

 Brent	Cabinet 17 October 2022
	Report of the Chief Executive
Draft Borough Plan 2023-2027	

Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	Key Decision
Open or Part/Fully Exempt: (If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)	Open
No. of Appendices:	One Appendix A: Draft Brent Borough Plan 2023-2027
Background Papers:	Brent Borough Plan 2019 - 23
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1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1. To present the draft Borough Plan 2023-27 and confirm upcoming plans to engage with residents, partners, stakeholders and staff on our provisional priorities. The draft plan has been developed with departmental leads and sets out the vision and strategic priorities developed with CMT and Cabinet earlier this year.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. To endorse the draft Borough Plan 2023-27 (Appendix A).

- 2.2. To note plans for widespread public consultation and engagement, as outlined in section 4.
- 2.3. To note plans to develop and publish a supporting evidence base alongside the final Borough Plan.
- 2.4. To note that the Leader will make any final amendments to the Borough Plan before its submission to Full Council following consideration by Scrutiny and outputs from upcoming engagement.

3. Draft Borough Plan 2023-27

- 3.1. The Borough Plan 2019-23 outlines the council's current strategic ambitions. It was updated and refocussed in 2020 to respond to the challenges, needs and events of global events - including the pandemic and the amplification of racial inequality. As we approach 2023 (the end of our previous strategy) and with a new Administration in place, the council is in the process of updating its ambitions and priorities to best support the borough.
- 3.2. The draft Borough Plan 2023-27 (Appendix A) captures our achievements over the last four years and provides the context, narrative and strategic priorities for our new ambitions. The Borough Plan states our provisional commitments and desired outcomes for the next four years.
- 3.3. In April 2022, officers established a set of provisional ideas and identified areas for further exploration in order to shape and inform new strategic priorities. To help this process, we commissioned SMSR research to undertake ten focus groups with specific stakeholders (see in Appendix A) in May. This research intended to help us to understand the needs and priorities of groups and individuals with particular characteristics and life circumstances. The groups were asked to analyse and feedback on the following areas which, overall, were considered by the groups as relatable and important to drive the ambition of a better borough:
 - **Accessibility** – Enabling people with disabilities to participate in all walks of life; access to information; people knowing their rights and entitlements.
 - **Removing barriers – equity in all areas** - Tackling inequalities, including health inequalities. This is about making life better for the most disadvantaged.
 - **Active and connected residents** – Support local community life; neighbourhoods; caring for our communities (through mutual aids and volunteering); working with and listening to our residents and provision of places for people to meet.
 - **A decent standard of living underpinned by secure homes, jobs, and incomes** – Affordable, quality and suitable homes; reducing homelessness; real jobs and real wages; employment support; inclusive growth.

- **A green and sustainable Brent** – Improved accessible green spaces and places to exercise; responding to the climate and ecological emergency; keeping our streets clean. In relation to safety – reducing crime and anti-social behaviour.
- **Digital enablers** – Upskilling residents; providing support and technology; using technology to support innovation (e.g. customer access; health interventions).
- **Leading anchor institutions across the borough** - digital opportunities; social value and ethical procurement; leading local government workforce.
- **Community safety** – A borough where residents feel safe; this includes safeguarding and addressing issues such as modern slavery.

3.4. Following the new Administration being formed in May 2022, data that captures the needs and priorities for Brent (which will be presented in the final evidence base, see section 5) and the findings from the initial engagement were then used as a foundation to establish key areas for improvement, focus and ambitions for the council's service areas.

3.5. However, this is only a draft. To ensure our priorities are right, resonate with communities and partners and are ambitious we will initiate a series of engagement to capture people's voice, priorities and perspectives.

4. **Borough Plan public consultation, engagement and communication**

4.1. Once the draft Borough Plan has been agreed by Cabinet we will undertake a series of engagement with partners, stakeholders and residents to socialise, share and receive feedback on our ambitions.

4.2. Officers have developed the following engagement plan which we are seeking to run in November and January, ahead of finalising the Borough Plan in February. The engagement will be delivered over a period of roughly ten weeks where we will target a range of specific groups, utilising our partnerships, stakeholders and Members. The engagement will also align with plans to consult on the draft budget, this is to help contextualise the draft ambitions within the resources available and to ensure the final ambitions are reflective of our resources. Our Medium Term Financial Strategy will also need to ensure it provides a framework to enable and support the delivery of our ambitions, priorities and any subsequent or existing programmes, considering the significant financial pressures the Council is currently facing.

4.3. The specific details are in the process of being finalised but the provisional joint Borough Plan and Budget engagement plan will seek to:

- Share and amplify the new, proposed strategic ambitions
- Provide information on the council's budget situation and current pressures
- Receive feedback on our ambitions and the council's budget pressures

- Understand and align our ambitions with stakeholder, partner and resident priorities
- 4.4. We are seeking to engage and involve as many people as possible. To help drive this, communications and engagement will be categorised across four key groups: specific communities, stakeholders and partners, general public and internal staff. As outlined below, the provisional plan consists of a wide range of activity, including:
- Drop-in sessions and community events
 - A range of meetings and focus groups in each Brent Connect area
 - Information sessions at libraries and hubs
 - Online information sessions
 - Online survey/ feedback form
 - Multimedia campaign
 - CitizenLab
 - Focus groups with underrepresented groups
 - Meetings with partnership and stakeholder groups and forums
- 4.5. As part of our learning and continuous improvement we will be monitoring levels of participation across all events and sessions and from specific geographical areas, including the response and participation from specific groups and communities (e.g. Somalian community, Asian community etc.).

Group Category	Engagement activity	Objectives	Approximate timeframe
Specific communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drop in sessions at community meetings • Focus Groups • Information Sharing • Website • Social Media • Surveys 	<p>Encourage resident and community participation</p> <p>Understand the needs and priorities of residents, specific groups and local communities</p> <p>Ensure residents views are listened to and voices are captured</p> <p>Share and clearly outline the council's current financial situation and challenges ahead</p>	November to January
Stakeholders and Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information Sharing • Surveys and possible workshop exercises 	<p>Capture stakeholder and partner priorities and feedback</p> <p>Share and clearly outline the council's current fiscal situation and challenges ahead</p> <p>Utilising stakeholder and partner skillset, knowledge and network to</p>	November to January

		help shape and share the Borough Plan priorities	
General public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public meetings across Brent Connects areas Website Social Media Surveys 	<p>Capture residents priorities and feedback</p> <p>Share and clearly outline the council's current financial situation and challenges ahead</p>	November to January
Internal staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Councillors Council staff Internal and digital Platforms Forums, drop in sessions and workshops 	<p>Encourage staff participation</p> <p>Understand the priorities of staff</p> <p>Ensure residents views are listened to and voices are captured</p> <p>Share and clearly outline the council's current financial situation and challenges ahead</p>	November to December

5. Evidence Base

- 5.1. To support and complement the Borough Plan we will develop a supporting evidence base that will capture the key information, data and trends (from publically accessible sources) that clearly describes Brent – its make up, needs, uniqueness and challenges. The datasets in the evidence base will include the 2021 Resident Attitudes Survey, and will underpin our priorities by providing further context on our ambitions so residents can understand the challenges we face.
- 5.2. The intention is to publish the evidence base alongside the Borough Plan, only as an online tool, so it can be used by the Council, including for subsequent strategies and initiatives (e.g. upcoming Equalities Strategy); partners and residents to understand and use when building a picture of the borough.
- 5.3. The evidence base will continue to be developed by capturing and combining publicly accessible information (e.g. upcoming Census 2021 data; government data; NOMIS etc.), including data and insights provided by services and key partners.
- 5.4. At a high level, the evidence base will set out the following:

- A Picture of Brent: Demography, needs and challenges
- What residents have told us: concerns, needs and priorities
- What Brent Council has delivered and achieved
- Possible data projections around we expect to look like in the future

5.5. The evidence base will be categorised by the following provisional themes, which also align with the new strategic priorities:

- Demography – who lives in Brent
- Poverty and income
- Housing and homelessness
- Jobs and skills
- Digital access
- Environment
- Crime and safety
- Resident insights
- Brent businesses
- Children and Young People
- Health and Wellbeing

6. Next steps

6.1. Once agreed, the following next steps will be undertaken:

- The draft Borough Plan will be considered jointly by the Resource and Public Realm and Community Wellbeing Scrutiny Committees at the upcoming Resource and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee meeting on 8 November 2022.
- Once agreed by Cabinet, officers will develop and initiate public consultation and broader engagement, as outlined in section 4. The consultation will be underpinned by a strong communications plan that will be developed and launched for a period of approximately ten weeks, aligned with the duration of the final engagement plan.
- Consultation findings will be considered, and any relevant amendments made to the plan ahead of the Council's final agreement and adoption in February 2023.

7. Legal implications

7.1. Under Part 3 Table 3 of the Constitution, it is the responsibility of the Cabinet to agree Policy Framework documents, including the Borough Plan, for submission to Full Council. Under Part 3 paragraph 7.7 of the Constitution the Leader may notify the Monitoring Officer if he intends to make changes to the allocation of functions or delegation in the Constitution. The Leader may therefore decide to make changes to the draft Borough Plan before its submission to Full Council for approval.

8. Financial implications

- 8.1. The draft Borough Plan highlights the existing financial context, such as the cost of living and post-pandemic recovery.
- 8.2. The Budget report will go to the same Full Council as the Borough Plan. The budget report will set out the overall financial position facing the Council next year highlighting significant risks, issues, and uncertainties. It will also sets out the draft budget proposals that will be consulted on for 2023/24 to deliver a balanced budget.
- 8.3. At the time of reporting, the working assumption is that £18 million worth of savings will need to be found to balance the budget for 2023/24.

9. Equality implications

- 9.1. The Council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:
 - (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
 - (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and
 - (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it, pursuant to s149 Equality Act 2010. This is known as the Public Sector Equality Duty.
- 9.2. The Public Sector Equality Duty covers the following nine protected characteristics: age, disability, marriage and civil partnership, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- 9.3. The purpose of the Duty is to enquire into whether a proposed decision disproportionately affects people with a protected characteristic. In other words, the indirect discriminatory effects of a proposed decision. Due regard is the regard that is appropriate in all the circumstances
- 9.4. There will be equality implications, positive and negative, for many of the activities undertaken under the Borough Plan in the next four years.
- 9.5. All departments implementing changes, through policies or initiatives will complete an Equality Impact Analysis. These will be reviewed by the Equality Officer before submission. In addition, a full EIA will be completed for the Borough Plan in its entirety.
- 9.6. Responses from the public consultation on the plan will form a key of the evidence to support these.

Report sign off:

Lorna Hughes

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Communications