

Harlesden Neighbourhood Planning Forum

Local and regional democracy in the United Kingdom

- **Statutory Partner**

- The United Kingdom ratified the European Charter of Local Self-Government (ECLSG) on 24 April 1998; it entered into force on 1 August 1998.
- **As a result of the Localism Act 2011, communities provided the power to develop neighbourhood plans.**

- **Planning Forum**

- Neighbourhood forums act as a sounding board for local development proposals and planning frameworks. They can help communities:
 - ✓ Choose where new homes, shops, and offices should be built
 - ✓ Have a say on what new buildings should look like
 - ✓ Grant planning permission for new buildings
 - ✓ Children and young people have the same decision-making power than adults (Section 1 of the Localism Act)

- **Charity**

- In 2020 we became a CIO



Who are we?

Harlesden Neighbourhood Forum is a group of local people working together to make Harlesden a better place in which to work and live.

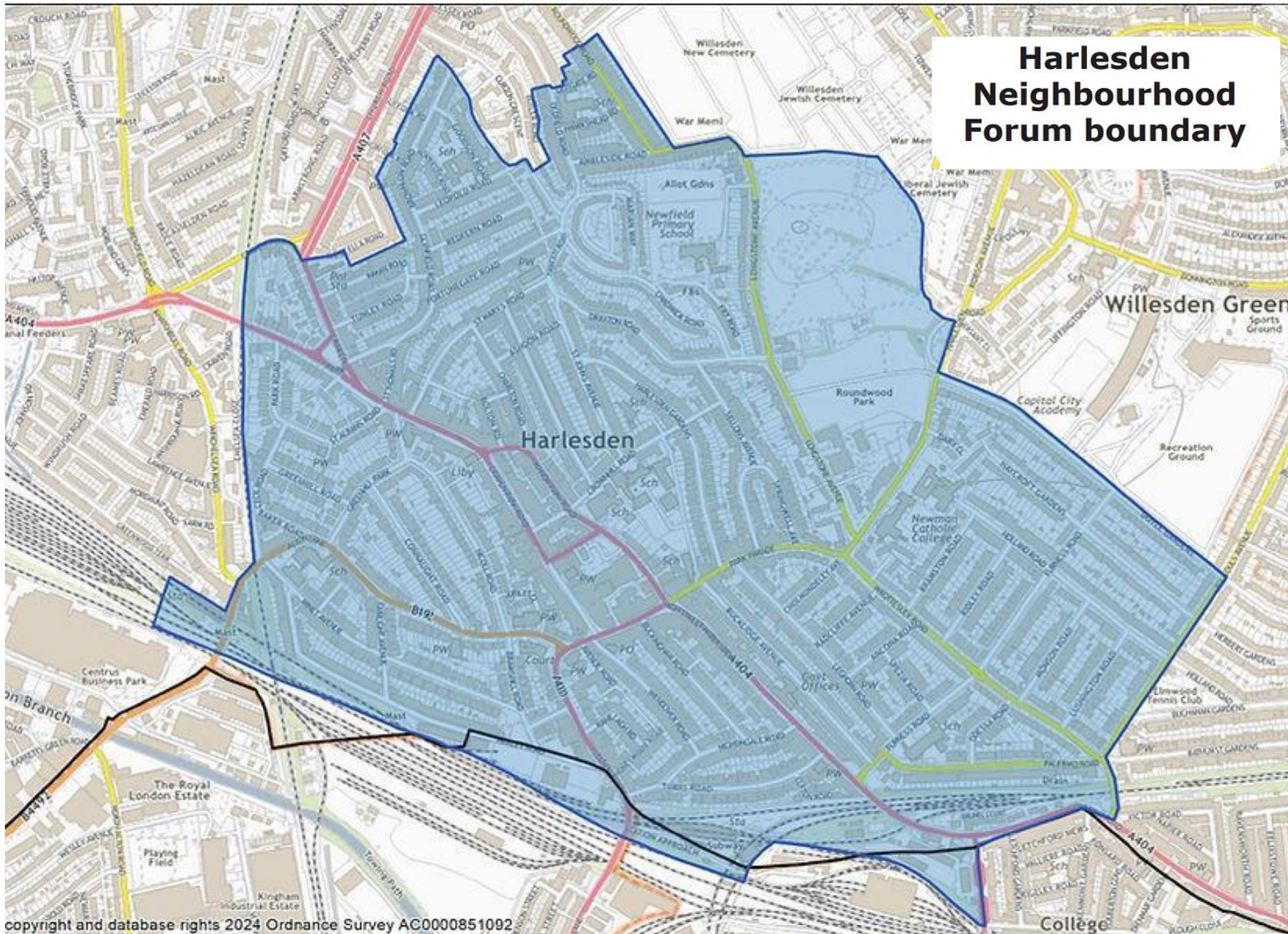
The initial purpose of the Forum was to create a Neighbourhood Plan for Harlesden. This is a document that clearly states what we, as a community, want to see happen in Harlesden in terms of planning and development.

For example,

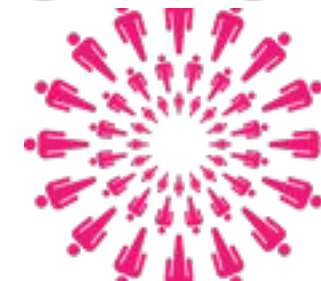
1. **Do we want more affordable housing in the area?**
2. **Do we need to improve the mix of businesses on the high street?**
3. **Do we want to protect our green spaces from development?**
4. **Do we want to create more opportunities for young people to shape the place where they live and feel connected?**

Our Neighbourhood Plan was ratified by referendum and adopted by Brent Council in June 2019.

The community came together to take care of the neighbourhood where they live



HARLESDEN NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM



- 500 members (full and associate)
- 119 member organisations/businesses involved directly with our work
- plus 120 people/organisations who are not members but who subscribe to our newsletter.

Radical Place Leadership

Changing how we work for residents, breaking down siloes across public services and communities to work collaboratively to deliver better outcomes for residents



Leadership
Interviews



Staff
Surveys

Radical Place Leadership explained:

Start with the person!

For too long the services and focus has been on organisational siloed need.

Empowerment and engagement

To radically transform the way statutory and community partner organisations work together, organisations need to be prepared to empower and delegate sovereignty to enable a new culture of joint working. This means delegating power to other organisations and towards neighbourhoods and communities where most of the genuine integration needs to take place and enable delivery at the Place level.

The prevailing culture needs to move away from one of organisational centricity and risk avoidance towards one that loosens control and devolves responsibility, and radically shifts resources towards prevention and social care.

A genuinely shared vision

Adopting a widely supported and understood shared vision and set of objectives for a place which makes clear how all place assets should be used for the benefit of all. It is critical that this vision is co-produced with communities and neighbourhoods within a place and comes with a clear set of metrics.

Enabling leadership of anchor institutions

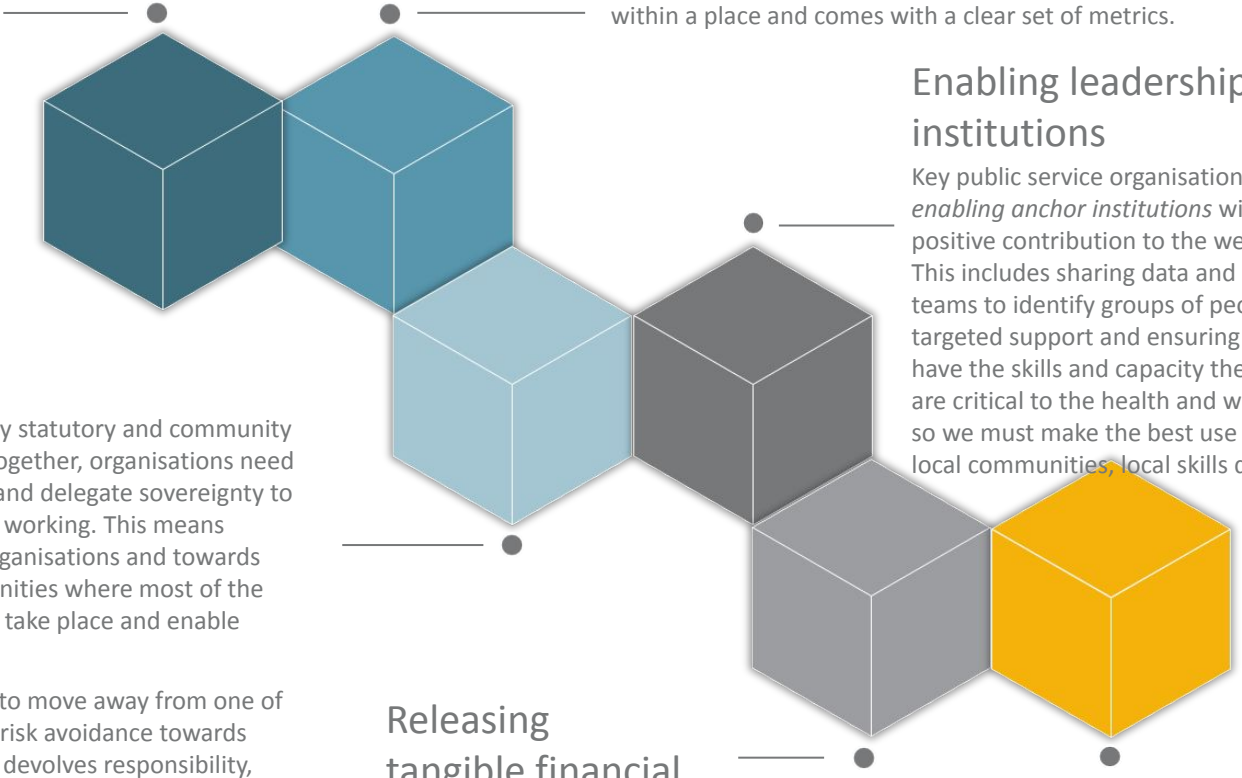
Key public service organisations should embrace the role of *enabling anchor institutions* with a responsibility for making a positive contribution to the wellbeing and prosperity of a place. This includes sharing data and intelligence within neighbourhood teams to identify groups of people and families who need targeted support and ensuring neighbourhoods and communities have the skills and capacity they need. Inclusive local economies are critical to the health and wellbeing and prosperity of a place, so we must make the best use of a place's total assets to support local communities, local skills development and local enterprises.

Releasing tangible financial savings

Changes must be able to demonstrate tangible savings and measurable benefits to all local institutions and communities. This requires clear up-front agreements on what needs to be measured and how (linked to the initial vision and objectives).

Community decision making and action

We need to develop new cultures and ways of working which put neighbourhoods and communities at the heart of decision making and action. We shouldn't stop at engagement and opinion gathering. Communities should be trusted with budgets and supported to take action rather than be treated as simply a source of data and ideas.

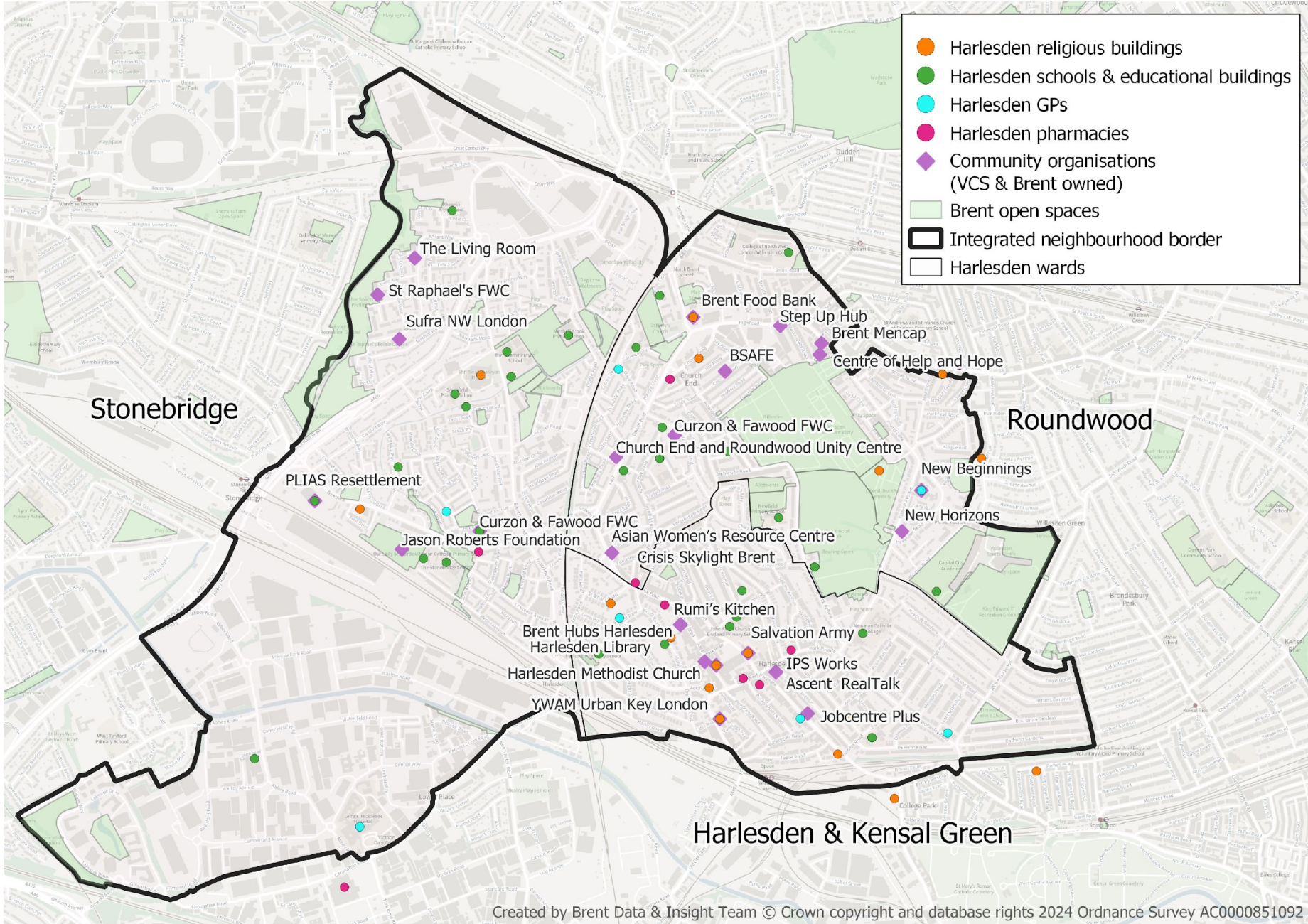


Principles

“Neighbourhood” is the smaller scale and context within which everything can come together, where relationships and community power can join with the power of professionals and their institutional resources



Testing and learning



Harlesden - Neighbourhood Working Model

Supports

Leadership Group

Team of Teams / Network

Tools and Resources

Active Components

Community Power

Strengthening our neighbourhood to help each other

Proactive Prevention

Working proactively with those at most risk of escalating issues

Co-ordinated Support

Coordinating support for people with complex needs

Data and insights

Learning

Community Power

Harlesden Neighbourhood Forum, SATH, Jason Roberts Foundation and WISE, working with the Integrated Neighbourhood Team

“The most valuable thing we have in our community is people.”





Community Power

Collaboration not competition

"The moment we are in we are changing our communities."



Hope isn't lost. It's local



Who We Are

-
- Grassroots, resident-led
-
- Deep roots in the area – not parachuted in
-
- Diverse voices: elders, youth mentors, youth organisations, tenants, carers
-
- We live the outcomes, not just write the reports

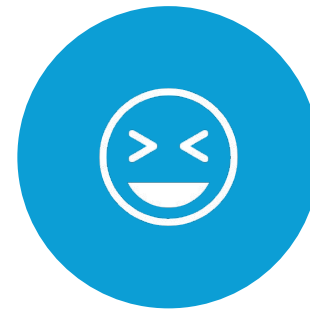
Town centre development – when businesses come together



- NOT CONSULTATION, COLLABORATION



- NOT A VOICE, A VOTE



- NOT INVITED IN, ALREADY HERE

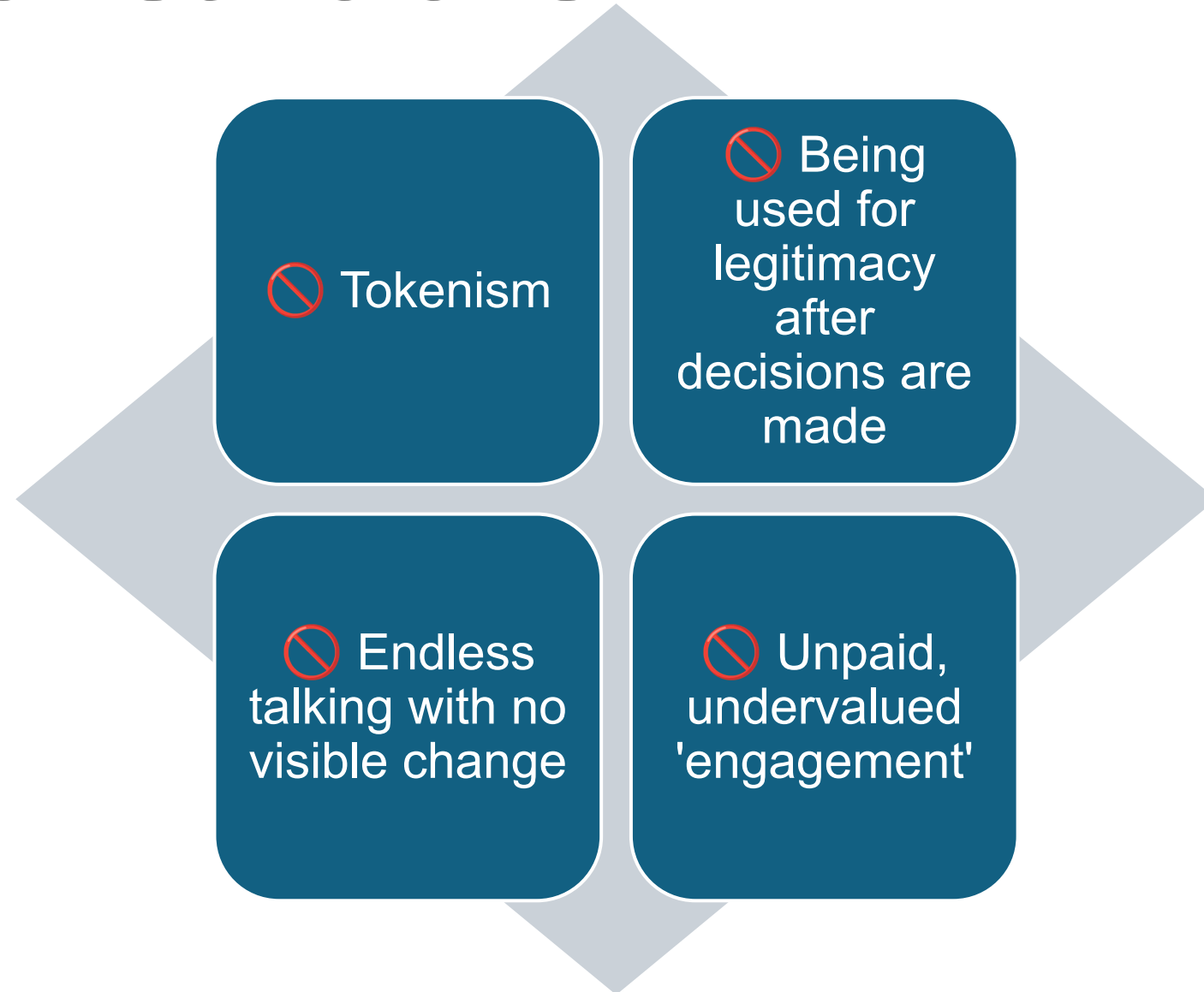


- WE BRING MEMORY, CONTEXT AND TRUST





Our Role in the INT

- We bring:
- ✓ Local knowledge that's street-level sharp
- ✓ Real-time feedback – not 12-week evaluations
- ✓ Relationships built over years
- ✓ Access to people and places the system struggles to reach

What We're Not Here For



What Community Power Needs

-  Investment in our time and skills
-  Clear roles and expectations
-  Space for local intelligence to shape services
-  Feedback that closes the loop – what changed?

A Shared Vision

Imagine an Integrated Neighborhood Team where:

- Local people co-chair decisions and support actions and delivery
- Budgets are co-designed
- Young people shadow Integrated Team workers
- Mapped community partners for specific 'Themes' are known and easily accessible



Harlesden Neighbourhood Forum Community Event: Shaping Our Future. #Harlesden #Community #Planning #LocalForum

Overview & Foundation

3 People from community convenor joined INT

- **Framework:** Radical Place-Based Leadership (RPBL) implementation is on track with its 18-month trajectory with a couple of months of delay and some adjustment done due to new partnerships and input coming our way.
- **INT Integration:** Active participation in weekly Integrated Neighbourhood Team (INT) meetings to bridge statutory services and community needs
- **Casework Impact:** Successfully moved from systemic themes to practical intervention, supporting **18 residents/cases** through personal contact to date .
- SMG session 2nd February to give insight on community power and joint neighbourhood work

Community Power & Resident Engagement

Strategy: Shifting from presentations to "sitting at the table" with residents in non-formal spaces .

Deep Listening: Launched Listening Circles in non-traditional spaces to define resident priorities

Engagement Events Hosted:
Permission to be Radical Workshop: Joint mission alignment between Harlesden Neighbourhood Forum (HNF) and INT leadership (20 attendees) Oct 25

Community Days & Cultural Events: HNF December MEETING (45) Nature Connection Centre days and bowling green consultation (65) SatH Wellbeing event (70) and the Harlesden Bassline music heritage celebration (80)

Housing Engagement: High-turnout events with Brent Council and Hyde, rebuilding trust through direct visibility of council staff. JRF reported over 100 residents turning up

Housing & Local Insights

Community Mapping: Completed identification of "hidden" community assets and leaders to build a local power database and connection with the place partnership Brent Active together

Strategic Housing Work:

Partnering with housing departments and BCLT on a new **Homelessness Prevention Model**

- **RRA implementation:** prep for May 2026 with new triage team
- **Micro-Site Audit:** discussed how to identify underutilised council land for potential Community Land Trust (CLT) development
- **Other prevention models:** ethical brokerage - rent guarantee models - integrated housing panel
- **Social Rights Workshops:** Preparing sessions on the **Renters' Rights Act (RRA)** to empower tenants with proactive enforcement knowledge- **Connection with Fairer Housing CIC our member organisation**


Looking Forward: Governance & Youth Participation



- **Neighbourhood Advisory Boards (NABs):**
 1. Establishing new governance structures to oversee local priorities
 2. Recruiting **15-20 local leaders** to manage community commissioning funds
- **Youth Leadership (The Synchrony Project):**
 1. Using the Horizon: Synchrony project to train young people to form the first **Youth Advisory Board**
 2. Creating a structured leadership pipeline for the next generation of Harlesden decision-makers
- **Test-and-Learn Pilot:** Initiating a pilot in Harlesden to practice collaborative working with people attending events up to now on a small scale before full rollout

Public realm

Community facilities, green spaces, parks, street keeping and pride



- **Expansion of the Roundwood Park vision** as designed by the community:
 1. Bowling green meeting and plans proposals
 2. Licensing of the land and containers between bowling green and NCC for community development
 3. Nature connection centre consortium
- **Neighbourhood Plan revision** ongoing with new chapters including young people, aging well, wellbeing sport and movement
- **Avenue Road engagement**
- **Ex Picture Palace consortium and capacity building**

Strategic Alignment & Integration

Discussed on 27th March 2026 during quarterly review meeting



- **Pride in Place:** Building an independent NAB model first, then developing proposals to embed it into the wider Council strategy
- **Neighbourhood Health:** Bringing community input into NHS meetings *before* primary care contracts are finalised
- **Future Scope:** Expanding Phase 2 to include Multi-Disciplinary Teams (MDTs) for **Families and Children** to align with current Council priorities

Final Message

- We don't want to just be heard.
- We want to be believed, backed, and resourced.
- We are an essential part of this team if it is too work!

Community power isn't a concept. It's already happening – when you let it. Example <https://www.healthierfleetwood.co.uk/>