

	<p align="center"><b>Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee</b> 30 January 2024</p>
	<p align="center"><b>Report from the Corporate Director of Children and Young People</b></p>
	<p align="center"><b>Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools - Cllr Gwen Grahl</b></p>
<p align="center"><b>Delivery of the 2021-23 Brent Youth Strategy</b></p>	

<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All
<b>Key or Non-Key Decision:</b>	Non-Key decision
<b>Open or Part/Fully Exempt:</b> <small>(If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)</small>	Open
<b>List of Appendices:</b>	Appendix 1 - Brent Youth Strategy 2021-2023: <a href="https://legacy.brent.gov.uk/media/16420126/brent-youth-strategy.pdf?ga=2.240673793.324031284.1705494329-1918829870.1693930795">https://legacy.brent.gov.uk/media/16420126/brent-youth-strategy.pdf?ga=2.240673793.324031284.1705494329-1918829870.1693930795</a> Appendix 2 - Free Text Comments – Brent Youth Survey February 2023 Appendix 3 - Brent Youth Survey results, February 2023
<b>Background Papers:</b>	None
<b>Contact Officer(s):</b> <small>(Name, Title, Contact Details)</small>	Palvinder Kudhail Director, Early Help & Social Care <a href="mailto:Palvinder.Kudhail@brent.gov.uk">Palvinder.Kudhail@brent.gov.uk</a>  Serita Kwofie Head of Early Help <a href="mailto:Serita.kwofie@brent.gov.uk">Serita.kwofie@brent.gov.uk</a>

## 1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report provides an update to the Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee (CWB) on the delivery of performance, outcomes, and opportunities identified since the implementation of the Brent Youth Strategy 2021-2023 and outlines the proposed plan for the Brent Youth Strategy refresh (2024-2027).

## **2.0 Recommendation**

- 2.1 CWB Scrutiny Committee to note and comment on the progress and impact of the current Brent Youth Strategy (2021-2023) and consider the plans to refresh this for the next three-year period.

## **3.0 Detail**

### **3.1 Contribution to Borough Plan Priorities and Strategic Context**

The Borough Plan Strategic Priority 3 is centred around Thriving Communities working with faith leaders, Brent hubs, and other voluntary and community sector partners to engage with underrepresented groups. Strategic Priority 4 is that our babies, children and young people get the Best Start in Life and receive the support they need to do this.

The Brent Youth Strategy (2021-2023) set out 8 focused themes connected to borough plan priorities – **Engagement and Voice, Activities, Skills and Opportunities, Place and Facilities, Wellbeing and Mental Health, Safety, Access and Awareness, and The Environment.** (See the current Brent Youth Strategy document in Appendix 1) Since the development of this strategy, significant progress has been made across the Borough, outlined in section 5.0 below.

The Youth Strategy refresh seeks to evaluate and build on the progress made to support children and young people in Brent thrive into adulthood.

## **4.0 Background**

- 4.1 The Local Authority has a responsibility under section 507b of the Education Act 1996 (as amended by Education and Inspections Act 2006) to secure, so far as reasonably practicable, sufficient educational and recreational activities which are for the improvement of young people's well-being, personal and social development, and sufficient facilities for such activities for young people aged 13 – 19, (or up to 25 for young people with additional needs). There is no requirement to directly fund or deliver services to a particular level (or at all).
- 4.2 In March 2015 the Council agreed to make savings of £900k from the CYP Youth Service budget that resulted in the closure of most youth centres and the activities connected to them the following year. In the context of reduced budgets for non-statutory services and increasing demand within statutory children's services, the council has been reshaping its approach to youth services since this time. This has meant an enhanced focus on work to support the local youth sector, supported primarily by the Young Brent Foundation (YBF), established at the time of funding cuts to the Council's youth services as a means to develop innovative partnerships with the VCS to bring in funding where it was needed.
- 4.3 Activities for young people in the borough are provided by groups, organisations and skilled individuals of all sizes. YBF support the voluntary sector in delivering

youth provision by equipping their 200+ members with training, resources, and financial support. The Local Authority works in partnership with YBF to ensure that there is sustainable youth provision for children and young people.

- 4.4 The drive behind the Brent Youth Strategy (2021-2023) arose from the findings of the August 2020 Brent Poverty Commission, aimed at helping reduce poverty, inequality, and social exclusion across the borough. One of the 40 recommendations was for the Council to bring together a statutory led 'Youth and Community Strategy for Young People' in Brent. The Brent Youth Strategy was aligned with and developed in parallel with the Multi-Agency Early Help Strategy and the Brent SEND Strategy (2021-2025), with Cabinet endorsing the Brent Youth Strategy in September 2021.
- 4.5 In September 2023 there was an update to published statutory guidance for local authorities on services to improve young people's well-being and this will be a significant focus of plans to refresh the Brent Youth Strategy 2024 – 2027. Well-being, as defined in the guidance, relates to physical and mental health and emotional well-being, protection from harm and neglect, education, training and recreation, the contribution made by young people to society, and social and economic well-being. The age-range covered in the guidance is from 13-19 years or up to 24 for those with a disability.
- 4.6 The Brent Youth Strategy is connected to complementary strategies to ensure consistency in approach, such as the Multi-Agency Early Help and SEND strategies as well as seeking to deliver on the aspirations within the Brent Black Community Action Plan 2020 (BCAP). Some of the BCAP actions, including enabling young people to explore and express their aspirations and make them aware of opportunities available to them, naturally dovetail with and support the goals of the Brent Youth Strategy. To date, 600 young people have been supported, with 21 participants on the BCAP Leadership Development Programme.
- 4.7 By refreshing the current Brent Youth Strategy, we seek to align with and inform the above strategies and plans towards a renewed Brent Youth Strategy, reflecting the post-Covid climate and the new focus and priorities of our young people in Brent. This is in conjunction with the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) who we rely on and through whom services are being delivered. Above all, young people will continue to be involved in future planning, promotion, co-design and co-production, and providing assurance that, far from being a lost generation following the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic, they are a priority whose voices are valued, respected and heard, and are integral in building a better future for all in Brent.

## **5.0 Achievements and Progress**

- 5.1 There have been significant achievements and progress made in the borough arising from the implementation of the Brent Youth Strategy. By evaluating these against the 8 themes of the existing strategy, in consultation sessions with colleagues, partner agencies and young people, the intention is to identify what remains a priority and where there are additional priorities to be included

in the Youth Strategy refresh. A summary of the key achievements and progress has been outlined below.

- 5.2 **Wellbeing and Mental Health:** To focus on young people's wellbeing and mental health and to mitigate the impact of the pandemic as outlined in the 2021 Princes Trust National Youth index, and in particular on those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The Youth Justice Board (YJB) funded 'Covid Pathfinder' project (2020-2023) supported young people in Brent significantly impacted by the Covid pandemic, identifying emotional health and wellbeing, education disruption, social isolation and lack of activities as some of the main challenges faced by young people in the borough. Brent Youth and Youth Justice Service worked together with EACH counselling and mentors from Young Brent Foundation (YBF) to support over 400 young people in the three-year period, along with creating a Youth Panel and podcasts, led by the Youth Participation Worker, to provide a platform and a safe space for young people to be heard and for their voices to extend to professionals to improve services for all. Ongoing weekly mentoring and wellbeing support for young people at Roundwood Alternative Education Provision was established as part of the project and continues to be run by a participation worker.

With the formation of Brent Integrated Care Partnership (Brent ICP) in June 2022, stakeholders have worked closely to address health and wellbeing across Brent, with a focus on the emotional health and wellbeing of children and young people. Young people's emotional health is a key priority in 2024 for Brent Health Matters and the refresh of the Youth Strategy will ensure there is cross-referencing to this approach.

- 5.3 **Places and Facilities:** To provide places and facilities for young people to be themselves, develop positive relationships and connect with support when needed. These spaces are vitally important for young people's development and wellbeing and must be inclusive to all, including SEND friendly spaces.

The creation of the eight Brent Family Wellbeing Centres (FWCs) in 2020 enabled young people in Brent to access youth provision in dedicated spaces within their local area, as well as receiving triage care and access to keyworker support and Education, Training and Employment drop-in sessions with the Council's commissioned 16-19 Education, Employment and Training (EET) provider. FWCs have created a welcoming space for young people, showcasing murals and artwork created by children and young people, digital connectivity that has been used to deliver sessions, and more activities for 11+ happening in the centres. All centres have games available, selected by young people. During the school holidays, the DfE Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme is an integral part of the FWC school holiday offer. Vulnerable children receive a free place on a holiday play scheme, a free hot meal each day they attend, and their families have access to free healthy eating / cooking sessions and free food parcels via the Felix project.

Brent Council worked with national charity OnSide to explore opportunities to develop a Youth Zone in Brent. Initial discussions were held in early 2018 and were explored further following Cabinet's endorsement in 2021 to support the development of a Youth Zone if a suitable site could be found and government funding was forthcoming for OnSide to deliver the project, matching the Council's capital funding offer. Unfortunately, despite extensive work undertaken, no suitable sites have been identified to fit with OnSide Youth Zone's requirements and the government's youth centre funding criteria did not include Brent as an area that was eligible for funding.

The Council nevertheless remains committed to supporting the youth sector in Brent with the principles established in the Brent Youth Strategy, which is to support a programme of refurbishment of existing voluntary sector youth facilities as well as converting spaces such as empty buildings or office spaces into modern accommodation that the voluntary sector could use for the benefit of young people across the borough. Plans are progressing, subject to Cabinet approval, to channel the previously earmarked capital funding towards improving the physical fabric of youth provision across a number of separate projects in the borough.

In January 2021, Roundwood Youth Centre became Roundwood School and Community Centre, run by the Beckmead Trust. The school caters for up to 50 children and young people aged 11 to 16 who are subject to fixed term exclusions, or whose needs cannot be met in mainstream provision. The Roundwood Park Campus model was funded by Brent Council's Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy (NCIL) fund. In partnership with Brent Council's Early Help and Prevention Team, Beckmead Trust and Young Brent Foundation, The Roundwood Park Campus has provided local provision for young people in a safe and local environment, led by well-known and respected youth organisations from the borough, over a period of two years. The model has not been without some challenges, including managing communication channels and balancing the priorities of consistent youth provision with the specific needs of the school. Ongoing conversations are taking place between Brent Early Help, YBF and the Beckmead Trust to ensure there continues to be consistent youth provision from the centre, in line with the principles agreed at the establishment of the Roundwood School and Community Centre, providing an anchor for young people to engage with positive activities in safe spaces within their own community.

- 5.4 **Activities:** To provide high quality, inclusive and diverse offers that appeal to young people of all backgrounds to enable them to lead happy and healthy lives.

In line with the strategic approach to support the VCS to secure funding for activities across the borough, YBF successfully bid for over £3 million of funding to youth and community groups over the period of the Brent Youth Strategy 2021-2023 covering a wide range of varying activities.

For those young people who required a more targeted approach, the Council secured support for a Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) funded

'Disproportionality' project (2022-2023) from Brent FWCs, including sports, art, mentoring, emotional health and wellbeing, beauty, music production and photography sessions, co-designed by young people in the community with sessions facilitated by Brent-approved partners of the voluntary sector. This was to support greater inclusion of all young people in the borough. Voluntary sector partners included Sport at the Heart (SatH), Jason Roberts Foundation, Always Furthering and Nurturing Development (AFND), and JKing the Artist. 107 young people were involved in the co-designing and 172 young people across Brent took part in the MOPAC-funded activities over summer 2023 in the Brent FWCs.

A recent bid by the Brent Youth and Youth Justice Service for the National Lottery Million Hours Fund aims to secure additional funding up to £100k to continue these activities until March 2025. The Council's Youth Participation Worker is focused on promoting activities for young people from FWCs. Two of the FWCs now support small groups of young people, under supervision of the Youth Justice Service, to undertake their required work and activities at the centres by assisting with the foodbank deliveries.

In April 2022, 10 young people attended 'youth interview' panel training, co-facilitated by a trained participation worker and a senior representative of the Council's participation group for care experienced young people (CLIA). These panels were a feature for all senior appointments including the Chief Executive, Corporate Director CYP, 2 CYP Directors as well as the Head of Service for LAC and permanency. CLIA members were trained to take part in the tendering process, including evaluating the tenders returned for Targeted Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing provision. Their feedback influenced the final decision for the award of contract to the preferred provider.

- 5.5 **Safety:** Ensuring safety underpins all aspects of young people's day to day experiences to support development and enable healthy behaviours and lives. To demonstrate the value of a public health approach to improving safety.

Brent's Early Help Service has been delivering two separate, targeted and funded programmes - 'Your Choice' (2022-2024) and 'Turnaround' (2021-2024), focusing on emotional health and wellbeing and improvement of outcomes for young people subject to court orders and Out of Court Disposals in the Youth Justice System. The 'Your Choice' programme partnered with Brent Centre for Young People (BCYP) to provide support for young people using Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT). This included training for selected YJS staff in how to incorporate CBT techniques in specialised sessions with their young people using a trauma-informed and child-led approach. This approach complements the work of the embedded CAMHS worker, the NHS Youth Justice Liaison and Diversion Officer, EACH and Substance Misuse Officers (previously known as Westminster Drugs Project) to address young people's health and wellbeing and provide mental health support within the Youth Justice Service. St Giles Trust and Air Network mentors embedded in the YJS team provide vital support to young people involved in, or at risk of, serious youth violence, from referrals made in fortnightly Exploitation, Violence and Vulnerability Panel (EVVP) meetings. A monthly 'No Knives Better Lives'

event is held at the Old Bailey Court and is a mandatory session for all young people arrested for knife-related offences. In these sessions, young people observe powerful presentations from a trauma surgeon, an ex-gang member, and the parent of a teenage victim of knife crime. The young people then engage in the Brent YJS-developed Weapons Awareness Programme, working through this with their YJS Case Managers on a weekly basis for an 8-week period to learn about the law and the dangers of knife crime, and explore alternative strategies to preventing or resolving conflict without violence. 'Unlocking Your Potential' is a monthly programme for up to 10 young people from the YJS cohort to attend motivational sessions with guest speakers from the local area to inspire young people with entrepreneurial skills towards achieving their ambitions. At the most recent session a local author spoke about his journey of growing up on the Chalkhill estate and being involved in the criminal justice system at the age of 17 years. The key message from this workshop was helping young people to see that they are authors of their own story, and they must take ownership rather than allowing someone else to write their stories.

The Brent Youth Strategy refresh will work closely with the Council's Community Safety team to address the ongoing safety needs of children and young people across the borough, overseen by the Safer Brent Partnership.

- 5.6 **Skills and Opportunities:** To provide opportunities for young people to develop life skills and readiness for further education and employment. Fundamental skills towards wellbeing, confidence and personal development with a focus on mitigating the impact of the pandemic on young people achieving their ambitions.

YBF's work with Brent has led to involvement in many projects and relationships developing with a wide variety of voluntary sector youth organisations. The Roundwood Youth Campus (2021-2023), managed by YBF and in partnership with Roundwood School and Community Centre, provides after-school youth provision for young people in the school and the wider community during term times and school holidays. This includes theatre workshops, sports activities, and comic book creative sessions. YBF's 'One Flow One Brent' programme received £744k funding through the MyEnds London Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) programme to support 3,000 young people living on the three largest estates in Brent – Chalkhill, Church End and Stonebridge, over a three-year period running to April 2024. Activities are held for local children in their youth club and events and workshops are organised over the holidays to bring the young people in the communities together, safely, with opportunities to build skills. In collaboration with the Raheem Sterling Foundation, YBF have created 'Brent Goes Global', a three-year volunteer scheme in which 15 young Brent people aged 17-21 fundraise towards travel costs and produce an international social action project with groups of young people in various countries, including Brazil and Jamaica. Three young people known to Brent Youth Justice Service, Early Help and Social Care were selected for the process. YBF have recently confirmed three years of funding via the John Lyons Foundation for the supplementary education sector for enrichment programmes delivered by local

members in Brent. Further development of this opportunity is underway with YBF.

- 5.7 **Engagement and Voice:** For young people to play active roles in influencing decision making and tackling the issues that matter to them. To engage young people in detached outreach work, to connect with more young people and to understand their needs and aspirations. To increase participation and amplify voices that may otherwise not be heard.

Brent Youth Parliament (BYP) meets monthly and represents schools and youth groups for young people aged 10-19, (up to 25 with SEND), with 63 members in 2023 attending nine BYP meetings and five Council meetings, including Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee, Full Council and Budget Task Force. The young people lead on discussions about the issues they want to look at, and then work with Councillors and council officers to create change for the improvement of young people's services in Brent. Young people have the opportunity to gain skills in debating, public speaking and campaigning in a safe, positive environment. BYP members represented young people in Brent locally in council meetings, asking questions about mental health, employment opportunities and support for young people with special educational needs. Three young people have represented Brent nationally as Members of the UK Youth Parliament (MYPs), in which they have spoken in the House of Commons, attended All Party Parliamentary Groups and worked with MYPs from across the UK on the Food for Learning national campaign. BYP has participated in the London Youth Assembly, representing Brent's young people in discussions about the GLA's budget and plans for young people. They have worked on several campaigns, including their own Education for Life campaign for more life skills to be taught at schools and BYC's Food for Learning campaign for universal free school meals. The UK Youth Parliament's Make Your Mark national youth ballot launches on 29th January 2024 and BYP members will be reaching out to all young people in Brent to vote. The top voted issue in Brent will be the focus of BYP's next campaign.

Junior Care in Action (Junior CIA), Care in Action (CIA) and Care Leavers in Action (CLIA) are the Children in Care Council for Brent Council. They work to make sure children and young people in care and care leavers have the chance to be involved in making decisions and in sharing views about the services and support received and report back to and influence the Council's Corporate Parenting Committee.

- 5.8 **The Environment:** Young people deserve a clean and sustainable environment. In 2019 Brent Council declared a Climate and Ecological Emergency and began a ten-year Climate Emergency Strategy for everyone living, working and studying in Brent to contribute towards tackling the climate crisis. This theme aligns the two strategies.

Young People have been engaged in various programmes and events led by the Brent Climate team in response to the climate emergency. Within the period of the Youth Strategy a Climate Showcase was held with students from Kingsbury Green Primary School, St Gregory's Catholic Science College, and



Roe Green Junior School hosting stalls where young people were selling sustainable Christmas decorations, informing members of the public about the climate emergency, showcasing their climate action work, and helping members of the public make Christmas cards with reused materials. Students from St Gregory's Catholic Science College, The Village School and Preston Manor provided entertainment pieces that were related to the climate emergency. The Brent Climate team worked with children and young people on 'What Does Climate Action Mean to You?' This is an artwork competition for 8 winning entries to be featured in the upcoming Brent Schools Climate Action Guide, and the other 203 entries will be collated in a flickbook which will be hosted on the Brent website. The artwork competition received over 200 entries. Over 600 Young people have been reached in schools via assemblies on the importance of climate action.

- 5.9 **Access and Awareness:** To extend the reach of youth provision and connect with Brent young people of all backgrounds. To increase awareness and understand and overcome barriers to access.

The Brent Youth Zone website promotes Brent Youth Parliament, as well as being a platform for Brent young people to access universal information about employment, learning, support and advice and activities to get involved with. The Brent Youth Zone website is also used as an engagement tool for young people by providing online access to youth surveys to gather the voice and views of young people. Additionally, the strong relationship with YBF has provided access to their digital comms to further promote and give young people access to support. Work has been undertaken with secondary schools as another route to reach young people to increase access and further raise awareness. This work has targeted the secondary schools that are geographically closest to the FWCs, with plans to roll out presentations across all secondary schools throughout this academic year. Work is also being done with the Brent Communications team in order to strengthen approaches and explore ways in which young people can be more strongly engaged via social media platforms.

- 5.10 A Brent Youth Survey in line with the 8 themes of the strategy was undertaken in spring 2023 to gain interim insight into the initial impact of the Youth Strategy in the previous year. Over 300 fully completed surveys were submitted. It focused on how involved young people felt in decision-making, their awareness of emotional and wellbeing services, extra-curricular activities, accessible parks and sporting facilities and environmental activities, whether they attended activities in Brent, how prepared they felt in terms of life skills and how safe they felt in the borough. The majority of respondents were positive about their awareness of accessible parks and sporting facilities, although the majority had not attended any activities in Brent since the strategy was launched. This figure may have been impacted by Covid measures and their ongoing impact, leading to the reduction of in-person activities at the time. Positively, the majority of respondents indicated feeling more rather than less safe in Brent. The survey provided helpful information to contribute to the development of the strategy refresh. The data and comments can be reviewed at Appendices 2 and 3.

## **6.0 Planning for the refresh of the Brent Youth Strategy**

- 6.1 There is a planned timeline of activity for a refresh launch by the end of Q2 (2024/25) following Cabinet approval, with activity taking place over the coming months to consult with a wide range of young people, building on the extensive youth engagement that took place when the current strategy was developed and taking into account the February 2023 survey results. As this is a refresh of the existing Youth Strategy, the engagement is not likely to be as extensive as was previously, however the voice of young people will continue to be central to the formation of the strategy, including young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), Looked After Children and young people in alternative education provision.

## **7.0 Governance**

- 7.1 The Youth Provision Strategic Steering Group will continue to help drive, coordinate, and ensure successful implementation of the refreshed strategy and delivery plan. This group will also be responsible for empowering young people from all backgrounds to become actively engaged with the strategy, including co-design and co-delivery opportunities. Strategic oversight and accountability for the strategy sits with the Brent Early Help and Prevention Group – a council-led group, chaired by the Director for Early Help and Social Care, including lead officers for Children and Young People, Public Health, Community Safety and Employment and Skills services, alongside key representatives from partners including the Police, Health and the VCS.

## **8.0 Stakeholder and ward member consultation and engagement**

- 8.1 The Lead Member for Children and Young People will be updated and kept informed with the progress of the refresh of the strategy as part of stakeholder engagement.

## **9.0 Financial Considerations**

- 9.1 There are no financial implications arising as a result of this report, however the achievements and progress to date have been delivered using existing General Fund budgets within the Early Help service and grant funding received from e.g., MOPAC and the YJB. There is also a £2m SCIL capital investment secured to improve the infrastructure of Youth Provision buildings in Brent.

## **10.0 Legal Considerations**

- 10.1 As described in paragraph 4.1 above. The recommendations within the report are within the remit and powers of the local authority as mandated by statute.

## **11.0 Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Considerations**

- 11.1 This report covers services for children and families in need of help and protection including looked after children and care leavers.

## **12.0 Climate Change and Environmental Considerations**

12.1 A section within the Youth Strategy connects young people's aspirations and demands related to climate justice. The Council and partners will continue to prioritise responding to this issue in the refresh of the strategy.

## **13.0 Human Resources/Property Considerations (if appropriate)**

13.1 There are no Human Resources or property issues relevant to this report.

## **14.0 Communication Considerations**

14.1 There are no communication issues relevant to this report.

**Report sign off:**

***Nigel Chapman***  
Corporate Director  
Children and Young People