



Executive
17 October 2011

**Report from the Directors of
Environment and Neighbourhood
Services and Strategy, Performance
and Improvement**

Wards Affected:
All

Adoption of the Council's Green Charter

1.0 Summary

1.1 Brent Council's Corporate Strategy, 'Brent Our Future 2010 - 2014' says that the Council will develop a Green Charter, 'setting out how we can work together to protect our environment'. A draft Green Charter was circulated between 29 June and 04 August 2011 for consultation and the outcome of this consultation is set out in this report. As a result, a revised version of the Charter is attached in Appendix 1. The Executive is asked to adopt this version of the Charter and to ask officers to implement the actions in their departmental performance improvement plans. An annual monitoring report will be prepared outlining progress in implementing the Green Charter.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Executive is asked to

- i) adopt the Green Charter
- ii) ask officers to implement the Charter's actions through departmental performance improvements plans, and
- iii) agree that an annual Green Charter progress report is published.

3.0 Details

3.1 Aims
The Council is seeking to protect the environment, to improve the use of environmental resources, to reduce the environmental impacts in the borough particularly of waste, carbon emissions and energy, greenhouse gases, water usage and more sustainable transport, encourage sustainable construction and to operate more environmentally sustainable. Obviously in order to achieve this broad aim support is needed from local residents, businesses,

the local community and voluntary groups, other organisations from the public sector and suppliers etc.

- 3.2 The Green Charter sets out the Council's commitments over the next few years, the support it is providing to local residents and lists the types of sustainable behaviour it is encouraging residents to adopt. It also sets out how the Council will work with the people who live, work or study in the borough in order to improve the local environment. The Council encourages residents to live more sustainable lives and suggests ways in which residents can make small changes in the way they live.

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4.0 Strategic Context

- 4.1 The Council recognises that it needs to reduce its impact on the environment, to reduce its carbon emissions and to work with everyone who lives, works or studies in the borough in order to improve and protect the local environment. It also wishes to help others to mitigate and adapt to future climate change and to deal with severe weather events such as drought, heat waves, flooding etc.
- 4.2 As well as the Council wishing to reduce its own environmental impacts and to operate more sustainably when delivering its services, it also recognises the need to take steps to meet national and London-wide carbon reduction targets. This is one of the reasons why it has set itself a target of reducing its own carbon emissions by 25% by April 2014.
- 4.3 Although much has already been achieved through, for example, existing strategies and policies, the Council's commitment to implement ISO 14001 environmental management systems, the adoption of a Carbon Management Strategy and Implementation Plan, implementing the Council's Travel Plan, the installation of photo-voltaic panels on the Town Hall roof, a decrease in the amount of energy used in Council buildings and the construction of the Civic Centre to the exacting BREEAM 'Outstanding' standard, there is still a great deal more which needs to be done.
- 4.4 The Council is keen to support local residents, business, voluntary groups, community organisations and other public services in helping them to use less energy, to tackle fuel poverty and promote affordable warmth, to operate more sustainably and for residents to lead more sustainable lifestyles. The Council's measures to support residents and local organisations are included in the Green Charter in Appendix 1. The Charter also includes suggestions

as to how residents may live more sustainably. Every Council department has contributed and included activities that are either planned or currently undertaken that either are or will be contributing to achieving this Charter e.g. the Planning Service has revised their Sustainable Development Checklist and Building Control is implementing the Code for Sustainable Homes. Other Council commitments included are:

- Seeking to ensure that Brent recycles 60% of its waste by 2014
- Investigating cutting the Council's carbon emissions by at least 25% by 2014.
- Converted the controlled parking zones into a 'Polluter Pays' scheme.
- Persuading public transport providers such as TfL and train operators to improve the environment in and around areas of their control.
- Meeting regularly with water utilities' companies to enable better liaison with the public during pipe renewal work and to seek long-term solutions to flooding and other water related problems.
- Continuing the long standing policy of protecting public parks and open spaces.
- Making Brent a Fairtrade borough.

4.5 Brent Council also has a number of policies and strategies in place which are in line with the aims of the Green Charter and these are listed in the Charter.

4.6 The Council's new Civic Centre which will open in 2013 aims to reduce 40% of the Council's CO2 emissions. The Council will move out of 14 properties and this will obviously result in significant savings in energy bills.

5.0 Consultation

5.1 Consultation took place from 29 June 2011 to 4 August 2011. The consultation process, length and activity was planned in conjunction with the Brent Consultation Team in order to follow best practice. The consultation methodology was approved by the Consultation Board. The consultation explained why we are consulting and how we planned to take people's views into account.

5.2 In order to take as many people's views into account as possible, it was decided not to use a questionnaire but, as the content was very wide ranging, to invite comments to be submitted either verbally or in writing or by phone. Presentations were made at all the Area Consultative Forums and this was an opportunity for residents to meet Council officers in person. At the end of the presentations sample questions were provided for those residents who prefer a more formal approach to consultations.

5.3 In order to involve the widest spectrum of the community, the consultation was advertised widely. The draft Green Charter was available to download from Brent Council's website and it was on the Council's Consultation tracker inviting people to feedback online, via letter or in writing. The Brent Magazine ran an article on the Green Charter and it was also on the Sustainable Brent social media website and on the 'Wembley Matters' blog. Letters and/or emails were sent to the Brent Citizens' Panel, local environmental

organisations, together with copies of the draft Green Charter and a summary asking for their comments and feedback. A variety of local organisations considered the draft Green Charter and provided feedback some of which was incorporated in the revised Green Charter attached as Appendix 1.

6.0 Results

6.1 Two pie charts in Appendix 2 show the results in percentage by subject heading. In total, 174 comments were received from the following:

- Barnhill Conservation Group
- Brent Campaign Against Climate Change
- Brent Citizens' Panel
- Brent Fairtrade Network
- Brent Friends of the Earth
- Brent Green Party
- Brent Sustainability Forum
- Council Officers
- Harlesden Town Team
- Individual Residents
- Queens Park Residents Association
- Streetwatchers
- Transition Willesden

6.2 Analysing the data showed, that the largest number of comments from local organisations concerned topics under the heading 'Sustainable Development'. Most comments were on future development and sustainable construction. The second highest number of replies was under the heading of 'Sustainable Land Use and Wildlife' and 'Lower Waste', which reflects the type of organisations represented (environmental in nature).

6.3 Most comments received by individuals were under the heading of 'Lower Waste' and many welcomed the new Waste Strategy for Brent. This was followed by 'Sustainable Transport and Streets'. One concern raised by several respondents is that the introduction of CPZ car parking may result in an increase of individuals concreting over their front gardens.

7.0 Next Steps

7.1 As a result of these comments, parts of the Green Charter have been amended and relevant council officers have been made aware of the issues and comments that the consultation highlighted. The recommended revised version of the Green Charter is attached as Appendix 1.

8.0 Financial Implications

8.1 The Green Charter does not make any additional financial commitments on the Council and all the measures included in the Charter will be implemented using existing Council budgets.

9.0 Legal Implications

9.1 The Council has power under section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000 to do anything which it considers likely to promote the environmental well-being of its area. In exercising this power the Council is required to have regard to its Corporate Strategy, Our Future 2010 - 2014'.

9.2 The Council has a legal obligation to participate in the Carbon Reduction Commitment Energy Efficiency Scheme (CRC) and to ensure the transparent display in public buildings of Display Energy Certificates. The Council will be seeking to minimise its financial payments under the CRC.

10.0 Diversity Implications

10.1 Brent is a place of contrasts. It is characterised by a sharp divide between the relative affluence of the northern wards and high levels of social and economic deprivation in areas south of the North Circular Road. Brent's population is growing and changing. Brent is the most one of only two local authorities serving a population where the majority are from ethnic minorities. 54.4% of Brent residents are from black and minority ethnic communities. These groups comprise of established Indian, Black Caribbean, Black African and Irish communities as well as emerging Eastern European, Somali, Turkish, Hispanic and Portuguese communities.

10.2 The environment affects everyone in terms of climate change, particularly those who are physically vulnerable – the elderly and the young – as they will be exposed to greater temperature extremes and potentially new or increased threats of disease.

10.3 Climate change is predicted to be felt most acutely in areas of the world where communities are less able to adapt. These areas include countries in sub-Saharan Africa, Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, and Australia. A number of residents have strong ties with these nations.

10.4 Brent is defined and enriched by the diversity of its population and this unique quality is celebrated locally. The Equality Impact Assessment demonstrates that the Green Charter is applicable to the whole population and aims to meet the needs of a diverse population. The Council is committed to working with local communities and recognises the value and diversity of local residents. This Green Charter will enable residents to be informed about the Council's environmental agenda and enable all residents to do their bit.

11.00 Environmental Implications

- 11.1 One of the overall recommendations is to reduce the Councils CO2 emissions and this will have a positive effect on the environment. Reducing CO2 emissions (one of the main green house gasses which contribute to global warming) will help mitigate the effect of climate change at both a local and global level. It is expected that the environment will benefit in the long term by the Council taking this action.
- 11.2 Adapting to Climate Change will ensure that the council is prepared for the effects of predicted extreme weather events. By making the necessary preparations the Council will ensure its key services and the borough's infrastructure are not compromised.
- 11.3 The Council's commitment to protect and enhance the environment is a positive step and it is hoped that others on the borough will work in partnership to this end.

12.00 Staffing/Accommodation Implications (if appropriate)

- 12.1 There are no specific staffing/accommodation implications of the proposals included in the Green Charter.

Appendix 1 - Revised version of the Green Charter

Appendix 2 - Green Charter Consultation Pie Chart

Background Papers

Draft Green Charter for consultation

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