comprehensive Early Help programme, delivered in eight Family Wellbeing Centres across the borough. We also signpost families to other local services including NHS and Citizen's advice.

Other news:

- **Children's Residential Centre** - An engagement meeting was held at Chalkhill Community Centre on 23rd May with local residents. Renovations are currently taking place and the centre is due to open in 2024.
- **Brent Food Strategy** - Coproduction of the Brent Food Strategy with local schools is currently taking place, and a survey has been sent to all schools in the borough to gather ideas and suggestions on eliminating food poverty, reducing waste and tackling the climate crisis.
- **Household Support Fund** - Cabinet approved the allocation of funding from the Household Support Fund towards supporting children with meal vouchers in the holidays on 28th May 2024. This will be for those on free school meals as well as under 5s from eligible families and will support some of the most vulnerable children in our borough.
- **Fostering Offer Launch** - An event at the Civic Centre on Thursday 23rd May celebrated our boosted offer for foster carers. Our carers work hard to care for

Looked After Children and we have improved the reward we can offer them to ensure this hard work is recognised. The new offer includes an uplift in the weekly rate, a free laptop for administrative duties and other benefits.

If you have any other questions, please feel free to contact by the email address below.
Contact: Cllr.Gwen.Grahl@brent.gov.uk

Cabinet Member for Community Health and Wellbeing - Councillor Neil Nerva

Top news since my last report:

- **CQC inspection complete** - The CQC inspection took place during the middle of May 2024, and we are now awaiting feedback. The format will be akin to the CQC feedback which has thus far been provided to other local authorities: [Local authority assessment reports - Care Quality Commission \(cqc.org.uk\)](#)

Other news:

- **Opening of new GP surgery** - The recent move of the Wembley Park Medical Centre into brand new and modern premises at 2 Humphrey Repton Lane, Wembley Park marks completes many years of hard work, by both the surgery team and the development team at Quintain.

The opening ceremony took place on Friday 31 May 2024. This new state-of-the-art facility is not simply a GP practice; it's a blueprint for the future of NHS general care, already garnering positive media attention. They aspire to create a space where cutting-edge technology seamlessly blends with compassionate care, empowering patients with agency and access to essential services. Wembley Park Medical Centre reflects many of the values that NHS North West London champion.

The Centre embodies a future where integrated care, proactive health, and patient empowerment are at the heart of our NHS. The opening was a great opportunity to meet with key partners and staff, understand how the facility will deliver for residents, and ask key questions.

If you have any other questions, please feel free to contact by the email address below.
Contact: Cllr.Neil.Nerva@brent.gov.uk

Cabinet Member for Employment, Innovation and Climate Action - Councillor Jake Rubin

Top news:

- Camden & Brent Business Climate Challenge (CBBCC) will be allocating 40 Brent businesses with £6,000 worth of support each to help them understand where energy is being used and how this can be reduced to achieve cost and carbon savings of at least 10%. Since Expressions of Interest to the programme went live in January, we have **had 79 businesses register**. We are now in the process of supporting those eligible businesses to apply in full. Early applicants will have the chance of applying for grant funding to carry out recommendations within their audit report.
- Secured additional Grant Funding from the GLA to continue delivery for the Mayor of London Skills Bootcamps for Brent residents to deliver Level 3 Gas Engineering course in partnership with Qualified 4 Life.
- The Employment and Skills team has commissioned a specialised employment service focused on the Somali economically inactive population. Service will be delivered by Step Up Hub for a year thanks to Mayor of London, People and Skills funding.
- Jobs Fair 2024: 16th July 2024 Brent Works will host our annual Jobs Fair, planned to be the biggest ever. Expecting over 8,000 attendees.

Other news:

- Brent Starts: 17/06/24 - currently 6,559 enrolments for 2023/24 academic year, which represents 2,187 unique learners.
- Harlesden Hairdressing Academy – we have acquired a unit at 16 Craven Park Road to establish a hairdressing academy for residents to train with a view to starting their own business.
- Brent Council's Supported Internship team has successfully completed the SIQAF (Supported Internship Quality Assurance Framework). The Framework assists providers to determine the quality and success of their Supported Internship programme. Excellent feedback was received from the assessors who interviewed interns, family members, managers and the team and look at the different policies and procedures in place.

If you have any other questions, please feel free to contact by the email address below.
Contact: Cllr.Jake.Rubin@brent.gov.uk

Cabinet Member for Environment and Enforcement - Councillor Krupa Sheth

Top news since my last report:

- 331 Fixed Penalty Notices have been issued for waste offences in May 2024, by the in-house enforcement team.
- We have brought in an additional 4 enforcement officers who will be deployed in target areas to issue, FPNs for littering and PSPO offences.

Other news:

- The Leader of the Council and I have written to Lime, setting out our concerns around the levels of service and are in discussion with their teams to ensure rapid improvements are felt across the borough. We are in discussions with other London Boroughs on how to move forward as a city on regulating and creating a common standard across the services of providers.
- Funding has been secured from TfL's LIP to install an additional 6 Bike Hangars this financial year. These provide secure cycle parking for up to 6 bikes with residents paying a subscription of £50 per year. We now have 134 Bike Hangars in the borough and demand is increasing where residents have limited space.
- Following our Expression of Interest (EOI) for Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) funding via London Councils for funding in 2024/25 (joint EOI with Haringey, Harrow, Hillingdon, Hammersmith & Fulham and Ealing) we have been informed that this application is successful and £7.544m has been awarded. It has been agreed that Brent will receive circa £1.25m and we are developing detailed information to submit to the DfT for a programme for new EVCPs in 2025/26, by the end of June 2024.
- An event for Clean Air Day is being arranged for Saturday 20th July between 10am and 3pm in Roundwood Park. This will include: a bike market, scooter repairs, family focussed clean air workshops and other activities. This will be advertised in early July via our website, social media platforms, and on-street posters.

If you have any other questions, please feel free to contact by the email address below.
Contact: Cllr.Krupa.Sheth@brent.gov.uk

Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning and Growth - Councillor Shama Tatler

Top news since my last report:

- **Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy projects:** three community-focused projects received a £4.1 million boost in funding from the council's Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy earlier this year. Members approved the release of funds to support development at Preston Library (12 affordable homes and a new community space), the spine road at Northwick Park (more community facilities and homes, with a view to promoting active and sustainable travel), and a nursery project at Grove Park Pavilion. All three projects are designed to create long-lasting, positive change to local areas for the benefit of the communities that live there.
- **Biodiversity Net Gain:** the legal requirements for development proposals to achieve a 10% gain in biodiversity came into effect for Major planning applications on 12 February and for minor applications on 2 April. Small developments are excluded from this requirement, including extensions to houses and small sites with less than 25 sqm of non-priority habitat. The net gain should normally be provided on site but can be provided in an off-site location or through the purchase of Biodiversity Credits by the developer. The latter is considered to be the least favourable option as credits can be used to deliver biodiversity improvements anywhere in the country with no local benefit. Work is due to be undertaken to identify suitable locations for biodiversity improvement schemes within the borough which could be used for the provision of off-site biodiversity gain. This could include biodiversity planting in our parks funded through the development proposals.
- **The Falcon:** Last month, the Council purchased The Falcon Pub in Kilburn, paving the way for new homes to be built at the site. The plans will deliver even more affordable homes in Brent as the housing crisis continues to bite.

Other news:

- **Heritage:** A six-week public consultation on Brent's conservation areas was held earlier this year to seek the views of residents, landowners and other interested stakeholders on proposed revisions to Brent's conservation area boundaries with changes subsequently approved by Cabinet on 28 May 2024.
- **Staples Corner:** The consultation window is now open until Tuesday the 16th of July for residents to share their feedback on the draft Staples Corner Growth Area Masterplan and Design Code SPD. As well as supporting our Local Plan, the draft SPD will secure physical, social and economic regeneration for the benefit of the whole community.

If you have any other questions, please feel free to contact by the email address below.
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