

 Brent	Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee 8 November 2022
	Report from the Director of Engagement, Strategy & Communications
Draft Borough Plan 2023-27	

Wards Affected:	All Wards
Key or Non-Key Decision:	N/A
Open or Part/Fully Exempt:	Open
No. of Appendices:	Three Appendix A Draft Borough Plan 2023 – 27 Appendix B Borough Plan 2023-27 Evidence Pack Appendix C Borough Plan Community Engagement & Communications Plan
Background Papers:	<u>Brent Borough Plan 2019 - 23</u>
Contact Officers:	Lorna Hughes Director, Communities and Strategy Lorna.hughes@brent.gov.uk Tom Pickup Policy, Partnerships and Scrutiny Manager Tom.pickup@brent.gov.uk

1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To present the draft Borough Plan 2023-27, which has been developed with departmental leads and sets out the vision and strategic priorities developed with CMT and Cabinet earlier this year. This includes outlining next steps, particularly around engagement, ahead of finalising early in the New Year.
- 1.2 To invite feedback and comments on the ambitions outlined within draft Borough Plan, including next steps.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Members of the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee are asked to note and comment on the draft Borough Plan 2023 -2027 (Appendix A) and

next steps to inform and consolidate the Borough Plan, including the communications and engagement plan for the draft Borough Plan (Appendix C).

2.2 Following feedback and comments, endorse the draft Borough Plan 2023-27 and next steps ahead of finalisation.

3.0 Draft Borough Plan 2023-27

Background: establishing our new draft priorities

3.1 The council's previous Borough Plan was originally established in 2019 and was set up to guide the organisation until 2023. During its lifetime, the Borough Plan was also updated to respond to a series of significant events, including the impact of Covid-19, the murder of George Floyd and the subsequent amplification of health inequalities and racial inequality. Additionally, over the four years, we have made important progress and achievements including becoming the London Borough of Culture 2020, delivered £16 million in funding across the community, as well as helping 1,000 residents into employment. This progress was delivered against the current priorities:

- 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

3.2 As we are approaching 2023, we are working and living in a different landscape with new emerging issues, in particular the Cost of Living Crisis. To reflect this, we are updating our priorities. By listening to, and building on evidence from residents the council commits to delivering a Borough Plan 2023-27 that focuses on five new strategic priorities (further detail in Appendix A). Evidence and 'voice' is, and continues to be, central to our approach. As such, our draft priorities are shaped and informed by a range of data and engagement, including from our:

Young people	Residents who are carers
Residents with disabilities	Older people
Homeless community	Business community
Key partners e.g. NHS	Community and voluntary sector
Residents in low socio-economic situations	Staff

3.3 To drive our engagement and this process, officers established a set of provisional ideas and identified areas for further exploration in order to shape and inform new strategic priorities. We then commissioned SMSR research to undertake ten focus groups with specific stakeholders in May 2022. 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:

- **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 aid 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 Overall the groups found these themes relatable and important to drive our ambition to establish a better borough. When providing feedback, the following key themes emerged from participants:

1. All attendees were initially asked what is it like to live in (or work) in Brent and there was a wide range of responses across all the groups. Diversity was highlighted as a key positive of living in Brent. For many, this is one of the main reasons they lived or stayed in Brent, stating that the multiculturalism across all areas made the borough feel “*vibrant*” and gave Brent its “*personality and spirit*”.
2. Businesses were very positive about the support they had received from the council in terms of set-up and growth and considered Brent to be a borough that held many opportunities for both businesses and its residents and is a good area to work.
3. There were concerns around inequality mentioned by residents; this was also observed by businesses and other groups.
4. A lack of access and suitable facilities for the disabled was mentioned by several groups, including carers, working parents and by those in the disabled group.
5. Crime was highlighted by all groups, with women in particular feeling unsafe in most parts of Brent. Drugs and Anti Social Behaviour were also mentioned as part of these discussions.

3.5 The engagement and associated exercises between officers and Members resulted in the following new draft strategic priorities, as outlined in Appendix A (this also includes desired outcomes and success measures):

- Prosperity, Pride and Belonging in Brent
- A Cleaner, Greener future
- Respect and Renewal in Brent
- The Best Start in Life
- A Healthier Brent

3.6 Our Borough Plan is driven by evidence. 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. Appendix B provides an overview of key data used and captured, to date, to shape our ambitions. The final evidence base will be available and published alongside the final Borough Plan. 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

Next steps: Refining and consolidating our priorities

Communications and engagement

- 3.7 Our priorities are not final, and we want to ensure that they are correct and truly reflect the needs and ambitions of residents and partners within the borough. To ensure these priorities are right we will engage with communities and partners through a range of methods including partnership events, drop-in sessions at Brent Hubs, focus groups and an online survey. We want as many voices as possible involved in this process to make sure our priorities are as reflective as possible.
- 3.8 From October 2022 – January 2023, the council will carry out engagement activities with residents and services, see Appendix C for further details. Our communications and engagement will target four key groups: specific communities, stakeholders and partners, general public and internal staff. 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.
- 3.9 The key, overarching aims of this communications and engagement process are 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
- 3.10 The success of this process will be measured by participation level across sessions, attendance at public events across the Brent Connects areas and the response from key groups.

Measuring progress and success

- 3.11 As outlined within the draft Borough Plan (see Appendix A) we will seek to measure our success and progress against each priority through several measures.
- 3.12 The ‘What Success Will Look Like’ criteria within the Borough Plan will drive and help build a new performance framework that will set out how the council will manage its performance from the commencement of the new Borough Plan in April 2023. The new framework will ensure focus on delivering improved outcomes by driving improvement throughout the organisation. The performance framework will cover Tier 1 strategies (the new Borough Plan and delivery plan) and Tier 2 strategies (e.g. the Black Community Action Plan, Equality Strategy, Poverty Commission, Climate Emergency Strategy and Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy).
- 3.13 The framework will be developed with a number of principles in mind:
- There should be a clear understanding and link from the Borough Plan, as the outline of strategic ambitions, to front line delivery.
 - The Borough Plan and key strategies/plans are interlinked and cross-referenced.
 - Performance measures must be proportionate and meaningful, and include the use of ‘milestone’ indicators to demonstrate progression.
- 3.14 Once agreed by Cabinet and considered jointly by the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee and the Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee, the following next steps will be taken:
- Officers will initiate public consultation and broader engagement, as outlined in Appendix C. The consultation will be underpinned by a strong communications plan that will be developed and launched for a period of approximately nine weeks, aligned with the duration of the final engagement plan.
 - Consultation and engagement findings and feedback and recommendations from the Committee will be considered, and any relevant amendments made to the plan ahead of the Council's final agreement and adoption in February 2023.

4.0 Financial Implications

- 4.1 The draft Borough Plan highlights the existing financial context, such as the cost of living and post-pandemic recovery.

4.2 At the time of reporting, the working assumption is that £28 million worth of savings will need to be found to balance the budget over the next two years. Proposals to balance the 2023/24 budget will be presented to Cabinet on 14 November. The Medium Term Financial Strategy will need to ensure it provides a framework to enable and support the delivery of the Borough Plan, considering the significant financial pressures the Council is currently facing.

5.0 Legal Implications

5.1 The Borough Plan is one of the Council's Policy Framework documents which is required by the Constitution to be adopted by the full Council. The committee is asked for its views in accordance with Standing Order 20(d).

5.2 Legal advice will be required in respect of the implementation of a number of the actions in the Borough Plan.

6.0 Equality Implications

6.1 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.

6.2 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.

6.3 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

6.4 There will be equality implications, positive and negative, for many of the activities undertaken under the Borough Plan in the next four years.

6.5 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.

6.6 Responses from the public consultation on the plan will form a key of the evidence to support these.

Related Document:
Cabinet Report Draft Borough Plan October 2022

Report sign off:

Lorna Hughes
Director of Engagement, Strategy &
Communications