



**Community  
Consultation & Engagement**

**STRATEGY**

**2006-2009**

Executive  
February 2006

# Contents

<b>1. Introduction.....</b>	<b>4</b>
Purpose of the strategy.....	4
National and local context.....	4
Making consultation work.....	5
Why we need a new strategy?.....	5
<b>2. Overall objectives of the strategy.....</b>	<b>6</b>
Objectives of the strategy.....	6
Principles and quality standards.....	6
Getting the most from consultation.....	7
<b>3. Scope of the strategy.....</b>	<b>8</b>
Who will we consult with?.....	8
What is consultation and community engagement?.....	8
Five levels of community engagement.....	9
Benefit and uses of consultation.....	9
Consultation and democracy.....	9
Wardworking and neighbourhood delivery of services.....	10
Role of the consultation team.....	10
Role of members.....	10
Overview and scrutiny.....	10
<b>4. The corporate consultation framework.....</b>	<b>11</b>
Area Consultative Forums (ACFs).....	11
Service User Consultative Forums (SUCFs).....	11
The Brent Citizens' Panel.....	11
Ward Working Pilots.....	12
Area Housing Boards.....	12
Staff forums.....	12
BRAIN (Brent resource and information network).....	12
General.....	13
<b>5. How we will continuously improve.....</b>	<b>14</b>
Area & service user consultative forums.....	14
The Brent Citizens' Panel.....	14
Wardworking.....	14
Staff panel and staff forums.....	15
A new Community Strategy.....	15
Listening to the community.....	15
Ensuring consultation is used effectively.....	16

Co-ordinating consultation and sharing good practice .....	16
Consultation co-ordination group .....	16
Consultation Tracker.....	17
Consultation toolkit.....	17
Training .....	17
Assessing the impact of consultation .....	17
eConsultation .....	18
Corporate consultation framework .....	18
<b>6. Conclusion .....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>7. Our action plan .....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Appendix 1 – Consultation &amp; Community Engagement Network ....</b>	<b>25</b>

## **1. Introduction**

### **Purpose of the strategy**

This document sets out Brent Council's approach to consultation. It outlines consultation standards for our staff and services and provides guidance for our partners when seeking to undertake consultation within the borough.

Brent Council is committed to listening to what local people have to say about services and what they want to see happen in their area. We want to continue to develop and build services on what people want. We already have a good record on consulting and involving people as a normal part of service delivery. We have well established consultation structures such as our citizens' panel and our area and user consultative forums, and we routinely undertake consultation across the full range of council activities. We want to build on our record of success in this area and ensure that we achieve continuous improvement in involving local people in the work of the council.

This strategy reflects an increased commitment to encouraging and supporting residents and service users to take an active role in working with the council to make decisions about what is best for Brent. It sets out clear objectives, principles, standards and an action plan for consultation and engagement. The strategy proposes performance measures to evaluate consultation activity linked to a business plan that will generate Gershon efficiency savings and provide a consistent approach to consultation across the organisation.

Our online, interactive consultation database; Consultation Tracker, has been developed alongside the strategy, and a revised version of the Brent Consultation Toolkit has been produced as a companion document.

### **National and local context**

Consultation and engagement is an increasingly important 'evidence gathering' tool for all local authorities; both in terms of delivering their strategic priorities and in meeting the needs of local communities.

Brent Council is committed to extending consultation far beyond our basic statutory obligations. We believe that it is crucially important in the process of developing strong links to local communities, that the views and perspectives of residents are explained and taken into account.

Our commitment to consult and engage with our community is set out in our Corporate Strategy 2002 – 2006 and this will continue in our new four year corporate strategy.

Government's agenda for the future of local government focuses on new localism, greater efficiency and reinvigorating local democracy. It reinforces the importance of having a robust, modern consultation strategy. This agenda, and our new corporate strategy, both advocate a role for local government as the 'champion' of local people and local communities, giving them the voice to make services more responsive, and putting the experience of users at the centre of performance measures, inspection and assessment.

In recent years there have been some significant changes to the performance framework and a much higher expectation that the views of residents and service users will be taken into consideration from planning through to delivery. Our new strategy incorporates the current policy demands of:

- Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA)
- Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPI)
- Local Area Agreements (LAA's)
- Local Development Framework (LDF)
- Efficiency Savings (Gershon)<sup>1</sup>
- Equalities Standard for Local Government
- Disability Discrimination Act (2005)
- Ward Working

### **Making consultation work**

Brent has a good track record when it comes to consultation. The CPA inspection report 2002 noted that Brent demonstrated a willingness to respond to community and user priorities and that it had been successful in engaging the community and key partners to deliver its objectives. We want build on this and further develop our consultation and engagement programmes.

### **Why we need a new strategy?**

This strategy replaces the Consultation Strategy (2001- 04). It reflects our ambition to involve all of our diverse communities more effectively in service planning, delivery, take-up and strategic decision-making. As we become more outward-looking and user-focused our performance improves measurably enabling us to provide value for money services and contribute to a better quality of life for the people of Brent.

The new strategy sets out clear objectives, standards and principles as well as an action plan for consultation and engagement.

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<sup>1</sup> The council's efficiency programme based on recommendations of the Gershon Report 2004

## **2. Overall objectives of the strategy**

The purpose of this new consultation and engagement strategy is to continuously improve how Brent Council consults and involves all its community in decision making and ensure that the views of the community are used to improve services and inform the development of policies. The new strategy has a key role in underpinning our ambition to create a healthy local democracy. The strategy's objectives and standards are set out below.

### **Objectives of the strategy**

The new strategy has four key objectives. These objectives have been developed to reflect the statutory and policy framework shaping consultation and engagement activity across local government. These objectives form the basis of our action plan in section 6.

#### **Objective One**

Inclusivity – we will engage more effectively with all members of our community. We will promote inclusivity and ensure that all members of our community are able to participate equally and fairly.

#### **Objective Two**

Coordination – we will deliver a more strategic and coordinated approach to consultation across the organisation and with our partners that enables effective planning and best use of resources. We will do this through our online database of consultations; Consultation Tracker and through the Consultation Coordination Group.

#### **Objective Three**

Innovation – we will make best use of new and imaginative ways to consult and engage with our residents and service users. We will tailor consultation and engagement methodologies to make them appropriate to different audiences.

#### **Objective Four**

Standardisation – we will provide clear guidance and implement quality standards for all consultation and engagement activity undertaken across the organisation.

### **Principles and quality standards**

Principles and quality standards will bring about improved coordination and consistency between consultation and engagement activity undertaken in

Brent. Our previous consultation strategy introduced five standards. We have kept these standards and introduced an additional procedural standard. These standards are now mandatory for all consultation undertaken by Brent Council. The standards are:

- Procedural - All consultation activity will be discussed with the council's corporate consultation team at the planning stage and all such planned activity will be logged on the corporate consultation database; 'Consultation Tracker'
- We will explain why we're consulting and how we're going to take people's views into account.
- We will involve the widest spectrum of the community in our consultations, including under-represented, marginalised and 'hard to reach' groups.
- We will organise consultation in ways which are convenient and accessible to the people whose views we are seeking.
- We will act on the findings to improve services, programmes and quality of life for local residents.
- We will report back to the public what they've told us during the consultation and what we've done as a result of it.

### **Getting the most from consultation**

Consultation can be expensive. We want to ensure that council and partner resources are not unnecessarily spent on duplicating research and consultation. We have established an online database of consultation; 'Consultation Tracker', for Brent. Details of all consultations, planned, undertaken and the results will be logged on the database. This data will be in the public domain and shared with our partner organisations.

Adherence to these standards will ensure that consultation is used effectively, with identifiable community impact and that results are fed back to the community.

We will ensure that these standards are universally met and we will provide training and advice to service areas to ensure compliance.

### 3. Scope of the strategy

This is a strategy that will be adopted across the organisation. The strategy will promote more effective and efficient consultation to a consistent set of corporate standards. The strategy is also for Brent's consultation team, council officers and our elected members. We hope that our partners in the public, private and community sectors and the general public will also find it a useful reference.

#### Who will we consult with?

We will consult widely with individual local people and with organisations. We refer to all those individuals and organisations that have a relationship with us collectively as 'our community'. By community we mean:

- **Residents** – people who live in Brent
- **Service users** – people who use our services like schools, libraries and parks, but don't necessarily live in Brent, as well as visitors such as tourists and participants at events in the borough
- **Business users** – people who own businesses or work in Brent
- **Staff** – people who work for the council
- **Statutory partners** – other authorities who run services in Brent (police, fire service, transport authorities, primary care trusts)
- **Community and voluntary sector** – non-government organisations that provide services to the people of Brent.

#### What is consultation and community engagement?

Community engagement covers the entire working relationship the council has with the community from research up to supporting active citizenship. Although all of our dialogue with our community could be described as 'consultation' in its broadest sense, it is more useful to think of consultation as covering a defined range of activities. This is especially important as the council has some specific duties to consult that are legal responsibilities. These cover:

- Council tax
- Economic development and regeneration
- Business rates
- The Local Development Framework



- Planning and licensing applications
- Housing rents and management
- Traffic and parking schemes
- School closures and expansions
- Leisure facilities

Consultation can be seen as a process of seeking the views, knowledge or guidance of others. Increasingly, consultation is seen as a process of actively involving internal and external stakeholders in determining and influencing local services and corporate strategies. It is concerned about the community taking a full and active role in planning and decision-making.

The table below shows five levels of community engagement which we will use as our starting point for developing a balanced programme of community consultation and engagement activities.

### **Five levels of community engagement**

<b>Level</b>	<b>What's involved</b>
<b>1. Information</b>	We tell people about our services
<b>2. Consultation</b>	We ask people for their views in surveys and forums
<b>3. Deliberation</b>	We discuss what the issues and priorities are
<b>4. Collaboration</b>	We work together to improve and design new services
<b>5. Partnership</b>	We maintain an equal and effective working relationship

### **Benefit and uses of consultation**

Consultation is seen as a legitimate expectation of service users and the wider community. It is also good organisational and management practice, and forms a key part of the political process. In Brent we consult and engage so that our community can influence:

- **Services** – ensuring that our community has a role in the development of services so that they better reflect their needs;
- **Priorities & structures** – involving our community in decisions on the council's strategic management issues;
- **The future** – allowing all our community to participate fully as citizens in developing a better Brent.

### **Consultation and democracy**

The strategy has a key role in underpinning our ambition to create a healthy local democracy. Good and effective consultation is a key element of a

successful local participatory democracy. Elected members are at the heart of local government. They have a unique role in community leadership and in advocating the interests of their locality and their constituents. Successful representative democracy is a dynamic process of open public debate which extends far beyond the local elections. Important decisions need to be made on a daily basis. Consultation is central to the role of informed decision making for cabinet, members and scrutiny.

### **Wardworking and neighbourhood delivery of services**

Consultation underpins our vision to deliver more services at a neighbourhood level. Launched in July 2004, Wardworking seeks to involve the community along with ward councillors, officers and partners in improving services at a local level. Currently being piloted in six wards, we plan to extend the programme to all 21 of our wards during 2006/07.

### **Role of the consultation team**

In line with the strategy objectives, the consultation team will scrutinise and manage the consultation tracker data entry process. All consultation will need to be with the consultation team at the planning stage and they will ensure that Council officers routinely refer to the database before undertaking consultation projects.

### **Role of members**

The consultation strategy will reinforce the role of elected members. The 'member' role is much wider than using the outcomes of consultation to inform their decision making. Members need to manage differing and sometimes conflicting interests. They need to protect the interests of minorities and represent a broader 'social good'. In addition to their traditional roles as ward members, members lead on consultation activities within Wardworking – the council's initiative to enhance and promote local working.

### **Overview and scrutiny**

The objectives of overview and scrutiny are to contribute to the development of policy, to highlight the way in which decisions are made about public services and by public bodies, to hold them to account and thereby to improve services delivered to Brent residents. Overview and scrutiny works by monitoring, probing, investigating, enquiring, persuading, reporting and recommending. Consultation plays a key role in this – underpinning well-informed conclusions and soundly-based recommendations involve good quality evidence, including consultation.

## **4. The corporate consultation framework**

Brent has built a solid network of community consultation and engagement opportunities. These include:

### **Area Consultative Forums (ACFs)**

There are five area consultative forums which provide the main mechanism for continuous dialogue between the council, residents, community groups and service users and our statutory partners. Area forums are based around groups of electoral wards and cover the geographic entirety of the borough. Area forum meetings are set as part of the council's committee calendar cycle. They each meet four times per year and are chaired by an elected councillor. Each area forum has a steering group made up of local residents. The principal function of the steering groups is to meet ahead of the actual forum meetings and agree the forum agenda. Meetings are held on weekday evenings at an accessible local venue. The meetings are minuted by officers from the council's legal and democratic services team. Minutes are posted on the consultation team web pages, fed back at the next scheduled meeting and form the basis of a quarterly progress report to overview committee. Area forum meetings are generally well attended, attracting an average audience figure of approximately 80.

### **Service User Consultative Forums (SUCFs)**

There are seven service user consultative forums, which cover a single interest or user group. These are Children, Youth, Pensioners, the Voluntary Sector, Disabled Users, Private Sector Housing Tenants and Black and Minority Ethnic. As with area forums, user forums operate in a similar way to the area forums. They meet four times per year, meetings are chaired by an elected councillor and proceedings are minuted by the officers from the council's legal and democratic services team. Progress on service user forums is also fed back to overview committee in a quarterly report.

### **The Brent Citizens' Panel**

Brent Citizens' Panel consists of just over 2,000 local residents reflecting Brent's diverse communities. The panel is managed on behalf of Brent Council by the market research organisation Ipsos MORI. The main purpose of the panel is to provide a platform through which Brent Council and its partners can listen to and accurately gauge residents' views.

### **Ward Working Pilots**

Ward Working is a new initiative introduced in 2004, (in six pilot wards), to give local people and ward councillors the chance to work together to decide on what most needs improving and how to go about it. A variety of consultation and engagement techniques have been employed to identify residents' issues and concerns and 'ward plans' have been agreed and published. A small budget has been allocated to each ward so that we can respond to residents' concerns quickly. This initiative is led by our Policy and Regeneration Unit.

### **Area Housing Boards**

We have four Area Housing Boards that are linked to a comprehensive network of Tenants and Residents' Associations, Tenant Management Organisations, community groups and focus groups. These are involved in a number of initiatives to encourage and support residents to become involved in all aspects of the development and management of their homes. The area housing boards are maintained by Brent Housing Partnership (BHP), our arms length tenant management organisation (ALMO).

### **Staff forums**

Brent Council has established five staff forums. These are Women, Black and Asian staff, Disabled staff, Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual & Transgender and the Brent Staff Panel. The staff panel is managed on behalf of the council by RBA Research Consultants of Leeds.

### **BRAIN (Brent resource and information network)**

BRAIN is the Brent resource and information network, bringing community information to the London Borough of Brent. It is managed by the Brent Libraries service in partnership with the local community.

Consultation and community involvement are important aspects of the information provided by BRAIN. Council and local agencies' consultation events, initiatives and surveys are regularly advertised on the BRAIN website and via the BRAINwaves e-newsletter.

Chat forums and regular polls encourage Brent residents to 'have their say' and discuss any topic with other residents or users of BRAIN, where appropriate comments are passed on to relevant council departments or local agencies.

Brain has recently launched the innovative Councillors' website pilot, which provides all Brent councillors with their own, fully-updatable webpages. It is hoped that these sites will help councillors from all political groups keep in contact with local residents and provide a forum for the public to put questions to councillors and generally contribute to the democratic process within Brent.

## **General**

Although the above represents the Corporate Consultation structure, there is additionally an extensive network of community and voluntary consultation structures. Mapping work of all consultation structures in Brent has taken place and map is given at appendix 1.

## **5. How we will continuously improve**

### **Area & service user consultative forums**

Our area and user forums are one of the main mechanisms for continuous dialogue between residents, service users, councillors, council officers and community groups, the voluntary sector and our statutory partners. We have recently reviewed the functions of all our consultative forums. We have identified a number of ways in which they can be strengthened in order to widen the spectrum of participation and strengthen the links to service areas. We now concentrate on improving the flow of information between these forums, service areas and the council's decision-making structure.

We will continue to support the Area Consultative Forums, maintaining the current high attendance figures and improving the content. We will especially encourage active participation by BME, disabled and young residents in 'soapbox' slots. We will create a local performance indicator to monitor the numbers of BME, disabled and young people taking active roles, for example sitting on steering groups and leading on presentations and report on this annually.

We will work with our service user consultative forums and our community and voluntary sector partners to develop innovative approaches to raising the levels of participation by these less represented groups.

We will report back regularly on all forum activity to our overview committee, through our web pages, ward newsletters and the Brent Magazine.

### **The Brent Citizens' Panel**

We will encourage greater use of the citizens' panel by making it a more cost effective option for consultation. We have already recruited an additional 1,000 panel members. We will retire existing panel members and evaluate the new panel during the latter part of 2005/06. We will target additional recruitment at under represented groups and the new panel will be more accessible by the council and its partners.

### **Wardworking**

Effective and meaningful consultation with residents is the foundation of Wardworking, and we will encourage each ward to undertake consultation which actively engages people who are traditionally hard to reach. This will include the use of new and innovative methods of consultation. In addition, we will continue to use quarterly Wardworking newsletters to offer feedback

to residents on the results of consultation and the resulting development of the Ward Plans.

We will continue to support and train our members and officers to better equip them for this innovative, hands-on practical work at a very local level. We will also offer training and support to residents who wish to work with us. We have piloted Ward Working in six wards so far and plan to extend the programme to all 21 of our electoral wards.

### **Staff panel and staff forums**

We value and support our workforce and are dedicated to listening to and acting on the ideas and suggestions for improvements that come from our staff forums. We are the second most ethnically diverse borough in the country and one of only two with a majority of residents coming from a black and Asian background. We are committed to achieving level 3 of the Equality Standard for Local Government by September 2006 and to increasing the proportion of BME, disabled and female staff members in senior management posts. Our staff are ambassadors in the community and a contented, ambitious, cohesive workforce is an essential ingredient in our continuously improving performance and reputation.

We will carry out an annual council wide staff survey and consult the staff panel on all important policy matters that could potentially impact on staff. We will work with our staff forums on developing progressive approaches to engaging with 'hard to reach' residents and service users.

### **A new Community Strategy**

This year we will publish a new Community Strategy explaining how we will work with residents and community partners to achieve our vision of a harmonious, safe and economically dynamic community that values and respects diversity. Our work will be based on these themes chosen by residents at our consultation events:

- a great place – safe, clean and green
- a borough of opportunity – economic and physical well-being
- an inclusive borough – diversity and community cohesion

Our focus over the life of this new strategy will be to build on the trust that is starting to flourish through our thriving partnerships.

### **Listening to the community**

We regularly carry out a number of major surveys with residents; BVPI surveys covering general service area satisfaction, tenant satisfaction and our

revenues and benefits and planning functions. In addition we undertake our major residents' attitude survey every three years. Overall satisfaction with the council has been steadily increasing over the last 15 years and we believe that this is a good indication that we are getting better at meeting the needs of the majority of residents.

We will continue to project manage these important surveys. We will routinely consult internally and with our partners and consultants on the appropriateness and benchmark value of questions used. We will disseminate the research information gained both across the organisation and to our partners.

### **Ensuring consultation is used effectively**

As we strive for a better informed, more empowered population, we recognise that the expectations our active residents and service users have from consultation and community engagement will be continually rising. We will respond by being open to changing our organisational culture accordingly and by being prepared to enter into more deliberative forms of consultation. We have used a Citizens' Jury successfully and we will look for opportunities to use these types of consultation more often in the future.

We will create new types of consultation events based on what users have said they want and introduce new systems, ('Active Partners' and 'Include me in' see Brent Consultation Toolkit), for monitoring and measuring the quality of the participation experience. We will develop the capability of our community consultation and engagement network to enable and support all our community members, including staff, to participate in and influence decision-making at all levels and particularly, at a strategic level.

### **Co-ordinating consultation and sharing good practice**

We recently undertook a survey of all the London Boroughs to discover how they carried out consultation and what methods they used. The results showed that our consultation and community engagement network is advanced by comparison with most other local authorities. We have taken a lead in sharing this information and will continue to be proactive in exploring the best and most current policies and practices.

### **Consultation co-ordination group**

Brent's consultation co-ordination group co-ordinates all internal and external consultation and research both within the council and with partners, (police, health authority, fire service, colleges and the community and voluntary sector). Joint pieces of work across the council, across Brent and even at a



sub-regional level through our inter-borough partnership, the West London Alliance (WLA) have resulted in considerable cost savings as partners have provided match funding. A reduction in duplication and some standardisation has also been achieved within the group. Guest speakers have motivated an interest in good community consultation and engagement practice. We will produce an annual consultation newsletter to maintain this interest.

### **Consultation Tracker**

The Consultation Tracker will be developed as the main resource and central hub for all research and consultation exercises. A development plan for the Tracker will be written and implemented early in 2006. We will ensure that all consultation carried out is published on the Tracker and we will further promote its use to service areas to eliminate duplication.

### **Consultation toolkit**

A new edition of our Consultation Toolkit will be published as a booklet and also in web-based form. It will include templates for new participatory models in addition to the comprehensive information it currently contains. We will introduce 'Include Me In' - a scale for understanding community roles and their purpose and 'Active Partners' – a benchmarking system for measuring the impact of community engagement. The toolkit will also contain quality control checklists and standard monitoring and evaluation forms.

### **Training**

There will be a new consultation and community engagement training programme starting in 2006 which will include four consultation workshops as part of the Improving Brent Programme. Training for individual service areas or for members will be available on an ad hoc basis. The Consultation Toolkit will be our main training aid. The consultation team will provide advice and guidance on all planned consultation activity as well as assistance in logging consultations on the tracker database.

### **Assessing the impact of consultation**

Impact Needs/Requirement Assessments (INRAs) measure the impact on equalities of every policy and function of the council and are now a standard requirement of the equality standard for local government. We will ensure that INRAs are completed as part of the consultation and engagement process, where appropriate.

We will improve our systems for collecting, actioning and reporting back on the ideas that come from our community through meetings, forums, focus groups and consultation events. We will develop our on-line consultation services and make sure that all of the consultation and research reports from all the service areas are posted on our web-based Consultation Tracker. We will introduce quality standards for community consultation and engagement and ensure that they are practised across the council. We will update our Consultation Toolkit and make sure it is widely available. We will offer training, advice and support to all service areas on commissioning, designing and carrying out all types of consultation. We will also offer workshops to councillors and officers on working more effectively within a community setting.

### **eConsultation**

Brent has one of the highest concentrations of people with access to the internet in the country. We will develop on-line consultation in line with the ODPM Priority Outcomes for e-consultation (G3 & E3 – Citizen Participation). These services will be designed to appeal to young residents and will be BOBBY compliant for disabled users. We will increase the proportion of email addresses on our database and start sending notification of meetings via email. We will introduce on-line surveys and build the capacity of the Consultation web-pages to stimulate discussion and deliberation. We will further explore the use of technology, e.g. text messaging and email, with particular reference to consulting and engaging with young people.

### **Corporate consultation framework**

Over the next three years, we will consolidate our corporate approach to consultation and community engagement. Our Consultation Team will ensure that the quality standards are practised across the council and offer training and support for service areas to help them comply with the standards. The Consultation Toolkit contains a list of principles and protocols and a complete set of consultation methods and techniques and instructions on how to use them most effectively. The Consultation Team will support service areas with training in its use. The Consultation Team's Service Development Plan focuses on exploring innovative ways of improving our community engagement practices and the Business Plan identifies efficiency savings, which will ensure that we get the best value for money from our consultation.

## **6. Conclusion**

Consultation is an essential part of Brent council's activities, as a provider of quality services for the community and as democratically elected local authority. This strategy places consultation and engagement in a broader and more strategic policy framework. The strategy and toolkit together will encourage a standardised and more effective range of consultation using a variety of techniques, better feedback and the sharing of consultation and research information across the organisation.

## 7. Our action plan

This action plan sets out the work we will carry out under four themes, based on our **Four Objectives**

- **Inclusivity** - we will seek to engage more effectively with residents, service users, particularly those from black and minority ethnic backgrounds, disabled, young and older people.
- **Co-ordination** – we will develop a more strategic approach to consultation and community engagement across the council, introduce more on-line services and improve our Consultation Tracker.
- **Innovation** - we will explore new and creative ways of involving residents and service users and introduce systems for measuring and monitoring community participation and influence.
- **Standardisation** - we will introduce quality standards for consultation and ensure that they are practised across the council and offer training and support to service areas.

**Objective one - to ensure that we engage all our community fairly and equally - Inclusivity**

<b>The Consultation Team will carry out the following specific activities</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will create a new local performance indicator to monitor BME participation at Area Consultative Forums (ACFs) and monitor BME participation in steering groups, on soap box slots, as speakers and on focus groups</li> </ul>	Reporting April 2007 and annually thereafter 2006
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will carry out a survey of community language needs for consultation</li> </ul>	2006
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will support the BME Forum to lead on developing new approaches to engaging with 'hard to reach' BME residents</li> </ul>	ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will carry out new accessibility audit/risk assessments on all our ACF and SUCF venues</li> </ul>	2006
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will monitor participation of disabled people on Citizens' Panel</li> </ul>	2006 an
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will support the new Brent Disabled Users Forum.</li> </ul>	annually
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will support the implementation of the Children and Young People's Participation Strategy</li> </ul>	2006
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will support the Children and Youth Forums and to take a lead on developing innovative methods of engaging with young people</li> </ul>	ongoing

## Citizens' Panel

The new Citizens' Panel will be one of the main measures of inclusivity.

<b>The Consultation Team will carry out the following specific activities</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will recruit a new panel of a minimum of 1,000 residents</li> </ul>	2005/06
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will carry out an options appraisal on how the panel is to be administered</li> </ul>	March 2006
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will implement BME, disabled, youth monitoring of panel membership</li> </ul>	ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will develop a work programme with a minimum of three surveys and three focus groups to be carried out each year</li> </ul>	2006
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will refresh the panel each year to ensure that it remains representative</li> </ul>	annually

The Consultation Team will also develop a programme of special consultation events, targeting groups that are usually under-represented

### **Objective Two - To meet the statutory and policy requirements for consultation – Co-ordination**

We have a number of new duties to consult that are requirements of:-

- **Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA)**
- **Best Value (BVPI)**
- **Local Area Agreement**
- **Local Development Framework**

<b>The Consultation Team will carry out the following specific activities</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will develop and commission the Residents' Attitude Survey 2008</li> </ul>	2007/08
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We provide analysis of resident satisfaction, evidencing its contribution to 'corporate health'</li> </ul>	ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will carry out a new ACF satisfaction survey</li> </ul>	2006
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will target residents already on the panel database with information about other consultation activity</li> </ul>	2006 and ongoing

### Monitoring and value for money

<b>The Consultation Team will carry out the following specific activities</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will contribute to service reviews by holding consultation surgeries, and provide on-going advice and training to service areas and members.</li> </ul>	ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will implement the requirement to conduct Impact/Needs Requirement Assessments on all policy changes involving consultation activity</li> </ul>	ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will further develop on-line consultation and email notification of meetings</li> </ul>	ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will support the development of the staff panel as the principal vehicle for consulting on staffing and work issues</li> </ul>	annually
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will undertake a consultation 'Challenge Day' as part of our service area review</li> </ul>	2006
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will develop a research and consultancy service within the Consultation Team and produce a <b>Business Plan</b> to generate annual income, demonstrating how cost savings can be made and quantifying those costs</li> </ul>	2006
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will revise and republish the Consultation Toolkit, with the addition of an e-learning component</li> </ul>	2006
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will audit consultation requirements regularly and distribute results to service areas</li> </ul>	annually
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will continue to produce an annual <b>Consultation Newsletter</b> to inform and maintain interest.</li> </ul>	annually

### Objective 3 - To contribute to a healthy local democracy - innovation

<b>The Consultation Team will carry out the following specific activities</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will run 20 ACF meetings and 20 Steering Group meetings, 4 Lead Managers and Chairs Meetings, annually in 4 rounds.</li> </ul>	annually
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will assist with up to 28 SUCF meetings and 4 Chairs and Lead Managers meetings, annually in 4 rounds</li> </ul>	annually
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will fully implement the recommendations of the Overview Task Group on improving information flow from forums to the council's decision making structures</li> </ul>	2005/06
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will achieve 100% of available ACF and SUCF minutes posted on website</li> </ul>	2005/06
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will undertake 3<sup>rd</sup> satisfaction survey of ACFs</li> </ul>	2006
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will develop and implement forward plans for ACFs and SUCFs</li> </ul>	ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will make quarterly reports to the council's Overview and Scrutiny Committees</li> </ul>	ongoing

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will work with BRAIN to support their consultation initiatives through digital TV and 3G mobile phone technologies.</li> <li>• We will support specific pieces of work commissioned through wardworking</li> </ul>	<p>2006</p> <p>ad-hoc</p>
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**Objective 4 - To provide clear guidance and standards for all consultation activity – Standardisation**

The five Consultation Standards are:

- **explain** why we're consulting and how we're going to take people's views into account.
- **involve** the widest spectrum of the community in our consultations, including under-represented, marginalised and 'hard to reach' groups.
- **organise** consultation in ways which are convenient and accessible to the people whose views we are seeking.
- **act** on the findings to improve services, programmes and quality of life for local residents.
- **report** back to the public what they've told us during the consultation and what we've done as a result of it.

<b>The Consultation Team will carry out the following specific activities</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will gain corporate endorsement for implementation of the Consultation Standards</li> </ul>	2005/06
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will publish the standards in a handy format</li> </ul>	2006
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will carry out regular audits of consultation activity with partner organisations through the Consultation Co-ordination Group</li> </ul>	annually
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will maintain quarterly meetings of the Consultation Co-ordination Group</li> </ul>	ongoing / quarterly
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will write and implement development plan for Consultation Tracker</li> </ul>	2006
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will continually review and update our consultation web pages</li> </ul>	ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will review and publish second edition of the Consultation Toolkit, including an e-learning component</li> </ul>	2006
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will allocate consultation officers to cover specific service areas</li> </ul>	2005/06
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will run four consultation workshops as part of the Improving Brent Programme</li> </ul>	2006

**Other documents relevant to this strategy:**

- Community Consultation and Engagement Strategy (Full version)
- Consultation Toolkit
- Consultation Team's Service Development Plan
- Consultation Team's Business Plan
- Communications Strategy (2004-06)
- Community Strategy (2006-08)
- Residents' Participation Strategy (BHP)
- Children and Young People's Participation Strategy
- Better Government for Older People Strategy
- Regeneration Strategy (2001-2021)



# Appendix 1 – Consultation & Community Engagement Network

