

 Brent	Decision of Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Employment & Climate Action 24 September 2026
	Report from the Corporate Director of Neighbourhoods and Regeneration
Public Engagement Proposals: Climate & Ecological Emergency Strategy Update 2026-2030	
Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	Non-Key
Open or Part/Fully Exempt:	Open
List of Appendices:	Two Appendix A: Framework for Public Engagement Appendix B: Easy-read Framework for Public Engagement
Background Papers:	None
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1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. This report sets out the background and rationale for updating Brent's Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy. The updated strategy document to be developed in the coming months is envisaged to cover a four-year period from the end of 2026 until the end of the 2030 calendar year. It will draw upon the five key themes within Brent's existing Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy (2021-2030) and provide updated delivery priorities and actions under each key environmental theme.

- 1.2. Community engagement is integral to this process. Every single individual who lives, works, or studies in Brent has a stake in tackling the climate emergency and avoiding the catastrophic effects of climate change. Subject to the approval of this report, a community engagement programme will be undertaken over a six-week period, launching on Monday 28 September 2026 and running until Monday 16 November 2026. The engagement period will cover a mixture of methods, locations and audiences, with the aim of capturing as many views as possible on the direction of Brent's Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy from our communities. This feedback will support the development of an updated strategy document which will then be presented to Cabinet in early 2027 for adoption.

2. Recommendation(s)

That the Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Employment & Climate Action, in consultation with the Leader of the Council:

- 2.1 Agrees to the proposals within this report to begin the six-week public engagement programme for an update of the council's Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy (2026-2030).

3. Background

Contribution to Borough Plan Priorities & Strategic Context

- 3.1 The council first declared a climate and ecological emergency in July 2019 and pledged to do all reasonable in our gift to aim for carbon neutrality by 2030, and work with government to achieve the national 2050 target.
- 3.2 Over the past seven years since this declaration, the council has worked alongside our communities to put this goal into action. Following on from the invaluable work of the Brent Climate Assembly, the borough's first Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy (2021-2030) ("The Strategy") was adopted in April 2021. The Strategy mirrored the priorities for action put forward by the Brent Climate Assembly, and therefore aptly captured the views of Brent's residents on where to focus climate action over the coming years.
- 3.3 The five key themes in the Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy mirrored the top five priorities put forward by the Brent Climate Assembly. Based on our experience of delivery over the past five years, and how valuable the Climate Assembly was, we believe there is a strong rationale for retaining the existing five themes. All of them remain as relevant now to accelerating climate action as they were in 2021 and cover the breadth of topics where environmental action should be focused in the borough.
- 3.4 The five key themes are: (1) Consumption, Resources and Waste; (2) Sustainable Travel; (3) Homes, Buildings and the Built Environment; (4) Nature and Green Space; (5) Supporting Communities. Adapting to climate change is interwoven throughout.

Detail

- 3.5 The Strategy provided a pathway of delivery towards the 2030 carbon neutrality goal and encapsulated Brent's ecological ambitions with an objective of also becoming 'one of the greenest, most biodiverse and climate-resilient boroughs in London'.
- 3.6 The core of our climate action can be broken down into three main elements: (1) emissions reduction, (2) supporting nature and biodiversity, (3) and preparing for and adapting to extreme weather. This is ultimately what the Strategy's aims sought to tackle, with communities at the heart of each of these elements.
- 3.7 Good progress has been made on each of these three aspects. For example, firstly, the borough's carbon emissions have fallen by 18% since 2021, with an estimated 185,600 less tonnes of emissions emitted within the borough boundary according to the most recent dataset (2024). The council's own footprint has also fallen by a further 13.8%, having now reduced by 76% since 2010.
- 3.8 Secondly, to support nature and biodiversity, we created a Green Infrastructure Vision and have put this into action through a range of initiatives to enhance the borough's natural environment.
- 3.9 Thirdly, in 2022, we were only the second borough in London to develop a dedicated plan for climate adaptation and resilience, which set out the key considerations for the borough in dealing with flooding, extreme heat and drought in the face of a rapidly changing climate. This was updated in 2025, using the latest evidence, through the adoption of the Brent Climate Adaptation and Resilience Framework.
- 3.10 More detail on our achievements to date across the five key Strategy themes, can be found in **Appendix A**. An overarching summary can also be found on the Climate Emergency pages of the council's website.
- 3.11 However, we recognise that there is much more to do. The risks posed by the climate emergency are clearer than ever before – with extreme weather records continuing to be broken time and time again. The most recent example being this summer deemed provisionally the hottest summer ever in the UK.
- 3.12 We also recognise that the key objectives of the 2021-2030 Climate Strategy were working to a timeline of aspiring to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030 on both a borough-wide basis, and for our own estate and operations. This date is fast approaching and no longer considered to be a realistic aim on a borough-wide basis. However, Brent Council remains committed to doing all reasonable in our gift to achieve net zero emissions from its own operations and estate by 2030.
- 3.13 We therefore believe it is the right time to review our existing Climate Strategy, and work with communities towards the creation of an updated document which will be the focal point for the next four years. The challenges facing councils in 2026 are like those which faced us during the creation of the initial Climate Strategy in 2021, but these have in many ways intensified. The rationale for pursuing a four-year strategy rather than another long-term strategy is to ensure that the document has a sharper focus on what is realistically achievable,

deliverable and will continue to accelerate pushing the borough's climate and environmental goals in the right direction within this period.

- 3.14 The council cannot tackle the climate emergency on its own. It is critical that Brent's communities remain at the heart of both the creation and delivery of this updated strategy. Climate Action can only be achieved through communities and public authorities working in tandem around common environmental goals.
- 3.15 Much has been achieved in the past five years by working to this ethos. We have brilliant, inspiring individuals and communities here in Brent, and the last five years have shown just what can be achieved by working together. Just some of the examples include:
- 4,800 members of the Brent Environmental Network
 - 105 community environmental projects funded by the Together Towards Zero Small Grants Scheme
 - 127 organisations signed up to the Brent Climate Charter
 - 40 businesses are part of the Brent Green Directory
 - 53% of our Schools now with completed or draft Climate Action Plans
 - 25 Faith organisations utilising the Brent Faith Climate Action Plan
 - An exemplary community co-design of the Church End & Roundwood Green Corridors scheme
 - Numerous Community Tree Planting Days
 - 3 community focused Climate Action Films: This Ain't Normal, Roots of Brent, Faces of Climate Change
- 3.16 We want to go even further over the next four years in placing communities at the heart of this programme. We will aim to ensure that climate action reaches the broadest number of people and communities in the borough as possible and making sure that it is reflective of the diversity of our borough.
- 3.17 Our aim is to continue to make sure that climate action is inclusive, equitable and that communities are ultimately empowered with the knowledge, skills and resources to be able to take action themselves wherever possible.

4. Engagement Proposals: Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy 2026-2030 Update

- 4.1 We will be engaging with Brent's communities on the development of an updated Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy over the next six weeks. We will do this through a combination of in-person events and online consultation, with participation seeking to reflect Brent's diverse communities throughout.
- 4.2 The success criteria of this public engagement centres around five key points:
- Attaining good level of engagement on updating the climate strategy with a wide cross-section of our community (i.e. residents, faith groups, schools, young people, businesses, trade unions etc)
 - Obtaining community feedback on the proposed delivery priorities and shaping these with community buy-in and input

- Community-based ideas and feedback which will feed into the development of the underpinning delivery plans which will accompany the final version of the updated Strategy document
- Community feedback on whether a carbon neutrality target should be retained on a borough-wide basis, and if so, to which date. Brent Council remains committed to doing all reasonable in our gift to achieve net zero emissions from its own operations and estate by 2030
- An up to date understanding of the barriers for people taking action on the climate in 2026, and how we can continue to build in ways to break these down within future delivery plans

4.3 The key objectives of the engagement are to:

- Engage at least 300 residents and stakeholders through a combination of workshops, roadshows and online engagement, with participation reflecting Brent's diverse communities, including (but not limited to) young people, faith groups, disabled residents and other seldom-heard groups.
- Establish a Brent Climate Action Forum (BCAF), initially to contribute ideas to the climate strategy update, prior to its continuation as an ongoing forum to share ideas and collaborate on the delivery of climate action.
- Deliver the following engagement sessions:
 - 1 x borough-wide Climate Strategy Workshop with the inaugural BCAF
 - 5 x community engagement events/roadshows across Brent Connects areas- could be a mixture of in-person and online
 - 1 x youth engagement session – Brent Youth Parliament and SOS UK (a youth climate leadership organisation)
 - 1 x schoolteacher engagement session
 - School pupils focus groups
 - Business engagement
 - Faith community engagement
 - 1 x Trade Unions session
 - Staff engagement session
 - Councillor engagement
 - 1 x online survey
- Adhere to the following key principles:
 - Inclusive and Representative
 - Accessible and Equitable
 - Transparent and Accountable
 - Collaborative
 - Action-Oriented
 - Youth-Centred and Intergenerational
 - Creative and Culturally Relevant
 - Evidence-Led
 - Connected and Aligned with Brent Council Plan and Engagement Framework

4.4 The membership of the BCAF as proposed will be open and drawn from (but not limited to):

- Community, faith and voluntary sector organisations
- Local environmental sustainability groups
- Businesses and business networks
- Trade Unions
- Housing providers
- Health sector representatives
- Residents' groups
- Local and regional partners
- Schools and young people

Phase 1 (End September 2026)

- 4.5 We will launch a questionnaire via the council's online 'Have Your Say' web pages where residents and organisations can provide their views.

Phase 2 (October - November 2026)

- 4.6 We will undertake a series of workshops and community engagement events across the borough – this will include a borough-wide Climate Strategy Workshop, at least one engagement event in each Brent Connects Areas, youth engagement sessions, schools focus groups, business focus groups, an engagement session with Councillors, engagement with council staff, and engagement with the borough's main trade unions. We will also take this document for discussion to the Brent Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee on 20 October.

Phase 3 (November 2026-January 2027)

- 4.7 The public engagement process will close, and the council will analyse and reflect on the feedback received, before using this feedback to form the updated Climate Strategy document. We will ensure that we close the feedback loop by demonstrating how the feedback informed the Strategy.

Phase 4 (February/March 2027 onwards)

- 4.8 Effective community engagement does not just stop there. With the ambition of the community continuing to be at the heart of climate action, the adoption of the strategy at Cabinet in early 2027 will see us turn to delivery in collaboration with the whole community. Please note that the engagement timeline above may be subject to change.

5. Alternative Options Considered

- 5.1 The alternative option would be to undertake no community engagement and have the council develop and adopt the updated strategy without input. Given, as this report sets out, community engagement is crucial to effective climate action, this is not felt to be a viable option and is not recommended.

6. Stakeholder and ward member consultation and engagement

- 6.1 Consultation and engagement with key stakeholders and all Councillors is integral to the purpose, content and recommendations of this report, as detailed above.

7. Financial Considerations

- 7.1 The costs of undertaking the engagement proposals will be met from existing council budgets. The development of an updated strategy will be comprehensively costed as part of the governance process seeking Cabinet adoption.

8. Legal Considerations

- 8.1 The Climate Change Act 2008 (the Act) is the statutory basis for the UK's approach to tackling and responding to the climate and ecological emergency. The Act places a legal duty on central government to set legally binding targets to reduce UK greenhouse gas emissions to net-zero by 2050. The Council's commitment to carbon neutrality and the actions towards this as set out in the report are consistent with the Governments Net Zero Strategy and are indicative of the important role local authorities play in achieving carbon neutrality.
- 8.2 Where consultation is carried out it must comply with the following 'Gunning' Principles and Common Law:
- Consultation must be undertaken at a time when proposals are still at a formative stage
 - Sufficient reasons for any proposal must be provided in order to allow proper and intelligent consideration and response
 - Adequate time must be given for consideration and response
 - The decision maker must give conscientious consideration to the responses.
- 8.3 The above principles apply to the proposed public engagement set out within this report.
- 8.4 Property related issues: the council is working towards a decarbonisation strategy for Brent's estate and is proposing 'A Net Zero Council' as key delivery priority under the Homes, Buildings and Built Environment theme. Further consideration of all of the requirements for this delivery priority (including legal ones) will be set out in due course should this be recommended as a delivery priority in the final strategy document which is developed with the community and presented to Cabinet for adoption in early 2027.

9. Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Considerations

- 9.1 The council, as a public authority exercising public functions, is subject to a public sector equality duty (PSED) under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 (EqA). A full Equalities Impact Assessment was provided upon the adoption of the Climate and Ecological Strategy in 2021 and has been published on the council's website. We also undertook a subsequent EIA for the adoption of the Climate Adaptation and Resilience Framework, which has also been published on the council's website.

- 9.2 Both EIAs identified groups at greater risk from the impacts of climate change, including:
- Older adults, young children and babies
 - People with disabilities or long-term health conditions
 - Pregnant people
 - Low-income households and those living in poor-quality housing
 - People from ethnic minority backgrounds, who may face compounded risks due to existing social and economic inequalities
 - Outdoor and manual workers, carers, refugees, asylum seekers, people experiencing homelessness, and those facing digital exclusion or language barriers
- 9.3 The updated strategy will be designed to reduce existing inequalities and support vulnerable groups, with positive or neutral impacts expected for those most at risk. The second key proposed delivery priority under theme 5 of an updated strategy will be 'Supporting the most vulnerable' and this should act as the focal point for actions in relation to this work.
- 9.4 As part of the process for adopting a new Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy, we will provide an updated EIA to supplement the new programme for 2026-2030.

10. Climate Change and Environmental Considerations

- 10.1 Climate change and environmental considerations are integral to the purpose, content and recommendations in this report.

11. Human Resources Considerations

- 11.1 There are no HR implications arising from this report.

12. Communication Considerations

- 12.1 A communications and engagement plan has been developed in support of the engagement programme being proposed within this report. The council will utilise existing council communication channels and our networks, whilst also encouraging communities to spread the word about engaging with this process, during the time the engagement period is open. We will ensure that we close the feedback loop with residents by outlining how the feedback informed the Strategy.

Report sign off:

Jehan Weerasinghe
Corporate Director, Neighbourhoods and
Regeneration