

LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE – MONDAY 23rd JUNE 2003

REPORT FROM DIRECTOR OF POLICY & REGENERATION

FOR ACTION

ALL WARDS

The Best Value Performance Plan 2003/04

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Each year, the Council is required to publish its Best Value Performance Plan (BVPP) in accordance with government guidance and by the end of June. The first draft of the 2003/04 plan is attached as an appendix to this report for consideration and agreement by the Executive.
- 1.2 The 2003/04 BVPP will be Brent's fourth published plan. It will look back over the last three years and forward over the coming three years. It is a statutory requirement to publish the plan each year. This year the government has significantly revised its Best Value guidance following the legislative changes made at the beginning of last year. The guidance is covered in more detail below.
- 1.3 The style and content of the plan has changed this year in response to the new guidance. Performance information is reported by Corporate Strategy Theme and the tables of performance indicators continue to be reported separately in the second part of the plan.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Executive are recommended to agree the format and content of the draft Best Value Performance Plan 2003/04 as presented at Appendix I of this report and to present it to full Council for agreement.

3 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 Section 6 of the Local Government Act 1999 requires local authorities to publish a Best Value Performance Plan. The content of the Plan and the date by which it must be published may be specified in an Order from the Secretary of State and its content may also be covered by guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
- 3.2 This year the requirements concerning the content of the Plan previously specified by Order have been revoked and are now covered by guidance issued in March 2003 in circular 03/2003 Local Government Act 1999: Part 1, Best Value and Performance Improvement, as set out in the detail of the report.

- 3.3 The date by which the Best Value Performance Plan must be published remains the 30th June in the financial year to which the Plan relates.
- 3.4 Regulations made under the Local Government Act 2000 identify the Best Value Performance Plan as one of the plans which makes up the Council's Policy Framework. This means the Plan must be approved by the Full Council.

4 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

5 **STAFFING IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 There are no staffing implications arising directly from this report.

6 **DETAILED CONSIDERATIONS**

Government Guidance

- 6.1 The key implications for the production of the BVPP from the 2002 interim guidance and 2003 circular are:
- 6.1.1 The deadline for the publication of the Best Value Performance Plan will continue to be 30th June each year.
 - 6.1.2 The Government has accepted that the full Performance Plan is not necessarily the most appropriate vehicle for providing information on performance to local people. Rather, the Performance Plan's principal audiences should be the staff and elected members of the authority, groups and organisations with an interest in the authority, and central government.
 - 6.1.3 The statutory requirement for an efficiency summary and consultation statement has been removed.
 - 6.1.4 A new requirement for a statement on contracts – listing contracts involving staff transfers in the previous year and stating their compliance with the Code of Practice on Workforce Matters in Local Authority Service Contracts.
 - 6.1.5 CPA scores must be presented along with 'opportunities and weaknesses' identified in CPA.
 - 6.1.6 The plan must include progress over the last 3 years in implementing improvement measures (mainly Best Value reviews and external audits and inspections) and outcomes / impact of those measures.
 - 6.1.7 The plan must also include plans for improvement over the current and subsequent 2 years (including Best Value review and inspection programmes).

- 6.1.8 There must be 3 year targets for all national PIs and priority local PIs (current plus subsequent 2 years). These *can* be amended in subsequent performance plans for the year 2 and 3 targets.

Auditor's Comments

- 6.2 Each year the performance plan is audited and the Council's auditor is required to publish their report by 31st December. For the 2002/03 performance plan, the auditor made no significant comments on the performance plan itself, choosing to focus attention on the systems in place for collecting the performance information.

Style, layout and content

- 6.3 The proposed structure of the plan is highlighted below. To a large degree, the structure follows the format of last year's plan whilst addressing the new requirements of the government guidance and following the Corporate Strategy Themes.
- 6.4 *Contents, Foreword, About This Plan* – no / limited change from last year.
- 6.5 *About Brent* – summary information about the borough remains the same as for last year. Key activities / events highlighted this time are: new corporate strategy, Improving Brent, Local Strategic Partnership and Community Plan, Beacon Status, Wembley Stadium, 2001 Census results, Local Public Service Agreement, Comprehensive Performance Assessment.
- 6.6 *Objectives and Priorities* – summary text as set out in the corporate strategy. This is new this year, as the corporate strategy was still in the process of being drafted at this point last year.
- 6.7 *Comprehensive Performance Assessment* – given the change in emphasis towards 'corporate' performance management in the new guidance and the requirement to report on the CPA process, this section is included towards the front. It will introduce the CPA process, cover the scorecard and refer to the outcomes.
- 6.8 *Consultation* – this is no longer 'required' under the revised guidance but it is proposed to keep this section to refer to the way we consult, our strategy and the outcomes of recent resident consultation (which have not been previously reported in a performance plan).
- 6.9 *Performance* – the heart of the plan. There are a number of changes to this section arising from the guidance and discussions across the authority and with some other London Boroughs.
- This section is sub-divided by corporate strategy themes rather than Council service areas (as for the last plan)
 - Reporting on performance now needs to cover a 6 year period – the 3 years preceding the current plan, the current year and the subsequent 2 years.
 - Each theme [or part theme] covers three discrete areas:

- a) Progress and outcomes of performance improvement over the previous 3 years, including actions taken from Best Value reviews, external inspections and audits, local and national priorities as appropriate.
 - b) Comparison of performance in 2002/03 against targets for that year (successes and priorities) including significant variations in performance, which will be commented upon in the performance digest.
 - c) Future corporate and CPA priorities, targets in priority areas [including LPSA] and where appropriate, future BV reviews, inspections and audits.
- BV Review information - other authorities are looking to summarise reviews in a way that is meaningful to residents by focussing on actions and outcomes that affect the customer. This approach has been adopted for the Brent performance plan, whereby BV reviews are only reported in any detail where they contribute to the priorities discussed under each theme and where there are clear outcomes that benefit the customer.
- 6.10. *Brent Council's Budget and Spending Plans* – as for last year, this section will follow CIPFA guidance on good practice. There is no longer a requirement to have an efficiency summary.
- 6.11. *Statement of Contracts* – this is a new requirement - to produce a list of contracts for the last financial year which included staff transfers, and for each to state whether they complied with the Code of Practice on Workforce Matters in Local Authority Service Contracts. As this cannot be applied retrospectively, it is proposed that the 2003/04 performance plan merely contains a statement of intent – to acknowledge the new requirement and pave the way for reporting in future years.
- 6.12. *Part II 'Performance Digest'* – there is no longer a requirement to publish previous years' data or comparative data. However, this is focussing too closely on future performance through targets. It is proposed therefore to keep 3 years of trend data (data for the most recent year plus the previous 2 years) and some form of comparison with London Boroughs. This will mean the only changes to the performance digest will be:
- To include targets for 2003/04, 2004/05 and 2005/06 where appropriate
 - To highlight PSA targets
 - To include priority and/or PSA local indicators

Timetable for publication

- 6.13. Local authorities are required to publish their performance plans by the end of June each year. They are also required to have their performance plans agreed by full Council. The earliest date that full Council can consider the 2003/04 performance plan is the 28th July.
- 6.14. Officers are currently consulting the Council's external auditors over the timetable. However, it is clear that locally, a fully transparent process for producing the performance plan must involve the non-executive through effective scrutiny as well as being agreed by the full Council. For this to

happen, the plan cannot be finally published until the Council have considered and agreed it in July.

7 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

7.1 The following documents were used in the preparation of this report:

ODPM Circular 03/2003: Best Value and Performance Improvement.
Best Value Performance Plan 2002/03 - Audit Report, December 2002.
2003/04 Draft Best Value Performance Plan.

7.2 The contact officer for this report is:

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