

Brent Climate Emergency Strategy

2021-2030

Draft for Public Consultation



Brent

London Borough of Brent

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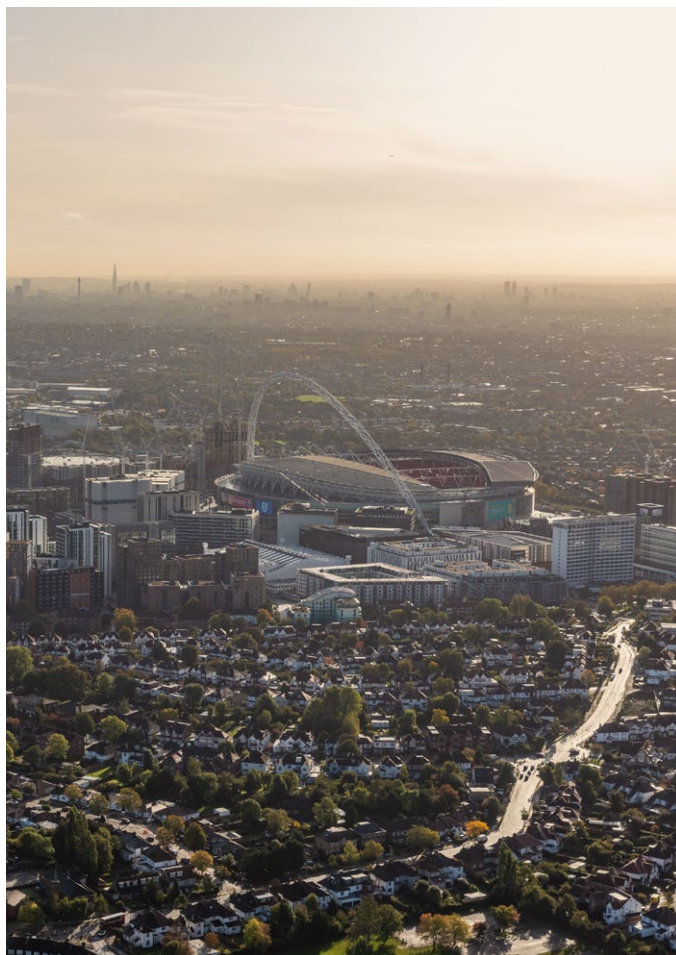
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Foreword

We are living in a Climate and Ecological Emergency



We are already seeing the devastating effects of climate change. 2020 has been punctuated by more volatile and unprecedented weather taking place around the world on a regular basis, whether it be wildfires in Australia or floods in the UK. The climate risk to Brent is no different. If we do not act, it is inevitable that the worst effects of climate change will directly affect all of us in the future.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a widespread impact on Brent and our residents. The pandemic has laid bare existing inequalities, with some of our most vulnerable residents hit the hardest. Similarly, the effects of the climate emergency will disproportionately affect the groups who are least resilient to them. This must bring into clearer focus our duty to act. There will be no vaccine to save us from climate change in years to come.

The time to start acting is now. Brent has declared a climate and ecological emergency and pledged to do all in our gift to achieve carbon neutrality in the borough by 2030. This draft ten-year strategy follows that pledge, and provides a focus for climate action through five key themes, with the speed and urgency it requires. The government's plan for a net zero UK by 2050 is a timescale that is not nearly ambitious enough to tackle the problem in front of us. We are clear at the outset that the scale of the challenge to achieve carbon neutrality will be too great for the council to act alone. We will only be successful if we are

working collaboratively with our residents and communities every step of the way.

This draft strategy seeks to reflect the priorities of our residents and will be open for public consultation from 16th November 2020 to 11th January 2021. I encourage anyone reading this document to provide us with your thoughts and to think about what you can do to contribute to tackling the climate emergency in Brent.

By working together, we can tackle the climate emergency and create a greener, cleaner and more sustainable borough for all of our communities, both now and into the future.

CLlr Krupa Sheth

Cabinet Member
for Environment



Introduction and Context

What does the Climate and Ecological Emergency mean for Brent?

It is widely agreed by climate scientists that if urgent action is not taken within the next decade to reduce emissions and limit global heating, the damage done to our climate will be irreversible. In Brent, the effects are likely to be most acutely felt through more intense heatwaves, droughts, floods and biodiversity loss. The interconnected nature of the global economy means that this could also manifest in the shape of water shortages, food shortages and the displacement of people. This will place increased pressure on council services, health systems and wider infrastructure in the borough in years to come.

International organisations and national governments are grappling with this crisis, but for any global targets to be made, change has to happen on the ground at the local level. Brent must therefore play its part and strive to transform our local area to be carbon neutral by 2030. This means reducing Brent's total net carbon emissions to zero – reducing existing emissions as far as possible, then balancing out any remaining emissions by removing an equivalent amount of greenhouse gases from the atmosphere.

It is not all about avoiding catastrophe. The climate crisis provides an immediate opportunity for positive social, economic and environmental change both nationally and locally through a transition to a net zero carbon economy, a cleaner and greener environment and a fairer and healthier society.

However, this will only be possible if all aspects of communities are on board with this radical and exciting journey. Everyone who lives, works and studies within our borough boundary will need to contribute to this transformation.

The environmental themes within this document are interrelated and must be considered in the round. If we achieve our objectives, we can bring about positive changes to our local community on many of the issues that matter to people such as cleaner air, greener spaces, warmer homes, healthier travel and a thriving local economy.

International Milestones

Paris Agreement [↗](#)
December 2015

Special Report [↗](#) from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)
October 2018

National Milestones

UK Parliament declared Climate Emergency [↗](#)
May 2019

UK Parliament makes law for **net zero carbon reduction target** [↗](#) by 2050
May 2019

London Milestones

Mayor of London released **Environmental Strategy** [↗](#) and declares **Climate Emergency** [↗](#)
May-December 2018

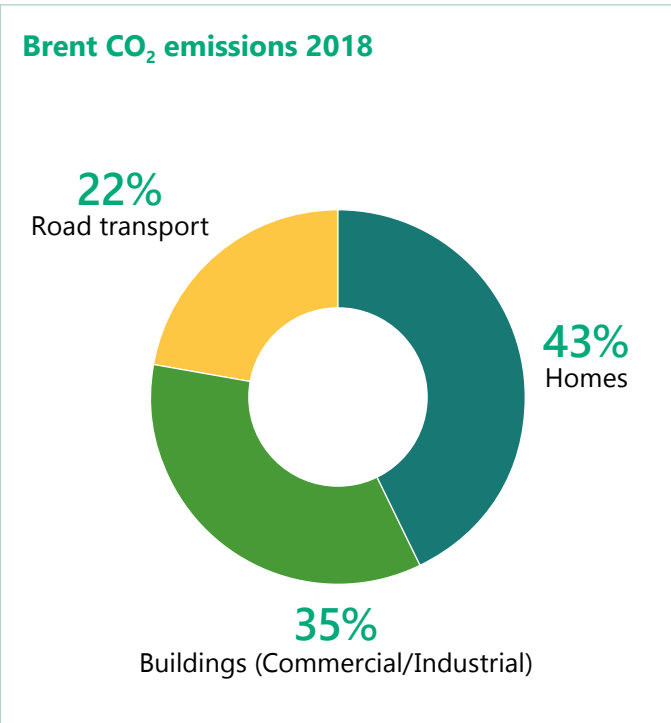
London Councils Transport & Environment Committee/ London Environmental Directors Network (LEDNET) Joint **Climate Change Statement** [↗](#)
November 2019
London Councils **Green Recovery Plan** [↗](#)
July 2020

Local Milestones

Brent Council declared Climate and Ecological Emergency [↗](#)
July 2019

Emissions in Brent

In Brent, there has been a 35% reduction in total carbon emissions between 2005 and 2018.



It is positive that emissions are going in the right direction, but carbon neutrality will not be possible on a 'business as usual' trajectory. Accelerating the speed and increasing the scope of collective climate action in Brent needs to start immediately.

The themes within this strategy provide a focus on the areas which are the most significant causes of emissions. Carbon dioxide (CO₂) is one of many greenhouse gases, but it is the biggest contributor to climate change. Within Brent, direct carbon emissions arise from three major sources: energy use in homes, energy use in buildings and road transport. These are areas that can be influenced more directly, and where change can be observed more easily.

The majority of carbon emissions from homes, buildings and road transport sources come from privately owned sources. The council will seek to lead by example and will provide the necessary leadership on these issues, but it cannot fund or directly intervene to guarantee the scale of the change required. Genuine, practical change will require individuals and organisations to contribute and take action in ways that will benefit the climate for future generations.

This draft strategy has been constructed to provide a platform on what we think Brent residents wish to see prioritised, and a focus for anyone reading it on the key actions that need to be at the forefront of tackling the climate emergency.

Brent's Wider Greenhouse Gas 'Consumption' Emissions

Energy use in homes and buildings and fuel use from road transport are the three key sources of direct CO₂ emissions in Brent. However, there are indirect greenhouse gas emissions which arise from the products we buy, the types of food we eat and how we travel outside of the borough boundary. These wider indirect emissions arising from our daily buying decisions are more difficult to measure but are estimated to be over four times as high as the direct emissions from homes, buildings and road transport. This will require a general shift to more sustainable behaviour and actions from everyone in Brent!

The Current Challenges

Funding

In August 2019, the council commissioned the independent Brent Carbon Scenarios 2030 Study which modelled a number of different scenarios for potential carbon reduction and the capital costs. The challenges identified were enormous. A 100% carbon reduction by 2030, would come at a cost of £3.1 billion (with additional costs of a zero carbon national electricity grid not quantified).

How can we overcome this?

The council and its communities will need to work together to ensure that Brent secures funding from existing and future national and regional programmes for carbon reduction, energy efficiency, waste reduction, air quality, sustainable urban drainage, biodiversity and tree planting (amongst other things). Innovative and creative thinking on fundraising to deliver climate-friendly programmes will also be required by the council and its communities.

COVID-19

The impact and disruption caused by the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic has been enormous, with an estimated fall in the UK Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of 35%. The economic effects on Brent are likely be felt throughout this decade, which is the timeframe for this strategy. The risk posed by inaction, and the long-term problems caused by climate deterioration to both councils and their populations remain hugely significant.

How can we overcome this?

The two crises of a global pandemic and climate emergency have collided and both require an urgent response. We have an unprecedented opportunity to converge solutions to both crises, to ensure that we achieve a truly green recovery.

Changing our behaviour

For many, a lack of understanding can make climate change seem like a large, complex and overwhelming concept. The Brent Climate Assembly challenged the council to ensure individuals are equipped with better information to understand how they personally can contribute. It will require big lifestyle changes that some people may view to be difficult and unnecessary at the current time.

How can we overcome this?

The council and its communities will need to work together to adopt simple changes to lifestyles that can make a big difference. We will seek to develop plans for change that are both observable and measurable on a wider scale. We know that we can change our behaviour from our response to the COVID-19 – lockdowns all around the world have shown that widespread behavioural change is possible and at speed. Human behaviour may have driven us to this point – but we are also the ones who can ensure we avoid climate catastrophe.

The Current Challenges (continued)

Lack of coordinated action

There are amazing individuals and groups who are taking action to tackle the climate emergency in Brent. The challenge is linking like-minded groups and individuals together to gain a greater understanding of the projects and actions being taken, so that best practice and practical expertise can be replicated across the local area and on an increased scale to ensure that positive action can have the widest possible collective impact.

How can we overcome this?

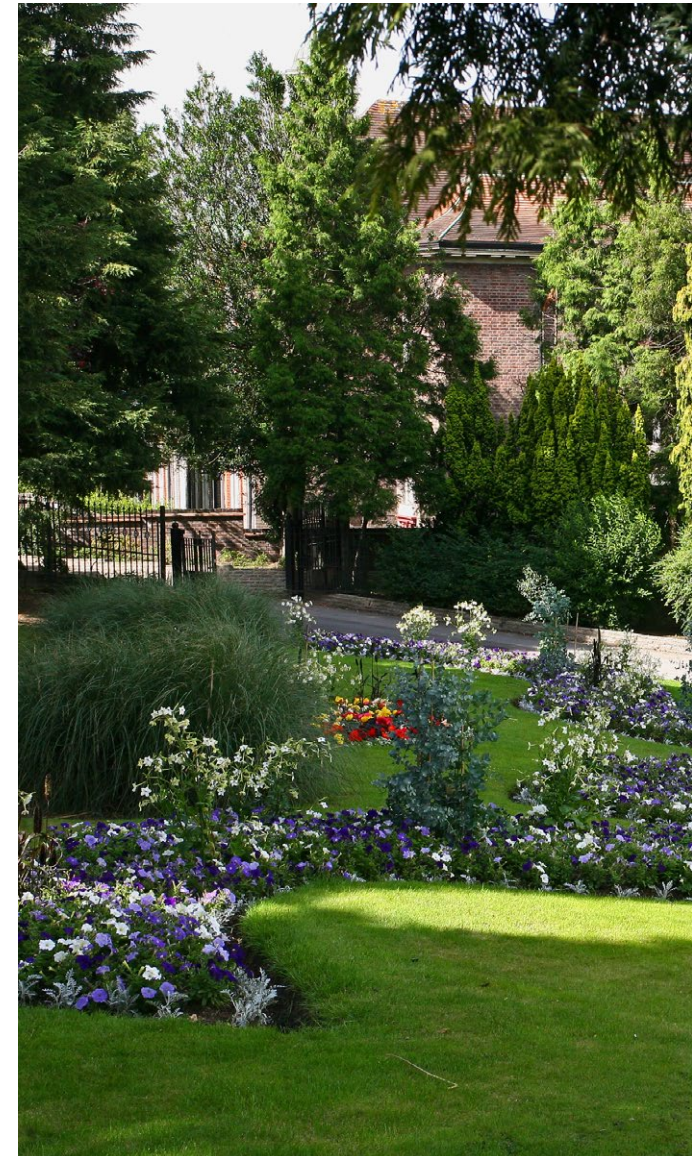
The council will seek to lead by example and will provide the necessary leadership to bring the community together to address this issue with a positive and collaborative agenda, ensuring that the carbon neutral transition is fair for all. The council will work to build on existing partnerships with other councils and partners across London to increase our impact and create new ones with key communities and sectors in Brent through the establishment of the Brent Environmental Network.

Tackling environmental issues comprehensively

Tackling the climate emergency requires action across a number of different and complex environmental issues, ranging from: carbon reduction; water conservation, cleaner air, healthy and active travel, biodiversity loss, greener spaces, adapting to global heating, warm homes, reducing waste and growing the green and circular economy. The challenge is ensuring that there is widespread understanding of how all these issues relate to each other.

How can we overcome this?

Environmental sustainability issues are interrelated and must be tackled in a joined-up way. The council has adopted a systemic, organisation-wide approach to tackling these interwoven environmental issues. It is through this lens that the council will seek to work most closely with all of its communities, working in tandem to tackle the issues most likely to have a positive impact on improving the environment in Brent.



Working Together – Development of the key themes

Community Engagement

The **Brent Climate Assembly** took place over three workshops in November and December 2019, and was made up of 53 residents who were representative of the borough in terms of age, gender, ethnicity, socio-economic group and locality. Assembly members voted on a longlist of potential actions which led to the development of a set of themes and recommendations which have informed this Draft Strategy.

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 were invited to post their ideas on the Assembly website. Most recently, we have also held further engagement with residents through two Brent Connects sessions, to explore how the council and its communities can begin to put the recommendations developed previously by the Brent Climate Assembly and Youth Summit into a plan of action over the next ten years.

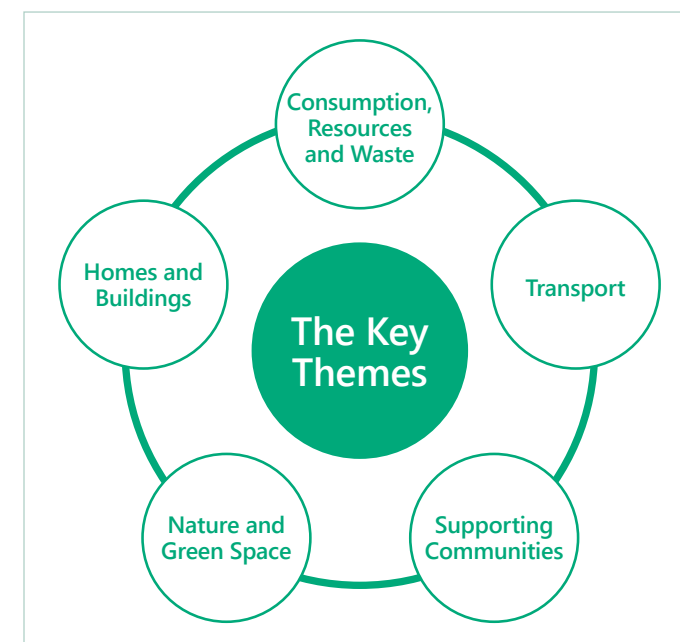
Community engagement has therefore been at the core of the development of this strategy, and will remain so in its delivery over the next decade.

Alignment with London-wide ambitions

All London Boroughs are facing similar challenges on the scale of greenhouse gas and specific carbon reduction emissions that are required if carbon neutrality is to be achieved by 2030. This draft strategy has therefore sought to align Brent's ambitions wherever possible with the London-wide ambitions set out in the London Councils' Transport and Environment Committee & London Environment Directors' Network (LEDNET) Joint Statement on Climate Change, and the London Councils' Green Recovery Plan.



The Key Themes





The Key Themes



Key Theme 1 – Consumption, Resources and Waste

Our Objective

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 of household waste produced within the borough.

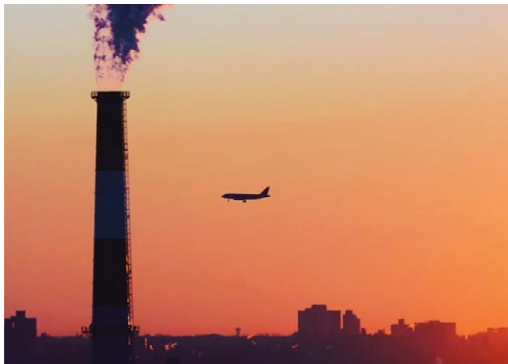
The Issue:

If humans are to be successful in our efforts to prevent the worst effects of climate change, then every single one of us has a significant role to play. At the heart of this is the fundamental need for us to consume less of the products and materials that damage the environment, and to waste less of the world's natural resources. For example, this could span from using less water, to flying less, from repairing your existing products (such as clothing), to wasting less food.

Greenhouse gas emissions caused by consumption and waste are difficult to measure, but are estimated to represent **over four times** the carbon emissions which are emitted directly from energy use in housing, buildings and road transport in the borough. Widespread community action is therefore the key influence, and the key to tackling consumption emissions.

Why it matters:

Not only will a significant reduction in consumption emissions go a long way to tackling the climate emergency, this is an environmental theme which is of huge importance to our residents. The Brent Climate Assembly voted for more potential actions to tackle the climate emergency relating to this theme than any other theme, viewing it as practical, relatable and an area where the council and its communities could all be empowered to make positive changes.



How will Brent get there?

The key areas of focus:

1. Community-Led Behaviour Change

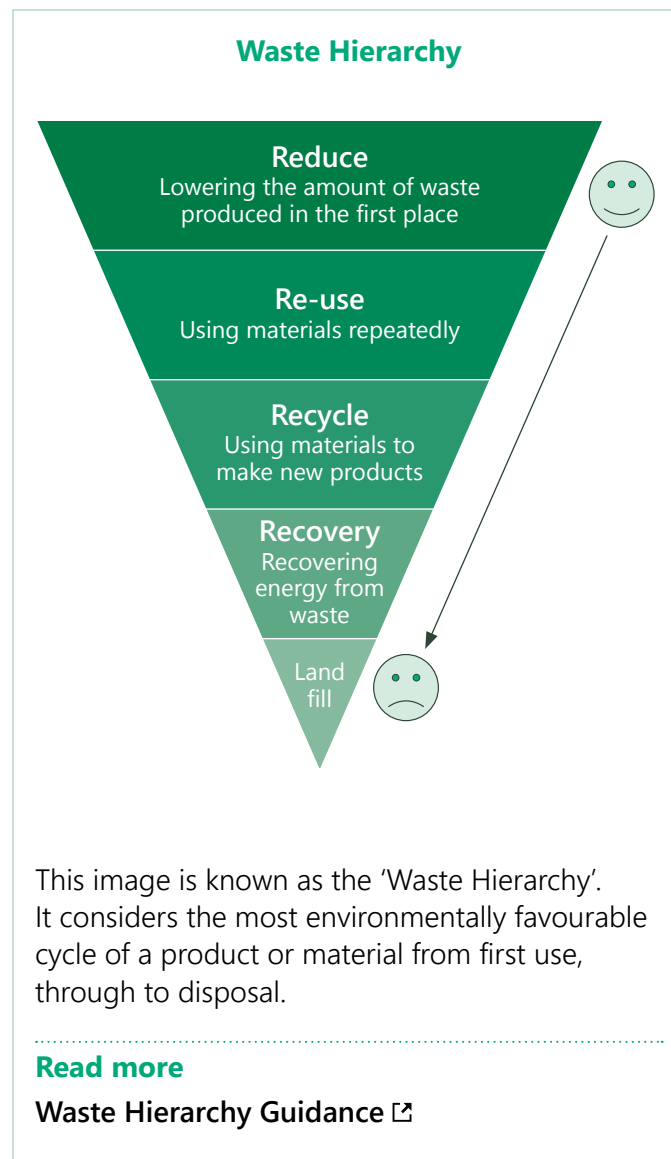
Regular communication campaigns and engagement with communities will be a crucial element of promoting a shift towards more sustainable daily behaviours. Communications will be simple, relatable and easy for anyone in the borough to understand, factoring in the array of languages and cultures that are present in Brent.

We must think innovatively about communications techniques and be ambitious in targeting and reaching demographics or local areas that are felt to be harder to reach or engage on this topic. Focus should be on the widespread benefits of

sustainable behaviours to residents, including signposting to existing sources, to help them assess their own carbon impacts and make informed choices.

At the heart of this will be our plan to develop a borough-wide, Brent Environmental Network, to develop the intelligence and the networks to ensure that information and education campaigns have a positive and widespread effect.

Engagement with specific sectors will also be a key part of this process, with organisations such as schools, businesses and voluntary groups having significant roles to play in encouraging a shift to more sustainable behaviours. The council will also strive to lead by example through its own operations.



2. Supporting Infrastructure

Reducing the amount of waste we create in the first place and improving our waste collection and recycling processes will provide the basis from which to reduce consumption emissions in the longer term.

The main waste infrastructure challenges for the borough rest with two main issues. These are contamination, typically in communal bins for blocks of flats; and food waste being mixed with general waste. We will seek to focus on addressing these key challenges and continue to seek to improve performance holistically across the waste hierarchy in the short, medium and long term.

Brent's **Recycling and Reduction Plan** [↗](#)

complements this theme, and should be read in alignment with this strategy. It outlines that the council will continue to work closely with its contractor (where necessary) to improve the infrastructure in the borough across a host of issues in relation to waste reduction, maximising recycling, reducing environmental impacts and maximising local waste sites.

The council is also in the process of developing a sustainable procurement policy which will embed a sustainable approach in the procurement for all products and services. A central element of this will be ensuring a reduction in the environmental impact of our supply chain, which is hoped to have a positive impact within the council and community, and to encourage other organisations to do the same.

Did you know?

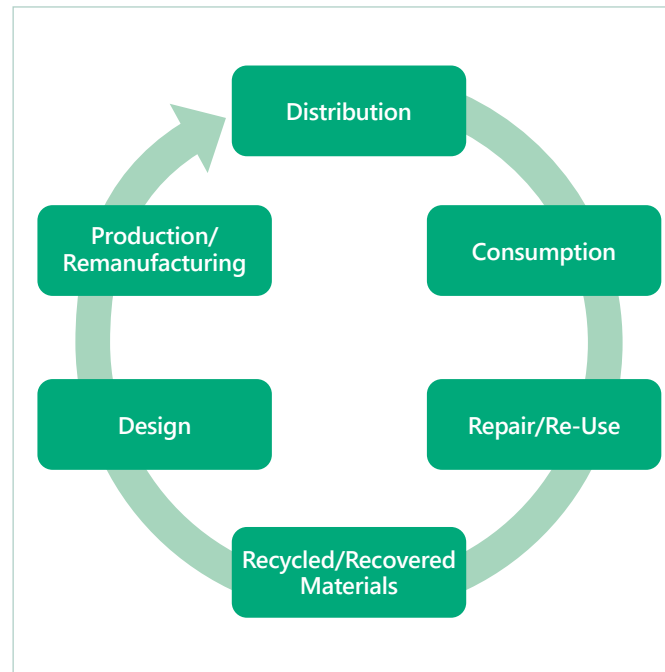
Brent residents recycle only **37%** of household waste, which is below the national average of **45%**



3. Enhancing the Low Carbon Circular Economy

Underpinning this is the need for Brent, and all of London, to move towards a low carbon, circular economy. This would involve a radical shift away from our current linear economy and 'throwaway culture' where products are made → used → disposed to one in which resources and products are kept in use for as long as possible. This should also be at the centre of green economic recovery efforts following the COVID-19 pandemic.

Brent is well placed to enhance its low carbon circular economy over the next 10 years as it is already amongst the top for London boroughs with the highest rates of employment in this sector. There are around 860 businesses in the borough involved in the circular economy. We must aspire to continue to build this sector and support this economic model of operation as a key mechanism for tackling the climate emergency.



This is a climate emergency! What can I do to help?

A few examples...

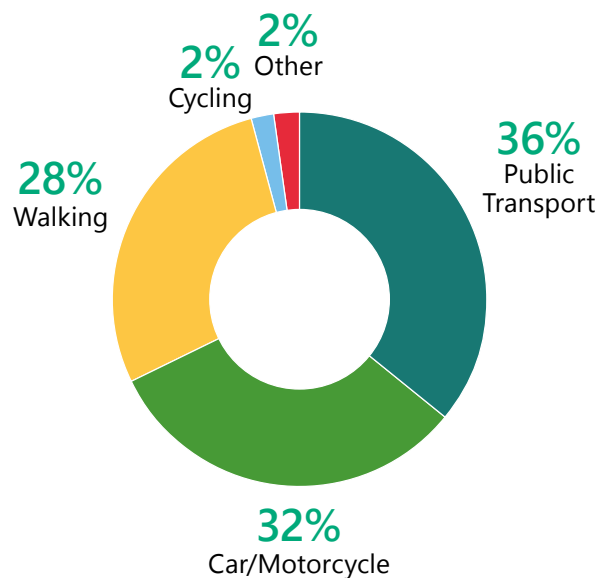
- Calculate your **carbon footprint** [↗](#)
- Download the **Recycleopedia** [↗](#) app
- Make the most of your clothes: via **Love Your Clothes** [↗](#) or **TRAID** [↗](#) amongst others
- Use a refillable water bottle
- Cut down on plastic bottles – shampoos etc
- Use one bag for life!
- Take shorter showers to conserve water – time them!
- Buy a water butt – save rain water to use on your plants
- Eat meat on fewer days a week or not at all
- Reduce your food waste: via **Love Food Hate Waste** [↗](#)
- Creatively re-use products by learning to upcycle
- Grow your own food on a balcony or in your kitchen

Key Theme 2 – Transport

Our Objective

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.

Most common method of transport for trips in Brent (prior to COVID-19)



The Issue:

Road transport is the third biggest contributor to territorial carbon emissions in Brent, representing 22% of the total. Moving away from private car usage and towards public transport, electric vehicles, walking and cycling will have huge implications not only for the climate but also for public health.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant effect on the way people travel, with Transport for London (TfL) reporting fewer numbers of people using public transport, and car usage reportedly exceeding pre-COVID levels as of August 2020.



Why it matters:

Transport was the second most important theme that should be prioritised in the eyes of the Brent Climate Assembly as a means of tackling the climate emergency.

Improving the sustainability of our transport will not only help resolve the climate emergency, but it will make Brent a healthier and safer borough, both in the short and long term.

Decarbonising travel, is not just an issue in Brent, it requires a national effort. In July 2018, the UK Department for Transport released a routemap, 'The Road to Zero' [\[1\]](#), which outlined its strategy for decarbonising the road transport sector, as part of the Government's Industrial Strategy.



How will Brent get there?

The key areas of focus:

1. Supporting and encouraging active travel

Pursuing active travel as the preferred mode of travel in years to come will be crucial in helping to tackle the climate emergency in Brent, through increased uptake of **walking** and **cycling**.

We understand the scale of the challenge. By 2030, it is likely that the following shifts will need to have occurred in order to achieve carbon neutrality:

- The number of trips made by walking needs to increase to 37-45%, up from 28% in 2017-18.
- The number of trips made by cycling needs to increase to 7-10%, up from just 2% in 2017-18.

To ensure that active travel is embedded as a priority mode of transport across our borough, both now and into the future, this will again require behaviour change. The promotion of walking and cycling across different communities and sectors will be essential, as will seeking to secure funding for the relevant infrastructure to support this and being strategic with the resources that are available.

A host of short term and long-term measures are being considered at the present time as part of the creation of a Transport Recovery Plan with the joint objectives of: transforming our streets to create healthy, more inclusive places; facilitating active travel to improve people's health and wellbeing; and improving safety on the borough road network.

Read More

Supporting documents:

[Long Term Transport Strategy](#)

[Draft Transport Recovery Plan](#)

[Cycling Strategy](#)

[Walking Strategy](#)

[Air Quality Action Plan](#)



2. Moving away from petrol and diesel vehicles

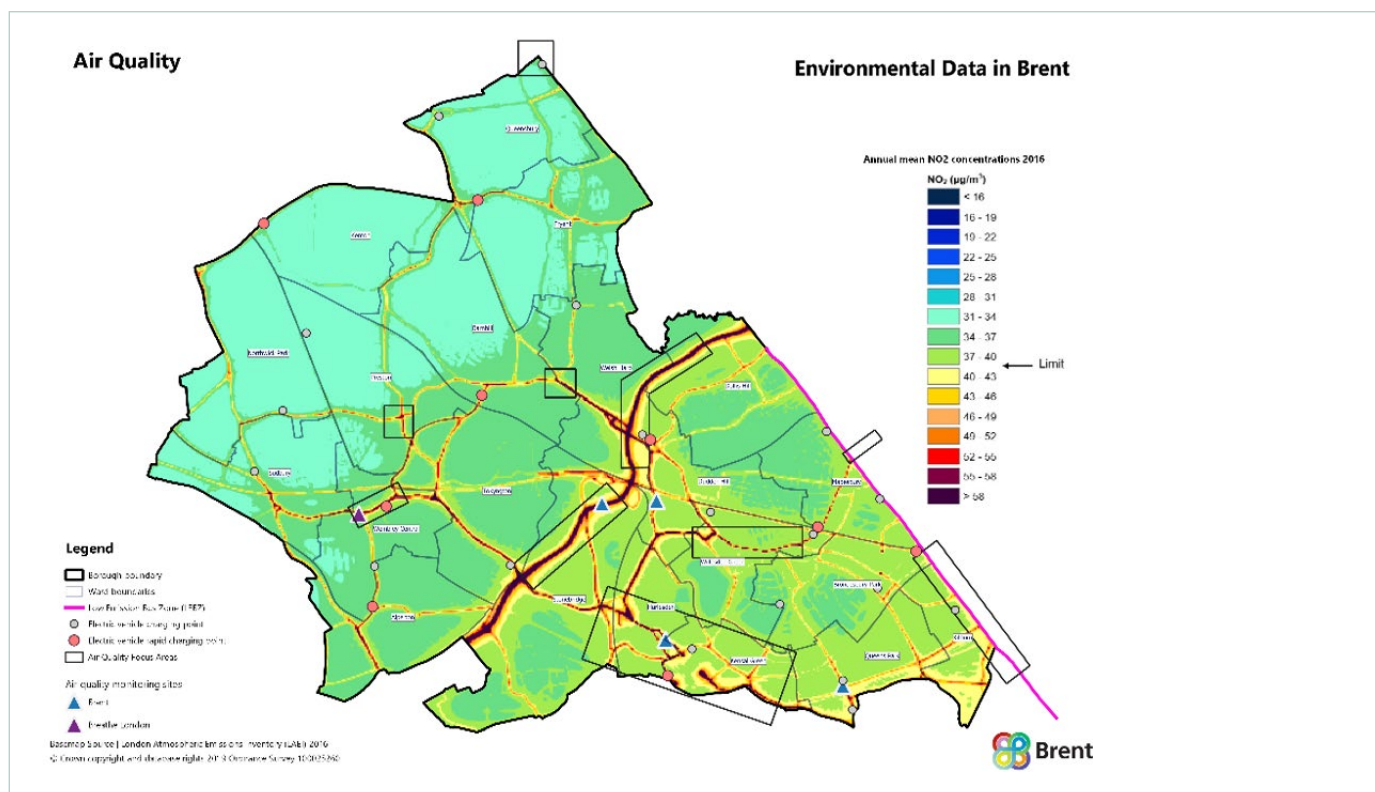
Fewer cars on the road and fewer trips means significant carbon emission reductions and cleaner air. The North Circular Road cuts through the middle of the borough and is a significant contributor of emissions and harmful pollutants every day.

The shift away from petrol and diesel vehicles does not necessarily mean a shift away from the car altogether. Promoting the use of zero emission (at source) vehicles (electric or hydrogen) across the borough will be important, as will working with TfL on the strategic infrastructure to support this. Car Clubs, last-mile delivery schemes and other sustainable alternatives should be promoted as alternatives where possible.

Schools, businesses and other organisations in the borough have a role to play too, particularly through the development of sustainable travel plans that reflect this shift. We already have 33 schools streets in Brent – the third highest number of all London boroughs!

For the council itself, through the development of a new Sustainable Procurement Policy, we will aspire to review and replace our current fleet with low emission models over the next ten years.

The Brent **draft Local Plan** [↗](#) (anticipated to be adopted in April 2021) also includes provisions for all new developments to be car-free or car-lite; increasing coverage of electric vehicle charging points; and enabling broadband access to encourage home working and assist independent living.



3. Encouraging public transport

When the Brent Climate Assembly met in autumn 2019, it placed great emphasis on the need for the borough to support and encourage the use of public transport as an alternative to petrol or diesel vehicle journeys. Due to COVID-19, it is unsurprising that usage of public transport has dropped – whether by increased numbers of people working from home, or fewer people choosing to travel by public transport. The climate emergency and the coronavirus emergency need to be tackled in unison, so we will need to find ways to ensure that public transport continues to be seen as a safe and viable alternative to the private car in future.

The council has limited influence over public transport and key road networks which are managed by the Mayor of London. We know that to achieve carbon neutrality in the borough, all public transport services will need to be zero emission, powered by renewable energy sources. It will be important for the council to continue to liaise with TfL and participate in any communication campaigns to highlight the environmental benefits to taking public transport, and on the acceleration of the delivery of any planned public transport improvements within the borough which may also have a beneficial effect on the climate.

Although Brent is well served by public transport links, these links are not necessarily equitably served in terms of geography of the borough. It will also be important for the council to continue to look for opportunities at a sub-regional level for longer term public transport initiatives to benefit Brent's population.



This is a climate emergency! What can I do to help?

A few examples...

- **Nominate streets** 🚶 in need of walking and cycling improvements
- Walk more
- Cycle more – consider joining a cycle club or try before you bike scheme!
- Look into joining a car club
- Consider whether your workplace has a sustainable travel policy
- Think about trading your petrol/diesel car in for an electric vehicle
- Use public transport where safe to do so (wear a face covering)

Key Theme 3 – Homes and Buildings

Our Objective

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 rating of Energy Performance Certificate B in directly owned council stock.

The Issue:

The energy used to power and heat Brent's homes and non-domestic buildings represents a combined total 78% of all carbon emissions produced in the borough (43% from homes; 35% from commercial and industrial buildings). This is therefore a hugely significant contributor to the changing climate.

Homes and buildings will need to become more energy efficient and be powered and heated by renewable energy sources. Homes and buildings will also need to be adapted to ensure they can cope with more volatile weather in the future.

When considering the scale and different types of homes and buildings across in the borough, this will require significant levels of central funding being made available to local areas, communities and residents by central government.

Why it matters:

The Brent Climate Assembly also recognised the importance of this theme, with 'Existing Housing and Buildings' being the third most important theme, 'Planning Policy and New Development' as the fifth most popular, and 'Adapting to global heating' as the sixth most popular theme in terms of issues that should be prioritised over the next ten years. We also know from surveying housing tenants within the council's housing stock in recent years, just how important energy efficiency is as a priority issue.

16,000 households in Brent are also thought to be in fuel poverty, equating to nearly 14% of Brent households. This is the fourth worst figure across London. Tackling energy inefficiency in homes can also help to reduce fuel poverty and ensure some of our most vulnerable residents are living in warm and comfortable homes. We will also need to ensure that homes in the borough are resilient to the predicted impacts of global heating – flooding, heatwaves and drought.



How will Brent get there?

The key areas of focus:

1. Improving Energy Efficiency

There are well over 100,000 homes and buildings in Brent (of which just under 12,000 homes and around 200 non-domestic buildings are owned by the council). The most effective way of reducing carbon emissions in homes and buildings is by reducing the need for heating and phasing out gas. In existing buildings, this can be most effectively achieved by adapting ('retrofitting') our homes and buildings to make them better insulated. Switching from gas boilers to more environmentally friendly renewable heating systems can also assist with this. In new developments, sustainable considerations should be present from design through to construction to drive carbon emissions as close as possible to zero.

On homes, the council will seek to lead by example by first assessing what energy efficiency measures are most effective within our existing housing stock, and through the delivery of the New Council Home Programme. We will do all in our gift to achieve an average rating of Energy Performance Certificate B in directly owned council stock by 2030.

As the vast majority of homes in the borough are either owner-occupied or privately rented, it is clear that homeowners and landlords will also have to play

a proactive role in tackling the climate emergency. The council will seek to encourage and support homeowners and landlords to make informed choices about energy efficiency, and signpost towards existing useful resources or funding. We will also seek to develop partnership approaches with the 60 Housing Associations in the borough who face similar challenges.

Schools, businesses and other community organisations must also collectively seek to improve energy efficiency and reduce energy demand across the borough's non-domestic buildings. The Brent Environmental Network will be a key mechanism for sharing ideas, expertise and knowledge across these sectors on practical ways to improve energy efficiency. The council will also develop a plan for achieving zero emissions across its own corporate estate by 2030.

Read More

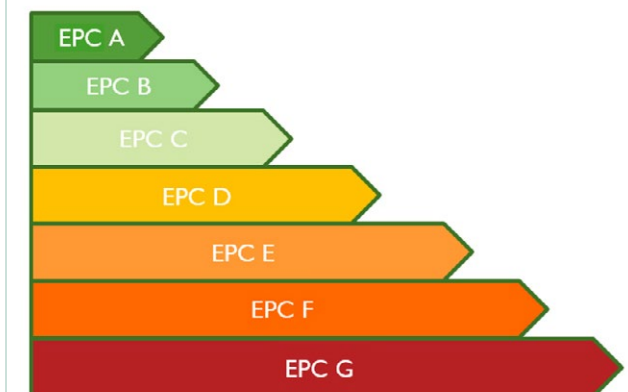
Supporting documents:

Brent Draft Asset Management Strategy (2020-2025) [↗](#)

Brent Two Year Stock Investment Plan 2020-2020 [↗](#)

What is the significance of Energy Performance Rating C B?

Every home or building has an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC), which provides a rating on energy performance. In this draft strategy, for its own housing stock, Brent is proposing to align itself to the London-wide target, which is an average of EPC B by 2030. This is the second highest energy efficiency rating, and if every home and building in the borough were operating this efficiently by 2030, it would have a significant impact on the Borough's aim to achieve carbon neutrality.



2. Renewable Energy

As Brent's population is expected to rise in the coming years, meeting the expected demand for energy in our homes and buildings and the infrastructure required to distribute it will be a key consideration. Renewable energy sources will need to be at the heart of energy distribution in the borough in the coming decade.

There are two key elements to this: our communities will need to play their part by seeking to power their home or commercial building through renewable

sources; and the council should seek to increase the use of renewable energy sources on its own assets through localised and sustainable energy networks. Progress is being made on both aspects, through an increase in solar panel usage in the borough and the requirement for low carbon district energy networks in new developments in Wembley and South Kilburn.

The borough will seek to explore opportunities to expand renewable energy provision to serve our homes and buildings and will ultimately aim to draw this together into a new dedicated Renewable Energy Strategy for the borough in the coming years.

Did you know?

766 solar panels have been installed on homes and buildings through the council-supported scheme Solar Together, saving 49 tonnes of carbon each year



3. Climate Resilience

Climate change and more extreme weather events in future years will impact on decisions about the location, construction and maintenance of our homes and buildings. Making adaptations to homes and buildings to make them more resilient to these weather events will be important to lessen the worst effects of climate change.

Brent, being a densely populated urban borough, is at greater risk from the predicted impacts of climate change due to the 'urban heat island effect' and the fact that the vast majority of our existing buildings and infrastructure were not built to withstand the predicted higher external temperatures and levels of rainfall. Heatwaves are likely to become increasingly common, and the risk of overheating, and therefore of heat-related health problems or mortality, is projected to increase significantly in the coming decades. Flood risk will also increase, potentially leading to displacement, high repair costs and mental health impacts such as depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder.

We have to be forward thinking and ensure that steps are taken now to guard against the more extreme effects of climate change. Major developments are encouraged to deliver green spaces and infrastructure, and to build future-proofed sustainable buildings that reduce usage of natural resources in the long-term. Planning policies within the draft Local Plan (if adopted) will require that all major commercial and residential developments mitigate and adapt to climate change, specifically by being Air Quality Positive or Neutral, and by managing flood risk, on-site water management and sustainable surface water drainage.

The borough will need to undertake further resilience planning and risk assessments across a range of different areas, addressing the disparate potential risks to our homes and buildings in the short, medium and long term. We will do this through a dedicated piece of work to establish a Climate Resilience Plan for the borough within the first year delivery plan of this strategy, assessing the specific options and infrastructure measures for feasibility within future yearly delivery plans.

This is a climate emergency! What can I do to help?

A few examples...

- Consider your home insulation **options** [↗](#)
- Find out more about the **warmer homes scheme** [↗](#)
- Find out more about the Energy Companies obligation **here** [↗](#)
- Find your property on the **London Building Stock Model** [↗](#)
- Wear warm clothes at home to use less heating
- Use LED lightbulbs in your home where possible

Key Theme 4 – Nature and Green Space

Our Objective

By 2030, Brent will be one of the greenest, most biodiverse and climate-resilient boroughs in London with our residents better connected to nature.

The Issue:

In the event of the climate deteriorating to the extent that it is irreversible and uncontrollable, extreme weather events of the future are likely to have a catastrophic effect on wildlife habitats, biodiversity and the natural infrastructure of the borough.

Nature and biodiversity have a role to play in the stability of the ecosystem and global climate. At a local level this particularly relates to things like our parks, trees, open spaces, gardens and waterways. We need to ensure that these are accessible so that everyone in Brent can feel connected to the natural environment.

Why it matters:

Enhancing our green spaces will make a significant impact on our plans to tackle the climate emergency. The benefits of green spaces range from a reduction in carbon emissions to storm-water reduction and filtration; from a reduction in air pollution to improving mental and physical health and providing a sense of community cohesion.

Protecting nature, biodiversity and enhancing green spaces are also key issues for residents in Brent. The theme of 'Nature and biodiversity' was the fourth highest priority theme as voted for by the Brent Climate Assembly last year. The impact of COVID-19 and the lockdown put in place earlier this year has also had the unintended positive consequence of people being more aware of their natural surroundings and the increasingly detrimental impact that humans are having on nature.



How will Brent get there?

The key areas of focus:

1. Enhancing green spaces and biodiversity

Brent's most prominent green areas come in the form of around ninety parks and open spaces which are a crucial aspect of the natural landscape in our borough. Brent is a densely populated, predominantly urban borough, but we must be determined to make the best use of the green space. We already are the Borough of Bee Corridors!

A key element to the council's role in enhancing our green spaces is to also provide the enabling vision to support communities coming together to connect to nature and improve our environment. We know that the distribution of public parks provision varies significantly. The south of the borough in particular, is currently more deficient in access to green spaces.

We will develop a Green Infrastructure Vision for Brent for 2030 which will set out how we will seek to facilitate this, and to create a 'park mentality' of re-wilding existing land and utilising spaces innovatively to improve environmental sustainability.

Promoting and enhancing our green spaces has to take place in tandem with local communities. Schools also have an important community role to play in connecting young people to nature from an early age and promoting biodiversity awareness that they will hopefully carry through to adulthood. There are a substantial number of environmental groups in our local areas, including various 'Friends of' and conservation groups, some of which we know are already leading sustainability projects to help tackle the climate emergency. Groups such as these should be encouraged to spread the message that tackling climate change and looking after local environments go hand in hand, and is everyone's responsibility.



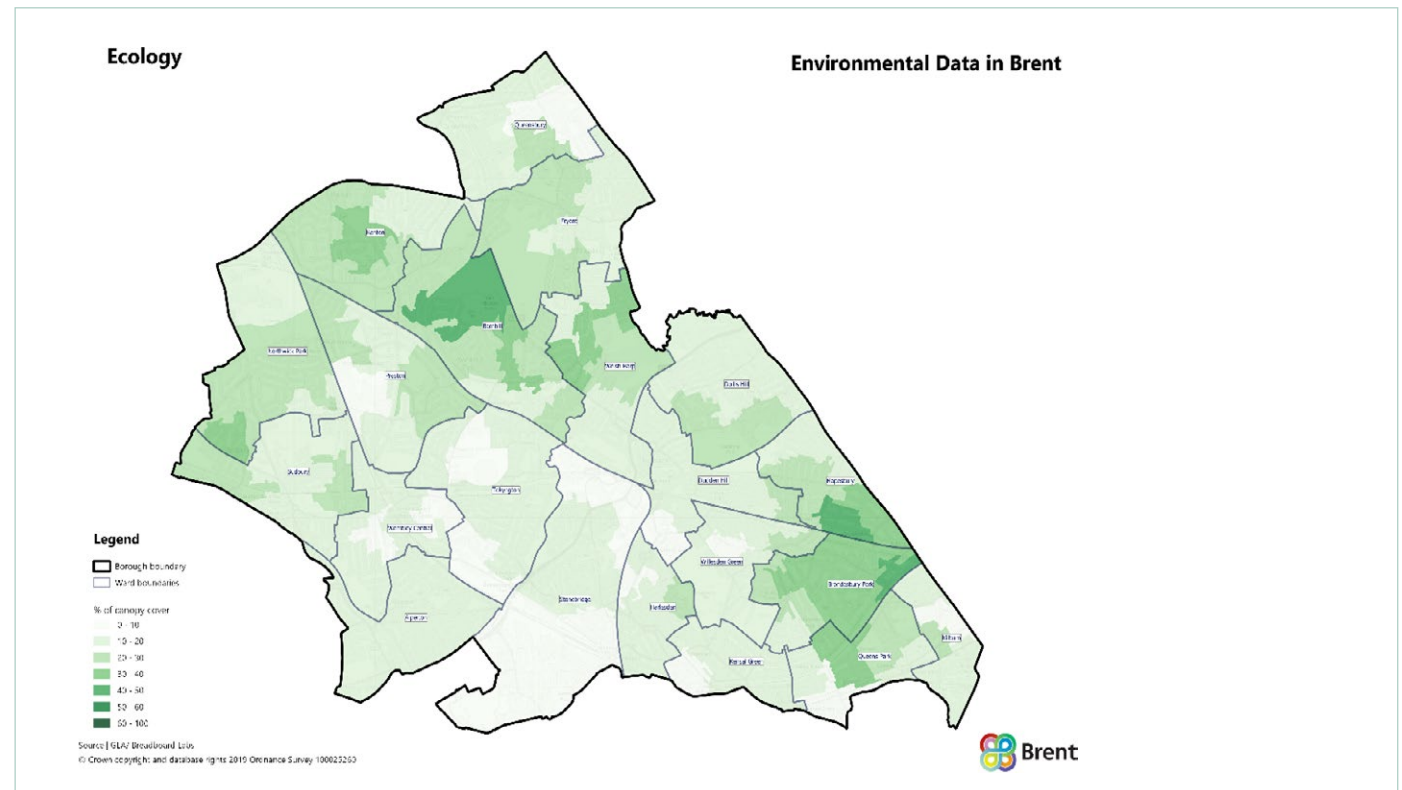
2. Green and blue (natural) Infrastructure

Trees are a significant element of our green infrastructure in Brent. Trees provide a host of environmental and health and well-being benefits, as well as offering a home and habitat for birds and insects which contribute to the functioning of a healthy local eco-system. We have a good track record of tree planting and we will aim to increase the number of trees in the future. In an urban setting such as Brent, trees can only make a tiny contribution to carbon reduction (by removing carbon from the air) – as an illustration, a 13% reduction in Brent's territorial carbon emissions through tree planting would require a land area 21 times the size of the Borough. Trees however will be vital in future to help provide shade and 'cool spots' for people and wildlife to shelter in the summer heat.

Brent is below the London average of tree canopy cover. We will seek to increase our canopy cover over the course of the next decade, to move closer to the London average. Community efforts on tree planting should be encouraged and supported in our green spaces where possible, dependent on grant funding being available from various sources.

It is important that we also consider our 'blue' spaces and infrastructure. Brent has a number of rivers and canals which flow through it (we are

named after a river!). The enhancement of waterways is another incredibly important factor in developing biodiversity in the borough. The council will seek to continue building on positive partnership working with organisations such as Thames 21 who are an integral part of improvement works to be undertaken to our rivers in Brent going forward.



3. Climate resilience

As mentioned under theme three (Housing and Buildings) we have to act to mitigate the worst effects of the climate emergency, but also adapt to the likelihood of adverse weather events which are likely to increase regardless in years to come. Adapting our infrastructure in this way should not be limited to homes and buildings, as our open spaces and parks are just important.

Heavier and more sustained downpours because of climate change are already affecting the infrastructure of Brent. An increase in properties requires more underground pipes, which already struggle to cope with existing water flow. Leaks from these pipes and missed connections lead to many incidents of flooding across Brent's streets and parks. Close working will be required with external organisations such as Thames 21 and the Canal and River Trust to develop flood alleviation schemes in our parks where we have rivers and outlet pipes running through or into them.

Management of our parks and climate change resilient planting will be an important factor. In particular, this will be through the use of longer lasting plants that are hardier, but offer a brighter mix of colours and at the same time offer habitats for insects, birds and mammals. Our parks also need to facilitate flood alleviation measures and consideration will be required of the development of swales and wet meadows that will allow for the retention of water from wetter winters and allow for flooding from nearby highways to be utilised within green spaces.

Flood management is important in the work of our highways team, in managing gully flooding and introducing solutions such as rain gardens and other Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) into new highway development proposals across the borough in areas that are most heavily affected by flooding.

This is a climate emergency! What can I do to help?

A few examples...

- **Grow Wild** [🔗](#) – Find out how to sow wildflowers and start a wildflower growing project.
- If you have a garden, consider turning it into a mini-wildlife sanctuary. The National Wildlife Federation has a programme to help you attract wildlife whether you have a balcony or a 20-acre farm or by simply hanging a bird feeder and planting bee-friendly flowers.
- Water communal plants and street trees with your waste water during drought.
- **The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds** [🔗](#) – Find out information about birds and take part in the Big Garden Birdwatch each January.
- **Butterfly Conservation** [🔗](#) – Discover information on butterflies and moths and take part in the annual Big Butterfly Count in July and August.
- **Plantlife** [🔗](#) – Discover the wonder of wildflowers and see which ones you can find in Brent during the Great British Wildflower Hunt.

Key Theme 5 – Supporting Communities

Our Objective

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.

The Issue:

Tackling the climate emergency and achieving carbon neutrality in Brent by 2030 cannot be a task for the council alone. The scale of the change facing us all is clear, but not unsurmountable if the council and communities work together.

The Brent Climate Assembly also posed a 'how' question to the council, on how it would work with communities to keep community voices at the heart of tackling the climate emergency.

Why it matters:

Through working together and making changes in our daily lives, we will do all in our power to counter the effects of global heating and secure our environment for the future. The need and appetite for the council and its communities to work together is clear, and the council will do all in its gift to ensure that this agenda is genuinely taken forward as collaboratively as possible.

This theme is not addressing any single environmental issue, but the fundamental need for collaboration and behaviour change – underpinning all of the four key themes prior to this.



How will Brent get there?

The key areas of focus:

1. Brent Environmental Network

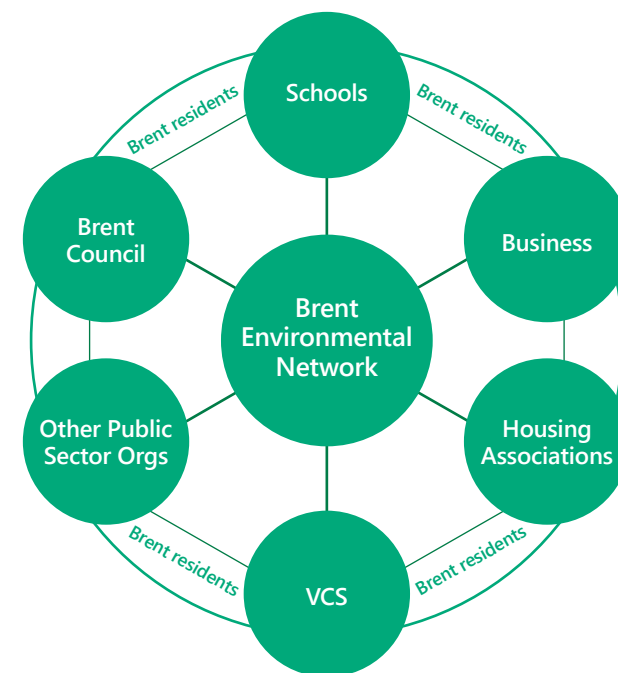
In order to achieve sustained engagement and climate action with our communities over the course of the next ten years, a comprehensive borough-wide network of residents, communities and key sectors should be established. The network is ultimately proposed to be the key overarching mechanism for sustained and ongoing engagement with communities on tackling the climate emergency and achieving the council's sustainability aims for the borough. In the first year delivery of this strategy, the council will begin developing this network to be as dynamic and successful as possible.

The ultimate aim is to develop a network of tens of thousands of both individuals and organisations across the borough who are signed up to receive communications and information about ways that they can get involved and take action in tackling the climate emergency. Those who are part of the network will be encouraged to be the champions and catalysts for climate action at a local level.

As explored in theme one of this strategy, a shift to more sustainable behaviour and spreading knowledge of the range of benefits to tackling climate change will be key to making Brent a carbon neutral borough. Members of the Environmental Network will be key to making this happen within all of our local communities.

We will need to make progress on this vision as urgently as possible in order to provide the momentum required for our communities to drive the ambition of carbon neutrality by 2030. The Brent Environmental Network will be open to all residents and organisations who either live, work or operate in the borough and as many people as possible would be welcome and encouraged to be involved. The development of a dedicated environmental and climate-action focused network of this nature is likely to continue to evolve organically over the next ten years. The focus of the council initially will be to put the building blocks in place for it to succeed and become self-sustaining.

Brent Environmental Network



2. Key Sectors

Behaviour change and utilising the expertise of different organisations from different key sectors to ensure Brent has the best chance of achieving carbon neutrality by 2030.

It should be emphasised that climate action is not limited to the different sectors and communities listed here but that these sectors have been identified as having the potential for making a key impact in assisting with the borough's aims for carbon reduction.

Schools

52 schools across Brent are already registered as eco-schools. We will encourage all of our schools to embed a 'whole school' approach on environmental sustainability.

Businesses

Both large and small businesses in Brent can also contribute by ensuring that commercial premises are energy efficient, encouraging employees to travel sustainably to and from work and that associated goods, products, materials services are utilised in the most sustainable fashion – minimising waste and consumption wherever necessary.

Voluntary and community Sector (VCS)

Brent has just under 900 different voluntary and community sector organisations which should all be encouraged and supported wherever possible to contribute to this agenda. We have a host of different environmental groups in the borough which are already active in seeking to improve environmental sustainability in local areas, either in active collaboration with the Council or run locally.

Housing

Liaison with Housing Associations, landlords, homeowners etc will be a key mechanism of sharing ideas, expertise, knowledge and establishing the optimum ways of working together to make as many homes as possible in the borough more energy efficient and climate resilient.



3. Brent Carbon Offset Fund

The Council is keen to work together with and support organisations or individuals in Brent who have ideas for carbon reduction initiatives in their local area. This will be supported by the development and launch of the Council's Carbon Offset Fund.

Since 1 October 2016, under the London Plan any development that fails to achieve on-site zero carbon must make cash in lieu contributions to a Carbon Offset Fund within the borough that they are operating. These contributions are used to fund local carbon reduction projects, thereby offsetting the development's carbon emissions shortfall.

To date, Brent has collected just over **£500,000** in carbon offset contributions and will be launching its new offset fund in alignment with the adoption and launch of this strategy. The policy and criteria for



allocation will be finalised and allocated accordingly in parallel to this prior to applications being opened to communities.

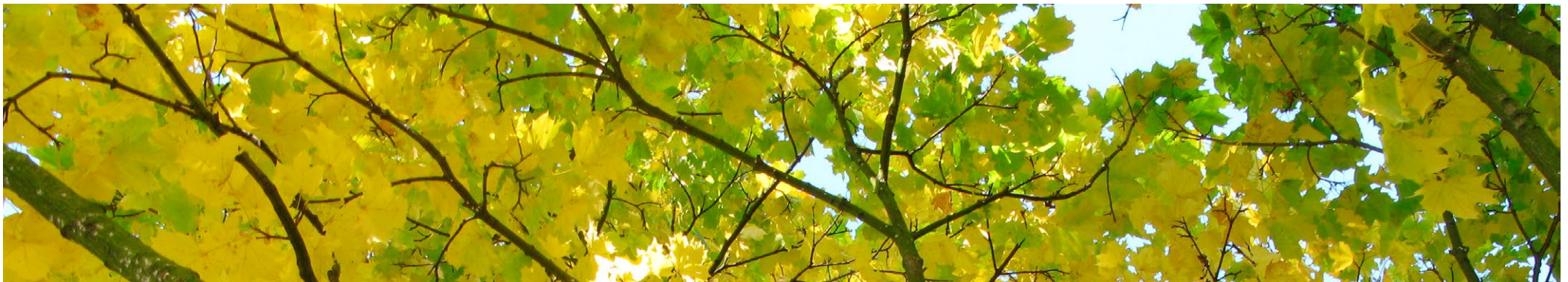
Given that the offset fund is explicitly ringfenced for carbon reduction activity, it is extremely important that it is utilised carefully and for maximum benefit. As well as achieving reductions in carbon emissions, carbon offset projects should demonstrate cost effectiveness over the project's lifetime, and wider benefits such as improvements to air quality, reductions in fuel poverty and energy bills, and job creation or upskilling.

Alongside the development and launch of this strategy, we will launch our Carbon Offset Fund and encourage applications according to the criteria set from different community sectors across Brent, to support local areas in actively supporting and contributing to tackling the climate emergency.

This is a climate emergency! What can I do to help?

A few examples...

- Join the Brent Environmental Network by emailing climateemergency@brent.gov.uk 
- Join a local environmental group – [view our directory](#) 
- Consider your local area's potential for carbon reduction projects





Draft First Year Delivery Plan 2021-2022



Draft First Year Delivery Plan 2021-2022

Due to the long-term nature of the Climate Emergency Strategy, and the current financial climate following the COVID-19 pandemic, the document it does not contain a detailed action plan for the next ten years.

It seeks to set the overall long-term objective for each of the themes, working within the overarching objective of the borough doing all within its gift to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030. Having yearly action plans provides a more targeted set of actions that will be assessed year-on-year for financial feasibility and likelihood of delivery. These actions will not be in isolation, but will contribute to the key themes identified within this strategy and its vision for the long term future of the borough.

It is important to also note that this delivery plan reflects the priority actions that the Council has assessed that it is currently able to commit to. It is not necessarily limited to these actions should further external funding or other opportunities become available during the course of the 2021-2022 financial year. A pipeline of future projects will also begin to be developed in order to inform the content of future delivery plans.



Theme 1 – Consumption, Resources and Waste

Action	Ref	Departmental Lead	Financial Implications
We will improve waste collection and recycling infrastructure, in particular through offering free internal food caddies to all residents in the borough living in flats (<i>blocks of over 8 people with communal bins</i>), and through textile and electronic goods reuse and recycling initiatives.	R&E05	Regeneration and Environment	Funded by the West London West Authority
We will develop and implement a plan for greater recycling opportunities in all primary and secondary schools across our borough.	CYP03	Children and Young People/ Regeneration and Environment	Financial implications will be assessed as recycling plans are developed, however it is expected that any additional costs will be funded directly by schools
We will create apprenticeship and training pathways into the green circular economy (such as construction skills for retrofitting homes) through working in partnership with the United Colleges Group.	R&E08	Regeneration and Environment	No material financial implications. Cost can be contained within existing budgets in R&E
We will create the conditions for zero/low carbon technology and the circular economy by utilising the OPDC Local Plan to encourage intensification of industrial floor space including start-up and move-on space, with the ability to cluster near to the Research and Development hub of Imperial at White City.	R&E09	Regeneration and Environment	No material financial implications. Cost can be contained within existing budgets in R&E
We will work with West London Alliance boroughs to develop proposals to stimulate the sub-regional green economy and to encourage inward investment.	R&E10	Regeneration and Environment	No material financial implications. Cost can be contained within existing budgets in R&E
We will develop and implement a sustainable procurement policy that requires sustainable practices to be considered throughout our procurement and contract management procedures.	CDS01	Customer and Digital Services	No significant financial implications are expected from the policy itself. Each new contract or contract renewal will be assessed for financial implications as appropriate.

Theme 2 – Transport

Action	Ref	Departmental Lead	Financial Implications
We will continue to deliver active travel measures including our Healthy Neighbourhoods (low traffic neighbourhoods) and school streets schemes, subject to available funding.	R&E01	Regeneration & Environment	Transport Delivery Plan whole plan cost £2.3m. Utilise TfL Local Implementation Plan funding to continue to deliver schemes that support active travel/healthy streets. Funding is secured from TfL for Low Traffic Neighbourhoods
We will continuing our Electric Vehicle charge point programme, and deliver: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 165 new lamp column charge points • 100-in kerb charge points (trial) • 66 Source London charge points. 	R&E02	Regeneration and Environment	Expected to cost £200,000 and is funded from London Councils/OLEV
We will deliver 47 bike hangars (282 spaces), plus 60 more cycle stand parking points, positioned near transport hubs, cycle routes and schools.	R&E03	Regeneration and Environment	Expected to cost £200,000 and is funded from TfL/s106
We will purchase two cargo bikes for council use, and engage with businesses to promote the benefits to sustainability of use of cargo bikes in day-to-day operations.	R&E04	Regeneration and Environment	Expected to cost £6,000 and is funded from TfL/other sources
We will work with schools to develop sustainable travel plans for all primary and secondary schools across our borough.	CYP02	Children and Young People/ Regeneration and Environment	No major financial implications expected other than engagement and communication support with schools and parents, which can be funded within existing budgets

Theme 3 – Homes and Buildings

Action	Ref	Departmental Lead	Financial Implications
We will develop a plan for the council to achieve net zero carbon emissions from the council's own estate and operations by 2030.	R&E13	Chief Executive's	This plan is likely to have significant revenue and capital financial implications. These will be assessed as the plan and recommendations are developed.
We will deliver the first year of the tower block works programme, which will include retrofitting work to improve the energy efficiency of properties within at least three council tower blocks – beginning work to our target of an average of EPC B in our housing stock by 2030.	CWB01	Community Wellbeing	The programme of work has been factored into the existing housing capital programme.
We will commission a detailed assessment of our own housing to identify the energy efficiency measures required and the potential costs for housing types, with consideration across all housing tenures.	CWB02	Community Wellbeing	The assessment is estimated to cost £50k and can be contained within the overall housing budget.
We will undertake a number of retrofit pilots to improve the energy efficiency of a number of specific void properties in the council's own stock.	CWB03	Community Wellbeing	This project is estimated to cost £65k and can be contained within the overall housing budget.

Theme 4 – Nature and Green Space

Action	Ref	Departmental Lead	Financial Implications
We will seek to expand our tree planting programme in the borough, targeting planting at areas of deprivation, poor air quality and canopy cover.	R&E07	Regeneration and Environment	Currently anticipated that NCIL will fund the upfront costs of planting trees and maintenance for the first three years.
We will develop a Green Infrastructure Vision for Brent for 2030.	R&E06	Regeneration and Environment	Initial development of vision will be contained within R&E budgets and the financial implications of further actions will be assessed on an ongoing basis.
We will develop a Climate Resilience Plan for the borough.	R&E12	Regeneration and Environment	Costs for Year 1 will be contained within existing Council budgets. The financial implications of further actions will be assessed on an ongoing basis.

Theme 5 – Supporting Communities

Action	Ref	Departmental Lead	Financial Implications
We will launch the Brent Climate Offset Fund to incentivise domestic and non-domestic energy efficiency and renewable energy measures.	ACE01	Assistant Chief Executive's	Activities will be funded from the Carbon Offset Fund, a ring fenced budget, funded by developers, to support local initiatives.
We will continue to promote collaborative environmental action across the borough by developing and expanding the Brent Environmental Network.	ACE02	Assistant Chief Executive's	Minor financial implications. Communication resources able to be funded from within existing budgets.
We will launch a communications programme of sustainable home and lifestyle advice and resources to residents, including signposting to existing sources, to help them assess their own carbon impacts and make informed choices.	ACE03	Assistant Chief Executive's	Minor financial implications. Communication resources able to be funded from within existing budgets.
We will engage with school-led approaches on the climate emergency agenda, supporting the establishment of a professional network of climate emergency leaders/champions within schools to share best practice.	CYP01	Children and Young People	No major financial implications expected, other than engagement and communication support, which can be funded within existing budgets.
We will promote Brent's green business base and encourage the 'greening' of Brent businesses, by promoting business advice, incentives that are available and enable local supply chain opportunities, via the Brent for Business Meet the Buyer events, local business associations, and the e-newsletter (with over 7,000 subscribers).	R&E11	Regeneration and Environment	No material financial implications. Cost can be contained within existing budgets in R&E.

Glossary

Active travel

Making journeys in a physically active way, such as walking, cycling, wheeling or scooting.

Air quality

A measure of air pollution levels, which affect human health and the environment.

Bee Corridor

A series of connected wildflower meadows in the borough of Brent, designed to attract bees and other insects.

Biodiversity

The variety of living things in an area, including different plants and animals.

Brent Carbon Offset Fund

A fund paid into by new developments in the borough, to be used for projects which reduce carbon.

Carbon emissions

Carbon dioxide released into the atmosphere from burning fossil fuels like oil, coal and gas.

Carbon neutrality

Reaching a point where the amount of carbon in the atmosphere is no longer increasing.

Climate and ecological emergency

The crisis caused by human activity, which is threatening the environment, health, and livelihoods.

Climate resilience

The ability to anticipate, prepare for and address hazardous impacts related to the climate (e.g. flooding, drought, heatwaves).

Consumption emissions

Carbon emissions created in the making of the goods and products we buy, such as food, clothing, furniture and other products.

District energy networks

A distribution system that takes heat from a central low carbon source and delivers it to a number of local homes and buildings.

Eco Schools

A programme designed to increase children and young people's awareness of environmental issues.

Ecosystem

An area where plants, animals and other organisms, work with weather and landscape to form a bubble of life.

Energy efficiency

Using less energy to perform the same task.

Energy network

Energy networks transport electricity and gas to homes and businesses.

Energy Performance Certificate (EPC)

Required when properties are constructed, sold or let. It provides a rating on the energy performance of the property from A to G.

Greenhouse gases

Any gases that trap heat in the earth's atmosphere and cause global heating.

Low carbon circular economy

Products/materials are kept in use for as long as possible, minimising resource consumption, waste and greenhouse gas emissions.

Net zero carbon

Reaching a point where the amount of carbon in the atmosphere is no longer increasing.

Renewable energy

Energy sources which won't run out, such as from the sun, wind, or sea.

Retrofitting

Altering existing buildings to reduce the amount of energy and carbon emissions they use.

Re-wilding

Restoring wildlife to areas and letting nature take care of itself, with minimal human intervention.

School streets

School street closure schemes – where cars are prevented from going up to the school gates at drop off and pick up times.

Glossary

Surface water drainage

Rainwater run-off from roofs and paved areas into drainage systems.

Sustainable procurement

Organisations find and buy goods and services in a way that takes into account environmental impact.

Sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS)

Systems which use a natural approach to drainage to deal with water and prevent flooding.

Swales/wet meadows

Grass ditches which help to drain water and prevent flooding.

Territorial emissions

Emissions generated within a certain area, including from transport, energy use, and land transport.

Urban heat island effect

The higher temperatures experienced in urban areas compared to the surrounding countryside due to the reduction in vegetation and increased use of human-made materials and heat sources.

Do you need this information in
another language or reading format
such as Braille or large print?

If so, please contact
climateemergency@brent.gov.uk 