

	Cabinet 6th February 2023
	Report from Director of Communities
Brent Borough Plan 2023 - 2027	

Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	Key
Open or Part/Fully Exempt: <small>(If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)</small>	Open
No. of Appendices:	Four Appendix A: Borough Plan Engagement and Consultation Findings 2023-27 Appendix 2: Brent Borough Plan 2023 – 27 Appendix 3: Borough Plan evidence base Appendix 4: Equality Impact Assessment
Background Papers:	None
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1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1. To share the findings from the draft Borough Plan consultation and engagement and, reflecting on the findings, the proposed changes and updates for the final Borough Plan.
- 1.2. Additionally, to seek endorsement for the following suite of documents that will be submitted to Full Council:
 - Borough Plan Engagement and Consultation Findings 2023-27 (Appendix A)
 - Brent Borough Plan 2023 - 27 (Appendix B)
 - Borough Plan evidence base (Appendix C)
 - Equality Impact Assessment (Appendix D)

2. Recommendations

2.1. To endorse the following to be progressed to Full Council for finalisation and adoption:

- Borough Plan Engagement and Consultation Findings 2023-27 (Appendix A)
- Brent Borough Plan 2023 – 27 (Appendix B)
- Borough Plan evidence base (Appendix C)
- Equality Impact Assessment (Appendix D)

3. Brent Borough Plan 2023 – 27

3.1 This report shares the final Brent Borough Plan 2023-27 and outlines the process we have undertaken to frame, shape and consolidate our ambitions. The Borough Plan consists of the following core components:

- Our Strategic Priorities – these are the five key overarching themes that will drive all we do as an organisation.
- The Desired Outcomes – these sit underneath each Strategic Priorities and outline the specific issues and areas we want to make an impact. Each desired outcome includes greater detail and commitments within the ‘we will’ sections which outline what we will seek to deliver.
- What Success Will Look – this consists of broad and indicative success measures. These will be expanded further into key performance indicators following the finalisation of the Borough Plan.

3.2 Although the Borough Plan shares our ambitions for the next four years, we also understand the importance of flexibility. The pandemic demonstrated that we must be able to adapt to needs and challenges as they arise. Currently we are operating within the cost of living crisis and the difficult financial context it has created, as outlined within our Budget Strategy 2023/24, therefore we will ensure we are ready to respond to any key changes in circumstance and tailor our priorities accordingly.

4. Consultation and engagement findings

Engagement undertaken

4.1 Between 31 October 2022 – 10 January 2023, the council has been consulting and engaging with residents, partners, stakeholders and specific communities. Our consultation approach focused on sharing and receiving feedback from people around our draft ambitions – essentially, our provisional areas focus were used to capture peoples voice and understand what matters to them. The aim of this consultation phase was to:

- Share and amplify the new, proposed strategic ambitions
- Provide information on the council's current pressures
- Understand and align our ambitions with stakeholder, partner and resident priorities

Event	Attendees/number	Additional Notes
Workshops and focus groups	73	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshops open to residents and specific communities: 30 November and 8 December • Pensioners focus group: 7 December • Partner and stakeholder event: 9 January
Library drop-in sessions	Estimated 105	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kilburn Library Drop-in Session - 8 November • Wembley Hub Drop-in Session - 23 November • Willesden Library Drop-in Session - 8 December
Partners events	Estimated over 350	<p>Includes but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing Department Licensing events • Healthwatch event • Pride of Brent Youth Awards • Gladstone Park Primary School • Brent Multi-faith forum • Local Democracy week event • Brent Connects x5 • VCSE Question Time • Disability Forum • Borough of Sanctuary group • Brent Youth Parliament • Brent Health and Wellbeing Board • Forward Together and other internal staff sessions
Survey responses	417	<p>402 online survey responses 15 physical survey responses</p>

4.2 We aimed to engage and involve as many people as possible. To ensure this, we have undertaken a thorough series of engagement activities across the following key groups: specific communities, stakeholders and partners, general public and internal staff. As outlined in the table below, the engagement has consisted of the following:

- 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
- 4.3 It is estimated that we have reached out to thousands of residents, communities and organisations and received around 900 direct responses, through the online survey and the range of activities as outlined below.

Consultation and engagement findings

- 4.4 The Borough Plan Engagement and Consultation Findings Report (Appendix A) details the breadth of feedback, ideas and concerns raised across the engagement. The key overarching themes are as follows:

- Environment – making Brent cleaner (i.e. tackling flying tipping) and greener (i.e. more and improved parks and open spaces).
- Crime and safety – concerns about safety for young people and women, anti-social behaviour and substance misuse.
- Young People – supporting their skills development and routes to full-time employment.
- Roads and transport – reducing congestion; improving access to, and facilitating more active travel.
- Housing – improving quality and affordability of housing, particularly during the cost of living crisis. Continuing to tackle homelessness, namely rough sleeping.
- Community cohesion and inclusion – harness our diversity and being more proactive to support greater community cohesion.
- Health – improving access to health care and mental health support; addressing health inequalities.
- Local democracy – amplifying the value of, and our work with the VCS; continue to create more opportunities for community participation and for people to influence decisions.
- Businesses and skills – supporting local skills development to get people into higher paid jobs.

- 4.5 In order to categorise the feedback, both through the quantitative and qualitative exercises, the findings report is broken down into three sections:

- **Feeling and responses to the draft priorities.** This section outlines the feedback to the survey questions which aimed to understand respondents feeling and reaction to the draft strategic priorities and core elements within them.
 - Within the residents' responses to draft priorities, 'A Cleaner, Greener Future' was identified as the most important to residents, whilst 'Prosperity, Pride and Belonging in Brent' and 'Respect and Renewal' were viewed less favourably.
- **What did people have to say about Brent?** This section captures the broad range of feedback and views we received from qualitative engagement, such as workshops, focus groups, meetings and drop-in sessions.

- The most frequently occurring themes when analysing the open-ended survey questions were as follows (these themes are similar to the general themes from broader qualitative engagement):
 - Environment
 - Young people
 - Health
 - Roads and transport
 - Local democracy
 - Housing
- **What should Brent look like in 2027?** The section describes the responses received to this question, both to the survey and during qualitative engagement.
 - Many responses wanted the Borough to look safer and cleaner over the next four years, which is represented in the word cloud of resident responses.

5. Updating the Borough Plan 2023 – 27

- 5.1. The Borough Plan captures our achievements over the last four years and provides the context, narrative and strategic priorities for our new ambitions. It is the overarching strategy that states our commitments and desired outcomes moving forward.
- 5.2. In October, Cabinet received the draft Borough Plan which utilised a series of initial engagement to understand the possible key areas of focus for the borough and organisation. However, to ensure our ambitions are right and reflective of what matter to our residents, communities and partners, we wanted to utilise the findings of a comprehensive consultation to shape the strategy. As such, our final Borough Plan 2023-27 is a product that is based on feedback – see Appendix B.
- 5.3. The following areas outline the key changes that have been made to the Borough Plan, following feedback from the consultation:

General comment:

- Include more reference to the importance of partnerships working, including the value of our voluntary and community sector.

Prosperity, Pride and Belonging in Brent (now Prosperity and Stability in Brent)

- Updating Strategic Priority (SP) 1 to “Prosperity and Stability” – this is to reflect feedback that people didn’t align the desired outcomes within this priority with the feeling of ‘pride or belonging’.
- Move ‘Safe, Secure and Decent Housing’ from SP 3 to SP 1 and expanding this to include ambitions around housing quality across Brent. Moving this priority also reflects people’s uncertainty around the meaning of the previous SP 3 (Respect & Renewal).

A Cleaner, Greener Future

- Move the desired outcomes “Empowering our Communities” (now “Enabling our Communities”) and “A Safer Borough” to the new SP 3, which is more clearly aligned with these themes.
- Include desired outcomes “A Sustainable Borough and a Greener Economy” (now “Climate-friendly, Sustainable Borough”) and “Keeping Brent on the Move”, both previously in SP 3.
- Amplify our climate change activity and commitment – this reflects many comments around presenting this more clearly and comprehensively in the Borough Plan.

Respect and Renewal in Brent (now Thriving Communities)

- Updating SP 3 to “Thriving Communities”. This will reflect people’s uncertainty with the previous title ‘Respect and Renewal’ and desired outcomes within this. This also reflects comments to amplify our support and recognition for our diverse communities and voluntary and community sector.
- Add new desired outcomes: “Enabling our Communities” and “A Safer Borough”, as above.
- New commitment (‘we will’) included around community safety. This reflects peoples focus on safety during the consultation - specifically around feeling safe, anti-social behaviour and substance misuse.
- Include greater reference and possible commitments around community cohesion – this reflects the value people have placed on inclusion, community cohesion and integration.

The Best Start in Life

- Only minor updates and no substantial changes. The issues identified in the consultation are already being addressed within this and other strategic priorities.

A Healthier Brent

- More reference to Adult Social Care provision to reflect the level of need and council resource invested into supporting resident who require care support.
- Ambition included around addressing substance misuse through a public health approach – this reflects feedback and concerns around anti-social behaviour and drug and alcohol misuse.

6. Borough Plan Evidence Base

- 6.1. The supporting evidence base for the Borough Plan (Appendix C) captures the key information, data and trends (from publicly accessible sources) that clearly describes Brent – its make-up, needs, uniqueness and challenges. The evidence base also consists of data and key quotes from the engagement and consultation to paint the Brent picture, aligned with the new priorities (‘Quotes’ and ‘Context Setting’). This product also seeks to show the progress and activity (‘What We’ve Done’) by the council to address key challenges for the borough.

- 6.2. Whilst the evidence has been used to drive the development of, and contextualise the Borough Plan, it can also be used as tool that can inform the development of other Council strategies, projects and initiatives, and can be used by partners and residents.

7. Next steps

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

- Socialising the Borough Plan – we will initiate both internal and external engagement to begin sharing our new ambitions. This will include:
 - External:
 - Partnership event(s) to share the ambitions and to have a dialogue about working better together within a challenging financial context.
 - Communications to our communities and across our partnership landscape to share the new ambitions.
 - Internal:
 - All staff sessions.
 - Roadshows to departmental management teams.
 - Communications with across the organisation to share the new ambitions
- Officers will work with departments to agree measures and milestones to be included in the new corporate performance matrix. This will be developed for spring 2023.

8. Legal implications

- 8.1. The Borough Plan is one of the Policy Framework documents which is required by the Constitution to be considered by Cabinet and recommended by Cabinet for adoption by the full Council. Legal advice will be required in respect of the implementation of a number of the actions in the Borough Plan and the Equality Action plan.

9. Financial implications

- 9.1. The draft Borough Plan highlights the existing financial context, i.e., the cost of living and post-pandemic recovery.
- 9.2. The Borough Plan will go to the same Full Council meeting as the budget report. The budget report will set out the overall financial position facing the Council for the next four years and highlight significant risks, issues, and uncertainties. It will also set out the budget proposals for 2023/24 to 2024/25 to deliver a balanced budget.

10. Equality implications

- 10.1. Under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the Council has a duty when exercising their functions to have ‘due regard’ to the need:
- To eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the Act;
 - Advance equality of opportunity; and
 - Foster good relations between those who share a “protected characteristic” and those who do not.
- 10.2. This is the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). The ‘protected characteristics’ are: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.
- 10.3. 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.
- 10.4. The proposals in this report have been subject to a full Equality Impact Assessment and Officers believe that there are no adverse equality implications and assist in advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relationships.
- 10.5. Equality analyses has been conducted concerning the ambitions and it has been considered that there will be positive equality implications for many of the activities undertaken under the Borough Plan in the next four years.
- 10.6. Responses from the public consultation on the plan have shaped the ambitions, priorities and content of the Borough Plan.
- 10.7. Further analysis will be conducted or reviewed as necessary as Plan is implemented

Report sign off:

Lorna Hughes

Director of Communities