

	Cabinet 17 November 2025
	Report from the Corporate Director of Neighbourhoods and Regeneration
	Lead Member – Cabinet Member for Climate Action & Community Power (Councillor Jake Rubin)
Approval to Proceed with Alternative Heat Supply for Willesden Green Library- Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) Phase 4	
Wards Affected:	Willesden Green
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
List of Appendices:	One Appendix 1: Equality Impact Assessment
Background Papers:	N/A
Contact Officer(s): <small>(Name, Title, Contact Details)</small>	Neil Luscombe, Energy Manager 0208 937 5027 neil.luscombe@brent.gov.uk Jakob Kupferberg, Energy Projects Manager 020 8937 1313 jakob.kupferberg@brent.gov.uk Tanveer Ghani, Director of Property & Assets 020 8937 1722 Tanveer.Ghani@brent.gov.uk

1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1. This report considers the recommendation for the installation of an alternative, low carbon heating solution at Willesden Green Library and other energy conservation measures following Brent Council's successful bid for the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme Phase 4 (PSDS P4). The project aims to deliver significant carbon savings, improve energy efficiency, and reduce operational costs.

2.0 Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 That Cabinet approves a total capital budget of £917,628, which includes £807,000 for installation, £111,000 contingency, and staff capitalisation costs.
- 2.2 Cabinet notes that the total capital budget of £917,628 will be sourced from £667,628 Salix grant and £250,000 from the Carbon Offset Fund. The budget will be split across delivery of the following two projects: Willesden Green Library and Willesden New Cemetery.
- 2.3 Cabinet acknowledges the findings of an Equality Impact Assessment (at Appendix 1) regarding the installation of an alternative heat supply at Willesden Green Library that includes the results of a public consultation undertaken.
- 2.4 Cabinet notes the grant spend timeline stipulated by Salix and its implication on the delivery of the project, particularly when it comes to the requirement to spend all grant funding by March 31st, 2026, as set out in points 5.3 – 5.4.
- 2.5 Cabinet notes the significant financial, energy and carbon savings that the delivery of an alternative heat supply at Willesden Green Library will provide as set out in point 3.7.

3.0 Detail

Cabinet Member Foreword

- 3.1 This report sets out proposals to proceed with the installation of a new low carbon heating system at Willesden Green Library. The existing heating arrangement is not fit for purpose and has presented ongoing operational challenges. The proposed works will deliver a reliable and energy-efficient solution through the installation of an Air Source Heat Pump, supported by other energy-saving measures.
- 3.2 These proposals align with the Council's strategic priorities as set out in the Borough Plan 2023 - 2027, notably:
 - **A Cleaner, Greener Future:** delivering a low-carbon, energy-efficient building with active travel facilities.

Background

- 3.3 Linden Homes and Galliford Try (contractor) achieved Practical Completion in June 2015 for the design and construction of the new Willesden Cultural Centre, which includes a new library and 95 residential units. Under the development agreement between the Council and Linden Homes, heating and hot water were to be provided via the Energy Centre. The Council attempted to formalise a heat agreement on two occasions, but negotiations with the Right to Manage (RTM) company, Newman Close, did not result in a resolution.

- 3.4 The RTM has since indicated that Brent Council should explore alternative heating solutions for Willesden Green Library and has expressed a willingness to support the Council during any transition period for a new system.
- 3.5 To this end, Brent Council sought a separate route for the provision of heat at Willesden Green Library. In November 2024, the Council's Energy Team therefore proceeded to apply for PSDS P4 to fund energy efficiency works at two of the Council's corporate sites, one of them being Willesden Green Library of which the primary measure is an alternative heat supply.
- 3.6 On 21st March 2025, it was confirmed that Brent was successful with its bid for PSDS P4. In total, £668K of government grant-funding was secured to fund works at the two sites, which is being match-funded by a minimum of £139K (up to a maximum of £250K) through Brent's Carbon Offset Fund. The majority of the total project value (£807K excl. contingency) will go towards an Air Source Heat Pump at the library (£715K). The summary of measures across the two sites are:
- **Willesden Green Library:** Air Source Heat Pump, Building Management System (BMS), LED lighting.
 - **Willesden New Cemetery:** Insulation measures, Air Source Heat Pump, Point of Use water heaters.
- 3.7 Installing an Air Source Heat Pump (ASHP) at Willesden Green Library will deliver three key benefits:
- a) Internalise heat production and management, enabling the Council to directly oversee energy operations at the site and ensure long-term reliability and control.
 - b) A reduction in energy usage as well as significant reductions in maintenance and service charge costs.
 - c) Support Brent's decarbonisation goals, contributing to the Council's 2030 Net Zero target. The proposed measures are expected to reduce carbon emissions by approximately 2,708 tonnes over their lifetime, representing a 5% annual reduction across the corporate estate.
- 3.8 While the project offers substantial benefits in terms of energy efficiency, financial savings, and carbon reduction, officers undertook consultation to give residents an opportunity to express any concerns they might have about the project.
- 3.9 To ensure meaningful engagement, the Energy Team issued letters to all 95 flats at Newman Close, inviting residents to attend two in-person public consultation meetings held on Saturday 9th August and Thursday 21st August. In parallel, an online consultation was launched, and residents were invited to participate via a follow-up letter.

- 3.10 Following the conclusion of the consultation on 20th September 2025, the initial EIA submitted in May 2025 has been updated to reflect the input and feedback from residents. The outcome of the consultation is that most responses to the consultation (80%) are in favour of the Council's departure from the Energy Centre to set up its own heating source as proposed by Brent's successful bid for PSDS P4. One respondent mentioned they prefer the Council stay connected to the Energy Centre as they are concerned it will affect their bills.
- 3.11 In order to mitigate these concerns, the Council has referred residents to its 'Brent Well and Warm' service which provides free energy savings advice (<https://london.greendoctors.org.uk/mailto:GreenDoctorsLDN@groundwork.org.uk>), as well as the 'Heat Network Efficiency Scheme (HNES)' which can help fund heat network optimisation studies and secure capital funding for the improvement measures identified, which in turn would help improve efficiency and lower bills at the Energy Centre.
- 3.12 Following the outcome of the consultation and the reasons outlined above, officers' recommendation is to proceed with the project and deliver the works at both sites.

4.0 Stakeholder and ward member consultation and engagement

- 4.1 A member briefing session was undertaken by officers on 7th July 2025 to inform them of the project proposals, the success of the PSDS P4 bid and the intention to engage residents prior to Cabinet.
- 4.2 Residents have been consulted via a formal public consultation. The Energy Team issued letters to all 95 flats at Newman Close, inviting residents to attend two in-person public consultation meetings held on Saturday 9 August and Thursday 21 August. In parallel, an online consultation was launched, and residents were invited to participate via a follow-up letter.

5.0 Financial Considerations

- 5.1 The capital budget request is £917,628. This covers £742,016 for the heat pump at Willesden Green Library including fitting costs plus £64,523 for insulation measures at Willesden New Cemetery. There is £111,000 contingency in the budget that will also cover staff capitalisation costs.
- 5.2 The budget will be funded by £667,628 Salix grant and £250,000 contribution from Brent's Carbon Offset Fund. Both these funding sources have appropriate approvals in place.
- 5.3 A key condition of the grant is that the grant funding from Salix is spent by 31st March 2026. Failure to meet this condition will result in any unspent grant having to be forfeited. Brent Council officers are currently expecting an updated Grant Offer letter to reflect a delayed completion of the project which has been accommodated by Salix, meaning as much of the grant funding is committed to being spent by the 31st March 2026 as possible, after which the remaining costs must be covered by the £250k from the Carbon Offset Fund.

- 5.4 Given the tight timescales until year end and that project completion is not expected until June 2026, there is a risk that Brent will not be able to spend the grant in line with Salix's conditions. Once approval is obtained, officers will work with consultants to progress the project as quickly as possible including obtaining appropriate planning permission.

Item	Target Completion Date
Investment Grade Proposal (Construction)	5 th December 2025
Construction Contract Agreement	19 th January 2026
Procurement of all parts complete	23 rd March 2026
Grant invoicing deadline	31 st March 2026
Completion on-site / commissioning	19 th June 2026

6.0 Legal Considerations

- 6.1 The Council has successfully secured £668,000 in grant funding under Phase 4 of the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) for energy efficiency improvements at two corporate sites. This funding is subject to a match funding requirement and compliance with the grant conditions. In accordance with the Council's Constitution, including its Financial Regulations and Contract Standing Orders, all expenditure and delivery of works must be undertaken in accordance with the terms of the grant and the Council's approved procurement procedures. Failure to comply may result in the requirement to repay the funding and could expose the Council to reputational and financial risk.
- 6.2 As referenced in paragraph 3.2.3, the Council has received correspondence from the entity managing the existing heat supply infrastructure at Willesden Green Library, indicating that alternative arrangements should be considered for future heat provision. The Council is not the contracting party for the current heat supply and has no formal agreement in place. In light of this, and in accordance with its general powers under the Constitution to manage and secure energy provision for its assets, the Council is entitled to pursue alternative heating solutions to ensure continuity of service and value for money.
- 6.3 In considering whether to approve the use of grant funding for the installation of a new Air Source Heat Pump to provide heating and hot water services at Willesden Green Library, Cabinet must take into account the Equality Impact Assessment provided at Appendix 1. This assessment evaluates the potential impact of the proposed decision on library users, staff, and residents of the adjacent flats who currently share the existing heat source with the library. This is in line with the Council's Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010.
- 6.4 Subject to Cabinet approval, officers are authorised to proceed with a variation to an existing contract to enable delivery of the proposed works. This approach is permitted under Regulation 72 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015,

which allows for modification of contracts without a new procurement procedure under certain conditions, including where the variation does not alter the overall nature of the contract and remains within the financial thresholds. Officers will ensure that the variation is compliant with both PCR 2015 and the Council's Contract Standing Orders, and that the grant funding is safeguarded through timely implementation.

7.0 Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Considerations

- 7.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been conducted to consider the impact on protected characteristics of the local community. This assessment considers a public consultation which has been held to understand any equalities impacts that may arise as a result of the proposed works. The EIA has concluded that 1) there will be minimal impact on the users of the library and its staff as the vast majority of the works will not impact normal working hours 2) the majority (80%) of respondents to the consultation (4 out of 5 responses) have indicated that they prefer the Council leave the energy centre and set up its own alternative heating source.
- 7.2 No specific equality concerns have been raised through the consultation, and no disproportionate impacts on protected groups have been identified as a result of this proposal. As a matter of courtesy to the residents of Newman Close, recommendations have been made to residents and the RTM regarding free energy savings advice and avenues to explore external funding to help increase the energy efficiency of its heat network in order to lower any operational inefficiencies or cost rises.

8.0 Climate Change and Environmental Considerations

- 8.1 The project is in line with the Council's environmental objectives and climate emergency strategy. It is estimate that the work package of PSDS P4 will save the council 2,708 tonnes CO2 equivalent over a lifetime.

9.0 Human Resources/Property Considerations (if appropriate)

- 9.1 It is anticipated that the installation of the Air Source Heat Pump at Willesden Green Library may result in some temporary physical disruption on site. From a property and operational standpoint, appropriate planning is underway to minimise any impact on staff and service users. Consultations are currently taking place with relevant environmental and planning officers to ensure that all necessary permissions and mitigations are in place.

10.0 Communication Considerations

- 10.1 A carefully considered communication strategy will be required to:
- Accommodate the works and transfer of heat supply itself, and
 - For continued engagement with residents connected to the Energy Centre, as well as users and staff of the library.

Report sign off:

Jehan Weerasinghe

Corporate Director of Neighbourhoods and Regeneration