	Cabinet 15 January 2025
	Report from the Corporate Director, Neighbourhoods & Regeneration
	Lead Member - Leader & Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration, Planning & Growth (Councillor Muhammed Butt)
Neasden Civic Partnership Programme	

Wards Affected:	Dollis Hill
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>	Part Exempt – Appendices 2 & 3 are exempt as they contain the following category of exempt information as specified in Paragraph 3, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, namely: “Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)”
List of Appendices:	Four Appendix 1: Neasden Town Centre Action Plan Appendix 2: (Exempt) NCPP Project Costs Appendix 3: (Exempt) GLA Funding Agreement Appendix 4: NCPP Support Letters
Background Papers:	None
Contact Officer(s): <small>(Name, Title, Contact Details)</small>	Jonathan Kay, Head of Regeneration 020 8937 2348 Jonathan.Kay@brent.gov.uk

1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1. This report provides an update on the Neasden Civic Partnership Programme and seeks Cabinet approval for up to £7.4m Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy capital funding to deliver public realm and highways infrastructure improvements in and around Neasden Town Centre.
- 1.2. Cabinet should note the Neasden Civic Partnership Programme has secured £3.1m capital grant funding from the Greater London Authority, and therefore the total amount of public capital investment under the programme is £10.5m.

2.0 Recommendation(s)

That Cabinet:

- 2.1 Approves up to £7.4m Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy capital funding to deliver public realm and highways infrastructure improvements in and around Neasden Town Centre.
- 2.2 Notes a range of contracts for consultants and contractors will be required to design, plan and develop the proposed public realm, community programming and highways improvements for the Neasden Civic Partnership Programme.
- 2.3. Notes and endorses the proposed installation of a temporary building for community use on top of the council-owned car park next to 237 Neasden Lane, subject to obtaining any planning permission, and any other statutory consents.

3.0 Detail

3.1 Cabinet Member Foreword

- 3.1.1 The Neasden Civic Partnership Programme is an integral part of this council's promise to the residents of Neasden, a promise to provide support in an area that has suffered from longstanding social, economic and climate inequalities for far too long. We know that transformational change awaits around the next corner, with game-changing regeneration to follow that will truly put Neasden back on the map. This report sets out what this council will do to make a legacy we can all be truly proud of.
- 3.1.2 Neasden Town Centre has struggled with the legacy of major highways infrastructure interventions, and more recently in responding to the impacts of the pandemic and cost of living crisis. To support Neasden's growth and vitality, Brent Council designated it as one of our Priority Town Centres and since that time a number of studies have been delivered to identify ways to improve connectivity, accessibility, and safety within the area. Brent Council working with the Mayor of London engaged local residents, businesses and communities to develop the Neasden Town Centre Action Plan, which sets an ambitious vision to put Neasden Town Centre back on the map. Additional investment is now required to unlock Neasden's potential and deliver meaningful change that stands the test of time
- 3.1.3 With the upcoming development planned for the Neasden Stations Growth Area, it is essential that we put the right level of infrastructure in place so that new and existing communities alike can benefit from this regeneration and growth. Infrastructure to improve connectivity, accessibility, safety, community cohesion and to tackle the climate emergency are long welcomed by all. Neasden won't be left behind because of the mistakes made in the past. Brent Council is unashamedly pro-growth, and alongside other councils we've also continued to call for the infrastructure necessary for the West London Orbital railway to stop at Neasden. But as with any change, we must ensure our diverse residents, businesses and communities can participate and share

in the benefits of growth. Young people in particular need more support. Gang activities remain troublingly prevalent in the Neasden area and have impacted residents for far too long. Initiatives that can help young people engage and connect to better opportunities will be fundamental to a brighter future for all of our communities. Where we put back pride in an entire neighbourhood, we hope only things can follow.

3.1.4 The Neasden Civic Partnership Programme will re-establish the socioeconomic and environmental links that have been lost between the historic town centre and its local communities, in order that both existing and new communities will find in Neasden a place where everyone can belong and thrive. This will take time, but this council is determined to see this change through.

3.1.5 The NCPP primarily contributes to the delivery of the following Brent Borough Plan (2023-27) strategic priorities by investing in:

Prosperity and Stability in Brent – critical infrastructure in and around the priority Neasden Town Centre that will benefit existing residents, businesses and communities, as well as support local and wider plans to deliver regeneration and growth, for new homes, jobs and infrastructure.

A Cleaner, Greener Future – sustainable urban drainage, trees and planting to facilitate Neasden Town Centre becoming more sustainable and resilient to the climate emergency. Highways, wayfinding and public realm improvements will encourage more walking and cycling and greater use of public transport.

Thriving Communities – community engagement to in civic partnership co-design and deliver a place-led priority improvements programme in an area characterised by deprivation, including new community and workspace available for activities for diverse communities including local young people.

The NCPP and proposed investment will also contribute to delivery of Brent Council strategies and plans including:

- Brent Local Plan (2019-2041)
- Climate & Ecological Emergency (2021-2030)
- Brent Air Quality Action Plan (2023-2027)
- Flood Risk Management Strategy (2015)
- Inclusive Growth Strategy (2019-2040)
- Long Term Transport Strategy (2015-2035)
- Neasden Stations Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document (2022)
- Neasden Town Centre Placemaking & Sustainability Action Plan (2024)

3.2 Background

Mayor of London Civic Partnership Programme

3.2.1 The Mayor of London Civic Partnership Programme (CPP) is a £12.85m fund and evolution of the Good Growth Fund and High Streets for All programmes. In 2023, LB Brent was one of 12 boroughs selected to join the CPP and receive

stage one funding to develop place-based regeneration strategies, involving local communities and businesses. Target areas were selected where local authority objectives align with Mayoral priorities, to combat long-standing inequalities and support areas undergoing change. CPP strategic objectives are to expand the public realm, strengthen representation and authorship in physical regeneration, and address the climate and ecological emergencies.

- 3.2.2 Over late 2023 and early 2024, officers and consultants engaged with local residents, business and communities, to develop the Neasden Town Centre Placemaking & Sustainability Action Plan. Brent Council Leadership endorsed this strategy as the basis for a bid for Mayor of London CPP Exemplar capital funding. In August 2024, the Mayor of London announced that Neasden in LB Brent was one of 5 London neighbourhoods successful in securing a share of £12.4m stage two funding to transform public space across the capital.

Neasden Civic Partnership Programme

- 3.2.3 Neasden Civic Partnership Programme (NCP) focuses on Neasden Town Centre, located in an area in need of regeneration and designated for growth. The vision is to revitalise Neasden Town Centre and link it better with neighbouring communities and development of the surrounding area.
- 3.2.4 Neasden Town Centre was divided in two by the North Circular Road (NCR) in the 1930s and further cut off from surrounding communities by highway work that widened the NCR and added an underpass and gyratories in the 1970s. Road traffic dominates the area, with junctions in Neasden having the most unfavourable crash statistics in the borough. Air pollution makes Neasden Town Centre one of London's Air Quality Focus Areas, a location where EU annual limits for nitrogen dioxide are exceeded and there is high human exposure. Crime levels in Neasden are high and the town centre is a hotspot for antisocial behaviour. Neasden comprises neighbourhoods classified in the 10% and 20% most deprived areas in London.¹
- 3.2.5 Neasden Town Centre at the same time is located in an area expected to deliver significant new housing to accommodate the borough's growing population; directly north of Neasden Stations Growth Area (NSGA) and Church End Growth Area (CEGA), and south of the Staples Corner Growth Area (SCGA), which the Local Plan and Masterplans² estimate together can deliver 5,500-7,000 new homes. Neasden Town Centre itself sits on the A4088 intensification corridor and, notwithstanding its current poor situation, presents potential for development within its own boundary. Feasibility work identifies opportunity sites, with a maximum development option for c300 new homes. Infrastructure is identified as necessary to support development both within the town centre and across the wider regeneration and growth areas.
- 3.2.6 The NCP is an opportunity to deliver place-based interventions in and around Neasden Town Centre, to address the severance, traffic congestion, air pollution, poor townscape and deprivation that blights the area. The NCP by

¹ Neasden Town Centre Placemaking & Sustainability Action Plan (2024)

² Local Plan (2022), NSGA Masterplan (2022), CEGA Masterplan (2023), SCGA Masterplan (2024)

improving movement, connectivity and public realm will integrate Neasden Town Centre within local and strategic ambitions for regeneration and growth, for the benefit of existing and new communities alike. Informed by public engagement and the Neasden Town Centre Placemaking & Sustainability Action Plan (Appendix 1), developed and refined through the Mayor of London Exemplar funding application and agreement, the NCPP is underpinned by core proposals across three strategic programme areas summarised as follows:

- 1) **Public Realm** – Wayfinding for Neasden Town Centre and route to Neasden Underground Station and Neasden Stations Growth Area, with new signage, lighting, landscaping, public art; Green infrastructure for Neasden Town Centre: sustainable urban drainage system, pocket forest trees and low-level planting.
- 2) **Community Programming** – Meanwhile Lighthouse : demountable two storey metal structure with access stairs and tower signage, internal first floor fit out, for workspace and community uses, installed on top of LBB-owned car park.
- 3) **Eastern Gyrotory** – reconfiguration, new access road, pavement, crossings, lighting and street furniture, to define and open up the gateway to Neasden Town Centre, improve access to The Grange open space, improve the route to Neasden Underground Station and Neasden Stations Growth Area.

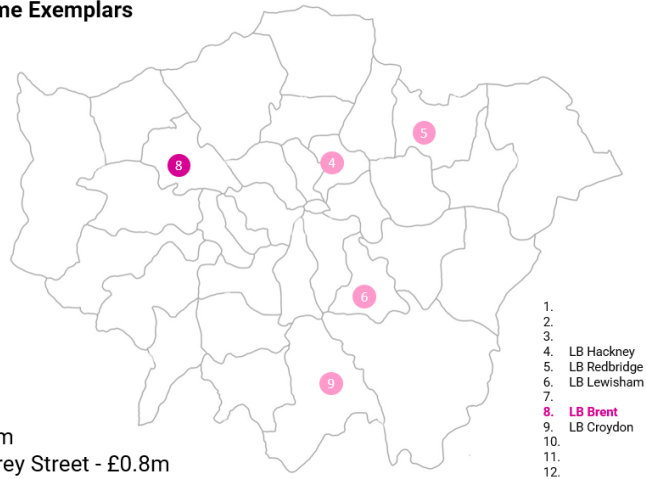
Options Appraisal

3.2.7 Council-commissioned studies³ over the past 10 years have reviewed options for regeneration, transport and movement improvements in and around Neasden Town Centre. The latest Neasden Town Centre Action Plan (2024) provides a place-based vision and identifies a comprehensive programme of 10 proposals, to be delivered over a 5-year period.

3.2.8 Brent Council Leadership, Executive and external partners (see Appendix 4) backed the Mayor of London CPP Exemplar application submitted in May 2024 for 5 core proposals, £4m Exemplar funding and £7.4m LBB match funding. The Mayor of London August 2024 announced 5 of the 12 CPP boroughs were selected to share the £12.4m capital funding to transform public spaces across the capital (see below map).

³ Jan Kattein Architects (2020), WYG (2017), Urban Movement (2016)

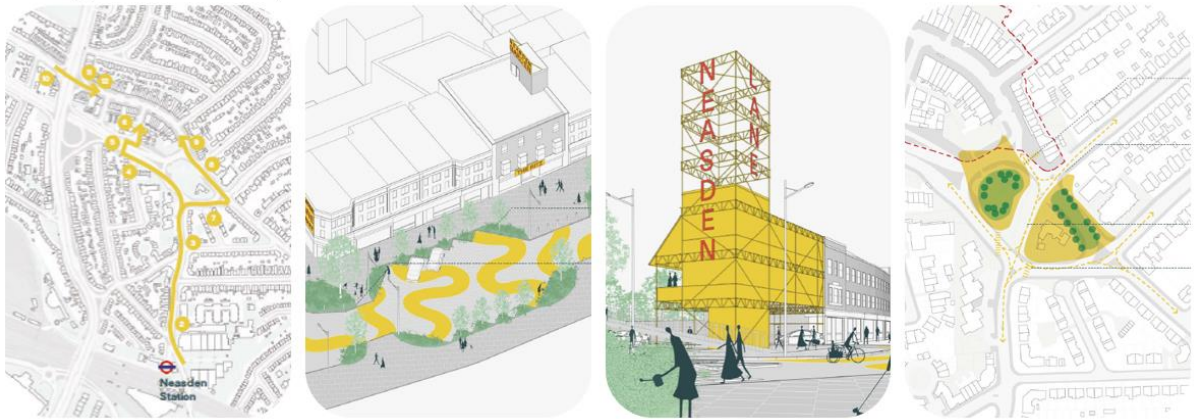
Mayor of London Civic Partnership Programme Exemplars



- **Neasden Town Centre - £3.1m**
- Ilford Arrival - £3m
- Connecting Hoxton - £3m
- Room for Rivers, A Place for People - £2.5m
- North End Quarter Fringes: Amplifying Surrey Street - £0.8m

3.2.9 Brent Council received the highest CPP Exemplar funding allocation, but not the full £4m applied for. The NCPP grant agreement was thus reduced from 5 core proposals to 4 core proposals across the three strategic programme areas:

Stage 2 : Exemplar allocation



- | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------|
| 1a. Public Realm | Wayfinding |
| 1b. Public Realm | Green Infrastructure |
| 2. Community Programming | Meanwhile Lighthouse |
| 3. Highways | Eastern Gyrotory |

4.0 Stakeholder and ward member consultation and engagement

4.1 The Neasden Town Centre Action Plan which informs the NCPP and exemplar projects was subject to intensive public engagement in January/February 2024.

Tools used to engage local stakeholders included :

- Brent Council Have Your Say online platform;
- Collaborating with United Borders and the College of North West London to reach out to a younger demographic;
- Local businesses and displaying project information in their shops;
- Local businesses promoting the work on the local radio station;

- Targeted sessions with key community groups, alongside public events facilitated by Launch It Neasden.

Throughout the month of February 2024 the team managed to reach:

- 150x+ stakeholders via email
- 56x young people from Crest Academy, ages 13-15
- 6x young people from College of North West London, ages 17-18
- 47x high street businesses
- 51x responses collected via the online survey
- 25x+ people attending face to face events in 4x targeted events

4.2 The Leader, Lead Member, London Assembly Member, Ward Members and partners were all briefed in advance of submitting the NCPP Exemplar funding application and support letters are provided at Appendix 4.

4.3 Following the Mayor of London CPP funding announcement in August 2024, the Lead Member and Ward Members were briefed on the NCPP funding allocation and agreed projects. A further stage of public engagement, to communicate progress on the NCPP and listen to local communities' views with respect to community influence, cohesion and belonging in various locations around Neasden, was started in November 2024 and will continue until the end of January 2025.

5.0 Financial Considerations

5.1 NCPP project costs breakdown totalling approx. £10.5m are based upon Neasden Town Centre Action Plan design work by Sanchez Benton architect, supported by Archibald & Trew QS costings, over FY2425, FY2526, FY2627, FY2728, and detailed at (Exempt) Appendix 2, and are summarised as follows:

	GLA	SCIL	TOTAL
1) Public Realm	£0.6m	£1.9m	£2.5m
2) Community Programming	£1.9m	-	£1.9m
3) Eastern Gyratory	£0.6m	£5.5m	£6.1m
	£3.1m	£7.4m	£10.5m

5.2 Direct investment in infrastructure to improve connectivity, accessibility, safety and the quality of public realm is expected will increase footfall and business and employment within Neasden Town Centre, and support regeneration and development of the wider area. Nearby Neasden Stations Growth Area is planned to deliver 2,300 new homes and 28,000sqm new industrial floorspace, which would generate an estimated £4.7m council tax and £3m business rates per annum, plus over £30m of Community Infrastructure Levy receipts.

5.3 The GLA NCPP Exemplar grant agreement funding allocation of £3.1m is capital funding to deliver public realm, community and highways projects, and predicated on match funding of c£7.4m Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy funding, which is subject to Brent Council Cabinet approval.

- 5.4 The GLA Exemplar Funding agreement was signed off 22/11/2024 and in so doing it was confirmed LB Brent is eligible to provide public match funding and such will not contain any funds provided by the GLA. Copy of the GLA Exemplar Funding agreement is provided at (Exempt) Appendix 3.

6.0 Legal Considerations

- 6.1 Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a charge which can be levied by local authorities on new development in their area. It is an important tool for local authorities to use to help them deliver the infrastructure needed to support development in their area. Section 216 of the Planning Act 2008 it to be applied, to supporting development by funding the provision, improvement, replacement, operation or maintenance of infrastructure. The Act provides that “infrastructure” includes—

- (a) roads and other transport facilities,
- (b) flood defences,
- (c) schools and other educational facilities,
- (d) medical facilities,
- (e) sporting and recreational facilities and
- (f) open spaces

- 6.2 The NCPP capital works to the public realm and the eastern gyratory meets the definition of “infrastructure” under (a) roads and other transport facilities (f) open spaces, and are eligible to be funded from SCIL.

- 6.3 The NCPP capital works to the public realm and the eastern gyratory will also importantly support delivery of the Local Plan Neasden Stations Growth Area and support the vitality and viability of the priority Neasden Town Centre.

- 6.4 A range of contracts for consultants and contractors are required to design, plan and develop the proposed public realm, community programming and highways improvements for the NCPP. Such contracts will need to be procured in accordance with the Council’s Contract Standing Orders and Financial Regulations. The majority of the contracts will likely be classed as Low or Medium Value Contracts under Contracts Standing Orders and Chief Officers have delegated powers under paragraph 9.5 of Part 3 of the Constitution to procure and award such contracts.

- 6.5 Where the contracts for the NCPP exceed the relevant threshold for services, supplies and works as set out in the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (and the Procurement Act 2023 following its introduction on 24 February 2024), contracts will need to be procured in accordance with such legislation, to include the requirement to operate a standstill period following award.

7.0 Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Considerations

- 7.1 The Public Sector Equality Duty, as set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, requires the Council, when exercising its functions, to have “due regard”

to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the Act, to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who have a “protected characteristic” and those who do not share that protected characteristic. The protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

- 7.2 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.
- 7.3 The proposals in this report have been subject to screening and officers take the view that there are no adverse equality implications and no adverse health inequalities implications. Rather, officers believe direct investment into NCPP improvements to the public realm, highways and community programming in and around Neasden Town Centre present opportunities for positive impacts upon people with the protected characteristics of age, sex, race and disability. Highways and green infrastructure improvements present potential to mitigate air pollution and its impact on peoples’ health.
- 7.4 Detailed design and planning for NCPP interventions will be subject to equalities impact assessment moving forwards. Procurement of consultants and contractors will require tenderers to explain how they will consider equality, diversity and inclusion in carrying out commissions. Under the GLA NCPP grant funding agreement it is required local residents, businesses, young people and adults from ethnic minorities are engaged in the programme to strengthen communities’ representation and authorship in physical regeneration.

8.0 Climate Change and Environmental Considerations

- 8.1 NCPP investment will pay for green infrastructure to facilitate Neasden Town Centre becoming more sustainable and resilient to the climate emergency, as well as highways, public realm and wayfinding improvements to encourage more active travel and greater use of public transport.
- 8.2 The introduction of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDs) will help to manage increasing risks of surface water flooding as climate change impacts weather patterns. New trees and planting will help to create a barrier against air pollution, cool the streets and contribute to carbon reabsorption.
- 8.3 Highways, public realm and wayfinding improvements, including to the eastern gyratory gateway to Neasden Town Centre and the key route to Neasden Underground Station, will deliver a safer, more inclusive environment to support increased walking and cycling and greater use of public transport.

9.0 Human Resources/Property Considerations (if appropriate)

- 9.1 A new Regeneration Project Manager dedicated to delivery of the NCPP on a 2-year fixed term basis started in December 2024, funded wholly from the GLA NCPP Exemplar grant funding.
- 9.2 NCPP Exemplar projects require satisfaction of the priority to deliver new community space, with installation of a temporary building on top of the council-owned car park next to 237 Neasden Lane prioritised to that end.

10.0 Communication Considerations

- 10.1 Greater London Authority and Brent Council communications teams liaised regarding the NCPP funding announcement in August 2024, and will continue to liaise regarding any future NCPP communications.

Report sign off:

Alice Lester

Corporate Director, Neighbourhoods & Regeneration