

	<p align="center"><b>Full Council</b> 19 September 2024</p>
	<p align="center"><b>Report from the Corporate Director of Law and Governance</b></p>
<p align="center"><b>Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee Chair's Report</b></p>	

<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All
<b>Key or Non-Key Decision:</b>	Council
<b>Open or Part/Fully Exempt:</b> <small>(If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)</small>	Open
<b>List of Appendices:</b>	One Appendix A: Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2024/25
<b>Background Papers:</b>	None
<b>Contact Officer(s):</b> <small>(Name, Title, Contact Details)</small>	<p>Chatan Popat Strategy Lead – Scrutiny, Democratic Services 020 8937 5068 <a href="mailto:chatan.popat@brent.gov.uk">chatan.popat@brent.gov.uk</a></p> <p>Amira Nassr Deputy Director Democratic Services 020 8937 4595 <a href="mailto:Amira.nassr@brent.gov.uk">Amira.nassr@brent.gov.uk</a></p> <p>James Kinsella Governance &amp; Scrutiny Manager 020 8937 2063 <a href="mailto:james.kinsella@brent.gov.uk">james.kinsella@brent.gov.uk</a></p>

## 1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1 To present Full Council with the Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee's 2024-25 work programme, and to provide an update on meetings and activities undertaken by the committee since the last meeting of Full Council on 8 July 2024.

## 2.0 Recommendation(s)

That Full Council

- 2.1 Note the report and the updates provided for both the Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee and North West London Joint Health and Overview Scrutiny Committee (NWL JHOSC).
- 2.2 Note the Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee's 2024-25 work programme, attached as Appendix 1 to the report.

### **3.0 Detail**

#### **3.1 Contribution to Borough Plan Priorities & Strategic Context**

- 3.1.1 The work of the committee contributes to the delivery of all of the strategic priorities within the Borough Plan as it seeks to support, advise and enhance the Council's activity. The recent activity outlined in this report contributes most specifically to the "A Healthier Brent," "The Best Start in Life," "Prosperity and Stability in Brent" strategic priorities within the plan.

#### **3.2 Background**

- 3.2.1 Brent Council has two scrutiny committees: the Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee and the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee. The council also participates as a full voting member in the North West London Joint Health Overview Scrutiny (NWL JHOSC). Councillor Ketan Sheth was re-elected as chair of the Community Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee at the Annual Council Meeting on 22 May 2024 and also continues to serve as chair of the NWL JHOSC.

- 3.2.2 A scrutiny committee can review anything which affects the borough or its inhabitants, subject to its remit. The remit of the Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee is set out in the Council Constitution under the Terms of Reference for Scrutiny Committees which includes:

*Adult social care; Safeguarding; Children's services; Cultural services; Education; Health; Housing; Public Health and Wellbeing.*

- 3.2.3 As part of its remit set out in the constitution, and its role to review the provision and operation of health services within the borough, the Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee can scrutinise, and make recommendations to NHS organisations or relevant health service providers.

- 3.2.4 The Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee's 2024-25 work programme is detailed in Appendix A. In developing its work programme, the committee held a work programming meeting, attended by committee members, Cabinet members and Corporate Directors. At this session committee members prioritised items to include on the work programme based on a set of criteria. Prioritisation ensured that items included on the committees work programme were (i) a strategic priority as set out in the council's 2023-27 Borough Plan (ii) of concern for a significant number of the borough's residents (iii) a significant cabinet decision or (iv) part of a forthcoming policy review or a new strategy being developed by the Cabinet. This was undertaken to ensure that scrutiny

has a significant impact and adds value to the council's policy process. Statutory guidance on overview and scrutiny recommends that for scrutiny to be effective, scrutiny committees focus on conducting fewer in-depth reviews on highly significant topics<sup>1</sup>.

- 3.2.5 The Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee met for its first meeting of the 2024-25 municipal year on 30 July 2024. The meeting focused on two annual safeguarding reports. The first of these reports was the Brent Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB) Annual Report; April 2023 – March 2024. Members welcomed Nicola Brownjohn, the newly appointed Independent Chair of the Brent Safeguarding Adults Board to the meeting, who has been in post since January 2024. She reminded the committee that SABs became statutory in 2014 under the Care Act, with the remit of SABs including production of an annual report every year, to set strategic priorities, to undertake Safeguarding Adults Reviews (SARs) and to take forward learning. Her role ensured that the safeguarding system in Brent was established and working well, and part of her role was to challenge the partners working within the SAB. The committee were delighted to hear from the new Independent Chair that she had been pleased to see the positive way partners worked together. Since joining Brent, she had some ideas for changes which had been taken forward quickly, with partners accepting them and adapting to them well. She had found exceptionally good listening and meaningful conversations were taking place between partners and was pleased at the range of agencies involved with SAB and the commitment from those agencies. She continued by stating that her 'wow' factor for Brent's arrangements was the relationship the partners had with voluntary services. Members were informed that Brent was doing relatively well in all aspects within the remit of the Board but there was always a desire for continuous improvement and there were things that Brent could improve on. While there were areas for improvement, the Independent Chair had confidence in Brent's processes.
- 3.2.6 The second item discussed at the Committee meeting was the Brent Safeguarding Children Partnership Report; October 2022 – March 2024. As with the first item, members welcomed Keith Makin, the newly appointed Independent Chair and Scrutineer for the Brent Safeguarding Children Forum. He began by highlighting the similarities and coherence between the children's and adult's safeguarding arrangements, whilst also noting the different legislation and guidance. He advised members that the key role of the partnership was to ensure that the three statutory partners – police, health, and the local authority worked closely together on safeguarding and were well sighted on strategic priorities that needed to be developed and achieved. Councillor Grahl (Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools) added that there were some very longstanding relationships within the Brent safeguarding partnership and an institutional culture of openness and honesty, which she saw as crucial to safeguarding. She added learning that took place within the partnership filtered through to all aspects of children's social care in Brent. The new Chair informed the committee that he had witnessed

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<sup>1</sup> *Statutory Guidance on Overview and Scrutiny in Local and Combined Authorities* (Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government), p21

partnerships at various stages of development and was extremely impressed that in Brent colleagues had been very welcoming, open, and the discussions he had with different agencies and partners had been very mature. He was also impressed by the level of involvement from GPs which he highlighted was strong in Brent compared to other places he had worked. The Partnership Managers were supportive, and he offered thanks for their work. In terms of work in progress and areas for focus and improvement, there had been some areas of development recommended by the most recent Ofsted inspection which was influencing the way the partnership was developing and working for the next twelve months. One of the areas of focus for the partnership was around working more closely with adults' safeguarding colleagues and continuing the good work already started around the transition from childhood to adulthood, with a recommendation for that transition age range to be between 14 – 25 years old. A second focus area was around data collection, refining the data so that more meaningful analysis could take place, learning from various audits and rapid reviews to feed in to that data analysis. Another area of development for partners was to engage more with children and young people across the borough and getting the lived and felt experience of children and young people into the various partnership settings.

- 3.2.7 Noting that there were separate but similar arrangements for safeguarding children and safeguarding adults, the aim across the next year for the two Boards would be to work more closely together. Members asked how the partnerships collaborated and communicated to resolve safeguarding issues so that work was not done in isolation between the two Boards. It was explained that this workstream was building on the work done previously around transitional safeguarding, recognising that if, for example, a child was running county lines then there may well be an adult who was being cuckooed as well. The two partnerships wanted to look at exploitation together as it was clear that this did not stop once the young person reached the age of eighteen. The Committee were advised that a Joint Executive Group was also being established, including senior leaders for both adults and children's safeguarding and both Board Chairs to meet on a semi-regular basis and discuss joint or overlapping issues. The committee recommended that an Internal Communications Strategy was drawn up for data sharing between partners and the two Boards.
- 3.2.8 The Committee will meet for its second meeting of the year on 18 September 2024. At this time, members will focus on two items prepared by the Children's and Young People Department. These items are; Overview of SEND provision in Brent and secondly, Early Years Provision and progress towards meeting the expansion of childcare entitlements.
- 3.2.9 Councillor Ketan Sheth is Brent's representative and Chair of the North West London Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (NWL JHOSC). The first meeting of the municipal year will be hosted by North West London NHS on 22 October 2024. At this meeting, the committee will review reports on; Primary Access and the Same Day Access Model, the North West London Mental Health Strategy and the North West London Adult Community-Based Specialist Palliative Care (CSPC) review.

#### **4.0 Stakeholder and ward member consultation and engagement**

4.1 Members of the Committee continue to be fully engaged in the development and delivery of the scrutiny work programme.

#### **5.0 Financial Considerations**

5.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

#### **6.0 Legal Considerations**

6.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

#### **7.0 Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Considerations**

7.1 There are no equity, diversity or inclusion implications arising from this report.

#### **8.0 Climate Change and Environmental Considerations**

8.1 There are no climate change or environmental implications arising from this report.

#### **9.0 Human Resources/Property Considerations (if appropriate)**

9.1 There are no human resources implications arising from this report.

#### **10.0 Communication Considerations**

10.1 There are no communication implications arising from this report.

**Report sign off:**

**Debra Norman**  
Corporate Director, Law and Governance