

Moving Brent Forward Together for **2023-2027**



Brent Borough Plan forward

It gives me great pleasure to introduce Brent's Borough Plan for the next four years.

This document is informed by your priorities, expressed through your vote at the ballot box earlier this year and through your participation in the Residents Attitude Survey that over 1000 people completed at the end of 2021. Throughout this plan, my eyes remain on the same principle as always – to leave no resident behind. This will be more important than ever, as we stare down the cost of living emergency together.

The plan on the following pages sets out the direction of travel Brent Council will take over the coming years. It is a snapshot of what we want to achieve and the path we will take to get there together.

What is still unclear is our destination. As you will recognise, four years is a long time in the world of today, where every day brings a new unknown and a different crisis to respond to. With every change comes opportunity and Brent is a borough of unlimited opportunities.

Over the last ten years, Brent Council has needed to strip out close to £200m from its budgets. We have needed to be agile, cut back our workforce and reduce spend. We have innovated, using new technology and modern ways of working. We have streamlined senior management and worked ever more closely with community groups and residents.

Our ambitions for Brent can regrettably diminish in line with inflation. The same rising cost of living that has affected us all individually has also cut our already shrinking pot of funding even further. Increased inflation does not only drive up the price of everyday essentials, it stretches the cost of goods, services, supplies and running buildings too.

This has obvious

effects on what it is we can deliver for you.

With all that said, we will look to continue our record as the Council of the Year, the award we received back in 2020 – recognising that despite the challenges, Brent Council will always take tough decisions in seeking to ensure that no one is left behind. We will continue to prioritise the most vulnerable in our community and make sure that essential services like waste collection, libraries, education, public health and care are protected.

In Brent, like every London borough – we face a constant balancing act between the many challenges that await us. We face unprecedented demand in housing services; many more residents requiring round the clock care in later life; an increase in interventions by children's social services; and the ever present need to keep our borough safe, secure and clean.

We have so much to be hopeful for though. We are a place of renewal; filled with people that come from far and wide, people that wish for a brighter future. Our children attend more Ofsted 'Good' and 'Outstanding' schools than ever. We will seek to deliver more genuinely affordable homes than any other London Borough and we will re-affirm our commitment to do whatever we can to respond to the Climate Emergency before us.

Brent Council exists to serve you, our residents. I hope that our new Borough Plan shows that we are committed to supporting everyone that lives and works in Brent. Together we will build a better Brent, with a brighter future.

Cllr Muhammed Butt
Leader of Brent Council



Building a Better Brent – our journey

In Brent we think it is important to always talk to you, our residents, about what our plans should be now and in the future. In 2019 we spoke and engaged with residents (you) across Brent to decide on the five priorities to build a Better Brent. Since this, we also updated the plan during Covid. We wanted to make sure we supported you, the people of Brent, in the best way we could, by responding to the pandemic's impact on our communities.

Here are the previous priorities and what we have achieved so far:

Every opportunity to succeed

We focused on equipping our young people for the future. We wanted to improve attainment and exam results for our young people who are in or have left care, our young men of Black Caribbean heritage and to help young people to have more employment opportunities. We invested £44 million to upgrade our schools, adding 427 places for our young people with special education needs and disabilities. We have helped 1,000 residents into employment, including over 200 apprenticeships and 90 kick-start places.

A future built for everyone, an economy fit for all

We focused on making Brent a great and affordable place to live and work. We are committed to investing in our towns and high streets and bringing jobs into Brent. We wanted to provide safe, affordable housing for our residents. Over the last four years, our council homes programme has built 871 homes. We have introduced licencing laws to protect our renters' safety and wellbeing. We repaired over 128km of roads and pavements.

A cleaner, more considerate Brent

We focused on how we could play our part in tackling climate change and improve air quality. By 2030 we aim for Brent to be a carbon-neutral borough. £500,000 has been provided to make residents' homes more energy efficient and for community groups to run education programmes. In Brent, we have installed over 21,000 energy efficient streetlights. We have fitted 515 electric vehicle charging points. We have planted 4,533 trees, 22 wild-flower meadows, and bee corridors to protect residents from harmful emissions.

A Borough where we can all feel safe, secure, happy, and healthy

We focused on crime, safeguarding, physical activity, and culture. We aimed to reduce anti-social behaviour and violent crime, with reported incidents falling over the last 4 years. We strived to increase resident physical activity as we were the fourth lowest borough. We have installed 20 open space gyms and offered free instructor-led sessions. We sought Brent to be a borough where culture is celebrated and vibrant. We were awarded the Borough of Culture in 2020, which our culture services delivered successfully.

Strong foundations

We focused on making Brent a digital place, where our services meet the needs of residents and are value for money. We created a new way of working with our voluntary and community sector. Our digital strategy has set up a fund to provide residents with a free laptop internet, and training. We have given over £16 million in funding to our communities. We created a social value and ethical procurement policy, which means our suppliers have agreed to invest in Brent.

Our plan for the next 4 years

The new Borough Plan builds on our work and progress over the last four years but recognises that we have more to do. The Borough Plan will be a guide for the things we will prioritise and focus attention on as a council, as we try to make Brent the best place it can be. We will support our residents and businesses through the cost of living crisis and help everyone to recover following the pandemic. We recognise that we need a Borough Plan that builds on the lessons we have learned and prepares us for the challenges facing our residents, communities, partners and businesses. We must also be honest and acknowledge that the cost of living crisis will impact our resources and capacity to provide everything we have in the past. We expect to see an increase in our costs to deliver services. We have listened to, and will continue to listen to residents and partners to decide the best way for us to respond to any upcoming challenges together.

We would like to build on the strong community spirit in Brent, which saw the council and residents working together so effectively during the pandemic. We want the council and the community to continue to work together, building on these strong foundations and making sure your voices are heard and influence the services we deliver. To capture your voices, in recent months we have consulted:

- Our young people,
- Our residents who are carers,
- Our residents with disabilities,
- Our older people,
- Our homeless community,
- Our business community,
- Our key partners e.g. NHS,
- Our community and voluntary sector,
- Our residents who are in low social-economic situation,
- Our staff.

To help present a picture for Brent and demonstrate how our ambitions are informed by data, we have put together the information we have gathered in one document [<<hyperlink>>](#), published alongside the Borough Plan. We have called this document an evidence base as it tells us the make-up of our borough, our needs, our diversity, our uniqueness, and also includes opportunities for Brent.

By building on what you told us and using the evidence, we commit to delivering a Borough Plan 2023-27 that prioritises:

1. Prosperity, Pride and Belonging in Brent
2. A Cleaner, Greener Future
3. Respect and Renewal in Brent
4. The Best Start in Life
5. A Healthier Brent

Strategic Priority 1: Prosperity, Pride and Belonging in Brent

The cost of living crisis is affecting everyone in Brent, with residents and communities with the most complex needs being hit the hardest. In our residents attitude survey, one in five people stated their finances will get worse over the next year. We expect greater demand for our support as energy costs and use of foodbanks continues to increase.

We want to tackle inequality and ease the pressure of the rising cost of living. This means continuing to work with partners and building on our existing joint plans to reduce poverty and ensure everyone has access to direct support when they need it – whether it be financial, digital, welfare centred advice or for employment. This is also about making sure our residents and communities with more complex needs receive the best possible support. To enable this, we will continue our progress to be a Digital Place and Digital Council that make it easier for residents to access support and for us all to interact.

We want to be clear that Brent is open for business. This means building stronger partnerships to ensure our high streets and local organisations are able to thrive. To achieve this, we will support our business community in providing and developing appropriate training. This will help residents gain the high quality skills they need to access and secure local well-paid jobs.

DESIRED OUTCOME 1: Easing the Cost of Living Crisis

We will:

- Work together with partners across Brent to work collaboratively to reduce poverty. This includes spreading awareness, improving access to services and support and providing tools and resource to help residents improve their lives.
- Provide a range of programmes which residents can access and understand their options for direct support. This includes maintaining support already available through the Resident Support Fund, Digital Inclusion, Fuel Poverty Toolkit, Fuel Vouchers, Digital devices.
- Deliver welfare support services from Brent Hubs to ensure residents access advice and guidance, help them to understand their rights and entitlements, promote Credit Unions and provide support that encourage small businesses to thrive.
- Provide tailored resources to those residents with the most complex needs to ensure our services are as accessible as possible and remove any unnecessary barriers.
- Work with partners, to create more opportunities for residents to develop skills and secure higher-paid jobs in growth markets, for example tech and green skills.

DESIRED OUTCOME 2: Brent for Business

We will:

- Improve the way we work with businesses to better support our high streets by increasing footfall and creating a Community Shops that encourage local shopping and increase the reuse, hire, and to reduce the cost of household goods.
- Lead by example and work with partners to employ more local people and create more opportunities to develop skills and training that help people to secure well-paid jobs.
- Work with neighbouring boroughs to attract more large businesses to the North West London and support them with local recruitment, skills and training.
- Better understand our business community so that we can raise awareness of appropriate training and employment opportunities for local people.
- Supporting community wealth building by encouraging retention of investment in the Brent economy and connecting local businesses to help them access supply chain opportunities.

What Success Will Look Like

- Greater accessibility for our welfare support and advice programmes, including Brent Hubs, Family Wellbeing Centres, Resident Support Fund, Digital Inclusion, Fuel Poverty Toolkit, Fuel Vouchers.
- More council homes and more temporary accommodation provided by the council.
- Providing digitally excluded households with devices, internet access and digital skills.
- Greater availability and uptake of skills development and training initiatives.
- More people securing work through training and development provided through Brent Works and Brent Starts.
- The council continues its commitment to, and encourages more businesses and partners to pay the London Living Wage.
- More people are employed in well-paid jobs and an increase in average hourly wage.
- Creating a Community Shop that supports local communities and their needs.



Strategic Priority 2: A Cleaner, Greener Future

You have told us that safety should be the most important priority for the council. We commit to working hard to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour. Prevention is essential so we want to tackle the causes of crime. We will help people leave criminal lifestyles and we will pursue justice for victims. We will also work with our communities to build trust, prevent criminality and improve our response to crime.

In addition to making our borough safer, we want to make it cleaner. However, if we want to deliver quality public services such as street cleansing, bin collections and park maintenance, we need you to tell us what you want and need from these services. We need to ensure there are ways for you to do that, which give you the opportunity to influence decisions on council services and activity.

The effects of climate change are here, and we all have a role to play. We are determined to work with our residents, partners and communities to reduce our carbon footprint as far as possible. We will also work with partners to reduce our emissions and usage of harmful material.

We want you, as a community, to have opportunities to take part in the council's decision-making process. Brent Connects is a central part of our approach to this, as it allows residents to come together, discuss what matters most to them, and work with us to develop and test new ideas. We will continue to work with faith leaders, Brent hubs, and other voluntary and community sector partners to engage with under-represented groups. Another way we enable the community to influence council decisions is through You Decide. You Decide is a funding initiative, also known as participatory budgeting, which allows local residents to vote on which local projects should receive grant money.

DESIRED OUTCOME 1: A Cleaner and Safer Borough

We will:

- Offer provision of high quality responsive universal services to all residents, ensuring we reduce negative impacts on the environment while delivering high standards and meeting our Customer Promise— for example, clean streets, waste collection, skills, parks and libraries.
- Work with the Safer Brent Partnership and our partners to improve community safety, and reduce violence and vulnerability with a focus on reducing violence against women and girls.

DESIRED OUTCOME 2: Empowering our Communities

We will:

- Introduce and deliver our new Community Engagement Framework. The framework is our plan to engage with people at a neighbourhood level to better capture and understand residents' voices, encourage greater involvement in council activities, and use different methods to do this.
- Support the Voluntary and Community Sector with clear communication and forums to provide insight, data and case studies of the lived experiences of residents.
- Deliver grant funding schemes that enable local people to lead on community activities and infrastructure

What Success Will Look Like

- Maintain our recycling targets as a proportion of overall waste.
- Reduced incidents of anti-social behaviour and fear of crime.
- Increase in resident engagement and influence in decision making.
- Delivery of successful and impactful grant funded programmes, including those delivered in collaboration with the voluntary sector and community sector.



Strategic Priority 3: Respect and Renewal in Brent

We want Brent to continue to grow, prosper and be a place where people want to live and work. To support this aspiration, we will do two things:

- Ensure sustainability is central to the growth of our borough and local economy
- Invest to make our streets cleaner and healthier.

We will create more accessible and genuinely affordable housing. We want to be the leaders in London for inclusive housing development that works better for everyone. This means buying houses; building new social, accessible and affordable homes and improving our existing estates. We will also continue working with partners to increase the supply of private rented accommodation.

We want a growing borough which puts sustainability and social value at the heart of all its development. This means making it easy for local businesses to choose to invest locally. We want to see as much of Brent's money as possible, re-invested in Brent. We are also developing our Local Plan to attract businesses from growing sectors into Brent. This will bring new well-paid jobs to the borough. Our Local Plan aims to revitalise and strengthen our town centres and high streets, making Brent more prosperous.

Cleaner and safer environments are key to communities becoming healthier. To do this we will invest in, and work with local communities and partners to recycle more, and to keep streets cleaner. We also want to support residents' health and wellbeing by making walking and cycling safer and more accessible in Brent.

DESIRED OUTCOME 1: Safe, Secure and Decent Housing

We will:

- Continue with our pledge to deliver 1,000 new council homes and continue to be leaders in London in building inclusive and genuinely more affordable homes.

DESIRED OUTCOME 2: A Sustainable Borough and a Greener Economy

We will:

- Seek ways of improving the use of the civic centre, including waste reduction and income generation, to lead by example, and encourage partners and the community to adopt more sustainable ways of living and working.
- Use our planning powers and land ownership opportunities to deliver more joined up projects and services with localities and neighbourhoods. Learn from good examples such as the Church End Council led development that will bring an additional £3m Social Value into the area
- Work with partners, through the West London Alliance, to create more opportunities for residents to develop skills and secure higher-paid jobs in growth markets, for examples tech and green skills.

- Ensure our social value policy encourages all the organisations we buy services from to provide benefit to our local communities, through jobs, skills, apprenticeships and training places.

DESIRED OUTCOME 3: Keeping Brent on the Move

We will:

- Invest in our roads and pavement improvement to help keep our streets clean, improve recycling, and reduce the use of waste landfill and incinerators.
- Deliver the Healthy Streets programme to encourage more walking and cycling in safe, inclusive, designed environments.
- Continue to strengthen our work force and its ability to deliver fair and equitable services through development and leadership programmes, ensuring the workforce is representative of the borough at all levels where we can.

DESIRED OUTCOME 4: A Representative Workforce

We will:

- Continue to strengthen our work force and its ability to deliver fair and equitable services through development and leadership programmes, ensuring the workforce is representative of the borough at all levels where we can.

What Success Will Look Like

- More genuinely affordable and accessible homes available to families and residents.
- New ways for council to generate income.
- More local investment and social value commitments from our suppliers in Brent.
- Increase in residents walking and cycling.
- Achieving our roadways and pavements maintenance targets.
- More local residents in council jobs, including those in graduate or entry level roles.
- Improve the representativeness of senior management, compared to the Brent population, within the organisation



Strategic Priority 4: The Best Start in Life

We want our young people to get the best start in life. We want them to receive the support they need when they need it. We also want our young people to receive a quality education, which develops their skills and allows them to achieve their potential and realise their aspirations. To do this, we will work through our Family Wellbeing Centres, with partners, communities, businesses and residents, and in particular our young residents. We also want to ensure our children and young people are safe and will aim to achieve this by improving our approach to safeguarding, including for those who are transitioning to adulthood.

We will raise attainment and aspirations. Working with schools and partners we will make sure access to education is fairer and more equal. This includes ensuring there is tailored support for our Black African, Caribbean and Somali communities to harness their talent and potential. We will also build on our existing investment to upgrade provision and SEND school places.

We want all our young people from all backgrounds to be seen and heard in our services. We will create more opportunities and spaces to empower our young people to have their say - for example, the Youth Advisory Group used their lived experience to influence the delivery of the Black Community Action Plan. We must hear all our young people's voices, from newly arrived refugees to long-established communities; from our young people with disabilities and those who belong to the LGBT+. We will constantly review how we engage with our young people to ensure we hear views from different groups of young people from across the borough.

DESIRED OUTCOME 1: Raised Aspirations, Achievement and Attainment

We will:

- Raise aspirations and address any underachievement from age 0-25 by promoting inclusion and inclusive schools.
- Focus on the Black African, Caribbean and Somali communities, through the Black Community Action Plan initiatives to continue to develop future community leaders.
- Improve our approach and support around safeguarding, both in relation to contextual and transitional safeguarding
- Promote the value of early intervention and prevention by working with families and through the activities of our Family Wellbeing Centres.
- Ensure the Children's Trust and Integrated Care System provide value for money and build better partnerships to improve our Children's Services.

DESIRED OUTCOME 2: Young People are Seen and Heard

We will:

- Enhance our existing young peoples' forums, including Brent Youth Parliament, School Councils, Children in Care Council and Youth Advisory Groups by encouraging greater involvement of diverse groups and newly arrived residents.
- Encourage young people to become active in their communities and ensure their voices are central in our key sustainability projects.
- Directly engage with our young people across all service areas using approaches and methods outlined in the Community Engagement Framework.

What Success Will Look Like

- More people leave education better equipped for future life.
- More people have the skills and attributes for work, enabling them to make a positive contribution to their communities.
- More people to enter employment including apprenticeships and graduate schemes.
- Improved opportunities and achievements for people from Black African, Caribbean and Somali communities.
- Increased use and take up of Family Wellbeing Centre support and offers.
- More opportunities for young people to participate in decisions, including more engagement with young people and people from a range of different communities.



Strategic Priority 5 – A Healthier Brent

The pandemic highlighted the health inequalities that exist in our communities. In Brent, we saw that there were more Covid cases and deaths in some groups, specifically: older people; men; Black and Asian people; and those living in more deprived areas. We know that there are a range of underlying factors such as housing, employment, and income that contribute to these inequalities. To tackle this, we want to establish ways to improve health outcomes for those who need it most.

We will learn from the pandemic. We will make sure our health services meet local need and reduce health inequalities. This means engaging with our communities and health partners to understand the challenges and differences that exist. We will use this information to develop community-centred approaches and solutions. We also want to improve communication with our communities so our residents know to access support and improve their health.

We want Brent to be a healthier and stronger borough. We can do this by removing barriers residents face to becoming physically active. This includes making our green spaces, walking, and cycling routes more SEND friendly, inclusive, and well-maintained.

DESIRED OUTCOME 1: Tackling Health Inequalities

We will:

- Work with the North West London Integrated Care Partnership Board to address health inequalities and strengthen our relationship with health partners to deliver priorities in the Health and Wellbeing Strategy.
- Work with the North West London Integrated Care Partnership to ensure children's health needs are prioritised. For example, addressing health inequalities for young people and ensuring children gain access to mental health and wellbeing support when they need it.
- Maintain preparedness to cope with public health emergencies. Make sure lessons from the pandemic are used to focus public health attention and resources to the communities most affected by and still recovering from Covid.
- Work with NHS and partners to deliver more cross-sector working within services that impact on health, such as housing, mental health and community safety.
- Use the Health and Wellbeing Strategy action plan to make sure Parks and Green spaces offer more opportunities for accessible physical activities and exercise. This includes making inclusive design improvements and management of pocket parks and community gardens.

DESIRED OUTCOME 2: Localised Services for Local Needs

We will:

- Respond to the Health and Social Care Act 2022 with the creation of more locality-based decision-making and delivery of services that meet the needs of Brent's diverse localities.

- Continue our community based work through Brent Health Matters and work with NHS partners to increase more community led approaches.
- Focus our commissioning approach on prevention and wellbeing and ensure residents are involved in deciding local solutions.
- Engage with communities to ensure they can access information and services to support them in managing their health better. This includes investing more and working within our Voluntary Community Sector organisations.
- Build on the successful methods of communication and engagement used during the pandemic, such as webinars with key speakers and social commentators for ongoing discussion with residents.

What Success Will Look Like

- More residents have access to outdoor activities.
- More accessible facilities in public spaces.
- Reducing health inequalities, particularly for groups disproportionately impacted by Covid and through co-designed approaches with communities.
- More people supported to sign up to GP practices.
- More people are seen by the Brent Health Matters team.
- Improved outreach to communities and residents.
- A reduction in referrals to more acute/emergency services.



Black Community Action Plan

In July 2020, Brent talked to its Black community about the inequalities they face. Together we developed our [Black Community Action Plan](#) to address these inequalities.

Brent Connects

[Brent Connects](#) is a space for local communities to come together, discuss the things that matter most to you and work with the council and its partners to develop and test new ideas that will improve the lives of Brent residents. There are five Brent Connects areas.

Brent Health Matters (BHM)

[Brent Health Matters](#) is a programme to reduce health inequalities. BHM works with the local communities to find out what services they want and need. It then delivers those services in a way which is easy for local residents to access.

Brent Hubs

[Brent Hubs](#) provide advice and support for residents in different locations across the borough.

Brent Customer Promise

[The Brent Customer Promise](#) is our commitment and promise sets out the standards of service you can expect from us whichever service you use.

Community gardens

A community garden is owned and run by the local community. It is often used to grow food.

Contextual safeguarding

An approach to safeguarding that recognises that young people may be at risk of significant harm not only within their home environment, but also outside it.

Digital Council

Digital Council is a term used in our [Digital Strategy](#). It means that we are improving the way we use technology and data. By collecting data in an ethical and secure way we are using it to make our services and information more accessible, personalised and responsive.

Digital Place

Digital Place is a term used in our Digital Strategy. It means we are building a borough-wide digital infrastructure providing fast connection to the internet. It also means we are providing training to improve residents digital skills.

Integrated Care Partnership (ICP)

The Integrated Care Partnership is a partnership of local health and care providers in Brent. Its aim is to improve local health and remove health inequalities.

Local Plan

The [Local Plan](#) is a collection of planning documents which sets out our strategy for future development in Brent

Resident Support Fund

Brent's [Resident Support Fund](#) is a support fund available to residents who are in financial difficulty.

SEND

SEND is an acronym which stands for Special Educational Needs and Disability.

Transitional safeguarding

A safeguarding approach and response that addresses specific developmental, social and contextual needs from a person going from adolescence to adulthood.

West London Alliance

The [West London Alliance](#) is a partnership between seven London boroughs. They are: Brent, Barnet, Ealing, Hammersmith and Fulham, Harrow, Hillingdon, and Hounslow.

You Decide

[You Decide](#) is a Brent programme in which local people choose how local funds are spent. Projects are submitted and local residents are invited to a decision day to vote on which projects they think would benefit their community, and they would like to go ahead. Funding is then given to these projects.



