



LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

MINUTES OF THE CABINET

**Held in the Conference Hall, Brent Civic Centre on Monday 8 December 2025
at 10.00 am**

PRESENT: Councillor M Butt (Chair), Councillor M Patel (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Benea, Donnelly-Jackson, Farah, Grahl, Knight, Nerva and Krupa Sheth

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Rubin (Cabinet Member for Climate Action & Community Power) and Rachel Crossley (Corporate Director Service Reform & Strategy) with Ruth Du Plessis (Director of Public Health) attending as her representative.

2. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made during the meeting.

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Cabinet **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the previous meeting held on Monday 17 November 2025 be approved as a correct record of the meeting.

4. Matters Arising (if any)

None identified.

5. Petitions (if any)

There were no petitions presented at the meeting.

6. Reference of item considered by Scrutiny Committees (if any)

There were no items referred from either the Community Wellbeing or Resources & Public Realm Scrutiny Committees.

7. Housing Management Property Services Performance Report Q1 & Q2 2025 (including Regulator of Social Housing Safety & Quality Standard) and progress update on referral to the Regulator of Social Housing

Councillor Fleur Donnelly-Jackson (Cabinet Member for Housing) introduced a report from the Corporate Director of Housing and Resident Services providing a performance update against core areas of housing management property services that fell under the Regulator of Social Housing's Safety & Quality Standard as well as an update on the progress being made following the Council's self-referral to the Regulator of Social Housing.

In introducing the report, Councillor Donnelly-Jackson began by advising members of the way in which the report had been presented to offer a direct and honest assessment of the Council's performance against the Regulator of Social Housing's Safety and Quality Standard, reflecting on a period of challenge and change within Brent. In highlighting that the report had not sought to shy away from the historic failings identified, it was also felt important to recognise the focus demonstrated in relation to the process of recovery alongside the renewed commitment to accountability and better practice.

Referring to the refreshed regulatory standards outlined within the report, members noted the higher expectations now being placed on all social landlords in order to ensure that residents were not only provided with homes that were safe but also a responsive service. As such, it was felt the self-referral to the Regulator represented a significant step in terms of not only acknowledging where the Council had fallen short of those expectations but also in committing the authority to taking responsibility for improvement. As part of this process, the opportunity was taken to highlight the progress which had been made following the self-referral to appoint independent specialists to scrutinise systems and complete a forensic audit, which it was recognised had exposed gaps. As a result, governance had been strengthened; stock condition surveys accelerated with a tenant-centred improvement programme now also in the process of being delivered.

The transparent nature of the report was also recognised and acknowledged as key in seeking to rebuild trust given the impact of the previous issue identified on those tenants whose confidence had been undermined by the delays, inconsistent communication and assurance previously experienced. On this basis, the introduction of the Housing and Tenant Satisfaction Improvement Board and the tenant-led Housing Management Advisory Board were also welcomed in representing what was felt to be a cultural shift towards transparency, challenge and coproduction with Councillor Donnelly-Jackson also taking the opportunity to formally thank the independent chair of the newly established Advisory Board for their support.

Whilst also highlighting the wider national context in terms of this recovery work in relation to operational capacity pressures on the housing system, skills shortages, rising compliance costs and ageing stock (in terms of social housing provision) it was recognised that these should not be seen to detract or negate the need for local responsibility, with the Council (as social landlord) determined to become easier to contact, quicker to respond and clearer in terms of its communication style.

Taken together, the report was felt to demonstrate the scale of recovery work being undertaken which it was highlighted included not only the clearance of historic repair backlogs, tightening of safety checks, rebuilding of data integrity, strengthening of front-line visibility and expansion of specialist capacity but also work to ensure that the tenant voice was embedded in decision-making alongside the provision of clearer lines of accountability from frontline teams right through to senior leadership (including the newly established tier of senior management introduced to bring together compliance and service improvement activities).

In considering the report, members welcomed the direct nature of the assessment provided in relation to the issues identified around the management of assurance, compliance and performance across the service with the Council's self-referral to the Regulator of Social Housing felt to have demonstrated how seriously the need to take accountability and address the challenges identified had been taken, given the impact on tenants. Given the focus outlined within the report on the improvement plan established following the self-referral, members were pleased to note the progress being made in terms of the foundations laid for delivery of the improvements identified as required to restore expected standards and ensure tenants were provided not only with a safe home but also transparent, accountable and responsive service by the Council in its role as social landlord. In recognising the focus on the improvement work identified across each compliance stream, support was also expressed for the renewed focus in tackling housing repairs as well as the strong emphasis on addressing engagement with tenants in order to ensure they remained at the centre of the improvement programme.

Having noted the update also provided for the Community & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee and ongoing commitment towards delivering the improvements identified as part of the wider approach towards transparency and accountability, Cabinet **RESOLVED**:

- (1) To note the performance update against core areas of housing management property services, as detailed within the report.
- (2) To note that the report only related to the Council's own housing stock and did not include performance for i4B or First Wave Housing properties, with performance on those portfolios reported to their respective boards.

8. **Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026 - 2031**

Councillor Fleur Donnelly-Jackson (Cabinet Member for Housing) introduced a report from the Corporate Director of Housing and Resident Services presenting the draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026-2031 for review, following public consultation, and seeking approval (as a result of the changes made in response) to the final strategy, which the Council was required to have in place for the start of the 2026 calendar year.

In introducing the report, Councillor Donnelly-Jackson began by acknowledging homelessness as one of the most significant social challenges currently faced. Referring to the specific challenges within Brent, members were advised of the continued pressures and impact on those affected with more than 170 households continuing to approach the Council as homeless each week and with over 2,400 households and 3,500 children currently placed in temporary accommodation.

Whilst proud that Brent continued to lead the way on housebuilding, with achievements highlighted in relation to the delivery of affordable homes, improved temporary accommodation standards, and major investment in prevention, the need to recognise the ongoing scale of the crisis was also identified not only in terms of those households directly impacted but also in relation to the pressures created as a result of the £30m annual cost of temporary accommodation faced by the Council.

In recognising the nature of the crisis as deep and complex, members were advised that the Strategy presented for review had not only sought to acknowledge the pressures identified but also, more importantly, outline a programme for action based around five priorities: understanding homelessness properly, preventing it earlier, increasing housing supply, improving temporary accommodation, and working in genuine partnership. Development of the Strategy was also felt to have been further strengthened through the process of consultation undertaken with residents, partners and people with lived experience who had challenged the Council to be clearer on accountability, tailored support and to be open about the limits of social housing. These voices (supported by welcomed input from Crisis and St Mungo's as part of the Homelessness Forum) were identified as crucial in helping to shape the actions identified around better measurement, improved data sharing, stronger face-to-face support, advocacy for national change and stronger help for people transitioning into new accommodation which had been included within the Strategy.

As a result, the Strategy had been designed to provide a clear commitment to delivery including a process for early intervention so fewer families reached crisis point and the equipping of frontline teams with clearer pathways and trauma-informed approaches. The Strategy also sought to expand the provision of tailored advice, recognising the challenges of settling into accommodation after homelessness, and to continue the improvement in temporary accommodation standards through Brent's leadership in the Setting the Standard scheme whilst also seeking to embed accountability in terms of measurable results, regular public reporting, lived-experience insight and deeper partnership working to help unlock supply and support.

In commending the Strategy, members recognised the significant nature of the challenge homelessness represented not only in Brent, but across London and the UK as a whole. The work undertaken to produce a clear strategy setting out how the Council could work with partners to not only seek to prevent people becoming homeless but also reduce the length of time households spent in temporary accommodation was therefore welcomed recognising not only the significant financial pressures being placed upon the Council as a result of the homelessness emergency but also the wider impact on those households impacted in terms of their physical and mental wellbeing, ability to access and retain employment, education and other life opportunities. As part of the approach outlined within the Strategy, members were therefore keen to highlight the joined up work focussed around addressing the impact on children and young people and Looked After Children and to develop wider partnership work alongside Housing Associations with reference also made to the importance of funding being provided through the Greater London Authority to continue supporting the delivery of additional affordable housing and temporary accommodation on a longer term basis.

In support of the commitments and approach outlined within the Strategy as a compassionate, evidence-based and determined plan for continuing to address the significant challenges in relation to tackling and seeking to prevent homelessness, Cabinet **RESOLVED** having reviewed the outcome of the public consultation process, to adopt the final version of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026 – 2031.

9. Corporate Performance update and Q2 reporting

In Councillor Rubin's (as Cabinet Member for Climate Change & Community Action) absence Councillor Muhammed Butt (as Leader of the Council) introduced a report from the Corporate Director of Service Reform & Strategy, which provided Cabinet with an update on progress in developing and embedding performance reporting and monitoring arrangements across the Council along with an overview of corporate performance in Quarter 2 2025-26.

In presenting the report, Cabinet noted that the performance monitoring update provided a detailed assessment against the full suite of Key Performance Indicators developed to monitor delivery of the desired outcomes and corporate priorities within the Borough Plan 2023-2027. In terms of a brief overview, members attention was drawn to the 60 Borough Plan key indicators included within the performance scorecard of which 52% had been identified as green (on or above target) demonstrating what was felt to represent progress and a strengthening performance culture designed to deliver real improvements for residents.

In recognising the efforts outlined within the report to focus on performance in the delivery of key services and priorities within the context of the wider financial and demand led challenges faced by services across the Council, specific reference was made to the positive performance achieved over the latest monitoring period in relation to a number of targets. These included the ongoing support being provided for residents through the Community Hubs, with not only more residents being able to access services but also 81% of enquiries identified as being resolved at the first point of contact as well as strong performance being delivered through Family Wellbeing Centres with 7,607 registered users in Q2 and a year-to-date total of 15,702. In addition, reference was made to performance across the borough's libraries with over 443,000 books being issued and over 600,000 visits reflecting their value as a well-utilised public resource.

Whilst keen to acknowledge the achievements outlined, it was also recognised that there were areas in which the need for improvement had been identified with the Council committed to addressing these challenges despite the financial pressures identified. This included work to streamline resident services and cut processing times through the simplification of administrative processes designed to make it easier for residents to access the support needed.

In considering the report, members welcomed the performance data provided as a means of providing a clear foundation for action and as a basis for the effective targeting of resources and focus for improvement of services. Highlighting the open and transparent nature of the report and opportunity provided to ensure work continued to be undertaken jointly by Cabinet Members with their relevant Corporate Directors in seeking to manage delivery of the highest standards of service, whilst also seeking to mitigate against the financial challenges and strategic risks identified as part of the overall approach towards supporting local residents and in support of the priorities within the Borough Plan, Cabinet

RESOLVED:

- (1) To note the progress in developing and embedding enhanced arrangements for corporate performance reporting along with the Borough Plan 2025-26 performance reporting for Q2 as set out in section 3 and Appendix A of the report.

(2) To note the current and future strategic risks associated with the information provided and agree the remedial actions on strategic risks identified as appropriate alongside the challenge on progress being provided with responsible officers as necessary.

10. **Procurement of Integrated Treatment Recovery Wellbeing & Substance Misuse Service**

Councillor Nerva (Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health & Leisure) introduced a report from the Corporate Director Service Reform & Strategy regarding the arrangements for reprocuring the contract to deliver the Integrated Treatment Recovery Wellbeing & Substance Misuse Service under the Provider Selection Regime

In presenting the report, Councillor Nerva began by reminding members of the critical role the Integrated Treatment Recovery Wellbeing & Substance Misuse Service played in relation to the Council's public health responsibilities and in terms of the impact on vulnerable residents in being able to access treatment and support through the service. In commanding the recommended direct award of the contract to VIA, the opportunity was taken to remind members of the achievements they had delivered in relation to the current service being offered to residents in terms of tailored care plans, clinical assessments, one-to-one key working, support groups, and even weekend services at Cobbold Road, backed by a 24/7 helpline.

In assuring members that the performance of VIA as the existing provider of the service had been subject to continued review and performance. Monitoring details were also provided of the improved performance, including those achieved across key areas outlined within the 2021 National Drug Strategy: From Harm to Hope. These included reference to increasing the number of people in Structured Treatment and number of opiate and crack users entering local treatment alongside the delivery of no waiting times for residents and retention rates comparable to national benchmarks meaning residents with substance abuse issues were able to be provided with the support needed when required. Reference was also made to the achievement in Brent (delivered in partnership with VIA) in the micro-elimination of Hepatitis C in the local treatment population, one of only six boroughs nationally to have done so.

In highlighting the extensive nature of the existing and ongoing treatment and recovery offer available to Brent residents through VIA and how this was tailored according to individual health and social care needs, the opportunity was also taken to outline the basis on which the direct award had been recommended given the strong performance of the current service including partnership work being undertaken and wider alignment with the Council's Health & Wellbeing Strategy.

In recognising the value of support being provided through the service, members were keen in supporting the approach outlined to highlight not only the transformational health but wider social care and community benefits being delivered through the integrated Treatment and Recovery offer. Specific reference was made to the impact on families and also outreach work involving rough sleepers and links with wider community safety activity, recognising the way the service was already embedded in key partnership work. Whilst aware of the need

to ensure outreach work remained culturally appropriate in terms of any area-based approach, members were also keen to support the basis on which the direct award had been recommended with VIA assessed as delivering a well established and high-quality service as the existing provider and the approach also designed to reflect the current funding regime.

In support of the positive impact being delivered, Cabinet therefore **RESOLVED**:

- (1) To note that the Brent Integrated Treatment Recovery Wellbeing and Substance Misuse Service was currently provided to the Council by VIA Community Ltd.
- (2) To approve the direct award under the Provider Selection Regime of the Integrated Treatment Recovery Wellbeing and Substance Misuse Service to VIA Community Ltd for a period of three years.

11. **Procurement of secure cycle parking provision**

Councillor Krupa Sheth (Cabinet Member for Public Realm & Enforcement) introduced a report from the Corporate Director Neighbourhoods and Regeneration seeking approval to the proposed 2025-26 programme for the delivery of secure cycle parking (Bike Nests & Bike Hangers) across the borough and to proceed with tendering a new contract for the supply, installation, management and maintenance of all bike nests and hangers.

In introducing the report, Councillor Krupa Sheth advised members of the commitment outlined towards the new programme and expansion of secure cycle parking across the borough as a practical investment designed to support the provision of a cleaner, greener Brent which also reflected resident priorities and supported what was felt to be a genuine shift towards more sustainable modes of travel. In recognising that this modal shift could only be achieved through investment in the necessary infrastructure (including access to safe and secure cycle storage) members were advised that the programme had been designed to respond to that challenge through the recommended provision of £650,000 NCIL funding that would enable delivery shaped by community demand and contribute towards an overall investment package of £1.5m designed to build on the existing infrastructure of 150 bike hangers across the borough.

Taking the opportunity to highlight the wider community benefits of the scheme, members noted the role which the provision of secure cycle storage had not only in terms of improving safety and reducing theft (supporting community safety) but also in terms of supporting healthier lifestyles, provision of lower-cost and more sustainable travel options and helping the Council meet its climate ambitions all of which were directly linked to the Council's transport strategy and climate commitments and reflecting how Brent was continuing to lead on a practical basis on measures designed to make sustainable travel easier.

Members also noted how the proposals had been developed to complement the growth of school streets, expansion of EV charging, investment in neighbourhood improvements and Council's ongoing retrofit work which, taken together, it was felt also served to demonstrate local leadership on climate action.

In terms of the procurement process, members were advised that the proposed contract arrangements had been designed to support the installation, management and maintenance of the cycle parking provision over a five year period (with an option to extend) and would support delivery of at least 100 new units in 2025-26, focused on areas of highest demand and replacing ageing stock, where necessary. In noting the current cap on rental charges, assurance was also provided of the intention to maintain this rate under the tendering requirements for the new contract with the aim of keeping cycling affordable.

Whilst noting that demand for cycle storage provision would continue to exceed supply (with over 1,200 current live requests) members were advised the approach outlined had been designed to ensure the Council was able to continue responding to community demand, as funding became available with the investment identified as a further example of Brent leading the way in ensuring its infrastructure was able to keep pace with growth and technology and in seeking to create a lasting legacy of safer and healthier streets.

In commending and welcoming the joined up nature of the approach outlined within the report, members were keen to recognise the wider community benefits which it was felt increased access to secure cycle parking would provide not only in terms of encouraging a shift towards cycling as a more active and sustainable form of travel but also given the associated health and wellbeing benefits identified and contribution towards the borough's climate and environmental commitments and in seeking to reduce transport inequality. On this basis, having considered the report, Cabinet therefore **RESOLVED**:

- (1) To approve the procurement of a five-year contract with provisions to extend for two years (in yearly increments), for an estimated total value of £1,500,000 to supply and install bike hangars/nests, management, maintenance, cleaning.
- (2) To note that the contract would include the delivery of £650,000 of NCIL funding for 2025-26 to support the expansion of secure cycle parking across the borough, as approved at Cabinet on 8 September 2025.
- (3) To approve inviting tenders for the Secure Cycle Parking – Supply and Installation, Management, Maintenance and Cleaning Contract, on the basis of the pre-tender considerations set out in paragraph 4.9 of the report.
- (4) To approve officers evaluating the tenders referred to in paragraph (3) above on the basis of the evaluation criteria set out in paragraph 4.9 of the report.
- (5) To note that following the selection of the successful bidder, the matter will be referred to Cabinet for the award of the contract.
- (6) To note that approval was given to the Head of Healthy Streets and Parking at Cabinet on 19 May 2025 to apply grant and other funding secured to the project to enable further utilisation of the budget.
- (7) To note that the 2025/26 Secure Cycle Parking Programme included proposed site identification, consultation, and implementation plans.

12. **Exclusion of Press and Public**

There were no items that required the exclusion of the press or public.

13. Any other urgent business

There were no items of urgent business.

As this was the final meeting prior to the Christmas and New Year holiday period Councillor Muhammed Butt (as Leader of the Council) prior to ending proceedings took the opportunity to thank all members and officers for their support over the year and to wish everyone all the best for the festive season.

The meeting ended at 10:35am

COUNCILLOR MUHAMMED BUTT
Chair