



Full Council
17 September 2018

**Report from the Director of
Performance Policy & Partnerships**

**Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee Chair's
Update Report**

Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	N/A
Open or Part/Fully Exempt: <small>(If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)</small>	Open
No. of Appendices:	0
Background Papers:	N/A
Contact Officer(s): <small>(Name, Title, Contact Details)</small>	Patrick Doherty, Senior Policy & Scrutiny Officer, Tel: 020 8937 3357 Email: Patrick.doherty@brent.gov.uk

1.0 Purpose of the Report

1.1 This report provides a summary of the work carried out by the Council's Resources & Public Realm Scrutiny Committee in accordance with Standing Order 14. The report covers the period from 03 July 2018 to present.

2.0 Recommendation(s)

2.1 Council is recommended to note this report.

3.0 Detail

3.1 The Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee covers corporate resources (including Customer Services, Policy, Partnerships and Performance, Procurement and IT) as well as Regeneration, Regulatory Services, Environment, Transport and Community Safety. The committee is comprised of eight elected members (seven from the Labour Group and one opposition group member, which is consistent with current political balance arrangements).

3.2 *2018-19 Resources and Public Realm Committee Members*

Councillor Matt Kelcher (Chair)
Councillor Neil Nerva
Councillor Roxanne Mashari
Councillor Kieron Gill
Councillor Sandra Kabir
Councillor Saqib Butt
Councillor Erica Gbajumo
Councillor Suresh Kansagra

- 3.3 The committee has met twice since the last report to Council, on 03 July 2018 and 16 Jul 2018. The 03 Jul 2018 meeting had fallen after reporting deadlines to Council, so that meeting is covered in this report. An extraordinary meeting was also called for 16 July 2018 due to some key members and officers being unable to attend the scheduled meeting on 03 Jul 2018 due their attendance at the annual LGA Conference. That meeting is also covered here.
- 3.4 The Chair invited Councillor Nerva to update the committee on the progress of the **Affordable Housing in New Developments Task Group** and propose new terms of reference for the committee's approval. The task group had previously been established by the committee in the last municipal year, but had been unable to progress due to the proximity to the elections. The new terms of reference were broader to allow fuller consideration of the issues. A series of evidence gathering sessions had been planned to be completed by September 2018, thereby allowing any recommendations to feed in to the new Brent Local Plan in development.
- 3.5 Councillor Butt (Leader of the Council) introduced a report on **Brent Priorities 2019 onwards**, explaining that the borough priorities would be based on the commitments made within the Brent Labour Manifesto. The Borough Plan was currently being developed and consultation on the Plan would commence in October 2018. Work was underway to detail how the priorities would be met, taking into consideration the financial challenges facing the council over the next four years and ensuring the council was poised to exploit any opportunities that arose.
- 3.7 Members subsequently queried how the council planned for wider political and economic changes and questioned whether any council services would be protected from future savings proposals. The committee also queried how the council would use the Borough of Culture status, both during the year and as a legacy for the borough, particularly with respect to improving community cohesion and outreach.
- 3.8 Environmental improvements for Brent were discussed and members were keen to hear how the council would tackle poor air quality, questioning whether the council would be willing to consider all potential measures. Clarity was sought on whether the council would deliver against manifesto commitments if they proved unpopular during consultation. Members also sought details of how the council measured progress against these commitments.

- 3.9 Councillor McLennan (Deputy Leader) introduced an **Assets and Property Overview & Strategy Brief (2019-2023)**, 'Making property assets work for Brent', outlining the council's property assets and focus areas for the new Property Strategy being developed for 2020. It was emphasised that the Strategy would address how the council's assets would be employed to the benefit of the council through cost reduction, income generation and value generation.
- 3.10 Members welcomed the strategic approach described and sought further detail regarding the process of property valuation and frequency of review. The committee advised that transparency was needed with regard to the provision of rental subsidy for council assets and sought confirmation of how often these arrangements were reviewed. Members also sought assurance that assets would not be sold off en masse and questioned how the council's property portfolio compared with those of other authorities. It was further queried how the council's asset management strategy aligned with the One Public Estate initiative and it was commented that the council should promote more widely the contribution it makes via its assets.
- 3.11 With reference to the table of council assets previously provided to the committee at its meeting in February 2018, the committee stated that for each asset the council should detail a range of further relevant information, and members sought comment on the usage of space within the Civic Centre and the provision of space for start-ups and small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs).

4.0 Scrutiny Meetings and Activities

- 4.1 The meeting of the committee on 05 September 2018 will be covered in the next report to Council. The items it considered were:
- Highways contract performance
 - Digital Strategy progress and outcomes for vulnerable people
 - Area based working update

5.0 Financial Implications

- 5.1 There are no financial implications.

6.0 Legal Implications

- 6.1 There are no legal implications.

7.0 Equality Implications

- 7.1 There are no equality implications.

Report sign off:

Peter Gadsdon

Director of Performance Policy &
Partnerships

