

2019-2023

Borough Plan

Building a Better Brent



Foreword

Brent is a borough characterised by change. It is a place where new communities have always settled, regularly adding to its distinctive diversity, and this continues today. Regeneration is also changing the face of the borough, in Wembley, South Kilburn, Alperton, Harlesden, Church End, and elsewhere. And we are growing - around 335,000 residents today, projected to increase to almost 350,000 by 2023, and over 375,000 by 2030.

Our residents are living longer too – the number of residents aged 65 and over will increase by 15% over the lifetime of this Plan, and by 41% by 2030. This is to be celebrated, as advances in medical care give people more years with their families. However, a growing and ageing population poses real challenges for the council in ensuring services for those that need them. For example, more people now require social care. Their needs are becoming more complex, and therefore more expensive to meet.

At the same time our resources are also changing - and not for the better. Nationally, councils have lost 63% of their funding from the government since 2010, and in Brent we have had to save £164 million. This will continue - we are required to make significant further savings over the next four years and beyond.

It is within this challenging context that the council has set out a vision for 2023. Achieving it will require us to focus on the things that matter most and where we can make a real difference to the lives of our residents. We will need to continue to explore and innovate, using our resources in the most effective way, and securing the services that people need. This will mean working closely with partners, ensuring that the best use is made of all our means.

We are at the forefront of a digital revolution, which is transforming how people interact and their expectations for accessing information and services. Over the next four years we will also continue to adapt our workforce and buildings to successfully deliver our priorities. We will build resilient communities through our community hub model - a prime example of how we want to address the needs of our residents earlier. We will do this, in a joined-up way, grounded in the neighbourhoods where people live.

The Borough Plan is our roadmap for navigating these changes and harnessing them for the benefit of the borough. By working together we can all help Build a Better Brent.

Cllr Muhammed Butt
Leader of Brent Council



Carolyn Downs
Brent Council Chief Executive





Introduction

Our vision for 2023 is to make Brent a borough of culture, empathy, and shared prosperity. A borough where people from different backgrounds feel at ease with one another, share in cultural opportunities and activities, and value the principles of fairness, equality, good citizenship and respect for people and place. People will feel that they and their children are safe, cared for and can achieve and that they receive excellent services when they need them. Brent will be a great place to live and work, where business and enterprise prosper and local people have opportunities to change their lives for the better.

While our vision remains similar to that set out in our previous Borough Plan, the context within which we are working continues to change drastically. Local government is set to experience the most significant reform of its funding arrangements for over two decades. The Fair Funding Review - a potential redistribution of government funding to councils - as well as changes to the way business rates are charged and how much councils can retain locally, will all have critical implications for the distribution of funding across local authorities. At the same time, the results of the Spending Review 2019 will affect the total level of funding available to the sector from April 2020.

The council expects to need to make savings of around £40m over the course of this plan, and has already identified proposals in order to achieve a balanced budget up to 2021. Achieving our vision will therefore require innovation, continued and deeper partnership, and careful planning based on sound evidence. It will also require us to shift from focusing on single services addressing specific issues, to a more joined-up approach based around localities.

We are well-placed to do this. Around two thirds of our residents feel that the council does a good job, and 56% also feel that people in their local area can contribute to making it better, which will continue to be important as we all work together to help Build a Better Brent. The council will lead this by focusing our energies on five strategic themes.

Our strategic themes

DESIRED OUTCOMES

- Reduction in anti-social behaviour, the risk of harm and re-offending
- Reduction in violent crime, including gang and knife crime
- Support our most vulnerable adults, enabling them to choose and control the services they receive, to remain independent and lead active lives
- Improve the health of Brent residents
- Make Brent a place where culture is celebrated and vibrant

DESIRED OUTCOMES

- Enable more residents to get online
- Ensuring value for money through our commissioning and procurement
- Building services around residents and their needs
- Increase in resident satisfaction
- Increase in resident involvement



DESIRED OUTCOMES

- Increase in inward investment achieved via the council
- Produce our new Local Plan, setting out our vision, priorities and areas for future development in the borough
- Increase in housing supply
- Reduction in the number of households in temporary accommodation
- Keep traffic moving and our roads and pavements in good repair

About Brent

334,700 people live in Brent - we are the 6th largest borough in London



76,800

under the age of 18
23% of the population

36

is our
average age

39,500

aged 65 and over
12% of the population

57%

adults don't exercise

4th

healthy life expectancy ———— life expectancy



10th

15th

8th

7th

in London

In Employment

71.3%

lower than

74.2%

Self-employed

17.6%

higher than

13.2%

Unemployed

5.7%

similar to

5.0%

Benefit claimants

2.2%

same as

2.2%

London
average



53% residents born abroad
2nd highest in London



9% of residents are born
in India

37%

of people do not speak
English as a first language

8%

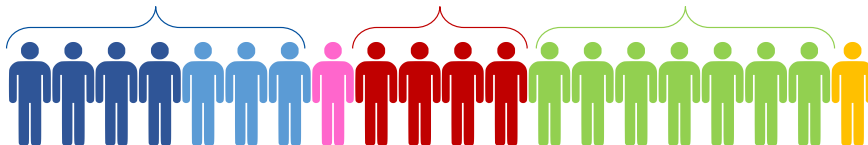
speak Gujarati, the most
spoken language after English

35%
white

6%
mixed
18%
black

34%
Asian

7%
other



16%

of the population is
white other, which
includes **22,000** residents
from Romania and Bulgaria



15.7

births per 1,000

higher than

14.1%



Pupils in Brent achieved
half a grade more than
pupils nationally with
similar starting points

8.2%



adults have
no qualifications

higher than

6.8%

London
average



The crime rate is **70.8** per 1,000 population, 15th highest in London





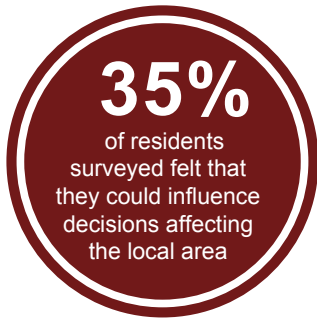
Every four years, we carry out a major survey to hear the views of residents on a range of issues. We held our most recent in the summer of 2018, and this is what you told us.

Here's what you said....

76%

Are satisfied with their local area as a place to live

This is slightly below the national average of 79%. High earners, home owners and those aged between 55 and 64 recorded the higher levels of dissatisfaction with the local area.



Top 3 things that residents value the most locally



Top 3 things that residents most want to see money spent on



Sports and leisure facilities, built environment: old and new buildings and road/pavement maintenance were all some of the least valued and least likely to be picked to spend money on among residents

This figure is in line with the 45% national average for councils (27% disagree, 28% indifferent – also all in line with national average).

45%
said local services provide good value for money

66%



of people are happy with the way in which Brent Council runs things, a figure higher than the 61% national average.

Brent Council satisfaction rates have risen from a low of 30% in 2006 and have remained at 66% since 2014.

Interestingly over the same 10 year period nationally rates reached a peak in 2014 of 68% but have dropped down to 61% in 2018.





45%

Agree

30%

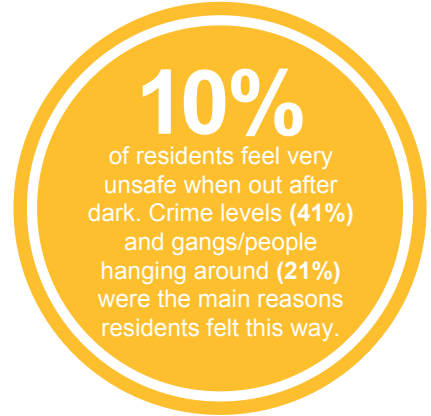
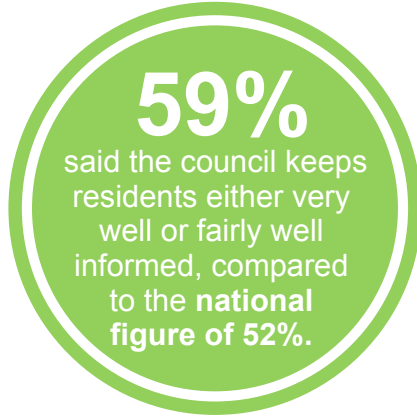
Neither

25%

Disagree



% that agree or disagree the council is helpful when you contact it



Rubbish and litter lying around

57%

Using/dealing drugs

42%

People being drunk or rowdy in public places

41%

People hanging around the streets

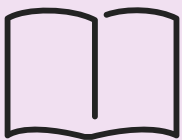
40%

Biggest neighbourhood problems for residents

23%

said their local area had improved over the last four years

This figure is a 2% increase when compared to the 2014 data, when the survey was last run.



28%

of residents have in the last twelve months read for pleasure.



25%

A quarter of Brent residents have no formal qualifications at all.



51%

English is the first main language for half of residents.



Harlesden

49%

In Harlesden, half of residents thought their local area had improved over the last four years, almost double the 27% who thought this in 2014.



Our journey so far

Achieving our strategic priorities will be challenging. However, with our partners we have made great strides towards making our vision a reality over the past four years.

- 97.7% of Brent pupils attend schools which are rated good or outstanding, and 94% of our early years providers are good or outstanding as well.
- Achievement in our primary and secondary schools is higher than ever. In particular, Brent's secondary pupils outperformed London in 2018, and their progress was amongst the highest in the country.
- Our children's services have received their best-ever rating from Ofsted following inspection, recognised as "Good" and with the experiences and progress of children in care and care leavers recognised as being "Outstanding".
- We have helped deliver more than 1000 jobs for residents, and support 3000 learners each year through Brent Start, who have given us a 97% satisfaction rating.
- We have appointed Town Centre Managers to rejuvenate nine priority town centres in the borough.
- 4400 net additional homes have been built in the last four years.
- We have received £50 million of Community Infrastructure Levy from new developments to pay for supporting infrastructure.
- We have built 120 new council homes in South Kilburn, and have won eight housing and architecture awards for our regeneration work across the borough since 2016.

- We are using the latest technology to transform our Housing Management Service, enabling us to deal more quickly with findings from inspections.
- We prevented 599 families from becoming homeless in 2017/18, and have launched a new form to process new homelessness applications. The council's wholly-owned company i4B has also let 177 homes to homeless households, avoiding the need to place them in temporary accommodation and generating a saving of at least £600,000 so far.
- We have installed almost 20,000 lower-energy LED street lamps, which will save us £850,000 per year and reduce our carbon footprint.
- We have dramatically improved the numbers of people receiving mental health assessments on time, from less than 25% to over 90%, by taking a smarter and more flexible approach to appointment planning.
- Tudor Gardens, our residential care home for people with learning disabilities, has been rated "Good" by the Care Quality Commission, its best-ever rating.
- We have achieved efficiencies in our use of the public health grant whilst maintaining some of the best outcomes in the country for those recovering from drug and alcohol misuse.
- Our libraries are amongst the most popular in the country, and saw more than a million items loaned in 2017/18, and more than 2.5 million visits. Over 4000 children also took part in the Summer Reading Challenge, and over 650 adults took part in the 2018 Reading Ahead scheme to improve low literacy.
- Finally, we have been chosen as the London Borough of Culture for 2020, beating 21 other boroughs with a proposal recognised by the Mayor of London as "visionary", and receiving £1.35 million to stage a year-long programme which will put culture and the arts at the heart of Brent's future.



Every opportunity to succeed

Education is crucial to helping people fulfil their potential and achieve their ambitions. Here in Brent, we are rightly proud of our early years provision, the teaching and leadership in our schools and the further education opportunities available within the borough. The council has worked in close collaboration with local school-led partnerships to achieve continuous improvement in the quality of education for a number of years, and achievement in our primary and secondary schools is higher than ever. We will continue to make advances by drawing on their expertise and experience to drive school improvement, agreeing support and intervention where necessary.

We take a Contextual Safeguarding approach and recognise that the different relationships young people form in their neighbourhoods and schools can affect them. While most groups perform well, some pupils are at risk of lower attainment than others due to a variety of factors. This is the case in particular for boys of Black Caribbean heritage, children looked after by the council and those reaching the age where they leave our care. This can affect their opportunities to stay in education, training or employment and the likelihood of them becoming offenders, so we owe them particular attention to offer life chances that are as good as those of their peers. We will raise their attainment and provide them with support to stay in education, employment or training. Equally as important is ensuring there are sufficient places for children to learn, and by 2023 we will need additional specialist provision so that vulnerable children and young people do not need to travel outside of Brent for their education.

More generally we need to raise people's skills and formal qualifications, and improve the below-average employment level. Although the situation has improved, household income in Brent is the third lowest in London.



EQUIPPED FOR THE FUTURE

Desired Outcome: Improvement in Key Stage results for boys of Black Caribbean heritage; Looked-after children and care leavers

We will:

- Support the continued improvement of early years provision and schools – particularly helping the very small number which are still to achieve a “good” rating from Ofsted.
- Raise the attainment of particular groups and narrow the gap with their peers for:
 - Boys of Black Caribbean heritage
 - Pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)
 - Children and young people in the care of the council
 - Young people leaving our care and moving into becoming independent
 - Pupils at risk of being permanently excluded from school.
- Provide additional specialist places in mainstream schools for children with SEND.



Desired Outcome: High level skills achievement; Increase in average wage

We will:

- Promote employment support and skills provision, including significantly increasing the take-up of apprenticeships.
- Ensure that residents can access affordable training and learning opportunities, so that they can secure and remain in employment and enhance their careers.

A future built for everyone, an economy fit for all



We have made huge strides in regenerating the borough, with thousands of new homes, hundreds of new jobs, and much-needed growth in our tax base, not to mention hundreds of millions of pounds spent in the local and regional economy. This is improving the lives of our residents and we will invest further to rejuvenate town centres and achieve high-value employment.

We must also ensure more affordable high-quality housing, for over 12,000 households currently in need. Having brought management of council housing back in-house, we are improving services to our tenants and leaseholders, and offering opportunities for meaningful engagement with them. We will encourage housing associations to do the same, and extend regulation to ensure private landlords offer decent standards for their tenants.

For those who do not have a home, Brent is well-placed to meet new legal duties to relieve and prevent homelessness. Against the overall trend across London, we have reduced the numbers of households in temporary accommodation, by developing alternatives such as increasing the supply of private rented accommodation. Brent has amongst the highest numbers of households in temporary accommodation in England, so this will continue to be a challenge.

Brent has busy streets and town centres - we need to ensure we are able to keep our borough moving with well-maintained roads and pavements, effective parking controls, and improved public transport and cycling facilities.



A GREAT PLACE TO DO GOOD WORK

Desired Outcome: Increase inward investment into the borough achieved via the council

We will:

- Invest in Brent's town centres to reverse decline and support diversification, employment and enterprise.
- Explore more in-house and Brent-based options for services we provide.



GETTING REGENERATION RIGHT

Desired Outcome: Produce our new Local Plan, setting out our vision, priorities and areas for future development in the borough

We will:

- Ensure well-designed public spaces and buildings - such as the multi-storey Generator building at the Northfields site, - through master planning, environmental improvements, active community engagement and place management standards.
- Proactively shape and influence development within Old Oak and Park Royal, ensuring that the council's regeneration objectives for Harlesden and Willesden Junction are prioritised.



SOMEWHERE TO CALL HOME

Desired Outcome: Increase in housing supply; Reduction in number of households in temporary accommodation

We will:

- Bring forward sites (including for estate wide regeneration) to meet significantly rising housing need in Brent.
- Deliver 5,000 new affordable, good quality homes with decent space provision to high safety standards in the next five years, including:
 - Improving relationships with local housing associations so that they can contribute to this target
 - Building 1,000 of these homes directly, and
 - Aiming to ensure that 50% of housing built in Brent is affordable.
- Invest in our properties to ensure our residents live in homes which are of a high standard and fire-safe.
- Increase satisfaction with management services amongst our tenants and leaseholders.
- Use our relationships with housing associations in Brent to ensure they meet high standards for their tenants.
- Lobby for the extension of our selective licensing arrangements to more of the borough.
- Contribute to better health and wellbeing outcomes for homeless households, and reduce our use of temporary accommodation, instead placing them in private sector tenancies and properties secured and built by i4B.

GOING PLACES

Desired Outcome: Keep traffic moving and our roads and pavements in good repair.

We will:

- Provide responsive and well-targeted regulation of parking.
- Liaise with utility companies and developers to protect residents, businesses and visitors from unnecessary disruption due to works on our roads.
- Work with the Mayor to deliver the West London Orbital passenger line, with new stations in Neasden and Harlesden, providing better access to west and north London and Heathrow.
- Renew roads and pavements and continue to maintain the highway network through a planned programme of improvement.



A cleaner, more considerate Brent

We declared a climate and ecological emergency in July 2019. We are committed to doing all we can to aim for carbon neutrality by 2030 and work with the government to achieve the 2050 target.

The environment is a major factor in the quality of life for our residents, who have identified clean streets, parks and trees, and collection of waste and recycling, as three of the top five priorities that they value the most in Brent. However, in common with much of London, the quality of our air is not as good as it could or should be. Everyone in Brent has the ability to help do something about this, and the council can do its part through reducing its own emissions and encouraging others to do the same.

Despite the importance of the environment to everyone, a small number spoil our borough with littering and fly-tipping (illegally-dumped rubbish), and this is the top problem residents identify with their neighbourhoods. We collect illegally-dumped rubbish within a day of it being reported, and use every tool at our disposal to catch and prosecute those responsible – including a record one-off fine of over £36,000 for a business carrying out persistent illegal rubbish dumping. We will continue to pursue strong locality-based enforcement actions to deter such behaviour – and positively improve our environment with a greater variety of habitats in our parks.



AN ENVIRONMENT TO BE PROUD OF

Desired Outcome: Tackling the climate and ecological emergency

We will:

- Carry out a review of all current council activity
- Hold a Climate Change Assembly, to develop proposals to tackle the crisis

Desired Outcome: Reduction in illegally-dumped rubbish

We will:

- Provide efficient and regular collection of household waste to ensure better recycling.
- Pursue strong local enforcement actions, to deter others from illegally dumping rubbish; and by working at a neighbourhood level, better target recognised hotspots for environmental nuisance.
- Promote biodiversity in our streets and parks, through tree-planting and the development of new and different habitats.



THE AIR WE BREATHE

Desired Outcome: Improvement in air quality

We will:

- Prioritise a significant local improvement in air quality, creating a sustained reduction in air pollutants and respiratory diseases.
- Encourage people to use alternatives to cars for those journeys where it makes sense, by prioritising more walking and cycling routes, promoting sustainable means of transport and the health benefits of being more active.
- Significantly reduce carbon emissions and electricity costs due to our investments in LED technology for lighting.
- Seek to significantly increase the number of trees we plant on our streets, in our public spaces, and our award-winning parks.

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

It is vital for the council to support our most vulnerable residents - safeguarding children and young people and helping vulnerable adults to be independent at home. We must also tackle health issues - 57% of residents are not physically active despite a large proportion feeling well-informed about opportunities. Only three other London boroughs have higher proportions.

Brent has a rich cultural history and heritage, and we were delighted to be awarded the title of London's 2020 Borough of Culture. We have ambitious plans to ensure that 2020 will bring Brent even closer together, with the benefits felt long afterwards, especially by young people.

Crime is falling in Brent, and residents are clear that safety is what they value most. However, we still have work to do to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour, as well as reducing the fear of crime - a quarter of residents do not feel safe after dark, with the most common reason being level of crime. As part of our increased focus on localities, we will better target anti-social behaviour in specific neighbourhoods and communities.



SAFE FROM HARM

Desired Outcome: Reduction in anti-social behaviour, the risk of harm and re-offending and a reduction in violent crime, including gang and knife crime

We will:

- Ensure children with additional needs receive early help and support when they need it, with integrated and coordinated services so that families only need to tell their story once to access the help they need.
- Target gangs, domestic abuse and serious youth violence, and make full and effective use of our modernised CCTV infrastructure – including enhanced recording, HD cameras and greater flexibility to help make Brent safer.
- Provide young people in our care with targeted support to help them lead fulfilling lives on their journey to independence.
- Tackle anti-social behaviour on a targeted neighbourhood basis.



INDEPENDENT AND DIGNIFIED

Desired Outcome: Support our most vulnerable adults, enabling them to choose and control the services they receive, remain independent and lead active lives.

We will:

- Support the families and carers of vulnerable adults to help meet their needs.
- Offer alternatives to residential care, through New Accommodation for Independent Living (NAIL), Community Mental Health Teams and exploring the opportunities offered by developing technology.
- Enable residents to return home earlier from hospital stays, and ensure providers of homecare and day care services focus on this too.
- Continue to integrate our services with those of the NHS where this benefits our residents.



ACTIVE AND HEALTHIER

Desired Outcome: Improve the health of Brent residents

We will:

- Get children and young people to be more active and reduce their sugar intake, in partnership with schools, the NHS, and the community.
- Encourage adults to take up physical activity, making use of improved facilities on offer in the borough, such as our leisure centres and the Gladstone Park tennis courts.
- Offer additional home visits for vulnerable families, support for breastfeeding, and help for overweight and obese children and families to manage their weight, through our new children's public health service.
- Refresh our approach to mental wellbeing, raising aspirations and tackling challenges as part of the Thrive LDN initiative.
- Support more people to recover from drug and alcohol problems with our Substance Misuse Service.



CULTURE TO TREASURE

Desired Outcome: Make Brent a place where culture is celebrated and vibrant

We will:

- Work to improve awareness of what our libraries have to offer and increase active borrowers.
- Deliver our ambitious London Borough of Culture 2020 programme, including:
 - Thoroughfair, a summertime street party celebrating Brent's historic transience with pop-up visual arts, dance, theatre and music commissions
 - No Bass Like Home, an affordable music festival and exhibition celebrating the musical legacy of the Windrush Generation and the musical ties between Brent and the Caribbean
 - Work with schools to enable every pupil to take part in a cultural experience during 2020, and
 - Ensuring a legacy which benefits generations to come, with a greater number of cultural enterprises, more pathways into cultural industries, and mentoring and work placement opportunities.
- Ensure all new development preserves and enhances our heritage, such as listed buildings, conservation areas and protected trees.

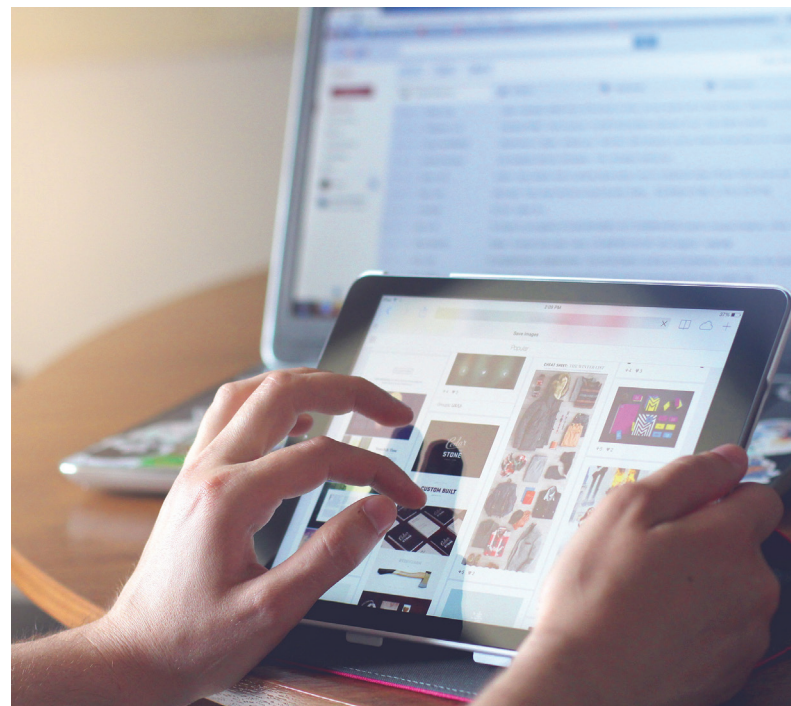


Strong foundations

About two thirds of our residents are satisfied with how the council runs things which, while positive, represents a slight decline from 2014. Whilst this may partly be a response to cuts in our budget by central government, we must work to improve satisfaction. To achieve our goals we must continue to utilise new technology, reduce avoidable contact and put residents more in control of services, redefining the “front door” through which residents contact the council. We will take advantage of the increasing pace of change and continue our journey to become a digital council and make Brent a digital place.

We will think carefully and creatively about the best ways to obtain value for money from our suppliers. Our community hub approach will mean developing the right skills and culture which emphasise managing commercial relationships, designing services, engaging with the community and partners and working more flexibly.

Brent is among the most diverse local authority areas in the country - our residents feel proud to live here, and agree that people from different backgrounds and cultures feel they get on well together. We must strengthen these bonds by engaging effectively with our communities. We will increase and widen attendance at our regular community engagement events in each of the borough’s localities, which will also help us better understand the views and needs of local people – only 37% believe the council listens to the views of local people, while 47% would like to be more involved in decisions made in their area. We will also work with voluntary sector organisations and help residents find opportunities to volunteer. As we move towards working around localities our approach will be increasingly centred on building the capacity and resilience of communities and helping them play an integral part in service delivery.



A DIGITAL BOROUGH

Desired Outcome: Enable residents to get online

We will:

- Implement our Digital Strategy to ensure local residents, partners and businesses are able to thrive in the digital future.

EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT

Desired Outcome: Ensuring value for money through our commissioning and procurement

We will:

- Continue to develop the skills and culture required for new ways of working, particularly around commissioning and procurement, managing commercial relationships, designing services, and creating and implementing large scale changes.
- Make the best use of our buildings and property portfolio to support our priorities, focusing on making the best use of available space, supporting local areas and community groups, reducing our costs and increasing income, and delivering development opportunities.



MEETING LOCAL NEEDS

Desired Outcome: Building services around residents and their needs

We will:

- Roll out our innovative Family Hubs, bringing together different services to provide holistic support for children and their families.
- Roll out community hubs throughout Brent, supporting early intervention to help the most vulnerable residents with issues such as housing, debt, employment, and the transition to Universal Credit.
- Work with charitable organisations and local community initiatives including food banks, to ensure residents in need get help early; and understand and tackle the underlying causes of demand for these services.



ENGAGING COMMUNITIES

Desired Outcome: Increase in resident satisfaction; Increase in resident involvement

We will:

- Develop a new Community Engagement strategy based on new values and priorities for community cohesion, in consultation with local people.
- Engage with our communities more effectively, maximising online channels such as social media to increasing the number of residents involved, and ensuring two-way dialogue to enable them to shape services.
- Support local voluntary sector organisations and obtain best value from grant funding provided to them.
- Use our spending power to help support our local communities, setting out clear expectations and with even more of a focus on volunteering and community support as benefits from our contracts.
- Promote and encourage community involvement through neighbourhood-level environment services.
- Treat residents fairly and with respect, supporting those in hardship, and taking a tough stance on those who can afford to pay but refuse to do so.

Moving forward

Implementation and monitoring will be crucial to achieve our strategic priorities and make our vision for 2023 a reality. We have developed a set of targets which will help us record our progress.

We have created a delivery plan which sets out how we will implement our commitments in the first year of the Borough Plan.

Monitoring will be carried out through tracking the completion of actions in our delivery plan, as well as monitoring the targets above. These will be reported to the council's Cabinet every six months. Partners for Brent, our local strategic partnership, will also review progress at its annual meeting.

In this way, local people will be able to see for themselves that our ambitions for Brent, and their own, are realised.



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- Improve the health of Brent residents
- Make Brent a place where culture is celebrated and vibrant

DESIRED OUTCOMES

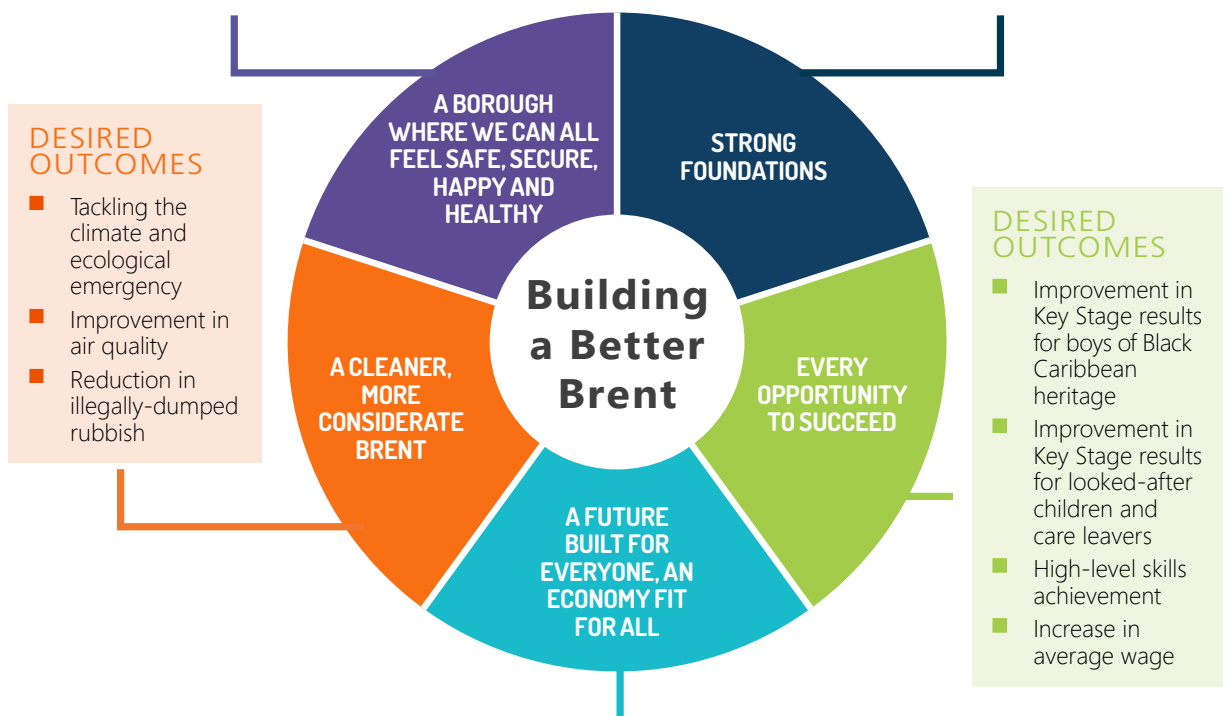
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- Tackling the climate and ecological emergency
- Improvement in air quality
- Reduction in illegally-dumped rubbish

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- Improvement in Key Stage results for boys of Black Caribbean heritage
- Improvement in Key Stage results for looked-after children and care leavers
- High-level skills achievement
- Increase in average wage



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