



**Cabinet  
15 December 2014**

**Report from the Chief Executive**

For action

**Brent Borough Plan 2015 - 2019**

**1. Introduction**

1.1 This report sets out – through its attached appendix – the first draft of the proposed Brent Borough Plan for 2015 - 2019. The priorities and targets set out with the plan have been informed by an extensive programme of consultation with residents, partners, the voluntary sector, local businesses and Members over the past three months. The priorities within the Plan build upon the Administration's commitment to fairness, driving local economic growth and creating strong communities. The Brent Borough Plan provides:

- a shared vision for the borough and the priorities for making sure that vision is achieved
- the promises and specific outcomes on which we will be concentrating over the period from April 2015 – to January 2019.

1.2 The Borough Plan constitutes a community strategy for Brent and sets out how the Council, its partner services, local residents, local business and the voluntary and community sector – will, working together, improve the quality of life for local people. The priorities and the promised outcomes identified are firmly rooted in what local people have told us they believe to be the most important things to be achieved. Nevertheless, the Plan was drafted before the closing date for responses and these all need to be considered before finalising the Plan.

**2. Recommendations**

Members of the Cabinet are asked to:

- 2.1 note the progress made in developing the Borough Plan and comment on the draft document
- 2.2 agree to use the draft plan and the borough plan consultation findings as the basis for further discussion with partners between now and formal adoption of the plan by Council in March 2015.

**3. Detailed considerations**

- 3.1 The Council has a key role in overseeing the Borough Plan for Brent, which sets out the community strategy for the borough. The borough's Local Strategic Partnership, Partners for Brent, has a key role in this.
- 3.2 The Borough Plan 2015 - 2019 details the priorities and specific targets on which the Council and its partners intend to concentrate for the period to January 2019.

### **Challenges and context for the Borough Plan 2015 – 2019**

- 3.3 The next four years will be the most critical period of change that local government has experienced in recent decades and a key moment to redefine the role and relationship it has with both residents and partners. As we experience continued reductions in central government funding, the council will need to build a strong consensus on those services which are local priorities, innovate across service and organisational boundaries to maximise efficiencies and develop capacity within local communities to build on their strengths to become more independent and resilient in the future.
- 3.4 The council will need to redefine its role as a direct provider of services and focus its resources on building relationships and influence across the public, community and business sectors to ensure future investment and growth is attracted to Brent. Within this context, the Borough Plan 2015 – 2019, provides the basis on which to shape the strategic partnership agenda for Brent and gives the vision and narrative to create ownership and commitment to the plan's priorities across all sectors.

### **Public Consultation on Developing the Plan.**

- 3.5 Since September 2014, the council and its partners have undertaken an extensive public consultation exercise to better understand the priorities and aspirations of local people for them and their families, also for Brent as a place.
- 3.6 There have been a variety of ways that local people could contribute their views and priorities to the Borough Plan. These covered:-
  - A call for evidence on the Council and key partners websites, which as people to respond to four key questions on their service priorities, where the council could reduce expenditure and ways that they could contribute to making Brent a better place to live. Even before the closing date for consultation, 210 people responded with their views and comments.
  - A self- fill questionnaire asking the same four questions distributed at libraries and community venues.
  - A series of discussions conducted at all five Brent Connects forums, seeking people's feedback on local priorities and actions to engage people in the local neighbourhoods. These were attended by approximately 185 residents.
  - 11 independently facilitated focus groups, including two with young people aged 11 – 19 years. Participants in the focus groups were recruited based on a demographic profile to ensure that they were representative of the wider population. In total 350 people took part in a focus group, including 64 young people.
  - The Residents Attitude Survey covering 2,100 interviews with local people, again structured to reflect the demographic profile of the population.
  - The CVS has run five workshops with local community groups.
  - Strategic Directors held discussions with local partnership networks and stakeholders.
  - Local businesses were invited to a number of business breakfast discussions.

- 3.7 Residents were very receptive to the various consultation events and welcomed the opportunity to shape the future of Brent. While peoples' priorities many vary, there was a consistent message that they enjoy living in Brent and have a strong sense of community and neighbourhood identity. They described Brent as a friendly, inclusive place and value the cultural, ethnic and religious diversity of the area. These are strengths that should be developed and sustained in our future plans.
- 3.8 Analysis of residents, businesses and partners responses have shaped the three priorities of the Brent Borough Plan and the individual actions which sit underneath the priorities:-
- Better lives
  - Better place
  - Better locally
- 3.9 Details of the priorities identified during the consultation are set out within each section of the draft Brent Borough Plan.

### **Making the Vision Happen - The Borough Plan and the Planning Framework**

- 3.10 Planning is a major thread running through all organisations. It enables them to set objectives and priorities, turn policy decisions into action, decide how best to allocate resources, and review results so that learning feeds back into the decision-making process.
- 3.11 It is through an effective planning framework, with clear processes for monitoring and evaluating progress that all stakeholders can understand exactly what goals are being worked towards and assess progress towards them. An effective planning framework also reflects the role of the organisation and each of its various services and teams – and of each individual within those services and teams – in achieving those goals, and it sets out how performance will be judged.
- 3.12 There are many providers of public services in Brent, including the council, schools, health services, the police, the voluntary and community sector, businesses. The need for better co-ordination and integration between services has become all the more important because so many of the key issues affecting local communities cut cross organisational boundaries.
- 3.13 The Borough Plan is therefore an overarching plan, which sets out the vision and priorities for the borough as a whole, and how this can be achieved by all of us – the council, partner services, local residents, local business and the voluntary and community sector – working together.

## **4. Financial Implications**

- 4.1 The Borough Plan provides the strategy framework for the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy reflecting the Administration's priorities for the borough and response to the needs of Brent residents. Over the coming period, the council will face a considerable reduction in its available resources and it is critical that budget decisions are taken within the context of a clear strategic intent, while still settling ambitious targets to improve service standards and deliver value for money.

## **5. Legal Implications**

- 5.1 Under section 4 of the Local Government Act 2000, every local authority in England must prepare a sustainable communities strategy for promoting or improving the economic, social and environmental well-being of their area and contributing to the achievement of sustainable development in the United Kingdom. A local authority may modify its sustainable communities strategy from time to time. When preparing or modifying its strategy, a local authority consults with and seeks the participation of “each partner authority” it considers appropriate, and any other person the local authority considers appropriate.
- 5.2 A local authority also needs to have regard to guidance from the Secretary of State under section 4 of the 2000 Act, any arrangements for co-operation to reduce child poverty in the local area (as set out section 21 of the Child Poverty Act 2010), any local child poverty needs assessment (as set out in section 22 of the Child Poverty Act 2010) and any joint child poverty strategy for the area (as set out section 23 of the Child Poverty Act 2010). This list of what constitutes a “Partner authority” is set out in Chapter 1 of Part 5 of the Local Government and Public Involvement In Health Act 2007 and includes, inter alia, the metropolitan police district, a joint waste authority, Transport for London, a Primary Care Trust, youth offending team, local probation board, NHS trust/foundation trust and the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority. As stated above, it is for the local authority to decide which partner authority it considers is appropriate to consult with.
- 5.3 In table 3 of Part 4 of the Council’s Constitution, it states that the Cabinet is responsible for formulating and preparing the sustainable communities strategy and then submitting the same to Full Council for consideration and adoption or approval. The sustainable communities’ strategy constitutes part of the Policy Framework.

## **6. Equalities Implications**

Reducing inequality of opportunity and improving the quality of life experienced by all local people is the central objective of the Brent Borough Plan 2015 – 2019. Each individual aspect of the plan or changes to services deriving from the plan will be supported by equality assessments.

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