

Full Council – 21 November 2022

2nd Labour Group Motion

Keeping Brent on the move: renewing our roads and pavements

This council notes:

- Providing a transport network which supports economic development and works to improve safety, accessibility and inclusivity is fundamental to keeping our borough on the move in the coming years.
- Whether you walk, drive, cycle or take a bus or taxi; maintaining Brent's roads, pavements and infrastructure is vital part in creating a safe place to call home.
- In Brent, in the last Administration our teams repaired or maintained over 128 Kilometres of roads and pavements, enough to get you from the Civic Centre to Dover.
- In this year alone, as part of Brent's "winter resilience" programme of injecting patching of potholes, we have undertaken 2,568 repairs across the borough.
- In London more broadly, as the effects of austerity have compounded, so too has the effect on our public realm. London Councils have stated that our infrastructure is in "managed decline" thanks to years of real terms budget cuts, exacerbated by high inflation. For example, over 80 bridges in London are currently substandard and subject to restrictions owing to a backlog in repairs.
- With the effects of climate change increasing the severity of storms and flooding, our roads, pavements and drainage systems will be overwhelmed more frequently and require greater investment than ever before.
- In the last London Councils "State of the City" report a total backlog for maintenance repairs across all forms of infrastructure in the capital is said to be c. £1.6bn. In Brent, repairing every effected part of our pavements was estimated at the time to be over £60m.
- Brent Council has recently launched a new "Fix my Street" tool which will make it quicker for residents to report roads and pavements in need of repair. At time of submitting this motion 36k reports have been submitted, with 5k fixed in just the last month alone.

This council further notes:

- That the situation has deteriorated further when, in 2018, the government withdrew highway maintenance funding to Transport for London (TfL). This funding had been ring-fenced to resurfacing TfL's Red Routes and the 32 boroughs' principal roads (with Brent Council formerly receiving approximately £900k annually).
- If Brent Council was not in London, adjusted for inflation, we could have expected to receive up to £7 million of funding for our roads from TfL during the intervening period.
- As a result of the significantly reduced funding for our principal road network, the overall condition of these routes has suffered. To address the decline Brent Council has allocated £4m for a Principal Roads programme with £1m of the investment being spent in 2022/23 and a further £2m programmed for 2023/24.
- That unlike the whole of the rest of England, the government provides no funding for the maintenance of highways and pavements in London.
- By way of comparison, the government has committed over £2.7 billion of local highways maintenance outside of London between 2022 and 2025.
- Recent announcements of funding worth £200m from Active Travel England are also unavailable to London boroughs.
- The government has since announced a £380m cut (by more than 50% of its current budget) to the active travel budget in the current spending review, which the Labour Party has estimated could cost more than £2bn in the long term through the impact on public health and wider economy.
- This follows a long line of broken promises from this government on infrastructure, from the Northern Powerhouse Rail to HS2 – now all curtailed.

This Council resolves to:

- (1) Request that the Cabinet Member for Environment, Infrastructure and Climate Action, write to the Secretary of State for Transport demanding that London is treated in the same way as the rest of England when funding the maintenance of our roads, pavements, and infrastructure.
- (2) Request that the Cabinet Member for Environment, Infrastructure and Climate Action, bring forward a report to Cabinet, setting out Brent Council's future capital investment into our roads, pavements, and improvements in our public realm – as part of our manifesto commitment to invest £15 million into a programme of repairs and renewal.

Councillor Teo Benea
Sudbury Ward