

## **Brent's Resident Attitude Survey 2009**

### **Final Topline Results**

#### **1. Background**

This briefing highlights the key findings from the results of the 2009 Residents' Attitude Survey (RAS). The briefing also highlights comparisons with the 2005 RAS as well as other trend data where relevant and available. Differences between the 2009 RAS and the 2009 Place Survey will also be considered, although due to the different methodologies used (face-to-face and postal respectively) they are not directly comparable. Both the Place Survey and the RAS were undertaken by Ipsos MORI.

The Council has conducted a residents' attitude survey at least once every three years since 1990 and it has been our key mechanism for measuring resident perception of the council and services it provides. The council is considering undertaking a full residents' survey every 2 years in the future as the central mechanism for monitoring the council's improvement agenda and its impact on the locality. The Council is also required to undertake a Place Survey every two years which is a postal survey. The focus of the Place Survey is much more on the local area and how partner agencies such as the Council, Police, NHS Brent etc are working together to improve outcomes for local people.

There are significant differences recorded in answers to the same or similar questions asked in both the Place Survey and RAS. In many cases the RAS demonstrates respondents are more positive about their local area and the services the council provides than seen in the Place Survey results. We believe the results from the RAS are a more robust measure of resident perception and a fair reflection of the improvements the council has undertaken to deliver better quality services to its residents. This is most likely due to the key methodological differences between the RAS and the Place Survey.

The RAS is a face to face survey and this methodology achieved a more representative sample of respondents as compared with our population demographic. The postal survey methodology, as used in the Place Survey, has a number of inbuilt faults. Respondents are self selecting and lower response rates are obtained particularly from younger people, people with literacy problems and people whose first language is not English. Higher weighing factors have to therefore be applied to such groups in postal surveys.

Other contributing factors explaining the difference in responses between the two surveys may be the impact of national issues experienced at the time and also the change in emphasis of the Place

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Survey over its predecessor the best value performance indicator, (BVPI) general survey where there is more emphasis on 'local public services'. This change in methodology could well have been confusing to residents who may not understand these government terms. This could have a particular impact in Brent with our high migrant population and the effect of this change is evident from the fact the Place Survey had a very high error rate for some questions (i.e. respondents did not fill out the form for some questions).

The final RAS results for 2009 are based on 2,243 interviews with adults aged 16+ across the London Borough of Brent. These interviews were conducted face-to-face, in resident's homes between 28<sup>th</sup> May and 26<sup>th</sup> August 2009. The data is weighted by gender, ethnicity, work status and area (ward).

## 2. Key Findings

### 2.1. Overall satisfaction with the council

- Just under two thirds (65 per cent) of respondents overall were satisfied with the way Brent Council runs things in the 2009 RAS. This compares to 48 per cent in 2005 and represents a 17 percentage point increase, this is also the highest level of overall satisfaction recorded by the RAS which, has been carried out since 1990. Prior to the 2009 results there has been a gradual but consistent rise in overall satisfaction since 2000.
- The Place Survey indicates a significant decline in overall satisfaction with the way the Council runs things from 52 per cent in the 2006/7 BVPI survey to 45 per cent in 2009.

	RAS 2009	RAS 2005	Place Survey 2009	BVPI Survey 2006/7
Q15. Taking everything into account, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way Brent Council runs things?	65%	48%	45%	52%

Note: There was a minor change to the wording of this question, the 2005 RAS and 2006/7 BVPI survey asked about satisfaction/dissatisfaction with the way Brent Council is running the Borough. The 2009 RAS and 2009 Place Survey asked about satisfaction/dissatisfaction with the way Brent Council runs things.

## 2.2. Local area

### 2.2.1. Satisfaction with the local area

- In the 2009 RAS over eight in ten (83 per cent) respondents were satisfied with their local area as a place to live. This compares to three quarters (75 per cent) of respondents in the 2005 RAS and represents an eight percentage point increase. Prior to the 2009 RAS results, satisfaction with the local area has consistently remained between 72 to 75 per cent since 1993.
- Both the RAS and the Place Survey indicate that there has been around an eight to nine percentage point increase in satisfaction with the local area as a place to live (as shown on the table below). However, levels of satisfaction in the RAS are considerably higher than those recorded by the Place Survey in 2009 (83 per cent compared to 68 per cent)

	RAS 2009	RAS 2005	Place survey 2009	BVPI Survey 2006/7
<b>Q1 Thinking about your local area how satisfied / dissatisfied are you with this area as a place to live</b>	83%	75%	68%	59%

### 2.2.2. Is your local area getting better or worse?

- Around a quarter of respondents (25 per cent) in the 2009 RAS felt that their local area had got better over the last two years which is consistent with the score in 2005. Fewer respondents felt their local area had got worse (23 per cent in 2009 compared to 27 per cent in 2005) while slightly more felt that not much had changed (40 per cent in 2009 compared to 37 per cent in 2005).

<b>Q2 On the whole do you think that over the past two years your local area has got better, or worse, or not changed much?</b>	RAS 2009	RAS 2005
Better	25%	24%
Worse	23%	27%
Not Changed much	40%	37%
Lived here less than 2 years	11%	10%
Don't know	2%	3%

### 2.2.3. Strong sense of community?

- Over half (51 per cent) of respondents in the 2009 RAS agreed that there was a strong sense of community in their local area, which is a fourteen percentage point increase since 2005 when 37% agreed with this statement.

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- Almost three quarters (74 per cent) agreed that Brent is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together, which is marginally above the figure recorded in the 2005 RAS.

	RAS 2009	RAS 2005
<b>Q5 there is a strong sense of community in my local area</b>	51%	37%
<b>Q7 it is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together*</b>	74%	72%

\*Note: This question was asked in the Place Survey but the scale did not include a neutral option, so it is not possible to compare the results.

### 2.2.4. Influencing decisions in the local area?

- While only around three in ten (32 per cent) of respondents felt that they could influence decisions in the local area this does represent a nine percentage point increase from 2005.
- Furthermore just under, half of respondents (49 per cent) agreed that they would like to be more involved in decision making.

	% Agree	
	RAS 2009	RAS 2005
*Q4 I can influence decisions affecting the local area	32%	23%
**Q18. I would like to be more involved in decisions the Council makes in my local area?	49%	n/a

\*Note: This question was asked in the Place Survey but the scale did not include a neutral option, so it is not possible to compare the results. \*\*Similar question in Place Survey but reply options are yes, no dependent on the issue.

### 2.3. Making somewhere a good place to live

- The top five things that respondents felt are most important in making somewhere a good place to live have remained the same since the 2005 RAS, although the ordering has changed slightly. The level of crime continues to be the most important thing in making somewhere a good place with over half (52 per cent) of respondents identifying this issue (this is compared to 50 per cent in 2005). Levels of crime, is followed by clean streets (41 per cent), health services (32 per cent) and shopping facilities (31 per cent). The first two of these have both moved up a ranking position out of the list of options provided since the last survey and while a slightly higher proportion identified clean streets (up by four percentage points), health services saw a slight decline (down 3 percentage points) as shown on the table below. Shopping facilities has remained in fourth position but experienced a slight decline in the proportion of respondents who identified it (down 4 percentage points). Lastly while public transport remains in the top

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five it has dropped from being in second to joint fourth position and has seen 12 percentage point decline since 2005.

- The results for this question from the Place Survey also identifies levels of crime as the key consideration for residents in making somewhere a good place to live (59 per cent), followed by cleaner streets (51 per cent), public transport (46 per cent) and health services (45 per cent). Shopping facilities which, was in the top five in the 2009 RAS was replaced by affordable decent housing (31 per cent) in the 2009 Place survey.

### Q8. Thinking generally, which of these things below would you say are most important in making somewhere a good place to live?

	RAS 2009		RAS 2005		% change since 2005	Change in rank 05 to 09
	%	Rank	%	Rank		
Levels of crime	52%	1	50%	1	+2%	↔ 0
Clean Streets	41%	2	37%	3	+4%	↑ +1
Health Services	32%	3	35%	4	-3%	↑ +1
Shopping facilitates	31%	4	35%	4	-4%	↔ 0
Public transport	31%	4	43%	2	-12%	↓ -2

\*Note: There are minor changes in the options i.e. in 2005 Low levels of crime, low levels of traffic congestions and low levels of pollution were changed to levels of crime, levels of traffic congestion and low levels of pollution in 2009, which are the same as used in the 2009 Place Survey.

### Thinking generally, which of these things below would you say are most important in making somewhere a good place to live?

Place Survey 2008/9	%
Levels of crime	59%
Clean Streets	51%
Public transport	46%
Health Services	45%
Affordable decent housing	31%

## 2.4. What most needs improving in the local area?

- The top five things that respondents felt most needed improving in the local area has also remained consistent since 2005, again with a slight alteration in terms of the ordering. Levels of crime remains the main thing respondents thought needs improving with 30 per cent of respondents identifying it in 2009 compared to 32 per cent in 2005.
- Around a quarter of respondents thought that activities for teenagers (25 per cent), road pavements and repairs (24 per cent) and clean streets (23 per cent) are in need of improving, followed by levels of traffic congestion (17 per cent).

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Q9	2009		2005		% change since 2005	Change in Rank 05 to 09
	%	Rank	%	Rank		
Levels of crime	30%	1	32%	1	-2%	↔ 0
Activities for teenagers	25%	2	22%	4	3%	↑ +2
Road and pavement repairs	24%	2	28%	3	-4%	↑ +1
Clean streets	23%	4	28%	2	-5%	↓ -2
Level of traffic congestion	17%	5	18%	5	-1%	↔ 0

## 2.5. Satisfaction with council services

- The satisfaction levels with services provided by the council are very positive and have increased for 24 out of the 28 services respondents were asked about and where there is data from the 2005 survey. The highest levels of satisfaction have continued to be with services such as refuse collection (86 per cent), street lighting (85 per cent), parks and open spaces (82 per cent) and recycling facilities (81 per cent) where over eight in ten respondents were satisfied. Over two thirds (69 per cent) were satisfied with libraries and just over half (55 per cent) were satisfied with road and footpath maintenance and road safety and traffic calming (55 per cent).
- The largest increases in satisfaction with local services includes sports facilities (18 percentage point increase since 2005) followed by swimming pools (17 percentage point increase) recycling facilities and street sweeping (both up 16 percentage points), and park and open spaces and car parking (both with a 14 percentage point increase).

Q12 How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the quality of each of the following services in your local area?			Difference in Satisfaction 2005 to 09
	2009	2005	
	% Satisfied		
Refuse collection	86	80	+6
Street lighting	85	75	+10
Parks and open spaces	82	68	+14
Recycling facilities	81	65	+16
Street sweeping	79	63	+16
Libraries	69	57	+12
Road and footpath maintenance	55	50	+5
Road safety and traffic calming	55	44	+11
Sports facilities	49	31	+18
One stop services	48	47	+1
Community safety & crime prevention work	46	34	+12
Primary schools	45	45	0
Car parking	41	27	+14

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- Respondents were most dissatisfied with car parking with over a third (36 per cent) registering dissatisfaction with this service. This is followed by parking enforcement (32 per cent dissatisfied), road and footpath maintenance and public conveniences (both 30 per cent dissatisfied). Swimming pools also make it into the top five services respondents were most dissatisfied with although, there has been a nine percentage point decrease in dissatisfaction with this service since 2005 (as shown in the table below).
- Of the 28 services respondents were asked about and where there is comparative data for 2005 19 have seen a decrease in dissatisfaction since 2005. The largest decreases have been for public conveniences (eleven percentage point decrease) and street sweeping (nine percentage point decrease) and swimming pools (eight percentage point decrease in dissatisfaction).

<b>Q12 How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the quality of each of the following services in your local area?</b>	2009	2005	Difference in Dissatisfaction 2005 to 09
	Dissatisfied		
Car parking	35	37	-2
Parking enforcement	31	29	+2
Road and footpath maintenance	29	35	-6
Public conveniences	31	42	-11
Swimming pools	26	34	-8
Preventing drug and alcohol abuse	24	25	-1
Road safety and traffic calming	23	25	-2
Community safety and crime prevention work	22	28	-6
Youth & community centres	21	20	+1
Sports facilities	20	26	-6

- Furthermore, less than ten per cent of respondents felt that Brent Council services have got worse over the last 12 months, while 18 per cent felt they have got better and 63 per cent felt they have stayed the same in the 2009 RAS.

<b>Q19 Over the last twelve months, do you think Brent Council services have got better, worse or stayed the same?</b>	%
Got better	18%
Stayed the same	63%
Got worse	9%
Lived in Brent for less than 12 months	6%
Don't know	5%

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## 2.6. Value for money

- Over a third (36%) of respondents agreed that the Council gives local people good value for money in the 2009 RAS. This represents a ten percentage point increase compared to the 2005 RAS where 26 per cent agreed.
- The 2009 RAS score for this question is also five percentage points above that recorded in the Place Survey (2009).

	RAS 2009	RAS 2005	Place Survey 2009
Q18.3 How strongly do you agree or disagree that the Council gives local people good value for money?	36%	26%	31%

## 2.7. Listening to the views of local people

- **Over a third (37%)** of respondents in the 2009 RAS agree that the council listens to the views of local people, which is a six percentage point increase on the 2005 RAS score. Since 2000 there has been consistent increase in the proportion of respondents who feel the council listens to local people from 27 per cent in 2000 to 37 per cent in 2009.

	RAS 2009	RAS 2005	Place Survey 2009
Q18.How strongly do you agree or disagree that the Council listens to the views of local people?	37%	31%	n/a

## 2.8. Rating the council

- A series of further questions in the 2009 RAS that asked respondents to rate the Council were generally positive and showing a consistent improvement (where data is available). For example just under, six in ten (59 per cent) of respondents felt that the quality of Council services is good overall and that the Council is easy to contact for help and information. There was a three and eight percentage point increase respectively for both these questions since 2005.
- There were also significant increases in the proportion of respondents who felt that the council is doing a good job for people like me (eight percentage point increase), who felt informed about how Brent Council spends its money and that the Council keeps its promises to local people (there was a eleven and twelve percentage point increase respectively for latter two questions).

**Q18. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?**

	% Agree		Difference between 05 and 09
	2009	2005	
The quality of Council services is good overall	59	56	+3
The Council is easy to contact for help and information	59	51	+8
The Council is helpful when you contact it	51	47	+4
The Council does a good job for people like me	47	39	+8
The Council is well run	44	n/a	
I feel I am informed about how Brent Council spends its money	36	24	+12
The Council keeps its promises to local people	30	19	+11

**2.9. Information about the council**

- Just under half of the respondents (49 per cent) said that they felt informed about the services and benefits provided by the council in 2009 RAS. This compares to 44 per cent in 2005 and is the highest score achieved for this question since 1990 when the question was first asked.

	RAS 2009	RAS 2005
Q20 How well informed do you think Brent Council keeps you about the services and benefits it provides?	49%	44%

**2.10. Information about the council**

- When asked about where respondents obtain most of their information about the Council the Brent Magazine (TBM) has consistently been the most popular option with close to six in ten respondents identifying it (56 per cent). This represents a two percentage point increase since 2005 and a six percentage point increase since 2002.
- TBM is followed by leaflets through the door (31 per cent) although there has been a 16 percentage point decrease in the proportion of respondents identifying it as a source of information about the Council.
- Encouragingly there has been a significant rise in the proportion of people using the Brent Council website to find out information about the Council. Just over one in five (22 per cent) of respondents identified this option which, is an eleven percentage point increase since 2005 and a 16 percentage point increase since 2002.

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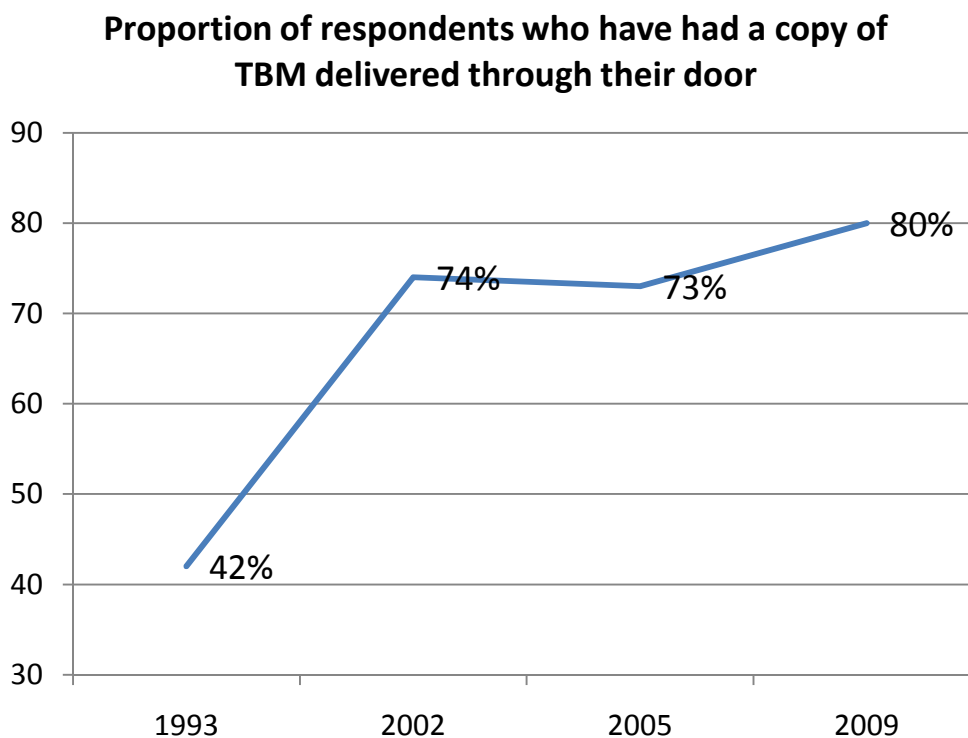
<b>Q21. From which, if any, of the sources on this card do you obtain most of your information about Brent Council?</b>	RAS 2009	RAS 2005	RAS 2002	Difference between 05 and 09
Brent Council's "The Brent Magazine"	56	54	50	+2
Leaflets delivered to your door	31	47	40	-16
Brent Council website (www.brent.gov.uk)	22	11	6	+11
Contact with Council staff	13	17	12	-4
Posters	10	15	7	-5
Friends and neighbours	8	23	19	-15
Other newspaper	8	3	3	+5
Leaflets and notice boards in libraries	7	13	15	-6
Willesden & Brent Times	7	9	13	-2
National newspapers	6	7	9	-1
Wembley & Kingsbury Times	5	4	n/a	+1

- A similar range of sources were identified by respondents in terms of where they would prefer to get their information about the council from, as shown on the table below.

<b>Q22. From which of the sources on this card, would you most like to get your information about Brent Council?</b>	RAS 2009	RAS 2005	RAS 2002	Difference between 2005 and 2009
Brent Council's "The Brent Magazine"	41	47	39	-6
Leaflets delivered to your door	25	41	34	-16
Brent Council website (www.brent.gov.uk)	19	12	8	+7
Contact with Council staff	10	11	8	-1
e-mail	8	4	3	+4
Posters	6	6	5	0
Contact with elected Councillors	4	3	3	+1
Other newspaper	5	2	1	+3
Willesden & Brent Times	4	4	6	0
<a href="http://www.brent.gov.uk/brain">Brain Community website (www.brent.gov.uk/brain)</a>	4	2	1	+2

## 2.11. The Brent Magazine

- The chart below illustrates that the proportion of residents who have received a copy of TBM through their door has almost doubled since 1993 from 42 per cent to 80 per cent in 2009. There has also been a seven percentage point increase since 2005.



- Of those who had seen a copy of TBM, 42 per cent read all of it or most of it which is a six percentage point increase since 2005. While less eight per cent said they never read it compared to ten per cent in 2005 (as shown in the table below).

<b>Q23C Thinking about the most recent issue of “The Brent Magazine” that you have seen, would you say you....?</b>	<b>% 2009</b>	<b>% 2005</b>	<b>Difference between 05 and 09</b>
.... read all or nearly all of it	14	13	+1
.... read most of it	28	23	+5
.... read a few articles	29	28	+1
.... just glanced at it	20	24	-4
.... never read it	8	10	-2
Don't know/can't remember	1	1	0

- Around seven in ten respondents thought TBM contained a lot of useful information (70 per cent) and liked the way it was presented (69 per cent). For each question there was a three and seven percentage point increase respectively since 2005.

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- Around two thirds of respondents thought TBM was well written (65 per cent) and interesting (64 per cent) and there was a ten and twelve percentage point increase respectively for both these questions since 2005.

Q23D How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following?	Agree		Difference between 05 and 09
	2009	2005	
"The Brent Magazine" contains a lot of useful information	70	67	+3
I like the way "The Brent Magazine" is presented	69	62	+7
I like the way "The Brent Magazine" is written	65	55	+10
I find "The Brent Magazine" interesting	64	52	+12

### 2.12. Customer Contact

- The proportion of respondents who have contacted the Council over the last two years has declined from 57 per cent in 2005 to 50 per cent in 2009
- Of those respondents that have contacted the Council over three quarters (78 per cent) did so over the phone, which has increased by seven percentage points since 2005. A significantly smaller proportion contacted the Council in person (thirteen per cent in 2009 compared to 20 per cent in 2005). While six per cent did so via email.

Q25. How did you get in contact with Brent Council on the last occasion that you contacted them?	%	%
	2009	2005
In person	13	20
By phone	78	71
By letter	2	5
By fax	-	n/a
By email	6	n/a
By SMS text messaging on mobile phones	-	n/a
Via the Council's website	1	0
Other	*	1
Don't know/can't remember	-	*

Note in 2005 email/council website were combined = three per cent

- Around two thirds (65 per cent) of respondents felt that it was easy to get hold of the right person (compared to 58 per cent in 2005) while, three quarters (75 per cent) thought that council staff were helpful (compared to 73 per cent in 2005).

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- In 2009 over two thirds (67 per cent) of respondents were satisfied with the handling of their enquiry, while 64 per cent were satisfied with the outcome of their enquiry compared to 58 per cent in 2005.

### 2.13. Community Safety

- Respondents were asked to what extent they felt threatened by crime and if they feel safe walking outside in their local area.
- Just under four in ten (39 per cent) of respondents said that they feel threatened by crime (a fair amount or a great deal) in their local area in the 2009 RAS. This has declined by fourteen percentage points since 2005. While six in ten (61 per cent) of respondents feel not very or not at all threatened by crime, this figure has increased by fourteen percentage points since 2005.

Q32. To what extent, if at all, do you feel threatened by crime in this area these days?				
	%			Difference between 05 & 09
	2009	2005	2002	
A great deal	10	14	17	-4
A fair amount	29	39	41	-10
Not very much	44	39	34	5
Not at all	17	8	8	9
Don't know	1	*	*	*

- The vast majority (88 per cent) of respondents feel safe walking outside in their local area alone during daytime in the 2009 RAS. This has declined marginally by two percentage points compared to 2005 RAS. Findings from the RAS 2009 for this question are nine percentage points higher than those recorded in the Place Survey (2009).
- Around four in ten (43%) respondents feel safe walking outside in their local area alone after dark in the 2009 RAS. This represents a six percentage point increase since 2005. The score for this question in the RAS (2009) is seven percentage points above that recorded in the Place Survey (2009).

	RAS 2009	RAS 2005	Place Survey 2009
Q33 How safe do you feel walking outside in this area alone in the daytime?	88%	90%	79%
Q34 And how safe do you feel walking outside in this area alone after dark?	43%	37%	36%