

	Cabinet 9 November 2020
	Report from the Assistant Chief Executive
Brent Climate Emergency Strategy (2021-2030) – Draft for Public Consultation	

Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	Key
Open or Part/Fully Exempt:	Open
No. of Appendices:	Two: Appendix A: Brent Climate Emergency Strategy – Draft for Public Consultation Appendix B: Equalities Impact Assessment
Background Papers:	None
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1.0 Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this report is to present a Draft Brent Climate Emergency Strategy (2021-2030) to be issued for public consultation.

1.2 The Draft Strategy includes the key objectives, themes and areas of focus that will help Brent to do all in its gift to reach its overall aim of carbon neutrality by 2030.

2.0 Recommendations for Cabinet

2.1 That Cabinet approves the Draft Brent Climate Emergency Strategy (Appendix A) to be issued for public consultation.

2.2 That Cabinet notes that, following comments received during public consultation, a revised, final Brent Climate Emergency Strategy will be presented back to Cabinet in spring 2021 for adoption.

3.0 Context

3.1 In October 2018, a Special Report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), as required by the Paris Agreement, called for urgent action to limit global warming to 1.5⁰C in order to avoid the risk of reaching ‘tipping points’ in our ecological and climatic systems that are likely to lead to runaway climate change.

3.2 That IPCC report, together with the growing grassroots movements – such as the school climate strikes, community direct action and the Declare a Climate Emergency campaign – created a significant rise in media coverage and public sector commitments on the issue. The Mayor of London declared a climate emergency in December 2018, UK parliament declared a national climate emergency in May 2019, and in June 2019, the UK government enshrined in law a net zero carbon reduction target by 2050.

3.3 It is widely accepted by economists that the costs of taking climate action now will be far lower than the costs of inaction in the future. Global heating linked to climate change is predicted to have negative impacts not only for society’s infrastructure and assets, but also for public health. These health impacts will be exacerbated without radical action to reduce pollution and enhance our green (natural) infrastructure. The health impacts are likely to affect vulnerable groups most severely and they include:

- Poor air quality, which can cause or exacerbate serious medical conditions, and which particularly affects young people and deprived communities
- More frequent and extreme weather events, such as flooding, heatwaves and drought, which can cause death, displacement and serious mental health conditions
- An increase in fuel poverty if measures to combat and adapt to climate change are not carried out fairly
- A lack of access to nature and green space, which can negatively impact physical and mental wellbeing
- Potential for water and food scarcity and the arrival of new diseases and pandemics in the UK

3.4 Conversely, tackling climate change offers numerous health benefits, relating to cleaner air and better access to green space, healthier diets and more active travel, greater resilience to extreme weather, reduced fuel poverty and associated savings to National Health Service budgets.

3.5 The environmental crisis therefore provides an immediate opportunity for positive social, economic and environmental transformation through a transition to a net zero carbon economy, a cleaner and greener environment, and a fairer and healthier society. As well as reducing the risks from global heating, action

to tackle climate change has the potential to bring positive change for the local community on many of the issues that matter most to people, such as cleaner air, greener spaces, warmer homes, healthier travel and a thriving local economy.

- 3.6 It is within this context that the London Borough of Brent (along with over 280 local authorities to date) passed a council motion to declare a Climate and Ecological Emergency at the Full Council meeting on 8 July 2019. Within this declaration, the council committed to an overarching aim to *“do all reasonable in the Council’s gift to aim for carbon neutrality by 2030, and work with the government to achieve the national 2050 target”*.
- 3.7 The council has since carried out the following strategic actions to support the development of the climate emergency strategy for the borough:
- Developed a holistic, council-wide approach to addressing the climate emergency covering a range of inter-related environmental issues in Brent
 - Commissioned and received the Brent Carbon Scenarios 2030 Study, an independent assessment of the sources of carbon emissions produced in the borough and the potential pathways to achieve carbon neutrality
 - Concluded a cross-cutting, internal sustainability review to take stock of what is already happening in order to reduce carbon emissions and to consider what more needs to be done
 - Reported an Interim Response to Full Council in November 2019 including an Interim Climate Action Plan (Winter 2019/20).
- 3.8 It is clear that achieving the goal of net zero carbon emissions by 2030 will be hugely challenging. As the council is not able to directly fund the level of infrastructure required to achieve this goal, collective climate action with key stakeholders across the borough will be paramount, alongside collaboration with regional and West London partners on cross borough initiatives, and a focus on ensuring that we secure investment in Brent from emerging national funding programmes.
- 3.9 In respect of regional collaboration, in December 2019, London Councils’ Transport and Environment Committee (TEC) and the London Environment Directors’ Network (LEDNet) agreed a Joint Statement on Climate Change in which they committed to prioritise and support the delivery of the seven programmes listed below, by pooling experience, expertise and resources and working together collaboratively. These programmes are ultimately consistent with Brent’s ambitions for carbon neutrality:
- Retrofit London: Retrofit all domestic and non-domestic buildings to an average level of Energy Performance Certificate B.
 - Low-carbon development: Secure low carbon buildings and infrastructure via borough planning.

- Halve petrol and diesel road journeys: Halve road journeys made by petrol and diesel via combined measures that can restrict polluting journeys and incentivise sustainable and active travel options.
- Renewable power for London: Secure 100% renewable energy for London's public sector now and in the future.
- Reduce consumption emissions: Reduce consumption emissions by two thirds, focusing on food, clothing, electronics and aviation.
- Build the green economy: Develop London's low carbon sector and green our broader economy.
- Create a resilient and green London: Ensure London is resilient to the effects of climate change, whilst enhancing its biodiversity and green spaces.

3.10 In July 2020, London Councils also put forward eight key proposals to facilitate a green recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic.

- Homes fit for the future: Comprehensive retrofit of housing and public sector buildings
- Net zero development for London: Establish a Commission on net zero development for London
- New neighbourhoods: Low carbon interconnected neighbourhoods
- Renewing our roads: London-wide road pricing and strategic enhancement of cycling/walking routes
- Accelerating low carbon heating: Developing local area energy plan and drive low carbon heating transformation
- Embedding a resilient, green economy: Develop a green economy recovery strategy
- Financing for a future London: Establish a green finance taskforce
- Creating a culture of sustainability: Research consumer behaviour and develop a communications strategy

3.11 Brent will continue to seek to capitalise on the benefits of joint working on this agenda, working with partners across the borough and across London and calling for the government to ensure that local authorities have the resources required to tackle climate change and ultimately meet the UK governments own targets. It is hoped that the UK government's role hosting the Conference of Parties (COP26) Climate Conference next year will mean an additional government focus on this agenda in the coming year.

3.12 Further to regional collaboration, the scale of the climate emergency requires us to build consensus with all sections of the community on the radical changes that will be needed in the way we heat and power our homes, move about and make choices about what we eat and buy. In autumn 2019, Brent organised a citizens' assembly on climate change to provide direction on how we should seek to tackle this issue collectively within the borough.

- 3.13 The [Brent Climate Assembly](#) took place over three workshops in November and December 2019, attended by 53 residents who came together to learn about climate change, discuss potential climate action in Brent, and make recommendations for action to the council and the community. The question they considered was *“How can we work together to limit climate change and its impact while protecting our environment, our health and our wellbeing? Consider the council, businesses and organisations, individuals”*.
- 3.14 The Assembly was designed and facilitated by deliberative democracy experts, Traverse, overseen by an advisory board of experts in relevant fields. At the Assembly workshops, a variety of specialists presented evidence and participated in discussions. Participants drew up a set of criteria by which to assess potential climate action. These were: cost effectiveness, fairness, transparency, wider benefits for health and wellbeing, and how realistic and achievable the idea was. Using this list, Assembly members voted on a longlist of potential actions which led to the development of a set of recommendations across a number of themes which have informed the Draft Strategy.
- 3.15 A Youth Climate Summit with the Brent Youth Parliament was also held, carrying out a similar process on a smaller scale to gain recommendations for climate action from the borough’s young people, which were then presented to the wider Assembly, along with suggestions from over 300 individuals and groups who posted their ideas on the Assembly website.
- 3.16 Most recently, we engaged with residents through Brent Connects sessions to explore how we can begin to put the recommendations developed by the Brent Climate Assembly into action over the coming months and years.
- 3.17 A key proposal within the Draft Strategy is the formation of the Brent Environmental Network to provide opportunities for everyone in Brent to take individual and collective actions to address the climate emergency.

4.0 Draft Brent Climate Emergency Strategy - Overview

- 4.1 The aim of the Strategy will ultimately be to harness the opportunities that the council has to make a direct impact on the climate emergency, to identify where investment will be required for maximum impact, but also where the council can lead by supporting and enabling different key communities (residents, businesses, voluntary and community sector groups, schools, registered providers etc) to play their part in sharing ownership of this substantial agenda.
- 4.2 The Draft Strategy themes therefore reflect, as closely as possible, the priorities identified by the Brent Climate Assembly, they also reflect the ambitions and direction of travel on this agenda for councils across London (as highlighted in section three).
- 4.3 Further detail on each of the key themes is provided within the strategy document itself which also provides a few practical examples of how residents can take action and contribute to tackling the climate emergency.

Theme 1: Consumption, Resources and Waste

- 4.4 The long-term objective of this theme is: 'By 2030, our communities will be living more sustainably: consuming less of the products and materials that accelerate climate change, whilst also wasting less of the world's natural resources. This behaviour shift will have helped to cut Brent's consumption emissions by two-thirds, and drive a substantive reduction in the amount of household waste produced within the borough'.
- 4.5 The key areas of focus in achieving this goal are: creating the optimum conditions for community-led behaviour change; ensuring that the supporting waste related infrastructure continues to be improved; and enhancing the green and circular economy in Brent, shifting to a local economic model where resources and products are kept in use for as long as possible.

Theme 2: Transport

- 4.6 The long-term objective of this theme is: 'By 2030, petrol and diesel road journeys will have at least halved in the borough, being driven as close as possible to zero, with an accompanying increase in journeys made by residents through cycling, walking or public transport'.
- 4.7 The key areas of focus in achieving this goal are: supporting and encouraging active travel; moving away from petrol and diesel vehicles; and encouraging public transport where possible and safe to do so.

Theme 3: Homes and Buildings

- 4.8 The long-term objective of this theme is: 'By 2030, as many homes and buildings in the borough as possible will be more energy efficient, be powered by renewable sources, and be resilient to future adverse weather events caused by climate change - and we will do all in our gift to achieve an average Energy Performance Certificate rating of 'B' in directly owned council stock.
- 4.9 The key areas of focus in achieving this goal are: improving energy efficiency in all homes and buildings, whether existing or new-build, facilitating a shift to powering homes and buildings through renewable energy sources; and adapting our homes and buildings to ensure that they are more climate resilient to cope with the potentially dangerous effects of climate change in years to come.

Theme 4: Nature and Green Space

- 4.10 The long-term objective of this theme is: 'By 2030, Brent will be one of the greenest, most biodiverse and climate-resilient boroughs in London with our residents better connected to nature'.
- 4.11 The key areas of focus identified in achieving this goal are: enhancing green (and blue) spaces and biodiversity wherever possible; improving our wider green infrastructure such as green corridors; and adapting our green spaces to assist in mitigating against adverse weather impacts in years to come.

Theme 5: Supporting Communities

- 4.12 Underpinning all four themes above is the overarching theme of ensuring that our communities are supported in delivering the proposed climate objectives for the borough.
- 4.13 The long-term objective of this theme is: ‘Everyone who lives, works or studies in Brent will have improved access to clear and understandable information on the need to tackle the climate emergency, and as many people as possible will be actively engaged in taking action to help the borough become carbon neutral by 2030’.
- 4.14 The key areas of focus in achieving this goal are: developing an environmental network in Brent for organisations, communities and individuals to be the catalysts of driving this agenda forward; supporting the key sectors which will need to be at the forefront of making sustainable change happen (households, schools, businesses, the voluntary and community sector); and through launching and utilising the Brent Carbon Offset Fund to drive carbon reduction at a local level.
- 4.15 Once adopted, the strategy will be treated as a ‘live’ document, with the annual delivery plans reviewed each year to ensure that the Borough is progressing against its overall aim for carbon neutrality by 2030. The setting of intermediary/midway targets for the Strategy for the period leading up to 2030 will be considered as part of this ongoing review process.

5.0 Key Next Steps

- 5.1 Subject to agreement from Cabinet, the Draft Strategy will be issued for public consultation on 16th November for a period of eight weeks (see further details in section 13 of this report).
- 5.2 This will include consideration by the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee in December.
- 5.3 Following a review of the comments received, the Draft Strategy will be revised and re-presented as a final strategy for adoption by Cabinet and launch in spring 2021.

16 November 2020	Public consultation opens	General public
1 December 2020	Consideration of the Draft Strategy by the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee	Scrutiny Committee
11 January 2021	Public consultation ends	General public
Spring 2021	Consideration of the Final Draft Brent Climate Emergency Strategy (2021-2030) and comments received during public consultation	Cabinet

6.0 Alternative Options Considered

- 6.1 Given the financial pressures that the council is facing and competing council priorities following the onset of COVID-19, alternative approaches include a 'business as usual' approach. However, as is made clear within the strategy document, through working together with Brent's communities, the council remains committed and ambitious in its goal to attain carbon neutrality by 2030. Failure to act at such a crucial time risks setting in train climate deterioration that will have huge adverse impacts for the borough and its population in years to come. For these reasons, 'business as usual' is not considered desirable.
- 6.2 An approach that solely focuses on the council's own estate and operations is also not supported, in view of the above but moreover, because the council's own emissions only account for 1% of Brent's total territorial carbon emissions. It is also thought that there is no other central body in Brent that can play a leadership role to bring together individuals and organisations in tackling this issue with the speed and urgency it requires.

7.0 Financial Implications

- 7.1 The financial implications for each action within the 2021-2022 action plan are set out at the end of Appendix A. Overall, of the 23 actions proposed, four are already factored into existing budgets, 10 result in new additional activity where costs can be contained within existing departmental budgets, six have external funding secured and three require further work where due to the early stage of project scoping, the financial implications are yet to be fully developed. These actions include developing a green infrastructure vision for 2030 (R&E06), developing a Climate Change Adaptation Plan for the borough (R&E12) and implementing the council's plan to achieve net zero for the Council's own estate and operations by 2030 (R&E13). These plans are likely to have both revenue and capital financial implications, which will be assessed as the detailed plans and recommendations are developed. Those aside, it is expected that the year one actions can be contained within existing budgets.

8.0 Legal Implications

- 8.1 The Climate Change Act 2008 (the Act) is the statutory basis for the UK's approach to tackling and responding to climate change. The Act places a legal duty on central government to set legally binding targets to reduce UK greenhouse gas emissions to net-zero by 2050.

9.0 Equality Implications

- 9.1 The council, as a public authority exercising public functions, is subject to a general public sector equality duty (PSED) under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 (EqA). The PSED requires public authorities to have 'due regard' to:
- The need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the EqA

- The need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. This involved having due regard to the need to:
 - Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic
 - Take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it
 - Encourage persons who share the relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low
- The need to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant and protected characteristic and those who do not share it. This includes having due regard to the need to tackle prejudice and promote understanding.

9.2 A full Equalities Impact Assessment is attached as Appendix B to this report. This strategy and action plan will support Brent Council to continue to meet its public sector equality duties.

10.0 Human Resources Implications

10.1 There are no immediate staffing implications.

11.0 Property Implications

11.1 Energy audits of Harlesden Library, Kilburn Library and the New Millennium day Centre have recently taken place. A specific energy audit for the Civic Centre is also being discussed by officers and is hoped to be commissioned in the near future.

11.2 The findings from all of these reports will help to inform the development of a comprehensive plan to achieve net zero carbon emissions across the council's estate and operations by 2030, which is part of the 2021-22 delivery plan within **Appendix A**.

12.0 Environmental Sustainability Implications

12.1 Environmental sustainability considerations are integral to the purpose, content and recommendations in this report.

13.0 Proposed Consultation with Ward Members and Stakeholders

13.1 Every individual who lives, works or studies in Brent has a stake in tackling the climate emergency. The draft strategy has been developed with the views of our residents at its heart, with the key themes and actions closely reflecting the priorities of the Brent Climate Assembly which took place last year.

- 13.2 The Draft Strategy will be issued for public consultation on the online portal to enable all residents in Brent to provide feedback and comments on the proposals, ahead of a final version being brought to Cabinet for approval in spring 2021. A short, illustrated version of the draft strategy is being designed and will be widely publicised.
- 13.3 During the eight week consultation period we will also hold a series of virtual events and webinars with schools, businesses, environmental groups and residents, particularly those groups who will be most affected by climate change – young people, older people, people with disabilities and our Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities.
- 13.4 We will encourage our ward councillors to become community champions. We are preparing fact sheets for members to use to promote the council's response to the climate emergency and to engage with residents, businesses, schools and community groups in their ward. Members will be at the forefront of community engagement and will be champions for climate action.
- 13.5 Finally, we are making the consultation activity-based – we will ask the public to carry out an audit of their area of the things they would like to see changed and to feed their ideas back to us.

Report sign off:

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