

Brent Walking Strategy 2017 - 2022

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Brent Borough Plan 2015-2019 outlines the ways in which Brent Council aims to improve life in Brent for its residents. The plan aims to improve services to provide for Better Place, Better Lives and Better Locally for all residents. This Walking Strategy provides a framework for Brent to implement these goals in a transparent way and prioritise funds to schemes which support an increase in walking throughout the borough.
- 1.2 Most journeys start and end with walking. Therefore, it is important that walking is considered a key means of encouraging more sustainable or active modes of travel, whether it is for part or all of a journey. Pavements and footpaths are essential to all as they allow access to local places and create the street environments where daily life is played out. With Brent's growing population, an increase in walking is essential to ensure other transport networks continue to function efficiently, as well as delivering public health improvements for Brent residents.
- 1.3 Air pollution is a substantial environmental and public health issue for Brent and all of Greater London. Poor air quality can have a detrimental impact on quality of life, as well as physical and mental health. In some cases, it can even contribute to a shortening of life. Brent has implemented an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) to tackle this issue. An AQMA is any part of the borough in which it appears that air quality standards or objectives are not being met and this covers most of the borough, including 12 wards in their entirety and significant road corridors. Trips undertaken by walking instead of private vehicles reduces the number of car journeys and therefore lowers emissions of carbon dioxide. Public transport also assists to reduce both air and noise pollution and deliver a wide range of personal health benefits. Together these work to improve air quality and help to lower the causes of climate change. Walking in town centres also supports local businesses and jobs.
- 1.4 As with many other areas of the United Kingdom, Brent has been faced by looming public health challenges. Walking is a key component of Brent's approach to tackling these issues, particularly where they lead to long-term public health improvements and establish active lifestyles for residents.
- 1.5 The Walking Strategy has been developed as part of a suite of policy documents under the Brent Long Term Transport Strategy (LTTS). The Walking Strategy reflects the objectives of the LTTS and complements the Cycle Strategy, Physical Activity Strategy and Air Quality Strategy. These stem from the Brent Borough Plan and Mayor's Transport Strategy (MTS). The actions arising out of the Walking Strategy therefore also reflect those outlined in the LTTS and the MTS.
- 1.6 The careful design of Brent's streets within a wider public realm is essential to creating vibrant, safe and accessible places that encourage walking. To enhance the experience of walking in Brent, the Walking Strategy will work

alongside the Brent Placemaking Guide and best practice industry standards of good urban design.

- 1.7 The Walking Strategy has been developed following public and stakeholder engagement, which took place from August to October 2015. This was used to understand what issues Brent residents felt needed to be addressed to encourage more walking in the borough and suggestions on how they might be implemented. The vision, objectives and actions of the Walking Strategy were developed from this and consulted on between September and December 2016.
- 1.8 Responses to this engagement were monitored to ensure the diverse nature of Brent was represented within the results.
- 1.9 To ensure the Strategy meets its objectives, a number of targets have been developed that will be monitored annually. These will enable Brent Council to measure progress towards achieving the Vision and Objectives set out in Chapter 2.
- 1.10 An action plan has been designed to help achieve the Strategy's targets and will be implemented by a variety of funding means, including the Local Implementation Plan, developer contributions and funding available for specific schemes or programmes.

2 Vision and Objectives

- 2.1 The Vision and objectives set out in this Chapter have been developed following assessment of the results of a public and stakeholder engagement survey carried out between August and October 2015. This survey resulted in a better understanding of what issues are most important to encourage more walking and what the residents of Brent want to see in relation to investment in walking measures.
- 2.2 Comments received from the survey indicate that there is strong support for the provision of more and better walking facilities. Other key issues highlighted include concerns regarding maintenance, environmental considerations and anti-social behaviour. Therefore, our vision for walking in Brent is:

“Make Brent a healthy, active and safe borough where walking is a practical and pleasant option for all.”

- 2.3 Brent Council is committed to achieving this vision through the following objectives:

2.4 **Objective 1: Provide a better environment and improve the experience of walking within the borough, ensuring it is accessible and inclusive for all**

- 2.4.1 Many respondents indicated that a key barrier to walking is a poor walking environment. Brent will build on its existing network and facilities in order to make walking a more attractive and practical option, especially in our town centres, retail parades, parks and key routes from residential areas and stations. Brent is committed to encouraging more walking by improving the walking environment for the community.

2.5 **Objective 2: Promote walking as a healthy and sustainable way to travel as well as to increase personal activity**

- 2.5.1 The public consultation showed there is broad community support for improving walking facilities across the borough, but it is also important that existing infrastructure is utilised. Therefore, given that walking is a healthy and environmentally friendly way of getting around, Brent Council will work with stakeholders across government, the community and the Council to promote walking as a primary means of transport and recreation.

2.6 **Objective 3: Improve the perceived and actual safety and security of pedestrians**

- 2.6.1 Personal safety and anti-social behaviour was raised repeatedly as an issue in the engagement survey, particularly as an un-prompted comment. Brent Council sees this as a significant issue both as a barrier to increasing walking in the borough, and as an unaddressed equality issue. In addition, Brent faces the significant challenge of trying to reduce pedestrian casualties at the same time as the population is growing and the number of pedestrians is increasing. Therefore, improving road safety for pedestrians is a key focus of the Walking Strategy.

3 Objective 1: Provide a better environment for pedestrians and improve the experience of walking within the borough, ensuring it is accessible and inclusive for all

- 3.1 The engagement survey highlighted residents wanted better facilities for walking to become an attractive option for travel and recreation. Poor quality or excessive street furniture such as advertising boards outside businesses, high vehicle speeds on local streets and insufficient lighting and footpaths through parks were identified as specific barriers to walking.
- 3.2 Such issues discourage people from walking in the borough and represent a barrier to equality, given certain people, such as those with disabilities, older people or parents with prams, can be disproportionately affected by poor walking environments including pavement surfaces, street clutter and insufficient crossing facilities.
- 3.3 The survey also shows that Brent residents specifically want improved facilities to public transport stops and stations, in town centres and at shopping destinations, as well as on local streets. Improvements in these locations will also help to support ongoing regeneration, which is a key corporate priority for Brent Council.
- 3.4 A key issue raised in the engagement survey undertaken was the maintenance requirements for pavements, particularly on high streets. In certain circumstances, such as constrained urban town centres, it is not possible to install any additional pedestrian facilities. In these locations, the maximum utility must be obtained from the existing infrastructure, which requires an extensive maintenance regime.
- 3.5 Uneven pavements and footpaths present trip hazards, which can be a safety risk and is a significant equality issue for several groups protected under the Equality Act (2010), including older people, people with disabilities and parents with children. In recent years, due to substantial budget cuts, Brent Council has had to amend the way it identifies and prioritises pavement defects for repair. Currently, 27.0% of pavements in Brent are in need of structural maintenance¹. In 2015/16, Brent resurfaced approximately 6.89km of pavements, representing 0.81% of the total network². Brent is currently engaged in ongoing efforts to reduce the maintenance backlog on resurfacing of roads and pavements, but it is essential this is continued into the future.
- 3.6 In 2015, Brent Council approved a plan to improve street lighting across the borough by replacing existing streetlights with Light Emitting Diode (LED) lights and implement a Central Management System (CMS). This proposal includes all lamp columns on our road network and provides an improved standard of lighting at a reduced operating and maintenance cost. This allows for lighting to be customised to suit individual circumstances and resolve local issues with lighting.

3.7 How we will achieve this

- 3.7.1 We will use a whole street approach to deliver better streets. Utilising Transport for London's (TfL's) healthy street indicators and ensuring the right balance between

¹ National Performance Indicators (BV187)

² Report to Cabinet: 'Highways Capital Scheme Programme 2016-17', Brent Council (2016)

movement and place through TfL's Roads Task Force Street Types³ to deliver a wide range of economic, social, health and environmental benefits.

- 3.7.2 We will design to Living Streets⁴ principles when improving the highway network to better manage space, with particular consideration for younger and older people, and those with disabilities.
- 3.7.3 We will plant more street trees to improve the urban environment. The presence of more street trees will assist in slowing traffic, providing shade on pavements during hot weather and contribute to mitigating air pollution. Street trees also provide a form of separation between pedestrian and vehicular traffic, which ensures pavements are more pleasant for pedestrians. These benefits may help to encourage a greater number of people to walk and should assist in reducing pedestrian casualties on the roads.
- 3.7.4 We will provide additional safe and comfortable off-road footpaths, where possible, particularly in parks, as long as there is strong demand.
- 3.7.5 When designing schemes in high footfall areas, such as high streets, we will undertake street audits to ensure obstructions are not placed on the public pavement and identify areas for improvement on a case-by-case basis. This includes taking action to ensure that shops are not encroaching onto the public footway beyond their license agreements.
- 3.7.6 In areas currently undergoing regeneration or growth, we will secure high quality pedestrian environments from developers, in accordance with Development Management Policies.
- 3.7.7 We will ensure that shopping areas and key pedestrian routes, such as from stations, schools and hospitals offer high quality provision for pedestrians, particularly for people with mobility difficulties.
- 3.7.8 We will reduce pavement parking where it is detrimental to pedestrian safety and convenience. We will employ a range of potential interventions, including but not limited to:
- Formalising parking arrangements in unregulated areas;
 - Improving highway design to protect pedestrian priority on pavements; and
 - Utilising enforcement action.
- 3.7.9 In areas of high pedestrian footfall, such as high streets and stations, we will continue to support the introduction of pedestrian countdown signs at crossings as part of signal replacement schemes to support greater pedestrian safety and accessibility.
- 3.7.10 We will provide improved wayfinding street furniture, such as Legible London signage (an easy-to-use, visual TfL signage system to help people find their way), to support walking, particularly for short distances, on high streets and near major

³ <https://tfl.gov.uk/info-for/boroughs/street-types>

⁴ <https://www.livingstreets.org.uk/>

destinations. This should be complemented by removing obsolete street furniture to reduce clutter on pavements and footpaths.

3.7.11 We will introduce and implement a Lighting Plan for Brent which will provide guidance on how we will light roads, pavements and off-road footpaths and reduce the fear of crime. The Plan will also seek to optimise operational and maintenance costs, and increase the lifespan of our lighting infrastructure.

4 Objective 2: Promote walking as a healthy and sustainable way to travel as well as to increase personal activity

- 4.1 Walking is essential for the health of the business community. A 2012 study for London Councils found that while shoppers who come to London high streets by car may spend more in a single trip, those who walk to the high street will spend more per week or per month, leading to more active streets and higher turnover for shopkeepers⁵.
- 4.2 Lack of physical activity is currently one of the biggest threats to health. Over half of Brent's adult population do not undertake sport or physical activity and a higher percentage of Brent's school children in reception and year 6 were obese when compared to the England average⁶. Active travel is likely to be the easiest and main way many that people can incorporate physical activity into their daily routine. It has been recommended that the minimum physical activity requirement is thirty minutes per day⁷, which can easily be achieved through a fifteen minute walk to and from public transport. The use of public transport has been associated with maintaining a healthy weight and weight loss because of the walking involved getting to and from public transport stops.
- 4.3 Shifting shorter car journeys to other modes such as walking or cycling will also increase physical activity. Walking is a particularly important activity as it is one that most people are likely to do consistently.
- 4.4 Being physically active can help prevent a wide range of illnesses including heart disease, stroke, depression, type 2 diabetes and some cancers.
- 4.5 Brent has released a Physical Activity Strategy⁸ for the borough, which aims to increase physical activity and address the causes of obesity and inactivity. Walking is a key way of increasing this and small behavioural changes, such as walking to or from a station or bus stop, can provide motivation to a more active lifestyle.
- 4.6 Brent will work in partnership with third parties to identify, design and implement improved walking facilities, particularly in high streets and regeneration areas.
- 4.7 How we will achieve this**
- 4.7.1 We will work to increase the number of pupils and school staff walking to school to help it become part of daily travel from a young age.
- 4.7.2 We will work with companies and employer organisations to encourage walking to work, including as part of commuter journeys by public transport.

⁵ 'The relevance of parking in the success of urban centres', a review for London Councils prepared by Tyler, S. *et al.* (2012). Accessed from: <http://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/services/parking-services/parking-and-traffic/parking-information-professionals/review-relevance>

⁶ Brent Council Joint Strategic Needs Assessment: Overview Report 2015/16, <https://www.brent.gov.uk/jsna>

⁷ 'Physical activity guidelines for Adults (19-64 years)', Department for Health (2011)

⁸ <https://www.brent.gov.uk/your-council/about-brent-council/council-structure-and-how-we-work/strategies-and-plans/a-physical-activity-strategy-for-brent-2016-21/>

- 4.7.3 We will work with Public Health and social care professionals to promote regular walking specifically for health improvement, with a focus on those most at risk of developing chronic conditions.
- 4.7.4 We will work with partners and user groups to ensure specific destinations popular with residents and visitors are convenient and attractive to access and explore on foot.
- 4.7.5 We will work to reduce the need to travel by car through land use and development planning; promoting walking journeys.

5 Objective 3: Improve the perceived and actual safety and security of pedestrians

- 5.1 Between 2005 and 2015 the number of pedestrian casualties in Brent has fluctuated. The number of pedestrians receiving fatal injuries in collisions with vehicles has decreased slightly though still remains too high. These trends are being experienced across London⁹ as well as nationally¹⁰.
- 5.2 Ultimately, Brent aims to achieve zero pedestrian fatalities by 2021/22 and a reduction of 30% on the total number of casualties. At the same time, Brent aims to see an increase in pedestrian mode share from 27% of all trips in 2013/14-2015/16 to 30% by 2021/22.
- 5.3 It is widely accepted that as vehicle speed increases, so does the likelihood of a collision and the severity of injury. In order to improve safety for pedestrians and cyclists on local streets, Brent has been introducing local 20mph zones for over ten years. In order to further take advantage of the safety improvements of reducing speed limits, Brent will continue to support introduction of 20mph zones throughout the borough.
- 5.4 Over 25% of respondents to Brent's engagement survey reported that concerns regarding anti-social behaviour and personal safety affected their decisions to walk. The most commonly reported forms of anti-social behaviour were:
- Personal harassment and intimidation
 - Drinking in public
 - Cycling on the pavement
 - Fly-tipping
- 5.5 While cycling on the pavement is unlawful, previous consultations undertaken by Brent in preparation of the Cycle Strategy found that many cyclists cycle on pavements because they do not feel safe on the road. Whilst moving traffic offences such as this can only be enforced by the Metropolitan Police, Brent's role is to make the roads safer for cyclists so they do not feel they must cycle on pavements.
- 5.6 Anti-social behaviour and fly-tipping are key equality issues for Brent. As a community, we continue to combat any form of harassment and intimidation. In addition to the impacts of anti-social behaviour, fly-tipping can impact the ability of all to walk in Brent, particularly older people, young children, parents with children or people with disabilities. Residents are encouraged to report incidences of fly-tipping online, by phone or via the Cleaner Brent app. In the past, Brent Council has utilised Public Spaces Protection Orders to address localised anti-social behaviour issues in public areas, and we will continue to do so in future.

5.7 How we will achieve this

⁹ 'Collisions and casualties on London's roads: Annual report 2015', Transport for London (2016)

¹⁰ 'Reported road casualties in Great Britain: 2015 annual report', Department for Transport (2016)

- 5.7.1 To reduce vehicular speeds and the risks to pedestrians and other road users, Brent will support the wider implementation of 20mph zones. This will be in accordance with current practice of assessment on a site by site basis.
- 5.7.2 We will routinely analyse accident data to identify casualty reduction priorities and implement remedial measures as and when possible.
- 5.7.3 Continuing the Council's existing work, Brent will support the improvement of cycle routes to encourage appropriate cycling behaviour, including the provision of public information on where cycling is permitted. In addition to this, we will also continue to offer cycle training to children and adults in order to encourage safe cycling where it is permitted.
- 5.7.4 Brent Council will raise the issue of harassment and public safety with the Metropolitan Police's Safer Neighbourhoods Team to ensure that they are aware of residents' concerns and are taking appropriate action to address them.
- 5.7.5 We will work with a variety of community stakeholders to implement Brent's Community Safety Strategy in the interests of improving public safety.
- 5.7.6 We will expand the implementation of City Safe Zones across the borough. These are identified places such as shops and community centres that provide a safe haven for anyone who feels in immediate danger. This scheme will help to improve perceptions of public safety on the street.
- 5.7.7 We will, in consultation with residents, businesses, community stakeholders and the Metropolitan Police, investigate the use of Public Space Protection Orders to address specific localised anti-social behaviours which cause public intimidation and discourage residents from walking.
- 5.7.8 We will investigate crime hotspots and implement Safer by Design¹¹ principles, where possible, including potential utilisation of CCTV as appropriate to improve surveillance and security on pavements and footpaths.
- 5.7.9 Continuing the Council's existing work, Brent will continue to support the improvement of cycle routes to encourage appropriate cycling behaviour including, improving the provision of public information on where cycling is permitted.

¹¹ 'Manual for Streets', Department for Transport & Department for Communities and Local Government (2007), and 'Manual for Streets 2', Chartered Institute of Highways and Transportation (2010)

6 Action Plan

This table summarises actions that are designed to achieve the three objectives set out in this Strategy.

OBJECTIVE	ACTION	BY	OUTPUTS
1	We will plant more street trees to improve the urban environment.	2017/18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will plant more street trees than those we remove.
1	We will provide additional off-road footpaths.	2017/18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will identify locations for off-road footpaths to determine their feasibility for further development.
1	We will undertake street audits in high footfall areas such as high streets.	2017/18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will complete an audit of Kingsbury Town Centre and remove obstructions on pavements.
1	We will reduce pavement parking that is detrimental to pedestrian safety and convenience.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will increase enforcement of parking restrictions in response to footway parking complaints.
1	We will secure high quality pedestrian environments from developers.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will undertake pre-planning application discussions to request and secure high quality pedestrian environments. We will ensure passive surveillance of any new footpaths provided as part of new developments using development management policies.
1	We will ensure key pedestrian routes such as from stations, schools and hospitals offer high quality provision for pedestrians, particularly those with mobility difficulties.	2017/18 2018/19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will continue to provide bus stop accessibility improvement works to increase the percentage of bus stops in the borough that are accessible. We will identify high footfall locations most in need of maintenance and prioritise these for improvement using our scanner surveys. We will identify locations where pedestrian countdown signs at crossings will be of greatest benefit.
1	We will provide improved wayfinding street furniture to support walking, particularly for short distances.	2017/18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will identify feasibility work for improved wayfinding street furniture along Walm Lane.
2	We will work with local schools to promote walking as a viable alternative mode of transport.	2017/18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will continue to work with schools to increase the number with active travel plans. We will hold an engine idling campaign to encourage parents/carers to park away from schools and walk with their children the final part of their journey.
2	We will work with companies and employer organisations to encourage walking to work.	2017/18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will support WestTrans to increase the number of workplaces in Brent on the Travel Plan Database by engaging with new developments to promote walking and active travel to work.
2	We will work with public health and social care professionals to promote regular walking specifically	2017/18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will promote the 'My Heart Beats for Brent' campaign to get local people active. We will promote the 'Active 10' campaign from Public Health England to encourage

	for health improvements.		people to undertake a short, brisk walk each day.
2	We will work to reduce the need to travel by car through land use and development planning.	2017/18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will work in accordance with Development Management Policy 12 to ensure that in locations with high levels of public transport (PTAL 4 or above), including those within CPZs, car free developments should be considered.
3	We will reduce vehicular speeds and the risks to pedestrians and other road users.	2017/18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will monitor vehicle speeds and collisions involving pedestrians to identify where new 20mph zones are needed, and implement these.
3	We will support the Cycle Strategy to encourage appropriate cycling behaviour.	2017/18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will offer cycle training to adults and children to build confidence to cycle on the road. We will continue to provide segregated cycle lanes and the Quietway network to discourage cycling on pavements.
3	We will expand the implementation of City Safe Zones across the borough.	2017/18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will set up new City Safe Zones in Wembley and Kingsbury. We will continue to promote the Harlesden City Safe Zone.
3	We will work with community stakeholders and the Metropolitan Police to address specific localised anti-social behaviour.	2017/18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will pilot six Public Space Protection Orders to curb street drinking in recognised hot spots and make a further four if the pilot is successful.

7 Targets

OBJECTIVE	TARGET	PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	ANNUAL TARGET				
			2017 /18	2018 /19	2019 /20	2020 /21	2021 /22
All	Increase the pedestrian mode share to 30% from 27% in 2013/14-2015/16	Mode share of walking trips	28%	28%	29%	29%	30%
1	Plant more trees each year than the number that are removed	Number of street trees planted each year	More trees planted each year than are removed				
1	Reduce to 22% the proportion of Brent's most used pavements in need of substantial maintenance	Percentage of most used pavements in need of substantial maintenance	26%	25%	24%	23%	22%
2	Increase the percentage of schools implementing an active travel plan to 90% by 2021/22	Percentage of schools with an active travel plan	84%	86%	88%	89%	90%
2	Support 40% of schools to achieve gold accredited active travel plans by 2021/22	Percentage of schools with gold accredited active travel plans	36%	37%	38%	39%	40%
3	Eliminate pedestrian fatalities in road traffic collisions	Number of pedestrian fatalities in road traffic collisions	1	1	0	0	0
3	Reduce the number of pedestrians slightly or seriously injured in road traffic collisions to 121	Number of pedestrians receiving slight or serious injury in road traffic collisions	163	152	142	131	121

8 Monitoring and Review

- 8.1 To allow the success of the Brent Walking Strategy to be measured, we will establish a robust monitoring strategy as well as identifying particular schemes or areas that show potential for future investment. It should be noted that measuring levels of walking is difficult as it is hard to consistently determine the start and end point of a walking trip as walking is invariably used to complete part of a longer trip, i.e. walking to a bus stop. It is also costly to collect walking data as it usually requires face to face surveys rather than automatic counters. As such, much of the data used is derived from recent Census releases (2011) and TfL's annual 'Travel in London' reports.
- 8.2 The targets outlined in Chapter 7 will be monitored and conveyed to the lead member through annual reports with a mid-Strategy report being prepared for Cabinet at the mid-point. These reports will set out progress against the targets and identify areas where either further work is needed or a different approach might be required to achieve the targets.
- 8.3 This strategy will be reviewed in its entirety every five years to enable inclusion of new findings and research, and any issues that have become apparent since it was first produced. This will also provide an opportunity to examine the achievability of targets and review them if necessary.