



**Executive  
15 February 2011**

**Report from the Director of  
Regeneration and Major Projects**

Wards affected:  
ALL

**Brent Regeneration Strategy 2010-2030**

**1.0 Summary**

- 1.1 This report introduces a proposed new twenty year Regeneration Strategy for the Borough, to replace the current Strategy, first published in 2001. It sets out the rationale for the new strategy and gives details of the proposed new priorities that will be used to maximise investment into the Borough in order to deliver the ambitious twenty year vision.

**2.0 Recommendations**

- 2.1 That Members approve and endorse the new Regeneration Strategy 2010 - 2030, as set out in Appendix 1.

**3.0 Detail**

**3.1 Background**

- 3.1.1 The Council's current Regeneration Strategy was launched back in 2001, since which time it has prioritised and guided the Council's regeneration activity.
- 3.1.2 The document laid out an ambitious twenty year vision to transform the Borough with a specific focus on those people and places most in need. It also provided a strong strategic focus for the delivery of regeneration activity in Wembley to ensure the benefits to local people were maximised.
- 3.1.3 Delivery of the vision centred on the six strategic priorities outlined below:
- To reduce the gaps between the most deprived communities and the rest of London, and in particular to focus on the neighbourhoods of South Kilburn, St Raphaels/Brentfield/Roundwood, Church End, Stonebridge and Harlesden;

- To reduce unemployment levels across Brent to below the London average, concentrating efforts on those people most in need;
- To increase income levels across Brent to above the London average and promote measures to retain this wealth within the Brent economy;
- To promote a landmark development of regional and national significance at Wembley creating an identity for the Borough and ensuring substantial local benefit;
- To ensure a consistently high quality of life for all Brent residents – incorporating the provision of decent homes for all, high quality facilities, low levels of crime, healthy living and town centres that meet the needs of local people;
- To take positive preventative action in those areas most at risk of decline in the future.

3.1.4 These priorities set the direction for a clear programme of activity based on evidenced local need and instigated a new approach to ensure resources were focused within priority neighbourhoods (outlined above), identified through their deprivation levels.

3.1.5 This in turn paved the way for the New Deal for Communities, Neighbourhood Renewal, Brent in2 Work and London Development Agency Area programmes and ensured funding through national and regional government channels was appropriately targeted to address Brent specific issues rather than be imposed from the centre. Using the Regeneration Strategy, the Council has been able to demonstrate added value to funders and long term sustainability to their investment. External funding from these sources has equated to well over £100 million over the past 10 years. The document also set a clear rationale for the negotiations of the Wembley regeneration area to help secure a comprehensive Section 106 Agreement to support the Borough's plans and ambitions.

3.1.6 The Strategy provided a clear rationale for developing specific partnerships to meet our delivery needs and ensured all partners were clear from the onset about their roles and responsibilities and that they fully understood the long term outcomes of their contributions.

3.1.7 An overview of some of the regeneration achievements since 2001 is listed within the new strategy in appendix 1 but includes:

- Over £2 billion of commercial investment into Wembley;
- Supported on average 1000 Brent residents a year into work through Brent in2 Work, which is hailed as best practice across the country;
- Worked in partnership with over 50 employment providers from the public, private and voluntary and third sector organisation to help support Brent's hard to reach communities living in Brent's most deprived neighbourhoods;
- Developed strong relationships with local businesses through the Employer Partnership;
- Launched a 'vision' for the North Circular Road;
- Secured planning consent for 500 new homes and work is underway on site in South Kilburn. A new sports centre has already been completed;

- Worked with local residents through the Neighbourhood Renewal Funded (NRF) programme in two of Brent deprived neighbourhoods; Harlesden & Stonebridge and St Raphael's, Brentfield and Mitchell Brook to help address a range of issues including; crime reduction, community engagement and improving access to employment and skills opportunities. This led to a significant increase in resident satisfaction.

3.1.8 Critical to these successes has been a rigorous approach to performance management. Both performance indicators and targets have been specified and measured through three yearly action plans to ensure the activities undertaken have contributed to the achievement of each strategic priority listed earlier. These have been reviewed quarterly through a management scrutiny process.

## 3.2 Responding to the Changing Context

3.2.1 The political and economic context under which the previous strategy was developed is almost unrecognisable today and the evidence shows there is still significant work to be undertaken, particularly in the priority neighbourhoods to tackle deep rooted levels of poverty. Unless addressed, the combined pressures of the economic downturn and budget cuts to local services will only serve to widen the socio-economic gap in the Borough.

3.2.2 Underlying this concern is the instability of the economy. Unemployment levels are rising with the most deprived neighbourhoods of Stonebridge, Harlesden, St Raphaels, Church End, Chalkhill and South Kilburn being most greatly affected. In these areas, benefit claimant levels are at their highest with a particular dependency amongst families. This, coupled with the proposed cuts to welfare spending and Council budgets, means levels of need are likely to rise significantly. While the concentration of need is likely to be in the communities outlined, there is a high probability that poverty levels will rise in other areas of the Borough.

3.2.3 The new coalition Government is introducing a whole new policy agenda. Further changes to the political landscape since the Regeneration Strategy was first written, has been the introduction of the London Mayor and the GLA with now, an ever increasing emphasis to work sub regionally to achieve economies of scale.

3.2.4 Within the Council, there has been the introduction of the Local Strategic Partnership, the Borough Plan and more recently through the restructure, the establishment of the Regeneration and Major Projects department. Alongside this is the drive to achieve greater efficiencies through the One Council programme and a need to more effectively manage risk.

3.2.5 Under this context, it was acknowledged that the existing Regeneration Strategy needed to be refreshed to ensure the Council's ambitious vision and Major Projects programme continue to be delivered through these challenging times. The Council needs to explore and develop new ways of working to secure future resource and proactively respond to the fast changing political and economic climate. It was also felt that the Strategy also needed to

respond to the challenges as outlined in the new Borough Plan and ensure it is fit for purpose to deliver that agenda.

### **3.3 The Regeneration Strategy 2010-2030**

3.3.1 The proposed new Regeneration Strategy is attached as appendix 1. It is very much a refresh of the current Strategy, reaffirming and updating a core set of principles for delivery. It includes a vision for Brent in 2030 that is complimentary to both the Borough Plan and the Local Development Framework (LDF).

3.3.2 The previous six strategic priorities have been reduced to a more focused three and are in alignment with the main areas of work for the Regeneration and Major Projects department and the new Borough Plan. They are:

#### ***One Borough***

- To deliver transformational change across the Borough, focusing primarily on the identified priority areas for investment

#### ***One Community***

- To increase employment and income levels of Brent residents concentrating on those most in need

#### ***One Council***

- To maximise investment in Brent from the private, public and community sectors in line with our regeneration priorities and ambitions

3.3.3 While the number of priorities has reduced, the ambitions for each (outlined under each strategic priority in the strategy) demonstrate a continued commitment to addressing deprivation and maximising the benefits from new developments for local residents.

3.3.4 Strategic priority one continues to focus on improving the priority (most deprived) neighbourhoods but now incorporates the borough's growth areas as set out in the LDF. To simplify the terminology, these have both been termed "priority areas for investment". The driver is to ensure any physical development is appropriate to the needs of local people, communities and business and that any economic and social benefits grow sustainable, well functioning communities that address all aspects of quality of life (including health, crime, education and wealth). Wembley is now included as one of these areas for investment and the regeneration programme here will continue to be developed with recognition of developments in other growth areas and to the same principles.

3.3.5 Strategic priority two reiterates the Council's longstanding regeneration principle that the best route out of poverty is through employment. It again focuses primarily on those people and places most in need but stresses the importance of finding creative solutions to ensure welfare to work initiatives are targeted to these groups. This will mean working closely with private sector prime contractors to share intelligence and assets to direct delivery to

meet this objective. With so many low income households in the borough that are already in work, our efforts must also ensure that residents have access to jobs that have opportunities to progress and raise incomes. This places a greater emphasis on creating the right conditions to attract and grow appropriate businesses in Brent. Ensuring residents can easily access employment in the wider London economy is also essential as are wider interventions to overcome barriers to work that are specific to the borough, including English language provision and affordable childcare.

- 3.3.6 Strategic priority three has been included to proactively respond to the current economic situation and the need to work creatively to ensure Brent is in a position to continue its ambitious regeneration programme and in particular, deliver its Major Projects. Emphasis is placed on making the Borough an attractive place to invest and maximising the Council's assets including property, land and intellectual assets to secure additional resource. Moving forward, this will include investigating the potential of proposed government schemes such as Tax Increment Financing and the New Homes Bonus as well as working with developers to secure the most appropriate benefits from local planning tariffs. Developing strong and effective partnerships where it makes most sense is also stressed, ensuring the Council makes full use of partners' assets and knowledge to deliver the most effective and efficient services.
- 3.3.7 It should be noted that the new strategy no longer directly addresses the need to monitor those areas at risk of decline. A number of attempts have been made to develop a model to identify these areas but it has not been possible to find an approach that is sufficiently robust. With the introduction of the Strategy, Partnerships and Improvement department and a more centralised policy function, it is felt that the Council now has stronger mechanisms in place to identify areas at risk of decline, with more effective use of GIS and Mosaic data.
- 3.3.8 The principles for delivery are very similar to the current strategy with greater emphasis on value for money, partnership and leadership again, to take account of the different economic and political climate and ensure opportunities are not lost.
- 3.3.9 Performance management and programme management are outlined as key implementation tools and the new strategy includes some detail with regard to these processes. This demonstrates that the Council is serious and professional in its approach to delivering Major Projects and provides reassurance to residents and investors that a robust system is in place to deliver projects on time and to budget.
- 3.3.10 As previously, specific actions to deliver the new strategy will be detailed in action plans that will now be incorporated into the service planning process. All units within the Regeneration and Major Projects department will be required to demonstrate how they will address the regeneration strategic priorities along with those outlined in both the Borough and One Council strategies.

- 3.3.11 Consultation to develop the strategy has been undertaken with a number of internal and external partners, including the voluntary and business sectors, who participated in a workshop session.
- 3.3.12 Once approved by CMT and the Executive, the document will be taken to the LSP for its approval and endorsement.

#### **4.0 Financial Implications**

- 4.1 There are no current financial implications although as outlined, detailed discussions will need to take place to identify new ways of funding major capital schemes that makes the most effective use of the Council's existing resources at minimum risk to the Council.

#### **5.0 Legal Implications**

- 5.1 Legal Services will work with the Regeneration and Major Projects department in delivering capital projects and future contracts with external service providers.
- 5.2 Where individual regeneration projects are presented to the Executive for approval, detailed legal implications will be provided in those separate reports to the Executive on a project by project basis.
- 5.3 Under section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000 ("the 2000 Act"), which is also known as the "well-being power", local authorities have power to do anything which it considers is likely to promote or improve the economic well-being, the social well-being and the environmental well-being of the area, subject to limitations set out in section 3 of the 2000 Act. Those limitations include not being able to raise money (whether by way of precepts, borrowing or otherwise). Also, this well-being power does not enable a local authority to do anything which they are unable to do by way of any prohibition, restriction or limitation on their powers which is contained in any enactment.
- 5.4 Where the Council plans to dispose of housing land, it requires the consent of the Secretary of State under section 32 of the Housing Act 1985. Where the Council disposes of housing land for less than market value, consent from the Secretary of State is also required under section 25 of the Local Government Act 1988.
- 5.5 Where Council properties need to be demolished to progress with a housing regeneration scheme, which has been the case with phase 1 of the South Kilburn regeneration scheme for example, it may be necessary to rely on Ground 10A of Schedule 2 to the Housing Act 1985 to obtain vacant possession of Council properties where secure tenants reside. However, the courts will grant a possession order on that ground if alternative suitable accommodation has been offered to the tenant. However, consultation with tenants is necessary first and consent needs to be obtained from the Secretary of State under Part V of Schedule 2 to the Housing Act 1985 before the Council can rely on Ground 10A. For properties involved in regeneration schemes where there are leaseholders rather than secure tenants, it may be necessary to apply for Compulsory Purchase Orders, as described in the next paragraph.

5.6 The Council has power to make a compulsory purchase order under section 226 (1)(a) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 if it thinks that the acquisition will “facilitate the carrying out of development, redevelopment or improvement or in relation to the land”. Under section 226(1)(A) the Council must not exercise the power under sub paragraph (a) unless it thinks that the development, redevelopment or improvement is likely to contribute to the achievement of any one or more of the following objects – (a) the promotion or improvement of the economic wellbeing of their area; (b) the promotion or improvement of the social wellbeing of their area; (c) the promotion or improvement of the environmental wellbeing of their area. Compulsory purchase orders must only be made if the Council is satisfied that there is a compelling public interest to do so.

## **6.0 Diversity Implications**

6.1 The Strategy is undergoing a full Equalities Impact Assessment to ensure no groups are adversely affected by the aims and ambitions of the strategy.

6.2 The key aim of the strategy is to ensure that those people and place most in need are reached and their needs addressed. The Regeneration and Major Projects team will continue to use and review the most up to date evidence and partners to ensure we have an accurate picture of who these groups are, where they live and what their barriers are so that the most appropriate interventions can be developed to address these needs.

6.3 The implementation tools used, including performance management systems, means that any interventions that are developed through the Regeneration Strategy will be monitored and measured throughout their lifetime on a quarterly basis. Using this process, in conjunction with the most up to date intelligence about the changing make up and needs of Brent’s communities, we will be able to ensure the right outcomes are delivered throughout the lifetime of the strategy.

## **7.0 Staffing and accommodation Implications**

7.1 There are no direct staffing or accommodation implications contained within the report.

### **Background Papers**

Appendix 1: Brent Regeneration Strategy 2010-2030

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