



Audit Committee
4th March 2008

**Report from the Director of Finance
and Corporate Resources**

For Information
* delete as necessary

Wards Affected:
ALL

**Report Title: New CIPFA / SOLACE Corporate Governance
Arrangements**

1 Summary

- 1.1 This report provides an on the review of the Council's corporate governance arrangements in preparation for the production of the Annual Governance Statement.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Audit Committee note the contents of the new framework, officers' assessment of the current governance arrangements and the proposed action plan items as detailed in appendix 1.

3 Detail

- 3.1 A previous report to this committee¹ set out the new governance framework identified as best practice by CIPFA and SOLACE. This report provides Members with the results of the review of the council's governance arrangements, using the CIPFA / SOLACE framework as a guide. The results of this review will be used when drafting the Annual Governance Statement for publication with the council's 2007/08 accounts.
- 3.2 The requirement for an annual review of governance is set out in the new framework and the Audit Committee has a key role to play in assessing the adequacy of governance across the council.
- 3.3 The review has been conducted by the Corporate Governance Group, a sub-group of the Corporate Management Team.
- 3.4 The definition of governance is: "...the systems and processes, and cultures and values, by which local government bodies are controlled and through which they account to, engage with and, where appropriate, lead their communities".

- 3.5 There are six core principles within the framework as set out in appendix 1 and summarised below:
- Focusing on the purpose of the authority and on outcomes for the community and creating and implementing a vision for the local area
 - Members and officers working together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles
 - Promoting values for the authority and demonstrating the values of good governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour
 - Taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk
 - Developing the capacity and capability of members and officers to be effective
 - Engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust accountability
- 3.6 Appendix 1 shows each of the principles, together with their sub-principles and evidence of the council's own arrangements. Where there are recognised gaps, these have been noted in the final column of appendix 1 and an action item has been identified.
- 3.7 The Corporate Governance review has relied upon already existing documentation and information from various sources across the council. These sources include performance information, risk management, Borough Solicitor, Service Directors, Director of Finance and Corporate Resources, Internal Audit, External Audit, Inspectorates and partners.

4 Financial Implications

- 4.1 None

5 Legal Implications

- 5.1 Regulation 4(2) of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2003⁶ (as amended 2006⁷) requires the Council to review its system of internal control and Regulation 4(3) requires the preparation of a statement on that review in accordance with "proper practice".
- 5.2 On 18th August 2006 the Department for Communities and Local Government issued further guidance to clarify what they deemed as "proper practice". Section 7 of circular 03/2006⁸ stated that "proper practice" in relation to internal control relates to guidance contained in the following documentation:
- Statement on Internal Control in Local Government: meeting the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2003, published by CIPFA in 2004

- Corporate Governance in Local Government: A Keystone for Community Governance (Framework and Guidance Note), produced by CIPFA/SOLACE in 2001 (recently updated)

5.3 Circular 03/2006 clears the way for the annual governance statement (originally intended as part of the 2001 framework) to be assigned proper practice status and, therefore, have statutory backing.

5.4 CIPFA has also confirmed that such status was assigned to the annual governance statement from 1st April 2007. This means that it will formally replace its proper practice association with the SIC with effect from the 2007/8 reporting year. CIPFA's earlier proper practice document of April 2004¹³ has now been replaced by the new governance framework.

5.5 In summary, the new framework gives the AGS "proper practice" status. There is no longer a requirement to produce a SIC, although in practice this is one part of the overall governance arrangements and will be subsumed into the AGS.

6 Diversity Implications

6.1 None

7 Background Papers

1. Report from the Director of Finance and Corporate Resources to the Audit Committee 18th December 2007. *New CIPFA / SOLACE Corporate Governance Arrangements*
2. CIPFA/SOLACE (2007). *Delivering Good Governance in Local Government – Framework.*
3. CIPFA/SOLACE (2001). *Corporate Governance in Local Government: A keystone for Community Governance – Framework and guidance note.*
4. Report from the Director of Finance and Corporate Resources to the Audit Committee 20th June 2007. *Statement On Internal Control 2006/07*
5. Report from Head of Audit and Investigations to the Corporate Management Team 29th November 2007. *New CIPFA/SOLACE Governance Requirements*
6. Accounts and Audit Regulations 2003
7. Accounts and Audit (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2006
8. Department of Communities and Local Government (2006). *Guidance on the Accounts and Audit regulations 2003*

APPENDIX 1

CORE PRINCIPLE 1 - Focusing on the purpose of the authority and on outcomes for the community and creating and implementing a vision for the local area

The local code should reflect the requirements for local authorities to:	Previous CG Action Plan Ref	Position at March 2008	Actions Needed to Address Weaknesses and responsible officer
1. develop and promote the authority's purpose and vision	NEW	In November 2006 the Council agreed its new corporate strategy for the coming 4 years. The aims and targets set out in the strategy are consistent with those set out in the partnership Community Strategy and have been used to support the development of the Local Area Agreement 2008.	
2. review on a regular basis the authority's vision for the local area and its impact on the authority's governance arrangements	NEW	Implementation of the Corporate Strategy is regularly undertaken by the Executive and the LAA by the Local Strategic Partnership.	
3. ensure that partnerships are underpinned by a common vision of their work that is understood and agreed by all parties	NEW	<p>The introduction of the Local Area Agreement in April 2006 provided the opportunity to review the governance arrangements and operational effectiveness of our LSP and partnership structures. A mapping of partnership activity was undertaken and a framework and guidance on effective partnership working adopted by the LSP. Significant improvements in monitoring of shared Community Plan objectives have taken place with quarterly monitoring reports on the LAA targets being considered by both the LSP and the Public Services Board.</p> <p>The Council and its partners on the LSP have been through an extensive consultation and challenge process to identify the 35 priorities for inclusion in their new LAA for 2008 onwards. These have now been agreed by the partnership, reviewed by the membership.</p>	
4. publish an annual report on a timely basis to communicate the authority's activities and achievements, its financial position and performance	1a	<p>A joint review of performance and summary of accounts has been produced annually over the last two years.</p> <p>A joint review of performance and summary of accounts is planned for July/August 2008 as part of The Brent Magazine.</p>	Progress against corporate strategy will be published by end August 2008. (Head of Communications)
5. decide how the quality of service for users is to be measured and make sure that the information needed to review service quality effectively and regularly is available	NEW	The Corporate Strategy sets out specific improvement targets across the range of council services. These are reflected in our new LAA priorities and monitored through the corporate Performanceplus system. Performance reports on all council and partnership improvement priorities area reported to the Executive and the CMT on a quarterly basis.	

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The local code should reflect the requirements for local authorities to:	Previous CG Action Plan Ref	Position at March 2008	Actions Needed to Address Weaknesses and responsible officer
6. put in place effective arrangements to identify and deal with failure in service delivery	NEW	Potential service failure is identified through the performanceplus system and service plans. These are regularly reviewed and referred to High Level Monitoring for a corporate response and remedial action.	
7. decide how value for money is to be measured and make sure that the authority or partnership has the information needed to review value for money and performance effectively. Measure the environmental impact of policies, plans and decisions.	NEW	<p>Actions to address areas of weakness or priorities for improvement are set out in the Improving Brent Action Plan. Specific efficiency targets set out in the Efficiency Strategy and the tool kit for supporting managers to achieve greater value for money.</p> <p>The council has an overall efficiency strategy and has included delivering improvements in VFM as one of its eight Improving Brent themes. The corporate Efficiency Board measures progress on the efficiency programme which underpins the Efficiency Strategy. The council monitors progress on delivering government efficiency targets set under the Gershon initiative and also has a included a stretch efficiency target under its Phase 1 Local Area Agreement. The council now brings together finance, activity and performance monitoring in a single performance and finance review report which enables officers and mebers to have a more holistic view of progress across the council on Value for Money. In addition, development of a value for money tool-kit for managers is one of a range of measures to support managers delivering better value for money. Unit costs are also used to measure progress in key areas eg on the children's transformation agenda.</p>	<p>Need to establish a more comprehensive set of unit cost measures. Need to make better use of bench-marking information, particularly in relation to corporate services. Need to put in place efficiency delivery plan for 3% annual efficiency savings built into the 2007 Comprehensive Spending Review. Deputy Director of Finance and Corporate Resources</p>

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CORE PRINCIPLE 2 - Members and officers working together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles

The local code should reflect the requirements for local authorities to:	Previous CG Action Plan Ref	Position at March 2008	Actions Needed to Address Weaknesses and responsible officer
1. set out a clear statement of the respective roles and responsibilities of the executive and of the executive's members individually and the authority's approach towards putting this into practice	3b	Article 2 of the Constitution describes the role of Members of the Council, the Executive, Mayor, Full Council and overview and Scrutiny. Members completed annual reports which were published on the website although reports were not received from all Members.	Members will be encouraged to submit annual reports. (Borough Solicitor)
		Up to date job descriptions are in place for Senior Officers. Monitoring Officer Advice Notes give advice to Memebrs on decision making and standards of conduct. Local Demcracy and Standards webpages are updated regularly.	
		All non-confidential reports and Minutes are now on the Internet.	
		All Executive decisions and key decisions by officers are recorded	
		2. set out a clear statement of the respective roles and responsibilities of other authority members, members generally and of senior officers	3b
Up to date job descriptions are in place for Senior Officers.			
3. determine a scheme of delegation and reserve powers within the constitution, including a formal schedule of those matters specifically reserved for collective decision of the authority taking account of relevant legislation and ensure that it is monitored and updated when required	3d	Clearly set out in the Constitution. The Legislation Tracker shows which CMT member is responsible for implementation of emerging legislation	
		The Borough Solicitor maintains a register of officer authorisations. Constitution renewed and reported to full Council every May.	
4. make a chief executive or equivalent responsible and accountable to the authority for all aspects of operational management	3i	Covered in constitution and job description.	

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The local code should reflect the requirements for local authorities to:	Previous CG Action Plan Ref	Position at March 2008	Actions Needed to Address Weaknesses and responsible officer
5. develop protocols to ensure that the leader and chief executive (or equivalent) negotiate their respective roles early in the relationship and that a shared understanding of roles and objectives is maintained	NEW	Chief Executive and Leader agreed respective roles following election in May 2006 and continue to meet on a weekly basis.	
6. make a senior officer (usually the section 151 officer) responsible to the authority for ensuring that appropriate advice is given on all financial matters, for keeping proper financial records and accounts, and for maintaining an effective system of internal financial control	3j	Covered in constitution and job description.	
		Covered by statute and financial regulations.	
		All reports have to be cleared by the Director of Finance and Corporate Resources. Director attends all Leader's briefings and meetings of the Executive and full Council.	
7. make a senior officer (other than the Responsible Financial Officer) responsible to the authority for ensuring that agreed procedures are followed and that all applicable statutes, regulations are complied with	3h	Covered in constitution and job description.	
		Covered by statute and financial regulations.	
		All reports have to be cleared by the Borough Solicitor who attends all Leader's briefings and meetings of the Executive and full Council. A lawyer also attends all other committee meetings and is responsible for issuing the legislation tracker, monitoring officer advice notes and legal bulletins.	
8. develop protocols to ensure effective communication between members and officers in their respective roles	3a	These are Covered in Part 7 of the Constitution and in the access to information protocol.	
9. set out the terms and conditions for remuneration of members and officers and an effective structure for managing the process including an effective remuneration panel (if applicable)	2h	<p>The scheme of member allowances has been reviewed by the CWG and there are been two interim reports recommending changes to the allowances scheme.</p> <p>The scheme requires a further review.</p>	The scheme will be subject to a further review (Borough Solicitor).

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The local code should reflect the requirements for local authorities to:	Previous CG Action Plan Ref	Position at March 2008	Actions Needed to Address Weaknesses and responsible officer
	2i		New appraisal scheme and revised management competencies introduced and will be rolled out in 2008 (Director of HR and Diversity)
10. ensure that effective mechanisms exist to monitor service delivery	NEW	The Performanceplus system is now fully operational across the Council and a standard service planning template with detailed target setting was introduced in 2007. On integrated quarterly Performance and Finance monitoring report is now produced. This is reviewed by the Executive, CMT and the Performance and Finance Select committee. Partners will have direct access to PerformancePlus during 2008 to monitor shared LAA objectives.	
11. ensure that the organisation's vision, strategic plans, priorities and targets are developed through robust mechanisms, and in consultation with the local community and other key stakeholders, and that they are clearly articulated and disseminated	1g	Corporate strategy based on Residents' Attitude Survey 2006. Communicated through Brent Magazine and other publications as well as at Area Forums. Brent Citizens' Panel recruited from March 2007. Citizens' Panel used regularly throughout 2007. Includes focus groups on budget publications and environmental enforcement services. Environment surveys on street tree policy and waste management.	Further development work on continuous panel recruitment linked to consultation database. (Director of Consultation)
12. when working in partnership ensure that members are clear about their roles and responsibilities both individually and collectively in relation to the partnership and to the authority	NEW	Partnership is now defined in the constitution. Following a review of Partnership activity in Brent, a set of protocols and guidelines for the operation of joint working was agreed by the LSP in early 2007. This document covers roles and responsibilities, protocols for financial administration and staff management. In January 2008 a partnership conference was held in Brent, addressed by the Local Government Ombudsman to consider the issue of complaints within partnerships. We are now working on proposals for the handling of complaints within partnership services.	

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The local code should reflect the requirements for local authorities to:	Previous CG Action Plan Ref	Position at March 2008	Actions Needed to Address Weaknesses and responsible officer
<p>13. when working in partnership: ensure that there is clarity about the legal status of the partnership ensure that representatives or organisations both understand and make clear to all other partners the extent of their authority to bind their organisation to partner decisions.</p>	NEW		<p>With the increasing number of services delivered jointly within the LAA we will be looking at the appropriate legal structures and guidance required during the coming year. (Borough Solicitor)</p>

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CORE PRINCIPLE 3 - Promoting values for the authority and demonstrating the values of good governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour

The local code should reflect the requirements for local authorities to:	Previous CG Action Plan Ref	Review January to March 2008	Actions Needed to Address Weaknesses and responsible officer
1. ensure that the authority's leadership sets a tone for the organisation by creating a climate of openness, support and respect	NEW	<p>Executive members have undertaken a range of training including media and presentation skills and key members have had support from an external mentor.</p> <p>IDeA have been engaged to provide peer support to Liberal Democrat executive members with a specific brief to work on team working and communication within the Executive and within the political groups.</p> <p>The Member Code of Conduct includes the 10 general principles of conduct, including respect for others, leadership and stewardship. The Constitution contains the Planning Code of Practice, Licensing Code of Practice, Code of Practice on Publicity and the protocol for Member Officer Relations. Members and Chief Officers work collaboratively on the Policy Coordination Group, Leader's Briefing, Service Planning and Budget Awaydays. the Leader meets weekly with the Chief Executive and also addresses to Corporate Roadshows and the Senior Managers Conference.</p>	<p>Ongoing training and support offered to Executive members. Regular meetings undertaken with senior officers. (Member Development Manager)</p> <p>The importance of securing a climate of openness, support and respect will be emphasised in the job profiles for Members once adapted. (Borough Solicitor)</p>
2. ensure that standards of conduct and personal behaviour expected of members and staff, of work between members and staff and between the authority, its partners and the community are defined and communicated through codes of conduct and protocols	5a	<p>New Code of Conduct for Officers agreed 2005</p> <p>The Improving Brent Programme sets out the requirement for having the highest standards of ethical behaviour across the organisation</p> <p>New Anti-Fraud Framework publicised and issued in February 2008</p> <p>The government has published a new model code of conduct for members and the Brent member code of conduct reflects the new model code, having been reviewed and amended in September 2007</p>	

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The local code should reflect the requirements for local authorities to:	Previous CG Action Plan Ref	Review January to March 2008	Actions Needed to Address Weaknesses and responsible officer
3. put in place arrangements to ensure that members and employees of the authority are not influenced by prejudice, bias or conflicts of interest in dealing with different stakeholders and put in place appropriate processes to ensure that they continue to operate in practice	5b	<p>Review of Members and Officers gifts and Hospitality completed and reported to Standards Committee and Director of HR</p> <p>The Constitution contains various other codes including: Licensing, Planning, Memembr Officer Relations. Advice notes are issued by the Borough Solicitor regarding conduct.</p> <p>The registers of Member Interests and member gifts and hospitality are now placed on the web site enabling easy public access</p>	
4. develop and maintain shared values including leadership values both for the organisation and staff reflecting public expectations and communicate these with members, staff, the community and partners	NEW	<p>The Member Code of Conduct includes reference to Leadership and Stewardship and other values.</p> <p>A new code of conduct and competency framework has been developed for Managers and Staff together with a management charter which all set out the expected behaviours for officers, including Leadership and working with others.</p>	
5. put in place arrangements to ensure that procedures and operations are designed in conformity with appropriate ethical standards, and monitor their continuing effectiveness in practice	5c	<p>Standards of conduct for members are set out in the Constitution</p> <p>Protocol for member/officer relations is set out in constitution</p> <p>Standards Committee has remit to monitor compliance</p>	
6. develop and maintain an effective standards committee		The terms of reference for the Standards Committee are set out in the Constitution. The Committee has an independent chair and vice chair. The committee has an annual work programme and is supported by the Borough Solicitor.	<p>The remit of the Standards Committee needs to be reviewed oin light of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act</p> <p>(Borough Solicitor)</p>

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The local code should reflect the requirements for local authorities to:	Previous CG Action Plan Ref	Review January to March 2008	Actions Needed to Address Weaknesses and responsible officer
7. use the organisations shared values to act as a guide for decision making and as a basis for developing positive and trusting relationships within the authority	NEW		
8. in pursuing the vision of a partnership, agree a set of values against which decision making and actions can be judged. Such values must be demonstrated by partners' behaviour both individually and collectively.	NEW	As part of the process for agreeing the 35 improvement priorities for the LAA partners committed to a number of values around addressing inequality, focusing on preventative actions and delivering value for money through the LAA. They have also signed up to a 'Compact agreement' setting out the principles for partnership working and how they engage with the voluntary and community sector.	

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CORE PRINCIPLE 4 - Taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk Taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk

The local code should reflect the requirements for local authorities to:	Previous CG Action Plan Ref	Position at March 2008	Actions Needed to Address Weaknesses and responsible officer
1. develop and maintain an effective scrutiny function which encourages constructive challenge and enhances the organisation's performance overall and of any organisation for which it is responsible.	2c	The Executive are responsible for the implementation of policy and ensuring the effectiveness of service delivery.	
	3c	Scrutiny is responsible for monitoring the performance of the Executive	
		Key targets continue to be monitored through the Improving Brent Action Plan 2004-2006. The Improving Brent Action Plan 2004-2006 sets out the key actions and priorities derived from the Corporate Strategy and is supported by a detailed monitoring report which is assessed every six months by the Corporate Management Team and the Executive against the agreed targets.	
		<p>The Improving Brent Action plan includes enabling elected members to scrutinise effectively the decision-making and performance of the Council through robust Scrutiny and Overview arrangements.</p> <p>The Chair of Overview and Scrutiny is given an opportunity to report back to every full council meeting. Call in arrangements in the Constitution allows overview and scrutiny to review decisions made by the Executive. Forward Plan Select Committee is able to scrutinise decisions before they are made</p>	
2. develop and maintain open and effective mechanisms for documenting evidence for decisions and recording the criteria, rationale and considerations on which decisions are based	1e	Decision making meetings of the Executive are open to the public.	
		Copies of reports and decisions are available on the intranet and through One Stop Shop and Libraries	
		All meetings are clerked by well trained and experienced committee support officers and lawyers are present to provide advice on law and procedure.	

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The local code should reflect the requirements for local authorities to:	Previous CG Action Plan Ref	Position at March 2008	Actions Needed to Address Weaknesses and responsible officer
3. put in place arrangements to safeguard members and employees against conflicts of interest and put in place appropriate processes to ensure that they continue to operate in practice	5b	Review of Members and Officers gifts and Hospitality completed and reported to Standards Committee and Director of HR	
		The registers of member's interesets and gifts and hospitality are now placed on the web site enabling easy public access.	
		The monitoring officer prepares an annual report to the standards committee.	
4. develop and maintain an effective audit committee (or equivalent) which is independent or make other appropriate arrangements for the discharge of the functions of such a committee		The Audit Committee was established in 2007 and has met quarterly. The terms of reference are set out in the consitution.	
5. put in place effective transparent and accessible arrangements for dealing with complaints		The Council has a well regarded corporate complaints procdure that has been praised and endorsed by the Local Government Ombudsman as set out in the annual LGO letter and our annual report on complaints which is submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.	
6. ensure that those making decisions whether for the authority or partnership are provided with information that is fit for the purpose – relevant, timely and gives clear explanations of technical issues and their implications.		<p>Members are required to make sound decisions based on written reports which are prepared in accordance with the report writing guide and have to be cleared by Finance and Legal. The Executive recieves a briefing (Leaders Briefing) two weeks prior to the Executive meeting when members can ask detailed technical questions of officers.</p> <p>Large cohort of cllrs have attended general training skills sessions. Specific skills sessions and mentoring have been arranged for Exective members and those with special responsibilities. A programme of training and development in place to support members and provide them with enough information and the skills to be able to make effective decisions.</p>	In addition to mentoring support for Executive members a new programme will be publicised and promoted with specific training for chairing meetings planned. (Member Development Manager)

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The local code should reflect the requirements for local authorities to:	Previous CG Action Plan Ref	Position at March 2008	Actions Needed to Address Weaknesses and responsible officer
7. ensure that professional advice on matters that have legal or financial implications is available and recorded well in advance of decision making and used appropriately		All reports must be cleared by Finance and Legal and contain financial and legal implications.	
8. ensure that risk management is embedded into the culture of the organisation , with members and managers at all levels recognising that risk management is part of their job	4a	<p>Identified in the 2005/06 SIC and recognised as an ongoing issue. Training has been rolled out by the Procurement and Risk Management Team. The Risk Management Group, which has senior representation from all Directorates is co-ordinating a consistent approach across the Council. New guidance has been issued relating to the identification and management of Corporate Risks, managed at a corporate level and how related service risks are identified and managed.</p> <p>Work has also been done on partnership risks by the Audit Commission in 2006/07</p>	<p>Corporate Risk Register requires revision to create parent/child hierarchy and measure inherent/residual risk. The register should have a consistent format across the council. Management reports required to give clear direction on risks requiring greater attention, revised or more frequent monitoring and/or escalation as needed.</p> <p>Council-wide risk review to be undertaken establishing hierarchy, risk level and control measures. Quarterly and annual management reporting formats and cycles to</p>

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The local code should reflect the requirements for local authorities to:	Previous CG Action Plan Ref	Position at March 2008	Actions Needed to Address Weaknesses and responsible officer
			be established. Head of Procurement and Risk Management
9. ensure that arrangements are in place for whistle blowing to which staff and all those contracting with the authority have access	5d	New whistleblowing policy now in place. Publicised to staff and on intranet. New policy is more explicit regarding contractors/agents and the points of contact outside the authority. The policy is on the intranet, held in HR & Diversity pages under 'Raising concerns'.	
10. actively recognise the limits of lawful activity placed on them by, for example the ultra vires doctrine but also strive to utilise powers to the full benefit of their communities	NEW	See above section 6. in addition regular Monitoring Officer Advice Notes are issued	
11. recognise the limits of lawful action and observe both the specific requirements of legislation and the general responsibilities placed on local authorities by public law	NEW	See above section 6. in addition regular Monitoring Officer Advice Notes are issued	
12. observe all specific legislative requirements placed upon them, as well as the requirements of general law, and in particular to integrate the key principles of good administrative law – rationality, legality and natural justice into their procedures and decision making processes.	5k	Legal comment and consultation on reports Monitoring Officer Advice Notes issued and Legislation Trackers	

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CORE PRINCIPLE 5 - Developing the capacity and capability of members and officers to be effective

The local code should reflect the requirements for local authorities to:	Previous CG Action Plan Ref	Position at March 2008	Actions Needed to Address Weaknesses and responsible officer
1. provide induction programmes tailored to individual needs and opportunities for members and officers to update their knowledge on a regular basis	NEW	<p>The Council runs a member development programme which is reported to the standards committee annually. The Borough Solicitor provides training to new and existing members on decision making and standards of conduct.</p> <p>The council has a learning and development plan together with a corporate service offering both of which are updated on an annual basis to reflect the needs of the council. Each new member of staff is required to undergo induction training</p>	
2. ensure that the statutory officers have the skills, resources and support necessary to perform effectively in their roles and that these roles are properly understood throughout the organisation	NEW	Officers have an annual appraisal containing developmental objectives linked to the Corporate strategy and Departmental service plans. The council has a corporate learning and development plan and service offering based on the needs identified in individual appraisals and service plans. Each role has a job description and role specification. All the statutory officers are members of the Corporate Management Team	Completion of workforce development plan Director of HR and Diversity
3. assess the skills required by members and officers and make a commitment to develop those skills to enable roles to be carried out effectively	4c	As part of the development of departmental service plans and the workforce development plan analysis is being undertaken to identify the skills required for future service delivery to ensure that officers are fully skilled to deliver quality services	Completion of workforce development plan Director of HR and Diversity
4. develop skills on a continuing basis to improve performance including the ability to scrutinise and challenge and to recognise when outside expert advice is needed	NEW	The training and development plan and service offering reflect the skills and knowledge required to deliver the corporate strategy and is reviewed on an annual basis to ensure continuing improvement and alignment to the goals of the council. Individuals are encouraged to develop through their annual appraisal, 6 monthly review and regular one to ones which focus on improving performance and achievement of corporate/departmental objectives. A new appraisal has been developed based on the competency framework which includes providing a customer focussed service, and leadership and influencing skills. The corporate training offering also offers courses on customer care and working with partners.	Review of member development plan Director of HR and Diversity Member Development Manager

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<p>5. ensure that effective arrangements are in place for reviewing the performance of the authority as a whole and of individual members and agreeing an action plan which might for example aim to address any training or development needs</p>	<p>1b</p>	<p>Standards for performance are set out in the Corporate Strategy, individual service plans, and the Best Value Performance Plan. Quarterly reports on service and financial performance are produced and considered by the CMT, Executive and Performance and Finance Select committee. This includes performance on key partnership targets within the Local Area Agreement. The LAA is designed to deliver the aims of the published Community Strategy. Services that are undergoing significant change of require support to achieve improvements are monitored through regular meetings with the Chief Executive. A summary of the council's performance is published each year in the Brent Magazine and delivered to all households. All performance data is available on the Council's website.</p>	
<p>6. ensure that effective arrangements designed to encourage individuals from all sections of the community to engage with, contribute to and participate in the work of the authority</p>	<p>1d</p>	<p>Attempts to collect baseline data on demographics at ACF meetings were unsuccessful. (Poorly responded to).</p> <p>Service user forums working well. Include, Pensioners, BME, Voluntary Sector, Private Sector Housing and Brent Disabled User. Other consultation, voluntary sector and user groups being mapped by Consultation Team.</p> <p>Forum progress report to O & S committee now includes additional information on citizens' panel and other consultation issues.</p> <p>Quarterly ward meetings provide a forum for Members to discuss matters of concern with officers and shape how services are provided at the neighbourhood level. Depending on the issues being addressed, these meetings are attended by the Police and other partner agencies. Progress is communicated to residents through quarterly ward newsletters.</p>	<p>Exercise to be repeated during 2008/09. (Director of Consultation) /</p> <p>Improvements to the quarterly SUCF Chairs and Lead Managers Meeting in consultation with the Exec member being planned. (Director of Consultation)</p> <p>Report to O & S Committee is no longer quarterly but only 'occasional', (as requested), due to agenda priorities. (Director of Consultation)</p>

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		Residents' Attitude Survey findings published January 2006. Scoping for the next Residents' Attitude Survey 2008/09 to begin this year.	Decision regarding timeframe and expenditure form CMT or CE. (Director of Consultation)
		The youth Parliament is now working well.	Lead officer for the Youth Parliament is Manveen Patwalia - Children & Families.
		Reporting arrangements for the BYP have not worked particularly well.	Improvements to the quarterly SUCF Chairs and Lead Managers Meeting in consultation with the Exec member being planned. (Director of Consultation)
7. ensure that career structures are in place for members and officers to encourage participation and development		Whilst many areas/professions have a clear career structure work is being undertaken to develop career pathways, generic job roles and a talent management system. A new management development centre has been established to assist in the further development of junior and middle managers. The current workforce development planning work includes succession planning.	Complete work in relation to career pathways, generic job roles and talent management Director of HR and Diversity

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CORE PRINCIPLE 6 - Engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability

The local code should reflect the requirements for local authorities to:	Previous CG Action Plan Ref	Position at March 2008	Actions Needed to Address Weaknesses and responsible officer
1. make clear to themselves, all staff and the community, to whom they are accountable and for what	NEW	Promote council policy and services to residents via The Brent Magazine produced monthly, the council website and wider media. Use the staff magazine - Insight, the intranet, and IB programme to communicate with staff.	Continue using all forms of communication but introduce CMT News for fortnightly staff briefings. Director of Communications
2. consider those institutional stakeholders to whom they are accountable and assess the effectiveness of the relationships and any changes required	NEW		
3. produce an annual report on scrutiny function activity	NEW		
4. ensure that clear channels of communication are in place with all sections of the community and other stakeholders including monitoring arrangements to ensure that they operate effectively	1f	Consultation Strategy 2006 – 2009 was formally launched in January 2006. Implementation is monitored by the Consultation Team. Strategy objectives and quality standards reinforced through training to members and staff. Also at Corporate Induction sessions.	Core training on consultation strategy and techniques being developed. (Director of Consultation)
5. Hold meetings in public unless there are good reasons for confidentiality.	NEW	All meetings are held in public. Some parts of meetings are held in private when exempt or confidential information might be disclosed. This is subject to the agreement of the members present.	

APPENDIX 1

The local code should reflect the requirements for local authorities to:	Previous CG Action Plan Ref	Position at March 2008	Actions Needed to Address Weaknesses and responsible officer
6. ensure arrangements are in place to enable the authority to engage with all sections of the community effectively. These arrangements should recognise that different sections of the community have different priorities and establish explicit processes for dealing with these competing demands	1d	Attempts to collect baseline data on demographics at ACF meetings were unsuccessful. (Poorly responded to).	Exercise to be repeated during 2008/09. (Director of Consultation)
		Service user forums working well. Include, Pensioners, BME, Voluntary Sector, Private Sector Housing and Brent Disabled User. Other consultation, voluntary sector and user groups being mapped by Consultation Team.	Improvements to the quarterly SUCF Chairs and Lead Managers Meeting in consultation with the Exec member being planned. Owen Thomson
		Attempts to collect baseline data on demographics at ACF meetings were unsuccessful. (Poorly responded to).	Exercise to be repeated during 2008/09. (Director of Consultation)
		Quarterly ward meetings provide a forum for Members to discuss matters of concern with officers and shape how services are provided at the neighbourhood level. Depending on the issues being addressed, these meetings are attended by the Police and other partner agencies. Progress is communicated to residents through quarterly ward newsletters.	
		Residents' Attitude Survey findings published January 2006. Scoping for the next Residents' Attitude Survey 2008/09 to begin this year.	
7. establish a clear policy on the types of issues they will meaningfully consult on or engage with the public and service users including a feedback mechanism for those consultees to demonstrate what has changed as a result	NEW	A Communication Strategy 2007-2010 has been agreed by CMT.	

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The local code should reflect the requirements for local authorities to:	Previous CG Action Plan Ref	Position at March 2008	Actions Needed to Address Weaknesses and responsible officer
8. on an annual basis, publish a performance plan giving information on the authority's vision, strategy, plans and financial statements as well as information about its outcomes, achievements and the satisfaction of service users in the previous period.	1a	A joint review of performance and summary of accounts is planned for July/August 2008 as part of The Brent Magazine.	
9. ensure that the authority as a whole is open and accessible to the community, service users and its staff and ensure that it has made a commitment to openness and transparency in all its dealings, including partnerships subject only to the need to preserve confidentiality in those specific circumstances where it is proper and appropriate to do so	1e	<p>A review of the Council's adherence to the Freedom of Information Act was reported to CMT in September and the Executive in October 2005. It showed that the Council is meeting its obligations under the act and that performance is generally high with regard to responding to requests within the statutory time limit.</p> <p>A report on the impact of the Environmental Information Regulations was presented to CMT in October 2005 and CMT agreed to increased co-ordination of FOI and EIR requests.</p>	
10. develop and maintain a clear policy on how staff and their representatives are consulted and involved in decision making.	NEW	The council's managing change policy includes guidance on staff and trade union consultation. A draft engagement policy has also been developed. The role of the line manager in people management has been documented and is shortly to be published which includes guidance on engagement. The content of this is being incorporated into the council's new people management courses.	