How we developed the Council Plan

Engagement and Evidence Report

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EMBRACE CHANGE

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CELEBRATE AND SHARE OUR SUCCESS

Brent

About this report

This guide explains what's in this Engagement and Evidence Report, and how to navigate through it.

The evidence and what we've heard

This report sets out the engagement that took place to inform the Council Plan. It sets out the key things we heard from residents, Members, staff and partners, and the other evidence sources we drew on to develop the Council Plan.

How we developed the Council Plan

Page three of this report sets out the process that we followed to develop the Council Plan. It shows how we used evidence and information to reach the final structure and content of the Council Plan and explains the difference between Council Plan priorities and focus areas.

How the feedback and evidence shaped the Council Plan

Throughout this report we've explained how we used what we heard and the information we gathered to inform the Council Plan's priorities and focus areas. You can find this information inside purple boxes like the one shown on the right.

How this shaped the Plan

You can find more detail on each page inside purple boxes like this one.

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How the Council Plan was developed

What informed the Council Plan: the evidence

Resident views
- Resident Attitudes Survey
- Council Plan survey
- Existing resident feedback and community insight

Political priorities
- Analysis of party manifestos
- Member engagement

Staff and service insight
- Staff surveys
- Discussions with key services

Partners and stakeholders
- Conversations with our strategic partners

Other data and local evidence
- Challenges and Opportunities
- Brent Wellbeing Index
- Indices of Deprivation 2025
- Poverty and inequality data
- Census 2021

Bringing it all together

- We brought together everything residents, Members, staff, partners and key datasets told us.
- We then identified the biggest themes, opportunities, needs and gaps.
- This helped us to understand where we could have the greatest impact and make the most meaningful difference for residents and communities.
- We balanced this against the Council's statutory responsibilities, financial position, and available resources, because we can't include everything people told us in the Council Plan.
- We thought about the things that we will need to do in partnership with others – because we can't do everything on our own.
- We turned this evidence and analysis into a focused set of priorities and activities to test with Members.

Council Plan



Our priorities
The ambitions we have for our communities and outcomes we want to deliver

Focus areas
Visible, high-profile commitments that will help us to achieve our ambitions

Delivery
- Directorate Plans
- Budget
- Partnership working
- Measuring and reporting on our progress
- Keeping residents informed
- Delivery plan

Brent

Resident Attitudes Survey (RAS) – Key Results

Every four – five years the Council carries out a Resident Attitudes Survey (RAS), with an independent research partner, DJS Research. The RAS provides a snapshot of residents' views on their priorities, their neighbourhood and the service the Council provides. The survey took place between 15 May – 30 July 2026, with a total of **2,207 people** interviewed. The RAS involved face-to-face interviews – 1,846 at the doorstep and 361 in the street. There were approximately 100 interviews carried out in each of Brent's 22 wards, with targets for characteristics like age, gender, disability, ethnicity and working status to reflect the demographics of Brent's overall population. We acknowledge that this is only one set of data, captured at a particular point in time, and needs to be read alongside other insights and sources of data.

Satisfaction with local area

90% ↑

2021: 81%
LGA: 72%

Satisfaction with Council

77% ↑

2021: 72%
LGA: 51%

Value for money

56% ↑

2021: 51%
LGA: 38%

Council acts on concerns

71%

2021: N/A
LGA: 53%

Council keeps residents informed

80% ↑

2021: 64%
LGA: 49%

Experiencing some form of financial difficulty

38%

2021: N/A
LGA: N/A

Struggling with the Cost of living

15%

2021: N/A
LGA: N/A

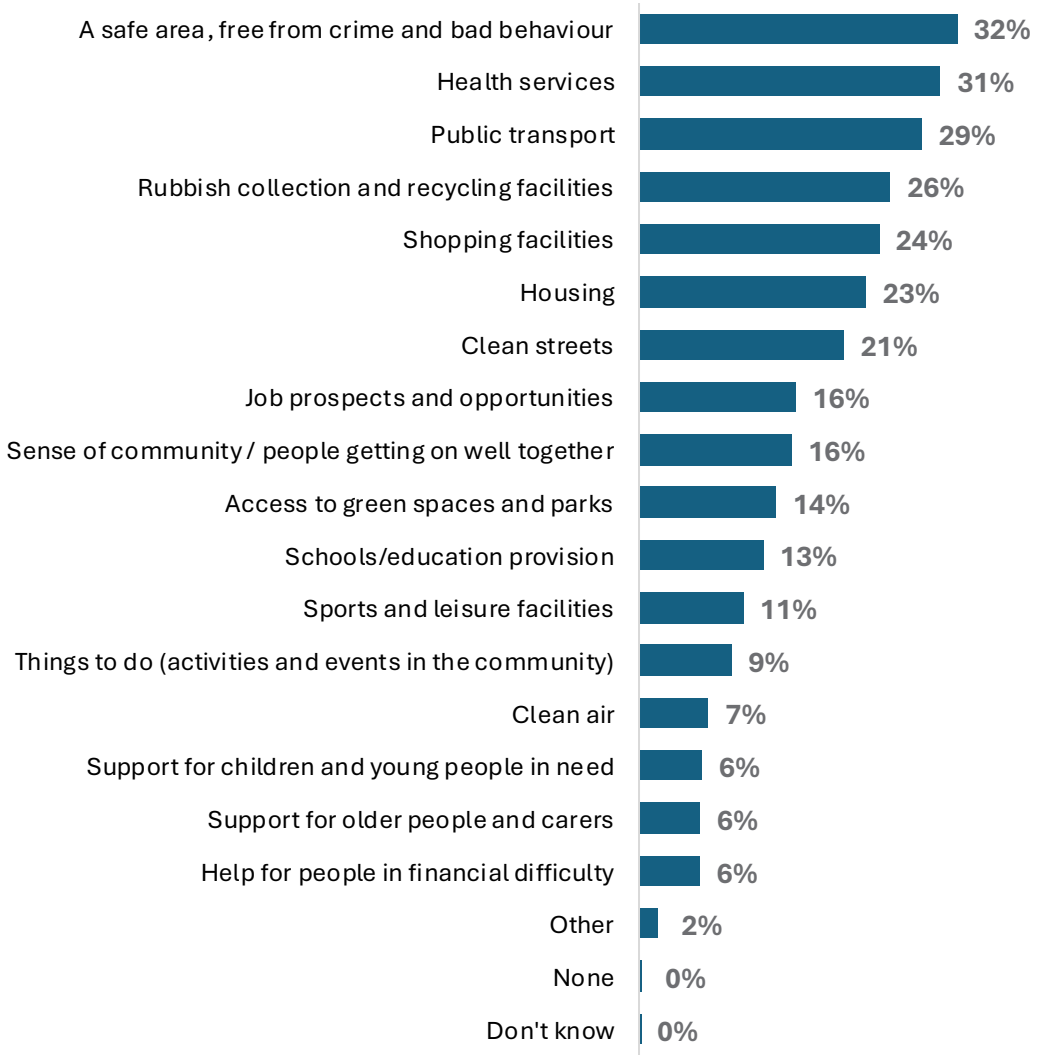
Arrows display a significant change vs. 2021.

How this shaped the Plan

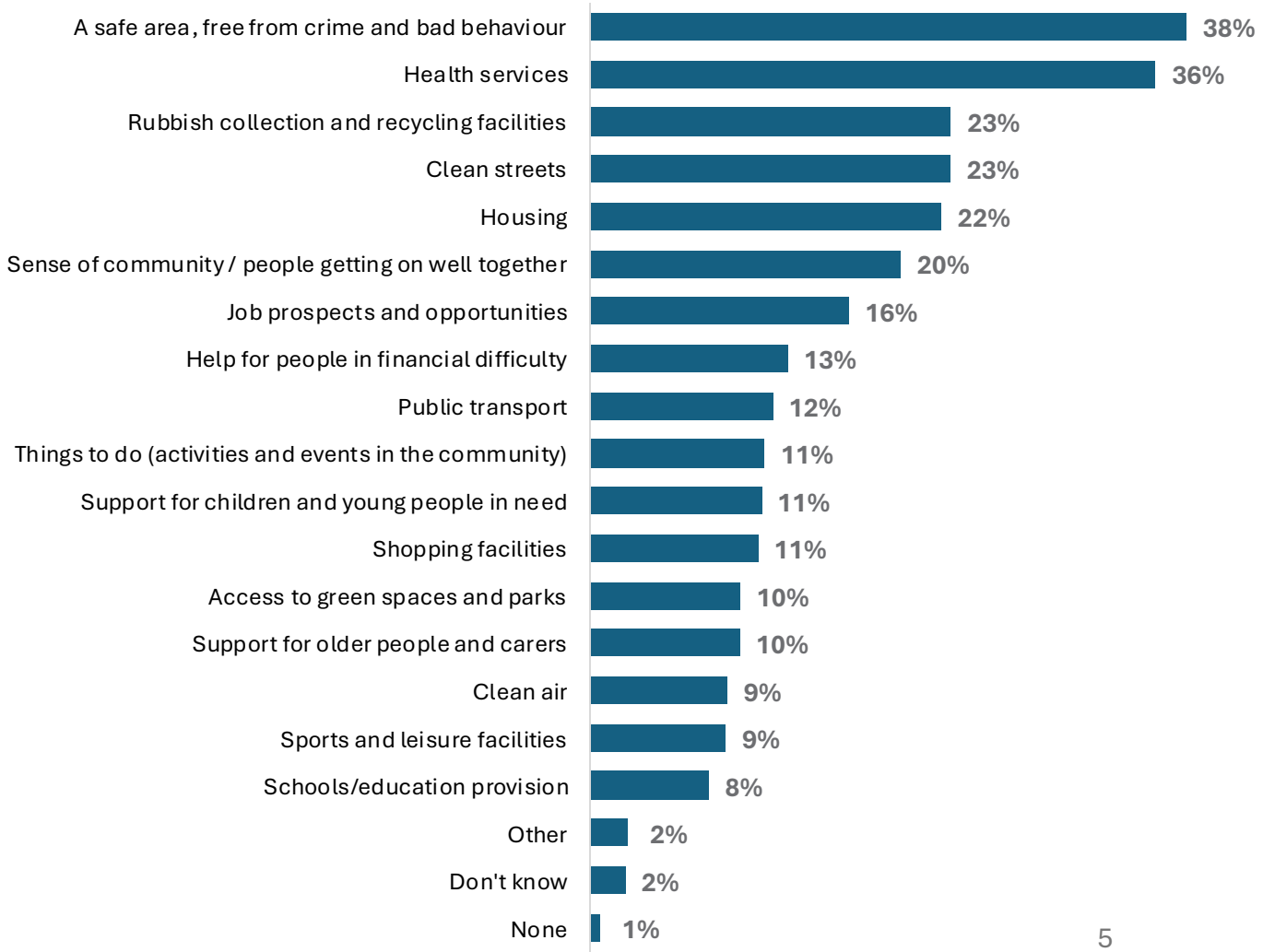
RAS data helped us to make sure that the Council Plan is focused on the things that matter most to residents. The data points strongly to residents' concerns about safety and struggles with the cost of living - both of which are addressed through the Council Plan's focus areas, ***Cleaner, greener, safer neighbourhoods*** and ***Tackling the cost of living by unlocking potential.***

RAS – Things most valued by residents

Things most valued by residents



Where public money should be spent



RAS respondent profile

Gender

48% Man

52% Woman

Economic activity status

69% Active

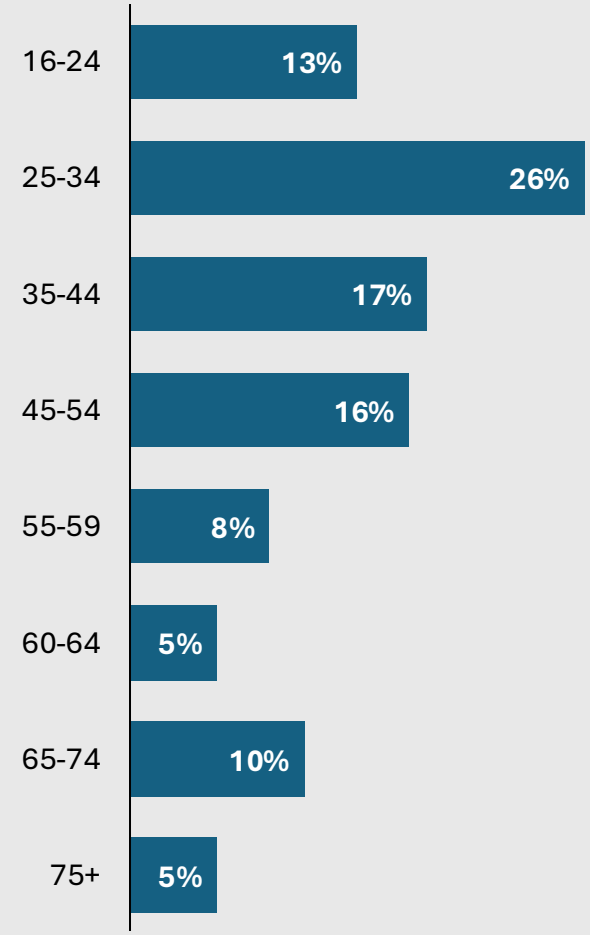
31% Inactive

Disability

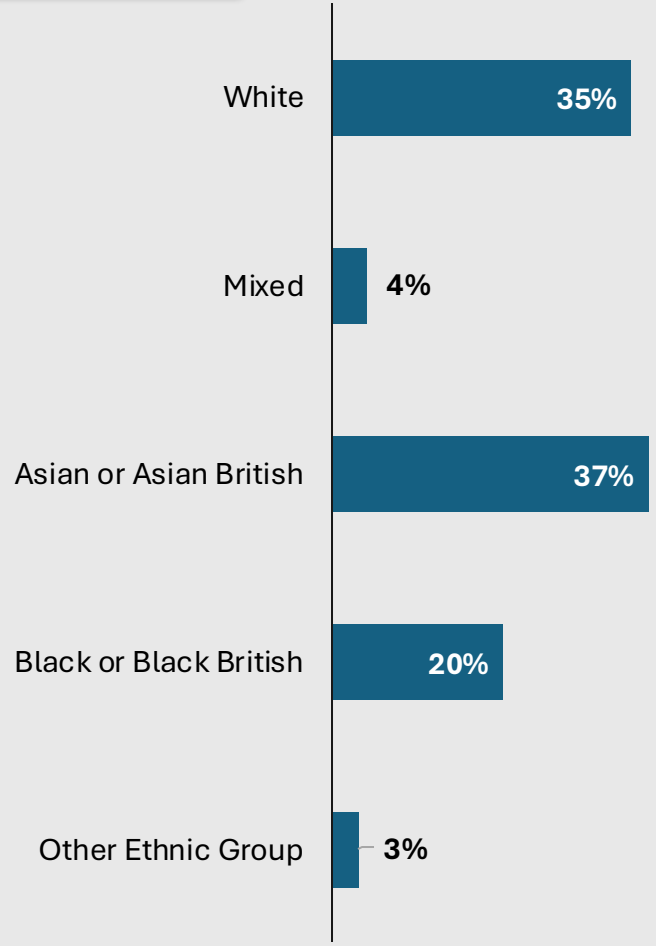
15% Yes

85% No

Age



Ethnicity



Figures may not sum to 100% due to refusals (not charted) or rounding. Weighted figures shown.

Help shape Brent's next Council Plan survey

During July and August 2026, we asked residents via a short online survey to tell us what makes Brent a great place to live, and what should be improved. We received **752 responses from residents, business owners and community and voluntary sector organisations**. A summary of the survey responses is on the other side of this page.

To make sure we heard from as many people as possible, we promoted the survey via our digital channels, at community events and to key partners, including voluntary and community organisations and faith groups. More detail on how we did this is included on slide 9.

Who did we hear from?

- Most respondents were aged 45-54 (20.3%) and 65+ (19.1%)
- 42.6% responses were from people working full time, 17.4% of respondents are retired
- 6.3% responses were from business owners/representatives
- 7.5% responses were from voluntary and community sector organisations

How this shaped the Plan

In response to this feedback, the Council Plan makes a number of commitments around improving the safety, cleanliness and attractiveness of public spaces, and improving town centres and high streets. It also commits to providing residents with cost of living support, and support to access good employment, skills and training opportunities. Improving the service that the Council provides to residents is at the heart of the Council Plan.

What makes Brent a great place to live?

- Our mixed communities and vibrant multicultural character.
- Good transport links, and strong connectivity.
- High streets that are easy to visit.
- Compared to neighbouring boroughs, residents feel Brent is relatively affordable.

What should be improved in Brent over the next four years?

- Local streets to be cleaner, safer and more pleasant to walk along, with less visible drug use, harassment and anti-social behaviour.
- A better mix of shops on high streets, rather than concentrations of betting and vape shops.
- Concerns around overdevelopment – need for a better balance between accommodating new residents and supporting existing communities.
- More help with housing, food banks and employability.
- Local jobs and opportunities should be prioritised for Brent residents.

If Brent could improve just one thing over the next four years, would make the biggest difference to you, your family or your community?

- The condition, safety and attractiveness of local streets and town centres.
- Improved traffic and street management, including safer walking and cycling, fairer parking/event day permit arrangements and better handling of roadworks.
- Faster and more compassionate council support for older and disabled residents, with non-digital options available.
- More community-run indoor and outdoor spaces.

Help shape Brent's next Council Plan survey

Here are some of the things you told us:

"Improve our environment, so we can [be] proud to live in Brent..."

"Closing down betting shops and fighting new ones opening."

"Prioritise children and young people. They deserve to feel safe both at school and in their community, receive a good standard of education and have safe places to go after school, at weekends and during holidays."

"We need cleaner streets, free from rubbish."

"Every family should have somewhere safe and healthy to live."

"Invest in leisure facilities, allow young people and all people to enjoy."

"Support local businesses so they are able to open and thrive."



Help shape Brent's next Council Plan survey – getting communities involved

This page shows the work that we did to make sure that as many residents and communities were aware of the survey and had the opportunity to share their thoughts with us.

Benchmarking – We compared the number of responses to our Council Plan survey with responses received by other local authorities that used the Go Vocal survey platform for their Council Plan engagement in 2025. The number of responses we received compares favourably, indicating strong levels of engagement.

Council	Survey respondents
Brent Council	**752**
Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea	584
Wokingham	433
Reading Borough Council	163

During the consultation period, the Council Plan survey page received **2,523 visits**, indicating strong awareness and interest, even where residents chose not to submit a survey response.

Community Network Promotion
The survey was circulated through established community engagement networks including:
- Faith groups
- Disability networks
- Pensioners groups
- Community and voluntary sector organisations
- Other key stakeholders

Community Outreach Activity
The Council promoted the survey at a number of community events and forums across the borough:
- Summer Streets events in Wembley, Willesden, Kingsbury and Kenton
- Brent Pensioners Forum
- One Kilburn Forum
- Brent Health Matters pop-up events
- Free Health Conversations session at Willesden Library

Faith Community Engagement
The survey was promoted through the Brent Multi Faith Forum and shared directly with a range of faith organisations and places of worship including:
- Central Mosque Willesden
- BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir, Neasden
- Kingsbury Mandir
- St Gabriel's Church
- Brazilian Evangelical Church
- Brahma Kumaris
- Willesden Baptist Church
- Hillside Islamic Cultural Centre
- Wembley Synagogue
- Brondesbury Park Synagogue
- Makor Hayim Synagogue
- Brent Sikh Centre (Kingsbury)

Community and Voluntary Sector Engagement
The survey was promoted through a variety of community and voluntary sector organisations, including:
- Ashford Place
- Higher Potential
- South Kilburn Trust
- Divine Purpose
- Brent Indian Association
- United Borders
- Asian People's Disability Alliance (APDA)
- Brent Punjabi Association
- Connect Stars
- Civil Litigation For All

Member engagement

We began our work to develop the Council Plan by analysing the manifestos of each political group elected to Brent Council. Manifestos reflect political priorities developed through extensive engagement with residents.

We met with Cabinet Members, Political Group Leaders and Councillors throughout the development of the Council Plan to help us to understand what Members hear from the residents and communities they represent and speak to everyday. We continually adapted the Council Plan in response to the feedback we heard.

What we did:

- Confirmed with Members that our manifesto analysis was accurate
- Had multiple conversations with the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council
- Had a number of conversations with each Political Group Leader
- Had a conversation with each Cabinet member, focused on making sure the Council Plan reflects their area(s) of responsibility
- Had a number of discussions with Cabinet
- Gave all Political Group Leaders the opportunity to come together to discuss and provide feedback on the Council Plan's emerging priorities and focus areas
- Invited Members from all three scrutiny committees to consider the draft Council Plan, ask questions and provide challenge and feedback

How this shaped the Plan

Councillors' insights shaped the structure, priorities and focus areas of the Council Plan at every stage. We listened to and incorporated their feedback, while balancing the needs and priorities of each party.

Staff Insights - survey and discussions

We asked staff for their feedback (via a survey and a number of discussions) about what they hear from residents, partners and communities; what work they think the Council should continue doing; and what changes they think the Council needs to make. The table below sets out some of the key themes we heard.

What feedback do you hear most often about your service from residents, communities, businesses or partners?	What work is the Council doing well that should continue for the next four years?	Recognising the constraints we have, what changes should the Council make in the next four years?
• Importance of Council services that are easy to access and understand, and responsive to residents' needs. • A need for clearer communication and more regular updates. • Concerns about waiting times and the challenge of navigating multiple different services, especially when dealing with complex issues. • Concerns about street cleanliness, rubbish collection and safety of roads. • Challenges accessing affordable housing. • Challenges with the cost of living. • Residents value being able to access services locally. • Positive feedback about helpful staff and support that has made a difference to people's lives.	• Maintain strong face-to-face support. • Help for residents facing challenges such as homelessness and financial hardship. • Continue to create a cleaner, greener and more sustainable borough, including by investing in tree planting, active travel, recycling and climate action. • Continue to invest in public spaces, libraries and community facilities. • Taking strong action to improve housing standards for private renters. • Making efforts to join up Council services and with partners. • Improving technology, data dn innovative ways of working.	• Make Council services simpler, more joined up and easier to access. • Streamline processes and improve communication between teams to reduce the need for residents to repeat information and navigate multiple services. • Focus resources on supporting residents who are facing the most significant cost of living and housing pressures. • Invest in digital services, technology and staff skills to improve efficiency and service quality. • Continued investment in improving housing and neighbourhoods.

How this shaped the Plan

Staff feedback has largely been reflected in the ***Council that delivers for you*** priority. This priority outlines how we will work as an organisation, and with partners, to deliver meaningful improvements to people's lives. It commits the Council to taking early, preventative action; better joining up Council services and working closely with partners; and using technology and data to improve service delivery.

Feedback from our key partners

We work closely with partners across the public, private and community sectors. Earlier in 2026, we hosted a meeting with key strategic partners to discuss the most critical challenges and opportunities we have in Brent, and that we can work on collectively to improve the lives of Brent residents. Although the Council Plan is focused on the things that Brent Council can deliver as an organisation, incorporating perspectives from other sectors and partners helps to ensure that the Council Plan's priorities reflect local needs, support partnership working and help improve the lives of our communities. Below are lists of the biggest opportunities and challenges facing Brent's residents and communities that our partners identified.

Opportunities to improve things for residents and communities in Brent

- Employment and apprenticeship pathways
- More recruitment of local people to local jobs
- Stronger links between education and employment
- Stronger partnership working and communication
- Supporting local and small businesses
- Community wealth building
- Retaining economic value within Brent
- Enhancing Brent's creative and cultural sectors and building on Brent's cultural assets
- Climate adaptation and environmental improvement
- Using AI and innovative technology

Challenges facing Brent's residents and communities

- Youth and general unemployment/work instability
- Young people losing hope and ambition
- Lack of work readiness and experience
- Limited coordination across organisations
- Housing affordability
- Poverty/Deprivation

How this shaped the Plan

Our Council Plan priorities and focus areas reflect the challenges and opportunities that are top of mind for our partners. In particular, there's a strong focus on improving employment, training and skills opportunities for local people, and especially our young people, in our ***Unlocking potential by tackling the cost of living*** focus area. The ***Council that delivers for you*** priority has a strong focus on making sure that the Council continues to work with partners to deliver good outcomes for residents, because we recognise that we can't do everything ourselves.

Challenges

This data is pulled from a range of sources and shows the different challenges Brent and the Council are facing. Footnotes are located on the last page of this report.

A lack of good quality, affordable homes and homelessness

170+ households approach the council as homeless each week[1], with over **2,550** households – including around **4,000** children – living in temporary accommodation[1].

We spend over **£30 million** each year on temporary accommodation for homeless residents[2].

According to recent data, Brent is the **second least affordable place to live** in England[3].

Poverty and the cost of living

Around **42%** of children in Brent are living in poverty after housing costs, compared with a London average of **31%** (without housing costs, the figure falls to 18.5%)[4].

29% of Brent's neighbourhoods are among **the 20% most deprived** in England[5].

At the last Census, **1 in 3 working-age adults were not in work**. 6% were seeking work while 28% were economically inactive[6].

Health Inequalities

The deprivation related gap in life expectancy in Brent is **7.3 years for men** and **3.3 years for women**[7].

Almost **one in four Year 6 pupils** in Brent are living with obesity (24.7%), **higher than the number in both London** (23.2%) **and England** (22.2%)[8].

Keeping our neighbourhoods safe

A safe area, free from crime and anti-social behaviour was the top priority for **32%** of residents – and **38%** said it's where they most want the council and its partners to invest[9].

Anti-social behaviour remains a challenge in Brent, with **30.6 police-recorded incidents per 1,000 residents**, which is **above the London rate of 27.1**[10].

Brent has the second-highest rate of hospital admissions for violent crime in London, at **57.2** per 100,000 people[11].

Growing demand for our services

In 2026/27 alone, the council needs to find around **£10m** in savings while protecting the services we're required to provide by law.

Nearly **4,300** adults received an Adult Social Care assessment in Brent in the last 12 months. This was around **80% higher than the London average** of 2,400 adults[12].

At the end of March 2026, **295 children** were in Brent's care. The average cost of a residential home placement is **over £7,000 per child per week**[13].

Financial pressure on councils

Councils in England are expected to face a funding gap of **£7.0 billion by 2028/29**[14]. This is due to a wide range of factors including demographic growth, inflation, wage growth and new national requirements.

By 2028/29, councils will face **extra cost pressures equivalent to 22%** of their current spending[15].
Councils in London face a collective budget shortfall of **£5.2 billion** over the next four years[16].

Opportunities

As well as the challenges presented on the previous page, Brent also has many strengths, which are opportunities for us to build on. Footnotes are located on the last page of this report.

Maintaining the quality of our neighbourhoods

90% of **residents** are satisfied with their local area and **76%** are proud to live in Brent[17].

Building on this strong sense of local pride, up to **£40 million** of long-term Pride in Place investment in Harlesden and St Raphael's creates a major opportunity to revitalise neighbourhoods, improve public and community spaces, and give local people a greater say in shaping their local area.

Using Brent's global profile to create local opportunity

Brent is home to almost **16,000 businesses**, providing jobs, services and opportunities across the borough[18].

Wembley Stadium is built for big moments. It holds **90,000 people**, which makes it the UK's largest stadium and second-largest in Europe.

With non-sporting events crowds **spending more than £4.35 million locally** each time there is an event, visitors create opportunities for local shops, restaurants, hotels and other businesses to grow, invest and create jobs[19].

As London introduces a **visitor levy**, Brent will look to maximise this for the benefit of local communities.

Championing cultural diversity as a great strength

Brent's diversity is one of our greatest strengths.

56% of Brent's residents were born outside the UK – the highest proportion of any local authority in the country[20].

85% of residents say Brent is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together[21].

Brent's rich mixture of cultures contributes to a vibrant cultural economy, which contributes an estimated **£238 million** annually, supporting jobs, skills, businesses and tourism[22].

We will keep building an inclusive Brent where everyone feels that they belong, and a Council that is proudly anti-racist.

Building on residents' satisfaction with council services

Most residents have a positive experience of the council. **77%** are satisfied with the way council runs things and **71%** feel the council responds to residents' concerns[23].

How this shaped the Plan

The opportunities and challenges that are set out above and on the previous page have directly informed the Council Plan's priorities and focus areas. The Council Plan is focused on both supporting residents and communities to manage the impacts of some of the key challenges we're facing in Brent but also responds to the opportunities that there are to improve on the things we're already doing well and to make the most of new and emerging opportunities.

Brent Wellbeing Index

The next page shows you how Brent's 22 wards measure against the four pillars

The Brent Wellbeing Index is an interactive data tool that measures how Brent's 22 wards are performing across a wide range of social, environmental and economic outcomes. It focuses on what life is like for Brent's communities, covering areas such as health, safety, education, access to services and community wellbeing. Access the full dashboard to find more information.

It is broken down into four key pillars:

Security and Stability: Looks at whether people can meet their essential needs, stay safe, and maintain stability in their day-to-day lives.

Health and Longevity: Assesses whether residents have the foundations for good health and long lives, and where preventable health challenges may exist.

Opportunity and Social Mobility: Assesses whether people have access to education, skills, and opportunities that help them achieve their potential and improve their lives.

Belonging and Trust: Looks at how connected, engaged, and supported communities are, and whether residents trust and contribute to the places where they live.

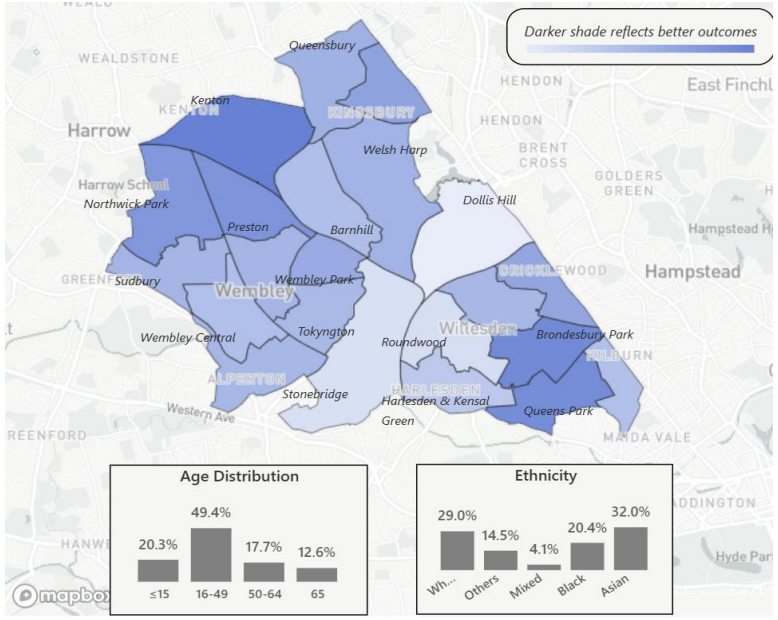
How this shaped the Plan

The Index shows us that wellbeing outcomes vary across the borough – particularly in the Security and Stability and Health and Longevity pillars. In response to this, the Council Plan includes a number of commitments to make sure residents can access housing and cost of living support, and good employment, training and skills opportunities. It includes a strong focus on improving health outcomes in the ***Healthy and active communities*** focus area.

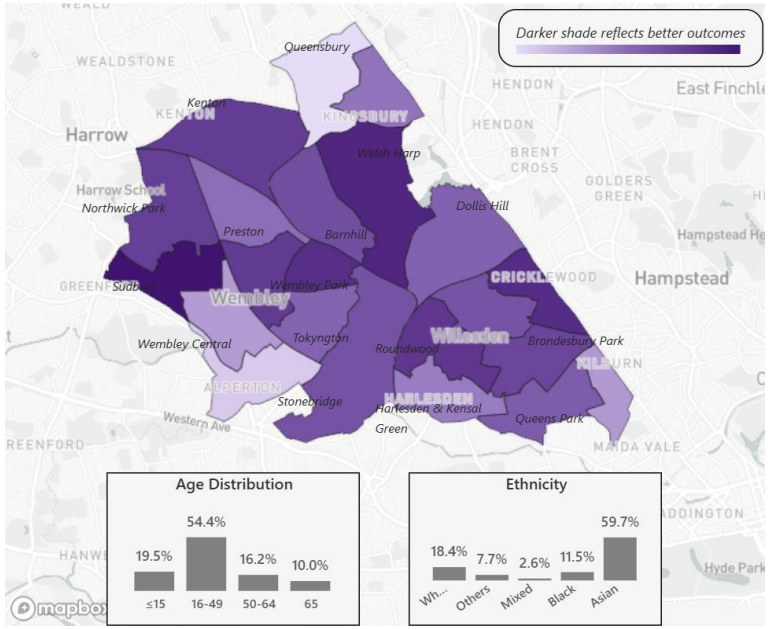
Brent Wellbeing Index Data

The following maps of Brent show how each of the 22 wards perform against the four Wellbeing Index pillars. Darker areas reflect better outcomes for that pillar, while lighter areas reflect worse outcomes.

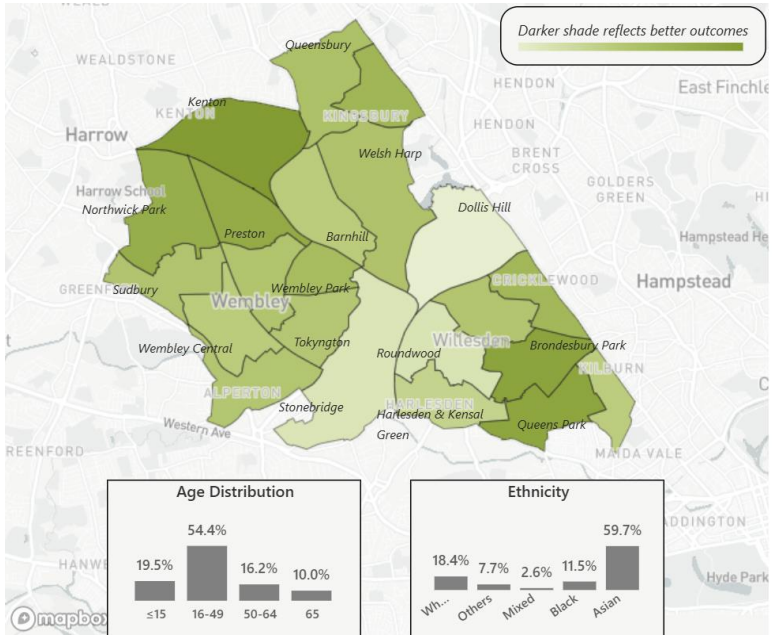
Security & Stability



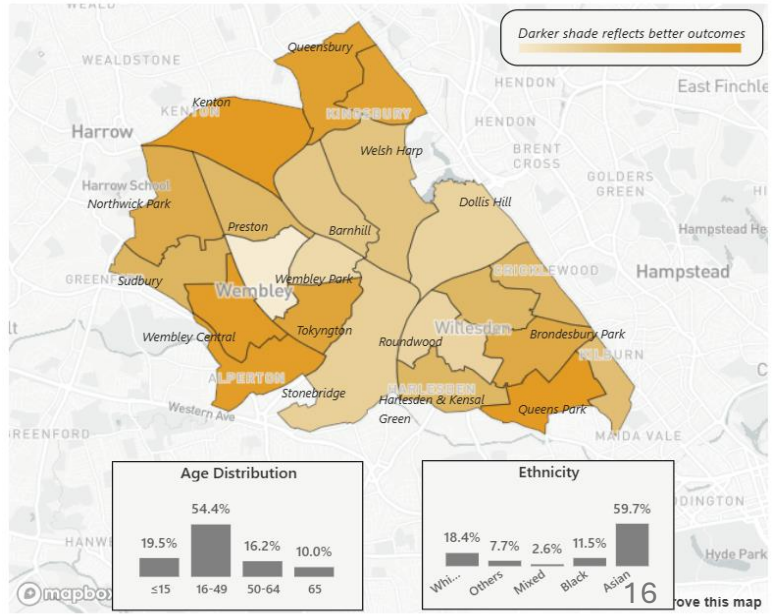
Opportunity & Social Mobility



Health & Longevity



Belonging & Trust



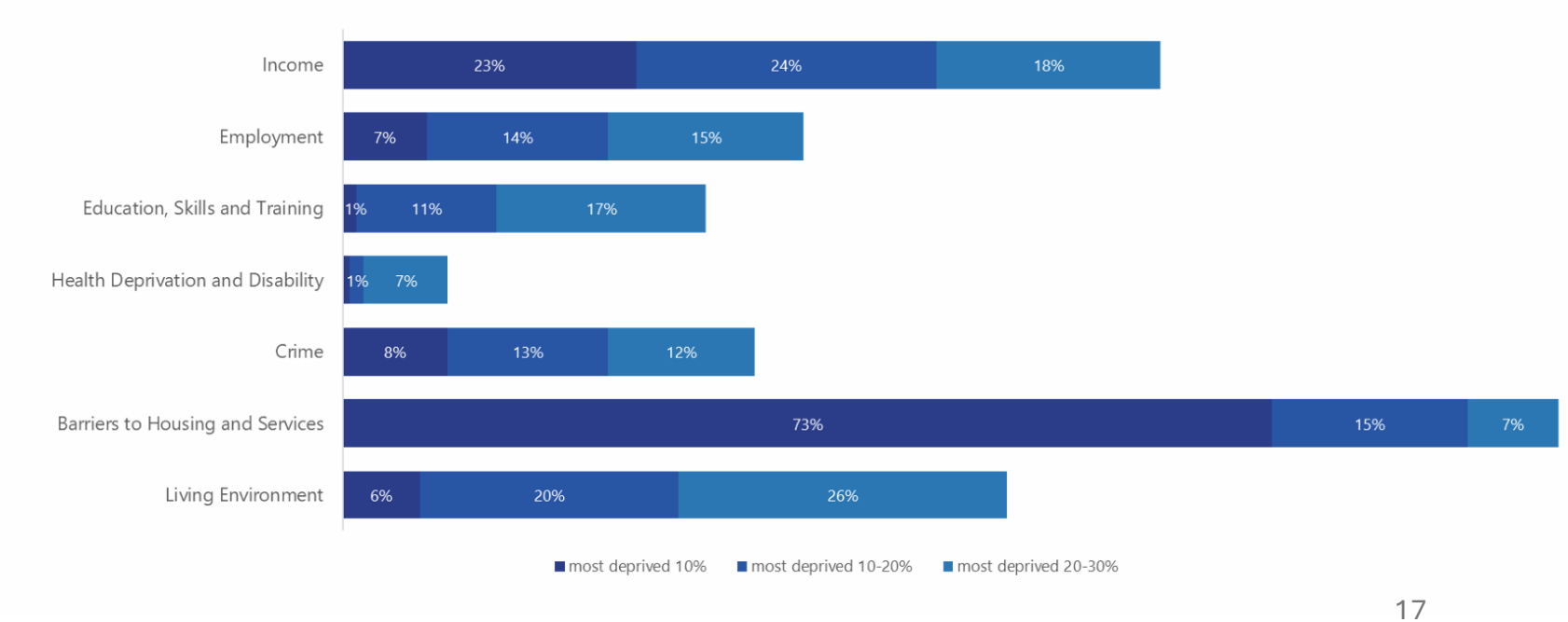
Indices of Deprivation 2025

The Indices of Deprivation are published by the government and are the primary measures of deprivation for small areas in England called LSOAs (Lower layer Super Output Areas). The Index of Multiple Deprivation combines seven distinct aspects (domains) as seen in the graph on the right.

Brent's level of relative deprivation varies between the domains. The **highest level of deprivation is in Barriers to Housing and Services**, where nearly half of wards (10/22) are in the most deprived 5% nationally. Brent's lowest level of relative deprivation is in the Health Deprivation and Disability domain, where zero wards are in the most deprived 20% nationally.

How this shaped the Plan

Because the Indices of Deprivation tell us that Brent has high levels of deprivation in the Barriers to Housing and Services domain, the Council Plan includes a strong focus on working to increase access to affordable housing, doing all we can to end homelessness, and helping people to live in good-quality, safe and secure homes. More detail on how we'll support people to access affordable, good-quality, safe and secure housing is set out in the Council Plan's focus area ***A good place to call home***.



Poverty and Inequality data

We gathered data on poverty and inequality in Brent from Trust for London, an independent charitable foundation that fights to tackle poverty and inequality in London.

The data highlights Brent's key social and economic challenges, and where targeted action is needed. The indicators show pressures relating to child poverty, income, unemployment and out-of-work benefits, where Brent is performing worse than the London average.

Read the full rankings.

How this shaped the Plan

The Council Plan's focus area, ***Tackling the cost of living by unlocking potential*** is about trying to address the poverty and inequality challenges that this data shows us. The focus area includes a number of commitments around supporting residents to access and navigate financial support and advice, and creating more opportunities for young people to access training, apprenticeships and employment. Our work in these areas is about trying to help residents out of poverty and achieve their ambitions.

Child poverty

42.3%

of children lived in households with an income below **60% of the UK median** after housing costs (2024/25).

Higher than the London average

Below the living wage

22.6%

of residents were estimated to be **earning below the Living Wage** (2025).

Higher than the London average

Pay inequality

2.28

pay ratio between higher and lower earners (2025)

Around the same as the London average

Qualifications

8.7%

of adults had no recognised qualifications (2025).

Around the same as the London average

Household income

£64,100

Average gross household income (2022/23)

Lower than the London average

Income after housing costs

33%

of the borough lived in households with an **income of less than 60% of the UK median after housing costs.**

Around the same as the London average

Census 2021

This page shows you what makes Brent unique. We got this information from the Census, which is carried out by the Office for National Statistics every 10 years. This data paints a reliable picture of our population. By understanding who lives in our borough, and how communities are changing, we can identify current and emerging needs, spread resources effectively and ensure Council Plan priorities reflect the needs of our residents.

Total population

339,800

9% increase from 2011–2021

Population rank in London's boroughs

5th largest borough population

Population density

7,859 people per km²

Gender

51% female

49% male

Main language

34% of residents use a main language other than English.

This is the second highest rate in England and Wales.

Age profile

More adults aged 20 – 44, and less older residents.

Around 12% of Brent residents were over 65, compared to 19% nationally.

Place of birth

56% of residents are born outside the UK, the highest rate in England and Wales.

Ethnicity

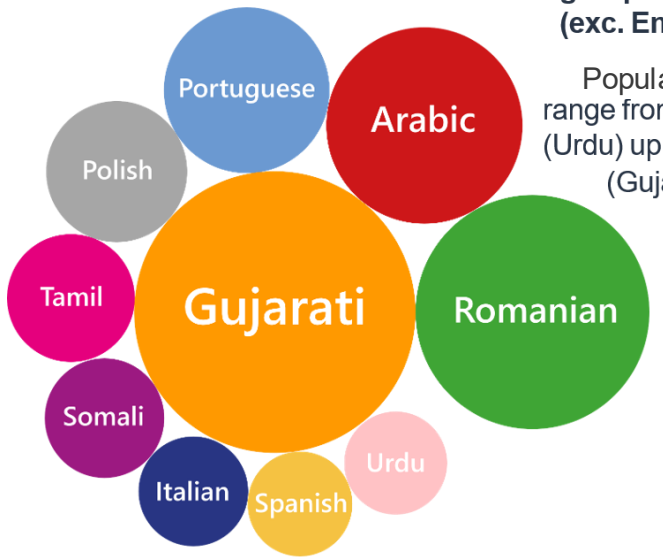
65% of residents are from Black, Asian or multiethnic populations.

How this shaped the Plan

The Census data reminds us that Brent is made up of a large number of distinct communities. Because of this, we recognise that we can't have one-size-fits-all services. That's why the Council Plan us to working closely with communities to understand their needs, and making sure that we tailor the services that we provide to meet those needs.

Top 10 language groups in Brent (exc. English)

Populations range from 3,015 (Urdu) up to 21,513 (Gujarati)



Challenges and Opportunities - Footnotes

The footnotes on this page refer to the challenges and opportunities on pages 13 and 14

1. Brent Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026-31
2. Brent Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026-31
3. Analysis of the 2025 Indices of Deprivation
4. Trust for London
5. Analysis of the 2025 Indices of Deprivation
6. Open data: Brent 2021 Census analysis
7. Office for Health Improvement and Disparities Fingertips
8. Office for Health Improvement and Disparities Fingertips
9. Residents' views that are referenced are based on responses from over 2,000 people who took part in the 2026 Resident Attitudes Survey carried out by an independent researcher, DJS Research, over Summer 2026. Results were weighted to ensure they are representative of Brent's population and provide an accurate picture of what matters most to residents. Resident Attitudes Survey, Brent Open Data
10. Resident Attitudes Survey, Brent Open Data
11. Safer Brent Partnership, annual report 2024-25
12. LG Inform. **Note:** Data includes only adults who were new to Adult Social Care and those who had not received ongoing support in the previous 12 months. ASC also carries out a significant number of short-term assessments.
13. Brent internal data
14. Autumn Budget 2026: LGA submission | Local Government Association
15. Councils warn of £7bn funding black hole threatening local services in three years | Local Government Association
16. London Councils: Budget 2026 press release
17. Resident Attitudes Survey, Brent Open Data
18. Labour Market Profile – Brent (Nomis)
19. Wembley Stadium: planning application
20. Brent 2021 Census analysis
21. Resident Attitudes Survey, Brent Open Data
22. Brent Cultural Strategy
23. Resident Attitudes Survey, Brent Open Data

Brent

COLLABORATE PROACTIVELY

LEAD INCLUSIVELY

EMBRACE CHANGE

BE BOLD AND CURIOUS

CELEBRATE AND SHARE OUR SUCCESS