

Title: Priority Neighbourhoods

What are the main issues? *What is the policy background? how does it link to the councils corporate priorities?*

Neighbourhood Renewal is a national, Government funded, programme designed to stop the decline in the UK's most disadvantaged neighbourhoods. Its aim is to ensure that no one is disadvantaged because of where they live. In Brent, five neighbourhoods have been identified to benefit from the Neighbourhood Renewal programme: St Raphael's, Brentfield and Mitchelbrook, as one area, and Harlesden and Stonebridge, as the other. Local priorities, identified by the community, will decide what the programmes does, in these areas.

This involves working with local residents' community groups, local businesses, schools and public agencies, as well as the voluntary and community sectors, to bring about life improvements in the neighbourhood. These include access to jobs, better education, decent housing, better health and safer communities

Who are we? Based at Challenge House, on Harlesden High Street, the Harlesden and Stonebridge Neighbourhood Renewal Team consists of a small team of Brent Council officers, who have developed a range of experience in working in Harlesden and Stonebridge. Our overall regeneration key priorities include:

Reducing gaps between Brent's deprived communities and the rest of London with a focus on the priority wards of Harlesden Stonebridge, South Kilburn. To reduce unemployment; Increase income levels, promoting Wembley as a landmark development, Taking positive, preventative action in those areas most at risk of falling into decline.

Regeneration Strategy 2001 - 2021

Through the delivery of Brent's 20 year Regeneration Strategy we will ensure that Brent provides a home of choice for its diverse population and businesses.

Corporate Strategy 2002-2006

Why are we looking at this area? Have there been recent legislation/policy changes? Are there any performance or budgetary issues?,

Brent's Corporate Strategy includes a commitment to ensure that Brent provides a home of choice to its diverse population and businesses. Regeneration in the five most deprived neighbourhoods of St. Raphael's; Harlesden, Stonebridge, Church End and Roundwood are corporate priorities. Additionally strengthening our approach to performance management has been a corporate priority over the past two years as a central part of our response to the CPA agenda. CPA sits within a broader national framework

designed to improve public services as described in Devolving Decision Making Review (2004).

In addition to this looking at sustainable initiatives that have a significant impact towards reducing gaps. The very nature of regeneration funds is that they are time-limited; therefore the council and its partners (LSP) will be looking at what aspects of external funded activities will be taken on by all stakeholders and what elements will continue to be levered from external sources. Current bulk of funding (SRB& NRF) ends by March 2008. The Executive will need to look at the way forward to regeneration soon in order to align with internal and partner's service plans.

Mainstreaming Service Improvement. To date the council's current policy towards neighbourhood level engagement is working as community members have had consistent opportunities to have their say about the quality of life of their neighbourhood and the NR Teams have had an increased level of engagement with all sections of the community. This will be used as a platform for further dialogue and actions around issues such as the fear of crime.

The council needs to review its service provision to reflect the principles adopted through years of additional external funding through Neighbourhood Renewal et al and ways of working with partners at a local level. In particular a review is required of its present engagement with the community/voluntary sector and business services supporting growth (using Wembley as a catalyst). These sectors are essential and sustainable stakeholders and work within priority neighbourhoods has not had a significant impact with leverage of funds and building the capacity of these sectors as yet.

This should also include a review and clear definition for the council's services and policy for the direction and delivery of the community cohesion agenda. Council needs to review its current branding and communication within the priority neighbourhoods to ensure messages are consistent, joined up and supported by resources that make an impact.

Recognise that if young people are to remain a priority the current methods of engagement, promoting local democracy and citizenship should be modernised. This would include the use of technology, peer mentors, community champions and organisational development for community groups who have a demonstrable track record of positive impact on Brent's youth community.

Re-focusing resources towards supporting Brent's Olympic ambitions around sports development, education, citizenship, volunteering and business support (supply chains)

What should the review cover? Give brief outline of what members could focus on, which partners to engage with, how residents/public can be involved.

Much work has already been developed and delivered in the priority neighbourhoods through both Neighbourhood Renewal Teams.

The review of work in the priority neighbourhoods should cover -

Continue to work with the MPS around the reassurance agenda and violent crime which includes the continuation of Street Care resources delivered at a local level borough-wide.

Looking at areas at risk of future decline and preventative actions to tackle further deprivation.

Continue looking at ways in which residents in priority neighbourhoods will benefit from the Wembley development which should include support to multi-faith organisations and businesses.

Build the capacity of priority ward businesses trading in growth sectors i.e. food, logistics and media. Work with schools on business projects. Using Corporate Social Responsibility from businesses in west London growth sectors.

Looking at LBB communication methods in priority neighbourhoods such as the use of the legal community radio. OFCOM have now issued a community radio licence to LIFE FM for broadcast within a five mile radius of Stonebridge. How are we maximizing and supporting this medium to marginalize the illegal radio broadcasts in the area, engaging the Hard 2 Reach, businesses, promote regeneration and other council/partner initiatives such as Domestic Violence, training & employment.

The executive should review the way Service areas work with regeneration to adopt new ways of working and see the opportunity and additionally of regeneration funds bring to support innovation and improved services.

What could the review achieve? - influence policy change?, improvement to service delivery?, budget savings?, develop partnerships?.

Internally the review will achieve drive policy changes amongst service areas that reflect the investment of external regeneration funds demonstrating commitment to mainstreaming what works and re-focusing and modernising council services.

Services could be delivered in partnership more effectively using the principles of pooled resources covering distinct and recognisable neighbourhoods that resonate within the community

Externally the review will support the work of existing partnership networks, the impact of regeneration in priority neighbourhoods and clarify the Council's position of many issues demonstrating an acknowledgment of resources invested by partners and new ways of working.

Demonstrates a commitment to working with partners to slow the pace of decline in new areas by exploiting the presence of the NR teams to manage resources and maintain consistent dialogue with the community through Area Consultative Forums, Youth Forums and community/ voluntary sector. This can be used to widen the participation from all diverse sections of the community.