

	<p align="center">Full Council 6 July 2026</p>
	<p align="center">Report from the Corporate Director of Finance & Resources</p>
<p align="center">Resources and Public Realm Committee Chair's Update</p>	

Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	Council
Open or Part/Fully Exempt: <small>(If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)</small>	Open
List of Appendices:	None
Background Papers:	None
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1.0 Executive Summary

1.1 To update Full Council on the meetings and activities of the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee since the last update to Full Council on 10 November 2025.

2.0 Recommendation(s)

That Full Council

2.1 Note the report and the updates provided for the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee.

2.2 Note that the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee's work programme for the 2026/27 municipal year will be provided as part of the next update report to Full Council.

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 set out in the Borough Plan 2023-2027. It seeks to ensure Council decision-making remains transparent, accountable and open, resulting in improved policies and services.

3.2 Background

3.2.1 In advance of approval to the formal establishment of the Homes Scrutiny Committee, Brent Council currently has two scrutiny committees: the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee and the Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee. The Council is also a member of the North West London Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (NWL JHOSC). Councillor Anup Patel was been appointed as chair of the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee at the Annual Council Meeting on 20 May 2026.

3.2.2 A scrutiny committee can look at anything which affects the borough or its inhabitants, subject to its remit.

3.2.3 Brent Council Standing Orders allow for the chairs of the scrutiny committees to report to ordinary Council meetings on the activities of their committees¹.

3.2.4 The current remit of the of the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee is set out in the Council Constitution under the Terms of Reference for scrutiny committees². Subject to establishment of the Homes Scrutiny Committee the remit of the Committee includes:

Corporate policy, partnerships and resources; Budget; Customer services; Commercial services; Planning policy; Environmental policy; Public realm; Employment and skills; IT; Recycling; Regeneration; Transport and highways; Community safety; Property; Emergency planning and business continuity.

3.2.5 The Committee is also the Council's "crime and disorder committee" for the purposes of Section 19 of the Police & Justice Act 2006 and as such may review or scrutinise decisions made, or other action taken, in connection with the discharge of the crime and disorder functions by the responsible authorities (as defined by section 5 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998) who make up the

¹ Brent Council Constitution, Part 2, paragraph 36.

<https://democracy.brent.gov.uk/documents/s123308/Part%202%20April%202022%20Procedural%20Rules.pdf>

² Brent Council Constitution Part 4.

<https://democracy.brent.gov.uk/documents/s123310/Part%204%20May%202022%20Terms%20of%20Reference%20.pdf>

Safer Brent Partnership, in order to make reports or recommendations to Full Council.

- 3.2.6 Below is an update of the work undertaken by the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee under the previous Chair and membership. The Committee met for its third meeting of the 2025/26 municipal year on 4 November 2025 where it reviewed the Council's financial position alongside wider service and policy developments. Members considered the Quarter 2 Financial Forecast, noting that while a balanced budget remained achievable, significant pressures persisted, particularly in temporary accommodation, adult social care and children's residential placements. The Committee examined delays in delivering savings, rising demand and cost pressures, and the impact of market factors such as housing supply and care provision. Members highlighted risks associated with hospital discharge, short-term placements and falling council tax collection, while also recognising improvements in financial controls, including tighter oversight of recruitment, agency spend and expenditure. The Committee emphasised the need for stronger mitigation measures, better targeting of financial support, enhanced partnership working with the NHS, and continued focus on income generation and void reduction to stabilise the Housing Revenue Account.
- 3.2.7 The Committee also scrutinised the Council's approach to supporting the voluntary and community sector (VCSE), procurement reform and the development of a new social value framework. Members welcomed efforts to strengthen the VCSE sector but raised concerns about capacity building, funding levels, affordability of council-owned spaces and the need for clearer, more transparent commissioning arrangements. The emerging Procurement Strategy and Improvement Programme were noted to be delivering early benefits, including savings and better supplier engagement, but further work was required to support local businesses and strengthen contract management. In reviewing the draft Social Value Policy, the Committee supported a shift towards a more flexible, community-led approach but stressed the importance of robust monitoring, clear performance data and accountability. Across these areas, the Committee made a number of recommendations focused on improving transparency, strengthening partnerships with local organisations, embedding social value across council activity, and ensuring that future procurement and commissioning decisions deliver measurable benefits for Brent residents.
- 3.2.8 The Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee met for its fourth meeting on 21 January 2026 where it undertook detailed scrutiny of anti-social behaviour (ASB) in Brent. Members noted increased reporting and enforcement activity, reflecting both improved public engagement and the expanded use of tools such as Public Spaces Protection Orders and fixed penalty notices. The importance of a multi-agency approach was emphasised, combining enforcement with support for vulnerable individuals, while concerns were raised about uneven enforcement across the borough, gaps in data and analysis, and the need to better understand underlying causes of ASB. The Committee recommended developing a standalone ASB strategy, strengthening work on houses in multiple occupation and improving data, reporting and partnership

engagement, including greater involvement of councillors and community representatives.

- 3.2.9 The Committee also considered the findings of the Budget Scrutiny Task Group, recognising the ongoing financial pressures facing the Council despite modest improvements in funding certainty. Members highlighted significant overspends driven by temporary accommodation and adult social care, and the continued challenges of operating within constrained resources. Concerns were raised about the adequacy of information available to support effective scrutiny, particularly around expenditure decisions and savings plans, and the need for greater transparency in financial reporting. While acknowledging positive work in areas such as reducing agency spend, the Committee stressed the importance of maintaining close oversight of budget performance and its impact on residents.
- 3.2.10 The Committee met for its final meeting of the year on 24 February 2026 where it focused on environmental issues and financial performance. Members heard a deputation from a resident regarding fly tipping and littering, highlighting significant local impacts linked to commercial waste, inadequate infrastructure and increased reporting. The Committee noted that the Council had made improvements in response times and clearance rates, with over 38,000 reports recorded and almost 99% cleared within target, but emphasised that underlying causes such as waste storage, bulky waste access and behaviour change required further attention. Members called for improved coordination between services, better use of data and clearer performance reporting, alongside consideration of alternative charging models for bulky waste and enhanced user experience for reporting systems such as FixMyStreet. The importance of consistent service standards across different land types and stronger integration between housing, enforcement and public realm services was also highlighted.
- 3.2.11 The Committee also scrutinised the Quarter 3 financial forecast, which identified a £12.5m overspend driven primarily by adult social care, temporary accommodation and housing pressures. Members examined the structural drivers of overspending, including increased complexity of care needs, workforce and data challenges, and rising housing demand, while welcoming actions to strengthen prevention, improve commissioning, and enhance financial monitoring. Concerns were raised regarding the sustainability of the Housing Revenue Account, pressures from repairs, compliance and regeneration programmes, and the need to prioritise investment in existing stock.
- 3.2.12 Finally, the Committee reviewed the Annual Complaints Report, noting a high number of upheld complaints, particularly in housing and emphasised the need to strengthen learning, improve timeliness and embed complaints within contractor performance management. Across all areas, the Committee stressed the importance of stronger data, transparency and cross-service coordination to improve outcomes for residents and support more effective scrutiny.

4.0 Stakeholder and ward member consultation and engagement

4.1 Members continue to be fully engaged in the development and delivery of the scrutiny work programme, which is intended to be a flexible, living document that can adapt and change throughout the municipal year in response to the Committee's needs.

5.0 Financial Considerations

5.1 There are no financial considerations for the purposes of this report.

6.0 Legal Considerations

6.1 There are no legal considerations for the purposes of this report.

7.0 Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Considerations

7.1 There are no EDI considerations for the purposes of this report.

8.0 Climate Change and Environmental Considerations

8.1 There are no climate change and environmental considerations for the purposes of 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 considerations for the purposes of this report.

Report sign off:

Minesh Patel

Corporate Director, Finance & Resources