

	Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee 16 September 2026
	Report from the Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Community Development
	Lead Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Employment and Climate Action - Cllr Jake Rubin
Brent Youth Strategy (2025-2028) Delivery Update	

Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	Non-Key Decision
Open or Part/Fully Exempt: (If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)	Open
List of Appendices:	0
Background Papers:	Brent Youth Strategy 2025 - 2028
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1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report provides the Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee with an update on delivery of the Brent Youth Strategy 2025–2028 following its launch in April 2025. It summarises progress made during the first year, highlights early impact, identifies areas requiring further focus, and sets out the priorities and next steps for year two.
- 1.2 The Brent Youth Strategy 2025-2028 provides a partnership-led, borough-wide framework for improving outcomes for children and young people by strengthening participation, access to positive activities, prevention and early intervention and targeted support for those facing the greatest barriers. The report enables Members to scrutinise progress against agreed priorities and to consider whether activity remains sufficiently focused on improving outcomes and reducing inequalities.
- 1.3 Overall, year one has established important foundations for delivery, including strengthened governance through the Brent Youth Strategy Delivery Group,

improved coordination across services and partners, and a clearer focus on youth voice. Continued scrutiny will be important to ensure that delivery is measurable, evidence-led and responsive to the lived experiences of young people across Brent.

2. Recommendations

The Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee is asked to:

- 2.1 Note the progress made in the first year of implementation of the Brent Youth Strategy 2025–2028 and the role of the Brent Youth Strategy Delivery Group in coordinating delivery across Council services and partner organisations.
- 2.2 Comment on the proposed priorities and areas for strengthened focus in year two, including performance reporting, youth participation, partnership delivery, equality of access and evidence of impact.
- 2.3 Identify any further lines of enquiry or information that Members wish to see reflected in future annual reporting to support effective scrutiny of outcomes for children and young people.

3. Detail

3.1 Contribution to Borough Plan Priorities & Strategic Context

- 3.1.1 The Brent Youth Strategy 2025–2028 most closely aligns with three of the five priorities in the Brent Borough Plan 2023–2027: The Best Start in Life, Thriving Communities and A Healthier Brent. It also supports the Council’s wider corporate strategic framework, including the Health and Wellbeing Strategy, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy, Brent Inclusion Strategy and Early Years Strategy/Best Start in Life Local Plan. This is through its focus on prevention, participation, inclusion, health, safety, opportunity and partnership delivery.
- 3.1.2 **The Best Start in Life:** The Strategy contributes directly to the Borough Plan priority of enabling children and young people to have the best start in life by strengthening access to positive activities, trusted relationships, inclusive opportunities, youth voice and targeted support. Its priorities of “Being Heard and Taking Part” and “Reaching Goals and Enjoying Yourself” support the ambition that young people are able to participate in civic life, develop confidence and skills, access education, training and enrichment opportunities, and shape services that affect them. This also aligns with Brent’s wider children and young people strategic priorities, including early help, inclusion, SEND participation and the Best Start in Life agenda.
- 3.1.3 **Thriving Communities:** The Strategy supports the Borough Plan priority to build thriving, connected and resilient communities by promoting participation, community cohesion, youth leadership and stronger partnership working with voluntary and community sector organisations, schools, health partners, police and local providers. The Strategy’s emphasis on co-design, inclusive engagement and accessible local activities help ensure that young people are active contributors to community life and that services respond to the experiences of Brent’s diverse communities. This contributes to wider corporate objectives around stronger communities, community safety, equality, cohesion and resident involvement.

- 3.1.4 **A Healthier Brent:** The Strategy aligns strongly with the Borough Plan priority to improve health and wellbeing by focusing on emotional wellbeing, mental health, healthy relationships, trusted adults, safe spaces and early intervention. The priorities of “Feeling Good” and “Staying Safe” support prevention and early help by improving access to wellbeing support, strengthening links between schools, Public Health, CAMHS, community organisations and youth providers, and addressing risks linked to exploitation, youth violence, substance misuse and social isolation. This supports the Health and Wellbeing Strategy by helping to reduce inequalities, promote resilience and improve outcomes for young people most likely to experience barriers to support.

3.2 Background

- 3.2.1 The Council has been reshaping its approach to youth services since 2015, in the context of reduced budgets for non-statutory services and increasing demand within statutory children’s services. 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.
- 3.2.2 The commission of the first Brent Youth Strategy (2021-2023) arose from the findings of the Independent Brent Poverty Commission in August 2020 - one of the recommendations was for the Council to bring together a statutory led “Youth and Community Strategy for Young People” in Brent.
- 3.2.3 In Autumn 2023, The National Youth Agency (NYA) published a Toolkit to support local authorities to ensure that young people’s rights and needs are met, quality youth programmes are happening and there is a focus on co-design and collaboration with children and young people.
- 3.2.4 The Brent Youth Strategy 2025 – 2028 is grounded in principles of equity, inclusion and innovation with a focus on ensuring that every young person, regardless of background, has the resources, confidence and opportunity to lead a healthy, fulfilling and purpose-driven life. Through collaborative partnerships, the aim is to create a sustainable framework that nurtures the young people of Brent to be equipped to thrive.
- 3.2.5 The key priorities of the Strategy are:
- Being Heard and Taking Part
 - Reaching Goals and Enjoying Yourself
 - Feeling Good
 - Staying Safe

The vision is to build a generation that feels confident, capable and inspired to shape their own futures as well as contribute positively to society. The Strategy is about supporting young people at every stage, acknowledging their potential and providing them with pathways to achieve. The current Strategy seeks to evaluate and build on the progress made to support children and young people in Brent thrive into adulthood.

- 3.2.6 The refreshed Brent Youth Strategy 2025-2028 was approved by Cabinet in March 2025 and was officially launched with a community celebration event on 7th April

2025 at St Raphael's Best Start Family Hub (formerly known as Family Wellbeing Centre). During this celebration, young people were invited to take part in free sporting and wellbeing activities and to meet with voluntary and community sector partners, including Jason Roberts Foundation, TETH, and Cricklewood Boxing Club, who engaged young people in discussions and informed them about opportunities for education, training, employment and leisure activities in their local community.

- 3.2.7 In July 2025, the Brent Youth Strategy Delivery Group (BYSDG) was established, bringing together representatives from relevant Brent Council departments and community partner organisations. Since its launch, the group has met five times, alternating between in-person and online meetings to maximise engagement and accessibility. The BYSDG continues to meet on a quarterly basis throughout the lifetime of the Strategy and will share responsibility for delivering the actions and priorities set out in the Brent Youth Strategy and accompanying Action Plan. A key focus for the group is to build on early discussions and identify opportunities for funding and pathfinder projects linked to the Government's National Youth Strategy 2025-2035 and its £500 million investment fund. Emerging information and opportunities are being monitored through participation in National Youth Agency (NYA) National Youth Strategy workshops and regional roadshow events.

4. Key Partnership Achievements by Priority Area

4.1 Engagement and Participation: Being Heard and Taking Part

- 4.1.1 Year one has strengthened youth participation from consultation towards influence, with young people contributing to formal governance, scrutiny activity, service improvement, recruitment, peer research and safeguarding practice. Brent Youth Parliament activity has expanded, including attendance at 12 council meetings since April 2025, and youth voice is increasingly reflected through the Brent Youth Strategy Delivery Group, SEND participation activity, Public Health engagement, climate participation and contextual safeguarding work.

4.1.2 Evidence of delivery and emerging impact:

- Young people are influencing decision-making through Brent Youth Parliament, the UK Youth Parliament, scrutiny activity, the Brent Youth Strategy Delivery Group, Ofsted engagement, peer research, recruitment and participation forums.
- Participation is becoming more inclusive through SEND surgeries, SEND celebration activity, co-produced events, Public Health engagement and targeted safeguarding work.
- Community, climate and wellbeing engagement has broadened through Community Cohesion Days involving more than 1,000 residents, the Brent Schools Climate Summit, youth-led environmental projects and Public Health youth engagement activities.

4.1.3 Strategic assessment of outcomes and impact

- The key impact is that youth voice is becoming more systematically embedded in governance, service design and safeguarding responses, rather than being limited to one-off consultation.
- Young people attend and contribute to several committee meetings including Corporate Parenting Committee, Cabinet and Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee. As an example, young people have been

commended by Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny committee members for their research, questions and recommendations on different topics such as the Casey Review, Housing, and Health issues. The agenda of the September 2025 Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny committee was set by members of BYP with a focus on period dignity. This was added to the agenda because of a youth-led campaign organised by members of Brent Youth Parliament. Young people are invited to add recommendations for future actions, progress of which is then reported back at future meetings. The year two scrutiny focus should be on evidencing who is participating, whose voices remain under-represented, and how young people's feedback has changed decisions, commissioning, delivery or outcomes.

4.2 Skills, Opportunities and Activities: Reaching Goals and Enjoying Yourself

Year one has broadened access to positive opportunities, with a stronger focus on youth infrastructure, creative and cultural provision, outdoor learning, employability, mentoring and inclusive activities for young people with SEND. This supports the Borough Plan ambition to give young people the best start in life by widening access to skills, confidence-building and positive pathways.

4.2.1 Evidence of delivery and emerging impact:

- £4 million of SCIL funding has been secured to improve youth infrastructure across five local organisations, strengthening the long-term platform for accessible, community-based provision.
- The youth offer has expanded through the Council committing funding to a tri-borough programme involving Camden and Westminster, delivery of services at Best Start Family Hubs for young people with a 4% increase in attendance of 11-25 year olds, a 12.5% increase in ensembles / choirs membership with Brent Music Service, 600 funded places with the Gordon Brown Centre, and via Young Brent Foundation partners, covering arts, sport, culture, outdoor learning, mentoring and youth group activity.
- Targeted pathways have been strengthened through the Holiday Activities and Food programme, Supported Internships, Independent Travel Training, specialist SEND provision, NEET mentoring, GCSE Results Day support, accredited courses and employment guidance.
- The combined NEET / Not Known rate for 16 and 17 year olds improved from 2.7% in 2025 to 2.4% in 2026. This places Brent among the very best performing areas in England (11th nationally). For comparison, London was 3.3% in 2025, falling to 3.2% in 2026.

4.2.2 Strategic assessment of outcomes and impact

- The key impact is a broader, more inclusive and better-connected youth offer, with stronger infrastructure and clearer routes into skills, confidence, accredited learning, employment support and positive activities.
- The year two scrutiny focus will be on tracking reach, repeat engagement, progression into education, employment or training through the upcoming Employment and Skills strategy and how investment is benefiting young people facing the greatest barriers.

4.3 Health and Wellbeing: Feeling Good

4.3.1 Year one has strengthened the preventative wellbeing offer through earlier access to emotional health, mental health, substance misuse, creative, cultural, sporting and outdoor activities. This reflects a shift towards community-based support, trusted relationships and earlier intervention to help reduce escalation and improve resilience.

4.3.2 Evidence of delivery and emerging impact:

- Mental health and wellbeing support has expanded across Public Health, SEND, CAMHS, schools, arts and culture, outdoor learning and specialist providers, including Brent Centre for Young People, who supported 858 young people within the year, with over 80% stabilisation reported across anxiety, depression, low self-esteem and relationships with family.
- Specialist mental health support services such as the Wellbeing and Emotional Support Team (WEST) reported 96% improved outcomes, providing evidence of the impact of earlier intervention for young people accessing support.
- The stepped-care CAMHS model, Via Elev8, Brent Music Service, the Gordon Brown Centre, Best Start Family Hubs and Young Brent Foundation activity have strengthened access to preventative support, creative wellbeing and positive peer connection.

4.3.3 Strategic assessment of outcomes and impact

- The key impact is a more visible, multi-disciplinary and community-based wellbeing offer, with evidence that earlier support is improving outcomes for young people who access services with 168 referrals, 84 assessments and 73 treatments starts between April and September 2025.
- The year two scrutiny focus will be on shared outcome measures, including access, waiting times, sustained engagement, reduced deterioration, improved resilience and young people's experience of support.

4.4 Safety: Staying Safe

4.4.1 Year one has strengthened the partnership response to safeguarding issues outside the home, serious youth violence, exploitation, substance misuse and community safety. Delivery has focused on prevention, earlier identification of risk, trusted relationships, safe spaces and diversionary pathways so that young people are supported to be safe and feel safe in their homes, schools, online spaces and communities.

4.4.2 Through the Diversion from Offending and Early Intervention Programme and the Serious Violence and Gangs Intervention Programme, Air Sports Network and St Giles Trust have continued to make a significant contribution to safeguarding children and young people and preventing involvement in serious violence, gangs, and criminal exploitation. Through a combination of street-based outreach, positive diversionary activities, specialist mentoring, and education, training and employment support, both organisations provide early intervention and targeted support to vulnerable young people. Their work helps build resilience, increase aspirations, reduce risks, and create positive pathways, improving the safety, wellbeing, and long-term life opportunities of children and young people across the borough.

4.4.3 Evidence of delivery and emerging impact:

- The Council's Targeted Prevention Hub has delivered knife crime awareness, mentoring and school-based gang and criminal exploitation workshops, reaching more than 2,500 students in the current academic year.
- Community Safety has delivered 28 knife crime workshops, robbery reduction programmes engaging 241 young people, and street-based mentoring to strengthen prevention and diversion.
- Police, Youth Justice, Public Health, Best Start Family Hubs and the 'I Am Brent' consortium have contributed to school safety, exploitation prevention, restorative practice, safe spaces and positive diversionary activity.

4.4.4 Strategic assessment of outcomes and impact

- The key impact is a more coordinated prevention and safeguarding response, with increased awareness of risk, stronger school and community partnerships, and wider access to safe spaces and diversionary pathways.
- The year two scrutiny focus will be on evidencing whether activity is reducing risk, improving feelings of safety, strengthening protective factors and reaching young people most vulnerable to exploitation or serious youth violence. This will be evidenced by monitoring cases through the Best Start Family Hubs, monitoring online harm through DSLs and increasing the number of young people accessing youth provision in dedicated safe spaces.

5. BYSDG Priority areas of focus for 2026/7

5.1 Being Heard and Taking Part

Efforts are focused on broadening and strengthening avenues for youth participation, with particular attention to vulnerable groups such as those with SEND, care-experienced, NEET, and marginalised communities. There is a drive to ensure youth voice is integrated consistently across all Council directorates and external partners, not just those already active in this area. Enhancing digital platforms for participation, making them accessible and well-publicised, is also a priority to boost engagement. Additionally, the aim is to create more inclusive spaces for young people to interact with services and share feedback, while improving shared data insights among partners for a clearer understanding of young people's needs and service gaps

5.2 Reaching Goals and Enjoying Yourself

5.2.1 Efforts are underway to improve data sharing and partnership working among organisations, with a focus on expanding opportunities for young people—especially those that are post-16 and from vulnerable groups. Priorities include increasing youth participation, boosting visibility and accessibility of services, and strengthening links with employers and partner agencies to support sustained engagement and clearer pathways.

5.2.2 A Youth Employment and Progression Taskforce is being established with Young Brent Foundation. The Taskforce will seek to further improve partnership efforts to reduce youth economic inactivity and seeks to respond to the findings of the Milburn Review which identified a rising trend among 16 to 24 year olds becoming NEET. This work will further strengthen preventative measures by engaging young people

earlier, with schools, colleges and employers, to promote the most suitable and appropriate pathways to successful employment and careers. A post-16 (NEET) oversight group has also been established to support the re-engagement of 16 and 17 year olds who are already NEET / Not Known into education, employment or training outcomes. In addition, the group will help to maintain multi-disciplinary oversight of those young people who are most at risk of becoming NEET and will strengthen the targeting of support for the young people who need it most.

5.3 Feeling Good

- 5.3.1 The 'Feeling Good' approach aims to contribute to improved wellbeing for young people by fostering collaboration between mental health services, schools, Public Health, and community providers, increasing awareness and accessibility of support services, expanding engagement in preventative activities such as sports and arts, and addressing barriers including social anxiety, safety concerns, and limited-service access. With a newly configured health landscape a focus will be on working closely with the Brent Integrated Care Partnership (Brent ICP) to address health inequalities and to support Brent's young people.

5.4 Staying Safe

- 5.4.1 There is a focus on supporting young people's wellbeing by encouraging collaboration among mental health services, schools, Public Health, and community organisations. It aims to increase awareness and access to support, promote engagement in preventative activities, and address barriers such as social anxiety, safety concerns, and limited-service availability. The Youth Provision capital project is progressing towards achieving these aims, along with I AM Brent grants providing up to £5,000 capacity building support to help young people stay safe from violence.

6. Next Steps

- 6.1.1 The table below translates the year two priorities into a focused 12-month delivery plan. It sets out the key actions required across each priority area, the proposed timeframes for delivery, and the intended outcomes and assurance measures that will enable progress to be monitored, to test impact and consider whether activity is improving access, equity and outcomes for young people.

Table 1: Brent Youth Strategy Year Two Delivery Plan — Strategic Priorities, Timeframes and Assurance

Priority area	Strategic focus	Short term Months 1–3	Medium term Months 4–8	Long term Months 9–12	Outcome and impact
Being Heard and Taking Part	Broaden youth participation, particularly for SEND, care-experienced, NEET and under-represented young people.	Map current participation routes and identify engagement gaps.	Strengthen digital, face-to-face and partner-led feedback routes.	Report how youth feedback has influenced decisions, delivery and evaluation.	Clearer evidence of youth voice influencing practice and priorities.
Reaching Goals and Enjoying Yourself	Improve visibility and coordination of youth opportunities, post-16 pathways, skills and positive activities.	Confirm priority cohorts and map the current youth offer.	Strengthen referral routes, communications, employer links and partnership delivery.	Review reach, sustained engagement and progression into positive destinations.	More coordinated access to skills, activities and progression pathways.
Feeling Good	Strengthen preventative wellbeing support through joined-up mental health, school, Public Health and community provision.	Agree shared pathways and improve awareness of available support.	Expand preventative arts, sport, wellbeing and community-based activity.	Review access, barriers, impact and young people's experience of support.	Improved access to early wellbeing support and stronger outcome evidence.
Staying Safe	Strengthen the partnership response to exploitation, youth violence, contextual safeguarding and safe spaces.	Confirm shared priorities, referral routes and prevention pathways.	Deliver targeted prevention, mentoring, school-based and community safety activity.	Review risk, reach, protective factors and evidence of impact.	More coordinated prevention and safeguarding assurance for young people most at risk.
Governance and assurance	Strengthen BYSDG oversight of delivery, data, performance, equalities, funding and	Agree reporting framework, measures and governance expectations.	Establish baselines, data sources and partnership reporting arrangements.	Report progress, learning, risks and next steps through BYSDG and	Clearer accountability and stronger assurance on impact, equity and delivery.

	outcome reporting.			scrutiny updates.	
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7. Financial Considerations

- 7.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report. The achievements and progress made to date have been delivered within existing service budgets, and the implementation of the plan's priorities will continue to be funded through existing resources. In addition, the Council has secured £4m of Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy (SCIL) capital funding to enhance the infrastructure of youth provision buildings across Brent. In 2025/26, the Council spent a total of £1.6m on universal services for young people, including expenditure relating to Connexions service, the AllChild contract, and the Holiday Activities and Food Programme.

8. Legal Considerations

- 8.1 Pursuant to section 507b of the Education Act 1996 (as amended by Education and Inspections Act 2006) the council is 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). In addition, the Education and Skills Act 2008 requires the Council to make available to young persons and relevant young adults for whom it is responsible such services as it considers appropriate to encourage, enable or assist the effective participation of those persons in education or training.

9. Stakeholder and ward member consultation and engagement

- 9.1 Delivery of the Strategy is underpinned by partnership engagement through the Brent Youth Strategy Delivery Group and wider collaboration with young people, council services, schools, health partners, community safety partners and voluntary and community sector organisations.
- 9.2 A key scrutiny consideration is the extent to which young people are actively shaping priorities, delivery and evaluation. Year two will place further emphasis on strengthening youth voice, ensuring engagement reaches young people from diverse communities and those who may experience barriers to participation, and demonstrating how feedback has influenced action.

10. Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Considerations

- 10.1 The Brent Youth Strategy fulfils Equity, Diversity and Inclusion considerations under the Equality Act 2010 to ensure fair access and inclusivity for all children and young people in Brent.

11. Climate Change and Environmental Considerations

- 11.1 There are no direct climate change or environmental implications arising from this annual report. However, delivery partners should continue to consider how youth activities, engagement and local provision can support access to green spaces, active travel, environmental awareness and sustainable community participation.

- 11.2 Where relevant, future delivery updates may include examples of how youth provision contributes to wider environmental and community wellbeing objectives.

12. Human Resources/Property Considerations

- 12.1 There are no specific human resources or property implications arising from this annual report. Implementation will continue to be delivered through existing partnership arrangements and service structures.
- 12.2 Any future proposals that require changes to staffing, governance, premises or delivery arrangements will be brought forward through the appropriate decision-making route.

13. Communication Considerations

- 13.1 Clear communication will be important to maintain visibility of the Strategy, share progress with partners and young people, and demonstrate how youth voice is influencing delivery.
- 13.2 Year two communications should focus on promoting opportunities for young people, sharing progress and case examples, ensuring partners understand their role in delivery, and providing accessible feedback routes so young people can continue to shape implementation.

Report sign off:

Nigel Chapman

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