

Leader of the Council – Councillor Muhammed Butt

Top news since my last report:

- **Pride in Place Impact Fund:** I'm delighted to share that Brent has been awarded £1.5 million from the Government's Pride in Place Impact Fund – a welcome boost that will help us deliver visible, lasting improvements to our high streets, town centres and public spaces.

We know that pride begins on the high street – in the way our streets look, feel and function. This funding gives us a real opportunity to invest in the visible public realm changes that residents will see and feel every day: cleaner, greener, safer spaces that make people proud to call Brent home.

We are now considering how best to target this investment to maximise its impact – focusing on those high streets and local centres where improvements will be most visible, and where they can support local businesses, strengthen community life and encourage more people to spend time locally.

This £1.5 million investment is a fantastic opportunity to put pride back into every corner of Brent – and I'm excited to see how, together, we can make our public spaces shine.

- **Building a Better, Bolder Brent – our Autumn Budget call:** The Deputy Leader and I made a submission to HM Treasury ahead of the Autumn Budget, setting out six quick wins that would deliver visible progress in communities and contribute to the Government's missions of growth, fairness and pride in place.

Within the Council, we are proud to have been leading on campaigns to reform gambling legislation, back the West London Orbital overground line, support the upgrade and extension of the Bakerloo Line, and to implement a visitor levy on hotel and short stay accommodation, with revenue reinvested back into frontline services such as cleaner streets, community safety, and tackling the cost-of-living crisis.

As our internal Budget discussions develop, we continue to pride ourselves on careful financial stewardship of this Council, making every penny count and exploring exciting, innovative ways to boost investment in Brent.

- **Deprivation in Brent:** The latest Indices of Deprivation 2025 provide a sobering reminder of the scale of the challenge we face in Brent. Our borough now ranks 12th in England for income deprivation, reflecting the growing pressures faced by households whose earnings simply do not keep pace with rising living costs. Brent also experiences some of the highest levels of housing barriers in the country – from high rents and overcrowding.

We welcome the Government's decision to update the methodology behind this year's indices to take further account of housing costs. It gives a more accurate reflection of life in places like Brent, where the cost of housing is the number one driver of the cost-of-living — from mortgages to rents — and absorbs so much of household income. Recognising this link is an important step forward, and it strengthens our resolve to tackle it head on.

Over the past five years, more than 4,000 affordable homes have been delivered across Brent, including 758 directly by the Council, with a further 1,074 currently on site and due for completion by 2028. These include major schemes at Cecil Avenue and Ujima House in Wembley, the Alperton Bus Garage redevelopment, Watling Gardens, Church End, and continued transformation across South Kilburn, where hundreds of new homes, community facilities and open spaces are being created.

But we know there is still much more to do. The updated data lays bare how deeply the housing crisis affects our residents and why we must redouble our efforts to build more homes, and crucially, more affordable homes. We will continue to push for long-term investment and the flexibilities councils need to accelerate delivery, so that everyone in Brent has a secure, affordable place to call home.

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

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

Top news since my last report:

- **Budget 2026/27:** Our Finance team are continuing to work through the details as we look to the next financial year, ensuring that Brent's careful financial stewardship and relative stability are not endangered as we continue to face a wave of challenges. From increased reliance on Adult Social Care to an unrelenting housing waiting list of over 30,000 people, the work continues once more to set out the blueprint for the Council's finances.
- **Gambling Harms Campaign:** Brent Council is leading the national call for urgent reform of the Gambling Act 2005, whose outdated "*Aim to Permit*" duty ties the hands of local authorities and makes it extremely difficult for councils to refuse new gambling premises – even in areas already saturated with them.

With the grassroots voices of residents in Harlesden, Wembley and beyond, Brent has made this a national issue, joining forces with over 40 other councils, combined authorities and mayors, including Greater Manchester's Andy Burnham, to urge the Government to act. Our message is simple: local leaders know their communities best, and it's time to give councils the power to say no where new premises may risk harm.

To build the evidence base for change, Brent commissioned the Social Market Foundation (SMF) to produce an independent report, *High Streets at Stake*. The findings are stark: the number of Adult Gaming Centres (AGCs) has risen by 7% nationally between 2022 and 2024, with a third of all AGCs now located in the most deprived 10% of neighbourhoods. Residents surveyed in Brent described AGCs as a source of anti-social behaviour, linked to crime, debt and the normalisation of gambling among young people.

The report sets out a clear plan for reform — calling on the Government to strengthen local powers and close loopholes in the Gambling Act by:

- Granting greater licensing powers to local authorities, including the use of cumulative impact assessments to limit clustering;
- Including Directors of Public Health as statutory consultees in the gambling licensing process, as they are for alcohol;
- Reviewing the current premises licence classifications, particularly where AGCs are operating under bingo licences;
- Raising the annual licensing fee cap from £1,000 to at least £2,000 and ensuring annual review;
- Clarifying enforcement responsibilities between councils and the Gambling Commission; and
- Ultimately removing the "Aim to Permit" rule from legislation altogether.

This is about fairness, accountability and local democracy. Our high streets should be places that foster community pride, not vulnerability. Brent will continue to campaign alongside national partners and residents until the law reflects that principle and gives councils the powers they need to protect local people and restore pride in our town centres.

- **Celebrating Diversity Fund:** I'm delighted to announce the launch of Brent's Celebrating Diversity Fund, offering grants of £1,000–£5,000 to support local projects and events that showcase the richness of our borough's communities.

This fund is all about bringing people together – celebrating the different cultures, faiths and stories that make Brent such a special place to live. We want to see visible, community-led celebrations that strengthen connections and build pride across every neighbourhood.

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

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Cabinet Member for Climate Action and Community Power – Councillor Jake Rubin

Top news since my last report:

- **Brent continues to tackle climate change through community power:** Brent Council has continued its strong partnership with the London School of Economics, building on last year's Faith and Climate event, with another successful event this month which focused on the role of faith in developing Climate Resilient Communities. Opportunities and challenges for co-producing climate policies were discussed, with conversations centred around how Brent can prepare and adapt for the potential of more extreme weather.
- **Brent partners with Think & Do to promote upcycling:** We are partnering with Think & Do to deliver a series of Sharing Space events this autumn across St Raphael's Estate and South Kilburn Green Neighbourhoods. These pop-up community spaces offer residents the chance to have items repaired, swap toys and clothes, and get practical advice on environmental sustainability and energy saving.
- **Brent's bringing more Repair Cafes to you:** We are continuing to build on the successes of the ever-popular Repair Cafes – the most recent of which took place on Saturday 11th October at the Pakistani Community Centre in Willesden. Residents were able to repair clothes with TRAIID workshops, fix small electrical appliances with the Restart Project, have their bike repaired with Peddle My Wheels, and donate unwanted bikes or purchase refurbished bikes at the bike market. We have also partnered with West London Fixers and are offering two free hands-on workshops where residents can learn to repair small electric items themselves. A further three Re-use and Repair Cafes will be delivered before mid-March 2026.
- **Brent secures significant funding to heat homes:** Brent has successfully secured £1,082,353 in funding as part of a pan-London consortium from the government's Warm Homes Social Housing Fund grant. The funding will be put towards energy efficiency improvements to two council-owned Tower Blocks (the Oaks and Pharamond), enabling retrofit works aiming to lower carbon emissions and bills for residents. The preferred heat source is via ground source heat pumps, which will be complemented by cavity wall insulation to reduce the heat demand. The scheme will be supported with a £2,068,558 allocation from the Carbon Offset Fund and will be undertaken between now and 2028.
- **Brent exceeds Digital Support Fund commitments to digital exclusion:** Brent has exceeded its commitments from the Digital Support Fund device donation scheme. To date, 1626 devices have been delivered to digitally excluded young people in Brent. This includes to pupils across 8 secondary schools, 5 primary schools, and the virtual school.

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

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Cabinet Member for Customer Experience, Resident Support and Culture – Councillor Promise Knight

Top news since my last report:

- **Brent extends food voucher scheme for low-income families:** Brent has extended its voucher scheme until the end of the Easter holidays next year. Families earning under £7,400 annually will automatically receive support. Funded by the Household Support Fund (2025–26), the scheme helps during school holidays when free meals are not available, offering targeted assistance to low-income households across the borough. The voucher scheme is just one part of Brent's wider support offer for residents. Other initiatives include help with employment skills, debt advice, and energy costs, all aimed at building resilience and reducing long-term hardship.
- **Kilburn Music Mile Festival:** Following a successful NCIL award of £62k in September and an additional award from Public Health reserves of £25k, the Kilburn Music Mile festival will take place for a second year in November 2025. The festival celebrates Kilburn's rich musical legacy through live performances, heritage tours, and community-led programming. The festival will utilise local pubs and historic venues, boost the nighttime economy, and promote mental wellbeing through a dedicated music-based support programme. Led by Kilburn State of Mind with support from Brent Culture Service and Brent's Town Centre Management team, the initiative aims to foster community cohesion, elevate Kilburn's cultural profile, and provide inclusive access to music and creative experiences.
- **Brent Museum and Archives awarded £122k:** Brent Museum and Archives has received £122K from the Museum Renewal Fund to secure its future, enhance collection care, and improve visitor experience. The grant will fund a full collections audit, new contactless donation points, and upgraded technology for staff and volunteers, supporting Brent's cultural heritage and community engagement.

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

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

Top news since my last report:

- **£4 million capital investment in Brent's Youth Section approved:** I am pleased to announce that our significant investment of SCIL funding for Brent's youth organisations has now been approved by Cabinet, with 5 grassroots organisations from across the borough set to benefit. This funding will help rebuild and refurbish crucial infrastructure for sports and activities, providing young people with the facilities they need to thrive.
- **New Wembley Manor SEND School welcomes its first pupils:** Our state of the art SEND school, designed specifically for neurodiverse children, has now opened and welcomed its first cohort in October. 150 children, predominantly with autism spectrum disorder, will benefit from the specialist provision, delivered with the RISE Partnership.
- **Brent Youth Justice Plan 2025-8 approved by cabinet:** The Youth Justice Service carry out extremely valuable work supporting young people who have experience of the criminal justice system. Our annual report highlights the downward trend of both first time and re-offending, as well as detailing some other key achievements, such as work to address disproportionality, and our proposal for targeted intervention hubs.

Other news:

Progress Report on the London Protocol: A progress report on reducing criminalisation of looked after children and care leavers was presented on 13 October. Key developments included a joint accommodation protocol, de-escalation training for foster carers, advocacy training for Personal Advisors, and a staff forum on justice system support. Lived experiences were shared, prompting constructive discussion.

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

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Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Leisure – Councillor Neil Nerva

Top news since my last report:

- **Brent Supervised Toothbrushing Programme:** On 13 October, Brent's Public Health Team packed dental kits for young people as part of the government's supervised toothbrushing programme. Brent received £70,000 and a five-year supply of products, including 3,148 toothbrushes, 9,444 toothpastes, and 6,296 packs. Each child will receive termly in-school kits and a take-home pack with brushing resources.
- **Community Health Pod Launch at Willesden Library:** Brent launched Community Health Pods at Willesden Library on 22 October as part of Brent Health Matters. These pods offer walk-in health checks with NHS integration and multilingual support in nine languages. Located in familiar community spaces, they aim to reduce health inequalities, support early detection, and ease pressure on hospitals and GPs through a tech-enabled, prevention-focused public health model.

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

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Cabinet Member for Public Realm and Enforcement – Councillor Krupa Sheth

Top news since my last report:

- **Brent wins British Parking Award:** Brent has been recognised for the significant improvements that have been made to parking in the borough over the last two years, winning the 'Parking in Action' award. We have also been shortlisted for the British Parking Awards 'Back Office Award'.
- **Brent continues to make progress on cleaner, greener transport in the borough:** Installation of 20 Uber EV chargers is underway, adding to the 140 already installed. 17 new bike hangars are also being installed, taking us up to 170 in Brent, whilst progress is also continuing with Lime Bike parking – with 140 bays installed and consultation ongoing for another 50 bays to commence in November – all while we continue to hold Lime to account, ensuring users are mandated to park in bays, prevent stray bikes causing nuisance – tidying up our borough, reducing emissions, and promoting active travel simultaneously. We will continue to engage residents in the process, with the upcoming Lime Residents Forum to be held November 6th.
- **Progress on tackling food waste in Brent:** Except for St Raph's estate – which is undergoing a separate project, all Brent Housing Management communal properties now have Food Waste recycling, whilst work is being undertaken to ensure all privately managed communal blocks have food waste units installed over the next few months. September saw 28.32 tonnes of food waste recycled from our communal properties – an increase of 10% compared to this time last year.
- **Brent ramps up zero-tolerance approach to fly-tipping:** In our ongoing Don't Mess with Brent campaign against fly-tipping and littering blighting our borough, we have invested in brand new AI technology CCTV cameras in all Brent connect areas, to supplement our existing cameras.

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

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Cabinet Member for Housing – Councillor Fleur Donnelly-Jackson

Top news since my last report:

- **Brent is clamping down on rogue landlords and protecting renters' rights through the additional HMO licensing scheme:** Our borough-wide HMO Licensing Scheme helps us raise standards and ensure that every property meets clear, consistent requirements. It creates a level playing field for landlords, while giving the Council the powers we need to act decisively where standards fall short. We have also strengthened engagement with tenants through our annual Renters' Fairs, the most recent of which was held last month, and received over 80% positive feedback. Likewise, our yearly landlord forums continue to promote good practice and collaboration across the private rented sector. Looking ahead, the new Additional Licensing Scheme, coming into force on 2nd February 2026, together with the new Renters' Rights Bill, will deliver even stronger protections for renters and fairer rules for responsible landlords. We have invested in staff training and robust operational systems to ensure we are ready for implementation from day one. These measures will help us drive up standards across Brent, tackle rogue landlords, and make sure that every resident has a safe and decent home.
- **Brent is ensuring local tenants benefit fully from the Government's Renters' Reform Bill:** The Renters' Rights Bill, which received Royal Assent this month, marks a once-in-a-generation reform of the private rented sector, bringing greater security for tenants, stronger powers against unfair evictions, and a fairer balance between renters and landlords. We are already preparing for its implementation, expected between April and June 2026. Dedicated projects are underway across both our Private Housing Services and Housing Needs teams to make sure Brent residents benefit fully from these long-overdue changes. Our teams are engaging closely in pan-London and subregional forums, sharing learning, and identifying opportunities to improve the quality of private rented housing, strengthen renters' rights, and prevent homelessness. We are also working closely with the DWP and our Housing Benefits teams to anticipate changes in income, affordability pressures, and Universal Credit delays, ensuring we can support residents through the transition. The Renters' Rights Bill represents a national turning point, and here in Brent, we'll make sure that it delivers real change for the thousands of renters who call this borough home.
- **Brent continues to tackle the Homelessness emergency head on:** The draft new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026 – 2031, is out to consultation until 3 November 2025, before being presented back to cabinet on 8 December for final approval before publication. The draft strategy was presented to key stakeholders at the Brent Homelessness Forum on 8 October and was presented at the Registered Provider Forum on 13 October and a Members' Briefing session on 14 October. We are also working to eliminate our use of B&B's as temporary accommodation, which is both costly to the Council, and destabilising for families. The B&B reduction plan aims to place more families in more stable and suitable accommodation fit for the long-term.

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

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Cabinet Member for Safer Communities, Jobs and Skills – Councillor Harbi Farah

Top news since my last report:

- **Hate Crime Awareness Week (13–18 October):** Brent held a series of events during Hate Crime Awareness week. The Stop Hate UK session focused on online hate and reporting tools, with 20 attendees from various services. The Protection Approaches workshop explored the causes and impact of hate crime, engaging 22 staff in discussions on protected characteristics and community impact. Both sessions saw strong participation and valuable insights.
- **Brent Good Work Standard First Cohort Event:** Brent successfully completed the first-year cohort of the Brent Good Work Standard Programme in July and celebrated this milestone at the Civic Centre on Tuesday 16th September 2025 with 7 accredited businesses. We are now preparing to launch our 2nd cohort, starting Tuesday 11th November.
- **Anti-social Behaviour and Nuisance Patrol Officers NCIL Bid Secured:** The Community Safety Team was successful in a bid from NCIL funding to have four ASB Patrol Officers to provide a uniformed presence in Brent's town centres. The officers will primarily work on weekends and late evenings to engage with and respond to residents and businesses concerning anti-social behaviour and low-level crime. We hope to have these officers in post by mid-November 2025.

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

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Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning and Property – Councillor Teo Benea

Top news since my last report:

- **Brent prioritises developments that residents need most with managed pause on student accommodation:** Purpose-Built Student Accommodation has been a significant part of Brent's growth story — bringing investment, life, and vibrancy to the area. Students contribute enormously to Brent's economy, spending in our shops, cafés, and cultural venues, volunteering in the community, and enriching the fabric of our borough. But we are also listening to residents who have told us that the balance must now be recalibrated. With more than 3,800 student beds already delivered or approved, it is right that we pause and reflect on the kind of development Brent needs next. The housing challenges we face are deep and varied. We need more homes for families, key workers and older residents, as well as genuinely affordable housing that allows people to stay and put down roots in the communities they love. This temporary Planning Position Statement does exactly that — it creates breathing space while we review the Local Plan to ensure that future development supports a mix of housing that meets real local need. We are making it clear that Brent welcomes investment and development, but we expect partners to come forward with schemes that help us tackle the housing emergency, not add to it.
- **Brent continues to improve its Town Centres:** NCIL funded cleaner, brighter, and safer programmes are now underway to improve the look of our high streets and public safety during the darker months. Town Centres will also benefit from the NCIL Buskers Corner Project, beginning in the coming weeks across 7 centres.
- **Summer of events boosts Brent's economy:** Recent analysis by Lloyds Banking Group shows that Brent's businesses significantly benefitted from Wembley's summer of world-class events, in particular Oasis' string of seven concerts. Data highlighted that hospitality, pubs, restaurants, takeaways, and convenience retailers saw the strongest uplift, with higher average spends per customer linked to extended dwell times before and after concerts. Licensed premises benefitted from increased food and drink sales, while local transport and late-night services also reported higher usage.

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

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