

	Officer Key Decision
	Report to the Chief Executive
	Leader of the Council
AUTHORITY TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT IN RELATION TO THE WEST LONDON ALLIANCE	

Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	Key Decision
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:	None
Background Papers¹:	N/A
Contact Officer(s): <small>(Name, Title, Contact Details)</small>	Peter Gadsdon Corporate Director, Resident Services 020 8937 6095 peter.gadsdon@brent.gov.uk

1.0 Executive Summary

1.1 This report concerns the proposal to enter into an agreement in relation to the West London Alliance to facilitate its operation and delivery of initiatives across the West London area.

2.0 Recommendation(s)

That the Chief Executive:

2.1 Approves the Council entering into an agreement in relation to the West London Alliance with the six other London boroughs forming the West London Alliance.

¹ [Insert a description of relevant background papers. There is a statutory requirement to include a list of those documents relating to the subject matter on which the report is based and which have been relied on to a material extent in preparing the report. These might include previous reports and records of decisions on the same matter. These papers are open to public inspection, unless they contain exempt or confidential information. It is not necessary to make reference to any published works where it is reasonable to expect that a member of the public could make their own arrangements to get a copy of the document.]

3.0 Detail

Contribution to Borough Plan Priorities & Strategic Context

3.1 The West London Alliance (“WLA”) was established to help deliver initiatives across west London borough boundaries and focussing on the priority areas of: economy and skills, employment support, mobility and transport, housing, health and care, and digital. These priorities align closely with Brent Council’s priorities as set out in the Bough Plan 2023 – 27, in particular:

- Prosperity and Stability in Brent
- Thriving Communities
- The Best Start in Life
- A Healthier Brent

Background

3.2 The West London Alliance (“WLA”) is a public sector partnership formed in 1997 between the seven West London local authorities of Barnet, Brent, Ealing, Hammersmith & Fulham, Harrow, Hillingdon and Hounslow (the “WLA Members”). It was established to help deliver initiatives across west London borough boundaries and focussing on the priority areas detailed at paragraph 3.1.

3.3 In order to deliver these initiatives and operate the WLA, the WLA Members entered into an agreement setting out the overarching objectives of the WLA and outlining the WLA Members’ commitments. This agreement had been in place for some years and the WLA Members considered it was in need of revision.

3.4 Following a full review of the original WLA agreement, a new agreement (the WLA Agreement”) has been drafted.

3.5 As with the previous agreement, the revised WLA Agreement is designed to provide the infrastructure for delivery of iniaitives across West London borough boundaries. This requires an annual financial contribution from each WLA Member, which for the financial year 2023/24 is £35k. This sum covers core costs such as general staffing and admisitrative costs. The WLA Agreement provides for annually reviewing and agreeing the core contributions figure (including any proposed adjustments), through approvals from the WLA Treasurers’ board and final agreement and sign off by the WLA Chief Executives’ board (as part of the annual business planning and budgeting cycle)

3.6 There is is an ability for council’s to join non-core initiatives under the WLA Agreement should they wish. These initiatives generally require additional payment by the WLA Members taking part in the initiative. Election to take part in the initiative and contribute to the cost is agreed through the Director level

programme boards, with oversight from Treasurers' board and the Chief Executives' board.

- 3.7 It should be noted that under the WLA Agreement, one of the WLA Members needs to employ staff on behalf of all of the others. This is usually undertaken by Ealing and to date the majority of WLA staff have been employed by Ealing but the WLA Agreement provides that this can be undertaken by any Member to this Agreement as agreed between the Members. In order to deliver the initiatives and operate the WLA, one of the WLA Members may need to enter into grant agreements and/or contracts on behalf of all the WLA Members.
- 3.8 In carrying out the above, various WLA Members incur costs, risks and liabilities on behalf of all of the WLA Members. As a result, the WLA Agreement sets out how the costs, risks and liabilities incurred in operating the WLA, employing WLA Staff and entering into grant agreements and contracts on behalf of all of the Members are shared between the Members.
- 3.9 The WLA Agreement is expressed to be a continuing agreement. WLA Members are however able to withdraw from the WLA at any time on giving not less than 12 months notice.
- 3.10 Officers have reviewed the contents of the proposed WLA Agreement and consider that the agreement meets the requirements set out in Section 3(a) of the table at paragraph 9.5 of Part 3 of the Constitution.

4.0 Stakeholder and ward member consultation and engagement

- 4.1 Given that the proposed WLA Agreement is merely an updating of a previous agreement for membership of the WLA and does not deviate materially from current arrangements or objectives of the WLA, there has been no specific stakeholder and ward member consultation and engagement.

5.0 Financial Considerations

- 5.1 Brent Council is charged an annual sum as its contribution towards the core running costs of the WLA. In 2023/24 this charge is £35k, this is funded from within central budgets. In addition, the Council has paid towards the costs of supporting various initiatives and programmes undertaken by the WLA. These are individually agreed and funded by the relevant business area to which the programme relates.
- 5.2 The Council is not obliged to take part in various initiatives and programmes and therefore its annual commitment under the WLA Agreement is limited to £35k save where this is revised through the WLA Treasurers' board and final agreement and sign off by the WLA Chief Executives' board.
- 5.3 Funding for the WLA core budget is payable from within the central (revenue) budget. The budget towards additional initiatives and programmes will be

approved on a case-by-case basis from the relevant business area to which each initiative and programme relates.

- 5.4 Over the past 3-years, total payments of £431k have been made in relation towards both core running costs and optional initiatives and programmes.
- 5.5 The cumulative cost arising from the new agreement valued over 4 years, both towards core running costs and also towards optional initiatives and programmes is expected to be over £600k.

6.0 Legal Considerations

- 5.1 The Chief Executive has delegated authority pursuant to paragraph 9.3 and 9.5 of Part 3 of the Constitution to enter into agreements subject to meeting the requirements of Section 3(a) of the table at paragraph 9.5. As detailed in Section 3 of this report, the Agreement meets these requirements.
- 5.2 Legal Services have reviewed the WLA Agreement and can confirm that it is legally permissible for the Council to enter into the proposed WLA Agreement.

7.0 Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Considerations

- 7.1 Pursuant to s149 Equality Act 2010 (the “Public Sector Equality Duty”), the Council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:
 - (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the Act
 - (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,
- 7.2 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.
- 7.3 Having due regard involves the need to enquire into whether and how a proposed decision disproportionately affects people with a protected characteristic and the need to consider taking steps to meet the needs of persons who share a protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it. This includes removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by persons who share a protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic.
- 7.4 There is no prescribed manner in which the council must exercise its public sector equality duty but having an adequate evidence base for its decision is necessary.

7.5 Officers believe that there are no adverse equality implications or adverse health equalities implications in relation to the proposals in this report.

8.0 Climate Change and Environmental Considerations

8.1 It is not considered that there are any direct climate change or environmental considerations arising from the proposals to enter into the agreement with the WLA that impact on the Council's environmental objectives and climate emergency strategy.

9.0 Human Resources/Property Considerations (if appropriate)

9.1 In order to operate the WLA, one of the WLA members employs staff. The WLA Agreement provides that employment of staff can be through any of the members. Traditionally however Ealing Council has employed staff based at Ealing and the WLA Agreement does not propose a change to this arrangement at the current time.

10.0 Communication Considerations

10.1 Given that the WLA Agreement is a continuation of existing arrangements with the WLA, it is not considered that entry into the agreement has any direct communication considerations.

Report sign off:

Peter Gadsdon
Corporate Director, Resident
Services