

Brent Council's Best Value Performance Plan 2003/2004

Part 1: DRAFT 01 (June 12th 2003)

This first draft sets out the content and style for part 1 of the 2003/04 performance plan. Part 2 (the performance digest) contains all the tables of performance data.

Due to time constraints in producing the plan and collating the data, as of the 12th June, the document is still undergoing a process of minor editing and refinement. In some cases there is missing data in the performance tables which will be added once the final figures are available.

Inside Front Cover & First Page

Brent's Performance Plan is available in other languages (inside front cover)

Translation details / large text:

- Albanian
- Arabic
- Gujarati
- Hindi
- Punjabi
- Somali
- Tamil
- Urdu

PAGE 1

Brent Council is committed to providing value for money and ensuring that our services are relevant to the needs of all sections of the community. To help us achieve this aim, we welcome your views on how you think we are doing, particularly in those areas which will be the subject of reviews in the forthcoming year.

This document contains details of Brent Council's performance over the last three years and the proposed actions for improving services in future years. If you would like to make any comments or suggestions about this plan, including the Performance Digest, or if you would like further information, a translation or a large print version of the document, please contact us at:

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Copies of this plan are also available in the council's One Stop Shops and libraries. The contact details for our One Stop Shops are listed below. To find out where your nearest library is call our general enquiry number on **020 8937 3144** or check our website: **www.brent.gov.uk/libraryservice**

One Stop Shop Contact Centre

020 8937 1200

between 8am-8pm Monday to Friday

Minicom 020 8937 1993

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Or email us at **customer.services@brent.gov.uk**

Or use our on-line enquiry form **www.brent.gov.uk**

Or visit us at one of our shops:

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349-357 High Road, Wembley,
Middlesex HA9 6BZ

Harlesden One Stop Shop

1-2 Bank Buildings, High Street, Harlesden,
London NW10 4LX

Kilburn One Stop Shop

Hampton House, 1b Dyne Road, Kilburn,
London NW6 7XG

Kingsbury One Stop Shop

522-524 Kingsbury High Road,
London NW9 9HE

Town Hall Library and One Stop Shop

Forty Lane, Wembley,
Middlesex HA9 9HV

**Willesden Green Library Centre
and One Stop Shop**

95, High Road, Willesden Green,
London NW10 2ST

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FOREWORD FROM THE LEADER OF BRENT COUNCIL.

I am pleased to introduce Brent Council's fourth annual performance plan, which lets you know what the council has been doing and what we plan to do next.

In this plan we have described what the council will be doing to meet the needs of service users, local communities and businesses in Brent in the coming year. The Plan is a key document for increasing the accountability of the council to the community it serves and shows how we will be improving performance to achieve our priorities and targets.

I believe that the services and support provided by the council should be high quality, represent good value for money and be relevant to the needs of all sections of our diverse community. I know that the council has striven to improve its performance in many areas but I also know that there is much more that needs to be done.

For the first time in 2002 the council was subject to a comprehensive performance assessment by the Audit Commission. The results of the assessment, what it means and how we have responded are included in this report. You will also find information on our performance to date, services that are improving or already doing well and where our priorities for improvement are for next year and the two years after that.

We appreciate Brent Council cannot deliver Best Value to its residents and businesses if we do not invest in those who deliver our services. We are continuing to develop our 'Improving Brent' programme designed to ensure we provide equality of opportunity for our large and diverse workforce as we continue to provide quality services to local people. The council is also committed to achieving 'Investors in People' status in this coming year.

The council and its local partners have now signed up to Brent's Community Plan where residents, the council and other organisations in the borough have had a say in defining the priorities for the area. Brent has become a Beacon Council for the second year running – a clear demonstration that we are delivering some of the best services in the country.

We try hard to listen to residents' views and concerns through our consultative forums and surveys. Inside this report you will find out more about how we consult and how residents' views are reflected in the way we change things. You will also see that we are continuing to improve the ways in which we talk to people and hear their concerns.

We welcome your views about this plan. If you have any comments or suggestions, or would like more information about anything that you read here, you can contact us at the address shown inside the front cover of this plan. You can also get in touch via our website – we now have free access to the internet through our libraries.

ABOUT THIS PLAN

This plan is the fourth of an annual series and comes in two parts. Part one, the Performance Plan, tells you what kinds of services we provide, how we are performing and what improvements we intend to make over the next few years. This is part of the government's requirement for councils to provide 'best value' services that are efficient, economical and effective. In order to provide best value to our local community we must also review our services and set targets for improvement.

This part of the plan provides you with information about the areas where we are doing well and those where we have set priorities for improvement. These priorities take into account issues of local concern as well as national priorities set by the government. You will also find information about the council and the borough, and our strategies for improving our performance and improving the borough over the next few years – including how the views of our residents and others with an interest in the borough are taken into account. It is important that we report back on the views of others regarding our performance (particularly the results of our comprehensive performance assessment undertaken in 2002) and how we raise and spend money to provide local services. Finally, you will also find details about how we have reviewed the performance of our services over the last three years, what the outcomes were, and which services will be next.

The second part of this plan, the Performance Digest, includes details of our performance against over 100 national and local indicators. We have set out the information in tables to make it as clear as possible and to allow you to make comparisons and to see the targets for improvement that we have set ourselves. Some of the indicators show how the council is doing compared to previous years and compared to other local authorities. Most of these indicators are quite detailed and rely upon precise definitions of what is to be measured – we would be happy to give you a more detailed explanation if this would help.

In this plan we have set out our priorities and targets for the coming years based on what residents and partners have said to us through consultation and what the government expects us to achieve. The following chapters tell you how much we actually achieved, the results of our service reviews and what we plan to do in 2003/2004 and beyond.

1. ABOUT BRENT

A dynamic borough

The London Borough of Brent came into being in April 1965 with the merging of the two Borough Councils of Wembley and Willesden. The River Brent, which for centuries divided the areas, now acts as their common link and has given the united borough its name. Today, Brent covers an area of approximately 4,325 hectares (almost 17 square miles) between inner and outer north west London. It extends from Kenton and Kingsbury in the north to Harlesden, Queens Park and Kilburn in the south, and is home to over a quarter of a million people. The North Circular Road divides the less densely populated northern part of the borough from the south.

As an area, Brent's most striking feature is, without doubt, the contrasts that exist in its economic, environmental, ethnic and social make-up. Its population is one of the most culturally and racially diverse of all the local authorities in England and Wales. The Black and Asian communities account for over fifty per cent of the local population and almost one in ten residents is Irish-born. Each community enriches the cultural life of the borough, which is home to a unique mix of festivals and religious celebrations. These include the Hindu Diwali Festival, Chanuka, Eid and the spectacular fireworks display which light up Brent's skies on Guy Fawkes night. Over 100 languages are spoken in the borough.

Contrasts are also the hallmark of the borough's physical and social character. It is a place where inner-city urban conditions meet with a more prosperous suburban life. While some areas in the south of Brent – such as Harlesden, South Kilburn and Stonebridge – experience high levels of social deprivation (including high unemployment rates, over-crowding and poor housing), parts of the north boast tree-lined streets and pleasant open spaces. Two of North-West London's most attractive recreational areas – the Welsh Harp Reservoir and Fryent Country Park – lie in the northern part of the borough, breathing fresh air into the urban environment. Politically, the borough is divided into three parliamentary constituencies – Brent East, Brent North and Brent South. There are 21 electoral wards with 63 local councillors elected to Brent Council every four years. The borough is also part of the London constituency for the European Parliament which returns ten members. With Harrow it returns one Member to the Greater London Authority.

New Developments

There are a number of new developments affecting the council and the borough this year. These are summarised below together with contact details for more information.

New Corporate Strategy

After last year's local elections the council's new administration set out its priorities for the following four years and how they will be delivered. These

priorities form the basis of our Corporate Strategy. The new strategy was published in the summer of 2002 and is discussed in more detail in the next chapter. This and future editions of the Best Value Performance Plan will report on progress against this strategy and other major plans.

Policy & Regeneration Unit
020 8937 1030
www.brent.gov.uk/corporatestrategy

Improving Brent

'Improving Brent' is the council's response to the Best Value requirement to pursue continuous service improvement. It contains over 30 initiatives designed to help council employees develop their skills and improve service delivery to Brent's diverse community. Open to all staff and councillors, the programme is based on the twin themes of quality and equality. It is a five-year programme to build on our existing strengths while addressing areas of weakness and under-performance. Initiatives include management seminars, mentoring schemes, training in communications and customer care skills and annual staff achievement awards.

Human Resources
020 8937 1023
www.brent.gov.uk

Brent Local Strategic Partnership and the Community Plan

Tackling key issues for local people such as crime, jobs, education, health and housing requires a range of local organisations working together. Brent Council has many of the responsibilities and powers needed to bring about improvements in our communities but we also need to work with other public services, local people, business, and the voluntary and community sectors. The Brent Local Strategic Partnership, known as 'Partners for Brent' is the single body that brings together partners from these different sectors so that different initiatives and services support each other and work together.

The Local Government Act 2000 places a duty on local authorities to prepare community plans for promoting and improving the economic, social and environmental well-being of their areas. The Brent plan has been prepared in partnership with all the agencies that influence the quality of life of residents including the council, the police, the Primary Care Trust, the voluntary sector and local businesses. We prepared the plan for Partners for Brent after consulting widely with residents, and the final plan will be published in summer 2003. Implementation of the plan will be monitored by the local strategic partnership, and progress will be reported back to residents via The Brent Magazine.

Policy & Regeneration Unit
020 8937 1030
www.brent.gov.uk

Beacon Council

This year Brent Council has been successful in winning Beacon Council status under the category of 'removing barriers to work'. It is the second year running that Brent has been awarded Beacon status. This means that we have received national recognition for our activities and initiatives in removing barriers to work and we will be sharing our good practice with others over the coming year.

Policy & Regeneration Unit
020 8937 1030
www.brent.gov.uk/regeneration

Wembley Stadium

After a long period of uncertainty, the decision and backing to go ahead with the new national stadium was made in September 2002. The old stadium has now been demolished and work is progressing on the new one.

In November 2002, Brent Council launched its ambitious plans to transform Wembley into a destination that is the envy of the world at a reception addressed by Ken Livingstone, the Mayor of London.

The centrepiece of the new Wembley will be the new 90,000 seat National Stadium, which will be surrounded by a mixed use development, incorporating conference and convention facilities, a refurbished Wembley Arena and a range of leisure, cultural and commercial activities attracting visitors from across the country. There will also be new hotels, restaurants, offices, shops and houses - capitalising on the improved transport links that make Wembley accessible to the whole of the UK and transforming the existing drab industrial area into a thriving 21st Century city quarter.

The new Wembley will create thousands of new jobs and opportunities in Northwest London, as well as protecting 5,000 existing jobs.

Wembley Project
020 8937 2273
www.brent.gov.uk/wembley

2001 Census Results

The Census provides a snapshot of the entire population once every ten years. These statistics are used for many important purposes. They allow central and local government as well as health authorities to plan health, education, transport and housing need for the years ahead.

The Census collects information from every household and therefore presents a unique and comprehensive picture of the borough, enabling the council to assess the needs and requirements of its customers and to review and monitor the effectiveness of its services.

Information from the 2001 Census is now available. Headline statistics put the population for the London Borough of Brent at **263,466**. This figure compares with the latest mid-year estimate for 2001 of 256,073 - a difference of 7,393 or 2.8%.

Environmental Services
020 8937 5004
www.brent.gov.uk/environment

Local Public Service Agreement

During 2003 the council is negotiating an agreement with the government which is set to improve local performance in 12 key areas by March 2006. The government will provide a financial reward if the council and its partners are successful in achieving challenging targets. The negotiations are focussing on education at key stage three, educational attainment of care leavers at age 19, burglary and street crime, road accidents, housing performance, sport, improving the borough's footways, reducing death and injury from fire, and improving the revenue and benefits service.

Policy & Regeneration Unit
020 8937 1030
www.brent.gov.uk

Comprehensive Performance Assessment

Brent Council has been given a powerful vote of confidence by the Audit Commission in its first ever Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) of the authority. Rated as 'fair' overall, the council is described as a 'quietly ambitious' council which is 'delivering improvements both in the way it works and in the service it delivers'.

A full explanation and analysis of the results of the CPA for Brent are provided in Chapter 3.

Policy & Regeneration Unit
020 8937 1030
www.brent.gov.uk

2. OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITIES

Building a better borough, Our Corporate Strategy 2002-06

The corporate strategy outlines Brent Council's vision, values and key priorities up to 2006. It is the council's contract with the people of Brent setting out the main issues that will be addressed between 2002 and 2006. The full strategy is available on our website at:
www.brent.gov.uk/corporatestrategy

Our Vision and Values

Brent will be a borough where all its communities enjoy a high quality of life and will be able to fully participate in society. Brent Council will have a reputation for good, democratically accountable leadership, strong partnerships and excellent services. Brent will be a borough proud of its diversity, served by an ambitious, progressive and outward looking council. Brent will be a home of choice for its diverse population and businesses.

Building a better borough

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Raising the quality of life

Raising the quality of life is one of Brent Council's key aims. We are serious in our drive to promote the social, economic and environmental well-being of all residents. Through service delivery and partnership we will strive to ensure that our work and that of our partners is of universal benefit. We aim to transform the environment and continuously improve the service offered to local people, whatever their age or need. We will take a focussed approach to delivering our regeneration strategy and are committed to environmental sustainability for the benefit of future generations.

Serving all our communities

Brent is a borough of many communities and cultures. We will work to ensure all Brent's diverse communities are served sensitively and effectively. We will recognise the diversity of the borough. We will ensure that we always consult residents appropriately and that they are represented by local councillors and the council to the highest standards. We will promote tolerance, understanding and community cohesion between our different communities.

Developing and motivating our staff

To achieve its aims Brent needs the highest quality staff. Our organisation will

be one that shows clear leadership but works in an open and collective way. We need service areas that are dynamic and customer-focussed and service units that are entrepreneurial and empowered. An organisation that acknowledges problems, makes hard choices but learns from mistakes without blame or recrimination. We will drive forward our 'Improving Brent' programme providing support, development opportunities and quality training for all our staff. Brent Council will be an employer of choice.

Achieving service excellence

All Brent staff, regardless of role or grade, share a commitment to providing excellent, sensitive and appropriate services. This commitment includes dedication to seeking continuous improvement and a strong belief in public service, democratically accountable local government and the rights of Brent residents both as citizens and service users.

Key Priorities

As well as details of our visions and values, the strategy has five crosscutting themes that were developed following consultation with Brent residents.

These **key areas of concern for local people are:-**

- Supporting children and young people
- Promoting quality of life and the green agenda
- Regeneration and priority neighbourhoods
- Tackling crime and community safety
- Achieving service excellence

Supporting children and young people

Brent has a young population that is getting younger. Nearly 29% of local people are under 19 years of age and this proportion will increase over the next ten years. The council will invest in the borough's children and young people to ensure they have the best possible life chances. We want to make sure that by the age of 19 all young people will be in full time education, work or vocational training.

Promoting quality of life & the green agenda

The quality of the environment and access to affordable housing and public transport, leisure, cultural and sporting facilities all affect the quality of peoples lives. The council intends to enhance the quality of life in Brent by creating an attractive, secure and sustainable environment, where all communities have access to varied leisure, cultural and sporting activities and quality affordable housing.

Regeneration and priority neighbourhoods

Brent is a borough of stark contrasts: it has both affluent suburban areas and deprived inner city areas; it is the second most ethnically diverse borough in the country; and it includes London's largest industrial estate, Park Royal. Through delivery of its Regeneration Strategy, the council will ensure that Brent provides a home of choice for its diverse population and businesses.

Tackling crime and community safety

Fears about the level of crime top the list of residents concerns. The council will make Brent a safer place for local residents, visitors and businesses by combating crime, reducing the fear of crime and supporting alternative choices for individuals who may be at risk of committing crime.

Achieving service excellence

Providing public services to a diverse, urban population with high levels of need is a complex and challenging role. Brent Council will be an outward-looking authority that strives to deliver excellent services, which are relevant to the needs and aspirations of local communities and represent value for money.

Strategy into action

Each year the council's Executive produces an annual plan listing the action it intends to take that year to meet the key priorities and progress on the previous year's action.

This performance plan is set out under the key themes of the corporate strategy. Under each theme you will find information relating to our progress, both in terms of successful implementation of parts of the strategy and remaining priorities.

3. COMPREHENSIVE PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

Brent Council has been given a vote of confidence by the Audit Commission in its first ever Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) of the authority. Rated as **'fair'** overall, the council is described as a *'quietly ambitious'* council which is *'delivering improvements both in the way it works and in the service it delivers'*,

A closer examination of the score shows that we came extremely close to the 'good' category, missing out by only one point on a 60 point scale! This shows that we are very well placed to secure a 'good' rating if our current rate of progress continues.

An encouraging outcome

In headline terms, our results (based on a 1 - 4 scale with higher scores equating to better performance) were as follows:

Core service performance

37 points out of 60 (Level 2)

Corporate assessment

36 points out of 48 (Level 3)

This combination of scores produces an overall assessment of 'fair' but it is perfectly clear from the detailed results below that Brent Council is at the very top of the 'fair' range.

How our score was calculated

On **core service performance** which measures the performance of the main council services, our weighted scores were as follows:

<u>Service</u>	<u>Score</u>	<u>Maximum</u>
Education	12	16
Social Services	8	16
Housing	6	8
Environment	6	8
Libraries & Leisure	1	4
Benefits	1	4
Use of resources	3	4
Total points	37	60

If the council had scored just one more point on this sixty point scale, we would have attained Level 3 on core service performance and this would have been enough to put us into the 'good' category overall. Brent Council has therefore just missed being classified as 'good' by the slimmest of margins.

On our **corporate assessment**, we scored a highly impressive 36 points out of 48 which means a Level 3 performance (on the 1 – 4 scale). This indicator measures our capacity as an organisation to move forward. The Level 3 score is a huge endorsement of our ability to improve further and offers great encouragement to members and officers about the current direction of the council.

Looking at the corporate assessment in more depth, our detailed score was as follows:

<u>Criterion</u>	<u>Score</u>	<u>Maximum</u>
Ambition	3	4
Focus	3	4
Prioritisation	3	4
Capacity	3	4
Performance management	2	4
Improvements achieved (weighting of 3)	9	12
Investment (weighting of 2)	6	8
Learning	4	4
Future plans	3	4
Total points	36	48

What the inspectors said about Brent Council

Accompanying our 'score card', the Audit Commission has also produced a 28 page corporate assessment report on Brent Council. Copies of the full assessment are available on the Audit Commission website: www.audit-commission.gov.uk.

Key recommendations and improvements

The corporate assessment report acknowledges the real pressures and constraints facing the council. It also recognises that Brent is an 'asset poor' authority with low reserves. There are some warning signs about pressure and workloads. The council is aware of these limitations and is seeking to redress them.

Some of the areas for improvement identified in the assessment report include the following:

- improving the operation and impact of the scrutiny and overview process

- enhanced briefing, support and training for elected members
- stronger performance management arrangements, including 'vital signs' indicators of corporate health
- improvements to management information and service monitoring arrangements
- closer co-ordination of service and financial strategies
- increasing our focus on income generation
- action to tackle under-performance in weaker areas, such as sports and leisure, revenues and benefits, waste recycling.

The council has prepared an Improvement Plan to respond to these recommendations and work is already in hand on several of them. The operation of the new constitutional arrangements has been reviewed and a new structure for scrutiny is now in place. Decisive action is already being taken to upgrade sports and leisure provision, including being the subject of a best value review this year. And major changes are being made to revenue and benefits following the decision to end the privatised contract for this service. We have made sure that both sport and revenue and benefits have been included in our Local Public Service Agreement negotiations.

We met with the Audit Commission in February 2003 to discuss the detailed content of our Improvement Plan and agreed six improvement priorities. These are:

Corporate priorities

- Develop the capacity of staff and members through focused training, the Improving Brent programme and achieving IIP for the whole authority.
- Strengthen performance management culture, through Best Value, performance management procedures and improved monitoring and scrutiny.

Service priorities

- Implement the improvement plan for Children's Social Services.
- Improve leadership and service outcomes in sports, leisure and cultural facilities.
- Improve the performance of the council's revenue and benefits service to increase efficiency and provide a high standard of customer service.
- Improve the council's performance in recycling and waste management

4. CONSULTATION AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Community engagement is at the core of the modernisation agenda for local government, allowing local people to contribute to decision-making and the provision of services. Brent council is committed to continuing dialogue with the communities it serves.

Over the last ten years we have undertaken literally hundreds of surveys. Our robust and comprehensive consultation structure also includes:

Five Area Consultative Forums

Giving local people a say about the issues that matter to them.

Meetings allow residents, traders and community representatives to raise questions about services provided by the council and other agencies in Brent.

User Consultative Forums

Encouraging the users of specific services to have their say.

These forums include: Public Sector Housing; Private Sector Housing; Children; Pensioners; Disabilities and Mental Health; Youth and Voluntary Sector. Both area and user forums are linked directly into the council's decision-making process through the Scrutiny and Overview Committees.

This year, during Respect Week, the council will pilot a new Forum to consult with local black and minority ethnic community groups on a range of issues. And the council has prioritised stakeholder consultation and communication for the coming year under the Race Equality Scheme.

Area Housing Boards

Seeking to engage tenants on housing and community issues

The Housing Boards encourage tenant involvement in the monitoring of housing services.

Citizens' Panel of 1100 residents

Enabling the council to consult the community on a wide range of issues.

The panel allows regular and quick access to a broadly representative group of residents that can be surveyed using both qualitative and quantitative research methods. It helps us understand why people's views are changing and offers the option of focused surveys among particular users.

Taking consultation forward

In Autumn 2001, we adopted our first Consultation Strategy (2001-2004) in order to improve how we and our partners consult local communities and stakeholders.

The strategy was based on a Consultation Audit undertaken by MORI across the authority in the summer of 2000. Its key objectives are:

- To ensure that consultation activity is accessible to all communities and stakeholders in Brent, particularly 'hard to reach' groups;

- To meet the statutory and policy requirements for consultation and to contribute to an evidence-based approach to policy and service development;
- To contribute to a healthy local democracy by putting in place a range of consultation opportunities;
- To provide clear guidance and standards for consultation activity and to enable staff, partners and stakeholders to undertake effective consultation.

Survey of Brent's Residents

Brent is not a bad place to live, but crime is a big concern. That's the view of Brent residents highlighted in a recent borough-wide survey.

The in-depth study, carried out by MORI on behalf of Brent Council, aimed to find out how local people feel about living in Brent, the general quality of their lives, and what they think of the overall job that the council is doing.

The majority of Brent residents (74%) said they are satisfied with the area they live in. The two areas identified as most in need of improvement were Harlesden (34%) and Wembley (28%).

The main good things about living in Brent are public transport (35%), access to shopping facilities (27%) and clean streets (12%).

Crime is seen as the single biggest issue having a negative impact on the health and quality of life for local people, with a third of residents saying crime is a problem (32%). Twenty per cent of people said their quality of life was affected by road traffic while 19% cited environmental pollution as having a negative impact.

The survey findings for Brent Council were encouraging with the council maintaining its overall service satisfaction levels. General satisfaction with the council rose to 46%, an increase of 3% since 2000 when Brent's Citizen's Panel was set up.

The top five council services people identified as good included refuse collection, street lighting, libraries, street cleaning and One Stop Shops. The most commonly used council services were libraries, parks and open spaces, One Stop Shops, car parks and recycling facilities.

MORI has identified Brent as one of the country's top performers for street lighting.

Top scoring satisfaction levels for services are:

Refuse collection - 77%

Street Cleaning - 76%

Parks and open spaces – 64%

One Stop Shops – 58%

Libraries – 57%

When asked what the council and its partners could do to improve the borough (even if it meant a rise in Council Tax) residents top three answers were crime prevention and community safety projects (35%), more police on the beat (25%) and better maintenance of roads and pavements (17%).

The number of people who feel well informed about the council's work has steadily increased since the first residents' survey was carried out in 1990, almost doubling to 48%. Fifty one per cent of people said they would like to know what the council is doing while 26% said they would like more of a say in what the council does.

The most popular source of information about council services is The Brent Magazine (50%). Eighty one per cent of people said they regularly get a copy while 62% said it contains lots of useful information.

Feedback from the survey has been used to help the council develop its corporate strategy plans for the period 2002 to 2006.

5. PERFORMANCE

SUPPORTING CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

Raising Standards of Education

Raising standards of education and improving the performance of our schools are key, ongoing priorities for the Education, Arts & Libraries Department.

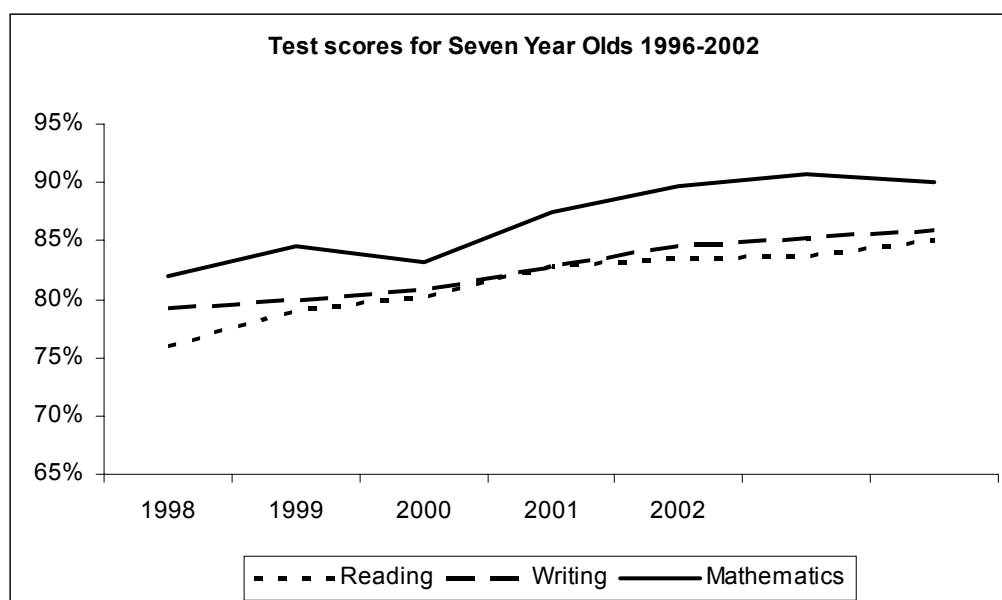
Pupils take tests and are assessed by their teachers at the ages of 7 (Key Stage 1), 11 (Key Stage 2) and 14 (Key Stage 3) and take GCSE and GNVQ examinations when they are 16 (Key Stage 4).

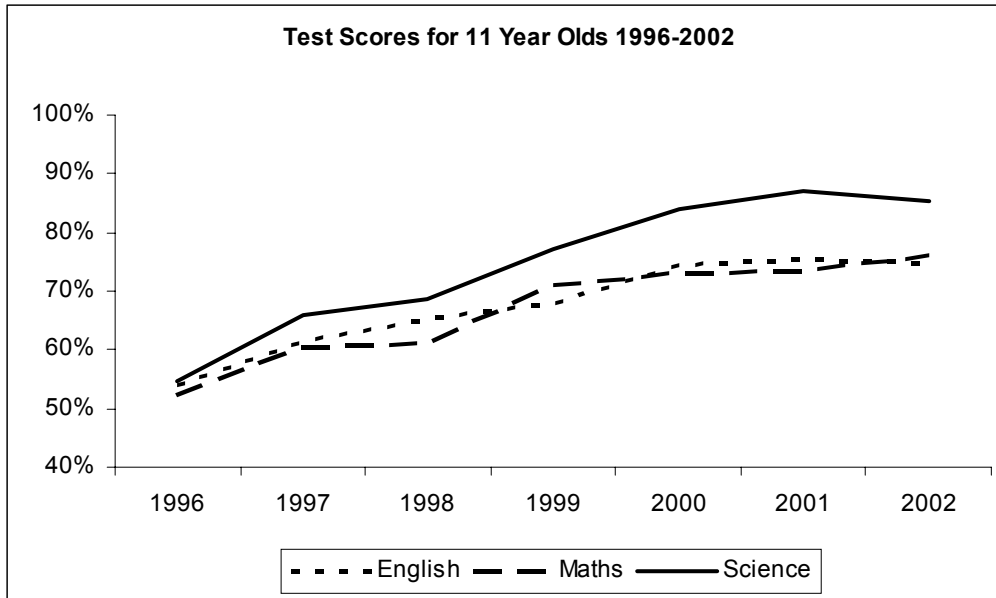
Performance of 7 and 11 year olds

The overall performance level of 7 and 11 year olds has improved every year since 1996.

The percentage of 7 year olds achieving level 2 or above at **Key Stage 1** is now broadly in line with the national average. The table below shows current attainment levels against those achieved in 2000 and shows the national average for both years.

Key Stage 1	Reading		Writing		Maths		Science	
	Brent	Nat	Brent	Nat	Brent	Nat	Brent	Nat
2000	82.9%	83%	83.9%	84%	88.9%	90%	85.6%	88%
2002	84.5%	83%	86.3%	86%	90.4%	90%	88.3%	89%



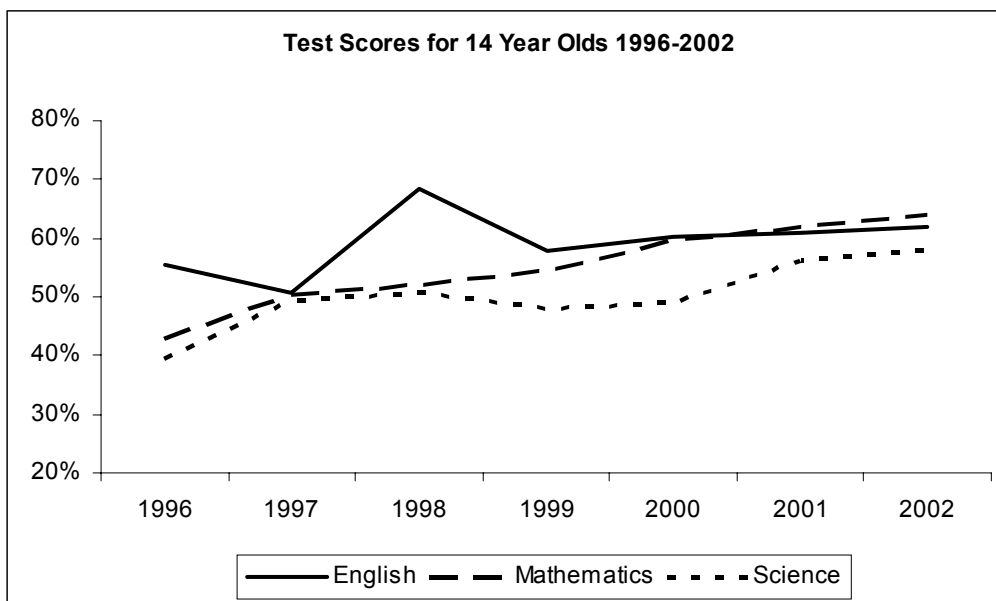


The 2002 results for 11 year olds were the best yet achieved in English and mathematics and Brent's results are once again higher than the national average in mathematics. Results in English and Science were only slightly below the national average. The table below shows current attainment levels compared with levels achieved in 2000, together with national averages.

Key Stage 2	English		Maths		Science	
	Brent	Nat	Brent	Nat	Brent	Nat
2000	73.4%	75%	72%	72%	82.8%	85%
2002	74.6%	75%	75.8%	73%	85.2%	86%

Performance of 14 and 16 year olds

The level of achievement of 14 and 16 year olds also increased between 1996 and 2002 and compares favourably with our statistical neighbours.



In 2002, levels of attainment at **Key Stage 3** (14 year olds) show an improvement over recent years and, although we are still somewhat behind national averages, our levels of achievement are now broadly in line with our statistical neighbours. Raising the attainment of pupils at Key Stage 3 is a priority and will form part of the council's 'Public Service Agreement' (PSA) with central government.

Between 2001 and 2002, there was an improvement of 2.4 percentage points in the proportion of students gaining five or more **GCSE** passes at grades A*-C, although Brent is still below the national average. For five or more GCSE passes at grades A*-G, there was an improvement of 4.4 percentage points, bringing Brent above the national average to a significant extent. There was an improvement of 1.1 percentage points in the level of students gaining at least one GCSE pass, with Brent again significantly above the national average. The average points score, which records attainment at all levels, is now 2.1 percentage points below the national average.

Targets for improvement

Overall, education standards shown in the tests and public examinations continue to rise and Brent has largely met the targets for 2002 for the Education Development Plan 1 (1999-2002). However, higher targets are set in the new Education Development Plan for 2002-7. More rapid improvement will be required at all key stages if the new targets are to be met in 2003.

The table below shows attainment levels for the past 2 years and targets for the coming 2 years taken from our Education Development Plan for 2002-7.

		Past Performance		Targets	
		2001	2002	2003	2004
Key Stage 2. The % of pupils achieving level 4 or above	English	74.5	74.6	79	84
	Maths	72.6	75.8	77	85
Key Stage 3. The % of pupils achieving level 4 or above	English	60.9	60.6	70	75
	Maths	61.8	63.3	70	74
	Science	56.1	57.4	65	68
	ICT	N/a	N/a	65	70
GCSE/GNVQ. The % of pupils expected to achieve:	5+ A*-C GCSEs	44.8	47.2	52	54
	5+ A*-G GCSEs	88.7	93.1	95	92
	Average points score	36.5	37.8	39	42

Historically, the level of achievement of children in care and pupils from certain ethnic minority groups has been below the average level of achievement. Reducing the gap between these under-performing groups and the Brent average is a specific priority.

As a Local Education Authority, the council must ensure that it invests adequately in the structures and staff that available centrally to support our schools. Consequently, in 2002 we undertook a best value review of our Planning, Information and Resources functions. Some of the key actions we are now focussing on include:

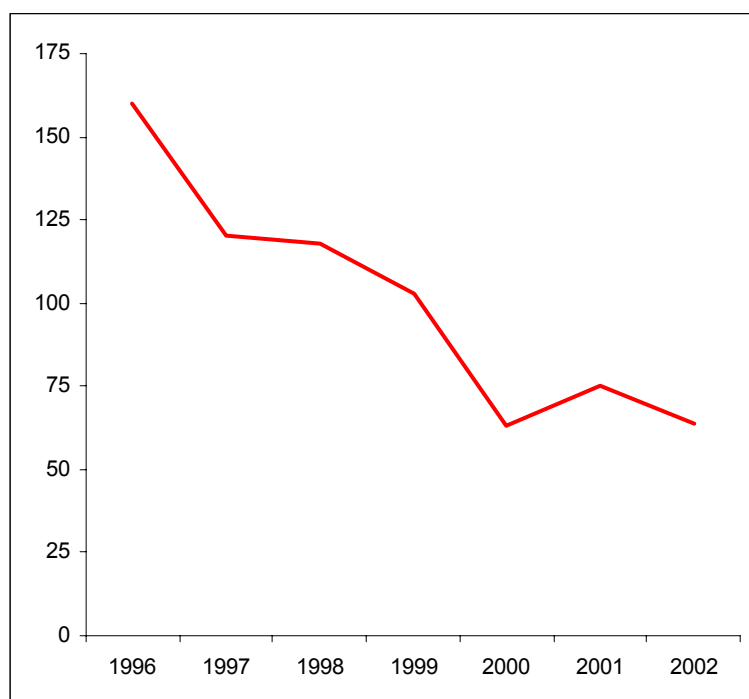
- Developing our recruitment and retention systems for teachers;
- Developing more effective training for our staff and improving the way we communicate information to them;
- Learning from good practice in other local authorities;
- Improving our IT systems and financial performance; and,
- Improving our pupil-level information systems;

Pupils out of School

We are working hard to reduce the number of pupils excluded from school and our efforts are starting to show some results. The number of permanently excluded Brent pupils dropped from 165 in the 1995/96 school year to 75 in 2000/01. It has dropped again in 2002/03 to 64.

Over the last 3 years the school attendance rate has been just below the national average in primary schools and above the national average in our secondary schools.

Number of exclusions



Following a best value review of school exclusions in 2000 we undertook a number of actions designed to improve our performance. We have improved our procedures, performance monitoring and information and training. There is now comprehensive and updated guidance on exclusion procedures, and support provision is available to all schools, relevant teachers and governors.

We ensure schools have access to a comprehensive training programme in classroom and behaviour management and continue to develop joint working arrangements at a local and regional level.

Attendance Rates in Brent Schools.

Year	Primary		Secondary	
	Brent	National	Brent	National
1999	93.6%	94.1%	92.3%	91.1%
2000	93.7%	94.3%	92.0%	91.4%
2001	93.4%	93.9%	92.2%	90.9%
2002	93.7%	94.2%	91.9%	91.3%

Brent's school attendance rates improved slightly in primary schools but the national average also increased so we remain just below this important benchmark. The attendance rate in secondary schools dropped slightly but Brent remains above the national average.

We continue to work closely with our schools and pupils to ensure high levels of school attendance. We respond to over 1,000 referrals and work with more than 400 individual pupils during a school year.

In order to increase the level of alternative tuition available to those pupils that are permanently excluded, we opened a new Pupil Referral Unit in September 2002. We also continue to focus our efforts on placing excluded pupils back into mainstream education wherever possible. During the forthcoming school year we aim to provide a minimum of 20 hours per week of alternative tuition to all excluded pupils.

Central government requires local authorities to have targets in place to increase school attendance rates. We have in place a range of support initiatives to steadily improve attendance year by year to achieve at least the national average and we consistently set targets which are both challenging and realistic.

Funding our schools

In recent years we have held back less of the overall council budget allocated to Education than almost all other London boroughs. This means that less money is spent on central administration and schools receive greater funding that they can invest in raising standards of education.

In 2003/04, under new school funding arrangements, the council has not only set its school budget above the level of funding expected by central government but is also one of a minority of Councils both in London and Nationally to have delegated and devolved to schools the level of budget provision expected by central government.

Providing adequate funding for our schools remains a priority. Our aim is to continue to set school budgets above the level of funding required by central

government and to delegate to schools the expected level of funding provision.

Indicator	How we performed in 1999/2000	How we performed in 2000/2001	How we performed in 2001/2002	Best performing Councils in London 2000-2001
Net expenditure per pupil aged under 5	£2,979	£4,478	£4,612	£3,988
Net expenditure per pupil aged 5-10	£2,330	£2,687	£2,768	£3,157
Net expenditure per pupil aged 11-16	£3,001	£3,985	£4,105	£4,055

Education Development Plan

The Education Development Plan sets out the agenda for the next three years to assist the LEA in securing the educational success our children deserve. The council wants its education service to meet the new challenges facing its communities so it can improve the quality of life and reduce inequalities for everyone living in Brent.

Early Years Development and Childcare Plan

The Early Years Development and Childcare Plan sets out our objectives for 2001 to 2004. These include creating more out-of-school childcare places, providing childcare support in Brent's most disadvantaged wards and providing nursery education places in Brent for all three and four year olds whose parents want one. We will ensure that standards are maintained among early education providers, develop more childminding networks and ensure childcare and early education practitioners are qualified to meet at least government minimum standards.

Want to know more?

Education Information Service
020 8937 3000
www.brent.gov.uk/education

OfSTED Inspection 2003

An OfSTED inspection of Brent Local Education Authority took place in January 2003 and the inspection report was published in May 2003. The inspectors reported that since the previous inspection (in 1998) Brent has made highly satisfactory progress in improving the quality of service it provides to schools and in carrying out the recommendations of the previous inspection.

It was reported that we have particular strengths in:

- the definition of monitoring, challenge and intervention
- the identification of and intervention in under-performing schools
- financial services
- assuring the supply and quality of teachers
- the deployment of staff
- the performance management of services
- value for money of services to support school improvement
- provision for looked after children
- the quality of leadership of senior officers
- the quality of advice given to elected members.
- support for raising standards in literacy
- support for raising standards in numeracy
- the provision of school places
- admissions

We still need to improve:

- targeting of resources to priorities by the council
- support for early years education
- support for human resources (personnel)
- provision for pupils who have no school place

Many of the recommendations for improvement matched our own self-evaluation and work on most of them is already underway. We will publish an action plan shortly covering all of the recommendations in details.

A full copy of the inspection report is available on our website:
www.brent.gov.uk/education

Services for Young People

Outside of the formal education system, we aim to provide informal education and social opportunities for children and young people. We are intending to increase the number of young people using our services in 2003-4, and provide one to one key worker support to young people who have been identified as being at risk.

We are coming to the end of our best value review on 'what young people want'. It has enabled us to focus on some of the key issues of importance to young people in Brent including sexual health, crime and transport. The review has highlighted consultation as very important – the young people consulted during the review felt we needed to improve the way we consult and engage with them over service improvement and delivery. The review findings and action plan will be published later in 2003.

As part of our approach to developing an integrated sports and leisure strategy, we will prioritise and target children and young people. The target of improving participation in sport by young people in our priority neighbourhoods is forming part of our 'public service agreement' negotiations with the government.

Children's Social Services

Brent Social Services has undergone major reorganisation and restructuring over the last three years, including the appointment of a new senior management team. The main areas of work relating to children cover: Referral and Assessment, Children in Need, Looked After Children, Children with Disabilities, Child Protection, Day Nursery services, Fostering and Adoption and Young People Leaving Care.

Before the re-organisation, there were a number of concerns about services provided. As a result, an inspection of assessment, decision making and care planning for children and their families was carried out by the Social Services Inspectorate (SSI) in May 2000. A follow-up inspection was completed in July 2001. A further inspection was carried out in May 2003 following the Laming Inquiry into the death of Victoria Climbié. The results of that inspection will be made known later in the year. Following each inspection, a report is produced by the SSI that identifies areas for improvement, we then develop an action plan to deliver those improvements.

A 'Joint Review' of Brent Social Services was carried out by the Audit Commission and the Social Services Inspectorate between April and June 2002 as part of a national programme. The review concluded that some people in the community are well served and that our prospects for improvement are promising. The final report was presented to the council in December 2002 and an action plan to address the recommendations in the Joint Review has been produced. A number of issues were identified which relate to services for children.

As part of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment of the whole council undertaken in 2002, services provided by Social Services were examined, and again some areas for improvement identified and an action plan developed in response.

The overall message from the various inspections and reviews show that over the last year significant progress has been made in improving the quality of services provided to children and their families, though there are still areas for further development. These are set out in the action plans for the CPA and the Joint Review which address the same issues. The table below lists some key issues to be addressed for children's social services and actions already taken or planned to address them.

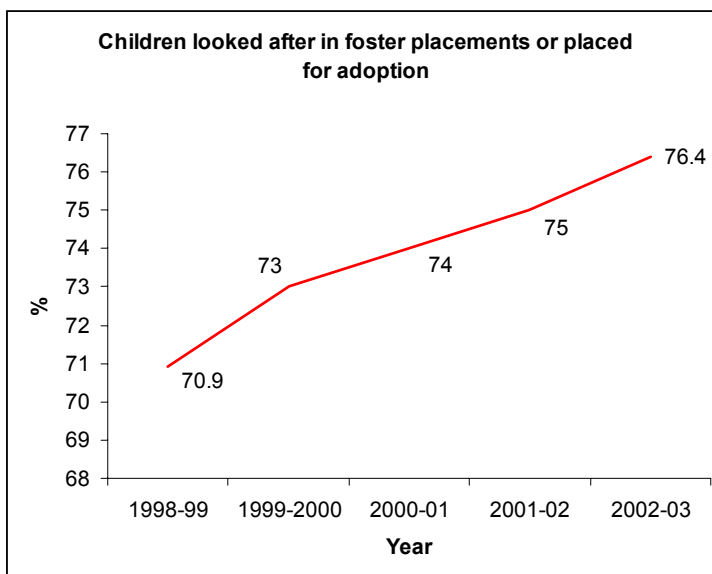
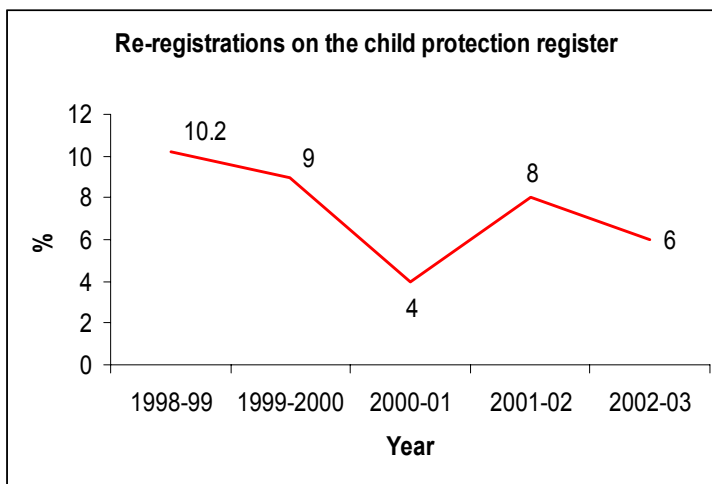
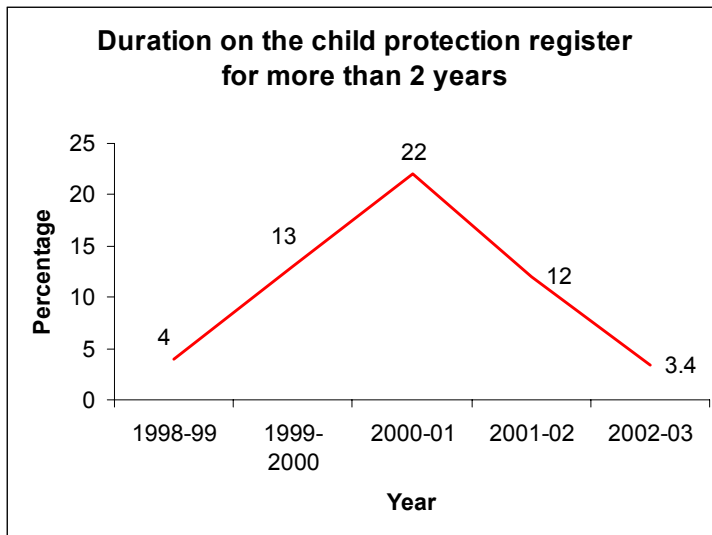
Area for Improvement	Actions taken or planned
Developing family support services	A Family Support Strategy has been drafted. Discussions are underway with a voluntary organisation for the provision of a Family Resource Centre
Improving referral and assessment processes	New practice and procedural guidance has been developed and distributed to all staff which will improve the consistency of the service. 13 new permanent Social Workers were appointed in early 2003. The report from the May 2003 SSI Inspection will identify further specific improvements needed.
Improving services for children with disabilities, and their families	Provision of respite services has been increased through use of the Carers Grant to the voluntary sector. Work is underway to improve transition services for those children approaching adulthood. An EFQM self-assessment of the Children with Disabilities service was completed in early 2003. This has identified a number of areas for improvement which will be addressed in the coming years
Improving the life chances of looked after children through improving their educational attainment	A dedicated education support team is now in place. All looked after young people sitting GCSE this year have individual plans and access to additional education support. Figures for 2002/03 show that performance has significantly improved.

Area for Improvement	Actions taken or planned
Increasing access to education, training and employment for care leavers	This measure has been put forward as the PSA target for Social Services. This seeks to substantially improve performance over the next 3 years. Research will be undertaken to identify problems and develop best practice. A co-ordinator and support officer will be employed to focus attention on achieving improvements. A Connexions Personal Advisor will support this work.
Increasing the numbers of looked after children adopted, and the number of locally based foster care placements available	We have started locally based, semi-independent living arrangements for older looked after young people. We have reviewed the carers payments scheme, including adoption allowances, and improved all carer allowances to recognise the special skills needed to look after children and young people with complex social, emotional and behavioural needs. This was implemented in January 2003. We will continue to run recruitment campaigns over the year to recruit more Brent carers. Placing of relinquished babies for adoption within 6-9 months of them becoming looked after is an area of excellence.
Reducing the numbers of children remaining on the Child Protection Register for more than two years	Performance for 2002/03 shows significant improvement on the previous two years. The 2001/02 figure was 12% and for 2002/03 the figure is 3.4%.

Addressing these issues will be a priority for Social Services during the coming years. The graphs below show recent and comparative performance on some of these issues.

Want to know more?

Social Services Quality and Support
020 8937 4143
www.brent.gov.uk/socialservices



Children & Young People Strategic Plan

During 2002/03 a multi-agency strategic plan setting out the key aims and priorities for work with young people was developed. This will be formally agreed during 2003/04.

Children and Young People Preventative Strategy

During 2003/04 a multi-agency preventative strategy will be drawn up. This will detail co-ordinated aims, objectives and activities across both statutory and voluntary sector agencies to promote positive outcomes, address risks and prevent negative outcomes for young people

PROMOTING QUALITY OF LIFE AND THE GREEN AGENDA

Environment

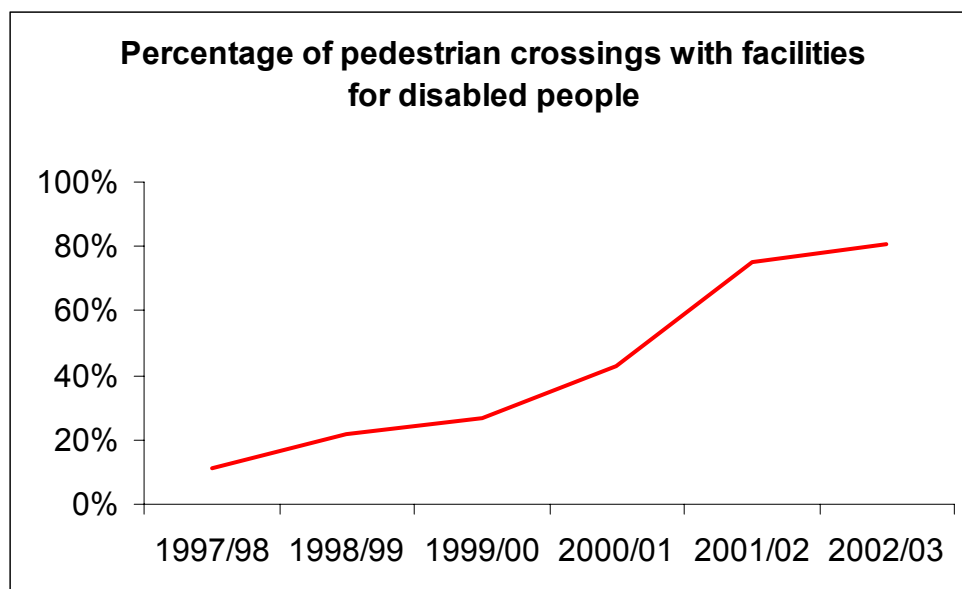
We have identified five key priorities for our Environment service area within the Corporate Strategy's 'Quality of Life and the Green Agenda' theme.

Investing in the Public Realm

Residents set great store in the quality of the public realm and we know that we have much to do before we can meet the standards they expect. We are completing the renewal of our street lighting through the country's first Private Finance Initiative for streetlights and have installed 8,169 new streetlights since the start of 1999 and upgraded a further 4,131.

Our footways have been deteriorating for many years but we now have significant extra resources to improve their condition. We are making this a priority through our local Public Services Agreement. We estimate that 40% of the busiest footways need renewal and we expect to reduce this to 30% over the next two years.

The proportion of our pedestrian crossings with proper facilities for disabled people has risen from 27% in 1999-2000 to 81% in 2002-03. We are planning to continue this improvement and have set targets to achieve 90% by 2005-06.



We undertook a Best Value Review of Highways Maintenance and the key conclusions were that:

- We need to spend more money on highways and footways maintenance

- That much better information about the condition of highways and footways is needed
- That we should investigate new forms of contract
- That we should improve the integration of our IT systems

All these improvements have now begun to be implemented.

Transforming Transport

The borough has a good public transport network and considerable scope for switching car travel to other, more sustainable modes of transport. Our planning and parking policies are working together to bring about a better public transport system. We have declared Air Quality Management Areas to help us meet targets for reducing pollution levels.

It is also important that we reduce road accident casualties. We use a number of approaches including education, enforcement, engineering works (to make roads intrinsically safer) and measures to reduce vehicle speeds. In 2000-01 there were 91 people killed or seriously injured (KSI) and 565 people slightly injured on Brent's roads for every 100,000 of our population. By 2002-03 these figures have fallen to 73 and 517 respectively. We have made this a priority in our Local Public Service Agreement and expect to see continuing improvements which will let us meet the government's targets of a 40% reduction in the KSI figures and 10% reduction in the slight injuries well ahead of their 2010 deadline.

Protecting the Public

Fly tipping, graffiti, abandoned vehicles, selling and repairing vehicles on the highway, noise nuisance, dog fouling and litter are just some of the problems that degrade the environment and make people feel unhappy and insecure.

Following the success of our graffiti removal pilot we have doubled the resources to extend the service borough wide. We have also appointed an Enviro-crime Co-ordinator to bring together the people who can take effective action against these problems and have increased funding for educational work to stop some of the problems before they happen.

Number of abandoned vehicles processed by the council each year

2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	Target for 2002/03
6,979	7,399	7,195	No target

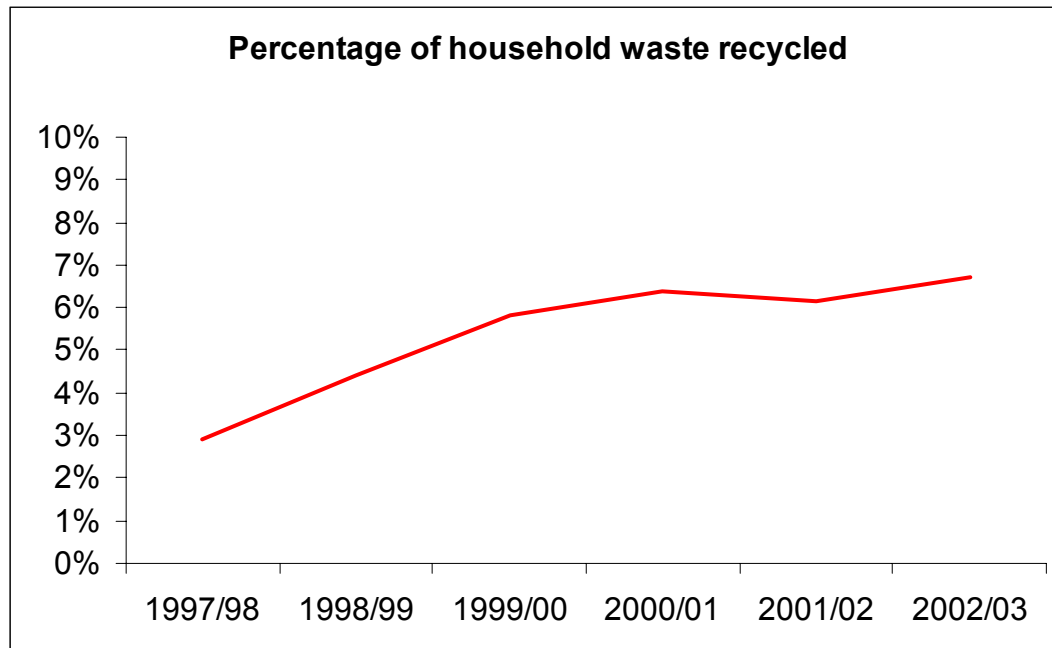
Average time taken to remove fly tips

2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	Target for 2002/3
1.38 days	2.29 days	2.28 days	2.0 days

The war on waste

Increasing the percentage of household waste that is recycled is one of our top priorities. It was identified in the Action Plan following our Comprehensive Performance Assessment as one of the council's top six areas for improvement.

In 2002-03 we made a small improvement from 6.2% to 6.7% but we need to do much more if we are to get close to our nationally set targets of 10% in 2003-04 and 18% in 2005-06.



We are extending doorstep and local recycling to medium and high rise properties and we plan to introduce recycling of compostable waste in a number of areas to boost our performance still further. We have also increased the level of educational work and encouragement to household's to recycle through new Recycling Officers.

Sport and Leisure

The Audit Commission inspected our Sports and Leisure Services in April 2002 in preparation for the Comprehensive Performance Assessment. They found that the service was poor with poor prospects for improvement.

Since that time we have developed a framework for Sports and Leisure which will lead towards an integrated Strategy. We have also reorganised the service and strengthened its management. We will be carrying out a Best Value Review in late 2003 and early 2004.

We have agreement to a Private Finance Initiative rebuilding of our largest sports centre at Willesden which should lead to much improved facilities. We have made increasing participation in sport and physical exercise in our priority neighbourhoods an important part of our local Public Services Agreement.

Interim Local Implementation Plan (ILIP)

Our Interim Local Implementation Plan explains how we are operating the London Mayor's Transport Strategy. Improvements in the plan have led to big increases in funding and scope. Our programmes for Safer Routes to Schools, accident reduction, cycle lanes and improving bus services are more extensive and successful than ever before.

Unitary Development Plan (UDP)

The UDP is the council's statutory development plan containing planning policies and guidance used to reach a decision on all planning applications. It also shows how new development on individual sites and the regeneration of specific areas will be promoted over a ten-year period. The latest draft Plan has been subject to extensive consultation and objections have been considered by a government-appointed inspector. Modifications are now being proposed in light of the inspector's recommendations.

Want to know more?

Environmental Services

020 8937 5302

www.brent.gov.uk/environment

Housing

Over the past three years, most of the Housing Service has been subject to best value reviews and major legislative and policy changes have been implemented over the same period or are proposed for the future. Together, the reviews and the pace of change are driving service delivery and service improvement. During 2002, important changes to the national performance monitoring framework have meant a decrease in the number of Best Value Indicators on which we are obliged to report.

Housing Management

Housing Management Services were the first part of the Housing service to be reviewed, in 2001. This resulted in an assessment rating of two stars with good prospects for improvement: an endorsement of continued improvement in delivery and confidence in our ability to continue this trend. Since then, and on the strength of the good rating from the Housing Inspectorate, the council has been able to establish an Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO) to oversee the management, maintenance and improvement of the housing stock. In Brent, the ALMO is called the Brent Housing Partnership.

Brent Housing Partnership (BHP) was formally launched in October 2002. Although the housing stock remains in the council's ownership and the tenants remain council tenants, BHP is an independent organisation, managed by a board with representation from the council, tenants and independents. The key objective for BHP will be to deliver against the government's Decent Homes targets - so that all social housing can reach

agreed standards, covering for example repair, internal facilities such as kitchens and bathrooms and thermal efficiency. The deadline for meeting the standard is 2010.

The benefit of being an ALMO is that additional government resources are available to help meet the decent homes standard. In order to attract these resources, BHP needs to at least sustain its current two star performance rating. BHP has been subject to a further inspection during May 2003 and the results of this are expected in July.

BHP and the Housing Service have set out their plans for the housing stock over the next thirty years. The Plan has recently been assessed by the government Office for London against a new objective standard of "fitness for purpose". Delivery of the objectives in the Business Plan will make a key contribution to the corporate priorities for promoting quality of life and the green agenda and regeneration and priority neighbourhoods.

BHP aims to achieve continuous improvement in the delivery of management services and in tenant and resident involvement. Recent progress includes setting up a Neighbour Relations Team to deal with nuisance and disputes and, through a specialist team, with incidents of racial harassment. In the table, BV174 shows that although tenant satisfaction has improved, the disparity between satisfaction levels for BME and non-BME tenants will be a key focus in the future.

Indicator		2001 /02	Top quar tile	2002 /03
BV166a	Proportion of rent collected	94%	96.7 %	96.3 %
BV174	Satisfaction of tenants of council housing with the overall service provided by their landlord			
	a) black and minority ethnic	45%	n/a	47%
	b) non-black and minority ethnic	56%	n/a	58%

Housing Resource Centre

The Housing Resource Centre was the second key service area to be reviewed under Best Value. Inspection of this review also resulted in a two star rating for the service, with good improvement prospects. Key findings of the review incorporated into the action plan were the need for a review of housing advice provision in the borough and its contribution to homelessness prevention and the need to develop a specific homelessness strategy.

Implementation of the action plan has continued successfully over the last two years but, to some extent, has now been overtaken by events at national level. Under the Homelessness Act 2002, all local authorities are obliged to

produce a Homelessness Strategy by July 2003, informed by a review of homelessness in their area. The review is intended to establish a baseline position for the strategy, including an analysis of need and of resources and services, for example advice services, available locally.

Through its Homelessness Unit, the government has now set a target for a drastic reduction in the use of 'bed and breakfast' accommodation. By March 2004, it is intended that no homeless household with children will be placed in bed and breakfast, except in an emergency and then for a maximum of six weeks.

The Brent Homelessness Review has been completed and published and the service is on track to produce an effective strategy, subject to wide consultation, by the July 2003 deadline. Assisted by additional government funding, considerable progress has been made in reducing the number of families in bed and breakfast accommodation.

Addressing homelessness is a priority that cuts across all elements of the Housing Service. For example, Private Housing Services has put renewed emphasis on filling empty properties, and new, tougher targets are being set to reflect this through our public service agreement with the government. This contributes to neighbourhood regeneration and environmental priorities, but also enables the council to secure direct nominations into properties through grant conditions, contributing to reducing bed and breakfast use.

Indicator		2001/2002	Top quartile	2002/2003
BV64	The proportion of private sector dwellings that have been vacant for more than 6 months at 1st April 2002 that are returned into occupation during 2002/03 as a direct result of action by the local authority	1.8% (57 units)	5.5% (equivalent to 174 units for Brent)	172 units
BV62	The proportion of unfit private sector dwellings made fit or demolished as a direct result of action by the local authority	2.27%	4.9%	4.13%

Private Housing Services

The final report of the review of Private Housing Services is currently awaited and the action plan has yet to be agreed. However, some key points are worth noting in advance of the review.

Brent has sustained one of the largest private sector capital programmes in London over the last three years, including by far the largest programme to tackle empty property. This is driven by a combination of an unusually large private rented sector in the borough, the high incidence of poor conditions and the large numbers of elderly and low-income owner-occupiers.

Performance against key indicators has shown continued improvement in recent years but two key factors will affect the development of the service in the future. First, the Renewal Reform Order, introduced in 2002 means local authorities can combine capital grants with support for loans and equity release. During 2003/04 we will focus grant support on the most vulnerable and towards programmes that support other priorities, such as bringing empty property back into use. The council has also joined HouseProud, a cross-borough agency providing assistance with loans and equity release. Second, the government's Housing Bill proposes several significant developments, including schemes for the licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation. The government is also consulting on proposals to introduce compulsory leasing powers to tackle empty property. The full impact of these changes is impossible to assess at this stage, but it can be expected that there will be changes to the performance monitoring regime in this area in the future.

Strategic Housing Function

The best value review of the strategic housing function is the most recent in the Housing Service. The Panel met in February 2003 and is currently preparing its report.

Our performance in this area is measured and assessed by relevant government departments and independent bodies. The Housing Strategy has been rated by the Government Office for London as above average in the London region for the past four years. In 2003, the ODPM introduced a new assessment system under which the Housing Strategy and the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan are rated for their "fitness for purpose". For Brent, both the Strategy and the Business Plan have been assessed as fit for purpose. One important outcome of this is that we will no longer need to make annual submissions, but will work cooperatively with the Government Office for London to ensure delivery. Until 2003, the Housing Corporation has rated the performance of local authorities in how they work with housing associations. Brent has consistently received an excellent rating for its enabling function. Finally, the government also assesses the effectiveness of local authority strategies for the implementation of the Supporting People Regime. Brent's first Supporting People Strategy received a rating of 'excellent' and was ranked in the top 14% nationally. .

Priorities for the next three years will be driven by the outcomes of the recent best value review. In addition, we will need to respond to the growing government emphasis on solutions to housing problems across borough boundaries. The Housing Corporation is already allocating funding for new housing on a sub-regional basis, requiring close cooperation between the West London boroughs. The Communities Plan, published in February 2003, and the emerging London Housing Strategy, give new force to the regional agenda across all housing priorities. One key activity for the immediate future is to work with our partners to develop the West London Housing Strategy.

Housing Strategy

In its role as the strategic housing authority for the area, the council publishes a Housing Strategy every year, analysing needs in the borough and setting out priorities. Among other things, the strategy covers homelessness and housing need, council housing, joint working with housing associations, the private sector, regeneration issues and spending plans. The strategy is assessed by the Government Office for London (GOL), as part of the process by which resources are allocated to the council. An effective strategy can lead to more resources, as GOL has discretion to award additional funding to high-performing councils. Brent's Housing Strategy is currently rated above average for the London region. No other London borough is currently rated higher.

Want to know more?

Housing Policy & Research Team

020 8937 2336

www.brent.gov.uk/housing

Lifelong Learning and Cultural Services**Libraries**

Brent Library Service was awarded a Charter Mark in 2002 for excellence in customer service. Opening hours increased by 17% in 2002 and the number of items issued and the number of visitors to libraries both increased by 5% on the previous year.

Planned improvements for 2003-4 include a further increase in library opening hours and the amount spent on new materials. We will also encourage the effective use of libraries by children to encourage reading habits from an early age, increasing individual use by 10%, and class visits by 15%.

In 2002 the number of hits to the BRAIN community information website increased by 100%. BRAIN provides interactive access to a huge range of information on Brent and its communities. In 2003/04 we are aiming to continue increased usage of BRAIN by community groups and will be focussing on crime prevention in particular.

Heritage Services

In July 2002 the Grange Museum received funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund to develop plans for its possible relocation to the more accessible Willesden Green Library Centre. Usage of the Grange Museum rose in 2002/03 by over 21% whilst usage of the Brent Archive rose by 13.9%. This has partly been assisted by improvements to the museum and archive web pages which make it easier to access elements of the service remotely.

Arts and Culture

This is a new Service area, instigated in 2003 to develop the council's Cultural Strategy and arts services for the borough. Priorities for 2003-4 are to

develop and publish the new strategy, manage the events programme and to build the communications and infrastructure needed to support arts and creative activities in the borough.

Adult and community education

Brent Adult and Community Education Service (BACES) is the council's direct provider of Adult Education. Significant improvements are planned over the coming year, including the provision of fifty-four family learning courses, improving access to our buildings and improving learner retention by 5%.

We are planning a rolling programme of tasters in a range of locations including primary schools and housing associations. Also planned is new provision set up in partnership with a variety of partners including Housing Projects, Primary Schools, libraries and Hostels for the Homeless. During 2003 we will be improving the BACES web pages to enable access to the service day and night.

Annual Library Plan

The Annual Library Plan is primarily an expression of our commitment to the development of the library service. It is also one of the key means by which the government is able to assess whether we are meeting our statutory duty under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 to provide a 'comprehensive and efficient' library service.

Adult Learning Plan

The Adult Learning Plan is a summary plan that focuses on the learning opportunities that the council intends to secure with funds it will receive from the Learning and Skills Council. The plan sets out our intention to develop further a comprehensive life-long learning strategy for adults in Brent.

Want to know more?

Education Information Service
020 8937 3000
www.brent.gov.uk/education

Community Care Services

The Social Services department provides Community Care services to adults with a key aim of promoting independence where possible and appropriate.

A number of Best Value reviews of Community Care services have been carried out in recent years which have looked at the delivery of services to adults. These services were also considered by the Audit Commission/SSI Joint Review of Social Services which was completed in 2002.

The Joint Review identified 'improving access to Community Care Services' as an area for improvement. In April 2003 new eligibility criteria were introduced for Community Care. These are in line with the 'Fair Access to Care Services' requirements set out by the Department of Health which seek

to ensure more consistent access arrangements both within individual authorities and across the country as a whole. The implementation of the new criteria will be monitored during the coming year to assess the impact on access to services for vulnerable people.

Elements of services for Older People were examined in the Best Value reviews of 'Elders Assessment and Care Management' and 'Elders Meals service'. Consultation during the assessment review showed that service users are generally satisfied with the level of service received but concerns were expressed about assessments and the written care plans following assessment. In response, a new joint referral format has been developed which will improve communication and assessments for people awaiting discharge from hospital. Revised procedures will provide a better response to service users including improvements to the Duty System and more reviews of service provision being carried out. A major review of Day Care Services is also being undertaken involving voluntary providers to develop a strategic and operational plan for the provision of integrated Day care across the borough. This has resulted in the setting up of a council run unit for people with dementia. The meals service review has resulted in changes to the delivery and production of meals which have produced significant savings to the department to release funds for those with higher care needs. The service continues to ensure that it meets personal needs, preferences and special dietary requirements. A choice of daily cooked English, Asian, Caribbean, Kosher and Halal meals is available.

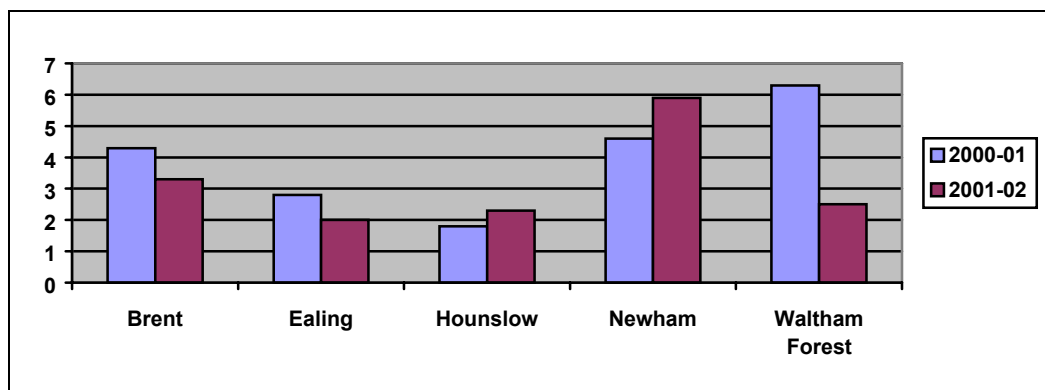
Services supporting people with physical disabilities were considered in the Best Value Reviews of 'Joint Equipment Stores', 'Occupational Therapy' and 'Physical Disabilities services'. As a result of the reviews, the equipment store is increasing the information available to service users about the range of equipment available and is preparing a new equipment catalogue. We are also seeking to increase the amount of equipment which is recycled and reused. Further change has also taken place recently to improve the delivery times for equipment. This will include on-line ordering from the stores by Occupational Therapists and small, common items of equipment being delivered directly from stocks held by Occupational Therapists. Both measures seek to ensure that users receive a more prompt service.

Occupational Therapy services have also been improved through the recruitment of four new permanent staff members which will increase response times for those requiring assessment.

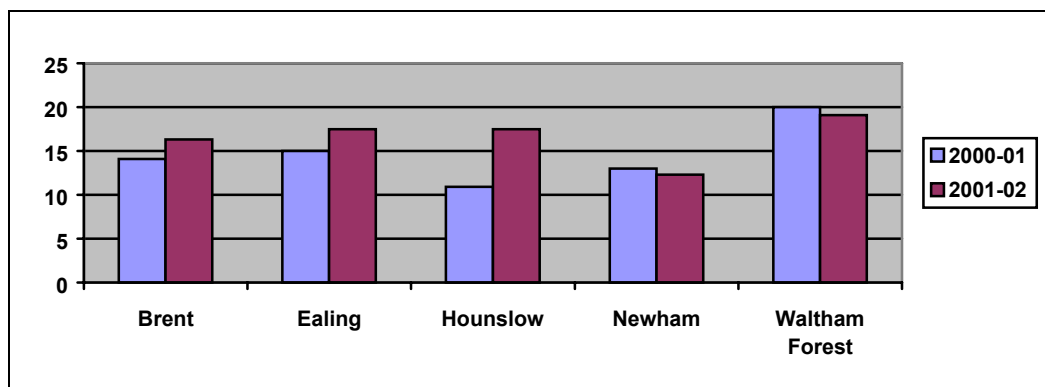
Despite difficulties in staff recruitment, there have been improvements in performance against a number of key performance indicators. These include BVPI 55, (numbers of people receiving a review as a percentage of those receiving a service) which increased from 7.5% in 2001/02 to 61% in 2002/2003, and BVPI 58 (percentage of people receiving a statement of their needs and how they will be met) which increased from 8.5% to 48% in the same period.

The Adult Disability Resources review has resulted in a number of developments affecting services to people with a Learning Disability. These include a review of the adult placement service which has seen a significant increase in fees paid to carers. Private Finance Initiative (PFI) funding is being sought to re-provide two residential homes which will, by 2006, provide 50 places in high quality and modern provision providing supported housing, including 16 respite care places in separate facilities. The Outreach team has also been merged with the Community Team to provide faster access to appropriate professional help and support for service users.

C27 - Admissions of supported residents aged 18-64 to residential & nursing care (per 10,000 population aged 18-64)



C28 (BVPI 53) - Intensive Home Care (households receiving intensive home care per 1,000 population aged 65 or over)



Performance Assessment Framework Indicator	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03
C29 Adults with physical disabilities helped to live at home per 1000 population aged 18-64	1.3	2.7	1.6
C30 Adults with learning disabilities helped to live at home per 1000 population aged 18-64	2.2	4.5	2.3
C31 Adults with mental health problems helped to live at home per 1000 population aged 18-64	2	3.3	2.3
C32 Older people helped to live at home	62	70	73.2

Want to know more?

Social Services Quality and Support

020 8937 4143

www.brent.gov.uk/socialservices

REGENERATION AND PRIORITY NEIGHBOURHOODS

Introduction

Through the delivery of our Regeneration Strategy, we will ensure that Brent provides a home of choice for its diverse population and businesses. Our priorities are focussed very much on reducing inequalities within the borough and with the rest of London. To do this we are putting our efforts into targeting the most deprived neighbourhoods in Brent, tackling employment and income issues, and ensuring that the rebuilding of the national stadium at Wembley has direct and measurable benefits for the local population.

Brent Council's Regeneration Strategy 2001 - 2021

In 2001 the council launched an ambitious 20-year regeneration strategy, incorporating the neighbourhood renewal strategy. Supported by two-year action plans, the Strategy outlines the council's priorities under six strategic objectives:

1. To reduce the gaps between Brent's deprived communities and the rest of London, and in particular to focus on the neighbourhoods of South Kilburn, St Raphael's/Brentfield, Roundwood, Church End, Stonebridge and Harlesden
2. To reduce the unemployment levels across Brent to below the London average, concentrating efforts on those people most in need
3. To increase income levels across Brent to above the London average and promote measures to retain this wealth in the Brent economy
4. To promote a landmark development of regional and national significance at Wembley, creating an identity for the Borough and ensuring substantial local benefit
5. To ensure a consistently high quality of life for all residents of Brent - 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
6. To take positive preventative action in those areas most at risk of falling into decline in the future.

The implementation of the twenty year strategy has started well. There has been good progress in the areas of neighbourhood renewal, action against unemployment and bringing about a landmark development at Wembley. The second two year action plan is being drawn up over the summer of 2003 and particular attention will be devoted to:

- increasing local incomes, preventing neighbourhoods from falling into decline and the quality of life in the Borough;
- the establishment of a bespoke performance framework so that future progress in the implementation of the Regeneration Strategy can be rigorously monitored.

Progress since 2001

The last few years have seen important advances in our action against disadvantage in Brent. The council has commissioned extensive research into the nature of disadvantage in the Borough and asked local people in priority neighbourhoods which kinds of initiatives would make the difference to their lives. Local agencies have been brought together in partnership to concentrate their efforts in a focused way.

The success of our approach to regeneration is demonstrated by our Beacon Council status in 2002 for neighbourhood renewal and in 2003 for removing barriers to work. Equally, the systems are now in place to ensure that the enormous developments which will happen in Wembley over the next decade will have the maximum possible benefit for local residents.

Neighbourhood renewal

Prosperous neighbourhoods can be right next to deprived ones in London, and Brent is no exception. Through the Regeneration Strategy, we are determined to prevent decline in neighbourhoods which are at risk, and to ensure that neighbourhoods identified as disadvantaged can be supported so that residents can overcome complex social and economic problems.

The council's neighbourhood renewal work follows a continuous pattern. First of all, we identify those areas which suffer multiple social and economic disadvantage, which we call "priority neighbourhoods". We also identify those areas which, although they are currently relatively prosperous, are at risk of decline. We identify all these areas through looking carefully at evidence of disadvantage – for example, indicators relating to unemployment, income, crime, and health. The first priority areas identified are set out in the Regeneration Strategy.

Even at this stage, we consult local people to find out what their needs are. In 2002 we carried out a comprehensive household survey in all of the identified priority neighbourhoods. This survey helped us to understand how priority neighbourhood residents feel about their neighbourhood.

Secondly, we work with local people in the identified priority areas to hear what measures they regard as priorities. Over the last couple of years, we have been setting up neighbourhood teams in each of the priority neighbourhoods to take forward the work of regeneration.

This has been done so far in four of our five priority neighbourhoods: South Kilburn, St Raphaels/Brentfield, Harlesden and Stonebridge.

The first task of the neighbourhood team is to engage local people. This is done by a number of means, including "have your say" days, mailshots and special meetings of residents and local agencies.

Having identified the local issues, we work with local people to start initiatives to tackle them. We also bring in resources from outside, if possible, and in any event seek to ensure that all existing money spent in the neighbourhood, by the council and other agencies, works to meet the identified issues of that neighbourhood.

The council's approach to neighbourhood renewal can be shown by achievements in St Raphaels/ Brentfield. Over the last eighteen months, a regeneration team has been established. Community engagement events have been organised in the neighbourhood, attended by over 150 local residents, and a forum established. In particular, the neighbourhood action team has engaged the local communities by two 'have-your-say' events attended by over 200 local residents and intensive consultation of local community groups. A St Raphaels/Brentfield strategy and full action plan has been put together. Some projects have already been set up and completed.

Improving employment prospects and incomes

The council intends to maximise opportunities for Brent people to get good quality jobs by adding value to the initiatives of government and employment agencies, and making best use of large scale local developments, particularly at Wembley. In particular, we want to raise employment prospects and incomes of residents of the identified priority areas.

The first element in the council's work in this area is to help maximise the effect of government initiatives for unemployed people. Particular achievements include:

- Over 1000 Brent people have been found work through the Brent Employment Zone by December 2002. The Employment Zone is a government initiative which involves a number of agencies in the employment field.
- Through outreach and training by the Working Link Action Team for Jobs, 550 local residents have had English language skills improved, over 300 of whom gained employment as a result.

In addition, we have started initiatives which specifically meet the needs of Brent. The Building One Stop Shop (BOSS) – Brent Council's training and job-brokering agency, has helped over 400 people find work in the construction sector. BOSS was set up in April 1999 specifically to help unemployed local people gain skills in the construction industry.

Brent Local Labour Agency was set up in early 2001 with £3.2 million funding from the London Development Agency over 7 years and £1.3million from the EU Social Fund. It was re-launched as Brent In2 Work in August 2002 to bring together information about vacancies and job seekers. There are currently 34 partner agencies involved with Brent In2Work and the partnership has already secured employment for 112 people in 2001/2 and 150 in 2002/3. The Brent In2Work partnership has made other specific achievements:

- 49 long term unemployed people have been taken on as part of the NHS Apprenticeship scheme, recruiting local people to key worker job vacancies;
- 86 local residents have gained intermediate labour market experience.

One of the biggest challenges is to ensure that long-term unemployed people can be reached to offer them support in gaining employment. The **Household Employment Pact** targets hard to reach unemployed residents of St Raphaels, Brentfield and Mitchellbrook by door to door visits. Residents who agree to take part are offered one to one support packages to help them into work. Through this initiative, which will soon start, the council hopes that 300 residents will be signposted to support services and 160 will take up employment. The impact of this initiative will be monitored to guide future initiatives to combat hidden unemployment in priority neighbourhoods.

Two projects, the Employer Partnership and Business Brokers, seek to involve local businesses in initiatives to employ priority neighbourhood residents.

Over 60 jobs have been filled in a link up between Wembley National Stadium, their contractors Multiplex, Brent in2work, and the Building One Stop Shop (BOSS). Many more opportunities are expected both in the construction sector and subsequently when the Stadium opens.

The new national stadium

The long period of development uncertainty at Wembley ended with the government decision that the construction of the new national stadium could go ahead. Planning approval has been granted and construction work should be complete by early 2006.

Brent Council launched ambitious plans for regenerating the whole of Wembley in November 2002 – a vision welcomed by London Mayor Ken Livingstone. The council's vision includes a brand new civic facility, a state-of-the-art entertainment venue, a new conference centre, high quality shops and commercial facilities and affordable new homes. The proposed improvements would bring great benefits for local people.

Important elements of the Vision are already being actively pursued, particularly in the area of land immediately surrounding the stadium, where the council is negotiating with Quintain Estates plc, the LDA and the GLA to bring about a comprehensive mixed use development in line with our Vision.

A critical success factor in the regeneration of Wembley will be the impact it makes on the lives of local people. The council, supported by a £25m SRB programme, is supporting a range of initiatives aimed at ensuring maximum local benefit, including:

- A package of infrastructure improvements to ensure enhanced public and private transport access to Wembley;

- Employment initiatives aimed at helping local people access the jobs that are and will be available on the site, both during the construction phase and subsequently in the end-use development;
- Pro-actively targeting neighbourhoods within the Wembley area that are least likely to benefit from these opportunities, and to work with these communities to set the foundations for wholesale neighbourhood renewal

The Regeneration Challenge in Brent

- 5 neighbourhoods fall within the top 10% most deprived in the UK - South Kilburn, St Raphael's/Brentfield, Stonebridge, Harlesden and Church End
- Within these neighbourhoods 20% of neighbourhoods have a gross income of less than £100 per week. 40% of households have an income made up entirely of benefits
- Unemployment in Brent is currently 13% above the Greater London average and 40% above the national figure
- Since 1997 the average hourly earnings of Brent residents have increased by 12.9% whilst average house prices have increased by 65%
- 25% of firms in Park Royal report skills gaps in their existing workforce
- A large proportion of Brent residents do not have the necessary basic skills for employment - 29% have basic or no numeracy skills, 17% have basic or no literacy skills and 51% have basic or no IT skills

Employment

- 'Brent in 2 Work' was launched in August 2002 to reduce unemployment levels across the borough
- A pilot apprenticeship scheme has been set up in Central Middlesex and Northwick Park Hospitals to get over 100 local unemployed people into key worker positions
- 'Our Vision for a New Wembley' was launched in November 2002 following the decision by the FA in September 2002 to proceed with the redevelopment of the national stadium
- We attained Beacon Status for Removing Barriers to Work in 2003

TACKLING CRIME AND COMMUNITY SAFETY

Introduction

Fears about the local level of crime regularly top the list of residents, concerns. Although overall crime is stable in Brent, people's lives and wellbeing are still damaged by the psychological effects of fear of crime.

In partnership with the Metropolitan Police and other agencies, Brent Council has been a leader in the field of crime prevention and community safety. Over the past 3 years, the Brent Crime and Disorder Partnership has used a multi-agency approach to reduce the opportunities for offences to occur, support communities in being pro-active about their own safety and to work with offenders to reduce their risk of re-offending.

This approach has been successful and the Brent Crime and Disorder Reduction and Community Safety Strategy 2002-05 was developed and published last year. The priorities in the strategy are based on an extensive audit of crime and consultation with local residents. It sets out seven key areas of activity designed to tackle crime, reduce the fear of crime and provide alternatives for people at risk of committing crime. The strategy is being delivered jointly by the council, the police, the probation service, the Fire Service, Brent Primary Care Trust and neighbourhood regeneration projects. Progress against the strategy is reported annually and is summarised below under the seven key areas.

Objective 1 – Reduce Residential Burglary

Our target for 2002/03 was to reduce residential burglary by 8% against the figures for 2001/02. The table below shows how we did.

	2001/02 (Baseline Year)	2002/03	Variation
Burglary (Dwelling)	2988	2807	-6.1% 181 fewer

Although this shows that we did not quite reach our target, progress is very encouraging. Burglary rates have been steadily decreasing over the last 3 years so that by March 2003 our burglary rate was 15.45% lower than the rate in 1999/2000.

What did we do?

Various projects and activities have been undertaken over the year including:

- raising public awareness – by targeting burglary 'hot spot' areas to raise awareness of what the public can do to reduce the likelihood of victimisation.
- Safeguard Initiative - focussed on four of Brent's hot spot areas: Fryent Park, Dollis Hill, Tokyngton and Kilburn. Advice was given to residents,

new Neighbourhood Watches were established and around 100 victims got help to upgrade their security.

- Alleygating - in Kilburn over 20 gates were installed within two neighbouring streets where rear access to terraced properties had led to a disproportionate number of burglaries.

Plans for 2003/04

Our target for next year is to reduce residential burglary still further – by 5% compared to this year's figures (that means 141 fewer burglaries). In order to achieve this we will be putting funding in to a BEESAFE scheme – providing locks and security devices for elderly residents and targeting the 200 most vulnerable properties in the Borough. Reducing residential burglary is forming part of our Public Service Agreement negotiations with the government.

Objective 2 – Reduce Street Robbery

Our target for 2002/03 was to reduce street robbery by 5% against the figures for 2001/02. The table below shows that we more than exceeded our target.

	2001/02 (Baseline Year)	2002/03	Variation
Street crime in Brent (Robbery of personal property + snatch/theft)	3091	2584	-16.4% 507 fewer

What did we do?

There were several initiatives undertaken that were aimed at tackling street crime, including:

- **Safer Streets Initiative** - new patrolling plans developed by the police have had a significant impact on reducing street crime.
- Summer Splash - a programme of summer activities to help curb youth crime. It targeted 9-17 year olds at risk of offending on the Wembley Central, Stonebridge, St Raphaels and Church End estates.
- Brent Educational Support Teams (BEST) - have been established in schools. These are aimed at reducing school exclusion and problem behaviour.

Plans for 2003/04

Reducing street crime forms part of the council's Public Service Agreement negotiations with the government – where we will enter into an agreement with the government to try and exceed the targets that would normally be set for reducing robbery over the next 3 years. In order to meet these challenging targets we intend to focus additional resources to work exclusively on street crime in Brent schools and at 3 of our hot spots at train/tube stations. There will also be a rolling programme to educate at risk young people and to raise public awareness about street crime.

Objective 3 – Reduce Violent Crime

The first task that had to be undertaken was to define what we meant by violent crime and how we were going to tackle the problem. After discussion it was decided that the work on violent crime would be defined by the victims and specific types of violent crime. Specifically we decided to focus on domestic violence, racist crime and other hate crimes plus sexual offences and terrorism. Most of the partnership work in the year has been based around domestic violence and racist crime.

Plans for 2003/04

With regard to domestic violence we intend to secure funding to appoint a Borough-wide Domestic Violence Co-ordinator, develop an integrated system for recording incidents and develop a training and awareness programme for staff. We will also develop improved systems for recording incidents of racial harassment.

Objective 4 – Reduce Gun crime

There have been a number of successful initiatives focussed on preventing gun crime. The **'Not Another Drop'** publicity campaign won the National Community Safety Award in September 2002 and the European Community Safety Public Award in December 2002. The project has received considerable media coverage and a number of other areas have expressed interest in using the poster and imagery.

Plans for 2003/04

A 'Ringmaster' system is being developed, and although not yet active, 100 community groups have signed up to receive information. The police are now recruiting a member of staff to operate the system.

Objective 5 – To reduce crime committed by children and young people and against children and young people

The crime audit had indicated that 26% of all crimes committed in Brent were by young people aged 10-17. The following table shows how things have changed over the year in terms of youth crime in general

	2001	2002	Variation
Offences committed by young people resident in Brent	1041	1011	-2.9%
Number of Brent young people who are offenders	522	581	+11%

The increase in the number of identified young offenders may be a result of changes to criminal justice and counting practices. Additionally, a significant number of offences continue to be committed by a small number of offenders.

A Howard League survey of 190 young people indicated that as many as 61% of them had been victims of an offence. The official figures do not reflect the high level of under-reporting amongst young people. There will be activity in 2003/04 to try and establish a baseline on youth victimisation.

What did we do?

Activities in the last year have focussed on:

- improving partnership working - a youth crime reduction and prevention officer was appointed in November 2002.
- reducing re-offending - persistent young offenders have been fast tracked through the criminal justice system in Brent, with them moving from arrest to sentence in an average of 60 days, against a London average of 80 days and a target of 140 days.
- targeting crime prevention and early intervention – a great deal of activity has been undertaken in selected schools as part of the Behaviour Improvement Programme. A **Safer Schools Partnership** has been established with the police, resulting in a police officer being placed in one school with plans to recruit more, and a behaviour audit has been carried out as a preliminary to the implementation of an anti-bullying programme.

Plans for 2003/04

Projects and activities such as On Track, the summer activities programme, the BEST teams, anti-bullying work and the development of youth consultation mechanisms will be continuing.

Objective 6 – To reduce drug and alcohol abuse

The delivery and work on this objective is led and co-ordinated by the Brent Drug Action Team, based at Brent Primary Care Trust. It works to a series of action plans into which individual targets are incorporated. The three plans in 2002/03 addressed treatment, young people and communities.

What did we do?

Four additional project workers were recruited to help Addaction provide a fully operational direct access and information service.

Plans for 2003/04

The Drug Action Team will continue to work to its long term target of increasing the number of people accessing drug and alcohol services through its treatment plan and also work through the young person's substance misuse plan and communities and availability plans.

Objective 7 – To reduce fear of crime through regeneration

In our target wards of Harlesden, Stonebridge, Roundwood, and St Raphaels survey results indicate that 86% of residents will not leave their homes at night through fear of crime.

What did we do?

- Improve street lighting - 8169 new lighting columns have been installed.
- Access neighbourhood renewal funding - approximately £340,000 of Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF) monies have been used to set up a localised Crime and Disorder reduction team within the NRF wards. This was launched in 2002 as the **Safe Haven** Project.
- To tackle anti-social behaviour - the Brent Anti Social behaviour group have been in operation for some 18 months. By the end of the year 14 acceptable behaviour contracts had been issued and the first applications for Anti-Social Behaviour Orders were being planned
- To reassure the public by increasing the 'authority' presence in neighbourhoods - there will be one manager and 9 street wardens patrolling Wembley Town Centre from mid April 2003. The 2nd year will see some wardens moved to Willesden Town centre. The Street Wardens who will be easily recognisable to the public in their red and black uniforms will carry radios to keep them in contact with the local police.
- Following the Parks Best Value Review the introduction of wardens to our major parks throughout daylight hours has been an extremely popular improvement making residents feel safer and better able to enjoy our parks.
- Increase the number of police mountain bike patrols - 5 extra mountain bikes and 9 sets of equipment have been purchased. The new bike patrols have been introduced in Harlesden and Chalkhill.
- To improve the environment by promoting **Community Safety Days** – there have been 7 partnership operations in Harlesden, Wembley and Kilburn. Agencies involved have been Environmental services, parking wardens, British Transport Police and some Housing Associations. These days concentrate on the removal of graffiti, litter and abandoned vehicles and tackling low level crime. On average, levels of reported crime fall by 50% for approximately 14 days or longer. The last Harlesden partnership day resulted in the seizure of loaded firearms and drugs.
- To reduce the incidences of malicious and accidental fires in Brent - the **Safe Haven** project and its dedicated fire officer have worked to promote the greater use of fire alarms. At the end of the year the project launched a local publicity campaign to encourage the use of fire alarms in domestic properties. Six forum community groups have been informed regarding fire prevention in order to raise awareness of fire risks.

Plans for 2003/04

The work to tackle anti-social behaviour and enviro-crime will continue and further partnership days are planned.

ACHIEVING SERVICE EXCELLENCE

Introduction

Providing public services to a diverse, urban population with high levels of need is a complex and challenging role. Brent Council aims to be an outward-looking authority that strives to deliver excellent services, which are relevant to the needs and aspirations of local communities and represent value for money.

We believe that the residents of Brent have the right to expect excellent services, delivered professionally and at a reasonable price. In order to fulfil that expectation, we need to operate the highest standards of corporate governance, with informed decision-making, intelligent service planning, effective risk management and efficient use of resources through financial management.

These aims require investment in the corporate infrastructure of the council, providing quality training to staff and members, ensuring we have the best information on which to base decisions and work in the most creative ways to solve the problems of modern urban life.

Accessibility and Equal Opportunities

Improving customers' access to our services continues to be a high priority for us. This means investing in our customer services staff, our buildings and the latest technology. Recent developments are listed below.

Customer access and electronic government

This year we moved the Kilburn One Stop Shop to Dyne Road to make access more convenient for Kilburn residents. We also increased its opening hours from 2½ to 4½ days a week. A programme to raise customer service standards across all council services is underway. We have continued to improve on-line access to services, forms and information through our award-winning internet site and BRAIN community site as well as through improved telephone call handling at our contact centre. New on line services include:

- Comprehensive 'Frequently Asked Questions' and responses.
- 'Email Alert' for local events
- On-line payment facilities
- Public access to on-line service requests
- Journey planner for public transport

Free internet access points are available at all Brent's 11 libraries and at 21 NW London On-line centres located in community facilities. A recent independent survey has found Brent's website to be the best used local authority site in London.

In 2002 we installed a £1 million customer focussed IT system to help our customer services staff provide a better and faster service to more of our

customers, and to help us on the way to achieving a true 'one stop' experience for those people needing services from the council. A multi-million pound programme is now in train to develop service access and e-government across the authority.

Improving access to council buildings and services

A £3 million programme of improvements to council buildings to improve physical access is continuing - 36.1% of council buildings now meet accessibility standards – an increase of 12.8% since last April. In addition, 81% of the borough's pedestrian crossings now have improved disabled access.

We are also developing new approaches to reducing language barriers, including producing language cards, deaf peoples' cards and ensuring that our customer services staff are speakers of the main borough languages.

The council has focused on disability issues during the second year of its Corporate Equalities Action Plan. Our achievements include gaining the Disability Symbol award, launching a Disabled Staff Forum and being asked to join a Ministerial Group on Disability. The council also runs training courses to help raise disability awareness among staff and has become a corporate member of the Employer's Forum on Disability. And, in March this year, the council hosted (along with the Department of Work and Pensions and local disability groups) a Recruitment Fair for disabled people to help break down barriers to work.

Brent's diverse community

According to the 2001 Census 62% of Brent residents described themselves as Black, Asian, Irish or Chinese. The largest minority ethnic groups are Indian at 18%, Black Caribbean at 10% and Black African at 9%. The borough also has the largest Irish community in England and Wales at 7%.

The 2001 Census also revealed that almost half of residents describe themselves as Christians, 17% as Hindu and 12% as Muslim. Brent also has Jewish, Sikh and Buddhist religious communities, which help make up the rich diversity of the borough.

The council's workforce is as diverse as our local community with 60.5% of staff describing themselves as Black, Asian, Irish or Chinese. These figures are based on staff returns from April 2003. However, black and minority ethnic staff are under-represented at some management levels. The council has recognised this under-representation and has put in place a number of measures, including using "positive action statements", in our recruitment advertising. We also run an internal mentoring scheme and we have launched a Black and Asian Staff Forum to help staff feel supported at work.

Brent has a long-time commitment to promoting racial equality including partnership working with the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE), and the award-winning 'Not Another Drop' campaign. We now formally monitor our workforce, including the number of black and minority ethnic staff in different

grades across the council. In April 2002, the council undertook a Staff Attitude Survey - 64% of staff reported that equal opportunities are taken very seriously in their work area. 60% said that fair treatment of people is a strong value in their service unit and almost half (48%) stated that they thought the council had given equalities a higher priority in the last two years.

The council has made a new Board level appointment to the post of Director of Human Resources and Diversity, and has made funding available to set up a new Diversity Team, including to the post of Head of Diversity. It is hoped that these new staff will be in place by September 2003.

During Respect Week, the council will pilot a new Forum to consult with local black and minority ethnic community groups on a range of issues. And the council has prioritised stakeholder consultation and communication for the coming year under the Race Equality Scheme.

Corporate Governance

Corporate Governance is defined as 'the way the council directs and controls its functions and relates to its community'. The main principles are: openness and inclusivity (covering decision making and management); integrity; accountability; and, leadership.

We have made significant progress in developing our corporate governance in the last year including improving our arrangements for scrutinising performance, implementing a consultation strategy and developing our community strategy. Many other elements of corporate governance are already included within the council's Constitution and we are now working on 'filling in the gaps' in areas such as risk management, anti-fraud, public reporting arrangements and developing the role of members.

Performance Management

Effective performance management is at the heart of achieving service excellence through investment in staff and improving services. The council has used performance information in one form or another since 1992 and, along with other English local authorities, is subject to one of the most intense inspection and audit regimes in the world.

The council is committed to improving its approach to performance management. As a complex organisation it must use the right information to inform decision making, shape service planning and support staff to deliver better services. Councillors and managers must have the right information and evidence to ensure the council is delivering on its commitments and responsibilities, and to enable them to take the right corrective action when it is not.

We are committed to improving our approach to performance management in five key areas:

1. corporate financial and service planning

2. monitoring and evaluating our performance
3. structure and roles supporting performance management
4. staff development
5. organisational culture, leadership and communications.

Through these priorities we will focus on ensuring:

- performance information is used throughout the organisation and to the right level of detail, including a package of 25 'vital signs' indicators at the top level
- service and budget planning are clearly tied into our strategic objectives
- there is effective scrutiny of performance through a new scrutiny performance and finance select committee
- that staff development involves a focus on performance through the 'Improving Brent Programme' and a new management development programme to be launched in 2003
- improving our internal knowledge base, communications, capacity for sharing information and learning from our own best practice as well as from others.

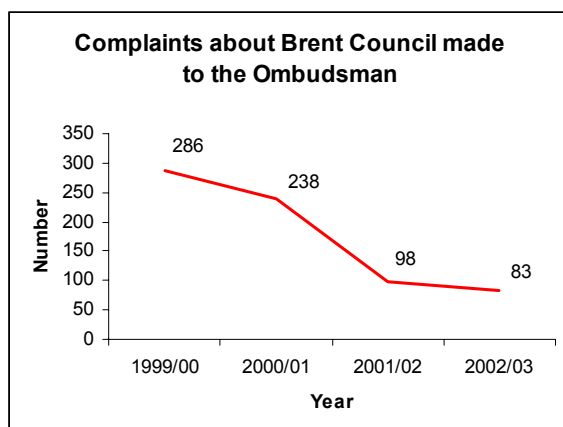
Complaints

Complaints is a key piece of the performance jigsaw, and our complaints service continues to improve - for the second year running there are no findings of maladministration by the Local Government Ombudsman.

Over the last four years, complaints against the council dealt with by the Local Government Ombudsman, have dropped by more than 70%. This level of improvement in performance is unparalleled in London and can be put down to real improvements in the way we deal with complaints together with an ability to learn from our mistakes and improve service delivery.

In 2002/03, the Ombudsman considered a total of 83 complaints. There were only seven cases where he asked the council to take some action to settle the complaint. This was a decline of almost 80% over the previous year and shows that we continue to get better and better at dealing with complaints under our own complaints procedure and, if things have gone wrong, putting them right.

The Ombudsman's league table will be published in September 2003. The council anticipates that it will have moved into the top half of the table in terms of handling complaints. There is no room for complacency though, and this year we will be introducing new systems to further improve the way we deal with complaints.



Revenue and Benefits

Brent Council has agreed a contract with the Capita Group to provide revenue collection services for council tax and business rates. The five-year contract began on 1st May 2003. Capita has taken over the running of Brent's revenue and related IT services from the previous contractor.

The Benefits Service came back under the direct organisation of Brent Council in October 2002. The service is responsible for Housing and Council Tax benefits for people in the borough on low incomes. It was outsourced to a private company in 1995 but a council best value review in 2001 concluded that the Benefits Service should transfer back in-house along with staff.

The move has enabled the council to make additional investment in the service and we are already starting to see improvements in overall performance. The customer service function is being transferred to our One Stop Shops. The time taken to assess new claims has already improved by 25% and the number of assessments has increased by 23%. The backlog of outstanding claims has now reduced by almost 20%. The council has been working hard to clear the large backlog of claims and has prioritised this work in order to minimise any hardship to residents while longer-term improvements are made. A Revenue and Benefits performance target has also been included in our Public Service Agreement negotiations with the government reflecting the priority the council is placing on improving this service.

Service excellence

The Council now holds 11 Chartermarks – for our Libraries, One Stop Shops and 9 for our Environmental Services.

Many services within Social Services, Education and Environment are beset by recruitment and retention problems common throughout London. We are taking measures to overcome these difficulties and have developed a recruitment and retention strategy. Nevertheless, we strive to maintain our

performance. Our Planning Service, for example, is performing well on all but major applications – dealing with 62.6% of minor applications and 75.4% of other applications within 8 weeks. The service will be taking measures to improve performance on major applications in the coming year.

We are undertaking a cross-cutting Best Value Review of our regulatory services this year to try to improve both the individual services and the way they work together for the benefit of residents and local businesses. We will be able to report the outcomes of this review in the next performance plan.

A number of our services are now adopting the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) framework. For example, in 2002/03 our Social Services undertook EFQM pilot schemes in two service areas. Self-assessments were undertaken involving staff at all levels which identified strengths and areas for improvement. Improvement measures will be included in plans for the development and provision of these services. Following the successful pilots the scheme will be rolled out across Social Services. The use of the EFQM model will be linked to improved business planning processes and will ensure that at team and service unit levels there are clear, consistent plans for the continuous improvement of services.

Social Services are also introducing a new information system across the department which will provide more accurate and reliable data for performance management purposes. During 2002 a tendering exercise was completed and the new system to be implemented has been identified. A project manager has been appointed to oversee the development and implementation of the new system during 2003/04.

During the last three years, three secondary and five primary schools in Brent have been awarded 'Beacon' status by central government. This means that they were identified as being amongst the best performing schools in the country. Whilst they held beacon status they were able to offer advice and support on a wide range of issues to other schools in Brent that performed less well. The council itself was twice awarded Beacon status in 2002 for 'neighbourhood renewal' and 'improving urban green spaces'. This year we have become a Beacon Council for 'removing barriers to work'.

6. Best Value Reviews

Over the last three years we have undertaken a major programme of reviewing our services to ensure that the council continues to provide best value. Some of these reviews have focussed on individual services, whilst others have considered a theme or an issue that cuts across a number of services – ‘what young people want’, for example.

Each review must challenge the service or function, consult with service users and other people involved, compare its performance with other councils and examine its competitiveness. The review findings are accompanied by an action plan explaining how and when specific improvements will be made.

The table below shows the reviews that have been undertaken over the past three years, and also the reviews that are taking place this year. The service improvements that have arisen from a number of the reviews are discussed in more detail in chapter 5.

As we have developed our approach to best value, we have been able to streamline the way we review services and to focus our attention on services and themes that are corporate priorities. You will see for example, that children and young people, and sport feature among our current reviews.

Best Value Reviews Undertaken Since 2002

Title of Review	Year Undertaken
Customer Service	2000/2001
Elders Assessment and Care Management	
Excluded Pupils	
Financial Management	
Highways Maintenance	
Joint Equipment Stores	
Local Taxation and Benefits Service	
Parks Service	
Asset Management, Property Services & Facilities Management	2001/2002
Communication and Student Support	
Education, Planning, Information and Resources	
Inclusive Education Services	
Lifelong Learning	
Payroll and Pensions Services	
Private Sector Housing	
Social Inclusion	
Transportation and Parking	2002/2003
Voluntary Sector Support	
Arts & Cultural Services: Libraries Museum and Archive	
Information and Communication Technology	
Occupational Therapy	
Physical Disability Services	
People Management and Organisation	
Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages	
Special Educational Needs	2003/2004
Strategic Housing Function	
What Young People Want	
Regulatory Services	
Early Years Partnership	2003/2004
Sports Service	
Charging policy	

BRENT COUNCIL'S BUDGET AND SPENDING PLANS

Financial Planning

The council plans its finances in the context of a Medium Term Financial Strategy. This allows the council to look at the financial consequences of its priorities within a set of clear principles. The principles include:

- To balance spending with income;
- To set aside adequate funds to meet estimated liabilities;
- To operate a rigorous financial control system;
- To protect the council's financial reserves from unplanned spending and other threats of erosion;
- To redirect resources to fund council Spending priorities.

Using these principles the council prepares a three year rolling forecast of spending and income. A wide range of factors influences this forecast:

- Estimated inflation and interest rates;
- Likely levels of government grant and other funding sources;
- Changes in the demand for the council's services due to changes in the size and make up of the population;
- Additional obligations placed on the council by new primary or secondary legislation including changes in taxation;
- The outcome of Best Value reviews, implications of meeting the requirements of the Performance Plan, and other sources of service improvement priorities;
- The scope for efficiency and other savings.

Financial Statement

Brent Council provides services to the public estimated to cost over £659m in 2003/4, of which just over half is recouped from fees and charges, rent, various specific government grants and subsidies, and other income. Central government, businesses and council taxpayers fund the balance of £328m.

Brent Council's Budget

Brent's budget requirement for 2003/2004 is £327.6m, which is £40.8m (14.2%) higher than that for 2002/2003. The reasons for this change are shown below.

Changes in Brent's Spending Plans: 2002/2003 and 2003/2004 compared

	£m
2002/2003 Budget Requirement	286.8
<u>Changes Due To:</u>	
Inflation	11.3
Decrease in specific government grants	4.5
Increases in quantity & quality of services	24.0
Increase in balances	2.0
Changes to other income receivable	(1.0)
2003/2004 Budget Requirement	<u>327.6</u>

2003/2004 Direct Service Expenditure

	£m	%
Education	157.8	49.4
Social Services	74.0	23.2
Highways, Roads And Transport	17.1	5.4
Cultural, Environmental and Planning Services	35.9	11.2
Housing	21.1	6.6
Central Services	13.6	4.2
Total Direct Services	319.5	100.0

2003/2004 Sources of Funding

	£m	%
Government Support Grants	174.0	53.0
Redistribution Of NNDR	77.2	23.5
Council Tax	77.2	23.5
	<u>328.4</u>	<u>100.0</u>

Capital Resources, Capital Strategy and the Asset Management Plan

The council is planning to incur £43m of capital expenditure in 2003/04 on investment in capital projects. The resources are allocated by reference to the council's capital strategy, which contains mechanisms for prioritising projects.

The Asset Management Plan is the council's detailed plan on how it intends using its properties for Best Value service delivery and it identifies the level of disrepair across the portfolio and attempts to make inroads into the backlog. The proposed expenditure for 2003/04 includes:

- Continued works to provide additional accommodation in schools to reduce class sizes;
- Maintenance of public lighting and roads;
- Investment in traffic calming and safety schemes;
- Improve disabled access to a wide range of properties;
- Investment in Social Service establishments;
- Major regeneration projects;
- Housing:
 - New units
 - Redevelopment of council estates
 - Repairs to existing units
 - Improvement grants to owner-occupiers and landlords

The cost of this investment is met from sales of council houses, sale of surplus land and buildings, capital grants and borrowing.

Capital Programme	2002/03	2002/03	2003/04
	Budget £m	Forecast £m	Budget £m
Resources			
Borrowings	17	17	15
Grants	17	24	21
Capital Receipts	2	2	5
Revenue	0	7	0
Section 106	0	5	0
Other	5	1	2
Totals	41	56	43
<u>Expenditure</u>			
Education	9	14	5
Highways, Roads and Transport	3	7	8
Social Services	1	1	1
Cultural, Environmental & Planning	10	11	13
Housing	19	11	12
Central Services	9	11	4
Underspend		1	
Totals	41	56	43

How we've managed the council's resources in 2002/3

For 2002/03 the overall budget for the cost of services was set at £282.1M. The latest estimate for the actual spend for the year is £286.0M - an overspend of £3.9M.

	What we promised to spend in the 2002/03 Performance Plan £M	The latest estimate of what we will spend in 2002/03 £M	Difference: over or (under) spend £M	Explanations for difference
Central Services to the Public Elections, registrations of birth, deaths and marriages, collection of local taxes, emergency planning, local land charges, general grants.	6.9	6.8	-0.1 -1.4%	Increased land charges income
Cultural, Environmental and Planning Services Museums & art galleries, recreation & sport, parks & open spaces, libraries, cemeteries & mortuary, environmental health, community safety, trading standards, street cleansing, waste collection & disposal, planning, economic & community development.	32.1	32.3	0.2 0.6%	Additional spend on special collections and disposal of fridges
Education Council schools, adult & community education, student loans & awards and youth service.	142.2	142.0	-0.2 -0.1%	Small variances - £0.2M
Highways, Roads and Transport Transport planning & policy, maintenance of highways & footpaths, street lighting, traffic management & road safety, parking services, support for public transport.	15.4	15.4	0.0 0.0%	
Housing Provision of council housing, housing advice and advances, private sector housing renewal, homelessness, housing benefits & welfare services.	21.2	20.1	-1.1 -5.2%	Reduced spend on Bed & Breakfast accommodation - £0.9M Other small variances -£0.2M
Social Services Social work and other social services for adults and children, services to asylum seekers.	62.7	67.8	5.1 8.1%	Increased demand for services and additional cost of agency staff covering for vacancies.
Other Services Corporate management, support to elected members, magistrates court services, unapportionable central overheads, other operating income & expenditure.	1.6	1.6	0.0 0.0%	
Net Cost of Services	282.1	286.0	3.9	

Our spending plans for 2003/04

Having considered all the matters set out on the preceding pages, the council has agreed the following budget for spending by services in 2003/04. Total spending on services will be £319.5M.

	What we promise to spend in 2003/04			what we promised to spend in 2002/3	Difference: increase or (decrease)	Explanations for difference
	£M	£M	£M	£M	£M	
Central Services to the Public	24.7	18.2	6.5	6.9	-0.4 -5.8%	Inflation +£0.1M Net reduced cost of Council Tax Benefits -£0.5M
Cultural Environmental and Planning Services	54.2	18.3	35.9	32.1	3.8 11.8%	Inflation +£1.0M Libraries- National Standards +£0.3M Sports Service +£0.3M Waste Recycling +£0.2M Refuse collection +£0.2M Increased volume of waste + £0.3M Graffiti Removal +£0.1M Liquor licensing +£0.1M Capital charges + £0.4M Other small variances +£0.9M
Education	197.0	39.2	157.8	142.2	15.6 11.0%	Inflation +£6.1M Government Grants - £4.8M Increased school funding in excess of inflation +£10.2M Capital Charges +£0.5M Other small variances + £3.6M
Highways Roads and Transport	25.6	8.5	17.1	15.4	1.7 11.0%	Inflation +£0.4M Insurance claims + £0.1M Concessionary fares +£0.5M Streetlighting PFI +£0.1M Capital charges +£0.6M
Housing	236.8	215.7	21.1	21.2	-0.1 -0.5%	Inflation +£1.5M Housing Management -£0.5M Housing Repairs -£1.7M HRA Balances +£1.4M Housing Subsidy -£0.4M Reduced spend on Bed & Breakfast accommodation -£0.8M Other small variances +£0.4M
Social Services	107.3	33.3	74.0	62.7	11.3 18.0%	Inflation +£3.2M Increased demand for services +8.1M
Other Services	13.6	6.5	7.1	1.6	5.5	Reduced capitalisation of pension costs +£6.4M Other small variances -£0.9M
Net Cost of Services	659.2	339.7	319.5	282.1	37.4	

The implications of the 2003/4 spending plans for council tax payers

In order to work out how much council tax we need to raise to pay for the net cost of services we have to:

- take into account other items of corporate income / expenditure, such as interest payments.
- levies payable to external bodies
- reflect the policy decision to build up our balances by £3.0M
- allow for the collection fund deficit
- add in the grants that the government will give us to meet our spending commitments
- add in the amounts we will receive from the National Non-Domestic Rate Pool
- add on the amount we will raise on behalf of the Greater London Authority (GLA)

	£M
Budgeted net cost of services for 2003/04	319.5
Other items of corporate income/expenditure	-2.2
Levies	7.3
Replenishment of balances	3.0
Total Budget Requirement	327.6
Collection Fund Deficit	0.8
Income from general government grants	-174.0
Income from National Non-Domestic Rate Pool	-77.2
Funds required by London Borough of Brent	77.2
Funds required by Greater London Authority (GLA)	20.4
Amount to be raised from Council Tax	97.6

The council tax requirement for 2002/03 was **£79.5M**. This means that the 2003/4 requirement of **£97.6M** is a 22.8% increase over the preceding year. After allowing for an increase in the tax base this equates to an increase of 22.5% in the Council Tax for each property band:

	Council Tax 2002/3 £	Council Tax 2003/4 £
Band A	585.23	716.70
Band B	682.76	836.15
Band C	780.30	955.60
Band D	877.84	1,075.05
Band E	1,072.92	1,313.95
Band F	1,267.99	1,552.85
Band G	1,463.07	1,791.75
Band H	1,755.68	2,150.10

Trading Accounts

This section deals with those parts of the council which obtain significant income from trading activities where there is external competition.

Brent's "trading" units cover a variety of services such as building cleaning, grounds maintenance, and transport. Some obtain income from the public, others from within Brent Council. Included here are former DLOs and DSOs, and units with an annual turnover greater than £1m.

	2002/03 Original Budget £000	2002/03 Forecast Outturn £000	2003/04 Original Budget £000
Total			
Turnover	12,132	12,039	12,514
Surplus/ (Deficit)	(1)	(39)	0

Services included

Brent Internal Repairs, Brent Building Cleaning, Building Control, Grounds Maintenance, Highways & Emergency Operations and Brent Transport Services.

Housing maintenance is no longer included as the service transferred to Brent Housing Partnership on 1st October 2002.

PART II - PERFORMANCE DIGEST

Introduction

Each year the council is required to publish a set of performance indicators as part of this Best Value Performance Plan. The indicators always cover the financial year and are checked by our external auditors. This digest contains a complete list of indicators, some of these have been highlighted for discussion in the first part of this performance plan. There are two types of indicator which measure how the council's services are performing:

Indicators set by the government – designed to pick out key performance by the council as a whole or by different parts of the council such as Environment or Housing. Most of these can be compared with other local authorities nationally and over time. These are called Best Value Performance Indicators or BVPIs.

Indicators the council sets for itself – these are local performance indicators and they will have been set through service development plans, best value reviews or in some cases by retaining a deleted Audit Commission indicator.

The government has set the date for the publication of the Best Value Performance Plan for the end of June each year. This has been done to enable us to include actual performance data for the previous financial year. Most of the figures you will see are actual figures however, there are some performance indicators that are still estimated. These are mostly financial figures where there has not been sufficient time since the close of the financial year to calculate them accurately. Where estimates are used, these are clearly indicated.

Contents

General performance (Corporate Health and Revenue & Benefits)
Education & Life-long Learning (including Libraries & Museums)
Social Services
Housing
Environment
Community Development

Statement of Contracts

None of the contracts awarded during the past year which involve a transfer of staff would be expected to comply with the requirements of the Code of Practice on Workforce Matters in Local Authority Service Contracts. The Code of Practice can only be expected to apply to contracts which were advertised after 13 March 2003. The council can confirm that since this date it has amended its contracts guidance and all individual contracts awarded in 2003/04 which involve a transfer of staff will comply, where applicable, with the Code of Practice.