

	Delegated decision by Corporate Director Neighbourhoods and Regeneration
	Report from the Director Inclusive Regeneration and Climate Resilience
	Lead Member – Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning & Property (Councillor Teo Benea)
Re-Designation of Harlesden Neighbourhood Forum	

Wards Affected:	Harlesden and Kensal Green, Roundwood and Stonebridge.
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.
No. of Appendices:	<p>Four</p> <p>Appendix A: Neighbourhood Forum Area Requirements</p> <p>Appendix B: Harlesden Neighbourhood Forum Application</p> <p>Appendix C: Harlesden Neighbourhood Forum membership spread and demographic assessment</p> <p>Appendix D: Responses received from public consultation</p>
Background Papers:	None
Contact Officer(s):	<p>Jordan Henderson, Planning Policy Officer, Planning Policy</p> <p>020 8937 3819</p> <p>jordan.henderson@brent.gov.uk</p>

1.0 Purpose of the Report

The purpose of the report is to consider re-designating the Harlesden Neighbourhood Forum following the conclusion of a statutory consultation.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Corporate Director of Neighbourhoods and Regeneration and Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning and Property consider the representations received and responses as set out in Appendix D.
- 2.2 That the Corporate Director of Neighbourhoods and Regeneration in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning and Property approves the re-designation of the Harlesden Neighbourhood Forum.

3.0 Detail

3.1 Contribution to Borough Plan Priorities & Strategic Context

- 3.1.1 The Localism Act gives statutory powers to local people to form neighbourhood forums and develop neighbourhood plans, which have statutory weight in the planning process. Whilst supporting these activities speak to the whole of the Borough Plan 2023-2027 it specifically aligns with Strategic Priority 3, which seeks to promote “Thriving Communities”. Neighbourhood Plans must be in conformity with the Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework, which promote sustainable development. In this respect the activities associated with neighbourhood planning also align with Strategic Priority 2 (A Cleaner, Greener future) and Strategic Priority 5 (A Healthier Brent).

3.2 Background

- 3.2.1 A steering group was set up in October 2014 to establish a Harlesden Neighbourhood Forum and draw up the Neighbourhood Area by consulting on a boundary and a constitution for the Forum. The Forum was formally launched in April 2015. The designation of Harlesden Neighbourhood Forum (HNF) and Neighbourhood Area was approved by Brent Council in August 2015 and by the Old Oak and Park Royal Development Corporation (OPDC) in November 2015.
- 3.2.2 The HNF then went on to produce the Harlesden Neighbourhood Plan (HNP) (2019). This was subject to a referendum of the area’s population on 30th May 2019, with 90% of those who turned out to vote, voting in favour of the Plan, which was subsequently adopted. The Plan follows the same boundary as the Neighbourhood Forum Area.
- 3.2.3 The HNP constitutes part of the Brent Statutory Development Plan and is a material consideration when making decisions on planning applications within the Neighbourhood Area. The HNF are a community group who have developed, and advocate for, the implementation of the adopted HNP.
- 3.2.4 The designation of a Neighbourhood Forum ceases to have effect 5 years from it being made (S61F Town and Country Planning Act 1990). The NHF neighbourhood forum status will expire on 7th April 2026. As a result, on 24th September 2025 the HNF applied for re-designation as a Neighbourhood Forum.

- 3.2.5 The application has met the statutory requirements, as shown within Appendix A of this report. This generally includes the Forum's written constitution, a map of the proposed Neighbourhood Area, a statement of its intentions, how they have sought to be inclusive, and that the Forum is reflective of the local populace and has the required number of members. A statement which demonstrates how the applicants have met these requirements is included in Appendix B.
- 3.2.6 The proposed written constitution is detailed and is reflective of their Charitable Incorporated Organisation Constitution. The objectives of the Forum have been carried forward from their previous application and are reflective of the general thrust of the adopted HNP, being to promote the social, economic and environmental well-being of the area. The Forum also has 338 members, far exceeding the statutory requirement for a minimum of 21 – drawn from a wide area, and generally representative of the area and characteristics of the population. See Appendix C for a detailed assessment of their compliance with this requirement.
- 3.2.7 In 2024, the Forum applied to amend their designated forum boundary. This was approved on 12/08/2024. The Neighbourhood Area proposed reflects this newly adopted boundary. This does not overlap with any other existing or proposed Neighbourhood Areas within the Borough. Appendix B includes a statement outlining why this boundary is appropriate. The Area occupies land in the Local Planning Authorities of both LB Brent, and the OPDC. The OPDC therefore must determine the re-designation of the proposed Forum also, undertaking the same statutory process as the LB Brent.
- 3.2.8 The Forum have consulted on their application with the local community. This was done to ensure that the proposed boundary is appropriate, and that the objectives and constitution continue to reflect the values of the community. It also serves to raise awareness of the Forum's proposed activities, and increase the number and diversity of its membership, enabling it to be more representative of the proposed area. This has been demonstrated in their statement in Appendix B and in the officer assessment in Appendix C.

Consultation Process

- 3.2.9 The Council ran a consultation for 8 weeks from 24th November 2025 to 19th January 2026. This was longer than the statutory minimum of 6 weeks due to the festive period. Public site notices were placed across the proposed Neighbourhood Area, with documents made available at both Wembley and Harlesden libraries. It advertised the consultation on its website and sent notifications to statutory consultees and those on the Local Plan consultation list.

Representations

- 3.2.10 14 responses were received in response to the consultation; four from residents, five from statutory consultees, four from local community

organisations, and one from a local councillor. None of the statutory consultees had any comments to make. All responses apart from one were neutral or positive. Harlesden Mutual Aid said they did not support the redesignation, but did not elaborate, providing no additional comments. Of those who commented and were supportive (eight), only two provided any detailed commentary. These included the North Brent Community Garden, whom have had positive dealings with HNF and from Cllr. Matt Kelcher, who was also positive of the redesignation. The representations received, and the officer comments, are included within Appendix D.

Next steps

3.2.11 Due to the proposed Neighbourhood Area boundary being within more than one Local Planning Authority (LB Brent & OPDC), the Council has 20 weeks from the date the application was first made public to decide. The deadline for decision is therefore 13th April 2026.

3.2.12 In deciding, the Council must consider whether the application for redesignation as a Neighbourhood Forum satisfies the legal requirements set out within Appendix A.

3.2.13 The previous HNF were considered by the Council to be positive, and who share the Council's wider aspirations for the area. HNF produced the HNP and sought to ensure its implementation in the furtherance of local social, economic and environmental goals.

3.2.15 As stated within paragraph 3.2.5, it is considered that the applicant has met these statutory requirements, and it is therefore recommended that the proposed Neighbourhood Forum is redesignated.

3.2.16 Once a decision is made, it will need to be made publicly available as soon as is practicable on the Council's webpage. If the decision is made to refuse the application, a statement will need to be produced which outlines the reasons for refusal.

4.0 Options

4.1 There are two options to consider for this decision:

- 1) To approve the redesignation of the Harlesden Neighbourhood Forum; or
- 2) Refuse to redesignate the Harlesden Neighbourhood Forum

4.2 The recommendation is to approve the redesignation of the Neighbourhood Forum for the reasons given above.

5.0 Financial Considerations

5.1 The Council has a legal responsibility to assist the Neighbourhood Forum in the production and implementation of a Neighbourhood Plan. The HNF are in the

early stages of reviewing their Neighbourhood Plan, with an aim to adopt a new plan within the newly extended forum period. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) stopped funding the national neighbourhood planning support programme from 2025 onwards, following a government spending review. Locality, a not-for-profit organisation, which delivered the grants and technical support on behalf of MHCLG, confirmed on 12 June 2025 that no new grant or technical support applications will be accepted. The forum will therefore have to raise funds themselves to produce and adopt their new Neighbourhood Plan. The Council may be able to assist to some extent with Neighbourhood CIL, but this has not been confirmed. This is also likely to generate some additional workload for officers.

6.0 Legal Considerations

6.1 The process for Neighbourhood Forum and Neighbourhood Area designation is set out within the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended). The process undertaken here has been consistent with these prescribed regulations.

7.0 Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Considerations

7.1 The Equality Act 2010 introduced a new public sector equality duty under section 149. It covers the following nine protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. The Council must, in exercising its functions, have “due regard” to the need to:

1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
2. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
3. Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

7.2 The production of the HNF application has involved wide consultation of the local area, including for those who live, work and visit the area. The application demonstrates how it has achieved this, and how participants and members are derived from a wide range of backgrounds as they relate to the above protected characteristics, and are broadly representative of the proposed Neighbourhood Area, as has been assessed in Appendix C.

7.3 In achieving diversity, the forum represents the objectives of the community as a whole, allowing the broader community to have a say in specific local matters which are likely to impact them directly. This provides a valuable resource for the Council in gauging the needs and wants of the local community, and how its actions are reflective of these.

7.4 Brent is one of the most ethnically diverse Local Planning Authorities in the UK, and the proposed HNF area has a high proportion of Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups. The area also experiences high levels of deprivation, being

inhabited by some of Brent's most vulnerable residents. The forum will therefore serve as a platform for improving the well-being of these most disadvantaged individuals, uplifting them and improving their access to opportunities.

8.0 Consultation with Ward Members and Stakeholders

8.1 The Local Ward members were notified upon receiving the application for re-designation of the HNF. They were also consulted by the HNF themselves. Membership of the HNF is also open to local ward Councillors. The Councillors are broadly supportive of the HNF, its previous work, and its re-designation going forward.

8.2 In terms of awareness raising for the consultation, public site notices were placed across the proposed Neighbourhood Area, with documents made available at both Wembley and Harlesden libraries. It advertised the consultation on its website and sent notifications to statutory consultees and those on the Local Plan consultation list

9.0 Climate Change and Environmental Considerations

9.1 The Harlesden Neighbourhood Plan, which has been authored by the Harlesden Neighbourhood Forum and examined by an independent examiner, is in general conformity with the Local Plan, which plans for sustainable development. Any subsequent plan will also be expected to be in conformity with the Local Plan.

10.0 Human Resource / Property Considerations

10.1 There are statutory duties to support neighbourhood forums. This is factored into officer's existing workstreams.

11.0 Communication Considerations

11.1 Supporting neighbourhood forums are a good example of promoting thriving communities as outlined in the Borough plan. Whilst the re-designation itself is not considered to warrant a case for significant external communication, subsequent neighbourhood plans that may be developed by the forum should be supported.

Report sign off:

Jehan Weerasinghe

Corporate Director of Neighbourhoods & Regeneration.