



**Full Council**  
22 November 2010

## **Report from the Executive**

Wards Affected:  
ALL

### **The First Reading of the 2011-2012 Budget Priorities for the Administration**

#### **1.0 Summary**

- 1.1 This report sets out the Administration's priorities for the Financial Year 2011-2012 and should be read in conjunction with the Council's new Borough Plan (formerly the Corporate Strategy) 'Brent our Future 2010-14' and the concurrent report from the Director of Finance and Corporate Services.

#### **2.0 Recommendations**

- 2.1 That Council approves the Borough Plan (previously circulated widely including to all Members) as the definitive statement of Priorities over the next four years for the Administration.
- 2.2 That the Council is recommended to consider the broad budgetary priorities set out in this report alongside the Director of Finance and Corporate Services paper and debate them as set out in Standing Orders 25A and 44.

#### **3.0 Introduction**

- 3.1 The format of this report has in previous years consisted of a statement of the Administration's priorities for spending in the next financial year to deliver the Corporate Strategy and a Part 2 which sets out progress against the strategy over the past year.
- 3.2 The format this year has changed somewhat for two reasons. Firstly this in the first year of the new Borough Plan (Corporate Strategy) and therefore a delivery report is not appropriate. Secondly and more profoundly the current funding position the Authority finds itself in after

CSR (and anticipating the December Local Government Finance Settlement) makes the nature of prioritisation significantly different.

#### **4.0 The Context**

4.1 The concurrent report of the Director of Finance & Corporate Services sets out clearly the projected gap in next year's budget of approximately £36.7m which has been driven by the withdrawal of grant by Central Government.

4.2 Given the scale of the savings to be made the first priority of the Administration therefore is to continue to deliver essential services whilst also delivering a balanced budget.

4.3 As the Government has 'front-loaded' their cuts it means in the next financial year the Council will need to make considerable savings over and above those already identified in the July Budget report to Council and anticipated in the medium term financial strategy. Whilst we have confidence that the 'One Council Programme' will deliver around £21m of savings in 2011-2012 our projection is that there will need to be found in the region of a further £16m to achieve a balanced budget. The final definitive sum cannot be stated until after the Local Government settlement is announced on 6th December 2010.

4.4 We will therefore be looking for further savings through the One Council Programme and are also undertaking a Fundamental Review of all the Council's activities. Any savings identified from this will feed into the Budget Building process.

#### **5. The Priorities**

5.1 Given the context we describe above it is our intention to take forward our Borough Plan by concentration on activity in five core areas.

5.1.1 We will continue to support our commitment to regeneration and the economy of the Borough. We believe that the long-term well-being of local people is critical and we will continue to make investment and concentrate resources so that long-term benefits accrue. We are determined to use the concentration and rationalization of resources which the new Regeneration & Major Projects Service offers us to seize opportunities and to drive forward the approach we set out in the Borough Plan building a better long-term economic base for the Borough and providing jobs and facilities for local people.

5.1.2 In this most difficult of times we will continue to prioritise support to protect in the most vulnerable of our residents. Whatever changes we make we will ensure that our Social Care offer is second to none and that we will deliver the best possible services to both Children & Adults.

5.1.3 We will take forward our pledge to make residents neighbourhoods cleaner, safer, and greener. We remain absolutely committed to

making local environments better places and we will be making major effort over the next year and beyond to reduce our carbon emissions and also the direct tax that has been placed on them. We will build on our Ward Working approach and the next generation of Total Place/Community Based budgeting to make all public services more responsive to and more focused on the needs of our residents.

- 5.1.4 As authors of this Borough Plan we will develop a more strategic relationship with our local Partners and Neighbours. Investing in joint shared service provision where that delivers better service and value for money for residents. We will recast our relationship with schools to provide top quality services that schools will wish to buy into. We will ensure that in the difficult climate whatever we do adds up to better outcomes for local people.
- 5.1.5 We will recast our services offer to fit in with the financial realities we face and to deliver on our Borough Plan pledges. We will work harder than ever to drive forward efficiencies and improvements. Whenever we make major changes we will ensure that whatever we do will improve the services we provide. In our approach to Customer Services, Libraries and other key services to the public we will ensure that what we achieve will provide a better overall service for local people.

## **6. Conclusion**

- 6.1 The delivery of our Borough Plan goes hand-in-hand with our approach to tackling the unprecedented financial difficulties we have now been placed in. We will not as a Council retreat from the business of providing services to our residents and become merely an 'enabler'. We will strive to deliver on all aspects of our Borough Plan, implementing efficiencies, linking with Partners using every means at our disposal to deliver on our promises whilst staying within the boundaries of financial prudence. We pledge to take actions to make the Borough better for all its residents to deliver beneficial long-term change and to leave the Borough a better place at the end of our four year term.

**ANN JOHN**  
**LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

Report – Full Council - First Reading Nov 2010