



Cabinet
10 December 2018

**Report from the Director of
Performance, Policy and
Partnerships**

Stronger Communities Strategy 2019-23

Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision: (only applicable for Cabinet, Cabinet Sub Committee and officer decisions)	Key
Open or Part/Fully Exempt: (If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)	Open
No. of Appendices:	Two: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Draft Stronger Communities Strategy 2019-2023• Draft Commitments
Background Papers:	None
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1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 This report presents **Brent: Stronger Together** - the draft Stronger Communities Strategy 2019-23 for approval. The strategy sets out values and priorities following consultation. It is supported by commitments that focus on the priority areas.

2.0 Recommendation

- 2.1 Cabinet is asked to consider and agree the draft strategy and commitments in Appendices 1 and 2.

3.0 Detail

- 3.1 **Brent: Stronger Together** sets a four year strategic approach to building and sustaining stronger communities. It sets a clear direction, building a strong sense of purpose and leading through our communities and their shared values. The four year timeframe gives space to build on our successes to date, the

flexibility for changes in light of new legislation or guidance and enough space to make a real difference. This strategy is central to the achievement of the overall vision for the borough as set out in the Borough Plan 2019 – 2023. This vision is:

To make Brent a borough of culture, empathy, and shared prosperity

- 3.2 Stronger communities will mean different things to different people, but for the purposes of this document it is intended to mean:

“People living and working in harmony, with a shared sense of community spirit – having respect for each other as citizens and respect for Brent as a place”.

- 3.3 The strategy includes the explicit core **values** of:

- Respect and tolerance for people
- Protecting the most vulnerable
- Pride in our area – Loving where we live
- Equality
- Active citizenship

These are integral to the **priorities** of this strategy:

- Tackling poverty
- Tackling extremism
- Engaging new and emerging communities
- Tackling underachievement
- Promoting gender equality

- 3.4 Building stronger communities is a local priority that sits well with a range of policies and initiatives at national and regional levels. The fact that objectives and actions are aligned in this way is a source of strength in developing and implementing our own values and priorities. The council will continue to work with the Government and the Mayor to ensure we all make a contribution to these shared goals.

Consultation

- 3.5 The views of our communities have played a key part in shaping the Stronger Communities Strategy. The values and priorities in this strategy have been set following extensive consultation including utilising social media. The consultation took place from 6 August to 31 October 2018. Public engagement took place at Brent Connects meetings and bespoke engagement events at:

- The Granville on 11 September
- Kingsbury Library on 21 September
- Willesden Green Library on 28 September
- Wembley Park station on 26 October.

Discussions took place at:

- The Multi-Faith forum on 16 October
- The Voluntary Sector Liaison Forum on 28 September and

- The “Time to talk” session on 3 September featuring a panel discussion (including the Lead Member) on Stronger Communities.

Paper copies of the consultation were available at these events. The online consultation took place during this period with paper copies also available on request. Staff were engaged via the Brent magazine, the “Time to talk” session, the Brent website and Twitter. The findings from the consultation have shaped the values and priorities in this strategy.

3.6 Results from the consultation show that there is strong support and agreement with the values and priorities that we had identified. We asked people to rate the Values – with 5 being the most important and 1 the least important. Ranked by the ratings received these are:

- Respect and tolerance for people
- Protecting the most vulnerable
- Pride in our area – Loving where we live
- Equality
- Active citizenship

3.7 In terms of importance the ratings showed that the most important were respect and tolerance for people and protecting the most vulnerable with equality and active citizenship the least important. We also asked people to rate the Priorities – with 5 being the most important and 1 the least important. Ranked by the ratings received these are:

- Tackling poverty
- Tackling extremism
- Engaging new and emerging communities
- Tackling underachievement
- Promoting gender equality

3.8 The ratings showed that tackling poverty and tackling extremism are the most important priorities for people with tackling underachievement and promoting gender equality the least important.

3.9 We have listened to this feedback and have developed a set of commitments to support the strategy. This is attached as an appendix. The strategy and commitments will be reviewed and monitored on an annual basis.

4.0 Financial Implications

4.1 The draft strategy highlights the existing financial context of the Council’s overall financial position and its challenges. It is within this context that the strategy will be delivered.

5.0 Legal Implications

5.1 The Council is a Best Value Authority in accordance with s 1(1) of the Local Government Act 1999. It is required to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way it exercises its functions, having regard to economy, efficiency and effectiveness pursuant to s3 Local Government Act. The Stronger Communities Strategy and the consultation exercise undertaken

to support it is a way in which the Council can make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way it exercises its functions. Further legal advice will be sought as and when required as the proposals in the Stronger Communities Strategy are implemented.

6.0 Equality Implications

- 6.1 The Council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it, s149 Equality Act 2010. The Stronger Communities Strategy demonstrates a commitment to that duty.
- 6.2 The s149, Public Sector Equality Duty (outlined above) cover the following nine protected characteristics: age, disability, marriage and civil partnership, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- 6.3 The Stronger Communities Strategy is focused on stronger communities and demonstrates a commitment to the s149 duty. There are positive equality implications for the actions that support the strategy. Equality analyses will be undertaken in relation to the actions as they are developed and implemented as appropriate.

7.0 Consultation with Ward Members and Stakeholders

- 7.1 Elected Members have been engaged as part of the consultation process.

Report sign off:

PETER GADSDON
Director of Performance, Policy, and Partnerships