

LGA Corporate Peer Challenge – Progress Review

London Borough of Brent

Wednesday 26th November 2025

Feedback



Corporate Peer Challenge

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1. Introduction

The council undertook an LGA Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) during 14 – 17 January 2025 and promptly published the [full report](#) with an [action plan](#).

The Progress Review is an integral part of the CPC process. Taking place approximately ten months after the CPC, it is designed to provide space for the council's senior leadership to:

- Receive feedback from peers on the early progress made by the council against the CPC recommendations and the council's CPC Action Plan.
- Consider peers' reflections on any new opportunities or challenges that may have arisen since the peer team were 'onsite' including any further support needs.
- Discuss any early impact or learning from the progress made to date.

The LGA would like to thank the London Borough of Brent for their commitment to sector-led improvement. This Progress Review was the next step in an ongoing, relationship that the council has with LGA sector support.

2. Summary of the approach

The Progress Review at the London Borough of Brent took place (onsite) on 26th November 2025.

The Progress Review focussed on each of the recommendations from the CPC, under the following theme headings:

1. Financial planning and management

- Recommendation 1 - Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)
- Recommendation 5 – Reserves
- Recommendation 6 - Financial processes and organisational grip

2. Change and transformation

- Recommendation 2 - Breaking down silos
- Recommendation 3 - Change and transformation programme
- Recommendation 8 - Shared vision for the future of Brent

3. Housing and temporary accommodation

- a. Recommendation 4 - Temporary accommodation
- b. Recommendation 10 - Housing allocations and waiting list
- c. Preparation for the Regulator of Social Housing inspection

4. Partnerships and engagement

- a. Recommendation 7 - Voluntary and community sector (VCS)
- b. Recommendation 9 - Community and tenant engagement

5. People services

- a. Recommendation 11 - Adults and children's services

6. Equity, diversity and inclusion

- a. Recommendation 12 - Equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI)

For this Progress Review, a smaller peer team was involved than for the original CPC. The peers who returned for this Progress Review were:

- Dr Lorraine O'Donnell, Chief Executive, City of Bradford Council
- Cllr Peter Marland, Leader, Milton Keynes City Council
- Clive Palfreyman, Strategic Director Resources (s151), London Borough of Southwark
- Sonia Grewal, Chief Operating Officer, Swindon Borough Council
- Harry Parker, LGA Peer Challenge Manager

3. Progress Review - Feedback

The peer team found that Brent has made progress across most of the recommendations from the CPC, with evidence of clearer governance arrangements and strengthened organisational grip, particularly in relation to the transformation programme. Many of the work programmes are still maturing and remain at an early stage, particularly the significant programme to restore full housing compliance, the review of the housing allocations policy and the broader challenge of securing long term financial sustainability and the demonstration of this through an extended five-year Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).

3.1. Financial planning and management

Brent ended 2024/25 with an overspend of £15.5m, driven predominantly by significant pressures in temporary accommodation, with the Housing Needs and Support budget alone overspending by £15.3m. These pressures reflect a national challenge affecting many councils, particularly across London, rather than an issue unique to Brent. The overspend was met through the use of reserves, which has reduced the council's overall financial resilience. The annual auditor's report for 2024/25 identified some considerable risk, highlighting significant weaknesses in financial sustainability and housing compliance and tasked the council with a number of improvement recommendations relating to financial reporting and strategic asset management.

The council's in-year financial position for 2025/26 remains challenging, with a forecast overspend of £9.2m. Of this, £5m relates to Housing Needs and Support, despite the council providing £15m of budget growth, demonstrating the continuing very high demand for homelessness services. There are also significant emerging pressures within Adult Social Care that will require close monitoring and mitigations being developed. In addition, the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) is forecast to overspend by £2.7m in 2025/26, increasing the cumulative DSG deficit to £16.3m.

No.	Original CPC Recommendation – Medium-Term Financial Strategy
1	The council should develop a longer-term MTFS that is fully aligned with its corporate priorities and change and transformation programme. It is important that this is owned across the organisation. The peer team agrees with the immediate need to establish a five-year MTFS, it is essential to integrate the financial benefits of the planned change and transformation programme into this strategy.

The council has strengthened its approach to medium-term financial planning and has, for the first time, introduced a three-year MTFS covering 2025/26 to 2028/29, moving beyond the two-year projections used previously. The MTFS sets out a projected budget gap of £10m each year, rising to a cumulative £30m by 2028/29.

The peer team continues to strongly encourage the council to develop a longer-term view through a five-year MTFS. It is positive that Brent has stated its intention to

move to this approach once there is greater clarity on future funding through the multi-year local government finance settlement and Fair Funding reforms, which should provide increased certainty over funding in the medium term. The council plans to develop a full five-year financial forecast as part of the July 2026 Cabinet finance update, and the peer team would also encourage consideration of an early outline of the longer-term position alongside the 2026/27 budget setting in February 2026.

No.	Original CPC Recommendation – Reserves
5	Given the depletion of the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) reserves, a medium-term programme of restoring the balances to sustainable levels must be a priority. This should include internal communications outlining the reserves position and include explanation of what the ringfence requirements are of the council's Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and capital reserves. The council should also explore strategic approaches to utilising these CIL and capital reserves to deliver a net-positive impact on the council's revenue account position.

Brent increased its budget stabilisation reserve by £5m going into 2025/26, which is a positive step. However, overall financial resilience remains constrained, as the council has continued to rely on reserves to balance the budget for the past two years. General Fund reserves now stand at around £20m, but this could reduce further if the projected (£9.2m) overspend as at Quarter 2 of 2025/26 is realised.

Looking ahead, the peer team supports the council's intention to develop a longer-term reserves strategy once the national funding position is clearer following the local government finance settlement and the implications of Fair Funding 2.0 are understood. Such a strategy should set out a clear and achievable roadmap for restoring reserves to a more sustainable level.

The council continues to hold strong levels of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and Section 106 reserves. The peer team heard positive examples of recent work to more clearly align the CIL programme with the Borough Plan and the wider capital strategy. Recent Cabinet decisions have committed £19m of CIL funding to areas such as development related highways, CCTV and green spaces. The council is also

making the case nationally for greater flexibility in how CIL can be used, particularly to support pressures around housing, community safety and local environmental improvements.

An emerging high-risk area for the council is the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), which is already under significant pressure due to low reserve levels and multiple competing demands. HRA resources are increasingly stretched, and the costs associated with delivering the regulatory compliance improvements required following the self-referral to the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) will place further strain on the account. These pressures sit alongside the council's continued ambition to deliver new social housing. Given the increasing pressure on the HRA, the peer team encourages the council to strengthen corporate awareness and ownership of the account across the organisation and to closely monitor the financial risk it is exposed to.

No.	Original CPC Recommendation – Financial processes and organisational grip
6	<p>The council should prioritise enhancing its financial processes to secure income, improve productivity and drive efficiencies. Key areas of focus include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Improving debt recovery effectiveness.b) Increasing council tax collection rates.c) Optimising procurement and commissioning practices.d) Consistent approach to business case development to support the delivery of change and ensuring that the change and transformation programme quickly identifies savings proposals of sufficient assurance to incorporate in the MTFSe) Conducting detailed unit cost analysis and benchmarking to identify cost-saving opportunities. <p>To effectively address the financial gap, the council should also invest in improving financial awareness, literacy and ownership across the organisation, ensuring both members and officers are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge and reducing the overreliance on the finance</p>

function.

Since the CPC, the council has introduced corporate spending controls, including halting non-essential expenditure, tightening controls on recruitment and agency use and requiring directorate-level financial recovery plans. These measures have supported a tightened financial grip and helped the council avoid an estimated £8m of costs.

Improving the effectiveness of debt recovery was a key CPC recommendation, and the council has taken positive steps in response. Targeted investment in the debt recovery function has resulted in a £10.8m reduction in overall debt between April and September 2025, exceeding business case targets. This progress represents an important step forward, though it now needs to be expanded and applied consistently across all income streams. The council's 90-day Income and Debt Improvement Plan, introduced in August 2025, provides a platform to build on the progress made and embed a more consistent approach to income recovery.

While progress on wider debt reduction is encouraging, council tax collection remains below expectations. In-year collection stood at 43.2 per cent in August 2025, and the 2024/25 outturn of 91.2 per cent was slightly lower than the previous year. This reflects the absence of a fully co-ordinated, corporate approach to debt, underpinned by limitations in systems and data that prevent a single, integrated view of debt across the council. Addressing these underlying issues will be essential to improving collection performance, and the peer team welcomes the external review recently commissioned to support improvements in council tax collection.

Positive progress can be seen in the steps taken to strengthen the corporate procurement function. Following an external review earlier in 2025, Brent established a two-year Procurement Improvement Programme. The programme launched with five workstreams with the aim of strengthening compliance and improving contract management, with mandatory contract management training rolled out. This has been supported through the development of the council's first Annual Procurement Plan which is due to be considered by Cabinet in January 2026 to secure corporate oversight. A new Procurement Strategy and Social Value Policy are also in development. These are important foundations, and the next phase will be to

translate this work into tangible benefits, including cross-cutting efficiencies with a clear financial impact.

The council has introduced a new business case process as part of the 2026/27 budget cycle. External support was used to develop a standardised template, which has been used for all savings proposals for the forthcoming budget. The next step will be to embed this approach consistently across the organisation so that all major proposals are supported by clear, evidence-based business cases.

The peer team again heard that there remains an overreliance on the finance function, with further work needed to strengthen financial ownership, improve understanding of services and accountability among finance staff, budget managers and Cabinet members. Developing a more confident and informed approach to financial management across the organisation will be essential, particularly to ensure decision makers fully understand the wider impacts of budget decisions across directorates. The council would benefit from refreshing its organisational development offer so that officers and members have the financial skills and confidence to understand budgets and the services they support, manage budgets effectively and deliver the savings required by the MTFS.

3.2. Change and transformation

No.	Original CPC Recommendation – Breaking down silos
2	<p>The council is aware of the need to break down silos. The change and transformation programme rightly targets this issue, but the scale of the transition required should not be underestimated. Collaborative behaviours with a genuine sense of curiosity need to be modelled by the Corporate Management Team (CMT), Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and all managers.</p> <p>To effectively break down silos, the council needs to foster greater strategic collaboration across all departments, sharing the knowledge and expertise held within the organisation. Officers need to adopt more of a corporate mindset recognising that challenges in specific directorates are shared, council-wide responsibilities.</p>

The council has taken steps to strengthen cross-council collaboration since the CPC, supported by the adoption of collaboration as one of the organisation's values and its inclusion as a category in staff and team awards. The introduction of the Innovation Hub, 'The Base', has also created a dedicated space for staff to work together across services, and the peer team heard positive feedback about the role this is playing. During the Progress Review, the peer team met a highly engaged Head of Service group who demonstrated a clear commitment to working collaboratively on strategic issues. The council should harness this energy to break down organisational silos and encourage officers to adopt a stronger corporate mindset to help tackle shared challenges.

The new organisational values and accompanying behavioural framework are in the process of being embedded and will be important in shaping the council's culture over time. Planned Staff Excellence Awards in 2026 and the relaunch of Directors' Commendations, aligned to the new values, provide additional opportunities to reinforce and celebrate collaborative behaviours across the organisation.

No.	Original CPC Recommendation – Change and transformation programme
3	<p>Recognise the urgency of advancing the change and transformation programme and develop evidence-based business cases that deliver the spending reductions required by the MTFS. To achieve this, the council should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Quickly define and set the name, scope and contents of the change and transformation programme, and consistently communicate this across the organisation. Bolster communications supporting staff to understand, engage with and embrace the transformation journey. b) Develop SMART delivery plans for each element of the programme. Support these plans through the use of the programme management office (PMO) governance to oversee and co-ordinate their delivery. c) Accelerate the pace of delivery of the change and transformation programme by ensuring that it is owned and led by SLT with the required grip to ensure delivery.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> d) Establish the programme as a cross-council initiative, corporately owned by all directors, to foster collective accountability. e) Focus the organisational development programme on building the capabilities and behaviours required to deliver the change and transformation programme at pace and scale. f) Ensure the change and transformation programme is fully integrated with the council's digital transformation agenda and the operating model for customer services
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Brent's transformation activity has been brought together under the Embrace Change portfolio, a re-scoped programme that comprises six major strands of work supported by three cross-cutting enablers. Governance arrangements have been developed through the creation of a Corporate Programme Management Office (PMO), which co-ordinates project boards reporting into the Portfolio Board (primarily CMT representatives) and works with Senior Responsible Officers (SROs) to support oversight of delivery. The introduction of Objectives and Key Results (OKRs) for each project is a positive development, helping to track progress and highlight areas requiring attention.

At present, the PMO operates largely as an assurance function, and there is an opportunity for it to adopt a more active and strategic role in supporting delivery. The peer team encourages the council to consider strengthening PMO capacity so that it can provide broader programme leadership and drive greater consistency in project management practice.

A crucial factor in the success of the Embrace Change portfolio will be ensuring that ownership is genuinely held across the organisation. During the Progress Review, the peer team heard concerns that scrutiny and challenge at the SLT level can be passive, with a tendency to defer decision making to the Portfolio Board/CMT. The peer team felt it is important there is sufficient support and training for SROs in understanding their role and responsibilities in how best to drive the delivery of the programme. The council should consider whether the current organisational development offer in this area is sufficient.

While the council has made progress in establishing stronger foundations, the overall

pace of change has been slower than expected, with much of the effort to date focused on governance and process. Several programmes remain at an early stage, and the benefits and savings expected from the transformation are not yet fully quantified or incorporated into the MTFS. The challenge now is to accelerate delivery and move more decisively towards realising the benefits of transformation. A priority should be to develop a clearly defined and deliverable savings pipeline, integrated into the MTFS, supported by a stronger overarching narrative for the Embrace Change portfolio. The peer team found that clarity on the purpose and objectives of the transformation was not consistently understood across the organisation.

Digital, data and insight form one of the cross-cutting enablers, and the council has taken steps to better align its digital activity with the wider transformation programme. The peer team heard positive examples of digital opportunities being brought forward, including the use of voice agents, chatbots and AI tools such as Copilot and Magic Notes. To maximise the impact of this work and accelerate the pace of digital transformation, the council would benefit from a clear and prioritised implementation plan. The forthcoming digital transformation roadmap, due to be considered by Cabinet shortly, provides an opportunity to agree priorities and set out how digital investment will deliver efficiencies and support innovation across the organisation.

No.	Original CPC Recommendation – Shared vision for the future of Brent
8	Work with partners across the public sector, VCS and private sector to co-create a shared, medium- to long-term vision for Brent that goes beyond the council's immediate priorities. This vision should reflect a collective ambition for the borough, setting shared priorities and intended outcomes for both Brent residents and Brent as a place.

Progress on developing a shared medium to long-term vision for Brent has been limited since the CPC, with the council intending to take this forward alongside the development of the next Borough Plan 2027 - 2031. Fieldwork for the new Resident Attitude Survey will begin in the new year and will provide useful insight to inform this process. The peer team continue to consider this is a key recommendation for Brent and encourages the council to prioritise this work, as it presents an important opportunity to build the Brent brand and a common purpose with partners. More work

is needed to articulate Brent's story and identity, including its unique strengths and what the Brent of 2035 and beyond should look like. The peer team would encourage the Cabinet, in particular, to carry out exercises to define an ambitious narrative and to work closely with officers to ensure it is clearly expressed both internally and externally.

3.3. Housing and temporary accommodation

In April 2025 the council made a self-referral to the RSH regarding significant concerns about fire safety and housing condition data. The RSH subsequently issued a C3 judgement for one of the Standards, indicating serious failings in meeting the Quality and Safety Standard and requiring substantial improvement. An independent audit commissioned by the council confirmed systemic issues across all major compliance areas and concluded that Brent did not have adequate assurance over building safety compliance.

In response, Brent developed a housing management improvement plan to address the failings identified. The peer team heard during the Progress Review that the council recognises the scale and seriousness of the challenge, and the self-referral has prompted a more focused corporate grip on housing compliance and the council's corporate landlord responsibilities. However, this remains a major and long-term area of risk that will require the continuation of the current unerring focus of senior leaders to deliver the level of improvement required.

Since the self-referral, the council has begun to make progress against its housing management improvement plan, although much of this work remains at an early stage. Good progress has been made in addressing all high-risk fire safety actions in high-rise blocks, and the council has accelerated its stock condition survey programme, with 35 per cent of homes due to be surveyed this year and full survey coverage targeted for March 2028. A significant programme is underway to rebuild the council's compliance data systems and asset register, which is due for completion by April 2026. Until this work is completed, the council acknowledges it cannot yet provide assurances on its compliance performance.

Brent has also established a new, independently chaired Housing Management Advisory Board, bringing together tenant and independent representatives to provide

external challenge and oversight of the improvement plan. Internally, the council has also created a Chief Executive-chaired housing and tenant satisfaction programme board to provide focus and co-ordination to workstreams designed to improve tenant experience. Tenant satisfaction remains an area for improvement, Brent's latest Tenant Satisfaction Measures show continued decline across several indicators, with overall satisfaction falling to 47.8 per cent (2024/25) from 51.4 per cent (2023/24) and performance on stage one complaints responded to on time reducing to 81.8 (2024/25) per cent from 97.5 per cent (2023/24).

No.	Original CPC Recommendation – Temporary accommodation
4	<p>Addressing the temporary accommodation crisis requires whole-organisational ownership and a collective response to tackle both the immediate pressures and the underlying systemic issues. The council should review all the levers it has to impact positively on this crisis. This may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Developing a dedicated Temporary Accommodation Improvement Plan reporting into a structured governance framework to co-ordinate actions across the council. b) Looking outwardly, as this is not a pressure unique to Brent, and working in collaboration with partners including other local councils. c) Build on initiatives that have already started e.g. 'Find a place you can afford.' d) Explore creative opportunities presented by the council's new build and acquisitions programme.

The scale of temporary accommodation in Brent remains extremely high and continues to place significant pressure on the council. Around 2,400 households, including approximately 4,600 children, are currently living in temporary accommodation, representing almost one in ten households in the borough. Demand continues to rise, with a 10 per cent increase in placements since March 2025. Q2 performance data for 2025/26 shows 2,483 households in temporary accommodation, exceeding the target of 2,100. This sustained pressure has driven substantial overspends, with the service budget overspending by £15.3m in 2024/25,

and despite £15m growth in the current year's budget, the service is still forecast to overspend by £5m.

Since the CPC, the council has taken steps to strengthen its corporate response and secure ownership from across the organisation. The Preventing Homelessness Improvement Programme has been launched as one of the major strands of the Embrace Change portfolio, and the council has adopted a new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy for 2026 – 2031. Positively, the council has been looking outwardly and is active in pan-London conversations, with clear recognition that this crisis cannot be solved in isolation.

A variety of initiatives have been rolled out to reduce the demand on temporary accommodation, including a MHCLG compliant B&B elimination plan to reduce the use of costly nightly paid accommodation – which 208 households are currently living in. The 'Find a Place You Can Afford' campaign has continued with evidence of some success with 20 households assisted into private rented homes since August 2025. Alongside this, Brent has made considerable investment through its new build and acquisitions programme; 663 new homes are forecast for delivery in 2025/26 with 70 per cent being allocated to homeless households.

Brent has strengthened its governance and systems in managing temporary accommodation. These foundations are positive, and comparative data indicates that while overspends remain substantial, they are not increasing at the same rate as in some neighbouring boroughs. However, pressures remain acute and continued whole-council ownership, strong partnership working and further development of prevention interventions will be essential in the year ahead.

No.	Original CPC Recommendation – Housing allocations and waiting list
10	Review and update the council's Housing Allocations Policy and undertake a re-registration exercise for households on the waiting list to obtain an accurate, up-to-date picture of housing needs across Brent

Progress on reviewing and updating the Housing Allocations Policy has been delayed and this recommendation remains outstanding. A revised policy has been drafted which proposes removing Band D households from the housing register. Eligibility is already restricted to those in Bands A to C, as households in Band D are

not eligible to bid.

The council has taken the decision to delay statutory consultation and implementation until after the May 2026 elections. While the peer team understands the context for this decision, updating the policy remains an important step in ensuring the housing register provides an accurate and realistic picture of housing need in Brent.

The peer team was informed that a re-registration exercise for all households currently in Band D will commence in January 2026.

3.4. Partnerships and engagement

No.	Original CPC Recommendation – Voluntary and community sector (VCS)
7	Consider a refresh of the Compact with the VCS and health to strengthen collaboration and align priorities. A co-developed engagement strategy, building on the enthusiasm for the Radical Place Leadership approach, would provide a robust framework for fostering deeper partnerships. Additionally, the council should continue its efforts to engage with the full breadth of the VCS sector in Brent.

The peer team heard about the positive steps that have been taken to strengthen the council's engagement with the voluntary and community sector (VCS). A new VCS Steering Group has been established, bringing together council, VCS and public sector partners as a forum for co-production and to strengthen relationships. The group has begun discussions on shaping a refreshed support offer for the VCS, addressing infrastructure needs and exploring opportunities to increase capacity. The council shared with the peer team its intention for the partnership to be more VCS-driven, a collaborative space which is focused on shared outcomes.

The steering group jointly delivered the 'Shaping the Future of Brent's Voluntary and Community Sector' consultancy event, which brought together over 90 representatives from VCS and partner organisations. This was an opportunity to connect Brent's broad and diverse VCS, celebrate its contribution and identify shared priorities and capacity challenges.

In July 2025 the council launched its first Integrated Neighbourhood Team pilot in the Harlesden Brent Connects area, bringing together colleagues from across council services and external partners, including health and the VCS. This pilot represents the first step in delivering the Radical Place Leadership vision through a neighbourhood-based operating model focused on collaboration, prevention and early intervention. While it is too early to draw firm conclusions about impact, the peer team was assured that the pilot is being closely monitored and evaluated, with the intention of using the learning to inform potential roll-out to other Brent Connects areas.

No.	Original CPC Recommendation – Community and tenant engagement
9	Refresh the council's approach to community engagement by conducting a comprehensive review of all existing engagement methods. This review should ensure that all approaches are aligned and complement each other. There is also a need to embed the new Tenant and Leaseholder Engagement Strategy to enhance tenant involvement in shaping the service. The new Housing Management Advisory Board will have an important role in scrutinising the implementation of this. This strategy should consider areas for improving the service culture and responsiveness to tenants.

The council introduced an internal Community Engagement Network in February 2025, bringing together officers from across the organisation to share practice, strengthen collaboration and promote a more co-ordinated approach to engaging with residents. The network is contributing to an ongoing review of community engagement activity across the council, and early mapping has highlighted wide variation in approaches. To make improvements, work is underway to develop a Community Engagement Framework that will bring together best practice guidance, practical tools and clearer corporate standards for community engagement.

Also, the council continues to gather feedback from Brent Connects forums to inform proposals on the future of place-based and democratic engagement. Learning from this will be taken to shape options on future local engagement arrangements with a paper due to be considered at the CMT shortly.

The peer team also heard positive examples of co-production, particularly within

Adult Social Care, where a dedicated co-production network brings together service users, carers and officers to inform policy development. The council should seek to build on this good practice by treating it as an exemplar and extending similar approaches more widely across the organisation.

3.5. People services

No.	Original CPC Recommendation – Adults and Children's services
11	Seize the opportunity for service transformation within both Adults and Children's services, leveraging the current position of below average overspends.

The January 2025 inspection of Brent's Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) services found that children and young people with SEND generally experience positive outcomes, which is particularly noteworthy given the scale of pressures across London. Both Adults' and Children's transformation programmes are now embedded within the Embrace Change portfolio, with clearer governance arrangements and established OKRs to support delivery. The peer team also heard positive evidence of effective use of performance and cost benchmarking, alongside Brent's participation in regional alliances to share good practice and learning.

The council has begun to explore digital innovation within its people services, including the use of AI tools such as Copilot and Magic Notes. These initiatives have the potential to improve efficiency and staff experience. However, emerging in-year overspends, particularly within Adult Social Care, will require close monitoring and the development of mitigations.

3.6. Equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI)

No.	Original CPC Recommendation – Equity, diversity and inclusion
12	Refresh the council's EDI priorities to ensure that activity is aligned with cultural competency/appropriateness and improving outcomes for residents. Ensure that there is a broader focus on EDI across all underrepresented

groups. The council should also reset its relationship with the staff networks to maximise their contribution in shaping organisational strategy and outcomes. The CMT should play more of an active role in sponsoring and supporting these networks, demonstrating a genuine commitment to enhancing their visibility and influence.

Staff networks were re-established in February 2025 following a refresh of their terms of reference, with two new networks launched – Multi Faith Network and Early Careers Network. The peer team heard that senior leadership visibility and accountability have been strengthened through refreshed sponsorship arrangements and more regular reporting to the EDI Board, helping to raise the profile and influence of the networks across the organisation.

Progress has been made in relation to racial equity. Anti-racism training has been rolled out to senior managers, with over 80 per cent having completed the programme to date. The next phase will be to embed this learning across the organisation and to measure its impact on behaviours and outcomes. Brent has refreshed its Black Community Action Plan for 2025 – 2033 and an Independent Advisory Steering Group, with external representation, has been established to oversee delivery of both organisational and community-facing actions. In addition, 17 staff Equity Champions have been appointed to support delivery and promote good practice across the council.

Positively, the council is taking action to broaden its EDI focus across disadvantaged groups and beyond the nine protected characteristics. Brent has recently adopted the socio-economic duty and care experience as a recognised protected characteristic. Plans are for both to be considered as part of the council's strengthened Equality Impact Assessments process which is undergoing a refresh.

4. Final thoughts and next steps

The LGA would like to thank the London Borough of Brent for undertaking an LGA CPC Progress Review.

We appreciate that senior managerial and political leadership will want to reflect on these findings and suggestions in order to determine how the organisation wishes to



take things forward.

Under the umbrella of LGA sector-led improvement, there is an ongoing offer of support to councils. The LGA is well placed to provide additional support, advice and guidance on a number of the areas identified for development and improvement and we would be happy to discuss this.

Mona Sehgal, London Principal Adviser, is the main point of contact between the authority and the LGA and their e-mail address is mona.sehgal@local.gov.uk.