



**Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny  
Committee**

10 January 2017

**Report from the Strategic Director for  
Regeneration and Environment**

For Information

**Report for Scrutiny on Brent's High Streets**

**1.0 Summary**

- 1.1 Brent's High Streets are an intrinsic part of its character; adding to its vitality and viability, providing retailing and other services, but also an important civic function role in a community of great diversity in bringing people together. The health of Brent's town centres has historically provided a barometer on the fortunes of their surrounding neighbourhoods. Nevertheless, against a background of changing retail habits in particular, their future is becoming less certain.
- 1.2 Despite significant future population growth in the borough, as a whole there is likely to be too much of the wrong type of retail floorspace within Brent's town centres. This will provide challenges which will require redefining town centre's roles and in some cases recognising and managing their contraction.
- 1.3 The services the Council provides can have a fundamental impact on the performance of these centres. This paper focuses on a range of Council functions that will impact on town centres. It identifies how the Council is addressing such basics as ensuring that their cleanliness is at levels the general public would expect, for example through street cleansing and dealing with waste.
- 1.4 It also identifies how the Council's existing strategies such as the development plan seek to prioritise developer investment within town centres and aim to ensure their continued vitality and viability through maintaining a suitable range of uses. Finally it identifies that although in its early stages, the Council is looking to improve its future strategy for high streets through detailed development and implementation of action and investment plans in nine identified priority high streets, with a view to enhancing the opportunities in the shorter and longer term.
- 1.5 The nine priority town centres are Wembley High Road, Ealing Road, Harlesden, Willesden, Neasden, Church End, Kilburn High Road, Colindale/ The Hyde, and Burnt Oak. It identifies that the significant planned regeneration of Brent provides an opportunity to further enhance the role and relevance of some town centres to the population and the place.

## **2.0 Recommendations**

2.1 The report is for comment.

## **3.0 Detail**

### **Background**

- 3.1 Brent has 17 high streets. The recognition of the important role of town centres and their prioritisation in terms of Council investment has been a significant theme for the Council in the past as well as guiding current actions. For example ensuring town centres are cleansed effectively is a considerable part of providing a positive experience of a town centre that works towards ensuring it is successful. The Council pays a significant amount of attention to maintaining high standards, principally through the contract that it has with Veolia.
- 3.2 Changes in retailing in particular have proven to be challenging for town centres. The consensus and evidence suggest that the demand and need for retail space will reduce in the future. This is primarily due to changes in retail expenditure patterns related to the internet and home deliveries. There will also be a gravitation of the consolidated floorspace of the major retailers to fewer, more successful centres. In Brent's case this is a concern due to the larger competing centres close by that are higher up in the London retailing hierarchy. This includes Westfield and Brent Cross, both of which have started or are about to embark on planned expansions. In addition in the medium to longer term the Old Oak High Street will be a new centre probably of main or even eventually metropolitan status that will further compete for space.
- 3.3 Brent's retail rents on average are at the lower end of those in London, which indicates too much supply. It is also a disincentive for retail investors in existing centres. Significant investment is only likely to occur in scenarios where it is part of a wider place making package ultimately adding value to and being subsidised by other uses, such has occurred with the London Designer Outlet.
- 3.4 The majority of Brent's centres serve local needs, rather than drawing people in from wider afield. There has already been a diversification away from pure retailing as such with service functions (i.e. professional and financial services, restaurants/cafes, drinking establishments and takeaways) making up a significant proportion of frontages in all but the primary areas of the main centres. Notwithstanding this, currently in terms of vacancy levels Brent's centres appeared to be fairing not so badly and are well under half the national average. This is probably due to low rents and business models with a higher than average bias towards single shop owners/small scale businesses. Nevertheless, many of the proprietor retailers appear to be non-sustainable in the longer term; working very long hours to maintain subsistence income levels. To some extent this may be overcome by subsequent migrant populations following a similar model, but ultimately without intervention and change of focus of centres this points to much lower levels of retail space demand in the future.
- 3.5 The challenges faced and the importance of high streets as a component of Brent's 'sense of place' mean that the Council needs to be aware of and address town centres so that they add to, rather than potentially detract from the Brent experience.

### **The Cleanliness of High Streets**

- 3.6 The council requires its environmental services to actively support the economic and social regeneration goals of our town centres. In particular, the council's Public Realm Contract with Veolia pays particular attention to environmental standards in these areas. It is understood

that by concentrating on the cleanliness of town centres, high streets and shopping parades, this will also encourage businesses to take pride in their immediate environment.

- 3.7 The vision for the Public Realm Contract is to:
- a) improve the way Brent “looks and feels” to visitors, businesses and residents;
  - b) promote a greater sense of civic pride and a stronger local identity.
- 3.8 The Aims are to:
- a) make Brent a cleaner and tidier place;
  - b) make people feel better about their surroundings;
  - c) improve their quality of life;
  - d) make a positive impact on social, environmental and economic sustainability
- 3.9 This has been enhanced by the introduction of council-delivered commercial waste collections, timed waste controls and through the introduction of litter enforcement patrols.
- 3.10 All of this is intended to create an improved ‘street scene’, which is likely to encourage visitors and shoppers to frequent these town centre areas. The Council’s contractors, Veolia and Kingdom also engage directly with local traders to further promote cleanliness, civic pride and responsible waste management.

### **The Public Realm Contract – Cleansing**

- 3.11 Veolia have committed to providing an excellent cleansing service. The current contract provides a move away from a contract that specifies how often the streets are cleaned to a requirement that Brent’s town centres are kept clean, no matter how often the streets need cleaning. The graded standards are as defined in the original Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse issued under section 89(7) of the Environmental Protection Act 1990. These four grades also correspond to the scales used by local authorities for recording levels of cleanliness.

- Grade A: No litter or refuse
- Grade B: Predominately free of litter and refuse apart from some small items
- Grade C: Widespread distribution of litter and/or refuse with minor accumulations
- Grade D: Heavily affected by litter and/or refuse with significant accumulations

- 3.12 Veolia are required to ensure that their operation achieves a Grade "A" Standard after cleansing. It is recognised that a grade A cannot be maintained at all times, and the presence of a few small items of litter and refuse, not yet accumulating, are regarded by the public as acceptable for short periods of time. It is expected that Veolia should, through monitoring and the appropriate use of their resources, keep these areas clear of litter and refuse so that they do not fall below a grade B and are cleansed to an A on a regular basis. If the standard is reported to fall below the grade of cleansing required then Veolia will return and restore the area to Grade A within time limits set out in the contract. They will be measured purely on the level of cleanliness their operations are able to bring about. Veolia have committed to delivering against very challenging annual targets and to improving these targets year on year. Current cleanliness targets, and the latest scores being achieved for zone 1 (town centre) areas are as follows:

	Percentage of streets with unacceptable levels of:		
	Litter	Detritus	Graffiti
2016/17 Contract Target	8%	9%	5%
Town centre Scores	6%	6%	4%

- 3.13 Veolia's cleansing service is designed around 7 villages and these give a focus particularly at weekends and evenings in town centre areas. Operations commence with an 'early shift' (0530 hours – 1430 hours for manual sweeping; 0500 hours - 1400 for mechanical sweeping). These ensure the agreed standards of cleanliness are achieved in the morning. Once these standards have been achieved it is more straightforward to maintain them to Grade A standard. Elsewhere, a lower resource is usually applied in the late shift period (1400 hours – 2200 hours). However, town centres are the exception. Here, the resource level is the same in the mornings and evenings.
- 3.14 The weekend service is more limited, operating both in the morning and the afternoon, but only until 2pm and only concentrating on litter bin emptying and bag removal.
- 3.15 Cleansing operations in town centres include an important mix of manual sweeping, mechanical sweeping and mechanical washing. Zone A, our main retail and commercial areas see a constant manual sweeping presence from 6am to 10pm. There is daily mechanical channel sweeping and daily mechanical pavement sweeping. There is mechanical washing every four weeks. Most street cleansing waste is bagged and held in lockable on-street containers prior to pick up, so it's no longer visible to the public.
- 3.16 Fly tips are cleared promptly. That is a key requirement. Veolia have committed their operatives to becoming "the eyes and the ears" of the council, trained to identify, report, and manage all day-to-day fly-tips using mobile devices. The initial role on all enforcement is with Veolia. Enforcement investigations will be managed as far as possible by the Veolia supervisors and managers who will ensure photographic evidence and pocket notebook records are taken to secure evidence. Once a case is correctly and sufficiently built, Veolia will work with Brent's enforcement team to bring final prosecution.

### **Timed Waste Collections**

- 3.17 In common with other London authorities, Brent has now introduced specific time banded waste collection controls in all our town centres. Bags and bins left out on the pavement for long periods of time contribute to littering, cause obstructions, stain pavements and make streets unattractive, especially during busy times. Timed collections eliminate these problems and keep the streets clean and tidy for people shopping, working, visiting and living near town centres.
- 3.18 The time bands work by setting very specific time periods, which are usually at the start and end of the day, stipulating when and where bagged waste and recycling can be set out on the street by residents and businesses. Waste cannot be left out at any other time. To make this happen, the council engaged with local business and residents to identify time bands that are both operationally viable and meet the needs of the majority of the local businesses in each area. Once the time bands were agreed and their operational viability confirmed, the council implemented a communications and engagement programme to ensure that all our business customers and residents were aware of the new controls and understood how they operated. Any contraventions can be enforced against.
- 3.19 The introduction of time-banding took place over an 18-month period, and was concluded in September this year. The borough now has a total of 20 timed collection areas across its main town centres. These have, in the main, proved extremely successful, but there are still pockets of non-compliance. Now that the roll-out has concluded, Officers are currently in the process of revisiting all time-banding zones, to assess compliance, and to re-educate and enforce against non-compliance where necessary.

## **Commercial Waste Collections**

- 3.20 All businesses are legally obliged to manage their waste and recycling responsibly. They are not meant to leave it out on the street to be picked up by street cleaners or as part of the domestic waste services provided to residents. Historically, a greater proportion of the waste left out on Brent's high streets was left by businesses who weren't meeting their obligations. To help these businesses and to improve the town centre 'street scene', the council now offers a commercial waste service at reasonable rates. Businesses are able to buy a bagged service or a container service for both residual waste and recycling. Through Veolia, Brent currently provides commercial waste collections to over 450 businesses in the borough. This number has grown by nearly 90% over the past 12 months, and the customer base continues to increase month on month.
- 3.21 This all fits with the introduction of time banded collections of waste in town centres. The council now has better control of business waste in town centres - we collect more of it, we generate an income from it, we can monitor it at close quarters, we can quickly identify contraventions and we can be clear about when and where the waste should be left for collection. All of this helps keep town centres tidy.

## **Litter Patrols**

- 3.22 The council is currently undertaking a 12 month trial with Kingdom Security to establish the effectiveness of uniformed litter patrols. This initiative aims to build on existing enforcement arrangements by providing additional capacity to undertake the issuing of FPNs to achieve zero tolerance on littering, principally in town centres and other high footfall areas. As well as covering a range of waste and litter issues, this operating model also addresses particular problems with cigarette litter and paan spitting in town centres. The operating model is 'zero cost enforcement' that pays for itself. It can also support Brent's waste enforcement and ASB teams, carrying out enforcement under the Environmental Protection Act in the public realm (including parks) in relation to:
- a) Spitting
  - b) Littering
  - c) Fly-tipping
  - d) Dog fouling
  - e) Graffiti
- 3.23 Kingdom deploy enforcement officers to patrol hot spot areas and to issue FPNs to anyone found guilty of committing an environmental crime. Since the pilot commenced in mid June 2016, Kingdom have issued over 2,700 Fixed Penalty Notices for littering across Brent's town centres. They also provide support to our waste enforcement team by investigating dumped rubbish for evidence and by helping monitor timed collection compliance.

## **Town Centre Development Strategy**

- 3.24 Recognition of the need to co-ordinate the functions of the Council to support better town centres has been set out previously. A Town Centre Regeneration Task group formed of councillors issued a report in 2008 that set out a number of actions for the Council to follow up. Many subsequently appear to have been taken forward initially, but perhaps not sustained. The prioritisation of town centres is currently recognised in a number of Council documents; it runs as a 'golden thread' through the Development Plan (Core Strategy, Site Specific Allocations, Wembley Area Action Plan and Development Management Policies) and the Council's Regeneration Strategy.

- 3.25 The Core Strategy for example Objective 3 is to 'Enhance the vitality and viability of town centres' and identifies them as a priority location for development of town centres uses (retailing, leisure uses and office) and new homes. This is reiterated through the 5 priority growth areas and CP16 'Town Centres and the Sequential Approach to Development'. This is followed through in the Site Specific Allocations, e.g. Site 9 Harlesden Plaza, or for Wembley, the Wembley Area Action Plan (WAAP).
- 3.26 The WAAP identifies the ambition to enhance Wembley's Town Centre through Policy WEM24 New Retail Development, the provision of 30,000 sq.m. of retail/leisure in addition to the London Designer Outlet and other sites, with a longer term aim to raise its categorisation to Metropolitan Town Centre in the London town centre hierarchy. The Development Management Policies Plan seeks to protect and enhance town centres by protecting retail uses in DMP2 'Supporting Strong Centres' and restricting the spread of lower value uses such as betting shops and pawnbrokers (Policy DMP3 Betting Shops, Adult Gaming Centres And Pawnbrokers'). In addition existing and forthcoming Supplementary Planning Documents provide guidance on shopfront design, forecourt trading and wider design guidance to improve the character and appearance of centres.
- 3.27 Other teams such as transportation through the investment plan associated with the Transport Strategy have a strong town centre emphasis. This is because town centres are likely to be areas where people and movement corridors focus. Investment seeks to for example reduce accidents, improve public transport accessibility and reliability and improve the public realm to enhance the pedestrian experience.
- 3.28 Specifically related to town centres there are two officers within the Employment and Enterprise team This team has been successful in attracting financial support from the GLA's High Street Fund and the New Homes Bonus Top Slice Funds. These funds will be targeted to provide demand-led business support, shop front and building improvements, reactivating empty shops, holding celebratory events Wembley Park Drive, Wembley Triangle, Wembley Central and Ealing Road as well as delivering a pilot digital test study in Wembley High Road.
- 3.29 Undoubtedly the activities of the High Street and Town Centre officers on their own are only likely to be a part of solution for improving the prospects for town centres. As recognised by this report in relation to the Development Plan, transportation, street cleansing and waste management and the earlier Town Centre Regeneration Task Group there are other Council teams/functions that do and can in the future impact on the success of town centres. The Council has been through significant change in terms of its internal structures and team responsibilities over the last few years. Town centres, their explicit prioritisation and co-ordination of Council activities have most likely been both positively and negatively affected by these changes. Reorganisation is likely to have encouraged reductions in 'silo' working improving co-ordination of services. Nevertheless, specific champions within the Council related to town centres through the deletion of town centre manager posts associated with the Wembley, Willesden and Harlesden might well have adversely impacted on some of these centres.
- 3.30 As identified the actions of teams may currently either explicitly or implicitly prioritise town centres. Nevertheless, it is recognised that as part of the Brent 2020 vision there is a greater need for the Council to co-ordinate its activities and those of its partners to deliver change. Town centres are part of this priority. This will improve efficiency of working with the resources available and provide for the prospect of greater success in moving the town centre agenda forward. This is seen as being an integral part of adapting to defining Brent's character to achieve its wider economic growth and regeneration ambitions. This will in turn support meeting the needs of a significant projected increase in population. It also can assist in seeking to safeguard Council's financial position in light of funding changes and the move towards business rate devolution.

- 3.31 The Council is seeking to take forward a new town centre development strategy. Work will progress on this swiftly, but it is still very much in its formative stages. A report was presented to the Council's Corporate Management Team on 17<sup>th</sup> November 2016 and due to be presented to the Policy Coordination Group in the new year.
- 3.32 The overall aim of the strategy despite the challenges faced by town centres is to not only ensure that they survive but wherever possible can thrive. This will be through diversification of their core purpose for businesses, residents and visitors to ensure that they remain relevant to population needs. Retail will continue to have significant importance to the use and success of the centres. For enhanced success however, in addition they must also respond to the leisure and cultural needs of local residents and/or visitors, as well as helping to meet population growth pressures for both housing and commercial space that in turn can create local jobs.
- 3.33 A new definition is proposed within the Corporate Management Team report to help frame how Brent should address and steer future development to its high streets. The definition effectively addresses the borough's priorities within its socio-economic context. Importance is placed upon creating a strong retail offer and access to consumer services, promoting economic growth, ensuring priority high streets are attractive and accessible with a diverse range of community uses (leisure and cultural) and lastly accommodating housing needs and growth.
- 3.34 The strategy identifies priority town centres/high streets so ensure a focused approach to resources and co-ordination of activities to ensure greater likelihood of success. This will be in those centres that are considered to provide opportunity, but in some cases due to the scale of existing issues that exists, e.g. anti-social behaviour or poor public realm. These priority centres are: Wembley High Road, Ealing Road, Harlesden, Willesden, Neasden, Church End, Kilburn High Road, Colindale/ The Hyde, and Burnt Oak.
- 3.35 The strategy looks to an improved approach to town centre management in Brent's town centre/high streets to deal with underlying concerns regarding the quality of the environment (clean, safe and green), plus supporting events/themes that can attract people to the centres. Six of the priority centres have been identified as recipients of additional town centre management resource, responding to levels of need identified (such as street-scene and anti-social behaviour), including Wembley High Road, Ealing Rd, Harlesden, Willesden, Neasden and Church End. To support the Council's activities in these areas and provide champions within the organisation to co-ordinate Council activity three Town Centre Manager posts are proposed.
- 3.36 The Strategy will seek a prioritised capital investment plans that will enable the diversification of the centre's core purpose. These two strands will not only be in association with the Council's activities but also those of others who impact on the prospects of the centres. This includes the businesses and landlords/property owners, property investors/developers, neighbourhood forums/community groups and other public bodies. An example for Wembley High Road in its early stages shows the type of investment plan proposed is shown in Appendix 1.
- 3.37 These plans will have clear implications for planning and development decisions relating to the infrastructure and property in town centres. Such plans are to be supported by for instance:
- a) prioritisation of Community Infrastructure Levy to support town centre development.

- b) using the council's ability to invest its own capital finance, either to unlock development where there is market failure, or to invest in assets that could generate capital gain or revenue income.
- c) bidding for external investment, led by the strategic investment plans. It seems clear that the Greater London Authority (GLA) under the leadership of the new Mayor of London will invest in capital initiatives to support economic and housing growth in outer-London, however, the details of upcoming funds are not yet known
- d) taking forward where it is possible mechanisms such as Business Improvement Districts (BIDs). The viability of this would need to be tested and limited to only the more significant centres. This is due to the relatively small scale of Brent's centres and the floorspace composition of units (preponderance of units too small to contribute business rate levy), which might ultimately limit funds that could be raised and therefore the worthwhileness of the process. In light of this, consideration is focused on the largest of the prioritised town centres with the greatest chance of this being a viable option. This will include Wembley High Road, Ealing Road, Harlesden, Willesden and Kilburn. If unviable alternative forms of business partnership will be considered.

3.38 The projected population growth of Brent will require both additional homes to live in and jobs. The town centres in terms of national and London Plan policy, with their usually high levels of public transport accessibility levels (PTAL) and access to services, in theory provide some of the best places in which to concentrate homes and jobs. This will sustain some existing facilities and also require additional social infrastructure which can either be accommodated in existing premises or add new ground floor uses to enhance the role of centres.

3.39 Whilst this process has commenced in Wembley and to a lesser degree in other centres, the relatively low PTAL levels in other suburban parts of Brent, together with an existing low density context point to an opportunity for a greater concentration in the future of such development in town centres than might previously have been the case. The progression of the Council's revised planning strategy through the planning Local Plan review will assist in directing the development to these locations.

### **Conclusion**

3.40 The Council undoubtedly has a significant role to play in the development and enhancement of town centres in Brent. It has recognised this role in the past through explicit work which has sought to join up the Council's approach to some area. More recently it has recognised the need to reinvigorate the priority it places on high streets and co-ordinating its functions to bring about positive change in the short and longer terms. The reinvigorated approach is still at an early stage, but there is a clear Council commitment to progress with its implementation.

### **4.0 Financial Implications**

4.1 This report is primarily for information and comment by Scrutiny and as such there are no specific financial implications arising. In the future, to take forward the Town Centre priority work stream it will involve decision making by the Council both on revenue and capital spending. This will be subject to the usual internal processes associated with such decision making to ensure value for money.

### **5.0 Legal Implications**

5.1 None specifically from this report. Taking forward the Town Centre priority work stream is likely to involve both statutory and non-statutory processes. This will be subject to the usual internal processes associated with such decision making before actions proceed. Where actions involve statutory processes, e.g. updating the Development Plan in relation to town centres, the necessary primary and secondary legislation will be adhered to.

## **6.0 Diversity Implications**

6.1 The Equality Act 2010 introduced a new public sector equality duty under section 149. It covers the following nine protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. The Council must, in exercising its functions, have “due regard” to the need to:

1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
2. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
3. Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

6.2 Taking forward the Town Centre priority work stream is likely to include many strands of work. Where necessary these will be subject to Equalities Analysis Assessment. At a strategic level improvements to town centres are more likely to be positive for the elderly and the young, the disabled, women and those from an ethnic background who are more likely to be reliant on walking, cycling or public transport and thus more dependent to a range of facilities which have access to these forms of movement.

## **7.0 Staffing/Accommodation Implications (if appropriate)**

7.1 None specifically related to this report.

### **Background Papers**

[Town Centre Regeneration in Brent – Town Centre Regeneration Task Group Report 2008](#)

[Brent Core Strategy 2010](#)

[Brent Site Specific Allocations DPD 2011](#)

[Wembley Area Action Plan 2015](#)

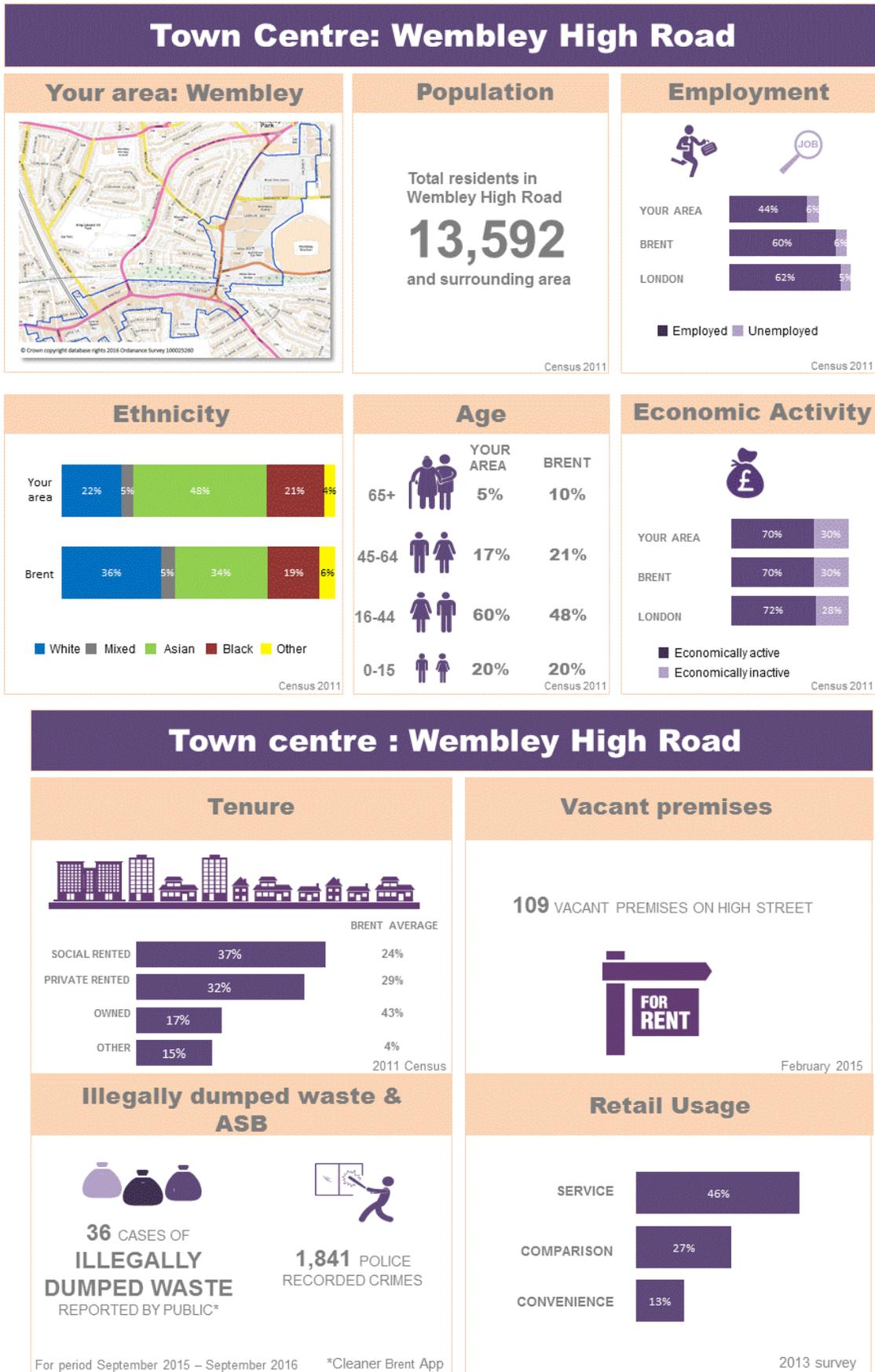
[Brent Development Management Policies Plan 2016](#)

### **Contact Officers**

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# Appendix 1; Example of early development of a potential Town Centre Investment Plan

## Town Centres Investment and Action Planning – Wembley High Road





Secondary school located in a central urban location



Redevelopment by Signa Homes

Secondary school located in a central urban location



Brent Civic Centre with ground floor retail



**Wembley High Road**



Wilko hardware store



Elizabeth House apartments with gym on ground floor

Convenience store with York House in the background



London Designer Outlet - shopping mall

## Wembley High Road

Wembley is the largest centre in Brent and is defined as one of Brent's two major centres (alongside Kilburn) as per the London Plan 2011. It currently sits within the largest growth area and one of the largest regeneration programmes in the UK.

The wider Wembley regeneration area has the capacity to accommodate at least half of the planned residential and employment growth and thus is strategically important to meeting the challenges of regeneration of Brent as a whole. Through its regeneration strategy, the council is seeking to attract further investment to Wembley to assist with meeting demands for new homes and for business to help improve income and employment levels of local residents.

The Wembley Area Action Plan (AAP) sets the strategy for growth and regeneration in Wembley, including the creation of an additional 30,000sqm of retail floor space, 11,500 new homes and 10,000 new jobs. The AAP extended the Wembley Town Centre boundary northwards to adjoin Wembley Park Centre, and established the principle of a strategic route with active frontage connecting both centres via White Horse Bridge and Olympic Way.

### **Future vision**

The long term ambition for Wembley High Road is to capture the investment momentum occurring in Wembley Park and to ensure that such momentum is visible within its adjacent neighbourhoods, through the delivery of homes; growth of the business base; supporting development with infrastructure and public realm; and placemaking.

There is an opportunity to connect momentum from Wembley Park with the high road through intensification measures that will diversify or bring back into use a mixed offer as well measures to improve public realm for pedestrian and cycle access. Investment is also required to improve the quality of the end of Wembley High Road that connects to Ealing Road, which is primarily low value uses at present, such as betting shops and fast food outlets. This end should retain a retail use or diversified to cultural or consumer uses to create a natural flow to Ealing Road, rather than replacement housing.

Due to the scale and nature of development which has occurred since the adoption of the AAP, there is an opportunity through the London Plan review for Wembley High Road and Wembley Park Drive to be promoted as one 'metropolitan centre'. This is being explored through the latest GLA town centre health checks. Designation would raise the status of Wembley High Road in the London Plan retail hierarchy, to be in a par with these centres. Wembley is already recognised in the London Plan as a Strategic Cultural Area, designation as a metropolitan centre will recognise its strategic role for other uses including employment and retail. The status can assist in attracting investment, including from higher order retailers.

The Outer London Commission suggests that in broad terms the impact of internet and multi-channel shopping could have a positive effect on attractive, mostly larger centres (most Metropolitan and some Major centres), where the projected, albeit more limited, quantum of growth in comparison goods floorspace is likely to be concentrated. Informed by this the London Plan indicates the likely growth categories of London's centres, with higher order centres identified for higher growth.

Wembley Park Drive and Wembley High Road already have adjoining boundaries, and have a symbiotic relationship. Designation as one centre allows consideration as a whole.

## **Town Centre Performance**

Wembley is currently the largest centre in Brent and extends from Harrow Road west along the high road, past the junction that meets Ealing Road until the corner of Napier Road. It is connected to the wider London by tube, overground and bus. London Midland also runs a service between Wembley and Watford Junction. The town centre is comprised of a total of 266 units, 2157m of frontage and is home to around 700 businesses employing over 14,000 people. This makes up around a third of all employment in the Central sub-area (this describes the mixed area with residential and commercial uses and significant development around Wembley, and industrial areas in Staples Corner and Dollis Hill).

In terms of the retail composition, as per Brent's Health Check survey report 2013 - Wembley High Road is heavily weighted with a high proportion of service outlets (examples include restaurant and cafes, fast food takeaways, banks and betting shops), making up 46% of the retail composition in the area. There is a notable high concentration of takeaways, restaurants and cafes in the local high road, which can be partly explained by the centre's close proximity to Wembley's main visitor attractions including the Wembley Stadium and the SSE Arena. On the down side, Wembley also has a significantly high concentration of betting shops (11) and pawnbrokers (7), which are clustered in the southern part of the high road before the high road meets the junction of Ealing Road.

In terms of comparison versus convenience – the high road has a higher proportion of comparison retail (27%) (Including clothes shops, jewellery, variety stores) compared to convenience (defined as retailers that sell every day convenience items) (13%), which is expected for a centre of its size. The high level comparison retail offer comprises of a combination of both multiples and independents. Multiples tend to be concentrated in the primary frontage area around Wembley Central station.

New residential and mixed use development is contributing to the town centre's revival. St Modwen's Wembley Central has replaced a run down and hard to navigate shopping area with a mixed use development, a public square and attractive national retail chains occupying a large retail space.

## **Vacancy Levels**

Despite overall increases in Brent's vacancy levels, they have fallen along Wembley High Road since 2001 by 4.5% to 7.6% (2013). This shows positive signs of high street revival as the decline along the stretch is not visibly apparent. However, this disguises issues regarding quality of uses along sections of the high street.

Recent research on Rightmove highlights that there is a single advertised opportunity for commercial freehold investment in Wembley Central in the form of a four-storey building (ground floor A1 retail shop (12,000sqft) with lower ground floor basement accommodation (1,350sqft) together with two floors above. The freehold is going for £1,000,000 and demonstrates the attractive nature of the area, given the excellent transport links and the surrounding regeneration.

## Key

0 – 1 year	Short
0 – 3 years	Medium
3 years +	Long

## Funding [To provide sense of scale, but not specifying at this stage whether council or external investment]

Nil	Using existing council resources
£	00s
££	000s
£££	000000s

<b>Key Opportunities: delivering the new Town Centre vision</b>			
	<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Funding</b>
Retail	WR1: Wembley restaurants quality / discount initiative	Medium	££
	WR2: Welcome to Wembley (branding, identity, look and feel)	Short	£
	WR3: Café and night time economy retail	Medium	££
	WR4: Ealing Road	Medium	££
Economy	WE1: Crossrail Lobbying	Long	Nil
	WE2: Enterprise Village	Medium	££
Accessible & Attractive	WA1 - Designation as a Metropolitan Centre (linked with Wembley Park District Centre). Lobbying	Medium	Nil
	WA2: Pedestrianisation of northern part of the High Road (between Park Lane and Wembley Triangle)	Medium	£££
	WA3: Secure frequency of trains to Wembley Stadium	Long	£££
	WA4: Free Wi-Fi everywhere – link into street light replacement	Medium	££
	WA5: Public realm and shop front enhancement (between Park Lane and Ealing Road junction)	Medium	££
	WA6: Re-zone Wembley as Zone 3 through lobbying TfL.	Long	Nil
Community	WC1: Events around key festivals (cultural celebration of diversity)	Medium	£
	WC2: Street Trading and Market Activity	Short	£

Housing	WH1: Housing Zone	Long	££
	WH2: Unlocking vacancy above shops with residential uses	Long	£

<b>Town Centre Management Plan</b>			
<b>Priorities</b>	<b>Areas for Action</b>	<b>Resource</b>	<b>Partnership</b>
Businesses sharing responsibility and accountability for Wembley Major, Wembley Park District issues	Improved business ownership of local issues via Wembley High Road Business Association (WHRBA) and the emerging network of businesses in Wembley Park District	WHRBA established.  £25K New Homes Bonus being used to continue the development of WHRBA to become sustainable.	WHRBA  Regeneration and Environment services
Priority to increase Wembley Park event day usage of the high road	Close working partnership with Wembley Stadium, local traders in Wembley High Road to draw footfall.	Officer time  WHRBA business network identify investment.	WHRBA  Wembley Stadium  Quintain
Look and feel of Wembley Major is often compromised by waste and illegal dumping.	Enforcement carrots, sticks and education to improve compliance whilst understanding business needs.	Officer time from a number of teams would need to be prioritised in a coordinated campaign.	WHRBA  Regeneration and Environment services (licensing, trading standards, environmental health)
Seasonal marketing campaign	Supporting WHRBA in the development of a seasonal marketing programme, which includes seasonal lighting, events, festivals and markets to help attract new audiences in to the high road and other parts of the area.	Officer time	WHRBA
Business rates collection.	Campaign in partnership with WHRBA/ WPD Business network for compliance with rate paying.	Officer time.	Business rates  Regeneration and Environment  WHRBA
Shopfront	Focus on the part of the high	Officer time	WHRBA

improvement and wider business support mechanisms made available	road between Park Lane and Ealing Road junction– programmed shop front improvement works to create a more inviting and appealing entry into the area.  This will be accompanied by a robust business support programme which includes visual merchandising, marketing and promotion as well business plan review, information on how to access finance etc. and incentivising those businesses that remain compliant.		
Landlord Partnership	Working closely with landlords to manage/ help reoccupy empty spaces along the high road	Officer time	Landlords WHRBA
Promoting available parking in the area	Campaign to promote the available parking opportunities to visitors: Curtis Lane car park, St John’s car park, Cecile Road car park	Officer time	WHRBA

### Investment Plan – Current/ planned projects

Project	Project description	Resource (funding source and value)	Objectives met
Central Station Square, Wembley High Road	An existing urban square, the most significant public space on Wembley High Road. Improvement of this space with a new design, potential for creation of a significant town centre urban square in partnership with landowner St Modwen.	Officer time	Community and retail
Trees, Central Station Square, Wembley High Road	Ongoing current Landscape project to plant new trees on Wembley High Road, holding funds for new trees at Wembley Triangle, subject to outcome of studies by Transportation.	Officer time S106 –	Community
Bus Pinch Point, public realm improvements and pedestrian accessibility at junction improvements - improve highway	Feasibility study completed whereby the 4 junctions between Ealing Road junction and South Way Junction have been assessed to see if a pedestrian phase can be included to improve pedestrian accessibility as well as reducing congestion along this corridor.	Bus Pinch Point, Major scheme, S106 CIL	Accessible and Attractive  Community  Economic

safety, Wembley High Road	Initial findings have shown that improvements to the 4 junctions is not good value for money. Therefore a more transformational design is needed. Looking to undertake further design feasibility work to determine if only permitting buses, cyclists and pedestrians to use Wembley High Road between Ealing Road and Wembley Triangle would achieve the objectives for making the area a better place.		
Landscaping project, Wembley Park District	Current potential for landscape improvement has already been delivered with tree planting, some potential to extend this.	Officer time	Accessible and Attractive  Community
Forty Lane collision reduction, Wembley Park Drive	Barn Rise to The Paddocks & Bridge Road/Forty Lane to Wembley Park Station - preliminary design and consultation. Collision reduction Programme (also to address loading/unloading and parking issues in the area).	LIP 2017/18 Programme	Accessible and Attractive
Naturalisation of Wealdstone Brook	Exploring the naturalisation of the Wealdstone Brook through Wembley Park This will interact with college of North West London site Crescent House, and other development sites in North End Road.  Links to Education Quarter proposal under development.	Officer time	Accessible and Attractive
Brent House	Disposal of existing office building for residential redevelopment (erection of 2 buildings of between 8 10 storeys accommodating 248 dwellings and flexible commercial ground floor (use classes A1, A2, A3, A4 and/or B1(a) New public square, landscaped communal gardens, alteration to existing crossover and basement car and cycle parking	Developing Council land/ Property	Economic  Community  Housing
Ark Elvin school site redevelopment	Disposal of existing buildings on site and replacement with replacement building (3 storey 9FE secondary school for 1750 pupils with associated car parking, servicing and circulation space. New pelican crossing planned near	Developing Council land/ Property	Economic  Community  Housing

	junction with Ecclestone Place for January 2018		
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