



# Caring for people, our places and the planet: Our plan for Barnet 2023-2026

Caring for **people**, our **places** and the **planet**









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# Leader's foreword



**Cllr Barry Rawlings**

Leader of Barnet Council

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*“We want to future-proof the borough so everyone can live their best lives now and in generations to come.”*

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Barnet is a brilliant place to live; to grow up, study, work, start a business and raise a family.

And we have big ambitions for it to be even better, to really put Barnet on the map.

To achieve this, we need to respond positively and proactively to the challenges we face, the climate emergency, and cost-of-living crisis included.

We want to future-proof the borough so everyone can live their best lives now and in generations to come.

We are aiming to reach BarNET ZERO as a council by 2030, and as a borough by 2042.

This is as much about fighting inequalities, reducing poverty, rejecting hate and celebrating our diversity as it is about protecting the environment and our biodiversity.

It will save lives and livelihoods.

It embraces all: all people, no matter their background or circumstances; each place, whether a home, street, neighbourhood, green space, natural habitat, or bustling town centre; and it is our contribution to help protect our planet.

Our new vision is to put Caring for People, our Places and the Planet at the heart of everything we do.

It will bring people together, young and old, to find local solutions to local problems. It will make Barnet safer and cleaner, more affordable, family friendly and able to withstand life's difficulties. And it will help us understand each other better and be a Borough of Fun!

We cannot do this alone. It's a journey we will be on together with residents, local businesses, as a council, a community and with our partners and our VCFSEs.

It will mean transforming our services over time, giving more power and resources to local communities, supported by a strong public service ethos.

This is a big agenda. We will need to adapt and innovate to deliver the best services, to become more financially self-sufficient and keep costs down. It won't all be easy and there will be hard choices along the way.

But it will be exciting, and the prize will be a destination borough with a real creative buzz that is socially, environmentally, and economically sustainable where no one is held back, and everyone feels they can achieve their aspirations.

Join us on the journey!

# Chief Executive's foreword



**John Hooton**  
Chief Executive

This is an exciting and ambitious plan for the future of Barnet.

The council is committed to improving the lives of people in Barnet. We have amazing and committed staff, who work tirelessly to care for people, our places and the planet. However, successfully delivering this plan will require us all to work more collaboratively within the organisation and with our partners and residents in the future.

At the heart of our approach is an imperative to genuinely work alongside residents in Barnet, listening and having an ongoing dialogue, not just consulting when we change something we do.

We will transform our approach to community participation and engagement, empowering residents and community groups, and sharing the power we have as a council for the benefit of local people.

We are also committed to working more effectively in local areas across Barnet. That means joining up our services in different areas of the borough rather than working in silos. It means being

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*“At the heart of our approach is an imperative to genuinely work alongside residents in Barnet, listening and having an ongoing dialogue, not just consulting when we change something we do.”*

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more responsive to local issues and concerns. At the centre of our approach is also working in partnership with other public sector organisations like health and the police, with businesses and with our fantastic voluntary and community sector in Barnet. The more we do in partnership the more we can achieve for residents.

As a council we are committed to being an inclusive organisation, that everyone feels part of Team Barnet, and that in terms of gender, ethnicity, sexuality and disability we are representative of the borough we serve at all levels.

Alongside all of this we want to ensure that we support our staff to have the tools they need to work effectively for residents. We will do everything we can to be an employer of choice and attract and retain great people to work in our organisation and alongside our partners.

I am looking forward to working with everyone to deliver this exciting vision for the future of Barnet.

# Introduction

This corporate plan puts Caring for People, our Places and the Planet at the heart of everything we do – they are our pillars.

It recognises we can only achieve this vision by delivering our foundation of becoming an engaged and effective council. Central to this is to become a listening council; one that encourages community participation and builds trusted, collaborative relationships with residents and stakeholders.

In the autumn of 2022, we engaged with residents, community groups, businesses and other partners to develop this shared vision for Barnet.

We will build on the borough's great strengths to forge a new future, recognising and tackling the many inequalities which impact our communities to create a shared prosperity for all.

The graph below demonstrates how our pillars and foundation work together:



## PEOPLE

- Tackling inequalities
- Reducing poverty
- Family Friendly
- Living well



## PLACES

- Safe, attractive neighbourhoods and town centres
- Quality, affordable homes
- Borough of Fun



## PLANET

- Journey to Net Zero
- Enhancing the local environment
- Enhancing green spaces



## ENGAGED AND EFFECTIVE COUNCIL

- Community participation
- Neighbourhood working
- Improving access to services
- A great place to work
- Working in partnership
- Financially responsible







# About Barnet

Barnet is the second largest borough by population in London, home to over 389,000 people, 26,000 businesses, and 1,000 charities. We are proud of our diverse communities and of being a place where people feel welcomed and celebrated.

We have many strengths in the borough. But we know that for some residents health, social and economic inequalities limit the opportunities available to lead a good life. Tackling these problems requires us all to work together. We will become a listening council, changing our relationship with residents, building trust with our communities, having ongoing conversations and involving all in decision making.



**OVER 90  
LANGUAGES  
ARE SPOKEN**  
(2021 Census)

**88%**  
of residents say their  
local area is a place where  
**PEOPLE FROM DIFFERENT  
BACKGROUNDS  
GET ON WELL  
TOGETHER**

**ONE IN FOUR** of  
Barnet's population  
are **CHILDREN AND  
YOUNG PEOPLE**  
(aged 0-19)



**CARING FOR  
PEOPLE**



**44%**  
of residents were  
**BORN IN ANOTHER  
COUNTRY** –  
up from 39%  
in 2011

**98%**  
of **SCHOOLS** are rated  
as **'GOOD'** or  
**'OUTSTANDING'**

Home to  
**LONDON'S  
LARGEST JEWISH  
COMMUNITY** with  
14.5% of residents  
self-identifying  
as Jewish

**ONE IN 10**  
residents are  
aged  
**75+ YEARS**







## CARING FOR OUR PLACES

# 1.76M TONNES

of carbon are emitted in the borough every year from energy use by homes and transport



As part of the council's Brent Cross Cricklewood regeneration scheme, the **£8bn BRENT**

**CROSS TOWN** development will have an on-site energy centre and the **LARGEST AIR SOURCE HEAT PUMP** installation in Europe. It will provide **LOW CARBON HEATING** to the planned 6,700 new homes and all energy supplied will come from **100% RENEWAL SOURCES**.

The new Brent Cross West railway station is also under construction

# 30

flourishing **TOWN CENTRES** with unique hospitality and retail scenes that reflect diverse communities

On the journey to becoming a **NET ZERO COUNCIL BY 2030**, and borough by 2042

While Barnet is increasingly **ONE OF LONDON'S SAFEST BOROUGHs**, crime is a priority concern for 36% of adults and 41% of young people



## CARING FOR THE PLANET

London's third largest borough by number of businesses, host to **26,440 BUSINESSES**, THE MAJORITY OF THEM SMEs

**28%** of the borough is covered with over **200 PARKS AND GREENSPACES**



A base for **1,075 CHARITIES**

A **6.7-YEAR GAP IN LIFE EXPECTANCY** between residents of the **POOREST AND WEALTHIEST** boroughs

**SEVEN IN 10** residents say the council is making their local area a **BETTER PLACE TO LIVE**







# Caring for people



We want everyone in Barnet to have a good quality of life; to be healthy and active, with access to excellent education, fulfilling employment, good housing, social connection and community. We will work with others to provide people with the right support when needed, to fight inequalities and reduce poverty.

## Our mission

### In caring for people, we will...

- Fight inequalities and work to improve life chances for a good, healthy, happy and long life. Working in partnership, we will ensure no one is held back, that Barnet is the healthiest borough in London and our communities and residents can take advantage of every opportunity.
- Reduce poverty in our communities, boosting incomes and reducing costs. We will create an inclusive Barnet by promoting long-term economic growth that benefits everyone and where families and communities support each other.
- Be a Family Friendly borough where children and young people have the best start in life with the best education, the right support and safeguarding when they need it, and the right tools to live their lives successfully into adulthood. This especially applies to our children in care and care leavers, who we are ‘corporate parents’ for.
- Focus on all residents having the best opportunities to live well and feel part of the community. This will mean increasing the inclusion of older and disabled residents and celebrating their contributions. We will recognise people’s goals and support them to build on their existing abilities and strengths. We will work with residents, communities and our partners to support residents to stay well and free from abuse.

Our starting point is always our residents and how they will be affected. We will continue to work with our communities to tackle the issues that have the greatest impact on local people.

Social isolation, poor health, low paid and insecure jobs present real challenges for many in our community. At the time of writing, the cost-of-living crisis and rising prices affect us all and we know many residents are facing hard decisions about household spending.

We can learn from the COVID-19 pandemic, which exposed deep inequalities within pockets of our communities. In responding to this, we also saw what a more caring and collaborative future could look like. This builds on our deep

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tradition of helping others in the borough, with people volunteering for different causes and with engaged faith and religious groups. We want to continue to develop this, together with residents, partners and communities across the borough, to achieve our shared mission.

# Tackling inequalities

With people of many cultural backgrounds, faiths and life experiences living side by side, one of Barnet's biggest strengths is its richness of diversity. We will create a place where people feel they belong, are respected and accepted. Barnet will become a place where people have fun together, share their cultures and build an understanding amongst one another.

## Taking into account individual needs and circumstances

We will be a borough where inequalities are proactively tackled by actively listening to and considering different perspectives and needs in policymaking and service design. Not everyone's experience is the same. Recognising that it is easier for some to access services and to take advantage of opportunities, we know there is more we need to do to ensure that we care for people according to their individual needs and circumstances.

Inequalities often start early, impacting children and young people's health and happiness in childhood and their opportunities later in life. We have, for example, seen that Black and Black British pupils have a lower chance of gaining good qualifications at schools, compared to White pupils. As they grow up, this can have an impact on them having a fulfilling adulthood. We want to ensure that no one is held back. For example, in the Resident Perception Survey (2021) we have also seen that residents with a disability are more likely to have a poorer experience of living in the borough and a poorer view of our services, and that inequalities are often amplified by poverty and social isolation.

Those residents who grow up and live in the most deprived areas are more likely to live shorter lives than people living in more wealthy areas. Over recent years, the gap in health inequalities for males has been reducing but remained the same for females.





## Partnership working to drive long-term change

There is a need for structural change and new policies to address inequalities, not just one-off interventions. We recognise that this is a long-term challenge, requiring systematic, joint working as a partnership. There is much we can do locally, working with our residents to change how we deliver our services. As a council, we will also support communities to come together to address challenges. We continue to develop this work as we refresh the Equalities, Diversity & Inclusion Policy in 2023. We are engaging with residents and partners to build a dialogue for how we together address challenges. Together, we can amplify our voices, working in partnership to influence the regional and national agendas.

A key focus is on supporting communities to maintain happy and healthy lives for as long as possible. We want to make Barnet the healthiest borough in London, where everyone who lives, works or studies locally can achieve the best possible health. Key to this is to tackle health inequalities so that life expectancy, and the

number of years people spend living in good health, is not varied between different areas. Working together with our partners, we have set out Barnet's Health and Wellbeing Strategy, which is committed to reducing health inequalities and the contributing factors to ill health – what we sometimes call “wider determinates of health”.

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*“We want to ensure residents are aware of and are able to access services and activities at the right time and in the way that is most suitable for them.”*

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### This focuses on:

- Creating a healthy environment, such as through improving air quality and being an age and dementia friendly borough.
- Healthy communities, where people are able to connect to each other and have healthy choices.
- Delivering local solutions for local neighbourhoods, based on residents' views.
- Improving healthy behaviours, such as increasing physical activity, promoting healthy eating and reducing smoking.
- Preventing long-term conditions, such as cardiovascular disease prevention.
- Partnership with the North London NHS Integrated Care System to deliver Core 20 Plus 5 priorities. This is an NHS approach to reducing health inequalities with a specific focus on the 20% most deprived in the population, and conditions such as mental health, childhood asthma, maternity care, diabetes and oral health.



We want to ensure residents are aware of and are able to access services and activities at the right time and in the way that is most suitable for them. The aim is to, where possible, enable support at an earlier stage by:

- Equipping our children and young people with the tools to take advantage of present and future opportunities, for example by ensuring they live in a safe environment and have an excellent education, providing early help were needed to their families.
- Raising awareness and increasing signposting of services or community support for our residents.
- Working towards providing referrals/services that are holistic, e.g., considering mental health as well as employment and financial support.
- Ensuring that all residents, but especially those with more complex enquiries or support needs,

are provided more proactive and personalised access to appropriate advice and support.

- Promoting digital inclusion to equip everyone with the skills, tools, and confidence to thrive in the digital era.

An important part of celebrating the diversity of the borough is to support those who have recently settled into Barnet. Our residents and communities are fantastically generous – offering their homes through the Homes for Ukraine scheme, and time through volunteering. We will continue to work with residents and partners to secure “Borough of Sanctuary” accreditation. This acknowledges the vibrant networks that provide support, dignity and welcome to refugees and people seeking sanctuary, enabling them to thrive and feel they belong in our community.



## Want to find out more about equalities or get involved?

We want to involve a wide range of residents, communities and partners to help us develop and co-produce our strategies and activities to tackle inequalities. If you would like to get involved or find out more information, please see: <https://engage.barnet.gov.uk/barnet-edi-policy-2023-2028>





# Reducing poverty

Many residents struggle to make ends meet and it is affecting more residents than ever before, with increasing numbers struggling to heat their homes and feed themselves and their children. For children and young people growing up in Barnet, ensuring families have enough money to live on is critical to improving their life chances. Children born in poverty are more likely to experience a wide range of physical and mental health problems. When incomes increase, these problems are reduced. Families are less likely to be stressed and depressed and are more likely to be able to afford healthy food and fun activities.



## Crisis support for residents

In response to the cost-of-living crisis we introduced immediate actions to support our residents. We have promoted our existing welfare and benefits services as well as introduced the Residents Support Fund, and will continue to utilise the Household Support Fund to provide financial support for Barnet residents who are struggling to afford household essentials such as paying for food, energy bills and other essential living costs.

We have created a network of community-led warm spaces, providing both a warm space for residents who have struggled to keep warm during the winter and welcoming space to encourage community interaction and reduce the impacts of loneliness. School holidays can be pressure points for some families due to increased costs and our BACE holiday programme for children and young people provides engaging and healthy activities such as sports and games, arts and crafts and the performing arts.

## Working with our voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise sector

As a council we will enable people to help each other. Working in partnership with our voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise sector we are taking a community-led approach to setting out our next steps. Together, we want to continue to develop better ways of supporting our local economies. This includes taking into consideration wider networks of support to address social and health challenges that are either a driver or consequence of economic inequalities. We have, for example, introduced a Barnet Community Innovation Fund, to fund local voluntary and community projects that aim to improve health and wellbeing in the borough.

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*“Our focus is on those who experience barriers due to inequalities, including people from marginalised and underprivileged communities and young people not in education, employment or training.”*

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## Boosting local employment

We will work with partners to identify and support people who find it the most difficult to find or return to employment. Our focus is on those who experience barriers due to inequalities, including people from marginalised and underprivileged communities and young people not in education, employment or training. We will work towards providing opportunities that allow residents to get out and stay out of poverty. Working with the employment and benefit advice service BOOST, we will set this out in an ambitious three-year plan from 2023 with a longer-term drive towards boosting employment in the borough. Linked to this, we will continue our commitment to applying the London Living Wage and encourage more businesses and partners to pay this too. We believe we all need a wage that meets our everyday needs.



## Investment in infrastructure and new skills

The last few years have seen a change in how we work and live our lives. The transition to a more sustainable environment will require investment in infrastructure and new skills. We see this as an opportunity and will take advantage of this by focusing on growth sectors including the green economy, digital, creative industries, social care and the construction industry. To keep up with these growth sectors, we want to encourage lifelong learning, particularly developing the local 'green skills' required to support the delivery of our net zero commitments. We will support existing and new businesses in partnership with higher and further education institutions and continue working with our investment partners to attract

new business and investment to the borough. Alongside this, we will engage with local employers and support them to find and recruit suitable employees that are residents of Barnet.

## Community wealth-building opportunities

Leading by example, our aim is to encourage and enable community wealth-building opportunities. This means we will commit to, and encourage our partners to, invest in and buy goods and services with local businesses, including by strengthening our high streets and by promoting local shopping. This will result in a boost in local employment opportunities as well as utilising local buildings for the benefit of our residents. Together, we can create a prosperous Barnet where our wealth is shared.



# Family friendly

We know families have a huge impact on people's lives, wellbeing and chances of success. We recognise families come in all shapes and sizes and are often blended and intergenerational. All families benefit from services and communities that support their needs and that enables them to celebrate and have fun together. From family friendly housing to neighbourhoods and public spaces that are open, clean and accessible by all. Together, we continue to make Barnet a family friendly borough.

Key to this is our focus on resilience. We want children, young people and families to have the ability to bounce back from stress and hardship; to take on new challenges, which lead to better outcomes.

**Our aspiration for a family friendly borough is:**

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*“Resilient children thriving in resilient families living in resilient communities.”*

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Children and young people in Barnet deserve the best start in life and the right support, when they need it, to live their lives successfully into adulthood. We want Barnet to be the best place in London to raise a child and for all children to thrive and achieve their potential – socially, emotionally, and academically.

Our ambition is to create a family-friendly borough, where children and young people have fun, play and explore the world. A place where the voices, needs, priorities and rights of children are considered and taken seriously as an integral part of any decision-making.

## Children and young people reaching their potential

We have excellent schools achieving some of the best results in the country and our aim is for every school in Barnet to be good or outstanding. We are working tirelessly to close the attainment gap between pupils. This means we fight inequalities, supporting children and young people from all backgrounds, but especially those that are from minority groups or that experience disadvantages such as growing up in poverty, to reach their educational and academic potential.

We are strengthening our commitment to work together to secure the delivery of efficient, high-quality and best-value services. We will achieve this by delivering services that are easy to access and to use. We aim to offer support that builds on families' resilience, that empowers by focusing on life goals and builds on strengths, from skills to connections in the community.



## Services for vulnerable children and young people

We will also deliver high-quality targeted and specialist services for our most vulnerable children and young people, including those who are disabled, in need or in need of protection. We want our children in care and care experienced young adults, who we are supporting to aspire to be the best they can be, to live their lives successfully, in a home that meets their needs.





## How we will work for children and young people

We are also focusing on the safety of our children and young people, working together with the police and other partners to ensure they are safe, at home and in their communities. We know some young people are more likely to be victims, as well as to be exploited or be drawn into crime. We are fighting these inequalities, working closely with the police and the justice system.

Our model of working builds resilience by delivering evidence-informed services that are:

- “All about me” – we focus on the child or young person, asking them about their identity, needs and wishes and building support around that
- Strengths-based – we focus on children and young people’s strengths and opportunities to build on, rather than issues or threats
- Trauma-informed – recognising the impact of past experiences and understanding the paths to recovery
- Co-produced together with children, young people and families – “My Say Matters”

We recognise we can only achieve this in dialogue with families and communities and have worked collaboratively to produce our new Children and Young People’s Plan. Together with our partners and communities we will focus on:

- Family & Belonging – supporting all our children including those in care and care experienced young people to live their lives successfully, to develop a sense of identity, improve wellbeing and to have fun and play
- Safe & Secure – ensuring the most vulnerable are protected, safe and supported to make the best choices and to build trusted relationships
- Health & Wellbeing – supporting our children and young people to adopt healthy lifestyles to prevent avoidable illness and improve their social, physical and mental wellbeing, including through integrated health and social care
- Education & Skills – supporting children and young people to reach their educational and academic potential, by closing attainment gaps and by being prepared for adult life.

# “ MY SAY MATTERS ”

‘My Say Matters’ is the name for our Child Participation and Family Involvement Strategy. The strategy has been developed with children and young people. They told us how important it is that equalities, diversity and inclusion is at the heart of ‘My Say Matters’ and we totally agree. The strategy is for all children, young people and their families especially those from racially minoritised communities, migrant families, LGBT+, children with disabilities and any other marginalised groups whose voices may not be heard as often. We will make sure everyone is supported to share their voice and express themselves fully.



## If you have something to say or want to share an idea, get involved!

**We have a range of established forums, including:**

- Youth Board – gives advice to the council about plans and policies
- Youth Assembly – is linked to democratic process & gives young people a chance to share their views with local Councillors.
- Barnet on Point - #BOP – our Children in Care Council
- Barnet Inclusive Next Generation – BING – Barnet SEND Youth Voice Forum
- Y-QAG – Young Quality Assurance Group
- Young People and Mental Health – Barnet Integrated Clinical Services – BICS
- Parent Carer Forum and the Parent Champions – who are co-producing services for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

If you would like to get involved or find out more information please see:

[www.barnet.gov.uk/mysaymatters](http://www.barnet.gov.uk/mysaymatters)

and/or email us:

[mysaymatters@barnet.gov.uk](mailto:mysaymatters@barnet.gov.uk)

## Your say matters!



**BARNET**  
LONDON BOROUGH



# Living well

In Barnet, we want all residents to feel they can play a full part in their communities, to live well and to age well. Disabled people face additional barriers in our society, as can older people and those living with a long-term health condition. The council, partners and communities all have a role to play in eliminating barriers and supporting inclusion. Some people may need support from social care to live well. We focus on people's goals, their existing abilities and strengths and the networks or communities they belong to. We can then identify any additional care or support they may need to stay well and live the lives they want to lead.

Together, we will create a borough that promotes wellbeing and inclusion for all our residents, in particular for older or disabled residents. Where neighbourhoods and services are designed to be accessible for all. A place in which we celebrate their contributions, break down isolation and amplify their voices.

## Community and health and wellbeing networks

There are many things that people, families and communities already do for themselves to live well. Being connected to wider community, whether through neighbours, friends, faith groups, activities or interests is key for many. One of Barnet's greatest strengths is our active voluntary and community sector, as well as family and informal carers from all walks of life, that help to foster valuable webs of connection and support for people. We will do everything we can to support them to thrive.

But we also know that at times, some people will need and want further support from the council and other services. We have a strong partnership working with the NHS, other public sector organisations and voluntary and community groups as part of the new Barnet Borough Partnership and North Central London Integrated

Care System. Together with local partners such as Barnet Hospital, GPs and community service providers, we are joining up health, social care and other services, improving the access, experience and outcomes for residents in Barnet. Together, we care for people's physical and mental health.

Our Mental Health Charter aims to ensure Barnet residents are supported to have good mental health. It focuses on collectively challenging stigma, encouraging people to feel confident in having conversations about their mental health and wellbeing.

We want everyone in Barnet to have opportunities to live more active and healthier lives. The Fit and Active Barnet Partnership is a collaboration between the council, voluntary and community sector, leisure and sports organisations. The partnership has agreed a shared strategy to identify gaps in physical activity provision and address them. Together, we aim to increase and promote the value and benefit of physical activity for everyone, but particularly where physical activity levels are lowest, and inequalities exist. We want to ensure fair access to services, facilities and places that support active lifestyles, from sports to everyday activities such as walking or cycling.

## Keeping adults at risk of abuse and neglect safe

We will continue to prioritise keeping adults at risk of abuse and neglect safe. We will support them to protect themselves, working with our partners and across the Barnet communities to ensure they have access to the right support in the way that works for them. We are co-designing our services with residents who need our support, as well as their family carers. We work with people to enable them to stay as in control of their lives and care as possible. In this, we encourage the human connection, people supporting people, but also the use of assistive technology where it benefits the individual.

All residents have the right to live free of domestic abuse and all forms of violence. Working with our partners in the Barnet Safer Communities Partnership, we will raise awareness and work to prevent violence and abuse in the home, places of learning and employment and in the community. The partnership has zero tolerance for abuse and violence, and perpetrators will be held to account. We will reach out to people who may face additional barriers when seeking help and aim to ensure everyone can get the help they need at the earliest opportunity.

### High-quality adult social care

Adult social care is one of Barnet's largest sectors, annually worth around £300m to the local economy and employing 10,000 people. We will carry on working closely with social care organisations such as care homes, home care agencies and supported living. We will continue to ensure care staff and providers are supported to continue to provide high quality care.

Large scale national changes are taking place for adult social care. We will prepare for and implement changes so that residents, care providers and staff are supported and gain the benefits of these reforms and use these as a

springboard for further improvement. The new Care Quality Commission assurance regime will help us identify where we are doing well and where we may need to focus our efforts.

We know that a big factor in keeping people well and healthy is living in a home that suits them. To that end we will work to increase the number of homes that meet the needs of disabled and older people, ensuring they are adapted and fit for purpose, and use assistive technology, where possible.

We are working across the council and with partners to understand more about the experience of disabled residents, hearing directly from people. We want to provide the right support and services, including creating more opportunities for disabled people to gain employment.

We aim to improve holistic support for people living with dementia and their loved ones. Together with key partners across Barnet, from leisure centres and libraries to the Royal Air Force Museum, we are continuing to develop as a dementia friendly borough. Our work is underpinned by a Dementia Strategy developed with the Barnet Borough Partnership. We are also committed to becoming an Age Friendly Borough.

## Want to get involved?

In adult social care, we work closely with residents with lived experience to help shape and improve services. This is sometimes called co-production.

We link with partners in health and across the council to ensure the voice of older and disabled people, carers, people living with mental health challenges and others are heard.

Some of our opportunities to get involved include:

- Our People's Voice Community - a group of 250+ people with experience of health and social care

- Getting people involved in developing new services, strategies, and giving feedback on social care practice

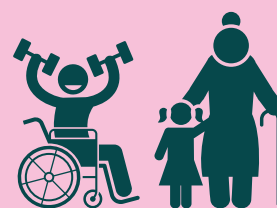
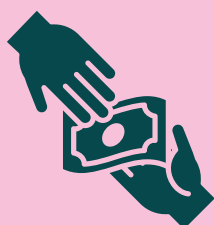
- An Involvement Board made up of resident representatives, which oversees all our engagement work

Our Engagement and Co-production Strategy and Charter for Adult Social Care sets out our aspirations in more detail to increase people's involvement in shaping adult social care services for the better.

To find out more and join, please contact [engage.adults@barnet.gov.uk](mailto:engage.adults@barnet.gov.uk)



# We will know we have made a difference because...



## Fighting inequalities

- There are equal opportunities for all, and equal access to quality services – based on need. Long-term, we aim to decrease structural drivers of inequalities
- Residents live healthy, happy and long lives
- We have made Barnet the healthiest borough in London where everyone who lives, works or studies locally can achieve their full health and wellbeing potential.
- Barnet being a truly inclusive employer

## Reducing poverty

- Reduced poverty in our communities
- The council, contractors and local businesses and partners pay the living wage
- Residents are engaged in employment

## Family friendly

- There is excellent education for all
- Children have their best start in life and are ready for learning
- Children and young people have good social, physical and mental wellbeing
- Young people are engaged in learning and work post-16
- Young people are safe and secure

## Living well

- More disabled people are employed by the council and partners
- More older and disabled people, including with mental health needs and learning disabilities, can stay living in their own homes
- Residents experience integrated health and care services, with positive outcomes and experiences
- Residents can access and enjoy more opportunities for physical activity and lead more active lives
- Residents have a positive experience of social care services
- There is social inclusion and representative access of older residents and those with disabilities in council and other services
- In the long term, we have eradicated domestic abuse and violence against women and girls

# Caring for our places



We are an ambitious London suburb – a vibrant and fun place to live, work and visit. We will champion and develop our town centres and neighbourhoods, creating safe, clean and welcoming places with quality homes people can afford. As a borough of fun, we will be a destination, a place to visit, live and enjoy ourselves, where people connect to each other and feel a sense of belonging.



## Our mission

### In caring for our places, we will...

- Champion and develop our town centres and neighbourhoods, creating places that are clean, safe and welcoming; where it is attractive for people to visit and spend time and where businesses have the best chance of success.
- Provide good quality homes in the right places that meet residents' diverse needs and are affordable. We will create better places that connect and support communities, with services our residents need and a local economy that is fit for all.
- Become a borough of fun; a place to enjoy ourselves, where there are plenty of opportunities for everyone to connect, have fun, experience arts, culture, events, sports and hobbies. We want everyone to feel they belong and that Barnet is their place, where we celebrate the people who live, work and study in Barnet and its many diverse communities.



We think Barnet is a brilliant place to grow up, live and work. We know the majority of residents like living in Barnet, think it is family friendly and a place where communities get on well together. However, these strengths are not well-known outside the borough, where some perceive Barnet as just a suburb that is good to commute from.

We have many different towns, neighbourhoods and communities within Barnet and we will celebrate the richness of our diverse communities; the pride people have in their borough and in their local area and together transform what is already good about the borough to what is great. We will become a borough of fun – a destination to commute to.

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*“We will become a borough of fun – a destination to commute to.”*

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It is essential our town centres, neighbourhoods and other public spaces feel safe and are designed with our residents in mind. Together with our communities, we will work to create places for people: where people want to be, where they want to enjoy themselves and are able to afford to live in the years to come. As such, our development and regeneration activities are focused on building communities, not just homes, and on building genuinely affordable homes. We also recognise that everyone deserves a place to live, and we will work with those at risk of homelessness to support them to remain in their own home, and ensuring the best help for those who do become homeless.

We have an ambition to become a borough of fun – a place where our residents want to stay and enjoy themselves; a place that is for ‘living, not just existing’. In doing so, we will help communities and residents to connect to each other and to Barnet as a place, to build a sense of belonging. Together, we care for our places.



# Safe and attractive neighbourhoods and town centres

We aim to create fun places people want to live in and visit. For this, we need safe and clean neighbourhoods, with flourishing town centres where creativity is encouraged, and businesses thrive.

We recognise safety is crucial to our sense of connection and pride in our local spaces. Everyone should feel safe in their homes and communities. While Barnet is one of London's safest boroughs, with overall crime reducing since 2005, that is not often how people feel. In the Resident Perception Survey 2021, crime was a top priority for 36% of adults, and 41% of young people. The perceptions and experiences of Barnet residents around crime and anti-social behaviour means we do more to listen to their concerns and co-producing solutions.

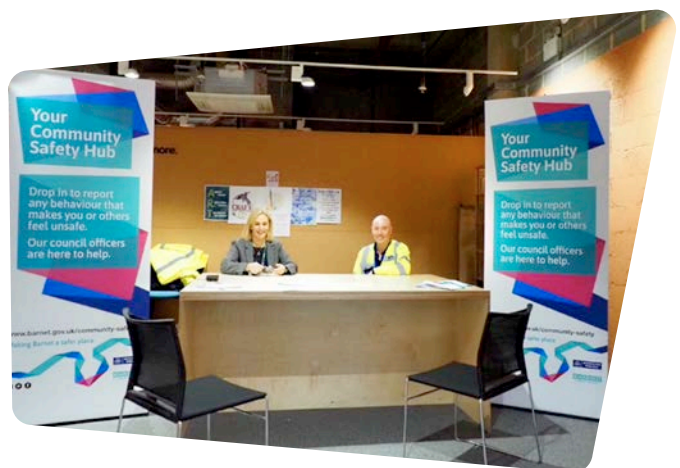
## Tacking anti-social behaviour and community safety issues

Key to this approach is our aim to be open and accessible to all residents, addressing concerns locally. We are piloting community safety hubs across the borough, encouraging residents to report anti-social behaviour and community safety issues in person to council officers and partners. We are also significantly expanding and upgrading our CCTV capacity and have introduced ward walks. Operating in every ward, the walks bring together resident group representatives, Barnet councillors, the police and council officers. They walk around an area and review issues that require action, such as specific areas where criminal activity is being reported, or where residents have concerns about safety in relation to streetlighting or overgrown hedges.

Collaborating with the police and partners in the community, we want our neighbourhoods to discourage crime and to instil a feeling of safety. Through the Barnet Safer Communities Partnership, we will tackle the issues of greatest concern to residents, including:

- Tackling areas of crime, from burglaries and robberies to identity and hate crime.
- Addressing anti-social behaviour, fly-tipping and other environmental offences in the borough.
- Diverting people away from being drawn into anti-social behaviour and crime, including through safeguarding young people.
- Creating a network of safe spaces for women and girls.

As we progress with our plans, we will continue to regularly review and refresh them.



## Clean and well-maintained public spaces

Not only are clean and well-maintained spaces likely to feel safer, but they are also likely to feel more welcoming, in turn encouraging people to spend more time in those places. This contributes to people's sense of place and that is why we will continue to focus on vibrant and clean spaces over the life of this plan. We have, for example, introduced a community skips service. Operating in neighbourhoods across the borough, the skips will make it easier for residents to dispose of bulky waste and will cut down on the amount of fly tipping.

Barnet's town centres are at the core of our places. We want to champion their diversity, creativity, histories and identities at the same time as making them feel safer for businesses, residents and visitors. As well as providing opportunities for shopping and services, they are important sites of



employment, recreation, religion and cultural life. Town centres are home to many of the borough's almost 30,000 businesses, the vast majority of which are small, family-run or independent. We are working to ensure all town centres and neighbourhoods become better connected places, including with state-of-the-art digital infrastructure.

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*“We are making our town centres accessible for older and disabled residents, as well as providing more opportunities for children and young people to play and feel welcomed – from playful furniture to creating public art.”*

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We want our town centres to be for everyone. This means making them accessible for older and disabled residents, as well as providing more opportunities for children and young people to play and feel welcomed – from playful furniture to creating public art.

We encourage local people and businesses to lead this renewal by working with creatives and artists to make our town centres more interesting and attractive. We will also work closely with established and new town centre groups, by directly supporting local businesses and by empowering residents and community groups. We also partner with other public sector bodies and private developers to maximise an area's potential. We are developing a new Town Centres Framework that will set this out in more detail and bring everyone along on the journey.

### **Improving our highways and footways**

We must also ensure that people can move safely around in the borough. Barnet's highways network is our largest and most visible community asset and is probably the most used of all our services. It is vital to the economic, social and environmental well-being of our community. In 2023/24 we will develop a new Highway Investment Strategy to improve the quality of our highways and footways and to support more sustainable forms of travel. This includes making repairs more reactive as well as improving communication and engagement with our residents on what is happening on our roads.



## **Want to develop your local area?**

**Please join us in leading the renewal of your local area, town centre or high street.**

Many town centres have established “town team” groups and partnerships which bring together residents, businesses and other partners. Together,

we enlist the support of designers, architects, engineers and others to develop our town centres.

**You can find out more here:**

[www.barnet.gov.uk/community/town-teams](http://www.barnet.gov.uk/community/town-teams)

# Quality, affordable homes

Delivering the right homes to meet diverse needs now and for future generations, that people can afford and are in the right places, is a key priority and challenge for the council. We are focused on working with residents, local businesses and partners to make sure that growth benefits existing communities as well as future residents. Our aspiration is that people who have grown up in Barnet and want to stay here to make their own lives are able to do so, as well as welcoming new people to join our communities. We are building more homes that people can afford, including 1,000 homes for rent at half market rates.

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*“We are building more homes that people can afford, including 1,000 homes for rent at half market rates.”*

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Barnet will respond to this need for new housing and infrastructure through our new Local Plan. This focuses development in existing growth areas such as Brent Cross and Colindale; in town centres and transport hubs such as Edgware and North Finchley; and along main roads where there is capacity for change. We already have new affordable housing being developed on the Fosters estate in Hendon, Little Strand in Colindale North, the Grange estate in East Finchley, Broadfields estate in Edgwarebury and Coppetts Road in Friern Barnet.

## Building communities and neighbourhoods

Building new homes is only one aspect of the challenge. We will work in partnership with local people to ensure that changes make better places, that integrate well with surrounding areas, celebrate good design and are supported with the right infrastructure, such as access to jobs, green spaces, local businesses, community facilities and state-of-the-art digital infrastructure.

At Brent Cross Town we are working with our development partner, residents and community groups to enhance and improve the local area for new and existing residents and visitors. This will build on the good work already achieved in the area – including the opening of the Exploratory and Claremont Parks, improvements to Claremont Way shops, and the construction of the new Brent Cross West station, due to open in 2023. Further residential buildings and one student accommodation building are due to complete in 2024 and 2025. The first office building is also expected to complete in 2026 and works to improve Clitterhouse Playing Fields continue.

## Healthy, energy-efficient homes

We must also work to improve the quality and energy efficiency of existing housing in the borough. We are investing in our own council housing, to improve fire safety and ensuring homes are healthy by tackling damp and mould, as well as renewing kitchens, bathrooms and windows. We are also seeking to lead the way in making our homes more energy efficient and fit for the future. We want to encourage others to do the same, including by requiring private sector landlords to demonstrate they meet minimum standards through our licensing schemes.

## Homes for all

London’s housing crisis is felt most keenly by those who have no home at all, and Barnet, like all councils, faces major challenges to reduce the harms associated with this. We will continue to invest in preventing and reducing homelessness and take steps to end rough sleeping. We will focus on working in partnership to better understand the root causes of homelessness, prevent recurring homelessness, give appropriate advice and support to those in need, and make sure there is sufficient supply of accommodation.



During 2023 we will adopt our new Local Plan and refresh our key housing-related strategies and policies. This includes updating our Housing Allocations Scheme to ensure those in greatest need are given priority in accessing affordable housing.



Image: Computer-generated image of new homes at Brent Cross Town. All the energy for the 6,700 planned homes will come from 100% renewable sources.

# Borough of fun

We are setting out our ambition to become a borough of fun – a place where there are opportunities to celebrate Barnet as a community and destination. Barnet will be a place to live and enjoy ourselves, where there are opportunities to participate in sport, play, leisure and arts and cultural activities, as well as build businesses and careers in hospitality and the creative sectors. We are passionate about the importance of community, and the need for ‘fun’, especially in times of hardship, to support our residents to improve quality of life. Culture, heritage, events and sport have long been recognised as being powerful forces in creating a sense of place and of belonging, as well as playing a vital role in developing skills, boosting wellbeing, productivity and innovation.

## **Community-led arts and culture to put Barnet on the map**

The Community Participation Strategy sets a bold ambition to become a ‘listening council’ and to celebrate our diverse communities and cultures. Aligned with this, when setting out our vision for borough of fun, we aim for this to be community-led and to create the things people really want and to include everyone. Our diverse communities and thriving voluntary, faith and community groups bring richness and depth to people’s experience of living in the borough. We will do more to celebrate this, sharing the stories, recognising the contribution and value our diverse communities.

We are working on an exciting, ambitious and fun Culture Strategy that puts Barnet on the map and celebrates its creativity, heritage and community. We are proud to have a rich network of artists and cultural organisations who have made the borough their home, along with a well-established cultural education partnership who are working strategically to ensure greater access to high quality arts and creative activities for children and young people in the borough. Building on this, our Culture Strategy will be co-created together with our networks and residents and will aim to boost

this activity further. Together, we will set out a vision of what culture means for us and aim to bid to become the London Borough of Culture.

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*“Together, we will set out a vision of what culture means for us and aim to bid to become the London Borough of Culture.”*

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Our children and young people are active participants in our development into a borough of fun. We want them to have fun, play and explore the world. Our Play Strategy will build on this, from upgrading our playgrounds to introducing more performance spaces and opportunities for development of public art.

## **A dynamic and inclusive community events programme**

We will work with residents, charities, community groups and businesses to create, support and host events and activities to share their cultures, passions and skills. By developing and championing an ongoing, dynamic and inclusive community events programme, we hope to bring opportunities for everyone in the borough to have some fun together. This will also support belonging and tackle loneliness and isolation, particularly with the elderly and young people.

These events are supported by our local spaces, including a variety of community buildings. We will make appropriate spaces available to resident groups and set this out in a new Community Assets Strategy, to enable more community groups to easily access buildings and spaces that meet their needs.



Our approach will be supported by our public spaces, including our active and vibrant town centres, parks and libraries. We will support volunteer days, culture and music festivals, events and food markets. Barnet has one of the largest public library services in London, providing local cultural venues at the heart of our communities. Our libraries promote reading for pleasure, bring people together and provide space for residents to meet and participate in a range of activities from reading groups and rhyme-time sessions to art, craft and music workshops. Together with residents we will continue to develop activities such as the Creative Communities programme in Colindale and to deliver renovated or new libraries in Burnt Oak and Hendon.

## Sport, physical activity and recreation

We want to embrace the power and fun of sport, physical activity and recreation. Our Fit & Active Barnet Framework highlights how we will continue to work with partner organisations to enable residents of all ages and abilities to get involved. Together, we are creating and providing new and enhanced opportunities for all residents to have an opportunity to get involved in the many great sports and physical activities across the borough. This also includes investing in our sports facilities and places, with proposals for West Hendon Playing Fields, Copthall Playing Fields and Barnet Playing Fields. We recognise that physical activity is vital not only for our physical health, but also for our general sense of wellbeing and community.

Together, we will honour the uniqueness of Barnet, celebrating the community and the people who live here.



## Want to contribute to making Barnet fun?

Our Culture Strategy, action plans and activities will be co-produced with the community to ensure it reflects what our residents, artists and young people want to see in the borough. Together, we will start our journey towards bidding to be London Borough of Culture in 2026. It will create many opportunities for residents to experience, make and share culture and creativity.

You can find out more about it here:

<https://engage.barnet.gov.uk/culture-strategy>

Our community events programme is designed to support community groups to put on events that celebrate culture, community and diversity. If you have a proposal for an event and would like to apply for funding and support, please email [community@barnet.gov.uk](mailto:community@barnet.gov.uk)

# We will know we have made a difference because...



## Safe, attractive neighbourhoods

- Town centres have good business health and vitality
- There is consistent, high standards of cleanliness and care across all parts of the borough
- Residents feel safe
- In the long term, we have eradicated domestic abuse and violence against women and girls

## Quality, affordable homes

- Residents experience regeneration that benefits local communities and improves well-being
- There is increased supply of new homes in the borough as well as increased supply of social rented homes in the borough
- All council homes are safe, warm & sustainable
- Private sector licensing schemes are effective and improve quality in the private rented sector
- Nobody is sleeping rough

## Borough of fun

- Residents pull together to improve local areas
- Residents think the council is making the local area a better place live
- We achieve London borough of culture status – with residents experiencing a fun borough
- We see an increased quality and investment in sports facilities, libraries and other public spaces.



# Caring for the planet



We will work together with local people, communities and businesses across the borough to become net zero carbon in Barnet by 2042, and for the council by 2030.



## Our mission

Image: Nature-based solutions will tackle flood risk around the Silk Stream

### In caring about our planet we will...

- Put sustainability at the heart of everything we do - becoming a net zero council by 2030. We will work with local people, communities and businesses across the borough to make Barnet net zero by 2042. We will work to create a place fit for the future, where everyone benefits from improved green infrastructure, green employment and business opportunities.
- Improve the quality of our local environment, so that residents benefit from clean air and waterways and reduced flooding.
- Enhance our green and open spaces so they are attractive places with excellent biodiversity and tree cover. We aim to create places that encourage communities to come together, have fun and improve their health and wellbeing, while helping us to manage the effects of a changing climate.

In May 2022, we declared a climate and biodiversity emergency. We now need to go further and faster than ever before to tackle climate change and the impact on the planet and biodiversity loss, as well as on our local environment and our lives. Extreme weather events such as flash flooding or heat waves are directly attributable to climate change and have significant impacts on our lives.

We will work to future proof our borough, safeguard our environment, enriching our green spaces and biodiversity, ensuring our actions do not negatively impact on future generations to come.

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*“We will put sustainability at the heart of what we do and empower local communities to do the same, taking action to tackle the most pressing environmental challenges affecting our borough.”*

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We will put sustainability at the heart of what we do and empower local communities to do the same, taking action to tackle the most pressing environmental challenges affecting our borough. In doing so, we will tackle the unequal impact of climate change; we know that some residents are more likely to be affected by air pollution and that others will not have the same resources to make sustainable choices.

We can only be effective in tackling climate change if we take action together so this is as much about what the council can do directly as about how we can encourage, support and enable our residents and communities to take action. In doing so, we will leverage opportunities to make Barnet an attractive place for sustainable business and investments; upskilling our communities to take advantage of new green job opportunities and green technology.



## Journey to net zero

The council has committed to an ambitious target of becoming a net zero council by 2030 and for Barnet to achieve this as a place as soon as possible after this, but no later than 2042. We want to be a vocal climate leader, one that takes action and cares for the planet, and our corner of it, for future generations.

We are setting out plans together with residents, communities and businesses across the borough to deliver on these targets. Together, we are creating cross-cutting action plans that make it easier for all of us to make sustainable choices, now and in the future. As our future generation, children and young people are key partners and voices in this, including through championing sustainability in school. We want to create a place fit for the future, where everyone benefits from improved green infrastructure, green employment and business opportunities.



**We are committed to putting sustainability at the heart of everything we do:**

- **Housing and Buildings** - Barnet will lead by example, ensuring all new and existing housing stock is brought up to the highest green, environmental and energy efficient standards.

- **Business and Skills** - Barnet will collaborate, create and leverage opportunities to make the borough an attractive place for sustainable businesses and investments; upskilling our communities to take advantage of new green job opportunities and green technology.

- **Transport** - Barnet will promote active travel by creating a safe and friendly environment for walking, wheeling and cycling. We recognise this is not possible for all and will encourage greener travel choices, making public transport as accessible as possible, and providing electric charging points.

- **Natural Environment and Biodiversity** - Barnet will seek to enrich and protect its natural environment, enhancing our green spaces across the borough. We will ensure residents have access to green spaces and balance the needs of residents and biodiversity.

- **Renewable Energy** - Barnet will remove the use of fossil fuels where possible. We will make energy use across the borough more sustainable and affordable for residents and businesses and tackle fuel poverty.

- **Investments** - Barnet will review investments, such as pensions, to understand more about their impact on sustainability.

- **Waste** - Barnet will seek to minimise the production of waste across the borough. We will enable all residents to have access to sustainable waste disposal choices, while educating businesses and individuals about best practice.

- **Supply Chain** - Barnet will work with suppliers to improve sustainability within the supply chain. We will also integrate sustainability in our decision-making when deciding which provider or supplier to go with.

## Join us on our journey to becoming net zero

We can all do our bit to look after the planet, and with your help, Barnet will become a net zero carbon borough by 2042.

Ways to get involved in our plans and monitor progress are made available through the Sustainability Hub:

<https://engage.barnet.gov.uk/net-zero>

Past opportunities have for example included our Citizens Assembly and a Youth Assembly for Biodiversity and Climate Change, which were held in early 2023. Please sign up to our e-bulletin for the most up-to-date information.

## Enhancing the local environment

Caring about the planet means caring about Barnet's local environment and safeguarding what people already like and value through living, working and visiting the borough. Through this, we will keep people healthy, safe and able to move freely around the borough.

London has the worst quality air in the United Kingdom, increasingly affecting people's health. We are determined to ensure everyone can live in a healthy, clean and attractive environment and improving the quality of air we breathe is key to achieving this. We are working to improve public transport and promote walking, cycling and other means of active travel instead of people making car journeys for short trips. We are also planting trees and greening our high streets, not only improving their look and feel but also helping to reduce air pollution and address climate change.

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*“We are planting trees and greening our high streets, not only improving their look and feel but also helping to reduce air pollution and address climate change.”*

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Climate change will result in more frequent and extreme storm events and consequently increase the risk of serious flooding. Across the borough we are already experiencing flooding incidents, where record-breaking rainfall has meant large parts of the borough were flooded, leading to streets and railways being left under water. As part of the Silk Stream Flood Resilience Innovation project, we are engaging with communities and delivering a range of flood risk improvements, such as enhanced drainage and improved waterways.

We also want to do more to shift to a circular economy, where people reuse, recycle and repair as many things as possible.

## Enhancing green spaces

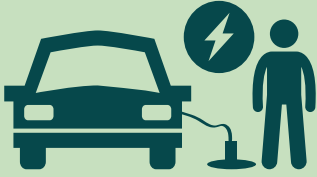
Our green spaces are an important part of what makes the borough a great place to live, grow-up in and to visit – a place to play and have fun. People can enjoy access to parks, wild landscapes, extensive areas of green belt and leafy river valleys. All across Barnet, there are also small green spaces, from trees and flower beds to front gardens, that enhance our everyday life. These areas form part of a vital biodiversity network, providing a habitat for wildlife and bringing the ‘countryside’ into the heart of the city.

We are committed to working with residents and our community environmental groups to improve our green spaces through the delivery of an ambitious tree planting programme, a new Parks and Open Spaces Strategy and a Nature Recovery Strategy. We will develop the habitat and biodiversity potential of green spaces across the borough. We will ensure our parks and open spaces remain welcoming, well used, safe and looked-after. We want to embrace their potential to support well-being, to provide spaces for learning and for communities to come together, making them inclusive and accessible for everyone.



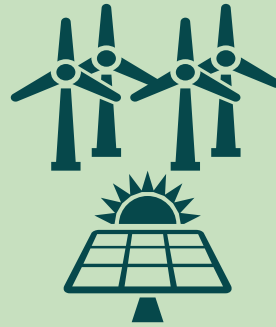


# We will know we have made a difference because...



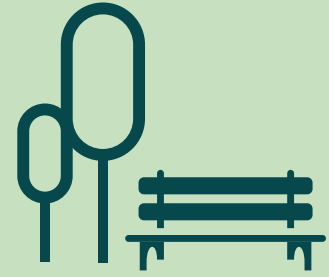
## Journey to net zero

- Barnet Council is net zero by 2030
- Barnet borough becomes net zero by 2042, with a reduction in carbon emissions in the short term
- Residents and businesses benefit from green opportunities, skills and employment
- There is an increase in greener travel.



## Enhancing the local environment

- Neighbourhoods are clean and green.



## Enhancing green spaces

- There is improved quality and provision of parks and open spaces, playing fields, woodlands and small green spaces.
- Barnet is an increasingly biodiverse borough, with diverse fauna and species
- The council plants 1,000 trees a year and there are more trees in areas with lower canopy cover.



# Being an engaged and effective council



We will become a ‘listening council’ that collaborates, listens and builds a dialogue with residents and communities, together working for a better Barnet. In doing so, we will transform how we work as a council, into one that residents find easy to access and where we act on their concerns and involve them in decision-making. Supporting this ambition, we want to become an employer of choice.



## Our mission

### In being an effective and engaged council, we will...

- Put residents at the heart of what we do. Collaborate, listen and build a dialogue with our residents and communities, working together to co-produce our strategies and services as well as ensuring that decision-making is open, transparent and accountable.
- Transform our services to deliver the best outcomes we can, ensuring our services are easily accessible to residents and that their experience of contacting and engaging with the council is consistent, seamless and focussed on their needs.
- Become a great place to work and an employer of choice, where staff feel valued, and where our values (Caring, Learning, Inclusive, Collaborative) are at the heart of everything we do.
- Delivering our vision through – and together with – our partnerships. Together amplifying our voices to deliver for residents.
- Make the best possible use of our financial resources, now and in the future, so that we are able to continue to deliver on what matters to Barnet residents.



Barnet is committed to being a ‘listening council’ that places community participation and engagement at the heart of everything we do. We are a council that cares about residents, and we want to enjoy a trusted and collaborative relationship with our communities. We will be open to scrutiny and transparent about the hard choices we sometimes have to make. All this means we need a step change in our approach. As a council, we want to transform our service delivery, becoming a council that is easy to reach and that delivers the best outcomes we can for our residents.

In delivering this plan, we need collective action from across our communities and our partnerships. We aim to further develop as an organisation that builds relationships, linking people and communities; where we can experiment and learn together, sharing lessons on what works and what does not. Together we can do more for people, our places and the planet.

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*“We want to transform our service delivery, becoming a council that is easy to reach and that delivers the best outcomes we can for our residents.”*

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At the core of this is our staff. Barnet will become a sector-leading employer and an employer of choice; an organisation people are proud to work for because they can see the difference their work makes to our residents and the borough.

We want to attract the best people into the council and the local area for the benefit of residents. In doing so, we are committed to a workforce and particularly a management team that is representative of the borough we serve.

## Community participation

We know residents of all ages and backgrounds and community groups have the experience, skills and insight to improve their lives and environments. Good community participation works by the council ensuring we unlock the assets and power that rest within communities to achieve all the ambitions set out in this plan. Designing solutions for problems that communities face in partnership with those communities means we will get better solutions.

Good community participation will enable the council to continue to better tackle the inequalities residents face. This will help us achieve better outcomes for children and young people, help support people who are vulnerable or isolated and will help grow a sustainable and inclusive economy by supporting people into jobs and providing better advice on things like debt.

This belief forms the foundation of our Community Participation Strategy, in which we set out our commitments for what good community participation looks like:

- **We go where people are**
  - We engage residents in the places they feel safe, comfortable and familiar
  - We keep it local and work at neighbourhood level
- **We learn through doing**
  - We test our approaches through pilot projects
  - We adapt and change as we learn
- **We listen**
  - We seek the views of all our communities; particularly young people, minoritised groups and those less often heard
  - We hear, respond and discuss sensitively
- **We are transparent, accessible and open**
  - We encourage participation in our policymaking and democracy
  - We are honest about our decisions
- **We value community power**
  - We will empower our communities and enable them to lead
  - We celebrate our diverse communities and their culture unities who are less often heard. We will ensure that all Barnet’s communities feel celebrated, listened to, and included.

## Developing services together with our residents

These principles will form part of our DNA and be hard wired into everything we do. These approaches have already been set out in ‘My Say Matters’ – our child participation and family involvement strategy – and the Adults Engagement and Co-production Strategy – where we have worked with residents, including those that use our services, or are parents or carers of those that do. By using residents and children and young people to inform decisions about service design, we are delivering better services and outcomes for people. Children and young people are also directly involved in our local democracy, including through our Youth Assembly, which regularly shares its views with local councillors.

We want to see this approach consistently used across the council. And to demonstrate our commitment to “learn through doing” we will deliver a range of “pathfinder” projects testing different aspects and approaches to engagement and co-production. One example is our Leader Listens events. In these events, the leader of the council will continue to meet with community groups to hear their opinions and questions of the council, especially groups whose voices may not have been heard in the past.

## More efficient and transparent decision making

These principles go to the heart of our decision making. We want to engage local groups and residents through the council’s decision-making meetings. Our move from a Committee system to an Executive system (from May 2023) will support more efficient decision-making and improved accountability with Cabinet Members being responsible for specific portfolios. Also, as part of our commitment to increase transparency, we are webcasting committee meetings and will enable remote access for meeting participants, including residents.

We will openly communicate and share information. This can be through our ‘formal’ channels, such as our website, Barnet First magazine and e-newsletter or through our social media channels. Or it can simply be a leaflet in the local library or GP’s surgery about how to find advice. More informally still, it can be through our conversations with residents and communities on our streets - our aim is to make every contact count.

We make published data and other information of interest easy to access through our Open Barnet data portal (<https://open.barnet.gov.uk/>). We continue to lead the way in transparency, striving to go above and beyond statutory requirements.



## Want to participate?

Engage Barnet will help you find and participate in discussions and consultations that interest you in Barnet. Have your say and take the opportunity to feedback, share your ideas, and influence decisions that matter to you. You can find out how we are using your feedback and ideas to help inform decisions.

We will also keep you updated on community news, events and how to get involved in your local community.

Please see: <https://engage.barnet.gov.uk/>

You can also sign up to our weekly digital newsletter at: <https://www.barnet.gov.uk/news/sign-our-e-newsletter>



# Working in partnership

In delivering this plan, we need collective action from across our community. Every day our schools, businesses, green spaces, and local services are all enhanced by the contribution made by people getting involved in their communities. We are lucky to have involved residents and a strong voluntary, community and faith sector. We want to further strengthen our relationships and ways of working to be able to do more together.

As we continue to develop our agenda, we aim to further develop as an organisation that builds relationships, empowers our partnerships and

acts as an enabler of discussion and change. Our partners in other public services like police, fire, health and education, as well as businesses, colleges and further education institutes all have a vital role to play in this.

We know we are likely to have limited budgets, resources and time to deliver what we want. But we also know that when we work together with others, we can do more with less. Together we can amplify our voices and resources, delivering better outcomes for our residents.

## Neighbourhood working

One area where we will test these community participation principles and transform how we deliver is through neighbourhood working. For example, where we tailor our approach to the unique needs and assets - from buildings to people's skills - in a given location or within a specific community.

When developing neighbourhood working, we will also consider how we can better join-up, coordinate and manage street and neighbourhood-based services. Our staff are the first point of contact for residents, and we want to empower them to be ambassadors for the council.

There are some areas of service delivery where we already do this. In Family Services' 0-19 Hubs, several services are located in a single, accessible venue while at BOOST, employment and benefit advice, skills and well-being support is run from a number of libraries across Barnet.

### A neighbourhood-based approach

The community safety hubs and neighbourhood models of care are also recent examples of where we have taken a more neighbourhood-based approach to delivery. We are working proactively with partners such as the NHS and our thriving voluntary and community sector to develop and jointly deliver neighbourhood-based approaches.

Informed by residents' views, we are currently delivering a localised, neighbourhood model in Grahame Park.

But there is more we can do. Our aspiration is to build on joint working already in place, creating 'community hubs' that integrate teams across Council, health, police, voluntary sector and other partners in neighbourhoods across Barnet. We want to actively share the problem and develop the solutions together. This may look different in different parts of the borough, but in each area we will link services together to ensure they can deliver for and engage with residents as effectively as possible. Together, we want to create an enabling environment where people and projects are encouraged and supported by the council.

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*“We want to actively share the problem and develop the solutions together.”*

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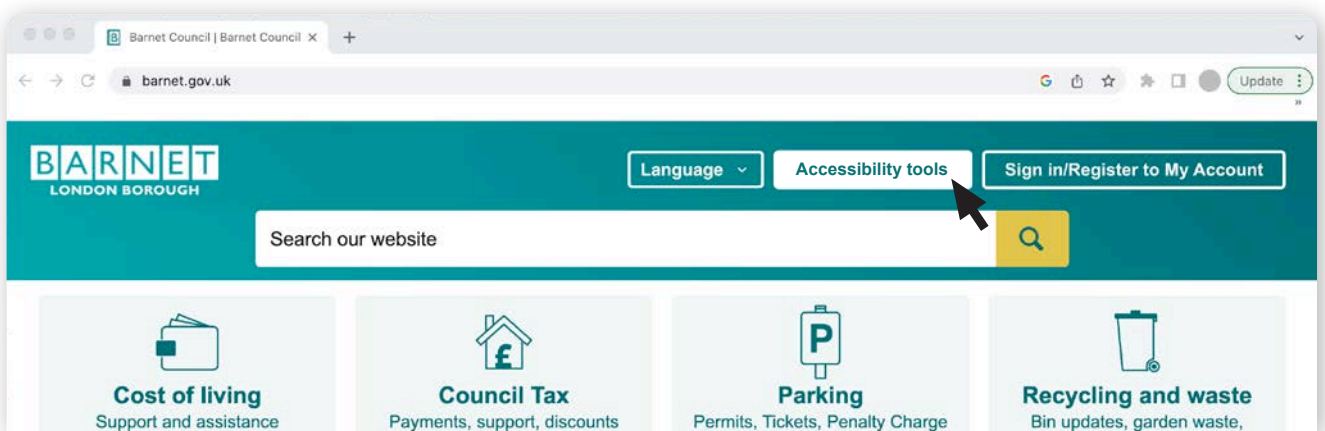
# Improving access to our services

We want to provide excellent resident experiences in all that we do, removing barriers and improving access for all. We want to come together as a council, share the problem, imagine and innovate, together setting out what a more accessible council looks like.

Key to this is to transform residents' contacts with the council, providing more and better, seamless options for accessing services online, by telephone as well as in person, including through community hubs. This series of improvements will be joining up this

'front door' for residents and re-designing it to ensure those with more complex or multiple needs are offered a more proactive and personalised service.

Equality is at the foundation of everything we do. In redesigning our services, we will ensure every resident can access the support, information and services they need in a way that suits them and recognises individual needs. As we strive to do this, we will support those residents that want to and can, to benefit from digital technology, investing in tools and improving digital literacy.



# Financially responsible

The COVID-19 pandemic placed huge pressures on council services, and we are still dealing with that legacy. Post pandemic, we continue to see increasing demand for services, especially for those that support the most vulnerable, such as special education needs budgets, children's social care, homelessness and adult social care. This, combined with high inflation and energy and fuel prices, means that pressure on the council's budget is likely to continue to increase.

This is not a new challenge for the council, which we will manage through prudent financial planning and delivery of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy. However, as funding declines, choices about spending and prioritisation become harder. This means we have to be sure we are investing and using our resources in the best, most effective way and a core part of that is considering how we deliver our services.

This is not only about efficiency. We firmly believe we can achieve more and better outcomes for residents by

considering the challenges and issues around service delivery in a holistic, joined up way.

This is not only about what we can do as a council. We know that by working more closely with others, from communities to partners, local businesses and neighbouring authorities, we can share skills, knowledge and resources. Together, we can make more efficient use of our money, and deliver for our residents.

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*“We know that by working more closely with others, from communities to partners, local businesses and neighbouring authorities, we can share skills, knowledge and resources”*

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# A great place to work

We want Barnet to be an employer of choice; a council that attracts the best staff and that our people feel proud to work for because we are a sector-leading employer and also because they can see the difference their work makes to our residents and the borough.

In being a great place to work, we need to get the essentials right by equipping all our staff with the right tools to effectively do their jobs, from smooth running of IT and mobile connectivity to well-functioning, modern offices. We will be a flexible employer, recognising how important it is for our staff to maintain a good work-life balance and to support them in looking after their physical well-being and mental health.

## Our values describe our culture

Our values – Caring, Learning to Improve, Inclusive and Collaborative - describe our culture and we are working hard to ensure these values run through everything we do.

We have an active organisational development programme that is helping us to build a workforce that is fully engaged and has the capability to deliver the priorities set out in this plan. We know that to deliver for our residents, we need to have staff who are passionate about Barnet and who are representative of the communities we serve. We also need to have leaders and managers that demonstrate integrity, adaptability and a genuine commitment to developing their staff.

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*“We have placed Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion front and centre of our approach to developing our workforce.”*

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We have placed Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) front and centre of our approach to developing our workforce. We have established active and empowered staff networks, which work closely with the council’s leadership to shape the way we do things, including our approaches to recruitment, learning and working culture. We

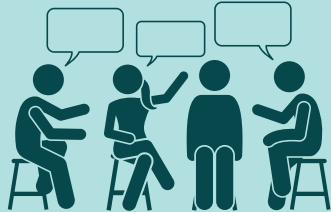
value the lived experience of our staff from all backgrounds and we genuinely want all of our staff to feel they can bring their whole selves to work, and to work in an environment that is safe, supportive and respectful. Together with our active staff networks, we have created an action plan for change with six priority targets:

- 1 We have an inclusive culture, based on an empathic understanding of people’s life situations and lived experiences
- 2 Our workforce is representative of the communities we serve, at all levels
- 3 Our working environment is safe and supportive, free from discrimination, bullying, harassment and micro-aggressions, where all staff can bring their whole selves to work
- 4 All staff are given the opportunity to grow and develop
- 5 Barriers to equality are better understood and eliminated
- 6 Equalities, diversity and inclusion are promoted at all levels of the council, internally and externally.



We want all of our staff to feel part of “Team Barnet”, and for this to be more than just a strapline: it encompasses the collaborative, supportive and ambitious approach that is needed to deliver the best for our borough.

# We will know we have made a difference because...



## Community participation

- Residents feel informed about what the council does
- We act on concerns of local residents and involve them in decision making.



## Neighbourhood working

- Residents and community groups tell us they are being listened to and encouraged to participate in shaping their communities.



## Improving access to services

- Residents find it is easy to access council services.



## A great place to work

- Staff feel valued
- Staff tell us they feel proud to be part of Team Barnet
- Recruitment is inclusive.



## Working in partnership

- Partners tell us they feel like valued equals in their relationship with the council
- The voluntary and community sector is flourishing and is seen as a beacon for London/the UK.



## Financially responsible

- We are able to balance our budget without cutting services.



# How we will know we have succeeded

Many of the themes set out in this corporate plan are supported by existing or emerging strategies, most of which have associated delivery plans. To achieve this plan, we have also established a transformation programme. This represents the continuation of this plan, by articulating the “how” many of the aspirations set out here will be delivered and ensuring that our strategies are turned into actions.

We will be evaluating our progress along the way. This plan highlights our high-level outcomes under the “We will know we have made a difference

because...” headings but this will be supported by an outcomes framework, with measures of success, such as key performance statistics and results from resident surveys. The purpose of the outcomes framework is to answer the “so what?” question. This provides a means of tracking the delivery of defined activities and objectives that will have a positive impact on outcomes for residents.

By working together as a council and as a borough, we can be the difference. We will care for people, our places and the planet.





**Caring** for **people**, our **places** and the **planet**

# Our plan for Barnet 2023-2026