# Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee

## Tuesday 19 July 2022 at 6.00 pm
Conference Hall - Brent Civic Centre, Engineers Way, Wembley, HA9 0FJ

Please note this will be held as an in person meeting which all Committee members will be required to attend in person.

**The meeting will be open for the press and public to attend or alternatively can be followed via the live webcast. The link to follow proceedings via the live webcast is available [here](here)**

## Membership:

| Members | Substitute Members |
|---|---|
| Councillors: | Councillors: |
| Conneely (Chair) | Afzal, Begum, Collymore, Ethapemi, Fraser, Moeen, Seelan, Ketan Sheth and Smith |
| Long (Vice-Chair) | |
| Ahmadi Moghaddam | |
| Akram | Councillors: |
| S Butt | |
| Bajwa | Kansagra & Maurice |
| Georgiou | Lorber & Matin |
| Miller | |
| Mitchell | |
| Patel | |
| Shah | |

**For further information contact:** Andrew Phillips, Governance Officer
Tel: 020 8937 3679; Email: Andrew.Phillips@brent.gov.uk

For electronic copies of minutes, reports and agendas, and to be alerted when the minutes of this meeting have been published visit:
**www.brent.gov.uk/democracy**

## Notes for Members - Declarations of Interest:

If a Member is aware they have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest* in an item of business, they must declare its existence and nature at the start of the meeting or when it becomes apparent and must leave the room without participating in discussion of the item.

If a Member is aware they have a Personal Interest** in an item of business, they must declare its existence and nature at the start of the meeting or when it becomes apparent.

If the Personal Interest is also significant enough to affect your judgement of a public interest and either it affects a financial position or relates to a regulatory matter then after disclosing the interest to the meeting the Member must leave the room without participating in discussion of the item, except that they may first make representations, answer questions or give evidence relating to the matter, provided that the public are allowed to attend the meeting for those purposes.

## *Disclosable Pecuniary Interests:
(a)   **Employment, etc. -** Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit gain.
(b)   **Sponsorship -** Any payment or other financial benefit in respect of expenses in carrying out duties as a member, or of election; including from a trade union.
(c)   **Contracts -** Any current contract for goods, services or works, between the Councillors or their partner (or a body in which one has a beneficial interest) and the council.
(d)   **Land -** Any beneficial interest in land which is within the council's area.
(e)   **Licences-** Any licence to occupy land in the council's area for a month or longer.
(f)   **Corporate tenancies -** Any tenancy between the council and a body in which the Councillor or their partner have a beneficial interest.
(g)   **Securities -** Any beneficial interest in securities of a body which has a place of business or land in the council's area, if the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body or of any one class of its issued share capital.

## **Personal Interests:
The business relates to or affects:
(a) Anybody of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management, and:
- To which you are appointed by the council;
- which exercises functions of a public nature;
- which is directed is to charitable purposes;
- whose principal purposes include the influence of public opinion or policy (including a political party of trade union).
(b) The interests a of a person from whom you have received gifts or hospitality of at least £50 as a member in the municipal year;
or
A decision in relation to that business might reasonably be regarded as affecting the well-being or financial position of:
- You yourself;
- a member of your family or your friend or any person with whom you have a close association or any person or body who is the subject of a registrable personal interest.

# Agenda

Introductions, if appropriate.

**Item**                                                                    **Page**

**1      Apologies for absence and clarification of alternate members**

**2      Declarations of interests**

Members are invited to declare at this stage of the meeting, the nature
and existence of any relevant disclosable pecuniary or personal interests
in the items on this agenda and to specify the item(s) to which they relate.

**3      Deputations (if any)**

To hear any deputations for which requests have been approved from
members of the public, in accordance with Standing Order 67.

**4      Minutes of the previous meeting**                                   1 - 14

To approve the minutes of the previous meeting, held on 9 March 2022 as
a correct record. Additionally, Committee Call-in meeting, held on 9 June
2022.

**5      Matters arising (if any)**

To consider any matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting.

**6      Digital Inclusion Strategy**                                        15 - 86

To outline the Brent Digital Strategy 2022-2026, with a particular focus on
the digital initiatives to support digital inclusion. To outline how the digital
inclusion programme is being delivered as part of the strategy and how
hard to reach groups are being supported and equalities issues
addressed.

**7      Wembley Events Review paper**                                       87 - 128

To provide an update on the progress made by partners on the
implementation of the recommendations made by Baroness Casey
following the UEFA Euros 2020 England v Italy football match at
Wembley.

**8      Medium Term Financial Strategy - summer update**

This report sets out the overall financial position facing the Council and highlights the significant risks, issues and uncertainties with regards to the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). This includes risks and uncertainties that already existed prior to COVID-19 and the new risks that must now be addressed. It also sets out the proposed budget setting strategy for 2023/24, which is the Council's minimum legal duty in respect of local authority budget setting, in order to maximise the period of consultation with residents, businesses and other key stakeholders.

**9      Committee Work Plan 2022/23**

This report presents the scrutiny committee's work plan for 2022/23.

**10      Recommendations Tracker**

This report presents the scrutiny committee's recommendations tracker.

**11      Any other urgent business**

Notice of items to be raised under this heading must be given in writing to the Head of Executive and Member Services or her representative before the meeting in accordance with Standing Order 60.

**Date of the next meeting:        6 September 2022**

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**Brent**

**MINUTES OF THE RESOURCES AND PUBLIC REALM SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**
**Held as a Hybrid Meeting on Wednesday 09 March 2022 at 6.00 pm**

PRESENT: Councillor Mashari (Chair), Kansagra, Choudhary, Hylton, Johnson, Long and Miller

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE REMOTELY: Councillor Hassan

Also Present: Councillors M Butt, McLennan (in remote capacity), Knight (in remote capacity), Krupa Sheth, and Tatler.

1. **Apologies for absence and clarification of alternate members**

   Apologies for absence were received from:

   - Councillors Conneely, Kabir and Shah.

2. **Declarations of interests**

   None.

3. **Deputations (if any)**

   A deputation was received from Philip Grant, pertaining to Item 9 on the agenda (Poverty Commission Update)

4. **Minutes of the previous meeting**

   It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the previous meeting held on XXX be approved as an accurate record

5. **Matters arising (if any)**

   None.

6. **Casey Review**

   A presentation from the Football Association (FA) was presented by Tom Legg (Head of External Operations, FA) and Chris Bryant (Head of Tournament Delivery, FA). The presentation covered the process of the independent review of events at the Euro 2020 Final, which had been done by Baroness Casey. It was highlighted that the review had involved interviews with numerous stakeholders representing all key delivery partners, analysis of substantial documentation and CCTV footage, a survey of ticket holders, and independent reports from experts and academics across the field. The presentation detailed that the review had made 4 recommendations in relation to FA governance, including changes to the categorisation of matches of a certain scale, a review of stewarding, a national campaign regarding attitudes and

supporter behaviour, and the strengthening of penalties for disorder. Those recommendations would involve the FA working closely with the government and police, supporting the Sports Grounds Safety Authority (SGSA) with the review of stewarding, working with the Premier League, English Football League and 'Kick It Out' on behavioural change campaigning, and developing a proposal for legislative and football banning order changes. Two recommendations for Wembley operational matters were made to strengthen plans for safety ahead of events and matches of significance.

The Committee agreed that work had already been done to prevent similar occurrences in the future, however, they had concerns in relation to the absence of a risk assessment, detailed in chapter 4 of the review. Members recollected their personal experience of the day of the Final, noting that people had gathered from very early morning with what they felt was a small police presence. Carolyn Downs (Chief Executive, Brent Council) confirmed that the chapter related entirely to the police risk assessment. Jim Brockway (Metropolitan Police) advised that the internal police review of the events of the Final was still underway and therefore he was unable to comment fully. He highlighted that various risk assessments took place by the police, and the operation regarding police resourcing was very extensive throughout the Final. The resourcing had been based on different parts of Central London not limited to Wembley, away from the operation, as that was where police intelligence would have indicated the best use of assets to be at that time. The Committee requested for the outcome of the internal police review of events to be shared with them when finalised.

Continuing to discuss the police response to events on the Final, the Committee highlighted the number of people who were able to bring alcohol and other substances into the area, which had a Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) in place prohibiting the consumption of alcohol in public spaces. Carolyn Downs advised that this was a matter for the British Transport Police (BTP) as well as the Metropolitan Police, as people had been able to bring alcohol on to the tubes. There had been a small police presence in Wembley from 10am, and the main shift, which had included heightened resource, began at 3pm, although the situation had escalated by then. Alcohol had also been brought in by people on scooters, mopeds, and motorbikes by delivery drivers, with many different ways of bringing alcohol in which had never been experienced to the same extent before. It became difficult for the police to then move people on as there were no fan zones to move them to, and pubs and restaurants were closed due to Covid-19. It was highlighted that a very specific set of events had led to the situation, and therefore actions had been taken by all partners following the learning from those issues. For example, the police had been present from an early stage to set the tone for the Carabao Cup Final, and it was made clear that anyone carrying alcohol in the area would have it confiscated. On top of that there had been 2 successful fan zones that police and civilian enforcement officers could move fans into legitimately.

Continuing to discuss the issue of fans bringing alcohol to Wembley, the Committee asked about the licensing arrangements that had been in place during the Final. Chris Whyte (Operational Director for Environment, Brent Council) highlighted that, since the Final, Brent Council had undertaken an urgent review of licensing arrangements around the Stadium. The Council had engaged over 60 off-licences in the area to understand the lessons learned from the Final and secure agreement to curtail the

sale of alcohol on event days almost entirely. No conditions to licensing had been broken during the Final and the only change had been to the General Safety Licence around the management of Covid-19 regulations at the time.

In relation to ticketless fans, the Committee queried how they could be managed in the future to deter them from coming to Wembley. Chris Bryant advised that when ticketless fans had arrived at Wembley Stadium for the Final they had nowhere to go, as there had been no fan zones in greater London due to Covid-19. The events of the Final had brought to light that Wembley was more of a destination for big events than it had been perceived previously, and therefore stronger communications were needed to the public, through all available channels, to advise people they should not come to Wembley Stadium if they did not have a ticket. The FA recognised that in events of significance this might happen again and therefore a strong communications piece was needed from all partners, including TfL, to discourage fans attending. This in conjunction with fan zones across greater London would limit the number of ticketless fans in Wembley on major event days. In relation to a fan being able to buy a ticket at 5:30pm, the Committee were advised that this was a very unique situation that would not happen again. The ticket purchase would have been made online as no ticket offices were open on the day, and the issue had been where capacity was made available in the event at very late notice.

The Committee highlighted that the match had finished late and queried whether there were plans to review the start and finish times of matches and events in the future. Chris Bryant advised that, in the initial Terms of Reference for the review, start times had not been considered something that would be included. He advised that in organising major events, there was not much flexibility on when kick off time was. The FA would always raise the issue, question it and push for earlier times where possible. Wembley Stadium often delivered big events late at night, and it was not possible for the FA to rule out 8pm kick off times for major finals in the future, but FA representatives agreed they needed to find a way to safely deliver events at those kick off times. They fully appreciated the challenges that came with later kick off times, not just for local residents but for fans also, and it was a broad and common issue in sporting. These were mega events with worldwide appeal and the ability to host came with the requirement to meet certain broadcast times, which funded these events and operations. He felt that to refuse events at the Stadium based off their start time would be a detriment to Wembley Stadium's ability to host big events in the future. However, they were always willing to make representations where appropriate. Carolyn Downs agreed that, where necessary, partners would push back against certain times. For example, the Stadium had been asked to host a West Ham vs Tottenham game at 8pm on a New Year's Eve on the same night as the firework display and less TfL staff on the tubes. The SAG had advised that there were issues with that time and did successfully push back on that despite broadcasting issues, as it had not been possible to deliver safely.

The Committee referred to a section of the review which detailed a Wembley Stadium Advisory Group meeting dated 18 March 2021, which mentioned the challenge of bags being brought in to the stadium, and queried what the challenge was. Tom Legg advised that the stadium had a clear bag policy, with bags larger than an A4 sheet of paper not permitted. There was an external bag team to ensure anyone walking up to the Stadium concourse was prohibited if they had a larger bag, and a bag drop facility

was provided so that anyone with a ticket had the opportunity to use that bag hold and re-present themselves at the external concourse to gain access to the venue.

The review had also detailed an incident where a steward would not let a warrant officer through, and the Committee queried what the issue was and whether this had an impact on communications. Tom Legg advised that the external team were briefed to only allow people with a valid match day ticket in to the entrance of the Stadium, with a separate process for police officers to enter via staff entrances. This was a very detailed process which had been worked through with the Match Day Commander and a series of detailed briefing meetings ahead of each match day. The incident of the police officer trying to gain access to the venue would have been resolved by the Match Day Commander, with a process followed to enable access to the right entrance. In relation to the comments regarding a breakdown of communication, the Committee heard that the process around how the police were communicated with had been debated and some updates to the process had been made as a result. Some of the observations in the review related to matches that occurred during the Autumn period, and the FA felt the process they had agreed with the police and Match Commander Team was very effective and aligned. He added that the Stadium Control Room was jointly located with the Police Control Room, and the Safety Officer had a very close working relationship, minute by minute, with the Match Day Commander.

Drawing the discussion to a close, the Chair asked what the key areas of learning the key partners would be taking forward from the review were. Chris White stated that the Council agreed with the Baroness Casey Review including its outcomes and recommendations, and were fully committed to working with partners in a very determined way to implement the solutions. He felt that one of the contributing factors to the issues on the Final day had been the casual street drinking in advance of the game, and the opportunity for people to drink in that way had now ceased and the supply had been stopped. As a local authority, Brent was determined to undertake the licensing change needed to prevent the retail of alcohol for street drinking on event days and the enforcement of that. He highlighted that the positive outcome witnessed at the Carabao Cup Final showed that this could be reasonably achieved through the deployment of a number of Council teams. Tom Legg advised that the FA also agreed with the recommendations from the review. The removal of fan zones had a significant impact on operations running well on the day, which was compounded by the reduced capacity in licensed premises and the late kick off. The FA were pleased with the revised arrangements that had been agreed for future events and had been impressed with partners support and ability to deliver the new arrangements for the Carabao Cup Final. He highlighted that they now had a new platform to build on, refine and improve as they went through the next few years at the Stadium.

The Chair thanked those present for their responses during the discussion, and invited the Committee to make information requests and recommendations.

The Committee made the following information requests:

i)      For the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee to receive a copy of the Internal Police Review into events at Wembley Stadium during the Euros 2020 Final when available, and for that review to be made available publicly, if appropriate.

ii)     To receive assurance from FA colleagues that they will continue to make representations in regard to kick off times of matches.

iii)    To receive further information from the relevant partners on how the consumption of illegal substances will be dealt with on event days.

iv)     To receive information on what the new category of match will look like for significant high profile matches when it has been proposed.

v)      To receive an update on any proposed changes to licensing policy as a result of the review, and what that will mean for the different categories of matches.

The following recommendations were made:

i)      To suggest that the British Transport Police conduct their own internal review of events if they are not already involved in the internal review currently underway by the Metropolitan Police. For the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee to receive the outcome of that review, if conducted.

ii)     To suggest that the partnership group review ticket office closure times both online and in-person.

iii)    To encourage partners to investigate the mobile phone mast system to ensure that it is robust and capable before moving to 100% e-ticketing for events.

iv)     To encourage a review of CCTV coverage by the relevant partners considering the changes in the area, to ensure it is adequate.

v)      To request a mutual commitment to provide fan zones and spaces where ticketless fans can go.

vi)     To propose that all partners have an overall risk assessment as well as their individual risk assessments, with 1 partner assigned to supervise all the various risk assessments for the partners.


7.  Topical Issue - TFL Funding

Councillor Shama Tatler (Lead Member for Regeneration, Property and Planning) introduced the item, presenting the Committee with an update on the Council's TFL Funding settlement. It was noted that TFL were in a difficult situation in regards to

Funding, which prevented Brent from pursuing improvement to Highways and Infrastructure to the extent that the Council would like to.

Alan Lunt (Strategic Director) then spoke to the Committee, and summarised the Funding issues facing TFL. The Committee were updated that historically TFL had provided around £3 million to supplement infrastructure projects from the Council, to augment the Council's own Funding of £3.5m. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, it was made clear that this amount would significantly reduced, and the current priority for TFL was to produce a balanced budget by April 2023. Despite this budget shortfall, it was highlighted that Brent had been able to make improvements to Brent's unclassified roads network, using Council funding. The impact of TFL's Funding position would be most prominently felt in the maintenance of A-Roads within the Borough. Currently, there was uncertainty as to what the TFL Funding settlement would look like in the future. It was also clarified that any funding provided by TFL in the future would be focused on providing sustainable transport solutions for residents.

The Committee was then invited to raise questions on the information provided, which focussed on a number of key areas, as highlighted below:

- It was asked how the resistance to sustainable travel would be affected by the extension of the Ultra-Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) within Brent. It was clarified that conversations were ongoing with the Mayor of London's Office to ensure that residents who required use of a car, such as those with a disability, would receive mitigations.
- On the issue of the Kensal Corridor and Wembley Hill schemes, it was asked if further information could be provided around these schemes and whether they were still planned to go ahead. It was clarified that further information regarding the schemes could be provided outside of the meeting, and whilst there was no guarantee that these projects would go ahead, any funding received from TFL would be prioritised for these projects.
- Regarding planned road works, it was asked if there was currently a backlog, and it was answered that there were currently no delays to planned work.
- Further to this, it was asked whether reserves or CIL funding were ever used to address road resurfacing; it was confirmed that the Council and TFL Funding were the main sources of funding for road resurfacing, in addition to the revenue budget.
- In response to a query on resurfacing of Church Road in Church End, it was clarified that this issue was planned to be addressed in the next couple of years.
- In terms of prioritisation of road works, it was asked if residents were able to see where their roads stood in terms of prioritisation, and it was confirmed that whilst this data existed, there was an opportunity for this to be made more readily available to residents.

- In future, it was highlighted that TFL Funding may be dependent on certain criteria and initiatives, and that the Council would have to be mindful of this when seeking Funding.

Information Requests

i)      Further information regarding the Wembley Hill and Kensal Corridor schemes to be provided to the Committee.

ii)     Data on road improvement schemes in the borough to be published on the Council's website in future.

iii)    Data for residents on estimates and average amount of time for roads to be resurfaced in the borough to be provided to the Committee.

8.      Updates on the Brent Council workforce strategy and flexible working update

Councillor Margaret McLennan (Deputy Leader, Lead Member for Resources and Children's Safeguarding, Early Help and Social Care) and Martin Williams (Head of Human Resources) introduced this update to the Committee.

It was highlighted that the workforce strategy was seeking to be closely aligned to the Council's Borough Plan, as well as ensuring that it was digitally flexible across the Council as a whole. Succession planning was also highlighted as a key priority for the Council, which fed into data on the structure and workforce of the Council, ensuring that staff were in the correct positions at the correct time, as well as ensuring recruitment reflected this ethos as well. Workforce development from within the Council was also noted as being a priority area. As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, this had also necessitated addressing the flexible working policy, which had been implemented successfully. The Council had also built foundations for younger workers through initiatives such as apprenticeship schemes, which reflected the priorities within the Borough Plan.

The Committee were also updated that a Digital Transformation Plan had recently been approved by Cabinet, and this would also tie into the Council's workforce strategy. The Council's strategy had been externally audited by PWC, and there were positive comments as to how the Council had been able to work flexibly in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Committee was then invited to raise questions on the information provided, which focussed on a number of key areas, as highlighted below:

- It was confirmed that the four key priorities from the 2020 workforce strategy had been achieved, and it was agreed that a document could be provided to the Committee outside of the meeting to outline this in more detail.
- In relation to staff surveys, it was confirmed that these were completed bi-annually, and were run by the Transformation Team within the Council. These were also supplemented by the Council's 'Forward Together' sessions, as well as weekly video updates from the Chief Executive.
- It was asked whether the workforce prioritised academic qualifications ahead of work experience; it was clarified that there was no official weighting, but that for specific occupations professional qualifications were required. It was stressed that development of employees within the organisation was something that was prioritised.
- The issue of Agency workers was raised, and it was noted that agency workers were being reduced in the Council, but in some sectors vacancies were necessarily covered by Agency staff.
- It was asked what the impact of the recently passed budget had been on the workforce strategy; it was responded that due to the ethos and culture of the Council this would not have an adverse effect.

The Committee made the following Information requests

i)      Further information on the four priorities of the previous workforce strategy to be shared with the Committee.

ii)     Results of the most recent staff survey to be shared with the Committee.

9.      Poverty Commission Update

Councillor Eleanor Southwood (Lead Member for Housing & Welfare Reform) introduced the item. The Committee received a deputation from Philip Grant, and due to the poor audio quality during Mr Grant's deputation, the Committee confirmed that Mr Grant would receive a written response to the issues raised in the deputation.

Moving forward to speak to the report, the Committee were thanked for their active and persistent interest in ensuring the recommendations arising out of Lord Best's Poverty Commission report were implemented. The Council House building programme was cited as moving forward, with all homes being ring-fenced as being at affordable levels of rent. Work on addressing issues in the private rental sector was also highlighted as a priority, with the cost of housing far outstripping wages within the borough. To this end, it was considered vital for high quality jobs to be provided in the borough. When residents experienced housing poverty issues, the

Council supported these individuals and families to help ensure this did not happen again.

The Committee was then invited to raise questions on the information provided, which focussed on a number of key areas, as highlighted below:

- Whilst the report had referenced outputs, it was asked if the impact of poverty at a borough and ward level could be measured in order to measure outcomes of policies to reduce poverty in the borough. The quality of borough wide data was cited as being an issue in obtaining these outcomes. The Council's Resident Support Fund was noted as being an effective way of obtaining data on reasons why residents were applying for grants, providing a holistic view of reasons residents were in poverty.
- Going forward, it was agreed that data on poverty from different sources could be more effectively presented to the Committee. The Committee were also notified that Brent, alongside six other London boroughs, were currently developing a framework by which to measure poverty. Locally within Brent Hubs, work was also ongoing to ascertain poverty at a more granular level.
- The issue of fuel poverty was raised, and it was asked how this data was collected. It was clarified that this was collated at both a regional and national level.

As a result of time constraints on the meeting, it was agreed that the Lead Member for Housing and Welfare Reform and Officers would respond to the Committee's remaining questions in writing.

10. Progress Report

The Committee noted this item, as well as noting the fulfilment of all Information Requests in the Municipal Year.

11. The Forward Plan of Key Decisions

The Committee noted the Forward Plan of Key Decisions.

12. Any other urgent business

The Committee thanked Councillor Roxanne Mashari for her 12 years of service as Chair of the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee, and wished her the best in her future endeavours.

The meeting closed at 9.24 pm

Councillor R. Mashari

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**MINUTES OF THE RESOURCES AND PUBLIC REALM SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**
**Held in the Conference Hall on Thursday 9 June 2022 at 6.00 pm**


PRESENT: Councillor Conneely (Chair) and Councillors Akram, Miller, Long, Georgiou, Mitchell, S Butt, Bajwa, Ahmadi Moghaddam and Maurice


Also Present: Councillor Milli Patel (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources & Reform)


1. **Apologies for absence and clarification of alternate members**

   Apologies were received from Councillor Jayanti Patel. It was noted that Councillor Maurice would be present in his place.

2. **Declarations of interests**

   Cllr Saqib Butt declared that he was on the planning committee when this decision was taken.

   Councillor Maurice also declared that he was on the planning Committee when the decision was taken.

3. **Deputations (if any)**

   None.

4. **Call-In - Officer Key Decision: Award of Design and Build Contract for Morland Gardens Development**

   The Chair clarified the purpose of the meeting to those in attendance and made reference to the report which outlined the background of the called-in decision made by the Strategic Director – Regeneration & Environment in respect of the award of a contract for enabling works at Morland Gardens.

   The Chair then invited Councillor Lorber to outline the reasons for the call-in, and the alternative action being sought, on behalf of those members that had called the decision in. Comments were made as follows:

   - It was the view of the Councillors who had called the decision in, which the Council had not obtained all necessary legal rights to build on the Morland Gardens site.
   - In relation to the proposed stopping up order, it was noted that there had been objections. This process could take up until March 2023. As the

decision to build was made in 2020, it was questioned why the stopping up order had only been applied for recently.

- The Strategic Director said in June 2021 that demolition would not go ahead until everything had been agreed, it was asked why this position had changed.
- It was noted that whilst the Council owned the land on which the Community Gardens were located, and whether the loss of trees in that area were contradictory to the Council's air quality plan.
- It was recommended that the Council not award the contract until all agreements were in place. If the Council failed to obtain a stopping up order, it was suggested that the decision be referred back to Full Council.

The Chair then invited Philip Grant, a member of the public who had requested to speak in support of the call-in, to address the Committee. Comments were made as follows:

- It was noted that the Council did not have all statutory approvals in place.
- Mr Grant highlighted that he had contested the proposed stopping up order due to environmental and public health reasons.
- Given the concerns raised, it was felt that the called-in decision needed to be reconsidered prior to the Council committing expenditure should the overall development not proceed.
- It was highlighted that the area was shown to have polluted air, which particularly affected children. A Health Inspector would decide next year whether that stopped the application.

The Chair then invited Melvyn Leach, a member of the public who had requested to speak in support of the call-in, to address the Committee. Comments were made as follows:

- It was noted that Brent Council and the Harlesden City Challenge Fund had both invested into the site in question. This had resulted in a tastefully restored heritage building, used as a successful new adult education centre.
- Furthermore, it was highlighted that 1 Morland Gardens was a listed heritage asset. Mr Leach told the Committee that such buildings were vital in helping students learn about local history in Brent.
- It was suggested that if the Council could not get approval to build on the extra land, it could draw up alternative plans that retained the historic Italianate villa as part of a modern development.
- Unless absolutely necessary for the redevelopment to go ahead, Mr Leach urged the Committee to prevent the unnecessary loss of 1 Morland Gardens and the community garden.

The Chair thanked Councillor Lorber, Philip Grant and Melvyn Leach for their contributions.  The Chair then invited Alan Lunt, Strategic Director – Regeneration

& Environment, to respond to the representations made. Comments were made as follows:

- It was important to note that the called-in decision and the Morland Gardens planning decision were separate. Many of the issues outlined in the call-in form related to the planning decision, however the planning process was outside of the Committee's remit.
- It was noted that the contract awarded was a 'design and build contract'. The maximum risk in terms of finances was highlighted to be £1.1m.
- In regards to the stopping up order, it was noted that this could have been carried out earlier, and the Committee were assured that this would not happen again.
- The building of the project was partially being funded by a GLA grant, and as part of this process it meant that there was required to be evidence of the project beginning in order to receive the grant.
- Mr Lunt then went on to clarify the process of the stopping up order referred to by Mr Grant. In the event that objectors were not going away, the Council would then write to the Mayor of London to make a final decision. At the end of the 'design' stage of the contract, it would be clear what the outcome would be in regards to the stopping up order.
- With regards to the Community garden, it was noted that this site would be moved and still remain in the area, slightly closer to Brentfield Road. This would leave a minimal impact on the risk of pollution to residents.
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The Chair thanked the Strategic Director – Regeneration & Environment for his responses and then invited questions and comments from the Committee, with the following points raised:

- Councillor Long raised concerns about the consequences if the contract was not awarded. It was noted that this would result in going out to procurement once again, and in all likelihood losing out on the £6.5m grant. The resultant procurement process would also likely incur significant costs.
- Councillor Georgiou asked what scope the Local Authority had to extend the GLA grant. It was confirmed that there was scope to extend this, though the longer the process went on, the more likely that the grant would not be extended.
- Regarding the stopping up order, it was asked what factors had led to a delay in this. Mr Lunt noted that the order should have been pursued on the award of the planning application. Thus far, there had been two statutory objectors to the stopping up order, and at least four members of the public.
- Responding to a question from Councillor Miller, it was acknowledged that the 'design and build' tender would help to mitigate against some of the risks of a one-step tender.
- Councillor Miller went on to ask whether there were risks associated with the Committee adopting the second recommendation contained within the report. It was noted that the risk would then be down to whether the stopping up order was confirmed or not.
- It was confirmed that any objections to the stopping up order which were not withdrawn would be considered by the Mayor of London. Mr Lunt noted that in his experience, all stopping up orders had been confirmed.

- In response to a question from Councillor Butt related to the Adult Education Centre, it was confirmed that services at this location had already been moved. In terms of the other properties on the site including the villa, these were now vacant.
- In response to a question from Councillor Ahmadi Moghaddam referencing affordable rents, it was noted that these rents were only £10 more a week than social rents.
- Councillor Georgiou asked whether the benefits of the project outweighed the demolition of the heritage sites in question. It was noted that this question was dealt with by the Planning Committee, and that no demolition would take place prior to the stopping up order being awarded.
- Following this question, Councillor Long asked if there were any security costs pertaining to the protection of the heritage buildings. It was clarified that no security had needed to be deployed thus far, though may need to be so in the coming months.
- Councillor Conneely asked Mr Lunt for further clarity regarding the possibility of future schemes if required and the risks associated with the loss of the contract. The biggest risk was highlighted as being £1.1m and the loss of community assets and prospective council homes.

As no further comments were raised, the Chair thanked everyone for their contributions and then invited the Committee to consider the recommendations set out in the report in relation to the outcome of the call-in.

As a result of the discussions at the meeting it was **RESOLVED** that the Committee recommend, in line with section 2.1.1 of the report:

- The Committee does not wish to refer the matter back to the decision maker or to Council, at which point the decision is deemed to be confirmed and takes effect immediately following the meeting.

In summarising the discussion the Chair noted and the Committee noted the following points:

- The apology in regards to the application of the stopping up order was noted, though the Committee stressed the need for checks and balances going forward.
- There was also a commitment from the Committee to want to see genuinely affordable homes for residents going forward.

The meeting closed at 7.52pm

R Conneely
Chair

| | **Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee**<br>19 July 2022 |
|---|---|
| | **Report from the Strategic Director of Customer and Digital Services** |

**A Review of the Digital Inclusion support provided to residents**

| Wards Affected: | All |
|---|---|
| Key or Non-Key Decision: | Non-key |
| Open or Part/Fully Exempt: | Open |
| No. of Appendices: | Two |
| Background Papers: | Citizens Online Report |
| Contact Officers: | Rehana Ramesh, Head of Digital Transformation<br>Rehana.Ramesh@brent.gov.uk<br>020 8937 1935<br><br>Madeleine Leathley, Digital Workstream Lead<br>Madeleine.Leathley@brent.gov.uk<br>020 8937 2651 |

## 1.0 Purpose of the Report

1.1 To outline the Brent Digital Strategy 2022-2026, with a particular focus on the digital initiatives to support digital inclusion. To outline how the digital inclusion programme is being delivered as part of the strategy and how hard to reach groups are being supported and equalities issues addressed.

## 2.0 Recommendation

2.1 That the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee note the report.

**3.0    Background**

3.1    The Brent Digital Strategy 2022-2026 sets out how Brent's ambition to become a truly digital borough will be realised through achieving the dual and interdependent aims of becoming a digital place and a digital council. One of the key benefits set out in the strategy is that "currently digitally excluded residents will increase their digital confidence"; which will be achieved through the work accomplished within one of our themes, digital inclusion.

3.2    A good digital customer experience is reliant on residents being able to access a borough-wide digital infrastructure providing instantaneous connectivity, with a greater number of residents getting access to full fibre broadband. Complementing this is the aim to develop a training and education framework that nurtures digital skills and expertise, getting residents support to improve their digital skills and get online and working with the voluntary and community sector to improve their digital infrastructure and skills.

3.3    The Digital Strategy 2022-26 builds on the achievements of Brent's previous Digital Strategy (2019-23). Some of these achievements relating to digital inclusion are:
- Over 90% of the Council website now meets accessibility criteria, an increase of over 38% since early 2020
- We provided fibre to over 8,000 premises within Brent's housing stock and increased fibre coverage across the borough from 4% to 57%
- We provided over 1000 digital devices to digitally excluded residents
- We offered over 20,000 hours of digital training for staff across the council through our partnership with Microsoft.

3.4    Brent Council has had a Digital Strategy in place since 2017 and has shown long term commitment to becoming a digital borough and enabling residents to access services online. By having completed this initial work, we were able to swiftly adapt when the Covid-19 pandemic commenced. Enabling us to adjust services and meet residents changing needs.

3.5    Brent is a founding member of LOTI (London Office of Technology and Innovation) and has been involved in work on digital inclusion and developing common Internet of Things standards. The council is also a signatory of the Local Digital Declaration.


**4.0    Developing the Digital Inclusion programme**

4.1    Recognising the importance of digital inclusion, the Digital Programme has worked with Citizens Online to review the digital skills offer across the borough and map that against need. The review was funded by Hyperoptic, as part of their social value commitment through our wayleave agreement, through which they are providing access to full fibre broadband services to residents living in Brent's housing stock.

4.2     In November 2020, the council held a workshop attended by over 80 representatives from the voluntary and community sector to feedback on the recommendations from Citizens Online report and gain views and buy-in for the way ahead.

4.3     On the back of this workshop the Digital Inclusion Action plan has been developed and it applies across Council teams; VCS organisations; Registered Providers and Health. Its themes are:

- Champions – recruitment; platform / consistency; support for champ; models for remote support; Sustainability/funding; support for voluntary sector orgs
- Bespoke offers – Disability; older people; neurodiversity; coaching
- Hosted network – good practice; opportunities
- Service mapping  - creation; where it goes; how to maintain it
- A placed based pilot
- Access  - devices / connections /skills
- Supporting SMEs

4.4     In light of the increased need to support Brent businesses, particularly Small and Medium-Sized  Enterprises (SMEs), as part of the recovery process, the scope of the Citizens Online work was widened to include them.

4.5     We continue to engage with the voluntary and community sector and other council departments through our Digital Inclusion network. This network provides an opportunity to share progress with the digital inclusion programme, identify new areas that require support and to provide an update on the digital inclusion action plan. The network meets on a bi-monthly basis and is regularly attended by ten community organisations.

**5.0     Aims of the Digital Inclusion Programme**

5.1     The Digital Inclusion programme aims to enable all digitally excluded residents who want to become digitally included to have access to the skills, devices and connectivity. This will be achieved through existing and future projects, including the ambitions to provide 8,000 digitally excluded households with access to a digital device by 2025.

5.2     Progress towards this aim has already been accomplished with a significant decrease in the number of residents who have not used the internet in the last three months at 4%, down from 11% in 2018. The fastest reduction across London boroughs. This information is collated annually through the Office for National Statistics (ONS) digital attitudes survey.

**6.0     Delivery of the Digital inclusion programme**

6.1     In response to the data and feedback from the Citizens Online report and SMEs, we launched the Digital Support Fund for businesses as a pilot in January 2022. Through this fund, SMEs were able to access digital skills

training, devices and connectivity to assist them with the challenges they face as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. It also gave us an opportunity to better understand the digital needs of businesses and how best to support them on a wider scale. We have supported 76 businesses with digital skills training and devices. The fund has been promoted via town centre managers, the business newsletter and successful word of mouth from businesses who received support in the early stages of the fund.

6.2     Each business was asked to provide information on their digital skill level before the training and a follow up survey will take place to monitor the impact of the support provided. Successful outcomes of the pilot will include improved self-identified levels of confidence, reduced barriers to starting an online presence and an increase in use of digital platforms e.g. websites and social media.

6.3     As well as this, we launched the Digital Support fund for children and young people in February 2022 to support digitally excluded pupils who had not received a device through earlier national programmes. Schools' were asked to put forward young people who they identified as digitally excluded. Initially the fund hoped to support 297 pupils, however due to a reduced price in devices we were able to support 478 pupils across 14 schools, both primary and secondary. 97 pupils also received a 12 month internet connection, through either a fibre connection or a Mi-Fi device. The next round of this fund will launch in September 2022 with a crowdfunding platform that will be match funded by the council. Through this funding, we hope to be able to provide a further 400 devices and internet connections.

6.4     The Resident Support Fund commenced in August 2020. There is a digital support fund as part of this and it is our longest running digital inclusion fund. Through this fund, any resident can apply for a digital device and 12 months of connectivity if they identify as digitally excluded and have savings of less than £6000. Through this fund over 500 residents have received a digital devices and 133 internet connections have been provided. The fund has also been adjusted following feedback from resident groups, and tablets are also offered through the fund as they are more accessible for some individuals.

6.5　The Digital Programme has enabled the fibre to the premises (FTTP) coverage in Brent to increase to 57% from 4% in 2017. This was enabled through wayleaves with several providers to connect Brent owned premises thus creating a network that could be expanded to privately owned premises. Through this programme, Brent now has the 2nd highest fibre coverage in West London and 7th across Greater London.



January 2018 – 4%

June 2022 – 57.65%
Includes 8,500 new connections for Brent housing stock
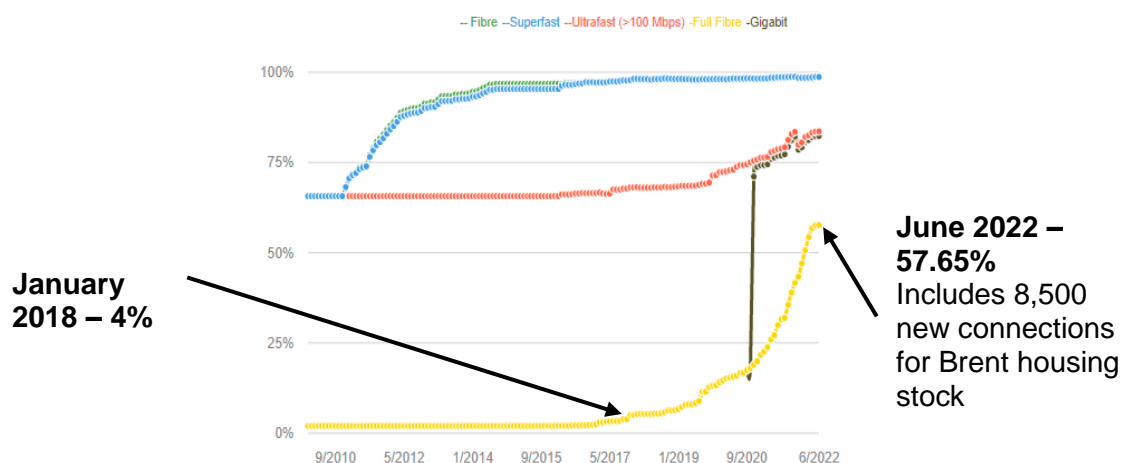
6.6　We continue to engage with new providers to develop and increase the accessibility of the fibre network in Brent and in 2021 signed a new wayleave with Openreach. This will expand the number of providers operating in the borough. We are also engaging with BT, via the West London Alliance (WLA) to connect 27 public buildings using Strategic Investment Pot (SIP) funding for connectivity. This will further widen the network in Brent, as these buildings are in currently hard to reach areas.

6.7　The Citizens Online report also highlighted the need to have digital champions, both within council services and the community. The council has committed to having 500 digital champions by 2025 to ensure the support is available to all digitally excluded residents. As of July 2022, Brent has 108 Digital Champions and are on track to meet our target. This includes having trained digital champions within Brent Hubs, libraries, customer services, and the voluntary sector and within housing partners. All Digital Champions are given access to the Digital Unite platform where they must complete essential training as well as explore more specific training that relates to the services they provide. The champions are also supported through the Digital Champions Network, which provides space to share experiences and feedback on the training programme.

6.8　For many digitally excluded residents, face-to-face support is beneficial to developing their digital skills. In response to this, new Digital Cafes were launched in October 2021 at Brent Hubs in partnership with AgeUK. These Digital Cafes are run as a drop-in service and are promoted via council teams. They take place on a fortnightly basis at the Kilburn, Harlesden and Wembley hubs and are available to all residents. The purpose of the digital cafes is to support people to get online to access council and universal services. Examples of support residents have received include setting up email

addresses, learning how to use different devices and signing up for on Brent's 'MyAccount' system. Overall, 65 drop-ins have visited the digital cafes and received support.

6.9     We continue to work with other partners to promote digital inclusion in Brent. This includes our local NHS Integrated Care Partnership (ICS). Through our work with the ICS we are supporting their rollout of pre-op online self-assessments by sharing guidance with our digital champions and digital inclusion network so they are able to support residents. As well as this, we continue to develop our relationship to identify further opportunities to collaborate on increased digital inclusion in Brent.

6.10    We also maintain active membership of the LOTI network and participate in their digital inclusion projects. This includes the development of the first Digital Inclusion map with four other London Boroughs. We are also engaging with of their newly launched Digital inclusion service which will support a pan-London approach to tackling digital exclusion.

*Digital Inclusion Case study:*

*Mrs Kohen was referred to the digital Inclusion programme with AgeUK through Elders Voice. Mrs Kohen was hoping to acquire a place on the Board of Trustees for Elders Voice and the support provided would allow her to develop her skills, which would be useful for her position as a Trustee. Mrs Kohen was contacted by one of the AgeUK volunteers to discuss her objectives and gain more insight into what she hoped to achieve from the programme. She stated that she wanted to be able to use means of communications to attend remote meetings and that she was interested in searching the National Archives as a hobby. Mrs Kohen already had an email address, which meant that she was able to start developing her skills straight away. She had used a laptop in the past, however, she stated that she had not used one for some time and was not confident to operate one independently. She lives alone; however, her daughter visits often and would be able to assist her if needed. The volunteer met with Mrs Kohen to develop the digital skills she needed to achieve the objectives she had shared. After successfully attending the sessions and increasing her digital confidence from working with the volunteer Mrs Kohen felt confident enough to no longer require the drop-in service.*

6.11    As part of The Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018, the Brent website was officially audited by GDS in August 2021. At the time, the report identified eights issues where the council website did not fully meet the regulations. Following a discussion with GDS, it was agreed that rather than focusing on fixing the old site, it made more sense to prioritise the new website with a view to resolving the issues they identified. This would ensure the new site was compliant from launch. Subsequently, the new website was launched in February 2022 and met the 2.1 AA standard required. To further support the need to make information more accessible, a significant effort was also made to reduce, rewrite and simplify the number of web pages across core service areas. The team rewrote 850 pages of content, and reduced the number of pages and the number of PDFs by 40%.

**7.0    Challenges and Risks**

7.1    As we established a broad digital inclusion programme within Brent, there is a risk that some digitally excluded residents do not access existing support due to a lack of motivation or awareness of how digital inclusion can benefit them. To mitigate this risk, as part of the programme we will be developing tailored digital inclusions to support for hard to reach groups including homeless families and residents with learning difficulties.

7.2    Over 1,000 devices have been provided to residents through various digital inclusion funds and projects. There is a risk that these devices are not being used frequently or at all. To understand the levels of use, we will be contacting recipients to collect information on how devices are being used via an anonymous survey. Alongside this, we will also be exploring the opportunities available to recycle devices to reduce the environmental impact of digital inclusion support being provided.

**8.0    Monitoring**

8.1    Delivery of the digital strategy, and the digital inclusion theme as part of this, is overseen by the Customer and Digital Board, chaired by the Strategic Director of Customer & Digital Services and championed by the Deputy Leader of the Council. Programme benefits are also reported to the Capital Programme Board.

8.2    Progress of the Digital Inclusion programme and underlying projects are provided to the Programme Delivery Board on a monthly basis. This includes any risks and issues that may be impact the delivery and expected outcomes of the programme. The Programme Delivery Board is chaired by the Operational Director for Transformation.

**9.0    Financial Implications**

9.1    To support the ambitions to become a Digital Place and a Digital Council investment is required.  In December 2021, Cabinet approved Brent's Digital Strategy 2022 - 2026 and the outline business case to support it. The overall investment required (for the whole digital programme, not just digital inclusion) was estimated at £9.3m over the programme period (capital programme). Cumulative savings of £14.8m are forecast after year 4, with an estimated recurring annual saving of £3,9m after 3 years. As well as financial savings, the outline business case sets out the wider benefits of each initiative within the programme, to both residents and the council.

9.2    Spend is currently on track and savings are reported to Capital Programme Board quarterly.

**10.0   Legal Implications**

10.1   Legal implications will be considered for new individual projects that make up the Digital Inclusion Programme at the appropriate time.

**11.0 Equality Implications**

11.1 An equality impact assessment (EIA) was complete alongside the Brent Digital Strategy 2022-26 and both went to Cabinet. Individual projects within the programme have also undertaken EIAs and accessibility audits have been completed.

11.2 It is important to remember that the digital inclusion support is there for any resident who wishes to develop their skills and awareness. However, for those that do not wish to be online, they will still be able to access council services via face to face or over the phone services. By enabling residents to become digital included citizens they are able to self-serve 24/7 and access other universal services that have moved online. It also increases officer capacity to support those most in need.

**12.0 Consultation with Ward Members and Stakeholders**

12.1 Consultation on specific projects will be carried out when and where appropriate. The Lead Member with responsibility for the work of this service area will be kept informed about the programme and its delivery.

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*REPORT SIGN-OFF*

*Peter Gadsdon*
Strategic Director of Customer and Digital Services

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# Digital Inclusion in Brent

Citizens Online

August 2020

**AUTHOR:**
Citizens Online

**DATE:**
11 September 2020

**VERSION:**
V11

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## ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report has been produced by Citizens Online to provide analysis of digital inclusion issues within London Borough of Brent.

The report aims to:

- Improve understanding of digital exclusion and inclusion issues
- Identify opportunities to improve delivery of Essential Digital Skills support
- Ensure stakeholders are equipped to develop their strategies and make business cases for digital and social change

*Motivating digitally excluded citizens to engage with the digital world can be difficult. To do this successfully requires compelling 'hooks' for each person, and each organisation.*

*Simply 'selling' or presenting a new digital service or technology does not create digital journeys. People and organisations need to understand what is beneficial for them and what an improved life or service might feel like in a digital world. Understanding people's motivations is key.*



Citizens Online promotes a collaborative partnership approach to tackling digital exclusion.

We collate information about current assets and resources, and promote working together in local areas, to improve the lives of residents. We have made recommendations in this report for how best to tackle digital exclusion in Brent.

We understand that things change quickly in the world of digital transformation and skills. During writing this report there may be more activity within the Council to support these issues not documented here.

# INTRODUCTION

This report has been commissioned by Brent Council (BC). BC is in the process of digital transformation with an aim to become 'a truly Digital Council and making Brent a truly Digital Place'. The Council are aware that there are still significant numbers of residents that lack Essential Digital Skills[1] and have commissioned this research to try to change that. In the context of digital transformation, the Council is making a bold statement of support for inclusivity and accessibility. They recognise the importance of digital skills, and have the ambitious aspiration that their residents will not be left behind in the digital age. Digital inclusion must be the heart of any digital transformation program and central to any transformation conversation from the start. There is no point in having brilliant online services if your customers can't use them.

The Coronavirus pandemic has had a huge impact on the way we are living our day to day lives. It has amplified just how important digital technology is to help us get through these times. For those not online, especially vulnerable people who are shielding, it is an extremely difficult and worrying time. We talk more about this in the report.



The pandemic also highlighted to BC that many SMEs[2] in the borough do not have a digital presence. The Council wants to support businesses to improve digital skills to ensure they are resilient. It's important for residents and businesses to upskill digitally to help aid economic recovery from COVID-19. Social Isolation and loneliness are also key concerns for the Council and we have included information on both these topics for how digital technologies and skills can help these groups of people.

The good news is that the number of people using the internet and digital technology in the UK is gradually increasing. However, those who remain offline or lack essential digital skills, are also increasingly harder to reach and motivate. Meaning that as the digital skills gap narrows, it also deepens.

As a result of our research, we've made recommendations for BC and other organisations in Brent to improve digital skills for their residents and workforce. We hope these are taken on board to embed digital skills and inclusion into business as usual. Helping to deliver fantastic digital customer service and enabling everyone to benefit from the digital world we now live in. We hope you enjoy the report.

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[1] The Essential digital skills framework defines the digital skills adults need to safely benefit from, participate in and contribute to the digital world: Essential digital skills framework (gov.uk), accessed 16/12/2019.
[2] Small and Medium Enterprises

## Adults in Brent
## Digital Exclusion Stats

**19%**
**Have no laptop**

**7%**
Have no internet access at home

**6%**
Have no Foundation Digital skills

BE SAFE, LEGAL AND CONFIDENT ONLINE

Find solutions to problems using digital tools and online services

Communicate, collaborate and share online

Problem Solving

Communicating

Foundation Skills

Transacting

Handling Information and Content

Apply for services, buy and sell and manage transactions online

Find, manage and store digital information and content securely
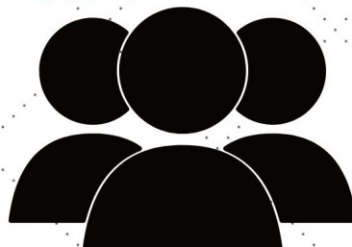
BE SAFE, LEGAL AND CONFIDENT ONLINE

**18%**
Don't have the Essential Digital Skills for life

**11%**
Only use a smartphone to go online

**7% Are offline**

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## HEADLINE DIGITAL INCLUSION STATS

| | |
|---|---|
| **Borough population:**[3] | 330,795 |
| **Approximate Number of households.**[4]: | 110,286 |
| **Working age population (16-64):**[5] | 220,379 |
| **People aged 65+:**[6] | 39,992 |
| **Working age population in receipt of benefits**[7]: | 49,697 |
| **State Pension age population in receipt of benefits**: | 37,609 |

### DIGITAL EXCLUSION-RELATED ESTIMATES FOR BRENT

| | |
|---|---|
| **Non-internet users (adults):**[8] | 17,600 (6.8%) |
| **Non-internet users aged 65+:**[9] | 13,241 (5%) |

**People without:**

- **Essential Digital Skills**[10]:  **48,500 (18.4%)**
- **Foundation Digital Skills**[11]:  **40,000 (15.1%)**
- **All 6 Foundation Digital Skills**[12]:  **16,000 (6%)**
- **Transactional Digital Skills**[13]:  **40,300 (15.3%)**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Adults with no laptop/PC at home:** | 50,000 (18.7%) |
| **Adults with no internet access at home:** | 17,800 (6.7%) |
| **Smartphone-only users:** | 30,000 (11%) |

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[3] Population figures in this report are based on the ONS 2018 Mid-Year Estimate
[4] 2015 estimate of "occupied addresses" using experimental methodology. This is close to the number of households from the 2011 Census: 50,943
[5] This is 66.6% of population - higher than for England 62.6%
[6] At 12.1% of the population this is considerably lower than for England as a whole, 18.2%
[7] Excludes benefits administered by HMRC (Child benefit, Child tax credits). DWP StatXplore, Aug 19.
[8] 6.8% - lower than 9.2% across England
[9] 56.5% of all non-internet users
[10] Essential Digital Skills Framework is a Department of Education system, which informs the Lloyds Bank Consumer Digital Index, from which the estimates above are made.
[11] Foundation Digital Skills underpin all essential digital skills - e.g. ability to turn on devices, connect to Wi-Fi, access the internet, understand passwords and keep personal information safe.
[12] 2019 Lloyds Consumer Digital Index
[13] 2020 Lloyds Consumer Digital Index

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

"Digital" permeates everything. How we communicate, work, learn, travel and entertain ourselves today is a world away from 20 years ago. Organisations transforming digitally must be clear in their culture that digital is everyone's responsibility as it is an essential part of our lives both in and out of work.

The Coronavirus pandemic has also demonstrated the vital importance of digital solutions. They enable us to; have food delivered, work from home, claim benefits, order prescriptions, pay bills and videocall loved ones. Yet **17,600 (6.8%) of adults in Brent are not online** and **18% of adults don't have all of the 'Essential Digital Skills[14]'** for life. With groups of people more vulnerable to the virus (older, disabled and with long term health conditions) also more likely to lack digital skills, this is a worrying problem.

As well as the people classed as offline,[15] there are a larger group of people classed as 'narrow' users. These people only engage in up to 4 of 15 types of online use[16]. **We estimate there are 53,200 adult narrow users in Brent** (20% of the adult population)**.**

We know that being online and having good digital skills has a wide range of benefits[17]. It helps people to connect and feel less isolated, save money, access better paid work, live healthier lives and help their children. These aims are also all within the BC Borough Plan[18] so supporting residents to improve their digital skills is a win-win situation.

From our research, there is now a clear picture for where those most at risk of digital exclusion are based. We've ranked wards[19] in Brent in order of **digital exclusion risk** and produced a Ward Risk Heatmap (pages 19-20). The top three are: **Harlesden, Stonebridge and Dollis Hill**. Digital exclusion is closely linked to poverty, disability, age and social isolation[20]. We would recommend focusing resources and marketing aimed at digitally excluded groups in these areas as a priority.

Like all local authorities across England, BC has faced significant funding cuts. Transacting online provides one way to make savings, yet continue to deliver excellent

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[14] Essential Digital Skills Framework is a Department of Education system
[15] From Office for National Statistics data. This refers to people who have never been online or last used the internet over three months ago.
[16] The 15 types of use are: email; transactions; instant messaging; banking/ paying bills; social media; finding/ downloading information; news; health information; watching short video clips; local government sites; audio services; TV or film content; remote access e.g. accessing files through a cloud service; uploading content e.g. photos, blog posts; and playing games online.
[17] People with the highest digital engagement, who earn less than £20,000 per year, save 42% on monthly utility bills compared to those with the least digital engagement
[18] Brent Council Borough Plan
[19] Strictly speaking, we have used data at Census LSOA level and combined this to Ward level using the ONS best-fit lookup. LSOAs do not always nest exactly into wards, so ward-level results are a best approximation.
[20] See, for example, "The emergence of a "digital underclass" in Great Britain and Sweden: Changing reasons for digital exclusion" (2017)

services.[21]  BC has already made progress on their digital transformation journey. The Council has a digital strategy and over 80% of services are now available online. There is a centralised transformation team and digital themes and leadership are of high importance.

It's important to recognise that when talking about people lacking digital skills and confidence online, this can also include staff. We identified some gaps in knowledge about staff digital skills and confidence; the extent to which the digital strategy and vision is embedded; how well the assisted digital process is working, and how technology supports staff to work more efficiently. We would recommend survey work to gather this information and help digital transformation.

Brent has listened to feedback from staff[22], residents and Crisis[23] and is working with Nomensa to develop a new website and resident's portal.  A user centred design approach has been adopted to ensure the new product meets end user needs.  The recent Brent residents' survey revealed that 45% of respondents agreed with the statement, 'It is easy to carry out online Council transactions'. We would hope with improved design of the website, resident's portal and with digital champion support, which more residents will find it easy to transact digitally with Council services.

The COVID-19 outbreak has hindered our research, especially with health and third sector organisations. We have only engaged with 14 organisations to date so we acknowledge that there may be more information to emerge as the crisis passes. From our findings so far, BC could perhaps benefit from more connections with the health sector. There is a health and wellbeing board and various types of social prescribing, which potentially offer opportunities for digital champion approaches to support residents.

Brent Council is working hard to support digitally excluded residents, especially in response to COVID-19. They are working with CVS Brent and the Young Brent Foundation to provide laptops young people. Digital support and drop-ins are also available in BC Hubs. Brent Start[24] will offer courses based on the Essential Digital Skills Framework from September 2020. There is also a Financial Inclusion Group to support residents who are struggling financially.

With COVID-19 recovery in mind, BC were interested in research into: 1. Small businesses 2. Loneliness and Social Isolation. The Council is supporting businesses with COVID-19 recovery, as the pandemic has highlighted weaknesses in businesses that lack e-commerce and digital infrastructure. Brent surveyed businesses in Kilburn and found that 46% of independent businesses had no digital presence. A digital champion

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[21] Online services often result in improved customer satisfaction as many residents prefer the ease and convenience of 24/7 access in your own home.
[22] Brent staff were surveyed about the Council website but tellingly only 4% of respondents used the site solely for personal use as a resident. Also the sample size (47 respondents) was small so caution is required when analysing the results.
[23] Crisis raised concerns about the usability of the 'My Account' and 'Homelessness Portal' in a report.
[24] https://www.brent.gov.uk/services-for-residents/employment-training-and-skills/brent-start/

approach can also be used to support businesses to digitally transform. Enabling them to become more resilient and aid economic recovery of the borough.

With residents vulnerable to Coronavirus shielding, the risk of experiencing loneliness and becoming socially isolated is also increased. Digital skills are one potential way to alleviate these unpleasant conditions.

The Council acknowledges that more could be done to tackle digital exclusion by working in partnership with other organisations. **The problem of digital exclusion is deeply entrenched**, with those still offline often the most difficult to reach. Most people will need multiple prompts, support, nudges and interventions to raise confidence and skill levels with digital technology. We advocate that the best way to do this is through a cross sector network, as this problem is too big for a single organisation to tackle alone.

A digital inclusion group and a fully networked system would:

- grow the Digital Champion (DC) provision with both volunteer and embedded DCs
- create a clear triage and referral system
- centralise information for help with digital skills, potentially on the BC website
- promote digital skills training for staff

We would recommend that a **Digital Inclusion Network is put in place for the Borough.** This could be as light touch as a regular agenda item on another existing group meeting with similar aims (e.g. welfare, health and wellbeing, financial inclusion), or it could be a more formal group. Either way a network will need dedicated resource and the more resource that can be allocated, the more successful it will be.

There has been an amazing community response to the COVID-19 crisis forming mutual aid groups with many volunteers. We would urge these groups to ask the vulnerable people they are supporting about their digital capability and train volunteers to be digital champions and offer remote support.

Using Digital Champions (DCs)[25] to help people improve their digital skills is a proven method[26]. We advocate that the most sustainable way of digital skills support is by using 'embedded' DCs[27]. These are people already working within organisations. Brent recognises the importance of this support and work is already in place to support staff in Brent Hubs and Libraries to access the Digital Champion Training as part of this project.

From our research we also know of DCs (most of which are now offering support remotely) in the following organisations: AgeUK Hillingdon, AbilityNet and Leonard Cheshire. There are also organisations where residents can access help with specific

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[25] A Digital Champion is someone who is confident to guide and support others to do things online
[26] Recent NHS DC Study
[27] Support for this comes from the independent evaluation of the One Digital programme test and learn phase (Sara Dunn Associates, *The One Digital collaboration: Evaluation of the 'test and learn' year 2016,* December 2016).

tasks online i.e. benefits forms. These include: Personal Independence Payment Online, Catch 22, Citizens Advice, Job Centre Plus (JCP). BC could also signpost to these services if overwhelmed with demand.

In the 'digital age', digital skills are essential. We recommend that **digital skills and digital champion skills are written into all job descriptions.** We recommend that digital skills and inclusion are embedded into the HR process by being included in interviews, induction, appraisals and learning and development policy. A culture of lifelong learning and allowing staff time to improve digital skills should also be promoted by management. This will futureproof organisations for digital change and in turn help residents to improve their digital skills.

Senior Management should encourage and support the rollout of DC training using the Digital Champions Network.[28] We also recommend DCs in other organisations as part of a Digital Inclusion Network. Organisational policy regarding how to help residents with digital skills should be clarified and communicated to all staff. **Everyone must be aware of where they can signpost residents for help** if they cannot offer that help there and then. This would apply to any other organisation as part of a Digital Inclusion Network.

Senior leaders should ensure that digital inclusion and accessibility are embedded into policies and procurement frameworks. BC has a Social Value and Ethical Procurement Policy[29] which does include provision of digital skills training. We would suggest adding digital inclusion and accessibility to it where appropriate.

We've enjoyed working with Brent Council and are impressed to see how quickly action has been taken to initiate a digital champion programme. The Borough has great assets and a wealth of community groups. We would hope in time that a strong local digital inclusion partnership will develop to help digital skills support flourish in the Borough to improve residents lives.



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[28] An online training platform for digital champions. Access is to the platform is included with this project.
[29] BC Social Value Policy

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# RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Set up an Brent Digital Inclusion Network**

We have struggled to engage with as many organisations as we would've liked because of the Coronavirus. But we know that there are at least 12 organisations already offering some sort of digital inclusion support; such as free WIFI, access to equipment or digital champions. We expect that there will be many more. It's imperative that organisations work together to raise the digital skill levels of residents and a network is an ideal place to; encourage joint working, partnerships, sharing of resources and best practice. We must stress that **a network will require dedicated resource to run it**. Similar networks in other areas of the country have been successful in securing funding for inclusion projects.

Partner with other key strategic organisations in Brent to maximise impact for residents. Such as NHS North West London, a consortium of 30 organisations focussed on better health outcomes for residents which includes digital skills aims.

2. **Increase the number of Digital Champions (DCs)**

Including Brent Council staff and staff in other organisations in the digital inclusion network.



**Embedded DCs** are people who support others with digital skills as *part of their job.* Examples of this might include essential digital skills support given by:

- Welfare advisors whiles assisting something with benefits claim
- Library staff while helping someone access their e-books service
- Employment support workers as part of helping someone to look for a job

This is a more sustainable way of delivering digital skills support, as they are already employed by organisations. As their roles are often customer facing, they

also have good skills to be able to engage with residents who may have more complex needs or be higher risk of digital exclusion. Research indicates that digital inclusion projects that use an embedded digital champion approach were able to maintain participant engagement for longer.[30]

In our experience it takes a ratio of **around 1 DC to 100 digitally excluded people**, to record a significant amount of digital support activity and evidence that there is some **genuine impact in an area**. Recruiting DCs at a ratio of 1:100 is likely to increase any organisation's chances of being able to evidence and evaluate the positive impact of the work.

Brent Borough has around **50,000 residents that lack digital skills**, suggesting Brent should aim to recruit around **485-500 DCs** across the borough working in a range of contexts from senior leaders and customer facing staff to volunteers working in the community sector.

Brent Council has already thought about how to progress this and are talking with library, hubs, customer contact centre teams as a starting point to become digital champions.

Prior to COVID-19 the following organisations were offering face to face support. They are now offering **remote skills help and support**. Brent Council and other organisations in the Borough can signpost residents to:

- AbilityNet – 0800 269 545
- Leonard Cheshire – for disabled people – 0300 303 0074

**Volunteer DCs** are also valuable resource to help people with digital skills, often libraries run volunteer digital champion schemes. Again, we want to stress that volunteer DCs take dedicated resource to manage – even if they are being hosted by other organisations (embedded volunteer DCs), coordinating efforts and matching learner needs with available volunteers takes time.

**Brent could support community organisations by providing access to the Digital Champion Network (DCN)** to help train volunteer digital champions working in other community organisations. Funding to cover volunteer induction and room hire for sessions etc would also help to stimulate provision, if any funding is available.

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[30] SCVO Digital Participation Challenge Fund Review 2017 https://storage.googleapis.com/scvo-cms/digitalparticipation/reports/Charter_Fund_Review_Report.pdf

3. **Create and embed a Brent Borough 'Triage and Signposting System'** for Essential Digital Skills[31]. Empowering employees and volunteers in all sectors to know:

   a) How to spot people who have barriers other than motivation
   b) What questions to ask (and when)
   c) Where to refer people to get help that they need

   There are many referrals pathways from Council services to other support organisations, e.g. for health concerns or addiction. **Digital skills support could be added to these referral forms** to highlight when this support is needed and remind frontline staff about the need to consider digital inclusion. We understand that referrals are also often made incorrectly for example, JCP has referred people to the libraries where currently the provision isn't in place to support Universal Credit claimants. A shared triage and signposting system in the borough would help residents to get the support they need.

4. **Target the wards with the highest risk of digital exclusion. The three top wards are Harlesden, Stonebridge and Dollis Hill.** Postcodes in this high risk wards could benefit from targeted marketing to signpost to over the phone DC support such as the organisation listed in Recommendation 2.



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[31] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/essential-digital-skills-framework/essential-digital-skills-framework
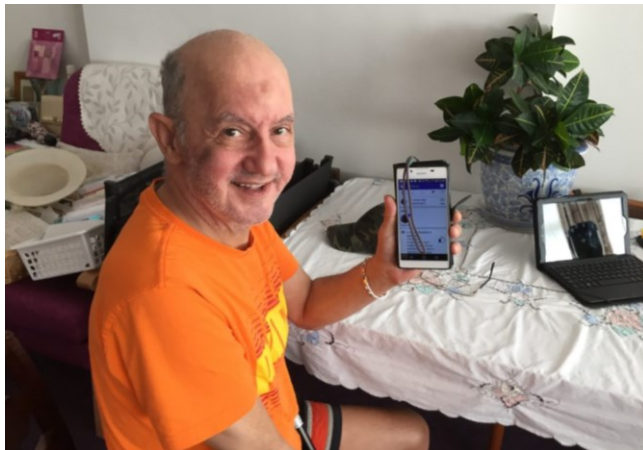
5. **Be responsive to COVID-19 by engaging people in essential digital journeys and finding out about their digital capability.**

Motivation is a key barrier for people doing more online. Over a third of those offline say the internet 'doesn't interest me' and 48% of the digitally excluded state that 'nothing' could motivate them to go online.[32] The current crisis has given many people clear reasons to go online - being able to order shopping and see family and friends on video, and so on.

During the recent COVID-19 pandemic, Brent Council and Mutual Aid groups, have been phoning vulnerable people to help with essential needs. They are asked if they need help with food delivery, medicine, walking pets etc but **we urge all organisations to also ask about people's digital capability[33].** This is an ideal opportunity to start someone on their digital journey. Ask if they have a device to connect to the internet, an internet connection and the skills and confidence to get online. If they don't offer help or signpost to other agencies who can help such as those mentioned in Recommendation 2.

There is also potential to launch a digital champion remote volunteer help service within mutual aid groups but such a scheme will need resource to manage.

6. **Strategic Leadership Recommendations**

   a) **Ensure Senior Leaders** in all organisations involved in the digital inclusion network **support the work of the group and promote inclusion** within transformation programmes.

   b) **Ensure that digital inclusion and accessibility[34] is embedded in the policies, procurement frameworks and work programmes of all network members.** Include digital skills and inclusion clauses into procurement frameworks and contracts. Especially for any IT contracts, digital products and services, or support services for higher risk digitally excluded groups.

   c) Promote **Digital Leadership and a culture of life-long learning.** Senior leaders in all organisations of the network must lead by example to promote new skills and ways of working.

   d) **Include digital skills and inclusion in HR processes**. All job specifications, recruitment advertising, interviews, on-boarding, appraisals and learning and development policy should include reference to digital skills. The key

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[32] https://www.lloydsbank.com/banking-with-us/whats-happening/consumer-digital-index.html
[33] https://www.citizensonline.org.uk/we-all-need-to-be-asking-people-about-their-digital-skills/
[34] Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0

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to changing culture is bringing your people with you. Highlighting the importance of digital skills to staff both new and old will convey the understanding that digital inclusion is everyone's responsibility. The role of a Digital Champion will not be seen as an additional responsibility, with time, it will be an agreed part of someone's role.

7. **Centralise all information about digital skills in one place, such as BC Website.** The page could include links and information about how to access: online learning, remote support, 1-2-1 support, home help, learning sessions and courses, free Wi-Fi and computer access. **Promote this resources page** by ensuring every **member of the digital inclusion network is linking to them** from their webpages.

8. **Support economic recovery in Brent by supporting businesses with digital skills.** Recommendations for action are made on page 21.

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# 1. DIGITAL EXCLUSION RISK ANALYSIS

Our analysis identifies three Brent wards that are within the 30% of wards in England with the highest risk of digital exclusion, and within the 10% of wards in London most at risk:

- Harlesden
- Stonebridge
- Dollis Hill

Harlesden is in the 15% of wards most at risk nationally. This is due to higher numbers of:

- people with no qualifications
- people receiving benefits to top up low incomes (e.g. unemployed, in low-wage employment, or retired)
- older and/or disabled people.

Kilburn ward is fourth in our list as it has a relatively high numbers of older people living alone and a relatively high number of premises without access to Superfast broadband connections.

The table below shows the data that we've used for the calculations. In each case, people in these demographic groups are more likely to be offline and less likely to have digital skills. We also include the number of premises without access to Superfast broadband (SFBB). Even where there are a low number of premises without access, take-up of SFBB may still be very low due to affordability and other considerations.

Note that risk is calculated based on a combination of absolute numbers of people in each area within the risk-factor populations, *and* percentage of people within an area in the at-risk categories[35]. This means that a ward such as Harlesden can be ranked as a higher risk than, say, Stonebridge, despite having lower *numbers* in most categories shown in the table. Since its overall population is lower, the risk of digital exclusion is higher overall when percentage figures are included.

Additionally, because ward level risk is calculated from the subsidiary LSOA statistics, a ward containing one or two high-risk LSOAs, with the rest being moderate risk, may end up being ranked lower overall than another ward where all of the LSOAs are moderately high but none is especially high. Thus ward-level maps may omit smaller areas of high risk.

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[35] This approach aims to balance the *scale* of the issue, in terms of the numbers of people affected, against the *character* of particular areas (local prevalence). Areas that are not particularly highly deprived overall, but simply have larger populations, can dominate a numbers-only approach; areas that have smaller populations but higher prevalence of forms of deprivation would dominate a percentage-only system but fail to point to where there are actually more people at risk.

| Ward | Premises without Superfast (SFBB) | People aged 65+ | People aged 65+ living alone | Disabled adults (estimate) | Adults with no qualifications | Housing Benefit and Universal Credit claimants | DE risk score decile (*London region) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Harlesden | 20 | 1,739 | 461 | 1,202 | 1,971 | 4,195 | 1 |
| Stonebridge | 221 | 1,885 | 510 | 1,330 | 1,950 | 4,343 | 1 |
| Dollis Hill | 318 | 1,757 | 355 | 922 | 1,454 | 2,297 | 1 |
| Kilburn | 456 | 1,754 | 592 | 1,181 | 1,405 | 3,115 | 2 |
| Welsh Harp | 14 | 1,844 | 463 | 993 | 1,403 | 1,877 | 2 |
| Willesden Green | 82 | 1,521 | 447 | 948 | 1,434 | 3,063 | 3 |
| Kensal Green | 81 | 1,529 | 396 | 930 | 1,445 | 2,524 | 3 |
| Barnhill | 13 | 2,274 | 539 | 1,001 | 1,253 | 2,108 | 3 |
| Wembley Central | 329 | 1,870 | 232 | 1,020 | 1,552 | 1,694 | 4 |
| Dudden Hill | 206 | 1,927 | 366 | 932 | 1,464 | 2,409 | 4 |
| Sudbury | 16 | 1,887 | 425 | 925 | 1,227 | 1,668 | 4 |
| Brondesbury Park | 7 | 1,831 | 593 | 935 | 857 | 1,505 | 4 |
| Queensbury | 34 | 2,168 | 348 | 974 | 1,420 | 1,391 | 5 |
| Kenton | 64 | 2,622 | 426 | 769 | 731 | 582 | 5 |
| Fryent | 1 | 1,849 | 438 | 764 | 1,208 | 1,325 | 5 |
| Preston | 18 | 2,306 | 479 | 886 | 1,140 | 1,431 | 5 |
| Alperton | 19 | 1,767 | 271 | 779 | 1,680 | 1,473 | 6 |
| Mapesbury | 360 | 1,751 | 414 | 840 | 1,159 | 2,263 | 6 |
| Tokyngton | 750 | 1,984 | 374 | 926 | 1,351 | 1,651 | 7 |
| Queens Park | 0 | 1,615 | 380 | 798 | 941 | 1,378 | 8 |
| Northwick Park | 43 | 2,112 | 299 | 704 | 682 | 756 | 9 |

Table 1: Digital Inclusion Risk ranked by ward (* risk decile refers to a London-wide ranking: 1 means the ward is within the 10% of highest-risk wards in London).

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**Digital Exclusion risk by ward (Brent), with location of GP surgeries and community assets**

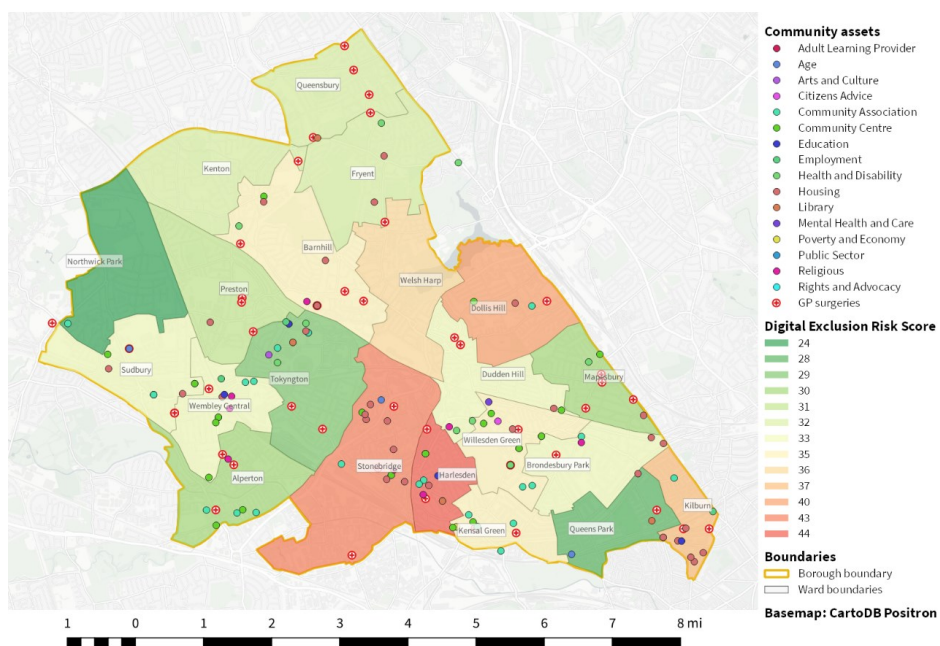Sources: Citizens Online, Brent Council, ONS OpenGeography



Figure 1: Digital Exclusion risk score by ward, Brent: red and orange are the wards with the highest levels of risk, with yellow areas being moderate risk overall and green areas being at lowest risk.

# 1. FOCUS ON HIGHER RISK WARDS

## HARLESDEN

**Digital exclusion risk by LSOA, and community assets, Harlesden ward, Brent**

Data sources: Brent Council, Citizens Online, NHS Digital, ONS OpenGeography
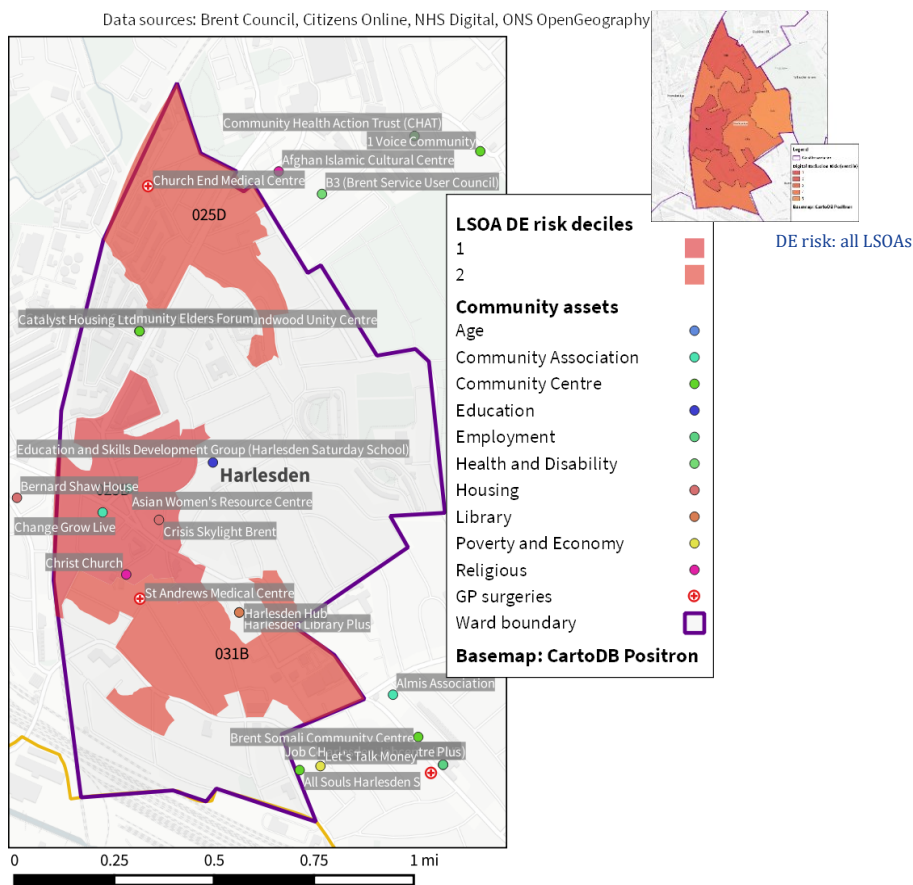


DE risk: all LSOAs

Figure 2: Digital exclusion risk by LSOA (highest risk only), and community assets, Harlesden ward

All 8 LSOAs in Harlesden ward are ranked as within the top 40% of areas at risk of digital exclusion in London. Three of these areas are found within the 20% most at risk, and these are highlighted on the map above.

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The majority of the community assets within Harlesden are found in or very near these areas of highest concern, and these cover a range of types:

- Community associations such as the **Asian Women's Resource Centre** and **Change, Grow, Live,** as well as **Let's Talk Money** just outside the ward in Kensal Green
- **Harlesden Library and Harlesden Hub**
- Community centres such as the **Church End and Roundwood Unity Centre**
- Employment and education resources such as the **Education and Skills Development Group** and the nearby **Jobcentre Plus** in Kensal Green
- Housing providers such as **Catalyst** and **Crisis Skylight Brent**
- GP surgeries: **Church End Medical Centre** in the north of the ward and **St Andrew's** in the south, as well as the **B3 Brent Service User Council** based in neighbouring Dudden Hill ward.

**St Andrew's Medical Centre** is one of the 10 surgeries in the borough with the lowest % of patients registered for GP online services (16.2%) while **Church End Medical Centre** has one of the lowest rates of usage of these services relative to the number of patients registered (0.2 transactions per patient in January 2020).

While Harlesden does not have a particularly high number of older residents, it does have a high number and of residents claiming disability-related benefits (PIP, DLA and/or ESA) and claiming Universal Credit or Housing Benefit. It also has a high number of residents who do not have any educational qualifications. This points to a high level of social need within the ward and a large number of residents likely to need support to carry out tasks online; such as online forms to initiate and maintain a claim for UC.

Support with employment-related training may be a crucial area of need in Harlesden. Due to the number of people on lower incomes, working on digital financial literacy – avoiding scams and using apps to help with budgets and to save money – through community associations including **Let's Save Money** may be a great and helpful hook for residents to get into digital.

A joined-up approach involving the local council, statutory agencies and a network of local community and voluntary sector organisations is the most effective way of helping residents with the essential digital skills. Digital Champions working in GP surgeries, the local library, the Jobcentre and through housing providers can provide a multitude of touchpoints where residents can gain and reinforce their digital capabilities.

## STONEBRIDGE

Of the 10 LSOAs in Stonebridge ward, five are within the top four ventiles (top 20%) for digital exclusion risk nationally. One of these (027F) is within the top ventile (5%).

**Digital exclusion risk by LSOA, and community assets, Stonebridge ward, Brent**

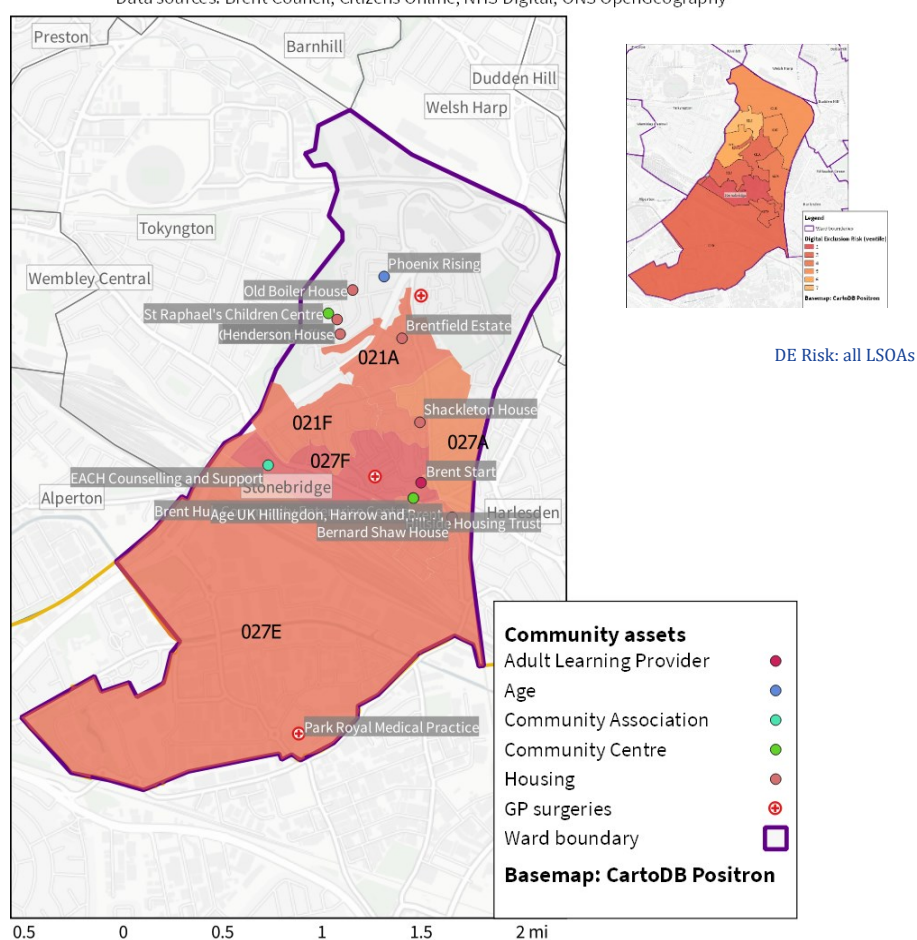Data sources: Brent Council, Citizens Online, NHS Digital, ONS OpenGeography



DE Risk: all LSOAs

Figure 3: Digital exclusion risk by LSOA (highest risk only); community assets, Stonebridge ward

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Within this high-risk neighbourhood are located the **Brent Start** adult education service, **EACH Counselling and Support** and **Hilltop Medical Practice**, with the **Brent Hub Community Enterprise Centre** – where the local Age UK office is located – and **Hillside Housing Trust** being located very close by.

Housing schemes such as **Bernard Shaw House** and **Shackleton House** are also found within the higher-risk areas of Stonebridge, along with the Brentfield Estate (including **Brentfield Medical Centre**). The **Asian People's Disability Alliance**, based on Alric Avenue in Stonebridge, may be able to support digital inclusion work in this area.

On the north side of the A406 North Circular, another estate, centred on Pitfield Way – home to **St Raphael's Children's Centre**, **Phoenix Rising** and **Henderson House** – is within the top 30% of areas at risk.

## DOLLIS HILL

Three of the seven LSOAs in this ward are within the top 6 ventiles (30%) at risk nationally, with one (010F) in the west of the ward being in the top 10% at risk. This neighbourhood is home to **Kingfisher Youth and Community Centre**, a venue that may be able to host or provide digital skills support sessions for local residents.

There are very few community venues we are aware so far of in this ward: as well as Kingfisher, there is **Dollis Hill Residents' Association** and **Comber Close** (social housing); **Oxgate Gardens Surgery** is the only GP surgery in the ward itself.

While Dollis Hill does not have very high numbers of people in most risk categories compared to some other wards, in terms of the overall picture - and as a ward with a relatively low population – the digital exclusion risk here is still high. That said, the population at risk is probably very concentrated in the few LSOAs that are most at risk, with others being relatively low-risk, so digital inclusion efforts here will benefit from being especially tightly targeted.

**Digital exclusion risk by LSOA, and community assets,
Dollis Hill ward, Brent**

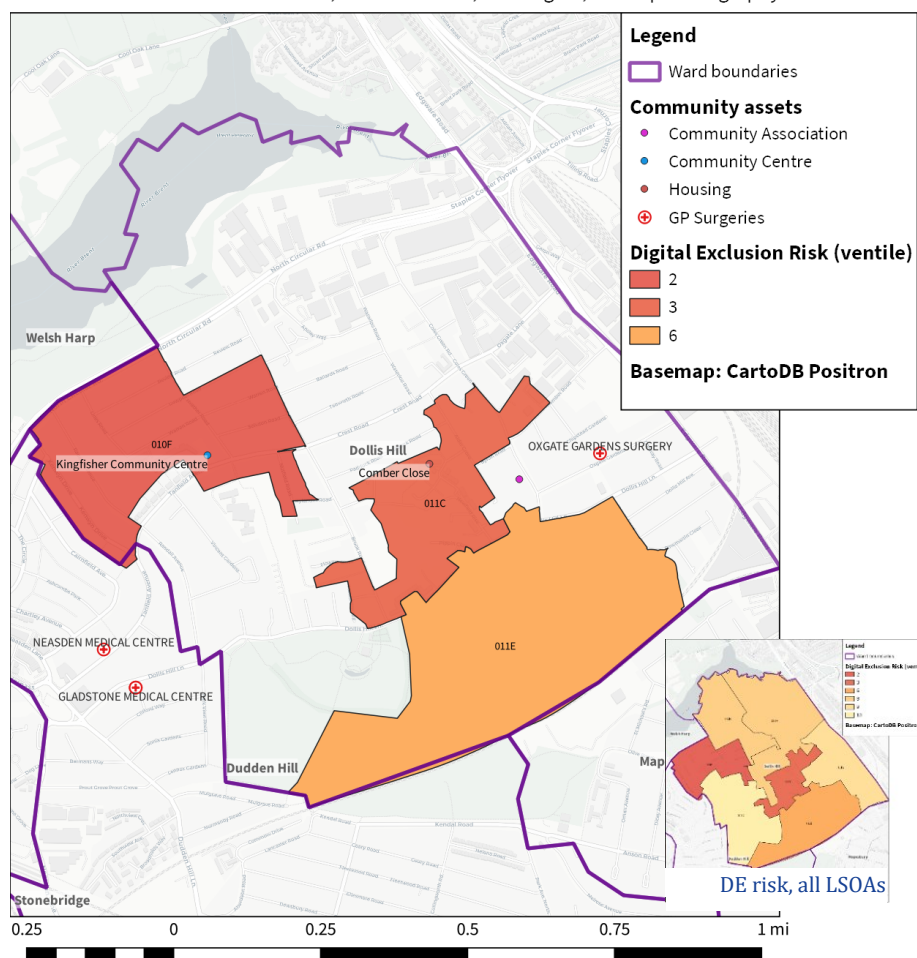Data sources: Brent Council, Citizens Online, NHS Digital, ONS OpenGeography



Figure 4: Digital exclusion risk by LSOA (highest risk only), and community assets, Dollis Hill ward

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## 2. FOCUS ON SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES

The recent pandemic has highlighted how businesses need digital technologies to be resilient. This pathfinder would audit and attempt to improve digital support for small and medium enterprises. With the aim to increase the number of businesses with an online presence and using technology to run a business more efficiently. For example: having a website, using social media, cloud-computing, digital finance and HR systems, remote working and online booking systems.

### OUTCOMES

Increased:

- Uptake of Superfast Broadband for self-employed, Micro and SMEs
- Confidence in staff in using online services and business tools. Specifically in: wholesale and retail sectors, human health and social work, accommodation and food services.
- Uptake in business related online digital journeys
- Income and profit for individuals and businesses to improve economic development in the area

### BACKGROUND

There are 35,500 people in Brent who are self-employed. At 16% this is a considerably higher rate than across either London (13.2%) or Great Britain as a whole (10.9%). There are 15,485 Micro, Small or Medium sized enterprises (16,945 units). The largest portion of these will be employment either directly or related to wholesale and retail trade (19.4% of Brent employees – compared to 15.2% across Great Britain and just 12% across London as a whole).

Other significant sectors are human health and social work (15.3% - compared to 10.3% across London), and accommodation and food services (8.1% compared to 7.6% across Great Britain).

Earnings in Brent for full-time workers (£610.20/gross per week) are higher than those across Great Britain on average (£587), but are significantly below the London average (£699.20).

A higher proportion or employees in Brent are involved in so-called "Elementary occupations" – 20,500 people or 12.4% of employees – compared to 10.3% across Great Britain and just 8% across London. Earnings can potentially be improved by helping people improve their digital skills, and businesses to diversify their income streams including digital channels.

| UK Business Counts (2019) | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Enterprises | Brent (numbers) | Brent (%) | London (numbers) | London (%) |
| Micro (0 to 9) | 14,385 | 92.6 | 473,875 | 90.7 |
| Small (10 to 49) | 925 | 6 | 38,570 | 7.4 |
| Medium (50 to 249) | 175 | 1.1 | 7,650 | 1.5 |
| Micro, Small and Medium Subtotal | 15,485 | 99.7 | 520,095 | 99.6 |
| Large (250+) | 45 | 0.3 | 2,145 | 0.4 |
| Total | 15,530 | - | 522,240 | - |
| | | | | |
| Local Units | | | | |
| Micro (0 to 9) | 15,240 | 89.7 | 509,415 | 87.2 |
| Small (10 to 49) | 1,350 | 7.9 | 59,570 | 10.2 |
| Medium (50 to 249) | 355 | 2.1 | 12,885 | 2.2 |
| Large (250+) | 50 | 0.3 | 2,315 | 0.4 |
| Total | 16,990 | - | 584,185 | - |
| Source: Inter Departmental Business Register (ONS) | | | | |



New income sources increasingly rely on digital skills and connectivity. According to the recent Lloyds Bank Business Digital Index[36], the **most digitally capable** small businesses are **more than twice as likely to report an increase in turnover**, than the least digital.

Digitally capable charities are also 28% more likely to report an increase in funding. However, a study by the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) found that 25% of SMEs don't think digital skills are important for their growth[37] despite 22% believing that a lack of digital skills within their organisation is preventing them from increasing their digital and online presence.

The study also found **more than a quarter of SME owners** were **not confident in their own basic digital skills**, and 46% of SMEs say their staff lack knowledge. Nationally, three-quarters (75%) of small businesses see talent as the biggest obstacle to their future success.[38] Retail sector small businesses are "nearly twice as likely as Service sector

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[36] https://resources.lloydsbank.com/businessdigitalindex/
[37] https://www.computerweekly.com/news/450431691/Quarter-of-SMEs-say-digital-skills-not-important-for-business-growth
[38] https://www.dnb.co.uk/perspectives/small-business/sme-change-wakeof-brexit.html

companies to say they lack the time to make their business more digital (39% to 22%)"[39]. Many sectors including retail cite recruitment as the most significant factor that impacts their growth. This is unsurprising as the UK is suffering from a digital skills gap. It has been estimated that the UK has around 800,000 positions left unfilled as 'digital vacancies'.

The 2019 Lloyds Business Digital Index reported that, in that year, small businesses who used Cloud-based IT systems, online accounting software and digital training tools had £262,000 higher annual turnover than those using none. This rose from a difference of £103,000 in the previous year - more than two and a half times in a single year. The report argued that, "whilst there is no silver bullet when it comes to increasing productivity for small businesses, we have identified five key digital ingredients that can help businesses to thrive":

1. Using data to make decisions on how to improve their online presence
2. Using cloud-based IT systems
3. Allowing customers to view products and services on their website
4. Planning to grow their marketing capabilities
5. Using or intending to use 'smart' devices in the next two years.

The Longitudinal Small Business Survey (LSBS) conducted by the Enterprise Research Centre in 2019 "aimed to build a representative picture of established micro-businesses in the UK and collect comparative data on representative groups of micro-businesses in the US and Ireland". This found that "Web-based account software and cloud computing are the most commonly used digital technologies among UK micro-businesses, with over 40 per cent of firms using these technologies. E-Commerce is used by 30 per cent of firms, with 25 and 18 per cent of firms using CAD and CRM respectively"

Figure 5: Percentage of micro-business adopters of digital technologies (2012-2018)

| | 2012 | 2015 | 2018 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Customer Relations Management | 7% | 12% | 18% |
| E-Commerce | 12% | 21% | 30% |
| Web-based Accounting Software | 15% | 25% | 42% |
| Computer Aided Design | 13% | 19% | 25% |
| Cloud Computing | 9% | 22% | 43% |
| Artificial Intelligence | 1% | 2% | 3% |
| Machine Learning | 3% | 5% | 9% |

On a local level. Brent Council have recently conducted a "Digital overview of Kilburn town centre" in May 2020. This found that 46% of independent businesses in Brent had no digital presence (though 43% had their own website, and 54% were on social media). The proportion without a digital presence was significantly higher than in the Camden part of the town (39%) – though the proportion on social media was higher (50% in Camden). Across Kilburn, "Of the 134 independent businesses that have an

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[39] Lloyds Business Digital Index 2019

active website, 106 (79%) also have a social media presence. Cafes, supermarkets and convenience stores catering for local audiences are less likely to have any digital presence".

The document highlights that many businesses are utilising bespoke platforms for their sector, such as Treatwell for the (female) beauty sector, and Deliveroo, Just Eat and Uber Eats for takeaway food businesses: "44 (63%) out of 70 hospitality businesses are signed up to an external delivery platform... Of the 26 that are not, 15 (58%) have an active website. However 7 (27%) have no digital presence at all".

Historically small produce sellers, retail and hospitality businesses would have had to commission their own websites and pay to have them updated, maintained and search-optimised by professionals. Increasingly the trend is away from this and towards sophisticated third party platforms that act as the intermediary and 'do the tech' including search optimisation, advertising and payment processing such as Shopify, BigCommerce or Squarespace. However, to use these platforms, people still need an internet connection and Essential Digital Skills. Users also need to know these approaches are available and how to use them.

Engaging with businesses is a huge barrier. BCs Town Centre Manager told us that it's 'difficult to speak with the right people' in local SMEs. SME owners are incredibly busy and need good reasons to give up their time, if they can be contacted at all. In the recent pandemic 86% of business in Brent have applied for small business grants at the time of this report. In an ideal world these applications would provide a good opportunity to promote digital skills support available, but the business rates systems are not well linked to systems in the Economic Growth team and the data held across both is inconsistent. The Economic Growth team is trying internally to get this data.

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## ACTION PLAN

Increasingly, there is no real boundary between the business community and local households. In order to develop understanding and mobilise support from SMEs the community will need to be engaged. Therefore work under this pathfinder would be well placed with employability and welfare reform work at BC or other key organisations. Support for improvement of digital skills and assisting people in finding employment, should also include training in order to access a wider variety of jobs – particularly with local SMEs - or even to start their own businesses.

Ultimately the aim is a community of individuals and small businesses that understand and actively support the development of digital skills and infrastructure development. Within this there will be a need to develop community, third sector and SME leaders, but ultimately the aim needs to be to develop and harness grass roots support.

1. **Consider working in partnership with similar business support agencies**, such as Federation of Small Businesses, Harrow Chamber of Commerce, The Local Enterprise Partnership for London. There is a lot of support aimed at economic support for COVID-19. SMEs can be difficult to engage with so a partnership approach may prevent SMEs being overwhelmed with similar offers from multiple organisations.

2. **Develop a diagnostic tool for businesses, to help prioritise** and decide where to focus resources in **developing digital journeys**. Trying to embark on too much digital change at once can be overwhelming. For example, moving to online HR software may free up more time to develop an online sales channel rather than the other way around.

The Lloyds Business Consumer Index report lists five top recommendations:
1. Using data to make decisions on how to improve their online presence
2. Using cloud-based IT systems
3. Allowing customers to view products and services on their website
4. Planning to grow their marketing capabilities
5. Using or intending to use 'smart' devices in the next two years.

3. **Offer Digital Champion support to businesses** to develop a recovery plan to include their planned digital journey from the diagnostic tool broken down into manageable steps.

4. **Signpost businesses to free training and support** from a wide range of sources such as: Google Garage, iDEA, Lloyds Bank Academy or Cisco Academy[40]. Use DCs to offer support with these resources.

5. **Facilitate peer to peer support, mentoring and sharing of learning**. For example businesses that have undergone successful digital transformation acting as mentors for others. This could be hosted in a Facebook group, Slack channel or WhatsApp group or use an existing business network that may now be online.

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[40] See Appendix 1 for a list of resources

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## 3. FOCUS ON LONELINESS AND ISOLATION

**12% of people in Brent would like to see more money spent on help for older people, according to the 2018 Resident attitudes survey. This could include funding to reduce loneliness and isolation amongst older people – who can be at particular risk.**

The 2020 Lloyds Consumer Digital Index reports that:

- 38% of the online population agree that being online "helps me feel less alone"
- 47% identified feeling "more like part of a community" as a benefit of being online.
- "34% of those online benefit from using the Internet to manage their physical and mental health. Those with the highest levels of digital engagement are more than twice as likely to benefit from this (44% compared to 21% of the least digitally engaged)."



Photo by Siavash Ghanbari on Unsplash

In common with the Government's strategy for tackling loneliness[41], we adopt the framework used by the Campaign to End Loneliness and the Jo Cox Commission, to define loneliness as:

> *"a subjective, unwelcome feeling of lack or loss of companionship. It happens when we have a mismatch between the quantity and quality of social relationships that we have, and those that we want."*

The Government strategy notes though "Loneliness is often used interchangeably with isolation, [and] while they are linked and can often overlap, they are not the same."

> *"It is possible to be isolated without feeling lonely and conversely to feel lonely while surrounded by people. Isolation is observable: for example, we may look at how many relationships someone has or how often they speak to other people to help us understand whether someone is isolated. We cannot measure loneliness in this way. Similarly, loneliness is not the same as solitude – which some people enjoy – as loneliness is an unwelcome feeling."*

## THE LOCAL PICTURE

It is difficult to identify geographic data that would identify people who are likely to feel alone. But, there are some proxy indicators that may be helpful to us. Across Brent there were in the 2011 Census, there were **8,808 single occupancy households where the resident was aged 65 or over**.

We can also look at Carer's Allowance (CA) as Carers UK report that 80% of carers have felt lonely or socially isolated[42]. There were 5,378 people with entitlement to receive Carer's Allowance in Brent as of November 2019, which suggests **there could be 4,300 carers in Brent who have felt lonely or socially isolated**.[43]

Entitlement to CA also acts as a "passport" to the carer premiums/additions in means-tested benefits such as: Income Support, Pension Credit and Housing Benefit. Under a third of Carer's Allowance claimants in Brent receive the benefit alone (1,538 or 28.6%). 2,514 also receive Universal Credit, Housing Benefit, Pension Credit, Income Support or a combination of these. This indicates lower financial means and therefore greater risk of digital exclusion. Those who receive Housing Benefit will move to Universal Credit and be required to apply online, so this represents a group that are

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[41] A connected society. A strategy for tackling loneliness – laying the foundations for change, published 15th October 2018.

[42] "Alarming numbers of people feel isolated and lonely as a result of caring for their loved ones", Carers UK, 2015, accessed 26/02/2019.

[43] The DWP explain on the StatXplore site that "Totals for all entitled cases show both the number of people in receipt of an allowance and those with entitlement where the payment has been suspended, for example if they are in hospital." There were over 813,804 recipients of Carer's Allowance in Great Britain in August 2017. To be entitled to Carer's Allowance, a person must be providing at least 35 hours of care a week for someone in receipt of a qualifying disability benefit, not be in full-time education, and, if in paid work, have earnings after certain deductions of no more than £110 a week.

likely to need digital skills support – as well as one that may be more likely to feel socially isolated or lonely.

Research by the South West Academic Health Science Network in 2014 found 45% of people over 75 admitted to A&E said they were socially isolated.[44] Triage sessions at GP surgeries to identify people who are socially isolated or lonely and who lack digital skills could be effective in signposting people to other support; including gaining digital skills which may be able to reduce perceptions of isolation or feelings of loneliness.

As indicated in the Lloyds Consumer Digital Index, being online may help people to feel part of a community, less lonely, and help them to manage and improve their health. Such a programme of work may need to involve the creation of bespoke courses on the Digital Champions Network for Digital Champions. Courses along the lines of "identifying and supporting people who are socially isolated" or "Supporting Carers with digital skills" could be developed.

Carers UK's research with the Jo Cox Commission on Loneliness[45] found that 32% of employees currently juggling work and care have felt lonely or isolated in the workplace because of their caring role. These employees may be more likely to be 'sandwich carers', caring for both sick, disabled or older relatives and dependent children, and as such "more likely to experience symptoms of mental ill-health (27%) – which can include anxiety and depression – than the general population (22%)"[46]. Carers UK report that carers' top priority for workplace support is improved and consistent manager awareness of caring issues (37%) and more flexible / special leave arrangements (37%)[47].

Loneliness and social isolation do not only affect older demographics and those who are carers. An ONS analysis of children's and young people's experiences of loneliness[48] found that 27.5% of children receiving free school meals (FSM) reported that they are often lonely, compared to just 5.5% of children who did not receive FSM. The report highlights children's and young people's suggestions for tackling loneliness:

- create a culture of openness about loneliness
- create opportunities to make social connections
- encourage positive uses of social media to alleviate loneliness
- prepare young people to understand loneliness and equip them to deal with it

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[44] "Top urgent care doctor: Impact of loneliness at Christmas causes spike in A&E numbers", NHS England, 23rd December 2014, accessed 26/02/2019.

[45] The world shrinks: Carer loneliness (pdf), CarersUK.

[46] More than one in four sandwich carers report symptoms of mental ill-health, ONS, January 2019.

[47] Caring and isolation in the workplace, CarersUK, March 2015.

[48] Analysis of Children's and young people's experiences of loneliness, ONS, December 2018.

These suggestions highlight a key point. **While digital inclusion can help, through being an enabler or a catalyst, it cannot resolve these issues alone. Loneliness and isolation are usually more complicated and multi-faceted issues than can be addressed by relatively small amounts of support to use technology.**

Indeed, loneliness and isolation are major issues in our society despite the fact that we now live in the most digitally connected age our society has ever experienced. Over-use or even addiction to digital communication can result in the opposite — it can completely isolate people (whether at work or socially) and actually increase people's experience of loneliness. So as well as building in more digital skills support, organisations should be mindful of "the need to plan for connection and design in moments of human contact" identified in the Ministerial Foreword to the Strategy:

> *Government can also work with communities and other sectors on the way our neighbourhoods, public services, businesses and working environments are designed and run so they consider social relationships, not just efficient transactions.*

The loneliness risk map in Figure 2 is based on an approach developed by the Office for National Statistics' Data Science Campus, which uses NHS Digital GP prescription data to find areas with above-average prescriptions for five conditions where loneliness has been shown to be a risk factor (*Alzheimer's, depression, high blood pressure, anxiety and insomnia).*

The data is available only at MSOA level[49]. These areas are roughly similar in size to council wards and in some — but by no means all — cases have similar boundaries and names to wards.

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[49] In this map we have used the unofficial MSOA names developed by the House of Commons Library; these names may not match local usage.
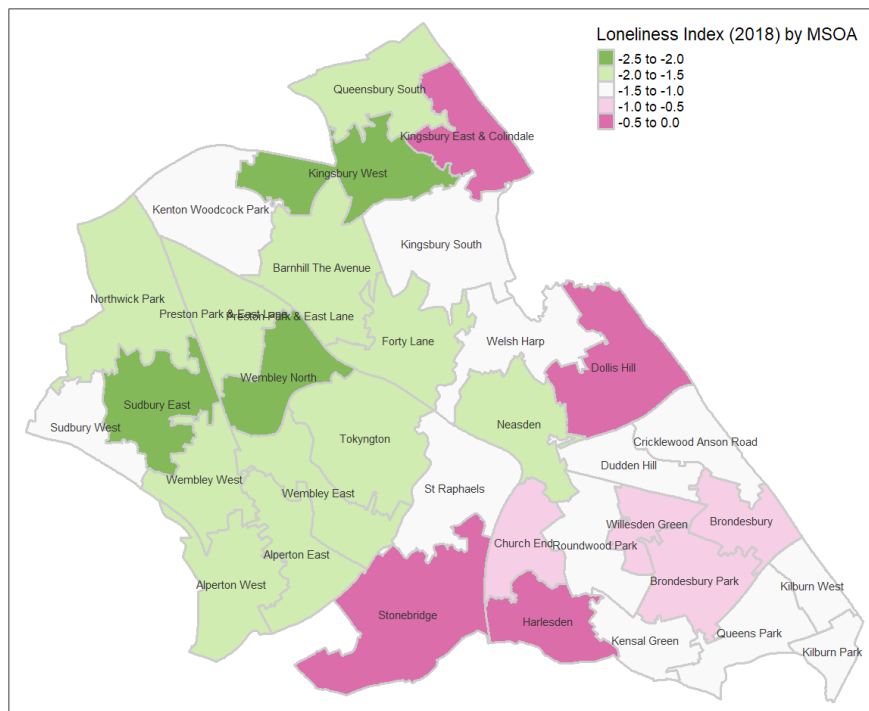
Figure 6: Loneliness Index (2018) by MSOA, London Borough of Brent. Source: ONS Data Science Campus, 2020

The darker pink areas on the map show MSOAs where the prescription data indicates the highest risk of residents experiencing loneliness. These are:

- Dollis Hill
- Harlesden
- Kingsbury East & Colindale
- Stonebridge

### What characteristics and circumstances are associated with feeling lonely?

The ONS Community Life Survey (2016-17) enabled analysis of the characteristics and circumstances associated with loneliness in England. Results from this survey show that, nationally:

- 5% of adults in England reported feeling lonely "often" or "always"
- Younger adults aged 16 to 24 years reported feeling lonely more often than those in older age groups.
- Women reported feeling lonely more often than men.

- Those single or widowed were at particular risk of experiencing loneliness more often.
- People in poor health or who have conditions they describe as "limiting" were also at particular risk of feeling lonely more often.
- Renters reported feeling lonely more often than homeowners.
- People who feel that they belong less strongly to their neighbourhood reported feeling lonely more often.
- People who have little trust of others in their local area reported feeling lonely more often.

The Community Life Survey analysis enabled three profiles of people at particular risk from loneliness to be identified:

- Widowed older homeowners living alone with long-term health conditions.
- Unmarried, middle-agers with long-term health conditions.
- Younger renters with little trust and sense of belonging to their area.

Further investigation of these factors among the population in Brent may enable us to pinpoint, to a greater degree of accuracy than the MSOA map, where pockets of residents at higher risk of loneliness may be found.

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# 5. UNDERSTANDING DIGITAL EXCLUSION FACTORS

Digital exclusion is not something we can measure directly. However, we can explore factors which contribute to it so we can understand which people are more likely to be affected. **People who are older and/or disabled are less likely to be online, have a range of devices to access the internet, or have the full range of digital skills.**

These issues are compounded by poverty – people on lower incomes, and receiving benefits such as Pension Credit – are more likely to be offline, to lack access to devices, and to have low/no digital skills.

## AGE

Older people are more likely to be digitally excluded – to be offline, to lack digital skills, and to be less likely to have access to digital devices.

- 33% of people aged 65+ have not been online *within the last 3 months* – hence they are effectively not online (ONS, figure 5).
- The great majority of these (86%, or 29% of all people aged 65+) have *never* been online.
- **More than half of the population aged 75+ (53.1%) are effectively not online** and most (89%, 47% of people aged 75 or over) of these have never been online[50].
- We have used this age data as the basis of our estimates that **around 50,000 adults in Brent lack Essential Digital Skills**

Figure 7: Proportion (%) of people nationally who are not online, by age band



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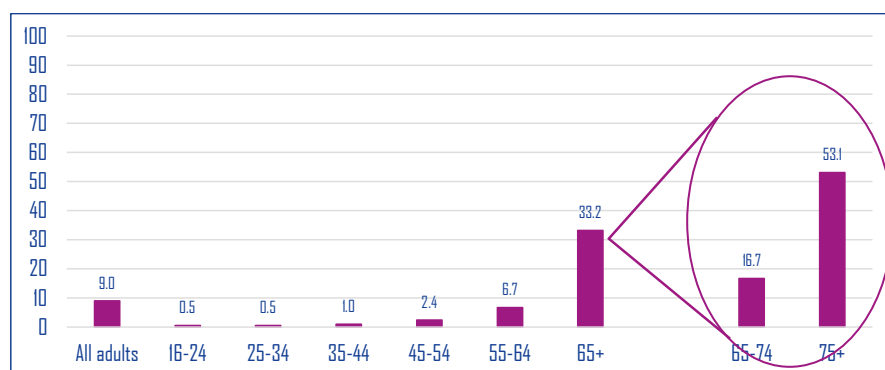
[50] ONS: Internet Users, UK (2019), accessed 25/09/2019

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## LOWER INCOME AND BENEFITS

- Lower income is associated with lower likelihood to have all digital skills. **25% of people earning under £11,499/year have skills in each of the five Essential Digital Skills groups**, compared to 61% of people earning over £25,000 [51].
- We estimate that at least **12,600 people in Brent will need support making a UC claim, and 9,100 will need ongoing support**.
- 43% of applicants said they needed more help making a Universal Credit (UC) claim – which is almost always required to be done online (DWP survey).
- A third of claimants need ongoing support using their UC digital account (31%).[52]

In Brent, there are 42,500 people claiming either UC or Housing Benefit (HB). 29,400 of these are currently claiming HB, but will move to UC. In all but exceptional cases this will require a digital application and digital entries to an online journal. We estimate that **12,600 people will need support making their UC claim, and 9,100 will need ongoing support**. We think this is a conservative estimate as there will be other groups of people that need to claim UC, not just those already claiming HB.

## DISABILITY

- There are around 20,000 disabled adults in Brent (*estimate from disability-related benefit claims*).
- 21.6% of disabled people, nationally, are not regular internet users (2.7 million people) - *considerably higher than for adults who are not disabled (5%)*[53]
- Technological developments can help those with impairments to access services online, but **we estimate 4,300 disabled adults in Brent are offline**.

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[51] Lloyds Consumer Digital Index, 2019. Likewise, The 2018 Lloyds CDI found that just 64% of those earning under £17,499 a year had all five Basic Digital Skills, compared to 84% of those earning up between £17,500 and £39,999, and 94% of those earning over £40,000

[52] Universal Credit full service claimant survey – DWP, June 2018, accessed 26/02/2019. The estimates of people who need help with UC claims may be underestimates as they only cover digital exclusion among those people claiming UC at that point of the rollout. The initial roll out cases were not expected to be the most difficult and may not overlap with the claimants or areas of the country that are most digitally excluded – particularly at a point when many people who would not have expected to need to claim UC are finding it is the only income stream available to them.

[53] According to the ONS Internet Users data for 2019, 18.2% of disabled people have never used the internet (2.3 million people), compared to 4.9% of those who are not disabled (1.7 million people). A further 3.4% last used the internet over three months ago, and may thus also be considered effectively offline. This makes a total of 21.6% of disabled people who are never, or not regularly, online (2.7 million people).

There is a clear intersection between age and disability: disabled people are less likely to be internet users the older they are (figure 9). **Among disabled people aged 75 and over, 59% are not internet users, more than ten times the rate for adults who are not disabled.**

Figure 8: Proportion of people who are not internet users: disabled people by age (ONS, 2019)
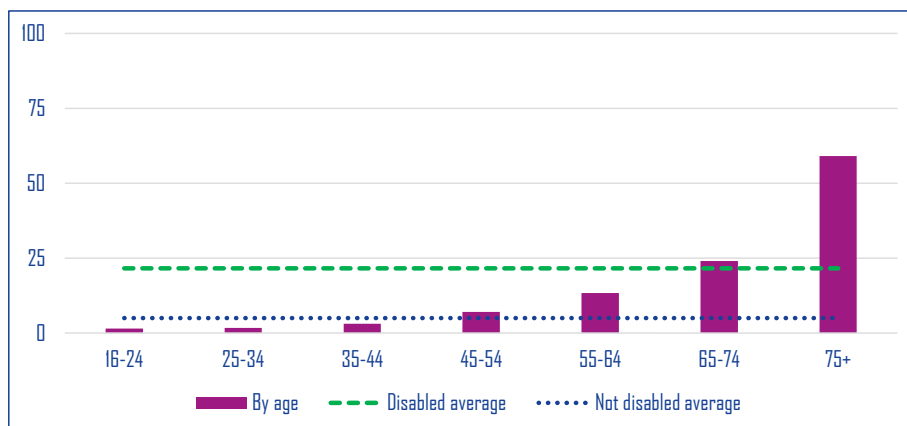


Disabled internet users are less likely to access public services online than non-disabled internet users: 37% vs. 43%.[54] This gap varies among people with different impairments: it is largest for visually impaired people (27% vs. 43%), while hearing impaired people are as likely as non-disabled people to use the internet to access public services (44% vs. 43%, see figure 9).

Figure 9: Proportion of people using the internet to access public services (benefits, government, council), by disability type
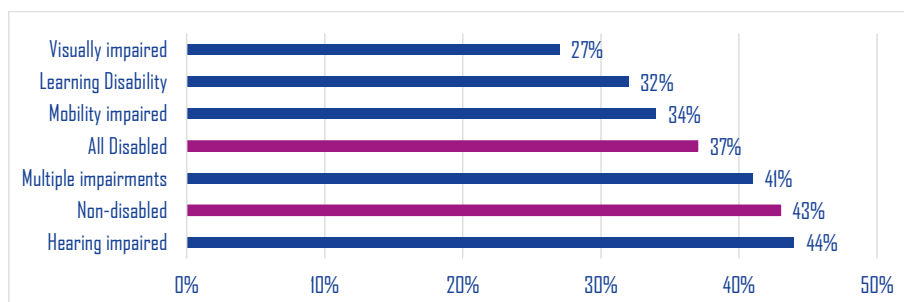


[54] Ofcom, 2018 Access and inclusion in 2018 report, available online at: https://www.ofcom.org.uk/research-and-data/multi-sector-research/accessibility-research/access-and-inclusion, accessed 15/01/2020.

## DEVICES

- Between **34,000 and 98,000 adults in Brent lack access to one or more digital devices** (between 13% and 37% of the adult population)**.**
- Older people are on the whole less likely to have access to digital devices in their households.
- The 2019 Lloyds Consumer Digital Index[55] provides data on the proportion of households without smartphones, laptop/PCs, and tablets. In each case, the proportion is highest for people aged 65 or over (see Figure 9).[56]

Figure 10: Proportion (%) of people without certain devices in their household, by age band
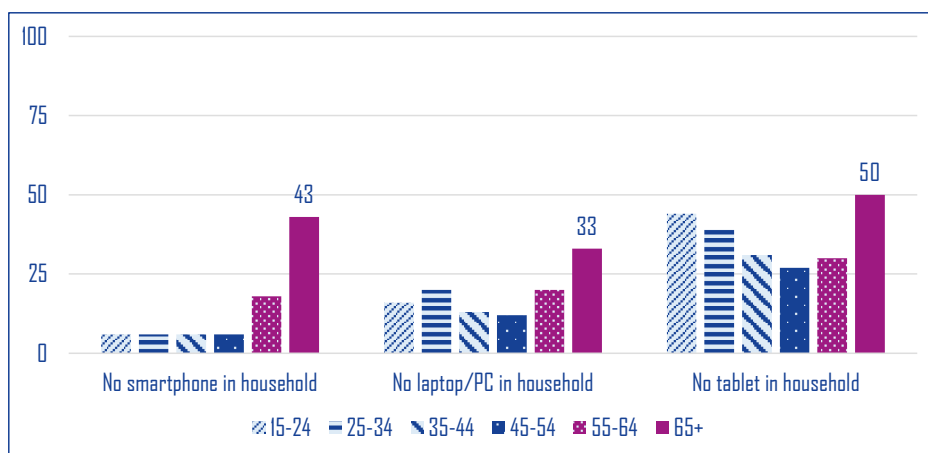


In Brent, we estimate that between **34,000 and 98,000 adults lack access to one or more of these digital devices, between 13% and 37% of the adult population** (Figure 11). These are significant proportions, in line with the proportions for England as a whole. We can't tell from this data what proportion of the population lacks any type of device capable of connecting to the internet.

Smartphones are the most popular device. But people who only use a smartphone to get online can have problems with completing online tasks. Many sites are not formatted very well for mobile use and the screen and keypad on many smartphones is small. Ofcom research estimates that around a quarter of UK adults "only use devices other than a desktop or laptop to go online".[57]

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[55] Lloyds Consumer Digital Index, 2019 – data derived from Appendix 24, based on an Ipsos MORI face-to-face Omnibus survey of 4,190 participants aged 15+ years in Great Britain and Northern Ireland.
[56] The picture for tablets is marginally more complicated as younger people seem less likely to have these, likely due to preference for other devices, but
[57] 'Smartphone by default' internet users - A qualitative research report, Ofcom, 2016 (pdf)

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Figure 11: Number and proportion of adults in Brent without smartphones, laptop/PCs, tablets

|  | No smartphone in household | No laptop/PC in household | No tablet in household |
|---|---|---|---|
| Adults, Brent | 34,808 | 49,494 | 97,234 |
| % of adults, Brent | 13.2 | 18.7 | 36.8 |
| % of adults, England | 16.0 | 19.9 | 37.6 |

Research by Citizens Advice Scotland found people reliant on smartphones to access the internet were less likely to say that they can use a computer 'very well' (28% compared to 41%), and less likely to access their email 'daily' (37% compared to 48%).[58]

The proportion of smartphone-only users who report they can complete a benefits application online 'no problem' is, at under a third – 31% - less than half that for users of all devices, 76%. This leaves a large proportion of smartphone-only users who experience some problem at least when filling in such applications.

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[58] Locked out: the Smartphone Deficit, Citizens Advice Scotland, 2018 (pdf)

# 6. CORONAVIRUS RISK AND DIGITAL EXCLUSION

The maps we present below use 2011 Census Output Areas (OAs). Rather than using percentages or raw numbers of people, in these maps we have used a risk ranking algorithm that combines:

1. The number of residents who had a long-term health condition that limited their day-to-day activity a lot (2011 figures). We've used this as a proxy for people self-isolating due to greater risk from COVID-19-19-19 related to an underlying health condition.
2. An age-adjusted risk ranking based on people aged 70 or over. We've taken the number of people in each 5 year age band over 65 (65-69, 70-74, 75-79, 80+) and weighted these to show areas where a higher number of older people are at risk[59].

We ranked each OA on those measures, where 1 is the area with the highest risk, and then added the ranks. Areas with lower numbers therefore contain a higher number of older people and/or people with a long-term health condition that limits their day-to-day activity a lot.

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[59] People aged 65-69 in 2018 multiplied by 0.5, aged 70-74 multiplied by 1, 75-79 by 1.1, and 80+ by 1.2

Figure 12: GP surgeries by online transactions per patient *vs* COVID-19-19-19 risk by Census Output Area

**Brent: GPs by online transactions per patient, vs Covid-19 Risk by Census Output Area**
Source: Citizens Online calculations based on data from NHS Digital (January 2020), ONS Mid-Year Population Estimate (2018), and the Census (2011)
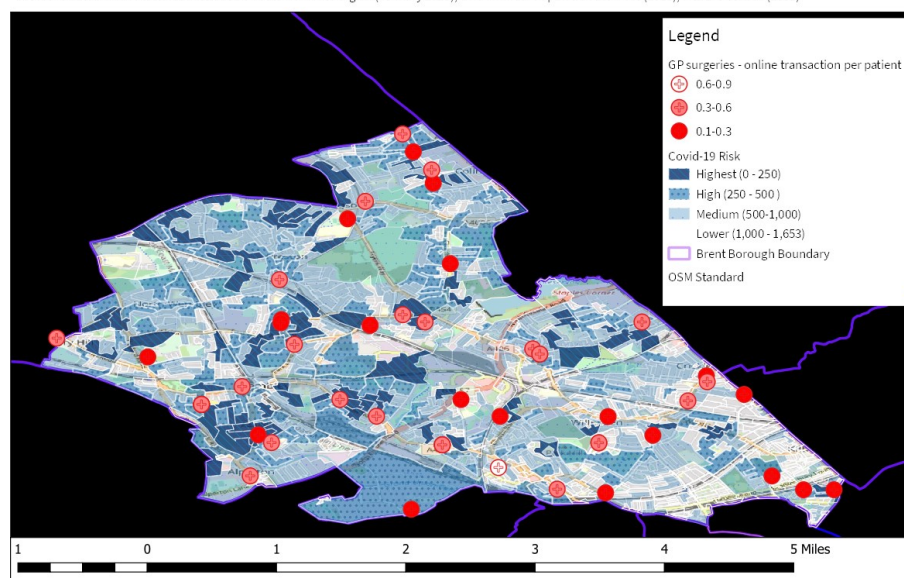


This map shows the level of use of online services. It gives an indication of where surgeries will have to adapt most to a shift to online, regardless of how many patients are nominally registered for online services.

No surgery in Brent saw more than 1 online transaction per patient (TPP) registered for online services during January 2020. In 41 of a total of 53 surgeries in the borough, there were less than 30 transactions per 100 patients registered online. Most of these surgeries are in locations where the level of coronavirus risk in nearby Output Areas (likely members of the patient list) is highest.

The surgeries detailed below will require additional digital skills support to onboard patients to online services, and/or their local areas will require additional paper/post- or landline-based information about coronavirus and support available.

Figure 13: GP surgeries with lower levels of online transactions per patient registered for the service

| Practice Name | Number of Patients | Patients registered for an online service | Online transactions (January 2020) | Online transactions per online patient |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| PEEL PRECINCT SURGERY | 1,240 | 211 | 11 | 0.1 |
| KILBURN PARK MEDICAL CENTRE | 8,093 | 3,114 | 414 | 0.1 |
| CHICHELE ROAD SURGERY | 5,807 | 1,073 | 164 | 0.2 |
| STAVERTON SURGERY | 9,025 | 5,871 | 927 | 0.2 |
| THE FRYENT WAY SURGERY | 8,478 | 5,956 | 942 | 0.2 |
| CHURCH LANE SURGERY | 8,963 | 3,421 | 570 | 0.2 |
| CHALKHILL FAMILY PRACTICE | 7,164 | 3,794 | 636 | 0.2 |
| WILLOW TREE FAMILY DOCTORS | 16,070 | 9,313 | 1,573 | 0.2 |
| STANLEY CORNER MEDICAL CENTRE | 6,250 | 2,519 | 432 | 0.2 |
| GLADSTONE MEDICAL CENTRE | 9,227 | 3,466 | 600 | 0.2 |
| THE LONSDALE MEDICAL CENTRE | 23,448 | 11,643 | 2,035 | 0.2 |
| PEARL MEDICAL PRACTICE | 4,773 | 2,001 | 351 | 0.2 |
| SUDBURY SURGERY | 8,833 | 2,933 | 529 | 0.2 |
| THE LAW MEDICAL GROUP PRACTICE | 18,004 | 8,289 | 1,497 | 0.2 |
| CHURCH END MEDICAL CENTRE | 8,048 | 3,651 | 666 | 0.2 |
| PRESTON ROAD SURGERY | 6,997 | 3,266 | 609 | 0.2 |
| PARK ROYAL MEDICAL PRACTICE | 7,586 | 2,791 | 526 | 0.2 |
| BRENTFIELD MEDICAL CENTRE | 9,106 | 2,029 | 402 | 0.2 |
| ELLIS PRACTICE | 8,975 | 5,234 | 1060 | 0.2 |
| KINGS EDGE MEDICAL CENTRE | 3,590 | 1,438 | 292 | 0.2 |
| MAPESBURY MEDICAL GROUP | 9,248 | 3,325 | 698 | 0.2 |
| PRESTON MEDICAL CENTRE | 4,253 | 1,601 | 341 | 0.2 |
| ROUNDWOOD PARK MEDICAL CENTRE | 4,171 | 2,583 | 554 | 0.2 |
| THE WILLESDEN MEDICAL CENTRE | 13,406 | 4,879 | 1,063 | 0.2 |
| THE STONEBRIDGE PRACTICE | 7,247 | 4,063 | 984 | 0.2 |
| NEASDEN MEDICAL CENTRE | 9,892 | 1,789 | 456 | 0.3 |
| FORTY WILLOWS SURGERY | 6,632 | 1,868 | 488 | 0.3 |
| THE WEMBLEY PRACTICE | 12,964 | 2,711 | 718 | 0.3 |
| THE SURGERY | 5,375 | 1,907 | 510 | 0.3 |
| HILLTOP MEDICAL PRACTICE | 4,026 | 978 | 264 | 0.3 |
| FREUCHEN MEDICAL CENTRE | 6,448 | 1,544 | 443 | 0.3 |
| ALPERTON MEDICAL CENTRE | 5,943 | 2,249 | 648 | 0.3 |
| PREMIER MEDICAL CENTRE | 8,374 | 4,398 | 1,328 | 0.3 |
| AKSYR MEDICAL PRACTICE | 7,455 | 1,975 | 602 | 0.3 |
| LANCELOT MEDICAL CENTRE | 6,822 | 1,021 | 312 | 0.3 |
| KINGSBURY HEALTH AND WELLBEING | 4,781 | 2,597 | 823 | 0.3 |
| LANFRANC MEDICAL CENTRE | 6,150 | 1,823 | 586 | 0.3 |
| THE SUNFLOWER MEDICAL CENTRE | 3,201 | 973 | 317 | 0.3 |
| BURNLEY PRACTICE | 8,908 | 2,427 | 807 | 0.3 |
| UXENDON CRESCENT SURGERY | 5,544 | 2,086 | 709 | 0.3 |
| OXGATE GARDENS SURGERY | 6,695 | 1,841 | 631 | 0.3 |

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Figure 14: Census Output Areas by COVID-19-19-19 risk vs proportion of GP patient list "online"



**Brent: GPs by proportion of patients "online", vs Covid-19 Risk by Census Output Area**

Source: Citizens Online calculations based on data from NHS Digital (January 2020), ONS Mid-Year Population Estimate (2018), and the Census (2011)
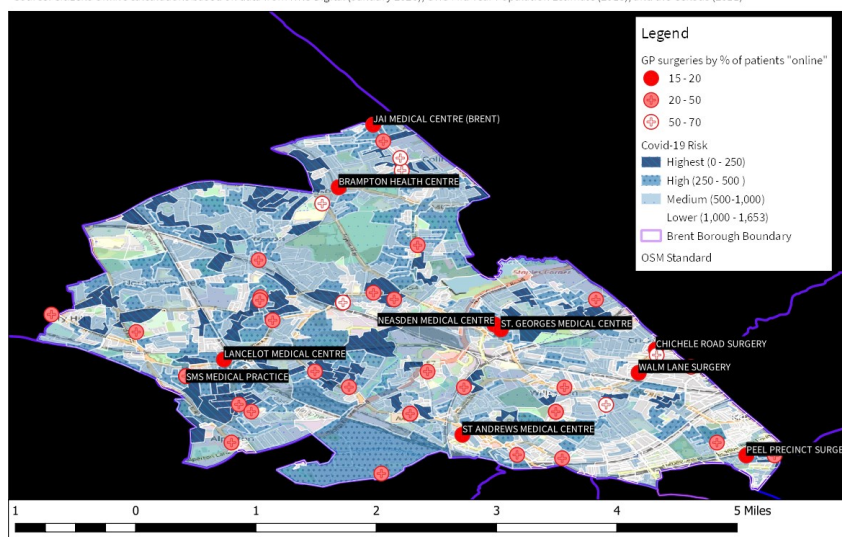
This map shows the potentially digital included/digitally excluded nature of each surgery's patient list. We can assume that patients registered for an online service are likely to be capable of using these services – even if they have not been using them previously or recently. The map identifies 10 surgeries in Brent where fewer than 20% of patients are registered for an online service (though in each case at least 15% are registered).

Figure 15: Ten GP surgeries where under 20% of patients are registered for an online service, Brent

| Practice Name | Number of Patients | Patients registered for an online service | Proportion of patients registered for an online service |
|---|---|---|---|
| SMS MEDICAL PRACTICE | 4,587 | 675 | 14.7 |
| LANCELOT MEDICAL CENTRE | 6,822 | 1,021 | 15.0 |
| ST ANDREWS MEDICAL CENTRE | 1,956 | 321 | 16.4 |
| PEEL PRECINCT SURGERY | 1,240 | 211 | 17.0 |
| JAI MEDICAL CENTRE | 6,163 | 1,102 | 17.9 |
| ST. GEORGES MEDICAL CENTRE | 2,278 | 411 | 18.0 |
| NEASDEN MEDICAL CENTRE | 9,892 | 1,789 | 18.1 |
| BRAMPTON HEALTH CENTRE | 4,860 | 889 | 18.3 |
| CHICHELE ROAD SURGERY | 5,807 | 1,073 | 18.5 |
| WALM LANE SURGERY | 8,149 | 1,614 | 19.8 |

Figure 16: Census Output Areas by COVID-19-19-19 risk vs size of GP patient list

**Brent: GPs by number of patients, vs Covid-19 Risk by Census Output Area**

Source: Citizens Online calculations based on data from NHS Digital (January 2020), ONS Mid-Year Population Estimate (2018), and the Census (2011)
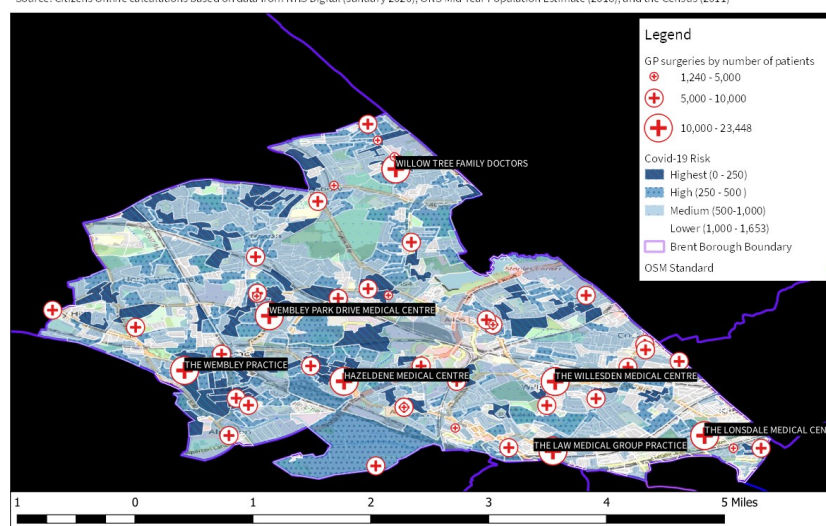


This map shows which GP surgeries have the highest numbers of patients from the local area. The map identifies six GP surgeries (figure 6) with over 5,000 patients on their list (up to 11,700 patients). Two of these are among those with the lowest proportions of patients registered for online services, and the lowest numbers of online transactions relative to their number of patients.

Figure 17: GP surgeries with over 10,000 registered patients, Brent

| Practice Name | Patients | Patients registered for online services | Proportion of patients registered for online services | Online transactions January 2020 | transactions / online patients |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| THE LONSDALE MEDICAL CENTRE | 23,448 | 11,643 | 49.7 | 2,035 | 0.2 |
| THE LAW MEDICAL GROUP PRACTICE | 18,004 | 8,289 | 46.0 | 1,497 | 0.2 |
| WILLOW TREE FAMILY DOCTORS | 16,070 | 9,313 | 58.0 | 1,573 | **0.2\*** |
| HAZELDENE MEDICAL CENTRE | 14,304 | 3,046 | 21.3 | 1,117 | 0.4 |
| THE WILLESDEN MEDICAL CENTRE | 13,406 | 4,879 | 36.4 | 1,063 | 0.2 |
| THE WEMBLEY PRACTICE | 12,964 | 2,711 | **20.9\*[60]** | 718 | 0.3 |
| WEMBLEY PARK DRIVE MEDICAL CENTRE | 12,639 | 4,163 | 32.9 | 1,490 | 0.4 |

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[60] *The Willow Tree Family Doctors Practice has the third lowest level of online transactions relative to the number of patients who are registered for online services. Wembley Practice is the GP surgery with the eleventh lowest proportion of patients registered for an online service in Brent.

# 7. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

## 7.1 A BRENT DIGITAL INCLUSION NETWORK

Citizens Online advocates a partnership working model as the most effective way to sustain digital skills provision. Many organisations are already offering some sort of provision that is helpful for improving digital exclusion, such as free Wi-Fi, access to technology, digital champions or help in people's homes. A network facilitates organisations working together to share resources and avoid duplication. Information is shared so that people are clear where they can signpost those who need help with digital skills.

In other projects where the network is a stand-alone project, we have found they have worked well with a 'three tier' approach (adopted by our projects in Brighton & Hove and Gwynedd). This is constituted of:

| | |
|---|---|
| **Board** | Organisations who finance activity and projects. |
| **Steering Group** | Board members + organisations with a large stake in digital inclusion and skills work e.g. Citizens Advice, DWP etc. |
| **Network** | Any organisation including voluntary organisations, individual independent digital champions, third sector support, training providers that have an interest in digital inclusion and skills. |

In practice, the Board and Steering Group may end up being the same and may not need to meet separately. There may be benefits to splitting these groups out as above if the Steering Group membership is large.

It is worth stressing that a network requires resource to run. This resource could be shared with another, or group of steering group organisations. There may be key organisations that are funded by BC to carry out similar support needs that would fit with digital inclusion. There may be joint initiatives such as with local CCGs or JCP where digital inclusion would fit with the agenda. Ideally we would recommend a full-time project manager as detailed in the Digital Brighton & Hove (DBH) case study below. A network and digital champions programme could also still be successful with a part-time role but obviously the more resource, the more that can be achieved.

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## CASE STUDY – THE DIGITAL BRIGHTON & HOVE NETWORK

In Brighton & Hove the network has grown over almost four years to include 241 organisations, of which 90% are actively engaged in the project. There is a steering group consisting of: Brighton & Hove City Council, the local DWP office/JobCentre Plus, Citizens Online, Possability People, Brighton & Hove CCG, Brighton & Hove Citizens Advice, and Brighton Housing Trust. The steering group meets quarterly.

The wider network also meets quarterly, with the DBH Project Manager organising and facilitating the meetings. The Project Manager is also a Super Champion, training DCs in partner organisations and reporting to the steering group on progress. Producing case studies and marketing the project is also part of their full-time role.

The PM has organised a range of guest speakers for the network events to share knowledge and good practice on digital inclusion and digital transformation themes. External speakers have included people from organisations such as AbilityNet, Diversity and Ability (DnA), SCVO Digital, the Centre for Acceleration of Social Technology (CAST) and Lloyds TSB.

Digital Brighton & Hove (DBH) has also taken part in a series of citywide working groups to ensure that digital support needs were monitored and addressed in different areas. For example, they have been represented on the Work and Learning Working Group chaired by BHT, which led to new connections being made with number of local charities such as YMCA, The Passage, Just Life and The Clocktower Sanctuary.

DBH has also played an active role on the Citywide Connect Partnership Board, which brings together key stakeholders to tackle social isolation, delivering two Digital Showcases at the Citywide Connect Hub Events and leading on a collective presentation at the inaugural Ageing Well Conference.

## 7.2 RECOMMENDED DIGITAL CHAMPION NUMBER ESTIMATE

We have estimated that a ratio of 1 DC to every 100 digitally excluded people is a good benchmark to make an impact on digital skills in a local area. There are number of caveats about this approach.

- We're not suggesting that the problem of digital exclusion can be solved once a certain number of Digital Champions are recruited. The issue is systemic and continually changing, as we detail elsewhere in this report.
- Registering people as members of an online learning platform like the Digital Champions Network (DCN) is a positive way to track the number of Digital Champions in an area who are 'signed up' to the cause – but it doesn't mean that all of these DCs are actively helping people.
- There is wide variability in how active DCs are, and not all DCs in an area are might be registered on a learning platform like the DCN. Digital help activity is likely to be happening that is not being recorded.
- The estimate of digitally excluded people across areas is only an estimate and is also subject to change and influence from other factors such as age, local policy changes and new support services coming on / going off line.

However, from our previous experience we do know that the 1:100 ratio can be a useful guide to help areas understand the scale of the challenge and provide an aspirational number of Digital Champions to aim for that, if recruited, trained and supported, could then evidence significant impact across an area.

Figure 18 shows Digital Champion recruitment over the duration of three different Citizens Online projects. Figure 19 uses the same underlying data to provide a comparison of the number of digitally excluded people in the local area[61] per Digital Champion recruited.

This shows that in our Digital Gwynedd project we were able to recruit 1 Digital Champion for every 70 digitally excluded people. By comparison in Brighton & Hove we were able to recruit one Digital Champion for every 112 digitally excluded people. Projects with higher DC: Excluded Population ratios are better able to evidence impact.

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[61] For consistency, this is based on a simple estimate: 21% of adults without all five Basic Digital Skills.

After three years, a figure of 1 Digital Champion to every 100 digitally excluded people (between the Gwynedd and Brighton & Hove project numbers), would suggest **485-500 DCs registered to the DCN in Brent**.
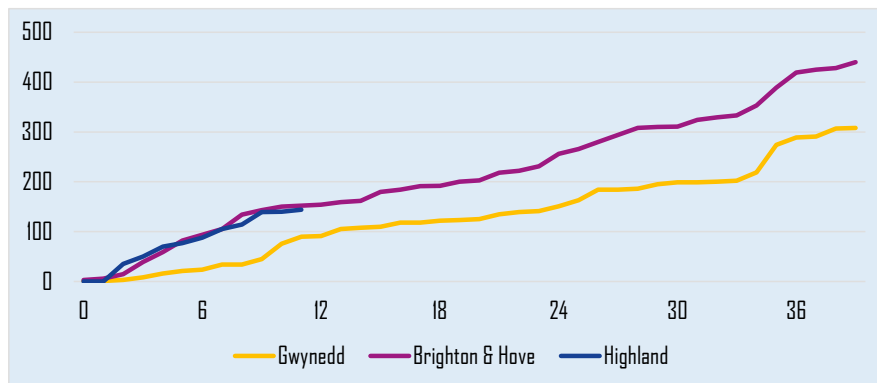


Figure 18: Cumulative DCs recruited to DCN from Month 0
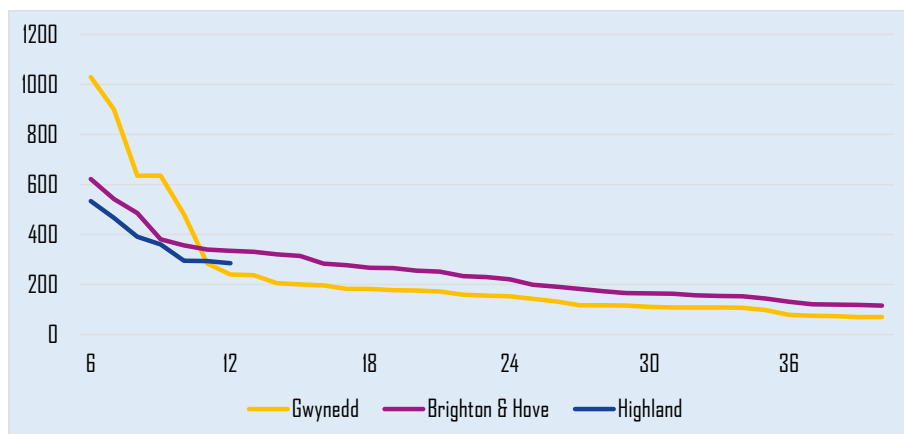


Figure 19: Digitally excluded people per DC recruited to the DCN.

## 7.3 ENGAGING LEARNERS

From our experience of running digital skills sessions, we know that it can be difficult to encourage learners to attend. Drawing from our work in other areas we would recommend the following pointers for advertising sessions:

- **Using images of real people that look like they come from target populations when possible** – to create a sense that sessions are for 'people like me'
- **Including the DC helpline phone number** on all posters

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- Wherever possible **communicating** with learners **via SMS**
- **Avoiding jargon** – some examples below:
  - o **Avoid using 'Android/Apple'** – often people refer to their tablets as 'iPad', no matter who made it or what system it is on. Using 'device' is a catch all.
  - o **Using the word 'Internet' rather than 'computers'.** People can be uncomfortable with the use of the word 'computers' as it gives the idea of high tech/office work/spread sheets/beyond their ability – and they may not think of their tablet or smartphone device as a computer. However, do bear in mind that often potential learners do not understand that applications such as 'Facebook' use the internet so internet isn't a universally understood word. Being specific about workshops to help people with Facebook / WhatsApp / Online Banking / Universal Credit application is more useful than generic offers about help with 'the internet'.
- **Changing 'we can help you' to 'we can show you how'** - otherwise potentially you will get people attending with no interest in learning
- **Being safe online is a key concern for many people**. Especially when dealing with finance they are wary of falling victim to a scam. Addressing these concerns can be a good way to hook people in
- **Finding a hook is important**. Family / local history, hobbies (online knitting patterns), access to archive TV footage, streaming music and skype can be enticing to first time internet users

The BBC Media Literacy research[62] is now a little dated but emphasises approaches that we continue to endorse around the need to disarm common concerns about the internet, using language carefully to emphasise:

- the ease of getting started and making progress
- taking steps at a pace set by the learner – guiding them to gradually build confidence
- 'discovering the benefits' – communication and convenience stand out initially
- 'enjoying the benefits' – that it can enhance and empower their lives or businesses
- avoiding judgements that it will make their life 'better' - they want to discover that

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[62] Media Literacy – Language & Branding Qualitative Research, 2013 - BBC Audiences North & Optimisa Research

**Phrases that work well include:** 'World at your fingertips', 'At your fingertips', 'Discover a new world', 'Explore', 'Open opportunities', 'Find out more', 'Explore more'. There is further information on language in the BBC Media Literacy research report.

## 7.4 DIGITAL CHAMPION PROJECT CASE STUDIES - WHERE DO YOU START?

**To successfully launch a DC programme it's essential that there is a 'Super Champion'** in the first instance to train and support other DCs and be a point of contact. There could be multiple 'Super Champions' in various organisations keen to be part of a network. Running a formal DC programme with reward and recognition is also a good motivator for staff and can encourage more digital skills provision.

**In Digital Brighton and Hove** network, the 'Super Champion' has trained staff in Brighton and Hove City Council services including; Revenues and Benefits, Libraries, Housing, Healthy Lifestyles, Heath and Adult Social Care to become DCs. The training was online training through the Digital Champions Network and face-to-face.

**Revenues & Benefits:** Working collaboratively with the Revenues & Benefits Service Manager contributed to supporting Revenues & Benefits Officers (frontline staff) delivering a 'self-help' customer service, switching from face-to-face to online services in the council's Customer Service Centre. This involved providing both face-to-face and online 'Digital Champion' training to over 20 Revenues & Benefits officers. The collaboration also involved collating and sharing activity records and other relevant data to help us monitor digital support activity and provision in the Customer Service Centre.

**Libraries:** All Library Officers and Connect Volunteers were trained as DCs. They monitor activity, demand and provision using the Digital Champions Network.

**In Dorset, the network is called 'Routes to Inclusion'.** A Digital Inclusion Officer manages a network of over 100 volunteer DCs. The funding for this post and recruitment came from the rollout of Superfast Broadband across the county. The Digital Inclusion Officer recruits and inducts volunteer Digital Champions who work in a variety of locations across the county. Another part of the remit is to liaise with new venues and develop relationships with community groups and other stakeholders to allow volunteer DCs to run drop in sessions within the venues. There has been a coordinated marketing campaign to recruit the volunteer DCs and promote the sessions including a phone number to call to book residents onto sessions. Dorset Council Customer Contact Team are also known as 'Digital Advisors'; essentially they are embedded DCs and can signpost residents to the volunteer DC sessions if they can't help the resident to transact online over the phone. The Digital Advisors follow a script to help residents.

The Digital Champions in Dorset as part of the Routes to Inclusion group are well publicised, with a coordinated marketing campaign county wide for residents and employees of Dorset Council, to 'normalise' digital skills. The campaign features 'Digital Norm' who is encouraging residents to take up superfast broadband and improve digital skills.

# Case Study:
# Customer Service Centre

Our Community Digital Champions have provided digital skills support in the council's Customer Service Centre on a regular basis over the past year, helping customers to manage their queries digitally. This work focused primarily on filling the gaps in provision in the Customer Service Centre on non 'self-help' days, that is when Embedded Digital Champions from other councils teams were not present in the Customer Service Centre.



*Glenn (right) helping a customer to get online.*

Based on the data recorded on the Digital Champions Network (DCN), 383 digital support sessions took place at the Customer Service Centre.

A further 444 interventions were recorded by Embedded Digital Champions who received training between March and November 2018, namely staff from the Revenues and Benefits team helping customers during the 'self-help' days.

"It was useful to learn about the free online resources that are available and to think about how to engage people to get online. It helped to discuss case scenarios where we might be able to signpost a customer to an online service." (BHCC Revenues & Benefits Officer)

"The training course was brilliant, really enjoyed it – the signposting website is very useful." (BHCC Customer Service Officer)

## 7.5 SETTING UP A DIGITAL CHAMPIONS PROGRAMME CHECKLIST

**Recruit and train 'Super Champions' (at least one)** – these are go-to people for other Digital Champions

**Agree your induction list for Digital Champions using the Digital Champions Network (DCN).** For example, DCs may be required to complete the 'Digital Champions Essentials' and 'Using your role to help customers online' training modules.

**Decide on a name and brand for the Digital Champions**. They are often called digital friends / advisors / helpers etc. When promoting the digital champion role to internal staff, do stress that not everyone will be able to do things online. So the more people transacting online, the more people your staff can help 1-2-1 with assisted digital. If possible promote internally with events and a marketing campaign.

**Ensure a Senior Leader is supporting the programme** to champion to senior management. Some courses on the Digital Champions Network are CPD accredited so this could also be part of staff development. A reward and recognition programme may be appropriate.

**Communicate to managers to get them on board.** Often staff will be able to perform a DC role as part of their day job. It can be a very light touch interaction such as raising awareness by letting residents know that they can do something online as part of a conversation, or signposting residents to get help to get online elsewhere. In some cases, DCs may be released from roles for a couple of hours a week to 'floor walk' in customer centres, asking residents waiting if they knew they can do certain services online and DCs can help them. Or, drop in sessions within council buildings, where residents can bring anything they like online for help i.e. using Skype, streaming music, using Google Maps etc.

**Start with those most interested in being a DC**. Often a DC programme is launched within a team. However, inviting all staff who have expressed an interest will start to embed DCs into part of the culture across departments. DCs can also help colleagues. Shared learning with peer to peer sessions can also aid roll out of new internal technologies and can also be a part of the DC role.

**Keep persevering.** Keep communicating with DCs and tracking activity using the DCN to report to management and more importantly to give DCs a pat on the back. The DCN has lesson plans, supporting materials and resources to help DCs and make it as easy as possible for them to perform this role. Showcase successes with case studies and videos of leaners. Use recognised digital events such as, 'Get Online Week,' 'Safer Internet Day', 'Ada Lovelace Day', or 'World Emoji Day' to keep momentum going. The DC programme will grow over time.

**Work in partnership.** Through a network, encourage other organisations to use the DCN and encourage their staff and volunteers to become DCs. A network will also help to

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standardise signposting with lists of where residents can get help locally. Also to triage residents, depending on what type of help do they need?

## 7.6 SIGNPOSTING AND TRIAGE

Effective triage relies on people being able to identify the different levels of digital skills need that customers may present with. Effective signposting relies on people understanding where other help and resources can be found in an area. Effective referral relies on organisations having good working relationships with each other and referral pathways being in place.

Supporting staff to triage, signpost or refer people to the digital help that they need is essential. There are often many organisations providing digital skills support and in order to reach people, all organisations need to understand where they can find information about what help is available.

**We recommend adopting a universal triage tool for Brent, ideally designed in partnership within a digital inclusion network, which can be embedded within training and support information** (e.g. procedure documents, inductions, presentations). Having a central information resource available such a webpage or signposting and resource website would be preferable. All partner organisations need to review their websites to ensure there is easily accessible information for staff and the public on where to find digital skills help and free access points across the Borough. Ideally they are linking to one agreed central place such as the BC website.

The diagrams below illustrate the workflow for basic essential skills triage (Figure 20), starting with first assessing if a resident can turn on a device. Figure 21 outlines the Essential Digital Skills Framework, which can be a useful reference in triage and monitoring of digital skills support work.

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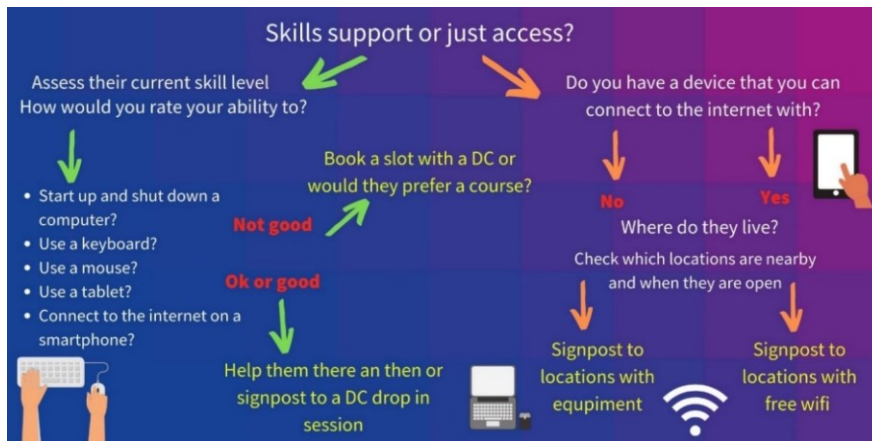
Figure 20: Workflow for essential digital skills triage



Figure 21: The Essential Digital Skills Framework

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## EXAMPLE QUESTIONS TO ASSESS LEARNER SKILLS AND NEEDS

Where can you access the internet? (If at all)

- o Home / Work / Public place / Friends or families home / I don't have access to the internet

Do you have access to a device that can connect to the internet? If so, where? (This could be through family, or at a library for example.)

- o I have my own device / I use a friend or family member device / I use devices in public places

How would you rate your ability to do any of the following? [Scale from: Very good /Quite good /Ok /Not great /I can't do that /I've never tried this]

- Switching on a computer
- Using a keyboard
- Using a mouse
- Using a tablet
- Accessing the internet on a mobile phone

How would you currently rate your confidence in being able to complete the tasks below? [Scale from: Very confident /Quite confident /Neutral /Not very confident /Not at all confident /I need help /I've never tried this]

- Scale from: Very confident /Quite confident /Neutral /Not very confident /Not at all confident /I need help /I've never tried this
- Searching and using the internet (e.g. using Google)
- Using LBBD online council services
- Using a word processor to write documents (e.g. letters and CV)
- Shopping and saving money online
- Sending and receiving emails -plus attachments
- Understanding how to fill in online forms
- Searching for work online (using Job boards and Find a Job)
- Using social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Skype, WhatApp etc.)
- Being safe and secure online
-

Are there any areas in particular you would like additional help with?

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## 7.8 BRENT STAFF WEBSITE SURVEY

Brent conducted a survey amongst staff about the website. The survey sample size was relatively small compared to staff numbers with 47 responses. The key take away for us reading this survey was that it cannot be used as 'user' research, as 60% of respondents do not use the site as a resident.

Only 4% of staff used the site solely for personal use as a resident. 36% used it for both personal and work use. Also only 2 people said that they accessed the site on tablet or mobile, with the vast majority accessing the site on desktop. Again, this does not match with residents' web traffic behaviour.

## 7.9 BRENT RESIDENTS' SURVEY

When asked 'It is easy to carry out council transactions online?':

45% agree, 22% neither agree nor disagree, and 26% disagree, with 14% don't know / no opinion.

| Q12. Which of the following online services have you used or would be happy to use in the future? | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Used | Likely to use | Not likely to use | Unsure |
| Make a payment to the Council | 46% | 22% | 27% | 5% |
| Look for information about services | 41% | 30% | 24% | 4% |
| Report an issue or problem | 30% | 34% | 30% | 6% |
| Make a complaint | 21% | 38% | 33% | 8% |
| Apply for a service | 32% | 32% | 29% | 6% |
| Make an appointment | 20% | 34% | 35% | 11% |

| Q13. Have any of the following prevented you from doing more on the council website? | |
|---|---|
| I didn't know I could | 6% |
| I haven't needed to | 40% |
| I don't think it's secure | 4% |
| The website is difficult to use / I can't find what I need | 7% |
| I am not confident it will work / do what I need it to | 3% |
| There is no online option to do the thing I want | 2% |
| I don't know how to use the internet | 4% |
| I prefer to talk to a real person | 18% |
| I do not have internet access | 3% |
| My partner does it | *% |
| My parents do it | *% |
| Prefer offline methods | *% |
| Other | 1% |
| None | 32% |

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**Q17. How much time do you spend on the internet per day?**

| | |
|---|---|
| Do not use the internet | 11% |
| Less than 30 minutes | 4% |
| 30 minutes to 1 hour | 8% |
| 1 - 2 hours | 19% |
| 2 - 3 hours | 21% |
| 3 - 5 hours | 18% |
| 5 - 7 hours | 11% |
| 7 - 10 hours | 6% |
| Over 10 hours | 2% |
| Unsure | 1% |

**Television is still the most popular place to get news and info**

| Where you use the internet | |
|---|---|
| **Q17A. How do you access the internet?** | |
| Laptop or PC | 63% |
| Tablet | 46% |
| Smartphone | 85% |
| Internet TV | 10% |
| Other | *% |

**Are you a member of the following social networks?:**

| | |
|---|---|
| Facebook | 72% |
| YouTube | 59% |
| Whatsapp | 76% |
| Linkedin | 17% |
| Twitter | 20% |
| Instagram | 26% |
| Google | *% |
| Snapchat | 1% |
| Other | *% |
| None of the above | 9% |

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# Table of Figures

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| Theme | Activity | Start date | End Date | Comments | Lead |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Digital Champions** | Digital Champions pilot to establish consistant approach to implementing champions across Brent, first cohort to include:<br>-Library Staff<br>-Health Champions<br>-Age UK volunteers<br>- Hub advisors | Feb-21 | 01/05/2021 - completed | Pilot to support building a consistent approach to digital champions. Used to inform decision on whether to use Digital Unite platform going forward. The pilot also looked at what other support Digital Champions require. Feedback collected from digital champions has informed the expansion of the project to CVS partners | Digital Programme Team |
| | Expansion of the digital champions programme to Brent VCS being lead by AgeUK.<br>The project will also be expanded to other frontline services and partners. | Aug-21 | Ongoing | Digital champions are currently being recuited from VCS, a positive response has been received from different community groups and partner organisations | Digital Programme Team |
| **Bespoke support** | Age UK pilot - older people | 03-Feb-21 | 01/06/2022 - completed | The pilot gave a cohort of Age UK Brent's service users access to devices, the internet and support from Age UK volunteers to make use of the devices. The impact of this support will be evaluated over time. Age UK volunteers were provided with access to training to support this approach.<br>Feedback from residents has informed the digital cafe offer. | Digital Programme Team |
| | Internet and device access for children learning at home during school closures via the Digital Support Fund for Children and Young People | 01-Jan-21 | Extended to 01/09/2022 | Shortcut into RSF in place; RSF adapted to incorporate Community Fibre free connections; mapping of premises served by Hyperoptic to schools in digitally excluded Wards to allocate 66 internet connections offered; survey of schools to establish remaining need.<br>Further expansion of support via Digital Support Fund for Children and Young People from January 2022. | Customer Services & Digital Programme Team |
| | Laptop loan scheme for Brent Start students | 01-Sep-20 | 01/12/2021 - completed | Established with GLA funding, provides learners with a device and internet connection for the purposes of supporting their studies with Brent Start. | Brent Start |
| | Direct Services Pilot - people with disabilities | Feb-21 | 01/09/2022 completed | Chromebooks have been distributed to day centres to support with engagement in activities | Digital Programme Team |
| | Health inequalities areas - working with patients identifd by GPs | Oct-21 | Ongoing | Close working with NHS Digital Inclusion network and Brent Health and Care integration team. | Digital Programme Team |
| **Hosted Network** | Set up a network who can contribute towards a joint action plan | Feb-21 | Ongoing | Group is meeting every other month to share digital inclusion best practice and opportunities for collaboration | Digital Programme Team |
| **Service Mapping** | Offline service map developed | Nov-20 | 01/01/2021 - completed | Service map distributed to members of the network to sense check and to provide further input | Digital Programme Team |
| | Brent Health Matters programme focuses on Church End and Alperton intially: Health Educators to participate in digital champions pilot | TBA | Completed | Will incorporate digital champion role into the new role of community based Health Educators. Will begin once Health Educators appointed | Digital Programme Team |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Placed based support** | Investigate the potential to include digital skills into be place based approach to address digital infrastructure and town centre support for Harlesden | Mar-21 | Ongoing | Working in partnership with Community Fibre to improve broadband coverage for local businesses. Communication with businesses commenced 29/08/2021. Alongside this, Harlesden Hub has been hosting digital cafes since 6th October due to the high level of digital exclusion in the borough | Digital Programme Team /WLA |
| | understand if there is a need to better target support to particular Wards highlighted by the Switch report as the most at risk of digital exclusion | Jun-22 | Oct-22 | | Digital Programme Team / BI Team |
| **Access - devices / connections / skills** | Resident Support Fund: Providing access to devices, internet connections and digital skills support for those impacted by Covid | Sep-20 | 01/04/2023 | Extended to continue to meet demand. | Digital Programme Team |
| | Use learning from Resident Support Fund and digitial inclusion pilots to establish a sustainable digital inclusion package | Mar-21 | 01/09/2022 | Awarded strategic investment funding for Digital Support Fund for businesses and CYP pupil digital support fund. | Digital Programme Team |
| | Bespoke support pilots to include the provision of devices and connectivity as well as suport with | Feb-21 | Completed | Evaluations on regular basis throughout. Findings will be used to inform place based pilot. | Digital Programme Team and services piloting with |
| | Further bespoke offers to be developed as need identifed | Ongoing | | Consider pilot targetting children / young people with disabilities | Digital Programme Team / service areas identifying need |
| **SMEs** | Understand skills and tools requirements for town centre businesses | Nov-20 | 05/07/2022 | Town Centre Managers have started an audit of digital skills in town centres to see which businesses are online and what specific tools they are using. £15k NCIL funds earmarked for the project targeting Priority Town Centres. Launch of new local shopping app (BuyBrent) in October for local SME businesses. This app is being promoted to residents and has a physical option to include digitally excluded residents. | Town Centre Managers |
| | Microsoft and Infosys digital skills support for SMEs | Start 2021 | Completed | Infosys Springboard launched in Brent 18th October. | Digital Programme Team |
| | Provide basic training to businesses who have few IT skills | 14/01/2022 | 01/09/2022 | Funding in place for Brent Start to deliver in January 2022. Additional digital skills training provided as part of the digital support fund for businesses. | Brent Start/ Digital Programme team |
| | best for them and support sharing of learning across Town Centres | Ongoing | Completed | Wembley & Ealing Road - help via Whats App group. | Town Centre Managers |
| **Council specific** | Digital Champions pilot to inform how digital inclusion is embedded in Council policies | Jun-21 | 01/09/2021 completed | Eg volunteers policy; training and deveopment offer for staff. Agreed to expand the pilot to recruit 500 digital champions by 2025 | Digital Programme Team & policy owners |
| | Working with Mircrosoft to support staff with digital offer | Mar-21 | Completed | Accessiblity training for frontline staff first. Wider staff group starts June 21 | Digital Programme Team / MS |

| | Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee<br><br>19 July 2022 |
|---|---|
| | Report from the Strategic Director of Regeneration & Environment |

| **Wembley Events Management** |
|---|

| **Wards Affected:** | N/A |
|---|---|
| **Key or Non-Key Decision:** | Non Key Decision |
| **Open or Part/Fully Exempt:**<br>(If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act) | Open |
| **No. of Appendices:** | None |
| **Background Papers:** | None |
| **Contact Officers:** | Chris Whyte - Operational Director Environmental Services.<br>Chris.Whyte@brent.gov.uk |

## 1.0    Purpose of the Report

1.1    To provide an update on the progress made by partners on the implementation of the recommendations made by Baroness Casey following the UEFA Euros 2020 England v Italy football match at Wembley.

## 2.0    Recommendations

2.1    That this update submitted by the Regeneration & Environment Department be noted.

## 3.0    Detail

3.1    The Euro 2020 Final at Wembley Stadium was blighted by unacceptable levels of casual street-drinking that ultimately led to shocking scenes of fan disorder and anti-social behaviour. These scenes created an unwanted world-wide news story that reflected badly on the organisation of the tournament, and on the preparations made by key agencies, including the police, the Football Association and Wembley Stadium, and Brent Council as the local authority.

3.2 The FA commissioned an independent review, led by Baroness Casey, to establish the reasons for the disorder and to provide recommendations to ensure there is no repeat in the future.

3.3 A summary of Baroness Casey's findings that are relevant for present purposes are:

- There was evidence of overnight drinking as early at 9am on the match day.

- By mid-day over 10,000 fans had arrived in Wembley area, many of whom had travelled in on public transport (buses, national rail and tube).

- Many of the fans were in possession of large amounts of alcohol.

- Some of the fans were already drunk on arrival.

- There was insufficient enforcement of the ban on consuming alcohol on public transport in London.

- There is a lack of enforcement mechanisms available to respond to (and deter) the kind of behaviour witnessed at that Final.

- Planning for crowd control for the Final did not match the 'occasion'.

- The reckless and life endangering anti-social behaviour that ensued was caused largely by people who were under the influence of alcohol / and or drugs.

The Review made five recommendations for national consideration and two specifically for the FA and Wembley and its partners, including Brent.

3.4 Recommendation 1 of the Review requires that the Government considers a new category for football matches of 'national significance'. The Review found that the majority of partners treated the Euro final as another match albeit a significant one, rather than an event of national significance. As a result, the security arrangements surrounding the Final were underpowered and public safety was not given the prominence it deserved. The recommendation requires that, in the future, there should be a new category for football matches of 'national significance', with the police, and other key partners setting out what steps should be taken for such matches. Importantly for Brent, as the Licensing Authority, this should include enhanced enforcement of bans on alcohol consumption in designated public spaces.

3.5 Recommendation 3 of the Review requires that the Sports Ground Safety Authority (SGSA), the events industry, the police and local government agree on a way forward on who is accountable for Zone Ex. The question of who was responsible for public safety on Olympic Way was a contributing factor to the inability to deal with the disorder seen in the build-up to kick-off at the Final. The police and stadium operators have for many years contested the issue of who

is responsible for safety and security in Zone Ex (the area of public space outside the stadium used by supporters) and the financing of it remains a contested issue. The recommendation reflects that this should be resolved.

3.6     In response, Brent gave its commitment to working with the key neighbouring agencies to ensure these recommendations are complied with in full. A new, energetic and more resilient tri-partite collaboration (known as 'Best in Class') has since been agreed and activated with the FA and Wembley Stadium, and with Quintain. All parties have agreed joint action is needed to fundamentally improve and coordinate operations in Zone Ex on match days. All are now signed up to a renewed and sustained programme of investment in enhanced infrastructure and resources.

**Best in Class Project**

3.8     The 'Best in Class' project has been created in order to help identify the gaps that sit between the three key partners. These gaps are those activities and/or initiatives which exist outside the three key partners' statutory responsibilities. There is a mutual understanding by all parties, however, that whilst these issues do not directly sit with one group, these initiatives and activities need to be addressed collectively by all primary stakeholders. The 'Best in Class' project aims to tackle four key strategic objectives. These are: Enforcement, Wayfinding, Traffic Management and Sustainability.

3.9     This programme now assumes a very high priority as a consequence of the recommendations of the Casey Review.

3.10    From this, a key responsibility for the Council has been to review licensing arrangements with respect to off-sales of alcohol in the local area. These are considered to contribute to problems associated with street-drinking in Zone Ex on match days.

3.11    Over recent months, we have taken forward a robust twin-track approach to review and change, as follows –

- A short-term (and ongoing) approach with the police and partners to prevent alcohol off-sales to street drinkers on event days. This is a statement of intent that sets a new culture.

- This will be married to a longer-term (and more intricate) process to review the current legislation and the pre-existing Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) enforcement framework to change relevant licensing conditions at relevant premises in a more fundamental way. That will seek to impose a more resilient and fully consistent set of conditions that prevent alcohol-related ASB over the longer term.

3.12    Licensing and enforcement interventions are therefore now imposed by the Council and the partner agencies at each match.

3.13    The arrangements that are now implemented are set out below –

- A full Council enforcement resource that has successfully exercised existing PSPO powers to enforce against street-drinking and urination, ASB, illegal trading, ticket-touting, and the use of flares/pyrotechnics, by applying a zero-tolerance approach for the first time.

- Enforcement of licensing restrictions on retail premises within the PSPO no-drinking zone.

- Agreement with event partners to provide –

  o Improved signage.
  o Dedicated drinking zones to contain and manage casual outdoors drinking.
  o Pre-messaging to supporters and the general public.
  o A full stewarding and policing resource to support the PSPO approach.
  o Full training for these staff.
  o Bins for can/bottle confiscation
  o A new Zone Ex control room for the events.
  o Full commitment from the police to greater numbers and an earlier deployment compared to the Euro Final
  o Dedicated enforcement against illegal street trading, ticket touting, the use of flares and pyrotechnics, street urination, and ASB
  o A greater number of public toilets
  o Better fencing and segregation
  o Regular tannoy information announcements
  o A commitment from train companies to ban the carriage of excessive alcohol on their trains to London.
  o Ongoing communications by the FA, the clubs, the police, BTP and a commitment to the need to educate and publicise a very clear message on this new approach.

3.14 Brent officers now work successfully with the many off-licence premises in and around Zone Ex to advise on the street-drinking culture at Wembley Stadium events, the problems associated with the supply of alcohol, the effects of this on high levels of street-drinking and also their specific responsibility as retailers under their Premises Licence to assist in reducing this. Any failure by any off-licence to uphold the licensing objectives, may result in a review of their Premises Licence, with additional conditions or a revocation of their licence being requested.

3.15 These premises have been advised that since 2017 Brent Council has administered the PSPO across the entire Borough of Brent, which amongst other factors, aims to prevent street-drinking. It's been made clear that the reasonable response to the Casey Review is for the Council to make a commitment to eradicating street-drinking on Wembley Stadium match days by banning the consumption of alcohol in open public spaces.

3.16 Knowingly selling alcohol to customers who consume alcohol in the street is a breach of an off-licence's responsibility, as there is a clear link between street-

drinking and the ASB and criminal and disorderly behaviour we are seeking to remove. In effect, it means that, if they sell alcohol under these circumstances, they would effectively be aiding and abetting customers in breaching the PSPO. The Council, for the first time, is now properly requiring their full co-operation to assist in guaranteeing a street-drinking-free zone during Wembley Stadium match days. In order to achieve this, we have asked that they only-

- Recognise those customers that are likely to consume alcohol in the street (retail is still possible to other customers).

- Refuse the sale of alcohol to anyone that is likely to drink alcohol in the street

- Refrain from increasing their store set-up to include additional alcohol for the purpose of match days

- Voluntarily cease selling alcohol in glass vessels including all wines, beers and ciders and where possible cease selling any alcohol on match days.

3.17  This requirement has been communicated to all premises and the response has been mostly favourable. The monitoring of compliance on match days is a key task as evidence is necessary for any firmer action to be applied at subsequent matches. Premises are still able to sell alcohol to regular local customers. The ban is on retail to obvious football fans only.

3.18  It is appreciated that this approach may be seen as detrimental to business but we believe that by using it to prevent the scenes of last year it is a very positive move overall, with the social and community benefits outweighing any inconvenience to the off-licenses. Our advice to these businesses is that this will help ensure the problems are avoided, it will remove pressures on them from drunken fans and will make Wembley a much more family friendly destination for everyone. That is our clear objective, and is working every effectively. In order to protect our community, and the visitors to the area, this approach will be applied at every upcoming large event.

## 4.0    Enforcement Outcomes

4.1    The metrics so far around enforcing the PSPO are significantly reduced ASB, reduced disorder, reduced match-day crime, reduced street urination and significantly less litter. These are all issues that the local community had made known they wished to see resolved. The detail in terms of enforcement outcomes is provided at **Appendix 1**. A typical event debrief report is provided at **Appendix 2** and this presents a positive photographic comparison with the Euro Final, specifically showing the reduced levels or litter and general disorder.

**5.0 Financial Implications**

5.1 The Council's equal contribution to support the continuation of the Best in Class Programme with respect to Wembley Stadium event day arrangements is £122k per annum.

5.2 Any additional event day costs incurred by the Council are recharged to the Stadium.

**6.0 Legal Implications**

6.1 Section 13 of the Criminal Justice and Police Act 2021, previously permitted Local Authorities to designate public areas through the introduction of Designated Public Place Orders (DPPOs). As a result, a Borough wide Controlled Drinking Zone (CDZ) was enacted from December 2007 until October 2017. DPPOs were subsequently replaced by Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs) under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, which incorporates the prohibition of 'specified things' above and beyond street drinking.

6.2 The Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 permits Local Authority to make Public Spaces Protection Orders if satisfied on reasonable grounds that two conditions are met.

6.3 The first condition is that activities carried on in a public place within the authority's area have had (or are likely to have) a detrimental effect on the quality of life of those in the locality. The second condition is that the effect, or likely effect, of the activities is, or is likely to be, of a persistent or continuing nature, such as to make the activities unreasonable and justifies the restrictions imposed by the notice.

6.4 A Public Spaces Protection Order is an order that identifies the restricted area and prohibits 'specified things' being done in that area and/or requires specified things to be done by persons carrying on specified activities in that area.

6.5 Failure to comply with PSPO prohibitions is a criminal offence subject to up to a level 3 fine on prosecution (up to £1000). In most cases a warning (written or verbal) will be issued upon the first instance of a breach. Further breaches will result in the issuing of a Fixed Penalty Notice (£100), payable within 14 days. If paid within 10 days, a discounted charge of £75 is applied. Payment of the Fixed Penalty Notice discharges liability to conviction for the offence.

**7.0 Equality Implications**

7.1 Improvements to event day arrangements will benefit all visitors to the Stadium and the Wembley area on event days.

**8.0 Environmental Sustainability Implications (where relevant)**

8.1 Enforcement of the PSPO has improved environmental conditions by significantly reducing street urination and also street drinking-related litter.

**9.0 Engagement with Ward Members and Stakeholders**

9.1 Engagement with Members, the community and other stakeholders is principally undertaken by the event owner, Wembley Stadium, via their regularly scheduled 'Wembley Stadium Resident & Business Meetings'. The Council will support their event day messaging via our own communications channels and any further direct 'on the day' liaison (particularly with businesses) is undertaken by all our front-line staff that are present.

10.0 **Human Resources/Property Implications (if appropriate)**

10.1 Enhanced match day enforcement requires a voluntary commitment from staff to participate in good numbers.

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*__Report sign off:__*

*ALAN LUNT*
Strategic Director (Regeneration & Environment)

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| Date | Event | Teams | Street Drinking Premises Warning | Street Drinking Warning | Street Drinking FPN | (Licensing) Street Trading Warning | (Licensing) Street Trading Confiscation | Trademark Goods | Ticket Tout Warning | Ticket Tout FPN | PSPO Street Trading Warning | PSPO Street Trading FPN | PSPO Urination FPN | PSPO Spitting FPN | PSPO Littering Warning | PSPO Littering FPN | PSPO Literature Distribution Warning | PSPO Literature Distribution FPN | PSPO Idling Warning | PSPO Idling FPN | PSPO Flares Warning | PSPO Flares |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 27.02.2022 | Carabao Cup | Liverpool v Chelsea | 4<br>Event Pad<br>Premier Inn<br>Mala Mini Mart<br>International Hotel | 56 | 3 |  | 3 |  | 2 | 5 |  | 1 | 5 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 26.03.2022 | International Friendly | England v Switzerland | 5<br>Mala Mini Mart<br>El Bandido<br>Arena Express<br>Tesco (High Road)<br>Butlers | 108 | 1 | 11 | 4 |  |  | 1 |  | 3 | 1 |  | 1 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 29.03.2022 | International Friendly | England v Ivory Coast |  | 94 | 3 |  |  |  |  | 1 |  | 1 |  |  | 4 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 03.04.2022 | Papa Johns Trophy | Rotherham v Sutton |  | 41 |  |  | 1 |  |  |  |  |  | 1 | 2 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 16.04.2022 | FA Semi Cup Final 1 | Liverpool v Manchester City | 3<br>Cerbul Romanesc – 414 High Road<br>Tesco (High Road)<br>Off Licence -25 Wembley Hill Road | 543 |  |  | 1 |  |  | 9 |  |  | 1 | 1 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 17.04.2022 | FA Semi Cup Final 2 | Chelsea v Crystal Palace |  | 822 | 2 |  | 1 |  |  | 9 |  |  | 1 | 6 |  |  |  |  |  |  | 1 |  |
| 23.04.2022 | Boxing | Tyson Fury v Dillian Whyte |  | 1793 | 1 |  | 1 |  |  | 9 |  | 3 | 11 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 14.05.2022 | FA Cup Final | Liverpool v Chelsea | 2<br>Ibis<br>International Hotel | 80 |  |  |  |  |  | 15 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 15.05.2022 | Women's FA Cup Final | Chelsea v Manchester City | 1<br>Parish | 31 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 21.05.2022 | League One Play-off | Sunderland v Wycombe |  | 860 | 2 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | 1 | 3 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 22.05.2022 | FA Vase & FA Trophy | Littlehampton Town v Newport Pagnell Town Wrexham v Bromley | 1<br>Butlers | 279 |  |  |  |  |  | 2 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

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# Carabao Cup
# 27th February 2022
# De-brief Report

**Event Information**

| Event: | Carabao Cup |
|---|---|
| Teams: | Chelsea (East) v Liverpool (West) |
| Expected Capacity: | 82,000 |
| Times: | **Hospitality:** 13:30<br>**General admission:** 14:30<br>**Kick Off:** 16:30<br>**Half Time:** 17:15<br>**Full Time:** 19.25<br>Extra time and penalties – Winner : Liverpool |
| **Gold (Strategic Lead)**<br>**Silver (Tactical Lead)**<br>**SPOC** | Chris Whyte<br>Colin Wilderspin<br>Susana Figueiredo |
| **Licensed Event Pads** | Chelsea – Arena Square, Engineers Way (opposite SSE Arena)<br>Liverpool – Event pad, Wembley Park Boulevard (by LDO play area) |
| **Licensed Premises** | Liverpool – West<br>Chelsea – East |

**Brief**

| Risk | • The match is a high risk, Category C match between two well-supported teams, Chelsea and Liverpool. Police intelligence is that serious fan disorder is unlikely but there is an expectation of widespread low-level ASB attributable to street-drinking. Immediate and short-term licensing and enforcement interventions are therefore required to be applied by the Council and the partner agencies for this match. |
|---|---|
| Review of Previous Event Plans | • The Euro 2020 Final at Wembley Stadium was blighted by unacceptable levels of casual street-drinking that ultimately led to shocking scenes of fan disorder and anti-social behaviour.<br>• As a result, the FA commissioned an independent review, led by Baroness Casey, to establish the reasons for the disorder and to provide recommendations to ensure there is no repeat in the future. Brent Council now seeks to be proactive in taking Baroness Casey's recommendations forward<br>• By utilising our own review and knowledge of the area, we have set out to put fair and proportionate measures in place in order to avoid any repetition of problems found at the Euro Final that can in fact, be controlled directly within the remit of the Council.<br>• Issues in relation to street drinking have been an issue at Wembley Stadium event days for a number of years. The further issues that then presented themselves at the Euro Final magnified those pre-existing issues and became the trigger to making immediate change.<br>• This issues include ASB attributable to street drinking such as excessive consumption of alcohol that leads to hostile behaviour, fighting & urination and the use of flares but also the enormous amount of waste that can also be attributable to street drinking from receptacles that are left on the public highway. |

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| | • Discussions with SAG partners, has meant implementing new high-profile measures and management controls for the Carabao Cup Final on 27 February and in turn all future events |
| Defining 'Zone Ex' & 'game of National significance' | In the absence of:-<br>• A defined 'Zone Ex'<br>• Definition of a 'game of National significance'<br>Licensing Community Protection (Susana) formulated an idea to use the existing 'Public Space Protection Order' to define 'Zone Ex'. As a result a definition of a 'game of National significance' was not required |
| Parties to be included in Joint Action | Brent Council, FA and WNSL, Quintain, Wembley Park Ltd, MET Police, BTP Police, Train Services, TFL<br>All are required in order to improve and coordinate operations in Zone Ex on match days. All are now signed up to a renewed programme of investment in enhanced infrastructure and resources. |
| Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) Borough Wide | There are two PSPO's in place. The first being a Borough Wide one that solely includes the prohibition of street drinking.<br><br> |
| Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) Wembley | The second PSPO includes restrictions on street drinking and other Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) matters including but not limited to urination, litter, flares, illegal street trading (including touting) and the distribution of free literature. See **Appendix 7** for full conditions. |

**Carabao Cup – Pre Match**

| | |
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| Enforcement (Engagement & Education) | <ul><li>The Council, for the first time, is requiring their full co-operation to assist in guaranteeing a street-drinking-free zone during Wembley Stadium match days. In order to achieve this, we have asked that they-<br><br>&bull; Recognise those customers that are likely to consume alcohol in the street (retail is still possible to other customers).<br>&bull; Refuse the sale of alcohol to anyone that is likely to drink alcohol in the street<br>&bull; Refrain from increasing their store set-up to include additional alcohol for the purpose of match days<br>&bull; Voluntarily cease selling alcohol in glass vessels including all wines, beers and ciders and where possible cease selling any alcohol on match days.</li><li>This requirement has been communicated to all premises and the response has been favourable, though there is some sign of resistance which we will need to be firm with. You may receive some representations. The monitoring of compliance on the day will be a key task as evidence is necessary for any firmer action to be applied at subsequent matches.</li><li>80+ premises (ON & OFF Licences) visited by Community Protection (Susana) with the assistance of Neighbourhood Management (Ashley), Public Safety (Laura) & the Licensing Police.</li><li>Letters were hand delivered and the Licence Holder/Designated Premises. See **Appendix 6**. Supervisor, were engaged with and educated on what was required.</li><li>Paul Lee (TS) engaged with numerous premises on behalf of their Primary Authority and specifically Asda.</li><li>See **Appendix 1** for the full list of premises that were engaged with</li></ul> |
| Feedback | Some off licences gave negative feedback in relation to serving street drinkers. See **Appendix 2** |
| Communication | Brent Council and partners approved a News story that was sent to the English Football League (EFL). See **Appendix 5 (a).** This communication was also listed on Brent Council's website for members of the public. |

| | The EFL agreed the above messaging and then modified it to be communicated on their website. See **Appendix 5 (b).**<br>A further version was agreed by WNS which was sent out to Chelsea FC, Liverpool FC, TFL, rail services, BTP, the MET, ticket holders and any other relevant partners. See **Appendix 5 (c).**<br><br>Talk Sport also did a piece on the street drinking ban, specifically on Olympic Way. The feedback on this was positive.<br><br>Below are some of the locations where the communication appeared.<br><br>No-Street Drinking Zone in operation for Sunday's Carabao Cup Final - News - EFL Official Website<br><br>Liverpool and Chelsea fans face £100 fines if caught drinking alcohol outside Wembley \| Metro News<br><br>Liverpool FC - No-street-drinking zone in operation for Carabao Cup final<br><br>Wembley no street-drinking zone details and Chelsea pubs confirmed \| Official Site \| Chelsea Football Club (chelseafc.com)<br><br>Anti-alcohol measures at Wembley - Chicago Today<br><br>No-street-drinking zone in operation for Carabao Cup final \| Troll Football<br><br>No-street-drinking zone in operation for Carabao Cup final : LiverpoolFC (reddit.com)<br><br>CFC News ✭✭ on Twitter: "Wembley no street-drinking zone details and Chelsea pubs confirmed - Olympic Way and the surrounding areas in Wembley have been designated as no-street drinking zones for Sunday's Carabao Cup final, while the list of approved Chelsea pubs has also been c… https://t.co/8J4FwvWY6v" / Twitter<br><br>Alcohol banned on way to Carabao Cup final (besoccer.com)<br><br>Carabao Cup - Home \| Facebook |
|---|---|
| Brent Event Day Webpage | • The Licensing Community Protection officer (Susana) created the content for a new webpage for all licensed premises which was then added by the Web Team (Rachel Gant) with an introduction to the event.<br>• Full list of premises including split can be found here https://www.brent.gov.uk/eventdays |
| Signage | • Improved signage including 40 totems<br>Please see **Appendix 8** for Totem Designs |
| Fan Zones | • There are two existing Premises Licences that cover external areas<br>• The first area is located in Arena Square (outside OVO Arena). The second area is the event pad located on Wembley Park Boulevard (opposite the LDO).<br>• These dedicated drinking zones permit those with a ticket for the game entry into a cordoned off zone, to consume alcohol purchased on site |

**Carabao Cup – During Match**

| | |
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| Communication – Social Media | Regular communication updates by the Communications Team  |
| Enforcement | 19 x PSU's @ 25 Police per PSU = 475 Police officers with an approximate additional 40 officers dedicated to intelligence<br>4 x Neighbourhood Patrol officers<br>2 x Licensing Police officers<br>1 x Licensing Community Protection Lead<br>5 x Licensing Community Protection officers (5 in the am, 2 in the pm)<br>6 + 1 Police officers dedicated to enforcement<br>3 x Licensing officers (pm), dedicated to street trading and ticket touting |
| Bin Deployment | 10 x 1100 litre bins were placed on Olympic Way which were used for the disposal of alcohol as fans came out of Wembley Park Station |

| Loggist | The loggist began at 11:00. There was an issue with the MS Form which delayed the logging. This was then rectified |
|---|---|
| Mobile Network | As the Stadium reached full capacity, the mobile network appeared to fail. This made it difficult for persons to communicate, but in particular the loggist and SPOC who could not be contacted |
| Police Command Meeting | Susana attended the Police briefing. Maps of OFF/ON licences were distributed, contact details for Brent staff and enforcement maps and timings. A brief explanation of our aims was given. |
| Police Commitment | There was a full commitment from the police with officers asking fans to dispose of alcohol |
| TFL/Train Services | There appeared to be a commitment from both services to reduce the excess alcohol on the trains/tubes coming into Wembley. It was reported that at some train stations, there were clear messages stating the Wembley is an alcohol free zone. |

**Carabao Cup – Post Match**

| Communication | Communication of the successful event was posted on Brent Council's website<br><br>Drink-free zone in Wembley hailed a success \| Brent Council<br><br>The wider press did not appear to report on the success of the event. |
|---|---|
| Letters of Gratitude | Thank you letter to premises<br>Thank you letter to Football Clubs and support groups |
| Brent Event Day Webpage | Susana will have to get the current message related to the current event removed from the website |
| Stewarding | The deployment of stewards worked well without the need to be given authorisation to enforce against those who may refuse to dispose of alcohol. Feedback demonstrated that in the most, persons disposed of their alcohol without any issues. |
| Enforcement Results | • Engagement with non-compliance premises and larger OFF licences in relation to long term strategy<br>• Reviews are likely to take place of the following premises<br>  • 2 ON licences<br>  • 2 OFF licences<br>• Neighbourhood Patrol Officers<br>  • Urination – 5 FPNs<br>  • Street Trading – 2 FPNs<br>  • Consumption of alcohol – 3 FPNs<br>  • Over 100 warnings |

**Achievements**

| Atmosphere | Please see **Appendix 3** for a visual comparison between:-<br>• Carabao Cup 27th February 2022<br>• FA Cup Final 15th May 2021<br>• Euro Final 2020 11th July 2021<br>In this case, atmosphere includes the use of flares, waste on the public highway and crowd behaviour. There was a noticeable difference, even between the FA Cup Final 2021 and the Carabao Cup 2022, where there was a capacity of 22.5k and 82k respectively |
|---|---|

| Feedback | Feedback was given by restaurants, bars, pubs, cafes, off licences. For some of the feedback, please see **Appendix 2** |
|---|---|
| Enforcement | The monitoring of premises worked well, with issues being brought in centrally through a clear line of communication. See 'what could be improved' for steps moving forward |

**Improvements**

| Enforcement Training | In relation to street drinking, the training of those undertaking street drinking duties of ON & OFF licences, needs to take place much sooner. Engagement with premises was limited to monitoring by officers due to the late timing of officers being allocated to Susana pre-event. For follow up events, this training will need to take place much sooner. |
|---|---|
| Stewarding | SW Quarter (area closest to Stadium station) needs addressing. This was covered by Neighbourhood Patrol officers, but not Stewards, Police or allocated bins as was Olympic Way. This is important if a completely sterile area is to be achieved around the WNS, where fans are likely to gather before entering the Stadium. |

**Considerations**

| Limitations | In relation to street drinking, the Wembley PSPO does not; <ul><li>Include wording that prohibits the carrying of sealed containers at a time when street drinking takes place. Any authorised officer may only count open containers as a breach</li><li>Cover all of the OFF licences in the immediate area surrounding the WNS. However, the Borough wide PSPO includes all public highways in Brent, but changes need to be made to add them to the relevant Wembley PSPO</li></ul> |
|---|---|
| NNDR | <ul><li>The OFF licences have mentioned that they pay premium business rates because they are located beside Wembley Stadium</li><li>Susana to contact Peter Cosgrove to confirm this information</li></ul> |
| Premises Licence Variations | <ul><li>The OFF licences who will have had a substantial drop in sales at the Carabao Cup, <u>will not</u> voluntarily apply to vary their Premises Licence to include such conditions as not supplying alcohol on event days. They will not want to change their licence when others may not change theirs and will also be reluctant as the news is so fresh</li><li>However, as some of the Wembley Stadium conditions will be costly to them in the long-run, such as the use of SIA, there may be a point where they are more forthcoming in undertaking this</li><li>Consideration needs to be had as to whether the fee to apply for a minor variation will be waived</li></ul> |
| Increase in Theft from Premises and Non-Payment of Goods | <ul><li>As a result of off licences refusing alcohol sales, fans were then stealing alcohol from the premises</li><li>One particular premises on Wembley Park estate reported that after eating and drinking in the premises, each person at the table subsequently left the premises without paying. The last person was apprehended and all of those that left, returned to pay</li></ul> |
| Radio Network | <ul><li>Consideration needs to be made as to whether a radio network would be more suitable for Wembley Stadium event days</li><li>This is in hand between Daryl, Scott McCormick and Susana where a discussion will take place in making this happen.</li><li>Daryl will also be able to use the radios as and when they are required for emergencies when the mobile network is at capacity or unavailable.</li></ul> |

Susana Figueiredo

| | • It is likely that there is already an existing radio network that Brent and its partners will be able to use this existing network. The current receptor may not have any further available slots and therefore another solution may be necessary |
|---|---|
| Zone Ex Control Room | • Consideration for a separate Zone Ex control room to be put into place during event days |

**Upcoming Events**

| Upcoming Events | Preparation for the following three games is under way;<br>• Saturday 26th March 2022 - England v Switzerland KO 17:30<br>• Tuesday 29th March 2022 - England v Ivory Coast KO 19:45<br>• Sunday 3rd April 2022 - Papa John's Trophy – KO TBC |
|---|---|
| Further Communication to Premises | Updated letter to be sent to premises to seek compliance |
| Brent Event Day Webpage | ON licences to be updated by Susana with relevant event details and split where necessary<br>https://www.brent.gov.uk/eventdays |
| Police Command Briefing | Susana to attend the briefing to ensure a consistent approach between agencies. It also give the Inspectors on the day an insight into the work Brent Council is undertaking from an enforcement point of view with contact details additionally being given |
| Police Commitment | The Police commitment appears to be consistent. The Commander for the day will not be the same but Susana has made contact with Central Police to gain contact details for alternative Commanders. This is to ensure collaboration on the days of the upcoming events but also to gain sign off on the letters to ON/OFF licences |
| Consistent Approach | It is important that ongoing communication continues between the FA, the clubs, the police, BTP, Brent Council and any other relevant stakeholders to ensure a commitment to educating and publicising a very clear message on this new approach |

**Long-Term**

| Defining Zone EX | The area to be encompassed by Zone Ex has already begun to be defined. As the events progress, evidence of where there may be gaps, can be addressed. This will need to be determined for the purposes of:-<br>• Future Wembley Stadium Event Days<br>• The PSPO update<br>• The CIZ as part of the Licensing Policy 2003 – Statement of Licensing Policy<br>It may be that a Zone Ex and a Zone Ex1 be determined, which could be implemented when required to deal with the displacement of street drinking. |
|---|---|
| Defining a Game of National Significance | Although relevant in some ways, for the purposes of implementing the PSPO, defining a game of 'National' significance is not required with the PSPO in place. |
| Communicating the Strategy | Discussion with partners in Quintain and Wembley Park Ltd who cover most of the larger OFF licences around WNS, as to what the long-term strategy is in order to gain maximum support |
| Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) – Borough Wide | The current PSPO expires in October 2023. Work will need to begin to include:-<br>• Gathering evidence to support the continuation of the PSPO<br>• Considering whether there is sufficient evidence to vary the PSPO to include other elements of ASB such as urination, litter, illegal street trading and the distribution of free literature in problematic areas.<br>The deadline for this work to commence is **December 2022** |

| | |
|---|---|
| Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) – Wembley | The current PSPO expires in October 2023. Work will need to begin to include:-<br>• Gathering evidence to support the continuation<br>• The streets omitted from the Wembley PSPO surrounding WNS for the purposes of prohibiting street drinking.<br>• A change in wording, that those carrying closed containers whilst street drinking would be a breach of the PSPO, if asked to dispose of them. The offence would then be committed, if the person fails to do so.<br><u>The deadline</u> for this work to commence is **December 2022.**<br><u>An earlier deadline</u> of **July 2022** would need to be considered if the change of wording to include closed containers is to be implemented by the Champions League Final at the end of May 2023. In this case, a new PSPO would be applied for with the intention of revoking the current PSPO when the new one becomes enforceable. |
| Defining Land Surrounding WNS | A project to determine the ownership of land surrounding WNS will soon be underway. The lead for this being Laura Davies from Public Safety. This will assist in determining where the PSPO may have limitations in relation to being enforced. |
| Licensing Act 2003 – Statement of Licensing Policy | The deadline for CIZ work to begin, should have been <u>at the latest</u> **October 2021,** to allow for time to collate evidence towards continuing the implementation of the CIZ. At this point we are running the risk of not having a CIZ Policy in place, when the current one expires. This means that any new applications for OFF licences in Brent and for the purposes of this report, Wembley, would be impossible to refuse. |
| Culture Surrounding Events | It is likely that once this football season ends, word will have got around that Brent Council and its partners have a zero tolerance for street drinking in Brent. In particular, where there are large crowds of people present.  This should in turn make street drinking at future events, a reduced issue and risk to all parties.<br>It is however expected that at the beginning of next season, a strong enforcement presence will be required to follow through on the message that street drinking will not be tolerated |

Susana Figueiredo

On Licences

| Premises Name | Premises Address |
|---|---|
| The Green Man | Dagmar Ave<br>Wembley<br>HA9 8DF |
| The Arch | 324 Harrow Rd<br>Wembley<br>HA9 6LL |
| Station 31 | 299-303 Harrow Rd<br>Wembley<br>HA9 6BD |
| The Liquor Station | 397A High Rd<br>Wembley<br>HA9 6AA |
| JJ Moons | 397 High Rd<br>Wembley<br>HA9 6AA |
| Crystals - Sports Bar | 1 South Way<br>Wembley<br>HA9 0HB |
| Crystals - Aqua (Ground Floor) | 1 South Way<br>Wembley<br>HA9 0HB |
| Crystals - Wings (1st Floor) | 1 South Way<br>Wembley<br>HA9 0HB |
| St George's Hotel | 43-51 Wembley Hill Rd<br>Wembley<br>HA9 8AU |
| California Kitchen | 31 Wembley Hill Rd<br>Wembley<br>HA9 8AS |
| Mushroom Italian Restaurant | 19 Wembley Hill Rd<br>Wembley<br>HA9 8AF |
| El Bandido | 13 Wembley Hill Rd<br>Wembley<br>HA9 8AF |
| Shawarma Grill | 350-352 High Rd<br>Wembley<br>HA9 6AZ |

| | |
|---|---|
| Cerbul Romanesc | 414 High Rd<br>Wembley<br>HA9 6AH |
| Nandos | 420-422 High Rd<br>Wembley<br>HA9 6AH |
| Youngs | 329 Harrow Rd<br>Wembley<br>HA9 6BA |
| Arena Restaurant | 307 Harrow Rd<br>Wembley<br>HA9 6BD |
| Best Western Plus | 365 High Road<br>Wembley<br>HA9 6AY |
| Holiday Inn | Empire Way<br>Wembley<br>HA9 8DS |
| IBIS | South Way<br>Wembley<br>HA9 0HB |
| Wembley International Hotel | Empire Way<br>Wembley Park<br>HA9 0NH |
| Black Sheep 1 | 2 Olympic Way<br>Wembley Park<br>HA9 0GU |
| Novotel | 5 Olympic Way<br>Wembley Park<br>HA9 0NP |
| Box Park | 18 Olympic Way<br>Wembley Park<br>HA9 0JT |
| Bread Ahead | 26-28 Olympic Way<br>Wembley Park<br>HA9 0NP |
| Pasta Remoli | 10 Exhition Way<br>Wembley Park<br>HA9 0FU |
| Masalchi by Atul Kochar | 2 Wembley Park Blvd<br>Wembley Park<br>HA9 0HP |
| The White Horse | 4 Wembley Park Blvd<br>Wembley Park<br>HA9 0HP |

| | |
|---|---|
| Blue Check | 12 -13 Empire Way<br>HA9 0RQ |
| The Parish | 120 Wembley Park Drive<br>Wembley Park<br>HA9 8HP |
| Wembley Tavern | 121 Wembley Park Dr<br>Wembley Park<br>HA9 8HG |
| Double 6 Sports Bar | 125 Wembley Park Dr<br>Wembley Park<br>HA9 8HQ |
| The Torch | 1-5 Bridge Rd<br>Wembley Park<br>HA9 9AB |
| Arena Square | Arena Square (outside SSE Arena, Engineers Way) |
| Events Pad | Events Pad (opp. LDO, next to playground) |
| TGI Friday | 1 Wembley Park Boulevard<br>Wembley Park<br>HA9 0TG |
| Mezze Grill | 131 Wembley Park Dr<br>Wembley Park<br>HA9 8HQ |
| Wembley Tandoori | 133 Wembley Park Dr<br>Wembley Park<br>HA9 8HQ |
| Moulin Grill | 139 Wembley Park Dr<br>Wembley Park<br>HA9 8HQ |
| Ecco'la Pizzeria | 87-89 Wembley Park Dr<br>Wembley Park<br>HA9 8HF |
| Early Bird (also sells food to takeaway) | Unit 109 Raglan Court<br>Empire Way<br>Wembley Park<br>HA9 0RG |
| Premier Inn | 151 Wembley Park Drive<br>Wembley Park<br>HA9 8HQ |

| Premises Name | Premises Address |
|---|---|
| Hilton | Lakeside Way<br>Wembley Park<br>HA9 0BU |
| Premier Inn | 1 Wembley Park Boulevard<br>Wembley Park<br>HA9 0GG |

Off Licences

| *Premises Name* | *Premises Address* |
|---|---|
| Amazon Fresh | 20 Wembley Park Blvd<br>Wembley Park<br>HA9 0HP |
| Sainsburys | Civic Centre<br>1-3 Exhibition Way<br>HA9 0FA |
| Co-op | 25 Olympic Way<br>Wembley Park<br>HA9 0FR |
| Butlers | 9 Olympic Way<br>Wembley Park<br>HA9 0NP |
| Tesco | Quadrant Court<br>1 Stadium Way<br>Wembley<br>HA9 0FE |
| Lidl | Unit3 Wembley Park Dr<br>Wembley Park<br>HA9 8TS |
| Asda | Forty Lane<br>Wembley<br>HA9 9EX |
| Brent Newsagents & Off Licence | 6 Grand Parade<br>Forty Avenue<br>Wembley<br>HA9 9JS |
| JS Food & Wine | 9 Grand Parade<br>Forty Avenue<br>Wembley<br>HA9 9JS |
| Cozza | 13 Grand Parade<br>Forty Avenue<br>Wembley<br>HA9 9JS |
| Mala Mini Market | 371 High Road<br>Wembley<br>HA9 6AA |

| | |
|---|---|
| Capitol Food & Wine | 107 Wembley Park Drive<br>Wembley<br>HA9 8HQ |
| Exotic Food Off Licence | 117 Wembley Park Drive<br>Wembley<br>HA9 8HG |
| Stadium Supermarket | 129 Wembley Park Drive<br>Wembley<br>HA9 8HQ |
| Wembley Park Express Food & Wine | 41-43 Bridge Road<br>Wembley<br>HA9 9AG |
| 11 Hour Expresss | 49 Bridge Road<br>Wembley<br>HA9 0GU |
| Arena Express | 110 Raglan Court<br>Empire Way<br>Wembley<br>HA9 0RG |
| Eastern European Food & Wine | 297 Harrow Road<br>Wembley<br>HA9 6BD |
| Jeen Cash & Carry | 306 Harrow Road<br>Wembley<br>HA9 6LL |
| Triangle Food & Wine | 1 Neeld Parade<br>Wembley Hill Road<br>HA9 6QU |
| Brother's Superstore | 4 Neeld Crescent<br>Wembley<br>HA9 6LW |
| Ruskan Food & Wine | 27 Wembley Hill Road<br>Wembley<br>HA9 |
| Fresh Mart (Canim Ailem) | 34 Wembley Hill Road<br>Wembley<br>HA9 8AD |
| Shree Superstore | 11 Wembley Hill Road<br>Wembley<br>HA9 8AF |
| Winstaar Food & Wine | 354 High Road<br>Wembley<br>HA9 6AZ |
| Sainsbury's | 349-357 High Road<br>Wembley<br>HA9 6ET |

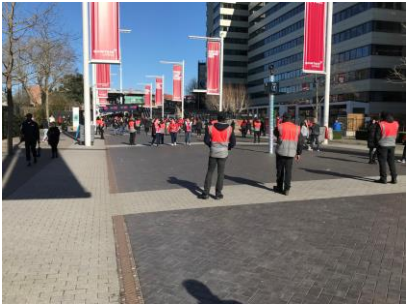| | |
|---|---|
| Inaq Food (not currently permitted to sell alcohol) | 3A, Pop In Commercial Centre<br>South Way<br>Wembley<br>HA9 0HF |
| Traditional European Food & Wine | 399 High Road<br>Wembley<br>HA9 7AF |
| Euro Food & Wine | 445 High Rd<br>Wembley<br>HA9 7AF |
| West 9 | 471 High Road<br>Wembley<br>HA9 7AF |
| Lakomka | 91 Wembley Park Dr<br>Wembley Park<br>HA9 8HF |
| Arena Mini Mart | 81-82 Alexandra Court<br>Empire Way<br>HA9 0QZ |

**Appendix 2**

Positive Feedback from Premises

| Feedback Type | Feedback |
|---|---|
| Veolia | Very noticeable reduction in cans and bottles in and around the location and on the concourse. There was also less conflict met with members of the public when operatives were carrying out their duties. They were able to manage the cleanliness throughout the day and stay on top of it. At the end of the day, the cleansing service took place, but is in no way comparable to when street drinking was permitted |
| Traders Association & Local Resident | **Francis Henry Chair of Wembley Traders Association and local resident**<br><br>'Consuming and drinking alcohol on Wembley's event day does have many benefits. It generates economic activity and employment; it brings people together to socialise; and it is an enjoyable pastime that many people value. However, it does come with costs. Some of these costs over the years include noise, pollution, conflict with many people's daily routine/sleep. Other costs include crime and injury, are facilitated by alcohol, which is often highly traded on event day. Brent managed yesterdays event day and the community have seen the benefits'. |
| Business - Public House | All was great, no problems |
| Business - Public House | No problems at all, everything went smooth |
| Business - Public House | Great day, no problems at all |
| Traders Association & Franchisee | **Reema Mavani Vice Chair of Wembley Traders Association & Franchisee**<br><br>'From a restaurant perspective – unlicensed, it was calmer as normally we have people drinking and we have to ask them to leave! Had no issues in Wembley Park or High Road!' |
| Business - Public House | For us, we had next to no rubbish anywhere on the street in front and saw a decent boost from people coming in earlier than expected, to what we pin down to not being allowed to walk around with their own cans |
| Business – Café | On an event day, takings are approximately 20% of my business for the day. On Sunday this increased by 60% |
| Business – Brent Civic Centre | The gardens to the side of the Civic Centre usually have to be locked up because people try to get in to have a drink, this wasn't the case on Sunday. The toilets on the ground floor are usually really dirty and the building overwhelmed with people coming in and out. Again this wasn't the case on Sunday |
| Business - Bar | We had more alcohol sales than usual event days and less food sales… but overall no issues being a big event and large crowd near the Stadium |
| Business - Restaurant | The atmosphere on Sunday was completely different. Sales increased but what was most noticeable was that those who were drinking, were also eating a meal, this balanced out how the alcohol affected them. Everyone was pleasant and on the street the atmosphere was calm, well natured and no rubbish from alcohol in the street |
| Business – Off Licence | I have to commend everyone in this group. Well done!<br>None of us to reduce sales of course…not even the Council. However there is a PSPO in place and we don't want some following and others not following…defeats the purpose of what the PSPO is trying to achieve.<br>We can only implement a PSPO if we ALL work together to enforce it – and today we have shown that we can and will work together to enforce unwelcome behaviour in Wembley! |

Susana Figueiredo

| | Photos and images from all of us on this forum will soon stamp this out. I commend those who have made the effort to share images here.<br>Well done everyone (all store owners for the images) and Susana, Paul and your team of enforcement officers to stamp it out quickly.<br>By the way, with us all saying no…the risk of theft of alcohol has increased – so be aware and watchful everyone. |
|---|---|
| Councillor | Could see a high visible difference in the area. A big thank you to the entire team. |

Negative Feedback from Premises

| Business – Off Licence | We need to find some alternative way it's big impact on business already we suffer 2 years from the pandemic we can't hold every event like today |
|---|---|
| Business – Off Licence | If the same thing keep happening than we have to close our business and start applying benefits |
| Business – Off Licence | You have to find other ways of implementing this. There are far too many event days for us to sustain this. Our takings are down by more than 50% compare to last Sunday and our staff costs are more than double. Generally on event days our regular customers disappear and football fans make up for it. If we can't serve them then it's going to affect people's livelihood. Some won't bother hiring extra staff and there will be security issues. Earlier kick off times might be one of the solutions. Mostly if goes back to normal after the game |
| Business – Off Licence | It's big impact on us our sale has reduced by 85% |
| Business – Off Licence | We have to employ 2 extra staff to control the event people. It's better to close all off licence shops on event days |
| Business – Off Licence | We will obviously comply with all the rules to the best of our abilities. But we feel like we are being put at the front line here which we don't think is fair at all |

| Event | | |
|---|---|---|
| 27.02.2022 - Carabao Cup<br>Liverpool v Chelsea<br>KO 16:30<br>Capacity 82K | 15.05.2021 FA Cup Final<br>Chelsea v Leicester City<br>K0 17:15<br>Capacity 22.5k | 11.07.2021  Euro Final<br>England v Italy<br>KO 19:45<br>Capacity 67k |
| <br>11:31 | | <br>9:47 |
| <br>11:47 | | <br>12.30 |
| | | |

Susana Figueiredo

13:59



14:40



13.00



14:30



15:00
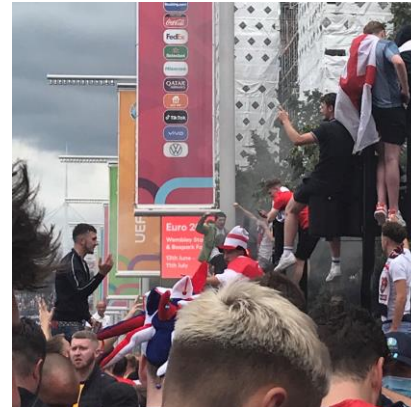


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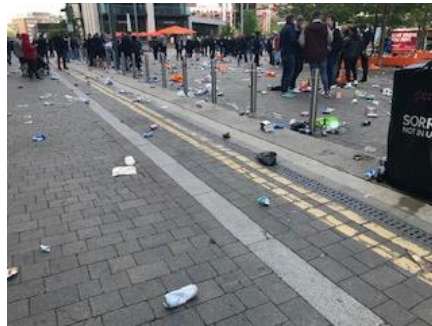


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16:38



18:30



19:53



19:52

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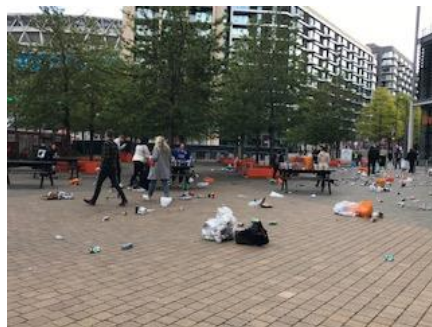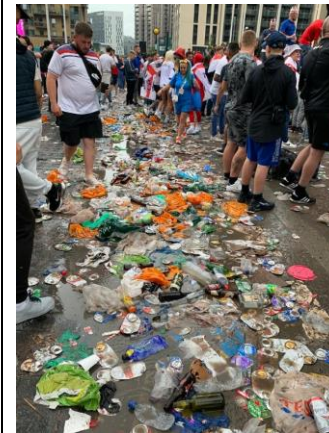
Brent

# Enjoy match days responsibly

We want everyone to enjoy their visit to Wembley and the match. However we will not tolerate anti-social behaviour, so please behave responsibly.

Brent Council and its partners are enforcing a No Street Drinking Zone on Olympic Way and the surrounding area for the Carabao Cup Final on Sunday 27 February 2022 as part of the current Public Space Protection Order. Fans drinking on Olympic Way and the surrounding streets will be asked to hand over their alcohol and enforcement action may be considered.

Event day parking restrictions →

## Drink responsibly

There is a range of bars, fan zones and restaurants available in and around Wembley where you can enjoy a drink or a meal before the game. We have listed details of some of these venues below, including which ones are hosting which fans. Please book early to avoid disappointment.

Please make sure you visit the ones allocated to the football club you support. We are taking these steps to provide a safe and enjoyable environment for everyone.

**West - Liverpool FC**                    +

**East - Chelsea**                         +

**Neutral supporters**                     +

## Travelling to Wembley

If you are travelling to Wembley by public transport, the Drinkaware website has some useful advice on drinking alcohol in public places. There may also be alcohol restrictions on coach services so please check before you travel.

## West - Liverpool FC ▬

If you are a Liverpool fan, we ask that you enjoy a pre-match drink or meal in the following pubs and bars. Please book early to avoid disappointment.

| Venue | Address | Phone number |
|---|---|---|
| The Green Man | Dagmar Avenue, Wembley, HA9 8DF | 0208 9031441 07595 051937 |
| The Arch | 324 Harrow Rd, Wembley , HA9 6LL | 0208 1271141 |
| Station 31 | 299-303 Harrow Rd, Wembley, HA9 6BD | 0208 9000173 |
| The Liquor Station | 397A High Rd, Wembley, HA9 6AA | 020 8903 0159 |
| JJ Moons | 397 High Rd, Wembley, HA9 6AA | 020 8903 4923 |
| Crystals (Sports Bar & Aqua Lounge) | 1 Popin Building, Southway, HA9 0HB | 02035765765 07985 195277 |
| La Regina | St George's Hotel, 43-51 Wembley Hill Rd, Wembley, HA9 8AU | 020 8900 0662 |
| Liverpool Fan Zone, Events Pad | Wembley Park Boulevard, HA9 0FD (opposite the London Designer Outlet) | |

## East - Chelsea ▬

If you are a Chelsea fan, we ask that you enjoy a pre-match drink or meal in the following pubs and bars. Please book early to avoid disappointment.

| Venue | Address | Phone number |
|---|---|---|
| Black Sheep | 2 Olympic Way, Wembley Park, HA9 0GU | |
| Box Park | 18 Olympic Way, Wembley Park, HA9 0JT | |
| The White Horse | 4 Wembley Park Blvd, Wembley Park, HA9 0HP | |
| The Blue Check | 12 -13 Empire Way, Wembley, HA9 0RQ | 020 8902 8147 |
| Wembley Tavern | 121 Wembley Park Dr, Wembley Park, HA9 8HG | 07956 849648 020 8903 2955 |
| Stadium Sports Bar | 125 Wembley Park Dr, Wembley Park, HA9 8HQ | 07503 000 096 |
| The Torch | 1-5 Bridge Rd, Wembley Park, HA9 9AB | 02089045794 |
| Crock of Gold | 23 Bridge Road, Wembley, HA9 9AB | 020 8908 6933 |
| Chelsea Fan Zone | Arena Square, Engineers Way, HA9 0AA (opposite SSE Arena) | |

## Neutral supporters

There are a number of cafes, restaurants and bars in and around Wembley that haven't been allocated to a team, where you can enjoy a meal or pre-match drink. Please book early to avoid disappointment.

Visit the London Designer Outlet website for more information on many of the restaurants listed below.

| Venue | Address | Phone number |
|---|---|---|
| Swan Pub | 789 Harrow Road, Wembley, HA0 2LP | 020 8904 6933 |
| Arena Lounge | 652 Harrow Road, Wembley, HA0 2HA | 020 8248 1280 07857820000 |
| TGI Friday | 1 Wembley Park Boulevard, Wembley Park, HA9 0TG | |
| Pasta Remoli | 10 Exhition Way, Wembley Park, HA9 0FU | |
| Masalchi by Atul Kochar | 2 Wembley Park Blvd, Wembley Park, HA9 0HP | |
| Bread Ahead | 26-28 Olympic Way, Wembley Park, HA9 0NP | |
| Frankie & Benny's | London Designer Outlet, Wembley Park Blvd, Wembley, HA9 0FD | |
| JRC Global Buffet | London Designer Outlet, Wembley Park Blvd, Wembley, HA9 0FD | |
| Las Iguanas | London Designer Outlet, Wembley Park Blvd, Wembley, HA9 0FD | |
| Wagamama | London Designer Outlet, Wembley Park Blvd, Wembley, HA9 0FD | |
| Pizza Express | London Designer Outlet, Wembley Park Blvd, Wembley, HA9 0FD | |
| Zizzi | London Designer Outlet, Wembley Park Blvd, Wembley, HA9 0FD | |
| Nando's | London Designer Outlet, Wembley Park Blvd, Wembley, HA9 0FD | |
| Byron Burger | London Designer Outlet, Wembley Park Blvd, Wembley, HA9 0FD | |
| Big Moe's | London Designer Outlet, Wembley Park Blvd, Wembley, HA9 0FD | |

**(a)**

**News story -**

**Street drinking ban in force for Carabao Cup Final**

A ban on street drinking in the streets around Wembley Stadium will be in force ahead of the Carabao Cup Final, as part of the existing Public Space Protection Order (PSPO).

The no street-drinking zone on Olympic Way and surrounding areas bars people from drinking alcohol in public spaces ahead of the match between Chelsea and Liverpool.

Fans drinking on Olympic Way and the surrounding streets will be asked to hand over their alcohol and enforcement action may be considered.

The move by Brent Council and its partners aims to crack down on anti-social behaviour related to drinking ahead of the game on Sunday 27 February 2022

Cllr Muhammed Butt, Brent Council Leader, said: "The iconic Wembley Stadium has successfully played host to countless memorable and historic events over the years. The vast majority of visitors enjoy themselves responsibly but a minority do not and this new approach targets those people intent on causing disorder after drinking heavily on street.

"There are a number of bars, fan zones and fantastic restaurants to enjoy in Wembley before the game so there really is no need for anyone to be drinking alcohol on our streets."

If you are attending the Carabao Cup Final, there are a range of bars, fan zones and restaurants available to enjoy in Wembley before the game – you can find the full range of options here [link to www.brent.gov.uk/carabaocup]. Please book early to avoid disappointment.

The ban on drinking in public will be enforced by a team of officers from Brent Council, Wembley National Stadium, Wembley Park, The Metropolitan Police Service, Transport for London and the British Transport Police.

Please click here for more information on the Public Space Protection Order. If you are travelling to Wembley by public transport, please click here to find out more about drinking alcohol in public places. There may also be alcohol restrictions on coach services.

**(b)**

**No-Street Drinking Zone in Operation for Sunday's Carabao Cup Final**

Supporters attending Sunday's Carabao Cup Final at Wembley are being advised that a no street-drinking zone on Olympic Way and surrounding areas will be in operation ahead of the match.

There will still be a wide range of bars, pubs, fan zones and restaurants available to enjoy in Brent before the game – you can find further details here.

Susana Figueiredo

The ban on street drinking in public will be enforced by a team of officers from Brent Council, Wembley National Stadium, Wembley Park, The Metropolitan Police Service, Transport for London and the British Transport Police with fans being required to hand over their alcoholic drinks or face a £100 fine.

The Carabao Cup Final, featuring Liverpool and Chelsea, is expected to be played in front of nearly 90,000 spectators, which will be the first time in two years Wembley Stadium has welcomed a full capacity crowd.

(c)

**Important information ahead of the Carabao Cup Final**

Brent Council and its partners are enforcing a No Street Drinking Zone on Olympic Way and the surrounding area for the Carabao Cup Final on Sunday 27 February 2022 as part of the current Public Space Protection Order. Please click here for more information on the order.

Fans drinking on Olympic Way and the surrounding streets will be asked to hand over their alcohol and enforcement action may be considered.

There is a wide range of bars, pubs, fan zones and restaurants available to enjoy in Brent before the game – you can find further details here.

If you are travelling into Wembley by public transport, please click here to find out more about drinking alcohol in public places. There may also be alcohol restrictions on coach services.

We are taking these steps to provide a safe and enjoyable environment for everyone.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

# Brent

Brent Civic Centre

Engineers Way

Wembley

Middlesex HA9 0FJ

## METROPOLITAN POLICE

EMAIL reportstreetdrinking@brent.gov.uk

WEB     www.brent.gov.uk

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Licence Holder/DPS

February 2022

Dear Licence Holder/DPS,

**Licensing Act 2003 – Street Drinking on Wembley Stadium Event Day – Carabao Cup on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2022**

I am writing in relation to the prominent street drinking culture at **Wembley Stadium events**, **the supply of alcohol**, the effects of this on **high levels of street drinking** and your responsibility under your **Premises Licence** to assist in reducing this.

**Public Space Protection Order**
Since 2017 Brent Council has administered a Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) across the entire Borough of Brent, which amongst other factors, aims to prevent street drinking. *Please see the Appendix for more information*

**Euro 2020 Independent Review**
During the Euro 2020 Final, it was clear that street drinking played a major factor in the unacceptable, high levels of anti-social and criminal behaviour that took place.

You may be aware that an independent review of events surrounding the UEFA Euro 2020 Final 'Euro Sunday' at Wembley was undertaken by Baroness Casey. In response to this report, one of the commitments is to eradicate street drinking on **Wembley Stadium Event days by banning the consumption of alcohol in open public spaces from significant games.** *Please see the Appendix for more information*

**Moving Forward – Supply of Alcohol**
As you are aware, knowingly selling alcohol to customers who consume alcohol in the street is still your responsibility, as there is a clear link between street drinking and the related ASB, Criminal and Disorderly behaviour at Wembley Stadium events. In effect, this means, if you sell alcohol under these circumstances, you would effectively be aiding and abetting customers in breaching the PSPO.

We therefore require your full co-operation to assist in guaranteeing, a street-drinking free zone, <u>during the Carabao Cup Final on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2022</u>. In order to achieve this, we ask that you and your staff:-

- **Are trained to recognise those that are likely to consume alcohol in the street**
- **Refuse the sale of alcohol to anyone that is likely to drink alcohol in the street**

Susana Figueiredo

- **Refrain from increasing your store set up to include additional alcohol for the purpose of event days**

And

- **<u>Voluntarily</u> cease selling alcohol in glass vessels including all wines, beers and ciders and where possible cease selling any alcohol on event days Please see the Appendix for more information.**

Finally, whilst we understand that alcohol sales on event days may be valuable trade for off licences, Brent Council must balance these considerations with that of the safety of residents and visitors to the local area.

Please email reportstreetdrinking@brent.gov.uk with your name, premises name and address to confirm that you have read and understood the terms of this letter. Should you require any further clarification, please do not hesitate to send me an email. Should you fail to respond, we will undertake further visits.

**Please remember that failure to uphold the Licensing objectives, may, result in a review of your Premises Licence, with additional conditions or a revocation of the licence being requested.**
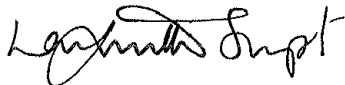
I would like to take this opportunity to thank you in advance for your co-operation in this matter.

I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Kind regards

Susana Figueiredo
Licensing Community Protection Officer
Brent Council

Louis Smith, Superintendent, MPS

Police Match Commander, Carabao Cup Final 2022

**Public Space Protection Order (PSPO)**

Local Authorities were granted powers in 2014 through section 59 of the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, to deal with nuisances or problems which harm the local community's quality of life. A PSPO is intended to ensure that people can therefore use and enjoy public spaces, living safely from anti-social behaviour.

Brent Council introduced a street drinking Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) which was implemented on 20th October 2017 for a period of 3 years and then further extended for a further three years up until 19 October 2023.

The PSPO was put in place as a preventative measure, in order to deter members of the public from street drinking. Street drinking enforcement can currently result in a fine of up to £100. The Police and the Council's Neighbourhood Patrol (NHP) Officers patrol areas where street drinking occurs and issue fines to offenders who breach the PSPO. Any open can or bottle of alcohol can also be seized and poured away.

For more information on the PSPO, please visit:-

https://www.brent.gov.uk/media/16417912/boroughwide-pspo-mapped-area.pdf

**Euro 2021 Independent Review**

An independent Review of events surrounding the UEFA Euro 2020 Final 'Euro Sunday' at Wembley has resulted in recommendations by Baroness Casey which include enhancing enforcement of bans on alcohol consumption on public transport and in other designated public spaces.

For access to the full review, please visit:-

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-casey-review-a-review-into-opportunity-and-integration

**Wembley Stadium Events**

At the upcoming events, there will be an increase in enforcement officers. They will assist in preventing any members of the public coming into the area with alcohol and in turn, consuming it in the street.

Brent Council and The Metropolitan Police must also take measures which incorporate both the existing PSPO and the independent review in relation to the Euros in order to make future events at Wembley a safe and enjoyable experience. This means working with licensed premises to ensure alcohol is not sold to street drinkers. In this case street drinkers are likely to be those persons attending the event who wish to consume alcohol in the street prior to entering Wembley Stadium.

**Staff Training**

The following measures should be considered and included in staff training in order to make certain that alcohol is not sold for consumption on the street:-

•        If unsure, ask your customers whether they are attending the game

•        Check their clothing. Are they wearing a football shirt?

•        Are they talking about going to the game?

•        Is it obvious that they are not from the area?

•        Many persons going to watch a game at the Stadium come as a pair or in a group

•        Use common sense. Having worked in the area for some time, you will be accustomed in differentiating locals to those attending football events

**Wembley PSPO**

There are 11 conditions which are prohibited in the area of the PSPO:-

1. To engage in illegal street trading which includes the buying and/or selling of any item(s) including tickets (ticket touting) to any person.

2. To consume alcohol or having an open alcohol container in a public space, who without reasonable excuse continues consuming alcohol or fails to surrender the alcohol in his/her possession when asked to do so by a Police Officer or authorised Council officer.

3. To distribute free literature which includes leaflets, the giveaway of free samples etc. without authorisation from the London Borough of Brent

4. To litter (such as cigarettes, bottles, cans, packets, food, urination,) etc.

5. To fly drone(s) without written consent from the land owner and/or the London Borough of Brent

6. To fly-post, which has potential to deface or damage fixtures, furniture or any other items.

7. To let off fireworks, including flares and smoke emitters in a public place, which may cause a nuisance and panic.

8. To play games or competitions which may cause an obstruction or nuisance to members of the public.

9. To undertake busking and use of loud speakers causing a nuisance without authorisation from the landowner and/or the London Borough of Brent.

10. To leave the engine of a vehicle idling without reasonable excuse, which is continued when asked to be stopped by an authorised Council officer.

11. To undertake Charity Collections without the consent from London Borough of Brent

**BLUE ZONE**

**ACCESSIBLE ROUTE**

**BAG RESTRICTIONS**

Permissible Bag Size

Depth 210mm    Height 297mm

|—Width 210mm—|

**WARNING**

YOU MAY BE FINED
PUBLIC SPACE PROTECTION
ORDER IN OPERATION:
- NO STREET DRINKING
- NO SALE OF GOODS
- NO SALE/RESALE OF TICKETS

WEMBLEY CONNECTED BY · Brent · Wembley Park

**WEMBLEY PARK STATION**

**WARNING**

YOU MAY BE FINED
PUBLIC SPACE PROTECTION
ORDER IN OPERATION:
- NO STREET DRINKING
- NO SALE OF GOODS
- NO SALE/RESALE OF TICKETS

WEMBLEY CONNECTED BY · Brent · Wembley Park

**PURPLE ZONE**

**ACCESSIBLE ROUTE**

**BAG RESTRICTIONS**

Permissible Bag Size

Depth 210mm    Height 297mm

|—Width 210mm—|

**WARNING**

YOU MAY BE FINED
PUBLIC SPACE PROTECTION
ORDER IN OPERATION:
- NO STREET DRINKING
- NO SALE OF GOODS
- NO SALE/RESALE OF TICKETS

WEMBLEY CONNECTED BY · Brent · Wembley Park

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| | **Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee** 19 July 2022 |
|---|---|
| | **Report from the Director of Finance** |

| **Medium Term Financial Outlook** |
|---|

| **Wards Affected:** | ALL |
|---|---|
| **Key or Non-Key Decision:** | KEY |
| **Open or Part/Fully Exempt:** (If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act) | OPEN |
| **No. of Appendices:** | None |
| **Background Papers:** | N/A |
| **Contact Officer(s):** (Name, Title, Contact Details) | Minesh Patel Director of Finance Email: Minesh.Patel@brent.gov.uk Tel: 020 8937 4043 Rav Jassar Deputy Director of Finance Email: Ravinder.Jassar@brent.gov.uk Tel: 020 8937 1487 |

**1.0 Purpose of the Report**

1.1 This report sets out the overall financial position facing the Council and highlights the significant risks, issues and uncertainties with regards to the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). This includes risks and uncertainties that already existed prior to COVID-19 and the new risks that must now be addressed. It also sets out the proposed budget setting strategy for 2023/24, which is the Council's minimum legal duty in respect of local authority

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budget setting, in order to maximise the period of consultation with residents, businesses and other key stakeholders.

1.2     The report also outlines how the MTFS will aim to provide a framework to invest broader ambitions and long term priorities such as the Borough Plan, the recovery from COVID-19, the cost of living crisis and other future steps to ensure the Council continues to operate in a financially sustainable and resilient way.

1.3     The remainder of this report sets out the medium term risks and uncertainties with regards to the current budget assumptions contained within the MTFS. These primarily relate to exceptional factors such COVID-19 scarring, high levels of inflation, increased demand for key services and uncertainty in government funding. In doing so, it must be recognised that the situation remains ongoing and it is extremely difficult to make a full, definitive and comprehensive assessment of the ongoing financial impact of these issues. As such, the figures in this report are based upon best estimates and forecasts and will therefore be subject to change. However, the significance of the financial challenge cannot be underestimated and over time, the Council will need to develop a response that continues to maintain a commitment to strong financial resilience and sustainability.

1.4     This report is structured as follows:

- Recommendations for Cabinet to approve;
- Strategic overview of Local Government finance;
- Future budget assumptions;
- Proposed budget setting process for 2023/24;
- Capital programme;
- Housing Revenue Account;
- Schools and the Dedicated Schools Grant;

## 2.0     Recommendation(s)

That Cabinet:

2.1     Note the contents of the report and the potential financial impact on the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy.

2.2     Agrees the budget setting process for 2023/24, including the approach to consultation and scrutiny, as set out in section five of this report.

2.3     Note and agree the proposed 2021/22 capital budget carry forwards and capital virements as set out in section six of this report.

2.4     Note the financial position with regards to the Housing Revenue Account, as set out in section seven of this report.

2.5     Note the financial position with regards to Schools and the Dedicated Schools Grant, as set out in section eight of this report.

**3.0    Strategic Overview**

**Macro-Economic Outlook**

3.1    This report paints a picture of considerable uncertainty in the economy caused by exceptional factors such as the COVID-19 pandemic, high levels of inflation, particularly for fuel and energy, and the global impact of war in Ukraine. These macro-economic factors together with local changes to demographics and demand-led pressures combine to create substantial need for growth in the Council's budget. At the same time, levels of government funding are uncertain. Nationally funding for local government is unlikely to keep pace with inflationary pressures and locally the effect of the government's "Levelling Up" agenda, which may move funding from London to the rest of the country, in highly uncertain.

3.2    Two years since the start of the pandemic, the current economic outlook is presented against the backdrop of another unfolding global shock - the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The conflict has major repercussions for the global economy, whose recovery from the worst of the pandemic was already being buffeted by the Omicron variant, supply bottlenecks and rising inflation. A fortnight after the invasion, gas and oil prices peaked over 200% and 50% above their end-2021 levels respectively. Prices have since fallen back, but remain well above historic averages.

3.3    The Bank of England is attempting to stifle inflationary pressures by raising interest rates, in common with other central banks worldwide; however, unlike the US Federal Reserve, the BoE is not confident it can engineer a soft landing for the economy. Instead, unusually gloomy BoE forecasts predict that the economy will contract by 1% in the fourth quarter of this year after gas and electricity costs have risen another 40% in October. Rising energy bills are forecast to push inflation up to 11% by December 2022, the highest in 40 years, and to slash real household incomes as wages fail to keep pace.

3.4    There are also shortages of food supplies due to the reduction in exports from Ukraine. This affects day-to-day essential commodities such as wheat, other cereals and sunflower oil leading to shortages and price rises for these items and similar alternatives. This is a contributor to the cost of living crisis faced by residents of the borough and will directly affect businesses and the Council itself by creating inflationary pressures.

3.5    The cost of living crisis is likely to have a direct and indirect impact on numerous service areas, ranging from leisure and civil ceremonials to homelessness and building services, with corporate impacts on Council Tax and Business Rates Collection as well as the Council Tax Support scheme.

**Inflation**

3.6    Inflation is being experienced at higher levels than has been the norm for recent years in all sectors of the economy. Core inflation, which strips out goods prone to fluctuation such as seasonal items, is experiencing the same levels of increase as mainstream inflation measured by CPI or RPI, indicating that higher levels of inflation are endemic in the economy. Fuel and energy costs are particularly volatile. As a net energy importer with a high degree of dependence

on gas and oil to meet its energy needs, higher global energy prices will weigh heavily on a UK economy that has only just recovered to near its pre-pandemic level.

3.7 In May 2022 the Consumer Price Index (CPI) hit 9.1%, up from 9% in the previous month, while the Retail Price Index (RPI), which is often used for contract indexation, reached 11.7%. The driving force behind these increases is fuel and energy costs, but there were sustained price rises in most categories of expenditure.

3.8 In June 2022 the Bank of England forecast that CPI inflation would peak at 11% in December 2022 before falling in 2023 and returning to the target level of 2% at some point in 2024. It is anticipated that the September 2023 figure could be 6% - this is used for inflation on many contracts.

3.9 Pre-pandemic a provision of £6m was adequate to cover the pay award, contract indexation and general inflation. The inflation provision is now more than double that amount at £14m and is set to rise further in 2023/24 to £18m before falling back in line with the Bank of England forecast. As an example, if inflation were 10.25%, this would add a further budget pressure of £9.23m per annum.

3.10 High inflation will have a significant impact nationally putting pressure on central government finances, with generally increased costs and automatic rises for items such as pensions that are indexed to the September CPI figure. Locally, many of the council's contracts have automatic indexation provisions that use specific indices at a point in time to increase the contract payment. General inflationary pressures will undoubtedly lead those negotiating pay awards to seek a similar level of increase to cover the rise in the cost of living.

**Interest Rates**

3.11 On 16 June the Bank of England raised the base rate of interest by 0.25% to 1.25%. The BoE officials forecast that the UK economy will slide into recession this year as higher energy prices push inflation over 10% by Christmas. This gloomy outlook has pushed sterling to a two-year low. Despite a forecast of a severe fall in household incomes, the BoE's Monetary Policy Committee's decision to raise base rate to 1.25%, its highest level since February 2009, will squeeze households further. Three of the nine MPC members voted for a half-point rate increase. Further increases are expected. Goldman Sachs predict interest rates will double to 2% over the next year, whilst Capital Economics forecast that rates will peak at 3% in 2023. For the Council, these rises will affect the cost of future borrowing, but not existing debt as the Council borrows on terms where the interest rate is fixed for the life of the loan.

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**Cost of Living Crisis**

3.12 The UK is facing a cost of living crisis as higher inflation erodes real incomes and consumption. The Bank of England has warned that household disposable income is projected to fall this year by the second largest amount since records began in 1964. The Council already has in place a number of mechanisms to support residents who may be struggling financially. These include:

- The **Brent Resident Support Fund** (RSF), which has been in place since August 2020. In the period August 2020 to 31 March 2022 the RSF supported 2,658 applicants with a total of £5.2 million.

- A **Fuel Poverty Toolkit** which was developed and promoted internally. It is available for all staff to access via the intranet. The toolkit provides an overview of local, national and independent support schemes and agencies, along with details as to how support can be accessed. Thirteen stakeholder briefings sessions were also delivered, helping raise awareness of the options that are available to residents help with the rising energy costs. These included briefing sessions for Members, as well as services including Housing, Public Health, Adult Social Care and Family Wellbeing Centres and Voluntary Community Sector (VCS) partners.

- In March 2022 a **Financial Support leaflet** outlining the support available was developed. This was delivered to all households in Brent to help increase awareness of the schemes and mechanisms available to residents who are struggling with the cost of living.

- **Brent Hubs** have in place mechanisms to issue vouchers to residents in need of urgent food and fuel support. This is in addition to referrals to food aid agencies and schemes for support with the cost of utilities. From October 2021 to March 2022 Brent hubs issued £2,490 worth of food vouchers and £5,507 worth of fuel vouchers. Over 5,000 residents presented at hubs in need of food aid between April 2019 and January 2022. Residents' presenting needs at the hubs are food and fuel enquires (30%), housing and homelessness (14%), council tax support (12%), form filling (12%), welfare benefits (8%), housing benefit (8%), money and debt advise (8%), digital support (5%), skills and employment (2%), and immigration (1%).

- The delivery of a number of Borough Plan funded **Financial Inclusion projects**, including a financial capability upskilling programme targeting community leaders, training to upskill Brent hubs staff and residents in debt management, and the delivery of a financial inclusion learning programme for residents. Up to 340 residents and community leaders will be supported through this programme.

- The Employment, Skills and Enterprise service have helped to **upskill residents to support them moving into work**. This includes 4,443 qualifications via Brent Start (ESOL, English, Maths & Digital Skills) from September 2021 to date, digital equipment loans, and financial support toward childcare.

- **Digital Inclusion** support for over 900 households, including providing 400 Brent pupils with access to a digital device and 100 businesses with digital skills training. To improve digital skills in the borough we have also launched

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digital cafes at three Brent Hubs and currently have around 100 digital champions in place. We also continue to engage internet providers to improve access to fibre through social tariffs.

- These initiatives are in addition to work being carried out across Council departments and by partner organisations which is aimed at supporting residents who are in hardship.

**COVID-19 Scarring**

3.13 Whilst the country has moved to a 'Living with COVID' position, which has seen the lifting of restrictions, a full return to pre-pandemic levels and patterns of activity has yet to happen. The impact of COVID-19 is not fully known and there is a risk that the Council may be exposed to unfunded financial pressures in the current and future financial years. In addition, the income loss compensation scheme for Council Tax and Business Rates does not fully cover the losses the Council is estimating and only applies to losses incurred in 2020/21. Similarly, the sales, fees and charges compensation scheme ended in July 2021, while the 'Plan B' restrictions will have had a further adverse impact on business rates and fees & charges income due to reduced footfall. Overall, these income losses may pose a considerable budget pressure. Any permanent 'COVID scarring' will also need to be reflected in the MTFS.

3.14 Despite these financial pressures, the Council has put in place considerable resources to support residents and businesses through these challenging times.  On 12 July 2021, Full Council agreed to set aside £17.5m of reserves for Recovery Initiatives. This is one-off funding over three years for the delivery of programmes in priority areas identified as essential to secure a sustainable and inclusive recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. These projects are themed around supporting communities, supporting businesses, reducing health inequalities and a green recovery.

3.15 The Council has also created the Brent Resident Support Fund. This dispersed 5.2m over 2020/21 and £2021/22.  It is estimated that a further £6m will be allocated in 2022/23. This is funded from reserves.

3.16 In the 2021/22 budget the Council allocated £13m of ongoing growth to address the effects of the COVID pandemic. £4m of this funding was removed in the 2022/23 budget. No additional funding is built into the MTFS for future years. The level of COVID scarring will need to be kept under review and is hard to assess. At the moment the best proxy for the cost of COVID scarring to the Council is £9m per annum (i.e. the £13m recovery budget originally allocated and subsequently reduced by £4m). This primarily relates to the increased cost of Council Tax support, income losses, lower collection rates and the higher cost of social care placements.

**Local Government Finance Settlement**

3.17 On 27 October 2021 the three year Spending Review was published and on 7 February 2022 the Levelling up secretary Michael Gove confirmed the final Local Government Finance Settlement for 2022/23. Whilst the 2021 Spending Review covers three years, the Local Government Finance Settlement was for one year only - the fourth one-year settlement in a row. Clearly, this is not

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helpful for medium term financial planning. The Spending Review indicates that the settlement is frontloaded, meaning that the risk of any additional service pressures from 2023/24 onwards will fall on the Brent taxpayer rather than the Chancellor.

3.18 The 2022/23 Local Government Finance settlement set out that core spending power will increase by 2.99% each year. However, this assumes that all councils will increase Council Tax by the maximum amount allowable without triggering a referendum of 2.99%. In addition, much of the new grant funding is tied to social care reforms, meaning that other services will benefit less. Removing the funding for the social care reforms, the increase for local government is actually 1.8%, which compares to 3.3% for the average government department.

3.19 It is anticipated that changes to the mechanism to allocate local government grants, implemented as part of the Fair Funding review, may see funding redistributed with a net transfer out of London. This would be consistent with the Government's "Levelling Up" agenda, which is targeting funds away from the capital. Although the government's stated aim is implementation of the Fair Funding review in April 2023, it is widely expected that there will be at best only a partial implementation at that point with completion of the review slipping to a future year. Normally, when the government makes major changes to local government funding, it puts in place transitional arrangements to bring in any funding reductions gradually over time. It is anticipated that this will happen with the Fair Funding review so that the full impact of any reduction in funding will not be felt for a number of years.

3.20 Combining the risks of the front-loaded local government settlement with a gradual reduction in government grant leads to the conclusion that the final years of the MTFS face a considerable risk that the level of government funding will be inadequate to cover future service requirements and that additional savings will be needed to balance the budget.

3.21 Another one year settlement means that it is unknown if the additional funding announced in autumn 2021 will be maintained. In particular, the settlement included a one-off grant, called the 2022/23 Services Grant, which is intended to cover various new burdens, such as National Insurance Contribution increases for Brent and its suppliers, and other expected inflationary pressures. The government has not committed to maintain this grant at current levels. Many commentators believe that this funding stream could be used to fund the "Levelling Up" agenda and that the future distribution mechanism could move funding out of London.

3.22 That being said, on 28 June 2022 at the Local Government Association's annual conference Michael Gove confirmed that Councils will receive a two year funding settlement from next year and will launch a consultation on spending plans. This news is welcome following four single year settlements and should make financial planning somewhat easier. However firmly fixing funding more than two years out amid rising inflation could be problematic. In addition, while this announcement will help the 2024/25 budget setting process, it does not help in setting the budget for 2023/24 due to core government funding not being announced until December 2022.  At the conference no new

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commitments were made on how the government would support Councils in managing the impact of inflation.

**Service Specific Pressures**

3.23   The Council is operating in a challenging financial environment with a funding outlook which is uncertain for local government in general and in particular, there is a lack of clarity around long term funding for adult social care and emerging pressures in children's services. In addition to this uncertainty, there is also the potential for significant spending pressures from demand-led services, specifically in children's and adult social care, new burdens which impact on the budget and on-going pressures as a result of COVID-19. Although growth has been built into the MTFS to help alleviate some of these pressures, they continue to present a significant budget risk, particularly in respect of the demographic pressures and contractual indexation. COVID, rising inflation, demand pressures on services and the reletting of a number of significant contracts in the Regeneration and Environment department add further financial risks. Therefore, Brent is likely to require significant savings over the next few years to deliver a balanced budget.

3.24   The demand for social care services and complexity of care needs are also ever-increasing resulting in higher costs. Whilst there are some reductions in costs due to less Residential and Nursing placement following the COVID-19 outbreaks, the demand for homecare and supported living is on the rise.

3.25   The cost of living crisis and the steep rise in inflation, heating and fuel costs are likely to have an impact on social care placement requests from providers who are looking to recover some of the additional costs they are incurring.

3.26   Another key area of uncertainty is the fair cost of care and social care reforms, which are likely to present substantial financial risks to the Council. While additional funding has been provided to support councils in preparing their markets to deliver the fair cost of care reforms, delivering these reforms will redirect resources away from frontline social care at a time when recovering from the pandemic is exerting major pressure on staff capacity. In addition, it is currently unknown whether the new funding will be sufficient to cover the cost of the reforms, such as the increase in employer's National Insurance Contributions (which affects both the Council's pay bill and supplier costs), the cost of the cap on personal care costs and inflationary pressures expected in the social care market. Early modelling suggests the additional cost of increasing National Insurance Contributions alone could be in the region of £2m per annum. Any shortfall in social care funding will, therefore, mean that the Council Tax will end up taking the strain.

3.27   As the cost of living is rising, the demand for housing services can be expected to increase and the number of homeless applications to rise. The current economic climate could also have an impact on the rent collection rates and result in increases in rent arrears. In addition, the service is reliant on the PRS for supply to prevent homelessness and end statutory homelessness duties. However, this market continues to contract. With more people placed in Temporary Accommodation, higher costs and less supply available to prevent homelessness, this could cause financial pressures on the budgets.

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3.28 The Redefining Local Services (RLS) programme was initiated in May 2019 to develop and implement a commissioning strategy for environmental services. The existing contracts were synchronised so that the new service arrangements would come into place from 1st April 2023. The final delivery model was approved to operate as a "specialist contracts delivery model with low to moderate levels of insourcing". And the procurement process is now underway for these specialist contracts.

3.29 Risks around the procurement process are being monitored and reviewed, however until the procurement processes are completed there remains a financial risk around the affordability of the contracts. In particular the rising rates of inflation and fuel costs, which could lead to increased contract prices when they commence in April 2023. The projected contract prices remain in review against the budget available, and increased contract costs will be considered when setting savings targets for 2023/24.

3.30 R&E has an income budget of £42m. A small percentage change can have a large monetary impact. For example, an additional 1% reduction in income would be equivalent to around £0.4m. In 2021/22 income collected was impacted due to the recovery from Covid-19 restrictions, such as in parking with changing motoring activities reducing traffic, and income from planning and building control applications reduced. It is hoped that with no restrictions income will continue to recover. In the current year there also remains some concern around the cost of living and the impact that could have on income received, this will be monitored throughout the year.

3.31 The Highways revenue budget is reliant on TfL LIP funding which was significantly reduced in 21/22 due to severe financial pressures on TfL. Since April 2020, TfL has negotiated a series of short-term funding settlements with the Government to enable it to continue operating public transport services and to enable the delivery of essential improvements to the transport network across London. Accordingly, the funding provided to Brent has been significantly below what it would usually expect to receive, and this impact continues to be felt in 2022/23. Reduced funding has been provided for quarter 1 of 22/23, with funding beyond that currently uncertain with further updates from TfL awaited.

**Overall Summary**

3.32 Brent has delivered total cumulative savings of £196m since 2010. In the last two years, 2021/22 and 2022/23, the Council has saved £11.2m, but it is clear that, looking forward to 2023/24, 2024/25 and 2025/26, further savings will be required. The lack of clarity around the future level of local government funding and uncertainty about the economic environment, particularly inflationary pressures, make it hard to be precise about future financial targets. When the 2022/23 budget was agreed by Council in February 2022, it was assumed that further savings of around £12m were required for the next two years. However, based on information and data available to date, it is clear that looking forward to 2023/24 and 2024/25, further savings will be required. The current working assumption is that £28m of savings will be required between 2023/24 to 2024/25 to balance the budgets of those years. The exact gap is inherently uncertain, simply because of the number of variables to be estimated and the

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difficulty of doing so over longer periods of time. The accuracy of this is probably at best +/- 20%, and wider variations are entirely plausible.

3.33 These estimates, which will be refined over the summer, will be a major factor in the construction of 2023/24 budget. The Council will be looking to identify and deliver savings of c£20m to bridge the gap in 2023/24 and enable it to set a balanced budget as required by law. The budget gap for 2024/25 will be reviewed once the local government finance settlement for 2023/24 is known. The Council will need to take difficult decisions about which services to prioritise and protect and which to reduce in order to continue to deliver affordable and sustainable budgets.

3.34 It is within this overall financial context that the other financial reports on this agenda, specifically the Financial Outturn 2021/22 report and Q1 2022/23 Financial Forecast report, become particularly relevant. Firstly, the Financial Outturn 2021/22 report sets out the outturn for income and expenditure versus the revenue budget for 2021/22. Despite reporting pressures of £20.7m as result of COVID-19, emergency funding from central government, and other interventions undertaken by the Council, were sufficient to offset these pressures. Secondly, the Q1 Financial Forecast report for 2022/23 sets out that based on current assumptions, the ongoing financial impact of COVID-19 and other budget pressures, such as inflation and demographic pressures, can be contained within the overall growth built in the 2022/23 budget.

3.35 However, it must be stressed that these forecasts and estimates are based on a number of assumptions which are subject to constant change. It is incredibly difficult to predict how business will recover as grants to businesses and business rates reliefs begin to wind down and how the general economy will recover after COVID-19. In addition, the current inflationary pressures being experienced makes financial planning and management exceptionally challenging. This uncertainty runs alongside existing budget pressures including social care demand, demographic changes, housing and homelessness.

3.36 Nevertheless, despite all of the uncertainties, risks and moving parts, all Local Authorities have to put together financial plans for 2023/24. For Brent, it is proposed to continue to base plans on an assessment on the range of possible scenarios rather than wait for the outcome of the Local Government Finance settlement in December 2022.

## 4.0 Medium Term Financial Strategy

4.1 The aim of the MTFS is to ensure a long term, stable and sustainable financial position that will allow the Council to achieve its strategic objectives. It reflects the impact of central government funding decisions and the impacts of the national and local economic context. It also provides a robust financial framework to support achievement of the Council's overall objectives and delivery of services.

4.2 The budget for 2022/23 was agreed in February 2022, and in another report on this agenda the first forecasts against that budget are reported.

4.3 The ongoing impact of COVID-19 and the emergence of significant inflationary pressures will require the Council to review its medium term financial strategy

on a more regular basis to ensure that it is still able to deliver its strategic priorities and maintain financial resilience. Though the precise financial impact remains difficult to predict, officers will continue to report on the Council's financial position to Cabinet at regular intervals in line with its existing governance arrangements.

4.4 The MTFS will be refreshed as part of the draft 2023/24 budget that will be presented to Cabinet later this year, including extending out to 2024/25 and beyond. Adopting a long term and forward looking approach should leave the Council in a sustainable financial position, with long term plans in place to give certainty to residents about future levels of service provision.

4.5 As part of the work to implement CIPFA's Financial Management Code, the Council will also introduce a longer term planning model with a high level overview of expenditure and resource requirements over the next 10 years – the Financial Strategy. This work should build a more robust forecasting tool, which is essential at a time of great uncertainty. It is worth noting that the longer term view captured in the Financial Strategy is intended to identify known and anticipated future expenditure requirements both to renew and maintain existing services and to allow transformation and investment in big ticket, long term initiatives. Much of this will involve capital investment.

4.6 It is important that the Financial Strategy and refreshed MTFS closely align with the Borough Plan for which they are the funding statement. They should also be closely linked to individual service plans for which they provide the funding sources and the Capital Strategy, which is key to sustaining the Council's services and investment in future improvements.

4.7 The aim is to produce a comprehensive suite of forward planning documents that allow the Council to ensure long term financial stability and a structured forecast of the future based on a 'no surprises' approach.

**Growth Assumptions**

4.8 Much of what the Council terms 'growth' is in fact the cost of standing still. Some of this is unavoidable (e.g. contract inflation, pay awards), whilst other parts result from growth pressures, such as demographic changes, that increase demand for services (e.g. adult social care, children's services, homelessness).

4.9 The Council currently expects services to contain inflationary pressures within their cash limits, but provides a specific amount for contractual indexation via growth. At present there is £3m allowed for contractual indexation in 2022/23. This is anticipated to be adequate as most contracts for this year are uprated based on inflation indices from late 2021 or early 2022 – i.e. before the large increases seen in March and April 2022 and the £3m is backed up by detailed business cases. Allowances for contractual indexation in future years are £5m (2023/24), £3m (2024/25) and £2m (2025/26). This is in line with the Bank of England forecast that the rate of inflation will fall back, having peaked in December 2022. It is not clear at the moment whether these amounts will be adequate as this depends on knowing both the base value of contracts being re-let in 2022/23 and the level of increase in the indices relevant to indexation.

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4.10    As inflation is so volatile, as part of the budget setting process for 2023/24, part of the Future Funding Risks reserve will be ear-marked to fund one-off spikes in inflation that do not require incorporation in the base budget.

4.11    Given that consumer price inflation is forecast to rise as high as 11% by December 2022, this is an area of considerable risk that will need to be closely monitored. The Council also needs to review its approach to general inflation within services as price rises of over 10% will be difficult to contain within existing cash limits both in 2022/23 and following years. The MTFS assumptions have not incorporated a specific amount for this risk, but departments are able to put forward business cases for growth and service pressures that will be considered as part of the budget round, if they cannot contain these within their cash limit. It is recognised that further work is needed on inflation risks.  An up to date assessment of these risks will be presented to Cabinet later in the year as part of the draft 2023/24 budget.

### Demographic and Demand-Led Service Pressures

4.12    Looking forward, besides general inflation, pay awards and contractual indexation, the Council needs to provide growth for unavoidable demographic and demand-led service pressures. The MTFS provides around £8m in 2023/24 and following years for the continuation of trends identified in 2022/23 or previous years; should increases be higher than the forecast trends, there is a risk that the current provision will prove inadequate.

### Government Grants

4.13    At present the Council's core grant funding consists of generally usable Revenue Support Grant (RSG - £25.8m in 2022/23), and specific grants for items such as for Public Health (PHG), the Improved Better Care Fund (iBCF) and Additional Social Care Funding (SCG). The MTFS assumes a small inflationary increase for RSG and PHG with a cash freeze for iBCF and SCG. Any inflationary increase may be inadequate to cover actual price rises experienced in the service areas. There are a number of other lower value grants which are also expected to remain frozen in cash terms.

4.14    Both the Improved Better Care Fund and Additional Social Care Grant have now been incorporated into the base budget. Previously, the Council's policy was to hold some of this funding as a central item and distribute it in-year as one-off expenditure. This was viewed as a prudent way to avoid overcommitting budget against grants that may not continue at their present levels. There has been no reduction in the level of these grants over time. The new policy is in line with that adopted by most councils. It does entail a risk, should these grants be reduced.

4.15    Whilst most grants are expected to continue at current levels, there is a question mark over the 2022/23 Services Grant. It is intended to pay for new burdens, such as the increase in employer's national insurance contributions, and these increases are clearly ongoing. The government has, however, made it clear that it intends to review the basis for allocating this funding and that the current level will not be protected. Given the expectation that the government will move much of this funding out of London as part of its "Levelling Up"

agenda, the MTFS assumes that the Council will receive 75%-80% of 2022/23 amount in future years. This is prudent as it is unlikely that the government would cut a local authority's funding by more than 25%. This grant will be needed to address the effect of grants being either frozen or subject to below inflation indexation.

**Council Tax**

4.16 Council Tax is one of the most significant sources of income for the Council, making up £135.7m (or 44%) of total core funding in 2021/22 rising to £140.1m (or 43%) in 2022/23. In 2021/22, the government increased the referendum threshold limit from 4% to 5% (excluding the GLA share which is subject to their own decision making) but reduced it down to 3% for 2022/23.

4.17 As set out when the 2022/23 budget was agreed, there was an implicit assumption from the Department for Levelling Up, Communities and Housing (DLUCH), built into future funding settlements, that all local authorities would increase council tax by up to the referendum limit. As the increase would permanently increase the council tax base income it would also reduce the significant funding pressures in 2022/23, and beyond, and support the unprecedented pressures within social care. In addition, the GLA precept, which makes up around 20% of the overall Council Tax bill and is subject to their own decision making, was increased by 8.8% in 2022/23 to provide additional funding for the Metropolitan police and Transport for London.

4.18 Furthermore, it continues to be acknowledged that continued historic above inflation rises in Council Tax is difficult for some households and for that reason the council continues to fund a Council Tax Support scheme support for households who are financially vulnerable. In 2021/22 £31m was provided to around 28,000 households, and increase of £3m from pre-pandemic levels. In addition, the Council's Resident Support Fund has made available additional funds for residents who are having difficulty due to unforeseen financial circumstances as a result of COVID-19. Nevertheless, this has been the government's financing regime for Local Government since 2010, and the beginning of austerity, with more resources raised locally rather reliance on central government grants.

4.19 The current budget assumptions for 2023/24 have taken a prudent view and assumed that government will maintain the current referendum limit of 3% (of which 1% is the Adult Social Care Levy). It should be noted that the additional income generated through the Adult Social Care precept alone does not cover the total growth requirement for Adult Social Care pressures. Although the government maintain that reforming social care remains a priority, a clear timeline is urgently needed on when proposals will be brought forward. In addition, the last two spending reviews have only included one off grants and increases in the Council Tax precept as measures to fund additional pressures in social care such as demographic growth and the rising cost of delivering care.

4.20 This year's Spending Review must address the social care funding gap, as well as tackle these additional challenges, and provide long term certainty in the medium term to stabilise the service rather than short term one off funding and increasing or extending the Council Tax precept.

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4.21    Other considerations that need to be taken into account when setting Council Tax, such as assumed tax base growth, the long term collection rate and the cost of the Council Tax Support scheme will be set out for Cabinet when the draft budget proposals are published later this year.

**Business Rates**

4.22    The Council remains committed to supporting local businesses through the pandemic.  Funded by government, the Council has processed a range of reliefs for various businesses across the retail, hospitality, leisure and other sectors. This has significantly reduced the amount of rates paid to the Council with the reduction estimated at £62.0m in 2020/21 and £26m in 2021/22 compared to the amount received during 2019/20.  In addition, the Council has administered direct grants, funded by central government, to local businesses totalling £137m across over 13,500 businesses. This is in addition to support provided to businesses as part of that Council's Recovery Initiatives. The Council continues to engage with the business community to ensure that those eligible businesses have access to this support.

4.23    The government allocate Business Rates back to Brent based on their assessment of need (the Baseline Funding Assessment) and the actual Business Rates collected. Brent receives a top up as need is in excess Business Rates collection. The MTFS assumes that there will be a small inflationary increase in the allocation of business rates. It is unlikely that the inflationary increase will match actual level of inflation and this will create a further budget pressure.

4.24    As considered in detail as part of the 2022/23 budget, the Government has allowed Local Authorities with a geographic link to form a business rate pool. The settlement confirmed the Eight Authority Business Rates Pool (involving the City of London Corporation as well as Tower Hamlets, Hackney, Haringey, Waltham Forest, Brent, Barnet and Enfield) is able to proceed in 2022/23.  In forming a pool, the group of authorities are seen as a single entity from a business rate perspective and in doing this, should retain more of the business rate income generated locally.

4.25    Based on the financial modelling undertaken to date, the benefit for Brent is estimated to be in the region of £2m.  This is based on estimates using forecasts from participating boroughs and are therefore only illustrative and a lower set of figures is entirely possible.  It is important to note that the final value of the pooling gain will not be known until the Statement of Accounts for the Pool Collection Fund, managed by The City of London Corporation, has been finalised and audited in the autumn of 2023.  This position will be closely monitored during 2022/23 but even at this stage it is not deemed prudent to build this potential additional income into the base budget and to place reliance for funding on a future income stream that is in no way guaranteed

**5.0    Proposed budget setting process for 2022/23**

5.1    The proposed budget setting process following this Cabinet meeting is as follows:

- Cabinet October 2022. This report will present the budget proposals to be formally consulted on to set the 2023/24 budget;

- The proposals, together with any changes made by Cabinet, will form the basis of consultation between October 2022 and January 2023 with residents, businesses and other key stakeholders;

- The Budget Scrutiny Task Group will review the budget proposals and report accordingly;

- The General Purposes Committee will review the calculation of the Council Tax base in December 2022; and

- After the statutory processes of consultation, scrutiny and equalities have concluded, a draft budget will presented to Cabinet to recommend a final budget and Council Tax to the February 2023 Council meeting.

## 6.0 Capital programme

6.1 In 2021/22 the Council spent £165m of the £222m approved budget with £56.9m slipped in to future financial years as outlined in Table 1.

| Table 1 - 2021/22 Final Outturn Position | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Portfolio / Programme | Budget as at Feb 2022 | Final Budget 2021/22 | Outturn | Over / (Under) Spend to Budget | 2021/22 Slippage C/FWD |
| | £m | £m | £m | £m | £m |
| Corporate Landlord | 18.97 | 18.97 | 10.02 | (8.95) | (8.95) |
| HCIB - GF | 51.96 | 51.96 | 39.21 | (12.75) | (12.75) |
| HCIB - HRA | 58.52 | 58.52 | 50.58 | (7.94) | (7.94) |
| PRS I4B | 24.55 | 24.55 | 19.95 | (4.60) | (4.60) |
| Public Realm | 25.26 | 25.26 | 14.84 | (10.42) | (10.42) |
| Regeneration | 11.74 | 11.74 | 8.42 | (3.32) | (3.32) |
| Schools | 10.75 | 10.75 | 7.18 | (3.57) | (3.57) |
| South Kilburn | 17.92 | 17.92 | 13.99 | (3.93) | (3.93) |
| St Raphael's | 2.59 | 2.59 | 1.18 | (1.41) | (1.41) |
| **Grand Total** | **222.26** | **222.26** | **165.37** | **(56.89)** | **(56.89)** |

6.2 The 2021/22 outturn position was lower to the revised budget by £56.9m.Further details on the outturn position are contained within the Financial Outturn Report for 2021/22. It is proposed that this is re-profiled into 2022/23 and future years, as set out in the table below

| Table 2 - Budget Adjustments Breakdown 2022/23 to 2026/27 | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2022/23 | 2023/24 | 2024/25 | 2025/26 | 2026/27 | Total |
| | £m | £m | £m | £m | £m | £m |
| **2021/22 Underspend** | 56.89 | - | - | - | - | 56.89 |
| **Cabinet Approved Budget** | | | | | | |
| Housing GF New Affordable Homes | 4.34 | 4.34 | 4.34 | 4.34 | 4.34 | 21.70 |
| Housing HRA New Affordable Homes | 23.26 | 23.26 | 23.25 | 23.25 | 23.25 | 116.27 |
| **Additional New Budget** | | | | | | |
| New S106 and NCIL Projects | 1.91 | 0.45 | - | - | - | 2.36 |
| Additional Grant funding for Transport | 0.41 | - | - | - | - | 0.41 |
| **Budget re-profiling** | | | | | | |
| Regeneration projects - Wembley Housing Zones | (27.49) | - | - | 27.49 | - | 0.00 |
| Regeneration projects - Morland Gardens | (5.50) | 5.50 | - | - | - | 0.00 |
| Regeneration projects - Medical Centres | (2.30) | 2.30 | - | - | - | 0.00 |
| Regeneration projects - Harlesden High Street | (0.31) | 0.31 | - | - | - | 0.00 |
| Public Realm including RLS Vehicle Purchase | (3.13) | 3.13 | - | - | - | 0.00 |
| SCIL allocation for Youth Centre | (2.15) | 2.15 | - | - | - | 0.00 |
| HRA budget brought forward | 0.99 | (0.99) | - | - | - | 0.00 |
| Civic budget brought forward | 0.08 | - | (0.08) | - | - | 0.00 |
| **Budget Removals** | | | | | | |
| Removal of School budgets for  completed projects | (0.3) | - | - | - | - | (0.30) |
| **Total** | **46.70** | **40.45** | **27.51** | **55.08** | **27.59** | **197.33** |

The budget adjustments set out in Table 2 include:

6.3 £56.9m slippage and underspend from 2021/22 set out in Table 1 above.

6.4 Budgets Approved by Cabinet since the 21/22 Budget Report

- £21.7m of funding for affordable housing in the General fund as part of the New Council Homes Programme Update.

- £116.3m of funding for affordable housing in the HRA as part of the New Council Homes Programme Update including Grand Union and purchase of affordable units for the NWCC South Kilburn Scheme.

6.5 Budget re-profiling

- The Regeneration realignment of the budget to the correct financial year includes projects for Wembley Housing Zones and Morland Gardens.

- The public realm re-profiling primarily relates to the Councils purchase of waste vehicles.

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- There is also re-profiling of an SCIL allocation for a youth project moving it into 2023/24.
- There are small budget movements into 2022/23 from future years for the projects External Fabric Works and Adaptation to Council Properties to deal with overspends within the HRA programme.
- There is a small budget brought into 2022/23 from future years for the Civic Centre asset management project.

6.6    Budget Removals

- Removal of remaining budget for completed schools projects that have completed, allowing repurposing of the grant funding within the Schools Board.

The revised budget position for 2022/23 to 2026/27 is summarised in Table 3 below.

| Table 3 - Capital Programme Revised Budget 2022/23 to 2026/27 | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Board | 2022/23 Revised Budget | 2023/24 Approved Budget | 2024/25 Approved Budget | 2025/26 Approved Budget | 2026/27 Approved Budget | Total 2022/23 to 2026/27 |
| | £m | £m | £m | £m | £m | £m |
| Corporate Landlord | 14.95 | 53.33 | 22.52 | 0.00 | 0.00 | **90.80** |
| HCIB - GF | 101.7 | 28.66 | 59.81 | 8.89 | 4.34 | **203.40** |
| HCIB - HRA | 79.33 | 57.27 | 42.31 | 23.25 | 23.25 | **225.41** |
| PRS I4B | 24.35 | 18.60 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | **42.95** |
| Public Realm | 21.39 | 12.29 | 5.15 | 6.00 | 0.00 | **44.83** |
| Regeneration | 16.20 | 75.10 | 63.74 | 27.49 | 0.00 | **182.53** |
| Schools | 11.59 | 26.25 | 14.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | **51.84** |
| South Kilburn | 26.41 | 10.44 | 9.89 | 2.78 | 11.52 | **61.04** |
| St Raphael's | 3.61 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | **3.61** |
| **Total** | **299.53** | **281.94** | **217.42** | **68.41** | **39.11** | 906.41 |
| **Approved Feb 22** | 252.83 | 241.49 | 189.91 | 13.33 | 11.52 | **709.08** |
| **Budget Adjustments** | 46.7 | 40.45 | 27.51 | 55.08 | 27.59 | **197.33** |

**Capital Pipeline**

6.7    The programme agreed by Council in February 2022 included £419.9m for pipeline schemes. The capital pipeline is a list of potential future investment projects identified by each of the sub-boards. In evaluating the investment pipeline proposals several factors are considered. These include statutory requirements, demonstrable linkages to corporate priorities, with the ability for proposals to generate revenue savings and, to a slightly lesser extent, their potential to generate future capital receipts or other financial returns.

6.8    Schemes will be brought forward once further refined and subject to detailed business cases, they will be promoted to the main programme following Cabinet approval where necessary.

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6.9     Since February an additional scheme has been added relating to the redevelopment of the Alperton community centre, increasing the total pipeline figure by £0.8m to £420.7m.

## 7.0    Housing Revenue Account

7.1     The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) is a ring-fenced account which contains the income and expenditure relating to the Council's landlord duties in respect of approximately 12,000 dwellings including those held by leaseholders.

7.2     The HRA budget is set each year in the context of the 30-year business plan. The business plan is reviewed annually allowing for horizon scanning and the identification and mitigation of risks in the short, medium and long term. Early identification of risks enables planning and implementation of mitigations to ensure the HRA can continue to remain financially secure and deliver on its commitments:

- Expand and accelerate the development of new council homes;
- Continue to maintain and improve existing council homes; and
- Transformation and continuous improvement of front line services to tenants and leaseholders.

7.3     Since 2020/21, and for the following four years, the Council has the power to increase rents annually up to a maximum of CPI plus 1%. In 2022/23, the average rent currently sits at £123.61per week, an increase of 4.1% when compared to the previous year. Considering present inflationary trends, if the Council follows the current rent policy and a similar increase is applied for 2023/24, this would result in an average rent per week of £128.68 and give the potential to raise an additional £2.1m per annum for the next 2 years.

7.4     HRA rent setting needs to be considered in the context of the ring-fence and the 30-year business plan. The CPI plus 1% model not only helps to contain higher costs as a result of inflation, it also helps to provide some stability and certainty over planned investment in the stock, service improvement and new development, at least in the medium term. A £2.1m increase in rent has the effect of an additional £63m investment in the HRA over a 30-year period.

7.5     After April 2025, the implications of future Government regulated rent policy remain uncertain. Medium-term investment plans must be approached cautiously and allow for flexibility. High levels of uncertainty around the inflation and rising interest rates pose a financial risk to the HRA. This has an impact on the cost of materials and repairs, as well as the cost of new build contracts. Rising energy costs are to be passed on to tenants and leaseholders resulting in an increased risk of non-collection. In addition, rising cost of living is likely to impact rent collection rates and consequently result in increased rent arrears. Other pressures involve the capital programme as there is no new government funding having been made available to meet environmental priorities and requirements such as carbon reduction works to homes. The increased costs experienced by the HRA would have to be met by rent inflation and modifying service delivery, in addition to the annual saving targets which are incorporated into the medium-term financial plan.

7.6     The influences outlined above are continuously monitored and a reappraisal of HRA budget priorities will be considered if necessary. As part of the budget setting process, the HRA budget will be subject to a separate consultation process.

## 8.0     Schools and Dedicated Schools Grant

8.1     Brent school budgets are under considerable pressure due to rising costs and additional costs due to the impact of the Covid pandemic. The primary schools in the borough are also impacted by reducing funding levels because of falling rolls, as pupil numbers mainly drive school funding. There are currently 6 schools in deficit and more schools are having to take action now and undertake restructures to prevent themselves going into deficit.

8.2     At the end of 2021-22, the overall DSG deficit in Brent has increased to £15.1 million following an in-year deficit of £4.6million added to the brought forward deficit of £10.5m, which began in 2019-20. This cumulative deficit is against the High Needs Block (HN), which has come under increased pressure in supporting children with special educational needs.

8.3     The increasing number of children with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP), has driven the cost pressures in the HN block. The table below shows the trend over the past 5 years.

| Table 4 | January | January | January | January | January |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Financial Year** | **2018** | **2019** | **2020** | **2021** | **2022** |
| **Number of EHCP** | 2,076 | 2,173 | 2,426 | 2,784 | 2,938 |
| **Brent Year on Year % Increase** | 6% | 5% | 12% | 15% | 6% |
| **National Year on Year % Increase** | 11% | 11% | 10% | 10% | 10% |

8.4     The cumulative deficit of £15.1million will be carried forward to 2022/23 and Brent has a Deficit Recovery Management Plan is in place with longer-term actions to recover the deficit and a task group has been set up by the council to coordinate and monitor these actions. Some of these actions to reduce costs include developing Alternative Provision education in the borough, increasing the amount of special provision within the borough, particularly for secondary phase pupils and 16-25 year old SEND students. A combination of these longer-term recovery actions and anticipated funding increases will reduce the deficit.

8.5     The statutory override in place to carry forward a deficit balance against the DSG would end in 2022/23 and this is a risk for Brent if the expectation is that local authority's balances should cover the deficit.

8.6     In 2021/22, the majority of local authorities in London had forecast DSG deficits exceeding £300 million in total. Nationally the pressure exceeded £1 billion in 2020/21. In response to this, the DfE has set up two programmes to tackle the pressures in the high needs system and for it to be placed on a sustainable footing. These are;

- The Safety Valve programme with an investment of £300m for authorities with very high deficits. There are currently 14 authorities on this programme;

- Delivering Better Value (DBV) in SEND programme, an £85 million investment over 3 years to support 55 authorities in deficit. Brent has been invited by the DfE to be part of the first tranche of 20 authorities and the programme is planned to commence in June 2022.

8.7 The DBV programme will run in three tranches and will comprise two phases. The first phase will take 6 months and comprise a comprehensive review of processes, data, underlying cost drivers and the existing DSG Management plan. Actions plans will be agreed as part of the review with the authorities and the second phase will commence lasting 18 months for the implementation of the action plans. The appointed delivery partner, SEND advisers and Financial Advisers, will undertake the review.

## 9.0 Financial Implications

9.1 The financial implications are set out throughout the report.

## 10.0 Legal Implications

10.1 Standing Order 24 sets out the process that applies within the Council for developing budget and capital proposals for 2023/24. There is a duty to consult representatives of non-domestic ratepayers on the Council's expenditure plans before each annual budget under Section 65 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992. The council also has a general duty to consult representatives of council tax payers, service users and others under Section 3 (2) Local Government Act 1999.

## 11.0 Equality Implications

11.1 Under the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) in the Equality Act 2010, Brent Council is required to pay due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different protected groups when making decisions. The groups protected by law, also known as protected characteristics, are age, disability, gender, race, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, sexual orientation and gender reassignment. Although socio-economic status (people on low income, young and adult carers, people living in deprived areas, groups suffering multiple disadvantage, etc.) is not a characteristic protected by the Equality Act 2010, Brent Council is committed to considering the impact on socio-economic groups.

11.2 The PSED does not prevent decision makers from making difficult decisions in the context of the requirement to achieve a significant level of savings across all operations. It supports the Council to make robust decisions in a fair, transparent and accountable way that considers the diverse needs of all our local communities and workforce. Consideration of the duty should precede and inform decision making. It is important that decision makers have regard to the statutory grounds in the light of all available material, including relevant equality analyses and consultation findings. If there are significant negative equality

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impacts arising from a specific proposal, then decision makers may decide to amend, defer for further consideration or reject a proposal after balancing all of the information available to them.

**12.0   Consultation with Ward Members and Stakeholders**

12.1   The detailed approach to the statutory consultation process will be set out as part of the budget report to be presented to Cabinet in October 2022.

**13.0   Human Resources**

13.1   Not applicable.

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| ***Report sign off:***<br><br>***Minesh Patel***<br>Director of Finance<br>. |

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| | **Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee**<br>19 July 2022 |
|---|---|
| | **Report from the Assistant Chief Executive** |

**Scrutiny Committee Work Plan 2022-2023**

| **Wards Affected:** | All |
|---|---|
| **Key or Non-Key Decision:** | Non-key |
| **Open or Part/Fully Exempt:** | Open |
| **No. of Appendices:** | 1 |
| **Background Papers:** | None |
| **Contact Officer:** | Lorna Hughes, Head of Strategy and Partnerships, lorna.hughes@brent.gov.uk |

**1.0    Purpose of the Report**

1.1    This report presents the scrutiny committee's work plan for 2022/23.

**2.0    Recommendation(s)**

2.1    That the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee Work Plan (set out in Appendix 1) be agreed.

**3.0    Detail**

3.1    The work programme sets out the items, which the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee will consider during the municipal year. The remit of the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee is set out in the Council Constitution under the Terms of Reference for scrutiny committees.  The remit of the committee is:

*Corporate policy, partnerships and resources; Budget; customer services; commercial services; planning policy; environmental policy; public realm; employment and skills; IT; recycling; regeneration; transport and highways; community safety; property; emergency planning and business continuity.*

3.2    The committee is also the Council's  "crime and disorder committee" for the purposes of Section 19 of the Police & Justice Act 2006 and as such may review or scrutinise decisions made, or other action taken, in connection with the discharge of the crime and disorder functions by the responsible authorities (as

defined by <u>section 5</u> of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998) who make up the Safer Brent Partnership, in order to make reports or recommendations to Full Council.

3.3 At its next meeting on 19 July 2022 the committee will agree the work plan for 2022- 2023. The work plan was developed during a work planning session that took place on 8 June 2022 where Cabinet Members and senior officers presented topics for the committee's consideration. The work plan will be regularly reviewed by the committee and accordingly updated where necessary.

3.16 The committee will lead a task group in autumn 2022 scrutinising the council's budget. A second task group will be convened later on in the municipal year, the topic for which will be confirmed by the committee.

## 4.0 Financial Implications

4.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report. However, Budget and finance issues are addressed in the Financial Implications section of any reports to committee requested as part of its work programme.

## 5.0 Legal Implications

5.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report. However, legal implications are addressed in the Legal Implications section of any reports to committee requested as part of its work programme.

## 6.0 Equality Implications

6.1 There are no equality implications arising from this report. Equality implications are addressed in the Equality Implications section of any reports to committee requested as part of its work programme.

## 7.0 Consultation with Ward Members and Stakeholders

7.1 Ward members are regularly informed about the committee's work plan in the chair's report to Council. There is ongoing consultation with stakeholders, in particular with Healthwatch who attend the committee for health-related items.

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*REPORT SIGN-OFF*

*Shazia Hussain*
Assistant Chief Executive

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**Draft Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee Work Plan 2022-2023**

13 July 2022

| Agenda Item | Leader/Deputy Leader/Cabinet Members | Chief Executive/Strategic Directors | External Organisations |
|---|---|---|---|
| Committee Work Programme 2022/23 – formal agreement | Cllr Mili Patel, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources and Reform<br><br>Cllr Shama Tatler, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Planning<br><br>Cllr Krupa Sheth, Lead Member for Environment, Infrastructure and Climate Action<br><br>Cllr Harbi Farah, Cabinet Member for Safer Communities and Public Protection<br><br>Cllr Ellie Southwood, Cabinet Member for Jobs, Economy and Citizen Experience<br><br>Cllr Fleur Donnelly-Jackson, Cabinet Member for Community Engagement, Equalities and Culture | Shazia Hussain, Assistant Chief Executive | |
| Digital inclusion strategy | Cllr Mili Patel, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources and Reform | Peter Gadsdon, Strategic Director, Customer and Digital Services | |
| Wembley Events Review paper | Cllr Krupa Sheth, Lead Member for Environment, Infrastructure and Climate Action (?)<br><br>Cllr Harbi Farah, Cabinet Member for Safer Communities and Public Protection | Alan Lunt, Strategic Director, Regeneration and Environment | Football Association, Metropolitan Police |
| Medium Term Financial Strategy – summer update | Cllr Mili Patel, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources and Reform | Minesh Patel, Director of Finance | |

**14 September 2022**

| Agenda Item | Leader/Deputy Leader/Cabinet Members | Chief Executive/Strategic Directors | External Organisations |
|---|---|---|---|
| Budget Oversight<br><br>• Financial Outturn 2021/22<br>• Quarter 1 Financial Report 2022/23<br>• Medium Term Financial Outlook | Cllr Mili Patel, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources and Reform | Minesh Patel, Director of Finance | |
| Cost of living crisis – council's role in supporting residents | Cllr Ellie Southwood, Cabinet Member for Jobs, Economy and Citizen Experience | Peter Gadsdon, Strategic Director, Customer and Digital Services | |
| Annual complaints and members' inquiries report | Cllr Mili Patel, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources and Reform | Shazia Hussain, Assistant Chief Executive | |

**10 November 2022**

| Agenda Item | Leader/Deputy Leader/Cabinet -Members/Non-executive Member | Chief Executive/Strategic Directors | External Organisations |
|---|---|---|---|
| Safer Brent Partnership Annual Report | Cllr Harbi Farah, Cabinet Member for Safer Communities and Public Protection | Carolyn Downs | Metropolitan Police<br><br>Representatives of community organisations |
| Police liaison | Cllr Harbi Farah, Cabinet Member for Safer Communities and Public Protection | Carolyn Downs | |
| Budget Oversight<br><br>• Quarter 2 Financial Report 2022/23 | Cllr Mili Patel, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources and Reform | Minesh Patel | |

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| Agenda Item | Leader/Deputy Leader/Cabinet Members/Non-Executive Member | Chief Executive/Strategic Directors/ Director of Public Health | External Organisations |
|---|---|---|---|
| An update on Brent Council grants programmes | Cllr Fleur Donnelly-Jackson, Cabinet Member for Community Engagement, Equalities and Culture | Lorna Hughes, Head of Strategy and Partnerships | |

**18 January 2023**

| Agenda Item | Leader/Deputy Leader/Cabinet Members/Non-Executive Member | Chief Executive/Strategic Directors/ Director of Public Health | External Organisations |
|---|---|---|---|
| Budget Scrutiny | Cllr Mili Patel, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources and Reform | Minesh Patel, Director of Finance | |
| Climate change | Cllr Krupa Sheth, Lead Member for Environment, Infrastructure and Climate Action | tbc | |
| *Spare slot* | | | |

**9 February 2023**

| Agenda Item | Leader/Deputy Leader/Cabinet Members | Chief Executive/Strategic Directors/ Director of Public Health | External Organisations |
|---|---|---|---|
| Multi-Agency Flood Planning | Cllr Krupa Sheth, Cabinet Member for Environment, Infrastructure and Climate Action | tbc | Thames Water Environment Agency |
| Migration scheme | tbc | tbc | tbc |
| Spaces for community use n | | | |

**9 March 2022**

| Agenda Item | Leader/Deputy Leader/Cabinet Members | Chief Executive/Strategic Directors | External Organisations |
|---|---|---|---|
| Budget Oversight<br>• Quarter 3 Financial Report 2022/23 | Cllr Mili Patel, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources and Reform | Minesh Patel, Director of Finance | |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Spare slot* | | | |
| *Spare slot* | | | |

| | **Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee**<br>19 July 2022 |
|---|---|
| Brent | **Report from the Assistant Chief Executive** |
| | **Scrutiny Recommendation Tracker** |

| **Wards Affected:** | All |
|---|---|
| **Key or Non-Key Decision:** | Non Key Decision |
| **Open or Part/Fully Exempt:**<br>(If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act) | Open |
| **No. of Appendices:** | Appendix 1 - Scrutiny Recommendation Tracker |
| **Background Papers:** | None. |
| **Contact Officer(s):**<br>(Name, Title, Contact Details) | Meenara Islam, Strategic Partnerships Manager<br>Meenara.islam@brent.gov.uk |

**1.0    Purpose of the Report**

1.1    The purpose of this report is to present the Scrutiny Recommendation Tracker to the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee.

**2.0    Recommendation**

2.1    That the progress of the previous recommendations and resolutions of the committee be noted (Appendix 1).

**3.0    Detail**

3.1    The Recommendation Tracker tabled at the 19 July 2022 meeting relates to the 2021 – 2022 municipal year. The Recommendation Tracker for the 2022 – 2023 municipal year will be published for the next meeting of the Resources and Public Realm committee meeting taking place on 6 September 2022.

3.2    In accordance with Part 4 of the Brent Council Constitution (Standing Orders of Committees) Brent Council scrutiny committees may make recommendations to the Full Council or the Cabinet with respect to any functions which are the responsibility of the executive, or of any functions which are not the responsibility of the executive, or on matters which affect the borough or its inhabitants.

3.3 The Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee may not make executive decisions and scrutiny recommendations therefore require consideration and decision by the appropriate decision maker; the Cabinet or Full Council for policy and budgetary decisions.

3.4 The scrutiny recommendation tracker table attached at Appendix 1 provides a summary of scrutiny recommendations made during the municipal year, in order to track executve decisions and any implementation progress. It also includes suggestions or improvement and information requests, as capture in the minutes of the committee's meetings.

3.5 Recommendations are removed from the tracker when they have been rejected or when implemented successfully and the review date has passed.

## 4.0 Procedure for Recommendations from Scrutiny Committees

4.1 Where scrutiny committees make reports or recommendations to the Cabinet, as soon as this has been confirmed, these will be referred to the Cabinet requesting an Executive Response and the issue will be published on the Council's Forward Plan. This will instigate the preparation of a report to Cabinet and the necessary consideration of the response.

4.2 Where scrutiny committees make reports or recommendations to Full Council (e.g. in the case of policy and budgetary decisions), the same process will be followed, with a report to Cabinet to agree Executive response, and thereafter, a report to Full Council for consideration of the scrutiny report and recommendations along with the Cabinet's response.

4.3 Where scrutiny committees have powers under their terms of reference to make reports or recommendations external decision makers (e.g. NHS bodies), where they do this, the relevant external decision maker shall be notified in writing, providing them with a copy of the committee's report and recommendations, and requesting a response.

4.4 Once the Executive response has been agreed, the scrutiny committee shall receive a report to receive the response and the committee may review implementation of the executive's decisions after such a period as these may reasonably be implemented (review date).

## 5.0 Financial Implications

5.1 There are no financial implications for the purposes of this report.

## 6.0 Legal Implications

6.1 Section 9F, Part 2 of the Local Government Act 2000, *overview and scrutiny committees: functions,* requires that Executive Arrangements by a local authority must ensure that its overview and scrutiny committees have the power to make reports or recommendations to the authority or the executive with respect to the discharge of any functions which are or are not the responsibility of the executive, or on matters which affect the authority's area or the inhabitants of that area.

6.2 Section 9Fe, *duty of authority or executive to respond to overview and scrutiny committee*, requires that the authority or executive;-

(a) consider the report or recommendations,

(b) respond to the overview and scrutiny committee indicating what (if any) action the authority, or the executive, proposes to take,

(c) if the overview and scrutiny committee has published the report or recommendations, publish the response, within two months beginning with the date on which the authority or executive received the report or recommendations.

## 7.0 Equality Implications

7.1 There are no equality implications for the purposes of this report.

## 8.0 Consultation with Ward Members and Stakeholders

8.1 None for the purposes of this report.

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*Report sign off:*

*Shazia Hussain –*
*Assistant Chief Executive*

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**Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee**
**Scrutiny Tracker 2021-22**

These tables are to track the progress of scrutiny recommendations and suggestions for improvement made by the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee, with details provided by the relevant lead departments.  It is a standing item on the Committee's agendas, so that the Committee can keep track of the recommendations, suggestions and requests it has made, and the related the decisions made and implementation status.  The tracker lists the recommendations, suggestions and information requests made by the committee throughout a municipal year and any recommendations not fully implemented from previous years.

The tracker documents the scrutiny recommendations to Cabinet made, the dates when they were made, the decision maker who can make each decision in respect of the recommendations, the date the decision was made and the actual decision taken.  The executive decision taken may be the same as the scrutiny recommendation (e.g. the recommendation was "agreed") or it may be a different decision, which should be clarified here.  The tracker also asks if the respective executive decisions have been implemented and this should be updated accordingly throughout the year.

Scrutiny Task Group report recommendations should be included here but referenced collectively (e.g. the name of the scrutiny inquiry and date of the agreement of the scrutiny report and recommendations by the scrutiny committee, along with the respective dates when the decision maker(s) considered and responded to the report and recommendations.  The Committee should generally review the implementation of scrutiny task group report recommendations separately with stand-alone agenda items at relevant junctures – e.g. the Executive Response to a scrutiny report and after six months or a year, or upon expected implementation of the agreed recommendation of report. The "Expected Implementation Date" should provide an indication of a suitable time for review.

**Key:**

**Date of scrutiny committee meeting** - For each table, the date of scrutiny committee meeting when the recommendation was made is provided in the subtitle header.
**Subject** – this is the item title on the committee's agenda; the subject being considered.
**Scrutiny Recommendation** – This is the text of the scrutiny recommendation as it appears on the minutes – **in bold**.
**Decision Maker** – the decision maker for the recommendation, (**in bold**), e.g. the Cabinet (for Council executive decisions), full Council (for Council policy and budgetary decisions), or an NHS executive body for recommendations to the NHS.  In brackets, (date), the date on which the Executive Response was made.
**Executive Response** – The response of the decision maker (e.g. Cabinet decision) for the recommendation.  This should be the executive decision as recorded in the minutes.  The Executive Response should provide details of what, if anything, the executive will do in response to the scrutiny recommendation.  Ideally, the Executive Response will include a decision to either agree/reject/or amend the scrutiny recommendation and where the scrutiny recommendation is rejected, provide an explanation of why.   In brackets, provide the date of Cabinet/executive meeting that considered the scrutiny recommendation and made the decision.
**Department** – the Council directorate (and/or external agencies) that are responsible for implementation of the agreed executive decision/response. Also provided, for reference only, the relevant Cabinet Member and strategic director.
**Implementation Status** – This is the progress of any implementation of the agreed Executive Response against key milestones.  This may cross reference to any specific actions and deadlines that may be provided in the Executive Response.  This should be as specific and quantifiable as possible.  This should also provide, as far as possible, any evidenced outcomes or improvements resulting from implementation.

**Review Date** - This is the expected date when the agreed Executive Response should be fully implemented and when the scrutiny committee may usefully review the implementation and any evidenced outcomes (e.g. service improvements). (Note: this is the implementation of the agreed Executive Response, which may not be the same as the scrutiny recommendation).

**Recorded Recommendations from RPRS
on Tuesday 13 July 2021**

| Subject | Scrutiny Recommendation | Decision Maker & Executive Response | Department, Cabinet Member and lead officer | Implementation Status | Review date |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| EURO 2020 Final at Wembley Stadium | That it be recommended to Cabinet; to hold a public review into the Council's actions taken before, during and after the Euro 2020 Final to establish the lessons learnt. | Cabinet 13 September 2021 **Cabinet Decision:** That Brent Council will: i). Undertake an assessment of Council activities relating to its responsibilities around safety, licensing and enforcement at Wembley Stadium as part of the Euro 2020 Finals in order to support the overarching Review led by Baroness Casey; ii). Fully support the Baroness Casey Review throughout; iii). Consider fully any recommendations relevant to the Council's duties that arise from the Review and; iv). Oversee and implement any actions and priorities for change. https://democracy.brent.gov.uk/documents/s113587/6a.%20Executive%20Response%20to%20the%20Resources%20and%20Public%20Realm%20Scrutiny%20Committee.pdf | Cabinet Members: Cllrs Sheth and Knight Lead Department: Regeneration and Environment  Strategic Director Regeneration and Environment | Implementation by: By July 2022 | July 2022 |

**Recorded Recommendations from**

| | Subject | Scrutiny Recommendation | Decision Maker & Executive Response | Department, Cabinet Member and lead officer | Implementation Status | Review date |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | The Public Realm | That the new parking strategy ensure that it is always cheaper to park a bike than park a car in Brent, and ensure that the cheapest resident parking permit is more expensive than using a bike hangar. | Cabinet 12 October 2020<br><br>Cabinet Decision/Response:<br>Cabinet RESOLVED to approve the Executive Response.<br><br>Cabinet Decision:<br>That consideration be given to raising the lowest parking permit price to the equivalent of the starting price for using a cycle hanger. | Regeneration and Environment<br><br>Cabinet Member for Environment and Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Property & Planning<br><br>Strategic Director Regeneration and Environment | The department will look to raise the lowest parking permit price to the equivalent of the starting price for using a cycle hanger i.e. from the current £25 to £36.<br><br>The Council uses two suppliers for the provision and management of Cycle Hangars in the borough, residents pay £36 for 3 years (subsidised) rising to £72 per annum for a space. This charge includes administration and also cleaning and maintenance of the hangar. The lowest resident annual permit is £25 per year, this is to encourage ownership of greener vehicles in the borough. We have no plans for changes to the emission based permit charges at present, but this can be considered when reviewed in the future.<br><br>We have secured £300k of S106 developer funding for the expansion of the boroughs cycle hangar network over the next 2 years. Officers have been exploring the options to reduce the cost of a bike hangar space following the 3 year subsidy and have contacted our current suppliers to see if they have the scope to manage this on our behalf and reduce the annual charge residents would have to pay, or whether this can be managed in-house. The team have been focussing on the introduction of school streets in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, but will further explore options in the Spring / Summer. If the option is for a supplier to manage cycle hangar requests, this will require procurement / contract arrangements. | March 2021<br><br>New review date: July 2022 |

| | | | | This will not be progressed during the current pandemic restrictions, with the target start date for consultation on this proposal no earlier than June 2022. | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| The Public Realm | That 20mph be adopted as the default speed on Brent roads, subject to an environmental audit, and that a timetable be drawn up for the introduction of a 20mph speed limit across the borough. | Cabinet 12 October 2020<br><br>*Cabinet Decision:*<br>That consideration be given to introducing 20mph as the default speed on Brent roads to an extent that reasonably accounts for the feasibility, the cost, the value, the actual impact on traffic and speeding at any given location, and the capacity of the department to deliver this policy at this time. | Regeneration and Environment<br><br>Cabinet Member for Environment and Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Property & Planning<br><br>Strategic Director Regeneration and Environment | Approximately 45% of the borough is already 20mph and new safety schemes introduce 20mph speed limits when introduced. Further consideration to a borough wide approach will be given in line with the new review date (March 2022), but with limited funding available it may not be cost effective at this time. | March 2021<br><br>New review date: March 2022 |
| The Public Realm | That any future transport strategies and plans include clear measurements and modelling for active transport and the impact on air quality. | Cabinet 12 October 2020<br><br>Cabinet Decision:<br>That consideration be given, when reviewing and updating the Long Term Transport Strategy or drafting any new strategies for future transport strategies and plans, to include clear measurements and modelling for active transport and the impact on air quality. | Regeneration and Environment<br><br>Cabinet Member for Environment and Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Property & Planning<br><br>Strategic Director Regeneration and Environment | The Draft Long Term Transport Strategy is currently being reviewed. The draft strategy will be approved by Cabinet in February before a period of public and stakeholder consultation/engagement during spring 2022. | March 2021<br><br>New review date: March 2022 |

**Suggestions for improvement / information requests tracker**

**Recorded suggestions for improvement / information requests from RPRSC**

| Meeting date and agenda item | Suggestions for improvement and information requests made by RPRSC | Department | Responses / Status |
|---|---|---|---|
| 18 January 2022 - Covid-19 Recovery | Information request: To receive a breakdown of the Covid-19 grant funding received by the Council including: a) Total received b) Total spent c) Total unspent d) Outputs/outcomes e) Cut off points for grant applications and spend f) Total allocated from Council core funding/additional grant funding | Finance | **a) Total received** The Council has received over £300m of Covid 19 grants from the start of the pandemic from a variety of government agencies. Some have been granted to directly fund council services or to provide support to residents and businesses, whilst others have been given to the council to distribute on behalf of central governments under their rules and guidelines. See detail in table in annexe A. **b) and c) Total spent and total unspent** To date over £200m of the grants have been spent on specific projects or providing funding generally towards services the council provides. There is a commitment to spend a further £21m by year-end. For some grants Brent received an allocated amount which they would only be entitled to retain up to the level they actually paid out, with the rest repaid back to the government. In some cases the amount paid out would be restricted to the number of eligible cases or claimants. From these grants Brent is currently due to return £70m. See detail in table in annexe A. **d) Outputs/outcomes** The grants fall into 5 main categories. The table below shows the amounts received by category. |

| Category | Amount £m |
|---|---|
| Containing the virus and ensuring public safety | 25.9 |
| Providing funding for additional council service | 5.5 |
| Financial support to Businesses | 214.4 |
| Financial support to Residents | 11.6 |
| General Grant to support the council's financial impact | 50.7 |
| **Total Grants Received** | **308.1** |

| | | | See detail in table in annexe A. |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | **e) Cut off points for grant applications and spend**<br>Many of the grants required businesses to apply for funding whilst some were processed without applications but were subject to government cut off dates at which point eligibility ended. Some had to be spent by the council by a specific date. The Council conformed to date restrictions that were set out in the grant conditions. A number of grants, such as the Additional Restrictions Grant, the Hardship fund and Covid Additional Restrictions Fund are ongoing and still being processed for payment.<br><br>**f) Total allocated from council core funding/additional grant funding**<br>The council did not allocate any additional core funding to contain the impacts of Covid 19 in 2020/21. The total impact in 2021/22 is being monitored and any funding requirements will be considered alongside specific grants that have been made available during the year-end process.<br><br>See detail in table in annexe A. |
| | Information request:<br>To receive a breakdown of the outputs/outcomes (in line with outputs/outcomes provided for other work in report) for Covid-19 support provided by:<br>a) Brent Hubs<br>b) Financial Inclusion and Welfare work stream | Customer and Digital Services | <u>Financial Capability Upskilling programme in the community</u><br>• Delivery of workshops to residents and community leaders within community settings between January and March 2022. Expected outcomes include:<br>   o Increase in financial confidence and resilience within Brent communities<br>   o Increase in community leaders financial upskilling skills and knowledge, and ability to share those skills within the community<br>   o Train community leaders on how to offer early intervention to guide residents on support pathways<br><u>Training to upskill Brent Hubs staff and residents in debt management</u><br>• Delivery of training sessions to residents and Brent Hubs staff between November 2021 and March 2022. Expected outcomes include:<br>   o Increased knowledge on strategies for dealing with existing debt, identifying priority debtors, and dealing with creditors<br><u>Debt advisory support</u><br>• Increase the capacity of an independent debt advisory charity to enable ongoing information sharing between the Council's debt recovery team and the independent agency to ensure:<br>   o Free independent professional debt advise for Brent residents which meets their individual financial needs |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | o Streamlined Council processes to ensure data driven decisions on how we target debt recovery actions for particular groups including vulnerable residents <br><u>Financial Upskilling learning programme in Brent Hubs</u> <br>• Delivery of a learning programme to improve individual and family financial budgeting and management from within a Brent Hubs location from November 2021 to March 2022. Expected outcomes include: <br>o Improvement in resident's money management skills, increase resident's knowledge on a range of financial topics, and improve their general financial wellbeing. |
| | Information request: <br>To receive a list of organisations that have signed up to the Foodbank Network and details on where the organisations are located within the borough. | | The list below are members of the Brent Food Aid Network which have received grant funding to support demand related to the Pandemic: <br>• Ansar Youth – Wembley <br>• Granville Community Kitchen – Kilburn <br>• St Laurence's Larder – Willesden/Kilburn <br>• London's Community Kitchen Alperton <br>• Rumi's Cave – previous location in Kilburn now operating in Harlesden <br>• Sufra NW London – 3 locations in Stonebridge, Willesden, Wembley <br>• Willesden mutual aid  - Willesden |
| | Information request: <br>To receive a list of contracts that have been given outside of the Council's procurement rules during the Covid-19 pandemic. | | All awards that the Procurement team were involved in, or made aware of, were made in line within the procurement rules. <br><br>The procurement rules PCR 2015 Regulation 32 allow awards to be made for reasons of extreme urgency bought about by unforeseeable events. |
| | Information request: <br>To receive a list of the Council's live strategies. | Assistant Chief Executive | These are the strategies listed on Brent Council's Strategies and Plans section on the website: <br>• Brent Borough Plan 2021-2022 <br>• Black Community Action Plan <br>• Brent Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy 2021-2030 <br>• Affordable Workplace Strategy <br>• Contaminated Land Strategy <br>• Digital Strategy 2022-26 <br>• Equality Strategy 2019 - 2023 <br>• Flood Risk Management Strategy <br>• Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-25 <br>• Inclusive Growth Strategy 2019-40 |

|  |  |  | <ul><li>Looked After Children and Care Leavers Placement Sufficiency Strategy 2020-24</li><li>Meanwhile Use Strategy</li><li>Parking Policy 2020</li><li>Procurement Strategy 2020 -23</li><li>SEND Strategy 2021-25</li><li>School Place Planning Strategy 2019-23</li><li>Stronger Communities Strategy 2019-23</li><li>Transport Strategy 2015-35</li><li>Walking Strategy 2017-22</li></ul> |
|---|---|---|---|
|  | Improvement suggestion: For the Council to consider increasing the amount of grant funding provided to Brent foodbanks. |  | In response to the grants team review report we have made grants more accessible and easier to apply for, which include voluntary sector and foodbanks. |
|  | Improvement suggestion: For the council to engages with the largest employers within the borough to seek assurance around potential future job losses. If necessary, appropriate support should be given to large employers to ensure job losses are limited. | Regeneration and Environment | The Economic Development, Employment and Skills team are developing an engagement and support plan for working with largest employers in the borough. 'Supporting your business in 2022' brochure is being distributed to all business rate players in March 2022. |
|  | Improvement suggestion: For the council's town centre managers to assess how many local businesses are in need of "critical support" and increase support for these businesses in line with their need. | Regeneration and Environment | This audit is currently being carried out. |
|  | Improvement suggestion: For the Council to ensure that Covid-19 related financial support for victims of domestic abuse and violence is well communicated to residents. | Assistant Chief Executive | Brent Council commissions Advance to support victims of domestic abuse. Through this service we deliver the Domestic Abuse Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) which coordinates multiple services to provide support to survivors. We ensure that all elements of financial support and assistance is considered, offered and an allocated Independent Domestic Violence Advocate (IDVA) is made available to support with any applications required. |

| | | | Throughout the pandemic, Brent Council provided additional investment to increase access to the service and we delivered an enhanced campaign to highlight domestic abuse and how to report it. |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Improvement suggestion: For the Council to consider commissioning business and/or financial professionals to provide support to those high street businesses that may be struggling to recover from the financial impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. | Customer and Digital Services | • Work is underway to provide retail consultancy and support to high street businesses in changing the look and feel of the shops to attract more footfall and income<br>• Bubltown and Buy Brent App have been launched to support business to have digital presences so that businesses can take advantage of e-commerce, online sales, click and collect<br>• Green audits – The council has commissioned for a provider to offer free energy efficiency audits to businesses, with a view to providing grant funding following the outcome of these audits, to help improve the sustainability of business premises.<br>• Digital training – A Digital Support Fund is open for business to apply to receive digital hardware (laptop & connectivity, where required) alongside digital skills training to improve their digital capability and build resilience against future economic shocks.<br>• Start-Up Business Support – The council will shortly be commissioning for an experienced provider to deliver pop-up start-up business training to individuals looking to start a business or those looking to level up following the pandemic. |
| 18 January 2022 - Budget Scrutiny | Information request: To receive details of any lobbying and/or media communications undertaken by the Council and other local authorities calling for additional funding to recover the Dedicated School Grant deficit. | Finance | Please see annexes B and C |
| | Improvement suggestion: For the Council to continue to lobby central government for a sustainable solution to funding the Dedicated School Grant deficit, with active involvement from Cabinet. | Finance | Please see annexes B and C |

| 18 January 2022 - VAWG Scrutiny Task Group Update | Information request: To receive a breakdown of the corporate training offered to Council staff including:<br>a) Type of training<br>b) Take up of training<br>c) Take up of training by department<br>d) Evaluation measures. | Assistant Chief Executive | We have submitted a request to our corporate training team for attendance figures and further details, once this is available we will share with the committee. The domestic abuse awareness training sessions are also offered to external partners to access and across the year we enhance the offer with specialist training by partner agencies. Some of these additional training sessions we do not hold the final attendance figures for.<br><br>Details of training are shared through a number of routes including the monthly newsletter to partners, an online training portal and through the borough-wide VAWG network (voluntary and community sector). |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Information request: To receive a breakdown of the number of women with older male children housed through the council house-building programme including:<br>a) Total figures<br>b) Type of accommodation | | This level of information is not recorded or held currently by the Brent Domestic Abuse Housing team. |
| | Information request: To receive details of the work undertaken to ensure that domestic abuse and VAWG services are accessible to all residents including those that share a protected characteristic. | | Referral pathways between Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) partners are clear to ensure residents have equitable access to services e.g. referral forms, MARAC referrals, Freephone helplines, out of hours service on Thursdays. One stop shop (Chrysalis) has resumed face to face services. This is reinforced through steering / delivery groups and monitoring meetings where concerns can be addressed.<br><br>There is also a monthly VAWG newsletter that is distributed widely which partners share with the community, and includes local updates and a service directory of Brent services.<br><br>There are also services open to BAME service users e.g. Awaaz (domestic abuse specific counselling with various languages). Ending Harmful Practices Helpline and PLIAS receive MOPAC funding providing specialist support to ensure intersectionality barriers are overcome. |
| | Improvement suggestion: For the Council to ensure emphasis is given to the initiatives to support for perpetrators within the VAWG strategy | | Our commissioned provider, RISE Mutual, is well embedded within the borough, attending multi-agency meetings such as the DA MARAC and steering groups. Their programmes perpetrator prevention, CPV (child to parent violence), APV (adult to parent violence) and CIFA (culturally integrated family approach) are promoted regularly through various channels. CIFA works with marginalised and minoritised ethnicities to ensure these groups of people are able to access specialised support. |

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|---|---|---|---|
| | | | The service is co-located across our Children and Young People's teams where we receive the highest referrals. In addition, the service is reviewed in line with contractual arrangements and by the community safety team to ensure the most effective interventions are offered and reached for Perpetrators to successfully engage. |
| | Improvement suggestion: For the Council to ensure that the business training provided to the night time economy (local pubs, bars, restaurants etc.) around supporting vulnerable women and safeguarding is offered more widely to local businesses | Regeneration and Environment | Town Centre Managers will continue to promote this training to businesses and highlight in business newsletters. |
| 18 January 2022 - Progress tracker | Information request: To receive further information on the changes implemented as a result of the out of hours emergency crisis response review (Hot Topic Item – Flooding, 10 November 2021) | Customer and Digital Services | A joint working group was created following the incident with the out of hours (OOH) service, our emergency team, Housing colleagues and Corporate Contact Centre. Following learning from the incident below are the changes that have been made. <br><br>• The co-ordination between OOH, Emergency team and Housing colleagues has been tightened with trigger points with volumes of calls and severity of any issue <br>• BHM duty rota will ensure to have two officers on rota and if one is off sick, they are replaced with another officer. <br>• BHM and Emergency team will ensure that consistent updates are given to OOH service to advice residents and co-ordinate with Thames Water and other stakeholders <br>• Clear escalation paths to senior management have been agreed. <br>• Calls to OOH will now be able to queue for an indefinite period of time and will not be disconnected <br>• BHM have now provided a supplementary script for Communal Water specifically relating to Drinking Water which has been cascaded to OOH to implement <br>• The contact details of management in OOH has been resent to BHM colleagues. |
| 9 February 2022 - Flooding | Information request: To receive a copy of the independent review into the events of and response to the floods experienced across London | Mike Benke, Thames Water | Information has been requested and will be provided later in the calendar year. Ahead of the publication of the full report a series of interim reports will be published covering aspects of the flooding and the first one is due imminently. More details about the review can be found here. |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | in July when published and Thames Water's response to the review | | |
| | Information request: To receive information on the level of funding for drainage repairs in Brent compared to other London boroughs | Mike Benke, Thames Water | In terms of identifying spending per borough, as indicated in the meeting on 9 February 2022, this is hard to do and is not measured by Thames Water. As London is divided into different natural water catchments each served by a sewage works, when we spend money in one borough it can benefit multiple boroughs.<br><br>Brent is served by two major sewage works Mogden and Beckton. In the current 5-year business plan (2020 -2025), Thames Water plan to spend around £300 million in the Beckton catchment and over £180 million in the Mogden catchment on major asset improvements.<br><br>This major expenditure is in addition to the existing expenditure on cleaning and maintaining the sewer network, pumping stations and other equipment that we need to run an efficient wastewater service. In 2021, Thames Water cleaned 133 km of sewers in the Mogden catchment and 115 km in the Beckton catchment. |
| | Information request: To receive an update report on the development of the Council's multi-agency flood plan | Regeneration and Environment | External consultants have been engaged to review and update Brent's Flood Risk Management Strategy. The process will take approx. 8-10months and members along with other key stakeholders will consulted during the review process.<br><br>Please follow this link to the council's Flood Risk Management Strategy \| Brent Council |
| | Improvement suggestion: For the Council's Planning Department to work more closely with Thames Water on drainage issues arising from planning applications. | Regeneration and Environment | The planning department will consult Thames Water on planning applications where drainage and sewerage capacity may be an issue, and on masterplan SPDs. They were consulted on the Local Plan. |
| Fire safety 9 February 2022 | Information request: To receive information on London Fire Brigade fire safety awareness communication plans and the work undertaken through the Safer Brent Partnership to develop and promote these plans | Assistant Chief Executive | The Safer Brent Partnership continues to maintain a strong partnership with the London Fire Brigade (LFB) and meetings are attended by the Borough Commander. We have had presentations to the board regarding their engagement plans of the LFB. The board has also participated in open day events and shared information to support the LFB. Our most vulnerable residents have benefited from referrals to support via our Community Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (Community MARAC), |

safeguarding teams as well as health partners. We will ensure we also link into future messages and maintain support of safety awareness raising in the borough.

John Ryan, Borough Commander, London Fire Brigade - response:
Following on from Covid restrictions the LFB are now working to return to pre-Covid activities and are looking to build upon existing partnerships and improve and increase in areas where our partnership working could improve.

Ongoing work includes the targeting of care homes for Home Fire Safety Visits (HFSV's) subject to Covid risk assessments, as these are our most vulnerable residents. We are also offering to provide training and support to care workers in recognising the tell-tale signs of the risks of fire and how to reduce or prevent this risk. This is offered in the form of a seven minute briefing which helps in the roll out and access for staff. Home fire safety visits carried out pre Covid was regularly 80% of visits targeting the Boroughs most vulnerable residents. We are now planning a return to these level of delivery.

Community engagement is being increased in the form of fire safety visits, visual audits and high rise premises visits. At every opportunity fire safety advice and guidance is offered, with the invitation of a HFSV where required. We have increase our community safety visits utilising our referral form which reduces the time between receipt and action, as it is managed locally. This also improves the working relationship between health, social services and LFB.

Our crews have an LFB target ( 10%) with regards to Community fire safety, spending over 11% of their time carrying out community work such as school, care home, club visits giving safety advice. Plus working on national campaigns.

We are now actively promoting both our safety messages via our twitter account to ensure as wide spread exposure of these messages as possible. We are also sharing partners messages on our twitter account again with the view to ensuring these community safety messages are shared as wide spread as possible.

The LFB can still offer free training to partners in a number of areas, for example on the response to an acid attack. This would also be particularly useful door staff of the Boroughs Night clubs and bars. This is being explored with our Community safety and licensing partners on how we offer this.

| | | | Having recently returned to Brent from Kingston I am keen to ensure and a closer working relationship with all our partners taking into account the results of our public consultation and the role out of our community risk management plan to the benefit of all those in our community. |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Information request:<br>To receive a breakdown of the current and future high-risk buildings in Brent and the work undertaken by the Council to improve fire safety standards across high-risk buildings since Grenfell | Customer and Digital Services | The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) has established the Building Safety Programme to make sure that buildings are safe - and people feel safe - now, and in the future.<br><br>The government has banned combustible materials in the external walls of high-rise residential buildings of 18 metres and over. With the support of local fire and rescue services and a panel of independent expert advisers, DLUHC is supporting building owners in taking immediate steps to ensure their residents' safety and in making decisions on any remedial work that is necessary to do.<br>The programme is working with building owners, housing providers, schools, hospitals and the construction industry, including an Industry Response Group.<br>As part of this programme DLUHC are working with local authorities to identify the wall coverings of buildings 18M and over that have majority private tenants or are either hotels or student accommodation. To that end, the Council has collected data on behalf of DLUHC.<br><br>The Council initially collected the data by way of visual inspection surveys for subsequent verification via Landlord building information requests and review. Set out below is a summary of the buildings identified in Brent by external wall covering type. This information has been provided to DLUHC via their Delta system. |

| Buildings above 18M in Brent (excluding social housing) wall covering ( private rent and lease, hotels and student accommodation | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Aluminium composite material (ACM) | High pressure laminate (HPL) | Other metal composite material (MCM) | Other non-combustible materials including glass, brick, concrete, render etc. |
| 9 | 15 | 10 | 91 |

| | Information request:<br>To receive information on the Council's role in ensuring fire safety standards in private housing blocks and the actions taken to do so | Community Wellbeing | Attached as annexe D |
|---|---|---|---|
| Community Engagement and Communications<br>9 February 2022 | Information request:<br>To receive further information on resident engagement groups; namely the membership of these groups and how the Council ensures they are representative of local communities. | Community Wellbeing | Brent Housing Management has an established network of 17 Resident Associations across the borough. These RA's are made up of volunteers who live or own homes on Brent Council estates and each RA is responsible for making their meetings inclusive places for all. Any resident from the estate can be part of the RA but they are required to be elected. Separately all residents are entitled to observe RA meetings. Brent Housing Management has a dedicated Customer Experience and Engagement Manager who works closely with the RA's and provides guidance on how to operate as a group successfully. There is dedicated mailbox for RA's to use HousingFeedback@brent.gov.uk and the Customer Experience and Engagement Manager maintains regular contact with each chair of the RA.<br><br>BHM produces a guide for all Resident Associations to use as a framework which includes a code of conduct and equality and diversity policy. This guide is available on request by emailing HousingFeedback@brent.gov.uk. The list of current RA's are:<br><br>• Alpha Gorefield & Canterbury Court<br>• Bernard Shaw House<br>• Cavendish Close<br>• Eskdale & Loweswater<br>• Five Ways<br>• Gauntlett Court<br>• Lodge and Manor<br>• Marley Walk<br>• Newfield Rise<br>• Pharamond<br>• St Andrews<br>• St Raphaels<br>• Summit Court<br>• The Groves<br>• Windmill Court<br>• William Dunbar/ William Saville |

| Topical issue – TfL funding 9 March 2022 | Improvement suggestion: Better communication with residents on identifying streets that needed improvements | Regeneration and Environment | Unlike schemes, whereby residents are involved from the outset to help develop proposals for road safety or parking measures, priorities for maintenance are primarily selected on condition data collected by independent consultants. We will also take other factors into account such as, past accident records, usage, past reactive repairs and member nominations to determine the final priorities. The materials used for our footway and carriageway programmes is based on policy and is not open for residents to decide on type of material for their road.<br><br>A yearly report is presented to Cabinet that sets out our asset management principles and criteria for identifying priorities along with the list of selected locations. The Cabinet report is a public document, however, we will also publish the programme on our Highways webpage and notify Ward Councillors of locations and dates for work within their wards. Further notification is given to members three weeks in advance of the works, with notification letters distributed to all properties two weeks in advance of works. Advance signing is also installed two weeks in advance of work commencing. |
| Topical issue – TfL funding 9 March 2022 | Improvement suggestion: The council to look into publishing the pavement improvements upgrades – make more transparent | Regeneration and Environment | Our Planned Footway & Carriageway Maintenance programmes are attached as appendices in the Cabinet Report (public document on the website ) and, following Cabinet approval, the programme and dates (once confirmed with contractor) will be published on the Council's website for all to view.  The Cabinet report also sets out the methodology for selecting priorities. There is information about the Council's £20m footway improvement programme on the website, which includes more general information about how roads are chosen and why we use certain materials<br><br>https://www.brent.gov.uk/parking-roads-and-travel/roads-and-streets/20m-for-improving-our-streets |
| Topical issue – TfL funding 9 March 2022 | Improvement suggestion: Publish average amount of time it takes to resurface roads and potholes | Regeneration and Environment | Please refer to annex A for response. |
| Topical issue – TfL funding 9 March 2022 | Information request: Kensal Corridor – committee requested background information on this project | Regeneration and Environment | This scheme was developed over the last several years working collaboratively with the Kensal Consultative Group comprising of ward councillors, four residents associations and local businesses (Aylestone Park Residents and Tenants Association, Kensal Rise Residents Association, Kensal Triangle Residents Association, Queens Park Area Residents Association and Kensal Rise Business Association), along with Transport for London. Background information is available on the councils |

| | | | website: https://www.brent.gov.uk/business/regeneration/revitalising-our-high-streets/kensal-corridor

The scheme takes significant steps in reducing the negative impacts of impeded bus movements on the road corridor, encourages greater local active travel, supporting a significant improvement in the quality of the public realm and local environment, and supporting the local economy.  The first phase of the scheme comprised of new pavements on Kilburn Lane between Regents Street and the Harrow Road, this was completed in conjunction with Westminster City Councils improvements to the Ladbroke Grove signal junction in early 2021.

With limited funding made available through TfL's Bus Priority Programme (£1.2m) the council prioritised improvements to the area near Kensal Rise Overground Station and the adjacent section of Kensal Rise. This provides the most benefits in relation to bus movements; new bus stops and stands will resolve the double looping issue with route 302 reducing congestion and helping to improve air quality, as well as providing new wider pavements, lighting and street furniture, cycle parking and amenities, with a new green roof cycle shelter near the station, improved pedestrian accessibility with two new pelican crossing, new trees and greening including rain gardens.

Construction commenced in September 2021 and the scheme is due for completion August 2022. |
|---|---|---|---|
| Workforce strategy 9 March 2022 | Information request: Sharing the last HR strategy and 2021 staff survey results | HR and Legal | Please see annex C for Brent Workforce Strategy 2017-2020 and D for the staff survey results. |
| Poverty Commission 9 March 2022 | Information requests: Outstanding questions from members of the Resources and Public Realm scrutiny committee on this item. | | Please see annex B for questions and written responses. |

**<u>Annex A: Response to -</u> Publish average amount of time it takes to resurface roads and potholes.**

We have used the following calculation to estimate the average amount of time it takes to resurface a road.

| Year | Length of road Resurfaced (miles) |
|---|---|
| 20/21 | 6.8 |
| 19/20 | 7.0 |
| 18/19 | 4.2 |
| 17/18 | 6.4 |
| 16/17 | 11.0 |
| **Average** | **7.1** |

**Road Network Length**        315   miles

**Average resurfacing frequency**        **44**   **years**

Importantly these figures do not take into account the injection patching programmes, as they are individual repairs, not complete resurfacing. By comparison, each year the Asphalt Industry Alliance (AIA) commissions an independent survey of local authority highway departments in England (including London) and Wales. In the 2022 report just out, the road resurfacing frequency is given as:
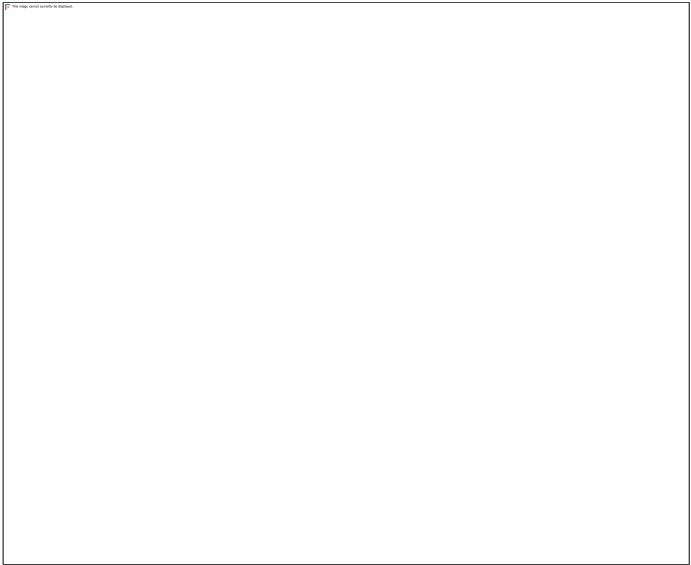
So at 44 years, Brent's frequency for all classes is longer than the London average but much shorter than for England as a whole. However, it should be noted that the overall road condition in Brent over the same 5 year period has varied as follows:

| Year | % of roads where maintenance should be considered | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | A class roads | B and C class roads | Unclassified roads |
| 2016/2017 | 6% | 5% | 24% |
| 2017/2018 | 22% | 7% | 21% |
| 2018/2019 | 6% | 7% | 18% |
| 2019/2020 | 14% | 10% | 14% |

| 2020/2021 | 17% | 14% | 9% |

The Classified road network has deteriorated in condition recently, with A roads worsening to 17% in need of maintenance and B&C roads likewise at 14%. The A road performance reflects the lack of LIP funding over recent years. However, the condition of Unclassified (Local) roads has improved, with only 9% of Brent's local roads now in need of substantial maintenance. This improvement reflects the increased budget for road resurfacing in 2019/20 and 2020/21 as the footway allocation within the £3.5m normally used for footways was "repurposed" for extra carriageway maintenance in those years due to the £20m footway improvement programme.

The extensive injection patching programmes from 2019 onwards, not catered for in the resurfacing figures, have no doubt helped the carriageway condition to improve.

The Alarm survey shows:

**Actual Road Condition Index**
England and Wales (% of network)

| | | ALL CLASSES | PRINCIPAL | NON-PRINCIPAL | UNCLASSIFIED |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **GREEN** | England | 63 | 72 | 67 | 58 |
| | London | 62 | 66 | 65 | 62 |
| | Wales | 57 | 72 | 66 | 48 |
| **AMBER** | England | 26 | 24 | 27 | 27 |
| | London | 21 | 20 | 18 | 21 |
| | Wales | 36 | 25 | 28 | 44 |
| **RED** | England | 11 | 4 | 6 | 15 |
| | London | 17 | 14 | 17 | 17 |
| | Wales | 7 | 3 | 6 | 8 |

So Brent's Principal Roads are slightly worse than the London Average (17% compared to 14%), the Non-Principal Roads (B and C Roads) are better (14% compared with 17%) and our unclassified roads are in significantly better condition than the London average (9% versus 14%).

With regards to potholes we deliver a yearly programme of planned resurfacing work that will pick up carriageway defects as part of the borough wide resurfacing programme. We have also engaged an injection patching contractor who will pick up a large number of carriageway defects (both

investigation and non-investigation level) on residential roads. We have used condition data to identify defect cluster areas so we can target the worst roads to maximise the output from this work, which is on average 60 defects repaired per day.

Finally, we carry out a cyclical safety inspection programme on all borough roads, and also do reactive safety inspections in response to customer reports, to identify and classify defects (subject to the defect meeting investigation levels). After risk assessment, defects selected for repair will be ordered for completion within one of the following: 1. 2hr or 24 hr emergency response (High Priority), 2. 7-day (also High Priority) or 28-day (Medium Priority)   Low priority defects are noted for record purposes but are not scheduled for repair.

**Annex B: Response to Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee on item 9: Poverty Commission update at 9 March 2022 meeting**

1) **Paragraph 3.5 of the Poverty Commission paper mentions that income has risen to 14.9% - are there figures available to show the men/women ratio? It is already recognised that women tend to be part-time workers but there are no figures that reflect this.**

Looking at the most recent ONS figures, full-time male workers in Brent earn £123.90 more a week than full-time female workers do, despite males only working 0.4 more hours per week (Source: Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings). Part-time male workers also earn £38.70 a week more than part-time female workers do. However, part-time males on average work 1.1 hours more a week than females (Source: Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings).

While there is no Brent specific data on the number of male and female workers in employment, in London from Nov 2021 to Jan 2022, 72% of males over 16 were in employment compared to only 61% of females over 16 (Source: The Labour Force Annual Survey).

2) **The main resident support fund will not work unless wages in real terms are increased. Has this ever been brought to the intention of policymakers that the time has now come to enforce full wages i.e. London Living Wages for all?**

As a London Living Wage employer itself, Brent Council has been very proactive in supporting other businesses in the borough to pay the London Living Wage. We hold a Business Rate Tax discount scheme to encourage businesses operating in the borough to pay it and become London Living Wage (LLW) accredited through the Living Wage Foundation.

More recently, the council's Employment and Skills Service has accelerated a project around the LLW, which has been re-developed as a three-year commitment to focus on the Mayor's Good Work Standard campaign. This includes promoting the LLW as one of the milestones towards achieving the Good Work Standard.

Activity on the Good Work Standard Project is continuing well and Nascent Rae, a local organisation awarded the research contract to engage with businesses operating in Brent, to see if they are paying LLW, are accredited as LLW employers and if not, to understand what the barriers are.

The research will determine employer engagement and uptake of Good Work Standards and LLW. It will also identify Brent Good Work Standard Working Group employers including champions and early adopters, which will develop a three-year action plan. This research is due be completed in May 2022 and the 3 year strategy shared following this.

Prior to this, the council's commitment to the Good Work Standards campaign was launched at Living Wage Week in November 2021. Speakers included representatives from the Living Wage Foundation, Brent Citizens, Brent Council and students from schools.

Other ongoing Delivery projects include: Brent Works and The Living Room team in Community hubs and all programmes work with clients and employers to pay LLW.

**3) What is being done to stop people from getting into more debt? Do we have data on how many people use pay day loans, money shops and pawnbrokers?**

The council's Cabinet recently approved an ethical debt recovery policy. Once someone lets us know they are struggling with debt we can arrange payment plans and freeze enforcement. If the debt continues for years, as a last resort we can write-off debt. Other initiatives include:

- Breathing Space – Once a resident has visited a debt adviser, they can apply for a breathing space, which can be applied by the council. This gives the debtor legal protection for 60 days. Furthermore, residents receiving mental health treatment can get a mental health crises breathing space, which lasts the duration of their treatment plus 30 days.
- Energy rebate – We are in the process of organising the £150 council tax energy rebate announced by central government, going to every household in council tax bands A-D. In addition, our discretionary scheme was recently signed off by cabinet which sees some residents in bands E-H receive the £150 rebate. Eligible households are those on either council tax support, income related state benefits, or who apply for financial support related to energy bills (such as the RSF).
- Continued financial support through the RSF and the HSF, the latter recently being recently extended until 30 September 2022.
- Financial support leaflet – A financial support leaflet has been sent to every Brent household, which increases resident awareness of the RSF, CTS, DHP, HB, breathing space, Brent Start and Brent Works. It is crucial that residents know what is available to them.
- Increase referrals to citizen's advice, advice for renters, step change, Brent Works and Brent Start.
- Fuel poverty toolkit briefings – increasing staff awareness of the options that residents have available to them, as well as giving tips on how to save money by being more energy efficient at home. Furthermore, staff have been trained on how to navigate the fuel poverty toolkit. This will, hopefully, translate into more residents getting the support that they need. In addition to internal staff briefings, there have been external briefings on the toolkit to those working in the health and wellbeing sector, such as GP's and health practitioners, further spreading awareness.
- Hubs and Family Wellbeing Centres – The Hubs and the FWC's can give out vouchers for pre-payment meters. This can act as an interim while welfare applications are approved. In addition to this, the work that the Hubs and FWC's do are integral to achieving joined up working throughout the council, especially the holistic financial advice tailored to the needs of the resident.

The council does not hold data on how many people use pay day loans, money shops and pawnbrokers.

**4) There are a number of housing schemes in the borough aimed at families, but how can we ensure that people who live in Brent are not forced to leave because of the cost of housing? Has the impact of rising cost of housing on the borough and the industries we are trying to establish and/or being built up been looked into?**

The Council has policies that seek to provide a minimum number of 3 bedroom homes in housing developments (1 in 4 of every new home). The Council had to balance Brent's needs for larger homes against wider London needs (London Plan policy has an emphasis on one and two beds) and also the impact that family housing has on the viability of developments. One and two bedroom dwellings are more profitable and therefore more deliverable.

Much of the affordable housing in the borough is subsidised by developers. Increasing the proportion of family homes can significantly reduce the quantum and type of affordable housing that developers can provide. In most cases going above 25% family homes in developments would bring affordable housing numbers down to unacceptable levels.

**5) The difference between house prices and wages is big around 50% - how can this gap be reduced?**

The dynamics of the housing market and salaries are complex and mainly influenced by macro-economic factors. However, the council will continue to plan and develop more new housing, including affordable housing, and make better use of existing housing stock, relying on basic supply and demand economics, and in securing 'intermediate' housing which is more accessible to those who can't afford to buy a property at full market value.

We are well aware that the average salary in Brent is below the London average, and employment, skills and enterprise have a number of work streams focussed on improving skills, supporting growth in jobs in growth (and other) sectors, and promoting the London Living Wage.

**6) Keeping in view the housing shortage, what is stopping the council insisting on 60% social housing to be set aside in new developments?**

The cost of land and development together with limited public subsidy for social housing mean such a policy is neither financially viable nor deliverable. Brent's recently adopted Local Plan seeks a minimum 35% affordable housing on major developments, considered generally viable for the majority schemes. Brent Local Plan strategic target is that 50% of new homes are affordable in the period to 2041. The council's own housing building programme will make a significant contribution towards this.

**8) What are the projections for the financial contribution to S106 in the change of policy for Planning Applications for units between 4 and 9 units (under 10 units - where no contributions were required)?**

This is a new Local Plan policy. If the level of planning consents for schemes of 5-9 homes secured in the borough in the recent past are maintained and delivered over the new Local Plan period, an initial high level estimate is that planning consents would secure financial contributions of c£5-10m per annum over the new Local Plan period.

**9) Buy Brent app - Mentioned in another scrutiny session that 150 businesses have signed up, has this figure changed, in that if more have signed up, if not the reasons why**

The figure for business take up has risen to 228.

**10) Affordable workspace - Very good initiatives but how can you ensure that established businesses are not impacted negatively?**

The affordable workspace supplementary planning document sets out how the management and occupation of affordable workspace will work; new affordable workspace is available to qualifying start up and established businesses and should have beneficial impacts on existing businesses by increasing the vibrancy of areas, developing the economic base, create stronger links between businesses and communities, and add vitality and value by bringing a range of activities and uses to areas.

**11) In para 3.8 bullet point 3 - Helping people with disabilities - What does the 6 month input actually mean? What happens if more input is required after 6 months.  Is there an agreed exit plan, so that they are not just left? What are the targets for getting disabled people into work? I went to an event recently in which people with mental disabilities attended.  There were incidents where they were bullied**

For Brent Works' clients, the 6 months support includes coaching and mentoring, 1-2-1 support, in-work support, advocating on behalf the resident and updating any personal action plan. Support continues after 6 months; residents have access to Brent Works' services and officers keep in touch with clients at regular intervals, and the team supports any progression or promotional opportunities.  Residents on an apprenticeship programme get in-work support to the end of the programme, whether that be for 12 or 18 months and the end of the programme support is provided to secure employment or higher apprenticeship placements.

On certain programmes like Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Work and Health programme, clients get 15 months support. Once they complete the programme, they complete an exit form, which details progress and next steps.

Brent Works track people with disabilities getting into work across the whole spectrum of disabilities including neurodiversity issues. We do not have any specific targets for jobs for people with disabilities, we have overall job targets and anyone with a disability is supported to secure employment. We have had 86 people with disabilities registering to our service over the last year with 26 gaining employment. In our Tech Camps programme, 9 out of 25 job outcomes were people with SEND (special educational needs and disability).

We have robust processes and zero tolerance of bullying. Please escalate any cases to the employment team. We also have access to and refer clients to additional services like CAB and wider Hub partners.

**12) Moving up Programme - Supported 96 men into employment.**
**- Is this full time employment and in what sectors?**
**- How do you recruit more men to participate?**
**- Has any men dropped out of the programme and the reasons for this?**
**- How would people access this programme?**

Majority of the roles (over 80%) are full time role but are based on the candidates' preference. The sectors varies but includes construction, retail, finance, IT, customer service, logistics and sales.

The participants are recruited through various means including Job Centre Plus (JCP) referrals, JCP outreach work events, community outreach (youth club as an example), word of mouth, council departments, social media and other promotions. The current methods have helped the programme to recruit over 300 people and with restrictions lifted, the team would be able to undertake further outreach activities including targeting sporting activities.

Participation on the programme is voluntary, and if participants do drop out, this is due to various reasons including personal circumstances or re-engagement in full-time education as examples. The team continue to re-engage with young people to ensure that they are aware that the support is still available if their circumstances change and they are ready to re-engage with the programme.

People are able to access this programme through the various means mentioned above. The team have adopted a blended approach to engagement and support taking into account the government guidelines as well as the personal preferences of the young people. Either one of the partners/services can refer people or they can self-refer.

**13) Social Value - Bricklaying – Wembley councillors have noticed that the high rise blocks no longer use brick, they use slabs that are slotted into place, and then covered with a brick like effect - is brick laying is a dying skill?**

Nationally, there is a high demand for Bricklayers and within Brent, it is the third most sought after trade by developers after electrician and plumbing. There is a shortage of this skill in the workplace hence one of our most popular construction apprenticeship schemes. Nonetheless, we are also promoting the newer skills needed for modern methods of construction.

**14) The Financial Upskilling Programme - can you give examples of groups and Community Leaders who have benefited from this programme?**

Two multilingual community mentor programmes have been delivered in Arabic and Somali. Additionally, community leaders from the Brent Community Advise Network (BCAN), Brent Multi Faith Forum and Mutual Aids have been targeted for separate workshop sessions.

**15) Brent health matters - How many outreach events have been held? Are there plans for more? Possibilities of using mobile unit to target estates and/or long roads?**

Brent Health Matters has worked with the council's public health team to deliver 25 Health and Wellbeing events and 6 large scale Diabetes events. Going forward, the BHM and public health teams are planning four health and wellbeing events a month. Four large scale diabetes events are scheduled for April 2022. We have not been taking the mobile bus to estates over the winter months but this will start again from May

**16) Sanitary products are now distributed through the vending machine – what adverse effects came to light?**

None – the initiative has been a success and is continuing.

**17) Good Food For Londoners has just been published by London Councils - Kevin Fenton and Tom Coffey. Brent is mid table. Are there any ideas that Brent can use from the report?**

The Health and Wellbeing Board agreed the Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Delivery Plan at its March meeting. This contains a number of actions which would raise Brent up the "league table".

**18) The economy is up and down, financial inclusion and welfare has so far not impressively reduced poverty. What other measures need to be considered as an alternative?**

We are looking to provide Brent residents with the greater employment and skills opportunities, especially in sectors such as Tech, the environmental sector and health and social care which are bound to keep growing is one way of supporting our working population.

Supporting under-represented and disadvantaged groups in the labour market is another measure which will help close the economic disparities in Brent's communities. Also, we exploring avenues for local people to get jobs within the council by adopting a local procurement strategy and encouraging local businesses to bid for council contracts.

We have Social Value Procurement objectives and to date, we have secured £3m in Social Value which is being redirected back into our communities. We are also focusing on ways to grow our local businesses and encourage them to adopt the London Living Wage, which will help to reduce poverty.

**19) 40% Child poverty is too high what are the main reasons and what would be the right solution.**

Childhood poverty rate in Brent is 40% after housing costs (ACH). This is unfortunately a reality across a large proportion of London boroughs, once housing costs are taken into account households are more likely to be on or below the poverty line. Rising housing costs in London are the main reason for higher childhood poverty rates.

In Brent, between April 2020 and March 2021 median monthly private rent for two bedroom homes was £1,400 (generally prices varied between £1,300-1,547). Meanwhile, the average sold price for a property in Brent as of January 2022 is around £600,000-£650,000. In addition, the cost of living crises and inflation of everyday items has driven more households into poverty.

Many residents in Brent are on low incomes and there is a lack of stable jobs. This has been exacerbated by Covid-19, as households in poverty are more likely to have been furloughed and have their wages cut due to the pandemic. 33,600 jobs were furloughed for Brent residents (as of 31 Jan 2021), which was fourth highest in London and ninth highest in England

Solutions the council is working on includes:

- building more affordable housing and ensure greater housing security for residents within the private rented sector, who are often more likely to be on or below the poverty line.
- working to increase awareness of resident support via Housing Benefit, the Resident Support Fund, and Household Support Fund (which includes Free School Meal vouchers). An extension for the Housing Support Fund has been announced by Government for April-September 2022.

- supporting employment and opportunities schemes are a key way of helping households gain employment and skills to ensure they do not experience poverty. This includes schemes such as Brent Start, Brent Works, Moving on Up, Springboard.
- continuing to work with and lobby central government for more financial support.
- offering support for households with children through our Family Wellbeing Centres and Hubs. We will keep increasing awareness off the support offered.

**20) How will fuel poverty be monitored because it looks like everybody going to be effected by it.**

Brent will be monitoring Resident Support Fund applications citing struggles to pay utility bills. Furthermore, we will be monitoring the number of pre-payment meter vouchers given out at the Hubs and Customer Services Centre. We are also working with third sector organisations such as Green Doctors and SHINE to monitor the number of referrals for support with fuel poverty.

We are keeping an eye on sub-regional research carried out by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy – showing the number of households in fuel poverty (most recent data came out in 2021 but used data from 2019).

The Financial Inclusion Dashboard provides an overall view of the financial situation of geographic areas to managers and decision-makers, as well as a person-level view for front-line staff, helping them to better target any required help or intervention.

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# brent workforce

# strategy

## 2017-2020

BRENT 20|20

Brent

# introduction

Brent is one of the most culturally diverse boroughs in the UK. The council is a vibrant and dynamic organisation with a workforce that reflects the diversity of its community. The diversity of the borough and the cohesion between its different communities are major factors in Brent's characteristic vitality and energy. In Brent, 76% of the working age population (16-64) are economically active; 72% are employed. As an employer, we have an indisputable bearing on the economic development of the borough and an essential responsibility as a role model for other local employers. We are therefore pleased to introduce our Workforce Strategy.

Over the last few years the council has had to face unprecedented financial challenge and change. Brent has a clear vision to make the borough a great place to live and work even whilst this challenge continues; a place where people feel that they have opportunities to change their lives for the better even in the context of the most pressing financial challenges experienced in public services for decades.

A skilled and engaged workforce is crucial to achieving our Brent 2020 vision. We are proud of our staff; we recognise the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead for our borough and it is only through our staff that these will be met. Our Workforce Strategy sets out our priorities for the next three years to support our workforce in plotting a course towards our vision.

## WORKING TOGETHER WITH OUR PARTNERS TO:

- Deliver the right services and outcomes for our residents
- Be an employer which is representative of our borough
- Support every member of staff to meet their full potential

## THIS WORKFORCE STRATEGY WILL FOCUS ON ACTIVITIES TO CREATE A CULTURE AND WORKFORCE:

- Where the customer is at the heart of everything we do
- Is high performing
- Where staff are fully engaged

**VISION** We focus to deliver priorities for our community

**LEADERSHIP** Managers role-model positive behaviours, live our values and nurture the potential in our diverse workforce

**VOICE** We seek and hear the views of our staff and problems are solved together

**VALUES** All staff are empowered to do their jobs and take personal responsibility; there is greater trust and transparency and we celebrate our successes together

## ...AND IN THIS CULTURE:

- The customer is at the heart of everything we do
- We are managing the performance of all our staff effectively
- We are leading our staff through change
- We are involving them in decision-making
- Staff take personal accountability for their decisions and actions

# drivers for workforce change

BRENT 2020

DIGITAL

BREXIT

SKILLS & DEMOGRAPHICS

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

WORKFORCE

WHAT WE DO

HOW WE DO IT
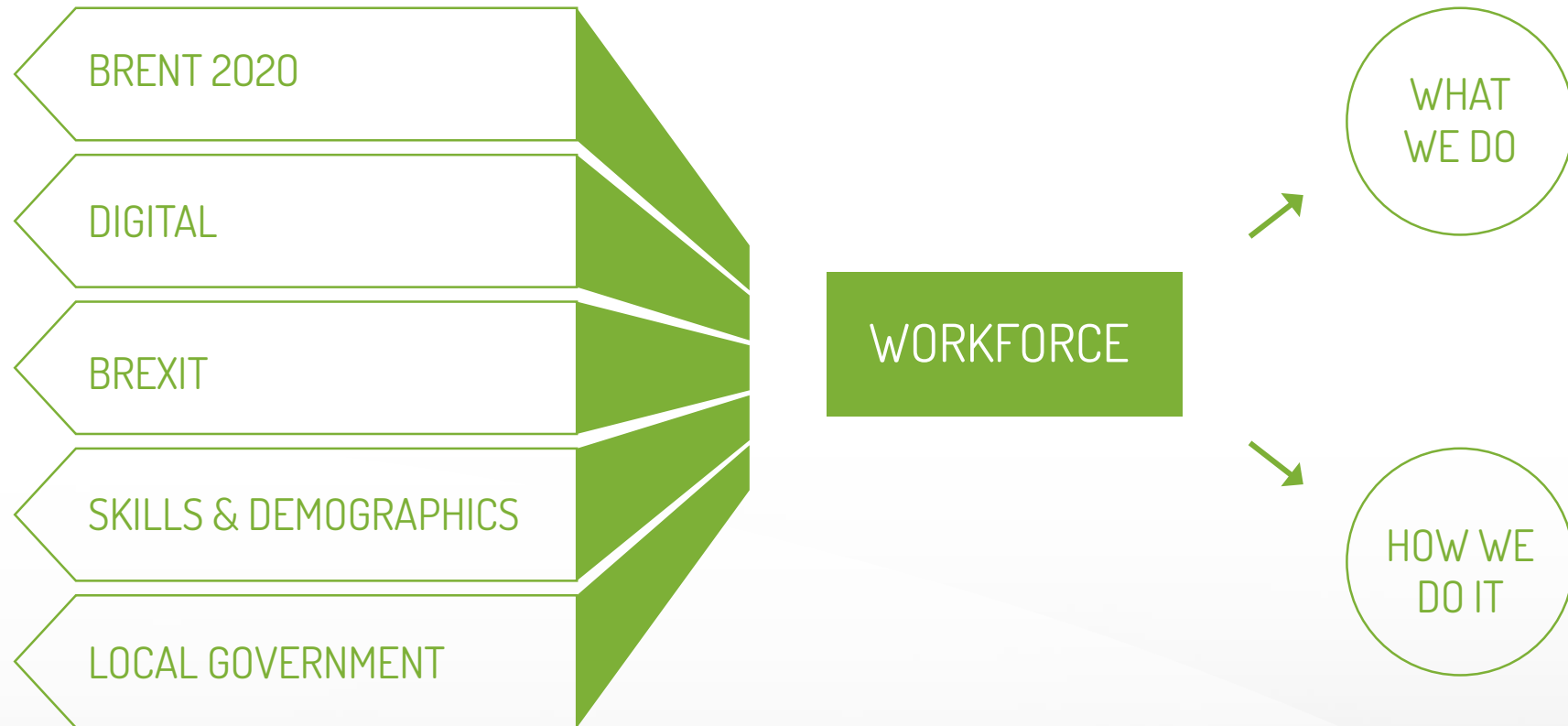
# BRENT 2020

**The Brent 2020 vision:** Our priorities are focussed on Brent being a better place where people have better lives, supported by building capacity in the community so things are better locally. As an organisation, our priority is also to provide efficient services through working differently. A growing and ageing population increases demand for services at a time when funding pressures are high. Significantly, growth in Brent's working age population means more people will require skills and jobs if we are to impact positively on economic growth in the borough. We will need to break the cycle of Brent workers receiving a lot less than the London average wage.

**To meet the priorities, our communities and residents have identified, the council intends to focus on five core priorities**

**1 EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS**
To respond to the increase in the working age population and lift people out of poverty and welfare dependency.

**2 REGENERATION**
To improve the economic, social and environmental conditions in the borough.

**3 BUSINESS AND HOUSING GROWTH**
To maximise the tax base to support the delivery of core services.

**4 DEMAND MANAGEMENT**
To manage the pressure on needs led budgets such as children's social care, adult social care and homelessness.

**5 RAISING INCOME**
To support the delivery of core services.

**Finding new ways of operating and changing service delivery models to meet the vision will need the involvement of the whole workforce, whose ideas and creativity are necessary to achieving the vision**



BUSINESS AND HOUSING GROWTH

DEMAND MANAGEMENT

EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS

BRENT 20|20

RAISING INCOME

REGENERATION
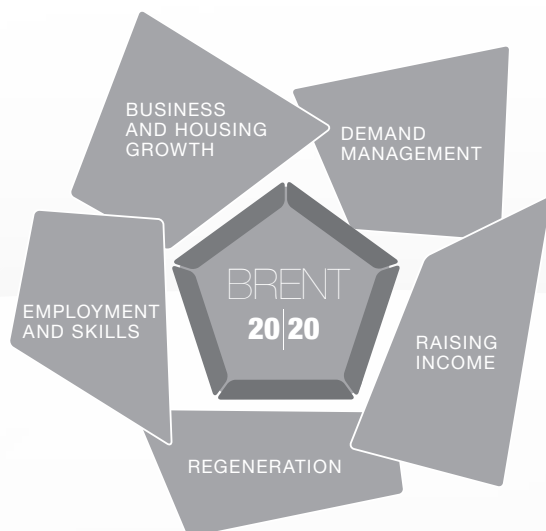
# DIGITAL

## NATIONAL CONTEXT

The sheer speed of digital development makes this the biggest "disruptor" at work. The top 10 "in demand" jobs in 2010 did not exist in 2004 and 65% of school children today will be doing jobs not yet invented. It's estimated that 15 million jobs will be replaced by robots in the next 20 years. The loss of jobs so far through introducing robotics have created a range of new roles which have tended to be better paid than the manual jobs they replaced.

**The top 10 "in demand" jobs in 2010 did not exist in 2004 and 65% of school children today will be doing jobs not yet invented.**

Digital provides opportunities for rethinking service delivery and to manage demand. The development of sophisticated algorithms and artificial intelligence (AI) will reshape workforce and resident interfaces with digital as well as replacing more professional roles especially in support services.

Social media has already profoundly changed how we communicate creating opportunities and risks for every organisation that wants to communicate effectively with employees, customers and stakeholders.

## BRENT CONTEXT

The council has developed the key components of its digital strategy. This will result in outcomes such as:

- Creating a "Smart Borough" to ensure digital interconnectivity
- Creating a new online offer for residents and stakeholders
- Connecting residents and partner organisations across the borough
- Modelling "big data" to focus preventative actions, for example, identifying those vulnerable residents at risk of child sexual exploitation

## IMPLICATIONS FOR THE WORKFORCE

- The "workplace" will become less defined as technology creates even more opportunities for mobile and flexible working.
- This will mean rethinking how the workforce is given voice, is engaged and how values and trust are managed in such a different environment. This will need a change in mind-set and council culture.
- The workforce will need to be adept at fully utilising digital skills to be effective in their jobs and many management functions will be done in the digital space, for example, a virtual reality coaching session with an AI avatar.
- Digital will mean the workforce has to become more collaborative with an attitude to "explore the art of the possible" through innovation and creativity. It will drive multi-disciplinary team working and place emphasis on employees contributing to designing services for residents to achieve more self-help.

# BREXIT

## NATIONAL CONTEXT

No one knows what the full impact of leaving the EU will be, however, it's probable there will be:
**1)** Some negotiated arrangement for EU nationals already living and working here and
**2)** Implementation of immigration controls that limit the freedom of movement of EU nationals.

Of the workforce of 2.26 million that make up social care, health, hospitality and agriculture, 56% are from the EU. In addition, 27% of EU nationals are considering leaving their current organisation in 2017. It's estimated that 10% of the public sector workforce is European.

Of the workforce of 2.26 million that make up social care, health, hospitality and agriculture, 56% are from the EU

## BRENT CONTEXT

Brent has about 40,000 residents born in the EU with the majority being from Eastern Europe. In 2016, 60% of applications for national insurance numbers from Brent residents were by Europeans. Europeans tend to be more economically active as a group compared to the borough average.

Approximately 10% of the council workforce are from the EU and it's about 7% of NHS staff in north west London.

## IMPLICATIONS FOR THE WORKFORCE

- **In North West London, applications for nursing courses fell from 1,680 to 1,100 between 2013 and 2017. Anecdotal evidence suggests this trend will continue. This has real implications for being able to resource the health and social care workforce**
- **Brexit and immigration controls will exacerbate current skills shortages so skills development for residents and the workforce will be crucial to maintain employment and employability**
- **Effective attraction and retention strategies for hard to recruit posts will be essential components of the workforce strategy**

# APPRENTICESHIP LEVY, SKILLS AND DEMOGRAPHICS

## NATIONAL CONTEXT

The government introduced the "Apprenticeship Levy" in April 2017. It does provide opportunities to address some skill shortages and be integrated with learning and development priorities.

There are already skill shortages in areas such as IT, advanced engineering and health and social care. These will be exacerbated with Brexit and new immigration controls.

Thirty percent (9.4m) of the UK's workforce is aged over 50 years and that percentage will continue to increase. With an ageing population, planning simply to replace those retiring with younger people won't work in the long term. Older employees have strengths in knowledge sharing, problem solving and customer service so it's important to prevent losing

### Thirty percent (9.4m) of the UK's workforce is aged over 50 years and that percentage will continue to increase.

this from the council too quickly. At the same time the next working generation (Generation z) will be the first truly digital generation and have very different expectations of the workplace.

## BRENT CONTEXT

The council annual levy contribution is c£440,000. The government target when combined with maintained schools for the number of apprentices under the levy scheme will be about 150.

The council workforce has a median age of 44, compared to Brent's population which has a median age of 32. The figure rises to 39 in England and Wales.

The council and community have highly diverse populations for example 66% are BAME.

As a corporate parent, the council needs to ensure it is developing the skills of it's care leavers and finding pathways to employment for them.

The hard-to-recruit roles in the council (in line with many other local authorities) are: social workers, IT architects, planners, building control surveyors, public health specialists, education phycologists.

Data about the council's workforce is given below and highlights that social care, customer services and finance are the largest parts of the workforce.

The council has an additional challenge of operating in a vibrant London economy where improved transport links enable any individual to live in one place but have a choice to work in 20 or more London boroughs. There is competition with the private sector especially for technical and professional roles.

## IMPLICATIONS FOR THE WORKFORCE

- Use workforce planning to adopt creative and flexible practices that retain and refocus older workers to new opportunities whilst still attracting and retaining younger employees.
- Opportunity to improve skills development for those under 21 years old and utilise the apprenticeship levy as part of the solution for growing our own to meet demand especially in hard to recruit roles. This applies to the Brent diverse community and the council workforce.
- Opportunities to tap into the local diverse graduate population be this specific graduate schemes or internships.
- The challenge of increasing the number of apprenticeships are costs for administration and support.
- The council will leverage opportunities for better skill development across its strategic partnerships, for example, the integrated health and social care workforce.

| EMPLOYEES BY DEPARTMENT SERVICE AREA (MAY 17) | CURRENT EMPLOYEES |
|---|---|
| Chief Executive's Department | 92 |
| Children and Young People | 521 |
| Community Well-being | 538 |
| Regeneration and Environment | 358 |
| Resources | 511 |
| Grand Total | 2,020 |

| TOP 10 ROLES BY NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES ACROSS THE COUNCIL | NO. OF EMPLOYEES |
|---|---|
| Social Worker | 141 |
| Benefit Assessment Officer | 86 |
| Customer Services Assistant | 55 |
| Community Support Worker | 42 |
| Administration Officer | 37 |
| Apprentice | 36 |
| Customer Service Officer (Contact Centre) | 28 |
| Care Assessor | 27 |
| Finance Officer | 27 |
| Team Manager (social worker) | 25 |

| WORKFORCE TRENDS | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Total staff | 2,484 | 2,378 | 2,345 | 2,062 |
| Average age | 49 | 44 | 45 | 44 |
| Disabled | 6% | 8% | 10% | 10% |
| BAME | 61% | 62% | 64% | 65% |
| Female | 65% | 65% | 66% | 65% |
| LGBT | 3% | 3% | 3% | 3% |

# ethnicity

How the workforce reflects the community

Brent's ethnicity profile is broadly comparable to the borough profile

**Brent Council**

| 24.4% (26%) | 10.2% (10.0%) | 28.5% (27.2%) | 32.5% (32.3%) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|

1.6% (1.4%)

2.7% (3.2%)
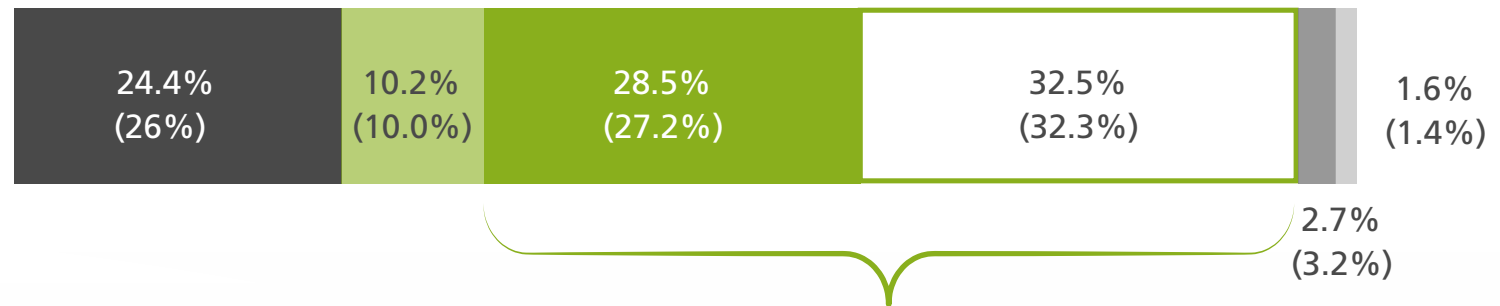
Black employees are overrepresented and Asian employees are underrepresented

**Brent** (London Borough)

| 18% | 18.3% | 34.1% | 18.8% | |
|---|---|---|---|---|

5.1%   5.8%
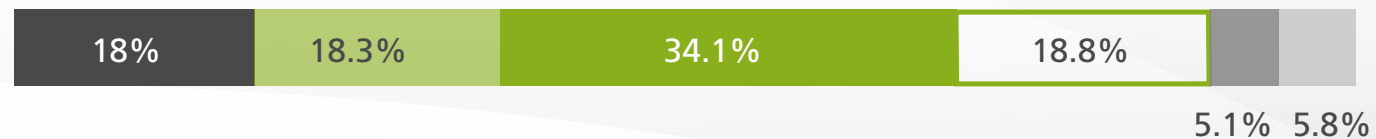
● White (British)   ● White (other)   ● Asian   ○ Black   ● Mixed   ● Other

# age

How old is the Brent workforce?

## Median age of workforce is **44**

One of the lowest median ages
of any London borough

2013     2014     2015     2016

Median age of workforce has remained
similar for the last three years

**49**

**44**

**45**

**44**

## Age profile has remained similar

1%

**2016** | 13.5% | 25.8% | 28.2% | 25.7% | 5.5%

**2015** | 14.1% | 25.1% | 28.3% | 26.2% | 4.9%

0.9%

● Under 21    ● 21-30    ● 31-40    ○ 41-50    ● 51-60    ● 61-70
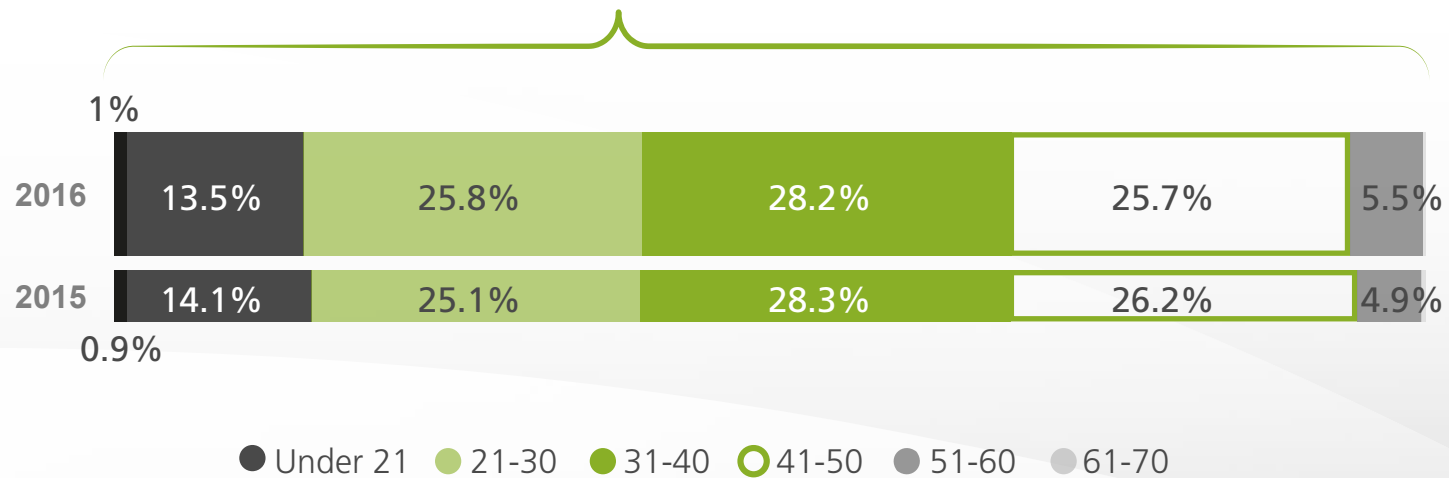
## SOCIAL CARE FILLED POSITIONS

| JOB ROLE | CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE | | ADULT'S SOCIAL CARE | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | CURRENT EMPLOYEES | REED AGENCY | CURRENT EMPLOYEES | REED AGENCY |
| Team Manager | 13 | 6 | 12 | 1 |
| Deputy Team Manager | 12 | 15 | 3 | 1 |
| Senior Social Worker | 12 | 23 | 2 | 3 |
| Mental Health Social Worker | - | - | 2 | - |
| Advanced/Senior Practitioner | 1 | 4 | 2 | 2 |
| Social Worker | 91 | 22 | 50 | 28 |
| Social Work Asst./Personal Advisor | 19 | 10 | - | - |
| Care Assistant/Domestic | 2 | - | 9 | 10 |
| Residential Childcare Officer | - | 5 | - | - |
| Grand Total | 150 | 85 | 80 | 45 |

## PLANNING FILLED POSITIONS

| JOB ROLE | CURRENT EMPLOYEES |
|---|---|
| Area Planning Manager | 2 |
| Deputy Area Planning Manager | 2 |
| Principal Planner | 2 |
| Planner/Planning Officer | 7 |
| Trainee/Assistant Planner | 8 |
| Grand Total | 21 |

# LOCAL GOVERNMENT

## NATIONAL CONTEXT

Most councils in the country will have faced budget reductions of about 55% between 2010 and 2020 at a time when an ageing population and higher birth rate are increasing demand. Population growth in cities like London puts further pressure on housing needs and provision of services.

Financial pressures have forced councils to change service provision, manage demand and find different ways of working internally and with partners.

For example, social care and health integration is a huge opportunity to improve customer experience, improve the quantity and quality of hospital discharges and reduce costs. This and joint strategic commissioning are ways in which working closely with strategic partners will benefit the whole community.

The way councils are being financed is changing. The revenue support grant will be replaced by business rates in 2020. Other income streams will be through council tax receipts, selling services, grants and joint funding.

Public sector pay increases have been held at about 1% for several years now and there is no indication this approach is going to change.

> Social care and health integration is a huge opportunity to improve customer experience, improve the quantity and quality of hospital discharges and reduce costs.

## BRENT CONTEXT

Over £117m had come out of the council budget by the end of 2016/17. Further savings of £4.4m are agreed, split between £2.3m in 2017/18 and £2.1m in 2018/19. A further gap of nearly £13m remains in 2019/20 and planning is in place to resolve this. It's estimated that by 2020 over half of the council's budget will be spent on social care.

The Office for National Statistics projects that in Brent, between 2017 and 2020 the number of over 65s will grow by over 8%; and the number of under 15s by 3.5%. This is much faster than the population as a whole, which is nonetheless forecast to grow by 3.2%.

The council's Brent 2020 vision is already driving activities capitalising on opportunities such as significant regeneration projects, plans to build 31,000 homes including affordable housing and improving services and outcomes for residents whilst managing demand.

The planned creation of a learning hub in Wembley with Westminster University, North West London College and the University of Football will attract high tech, start-ups, professional jobs and boost skills and learning opportunities for residents and staff. Those with a post degree qualification are under represented in Brent.

## IMPLICATIONS FOR THE WORKFORCE

- Social care and health integration, change and project work in the council and across strategic partners, will create new career paths in the council
- Different skills and behaviours from all employees will be needed to thrive in this new environment.
- There will be pressure to increase wages after years of austerity and this will put additional pressure on attraction and retention
- A different type of leadership and management will be needed
- Attraction and retention packages will need redesigning to develop workforce potential and improve engagement and well-being
- The cost of housing is an issue for attracting key workers such a social workers and teachers

# what are the new skills that will be needed?

As people step into spaces left by changing structures and reducing posts, they are asked to broaden the spectrum of their roles as we find new ways to manage the pressure on needs-led services such as social care and housing. So that our priorities, once delivered can be sustained, we now need to build resilience, capacity and capability, developing essential skills in several key areas →

## REIMAGINE SERVICES

To lift people out of poverty and welfare dependency and improve the economic, social and environmental conditions in the borough we will need new knowledge and innovation to apply different commissioning and design principles

## CUSTOMER FOCUS

To support the delivery of core services and manage the pressure on needs-led services such as social care and housing we will need to apply robust research and analysis skills to understand current demand, customer patterns and systems/procedures

## DELIVER OUTCOMES

To support and sustain the delivery of core services we will need agility, resilience and collaboration to pilot and test solutions rapidly and at reduced cost

EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS

REGENERATION

BUSINESS AND HOUSING GROWTH

DEMAND MANAGEMENT

RAISING INCOME

# the Brent 2020 vision forms the basis of organisational transformation and requires a workforce that is:

- Engaged
- Customer led
- Collaborative (across partners and the council)
- Skilled
- Innovative

engaged

innovative

**20|20**
VISION

customer led

skilled

collaborative

## what will be different?

- We will be a smaller organisation
- The customer is at the heart of everything we do
- Our staff will be more agile, skilled and collaborative, working with colleagues and partners and not limited by physical or structural boundaries
- Managers and staff will use more commercial, collaborative and strategic commissioning skills to obtain best value from our resources, partners and contractors
- We will be more innovative, developing and embracing new ways of working
- We will use "digital" to be more efficient and effective
- Our managers will role model organisational behaviours, values and competencies
- Our managers will follow a clear set of management standards for managing staff, resources and budgets
- Staff will be more engaged

We will need the creativity, vision, imagination and innovation of all our workforce if we are to find new ways of doing things, and sustain high standards of service in the face of rising demand and falling funding. A great example are Outcome Based Reviews (OBRs), one of which resulted in the Harlesden Hub where staff and partners are working differently to find new ways of engaging the community in a different setting.

# values

It's not just what we do, but how we do it is just as important. Our values are the foundation on which everything else is built and help shape and define the standard to which we work and the way that we do it. Our values express the over-arching importance to our organisation of being fully inclusive and welcoming of the broad spectrum of skills, experiences and perspectives represented in our communities and our workforce.

**Fairness**
We are driven by a determination to reduce inequality and justice

**Respect for people**
We actively engage with our residents and staff, seek their views and use them to shape our decision-making

**Equality**
We believe that every person is different but equal, and that everyone's unique talent should be recognised and encouraged and aim to create opportunities for people to make the most of their abilities

**Excellence in all our services**
We strive to achieve the very best standards of service for all our residents

VALUES

BEHAVIOURS

SKILLS

2020 VISION
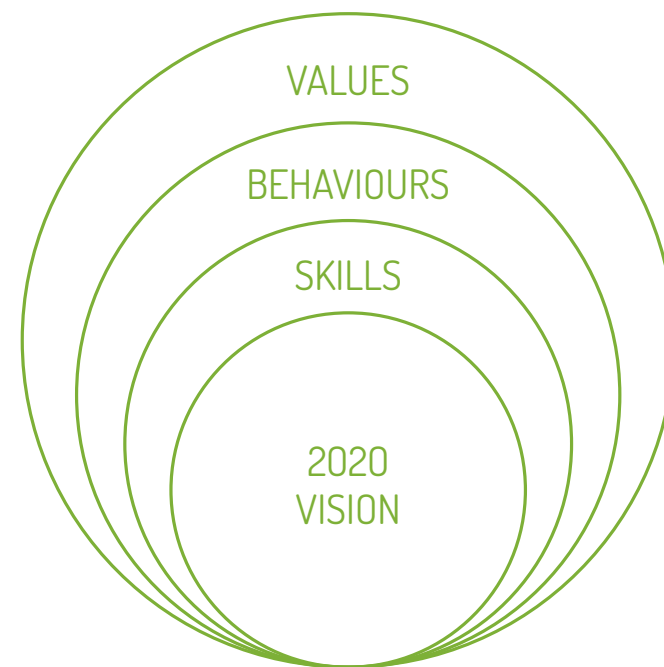
Our staff networks play a valuable role in helping us express and uphold our values; celebrating the diversity across our borough with our residents and communities.

# where are we now?

Brent currently has around 2,020 employees, and a small contingent workforce. Since 2010, government funding cuts have meant a large reduction of employee numbers and restructuring in most parts of the organisation. To counter this, the council is working with partners to transform services, using opportunities for regeneration and growth to build income and creating a more agile workforce. The way we work together, sharing the space with our customers and communities in the Civic Centre symbolises this ethos and it is this respect and humility for all parts of Brent's communities that gives us our drive and energy.

# where do we need to be?

The new skill set of the workforce is shaped by national changes and local priorities. The council has had some rich sources of feedback in the last 12 months which help to triangulate the strategic approach.

1. During 2016, Outcome Based Reviews (OBRs) were conducted based on a desire to have a systems wide approach to improving services and outcomes for employment and welfare, housing vulnerable people and regeneration (physical, social, environmental). In talking to residents some key themes emerged which are workforce related.

2. In the 2016 staff survey, our staff identified ways which we can further demonstrate our commitment to our values particularly in supporting each other through change and taking personal responsibility.

3. Senior management feedback was sought in face-to-face interviews which captured their views about the current culture and what needs to change.

# feedback

| THEME | RESIDENTS | STAFF | SENIOR MANAGERS |
|---|---|---|---|
| Collaborative | Collaborative across the system towards shared outcomes, work across the council | They need a better understanding of the bigger picture | Culture still too siloed and risk adverse. People happy to push decision making upwards |
| Engaged | Thinking about people and place not organisation and system | They want to be more engaged and better recognised for doing a good job | People are generally friendly and want to be supportive |
| Customer led | Partnerships based on accountability and trust | They need to create a better customer experience | Too much bureaucracy and too many processes to navigate |
| Leadership | Continually build relationship capabilities of staff so they are more effective in their work | They want more motivating and inspiring managers | People can be too cautious and defensive |
| Performance management | Encourage honest two way conversations and use as a basis for action | They thought performance management across the council should be better | There needs to be better performance management in the council |
| Diversity | Work across the council and get community involvement and ownership | They enjoy the diversity and dynamism of Brent and like working for the council | A lot of energy and wanting to drive forward community engagement |

# forward together

In recent "Forward Together" sessions, nearly two thirds of our staff were asked for the top five characteristics they'd like to see in front line staff, team leaders and managers and senior leaders. These are listed in order of most frequently chosen:

| | FRONT LINE STAFF | TEAM LEADERS AND MANAGERS | SENIOR LEADERS |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Customer focused | Supportive | A great communicator |
| 2 | Knowledgeable | Knowledgeable | A great role model |
| 3 | A great communicator | Makes decisions | Makes decisions |
| 4 | Professional | A great communicator | Supportive |
| 5 | A good listener | Open to ideas | Values Diversity |

Staff feel most supported when their manager is approachable, is a great communicator and acts decisively. This approach leads to more effective performance management and engagement of staff and this workforce strategy will support development of these skills in managers. These characteristics will be used as a basis to develop management standards.

Our culture is already more open and friendly and people generally want to help each other. There is a sense of energy driven by the number of projects and activities delivering council priorities and a strong connection with our local community. We want to build on this so our culture allows our whole workforce to be the best they can be.

"Staff feel most supported when their manager is approachable, is a great communicator and acts decisively. This approach leads to more effective performance management and engagement of staff"

# priorities for the workforce

The journey to transform the culture of the organisation is at the heart of sustaining the pace and depth of business change. Workforce engagement is the key to delivering the outcomes we seek. A priority will be ensuring that staff understand what part they need to play in achieving the vision, that the organisation values their involvement and can best succeed through their contributions.

This Strategy sets out the headline actions for the next three years. The action plan will be monitored and the Strategy reviewed annually on a rolling basis. These are the workforce priorities, with initial focus being on performance and development combined with increasing management capability and modelling the right behaviours.

| WORKFORCE PLANNING AND MANAGING POTENTIAL | • Right people, right time right place, right numbers<br>• Attracting and developing employee potential |
| PERFORMANCE AND DEVELOPMENT | • High performing teams<br>• People skilled and developed |
| LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT | • Right Behaviours<br>• Inspirational leadership |
| ENGAGEMENT, REWARD AND WELL BEING | • Having the right culture<br>• Customer is our focus<br>• Staff recognised and supported |

| | |
|---|---|
| **PRIORITY 1**<br><br>WORKFORCE PLANNING AND MANAGING POTENTIAL | • Job roles and skills will be identified to meet the council's need now and in the future.<br>• A workforce planning tool will be developed to help services think about and plan their workforce requirements using context and market information to decide which roles we will employ, develop, source as contingent labour or share with partners.<br>• We will boost the skills of the workforce through the use of work experience, apprenticeships and graduate schemes that benefit employers and individuals and help improve economic productivity.<br>• Over the coming months and years, we will take more control over designing, choosing and supporting wider pathways to employment and providing opportunities for our diverse workforce and community.<br>• We will review flexible ways of working, supported by our Digital Strategy that are aligned with council priorities to generate income and deliver transformed services.<br>• We will review our recruitment processes to ensure we are attracting the best people across the community and recruiting for the right behaviour and value mind-set.<br>• We will identify our best potential across our diverse workforce and ensure staff are given the opportunity to flourish in a way that supports and drives achievement of the council's priorities.<br>• We will use projects and activities across the council and partners to provide opportunities for skills development and to grow staff with potential. |
| **PRIORITY 2**<br><br>PERFORMANCE AND DEVELOPMENT | • We will enable and require managers to be adept at supporting staff with development planning, supporting them to reflect on their performance, giving and receiving feedback and helping staff to take personal responsibility for their own performance and development.<br>• We will focus our development activities on increasing our leadership capability and capacity for leading employees through change and creating a culture of collaborating with others, having a commercial focus, and creating a resilient workforce.<br>• We will review our performance processes to ensure they are fit for purpose for a smaller more agile workforce.<br>• We will ensure that staff understand their role, the contribution they make to the council and what they can do to achieve.<br>• The council's learning and development offer will be aligned with emerging development priorities.<br>• We will encourage people to take personal responsibility for their development supported by a corporate development offer. |
| **PRIORITY 3**<br><br>LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT | • We will make sure our leaders and managers can manage people in an effective and inclusive way, that recognises potential, develops performance and role models our values.<br>• Our managers will be supported to develop their leadership capability at all levels to build trust and resilience, maximise the potential of their teams and lead the way in enhancing our capacity for working in collaboration and partnership.<br>• We will enable a coaching approach to management and facilitate all aspects of workforce engagement, performance and cultural development.<br>• Leadership is found at all levels of the organisation and we will encourage our dispersed leadership to grow.<br>• We will develop a set of management standards for managing staff, resources and budgets. |
| **PRIORITY 4**<br><br>ENGAGEMENT REWARD AND WELL-BEING | • We will work together to achieve the set of common behaviours that allow us to live our values every day and express our sense of personal responsibility and pride in working at Brent Council.<br>• We will make the council an employer of choice for a great diversity of people and prioritise achieving diversity in our workforce.<br>• We want everyone in our workforce to feel they can be who they are and feel confident in a supportive environment, able to contribute their ideas and opinions and work in partnership with others.<br>• We will create development and network opportunities so staff tell positive stories about our council as a supportive employer that encourages confidence across our diverse workforce.<br>• There will be specific attraction and retention plans for hard to recruit areas.<br>• We will continue to help staff to access the benefits and well-being support available to them.<br>• We will have a staff recognition scheme and look at ways to achieve more flexibility with reward where circumstances are appropriate to do so. |

# PRIORITY 1

## workforce planning and managing potential

| OUTCOME | WHAT WE ARE GOING TO DO | HOW WE WILL KNOW WE HAVE SUCCEEDED |
|---|---|---|
| P1.1 We will provide opportunities for progression both within and outside the council balancing opportunities to develop staff alongside assessment of need to refresh the workforce<br><br>Service areas will have clear workforce plans to ensure actions are taken in time to meet workforce requirements for delivery of council priorities | Having clarity about workforce planning helps us balance short and long term workforce objectives. It helps us to better target resources, managing of potential, development priorities and improve staff engagement to meet Brent 2020 outcomes:<br><br>1. We will develop a workforce planning tool to help services structure their thinking and planning about workforce needs This will include workforce intelligence based on employment market analysis to assist services with planning for which roles to develop, grow, source through other means or accept that such roles could only be filled by contingent labour<br>2. We will review job roles and competencies to reduce complexity and have a clear set of competencies and job families better suited to a more agile workforce working across strategic partnerships<br>3. We will use digital to underpin and develop new ways of working<br>4. We will conduct a review of management tiers and spans of control across the council | • The council has a corporate workforce plan being actioned that meets workforce requirements and is delivering Brent 2020 priorities<br><br>• The council has adopted new ways of working allowing more workforce flexibility, staff engagement and effective utilisation of the Civic Centre to generate income<br><br>• CMT will be able to make strategic decisions about management tiers and spans of control based on the analysis |

| OUTCOME | WHAT WE ARE GOING TO DO | HOW WE WILL KNOW WE HAVE SUCCEEDED |
|---|---|---|
| P1.2 Brent's young people see council work experience, apprenticeships and graduate schemes as a high quality and prestigious path to successful careers, and for these opportunities to be available across all areas of council work | The provision of clear pathways to employment for our borough's young people is an opportunity for us to engage with our diverse communities and encourage their involvement whilst harnessing fresh perspectives, fresh ideas and skillsets:<br><br>1. Apprentices and graduates to be recognised and considered as high potential and provided with development. Working with employment and skills to ensure pathways for apprenticeships for local residents are available either in the council or within Brent<br>2. Apprenticeships and graduate traineeships focused on exactly the skills, knowledge and behaviours that are required of the workforce of the future supported by funding from the apprenticeship levy<br>3. We will increase the proportion of work experience, apprentice and training opportunities forming the council's pathways to employment<br>5. We will devise a support and development package for our care leavers | • 50% of our graduates and apprentices will be employed by the council or elsewhere in Brent at the end of their training<br>• 75% of graduates and apprentices will be employed locally at the end of their training<br>• By 2020 we will meet or exceed the government's apprenticeship requirements for employers<br>• Apprentices report that their apprenticeships have increased their productivity and prospects<br><br>We will have succeeded when:<br>• The council is recognised as an employer with the highest quality apprenticeship and graduate trainee programme<br>• All care leavers will have had the opportunity for skills development and successful pathways into either further education or employment |
| P1.3 We will use our "Managing Potential Strategy" to identify our best potential across our diverse workforce and ensure staff are given the opportunity to flourish in a way that supports and drives achievement of the council's priorities | We will actively engage in the development of our high potential staff in order to continue to attract and retain the skills and capabilities that are needed to deliver our priorities:<br><br>1. Identify potential in a systematic way<br>2. Link managing potential activities to other learning and development initiatives including informal and formal learning interventions<br>3. Develop managers and leaders to positively impact on retaining our most talented staff and those with greatest potential<br>4. Make proactive workforce plans that make space for those with potential to grow, that identify mission critical roles and ensure an on-going supply of mission critical skills<br>5. Ensure that systems and processes facilitate the extraction of valid, reliable and robust data to evaluate schemes and ensure investment is meeting organisational needs<br>6. To identify hard to fill posts and talented individuals; and develop a process for promoting from within the organisation | • By 2020 high potentials will have a tailored development plan which is deliverable<br>• By 2020 we will continue to appoint and promote the best people for the job, assisted by processes for promoting within the organisation<br>• By 2020 there will be an improved perception that the council has an improved organisational capacity, a reduction in skills shortages and improved opportunities for career development<br><br>We will have succeeded when:<br>• The council has a reputation amongst its peers and with its partners as an innovative workplace with a positive culture and competitive terms and conditions |

| OUTCOME | WHAT WE ARE GOING TO DO | HOW WE WILL KNOW WE HAVE SUCCEEDED |
|---|---|---|
| P1.4 We will review our recruitment processes to ensure we are attracting the best people across the community and recruiting for the right behaviour and value mind-set | We will seek to enhance our reputation as an employer that lives its values through a programme of work allowing us to engage our staff in our mission and values from the outset:<br><br>1. Complete a full review of the recruitment service and process<br>2. Successfully on-board new colleagues through the provision of engaging and inspiring induction activities from the point of appointment to establishment in role<br>3. Monitor and report on the number and nature of employee relations issues across the council including employee complaints and employment tribunals and take appropriate action to remedy and reduce these<br>4. Target and implement interventions where appropriate to improve employee relations<br>5. Design and implement a learning programme that underpins the cultural change | • By 2020 the majority of staff will believe that the council is an employer that values staff contributions; there will be an increase in the proportion of positive employee comments<br>• By 2020 the majority staff will be participating in engagement activities; and all staff will be engaging in some of the activities<br>• By 2020 completion rates for induction modules will be at least 90% and all new colleagues attend corporate induction within 1 month of start<br>• By 2020 the majority of new staff will evaluate corporate and local induction as good, leading to improved retention across 12 months from start date<br><br>We will have succeeded when:<br>• Staff and partners speak positively and routinely about the values and culture of the council and residents report that the council acts on feedback |

# PRIORITY 2

## performance and development

| OUTCOME | WHAT WE ARE GOING TO DO | HOW WE WILL KNOW WE HAVE SUCCEEDED |
|---|---|---|
| P2.1 Brent will be a learning and high performing organisation where value is placed on the learning that stems from reflection on practice as well as collaborative learning through networks | Good performance and development are a clear expectation from an engaged and productive workforce. A critical building block on our path to developing a highly engaged workforce is getting performance and development activities right for our staff:<br><br>1. Review the performance and development processes so that that poor performance is consistently addressed and very good performance is properly recognised and celebrated<br>2. Provide support to all staff and managers to raise competencies in interpersonal awareness, meaningful conversations, giving and receiving feedback and development<br>3. Support the development of a culture of personal accountability through a series of learning interventions focused on proactivity, participation and personal influence<br>4. Improve organisational capability for development<br>5. Embed values and behaviours as a driver of great performance | • The majority of staff will report satisfaction with their development and development plans (90%)<br>• The majority of staff with report satisfaction with their appraisal discussions (90%)<br>• Brent has a strong culture of performance management and poor performance is dealt with effectively<br><br>We will have succeeded when:<br>• Staff acknowledge that their skills are appreciated and we have a committed and capable workforce who want to get things done |

# PRIORITY 3

## leadership and management development

| OUTCOME | WHAT WE ARE GOING TO DO | HOW WE WILL KNOW WE HAVE SUCCEEDED |
|---|---|---|
| P3.1 Our leaders and managers can manage people in an effective and inclusive way, that recognises potential, develops performance and role models our values | A culture which supports and involves staff requires a strong strategic narrative, engaging managers who encourage and act on feedback and organisational values that are demonstrably part of organisational life. Leadership and management capability is critical to achieving the right cultural outcomes:<br><br>1. We will clearly define the role of the manager and identify and embed leadership and management behaviours within the organisation<br>2. We will develop and implement a new leadership offer within our organisation to:<br><br>• Develop leader and manager capability to help employees understand why change is happening, what it means for them and how they can model expected behaviours at work<br>• Help leaders and managers to effectively manage performance across the organisation<br>• Support managers in communicating better with their teams, stakeholders and customers<br>• Provide managers and leaders with networking opportunities to share experience and expertise and get routine advice from colleagues<br>• We will develop a clear set of management standards to ensure that managers are adopting a consistent approach to managing staff, resources and budgets<br>• Develop an introduction to management programme for non-line managers | • By 2020 performance appraisals will accurately reflect performance standards and include a SMART development plan<br>• By 2020 there will be noticeable improvement in positive feedback that managers are living the council's values<br>• By 2020 the majority of staff will believe that the council is an employer that values staff contributions; there will be a reduction in the proportion of employee complaints<br>• Skills in dealing with service improvement and change and staff motivation and performance improvement are consistently higher<br>• Employees are confident and capable to engage in, get involved in and contribute to making change happen and creativity is more abundant<br><br>We will have succeeded when:<br>• Staff and partners speak positively and routinely about the values and culture of the council and Brent manages change effectively<br>• The majority of staff are clear about their responsibilities; are not hampered in their work and feel trusted and accountable for their actions |

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P3.2 Workforce engagement will rise and cultural development will prosper as all staff are supported to develop and contribute through a consistently applied coaching approach to supporting others

A coaching approach allows personal leadership to flourish and encourages dispersed leadership in action across and throughout the whole workforce:

1. Provide a sustainable, credible, internal coach/coach training offer which delivers value for money and reduces costs of 3rd party provision
2. Embed internal and external mentoring as an accepted and valued tool for personal development in support of leadership which extends beyond the management hierarchy
3. Develop manager capability to ensure employees understand the council's vision and values and see the connection with their own team and role

- By 2020 there will be a reduction in external coach training spend
- The majority of staff will report positive feedback relating to appraisal discussions
- An active coaching network will be established internally
- By 2020 there will be increased usage of the My Mentor programme

We will have succeeded when:

- Staff and partners recognise the council as having a climate of listening and feedback, up, down and across the organisation

# PRIORITY 4

## engagement, reward and well-being

| OUTCOME | WHAT WE ARE GOING TO DO | HOW WE WILL KNOW WE HAVE SUCCEEDED |
|---|---|---|
| P4.1 Brent Council continues to promote an open, inclusive and fair culture aligned to Brent's values and all employees have opportunities to develop | We will seek the contributions of all our diverse staff by ensuring we do all that we can to maximise their potential, and proactively engage in their development:<br><br>1. To develop and implement a 'fit for purpose' learning and organisational development plan in response to skills and capacity shortages, to support staff performance and meet the needs of emerging talent<br>2. Help managers to apply strong general management practice such a performance management, appraisal, feedback, project management and learning interventions<br>3. Develop organisational awareness of bias in order to design negative bias out of all decisions related to talent from recruitment and selection, to appraisal and development | • The performance of all staff will be evaluated against their potential<br>• All staff will have access to development opportunities and be encouraged to take on additional responsibilities where possible<br><br>We will have succeeded when:<br>• Our workforce feel psychologically safe to fully participate in organisational life without fear or favour, and trust that they will receive support if they ask for it |

| OUTCOME | WHAT WE ARE GOING TO DO | HOW WE WILL KNOW WE HAVE SUCCEEDED |
|---|---|---|
| P4.2 Staff and potential staff will understand the full range of benefits and support available to them | We will seek to ensure the well-being of our staff through engaging and involving them in dialogue about their well-being in a variety of ways. We will make prospective employees excited about coming to Brent Council as an employer of choice.<br><br>1. We will review pay structures and our evaluation schemes to ensure we can attract and retain people especially in hard to recruit and key roles<br>2. We will review staff rewards and benefits to ensure they support a culture of personal responsibility, demonstrating initiative and delivering outcomes aligned to strategic priorities<br>3. Deliver a programme of regular staff feedback (pulse surveys) to measure staff understanding and engagement in the corporate offer<br>4. Promote health and well-being activities for our staff<br>5. Review reasons for sickness absence and target interventions if any areas of concern are identified<br>6. Introduction of staff awards | • By 2020 90% of staff will feel that the council values employee well-being<br>• By 2020 we will be confident that 90-100% of sickness absence is being recorded by managers; and sickness absence will be less than 5.5 days per FTE per year<br>• By 2020 80% of staff will feel that they are paid competitively and that they have a good work-life balance<br>• By 2020 the majority of staff will report satisfaction with their development plan<br>• By 2020 reward and recognition activities will be embedded as part of organisational life<br><br>We will have succeeded when:<br>• The majority of staff are ambassadors for working at Brent Council and take responsibility for their own health and well-being using support available through the council and its partners |
| P4.3 To ensure the council has a representative workforce and at least 80% of the same representation exists in the senior management cohort. | To deliver our outcomes we need to understand the diverse needs of our communities, residents and service users. To build trusting and helpful relationships we need to reflect the communities we serve. In order to innovate we need ideas generated from a multitude of different skills, learning, life experience and attitudes. Our leadership reflects the diversity of our workforce.<br><br>1. Establish and take positive steps to ensure that our organisational diversity profile reflects our borough diversity profile<br>2. Participate in external accreditation measures (e.g. Stonewall Index; Timewise) to encourage employee participation and benchmark our progress<br>3. Sponsor and support employee participation in diversity networking | • We will have by 2020 a minimum of 95% staff disclosure (relating to staff diversity data)<br>• By 2020 the number of disabled applicants to the council will be proportionate to the estimated economically active disabled people within the borough<br>• By 2020 for the council to be in the Stonewall top 100 employers / Best 100 employers for race<br><br>We will have succeeded when:<br>• Our workforce represents the working age community we serve at all levels +/- 20% and<br>• We have 80% of staff choosing to disclose all of their protected characteristics |

| OUTCOME | WHAT WE ARE GOING TO DO | HOW WE WILL KNOW WE HAVE SUCCEEDED |
|---|---|---|
| | 4. To ensure all council employees are paid at least the London Living Wage; and ensure Equal Pay within the council<br>5. To participate in external fora (e.g. ENEI, London councils, Business in the community); and accreditation measures (e.g. Timewise, disability confidence) to encourage employee participation and benchmark our progress<br>6. To further embed Valuing Diversity into everyday organisational life through the establishment of a beyond-compliance diversity learning | • We will be perceived by staff to be an equal opportunities employer<br>• We will be a Timewise accredited organisation<br>• We will have a 10% improvement from the 2016 baseline in the proportion of men and women adopting flexible working patterns at all levels of the organisation<br><br>We will have succeeded when:<br>• We have the same representation of women, BAME and disabled staff in senior management roles as exists within the workforce +/- 20% and our customers report that their voice is being heard and our services are meeting need in the right way |
| P4.4 To ensure the council is an employer of choice for Brent's culturally diverse communities | Engaged employees are productive employees. We need to make sure we continue to be attractive to potential employees through the ways we support, encourage, manage and develop our existing workforce:<br><br>1. To establish key actions to address under representation of certain groups applying for the council's training and employment opportunities<br>2. To systematically review HR metrics relating to the diversity profile of employees included in employee relations and performance management procedures.<br>3. To review and improve our processes where necessary for attracting under represented communities to work or train for the council | • We will continue to recruit and promote the best people for the job; and by 2020 all divisions will have a diversity profile that meets our success criteria<br>• Council staff and community groups work together to reap the benefits of Brent's cultural diversity<br><br>We will have succeeded when:<br>• The protected characteristics of staff are represented proportionately in employee relations and performance management procedures |

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# How are you?

Brent staff wellbeing survey – Headlines

**Topline results (Draft v1.0)**

December 2020

**Brent**

BUILDING A
BETTER BRENT

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# Headlines

- **Top concerns:** Concerns about health and workload top the list of the most pressing concerns right now: around four in ten staff were concerned about their physical and mental health (41% and 39%), and over one third (36%) were concerned about workload– up from the 24% recorded in the previous survey (in May).

- **Wellbeing:** For most, physical health, mental health, sleep and workload, have either stayed the same, or worsened, since the March lockdown, though some report improvements in these areas (14-20%). Views about work-life balance remain mixed: almost half (47%) of those surveyed said the balance between work and home had got better while 30% said it had got worse. Almost half (46%) of those surveyed said their workload had got worse, significantly higher than the 31% recorded in the previous survey.

- **How you feel about work:** In general, views about most aspects of work have remained positive: there were high agreement ratings across most areas including: pride in working for the council; line management contact and support; and effective team working. However, the percentage of staff who said they felt connected with their team declined from 80% to 73%. The percentage who felt supported in their mental health by the organisation also dropped from 63% to 55%.

- **Working from home:** For most, working from home (WfH) has been a positive experience: the majority felt they had the technical equipment they needed and that virtual tools were helping them be effective. However, aspects of WfH remain challenging for some: 26% said they often felt isolated and 23% said they didn't feel able to take sufficient breaks, up from 16% in May. More positively, 80% of staff now agree they have adequate office equipment to WfH - up from just 58% in May. This follows the council's office equipment initiative which was rolled out in the Summer.

# Headlines

- **WfH benefits:** When asked to rate the benefits of maintaining (or increasing) levels of WfH in the future – top of the list was not having to travel to work (75%), followed by a better work-life balance (57%). Other benefits included: saving money, increased productivity, the ability to have quiet time, and the reduced environmental impact (38-46%). These rankings were similar to those recorded in May.

- **WfH challenges:** Problems maintaining a work-life balance (ie finding it difficult to switch off) was the top challenge for staff when working from home: 38% said this was a problem, up from 32% in May. This was closely followed by feeling disconnected from the team – an issue for 36% of staff. Over one quarter said feeling lonely or isolated was a challenge while one third said they didn't see any challenges at all. Lack of office equipment was a problem for just 12% of staff, much lower than the 36% recorded back in May. Written comments highlighted that many staff were appreciative of the equipment support provided by the council in recent months.

- **Flexible working**: The majority of staff (83%) said they were interested in working more flexibly in the future in terms of hours/work patterns. Also, more than half said they would like to continue WfH – either most of the time (38%) or every day (15%), and a further 30% said a 50/50 split would suit. However, there was recognition that WfH wasn't for everyone, and that face to face interaction was important. Many miss the banter and social interaction in the workplace.

- **Returning to work**: Since the first lockdown in March, almost one quarter (24%) of staff had been back to their workplace regularly, around half had been back occasionally (49%) and the remaining 27% had not been back at all.

**Brent**

# Headlines

- **Returning to work**: On returning, the majority felt the workplace was clean and that they had the equipment they needed (87%). The biggest area of concern was travelling to work: only 56% agreed they felt safe while travelling. A significant minority (10%) indicated they were not able to practise social distancing and the same percentage said they did not feel safe at work.

- **Staying connected:** Staff remain very positive about the effectiveness of communications during lockdown: 92% felt communications were keeping them informed and up to date – up 4 points since May. The majority (81%) felt their managers were keeping them updated about what was going on. Views were a bit more mixed about social and informal interaction: 73% agreed they had regular social interaction with their colleagues, while one in eight (12%) disagreed.

- **Borough of Culture:** One in five (21%) staff said they had been involved in the London Borough of Culture (LBOC) in some capacity. Of this group, over half had attended events and/or used the website, and around 18% had helped organise or publicise activities.

- **LBOC impacts**: Around two thirds said their involvement in LBOC had had a positive impact on them, or the council, while others described the impacts as 'mixed' or said they didn't know. Written comments suggest that some of the ambivalence expressed might reflect the fact the pandemic had limited the potential reach of the event, and affected the level / nature of staff involvement.

**Brent**

# Survey background

- In May 2020, the council ran a staff wellbeing survey to take a 'pulse check' of how staff were coping during the Covid-19 lockdown. Seven months on, the survey has been repeated to explore the longer term impacts of the pandemic on wellbeing, and to assess what has changed.

- The survey took place during early December (1st-11th) and explored four themes:

  - Wellbeing
  - Work
  - Feeling connected
  - London Borough of Culture (LBOC)

- The outputs will continue to inform actions to support staff going forward. The LBOC questions were added to this survey to inform the evaluation of the programme.

- The survey was carried out online, but was supplemented with a small postal survey of estate-based staff. In total, 1,343 responses received, a response rate of 48%.

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**Survey sample**

**1,343**

respondents

**Response rate**

**48%**

**By directorate**

| Directorate | Response rate |
|---|---|
| Chief Executive's Department | 48% |
| Children and Young People | 40% |
| Community Wellbeing | 42% |
| Customer and Digital Services | 59% |
| Regeneration and Environment | 51% |
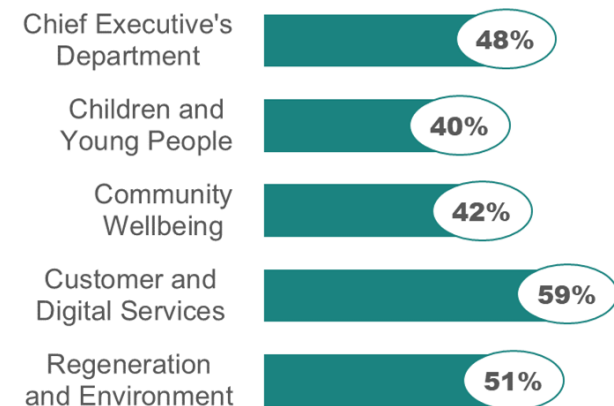
# Wellbeing: Top concerns

- Concerns about health and workload top the list of the most pressing concerns: around four in ten staff were concerned about their physical and mental health (41% and 39%), and more than one third were concerned about workload (36%).

- A similar proportion (36%) were concerned about their exposure to Covid-19 and one third were concerned about the health and wellbeing of others.

- Other worries included: balancing work with caring responsibilities, productivity, finances and feeling isolated.

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**Think about how you're feeling today. What are your top three concerns right now?**

| | |
|---|---|
| My physical health & wellbeing | 41% |
| My mental health & wellbeing | 39% |
| My workload | 36% |
| My exposure to COVID-19 | 36% |
| The health & wellbeing of others | 33% |
| Balancing work with caring responsibilities | 22% |
| My productivity | 17% |
| My financial situation | 16% |
| Feeling isolated | 14% |
| Nothing | 5% |
| Other | 4% |

■ % respondents who chose option
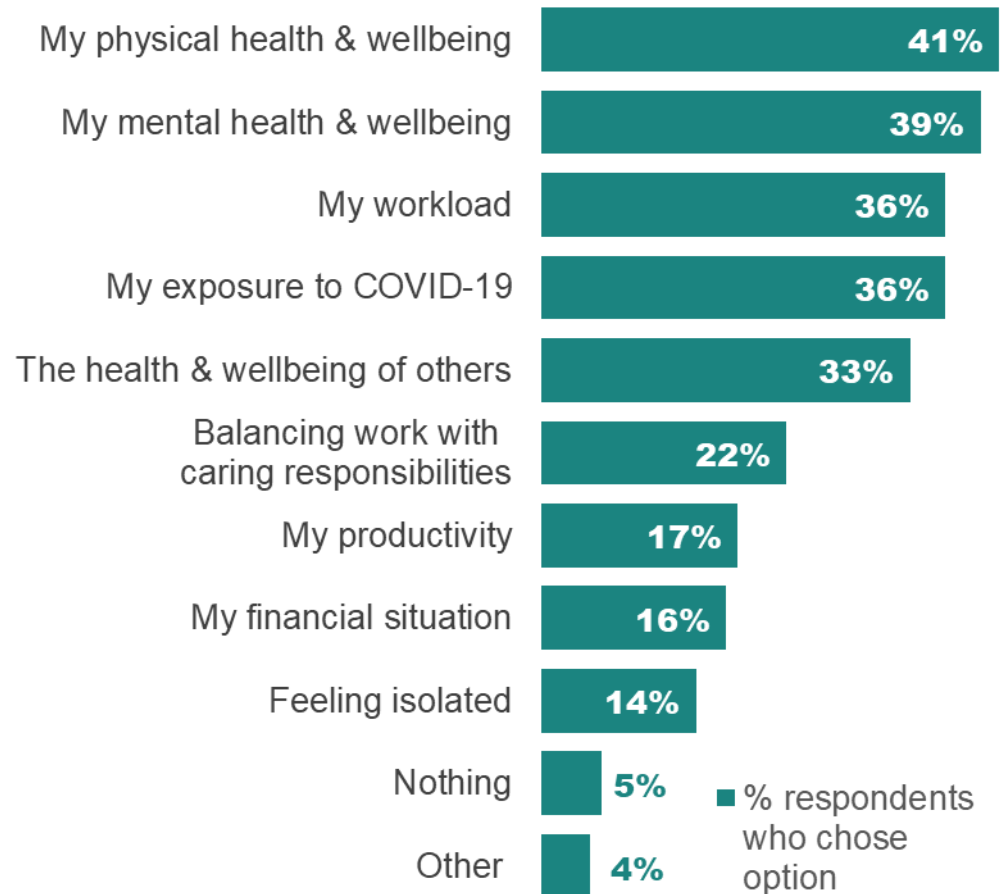
# Top concerns – changes since May

The biggest change since May relates to concern about workload: 36% of staff now cite this a top concern, up from 24% previously. Staff were also more concerned about mental health (39%, up from 33% in May), and a little more worried about finances. Conversely, levels of concern about exposure to Covid, or the health and wellbeing of others, were lower than before.

**Think about how you're feeling today. What are your top three concerns right now?**
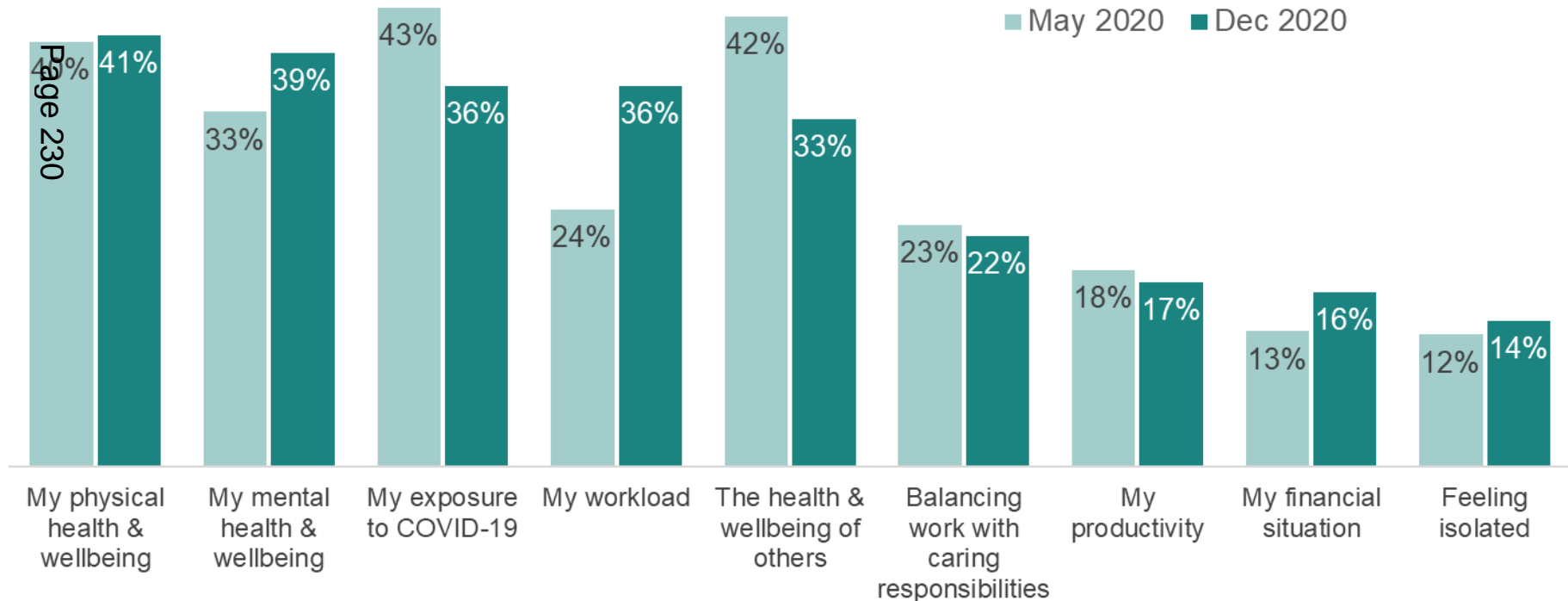


Note: This question was changed slightly between the two surveys: one answer option (home schooling) was dropped from the December survey – 14% chose this option in the May survey.

# Your wellbeing

For most, physical health, mental health, sleep and workload has either stayed the same or worsened since the March lockdown, though some report improvements in these areas (14-20%). Views about work-life balance are more mixed: almost half (47%) say the balance between work and home has got better since March, while 30% say it has got worse.

**To what extent do you think the following has changed since the COVID-19 lockdown began back in March?**

| | ■ % got a lot better | ■ % got a little better | ■ % about the same | ■ % got a little worse | ■ % got a lot worse | ■ % prefer not to say | % **better** | % **worse** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| The balance between my work and my home life | 26 | 21 | 21 | 19 | 11 | | 47% | 30% |
| My physical health | 8 | 12 | 37 | 33 | 8 | | 20% | 41% |
| My sleeping patterns | 10 | 9 | 37 | 28 | 14 | | 19% | 42% |
| My mental health | 7 | 9 | 45 | 29 | 7 | | 16% | 37% |
| My workload | 6 | 8 | 38 | 26 | 19 | | 14% | 46% |

**Brent**

Sample base: 1,343 respondents. Percentages are rounded to the nearest percentage point, so may not always sum exactly to 100, or to the summary totals shown.

# Your wellbeing – changes

- Across the five wellbeing areas, views about workload are particularly negative: 46% of staff said workload had got a little or a lot worse since March – up from 31% of staff in the May survey. The percentage who said workload had got a lot worse almost doubled between May and December (from 10% to 19% of staff).

- Views were also a bit more negative in relation to work-life balance: the percentage who said things had got worse rose from 26% to 30%, while the percentage who said things had got better fell from 54% to 47%.

To what extent do you think the following has changed since the COVID-19 lockdown began back in March?



% who said things had got a little, or a lot, worse
■ May-20 ■ Dec-20

| | The balance between my work and my home life | My physical health | My sleeping patterns | My mental health | My workload |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| May-20 | 26 | 39 | 41 | 34 | 31 |
| Dec-20 | 30 | 41 | 42 | 37 | 46 |

**Brent**

Sample base: 1,343 (December) and 1,477 (May). Percentages are rounded to the nearest percentage point.
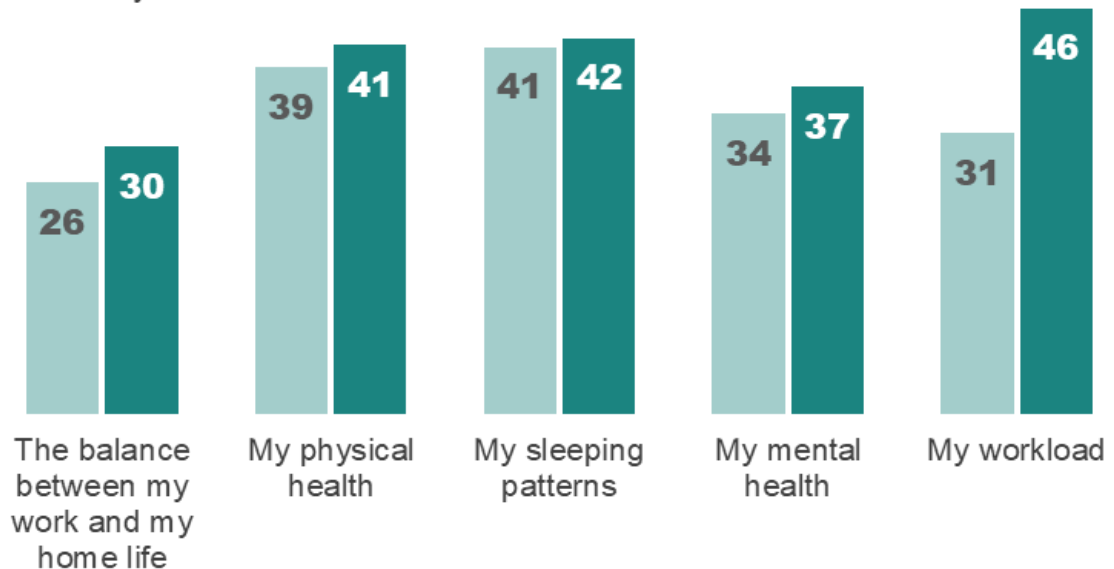
# Wellbeing: comments – key themes

**Do you have any suggestions about how the council could help support your wellbeing?**
661 comments

## Wellbeing – what has gone well
- Many felt the council had done a good job of supporting staff wellbeing during this time
- Many found the working from home experience positive, and helpful, in terms of their wellbeing
- There was strong support for more flexible working patterns going forward to help staff balance home and work

## Workload and staffing pressures
- Many reported high/increasing workloads and inadequate levels of staffing
- Staff report feeling pressured, stressed, and at times, overwhelmed
- Balancing normal work alongside new Covid-related work (and guidance) has been a challenge
- Some feel expectations and targets are unrealistic, and that work could be better prioritised / managed at this time

## Other challenges
- Many reported finding it difficult to take regular breaks, especially while working remotely
- Some found it difficult to switch off and were working long hours, while others felt pressure to be always available
- Many are missing face to face interaction with colleagues, particularly social and informal interaction
- Suggested the council should do more to encourage staff to take breaks and to discourage over-working

## Mental and physical wellbeing
- Staff made a wide range of suggestions about what the council could do to promote mental wellbeing. These included: workshops, advice, counselling, group talks, wellbeing checks and buddy schemes.
- Many were aware they should be doing more exercise and would welcome support. Suggestions included: virtual sessions, advice, help with gym memberships etc
- Front-line staff highlighted the importance of PPE and enforcement of social distancing as key issues for physical wellbeing, as well as ensuring access to required facilities / equipment (eg washrooms)

# Wellbeing: some of your comments...

**Do you have any suggestions about how the council could help support your wellbeing?**
661 comments

Our team has had cuts which has resulted in an increase in workload. Two officers now do what used to be done by six officers…at times it does get overwhelming

I think Brent has done a very good job of supporting its staff - and reacted well to the evolving situation

Encourage the managers to stop normalizing being stressed due to high workload. It is a real concern

To understand stress levels of working with a whole range of children and adults who are directly impacted by the pandemic and the expectations of the support we can offer

Flexible working has been brilliant since lockdown. I am more productive as I now use traveling time to get work done

The reduction in commuting has really impacted positively on my health and well being

Would be nice to maybe have more social opportunities on Teams to meet colleagues

To promote platform for daily virtual fitness

Not holding meetings during typical breaks for lunch. Sometimes they are back to back, and you don't get a break until the end of the day

Ensure everyone wears PPE and maintains social distancing

I feel under pressure when I receive emails from my line manager in the evenings and weekends to respond there and then. It feels as if we should always be on call

Maybe have a message popping up on the screen telling us to have a break - get up, move around, stretch...

When the budget is decreasing and staff are supposed to do more and more, staff get physically and emotionally tired and drained

Working from home has made the working day longer and it has been difficult to just switch off from the day job as there is so much that needs to be done

just checking about our health and wellbeing more often

**Brent**

# Work – your views

Views about work were relatively positive: there were high agreement ratings across most areas: pride in working for the council; line management contact and support; and effective team working. However, one in eight did not feel connected with their team, and one in ten felt less effective in their job now than before. There was significant ambivalence around whether people feel supported by the council in terms of their mental health and wellbeing: 32% neither agreed nor disagreed, while 13% felt unsupported.

**To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your work?**



| Statement | % strongly agree | % agree | % neither | % disagree | % strongly disagree | % agree | % disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I am in regular contact with my line manager | 45 | 43 | 8 | 3 | | 88% | 4% |
| I am proud to work for Brent Council during the COVID-19 crisis | 49 | 39 | 11 | | | 87% | 2% |
| I am still able to effectively work as part of a team | 39 | 47 | 9 | 5 | | 86% | 5% |
| I feel supported by my line manager | 38 | 42 | 12 | 5 | | 81% | 7% |
| Overall, I feel I am working just as effectively in my job now, as before COVID-19 | 40 | 38 | 13 | 9 | | 77% | 10% |
| I feel connected with my team and colleagues | 27 | 46 | 15 | 11 | | 73% | 12% |
| I feel generally supported in my mental health and wellbeing by the organisation | 18 | 37 | 32 | 10 | | 55% | 13% |

Sample base: 1,335-1,338 (varies by question). Percentages are rounded to the nearest percentage point, so may not always sum exactly to 100, or to the summary totals shown.

**Brent**

# Views about work - changes

Views about different aspects of work were quite similar to views expressed in the May survey with two exceptions: views about feeling connected and views about mental health support. The percentage of staff who felt connected with their team and colleagues fell from 80% to 73%, while the percentage who agreed they felt supported in their mental health by the organisation fell from 63% to 55%.

**To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your work?**



% agree (strongly agree / agree)  ■ May 2020  ■ Dec 2020

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| | May 2020 | Dec 2020 |
|---|---|---|
| I am in regular contact with my line manager | 89 | 88 |
| I am proud to work for Brent Council during the COVID-19 crisis | 89 | 87 |
| I am still able to effectively work as part of a team | 87 | 86 |
| I feel supported by my line manager | 82 | 81 |
| Overall, I feel I am working just as effectively in my job now, as before COVID-19 | 75 | 77 |
| I feel connected with my team and colleagues | 80 | 73 |
| I feel generally supported in my mental health and wellbeing by the organisation | 63 | 55 |

# Working from home – your views

In general, views were quite positive about the working from home experience. The majority felt they had the technical equipment they needed and that virtual office tools were helping them be effective. However, the experience remains challenging for some: 26% said they often felt isolated; 23% felt unable to take sufficient breaks; 11% said they didn't have adequate office equipment; and 8% didn't have a suitable space to work effectively at home.

**Thinking about your recent experience working at home, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements below.**

| | % strongly agree | % agree | % neither | % disagree | % strongly disagree | % does not apply | % agree | % disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I have the technical equipment I need effectively work from home (eg laptop) | 51 | 41 | 4 | | | | 93% | 4% |
| I am adapting and building confidence with remote ways of working | 44 | 47 | 8 | | | | 91% | 1% |
| Using virtual office tools (eg MS Teams, 8x8) has helped me do my job effectively | 43 | 46 | 8 | | | | 89% | 3% |
| I have a suitable space at home where I can work effectively | 41 | 42 | 9 | 6 | | | 82% | 8% |
| I have adequate office equipment to work at home (e.g. desk and chair) | 37 | 43 | 9 | 8 | | | 80% | 11% |
| I feel able to take sufficient breaks when working at home | 22 | 38 | 17 | 15 | 8 | | 59% | 23% |
| I often feel isolated when working from home | 6 | 20 | 24 | 27 | 18 | 5 | 26% | 45% |
| Family pressures make it difficult to work from home | 11 | 18 | 31 | 21 | 16 | | 13% | 52% |

Sample base: 1,255 (respondents who had worked at home in the last 4 months). Percentages are rounded to the nearest percentage point, so may not always sum exactly to 100, or to the summary totals shown.

**Brent**

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# Working from home – changes

The most notable change since May was in relation to office equipment: 80% of staff agreed they had adequate office equipment, up from just 58% in May. This follows the council's office equipment initiative which ran over the Summer. Less positively, the percentage who felt able to take sufficient breaks when working from home, dropped to 59%, down from 70% in May.

**Thinking about your recent experience working at home, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements**

% agree (strongly agree / agree)

May 2020    Dec 2020



| Statement | May 2020 | Dec 2020 |
|---|---|---|
| I have the technical equipment I need to effectively work from home (eg laptop) | 90 | 93 |
| I am adapting & building confidence with remote ways of working | 89 | 91 |
| Using virtual office tools has helped me do my job effectively | 87 | 89 |
| I have a suitable space at home where I can work effectively | 78 | 82 |
| I have adequate office equipment to work at home (e.g. desk and chair) | 58 | 80 |
| I feel able to take sufficient breaks when working at home | 70 | 59 |
| Family pressures make it difficult to work from home | 17 | 13 |

**Brent**

Sample base: 1,255 (December) and 1,445 (May). Percentages are rounded to the nearest percentage point.

# Working from home: Benefits

When asked to rate the benefits of maintaining (or increasing) levels of WfH in the future – top of the list was not having to travel to work (75%), followed by a better work-life balance (57%) – mainly due to the extra time. Other benefits included: saving money, increased productivity, the ability to have quiet time and the reduced environmental impact (38-46%). The ranking of perceived benefits is broadly similar to that recorded in the last survey.

**What, if any, do you see as the key benefits of increasing, or maintaining, levels of working from home in the future?** Choose up to three



Legend: ■ May 2020  ■ Dec 2020

| Benefit | May 2020 | Dec 2020 |
|---|---|---|
| Reduced travel | 76% | 75% |
| Work-life balance improvement | 59% | 57% |
| Saving money | 42% | 46% |
| Increased productivity | 43% | 45% |
| Ability to have focused quiet time | 40% | 41% |
| Reduced environmental impact | 41% | 38% |
| Other comment | 4% | 4% |
| None – I don't see any benefits | 2% | 1% |

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Sample base: 1,255 (December) and 1,445 (May). Percentages are rounded to the nearest percentage point.

# Working from home: Challenges

The main challenges to more regular WfH were: problems maintaining a work-life balance and feeling disconnected from the team (cited by 38% and 36%). Over a quarter said feeling lonely or isolated was a concern. The biggest change since May was the sharp decline in the percentage who said lack of proper equipment was a challenge (from 36% to 12%) – as mentioned earlier, this is likely to reflect the roll out of the council's office equipment initiative. The percentage who were struggling to maintain work-life balance increased from 32% to 38%, though at the same time, the percentage who said they didn't see any challenges also rose (from 28% to 34%).

**What, if any, do you see as the main challenges to more regular working at home?**
Choose up to three



Legend: ■ May 2020  ■ Dec 2020

| Category | May 2020 | Dec 2020 |
|---|---|---|
| Problems maintaining work-life balance (ie difficult to switch off) | 32% | 38% |
| Feeling disconnected from my team | 34% | 36% |
| None – I don't see any challenges | 28% | 34% |
| Feeling lonely or isolated | 25% | 27% |
| Lack of proper equipment (eg desk, chair, screen) | 36% | 12% |
| Other | 12% | 10% |
| Too many distractions | 9% | 9% |
| No quiet space to work | 6% | 5% |
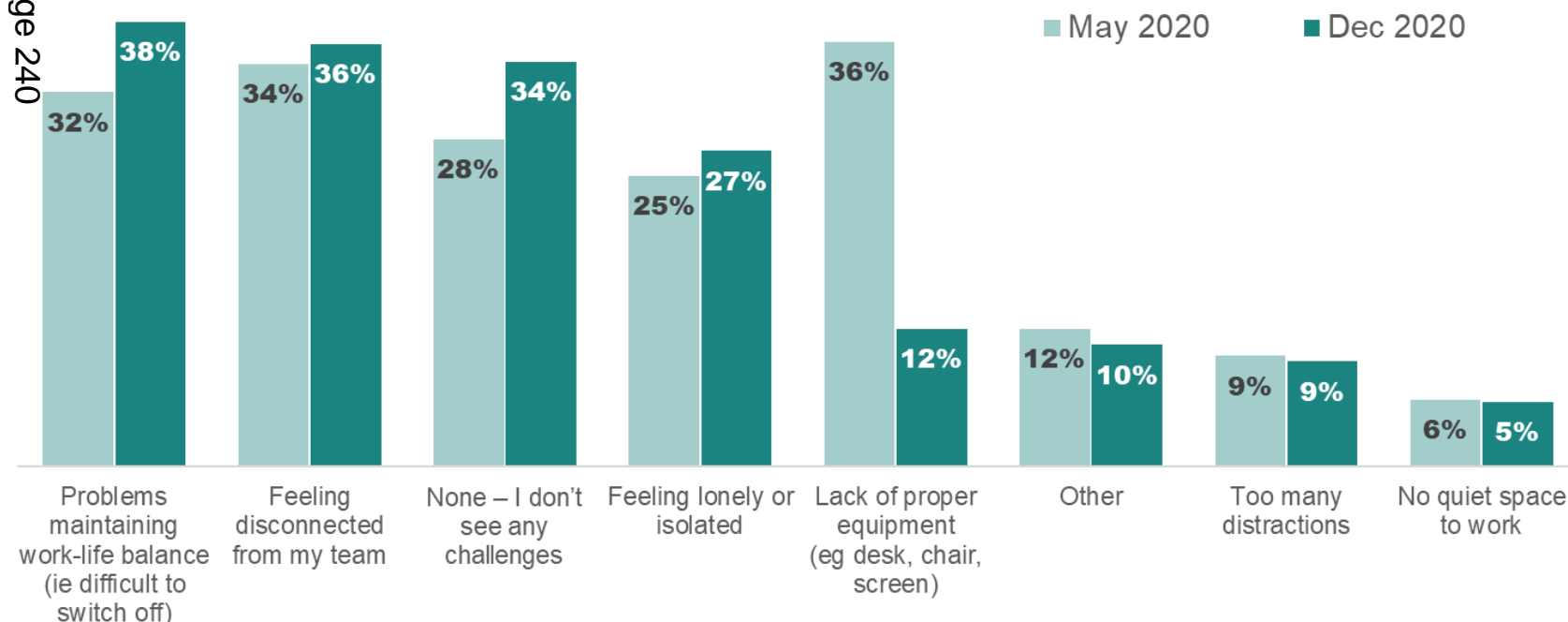
# WfH: comments – key themes

**Please tell us if there is anything more that could put in place to help you work at home effectively?** 456 comments

## What is going well
• Many were positive, and appreciative, about the flexibility to WfH during this time
• Many wanted to continue working in this way and there were requests for more flexible work patterns going forward
• At the same time, it is clear WfH doesn't suit everyone/all roles and that choice is important
• Positive comments about the council's support, with many saying thank you for the equipment / support provided

## Equipment and ICT
• Numerous requests for office furniture and ICT equipment – some staff do not have what they need
• Some reported delays in obtaining equipment. Also, number of requests for printing/mail services and stationery
• Some staff experiencing ICT problems: connection problems/slowness/crashing, cameras not working etc
• Importance of ICT stressed in terms of infrastructure and support – seen as essential to effective WfH
• Some staff requested help with bills (ie utility bills and internet costs)

## Switching off and breaks
• Many reported it was difficult to take regular breaks / or to remember to take breaks
• Others found it difficult to switch off and maintain separation/balance between home and work
• Suggested that council needs to be more proactive in promoting breaks / tackling the overworking culture
• Suggestions included: automatic computer alerts to remind people to take a break and meetings etiquette (eg avoiding lunchtimes and not booking meetings back to back)

## Team interaction
• Staff stressed the importance of regular virtual catch ups given the increased WfH
• Many missed the more informal/social catch ups that face to face contact provides. Suggestions included: virtual coffee catch ups, lunches and social events / activities as well as face to face 'team days' when restrictions lift

**Brent**

# WfH: some of your comments...

**Please tell us if there is anything more that could put in place to help you work at home effectively?** 456 comments

Reminders to staff to respect that you are still allowed breaks and may not always be immediately available. Microsoft Teams etiquette

I am very grateful for my screen, keyboard and chair, it has made such a difference

Encourage informal interactions via Teams

I was not able to order a chair in the first round, as I was a new member of staff, …would be useful to allow ad hoc orders of equipment

I have everything I need and the council have offered solution to others re office equipment, I think the support offered has been brilliant

I feel that working from home has given me more time to plan my day and work load with less distraction from being in an office

Recognised breaks without feeling guilty for getting a cup of tea or lunch

Improve very slow servers which slow us down considerably when working from home, help with poor wifi connections (make boosters available?)

Flexibility and understanding that working from home is extremely effective, through Covid and beyond. Understanding that working from home allows working parents to balance life far more effectively, leading to a more productive workforce

At the moment none as I have all the equipment. I just miss human contact

The experience of being present in the office is one that can't be replicated

Additional allowance/ financial support with gas, electricity and wi-fi bills

I think we could review our HR offer, with them being more pro-active sharing good practice about remote working

To have the ability to scan and print documents at home

Lower workload - this would make the experience less stressful and isolating

**Brent**

# Flexible working

- The majority of staff (93%) have worked from home in recent months and most were interested in working more flexibly in the future. More than half said they would like to continue WfH either most of the time (38%) or every day (15%), and a further 30% said a 50/50 split would suit.

- Since the first lockdown in March, almost one quarter of staff had been back to their workplace on a regular basis and around half had been back occasionally. The remaining 27% had not been back at all.

In the future, would you want to work a more flexible pattern (eg working outside 'core hours')?

| | |
|---|---|
| 46% | ■ Yes |
| 37% | ■ Maybe |
| 17% | ■ No |
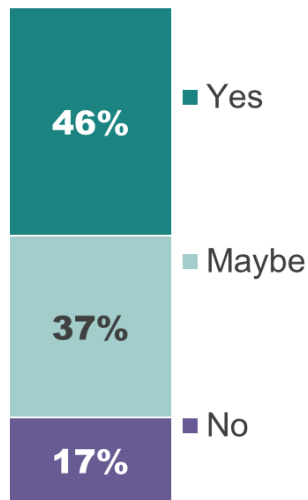
Thinking about the future, when the pandemic is under control and things are back to normal, how often would you ideally like to work from home?

| | |
|---|---|
| Every day | 15% |
| Most days | 38% |
| Half and half | 30% |
| Occasionally | 11% |
| Never | 1% |
| Doesn't apply to me | 6% |
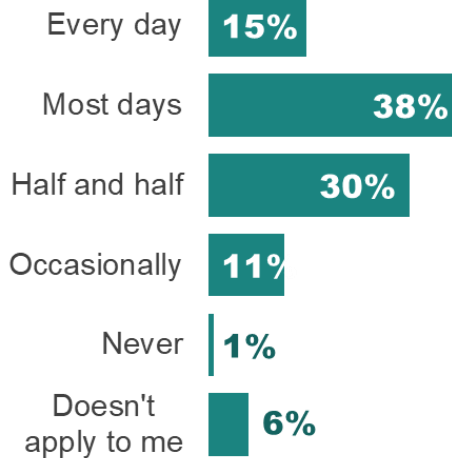
Since the first lockdown in March, have you been back to your normal place of work (ie the office or your usual workplace)?

| | |
|---|---|
| 24% | ■ Yes - regularly |
| 49% | ■ Yes - occasionally |
| 27% | ■ No - never |
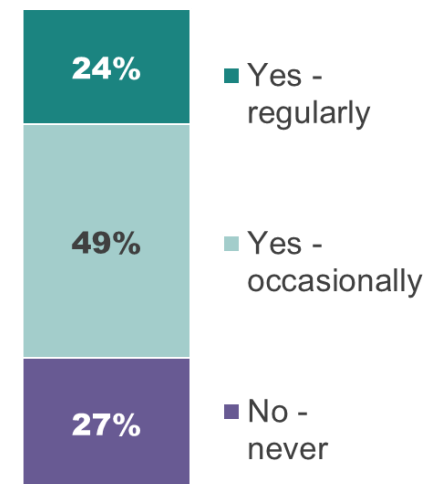
# Returning to the workplace – your experiences

On returning to the workplace, the majority of staff felt the workplace was clean, enjoyed seeing colleagues again and said they had the equipment they needed. The biggest area of concern was travelling to work – only 56% agreed they felt safe while travelling. One in ten said they did not feel safe at work and a similar proportion indicated they were not able to practise social distancing.

**Thinking about your recent experience in the workplace, overall, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements:**



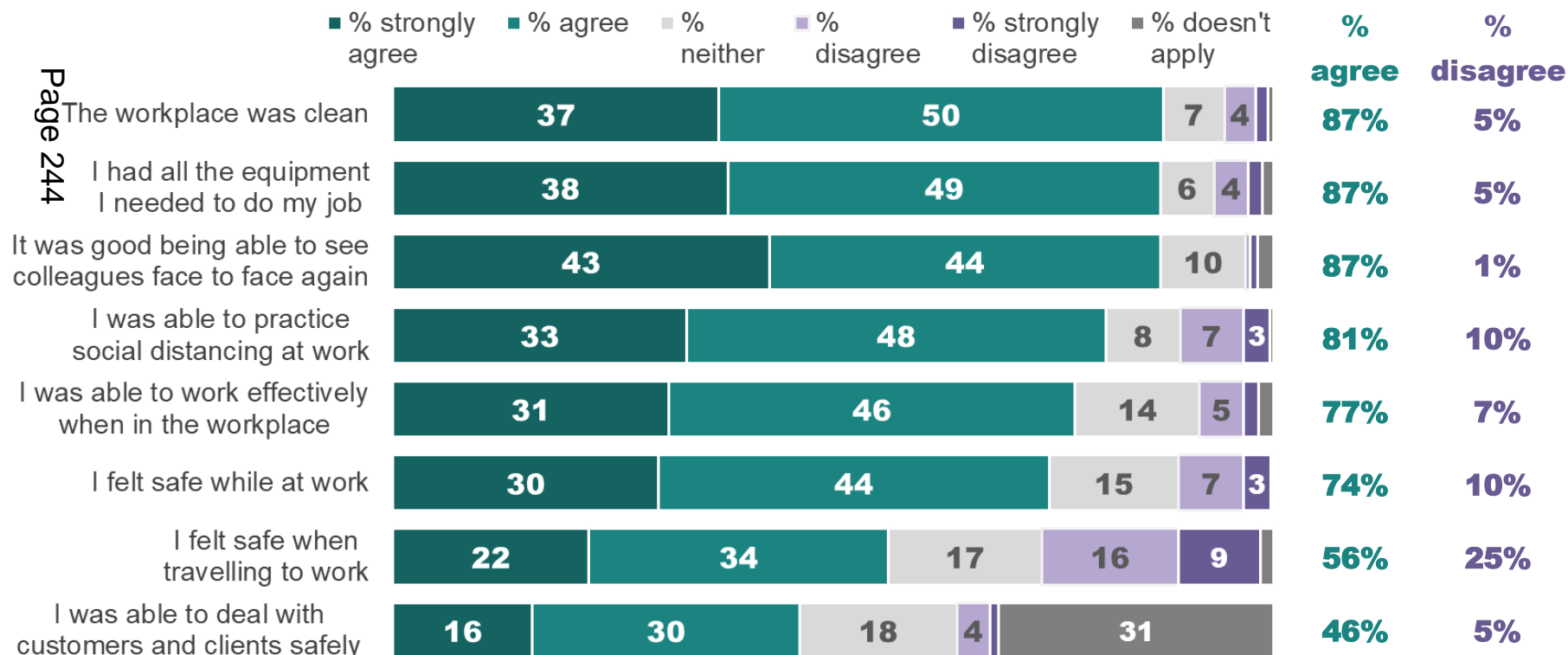| | % strongly agree | % agree | % neither | % disagree | % strongly disagree | % doesn't apply | % agree | % disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| The workplace was clean | 37 | 50 | 7 | 4 | | | 87% | 5% |
| I had all the equipment I needed to do my job | 38 | 49 | 6 | 4 | | | 87% | 5% |
| It was good being able to see colleagues face to face again | 43 | 44 | 10 | | | | 87% | 1% |
| I was able to practice social distancing at work | 33 | 48 | 8 | 7 | 3 | | 81% | 10% |
| I was able to work effectively when in the workplace | 31 | 46 | 14 | 5 | | | 77% | 7% |
| I felt safe while at work | 30 | 44 | 15 | 7 | 3 | | 74% | 10% |
| I felt safe when travelling to work | 22 | 34 | 17 | 16 | 9 | | 56% | 25% |
| I was able to deal with customers and clients safely | 16 | 30 | 18 | 4 | | 31 | 46% | 5% |

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**Brent**

Sample base: 970-973. Percentages are rounded to the nearest percentage point, so may not always sum exactly to 100, or to the summary totals shown.

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# Returning to the workplace: key themes

**Is there anything you would like to see changed, or improved, that would improve your experience in your workplace?** 392 comments

## The office space
- Many felt the council had done a good job in making the office space feel safe
- Numerous comments about ICT equipment not working or things missing (eg mice, cables, keyboards).
- Some anxiety about hot-desking and confusion about protocols / rules (ie who can/should sit where)
- Noise was an issue for some (with people on MS teams calls in office)
- Suggested, as more return, quiet /dedicated spaces may be required for working / confidential conversations
- Some found the civic centre quite cold while others wanted re-assurance that the ventilation systems were safe

## Safety
- Numerous requests for more hand-sanitisers / wipes to be made available at desks and, generally, at more locations
- Ensure that staff have easy / ready access to PPE and that there is consistent policy in place about use
- Importance of cleaning stressed, some felt more regular cleaning was needed especially in toilets and kitchens
- Staff did not always feel able to maintain social distancing - lack of space or due to other staff not adhering to the rules
- Concerns about ensuring safety when working face to face with customers and visiting clients. Some felt PPE was inadequate while others were concerned when having to deal with customers who refused to follow the rules
- Suggested that more was needed to implement rules, and to remind staff and customers to follow them

## Travelling / returning to workplace
- Significant concern about travelling on public transport
- Many staff felt safer driving to work and requested help with parking (eg free/subsidised parking for staff, permits)
- Suggested that staggered hours/flexible working could assist in avoiding busy times (both on transport and in office)
- Felt important that vulnerable staff were protected and not pressured to return to workplace

**Brent**

# Returning to workplace: some of your comments...

**Is there anything you would like to see changed or improved that would improve your experience in your workplace?** 392 comments

There have been quite a few monitors not working/with missing cables to connect to the laptops… I have had two experiences where I have had to try 4 or 5 different desks to find a working monitor

No. I think facilities have done an incredible job making the civic safe. It feels good to go back into the office occasionally

More signs displayed about social distancing, masks, washing hands and stating that customers must NOT enter the building if they have any potential covid symptoms

Having wipes available to clean work stations before and after use. Hand sanitiser dispenser on every floor would be good similar to the ones on the ground floor as you enter the civic

Electronic booking systems, zones for different staff groups to stop cross bubble infection risk

PPE available at the Civic Centre for pick up

Many colleagues at BCC don't take social distancing seriously, eg stand very close to you without a mask. Better communications about the importance of doing so

Workplace is safe. Its just customers. Some of them don't maintain distance or refuse to do Track and Trace and wear a mask and all that becomes challenging

staff that are using public transport should have flexibility to avoid busy hours

More private space as now most meetings are on Teams. This is difficult in the open office, particularly when it is so quiet

There was quite a lot of pressure from senior management to start to come in when the initial lockdown was eased, which made me feel uncomfortable, and seemed unnecessary as I felt I was working from home effectively

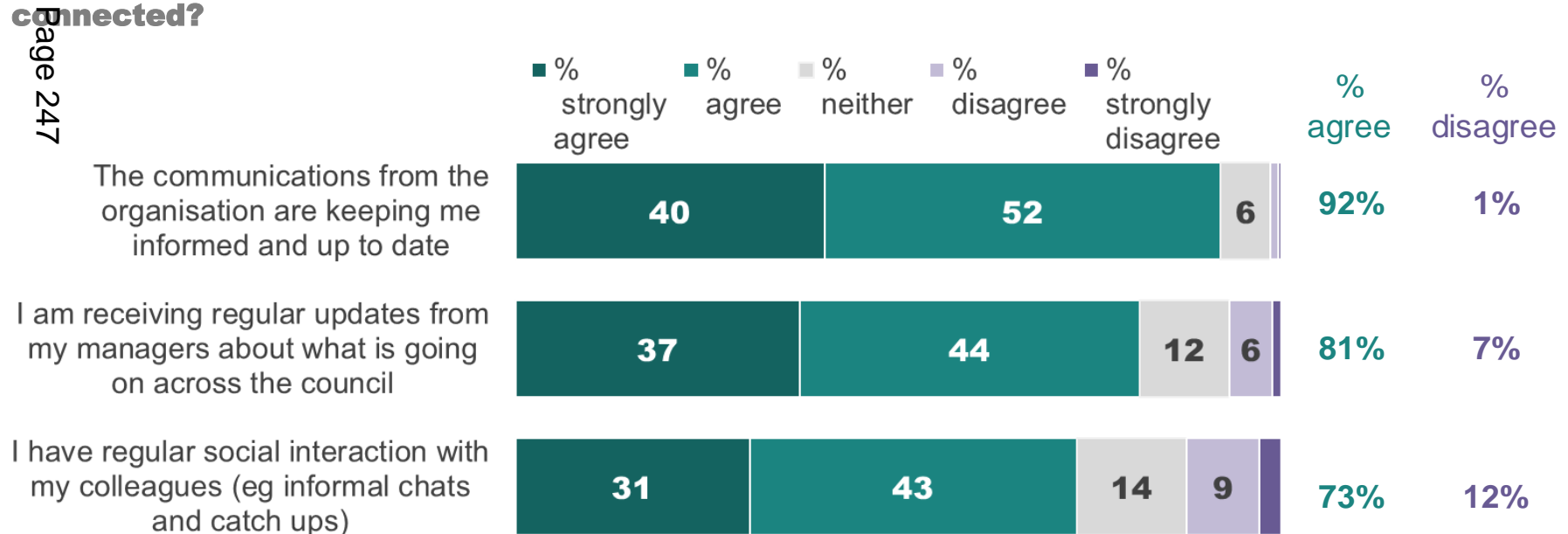Generally speaking Covid pandemic makes being in a shared office environment a concern

Each desk space formally separated and protected by screens to form a cubicle that allow for a protective barrier preventing contact with others. Employees still sit very closely together not adhering to social distancing

**Brent**

# Feeling connected

- Staff remain very positive about the effectiveness of communications during this period: 92% felt communications were keeping them informed and up to date – an increase of 4 points since May. The majority (81%) felt their managers were keeping them updated about what was going on – close to the level in May (79%).

- Views were a bit more mixed about social and informal interaction with their colleagues – 73% agreed they had regular social interaction (such as informal chats and catch ups), while one in eight (12%) disagreed.

**To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about feeling connected?**



| | % strongly agree | % agree | % neither | % disagree | % strongly disagree | % agree | % disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| The communications from the organisation are keeping me informed and up to date | 40 | 52 | 6 | | | 92% | 1% |
| I am receiving regular updates from my managers about what is going on across the council | 37 | 44 | 12 | 6 | | 81% | 7% |
| I have regular social interaction with my colleagues (eg informal chats and catch ups) | 31 | 43 | 14 | 9 | | 73% | 12% |

Sample base: 1,337-1,339. Percentages are rounded to the nearest percentage point, so may not always sum exactly to 100, or to the summary totals shown.

**Brent**

# Feeling connected: comments – key themes

**What else could be put in place to make you feel more connected and informed?**
463 comments

## Communications

- Staff very positive (and appreciative) about the range of corporate communications they are receiving
- In particular, the weekly videos, Q&A sessions and recent online events (eg CYP conference,) have proved popular
- Many said they felt connected and well informed, some even said more so than before
- Suggestions included: corporate videos from different locations, more departmental/service level communications, and more of a focus on updates about frontline services

## Team Interaction

- Staff generally positive about how virtual office tools have enabled them to stay connected while working remotely
- Strong emphasis on need for regular catch ups and team meetings while WfH
- While many said they have regular team meetings, and feel connected to their team, some others felt they needed more frequent meetings, and better support / contact from their managers
- Many were missing informal / social interactions with their colleagues, and others across the council
- Suggestions included more virtual social activities eg games, wellbeing / exercise sessions, coffee / lunch catch ups
- Many also emphasised that face to face meet ups / team days were important

## Other concerns and issues

- Staff made various suggestions about things they wanted more information about going forward. These included information about: the council's future priorities and plans, wellbeing initiatives and information about covid
- While most staff receive communications virtually, some staff requested updates via newsletters
- Some suggested that comms could be better streamlined – as there are a lot of different ways to receive information

**Brent**

# Feeling connected: some of your comments...

## What else could be put in place to make you feel more connected and informed?
463 comments

The internal comms has been excellent throughout. I know more about what's happening than when working in the office

Very happy with the weekly director's videos that make us feel valued - please more information further down the chain

More updates from managers about news from the department and organisation, which may not be covered in the corporate comms

I think Brent are doing well keeping staff informed

Feel that a lot of info/updates are geared to those still working from home and not acknowledging the people who have been back on the frontline

More opportunities to meet informally with colleagues, this can be difficult when we all working at max. capacity

A Team Lunch via Teams for a general catch up as unable to meet up during lockdown.  Some staff are new and have never met each other face to face

One option is could we do some officer level 'vlogging' so people can see more of what's happening day to day

We are regularly informed with the work related things. We need more team building time. I don't feel connected to my team
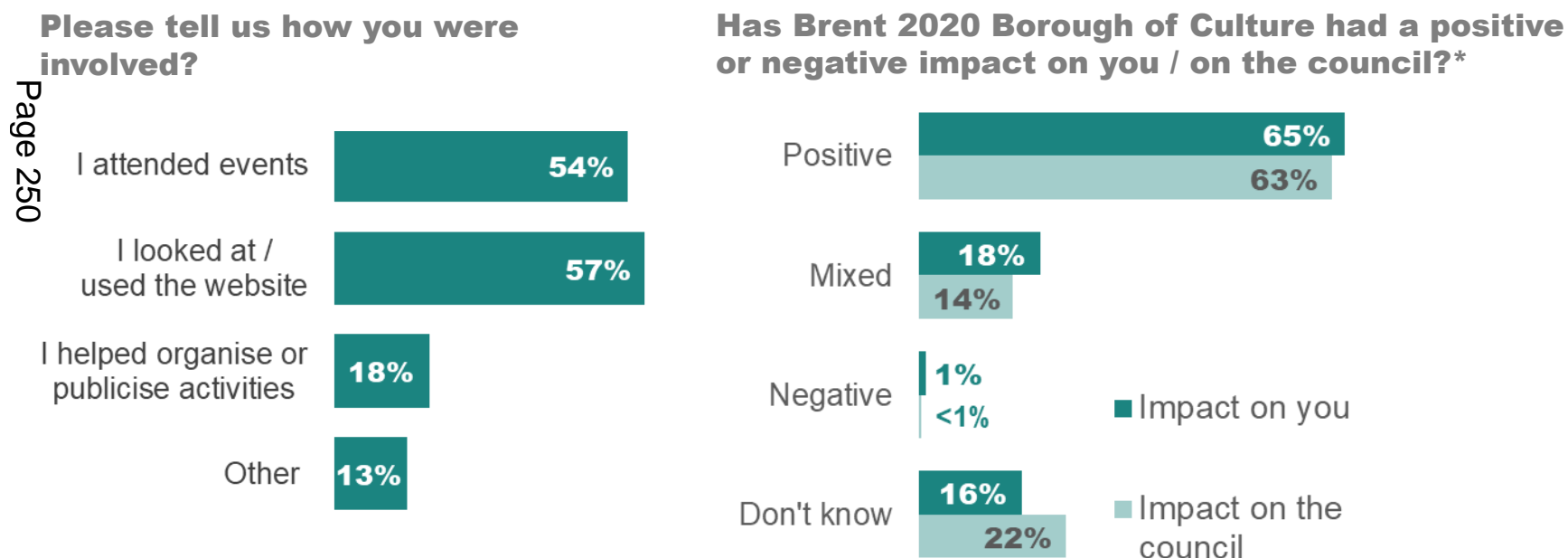
I feel very connected. My team keeps in contact as a team, and on an individual basis every week. We have become closer as a team.

There area a lot of information streams - email, Yammer, intranet. I think it needs to be streamlined rather than expanded.

All teams should have a day when that team comes into the office. This will be great to see colleagues face to face and also have dynamic team meetings with shared food/drinks

Brent

# Brent 2020 – London Borough of Culture

One in five (21%) staff said they had been involved in the London Borough of Culture (BOC) in some way. Two thirds said their involvement had had a positive impact on them, while 18% described their views as mixed and 16% said they didn't know. When asked about impacts on the council, views followed a broadly similar pattern. Written comments suggest some of the ambivalence expressed might reflect the fact the pandemic had limited the potential reach of the event and affected the level/nature of staff involvement.

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**Please tell us how you were involved?**

| | |
|---|---|
| I attended events | 54% |
| I looked at / used the website | 57% |
| I helped organise or publicise activities | 18% |
| Other | 13% |

**Has Brent 2020 Borough of Culture had a positive or negative impact on you / on the council?***

| | Impact on you | Impact on the council |
|---|---|---|
| Positive | 65% | 63% |
| Mixed | 18% | 14% |
| Negative | 1% | <1% |
| Don't know | 16% | 22% |

\* Full question wording: Has Brent 2020 Borough of Culture had a positive or negative impact on you? eg morale, skills in using culture as a way of engaging culture, work load; Has Brent 2020 Borough of Culture had a positive or negative impact on the council? eg learning about creative or open methods of consultation, cross departmental working, new relationships with communities

Brent

Sample base: 282 staff (who said they had been involved). Percentages are rounded to the nearest percentage point, so may not always sum exactly to 100.

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# LBOC impacts: comments – key themes

**Has Brent 2020 Borough of Culture had a positive or negative impact on you / on the council**  315 comments

## Impacts on staff / residents
- Provided a celebration and appreciation of cultural diversity
- Improved understanding and awareness of different communities in Brent
- Promoted a sense of pride in working for the council and helped boost morale
- Increased profile of Brent's cultural history and improved knowledge about Brent as a place
- Many said they enjoyed particular events (eg opening ceremony, No Bass Like Home)
- Personal impacts included: widening horizons, meeting new people and learning new skills

## Impacts on council
- Many felt LBOC had strengthened the council's relationships and engagement with different communities
- Others felt the event had promoted / encouraged cross-team working across the council, though some felt connections with departments could have been better.
- Some said they felt LBOC had strengthened the council's reputation / provided good publicity

## Impact of pandemic
- Many felt it was unfortunate the pandemic had limited the potential reach / impact of activities, many of which had to be online. At the same time, others commented on how well the team had adapted the events / coped in difficult circumstances
- There was some ambivalence about impacts generally. This was due to staff feeling not well enough informed to give a view one way or the other, and the acknowledged impacts of the pandemic on proceedings as well as on the level/nature of involvement staff were able to have

**Brent**

# LBOC: some of your comments...

**Has Brent 2020 Borough of Culture had a positive or negative impact on you / on the council** 315 comments

Its been an amazing and interesting programme of events. An uplifting diversion in a difficult year. No Bass Like Home was particularly good

It was a chance to openly discuss different cultures and how they experience the world. Opened up other forums

It has been a great initiative to be able to celebrate the culture and history of the borough. It's a shame that pandemic has halted some of the activities scheduled

I attended events where I came across people and cultures I have never encountered before

It's helped me learn so much more about Brent, its history and community

It gave a boost to my teams, which increased morale and productivity

It was great to be part of something so big and with Brent at the centre of it. I felt pride in working for the BoC

The event has continued in a different way so I think that's a really positive step - that we didn't ditch the whole idea but instead made changes to its delivery

It started so well but unfortunately was severely impacted on by the pandemic. A shame we cant repeat the year

it would be great if some of the planned events could go ahead when allowed

LBOC has been great for the young people engaged with it and has really energised young people we have been working with

I think it brought creativity to the council and fully opened up new relationships with communities
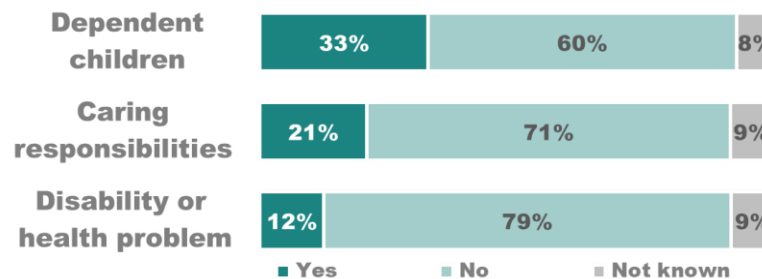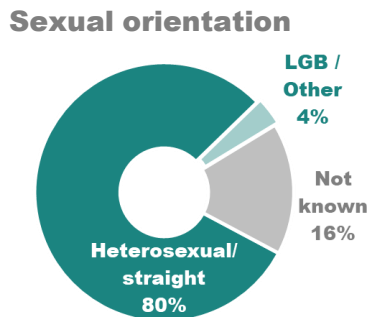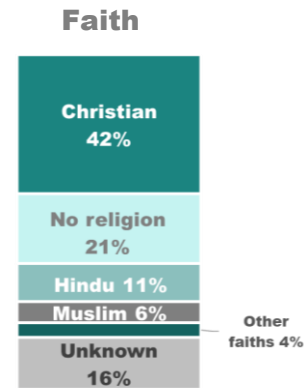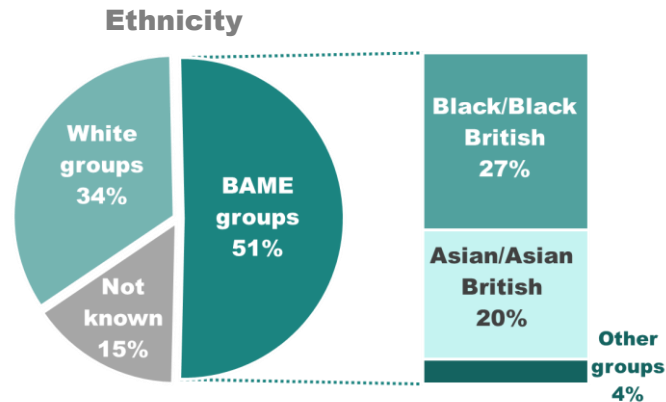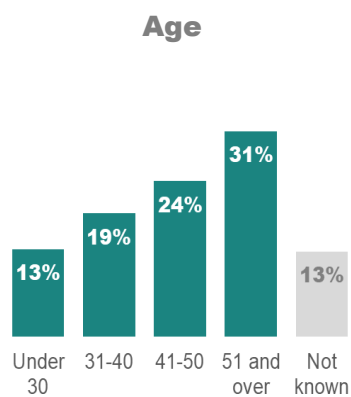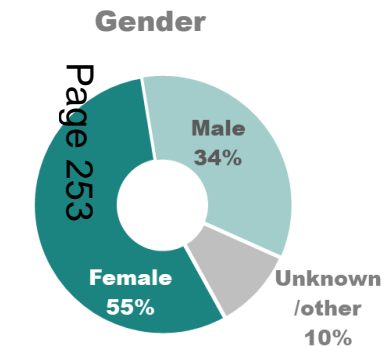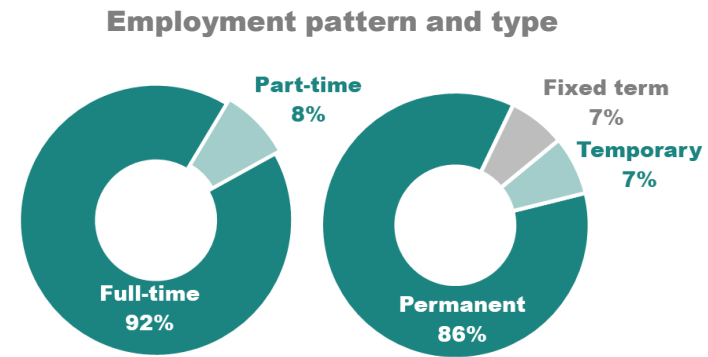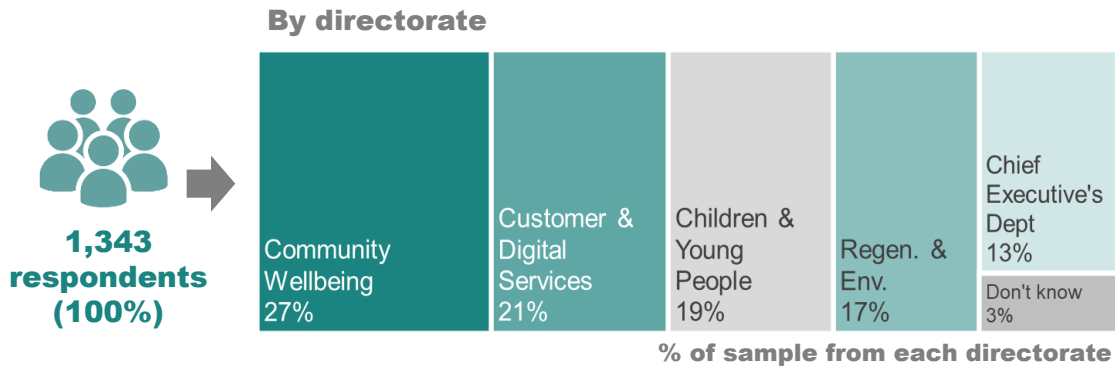
Connected the council better with its community. Especially the young

Colleagues who would not normally work together have collaborated on work. This has been positive for the council

I do feel there was some lack of thinking about how the projects would work with existing services

**Brent**

# About you – profile of respondents

**1,343 respondents (100%)**

## By directorate

% of sample from each directorate

- Community Wellbeing 27%
- Customer & Digital Services 21%
- Children & Young People 19%
- Regen. & Env. 17%
- Chief Executive's Dept 13%
- Don't know 3%

## Employment pattern and type

- Part-time 8%
- Full-time 92%
- Fixed term 7%
- Temporary 7%
- Permanent 86%

## Gender

- Male 34%
- Female 55%
- Unknown/other 10%

## Age

- Under 30: 13%
- 31-40: 19%
- 41-50: 24%
- 51 and over: 31%
- Not known: 13%

## Ethnicity

- White groups 34%
- BAME groups 51%
- Not known 15%
- Black/Black British 27%
- Asian/Asian British 20%
- Other groups 4%

## Faith

- Christian 42%
- No religion 21%
- Hindu 11%
- Muslim 6%
- Other faiths 4%
- Unknown 16%

## Sexual orientation

- LGB / Other 4%
- Not known 16%
- Heterosexual/straight 80%

| | Yes | No | Not known |
|---|---|---|---|
| Dependent children | 33% | 60% | 8% |
| Caring responsibilities | 21% | 71% | 9% |
| Disability or health problem | 12% | 79% | 9% |

Source: Brent Staff Wellbeing Survey 2020 (Dec) Sample base: 1,343.

Notes: Percentages are rounded to the nearest percentage point, so may not always sum exactly to 100. 'Unknown' denotes cases where respondents ticked 'prefer not to say' or left the question blank.

Definitions: Dependent children refers to dependent children aged 18 and under. Caring responsibilities refers to caring responsibilities other than parenting.

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