


SUMMONS ITEM 11

	<p>Full Council 28th November 2005</p> <p>Report from the Executive</p>
<p>For Action Wards Affected: ALL</p>	
<p>First Reading of the 2006-7 Budget Priorities for the Administration</p>	

Forward Plan ref:

1.0 Summary

1.1 This report sets out the Administration's Priorities for spending and activity for 2006-7 and should be read in conjunction with the concurrent report from the Director of Finance & Corporate Resources which sets out the main parameters surrounding the setting of the budget. This report also highlights the achievement made in delivering the 2002-6 Corporate Strategy.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Council is recommended to consider the achievements and priorities set out in the report, alongside the Director of Finance and Corporate Resources report on the Budget and to debate them as set out in Standing Orders 25A and 44.

3.0 The Corporate Strategy

3.1 Significant achievements have been made in the delivering the 2002-2006 Corporate Strategy and some of these are highlighted in the body of this report. A more detailed appraisal is set out as Appendix A to the Director of Finance & Corporate Resources report. The Corporate Strategy has been an ambitious and stretching programme. The major achievements are testament of the focus and drive of this Administration, the dedication of officers and the co-operation of partners. The clear message is that when we say as an Administration we are going to do something – we deliver.

3.2 Supporting Children and Young People

- 12 out of the 13 secondary schools in the Borough have already been awarded specialist status. The one remaining school, Cardinal Hinsley, has made significant improvements and is now out of special measures and can now proceed with its application. Once awarded this means that

all of our secondary schools have specialist status supporting the government's 5 year improvement plan for secondary education

- Brent will meet its target for childcare places and outreach to families by March 2006. This will include having five Children's Centres
- The numbers of children being adopted has increased and we are on target to meet the year end target. All placements are found and approved by a dedicated placements service. A multi agency Family Support Team is now operational, with the remit to reduce the number of children, especially older children, who become looked after
- During 2005, we successfully ran 22 school holiday schemes and more will be run at Christmas and in February 2006. Arts, sports and cultural activities included four sporting tournaments and two performing arts events successfully bringing different geographical and ethnic communities together. These included a dance *Olympiad* and a national basketball event developed by the PAWS Foundation
- A new service specification for The Vale Farm and Charteris leisure management contract includes provision of free swimming during all school holidays and sports activity programmes during all school holidays.
- 31.3% of Brent schools are rated excellent or very good by the SIS with 87% rated as at least satisfactory
- At Key Stage 4, Brent has performed above London and national averages for 5+A*-C and 5+A* including English and Mathematics. More learners are achieving 5 or more A*-C grade GCSE or GNVQ equivalent

3.3 Promoting Quality of Life and the Green Agenda

- In the last year as part of our "Big Brent Clean-Up Campaign" we have removed nearly 1,000 dumped cars; dealt with over 4,000 complaints about graffiti; over 1,200 cases of rubbish on private land dealt with and approximately 1,800 rat extermination treatments undertaken. A ward working system was introduced in Environmental Health to parallel StreetCare's intensive clean up initiative
- At the end of September 2005 our recycling/composting rate for Quarter 2 had reached 21%. We are projected to increase our green box recycling tonnage by 18% to an estimated 7,250 tonnes for 2005-6. We are actively pursuing additional plastics recycling banks and continue to promote waste reduction and recycling
- We are continuing to expand the Estates Recycling systems and now serve about 70% of flats with a view to reaching 95% by March 2006. The only properties remaining would be typically flats above shops
- Brent has assisted 168 single homeless people from 2004 through to Sept 2005 through projects funded by us
- Brent Housing Partnership is managing a 4 year investment programme worth over £100m due to be completed in April 2007. By the end of January 05 2,549 homes had been designated as Decent Homes with a projected investment total of £56m for the programme by April 05

- The Occupational Therapy waiting list has been more than halved since the introduction of the Corporate Plan
- 100% of new residential units between March 2004 and April 2005 were built on brownfield land
- There has been a continued year on year reduction in the number of “killed and seriously injured” people on roads in the borough, through the introduction of targeted accident reduction schemes. Reductions exceed the interim targets needed to achieve the Government set targets
- We increased opening hours across the library service by 6.5% in January 2005
- We continue to invest in sports and leisure facilities in the Borough: All of our Sports centres and pavilions have had work done on them to make them DDA compliant; we have built six new tennis courts at Gladstone Park and refurbished the other four; Installed Multi Use Games area’s at One Tree Hill and Roundwood Park; Installed skateboard park at St Raphael’s and Northwick Park Golf Course opened on Monday 7th November 2005.
- We have made a range of improvements to local parks including installing new notice boards, new bins and purchasing graffiti removal equipment to ensure that our parks are clean and welcoming to our local community

3.4 Tackling Crime and Community Safety

- Crime has dropped by 4% in the last two years. This includes a reduction in residential burglaries by 14%; a reduction of thefts of motor vehicles by 5% and a reduction in thefts from motor vehicles by 8%
- The recent 1 in 5 household survey of priority neighbourhoods showed that 24% of residents perceived crime to be a serious issue in their area, down from 30.5% in 2001
- The fear of crime has reduced, with 47% of parents allowing their children to play outside, up from 37.6% in 2002

3.5 Regeneration and Priority Neighbourhoods

- As part of the Wembley Development scheme we have secured £21m for community benefits above the homes and jobs that will be created. This includes: £9 million to provide a much needed new school; £2.4m for community facilities and better policing; a Healthy Living Centre with space for a 5 GP surgery; £2.5 million towards employment and training initiatives and over £7m towards transport including bus, road and station improvements. Overall the transformation of Wembley is well and truly underway
- The Neighbourhood Renewal programme has met its targets in St Raphael’s, Harlesden & Stonebridge
- The Government Office for London review of partnership investment and performance review congratulated Brent for its continued increase in educational attainment and employment rates in the deprived neighbourhoods
- The future of the Stonebridge development has been secured beyond the life of the Housing Action Trust through the Hillside Housing Trust.

- The Brent in2 Work partnership supported 1,000 local residents into employment in 2004/5. The Council's negotiations meant that more than 100 local unemployed people secured jobs during the construction phase of the stadium.
- Since 2002 the Council has directly supported more than 2,000 people into sustainable employment, focussing on long-term unemployed people and residents from priority neighbourhoods

3.6 Achieving Service Excellence

- Brent residents can contact the Council more easily by telephone, Internet and in person at six one stop shops which have extended considerably their opening hours
- We have an excellent service in dealing with resident complaints that have led to us having no ombudsman decisions against us for four years
- Brent's website has been cited in the top twenty Local Government sites in both 2004 and 2005
- We have achieved a "strong" level 3 in the 2005 use of resources judgement reflecting our careful financial management

4.0 The Priorities

4.1 The Administration is not so arrogant that it takes for granted the support of the electorate in May 2006. However we believe that our achievements and track record in delivering ever better services, driving up the performance of the Council whilst delivering value for money are solid reasons for us to be given a mandate to continue our drive to 'build a better borough'

4.2 In 2002 we gave a clear undertaking to achieve service excellence. We believe that this must be a commitment that continues and cannot be seen as a 'one off' issue. We will build upon our achievements in turning around performance in our services for example Revenues and Benefits, Children's Services and Streetcare. We will deliver ever higher quality services that meet the needs and expectations of local people. The latest satisfaction survey, conducted under Audit Commission rules shows a consistent pattern of rising satisfaction with the Council and its services – for example a 53% overall satisfaction in the Council in 2005 (compared to 47% in 2003-04). A 9% increase (to 69%) with satisfaction with recycling and our civic amenity site and a 7% increase to 58% in satisfaction with our performance in keeping land clear of litter and refuse.

4.3 We will continue to provide value for money and use our resources to the best possible effect. So far we have driven up the standard and quality of our services whilst having one of the lowest levels of Council Tax in London.

4.4 We will roll out Ward Working across the Borough. The pilots have proved that Local Councillors working with officers and partners, focussing on residents concerns within their wards is both effective and popular and the opportunity must be extended to all residents and their Ward Councillors.

- 4.5 We will continue to concentrate on increasing opportunities for our young people, in schools and education, and in sports and leisure. We will invest in their future.
- 4.6 We will meet head on the issues raised by pressure on school places by a rising population. We will build new schools including a new primary and secondary school in Wembley and expand existing schools.
- 4.7 We will continue to invest in our clean and green agenda with better and more frequent street cleaning. We will link Streetcare to our Ward Working agenda and have identifiable teams and individuals responsible for delivering streetcare services on a ward basis. We will continue to develop our Deep Cleaning programme. We will increase the number of items accepted on our doorstep recycling collections. In specifying a new waste and streetcare contract we will ensure an ever higher service for Brent residents. We will build on the major successes we have made in improving our parks.
- 4.8 Tackling Crime and Community safety issues has been a major priority for this Administration. We will continue to fund our popular warden service and further integrate their work as wardens in our streets, parks and estates. We will work in ever closer partnership with the police to bear down on the issues of crime and fear of crime which concern our residents.
- 4.9 Our record in Regeneration is exemplary, when others doubted that the stadium would return to Wembley, this Administration stood firm. We will now ensure that our far-reaching vision is delivered so that Wembley provides the jobs and leisure, and retail opportunities that will benefit local people. We will continue to work with the New Deal Board in South Kilburn to positively transform the area and we will pursue our goal of decent affordable homes for everyone who needs one.
- 4.10 The next Administration will focus on services that provide a quality of life and opportunity for older people building on the work that we have begun. As the ethnic composition of our elder population becomes increasingly diverse, we will ensure that our services will reflect this.
- 4.11 This administration will work hard to deliver equality in service delivery recognising both individual needs and the needs of all our diverse communities.
- 4.12 The above is designed to give a flavour of the priorities this Administration has for the use of the 2006-7 budget. When re-elected we pledge to provide a detailed action plan to Full Council in the summer of 2006.

Councillor Ann John

Councillor David Coughlin