

# Draft

## Building a Better Brent Borough Plan- 2021-2022

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## Foreword

I am pleased to introduce **Brent's Borough Plan**, the key strategic document that sets out what we aim to achieve over the next year. The plan focuses on how we will, over the next twelve months, take forward delivery in the five priority areas agreed in 2019 as being of fundamental importance to Brent and its people:

- Every Opportunity to Succeed
- A Future Built for Everyone, An Economy Fit for All
- A Cleaner More Considerate Brent
- A Borough where we can all feel safe, secure, happy and healthy
- Strong Foundations

These are huge, complex issues and the council cannot deliver on them by itself. That is why partnership working is a key theme running through this Plan, highlighting the importance of working across sectors and service areas. As recent events have shown, it is our community that makes Brent a great place; we make a really positive difference when we work together.

This is a time of enormous change and upheaval, raising new challenges as we continue to tackle the pandemic and its economic and social consequences. These consequences will be far-reaching and long-lasting, and will set the context in which this Plan will be delivered and future plans prepared. But the pandemic has also given a glimpse of what can be achieved if everyone in Brent works together in ways that have made a reality of terms like “community” and “neighbourhood”, with the council, its local residents, voluntary organisations and businesses working together to support each other and build for a better and fairer future in months and years to come.

The past year has also proved the vital importance of local leadership at times of rapid change and uncertainty. The impact of the pandemic and other challenges to the national and local economies will mean that resources will be tight. As a council, we will have to prioritise, focusing actions and resources on the things that are most important for the people of Brent, using evidence to ensure resources are deployed

with maximum effectiveness and to measure success. This is how we responded to the pandemic and we will draw on lessons learned as we go forward.

The pandemic has also reminded us of the deep inequalities in our communities and how these blight peoples' health and life chances. As a council, we place equality at the heart of everything we do. We know that real recovery means doing whatever we can to build a fairer society and economy, ensure a high quality and more sustainable local environment and build on the hard work and commitment shown by so many over the past year to help ensure our borough continues to be caring and supportive.

We have much to be proud of. Brent was awarded London Borough of Culture 2020 in recognition of the vibrancy and diversity of our borough. Our recent success in being named Local Government Chronicle "Council of the Year" recognises the commitment and imagination that we can bring to catalyse action to effect real change.

We know Brent's people are its most important asset; we will continue to work with all our partners to use this potential to the full and by working together we can ensure successful delivery of this plan.

**Cllr Muhammed Butt – Leader of the Council**

## Introduction

The Borough Plan 2019-2023 was agreed in 2019. It is based on the vision to “make Brent a borough of culture, empathy and shared prosperity”:

“A borough where people from different backgrounds feel at ease with one another, share in cultural opportunities and activities, and value the principles of fairness, equality, good citizenship and respect for people and place. People will feel that they and their children are safe, cared for and can achieve and that they receive excellent services when they need them. Brent will be a great place to live and work, where business and enterprise prosper and local people have opportunities to change their lives for the better. “

This Plan updates the five priority areas and sets out actions to realise them, refocussed in the light of what has happened since the original plan was agreed. In particular, it sets out ways in which we can understand and tackle the barriers preventing all Brent people being able to realise their full potential and enjoying the best their borough provides and action on key issues including the climate emergency and reducing health inequalities.

Although the vision remains the same, the changed context means it has new resonances. The ways we deliver it will have to change. Over the next year we will address the immediate and longer-term impacts of a global pandemic and the other pressing challenges affecting a range of service and policy areas, including the climate emergency and tackling the causes and consequences of homelessness. It will be a year that will set the stage for recovery in the borough – and for action to ensure a better, fairer and greener future for all its people.

We are well-placed to meet this challenge. We have designed and implemented new approaches to working with the voluntary and community sectors, which worked well in supporting communities through the pandemic. We are already sector leaders in areas like housing, making a practical difference to peoples’ lives and are taking focussed actions to tackle problems of social inequality and unfairness. We continue to work day-to-day to improve the range of services we provide. Around two thirds of

our residents feel that the council does a good job, and 56%<sup>[2]</sup> also feel that people in their local area can contribute to making it better; this support will continue to be important as we all work together to deliver on the priorities outlined in this Plan.

This Plan is for residents, local businesses, people who study and visit here and all those providing services for the borough and its people and who are interested in its future success. It is ambitious, innovative and flexible enough to cope with the unexpected, but based on a clear understanding of what is deliverable given the resources and powers available.

### About Brent

Brent is situated in North West London. It covers an area of 4,325 hectares, making it London's fifteenth largest borough; about 22% of this is green space. It is also the capital's seventh most populous borough, with a population of 329,800. Brent has a young population; the median age is 36, four years below the average for England; 24% of local people are under the age of 18. It is the second most ethnically diverse borough in London - 64% of the local population is from Black, Asian and other minority groups; the largest single group is the Indian population – who comprise 17% of residents – the fourth largest in London. Some 55% of Brent residents were born overseas. The borough has the second largest Hindu population in England and Wales, and the 10th largest Muslim population (as a percentage of the population). Over 149 languages are spoken in the borough; 37% of residents do not have English as their main language – the second highest proportion in London.

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<sup>[2]</sup> Residents Attitude Survey 2018

# Brent Borough Profile

Brent is home to **329,800** residents, of whom **64%** are from Black, Asian and other minority groups



Residents speak **149** different languages

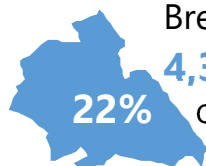
We're a young borough – our residents have an average age of **36**



and **55%** were born overseas



Brent covers **4,325** hectares, **22%** of this is green space



**24%** of residents are under 18 and

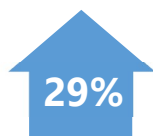
**12%** are over 65



**37%** of household waste is sent for recycling, reuse or composting



**41,407** residents are in receipt of Universal Credit



**29%** of homes are privately rented



**1,911** households are in temporary accommodation



**15.5%** residents live in income deprived households

**71%** of residents are in employment, including **15%** who are self-employed



**27%** of full-time workers earn below the London Living Wage of **£10.85** per hour



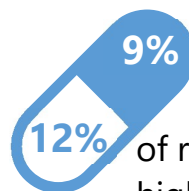
**96%** of Brent schools are rated Good or Outstanding



**93%** of Brent businesses are micro businesses that employ fewer than ten people



**48%** of Care Leavers aged 19-21 are in employment, education or training



**9%** of Brent adults have diabetes and **12%** of residents have high blood pressure

## Our Response to the Pandemic

The council has worked well in partnership in response to the pandemic ensuring that the most vulnerable in our communities are supported during these difficult times. This has included the effective distribution of PPE, phone line support, local testing, and mass lateral flow testing across 9 sites, test and trace and most recently the establishment of a vaccination hub.

The council took a targeted communications approach, using specific messages shaped by the behaviours and beliefs of different audiences locally, and carrying out deeper engagement into communities by understanding where people access information and who they listen to. This involved working closer with trusted voices in different communities, for example the Brent Health Matters community champions and local faith leaders, and supporting them to communicate important messages in a way that would resonate with local people. As part of this, the council established a weekly communication toolkit which included key messages and materials that could be shared with the community, voluntary and faith sector and by mutual aid groups to share through their own channels and networks. This approach, with engagement at the heart, will be at the centre of the council's communication campaigns moving forward.

Other communication activity included on-street signage and translated materials, for example videos in a range of languages that were recorded by local people and targeted digital advertising that would display messages in a person's preferred language. The council website has been one of the most successful channels for information relating to the pandemic, including explaining how to book a test and signposting people to the range of support available. The council has worked with mutual aid groups and the voluntary and community sector to ensure that the most vulnerable are supported including tailoring our grants offer.

Included here are examples of our tailored response:

- Bridge Park delivered 800 emergency food parcels per week on a four week cycle at its peak.

- 1347 Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV) residents received food support (March-August 2020).
- Provision of emergency food to 2165 non-CEV residents who were vulnerable and unable to access food during the same period.
- In October 2020 the council provided vouchers to the value of £15 per child for families eligible for free school meals during the half term break.
- Establishment of a council managed booking service for Covid testing – able to prioritise local residents – over 20,000 tests booked to date.
- 9 Lateral Flow Testing sites in place across the borough enabling residents and key workers to get Covid test results within 30 minutes.
- Local Track and Trace, using local knowledge to help residents isolate safely and provide them with the support they need.
- 3,637 of CEV residents were contacted by the council in the second lockdown to assess their needs.
- Establishment of the Resident Support fund - to date, 1,873 applications have been received.
- The Winter Grant Scheme is being used to support families and other vulnerable residents with paying for food and utilities. (£1.142 m).
- The council has distributed a total of £68,075,375 in business grants. (Including 561 discretionary payments).
- Delivered infection control training to over 3,500 social care and school staff.
- Our commissioning teams supported care providers to maintain safe services - the key issues they are responding to are PPE, testing, staffing shortages, infection control and wider Public Health advice, and providing additional services.
- The council bought and distributed PPE on 28 March (3.2m gloves and 600,000 aprons to 180 care providers), and continued to supply 150k of core items through the first wave and onward until the national portal took over in September 2020.
- The Adult Social Care (ASC) Duty Team mobilised to transform the service into a Wellbeing Team, operating 7 days a week and from 8am–8pm. The Emergency Duty Team continued to work outside of these hours and additional



staff including Approved Mental Health Practitioners volunteered to ensure the required staffing levels are in place.

- ASC supported hospital discharge increasing homecare availability, ensuring medication delivery and reducing social isolation, and setting up a new step down facility at Peel Road to support 11 people at a time (2 week stay) for people who have tested positive for Covid19 but no longer need to be in hospital.
- The substance misuse services became virtual and provided mobile phones with credit to allow service users to keep in touch with their key workers.
- The council worked with the voluntary and community sector and mutual aid groups to ensure that the most vulnerable are supported.

Other activity undertaken by the council includes:

- Accommodated an unprecedented 347 single people who were either sleeping rough or faced the potential of sleeping rough.
- Continued to support council tenants and leaseholders by delivering repairs, maintenance and improvements to their homes during the pandemic.
- Carried out necessary adaptations to facilitate discharge from hospitals and to enable people to continue living in their own homes.
- During lockdown conducted patrols of our high streets 7 days a week during the day time and evenings to ensure businesses are complying with the rules, at peak times, this has seen a deployment of over 50 staff.
- Employed a dedicated Covid Regulatory Response Team who work 7 days a week across the borough responding to complaints and supporting local businesses.
- Engaged with over 7,000 local businesses to ensure they understand and are following the required Covid related rules and conducted over 10,000 spot checks at business premises.
- Issued Fixed Penalty Notices, Improvement and Prohibition notices in order to ensure businesses operate in a Covid secure manner, closing businesses temporarily if required in order to ensure that our communities are protected.

- Worked with business owners to bring hundreds of businesses into compliance using enforcement powers where advice and guidance has not been complied with.
- Distributed and displayed free face covering notices to most local high street businesses and floor marking distance stickers to high footfall businesses.
- Provided support and advice to 322 Early Year settings and 87 schools.
- Adapted to remote learning at Brent Start, our adult education service, in order to continue to enable our communities to access the skills they require to secure a better future in a Covid secure way.

A further package of support has been developed:

- Additional funding for Food Banks to support them to increase capacity to deal with an increase in demand from CEVs and vulnerable residents.
- Additional funding for mutual aid organisations to support an increase in capacity to be distributed via the Brent Solidarity Fund.
- Supermarket shopping and fuel vouchers which can be issued by the council or its agents to support those at risk of losing access to food while longer term issues are being addressed.

The impact of the pandemic and our response has highlighted the strengths in our partnership working as well as recognition of the cross-cutting complex nature of the challenges that our residents face on a daily basis. It is within this context that we have developed this Plan. Work will be undertaken this year to develop a new joint health and wellbeing strategy with our partners focused on tackling health and wellbeing inequalities. This will include extensive engagement.

### Building a Fairer, More Equal Borough

Tackling poverty, inequality and the climate emergency are vital to success in addressing the five priority areas outlined in this plan. Recent events have proved beyond doubt that these have to be priorities for action by the council and for our work with partners.

Tackling poverty is a vital step to success across all this Plan's priorities as made clear by the [Brent Independent Poverty Commission's recommendations](#). The Commission carried out a comprehensive review of why so many in Brent live in poverty and what this means to peoples' everyday lives, drawing on the first hand "lived experience" of poverty – and of the often life-changing potential of the actions taken to address it. The Commission explained the cumulative impact of rocketing housing costs, precarious employment and a welfare system which all too often puts process before people. Delivery plans (based on the recommendations of the Commission's report) covering housing, economy and jobs, financial inclusion and welfare are being implemented and this will continue over the coming months.

Events throughout 2020 confirm the Commission's message that inequality is the root cause of many problems in our community. We will continue to take practical action to promote equality, particularly addressing the often complex, entrenched and interrelated issues behind inequality.

Our [Equality Strategy 2019-2023](#) sets out four objectives: understanding the barriers to equality experienced in Brent and acting to remove them; providing accessible information and services; tackling hate, harassment and victimisation and; leading the way in encouraging diversity to flourish in Brent. The annual equality strategy action plan sets out how we will continue to deliver against these objectives in the coming year, detailing the activity that will drive forward and embed improvements in our equality practice. This activity includes empowering our communities to identify and tackle barriers to equality; addressing the causes of poverty in Brent; enhancing the accessibility of our services, and; continuing to invest in and support our diverse workforce. The action plan also details how we will review and strengthen our equality and diversity practice across the organisation, with a focus on robust equality and diversity training and enhanced and meaningful equalities processes, all feeding into our existing equality standards.

Our [Black Community Action Plan \(BCAP\)](#) sets out actions across 10 work streams to address the inequalities and disadvantages Black communities too often face. The plan is community led, and is being delivered by the council and community working in partnership. Public meetings and a summit have taken place with the community

ensuring that this work is community-led. Actions include early intervention to help children, young people and families; enabling and strengthening community leadership through capacity building; supporting the Black community and voluntary sector through grant funding; and supporting employment and enterprise, accountability and engagement. We will also match our council decision makers with community leaders, to ensure we fully understand and appreciate the lived experience. The programme of work will continue over the coming months.

In July 2019, Full Council declared a climate and ecological emergency and committed to an overarching aim to 'do all reasonable in the council's gift to aim for carbon neutrality by 2030'. As well as reducing the risks from global heating, action to tackle the climate emergency has the potential to bring positive change for Brent's local community on many of the issues that matter most to people, such as cleaner air, greener spaces, warmer homes, healthier travel and a thriving local economy. The council and all of its residents and communities will need to work together to meet this challenge and to secure the potential benefits for positive social, economic and environmental transformation through a transition to a net zero carbon economy, a cleaner and greener environment, and a fairer and healthier society. The council's [draft Climate Emergency Strategy \(2021-2030\)](#), which has been developed through close engagement with local residents, sets out key themes and objectives.

## Principles

In delivering this Plan we will:

- **Work Together** – collaboratively and strategically across services and with partners, finding ways of delivering the priorities in this Plan that add value.
- **Empower local residents** - building on our community voice approach with a focus on supporting communities and neighbourhoods.
- **Reimagine local places** and make real improvements to their quality and the wellbeing of their residents.

## Our Priorities – the Journey So Far

Building a Better Brent, the council's Borough Plan for 2019-2023 set out five priorities. We have made great strides with our partners in delivering on these and towards making our vision a reality.

**Every Opportunity to Succeed** - the gap in attainment between boys of Black Caribbean heritage and all other pupils has significantly narrowed. Over 3,000 residents have been supported through our adult education college Brent Start, with an achievement rate of 93.7%. Brent Works has supported over 100 residents into apprenticeships and 150 young people into 6 month work experience placements with employers as part of phase 1 of the Governments 'Kickstart' programme.

**A Future built for everyone, an economy fit for all** - A new local plan setting out our plans for future development in Brent is being produced. An Affordable Workspace strategy has been agreed, and a Meanwhile Use strategy to support diversity of High Streets is being progressed. Support has been given to businesses via advice and webinars. In 2019-20 we saw a net gain of 2,433 new homes. Some 954 affordable homes are being delivered with 309 new social housing properties to meet housing need. We are supporting businesses with adhering to Covid requirements and safe re-opening when allowed. Town centres have had physical distancing measures put in place, and our emerging Meanwhile Use strategy will help with High Street diversification. Our Small Business Saturday awards and shop local campaign are supporting our local businesses.

**A Cleaner, more considerate Brent** - The Brent Climate Assembly met in December 2019. A Draft Brent Climate Emergency Strategy has been issued for public consultation. 1,033 trees have been planted, Energy-saving streetlights have been installed; together with the new Civic Centre these helped the council to cut its carbon emissions by 63.7%. 19 community clean up action days have been held across our neighbourhoods, supporting 150 volunteer litter pickers who removed over 120 tonnes of waste.

**A Borough where we can all feel safe, secure, happy and healthy** - The "Bright Futures" ex-offender project was delivered and exceeded its engagement target. We

tackled anti-social behaviour and violent crime including extension of the public space protection order to tackle street drinking, delivered a Young Female project to prevent involvement in gangs and increased support for those at risk of or experiencing domestic abuse. A continued reduction of violent crime is evident by 7% compared to the previous year, Between January 2019 and December 2020, Brent has seen a 25% reduction in reported knife crime offences and a 33% reduction in serious Youth Violence over the same period. Our service user led substance misuse service established “park pods” to provide socially distanced peer support. Health visiting responded to lockdown and pressures on the NHS by moving to a risk based model of contacts, including a seven day helpline for parents, but still contacted over 98% of all new mothers in the first 14 days after birth. With the Patrick Clements Clinic, we have expanded the on-line sexual health service. Our culture services delivered the successful London Borough of Culture programme. Activities included an online exhibition Windrush 2020 – that has been viewed 508 times, 8 online films called Brent Then and Now and 22 heritage engagements.

**Strong Foundations** - a new model of collaborative working with the voluntary and community sector has been implemented, the Hub model has been adapted during the pandemic to provide welfare phone support and to act as the main food aid referral route. There have been over 10,000 visits to our hubs; 74% of Community Hub customers are more confident using online services. Over £16 million has been given in grant funding to local communities. A new social value and ethical procurement policy has been agreed and is being implemented which aims to help ensure the council invests in the borough and those with whom we choose to do business share our values. We have also made significant progress in delivering our Digital Strategy including increasing access to fast broadband and improving our online customer portal.

### Our Focus Going Forward

The five priorities set in 2019 will remain in place for the next twelve months. These are based on feedback from communities, drawing on extensive consultation and engagement tailored to meet the needs of specific audiences, including working with trusted voices within communities. Under these five existing priorities we have refined and refreshed our focus for the coming year within the new context in which we are

operating. The areas of focus draw on an evidence-based understanding of the local community, its needs and of the opportunities and challenges facing the borough. Our engagement confirms they remain of fundamental importance. They are equally important and mutually reinforcing.

### Every Opportunity to Succeed

Education is crucial to helping people fulfil their potential and achieve their ambitions. Here in Brent, we are rightly proud of our early years provision, the teaching and leadership in our schools and the further education opportunities available within the borough. For a number of years, the council has worked in close collaboration with local school-led partnerships to achieve continuous improvement in the quality of education; achievement in our primary and secondary schools is higher than ever. We will continue to make advances by drawing on their expertise and experience to drive school improvement, agreeing support and intervention where necessary.

We take a Contextual Safeguarding approach and recognise that the different relationships young people form in their neighbourhoods and schools can affect them. While most groups perform well, some pupils are at risk of lower attainment than others due to a variety of factors. This is the case in particular for boys of Black Caribbean heritage, children looked after by the council and those reaching the age where they leave our care. This can affect their opportunities to stay in education, training or employment and the likelihood of them becoming offenders, so we owe them particular attention to offer life chances that are as good as those of their peers. We will raise their attainment and provide them with support to stay in education, employment or training. Equally as important is ensuring there are sufficient places for children to learn, and by 2023 we will need additional specialist provision so that vulnerable children and young people do not need to travel outside of Brent for their education.

More generally we need to raise people's skills and formal qualifications, and improve the below-average employment level. The council has worked well in partnership to deliver youth opportunities for the borough. The focus is on ensuring that young people have the opportunities to succeed and are ready in terms of skills and experience when these opportunities present themselves. Improving key stage results is an

important part of this. Alongside this are projects such as the Moving on Up project designed to help young (age 16-24) Black men to find jobs and careers in London's competitive labour market. The council is raising employment prospects and skill levels of adults via courses delivered by Brent Start and works with other Colleges to ensure an appropriate adult skills offer. The council listens to children and young people in order to help design and commission services that meet their needs for example, through the Brent Youth Parliament (BYP). The BYP gives opportunities to gain skills in debating, public speaking and campaigning on issues that affect young people. The council will continue to work effectively with its partners in delivering this key priority area, including the Young Brent Foundation whose principal aim is to unite a diverse voluntary youth sector, create a strong united voice, and provide the training, resources and financial support to increase overall capacity and develop a more sustainable future to benefit young people.

The Black Community Action Plan captures the activity we will undertake to ensure excellent outcomes for Black children and young people, including opportunities for Black children and young people to explore and express their aspirations, and be aware of opportunities available.

## **Equipped for the Future**

**Desired Outcome:** Improvement in Key Stage results for boys of Black Caribbean heritage; Looked-after children and care leavers

**We will:**

- Support the continued improvement of early years provision and schools.
- Raise the attainment of particular groups and narrow the gap with their peers for:
  - Boys of Black Caribbean heritage
  - Pupils with special educational needs and disabilities
  - Children and young people in the care of the council
  - Young people leaving our care and moving into becoming independent
  - Pupils at risk of being permanently excluded from school.
- Provide additional specialist places in mainstream schools for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).



**Desired Outcome:** High level skills achievement, increase in average wage.

**We will:**

- Promote employment support and skills provision, including increasing the take-up of apprenticeships and maximising the number of young people on work experience placements as part of the “Kickstart” programme.
- Ensure that residents can access affordable training and learning opportunities, so that they can secure and remain in employment and enhance their careers.

## **Providing Youth Opportunities**

**Desired Outcome** – Increased opportunities for children and young people to succeed.

**We will:**

- Develop and implement the youth strategy.
- Work effectively with partners to reduce child poverty in the borough.
- Explore employment and upskilling opportunities for young people in the digital and green circular economies as well as opportunities offered through for example our sustainable growth strategy.
- Through our social value policy, increase employment opportunities for young people as an integral part of how we procure services.
- Continue to strengthen our youth engagement, building on examples such as Care in Action, Blueprint Collective, Brent Youth Parliament, Young People Thrive and partnership with the Young Brent Foundation.

## **A Future Built for Everyone, an Economy Fit for All**

We have made huge strides in regenerating the borough, with thousands of new homes, hundreds of new jobs, and much-needed growth in our tax base, not to mention hundreds of millions of pounds spent in the local and regional economy. This is improving the lives of our residents and we will invest further to rejuvenate town centres and achieve high-value employment.

We must also ensure more affordable high-quality housing for households currently in need. Having brought management of council housing back in-house, we are

improving services to our tenants and leaseholders, and offering opportunities for meaningful engagement with them. We will encourage housing associations to do the same, and will extend regulation to ensure private landlords offer decent standards for their tenants.

For those who do not have a home, Brent is well-placed to meet legal duties to relieve and prevent homelessness. Against the overall trend across London, we have reduced the numbers of households in temporary accommodation, by developing alternatives such as increasing the supply of private rented accommodation.

Brent has busy streets and town centres and whilst some shops have found the pandemic challenging, local centres have been busy, when open, as people have shopped locally. Our Meanwhile Use strategy will help with diversification where it is needed. Public art projects and public realm improvements are improving the attractiveness of our town centres to encourage visitors and dwell time. We need to ensure we are able to keep our borough moving with well-maintained roads and pavements, effective parking controls, and improved public transport and cycling facilities.

The council has carried out a substantial programme of work to support the economy and increase job opportunities in the borough. Brent's economy is heavily represented by employment in sectors likely to be especially impacted on by the pandemic. Much of the employment in these sectors is low paid, part time and can be insecure. Consequently, the median gross full-time earnings of employees in 2018 was below the London average, at £575.50pw. 93% of Brent businesses are micro businesses employing fewer than ten people.

The Inclusive Growth Strategy (IGS) sets out the council's approach to supporting sustainable growth in employment in Brent from 2019 to 2040. It focuses on improving prospects for low-paid workers, boosting adult education and skills, supporting growth sectors and connecting people to economic opportunities. The council provides a range of services to support employment and training. This includes Brent Start that provides adult education to support residents to upskill, re-train, develop language skills and prepare residents for the world of work. Brent Works is the council's job

brokerage service. Its role is to help local residents into sustainable employment, harnessing the socio-economic benefits of regeneration and enabling priority groups of vulnerable residents into work. Apprenticeships and training and development plans are secured via planning decisions for large developments. We have secured an Employment and Skills Hub in Park Royal, and a memorandum of understanding with HS2 on business and employment opportunities.

## **Delivering Employment and Training Support**

**Desired Outcome** - Increased levels of labour market participation and training support.

### **We will:**

- Support more residents into employment in growth sectors, identified by the Inclusive Growth Strategy, which include digital, tech, low carbon circular economy, creative industries, and professional services (such as finance, accounting, and legal).
- Provide more young people and adults with the skills they need to succeed in London's growing economic sectors, securing more and better jobs, including through the Moving on Up project that supports young Black men into employment.
- Extend the use of the council's procurement powers to secure more good quality apprenticeships and social value from council contracts.
- Narrow the gap in employment rates for young people (aged 25 and under), people with mental health issues, disabled people, residents aged 50+, and in the population more widely and deliver tailored employment and training support for those most affected by the pandemic and those with disabilities.
- Continue to deliver ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) courses across the borough.

## **A great place to do good work**

**Desired Outcome:** Increase inward investment into the borough achieved via the council.

**We will:**

- Invest in Brent's town centres and support diversification, employment and enterprise.
- Explore more in-house and Brent-based options for services we provide.

## **Getting Regeneration Right**

**Desired Outcome:** Adopt our new Local Plan, setting out our vision, priorities and areas for future development in the borough.

**We will:**

- Produce masterplans for Neasden and Church End to help guide appropriate mixed use development, providing new homes, employment and public realm.
- Allocate Community Infrastructure Levy funds for vital infrastructure projects that facilitate delivery of new housing and employment proposals/developments.
- Ensure well-designed public spaces and buildings - such as the multi-storey Generator building at the Grand Union development site - through master planning, negotiation, environmental improvements, active community engagement and place management standards.
- Improve air quality in the borough through increased uptake of active travel (walking and cycling) and through the delivery of supporting sustainable travel infrastructure, working with local, sub-regional and pan-London partners.

## **Somewhere to Call Home**

**Desired Outcome:** Increase in housing supply; reduction in number of households in temporary accommodation.

**We will:**

- Increase direct supply - We have already delivered 255 new council homes from the 1,000 original target, with another 918 on the way for delivery by 2024. Of this 918, 406 are expected to be delivered in 2021/22. We will

develop a new pipeline of new homes, including estate regeneration, to extend our ambition beyond 2024.

- Increase supply through other council bodies and partners – we will widen the scope of i4B and First Wave Housing to deliver intermediate affordable housing products such as, key worker accommodation, sub-market private rented and Shared Ownership homes.
- Work with Registered Providers to ensure the delivery of 4,000 additional genuinely affordable homes by 2024.
- Invest in our current stock to ensure they are of a high standard, energy efficient and safe. We will leverage our relationship with Registered Providers and private sector landlords, to ensure they do the same for their stock.

## **Tackling Homelessness**

**Desired Outcome** – Reduction in number of people who are homeless in the borough and effective support for those who are homeless.

### **We will:**

- Reduce the number of households in temporary accommodation to under 1,000 by 2025 and ensure that any temporary accommodation provision is owned and managed by the council.
- Increase support for people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness by enhancing our prevention services for those threatened with homelessness and ensuring composite assessment of needs for those who are homelessness, so that the appropriate type of accommodation is provided for them.
- Maximise the use of our stock and encourage Registered Providers to do the same, to effectively address overcrowding and under-occupation.

## **Going Places**

**Desired Outcome:** Keep traffic moving and our roads and pavements in good repair.

### **We will:**

- Provide responsive and well-targeted regulation of parking in order to maintain the flow of traffic.
- Work with the Mayor to deliver the West London Orbital passenger line, with a new station in Neasden, providing better access to west and north London and Heathrow.
- Renew roads and pavements and continue to maintain the highway network through a planned programme of improvement.
- Continue our electrical charge point programme.

### A Cleaner, more considerate Brent

The environment is a major factor in the quality of life for our residents, who have identified clean streets, parks and trees, and collection of waste and recycling, as priority areas. However, in common with much of London, the quality of our air is not as good as it could or should be. Everyone in Brent has the ability to help do something about this, and the council can do its part through reducing its own emissions and encouraging others to do the same. Tackling the climate emergency is a key area of activity going forward.

Despite the importance of the environment to everyone, a small number spoil our borough with littering and fly-tipping (illegally-dumped rubbish), a key challenge identified by residents. We collect illegally-dumped rubbish within a day of it being reported, and use every tool at our disposal to catch and prosecute those responsible – including a record one-off fine of over £36,000 for a business carrying out persistent illegal rubbish dumping. We will continue to pursue strong locality-based enforcement actions to deter such behaviour. We will positively improve our environment through greening and sustainability projects including tree planting and the development of new and different habitats.

## Climate Emergency

**Desired Outcome** – Considerable and measurable progress made in the borough's journey to reaching net zero carbon emissions, improving air quality and reducing fuel poverty.

**We will:**

- Expand the Brent Environmental Network to facilitate joined up working to tackle the climate emergency - establishing close links with key sectors and stakeholders such as businesses, schools, voluntary/community sector, Registered Housing Providers.
- Have begun to improve the energy efficiency of the council's own housing stock, expand operations for domestic energy advice and attract grant funding for energy efficiency improvements across the wider housing sector.
- Increase the opportunities and pathways for local employment within key sectors of the green circular economy and work closely with businesses to promote and encourage "greening" their existing operations.

## **An Environment to be proud of**

**Desired Outcome:** A cleaner more attractive borough

**We will:**

- Continue to provide efficient and regular collection of household waste.
- Pursue strong local enforcement actions, to deter others from illegally dumping rubbish; and by working at a neighbourhood level, better target recognised hotspots for environmental nuisance.
- Promote a cleaner and more attractive borough, improving biodiversity in our streets and parks, through greening and sustainability projects including tree-planting and the development of new and different habitats.

## A Borough where we can all feel safe, secure, happy and healthy

It is vital for the council to support our most vulnerable residents - safeguarding children and young people and helping vulnerable adults to be independent at home. Reducing health inequalities is a key area of work during the lifecycle of this plan.

Brent was particularly badly hit in the first wave of the pandemic with some of the highest numbers of residents having lost their lives to the virus. Covid-19 has exacerbated and shone a light on health inequalities with increased risk of death in older people, men, Black, Asian and other minority communities and those living in more deprived communities. Disparities in the socio economic determinants of health, such as housing, employment and income underlie this disproportionate impact and

addressing these will require sustained societal action. There is an immediate need to address both exposure to the virus and the susceptibility to severe disease amongst these communities. This has focused our priorities to ensure we support activity for the most vulnerable residents. The council was the first in London to host a local walk through test site in Harlesden, which was followed by a second in Wembley.

In areas like Alperton and Church End where residents were most adversely affected, the council with the local NHS has listened to local people to understand the needs of their communities and to develop action plans to address health inequalities across the borough. We have established a network of community champions who act as bridges between statutory services and local people. The council has successfully bid for funds to scale this approach to cover the whole borough. We will commission local third sector organisations to find and support health educators drawn from various communities who will be provided with training and materials from public health and the NHS to work with their communities to promote health and resilience. The local CCG supported by the council also successfully bid for NHS funding for a new primary care service which will offer a holistic resident centred service with outreach.

The council is also reaching out to address Covid myths and concerns through the trusted messengers in the NHS and local communities and using traditional and social media to enable our residents to make informed choices.

Brent has a rich cultural history and heritage, and we have successfully delivered the London Borough of Culture 2020 (LBoC) programme. Going forward we will ensure delivery of the LBoC legacy, which benefits generations to come.

Despite the increase in reporting of anti-social behaviour due to Covid19 related incidents, Brent continues to see a reduction in overall reported crime. However, we still have work to do to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour, as well as reducing the fear of crime. The safety of residents is paramount. As part of our increased focus on localities, we will continue to target anti-social behaviour in specific neighbourhoods and communities.

## **Safe from Harm**

**Desired Outcome:** Reduction in anti-social behaviour, the risk of harm and re-offending and a reduction in violent crime, including gang and knife crime.



**We will:**

- Ensure vulnerable individuals who are at risk of being involved in violent crime receive early help and support when they need it, with integrated and coordinated services.
- Target gangs, violence against women, domestic abuse and serious violence, and make full and effective use of our CCTV infrastructure – including enhanced recording, and greater flexibility to help make Brent safer.
- Tackle anti-social behaviour on a targeted neighbourhood basis.
- Work with our communities to facilitate resilience by supporting local approaches to crime reduction and improve trust in our community safety partners.

**Independent and Dignified**

**Desired Outcome:** Support our most vulnerable adults, enabling them to choose and control the services they receive, remain independent and lead active lives.

**We will:**

- Continue to offer alternatives to residential care, through New Accommodation for Independent Living (NAIL), delivering 100 new units of accommodation a year.
- Implement the new homecare contract to ensure all Adult Social Care provision is London Living Wage compliant, and bring the Reablement service in-house.
- Continue to align and integrate our services with those of the NHS where this benefits our residents, for example, helping people return home after hospital stays.
- Deliver a new model of day care which provides additional opportunities in the community and reflects the needs of all of our community.

**Active and Healthier**

**Desired Outcome:** Improve the health of Brent residents and reduce health inequalities.

**We will:**

- Work with the NHS to improve health outcomes for those who have been disproportionately affected by Covid-19 including people with diabetes and hypertension, those who are not a healthy weight, and those living in Alperton and Church End to reduce the impact of the second wave of Covid, including on residents' mental wellbeing.
- Work with our communities and the NHS to ensure an equitable uptake of Covid vaccination across all groups and in more deprived communities.
- Work with the NHS to ensure that vaccinations for those of school age which have been missed as a result of the partial school closures are caught up.
- Introduce a new service to address substance misuse and mental health problems for those who are homeless, increasing engagement in active treatment by this group.
- Encourage residents to be more active making use of the facilities on offer in the borough.

## **Culture to Treasure**

**Desired Outcome:** Make Brent a place where culture is celebrated and vibrant.

### **We will:**

Ensure delivery of the LBoC legacy, which benefits generations to come, including:

- Setting up a Local Cultural Education Partnership working with our schools to ensure every child in Brent has cultural opportunities.
- Creating new cultural spaces, both meanwhile and permanent, including the Kilburn Studios and the Picture Palace.
- Delivering the Brent Biennial from 2022, a place shaping festival each year alternating between visual arts and music.

## **Strong Foundations**

As part of this Plan we will continue to seek to improve satisfaction with council services. To achieve our goals we must continue to utilise new technology, reduce avoidable contact and put residents more in control of services, redefining the “front door” through which residents contact the council. We will take advantage of the

increasing pace of change and continue our journey to become a digital council and make Brent a digital place. We will continue to strengthen our community hub model working effectively with our partners and the voluntary and community sector. Engaging communities will continue to play a key role going forward.

## **A Digital Borough**

**Desired Outcome:** Address digital exclusion and enable residents to get online

**We will:**

- Implement our Digital Strategy and our digital inclusion action plan to ensure local residents, partners and businesses are able to thrive in the digital future.

## **Effective and Efficient**

**Desired Outcome:** Making every pound count

**We will:**

- Continue to develop the skills and culture required for new ways of working, particularly around commissioning and procurement, managing commercial relationships, designing services, working more flexibly and creating and implementing large scale changes.
- Make the best use of our buildings and property portfolio to support our priorities.

## **Meeting Local Needs**

**Desired Outcome:** Building services around residents and their needs

**We will:**

- Build on and develop our network of community hubs to help the most vulnerable residents with issues such as housing, benefits debt and employment.
- Work with charitable organisations and local community initiatives including food banks, to ensure residents in need get help early; and understand and tackle the underlying causes of demand for these services.

## **Engaging Communities**

**Desired Outcome:** Increase in resident satisfaction; Increase in resident involvement.

We will:

- Continue to deliver tailored engagement in areas such as tackling poverty, the climate emergency, health inequalities and tackling inequalities including using Brent Connects as the established engagement tool.
- Introduce Participatory Budgeting ensuring a clear community voice in financial decision making and resource allocation with positive community impact.
- Use our spending power to help support our local communities, setting out clear expectations and with even more of a focus on volunteering and community support as benefits from our contracts.
- Deliver our grants programme to support local communities.

## Enablers

### Workforce Support

The council is a vibrant and dynamic organisation with a workforce that reflects the diversity of its community. As an employer the council has a major part to play in the economic development of the borough and an essential responsibility as a role model to other local employers. A skilled and engaged workforce is crucial to achieving the vision set out in this Plan. The council is proud of its staff and 89% of respondents to a recent staff wellbeing survey<sup>1</sup> said that they were proud to work for the council during the pandemic. The council's workforce is its greatest asset and the council will provide comprehensive support to its workforce so that they achieve their best outcomes. Key activity during the lifecycle of this plan includes achieving the Good Work Standard and Disability Confident Level 3, harnessing the opportunities that digital development present, expanding flexible working across the organisation and the range and level of apprenticeships offered by the council as described in the equalities strategy and BCAP. The council's workforce strategy sets out in more detail how the council will continue to support our workforce over the coming years.

### Finances

The period covered by this Plan is likely to be financially challenging. However, there are plenty of things we can do as a council to spend and invest wisely to maximise our own resources, transform services to release efficiencies, generate income and to

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<sup>1</sup> Staff wellbeing survey 15-29 May 2020

work smarter, both in-house and with our partners. By taking a proactive approach addressing the causes of challenges like poverty and inequality we can also secure savings by managing future demand for services. However, like all local authorities, our resources are tight and likely to become tighter. Delivering on our priorities when resources are short will require everyone – in the council and beyond - to think more broadly and imaginatively to ensure the key services that residents value are provided in an efficient and cost-effective manner.

### Monitoring and Review

The Borough Plan will be reviewed regularly to ensure it is still relevant, reflects the national policy landscape, local priorities and context. The council will monitor progress against the outcomes set out in this Plan based on a suite of performance measures. These will be reported to Cabinet twice a year.