



FULL COUNCIL
27th November 2006

Report from The Executive

For Action

Wards Affected:
 ALL

**First Reading of the 2007-2008 Budget Priorities for
 the Administration**

1.0 Summary

This report sets out the Administrations top priorities for action and spending and should be read in conjunction with the Corporate Strategy and the concurrent report from the Director of Finance and Corporate Resources which sets out the main parameters surrounding the setting of the budget.

2.0 Recommendations

The Council is recommended to consider the priorities alongside the Director of Finance and Corporate Resources paper on the budget and to debate them as set out in Standing Orders 25A and 44

3.0 The Priorities

3.1 This year residents of this borough voted for change. One of the key areas they identified was that the council needed to make a step change in its approach to the Green Agenda. In line with our commitment to make Brent a "Great Place to Live" we are prioritising Green issues and taking a Green approach to what we do.

3.2 In this context cleaning up our own act must be a priority. If we want to influence others then we ourselves must set a clear example. We will therefore put in place a new Waste Collection, Recycling and Cleansing contract from April 2007 that delivers an increasingly improved service and

approach to street cleaning with even higher standards and greater frequencies of cleansing. We will ensure that we make it easier and more effective for residents to recycle and will include plastics and other materials previously not picked up in our doorstep collections. No area of the borough will be left out and so new contracts will also focus on areas previously poorly covered like housing estates. We will ensure that for our money we deliver a full integrated waste and cleaning service with ever higher standards year on year.

- 3.3 We will pioneer 'Green' approaches to existing problems. We will ensure that all residents will have access to controlled parking if they want it. However as part of our encouragement for everyone to take responsibility for the environment we will allow free car parking for residents whose cars are 1100cc or under. We believe that to be serious about engaging people around green issues, good services and incentives are better than just sanctions and prohibitions.
- 3.4 This administration puts the needs of the borough's children at the top of its priorities. We are clear that Brent is a young borough and we need to do all we can to support the education of children and provide opportunities for all our young people. We will ensure that school places are increased to meet the needs and desires of children and parents. We will expand existing schools, lobby the Department of Education and Skills for, additional resources and we will explore every opportunity to deliver the school places that we need.
- 3.5 We are clear that the supply and affordability of housing are key issues in the lives of our residents. We are committed to increasing both the amount and quality of housing available in all sectors. Through our growth areas policy we will be seeking to attract quality developers and partners to help us increase housing opportunities across all tenures, in particular exploring further opportunities for shared ownership.
- 3.6 We will continue to drive forward our regeneration programmes. Wembley is the fastest moving major development in London and we will ensure that a mixed development with retail, entertainment, culture and jobs benefiting all our residents is achieved. Our approach to growth areas is that they will benefit the whole borough and it is not just about ensuring the infrastructure is provided to support growing population but that quality facilities and jobs should be forthcoming that benefit all residents across the borough.
- 3.7 A hallmark of this administration is the respect in which it holds its residents. We are committed to listening to and acting upon the issues and concerns of local residents. We are committed to ensuring that engagement with the public in decision making takes place at the level nearest to them and that local people have an opportunity to shape the environment and services that affect their lives. We will therefore bring forward proposals for implementation from May next year which keep the best elements of our ward focus whilst allowing ward councillors and their constituents to take real decisions on a wider neighbourhood basis. We will ensure that councillors are supported in their job of getting things done for local residents and that the public is empowered on the issues that affect them.

- 3.8 On every doorstep in May the top priority of residents was consistently crime and the fear of crime. We will bring forward a package of measures that guarantees the public's number one wish which is to have a greater uniformed presence on the street at times when they want it. We will work on this in partnership with the police and deliver measures that both stop crime and make the public feel safer. We will build on the success of our multi agency approach to anti-social behaviour, we will build on the success of new initiatives in Wembley and will use CCTV, including mobile CCTV more imaginatively and we will link all this into our new improved approach to neighbourhood working.
- 3.9 This Administration will not shrink from its responsibilities to provide the best possible social care whilst ensuring that every penny spent is used most effectively for the benefit of the most vulnerable people in our community. We will bear down on the ever rising costs for purchasing of care which benefit only the external providers of services. We will therefore bring forward an ambitious programme of Spend to Save measures and initiatives which maximise the value of money that we get from the budget whilst improving services to prevent long-term dependency. We are clear that this is a programme for the whole term of this administration but we are convinced by the need to make a start now.
- 3.10 This Administration is unashamedly ambitious for this council and its residents. It is determined to shift up a gear from being seen as competent to being seen as excellent – a Council, residents, employees and councillors all feel rightly proud of. We will continue to pursue our innovative solutions to some of the borough's most intractable problems through our successful approach to the Local Area Agreement and with projects such as improving preventative care for young people in Stonebridge and Kingsbury we will link up our approach to Crime, Education and Social renewal.
- 3.11 In our work programme we will not shrink from Building an even Better Borough.

PAUL LORBER
LEADER OF THE COUNCIL