

	<p style="text-align: center;">Executive 18th March 2008</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Report from the Chief Executive</p>
For Action	Wards Affected: ALL
<p style="text-align: center;">A New Civic Centre for Brent – detailed proposals</p>	

Forward Plan Ref: CE-07/08-03

*** Appendices 6 and 7 of this report are not for publication.**

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 This report makes a clear case for the procurement of a new Civic Centre for Brent. It builds on previous reports considered by the Executive and gives options for procurement in the Wembley area.
- 1.2 It shows how the vision for a new “heart” for Brent can be delivered, through a building that will provide exceptional levels of public access to a wide range of public services. The building will be fit for the 21st Century and an asset for the residents of Brent for decades to come.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Members agree to the procurement and delivery of a new Civic Centre for Brent in the Wembley Regeneration Area.
- 2.2 Members note the options available for procuring a new Civic Centre as described in section 9 below.
- 2.3 Members approve the site purchase option and agree for officers to continue negotiations with landowners for a site. If negotiations are successful a report will be brought to Executive to approve the purchase of a specific site.
- 2.4 If a site purchase is successful, Members note that three options are to be considered to procure the building of the new Civic Centre, these being:
- Self build, or
 - Developer-led, or
 - Partnering.

The options are described in paragraphs 10.0 below. A further report will be brought to Executive recommending one of the options and requesting approval to go out to tender in due course.

- 2.5 That Members agree the site boundary for the new Civic Centre to be the North West District as defined in the council's Wembley Masterplan in the first instance and, if necessary, extended to the National Stadium Policy Area. See paragraph 9.3 below.
- 2.6 Members approve the Strategic Brief as a basis for the procurement of the new Civic Centre.
- 2.7 Members give approval to officers to establish a project team, including external advisers, with the capacity to deliver the new Civic Centre on time and to budget. The external advisers currently engaged by the council in connection with the new Civic Centre project and will continue to advise on this stage of the project. The position will be reviewed when the options for the management of the project are further refined.
- 2.8 Instruct officers to procure any necessary additional advisers in accordance with the council's Contract Standing Orders and to the extent it applies the European Union's public contracts procurement directive. The funding for the project team and external advisors will be contained within the resources envelope for the new Civic Centre project.
- 2.9 Members note that the new Civic Centre will both facilitate and be dependent upon new ways of working being adopted throughout the council.

3.0 Introduction

The Civic Centre project needs to be seen in the context of the major change taking place in the way that councils deliver services. There is an increasing move to more customer-driven personalised services with a 24/7 approach to access and a push on staff and Councillors to work more closely together with citizens in their neighbourhoods. We will therefore expect less need for staff to be centrally located and we will see increasing numbers of staff located (with partners) in a range of localities. Brent's Neighbourhood Working programme, being rolled out now, is the beginning of a new process where the key services of the council will be accessible where people want them, in local meetings and local areas, not in offices. This whole approach is the backbone of our commitment to new ways of working at neighbourhood level and will be evolving simultaneously with the development of the Civic Centre Project.

3.1 Why a new Civic Centre

A 2003 Audit Commission inspection found Brent's buildings to be generally of a poor standard. The Commission's report stated Brent's buildings "have suffered from a lack of investment over many years leaving a significant proportion in a poor condition". (Best Value Review of Property Services, Asset Management and Facilities Management 2003).

In January 2004, Jonathan Edwards Consulting carried out a detailed feasibility study into the potential for the development of a civic facility near to the National Stadium. They found "*Brent Council's existing municipal portfolio is ageing and of*

variable quality. The inadequate accommodation that it provides will not be sustainable in the long term and will restrict the council's ability to provide public services. As the portfolio will deteriorate further and services will fall increasingly behind acceptable standards, the council does not have the option of doing nothing. Poor standards of accommodation are reflected by low overall costs, but these will have to rise in order to address backlog repairs, achieve acceptable standards and replace ageing accommodation."

Improvement work has been undertaken since this report was published. However this does not address the fundamental change that is required to transform the council's services and the way we work.

- 3.2 Like all local authorities, Brent faces the constant challenge to deliver improved services and value for money. Well designed accommodation at a reasonable level of investment will dramatically help the council to improve, remain flexible and deliver better value to the local population and businesses. In addition, improved facilities will have a positive impact on the council's staff and its reputation as a good employer.

In summary:

- Our buildings are inflexible, unwelcoming and inappropriate, and they give the council a poor public face;
- They are part of an aged infrastructure, high maintenance, expensive to operate and carbon greedy;
- They contain too many individual offices and flexible use of space is not easily achieved;
- Departments are scattered all over Wembley, leading to silo working and a poor headquarters function;
- The Town Hall, which is the council's main public face, fails to meet the standards expected of an acceptable modern headquarters building;
- Mahatma Ghandi House will require a full refurbishment within the next few years unless a clear strategy to decant is agreed at lease expiry;
- Both Elizabeth House (which contains crucial IT infrastructure and has already been identified as a major risk to the operation of the council) and Chesterfield House have been sold. Both sites are seen as development opportunities and it is possible that the council will be required to vacate within the next 5 –10 years;
- Other main office buildings within the portfolio are simply becoming uneconomic to maintain and unable to cope with changes in technology. The opportunity to make a fundamental change to how we deliver our service to residents from our accommodation is clearly available to us over the next few years.

3.3 The window of opportunity

Wembley is part of the largest regeneration area in west London. A new civic centre will form an important part of that regeneration and will create a community centrepiece in the heart of a modern development. Bringing 1,250 Civic Centre staff and up to 1million Civic Centre visitors into the area per year, in addition to up to 5.6 million visitors attracted by the regeneration of Wembley, will inevitably improve the whole offer to Brent's residents.

The master planning of the new Wembley gives the council a limited window of opportunity to bring public service provision into the heart of this regeneration area.

It is the aspiration of the council to secure a site to construct a landmark building which integrates with the open space and public realm strategies as well as roads/highways and accessible public transportation. A new civic building with community uses such as a new library, local service centre and hall will provide integrity to this new district. The routes, spaces and uses allocated will be planned to provide a sustainable development that not only sits well with a new community but also allows existing residents to access services.

The flexibility of a new Civic Centre will also enable better working with partners to happen more easily in the future.

Leases in the current portfolio are coming to an end. This creates an opportunity to have a radical re-think about how Brent Council should be providing its services in a manner that respects its residents and partners.

Quintain, the principal owner of land to the north of the stadium have indicated in discussions with officers in the Planning Service, that it is their intention to submit a planning application for land to the north of Engineers way in July/August this year. To this end they have already instructed Masterplanners and other consultants to develop proposals for the area. The time is therefore right to take advantage of the opportunities afforded by this process. Indeed a failure to do so may mean that the opportunity to locate a Civic Centre in this location is lost to alternative proposals. The justification for this location in planning terms is discussed in paragraph 9.3 below.

4.0 A Case for the Civic Centre

4.1 Our offer to Brent's residents

The critical outcome of this project for our residents, stakeholders and businesses will be access to better council services, delivered from one place.

In November 2002 Brent Council together with the Mayor of London launched 'Our Vision for a New Wembley'. The vision document describes how the council has a once in a lifetime opportunity to maximise the national stadium's impact as a catalyst for regeneration of the area. At the core of and integral to this vision is a new civic building to be the community centrepiece of the redevelopment. A new "heart" for Brent. A building that should have exceptional levels of public access to a wide range of public services, including those provided by the council. A building which will be state of the art for the 21st Century and be a community asset for the residents of Brent for decades to come. A building which embodies our commitment to diversity and community cohesion by incorporating and reflecting best practice in relation to diversity.

The concept underpinning the proposal for a new civic facility goes beyond the traditional model of a Town Hall. It proposes a physical focal point for a range of public services which will operate as a new service centre for residents. A new Civic Centre will also be a facility available for partners to use. This would improve immeasurably the quality of service offered to local people, renewing public interest and confidence in democratic local governance and enabling easy access to a set of additional services for residents.

A critical argument for proceeding has been the need to increase the accessibility and transparency of the local council - something currently hampered by the physical disposition of the accommodation. Another critical issue has been the opportunity to deliver services in partnership with other public service providers and the voluntary and community sector. A new Civic Centre aims to forge a direct link between elected representation and the broad spectrum of public services people use across the borough.

The creation of a new Civic Centre would be the embodiment of the council's strategic intent for the future of public service provision within the borough. It would demonstrate that the council is committed to:

- Leading the regeneration of the borough;
- Providing excellent, modern public services;
- Working creatively with its partners in the public, private and voluntary sectors;
- Putting the operation of local democracy where it belongs, in a quality setting which is accessible to the public;
- Investing for the long-term in state-of-the-art facilities such as a central library that truly enhances the lives of ordinary citizens;
- Showing community leadership
- Environmental sustainability and reducing its ecological footprint.

4.2 The Economic Case

As stated above, the council's current building portfolio is in very poor condition. The council will have to make significant capital investment in its existing stock over the coming years in order to maintain a reasonable quality of service to the public and the safety of the working environment. This investment will not raise those buildings to an adequate standard of access and utility and will not overcome the problems of geographical location. At best it will be a short-term-solution that will inevitably generate the need for further investment at a future date. Investment made in a new Civic Centre will significantly improve the quality of community facilities available, improve the provision of a range of public services and in the long-term has the potential to create efficiencies across the whole of the public sector in Brent. The case is developed further in the Financial Implications in section 14 below and in the financial report in confidential Appendix 6.

4.3 Local Democracy

Increasingly local democracy is not just conducted through formal council meetings. Engaging local people in debate, discussion and consultation on local priorities is critical to the process of local democracy. The formation of member-led scrutiny groups, citizen's juries and neighbourhood initiatives requires an accessible building with high quality public spaces that can be used in a flexible and welcoming manner. This is a central element in bringing the democratic process closer to the public and improving trust and confidence in local decision-making and elected Members. A new Civic Centre will facilitate this political transparency.

4.4 New ways of working - Service Transformation

The old model of office based staff undertaking bureaucratic functions is an outmoded picture of how a modern service provider works. We require less office space and more space that enables interaction with service users, citizens, community groups and partners. Many staff now work more frequently with

partners than with Brent Council staff and often in community settings. They need, when necessary, to be able to access quality meeting spaces not necessarily desks. In order to facilitate higher levels of performance from staff we should be providing spaces that support new working methods. Staff need flexible spaces and easy accessibility, where they can work alongside staff from across the council and with key partners.

The agenda for delivering services in a more focussed, flexible and coherent way and the building of a new Civic Centre are inextricably linked. Local government is undergoing a period of major change. The facets of this change are being driven towards more personal and empowering service provision, activity closer to people at the neighbourhood level, an ever more efficient use of resources targeted at problems and finally far more delivery in genuine partnership with other public, voluntary and private sector organisations.

There is a false impression that 'new ways of working' is merely more people working from home using developments in IT. Whilst this has its place there are in fact a myriad of different approaches for this driven by changes in the business rather than just technological opportunities.

Brent is engaged in major transformation programmes in Adults & Children's Social Care and in its customer facing services. This is predicated on giving adults far more self direction in the support they need on ever increasing support for families rather than putting children in care and a more holistic one stop service which covers the run of professional information and support. This will inevitably mean new skill sets, less office based working and a more collaborative and cross cutting approach within the Council and with partners.

Linked to this is a better more sensitive and customer and neighbourhood focussed relationship with our residents with more pro-active time spent in neighbourhoods and less reactive time behind a desk.

A new Civic Centre will drive forward our commitment to one council working and the more appropriate deployment of staff. It will provide an environment which breaks down the silos of profession and the divisions of directorates and unit. A new Civic Centre will allow a greater exchange of ideas and experience between staff. It will promote a greater understanding of what the public want and will provide an efficiency of use which currently is sorely lacking.

4.5 Transformation of Customer Contact.

Modern customer services currently focuses on telephone call centres and is rapidly moving towards greater self service on line. Despite the efficiency and performance requirements to reduce unnecessary face to face customer demand, there will always be a need for accessible, face to face reception support for people who have special needs or complex.

Providing a safe, welcoming and private area for customers to visit remains a major requirement in addition to the variety of speedy technological solutions. Brent customers still want choice of access which includes the option to 'drop in' for help and advice when they want or need to. The existing Town Hall One Stop reception is now dated and tired and needs to be redesigned to meet changing customer needs. There are four remaining One Service receptions, three of which are no longer fit for purpose and two of which are in close proximity to each other. This is expensive and inefficient.

The opportunity to deliver a high specification public reception, located within the heart of the civic centre, where all services have a presence is the ideal solution to the number of problems. It will enable a more cost effective, efficient and professional service to be created. This will improve communication, aid seamless service delivery and faster resolution of complex enquiries greatly enhancing the customer experience.

4.6 The Efficiency Agenda

Members will be aware that the council is continually seeking efficiency savings as part of its Medium Term Financial Strategy. This is driven by a number of factors including:

- The need to re-direct resources to support the delivery of the council policy priorities as set out in the Corporate Strategy.
- Brent will be on the Grant “floor” for at least the next three years. This will see formula grant increases of only 2% in 2008/09, 1.75% in 2009/10 and 1.5% in 2010/11. This is well below current levels of inflation. The Government expects Local Authorities to deliver at least 3% cumulative efficiency savings per year, and use these to fund increases in demand for services and other cost increases.
- Surveys of local residents indicate that they expect the council to deliver value for money.

Experience has shown that the more fundamental service transformations bring the greatest service improvements and efficiencies. This has been the driver for the Invest to Save projects in Adult Social Care, Looked After Children and Customer Services. The Civic Centre Project offers a huge opportunity to generate efficiencies for example through the strategic co-location of staff, minimising the time wasted travelling between offices. A new building will also allow advantage to be taken of the latest technology and design principles to achieve efficiencies in both running costs and working practices.

4.7 Sustainability

The councils current portfolio of buildings prevents the council from becoming a leader in sustainability and meeting its aspiration to “*live today and use resources so as to allow future generations our quality of life*” (*Corporate Environmental Policy, 2005*). Due to their age and condition the buildings the council owns or occupies waste energy and water resources and are ill-equipped to deliver cost effective environmental initiatives such as recycling and temperature management. The cost of retro fitting older buildings to acceptable sustainability levels is high and the work disruptive. In addition, the location of some of the buildings promote car travel adding to the congestion of the borough’s roads and the contamination of the air quality. Together these buildings do not showcase a council committed to improving the environmental quality of the borough. Section 12, Environmental and Sustainability Implications, below, discusses how a new Civic Centre will demonstrate the Council’s commitment to sustainability.

4.8 Driving up our performance

The council's commitment to providing excellent public services is still at the centre of its policy agenda. We have made remarkable progress towards that goal but the benchmark is continually being raised. To make further step-changes in our performance both in terms of the quality and the efficiency of services will not be achieved just by doing what we already do a bit better. There are some areas of service which will need to be recast to attain the excellent standards that local people are entitled to. That means providing the right facilities such as better Library spaces, community spaces for people to meet, a place that welcomes and encourages young people to participate in local democracy. A new Civic Centre will provide that space which will improve our ability to interact with the public and enhance our performance in response to their needs.

4.9 Staff perceptions

In the most recent Staff Survey out of a 62% overall response rate, there was a marked in reduction in staff satisfaction with their physical working conditions, with 1 in 2 staff being less than satisfied. When asked "if there was one thing you would change about Brent Council what would it be? A very large number of responses commented on the state of the physical working environment that staff have to endure, as well as a desire to co-locate with colleagues in other departments.

"All core departments should be based in the same building. A lot of time is spent/wasted travelling to and from meetings and I feel cut off from colleagues that I liaise with in other buildings."

"A better work environment – does not support or align with the Improving Brent initiative."

"A new building and better communication between departments."

"So many departments in so many buildings and scattered all over the borough. We need a central large Civic office!"

In addition to the above comments, the largest number of requests for a change were for the provision of a staff restaurant / dining area where staff could have lunch away from their desks and meet with other colleagues.

"A comfortable room available for taking lunch breaks in. I believe this would encourage more departmental friendliness and possibly encourage working together with other departments."

A desire for more flexible and home working was also apparent, as was the need for showering facilities and lockers for cyclists.

Dissatisfaction with working conditions can have a considerable impact on recruitment and retention and sickness and performance levels, as well as the general morale staff.

Brent is one of 32 London boroughs and is therefore in a highly competitive market for attracting and keeping the best staff. As the regeneration of Wembley progresses, Brent will also face increasing competition with local employers. Our

current buildings do not give the best impression to interviewees about their future working conditions.

The way we provide services will change through the transformation of services, through shared services and through the demands of our customers. This will require much more flexible space in a modern working environment. The new Civic Centre will provide a more strategic “joined up approach” across all the service areas leading to more efficient working as well as a more attractive and pleasant working environment.

4.10 Experience elsewhere

Experience both in the public and private sector has shown that modern flexible open plan offices with welcoming “front of house” areas are part and parcel of improved services. They result in increased efficiency, reduced recruitment and retention costs, and better service delivery. Buildings that are fit for purpose value and respect customers and staff. Consolidation of ageing, expensive to maintain and dispersed buildings brings savings, as does unified strategic “headquarters” working. For this reason local authorities in Newham, Hackney, Barking and Dagenham, Salford, Barnet, Greenwich, Suffolk, Hertfordshire, Aberdeen and Ealing, amongst others have already taken similar steps to those proposed in this report. Other Public Sector agencies such as the NHS through the ACAD and BCAD centres in Central Middlesex Hospital, the Metropolitan Police and Job centre plus have all reviewed and modernised their accommodation and through it improved service to their customers. In the private sector the GlaxoSmithKline building and the British Airways waterside building are exemplars in how a radical change of approach to working practices improves service as well as recruitment and retention of staff.

5.0 Excellent Services delivered from an excellent building

The potential benefits to service performance from the creation of a purpose-built Civic Centre are immense. The nature of the building that is proposed will both enable greater public interaction with the work of the council and enhance integration across service units leading to better understanding, co-ordination and implementation of services. Our current property arrangements provide no such opportunities.

The new Civic Centre will include facilities that will contribute to better service performance in terms of the experience of the user and enable the better managerial practices that drive increased efficiency and effectiveness. These would include:

- The location of all service area directorates within one building to improve strategic planning and co-ordination;
- Open plan flexible office space for council staff and partners;
- A substantial new central library for the borough;
- High quality public space for members to meet and work;
- Space for our partners – particularly a visible inter-agency presence in delivery, and potentially co-location of similar back-office functions or shared services;
- A multi-agency reception and one stop service providing access to information on all public services within the borough;
- A welcoming space for community groups, voluntary sector partners and others to hold events and meetings;

- Space for training, courses and seminars;
- Smaller committee style meeting rooms;
- Retail space to rent – potentially for facilities such as cafes, restaurants, bookshops;
- Open public spaces with the capacity to hold local displays and exhibitions of public art;
- A Registrar’s services open seven days a week;
- A large capacity assembly hall for 400-800 people;
- A high quality, accessible, flexible council chamber;
- Emergency planning control room with CCTV;
- Internal and external natural spaces to enhance environmental quality and improve user experience and staff morale;
- Staff showering and changing facilities to encourage green travel options;
- Provision of tourist and visitor information; and
- Advice shops for young people and/or older people.

These services and facilities are expected in any normal public building and are increasingly common as the core set of services that residents would expect to find in the civic centres of excellent councils.

6.0 Seizing the Moment – The Regeneration of Wembley

6.1 The council has already set out a vision for the whole of the Wembley regeneration area.

Central to this vision is the desire to establish Wembley as a community focus for Brent. The vision states:

“Underpinning our ambitions is the desire to create a new Wembley and a new focus for Brent. The council will re-locate many of its key functions to a new civic facility, providing a long term and secure office tenancy. We envisage a new form of civic building incorporating unprecedented levels of public access to a wide range of public services..... a real icon for the people of Brent and a true community asset.” (Our Vision for a New Wembley, p8)

6.2 The regeneration of Wembley genuinely provides a ‘once in a lifetime’ opportunity to transform a huge area of under utilised land into a genuine asset for Brent and for London as a whole. As the local authority for the area, Brent Council can ensure that this opportunity is maximised for the benefit of local people. On one level this means ensuring that local people are attracted into the new Wembley, that they have a reason to visit the area, that there are facilities and services within the area that they want to make use of. Locating a new Civic Centre within the regeneration area will make a significant contribution to ensuring that Wembley is a destination of choice for local people.

6.3 In addition, by locating itself at the centre of the Wembley regeneration area there is a clear opportunity for the council to capitalise on a renewed prominence. The Civic Centre would be in an area which will attract 5.6 million visitors every year, providing the scope for both significantly increased accessibility to services and improved participation in democracy.

- 6.4 A significant number of office-based staff, together with a regular flow of some 600,000 to 1 million visitors per year to the Civic Centre, will generate significant footfall within the regeneration area and significant additional spending power which otherwise would not be there. This in turn creates potential new and enhanced markets for other uses – in particular retail, leisure, restaurants and bars.
- 6.5 A further component of the Wembley Vision is the need for Wembley to be a new Cultural and Educational Centre. Clearly a new central library will help contribute to this aim, and has the potential to both act as a stimulant for further cultural facilities within the regeneration area and also to set a benchmark standard for future such facilities.

7.0 Doing nothing is not an option

In order to assess the new civic centre project it is important to assess the 'status quo' option. This option looks at the costs of the current portfolio and pays no regard to redesign and improvements in service delivery.

In this option the council would continue the 'make do and mend' approach but inject further capital funds to the freehold buildings at regular intervals together with major structural alterations and an appropriate physical extension to the Town Hall site. The objective is to keep these building as up to date as possible and extend beyond some of the physical constraints of the existing fabric. In addition the council would look to renegotiate existing leases beyond their current end date, and where this is not possible, look to find alternative accommodation to meet its needs.

A financial comparison looking at the capital and revenue implications of a number of different scenarios was conducted over the life of the project (modelled on 25 years), full details of this analysis can be seen in the Finance Report at confidential appendix 7. The analysis demonstrates that the costs of a new Civic Centre were comparable to the 'status quo' option of maintaining the existing portfolio with a new civic centre costing slightly less over the life of the project.

This analysis demonstrates that the procurement of a new civic centre represents a value for money option for the council, subject to cashable efficiencies being made.

7.1 Current portfolio

Given the increasing demand for modern office space with maximum flexibility the current existing office portfolio is unlikely to be fit for purpose in the medium to long term without a significant injection of additional funds. Even then it will not overcome the physical problems inherent in operating from a large number of buildings. Although the council's main offices are now all located in the Wembley area the physical separation of directorates and officers impedes the one council ethos and adds to inefficiency and lack of communication. The council holds a number of the main buildings on leases which are due to expire over the next decade. This opportunity would enable the council to reconfigure how it delivers services.

Over the past few years the council has continued with the office accommodation strategy which has been predicated on building consolidation to a new centre circa 2011/12. Due to the current timetable the earliest build completion date for a new civic centre is the end of 2012. This significantly narrows the window of opportunity for the council and makes it crucial that a clear decision on whether to secure

agreement for a new site is obtained early this year. The financial terms for a site must also be secured in the first part of 2008.

Since the previous report, in accordance with the office accommodation strategy the council has vacated 9 Willesden Lane, Park House and Dyne Road and absorbed staff and services within its existing buildings. Brondesbury Road has been refurbished and the offices at Challenge House vacated. Fifty per cent of Brent House Annex is currently being refurbished. There are plans, currently at an early stage, seeking to similarly absorb the IT staff based at Elizabeth House and the Trading Standards staff based at Quality House into the current portfolio, again in the Wembley area. The lease on Elizabeth House expires in March 2009 and we are hoping to identify suitable space to enable decant prior to this date.

The main Brent House lease expires in June 2008 and Members will recall last year agreeing to extend this lease through to 2018 with a break clause in 2013. This will secure the building for medium term council use and also offer an option to quit in 2013 if necessary. Apart from MG House where the lease runs through to 2016 all the other main office leaseholds fall in prior to 2013. The council will need to try and agree extensions to the current agreements as further absorption within the current portfolio will be difficult to achieve without impairing service although, of course, any spare capacity will be used.

8.0 The solution

- 8.1 There are three core components of the Civic Centre; Public, Democratic and Administrative.

The three core components deliver:

Public functions	Multi-purpose foyer with exhibition space, meeting, conference and assembly room spaces with more community facing service spaces, such as a multi-agency customer service centre, a 'state of the art' central library, a café, and the registrars service.
Democratic functions	Mayoral and Leader's offices, Members' accommodation, and political group offices. The council chamber and committee rooms are also included in this category but will be flexible, useable and e-enabled.
Administrative functions	This will include departmental office spaces, meeting rooms, training rooms and breakout spaces and other ancillary administrative functions to serve approximately 1,250 council staff.

8.2 Strategic Brief for Accommodation

A detailed Strategic Brief for the new Civic Centre has been produced through extensive consultation with council officers and staff forums. The brief is attached at Appendix 1a) the vision and 1b) the building.

The contents of the Strategic Brief document have been progressed from several existing sources. This information has been reviewed and, in context of consultation with representatives of the key service providers, revised to provide a detailed Brief for the accommodation. The core areas discussed within the Brief are

the Public and Democratic Functions, and the Administrative Functions of the New Civic Centre.

The brief has been developed in the specific context of the requirements set out in the Vision for the New Civic Centre with the aims of increasing accountability, efficiency and defining excellence.

The brief describes (per function) the key areas that will be required, the volumes and character of the spaces, a commentary on aspect and orientation where relevant, occupancy and space standards, general principles of service delivery method, key considerations and specific operational requirements for the constituent parts of the new Civic Centre. The purpose has been to describe the high level aspirations held in the Vision for the Civic Centre per Service Delivery principle, moving progressively into detail of the functions required to ensure that improved public service activity will be supported in the new building.

Supporting the written brief is a schedule of areas that define the quantum of the spaces needed to uphold the requirements of the Brent Civic Centre Vision. The Consultant team have tested the working methods described by the council against the efficiency agenda and where possible combined functions such as back of house staff facilities, and shared reception spaces. Shared use of functional areas achieved through co-location of council service providers within the same building has been fundamental in defining the benefits of a new Civic Centre Building.

Through consultation a key requirement of the brief is to provide a large Civic Chamber that will be suitable for use as a council chamber but is also of such a scale and flexibility to support a multitude of community functions. The description of this Civic Chamber effectively replaces what are currently two separate spaces (the council chamber and the Paul Daisley Hall) within Brent Town Hall into one shared use. The suitability of the combination of these Civic and Community functions has been carefully considered through evaluation of frequency, date and time of use.

Currently a total of 125 car-parking spaces of which 25 are disabled parking spaces, have been included in the brief. The consultant team and the council are involved in an ongoing process to further define this requirement in the context of current and future Policy evaluated against the specific needs of the council staff and users.

The overall figure of 125 car spaces on the site would be acceptable in planning terms. Regards will also need to be had to the proximity and availability of public parking in proximity to the site. Within or close to the preferred area of search outlined in paragraph 9.3 of this report, there is likely to be accessible public parking serving the wider commercial development that would be available to users of the new Civic Centre. As with all new office development, there will be a requirement for a green travel plan designed to reduce car use. Broadening initiatives such as the use of pool cars for operational use will have to be examined further. Pool cars are already used in some service areas. Other operational requirements will also need to be considered e.g. Mayor's car, Members parking, impact on staff recruitment/retention.

It should be noted that the brief does not aim to be:

A Planning Document,
A specification for Building Work,

A detailed description of Internal Finishes,
A Work-Style Strategy Plan,
OJEU instructions,
A Business Model.

These documents will be produced separately at later stages in the project

The strategic brief is of sufficient quality and detail to be submitted to an architect or developer to produce an output specification for a design for a new Civic Centre that will meet the council's requirements.

9.0 Procurement routes for a site

The report to Members in December 2006 detailed the results of the Request for Proposals from two owners, CLS Holdings plc and Quintain Estates and Developments plc. The council's intention was to pursue this competitive tender process and select a preferred site together with a turnkey developer solution. This did not prove to be possible under the recently issued legal guidance, following case law relating to OJEU public procurement regulations.

The December Executive also approved an OJEU procurement process to appoint a new team of consultants for the project. The appointed team consists of Sherlock Consultancy, Consarc Consulting Architects and Sector Treasury Management. In addition, Trowers & Hamlins have been appointed as external legal advisers.

Through workshops, the Consultant Team together with the Civic Centre Project Team reviewed the project and in the light of the legal advice given by Trowers and Hamlin, whether a straight developer led turnkey solution was in fact the best for the council.

Trowers and Hamlin have provided the following comments in this section and in section 13 (legal implications)

The council as a "contracting authority" is bound to consider and apply the Public Contracts Regulations 2006 which implement the European Directive on the co-ordination of the award of public works contracts, public supply contracts and public service contracts and it has been recorded in previous reports that this was an issue to be addressed.

In procuring the Civic Centre (whether the council "self build" option, the "Developer-led" option or the "partnering" option is followed will be letting a public contract which will fall within the Regulations).

A public works contract is defined as "a contract, in writing, for consideration (whatever the nature of the consideration) –

- a for the carrying out of a work or works for a contracting authority; or
- b under which contracting authority engages a person to procure by any means the carrying out for the contracting authority of a work corresponding to specified requirements".

This means "the public works contract under which the consideration given by the contracting authority consists of or includes the grant of a right to exploit the work or works to be carried out under the contract". In simple terms, if part or all of the

consideration for the new Civic Centre were to come from a third party tenant in addition to the council, the contract would be a public works concession.

The Civic Centre procurement will be for a value above the new threshold of £3,497,313.

European case law and an Interpretive Communication from the European Commission has also highlighted that a contracting authority which intends to have buildings constructed by third parties according to a specification for remuneration that exceeds the threshold, has to conduct a European-wide contract award procedure which applies independently of the legal nature of the contractual arrangement – be it work, sales, rent, leasing or any other contract" (IP/07/971).

Practically, this means that whether the council opt to proceed with the self-build option, the developer-led option or the "partnering" option, the council will need to advertise the opportunity to contractors and developers in the Official Journal and follow a procurement route in accordance with the Regulations. If the council breaches the Regulations, it would be vulnerable to challenge, which if the challenger were successful, could lead to the contract award being suspended and/or a damages award.

With regard to the proposal to purchase a site, an acquisition of a bare land interest (without specification of requirement as to any works or building on the land) can (if the documentation is drafted correctly) fall outside the Regulations which would mean that the site purchase alone would not have to be advertised in the Official Journal or follow the procurement procedures set out in the Regulations. This would apply to a bare option to purchase the site or the acquisition of a bare leasehold interest provided there is no specification of any requirements (e.g works to be built, designed, development or financing).

As far as the Civic Centre procurement is concerned, whatever option is used, the process will have to be managed fairly and transparently on the basis of equality of treatment with an evaluation methodology clearly worked out and applied. There cannot be a pre-determined preference for a particular developer or contractor.

We have suggested that other activities in terms of developing output specifications, contractual structures for the building of the Civic Centre and other facilities can be developed in parallel with the management of a procurement process.

From a strategic point of view, there are now two distinct procurement routes available. The first is a formal OJEU setting out the council's specifications for the appointment of a developer who will be expected to bring forward land together with a fully costed design solution. The second is for the council to proceed and purchase land of sufficient size to accommodate the project, in a location which meets the vision of being at the heart of the new Wembley regeneration area. Following site acquisition, the council then has various procurement options available, through the OJEU process, to appoint a project team and then a contractor, a developer partner or a developer.

A detailed analysis was undertaken to consider the best option for the council. Whether the council should continue to pursue an OJEU procurement for a developer to bring forward land together with a design and build or to purchase land. These are described as Tier 1 decisions. Tier 2 decisions are only required if

land is purchased. This analysis is shown in detail in Appendix 2 - Procurement options.

We consider that the best option whichever procurement route is adopted is for the council is to purchase a site.

9.1 Site purchase

The strategic brief calls for a building that emanates civic pride and that will be open, transparent and welcoming to the citizens of the Borough. It is critical that the council is in control of the site to ensure its presence is secure for decades to come. The initial investment as well as the care to design flexibility in use requires the purchase of a freehold or at the very least, a long leasehold ownership, rather than a short term commercial lease arrangement.

Agreement to pursue the purchase of a site offers the council the opportunity to be part of in the regeneration of Wembley. Without doubt, the investment being made in a new Civic Centre, incorporating a state of the art Library, local service centre and Assembly hall, will assist and bring further confidence to the redevelopment of this area. The building will need to be located in a prominent position and well served by public transport.

Corporately, the council has resolved to enhance and assist the regeneration of Wembley and this is clearly set down in section 6 above. A great deal of public consultation has taken place to establish the Town Planning guidance. The council has an opportunity, which it should grasp, to be a party to a quality and truly mixed-use sustainable community around the new stadium.

Legal advice was sought on the scope of negotiations with land owners to comply with procurement requirements for the acquisition of a site for a new Civic Centre and a summary advice note can be found at Appendix 3.

9.2 Why we want to purchase a site

The Wembley regeneration area though large has a very small number of landowners. There will therefore be a limited number of developers in a position to provide land and develop a scheme for the council. The choice is likely to be particularly limited and may not give the council the best opportunity for site selection. Also with a developer-led land and building option the opportunity for the council to be in full control of the quality and design of its building will also be much more difficult.

If the council opts to purchase a site, a further series of decisions will have to be taken regarding procurement of a building. There are three possible routes described in paragraph 10 below. Whichever route is taken however it is clear that this option will open up the market to significantly more bidders than a pure developer-led possible turnkey option.

The decision to purchase a site in terms of the cost of the project as a whole is envisaged to be cost neutral. This however is on the basis that the value of a site purchase can be obtained for a current market rate.

9.3 What constitutes a suitable site?

It is intended that the Wembley regeneration area is planned in a considered way, taking account of the needs of a community where mixed uses and sustainability are the guiding principles. The council together with its partners should be at the heart of this community in term of public service provision. Furthermore, the council is committed to create a sense of place for the community it serves. Thus, what will be important is prominence and civic presence, within the new masterplanned area. The nature of the area will change and the masterplan has to have regard to the stages of development over time.

The criteria for determining the location of the Civic Centre are to a large degree informed by the borough's land use policies and related guidance.

All the council's major offices are currently located within Wembley, and this has been the position since the formation of Brent following the London Government Act in 1964. Wembley is a central and accessible location within the borough that is well served by public transport, and is the focus of major regeneration proposals that are already, on the back of the new national stadium, changing the way Wembley as a centre will function. The potential for new development will ensure that Wembley will continue to grow as a centre, re-inforcing its position as the borough's main administrative, retail, and entertainments centre.

The adopted policies for the Wembley area are contained in the council's Unitary Development Plan (UDP) (2004). The Wembley Regeneration Area is covered by a detailed Inset Plan that extends from the western end of the existing town centre (High Road) to the eastern extent of the stadium industrial estate (North Circular Road), and to Wembley Park Station in the north. Within the defined regeneration (Inset Plan) area, and corresponding with very good existing public transport accessibility, is the defined National Stadium Policy Area (Policy WEM3/WEM7). This area includes much of the existing town centre and the land surrounding the stadium. The UDP directs new purpose built office accommodation (this would include civic offices) to this defined area (EMP16). The area of greatest new development potential, to the north and west of the new national stadium, is identified in the Plan for comprehensive development in accordance with guidance provided by the design framework for the area and other relevant supplementary planning guidance (WEM9).

A framework for development within this comprehensive development area was provided through Supplementary Planning Guidance 'Destination Wembley' published following consultation and formally adopted by Brent Council and the Mayor of London in September 2003. This framework developed the aspirations contained in the council's published 'Vision for a New Wembley' (Nov 2002) into more detailed area based development guidance, and contained preferred uses for the Comprehensive Development Area surrounding the stadium that included a new Community Focus/Civic Building – 'besides a core location for the council's key functions, the facility would provide a cutting edge central library and arts complex, performance spaces, learning facilities and community rooms'.

Following the publication of the development framework, further more site specific guidance was produced in the form of a masterplan, that defined four major districts to the west and north of the stadium and set out development parameters, including appropriate land uses for each district. The Wembley Masterplan (March 2004) identifies the North-West District (bounded by Olympic Way, Engineers Way,

Empire Way and Fulton Road) as possessing 'opportunities for a new civic building and new educational facilities'.

The Masterplan, whilst not designed to be wholly prescriptive, contains guidance that Officers regard as still being relevant and appropriate today. It therefore follows that the initial search for a civic centre site should be focussed in the North-West District area.

A map showing the site area is attached at Appendix 4

10.0 If a site purchase is successful

What delivery options are available?

There are essentially three options available to the council to procure a new Civic Centre once a site is purchased. These are:-

Self Build

This form of procurement gives the council greater control of all the elements of the project, including design, construction and fit out. The council will commission external providers to deliver various elements of the project, with the council acting as a single point of control and management. The advantage of this option is that the council can call for a world-class design team and has greater control over design quality and a fit for purpose building. All risks are managed by the council including contractual arrangements. However, costs associated with overruns and any additional unforeseen costs may lie with the council. Conversely, it may be that risks included at the beginning of the project may not occur and subject to the successful management of these can be managed back into the project, creating a more cost effective scheme, or can be used to fund other council priorities. This route would require open procurement (OJEU) of both the design team and subsequently the contractor.

Developer-led

This form of procurement requires the council to work up a controlling specification for their building. The specification needs to set out in as much detail as possible the requirements of the council. The council will then procure a suitable developer to deliver this concept. The developer will take responsibility for the financial control and commercial risk in undertaking the project. The developer will use their own design team to generate a design for the building in response to the specification and they will deliver this to an agreed price in a specified timescale. The price will include a developers risk premium as overruns or additional costs are borne by the developer. Any post construction start costs will be costly. The advantage of this option is that the developer bears the risk and manages the project. A council shadow team will be required to ensure the councils vision is fully met.

Partnership

This form of contract involves the appointment of a design team to design the building under the instruction of the council and in response to its specification. Developers are then invited to take on the design and to construct the building in conjunction with the council. The developer then takes over responsibility and liability for the design and construction of the building, but works closely with the council team to ensure that needs are met.

This route brings a single point of responsibility, integration of design and construction expertise and can lead to faster more efficient processes. This procurement route should not take any longer than a traditional route and allows the client greater control of the design phase that might be achieved through a conventional developed route. Under this option the risks are shared between the parties. The advantages of this option are that risk is that the council has control over the design quality and “fit for purpose” criteria of its building and shares the risk of construction.

10.1 How these procurement options will be evaluated and concluded?

The decision as to which of these procurement routes; self-build, developer-led or partnership, will be the most appropriate for the Council is dependant on careful assessment of their relative strengths and weaknesses. Referred to as the ‘Tier 2’ decision in the matrix in Appendix 2 the key factors that affect this assessment will be:

Timing

How important is timely completion to the success of the project?

Control over design development

Does the Council want to have control over the design development throughout?

Variation control

Does the Council foresee the need to alter the project in any way once construction work has started?

Complexity

Does the building need to be technically advanced or highly serviced? Innovation required?

Quality

What level of quality does the Council seek in the design and workmanship?

Price certainty

Does the Council need to have a firm price for the building’s construction before committing to proceed?

Competition

Does the Council need to demonstrate that the construction team has been chosen by price competition?

Management expertise

Can the Council manage separate consultancies and contractors or does it require one firm to be responsible after the briefing stage?

Responsibility

Does the council want professional responsibility from the designer and cost consultant?

Risk avoidance

Does the Council want to pay for the risk of cost and time overruns to be taken by others?

The answers to these questions will identify the priorities and lead to a conclusion on which procurement route is the most appropriate for the Council. Success of the Civic Centre project will be judged on the delivery of a high quality building, delivered within an agreed timescale and budgets, situated in the best location that meets the vision to provide improved public services at the heart of the Wembley regeneration area. The quality of the building's design, functionality and ease of management will be judged not only by the public who visit it but by the staff who occupy it.

A further report will be brought to Executive recommending the optimum procurement option, following this assessment, in July 2008.

11.0 If a site purchase is not successful

If a site purchase is not successful several alternative options are available to the Council. Should an alternative plan be required, Members will be notified at the earliest opportunity.

12.0 Environmental and Sustainability Issues

The council is actively establishing itself as an organisation that wants to lead and promote sustainability across the borough.

At the meeting of the Full council on 26th November 2007, the report from the Executive entitled "The First Reading of the 2008 – 09 Budget Priorities of the Administration" set out the Administration's top priorities for action and spending. The Administration's four major themes include Crime and community Safety, Regeneration, Youth and Sustainability.

Through its sustainability theme, the Administration aims to make sustainability central to everything we do. The council aims to put its own House in order through a variety of initiatives including:-

- becoming an exemplary organisation for recycling and sustainable activity;
- publishing and implementing a green travel plan covering staff, councillors and the way we do business (by the summer of 2008)
- being an exemplary borough for green design including new schools and our own new Civic Centre.

The vision in Brent's Community Strategy (2006-10) states that Brent will be a place that, '... will thrive for generations to come ...' and that one of the Strategy's values is to 'deliver... sustainable services'

One of the priorities in the Corporate Strategy 2006-10 is to; 'Make Brent an exemplar of environmental practice and performance on sustainable issues.'

Specific targets to fulfil the aspirations of this priority include:
- a 20% reduction in carbon emissions by 2011; and
- implementing the councils' green travel plan.

BREEAM (Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method) excellent for offices status is a planning requirement for new buildings in Brent. By achieving BREEAM excellent for offices status, the new Civic Centre will potentially be the single greatest contributor to our internal environmental performance targets on carbon, procurement, recycling and transport. Annual

savings for electricity, gas and water usage are potentially available for the council as well as opportunities to reduce the amount of waste that is produced.

The new Civic Centre will show Brent's corporate leadership in enhancing and improving the local environment. The council will lead by example in its use of energy efficient and sustainable construction technologies and materials. The new Civic Centre will become a feature that will represent Brent becoming a 'green place'. This has to be achieved within the limits of the resource envelope.

Some of the specific transport measures that are being considered in the council's Sustainable Travel plan and which might also affect the design and facilities to be made available at the Civic Centre. These include discouraging single occupancy car travel to work, promoting the use of public transport, promoting cycling by providing facilities such as showers, loans etc, encouraging flexible working arrangements, encouraging video conferencing, providing real-time travel information and examining ways of reducing the use of private cars to provide council services.

13.0 Communication and consultation

A communications and consultation strategy for the Civic Centre project was developed and adopted in June 2007. Its purpose is to inform, engage and involve key stakeholders in the development of the project, ensuring there is an 'informed debate' by getting out key messages such as, community benefit, open democracy, greater service efficiency through 'joined up' services, as well as value for money and the unsuitability of the current property portfolio.

Three broad categories were identified as key stakeholders: Brent people; Brent Council staff including elected members and our partners. A range of activities, over the short and long term, have been proposed to engage with these groups. To date, initial consultation has been undertaken through the area consultative forums and the staff forums. Subsequent stages of consultation will include the Brent citizens' panel, service user consultative forums, the staff panel, trades unions and the Improving Brent Programme. The consultant architectural firm appointed in September 2007 have undertaken a comprehensive consultation exercise, engaging with key service areas via questionnaire and several face-to-face interviews, as part of their role in creating a strategic brief for the new civic accommodation. Communication has involved articles in The Brent Magazine, leaders', members and group briefings and management of local and specialist media. Articles in Insight, the staff magazine, and information on designated web pages on the council's intranet have kept staff informed of the project to date.

It is important that communications and consultation activity is generic and widespread throughout the identified stakeholder groups, but without restricting targeted activity to certain communities or groups to ensure coverage and representation of Brent's diverse population. The activity described in the strategy is ongoing and will continue throughout the life of the project.

The full communications and consultation strategy is reproduced at Appendix 5

14.0 Financial Implications

14.1 Sector Treasury Services Limited are providing financial advice on the project. A confidential appendix 6 is included as part of the overall report.

14.2 This appendix covers 5 main areas as follows:

- (i) Analysis and calculation of the resources envelope available to support the capital costs of a new civic centre.
- (ii) Detail the risks associated with the resource envelope.
- (iii) Review the assumptions made in the model.
- (iv) Review the viability of the project in light of the resource envelope.
- (v) A review and update of previous financial information regarding the civic centre project.

It also contains its own Appendix A which sets out the main assumptions used in the Financial Model which forms the basis of the analysis.

14.3 The Civic Centre proposal has consistently been dependent on meeting 3 key financial tests:

- (i) It delivers value for money. Section 7 of the confidential appendix confirms that the project provides value for money as it has done through the whole evolution of the scheme.
- (ii) It is affordable for the Council. This is defined as at least being cost neutral compared with the budget provision within the Medium Term Financial Strategy for retaining and upgrading accommodation in the current portfolio to a reasonable standard, given the limitations of the stock.
- (iii) It offers the opportunity for efficiencies as the building gave significant flexibility to change service delivery methods and facilitate new ways of working for staff. These are set out in more detail in Section 4 of the report and 2.2 of the Appendix.

14.4 **Resource Envelope**

Section 2 of Appendix 6 sets out the resource envelope available to the Council to finance the project and ensures the affordability test is met.

This resource consists of 3 main elements.

- (i) Capital Receipts from the sale of freehold properties within the Council's current portfolio which will not be required when the Civic Centre is available; and
- (ii) Revenue generated from:
 - the consolidation of the Council's portfolio
 - cashable efficiencies as a result of new working practices set out in the main body of the report in Section 4
 - central resources allocated in the Council's medium term financial strategy for the upgrade of the current portfolio which can be allocated to the project.
- (iii) Prudential Borrowing:

The Prudential Borrowing Regime allows authorities to adopt a more commercial approach to balancing capital costs and receipts over time with revenue generation and saving opportunities. This means that authorities are no longer prevented from pursuing more prudent options by virtue of artificial controls, which ration borrowing in the public sector. Following an internal assessment of what they can afford, local authorities may borrow

funds for any purpose relevant to their functions. This currently appears the most favoured option to fund the capital elements of the scheme. This will be reviewed more thoroughly in future reports.

14.5 Risk Management

Section 15 of the main report and Section 5 of the confidential appendix deal with the identification and the management of the main risks in the project. The approach is to identify the total resources available to the project and this is then adjusted and reduced for a realistic assessment of risk. This is both for the resources envelope available, such as rises in interest rates, and also the construction and development of the building. The latter is in addition to a general contingency which will be held within the specific budget for the construction of the building.

Using the resource envelope in the way described ensures that, if risks are successfully managed during the development of the project, resources earmarked to cover these risks can be released either back into the project or as general efficiency savings for the overall Council budget.

14.6 External Support for the Project

The Council has utilised a number of specialist skills through consultants to develop the project to this point. As it moves forward such support will need to continue. The exact requirements will be partially dependent on the eventual procurement route chosen. This will be fully assessed in the build up to the next report to the Executive. It is envisaged that the costs will be met as part of the overall project costs and charged to the revenue account as part of the total capital cost.

15.0 Risk

15.1 Analysis of Risk

This section sets out the methodology and output from the risk analysis to develop the risk management strategy for the civic centre project.

All projects, by their very nature, are subject to risk. The objective of the risk analysis and management process is to minimise the impact of negative events on the project plan whilst allowing maximum advantage to be taken of the opportunities.

15.2 Valuing Risk

Both qualitative and quantitative risk analysis and modelling are fundamental components of 'Risk Management'. They allow the allocation of financial values to risks. At this stage of the project the application of qualitative analysis that considers the likelihood of a risk occurring and its anticipated impact is most appropriate. This form of analysis has been applied to the strategic risk register.

This methodology is an industry standard and has been used to calculate risk on a large number of capital projects.

The strategic risk register recognises risks associated with current stage of the project, it is by no means a definitive list of objectives and is a dynamic document that requires constant revisiting.

15.3 Looking Forward - Risk Monitoring and Control

The Risk Register will need to be updated as the project develops, including probability of occurrence, potential impact in terms of cost and/or time, area of project likely to be affected and a risk control plan (risk owners and risk strategies to be adopted) incorporated in the project delivery plan.

Ongoing monitoring of actual progress against the project plans and the risks identified is essential. This will be co-ordinated by the Project / Risk Manager who needs to update the risk registers identifying risk events that have occurred or the time at which they can affect the project. The risk registers will be used to indicate the status of the project as well as being used as a predictive tool for forecasting the cost and time at project completion.

In calculating the resource envelope for the civic centre project, the resource risks, which include fluctuating interest rates, insufficient capital receipts and higher portfolio costs, have been taken into account and are not included in this risk assessment. These risks can be found detailed in the Finance Report, Appendix 6. When the resource envelope is calculated, a number of assumptions relating to the timing and overall costs of the building were made.

The results of the initial strategic risk register can be seen at Appendix 7. A risk allowance of approximately £19 million has been recognised from this analysis. The council must now look for ways to manage and mitigate this risk to add value to the project.

16.0 Legal Implications

- 16.1 The council has a range of powers to acquire land for the purposes of discharging its functions. This includes acquiring land for the purposes of constructing a Civic Centre to provide offices, civic space, leisure and library facilities, restaurants, cafeteria, information centres and tourist offices. Some of the powers available to the council are, Section 120 Local Government Act 1972 (Power to Acquire Land to Discharge Functions), Section 7 Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 (Provision of Libraries), Section 19 Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 (Provision of Leisure Facilities), Section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000 (Well-Being Powers) and Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 (Powers Incidental to the Discharge of Functions).
- 16.2 The council may acquire a "bare interest" in land without it subjecting that process to EU public contract procedures/OJEU. This is reflected in Regulation 6(2)(e) of the Public Contracts Regulations 2006. It should be noted that "bare interest" in land means that the council would obtain the freehold or leasehold ownership of the land but would not specify or require the owner of that land to undertake any demolition or construction works or provide services as a condition to transferring such land to the council's ownership. It should also be noted that contracts relating to an interest in land are exempt from the councils Contract Standing Orders (S.O.83(c)).
- 16.3 It should also be noted as set out in paragraph 9 above that the procurement of the design and construction of the new civic centre will have to be undertaken in accordance with the Public Contract Regulations 2006/OJEU.

- 16.4 Members owe a fiduciary duty to the council tax payers of the Borough and must act reasonably at all times, particularly in relation to expenditure. Members must consider the relevant considerations in reaching a decision and ignore all considerations which are irrelevant. In reaching decisions as to the recommendations of this report the relevant considerations would include the cost (estimated) of acquiring land and developing a new civic centre as opposed to the cost (estimated) of retaining existing or alternative similar accommodation in the future, the nature and scale of the proposed new civic building and the benefit of co-locating council and other services in a modern site, the cost of procuring any new accommodation.
- 16.5 The council decided (Executive decision 11 December 2006) to appoint external advisers in connection with surveying, architectural services and financial services. Advisers were subsequently appointed and their current appointments are (subject to extension in certain circumstances) due to expire by the end of March 2008.
- 16.6 It will be necessary on the expiry of these appointments for the council to re-procure these services. It should be noted that the services in question are all classified as Part A Services under the Public Contracts Regulations 2006. In view of the nature of delivering a new Civic Centre the aggregate estimated value of the surveying, architectural and financial services will be higher than the EU threshold for service contracts and therefore these contracts will be subject to the full application of the Public Contracts Regulations 2006 as well as the council's Standing Orders for high value contracts.
- 16.7 Once the tendering process is undertaken for these services Officers will report back to the Executive in accordance with the council's Contract Standing Orders, explaining the process undertaken in tendering for the services and recommending an award.
- 16.8 The council also previously decided (Executive decision 11 December 2006) to tender for the provision of external legal advice in connection with the new Civic Centre. Legal services are a Part B service under the Public Contracts Regulations 2006 and are not therefore subject to the full application of those Regulations. Legal services are however subject to the council's Contract Standing Orders and European Union's general principles of equality of treatment, fairness and transparency when public authorities award contracts. On that basis the council undertook a tender exercise and appointed Trowers & Hamlins. It should be noted that the terms of Trowers & Hamlins appointment do not expire at the end of March 2008 and there is no need for the council to retender these services.

17.0 Diversity Implications

Currently everybody associated with Brent Council understands the message that the promotion and commitment to diversity and community cohesion is a core business objective. It is a subject that local politicians and council officers take very seriously. The councils Corporate Strategy and Vision (2006 – 2010) explicitly endorses respect for diversity as a core value for the council and it is structured around three inter-related themes:

- A Safer, Cleaner and Livelier place.
- A Borough of Opportunity
- One Community

- Brent has been identified as the most ethnically diverse local authority in England. Black and visibly minority ethnic communities in Brent make up the majority of the population at 55%.
- According to the Office for National Statistics, if you were to pick two Brent residents at random, there would be an 85% chance that they would come from different ethnic communities.
- The mobility of the borough is also increasing, with many residents only staying for short periods at a time.
- Between 7 and 8% of residents are classed as refugees or asylum seekers.
- 34% of residents do not have English as their first language.
- More than 130 languages are spoken in addition to English, with Gujarati, Hindi, Punjabi, Somali and Urdu the most widely spoken.

To serve this diverse population, the council has an equally diverse workforce; indeed we believe we are the only local authority in the country with a majority minority ethnic workforce, and our services have been at the forefront of our approach to community cohesion.

The recent report by the Commission on Integration and Cohesion – Our Shared Future, emphasized the key role that local government has in promoting and supporting community cohesion. The new Civic Centre will be a building that is fit for purpose for local government in the 21st Century and will support this aim. The building will strongly reflect the needs and celebrate the diversity of Brent with inclusive events for residents, business community and staff. It will be welcoming and open to all of our community. We will be able to:

- At the click of a button re-assign areas in community languages as appropriate for a particular group, meeting or event
- Have central exhibitions, for example, for International Women’s Day, Black History Month, LGBT month.
- Be a central point of reference and a hub for new residents, settled communities, national and international visitors.

17.2 Unlike Brent’s current buildings which leave much room for improvement for accessibility, the new Civic Centre will meet our statutory requirement to be accessible to all and be fully compliant with the Disability Discrimination requirements. This will lead to a greater engagement with all our communities and demonstrate our commitment to delivery to both our staff and our residents.

A formal Impact Needs/Requirements assessment will be undertaken as part of the next stage of the project and will inform the final output specification for the new Civic Centre. We recognise that there will be impacts that will need to be addressed in the design of the building to ensure that there are no physical barriers to residents participating in civic affairs as well as ensuring the same for staff and other users and visitors.

18.0 Staffing implications

18.1 Brent currently employs 3,122 council-based staff, 2,529 are full time employees and 593 or 19 per cent work part-time. Forty per cent of staff are Brent residents..

These figures do not include teachers, agency staff, casual employees and staff employed by partner agencies but working in council offices.

- 18.2 The development of a high quality modern building will provide vastly improved office space and working conditions for Brent staff. While it is not envisaged that all staff will need to be located in the centre, its development provides an opportunity for more strategic deployment of staff resources overall.
- 18.3 Recent staff survey results have shown that more than 1 in 2 of our staff are less than satisfied with their physical working conditions. A new Civic Centre could impact on retention of staff and work performance especially longer-term by improving staff morale and associated positive traits in improved sickness levels and greater positive staff engagement.
- 18.4 Good, fit-for-purpose and attractive working conditions and facilities may not only impact on staff retention but also on recruitment. Working from a modern, flagship facility at the heart of Wembley could provide an additional incentive for staff to come or remain working for the Borough. Brent currently recruits from the local and London labour market, with many staff coming from other local authorities. Almost all parts of the council are currently faced with recruitment and retention hot spots. As the Wembley regeneration programme and Olympics project progress Brent will face increasing competition from other local employers.
- 18.5 The Civic Centre also presents an opportunity to take significant strides to improve service delivery through new forms of work organisation. Indeed it provides a focal point for developing a workforce, with the skills and working practices to deliver 21st century service excellence.
- 18.6 Currently, the diversity of Brent's building stock limits opportunities for joint working and development across different directorate personnel. Put simply, housing staff spread over many different buildings, reduces overall efficiency and effectiveness. The new Civic Centre will allow all key service areas to be co-located for the first-time and provide a clear basis for more multi-disciplinary working and integrated planning and service provision. In the meantime, Brent's People Strategy and draft workforce development plan are already addressing the aim to increase skill levels, productivity, flexibility and adaptability of the workforce overall.
- 18.7 The Civic Centre project includes stretching targets to reduce the overall requirement for office-based workers. Flexible working (including tele or remote and home-based working) and work-life balance strategies will enhance productivity and performance in key service areas while also acting as a major recruitment and retention tool. Brent Council is already recognised as a flexible, family friendly employer. However, by increasing flexible working patterns through new remote technologies, in professional and senior levels, should provide us with an edge in hard to recruit areas. However, some of the changes will also require different forms of 'back-office' and strategic support involving new ways of working across the organisation.
- 18.8 More flexible and adaptable office space will be required as more staff require less 'desk' time and more team and project meeting space. It is also envisaged that all staff will have increased access to technology based learning opportunities and that space may be adapted for training and development purposes. Currently some staff lack access to basic IT facilities or e-learning facilities where they work. The civic centre could provide a central 'drop in' facility for staff needing to work or learn away from their home or office base.

18.9 Members, managers and staff, need to be preparing now for new ways of working. As indicated earlier, Brent's emerging People Strategy is already addressing the need to address changing demands and our future workforce requirements. While the civic centre provides a focal point or potential icon for these changes, they are in fact necessary regardless of the building issue. The Civic Centre will enhance the value of the changes we are making to help ensure we can be a modern and forward thinking employer, attractive to our staff and potential workers, for the foreseeable future.

19.0 Implementation arrangements and next steps

The Civic Centre project to date has been a feasibility project, examining and testing the need, affordability and value for money of building a new Civic Centre in the most appropriate location in Brent. We have necessarily been cautious in our approach. Over a series of reports since 2004, as shown in background papers, we have demonstrated why, where and how this should be achieved. We have also demonstrated that a decision to proceed with the Civic Centre has to be made now. The opportunity in the Wembley Regeneration area will close within months. Also to complete the build by last quarter of 2012 the project has to start now.

During the feasibility stage the project has been led by a Project Board chaired by the Chief Executive and delivered by a Project Team led by the Project Director and supported by officers throughout the council and by a Consultant Team. The Project Director is the only full time resource on this project.

To achieve a successful outcome, it is critical that the council consolidates and puts into place an efficient corporate governance structure to ensure efficient reporting and decision making throughout the life of the project. This will include adequate internal and external resources, facilities and expertise. Roles and responsibilities will need to be established and a proactive and delivery approach needs to become part of the culture. This is especially important as any delay in decision making will be seen in the context of the inflationary impact which on a project of this size could be £500,000 per month.

The table below shows the headline next steps and critical decisions that need to be made to achieve the construction timetable by the end of 2012.

1. Strategic brief developed into an output specification 2. Negotiations to purchase a site continue 3. Preparation for possible OJEU tender process 4. Evaluation & decision of procurement route for detailed design and build	February – June 08
If site negotiations successful, Executive report for approval to buy a site. Executive report for approval of procurement route	May 08, July 08 Critical decision
Depending on procurement route, appoint design and/or construction team. Develop detailed design of the civic centre.	July 08 – January 09
Planning process	January – July 09
Planning permission granted	October 09/January 10
Site preparation/potential demolition (approx. 6 months)	January/July 10
Start construction	October 10/January 11
Civic Centre opens	End 2012

20.0 Background Papers

- Report to Executive 7th April 2003 entitled “A New Civic Centre for Brent”.
- Report to Executive 9th February 2004 entitled “Consultants’ Study on possible Civic Centre Developments in Wembley”
- Report to Executive 13th December 2004 entitled “Civic Centre for Brent”
- Report to Executive 11th July 2005 entitled “A Civic Centre for Brent”
- Report to Executive 11th December 2006 entitled “ A Business Case for a new Civic Centre for Brent”.
- Best Value Review of Property Services, Asset Management and Facilities Management - October 2003
- Images of current working conditions
- A Vision for Wembley – November 2002
- Witherford Watson Mann Architects – Brent Civic Centre: a position paper on its context, identity and location
- Witherford Watson Mann Architects – Strategic Brief and schedule of areas
- Civic Offices Project Analysis (2005) [Staff numbers]
- Notes from Neighbourhood Working / Civic Centre Member /Officer working session November 2005
- Brent’s Corporate Strategy 2006 – 2010
- Brent’s Community Strategy 2006 – 2010
- London Borough of Brent Unitary Development Plan Replacement 2000 – 2010
- Report to the Full Council 26th November 2007 entitled “The First Reading of the 2008 – 09 Budget Priorities of the Administration”.

Appendices:

Appendix 1a, 1b	Vision and Strategic Brief
Appendix 2	Procurement Options
Appendix 3	Advice Note on Purchasing land
Appendix 4	Map of site
Appendix 5	Communication and Consultation Strategy
Confidential Appendices:	
Appendix 6	Finance section (Sector)
Appendix 7	Strategic Risk Register

Contact Officers

Anna Woda, Civic Centre Project Director – tel: 020 8937 6409

Phil Newby, Director of Policy and Regeneration – tel: 020 8937 1032

Duncan McLeod, Director of Finance and Corporate Resources tel: 020 8937 1424

Gareth Daniel
Chief Executive