



Cabinet
6 April 2021

Report from the Assistant Chief Executive

Brent Climate & Ecological Emergency Strategy (2021-2030)

Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	Key
Open or Part/Fully Exempt:	Open
No. of Appendices:	One: Appendix A: Brent Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy (2021-2030)
Background Papers:	None
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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present Cabinet with the final version of Brent's Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy (2021-2030) for adoption following a further period of public consultation between November 2020 and January 2021.
- 1.2 The Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy includes the key objectives, themes and areas of focus that will help Brent to do all in its gift to reach its overall aim of carbon neutrality by 2030.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 That Cabinet approves the final Brent Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy (2021-2030) following a further period of public consultation and following further officer consideration (updated strategy document provided as Appendix A).

2.2 That Cabinet notes that a more detailed breakdown of the consultation process, a short illustrative version and an easy-read version for people with disabilities are available on the Climate Emergency section of the council's website (www.brent.gov.uk/climateemergency).

3.0 Context

3.1 It is clear that achieving the goal of net zero carbon emissions by 2030 will be hugely challenging. The council is not able to fund directly the level of infrastructure required to achieve this goal. The scale and urgency of the Climate and Ecological Emergency therefore requires us to build consensus with all sections of the community on the radical changes that are needed imminently about the way that all of us heat and power our homes, move about and make choices about what we eat and buy.

3.2 Since the original climate and ecological emergency declaration in July 2019, Brent has sought to develop this long-term strategy with the goal of consensus in mind. As is detailed within the strategy document itself, the key themes and priorities have been developed following extensive engagement with Brent residents, and through aligning ourselves to similar London-wide goals – positioning Brent in the best position possible to do all that we can to respond the climate and ecological crisis.

4.0 Recent Consultation on Brent's Draft Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy

4.1 A key facet of the development of the draft Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy was to ensure that it genuinely followed the priorities of our residents and communities wherever possible. Cabinet approved the draft version of the Strategy for a further stage of public consultation at its meeting on 9 November 2020.

4.2 The consultation portal was open for comments between 17 November 2020 and 15 January 2021 and also captured wider details about the demographics of respondents. At the close of the consultation on 15 January, there had been 76 responses received via the consultation portal. This included a couple of responses from resident associations and environmental groups in the borough who appeared to have sent a single response on behalf of their members.

4.3 In order to try to reach the widest number of people and demographic groups as possible, the council did not solely consider responses to the online consultation portal. An online workshop was hosted with disabled residents, groups and their carers, which took place on 13 January 2021 and focused on obtaining the views of those with a disability on the key themes within the strategy.

4.4 A recorded roundtable webinar was also hosted with the Jason Roberts Foundation (based in Stonebridge) facilitating a dialogue between young people and Councillor Krupa Sheth (Lead Member for Environment) and Oliver Myers (Head of Environmental Strategy and Commissioning) on 14 January 2021, allowing them the space and opportunity to give their perspective on how we tackle the climate and ecological emergency.

- 4.5 Two letters responding to the consultation were also sent to Councillor Krupa Sheth from Brent Friends of the Earth and Brondesbury Park Residents Association respectively. The draft strategy was also scrutinised at the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee on 1 December 2020 where a number of recommendations and suggestions were made by the Committee.
- 4.6 All of these responses have been analysed and considered ahead of the final strategy being brought back to Cabinet for final adoption. It can be deduced from responses to key questions that ultimately there is support for the council's aims and objectives on tackling the climate and ecological emergency, and there is a will from the community to be involved and support this crucial agenda.
- 4.7 It is also important to re-emphasise that the end to this phase of engagement does not mean the end to engagement on this agenda. The strategy document makes clear throughout that to deliver carbon neutrality by 2030 all of Brent's communities (defined broadly as including residents, residents groups, community and voluntary groups, schools, businesses, registered providers etc) will need to contribute and work both with and independently of the council where necessary to achieve this collective aim.
- 4.8 Many of the comments or ideas put forward as part of this engagement phase that are not specifically mentioned in the strategy document or year one delivery plan have not been discounted. These ideas and comments have been recorded by officers and will be referred back to in order to help shape content on further engagement on specific issues; considered in the development of new projects where opportunities and funding arises outside of the actions in the strategy's delivery plan; and to form a longlist of potential actions and themes for action to be considered in advance of the delivery plans being formally refreshed each year.

5.0 Summary of Strategy Objectives and Themes

- 5.1 The ultimate aim of the Strategy remains to do all in our gift to make Brent a carbon neutral borough by 2030. This is also supported by an ecological aim of boosting and protecting biodiversity, and minimising the risk of ecological collapse in years to come. We have reverted to calling the strategy the Climate and *Ecological* Emergency Strategy following comments received which questioned its scope during the most recent consultation period.
- 5.2 The document aims to harness the opportunities that the council has in order to make a direct impact on the climate emergency, to identify where investment will be required for maximum impact, but also where the council can lead by supporting and enabling different key communities to play their part in sharing ownership of this substantial agenda.

Theme 1: Consumption, Resources and Waste

- 5.3 The long-term objective of this theme is: 'By 2030, our communities will be living more sustainably: consuming less of the products and materials that accelerate climate change, whilst also wasting less of the world's natural resources. This

behaviour shift will have helped to cut Brent's consumption emissions by two-thirds, and drive a substantive reduction in the amount of household waste produced within the borough'. The key areas of focus in achieving this goal are creating the optimum conditions for community-led behaviour change; ensuring that the supporting waste related infrastructure continues to be improved; and enhancing the green and circular economy in Brent (shifting to a local economic model where resources and products are kept in use for as long as possible).

- 5.4 Following comments received from the most recent consultation, amendments have been made to include more detail on: the role of consumption in everyone's daily lives; the impact of food waste; and meat consumption; and focusing on all aspects of the waste hierarchy – not just recycling. Updated wording for actions CYP03 (expanding recycling opportunities in schools) and R&E09 (intensification of floorspace for low-carbon/cleantech businesses) within the 21-22 delivery plan has also been provided.

Theme 2: Transport

- 5.5 The long-term objective of this theme is: 'By 2030, petrol and diesel road journeys will have at least halved in the borough, being driven as close as possible to zero, with an accompanying increase in journeys made by residents through cycling, walking or public transport'. The key areas of focus in achieving this goal are: supporting and encouraging active travel; moving away from petrol and diesel vehicles; and encouraging public transport where possible and safe to do so.
- 5.6 Following comments received from the most recent consultation, amendments have been made to include more detail on: the council's strategic vision for long term active travel infrastructure; supporting residents through the transition to electric vehicles; and continued specific liaison with TfL over areas which are not directly within the council's control. Updated wording for actions R&E01(healthy neighbourhoods and school streets) and R&E02 (EV charge points), R&E03 (bike hangars), R&E04 (cargo bikes), and CYP002 (sustainable travel plans) within the 21-22 delivery plan has also been provided.

Theme 3: Homes, Buildings and the Built Environment

- 5.7 The long-term objective of this theme is: 'By 2030, as many homes and buildings in the borough as possible will be more energy efficient, be powered by renewable sources, and be resilient to future adverse weather events caused by climate change - and we will do all in our gift to achieve an average Energy Performance Certificate rating of 'B' in directly owned council stock. The key areas of focus in achieving this goal are: improving energy efficiency in all homes and buildings, whether existing or new-build, facilitating a shift to powering homes and buildings through renewable energy sources; and adapting our homes and buildings to ensure that they are more climate resilient to cope with the potentially dangerous effects of climate change in years to come.
- 5.8 Following comments received from the most recent consultation, amendments have been made to the title of this theme (now, Homes, Buildings and Built Environment, in order to provide a wider scope) and to include more detail on:

how sustainability considerations are present within the planning and construction process for new builds; and working with the private rented and owner occupied sector on energy efficiency. Updated wording for actions R&E13 (net zero council estate) within the 21-22 delivery plan has also been provided.

Theme 4: Nature and Green Space

- 5.9 The long-term objective of this theme is: 'By 2030, Brent will be one of the greenest, most biodiverse and climate-resilient boroughs in London with our residents better connected to nature'. The key areas of focus identified in achieving this goal are: enhancing green (and blue) spaces and biodiversity wherever possible; improving our wider green infrastructure such as green corridors; and adapting our green spaces to assist in mitigating against adverse weather impacts in years to come.
- 5.10 Following comments received from the most recent consultation, amendments have been made to include more detail on: the council's tree policy and the role of trees in tackling the climate emergency; the scope of our planned Green Infrastructure Vision and Climate Resilience Plans; and the education centre at Welsh Harp as a key blue space in the borough. Updated wording for actions R&E14 (green infrastructure vision) within the 21-22 delivery plan has also been provided.

Theme 5: Supporting Communities

- 5.11 Underpinning all four themes above is the overarching theme of ensuring that our communities are supported in delivering the proposed climate objectives for the borough. The long-term objective of this theme is: 'Everyone who lives, works or studies in Brent will have improved access to clear and understandable information on the need to tackle the Climate and Ecological Emergency, and as many people as possible will be actively engaged in taking action to help the borough become carbon neutral by 2030'.
- 5.12 The key areas of focus in achieving this goal are: developing an environmental network in Brent for organisations, communities and individuals to be the catalysts of driving this agenda forward; supporting the key sectors which will need to be at the forefront of making sustainable change happen and through launching and utilising the Brent Carbon Offset Fund to drive carbon reduction at a local level.
- 5.13 Following comments received from the most recent consultation, amendments have been made to include more detail on: re-emphasising the need to be inclusive on this agenda and also providing additional wording to highlight the importance of both schools and businesses.

6.0 Key Next Steps

- 6.1 Following the adoption of this strategy, the 2021-2022 delivery plan will become live and officers will press ahead with the development and implementation of each of the key actions listed. Focus will also be on expanding the Brent

Environmental Network and plans for sustaining community engagement both now and into the future.

7.0 Monitoring and Performance

- 7.1 Once adopted, the strategy will be treated as a 'live' document, with the annual delivery plans reviewed each year to ensure that the Borough is progressing against its overall aim for carbon neutrality by 2030. The setting of intermediary/midway targets for the Strategy for the period leading up to 2030 will be considered as part of this ongoing review process.
- 7.2 The strategy document also sets out in more detail the main sources of carbon and consumption emissions data, plus other key sources of information which will be monitored accordingly to provide a key indication of progress made against the objectives of the strategy itself.

8.0 Alternative Options Considered

- 8.1 Given the financial pressures that the council is facing and competing council priorities following the onset of COVID-19, alternative approaches include a 'business as usual' approach. However, as is made clear within the strategy document, through working together with Brent's communities, the council remains committed and ambitious in its goal to attain carbon neutrality by 2030. Failure to act at such a crucial time risks setting in train climate deterioration that will have huge adverse impacts for the borough and its population in years to come. For these reasons, 'business as usual' is not considered desirable.
- 8.2 An approach that solely focuses on the council's own estate and operations is also not supported, in view of the above but moreover, because the council's own emissions only account for one percent of Brent's total territorial carbon emissions. It is also thought that there is no other central body in Brent that can play a leadership role to bring together individuals and organisations in tackling this issue with the speed and urgency it requires.

9.0 Financial Implications

- 9.1 The financial implications for each action within the 2021-2022 action plan are set out at the end of the strategy document, attached as Appendix A. Overall, of the 23 actions proposed, five are already factored into existing budgets, 11 result in new additional activity where costs can be contained within existing departmental budgets, six have external funding secured and one requires further work where due to the early stage of project scoping, the financial implications are yet to be fully developed. This refers to implementing the council's plan to achieve net zero for the council's own estate and operations by 2030 (R&E13). These plans are likely to have both revenue and capital financial implications, which will be assessed as the detailed plans and recommendations are developed.
- 9.2 In addition, the 2021/22 budget agreed by the Council set out additional funding to support the delivery of the Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy.

10.0 Legal Implications

- 10.1 The Climate Change Act 2008 (the Act) is the statutory basis for the UK's approach to tackling and responding to climate change. The Act places a legal duty on central government to set legally binding targets to reduce UK greenhouse gas emissions to net-zero by 2050.
- 10.2 The data provided from those who sign up to the Brent Environmental Network will be managed in accordance with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and other relevant Data Protection legislation.
- 10.3 In delivering the Brent Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy, the Council will need to have regard to internal governance procedures and the Public Contract Regulations 2015 in respect of any procurement.

11.0 Equality Implications

- 11.1 The council, as a public authority exercising public functions, is subject to a general public sector equality duty (PSED) under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 (EqA). The PSED requires public authorities to have 'due regard' to:
- The need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the EqA
 - The need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. This involved having due regard to the need to:
 - Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic
 - Take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it
 - Encourage persons who share the relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low
 - The need to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant and protected characteristic and those who do not share it. This includes having due regard to the need to tackle prejudice and promote understanding.
- 11.2 A full Equalities Impact Assessment has been undertaken and is available on the climate emergency section of the council's website (www.brent.gov.uk/climateemergency). This strategy and action plan will support Brent Council to continue to meet its public sector equality duties.

12.0 Human Resources Implications

- 12.1 To support the delivery of this strategy, two additional posts relating to Sustainability will be recruited to in the near future.

13.1 Property Implications

13.1 This council is working towards a decarbonisation strategy for Brent's estate as noted within the 2021-2022 delivery plan (action reference R&E13). Energy audits are currently taking place across the council's estate to inform this work, and potential funding streams are being identified.

14.0 Environmental Sustainability Implications

14.1 Environmental sustainability considerations are integral to the purpose, content and recommendations in this report.

15.0 Proposed Consultation with Ward Members and Stakeholders

15.1 In addition to the consultation process outlined in Section Four of this report, two Members' Learning and Development Sessions on the Climate and Ecological Emergency have taken place over the last few months, and members have also been encouraged to respond to both the consultation and a more general neighbourhood survey which had been running concurrently to the consultation period.

15.2 We have also encouraged our ward councillors to become community champions and have prepared fact sheets for members to use to promote the council's response to the Climate and Ecological Emergency and to engage with residents, businesses, schools and community groups in their ward. Members will be at the forefront of community engagement and will be champions for climate action.

15.3 Ultimately, every individual who lives, works or studies in Brent has a stake in tackling the Climate and Ecological Emergency. The strategy has been developed with the views of our residents at its heart. As previously stated in paragraph 4.7, the strategy document makes clear throughout that to deliver carbon neutrality by 2030 all of Brent's communities (defined broadly as including residents, residents groups, community and voluntary groups, schools, businesses, registered providers etc) will need to contribute and work both with and independently of the council where necessary to achieve this collective aim. A sustained plan for community engagement will be developed and put into operation through the growth of the Brent Environmental Network - which now has just under 350 members signed up.

Report sign off:

Shazia Hussain
Assistant Chief Executive