



Executive
16th January 2006

**Report from the Director of
Policy and Regeneration**

For Action

Wards Affected:
ALL

Brent's Community Strategy 2006 – 2010

Forward Plan Ref: PRU-05/06-16

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report presents Brent's draft Sustainable Community Strategy 2006-2010. The Strategy has been developed by the Local Strategic Partnership, who approved the attached draft on the 14th December 2005.
- 1.2 This report provides background information and sets out the legal, financial and diversity implications. It recommends that the Executive approves the Strategy and refers it for adoption by full Council.

2. Recommendation to the Executive

- 2.1 That the Executive agrees the attached draft Sustainable Community Strategy 2006-2010 and refers it to full Council for adoption on 23rd January 2006.

3. Community Strategy 2003-2008

- 3.1 The Local Government Act 2000 sets out councils' community leadership role and placed upon them a duty to work with their partners and to develop a community strategy.

- 3.2 A community strategy aims to enhance local quality of life, improve economic, social and environmental well being and contribute towards sustainable developments.
- 3.3 During summer 2003, the Council together with its local strategic partnership, published its first 5 year Community Strategy, 'A Plan for Brent'. The strategy was based on extensive consultations with local residents and partner organisations spanning over a 2-year period.
- 3.4 The strategy summarised over 150 individual issues identified by local residents into 48 priority objectives. It detailed key public sector strategies and plans that would aim to meet the local priorities structured under 6 themed areas:
- Health and social care
 - Local housing
 - Environment and transport
 - Regeneration and employment
 - Community safety and crime prevention; and
 - Education and Lifelong Learning.

4. Local Strategic Partnership

- 4.1 Brent's local strategic partnership has an executive (Partners for Brent), three sectoral forums (a Local Public Service Board, a Community Empowerment Network and an Employer Partnership) and a number of strategic service partnerships (covering services for children and young people, health and social care, crime, substance misuse and disorder and housing).
- 4.2 'Partners for Brent', is chaired by the Leader of the Council and its membership is drawn from the three sectoral forums. Members include:
- Brent Council
 - Metropolitan Police Service
 - London Fire Brigade
 - Brent teaching Primary Care Trust
 - North West London Hospitals NHS Trust
 - Jobcentre Plus
 - West London Learning Skills Council
 - College of North West London
 - The RSL Forum (represented by Ujima Housing Group)
 - The Employer Partnership (on behalf of local businesses)
 - Brent Association for Voluntary Action
 - Brent Community Empowerment Network (on behalf of the local voluntary and community sector)

Representatives from the Government Office for London and the London Development Agency attend as observers.

- 4.3 During 2004, the local strategic partnership reviewed its role, structure and function. A key recommendation was to refresh and update the current Community Strategy 'A Plan for Brent' to make it more visionary yet action focused, with strong and inclusive values and ambitions reflecting the local priorities of Brent's residents.

5. Developing Brent's Sustainable Community Strategy 2006-2010

- 5.1 The Egan Review¹ re-emphasised the need for local leaders to take a more cross-disciplinary and integrated approach to social, economic and environmental issues. Following the UK Sustainable Development Strategy² the Government has committed to reshaping community strategies as sustainable community strategies.
- 5.2 Sustainable community strategies seek to meet the needs of existing and future generations; and respect the needs of other communities in the wider region or internationally. They should reflect the needs priorities and preferences of local people and organisations; inform and influence partners' strategies including the Local Development Framework, Local Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy and Local Area Agreement; and as such provide a framework for the coordination of local services.
- 5.3 Brent's draft Sustainable Community Strategy 2006-2010 responds to the needs and aspirations of residents expressed during consultations carried out by the Council and its partners over the past 3 years (2002-2005). The consultations have involved over 26,000 local participants through a variety of mechanisms including face-to-face, postal and telephone surveys, community workshops, focus groups and questionnaires.
- 5.4 The draft Strategy also reflects the priorities of local and sub-regional public, voluntary and community and business partners, who have actively contributed to its development since February 2005.
- 5.5 The draft Strategy was formally approved on the 14th December 2005 by Partners for Brent, who agreed that it should also be approved by the Council's Executive and adopted by full Council as well as by the partner's respective Boards and/or management committees.

6. Brent's Sustainable Community Strategy 2006-2010

- 6.1 Brent's draft Sustainable Community Strategy sets out our shared vision for the Borough:

"Brent will be a prosperous and lively borough, full of opportunity and welcoming to all. A place that will thrive for generations to come, whose future will be determined by local people."

¹ The Egan Review: Skills for Sustainable Communities, OPDM, 2004

² ODPM, 2005

6.2 Three values underpin the Strategy:

- delivering efficient, accessible and sustainable services to excellent standards;
- developing tailored solutions to meet the needs of individuals, families and communities; and
- celebrating our Borough's diversity and building upon our national reputation for nurturing successful community cohesion.

6.3 The draft Strategy is streamlined and structured around three simple, unambiguous, but challenging cross cutting ambitions to make Brent:

- a great place;
- a borough of opportunity; and
- an inclusive community.

6.4 The 'great place' ambition expresses shared commitment to make Brent safe, clean, green and lively, prioritising efforts to:

- reduce the fear of crime and the impact of violent crime and robberies;
- provide clean, well designed and cared-for streets and open spaces;
- ensure access to parks and open spaces which are rich in wildlife and offer a variety of activities; and to
- promote access to cultural and leisure facilities and services.

6.5 The 'borough of opportunity' ambition details shared commitment to make Brent a prosperous and healthy place where there are opportunities for all, notably:

- creating a place where businesses want to locate and can succeed;
- ensuring that local people fill local jobs, boosting the economy and household income; and
- reducing the gap in life expectancy across the Borough and promoting wellbeing.

6.6 The 'inclusive community' ambition makes a commitment to responding to the needs of young and old alike, supporting them to achieve independence and encouraging them to take a full part in the life of the Borough. This section focuses on:

- creating settled homes for the large number of families with children based in temporary accommodation; and
- supporting those children and young people whom experience the greatest barriers to learning, live transient lives, within priority neighbourhoods, low-income households and/or whom have additional or acute needs.

6.7 The draft Strategy will provide the Council and the local strategic partnership with a clear framework for strategic planning, across the Borough's public, private, voluntary and community sectors.

- 6.8 The Local Development Framework will provide the special expression of the draft Strategy (see 6 below) and the Local Area Agreement (see 7 below) will provide its delivery plan.

7. Local Development Framework

- 7.1 The Council is also in the process of producing a new development plan for the Borough called a Local Development Framework. When it is fully adopted this will replace the Unitary Development Plan. The Local Development Framework is a portfolio of Local Development Documents which will provide the Council's policies for meeting the community's economic, social and environmental aims for the future of their area where this affects the development and use of land.
- 7.2 The Local Development Frameworks will contain clear up-to-date spatial planning frameworks that will enable efficient delivery of new developments, especially housing. They will be an influential strategy that drives actions by the London Planning Authority and other implementation bodies whilst reflecting the aspirations of the wider community. Local Development Frameworks should be soundly based, incorporating the principles of sustainable development and informed by robust evidence and monitoring. As such they will provide the spatial expression of the Borough's new Sustainable Community Strategy.

8. Local Area Agreements

- 8.1 Local Area Agreements offer a new way for councils and their partners to negotiate national and local priorities, reduce bureaucracy and secure greater operational freedom and flexibility. During March 2005, Brent's local strategic partnership supported the Council's successful bid to become a second-wave 'single pot' pilot. As a result Brent has become one of 66 pilots, and is one of 15 'single pot' areas to develop and negotiate an agreement due to commence from 1st April 2006. Local Area Agreements have three key elements:
- a set of nationally/locally agreed outcomes, targets and indicators
 - associated funding streams; and
 - negotiated freedoms and flexibilities.
- 8.2 On behalf of the Borough's local strategic partnership the Council is in the process of developing and negotiating the Agreement, with an initial full draft submission made to Government Offices for London on the 30th November 2005 and a final draft due on 6th February 2006.
- 8.3 Central Government policy guidance³ states the Local Area Agreement should be outcome based, enable local authorities and their partners to delivery national outcomes in a way that reflects local priorities; and be innovative and add-value to existing public services, particularly those identified within Community Strategies. As such, Brent's developing

³ Local Area Agreement Guidance, ODPM June 2005

Local Area Agreement will act as the delivery plan for the new Sustainable Community Strategy.

9. Financial Implications

- 9.1 The Sustainable Community Strategy provides a local framework for strategic planning. The Strategy will be used to influence and inform service developments across the Council and partner services which will be subject to separate financial considerations. The financial implications of the Local Development Framework and Local Area Agreement will be considered separately within future reports.
- 9.2 Resources for the production and printing of the Sustainable Community Strategy have already been allocated in the 2005/06 budget. Its distribution will be assisted through the Council's, partners' and local strategic partnership's websites.

10. Legal Implications

- 10.1 The Local Government Act 2000 places a statutory duty on the Council to prepare and develop a Community Strategy, in partnership with the other agencies engaged in the local strategic partnership. The Sustainable Community Strategy enables the Council to exercise its power of well-being and secure improvements to local quality of life by encouraging closer inter-agency working and innovation within the delivery of local services.
- 10.2 The new Sustainable Community Strategy 2006-2010 satisfies the Council's statutory requirements under the Local Government Act 2000.

11. Diversity Implications

- 11.1 The Sustainable Community Strategy 2006-2010 has been subject to race equality and diversity proofing. It prioritises and challenges discrimination and disadvantage experienced by local residents. It actively promotes equalities, diversity and cohesive communities encouraging local public, private, voluntary and community sector services to become fairer and accessible to all.
- 11.2 The Strategy is delivered through the Council and its partner's development plans and service strategies, including the Local Development Framework and Local Area Agreement, which are subject to separate equalities impact assessments.

12. Staffing/Accommodation Implications

- 12.1 None at this stage in the reporting process.

Background Papers

Brent's Community Plan 2003-2008, Brent's LSP, 2003
Local Area Agreements Guidance, ODPM, June 2005
Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Development Frameworks, ODPM, 2004
The Egan Review 'Skills for Sustainable communities, OPDM, 2004
The UK Sustainable Development Strategy, ODPM 2005

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