



Questions from Members of the Public

Full Council – 9 July 2018

1. Question from a Brent resident to Cllr Muhammed Butt, Leader of the Council

What is the Cabinet Member for Community Safety doing to combat crime and anti-social behaviour resulting from phone boxes on Harlesden High Streets and its surrounding roads?

Response:

Phone boxes in Harlesden Town Centre and the surrounding roads have been increasingly used for drug use, substance misuse and drug dealing. There has also been a prevalence of on street sex working and advertisement of those services which has been blighting the community.

Historically the Anti-Social Behaviour Team were successful in getting BT to remove phone boxes which were a hub for crime and anti-social behaviour. In April 2017, BT informed the Council they will only consider removal if the requester is willing to consider paying the full costs of the works.

We would like to reassure residents that the Council is working closely with the police to robustly tackle crime and anti-social behaviour in Harlesden Town Centre and the surrounding roads. Some examples of our recent and current and current interventions in Harlesden include:

Recent and Current Intervention

Operation Hope, launched by the Police and various Council Teams from February to April 2018 to target individuals and issues blighting Harlesden Town Centre. Over £60,000 worth of drugs was seized and many drug dealers have been identified, and charged. Criminal Behaviour Order applications currently are being sought through the courts.

Due to the frequency of crime and anti-social behaviour in the ward the Police have extended Operation Hope to continue up until the end of June 2018 and the Council's Community Safety Team started a 14 week summer nights operation on the 14th of this month, to further extend the enforcement programme, with proactive use of CCTV to review hot spot areas.

The Council's Anti-Social Behaviour Team has a dedicated Anti-Social Behaviour Localities officer for the Harlesden Ward who works very closely with the local

Safer Neighborhood Team to tackle persistent crime and anti-social behaviour problems in the area.

Local Joint Action Groups

The Safer Brent Partnership Board (SBP), Brent's Community Safety Partnership (CSP) has established Brent Local Joint Action Groups (LJAG's) as part of its delivery structure to respond to crime and ASB problem locations in the borough and priority anti-social behaviour offenders. The LJAGs meet monthly to ensure holistic offender management of all perpetrators identified.



Questions from Brent Youth Parliament

Full Council – 9 July 2018

1. Question to Cllr Margaret McLennan, Deputy Leader of the Council:

Brent Youth Parliament are currently campaigning on Discrimination. What is the Council doing to bring communities together in the Borough and reduce discrimination?

Response:

Brent Council is determined to bring communities together and reduce discrimination in all it does, in providing services, as an employer and in giving civic leadership. The council is undertaking a variety of actions.

Brent is proud of its history as a place where people from different backgrounds and cultures feel they get on well together. It is among the most diverse local authority areas in the country, with 65% of the total population from black and minority ethnic backgrounds. Its diversity is a reason for the borough's vibrancy and dynamism. 84% of residents agree that Brent is a place where people of different backgrounds get along well with one another, and we continue to welcome new communities to the area. This is a borough where people can live together peacefully, with mutual respect and where everyone can contribute to civic life.

The council's Equality Strategy states that Brent's core values include Fairness, Respect, Equality and Excellence. As a public body, it is subject to the Public Sector Equality Duty, created by the Equality Act 2010. Amongst other things, this requires it to have due regard to the need to:

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

The council undertakes a variety of work to meet its duties, many of which are listed below. Importantly, however, services are required to analyse the impact of their work and projects, to ensure that they meet the duties. Where they identify that this is likely to impact on people because of their protected characteristics under the Equality Act, they assess evidence to ascertain what this would be. They are then required to identify how any negative impacts can be reduced or removed, and positive impacts enhanced. A recent example was on the council's implementation of the government's reduced Benefits Cap.

As an employer, the council aims to be an exemplar of good practice on equality, diversity and human rights. It supports LGBT, Cultural Diversity, Disability and

Gender Equality staff networks, including events to celebrate key dates in their calendars, such as International Women's Day. In 2018 the council dramatically improved its ranking in Stonewall's Workplace Equality Index (52 places higher than in 2017 and 147 places higher than in 2016), with a number of improvements identified in terms of LGBT inclusion in the council and across the borough.

In Brent, more than eight out of ten people declare a faith, higher than the average for both London and England. The council has enjoyed a good relationship with faith groups over many years, meeting regularly with the Brent Multi-Faith Forum to discuss issues and work together to raise awareness, promote tolerance and enhance community cohesion in the borough. In 2017, we built on this by agreeing a Faith Covenant together, committing the council and faith groups to a set of principles that guide engagement, aiming to combat mistrust and to promote open, practical working.

The council also has a Stronger Communities Strategy 2015-19, with clear objectives and outcomes to further bond our communities. This includes opening and maintaining a dialogue with all communities within the borough, so that their voices are heard and their views understood in the provision and commissioning of services and in taking decisions about the future of our borough. The council will soon be undertaking work to build upon this strategy, and will consult the public and partners on a new set of values and priority areas to inform our future work and decisions.

The council, working in partnership, undertakes a range of activities to bring communities together and reduce discrimination. These include:

- A campaign for the rights of EU nationals living and working in Brent;
- Open days to provide advice and guidance services to eastern European communities, as well as cultural programmes;
- Eastern European Fair for residents and stakeholders as a celebration of culture and communities
- A youth-led "Peace in the Streets" campaign against youth violence;
- Delivering Tackling Hate Crime for practitioners in Brent and commissioning work from Coventry University to understand, tackle and deliver support on hate crime;
- A comprehensive signposting campaign, encompassing White Ribbon Day, to increase awareness of voluntary service provision amongst victims and survivors of violence against women and girls;
- A multi-agency Stronger Communities portal on the Brent Council website to signpost residents to services;
- "It's Time to Talk" events on a range of topics about topics affecting community cohesion, hosted by Harlesden-based radio station The Beat London, including the Windrush generation, mental health and domestic abuse;

- Our Outcomes-Based Reviews on gangs, domestic abuse and adolescents on the edge of care;
- Understanding how places of worship are used by different denominations, genders and generations, to inform our work with faith-based groups;
- Dedicated engagement channels such as Brent Connects forums, public meetings with local police Safer Neighbourhoods Teams, and housing association resident scrutiny groups, plus Brent Youth Parliament for children and young people;
- The Controlling Migration Fund – the council has been awarded this grant to extend its engagement work through drop-in sessions, community volunteers and hosting cross-cultural community events celebrating eastern European and Latin American communities. Future work will include extending the existing provision of English language courses, and providing new arrivals with a “Welcome to Brent” leaflet to give them an overview of services provided and how to get these. We have also hosted the Romanian Consulate at the Civic Centre on a number of occasions and during June-August 2018 to advise and support residents with their travel documents.
- The council participates in the UK’s Syrian Vulnerable Resettlement Programme including hosting Syrian refugees to resettle them into local communities. Community engagement plays a vital role in the approach. So far, we have resettled 46 individuals (12 families).
- The voluntary and community sectors working with the council play a vital role in bringing communities together and reducing discrimination. These include our dedicated forums around faith, disability and old age, as well as residents’ and tenants’ associations, which meet on a quarterly basis to discuss topics that are relevant to local people. The meetings are also an opportunity to bring people together and provide them with a platform to feed back to the council and partners.
- Grants of up to £500 are available to residents to promote and increase community cohesion in their local neighbourhoods. 88 grants have been awarded to support community cohesion projects.
- The council is committed to and holds accreditation for the London Living Wage. By paying the real living wage, the council is voluntarily taking a stand to tackle economic exclusion by ensuring that its employees can earn a wage which is enough to live on. That basic fairness is at the heart of the approach and the council is proud of its achievements in this area.

In conclusion, Brent’s diverse communities have been a source of strength for the borough, helping to make it the exciting, successful place it is. The council is committed to building on this heritage so that Brent remains somewhere everyone - whatever their background – can be proud to call home.

2. Question to Cllr Muhammed Butt, Leader of the Council:

Youth Violence is becoming an extreme concern in the borough – what measures is the Council putting in place to prevent the culture of violence that seems to exist among some of our young people?

Response:

The council is committed to working in partnership with parents, carers, extended families, schools and the community to help educate and raise awareness to young people and safeguard them. We recognise that some young people, as you have stated, experience a culture of violence and as a Safer Brent Partnership we are committed to challenging violent crime in all its forms.

There are a variety of ways in which Brent supports local young people. These include:

- Educational Programmes offered to all Brent primary and secondary schools;
- A Gangs Intervention Programme run by St Giles Trust;
- Peer Training for those significantly engaged with the Gangs Intervention Programme;
- Gang Awareness Training for professionals;
- Community-based Mentoring Programmes delivered by Air Network;
- Behavioural sessions, Group Work Programmes and a Gangs' Worker delivered within the Youth Offending Service;
- 6 targeted support workers for young people at risk of / who are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) delivered by the Brent Connexions Service;
- A summer holiday activity project being organized by the Safer Neighbourhood Board;
- A Troubled Families Programme provided by the Council's Family Solutions team and intensive family support for families at the greatest risk of escalating problems delivered by the Council's Early Help team;

In addition to this, the Council works closely with its partners particularly settings and schools to ensure at both a strategic and operational level that plans are co-ordinated, with the sharing of information to help assess vulnerability risks (including knife crime and serious youth violence).