



**Performance and Finance Select
Committee
8th September 2009**

**Report from the Directors of Finance
and Corporate Resources and Policy
and Regeneration**

For Action

Wards Affected:
ALL

**Report Title: Performance and Finance Review -
Quarter 4 2008/09**

(PRU – 09/10 - 1)

1. Summary

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

2.0 Recommendations

The Executive is asked to:

- 2.1 Note the council's spending, activity and performance in financial year 2008/09.
- 2.2 Agree the funding of election costs of £22k from General Fund Balances as set out in paragraph 5.6

3.0 Background

- 3.1 The success of the council is ultimately measured by the delivery of the priorities within the Corporate Strategy and its jointly agreed outcomes in the Local Area Agreement. That is principally determined by the council's overall strategic planning framework and reviewed through the annual report to Council in November on progress against the Corporate Strategy and the Annual Review published in late summer. Regular Performance and Finance

Review reports allow members to ensure that council finances and performance remain on track to help achieve these priorities.

3.2 Appendices included in this report are as follows:

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

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

4.0 Corporate context

4.1 The long term objectives for Brent were agreed by the council in the Corporate Strategy which sets out the main aims of making Brent a great place, a borough of opportunity and one community. The themes reflect the broad approach in our inter-agency Community Strategy for 2006-10 and also results of local polling about residents' concerns. These aims need to be achieved within the context of a reduction in real terms in government grant, members' ambitions to keep council tax increases low, and significant budget pressures resulting from, amongst other things, demographic pressures, the increasing costs of waste disposal and increased cost of continuing care.

4.2 This year we have started reporting against the new set of National Indicators. The aim of these is to reflect more clearly the performance of the council and partners, acting as evidence for the new Comprehensive Area Assessment which will be introduced in April 2009. Brent has had consistent success in improving incrementally. To continue to improve at the same rate as other councils, Brent is changing its approach to improvement. The council is now preparing its road to excellence with an Improvement and Efficiency strategy aimed at delivering better services to local residents.

4.3 Continuous improvement has been at the centre of our approach to service development and financial planning, and we have demonstrably raised the effectiveness, relevance and quality of our public services. Despite these real and sustained improvements, the organisation has recognised the need to go beyond reliance on silo based or incremental approaches to secure future changes in performance and efficiency. In September 2008, Brent launched an ambitious change programme set out in the new Improvement and Efficiency Strategy. The change programme is structured around three themes:

- *Making the 'One Council' approach a reality*
Development of the organisational infrastructure and establishment of a Business Transformation department to integrate critical support functions
- *Raising performance and maximising efficiency*
A raft of integrated projects and service reviews run by cross council teams to develop and implement more customer-focused and effective service delivery models across the council.
- *Delivering on major projects*
Delivering large capital schemes notably the Civic Centre, the expansion programme for schools, regeneration of Wembley and South Kilburn and the North Circular Road project

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

5.0 Overall financial position

General Fund Revenue budget

5.1 The 2009/10 budget report to Council on 2 March 2009 included projections of the outturn for 2008/09. The accounts for 2008/09 have now been closed and were approved at General Purposes Committee on 30 June 2009. The

accounts are subject to audit and therefore the figures are provisional until the audit is completed at the end of September.

- 5.2 The table below summarises the provisional outturn for 2008/09 and further information is included in Appendix E.

Table 1 – Provisional Revenue Outturn for 2008/09

	Q3 Forecast £'000	Outturn £'000	Change £'000
Children and Families	58,291	58,388	97
Environment and Culture	48,108	48,454	346
Housing & Community Care:			
o housing and customer services	20,330	20,153	(177)
o adult social care	87,151	87,689	538
Finance & Corporate Resources/Central Units	21,603	21,452	(151)
Service Area Total	235,483	236,136	653
Central items	37,740	37,046	(694)
Area Based Grants	(16,209)	(16,209)	0
Total council budget	257,014	256,973	(41)
Application of balances	(1,042)	(1,001)	41
Total after application of balances	255,972	255,972	0

- 5.3 The main movements in service area spending since the forecast outturn was reported is as follows:

- Environment & Culture –

The most significant issues in Environment and Culture are the impact of the collapse in the housing market on land search income, reduced income from parking, increased inflation on contract costs, the effect of energy cost increases and additional costs associated with compulsory recycling. These pressures contributed to a forecast overspend of £435k in quarter 3. The position for quarter 4 has further worsened by £346k to an overspend of £781k. The full effects of the loss in the parking income are now known and amount to £508k although a significant element of this was already factored into the quarter 3 forecasts. Environment and Culture have achieved a number of operational savings since quarter 3, however some of the anticipated savings particularly within Streetcare and Transportation have not been realised.

- Adult Social Care –

The overspend in Adult Social Care has worsened from £629k to £1.167m since quarter 3. Throughout the year there have been pressures on the budget through increases in nursing care, home care and residential placement costs across Adult Social Care. Furthermore there have been issues over the pace of change of the transformation programme particularly

around the delivery of self-directed support and direct payments. Quarter 4 has seen the position on Mental Health deteriorate by £200k primarily due to redundancy costs associated with the care in the community contract with the PCT. Additional demand pressures have also seen Learning Disability's increase by £167k. Higher than expected costs associated with the transformation programme have not been offset by transformation savings achieved during the year.

- Finance and Corporate Resources/Central Units –

The corporate units have seen their position improve from a forecast deficit of £125k in quarter 3 to a surplus quarter 4 principally due to improved efficiency on assessments in Location Taxation and additional grants in Information Technology.

- 5.4 The outturn for central items is £694k better than forecast. The ability to maintain investment income levels and the restructuring of £64.75m of long-term debt has benefited the Capital Financing budget in 2008/09 and also enabled the required contribution to the Capital Financing Reserve to be lower than previously estimated. The other main elements include lower than anticipated expenditure on Civic Centre/Property Repairs and Maintenance, lower savings from the Efficiency Programme and unfavourable accounting adjustments relating to internal debtors/creditors.
- 5.5 The overall position for the Council is a slight improvement of £41k against the previously assumed year end position. The Council's 2009/10 budget includes the use of £0.5m of balances brought forward from 2008/09. This means that the forecast of balances at 31 March 2010 is now £8.054m, compared to £8.013m when the 2009/10 budget was set.
- 5.6 The Council incurred costs of £22k relating to the recent elections. Given the slightly improved outturn position it is recommended that these costs be charged against balances in the current year.
- 5.7 The budget monitoring position covering the first quarter of 2009/10 will be reported to the Executive in September. Risks to the budget were set out in the report to Council in March 2009. Despite the fact that recession began to impact on service budgets during 2008/09 the Council was able to balance its books overall. It is clear that the effects of the recession will continue into 2009/10, increasing the need for robust monitoring of the budget throughout the year.

Housing Revenue Account

- 5.8 The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) is a ring-fenced account containing the income and expenditure relating to the Council's Landlord duties for more than 9,000 dwellings.
- 5.9 The HRA outturn for 2008/09 is a surplus of £4.4m which is £2.2m more than previously forecast. The main reasons are variances relating to repairs and

maintenance expenditure, provisions for bad and doubtful debts, interest income, communal services costs chargeable to the General Fund Account, income from commercial rents and management costs.

Schools Budget

- 5.10 The ring-fenced Schools Budget is split into two parts. The first part delivers delegated funding to schools - school budget shares. The second part is termed central items expenditure and covers local authority retained elements to support activities such as pupil referral units and payments to non maintained nurseries.
- 5.11 The central items budget for 2008/09 was £19.1m and there was an adverse outturn variance of £428k, due to increased numbers of children having special education needs (SEN) statements in schools. The overspend was met by earmarked central items' reserve, which now stands at £671k. An SEN review is being undertaken which will amongst other things seek to identify measures to reduce pressures on SEN budgets.

Capital programme

- 5.12 Total spending on the capital programme in 2008/09 was £108.290m, made up of £91.686m on the General Fund and £16.604m on the Housing Revenue Account. Changes between the forecast outturn and actual outturn are set out in Table 2 below.

Table 2 - Changes between forecast and actual capital outturn

	£'000
Spending	
Forecast spending outturn – March 2009	122,202
<i>Add items not included in the forecast outturn</i>	
Revenue contributions from General Fund	6,208
Revenue contributions from HRA	45
Enfranchisement Schemes	462
Additional external grant	1,999
Additional Contributions	5,042
Additional Self Funded Prudential Borrowing	2,681
Additional Prudential Borrowing for School Loan Schemes	1,517
Additional HRA Unsupported Borrowing	6,587
Overspends	1,899
Other Amendments	65
Sub-total	148,707
Less:	
Amounts carried forward to 2009/10	(40,417)
Total spending	108,290
Less:	
Total resources	(108,290)
Amount Carried Forward	0

5.13 Significant additions to the previous outturn forecast include:

Revenue Contributions from General Fund

- £6.086m contributions to meet the capitalisation of sums meeting the definition of capital expenditure originally incurred within the revenue accounts.

Additional External Grant

- £1.132m Building Schools for the Future
- £0.495m Additional Ringfenced Children & Families Grant notifications
- £0.311m Adults and Social Care Framework-i funding.

Additional Contributions

- £3.924 contributions towards Metropolitan Housing Trust lease back schemes. This matter was reported to Executive on 19th January 2009.
- £0.402m contribution from South Kilburn Trust towards purchase of Marshall House properties as part of regeneration scheme.
- £0.122m contributions from BACES and One Stop Shop towards Harlesden Library scheme.

Additional Self Funded Borrowing

- £1.350m Civic Centre scheme implementation.
- £0.756m Wembley Park Sports Ground.
- £0.342m Single Accounting System implementation.

Additional HRA Unsupported Borrowing

- This sum relates to the requirement to undertake unsupported borrowing in lieu of the capital receipt to be arising on the transfer of Granville New Home properties to Brent Housing Partnership.

Overspends

- £1.414m overspend arising on the Wembley Manor Primary School scheme. This has arisen primarily as a result of increases in contract works costs due to poor communication between consultants and contractors which has led to additional re-design and planning costs plus additional time on site. Children and Families are currently investigating means by which elements of this overspend can be recouped.

- 5.16 As can be seen from Table 2, capital expenditure commitments of £40.417m have been carried forward from 2008/09 to 2009/10. Table 3 below sets out the main commitments.

Table 3 - Analysis of capital expenditure carried forward to 2009/10

	£'000
<u>Schemes Carried Forward:</u>	
- Children's Centre Sure Start Grant	668
- Schools Devolved Formula Grant	4,427
- School Schemes	11,552
- Youth Service Schemes	165
- Environment Schemes	3,187
- Libraries Schemes	1,135
- Improving Information Grant	250
- Adults Schemes	232
- PSRSG and DFG	88
- New Units	140
- Housing Schemes	126
- Customer Services Schemes	14
- Property Schemes	917
- ICT Schemes	336
- Local Area Agreements	1,201
- Central Items	847
Section 106 Agreements	9,251
HRA Works	1,939
<u>Wembley Regeneration Land Claims:</u>	

- Estate Access Corridor	2,235
- Stadium Access Corridor	1,707
Expenditure Carried Forward to 2009/10	40,417

- 5.17 The first quarter monitoring for 2009/10 will be included in the Performance and Finance Review report to the Executive in September. This will include changes to the 2009/10 to 2012/13 programme to reflect slippage from 2008/09.
- 5.18 One area members should note that will have an impact on the Quarter 1 monitoring is the Growth Area Fund Programme. This was introduced by the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) in 2008/09 with the intention of bringing forward housing growth to aid in meeting the governments housing targets. Although the funding was not earmarked its purpose is to support housing development through the provision of key infrastructure. There is no timeframe attached to the utilization of this funding.
- 5.19 The Council first bid on the basis of provision in the Wembley Regeneration area and was successful in securing £2m of capital funding for 2008/09. The CLG subsequently requested that the Council submit a revised Programme of Development to match its housing development ambitions including specific items such as junction improvements, supporting new bus routes, relocation of industry and the provision of open space. The Council's re-submission again concentrated on the Wembley Regeneration area and as a result further allocations have been secured of £2.663m in 2009/10 and £2.684m in 2010/11.
- 5.20 There has been some initial consideration around potential utilisation of the grant funding, none of which has yet been expended, and it has been proposed that although utilisation should concentrate on the Wembley area, as per the submissions, an element of the funding should also be utilised to forward schemes in the South Kilburn Regeneration Area. It is considered that monies utilised in the funding of schemes in South Kilburn could at a later date produce capital receipts which could be re-invested in the Wembley area. There is a report on South Kilburn elsewhere on this agenda which provides additional detail.
- 5.21 A further report will be submitted to the Executive when options for the use of the capital funding have been developed, for consideration and approval.

Prudential Indicators





- 5.22 Prudential indicators were introduced as part of the prudential borrowing regime introduced as part of the Local Government Act 2003. The arrangements are aimed at ensuring authorities exercise their borrowing powers responsibly, with capital expenditure plans that are affordable, external borrowing that is prudent and sustainable, and treasury management decisions taken in accordance with good professional practice. Prudential

limits are set as part of the budget process and monitored during the year. The Executive will receive the annual report on Treasury Management in August and this will include the final outturn against the prudential indicators.

6.0 Overall performance position

Corporate Strategy

- 6.1 Overall the council has made good progress towards delivering the key objectives in the Corporate Strategy in quarter 4 of 2008/09 with the majority of Vital Signs indicators considered critical to the success of the council performing broadly in line with target. 63% are currently on target (green star) or just below target (blue circle) and 27% are well below target (red triangle).

Overall Council Performance				
				
	Low risk	Medium risk	High risk	No data
Percentage Outturn PIs	46%	17%	27%	10%

More detailed trend data and comments on these indicators are available in Appendix F. A number of indicators do not have performance targets in Quarter 4 due to the introduction of the new national indicator set and the need to set baselines.

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

Local Area Agreement 2006-09

- 6.4 Brent's LAA 2006-09 is due to finish in 2009. This agreement is comprised of 12 stretch targets with an associate performance reward grant (PRG) of over £8m. The majority of LAA priorities for 2006-09 achieved their agreed stretch target, with many significantly overachieving:
- 4) Reducing Domestic Violence
 - 5) Reducing Accidental Fires
 - 6) Street cleaning (provisional data)
 - 10) Disadvantaged Groups into Employment a) Disadvantaged Jobs

(achieved in part – provisional data). This is due to a process of reclassification and verification currently underway for the first 2 years of the target.

- 14) Housing and Council Tax Benefits Processing Times
- 28) Healthy schools
- 29) Extended schools
- 31) Children and Young People Sports Participation (provisional data)
- 38) Volunteering (provisional data)
- 30) Improving Educational Outcomes for Looked after Children – data is not available until October / November 2009, although both targets are expected to be achieved.

6.5 The following three stretch targets have either not achieved their target or are high risk:

- Smoking cessation: a) 4 week quit NRF areas b) 13 week quit
Whilst data is still provisional, it is clear that the smoking stretch target has not been achieved. Funding for the smoking cessation programme has been re-instated, however, and performance has already improved for 4 week quits in Neighbourhood Renewal Fund areas, increasing to 261 (compared to 55 in 2007/08). Despite this improvement numbers for 13 week quit have dropped to 3 for 2008/09 (2007/08 figure was 26). Performance is expected to improve as the programme matures.
- Adults Participating in Sport and Physical Activity
The result from the last activity people survey published in December 2008 was 19.5%. This is significantly below target. A key risk is the impact of the recession which might affect people's spending patterns, for example payment of memberships. Key actions being undertaken include promoting sports facilities and activities through special offers and promotions, for example free swimming for OAP's.
- 10) Disadvantaged Groups into Employment b) BME jobs achieved
A recent audit highlighted that previous reported figures have been significantly overestimated. Data verification processes are still underway but at this stage a new provisional figure of 809 is still below target. To achieve 60% of PRG, numbers will need to improve to 926 and to achieve 100% they will need to increase to 968. An intensive process is currently underway within the regeneration team to finalise the reclassification of the data, this will be a top priority over the next few weeks to improve numbers. Despite this, numbers for this indicator have been particularly strong in 2008/09 with 651 jobs sustained for people from BME groups.

Local Area Agreement 2008-11 Refresh

6.6 From January to March 2009, the LAA annual refresh was undertaken with Government Office for London (GOL). As part of this process, a number of changes was negotiated which are detailed in appendix G. Brent's final LAA has now been approved (see appendix G). Brent's LAA 08-11 now has a total of 29 indicators, seven of which are local indicators. Stretch targets continuing

from LAA 06-09 include: reducing accidental residential fires and Children's sport participation. Volunteering has been added as a new indicator. Economic indicators affected by the recession (NI 152, NI154, NI155) will be subject to further negotiations which will take place in January 2010. Performance reward grant (PRG) for the LAA 2008-11 is £2,151,040 of which nearly £600k (28%) is capital. The calculation for the payment of PRG has changed, in that we will receive 40% of PRG if we achieve an average of 60% across all LAA targets. This change makes achieving individual LAA targets particularly important as lower performance on an indicator will increase the need to achieve better performance on other indicators.

Performance Summary

- 6.7 Performance for the new LAA 2008-11 is mixed. A summary table is provided below:

Priorities not achieving target	5
Priorities with delayed data - at high risk of not achieving target	4
Priorities not achieving target but within 10-15% of the target	1
Priorities which have achieved or exceeded target	10
Priorities deferred or baseline year	9

Priorities not achieving target

- 6.8.1 **16) Reducing Substance Misuse: NI 40 Drug users in effective treatment**
 Performance for quarter 3 was 934 drug users being in effective treatment after 12 weeks of continuous treatment, this is below annual target of 1000*. The majority of organisations which contribute to the achievement of this target are currently over-performing with only a few not reaching target. However, performance for most under-achieving organisations is expected to improve in quarter 4. **there is a 3 month lag in reporting*
- 6.8.2 **17) Tuberculosis (Local)**
 The increase treatment completion rate was 82% in 2008, below the target of 83.5%. Several key actions are underway to improve rates in Brent. Brent's TB network has looked at service delivery and commissioning across Brent & Harrow. A joint Brent/Harrow service level agreement and contract has been developed. Future milestones include further training to GPs and practise staff so that an early diagnosis can be obtained.
- 6.8.3 **25) Youth Crime Prevention: NI 111 First time entrants to the youth justice system aged 10-17**
 Annual performance for 2008/09 was 259 which exceeds the annual target of 239 (smaller is better). This may increase further due to the time it takes to receive all notifications from out of borough partner agencies. However, it is less than the Youth Offending Service's proposed new annual target (285) which was set in anticipation of an increase in full time entrants resulting from improved information sharing. The calculation of this indicator will change next year and these figures are not comparable with targets outlined for 08/09 and 09/10.

6.8.4 27) Improving Outcomes for looked after children (LAC): NI 63 Stability of placements of looked after children

Performance for the year is significantly less than the target of children and young people meeting the criteria for stable placements. This is a consequence of Brent's success in diverting some young people from becoming looked after. The council is addressing related issues through a dedicated Care Planning service who will be able to provide focussed support to LAC and their placements.

6.8.5 35) Brent Carers: NI 135 Carers receiving needs assessment or review and specific carer's service or advice and information

The target for 2008/09 was not achieved with provisional figures at 14.98%. Many actions are being undertaken to provide additional support and guidance to carers and improve the quantity and quality of assessments.

Priorities with delayed data - at high risk of not achieving target

6.8.6 26) Child Obesity: NI 56 % Primary children in yr 6 – obese

Data from 2007/08 showed that 22.5% of children were obese, raising the possibility that we may not meet the target set for the 08/09 (results available in December 2009). The PCT is working with partners to build capacity and raise awareness through training. A strong collaborative approach is being adopted to tackle obesity. Key actions include feeding into policies on housing, green spaces, sporting facilities, marketing and reducing the availability of junk food on the high street.

6.8.7 19) Adult Obesity: NI 121 Mortality rate from all circulatory diseases at ages under 75

The 2008 figure for this indicator will not be available until June 2009. The latest data available is for 2005-2007 which is 89 (rate per 100,000). This is an increase on the baseline rate of 85 and above the 2008/09 target of 84. However, the PCT still predicts a downward trend on the basis that this may not be statistically significant. Currently an obesity strategy is being developed jointly with Brent Council and key actions are being undertaken such as weight management classes, walking programmes and referral programmes from GPs to sports centres.

6.8.8 20) Improving Sexual Health: NI 112 Under 18 Conception rate

Figures for 2008 will not be available until early 2010 due to a delay in reporting. The latest 2007 data is a rate of 44, exceeding the 2008 target of 31.6. This is an increase on the 2006 baseline year of 40. Reasons behind the increase particularly reflect the lack of focus on preventative services in schools and colleges. To address this gap, services have been commissioned to deliver advice and support services in schools and youth settings.

6.8.9 23) Additional Housing: NI 154 Net additional homes provided

This is an annual measure with a target of providing an additional 915 self contained homes. In 2007/08 only 791 additional new homes were achieved, falling short of the target. Final 2008/09 performance figures are not due until

later in the year but there is a high risk to not achieving target due to the impact of the recession. New housing starts are reducing and there is evidence that in instances where construction has commenced, developers are delaying internal decorating that allows new homes to be habitable in the hope that the market will improve soon. The effects of the recession on this indicator are recognised nationally and this indicator will be re-negotiated in 2010.

Priorities not achieving target but within 10-15% of the target

6.8.10 11) Access to employment for social housing tenants: NI 152 Working Age people on out of work benefits

Performance was only slightly above 14% target at 14.04% (where smaller is better). It is anticipated that performance will increase as the effects of the recession become more apparent. Currently there is a lag with no data available for the period time of the recession. Due to these economic factors, Brent will re-negotiate the target in 2010 during the next refresh.

Comprehensive Area Agreement (CAA)

- 6.9 Our final CPA score for 2008/09 is 3 stars and improving strongly. A new set of national indicators has been put in place to measure performance in the new CAA regime. 29 of the national indicators are the focus of the Local Area Agreement. The new regime began on the 1st April 2009.

Specific Performance Issues

Youth

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

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

Schools

- 7.1 Although reported figures show improvement this quarter for both primary and secondary schools, the council still has high numbers of children waiting more than 6 weeks for a school place. The underlying problem is a shortage of places in schools; a situation experienced by a number of neighbouring boroughs, where schools are almost at capacity. Brent has set out a strategy to deal with this involving close monitoring and expansion of existing provision in the borough in the medium term.
- 7.2 Brent schools have recorded their best ever GCSE results. 56% of pupils achieved the new benchmark of 5 A-C GCSEs, including English and Maths, compared to 51% in 2007. This is well above the national average of 48% and

the London average of 51%. Brent is now ranked in the top 20 of 150 local authorities for GCSE results, for the progress students make in school and also for the greatest GCSE improvement over the last ten years.

Children's Social Care

- 7.3 Work overseen by the Children's Social Care Transformation Board to both improve the health and well-being of children by providing help when they need it and reduce projected overspends has resulted in some success. Challenges for the transformation board over the year included the complexity of cases and ability to provide foster care in-house. In addition, the service has seen an increase in demand of around 50% which has put some pressure on the ability to meet original savings targets' and staffing levels which are being reviewed. The service is moving to a locality working based model which should help progress the transformation work.

Special Educational Needs

- 7.4 The Special Educational Needs Advisory Service is working closely with the PCT and will review progress regularly to promote better performance over the next year. The SEN service is due to be reviewed during 2009/10 as part of the new transformation programme.

Crime

- 7.5 We have made Brent a safer place: overall acquisitive crime has decreased by 21 % compared to last year. The rate of serious acquisitive crime has also been consistently low throughout the year. We are successfully tackling domestic violence in the borough with all of the DV indicators performing well (please note that ineffective / cracked cases data is currently provisional).

Temporary accommodation

- 7.6 Our strong performance for this indicator has contributed to Brent receiving a CPA rating of four stars for housing services. This remains a challenging target and we are still assessing what further impact there might be from the recession. Brent is one of nine authorities piloting the government mortgage rescue scheme and is placing a greater emphasis on prevention to look to improve performance.

Planning

- 7.7 There has been a marked improvement in the percentage of major planning applications determined within the allotted timeframe. Minor and planning applications being determined within the set time is being affected by the number of applicants pursuing a section 106 agreement alongside their planning application.

Libraries

- 7.8 The number of library visits has seen a slight improvement in this quarter but has not yet hit target, mainly due to refurbishment work in the south of the borough. As yet, this has not had an impact on the number of active borrowers but is expected to improve numbers in the long term. The reopening of Kingsbury Library Plus has resulted in a rise in the number of borrowers there and the next stage of refurbishments at Neasden has been

completed. This is expected to have a positive effect on performance in the year ahead.

Adult Social Care

- 7.9 This is a baseline year for many of the indicators and as such there are some without outturn targets for 2008/9. The adult social care transformation programme has seen success in the provision of a better value for money transport service. It is working to deliver the personalisation agenda more effectively with the restructuring of asset and care management services.

Revenues and Benefits

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

Human Resources

- 7.11 There has been an improvement in performance this quarter due to the review of the sickness policy and a workshop for managers that was put in place in 2008/09. The percentage of workforce agency staff has shown some improvement this quarter and a review of approaches for managing agency staff has been proposed to help improve performance in the next financial year.

8.0 Financial implications

- 8.1 These are set out in the body of the report.

9.0 Legal implications

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

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

10.0 Diversity implications

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

11.0 Background documents

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

12.0 Contact officers

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DUNCAN McLEOD Director of Finance and Corporate Resources

PHIL NEWBY Director of Policy and Regeneration
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