	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Executive</b> <b>16<sup>th</sup> March 2009</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Report from the Directors of Finance and Corporate Resources and Policy and Regeneration</b></p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Wards Affected: NONE</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Performance and Finance Review - Quarter 3 2008/09</b></p>	

Forward Plan Ref: PRU-08/09-17

## 1. Summary

- 1.1 This report summarises Brent Council's spending, activity and performance in the third 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 3.
- 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 virement detailed in paragraph 5.7.

## 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	Addendum

3.4 Supplementary documentation circulated to members includes a Vital Signs report providing detailed explanation of performance, an activity monitoring report and 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

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 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

4.4 The impact of recession and recent heightened public concern about child protection means that the council has had to look again at its priorities. This does not however mean that the council has fundamentally changed its approach. A lot of what we already do supports people who might be most affected by recession by helping them find work through Brent-in2-Work, adult and community education and other employment and training initiatives, preventing homelessness and providing accommodation when people become homeless, ensuring people receive the state benefits to which they are entitled, and supporting those with social care needs. We also have in place a programme to transform our children's social care service which has improved from an 'adequate' (2 out of 4) service that overspent to a 'good' service (3 out of 4) that lives within its budget. The 2009/10 budget includes additional measures aimed at helping combat the impact of recession and strengthen our child protection structures and these are areas that will need

to be a particular focus of attention through the Performance and Finance Review process in 2009/10.

## 5.0 Overall financial position

### General Fund Revenue budget

- 5.1 A summary of the 2008/09 budget position is included at Appendix E.
- 5.2 The table below shows a forecast net overspend on service area budgets of £1.189m and underspend on central items and Area Based Grant of £1.440m, resulting in an overall surplus of £251k. This is an improvement of £2.244m on quarter 2 where the forecast net overspend was £1.993m. The main reason for this is an improvement of £1.570m in central budgets primarily around the costs of the remuneration strategy.<sup>1</sup> In addition the deficit on service area budgets has been reduced by £674k principally due to the Children and Families being brought back into a breakeven position and a £386k reduction in the overspend on Environment and Culture. The result is that, on the basis of forecasts at the end of Quarter 3, general balances at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2009 would be £8.013m, £513k more than the budgeted balances of £7.5m. This has allowed £500k of balances to be used to support the 2009/10 budget (as set out in the budget report to Full Council on 2<sup>nd</sup> March.

	<b>Latest Budget £'000</b>	<b>Forecast £'000</b>	<b>Variance £'000</b>
Children and Families	58,291	58,291	0
Environment and Culture	47,673	48,108	(435)
Housing & Community Care:			
o housing and customer services	20,330	20,330	0
o adult social care	86,522	87,151	(629)
Finance & Corporate Resources/Central Units	21,478	21,603	(125)
<b>Service Area Total</b>	<b>234,294</b>	<b>235,483</b>	<b>(1,189)</b>
Central items	39,080	37,740	1,340
Area Based Grants	(16,109)	(16,209)	100
<b>Total council budget</b>	<b>257,265</b>	<b>257,014</b>	<b>251</b>
<b>Application of balances</b>	<b>(1,293)</b>	<b>(1,042)</b>	<b>(251)</b>
<b>Total after application of balances</b>	<b>255,972</b>	<b>255,972</b>	<b>0</b>

- 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 RPI peaked at 5% in September 2008 but had fallen to 0.1% in January 2009 though other measures of inflation range from 2.4% and 3.4% - and the effect of the downturn on income, which is particularly true of those areas linked to the housing market, for example, land searches but is also starting to affect other areas. The main issues in individual services areas are as follows:

<sup>1</sup> Income from interest on balances was particularly strong in the first half of the financial year and there is a forecast underspend of £1.996m in 2008/09 but this has been put into a reserve to offset the forecast loss of interest on balances in 2009/10 as a result of near zero interest rates.

- Children and Families. The major risk areas to the General Fund budget in 2008/09 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 368 in December 2008 (compared with a peak of 427 in 2006) though this reflects an increase compared to the low of 355 reached in October 2008 figure of 363. Success in reducing placements has been achieved through preventative measures introduced as part of the 'invest to save' programme but additional referrals and assessments following recent heightened public concern about child protection will impact on the number of children in care and this remains a major risk for the 2009/10 budget. The difficulties with securing in-house foster carers have begun to ease with the start of 12 new foster carers in October and this is reflected in the increase in in-house fostering over the last three months. 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 £300k in the second quarter to breakeven. Children and Families have been able to use one-off monies including £600k received for the 2006/07 and 2007/08 unaccompanied asylum seeking children special circumstances grant to help achieve a breakeven position and maintaining that position in 2009/10 will depend primarily on the effectiveness of the council in continuing the success of the 'invest to save' programme in the light of recent events.
- 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, reduced income from parking, increased inflation on contract costs, the effect of energy cost increases and the additional costs associated with compulsory recycling. These pressures saw the overspend rise in quarter 2 to 821k but it has improved by £386k to £435k in quarter 3. The department has put in place measures to reduce the impact of cost increases. Budget targets were reviewed and reset in October and were again reviewed in January. These measures have been successful in reducing costs in a number of areas. However, emerging problems resulting from a projected downturn in income from the parking account have negated the full impact of the improvements. Although all measures are being taken to reduce the deficit the areas of land search and parking are particularly difficult to deal with as reductions in staffing would only further reduce the capacity to collect income. It is now assumed that the current deficit is unlikely to be significantly reduced before year end. At present planning and building control 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 of £629k has remained stable during the year. 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, with a projected overspend of £422k. 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. Given the statutory responsibilities and the demand led nature of the service, the level of short term action that can be taken to reduce spending is relatively limited without affecting the quality of the service and so the current level of overspend is not expected to change significantly from around £600k. In the medium term, however, more comprehensive action is being taken to restructure the department and procure services in better ways. There continues to be very proactive monitoring of activity and spend on adult social care at both departmental and corporate levels to ensure there is no deterioration in the financial position.

- Finance and Corporate Resources/central units. The forecast has remained almost unchanged since the second quarter at £125k. This mainly reflects a shortfall in council tax summons income in the early part of the year.

- 5.5 The forecast for central items is now an underspend of £1.340m. This is principally due to a reduction in the provision required for the remuneration strategy resulting from the decisions of General Purposes Committee on 12<sup>th</sup> January 2009 on single status and approval from Communities and Local Government to capitalise retrospective payments in 2008/09 and spread the cost over a number of years. There is base budget provision in the 2009/10 budget to allow these costs to be met in future years. The consequence is that £2.052m of the central provision can be released in 2008/09. Against this though are a number of areas of overspending including the costs of premature retirement compensation and a shortfall against target savings from cross-cutting income and efficiency initiatives.
- 5.6 There is also a forecast underspend of £1.996m as a result of additional income resulting from relatively high short term interest rates earlier in the financial year. These funds have been put in reserve to offset the expected loss of income on balances as a result of anticipated low interest rates in 2009/10. No separate provision has been made for potential loss of income if monies are not fully recovered from the Icelandic banks in which the council had investments. Action is being taken to recover the funds and government regulations mean councils do not have to make provision for potential losses in their 2008/09 accounts or 2009/10 budgets.
- 5.7 For 2008/09 Officers' pay award the Employers' Side made a final offer for 2008/09 of 2.45% (plus additional £100 per annum on spinal column points 4, 5 & 6) which was not agreed by the Trade Union Side. Both sides then agreed to refer the issue to arbitration. The National Joint Council for Local Government Services issued a circular in October 2008 implementing the Employer's Side final offer in the interim while awaiting the outcome of the arbitration. The arbitration process has now been concluded and we expect a circular to be issued shortly which sets out an additional 0.3% on the pay award. This brings the main element of the pay award up to 2.75% which is 0.25% higher than the 2.5% provided in Council budgets. This is expected to add an additional £300k to the pay bill for 2008/09. It is expected that these

additional costs will be met from service area and central budgets in 2008/09. An allowance for 2.00% has been made in the 2009/10 budget. Given projected inflation rates, it may be that the pay award will fall below this level which can then fund any shortfall in future years.

- 5.8 Members are asked to agree a virement between the levies budget and Environment and Culture. The levies budget for 2008/09 included a provision of £501k for increases in the volume and costs of Section 52(9) charges for waste disposed on top of the amount paid through the London Waste Authority levy. At the July Executive Members agreed to vire £354k for additional section 52(9) costs and the loss of monies for the Waste Performance and Efficiency Grant leaving £147k to meet the costs of any additional tonnages relating to Section 52(9). It is now proposed to transfer the £147k to meet the impact of higher than anticipated inflation in 2007/08 on the waste contract.

#### Housing Revenue Account

- 5.9 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.
- 5.10 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

- 5.11 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.
- 5.12 The central items budget for 2008/09 is £19.1m 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

- 5.13 Financial monitoring information for the capital programme is included in Appendix B. Details of the changes since Quarter 2 were provided in section 10 and Appendix M of the 2009/10 Budget Report to Full Council on 2<sup>nd</sup> March.





## Prudential Indicators

5.14 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 3.

## **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 3 of 2008/09 with the majority of Vital Signs indicators considered critical to the success of the council performing broadly in line with target. 49% are currently on target (green star) or just below target (blue circle) and 34% are well below target (red triangle).

<b>Overall Council Performance</b>				
				
	Low risk	Medium risk	High risk	No data
Percentage Quarter 3 PIs	34%	15%	34%	17%

More detailed trend data and comments on these indicators are available in Appendix F. A number of indicators do not have performance in Quarter 3 because of the introduction of the new national indicator set and the need to set baselines.

6.2 The key risks to achieving the objectives outlined in the Corporate Strategy this year include: pressures on budgets as a result of the state of the economy, overspends in adult 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 any 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.

LAA Priorities:

- 6.5 **\*11 Access to Employment for Social Housing Tenants** NI 152 Working Age People on Out of Work Benefits (percentage of working age population). The performance year to date is 14.10, which is just below the target year to date value of 14.53, this shows that the priority is on track. However, there is a high risk that the project will hit a downturn at the start of the next financial year and could continue through the recession (which is at present speculated to be until the end of 2010, until any signs of recovery are seen). In addition since the LAA was agreed the level of neighbourhood working fund has been reduced, and hence the full range of activities planned to support this target can no longer be funded. Negotiations are at present underway with GOL to revise the target. However, if this is unsuccessful then the delivery of this target will fall increasingly to Job Centre Plus.
- 6.6 **\*15 Smoking Cessation** Number of People Helped to Stop Smoking for 4 Weeks in Priority Areas and 13 Weeks Brent Wide. This is a current stretch target from LAA 1, due to end in March 2009, with a reward grant attached. The latest provisional results on this target are disappointing but were expected. The service suffered severe cutbacks during Brent NHS 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. The current performance data available shows that there were 21 4 week quits in Neighbourhood Renewal funded (NRF) areas and 0 13 week quit Brent wide. However, there is always a considerable time lag associated with smoking cessation data (at least 6 to 8 weeks) as it is 'cleaned', so these are only provisional numbers.
- 6.7 It is target is not expected to be achieved for this year, although work to restore this priority has included; a number of mini on street campaigns outside high street pharmacies and local supermarkets throughout the borough, which have been the most successful avenues in reaching smokers and capturing those who would like to quit. Other work includes a Local Enhanced Service contract which has been developed with GP practices to encourage them to support patients to quit smoking. 26 GP practices have signed up to this. The Regional Tobacco Control Support Team is next due to visit Brent on 23 February 2009. Other future work includes rolling-out of the "Stop Before the Op" initiative, which is a national initiative where GP s who refer patients for minor elective surgery will advise smokers to quit before their operation. The anticipated start date for this service is April 2009.
- 6.8 It is target is not expected to be achieved for this year, although work to restore this priority has included; a number of mini on street campaigns outside high street pharmacies and local supermarkets throughout the borough, which have been the most successful avenues in reaching smokers

and capturing those who would like to quit. Other work includes a Local Enhanced Service contract which has been developed with GP practices to encourage them to support patients to quit smoking. 26 GP practices have signed up to this. The Regional Tobacco Control Support Team is next due to visit Brent on 23 February 2009. Other future work includes rolling-out of the "Stop Before the Op" initiative, which is a national initiative where GPs who refer patients for minor elective surgery will advise smokers to quit before their operation. The anticipated start date for this service is April 2009.

6.9 **\*18 Sports Participation** Proportion of Adults doing physical activity for 30 Minutes Three Times a week or more. The Annual People Survey two which measured the period November 2007 until October 2008 reported two figures:

- The percentage of adults that are taking part in sport and physical activity for 30 mins on three occasions per week = 19.5%
- The percentage of adults that are taking part in sport and physical activity for 30 mins on three occasions per week including light intensity activity of over 65's = 21.1%.

Both of these figures show that the annual target of 22% has not been met, and it seems that it will be very challenging to meet this target. Further concerns are that with the current and short term economic depression people have less disposable income and/or are more cautious with their money and therefore may see sports memberships / visits to sports centres as a luxury, either cancelling membership or reducing the frequency with which they visit and so further reducing the percentage that are undertaking 3 x 30 minutes of physical activity. However, we continue to promote the facilities and activities and any special offers and promotions such as free swimming for OAP's, and continue to phone those with membership to encourage them to attend three times a week which will give them the best value for money.

6.10 **\*20 Improving Sexual Health** NI 112 Under 18 Conception Rate

The annual target for 2008/09 is 32.7%, however, the performance data for the last 3 quarters has been disappointing with values of 42.4%, 42.6% and 45.1%, respectively. Whilst we will not meet the annual target, milestones have been set to mitigate risks to this project. These include regular monitoring meetings for the African Child Contract (the last meeting was scheduled for 30 January 2009); interviews were scheduled in mid January in order to recruit a Young Persons Sexual Reproductive Health Practitioner and outreach in Brent. The current teenage pregnancy and sexual health service is being reconfigured to focus on prevention of risk taking behaviour among young people rather than support as mainstream services exist to provide support teen parents. Therefore a Teenage Pregnancy Commissioning Plan was developed and circulated to implement the reconfigured service, which has been managed with careful consideration and expert advice. In addition, current services commissioned have not been impacted or changed to ensure there is no disruption in the services that young people can access. Furthermore, a considerable amount of consultation has been carried out with teenage pregnancy and substance misuse providers.

- 6.11 **\*22 Increasing Affordable Homes** NI 155 Number of Affordable Homes (delivered gross). This indicator measures the total supply of social rented housing (housing owned by local authorities and registered social landlords) and intermediate housing (housing at prices or rents above those of social rent but below market prices or rents). The annual target for this priority is to provide 458 affordable homes, However as of end December 2008 464 completions were achieved, which is an overachievement of 6 homes against the annual target.
- 6.12 The 2008/09 performance is likely to exceed our delivery targets as it includes slippage from the previous financial year. However, the performance in 2009/10 and 2011/12 will be affected by delays in scheme completions and schemes being aborted. So far in 08/09, four development schemes which provide a total of 91 affordable units have already aborted. In addition, a number of sites that were anticipated to be delivered in 2009-10 have now slipped into 2010/11. Overall we expect to deliver our LAA target for 2008/09. However, the targets for 2009/10 and 2010/11 should be adjusted to reflect the market down turn as it will not be possible to deliver 458 affordable homes per year over the next two financial years. Hence, due to the economic recession this target is being renegotiated with GOL.
- 6.13 **\*23 Additional Housing** NI 154 Net Additional Homes Provided  
This London Plan monitoring indicator is a requirement of Planning's statutory Annual Monitoring Report 2008-09 to the Secretary of State. As this indicator can only be formally monitored on a comprehensive annual basis, following the site surveying of all housing completions (spring/early summer) it is not amenable to any 'Quarterly' reporting or 'sub indicators'. However, the available information indicates that Brent may meet this target as it is known that at least 407 s/c homes have already been completed in two large projects. A further 563 completions might have reasonably been expected by March 31<sup>st</sup> but the recent severe weather may substantially reduce this figure. It is impossible at this moment to estimate whether any of the three schemes with a total of a further 117 s/c homes, which have been classified in the 'less likely to be completed' category, will be implemented by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2009. Hence, in estimating the situation this year and beyond, it is clear that due to the market slowdown new housing starts are reducing, and there is evidence that in instances where construction has commenced developers are delaying internal fit outs that allow new homes to be habitable in the hope that the market will improve. Therefore this priority's target is in the process of being renegotiated with GOL.
- 6.14 **\*25 Youth Crime Prevention** NI 111 Reduce First Time Entrants to the Youth Justice System. This priority is presently having its targets renegotiated with GOL and DCSF. The present targets are a trajectory on the baseline from 2007/2008, although they have not been agreed formally. We are in the process of negotiating with GOL following a change in the way this indicator is reported.
- 6.15 **\*26 Child Obesity** NI 56 (a) Proportion of Pupils in Year 6 with Height and Weight Measured (b) Obesity among Primary School Age Children in Year 6. The aim of this project is to stop the rise in child obesity. PCT's are expected to weigh and measure all children in Reception and Year 6 as part of the National Child Measurement Programme. This measure has two parts, the

proportion of pupils with their height and weight measured and obesity amongst pupils in Year 6. Data from the 07/08 National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP) showed that 89% of children were measured in 07/08 (meaning we exceeded our 08/09 target of 88.6%), whilst 22.5% of the children were shown to be obese (meaning there was an increase in obesity prevalence from 22.1% to 22.5%). Data from the 08/09 NCMP survey will not be returned until December 2009; therefore we are unable to predict whether future targets will be achievable. However, we are presently working with partners to build capacity and raise awareness through training, but we need to influence borough wide policies and work more collaboratively with both internal and external partners to have any strong impact on prevalence. This might include working with other areas in the council to incorporate tackling obesity into policies on housing, green spaces, sporting facilities, marketing and reducing the availability of junk food on the high street.

- 6.16 **\*27 Improving Outcomes for LAC** NI 63 Stability of Placements of Looked After Children: Length of Placement. This measure refers to the increase in long term stability of children who remain in care for significant periods of time (continuously for a minimum of 2.5 years, or in the same placement for 2 years). The target for Quarter 3 was 74%; however the current performance is 66%, which is below target. We are unlikely to meet the annual target but are working towards meeting the three year target. The potential risks for this project arise as we become more successful in diverting some young people from becoming looked after, those who then do become looked after tend to have the most complex needs which can put great demand and strain on their placements. This is now proving to be an additional challenge for recruiting foster carers, who have the capacity and level of skills to care for young people with complex needs. More local foster placements need to be achieved for young people and this part of the I2S projects has been the most challenging to achieve.
- 6.17 **\*34 Increasing Self Directed Support** NI 130 Social Care Clients Receiving Self Directed Support per 100,000 Population. This priority is about developing the government's agenda on increasing people accessing direct payments. Self directed services, including direct payments and individual budgets, offer the individual client or carer greater flexibility in how their support is provided and ensure that their care and support package is directly responsive to their individual needs. At present, we are above the Quarterly target of 158 people per 100,000 at 168 people per 100,000 people. The annual target of 172 people per 100,000 is expected to be achieved with further increases in numbers of people in receipt of Direct Payments are anticipated as set out in the Transformation Programme aims. A detailed Summary Activity Plan for Implementation of Self Directed Support including a detailed Risk Analysis Log has also been provided. The definition is currently changing and we are in negotiations with DoH and GOL about a revised target.
- 6.18 **\*38 Volunteering** The Number of People Volunteering for 100 Hours or More. This project is going relatively well, although there has been a lag in data. Therefore it is not possible to report on this priority at this time.

## Comprehensive Area Agreement (CAA)

- 6.19 We are awaiting our final CPA score for 2008/09. A new set of national indicators has been put in place to prepare for the new CAA regime. 35 of the national indicators are the focus of the Local Area Agreement. We are now working on the action plan for the CAA. The new regime will begin on the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009.

### Specific Performance Issues

#### *Youth*

- 6.20 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.

*\*Please note that the number of Black African and Black Caribbean youth subject to REMAND and CUSTODY are two separate indicators.*

#### *Schools*

- 6.21 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.
- 6.22 Brent schools have recorded their best ever GCSE results. 56% of pupils achieved the new benchmark of 5 A-C GCSEs, including English and Maths, compared to 51% in 2007. This is well above the national average of 48% and the London average of 51%. Brent is now ranked in the top 20 of 150 local authorities for GCSE results, for the progress students make in school and also for the greatest GCSE improvement over the last ten years.

#### *Children's Social Care*

- 6.23 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. In addition, the service has seen an increase in demand of around 50% over the last few months which has put some pressure on the ability to meet original savings targets' and staffing levels which are being reviewed. The service is moving to a locality working based model which should help progress the transformation work.

#### *Special Educational Needs*

- 6.24 The council has performed better this quarter in issuing 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.

#### *Crime*

- 6.25 We have made Brent a safer place: overall acquisitive crime has decreased by 21 % compared to last year. The rate of serious acquisitive crime has also been consistently low throughout the year.

#### *Temporary accommodation*

- 6.26 We are marginally down on target. This is a challenging target given the large numbers we began with and we are still assessing what further impact there might be from the recession. Brent is one of nine authorities piloting the government mortgage rescue scheme and is placing a greater emphasis on prevention to look to improve performance.

#### *Planning*

- 6.27 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*

- 6.28 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 improve numbers in the long term. The reopening of Kingsbury Library Plus has resulted in a rise in the number of borrowers there and the next stage of refurbishments at Neasden are about to be completed. This is expected to be very positive for performance in the year ahead.

#### *Adult Social Care*

- 6.29 This is a baseline year for many of the indicators and as such there are not targets for all at this stage. The adult social care transformation programme has seen success in the provision of a better value for money transport service. It is working to deliver the personalisation agenda more effectively with the restructuring of asset and care management services.

#### *Revenues and Benefits*

- 6.30 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. The main factor affecting the NNDR 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.

#### *Human Resources*

- 6.31 A review of the sickness policy and a workshop for managers has been put in place to ensure that staff sickness levels are reduced. 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.

## **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**

Peter Stachniewski (Deputy Director, Finance and Corporate Resources)  
Brent Town Hall, Forty Lane, Wembley Middlesex, HA9 9HD 020 89371260

Cathy Tyson (Assistant Director, Policy and Regeneration) Brent Town Hall,  
Forty Lane, Wembley Middlesex, HA9 9HD 020 8937 1030

**DUNCAN McLEOD**  
Director of Finance and Corporate Resources

**PHIL NEWBY**  
Director of Policy and Regeneration