



Brent

Cabinet

Wednesday 15 January 2025 at 10.00 am

Conference Hall - Brent Civic Centre, Engineers Way,
Wembley, HA9 0FJ

Please note this will be held as a physical meeting which all Cabinet 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](#)

Membership:

Lead Member Councillors:

Portfolio

M Butt (Chair)	Leader of the Council & Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration, Planning & Growth
M Patel (Vice-Chair)	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources
Donnelly-Jackson	Cabinet Member for Resident Support & Culture
Farah	Cabinet Member for Public Safety & Partnerships
Grahl	Cabinet Member for Children, Young People & Schools
Nerva	Cabinet Member for Community Health & Wellbeing
Rubin	Cabinet Member for Employment, Innovation and Climate Action
Krupa Sheth	Cabinet Member for Environment & Enforcement

For further information contact: James Kinsella, Governance Manager, Tel: 020 8937 2063; Email: james.kinsella@brent.gov.uk

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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 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

2 Declarations of Interest

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 Minutes of the Previous Meeting 1 - 6

To approve the minutes of the previous meeting held on Monday 9 December 2024 as a correct record.

4 Matters Arising (if any)

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

5 Petitions (if any)

To receive any petitions for which notice has been received, in accordance with Standing Order 66.

6 Reference of item considered by Scrutiny Committees (if any)

To consider any items referred by either the Community Wellbeing or Resources & Public Realm Scrutiny Committees.

Neighbourhoods & Regeneration reports

7 Neasden Civic Partnership Programme 7 - 218

This report provides an update on the Neasden Civic Partnership Programme and seeks Cabinet approval for up to £7.4m Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy capital funding to deliver public realm and highways infrastructure improvements in and around Neasden Town Centre.

Ward Affected:
Dollis Hill

Lead Member: Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration, Planning & Growth (Councillor Muhammed Butt)

Contact Officer: Jonathan Kay, Head of

Finance & Resources reports

8 Quarter 3 Financial Report 2024-25

219 - 286

This report sets out the financial forecast for the General Fund revenue budget, the Housing Revenue Account, the Dedicated Schools Grant and the Capital Programme, as at Quarter 3 2024-25.

Ward Affected:
All Wards

Lead Member: Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources (Councillor Mili Patel)

Contact Officer: Ravinder Jassar, Deputy Director of Finance

Tel: 0208 937 1487

ravinder.jassar@brent.gov.uk

Children and Young People reports

9 Brent Council's School Admission Arrangements and Schemes of Co-ordination 2026-2027

287 - 322

This report seeks Cabinet approval to the proposed admission arrangements for Brent community schools and schemes of co-ordination for 2026-27 in accordance with statutory requirements which require Admission authorities to determine their admission arrangements by 28 February in the determination year.

Ward Affected:
All Wards

Lead Member: Cabinet Member for Children, Young People & Schools (Councillor Gwen Grahl)

Contact Officer: Michelle Gwyther, Head of Forward Planning, Performance and Partnerships

Tel: 020 8937 2499

Michelle.gwyther@brent.gov.uk

10 Exclusion of Press and Public

The following items are not for publication as they relate to the category of exempt information set out below, as specified under Part 1, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972:

Agenda Item 7: Neasden Civic Partnership Programme - Appendix 2 (Programme project costs) & Appendix 3 (GLA Funding Agreement).

These appendices has been classified as exempt under Paragraph 3 of

Part 1 Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, namely:
"Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)"

11 Any other urgent business

Notice of items to be raised under this heading must be given in writing to the Deputy Director Democratic Services or their representative before the meeting in accordance with Standing Order 60.

Date of the next meeting: Monday 10 February 2025



- Please remember to set your mobile phone to silent during the meeting.
- The meeting room is accessible by lift and seats will be provided for members of the public. Alternatively, it will be possible to follow proceedings via the live webcast [HERE](#)

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LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

MINUTES OF THE CABINET

Held in the Conference Hall, Brent Civic Centre on Monday 9 December 2024
at 10.00 am

PRESENT: Councillor M Butt (Chair), Councillor M Patel (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Donnelly-Jackson, Farah, Grahl, Nerva, Rubin and Krupa Sheth.

1. **Apologies for Absence**

No apologies for absence were received at the meeting.

2. **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were made during the meeting.

3. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

Cabinet **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the previous meeting held on Tuesday 12 November 2024 be approved as a correct.

4. **Matters Arising (if any)**

None.

5. **Petitions (if any)**

5.1 Queen's Park Healthy Neighbourhood proposals

Councillor Muhammed Butt (as Leader of the Council) welcomed Mr Alastair Balfour (as a local resident in Queens Park and lead petitioner) to the meeting, who had been invited to speak in support of a petition containing over 1,400 signatures requesting that the Council reconsider the Queen's Park Healthy Neighbourhood proposals which were currently subject to consultation, given concerns in relation to their design and the engagement process undertaken by MP Smarter Travel. In thanking the Leader of the Council for the opportunity to present the petition, Alastair Balfour began by highlighting that whilst the proposals would appear to benefit residents in the area, many had experienced disruption caused by the current traffic restrictions and therefore felt the proposals being consulted upon were ill conceived, unfair and would lead to problems being experienced in other parts of the ward creating division and potentially creating a risk to the health and safety of many children attending schools on the boundary roads as a result of displaced traffic, increased congestion and pollution.

As a result of the concerns raised in relation to the approach adopted, it was felt damage was being caused to the community and trust in the Council which had

resulted (since an MP Smarter Travel engagement event at the start of November 2024) in the creation of the current petition, a leaflet being produced and delivered to 2,000 residents, a video objecting to the proposals being circulated on social media, and local media also picking up the story.

Concerns were also raised in relation to the engagement process being undertaken by MP Smarter Travel, which the petitioners felt to be flawed and unreliable. In terms of specific issues highlighted, the engagement materials were felt to be confusing and to lack technical analysis, with changes to the online questionnaire mid engagement process not having been effectively communicated. Outlining widespread opposition to the options, including from those who it appeared would benefit from the scheme, Alastair Balfour also queried the focus of MP Smarter Travel's role on modal shift rather than as traffic management experts, which it was felt had resulted in a lack of clear objectives and indicators of success or failure being established. Whilst recognising that the issue was highly complex the petitioners, as a way forward, felt that if Cabinet wished to improve the situation there was a need to go back to basics with joined up thinking, taking into account the views of local stakeholders. Recognising the budgetary constraints on the Council, Mr Balfour proposed that officers should look to utilise the skills and resources that existed within the community to assist in developing a project roadmap and identifying solutions to ensure transparent engagement and community support in seeking to deliver a healthy neighbourhood scheme that worked for everybody. In supporting a process of wider engagement and transparent co-operation it was hoped that the Council would be willing to work with the local community to deliver a successful scheme, recognising the balance needing to be achieved.

In summing up, Alastair Balfour thanked Councillor Muhammed Butt for the opportunity to address the Cabinet in relation to the petition and for the confirmation it would be considered as part of the engagement process, and as a final way forward concluded by seeking a commitment on the following actions:

- To stop what the petitioners felt was the flawed MP Smarter Travel engagement process;
- To halt all hyper local traffic schemes until data-led area impact assessments had been conducted;
- To sit down with local community representatives to define the most pressing traffic issues (focussed on boundary roads and schools) and agree a process roadmap the whole community could support and commit resource behind, based on transparency in terms of data sharing and communication, with the petitioners also keen to ensure lessons were learnt from the current experience in seeking to develop a scheme that would support the Council's objectives for healthy neighbourhoods whilst also prioritising health, safety, equity, prosperity and quality of life across the entire neighbourhood.

In response, Councillor Krupa Sheth (as Cabinet Member for Environment and Enforcement) thanked Mr Balfour for attending Cabinet in order to ensure the views of those supporting the petition were presented. In outlining the Council's shared commitment to road traffic safety and the promotion of sustainable travel options, Councillor Krupa Sheth also acknowledged there were strong views within the

community on how best to tackle these issues involving a range of diverse opinions. Pointing out that residents had consistently called for measures to reduce traffic, improve safety and enable more active modes of travel, the difficulty in balancing the differing views on how to achieve these objectives effectively and fairly were also highlighted and recognised as requiring an inclusive approach.

On this basis, Councillor Krupa Sheth took the opportunity to reassure the petitioners that no decisions had been made on the proposals at this stage, with the activity undertaken to date purely designed as an engagement exercise to better understand the views of all members of the community with the feedback provided playing a central role in shaping any future decisions. In response to concerns raised relating to the role of MP Smarter Travel, the petitioners were advised they had been commissioned to collect evidence through a variety of inclusive methods which had included face to face engagement and pop-up events designed to reach groups less able to participate through traditional channels.

In concluding her response, Councillor Krupa Sheth acknowledged and welcomed the invaluable contributions from local residents and resident groups who it was recognised had worked hard to provide a wide range of feedback that would be carefully reviewed. The opportunity was also taken to reaffirm the Council's commitment to listen and engage with the community throughout the process to determine the best path forward, reflecting the needs and aspirations of the community and ensure local neighbourhoods remained safe, healthier and sustainable for everyone.

Councillor Nerva (as local ward councillor) advised he was also keen to endorse the remarks made by Councillor Krupa Sheth and the approach being taken by the Council to deliver this work and continue learning throughout the process.

In thanking Councillor Krupa Sheth for her response, Councillor Muhammed Butt (as Leader) also took the opportunity to assure the petitioners that the concerns raised would be considered in bringing any proposals forward. He acknowledged that whilst there were many different opinions, these would be captured and feedback, in order to develop a way forward designed to work for all to ensure the delivery of a healthy neighbourhood.

6. Reference of item considered by Scrutiny Committees (if any)

There were no items referred from either the Community Wellbeing or Resources & Public Realm Scrutiny Committees.

7. Infrastructure Funding Statement 23/24

Councillor Muhammed Butt (as Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration, Planning & Growth) introduced a report which set out the Council's 2023-24 Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS), prepared in accordance with the Community infrastructure Levy (CIL) Regulations.

In considering the report, Cabinet noted the outline provided relating to the purpose of CIL and s.106 as a funding mechanism to assist in the delivery of a wide variety of infrastructure to support development of the area and annual requirement within the IFS to detail how Brent's CIL and s.106 funding had been spent in line with

regulations. In addition, the IFS was designed to set out future spending priorities on infrastructure in line with the commitments included within the Borough Plan and other key strategic plans such as the Local Plan, Affordable Workspace Strategy, Climate Strategy and Inclusive Growth Strategy.

Whilst recognising the criteria regulating use of funding generated through CIL and s.106 receipts and the impact of the current financial and economic climate on the programme of development across the borough, members noted the continued strong performance of the Council in terms of the collection of CIL and s.106 receipts, as detailed within section 3 of the report. In thanking officers for their efforts in relation to performance on the collection of receipts during such a challenging period, members also recognised the positive impact being delivered in relation to the wide ranging and diverse nature of both local and regional infrastructure projects being supported through the strategic CIL process, including the delivery of highway and town centre improvements, medical, external amenity and community facilities. Members were also keen to commend performance in relation to the use and allocation of CIL in support of community projects such as those at The Avenue School being supported through the Neighbourhood CIL programme designed to benefit all communities across the borough.

In commending the transparent nature of the detail provided within the IFS and having noted the performance outlined in relation to CIL and associated benefits being achieved through its use to support the wider growth and regeneration programme across the borough Cabinet **RESOLVED** to note the content of the report and approve the Brent Infrastructure Funding Statement 2023-24, as detailed within Appendix A of the report, for publication on the Council's website.

8. **Request for Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy Allocation for the South Kilburn Primary School and South Kilburn Urban Park**

Councillor Muhammed Butt (as Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration, Planning & Growth) introduced a report which set out proposals for the use of Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy (SCIL) funding to deliver a new build primary school and enhancements to the South Kilburn Open Space as social infrastructure projects within the South Kilburn Regeneration Programme.

In presenting the report, Cabinet noted the way in which the proposals had been designed to reflect the Council's ongoing commitment to deliver a programme of meaningful and long-lasting change within the South Kilburn area as well as utilising SCIL as a means of supporting schemes that would benefit both current and future residents. In outlining the detailed nature of the proposals, Cabinet was advised these would involve a new build primary school, future-proofed to be capable of expanding from a 1 Form Entry to a 2 Form Entry school, alongside enhancements to the South Kilburn Open Space which would enhance green infrastructure and promote the physical and mental well-being of residents. The proposals had been developed to align with the Council's strategic objectives outlined in the Borough Plan, Brent Local Plan, the South Kilburn Masterplan, and the Infrastructure Delivery Plan addressing current deficiencies while anticipating future demands and delivering high-quality educational facilities and green infrastructure that would ensure long-term community stability and growth

recognising South Kilburn as a strategic priority area for driving transformational change and regeneration.

In welcoming the proposals, the opportunity was taken to highlight the way in which development of the new build primary school had been designed to align with the Brent School Place Planning Strategy 2024-28 focussed around the sufficiency and sustainability of school places and to commend the work undertaken (as part of this process) involving the amalgamation of the existing two local schools (Carlton Vale Infant School and Kilburn Park Junior School) in order to progress delivery of the new build school proposal. Subject to approval of the necessary SCIL funding, members noted the indicative timescales for the school and open space delivery programme.

Having considered the report and recognised the positive nature of the outcomes that it was anticipated would be delivered for the benefit of young people and the wider local community as a result of the proposals identified, Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

- (1) To approve the use of £12.9m of SCIL funding, for the construction of a 1 FE primary school with a nursery and the infrastructure to expand to a 2FE school (including decanting of Carlton Vale Infant school to Kilburn Park Junior school and the associated building works), as part of South Kilburn Regeneration Programme.
- (2) To approve the use of £4.4 m of SCIL funding, for the enhancement of the South Kilburn Open Space, as part of the South Kilburn Regeneration Programme.
- (3) To delegate authority to the Corporate Director Neighbourhoods and Regeneration in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration Planning and Growth to approve the most appropriate procurement process and to approve pre-tender considerations as set out in Contract Standing Order 89 in respect of the procurement of contractors for the development of the new school and improvements to the open space.
- (4) To approve inviting tenders in respect of the procurement of contractors for the development of the new school and improvements to the open space in accordance with Contract Standing Order 88.
- (5) To approve officers evaluating tenders on the basis of the pre-tender considerations referred to in (3) above.
- (6) To delegate authority to the Corporate Director, Neighbourhoods and Regeneration in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration Planning and Growth, to take all necessary steps to acquire the land at Kilburn Park Junior school for the regeneration of South Kilburn, and thereafter pursue Secretary of State approval to dispose education land for non-educational uses.
- (7) To note that consultants required for design development and procurement of the contractor(s), will be procured using powers delegated to officers under the Constitution.

- (8) To note the indicative time scales, next steps and key risks associated with the delivery of the school and improvements to the open space.

9. **Corporate Performance Q2 2024-25 report**

Councillor Rubin (Cabinet Member for Employment, Innovation & Climate Action) introduced a report, which provided Cabinet with an overview of corporate performance in Quarter 2 2024-25.

In presenting the report, Cabinet noted that the performance monitoring update provided a detailed assessment against the full suite of Key Performance Indicators developed to monitor delivery of the desired outcomes and corporate priorities within the new Borough Plan 2023-2027 focussed around the delivery of prosperity, sustainability, and thriving communities across Brent. In terms of a brief overview members attention was drawn to the 49 Borough Plan key indicators included with the performance scorecard of which 21 had been identified as green (on or above target), 4 as amber (just off target) and 9 as red (off target) with 15 included as contextual information.

In recognising the efforts being made to ensure the continued delivery of services and work being undertaken jointly by Cabinet Members with their relevant Corporate Directors, in seeking to manage and mitigate against the financial challenges and strategic risks identified as part of the overall wider approach towards supporting local residents and in support of the priorities within the Borough Plan, Cabinet **RESOLVED**:

- (1) To note the Borough Plan 2024-25 performance reporting for Q2 as set out in section 3 and Appendix A of the report
- (2) To note the current and future strategic risks associated with the information provided and agree the remedial actions on strategic risks identified as appropriate alongside the challenge on progress being provided with responsible officers as necessary.

10. **Exclusion of Press and Public**

There were no items that required the exclusion of the press or public.


11. **Any other urgent business**

There were no items of urgent business.

As this was the final meeting prior to the Christmas and New Year holiday period Councillor Muhammed Butt took the opportunity to thank all members for their support over the year and to wish everyone all the best for the festive season.

The meeting ended at 10.28 am

COUNCILLOR MUHAMMED BUTT
Chair

 <p>Brent</p>	<p align="center">Cabinet 15 January 2025</p>
	<p align="center">Report from the Corporate Director, Neighbourhoods & Regeneration</p>
	<p align="center">Lead Member - Leader & Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration, Planning & Growth (Councillor Muhammed Butt)</p>
<p align="center">Neasden Civic Partnership Programme</p>	
<p>Wards Affected:</p>	Dollis Hill
<p>Key or Non-Key Decision:</p>	Key
<p>Open or Part/Fully Exempt: <small>(If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)</small></p>	Part Exempt – Appendices 2 & 3 are exempt as they contain the following category of exempt information as specified in Paragraph 3, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, namely: “Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)”
<p>List of Appendices:</p>	Four Appendix 1: Neasden Town Centre Action Plan Appendix 2: (Exempt) NCPP Project Costs Appendix 3: (Exempt) GLA Funding Agreement Appendix 4: NCPP Support Letters
<p>Background Papers:</p>	None
<p>Contact Officer(s): <small>(Name, Title, Contact Details)</small></p>	Jonathan Kay, Head of Regeneration 020 8937 2348 Jonathan.Kay@brent.gov.uk

1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1. This report provides an update on the Neasden Civic Partnership Programme and seeks Cabinet approval for up to £7.4m Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy capital funding to deliver public realm and highways infrastructure improvements in and around Neasden Town Centre.
- 1.2. Cabinet should note the Neasden Civic Partnership Programme has secured £3.1m capital grant funding from the Greater London Authority, and therefore the total amount of public capital investment under the programme is £10.5m.

2.0 Recommendation(s)

That Cabinet:

- 2.1 Approves up to £7.4m Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy capital funding to deliver public realm and highways infrastructure improvements in and around Neasden Town Centre.
- 2.2 Notes a range of contracts for consultants and contractors will be required to design, plan and develop the proposed public realm, community programming and highways improvements for the Neasden Civic Partnership Programme.
- 2.3. Notes and endorses the proposed installation of a temporary building for community use on top of the council-owned car park next to 237 Neasden Lane, subject to obtaining any planning permission, and any other statutory consents.

3.0 Detail

3.1 Cabinet Member Foreword

- 3.1.1 The Neasden Civic Partnership Programme is an integral part of this council's promise to the residents of Neasden, a promise to provide support in an area that has suffered from longstanding social, economic and climate inequalities for far too long. We know that transformational change awaits around the next corner, with game-changing regeneration to follow that will truly put Neasden back on the map. This report sets out what this council will do to make a legacy we can all be truly proud of.
- 3.1.2 Neasden Town Centre has struggled with the legacy of major highways infrastructure interventions, and more recently in responding to the impacts of the pandemic and cost of living crisis. To support Neasden's growth and vitality, Brent Council designated it as one of our Priority Town Centres and since that time a number of studies have been delivered to identify ways to improve connectivity, accessibility, and safety within the area. Brent Council working with the Mayor of London engaged local residents, businesses and communities to develop the Neasden Town Centre Action Plan, which sets an ambitious vision to put Neasden Town Centre back on the map. Additional investment is now required to unlock Neasden's potential and deliver meaningful change that stands the test of time
- 3.1.3 With the upcoming development planned for the Neasden Stations Growth Area, it is essential that we put the right level of infrastructure in place so that new and existing communities alike can benefit from this regeneration and growth. Infrastructure to improve connectivity, accessibility, safety, community cohesion and to tackle the climate emergency are long welcomed by all. Neasden won't be left behind because of the mistakes made in the past. Brent Council is unashamedly pro-growth, and alongside other councils we've also continued to call for the infrastructure necessary for the West London Orbital railway to stop at Neasden. But as with any change, we must ensure our diverse residents, businesses and communities can participate and share

in the benefits of growth. Young people in particular need more support. Gang activities remain troublingly prevalent in the Neasden area and have impacted residents for far too long. Initiatives that can help young people engage and connect to better opportunities will be fundamental to a brighter future for all of our communities. Where we put back pride in an entire neighbourhood, we hope only things can follow.

3.1.4 The Neasden Civic Partnership Programme will re-establish the socioeconomic and environmental links that have been lost between the historic town centre and its local communities, in order that both existing and new communities will find in Neasden a place where everyone can belong and thrive. This will take time, but this council is determined to see this change through.

3.1.5 The NCPP primarily contributes to the delivery of the following Brent Borough Plan (2023-27) strategic priorities by investing in:

Prosperity and Stability in Brent – critical infrastructure in and around the priority Neasden Town Centre that will benefit existing residents, businesses and communities, as well as support local and wider plans to deliver regeneration and growth, for new homes, jobs and infrastructure.

A Cleaner, Greener Future – sustainable urban drainage, trees and planting to facilitate Neasden Town Centre becoming more sustainable and resilient to the climate emergency. Highways, wayfinding and public realm improvements will encourage more walking and cycling and greater use of public transport.

Thriving Communities – community engagement to in civic partnership co-design and deliver a place-led priority improvements programme in an area characterised by deprivation, including new community and workspace available for activities for diverse communities including local young people.

The NCPP and proposed investment will also contribute to delivery of Brent Council strategies and plans including:

- Brent Local Plan (2019-2041)
- Climate & Ecological Emergency (2021-2030)
- Brent Air Quality Action Plan (2023-2027)
- Flood Risk Management Strategy (2015)
- Inclusive Growth Strategy (2019-2040)
- Long Term Transport Strategy (2015-2035)
- Neasden Stations Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document (2022)
- Neasden Town Centre Placemaking & Sustainability Action Plan (2024)

3.2 Background

Mayor of London Civic Partnership Programme

3.2.1 The Mayor of London Civic Partnership Programme (CPP) is a £12.85m fund and evolution of the Good Growth Fund and High Streets for All programmes. In 2023, LB Brent was one of 12 boroughs selected to join the CPP and receive

stage one funding to develop place-based regeneration strategies, involving local communities and businesses. Target areas were selected where local authority objectives align with Mayoral priorities, to combat long-standing inequalities and support areas undergoing change. CPP strategic objectives are to expand the public realm, strengthen representation and authorship in physical regeneration, and address the climate and ecological emergencies.

- 3.2.2 Over late 2023 and early 2024, officers and consultants engaged with local residents, business and communities, to develop the Neasden Town Centre Placemaking & Sustainability Action Plan. Brent Council Leadership endorsed this strategy as the basis for a bid for Mayor of London CPP Exemplar capital funding. In August 2024, the Mayor of London announced that Neasden in LB Brent was one of 5 London neighbourhoods successful in securing a share of £12.4m stage two funding to transform public space across the capital.

Neasden Civic Partnership Programme

- 3.2.3 Neasden Civic Partnership Programme (NCP) focuses on Neasden Town Centre, located in an area in need of regeneration and designated for growth. The vision is to revitalise Neasden Town Centre and link it better with neighbouring communities and development of the surrounding area.
- 3.2.4 Neasden Town Centre was divided in two by the North Circular Road (NCR) in the 1930s and further cut off from surrounding communities by highway work that widened the NCR and added an underpass and gyratories in the 1970s. Road traffic dominates the area, with junctions in Neasden having the most unfavourable crash statistics in the borough. Air pollution makes Neasden Town Centre one of London's Air Quality Focus Areas, a location where EU annual limits for nitrogen dioxide are exceeded and there is high human exposure. Crime levels in Neasden are high and the town centre is a hotspot for antisocial behaviour. Neasden comprises neighbourhoods classified in the 10% and 20% most deprived areas in London.¹
- 3.2.5 Neasden Town Centre at the same time is located in an area expected to deliver significant new housing to accommodate the borough's growing population; directly north of Neasden Stations Growth Area (NSGA) and Church End Growth Area (CEGA), and south of the Staples Corner Growth Area (SCGA), which the Local Plan and Masterplans² estimate together can deliver 5,500-7,000 new homes. Neasden Town Centre itself sits on the A4088 intensification corridor and, notwithstanding its current poor situation, presents potential for development within its own boundary. Feasibility work identifies opportunity sites, with a maximum development option for c300 new homes. Infrastructure is identified as necessary to support development both within the town centre and across the wider regeneration and growth areas.
- 3.2.6 The NCP is an opportunity to deliver place-based interventions in and around Neasden Town Centre, to address the severance, traffic congestion, air pollution, poor townscape and deprivation that blights the area. The NCP by

¹ Neasden Town Centre Placemaking & Sustainability Action Plan (2024)

² Local Plan (2022), NSGA Masterplan (2022), CEGA Masterplan (2023), SCGA Masterplan (2024)

improving movement, connectivity and public realm will integrate Neasden Town Centre within local and strategic ambitions for regeneration and growth, for the benefit of existing and new communities alike. Informed by public engagement and the Neasden Town Centre Placemaking & Sustainability Action Plan (Appendix 1), developed and refined through the Mayor of London Exemplar funding application and agreement, the NCPP is underpinned by core proposals across three strategic programme areas summarised as follows:

- 1) **Public Realm** – Wayfinding for Neasden Town Centre and route to Neasden Underground Station and Neasden Stations Growth Area, with new signage, lighting, landscaping, public art; Green infrastructure for Neasden Town Centre: sustainable urban drainage system, pocket forest trees and low-level planting.
- 2) **Community Programming** – Meanwhile Lighthouse : demountable two storey metal structure with access stairs and tower signage, internal first floor fit out, for workspace and community uses, installed on top of LBB-owned car park.
- 3) **Eastern Gyrotory** – reconfiguration, new access road, pavement, crossings, lighting and street furniture, to define and open up the gateway to Neasden Town Centre, improve access to The Grange open space, improve the route to Neasden Underground Station and Neasden Stations Growth Area.

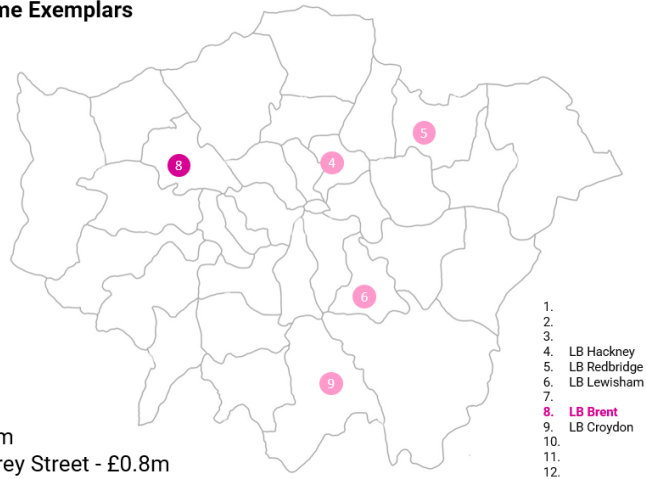
Options Appraisal

3.2.7 Council-commissioned studies³ over the past 10 years have reviewed options for regeneration, transport and movement improvements in and around Neasden Town Centre. The latest Neasden Town Centre Action Plan (2024) provides a place-based vision and identifies a comprehensive programme of 10 proposals, to be delivered over a 5-year period.

3.2.8 Brent Council Leadership, Executive and external partners (see Appendix 4) backed the Mayor of London CPP Exemplar application submitted in May 2024 for 5 core proposals, £4m Exemplar funding and £7.4m LBB match funding. The Mayor of London August 2024 announced 5 of the 12 CPP boroughs were selected to share the £12.4m capital funding to transform public spaces across the capital (see below map).

³ Jan Kattein Architects (2020), WYG (2017), Urban Movement (2016)

Mayor of London Civic Partnership Programme Exemplars



- **Neasden Town Centre - £3.1m**
- Ilford Arrival - £3m
- Connecting Hoxton - £3m
- Room for Rivers, A Place for People - £2.5m
- North End Quarter Fringes: Amplifying Surrey Street - £0.8m

3.2.9 Brent Council received the highest CPP Exemplar funding allocation, but not the full £4m applied for. The NCPP grant agreement was thus reduced from 5 core proposals to 4 core proposals across the three strategic programme areas:

Stage 2 : Exemplar allocation



- | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------|
| 1a. Public Realm | Wayfinding |
| 1b. Public Realm | Green Infrastructure |
| 2. Community Programming | Meanwhile Lighthouse |
| 3. Highways | Eastern Gyrotory |

4.0 Stakeholder and ward member consultation and engagement

4.1 The Neasden Town Centre Action Plan which informs the NCPP and exemplar projects was subject to intensive public engagement in January/February 2024.

Tools used to engage local stakeholders included :

- Brent Council Have Your Say online platform;
- Collaborating with United Borders and the College of North West London to reach out to a younger demographic;
- Local businesses and displaying project information in their shops;
- Local businesses promoting the work on the local radio station;

- Targeted sessions with key community groups, alongside public events facilitated by Launch It Neasden.

Throughout the month of February 2024 the team managed to reach:

- 150x+ stakeholders via email
- 56x young people from Crest Academy, ages 13-15
- 6x young people from College of North West London, ages 17-18
- 47x high street businesses
- 51x responses collected via the online survey
- 25x+ people attending face to face events in 4x targeted events

4.2 The Leader, Lead Member, London Assembly Member, Ward Members and partners were all briefed in advance of submitting the NCPP Exemplar funding application and support letters are provided at Appendix 4.

4.3 Following the Mayor of London CPP funding announcement in August 2024, the Lead Member and Ward Members were briefed on the NCPP funding allocation and agreed projects. A further stage of public engagement, to communicate progress on the NCPP and listen to local communities' views with respect to community influence, cohesion and belonging in various locations around Neasden, was started in November 2024 and will continue until the end of January 2025.

5.0 Financial Considerations

5.1 NCPP project costs breakdown totalling approx. £10.5m are based upon Neasden Town Centre Action Plan design work by Sanchez Benton architect, supported by Archibald & Trew QS costings, over FY2425, FY2526, FY2627, FY2728, and detailed at (Exempt) Appendix 2, and are summarised as follows:

	GLA	SCIL	TOTAL
1) Public Realm	£0.6m	£1.9m	£2.5m
2) Community Programming	£1.9m	-	£1.9m
3) Eastern Gyratory	£0.6m	£5.5m	£6.1m
	£3.1m	£7.4m	£10.5m

5.2 Direct investment in infrastructure to improve connectivity, accessibility, safety and the quality of public realm is expected will increase footfall and business and employment within Neasden Town Centre, and support regeneration and development of the wider area. Nearby Neasden Stations Growth Area is planned to deliver 2,300 new homes and 28,000sqm new industrial floorspace, which would generate an estimated £4.7m council tax and £3m business rates per annum, plus over £30m of Community Infrastructure Levy receipts.

5.3 The GLA NCPP Exemplar grant agreement funding allocation of £3.1m is capital funding to deliver public realm, community and highways projects, and predicated on match funding of c£7.4m Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy funding, which is subject to Brent Council Cabinet approval.

- 5.4 The GLA Exemplar Funding agreement was signed off 22/11/2024 and in so doing it was confirmed LB Brent is eligible to provide public match funding and such will not contain any funds provided by the GLA. Copy of the GLA Exemplar Funding agreement is provided at (Exempt) Appendix 3.

6.0 Legal Considerations

- 6.1 Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a charge which can be levied by local authorities on new development in their area. It is an important tool for local authorities to use to help them deliver the infrastructure needed to support development in their area. Section 216 of the Planning Act 2008 it to be applied, to supporting development by funding the provision, improvement, replacement, operation or maintenance of infrastructure. The Act provides that “infrastructure” includes—

- (a) roads and other transport facilities,
- (b) flood defences,
- (c) schools and other educational facilities,
- (d) medical facilities,
- (e) sporting and recreational facilities and
- (f) open spaces

- 6.2 The NCPP capital works to the public realm and the eastern gyratory meets the definition of “infrastructure” under (a) roads and other transport facilities (f) open spaces, and are eligible to be funded from SCIL.

- 6.3 The NCPP capital works to the public realm and the eastern gyratory will also importantly support delivery of the Local Plan Neasden Stations Growth Area and support the vitality and viability of the priority Neasden Town Centre.

- 6.4 A range of contracts for consultants and contractors are required to design, plan and develop the proposed public realm, community programming and highways improvements for the NCPP. Such contracts will need to be procured in accordance with the Council’s Contract Standing Orders and Financial Regulations. The majority of the contracts will likely be classed as Low or Medium Value Contracts under Contracts Standing Orders and Chief Officers have delegated powers under paragraph 9.5 of Part 3 of the Constitution to procure and award such contracts.

- 6.5 Where the contracts for the NCPP exceed the relevant threshold for services, supplies and works as set out in the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (and the Procurement Act 2023 following its introduction on 24 February 2024), contracts will need to be procured in accordance with such legislation, to include the requirement to operate a standstill period following award.

7.0 Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Considerations

- 7.1 The Public Sector Equality Duty, as set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, requires the Council, when exercising its functions, to have “due regard”

to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the Act, to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who have a “protected characteristic” and those who do not share that protected characteristic. The protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

- 7.2 Having due regard involves the need to enquire into whether and how a proposed decision disproportionately affects people with a protected characteristic and the need to consider taking steps to meet the needs of persons who share a protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it. This includes removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by persons who share a protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic.
- 7.3 The proposals in this report have been subject to screening and officers take the view that there are no adverse equality implications and no adverse health inequalities implications. Rather, officers believe direct investment into NCPP improvements to the public realm, highways and community programming in and around Neasden Town Centre present opportunities for positive impacts upon people with the protected characteristics of age, sex, race and disability. Highways and green infrastructure improvements present potential to mitigate air pollution and its impact on peoples’ health.
- 7.4 Detailed design and planning for NCPP interventions will be subject to equalities impact assessment moving forwards. Procurement of consultants and contractors will require tenderers to explain how they will consider equality, diversity and inclusion in carrying out commissions. Under the GLA NCPP grant funding agreement it is required local residents, businesses, young people and adults from ethnic minorities are engaged in the programme to strengthen communities’ representation and authorship in physical regeneration.

8.0 Climate Change and Environmental Considerations

- 8.1 NCPP investment will pay for green infrastructure to facilitate Neasden Town Centre becoming more sustainable and resilient to the climate emergency, as well as highways, public realm and wayfinding improvements to encourage more active travel and greater use of public transport.
- 8.2 The introduction of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDs) will help to manage increasing risks of surface water flooding as climate change impacts weather patterns. New trees and planting will help to create a barrier against air pollution, cool the streets and contribute to carbon reabsorption.
- 8.3 Highways, public realm and wayfinding improvements, including to the eastern gyratory gateway to Neasden Town Centre and the key route to Neasden Underground Station, will deliver a safer, more inclusive environment to support increased walking and cycling and greater use of public transport.

9.0 Human Resources/Property Considerations (if appropriate)

9.1 A new Regeneration Project Manager dedicated to delivery of the NCPP on a 2-year fixed term basis started in December 2024, funded wholly from the GLA NCPP Exemplar grant funding.

9.2 NCPP Exemplar projects require satisfaction of the priority to deliver new community space, with installation of a temporary building on top of the council-owned car park next to 237 Neasden Lane prioritised to that end.

10.0 Communication Considerations

10.1 Greater London Authority and Brent Council communications teams liaised regarding the NCPP funding announcement in August 2024, and will continue to liaise regarding any future NCPP communications.

Report sign off:

Alice Lester

Corporate Director, Neighbourhoods & Regeneration

Neasden Town Centre

Placemaking and Sustainability Action Plan

April
2024



1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. Report Summary
- 1.2. Civic Partnership Programme
- 1.3. Strategic Context

3. ACTIONS

- 3.1. Proposals
- 3.2. Short Term Proposals
- 3.3. Medium Term Proposals
- 3.4 Long Term Proposals
- 3.5. Deliverability
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- 2.2. Challenges & Opportunities
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5. ABOUT THIS ACTION PLAN

INTRODUCTION

1



1.1

REPORT SUMMARY

1. INTRODUCTION

Introduction

As part of their application to the Mayor of London's Civic Partnership Programme, Brent Council has commissioned Sanchez Benton architects with Rumi Bose, Where Pathways Meet and Concept Culture consultants to develop, through meaningful engagement with the local community, a strategic vision and action plan to set out a road map to transform Neasden Town Centre into a thriving neighbourhood.

The Neasden Town Centre Placemaking and Sustainability Action Plan will:

- Identify a key set of actions, initiatives and projects that can be co-authored, co-designed and co-delivered throughout 2024-27 to support the overarching vision to achieve a fairer, safer, greener, healthier, connected and more diverse Neasden
- Be informed and led by local stakeholders and communities
- Build on past studies and complementary work currently being developed by Brent Council and the work they are carrying out to improve placemaking, connectivity and movement in the area
- Form the basis of the Council's upcoming Civic Partnership Programme bid, a funding submission to the Greater London Authority in May 2024. If successful, this bid could potentially secure up to £4m and along with Council match funding, could mean a substantial level of improvement for Neasden Town Centre

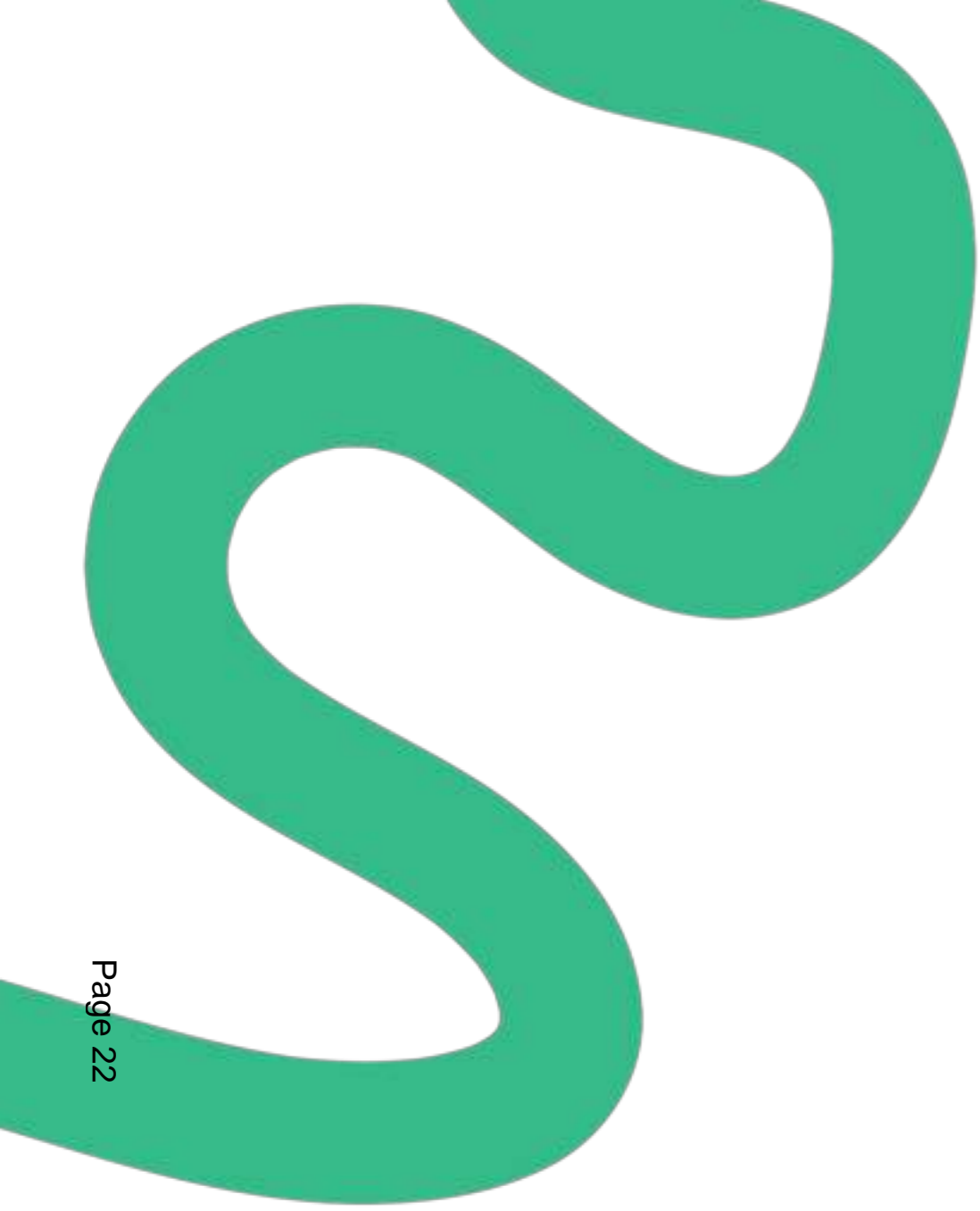
This Action Plan is the culmination of this work and sets out a deliverable set of projects that can be implemented over time to help reposition Neasden as a thriving town centre.

The report introduces the aims and objectives of the Civic Partnership Programme and outlines a brief history of the evolution of the Neasden neighbourhood over the last couple of centuries. It then analyses the socio-economic and environmental challenges that Neasden Town Centre faces today, that programmes like the Civic Partnership Programme can help address.

The closing section of the Action Plan sets out a suite of ambitious, creative and exemplar short, medium and long-term proposals, which can be delivered in phases over time, as different pots of funding become available.

To inform the Action Plan, Brent Council also commissioned the team to prepare the Neasden Action Plan Engagement & Co-design Report. This is a separate document which will:

- Support the Action Plan and parallel work being carried out by the Council's Transport and Placemaking teams
- Set out an approach for this 'testing phase'/early engagement carried out during February 2024
- Set out key messages and feedback gathered from the early testing phase/engagement
- Demonstrate methods used with key audiences
- Establish the basis of a strong, galvanised co-design framework with local stakeholders and communities in order to develop a pipeline of projects that can improve the appearance, performance, connectivity, sustainability and resilience of the high street
- Inform The Neasden Town Centre Placemaking and Sustainability Action Plan.



NEASDEN
TOWN
CENTRE

1.2

THE CIVIC PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMME

1. INTRODUCTION

Civic Partnership Programme (CPP)

The Civic Partnership Programme (CPP) is the Mayor of London's new regeneration funding programme. It targets areas of need, in order to combat long-standing inequalities and support areas undergoing change.

The London Borough of Brent has been identified as one of 12 locations eligible for CPP funding, based on factors relating to deprivation, climate risk, reduced access to public space, and the scale of future development in the pipeline.

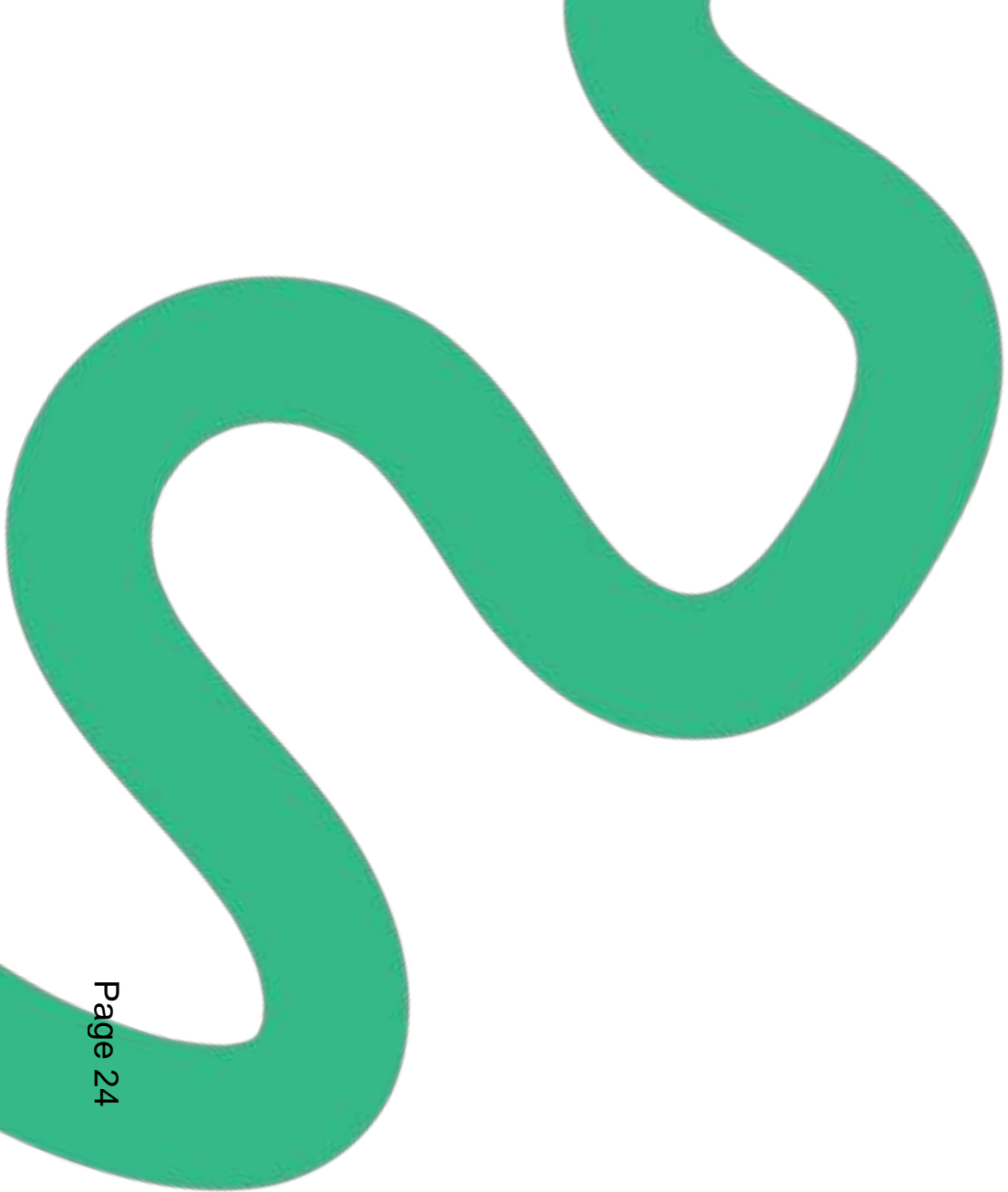
CPP funding is designed to be used as seed funding to catalyse and support exemplary, transformative area-based strategies and projects, promoting capacity building, collaboration and exchange.

The CPP programme has two elements:

- CPP Strategy funding allocated to 12 London boroughs and their partners to develop a place-based regeneration strategy, involving local stakeholders (this commission).
- CPP Exemplar funding available to deliver three to six exemplar projects, for which the CPP regeneration strategy above can provide the business case. The Neasden Action Plan will form the basis of Brent Council's business case.

The key aims of the CPP programme are to:

- **Strengthen representation and authorship in physical regeneration**
Delivering projects for and with the communities they serve, with a focus on local network capacity building and agency.
- **Expand the public realm**
Creating open, high quality, connected and inclusive public spaces with good social and cultural infrastructure managed by cross-sector partners.
- **Address the climate and ecological emergencies**
Strengthening London's climate resilience and tackling environmental inequalities.

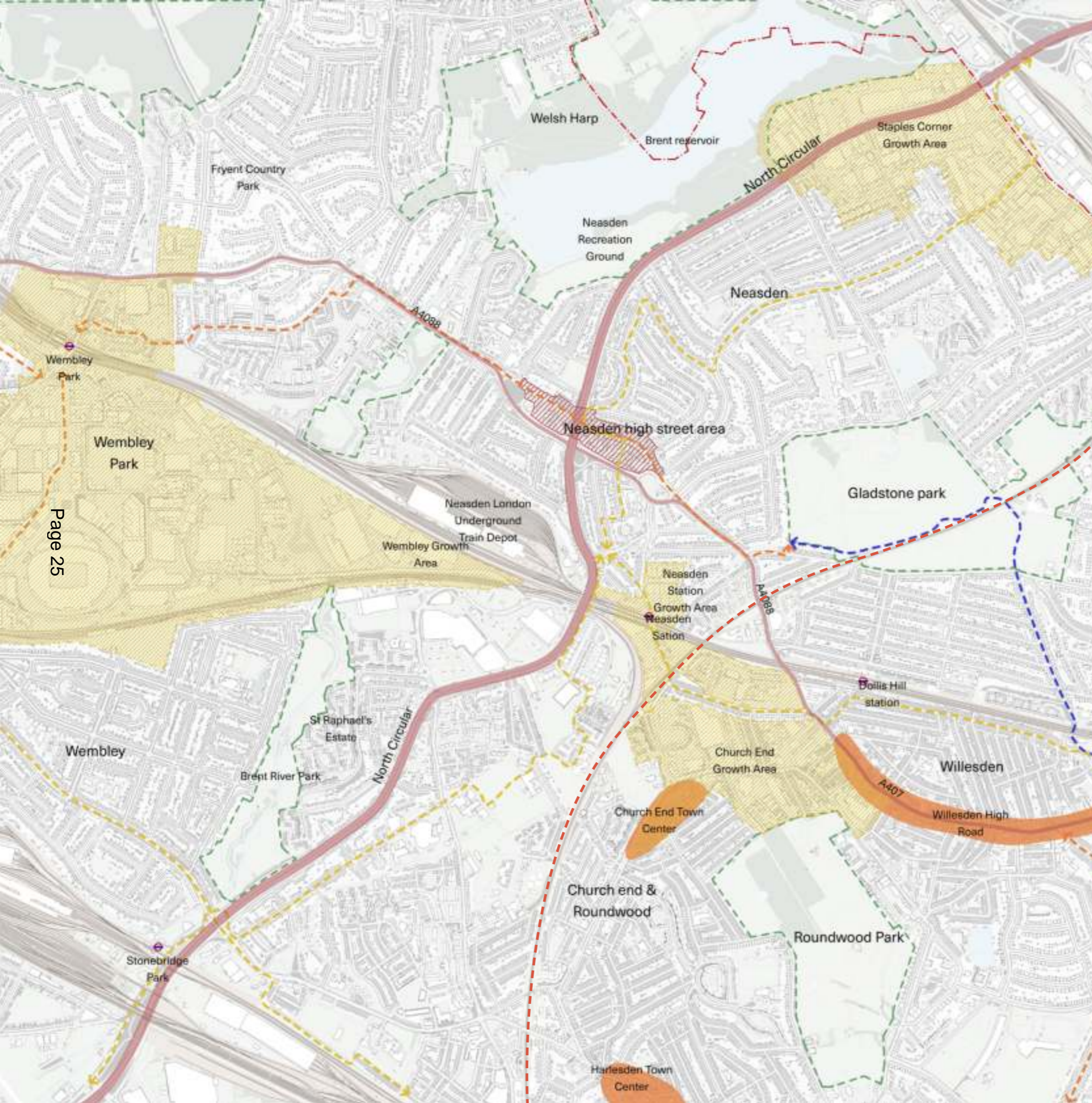


NEASDEN
TOWN
CENTRE

1.3

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

1. INTRODUCTION



Strategic Context

Neasden is a district town centre located at the heart of the London Borough of Brent and strategically situated in the centre of Brent, close to several major growth areas. Neasden Town Centre is conveniently located in close proximity to Church End (12 minutes on foot), Wembley (9 minutes by car), and Staples Corner (8 minutes by car). Neasden's role is to service the local residential areas with its goods and service offer. Brent Cross and Wembley act as major retail and services centres serving the wider area.

Notably, Neasden is the sole town centre in Brent that coincides with a significant strategic road in the borough, the North Circular Road. The location's close proximity to prominent transport hubs (Neasden Station and future West London Orbital (WLO)) provides an optimal location for people to access services and other recreational pursuits.

- - - - - London Cycle Network+
- - - - - Future Short Medium term links (yet to be implemented)
- - - - - Quietway (regents Park to Gladstone Park)
- Local parks
- Growth Areas
- - - - - West London Orbital

Brent Cycle Strategy 2018 - 2021
<http://democracy.brent.gov.uk/documents/s26362/>

Neasden Stations Growth Area (NSGA)

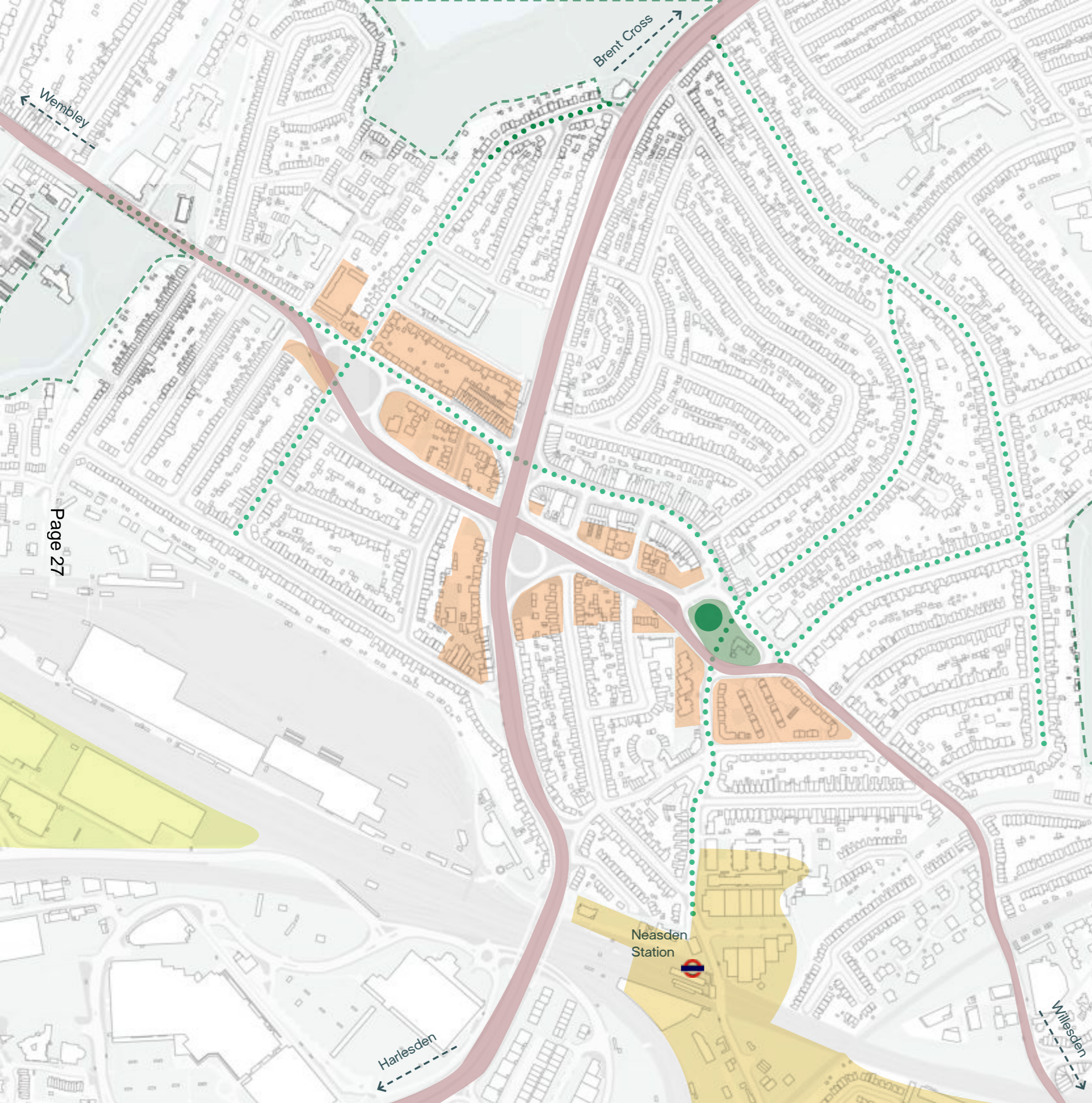
Neasden Stations Growth Area (NSGA), just south of the Town Centre, is currently undergoing intensification and aims to deliver a minimum of 2,000 new homes and 26,160m² industrial workspace in a dynamic and varied mixed-use neighbourhood. Neasden Stations Growth Area (NSGA) is planned to accommodate future housing and employment growth demands through industrial intensification and co-location with new residential uses. It is estimated that 3,000 new people will be moving into the area. The adopted SPD reinforces the need for having new developments supporting existing infrastructure such as the town centre:

- DP2 supports the creation of a neighbourhood parade along Neasden Lane that is linked to Neasden Town Centre and
- DP7 reinforces the need for improving pedestrian and cycle connectivity to and across NSGA to support access to the West London Orbital (WLO) and Neasden Town Centre. The new north-west route will substantially increase accessibility to active travel and unlock density across the area.

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- DP7 reinforces the need for improving pedestrian and cycle connectivity to and across NSGA to support access to the West London Orbital (WLO) and Neasden Town Centre. The new north-west route will substantially increase accessibility to active travel in the area and unlock density throughout a number of sites.





Future Development

Brent Council is currently identifying avenues for housing development, both infill sites and more extensive revitalisation within Neasden Town Centre. Local Plan Policy BH2 specifies town centres and fringes areas with greater PTAL (poor-to-area ratio) as suitable places for housing delivery. Recent evaluation, suggests that there is a potential for at least an extra 300 new dwellings to be built as part of infill developments, taking advantage of PTAL 3-4. This will also take into account variables such as the capacity of infrastructure and the availability of community amenities in order to promote sustainable growth. The Neasden Town centre Regeneration Options by Jan Kattein Architects, 2020 sets out a number of high-level development options for sites within the town centre and its fringes.

- The Grange Nature Reserve
- Local parks
- Jan Kattein Study Development Sites
- Neasden Growth Area (NSGA) 3,000-7,500 people
- Wembley Growth Area
- Major roads causing severance
- Brent safe, green and accesible pedestrian and cycle routes linking green spaces and the town centre

Draft Neasden Town Centre Connectivity and Placemaking Strategy

The Council has recently prepared a draft Neasden Town Centre Connectivity and Placemaking Strategy which highlights that Neasden:

- Is a strategically important node at the convergence of radial and orbital routes through Brent;
- Has the potential to connect major growth areas and both parts of the borough together; connecting Park Royal to Brent Cross via Harlesden, Church End, Neasden, Dollis Hill and Staples Corner;
- Has suffered the effects of changing shopping patterns and is constrained by its limited retail offer;
- Has the potential to densify and accommodate growth through new development
- Is an unhealthy place due its proximity to the strategic road network and poor accessibility to both green open space and active travel modes.
- Could support a green-led recovery of some of the most deprived neighbourhoods in Brent.

Neasden Town Centre Connectivity and Place Study (Transport Study)

Brent Council have recently commissioned infrastructure and transport consultancy Steer, to carry out a Connectivity and Place Study. The study will be carried out over two years, and will consist of a review of previous work carried out in Neasden Town Centre and the surrounding transport network, as well as looking at modelling options and constraints, before setting out the next steps and proposals.

The Local Plan (see Planning Policy Context) as well as the studies and guidance outlined above, all align with the goal of creating safer, more sustainable, and more inclusive places, where people can easily access more active and environmentally friendly modes of transport, such as walking and cycling.

Air Quality and Climate Risk

The North Circular was constructed at the start of the 20th century, dividing the Town Centre in half, with the purpose of enhancing and supporting London's transport infrastructure. The thoroughfare across Neasden Town Centre, comprising six lanes for vehicular traffic, serves a daily influx of more than 30,000 cars traversing the eastern and western regions of London. Although automotive travel has been the main focus for more than a century, pedestrians and local residents who need to move around Neasden Town Centre often encounter substantial accessibility challenges. These concerns have long hindered the effectiveness and prosperity of this community.

The overwhelming physical severance and fragmentation creates physical disconnect, hampers economic growth and access to green space and creates climate risk. Neasden town centre is one these Air Quality Focus Areas (AQFA) or hotspots as identified in Brent Council's Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) 2017-2022. The study undertook local air quality testing and modelling and identified four areas as the worst affected sites within Brent. Unsurprisingly, as Neasden town centre incorporates part of the North Circular Road and Dudden Hill Lane (A4088), these major roads contribute significantly to the poor air quality in the area. Neasden Goods Yard has also been identified as a significant source of PM10.

As Neasden is a growth area, it is important to implement active and mitigating measures as future development is delivered in the area.

Reduced Access to Public Space

Whilst the Welsh Harp Reservoir and Gladstone Park offer good quality open spaces for recreation, biodiversity and improving well-being, Neasden lacks access to good green infrastructure, in both quality and quantity. This adversely impacts the liveability of the place. In the 1980s, the London Wildlife Trust converted part of The Grange roundabout into a nature area. This unique yet underutilised asset for the town centre, is currently cut off and hidden due to the eastern gyratory. Whilst the bolder opportunity to reconnect this 'island' back to the high street exists, this is a complex and long-term aspiration due to its context of the road infrastructure surrounding it. Unless there is a step-change in the surrounding road infrastructure, the opportunities to introduce new and significant green spaces to impactfully improve the pedestrian environment are limited.



Deprivation

Brent is home to many communities and is one of the most diverse boroughs in London. Brent is the fourth most deprived borough in London. The most highly deprived areas in the borough are concentrated in Stonebridge and Harlesden. The diversity of the population however also gives rise to specific needs. These include the need to provide a wider range of community and cultural facilities.

Neasden falls across neighbourhoods classified as falling into the 10% and 20% of most deprived areas in London, according to the 2019 Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD). The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) combines measures across seven distinct aspects of deprivation: income, employment, education, health, crime, barriers to housing and services, and living environment. Whilst Neasden Town Centre falls within the Dollis Hill ward, the high street also serves the population from Welsh Harp ward. In both wards, the working age population is around 66%. Dollis Hill has a higher percentage of Black and Minority Ethnic communities (66%) when compared to Welsh Harp (60%), Brent (65%) and London (46%). In both wards, the majority of the population are 'White groups' followed by those of Asian ethnicity and 'Black groups'. Christianity is the predominant religion, followed by Islam.

Crime levels in the Neasden area are high and the town centre is a hotspot for anti-social behaviour, and remained the case over the last decade.

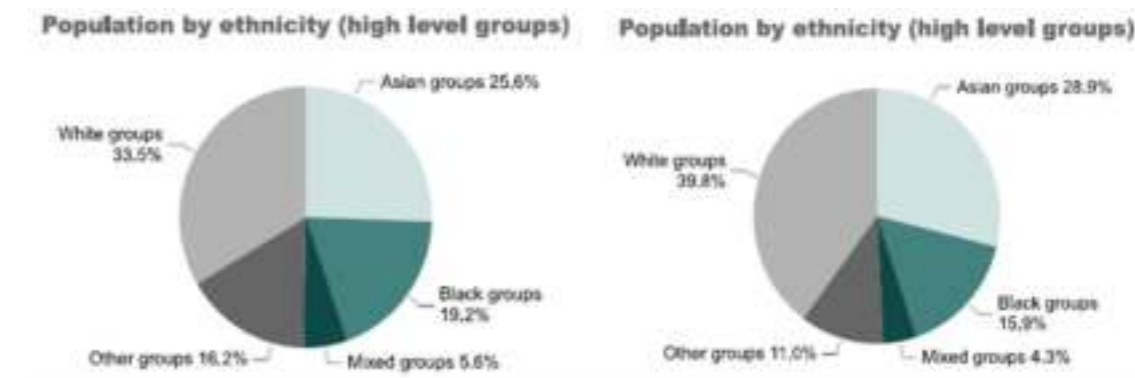


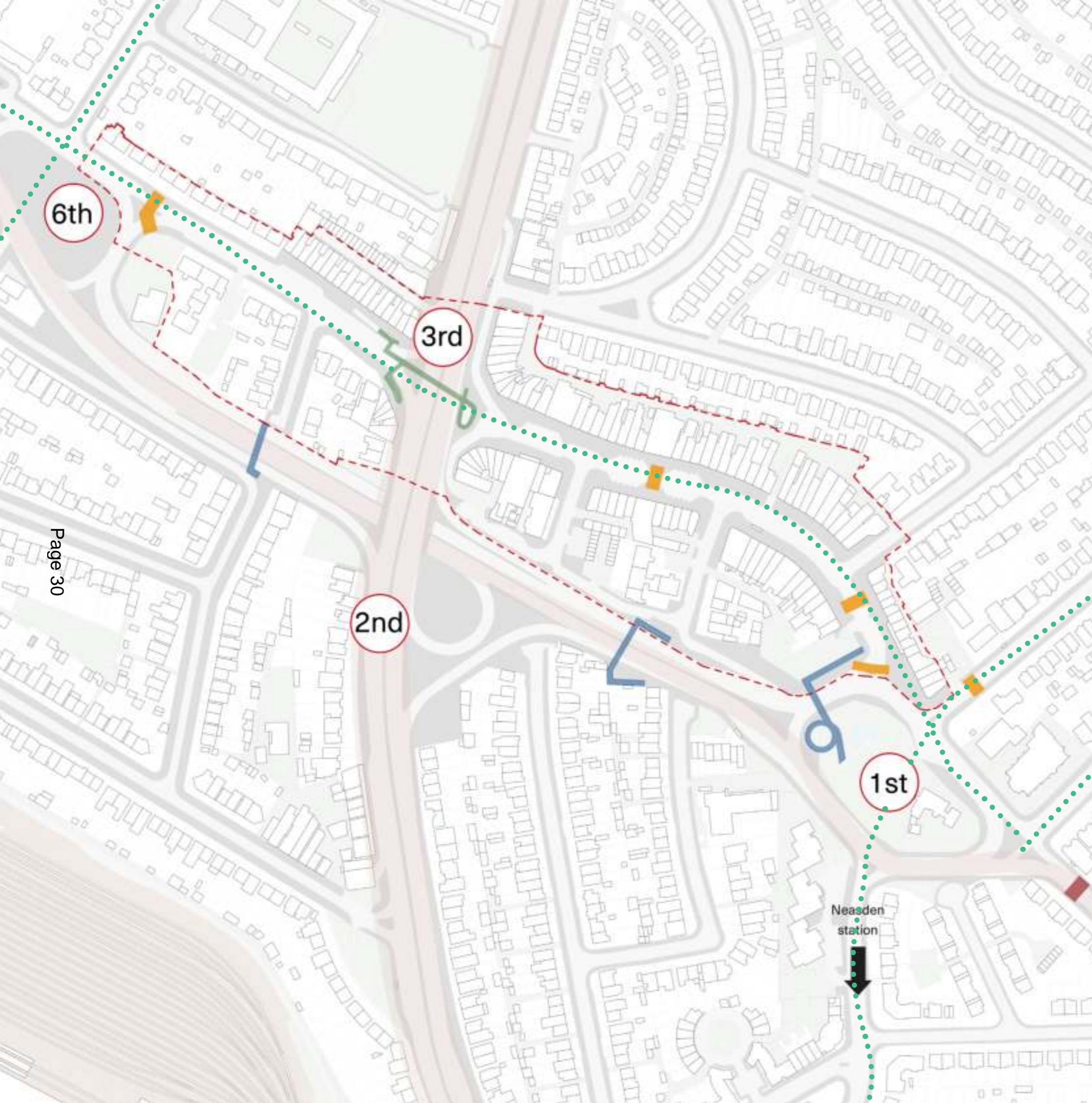
Figure - Welsh Harp

Figure - Welsh Harp

Road Safety

The A406 Cycle Crossing at Neasden – Initial Options Review by Urban Movement, 2016 revealed that the junctions in Neasden have the most unfavourable crash statistics throughout the entire borough. Collision data 3 years (up to 30th September 2015) was analysed and placed within a Borough-wide context as illustrated in the plan.

Pedestrian approaches into the Town Centre are poor, particularly the main route from the town centre to Neasden Underground station, which is negotiated by crossing a busy gyratory system with no surface-level crossings and a series of convoluted elevated footbridges. Cycle access into the town centre is unappealing due to the poor air quality, dominance of road traffic, busy A-roads and the difficult gyratory.



Traffic and accessibility

- Neasden high street area
- Pelican crossing
- Zebra crossing

- Pedestrian and bicycle bridge
- Pedestrian and bicycle tunnel

- Ranking of the worst collision junctions within the entire borough

VISION

2

This part of the document sets out a bold and ambitious long-term vision for Neasden, with necessary moves to address long-standing issues which have hindered Neasden physically, socially, economically and environmentally for many decades.

The early engagement which was carried out (and detailed in the accompanying document **Neasden Town Centre Engagement Report 2024**, is outlined here with the key feedback that has shaped the activations and proposals set out in Section 3 'Actions'. Through the early engagement, we were also able to check the pulse of what local people felt about Neasden, and its current and potential identity both locally and across the wider region.

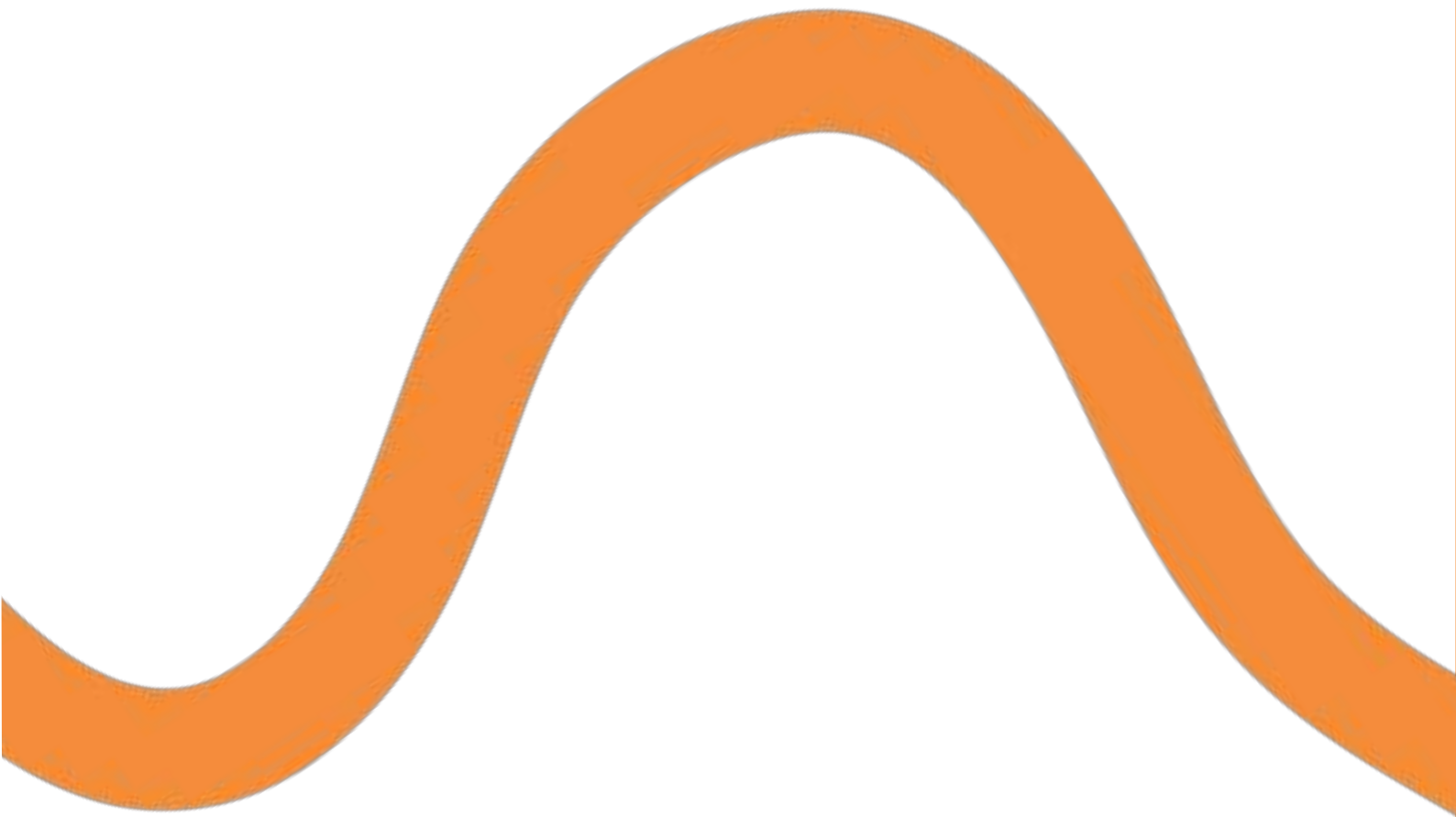


The long-term vision is informed by Neasden's strategic challenges identified through our own research as well as gathering knowledge from the engagement and prior studies. These challenges are then presented along with opportunities to mend, stitch, connect and activate.

Shorter-term activations will test, trial and pave the way for the implementation of the longer-term strategy with programme and partnership coming together to deliver the key aims of the CPP to:

- **Strengthen representation and authorship in physical regeneration**
delivering projects for and with the communities they serve, with a focus on local network capacity building and agency.
- **Expand the public realm**
creating open, high quality, connected and inclusive public spaces with good social and cultural infrastructure managed by cross-sector partners.
- **Address the climate and ecological emergencies**
strengthening London's climate resilience and tackling environmental inequalities.

The section includes an imagined Community Charter - a similar one could very well become reality - a community call to arms to gather, partner, and uplift Neasden to be and a place full of culture, healthy streetlife, community and enterprise.



2.1

A VISION FOR NEASDEN TOWN CENTRE

Three Overarching Themes

Following our on-site research, review of previous studies, and analysis of the engagement feedback received, we have distilled 3 key themes which encompass an informed set of phased actions, initiatives and proposals to improve place, connectivity and to achieve a fairer, safer, healthier and more prosperous Neasden.



1. Authorship & Representation



2. Enhancing Public Realm



3. Addressing Climate Change & Ecology

A Vision for Neasden

Bringing together Neasden's history, challenges, assets and opportunities, a long-term, sustainable and deliverable vision for Neasden is presented as:



Community-Driven Regeneration

Committing to a regeneration process that is co-authored and co-delivered with the community, building legacy and capacity, and ensuring that developments in Neasden are reflective of local needs, aspirations, and the unique character of the town.



Green and Connected

Delivering sustainable development and improved connectivity to transform Neasden into a greener, accessible town centre of the future, reinforcing environmental innovation and responsibility.



Safety and Vibrancy for All

Prioritising creating a safe, legible and vibrant public realm that encourages community engagement, supports local businesses, and attracts visitors, making Neasden a sought-after destination to live, work and play.



Creative and Cultural Hub

Leveraging Neasden's musical and cultural heritage as a foundation for a creative economy, positioning the town centre as a hub for arts, culture, and education that celebrates diversity and innovation.



Crossroads of Culture and Community

Celebrating Neasden's rich multicultural heritage and strong community spirit as its core identity, fostering a welcoming environment for all.



2.2

CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

Challenges & Opportunities



Mending Town Centre Severance

Stitch the High Street back to the station and local context.



Enhancing Public Spaces

Creating attractive, safe, and accessible green and public spaces that encourage community interaction and pride.



Mitigating Climate Risk

Mitigating air pollution issues through active travel, green infrastructure and enhancing biodiversity.



Tackling Crime & Safety

Tackling the high levels of crime and improving perceptions of safety to encourage community engagement and investment.



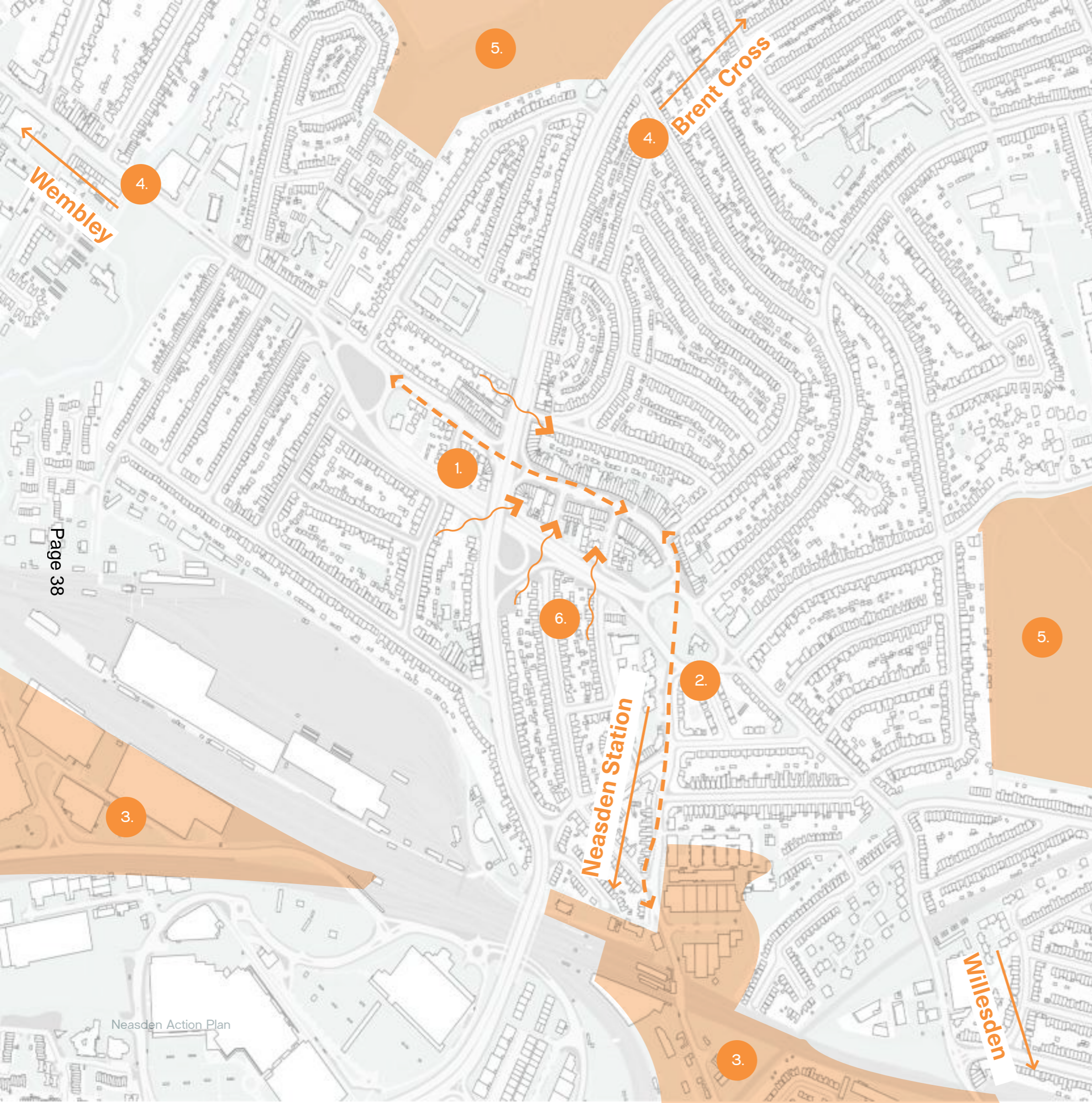
Building Community Cohesion

Overcoming physical and social fragmentation to foster a stronger, more unified community identity both locally and within Brent.



Diversifying the High Street

A broad, high quality offer that reflects the community's diversity and appeals to future populations from Local Growth Areas.

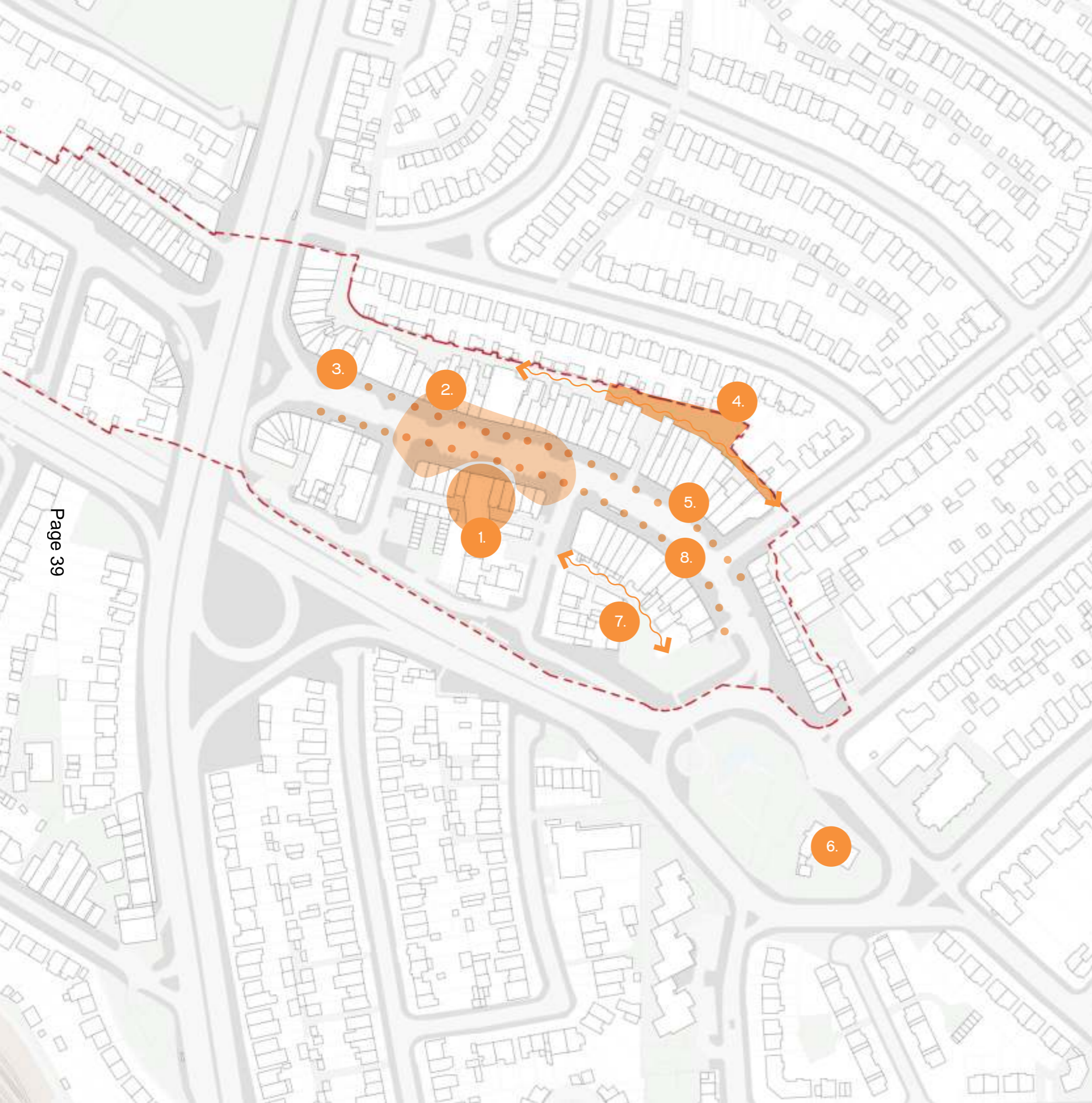


Challenges & Opportunities

- 1. Re-connect Neasden High Street, severed by the North Circular
- 2. Mend severance from the station created by transport infrastructure
- 3. Ensure the High Street provides an offer to the Local Growth Areas established by Brent
- 4. Strengthen Neasden's identity within the local and borough context
- 5. Maximise sustainability initiatives (greening, biodiversity, reuse)
- 6. Mitigate air pollution through active travel, green infrastructure and enhancing biodiversity



1. Authorship & Representation

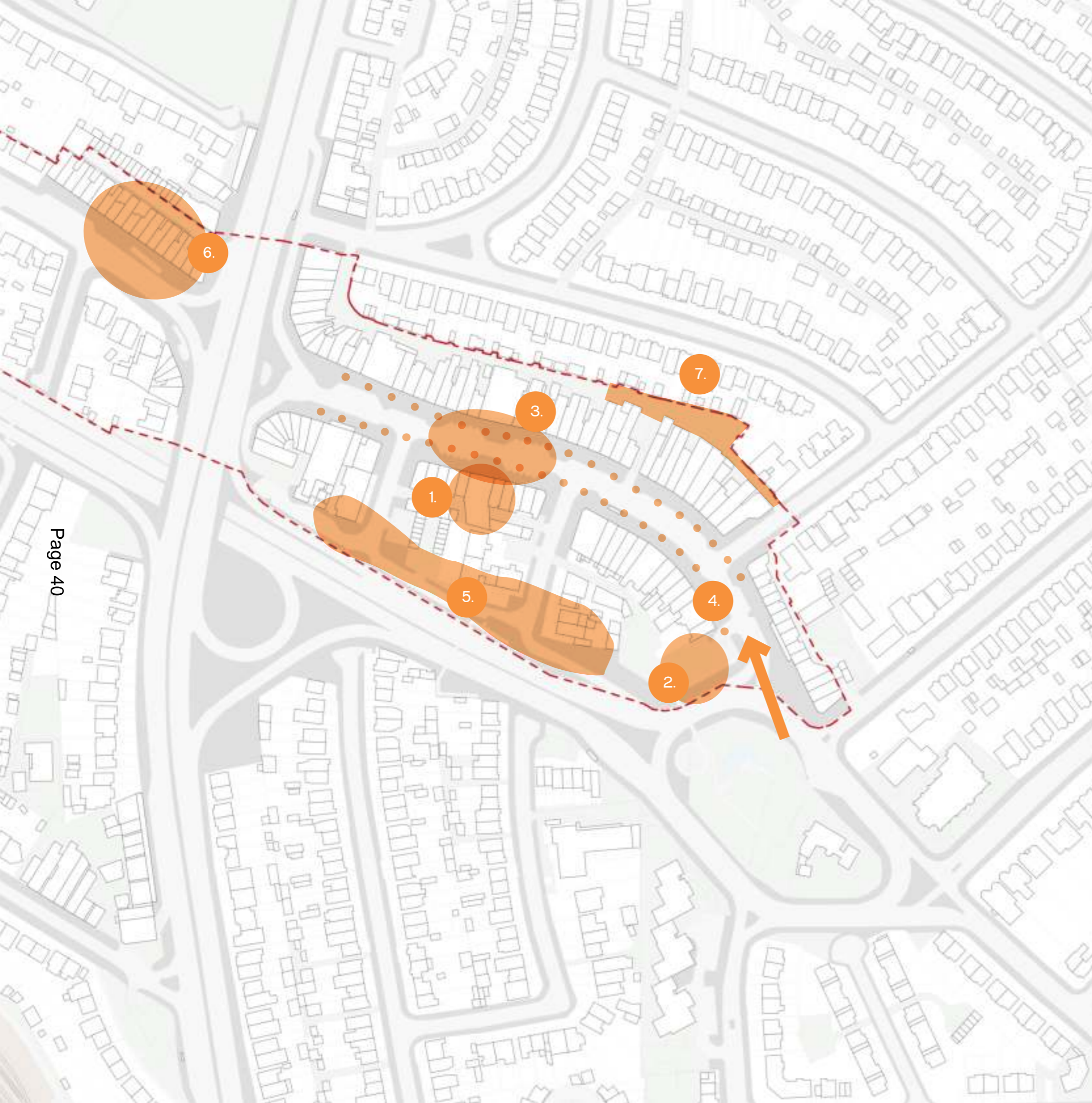


1. Create a new co-designed community space at the heart of the high street
2. Implement a regular weekly/monthly market to support local makers and producers
3. Build capacity, networks and community stewardship
4. Reduce anti-social behaviour in crime hot spots
5. Improve the perception and boost pride in the high street encouraging people to dwell
6. Connect to established community hubs in Neasden
7. Businesses to co-ordinate waste management and servicing
8. Encourage people to take ownership and participate in the growth and care of their high street



2. Public Realm

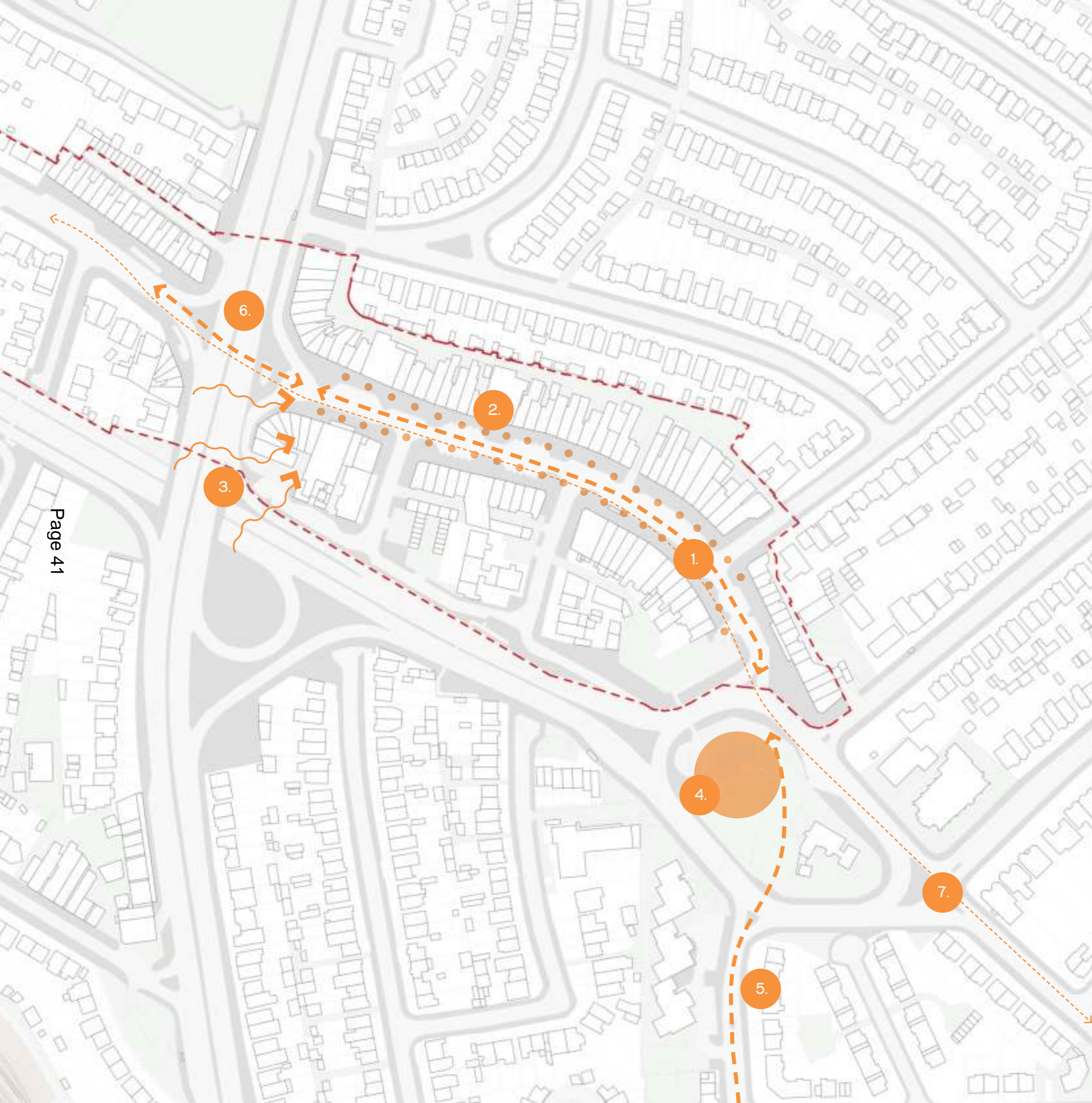
1. Capitalise on unit 277 as a key high street asset
2. Utilise underused council-owned land to boost the high street offering
3. Relocate high street car parking to make room for civic space
4. Create a bold new gateway to Neasden Lane, improve wayfinding
5. Improve the condition of the alleyways which currently feel like forgotten spaces
6. Boost/encourage footfall to this section of retail units on the section of high street cut off by the North Circular
7. Improve street cleanliness and reduce fly tipping





3. Climate & Ecology

1. Decrease traffic and encourage active travel
2. Maximise greenery with a series of rain gardens, dry gardens and pocket forests and mobile gardens
3. Combat air pollution levels with urban greening measures
4. Make the most of the The Grange nature reserve as an existing local asset
5. Improve pedestrian and cycle connectivity to Neasden from the Station
6. Improve the existing underpass (visibility, connection, greening, safety and cycle access)
7. Facilitate cycling routes outlined by LB Brent



2.3

COMMUNITY CHARTER

2. VISION

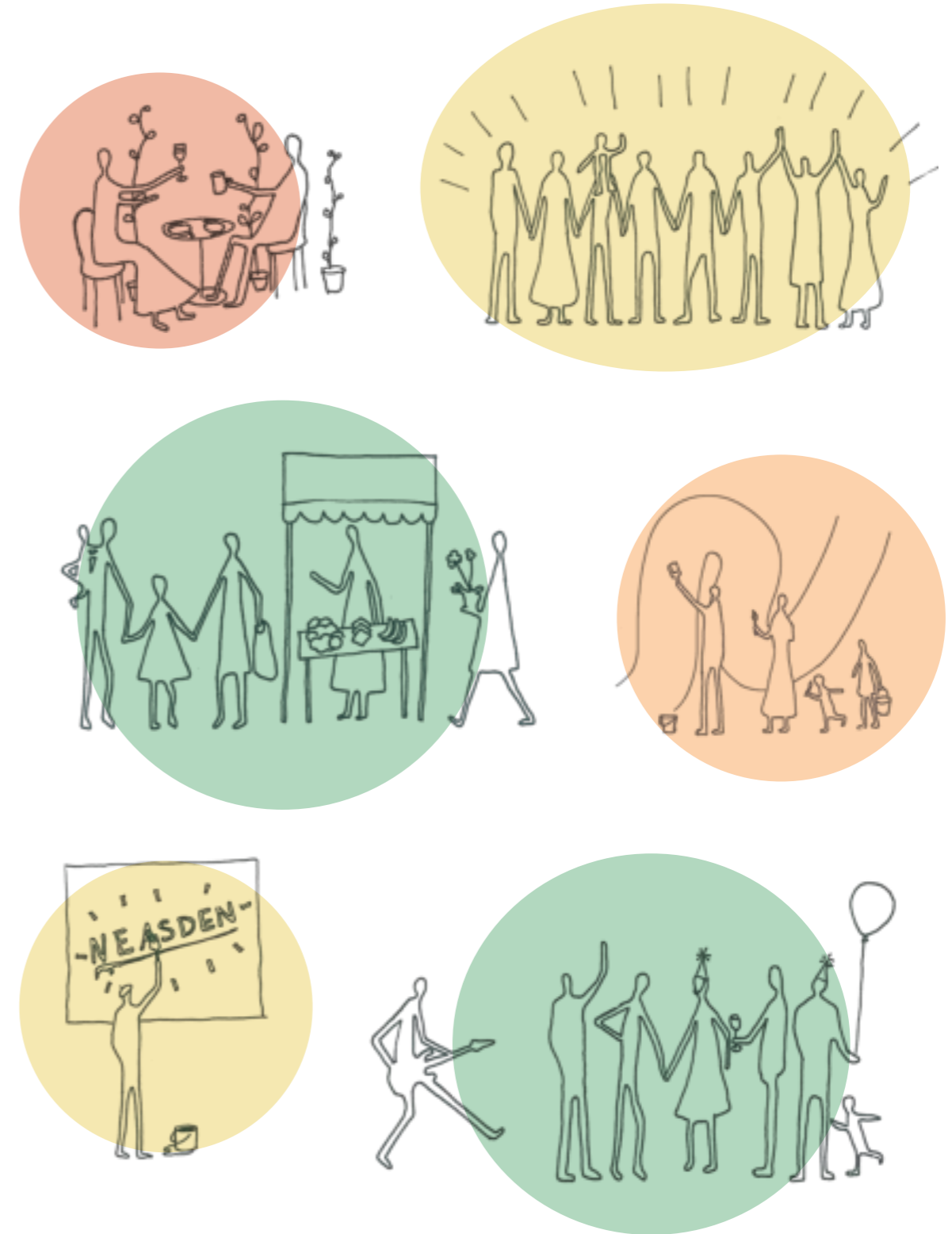
Community Charter

Our high street is our identity, our community stage, the face of our place. Now and in the future, our high street will be about more than just shopping. A place to gather, meet, socialise, work, shop and play. It is the route to our shops and parks, our station and bank, our schools and places of worship. All of Neasden will benefit from a thriving, cared-for, safe high street with pleasant places to sit, stop and enjoy. Shoppers, businesses, families, women and girls, the young and the old, LGBTQ+ communities and the newly-arrived – all make up a flourishing and fair economy and community.

Working together is key. We love and promote our diverse shops and eateries, which provide us with services, which are convenient, familiar and reflect our communities. We want our streets to be safe, accessible, attractive, clean and cared for. We don't litter or park inconsiderately, we come together as stewards of our place, caring for our high street as an extension of our home. We create a legacy for future generations. We ask our Council to provide businesses and communities with support, and enforce against those who don't act with care or respect.

With its historic architecture, broad pavements, engaged locals and businesses, Neasden has plenty of potential to thrive. We have a long history and look forward to a bright future. We are a community with a diverse identity, representing the best of London and we believe our high street should be at the heart of this.

We pledge to help our high street to thrive, make changes that foster pride, and to ensure that the diverse voices and spirits of local people come together. Let us innovate and evolve Neasden into the vibrant, fair, sustainable and joyful place it deserves to be.



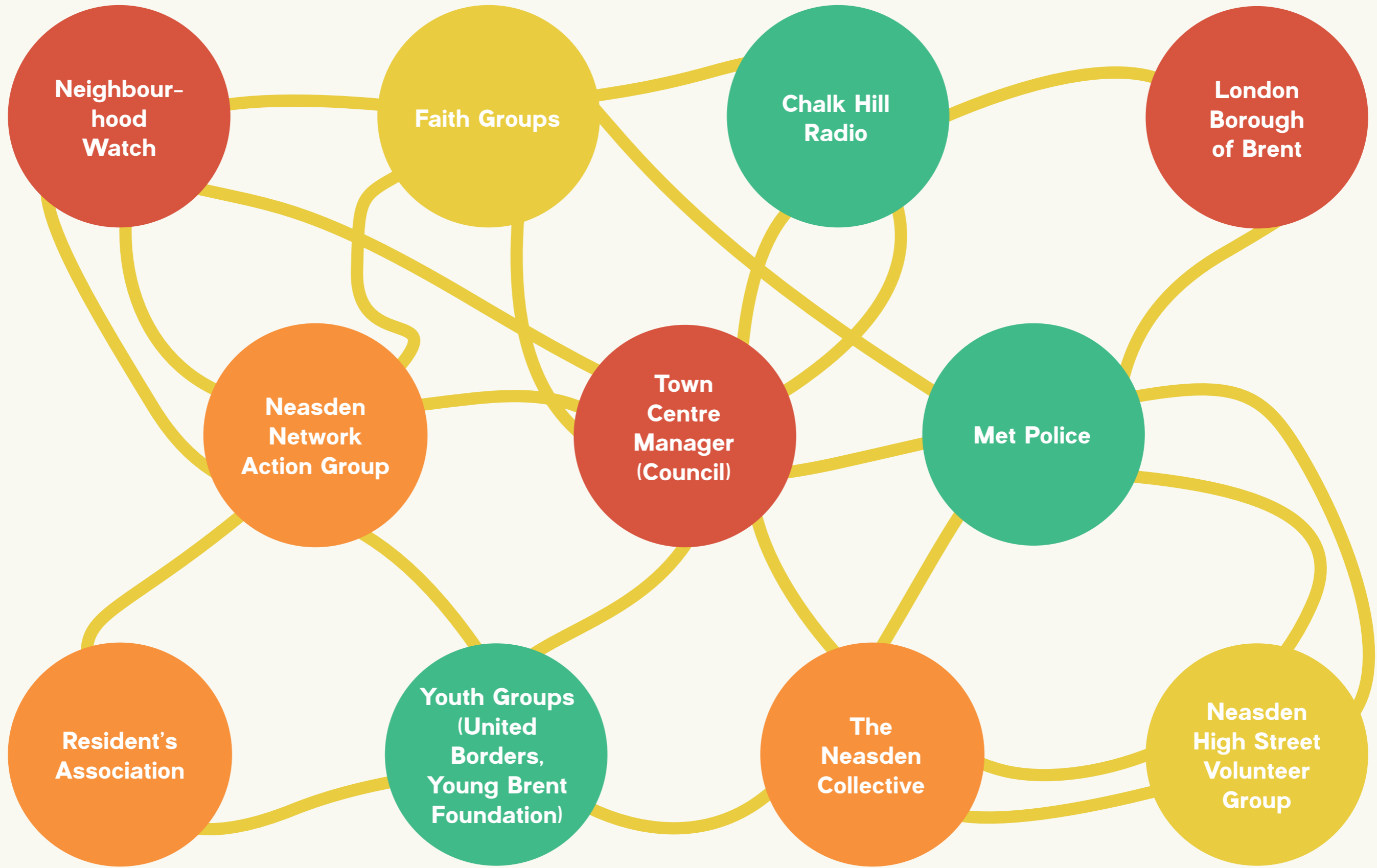
2.4

SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE

2. VISION



NEASDEN
TOWN
CENTRE



Partnerships

Neasden has many town centre issues that need resolving. However, we have found that one of its greatest assets are some dynamic and engaged community groups, who have the power to convene others, and have the appetite to raise funds, negotiate with private landlords and deliver projects.

The Neasden Network is:

- A long-term network of civic partners: a diverse group of locally embedded people who live, work and play in and around Neasden
- Made up of business, community, amenity, creative and arts networks, the elderly, families, young people, new arrivals to Neasden, underrepresented groups, health, educational, faith and environmental organisations
- A multi-skilled and engaged network who will co-author a place vision and narrative delivered in partnership with the Council and associates
- A group that represents Neasden as a place within the context of Brent and its future to be a welcoming, sustainable and successful place for all



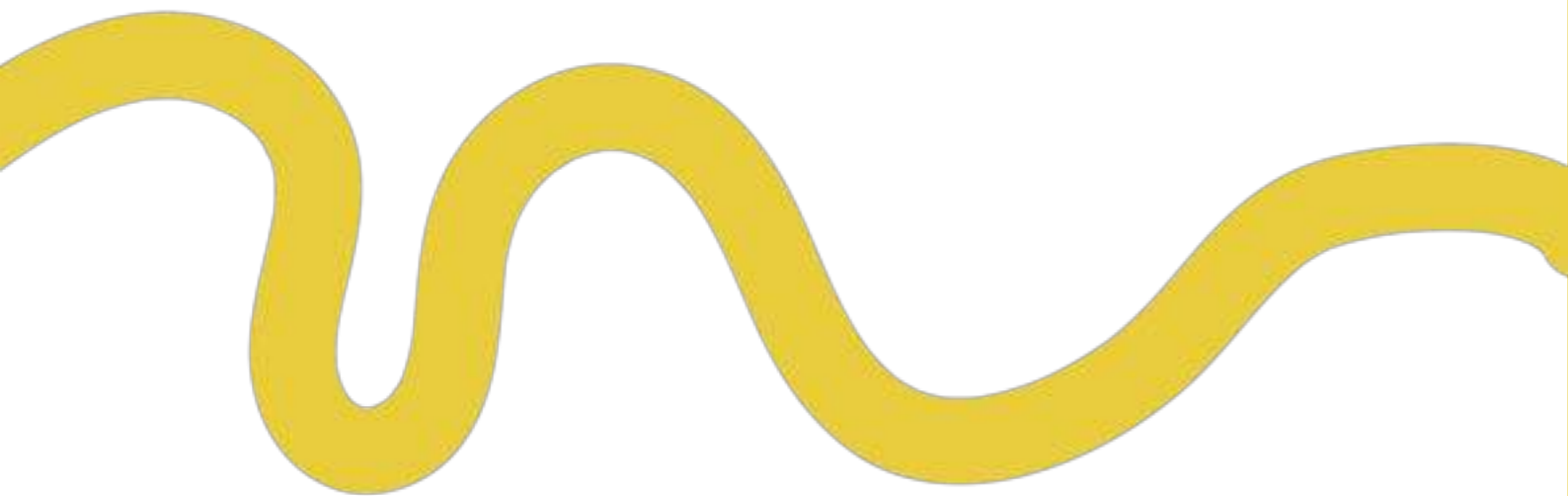
This group is a burgeoning action group made up of local residents, volunteers and community organisations such as Friends of Gladstone Park, an active amenity groups who in the words of Dollis Hill Ward Councillor, Liz Dixon act as 'eyes and ears' of the street. At one of the February engagement events, whilst discussing themes of identity, connection and sustainability in Neasden, a key action was noted. This was that an 'action' or 'pressure' group was needed to try and address some of the ongoing issues in Neasden, and to bring together the existing networks of activity and guardianship that already exists. Councillor Dixon is keen to take a proactive role in scoping what this wider community network might look like, and the mechanisms for its operation. Early discussions will be underway in the coming weeks to establish this. With such a set-up, a strong engagement framework could set the tone for meaningful partnership working and collective impact in Neasden, driving change which is rooted in an empowered community with agency and cohesion.



Neasden Collective is a newly formed business alliance, representing a number of high street businesses on the high street. The Directors of the alliance are all local traders, and between them have strong experience of running businesses and community enterprises. As an energetic, local and galvanized new organisation, their agenda is to create and maintain a thriving Neasden Town Centre. The group represents an ideal partnership opportunity for Brent Council to co-create authorship and legacy in the area.

ACTIONS

3



3.1

PROPOSALS

3. ACTIONS

The following proposals are set out in 3 phases, at different scales and suggest a mix of partnership models, to enable a delivery and management framework that is action-oriented and fundable. Smaller 'quick-win projects' gained along the way build community trust and support, showing that change is being delivered. These quick-wins also make a compelling case for investment for broader, cumulative and more complex changes to the town centre as further development comes forward as part of the Council's Local Plan. The ultimate ambition for Neasden is to deliver much-needed change to address some of the major barriers that sever the town centre and to transform Neasden into a much more healthy, sustainable and safer town centre. The initial phase sets out a collection of seed proposals that could be delivered in the initial period of 1-2 years, with additional, more complex projects, garnering support, building capacity and growing community partnership along the way.



1 : Authorship & Representation

The early engagement that we carried out in February 2024 highlighted the strong multicultural aspect of Neasden. This is a unique quality that should be celebrated both within the place identity and its public realm. Any proposals for the natural and built environment should be designed to be fairer and more inclusive, responsive, adaptable and comfortable for a wide range of people.

It is the intention of proposals set out in this action plan to be wherever possible, co-designed, co-authored and co-delivered with a legacy toolkit or management framework to provide ongoing maintenance and stewardship in the area. In this way, local people will be encouraged to take on a participatory role in shaping their town centre and be guardians of its ongoing success.

This spirit is captured in a draft Community Charter, set out in section 2.3 of this Action Plan.

Respondents to the engagement have also proposed that the diversity of Neasden could be celebrated through food, cultural events, and vibrant colours around the borough. We have brought this thinking into in our proposals below.

We propose:

- Creating opportunities wherever possible, for authorship, co-design, partnership and legacy
- Capacity building established grass-roots organisations, through true partnership working (financial or in-kind support), to achieve collective social impact
- Testing innovative ways in which to pivot the high street to create a more diverse offer
- Creating a welcoming civic space and high street anchor
- Creating a meanwhile multi-purpose event space and beacon to celebrate community and culture
- Trialling a specialised market, to complement the current retail offer, create a destination and draw a new pattern of footfall



2. Enhancing Public Realm

Movement and connectivity are the biggest issues blighting Neasden Town Centre. The severance created by the road infrastructure in the last century has had a severe knock-on effect on Neasden's traffic congestion, air quality, high street footfall and townscape quality. Much of the fragmentation that has happened (with the arrival of the North Circular) is not reversible. A strategic move to repair and stitch back, such as reconnecting The Grange gyratory to the high street will require substantial investment working in partnership with Transport for London and will require considerable modelling and testing of the impacts on the wider transport network. Brent Council has been exploring the gyratory proposition for some time internally, most recently with an outline 'Connectivity and Place Strategy for Neasden Town Centre'. As a next step the Council has commissioned infrastructure and transport consultancy Steer, to undertake an Options Design and Feasibility Study which will be developed and delivered over the next two years.

As such, the aspiration of peninsularising the eastern gyratory is beyond the scope of this Action Plan and the subsequent bid for CPP funding. Nevertheless, the reconfiguration of the gyratory is held as a long-term aspiration and is discussed in Phase 3 of our 'Proposals' section.

Our proposals intend to address some of the issues relating to movement and connectivity, like wayfinding. These do not preclude longer-term development, but test and pilot cumulative initiatives, provide opportunities for stewardship and build community capacity.

We propose:

- Improving the approaches to, from and through the town centre through wayfinding
- Supporting and encouraging businesses to improve their servicing strategy to reduce motorised vehicle trips in the town centre.
- Creating a town centre gateway and wayfinding beacon at 'The Lighthouse'
- Early intentions to realign the historic street pattern and desire lines across the gyratory



3: Climate & Ecology

Neasden is a town centre with its own nature reserve.

Our starting point for weaving in more green infrastructure is Neasden's very own small nature reserve at The Grange roundabout. This hidden (though difficult to access) gem of 0.24 hectares, provides an important stepping stone for nature across the wider green infrastructure network.

Designing for greater climate resilience in the future has informed our strategy for increasing the quality and quantity of green infrastructure through this project. Our strategy considers how to build capacity within the local residential and business communities to help foster ownership and custodianship of any green infrastructure delivered.

Whilst larger scale open spaces in the Town Centre are unlikely to materialise, even with redevelopment, there are opportunities to create and activate a garland of small parklets dotted along the high street.

We propose:

- Creating and improving pockets of green infrastructure along the high street through a series of temporary greening measures

Engaging with the local community to

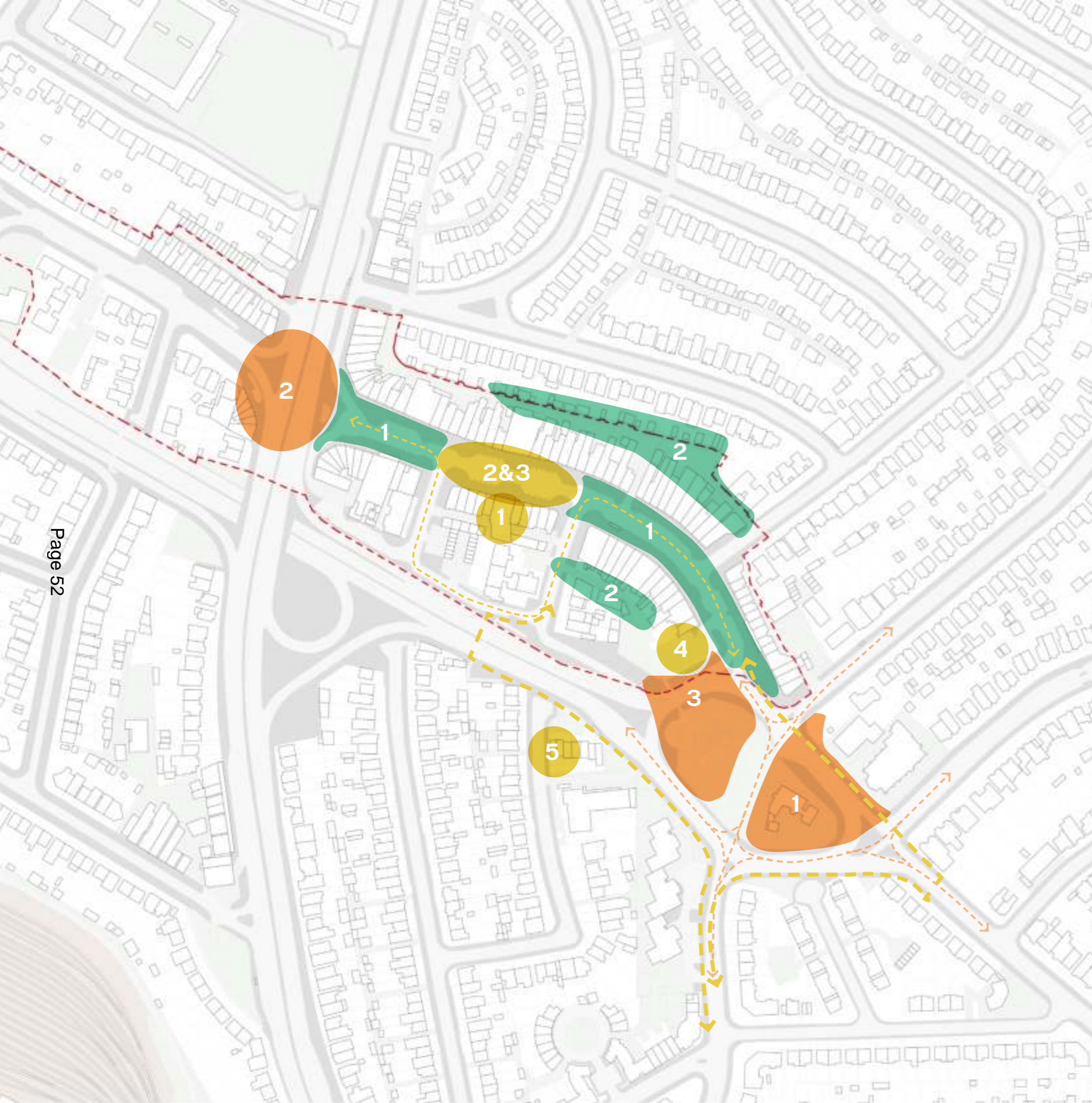
- gauge appetite and logistics for longer term management and permanent measures

Testing and building a strategy to transform Neasden Lane into a more climate-resilient

- neighbourhood.

Developing and implementing a coordinated waste management strategy for Neasden

- Town Centre, including enforcement



Short Term Proposals

- ◆ ◆ 1. The Ritz Urban Rooms & Kitchen
- ◆ ◆ ◆ 2. A Moveable Feast
- ◆ ◆ 3. Neasden Market
- ◆ ◆ 4. The Lighthouse
- ◆ ◆ 5. Visual Identity & Wayfinding

Medium Term Proposals

- ◆ ◆ ◆ 1. Pocket Forests & Gardens
- ◆ 2. Alleyways & Garage Spaces

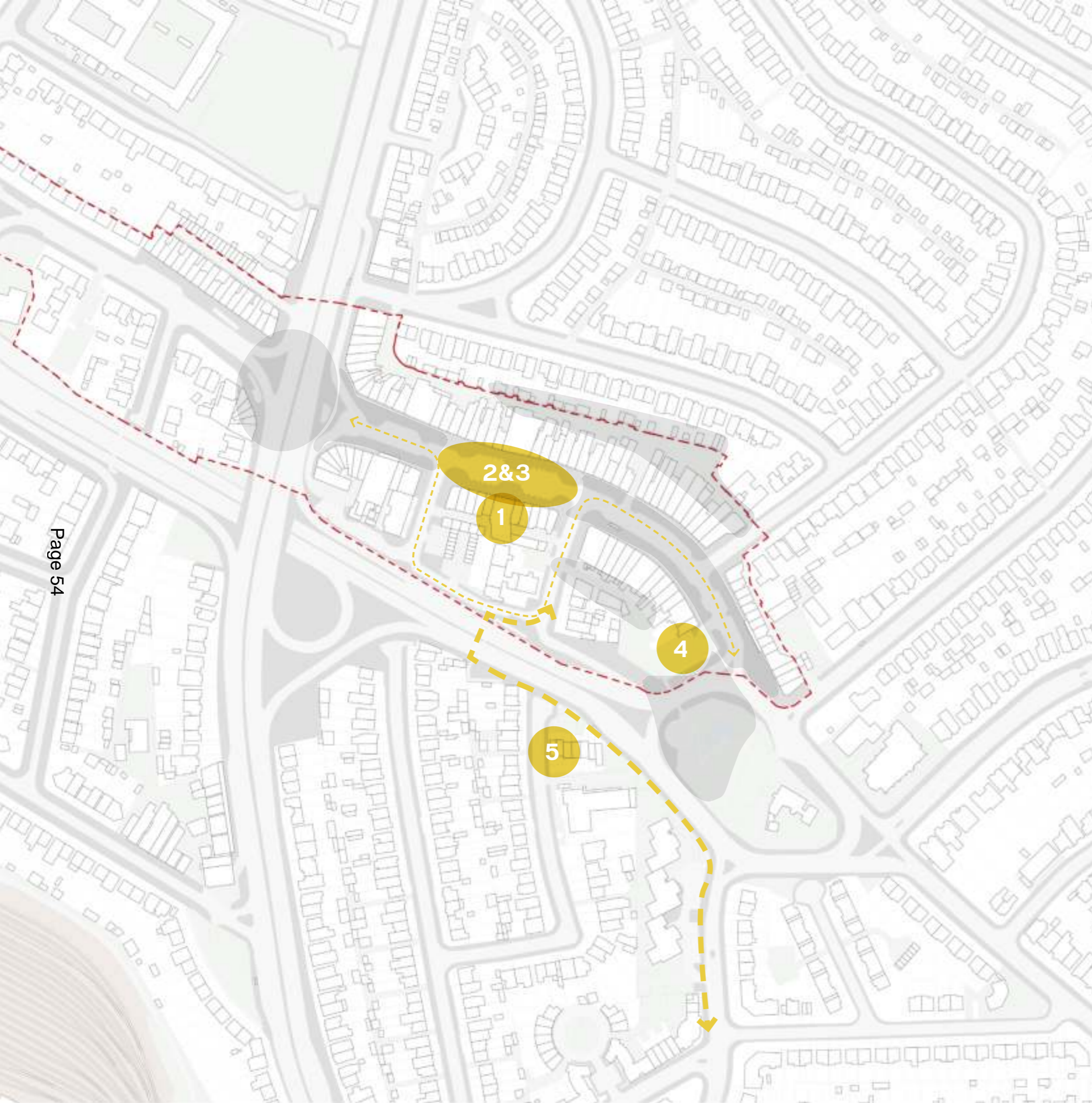
Long Term Proposals

- ◆ ◆ ◆ 1. The Green at the Grange
- ◆ ◆ 2. The Underpass
- ◆ ◆ 3. The Lighthouse (Permanent) & Future Development

3.2

SHORT TERM PROPOSALS

3. ACTIONS



Short Term Proposals

The ultimate ambition for Neasden is to deliver much-needed change to address some of the major barriers that sever the town centre and to transform Neasden into a much more healthy, sustainable and safer town centre. The initial phase sets out a collection of seed proposals that could be delivered in the initial period of 1-2 years, with additional, more complex projects, garnering support, building capacity and growing community partnership along the way. These interventions can be used to test ideas, innovate and be built upon at future stages.

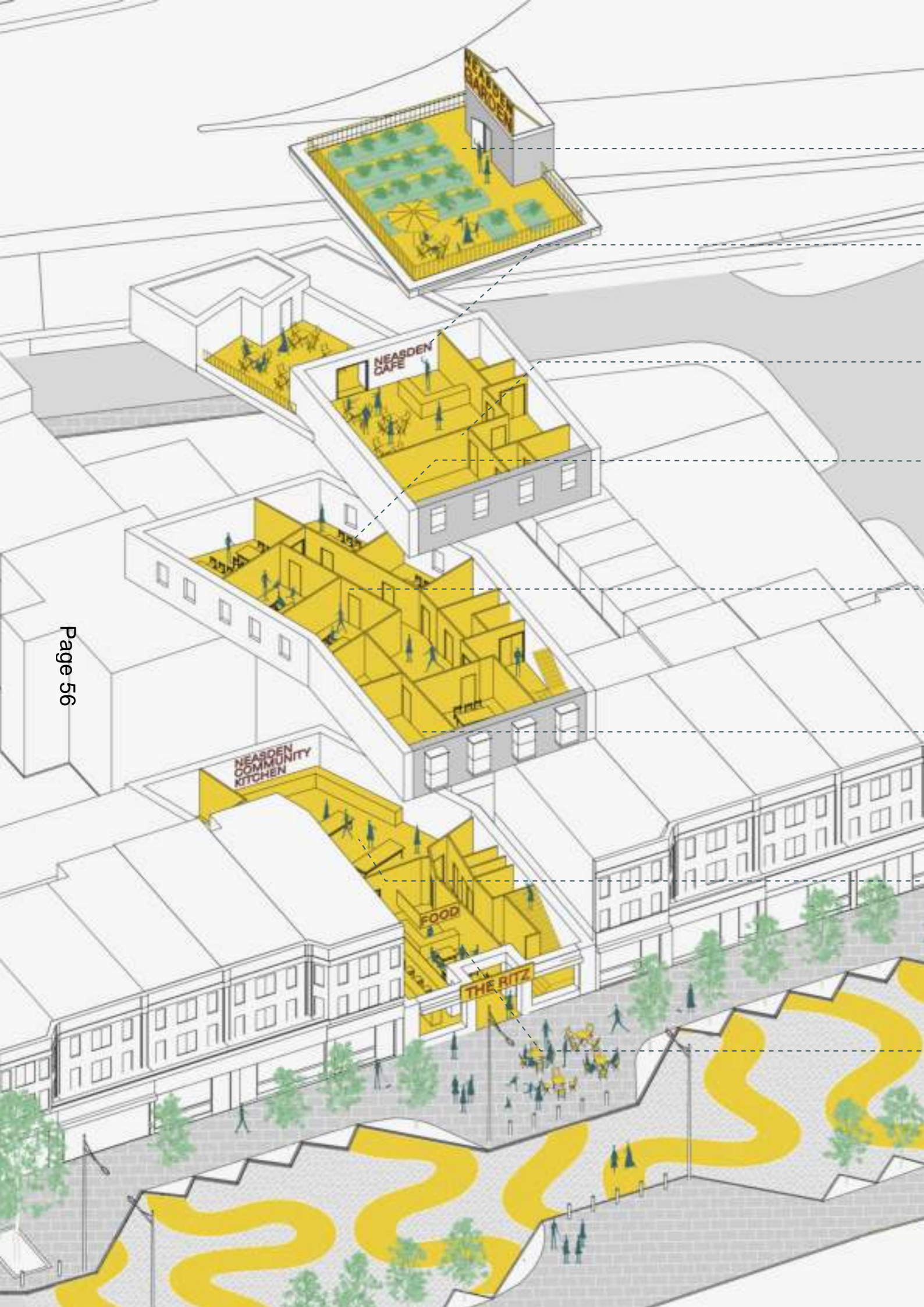
- 
1. The Ritz Urban Rooms & Kitchen
- 
2. A Moveable Feast
- 
3. Neasden Market
- 
4. The Lighthouse
- 
5. Wayfinding & Visual Identity



The Ritz Urban Rooms & Kitchen



The project will activate underused space to deliver a multicultural food court and training kitchens on the ground floor, with affordable workspace, a gym with female-only sessions to cater for diverse cultural groups, therapy rooms and podcasts studios on the upper floors. The roof also has development potential and could host a small garden with beehives, or a place for outdoor yoga or small gatherings in the warmer months.



Community Garden

- Horticultural training and gardening education and urban greening



'Chatty Café'

- Sessions to address social isolation, and a meeting place for newcomers

Gym/Exercise Studios

- Including female-only sessions to cater for diverse cultural groups



Community Space

- Available for skills & training workshops used by local groups like Chalk Hill Radio Station, United Borders etc.



Affordable Workspace

- Space for local businesses
- Work-near-home space
- Therapy rooms to hire supporting local independent beauty businesses

Recording and Podcast Studio

- Available to hire for skills & training used by young people, professionals and local groups like Chalk Hill Radio Station, United Borders etc.



Community Kitchen

- Cooking lessons/community kitchen reflecting local diversity
- Local entrepreneurs to incubate food businesses within a low-cost outlet/training kitchen

Food Court

- Ground floor food court, with food kiosks showcasing the area's rich diversity
- Central hub open day and evening with pool tables, gallery, photo booth, café etc. for people to meet, socialise and dwell













Engagement & Partnerships

We set out opposite an enabling framework for collective action. This acts as a launchpad for creative ideas and discussions amongst community groups, businesses, landowners and stakeholders to support the delivery of proposals and supporting management and community initiatives. Each can be scalable and applicable across small, medium and large sites in Neasden.

- Early engagement told us:
Lack of family restaurants on the high street
- Poor evening economy being the Venue 295 nightclub
- No female-only facilities at Willesden Green Sports Centre
- No space to dwell in Neasden
- Demand for podcast/music studios from young people
- Demand for affordable workspace from local operators (Launch-It)
- We need a cultural or educational/skills programme,
- There is nothing in Neasden to offer this and no community sense.

 £ 986,600

 1-2 Years

		Who is leading?	Potential to foster	Long term partnerships
Project	The Ritz Urban Rooms & Kitchen			
			Capacity building Co-authorship	Brent Council Local food entrepreneurs Workspace Café operators Community gardeners
	Neasden Skills Programme - Education & Business support			
			Co-design Co-authorship	Local Schools High Street Businesses
Supporting Actions & Initiatives	Community Gardening Group & Food Growing			
		 	Capacity building Stewardship Community Pride	Brent Council (Parks Team) Neasden Residents Community gardeners
	Library of Things			
		 	Stewardship Community Pride	Local Residents High Street Businesses

Precedents



Nourish Hub North Kensington

From the sociable nature of sharing food, to the formal training opportunities afforded via its training kitchen and education programme, the Nourish Hub is a place for communities to come together, eat well and learn essential skills for life.



Holborn Community Association Central London

Community space and opportunities for individuals, groups and the wider community to thrive. Three centres and multiple outreach settings across the area which are welcoming, accessible and shaped by the community.



East Street Exchange Southwark

Adjoining East St Library, the extension now allows the library to host a flexible range of new uses. It offers an affordable space for local businesses, entrepreneurs and community groups; provides a much-needed flexible space for groups in the area to meet.



The Landing Manchester

The Landing is a collaborative community growing space designed and built as a sustainable food system and urban growing space for 'Where The Light Gets In' restaurant. The garden provides produce for the restaurant as well as the local community.



A Moveable Feast



A series of short-term creative projects to help raise awareness, foster ownership and custodianship to help inform longer-term strategies to deliver more and better green infrastructure.

The proposal is to commission a 'family' of temporary and engaging public realm/urban greening measures to test in different locations on Neasden High Street.

Planting trees, flowers and shrubs along the high street has multiple benefits; to reduce exposure to air pollution, to soften the streetscape and improve the look and feel of the high street. A key part of the initiative is to engage with local community members, to gauge their appetite for longer-term permanent greening measures, including management and maintenance.

A series of parklets and street trees will be planted in movable containers alongside the greening of fixed spaces up and down the high street. This will provide greening, shading, colour and fun. The green spaces can be designed with integrated seating and co-located with signage and other graphic elements to provide wayfinding and spots to dwell and socialise. The underpass is one such fixed spot which could be planted and used alongside the mobile sites.

The garland of micro sites combining in-ground planting, window boxes, wildlife boxes, street planters, mini-parklets and green walls along the high street can act as multifunctional islands of green. This will create small areas of habitat acting as stepping stones for pollinators and other wildlife, increasing biodiversity, enhancing Brent's Bee Corridor and leading to the local nature reserve at The Grange and beyond.





Mobile

Enabling active management, moved and deployed in different locations - thereby avoiding being colonised by anti-social behaviour.

Colourful

Injecting fun, animating the public realm, providing a point of interest and social interaction.

Green

Made of robust and sustainable materials and incorporating green infrastructure to add more greening in to Neasden Lane and test locations for longer term / permanent green measures.

Hyperlocal air quality improvement

Through planting buffers, green walls and suitable plant specification, e.g. Verbena and Lavender to encourage bees and birds, succulents, creeping ivy to absorb for particulate matter.

Place Identity

Creatively designed with a visual identity that speaks to the character and ambition of Neasden Lane

Street Furniture

- Moveable furniture allowing people to dwell on the street in a managed, timed way

Planted Seating

- Moveable planters incorporating lighting and seating

Planted Storage

- Moveable & secure storage units housing the street furniture



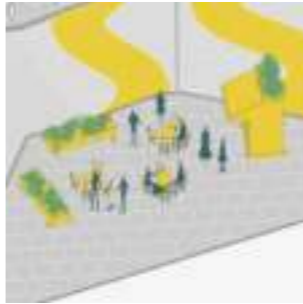



Engagement & Partnerships

Early engagement told us:

- There is a need for more green spaces and a more attractive environment overall
- More appealing green spaces for families
- No space to dwell in Neasden
- Would like appealing features like a living wall

 £ 165,000

 1-2 Years

		Who is leading?	Potential to foster	Long term partnerships
Project	A Moveable Feast	 Brent Council Neasden Network	Capacity building Co-authorship	Brent Council (Parks Team) Community gardeners
	High Street Gardening Days & Community Gardening Group	 Brent Council	Co-design Co-authorship	Brent Council (Parks Team) Neasden Residents High Street Businesses Community gardeners
Supporting Actions & Initiatives	Co-ordinated Waste Management Strategy	 Brent Council Town Centre Manager	Stewardship Community Pride	Neasden Residents High Street Businesses
	Host a window/bird box	 Brent Council Neasden Collective	Stewardship Community Pride	High Street Businesses

Precedents



Mobile Arboretum Cheapside

These engaging, temporary and mobile gardens explored the role of urban greening in a busy city environment incorporating trees and drought tolerant planting. The installation reflected local site histories in its design and narrative.



George's Square Pocket Park Baker Street, London

This site has been transformed through a series of low cost, flexible and imaginative interventions creating a place for nature to thrive and for people to connect in a busy city location.



Better Air Benches Borough Market

Commissioned as part of a Low Emissions Neighbourhood project, this suite of colourful and mobile street furniture combining seating and planting raised awareness of using low emissions routes across the Bankside Neighbourhood.



Palmers Green Action Team London

Palmers Green Action team is a group of local volunteers who got together to help the high street thrive, making changes so that it could once again be the heart of the community. This ensured that local residents were represented when decisions were made for the high street.



Neasden Market



The idea of Neasden as a market destination has come up several times during our early engagement. There have been previous pre-applications for a temporary market in this area.

A regular market can draw footfall to the area, whilst boosting local spend in the neighbouring shops. Specialist markets like antiques/bric-a-brac, art and craft, vintage clothing or food markets have a wide appeal, create a reason to visit and complement the local offer.

The form of the town centre lends itself to programming market days in the central area, which is currently used as car parking. Whilst a good idea principle, a successful outcome for this proposal rests on rationalising the car parking from the current diagonal bays, and the effective movement of traffic around Neasden Lane.



Programme

Annual programme run by Brent Council's Market team and/or independent markets

Local Entrepreneurs

Digital engagement campaign via TikTok / other social media platform to attract the next generation of entrepreneurs



Murals

- Implement market signage through collaboration with local artists and creators

A Civic Square

- Pedestrianise the centre through traffic re-routing on market days creating a lively, safe and activated town centre

Market Stalls

- Pitches to be provided at affordable rates, minimum of 80% of stallholders from Brent

Market Infrastructure

- Power is run in the ground to accessible points on the pavement for market stalls to connect to



Engagement & Partnerships

Early engagement told us:

- Trial a market in Neasden to create a destination and a reason to visit
- There have been previous pre-applications for a temporary market in this area
- A regular market can draw footfall to the area, whilst boosting local spend on the high street
- Neasden’s diversity could be brought out by creating a specialist market
- Build on the successes of the Neasden festival, last held in 2022
- Need to sort out the movement of traffic around Neasden Lane and people along the pavements.
- Use the broad pavements to create a day and night market
- Neasden is severed and ‘pocketed in’ which hampers trading and places to convene like markets

 £ 122,000

 1-2 Years

		Who is leading?	Potential to foster	Long term partnerships
Project	Neasden Market			
			Community Pride	Neasden Colletive Neasden Network Local entrepreneurs Transport for London
Supporting Actions & Initiatives	Feast Markets & Festivals			
			Community Pride Capacity Building	Neasden Network Local entrepreneurs
Supporting Actions & Initiatives	Brief Writing, Funding Applications & Crowdfunding			
			Community Pride Capacity Building Stewardship	Neasden Collective Neasden Network Local entrepreneurs

Precedents



East Street Market

A traditional and bustling South London market and thriving community hub. It is a welcoming space where locals and visitors alike can meet, sit, talk, and enjoy delicious street food, fresh fruit and vegetables, African clothing and vintage goods.



Feast

West Norwood Feast is a community managed market that happens monthly between April and December. It is run almost entirely by volunteers who book the stalls and organise a full programme of free children's activities and live entertainment. It is a farmer's market, a craft fair, a flea market and a street food hub all rolled into one.



Bohemia Market

Hackney

An independently run market since 2017, with community at its centre, showcasing local businesses small artisan traders, sustainable products and street food vendors. Market series such as Black Owned, Hackney Vegan and Wasted Chic.



London Makers Market

London

A convenient platform for the conscious consumer by hosting markets and features. Showcasing a range of beautiful artisan products from small businesses and independent makers enabling a sustainable lifestyles and supporting creative businesses.

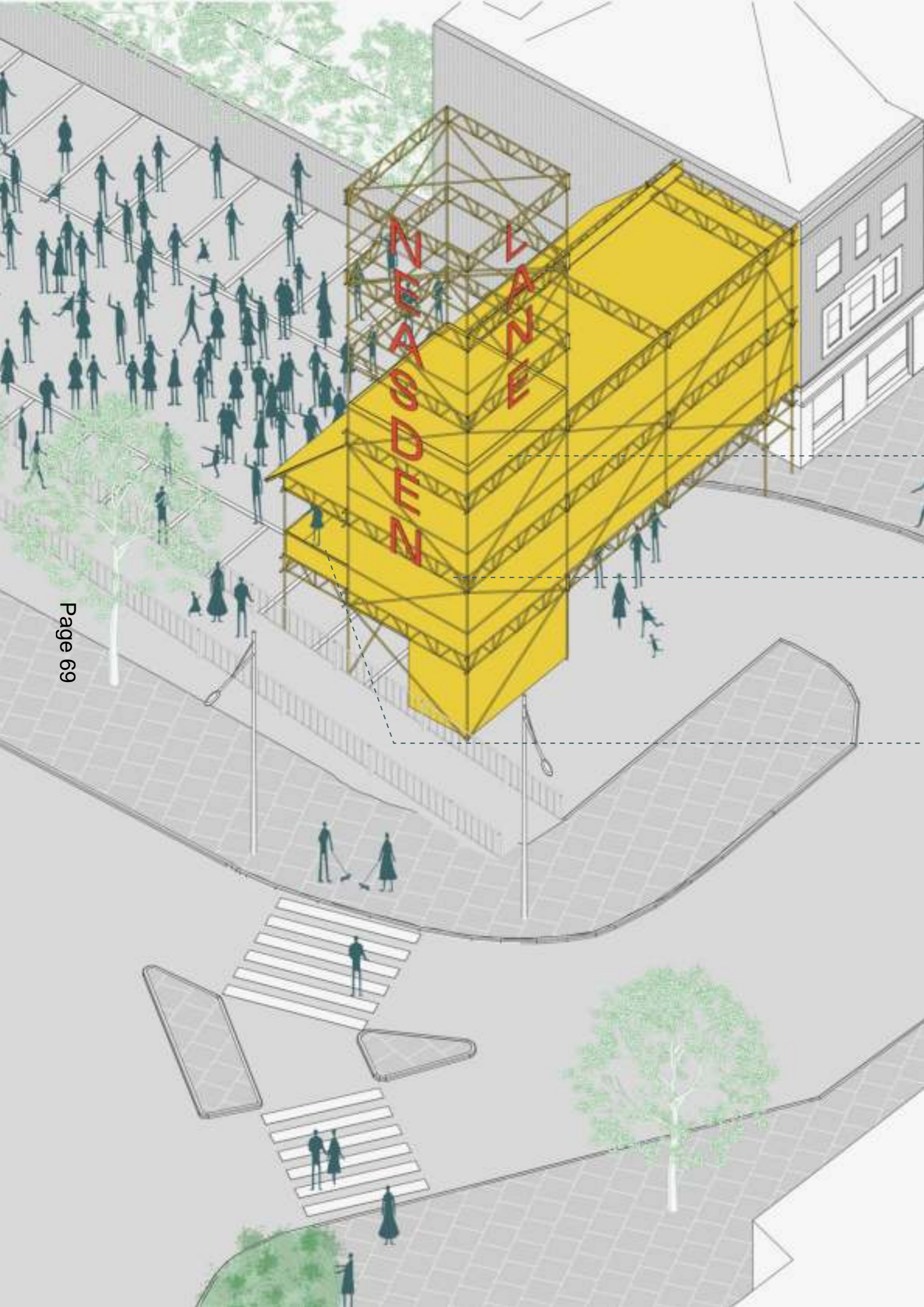


The Lighthouse



The Lighthouse is a meanwhile and demountable community pavilion, a multi-functional beacon to celebrate community and culture. Built within the town centre car park, the building takes up just 3 car parking spaces, and with its tall, brightly coloured form, is an identifiable landmark and gateway for Neasden town centre. Strictly for fun and community building, the conception and delivery of this folly offers opportunities for co-design and community build, and creates a high street anchor, a welcoming civic space, with a mixed programme of round-the-clock activities where people can meet, socialise and celebrate.

The intention for the building is to test innovative ways in which to pivot the high street to create a more diverse high street offer. The car park site is Brent-owned and earmarked for future housing. Depending on when this planned development comes forward, the design and programme for the meanwhile building could adapt, build and grow.



Circular Economy

A low-cost demountable structure with a minimal carbon footprint, sized to sit above standard car parking bays, it has the potential to be re-established elsewhere as a catalyst for growth.

Neasden Festival

The structure provides a central hub for Neasden Festival. The car park could be closed off to provide viewing space for artists to perform on the public balcony.

Signage Beacon

- A lightweight tower marking the entrance to the high street, giving Neasden a new identity and aiding orientation and wayfinding

Community Performance and Exhibition Space

- Flexible spaces for different programmes of activity like plays, concerts and other cultural events

Public Balcony

- A balcony facing the car park provides performance external performance space facing a public square on days the car park is closed off to cars.



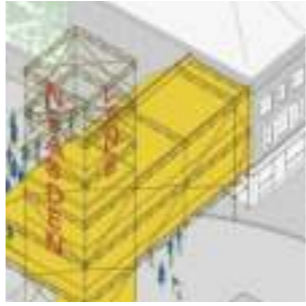







Engagement & Partnerships

Early engagement told us:

- Brent is the home of British Black Music. A long-term opportunity/aspiration exists to create a cultural anchor in the borough
- Reggae as a culture was predominantly hosted within the Caribbean community and is now becoming historic
- Turn legacy of Reggae into a meaningful narrative for Neasden today, by linking it to modern music genres and key socio-economic outputs.

 £ 1,110,000

 2 Years

		Who is leading?	Potential to foster	Long term partnerships	
Project	The Lighthouse			Co-authorship Co-design Community Pride	Cultural Operators Local Artists Neasden Network Local Residents
	Neasden Festival			Co-authorship Community Pride Stewardship	Neasden Network Local Artists Neasden Collective Local Residents
Supporting Actions & Initiatives	Neasden Reggae Museum Exhibitions & Events			Community Pride Stewardship	Local Artists Cultural Operators
	Cultural Programmes			Community Pride Capacity Building	Neasden Network Local Residents

Precedents



Potemkin Theatre Hackney

This small theatre draws on the changing use and cultural significance of the canalside location and presents a bold face to the Regent's Canal in London. On one side the canal frontage has a flat, abstract image; the other side open galleries overlook the rooftop and surrounds. The theatre was constructed over 25 days with the help of a team of volunteers.



Level Up Croatia

Designed to be a new place for locals in Rijeka, Croatia to socialise, it turns a previously disused rooftop area into a terrace. The pavilion, which doubles as street furniture, is formed of a series of levels linking up to an elevated terrace built on the roof. Different places and surfaces for visitors to sit, swing or relax in a hammock are placed all along the extended staircase to the top of the structure.



Theatre on the Fly Chichester

An experimental temporary venue for a season of new theatre built in the grounds of Chichester Festival Theatre. Built by a group of volunteers whose ages ranged from 16 to 68, the design used accessible processes and economic materials to maximise the involvement of the theatre's many supporters and create a generous space within a tight budget.



Horst Festival Belgium

Aa stage for the Horst Festival. Utilising a scaffold system for a budget of 10,000 euros a temporary structure was erected providing a dynamic, performance space with flanking viewing platforms. The structure was affordable but proved to be extremely effective in producing festival and performance space.



Visual Identity & Wayfinding



A strong and meaningful visual identity can celebrate civic pride, foster a communal sense of belonging, and spark a culture of creativity. We propose the commissioning of a strong visual identity for Neasden, with a subsequent public art and wayfinding project to animate and enhance the unique qualities of the town centre to create a visually stimulating environment. Pedestrian approaches into the Town Centre are poor, particularly the main route from Neasden Underground station to the town centre, which is negotiated by crossing a busy gyratory system with no surface-level crossings and a series of convoluted elevated footbridges. A key part of this proposal is addressing these issues by improving people's experience of these routes, and the connection to and from the town centre through a strong, clear and legible wayfinding strategy. Contemporary and engaging public art will complement this strategy and contribute to how Neasden is perceived and will derive inspiration from the fundamental identity of Neasden as a place and the communities who live here.



Rooftop and Facade Signage

- Large scale signage on either the rooftop or the facade of the Ritz Kitchen helps with identity and orientation at the heart of the high street



Murals

- Long-term community involvement in public spaces through co-design of public spaces.
- Engaging with local artists to produce art works and murals on blank facades along the high street that aid wayfinding and orientation

A High Street Identity

- Manifest Neasden's visual and spiritual identity in the public realm through a wayfinding and public art commission, which reflects its vibrant community and unique character.
- Engage with local artists to produce painted floor textures that orientate you with in Neasden and bring a new identity to the town centre



Signage Beacon

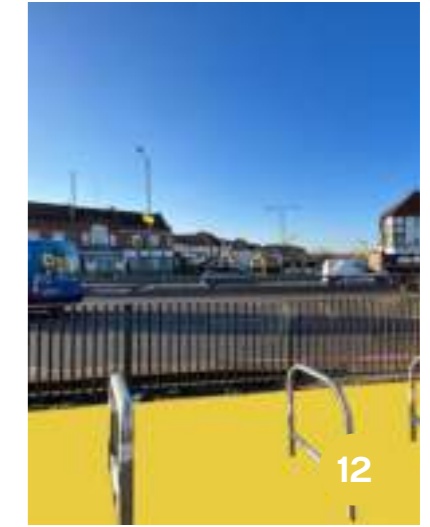
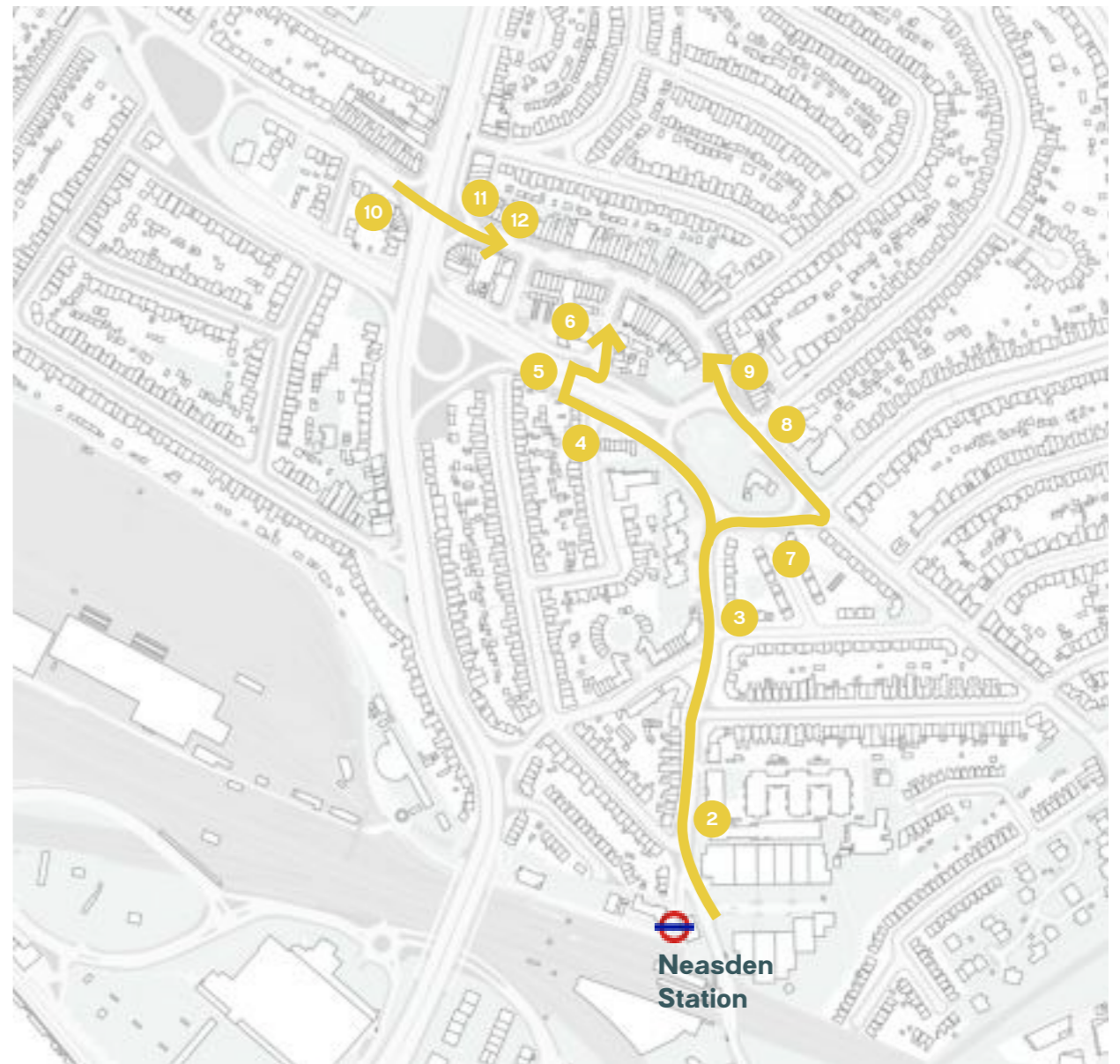
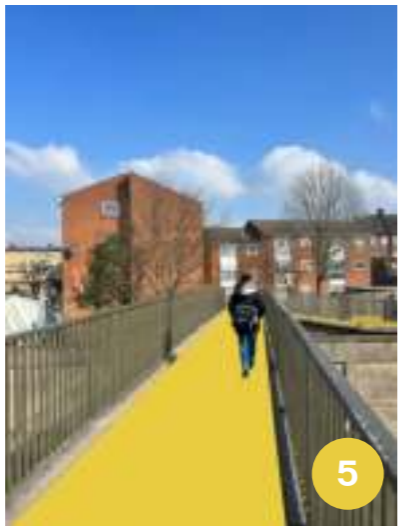
- A lightweight tower marking the entrance to the high street, giving Neasden a new identity and aiding orientation and wayfinding

Clear Routes

- Address need for Neasden's routes and spaces to be punctuated and defined by distinctive landmarks and identifying features such as graphics, wayfinding and public art, to help with legibility.
- Improving the experience of walking and cycling routes, to and from the town centre through a strong, clear and legible wayfinding strategy
- Use painted floor markings and signage to create clear, legible routes guiding visitors from the station to Neasden Town Centre



Getting to Neasden Town Centre



Visual Identity: Roots to Routes

Meaningful community engagement to achieve buy-in and promote inclusivity will help to produce a strong visual identity, wayfinding and public art commission that reflects the community it belongs to. This element has exciting potential to bring out what is authentic about Neasden and shape its identity for the future.

A dynamic logo that combines elements of roads and tree roots, symbolising the intertwining of routes and roots.

A colour palette inspired by the natural environment and the cultural vibrancy of Neasden, using greens for sustainability, vibrant colours for diversity, and earth tones for heritage.

Imagery that showcases the diversity of the community, green spaces, cultural festivals, and the architectural character of Neasden.













Engagement & Partnerships

Early engagement told us:

- Pedestrian entrances and arrivals from Neasden station to the high street are underwhelming or absent
- Poor connection and legibility for pedestrians and cyclists, particularly from station to high street
- Some would rather drive to the tube station than having to walk via the high street
- Clear wayfinding and signage connecting the station, high street and underpass is needed
- Make going to the high street a desire line
- Unsafe crossing locations at the gyratory, with pedestrians regularly climbing over railing to cross
- No 'wow factor' or public welcome as part of the civic space
- Improvements to pedestrian and cyclist infrastructure in Neasden Town Centre to enhance safety, accessibility, and connectivity
- Neasden isn't a 'pretty' place, there is nothing to make people come here. We need a rebrand!

 £ 150,000

 1 Year

		Who is leading?	Potential to foster	Long term partnerships	
Project	A Visual Identity for Neasden		 	Co-authorship Co-design Community Pride	Local Businesses Local Artists Local Makers
	Wayfinding		 	Co-authorship Co-design Community Pride	Local Businesses Local Residents
Supporting Actions & Initiatives	High Street Twinning/exchange visits			Community Pride	Local Residents Local Businesses BIDS
	Community Mural Painting			Community Pride Capacity Building Co-authorship Co-design	Neasden Network Local Artists Local Residents

Precedents



Tooley Street Triangle

London Bridge

Conceived as a map come to life, it transforms an overlooked piece of pavement into a local landmark and meeting point. It has three elements: a scale map of the area around London Bridge printed onto the pavement, a giant signpost with local directions and information on it, and a bench for passers-by to take a breather.



Southbank Centre

London

A new visual identity for London cultural institution Southbank Centre to give it a more "consistent" and less "complex" brand and identity which aimed to represent a more modern way of considering art, where particular disciplines are not "confined to particular buildings", "nor performances to a stage or audiences to seats"



Stratford Placemaking

Stratford

This project was part of the LB Newham's two-year commitment to public realm improvements working in partnership with Stratford Original. The aim was to make the town centre more welcoming and the large, brightly coloured murals on the Broadway shopfronts are part of a wider strategy delivered over two years.



Brent Cross Wayfinding

Brent

The exuberant wayfinding graphics guide people from London's Brent Cross tube station to a new residential, business and recreational development. Designed as a response and activation of Brent Cross Town's aims to be an unrivaled multisport destination. The goal was to capture the spirit of play and bring a bit of joy to the neighbourhood.

Addressing the Themes

Short Term Proposals

1 The Ritz Urban Rooms & Kitchen



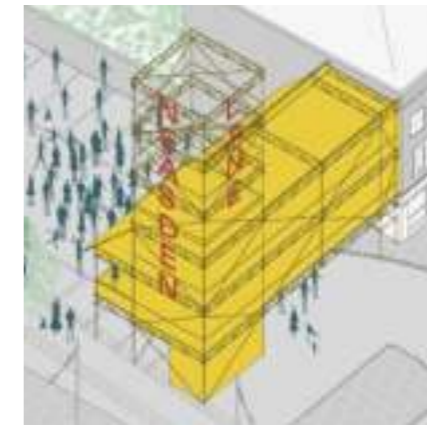
2 A Moveable Feast



3 Neasden Market



4 The Lighthouse



5 Visual Identity & Wayfinding



<p>Existing & New Communities</p>	<p>the Ritz is a community building that serves the needs and wants of the existing demographic of Neasden residents while also providing a unique and rich high street offering not currently provided for elsewhere locally which will bring new residents and visitors to use Neasden High Street</p>	<p>By establishing Neasden High Street as a green town centre in Brent, it will become more appealing to both existing and new communities in the local area</p>	<p>The Market will provide a stepping stone for local businesses to exhibit and sell goods and services. It will also provide an additional reason to visit Neasden, drawing in people from other local communities</p>	<p>A vibrant new beacon of community, identity and culture with space and programmes to showcase Neasden's community, diversity, culture and collaboration. The Lighthouse will reflect the existing culture of Neasden while also pulling in people from new communities being established locally to see performances, exhibitions etc.</p>	<p>The Visual Identity will reflect the vibrant and varied existing communities that make up Neasden</p>
<p>Co-Design</p>	<p>The concept for this proposal is informed by the engagement. The brief and design will be further developed with and alongside the local community to establish co-authorship and build capacity</p>	<p>Opportunities to shape the concept, proposals, commission and upkeep with the local community. The proposal promotes co-design and stewardship with local residents/businesses.</p>	<p>The types of market on offer will be defined through engagement with the local community</p>	<p>Opportunities to shape the concept, proposals, commission and programming with the local community</p>	<p>The local residents and business must be at the heart of a considered and well designed Place and visual identity that speaks to the character and ambition of Neasden Lane</p>
<p>Authorship</p>	<p>The Neasden Collective are already established as the custodians of the Ritz Kitchen and have galvanised to make initial inquiries with the landlord</p>	<p>The measures offer opportunities for the community to galvanise in a volunteering capacity to help adopt, manage and maintain the streetscape.</p>	<p>The market offer can be tested and curated over time, providing opportunities for local entrepreneurs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessible and local cultural/community/event space • Opportunity to nurture local skills/talent pipeline for young people • Cultural partnerships and delivery programme with local and regional organisations such as Reggae Museum, British Museum, UD, Museum of Migration seed Brent Cultural anchor for Black British Music Heritage 	<p>An identity is not a stagnant thing, it will evolve and adapt over time through local authorship</p>
<p>Social Value</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting local entrepreneurship • Accessible ground floor community space • Affordable workspace in partnership with local youth, music and radio organisations • Building skills and talent pipeline for local young people • Community rooftop gardening offers opportunity to tackle social isolation and skills sharing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public realm improved • Urban Greening Factor increase • Increased green space • SUDs planting • Community participation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities for local start-ups • Trader recruits using TikTok/other social media to attract new a young generation of entrepreneurs • Stalls provided at low cost • Min 80% local traders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnership with local youth, music and radio organisations 	<p>Celebrating and reflecting the fundamental identities of Neasden as a place and the communities who live here</p>

		The Ritz Urban Rooms & Kitchen	A Moveable Feast	Neasden Market	The Lighthouse	Visual Identity & Wayfinding
PUBLIC REALM	Public Realm	The Ritz will become the custodians of the area of street in-front of it, activating it with street furniture and planting. The building itself will also act as an extension of the street and public life of Neasden	The appearance of Neasden High Street will be significantly improved, boosting local pride and perception of the public realm	Rationalising the car parking in the town centre to make way for generous civic uses, such as regular specialty markets, will create a habitual reason to visit Neasden and dwell in the town centre, promoting gathering, identity, community events and footfall	On special event days the car park can be closed off to enable it to act as a new public square adjacent to the building, hosting festivals and performances	The proposal will make the public realm more accessible and increase footfall
	Access and Connectivity	With it's position at the heart of the high street, the Ritz Kitchen provides an anchor point for community and civic life on the high street	A Moveable Feast provides a characterful suite of planting to aid wayfinding and navigation to and through the town centre.	—	Car parking spaces are retained, the location is also adjacent to local bus stops	Clear wayfinding connects hard to find areas and improves enjoyment and perception of Neasden and its surroundings
	Exploiting Local Assets	As an un-used building on the high street, The Ritz Kitchen takes advantage of existing, under exploited assets	A Moveable Feast takes advantage of the wide pavements on Neasden High Street, populating and activating it without interrupting movement	Neasden High Street is unique in having particularly generous pavement and road widths. The generosity of the public realm allows it to become a meaningful civic space populated by a market,	The Lighthouse activates an existing, underused piece of public land while retaining the parking in the short term.	Existing lamp posts are used to hold new signage, large solid areas of walls are used to paint murals and wayfinding elements
	Green Space	The rooftop will become a lush communtiy garden used for training, workshops and education	Attractive, clean and green streetscape with colour, character and interest, using interesting planting to mitigate air pollution	—	There is opportunity to improve the green areas around the lighthouse and car park as part fo the project	—
CLIMATE & ECOLOGY	Re-use and Demountability	Where possible existing walls, floors and ceilings will be retained or re-used in the design. Careful consideration will be given to imaginative re-use of materials	As temporary and mobile objects, A Moveable Feast will consider reuse and demountability as part of their design features	Sustainable material will be used for market stalls, with speciality markets for local producers, artisan crafts, green and eco-products	The lighthouse is designed as a fully demountable structure. If the site is developed in the future the project can be dismantled and re-assebled elsewhere. Designed to standard parking bays it could sit neatly in other car parks locally.	Signage is designed to be demountable and moveable so it can react to how Neasden changes over time
	Ecology and Green Space	Plant species on the roof garden will be carefully selected to contribute to local ecology and biodiversity	Plant species will be carefully selected to contribute to the local ecology and biodiversity and feed into Brent initiatives like the Brent Bee Corridor	—	The Car Park does have existing greenery around its edges, there is opportunity to build on this and increase the biodiversity in the area	—
	Sustainable Travel	Centrally located building accessible by bus, bicycle and train/tube. Bike storage will be provided nearby.	—	Centrally located, accessible by bus, bicycle and train/tube	Centrally located, accessible by bus, bicycle and train/tube	Signage will focus on promoting sustainable travel methods
	SUDS and biodiversity	The existing rooftops will be greened where possible to contribute to the wider SUDS strategy	A moveable feast looks to provide stepping stones for pollinators and other wildlife. Given the increase in greenery, the scheme aims to contribute to the wider SUDS strategy	—	Drainage will be considered so as not to negatively impact on drainage systems and strategies	—
	Zero Carbon	Both operational and embodied carbon are taken into account. Where possible the building will be upgraded to reduce operational carbon requirements over the coming years using materials with low embodied carbon, locally sourced where possible	Low embodied carbon materials are ued where possible	Low embodied carbon materials are ued where possible	Designs will ensure a highly energy efficient building making use of bioclimatic architecture and passive concepts, provide renewable energy on site whenever possible, using energy efficiency of appliances and lighting, and considering embedded carbon.	Low embodied carbon materials are ued where possible



NEASDEN
GARDEN

Page 80

RITZ

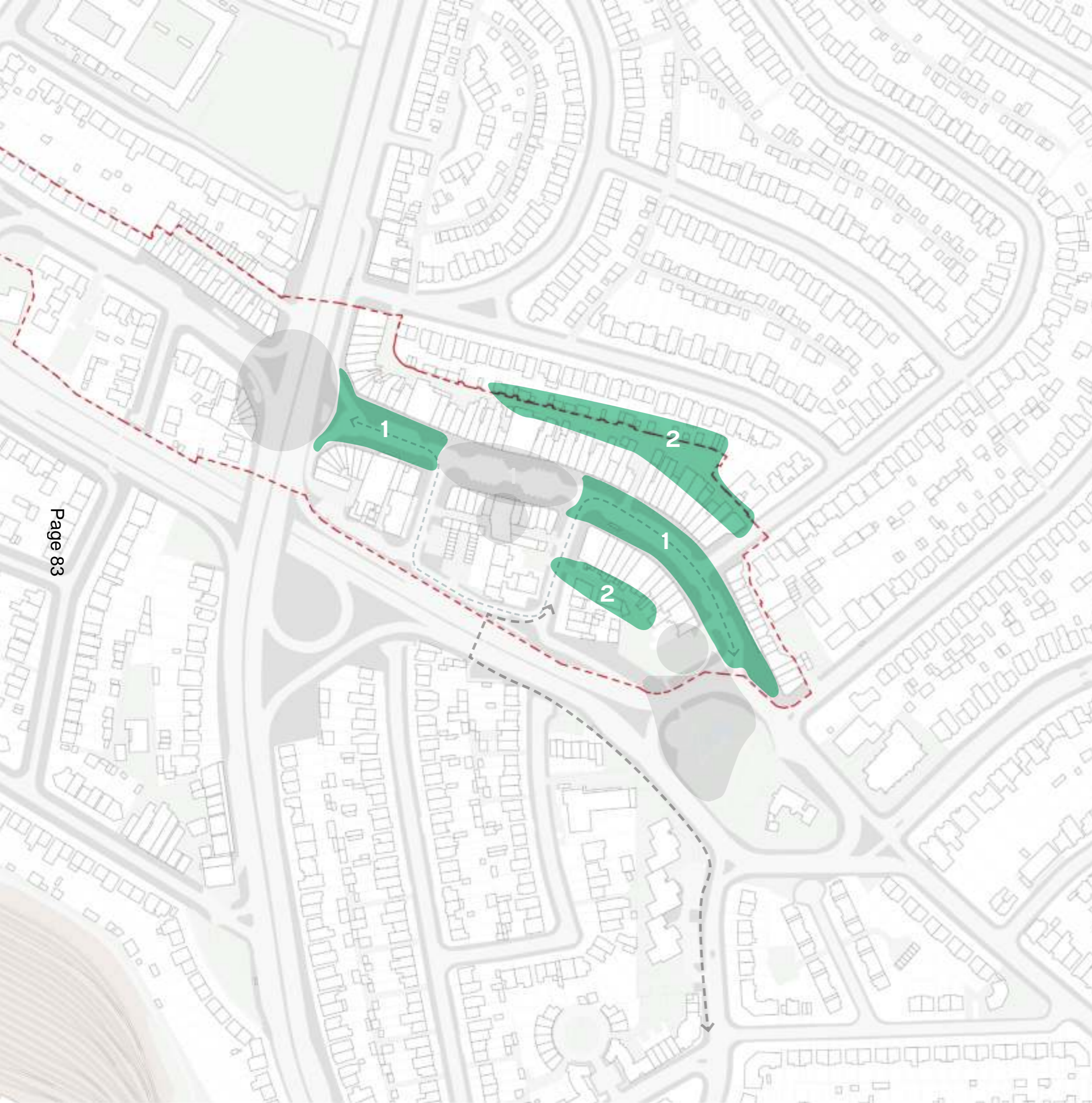




3.3

MEDIUM TERM PROPOSALS

3. ACTIONS



Medium Term Proposals

This phase focuses on greening the high street with Pocket Forests and a variety of different kinds of green spaces with dry, gravel and rain gardens, each promoting green measures such as drought tolerant planting, water attenuation and reuse of materials. These activations build on the previous phase, 'A Moveable Feast', having tested locations, plant species, wayfinding and biodiversity principles, and making them a more established set of features of the townscape.

1. 
Pocket Forests & Gardens

2. 
Alleyways & Garage Spaces



Pocket Forests & Gardens



Building on the pilot initiatives from Phase 1, the next phase proposals are to weave in-ground green infrastructure to transform Neasden Lane into a more climate-resilient neighbourhood. These are themed under three key headlines which collectively can help address the multitude of climate risks faced by Neasden.

Pocket Forests – trees and their canopies characterise some parts of Neasden Lane, notably on the gyratory at The Grange (where the overpass traverses through a tree canopy as it sweeps down to the pond area on the roundabout). There are a number of small pockets of residual space in the wider site area that could accommodate small stands or pockets of trees. The Urban Heat Island Effect is affecting cities increasingly each year. Urban forests can reduce this heating effect quite dramatically.

Gravel Gardens – there are a number of locations in Neasden that are very exposed and dry and would lend themselves to being re imagined as dry gardens, with plants growing in sand and gravel. The principal site for this is at the eastern end of the underpass. If there is any demolition happening locally that would result in crushed concrete this could add to sustainability credentials. Growing in gravel and sand is becoming increasingly prevalent as a tool in designing with climate resilience in mind.

Rain Gardens and de-paving – there are many places along Neasden Lane and in the side-streets off it where hard paving can be removed and green infrastructure retrofitted into the streetscape – either through the implementation of rain gardens or through more simple de-paving initiatives. Both offer a range of environmental and amenity benefits, Rain gardens are a powerful tool in urban greening and flood management. These rain gardens play a pivotal role in mitigating flooding caused by surface water runoff and in purifying water as it percolates through the soil.





Air Pollution

Mitigate air pollution issues through active travel, green infrastructure and enhancing biodiversity.

Ecology & Biodiversity

A garland of micro sites combining in-ground planting, window boxes, wildlife boxes and mini-parklets acting as islands of green habitat and stepping stones for wildlife, increasing biodiversity, enhancing Brent's Bee Corridor and leading to the local nature reserve

Community

The community growing group established on the rooftop garden of Unit 277 can play a pivotal role in the plant selection and management of the urban greening measures.

Rain Gardens /SUDs (Sustainable

Urban Drainage systems)

Areas of hard landscaping are removed in favour of rain gardens which mitigate flood risk and purify water as it percolates through the soil

Pocket Forests

- Using wider sections of public realm and 'forgotten' spaces to introduce pockets of trees to combat the heat island effect and improve biodiversity





Gravel Gardens

- With a focus on circular economy, demolition from the urban greening interventions is crushed and used in a new garden in the existing underpass.

High Street Greening

- Greenery is implemented along the full length of the high street, giving Neasden a new identity as one of the greenest High Streets in Brent.

Pocket Parks

- Taking advantage of underused corners of Neasden to intensify greening, improved drainage and build upon local biodiversity and ecology.

The Nature Reserve


- The existing nature reserve is celebrated and managed to increase local awareness and number of visitors.










Engagement & Partnerships

Early engagement told us:

- There is a need for more green spaces and a more attractive environment overall
- Pedestrian entrances and arrivals from Neasden station to the high street are underwhelming or absent No 'wow factor' or public welcome as part of the civic space
- Neasden is not a 'pretty' place and that there is nothing to make people come here.

 £ 515,600

 4-5 Years

		Who is leading?	Potential to foster	Long term partnerships	
Project	Pocket Forests and Gardens		 	Community Pride Capacity Building Stewardship	Green Infrastructure Provider Neasden Network Brent Council Local Residents
	High Street Gardening Days & Community Gardening Group			Co-design Co-authorship	Brent Council (Parks Team) Neasden Residents High Street Businesses Community gardeners
Supporting Actions & Initiatives	Co-ordinated Waste Management Strategy		 	Stewardship Community Pride	Neasden Residents High Street Businesses
	Nature Trails			Community Pride Stewardship	Brent Council (Parks Team) Neasden Residents Community gardeners

Precedents



Royal Docks Raingarden

Rain Gardens are incorporated as part of the Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS) plan. Implemented across 5 phases, over 50 varieties of trees, shrubs and plants were used in the first phase including 5,000 plants in total! As the plants establish and bloom, they enhance the area's visual appeal while also serving as a vital food source for pollinators, thereby contributing to biodiversity.



A Flight Folly

An installation that aims to improve the visibility of Barnet's greenery and connect people with green spaces. It draws upon the Barnet district's aviation history and connection to the Royal Air Force. The structures connect several meters above ground level in the shape of 'flight paths'.



Guys Hospital Biodiversity Garden

A colourful garden on the entrance road to Guy's Hospital, made from recycled demolition material. Utilising ecological principles to match plants to the low-nutrient mounded rubblescapes, a series of drought tolerant plants have been used to create a robust evolving garden, brightening a much-needed plant-filled space.



Sugi Heritage Forest

Kensington

The forest will revive the UK's endangered flora, nurture pollinators vital for food production, and grow medicinal herbs known to bring balance back to body, mind, and spirit. The forest will be a green space for local neighbours to find quiet moments of respite and to take in the joys of nature in a vibrant and busy city.



Alleyways & Garage Spaces



The most frequently mentioned challenges in Neasden Town Centre include issues related to street drinking and groups of men hanging around, which contribute to a fear and perception of crime/anti-social behaviour.

Birse Crescent alleyway is a high problem area. Ongoing issues that the police tackle regularly in Neasden centre are centred around drug crime, gang violence, anti-social behaviour, waste management & fly tipping. Crowding out these issues with a variety of early initiatives around security, lighting, cleaning and public realm improvements will not solve the socio-economic issues, but will give an uplift to this part of the town centre that is increasingly becoming a no-go area because of the real and perceived threat of crime. Engaged and active groups in the town centre, like Neasden Collective meet with other groups like local Resident's Associations and Neasden Neighbourhood Watch, and local people are acutely aware of these issues. Neasden Collective have applied for funding to purchase CCTV cameras to be installed in the alleyway as a deterrent.

Our strategy is to crowd out these elements using natural surveillance, programming and co-authorship to overcoming crime and the fear of crime.



Changing Perception

- Activation of garage spaces to increase activity and surveillance
- Security measures such as lockable gates, and CCTV cameras

Combatting Anti-Social Behaviour

- Crowd out anti-social elements using natural surveillance, programming and co-authorship to overcoming crime and the fear of crime.
- 'Problem Oriented Policing' led by Metropolitan Police in partnership with Brent Council Neasden Neighbourhood Watch, Neasden Collective and residents

Clean and Welcoming Spaces

- Better care, surveillance and stewardship to ensure alleyways are clean and cared for
- Upgrade to lighting, waste management (litter-pick days) and greening to improve public realm




Engagement & Partnerships

Early engagement told us:

- Operation Nightingale is being deployed in places like Neasden.
- Opportunities for young people to get out of a gang lifestyle are absent.

 £ 39,400

 3-4 Years

		Who is leading?	Potential to foster	Long term partnerships	
Project	Alleyways & Garage Spaces			Community Pride Capacity Building Stewardship	Green Infrastructure Provider Neasden Network Brent Council Local Residents
	Problem Oriented Policing		 	Capacity Building Stewardship	Local Residents Neasden Neighbourhood Watch Local Businesses Brent Council (Community Safety)
Supporting Actions & Initiatives	Neasden Litter Pick & Lunch		 	Community Pride Capacity Building Stewardship	Neasden Collective Local Residents
	Neighbourhood Watch			Stewardship	Brent Council (Community Safety) Local Residents Local Businesses

Precedents



Breakthrough Purley

'Breakthrough' is a community-led public art installation in a well-used and under-lit narrow laneway that connects the train station to the town centre. The artwork was inspired by the hope and optimism of women of Purley.



Bristol Environmental Crimes Bristol

Bristol Council are working with an environmental enforcement company to tackle environmental crimes. Environmental Enforcement Officers patrol the city to cut down on the crimes and increase environmental awareness. Anyone caught committing an environmental crime, they will be given a fixed penalty notice charge on the spot.



Ray of Light Madrid

A temporary installation that gives a visual perception of a projected beam of light. The project's intention was to give the illusion of an artificial light shining from above made by using over 250 meters of yellow tape, pineapples, painted pieces of art, lawn furniture and a lamp.






The Blue Bermondsey Peoples Mural Southwark



The final element of the Made in Bermondsey regeneration project this community mural celebrates the history and life of South Bermondsey, painted by distinguished mural artist Paul Butler and features legendary Bermondsey reformer Ada Salter.

Addressing the Themes

Medium Term Proposals

1 Pocket Forests & Gardens	2 Alleyways & Garage Spaces
	

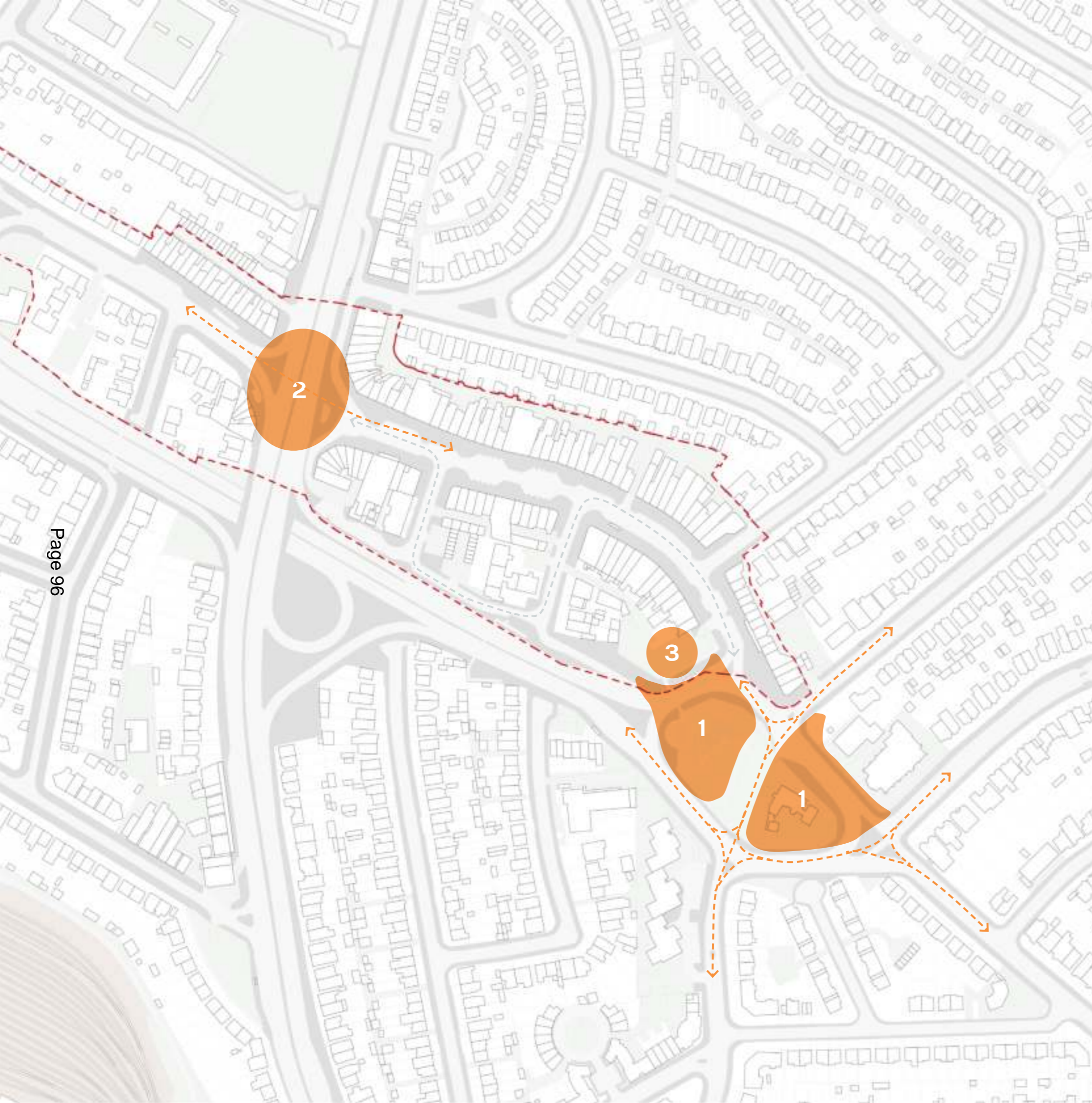
	Existing & New Communities	By establishing Neasden High Street as a green town centre in Brent, it will become more appealing to both existing and new communities in the local area	
	Co-Design	Opportunities to shape the concept, proposals, commission and upkeep with the local community. Co-design and stewardship with local residents/businesses.	
	Authorship	Foster local appetite for permanent greening measures, including stewardship management and maintenance.	
	Social Value	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public realm improved Urban Greening Factor increase Increased green space SUDs planting Community participation 	Local artists and creatives will be commissioned to design artworks to install in the alleyways. There is potential to involve local schools and youth groups to both design and paint the installations through community events.

		Pocket Forests & Gardens	Alleyways & Garage Spaces
 PUBLIC REALM	Public Realm	The appearance of Neasden High Street will be significantly improved, boosting local pride and perception of the public realm	The appearance of the alleyways will be significantly improved, boosting perception of the spaces and therefore footfall and use. The proposal aims to take these forgotten spaces and redefine their character and reputation in the local community.
	Access and Connectivity	The proposal provides a characterful suite of planting to aid wayfinding and navigation to and through the town centre.	
	Exploiting Local Assets	The design focusses on areas of the high street as well as forgotten pockets of public realm around Neasden High Street	
	Green Space	Attractive, clean and green streetscape with colour, character and interest, using interesting planting to mitigate air pollution	
 CLIMATE & ECOLOGY	Re-use and Demountability	Elements of the design will focus on re-use and using local, unwanted material where possible. The rain gardens can be made from recycled demolition material coming out of other local projects.	The long term vision for the alleyways includes further greening and improving further the aesthetic and perception of them as places to enjoy. As part of the scheme environmental crime enforcement could be implemented. Environmental crimes include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> dropping litter on the street or from your vehicle: including chewing gum and cigarette butts graffiti: this includes painting or damaging a tree or any road signs flyposting flytipping nuisance parking not putting your domestic or commercial waste out properly breach of a Community Protection Notice dog fouling drinking in a no-drinking area
	Ecology and Green Space	Plant species will be carefully selected to contribute to the local ecology and biodiversity and feed into Brent initiatives like the Brent Bee Corridor	
	Sustainable Travel	—	
	SUDS and biodiversity	The scheme will significantly improve the SUDS strategy along the high street. In addition it looks to provide stepping stones for pollinators and other local wildlife.	
	Zero Carbon	The pocket parks and forests will form mini carbon sinks along the high street	

3.4

LONG TERM PROPOSALS

3. ACTIONS



Long Term Proposals

This phase builds on the greening of the last two phases, with the culmination in 3 larger-scale aspirational projects: to create a pronounced linear green connection with North Circular underpass, peninsularisation of the eastern gyratory, reconnecting The Grange back to the high street and a permanent cultural venue The Lighthouse, as part of a future housing development overlooking the Green.

1. 
The Green at the Grange

2. 
The Underpass

3. 
**The Lighthouse
(Permanent) &
Future Development**



The Green at the Grange



The open space at The Grange roundabout is the largest green space in the immediate area and is designated as a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation. In the 1980s, the London Wildlife Trust converted part of this roundabout into a nature area. This unique yet underutilised asset is accessed from the side near Neasden Parade via a footbridge, but is cut-off and hidden from the town centre because of the dominant and busy highway system.

The nature area includes a pond and wetland plants, wildflower grasslands, screening scrub and mature trees. Several flower species that grow here attract pollinators, adding to Brent's bee corridor. Although the site is rich in wildlife and protected from the surrounding urban activity, it would benefit from some upkeep to elevate its important role as a small nature reserve.

A bold opportunity exists for a comprehensive reconnection of the wider 'island' back to the high street, enhancing the town centre with a more substantially sized green space - revealed, renewed and brought closer to the town. Along with St. Catherine's church, Neasden Montessori School and the Grange Business Centre, the Lighthouse building/car park would face onto this new green, an ideal opportunity to build on its' civic potential to programme and animate the space.

As identified in the Jan Kattein study of 2020, 'Reconnecting The Grange' could be coupled with integrating the southern elbow of Birse Crescent (currently used for servicing and buses), to create a green buffer extending from The Grange between Neasden Lane and the A4088. This buffer could extend across the North Circular to the western end of the high street.





A Town Green

- Renew and protect the nature reserve through upgrade and maintenance
Culmination of the Green Garland urban greening, built on earlier phases (A Moveable Feast and Pockets forest & Gardens) to improve air quality, urban greening and enhance Brent's bee corridor



Create civic clusters

- Re-connect the grange, by peninsularising the gyratory
- Create a reimagined town green bounded by a civic cluster: The Lighthouse, The Grange Business Centre, St. Catharine's Church and former Montessori School
- The Montessori School is a potential development site which could add character and new community/cultural activity to the town centre



Re-establish historic routes

- Realign to the historic street pattern and desire lines across the gyratory

Improve connections


- New, wide at-grade pedestrian and cycle crossings, providing safety and legibility



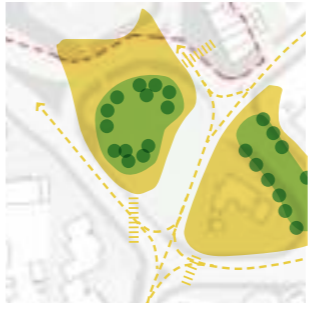







Engagement & Partnerships

Early engagement told us:

- Improvements to pedestrian and cyclist infrastructure to enhance safety, accessibility, and connectivity.
- Neasden is severed and 'pocketed in' This hampers trading, places to convene (markets and dwell spaces) safety, pedestrian comfort and quality of the public realm.
- Some would rather drive to the tube station than having to walk via the high street
- Clear wayfinding and signage connecting the station, high street and underpass
- Make going to the high street a desire line
- Unsafe crossing locations at the gyratory, with pedestrians regularly climbing over railing to cross

 £ 2,730,000

 5+ Years

		Who is leading?	Potential to foster	Long term partnerships	
Project	The Green at the Grange		 Brent Council	Community Pride Capacity Building Stewardship	Brent Council (Parks Team) Neasden Residents Community gardeners
	Supporting Actions & Initiatives	High Street Gardening Days & Community Gardening Group		 Brent Council	Co-design Co-authorship
Nature Trails			 Brent Council	Community Pride Stewardship	Brent Council (Parks Team) Neasden Residents Community gardeners
Bikeability - Cycle Training for Youth			 Bikeability	Capacity Building	Brent Council Neasden Residents

Precedents



Highbury Corner London

Segregated cycle lanes and a new green public space are introduced. New, wider and 'straight across' pedestrian crossings are implemented with more green space by partially opening the arboretum to public access. A new shared pedestrian/cycle toucan crossing across St Paul's Road to allow two-way cycling.



Phoenix Community Garden London

The Phoenix Garden is a community garden nestled in the heart of the West End. It provides a green retreat from the stresses of the city and a valuable habitat for urban wildlife. A modest garden building provides space for the charity, events, education and storage.



Stockwell Cross London

TfL is improving Stockwell Cross, as one of the 33 busiest and most dangerous junctions. Designed to encourage walking and cycling by providing a dedicated cycle route and creating a new public space. The removal of the gyratory system will help support local investment in the area.



Westfield Opens Nature Reserve London

A pioneering space, the Nature Reserve has been designed to feature a range of diverse horticultural areas. The Nature Reserve hosts a variety of different areas including a wild flower meadow, insect hotels, beehive, fruit trees, vegetable beds, herbs and a pond area

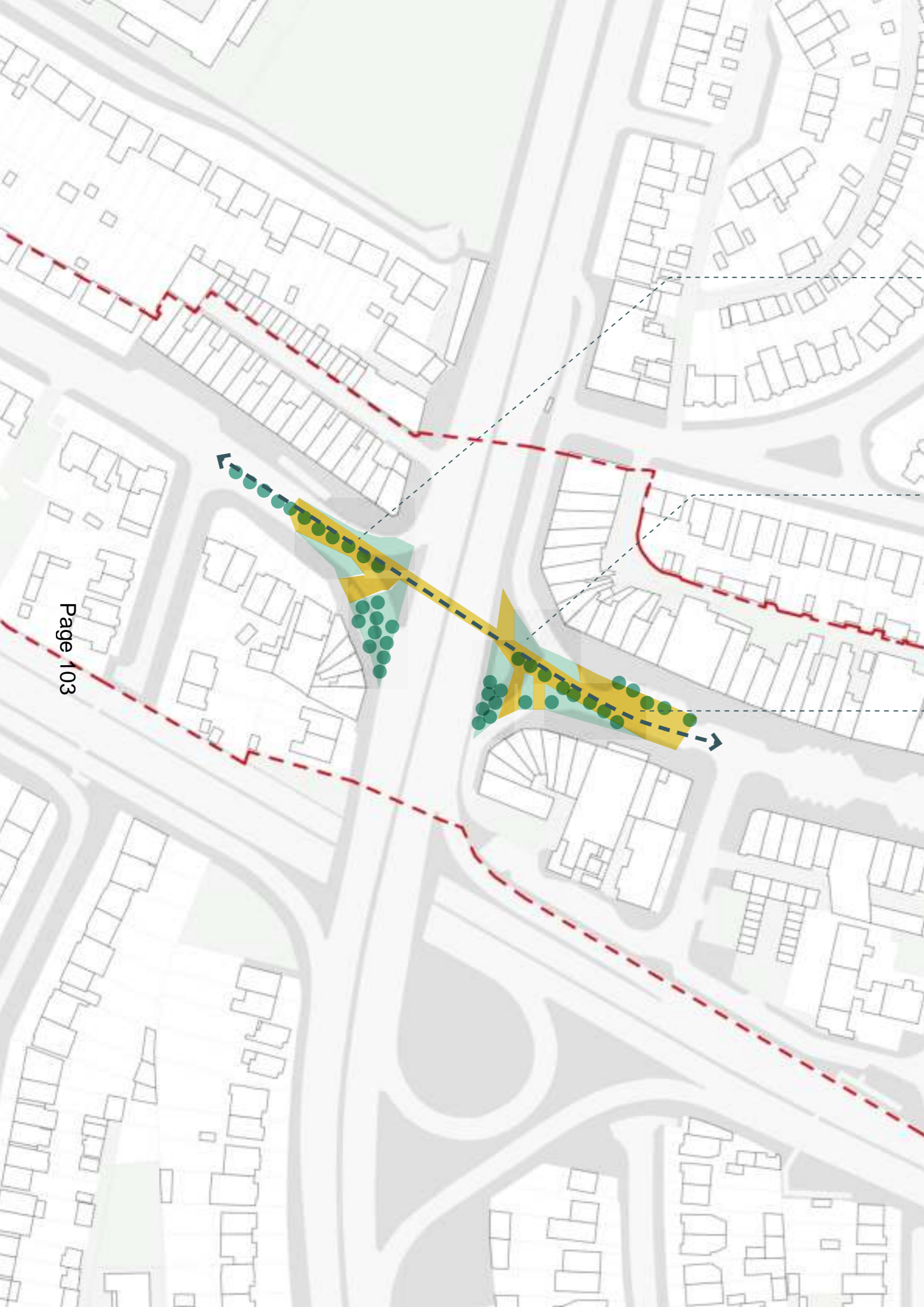


The Underpass



This project was the preferred option, proposed as part of the Wvg Neasden Lane Options study and looks to improve the approaches to the underpass, rationalise the convoluted approaches, improve greening and strengthen the linear connection between the two sides of Neasden Lane.

This is longer-term subway upgrade that sees the creation of a sunken garden landscaped with sloping garden terraces, planted with mixed grasses and flowering plants to create colour and interest. A retaining wall and an 'avenue' of tall trees further strengthens the linear connection between the two sides of Neasden Lane. Trees are also grouped close to the North Circular to act as a screen and noise buffer.



Safety & Visibility

- Upgrade the lighting throughout the underpass
- Improve visibility by straightening out the access points creating a clear linear route

Greening & Ecology

- Implement a terraced approach allowing for new trees and planting
- Integrate soft landscaping into the design, combating air pollution from the North Circular

Pedestrian & Cycle Usability

- Create cycle friendly ramps providing access to the underpass each side of the North Circular
- Excavation of existing carriageway and footway to enable widened approaches



Engagement & Partnerships

Early engagement told us:

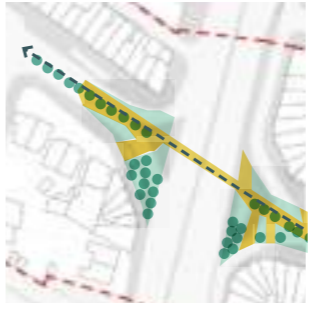







- There is a need for more green spaces and a more attractive environment overall
- Pedestrian entrances and arrivals from Neasden station to the high street are underwhelming or absent No 'wow factor' or public welcome as part of the civic space
- Improvements to pedestrian and cyclist infrastructure in Neasden Town Centre to enhance safety, accessibility, and connectivity
- Neasden is severed and 'pocketed in' This hampers trading, places to convene (markets and dwell spaces) safety, pedestrian comfort and quality of the public realm.
- Clear wayfinding and signage connecting the station, high street and underpass
- Make going to the high street a desire line



£ 1,101,100



5+ Years

		Who is leading?	Potential to foster	Long term partnerships	
Project	The Underpass			Community Pride Stewardship	Brent Council (Parks Team) Community gardeners
	High Street Gardening Days & Community Gardening Group			Co-design Co-authorship	Brent Council (Parks Team) Neasden Residents High Street Businesses Community gardeners
Supporting Actions & Initiatives	Nature Trails			Community Pride Stewardship	Brent Council (Parks Team) Neasden Residents Community gardeners
	Bikeability - Cycle Training for Youth			Capacity Building	Brent Council Neasden Residents

Precedents



Happy Street

Nine Elms

With the aspiration to overhaul a "gloomy underpass" in Wandsworth, the Thessaly Road Railway Bridge transforms the underpass into a welcoming space for pedestrians and cyclists, which the local community can be proud of. The richly patterned vitreous enamel panels, and the illumination at night provide a new local landmark, giving users a greater sense of safety and visual enjoyment.



Wassenaar Bicycle Tunnel

Netherlands

This Bicycle tunnel in the Netherlands, opened in 2017 forms a pedestrian and cycle route that runs under a busy road. The tunnel allows direct and clear vision through its full extent increasing the feeling of safety as you enter. Mosaics line the walls while low and high level lighting ensure its well lit.



Bergen Cycle Tunnel

With its 3000 m, it is the world's longest purpose-built pedestrian and cycling tunnel. The path is 7.8 km long in total and takes about 25 minutes to cycle through. A blue rubber floor makes the tunnel a perfect place for running on rainy days. The opening of the new pedestrian and cycling paths is part of a decade-long strategy to make Bergen a more environmentally friendly and sustainable city.



The Olympic Park

The planting in the Olympic Park's 2012 gardens is highly structured, designed for dramatic, year-round effect. The plants themselves were carefully selected not only for their beauty but also for their durability and value in attracting bees, butterflies, hoverflies, and other species for increasing biodiversity.



The Lighthouse (Permanent) & Future Development



Building on the seed stage proposed in the last phase, The Lighthouse will now take on some of the programme, activities and operators trialled at the meanwhile stage, housed within a permanent space. The Town Centre car park site is earmarked by Brent Council for housing development. As this comes forward, the gateway location is an excellent opportunity to co-locate with residential use, cultural and community activities within part of the future development. The green buffer zone proposed above could fit well with public/private amenity space provided as part of a future housing site.



A New Gateway to Neasden

- A new public ground floor provides an activated and welcoming entry point to Neasden High Street



Culture and Community

- Cultural and community civic space activating the new green town square
- Permanent showcase for cultural diversity and interim home to Brent British Black Music cultural archive/ programme
- Creative economy co-located with residential and town centre uses
- Acknowledging role arts, culture and heritage will play in shaping the growing community



Biodiversity & Green Space


- Green finger extension from the Grange could be part of housing amenity







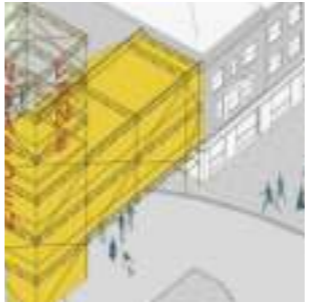

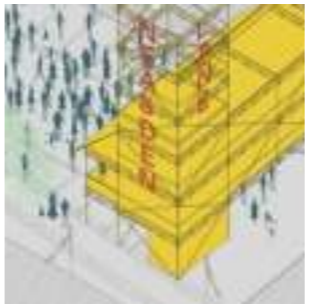


Engagement & Partnerships

Early engagement told us:

- Cultural and community civic space activating the new green town square
- Gateway to Neasden, located on the desire line from the Station to the High Street
- Permanent showcase for cultural diversity and home to Brent British Black Music cultural archive/ programme
- Co-location of residential/arts and culture
- Delivering through arts and culture, key socio-economic impacts like access to learning, training, skills and building a talent pipeline

 £ 1,200,000

 10+ Years

		Who is leading?	Potential to foster	Long term partnerships
Project	The Lighthouse (Permanent) & Future Development			
			Community Pride Capacity Building Stewardship	Cultural Operators Local Artists Neasden Network Local Residents
	Neasden Festival			
			Co-authorship Community Pride Stewardship	Neasden Network Local Artists Neasden Collective Local Residents
Supporting Actions & Initiatives	Neasden Reggae Museum Exhibitions & Events			
			Community Pride Stewardship	Local Artists Cultural Operators
	Cultural Programmes			
	 	Community Pride Capacity Building	Neasden Network Local Residents	

Precedents



M Shed Bristol

M Shed is a new kind of museum, one that challenges traditional ideas. It works with the people of Bristol to create displays which make everyone want to come and see. It is a living museum, where the stories of the past spark discussions about the future.



Rich Mix Hackney

Rich Mix is a cultural and community space in East London, offering live music, cinema, dance, theatre, spoken word, education, and a range of creative activities for people of all ages and cultures. Through our creative engagement programmes, we develop and facilitate the creative potential of young people, families, children and wide-ranging communities from across East London.



Peckham Levels Southwark

Peckham Levels is a vibrant cultural destination. Designed to act as a platform to help creative and ambitious local people get their ideas off the ground. Peckham Levels offers much needed performance space, creative workspace, designed to inspire and support a new community of artists, makers and entrepreneurs, as well as providing benefits to the wider community.



Talent House East London

UD is a London-based music organisation bringing communities together around Black music and Black music culture. UD and East London Dance have come together to offer opportunities for young people at Talent House. A pioneering music and dance hub it is a cultural hub for emerging talent.

Addressing the Themes – Long Term Proposals

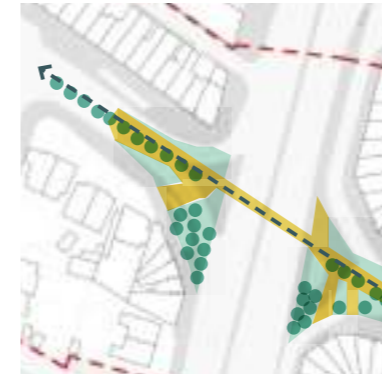
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The Green at the Grange



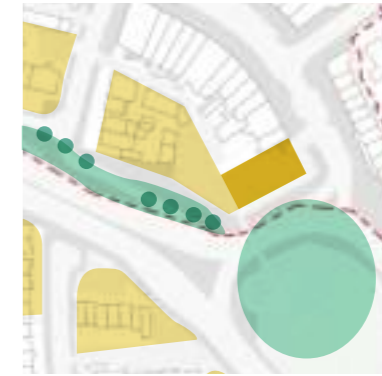
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The Underpass



3

The Lighthouse (Permanent) & Future Development



AUDIENCE & PARTICIPATION REPRESENTATION	Existing & New Communities			
	Co-Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By establishing Neasden High Street as a town centre with a new and refreshed green space and identity in Brent, it will become more appealing to both existing and new communities in the local area. A new green town square, activated with community, and cultural programmes (The Lighthouse) to showcase Neasden's community, diversity, culture and collaboration. 	<p>The concept for this proposal is informed by the early studies and engagement. The brief and design will be further developed with and alongside the local community to establish co-authorship</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Permanent showcase for cultural diversity and home to Brent British Black Music cultural archive/programme. Co-location of residential/arts and culture Delivering through arts and culture, key socio-economic impacts like access to learning, training, skills and building a talent pipeline
	Authorship			
	Social Value			
PUBLIC REALM	Public Realm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The reimagined green space is a desire line to the centre, and both a transit and dwell space to draw in people from new and existing communities. Builds on the on the unique and special character of The Grange and its surrounding green space and nature reserve 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public realm improved Restitching the severance of Neasden Lane through the strengthening the desire line, high quality public realm and an avenue of green planting 	<p>Cultural and community civic space activating the town green edge Gateway to Neasden, located on the desire line from the Station to the High Street</p>
	Access and Connectivity			
	Exploiting Local Assets			
	Green Space			
CLIMATE & ECOLOGY	Re-use and Demountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Builds on the on the unique and special character of The Grange and its surrounding green space and nature reserve Acts as a stepping stone for wildlife, building on a green garland of micro sites (pocket park and forests) installed along Neasden Lane Adds to Brent's Bee Corridor The reimagined green space is a desire line to the centre, and both a transit and dwell space to draw in people from new and existing communities. Central location, accessible by public transport and active modes of travel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased green space and SUDs Water attenuation, biodiversity and air quality impact Increasing the attractiveness of cycle and pedestrian travel across the North Circular through a more legible and pleasant connection. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-location within a new housing development built to high sustainable design standards Central location, accessible by public transport and active modes of travel
	Ecology and Green Space			
	Sustainable Travel			
	SUDS and biodiversity			
	Zero Carbon			

3.5

DELIVERABILITY

3. ACTIONS

Partnership

Authorship & Stewardship

'Neasden Collective' are a newly formed business alliance, representing a number of high street businesses on the high street. The group represents an ideal partnership opportunity to build capacity, create co-authorship and legacy in the area through several town centre initiatives, including the activation and reimagination of no.277 into the Ritz Kitchen & Rooftop. Although the unit is not Council owned, there is promising potential to work in partnership with the Neasden Collective, who have the ability to fundraise and already have bold ambitions to take on the lease of no. 277, with the intention of creating a mixed-use civic hub. Neasden Collective have started negotiations with the landlord and if successful, they predict that the rental from the subdivided food outlets on the ground floor) could cross-subsidise upper floors. The Ritz Kitchen could unlock huge potential for the high street offer, community co-design and authorship.

During the Phase 1, light-touch, pilot projects which are proposed such as A Moveable Feast, are intended to test and foster local appetite for longer-term permanent greening measures, including stewardship management and maintenance. The measures themselves offer opportunities for the community to galvanise in a volunteering capacity to help adopt, manage and maintain the streetscape.

Neasden Town Centre is fortunate enough to have a dedicated Town Centre Manager for Neasden High Street who could be the conduit for such a partnership approach.

A Phased Approach to create a legacy

A phased approach starting with small-scale initiatives such as each business hosting a window box, starts to promote pride along the streetscape before moving onto larger scale initiatives like a Neasden High Street specific 'Library of Things' that can be used communally for activations and events. Items could include occasional tables and chairs, moveable planters, floor paint, crowd barriers, A-boards or street works signs to be creatively adapted to highlight community activities. Location/storage for this library of things could form part of the street furniture as multifunctional kiosks.

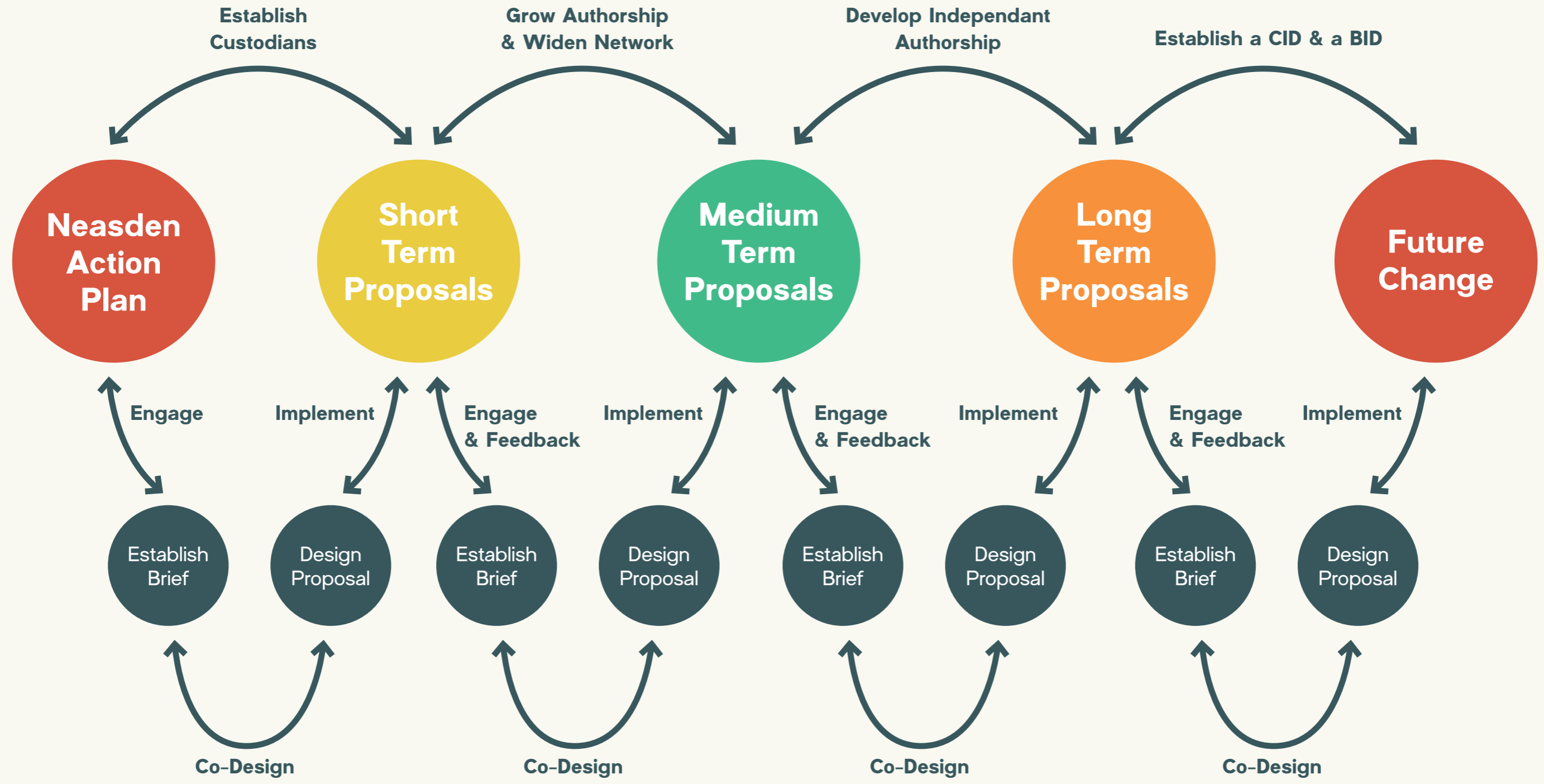
In addition to providing flexible spaces for community and cultural events, The Lighthouse offers the potential to seed a Brent cultural anchor, with its very early prototype starting life in Neasden. As the former home of Bob Marley, and with Brent as the root of British Black music culture, developing this ethereal historical asset into a cultural asset and physical space for the future is an idea that could be explored.

Moving into the permanent phase, a mixed use offer as part of a future housing development on the site, any such 'cultural anchor' would need to generate repeat footfall with key socio-economic impacts such as training, education, skills and building a talent pipeline for the future creative economy. This is the core idea that could be explored for Neasden, combining the activities and outputs at The Lighthouse and the music studios/enterprise space at no. 277.

The opportunity of promoting the ideas of a Brent Black British music cultural anchor, seeded as a pilot in Neasden should be explored with the Brent Council Culture team. Starting as small-scale community commissions taken from existing cultural archives at Willesden Library and The Reggae Museum to platform them on a London-wide stage, these could be developed into a future strategic package of regeneration and creative economy initiatives for Neasden and Brent over the next 5-10 years.

A Brief that Evolves Incrementally and Collaboratively

Paving the Way for Future Change
Improve community capacity, change perceptions & build momentum

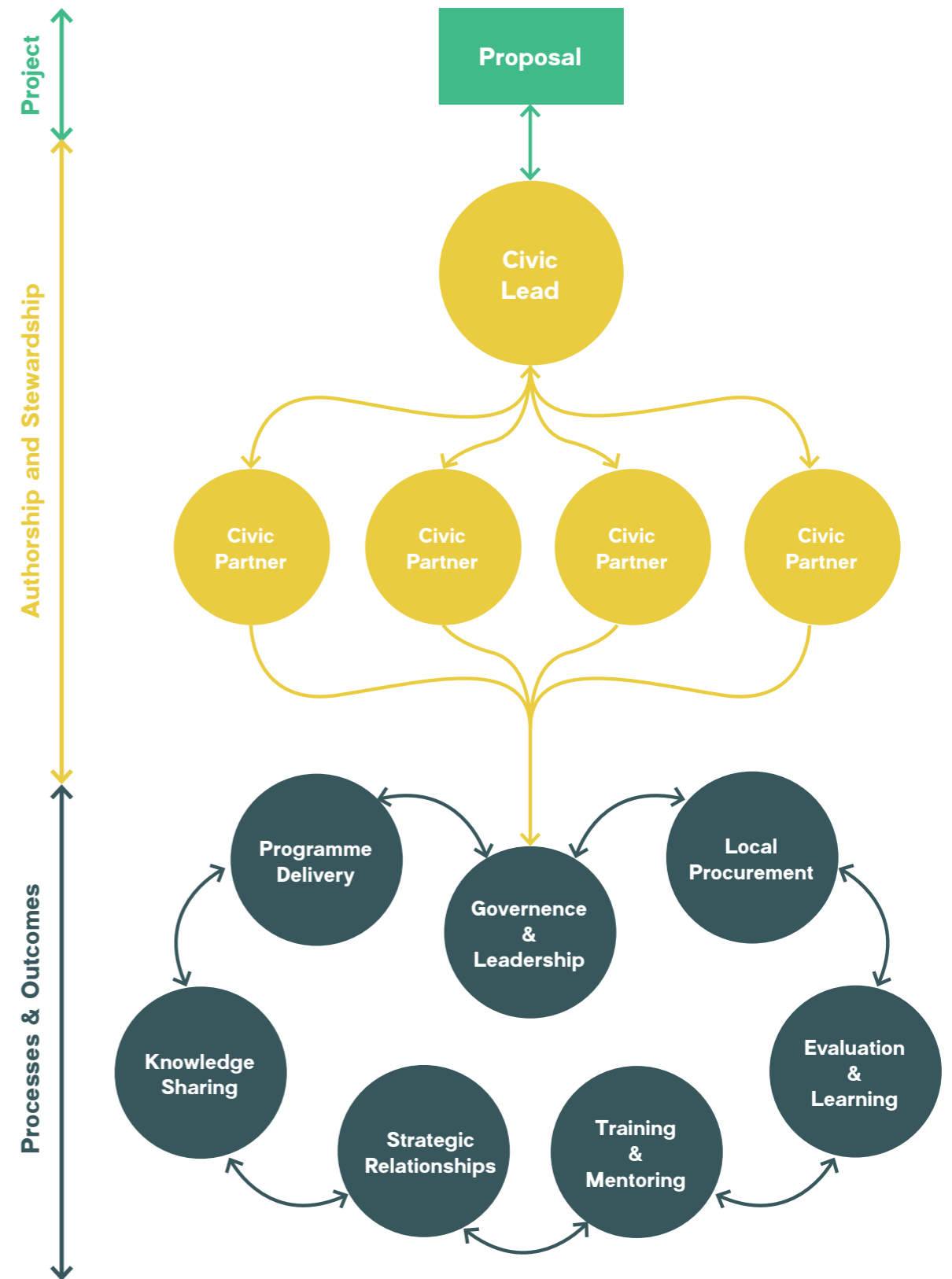





























Capacity Building

The Home Office programme 'Operation Nightingale' is being deployed in Neasden. This programme identifies 100 of the most violent hotspots across London and combines both hotspot policing and 'Problem Oriented Policing' (POP) to reduce serious violence. This involves enhancing visible presence in these key locations at peak times as well as funding for lighting, CCTV cameras and audio devices. Officers will be deployed on foot patrol and engage more with the public. This will be complemented with dedicated problem solving (POP) activity with partners to understand the underlying causes and contributors of serious violence in each of those hotspots and develop solutions to tackle them.

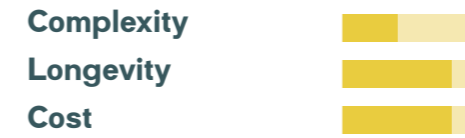
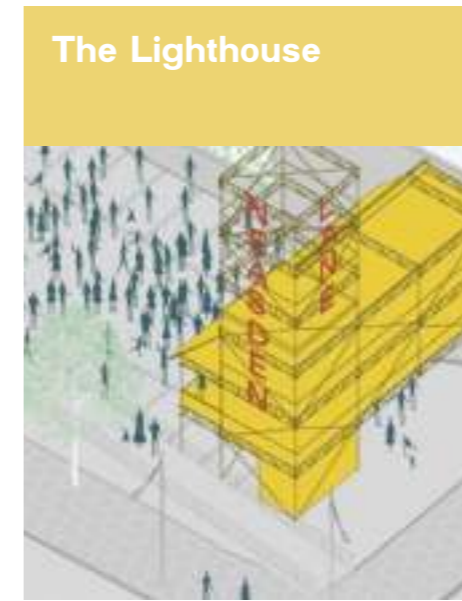
Through this action plan, we propose a dedicated partnership of local people working with the Metropolitan Police as part of their wider Home Office operation, using some of the measures outlined. With this framework set up, future funding can be directed towards a series of cleaning, surveillance and security measures, along with public realm improvements.

The tables set out under each proposal earlier in this document demonstrate the initiatives and actions which start to sow the seeds, test, flex and grow to deliver the longer-term vision. Each project has different civic leads, with a framework for civic partners to deliver a number of different actions. This approach is intended to provide an early framework which can be adapted as a useful tool for the community to build upon, and build into the existing mix of enterprise, cultural and streetscape activity happening in the area already.



	Proposal	Cost	Risk	Funding
Phase 1	The Ritz Urban Rooms & Kitchen  	£ 986,600	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Site is in private ownership, favourable lease terms not yet secured - Delay in landlord approvals impact on programme - Prolonged programme and increased costs due to unforeseen circumstance (condition, asbestos, contamination etc.) - Project costs exceed funding available. Insufficient funding to deliver the scale of project desired. - Delay due to extended approvals process with internal stakeholders (Planning, Policy, Transport, Licensing etc.) 	CPP
	A Moveable Feast   	£ 165,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Full and adequate maintenance strategy not in place - Community stewardship not present - ASB, (vandalism, graffiti or other damage) to finishes 	CPP
	Neasden Market  	£ 122,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Footfall not sufficient - Ancillary issues (waste, noise, traffic) are exacerbated 	CPP/LBB Match funding
	The Lighthouse  	£ 1,110,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Potential opposition to removing 2-3 car parking spaces - Delay in TfL/LBB approvals impact on programme - Delay due to extended approvals process with internal stakeholders (Planning, Policy, Transport, Licensing etc.) - ASB, (vandalism, graffiti or other damage) to finishes 	CPP
	Visual Identity & Wayfinding  	£ 150,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Obtaining TfL buy-in coordination and funding - Delay in TfL/LBB approvals impact on programme - Delay due to extended approvals process with internal stakeholders (Planning, Policy, Transport etc.) - ASB, (vandalism, graffiti or other damage) to finishes 	CPP/LBB Match funding
Phase 2	Pocket Forests & Gardens   	£ 515,600	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Full and adequate maintenance strategy not in place - Community stewardship not present - ASB, (vandalism, graffiti or other damage) to finishes 	CPP
	Alleyways & Garage Spaces   	£ 39,400	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - POP strategy is only a temporary deterrent - Community stewardship not present - ASB, (vandalism, graffiti or other damage) to finishes 	CPP
Phase 3	The Green at the Grange (Light intervention)   	£ 600,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Obtaining TfL buy-in, coordination and funding - Securing LBB funding - Delay in TfL/LBB/utilities approvals impact on programme - Project costs exceed funding available. Insufficient funding to deliver the scale of project desired. - Delay due to extended approvals process with stakeholders (TfL, Thames Water, GLA etc.) 	LBB Match funding
	The Green at the Grange (Full reconfiguration)   	£ 2,730,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Obtaining TfL buy-in, coordination and funding - Securing LBB funding - Delay in TfL/LBB/utilities approvals impact on programme - Project costs exceed funding available. Insufficient funding to deliver the scale of project desired. - Delay due to extended approvals process with stakeholders (TfL, Thames Water, GLA etc.) - Delay due to extended approvals process with internal stakeholders (Planning, Policy, Transport etc.) 	LBB Match funding
	The Underpass  	£ 1,101,100	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Obtaining TfL buy-in, coordination and funding - Securing LBB funding - Prolonged programme and increased costs due to unforeseen circumstance (condition, contamination etc.) - Project costs exceed funding available. Insufficient funding to deliver the scale of project desired. - Delay due to extended approvals process with external stakeholders (TfL, Thames Water, GLA etc.) - Delay due to extended approvals process with internal stakeholders (Planning, Policy, Transport etc.) - ASB, (vandalism, graffiti or other damage) to finishes 	LBB Match funding
	The Lighthouse (permanent)  	£ 1,200,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Site allocated to housing, but development is not committed at this stage - Potential opposition to removing town centre car park - Prolonged programme and increased costs due to unforeseen circumstance (condition, contamination etc.) - Delay due to extended approvals process with internal stakeholders (Planning, Policy, Transport etc.) - ASB, (vandalism, graffiti or other damage) to finishes 	LBB Match funding

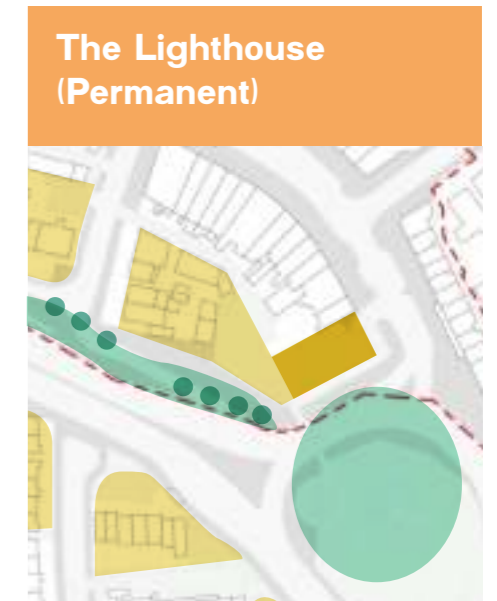
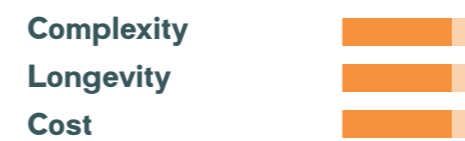
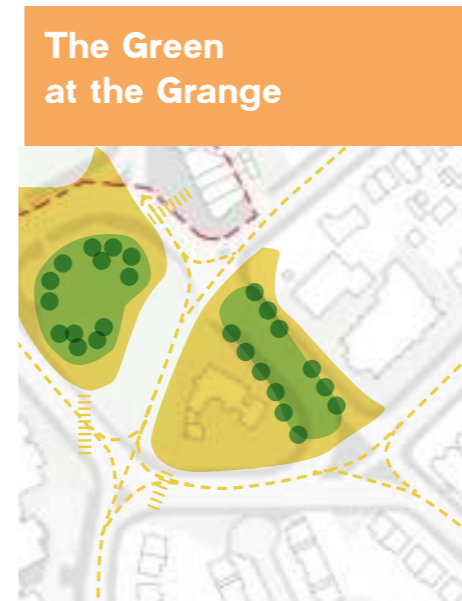
Short Term Proposals

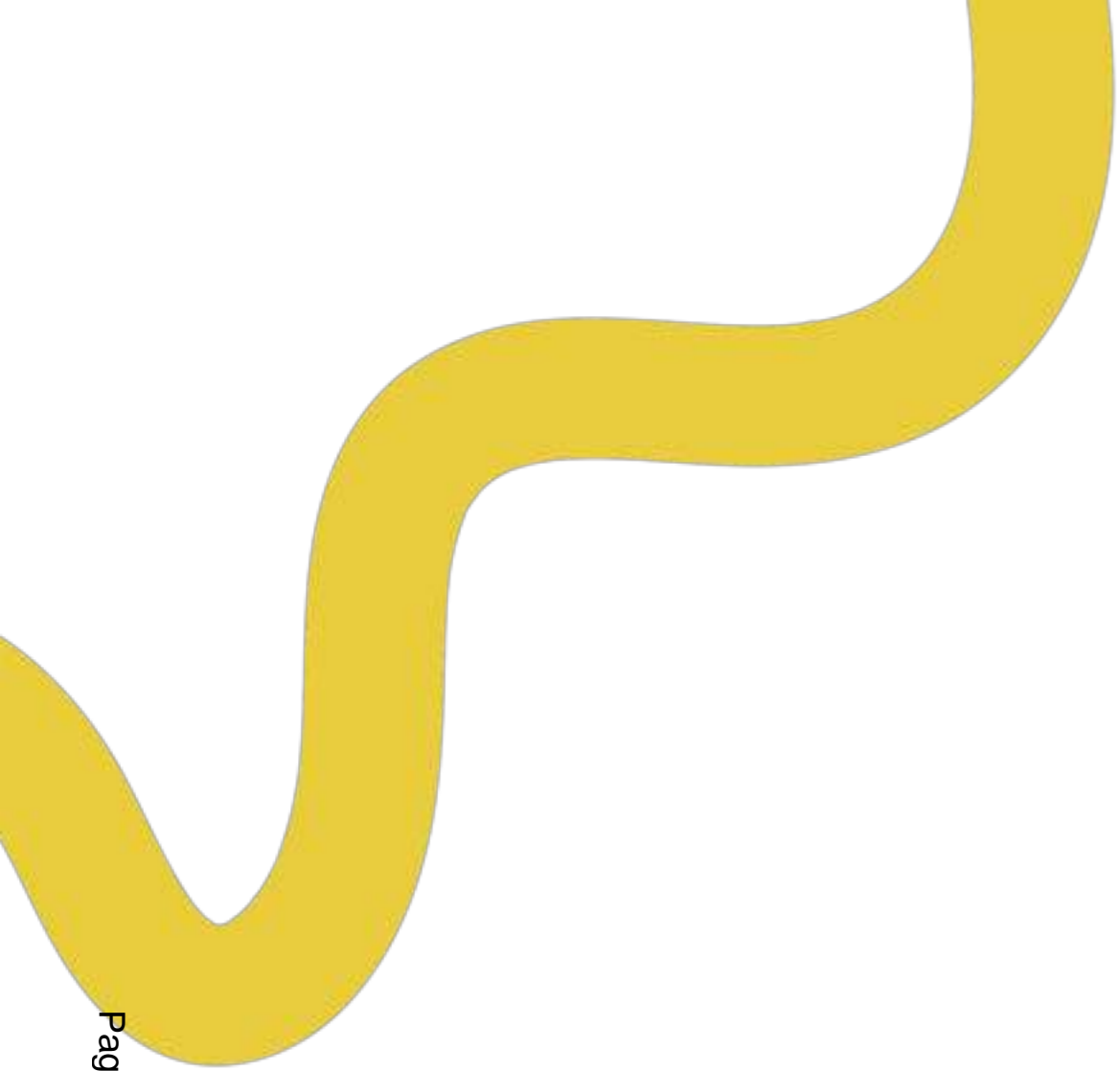


Medium Term Proposals



Long Term Proposals





3.6

OUTPUTS & OUTCOMES

Project outputs include:

The Ritz Urban Rooms & Kitchen

- Number of sqm of workspace created within an underused building
- Number of start-up phase/incubator workspace units
- Number of skills sharing, training or business development partnerships with local community organisations (e.g. Chalk Hill Radio Station, The Grange, Launch-It, Reggae Museum, College of NW London, Brent Youth Foundation, United Borders etc.)
- Number of community organisations making use of ancillary and shared spaces available at low/ no cost

The Lighthouse

- Amount of newly created cultural/community/event space (sqm)
- No. of new cultural partnerships and delivery programme with organisations such as Reggae Museum, British Museum, UD, Museum of Migration to seed concept of a Brent Cultural anchor for Black British

Neasden Market

- Number of opportunities for local start-up businesses
- Number of new market trader recruits using TikTok/other social media to attract new a young generation of entrepreneurs
100% of stalls to be provided on affordable low cost
- Amount of typical average weekly local spend (£) Minimum of 80% of market stall holders from Brent
- Percentage of increasing footfall on the high street (baseline stats required)

High Street Greening (A Moveable Feast, Pocket Forests & Gardens, The Grange Green):

- Amount of public realm improved (sqm)
- Urban Greening Factor score
- Number of new trees planted
- Amount of green space created (sqm)
- Amount of green space improved (sqm)

Wayfinding

- Amount of public realm improved (sqm)

Alleyways & Garage Spaces

- Amount of public realm improved (sqm)
- Urban Greening Factor score
- Number of new trees planted
- Amount of new green space (sqm)

The Underpass (Sunken Garden)

- Amount of new green space (sqm)
- Amount of public realm improved (sqm)
- Urban Greening Factor score
- Number of new trees planted

EVIDENCE

4



4.1

ENGAGEMENT

A Community Framework

During a 4-week period in February 2024, the consultant team, held a series of engagement events with a variety of community groups in Neasden. This was carried out to inform and test some of the early proposals we are putting forward as part of this Action Plan.

Any plans for future development must be authentic and rooted in Neasden's people and place. This can only come with in-depth programme of engagement and an organised community framework, nurtured over time, with trust and agency, co-design, co-authorship and with the local community as stewards of place. Our early engagement was intended to:

- sow the seeds of this long-term framework
- to promote the Action Plan, a baseline piece of work being developed as a background for Brent Council's CPP Exemplar funding application
- to shape and test emerging proposals within the Action Plan
- build on the prior studies commissioned out by the council.

Through this process, a key outcome was to garner interest, start to forge long-term relationships and build on existing and burgeoning networks to galvanise a diverse set of organised community stakeholders, to form a long-term strategic network, ready to receive and implement real change when it comes, empowered to take on the stewardship and agency of a renewed Neasden.

In total:

- 156 contacts were reached out via email
- 62 young people from Crest Academy and College of North West London took part in focus group and vox pops sessions
- 47 high street businesses were visited and spoken to in-person
- 50 people responded to our online survey
- +20 people attended our community hackathon

Neasden Action Plan

JOIN US AND HELP US SHAPE THE FUTURE OF NEASDEN TOWN CENTRE

Brent Council is developing an action plan for the area with the aim of making Neasden Town Centre more connected, sustainable and welcoming for its residents, businesses and communities.

Tell us how we can make change happen by:

1. Taking part in our online survey

Scan me



**3. Call us on:
020 8937 6113**

2. Come along to one of our public workshops

Tues, 13th February, 5pm–7pm

Sat, 17th February 1pm–3pm

**@Launch It Neasden
60 Neasden Lane NW10 2UW**

Sanchez Benton architects

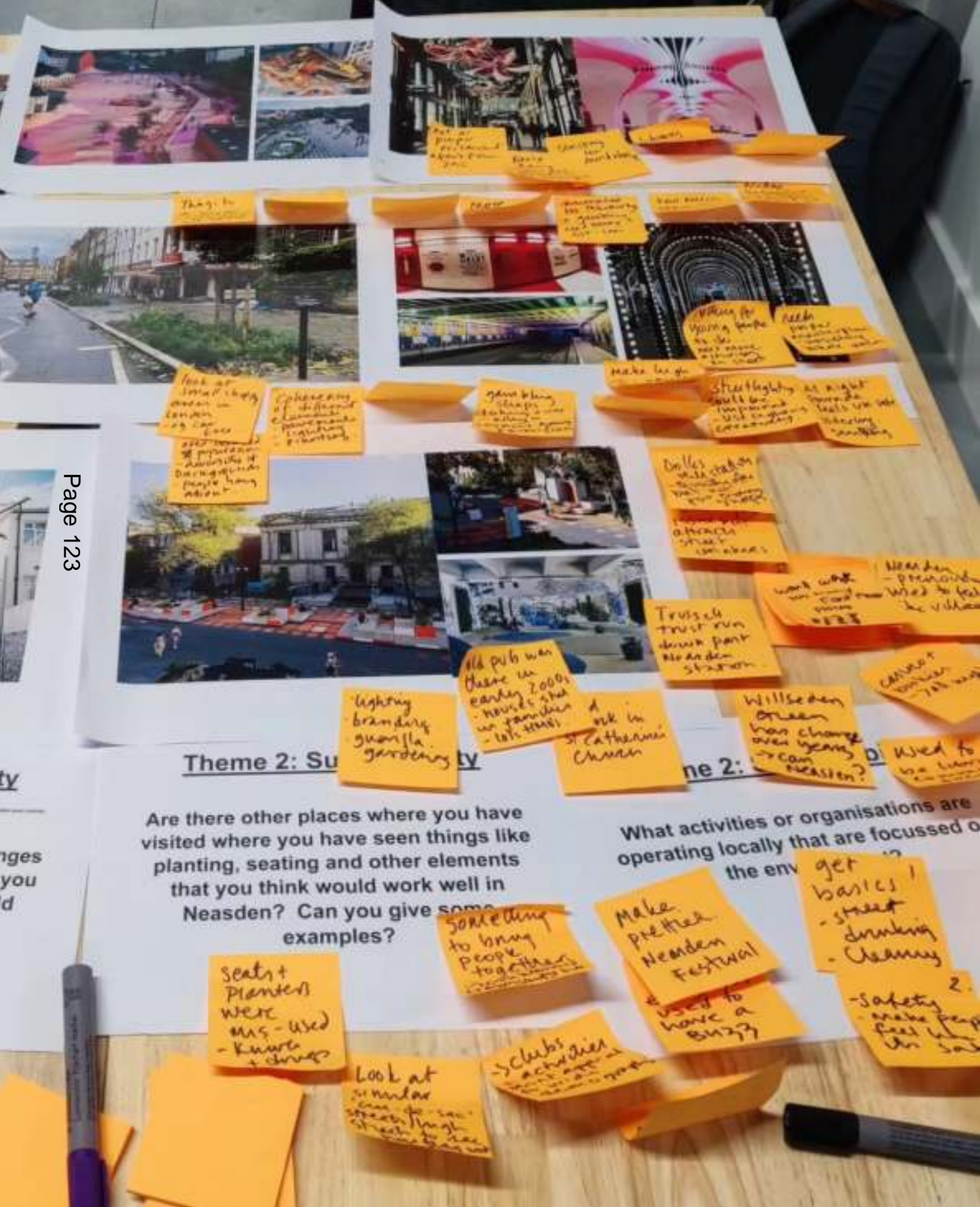


CONCEPT
CULTURE

SUPPORTED BY
MAYOR OF LONDON



This initiative is being supported and facilitated by the Mayor's Civic Partnership Programme (CPP), London's new regeneration funding programme, as well as by Sanchez Benton Architects, Rumi Rose and Concept Culture.



What people told us

The key feedback from our engagement can be summarised in the following points:

1. Real and perceived fear of crime with a prevalence of gang culture, drug crime and street drinking
2. Poor connection and legibility for pedestrians and cyclists, particularly from station to high street
3. Lack of safety (especially evening), cleanliness and traffic management, "pocketed in" by roads, traffic and parking
4. Degraded, dirty, dull and neglected with no dwelling spots
5. Need for more green spaces and better air quality
6. Rich and diverse community should be celebrated
7. Need to improve use and appearance of public space
8. Lack of diversity in shops and businesses, desire for a different offer, including family



4.2

PLACE IDENTITY

4. EVIDENCE

Workshop Insights

We have organised insights from the engagement workshops to try and understand the key elements of Neasden’s place identity.



EMERGING THEMES:	1. COMMUNITY & IDENTITY	2. SAFETY AND WELL-BEING	3. YOUTH ENGAGEMENT	4. SUSTAINABILITY & GREEN SPACES
ACTIONABLE BRANDING ELEMENTS	<p>Develop narratives and visuals celebrating Neasden’s multicultural community.</p> <p>Initiatives promoting community hubs and spaces for enhanced cohesion and engagement.</p>	<p>Safety campaigns and community watch programs.</p> <p>Engagement initiatives involving local police and community members to foster a sense of safety and belonging.</p>	<p>Youth-focused events and spaces, leveraging educational and cultural programs.</p> <p>Incorporate youth voices in branding materials to reflect their aspirations and contributions to Neasden.</p>	<p>Highlighting green initiatives and parks in branding materials.</p> <p>Promoting sustainable practices through community workshops and events.</p>
	5. CONNECTIVITY & INFRASTRUCTURE	6. CULTURAL DIVERSITY & HERITAGE	7. ECONOMIC VIBRANCY	8. PUBLIC REALM IMPROVEMENT
	<p>Visuals and messages showcasing improved accessibility and transport links.</p> <p>Highlight pedestrian-friendly routes and community connectivity in marketing efforts.</p>	<p>Use of Neasden’s cultural events, landmarks, and stories in the brand narrative.</p> <p>Marketing materials featuring diverse cultural expressions and heritage conservation efforts.</p>	<p>Campaigns promoting a diverse high street offer.</p> <p>Branding that emphasises Neasden as a vibrant place for business, innovation, and leisure.</p>	<p>Showcase transformation projects in public spaces to emphasise inclusivity and improved connectivity.</p> <p>Use before-and-after imagery in promotional content to demonstrate tangible changes.</p>

Swot Analysis

SWOT COMPONENT	INSIGHT	INTEGRATION WITH IDENTITY ESSENCE AND VALUES
STRENGTHS	Community Spirit Cultural Diversity Historical and Architectural Assets Existing Civic Engagement	These strengths are the pillars of Neasden’s brand essence. They showcase Neasden as a community rich in history and cultural diversity, committed to sustainable and inclusive growth. The strategy will highlight these strengths in its narrative, ensuring the brand essence and values are communicated effectively.
WEAKNESSES	Public Realm and Connectivity Perception of Safety Quality of Local Offer Physical and Social Fragmentation	The strategy aims to transform these weaknesses by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enhancing public spaces and connectivity to reflect the value of inclusivity and accessibility. - Implementing safety measures and community initiatives to improve perceptions and real safety. - Diversifying the high street offer to reflect Neasden’s cultural diversity. - Addressing fragmentation through community-driven projects and improved infrastructure.
OPPORTUNITIES	Regeneration Funding Cultural and Creative Anchors Community-Led Initiatives Green and Sustainable Development	Opportunities align with Neasden’s values by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Leveraging funding for projects that emphasise sustainability and community engagement. - Utilising Neasden’s musical heritage and cultural diversity as key themes in place branding. - Encouraging community-led initiatives that foster a strong sense of belonging. - Prioritising green infrastructure and sustainable practices in development projects.
THREATS	Economic and Social Challenges Infrastructure Limitations Rapid Urban Development Changing Demographics	The strategy addresses threats by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Developing inclusive programs that support economic growth and social well-being, mitigating the impact of economic and social challenges. - Planning infrastructure improvements to enhance connectivity. - Ensuring that urban development projects are community-focused and sustainable. - Embracing changing demographics as an opportunity to enrich the cultural tapestry of Neasden.

Changing Perception

Neasden Town Centre is ready for a fresh approach. The model below shows where we feel the Town centre is today. And where it could be tomorrow.



Neasden Town Centre Place Identity Strategy

Neasden Town Centre, a gem in Northwest London, is on the brink of an exciting transformation. Central to this journey is the powerful reflection of our town's uniqueness, drawn directly from the heart of our community. With the Civic Partnership Programme's support, our aim is to elevate Neasden as an epitome of inclusivity, environmental stewardship, and cultural wealth.

Strategic Objectives

Our place identity strategy for Neasden is guided by five pivotal objectives, each designed to usher in a new era of prosperity and unity:

- **Community and Diversity:** Championing Neasden's diverse fabric to nurture a deeper sense of community and belonging, and to celebrate our rich cultural diversity.
- **Sustainability:** Showcasing our commitment to sustainability, positioning Neasden as a pioneer in eco-friendly urban living.
- **Connectivity:** Enhancing Neasden's infrastructure to ensure it is more accessible and interconnected, fostering a more welcoming environment for all.
- **Cultural Heritage:** Capitalising on Neasden's historical and cultural significance to deepen our town's identity and sense of pride.
- **Collaborative Regeneration:** Mobilising community engagement in the regeneration process to ensure that future developments resonate with the needs and visions of Neasden's residents.

This strategy envisions a reimagined Neasden – a harmonious blend of tradition and innovation, where the collective spirit drives a vibrant and inclusive future. Together, we aim to transform Neasden into a thriving community where every individual, business, and visitor plays a role in crafting a unified and prosperous town.



Positioning Overview

Values	Community, Sustainability, Connectivity, Cultural Diversity
Mission	To transform Neasden Town Centre into a vibrant, inclusive, and green community hub that celebrates its diverse cultural heritage and improves quality of life for all residents.
Vision	A regenerated Neasden Town Centre that stands as a beacon of community-driven urban development, showcasing a harmonious blend of cultural diversity, environmental sustainability, and economic vitality.
Essence	Neasden's essence is its vibrant community spirit, rich cultural mosaic, and commitment to sustainable urban living.



Values

COMMUNITY



Emphasises the importance of collective action, inclusivity, and fostering a strong sense of belonging among Neasden's diverse residents.

SUSTAINABILITY



Focuses on environmental stewardship, green spaces, and sustainable practices that contribute to a healthier, more resilient Neasden.

CONNECTIVITY



Highlights the goal of improving physical and social connections within Neasden, making it more accessible and fostering interactions among its people.

CULTURAL DIVERSITY



Celebrates the rich tapestry of cultures that make Neasden unique, encouraging cultural exchanges and the preservation of its multicultural identity.

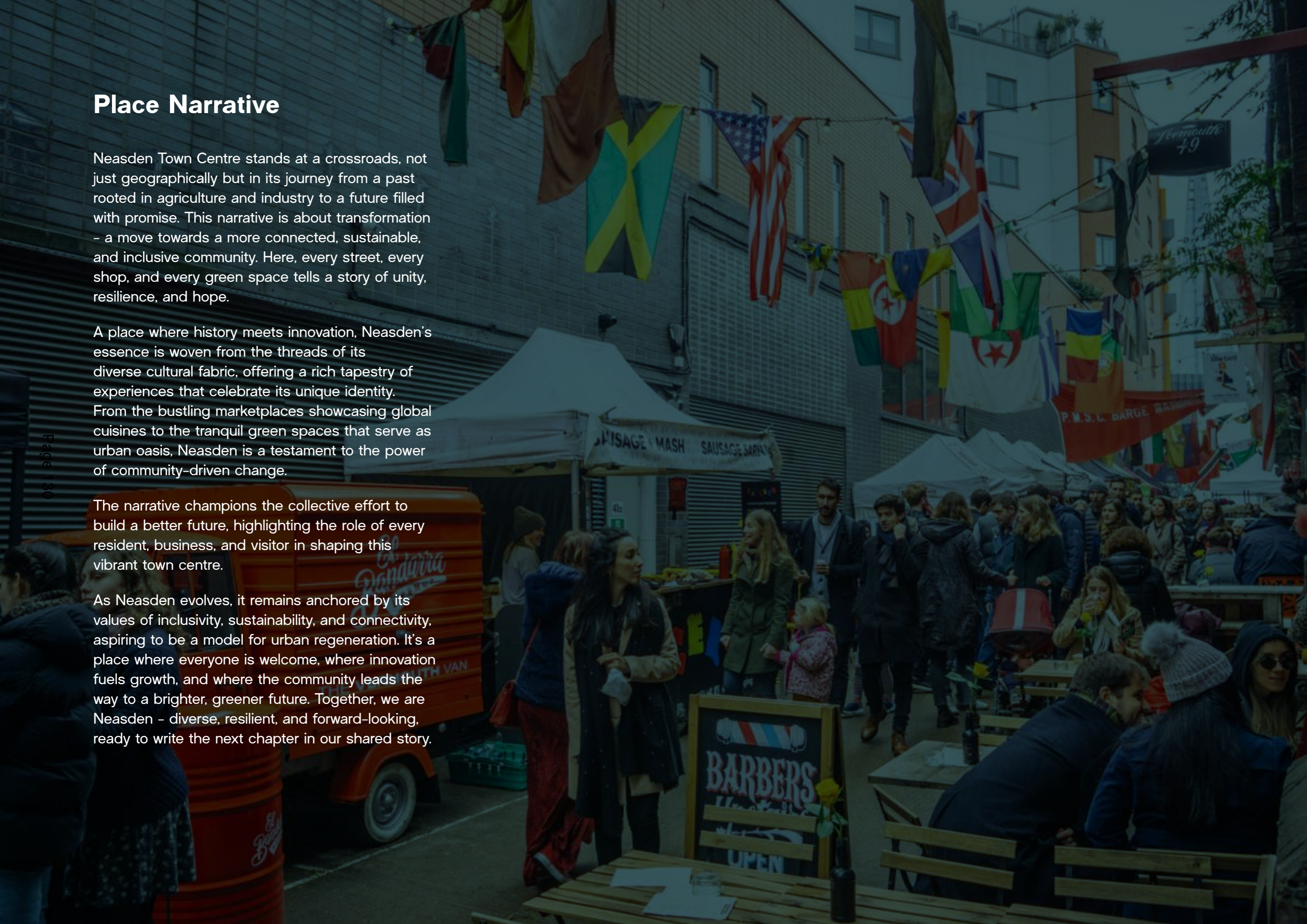
Place Narrative

Neasden Town Centre stands at a crossroads, not just geographically but in its journey from a past rooted in agriculture and industry to a future filled with promise. This narrative is about transformation – a move towards a more connected, sustainable, and inclusive community. Here, every street, every shop, and every green space tells a story of unity, resilience, and hope.

A place where history meets innovation, Neasden's essence is woven from the threads of its diverse cultural fabric, offering a rich tapestry of experiences that celebrate its unique identity. From the bustling marketplaces showcasing global cuisines to the tranquil green spaces that serve as urban oasis, Neasden is a testament to the power of community-driven change.

The narrative champions the collective effort to build a better future, highlighting the role of every resident, business, and visitor in shaping this vibrant town centre.

As Neasden evolves, it remains anchored by its values of inclusivity, sustainability, and connectivity, aspiring to be a model for urban regeneration. It's a place where everyone is welcome, where innovation fuels growth, and where the community leads the way to a brighter, greener future. Together, we are Neasden – diverse, resilient, and forward-looking, ready to write the next chapter in our shared story.



Creative Concept Directions

These concepts are our first step in defining the look and feel, helping us visualise the possibilities. It was decided that 'Routes to Roots' captured the project's essence and objectives.

Cultural Mosaic

Envision Neasden as a vibrant tapestry of cultures, where every thread represents a different community, tradition, and story. This route will celebrate the town's rich cultural diversity through visual narratives and initiatives that highlight multicultural festivals, art installations, and culinary experiences. It aims to foster inclusivity and pride in Neasden's identity as a multicultural hub, encouraging locals and visitors to explore and appreciate the variety of cultural expressions that thrive in the heart of the town.

(Brand values: Cultural Diversity, Community)



Routes to Roots

This narrative celebrates Neasden as a vibrant crossroads of cultures, that come together harmoniously. It's a testament to the power of diversity, highlighting how each individual's journey contributes to the collective experience, fostering a deep sense of belonging and connection. Neasden Town Centre is envisioned as a dynamic canvas for storytelling, where cultural festivals, community programs, and everyday interactions invite everyone to share and celebrate their unique stories.

It's a call to discover, engage, and become part of a larger narrative that values every path and every story, making Neasden a place where journeys begin, cultures converge.

(Brand Values: Sustainability, Connectivity, Cultural Diversity)



Heart of Diversity

Focus on the vibrant heart of Neasden, pulsing with the energy of diverse communities, activities, and green initiatives. This route will portray Neasden as a dynamic centre of community engagement, where diversity fuels creativity and collaboration. Featuring stories of community-led initiatives, green urban spaces, and events that bring people together, this route will celebrate Neasden's role as a beacon of diversity and inclusivity. It's about showcasing how a united community can drive positive change, making Neasden a model for multicultural urban living.

(Brand Values: Cultural Diversity, Community, Sustainability)



Positioning to Visual Identity



Vauxhall, London: Vauxhall's identity marries its edgy punk past with its contemporary vibe, capturing the unique spirit of the place. It's a nod to its musical roots while embracing the area's current evolution, creating a design that resonates with both history buffs and modern visitors.



Azerbaijan: This branding effort aims to shake off old stereotypes, shining a light on the country's rich diversity and stunning landscapes. It's about showing off a vibrant, ever-evolving Azerbaijan through a dynamic design identity that adapts and celebrates its variety.



Vauxhall, London

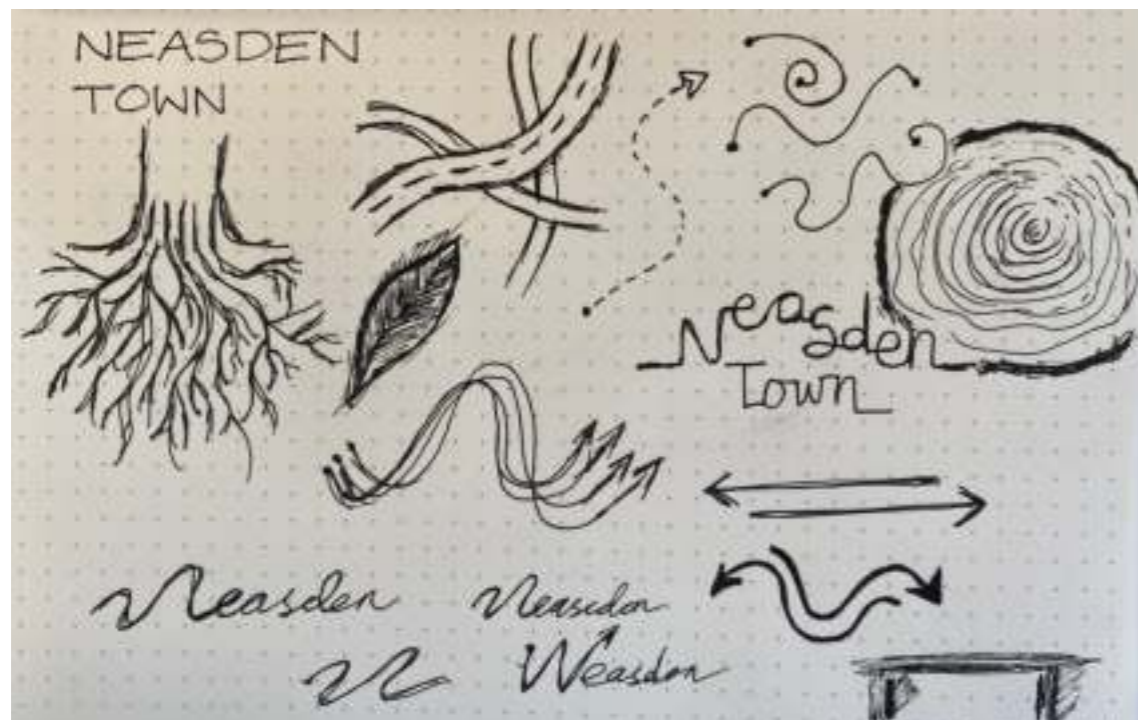
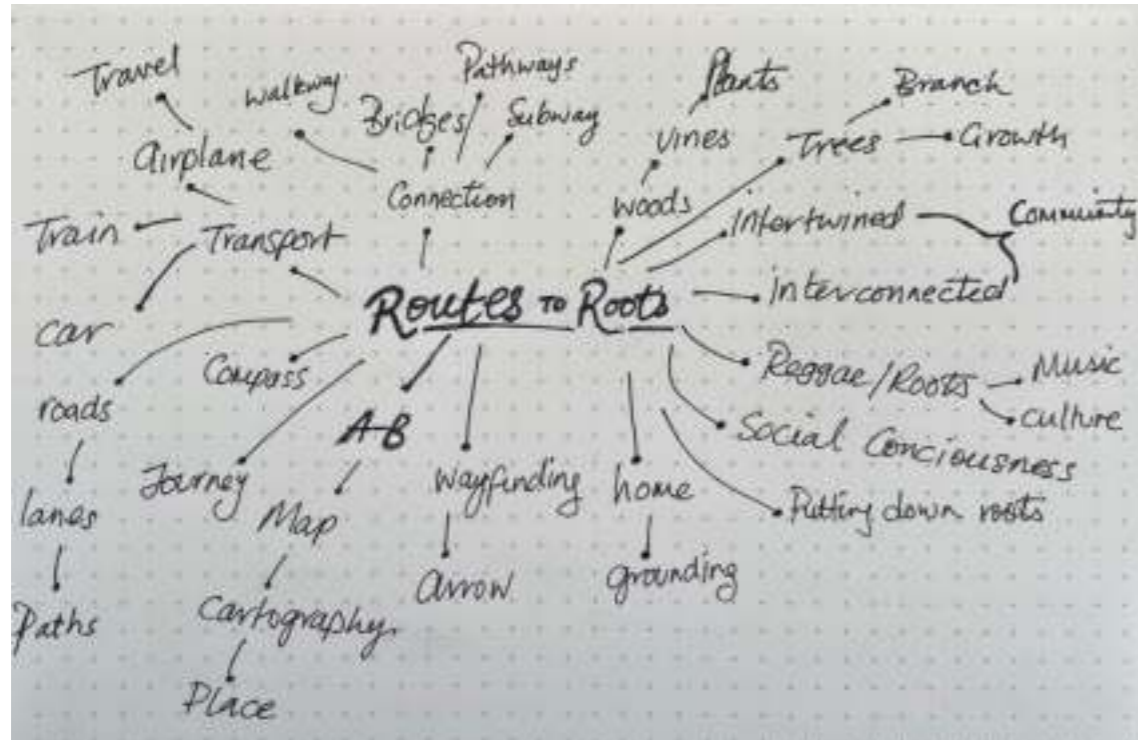


Eindhoven, Netherlands: Eindhoven's brand strategy is all about community and growth, turning local pride into a driver for economic success. It leverages the city's innovative spirit to foster a sense of belonging among its residents while attracting economic opportunities, showing how a city can thrive by staying true to its roots and looking forward to the future.

Concept Development

Transforming initial ideas into actionable plans, refining creative visions through brainstorming and experimentation to find the best direction.

ROUTES TO ROOTS: Grounded in our past, growing towards our future



Neasden Action Plan



Neasden Action Plan

4.3

CONTEXT & HISTORY

4. EVIDENCE



History

The name Neasden means 'the nose-shaped hill' in Anglo-Saxon, a reference to its location on a small promontory at the end of the Dollis Hill ridge. By the Middle Ages the village comprised a number of small buildings and there was a green near the site of the current gyratory. The Grove was built by one of the few wealthy families in 1720, the stables of which is now The Grange. Neasden was dominated by agriculture until just before the First World War. Dairy farming, hay production and the rearing and stabling of horses all thrived because of Neasden's proximity to London.

Community Parish

The 'Spotted Dog' publican house became a social centre for local people and a clay pigeon shooting ground opened north of the local vicarage. The vicar, Reverend James Mills, was a key figure of the new enlarged parish, created because of the area's rising population. Mills founded the Neasden Cricket Club and encouraged musical societies. In 1893 a golf club was founded at Neasden House, which attracted members from wealthy London society.

Railways & Growth

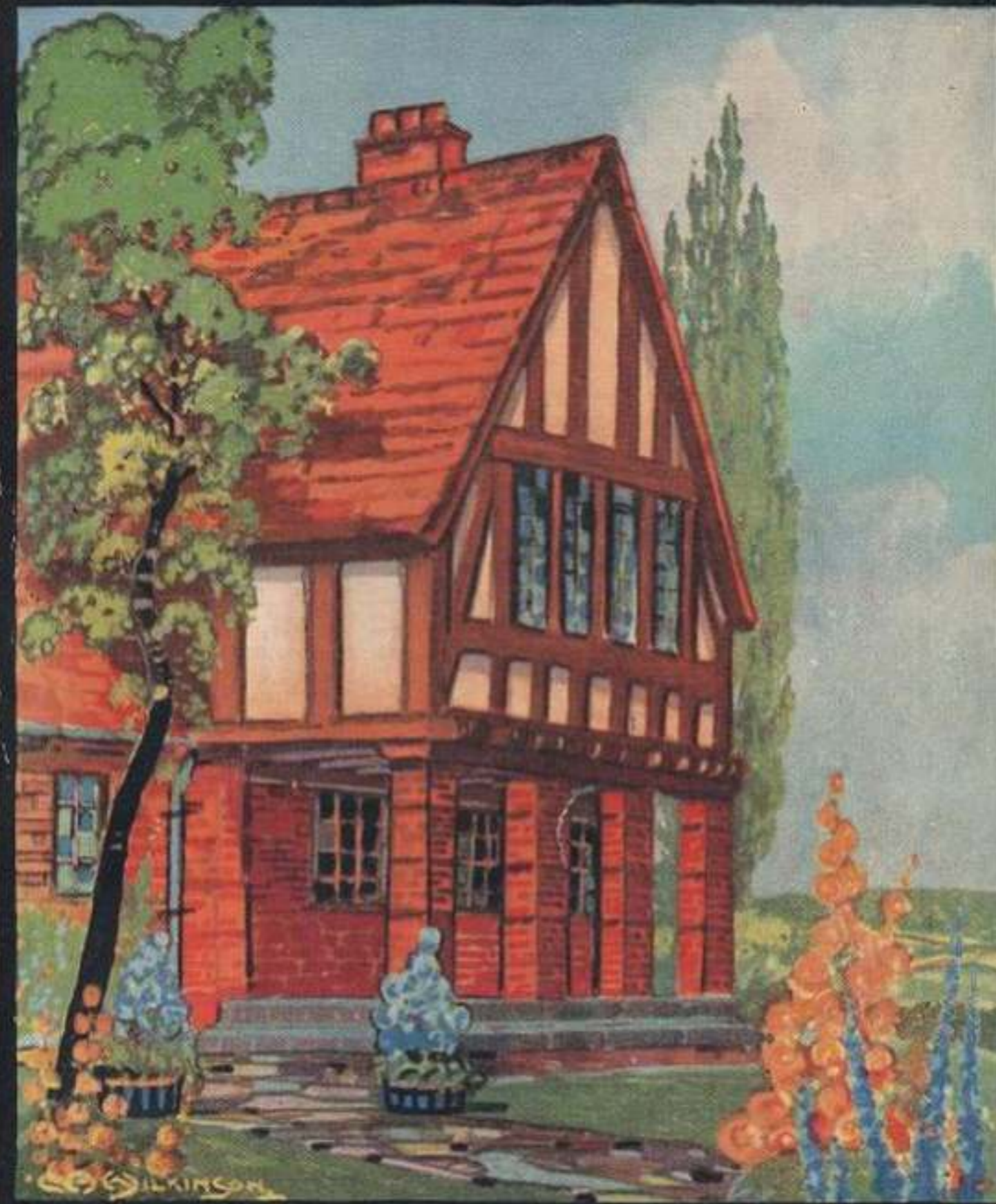
The first railway came to Neasden in 1868 and in 1875 a station opened on Dudden Hill Lane. Much like today, the station was not well located in relation to the town, and as there were no passenger trains on the new line, the railways had no effect on development. This changed in 1880 when the Metropolitan Railway extended and opened a station on Neasden Lane. With 30 trains a day into London and a journey time of 20 minutes to Baker Street, land values increased with more farmland being sold for development.

In 1882 the Metropolitan Railway built a railway engineering works with workers' housing creating Neasden Village. Situated to the west of Neasden, it was called "the loneliest village in London." A power station was added in 1903 and the village grew over the next 25 years. In 1893 the Great Central Railway connected its main line from the Midlands, setting up another depot and more worker's housing. By the 1930s the two railways combined employed over 1,000 men while other industries (mainly farming) in south Neasden employed over 2,000 more. A community was built up around the railway estates.

Industry, housing growth and the North Circular

The arrival of new infrastructure for the motor car changed the rural, 'farming village' feel of Neasden. By 1913 light industry had spread towards Neasden Lane. In the mid- 1920s, bus services along with the arrival of the new North Circular dawned a new era for Neasden as a middle-class residential suburb. New schools, and a public library at Welsh Harp were built to serve the growing population. Over the next decade, the 'Metroland' movement created huge private housing estates taking almost all the remaining farmland.

The Metropolitan Railway pushed the 'Metroland' concept, marketing its surplus railway lands with the idea of desirable places to live. Heavy stylised magazines and posters were used to promote an idyllic country lifestyle with beautiful homes within easy reach of London. From the end of World War One through to the 1920s, Metroland boomed, as London's new middle class bought into the advertising and took advantage of affordable homes. Between the wars, all of Neasden's older houses were demolished except for The Grange, the only pre-Victorian building remaining in the area.



METRO-LAND

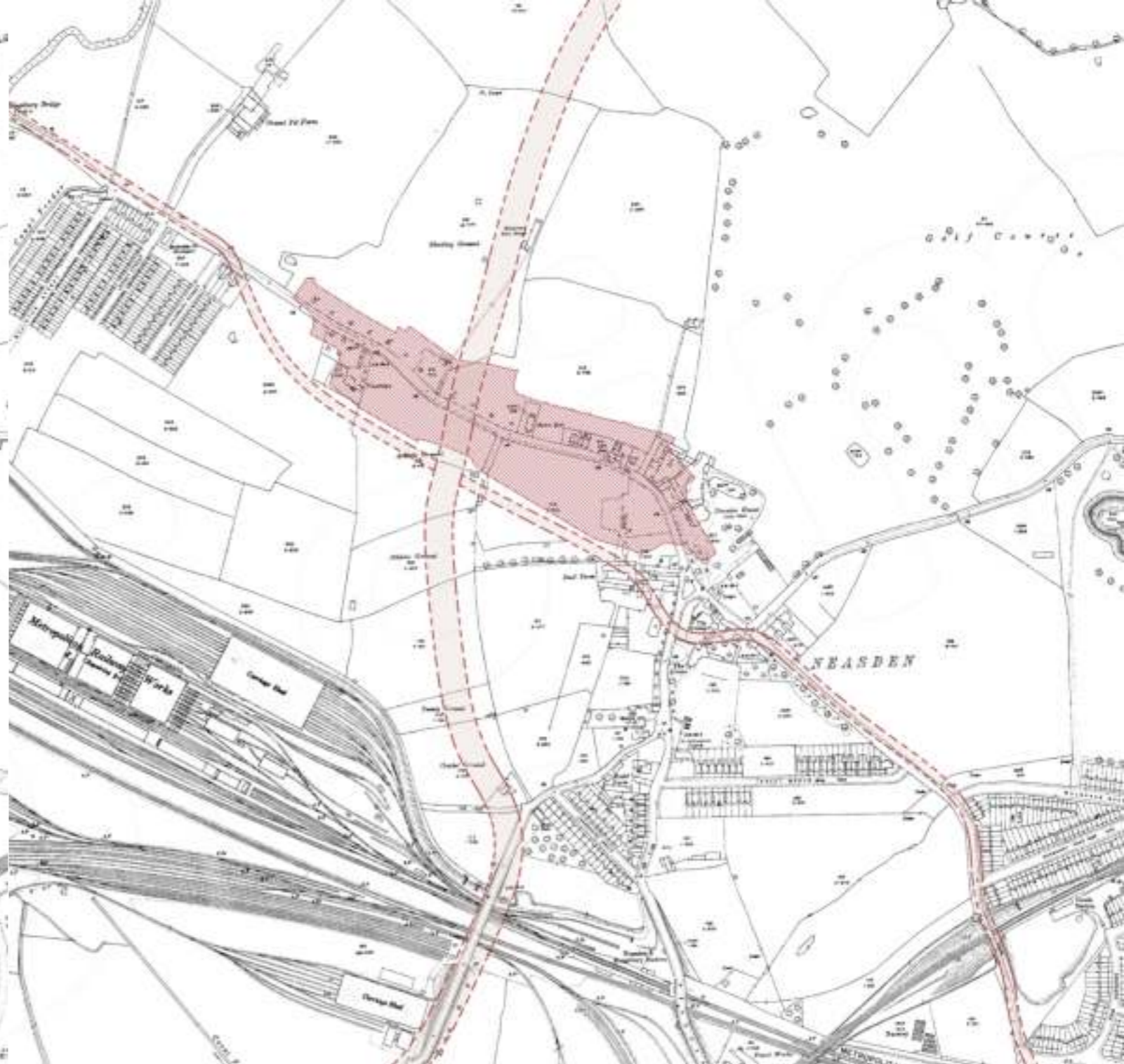
PRICE TWOPENCE



Neasden saw its heyday in the 1930s with one of the most modern high streets of its era, complete with a new shopping centre and the old 'Spotted Dog' and Dollis Hill Station being rebuilt in mock-Tudor/'Metroland' style. The Ritz Cinema opened in 1936, on the current site of the former library at no 277 Neasden Lane. Traffic on the North Circular and Neasden Lane became an increasing problem in the post war years.

In 1973 the North Circular was expanded, taking out more housing. There was strong resistance to this move, with campaigns on the streets and local press. Despite this however, the ministry of Transport pressed ahead. This blighted the shopping centre and since then large retail warehouses like Tesco, Asda and Ikea have located to the south, driving away footfall. The opening of Brent Cross out-of-town shopping centre in 1976 encouraged buses to bypass Neasden, to the further detriment of the centre.

Industrial decline dealt another blow to Neasden and the area changed from a middle class suburb to an area with higher levels of deprivation, relatively lower property values and a diminished sense of place. Waves of immigration to the area from India, Afghanistan, Somalia, Syria, Turkey, Ukraine, Romania and Poland have kept retail services and pubs going. Much of this is evident in Neasden High Street, which reflects this multicultural make-up, largely consisting of ethnic food and grocery stores, cafes and barber shops. In 1995, Asian immigrants built the largest Hindu temple outside India - the Shri Swaminarayan Mandir located in south-west Neasden.



Historic map from 1890
With current Neasden high street area
and important roads highlighted

Historic map from 1910
With current Neasden high street area
and important roads highlighted



Historic map from 1930
With current Neasden high street area
and important roads highlighted



Historic map from 1950
With current Neasden high street area
and important roads highlighted



4.4

SITE ANALYSIS

4. EVIDENCE

Character

Neasden is suburban in nature with the town centre servicing the surrounding residential area. Some industrial and wider employment activities are located to the south near Neasden station and bordering the A406 North Circular.

Neasden Town Centre is characterised by a traditional high street typology, with 3-storey inter-war terraces lining the north and south of Neasden Lane. These terraces have been converted to shops on the ground floor with flats above. There are roughly 100 business units (14,300m2) along Neasden Lane. There are a few relics of Art Deco architecture, namely the façades at the former Ritz Cinema (no. 277 Neasden Lane, the old public library) and the former Dicey’s Nightclub.

The North Circular is a six-lane dual carriageway that connects the industrial estates outside town, and bisects Neasden High Street into two halves. To the south of the high street, a rear access alley (Birse Crescent) runs behind the shop units, a hotspot for rough sleeping, flytipping and anti-social behaviour. Pedestrian routes between the eastern and western halves of the high street is run down through a subway, accessed by winding ramp or via a complex arrangement of steps.



Neasden Action Plan





A characterful mock-Tudor parade sits at the northern side of the western half of the high street (nos. 354–388). On the south side of Neasden Lane, a single 2-storey Art Deco building occupies the corner before the high street gives way to semi-detached homes.

Public Realm

Broad pavements run alongside the shopfronts on the high street and provide the potential for generous civic space. This is sometimes taken up by grocery produce and other retail displays. Oblique car parking on both sides of the street dominates the very central part of high street on the eastern half, where there is also an 'avenue-style' concentration of small street trees. This is really the only green focal point in the area, (apart from at The Grange roundabout) with little to no planting in high street other locations.

Despite the context having a human scale with 1930s features, the public realm is poor, offering no amenity or dwell spots and very few of the businesses contribute to positive streetlife.

Pollution, noise, poor waste management and ongoing anti-social behaviour (gang violence, rough sleeping and street drinking) are recurrent complaints from both residents and business owners. There is a very high proportion of private rented homes and Houses in Multiple Occupation in the Neasden area. Transient, disengaged communities can sometimes correlate to lack of care, stewardship and pride in the local area.

The high street offer is limited, consisting largely of small-scale independent traders of services (launderette, barbers), several ethnic food and grocery stores and cafes reflecting the area's diversity. There is a bank, post office, national supermarket chain and pharmacy, but very few comparison retailers or national multiples.

Ownership

The Council has a moderate level of property ownership in and around the Town Centre. This includes a significant block of row housing surrounding Wykeham Primary School and Jackman Mews to the north. The council also owns a contiguous strip of backland sites running along the A4088, funnelling out to a small town centre car park that heralds the start of the western high street and faces The Grange itself. Other key assets outside of ownership include the former Ritz Cinema/former library at no. 277 and the former Neasden Montessori School next to St. Catherine's church show on map.



Economic context

Brent has undergone significant regeneration over the last 20 years, which has improved prosperity and life chances. The borough has experienced strong economic growth since 2014. The number of jobs has increased by 17%, and the number of businesses by 24%. Despite this, there are still parts of the borough that suffer high levels of social and economic disadvantage.





Nationally, Brent is the fourth most deprived borough in London. Neasden is classified as falling into the 10% and 20% of most deprived areas in London, according to the 2019 Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD). In employment terms, Neasden's economy is driven by typically lower value sectors such as wholesale and retail, construction, transport and manufacturing. There is a lower than average concentration of higher value activities such as business, professional services technology and communications.

The area experiences a number of labour market challenges including below average economic activity levels, higher than average unemployment, lower than average skills levels and therefore lower levels of income. A reported 9,900 working age people in Brent are unemployed, slightly higher than London as a whole. This shows a need to provide further education to help uplift the economic base of the borough, as well as the need for additional jobs, and other initiatives to improve Brent's skills base. The multicultural nature of the population also requires specific needs such as a wide range of community and cultural facilities.

Neasden has a weak evening economy, and has a high proportions of convenience and betting. The impact of Brent Cross Shopping Centre and larger footprint retail parks to the south have hit Neasden local economy hard.

This Action Plan will explore the concept of building and strengthen a local round-the clock offer through diversification of offer, mixed uses and capacity building .

Green Space

Whilst the Welsh Harp Reservoir and Gladstone Park offer good quality open spaces for recreation, increasing biodiversity and improving well-being, Neasden Town Centre lacks good quality, quantity and access to green infrastructure. This adversely impacts the liveability of the place. In the

1980s, the London Wildlife Trust converted part of The Grange roundabout into a nature area. This is a unique yet underutilised asset for the town centre, currently cut off and hidden due to the gyratory. Whilst the bolder opportunity to reconnect this 'island' back to the high street exists, this is a complex and long-term aspiration due to its context of the road infrastructure surrounding it.

Unless there is a step-change in the surrounding road infrastructure, the opportunities to introduce new and significant green spaces to impactfully improve the pedestrian environment are limited.

Brent Bee Corridor

Brent Council has sown a 7-mile long 'bee corridor' of wildflower meadows across 24 of its parks and green spaces to support dwindling bee populations in the city. The corridor was created over a three year period (2019–2021).

To increase biodiversity and help flora and fauna to thrive, the Council has changed the management strategy for some of its grassed areas to create wildflower meadows. 22 of these wildflower meadows make up Brent's Bee Corridor. The bee corridor is an attempt to provide much-needed habitats within a densely populated urban area. 5 years on, bees and other pollinating insects, such as butterflies, are benefiting due to the increase in habitat.

The initiative won the APSE (Association for Public Service Excellence) award in 2019 and the council is monitoring impact on biodiversity. A species of butterfly that had not been seen locally for many years has emerged, as well as a type of long grass called 'Yorkshire Fog', which is attractive to caterpillars and the small skipper butterfly.

The opportunities exist to re imagine even the smallest pockets of land, and convert them into hard-working high street islands of green, adding to Brent's bee corridor and improving the air quality of the local area.

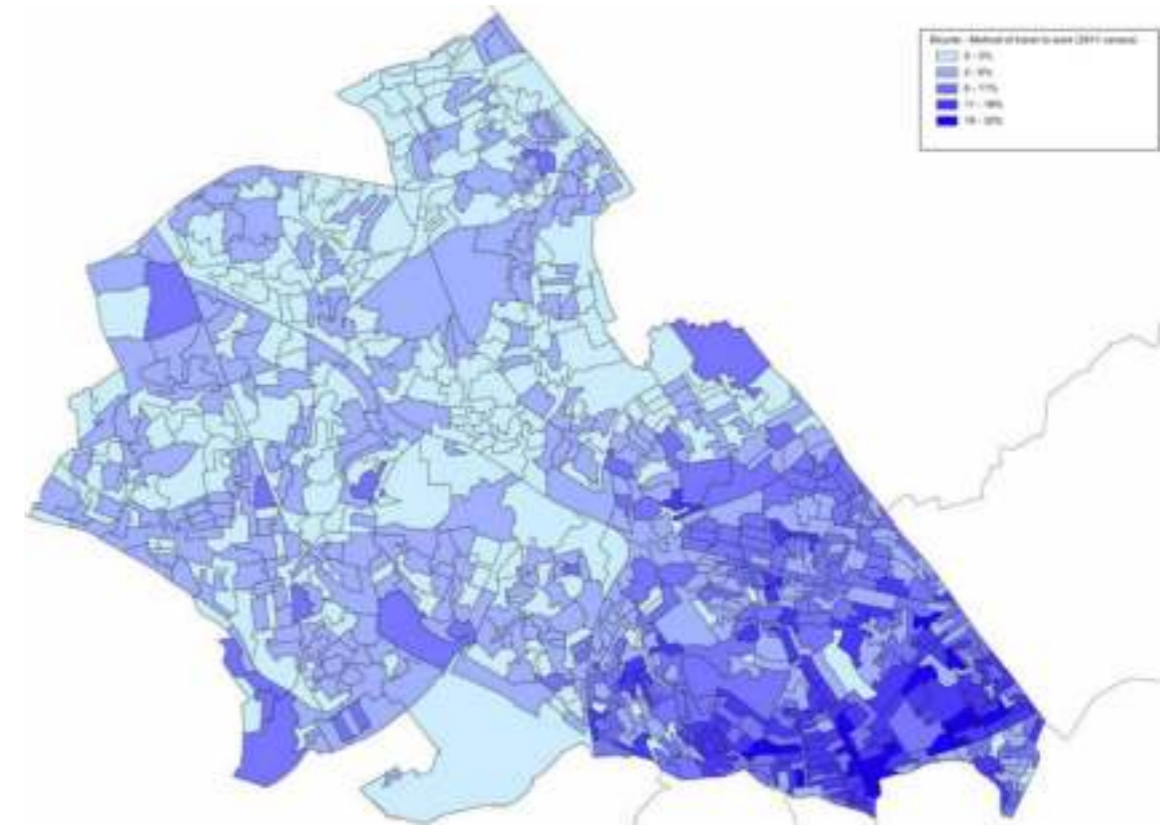


Transport and Active Travel

The public transport offer in Neasden is sub-optimal, with Neasden tube station (Jubilee Line) located some way from the town centre. Dollis Hill underground provides public transport accessibility to the south. Bus services bypass the town centre itself and operate mainly along the principal routes of the of the A5 Edgware Road, A4140 Salmon Street, A4088 Dudden Hill Road/Neasden Lane and the A406 North Circular. Cycle access into the town centre is unappealing due to the poor air quality, dominance of road traffic, busy A-roads and the difficult gyratory. Birse Crescent runs along the southern edge of the town centre at lower level where the A4088 dips under the North Circular.

The Council has a long-term ambition to create a coherent network of direct, comfortable and attractive cycle routes to enhance wider connectivity. Although reconfiguring the gyratory and connecting back The Grange is a wider term aspiration, it is an undertaking that requires far more research, modelling, testing and finding frameworks that are beyond the scope of this action plan. However, this plan will explore:

- Improving the approaches to, from and through the town centre, through wayfinding, green infrastructure, for example pocket parks and the subway
- Rationalisation of the car parking in the town centre to partially pedestrianise the core and encourage other civic uses of the space to improve the townscape (greening, seating, markets, public art)
- Supporting Neasden Collective explore ways to encourage businesses to improve their servicing and delivery plans to help reduce motorised vehicle trips in the town centre.
- An intention to realign back to the historic street pattern and desire lines across the gyratory will be explored.

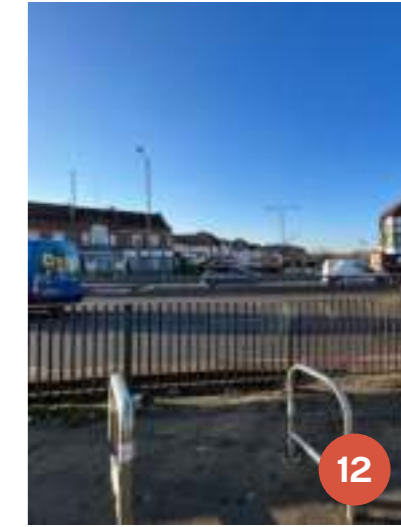
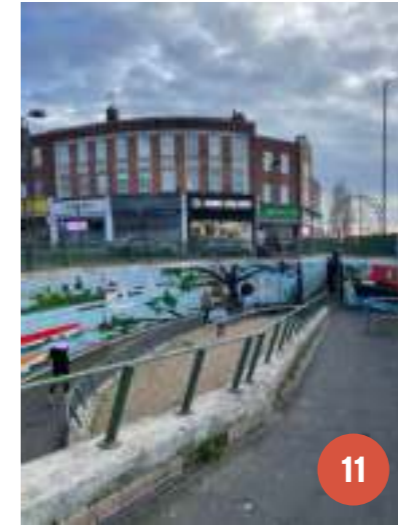
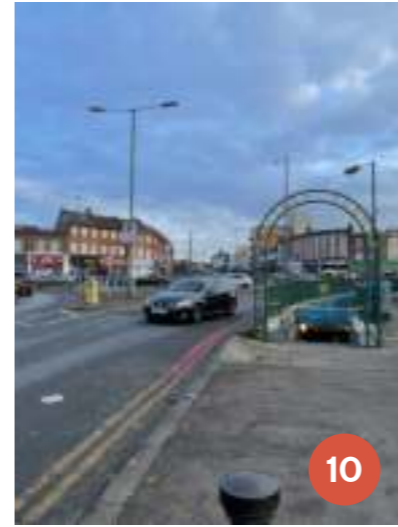
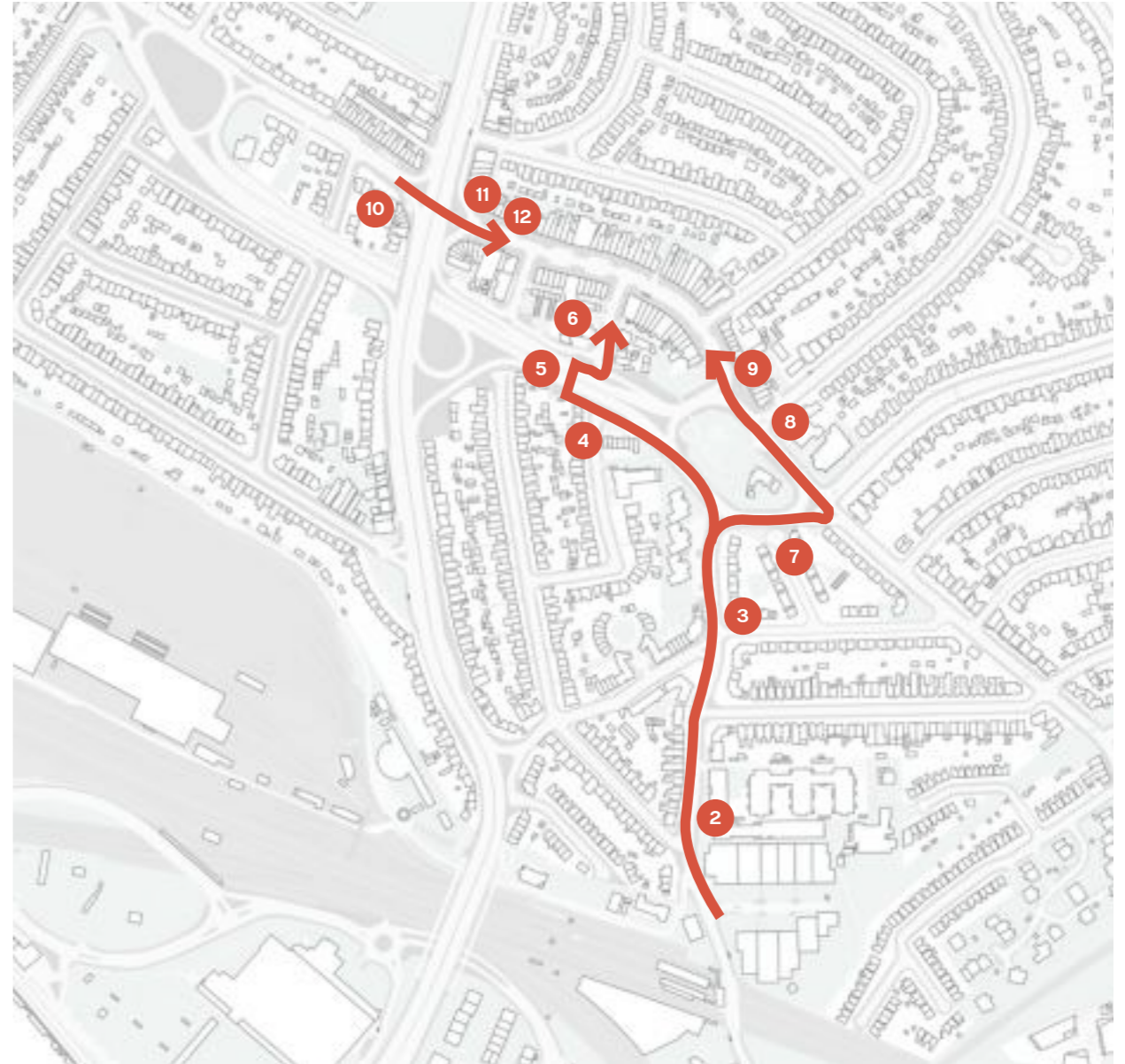
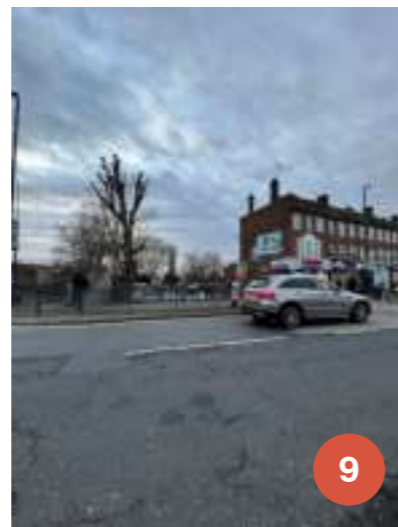
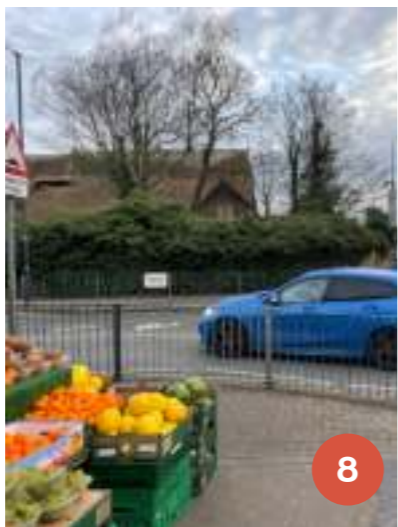
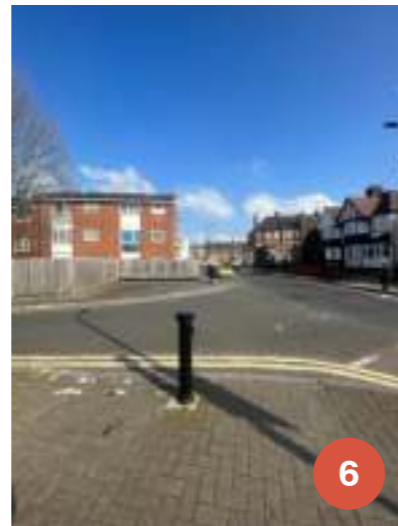
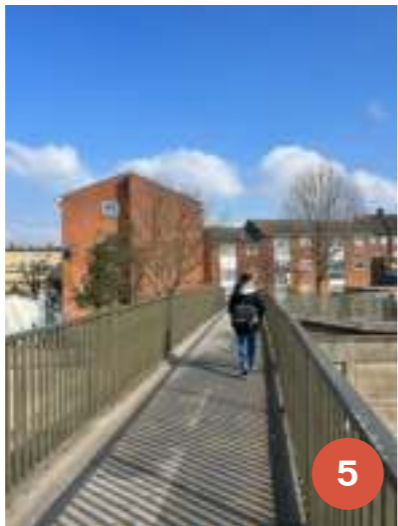
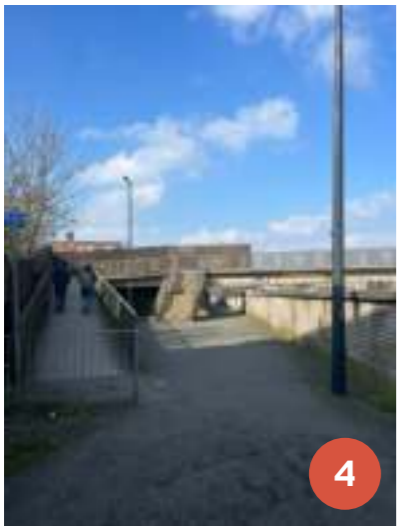




Connectivity

Pedestrian approaches into the Town Centre are poor, particularly the main route to the town centre from Neasden Underground station, which is negotiated by crossing a busy gyratory system with no surface-level crossings and a series of convoluted elevated footbridges. The following page highlights these routes through a series of photographs.

The Route to Neasden High Street



Air quality

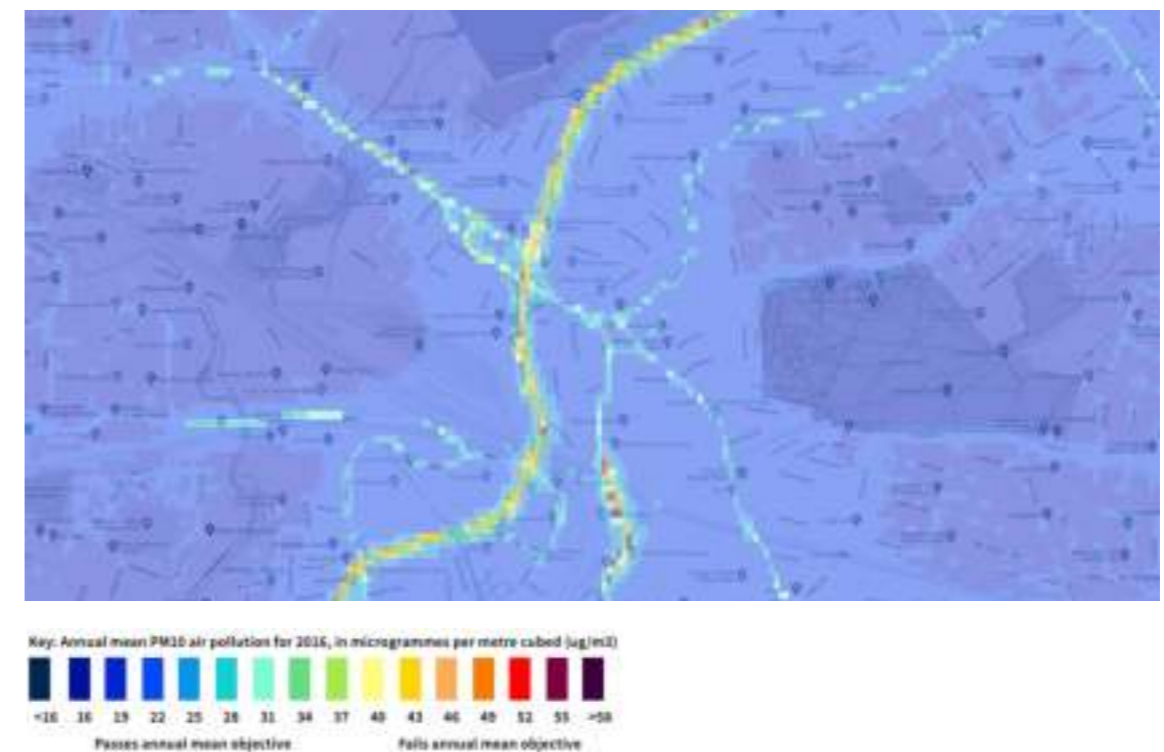
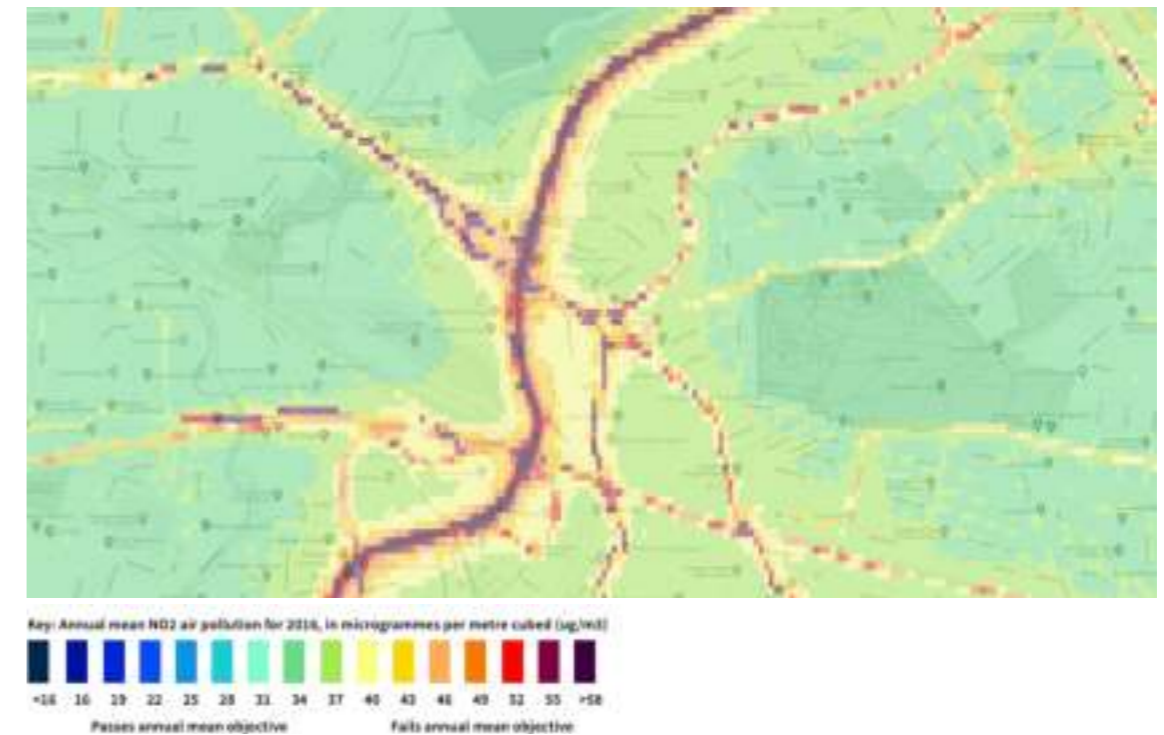
Much of Brent is covered by an Air Quality Management Area, principally related to pollution caused by vehicles. These impacts can also be made worse by wider issues such as poverty, deprivation and general poor health. The Brent Local Plan 2019–2041 sets out particular initiatives under the London Plan’s Good Growth Objectives. These include:

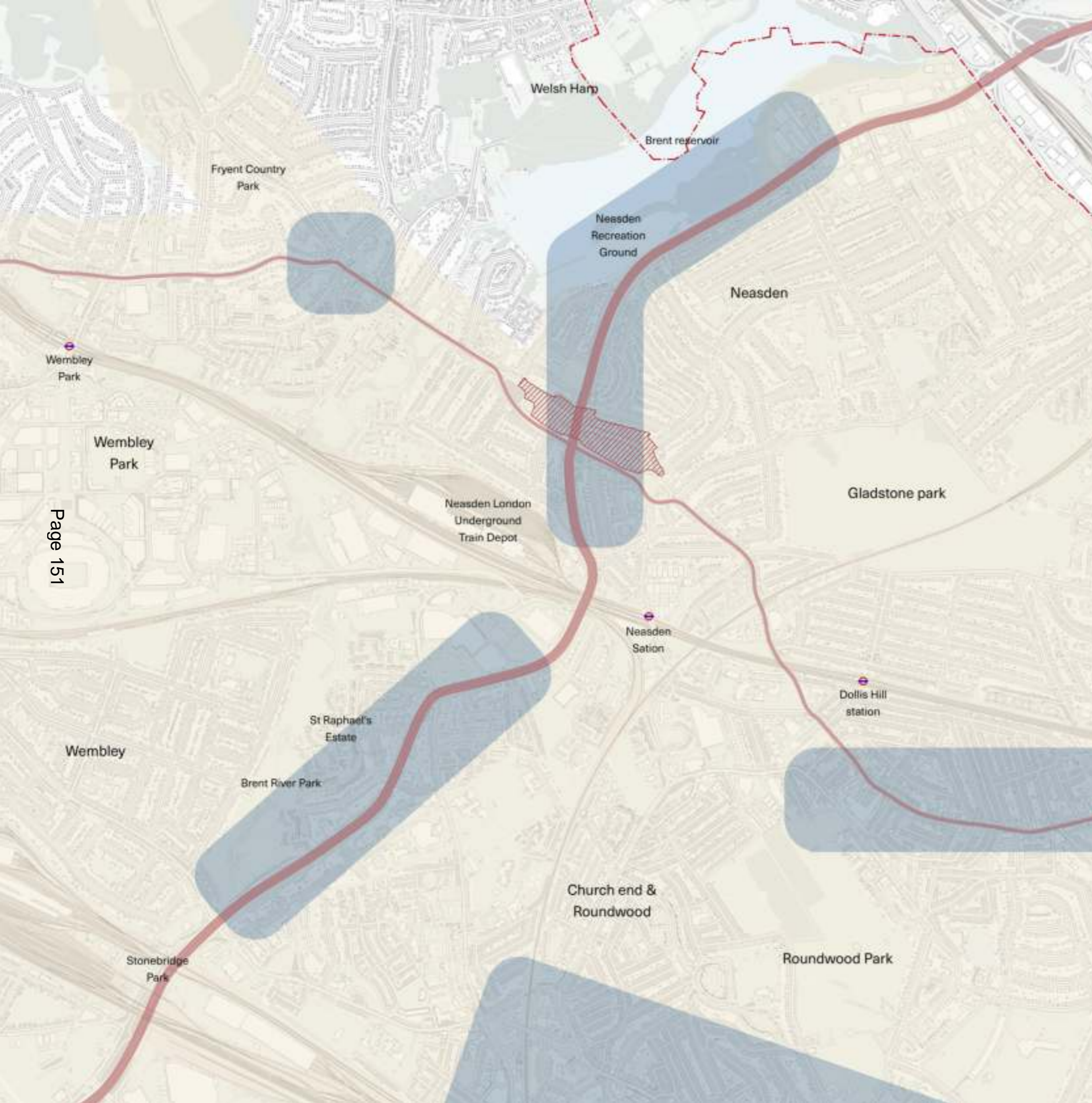
- Creating a Healthy Borough – Improving Brent’s air quality overall and particularly in Growth Areas.
- Increasing Efficiency and Resilience – Tackling congestion and air quality around the North Circular, improving orbital public transport routes such as the West London Orbital railway scheme and prioritising active travel to provide realistic alternatives to travelling by car.

Local Plan Policy BSUI2 Air Quality says that major developments within Growth Areas and Air Quality Focus Areas will be required to be Air Quality Positive and elsewhere Air Quality Neutral.

Brent Council’s Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) 2017–2022 undertook local air quality testing and modelling and identified four areas as the worst affected sites within Brent. Neasden town centre is one these Air Quality Focus Areas (AQFA) or hotspots.

Unsurprisingly, as Neasden town centre incorporates part of the North Circular Road and Dudden Hill Lane (A4088), these major roads contribute significantly to the poor air quality in the area. Neasden Goods Yard has also been identified as a significant source of PM10. As Neasden is a growth area, it is important to implement active and mitigating measures with as future development is delivered in the area.





Air Quality

Air quality

-  Air quality management area
-  Air quality focus area

https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/aqma/details?aqma_ref=120#191 Accessed 19-02-24

Climate Resilience

The project area has a higher than average climate risk rating on the GLA's Climate Risk Register. Brent Council have declared a Climate and Ecological Emergency, and have developed a strategy to help address some of the local climate related challenges. The Brent Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy has five key themes which are closely aligned to the priorities set out by residents within the Brent Climate Assembly and also align to the Climate Change priorities being pursued across London.

The five strategy themes are:

- Consumption, resources and waste
- Transport (Sustainable Travel)
- Homes, Buildings and the Built Environment
- Nature and Green Space
- Supporting Communities.

Our proposals and action plan align with this broader strategy to help implement measures that mitigate the impact of a changing climate.





Neasden High Street

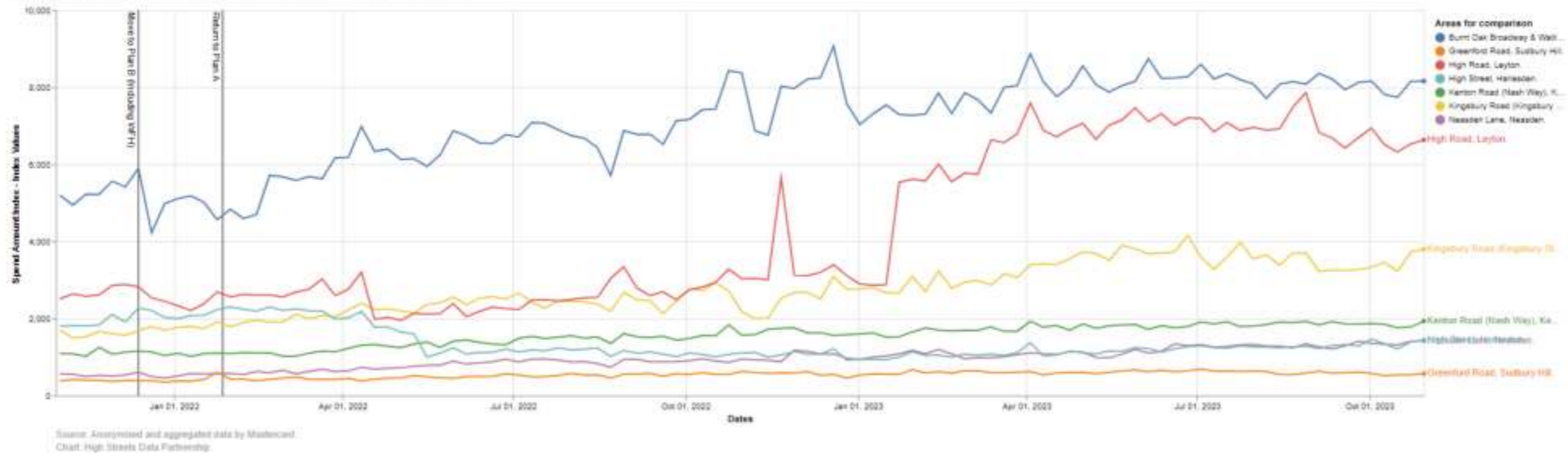
Neasden town centre exhibits distinct characteristics that set it apart from neighbouring town centres, including Church End, Willesden Green, and Wembley. The town centre hosts some prominent establishments such as Tesco, Iceland, and Costa. Neasden is undergoing a transformation into a comprehensive destination and it has the potential to cater to both local residents and visitors from the wider area .

The town centre currently has a variety of ethnic groceries offering Polish, Turkish, Greek, Afghan, and Romanian products and is equipped with some vital local services such as pharmacists, launderettes, and barbers. There is also a growing market specialising in black hair and beauty. There has been a chronic lack of investment in the town centre work in recent decades.

The upcoming Neasden Goods Yard is expected to bring about new economic opportunities in the surrounding area of Neasden Station and a new range of businesses. It is important to ensure that this new development knits into and benefits the existing communities, culture, history, and ensures integration of old and new into the area's growth. This is a major element of Brent's Inclusive Growth Strategy.

To maintain Neasden's unique character and community amidst new developments, it is crucial to give priority to bolstering local enterprises and safeguard its multicultural legacy. Maintaining this equilibrium will be key to ensure that growth in this area is comprehensive and beneficial to all members of the community, preserving and enhancing its distinct identity, whilst capitalising on the future

Neasden Lane, Neasden. vs Other Areas - Mastercard Transactions, Retail
 30/10/2021 to 30/10/2023, Weekdays (Mon-Fri), Spend Amount Index (Index Values)

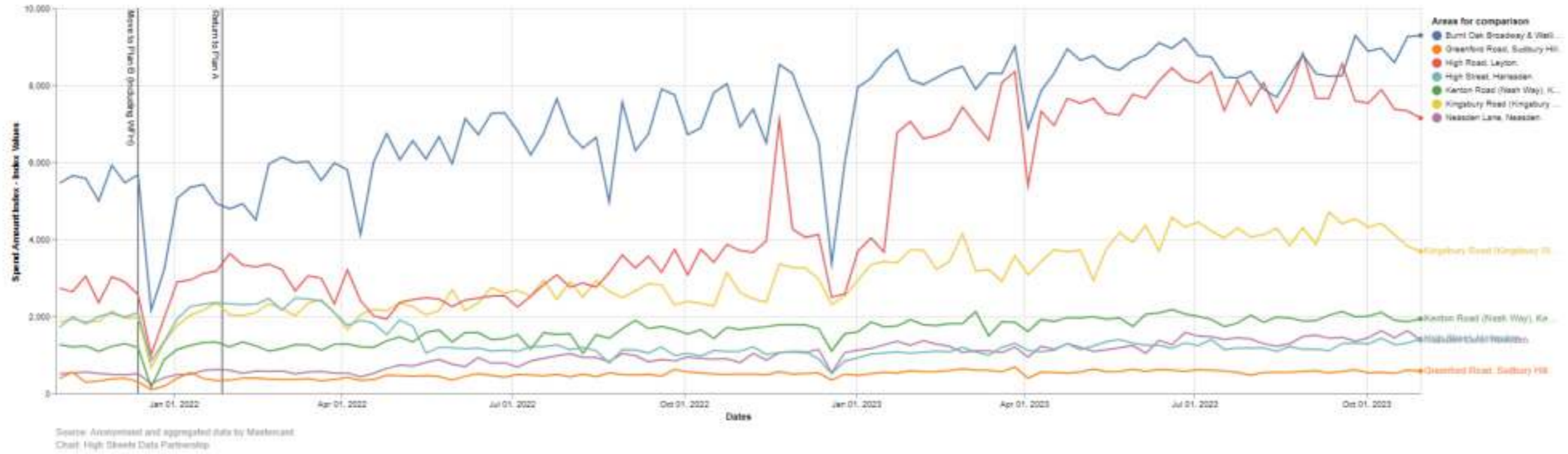


Neasden Lane, Neasden. - Retail Spend By Hour
 7 Day Rolling Average Spend (Retail) in Focus Area, by selected times of day (Hours), (30/09/2022 - 30/09/2023)



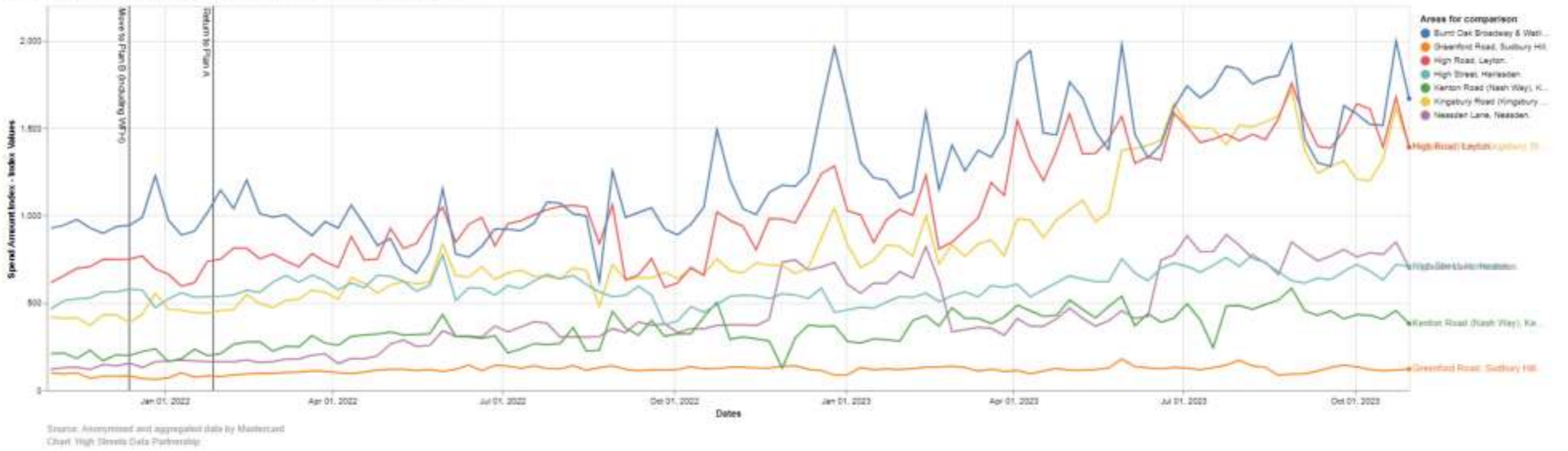
Neasden Lane, Neasden. vs Other Areas - Mastercard Transactions, Retail

30/10/2021 to 30/10/2023, Weekend (Sat-Sun), Spend Amount Index (Index Values)



Neasden Lane, Neasden. vs Other Areas - Mastercard Transactions, Eating

30/10/2021 to 30/10/2023, Weekdays (Mon-Fri), Spend Amount Index (Index Values)



4.5

PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

4. EVIDENCE

Brent Local Plan 2019-2041

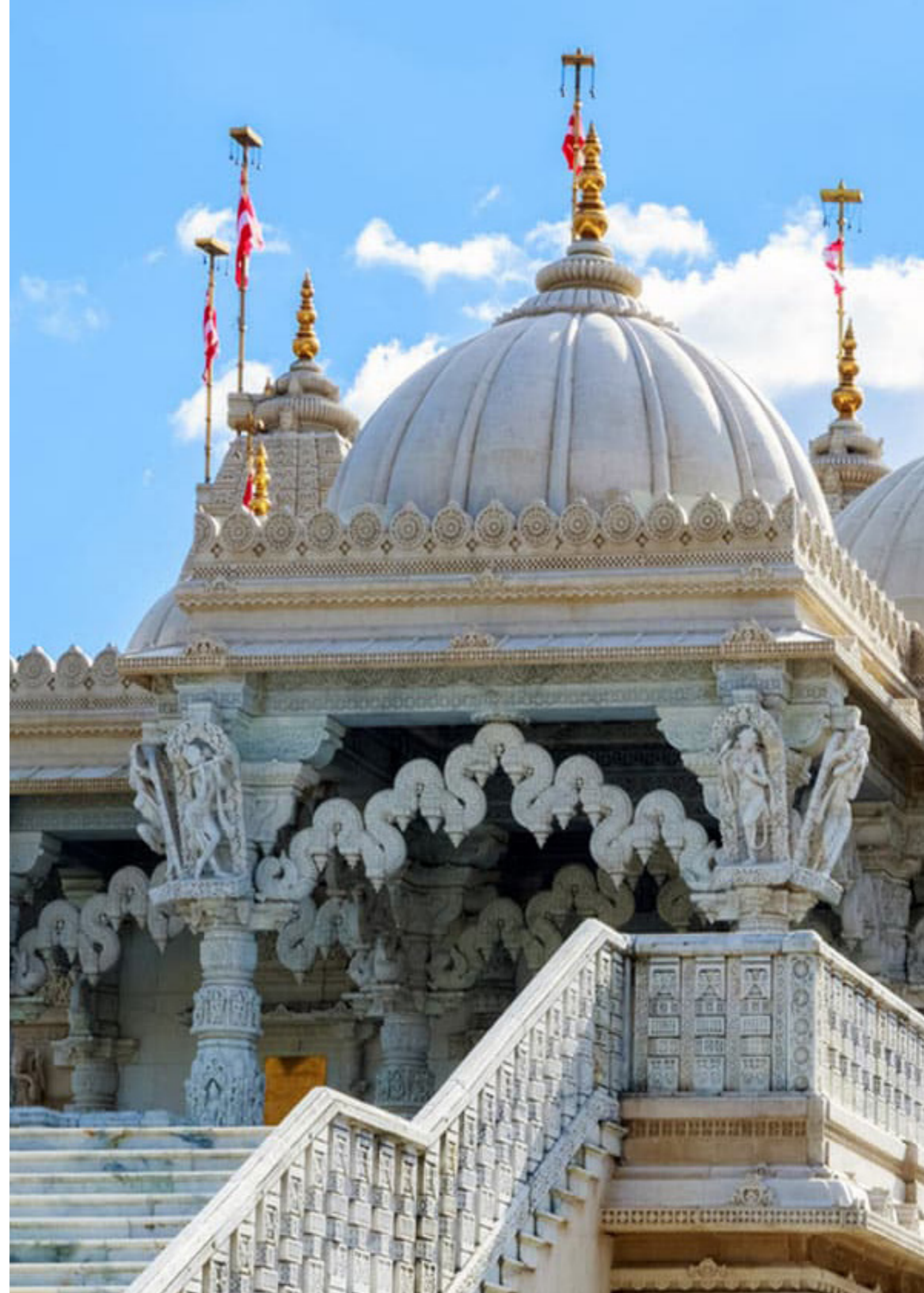
Vision For Neasden

The local plan sets out a high level vision for Neasden, as:

- maintaining its role as a local centre, providing a range of independent retail and services
- aspirations for a new street market
- a mix of community and cultural facilities to cater to the needs and reflect the diversity of its communities
- Neasden Stations Growth Area: a key focus for new housing and employment provided in tall buildings and a new West London Orbital railway station
- improved townscape and public realm on/around the A406 and Neasden junction.

Policy BP2 EAST outlines that any proposals should align with the place vision by contributing to:

- The potential at various locations in the town centre to support its vitality and viability.
- Co-location/ intensification and a wide range of new business premises fit for modern day occupiers in association with a new mixed use community.
- Tree planting and associated landscaping around North Circular Road and other transport corridors.





Policy BEGA 1a Neasden Stations Growth Area(NSGA)

The Brent Local Plan identifies the area around Neasden Station as a growth area. This is largely down to large areas of underutilised land and the potential to increase transport capacity and improved connectivity via the existing Neasden station and proposed West London Orbital station.

NSGA Masterplan SPD

Growth will accommodate new homes and jobs to meet future demands through industrial intensification and co-location with residential uses. The aim for the NSGA is to deliver at least 2,000 new and affordable homes with new job opportunities, new and affordable workspace.

Redevelopment will be complemented by public spaces and open spaces and enhanced, high quality public realm. A robust local movement network of walking and cycling routes and social infrastructure will connect surrounding neighbourhoods and communities.

Brent Council has adopted the NSGA Masterplan SPD to provide a sustainable development framework to guide the physical and social-economic regeneration of the growth area.



4.6

OTHER STUDIES

Neasden Town Centre Study (Regeneris & We Made That 2015)

The study was commissioned in 2015 by Brent council to understand character and town centre performance. The purpose of the study was to provide a robust evidence base to inform future policy and intervention. Nine years on, much of the challenges, opportunities and recommendations are relevant. The Brent Local Plan 2019-41, earmarks Neasden as a growth area with the opportunity to intensify with up to 2000 new homes.

The study identifies the key challenges in Neasden town centre as:

- Quality Breadth of Retail Offer
- Anti-social Behaviour, crime and safety
- Cleanliness
- Labour market issues (below average economic activity, high unemployment and a low skills/income base)
- High churn of residents/absentee landlords - engagement/enforcement

Four recommendations came out of this study:

- **Form/Function**
To intensify development and diversify the town centre offer.
- **Enforcement**
To tackle daily issues like anti-social behaviour, litter, fly tipping, commercial waste management and illegal parking through stricter enforcement measures.
- **Empowerment**
Giving residents and business communities a stronger voice.
- **Place/Identity**
Improving the sense of arrival, wayfinding and gateways.

Strengths

- A number of long-standing businesses are willing to engage in town centre issues with a general appetite for partnership working
- A number of potential development sites within the town centre providing potential to intensify and diversify uses, (concept proposals for three of these are explored later in this document)

The presence of The Grange a successful and well-

- established business centre

Opportunity to test a street market via the planned temporary relocation of the Church End market

Opportunities

Building on the existing engaged business groups, there is strong potential to galvanise a wider community of people in a more structured format, and looking forward, opportunities for the future of Neasden Lane to be more citizen-led, with an action group or Community Improvement District. Whilst in the study the demand for SMEs workspace was not identified, there is a strong likelihood that market conditions will have changed, with remote working being prevalent since the pandemic. Since the study, the Launch-It enterprise centre has established at 60 Neasden Lane, offering affordable private and co-working spaces for young entrepreneurs and the local community.

Neasden Town centre Regeneration Options (Jan Kattein Architects, 2020)

This is the most recent commissioned study of Neasden town Centre, completed in 2020. The study covers off economic, planning policy, ownership and green infrastructure contexts of Neasden before looking at public realm improvements and a set of high-level development options for sites within the town centre and its fringes.

A number of salient points are addressed within a future vision Improved and greened pedestrian routes, generous planting to create a buffer between intensified fringe development 'meanwhile' interventions and incubator space, and enhancing the town's Art Deco architecture. In the context of a major and longer-term road infrastructure reconfiguration interim steps are noted to create a welcoming pedestrian environment with mitigation of pollution through urban greening and a new market. Improvement to the underpass by way of lighting and direct access are highlighted as an opportunity to connect the core town centre to the northwest.

Short-term proposals listed in the study are:

- Building frontage improvements - to restore historic Art Deco buildings, to positively address the high street
- Neasden Market Lane - public realm improvements to trial full pedestrianisation of the high street and trial a new town centre market
- Reactivating the Ritz Bringing the former (library and Ritz Cinema) as the centrepiece of Neasden through meanwhile cultural and entrepreneurial activity
- Neasden Parade - framing the entry into the Town Centre via one of Neasden's prominent Art Deco heritage assets
- Reconnecting the Grange - expanding the offer at The Grange business centre through temporary affordable workspace development

Action Plan Response:

- Invest in the fit out and activation of The Ritz kitchen or diversify the high street offer, create a community hub and support local entrepreneurs
- Neasden Market provides an opportunity to trial a specialised market, to complement the current retail offer, create a destination and draw a new pattern of footfall
- Creating a town centre gateway and wayfinding beacon at 'The Lighthouse'
- Reconnect The Grange, peninsularising the gyratory, creating a new town green bounded by a civic cluster: The Lighthouse, The Grange Business Centre, St. Catharine's Church and former Montessori School

A406 Cycle Crossing at Neasden – Initial Options Review (Urban Movement, 2016)

There are two TfL Quietway proposals being developed that traverse Neasden. Quietway 3 runs between Regents park and terminates at Gladstone Park to the southeast. The other runs from Harrow and terminates at Wembley Park to the northwest. Currently, there is no quiet cycling route connecting these two Quietways. The existing subway is substandard for cycling and not ideal either for walking. The challenge is to develop a cost effective, feasible and attractive means for cyclists and pedestrians to cross the A406.

The study explores following five basic options for the crossing:

1. a surface-level crossing aligned with Neasden Lane
2. a bi-directional cycle track in the central reservation of the A4088 underpass
3. a walk/cycle path along the A4088, above the central reservation and below the A406 bridge
4. a new bridge link over the A406
5. an improved subway crossing

The study concludes that the preferred solution is a 'replacement of the two existing footbridges across the A4088 with new pedestrian and cycle bridges that better respond to the traditional street pattern. These bridges are connected by a third bridge that spans the North Circular, running above the central reservation of the A4088. This dumbbell arrangement reconnects all four 'quadrants' of Neasden, currently disconnected by the A406 and A4088'

Action Plan Response:

- Creating a town centre gateway and wayfinding beacon at 'The Lighthouse'
- Reconnect The Grange, peninsularing the gyratory, creating a new town green bounded by a civic cluster: The Lighthouse, The Grange Business Centre, St. Catharine's Church and former Montessori School

Neasden Lane Options Study (Wyg, 2017)

Wyg carried out this feasibility study to identify traffic management and public transport issues for the Council's Local Implementation Plan (LIP) process. Key challenges include a high level of road accidents, poor air quality, poor public realm, connectivity and limited accessibility for active travel. The proposed options focused primarily on the Eastern and Western Gyratory, the A4088 and the subway beneath the North Circular. A number of options were considered and preferred options identified.

Western Gyratory Preferred Option – removing the gyratory system, realigning the eastbound A4088 along the westbound carriageway, replaced with a signalised junction. Adding a merge at the westbound Neasden Lane North approach onto northbound A406 is also proposed as well as the creation of 5500 sqm of new public space east and north of the junction for development, released following the gyratory realignment.

- **Eastern Gyratory Option 1** – signalisation of the A4088 / Neasden High Street and A4088 / B453 junctions, with the gyratory system remaining in place. A new bus facility is also proposed adjacent to Neasden Lane to replace the bus loop via the High Street and Birse Crescent. It also proposes an enhanced pedestrian route along Birse Crescent and the removal of the existing footbridge between the High Street and the Grange Business Hub.
- **Subway Preferred Option 2** – creation of a sunken garden landscaped with sloping garden terraces, planted with mixed grasses and flowering plants to create colour and interest. A retaining wall and an 'avenue' of tall trees further strengthens the linear connection between the two sides of Neasden Lane. Trees are also grouped close to the A406 to act as a screen and noise buffer

Action Plan Response:

- Sunken Garden at Underpass to rationalise convoluted approach, improve greening and strengthen the linear connection between the two sides of Neasden Lane.



5

ABOUT THIS ACTION PLAN

This document is The Neasden Town Centre Placemaking and Sustainability Action Plan ("Action Plan"). It is a strategic pipeline partnership programme for Neasden Town Centre, with costed and deliverable projects at a mixture of scales giving scope for community authorship and capacity building.

Project Team: Valerie Beirne, Casper Bhalerao, Poppy Boadle, Rumi Bose, Anu Dheri, Gustav Hedberg, Tanisha Raffiuddin, Carlos Sanchez and James Taylor.

The report was prepared by Sanchez Benton Architects with Rumi Bose, Where Pathways Meet & Concept Culture.

Sanchez Benton is an architecture practice committed to working within the earth's ecological boundaries. We design landscapes, buildings and public spaces, applying the same approach and ethos to all. This demands a paradigm shift in architects outlook and behaviour that starts with Transform and Repair: Don't Demolish! Our award-winning work is civic, generous, and joyful. Our approach is always to combine technical expertise with a community-led approach, ensuring real life knowledge informs design and investment decisions. The studio is featured in the Architect's Journal's '40 under 40' and the Architecture Foundation's book - 'New Architects 4' showcasing 'the best British architecture practices of the last 10 years.'

Where Pathways Meet is a creative consultancy that works at the meeting point of cities, nature, and communities across the fields of strategic placemaking, green infrastructure, landscape strategy, urbanism, active travel, healthy streets, regeneration and economic development.

Rumi Bose is an urban design and placeshaping consultant with 15 years of regeneration, engagement and delivery experience. Leading by listening, Rumi brings together the best people to create insightful and creative projects, weaving social, cultural and environmental challenges into designs that speak of hope and community. An award-winning place-shaping expert, Rumi approaches design intuitively, and her projects have won RIBA, Civic Trust, New London Architecture and Festival of Place awards.

Concept Culture is a boutique creative agency, dedicated to the built environment. We help developers, architects and placemakers tell their story, champion the value of their work, and actively engage with their audience through the power of storytelling. Through our adventures around the world, we have seen how the power of good architecture and urban design has a positive cultural, social, and environmental impact on people's lives. We exist to support organisations that deliver conscious places and thriving communities.

Sanchez Benton architects



Where Pathways Meet

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of the Local Government Act 1972.

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of the Local Government Act 1972.

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Brent Civic Centre

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Friday, 17th May 2024

To Sadiq Khan

Mayor of London

City Hall, Kamal Chunchie Way, London, E16 1ZE

RE: Support for the Civic Partnership Programme (CPP) - Routes *Back* to Neasden

Dear Sadiq,

I am delighted to confirm my support for the London Borough of Brent's bid for a Civic Partnership Programme in and around Neasden Town Centre.

I am pleased to know that you allocated £12.85m of regeneration grant-funding programme to support areas suffering from longstanding social and climate inequalities. Responding to the impacts of the pandemic, the cost-of-living crisis, and the climate and ecological emergencies are all crucial aspects of Brent's Borough Plan 2023-2027.

Neasden Town Centre has struggled over the years and in our efforts to support its growth and vitality, we designated it as one of our Priority Town Centres. Since then, a number of studies have been delivered within the area to identify ways to improve its connectivity, accessibility, and safety, but additional funding is still required to deliver change.

The seed funding Brent Council has received to deliver the Action Plan for Neasden Town Centre has been greatly welcomed as it helped us refine proposals for what we think could be the key strategic elements missing to help unlock Neasden's potential.

With the upcoming development planned for the Neasden Stations Growth Area and the local population expected to nearly double in the next 15-20 years, it is essential that we put the right level of infrastructure in place to ensure the local businesses and residents can benefit from the upcoming growth. Proposals that include additional **greening** and improvements in **community cohesion, connectivity, accessibility, and safety** are long welcomed by all.

I appreciate your support so far. We look forward to working together on this project.

Yours sincerely,

Councillor Muhammed Butt

Leader of Brent Council



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Friday, 17th May 2024

To Jules Pipe

Deputy Mayor, Planning, Regeneration and Skills
City Hall, Kamal Chunchie Way, London, E16 1ZE

RE: Support for the Civic Partnership Programme (CPP) - *Routes Back to Neasden*

Dear Jules,

I write to express my support for the London Borough of Brent's submission for the Civic Partnership Programme (CPP) in Neasden Town Centre.

The Mayor of London Civic Partnership Programme is exactly what is needed to support communities in priority areas that are suffering from longstanding social, economic and climate inequalities. Responding to the impacts of the pandemic, the cost-of-living crisis, and the climate and ecological emergencies are all crucial aspects of Brent's Borough Plan 2023-2027 and Brent's Inclusive Growth Strategy 2019-2040.

The fundamental message of our submission is that Neasden can't be left behind of the upcoming growth because of the mistakes made in the past. The local regeneration context suggests that the surrounding area is due to change and the population nearly double in the next 15-20 years. Brent Council is unashamedly pro-growth, but we must ensure new and existing diverse communities alike can participate and share in the benefits of growth.

In particular, our young people need more support. Gang activities and violence are prevalent in the Neasden area and have been so consistently over the past 20 years. Creating initiatives that can help young people engage and be connected to better opportunities is key to ensure they unlock their potential and a better future for all of our communities.

The '*Routes Back to Neasden*' project will create an ambitious framework to re-establish the socio-economic and environmental links that have long been lost between the historic town centre and its local communities. It will ensure that both existing and new communities will find in Neasden a place where different communities can belong and thrive.

We appreciate your support on this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Cllr Shama Tatler

Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning & Growth



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www.brent.gov.uk

Friday, 17th May 2024

To Lucinda Turner

Assistant Director, Planning

Greater London Authority, 169 Union Street, London, SE1 0LL

RE: Support for the Civic Partnership Programme (CPP) - Routes *Back* to Neasden

Dear Lucinda,

I am delighted to express my support for the London Borough of Brent's submission for the Civic Partnership Programme in Neasden Town Centre.

Neasden and its Town Centre are areas suffering from longstanding social inequalities. The area falls into the 10%- 20% of most deprived areas in London and crime levels especially associated with young people are increasing over time. Concerns about the area's healthiness have persisted since the opening of the North Circular, and with the rising traffic and pollution levels, the area has been selected as Air Quality Focus Areas (AQFA). While the expanded Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) promises improvements, streets continue to feel unsafe, communities remain fragmented, and the neighbourhood remains disconnected.

The local planning and policy context suggests that its population is due to nearly double in the next 15-20 years as a result of infill developments in the Town Centre and the new homes delivered as part of Neasden Stations Growth Area.

The '*Routes Back to Neasden*' project aims to create the framework to re-establish the socio-economic and environmental links that have long been lost between the historic town centre and its local communities. The framework will ensure that both existing and forthcoming communities will find in Neasden a place where they can mutually support each other.

We are delighted to see that the GLA has seen the potential so far in the project. We look forward to support this exciting programme that will help us deliver an exemplar of our Inclusive Growth Strategy.

Yours sincerely,

Alice Lester MBE
Corporate Director Neighbourhoods and Regeneration

9th May 2024

RE: CIVIC PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMME – NEASDEN – ‘Routes Back to Neasden’

Dear Sir/Madam

I am writing in support of Brent Council regarding funding for fit out of an affordable workspace unit targeted at young people.

We have been working in Brent for over a year now and have assessed that the need for this type of space is extremely important. We have been managing the Launch It Neasden site which is accessed by young people who are setting up in business. The site has proved overwhelmingly popular with a waiting list now being in place for young people who want to work from the site. With that in mind, taking on extra space would enable us to work with more young people in the local community.

Supporting young people in this way is very important, offering them opportunity, advice and guidance. This type of space, with the right support being in place, ensures young people in the local community are set on the right path to success.

We see this type of facility as important, needed and of great benefit to the whole community, producing local spend and local role models for other young people.

We would like to offer our full support for the prospective project.

If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Patrick Shelley
Chief Executive Officer – Launch It



Krupesh Hirani AM

London Assembly Member for Brent and Harrow

Sadiq Khan
City Hall
Kamal Chunchie Way
London
E16 1ZE

Krupesh Hirani AM
City Hall
Kamal Chunchie Way
London
E16 1ZE

16th May 2024

RE: Support for the Civic Partnership Programme (CPP) - Routes *Back* to Neasden

Dear Sadiq,

I am delighted to confirm my support for the London Borough of Brent's bid for a Civic Partnership Programme in and around Neasden Town Centre.

Neasden holds immense potential and boasts a rich and surprising history. It has been home to both fashion icon Twiggy and reggae legend Bob Marley. This unique connection to pop culture adds a layer of charm to the area. But Neasden offers much more than famous names. Look beyond the surface and discover hidden gems like the Neasden Grange and the historic St Catherine's Church, standing tall for over 200 years. These treasures contribute to the unique character of the area.

Neasden Town Centre has struggled over the years and in our efforts to support its growth and vitality, Brent Council designated it as one of their Priority Town Centres. Since then, a number of studies have been delivered within the area to identify ways to improve its connectivity, accessibility, and safety, but additional funding is still required to deliver change.

The seed funding Brent Council has received to deliver the Action Plan for Neasden Town Centre has been greatly welcomed as it helped them refine proposals for what could be the key strategic elements missing to help unlock Neasden's potential.



The '*Routes **Back to Neasden***' project will create the framework to re-establish the socio-economic and environmental links that have long been lost between the historic town centre and its local communities. It will ensure that both existing and forthcoming communities will find in Neasden a place where different communities can belong and thrive. With the right level of infrastructure in place, we can ensure everyone benefits from growth.

Neasden's potential is undeniable. With its rich heritage and exciting possibilities for the future, I wholeheartedly believe in supporting its continued growth and development and look forward to working with you at City Hall to ensuring we do all we can to support its progress.

Yours sincerely,

Krupesh Hirani AM
London Assembly Member for Brent and Harrow

15 May 2024

Dear Brent Council,

RE : LETTER OF SUPPORT

I am writing in support of Brent Council and the proposed joint co-designed Neasden Civic Partnership Programme CPP. As Neasden Business Collective NBC, we are enthusiastic about the Regeneration of Neasden, NBC believe this project has the potential to make a real impact in our community.

The problem NBC are facing of crime, decreasing retail sales, housing shortage, lack of green space, lack of a retail mix, a place for community to meet and the on-going issues with the gyratory and traffic issues, which have had a negative impact on our communities. These are a pressing issues that demand immediate attention and action.

Fortunately, Brent Council has developed an innovative and effective solution to this problem. By initiating the Neasden Civic Partnership Programme CPP, we can all address these issues and make a real impact in our communities.

The potential impact of the Neasden CPP project is significant. From the brief update provided by Rubie at the last Neasden Business Collective NBC meeting, the consultation statistics show a real support for the proposed solutions. If we can successfully implement CPP project, we can see positive outcomes that will result from this work.

We strongly believe that Neasden CPP is the right solution for our community. Where NBC can support, we will. NBC will provide £25,000 of match funding towards the project.

Thank you for all council officers involved in this proposal, including Bruna. We hope with Brents support you will make a meaningful difference in the lives of our community members.

Sincerely,

Neasden Business Collective

- Kevin De Rosa Chair
- Vijay treasurer
- Dhiresh secretary
- Akay Vice Chair



Jonathan Kay
Head of Regeneration – Brent Council

Via email

Transport for London
Local Communities
& Partnerships

197 Blackfriars Road
London
SE1 8NJ

0343 222 1234*
tfl.gov.uk/contact

15 May 2024

Dear Sir/Madam

Routes Back to Neasden: Letter of support

I am writing to express TfL's support for Brent Council in submitting the application for the 'Routes Back to Neasden' project. We are supportive of the strategic aims of the project, which envisage creating a safer, greener, and fairer neighbourhood.


The 'Routes Back to Neasden' project consists of a number of initiatives to improve legibility, connectivity, safety, accessibility, and community cohesion within and around Neasden town centre. This initiative represents a crucial step towards addressing long-standing inequalities and fostering positive change within Neasden's diverse communities.

We view ourselves as an integral partner of the project and believe proactive engagement is required to ensure the project supports our own strategic objectives to promote active travel and encourage bus journeys.

In conclusion, we endorse Brent Council's proposal for the Civic Partnership Programme and stand ready to collaborate closely with all stakeholders involved.

Yours faithfully

Andrew Hatch
Community Partnerships Specialist
Transport for London

 <p>Brent</p>	<p align="center">Cabinet 15 January 2025</p>
	<p align="center">Report from the Corporate Director of Finance and Resources</p>
	<p align="center">Lead Member - Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources (Councillor Mili Patel)</p>
<p align="center">Quarter 3 Financial Forecast 2024-25</p>	
Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	Key
Open or Part/Fully Exempt: <small>(If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)</small>	Open
List of Appendices:	Two: Appendix A: Savings Delivery Tracker Appendix B: Prudential Indicators
Background Papers:	N/A
Contact Officer(s): <small>(Name, Title, Contact Details)</small>	Minesh Patel, Corporate Director of Finance & Resources Tel: 020 8937 4043 Email: Minesh.Patel@Brent.gov.uk

1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out the financial forecast for the General Fund revenue budget, the Housing Revenue Account, the Dedicated Schools Grant and the Capital Programme, as at Quarter 3 2024/25.

- 1.2 The Council's revised General Fund revenue budget for 2024/25 is £387.5m. There is a forecast overspend of £17.6m against the revenue budget at Quarter 3, which is an increase of £2.8m compared to the Quarter 2 forecast presented to Cabinet in October 2024. The forecast overspend is primarily within the Housing service, which is experiencing high levels of demand due to a rise in homelessness and a reduction in the supply of suitable temporary accommodation, and has remained steady at £15.2m since the Quarter 2 forecast. Additionally, new pressures have arisen within the Children & Young People and Community, Health & Wellbeing directorates. These pressures are being partially offset by £8m of in-year savings that have been identified across other services.
- 1.3 If sustained until year end, this would require a transfer from unallocated reserves. Equally, any overspend not dealt with in 2024/25 could potentially carry over into following year, therefore increasing the requirement for further savings whilst at the same time depleting the Council's reserves. The Council is taking a number of mitigating actions, including continuing to implement spending controls and setting directorates in-year savings targets, in order to contain identified pressures as much as possible. The current budget also reflects £8m of savings agreed by Full Council in February 2024, the status of which are set out in Appendix A.
- 1.4 There are also potential budget pressures being reported within the Housing Revenue Account as a result of considerable savings being required following rent limitations imposed by Central Government in previous years and increased demand and costs associated with repairs. Further details are set out in section 6. The Dedicated Schools Grant is reporting a £0.2m overspend, however there remains a legacy deficit of £15.1m that presents a significant risk. Further details are set out in section 5. There is significant risk within the delivery of the Capital Programme due to the complex nature of the projects within it which may result in slippage. Further details can be found in section 7.

1.5 The tables below show the forecast position against budget for the General Fund, Dedicated Schools Grant and Housing Revenue Account.

	Budget	Forecast	Overspend / (Underspend)
	£m	£m	£m
Community, Health and Wellbeing	156.3	156.7	0.4
Children and Young People	91.0	92.3	1.3
Neighbourhoods and Regeneration	35.4	33.7	(1.7)
Law and Governance	14.0	14.1	0.1
Finance and Resources	11.4	11.3	(0.1)
Partnerships, Housing and Resident Services	39.1	52.0	12.9
Subtotal Service Area Budgets	347.2	360.1	12.9
Central Budgets	40.2	44.7	4.5
Total Budget Requirement	387.4	404.8	17.4
Funding	(387.4)	(387.4)	0.0
Grand Total General Fund Budgets	0.0	17.4	17.4
DSG Funded Activity	0.0	0.2	0.2
Housing Revenue Account (HRA)	0.0	0.0	0.0
Net Total*	0.0	17.6	17.6**

*DSG and HRA budgets have been presented as net figures in the table above. Gross income and expenditure budgets for the DSG and HRA are shown below.

**In-year forecasts are inclusive of the in-year savings

DSG gross income and expenditure			
	Budget	Forecast	Overspend / (Underspend)
	£m	£m	£m
DSG			
Income	(235.9)	(235.9)	0.0
Expenditure	235.9	236.1	0.2
Total	0.0	0.2	0.2

HRA gross income and expenditure			
	Budget	Forecast	Overspend/ (Underspend)
	£m	£m	£m
HRA			
Income	(65.8)	(67.0)	(1.2)
Expenditure	65.8	67.0	1.2
Total	0.0	0.0	0.0

1.6 The table below shows the current forecast against the revised budget for the Capital Programme for 2024/25.

Directorate	Original Budget	Revised Budget	Current Forecast	FY Variance		
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
				(Underspend) / Overspend	(Slippage)/ Brought Forward	Variance Total
Corporate Landlord	14.2	17.0	13.5	0.0	(3.5)	(3.5)
Housing GF	59.8	63.0	57.5	(1.0)	(4.5)	(5.5)
Housing HRA	57.3	54.7	52.8	(0.9)	(1.0)	(1.9)
PRS I4B	46.3	0.0	0.0	(0.0)	0.0	0.0
Public Realm	23.8	24.9	19.7	(0.1)	(5.1)	(5.2)
Regeneration	64.7	66.1	55.9	0.0	(10.2)	(10.2)
Schools	24.7	28.3	20.7	0.3	(7.9)	(7.6)
South Kilburn	27.2	33.4	19.0	(14.2)	(0.2)	(14.4)
St Raphael's	0.3	0.5	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total	318.3	287.9	239.6	(15.9)	(32.4)	(48.3)

Current Economic Environment

1.7 Since the Quarter 2 Financial Forecast reported to Cabinet in October 2024, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rachel Reeves MP, delivered her first Budget on 30 October 2024. This announcement outlined a set of measures aimed at fixing the foundations of the economy and delivering change. Alongside this fiscal event, the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) published its updated economic and fiscal outlook.

1.8 In the report, the OBR forecast that there would be a short-term boost to growth in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) as a result of the policies included in the budget, but that Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation would rise slightly again in the short term to 2.6% in 2025, before returning to the Bank of England's 2% target thereafter. Interest rates were consequently expected to be reduced at a slower rate from the current 4.75%, before settling at 3.5%, 0.5 percentage points higher than the OBR had forecast at the time of the Spring Budget in March 2024, delivered prior to the General Election, which resulted in a change of government.

- 1.9 On 4 December 2024, the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) released a separate forecast, which supported the direction of the OBR's projections, with growth forecast to be 0.9% in 2024 (OBR 1.1%), 1.7% in 2025 (2.0%) and 1.3% in 2026 (1.8%). The OECD expectation for inflation in 2025 is slightly higher at 2.7% and interest rates are expected to fall back to 3.5% by early 2026.
- 1.10 It is important to note that while inflation remains significantly lower and less volatile than in recent years and is expected to remain so in the near future, current inflation is being applied to prices that are more than 20% higher on average than they were three years ago. This is more than triple the increase that would have occurred if inflation had remained at the target. This continues to make the economic environment challenging for Brent Council and its residents and businesses.
- 1.11 Higher interest rates increase the cost of borrowing for all organisations, Brent Council included. The holding of interest rates at a higher level for longer, as a result of higher-than-expected inflation, may have an impact on the Council's ability to use borrowing to fund capital investment our residents rely on in the Borough. Future policy decisions regarding interest rates are dependent upon UK economic data with the Bank monitoring both inflation and employment.
- 1.12 Whilst in the short term the economic environment is more challenging, the OBR acknowledged that long term growth prospects for the economy may be improved as a result of the policies in the Budget, provided that the increase in public investment is sustained. Such long-term growth in the economy would be a positive for Brent Council and its residents, but this is highly uncertain. It remains unclear if sustained public investment beyond the current Budget cycle is possible, given the increasing demands on the government's resources in areas such as Defence and Health. These factors create a challenging environment for the Council to plan its future resourcing requirements.

Maintaining Financial Control

- 1.13 Local government is facing the most challenging financial environment for many decades. Many councils are overspending and depleting their reserves, most are experiencing the adverse effects of a prolonged period of high inflation, high interest rates and significant increases in demand due to demographic changes. So far, 19 Councils have formally applied to the Government for Exceptional Financial Support, and many more are in talks, allowing them to use capital resources (such as borrowing or selling assets) to pay for day-to-day spending. Concerns about future levels of government funding are widespread. Against this backdrop, Brent has maintained a strong position in terms of financial resilience and sustainability with a good track record of delivering savings and balancing the overall budget. However, in 2023/24 the Council overspent against its revenue budget by £14m and is forecast to overspend again in 2024/25.

- 1.14 Despite the considerable efforts of the Council to manage its position, the operating environment and wider economic context continues to be volatile with small changes in demand disproportionately materialising in large financial pressures. These are particularly the case with Children's social care and Adult social care packages in terms of volumes and complexities, and temporary accommodation volumes, costs of provision and loss of Housing Benefit subsidy from central government. The Council is also dealing with the impact of rising costs due to continued high level of provider inflationary pressures, and the impact of the cost-of-living crisis which also affects important income streams of the Council.
- 1.15 Since 2023, a number of immediate and medium-term actions have been taken to mitigate these pressures in order to maintain financial control over the current budget position. The Council has implemented a Budget Assurance Panel to provide additional oversight and scrutiny of its financial position, including in-year budget pressures and issues, mitigating actions and the delivery of agreed savings. In addition, the Council has introduced a number of spending controls, including a new requirement for services to deliver further in-year savings to provide more assurance over the Council's spending decisions and reduce the risk that the budget deteriorates further. These measures include proactive vacancy management, directorate led targeted non-essential spending controls including agency and interim spend, alongside department led management action plans reflecting other actions being undertaken. This report reflects where departments are in the identification and delivery of these new in-year savings targets.
- 1.16 A further update on the overall financial position over the medium term will be provided in the 2025/26 Budget and Council Tax report, which will be presented to Cabinet in February 2025.

Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement 2025/26 Summary

- 1.17 The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government published their provisional Local Government Finance Settlement for 2025/26 on the 18 December 2024. Brent's Core Spending Power (a measure of the total resources available for local government, including Council Tax increases) will increase by 6.2% in 2025/26. Additional grant funding was also announced for social care, an increase of £5.2m, a new Recovery Grant of £5.8m, a new Children's Social Care Prevention Grant of £1.3m and additional Homelessness Prevention Grant of £3.5m. All other grants and funding streams were as assumed in the draft budget. Overall, while this new funding is welcome, there are new burdens that are unavoidable, primarily the indirect cost of employer National Insurance contributions from contracts and commissioned services, notwithstanding existing inflationary and demand pressures. At this stage, current estimates suggest that these unavoidable additional costs exceed the increase to general and new grants announced in the settlement. The final budget will be presented to Cabinet in February 2025, which will incorporate the changes to grants set out in the provisional

settlement as well as the new burdens and additional costs expected next year.

2.0 Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 That Cabinet note the new grant funding received in year, the overall financial position and the actions being taken to manage the issues arising.
- 2.2 That Cabinet note the savings delivery tracker in Appendix A.
- 2.3 That Cabinet note the prudential indicators for treasury management in Appendix B.
- 2.4 That Cabinet approve the virements set out in section 4.7.13 of this report.

3.0 Cabinet Member Foreword

- 3.1 This report sets out a comprehensive overview of the financial and operational challenges and achievements faced by the council during the 3rd financial quarter of 2024/25.
- 3.2 For another consecutive quarter, the financial picture in Brent remains incredibly challenging. I have written before, that without wide-ranging reform of Local Government Finance, councils will be on a pathway to managed decline. In the meantime, the impact is felt across all of our services, which are working under extraordinary pressure, with far fewer staff than ever before. We have always maintained, that if we were allocated the funding that matches the latent demand and need in this borough, this council could do far more than it can achieve today. While we prioritise the statutory services for which we are legally and morally compelled to provide, the cost is clear to see as other discretionary services are impacted. We are therefore grateful to the government for their promise of a multi-year funding settlement, the future cannot come soon enough.
- 3.3 This report sets out some stark figures, highlighting the testing conditions Brent is facing. There is no escaping that the financial overspend in-year remains far too steep. This report sets out a predicted £17.4m overspend in the general fund budget, compounded by a £13.4m cumulative deficit on the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). The loss of housing benefit subsidy against Temporary Accommodation continues to impact Brent, necessitating ongoing spending controls and directorate savings efforts. While in-year savings of £8m have provided some offset, the potential need to draw from unallocated reserves remains a concern to Cabinet. Once that funding is drawn down, it is difficult to replace, and the ongoing revenue pressures from overspends in the Housing Needs Service are troubling.
- 3.4 The Housing Needs Service in Brent has seen a 12% increase in the number of homelessness presentations received in 2023/24 (7,300) compared to 2022/23. The total number of households in temporary accommodation in Brent has increased by 8% over the same period, and the number of families

in emergency temporary accommodation has increased by 36%. The current number of homelessness applications received equates to an average of 133 applications per week. Across London, the gross total monthly Temporary Accommodation spend was £93.1m in July 2024, up 35.41% on a year earlier. Correspondingly, the total number of households in Temporary Accommodation in Brent has increased by 10.2% and the total number of families living in B&B accommodation rose by 7.2% when compared to the previous year. There are still far too few solutions to address this new fault line in the Housing Emergency, and we would urge the government to increase the funding available to local authorities to cope with the loss in Housing Benefit subsidy, and so that the Local Housing Allowance is truly reflective of the cost of living in London.

- 3.5 Despite these financial pressures in the Housing Needs Service, the report also showcases positive outcomes. The Neighbourhoods and Regeneration department has achieved an underspend of £1.7m, and the i4B initiative continues to be self-financing, generating annual savings exceeding £4m in Temporary Accommodation costs. Furthermore, proactive efforts in homelessness prevention and relief have yielded some positive results. This is a credit to those teams, facing a huge surge in demand.
- 3.6 Finally, this report offers a transparent assessment of the council's current position, outlining both the challenges and the progress made. It underscores the importance of continued financial discipline, careful stewardship, and efforts to ensure the financial viability of this council in perpetuity. The work amassed here is the product of many council officers in the Finance and Resources Directorate – and on behalf of Cabinet this report is gratefully received.

4.0 Revenue Detail

4.1 Community, Health and Wellbeing

Community, Health and Wellbeing	Budget (£m)	Forecast (£m)	Overspend / (Underspend) (£m)
Adult Social Care	84.7	83.8	(0.9)
Strategic Commissioning & Capacity Building	45.8	46.8	1.0
Public Health	24.2	24.2	0.0
Leisure	1.5	1.8	0.3
Integrated Health Partnerships	0.1	0.1	0.0
Total	156.3	156.7	0.4

Summary

4.1.1 The Community, Health and Wellbeing (CHW) department at Quarter 3, is currently forecasting a pressure of £0.4m across the directorate. This is a movement of £2.5m from the £2.1m underspend position reported at Quarter 2. This movement is mainly due to:

- A £1m pressure against Strategic Commissioning and Capacity Building budgets which is an increase of £0.9m compared to the position reported at Quarter 2. This is largely attributable to the increase in homecare service users, which has seen a 7% (114 clients) increase since the position reported at Quarter 2 with the packages of care costing £0.8m more. There is also a slippage against the technology enabled care (CHW01) saving. It is unlikely this will materialise into realisable savings this year as the project is still in the scoping phase.
- A £0.3m pressure against the Leisure budgets arising from the Bridge Park Leisure Centre and Vale Farm, a £0.1m reduction from the Quarter 2 forecast.
- A £0.9m forecast underspend against the Adult Social Care directorate, the forecast underspend has reduced from £2.6m reported in Quarter 2, to £0.9m. The movement is primarily due to:
 - a £1.1m increase to the forecast for placement costs, mainly against Residential and Residential Dementia placements where costs increased by c4% and although placement numbers are stable, the costs of new placements on average are much higher. The Quarter 2 forecast had assumed spend of £21.7m, however by Quarter 3 this has increased to £22.6m due to the costs of newer placements being higher. So far this year there have been 82 new Residential and Residential Dementia placements. The forecast for Supported Living also increased by £0.2m compared to Quarter 2.

- There is also a £0.6m reduction in the forecast income for Continuing Health Care (CHC) and a review is underway to ensure that the right levels of contributions are received from health. These pressures are being offset by the achievement of in-year savings within the directorate.
- 4.1.2 The forecast includes the delivery of in-year savings arising from previously agreed savings brought forward from 2025/26, and the impact of the changes to the charging policy that was implemented earlier this year estimated at £1.7m.
- 4.1.3 The section below provides further details of the areas and risks which may further impact on the forecast position going forward.

Risks and uncertainties

- 4.1.4 There remains a number of risks and uncertainties which could impact on the budgets within the CHW department. These include the following:
- 4.1.5 Demographic changes could put pressure on existing systems and budgets if the trend of rising number of clients using social care services in Brent continues. Since the 31 March 2024, the average number of service users has increased by 307. This is an increase of 7%, an average of c1% per month. If this trend continues, there could be 4,729 service users by March 2025. The trend of client numbers will be monitored so that any pressures can be identified and managed. In addition to demand pressures, the average weekly cost has increased by 2% since the 31 March 2024. The last quarter of the financial year also poses a risk due to the impact of winter pressures where demand for services could also increase. The combination of increased demographic and inflationary pressures, above that which has been budgeted for could add to the existing budget pressure.
- 4.1.6 There are an increasing number of clients presenting with more complex health and social care needs, requiring additional resources and more specialised staff. There is a risk of additional costs due to difficulties in managing complex cases and the need for detailed assessments and personalised care plans, such as one-to-one support in a residential or nursing placement which costs £1,302 and £1,159 per week respectively. Whilst the number of service users is remaining relatively stable, the cost of packages is increasing. Brent has used a number of approaches to try and control residential and nursing placement numbers, including commissioning more complex homecare packages, commissioning floating night support to care for people at home and the opening of extra care services. However, the costs for new placements are currently more expensive. For example, in October 2024, the average weekly costs for new placements in Residential Dementia was £1,054 compared to the overall average for the cohort of £892 and for Nursing Dementia an average weekly cost of £1,395 compared to the overall cohort of £1,235.

- 4.1.7 Recruitment and retention of staff remains a risk nationally in the adult social care sector. The sector continues to be faced with high staff turnover and vacancy rates. The shortage of qualified staff can have detrimental effects on the care provided to adult service users and added stress on existing staff. The national shortage of care workers has changed the workforce model across social care leading to a reliance on agency staff that are more costly compared to permanent staff. Management continues to focus on agency to permanent conversions as part of its workforce planning strategy and to maintain stability for the clients. To date there have been 16 conversions this year.
- 4.1.8 The risk remains that supporting the Care Market could also place pressures on the budget as there are risks related to the sustainability of private care providers and the need to ensure the care market has sufficient capacity to meet demand. There is also the need to support care providers through fair contracts and financial assistance to ensure continuity of services and care quality.
- 4.1.9 To manage demand, the service continues to focus on prevention through continuing work with the Partnerships, Housing and Resident Services directorate, providing advice and ensuring that only those who are eligible access council funded services, including ensuring appropriate referrals to the NHS for Continuing Health Care and appropriate reviews of aftercare provision under Section 117 of the Mental Health Act 1983. The valuable role of carers is also recognised and the Directorate is working hard to ensure that carers are well supported. Brent's commitment to carers is outlined in the new co-produced carers strategy and the services focus on strength-based practice to promote independence and aid people to remain supported within their community.
- 4.1.10 The BCF review which was undertaken by the North-West London ICS with the aim to have clear sight of all spend, activity & impact of BCF schemes did not result in in-year changes during 2024/25 as previously highlighted as a risk. The BCF schemes totaling £55m in Brent continue to be on track to deliver outcomes.

Public Health

- 4.1.11 The Public Health grant as at Quarter 3 is forecast to break even at year end despite the impact of high inflation on key contracts procured under the NHS national Agenda for Change (AfC), where the majority of public health services are commissioned. Pressures had arisen due to medical pay awards significantly exceeding the initial increases in the Public Health grant. However, a recent announcement of additional funding £0.5m is expected in Quarter 4 to cover these pay awards has alleviated some of the financial strain. To address any remaining pressures and ensure the continued delivery of essential services, funds from the Public Health earmarked reserve will also be utilised.

- 4.1.12 Spending on Public Health initiatives funded by the Supplementary Substance Misuse Treatment and Recovery Grant (SSMTRG), Rough Sleepers Drug and Alcohol Treatment Grant (RSDATG), Stop Smoking Grant, and Start for Life Grants is progressing as planned and aligned with the outcomes outlined in their respective guidelines. However, funding for these grants except for the Stop Smoking Grant is not guaranteed beyond 2024/25. The SSMTRG and RSDATG have enabled a significant expansion of local treatment services, leading to improved outcomes. While the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) has provided positive indications of at least one additional year of funding, the service is proactively developing a contingency plan to utilise the Public Health reserve to sustain these outcomes in 2025/26 if required.
- 4.1.13 Sexual health services are facing mounting challenges due to rising demand driven by increasing rates of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including the emergence of new infections and growing clinical complexity, such as antimicrobial resistance. These pressures are compounded by broader public health constraints, necessitating innovative approaches to service delivery. To address this, the service is working collaboratively with providers to explore the expansion of online offerings. This strategy aims to enhance accessibility and meet rising demand while minimising costs. Expanding these services could help ensure timely diagnosis, treatment, and prevention, particularly considering constrained resources and evolving public health challenges.

Leisure

- 4.1.14 The Leisure service is dependent on income generation, making it vulnerable to financial challenges from fluctuating demand or unforeseen cost increases. The current Quarter 3 forecast reflects a budget pressure of £0.3m primarily driven by pressures of £0.2m at Bridge Park Community Leisure Centre and £0.2m at Vale Farm, this is partially offset by a £0.1m underspend in the sport services operations budget. The council is actively exploring more sustainable strategies to manage income variability and address the rising operational costs of the service.
- 4.1.15 The rising costs of running and maintaining the Bridge Park Community Leisure Centre continues to place significant pressure on the budget. There have been increases in income for some services, however it is still not sufficient to fully offset the growing expenses for staffing, cleaning, security, and repairs. To address these challenges, the service continues to explore opportunities to boost income, such as renting out office space, and reducing expenses through more efficient contract negotiations.
- 4.1.16 The Leisure services at Vale Farm Sports Centre are provided through a Tri-Borough contract involving Brent, Ealing, and Harrow councils. The forecast pressure of £0.2m is due to a shortfall in income arising from the reduced management fee income agreed with the contractor to help address the rising costs of utilities and other goods and services. Both Ealing and Harrow

councils are making similar reductions to the management fee income to support the continued delivery of this service.

- 4.1.17 At Willesden Sports Centre, the increasing indexed unitary charges and rising utility costs are creating significant financial pressures. To help manage these challenges, a £1m smoothing reserve is available to address the fluctuating cash flows, though it is anticipated that most of this reserve will be utilised during 2024/25, with a projected drawdown of £0.8m. The council is working closely with leisure providers to ensure the long-term delivery of an affordable and sustainable service that does not rely on the reserve which is due to run out by 2025/26.

Savings and Slippages

- 4.1.18 The department has a savings target of £0.8m to deliver in 2024/25. Most of the savings are on track to be delivered, however, savings target CHW01 – technology enabled care (£0.1m) will be delayed as work required in determining an approach to deliver the saving is still underway.

Summary of Key Assumptions

- 4.1.19 The table below summaries the main assumptions made in the CHW forecast.

Key Assumption	Downside if worse	Upside if better	Mitigations
Adult Social Care providers' costs will increase to the anticipated level in line with inflationary assumptions.	A 1% increase over and above budgeted levels on the cost of care packages could result in a £1m pressure	A 1% decrease on the cost of care packages could result in a £1m reduction in anticipated costs.	The Council is working closely with the service providers and provides robust challenge of individual package costs based on evidence as part of placement reviews.
Client numbers and unit costs stay within the forecast range	Additional budget pressures should there be clients beyond those predicted in the forecast	Client numbers falling below those forecasted would reduce costs	The Council are monitoring both client numbers and package costs for each service. This should allow for early identification of pressures so mitigating actions can be taken.
Leisure - Utility costs to stay within the expected forecast	Additional pressure on the leisure reserves	Reduced pressure on the reserves	Service is monitoring activity and pricing to ensure are updated and reflected in a

			timely and accurate way.
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4.2 Children and Young People (CYP) (General Fund)

Children and Young People (GF)	Budget (£m)	Forecast (£m)	Overspend / (Underspend) (£m)
Central Management	1.8	2.0	0.2
Early Help	5.5	5.0	(0.5)
Inclusion	3.8	3.8	0
Localities	24.4	24.4	0
Looked After Children and Permanency	7.4	7.9	0.5
Forward Planning, Performance & Partnerships	45.8	46.9	1.1
Safeguarding and Quality Assurance	2.2	2.1	(0.1)
Setting and School Effectiveness	0.1	0.2	0.1
Total	91.0	92.3	1.3

Summary

- 4.2.1 The CYP directorate is projecting an overspend of £1.3m at the end of Quarter 3, including additional in-year savings of £1.0m. This reflects a £1.8m movement from the underspend forecast of £0.5m reported at the end of the previous quarter, mainly driven by pressures against the placement budgets. The unpredictable nature of the demand for placements presents risks and uncertainties which make it challenging to provide accurate full year spending forecasts. As a result, this position may fluctuate further by the end of the financial year.
- 4.2.2 The budget for SEN Transport, which covers transport services for adults with social care needs, transferred to CYP at the beginning of the financial year. This budget is reporting a break-even position as at Quarter 3.

Forecast

- 4.2.3 The Forward Planning, Performance and Partnership (FPPP) service is reporting an overspend of £1.1m due to the following reasons:
- The placements' budgets are experiencing a net pressure of £0.9m, primarily driven by costs associated with residential and secure placements. Quarter 3 has seen an unprecedented rise in clients with very high needs entering care. The forecast accounts for a net increase of

seven additional clients in residential placements by the end of the financial year. This pressure is partially mitigated by underspends in the Independent Foster Agency (IFA) placements budget, resulting from lower client numbers. While the number of clients in supported accommodation grew during quarter 3, this specific budget is expected to remain balanced due to reduced unit costs compared to last year, achieved through effective commissioning practices.

- £0.1m overspend against the Business Support budget due to staffing pressures and a net overspend of £0.1m in all other areas.

4.2.4 LAC and permanency is reporting a £0.5m overspend, mainly driven by legal costs and some pressures within the Contact team, particularly related to out-of-borough contact services. Legal costs, which are largely unavoidable, are influenced by the number of court proceedings and are challenging to predict. The pressure this year relates to a small number of legal challenges and high-cost legal disbursements linked to age assessments of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC). Numbers are expected to reduce towards the end of the financial year, in line with trends in the last 3 years.

4.2.5 The Localities service which includes demand led care packages for Children with Disabilities' (CWD) is reporting a breakeven position:

- There are pressures against the CWD budget due to the number of supported clients rising by 5% since March 2024. A cost driver in this area is the increasing number of Education, Health, and Care Plans (EHCPs) which also has an impact on the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant. Care packages are also seeing significant price increases including 5% increases in Care at Home and 10% in Direct Payments. The Localities and the LAC and Permanency services are also reliant on the need to use agency social workers to cover vacant positions.
- These pressures have been mitigated by in-year savings within the Direct Payment budgets, higher levels of claw backs from overpayments and an expected 10% reduction in agency costs.

4.2.6 The forecast against the Early Help budgets is an underspend of £0.5m, mainly derived from the Brent Family Solutions service and the Barnardo's contract which supports the Brent Family Well Being Centres. The forecast includes in-year savings of £131k agreed for this area and a drawdown of reserves to fund ongoing projects.

4.2.7 To manage the pressures mentioned above, a CYP Placement Commissioning Board has been put in place to oversee the development of two workstreams:

- Growing Brent's in-house foster care provision by developing a new and competitive package for in-house carers and reducing the requirement to use more expensive Independent Fostering Agencies (IFAs).

- Promoting greater independence for care-experienced young people thereby reducing placement spend and the number of care-experienced young people in paid for accommodation through a system-wide approach that supports young people transitioning to independence (e.g., working with the Housing department to enable tenancy sustainment, ensuring care leavers claim Housing Benefit when entitled with the aim of reducing the impact on the placements' budget).

4.2.8 CYP management continue to take steps to improve recruitment and retention of social workers including several recruitment drives, a weekly Establishment Board created to scrutinise all agency recruitment, and corresponding activity to achieve permanency through conversations with agency staff to convert to permanent roles. The drive to achieve a further 10% savings against agency costs has resulted in cost avoidance of £129k since the commitment was made in October 2024 and if the trend of the reduction in agency cost continues, the £200k in-year savings target will be achieved.

Risks and Uncertainties

4.2.9 The main risks and uncertainties impacting on the CYP directorate stem from inflationary pressures resulting in increased costs from private providers of fostering, semi-independent and residential accommodation for looked after children. Therefore, ongoing actions are being undertaken by the directorate to control spend within the funding envelope available.

4.2.10 The SEN transport service is a demand-led budget and increases in the number of children needing Education and Health Care Plans (EHCPs) could put additional pressures on this budget. Furthermore, there could be inflationary and market pressures which could impact on taxis, fuel and other running costs, thereby exacerbating the pressure to achieve the expected savings for this financial year. This risk is considered to be low as the latest forecast (breakeven) incorporates the latest data on clients and routes for the new academic year and it is unlikely that there will be major changes.

4.2.11 Recruitment and retention of skilled and experienced social work staff continues to be a risk within the Localities and LAC and Permanency services with agency staff occupying a high proportion of the workforce in some teams. The current agency cost is expected to reduce by 10% to achieve the expected in-year savings.

4.2.12 The volatility surrounding the placements budget for LAC is a key challenge. If demand for residential placements increases, the financial pressure also increases as an individual high cost residential or secure placement can cost up to £0.5m per annum.

4.2.13 Ofsted has introduced regulation of the 16/17-year-old placement market. This new approach, alongside a testing inspection framework for children's residential homes may cause a risk of a reduction in the number of homes, causing higher demand and higher costs for local authorities competing for the same places. In response, Brent has been successful in a DfE bid to build

and run a children's home, which will help manage costs and improve placement sufficiency. The home is expected to be operational towards the end of the 2024/25 FY.

- 4.2.14 The CWD budget within the Localities service funds the social care cost element for many children with an EHCP. There remains a risk that further increases in EHCPs will put additional pressure on the care packages budgets in this area and impact on staffing costs. The average cost of supporting a new CWD client can range between £8k (Direct Payment) to £33k. These are average costs and some of the most expensive packages can be substantially higher.
- 4.2.15 A lack of full, agreed cost sharing for children's care packages at an Integrated Care Board level for CYP Placements and Children with Disabilities remain a high risk for the directorate, particularly in events where placement charges are disputed.
- 4.2.16 The forecast position is also dependent on estimated income from the Home Office for UASC and Care leavers (£3m) and health contributions from the ICB (£1.66m). Any major fluctuations against these income streams could impact on the outturn position.

Savings and Slippages

- 4.2.17 The directorate has a £1.9m savings target to deliver in 2024/25 which is forecast to be met, as well as £1.2m savings against the SEND Transport budget, however, this has now been deferred to 2025/26 when the newly approved transport policy will begin to gain traction, with the anticipated impact of the policy to drive cost savings.
- 4.2.18 There are savings from reductions in care packages of £0.9m, staffing efficiencies of £0.5m, £0.4m arising from contract and other miscellaneous items and £0.2m from "service transformation/digital" savings. The digital savings remain a risk as not all of the £0.2m has yet been identified. Implementation of changes will involve support as part of the Council's wider Digital Programme. The rest of the savings are on track to be delivered and any risk of slippage will be managed by the directorate.
- 4.2.19 As part of the requirement to deliver in-year savings to address the challenging financial situation the Council is facing, the directorate has reviewed some of the savings previously planned for 2025/26 with the potential to bring these forward into the current financial year. As of October 2024, the directorate had identified c£1.0m worth of in-year savings. However, these savings have been subsumed by the inherent pressures against the demand led placements budget, leading to a shift from a forecast underspend position in quarter 2, to a forecast pressure of £1.4m in quarter 3.
- 4.2.20 There is limited time to implement any structural changes to find additional in-year savings other than those already identified, particularly given the newly

identified pressures against the CYP budgets. Any further reduction in agency staff would increase caseloads for the remaining staff and significantly increase several risks, many related to safeguarding, that would be extremely challenging for the directorate to manage effectively. The directorate continues to scrutinise all aspects of discretionary spend to identify where greater impact can be seen in this financial year.

Summary of Key Assumptions

4.2.21 The table below summaries the main assumptions made in the CYP forecast.

Key Assumption	Downside if worse	Upside if better	Mitigations
LAC and Care Leaver placements forecast assumes numbers of 815 FTEs and unit costs reflect current trends.	An increase in the number of high cost residential or secure placements would place additional pressure on the budget. e.g., an increase by 4 placements in year could cause an additional in-year pressure of c£0.5m (and £2m per annum).	Increased step-down arrangements result in falling number of residential placements. A single stepdown from a residential placement to a semi-independent placement could reduce expenditure by c£0.2m in-year.	Ongoing review of packages for best outcomes and focus on stepdown arrangements to support children to transition from residential to foster and/or semi-independent placements. Supporting the transition of care leavers to their own tenancies, to improve outcomes and independence. Innovative support and partnering with Health for CYP Mental Health and Wellbeing, among other preventative measures.
CWD placements forecast assume numbers of 684 and packages & unit costs reflect current trends	An increase in the number of packages would place pressure on the budget.		Rigorous gate keeping of care packages. Enhanced clawback arrangements.
Health contributions for CYP placements and	spend will not be mitigated by these contributions	It will assist in mitigating overall net spend.	Maximising joint funding approaches with health to ensure contributions to placement costs where

Children with Disabilities (CWD) packages will be lower than the 2023/24 levels.	in proportion to the overall demand.		applicable. Targeted activity across ICS to ensure consistency in Continuing Health Care funding.
Mix of social work staff and caseloads in the Localities and LAC & Permanency service to include the use of agency staff at a similar level than 2023/24.	If increases of 15% during the year, there could be up to £0.4m additional spend on agency social work staff to manage the pressure.	There would be a reduction in the use of agency staff and the reduced caseloads could be attractive to social workers seeking permanent roles.	Continued management action to monitor caseloads across the service and review and manage social work resources and incentives. New/more targeted recruitment campaign
Assume numbers of SEN clients requiring transport do not increase significantly	A significant increase in the number of children with Education, Health and Care Plans which would place additional pressure on the budget	A reduction in the number of children with Education, Health and Care Plans.	A full implementation of the SEN Transport policy and on-going review of the management of the SEN Transport contract by the SEN Travel Board, including monitoring of KPIs.

4.3 Neighbourhoods and Regeneration

Neighbourhoods and Regeneration	Budget (£m)	Forecast (£m)	Overspend / (Underspend) (£m)
Public Realm	24.7	23.7	(1.0)
Inclusive Regeneration & Employment	2.9	2.5	(0.4)
Property & Assets	7.8	7.5	(0.3)
Total	35.4	33.7	(1.7)

Summary

- 4.3.1 Neighbourhoods and Regeneration Directorate are currently forecasting an underspend of £1.7m at Quarter 3. This underspend is a result of in-year savings implemented to assist the Council with forecast budget pressures. These savings come from a review of the resources available to department, and largely come from the utilisation of reserves and additional income that is forecast to be generated by the Parking service in 2024/25.
- 4.3.2 The service is expecting to generate more income from the parking service, based on forecast PCN income. Smaller savings come from bringing forward voluntary redundancy dates, and minor restructures related to this.
- 4.3.3 Property and Assets has moved into the Neighbourhoods and Regeneration directorate in Quarter 3, and Strategic Housing is now part of the Planning and Development service within Inclusive Regeneration and Employment.

Risks and uncertainties

Inclusive Regeneration & Employment

- 4.3.4 Within Inclusive Regeneration & Employment, pressures reported on income generated by Building Control and Planning remain.
- 4.3.5 Building Control have been impacted in their ability to generate fee income by scaling back or cancellation of major developments, which has resulted from the increases to interest rates and material costs experienced in recent times. At the same time the service has also been affected by The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) high-rise building regulations were introduced in October 2023, which meant a switch to a cost recovery basis for charging. In addition, almost all major project work is assigned to Local Authorities by the BSR (Building Safety Regulator) which has taken away the department's ability to bid for further work. The department is working to mitigate the effect of these factors.
- 4.3.6 Planning and Development services have been similarly affected to Building Control by the recent financial climate, with application and pre-application fee income seeing a decline in recent years. This was managed in 2023/24

due to an implementation of fee increases in December 2023, which is expected to be sufficient to prevent any pressures in 2024/25.

Public Realm

- 4.3.7 For Public Realm, the new contractual arrangements for a number of key services such as parking and waste management, commenced in 2023/24. These continue to be closely monitored as the contracts become embedded.
- 4.3.8 The largest contract is the new waste contract, and this contract is also experiencing the most pressure currently. Within the service there is close monitoring of recycling tonnage, and market prices for recyclates, to ensure they align with the predicted figures for the contract. The material prices can suffer significant swings, for example across 2023/24 there was an 80% swing between the highest and lowest price achieved for cardboard. As at Quarter 3, higher variable costs and market fluctuations for various materials, including card, paper and aluminium have led to a pressure.
- 4.3.9 In 2024/25 there has been an increase in residual waste tonnage collected, with the current forecast expected to be an 8% increase on the prior year tonnage. The main drivers for this appear to be the poor quality of communal recycling, this means it cannot be recycled and therefore has to be disposed of as residual waste. An increase in fly-tipping in recent years has created additional collection/cleaning and disposal costs. Alongside this increase in tonnage, waste disposal costs have also been rising. Disposal costs per tonne are expected to be 8.5% higher in 2024/25 than last year.
- 4.3.10 It was anticipated that the new service would face some pressure in the first few years, and as such, an earmarked reserve was created to smooth any financial impacts between years. These reserves are enabling the service to remain within budget for the current year despite the pressures. The service is working on mitigations and performance improvements to ensure that service can continue to operate in future years, once the reserves have been utilised.

Property & Assets

- 4.3.11 Property and Assets are required to find new tenants to replace expired leases and vacant property to meet their income targets. The service is working to mitigate this risk by actively marketing these properties and working with agents where appropriate.
- 4.3.12 Based on the current forecasts of energy prices from the Council's energy supplier, which is based on the contracts they have already bought for future energy supply, Property & Assets are expecting energy costs to the council to fall in October. The current estimate is an underspend of £0.4m. Energy prices are prone to fluctuations, which has resulted in a revision of £0.2m since Quarter 2.

4.3.13 The underspend in Property & Assets is offset by a projected £0.1m pressure in car park income as a result of works in Wembley Triangle which is expected to affect demand.

Savings and Slippages

4.3.14 Savings for 2024/25 were set under the Council's previous structure. Following the senior leadership realignment, savings have been realigned and £2m of savings are attributable to the new Neighbourhoods and Regeneration department. Of this £2m target, £0.7m relates to finding new tenants for parts of the Civic Centre, which has now been deferred to 2025/26.

4.3.15 At Quarter 3 there are no reported issues within Public Realm and Inclusive Regeneration & Employment, all savings in those areas are expected to be delivered in-year.

4.3.16 The table below summaries the main assumptions made in the N&R forecast.

Summary of Key Assumptions

Key Assumption	Downside if worse	Upside if better	Mitigations
That newly implemented in-year savings can be achieved. This also assumes that the service would otherwise have broken even.	If the savings are not achieved, it will put pressure on the Council's overall budget.	There are significant pressures on the Council's overall budget, so if further savings are achieved to will go towards alleviating this.	Work has already begun to achieve the savings. Some are straightforward, such as holding vacancies and therefore already achieved.
Building Control is able to mitigate pressure on its income generation.	In 23/24 the department reported a £600k overspend, without mitigation the same could occur	The department is able to generate more income providing additional revenue to the Council	Cases arriving through the BSR are being closely monitored to ensure accurate forecasting. A reserve was created in 2023/24 to mitigate pressures whilst a longer term plan is implemented.

<p>Recycling performance will improve and material prices for the recyclates will be in the forecast range.</p>	<p>The full reserve could be utilised and pressures spread into future years. There is a £560k difference between the central and worst case when modelling the cost of the recycle reprocessing budget.</p>	<p>If recycling improves it will reduce the cost of waste disposal, leading to a rebate on forecast charges. Based on prior years this could be up to £500k. The reserve balance is not fully used and is available to repurpose and utilise for other pressures.</p>	<p>The monthly data around tonnage, rejections and market prices for recycling are closely monitored. With ongoing work to improve recycling performance.</p>
<p>The waste contract now has some variable elements which are paid for as used, for example winter maintenance. It is assumed that usage will be within the expected range.</p>	<p>This will create a financial pressure for the service, likely leading to an overspend.</p>	<p>The expected budget for this element would not be utilised. This could then be used to cover pressures elsewhere.</p>	<p>The service are aware of the costs of the variable elements. The volume is therefore closely monitored to ensure that the usage is appropriate.</p>

4.4 Law and Governance

Law and Governance	Budget (£m)	Forecast (£m)	Overspend / (Underspend) (£m)
Legal Services	4.9	5.3	0.4
HR & Organisational Development	3.6	3.3	(0.3)
Democratic Services	5.5	5.5	0.0
Total	14.0	14.1	0.1

Summary

- 4.4.1 The Law & Governance Directorate are forecasting an overspend of £0.1m at Quarter 3, compared to an underspend forecast at Quarter 2. This underspend was a result of in-year savings implemented to assist the Council with forecast budget pressures. However, there are a number of underlying budget pressures, especially in Legal Services, which existing actions have not been able to fully control, and therefore need to be recognised in the Quarter 3 forecast.
- 4.4.2 Legal Services was reporting to breakeven in the Quarter 2 report, however as of October 2024 the revised forecast is an overspend of £0.4m. This is mainly due to vacancies which are covered by agency staff. Legal Services have implemented a recruitment strategy to try and fill the vacancies with permanent staff. However, this hasn't been delivered at the speed Legal Services anticipated. As a result of high agency costs the department is likely to overspend by £0.5m on staff costs for 2024/25.
- 4.4.3 Some of the Legal Services overspend will be met by £0.2m of additional income which the legal service has generated through a review of debt recovery cases.
- 4.4.4 Human Resources are expected to underspend by £0.3m as a result of the achievement of their in-year savings targets. This largely comes from a review of the Occupational Therapy Services budget, and an element of the training budget that will not be utilised.
- 4.4.5 Democratic Services is currently expecting to break even. The Department has implemented in-year savings around £0.1m, however this has been offset by a higher volume of compensation payments by the Complaints service than had been anticipated.

Risks and uncertainties

- 4.4.6 Brent's council-wide homelessness and temporary accommodation pressures have led to the use of specialist agency staff which has resulted in an overspend on salaries.
- 4.4.7 Additionally, the department is experiencing budget pressures due to increases in Barrister fees since the start of the year when a new Framework was procured through the London Boroughs Legal Alliance. The new rates are generally advantageous compared to rates available outside that framework but are higher than under the previous framework. The service is seeking to mitigate this by close controls over instruction of barristers and by increasing advocacy capacity internally.

Savings and Slippages

- 4.4.8 Human Resources is on track to deliver an in-year saving of £0.3m with underspends being reported for Occupational Therapy services and the corporate training budget.
- 4.4.9 As at Quarter 3 Democratic Services is on track to deliver £62k in year savings plus an additional underspend of £16k due to staff vacancy.

4.5 Finance and Resources

Finance and Resources	Budget (£m)	Forecast (£m)	Overspend / (Underspend) (£m)
Finance Services	7.2	7.2	0.0
Organisational Assurance & Resilience	4.2	4.1	(0.1)
Shared Technology Services	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total	11.4	11.4	(0.1)

Summary

- 4.5.1 The Finance & Resources directorate is reporting an underspend of £0.1m at Quarter 3.
- 4.5.2 Finance Services has four service areas: Core Finance, Finance Transformation Programme, Pensions and Transactional Finance. Currently these are all forecast to break even.
- 4.5.3 Organisational Assurance & Resilience is forecast to underspend by £0.1m this year. There is a £0.1m underspend in Audit & Investigations. This is due

to staff turnover causing temporary vacancies and this budget will be fully utilised once posts are filled in order to deliver the planned audits.

- 4.5.4 Within Organisational Assurance & Resilience, Insurance is forecast to break even this year. However, there is a shortfall in schools' income of £0.5m. This shortfall is due to the government now offering insurance directly to schools. The RPA Insurance offered by the Government is cheaper than the insurance the Council can offer. Unfortunately, as the council self-insures to a significant level, the reduction in income from schools is not offset by a corresponding reduction in expenditure this year. The property insurance premium has been uplifted by nearly £0.1m due to out-of-date reinstatement valuations, this risk will continue to increase if this is not addressed, the service is in the process of commissioning valuations to bring this up to date. The budget will need to be reviewed to understand if the loss of income is a permanent structural issue and to what extent it can be offset by actively managing insurance premiums. The Council has an insurance earmarked reserve of £5.3m to manage peaks and troughs of claims between years, which will be used in 2024/25 to cover the overspend.
- 4.5.5 Shared Technology Services (STS) is expected to break even. The costs for Shared Technology Services are split between Brent, Southwark and Lewisham, so income is equal to expenditure for STS.

Savings and Slippages

- 4.5.6 A total of £1.1m in savings was planned for Finance and Resources through staff reductions, digital transformation, leasing additional floors of the Civic Centre, streamlining Facilities Management services, maximising income potential from Council assets, and other departmental efficiencies. However, due to the internal restructuring, Property & Assets has moved to Neighbourhood & Regeneration since November and part of the savings target (£0.8m) is for Property & Assets.
- 4.5.7 Savings of £22k that were to be delivered by utilising sharepoint to replace software used by Organisational Assurance & Resilience have been delayed until 2025-26, as the relevant software license expires in March 2025.

Risks & Uncertainties

- 4.5.8 There is a risk that the insurance income is further reduced from schools due to the cheaper and more user-friendly insurance introduced by the Government.
- 4.5.9 A significant driver of the long-term cost of insurance is the number and value of claims for injuries and vehicle damage relating to footways and highways, this is currently increasing, which if unaddressed will increase the cost of insurance. The service continues to be pro-active in working with relevant council departments, such as highways, to address issues where claims are prevalent.

4.6 Partnerships, Housing and Resident Services

Partnerships, Housing and Resident Services	Budget (£m)	Forecast (£m)	Overspend / (Underspend) (£m)
Communications Insight and Innovation	15.5	15.0	(0.5)
Communities & Partnerships	4.3	4.1	(0.2)
Housing Needs & Support	2.2	17.4	15.2
Private Housing Services	0.3	0.2	(0.1)
Residents Services	14.7	13.2	(1.5)
Housing & Resident Services Corporate Director	2.1	2.1	0.0
Total	39.1	52.0	12.9

Summary

- 4.6.1 The Partnerships, Housing and Resident Services Directorate is forecasting a budgetary pressure for 2024/25, which could amount to £12.9m. It is directly attributable to the high level of pressures in the Housing Needs and Support service resulting in a possible £15.2m projected overspend, which is partially reduced by in-year saving measures across other service areas within the department. In-year saving measures amounting to £2.3m are largely achievable as a result of holding vacant posts, generating additional income and reviewing opportunities to postpone expenditure plans in the short term. This forecast shows a £1m reduction in the projected overspend in comparison to Quarter 2. This is due to a £1m increase in projected in-year savings as a result of re-prioritisation of existing resources and future commitments.
- 4.6.2 The department continues to take a number of actions to support Brent residents and businesses and mitigate the impact of the cost-of-living crisis.
- 4.6.3 The Household Support Fund (HSF) grant has been extended for 12 months, until 31 March 2025, to support residents through the cost-of-living crisis. The initial £2.8m grant for April to September 2024 was fully utilised, and a further £2.8m was received in October 2024, to be spent by March 2025. This is anticipated to be fully utilised to continue to support households receiving free school meals, Care Leavers, Disabled households on Housing Benefits, Credit Union and external partners. An amount will also be allocated for reactive support where residents who are in hardship can apply for help and support.
- 4.6.4 In addition, a new model of support for Brent residents has been developed through the piloting of Cost-of-Living Outcome Based Review (OBR) projects

and guided by a series of design principles. The approach proposes a single, joined-up model including development of a Community Wellbeing Programme aligned with a refreshed Resident Support Fund (RSF), designed to support residents to be more resilient in the longer term and align more closely with strategic priorities and related projects. The RSF supports the Council's approach towards addressing key community needs through strategic funding and partnerships, ensuring impactful and sustainable support for residents. £1m of recurring funding has been allocated in the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) to support this new model. The Council's original RSF, a discretionary support fund, has been in place since August 2020 to provide more support to residents and businesses with the cost of living.

- 4.6.5 The 2024/25 budget has been set considering assumptions around future demographic changes, the impacts of the cost-of-living crisis and inflationary trends. It is based on these assumptions and current trends that the Partnerships, Housing and Resident Services department is forecasting an underspend in line to achieve its in-year savings for areas other than Housing Needs for 2024/25. However, there are risks and uncertainties that could impact the year's final financial outturn position.

Risks and uncertainties

- 4.6.6 Housing Needs and Support continues to be the most significant area of risk for the department. An extremely elevated level of demand for housing services and emergency accommodation is a national issue that is particularly acute in London. The Housing Needs Service in Brent has seen a 12% increase in the number of homelessness presentations received in 2023/24 (7,300) compared to 2022/23. The total number of households in temporary accommodation in Brent has increased by 8% over the same period, and the number of families in emergency temporary accommodation has increased by 36%. The current number of homelessness applications received equates to an average of 133 applications per week. If demand remains at the same rate this would result in a total of 6,862 applications for the year, a 6% reduction on the previous year. However, the reduction continues to be in approaches from single people, rather than families, which are forecasted to remain constant. As at the end of November 2024, the total number of homeless households living in emergency type accommodation had risen to 1179, with the service placing an average of 26 households every week. This is a 28% rise in comparison to April 2024 that had 922 households in stage 1 temporary accommodation and an 11% increase when compared to August 2024.
- 4.6.7 London Councils conduct analysis and benchmarking of peers that help to gauge the situation in London. They revealed that Housing pressures are increasing rapidly compared to budgeted levels and that Councils' net deficit on homelessness service spending was projected to be £101.5m (38.5%) higher in 2024/25 than it was in 2023/24. Brent has seen a 259% increase in the deficit between 2022/23 and 2023/24. The gross total monthly TA spend was £93.1m in July 2024, up 35.41% on a year earlier. Across London, the

total number of households in temporary accommodation has increased by 10.2% and the total number of families living in B&B accommodation rose by 7.2% when compared to the previous year. There was a 4.9%% decrease in families living in B&Bs beyond the six-week limit.

- 4.6.8 As these issues are London wide, the availability of B&B and Annexe accommodation is severely restricted across the capital, with many Councils being forced to book rooms in commercial hotels to meet statutory duties. This lack of availability of accommodation is resulting in having to use expensive providers and at times outside of Brent, which also causes significant financial pressures to the families placed there due to additional travel costs for children at schools in Brent.
- 4.6.9 The supply of settled TA properties, leased from private owners and used to move families out of B&B and Annexe accommodation has also contracted. This is due to fewer new properties being procured under Private Sector Leasing (PSL) schemes, and owners not renewing the lease for existing stock when the lease ends.
- 4.6.10 London Councils' findings suggest that London's PRS (Private Rented Sector) is affected by multiple factors driving a reduction in the availability of properties for rent. The demand for housing is continuing to increase while supply is reducing across the whole market. Greater reliance on the PRS to house lower income households and increasingly limited housing benefits are making accommodation less affordable and available. It appears to be supply side factors notably taxation, interest rate changes and uncertainties about future regulation that are reducing availability at the lower end of the PRS. The Office for National Statistics has published its latest private rent and house prices bulletin providing figures for October 2024. To note, in the months to October 2024 average UK private rents increased by 8.7%, this is up from 8.4% in the 12 months to September 2024. Average rents increased to £1,348 (8.8%) in England, with rent inflation highest in London (10.4%) and lowest in Yorkshire and the Humber (5.9%).
- 4.6.11 Homeless households placed in temporary accommodation who are entitled to it can claim housing benefit to go towards their housing costs. Local authorities pay the cost of that housing benefit upfront and then are paid back by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) through subsidy arrangements. Households receive the full housing benefit they are entitled to, however the amount the council can claim back is limited to 90% of the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates from 2011. This means that if the cost of the housing benefit claim is higher than those rates, the local authority loses money. The council is essentially bridging the gap between rent and the amount the council is allowed to recover in housing benefit subsidy from the Department of Works and Pensions. This means that if the weekly award of housing benefit for a placement in a bed and breakfast is higher than £170 on average per week, the council only receives £170, and the difference comes at a cost to the council. The average placement is in excess of £344 per week.

- 4.6.12 In 2023/24, the total subsidy loss for the Council amounted to £10.4m. In 2024/25, the Council has changed its approach to B&B rental charges where these are now set at 90% of the 2011 Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rate. Previously B&B rents were charged at the same level as costs paid to the accommodation provider. Whilst Housing Benefit (HB) would fund either the full or the assessed cost to the tenant on HB, the Council would incur a subsidy loss as it would only be able to recover HB at a subsidy rate of 90% of the 2011 LHA. This loss would be charged to TA. Rents set at 90% of the 2011 LHA allow to minimise subsidy losses, however the TA budget needs to cover the difference between the cost paid to the accommodation provider and the HB subsidy. This change therefore has no effect on the overall forecast as what would have previously been a subsidy loss, is now borne directly by the Housing Needs service.
- 4.6.13 A programme of works has been designed to focus on containing the projected overspend. Several workstreams covering affordability of Temporary Accommodation and new and alternative supply have been set up. Officers are actively looking to renegotiate prices and identify alternative arrangements that would allow the Council to move some of the most expensive cases with the aim of reducing costs for the Housing Needs service. Officers also continue to carefully consider and assess the needs of homelessness applications. In 2023/24, 49% of approaches were successfully prevented or relieved. At the end of November 2024, the average percentage of approaches that had successfully been prevented or relieved in 24/25 reached 51%.
- 4.6.14 In 2024/25, i4B is continuing its street property acquisition programme and had a target to acquire 25 homes. i4B is a housing company wholly owned by Brent Council set up to acquire, letting, and manage a portfolio of affordable, good quality private rented sector (PRS) properties. Properties are let to homeless families at Local Housing Allowance (LHA) levels. This enables the Council to either prevent or discharge its homelessness duty and therefore reduce temporary accommodation costs whilst also ensuring families have a secure and responsible landlord. The rise in LHA rates has enabled i4B to increase its acquisition price caps. As at end of August 2024, 34 properties have been acquired and these property sizes range between one to five bed properties, meaning i4B has exceeded its target for the year and is on track to acquire a total of 40 properties in the year. Negotiations are in progress for additional properties in the borough. i4B continues to be self-financing and the current portfolio results in an annual saving in excess of £4m in Temporary Accommodation costs. Whilst building and new acquisitions would not solely resolve the homelessness crisis, the Council is doing everything within its powers and the funding available to source new supply. Any new supply would help to avoid additional housing costs and mitigate the risk of the projected overspend increasing.

Supported Exempt Accommodation

- 4.6.15 In addition, the supported exempt accommodation properties are leading to growing financial pressures on the Council and present a new budgetary risk

for 2024/25. This is because providers are not constrained by the LHA caps like other landlords and are able to charge a higher rent once they justify that they are providing support. The amount of Housing Benefits subsidy is dependent on the Rent Officer decision and is awarded based on the claim related rent. This is a national challenge as there is a need for better regulation around the agreed criteria that a provider should meet to be considered as a Supported Exempt Accommodation provider and further clarity on what constitutes as minimal care would enable a universal approach when considering an individual's support needs. A detailed review has taken place within the Adult Social Care and Single Homelessness Team to ensure providers can adequately fulfil the care and support duties required for Supported Exempt Accommodation. It has been established that the main referrers are coming from the Voluntary Sector from services such as Crisis, Thames Reach and Single Homeless Prevention Service (SHPS). Historically, this has not been a significant budget pressure for the Council and has been managed corporately within Central Budgets. At this stage an overspend of £4.5m is forecasted, while further analysis is carried out to understand the scale and quality of referrals from external organisations.

- 4.6.16 A dedicated working group has been set up within the Council and its work aims to minimise the opportunities for exploitative landlords to join the Supported Exempt Accommodation market by introducing a clear strategy on the Council's mechanisms to review landlords that enter this market and those already established. Reviews will also be carried out to consider the individual's support care needs and to verify whether the provider is providing the appropriate amount of care.
- 4.6.17 A consultation is expected to be launched on the implementation of the Supported Exempt Accommodation Act. The Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act was introduced in 2022 and came into force on 29 August 2023. The Act introduces national standards for support and give local housing authorities power to set up licensing schemes to manage the scale and distribution of supported accommodation and tackle poor quality supported housing. As Government starts consulting on the standards and licensing and more details becomes known, further horizon scanning will continue to ensure the outputs of this work are aligned to the new requirements.

Savings and Slippages

- 4.6.18 A total of £1.5m in savings is planned to be delivered from the department's budgets in 2024/25, including a £0.4m housing saving deferred from the previous financial year. The main savings are expected from service transformations, restructures and digital projects. Considering the overall pressures on the Housing service, there is a risk that the £0.4m saving will not be achieved in the current financial year due to slippages against the delivery of this saving, however it is anticipated that any slippages will be managed by the department through one-off in year measures.

Summary of Key Assumptions

Key Assumption	Downside if worse	Upside if better	Mitigations
The additional number of homeless people can be managed within the existing forecast.	Each person costs on average £344 per week to accommodate, therefore any further increases in demand would result in a circa £0.1m per quarter for every 20 people.	Faster progress on homeless pathways or any decrease in demand will reduce expenditure by £344 per week per person.	The service is focusing on moving homeless clients along the various pathways. Various project workstreams are focusing on sourcing additional housing supply to alleviate some of the pressures.
Rent collection rates for the Housing Needs service will not fall below the anticipated level.	A 5% worsening in the collection rate will cost £0.4m per quarter	A 5% improvement in the collection rate will recover £0.4m per quarter	Collection rates are being closely monitored and investigations into the drivers for the movements in the collection rates are ongoing.
Other inflation linked costs can be contained within existing budgets.	A 3% increase in costs above budgetary assumptions could cost an additional £0.2m per annum	A 3% cost reduction in costs would result in a circa £0.2m saving for the year.	The department continues looking for best way to achieve value for money, utilising the most efficient procurement and service delivery options and negotiations.

4.7 Central items

Collection Fund – Council Tax

- 4.7.1 The net collectible amount for Council Tax for 2024/25 (after exemptions, discounts and Council Tax Support) as at 30 November 2024 is £217.4m (£217.1m at 31 August). As at the end of November 2024, the amount collected was 67.2%, a decrease of 2.6% when compared to the in-year target and 1.2% lower than the amount collected in the same period in 2023/24.

- 4.7.2 In 2023/24, by 31 March 2024 only 92.2% of the net collectable debit for 2023/24 had been collected, 1.8% below the 94% in-year target and 2.1% lower than the equivalent figure for 2022/23. Based on the collection in the year to date, a similar or lower level of collection on the current year liabilities can be expected at the end of 2024/25, indicating that the issues that have been negatively affecting the collection of Council Tax are continuing. The most prominent of these impacts is the ongoing cost-of-living crisis, which has been exacerbated in Brent by levels of unemployment above national and London averages. Collection continues beyond the end of the financial year and 93.5% of the 2023/24 debt has now been collected at 30 November 2024. However, this remains below 94% and 3.5% below the long-term collection target of 97%. Evidence suggests that debt becomes much harder to collect after two years have passed.
- 4.7.3 The Revenue and Debt service are utilising external resources to enable a deeper analysis of the outstanding Council Tax debts and the reasons for non-payment. The analysis will also enable the service to segment the debts based on the likelihood of collection. The service is reporting regularly to the Budget Assurance Panel and working together with the Finance department to ensure that appropriate actions can be taken which maximise the collection within the resources that the Council has available.
- 4.7.4 In the current uncertain funding environment for local government low collection of Council Tax represents a significant risk to the Council's financial resilience. Any budget gap arising from reduced expectations for collection will have to be met either from reserves in the short term or from additional budget savings. The Council has already committed to a challenging programme of savings across 2024/25 and 2025/26 and the reserves have been depleted in recent years due to high inflation and demographic pressures. The Draft Budget for 2025/26 approved by Cabinet in November 2024, did not include reductions in the assumed collection of Council Tax or of the growth in the taxbase. However, ongoing low collection of Council Tax will result in a permanent reduction in resources for the Council through a reduction in the taxbase used for budgeting purposes.
- 4.7.5 Further updates on Council Tax collection and the growth in the Council taxbase, including benchmarking and analysis of how Brent compares to its nearest neighbours and the implications for the budget, will be brought forward in the Council Taxbase report to General Purposes Committee in January 2025 and the Budget & Council Tax report in February 2025. If the conclusions drawn in these reports are that a permanent reduction to the resources assumed in the budget is required, this will result in an additional budget gap that will be addressed in the MTFs update to Cabinet in summer 2025.

Collection Fund – Business Rates

- 4.7.6 The budgeted net collectable amount for Business Rates (NNDR) for 2024/25 is £140.1m (after exemptions, reliefs and discounts). This was based on the forecast used for the NNDR1 form in January 2024 and has increased by 11.6% from £125.5m in 2023/24. This increase is largely the result of a £10.5m

reduction in the transitional relief provided to businesses (£1.7m, down from £12.2m in 2023/24), which deferred the increase to their business rates resulting from the revaluation of all non-domestic properties as at 1 April 2023.

- 4.7.7 The actual net collectible amount for NNDR as at 30 November 2024 is £133.2m, a reduction of £2.3m since August and £6.9m from the budget in January 2024. This is mostly due to additional empty properties and properties with charitable occupation for which relief is given to the businesses. Further adjustments to this may occur during the year due to increases or reductions in the number of non-domestic properties and successful appeals against rateable values.
- 4.7.8 Any movement in the net collectible amount for NNDR does not directly affect the General Fund in the current financial year as the overall resources that the Council receives from the Business Rates retention system are determined in the Local Government Finance Settlement. However, where the actual income to the Collection Fund is different to the budgeted amount, Brent's share of the resulting surplus or deficit estimated in January is distributed to or from the General Fund in the following financial year.
- 4.7.9 The reduction in business rates income resulting from the additional empty property relief and charitable occupation relief are unfunded reliefs, meaning that this will result in a deficit that will affect the 2025/26 budget. However, the Council holds a Collection Fund reserve for the purpose of smoothing out any unexpected surpluses/deficits on the Collection Fund. It is expected that this deficit will be contained within the available reserve.
- 4.7.10 As at 30 November 2024, the amount collected was 67.8%, which is 3.3% below the amount collected in the same period in 2023/24 (71.1%). This is partly due to ongoing delays with the payment of a small number of large liabilities. However, it is expected that these will be resolved before the end of the financial year.
- 4.7.11 Furthermore, there remains a number of factors present in the economy, which could have a negative impact on the ability of businesses to pay their Business Rates, such as high interest rates and the reduction in consumer spending power as a result of the ongoing cost-of-living crisis. As with Council Tax, benchmarking and analysis of how Brent compares to its nearest neighbours and the implications for the budget, will be brought forward in the Budget & Council Tax report in February 2025.

Savings

- 4.7.12 The 2024/25 budget, agreed at Full Council on 29 February 2024, included an £8.0m savings target, of which £4.5m had been agreed in February 2023. Appendix A sets out the progress in delivery against this savings target and any mitigating actions. Since Quarter 2, the Property service has been transferred from the Finance and Resources directorate to the Neighbourhoods and Regeneration directorate, resulting in a corresponding change to the directorate savings targets. All other savings targets remain

unchanged from Quarter 2. Of the savings for 2024/25, at quarter 3, 92% of these are on track to be delivered (96% Q2), which equates to delivering £6.9m of the £8.0m budgeted savings required (87% Q2).

Virements

4.7.13 The table below shows the virements which have been entered to adjust the budgets at Corporate Directorate level from August to October 2024. Cabinet are recommended to approve these virements.

	2024/25 In-Year Budget at 01.08.2024	In-year growth	Transfer of functions between services	Technical Adjustments	2024/25 In-Year Budget at 31.10.2024
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Community, Health and Wellbeing	156.2	0.0	0.0	0.1	156.3
Children and Young People	91.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	91.0
Neighbourhoods and Regeneration	29.4	0.0	7.8	(1.8)	35.4
Partnerships, Housing and Resident Services	38.9	0.0	0.0	0.2	39.1
Law and Governance	13.8	0.2	0.0	0.0	14.0
Finance and Resources	19.2	0.0	(7.8)	0.0	11.4
Central Items	(348.4)	(0.2)	0.0	1.5	(347.2)
Total Budget	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

4.7.14 In-year growth items are budget movements from the Central Items budget to Departmental budgets which were not actioned at the start of the financial year. The table above includes the following in-year growth items added between August and October 2024:

- Temporary funding for the Strategic Change Programme in the Law and Governance Directorate (£0.2m).

4.7.15 Transfers of functions between services are budget movements between Corporate Directorates, which occur when a department is moved from one service to the other. The virement ensures that the department and the related budget remain together. The table above includes the following transfer of functions between services items added between August and October 2024:

- Transfer of the Property and Assets service from the Finance and Resources directorate to the Neighborhoods & Regeneration directorate (£7.8m)

4.7.16 Technical adjustments are budget movements resulting from either events which are provided for in the MTFs, but only confirmed during the year (e.g. pay award), or budget movements resulting from changes to processes (e.g. centralisation of budgets). The table above includes the following technical adjustment items added between April and July 2024:

- Permanent deduction from the Neighbourhoods and Regeneration directorate budget for the costs of prudential borrowing in respect of vehicles for the Redefining Local Services (RLS) programme (£1.6m).
- Permanent allocation of funding for the Climate Emergency (£0.1m).
- Permanent transfer of budget for a service manager from Neighbourhoods and Regeneration directorate to Community, Health and Wellbeing directorate (£0.1m).
- Permanent transfer of budget for Environmental Strategy from Neighbourhoods and Regeneration directorate to Partnerships, Housing and Resident Services directorate (£0.1m).

New Grants

4.7.17 There are two new grants for Cabinet to note. These have been included in sections 4.7.18 and 4.7.19 below.

4.7.18 On 29 July 2024, the DfE announced almost £1.1b of funding through the CSBG to support schools with their overall costs in the 2024/25 financial year, in particular following confirmation of the 2024 teachers' pay award. The indicative grant allocation for Brent mainstream schools (excluding Special Schools) in 2024/25 is £2.6m, and special schools will be funded at £703.05 per place. The funding for mainstream primary, secondary and all through schools will be incorporated into core budget allocations for 2025/26, by being rolled into the schools NFF for 2025/26. Funding for Centrally Employed Teachers will be rolled into the Central Schools Services Block funding for 2025/26. For special and AP schools and hospital education, the government will combine the CSBG, teachers' pay additional grant (TPAG) and teachers' pension employer contribution grant (TPECG 2024) allocations into a single grant and paid to local authorities to allocate to these settings.

4.7.19 A recent announcement of additional funding has been made. The Council is expected to receive £0.5m in Quarter 4. This has been provisionally earmarked to alleviate the financial strain from the pay award.

5.0 Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)

Funding Blocks	Overall DSG Funding 2024/25	Forecast Expenditure	Overspend/ (Underspend)
	£m	£m	£m
Schools Block	121.6	121.6	0.0
High Needs Block	77.0	77.2	0.2
Early Years Block	35.2	35.2	0.0
Central Block	2.1	2.1	0.0
Total DSG	235.9	236.1	0.2

5.1 Summary

- 5.1.1 The DSG forecast is reflecting a deficit of £0.2m, against grant funds of £235.9m for 2024/25, mainly due to pressures from High Needs (HN) Block. The forecast assumes that the other funding blocks will achieve a balanced budget by the end of the financial year.
- 5.1.2 The cumulative deficit stood at £13.2m as of the close of the 2023/24 financial year, due to rising demand for High Needs provision, coupled with the pressures on top-up funding allocations. The DSG budget is projected to end the 2024/25 financial year with a slight increase to the cumulative deficit, which is now forecast at £13.4m.
- 5.1.3 The overall DSG allocation has decreased by £0.6m, from the initial allocation in December 2023, due to an in-year adjustment by the DfE in July 2024. The adjustment relates to £0.1m decrease in the HN Block funding for Brent children attending schools in other local authorities and £0.5m decrease in the Early Years Block following the completion of the January 2024 census which saw a reduction in hours of childcare provision compared to the January 2023 census data. There was a 9.5% decrease in take-up of the two-year free entitlement in Brent and this is reflective of a 7% decrease in take-up nationally. This decrease is attributed to three factors including falling birth rate in recent years, the transition to universal credit from legacy benefits and income thresholds for the eligibility criteria remaining unchanged whilst average incomes have risen in recent years. The reduction in funding is mitigated by small underspends within the Early Help central services budgets due to staff vacancies.
- 5.1.4 It is worth noting that this position is likely to change over the next few months as payments to childcare providers for the autumn term would determine if there has been an increase in the number of take up hours for EY provision from September 2024 and in the Spring term from January 2025. In addition to this, due to changes in EY funding from September 2024 - working parents of 9 months – 3 years old can receive up to 15 hours a week free education and childcare, which will also have an impact on the overall outcome.

5.1.5 Although the HN Block allocation increased by £2.8m in 2024/25 (£6.9m in 2023/24), as in previous years, the number of children with EHCPs has continued to rise. As a result of this growing demand, there is continued pressure on the HN Block. Growth in EHCPs is a national and London trend with the number of children assessed as meeting the threshold for support continuing to increase. However, the HN funding has not increased in line with the growth in demand creating financial pressures. Between January 2024 and September 2024, there was an 8% increase in children and young people with an EHCP, with the number increasing from 3508 to 3782 over this period and this represents a 12% increase when compared to September 2023.

5.2 Forecast

5.2.1 The £0.2m deficit against the HN Block is a £0.2m reduction from the £0.4m pressure reported in quarter 2. This is mainly due to a £0.2m reduction in the forecast pressure against the HN and EY Blocks, to reflect the movement in activities within these budget areas since the last reporting period.

5.2.2 The forecast also includes a small adverse adjustment of £0.09m following confirmation of the import/export adjustment by the DfE in September 2024. This is the net impact of Brent children attending educational settings outside the borough and children from other local authorities attending Brent schools.

5.2.3 The main elements of the forecast position are further detailed below:

- i. £0.4m forecast pressures against in-borough mainstream schools' (including academies) top up funding due to the introduction of a new level of funding allocated to mainstream schools with EHCPs for pupils awaiting placements in special schools.
- ii. There is a further pressure of £0.3m against the education costs of children placed in independent and residential settings. This is partially mitigated by an additional forecast recoupment income of £0.1m to claim back the cost of children attending Brent schools placed by other boroughs.
- iii. £0.7m pressure against the cost of placing Brent children in schools out of borough. The post-16 budget is projecting a breakeven position as it is difficult at this stage to accurately forecast the post-16 costs due to delays in various settings confirming their charges to the local authority. New pupils also join in the spring term which makes it difficult to predict the forecast based on pupil numbers. As such, the forecast against the post-16 budget line is subject to change later in the financial year.
- iv. The above pressures are expected to be mitigated by forecast underspends of 0.7m against SEN support services, including Education Otherwise/Awaiting Placement and a further forecast underspend against the SEN support budget due to slippage against the training budget earmarked for the graduated approach programme.

- 5.2.4 The Council has a High Needs Block Deficit Recovery Management Plan in place with longer-term actions to recover the deficit. A task group led by the Corporate Director of CYP and the Corporate Director of Finance coordinates and monitors these actions. Some of these actions to reduce costs include; managing demand for EHCPs through adopting a graduated approach framework, improving sufficiency of places through increasing the amount of special provision within the borough, particularly for secondary phase pupils and 16–25-year-old SEND students and financial management to identify efficiencies and charging an administrative cost to ensure that there is full cost recovery from other local authorities that place pupils in Brent Special Schools. A combination of these longer-term recovery actions and anticipated funding increases is expected to achieve continued reduction in the deficit.
- 5.2.5 In 2022/23 Brent participated in the DfE programme called Delivering Better Value (DBV) in SEND, to provide dedicated support and funding to help local authorities reform their high needs systems. The first phase of the programme included a comprehensive diagnostic to identify root cause cost drivers and mitigating solutions or reforms and support in developing a quality assured Management Plan and the opportunity to bid for a £1m grant to deliver the actions in the Management Plan. Brent was successful and will receive the £1m funding over two financial years 2023/24 and 2024/25. The programme is in the test and learn phase with specific project workstreams being implemented and monitored along with key performance indicators designed to ensure that actions are tracked. The DBV programme will not address the historic deficit but changes that will be embedded as a result of the programme will be aimed at reducing future spend. The current Management Plan and efficiencies identified from the programme may allow funds to be released to address historic deficits.

5.3 Risk and Uncertainties

- 5.3.1 There remains a risk that the number of children and young people with Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) will continue to grow above forecast levels. The growth in EHCPs is a national and London wide trend whereby the number of children assessed as meeting the threshold for support continues to increase. However, the HN Block funding has not increased in line with continued growth. Over the years, this has created financial pressures with many authorities holding deficit balances. The HN Block received a 2.8% increase in funding for 2024/25, however the risk remains that this increase may not be sufficient to cover the costs of further increases in EHCP numbers and increases from providers for high inflationary costs.
- 5.3.2 The financial year 2022/23 was the final year of the statutory override set out in the School and Early Years Finance Regulations 2021 which requires local authorities to either carry forward any cumulative DSG deficit to set against the DSG in the next funding period or carry forward some or all the deficit to the funding period after that. The government has now extended the arrangement for another three financial years from 2023/24 to 2025/26 with the risk that the local authority would then be required to absorb any accumulated deficit from the DSG by using General Fund reserves.

6.0 Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

HRA gross income and expenditure			
	Budget	Forecast	Overspend/ (Underspend)
	£m	£m	£m
HRA			
Income	(65.8)	(67.0)	(1.2)
Expenditure	65.8	67.0	1.2
Total	0.0	0.0	0.0

6.1 Summary

6.1.1 Budgets for the Housing Management function are contained within the ring-fenced Housing Revenue Account (HRA), which has a balanced budget for 2024/25 made up of £65.8m of income matched by expenditure.

6.1.2 The HRA is forecasting an overall break-even position, unchanged from the Quarter 2 forecast. In Quarter 2, based on the analysis of last years' activity and spend on repairs, a potential pressure on these budgets in 2024/25 was anticipated to be circa £2m due to continued levels of demand to address disrepairs, complex repairs and damp and mould related works. There is still a risk that these responsive repairs related pressures could crystallise leading to possible overspends. However, based on leaseholders services charges billing processed for 2024/25 in September, actual charges for the year were higher than the budgetary assumptions, hence reducing the repairs' related pressure within the overall forecast. It is anticipated that any other potential pressures will be mitigated through in-year savings and efficiencies.

6.2 Risks and uncertainties

6.2.1 Although the current rate of inflation has reduced, the uncertainty around inflation and interest rate projections remains and poses a financial risk to the HRA. This impacts the cost of materials and repairs and the cost of new build contracts. In addition, an increase in service requests relating to damp and mould and repairs in general is likely to put additional pressure on budgets.

6.2.2 Other pressures involve the capital programme as there is currently insufficient government funding having been made available to meet environmental priorities and requirements such as carbon reduction works to homes.

6.2.3 Government rent policy currently allows for CPI+1 inflation on rents up to March 2026. Rent setting uncertainties add to the difficulties in financial planning and budgeting for improvements and building new homes. The Government has launched a consultation on a proposed rent policy which will remain in place for at least 5 years, from 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2031, to permit social rents to increase each year by up to CPI plus 1 percentage point.

Views are also being sought on other potential options, including a longer seven or 10-year rent settlement, or a 'rolling' five-year settlement. Whilst a CPI plus 1% model helps to provide some stability and certainty, it does not entirely mitigate other risks, such as the inflation on cost of materials, repairs, maintenance etc., which are usually higher than the rent uplift. For example, the recent Housemark report revealed that the average cost of maintaining a social housing unit has risen by 11%, whereas rent uplift for the current year was 7.7% (CPI of 6.7% plus 1%).

6.2.4 These risks are being continuously monitored and reflected in the HRA Business Plan and the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).

7.0 Capital Programme

7.1 The capital programme as at Q3 forecasts expenditure to be £48.3m less than the revised budget for the current financial year. This is split between £32.4m of budgeted expenditure that is forecast to slip into future financial years and £15.9m underspend projected for the current financial year.

Directorate	Original Budget	Revised Budget	Current Forecast	FY Variance		
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
				(Underspend) / Overspend	(Slippage)/ Brought Forward	Variance Total
Corporate Landlord	14.2	17.0	13.5	0.0	(3.5)	(3.5)
Housing GF	59.8	63.0	57.5	(1.0)	(4.5)	(5.5)
Housing HRA	57.3	54.7	52.8	(0.9)	(1.0)	(1.9)
PRS I4B	46.3	0.0	0.0	(0.0)	0.0	0.0
Public Realm	23.8	24.9	19.7	(0.1)	(5.1)	(5.2)
Regeneration	64.7	66.1	55.9	0.0	(10.2)	(10.2)
Schools	24.7	28.3	20.7	0.3	(7.9)	(7.6)
South Kilburn	27.2	33.4	19.0	(14.2)	(0.2)	(14.4)
St Raphael's	0.3	0.5	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total	318.3	287.9	239.6	(15.9)	(32.4)	(48.3)

7.2 Corporate Landlord (Capital)

7.2.1 Corporate Landlord, which is made up of Retained Estates, Digital Strategy, ICT and Libraries, is forecasting slippage of £3.5m as at Q3, with the budgets set to be reprofiled into future years.

7.2.2 A slippage of £1.6m is projected in Retained Estates, as the Civic Centre roof works and the audio-visual equipment upgrade are now scheduled for next year.

7.2.3 £0.8m slippage in Digital Strategy is due to a reduction in staff which has delayed completion of some projects to next year.

- 7.2.4 The £0.8m slippage in IT Licensing budgets is due to a reduction in the number of software licenses in use. The remaining budget will be reprofiled to cover annual IT licensing costs in future years.
- 7.2.5 £0.5m is due to works at Kilburn Library being delayed until all the works at Harlesden Library have been completed.
- 7.2.6 £0.1m of the budget for flexible working equipment is being reprofiled to future years due to low demand this year. However, demand is expected to increase in the future as more equipment reaches the end of its useful life and requires replacement.
- 7.2.7 In contrast, there is a £0.3m accelerated spend within the ICT Investment Fund project, as the laptop refresh purchase was brought forward to avoid higher costs anticipated next year.

Risks and Uncertainties – Corporate Landlord

- 7.2.8 Ongoing works to the Civic Centre such as complex roofing works and improvements to the lifts could experience higher spending than budgeted. At the Cabinet meeting on 9th September 2024, an additional budget of £8.7m was approved to support part of the planned programme of works. However, further costs are anticipated as additional condition surveys are conducted on other non-housing Council properties and assets.

7.3 Housing General Fund (Capital)

- 7.3.1 As of Q3, the Housing General Fund is forecasting a negative variance of £5.5m against the revised 2024/25 budget of £63.0m. This variance is comprised of net slippage of £4.5m, and an underspend of £1.0m.
- 7.3.2 The slippage includes £3.0m related to the Church End development project, where the start on site, initially planned earlier, was delayed to April 2024. Various factors such as delays with legal agreements, site water issues, and regulatory approvals have contributed to the slippage, which has been carried forward into 2025/26.
- 7.3.3 Additionally, £1.2m of slippage on the Build Works Empty Properties scheme is primarily due to its demand-led nature, as the budget is tied to requests for works on empty properties. This was one of the key factors limiting the ability to secure larger development schemes and fully utilise the budget. However, it is now anticipated that the allocated budget will be fully spent in future periods. A further £0.3m would be carried forward into 2025/26 to account for the retention against Honeypot Lane.
- 7.3.4 An underspend of £1.9m is forecasted against the Brent Indian Community Centre development scheme, which is now complete. The allocation was initially reserved for retention costs, which have been minimal, resulting in a surplus. However, this underspend is partially offset by an overspend of £0.9m

on the Edgware Road scheme, driven by costs associated with a s73 planning application and partial demolition works to be completed within the financial year. Upon completion of these works, the project's status will be reassessed, and the Council is currently evaluating options for delivering the project now that the planning application has been submitted in November.

7.4 Housing HRA (Capital)

- 7.4.1 Housing HRA is forecasting a net £1.9m negative variance, consisting of a £0.9m net underspend and £1.0m slippage against the revised budget of £54.7m.
- 7.4.2 £1m allocation has been brought forward to accommodate accelerated spending on the Grand Union Phase 2 project, as the contractor is expected to complete the project earlier than anticipated.
- 7.4.3 An underspend of £2.9m has been projected, this however, is partially offset by a net overspend of £1.9 million on schemes that are currently progressing or complete.
- 7.4.4 The £1.9m overspend, fully financed through prudential borrowing, is mainly due to increased costs surrounding the energy efficiency works programme within the Major Repairs Programme and a rise in void properties. It also includes smaller overspends across several schemes, primarily driven by tail-end costs such as minor works, settlement agreements, and legal fees.
- 7.4.5 The Five Tower Blocks project is reporting a slippage of £1.0m, with spend dependent upon planning applications currently going through the Building Regulator, causing programme delays.

Risk and Uncertainties – Housing

- 7.4.6 Despite a slowdown in cost inflation, recent increases remain embedded in current costs, compounded by new fire safety regulations requiring redesigns and a higher interest rate environment, all which challenge project viability. The construction industry faces additional strain from an increasing number of contractors and suppliers entering administration, impacting competition and driving up contract costs. To address these challenges, officers are reviewing and enhancing procurement processes for the New Council's Homes Programme, aiming to strengthen the Council's commercial position and improve financial returns from development schemes.
- 7.4.7 The Council continues to face significant supply pressures for Temporary Accommodation and has several schemes in development to address this need. However, delivering these schemes is becoming increasingly challenging due to viability issues driven by high acquisition costs and supply chain disruptions. To mitigate these challenges, the ongoing acquisition programme through the Council's subsidiary, I4B, aimed at increasing the supply of temporary accommodation, is expected to continue in 2024/25. Additionally, the Council has secured funding through the government's Local

Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) programme to enhance supply within the borough by facilitating the planned purchase of 25 properties, helping to alleviate these pressures. The Council is also exploring the introduction of other tenure types into its development programme, creating opportunities for cross-subsidising social housing units while increasing the overall housing supply in the borough.

7.5 PRS i4B and First Wave Housing

- 7.5.1 At the beginning of 2024/25, i4B had an opening balance of approximately £21.0m remaining from its loan facility for private rented sector property acquisitions. As of Q3, the company purchased 34 units, with an additional 6 units in the acquisition pipeline. With forecasted loan drawdowns of around £20.5m, the company anticipates fully utilising the remaining loan facility balance within 2024/25.

Risk and Uncertainties - PRS i4B and First Wave Housing

- 7.5.2 I4B and First Wave Housing are collaborating with the Council to shape their future acquisition strategy. While loan funding is available to support this project, the key consideration is their ability deliver viable schemes within their business plan affordability parameters.

7.6 St Raphael's

- 7.6.1 As at Q3, St Raphael's has spent £0.2m to date, and is forecast to spend £0.5m in line with the 2024/25 budget. This £0.5m consists of improvements to roads and pavements of £0.4m and additional CCTV equipment of £0.15m. Currently, St Raphael is in a position of instructing the Community Centre works and landscaping on the estate subject to planning award. Risks have been noted around the future profile of works scheduled for 2025 and onwards.

7.7 Public Realm

- 7.7.1 As at Q3, Public Realm's forecast outturn for 2024/25 is £19.7m against a revised budget of £24.9m. A £5.2m variance is linked to approximately 150 active Public Realm capital projects, all of which are reported as slippage.
- 7.7.2 £2.7m of Carriageways and Highways works have been rescheduled to spring 2025 due to resource reprioritisation. £0.4m of slippage occurred for Pitch Improvements in the Parks programme, caused by delays in procurement due to a vacant specialist procurement staff position (now filled). Another £0.4m of slippage is related to North End Road works, now set to start in 2025-26, due to resource prioritisation. £0.3m of slippage was attributed to the waste bins scheme, which was delayed by new DEFRA legislation, with the Council continuing to use sacks while awaiting central government advice. Additionally, £0.3m of slippage occurred across several Tree projects, delayed due to the reprioritisation of staff resources, which impacted delivery schedules.

- 7.7.3 An additional £0.3m of slippage is due to delays in the Gladstone Park tennis courts and sports pitches upgrades which have not yet been contracted. The delay was due to a supplier responsible for providing a toilet block for the sports pitches went into administration, requiring the work to be re-tendered. £0.2m of slippage in the Healthy Neighbourhoods schemes, aimed at reducing traffic to improve air quality (particularly in Roe Green), is due to reduced staffing in the Healthy Streets team. £0.1m for the s106 funded Hostile Vehicle Mitigation works (barriers to prevent parking outside Wembley Stadium) has been deferred to 25-26. £0.1m of slippage in Thames 21 works is attributed to design delays related to the gym.
- 7.7.4 Delays in procurement and staff reprioritisation resulted in slippages of £0.1m each (£0.3m in total) for King Edward Park, Barham Park and Tokyngton Rec. The remaining £0.1m of slippage relates to the Forty Lane, Brentfield Hillside and Brook Avenue Car Club projects.

Risk and Uncertainties – Public Realm

- 7.7.5 The reduction in grant funding for TFL has resulted in a smaller scope of work to deliver the Local Implementation Plan. The long-term programme is being developed in recognition of this reduced level of funding to ensure the impact of the funding received is maximised. In addition, we are waiting for further advice on the new DEFRA legislation for household waste collection. In the meantime, residents will continue to use sacks for household waste rather than bins.

7.8 Regeneration

- 7.8.1 The Regeneration programme budget for 24-25 was revised to £66.1m. The £1.6m increase is because of a £1m utilisation of the contingency budget for Wembley Housing Zone, and a £0.6m addition of the One Tree Hill works in Alperton (funded by £0.5m SCIL and £0.1m Public Health Reserve grant).
- 7.8.2 The Q3 forecast outturn for 24-25 is £55.8m, against a budget of £66.1m, resulting in a variance of £10.2m. The entire variance is reported as slippage into future years. £8.4m, of the £10.2m slippage, is attributed to delays in the start times for various stages of the Wembley Housing Zone works, which have been re-phased into 25-26 and 26-27. Additionally, £0.9m of slippage is related to the Picture Palace scheme. The delay was due to extended engagement with local community stakeholder groups to finalise the requirements before awarding the contract in summer 2024. This process took longer than planned, leading to a delay in the contract award. However, the contractor is now on site, and the project is expected to complete in summer 2025.
- 7.8.3 Another scheme that experienced slippage was Bridge Park (£0.5m), which began its pre-planning consultation later than originally planned. The Grand Union project (£0.2m) slipped into 25-26 due to the design consultant role for the contracting firm being vacant for several months, affecting the review of

the design stage. Watkin Road's Affordable Workspace project (£0.1m) also faced delays as the original operator's acquisition of the affordable workspace fell through; however, an alternative operator has now moved to acquire the workspace. £0.1m of the One Tree Hill works has been re-phased to 2025-26 due to a slight delay in the contractor's recruitment of specialist roles for the project, leading to a revised construction timeline.

Risk and Uncertainties - Regeneration

- 7.8.4 The capital regeneration and development projects are subject to various risks and uncertainties. These include land and planning risks, and increased cost from new health and safety regulations and recent high build costs all potentially leading to delays and impacting scheme viability. The Wembley Housing Zone contingency budget was applied in Q3 to mitigate cost uncertainties. These will be monitored throughout the year and updated accordingly.

7.9 Schools

- 7.9.1 In Q3, the Schools programme budget was increased to £28.3m, to reflect the additional £3m SCIL that had been awarded earlier in 24-25 to deliver the SEND School programme. The Q3 forecast outturn for the Schools programme is £20.7m against £28.3m budget, resulting in a variance of £7.6m. This variance consists of a £0.3m overspend, offset by £7.9m of slippages.
- 7.9.2 £7.3m of the slippages relate to the SEND expansion programme, which has been delayed into future years due to the unsuccessful contractor procurement exercise for the Additionally Resourced Provision (ARP) projects. As a result, the council had to re-tender, and the projects will now begin later this financial year and complete next year. £0.4m slippages are attributed to the the Islamia School project, caused by delays in agreeing designs with the building contractor. £0.1m of slippages occurred in the Onside Youth Zone works programme, due to project resource reprioritisation; officers will now present an alternative proposal in 25-26 with the available budget. Additionally, £0.1m of slippages were for the Welsh Harp project, caused by slight delays in agreeing the designs for the next stage of the programme.
- 7.9.3 The £0.3m overspend is due to a completed build project for Ark Elvin. At the time of closing the project, the Department for Education (DfE), as the lead project partner, did not inform the council that monies were outstanding. Following an audit of the scheme by the DfE in 2024, it transpired the Council had not paid its full contribution. As this was discovered post closure of the project, the council is now reporting an overspend of £0.3m. This overspend will be covered by the Basic Need grant in the 24-25 claim.

Risk and Uncertainties – Schools

7.9.4 There have been delays to some of the projects within the SEND Capital Programme due to issues such as changes in OFSTED ratings and failed contractor procurement exercises. As a result, the programme could experience volatility in its delivery and costs to deliver due to the delays in starting some of the projects. The capital projects are also impacted on the challenges in the construction industry such as inflation, resource and material availability and contractor administration.

7.10 South Kilburn

7.10.1 In Q3, the South Kilburn programme team provided a revised forecast for indicative programme costs through to 2040. The revised forecast outturn for Q3 is £19.0m against a budget of £33.4m, resulting in a variance of £14.4m. This variance is comprised of £9.2m underspend and £5.2m of slippages. Following Cabinet approval of progressing with the appointment of a Single Delivery Partner (SDP) to deliver the remainder of the South Kilburn regeneration, a wholesale review of the budget for the programme was undertaken. The 24/25 variance is based on the revised SDP forecast, compared to the original site by site delivery model budget, which was an indicative estimate set in late 2023. Future year budgets from 25/26 will reflect the Council's costs aligned with the revised delivery programme under the SDP model.

7.10.2 The South Kilburn programme as a whole maintains the principle of self-financing, with costs and expenditure forecasted to be covered by income from capital receipts and other sources of funding such as SCIL and Infrastructure grants. Forecasts for eight sites have been updated from the site by site delivery model to the new SDP model. These sites include Hereford and Exeter, Masefield Wordsworth Dickens, Austin and Blake, Craik Crone Zangwell, Queen's Park Cullen, William Saville and William Dunbar, John Radcliffe and Carlton Vale Boulevard. Each of these projects are at a different stages of project development; for instance Hereford and Exeter has planning consent, Craik Crone Zangwell is at planning stage.

7.10.3 £4.5m of the £9.2m underspend was due to reforecasting of the SDP against the indicative costs originally budgeted under the multi-site model. The remaining £4.7m underspend resulted from adjustments made following a review of the contingency budget and staff capitalisation costs. The South Kilburn programme had an additional £3.4m contingency budget (representing 10% of the overall budget) at the start of 24/25, but was no longer required following the mid-year SDP model reforecast. The staff capitalisation costs were forecast to be £1.3m less than budgeted following a Q3 forecast review. The £5.2m slippage in 24/25 is primarily due to the revised SDP delivery of three sites in particular: Masefield & Wordsworth, William Saville and William Dunbar, and Hereford & Exeter.

7.10.4 Meanwhile, the DEN (District Energy Network) are forecasting to budget for Q3 and are investigating the option of a temporary energy resource.

Risk and Uncertainties – South Kilburn

7.10.5 Viability is a key challenge for the remaining developments within the South Kilburn programme. The Council as a result is exploring other development routes aimed at improving the viability of the future phases and help provide certainty for the programme.

7.11 Treasury Management Prudential Indicators

7.11.1 In line with changes to the Prudential Code in 2021, the performance of the Council's treasury and capital activities against the approved prudential indicator for the year are now reported quarterly within these financial reports to members. Details of the performance against the indicators in the first quarter of the financial year are captured in Appendix B and show the Council to be operating within the limits of the prudential indicators.

8.0 Stakeholder and ward member consultation and engagement

8.1 There are no stakeholder and ward member consultation arising from this report.

9.0 Financial Considerations

9.1 This report sets out the financial forecast for the General Fund revenue budget, the Housing Revenue Account, the Dedicated Schools Grant and the Capital Programme, as at Quarter 3 2024/25. Financial implications of agreeing to this report are included within the forecasts provided.

10.0 Legal Considerations

10.1 The law requires that the council must plan to balance its spending plans against resources to avoid a deficit occurring in any year. Members need to be reasonably satisfied that expenditure is being contained within budget and that the savings for the financial year will be achieved, to ensure that income and expenditure balance (Section 28 Local Government Act 2003: the council's Financial Regulation 2.3 Revenue Budget Monitoring, Forecasting and Overspends).

11.0 Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Considerations

11.1 There are no EDI considerations arising out of this report.

12.0 Climate Change and Environmental Considerations

12.1 There are no climate change or environmental considerations arising out of this report.

13.0 Human Resources/Property Considerations (if appropriate)

13.1 There are no HR or property considerations arising out this report.

14.0 Communication Considerations

14.1 There are no direct communication considerations arising out of this report.

Report sign off:

Minesh Patel

Corporate Director of Finance and Resources

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Appendix A - MTFS Savings Delivery Tracker 2024/25

Department	Reference	Project / Proposal	Category	Description	2024/25 (£000)	RAG Status	Comments / Mitigating Actions
Corporate	2023-24 CORP4	Procurement savings	Procurement	To be managed by the Commissioning and Procurement Board. All contracts on pipeline will come to the board to review contract specifications in order to deliver savings	51	Green	On track to be delivered
Corporate	2023-24 AH08	Technical Adjustment - recurring grant funding	Service Transformation	Recognition of grants not previously budgeted for in the MTFS.	1,500	Green	On track to be delivered
Subtotal					1,551		
Community Health & Wellbeing	2023-24 GOV10	Procurement restructure	Restructure	Review structure of the Procurement team with overall impact leading to a reduction in the establishment by 1 FTE	50	Green	On track to be delivered
Community Health & Wellbeing	2024-25 CHW01	Technology Enabled Care	Service Transformation	Enabling residents to self-manage their health and well-being, including preventing and reducing the need for care and support through technology so they can stay independent and well in their homes and communities	100	Amber	Work has commenced in determining an approach to TEC within Adult Social Care services, including a project workshop facilitated by the Corporate Transformation Team. However, savings are still to be achieved from this workstream, and other options such as charging for telecare are being considered, and a soft-market test for our telecare service to recommission in 2025 is being prepared.
Community Health & Wellbeing	2024-25 CHW02	Managing demand at the front door, prevention and early intervention	Service Transformation	Managing demand and complexity of support to 23/24 with a consistent prevention and reablement offer and a focus on Care Act statutory responsibilities including integrated market management	365	Green	On track to be delivered
Community Health & Wellbeing	2024-25 CHW03	Continuing sustainable long-term care and support needs costs that promote independence	Service Transformation	Reducing expenditure in mental health and learning disability including transitions so Brent benchmarks in the middle quartile with comparator authorities	275	Green	On track to be delivered
Community Health & Wellbeing	2024-25 G09 (d)	Discontinue use of underutilised IT on-line systems/services	Service Transformation	A review has identified several underutilised resources across the department and ceasing to subscribe to these will enable savings to be made. Cease use of Proactis e-tendering system and marketplace system	16	Green	On track to be delivered
Subtotal					806		

Finance & Resources	2024-25 FR03	Delete three vacant posts	Digital	The current finance establishment has a number of vacancies. It is proposed to delete three posts that are currently filled by agency workers. Digital transformation will lead to improvements in self-service to enable further transactional activity to be reduced.	250	Green	On track to be delivered
Finance & Resources	2024-25 G09 (b)	Discontinue use of underutilised IT on-line systems/services	Service Transformation	A review has identified several underutilised resources across the department and ceasing to subscribe to these will enable savings to be made. End contract with Alcamus and build system in SharePoint	22	Amber	Only a part-year saving in 2024/25 due to the License for Alcamus not expiring until March 2025. However, System requirements have now been finalised and a project initiated to develop the in-house application to replace Alcamus once the License expires.
Subtotal					272		
Children & Young People	2023-24 CYP05	Looked after Children and Permanency	Restructure	Review of agency worker usage and implementation of a vacancy factor	510	Green	On track to be delivered
Children & Young People	2023-24 CYP06	Forward Planning Performance & Partnerships	Procurement	Proposed savings will be made through the commissioning of placements for Looked After Children and Care Leavers	860	Green	On track to be delivered
Children & Young People	2023-24 CYP09	Digital / Transformation Savings	Service Transformation	Admin - case management, RPA, Mosaic enhancement (alerts), electronic document management, removing manual processes and excel. Schools admissions chatbots/virtual agents. Direct payments automation and reduction in overpayments; potential for increased alignment with ASC DP team. CAMS dashboard.	200	Amber	Following review, £88k of original proposals were assessed as not being achievable. Likely slippage of £60k due to delayed programme implementation but will be delivered in 25/26. New options to consider other digital savings such as from Mosaic redesign will be considered in 25/26.
Children & Young People	2024-25 CYP01	Reduce the value of the contract that provides a targeted service that promotes education, employment, and training for young people. (Inclusion)	Reduction in provision	The current contract ends on 31 March 2024. The planned contract value from April 2024 onwards is £565,000 per annum (reflecting a previous saving of £80K). A 10% saving is proposed when the contract is re-procured. This will be targeted at the non-statutory element of the contract resulting in a reduction in bespoke projects for targeted vulnerable groups, fewer access points for the service and no service for children currently in specialist EAL provisions.	56	Green	On track to be delivered

Children & Young People	2024-25 CYP02	Additional controls to better manage spot purchasing of specialist assessments required for child care proceedings cases (Localities / LACP / Early Help).	Procurement	Additional controls to better manage spot purchasing of specialist assessments, contracts and support packages required for children's care proceedings cases. Practitioners undertaking their own assessments, better due diligence of contracts, reviewing support packages.	50	Green	On track to be delivered
Children & Young People	2024-25 CYP03	Utilising DSG to fund eligible services currently funded from the General Fund. Setting and School Effectiveness / Inclusion / Early Help.	Service Transformation	Utilising the Dedicated Schools Grant to fund eligible services currently provided from the General Fund. A review of Early Years functions that are funded through DSG across Setting and School Effectiveness, Early Help and Inclusion Service is being undertaken to reduce duplication. This will result in some DSG savings (1FTE equivalent) which will be repurposed to fund capacity in the Performance Management and Information Team that is eligible to be funded by DSG.	50	Green	On track to be delivered
Children & Young People	2024-25 CYP04	Reduction in school improvement funds in Setting and School Effectiveness Service. Setting and School Effectiveness	Reduction in provision	Reduction in budget identified for targeted school improvement activity. The general fund contributes to the team following the loss of the School Improvement and Brokering grant.	50	Green	On track to be delivered
Children & Young People	2024-25 CYP05	Freeman Family Centre – contact activity Early Help / LACP	Reduction in provision	A new organisation will be taking over tenancy of the Freeman Centre. The current contract with Barnardo's has ended and there is scope to reduce this by up to £50k as part of new arrangements with the new tenant organisation and reducing allocated growth to the existing contact service for children in care that operates from the Freeman Family Centre.	100	Green	On track to be delivered
Children & Young People	2024-25 CYP06	Offsetting overheads/management costs within Early Help through delivery of the Best Start for Life programme. (Early Help)	Service Transformation	To offset some Early Help staff costs using the Best Start for Life programme funding.	70	Green	On track to be delivered
Subtotal					1,946		

Partnerships, Housing & Residents Services	2024-25 CR02	Review of Directorate staffing structures to identify efficiencies	Restructure	Review of Directorate staffing structures to identify efficiencies	150	Green	On track to be delivered
Partnerships, Housing & Residents Services	2024-25 RS01 (a)	Increased use of automation	Digital	Based on 3 complex and 5 simple processes per year across all PHRS departments (focusing on transactional services) with efficiencies cashed through reduction in posts and/or increase in income.	117	Green	On track to be delivered
Partnerships, Housing & Residents Services	2024-25 RS02 (a)	Business support efficiencies.	Digital	Reduction in business support posts through alignment of support functions across Partnerships, Housing & Resident Services, combined with improved forms and integration with back-office systems.	78	Green	On track to be delivered
Partnerships, Housing & Residents Services	2024-25 RS10 (a)	Customer Access Improvement and Performance	Restructure	Restructure and pooling of administrative functions across Partnerships, Housing & Resident Services. Approx 2 FTE Reductions	44	Green	On track to be delivered
Partnerships, Housing & Residents Services	2024-25 RS03	Mobile telephony contract	Procurement	Saving through new contract for mobile telephony	200	Green	On track to be delivered
Partnerships, Housing & Residents Services	2024-25 RS04	Licensing	Digital	Savings through application rationalisation and license management	113	Green	On track to be delivered
Partnerships, Housing & Residents Services	2024-25 RS05	Registration and Nationality - Income generation	Income Generation	Fee Increase 24/25 following an income freeze for 23/24	20	Green	On track to be delivered
Partnerships, Housing & Residents Services	2024-25 RS06	Libraries and Heritage - realignment of managerial responsibilities and posts	Restructure	The restructure will focus on maximising income generation and delivering savings in 2024/25 – 2025/26.	48	Green	On track to be delivered
Partnerships, Housing & Residents Services	2024-25 RS07	Community Hubs - Reduction in provision	Reduction in provision	Deletion of a vacant post within Community Hubs	40	Green	On track to be delivered
Partnerships, Housing & Residents Services	2024-25 RS08	Revenue and Debt	Digital	To not recruit to vacant posts / move to digital – self-service / reduction in usage of Resilience Contract	65	Green	On track to be delivered
Partnerships, Housing & Residents Services	2024-25 RS09	Customer Services and Assessments	Digital	Reduction in Benefit Assessment processing costs due to impact of Universal Credit (UC)	61	Green	On track to be delivered

Partnerships, Housing & Residents Services	2024-25 RS10	Implementation of borough wide (except Wembley Park) selective licensing scheme	Income Generation	This is extra income into the General Fund and therefore has no negative impact on staff and service users. It is also not politically difficult to deliver. However, it is dependent upon approval by the Secretary of State.	100	Green	On track to be delivered
Partnerships, Housing & Residents Services	2024-25 RS17	Grave tending / additional vaults in cemeteries	Income Generation	Offer a paid for grave tending service for families that may not be able to access the Brent cemeteries.	40	Green	On track to be delivered
Partnerships, Housing & Residents Services	2024-25 RS18	Mortuary / Bereavement / Funeral Initiatives	Income Generation	A range of small income generating initiatives across our bereavement services	20	Green	On track to be delivered
Partnerships, Housing & Residents Services	2024-25 CR01	Volunteering Platform	Procurement	Not to procure a new Volunteering Platform	20	Green	On track to be delivered
Subtotal					1,116		
Law & Governance	2023-24 GOV11	Digital / Transformation Savings	Service Transformation	Electronic document management, further implementation of DocuSign, sharing documents with external parties via M365, chatbots for routine HR and Legal queries	75	Amber	Not achievable through original proposal due to delays with chatbots. Now expected to be largely achieved through alternative means
Law & Governance	2024-25 G01	Training budget reductions	Reduction in provision	Local training budgets have not been fully utilised in several teams and for the Member Development Programme. It is proposed to reduce these budgets accordingly. In both cases there has been an increase in in-house provision of training and therefore less dependence on purchasing from external organisations.	15	Green	On track to be delivered
Law & Governance	2024-25 G02	Member allowances	Reduction in provision	A reduction to reflect the reduction in the number of councillors as a result of the boundary review	51	Green	On track to be delivered
Law & Governance	2024-25 G03	Elections Legal provision	Reduction in provision	Currently the elections team have budgets to fund the extra legal support that might be necessary were there to be a challenge related to electoral registration or an election. Most years this has not been used. It is proposed in future to rely on the reserves that have been established for elections and call on those should such a challenge occur.	14	Green	On track to be delivered

Law & Governance	2024-25 G04	Miscellaneous overheads	Reduction in provision	This reduction is to reflect existing underspends on stationery and mail	3	Green	On track to be delivered
Law & Governance	2024-25 G05	Review of support arrangements in Executive and Member Services	Reduction in provision	There is scope to reduce the amount of administrative support provided within the service.	10	Green	On track to be delivered
Law & Governance	2024-25 G06	Legal Services – change approach to training posts	Reduction in provision	Currently Legal Services has three traditional graduate level trainee solicitor posts. It is proposed to reduce this to one post. As trainees are a valuable source of recruits to qualified posts, it is proposed to over time to convert two existing Legal Assistant posts to solicitor apprentice posts. These require a lower level of qualification, and the Apprentice Levy can be used to fund the qualification element of the training.	42	Green	On track to be delivered
Law & Governance	2024-25 G07	Increase income target for services to schools and for legal charges to third parties	Income Generation	Income from these sources has increased, for example through more schools buying into the services available from the Governance Department and work undertaken in relation to developments.	42	Green	On track to be delivered
Law & Governance	2024-25 G09 (a)	Discontinue use of underutilised IT on-line systems/services	Service Transformation	A review has identified several underutilised resources across the Governance department and ceasing to subscribe to these will enable savings to be made. The courts are moving to a new bundling system, and this will no longer be required	10	Green	On track to be delivered
Law & Governance	2024-25 G09 (c)	Discontinue use of underutilised IT on-line systems/services	Service Transformation	A review has identified several underutilised resources across the Governance department and ceasing to subscribe to these will enable savings to be made. Cease subscription to expert HR	5	Green	On track to be delivered
Law & Governance	2024-25 G08	Realign graduate budget	Reduction in provision	The number of graduates recruited under the council's programme is variable and as appointments are made part way through the financial year the precise costs are unpredictable. A smoothing reserve has therefore been established to manage this issue and it proposed that the core budget be reduced accordingly. The proposed	5	Green	On track to be delivered

				reduction for 2024/25 is part of an overall £15k reduction already partly implemented.			
Subtotal					272		
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	2023-24 CR01	Planning Service Staff	Restructure	Reduce planning staff by 5% (3.5 FTE) achieved by natural turnover/deletion of vacant posts. Would impact ability to provide planning service and policy framework.	205	Green	On track to be delivered
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	2023-24 CR04	Regeneration Capitalisation	Restructure	Opportunity for further capitalisation for 4 years, whilst Wembley housing zone schemes are built	75	Green	On track to be delivered
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	2023-24 RS18	RLS Related - Negotiate RLS cost reduction	Procurement	Potential to reduce cost as part of RLS competitive dialogue tendering approach	200	Green	On track to be delivered
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	2024-25 RS01 (b)	Increased use of automation	Digital	Based on 3 complex and 5 simple processes per year across all RS departments (focusing on transactional services) with efficiencies cashed through reduction in posts and/or increase in income.	33	Green	On track to be delivered
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	2024-25 RS02 (b)	Business support efficiencies.	Digital	Reduction in business support posts through alignment of support functions across Resident Services, combined with improved forms and integration with back-office systems.	22	Green	On track to be delivered
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	2024-25 RS10 (b)	Customer Access Improvement and Performance	Restructure	Restructure and pooling of administrative functions across Resident Services. Approx 2 FTE Reductions	13	Green	On track to be delivered
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	2024-25 RS11	Increased subscription to the bulky waste service	Income Generation	A saving to account for an established increase in demand for the bulky waste collection service from around 350 requests when Veolia were operating the service to around 650 requests per month currently	10	Green	On track to be delivered
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	2024-25 RS12	Increased subscription and £5 charge increase with respect to the garden waste service	Income Generation	To increase the annual subscription price for garden waste collections from £60 to £65, an 8% increase to generate an additional income of £100,000	100	Green	On track to be delivered
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	2024-25 RS13	Review of the Parks service	Income Generation	Create a programme of organised cultural and entertainment events in parks to include a revision of fees and charges.	70	Green	On track to be delivered

Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	2024-25 RS14	Rental of Parks building space	Income Generation	To review existing unused property space within parks.	30	Green	On track to be delivered
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	2024-25 RS15	Licensing / sponsorship schemes in Parks	Income Generation	Offer space for advertising in parks.	40	Green	On track to be delivered
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	2024-25 RS16	Increase tennis/sports bookings	Income Generation	Create and advertise a revised sports booking programme that encourages better take up and which offers new activities.	20	Green	On track to be delivered
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	2024-25 RS19	Cashless Parking opt In Reminders	Digital	The Council generating income through optional text reminders, which is expected to generate income in the region of £80k per annum.	100	Green	On track to be delivered
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	2024-25 RS20	RLS Contract Efficiencies Post Year 1	Service Transformation	Review of savings and efficiencies potential once the new contract operations have settled after year 1.	100	Green	On track to be delivered
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	2024-25 RS21	Removal of vacant posts	Restructure	An ongoing assessment of the need to recruit to vacant posts and whether these can be removed and the tasks accounted for in different ways.	200	Green	On track to be delivered
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	2023-24 FR04	Civic Centre Office Let	Income Generation	Lease further floors of the Civic Centre to external organisations / tenants to generate revenue	680	Amber	Ongoing challenges in the commercial lettings market to secure new tenants for the Civic Centre so unlikely to achieve saving target for this financial year.
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	2024-25 FR01	Increase Civic Centre Car Park Charging Tariffs in line with inflation/local prices	Income Generation	The current Civic Centre Car Park charging tariffs were introduced in September 2022. There is an opportunity to increase the car park charging tariffs in line with inflation and the rates charged at other car parking facilities within the vicinity of the Civic Centre from April 2024.	100	Green	On track to be delivered
Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	2024-25 FR02	Property Strategy to maximise rental return on council assets	Income Generation	A new Property Strategy will allow the council to maximise the opportunity of increasing revenue from its assets. A starting target which we would endeavour to increase over time.	50	Green	On track to be delivered
Subtotal					2,048		
Overall total					8,010		

Appendix B – Quarter 3 2024/25 Prudential Indicators

Legislative Update

In December 2021, CIPFA published its revised Prudential Code and Treasury Management Code of Practice following concerns around the commercial activity undertaken by several local authorities and the affordability of borrowing plans.

The Code required authorities to not borrow to invest primarily for financial return and all capital expenditure undertaken must be related to the functions of the authority. The Council has not undertaken any activities to invest for a yield or have any commercial plans within the capital programme.

The Code required the Prudential Indicators (which are approved as part of the Council's Treasury Management Strategy) to be reported quarterly (from semi-annually) as part of the financial updates and will be a recurring addition to the quarterly financial reports.

Prudential Indicators

The Council has a significant borrowing requirement and balance and is therefore exposed to financial risks including the loss of invested funds and the revenue effect of changing interest rates. The successful identification, monitoring and control of risk remains central to the Council's treasury management strategy.

Prudential indicators have been calculated using the capital programme data as at quarter three of 2024/25 (October 2024 Capital Forecast) and a forecast spend as at 31 March 2025.

Capital Expenditure & Financing at Q3 2024/25 (£m)	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	Total 2024/25-2027/28
	Actual	Estimated	Estimated	Estimated	Estimated	
Corporate Landlord	10.0	13.5	7.1	34.3	23.3	78.2
Housing GF	100.0	58.0	69.5	34.6	29.2	191.4
Schools	11.7	20.7	20.6	26.5	3.1	70.9
Regeneration	4.5	55.8	77.7	21.8	20.0	175.3
Public Realm	25.1	19.7	18.6	3.1	1.0	42.4
South Kilburn	18.9	19.0	25.1	19.3	17.7	81.0
HRA	42.8	52.8	47.4	19.5	0.0	119.6
Total Capital Expenditure	213.0	239.5	266.0	159.0	94.3	758.8
Financed By:						
Grants	57.3	51.5	30.7	26.9	4.0	113.1
Section 106	8.9	24.6	18.6	13.0	15.8	72.0
Capital Receipts	4.9	10.4	33.2	25.8	31.0	100.4
Earmarked Reserves	0.9	1.1	1.0	0.9	0.0	3.0
Major Repairs Reserve	10.4	22.8	21.4	0.0	0.0	44.2
Revenue Contributions	9.1	8.1	0.6	9.0	0.6	18.3
Borrowing	121.5	121.0	160.5	83.4	42.9	407.8
Total Capital Financing	213.0	239.5	266.0	159.0	94.3	758.8

(a) Capital Financing Requirement (CFR)

The underlying need to borrow for capital purposes is measured by the Capital Financing Requirement. This is the amount of the Capital Programme that is funded by borrowing. The Council's maximum external borrowing requirement for 2024/25 is shown in the table below. The indicator is set to ensure that the level of proposed capital expenditure remains within sustainable limits and to consider the impact on Council tax and in the case of the HRA, housing rent levels.

CFR Movement at Q3 2024/25 (£m)	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
	Actual	Estimated	Estimated	Estimated	Estimated
Opening CFR	1,139.6	1,236.6	1,336.4	1,473.9	1,532.6
Capital Expenditure	213.0	239.5	266.1	159.0	94.3
External Resources	(66.2)	(76.1)	(49.3)	(39.9)	(19.8)
Internal Resources	(25.3)	(42.4)	(56.2)	(35.7)	(31.6)
MRP	(18.1)	(20.3)	(22.2)	(23.5)	(25.8)
Capital Loans Repaid	(0.9)	(0.9)	(1.0)	(1.1)	(1.3)
Use of Capital Receipts	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Accounting Adjustments	(5.5)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Closing CFR	1,236.6	1,336.4	1,473.9	1,532.6	1,548.4

External resources consist of grants and Developer contributions. Internal resources consist of use of reserves, capital receipts and revenue contributions.

(b) Gross Debt and the Capital Financing Requirement

To ensure that over the medium term, debt will only be for a capital purpose, the Council should ensure that debt does not, except in the short term, exceed the total of capital financing requirement in the preceding year plus the estimates of any additional capital financing requirement for the current and next two financial years. This is a key indicator of prudence. The table below shows that the Council expects to comply with this recommendation during 2024/25.

Gross Debt & the Capital Financing Requirement at Q3 2024/25 (£m)	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
	Actual	Estimated	Estimated	Estimated	Estimated
External Loans	814.3	849.5	985.0	1,037.7	1,048.0
PFI & Leases	36.2	32.5	28.5	24.7	22.7
Total External Debt Liabilities	850.5	882.0	1,013.5	1,062.4	1,070.7
Internal Borrowing	386.2	454.4	460.4	470.3	477.7
Capital Financing Requirement	1,236.6	1,336.4	1,473.9	1,532.6	1,548.4

(c) Liability Benchmark

The liability benchmark is an important tool to help establish whether the Council is likely to be a long-term borrower or long-term investor in the future, and so shape its strategic focus and decision making. The liability benchmark itself represents an estimate of the cumulative amount of external borrowing the Council must hold to fund

its current capital and revenue plans while keeping treasury investments at the minimum level required to manage day-to-day cash flow.

Liability Benchmark at Q3 2024/25 (£m)	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
	Actual	Estimated	Estimated	Estimated	Estimated
CFR	1,236.6	1,336.4	1,473.9	1,532.6	1,548.4
Less Balance Sheet Resources	(470.5)	(470.5)	(470.5)	(470.5)	(470.5)
Net Loan Requirement	766.2	866.0	1,003.4	1,062.2	1,077.9
Plus, Liquidity Allowance	20.0	20.0	20.0	20.0	20.0
Liability Benchmark	786.2	886.0	1,023.4	1,082.2	1,097.9

(d) Authorised limit and Operational Boundary for External Debt

The Operational Boundary for External Debt is based on the Council's estimate of most likely i.e. prudent, but not worst-case scenario for external debt. It links directly to the Council's estimates of capital expenditure, the capital financing requirement and cash flow requirements and is a key management tool for in-year monitoring.

Other long-term liabilities comprise finance leases, Private Finance Initiative contracts and other liabilities that are not borrowing but form part of the Council's debt.

The Authorised Limit for External Debt is the affordable borrowing limit determined in compliance with the Local Government Act 2003. It is the maximum amount of debt that the Council can legally owe. The authorised limit provides headroom over and above the operational boundary for unusual cash movements.

Authorised Limit at Q3 2024/25 (£m)	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
Authorised Limit	1,700.0	1,700.0	1,800.0	1,900.0	1,900.0
Operational Boundary	1,500.0	1,500.0	1,600.0	1,700.0	1,700.0

The Corporate Director for Finance and Resources confirms that there were no breaches to the Authorised Limit and the Operational Boundary during Quarter one of 2024/25.

(e) Upper Limits on one-year revenue impact of a 1% movement in interest rates

This indicator is set to control the Council's exposure to interest rate risk. The impact of a change in interest rates is calculated on the assumption that maturing loans in the current year will be replaced at current rates.

Upper Limits on one-year revenue impact of a 1% movement in interest rates on Maturing Debt at Q3 2024/25 (£m)	2024/25	2024/25
	Approved Limit	Actual
Upper limit on one-year revenue impact of a 1% rise in interest rates	5.0	0.8
Compliance with limits:		Yes
Upper limit on one-year revenue impact of a 1% fall in interest rates	5.0	(0.8)
Compliance with limits:		Yes

(f) Maturity Structure of Fixed Rate Borrowing

This indicator is to limit large concentrations of fixed rate debt needing to be replaced at times of uncertainty over interest rates. The Council uses the option date as the maturity date for its LOBO loans. Loans based on existing debt portfolio as at the reported period.

Maturity Structure of Fixed Rate Borrowing at Q3 2024/25	Upper Limit	Lower limit	2024/25	2024/25	2024/25	2024/25	2024/25
			Actual Borrowing 31.12.2024	Actual Borrowing	Forecast Borrowing at 31.03.2025	Forecast Borrowing at 31.03.2025	Compliance with limits
			£m	%	£m	%	
Under 12 months	40.0	0.0	73.3	8.8%	121.9	14.7%	Yes
12 months & within 24 months	40.0	0.0	51.9	6.2%	26.4	3.2%	Yes
24 months and within 5 years	40.0	0.0	59.8	7.2%	43.8	5.3%	Yes
5 years and within 10 years	60.0	0.0	85.8	10.3%	88.7	10.7%	Yes
10 years and within 20 years	75.0	0.0	145.9	17.5%	133.7	16.1%	Yes
20 years and within 30 years	75.0	0.0	122.3	14.7%	133.5	16.1%	Yes
30 years and within 40 years	75.0	0.0	189.3	22.7%	177.1	21.3%	Yes
Over 40 years	75.0	0.0	105.0	12.6%	105.0	12.7%	Yes
Total			833.3	100.0%	830.0	100.0%	

(g) Ratio of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream

This is an indicator of affordability and highlights the revenue implications of existing and proposed capital expenditure by identifying the proportion of the revenue budget required to meet financing costs, net of investment income.

Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream at Q3 2024/25	Limit	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast
	2024/25	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
Financing Costs (Interest & MRP) (£m)	39.1	26.6	33.7	35.6	37.5
Net Revenue Stream (£m)	383.3	387.0	395.0	407.3	420.1
Proportion of net revenue stream (%)	10.2%	6.9%	8.5%	8.7%	8.9%

Financing costs can be further broken down as follows.

Capital Financing Costs at Q3 (£m)	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
	Actual	Estimated	Estimated	Estimated	Estimated
Total Gross External Debt Interest	30.3	34.0	43.1	44.0	46.0
Total Interest Payable & Expenses	33.6	35.8	44.5	45.1	47.1
Total Interest Receivable	(24.5)	(24.5)	(27.9)	(28.2)	(30.1)
Net Interest	9.1	11.4	16.6	16.9	17.0
MRP (Excluding PFI)	13.4	15.3	17.2	18.7	20.6
Total Interest & MRP	22.4	26.6	33.7	35.6	37.5
Revenue Contributions to Capital Programme	8.0	8.5	9.0	3.5	3.5
Total Capital Financing Costs	30.4	35.1	42.8	39.1	41.0

(h) Upper Limit for Total Principal Sums invested over 364 Days

The purpose of this limit is to contain exposure to the possibility of loss that may arise because of the Council having to seek early repayment of the sums invested.

Upper Limit for Total Principal Sums invested over 364 Days at Q3 2024/25 (£m)	2023/24	2023/24	2024/25	2024/25
	Approved	Actual	Approved	Actual
Upper Limit for Total Principal Sums Invested Over 364 Days	50.0	0.0	50.0	0.0

(i) Security

The Council has adopted a voluntary measure of its exposure to credit risk by monitoring the value-weighted average credit rating of its investment portfolio. This is calculated by applying a score to each investment (AAA=1, AA+=2, etc) and taking the arithmetic average, weighted by the size of each investment. Unrated investments are assigned a score based on their perceived risk.

Credit Risk Indicator at Q3 2024/25	2023/24	2023/24	2024/25	2024/25
	Approved	Actual	Approved	Actual
Portfolio average credit rating	A	A+	A	A+

(j) Liquidity

The Council has adopted a voluntary measure of its exposure to liquidity risk by monitoring the amount of cash available to meet unexpected payments within a rolling three-month period, without additional borrowing.

Liquidity Risk Indicator at Q3 2024/25 (£m)	2023/24	2023/24	2024/25	2024/25
	Approved	Actual	Approved	Actual
Total cash available within 3 months	20.0	95.3	20.0	53.9

(k) Investment Forecast

This indicator demonstrates the Council's investment exposure broken down by category for Treasury and non-treasury investments. Non-Treasury investments are directed under the Council's Investment Strategy 2024/25, whilst treasury investments are managed under the Treasury Management Strategy 2024/25.

Total Investment Exposure Indicator at Q3 2024/25 (£m)	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
	Actual	Estimated	Estimated	Estimated	Estimated
Treasury management cash investments	95.3	20.0	20.0	20.0	20.0
Service investments: Loans	285.6	324.5	323.3	322.1	320.9
Commercial investments: Property	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total Investments	380.9	344.5	343.3	342.1	340.9
Commitments to lend	50.0	50.0	50.0	50.0	50.0
Total Exposure	430.9	394.5	393.3	392.1	390.9

Service investments are further broken down in the table below.

Loans & Investments for service purposes: Category of borrower at Q3 2024/25 (£m)	2023/34	2024/25	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
	Actual	Approved Limit	Estimated	Estimated	Estimated	Estimated
I4B Subsidiary Loans	182.1	400.0	222.1	222.1	222.1	222.1
I4B Subsidiary Equity	36.4		36.4	36.4	36.4	36.4
FWH Subsidiary Loans	34.3		33.8	33.4	32.9	32.5
Local Businesses	0.2	10.0	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
Schools, Academies and Colleges	17.9	55.0	17.6	17.4	17.1	16.8
West London Waste Authority	14.8	20.0	14.4	13.9	13.5	13.0
Local Charities	0	10.0	0	0	0	0
Housing Associations	0	50.0	0	0	0	0
Local Residents	0	5.0	0	0	0	0
Total	285.6	550.0	324.5	323.3	322.1	320.9

(I) Investment Funding

This indicator demonstrates the amount of exposure to borrowing because of investments made for service purposes. These investments are the loans to the Council's subsidiaries i4B Holdings Ltd and First Wave Housing Ltd.

Investments Funded by Borrowing at Q3 2024/25 (£m)	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
	Actual	Estimated	Estimated	Estimated	Estimated
I4B Loans	218.4	258.4	258.4	258.4	258.4
First Wave Housing (FWH)	34.3	33.8	33.4	32.9	32.5
Total Service investments: Loans	252.7	292.3	291.8	291.4	290.9
Total Funded by Borrowing	252.7	292.3	291.8	291.4	290.9

(m) Investment Rate of Return


This indicator demonstrates the rate of return obtained from the different investment categories.

Investments net rate of return at Q3 2024/25	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
	Actual	Estimated	Estimated	Estimated	Estimated
Treasury management investments	5.31%	4.67%	3.94%	3.75%	3.75%
Service investments: Loans	2.4%	2.0%	2.6%	2.6%	2.6%
Commercial investments: Property	0	0	0	0	0

(n) Other Investment Indicators

Other investment indicators	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
	Actual	Estimated	Estimated	Estimated	Estimated
External Debt (Loans)	814.3	849.5	985.0	1,037.7	1,048.0
Net Service Expenditure	358.4	387.0	395.0	407.3	420.1
Debt to net service expenditure ratio	2.3	2.2	2.5	2.5	2.5
Commercial income as a % of net service expenditure ratio	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

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 <p>Brent</p>	<p>Cabinet 15 January 2025</p>
	<p>Report from the Corporate Director of Children and Young People</p>
	<p>Lead Member – Cabinet Member for Children, Young People & Schools (Councillor Gwen Grahl)</p>
<p>Brent Council’s School Admission Arrangements and Schemes of Co-ordination 2026-2027</p>	

Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	Key
Open or Part/Fully Exempt: <small>(If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)</small>	Open
List of Appendices:	Two Appendix 1: Proposed Admission Arrangements 2026-27 Appendix 2 - Schemes of Co-ordination for 2026-27
Background Papers:	N/A
Contact Officer(s): <small>(Name, Title, Contact Details)</small>	Michael Rollin Admissions and School Organisation Manager 020 8937 2862 Michael.rollin@brent.gov.uk Michelle Gwyther Head of Forward Planning, Performance and Partnerships 020 8937 2499 Michelle.gwyther@brent.gov.uk

1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1 Cabinet is asked to agree the proposed admission arrangements for Brent community schools and schemes of co-ordination for 2026/27 in accordance with statutory requirements. Admission authorities are required to determine their admission arrangements by 28 February in the determination year.

2.0 Recommendation(s)

That Cabinet:

- 2.1 Agrees (“determines”) the proposed admission arrangements for Brent community schools and schemes of co-ordination for all maintained schools and academies in Brent for the 2026/2027 academic year (Appendices 1 and 2).
- 2.2 Notes the scheme of co-ordination which will be in place for the 2026-2027 offer year for co-ordinated applications to start school in years Reception, 3, 7 and 10.

3.0 Detail

3.1 Cabinet Member Foreword

- 3.1.1 Brent’s school admission arrangements support the Borough Plan Strategic Priority 4: The Best Start in Life. By ensuring there are suitable admissions arrangements for children and young people in Brent, the local authority is meeting its statutory obligations and supporting every child and young person to access high quality education locally in the borough.

3.2 Background

- 3.2.1 Brent Council is the admission authority for 29 community primary schools in the borough (listed within Appendix 1). Voluntary aided and foundation schools, academies and free schools are their own admission authority and determine their own admission arrangements and oversubscription criteria. Therefore, this report relates to the admission arrangements and oversubscription criteria of Brent community primary schools only.
- 3.2.2 No changes are proposed to the admission arrangements (other than minor drafting changes which do not require consultation). Where this is the case, admission authorities are only required to consult on those arrangements at least once every seven years. Brent as an admissions authority most recently carried out a consultation on its admission arrangements in 2023.
- 3.2.3 The School Admissions Code issued under Section 84 of the School Standards and Framework Act is the legal framework for school admissions matters. The Admissions Code requires that admission authorities have a mechanism to rank applications in order of priority. All schools and admission authorities must have admission arrangements that clearly set out how children will be admitted, including the criteria that will be applied if there are more applications than places at the school. Admission arrangements for Brent community schools are determined by the council as the admission authority, and these are detailed in appendix one.

- 3.2.4 The local authority, as the admission authority for community schools in Brent, is required to determine (formally agree) its admission arrangements by 28 February 2025.
- 3.2.5 Each year all local authorities must formulate and publish on their website by 1 January in the relevant determination year, a scheme to co-ordinate admission arrangements for the normal admissions round and late applications for all publicly funded schools within their area.
- 3.2.6. The scheme of co-ordination is based on a template scheme agreed with all members of the London Inter Authority Admissions Group (LIAAG), which includes every London borough. It is not substantially different from the scheme adopted in the previous academic year. An additional section has been added to clarify the process to resolve parental disputes where they may arise. Otherwise, the only changes are to the dates recorded throughout the document. The scheme of co-ordination can be seen in Appendix 2.
- 3.2.7 As the scheme has not substantially changed from the previous year there is no requirement to consult on it at this time. There is a requirement that the local authority must consult with the other admission authorities in the area on the scheme at least once every seven years. The local authority last carried out consultation on its scheme of co-ordination in 2018. It will carry out its next consultation with other admission authorities in the area in the autumn term 2025.

4.0 Stakeholder and ward member consultation and engagement

- 4.1 As no significant changes are proposed to either the admission arrangements or the scheme of co-ordination, no consultation has been required or has been carried out.

5.0 Financial Considerations

- 5.1 There are no specific financial implications arising from this report.

6.0 Legal Considerations

- 6.1 Admission authorities must act in accordance with the mandatory requirements of the School Admissions Code 2021 and have due regard to the discretionary elements of the Code. They must also act in accordance with other laws relating to admissions and relevant human rights and equalities legislation.
- 6.2 Oversubscription criteria must be reasonable, clear, objective and comply with all relevant legislation, including equalities legislation. Highest priority in the oversubscription criteria must be given to looked after children and previously looked after children/children adopted from state care abroad (Regulation 7, Admission Arrangements Regulations 2012). Subject to these requirements it is for the admission authority to decide which criteria would be suitable according to the local circumstances.

6.3 The local authority must publish online its scheme of co-ordination for 2026/2027 by 1 January 2025.

6.4 The local authority must determine its admission arrangements for community schools 2026/2027 by 28 February 2025.

7.0 Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Considerations

7.1 The public sector equality duty, as set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, requires the Council, when exercising its functions, to have “due regard” to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the Act, to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who have a “protected characteristic” and those who do not share that protected characteristic. The protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

7.2 Having due regard involves the need to enquire into whether and how a proposed decision disproportionately affects people with a protected characteristic and the need to consider taking steps to meet the needs of persons who share a protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it. This includes removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by persons who share a protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic.

7.3 There is no prescribed manner in which the council must exercise its public sector equality duty but having an adequate evidence base for its decision is necessary. The Admissions Criteria ensure fair access to school places. Cabinet is referred to the contents of this report for further information, in particular section 3.0.

8.0 Climate Change and Environmental Considerations

8.1 Determination of community school admission arrangements has no direct impact on the Council’s environmental objectives and climate emergency strategy.

8.2 The oversubscription criteria support applicants securing places at local schools by way of giving higher priority within each criterion to children living closer to the school.

9.0 Human Resources/Property Considerations (if appropriate)

9.1 There are no human resources or property implications.

10.0 Communication Considerations

10.1 The determined admission arrangements must be published on the Brent website by 15 March 2025.


10.2 The scheme of co-ordination must be published on the Brent website by 1 January 2025.

Report sign off:

Nigel Chapman

Corporate Director of Children and Young People

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	ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR BRENT COMMUNITY SCHOOLS FOR 2026/2027
	To be determined

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Brent Community Primary School Published Admission Numbers and Grid Reference Measuring Points for Admission in 2026/2027

Name of School	Published Admission Number	Grid Reference Measuring Point	
		Easting	Northing
Anson Primary School	52	523552	185345
Barham Primary School	120	517506	184655
Brentfield Primary School	90	520541	184537
Carlton Vale Infant School	60	524938	182956
Chalkhill Primary School	60	520005	186210
Donnington Primary School	30	522577	184004
Elsley Primary School	120	518869	184738
Fryent Primary School	90	520385	187897
Harlesden Primary School	60	521141	183461
Kingsbury Green Primary School	90	520010	188549
Leopold Primary School	60	521640	184310
Lyon Park Primary School	120	518820	184115
Malorees Infant School	60	523952	184011
Mitchell Brook Primary School	60	521010	184768
Mora Primary School	60	523141	185939
Mount Stewart Infant School	90	517785	187999
Mount Stewart Junior School	90	517785	187999
Newfield Primary School	60	521890	184050
Northview Primary School	30	521580	185500
Oliver Goldsmith Primary School	60	520809	188559
Park Lane Primary School	60	518380	185490
Preston Park Primary School	120	517930	187200
Roe Green Infant School	120	519772	189316
Roe Green Junior School	120	519772	189316
Salisbury Primary School	90	524528	183518
The Stonebridge School	90	520512	183844
Uxendon Manor Primary School	90	518023	188541
Wembley Primary School	120	518365	186130
Wykeham Primary School	60	521087	186286

Oversubscription Criteria for Brent Community Schools in 2026/2027

The criteria set out below apply to the 29 Brent community schools listed on page 2.

Voluntary aided or religious faith schools, foundation schools, free schools and academies have their own admission policies. Parents/carers should visit the website of these schools for a copy of their admission arrangements or visit www.brent.gov.uk/admissions

Applications for children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) are made by Local Authority Special Educational Need (SEN) teams. The placement of such children is made after a process of consultation between parents/carers, the school and the Local Authority. Children with an EHCP receive priority over others for admission to the school named on their EHCP. An EHCP is a plan made by the Local Authority under Section 37 of the Children and Families Act 2014 specifying the special education provision required for that child.

Schools should not admit more than 30 pupils in each class for Reception, Year One and Year Two. This is to enable the Local Authority to meet its statutory duty of having no more than 30 pupils in each class at Key Stage One. Where an offer has been made, children are entitled to a full-time place in the September following their fourth birthday. Three-year-old children should not be admitted to Reception classes.

Whenever and wherever possible, children are offered a school of their parents'/carers' preference and in practice the majority of children go to the school which their parents/carers select for them. Admissions criteria are clear, fair and objective. It is illegal for schools to discriminate against a pupil on the basis of his/her/their ethnicity.

Sometimes, however, there are more applications for a particular school than there are places available. This is described as oversubscription. Whenever this happens, pupils are offered places in the following order of priority:

1. Looked After Children or Previously Looked After Children (including Internationally Adopted Previously Looked After Children)

A looked after child or a previously looked after child, including those children who appear to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted.

- A 'looked after child' (LAC) is a child who is in the care of a local authority, or being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions at the time of making an application to a school.
- A 'previously looked after child' (PLAC) is a child who was looked after but ceased to be so because they were adopted or became subject to a child arrangement order or a special guardianship order.
- An 'internationally adopted previously looked after child' (IAPLAC) is a child who appears to Brent Council to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted. A child is regarded as having been in state care in a place outside of England if they were accommodated by a public authority, a religious organisation or any other provider of care whose sole purpose is to benefit society.

2. Linked infant school

Children attending an infant school on the same site as a junior school.

- This criterion only applies to Year 3 applications to Mount Stewart Junior School (for children attending Mount Stewart Infant School) and Roe Green Junior School (for children attending Roe Green Infant School).

3. Medical or Social needs

Exceptional circumstances to do with significant medical needs and or social needs which necessitate a child's placement at one particular school.

This criterion relates to the medical and/or social needs of the child or family members with caring or parental responsibility. The application must be supported by written evidence (see below) that sets out the particular reasons why the school in question is the most suitable and the difficulties that would be caused if the child had to attend another school. The recommendation for this specific school should demonstrate knowledge of the school in terms of location, resources and organisation which deems it essential that the named pupil be admitted to the specific school. The Council will not give higher priority to children under this criterion if the required documents have not been submitted. Decisions on whether to allow the criterion will be made by an admission panel, based on all the evidence available, and will be consistent.

- *Medical Needs*

Applications made on medical grounds must be accompanied by compelling medical evidence from a GP/hospital consultant at the time of application. The letter from the GP/hospital consultant must provide information about the medical condition, the effects of this condition and why, in view of this, the child needs to attend the preferred school. If the school is not the closest to home, the consultant must set out in detail the wholly exceptional circumstances for attending this school and the difficulties that may exist if the child had to attend another school. Medical claims will only be considered for one school, and this should be named by the GP/hospital consultant. In assessing these applications, advice will be sought from relevant professionals as required.

- *Social Needs*

Applications made on social grounds must be accompanied by compelling evidence at the time of application. Social needs claims will be considered where there is involvement from a social worker, or other professional and where it can be demonstrated that the child has exceptional social needs that cannot be met at any other school than the named school. Parents'/carers' circumstances can have an impact on a child's social needs and evidence of this will be considered. In assessing these applications, advice will be sought from relevant professionals as required.

4. Children of staff

Children whose parent/carer is a member of staff:

- who has been employed by the school and has worked predominantly on the school site for two or more years at the time of application; or
- who has been recruited to fill a vacancy at the school for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage.

5. Siblings

Brothers or sisters of a child who attends the school, or an infant or junior school on the same or adjoining site, and who will continue to do so on the date of admission.

- This includes half and step brothers and sisters and foster children so long as they live at the same address - but not cousins.

6. All other applicants.

'Tie-break' Distance Measurement

Where pupils meet the same criteria, places will be offered in order of the distance from home to school which will be measured by straight-line, from the address point in the property to the address point in the school, as determined by Local Land Property Gazetteer (LLPG) data. Those living nearer the school will have the higher priority. The measuring system is an integral part of the admission software produced by The Access Group Ltd, uses Ordnance Survey maps and LLPG data and is accurate to 1 centimetre.

Where two or more children share the same priority, live equidistant from a community school and only one place remains, the local authority will use a computerised random allocation to determine which child should be given priority.

Home Address

The address used must be the child's permanent home address on the closing date for on-time applications or at the time of application for late or in-year applications.

This cannot be a business address, childminder or relative's address, or any address other than child's permanent home address. Only in circumstances where the relative or carer has legal guardianship, and is the main carer, will a different address be considered as the main residence. Evidence will be requested to support this arrangement.

Proof of address is not required to be sent with an application. The council tax reference number should be supplied on the application if the applicant is responsible for paying it. Brent Council will check internal council databases in order to verify the address. Where it is not possible to verify the address or the applicant has recently moved, the Council will write to the applicant to ask for two proofs of address.

Any offer of a place on the basis of address is conditional upon the child living at the appropriate address on the relevant date. Applicants have a responsibility to notify the local authority of any change of address.

Any applications received containing fraudulent or misleading information, or any offers made based on fraudulent or misleading information may be withdrawn, especially where other applicants have been disadvantaged as a result.

Twins, Triplets and other children of multiple births

In the event that the school has one place to offer and the next child on the waiting list is one of twins, triplets or other children of multiple births, the Local Authority will offer both twins, all triplets or children of multiple birth a place even if this means temporarily going over the published admission number.

In the event that one child from a multiple birth has an Education, Health and Care Plan which names a particular community school, all other children from the same multiple birth will be considered under the third criteria for the same school – medical or social needs – unless a higher criteria should be applied.

Split residence

Where a child lives with parents/carers with shared responsibility, each for part of a week, the address where the child lives is determined using a joint declaration from the parents/carers stating the pattern of residence. If a child's residence is split equally between both parents/carers, then they will be asked to determine which residential address should be used for the purpose of admission to school. If the residence is not split equally between both parents/carers, then the address used will be the address where the child spends the majority of the school week.

If it is not possible to determine which residential address should be used through a joint declaration, then the address of the parent/carer who is in receipt of child benefit will be used for the purpose of the application. In cases where parents/carers are not eligible for child benefit the address will be that of the parent/carer where the child is registered with the doctor. In cases that still cannot be determined, or are open to dispute by parents/carers, an admission panel will determine how to proceed with the application in accordance with these arrangements, the Admissions Code and any other relevant legislation or guidance. This will not impact on parents'/carers' right to appeal against any decision not to offer a preference school.

Multiple applications

Only one application can be processed for each child. In the event that the local authority receives more than one application for the same child, whether from the same parent/carer or not, the most recently received application will be processed. This includes applications that have been submitted online and by post.

Parents/carers are responsible for ensuring only one application is received. If multiple applications are received and it is not possible to obtain a joint declaration from both parents/carers (or those with parental responsibility) regarding which schools should be included as preferences, an admission panel will determine how to proceed with the application in accordance with these arrangements, the Admissions Code and any other relevant legislation or guidance. This will not impact on parents'/carers' right to appeal against any decision not to offer a preference school.

Applications from overseas

Applications with an overseas address will not be accepted for processing by the local authority unless there is evidence of a link to an address in the area and evidence that a child will be living in the area on or before the date of admission.

Where an application is accepted, the address used on the application will be the overseas address until such time as there is evidence of the child's return to the linked address prior to the closing date (or the date for accepting applications as late for good reason). Such evidence received after the closing dates will be considered on the application after National Offer Day.

The local authority is only responsible for making offers for children currently living in the area. If it is not possible to make a preference offer prior to a child's arrival on the relevant offer days, an alternative offer will not be made.

Applications will not be accepted from overseas addresses for in-year applications with the exception of applications for Children of UK Service Personnel (UK Armed Forces) and Crown Servants.

Children of UK Service Personnel (UK Armed Forces) and Crown Servants

Families of service personnel with a confirmed posting to the area, or crown servants returning from overseas to live in the area, can apply to the local authority in advance of their arrival provided the application is accompanied by an official letter that declares a relocation date and a Unit postal address or quartering area address.

The address used on the application will be the postal address or quartering area address provided.

Offers will be made in advance of a child's arrival for in-year applications and on the relevant offer date for normal round applications.

How places will be allocated at Brent community schools for September 2026 in Reception (Primary and Infant schools) and Year 3 (Junior Schools)

There is no automatic transfer from nursery to Reception class, or from Year 2 to Year 3 in a Junior School. Parents/carers wanting to apply for a place at Reception (or to a Junior School) must complete an application which is available online or a paper Common Application Form.

If more applications are received than there are places available, places are offered up to a school's planned admission number to applicants whose application is received by the closing date in accordance with the oversubscription criteria listed on page 3 using an equal preference system (see below).

Equal preferences

Each preference is treated as a separate application. Then using the oversubscription criteria each application is considered and ordered in a list based on how well it meets the oversubscription criteria (page 3).

If applicants qualify for a place at more than one school, a place is offered at the school given the highest ranking by the applicant.

Application forms will be available from September 2025 and the closing date for applications will be 15 January 2026. Offer letters and e-mails will be sent out on 16 April 2026.

Deferred Entry

Parents/carers can request that the date their child is admitted to school is deferred until later in the year for which they apply or until the term in which the child reaches statutory school age. Statutory school age begins the first day of the term after a child's fifth birthday.

Parents/carers wishing to defer entry must contact the school to advise them of this after a place has been offered.

Parents/carers can also request that their child attends part-time until their child reaches statutory school age.

Applications for children outside the normal age group

The Council's policy is for children to be educated within their correct chronological year group, with the curriculum differentiated as necessary to meet the needs of individual children. In general, children should be educated in their normal age group, with the curriculum differentiated as appropriate; they should only be educated out of their normal age group in very limited circumstances.

In addition, the parents of summer born children* may choose not to send their child to school until the September following their fifth birthday and may request that they are admitted to Reception rather than Year 1. If parents/carers believe their child should be educated in a different year group they should submit an application for the 'normal' Reception round for their child. With the application they should provide supporting evidence from relevant professionals working with the child and family stating why it is in the child's best interest to be placed outside their normal age appropriate cohort.

For community schools, the Council as the admission authority will decide whether the application will be accepted on the basis of the information submitted. Decisions will be based on the individual circumstances of each case including the view of parents/carers, the relevant head teacher(s), the child's social, academic and emotional development and whether the child has been previously educated out of year group.

There is no guarantee that an application will be accepted on this basis. If the application is not accepted this does not constitute a refusal of a place and there is no right to an independent statutory appeal. Similarly, there is no right of appeal for a place in a specific year group at a school. The internal management and organisation of a school, including the placement of pupils in classes, is a matter for the headteacher and senior leadership of individual schools.

* The term summer born children relates to all children born from 1 April to 31 August. These children reach compulsory school age on 31 August following their fifth birthday (or on their fifth birthday if it falls on 31 August).

Late Applications and changes after the closing date

Application forms must be received by Brent Council by the closing date of 15 January 2026.

Applications received after the closing date will be considered as late applications and will be processed after places have been allocated to applicants who applied on-time. However, in very exceptional circumstances applications received after the closing date may be considered as on time.

Applicants who consider they have exceptional circumstances that prevented them from applying between applications opening in September 2025 and the closing date of 15 January 2026 should provide independent written evidence explaining why the application was late no later than 5pm on Tuesday 3 February 2026.

Additionally, any changes to the application (e.g. order of school preference or change of preferences) received after the closing date will be treated in the same way as late applications.

Changes of Address after the closing date

Changes of address will only be considered after applicants are resident at the new address and evidence to demonstrate this has been supplied. Applications will not be processed from an intended future address except in the case of Crown servants and UK service personnel.

Evidence must be received by 5pm on Tuesday 3 February 2026 for the new address to be used when processing the application and calculating home to school distances. Any change of address evidenced after 5pm on Tuesday 3 February 2026 will not be included until after National Offer Day 16 April 2026.

Waiting Lists

If the school place allocated is not the first preference, the child's name will automatically be placed on the waiting list for schools which have been ranked higher than the offer made. Community school waiting lists will then be maintained by the Council whilst voluntary aided, foundation and academy schools' waiting lists will be maintained by the relevant schools.

Waiting lists are not maintained on a 'first come - first served' basis. Waiting lists are kept in the priority order as explained in the oversubscription criteria.

Places are offered from the waiting list throughout the year. When a place becomes available, it is offered to the first child on the list and, if it is accepted, all other children will move up the list. Children may also move down the waiting list if another family, with a higher priority under the oversubscription criteria, ask for their child's name to be added to the list.

Applicants, who ask for their child's name to be placed on the waiting list for another school after a school place has been allocated, are indicating they prefer this school to the other school already allocated. If at a later date a place is offered from the waiting list, this new offer will supersede any previous offer, which will then be withdrawn.

Looked after children and previously looked after children, and those allocated a place at the school in accordance with Brent's Fair Access Protocol, will take precedence over those on a waiting list.

Lists will be maintained throughout the school year. A child's position on the waiting list does not depend upon the time they have been on the list but will be determined by how they meet the oversubscription criteria.

This means that a child's position on the list can go down as well as up, depending upon the child's circumstances and those of other applicants.

The waiting list will be closed in mid-June each year and will not roll over. A new application will have to be made for a new academic year. New in-year applications can normally be made from the first full week in July each year. Details of opening and closing dates are available online.

Appeals

Parents/carers can appeal against any decision made by Brent Council to refuse an offer at a community school where they would like their child to be educated. Brent Council is not responsible for appeals at foundation, voluntary aided, academy or free schools and any appeals need to be made directly to the schools as they are their own admissions authority.

When an appeal form is requested, the child's name is automatically placed on the waiting list for that school, if it is not already included.

A child admitted to a school as a result of a successful appeal will be admitted in precedence to those on the waiting list.

There is no right of appeal against any decision not to offer a place in a nursery.

Brent Council is not responsible for appeals at foundation, voluntary aided, academy or free schools. Requests for appeals at these schools should be made directly to the school.

Admission to community school nurseries

The timeline and oversubscription criteria for a place in a nursery class in a community school are the same as for a Reception place. The council does not co-ordinate applications for nursery places. Applications for a nursery place in a community school must be made directly to the school by 15th January 2026. Offers will be made on 16th April 2026 by the school. If the nursery is oversubscribed the Community Schools' Oversubscription Criteria will be applied.

In-Year Applications

Applications received outside the normal admission round will be considered in line with the oversubscription criteria.

A place will be offered at the school requested provided there is a vacancy in the appropriate year group. Where the year group is full and it is not possible to meet the parental preference, a place will be offered at the nearest primary school with a vacancy in the year group, if the child does not already attend a suitable school.

The address used to process the application will be the address where the parent/carer and child normally live and they must be living there at the time of application.

Admission of one child to a primary school does not give a right of admission for brothers or sisters, if places are not available for all at the same time.

PAN-LONDON CO-ORDINATED ADMISSION SYSTEM

Brent Council Scheme for Co-ordination of Admissions to Year 7/Year 10 and Reception/Junior in Maintained Schools and Academies in 2026/27

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PAN-LONDON CO-ORDINATED ADMISSION SYSTEM

Brent LA Schemes for Co-ordination of Admissions to Year 7/Year 10 and Reception/Junior in 2026/27

Definitions used in the template schemes

“the Application Year”	the academic year in which the parent makes an application (i.e. in relation to the academic year of entry, the academic year preceding it).
“the Board”	the Pan-London Admissions Executive Board, which is responsible for the Scheme
“the Business User Guide (BUG)”	the document issued annually to participating LAs setting out the operational procedures of the Scheme
“the Common Application Form”	this is the form that each authority must have under the Regulations for parents to use to express their preferences, set out in rank order
“the Equal Preference System”	the model whereby all preferences listed by parents on the Common Application Form are considered under the over-subscription criteria for each school without reference to parental rankings. Where a pupil is eligible to be offered a place at more than one school within an LA, or across more than one participating LA, the rankings are used to determine the single offer by selecting the school ranked highest of those which can offer a place
“the Highly Recommended Elements”	the elements of the Template Scheme that are not mandatory but to which subscription is strongly recommended in order to maximise co-ordination and thereby simplify the application process as far as possible
“the Home LA”	the LA in which the applicant/parent/carer is resident
“the LIAAG Address Protocol”	the document containing the address verification policy agreed by LIAAG and the policy of each participating LA
“the Local Admission System (LAS)”	the IT module for administering admissions in each LA and for determining the highest offer both within and between participating LAs

“the London E-Admissions Portal”	the common online application system used by the 33 London LAs and Surrey County Council
“the Maintaining LA”	the LA which maintains a school, or within whose area an academy is situated, for which a preference has been expressed
“the Mandatory Elements”	those elements of the Template Scheme to which authorities must subscribe in order to be considered as ‘Participating Authorities’ and to benefit from use of the Pan-London Register
“the Notification Letter”	the agreed form of letter sent to applicants on the Prescribed Day which communicates any determination granting or refusing admission to a primary or secondary school, which is attached as Schedule 2
“the Prescribed Day”	the day on which outcome letters are posted to parents/carers. 1 March (secondary) and 16 April (primary) in the year following the relevant determination year except that, in any year in which that day is not a working day, the prescribed day shall be the next working day.
“the Pan-London Register (PLR)”	the database which will sort and transmit application and outcome data between the LAS of each participating LA
“the Pan-London Timetable”	the framework for processing of application and outcome data, which is attached as Schedule 3
“the Participating LA”	any LA that has indicated in the Memorandum of Agreement that they are willing to incorporate, at a minimum, the mandatory elements of the Template LA Scheme presented here.
“the Qualifying Scheme”	the scheme which each LA is required to formulate in accordance with The School Admissions (Admission Arrangements and Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) Regulations 2012, for co-ordinating arrangements for the admission of children to maintained primary and secondary schools and academies.

PAN LONDON CO-ORDINATED ADMISSIONS SYSTEM

Scheme for Co-ordination of Admissions to Year 7/Year 10 in 2026/27

Applications

1. Brent LA will advise home LAs of their resident pupils on the roll of Brent LA's maintained primary schools and academies who are eligible to transfer to secondary school in the forthcoming academic year.
2. Applications from residents of Brent LA will be made on Brent LA's Common Application Form, which will be available and able to be submitted on-line. This will include all the fields and information specified in Schedule 1 to this LA Scheme. These will be supplemented by any additional fields and information which are deemed necessary by Brent LA to enable the admission authorities in the LA area to apply their published oversubscription criteria.
3. Brent LA will take all reasonable steps to ensure that every parent/carer who is resident in Brent LA and has a child in their last year of primary education within a maintained school or academy, either in Brent LA or any other maintaining LA, is informed how they can access Brent LA's composite prospectus and apply online. Parents/carers who do not live in Brent LA will have access to Brent LA's composite prospectus, which will advise parents/carers to contact their home LA if they are unable to apply online.
4. The admission authorities within Brent LA will not use supplementary information forms except where the information available through the Common Application Form is insufficient for consideration of the application against the published oversubscription criteria. Where supplementary information forms are used by the admissions authorities within Brent LA, the LA will seek to ensure that these are used to collect information required by the published oversubscription criteria only, in accordance with paragraph 2.4 of the School Admissions Code 2021.
5. Where supplementary information forms are used by admission authorities in Brent LA, they will be available on Brent LA's website. Such forms will advise parents that they must also complete their home LA's Common Application Form. Brent LA's composite prospectus and website will indicate which schools in Brent LA require supplementary forms to be completed and where they can be obtained.
6. Where an admission authority in Brent LA receives a supplementary information form, Brent LA will not consider it to be a valid application unless the parent/carer has also listed the school on their home LA's Common Application Form, in accordance with paragraph 2.3 of the School Admissions Code 2021.
7. Applicants will be able to express a preference for six maintained secondary schools or Academies within and/or outside the Home LA.

8. The order of preference given on the Common Application Form will not be revealed to a school within the area of Brent LA. This is to comply with paragraph 1.9 of the School Admissions Code 2021 which states that admission authorities must not give extra priority to children whose parents rank preferred schools in a particular order, including 'first preference first' arrangements. However, where a parent resident in Brent LA expresses a preference for schools in the area of another LA, the order of preference for that LA's schools will be revealed to that LA in order that it can determine the highest ranked preference in cases where an applicant is eligible for a place at more than one school in that LA's area.
9. Brent LA undertakes to carry out the address verification process as set out in its entry in the LIAAG Address Protocol. This will in all cases include validation of resident applicants against Brent LA's primary school data and the further investigation of any discrepancy. Where Brent LA is not satisfied as to the validity of an address of an applicant whose preference has been sent to a maintaining LA, it will advise the maintaining LA no later than **11 December 2025**.
10. Brent LA will confirm the status of any resident child for whom it receives a Common Application Form stating s/he is currently or previously a 'Child Looked After' and will provide any additional evidence on receipt of a reasonable request by the maintaining LA in respect of a preference for a school in its area by **14 November 2025**.
11. Brent LA will advise a maintaining LA of the reason for any application which is made in respect of a child resident in the area of Brent LA to be admitted outside of their correct age cohort and will forward any supporting documentation to the maintaining LA by **14 November 2025**.

Processing

12. Applicants resident within Brent LA must return the Common Application Form, which will be available and able to be submitted on-line, to Brent LA by **31 October 2025**.
13. Application data relating to all preferences for schools in the area of a participating LA, which have been expressed within the terms of Brent LA's scheme, will be uploaded to the PLR by **14 November 2025**. Supplementary information provided with the Common Application Form will be sent to maintaining LAs by the same date.
14. Brent LA will notify each school within its area, which is its own admissions authority, of all applications for their school. All relevant details from the Common Application Form and any supporting evidence will be forwarded to these schools by **2 January 2026**. Own admission authority schools within Brent LA's area will apply their admissions criteria and return applicants ranked in order of priority in accordance with their admissions criteria by **23 January 2026**.

15. Brent LA will accept late applications only if they are late for a good reason, deciding each case on its own merits. The latest date for receipt of such applications from parents/carers is **8 December 2025**.
16. Where such applications contain preferences for schools in other LAs, Brent LA will forward the details to maintaining LAs via the PLR as they are received. Brent LA will accept late applications which are considered to be on time within the terms of the home LA's scheme.
17. The latest date for the upload to the PLR of late applications which are considered to be on-time within the terms of the home LA's scheme is **11 December 2025**.
18. Where an applicant moves from one participating home LA to another after submitting an on-time application under the terms of the former home LA's scheme, the new home LA will accept the application as on-time up to **8 December 2025**, on the basis that an on-time application already exists within the Pan-London system.
19. Brent LA will participate in the application data checking exercise scheduled between **15 December 2025 and 2 January 2026** in the Pan-London timetable in Schedule 3A.
20. All preferences for schools within Brent LA will be considered by the relevant admission authorities without reference to rank order to comply with paragraph 1.9 of the School Admissions Code 2021. When the admission authorities within Brent LA have provided a list of applicants in criteria order to Brent LA, Brent LA shall, for each applicant to its schools for whom more than one potential offer is available, use the highest ranked preference to decide which single potential offer to make. [This is the 'Equal Preference System'.]
21. Brent LA will carry out all reasonable checks to ensure that pupil rankings are correctly held in its LAS for all maintained schools and academies in Brent LA's area before uploading data to the PLR.
22. Brent LA will upload the highest potential offer available to an applicant for a maintained school or academy in Brent LA to the PLR by **2 February 2026**. The PLR will transmit the highest potential offer specified by the Maintaining LA to the Home LA.
23. The LAS of Brent LA will eliminate, as a Home LA, all but the highest ranked offer where an applicant has more than one potential offer across Maintaining LAs submitting information within deadline to the PLR. This will involve exchanges of preference outcomes between the LAS and the PLR (in accordance with the iterative timetable published in the Business User Guide) which will continue until notification that a steady state has been achieved, or until **13 February 2026**. Where a management decision is made that additional iterations are necessary, these will continue no later than **17 February 2026**.

24. Brent LA will not make an additional offer between the end of the iterative process and **2 March 2026** which may impact on an offer being made by another participating LA.
25. Notwithstanding paragraph 24, if an error is identified within the allocation of places at a maintained school or academy in Brent LA, Brent LA will attempt to manually resolve the allocation to correct the error. Where this impacts on another LA (either as a home or maintaining LA) Brent LA will liaise with that LA to attempt to resolve the correct offer and any multiple offers which might occur. However, if another LA is unable to resolve a multiple offer, or if the impact is too far reaching, Brent LA will accept that the applicant(s) affected might receive a multiple offer.
26. Brent LA will participate in the offer data checking exercise scheduled between **16 (18*) February and 23 February 2026** in the Pan-London timetable in Schedule 3A.
* Subject to end of iteration process
27. Brent LA will send a file to the eAdmissions portal with outcomes for all resident applicants who have applied online no later than **26 February 2026**.
28. The file should additionally contain offers to late applicants who can be offered a place on **2 March 2026**. Home LAs are required to make those offers, but they are not included in the report of on-time outcomes generated from the LAS.

Offers

29. Brent LA will ensure that, if there are places available, each resident applicant who cannot be offered a preference expressed on the Common Application Form receives the offer of an alternative school place in accordance with paragraph 2.11 of the School Admissions Code 2021. Brent LA will seek to offer the nearest suitable school to the family home that still has vacancies.
30. Brent LA will inform all resident applicants of their highest offer of a school place and, where relevant, the reasons why higher preferences were not offered, whether they were for schools in the Home LA or in other participating LAs.
31. Brent LA's outcome notification will include the information set out in Schedule 2.
32. On **2 March 2026**, Brent LA will send notification of the outcome to resident applicants by email or first-class post.
33. Brent LA will provide primary schools with destination data of its resident applicants by the end of the summer term **2026**.

Post Offer

34. Brent LA will request that resident applicants accept or decline the offer of a place by **16 March 2026**, or within two weeks of the date of any subsequent offer.
35. Where an applicant resident in Brent LA accepts or declines a place in a school within the area of another LA by **16 March 2026**, Brent LA will forward the information to the maintaining LA by **23 March 2026**. Where such information is received from applicants after **16 March 2026**, Brent LA will pass it to the maintaining LA as it is received.
36. Where a place becomes available in an oversubscribed maintained school or academy in Brent LA's area, it will be offered from a waiting list ordered in accordance with paragraph 2.15 of the School Admissions Code 2021.
37. When acting as a maintaining LA, Brent LA will place an applicant resident in the area of another LA on a waiting list of any higher preference school in Brent LA's area. (Where this process is not automatic, it will be done immediately following a request from the home LA).
38. Where a waiting list is maintained by an admission authority of a maintained school or academy in Brent LA's area, the admission authority will inform Brent LA of a potential offer, in order that the offer may be made by the home LA.
39. When acting as a maintaining LA, Brent LA will inform the home LA, where different, of an offer for a maintained school or Academy in Brent LA's area which can be made to an applicant resident in the home LA's area, in order that the home LA can offer the place.
40. When acting as a maintaining LA, Brent LA and the admission authorities within it, will not inform an applicant resident in another LA that a place can be offered.
41. When acting as a home LA, Brent LA will offer a place at a maintained school or Academy in the area of another LA to an applicant resident in its area, provided that the school is ranked higher on the Common Application Form than any school already offered.
42. When acting as a home LA, when Brent LA is informed by a maintaining LA of an offer which can be made to an applicant resident in Brent LA's area which is ranked lower on the Common Application Form than any school already offered, it will inform the maintaining LA that the offer will not be made.
43. When acting as a home LA, when Brent LA has agreed to a change of preferences or preference order, it will inform any maintaining LA affected by the change. In such cases, paragraphs 40 and 41 shall apply to the revised order of preferences.

44. When acting as a maintaining LA, Brent LA will inform the home LA, where different, of any change to an applicant's offer status as soon as it occurs.
45. When acting as a maintaining LA, Brent LA will accept a change of preferences or preference order (including reinstated or additional preferences) from home LAs for maintained schools and academies in its area.
46. Brent LA, when acting as a maintaining LA, will maintain waiting lists and allocate places, as they become available, in accordance with each admission authority's published admission and oversubscription criteria.
47. Brent LA, when acting as a home LA, will carry out the initial offer of places which become available after National Offer Day by the week ending **27 March 2026**.
48. Brent LA, when acting as a home LA, after preferences expressed in accordance with paragraph 7 above have been determined, will allow applicants to express additional preferences before the start of the school term. The order of preferences expressed will supersede any existing preferences without an offer.

**LA Scheme for Co-ordination of Admissions to Reception/Junior in
2026/27**

Applications

1. Applications from residents of Brent LA will be made on Brent LA's Common Application Form, which will be available and able to be submitted on-line. This will include all the fields and information specified in Schedule 1 to this LA Scheme. These will be supplemented by any additional fields and information which are deemed necessary by Brent LA to enable the admission authorities in the LA area to apply their published oversubscription criteria.
2. Brent LA will take all reasonable steps to ensure that every parent/carer who is resident in Brent LA and has a child in a nursery class within a maintained school or academy, either in Brent LA or any other maintaining LA, is informed how they can access Brent LA's composite prospectus and apply online. Parents/carers who do not live in Brent LA will have access to Brent LA's composite prospectus, which will advise parents/carers to contact their home LA if they are unable to apply online.
3. The admission authorities within Brent LA will not use supplementary information forms except where the information available through the Common Application Form is insufficient for consideration of the application against the published oversubscription criteria. Where supplementary information forms are used by the admissions authorities within Brent LA, the LA will seek to ensure that these are used to collect information, which is required by the published oversubscription criteria only, in accordance with paragraph 2.4 of the School Admissions Code 2021.
4. Where supplementary information forms are used by admission authorities in Brent LA, they will be available on Brent LA's website. Such forms will advise parents that they must also complete their home LA's Common Application Form. Brent LA's composite prospectus and website will indicate which schools in Brent LA require supplementary forms to be completed and where they can be obtained.
5. Where a school in Brent LA receives a supplementary information form, Brent LA will not consider it to be a valid application unless the parent/carer has also listed the school on their home LA's Common Application Form, in accordance with paragraph 2.3 of the School Admissions Code 2021.
6. Applicants will be able to express a preference for up to six maintained primary schools or academies within and/or outside the Home LA.
7. The order of preference given on the Common Application Form will not be revealed to a school within the area of Brent LA to comply with paragraph 1.9 of the School Admissions Code 2021. However, where a parent resident in Brent LA expresses a

preference for schools in the area of another LA, the order of preference for that LA's schools will be revealed to that LA in order that it can determine the highest ranked preference in cases where an applicant is eligible for a place at more than one school in that LA's area.

8. Brent LA undertakes to carry out the address verification process set out in its entry in the LIAAG Address Protocol. This will in all cases include validation of resident applicants against Brent LA's maintained nursery and primary school data and the further investigation of any discrepancy. Where Brent LA is not satisfied as to the validity of an address of an applicant whose preference has been sent to a maintaining LA, it will advise the maintaining LA no later than **12 February 2026**.
9. Brent LA will confirm the status of any resident child for whom it receives a Common Application Form stating s/he is currently or previously a 'Child Looked After' and will provide any additional evidence on receipt of a reasonable request by the maintaining LA in respect of a preference for a school in its area by **5 February 2026**.
10. Brent LA will advise a maintaining LA of the reason for any application which is made in respect of a child resident in the area of Brent LA to be admitted outside of their correct age cohort, and will forward any supporting documentation to the maintaining LA by **5 February 2026**.

Processing

11. Applicants resident within Brent LA must return the Common Application Form, which will be available and able to be submitted online, to Brent LA by **15 January 2026**.
12. Application data relating to all preferences for schools in the area of a participating LA, which have been expressed within the terms of Brent LA's scheme, will be up-loaded to the PLR by **5 February 2026**. Supplementary information provided with the Common Application Form will be sent to maintaining LAs by the same date.
13. Brent LA will notify each school within its area, which is its own admissions authority, of all applications for their school. All relevant details from the Common Application Form and any supporting evidence will be forwarded to these schools by **23 February 2026**. Own admission authority schools within Brent LA's area will apply their admissions criteria and return applicants ranked in order of priority in accordance with their admissions criteria by **11 March 2026**.
14. Brent LA will accept late applications only if they are late for a good reason, deciding each case on its own merits.
15. Where such applications contain preferences for schools in other LAs, Brent LA will forward the details to maintaining LAs via the PLR as they are received. Brent LA will accept late applications which are considered to be on time within the terms of the home LA's scheme.

16. The latest date for the upload to the PLR of late applications which are considered to be on-time within the terms of the home LA's scheme is **13 February 2026**.
17. Where an applicant moves from one participating home LA to another after submitting an on-time application under the terms of the former home LA's scheme, the new home LA will accept the application as on-time up to **12 February 2026**, on the basis that an on-time application already exists within the Pan-London system.
18. Brent LA will participate in the application data checking exercise scheduled between **16 and 23 February 2026** in the Pan-London timetable in Schedule 3B.
19. All preferences for schools within Brent LA will be considered by the relevant admission authorities without reference to rank order to comply with paragraph 1.9 of the School Admissions Code 2021. When the admission authorities within Brent LA have provided a list of applicants in criteria order to Brent LA, Brent LA shall, for each applicant to its schools for whom more than one potential offer is available, use the highest ranked preference to decide which single potential offer to make. [This is the 'Equal Preference System'.]
20. Brent LA will carry out all reasonable checks to ensure that pupil rankings are correctly held in its LAS for all maintained schools and academies in Brent LA's area before uploading data to the PLR.
21. Brent LA will upload the highest potential offer available to an applicant for a maintained school or academy in Brent LA to the PLR by **19 March 2026**. The PLR will transmit the highest potential offer specified by the Maintaining LA to the Home LA.
22. The LAS of Brent LA will eliminate, as a Home LA, all but the highest ranked offer where an applicant has more than one potential offer across Maintaining LAs submitting information within deadline to the PLR. This will involve exchanges of preference outcomes between the LAS and the PLR (in accordance with the iterative timetable published in the Business User Guide) which will continue until notification that a steady state has been achieved, or until **23 March 2026 for Junior and 25 March for Reception**. Where a management decision is made that additional iterations are necessary, these will continue no later than **25 March for Junior and 27 March 2026 for Reception**.
23. Brent LA will not make an additional offer between the end of the iterative process and the **16 April 2026** which may impact on an offer being made by another participating LA.
24. Notwithstanding paragraph 23, if an error is identified within the allocation of places at a maintained school or academy in Brent LA, Brent LA will attempt to manually resolve the allocation to correct the error. Where this impacts on another LA (either as a home or maintaining LA) Brent LA will liaise with that LA to attempt to resolve the correct offer and any multiple offers which might occur. However, if another LA is unable to resolve a

multiple offer, or if the impact is too far reaching, Brent LA will accept that the applicant(s) affected might receive a multiple offer.

25. Brent LA will participate in the offer data checking exercise scheduled between **26 (30*) March and 8 April 2026** in the Pan-London timetable in Schedule 3B. * Subject to end of iteration process.
26. Brent LA will send a file to the eAdmissions portal with outcomes for all resident applicants who have applied online no later than **13 April 2026**.
27. The file should additionally contain offers to late applicants who can be offered a place on **16 April 2026**. Home LAs are required to make those offers, but they are not included in the report of on-time outcomes generated from the LAS.

Offers

28. Brent LA will ensure that, if there are places available, each resident applicant who cannot be offered a preference expressed on the Common Application Form, receives the offer of an alternative school place in accordance with paragraph 2.12 of the Schools Admissions Code 2021. Brent LA will seek to offer the nearest suitable school to the family home that still has vacancies.
29. Brent LA will inform all resident applicants of their highest offer of a school place and, where relevant, the reasons why higher preferences were not offered, whether they were for schools in the Home LA or in other participating LAs.
30. Brent LA's outcome notification will include the information set out in Schedule 2.
31. Brent LA will, on **16 April 2026**, send notification of the outcome to resident applicants by email or first-class post.
32. Brent LA will provide nursery and primary schools with destination data of its resident applicants by the end of the Summer term 2026.

Post Offer

33. Brent LA will request that resident applicants accept or decline the offer of a place by **30 April 2026**, or within two weeks of the date of any subsequent offer.
34. Where an applicant resident in Brent LA accepts or declines a place in a school maintained by another LA by **30 April 2026**, Brent LA will forward the information to the maintaining LA by **7 May 2026**. Where such information is received from applicants after **30 April 2026**, Brent LA will pass it to the maintaining LA as it is received.

35. Where a place becomes available in an oversubscribed maintained school or academy in Brent LA's area, it will be offered from a waiting list ordered in accordance with paragraph 2.15 of the School Admissions Code 2021.
36. When acting as a maintaining LA, Brent LA will place an applicant resident in the area of another LA on a waiting list of any higher preference school. Where this is not done automatically, it will be done immediately following a request from the home LA.
37. Where a waiting list is maintained by an admission authority of a maintained school or academy in Brent LA's area, the admission authority will inform Brent LA of a potential offer, in order that the offer may be made by the home LA.
38. When acting as a maintaining LA, Brent LA will inform the home LA, where different, of an offer for a maintained school or Academy in Brent LA's area which can be made to an applicant resident in the home LA's area, in order that the home LA can offer the place.
39. When acting as a maintaining LA, Brent LA and the admission authorities within it, will not inform an applicant resident in another LA that a place can be offered.
40. When acting as a home LA, Brent LA will offer a place at a maintained school or Academy in the area of another LA to an applicant resident in its area, provided that the school is ranked higher on the Common Application Form than any school already offered.
41. When acting as a home LA, when Brent LA is informed by a maintaining LA of an offer which can be made to an applicant resident in Brent LA's area which is ranked lower on the Common Application Form than any school already offered, it will inform the maintaining LA that the offer will not be made.
42. When acting as a home LA, when Brent LA has agreed to a change of preferences or preference order, it will inform any maintaining LA affected by the change. In such cases, paragraphs 39 and 40 shall apply to the revised order of preferences.
43. When acting as a maintaining LA, Brent LA will inform the home LA, where different, of any change to an applicant's offer status as soon as it occurs.
44. When acting as a maintaining LA, Brent LA will accept a change of preferences or preference order (including reinstated or additional preferences) from home LAs for maintained schools and academies in its area.
45. Brent LA, when acting as a maintaining LA, will maintain waiting lists and allocate places, as they become available, in accordance with each admission authority's published admission and oversubscription criteria.
46. Brent LA, when acting as a home LA, will carry out the initial offer of places which become available after National Offer Day by the week ending **15th May 2026**.

47. Brent LA, when acting as a home LA, after preferences expressed in accordance with paragraph 7 above have been determined, will allow applicants to express additional preferences before the start of the school term. The order of preferences expressed will supersede any existing preferences without an offer.

**PAN-LONDON CO-ORDINATED ADMISSIONS SCHEME
SCHEDULE 1**

**Minimum Content of Common Application Form for Admissions to Year
7/Year 10 and Reception/Junior in 2026/27**

Child's details:

Surname
Forename(s)
Middle name(s)
Date of Birth
Sex
Home address
Name of current school
Address of current school (if outside home LA)

Parent's details:

Title
Surname
Forename
Address (if different to child's address)
Telephone Number (Home, Daytime, Mobile)
Email address
Relationship to child

Preference details (x 6 recommended):

Name of school
Address of school
Preference ranking
Local authority in which the school is based

Additional information:

Reasons for Preferences (including any medical or social reasons)
Does the child have an Education, Health and Care Plan Y/N*
Is the child a 'Child Looked After (CLA)'? Y/N
Is the child formerly CLA but now adopted or subject of a 'Child Arrangements Order' or 'Special Guardianship Order'? Y/N
If yes, name of responsible local authority
Surname of sibling
Forename of sibling
DOB of sibling
Sex of sibling
Name of school sibling attends

Other:

Signature of parent or guardian
Date of signature

*Where an LA decides not to request this information on the CAF, it must guarantee that no details of a child with an Education, Health and Care Plan will be sent via the PLR.

**PAN-LONDON CO-ORDINATED ADMISSIONS SCHEME
SCHEDULE 2**

**Template Outcome Letter for Admissions to Year 7/Year 10 and
Reception/Junior in 2026/27**

From: Home LA

Date: **2 March 2026 (sec) / 16 April 2026 (prim)**

Dear Parent/Carer,

Application for a Secondary / Primary School

I am writing to let you know the outcome of your application for a secondary/primary school. Your child has been offered a place at X School. The school will write to you with further details.

I am sorry that it was not possible for your child to be offered a place at any of the schools which you listed as a higher preference on your application form. For each of these schools there were more applications than places, and other applicants has a higher priority than your child under the school's published admission criteria.

Offers which could have been made for any schools which you placed lower in your preference list, were automatically withdrawn under the co-ordinated admission arrangements, as a higher preference has been offered.

If you would like more information about the reason that your child was not offered a place at any higher preference school, you should contact the admission authority that is responsible for admissions to the school within the next few days. Details of the different admission authorities for schools in the borough of X are attached to this letter. If the school is outside the borough of X, the admission authority will either be the borough in which the school is situated, or the school itself.

You have the right of appeal under the School Standards & Framework Act 1998 against the refusal of a place at any of the schools for which you have applied. If you wish to appeal, you must contact the admission authority for the school within the next few days to obtain the procedure and the date by which an appeal must be received by them.

Please would you confirm that you wish to accept the place at X School by completing the reply slip below. If you do not wish to accept the place, you will need to let me know what alternative arrangements you are making for your child's education.

You must contact this office if you wish to apply for any other school, either in this borough or elsewhere.

[You can also request that your child's name is placed on the waiting list for a school which was a higher preference on your application form than the school you have been offered. Please use the enclosed reply slip and return it to this office]. OR

{Your child's name has been placed on the waiting list for any school which was a higher preference on your application form than the school you have been offered. If you need to find out your child's position on the waiting list please contact the admission authority or the borough in which the school is situated}.

(One of the above bracketed paragraphs should be used depending on whether the LA automatically places children on a waiting list for higher preference schools).

*Please return the reply slip to me by **16 March 2026 (sec) / 30 April 2026 (prim)**. If you have any questions about this letter, please contact me on _____.*

Yours sincerely

(First preference offer letters should include the paragraphs in italics only)

**PAN-LONDON CO-ORDINATED ADMISSIONS SCHEME
SCHEDULE 3A**

Timetable for Admissions to Year 7/Year 10 in September 2026

Date & working days	Process
Fri 31 Oct 2025 <i>10 days</i>	Statutory deadline for receipt of applications
Fri 14 Nov 2025 <i>20 days</i>	Deadline for the transfer of application information by the Home LA to the PLR (ADT file).
Mon 8 Dec 2025 *	Deadline for receipt of late applications considered as "on-time" by parents to Home LA.
Thurs 11 Dec 2025	Deadline for the upload of late applications considered as "on-time" to the PLR.
Mon 15 Dec 2025 – Fri 2 Jan 2026	Checking of application data
December 2025 to Friday 23 January 2026	Ranking of applications, checking of ranked lists and local allocation of school places
Mon 2 Feb 2026 <i>10 days</i>	Deadline for the transfer of potential offer information from Maintaining LAs to the PLR (ALT file)
Fri 13 Feb 2026	Final ALT file to PLR**
Mon 16 to Tues 17 Feb 2026	**Additional iterations if needed
Mon 16 to Fri 20 Feb 2026	<i>Half Term</i>
Mon 16 (Wed 18) – Mon 23 Feb 2026 <i>6 days</i>	Checking of offer data
Thurs 26 Feb 2026 <i>2 days</i>	Deadline for on-line ALT file to portal
Mon 2 Mar 2026 <i>10 days</i>	Offer notifications sent.
Mon 16 Mar 2026 <i>5 days</i>	Deadline for acceptances
Mon 23 Mar 2026	Deadline for transfer of acceptances to maintaining LAs

***7 December is the agreed date by LIAAG November 2023 (moved to 8 December as 7 December falls on a Sunday in 2025)**

**PAN-LONDON CO-ORDINATED ADMISSIONS SCHEME
SCHEDULE 3B**

Timetable for Admissions to Reception/Junior in September 2026

Date & working days	Process
Thurs 15 Jan 2026 <i>15 days</i>	Statutory deadline for receipt of applications
Thurs 5 Feb 2026 <i>5 days</i>	Deadline for the transfer of application information by the Home LA to the PLR (ADT file)
Thurs 12 Feb 2026	Deadline for receipt of late applications considered as "on-time" by parents to Home LA.
Fri 13 Feb 2026	Deadline for the upload of late applications considered as "on-time" to the PLR.
Mon 16 – Mon 23 Feb 2026	Checking of application data
Mon 16 to Fri 20 Feb 2026	<i>Half Term</i>
February 2026 to Wednesday 11 March	Ranking of applications, checking of ranked lists and local allocation of school places
Thurs 19 Mar 2026 <i>6 days</i>	Deadline for the transfer of potential offer information from the Maintaining LAs to the PLR (ALT file).
Mon 23 Mar 2026 Wed 25 Mar 2026	Final ALT file to PLR for Junior* Final ALT file for Reception**
Tues 24 & Wed 25 Mar Thurs 26 and Fri 27 Mar	*Additional iterations for Junior if needed **Additional iterations for Reception if needed
Thurs 26 (30) Mar – Wed 8 Apr 2026	Checking of offer data
Mon 30 Mar to Fri 10 April	<i>Easter Holidays</i>
Mon 13 Apr 2026	Deadline for on-line ALT file to portal
Thurs 16 April 2026 <i>10 days</i>	Offer notifications sent.
Thurs 30 Apr 2026 <i>5 days</i>	Deadline for acceptances
Thurs 7 May 2026	Deadline for transfer of acceptances to maintaining LAs

Easter Weekend 2026 – Friday 3 April to Monday 6 April

Parental Dispute Protocol

Any parent can make an application for a school place for their child and can express up to six preferences for their preferred school(s). Anyone with parental responsibility may submit an application, however, the child's address on the application should be recorded as the place they spend the majority of the week. Unless a maintained school or academy uses its own definition, this will be considered to be the definition used in Brent Council's Admission Arrangements for Community Schools 2026/2027.

If parents believe that there may be disagreements over which school preferences should be named or which address should be used we recommend starting the following process as early as possible as national closing dates are fixed and cannot be extended under any circumstances.

We urge parents to work together in the best interests of their child; it is advised that the applicant should inform all other parties who have parental responsibility before submitting the application.

All parties should agree with the school preferences to be applied for and/or the home address to be used. Any disagreements should be resolved before submitting an application. If parents are unable to reach an amicable agreement, then both parents should seek their own legal advice or recourse through the Family Courts.

You should note that the Local Authority will only process one application per child and will only make one offer of a school place.

Where more than one application is received with different preferences the Local Authority (or Local Authorities if parents submit applications to more than one) will contact both applicants to advise that more than one application has been received and advise them to complete one application with one set of preferences for their child.

We will not mediate between parents if there is a dispute or when two applications are submitted. Only one application will be accepted, and the final decision will rest with the Local Authority after all submitted evidence has been considered. Further information about the process which will be followed by the local authority is set out in Brent Council's Admission Arrangements for Community Schools 2026/2027.

All evidence must be received by published closing dates, at which point a decision will be made as to which application will be processed. The Local Authorities concerned may contact early years or education settings noted in the application, or other professionals working with the child where applicable, to assist in their decision making. Any evidence provided after the closing date which affects the content or processing of the application, may render the application late, and delay an offer of a school place.