	Executive 16th April 2007 **Report from the Director of Policy and Regeneration**
For Action	Wards Affected: ALL

The Local Government White Paper: "Strong and Prosperous Communities" Briefing

Forward Plan Ref: PRU-06/07-21

1.0   SUMMARY

1.1   This report summarises the proposals for local government outlined in the White Paper "Strong and Prosperous Communities" and gives some initial analysis of potential implications for Brent. It is intended as a briefer guide to the voluminous (222 pages) White paper. Most service areas across the Council have contributed to this document.

2.0   RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1   To note the initial proposals and local implications

3.0   BACKGROUND

3.1   The Department of Communities and Local Government published their White Paper for Local Government on October 26th setting out their proposals for Local Authorities over the next few years.

3.2   The proposals are set out in seven themes under an over arching theme Strong and Prosperous Communities. The seven themes are:

- Responsive Services and Empowered Communities
- Effective, Accountable and Responsive Local Government
- Strong Cities, Strategic Regions
- Local Government as a Strategic Leader and Place-Shaper

- A New Performance Framework
- Efficiency – Transforming Local services
- Community Cohesion

3.3 The White paper is a large and unwieldy document which includes a multitude of small initiatives alongside a few significant ones. It does contain some important proposals which will significantly change Local Authorities relationships with both central government and the local community over the next few years. However, the overall tone of the paper implies some uncertainty on the part of government as to which direction it wants to head in, and this is reflected in the hesitant manner in which many of the proposals are put forward.

3.4 This briefing for Executive comprises of a summary of each Chapter, and potential 'implications' or 'issues to consider'. Chapter summaries are of varying length and nature of content depending on the analysis warranted. Whilst every attempt has been made to provide a streamlined report submissions have come from a range of authors, so style and language does vary throughout the report. The repetition of themes through the Chapter summaries does follow the White paper structure and content which is itself quite repetitive.

STRONG AND PROSPEROUS COMMUNITIES - THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT WHITE PAPER

4.0 **Preface by Ruth Kelly MP**

Summary

4.1 Ruth Kelly in her preface to the White Paper describes its aim as to 'give local people and local communities more influence and power to improve their lives. It is about creating Strong and Prosperous Communities and delivering better public services through a rebalancing of the relationship between central government, local government and local people'.

4.2 She cites that over the last 10 years improvements in public services have been driven from the centre. This approach followed the inheritance in 1997 of institutions which were not fit for purpose following decades of underinvestment. In the face of increasingly challenging, complex and often local needs, a new approach which allows for more local flexibility is required.

The relationship between central and local government

4.3 The White paper sets out proposals to provide more freedom for Councils to respond flexibly to local demands. It t will radically reduce national targets, tailor them to local circumstances and introduce a lighter inspection regime. This will mean a stronger community leadership role for Councils to shape neighbourhoods and bring local public services together.

The relationship between local government and its partners

4.4 The paper describes local government's strength as its closeness to its communities. The papers intention is to use citizens and communities to drive up public service standards and foster a sense of community and civic pride.

New powers for citizens and local councillors are proposed, with local communities taking on the management and ownership of local facilities and assets, and a 'community call for action' when things go wrong. Small budgets for councillors to address local problems are proposed.

A new settlement for the future

4.5   This new settlement between central and local government and citizens aims to give incentives and opportunities for local government and its partners to radically 'improve the services we receive and the places where we live'. This, it states, requires a fundamental change in attitudes and culture and new ways of working, which the White Paper offers a framework for.

5.0   Chapter 1 - Introduction

Good Public Services are essential to strong and prosperous communities.

5.1   This first introductory chapter gives an overview of the White paper and some background rationale for its proposals. It recalls the 'huge' achievements in improving public services since 1997 combined with record government investment to drive through reforms. However, if these improvements are to continue, it cites that local government must be given more freedom to tackle increasingly complex and crosscutting issues like climate change, social exclusion, anti-social behaviour and improving standards for children in care.

Lyons Review

5.2   The Lyons review into local government funding will now report in March 2007. Lyon's report in May 2006 identified 3 priorities which now form key themes of this White paper – a clearer identified role between central and local government, a greater recognition of local governments 'place shaping 'role, and a recognition that local government needs to improve its capacity to deliver.

A new role for local government

5.3   A key theme of the White Paper is around reshaping public services around the needs of users and communities, consulting and involving them in setting service priorities, design and delivery. These 'radical' and 'devolutionary' reforms described aim to leave local authorities and partners with the flexibility required to do this.

The importance of place: the role of partnerships

5.4   The White paper seeks to build on past thinking around the importance of partnership working to deal with society's intractable problems, with greater emphasis on working across both whole geographical and service areas over improving individual services particularly on economic development and sustainability issues. Several elements it is felt will help the required partnership development work better.

- The local councillors representative role is to be strengthened through a 'Community call for action' and collectively through Overview and Scrutiny Committees. Citizen participation in local service delivery is to be strengthened to develop community management and ownership of assets.

- 3 types of 'stronger' more stable and 'visible' leadership (directly elected mayor, directly elected Executive, or indirectly elected Leader) are proposed.
- Stronger strategic leadership for local communities will be developed by putting the Sustainable Communities Strategy at the heart of what authorities deliver through the new performance framework. Authorities will then prepare a Local Area Agreement (LAA) – in consultation with government, partners and citizens which will set out an area's priorities. The paper cites that partners will be under a duty to cooperate to work towards targets.

5.5 The inspection regime will be rationalised, to be more proportionate, targeted and risk based. This should provide the basis for a more mature relationship between central and local government, and assist cross service boundary working. Work is underway to develop Multi Area Agreements which cross administrative boundaries. The new framework should:
- Foster civic pride and build community cohesion
- Deal with complex problems which require co ordination
- Build a modern infrastructure and improve leadership and partnership
- Better integrate services
- Increase efficiency by working together

Putting it all together

5.6 In summary the authors cite that these 'radical' and 'demanding' reforms will empower citizens and communities; create stronger and more visible leadership; and put in place a new framework within which local authorities and their partners can work.

The following Chapters contain more detail about proposals and commentary on their implications.

6.0 Chapter 2: Responsive services and empowered communities

6.1 This lengthy Chapter describes the government's view that community involvement, participation and empowerment are at the heart of public service delivery, and key to reinforcing local democracy. The view is that if public services are improved, local people will be more satisfied and communities stronger. Analysis is given alongside the summary.

Our ambition

6.2 The preamble cites the public expectation for local public services to mirror the increasing "speed and range" of services available 'on the high street', and states the government's ambition for the continued improvement of performance in public services, but also to provide more responsive services which are better tailored to the individual. The proposals outlined aim to give greater community empowerment, including marginalised groups which will extend choice and control and give citizens a greater role in local decision making and place shaping.

Extending choice for individuals and families

6.3 Greater choice in local services is to be promoted by:
- Increasing choice for parents organising childcare

- Meeting targets to offer choice based letting schemes to tenants by 2010, and extending this scheme to social housing, low cost homes and private rented accommodation
- Extending choice in the provision of social care via direct payments

6.4 Whether 'choice' and 'quality' always go hand in hand is debatable, and there is a need to ensure than non users or non frequent users have a say.

Giving local people more say in running local services

6.5 <u>Innovative local authorities</u>.
A selection of examples of local authorities innovating ways of extending choice and control over their services is given, for example the 'Love Lewisham' scheme which allows people to email or text picture of problems.

6.6 <u>Government action to encourage citizen and community empowerment.</u>
A selection of government policies which have encouraged community empowerment are given, such as neighbourhood policing teams and the Healthy Communities Collaborative. These proposals would have their own accountability requirement in terms of 'process' while ensuring that all sections of the community have a chance to determine funding priorities and control.

6.7 <u>Securing Participation</u>
The best value regime is to be reformed to extend the existing duties of consultation. Authorities will need to inform, consult, involve citizens and devolve responsibility for service delivery through community management. Government will aid this process with a range of activities including renewing best value guidance, piloting practical methods, ensuring assessment of council's information systems regarding their communities form part of the new inspection arrangements.

6.8 Whilst relaxing the performance framework is welcomed, authorities will have to develop better means of consulting and informing to meet the new inspection requirements, which may well result in a mere replacement of those old measures with the new. The will be a clear need to develop greater 'intelligence' about the Brent community profile and needs.

Providing better and more timely information on the quality of local services.

6.9 The government wants to encourage better, faster communication and accountability to local citizens. They will support council innovations in this, and will publish annually Council performance to include citizen satisfaction indicators. LSPs should give information on LAAs and progress against the sustainable community strategy.

Listening to and acting on local concerns

6.10 Petitions have been a useful form of civic engagement. The paper proposes formalising a 'Community Call for action' as a tool for citizens to take up issues of concern with their local councillor, who may have a small budget to help resolve minor problems, and will run in parallel to that introduced to the Police and Justice Act. More strategic or crime issues should be referred to Overview and Scrutiny. Legislative safeguards will be introduced to prevent the CCfA being misused.

6.11 The White paper assumes that citizens will be motivated to get involved once armed with better information, which is not necessarily the case.

6.12 For CfCAs, if overview and scrutiny is to determine the validity of a CfCA it could simply respond by just 'noting' the concern. The paper lacks clarity suggesting a gatekeeper role for overview and scrutiny but showing Executive as the first port of call, and ignores the role of full council, and supporting mechanisms such as officer contacts and fellow ward member support.

The Local Government Ombudsman

6.13 The paper proposes modernising practices of the Ombudsman to include potential investigations into council and partnership activity, any council maladministration, providing alternate methods for complaints, and better joint working between the local government and parliamentary ombudsman.

Empowering local people to manage neighbourhoods and own community facilities

6.14 Neighbourhood management
The paper describes initiatives to date such as neighbourhood policing teams and examples of the positive effect these have had on citizen's satisfaction levels. This will be further encouraged through pilot projects, New Deal for Communities funding and partnership activity.

6.15 Community management and ownership of assets
Examples of community ownership initiatives are given and the benefits highlighted such as revitalising underutilised assets. The government will make it easier for communities by funding capital support and issuing new guidance. They will extend this to include more opportunities for tenants to get involved in management of community services.

6.16 Accountability, capacity and equity issues will apply here, for example how are requests for ownership to be determined? What impact such action will have on the council budget, potential to generate revenue spend also needs consideration. Funding and guidance is mentioned but long term resource implications would need consideration.

6.17 Local charters for neighbourhoods
Local charters will act as voluntary local service level agreements with partners and the community, which may help meeting the new duty to secure the involvement of citizens.

6.18 Probably unenforceable as 'voluntary' agreements, but these are a positive idea and provide a framework for development as well as a good public relations initiative, they could be contested if they differed widely across areas.

6.19 Community and Parish Councils
The paper proposes extending the power of wellbeing to parish and town councils, and London authorities will have the option to form parishes.

6.20   Support for Community Groups
       The paper proposes providing more support to community groups to help
       them engage with the statutory sector. A citizen governance project will be
       launched to aid this.

       Implications

6.21   The White paper presents a move towards devolution and neighbourhood
       empowerment, but falls short of a clear vision of double devolution. In the
       desire to allow local councils and communities to decide what is best, there
       are no overarching bold initiatives, but rather it is a strange mish mash of
       tentative initiatives and mild encouragements.

6.22   The councillor is placed closer to the proposals for more empowered
       communities, which could re invigorate the backbench role to be more
       frontline, although the community call for action may be seen as burdensome
       for some. The boost in councillor profile may be used to good effect if
       combined with positive local initiatives.

6.23   Size and definitions of neighbourhoods are carefully avoided and decisions on
       how best to implement proposals in relation to existing communities (in terms
       of geography and scale) do need to be left to local interpretation. The lack of
       top down priority leaves the Council to juggle with a myriad of initiatives and
       ideas. Further guidance may provide further prescription, but the scope to be
       proactive in identifying what Brent might choose to implement is apparent.

6.24   The CCfA lacks clarity in relation to which other public service providers may
       be subject to it, it could become a bureaucratic minefield and a source of
       cynicism to communities, or like FOI it could have a smaller impact than
       initially anticipated. Whilst the proposals are an attempt to reinvigorate local
       democracy, the question remains to what extent do communities want new
       powers, precepts, services and assets? And how much will Councils be
       incentivised to change current arrangements.

7.0   Chapter 3: Effective, accountable, and responsive local government.

7.1   Another lengthy chapter focuses on developing more effective systems of
       democratic governance. Promoting councillors roles as community
       champions, more effective scrutiny structures that are fit for purpose to help
       strengthen local government, and enable better representation of local people
       are discussed. It also proposes structural changes for two tier local
       government. The paper recites the local government reforms since 1997 but
       states that there are still governance issues to address. Again, commentary is
       supplied next to summary.

       More Diverse and Representative Councillors

7.2   Democratic representatives need to reflect the diversity of the population that
       they represent to command their confidence. This is essential to ensure
       citizens engage in local democracy. Groups that are under represented are
       more likely to believe that their perspectives are overlooked and disengage

from the process. The government wants to encourage a greater range of candidates to come forward and describes various innovative initiatives of political parties to attract new candidates, from all sections of the community but says that more could be done.

7.3   The government will;
- Establish an independent review of the incentives and barriers to serving on councils.
- Remind prospective candidates that elected councillors have a legal right to ask their employers for time off work to fulfil their council duties
- Encourage the Local Government Association and the political parties to work together to improve the recruitment of candidates from more diverse backgrounds

Implications

7.4   The ethnic make up of Brent Councillors is reflective the communities that it serves. However more work needs to be done to ensure representation across age and gender.

7.5   An independent review of the incentives and barriers to serving on councils may provide a useful indication on what could prevent people from becoming councillors, although the government must recognise that many of the issues will be local problems which require local solutions.

7.6   Having the legal right to ask employer for time off to fulfil council duties does not provide a strong enough incentive. More 'carrots' should be developed to encourage employers to comply perhaps a community award or some form of public recognition. There is no recognition of the other commitment of members- family, work, social life.no mention of possible options to reduce the number of Cllrs and have fewer, full-time, salaried members. The review could consider how this role fits in with other "local bodies" such as PCT Board non-execs, Foundation Trust Governors, Elected School Governors.

Councillors as democratic champions

7.7   The new political arrangements introduced in the Local Government Act 2000 which introduced cabinet and leader models are seen to be beneficial in developing stronger executive leadership. Whilst additional capacity building for councillors is a welcome step, there still needs to be clearer defined role for councillors in championing the interests of their local communities.

7.8   The government proposes to re-affirm the importance of the role of councillors through Community Call for Action. As well as work with organisations such as the LGA, and IDeA to develop a clearer role and capacity building for councillors.

7.9   Brent Council has led the way in developing community leadership roles for councillors through the Ward Working pilot. This initiative empowered members to tackle local issues through having a local budget working with partners and influencing mainstream council budgets to address issues of concern within the ward. New proposals around neighbourhood working are currently being developed which are still likely to incorporate lead roles for councillors at the neighbourhood level.

7.10 It is unclear how the 'community call for action' will add value to the role that councillors already play in local communities. There is no indication at this stage on how much this new power will be used. The challenge may be to ensure that the power is not monopolised by 'usual suspects' or community activists but that it is accessed by all sections of our diverse communities.

Enacting community rules and bye-laws

7.11 The paper proposes the removal of the secretary of state's role in confirming byelaws. The idea being that this will reduce the enactment period and attached bureaucracy and enable councils to enforce rules and standards of behaviour locally and more easily.

7.12 Potential issues to consider include questions around how this might impact upon individual rights of redress? Particularly if the magistrates role is removed. It replaces a judicial function (albeit small) with a politically determined one. The Council's liability could then be increased. It could encourage a "penalties culture" and could also fragment borough responses and continuity of restrictions across boundaries.

Stronger Leadership

7.13 Places need clear vision and strong leadership if they are to deal with constantly changing economic, social and cohesion challenges. Research cites strong support for the arrangements introduced in 2000 Local Government Act, but many councils have been cautious in their approach with only 12 pursuing the strongest leadership model. Whilst leadership is the key driver for change and improvement, annual election arrangements can hinder stability and long term decision making. The white paper therefore proposes three models of Council Leadership which it believes will strengthen effective leadership making it more visible to the local community.

- **An indirectly Elected Leader** as now, but with a 4 year term (no annual renewal)
- **A Directly Elected Executive** voters choose a "slate" of 2-9 party candidates.
- **A Directly Elected Mayor** as currently operated.

Implications

7.14 While the mayoral system is heralded as "strongest leadership" model. There is no evidence actually cited to back up this claim. With a directly Elected Executive, candidates would stand as both an Executive "slate" candidate and a Cllr Candidate. If they were elected to the Executive then the Cllr seat would be vacant. This model implies a preferential or transferable voting system. It would also be necessary to recruit more candidates than necessary, to receive allocated places. This is at a time when party membership and the number of prospective Cllrs are in decline.

7.15 It is also possible that the party winning the Executive could be completely separate from any other political group on the Council. This raises questions about the representative function of this model and indeed the role of full council. These models are aimed at providing more stability in light of an increased number of NOC councils and a need to provide more visible government at a local level. These proposals may have the potential of weakening the Cllr role and undermining full council by developing a split

mandate. Overview and Scrutiny would need to be clearly defined in relation to the Directly Elected Executive model. The intricacies of these models have been spelt out in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Bill (40A), P31 "Elected Executives".

7.16   The requirement to change executive arrangements is contentious. The evidence from government commissioned research is that councils have implemented the new constitutions effectively. One of the main problems identified is with the role of non 'executive' members. The idea of concentrating leadership powers on one individual and reducing the role of the elected Council as a whole seems likely to add to this problem.

7.17   Local government leadership is inevitably complex, split between the democratic and managerial role. The White Paper defines 'strong' leadership as the concentration of executive power on one person, failing to review the evidence that effective leadership can be exercised through a variety of styles: by a group, team, or democratic assembly, as well as by an individual. To focus all executive power on one individual may undermine many of the other aims of the White Paper such as reflecting diversity, attracting a wide range of councillors, community engagement, and so on. A wider debate about the characteristics of effective leadership in local government is required. Excellent performance has been achieved by councils with a range of constitutional options.

7.18   Despite the White Paper's ambition to concentrate executive power on one person, there is a growing tendency for government departments and legislation to ascribe particular roles to cabinet members. For example, councils are required to designate a lead member for children's services. A lead member for adult social services is likely to be required soon. Developments around the Police and Justice Bill require a lead member for crime and disorder issues. The proposals for a new statutory health partnership (paragraph 5.23 of the White Paper) are likely to define a portfolio holder's role.

7.19   It does not appear clearly thought out how these various roles and legal responsibilities are to be combined with the executive powers being vested in one individual. Some joined up thinking on this from government would be welcome.

Overview and Scrutiny

7.20   There are proposals throughout this document aimed at developing and strengthening the role of overview and scrutiny (O&S) and therefore that of non executive councillors, to champion the interests of local people across a wide range of local issues and hold the executive to account. This is particularly important given the proposals to enhance the powers of the council leadership and the desire to enable local authorities carry out their place-shaping role.

7.21   Specific proposals are:
   •   Committees will be able to consider specific matters regarding the actions of local service providers and key public bodies operating in the area.
   •   Public service providers will be required either to appear before the committee or provide information to the committee within 20 working days.

- Committees will have to copy any recommendations to any bodies affected. The council will need to consider and publish the results of those recommendations within two months.
- Overview and scrutiny committees will be required to consider issues raised by Councillors as 'Community Calls for Action'.
- Local authorities will be encouraged to set up 'area' overview & scrutiny committees. These would focus on their local area and review the actions and impact of the council and other bodies.
- Overview and scrutiny will be also be encouraged to focus on more strategic issues including the LAA, Sustainable Communities and other key strategic plans. There are proposals to strengthen the involvement of elected members in LSPs via scrutiny.
- Overview and scrutiny will have a stronger role in policy development. The aim is to give local councillors a greater role in advising the executive and that the local perspective influences decisions. Committees will have the opportunity to consider how policies can best promote community cohesion and identify potential negative impact of policy proposals.
- All councils will be encouraged to ensure that the overview & scrutiny function has the appropriate resources dedicated to it. Best practice guidance will be produced in consultation with local authorities.

Implications

7.22 Whilst an extension of scrutiny powers is positive, there is a potential dichotomy of role between encouraging local area focused scrutiny and greater focus on strategic issues. To do both well will have real resource and capacity implications. The regulatory impact assessment estimates a 50% expansion of current overview & scrutiny activity.

7.23 How will area scrutiny fit in with our area / neighbourhood arrangements? Area committees with devolved decision making powers (possibly from the executive) could not take on area scrutiny, not least because they will contain executive members. We would not want to be in the position of having two sets of area committee / forum, so how would this work?

7.24 The white paper and the Police and Justice act talk about Community Calls for Action in different terms. The white paper places greater emphasis on the role of the councillor rather than the rights of the public in the triggering mechanism. It also goes further in proposing consideration of powers and budgets for councillors to resolve problems before they escalate to overview & scrutiny. This can be developed within Brent's ward / neighbourhood working arrangements

7.25 The duty on public service providers to co-operate will only apply to those specifically named in legislation – the proposed list is set out in section 5 of the white paper. The limit placed on these may limit the functions of the community cohesion and place shaping role.

Improving participation and electoral arrangements

7.26 Local government derives its representative and leadership legitimacy from its democratic mandate, yet low electoral turnout is weakening local democracy. Despite the 2000 Act citizen participation remains low at 40% for local elections.

7.27   The Electoral Commission has made recommendations which the government will take up. The cycle of elections should be clearer and more consistent to aid clearer accountability and increase participation. The government will enable this by removing the requirement for the secretary of states permission to move to whole council elections.

7.28   The government will also enable any Council who holds whole Council elections to request that the Electoral Commission reviews them for the purpose of rewarding an area to single member wards.

Localise and simplify the conduct regime

7.29   Following consultation on this, the government is proposing a more locally based standards regime with decisions made at local level. There will be a revised regulatory role for the Standards board, and a simpler more proportionate code of conduct for council members and employees.

Opportunities to enhance effective two tier local government.

7.30   The paper cites while government structures and boundaries reflect peoples natural sense of place, that economy of scale has led to some services being organised over areas with little connection to recognised communities. The result is that two tier face additional challenges. It proposes new governance arrangements to overcome duplication, confusion and inefficiency, and invites shire areas to make proposals to move to unitary structures. Where there is no move to unitary status they will work to secure more effective working arrangements, with a view to achieving a unified service delivery model, stronger leadership for 'place shaping' and shared back office functions and integrated service delivery.

8.0   Chapter 4: Strong Cities, Strategic Regions

8.1   This chapter charts the ambition for continued economic and population growth within England's cities and city regions, to ensure the country as a whole remains competitive within the global economy.

8.2   The starting premise for this chapter is that cities and city regions are the drivers of national economies, and that there is a responsibility on local authorities to ensure that continued economic growth occurs.

8.3   The government sets out a number of commitments to ensure the deliverability of this:
   - Continue a dialogue with cities and towns to establish how the government can best devolve economic development powers and resources to regions and local authorities in cities;
   - Reform Passenger Transport Authorities and Executives, to enable a more coherent approach to transport, and increase local authority participation in transport arrangements;
   - Work closely with local authorities that are developing cross-boundary Multi-Area Agreements;
   - Consult on draft guidance to promote City Development Companies;

- Encourage stronger city and city region leadership models, including directly elected executives and city mayors where there is local support for this.

8.4   As part of the Comprehensive Spending Review 2007, the Government promise to review a number of factors for economic development in cities:
- What has worked to date?
- What level of government should take responsibility for economic development, regeneration and neighbourhood renewal?
- What opportunities exist to reduce the overlap and improve co-ordination between bodies in terms of both strategy and delivery?
- What institutional barriers currently hinder effective co-ordination of policy-decisions and service delivery?
- Any other changes needed to improve the effectiveness of sub-national policy delivery?

City Development Companies and MAAs

8.5   City Development Companies are bodies which bring together market intelligence, economic strategy, and analytical and co-ordination functions, and boost business confidence in a shared, strategic approach across the area. They are borne out of the need to engage the private sector and develop strong public sector co-ordination to deliver transformational economic change.

8.6   Multi Area Agreements (MAAs) are an extension of the LAA idea, designed for outcomes best delivered through collaboration at a sub-regional level. In most cases this has been identified as economic development and employment questions. They are voluntary, and will be established by groups of authorities and their partners deciding to develop and deliver a MAA. They will require robust arrangements to ensure democratic accountability and governance arrangements.

Implications

8.7   Throughout the chapter there is a lack of clarity regarding the level of local authority being spoken of. There is a clear emphasis on the eight core cities, and occasional references to the unique governance arrangements within London. The chapter fails to get to grips with the issue of what types of interventions would best take place at which level, but generally there is a clear fixation with increased vertical and horizontal collaboration between local authorities.

8.8   In relation to new ideas, those that are suggested – such as City Development Companies – are largely undefined. Rather the white paper seeks to put the emphasis on cities and city regions preparing their own delivery models and vehicles within very broad parameters, and negotiating these with government, perhaps on a bi-lateral basis.

8.9   The implications for London are unclear, although the white paper acknowledges that to some extent in London the debate has already happened within the context of the recent review of the Mayoral powers in relation to planning, transport, skills, housing and health.

8.10   The clear implication for Brent is that we need to work to maintain and improve our relationships at all levels with the regional institutions and, by definition, with the established sub-regional partnerships.

9.0   Chapter 5 - Local government as a strategic leader and place-shaper

9.1   '*Today, [local authorities] are more likely to discharge their place-shaping role through partnership, by developing a joint vision, by supporting and working with other agencies and services and by commissioning others to work on solutions - rather than delivering services directly themselves*'[1].

9.2   Chapter 5 focuses on proposals to strengthen partnership arrangements, to improve local services and tackle core issues. To achieve the desired changes the paper proposes some new measures to reinforce the strategic leadership and new performance framework of local government. The chapter centres on strengthening the role of LSPs; improving the strategic alignment of the local authority and named public sector partners; and supporting more streamlined target setting through LAAs.

9.3   With the exception of new proposed guidance, standards, and advice notes the paper considers the recent LSP consultation and sets out a basic partnership framework, which is already in place or being developed by local authorities with good partnership arrangements. On a policy level, the chapter describes a shift towards establishing the LAA as a corner stone of performance management, and includes a duty to co-operate on named partners however; this duty lacks a practical definition or standard.

Strengthening local partnerships

9.4   The paper reiterates the importance of the local authority to provide communities with strategic leadership that brings together local agencies and groups to tackle a localities problems and challenges in a coordinated way. The LSP continues to be promoted as the overarching strategic partnership and primary vehicle for developing a local vision for transforming a place and tackling hard crosscutting social problems.

9.5   The main proposals for LSPs are:
   - To encourage elected members within executive and scrutiny roles to have greater involvement in the LSP. The paper asserts the expectation that local authority leaders will play a leading role in LSPs and have the opportunity to agree the LSP chair; and that executive portfolio holders will play a key role in the related thematic partnerships. These arrangements are already supported by DfES guidance requiring portfolio leads for Children Services by 2008 and proposed Home Office national standards for Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnerships. New overview and scrutiny powers will enable local authorities to scrutinise other partners on their role and involvement in delivering LSP core activities, namely the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) and Local Development Framework (LDF)
   - To strengthen the role of thematic partnerships to deliver the relevant parts of the SCS and LAA including responsibility for implementing plans and driving delivery of outcomes**.** The paper refers to DoH proposals for a new

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[1] Page 94, The Local Government White Paper 'Strong and prosperous communities' Volume I, DCLG, October 2006

statutory partnership for health and well-being, with associated legislation, to deliver both local government and NHS priorities.

- Intentions to establish a standard by which local third sector bodies should organise themselves, to facilitate their effective representation on LSPs.
- Shift of partnerships towards a commissioning role at both a strategic and operational level. New best value statutory guidance on commissioning principles, community participation, and competition will support these developments.

Improving strategic planning

9.6   The paper promotes the improvement and integration of strategic planning procedures, emphasising the role of the SCS as the shared vision and place shaper of localities. It reiterates the importance of coherent plans that reflect the SCS across the local authority and named public sector partners[2], as well as for London authorities to have regard to the Mayor's statutory strategies and targets. Key proposals include:

- New guidance on place shaping, replacing existing statutory and non-statutory guidance
- Encouragement of local authorities to integrate the LDF core strategy within the SCS, ensuring the full alignment of spatial planning objectives.
- Wherever possible, integration of housing and homelessness strategies within the SCS.
- Outcomes of the reviews of sub-national economic development, and housing and regeneration that are considering options of modernising delivery structures (i.e. Housing Corporation & English Partnerships[3]) with details to be announced in CSR07.
- Push for more effective and simplified community consultations by providing flexibility to draw up a comprehensive community engagement strategy. To support this proposal the paper states the intension to repeal the requirement for the independent examination of the LDF's Statement of Community Involvement.
- New advice will be issued on information sharing, including the existing statutory position, and model protocols to support better data sharing.

Developing Local Area Agreements

9.7   The paper considers LAAs as important yet not currently central to the local government performance framework. However, it states intentions for LAAs to become the delivery plan of the SCS and carry more weight.

9.8   The paper indicates that more area-based funding streams will be channelled through the LAA, and all areas will benefit from the removal of the four funding block structure. The paper explains how Government will consider the LAA when deciding the administration of funding streams. In the first instance, where possible funds will be provided to a locality in the form of general unringfenced grants, for instance the Revenue Support Grant. Secondly, they will be provided through the LAA Grant. This will relate to most area-based

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[2] Police, Police Authorities, Local Probation Boards, YOTs, PCTs, NHS Foundation Trusts, NHS Health Trusts, LSCs, Job Centre Plus, Health & Safety Executive, Fire & Rescue Authorities, Metropolitan Passenger Transport Authorities, The Highways Agency, The Environment Agency, Natural England, Regional Development Agencies, National Park Authorities, The Broads Authority, Joint Waste Disposal Authorities. Since publication of the White Paper, the duty has been extended to Sports England & English Heritage.
[3] DCLG announced on 17.01.07 establishment of the new agency 'Communities England' taking over delivery responsibilities for housing and regeneration programmes of the Housing Corporation, English Partnerships, and some DCLG functions, including Decent Homes, providing affordable housing, housing PFI and Market Renewal Programmes.

funds. Some funding streams may be deemed unsuitable for the general grant or LAA. However, any proposals to ring-fence funding will need to be justified, given the presumption against it. Other key proposals include:

- Placing a duty on local authorities to prepare the LAA in consultation with others. This will be similar to the existing requirement relating to the SCS.
- A new duty for the local authority and named partners to cooperate with each other to agree the LAA targets.
- A new duty for the local authority and named partners to have regard to relevant targets in the LAA - as set out by the relevant Secretary of State in directions. The local authority will need to take account of partners commitments and responsibilities, and will be unable to impose targets on named partners. Partners will retain budgetary independence, except where the decision to pool funding in the LAA has already been taken.
- Potential of a third generation of reward grants.

Local Implications

9.9 The proposals for partnerships are consistent with local practices and developments towards strengthening governance, performance, and financial management. Standards for voluntary sector participation, and a new statutory health and well being partnership may provide a greater level of clarity and direction however could require changes to existing arrangements.

9.10 The basic proposals for rationalisation of strategic planning reflect current activities. Consideration is already being given to strategic alignment including through partnership standards, service-planning frameworks, and performance management system. Attention will need to be given to the future integration of the LDF Core Strategy within the SCS.

9.11 The chapter proposes the LAA to have a more central performance management role. The new duties on named partners simply reflect existing consensual partnership arrangements, however where required could create opportunities for greater engagement with named partners, in particular through the extension of overview and scrutiny powers *(see chapter* 3). The new duties, alongside the national mandatory targets *(see chapter 6),* could represent a tightening of government control over the SCS and LAA.

10.0 Chapter 6 – A new performance framework.

Introduction

10.1 The paper sets out a new performance framework which it says should reduce the number of nationally reported indicators and change the emphasis to a more balanced approach between national and (more) local accountability, influence and priority setting.

10.2 The government acknowledges the improved performance of Councils that the current regime has brought, but also the unbalanced impact this has produced for local government and partners in terms of the burden and (sometimes) obstacle to joint working. It cites the need to shift services further towards prevention and early intervention which the current framework has hindered. User satisfaction will be a key measure of performance.

Changes

10.3   Inspection arrangements will be better coordinated between inspectorates and more proportionate relating to 'risk'

10.4   Separate performance frameworks will continue to operate for partners, for example PCTs, the police and Jobcentre Plus but will be modified to align with the framework for partnership working. LSPs become the single overarching partnership setting strategy and priorities.

10.5   Best Value requirements will change to increase focus on citizen engagement and competition, while the paper cites that the Best Value Performance Plan and Best Value Reviews will no longer be required. (This is unclear as we may still be required to publish some performance data) Best value will no longer apply to Parish Councils.

LAAs

10.6   The government will set out a single set of national priority outcomes for Councils working alone or in partnership. They will be measured by a single set of 200 national indicators for all local partners. (Government wants partners to use the same set of indicators to measure joint outcomes.) Where other statutory functions require reporting to government, they will align this with the new framework.

10.7   The 200 national indicators will be drawn from but replacing current BVPIs and PAFs to be more outcomes focused. There will also be around 35 improvement targets to be negotiated with government (against national priorities) p125, plus at least 18 DfES targets. These will all sit within LAAs alongside local priority targets agreed with local partners which reflect 'other' local priorities. (No reporting required) GOL will coordinate an annual review of performance through LAA's which will be fed through to other inspectorates. (Multi Area Agreements are not mentioned in this Chapter)

CAAs

10.8   From 2009 a Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) will be introduced, this will include:
- An annual risk assessment based on outcomes for each area
- An annual Use of Resources judgment highlighting procurement and commissioning capacities
- An annual scored Direction of Travel judgment
- Inspection activity driven by the risk assessment. JARs and APAs are discontinued, a few programs of rolling inspection will continue around vulnerable groups such as Children in Care.
- Intervention to support struggling authorities

Implications

10.9   Clearly a single assessment process and a single outcome and indicator set that will be aligned with outcomes and processes will be an improvement on the current arrangements. However it will be a significant challenge to deliver the kind of simplicity and joined up thinking that is promised within the time frame outlined. This statement of intent has been the subject of continued debate across DCLG and other departments and it should be beneficial to

local government that all departments have signed up to the principle of a single system.

10.10 The reduction in statutory reporting requirements from an estimated 1200 BVPIs (LGA) or 600 according to the White paper to 200 should be a welcome step in the right direction in reducing the burden of reporting, as should be the approach to rationalized and proportionate inspection. However it is not clear whether these 200 BVPI's are discrete, they may well contain sub parts attached to them, hence develop into more than just 200.

10.11 In addition, the Audit Commission have cited that (during inspections or assessments) they will still expect authorities to collect and monitor the BVPIs required to demonstrate that they are delivering an effective service. Whilst some of the national reporting burden is lifted, it remains unclear exactly what collection and monitoring requirements on other PIs will remain.

10.12 LAAs become the center piece of the new performance framework, increasing in size to now include 35 national priorities and 18 DfES targets. In earlier Chapters, the White Paper begins to translate the LAA into a contract for the delivery of priorities agreed in the Council's Sustainable Communities Strategy. Together with the strategic role of the leader of the LSP this is viewed as strengthening the local ownership and delivery of the LAA. However, the LAA reporting framework appears to be more heavily biased towards national priorities and mandatory outcomes than previous rhetoric suggested. Therefore it remains to be seen how 'local' LAAs will really be, there remains a strong challenge to develop this 'local' aspect of LAAs .

10.13 More recent government statements have highlighted the need to acquire more local variation in LAAs, and that Mandatory Outcomes should be the exception, not the rule.(CLG) Whilst government departments will have their priorities, negotiation is the key to local government for getting its own priorities fulfilled. LAAs are seen as free to include local priorities, but with statutory underpinnings. New LAAs should be in place by April 2008 with the new performance framework implemented by 2009. The message is now around taking the initiative, not waiting for central government, but to 'get on and define your priorities'.(CLG). The Council will need to develop and agree a definitive local priorities under the national priorities very quickly if it is to maximize on the new LAA framework.

10.14 CAA s will focus on a score based on 'risk' which is future focused, ie) predicting a Councils future likelihood of success. Difficulties may arise from the potential subjectivity of this judgement, including damage to a Council's reputation, and mistaken judgements of future risk. Further clarity and definition of how this will work is required, with an outline of whether the Audit Commission will share any of the risk associated with this judgement process. Some other areas require further clarity. It is unclear just how much information the Audit Commission would require to inform their future 'risk' judgement, this could well increase. What 'Areas' in CAAs are is yet to be defined. Councils also appear to remain the accountable bodies for what comes out of a CAA so the workload involved may well increase, as well as the reporting burden if the Council becomes responsible for sourcing data from partners.

10.15 A duty to cooperate (for partner agencies) has been included in the Local Government Public Involvement in Health Bill. It remains unclear how far this duty may be extended to other partners, so challenges around partnership working may remain.

11.0   Chapter 7: Efficiency – transforming local services

11.1   The efficiency transformation agenda builds on present best practice, following on from a history of Compulsory Competitive Tendering, Best Value, the National Procurement Strategy and e-government. It seeks to achieve change in service delivery, greater collaboration between public bodies and greater competition in contracts for service provision in a 'challenging financial climate'. Key proposals are:
- Delivering ambitious efficiency gains (at least 3%) with our partners as part of the 2007 Comprehensive Spending Review, with direct challenge to poorly performing or coasting services
- Securing more collaboration between councils and across public bodies ensuring administrative boundaries do not act as a barrier to service improvement and efficiency
- Ensuring greater contestability through the use of fair and open competition in local government services markets
- Promoting business improvement techniques including new technology to ensure efficient and effective service delivery
- Providing a secure financial situation including three-year formula grant settlements, three year council tax projections and more stable funding to the third sector
- Supporting councils and their partners to meet efficiency challenges

The Challenge
11.2   The overall objective is to achieve efficiency gains that improve users' experience of services without increases in taxation. Efficiency will be embedded into the new performance framework and poor performance challenged from a menu (not ladder) of intervention options. The detail of the framework is unclear but possible options include: the annual Use of Resources assessment being developed to look at efficiency further and/or an efficiency target delivered by all partners as part of the LAA.

Collaboration between public bodies
11.3   The move to greater shared service provision continues. Collaboration is expected across public, private and third sectors. Path finders are planned around shared back office functions, but benefits for frontline services are also highlighted. Issues identified include: the capacity to share assets, systems, data, skills and knowledge, and sustaining continuous review. Local Area Agreements are identified as the main vehicle for maximising shared procurement opportunities and multi area agreements could also assist in offering greater flexibility to deal with cross cutting issues. Greater understanding of costs and value for money will be required and more comparison between authorities will be made through the Audit Commission value for money tool. It is recognised that efficiency should not be about passing on costs to other organisations. Research around key interfaces is underway including those between social care and primary care trusts.

Guidance and toolkits are promised as part of the Comprehensive Spending Review 2007.

Competition and market development

11.4   The push to open up the public sector to greater competition is maintained: "Local authorities should regularly test the competitiveness of their performance in comparison with others. When services are found to be underperforming, where practical, they should introduce fair and open competition." Government will shortly publish a report on developing the local government services market. This report appears to be offered as a way to sell the positive outcomes that can be gained from competition for service provision where any of the sectors could be considered. In addition the recently announced framework to strengthen the role of the third sector in the delivery of local public services is intended to support this market development. The competitiveness of councils will be tested and the detail of how this will occur will be part of the single piece of revised guidance on the principles of best value. There will also be a code of practice on competition covering the core practices expected from all local authorities and suppliers.

11.5   Smarter procurement is sought with ideas from the Sustainable Procurement Taskforce to be taken further through guidance. Where appropriate the auditor's ability to respond to complaints from service providers about unfair and unlawful procurement will be strengthened. Procurement cards, e-marketplaces and the aggregating of demand are highlighted as best practice. Best practice examples in procurement include Leeds and Plymouth City councils who have developed a step by step guide to procurement of services for vulnerable people.

11.6   In addition asset management will be considered as part of the spending review and there is further debate on the benefits and disadvantages of transferring assets to community management or ownership with a review of barriers to this, as the idea is thought to be a tool to enable better community cohesion and push up service standards.

Business process improvement and flexible working

11.7   Business process improvement techniques are recommended as tools to enable efficient service delivery.

Use of Technology

11.8   The best practice development in the use of technology and information sharing is seen as something all of local government can benefit from; 'Dorset for you' is highlighted as a best practice example. There is also a drive to migrate customers to cheaper delivery channels with Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council seen as best practice in this area. The move to secure a bridge between local authorities and central government through the Government Connect programme and learning from other technology partnerships is a good example of the strategic approach to technology that will benefit the public sector. The need to move to cheaper delivery channels will require a better understanding of unit costs; something Brent is beginning to develop further in relation to service planning.

Stable finance

11.9 Capping will remain and three year formula grant settlements will begin with 2008-2011.

Support

11.10 Support will come from bodies like the Regional Centres of Excellence, IDeA and the 4Ps A number of pieces of guidance and initiatives will follow the White Paper, including:

- pathfinder projects
- a Business Improvement Package to outline best practice on customer focussed services
- more resources to support procurement
- revised best value guidance
- a code of practice on competition
- a change in the role of local auditors
- recommendations on market development
- more on the role of the voluntary and community sector

Implications

11.11 We are required to deliver more savings and continue to improve the quality of our services following the best practice approaches which Brent's efficiency agenda is already based upon. Brent is already preparing for further shared service and remembers greater competition in the past so will be well prepared for the changes ahead. Detailed guidance may reveal further implications for Brent, but the chapter simply sets the direction building on progress made so far in the public sector. As ever a balance remains to be made between the efficiency agenda and offering tailored services that meet the 'needs and preferences' of the community we represent. The definition of value for money needs to include both the quality and equality aspects of service delivery. Increasingly international discussions by economists are about the inclusion of human values in quantifying economic success.

12.0   Chapter 8: Community Cohesion

12.1   This chapter emphasises the need to provide more specific support to councils and their partners in addressing community cohesion issues. Work already undertaken to strengthen legislation against discrimination is emphasised. Councils have a key role in both celebrating an increasingly diverse society and responding to the challenges that can exist as a result. The strategy to achieve this is not yet fully articulated and therefore the focus is on basic principles. This chapter weights its approach towards tacking extremism but also outlines a move to incorporate community cohesion into council processes, implement the conclusions of the discrimination law review and follow guidance yet to be published by the Commission on Integration and Cohesion. Key interim steps include:

- Providing support for councils which wish to include cohesion issues in community strategies and LAAs
- Providing new guidance on how overview and scrutiny can support community cohesion
- Receiving support from Government for local establishment of forums on extremism where necessary

- Receiving further detailed plans from Commission on Integration and Cohesion on the promotion of community cohesion
- Sharing best practice across the country

Principles for mainstreaming community cohesion

12.2 The paper outlines basic principles for mainstreaming community cohesion as a foundation to guidance which is to follow:

Strong leadership and engagement

12.3 The context of 9/11 permeates this chapter of the white paper. Local government is seen as a leading light in fighting extremism including combating the roots of terrorism. Local authorities and their partners are to exercise their wider role in tackling all the challenges of ever more diverse communities in Britain, as part of the place shaping agenda. Leadership to ensure community cohesion has traditionally been strong in Brent, driven by the continued desire to relate to our very diverse community. The use of local government to fight extremism is relevant though it remains important to think much wider than this in building from communities for the future.

12.4 Building confidence in the local democratic structures is seen as one way to improve community cohesion. Central government is setting up a review of the incentives and barriers to serving on councils and seeking ways to promote greater diversity and get more candidates to put themselves forward. Capacity building for councillors will be supported. The focus on confidence in the democratic structures is likely to impact on Brent where our annual workforce survey points to scope for politicians to be more representative of the diverse make up of our population. This would involve looking to see what the barriers to people from any part of the community entering the political realm might be and looking to overcome them.

12.5 A whole raft of engagement activity is set out to enable better community involvement and to assist with community cohesion including the introduction of a 'Community Call for Action' which is seen as key element to assist community cohesion, enabling communities to put greater pressure on service providers to deliver high quality services that meet their needs. The white paper expects engagement to be targeted at disadvantaged or marginalised groups. Since much of our engagement with the community is with disadvantaged or marginalised people we can continue to develop this. How successful the community call for action will be, remains to be seen.

Developing shared values

12.6 Local government is called to build consensus; setting out the non-negotiables for a community and strengthening shared values through schemes which celebrate diversity and lead the fight against extremism.

Preventing the problems of tomorrow

12.7 Conflict resolution projects are viewed very positively which could well assist progress of our 'invest to save' bid presently being considered by the Treasury. They are particularly concerned with councils being ready for any crisis which might occur with clear contingency plans.

Good Information

12.8 There are clear pointers for what to include in further development of the neighbourhood agenda in Brent including learning from the systematic

mapping of areas to gain a better understanding of different communities undertaken elsewhere. Good approaches similar to those already implemented across west London are seen as positive including training about different cultures.

Visible work to tackle inequalities

12.9 Health, regeneration (skills training and employment opportunities) and work in schools are seen as key ways to visibly tackle inequality. It is recommended that we strengthen community cohesion through more community involvement in owning and running local facilities

Involving young people

12.10 Road shows of Muslim scholars speaking to young people and local forums against extremism and Islamophobia are the main focus in the present context but football festivals in London are also highlighted as an example of good practice. We could build on our wider engagement with young people through the youth parliament.

Interfaith work

12.11 Utilising the faith leaders' role in communities is highlighted as vital in engaging with our communities. This is particularly pertinent for Brent where we have a very high proportion of the population who describe themselves as religious.

Partners such as local third sector organisations

12.12 There is a particular focus on the third sector but the importance of work with all sectors is underlined. Local government is expected to be building networks of key people within communities who can facilitate debate, discussion and work to enable community cohesion.

Tools

12.13 The white paper outlines the structures which are seen as key to ensuring community cohesion:

Local Strategic Partnership and Sustainable Community Strategy

12.14 The LSP and the Sustainable Community Strategy are seen as a tool for promoting community cohesion. Councils are encouraged to put integration and cohesion at the heart of community strategies and Local Area Agreements.

Overview and scrutiny

12.15 The white paper identifies a role for Overview and Scrutiny in considering how policies can best promote community cohesion, countering misinformation and drawing on work in Luton, Camden and Enfield The good practice guide; the 'Scrutiny of Community Cohesion Issues, an LGIU Guide 2005' is recommended.

Performance framework

12.16 The refocusing of the performance management framework around Local Area Agreements and sustainable community strategies is seen as a way to enhance community cohesion with all performance measurement linking back to the overall community vision agreed with partners for an area.

12.17 The new framework will look to secure community cohesion outcomes taking into account local circumstances through the Comprehensive Spending Review 2007. Within the new framework national indicators and the annual risk assessment will pick up whether there are areas which need to be addressed. Support outlined below will assist in this process. "In areas in which cohesion is already, or risks being in future, a local concern, local partners may wish to agree additional local commitments as part of their LAA."

12.18 The Discrimination Law Review is considering establishment of an integrated public sector equality duty and a green paper is to follow, this will impact on the Local Government Equality Standard and our wider approach to diversity, hopefully moving to more developed joint working with partners around community cohesion.

Support

12.19 Bodies

Institute of Community Cohesion

IDeA

National government who will:

- Provide cohesion specialists to work with local partners to develop local cohesion solutions
- Provide peer and tailored support
- Spread good practice
- Assist in the establishment of forums on extremism where necessary

12.20 Guidance and best practice

- Community Cohesion: Seven steps, A Practitioner's Toolkit
- Leading cohesive communities, a guide for local authority leaders and chief executives, LGA and IDeA, 2006
- Reporting Diversity: How Journalists Can Contribute to Community Cohesion, the Media Trust and the Society of Editors, 2005
- Scrutiny of Community Cohesion Issues – an LGIU Guide 2005
- Preventing Extremism Together – working group report Aug - Oct, Home Office, 200

12.21 Policy and Guidance to follow:
- Findings of the independent equalities review looking at core priorities and levers for improvement, reporting in February 2007.
- Green Paper highlighting the proposals following the discrimination law review
- Recommendations of the Commission on Integration and Cohesion - June 2007 (consultation occurring at present)
- Draft guidance on Local Strategic Partnerships and Sustainable Community Strategies
- New overview and scrutiny guidance including how best to take community cohesion into account

Implications

12.22 The shift to a stronger focus on extremism and terrorism is expected but overall the chapter demonstrates some tension between creatively engaging with diversity and articulating rather vehemently against extremism whilst offering limited overall strategic direction. A number of inaccuracies in understanding basic descriptors for community groupings illustrate the difficulties being encountered at central government in trying to respond to the fast paced changes in Britain's population. Guidance and further policy direction arising from this chapter of the white paper are likely to require action by Brent in the future. These detailed recommendations are still awaited and are occurring within the context of a shift to try to make equality legislation strategically cohesive – an unenviable and difficult task philosophically speaking.

12.23 Brent has already made great progress in enabling and ensuring community cohesion in work with its partners across west London but needs to build on this foundation in the future. Taking on board the initial themes outlined in the white paper Brent could further the development of shared values in communities in line with the place shaping agenda, learning from the work already being carried out in the most deprived neighbourhoods in Brent. In addition Brent could strengthen its interfaith work, continue to improve the relationship with the whole of the third sector and consider community cohesion within the changes to overview and scrutiny.

13.0   Chapter 9: Steps towards implementation

13.1   This chapter describes how the recommendations in the White Paper will require changes in the way central and local government and local partners work.

13.2   A number of steps will be taken towards implementation of the White Paper over the coming period:
- Consult on and issue guidance on:
  o The revised best value duty
  o The Community Call for Action, Overview and Scrutiny and governance reforms
  o LSP, Sustainable Community Strategies and LAAs
  o City development companies, to drive regional and national economic growth

- Legislate to embed systematic reforms to rebalance the central-local relationship, better enable local partners to work together and give communities a bigger say in the things that matter to them. Legislation will be needed:
  - To create more responsive services and empowered communities
  - To secure effective, accountable and responsive local government, and help all councils develop their capacity and effectiveness
  - To strengthen local partnership working
  - To introduce more targeted, risk based and proportionate external challenge

13.3   The chapter lists activities for each heading above. The chapter summarises the activities Government will carry out from each of the other chapters of the document.

VOLUME 2

14.0   Annex A: Community Safety

14.1   The aim of the White Paper regarding community safety is to create a sustainable framework for local action on community safety and respect, strengthening partnership working and ensuring greater clarity over who is responsible for agreeing and delivering local community safety targets.

14.2   The specific community safety proposals in the White Paper pick up on the issues identified in the Crime and Disorder Act Review, which was published in January 2006. Many of these have already been developed and are incorporated into the Police and Justice Act (PJA) which received royal assent in November 2006.

Specific Proposals

Political leadership, engagement and accountability
14.3   The paper re-states the ambition of government to see local authorities demonstrating strong leadership on community safety, through the active involvement of the executive portfolio holder on the CDRP. To date in Brent the lead member for crime prevention and public safety has not been a member of CPSG. This position may have to be reviewed once the guidelines and standards are published.

14.4   The powers of Overview and Scrutiny are being extended to cover the work of CDRPs and all members of the partnership. The Act refers explicitly to a 'crime and disorder committee.' We do not currently have a separate community safety O&SC but incorporate the powers and duties into the O&SC. However, the Borough Solicitor, Director of PRU and Head of Community Safety are meeting shortly to explore the pro and cons of this approach and if this is feasible under the terms of the Act.

14.5 Local residents who are dissatisfied with progress of any CDRP agency in relation to a community safety problem will be able to bring their issue to Overview and Scrutiny as a "Community Call for Action", via their ward councillor. Ward councillors will be required to try and resolve issues informally first and act as 'gatekeepers' to exclude vexatious complaints to O&SC. This is a potentially problematic area. There are concerns that the mechanism could be used to pursue political influence and agendas. Clear guidelines will be required for how the CCfA will work and when.

14.6 CDRPs will be required to consult, engage and report regularly to residents, including through 'face the people' sessions where senior CDRP members will meet communities in sessions open to the media. The 'face the people' proposal has a gimmicky feel. Brent's CDRP already engages in a significant level of consultation and community engagement using a variety of techniques (e.g. public meetings, written consultation, police Independent Advisory Groups, Brent Community Safety Board). It could be argued that attendance of officers at area forums satisfies the government's desire to see 'face the people' sessions. Again this will be covered in the standards which have yet to be published.

Co-ordinated and collaborative planning and delivery, and performance framework

14.7 The aim is for all separate agency plans to reflect the same priorities for community safety, have the same PIs, and for these to be included in the LAA which all partners will be required to have regard to. This reflects our current practice within the Brent LAA and the CPSG action plans. In practice this means that crime reduction targets and priorities are driven by the MPS and the other partners fall in behind on these. The White Paper is also at pains to state that the police operational independence will be maintained and that the police authority will remain responsible for setting policing objectives - in reality signifying their control of the decision making regarding crime targets.

14.8 There will be an aligned intervention regime through the Government Office to address underperformance by partners in respect of community safety targets. Again this reflects current practice anyway but the same comment about police independence is also made in respect of this proposal, in reality allowing the MPS to de-prioritise an issue unilaterally.

Neighbourhood management of community safety

14.9 The government wants to encourage local authorities, police and other agencies to co-ordinate and integrate neighbourhood management with neighbourhood policing, and avoid competing plans, consultation arrangements etc. This is already being addressed by Brent and discussions have taken place with the police to align ward based working and SNTs.

15.0 Annex B – Health & Well-Being

15.1 The Local Government White Paper's proposes to shift local authorities, PCTs and other health organisations towards an integrated approach to service delivery. These changes to the delivery of health services are focused around four key areas:
- resident involvement;
- local leadership and joint commissioning;

- partnership working and joint service delivery; and
- joint reporting systems and performance management arrangements.

Local Leadership and Partnership Working

15.2 Effective partnership working to bring about a more collaborative approach to service delivery is a central theme of the white paper. This will have a significant impact on the health service in Brent which is primarily delivered by Brent's tPCT. The nature of the relationship between Brent and the tPCT will consequently have to adjust to enable the joint delivery of service. Changes include: working towards shared outcomes, joint commissioning, joint appointments, pooling budgets, aligning the planning and budgetary cycles, and joint performance reporting. These changes will be underpinned by a legal requirement for partners such as Brent's tPCT to cooperate in implementing these changes.

15.3 Collaborative local leadership is expected to address gaps in health outcomes of a community, particularly in areas such as obesity, smoking and other measures of health inequalities such as life expectancy. Key partners will need to commit to shared community outcomes in order to achieve a consistent strategic view for realising joint working arrangements. Key partners will be required by law to negotiate and sign up to shared outcomes and targets through agreements such as the LAA. A joint Health & Well-being Strategy is currently being developed in partnership with the PCT which will also provide an avenue to agree on shared objectives for addressing local health issues and inequalities. The current climate surrounding Brent's relationship with the PCT, however, may make negotiating and agreeing shared outcomes difficult. These difficulties were recently demonstrated by the failure to implement the jointly developed implementation plan responding to the recent government white paper 'Our Health, Our Care, Our Say'.

15.4 Council's taking a leading role in influencing the commissioning of health & social care is another main proposal in the white paper. The Council will be expected to play a leading role in commissioning to ensure the most cost effective, best value services are secured to achieve health outcomes. The government will publish guidance concerning this role this winter. For the Council to effectively take on this role, gaps in our current joint working arrangements with the tPCT will need to be addressed. The Council currently intends to establish a new Strategic Commissioning & Development Unit within Housing & Community Care department which will explore this issue further.

15.5 To aid joint service delivery the white paper proposes joint appointments within the Council and tPCT. This would affect Directors of Public Health positions and other senior members of staff in Adult Social Care. These positions would be held jointly accountable by the chief executives of both the Council and tPCT. These joint arrangements would consequently have an impact on the unit structures, individual remits and management arrangements within Adult Social Care and would require changes to the councils HR policies and recruitment procedures.

Performance Management

15.6 Joint service delivery will be underpinned by a single performance framework through which partners will be able to collect, monitor, and report on

performance information concerning shared targets. Brent will be well placed to undertake partnership monitoring and reporting arrangements once Performance Plus is rolled out to key partners. Responsibility for performance will be shared across partners and this could leave the council open to the negative consequences of poor performance from partner organisations. The tPCT is not performing well on many of the current health targets in the LAA. The new duty of partners to cooperate in the deliver of shared performance targets, however, should make partners more accountable for meeting performance targets.

15.7   The single performance framework will also be used as a basis for new partnership based assessment arrangements. Health services delivered by the council will be assessed via the new risk based approach to assessment. If an inspection is consequently triggered from this assessment, the Audit Commission will undertake this inspection if the issue is relating to the Council, however, if the inspection is solely affect a health body such as the tPCT a new health and adult social care inspectorate will undertake the inspection.

Resident Involvement - Responsive Services and Empowered communities

15.8   A central theme of the white paper is empowering your community to be involved in local decision making and responding to their needs. The introduction of Local Involvement Networks (LINks), Community Calls for Action, New scrutiny arrangements and other community governance arrangements will establish an avenue to scrutinise and address health issues raised by the community. The need to involve residents in local decision making will also increase the importance of a coordinated approach to consultation on issues pertaining to jointly delivered services within the borough.

16.0   Annex C - Vulnerable People

16.1   Most proposals set out in the White Paper concerning 'vulnerable people' consolidate and re-affirm policy initiatives previously set out elsewhere. These include:

- Race, gender, age and disability equality (with more proposed concerning sexual orientation and faith)
- Addressing the needs of the increasing numbers of older people including overcoming social exclusion
- Increasing employment opportunities for disadvantaged groups including disabled people and BME communities, and addressing income inequalities for these groups and for women.
- Tackling disadvantage in deprived neighbourhoods
- A general focus on tackling social exclusion and disengagement from the democratic process with central themes of early intervention, identification of effective approaches, improved co-ordination, personalised services and clear performance management and improvement.

16.2   Local authorities are seen as having a key strategic role in addressing disadvantage, and are well placed to provide co-ordinated, targeted and

innovative services based on sound local knowledge and often in partnership with other agencies.

Responsive communities & empowered communities:

16.3 A key aim of the White Paper is to give people more power over their own lives and the decisions that affect them. *Statutory guidance* will be issued to ensure disadvantaged or marginalised groups are appropriately targeted under the new duty to secure participation of citizens. Elected members will be encouraged to work with relevant agencies to ensure those least able to raise their concerns are supported to use the 'Community Call for Action' mechanisms.

16.4 The 'third sector' will be centrally involved in building community capacity.

16.5 A *strategy* to encourage disadvantaged groups to get more involved will be developed, with additional support for the most deprived areas.

Responsive Local Government:

16.6 Strong leadership is seen as crucial. Elected members should reflect the diversity of their communities, and encouragement will be given to LGA and political parties to improve recruitment of candidates from non-traditional backgrounds.

Cities & Regions:

16.7 Partnership and cross boundary working are seen as effective ways of tackling deprivation and poverty, particularly in terms of:
- Regeneration, economic growth, neighbourhood renewal and community cohesion
- Employment initiatives, skills development and training
- transport

Local Government as strategic leader:

16.8 The strategic and co-ordinating role of the local authority is seen as crucial. The White Paper emphasises this by:
- placing a duty on the local authority to *prepare the LAA in consultation with others*
- setting out *statutory guidance* that the Sustainable Community Strategy and other local/regional plans should have regard for each other
- placing a new duty on LAs and named partners to *co-operate in agreeing LAA targets*
- encouraging *pooling of areas based funding* to ensure more 'joined-up' service provision
- encouraging a move from service delivery to a '*commissioning' role*

16.9 These measures are designed to promote greater cross-agency working and to aid a focus on early intervention and preventative measures.

16.10 Assisting people to maintain independent living as seen as a core function of LAs and should be part of a co-ordinated, authority wide approach. *'Supporting People'* services are central to this and the expectation is that they will be delivered through the LAA framework. New SP outcomes and

performance indicators will be implemented following the CSR07 and set out in a revised SP strategy.

16.11 A *national housing strategy for an ageing society* will be published in 2007. LAs should make best use of *third sector expertise* to ensure local services work appropriately with the most excluded on issues such as 'Supporting People'.

Performance Framework:

16.12 The new performance framework will support work with vulnerable people through:
- focused targets in LAA including key outcomes on disadvantage and inclusion and often shared targets with partner agencies
- inclusion of satisfaction and perspective measures which will also have a greater focus in inspections
- joint annual risk assessment across partners related to LAA delivery
- improved targeting of intervention in areas of high risk or underperformance
- rolling inspection programme (eg looked after children, physical or learning disabilities etc)

16.13 The needs of the most excluded will be addressed in *revised targets & indicators* to be published in 2007.

Efficiency – transforming local services:

16.14 Strategic planning and co-ordinated service delivery across agencies is essential, as are improved efficiency and early intervention. Activities and efficiencies need to be co-ordinated across agencies to ensure that the actions of one organisation do not impact in terms of 'downstream' costs for another agency.

16.15 Increasing and improving information sharing across agencies to support more co-ordinated working is also necessary.

Implications

16.16 We will need to respond to the various strategies and statutory guidance to be issued. Key issues include:
- securing participation of excluded groups – possibility of resources to assist in this if Brent identified as a 'deprived' area. - Will be a challenge given the diversity of local communities
- increasing partnership and cross boundary working – opportunities for sub-regional working through WLA
- ensuring engagement of key partners in agreeing LAA and other key targets
- Exploring opportunities for pooled funding - *may be affected by PCT issues*
- Developing the commissioning role – *re-organisation of Housing & Community Care department is addressing commissioning role*
- Focusing efforts on promoting independence across social care and supporting people services – *in line with current national and local policy for social care*

- Engaging the 'third sector' in service delivery - *Brent's main programme grant for voluntary agencies is being reviewed in 2007/08*
- Addressing housing needs of older people - *Brent already has an older people housing strategy*
- Responding to the new performance regime, including increasing user satisfaction rates – *social care performance regime is becoming more outcome focused - greater attention being paid in assessment to user involvement, commissioning & partnership working – performance ratings may be affected by PCT issues*
- Ensuring a 'whole systems' approach to planning and delivery of services with other partners – *will be affected by current PCT issues*

17.0 Annex D - Children Young People and Families

17.1   The described aim in this section is to devolve power and responsibilities from central government to local authorities. The Government believes that by strengthening the leadership, scrutiny and commissioning role of local authorities they will have more power to improve outcomes for children and young people in their area. The importance of engaging local people about the services they receive is a key theme throughout this white paper.

17.2   A new performance framework is being proposed creating more space for local flexibility and responsiveness. There will be a reduced and more focussed set of targets contained within the Local Area Agreement (LAA).The aim is that there will be no more than 35 targets reflecting key national and local priorities for improving the lives of children and young people. The statutory Early Years performance indicators from the DfES will remain the same. A number of time limited output indicators will continue where there has been major system reform such as delivering Children's Centres and Extended Services.

17.3   A major change in the approach to assessment and inspection of services is proposed in the white paper. Inspection will be by exception rather than routine. Inspection will take place when there are high risks to safeguarding children and young people or where it is the only means to drive a system change in a local authority. Joint Area Reviews, Annual Performance Assessments and Social Care star ratings will not continue beyond March 2009. From 2009 there will be a new system called the Comprehensive Area Assessment .This will be based on a combination of an annual risk assessment, scored use of resources judgement, and annual scored direction of travel judgement which assesses effectiveness of each local authority in driving continuous improvement. The government plans to work with the Social Exclusion Task Force to ensure there is a focus on identifying and targeting the key issues for children, young people and families in the new performance framework before problems arise.

17.4   The reforms set out in the white paper are intended to support the Every Child Matters (ECM) change for children agenda. This white paper reinforces the importance of engaging children, young people and their families in the services they receive. Involving young people has been identified as one of the ways of achieving cohesive communities. A wide range of options are being proposed so that local communities can be engaged in the development

of local services e.g. community call for action. Young people will be encouraged to get involved in these.

17.5   Other main themes of the white paper and the impact on children and young people include:

- More robust scrutiny and overview arrangements – The focus will be on the outcomes agreed as part of sustainable community strategies, Children and Young Peoples Plan and Local Area Agreements
- The proposal to promote successful towns and cities will benefit children and young people , as well as everybody else e.g. better transport , skills training and cohesive communities
- An increased focus on local authorities being strategic leaders, promoting early intervention and preventative services.
- Promoting joined up working with the local authority and its partners. There will be a new requirement on key statutory organisations (YOT , LSC , PCT) to agree and have regard to relevant targets in the Local Area Agreement   (LAA)
- The continuation of local authorities sharing good practice with each other and co-ordinated through Regional Centres of Excellence.
- Commissioning services for children and young people. This complements the requirements of the Children Act 2006 and the Education and Inspection Act 2006 for authorities to consider the full range of alternative provision available when commissioning childcare and positive activities for young people.

17.6   The white paper does not make any explicit reference to the green paper Care Matters which sets out reforms to improve outcomes for Looked After Children. Both papers emphasise the importance of commissioning services and devolving powers to a more local level. The green paper is proposing that councils should have powers to direct schools to admit looked after children , and that budgets should be devolved to lead professionals to commission services for looked after children. There are clear recommendations in the green paper that all councils should be inspected by OFSTED about how they are meeting educational outcomes for looked after children.

Implications

17.7   The reforms set out in the white paper support the ECM agenda and the work currently taking place in Brent Children and Families Department. Prevention, early intervention, integrated services, the participation of children and young people and joint commissioning have been identified as the key factors in the white paper and have also been locally agreed in the Brent Children and Young People's Plan.

17.8   The proposed changes in the inspection regime means that Brent Children and Families Department will need to formulate its own procedures for independent self evaluation in addition to the annual performance assessment. This may involve undertaking peer reviews internally or externally.

18.0   Annex E – Economic Development, housing and planning

18.1   This section of the White Paper sets out specific proposals for change under a number of headings. It is underpinned by the principle that all local authorities need to take seriously their roles in driving forward economic development, specifically through the use of their regeneration, planning and housing powers. The unique position of local authorities to be able to take an overview of the economic needs of their areas is clearly identified.

18.2   The white paper proposes a range of measures, including:
- Improving and simplifying community engagement and consultation in the planning process;
- Stronger leadership for regeneration based on a clear and stable mandate for the Council leader or mayor;
- Investigating the possibility of a Council delegating responsibility for determining major planning applications to its Executive;
- Promoting cross border working and Multi Area Agreements when these help local authorities to improve local economic development;
- Local authorities should play a positive co-ordinating role in the delivery of new infrastructure;
- Duty to co-operate for key local players to work together to agree joint targets through the LAA;
- Local authorities will take a more strategic housing role, particularly in developing more affordable housing for rent. Reference is also made to the pilot projects examining the implications of coming out of the housing revenue account subsidy system.
- Greater emphasis on local authorities taking a proactive role in facilitating housing delivery
- Simplifying Tenant Management Organisations and making it easier for tenants to influence housing management and regeneration schemes;
- Considering wider roles and accountabilities for the RSL sector, the government will also strengthen the ability of tenants to be involved in exploring options for future of social housing stock.
- Enhanced overview and scrutiny arrangements to ensure the economic development agenda is aligned with other community issues
- The Local Development Framework will be the spatial expression of the Sustainable Community Strategy and covers housing, health, education and transport among other areas. It is expected that local authorities will

align and coordinate strategies and programmes and, to this end, it is proposed that Housing and Homelessness Strategies should be incorporated within the Sustainable Community Strategy wherever possible.

Implications

18.3   Many of the ideas put forward in this section are extensions of ideas or pilots that have already been introduced. The emphasis on community engagement and involvement, and improved accountability to local residents and communities, is consistent with other policy agendas, and points towards the need for the Council to continue to strengthen its approach to neighbourhood working.

18.4   The linking of the three areas 'economic development, housing and planning' is significant and indicates the government's acceptance of the close relationship between these three policy strands and their importance to the local authority's role as a "place shaper". In particular, the White Paper views "place" as a key driver of economic growth and prosperity, where the aim is to raise the rate of sustainable growth and achieve rising prosperity and a better quality of life, with economic and employment opportunities for all.

18.5   The importance of local housing strategies as a lever for economic and social change is stressed in the White Paper. The decent homes programme is seen as vital mechanism for ensuring long-term sustainability of council housing. Local authorities are considered to play lead role in the delivery of new homes to meet demographic and affordability pressures. Housing and planning will be linked at the regional level through new powers for the Mayor of London to produce regional housing strategy

18.6   In comparison with some other areas, less is said on housing in the White paper and further detail is expected to come from upcoming government reviews. Additional guidance is expected in 2007 that will further influence the development of housing policy and practice eg. guidance on housing market assessment, changes to planning resulting from the Barker review, and the development of the London Housing Strategy which is now the responsibility of the Mayor of London.

18.7   Proposals for greater tenant and resident involvement are welcome, but the exact mechanisms through which this will be delivered are unclear. The council has already made progress in joint working with RSLs, not least in the development of common management standards. A duty to cooperate around the LAA should assist, but work will need to be done to develop the role of housing in the LAA.

18.8   More specifically, it is not clear what is meant by incorporation of Housing and Homelessness Strategies into the Sustainable Community Strategy "wherever possible". The Housing Strategy is a statutory document with its own system of assessment (currently undertaken by Government Offices in each region) and both strategies are detailed and lengthy. More guidance of how incorporation is to work in practice would be helpful.

18.9   An important issue the White Paper did not address was the relationship between the different tiers of government – in London between the mayor and

the local authorities. In the planning system it is unclear as to what the relationship might be between major planning applications that could be considered by the Executive and those that could be directly considered by the Mayor. Similarly there is no clarity on the role of the respective tiers with regard to the development of the housing strategy.

18.10 The council will need to engage with the more detailed consultations either expected or already published on a number of topics. In this context, the development of the regional housing strategy over the next eighteen months will be particularly important, not least because there is an apparent tension between proposals for more local accountability and local control, for example in the proposals around the local authority role in promoting housing delivery, and the concentration of other powers at the national or regional level.

19.0 Annex F - Climate Change

19.1 The White paper sees local government as championing and leading local response to climate change. It outlines a number of changes and clarifies how local government frameworks can work together to address climate change.

19.2 Councils are expected to:
- Provide strong and visible leadership on climate change, promoting innovative initiatives
- Lead by example through its services and procurement policies
- Provide a means for the community to raise climate change concerns and for them to be addressed at the level the community sets
- Coordinate and facilitate key partnerships that can deliver results on addressing climate change

19.3 The white paper gives the council a clear mandate to tackle climate change, through the clarification and strengthening of frameworks that already exist. The paper describes how this will provide tangible climate change solutions which are in line with local communities expectations.

19.4 The frameworks are:
- The Sustainable Community Strategy
- The Local Area Agreement and the Local Strategic Partnership
- The Performance Framework
- Local Development Framework and the Sustainability Appraisal

19.5 A significant contribution to these frameworks is the reinforcement that local decisions should be made by local people, so that new and innovative ideas are heard and old ideas are challenged.

Key proposals

Strong and visible leadership on climate change
19.6 The council should lead at the local level on addressing climate change. This means challenging not only the council's and community's traditional ideas and methods of providing services and facilitating development, but also influencing other individuals and organisations.

19.7 The Sustainable Community Strategy, together with its spatial interpretation in the Local Development Framework, will set objectives and challenging targets for climate change.

19.8 The Performance Framework, Overview and Scrutiny, and the Local Development Framework Sustainability Appraisals will also provide ongoing checks, balances and accountability.

<u>Lead by example</u>

19.9 Council is expected to lead by example as a major employer, service deliverer, and service user itself. In practice this means that its buildings (including housing and leisure facilities and new and existing buildings) should be greener. Council buildings should incorporate innovative and best practice designs, where practicable, in addition the Council should set the challenge to other developers. The effects that services have on climate change also need consideration. This means assessing services like public transport and including in their strategies initiatives to begin addressing climate change issues, including their own office management practices. With its major purchasing power; the paper also promotes greener purchasing by councils to create a market for sustainable goods and services.

<u>Involving the community and raising community concerns</u>

19.10 The community should be increasingly involved in addressing climate change through local services like housing management, schools, renewable energy generation, and energy saving schemes. This could be either through policy development or being directly involved in the management of a service. Here the council would play a facilitation role, providing information and processes to help the community make choices and also help link up interested community groups to service providers, including council itself.

19.11 To ensure that the Performance Framework and the LAA applies to climate change, the paper expects cross cutting climate change indicators to be included in theses documents and in the local indicators within the Local Development Framework. For Brent this needs further development.

<u>Coordinate and facilitate key partnerships</u>

19.12 The LDF provides the vision, and the LAA, through the Local Strategic Partnership and Multi Area Agreement, will be the financial means by which many of the larger projects will be coordinated. This means that the council can work with the community and other organisations to address climate change. Examples include, working with energy companies on renewable energy schemes, promoting energy efficiency and working with major employers to develop sustainable transport plans.

19.13 The Secretary of State will have the power to identify partners and hold to account those who have a responsibility for achieving climate change targets in the LAA. These types of partnerships may offer participation in the Energy Performance Commitment (EPC). This is a carbon trading system led by Defra.

19.14 To support partnerships and provide guidance the council's Climate Change Adaptation Strategy, is being developed with the area Regional Climate Change Partnership. The Strategy will need to be consistent with the Climate

Change and Energy Strategy for London and also the Climate Change Adaptation Strategy published by the London Mayor.Brent Council is working with a number of organisations currently to support climate change initiatives, including the Carbon Trust.

Implications

19.15 The government has set a target of reducing CO2 emissions by 60% by 2050. In addition to targeting transport, a zero carbon housing target has been set to address the issue of housing accounting for 27% of carbon emissions. The white paper reaffirms that climate change is a cross cutting issue and that if we are to effectively respond, we must be address it through the way council does business and the influence it as on the community and other organisations. For Brent this means we need increasingly robust information about our community to understand where and how they work, play and live so that we can make ours and others services and existing and new developments resource efficient.

19.16 Community involvement in addressing climate change is a present and challenging theme, although the paper acknowledges potential lack of support for climate change initiatives, the Council is charged with taking the lead, and a long term view. The Council will need to bring other organisations on board that can help address this issue by funding and supporting the use and development of new and innovative ideas.

19.17 Further work will also be needed to address current gaps in our knowledge to allow better cross pollination of the Environmental Projects team, which is leading the council's climate change agenda, with other key areas of council including Planning, Property and Asset Management and input into the LAA process.

20.0 <u>Annex G - The Third Sector</u>

20.1 *"In order to transform communities, local government needs the support not only of other statutory providers, but of all citizens and the groups that speak for them"*[4]

20.2 This section asserts the need for local authorities to harness and develop the sectors expertise and enterprise in order to perform their place-shaping role. It states that engagement between local voluntary and community bodies and LSPs are inconsistent and at worst weak, and that there are benefits of working more closely to deliver public services, to meet the diverse needs of individual and communities and deliver value for money and efficiencies.

20.3 The paper describes three key roles of the sector - shaping and designing effective services, representation and advocacy, and lobbying and influencing policy. It states that in order to identify priorities, meet needs and secure agreements, local authorities need to listen to citizens, service users, local businesses, and community groups. It proposes that the voluntary and community sector, in addition to frontline councillors have a key role to ensure that these opportunities are communicated and used to give everyone, not

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[4] Page 59, The Local Government White Paper 'Strong and prosperous communities' Volume II, DCLG, October 2006

just those whom shout the loudest, a say in shaping their community. These opportunities include:

- The duty so that local authorities are required to take steps, where appropriate, to ensure the participation of local citizens, local voluntary, and community groups and businesses *(see chapter 5)*[5].
- Extending the choice local people have over their services *(see chapter 2).*
- Increased involvement of users and communities in commissioning decisions *(see chapter 5).*
- Enhancing the right of local people to be heard, by extending the Community Call for Action (CCfA) to all local government services *(see chapter 2).*
- The provision for neighbourhoods and communities with opportunities to request local Charters, setting out service standards and priorities *(see chapter 2).*
- the take-up of neighbourhood management schemes in all areas, including giving tenants more control over their homes and neighbourhoods *(see chapter 2).*
- Reinforcing of the user perspective in the judgements of inspectorates on the performance of services and local authorities *(see chapter 6).*

20.4   This section also refers to other key proposals, including:

- A new standard on how the voluntary and community sector will represent itself on LSPs, including involvement in LAA negotiations (this will be reflected in future LSP guidance).
- Recommendations that where the sector seeks to represent local communities, and in particular vulnerable and under-represented groups, the sector should work in partnership with frontline councillors.
- DCLG commitment to develop a support network dedicated to empowering local people and communities.
- Funding & commissioning - recognition that short term arrangements affect the stability of many third sector organisations, nor make best use of the skills and capacity of the sector.
- Examination within the CSR07 of how to coordinate Capacity Builders and Change Up funding with voluntary and community sector capacity-building efforts by local authorities and LSPs.
- promotion of 3 year funding of voluntary and community organisations in all cases (including LAA and Supporting People Programme) subject to its purpose, normal democratic controls and with exception of where it does not represent best value. The paper proposes the intention for this to be considered within council's Use of Resources assessments.
- Commitment to ensure the proposed Best value statutory guidance on commissioning, will as far as possible reflect the key funding and procurement principles contained within the Compact[6].
- A commitment to making it easier for communities and community groups to take on management and or ownership of local authority assets, by establishing a fund giving local authorities capital support to refurbish buildings marked for transfer to community groups.

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[5] Concerning the joint duty to co-operate with named partners; these only apply to organisations, which can be clearly identified in legislation. The paper asserts that it would not be right to apply such a duty for example, to voluntary and community agencies in an area, however it is essential that the sectors and bodies such as RSLs be involved in the preparation of the Sustainable Community Strategy and LAA.
[6] Compact Code of Good Practice – Funding and Procurement, Compact Working Group, 2005

Local Implications

20.5   Previous national policy has placed expectations on the local authority and LSP to support local capacity building programmes, including continuing, from local resources, ceased DCLG funding streams to the local voluntary and community sectors. The establishment of a national standard for third sector LSP participation and proposals for coordination of Capacity Building, Change Up and local-level capacity building funding could provide a useful level of clarity and direction for the local voluntary sector and support partnership working. At the same time, it may place new requirements and expectations on the local authority and LSP.

20.6   Local authority funding of the voluntary and community sectors is currently being considered within the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Task Group and work is in progress reviewing voluntary and community sector property lettings. The paper's proposals could be considered within these ongoing reviews.

Financial Implications

20.7   There are no financial implications arising as a direct result of this summary briefing of the White paper for Executive as it has been produced for discussion purposes only, for noting the contents and no financial decisions are expected at this stage. Clearly there will be potential financial implications for the Council as alluded to throughout this summary report, but this will depend on future activity and decisions as to which proposals the council pursues. The government has proposed a number of measures which will have cost implications and it is hoped that they will allocate resources for the implementation of these. Some further financial commentary will be supplied for the revised version of this report which will go to the Executive.

Legal implications

20.8   There are no legal issues arising as a result of the report at this stage. Issues concerning implementation will be addressed in due course.

Diversity Implications

20.9   There are no diversity implications arising as a direct result of this discussion paper. Specific new areas of work will undergo equalities impact assessments as appropriate.

Staffing implications

20.10 There are no staffing or accommodation issues arising from this briefing report.

Background Papers

Strong and Prosperous Communities – The Local Government White Paper
Department for Communities and Local Government

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21.0 Appendix - Local Government White Paper – Implementation Plan

21.1 The implementation plan provides a timetable on when the Government will implement key proposals which underpin changes outlined in Volume One of the White Paper. These actions have been divided into 5 work streams and will be updated every 6 months.

21.2 The majority of actions are being consulted on during 2007 with a view to implement in 2008.

WORK STREAMS	ACTION	TIMETABLE
Local Government and Public Involvement Bill	Introduce Bill which provides statutory basis for a number of proposals in white paper including: • Elections every 4 years and single member wards • Leadership model (type of elected leader) • Local Area Agreements • Community Calls for Action • New Scrutiny powers over key public service providers • Byelaws • Involving local people in services and policies • Deregulating and simplifying BV regime • Duty of partners to cooperate • AC as single local services inspectorate • Conduct of local authority members	12 Dec 2006 Royal Assent Anticipated Autumn 2007
Performance	*Establish single set 200 national indicators, reported on by Council and relevant partners* • Consultation through 2007 Comprehensive Spending Review • Roll-out majority of indicators • Roll-out full suite of indicators	 • Summer 2007 • April 2008 • April 2009
	Single Performance Framework Local Govt and Partners • AC become single local services inspectorate • No longer required to prepare annual BV performance plan and conduct reviews • Fully implement Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA)	 • April 2008 • April 2008 • April 2009
	Strengthen LAA and LSPs • Consult Guidance for LAAs and MAAs • Council and partners begin negotiations revised LAAs • Statutory basis LAA introduced (incl duty of partners to cooperate) • New LAA and MAA arrangements introduced, including single pot LAA grant	 • Summer 2007 • Summer 2007 • March 2008

		• April 2008
	Efficiency Establish integrated support structure for authorities to deliver efficiencies: • Publish integrated Business Improvement Package and disseminate best practice • Initiate national procurement programme	Spring 2007
Governance and Empowerment	*Restructuring – unitary status*	n/a
	Governance Framework • Consult on new Scrutiny and Community Governance • Introduce New Scrutiny powers • Introduce Byelaws • Implement new leadership model during electoral cycle • Implement electoral changes – all out 4 year elections, single member wards	• April 2007 • April 2008 • April 2008 • May 2010 (London) • May 2010 (London)
	Review of barriers and incentives to serving on Councils	• Feb 2007 (launch)
	Community Empowerment • Review of Community Mgmt and Ownership of Assets • Consult Community Call for Action • Introduce Community Call for Action • Implement community governance arrangements (power to carry out community governance reviews, set up parishes in London) • Introduce duty to involve local people	• March 2007 • April 2007 • April 2008 • April 2008 • April 2009
Cities and Regions	Improve Economic Growth • Consultation – Role City Development Companies • Draft Road Transport Bill	• March 2007 • Spring 2007
Community cohesion	Supporting areas facing cohesion challenges • Arrangements in place for supporting areas facing migrant pressures • Publish recommendations for local communities building cohesion • Forums for Extremism established in all areas of need	• April 2007 • June 2007 • April 2008