	<p>Executive 15th December 2008</p> <p>Report from the Directors of Finance and Corporate Resources and Policy and Regeneration</p>
For Action	Wards Affected: ALL
<p>Report Title: Performance and Finance Review - Quarter 2 2008/2009</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(PRU – 08/09 - 11)</i></p>	

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report summarises Brent Council's spending, activity and performance in the second quarter of the 2008/09 financial year and highlights key issues and solutions to them. It takes a corporate overview of financial and service performance and provides an analysis of high risk areas. The report is accompanied by appendices providing budget, activity and performance data for each service area, the Local Area Agreement, ring fenced budgets and the capital programme. Vital signs trend data and graphs are also provided along with the council's overall budget summary.

2.0 Recommendations

The Executive is asked to:

- 2.1 Note the council's spending, activity and performance in quarter two.
- 2.2 Require that all directors ensure that spending is kept within budget and underperformance tackled and that measures are taken, in consultation with relevant portfolio holders, to achieve this.
- 2.3 Agree the virements listed in paragraph 5.6 and Appendix G.

3.0 Background

- 3.1 The success of the council is ultimately measured by the delivery of the priorities within the Corporate Strategy and its jointly agreed outcomes in the Local Area Agreement. That is principally determined by the council's overall strategic planning framework and reviewed through the annual report to

Council in November on progress against the Corporate Strategy and the Annual Review published in late summer. Regular Performance and Finance Review reports allow members to ensure that council finances and performance remain on track to help achieve these priorities.

- 3.2 This approach to monitoring and reporting reflects other changes in the council's approach in recent years, including strengthening the link between the Corporate Strategy and the Medium Term Financial Strategy, active performance monitoring and management, a greater focus on outcomes as part of capital programme monitoring, and bringing together financial and performance monitoring of partnership activity through the Local Area Agreement. It provides more clarity about the relationship between spending, performance and activity – for example the impact of reductions in the number of children in different forms of care on the children's service provision and budget – and provides a basis for assessing the potential impact of future decisions. It also provides a more holistic view of the council's spending and activity by bringing together revenue and capital, the General Fund, Schools Budget and Housing Revenue Account budgets, and council and partnership activity and performance in one report.

- 3.3 Appendices included in this report are as follows:

Appendix A	General Fund services – Financial, activity and performance monitoring information for each of the council's main service areas:
- A1	- Children and Families
- A2	- Environment and Culture
- A3	- Housing and Community Care
- A4	- Corporate Centre
Appendix B	Capital programme
- B1	- Children and Families
- B2	- Environment and Culture
- B3	- Housing and Community Care
- B4	- Corporate Centre
Appendix C	Housing Revenue Account
Appendix D	Local Area Agreement
- D1	Local Area Agreement 1
- D2	Local Area Agreement 2
Appendix E	Budget Summary
Appendix F	Vital Signs – high and medium risk performance
Appendix G	Budget Virements 2008/09

- 3.4 Supplementary documentation circulated to members includes a vital signs report providing detailed explanation of performance, an activity monitoring report and the Addendum.

4.0 Corporate context

- 4.1 The long term objectives for Brent were agreed by the council in the Corporate Strategy which sets out the main aims of making Brent a great place, a borough of opportunity and one community. The themes reflect the broad approach in our inter-agency Community Strategy for 2006-10 and also the results of local polling about residents' concerns. These aims need to be achieved within the context of a reduction in real terms in government grant, members' ambitions to keep council tax increases low, and significant budget pressures resulting from, amongst other things, demographic pressures, the increasing costs of waste disposal and increased cost of continuing care.
- 4.2 This year we have started reporting against the new set of 198 National Indicators. The aim of these is to reflect more clearly the performance of the council and partners, acting as evidence for the new Comprehensive Area Assessment which will be introduced in April 2009. Brent has had consistent success in improving incrementally. To continue to improve at the same rate as other councils, Brent is changing its approach to improvement. The council is now preparing its road to excellence with an improvement and efficiency strategy aimed at delivering better services to local residents.
- 4.3 Continuous improvement has been at the centre of our approach to service development and financial planning, and we have demonstrably raised the effectiveness, relevance and quality of our public services. Despite these real and sustained improvements, the organisation has recognised the need to go beyond reliance on silo based or incremental approaches to secure future changes in performance and efficiency. In September 2008, Brent launched an ambitious change programme set out in the new Improvement and Efficiency Strategy. The change programme is structured around three themes:
- *Making the 'One Council' approach a reality*
Development of the organisational infrastructure and establishment of a Business Transformation department to integrate critical support functions
 - *Raising performance and maximising efficiency*
Service reviews run by cross council teams to develop and implement more customer-focused and effective service delivery models
 - *Delivering on major projects*
Delivering large capital schemes notably the Civic Centre, the expansion programme for schools, regeneration of Wembley and South Kilburn and the North Circular Road project

5.0 Overall financial position

General Fund Revenue budget

- 5.1 A summary of the council's overall budget position for 2008/09 is included at Appendix E.

- 5.2 The 2007/08 provisional outturn was reported to the Executive in July 2008. That showed an improvement in balances brought forward from 2007/08 of £450k, from £8.605m forecast when the 2008/09 budget was set to £9.055m. This improvement was provisional, pending completion by the Audit Commission of the audit of the 2007/08 accounts. The accounts have now been audited with no change to the position on balances.
- 5.3 The table below shows a forecast net overspend on service area budgets of £1.863m and a forecast overspend on central items of £130k, resulting in an overall deficit position of £1.993m. This is an improvement of £334k on quarter 1 where the forecast net overspend was £2.327m. This is principally due to a £500k improvement in the Children and Families position, partially offset by a deterioration in the overspend on Environment and Culture. The result is that, on the basis of forecasts at the end of Quarter 2, general balances at 31st March 2009 would be £5.769m, £1.731m less than budgeted balances of £7.5m.

	Latest Budget £'000	Forecast £'000	Variance £'000
Children and Families	58,680	58,512	(300)
Environment and Culture	47,663	48,484	(821)
Housing & Community Care:			
o housing and customer services	20,330	20,330	0
o adult social care	86,468	87,080	(612)
Finance & Corporate Resources/Central Units	21,174	21,304	(130)
Service Area Total	234,147	236,010	(1,863)
Central items	39,227	39,357	(130)
Area Based Grants	(16,109)	(16,109)	0
Total council budget	257,265	259,258	(1,993)
Application of balances	(1,293)	(3,286)	1,993
Total council budget/forecast after application of balances	255,972	255,972	0

- 5.4 There are some underlying issues that are causing pressure on budgets across the council, principally as a result of the state of the economy. These include the impact of higher inflation levels on costs - the increase in the RPI is currently running at 5% per annum - and the effect of the downturn on income, for example, land searches. The main issues in individual services areas are as follows:
- Children and Families. The major risk areas to the General Fund budget are the cost of children's placements for children in care and costs associated with children with disabilities. The number of children in care

was 363 in October 2008 (compared with a peak of 426 in 2006) and measures are in place through the 'invest to save' programme to bring this down further. The difficulties with securing in-house foster carers have begun to ease with the start of 12 new foster carers in October and with further recruits expected after a successful advertising campaign. In the case of children with disabilities, the main pressures are from increased numbers of direct payments and increasingly complex support packages. The forecast overspend in Children and Families has reduced from £800k in the first quarter with main factor being additional monies received as a result of £400k from the 2006/07 unaccompanied asylum seeking children special circumstances grant. Bringing costs within budget in 2008/09 will depend primarily on continuing the success of the 'invest to save' programme.

- Environment and Culture. The most significant issues in Environment and Culture are the impact of the collapse in the housing market on land search income, increased inflation on contract costs, the effect of energy cost increases and the additional costs associated with compulsory recycling. These pressures have seen the forecast overspend worsen by £284k from the £537k reported in quarter 1 to £821k in quarter 2. The department has in place measures for reducing the impact of cost increases and has in recent years managed to bring spending within budget by year-end. At present planning, building control and parking income seem to be holding up reasonably well but there must be risks of a reduction in income in these areas as economic conditions worsen.
- Adult Social Care. This remains the most significant risk area for the council. Overall the forecast overspend has remained stable from quarter 1 though there has been some significant fluctuations within services. Generally there have been increases in the costs of nursing care and to a lesser extent residential care and this is particularly true for physical disabilities which is reflected in its overspend of £450k in this quarter. There remain significant pressures on the budget as a result of inflationary impact on cost of home care and residential placements and achievement of spending in line with budget depends on the delivery of savings from the adult social care transformation programme. There are issues over the pace of change of the programme particularly around the delivery of self-direct support and direct payments where some areas have performed better than others. The income budgets are currently performing better than expected but historically there have always been underlying pressures on these budgets and this is being monitored closely. There continues to be very proactive monitoring of activity and spend on adult social care at both departmental and corporate levels.
- Finance and Corporate Resources/central units. These were forecasting an overspend of £218k at the end of quarter 1 and this has improved to £130k in quarter 2. The issues over increases in summons income have now been resolved so there should be an improvement in the budget position in quarter 3.

- 5.5 The £130k forecast overspend on central items is the result of an increase in the costs of premature retirement compensation as a result of additional charges for pensioners within the London Pension Funds Authority scheme. The position on capital financing and interest on balances is currently being reviewed. The 0.5% reduction in base rates in October together with further expected falls will reduce the return on short term investments. If the Council recovers its £15m invested in Icelandic banks, overall capital financing costs should be below budget. This is because earlier in the year the relatively high levels of short term interest rates and low levels of long term interest rates contributed to improvements in the capital financing position though it would not be prudent to assume any betterment until the position on Icelandic banks' funds is clearer.
- 5.6 There are a number of budget virements in 2008/09 which members are asked to agree. These are included in Appendix F and are as follows:
- Following agreement at the July Executive to changes to the structure of the Council, three functions transferred with effect from 1st October: Brent Adult and Community Education Service has moved from Environment and Culture to Children & Families; Registrars and Nationality has moved from Environment and Culture to Legal & Democratic Services; and Diversity has moved from Human Resources to Communications and Consultation.
 - An adjustment to the virements agreed at the July Executive for transfer of premature retirement compensation costs from service areas to central items.
 - Three internal transfers within Housing and Community Care between Housing and Customer Services and Adult Social Care for One Stop Shop IT services, Private Housing Occupational Therapy Services and Policy & Performance.

Housing Revenue Account

- 5.7 The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) is a ring-fenced account containing the income and expenditure relating to the Council's Landlord duties for approximately 9,500 dwellings.
- 5.8 The HRA forecast outturn for 2008/09 indicates a surplus of £2.2m, which is £1.8m more than that provided for in the original budget. The main reason for this additional surplus is the carry forward of the £1.9m underspend on the HRA in 2007-08.

Schools Budget

- 5.9 The ring-fenced Schools Budget is split into two parts. The first part delivers delegated funding to schools - school budget shares. The second part is termed central items expenditure and covers local authority retained elements

to support activities such as pupil referral units and payments to non maintained nurseries.

- 5.10 The central items budget for 2008/09 is £18.1m and the latest forecast is a £300k overspend by the year end, due to increased numbers of children being given Special Education Needs (SEN) statements in schools. Any overspend will be met by the earmarked central items' reserve, which is £1.1m in 2008/09. An SEN review is being undertaken which will amongst other things seek to identify measures to reduce pressure on the SEN budget.

Capital programme

- 5.11 Financial monitoring information for the capital programme is included in Appendix B.
- 5.12 There have been a number of changes to the forecast outturn position for 2008/09 since the Quarter 1 Performance and Finance Review report to the Executive in August 2008, as detailed in the following paragraphs.

Children and Families capital

- 5.13 There is a requirement to incur an additional £300k on the Wembley Academy scheme in order to meet project support costs. This was highlighted as a possible requirement in the report to Executive on the 11th February 2008. Members are asked to approve that this additional expenditure be funded by reducing provision in future years' programmes for additional school placements.
- 5.14 An additional £685k has been included in the provision for school expansion to meet the costs of refurbishment works to the Gwyneth Rickus Building Annexe 4 for the expansion of the tuition service. These additional costs will be met through a Revenue Contribution to Capital Outlay having a nil impact on the capital programme overall.
- 5.15 There is forecast slippage to 2009/10 on the Manor School and Vernon House SEN schemes of £100k and £50k respectively.

Environment and Culture capital

- 5.16 There is a forecast requirement to incur an additional £203k on the main programme element of the Harlesden Library scheme which can be funded from sums no longer required for schemes that were re-phased from 2007/08.

Housing and Community Care: Adults capital

- 5.17 Additional IT Infrastructure Grant of £84k has been received from the Department of Health.

Housing and Community Care: Housing capital

- 5.18 Additional Disabled Facility Grant of £365k has been received from the Department for Communities and Local Government.
- 5.19 There is forecast slippage to 2009/10 on the Disabled Facility Adaptations to PFI Properties scheme of £250k.
- 5.20 There is a forecast reduction of £222k in the level of Major Repairs Allowance works to HRA properties arising from re-phasing from 2007/08. Changes in expenditure are matched by amended contributions from the HRA; thus there is a nil impact to the capital programme overall.

Corporate capital

- 5.21 There is a forecast underspending of £137k on Backlog Maintenance Works. This is because funds slipped from 2007/08 are not required.





Prudential Indicators

- 5.22 Prudential indicators were introduced as part of the prudential borrowing regime introduced as part of the Local Government Act 2003. The arrangements are aimed at ensuring authorities exercise their borrowing powers responsibly, with capital expenditure plans that are affordable, external borrowing that is prudent and sustainable, and treasury management decisions taken in accordance with good professional practice. Prudential limits are set as part of the budget process, monitored during the year, and actual performance reported at outturn. There are no variations to report for quarter 2.

6.0 Overall performance position

Corporate Strategy

- 6.1 Overall the council has made good progress towards delivering the key objectives in the Corporate Strategy in quarter 2 of 2008/09 with the majority of Vital Signs indicators considered critical to the success of the council performing broadly in line with target. 59% are currently on target (green star) or just below target (blue circle) and 22% are well below target (red triangle).

Overall Council Performance				
				
	Low risk	Medium risk	High risk	No data
Percentage Quarter 1 PIs	42%	17%	22%	19%

More detailed trend data and comments on these indicators are available in Appendix F. There is a high number of indicators without information in quarter 2 because of the introduction of the new national indicator set, the need to set baselines and the deadlines for tranche data collection not coinciding with the end of quarter.

- 6.2 The key risks to achieving the objectives outlined in the Corporate Strategy this year include: the overspend in adults' social care and the lack of school places. We also continue to closely monitor the progress under the new waste contract. Transformation programmes are in place to continue to address these issues. This report sets out the measures that have been put in place to respond to poor progress towards the corporate objectives.
- 6.3 Officers will be monitoring and managing performance and will report any further action required to members as appropriate. The Executive is asked to agree:
- that all directors ensure that underperformance is tackled and measures are taken, in consultation with relevant portfolio holders, to achieve this.

Local Area Agreement

- 6.4 Brent's LAA 2008 to 2011 was finally agreed and signed off with Government Office for London (GOL) in June of this year. Since then the LAA team have been working to develop performance management framework arrangements with partners around monitoring the LAA. It has 38 priorities composed of 12 stretch targets from the last LAA which we are carrying forward, plus 3 local targets which were priorities we could not find an appropriate indicator for from the 198 national indicator set, and 23 priorities that were chosen from the 198. The report below is 'by exception' and only reports on priorities that may have some degree of risk or special circumstances attached to them.
- 6.5 LAA Priorities:

Domestic Violence (DV)

Current Stretch Target ends 2009.

It is currently low risk but some risk remains because of the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS). This priority has a year left to run before the project becomes part of the 'Serious Violent Crime' agenda and becomes subsumed into that priority. To date, it has been an extremely successful project in reducing repeat incidents and impacts on a number of cross cutting areas. These include health and well being and the children's safety agenda, DV being one of the primary reasons for children ending up in care. It has suffered recent difficulties in recruiting a new DV Coordinator, and also in obtaining data to measure 'ineffective cases' from the CPS although the team are working to resolve this. Despite these difficulties it is expected to meet its final year targets for 2009.

Street Cleanliness

Current Stretch Target ends 2009.

This priority (formerly BV199a) is reported as four parts, one for each element of environmental and street cleanliness: BV199 the proportion of (a) Litter, (b) Detritus, (c) Graffiti, (d) Fly-posting which we are aiming to reduce through this project. The first two are included in the LAA, and the annual target for 2009 is 19% from an original baseline of 30% in 2006. Performance for

quarter 1 this year was encouraging with a drop to 13%, but recent provisional figures have indicated a sharp rise to 22% for this quarter. Work to redress this is underway and includes discussion on human resources at monthly contract management meetings and Partnership meetings. Client Officers are monitoring contractor performance more vigilantly and seasonal work is to be planned in advance with operating methods, operating dates and resource requirements agreed in advance. A working plan should be issued to the council well in advance of the work taking place. The Service remains optimistic that they can meet the annual and final target for 2009.

Recycling and Composting

This priority (previously known as BVPI 82a and 82b) has an annual target of 27% for 2009 from an original baseline of 21% for 2007. Quarterly targets are profiled against seasonal variations in waste arising, and balance at 27%. The target is set to increase every year up to 40% for the final year of the LAA. This quarter's target has been met. At present, we are on track to meet the annual target. However, there are some risks associated with this project as the full impact of compulsory recycling is not realised yet. These include the fact that increased participation may place significant pressure on the collection operators, leading to collection failures and unsustainable cost increases. The adopted policy around enforcement is that residents will be given three opportunities to start recycling, after which a formal enforcement route will be followed, this message must remain consistent from all parts of the Council. The Service Area does remain optimistic that with close liaison with the contractors, understanding their pressures and providing them with early remedial actions, the annual target for 2009 can be met, but the project will need careful monitoring to ensure that it remains on track to achieve the 40% 3 year target.

Access to Employment for Social Housing Tenants

The performance this quarter and last was good however there remain some risks due to the economic downturn, which may yet be reflected in future figures.

This priority has an annual target of 14% for 2009. At present the target is on track, however, the risks to not achieving the annual target are fairly high as it is difficult to predict how the impact of the start of recession will affect the claimant rate. Brent has made provision for this in a 'demand' within the original LAA that the target be reviewed annually in the light of economic conditions which may result in the target being reviewed at some point. Brent is currently developing a joint agreement with JCP and other key delivery partners to secure commitment to reaching the target and ensure local resources are maximised.

Reducing Benefit Processing Times

This priority is a current stretch target with reward grant attached. It has been very successful performance wise, but a recent random audit did highlight some discrepancies showing a potential variance of 1-2 days from the reported figures. As a result the Service Area is conducting a full audit of performance in Q1 and Q2 to ensure confidence in data and performance

against the target. Whilst some extra work may need to be undertaken to ensure this issue is resolved. The service area remains confident of achieving the 2009 final target.

Smoking Cessation

This is a stretch target from LAA 1 with reward grant attached.

The latest results on this target are disappointing but expected. The service suffered severe cutbacks during the PCT financial turnaround program of 2006/07 and performance was affected. However, in the last 6 months the PCT has reinvested considerable money to reinstate and build up the service again. There is always a considerable time lag associated with smoking cessation data (at least 6 to 8 weeks) as it is 'cleaned' so it is currently too early to tell whether this will have the desired impact. Work to restore this priority has included recruitment to the Smoking Cessation Team including a Stop Smoking Manager; 2x Stop Smoking Specialists; 4x sessional workers and admin support. A specialist contractor has been recruited to work in neighbourhood renewal areas to help people stop smoking. Publicity materials (leaflets, posters) & local media advertising (radio production, Willesden & Brent Times, Kilburn Times) has been organised. Visits have been arranged throughout Sept/Oct to Pharmacies & GPs with publicity materials to advertise the service. A Business Plan has also been developed to ensure 3 year funding for the Stop Smoking Service, which is due to be ratified by the PCT Board, PEC (Professional Executive Committee) & PCT investment panel, and includes a jointly funded Tobacco Control Manager between PCT and LA. Future work includes the recruitment of GPs and practice staff to deliver a stop smoking service to registered patients, through (PbC) Practice-based Commissioning, and Roll-out of "Stop Before the Op" initiative. The PCT state that the best results will come out in quarter 4, and it may be that 60% of the target and therefore 60% of reward grant is a possibility. This project will continue to be carefully monitored by the LAA team and the PCT.

Sports Participation

This is a stretch target from LAA 1 with reward grant attached.

The interim Sport England Survey performed in May of this year has shown a decrease in adult participation to 16% which is below the original baseline set for this target of 18%. This is an extremely surprising and disappointing result as the baseline occurred before the opening of Willesden Sports Centre which has been very successful with high numbers attending. The LAA team is working with Gerry Keifer who leads on this project to identify a range of potential solutions which might impact the final year survey which will be carried out in either March or October of next year (we are still waiting to find out). The survey itself is an issue as it is only conducted across only 500 people in Brent which is not particularly statistically robust. Brent has always paid extra for a booster sample size to 1000, but this still remains a difficult methodology. We are still awaiting the results of this year's final survey which was recently completed. Results should be out by the end of November 2008.

Adult Obesity

This priority is a new and challenging one for all boroughs and will require a strong focus if Brent is to be able to achieve the impact we hope for. The LAA

target is aimed at addressing and reducing the 'rise in obesity' over 3 years which accounts for the small percentage reduction target set. This is one example of a more complex health issue which will probably need to continue in the LAA for 10 years before a real difference can be achieved. Brent NHS (formerly Brent PCT) have a range of current measures aimed at addressing this issue including Healthy Walks, GP exercise referral schemes, weight management classes and an adult obesity strategy is under development, alongside a vascular health strategy which should come into force from April 2009 onwards with a range of new measures. This target is almost impossible to measure on a quarterly basis; therefore annual data will be the only way to assess the impact of the measures being taken. Circulatory death rates are always around 2 years out of date when they are published so we won't be able to see an impact on this for at least 3 years. We will keep the LSP up to date with project milestones as the 2 strategies are rolled out.

Settled Homes Project

Brent put forward 2 sets of targets for this priority. One was the national target, a challenging 50% reduction of numbers in temporary accommodation by 09/10 and a total of 56% reduction by the end of the LAA. Brent has over 4000 people in TA and has put the case to government for the need for individual local authority targets rather than a blank percentage rate reduction applying to all, as a fairer way of setting targets and measuring progress on this issue. Brent also asked for consideration of its innovative 'Settled Homes' proposal to assist the borough and made an in principle agreement with government that the national targets could only be achieved pending approval of this project, (which we are still waiting for). The second set of targets (without the settled homes project) are lower at 20% reduction for this year (-33% by 2011) and the project is currently well on track to reach this targets annual target for 2009.

Increasing Affordable Homes

Although half the annual target has been achieved already we will monitor this because of the potential impact of the economic downturn.

Additional Housing

This indicator measures new homes actually built or provided through conversion. We can only provide draft estimates of this performance to date as this is an annual indicator measured at the end of the financial year, with a considerable time lag to it. The original target of 915 new units per year matched the GLA London Plan targets and was felt to be achievable. However, within the current economic climate it may now be difficult to achieve. The final figure for last year was considerably lower than the projected completions figure, at 770, against a 1322 forecast. Some units achieved last year will carry forward into this year in terms of being counted, due to data time lags, It should be noted that even in normal economic circumstances this completion figure is subject to large variations year on year due to construction cycles and a range of other factors. This will remain a challenging target to achieve, and will continue to be monitored.

Volunteering

The performance figures for this priority are good this quarter. We have reached agreement with GOL that we can combine the targets for this indicator to a total of 500 volunteers, 100 of whom must be from socially disadvantaged backgrounds.

To date, Local Area Agreement funding has enabled the Volunteer Centre to attract an additional £578,000 from various funders, for work taking place from 2007-2011. This includes new projects to work with young volunteers aged 16-25 years, funded by v; and a new supported volunteering project for 2008-9, funded by Brentin2Work. This helps to address some of the inequalities faced by certain groups, who find it harder to access volunteer opportunities. Equal access to volunteering is important, as volunteering is known to help people with confidence and self-esteem, as well as providing valuable skills and experience which can help with finding paid work. We will continue to monitor the progress of this priority.

Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA)

- 6.10 Brent retained three stars in the assessment of financial year 2007/08, released in February 2008. The Audit Commission have confirmed the CPA framework for 2008. The Vital Signs indicators which will impact on the final CPA score in 2008 are: the number of active library borrowers, numbers of library visits and street cleanliness.
- 6.11 A new set of national indicators has been put in place to prepare for the new Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) regime. 35 of the national indicators are the focus of the Local Area Agreement.

Specific Performance Issues

Youth

- 6.12 The council is working to ensure early excellence and this quarter there is a reported improvement in the number of Black African and Caribbean youth subject to custody, young people visiting council sports facilities and the percentage of young people in education, employment or training. The Youth Offending Team is undertaking focussed work to improve reintegration into the community and employment, training and education. This includes strategies to improve the seasonal inconsistencies of first time entrants of ages 10-17 to the Youth Justice System.

Schools

- 6.13 The council still has high numbers of primary and secondary school children waiting more than 6 weeks for a school place. The underlying problem is a shortage of places in schools; a situation experienced by a number of neighbouring boroughs, where schools are almost at capacity. Brent has set

out a strategy to deal with this involving expansion of existing provision in the borough in the medium term with another 120 new places in Wembley alone.

Children's Social Care

- 6.14 Work overseen by the Children's Social Care Transformation Board to both improve the health and well-being of children by providing help when they need it and reduce projected overspends has resulted in some success. Challenges for the transformation board this year include the complexity of cases and ability to provide foster care in-house.

Special Educational Needs

- 6.15 The council has performed better this quarter regarding the issuing of statements of Special Educational Needs within 26 weeks. The Special Educational Needs Advisory Service is working closely with the PCT and will review progress regularly to promote better performance for the rest of the year. The SEN service is due to be reviewed as part of the new transformation programme.

Cleanliness – litter and graffiti

- 6.16 We have made Brent a greener place. The introduction of compulsory recycling in Brent has had a positive effect on the levels of residual waste per household and the percentage of waste sent for reuse and recycling. Participation in some areas has risen to over 90% from an average of 40% and significantly reduced the amount of waste sent to landfill. We are fine tuning the compulsory recycling model and setting up 0% waste zones to ensure even higher recycling rates and are working towards reaching the LAA target of 40%.

Planning

- 6.17 There has been a marked improvement in the percentage of major planning applications determined within the allotted timeframe. Minor and planning applications being determined within the set time is being affected by the number of applicants pursuing a section 106 agreement alongside their planning application. However, the current economic downturn is expected to affect all planning performance in the medium term.

Libraries

- 6.18 The number of library visits has fallen this quarter, mainly due to the planned refurbishments in the south of the borough. As yet, this has not had an impact on the number of active borrowers but is expected to start improving numbers in the long term. The rise in the number of borrowers at Kingsbury Library Plus since its opening will be positive for performance in the year ahead.

6.19 *Adult Social Care*

The adult care transformation programme is working to improve health and well being performance and to mitigate the risk to the council's budget from the current overspend. The service is building on the good performance achieved in 2007/08. Performance compared to other boroughs in London is improving. The POP programme at Brent is being used as a case study nationally illustrating the shift to prevention and early intervention. Brent is

looking to build on this success by apply the same principles to other projects we are undertaking.

6.20 *Revenues and Benefits*

The good performance for Revenues and Benefits has continued into quarter one of this year. Performance for the following indicators have met target: council tax collected, average time for new claims, complaints and time taken to process claims for council tax and housing benefit. National non-domestic rates (NNDR) collected is very close to target this quarter. The main factor affecting this performance is the change in the law so that exemptions for empty business properties have been taken away. Taxes on several properties which had previously been exempt from paying had not been paid. This is a common issue in many London boroughs with a high number of industrial properties.

6.21 *Human Resources*

Sickness levels (excluding schools) in Brent have fallen this quarter and this indicator is now meeting target. A review of the sickness policy and a workshop for managers has been put in place to ensure that good performance is maintained. The percentage of workforce agency staff has risen this quarter and a review of approaches for managing agency staff has been proposed to help improve performance in the year ahead.

6.22 *Crime*

We have made Brent a safer place: overall acquisitive crime has decreased by 21 % compared to last year. Performance for serious acquisitive crime has also been consistently good throughout the year.

6.23 *Regeneration*

The number of working age people on out of work benefits is decreasing steadily and shows good performance again this quarter. There is also exciting news regarding the Brent Civic Centre project. We have a site for our new civic centre, are going out to recruit a project team and at the same time are recruiting a new assistant director as part of our Business Transformation Department to drive the project forward.

6.24 *Temporary accommodation*

The current economic climate is having significant effect on this indicator. However, we believe the 20% to be achievable. Housing and Community Care is awaiting the outcome of the Working Futures Settled Homes initiative from central government. This will form the basis for performance improvement strategies in the medium term.

7.0 Financial implications

7.1 These are set out in the body of the report.

8.0 Legal implications

8.1 The capital programme is agreed by Full Council as part of the annual budget process. Changes to, or departures from, the budget during the year other than by Full Council itself can only be agreed in accordance with the scheme of Transfers and Virements contained in the Constitution. Any decisions the Executive wishes to take and any changes in policy which are not in accordance with the budget set out in March 2008 and are not covered by the Scheme of Transfers and Virements will therefore need to be referred to Full Council.

8.2 The Director of Finance and Corporate Resources is satisfied that the criteria in the scheme are satisfied in respect of virements and spending proposals in the report.

9.0 Diversity implications

9.1 This report has been subject to screening by officers and there are no direct diversity implications.

10.0 Background documents

10.1 Corporate Strategy 2006/10
Community Strategy 2006/10
Local Area Agreement 2008/11
Budget Report 2008/09
Best Value Performance Plan 2008/09

11.0 Contact officers

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DUNCAN McLEOD Director of Finance and Corporate Resources
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PHIL NEWBY Director of Policy and Regeneration
