

EQUALITY ANALYSIS (EA)

POLICY/PROPOSAL:	Digital Strategy 2019 – 2023
DEPARTMENT:	Customer and Digital Services
TEAM:	Transformation Team
LEAD OFFICER:	Charlotte Moore
DATE:	23/08/19

NB: Please ensure you have read the accompanying EA guidance and instructions in full.

SECTION A – INITIAL SCREENING

1. Please provide a description of the policy, proposal, change or initiative, and a summary its objectives and the intended results.

The 2019-2023 digital strategy echoes the themes of the Borough Plan 2019-23 and focuses on two interdependent aims:

1. A **digital place** that enhances the strengths of Brent’s local neighbourhoods and destinations, by building a borough-wide digital infrastructure improving access to full fibre broadband, developing a training and education framework that nurtures digital skills and expertise and building an environment that emboldens a culture of digital entrepreneurship and innovation.
2. A **digital council** with a digital offer in line with modern expectations. Our services and information are becoming more accessible and personalised, helping residents to make better informed choices and we are providing more efficient and value for money services, with leadership that empowers our workforce to use technology to work smarter across traditional structures and in new and existing partnerships.

The digital programme is driven by six key design principles, these are:

1. Work openly and collaborate
2. Inclusive
3. People Centred
4. Digital is embedded in all we do
5. Secure by design
6. Enables smarter working

There are 7 groups of projects underlying the programme of work:

- **Access** – giving residents quick and easy access to the information they need by continuing to transform the way services can be accessed. Using innovative technology to support customers as they interact with us and providing assistance for residents with more complex needs.
- **Skills** – working to ensure the right information, services and conditions are in place for all stakeholders to confidently interact with the digital council and thrive in the digital place.
- **Digital Place** - improving the borough's digital infrastructure so it is a destination for investment and is well placed to meet the challenges of the emerging digital economy. Using technology such as Internet of Things devices and supporting digital enterprise to create a vibrant digitally enabled borough.
- **Data and Smart devices** - extending our data capture and analytics capability to create richer data, a single view of the customer and services and the ability to drive decision-making. Enabling early service intervention to reduce demand and long terms costs on the council and partners.
- **MS Dynamics** – bringing further services onto Brent's MS Dynamics platform. Channels, applications and workflows will be integrated to enable seamless end-to-end transactions and maximise first touch capability.
- **Robotics** – using robotics to increase staff capacity, enabling them to deal with meaningful and complex interactions making better use of the talent and skills within our workforce. Automating transactions so they are completed on time, eliminating risk of errors, improving quality resulting in increased customer satisfaction
- **Building blocks** – working collaboratively to create the best possible solutions and continue to grow our capacity and capability to develop and deliver these solutions. Ensuring that we have an efficient and secure technical architecture to support our digital ambitions.

To support this sustained programme of change, delivery of this digital strategy is underpinned by the following key principles:

1. We will ensure that our services are accessible to everyone. We will develop guidance on digital inclusion setting out the accessibility standards new technology needs to comply with and to help services plan the provision for vulnerable

customers as access arrangements change.

2. Services will be people centred. We will work with residents, partners and businesses to co-design and co-deliver transformation, ensuring that Brent's evolution as a digital borough is shaped by the energy, ideas and requirements of local people and key stakeholders.
3. We will embed our digital vision within our policies and strategies including HR, Planning, Regeneration, Employment and Skills and ICT. We will also reflect it in our engagement with the community and models of working with the Community and Voluntary Sector.
4. We will deliver robust information security measures to protect resident and stakeholder data from misuse and cyber threats, and we will safeguard their privacy through increasingly secure and modern information governance and data sharing arrangements both internally and with partners.
5. We will invest in our workforce to ensure they have the resources and agile skills they need to innovate, collaborate and excel in the digital workplace and work smarter. This will include imbedding a culture of change across the organisation, moving away from a traditional 'service and department' approach to working in flexible, multi-disciplinary teams that use methodology aligned with the Local Government Digital Service Standard to iterate continuous service improvements in response to user needs.
6. We will work openly and actively collaborate with other organisations, including with the Community and Voluntary Sector, to develop innovative solutions and share learning and good practice.

2. Who may be affected by this policy or proposal?

The digital strategy will have a positive impact on the majority of Brent residents as the strategy seeks to improve the ease in which residents can access council services and improve the digital skills of Brent residents.

Service users, mostly older people and disabled people may be negatively impacted by this proposal as they are less likely to have access to the internet. This could be due to lack of digital skills; access costs being too high; or, complex needs which makes it difficult for them to access the internet. The Strategy considers mitigating actions to offset negative impacts on Brent residents who may be digitally excluded.

Additionally, black residents and residents in lower social economic groups are less likely to be online.

3. Is there relevance to equality and the council's public sector equality duty? Please explain why. If your answer is no, you must still provide an explanation.

Yes, when developing the digital strategy due regard has been given to minimise the disadvantages connected to particular protected characteristics.

4. Please indicate with an “X” the potential impact of the policy or proposal on groups with each protected characteristic. Carefully consider if the proposal will impact on people in different ways as a result of their characteristics.

Characteristic	IMPACT		
	Positive	Neutral/None	Negative
Age	X		X
Sex	X		
Race	X		
Disability	X		X
Sexual orientation	X		
Gender reassignment	X		
Religion or belief	X		
Pregnancy or maternity	X		
Marriage	X		

5. Please complete **each row** of the checklist with an “X”.

SCREENING CHECKLIST		
	YES	NO
Have you established that the policy or proposal <i>is</i> relevant to the council’s public sector equality duty?	X	
Does the policy or proposal relate to an area with known inequalities?	X	
Would the policy or proposal change or remove services used by vulnerable groups of people?	X	
Has the potential for negative or positive equality impacts been identified with this policy or proposal?	X	
If you have answered YES to ANY of the above, then proceed to section B. If you have answered NO to ALL of the above, then proceed straight to section D.		

SECTION B – IMPACTS ANALYSIS

1. Outline what information and evidence have you gathered and considered for this analysis. If there is little, then explain your judgements in detail and your plans to validate them with evidence. If you have monitoring information available, include it here.

In 2018 the Brent Resident Attitudes Survey (RAS) was undertaken, this comprised face to face interviews with 2,113 residents. The sample was designed to be representative of the borough population and is large enough to provide an analysis of digital use by demographic and socio-economic group.

The survey included several questions relevant to the topic of digital inclusion, these included:

- Internet access (frequency/mode);
- Current use of online methods to access services and information;
- Views about likely future use (among non-users).

Based on responses, the RAS estimates that around 9 out of 10 Brent residents (89%) use the internet. The majority of Brent residents use it for more than 2 hours a day. A significant minority - just over 1 in 10 of those surveyed – said they did not use the internet (11%).

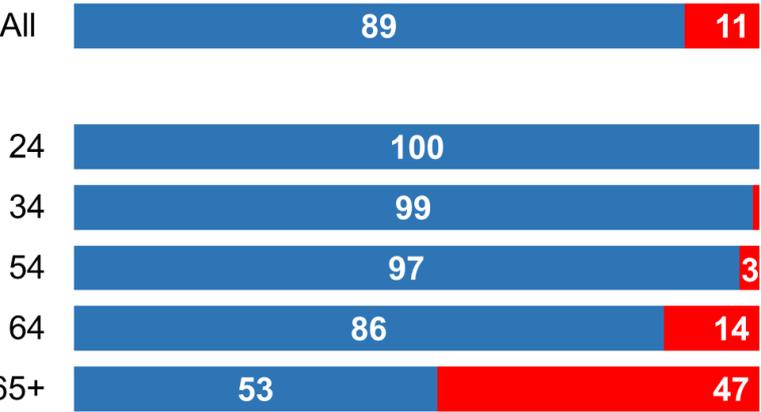
The Brent RAS estimate on internet use is broadly in line with Office for National Statistics (ONS) survey estimates, which indicate that around 90% of Brent adults were internet users (as at 2016). The RAS estimates are likely to be more reliable as they are based on a larger sample for Brent (x3). Also, RAS provides a richer data on demographics.

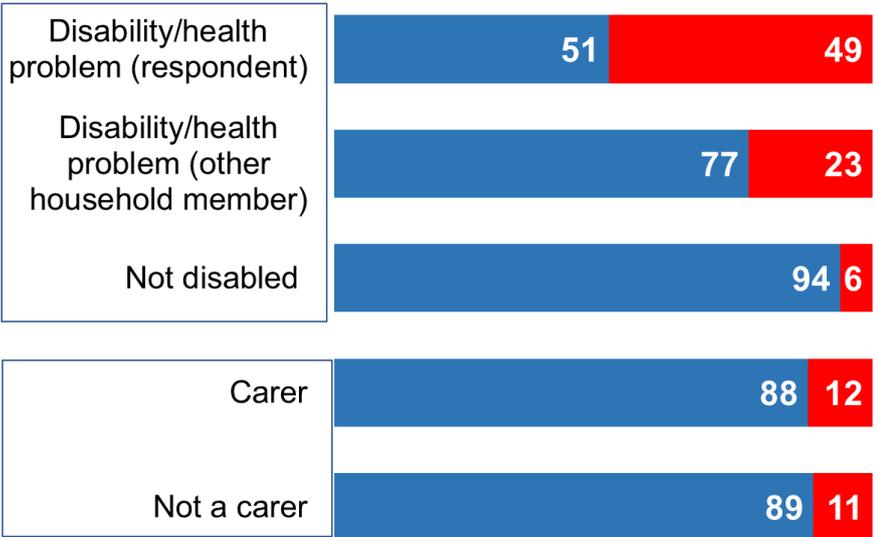
The RAS estimates that the majority of internet users in Brent access it via a smart phone (85% of users).

The Equality Profile of Brent 2019 provides an equality profile of the Brent population according to the nine protected characteristics named in the Equality Act 2019.

2. For each “protected characteristic” provide details of all the potential or known impacts identified, both positive and negative, and explain how you have reached these conclusions based on the information and evidence listed above. Where appropriate state “not applicable”.

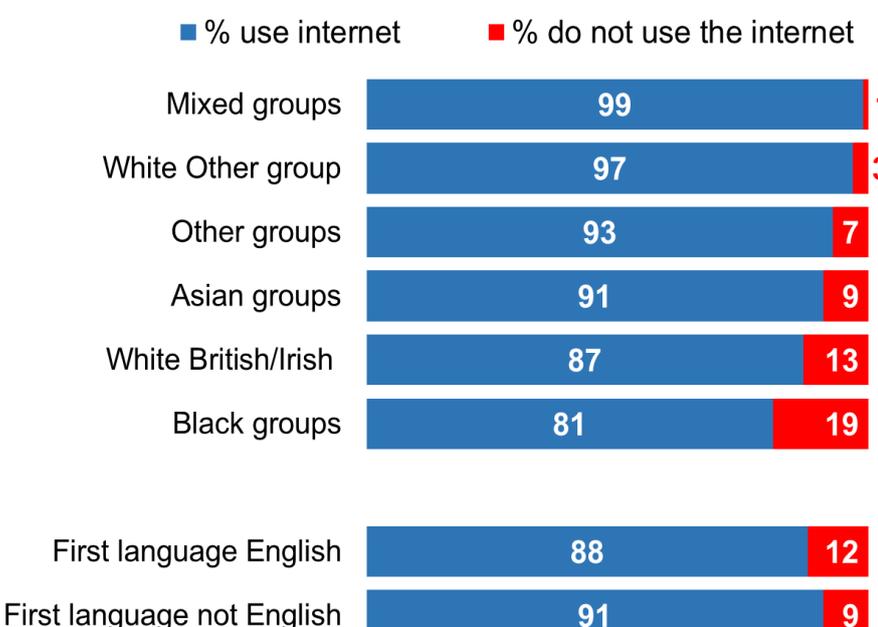
AGE	
Details of impacts identified	<p>In 2017, the median age of Brent population was 35 – five years lower than the national. The population is expected to age in the future: the number of residents aged 65 and over is expected to increase by two thirds (+67%) between 2018 and 2038 – an increase of 26,700 older residents (Equality Profile of Brent 2019)</p> <p>Older people who are unable or unwilling to access and use online services, including those where additional assistance is required, may be negatively impacted by this proposal.</p> <p>ONS – UK internet users, 2017 states that 99% of those aged under 34 access the internet and therefore are “digitally included”, with</p>

	<p>those aged between 55-64 being 90% “digitally included” and those aged 65 to 74 years old being 79% “digitally included”.</p> <p>The Brent RAS estimates that internet use is strongly related to age, which is consistent with national studies: whilst almost all young adults in Brent use the internet, just 53% of the over 65s use the internet.</p> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>■ % use internet ■ % do not use the internet</p>  <table border="1" style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <thead> <tr> <th>Age Group</th> <th>% use internet</th> <th>% do not use the internet</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>All</td> <td>89</td> <td>11</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Age 16 - 24</td> <td>100</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Age 25 - 34</td> <td>99</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Age 35 - 54</td> <td>97</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Age 55 - 64</td> <td>86</td> <td>14</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Age 65+</td> <td>53</td> <td>47</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> </div> <p>Source: Brent Council, Resident Attitudes Survey 2019 (sample size 2,113)</p> <p>Older people may also be positively impacted by this proposal as some of the technology will enable an improved quality of life for some residents. The Council will develop guidance on digital inclusion setting out the accessibility standards new technology needs to comply with and to help services plan the provision for vulnerable customers as access arrangements change. Further mitigating actions are outlined in section C.</p>	Age Group	% use internet	% do not use the internet	All	89	11	Age 16 - 24	100	0	Age 25 - 34	99	1	Age 35 - 54	97	3	Age 55 - 64	86	14	Age 65+	53	47
Age Group	% use internet	% do not use the internet																				
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Age 35 - 54	97	3																				
Age 55 - 64	86	14																				
Age 65+	53	47																				
DISABILITY																						
<p>Details of impacts identified</p>	<p>Around one in seven Brent residents have a long-term health problem or disability that limits their day-to-day-activities in some way. The prevalence of disability rises sharply with age: more than half of all residents aged 65 and over had a long-term health problem or disability (Equality Profile of Brent 2019).</p> <p>Customers who face access barriers and cannot self-serve due to disabilities or health conditions may be negatively impacted by this proposal. These may include but are not limited to customers with learning disabilities, mental health conditions or severe physical disabilities or health conditions, as well as customers with hearing (incl. BSL users) and/or visual impairments.</p>																					

	<p>The Brent RAS estimates that internet access is strongly related to disability/poor health (49% of residents with disability/health problem are not accessing the internet). This is likely to be related to the findings on age as prevalence of disability and poor health rises with age.</p> <p>The Brent RAS estimates that carers are as likely as non-carers to use the internet.</p> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>■ % use internet ■ % do not use the internet</p>  <table border="1" style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <thead> <tr> <th>Category</th> <th>% use internet</th> <th>% do not use the internet</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Disability/health problem (respondent)</td> <td>51</td> <td>49</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Disability/health problem (other household member)</td> <td>77</td> <td>23</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Not disabled</td> <td>94</td> <td>6</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Carer</td> <td>88</td> <td>12</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Not a carer</td> <td>89</td> <td>11</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> </div> <p>Source: Brent Council, Resident Attitudes Survey 2018 (Sample size: 2,113) Notes: Disability/health question wording: Do you, or does anybody else in your household, have any long-term illness, health problem, or disability, which limits your daily activities or the work you can do?</p> <p>Customers with disabilities or health conditions may also be positively impacted by this proposal as some of the technology will enable an improved quality of life for some residents, which will allow residents to live more independently for longer.</p> <p>The Council will develop guidance on digital inclusion setting out the accessibility standards new technology needs to comply with and to help services plan the provision for vulnerable customers as access arrangements change. Further mitigating actions are outlined in section C.</p>	Category	% use internet	% do not use the internet	Disability/health problem (respondent)	51	49	Disability/health problem (other household member)	77	23	Not disabled	94	6	Carer	88	12	Not a carer	89	11
Category	% use internet	% do not use the internet																	
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RACE																			
<p>Details of impacts identified</p>	<p>Almost two thirds (65%) of the Brent population are from Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups (Equality Profile of Brent 2019).</p> <p>BAME customers that do not have English as their first language may face access barriers or be unable to self-serve without alternative languages being available for translation. However, the council is able to arrange translation or interpreting services and/or alternative</p>																		

formats for customers with language and/or disability barriers upon request through its corporate translation and interpretation contract.

The Brent RAS estimates that internet use levels are highest for residents from mixed ethnic groups and lowest for black residents and that first language has little bearing on internet usage.



Group	% use internet	% do not use the internet
Mixed groups	99	1
White Other group	97	3
Other groups	93	7
Asian groups	91	9
White British/Irish	87	13
Black groups	81	19
First language English	88	12
First language not English	91	9

Source: Brent Council, Resident Attitudes Survey 2018 (Sample size: 2,113)

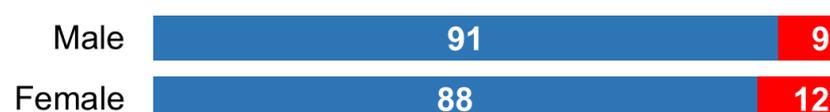
SEX

Details of impacts identified

The gender split in Brent population is 51% male and 49% female (Equality Profile of Brent 2019).

The Digital Strategy aims to provide assistance and support to all client groups, including people of all sexes.

The Brent RAS estimates that internet user rates in Brent are similar for men and women.



Gender	% use internet	% do not use the internet
Male	91	9
Female	88	12

Source: Brent Council, Resident Attitudes Survey 2018 (Sample size: 2,113)

SEXUAL ORIENTATION

Details of impacts identified	<p>Approximately 4.6% of Brent residents identify as Lesbian, Gay or Bisexual (Equality Profile of Brent 2019).</p> <p>The Digital Strategy aims to provide assistance and support to all client groups, including people of any sexual orientation.</p>
PREGANCY AND MATERNITY	
Details of impacts identified	<p>Brent has relatively high birth rates. In 2017, there were 5,208 live births in Brent – which equates to 74.5 births per 1,000 women aged 15 to 44 (Equality Profile of Brent 2019).</p> <p>Although services are not specifically aimed at this category, the Digital Strategy would make services more accessible to this client group, by increasing the ease in which Council services can be accessed.</p>
RELIGION OR BELIEF	
Details of impacts identified	<p>82% of Brent residents identify as having a religion or belief (Equality Profile of Brent 2019).</p> <p>The Digital Strategy aims to provide assistance and support to all client groups, including people of all religions or beliefs.</p>
GENDER REASSIGNMENT	
Details of impacts identified	<p>The Government Equalities Office tentatively estimates that around 0.3-0.8% of the UK population are transgender. In Brent this would equate to between 1,000 to 2,500 people (Equality Profile of Brent 2019).</p> <p>The Digital Strategy aims to provide assistance and support to all client groups, including people who have undergone gender reassignment.</p>
MARRIAGE & CIVIL PARTNERSHIP	
Details of impacts identified	<p>The 2011 Census found that around 43% of Brent residents were married and 0.3% were in a civil partnership. In 2015, 960 marriages or civil partnerships took place in Brent – of these, 29 (3%) were same sex marriages or civil partnerships (Equality Profile of Brent 2019).</p> <p>The Digital Strategy aims to provide assistance and support to all client groups, including people of all partnership arrangements.</p>

3. Could any of the impacts you have identified be unlawful under the Equality Act 2010?

No

4. Were the participants in any engagement initiatives representative of the people who will be affected by your proposal and is further engagement required?

The Brent Resident Attitudes Survey (RAS) sample was designed to be representative of the borough population and is large enough to provide an analysis of digital use by demographic and socio-economic group. The survey comprised of face to face interviews with 2,113 residents.

5. Please detail any areas identified as requiring further data or detailed analysis.

N/A

6. If, following your action plan, negative impacts will or may remain, please explain how these can be justified?

See section C

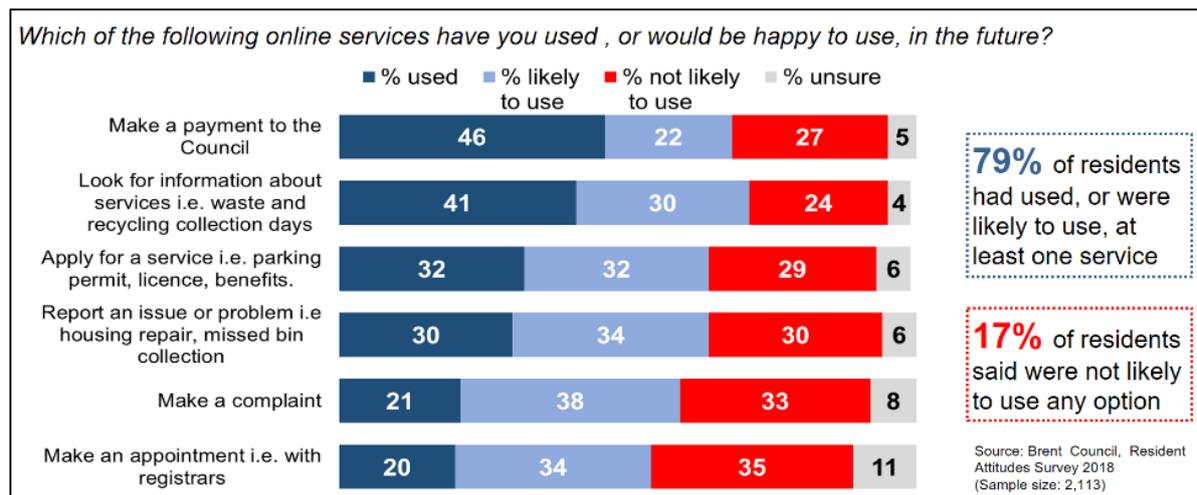
7. Outline how you will monitor the actual, ongoing impact of the policy or proposal?

Delivery of the Digital Strategy is overseen by the Brent Digital Board which meets monthly.

SECTION C - CONCLUSIONS

Based on the analysis above, please detail your overall conclusions. State if any mitigating actions are required to alleviate negative impacts, what these are and what the desired outcomes will be. If positive equality impacts have been identified, consider what actions you can take to enhance them. If you have decided to justify and continue with the policy despite negative equality impacts, provide your justification. If you are to stop the policy, explain why.

Our approach for online services and support is shaped by knowledge of those more likely to be digitally isolated, but with equal consideration for evidence showing that a majority of residents have already used Brent’s online services, or say they are likely to use them in future (see below chart, Brent RAS). By developing online offers that make the lives of these residents easier - such as enabling them to do things more efficiently or ‘on the go’– we are helping to make online residents first choice for interacting with the council, thereby releasing capacity in traditional channels that can be prioritised for vulnerable residents.



The Strategy recognises that a significant minority of Brent residents (1 in 10) are digitally excluded and as such considers the appropriate mitigating actions to offset the potential negative implications to the groups most likely to be impacted by this proposal (older residents and residents with a disability). These mitigating actions include:

1. The Digital Strategy promotes inclusion and provides opportunities for more residents to gain digital skills. Access to support for improved digital skills will be available to Brent residents, this will include:
 - Children and young people will be able to access coding clubs through libraries
 - Over 1700 places will be available for residents on Brent Start digital skills courses in the borough. The target for the number of people accessing the Brent Start curriculum is:

Year	Number of People
2020/21	524
2021/22	576
2022/23	634

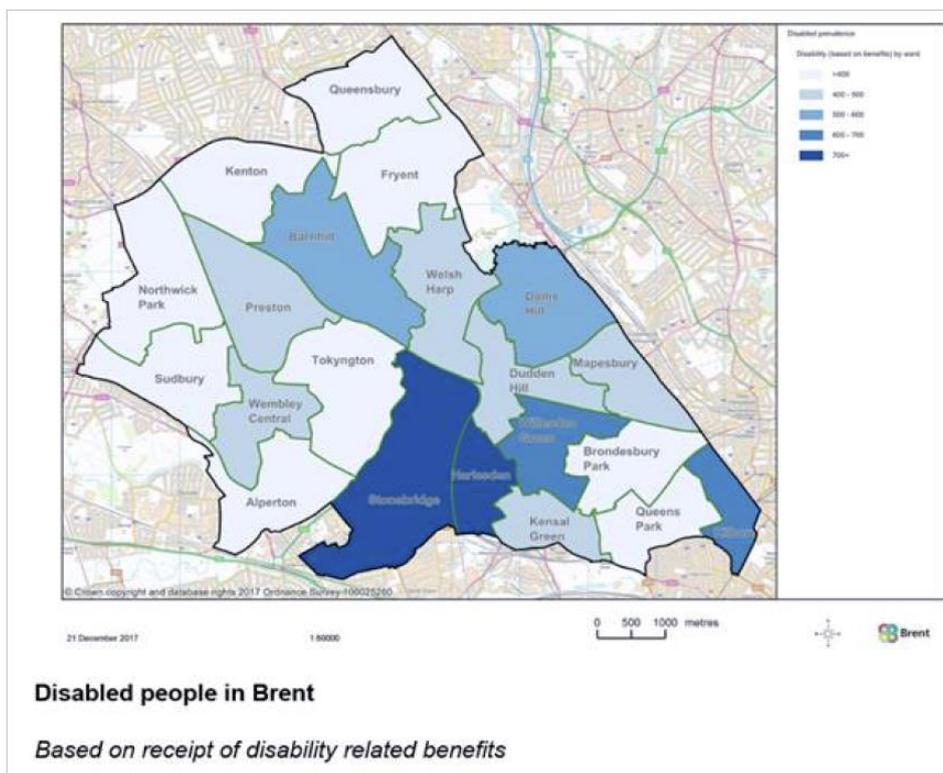
2. The Community Hub Model has been designed to provide support for more vulnerable residents with complex needs who may find it challenging to access mainstream services. The hub approach aims to engage a wide range of residents in an accessible and inclusive environment and provide support to get them online.

There are currently two community hubs operating in Harlesden and South Kilburn and a further three community hubs will open in Willesden, Wembley and Kingsbury by August 2020.

Digital support is a key element of the community hub core offer, the hub network aims to ensure positive outcomes for older people and disabled people who may require digital support to participate online.

Independent research was conducted in March 2018 to explore who was using the Harlesden hubs and how it is helping and benefiting residents. The research was conducted through observations and interviews carried out in the hub over three separate days. Quantitative data gathered identified benefits assistance as its most popular core service at the Hub (which was primarily accessed by local people). Qualitative data from the service provider demonstrates positive outcomes for disabled people accessing benefits support within the hub (who may not have been able to access it elsewhere).

The map below shows disabled people in Brent based on receipt of disability related benefits at a ward level; with two of the Harlesden locality wards (Harlesden and Stonebridge) being home to comparatively more disabled people.



3. The strategy aims to improve the accessibility of the council's website by the end of 2020/21. Any new digital platform designed for Brent will meet Government Digital Services specified Web Content Accessibility guidelines, which includes guidance on how to make digital services, websites and apps accessible to everyone, including users with impairments to their vision, hearing, mobility and thinking and understanding. To meet government accessibility requirements, the Council's digital services will:

- Meet level AA of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.1) as a minimum
- Work on the most commonly used assistive technologies – including screen magnifiers, screen readers and speech recognition tools
- Include people with disabilities in user research
- Have an accompanying accessibility page that explains how accessible the service is

4. Alongside the Digital Strategy, the Council is undertaking a Customer Access Review which aims to ensure that customers have the access, confidence and skills to engage with the Council digitally. One of the priorities of the review is to ensure services are automated at every opportunity so that resources can be prioritised to support customers that need it the most.

As part of the review, front line staff in contact centres, the customer service centre, community hubs and libraries will be trained to:

- Identify characteristics and situations which indicate complex needs with empowerment to provide additional support including delivery of appointment advocacy and hub referral services
- Ensure that more customers are 'getting online' through 'assisted digital support' available across all access channels. Consistent services will be provided face to face ranging from light touch support/access to equipment to full support provided through side by side assistance

A number of positive impacts from the strategy on Brent residents have been identified, these include:

- Improved quality of life for some residents enabled by new technology
- residents will be able to access more services online
- transactions will be easier
- residents will be able to access services via smart phones and table
- residents will be able to pay for more services online
- residents will be able to track the progress of their cases and transactions

- a more secure single portal will enable residents to effectively transact with a wider range of council services in one place.

A core element of the current digital programme has been to work with departments and service areas to identify opportunities for rolling out new platforms and technologies. Opportunities will be sought where possible to maximise customer access to customer services through digital and technological solutions.

SECTION D – RESULT

<i>Please select one of the following options. Mark with an "X".</i>		
A	CONTINUE WITH THE POLICY/PROPOSAL UNCHANGED	X
B	JUSTIFY AND CONTINUE THE POLICY/PROPOSAL	
C	CHANGE / ADJUST THE POLICY/PROPOSAL	
D	STOP OR ABANDON THE POLICY/PROPOSAL	

SECTION E - ACTION PLAN

This will help you monitor the steps you have identified to reduce the negative impacts (or increase the positive); monitor actual or ongoing impacts; plan reviews and any further engagement or analysis required.

Action	Expected outcome	Officer	Completion Date
To develop guidance for service areas on digital inclusion	Services are able to effectively plan the provision for vulnerable customers as access arrangements change across the council	Sadie East Head of Transformation	December 2019
User testing will involve older people and people with a disability who are less likely to be online	Better understand the user requirements specific to these groups	Rehana Ramesh Digital Transformation Lead	Ongoing

The Customer Access Review will consider how to make information more accessible to support elderly and people with a disability	Ensuring information and support is available for those who find it difficult to use online services	Troy Francis Director, Customer Services	March 2020
Ongoing monitoring of equalities through residents accessing Community Hubs and take-up of digital skills training	Continuous monitoring of the equalities implications of the strategy which will inform insights for implementation	Mohammed Jamam Brent Hubs Manager	Ongoing
Changes will be effectively communicated to those who may be negatively impacted by the strategy, including elderly residents and residents with a disability	Residents vulnerable to digital exclusion are made aware of changes which may negatively impact them	Sadie East Head of Transformation	Ongoing

SECTION F – SIGN OFF

Please ensure this section is signed and dated.

OFFICER:	Charlotte Moore
REVIEWING OFFICER:	Natalie Gordon
HEAD OF SERVICE:	Sadie East, Head of Transformation, 2 September 2019