BRENT COUNCIL

Partnership and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Thursday 21 March 2013 at 7.30 pm
Committee Room 1, Brent Town Hall, Forty Lane, Wembley, HA9 9HD

Membership:

Members Councillors:	first alternates Councillors:	second alternates Councillors:
Van Kalwala (Chair)	Ogunro	Daly
Clues (Vice-Chair)	Matthews	Hopkins
Green	Lorber	Leaman
Harrison	Oladapo	Ketan Sheth
Naheerathan	Al-Ebadi	Pavey
HB Patel	Colwill	Kansagra
RS Patel	Chohan	S Choudhary
Krupa Sheth	Aden	Denselow

For further information contact: Lisa Weaver, Democratic Services Officer
020 8937 1358 lisa.weaver@brent.gov.uk

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www.brent.gov.uk/committees

The press and public are welcome to attend this meeting

recycle for Brent

Agenda

Introductions, if appropriate.

Apologies for absence and clarification of alternate members

Item		Page

1   Declarations of personal and prejudicial interests

Members are invited to declare at this stage of the meeting, any relevant financial or other interest in the items on the agenda.

2   Deputations

3   Minutes of the previous meeting held on 7 February 2013   1 - 4

The minutes are attached.

4   Matters arising

5   Brent Housing Partnership (BHP) - performance update   5 - 16

This presentation will provide an overview of BHP's performance and provide:

- Analysis of BHP benchmarking results compared with London Boroughs and Arms Length Management Organisations (ALMO) performance improvement club
- Analysis of BHP benchmarking results compared with London Traditional Housing Associations and Large Scale Voluntary Transfer (LSVT)

6   Registered social landlord performance   17 - 44

This report provides an overview on the Performance of social Landlords within Brent. The reports focuses on the main Registered Providers (RPs) operating in Brent, covering the organisations that are part of the council's joint commissioning arrangement.

Ward Affected: All Wards   *Contact Officer*: Tony Hirsch, Policy and Performance

Tel: 020 8937 2336

tony.hirsch@brent.gov.uk

7   Brent data - the multi agency data hub (update)

The presentation will provide an introduction to the intelligence hub

database and an updated analysis on the most current statistical information coming out of the census.

Ward Affected: All Wards	***Contact Officer****: Cathy Tyson, Strategy, Partnerships and Improvement, Alisdair Maclean, GIS Manager*
	Tel: 020 8937 1045,
	cathy.tyson@brent.gov.uk, Alisdair.Maclean@brent.gov.uk

8   The gangs task group draft report for discussion   45 - 66

This is a draft reports for discussion and reviews the Gangs tasks groups findings and recommendations.

Ward Affected: All Wards	***Contact Officer****: Councillor Zaffar Van Kalwala, Christopher Young, Corporate Policy Officer*
	cllr.zaffar.vankalwala@brent.gov.uk, Christopher.Young@brent.gov.uk

9   Partnership and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee work 67 - 70
programme

This report sets out some options for the Partnership and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee work programme.

10   Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the Partnership and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting will be confirmed at the Annual Full Council meeting on 15 May 2013.

11   Any other urgent business

Notice of items raised under this heading must be given in writing to the Democratic Services Manager or his representative before the meeting in accordance with Standing Order 64.

- 📞 Please remember to **SWITCH OFF** your mobile phone during the meeting.
- The meeting room is accessible by lift and seats will be provided for members of the public.
- Toilets are available on the second floor.
- Catering facilities can be found on the first floor near the Paul Daisley Hall.
- A public telephone is located in the foyer on the ground floor, opposite the Porters' Lodge

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MINUTES OF THE PARTNERSHIP AND PLACE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Thursday 7 February 2013 at 7.30 pm

PRESENT: Councillor Van Kalwala (Chair), and Councillors Harrison, Hopkins (substituting for Clues), Lorber (substituting for Green), Naheerathan, HB Patel, RS Patel and Krupa Sheth,

Apologies for absence were received from: Councillors Clues and Green

1.   **Declarations of interests**

      None declared.

2.   **Minutes of the previous meeting held on 6 December 2012**

      The minutes of the meeting held on 6 December 2012 were approved as an accurate record of proceedings.

3.   **Matters arising**

      The Policy and Performance Officer informed the committee that the crime update would not be available; however at the May committee meeting a crime priority update will be submitted alongside the new Community Care Partnership strategy.

4.   **Brent Police, borough update**

      Gideon Springer, Superintendent of Operations gave a MOPAC presentation detailing the consultation proposals for the future of policing across London. He highlighted the mission statement and aims which included; greatest and safest big city on earth; most effective, efficient, loved and respected force in the UK; and public services and communities tackling crime together. To achieve these, a 20% reduction in seven priority crimes, 20% boost in public confidence and a 20% cut in spending equating to approximately £600m needed to be achieved. MOPAC additionally had three criminal justice goals to ensure punishments were effective and to reduce reoffending. The Superintendent of Operations drew the Committees attention to the future structure of the force which would achieve approximately £30m savings. It was queried how officers on higher tiers would be 'disposed' and whether the flatter structure would deter prospective recruits due to reduce promotion prospects. It was explained that under regulation A19, the force had the option to retire persons who had served for 30 years and noted that although the flatter structure may deter some, the requirement to work for 35 years rather than 30 would mean promotion could be achieved. It was explained that savings would also be achieved through the reduction of the asset base with the sale of approximately 200 buildings, reduced building size and reduced running costs. Other saving methods included increasing efficiencies through the upgrading of IT

equipment and reduction of back office staff. It was queried how back office staff would be identified for redundancy.   It was explained that this was a complex process due to the uncertainty surrounding the impact of these losses but would partially be linked to the IT efficiencies resulting in less officers required for data entry and to carry out administrative functions. It was explained that a further 1200 officers would be placed across London with an overall increase of 2600 SNT, with one named officer for each of the three areas in Brent with the ability to mobilise a team of approximately 30 officers.   Members expressed concern over local knowledge being lost with specific officers and PCSOs no longer being assigned to individual wards. It was explained that officers would still be assigned to specific wards but also be able to cover a larger area if required. It was noted that Brent currently had a shortage of officers which would not be filled until August however, under the new proposals, two officers would be added to the number Brent should have.   Members queried how public confidence could be increased with less named officers and a lack of consultation. It was explained that the proposals were from MOPAC and the consultation continued until March and Councillors should feed in any concerns regarding the proposals. It was agreed that a response to the MOPAC consultation would be submitted highlighting the concerns of the Committee. It was further explained that a 24 hour front desk would be available in Wembley with Harlesden and Willesden centres being closed once an alternative 'surgery' space was located to enable the public to discuss minor concerns. Four drop in sites would be accessible in Brent and it was clarified that due to fewer people reporting crimes to police stations, closing the front desk centres would allow more police to be on the streets.   An agreement in principle had been arranged with Harlesden Library with ongoing discussions taking place to secure all four drop in locations. It was queried whether discussion with the local authority and the police sharing facilities had been progressed. Phil Newby, Director Policy and Performance explained that although local services may benefit from sharing capital assets, many of the police assets were owned centrally and it was not possible to form an arrangement at a local level. Superintendent Gideon Springer explained that all decisions were currently being made centrally by MOPAC who were currently adjusting and having to reform the police service in line with government spending cuts. It was noted that other areas of the country did not have such complex issues as Brent and had been able to implement changes to address the reduction in funding due to London delaying for the Olympics.

Members expressed concern over the restructuring plans by MOPAC. It was explained that there was a large, three year plan to make savings which included a reduction in officer posts as well as the creation of efficiencies including an improved, comprehensive IT system. The police had been consulted on which buildings they felt could be closed but it was noted that overall; the decisions would be made by MOPAC. Members noted that other forces were further along in the reshaping process and whether any lessons could be learnt. It was explained that the system that was being proposed had been successful in other areas although the force had never faced this level of cuts before.

During discussion, members queried how the mission statement success would be measured. It was reiterated that this was a MOPAC presentation and it was unsure how they would measure the success. It was noted that the force currently used statistical data of the number of crimes and compared it to similar boroughs. Following a query it was clarified that the outcomes were hoped to be achieved by 2015.

Members expressed concern regarding police officers being placed in public spaces such as libraries and the confidentiality of the public wishing to report serious crimes. It was clarified that the Police would not expect a serious crime to be reported at a library and that they would visit the victim within 12 minutes of receiving a call. It was felt that the drop in sessions may not have high visitor numbers and it was explained that less than 10% of victims currently reported a crime at a station and that people could not be forced to engage.

Superintendent Gideon Springer drew the members attention to the scorecard circulated and explained that Brent was currently performing greater than the key performance indicators for the current financial year. Following queries it was clarified that not all arrests resulted in a prosecution in the form of a prison sentence, with alternative sanctions being sought to try and reduce repeat offending.

Members queried whether providing officers with transportation would help reduce crime rates. It was felt that officers being on foot allowed them to focus on their surroundings which would not be possible if they were driving. Following discussions surrounding individual's crime experiences, Superintendent Gideon Springer agreed to take up members concerns and discuss individual details out of the meeting. Satisfaction surveys were taken at various stages of the process from the victim, however what qualified as being satisfied would vary greatly depending on the nature of the crime experienced and the outcome. Members felt that the data was complex and requested that crime numbers be included as well as percentages. The Director of Policy and Performance explained that they were currently working alongside the Police to make data more accessible, with the intention of being able to track data against baseline figures and making it easier to digest.

Members queried whether work was being carried out with families to address problems, particularly when offenders are released from jail. Phil Newby explained that as of July a multi agency services hub will be placed within the civic centre and allow for multiple issues to be captured and addressed across various agencies to help the family as a whole. The integrated offender management programme was also taking place to prevent reoffending however it was noted that due to the high level of deprivation within the borough, despite reductions in crime, it was likely that Brent would always have a higher crime rate than more affluent boroughs. Superintendent Gideon Springer concluded that crime rates had dropped due to targeting known gang members and highlighted that the cut in budgets would impact on whether the successes could be continued.

RESOLVED:-

(i) that members noted the presentation#
(ii) that a response to the consultation be submitted, addressing the concerns raised

5. **Partnership and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee work programme**

RESOLVED:-

members noted the work programme

6.   **Date of next meeting**

The next meeting of the Partnership and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee will take place on 21 March 2013.

7.   **Any other urgent business**

None.

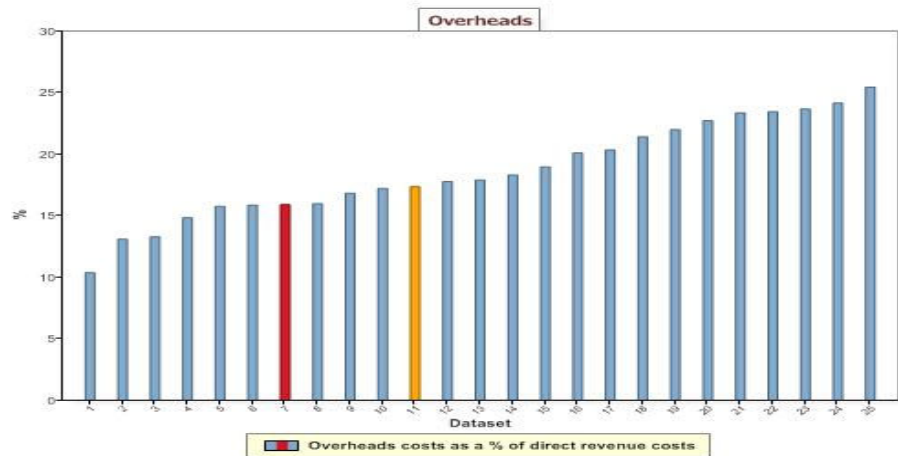The meeting closed at 9.15 pm

Z VAN KALWALA
Chair

Appendix 1 – London boroughs & London ALMOs

Key: ⬤ Upper Quartile, ⬤ Middle Upper Quartile, ⬤ Middle Lower Quartile, ⬤ Lower Quartile

Value for money summary

| Efficiency Summary for Brent Housing Partnership						
Business Activity	**Cost KPI**	**Cost KPI Quartile**		**Quality KPI**	**Quality KPI Quartile**	
		Brent Housing Partnership (2011/2012)	Brent Housing Partnership (2010/2011)		Brent Housing Partnership (2011/2012)	Brent Housing Partnership (2010/2011)
Overheads	Overhead costs as % adjusted turnover	🟢	🟡	Overhead costs as % direct revenue costs	🟢	🟡
Major Works & Cyclical Maintenance	Total CPP of Major Works & Cyclical Maintenance	🟢	🔴	Percentage of tenants satisfied with overall quality of home (GN & HfOP)	🟢	🟢
				Percentage of dwellings failing to meet the Decent Homes Standard	🟡	🟢
Responsive Repairs & Void Works	Total CPP of Responsive Repairs & Void Works	🟢	🟢	Percentage of tenants satisfied with the repairs and maintenance service (GN & HfOP)	🟢	🟡
				Percentage of all repairs completed on time	⚫	⚫
				Average time in days to re-let empty properties	🔴	🔴
Housing Management	Total CPP of Housing Management	🟡	🔴	Percentage of tenants satisfied with overall services provided (GN & HfOP)	🟢	🟡
				Percentage of tenants satisfied that views are being taken into account (GN & HfOP)	🟢	🟢
				Current tenant rent arrears net of unpaid HB as % of rent due	🔴	🔴
Development	Staff involved in standard units developed per 100 units	🔴	🔴	Percentage of residents satisfied with quality of new home, surveyed within 3 years of completion	⚫	⚫
				Standard units developed as % of current stock	🟢	🟢
Estate Services	Total CPP of Estate Services	🟡	🟡	Percentage of tenants satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live (GN &HfOP)	🟢	🟡

Overheads

1	LB of Southwark	10	Ascham Homes	19	Sutton Housing Partnership
2	LB of Newham	11	Brent Housing Partnership (2010/2011)	20	Barnet Homes
3	LB of Barking and Dagenham	12	Redbridge Homes	21	Homes in Havering
4	LB of Wandsworth	13	Kensington and Chelsea TMO	22	Homes for Haringey
5	City of London	14	LB of Croydon	23	LB of Ealing
6	CityWest Homes	15	Hackney Homes	24	Lewisham Homes
7	Brent Housing Partnership (2011/2012)	16	Tower Hamlets Homes	25	LB of Hillingdon
8	Enfield Homes	17	Hounslow Homes		
9	Homes for Islington	18	LB of Harrow		

Overheads costs as a % of direct revenue costs			Upper	Median	Lower
Comparator Group Quartiles			15.93	18.31	22.36
Id	Results for Brent Housing Partnership		Result	Rank	Quartile
7	Brent Housing Partnership (2011/2012)		15.90	7	🟢
11	Brent Housing Partnership (2010/2011)		17.36	11	🟡

Major works & cyclical maintenance
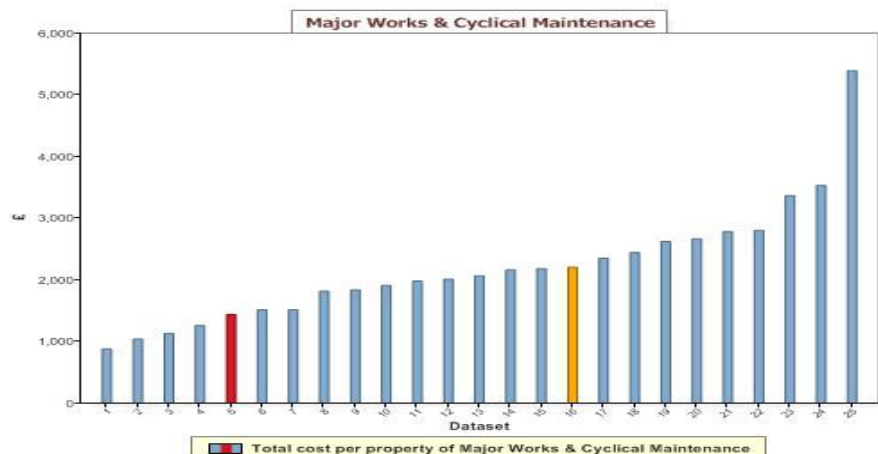
1	City of London	10	Barnet Homes	19	Homes for Haringey
2	LB of Barking and Dagenham	11	Homes in Havering	20	Sutton Housing Partnership
3	LB of Croydon	12	Hounslow Homes	21	Redbridge Homes
4	LB of Hillingdon	13	Lewisham Homes	22	LB of Ealing
5	Brent Housing Partnership (2011/2012)	14	LB of Wandsworth	23	LB of Newham
6	LB of Southwark	15	Hackney Homes	24	Ascham Homes
7	LB of Harrow	16	Brent Housing Partnership (2010/2011)	25	Homes for Islington
8	Tower Hamlets Homes	17	CityWest Homes		
9	Kensington and Chelsea TMO	18	Enfield Homes		

Total cost per property of Major Works & Cyclical Maintenance					
Comparator Group Quartiles		Upper	Median		Lower
		1,666.35	2,067.73		2,643.75
Id	Results for Brent Housing Partnership	Result	Rank		Quartile
5	Brent Housing Partnership (2011/2012)	1,437.52	5		🟢
16	Brent Housing Partnership (2010/2011)	2,205.75	16		🔴

Responsive Repairs & Void works

Total cost per property of Responsive Repairs & Void Works
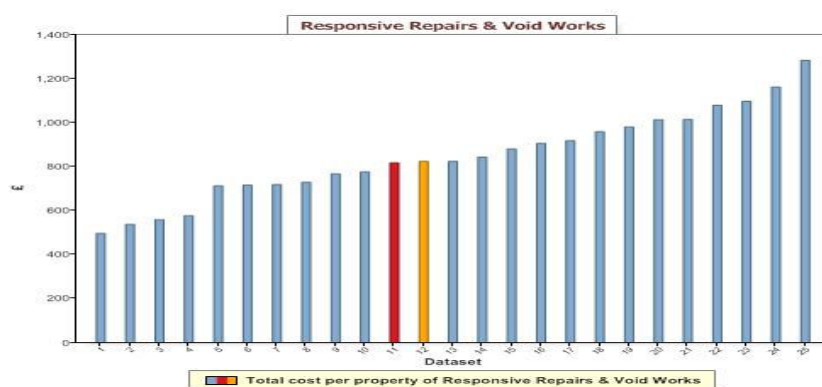
1	LB of Ealing	10	Hackney Homes	19	Tower Hamlets Homes
2	Sutton Housing Partnership	11	Brent Housing Partnership (2011/2012)	20	Redbridge Homes
3	LB of Newham	12	Brent Housing Partnership (2010/2011)	21	LB of Harrow
4	Ascham Homes	13	Kensington and Chelsea TMO	22	CityWest Homes
5	Barnet Homes	14	City of London	23	LB of Southwark
6	LB of Barking and Dagenham	15	LB of Croydon	24	Homes for Haringey
7	Homes in Havering	16	LB of Wandsworth	25	Homes for Islington

| 8 | Hounslow Homes | 17 | Enfield Homes | | |
| 9 | LB of Hillingdon | 18 | Lewisham Homes | | |

Total cost per property of Responsive Repairs & Void Works			
Comparator Group Quartiles	Upper	Median	Lower
	717.35	843.81	996.69
Id **Results for** Brent Housing Partnership	Result	Rank	Quartile
11 Brent Housing Partnership (2011/2012)	817.40	11	
12 Brent Housing Partnership (2010/2011)	824.49	12	

Housing Management

Total cost per property of Housing Management

1	Ascham Homes	10	Brent Housing Partnership (2011/2012)	19	Homes for Islington
2	Hounslow Homes	11	LB of Ealing	20	Tower Hamlets Homes
3	Enfield Homes	12	Hackney Homes	21	LB of Croydon
4	Lewisham Homes	13	LB of Wandsworth	22	Homes for Haringey
5	LB of Barking and Dagenham	14	Redbridge Homes	23	Kensington and Chelsea TMO
6	Homes in Havering	15	Brent Housing Partnership (2010/2011)	24	City of London
7	LB of Harrow	16	LB of Hillingdon	25	CityWest Homes
8	LB of Newham	17	LB of Southwark		
9	Sutton Housing Partnership	18	Barnet Homes		

Total cost per property of Housing Management			
Comparator Group Quartiles	Upper	Median	Lower
	348.97	416.86	460.99
Id **Results for** Brent Housing Partnership	Result	Rank	Quartile
10 Brent Housing Partnership (2011/2012)	381.26	10	
15 Brent Housing Partnership (2010/2011)	436.12	15	

Estate Services
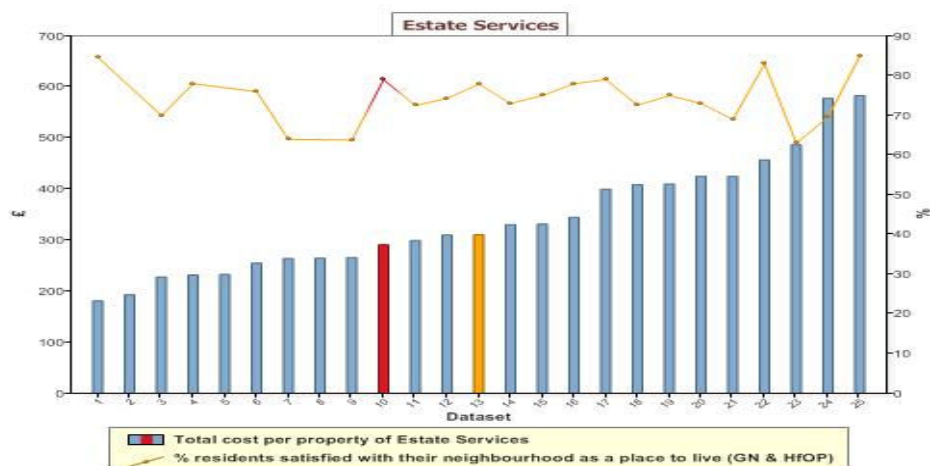
1	CityWest Homes	10	Brent Housing Partnership (2011/2012)	19	Homes for Islington
2	LB of Hillingdon	11	LB of Ealing	20	Homes in Havering
3	Barnet Homes	12	LB of Croydon	21	Tower Hamlets Homes
4	LB of Harrow	13	Brent Housing Partnership (2010/2011)	22	Kensington and Chelsea TMO
5	Sutton Housing Partnership	14	Redbridge Homes	23	LB of Newham
6	Ascham Homes	15	Lewisham Homes	24	LB of Barking and Dagenham
7	Enfield Homes	16	Hounslow Homes	25	City of London
8	LB of Southwark	17	LB of Wandsworth		
9	Homes for Haringey	18	Hackney Homes		

Total cost per property of Estate Services					
Comparator Group Quartiles		Upper	Median	Lower	
		259.84	330.70	417.72	
Id	Results for Brent Housing Partnership	Result	Rank	Quartile	
10	Brent Housing Partnership (2011/2012)	290.88	10	🟡	
13	Brent Housing Partnership (2010/2011)	310.87	13	🟡	

% residents satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live (GN & HfOP)					
Comparator Group Quartiles		Upper	Median	Lower	
		78.00	73.65	69.90	
Id	Results for Brent Housing Partnership	Result	Rank	Quartile	
10	Brent Housing Partnership (2011/2012)	79.00	4	🟢	
13	Brent Housing Partnership (2010/2011)	77.90	8	🟡	

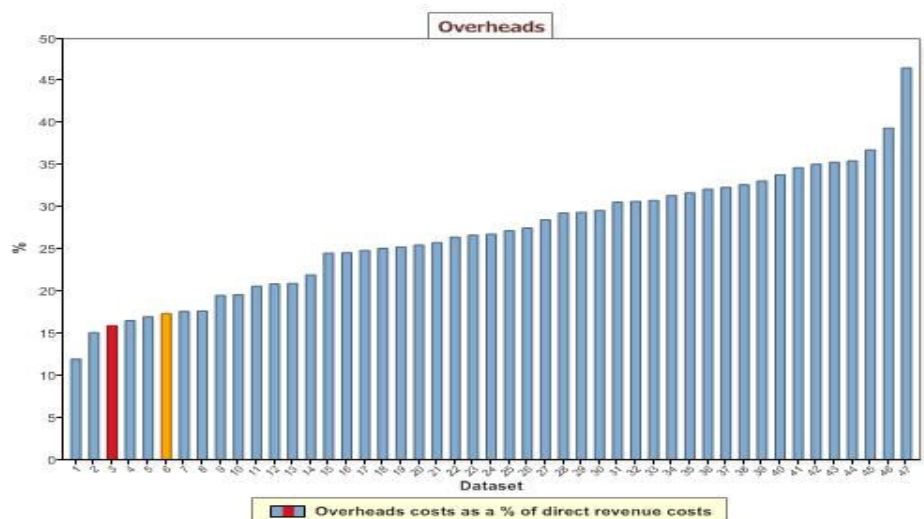This page is intentionally left blank

Appendix 2 – London Traditional Housing Associations & LSVT

Key: ⬤ Upper Quartile, ⬤ Middle Upper Quartile, ⬤ Middle Lower Quartile, ⬤ Lower Quartile

Value for money summary

| Efficiency Summary for Brent Housing Partnership						
		Cost KPI Quartile			**Quality KPI Quartile**	
Business Activity	**Cost KPI**	Brent Housing Partnership (2011/2012)	Brent Housing Partnership (2010/2011)	**Quality KPI**	Brent Housing Partnership (2011/2012)	Brent Housing Partnership (2010/2011)
Overheads	Overhead costs as % adjusted turnover	🟢	🟢	Overhead costs as % direct revenue costs	🟢	🟢
Major Works & Cyclical Maintenance	Total CPP of Major Works & Cyclical Maintenance	🟡🔴	🔴	Percentage of tenants satisfied with overall quality of home (GN & HfOP)	🟢	🟡🔴
				Percentage of dwellings failing to meet the Decent Homes Standard	🟡🔴	🔴
Responsive Repairs & Void Works	Total CPP of Responsive Repairs & Void Works	🟡🟢	🟡🟢	Percentage of tenants satisfied with the repairs and maintenance service (GN & HfOP)	🟢	🟡🟢
				Percentage of all repairs completed on time	⚫	⚫
				Average time in days to re-let empty properties	🟡🟢	🟡🟢
Housing Management	Total CPP of Housing Management	🟢	🟢	Percentage of tenants satisfied with overall services provided (GN & HfOP)	🟢	🟡🔴
				Percentage of tenants satisfied that views are being taken into account (GN & HfOP)	🟢	🟡🟢
				Current tenant rent arrears net of unpaid HB as % of rent due	🟡🔴	🟡🔴
Development	Staff involved in standard units developed per 100 units	🔴	🔴	Percentage of residents satisfied with quality of new home, surveyed within 3 years of completion	⚫	🟢
				Standard units developed as % of current stock	🔴	🔴
Estate Services	Total CPP of Estate Services	🟡🟢	🟡🔴	Percentage of tenants satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live (GN &HfOP)	🟡🟢	🟡🔴

Overheads

Overheads costs as a % of direct revenue costs

1	Circle 33 Housing Trust	17	Richmond upon Thames Churches HT	33	Salvation Army Housing Association
2	Merton Priory Homes	18	Notting Hill Housing Group	34	Catalyst Communities Housing Association
3	Brent Housing Partnership (2011/2012)	19	Croydon Churches Housing Association	35	East Thames Group
4	Old Ford Housing Association	20	A2Dominion	36	Clapham Park Homes
5	Poplar HARCA	21	Womens Pioneer Housing	37	Shepherds Bush Housing Group
6	Brent Housing Partnership (2010/2011)	22	Thames Valley Housing Group	38	CBHA
7	Circle	23	Islington & Shoreditch HA	39	Fortunegate Community Housing
8	Kensington Housing Trust	24	AffinitySutton	40	Network Housing Group
9	Newlon Housing Trust	25	Hexagon Housing Association	41	Places for People Homes
10	Viridian Housing	26	Christian Action Housing	42	Wandle Housing Association
11	Industrial Dwellings Society (The)	27	Gallions Housing Association	43	Inquilab Housing Association
12	Family Mosaic	28	Tower Hamlets Community Housing	44	Arhag Housing Association
13	London and Quadrant Group	29	Peabody	45	Hyde Group (The)
14	Southern Housing Group	30	Peabody Group	46	Origin Housing Group
15	Octavia Housing	31	Phoenix Community Housing	47	Richmond Housing Partnership
16	One Housing Group	32	Gateway Housing Association		

Overheads costs as a % of direct revenue costs			Upper	Median	Lower
Comparator Group Quartiles			21.95	27.21	32.15
Id	**Results for** Brent Housing Partnership		Result	Rank	Quartile
3	Brent Housing Partnership (2011/2012)		15.90	3	🟢
6	Brent Housing Partnership (2010/2011)		17.36	6	🟢

Major Works & Cyclical Maintenance

Total cost per property of Major Works & Cyclical Maintenance
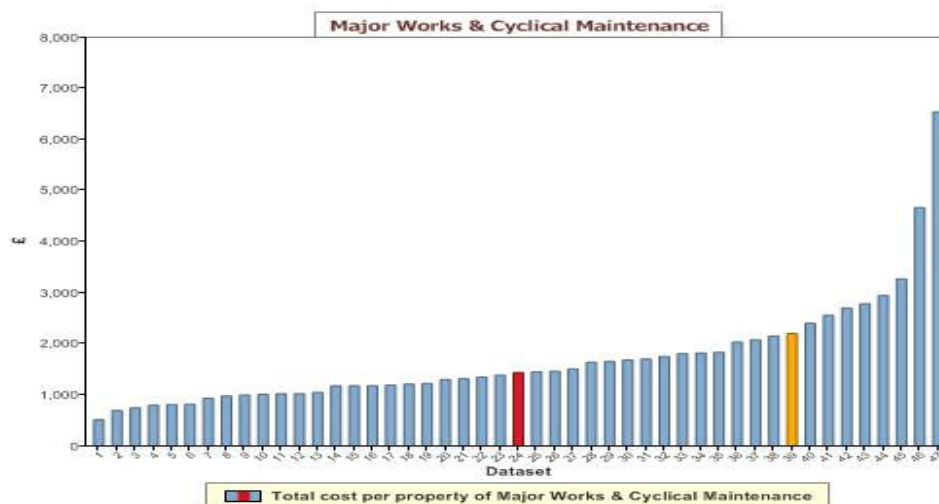
1	Fortunegate Community Housing	17	Richmond upon Thames Churches HT	33	Notting Hill Housing Group
2	Inquilab Housing Association	18	Octavia Housing	34	Richmond Housing Partnership
3	Thames Valley Housing Group	19	Salvation Army Housing Association	35	Tower Hamlets Community Housing
4	CBHA	20	Hyde Group (The)	36	Origin Housing Group
5	One Housing Group	21	Newlon Housing Trust	37	Womens Pioneer Housing
6	Wandle Housing Association	22	Network Housing Group	38	Circle
7	Islington & Shoreditch HA	23	Viridian Housing	39	Brent Housing Partnership (2010/2011)
8	Industrial Dwellings Society (The)	24	Brent Housing Partnership (2011/2012)	40	Peabody Group
9	Hexagon Housing Association	25	Places for People Homes	41	Peabody

10	Shepherds Bush Housing Group	26	London and Quadrant Group	42	Poplar HARCA
11	East Thames Group	27	AffinitySutton	43	Old Ford Housing Association
12	Southern Housing Group	28	Gateway Housing Association	44	Kensington Housing Trust
13	Croydon Churches Housing Association	29	Arhag Housing Association	45	Phoenix Community Housing
14	Christian Action Housing	30	Catalyst Communities Housing Association	46	Clapham Park Homes
15	A2Dominion	31	Gallions Housing Association	47	Merton Priory Homes
16	Family Mosaic	32	Circle 33 Housing Trust		

Total cost per property of Major Works & Cyclical Maintenance					
Comparator Group Quartiles			**Upper**	**Median**	**Lower**
			1,026.31	1,390.73	1,837.36
Id	**Results for** Brent Housing Partnership		**Result**	**Rank**	**Quartile**
24	Brent Housing Partnership (2011/2012)		1,437.52	24	🔴🟡
39	Brent Housing Partnership (2010/2011)		2,205.75	39	🔴

Responsive repairs & void works

Total cost per property of Responsive Repairs & Void Works
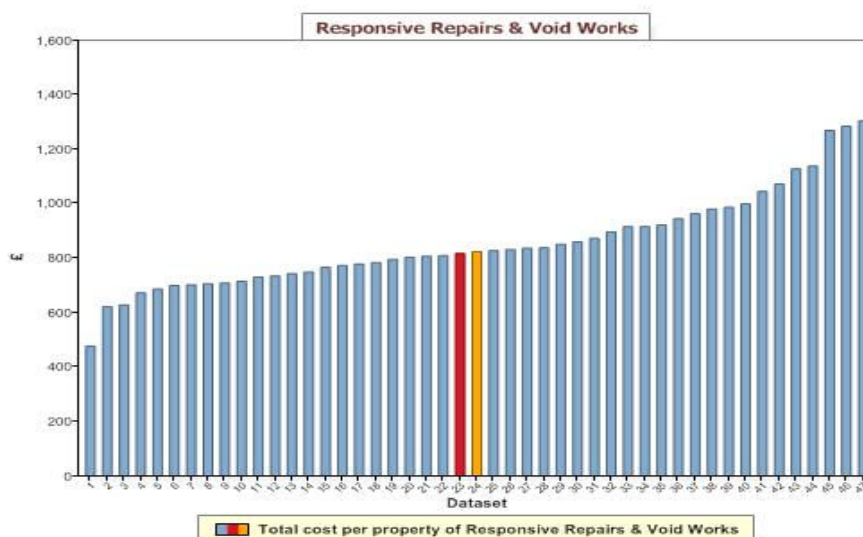
1	Family Mosaic	17	Arhag Housing Association	33	Salvation Army Housing Association
2	Richmond Housing Partnership	18	Network Housing Group	34	Origin Housing Group
3	Womens Pioneer Housing	19	Southern Housing Group	35	Christian Action Housing
4	Gallions Housing Association	20	Notting Hill Housing Group	36	Old Ford Housing Association
5	Richmond upon Thames Churches HT	21	AffinitySutton	37	Catalyst Communities Housing Association
6	Peabody	22	A2Dominion	38	Gateway Housing Association
7	Wandle Housing Association	23	Brent Housing Partnership (2011/2012)	39	Phoenix Community Housing
8	Peabody Group	24	Brent Housing Partnership (2010/2011)	40	Merton Priory Homes
9	Newlon Housing Trust	25	Poplar HARCA	41	Tower Hamlets Community Housing
10	Inquilab Housing Association	26	Clapham Park Homes	42	Thames Valley Housing Group
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13	One Housing Group	29	CBHA	45	Kensington Housing Trust
14	Shepherds Bush Housing Group	30	Circle 33 Housing Trust	46	Industrial Dwellings Society (The)
15	Hyde Group (The)	31	London and Quadrant Group	47	Places for People Homes
16	Viridian Housing	32	Hexagon Housing Association		

Total cost per property of Responsive Repairs & Void Works			
Comparator Group Quartiles	**Upper**	**Median**	**Lower**

			735.16	827.99	945.34
Id	**Results for** Brent Housing Partnership		**Result**	**Rank**	**Quartile**
23	Brent Housing Partnership (2011/2012)		817.40	23	
24	Brent Housing Partnership (2010/2011)		824.49	24	

Housing Management
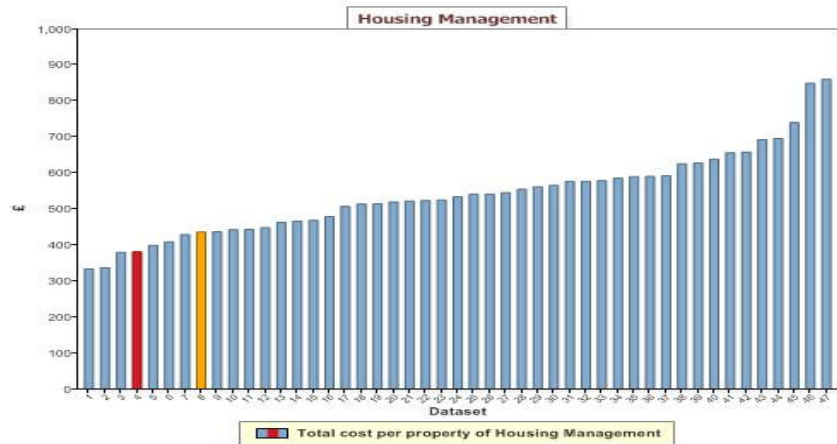
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2	Hexagon Housing Association	18	Peabody	34	Phoenix Community Housing
3	London and Quadrant Group	19	Octavia Housing	35	Catalyst Communities Housing Association
4	Brent Housing Partnership (2011/2012)	20	Peabody Group	36	Hyde Group (The)
5	Circle	21	Fortunegate Community Housing	37	Circle 33 Housing Trust
6	Old Ford Housing Association	22	Places for People Homes	38	Wandle Housing Association
7	Richmond Housing Partnership	23	Richmond upon Thames Churches HT	39	Shepherds Bush Housing Group
8	Brent Housing Partnership (2010/2011)	24	One Housing Group	40	Origin Housing Group
9	Gallions Housing Association	25	Network Housing Group	41	Kensington Housing Trust
10	Notting Hill Housing Group	26	Christian Action Housing	42	CBHA
11	Inquilab Housing Association	27	Industrial Dwellings Society (The)	43	Tower Hamlets Community Housing
12	Poplar HARCA	28	Gateway Housing Association	44	Thames Valley Housing Group
13	East Thames Group	29	A2Dominion	45	Clapham Park Homes
14	Newlon Housing Trust	30	Womens Pioneer Housing	46	Arhag Housing Association
15	Southern Housing Group	31	Islington & Shoreditch HA	47	Croydon Churches Housing Association
16	Merton Priory Homes	32	Salvation Army Housing Association		

Total cost per property of Housing Management					
Comparator Group Quartiles			**Upper**	**Median**	**Lower**
			466.64	541.45	590.62
Id	**Results for** Brent Housing Partnership		**Result**	**Rank**	**Quartile**
4	Brent Housing Partnership (2011/2012)		381.26	4	
8	Brent Housing Partnership (2010/2011)		436.12	8	

Estate Services
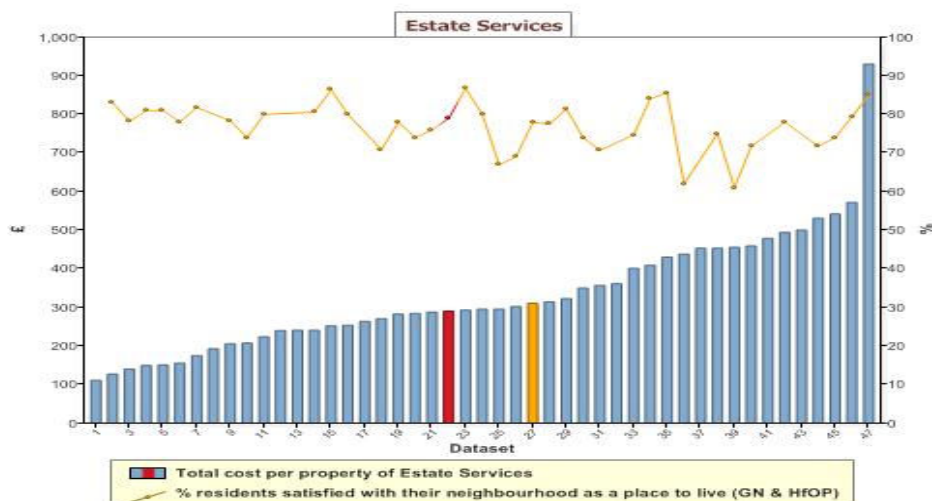
1	Hexagon Housing Association	17	Circle	33	Industrial Dwellings Society (The)
2	Family Mosaic	18	East Thames Group	34	Peabody Group
3	London and Quadrant Group	19	Wandle Housing Association	35	Peabody
4	Shepherds Bush Housing Group	20	Arhag Housing Association	36	Fortunegate Community Housing
5	CBHA	21	Gateway Housing Association	37	Richmond Housing Partnership
6	Salvation Army Housing Association	22	Brent Housing Partnership (2011/2012)	38	Kensington Housing Trust
7	Hyde Group (The)	23	Network Housing Group	39	Poplar HARCA
8	Thames Valley Housing Group	24	Octavia Housing	40	Clapham Park Homes
9	Circle 33 Housing Trust	25	Inquilab Housing Association	41	Womens Pioneer Housing
10	AffinitySutton	26	Phoenix Community Housing	42	Croydon Churches Housing Association
11	Southern Housing Group	27	Brent Housing Partnership (2010/2011)	43	Merton Priory Homes
12	Places for People Homes	28	Viridian Housing	44	Tower Hamlets Community Housing
13	Catalyst Communities Housing Association	29	Islington & Shoreditch HA	45	Gallions Housing Association
14	Origin Housing Group	30	Newlon Housing Trust	46	Christian Action Housing
15	Richmond upon Thames Churches HT	31	One Housing Group	47	Old Ford Housing Association
16	Notting Hill Housing Group	32	A2Dominion		

Total cost per property of Estate Services					
Comparator Group Quartiles			Upper	Median	Lower
			240.39	295.35	438.11
Id	**Results for** Brent Housing Partnership		Result	Rank	Quartile
22	Brent Housing Partnership (2011/2012)		290.88	22	🟢
27	Brent Housing Partnership (2010/2011)		310.87	27	🔴

% residents satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live (GN & HfOP)					
Comparator Group Quartiles			Upper	Median	Lower
			81.00	78.05	74.00
Id	**Results for** Brent Housing Partnership		Result	Rank	Quartile
22	Brent Housing Partnership (2011/2012)		79.00	16	🟢
27	Brent Housing Partnership (2010/2011)		77.90	22	🔴

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	Overview & Scrutiny Committee 21 March 2013 **Report from the Director of Regeneration and Major Projects**
	Wards Affected: ALL
Registered Provider Performance	

1. Introduction

1.1 This report provides information on the performance of the main Registered Providers (RPs) operating in Brent, covering the organisations that are part of the council's joint commissioning arrangement. It should be read alongside the separate report on the performance of Brent Housing Partnership (BHP), which also provides some comparative information on performance against other local authorities, Arms Length Management Organisations (ALMOs) and RPs.

1.2 The period covered runs from April 2011 to March 2012, the most recent for which complete information is available.

2. Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to note the content of this report.

2.2 Members are asked to agree the approach to future reports summarised in paragraphs 4.4.4 to 4.4.5.

3. Background

3.1 Regulation

3.1.1 Since its election in 2010, the coalition government has made significant changes to the way in which housing providers, both local authorities and RPs are regulated. Some of these reflect changes that were put in train by the previous government, albeit with some important differences of approach, while others reflect the government's overall approach to localism, regulation and the reduction of what it describes as "red tape". This means that the type

of information that must be provided and the way it is reported is very different to the approach that was in place up to 2010/11.

3.1.2 The National Indicator Set, through which local authority performance against a range of indicators was reported on an annual basis, has been abolished. Although some of the indicators that were collected through this system are still in place, sometimes in a revised form, and others have been retained at the local level, there is increasing freedom for housing providers to adopt their own approaches to the way performance information is treated. This makes it increasingly difficult to make meaningful comparisons between organisations, although an approach that includes benchmarking has been sustained as far as possible.

3.1.3 For RPs, the position has changed more significantly than for local authorities in some respects. The government has abolished the Tenant Services Authority, which had been set up as the main regulatory body for RPs. Its role has been taken on by the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) but with a very different emphasis. The HCA is concerned primarily with the economic and financial viability of RPs and its focus is very strongly on their role as developers and providers of new homes and the way in which they manage their loans and other financial commitments. With regard to other aspects of service and performance, the HCA's approach is one of light touch regulation, with intervention seen very much as a last resort in the event of "serious detriment" to tenants.

3.1.4 The HCA has retained the TSA's principle of "co-regulation", through which the regulator, RPs and their tenants all take a role in overseeing performance. This includes a set of consumer standards, which apply to all providers including local authorities and ALMOs, and a set of economic standards, which apply only to RPs. The HCA's guidance on regulation states that: "*The co-regulatory principles underpin the regulatory approach. Registered providers are required to meet the relevant standards. Boards and councillors who govern providers' service delivery are responsible for meeting the standards and being transparent and accountable for their organisation's delivery of its social housing objectives. It is for providers to support tenants both to shape and scrutinise service delivery and to hold boards and councillors to account. In cases where breach or potential breach of a consumer standard leads to risk of serious detriment to tenants, the regulator may intervene (in addition to its proactive role in the economic standards for non local authority providers)*"

3.1.5 Elected members therefore have a direct role in overseeing the performance of housing services provided by the local authority, either directly or through an ALMO. They also have a role as a conduit through which concerns about RPs can be raised with the regulator and this is considered further below.

3.1.6   In setting standards, the regulator must have regard to the desirability of registered providers being free to choose how to provide services and conduct business9. Standards are set largely with a focus on outcomes, avoiding detailed prescription wherever possible.

3.1.7   The seven core standards are:

- Customer standards

    o . Tenant involvement and empowerment
    o . Home
    o . Tenancy
    o Rent (introduced from April 2012)
    o Neighbourhood and community

- Economic standards
    o . Value for money
    o . Governance and financial viability

3.1.8   This report is concerned with the first five. It should be stressed that while the standards set out the matters on which RPs must keep their tenants informed and involved, they are not prescriptive about the exact way in which performance indicators should be set up and reported, leaving this detail to agreement between each organisation and its tenants. There are therefore differences between the ways in which organisations report their performance in some areas, making direct comparison difficult in some cases. It should also be noted that, although the TSA had adopted this approach prior to April 2012, it was not until then that the current guidance came into effect. 2011/12 is therefore a transitional year to some extent, bridging the initial introduction of a new regime and its implementation in its final form. It may therefore be expected that there will be further changes in approach for reports covering the current financial year, which will begin to be published in the summer.

3.1.9   There is an expectation that RPs and local authorities will publish an annual report to tenants and residents setting out how they have performed and their objectives for the future. Again, there is no prescription about the format of these reports other than that they should address the core standards.

3.1.10 An extract from the guidance on standards is provided for information at Appendix 1.

3.2   Housing Reform

3.2.1   Since 2010, the government has introduced a range of reforms to the housing and welfare systems that will have wide-ranging impacts and, in future, will need to be incorporated into the council's approach to its

relationships with RPs and the ways in which their performance is monitored.

3.2.2 The development programme for the period 2011-15 is governed by the Affordable Rent regime. This has reduced the subsidy available for the building of new social housing from around 50% of total cost to around 20%, with the rest financed through borrowing. In order to support a programme that aims to deliver the same number of new homes planned under the previous funding regime, RPs are able to charge rents of up to 80% of market levels for new homes and a proportion of existing homes at the point at which they are re-let. At the same time, RPs and local authorities have the ability to let on fixed term tenancies.

3.2.3 The council's response to these reforms is set out in its Tenancy Strategy, which was approved by the Executive in 2012. The Strategy commits the council to keeping its approach under review and a key element of this will be to monitor the impact of rent and tenure reforms and the approaches being taken by different providers, including the impact on their overall performance. Officers are currently reviewing the future approach to performance monitoring and the areas where a different focus will be required but key areas are likely to include:

- Rent levels and affordability in Brent compared to other boroughs and between providers to ensure that the objectives set out in the Tenancy Strategy are met
- Access to housing and, in particular, which tenants are moving into properties at Affordable Rents, levels of refusals of such properties etc.
- Numbers of properties let on fixed terms, including re-lets.
- In the longer term, numbers of fixed-term tenancies that are renewed
- Impact of higher rents on rent arrears

3.2.4 At present, there is no certainty that the current Affordable Rent programme will continue beyond 2015. However, it should not be assumed that the low level of subsidy is a temporary measure and that it will increase after 2015; although it is difficult to make any precise prediction, it seems more likely at this stage that subsidy will, at best, remain at current levels or even decrease further.

3.3 Welfare Reform

3.3.1 The government has introduced a range of changes to the welfare system, some of which are already in place while others are planned for introduction during this year. They key changes for the purposes of this report are outlined in the following paragraphs.

3.3.2 From April 2013 the under-occupation penalty (better known as the bedroom tax) will be introduced. This will apply reductions in Housing

Benefit for most households in social housing below pensionable age who have one or more spare bedrooms. Households that do not opt to move to smaller accommodation will need to make up the difference from their other benefit income and it is expected that this will lead to hardship and increased rent arrears.

3.3.3   The government had planned to introduce the overall benefit cap, which will set a limit on benefit payment of £350 for a single person and £500 for a family, from April 2013. This has now been postponed but a pilot scheme involving four London boroughs will run from the original date with full implementation planned for later in the summer, probably between July and September although no definite date has been announced. While the worst impact of the change will be on households claiming benefit and renting in the private sector, it will also impact on households in social housing, especially those paying Affordable Rents, and is also expected to lead to an increase in rent arrears.

3.3.4   The localised Council Tax regime will also result in many households that have never paid Council Tax having to make a contribution to their bills from April. Again, an impact on rent arrears is anticipated.

3.3.5   Finally, Universal Credit will be introduced on a rolling basis from October 2013. A key aspect of the system is that claimants will be paid monthly, including for any housing costs, and will then be expected to meet their bills from the overall payment. Evidence from the pilot programme indicates that, in the majority of cases, this has resulted in increased rent arrears.

3.3.6   One outcome of the changes outlined above is likely to be increasing pressure on the ability of housing providers to collect rent. Most obviously, this will impact on performance against targets in this area but more seriously it will affect the income streams that support borrowing for both RPs and, under the self-financing Housing Revenue Account, for local authorities. This could have an impact on the resources available for planning and delivering repairs, maintenance and improvement programmes as well as for building new homes and could therefore have an impact on performance beyond rent arrears indicators.

3.3.7   It will therefore be necessary to consider how the impact of these changes can be monitored and officers are, as noted above, considering the options and emerging best practice in this area.

3.4   The Wider Provider Role

3.4.1   Providers of social housing have, for many years, run a range of programmes that go beyond their traditional role as developers and managers of homes. In particular, this has included work around employment and training and tackling poverty, for example through

provision of welfare advice and implementation of measures to tackle fuel poverty.

3.4.2 While there has been some monitoring of providers in areas such as tackling anti-social behaviour, where they play a significant role in keeping neighbourhoods safe and attractive, there has been less focus on their role in the other areas noted above. The implementation of housing and welfare reform in the context of overall economic conditions suggests that future consideration of provider performance should have a stronger focus on the contribution providers can make to social and economic regeneration and supporting tenants to mitigate the impact of change.

4.   Performance Summary

4.1   As noted earlier, the changes to the performance regime mean that it is difficult to provide meaningful comparative information as each provider makes its own interpretation of the guidance provided by the HCA standards concerning the information to be provided to tenants. In particular, approaches will vary according to the kinds of information and methods of presentation that tenants have requested. Individual approaches will continue to develop as tenants give feedback on reports each year. BHP have collected benchmarking information that provides comparison with a range of local authorities, ALMOs and RPs but this is mainly concerned with the costs of service provision rather than traditional performance indicators. Similarly, most RPs make some comparison with other organisations, for example those in the G15 group of larger providers, but approaches are not consistent and generally exclude comparison with local authorities and ALMOs.

4.2   The rest of this section summarises key indicators for the council's main RP partners. It does not seek to present every indicator that appears in annual reports to tenants since many of these are unique to specific providers and of limited wider value. While there are some common indicators which can provide some comparative data, it should be stressed that there may be some differences in what is being measured and how. Many providers have also changed the way in which they report and what they report on, so that comparison with previous years is not always possible and targets have not always been set.

4.3   While the majority of providers have retained some key indicators that were part of the National Indicator Set – for example on rent arrears and the time taken to re-let void properties – the majority are also moving towards measures that are more concerned with the impact of performance on tenants. While most have some basic satisfaction indicators, many are moving to development more qualitative indicators that look at tenant views on the delivery of services rather than numbers; for example, not whether a repair was completed within a particular time, but was the tenant happy with the result. Given the

overall thrust of the guidance set out by the standards, it seems likely that this approach will continue to develop.

A2 Dominion			
Indicator	**Target**	**Outcome**	**Comparison with 2010/11**
Overall satisfaction with repairs and maintenance	85%	92%	Same
% emergency repairs completed on time	100%	99.9%	Better
% residents satisfied with complaints handling	100%	99.6%	Better
% residents satisfied with service provided by the Customer Service Centre	55%	52%	Better
% category 1 extreme ASB incidents responded to within 1 working day	100%	78%	Worse
% category 2 serious ASB incidents responded to within 5 working days	100%	79%	Better
Void turn round time in days	23	20	Better

Catalyst*				
Indicator	**Target**	**Outcome** **April 11 to March 12**	**Outcome** **April 12 to August 12**	**Comparison with 2010/11**
Emergency repairs completed on time	N/A	96.4%	99.2%	Better
Complaints responded to within 10 working days	N/A	88%	95.2%	Better
Rent arrears as a percentage of rent due – shared ownership	N/A	5.1%	3.9%	Better
Rent arrears as a percentage of rent due – social rented	N/A	7.2%	7.5%	Worse
Void turn round time in days	N/A	39	28	Better

*Note that Catalyst made significant changes to their systems and procedures during the year and opted to give both full year and half year results in their report to tenants. These are reproduced here as they provide a more accurate snapshot of performance.

Family Mosaic

Indicator	Target	Outcome	Comparison with 2010/11
Satisfaction with overall service	N/A	81.8%	N/A
% emergency repairs completed within target	N/A	99.4%	Better
% urgent repairs completed within target	N/A	99%	Better
% routine repairs completed within target	N/A	98.9	Better
Void turn round time	N/A	27 days	Better
Rents arrears as a % of rent due	N/A	4.6%	Better
ASB – satisfaction with case outcome	N/A	62%	Better
ASB – satisfaction with overall case handling	N/A	68%	Better

Genesis

Indicator	Target	Outcome	Comparison with 2010/11
Satisfaction with quality of repairs	80%	75%	Better
Repairs right first time	70%	65%	Better
Appointments made and kept	70%	87%	Better
Contact centre calls resolved at first point of contact	65%	50%	Better
Contact centre calls abandoned	6%	4.3%	Better
Complaints dealt with fairly and helpfully	60%	45%	Better

L&Q

Indicator	Target	Outcome	Comparison with 2010/11
Overall resident satisfaction	N/A	82.9%	N/A
Enquiries dealt with to resident's satisfaction	62%	83%	N/A
Taking complaints seriously and dealing with them promptly	92%	95%	N/A
Satisfaction with opportunities for involvement	62%	68%	N/A
Repairs carried out to satisfaction of residents	85%	87%	N/A

Void turn round time (weeks)	4.3	4.7	N/A
Support offered to residents in rent arrears (referral for financial advice)	15%	12%	N/A
Rent arrears as a % of rent due	N/A	3.35%	N/A
Satisfaction with neighbourhood	80%	81.2%	N/A
Treat reports of ASB confidentially and offer anonymity to witnesses	65%	67%	N/A
Keep residents informed about progress on ASB cases	65%	54%	N/A

ASRA Housing Group			
Indicator	**Target**	**Outcome**	**Comparison with 2010/11**
Overall satisfaction with service	90%	69.1%	N/A
Satisfaction with repairs	84%	55%	N/A
Satisfaction with neighbourhood	85%	69.6%	N/A
Satisfaction with quality of home	88%	66.9%	N/A
Satisfaction with complaints handling	N/A	47%	N/A
Rent arrears as a % of rent due	6.2%	6.%	N/A
Void turn round (days)	N/A	64 days	N/A
Satisfaction with ASB case handling	N/A	81.3%	N/A
Satisfaction with ASB case outcomes	N/A	87.1%	N/A
% emergency repairs completed on time	99%	97.1%	N/A
% urgent repairs completed on time	93%	94.1%	N/A
% routine repairs c0mpleted on time	93%	93.6%	N/A

Metropolitan			
Indicator	**Target**	**Outcome**	**Comparison with 2010/11**
Overall satisfaction with service	N/A	65%	N/A
Satisfaction with keeping customers informed	N/A	72%	N/A
Complaints responded to within 10 working days	N/A	78%	N/A
Satisfaction with opportunities for resident feedback	N/A	55%	N/A
Satisfaction with quality of home	N/A	74%	N/A
Satisfaction with repairs and	N/A	66%	N/A

maintenance			
Satisfaction with neighbourhood	N/A	80%	N/A
Emergency repairs attended to within 24 hours	N/A	99.4%	N/A
Repairs completed on first visit	N/A	69%	N/A
Void turn round (days)	N/A	37	N/A
Response to serious ASB within 1 day	N/A	95%	N/A
Response to other ASB within 10 working days	N/A	785	N/A

Network (Stadium and Willow)*			
Indicator	Outcome Stadium	Outcome Willow	Comparison with 2010/11
Satisfaction with landlord services	67.3%	93%	N/A
Satisfaction with repairs and maintenance	61.3%	86%	N/A
Satisfied that views are taken into account	48.6%	77%	N/A
Reactive repairs completed in target time	96.7%	97.5%	N/A
Current rent arrears	7.6%	4.4%	N/A
Void turn round (days)	33	34.5	N/A
Complaints upheld	37.3%	33.3%	N/A

*Note that these figures are for Stadium and Willow – the parts of the Network Group that manage homes in Brent – only. Performance of the group overall amalgamates figures from other parts that have no stock in Brent.

Notting Hill			
Indicator	Target	Outcome	Comparison with 2010/11
Satisfaction with overall service	N/A	76%	Better
% of residents in contact satisfied with final outcome of their query	75%	66%	Better
% finding response to complaint was positive	75%	77%	Better
% satisfied with repairs	75%	63%	Worse
Stage 1complaints resolved within 10 working days	85%	81%	Better
Stage 2 complaints resolved within 15 working days	85%	59%	Better
Satisfaction with response to tenant views	85%	59%	Better
% day to day repairs completed on time	96%	92%	N/A

Octavia

Indicator	Target	Outcome	Comparison with 2010/11
Emergency repairs completed on time	N/A	99.6%	Worse
Urgent repairs completed on time	N/A	99.3%	Better
Routine repairs completed on time	N/A	99.3%	Better
Void turn round (days)	N/A	37	Worse
Rent arrears as a % of rent due	N/A	5.6%	Worse
Complaints resolved within target time	N/A	93%	Better
% satisfaction with handling of ASB cases	N/A	83%	Better
% satisfaction with outcome of ASB report	N/A	72%	Better

Hyde – Hillside*

Indicator	Target	Outcome	Comparison with 2010/11
Satisfaction with complaint handling	80%	93%	Better
Stage 1 complaints responded to within 10 days	90%	65%	N/A
Satisfaction with repairs service	87%	86%	Better
Emergency repairs completed within target	98.6%	100%	N/A
Urgent repairs completed within target	98.6%	100%	N/A
Routine repairs completed within target	97%	100%	N/A
Void turn round (days)	34	34	
Rent arrears as a % of rent due	4.2	6.6%	Better
ASB cases per 1000 homes	N/A	38	Worse

*As with Network above, these figures represent only the part of the wider Hyde group with stock in Brent

4.4 Commentary and Future Reporting Arrangements

4.4.1 Overall performance against key indicators is generally good and there are no significant concerns arising at this stage. On the whole, the direction of travel is positive, with most organisations achieving an improvement of 2010/11 performance, where this has been reported, even though targets for 2011/12 have not been met in all cases. Satisfaction levels are generally good and measurement of tenant views is becoming more sophisticated and qualitative.

4.4.2 As yet, there is no real indication that rent arrears are rising, but the impact of welfare reform will only begin to be felt for most social hosing

tenants during the current financial year and it will not be until 2014 that any meaningful change is likely to be noticed.

4.4.3   As noted above, while there is some consistency in the use of indicators, there is increasing divergence in the ways in which providers choose to measure and report information to tenants. Coupled with the wider changes outlined in section 3 above, it is suggested that a revised approach to performance monitoring should be considered.

4.4.4   RPs will publish reports to tenants covering the period to 31st March 2013 during the summer. As timetables for reporting vary, it is likely that final versions for all relevant organisations will be available by September 2013, in which case it is proposed that the next report to Overview and Scrutiny should be planned for October.

4.4.5   In terms of content, it is proposed that the report should cover:

- Performance against a selected range of standard performance indicators covering rent collection and arrears, void turn round, repairs, complaints handling and anti-social behaviour
- Tenant satisfaction with overall service
- Progress on tenant involvement and engagement
- Progress on contributing to wider social and economic regeneration objectives, including:
  - Employment and training
  - Tackling crime and anti-social behaviour
  - Financial inclusion
  - Fuel poverty

5.0   Financial Implications

5.1   There are no immediate financial implications arising from this report.

6.0   Legal Implications

6.1   There are no immediate legal implications arising from this report

7.0   Diversity Implications

7.1   While there are no immediate issues relating to diversity, there are one or two points to note. First, some ethnic groups are over-represented in social housing while others are under-represented and there is therefore some potential for differential impact from poor performance. In addition, Brent will be reviewing the way in which performance indicators are recorded and reported in order to ensure compliance with expectations within the new equalities standard that the impact on a range of equalities groups will be measurable.

8.0   Staffing/Accommodation Implications (if appropriate)

8.1   None

9.0   Background Papers

9.1   None

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Appendix 1: Consumer standards – Extract from HCA Guidance

These standards apply to all registered providers. Providers' boards and councillors are responsible for ensuring their organisation meets the consumer standards. The regulator's role is limited to setting the consumer standards and intervening only where failure of the standard could lead to risk of serious harm to tenants (the 'serious detriment test').

Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard

Required outcomes

1 Customer service, choice and complaints

Registered providers shall:

- provide choices, information and communication that is appropriate to the diverse needs of their tenants in the delivery of all standards
- have an approach to complaints that is clear, simple and accessible that ensures that complaints are resolved promptly, politely and fairly

2 Involvement and empowerment

Registered providers shall ensure that tenants are given a wide range of opportunities to influence and be involved in:

- the formulation of their landlord's housing related policies and strategic priorities
- the making of decisions about how housing related services are delivered, including the setting of service standards
- the scrutiny of their landlord's performance and the making of recommendations to their landlord about how performance might be improved
- the management of their homes, where applicable
- the management of repair and maintenance services, such as commissioning and undertaking a range of repair tasks, as agreed with landlords, and the sharing in savings made, and
- agreeing local offers for service delivery

3 Understanding and responding to the diverse needs of tenants

Registered providers shall:

- treat all tenants with fairness and respect
- demonstrate that they understand the different needs of their tenants, including in relation to the equality strands and tenants with additional support needs

Specific expectations

1 Customer service, choice and complaints

Registered providers shall provide tenants with accessible, relevant and timely information about:

- how tenants can access services
- the standards of housing services their tenants can expect
- how they are performing against those standards
- the service choices available to tenants, including any additional
- costs that are relevant to specific choices
- progress of any repairs work
- how tenants can communicate with them and provide feedback
- the responsibilities of the tenant and provider
- arrangements for tenant involvement and scrutiny

Providers shall offer a range of ways for tenants to express a complaint and set out clear service standards for responding to complaints, including complaints about performance against the standards, and details of what to do if they are unhappy with the outcome of a complaint. Providers shall inform tenants how they use complaints to improve their services. Registered providers shall publish information about complaints each year, including their number and nature, and the outcome of the complaints. Providers shall accept complaints made by advocates authorised to act on a tenant's/tenants' behalf.

2 Involvement and empowerment

Registered providers shall support their tenants to develop and implement opportunities for involvement and empowerment, including by:

- supporting their tenants to exercise their Right to Manage or otherwise exercise housing management functions, where appropriate
- supporting the formation and activities of tenant panels or equivalent groups and responding in a constructive and timely manner to them
- the provision of timely and relevant performance information to support effective scrutiny by tenants of their landlord's performance in a form which registered providers seek to agree with their tenants. Such provision must include the publication of an annual report which should include information on repair and maintenance budgets, and
- providing support to tenants to build their capacity to be more effectively involved

Registered providers shall consult with tenants on the scope of local offers for service delivery. This shall include how performance will be monitored, reported to and scrutinised by tenants and arrangements for reviewing these on a periodic basis.

Registered providers shall consult with tenants, setting out clearly the costs and benefits of relevant options, if they are proposing to change their landlord or when proposing a significant change in their management arrangements.

Registered providers shall consult tenants at least once every three years on the best way of involving tenants in the governance and scrutiny of the organisation's housing management service.

3. Understanding and responding to diverse needs

Registered providers shall demonstrate how they respond to tenants' needs in the way they provide services and communicate with tenants.

Home standard

Required outcomes

Quality of accommodation

Registered providers shall:

- ensure that tenants' homes meet the standard set out in section five of the Government's Decent Homes Guidance[14] and continue to maintain their homes to at least this standard
- meet the standards of design and quality that applied when the home was built, and were required as a condition of publicly funded financial assistance[15], if these standards are higher than the Decent Homes Standard
- in agreeing a local offer, ensure that it is set at a level not less than these standards and have regard to section six of the Government's Decent Homes Guidance

Repairs and maintenance

Registered providers shall:

- provide a cost-effective repairs and maintenance service to homes and communal areas that responds to the needs of, and offers choices to, tenants, and has the objective of completing repairs and improvements right first time
- meet all applicable statutory requirements that provide for the health and safety of the occupants in their homes

Specific expectations

1 Quality of accommodation

Registered providers may agree with the regulator a period of noncompliance with the Decent Homes Standard, where this is reasonable. Providers shall ensure their tenants are aware of the reasons for any period of non-compliance, their plan to achieve compliance and then report on progress delivering this plan.

2. Repairs and maintenance

Registered providers shall ensure a prudent, planned approach to repairs and maintenance of homes and communal areas. This should demonstrate an appropriate balance of planned and responsive repairs and value for money. The approach should include: responsive and cyclical repairs, planned and capital work, work on empty properties and adaptations.

Tenancy standard

Required outcomes

1 Allocations and mutual exchange

Registered providers shall let their homes in a fair, transparent and efficient way. They shall take into account the housing needs and aspirations of tenants and potential tenants. They shall demonstrate how their lettings:

- make the best use of available housing
- are compatible with the purpose of the housing
- contribute to local authorities' strategic housing function and sustainable communities

There should be clear application, decision-making and appeals processes.

Registered providers shall enable their tenants to gain access to opportunities to exchange their tenancy with that of another tenant, by way of internet-based mutual exchange services.

2 Tenure

Registered providers shall offer tenancies or terms of occupation which are compatible with the purpose of the accommodation, the needs of individual households, the sustainability of the community, and the efficient use of their housing stock.

They shall meet all applicable statutory and legal requirements in relation to the form and use of tenancy agreements or terms of occupation.

Specific expectations

1 Allocations and mutual exchange

Registered providers shall co-operate with local authorities' strategic housing function, and their duties to meet identified local housing needs. This includes assistance with local authorities' homelessness duties, and through meeting obligations in nominations agreements.

Registered providers shall develop and deliver services to address under-occupation and overcrowding in their homes, within the resources available to them. These services should be focused on the needs of their tenants, and will offer choices to them.

Registered providers' published policies shall include how they have made use of common housing registers, common allocations policies and local letting policies. Registered providers shall clearly set out, and be able to give reasons for, the criteria they use for excluding actual and potential tenants from consideration for allocations, mobility or mutual exchange schemes.

Registered providers shall develop and deliver allocations processes in a way which supports their effective use by the full range of actual and potential tenants, including those with support needs, those who do not speak English as a first language and others who have difficulties with written English.

Registered providers shall minimise the time that properties are empty between each letting. When doing this, they shall take into account the circumstances of the tenants who have been offered the properties.

Registered providers shall record all lettings and sales as required by the Continuous Recording of Lettings (CORE) system.

Registered providers shall provide tenants wishing to move with access to clear and relevant advice about their housing options.

Registered providers shall subscribe to an internet based mutual exchange service (or pay the subscriptions of individual tenants who wish to exchange), allowing:

- a tenant to register an interest in arranging a mutual exchange through the mutual exchange service without payment of a fee
- the tenant to enter their current property details and the tenant's requirements for the mutual exchange property they hope to obtain
- the tenant to be provided with the property details of those

properties where a match occurs

Registered providers shall ensure the provider of the internet based mutual exchange service to which they subscribe is a signatory to an agreement, such as *HomeSwap* Direct, under which tenants can access matches across all (or the greatest practicable number of) internet based mutual exchange services.

Registered providers shall take reasonable steps to publicise the availability of any mutual exchange service(s) to which it subscribes to its tenants.

Registered providers shall provide reasonable support in using the service to tenants who do not have access to the internet.

2 Tenure

Registered providers shall publish clear and accessible policies which outline their approach to tenancy management, including interventions to sustain tenancies and prevent unnecessary evictions, and tackling tenancy fraud, and set out:

- The type of tenancies they will grant.
- Where they grant tenancies for a fixed term, the length of those terms.
- The circumstances in which they will grant tenancies of a particular type.
- Any exceptional circumstances in which they will grant fixed term tenancies for a term of less than five years in general needs housing following any probationary period.
- The circumstances in which they may or may not grant another tenancy on the expiry of the fixed term, in the same property or in a different property.
- The way in which a tenant or prospective tenant may appeal against or complain about the length of fixed term tenancy offered and the type of tenancy offered, and against a decision not to grant another tenancy on the expiry of the fixed term.
- Their policy on taking into account the needs of those households who are vulnerable by reason of age, disability or illness, and households with children, including through the provision of tenancies which provide a reasonable degree of stability.
- The advice and assistance they will give to tenants on finding alternative accommodation in the event that they decide not to grant another tenancy.
- Their policy on granting discretionary succession rights, taking account of the needs of vulnerable household members.

Registered providers must grant general needs tenants a periodic secure or assured (excluding periodic assured shorthold) tenancy, or a

tenancy for a minimum fixed term of five years, or exceptionally, a tenancy for a minimum fixed term of no less than two years, in addition to any probationary tenancy period.

Before a fixed term tenancy ends, registered providers shall provide notice in writing to the tenant stating either that they propose to grant another tenancy on the expiry of the existing fixed term or that they propose to end the tenancy.

Where registered providers use probationary tenancies, these shall be for a maximum of 12 months, or a maximum of 18 months where reasons for extending the probationary period have been given and where the tenant has the opportunity to request a review.

Where registered providers choose to let homes on fixed term tenancies (including under Affordable Rent terms), they shall offer reasonable advice and assistance to those tenants where that tenancy ends.

Registered providers shall make sure that the home continues to be occupied by the tenant they let the home to in accordance with the requirements of the relevant tenancy agreement, for the duration of the tenancy, allowing for regulatory requirements about participation in mutual exchange schemes.

Registered providers shall develop and provide services that will support tenants to maintain their tenancy and prevent unnecessary evictions.

Registered providers shall grant those who were social housing tenants on the day on which section 154 of the Localism Act 2011 comes into force, and have remained social housing tenants since that date, a tenancy with no less security where they choose to move to another social rented home, whether with the same or another landlord. (This requirement does not apply where tenants choose to move to accommodation let on Affordable Rent terms).

Registered providers shall grant tenants who have been moved into alternative accommodation during any redevelopment or other works a tenancy with no less security of tenure on their return to settled accommodation.

Neighbourhood and Community standard

Required outcomes

1 Neighbourhood management

Registered providers shall keep the neighbourhood and communal

areas associated with the homes that they own clean and safe. They shall work in partnership with their tenants and other providers and public bodies where it is effective to do so.

2 Local area co-operation

Registered providers shall co-operate with relevant partners to help promote social, environmental and economic wellbeing in the areas where they own properties.

3 Anti-social behaviour

Registered providers shall work in partnership with other agencies to prevent and tackle anti-social behaviour in the neighbourhoods where they own homes.

Specific expectations

1 Neighbourhood management

Registered providers shall consult with tenants in developing a published policy for maintaining and improving the neighbourhoods associated with their homes. This applies where the registered provider has a responsibility (either exclusively or in part) for the condition of that neighbourhood. The policy shall include any communal areas associated with the registered provider's homes.

2 Local area co-operation

Registered providers, having taken account of their presence and impact within the areas where they own properties, shall:

- identify and publish the roles they are able to play within the areas where they have properties
- co-operate with local partnership arrangements and strategic housing functions of local authorities where they are able to assist them in achieving their objectives

3 Anti-social behaviour

Registered providers shall publish a policy on how they work with relevant partners to prevent and tackle anti-social behaviour (ASB) in areas where they own properties.

In their work to prevent and address ASB, registered providers shall demonstrate:

- that tenants are made aware of their responsibilities and rights in relation to ASB
- strong leadership, commitment and accountability on preventing

and tackling ASB that reflects a shared understanding of responsibilities with other local agencies
- a strong focus exists on preventative measures tailored towards the needs of tenants and their families
- prompt, appropriate and decisive action is taken to deal with ASB before it escalates, which focuses on resolving the problem having regard to the full range of tools and legal powers available
- all tenants and residents can easily report ASB, are kept informed about the status of their case where responsibility rests with the organisation and are appropriately signposted where it does not
- provision of support to victims and witnesses

How the standards are applied

Each standard is defined in terms of required outcomes and some specific expectations. The standards have regard to the desirability of providers being free to choose how they conduct business and deliver services. For the consumer standards, the specific expectations are not intended to describe entirely how to meet or comply with the outcomes. The consumer standards are subject to 'backstop' regulation only, in circumstances where there is evidence of or risk of serious detriment as detailed in chapter five of this regulatory framework.

The regulator can issue a Code of Practice which relates to any matter addressed by an economic standard or amplifies an economic standard. These Codes of Practice can be taken into account in considering whether economic standards have been met. No Codes of Practice have been issued since the previous standards framework was introduced in April 2010.

Regulating the consumer standards

The Localism Act specifies the regulator's role in, and its approach to, regulating the consumer standards. The regulator's responsibilities are limited to setting standards and intervening when there is, or is a risk of, serious detriment to tenants (called the 'serious detriment test' which is explained in detail in this chapter).

Setting consumer standards

In this regulatory framework the regulator has set clear service standards on:

> a. Tenant Involvement and Empowerment
> b. Home
> c. Tenancy
> d. Neighbourhood and Community

The regulator sets consumer standards so that tenants, landlords and

stakeholders know the outcomes that are expected. This is crucial if tenants are to be able to hold landlords to account effectively. These standards therefore support co-regulation. Where necessary, they reflect directions issued to the regulator by Government.

Boards and councillors that govern providers' services are responsible for ensuring that their organisation meets the consumer standards. Performance issues should be resolved by providers through their complaints procedures, scrutiny arrangements and/or local routes to resolution and without reference to the regulator.

The regulator has no role in monitoring providers' performance or routine compliance with the consumer standards. Government policy on which the Localism Act is founded advocates a localist approach to the resolution of service delivery problems, and an enhanced role in the complaints process for designated tenant panels, MPs and elected councillors. Further information about what it means for users of these local mechanisms will be provided by DCLG.

In relation to the Home standard, there is a provision established by the direction from Government that the regulator may agree temporary periods of non-compliance where providers do not meet the Decent Homes standard (DHS). The regulator's normal expectations are that, where providers do not meet DHS, they should have regard to their coregulatory accountabilities as reflected in the Tenant Involvement & Empowerment standard. They should consult with tenants on the approach that they propose to take to meeting the Home standard, particularly with tenants who may be directly affected, and to communicate clearly to them the timescale and approach that they will adopt to meet the standard. Where this is done, a formal temporary DHS exemption from the regulator will not be required

As the regulator does not actively monitor compliance with the Home standard, nor DHS compliance, it will not routinely discuss temporary exemptions with providers where they do not meet the standard. The regulator's approach will be to consider formal temporary exemptions where there is a particular reason to do so. We envisage that this will be an exceptional requirement and may arise in relation to conditions attached to funding, whether public or private, or where it arises as a result of the regulator finding serious detriment and where a temporary exemption may be part of a strategy agreed with providers following resolution of the matters giving rise to serious detriment.

In respect of the consumer standards more generally, the regulator's regulatory and enforcement powers will only be used where it is necessary to address failures against these standards that give rise to actual or potential serious detriment to tenants (or potential tenants). Any action by the regulator will be reactive in nature in response to referrals or other information received. The regulator's judgement about the need for further intervention will be based on the approach to

intervention and enforcement set out in chapter six of this regulatory framework and in guidance notes on the use of powers in Annex B.

The remainder of this chapter sets out the regulatory arrangements that reflect the serious detriment test in the Localism Act. It comprises the regulator's guidance on the submission of information to it about the performance of registered providers, as required by section 215(1) (a) of the 2008 Act as amended by the Localism Act.

The serious detriment test

The Localism Act places a restriction on the regulator's ability to use its powers in relation to a provider failing to meet a consumer standard. The regulatory and enforcement powers may be used if the regulator thinks that a standard has been failed and there are reasonable grounds to suspect that:

- The failure has resulted in a serious detriment to the provider's tenants (or potential tenants), or
- There is a significant risk that, if no action is taken by the regulator, the failure will result in a serious detriment to the provider's tenants (or potential tenants)

This is the basis of what is called the 'serious detriment test'. Regulatory powers in Chapter 6 of the 2008 Act can be used to investigate where the regulator thinks that there is risk of failing a standard, and has reasonable grounds to suspect that - if the failure occurs - the failure will or may result in serious detriment to tenants (or potential tenants).

The regulator is required to issue guidance about how it applies and intends to apply the 'serious detriment test', as follows.

In defining serious detriment, it is clear that the threshold for regulatory intervention is intended to be significantly higher than that in relation to the economic standards. Failure to meet one or more of the consumer standards does not in itself lead directly to a judgement of serious detriment by the regulator. The regulator considers that the meaning of serious detriment is when there is risk of, or actual, serious harm to tenants.

The regulator will judge whether actual or potential serious detriment exists depending on the circumstances of each case based on an evaluation of the harm or potential harm to tenants. It is not feasible or desirable for the regulator to attempt to produce a prescriptive list of issues that would constitute this. Such a list would inevitably fail to cover all current or potential eventualities and would need frequent updating to reflect changes in the policy and operational environment of providers. In addition, the same issue might have very different implications in different circumstances, leading to the risk of a

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disproportionate regulatory response. In order to ensure its uses its powers proportionately, the regulator must take the circumstances of each case into consideration.

Assessing serious detriment

The regulator's assessment of serious detriment is based on the degree of harm or potential harm that may be caused to tenants by a breach of standards. The judgement will be formed on the regulator's opinion of the actual or potential impact on tenants, irrespective of the nature of the issue that gives rise to the concern.

In assessing whether to consider if there could be serious detriment or reasonable grounds to suspect this may be the case, the regulator will consider four initial questions. They are:

- Does the issue raised relate to a matter within the regulator's remit?
- If the issue raised were true, is it likely that there has been, or could be, a breach of a consumer standard?
- If the issues raised were true would there be any impact on tenants which would cause actual harm or potential harm?
- If the issues raised are true is the actual harm or potential harm likely to be serious?

If the regulator is satisfied that there could be serious detriment or that there are reasonable grounds to suspect this, it will then seek to determine whether this is the case through examining the evidence and the nature and extent of the impact or potential impact on tenants. In reaching this assessment, the regulator will require evidence of harm or potential harm, in particular but not exclusively in relation to:

- health and safety
- loss of home
- unlawful discrimination
- loss of legal rights
- financial loss

Irrespective of from where and how information is received, the regulator is ultimately responsible and accountable for the decisions it takes. Therefore, the regulator retains the right to conduct, or agree that the provider commissions, appropriate investigations in order to determine whether there is evidence of a breach of standard and serious detriment.

Ultimately, decisions on serious detriment are a matter of judgement by the regulator, based on the evidence available and its published approach. It is also possible that issues under one consumer standard may result in problems under one or more of the other standards, indicating a systemic failure.

Intervention and enforcement in cases of serious detriment

The circumstances of each case will inform the regulator's response. In some cases, the regulator may need to intervene directly to address the problem(s) identified. The regulator's approach to intervention and enforcement and the specific implications in relation to the threshold for serious detriment are set out in chapter six of this regulatory framework. The regulator's approach to the use of its regulatory, enforcement and general powers is set out in separate guidance notes in Annex B to this framework.

Where the regulator believes the serious detriment threshold has been crossed in relation to consumer standards, or may be crossed if effective remedial action is not taken, for private registered providers the regulator will also assess the implications of the issue against the economic standards (particularly the governance element of the Governance and Financial Viability standard) in accordance with its published approach. The regulator will implement a strategy for investigating the issues, determining what assurances on governance may be required of the provider's board, and whether any further regulatory action is required.

In the case of serious detriment being identified in a local authority housing service the regulator may still use relevant powers. The economic standards do not apply to local authorities however the investigation of a case of serious detriment may raise concerns about governance issues. In these circumstances, as well as taking any necessary action to deal with the presenting serious detriment problem, it may also be necessary for the regulator to refer concerns about governance to the authority's monitoring officer and others where relevant, such as its auditors, chief executive and lead councillor, and DCLG.

It is possible in some cases of serious detriment that other agencies or regulators will have responsibility for dealing with the presenting issue. The (social housing) regulator may refer the issue directly to the relevant authority if this has not already been done. However, in such cases the regulator may also act in anticipation of, or at the same time as, other agencies, with particular reference to implications for the provider's governance that may arise from the problem.

The regulator will give reasons for its decisions to intervene or investigate, or for not taking any action. Where a referral does not, in the regulator's opinion, constitute serious detriment, the regulator will advise the referring party of alternative routes to take, if applicable. If the referral appears to the regulator to be a misdirected complaint, it will advise the referring party of the options that should be available to them. If the referring party has explored this route but without a response, the regulator will signpost them to agencies that may be able

to provide appropriate advice.

As with the regulator's existing procedures, for those cases that the regulator decides to follow up, it will give the referring party an indication of its anticipated timetable. The regulator will, in general terms, keep the referring party informed of the action that is being taken and the outcomes.

The regulator will publish information relating to its findings of serious detriment. It will set out how it will do this as part of a wider approach to publicising its intervention and enforcement actions, in due course.

Referrals on serious detriment: what the regulator will and won't consider

The main sources of intelligence about potential cases of serious detriment will be information referred to the regulator by third parties.

In considering whether failure of a consumer standard has or may lead to serious detriment, the regulator is obliged to have regard to information received from a number of authorities, representative bodies and individuals that are specified in the Localism Act. These include the housing ombudsman, tenant representative bodies, MPs, local authority councillors, the Health and Safety Executive or a fire and rescue authority. Information received in this context from these specified bodies are known as statutory referrals.

Additionally, the regulator will consider relevant information it receives from all sources, including during the course of routine regulatory activity in connection with its economic regulation remit. Such information will be assessed in the same way as information received through the statutory referral routes.

The regulator does not have a statutory mandate to deal with individual complainants and cannot mediate in disputes between landlords and tenants. The regulator has no locus in the contractual relationship between a provider and its employees and cannot become involved in disputes between them or in any other contractual disputes.

Providers have principal responsibility for dealing with, and being accountable for, complaints about their service, and the Tenant Involvement and Empowerment standard requires that they have clear and effective mechanisms for responding to tenant complaints. A tenant with a complaint against their landlord should raise it with their landlord in the first instance and, should the complaint remain unresolved consider contacting the relevant Ombudsman via the route(s) available at that time. 25

The authorities who are able to make statutory referrals to the regulator include parties who may be or could become involved in local

complaints resolution processes. Where the regulator receives a referral from one of these specified authorities (or any other party), the regulator's role will not be to seek redress for an individual complainant. Rather, the regulator will assess whether, in its judgement, the serious detriment test has been met in accordance with the approach set out above.

Although the regulator will not become involved in the resolution of individual complaints, it does not exclude the possibility that assessments of serious detriment might originally stem from an individual tenant complaint which indicated a more far-reaching problem causing harm or potential harm to tenants.

Gangs in Brent: An assessment of gangs in Brent and services for at-risk young people and gang members to exit

An Overview and Scrutiny Task Group Report

March 2013

Membership
Councillor Zaffar Van Kalwala, Chair
Councillor Harshadbhai Patel
Councillor Hayley Mathews

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3

Chair's Forward

Executive Summary

This task group was set up following a report commissioned by Brent's Community Safety Partnership entitled *Establishing the reality of gangs in Brent.*[1] This report identified that for young people involved in gangs and gang related activity, there was insufficient activity in Brent to divert them away from involvement. Subsequently, in the summer of 2011, riots engulfed London and other cities across the UK. And, in order to gain a greater understand of the extent of the problem in Brent and what could be done to intervene, and help young people exit such a destructive and wasteful lifestyle.

The task group undertook research from the world of academia as well as those in Government and practitioners. We also heard evidence from members of the Metropolitan Police Service, voluntary and community organisations working with gang members and statutory services within the Council, such as the Youth Offending Service.

In the course of the task group's investigations, we discovered that whilst some good work on this issue is being done in Brent, it is largely being done in isolation. Through the discussions with Brent's partners and with those from other local authorities, the task group have concluded that the work around tackling gangs in Brent is both uncoordinated and fragmented. Given this position, and the fact that none of the problems are too great to overcome, the task group is pleased to present its findings.

The task group's key findings are as follows:

Defining 'gang' and developing a strategy
From the myriad ways to define what a gang is, how it is organised and what it is not, the task group discovered that there is no one agreed definition. We concluded that Brent Council should prioritise this area of work and that it needs to develop an overarching strategy which clearly defines what a gang is.

Key risk factors for gang membership
Brent is a young borough. The 2011 census data shows that roughly 25% of the total population in Brent is under 19 years old. This means that this issue, if not dealt with effectively, could leave many more young people in Brent at risk. Research on the drivers of gangs and youth violence point to a number of factors, which are most common to this group. As one researcher pointed out, 'gang members are youth for whom everything is going wrong.'[2] Though not exhaustive, the following is revealing about gang membership in Brent:

- Being young and male;
- Being a victim of bullying or violence;
- Discrimination and stereotyping;
- Having a member of the family or friends circle who is a gang member;
- Family breakdown and dysfunction (including domestic violence);
- A lack of positive role models (including an absent father);
- Poor educational attainment;
- Having a drug or alcohol misuse problem;
- Mental and emotional health problems;
- An absence of aspirations;

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[1] Produced by the Centre for Social Evaluation and Research, London Metropolitan University

[2] Greene, Judith and Pranis, Kevin. 2007. *Gang Wars: The Failure of Enforcement Tactics and the Need for Effective Public Safety Strategies*. Washington, DC: Justice Policy Institute.

- Having a perceived need for protection;
- Unemployment or underemployment and the need for money;
- Living in a culture that strongly identifies success with material wealth; and
- Poverty or growing up in social housing.

Girls in gangs

This was an area the task group as keen to investigate. Although there is little evidence to suggest that Brent has a girl gang problem, there is anecdotal evidence that there is a developing problem, across London, of sexual exploitation of young women by males associated with gangs. This is an area which the task group believes must be researched further so as to fully understand the nature and scope of the problem in Brent.

Gangs in Brent

The report, *Establishing the reality of gangs in Brent* was a good starting point for the task group's investigations. Its research provided key insights into the organisation of groups and how young people feel about those groups. In the course of further research, we were told that gangs are a problem across London and that Brent is one of 19 priority boroughs the Met have identified as a 'Trident borough'.

There are 15 recognised gangs in Brent. These gangs are most commonly geographically located on or near social housing estates and in areas of relative deprivation. Based on arrests and convictions, the main types of offences committed by Brent's street gangs are: firearms offences, drug dealing, robbery burglary, violence and anti-social behaviour. Recent Police statistics also highlight that despite London-wide reductions in gun crime, Brent is seeing a 10.8% increase and is also experiencing increases in knife crime, well above the London-wide figures.

Prevention, intervention and exit services

It is clear from the evidence that the task group has heard and research available that any gangs strategy must include these three levels of service. More prevention work is needed, particularly in schools and PRUs to educate young people on making healthier life choices and rejecting gang membership. Robust intervention services also need to be developed; these programmes should offer gang-involved young people a clear alternative which allows them to stop offending and choose a more positive lifestyle. Exit services, similar to interventions, are required for high risk gang members who cannot simply quit their gang because of an imminent danger to their own lives or to their close family.

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Recommendations

1. Prioritise gangs and commit to working closer with partners and the community to reduce gang membership and violence in the community. This issue must be seen as both a Safeguarding and Public Health issue.
2. Develop a robust, gender-proof, multi-layered gangs strategy that focuses on three core areas: prevention, intervention for those affected and exit programme pathways (for existing gang members) for each of the identifiable cohorts listed above.
3. Adopt a single, working definition of gangs.
4. Development of an integrated gangs unit to analyse and manage changing profile and risk of gangs in Brent and to effectively manage the PMAP and all associated partnership working.
5. Develop a greater partnership with local schools with a view of developing and training a lead from each school to act as Single Point of Contact (SPOC) and liaise with colleagues within the Partnership.
6. Consult with community partners and organisations to develop an Independent Advisory Group (IAG) to work with the Partnership. A similar consultation and IAG should also be created for young people in Brent.
7. Align processes with Working with Families initiative to identify and manage cohorts to reduce duplication.
8. Develop a robust, multi-agency identification and assessment methodology that uses a traffic-light system for targeted support and interventions. Any such approach must also include reporting of incidents from hospital A&Es within the West London area.
9. Develop a scoping and mapping project to understand the extent of the problem for women and girls who may be involved or affected by gangs and vulnerable to sexual abuse. A gendered approach must also be undertaken regarding any victim support, intervention and exit strategy. This must also be consistent with recommendation 2.

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1. Introduction - Scope of the Task Group's Work

Since the task group started meeting in September 2011, issues relating to gangs and serious youth violence have risen in the national political agenda resulting in a rapidly changing landscape within which evidence has been gathered. New initiatives and funding streams relating to gangs and serious youth violence have been introduced by the government and, in some cases, have already come to an end. In addition the new Metropolitan Police Commissioner and the new Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) have made strengthening the Met's response to serious youth violence and getting tough on gangs a priority.

The national discourse around gangs and gang related activity is frequently emotive, particularly since the riots in August 2011 when the Prime Minister declared a 'concerted all-out war on gang and gang culture'. Indeed, the Home Office have reported that one in five people arrested during the course of the riots had a known gang affiliation. However, there is a danger that all urban crime is identified as gang related, increasing fear amongst residents and labelling young people who may be undertaking what they view as mundane activities as gang members. Equally, where gangs do exist, the impact on local communities and the life chances of those involved or associated with gangs and gang related activity can be devastating. Therefore, understanding what is and is not gang related is essential for the police and the wider Community Safety Partnership to tackling gangs without further alienating young people in the process.

This task group was set up following a report commissioned by Brent's Community Safety Partnership entitled *Establishing the reality of gangs in Brent*.[3] This report identified that for young people involved in gangs and gang related activity, there was insufficient activity in Brent to divert them away from involvement.

The key findings of the task group are as follows:

- Defining gangs and developing a strategy;
- Key risk factors for gang membership;
- Girls in gangs;
- Gangs in Brent; and
- Prevention, intervention and exit services.

2. Task Group Membership

Councillor Zaffar Van Kalwala, Chair
Councillor Harshadbhai Patel
Councillor Hayley Mathews

Policy support has been provided by Jacqueline Casson, Acting Corporate Policy Team Manager and Christopher Young, Policy Officer.

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[3] Produced by the Centre for Social Evaluation and Research, London Metropolitan University

3. Methodology

The task group reviewed a range of literature in the course of their research, and drew in particular from the following publications:

1. HM Government (2011) *Ending Gang and Youth violence: A Cross-Government Report including further evidence and good practice case studies.* London: Crown.
2. The Centre for Social Justice (2009) *Dying to Belong: An In-depth Review of Street Gangs in Britain.* London: The Centre for Social Justice.
3. Hallsworth, S. and D. Brotherton. (2011) *Urban Disorder and Gangs: A Critique and a Warning.* London: Runnymede
4. Pitts, J. (2008) *Reluctant Gangsters: The Changing Shape of Youth Crime.* Cullumpton: Willan Publishing.
5. Hallsworth, S. and K. Duffy (2010) *Confronting London's Violent Street World: The Gang and Beyond.* London: Routledge.

In order to complete the work identified in the scope the task group gathered evidence from a number of sources. We would like to thank the following people for speaking to us about this issue:

- Genny Rennard, Head of the Integrated Community Safety Team (Brent Council)
- Anita Dickenson, Head of Brent Youth Offending Service (Brent Council)
- Matthew Watkis, Youth Offending Service Gang Co-ordinator (Brent Council)
- Chief Inspector Stuart Smith (MPS, Brent)
- Christine Topping, Violence Against the Person Focus Desk (MPS, Brent)
- Andy Brown, Head of Substance Misuse (NHS Brent)
- Helena O'Connell, Service Manager (Young Addactions)
- Kiran Vagarwal, Neighbourhood Crime and ASB Manager & Project Co-ordinator (Brent Council)
- Inspector Heidi Tubby, Partnerships (MPS, Westminster)
- Pat Green, Divisional Manager for Westminster City Council (Victims Support)
- James Salter, Principal Officer (Brent Youth Offending Team)
- Helena O'Connell, Service Manager (Young Addactions)
- Jennifer Shaw, Youth Worker (Brent Youth Service and Connections Service)
- Matthew Watson, Service Manager NW Locality Young People's Service (Westminster City Council)
- Jennifer Ogogle, DJ (Bang FM) and Junior Reid, Recording Artist from Brent
- Dr Charlie Alcock, CEO (MAC UK)
- Bethan West, Gangs Prevention Programme Coordinator (London Borough of Waltham Forest)
- Professor John Pitts, Academic and author of 'Reluctant Gangsters'
- Rob Owen, CEO and Dave Evans, Partnerships Manager (St. Giles Trust)
- Rena Sodhi, CEO and Claire Hubberstey, Director of Projects and Partnerships (Safer London Foundation)
- Chief Inspector Timothy Champion, Trident Gang Command Unit (MPS)

Members of the task group heard from a number of other local authorities, including Westminster City Council and Waltham Forest to try to identify areas of best practice that could be brought back to Brent.

Members of the task group visited the Monday Club at Young Addaction which works with young people, referred by the Youth Offending Service and Community Safety Team, who are on the periphery of gang related activity.

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The task group spent an evening on the Youth Bus when it was operating in South Kilburn as part of the CAGGK project.

Members of the task group visited St. Giles Trust, who specialise in offering ex-offender led exit programmes who have recently begun taking referrals from Brent.

In addition to using Professor John Pitts' academic work as key reference material, members of the task group met with Mr Pitts to hear about some of the work he is currently researching and ask about recent trends.

The task group heard from organisations such as Safer London Foundation and MAC UK who are providing services identified by partners as best practice, the former in relation to young women in gangs or gang affected and the latter, who engage gang involved young people to think about their mental health through their Music and Change programme.

Lastly, the task group visited New Scotland Yard to hear from Chief Inspector Timothy Champion, who led the Trident team carrying out operations in Brent. Mr Champion gave the task group an up-to-date account of the changing nature of gang activity in Brent and across London.

4. Background and Policy Context

In their 2009 report, *Dying to Belong – an in depth review of street gangs in Britain,*[4] the Centre for Social Justice highlighted the nature and scale of gangs in Britain. Some key findings include the following:

- Up to 6% of 10-19 year olds self-report belonging to a gang;
- Police in London and Strathclyde have each identified 171 and 170 gangs respectively;
- Between 600 and 700 young people are estimated to be directly gang involved in the London Borough of Waltham Forest alone, with an additional 8,100 people affected by gangs;
- In both Manchester and Liverpool around 60% of shootings are gang related;
- At least half of the 27 murders of young people perpetrated by young people in London in 2007 were gang-related;
- In the past 5 years there has been an 89% increase in the number of under-16s admitted to hospital with serious stab wounds, and a 75% increase amongst older teenagers; and
- The percentage of school children reporting having carried a knife increased by more than 50% between 2002 and 2005.

Building on this report, and in response to the August 2011 riots, the government published a cross government report, *Ending Gangs and Youth Violence*[5]. The report, launched in November 2011, was jointly presented by the Home Secretary, Theresa May, and the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, Ian Duncan Smith, who, while in opposition founded the Centre for Social Justice, the authors of *Dying to Belong.* In his foreword, the

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[4] The Centre for Social Justice (2009) *Dying to Belong: An In-depth Review of Street Gangs in Britain.* London: The Centre for Social Justice.

[5] Ending Gangs and Youth Violence: A Cross Government Report, HM Government, November 2011

Secretary of State for Work and Pensions stated that tackling gangs and serious youth violence will take a fully coordinated, multi-agency response, and full and public local authority leadership.' The approach set out in this report included:

- Providing support to local areas to tackle their gang or youth violence problem;
- Preventing young people becoming involved in serious youth violence in the first place;
- Pathways out of violence and gang culture for people wanting to break with the past;
- Punishment & enforcement to suppress violence; and
- Partnership working to join up the ways in which local areas respond.

As part of the report, the government announced £10m funding for early intervention work, including the Communities Against Guns, Gangs Knives (CAGGK) funds and funding for young people's advocates for young people at risk of sexual violence and exploitation. Brent, along with Westminster, was successful in bidding for work to be carried out through both of these funds.

The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 abolished the Metropolitan Police Authority and replaced it with the Mayor's Office for Policing & Crime (MOPAC). Through MOPAC, the Mayor and Deputy Mayor will be directly accountable for police performance in the capital, setting the Metropolitan Police's strategic direction and allocating resources. Two of the key priorities of the Mayor's office are:

- Strengthening the Met's response to serious youth violence, including knife crime;
- Getting tough on gangs and tackling re-offending rates.

A new Metropolitan Police Commissioner Bernard Hogan-Howe was appointed in September 2011, just after the August riots. He has advocated 'total war on crime' and tackling gang crime in the capital is a key plank of his approach with the formation of a Trident Gang Crime Command. According to the Metropolitan Police there are an estimated 250 active criminal gangs in London comprising of around 4,500 people. The gangs they have identified range from organised crime network to street based gangs involved in street-based violence and robbery. The Metropolitan Police say that gangs exist in all parts of London and Brent is one of the 19 boroughs that will have dedicated gang task forces to deal with local gang crime and work with local partners on diversion and prevention activities. Given the total population of young people in London, the Police Commissioner does acknowledge that the vast majority of young people in London are law abiding but goes on to say:

> *There are still too many young people who are, or could get involved in gangs. We want to prevent young people from getting involved in gang offending so we and other agencies are offering ways out to support them. However, those who refuse our offer of help will be pursued and brought to justice. Getting involved in gangs can ruin a young person's life. With a criminal record it can be harder to get a job or into further education, while being involved in violence can lead to someone being arrested, sent to prison, seriously injured or even killed. We're not concerned with peer groups or just friends who may 'hang around' and we have no intention of criminalising an entire generation. Our focus is on violence and criminal behaviour associated with gangs and gang members.*[6]

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[6] Metropolitan Police Service in major crackdown on gang crime – Press release 9th February 2012

5. Local Context

Protecting the public from crime and reducing the fear of crime is one of the council's highest priorities[7] In spite of an overall reduction in crime in the borough, there are still areas of the borough where violent crime including the use of guns and knives is still a concern.

In response to local concerns and the perception that gang activity had increased in Brent, a report entitled *Establishing the reality of gangs in Brent*[8] was commissioned by the Brent Community Safety Partnership to establish the actual situation in relation to the following concerns:

- That gangs have increased in prevalence in Brent
- That gangs are territorially based, are violent and are attracting young people, and
- That gangs pose a serious threat to public order

The key findings published in 2010 highlighted a number of issues. Firstly that the definition of the term gang varies significantly, what some people might term a gang others might see as a group of friends. The use of the term gang particularly by the media can stigmatise young people, create fear amongst some residents and fear among young people in general. Secondly there is little evidence of US style gangs in Brent, though some street based groups of young people, mostly boys, do exist in the south of the borough. Lastly, for young people involved in these groups there is insufficient provision to divert them away from involvement. Given these findings, the Crime Prevention Strategy Group agreed to support the establishment of an overview & scrutiny task group to investigate these issues and look at how effective diversion and exiting provision could be developed.

6. Key Findings

6.1 Defining 'Gangs' and Developing a Gang Strategy
One of the most basic yet difficult things that the task group wanted to do was to establish what was meant by the term 'gang'. There are a myriad of definitions in existence none, of which is universally accepted and used. Indeed within the world of academia and practicing criminology, defining the term 'gang' is a contentious issue[9]. The lack of consensus around the definition of a gang is problematic in a number of ways, particularly:

- Being sure that when gathering evidence about gangs in Brent that everyone has a common understanding
- Generic use of the term may lead to everyday activities of a group of young people and even criminal activity as being labelled as gang related when they might not be

As Hallsworth and Duffy point out, 'a group of eleven year old lads 'hanging around', for example, is very different from an armed, territorially affiliated group of eighteen year olds looking for trouble; and this differs in turn from a group of adult criminals planning a heist[10]'. In 2005, Hallsworth and Young provided a definition that separates out peer groups, gangs and organised criminal groups as a three-tiered system of 'urban collectives'. This typology consisted of three groups, including:

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[7] Brent our Future 2010-2014

[8] Produced by the Centre for Social and Evaluation Research, London Metropolitan University

[9] Brotherton, D.C. (2007) Beyond Social Reproduction: Bringing Resistance Back into the Theory of Gangs', *Theoretical Criminology* 12(1):55-77; Klein, M.W. (2001) *The Eurogang Paradox: Street Gangs and Youth Groups in the US and Europe.* Dordrecht and Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishers.

[10] Hallsworth, S. and K. Duffy (2010) *Confronting London's Violent Street World: The Gang and Beyond.* London: London Councils.

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Peer Group: A small, unorganised, transient grouping occupying the same space with a common history. Crime is not integral to their self definition.

Gang: A relatively durable, predominantly street-based group of young people who see themselves (and are seen by others) as a discernible group for whom crime and violence is integral to the group's identity.

Organised Criminal Group: Members are professionally involved in crime for personal gain operating almost exclusively in the 'grey' or illegal marketplace.

The Hallsworth and Young typology is still used by a number of agencies, including the Brent Youth Offending Service. This definition of gang, however, has been refined further by the Centre for Social Justice in their 2009 report *Dying to Belong.* The definition used by the Centre for Social Justice has also been adopted by the Brent Community Safety Team, The Home Office and the Association of Chief Police Officers and defines a gang as:

> *A relatively durable, predominantly street-based group of young people who (1) see themselves (and are seen by others) as a discernible group, (2) engage in a range of criminal activity and violence, (3) identify with or lay claim over territory, (4) have some form of identifying structural feature, and (5) are in conflict with other, similar, gangs.*

In *Reluctant Gangsters*, Professor John Pitts defined the term 'youth gang' as:

> *A social group composed of children, young people and, not infrequently, adults who see themselves, and are seen by others, as affiliates of a discrete, named, group; variously described as a crew, 'fam' (family), massive, posse, or as brerrs (brothers/'bredderin'), cousins, soldiers, sabbos (saboteurs), boys or mandem[11].*

When we talked to Brent Police, they told us that they define a gang as:

> *A group of individuals involved in persistent criminality for some form of personal gain (this includes profit and/or to gain or demonstrate status) which is causing significant harm to the community and/or is of cross border concern.*

Section 34(5) of the Policing and Crime Act 2009 Act provides the nearest thing to a legal definition of gang by defining gang-related violence as:

> *Violence or a threat of violence which occurs in the course of, or is otherwise related to, the activities of a group that:*
> *a) consists of at least 3 people;*
> *b) uses a name, emblem or colour or has any other characteristic that enables its members to be identified by others as a group; and*
> *c) is associated with a particular area.*

Based largely on Hallsworth and Young's 2005 definition and that of the one used by the Centre for Social Justice, the task group recommend the following definition of a gang be adopted by the Community Safety Partnership:

Recommended definition of 'gang':

A relatively durable, predominantly street-based group of young people who:

(1) See themselves (and are seen by others) as a discernible group, and

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[11] Pitts, J. (2008). Reluctant Gangsters: The Changing Shape of Youth Crime. Cullompton: Willan Publishing.

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(2) Engage in a range of criminal activity and violence.

They <u>may</u> also have any or all of the following features:

(3) Identify with or lay claim over territory

(4) Have some form of identifying structural (or labelling) feature

(5) Are in conflict with other, similar, gangs.

Based on the research, which has highlighted the problems associated with not having a clear definition of gang, the task group has omitted from this definition the delinquent peer group and organised crime groups.

A critique of labelling

There are, however, problems will all definitions. In the Ministry of Justice report, *Understanding the Psychology of Gang Violence*[12], Harris *et al.* states that 'practitioners need to be careful about making assumptions about an offender's own sense of their gang affiliations' and labelling someone as a gang member. In the research, this caution manifested itself clearly as several of the 'participants refused to proceed until the interviewer acknowledged their rejection of this label'.

On a visit to the Monday Club at Young Addaction for gang-involved and affected young people, one young person told the task group that just because a group of friends is gathered together, they are not necessarily a gang or gang members, even if the police can't make such a distinction.

Developing a strategy

During the course of this investigation the task group talked to a number of partners across Brent and London Boroughs such as Waltham Forest and Westminster to find out about the work being undertaken and how partners worked together. The two London boroughs told us they had set up a dedicated gangs team to analyse data and coordinate work within the partnership to effectively tackle gangs in the borough. They also told us that strong leadership and patience is required and that the key to effective partnership working is to involve all with stake in its success, including those often overlooked, such as local community members, health care providers and housing providers.

Bethan West, from the London Borough of Waltham Forest, said that it is important to make sure that any work is aligned to the Troubled Families work as many of the same families involved will also have a member of the household involved in serious youth violence or anti-social behaviour. Moreover, the task group was told that at Waltham Forest the gangs programme was so successful, the Council decided to use it as a model for their Troubled Families programme.

When we spoke to Tim Champion, of the Trident Gang Command Unit, he told the task group that the single biggest way of combating gangs is to involve community members as an Independent Advisory Group (IAG). He also recommended developing a critical incident review group, which would ensure all partners are aware of what has happened and enable them to develop a unified response in cases of fatal gang violence. In doing so, Mr Champion said that the police, Councillors, Council officials and community leaders will be able to assure the public that an appropriate response is being coordinated.

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[12] Harris, *et al.* (2011). *Understanding the psychology of gang violence: implications for designing effective violence interventions.* Ministry of Justice Research Series 2/11.

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The evidence we received has led the task group to conclude that work being undertaken in Brent is fragmented and uncoordinated. Therefore, it is the task group's belief that Brent would benefit from the development of an overarching gangs strategy and that the strategy be agreed by the Community Safety Partnership. This would not only provide a commonly used definition of a gang that is used by all partners but ensure that a coordinated approach is taken to use available resources effectively in the delivery of the exiting services outlined later in this report. Involving community partners and organisations to be involved throughout this process, a more grassroots approach will engender local solutions to local problems. The strategy should include:

- An agreed definition of 'gang';
- A robust, multi-agency identification and assessment methodology that uses a traffic-light system, based on risk. Any such identification must also include girls in gangs and those vulnerable to sexual exploitation and referral pathways from hospitals in the Brent and west London area;
- The continued use of PMAP as forum for case management to ensure targeted support and interventions;
- Appoint a lead from each relevant Council department to act as Single Point of Contact (SPOC) and liaise with colleagues within the Partnership. A similar approach should be taken for schools to have lead for gangs;
- The development of planned prevention services in schools and PRUs, early interventions and specialised services for high risk gang members to exit;
- Gendered services for girls in gangs and those vulnerable to sexual exploitation;
- Greater partnership working with the community and voluntary sector;
- An approach which involves community leaders as part of an Independent Advisory Group (IAG). This should also be replicated for young people; and
- The development of a critical incident review group to ensure a unified response to high profile incidents are coordinated and inclusive of communities.

In order to implement the strategy as recommended above, the task group recommends that the Council develop an integrated gangs unit within the Community Safety Team. The role of the unit will be to implement the strategy, analyse intelligence and trends, coordinate partnership working and commission services, when required. The unit will also assist in working to align the approach to those families identified under Brent's Working with Families (WWF) initiative that are gang-involved or affected.

6.2 Risk factors for gang membership

The task group took evidence from across the Community Safety Partnership, including the Metropolitan Police, Youth Offending Services (YOS) and the Community Safety Team. We also visited community and voluntary sector organisations dealing with gangs and gang members on the frontline. Although there is never a clear-cut set of factors which always determines gang membership or the potential for a young person to engage in serious violence, a pattern seems to have emerged. The following risk factors have either been highlighted in research or have been stated as risk factors by the experts we have taken evidence from:

- Being young and male;
- Being a victim of bullying or violence;
- Discrimination and stereotyping;
- Having a member of the family or friends circle who is a gang member;
- Family breakdown and dysfunction (including domestic violence);
- A lack of positive role models (including an absent father);
- Poor educational attainment;
- Having a drug or alcohol misuse problem;

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- Mental and emotional health problems;
- An absence of aspirations;
- Having a perceived need for protection;
- Unemployment or underemployment and the need for money;
- Living in a culture that strongly identifies success with material wealth; and
- Poverty or growing up in social housing.

In the 2010 report, *Establishing the reality of gangs in Brent,* an interview was conducted with 16 'gang involved' young men who, when asked what risk factors are most relevant to them, they said:

- Living in an area with an established gang problem;
- Reputation (to be had) and excitement;
- Being a victim; and
- Opportunity to make money.

'Reluctant gangsters' as a risk factor
In our discussion with Professor Pitts, it was suggested that for some young people growing up on estates across London – including Brent – where gangs are prevalent, simply turning a blind eye or disassociating with gangs is not possible. Professor Pitts told the task group that for some young people to even survive, they will make friends with local gang members because they provide at least some protection from gangs operating from nearby estates. As shown above, by the young men interviewed on risk factors, this highlights the ever-present need for young people to secure their personal safety.

A similar story was told when we visited a representative from the Trident Gang Command. He told the task group of a young man who being beaten up by two gangs operating near his home. The boy joined one of them, just to avoid being beaten up by both.

Mental health as a risk factor
Mental health is one of the risk factors mentioned above that the Home Office has singled out as an area of particular concern. In the Government's *Ending Gangs and Youth Violence* report, mental health is singled out as one of the recurrent themes at every stage in a person's development and often critical as a predictor of future outcomes (if not treated). This is also one area which is most commonly overlooked in devising strategies to deal with gangs and gang crime.

As the Graham Allen report on Early Intervention[13] puts it, 'when the environment is impoverished, neglectful or abusive, this can result in a child who doesn't develop empathy, learn how to regulate their emotions or develop social skills, and this can lead to an increased risk of mental health problems, relationship difficulties, anti-social behaviour and aggression.'

Dr. Alcock, of MAC UK, told the task group that 1 in 3 gang members has an undiagnosed mental health problem, and whilst the remaining 2 may not have an undiagnosed 'problem', many suffer other issues such as a deep-rooted lack of confidence, low self-esteem and self-belief. Added to this problem, says Dr. Alcock, is the almost universal use of drugs by this cohort, most commonly cannabis, which exacerbates mental health problems. Moreover, Dr. Alcock went on to say that many violent young men, grow up in a households where domestic violence is the norm; in seeing this, their only way to calm down or release frustrations is through violence.

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[13] Allen, G. (2011) *Early Intervention: The Next Steps – An Independent Report to HM Government*. London: HM Government

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Music and social media and 'gang culture' as risk factor

The task group was also keen to explore what effect music and the use of social media had in what has been described as 'gang culture'. The task group met with Bang FM DJ Jennifer Ogogle and Junior Reid, a recording artist from Brent. When asked if certain types of music encouraged gangs, membership or lifestyle, Ms Ogogle argued that music may have played a part in gang culture some years ago but that now its role had reduced and that urban music is now mainstream and not a sub culture. When asked if urban music encouraged violence and gang membership, Ms Ogogle said that 'stable young people are not going to hear a tune and then join a gang. Real musicians are not members of gangs, not if they want a career. A number of factors lead to a young person being at risk of becoming involved in a gang but music was not one of these factors.' When asked if YouTube[14] aggravates gang rivalry, Mr Reid thought it did but not directly act as an aggravator of violence saying that 'videos usually don't mention areas or names, just post codes'.

6.3 Girls in gangs

The task group was keen to investigate the role of girls in gangs and was particularly concerned about issues relating to sexual exploitation and violence. Our starting point was the Race on the Agenda (ROTA) report, *Female Voice in Violence*[15]*,* on the impact of serious youth violence and criminal gangs on girls across the country. This said that 'female involvement in serious youth and gang-associated violence is nothing new. For as long as there have been issues of *weapon-enabled crime,* drugs markets and gang conflict in the UK, women have played roles and have been victimised.'

Women and girls can be involved in gangs in a number of ways, all of which impact significantly on their lives, including:

- As foot soldiers, setting up rival gangs;
- As carriers, holding and hiding weapons and drugs'
- As mother figures; and
- Most commonly as girlfriends or to perform sexual acts. They are often passed around gang members and rape is not uncommon.[16]

ROTA's research also found that risk indicators for girls are similar to that of boys, for example:

- Living in a gang-affected area;
- Having a family member or sibling involved in serious offending;
- Non-attendance at school – either through exclusion, truancy or simply non-attendance; and
- Disengagement from family and services.

However, the research suggests that there are additional risk factors for those girls and young women who have become entrenched in gangs and violence. These additional risk factors include:

- Social services and the police had been involved in their lives from the ages of 8-13 in relation to their behaviour;
- While they were not attending school, not all had been excluded; some had simply stopped attending and disengaged; and

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[14] Gangs often post activity and reprisals against rivals on You Tube, either for provocation or as evidence that they were responsible.

[15] ROTA, *Female Voice in Violence Project: A Study into the impact of Serious Youth Violence and Gangs on Women and Girls*, February 2010.

[16] From *Dying to Belong*. See above for full citation.

- They had early sexual experiences that they regretted and had either been victims of sexual violence or exploitation under the age of 18.[17]

The task group asked a number of local agencies about the evidence they had on girl gang activity and the impact on women and girls. The task group was told that there is little evidence that girl gangs exist in Brent. Evidence we received around sexual exploitation was largely anecdotal. However, Victim Support told us that there was a big link between domestic violence and women and girls associated with gangs. They said that they are seeing enough cases to make them concerned about this issue. Westminster Council told the task group that they were concerned about the level of sexual violence and abuse towards women and girls associated with gangs. Their concern was that this was a significant source of hidden harm that had led them to engage a female worker to undertake a mixture of research and one to one assessment work in gang affected areas.

The task group visited the Safer London Foundation, who has developed a number of gender-specific education and intervention programmes. They told us that Croydon Council's partnership had a similar situation to Brent. However, once the organisation was able to reveal the extent of the problem, there were more than 40 girls waiting for assistance. We also heard that a developing trend, in other boroughs where they are working, was that gang members are using rape and multiple perpetrator rape, not just on girls known to gang members or girlfriends of gang members but also targeting women from rival gang areas for the purpose of attacks as reprisals or retaliation.

Ms Sodhi, from the Safer London Foundation, told the task group that to tackle this issue, all agencies, including schools, YOS and Community Safety need proper training to deal with the complex set of problems young women in gangs are exposed to. Moreover, Ms Sodhi stated that this issue must be seen as a safeguarding issue so that measures are taken to ensure that young women are referred into appropriate, gendered services.

Professor John Pitts told the task group that many of London's gang members are regularly travelling to coastal cities, such as Brighton and Bournemouth, to sell drugs. Whilst they are staying there, young women would usually be there for the gang to use as sex slaves or in part-payment in drug deals.

The task group recommends that Brent conduct a mapping exercise in order to understand the nature of the local problem, from which the findings may inform the gangs strategy, recommended above.

6.4 Gangs in Brent
One of the task groups aims was to build on the research undertaken for the *Establishing the reality of gangs in Brent[18]* report, which stated that that there is little evidence of US style gangs in Brent, though some street-based groups of young people, mostly boys, do exist in the south of the borough. The task group received evidence from experts in the Police, academia and those practitioners working across London to help gang members exit who consistently state that the gang problem in London (and Brent) cannot be described in the same way as in some US cities.

According to the Metropolitan Police Service[19], there are 250 recognised gangs and criminal networks in London, comprising of more than 4,500 people. These range from organised

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[17] ROTA, *Female Voice in Violence Project: A Study into the impact of Serious Youth Violence and Gangs on Women and Girls*, February 2010.

[18] Centre for Social and Evaluation Research (2010) *The Reality of Gags in Brent.* London: London Metropolitan University.

[19] Figures from a presentation on Operation Connect in 2011.

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criminal networks involved in Class 'A' and Class 'B' drugs supply and firearms to street-based gangs involved violence, personal robbery and, on occasion, murder.

Of the 250, more than 100 are thought to be the street-based gangs with over 2,000 members. 80% of these street-based gang members are thought to be involved in street-based drug dealing and 88% are also thought to be involved in violence. A report from the Metropolitan Police's Operation Connect shows that individuals who have links to gangs are believed to be responsible for:

- 16% of London's total drug supply;
- 22% of serious violence (including 17% of stabbings and 50% of shootings);
- 17% of personal robbery;
- 12% of all residential burglary (including 26% of aggravated burglary); and
- 4% of all sex offences (including 14% for rape).

The task group met with Tim Champion from the Trident Gang Command Unit, who was recently involved in a three-month assignment in Brent. Mr Champion told the task group that gangs are an issue across London but there are 19 priority London boroughs, and Brent is one of them.

When looking at the prevalence of gangs in Brent it is important to remember that Brent is a relatively young borough, with a quarter of the population under 19. The 2011 census shows that figure represents an increase of 39.8% from 2001 figures. When adding this to the other figures which illustrate Brent's high unemployment rate (10.9%), high levels of deprivation and the increasing strain on public services, the problem becomes even more acute.

Representatives from the Youth Offending Service told the task group that the gang problem in Brent was less serious than elsewhere in London, however there was evidence that the instances of gang affected young people had risen over the previous 18 months. The Youth Offending Service has developed the Gang Affected Database (GAD) which contains corroborated and uncorroborated intelligence.

Brent Police told us that Brent's gangs, like many of London's gangs, are largely based on geographical boundaries, usually associated with specific estates in areas where social housing and deprivation levels are high. This characteristic is particularly relevant to the presence and location of the Church Road Soldiers and the Thugs of Stonebridge, both in areas linked to low incomes and social housing. However, a recent report from a Metropolitan Police analyst pointed out that other gangs are also established across 'broader geographical areas and in areas of comparative affluence, such as the Kensal Green Boys and Thugs For Life'.

Whilst some gangs use colours, bandanas, scarves, hats and jackets to identify themselves, some do not. There is also some debate as to how aligned they are to colours. The Brent Police have said that 'these particular identifiers have been evident in videos that have been uploaded to the internet.' In a departure from what has been known about gangs' territorial allegiances, the Youth Offending Service told the task group that there is some evidence of waning gang allegiances with some individuals moving from one gang to another. They also told us that some gangs, as a unit, have developed ties with other gangs in neighbouring areas.

The map below identifies the 15 active gangs in Brent:

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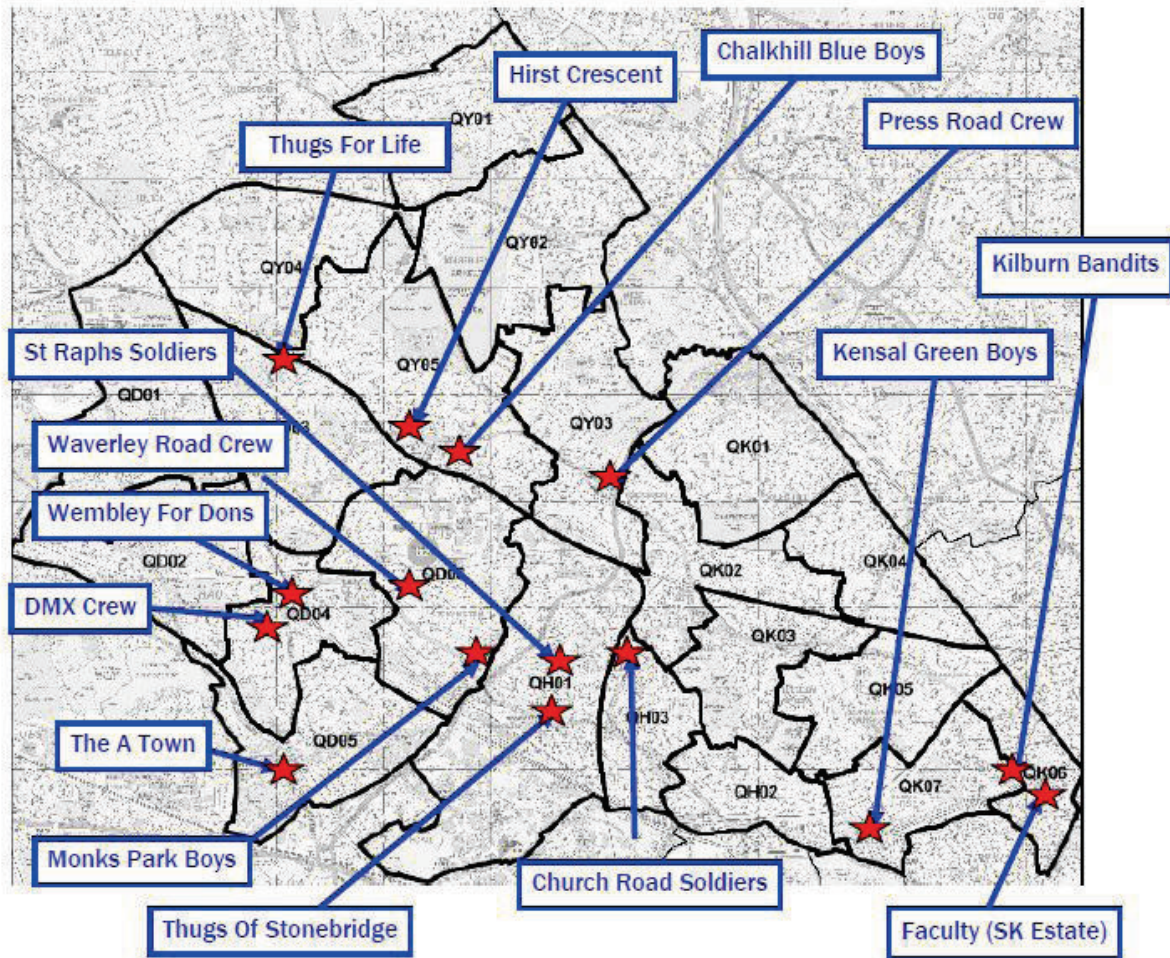
Research, published in 2008, by the Home Office's Tackling Gangs Action Programme (TGAP)[20] on the make up of gangs demonstrates that London has an entirely different narrative compared to the other TGAP areas[21] in the UK, making gang profiles heavily dependent on the make up of local populations. This research stated that in London, 86% of gang members are Black African-Caribbean. According to Metropolitan Police data[22] this seems to be fairly consistent in Brent. When we met with a representative from the Metropolitan Police's Trident Gangs Command Unit, he told us that offenders of gang-related crime, including knife and gun-enabled offences, tend to be male and between 14-15 years old.

Based on arrests and convictions, the main types of offences committed by Brent's street gangs are: firearms offences, drug dealing, robbery burglary, violence and anti-social behaviour.

Drug offences
Brent Police told us that drug supply was an integral part of gang activity for most of the gangs in actively operating in Brent. When we spoke to Mr Champion about the nature of drugs supply among gangs in Brent and London, he said that gangs are now grooming boys as young as 10 years old. These younger boys would be used as runners or scouts for the

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[20] Dawson, P. (2008) Monitoring data from the Tackling Gangs Action Progrmme. London: Home office.
[21] West Midlands, Merseyside, Greater Manchester
[22] MPS Report on Gangs in Brent, based on victim and offender (and suspect) information.

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teenaged boys in local, who, sometimes, would be used by older people with links to organised crime.

Violent Offences

Violent offences are typically classed either as offences of 'Most Serious Violence'[23] and 'Serious Youth Violence'[24]. The table below highlights such offences as a percentage of those two classes:

Offence as % Most Serious Violence	Offence as % Serious Youth Violence
- Wounding / Grievous Bodily Harm – 86%; - Other Violence (unspecified) – 5%; - Assault with Injury – 4%; - Common Assault – 3%; and - Murder – 1%.	- Personal Robbery – 49%; - Wounding / Grievous Bodily Harm – 34%; - Assault with Injury – 10%; - Other Violence (unspecified) – 3%; - Common Assault – 3%; and - Harassment – 1%.

A Metropolitan Police report says that Brent saw a rise in Gun Crime from 2010/2011 to 2011/2012[25] of 10.6%.[26] This figure stands in contrast to Brent's long term reduction of 10.9%, regional[27] reductions of 18.3% and MPS-wide reductions of 11.8% in the same period. The same report stated that there were 575 knife-enable offences in 2011-2012, representing a 12.3% year-on-year increase. As with gun-enabled offences, this figure is also in excess of the regional increase of 6% and the MPS-wide increase of 6.3%. In total, robbery accounted for most (62.3%) of the knife-enabled offences.

The task group had expected to be able to make more exit strategy recommendations but now believes that further mapping, and on-going analysis mapping of gang activity is required. As part of this, life cycle mapping may be useful to track an offender through the various 'touch points' and statutory services he or she has engaged with. This will help to inform what services may need improving to prevent others in choosing such a lifestyle.

6.5 Prevention, intervention and exit services

The task group believes that within any gangs strategy, three main levels of service need to be developed: Prevention, Intervention and Exit.

Prevention services are vital for educating young boys and girls, from the age ten, on the harms of joining a gang and the likely path a gang members' life will follow. The task group heard consistent calls for further work to be done in schools. Three schools programmes the task group heard about are:

- Growing Up Against Gangs and Violence (GAGV) – This is an adaptable programme that can be delivered in schools on various themes to a number of age groups.
- Only Connect – The programme starts with a theatrical presentation that can be delivered to around 250. Only connect offer follow up sessions with hard to reach or at-risk pupils for 12 weeks thereafter.
- Safer London Foundation's Youth Engagement – These projects work with young people at risk of or involved in criminal activity within wards identified by the police as

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[23] Figures from Met Police and based on Financial Year rather than calendar year.
[24] Serious Youth Violence is defined as any offence of Most Serious Violence or Weapon Enabled Crime, where the victim is aged 1-19.'
[25] Years as financial years, not calendar years.
[26] Ibid.
[27] Meaning North West Cluster of local authorities.

having active gangs. Projects include youth panels and youth training of the police to encourage young people who would not normally join such forums to share their experiences, knowledge and views about local crime issues with the police and work together to identify local solutions to reduce crime.

Intervention services will need to be considered when gang members in the community are deemed to be a 'risk' but not necessarily a 'high risk'. Many of the young people will already be known to the Youth Offending Services or Probation. Some may also have an alcohol or drug problem. Others will be involved in gang activity but only doing so because of a lack of options. Most interventions will fall under this category. Whilst we accept this list is not exhaustive, the following are capable of being offered in Brent:

- Addaction – This is a specialist alcohol and drug service delivered to gang involved or affected young people. They engage in one-to-one goal setting, counselling, rehabilitation and gang mediation. They also encourage healthy lifestyle choices and help young people into education, employment or training.
- MAC UK's 'Mini MAC' – The programme combines a Youth outreach worker with a mental health practitioner to engage young people to promote mental health to vulnerable and at risk young people through music in schools and pupil referral units. Mini MAC is open to students of all ages with an interest in DJing, MCing, lyric writing, music production and music performance. It is a great way of improving self-esteem, confidence and creativity.
- Pathways to Progress' Endz United Gang Mediation – The programme offers a 12 week social and life management training programme for conflict mediation whereby gang members learn about their chosen lifestyle and how to resolve the underlying issues that lead them serious youth violence. At the end of the training, an exit strategy called an Ending Youth Violence Consultation is offered.
- GOALS UK – The GOALS programme consists of an intensive three, full-day workshop designed to prepare the young person for work and arm them with the skills to succeed in getting and retaining employment. After the workshop, support is offered for 4 weeks or until education, employment or training has been found.
- Safer London Foundation's Empower- This programme delivers intensive 1:1 support and targeted group work to young women and girls who are at risk of or already experiencing sexual violence, including those involved in gang related activity. The projects are based within co-located multi-agency gangs units and are delivered by highly experienced specialist Young Women's Workers who ensure the project is gendered and accessible to those most at risk. Also delivers group work with young men, workshops for parents and training for professionals.

Exit programmes will represent the last chance a gang member may have in leaving his or her lifestyle behind. The gang members being referred into such programmes will be those who represent a 'high risk' to the community or they and/or their family members are in imminent danger. If the gang member does not engage at this level, enforcement may be the only recourse.The following two programmes are already being delivered in Brent:

- St. Giles Trust's Project SOS – This programme is the first ex-offender led exit programme, whereby a case worker will engage a gang member either in a Young Offender's institution, Prison or in the community. Using their own experiences as credibility, the caseworker will engage and support the young person to exit their lifestyle and re-engage in a positive lifestyle. The caseworker also assists in helping them to access housing, employment or training.
- Safe & Secure – This programme is designed to help gang members and or family members to move away from an imminent danger that being in a gang has put them in.

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The task group have also heard from representatives from other local authorities who developed partnership agreements with St. Giles Trust, MAC UK and Safer London Foundation to embed personnel within their partnerships. The task group believes such integrated programmes need to be evaluated to determine if Brent is a suitable place for such programmes in the future.

Partnership & Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2012/13
Chair Cllr Van Kalwala

Date of Meeting	Agenda item	Requested Information / Evidence	Invited witnesses	Notes
14th June 2012	**Ward Working Annual Report**	A report that details the work of the Ward Working Team in 2011/12	**Christine Collins Cllr Jones Lead member and Member of the Member reference group**	
	Partners for Brent Executive Progress report Q4	A report that sets out progress on delivering the work programme of Partners for Brent	**Jo McCormick Partnership Co-ordinator**	
	Work Programme	A report that sets out a series of options for the committees work programme	**Jacqueline Casson Acting Corporate Policy Manager**	
25th July 2012	**Crime Update**	A report that sets out crime performance information and key issues	**Genny Renard Head of Integrated Offender Management**	
	Integrated Offender Management	A presentation on the key aspects of the policy		
	Changing the delivery of crime reduction - LJAGS	A report on the introduction and operation of Local Joint Action Groups	**Genny Renard Head of Integrated Offender Management**	

Date	Item	Description	Lead	
17th October 2012	**Brent Data – The multiagency data hub with the latest from the census**	A presentation on the most current statistical information coming out of the census	**Cathy Tyson Assistant Director of Policy**	
	Council for Voluntary Service (CVS) Brent Progress Report - Update	Development of a Council for Voluntary Service in Brent - progress on delivering their business plans.	**Jo McCormick Partnership Co-ordinator** **Tessa Awe Chief Executive CVS Brent**	
	The Voluntary Sector in Brent	Setting out the Key aspects of the voluntary community and not for profit sector in Brent	**Jo McCormick Partnership Co-ordinator** **Tessa Awe Chief Executive CVS Brent**	
6th December 2012	**Employment in Brent**	Update on the state of employment in Brent	**Andy Donald Director of Regeneration & Major Projects**	
	Domestic Violence Investigations and White Ribbon Campaign	Report detailing the results of the Domestic Violence investigations carried out in Brent	**Genny Renard Head of Integrated Offender Management**	
	Brent Fire Borough Commander	Service Reductions, Community Safety and Operational - Quality, Readiness and Contingency Planning	**Terry Harrington Brent Borough Commander**	

7ᵗʰ February 2013	**Brent Police Borough Commander**	Policing issues within Brent	**Matthew Gardner Brent Borough Commander**	
21ˢᵗ March 2013	**The Gangs Task Group Report**	Overview of tasks groups findings and recommendations	**Cllr Zaffar Van Kalwala & Christopher Young Corporate Policy Officer**	
	Registered Social Landlord Performance	A overview on the Performance of social Landlords within Brent	**Tony Hirsch Head of Housing Policy & Performance**	
	BHP – Performance Update	Overview of BHP Performances	**David Bishop Performance Manager**	
	Brent Data – The multiagency data hub	Progress update	**Cathy Tyson Assistant Director of Policy**	
June 2013/14	**Employment Enterprise Update**	Update on the how the employment enterprise programme is performing	**Andy Donald Director of Regeneration & Major Projects & Head of Employment Enterprise Programme**	
	Brent Fire Borough Commander	Update on budget, options and changes to Brent Fire Services in 2013	**Terry Harrington Brent Borough**	

			Commander	
	Crime Performance Information - Update	Update - crime performance information and key issues	**TBC** **Head of Integrated Offender Management**	

Other issues the committee would like to cover date to be confirmed:

- *Employment in Brent*
- *Policing in Brent – the Borough Commander will be invited to discuss policing issues in Brent*
- *Registered Social Landlord performance*
- *Council for Voluntary Services – update*
- *Crime Performance Information – regular updates*
- *Partners for Brent – updates on the delivery of their work programme*
- *Update multi agency data hub (census*)
- *Fire Commander – Service performance and reductions in services*
- *Employment Enterprise update*
- *Community Right to Bid - Summary and work to date*