



Item 7: Questions from Members of the Public

Full Council – 20 September 2020

1. Question from Nicholas Kollgaard to Councillor Krupa Sheth, Lead Member for Environment

Why is Brent Council the last in Central London (and one of the last in the entire Greater London Region) to integrate with a flexible car sharing scheme, such as Zipcar's Flex scheme?

Whilst the benefits of such a flexible car sharing scheme are clear, officers within the Transportation Service have advised that further work is required to determine the full implications. Please could you provide an update on these investigations and when the Council aims to have a decision by?

Response:

Car sharing schemes are an important part of the overall transport offer in Brent and the Council recognises the important role they can play in reducing the need for people to own their own car which, in turn, can help alleviate congestion and improve local air quality. Two such schemes currently operate in Brent, with Zipcar and Enterprise Car Club operating from 50 locations across the borough on a fixed-bay model.

As part of the review of the Brent Long-Term Transport Strategy, the Council is proposing the development of a Shared Mobility Action Plan by the end of 2022, which will set out in more detail our approach to car sharing schemes and how they operate in the borough. This will include the potential for introducing flexible car sharing schemes, which currently operate in 15 of the 33 London Boroughs. Such schemes will need to be considered carefully due to the potential for issues such as inappropriate parking of vehicles, which can create problems for our local communities.

2. Question from Carmen Meagher-Mansilla to Councillor Neil Nerva, Lead Member for Public Health, Culture & Leisure

Brent is a large Borough, with an enormous amount of development activity including in Cricklewood (with development of the B&Q site) and around Dollis Hill Lane and Avenue.

Given their importance to young people in the borough can the Council please explain what is being done to plan for the provision of leisure and cultural facilities as part of this wider regeneration activity, especially in the area around Gladstone Park.

Whilst the park offers access to some sports facilities and lessons there is no Sports Centre or library located close to these new developments with access to such facilities seen as key for the development of young people and parents.

Response:

There are no plans in place to introduce an additional library or leisure centre as part of the regeneration around Gladstone Park.

However, within our resources the Council is supporting residents to become more physically active and to engage in cultural activities across the Borough as evidenced by the recent Summer on Your Doorstep programme. The programme is currently being evaluated and will inform future plans. In the meantime the Council website provides details of the offer in all our parks, libraries and other settings.

The Council is committed to expanding the cultural offer to young people notably through our funding to support the creation of a Local Cultural Educational Partnership (LCEP) which is part of the lasting legacy of Brent's time as London Borough of Culture. The LCEP will ensure every child in Brent has access to cultural opportunities and a pathway into the creative industries.

3. Question from Gordon Aldrich to Councillor Krupa Sheth, Lead Member for Environment

Can you please advise what steps are being taken to enforce the double yellow lines on the Queensbury Station Roundabout? There are double yellow lines all around, but the lack of enforcement means that cars are actually often left without occupants at times.

It has become a very easy drop off and pick up point for people collecting family and friends from the station during rush hour. Often cars are double parked which creates a hazard and danger for other vehicles and pedestrians.

In addition could you also advise about the enforcement policy on footway parking in local roads such as Girton Avenue and also on what measures are being taken to enforce the signs forbidding the consumption of alcohol on the green? These are being ignored due to a lack of enforcement, which can be witnessed by all those using the station on most days.

Response:

We are aware of the issue related to vehicles stopping in this location. We have recently refreshed the double yellow lines and kerb markings at the roundabout to make it clear to motorists that both waiting and loading is prohibited at all times. Vehicles are however, permitted to stop for short periods in order to allow passengers and their luggage to board and alight. If a Civil Enforcement Officer (CEO) witnesses a vehicle stopped for a longer period they will seek to enforce by issuing a Penalty Charge Notice (PCN). However, when a CEO attends the location the vehicle will often be moved away by the driver before a PCN can be issued. CCTV cannot legally be used for enforcing this parking contravention.

Footway parking remains unlawful within all roads within Greater London unless the local authority has painted markings and erected signage explicitly allowing the practice. The Council publishes a list of all streets within the borough where footway parking is lawful that can be accessed via the following link;

<https://www.brent.gov.uk/media/16415706/list-of-footway-parking-exemptions.pdf>

Officers do regularly patrol the area of The Green for the purposes of enforcing the Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) that forbids the consumption of alcohol. During August 2021 for example, three Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN's) were issued for street drinking. The Council will continue to enforce the PSPO in the area whenever an offence is identified.

4. Question from Pam Laurance to Councillor Krupa Sheth, Lead Member for Environment

About a year ago the Council launched the Brent Climate & Ecological Emergency Strategy, with a considerable amount of publicity, setting out specific aims and targets.

The First Year Delivery Plan 2021-2022 set out 23 targets for that period. The Strategy documents states that:

'Progress against the key objectives will be monitored and measured regularly, and progress on the delivery of the specific actions in our yearly delivery plans will be reported in detail, alongside a commentary of progress of the overall programme each year. Available datasets and baselines will be measured against the most up to date statistics at the time of the adoption of this plan. This strategy is currently a long-term strategy, but we will keep under review the need to refresh its aims and objectives in the years to come'.

Please will the Council say:

- 1) What criteria are being used to measure progress?
- 2) How does the Council plan to keep the public informed on progress?
- 3) Does the Council believe that any of the targets need to be more ambitious in the light of recent climate developments?

Response:

1) What criteria are being used to measure progress

The overarching means for measuring progress on direct carbon emissions in the borough is from the local authority dataset provided by the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) each year. It is from this dataset, for example, that we have been able to ascertain that there has been a 35% reduction in total carbon emissions on a borough-wide basis since 2005 (when this method of accounting began) and it is also by utilising this dataset that we are able to analyse different pathways of getting to carbon neutrality by 2030. Unfortunately, the complexity of carbon accounting means that these figures are only available with an 18-month timelag – and therefore the latest set of figures for Brent is from 2019. We also have a baseline estimate of the consumption emissions (wider greenhouse gases, not just carbon) which are attributed to Brent and one of our key objectives is to reduce these emissions by at least two thirds by 2030.

Due to this timelag in receiving specific data, councils are reliant in the meantime on assessing progress through other 'proxy' measures which will indicate the direction of travel in reducing emissions. We are currently working on developing an internal dashboard with the council's Corporate Performance Team which currently includes around 80 potential underpinning long-term indicators and

datasets. These can include specific datasets such as EPC ratings, waste statistics, TfL travel data but also through more the practical delivery of initiatives we have set out in our yearly delivery plans. Progress will be reported to Cabinet each year. The current 2021-22 delivery plan for example, comprises of actions that we expect to have a direct impact on emissions, or lay the building blocks for emissions reduction in the future.

2) How does the Council plan to keep the public informed on progress

The council has been keeping the public informed of progress through regular updates via Brent's main communications and engagement channels. This includes the council's social and digital channels, through news updates, webinars and social media feed on specific projects and themes from the delivery plan as well as in the physical copies of the Your Brent magazine or at any in person event where the climate emergency team has a presence.

We have also developed and established the Brent Environmental Network which is now approaching 1000 members. The network is ultimately proposed to be the key overarching mechanism for sustained and ongoing engagement with communities on tackling the climate and ecological emergency and achieving the council's sustainability aims for the borough. Signed up members receive, at the very least, a monthly e-newsletter which provides information on how individuals can live more sustainably and contribute to tackling the climate emergency, alongside updates about the council's climate emergency programme and a 'community corner' which seeks to shine a light on all of the positive environmental initiatives that are happening in Brent led by brilliant individuals and local organisations. Members also receive specific alerts about local events, issues or new initiatives like grant funding as and when necessary.

We have also established and meet regularly with the Brent Environmental Network Advisory Group not only as a means of providing updates, but also to gather regular community input on how we expand our engagement to all of Brent's communities. As an example of an outcome of this work, we are also hoping to develop new dedicated social media platforms for the Brent Environmental Network as a means of providing even more regular and dedicated information about environmental initiatives in Brent.

We have also committed to providing a comprehensive yearly report to cabinet which set out the progress made against all actions within the yearly delivery plans, plus any key contributing actions which have developed through the course of the year outside the formal delivery plan. This report will also be the opportunity for cabinet to approve future yearly delivery plans.

3) Does the Council believe that any of the targets need to be more ambitious in the light of recent climate developments

Page 41 of the Council's Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy sets out of that this is a long-term strategy but that we will keep under review the need to refresh its aims and objectives in the years to come. Whilst recent weather events around the world and in London, plus the findings of the IPCC report, have been

very troubling, we are one of only twelve London councils to have adopted a carbon neutrality target both for our own operations and for borough wide emissions by 2030. We therefore sincerely feel that we are being as ambitious as we can be with resources at our disposal at the present time. We remain open to ideas and suggestions from residents or communities as to what else the council can do to upscale our plans. We are very clear throughout the strategy document that the council cannot achieve these targets alone and we need all individuals and communities in Brent to play their part and strive for carbon neutrality.

5. Question from Keith Anderson to Councillor Eleanor Southwood, Lead Member for Housing & Welfare Reform

Since ten months, New Council Homes has been pre-consulting on an Infill scheme to add over 80% more flats to the 2019 total on the Kilburn Square Co-op Estate, on the existing footprint; residents and neighbours alike consider that far too big.

Housing officers told the January 21 Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee that Brent “would not want to force homes on anyone” so they had built only “with the support and encouragement of local residents and ward councillors”.

The Council now has a three-pronged rejection of the current scheme: strong resistance from Estate residents, via an independent Tenant and Leaseholder Advisor; a unanimous rejection from the local community, via five Community zoom meetings and 50 feedback forms; and an 850-signature Change.org petition for a much smaller scheme.

Will the Council now have the courage to publish in full the results of the resident and community consultations, and engage with the community to design a much smaller scheme, protecting green space and mature trees and excluding a 17-storey tower right next to a Conservation Area and the polluted A5?

Response:

There is a housing crisis in London, and Brent Council is at the forefront of efforts to help alleviate this. There are over 1,400 families in Brent currently living in temporary accommodation and many more whose home is completely unsuitable. Over the past three years, Brent has been one of the most ambitious council home builders in London and we continue to push forward. We are on track to build 1700 new council homes by 2028, with 400 families set to move in to a new home by the end of this year alone. This means that 1700 families will have a key to a new home, and a new future. But this is not about numbers, this is about building a fairer and more equal Brent.

It is essential that rents for our new homes are kept as low as possible so that they are affordable for our tenants, with our ability to keep rents low affected by the costs of building and the amount of grant we receive. The most cost effective building occurs when the council is able to build on land that it owns. Most of the land that the Council owns that is suitable for residential development is located next to existing Council homes.

Kilburn Square has been identified as a potential site for the infill development of new homes due to a number of factors. Firstly, there are two obsolete buildings that represent excellent opportunities for redevelopment and secondly, there are some parcels of land on Kilburn Square that the council understand would be suitable for additional properties. Finally, the accessible location means that, in London, higher density development at this location is strongly supported.

Our approach at Kilburn Square has involved considerable consultation and engagement with residents with monthly Resident Panel meetings, estate wide questionnaires and in person exhibitions as soon as this was possible after lockdown. Monthly newsletters are delivered to all households and a dedicated Kilburn Square Estate webpage has been established (www.brent.gov.uk/KilburnSquareEstate). Over the summer, Source Partnership, the Independent Tenant and Leaseholder Advisor, carried out extended engagement with Kilburn Square households on the proposed development scheme. Thank you to the residents and local groups who spoke to the team and provided feedback on the current scheme – we received formal responses from 54% of households on Kilburn Square. The report from Source Partnership on the engagement will be published shortly. We'd also like to thank local councillors who have played an important role in articulating residents' concerns and aspirations throughout the process.

We have carefully reviewed the designs and considered your comments and concerns, as well as feedback from Planning, the GLA and the Design Council, all of whom have reviewed and commented on the current scheme, together with comments from the professional team working on the design including the architects, transport consultants and landscape architects.

Each council housing scheme is different and will always be considered within its own specific context. This scheme was designed to optimise a number of outcomes and the feedback we have received has been valuable. The Council is committed to working with existing residents in the development of new homes, balancing this with the needs of people who are waiting for a permanent home.

After careful consideration, we have agreed that the project team will work with the residents of Kilburn Square to amend the scheme design. This responds to the concerns raised by residents around the proposed new tower, the loss of open space and the impact of the new homes on existing services, whilst delivering a significant number of new homes for Brent residents who are currently homeless.

We will therefore be collaborating with residents on revising some elements of the current design. Details of how to get involved will be communicated via the usual channels. Stakeholders and neighbours will be given the opportunity to give their views ahead of submission to planning.