



IT Strategy 2007

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1 Introduction

The philosophy that underpins our IT Strategy for 2007-10 is a simple one - to maximise the potential of information technology to support more efficient council services. IT is a key enabler for service transformation and the Brent IT Service, working with our private and public sector partners, is dedicated to fulfilling this role. A key priority of the council's corporate strategy is "service excellence" - IT plays a key role in making that target a reality.

The format of the strategy is based on the National E-Service Delivery Standards and reflects our organisational commitment to quality and best practice. The content of the Strategy is aimed at the customers of the IT service rather than the technical community.

Whilst our ambitions are to ensure that Brent residents have state of the art IT services we are committed to becoming a centre of excellence in one key area – the management of information and data. These are key strategic resources that are easily overlooked by all large organisations (private and public).

Our aim is to build an environment where residents do not have to provide the same information time and time again, where we make the maximum use of the information we have on clients, properties and businesses. Such an environment will facilitate a more proactive and more efficient service provision. For the first time, services and the information we provide will be personalised, around the needs and requirements of the customer.

A new Information Management policy will bring structure and clarity to the wealth of information we hold so that all staff have access to a deep and resource-rich pool of knowledge. Information will be kept securely and only be made available to those who need it. No longer will the council be dependant on insecure and expensive paper records.

We strongly believe that by making far greater use of this strategic resource we will achieve the twin objectives of improving services and making them cheaper to provide. Many large organisations have not addressed this issue because of the size and complexity of the problem – this is a challenge that Brent accepts and will address.

The next four years are also about building on the council's nationally acknowledged excellence in areas like e-Government, website quality and partnership working. Our aim is not only to build on existing partnerships but also forge new relationships across the private/public sector. In supporting the drive to "service excellence" we are looking to work with partners who are excellent in their own particular field – we envisage a model where we work with numerous specialist organisations rather than a single monolithic partner. The future for information technology is about cost reduction, reduced bureaucracy and increased business flexibility - this will be reflected in our partnership approach.

Empowerment of both our staff and residents will underpin our strategy and IT service provision. Staff will be empowered through the deployment of new technology and having immediate access to the information they require to efficiently carry out their duties. Residents will be empowered through enabling them to access the information they require and to make growing use of our online self-service facilities. The Brent resident's perspective of the council will be improved by providing a "joined up" and pro-active response to their requirements.

A lot of work has already started and this strategy will be reviewed on an annual basis. Feedback is always welcome and we can be contacted at cit@brent.gov.uk.

2 Executive Summary

The corporate IT Strategy 2007 supersedes the previous e-Government and IT Strategies. It outlines the direction of Information and Communications Technology in Brent Council through to 2010.

The strategy is influenced by four key drivers:

1. **The council's corporate strategy and departmental business requirements.** The number one priority of the council's 2007-10 Corporate Strategy is to achieve "service excellence". The role of the IT Strategy is to ensure that IT both supports and enables this objective.

Departmental and service unit IT requirements are expressed through their own strategy documents and these have been addressed in the overall corporate IT strategy.

2. **The Cabinet Office "Transformational Government"** document which outlines the Government's vision of the post e-Government programme world. The emphasis is upon improved service to the public and improved efficiencies through the use of information technology. It specifies three key objectives:
 - The need to design and build services around the needs of the customer
 - The opportunities for efficiencies through shared services
 - Increased IT professionalism within the public sector
3. These objectives are reinforced by the Local Government White Paper 2006 which sees IT playing a major role in organisational transformation through business process improvement, flexible working, joint working and support for efficiency measures.
4. **Technical IT developments** particularly in the areas of the Internet, data storage, mobile/remote working, convergence of voice and data networks and continuing threats to information security.
5. Increasing adoption of **professional standards in government IT** – core competencies, the use of common methodologies & working practices in service, project and information management.

The key directions for information technology for Brent Council over the next 4 years are:

1. Improving levels of support to all service units through the adoption of standard methods of IT service management and a greater emphasis on performance management. This will result in improved delivery, availability and reliability of IT services.
2. Integration of customer data to provide a unified view of the citizen (and business) to all service units and front line customer services. This will result in significant improvements in customer service and cost savings across the council. For the first time services will be configured (personalised) around the needs and requirements of the resident.
3. Data quality and data sharing will become key issues and these will be addressed as part of the Information Management strategy.

4. An increased role for employing IT in business and organisational transformation to realise potential efficiency savings. This will involve greater use of business analysis, process improvement and change management.
5. A greater emphasis on using IT to assist the efficiency and effectiveness of everyday working practices. This includes improved email and collaboration services, greater use of workflow and document/records management.
6. Development of mobile and remote working. The increasing availability of high capacity broadband and wireless facilities will free staff from being tied to specific work locations and allow much greater flexibility in working patterns and office accommodation.
7. Empowering our residents by providing them with a means of directly accessing information on the services provided to them. This will transform online contact with the public and move from simple information provision to fully transactional and interactive services. These will play a key role in developing more cost effective means of service delivery. Take-up of these services will need to be encouraged and customers will need to have the appropriate skills to make use of them. It is envisaged that the provision of a faster and more "personalised" service provision will have a direct impact on perception and satisfaction with the council.
8. Providing an up-to-date, effective, resilient and secure IT infrastructure which will support all the IT needs of the council.
9. Establishing the infrastructure for enabling shared services, secure electronic communications and the exchange of data. This will require secure network connectivity with partner organisations.
10. Ensuring that IT is deployed corporately across the whole of the council so that maximum benefits and efficiencies can be achieved.
11. Reducing the environmental impact of the use of IT in the council - the Green IT Agenda.

This strategy document has adopted the structure of the recently published National e-Service Delivery Standards (NeSDS) for ICT Services. These are part of a series of standards developed under the auspices of the DCLG Local e-Government Programme to provide a comprehensive set of best practice benchmarks for the development of excellence in local government.

3 Background

This section describes the context of the current strategy.

3.1 Previous IT Strategies

The previous e-Government Strategy (2001) and IT Strategy (2002) addressed the issues associated with the government's requirements for all services to be available online and the ongoing council IT needs. They were particularly concerned with the implementation of a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system, a new Social Care system and upgrading elements of the basic IT infrastructure such as the data network and the telephone system.

The e-Government Programme had a budget of £7m (funded partly through central government grants and partly from the council). It successfully delivered more than 140 projects over 4 years. All of the BVPI 157 targets for online services were met by December 2005 and the relevant Priority Outcome targets by April 2006.

3.2 National activities

The council participates in major national IT initiatives and has won various awards for its website and use of property information -

- Lead Authority for the CRM Pathfinder project
- Executive member of the CRM National Project
- Lead authority for the Local DirectGov project
- Originator of national standards for website navigation
- Development of a national register of e-Government supplier & product usage
- Playing a leading role in national land & property developments

The council website has a national reputation for its use of web technology. It has been consistently in the Socitm Top 20 websites for the last 5 years, the council has an award winning community website (BRAIN), it developed the websites for the West London Alliance partnership and the e-Government Register and contributed to the establishment of the London Portal website. In 2006 the council won a national award for the most creative use of property data through digital television.

3.3 IT structure

Brent has had a devolved IT structure since the 1990s but recently this has been changing to a more corporate approach. The IT Unit has now assumed responsibility for all desktop and network support across the council.

Over the next 2 years the council is committed to a further rationalisation of its IT infrastructure as it exploits the benefits of new technology e.g. server virtualisation. Not only will this substantially reduce the hardware footprint within the council but also ensure we demonstrate total value for money on what is spent on IT.

The internal structure of the IT Unit will be reorganised to so that it can meet the increasing demands for business transformation and improved service level management. The use of SFIA (Skills Framework for the Information Age) competencies will align the IT Unit structure with the evolving Government IT Profession standards.

3.4 IT Unit responsibilities

The IT Unit now provides a single unified service across the council.

- Desktop support for 3000 PCs and 600 laptops
- Management of the data network (approximately 200 servers and 250 switches in 60 office locations)
- Management of the telephone network (26 switches at 20 locations and 4000 handsets)
- Support for key back office systems in areas such as Customer Services, Communications, Children & Families, Environment, Finance, Housing & Social Care
- Information management including Freedom of Information (FOI) and Data Protection Act (DPA)
- IT Strategy and Standards
- Information security including anti-virus and web filtering
- Business transformation

3.5 Outsourced services

Several areas of IT service are provided by external suppliers as part of a wider service outsourcing. Examples are Revenues & Benefits which is provided by Capita as part of a 5 year contract and the council's telephone system which is supported and provided by a private sector partnership. The criteria applied to whether services are provided locally or via a partner are cost and the quality of the service.

The Brent IT Service has a standard review process where all service options are regularly reviewed and, where necessary, project based benchmarking exercises are carried out to see if the service could be provided elsewhere. Equally all private sector partnerships are benchmarked during the contract to ensure value for money.

3.6 Partners

The IT Unit is committed to providing the best levels of service to customers and residents of Brent. This will require working with external partners either from the other local authorities, public agencies or the private sector. The IT Unit already has close working relationships with existing partners such as the West London Alliance (WLA), London Connects and several private sector organisations for current outsourced services or technical support and development.

Our strategy remains to forge new partnerships with any organisation that can demonstrate value to Brent council and support its determination to achieve service excellence.

4 IT Strategy

4.1 Strategy objectives

The IT Strategy is an agreed statement of how the organisation will use ICT to achieve its objectives.

The strategy has been developed to meet the council's overall corporate strategy, its customer service strategy and the plans of individual service areas. It will be subject to consultation and agreement with all service areas to ensure that it is aligned to the business needs of the council. Where appropriate this consultation will include major partners and suppliers.

The council's corporate strategy expects that citizens and businesses in Brent will be able to take advantage of up to date IT facilities and that the council's IT provision will support efficient and effective service delivery to the public.

Individual service areas are encouraged to develop their own departmental strategies to ensure that IT will support their business needs. The corporate strategy is intended to provide a foundation which will enable the departmental strategies to be delivered successfully.

Information Technology has become an essential component of successful service delivery and it will play an increasingly significant role in business change and transformation over the next few years.

The corporate IT Strategy will look ahead to plan for longer term developments in information technology and business transformation to ensure that the council's IT environment will be able to accommodate future business requirements.

The primary role of the Brent IT service is to empower both the staff and residents of Brent. The efficient use of technology is the single biggest enabler for improved service delivery which indirectly links in with the level of customer satisfaction with the council.

Whilst the ICT Strategy includes information on the technical vision of the council this is secondary to the requirement of explaining, in non-technical terms, how the efficient use of IT and more structured information can change the way the council both works and is perceived by its customers.

Often the role that technology and good information management play in day-to-day service provision is overlooked and yet, without them, the service could not be provided. The purpose of the following case studies is to demonstrate how service provision could be changed and improved in the future.

4.2 Case studies

1. Empowering residents

2008 : Moving into Brent

Mary is planning to move from the north of England into Brent. Her experience of Brent starts well before she actually moves in. She has already used the Brent website to check the details of parking permits, parking bay suspension (for the removal lorry), planning proposals, local shops and services near her new home (and even looks at photographs of the locality). She notifies the council that she is moving, gives her new address and authorises the transfer of her personal details to her new local authority.

This information is transferred to Brent over the Government Connect Secure Intranet. The Brent change of address system automatically alerts the appropriate service units of the date of arrival - a customised moving-in pack is generated giving details of the appropriate services that she will need - school admissions, refuse collection days, electoral registration and local councillor/MP, council tax etc. Note this information is personalised content based on her individual requirements and the area of Brent she lives in.

She logs onto the Brent website using her Government Gateway registration and applies for a parking permit and parking bay suspensions for the move. She applies for school places for her children using the online admissions system, registers to vote and completes the direct debit form for her council tax. All the necessary transactions were completed online. Any documentary evidence she needs to submit to verify her eligibility for a service is only sent to the council once and then electronically made available to all relevant sections.

A new council Smartcard is issued to Mary which will enable her to pay for all council services (by 2012 this card will also be linked to the Transport for London Oyster card so she can use it for travel as well).

From the resident's point of view it is a seamless process where all the information they require is easily available and their first experience of the council, as a service provider, is to be presented with a co-ordinated single "bundle" of service options. Rather than having to approach each individual service area the new resident receives a pro-active response rather than a reactive one.

Co-ordinating our response is also a far more efficient business process for the council. We only receive and process information once and officer time in setting up services is reduced to a minimum. Duplication of tasks and the multiple processing of the same information is brought to an end.

Web based transactions with residents are substantially cheaper than phone or face to face visits. However, not all residents have access to technology at home so it's important that they still benefit from the technology we're deploying. Should a resident contact us by phone the customer service agent can still process the information for them and ensure they get their customised information on services.

Even if they forget to contact the council before moving in we can still respond in a co-ordinated joined up way. Through our Client Index project we will know when a new resident

registers for a service, having automatically picked this up we can inform the same customer service agent and they can, in turn, contact the resident about signing up for additional services.

The unseen technology that enables this new level of service provision is:

- Government Gateway - a national system for issuing passwords for secure online access to personal information
- Website – rich in content but also linked into the main council IT systems
- Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system - stores and holds information about council customers and their service requests. The CRM is linked into the main council IT systems
- Client/Business Index –the council’s single reference point for client and business data. Allows changes to data to be coordinated across all council systems.
- Corporate document management system – holds electronic copies of documentary information the resident has provided in one single location. The applications can make the information available to any relevant service area (online) and has the ability to automatically route information onto staff/teams through workflow)
- LGOLNet - a local authority middleware solution for linking application systems
- Property Database - Corporate system holding details of all properties in Brent
- Council Smartcard which covers services such as library and leisure centre membership and also provides Oyster card functionality for travel payment

2. Empowering more efficient service provision

2008 : The improved quality of data has meant that information about people, properties and businesses is consistent and accurate across the entire range of front and back office systems.

Changes to a person’s circumstances are communicated seamlessly to the relevant areas of the council and central government - this allows the benefit calculations to be performed without the delays of the past, eligibility for additional benefits to be identified, requirements for social care to be assessed and the care plans prepared, liability for tax recalculated.

The results are a dramatic improvement in levels of customer service through only having to supply data once and reduced times to complete the transaction, reduced costs for the council through minimal manual intervention in the process, reduced rates of error through reduced need to re-enter data and lower levels of fraud through reduced opportunity for false claims.

By 2008 Brent will be technically linked to partner agencies in central government and the NHS. From a customer’s perspective we will be in a position to support a more cohesive multi-agency response to their needs.

The Data Protection Act states that the information we hold must be “accurate and up to date”. The problem most organisations like Brent have is that the size and complexity of their business makes this very difficult. Our services and information are based on the individual and managed by separate service areas. Our current technical infrastructure does not allow us to receive information and then make it available to all those service areas which need it. In addition we have no way of making sure that the relevant information is updated across the whole of the organisation should a customer’s circumstances change.

All this will be different by 2008. Through our “Brent i-Hub” we will have built the technical environment that supports the automatic transfer of information from one part of the organisation to another. Changes in circumstances e.g. change of address, income etc will be passed to all the areas providing a relevant service to the customer. From the customer’s perspective they only need to provide the information once and from an organisational point of view our costs are reduced because we process the information more efficiently.

Most importantly we will be able to ensure that all parts of the organisation have the same and most accurate information. This means that all service areas will be able to ensure that customers receive all the services they are entitled to. Often customers are unaware that they meet the eligibility rules for a service e.g. pensioners not claiming benefits. In future the benefits of joined up data will mean that the council can provide a more proactive approach to service provision e.g. customer income maximisation.

3. Empowering staff

2008-10 : Staff communication has been radically improved by new facilities for collaboration. Email, instant messaging and web conferencing will have converged into one environment that is available through PCs, laptops and PDAs. Meetings are arranged electronically and are routinely held with participants in several different locations using audio or video conferencing and simultaneous white boarding facilities. LA Life - a local authority version of 3D virtual forums such as Second Life - allows meetings and projects to be conducted over the Internet rather than face-to-face meetings.

The dependency on the traditional office environment will be broken with new opportunities for home/mobile working . Staff working from home will have full access to all the information they require. The same broadband link they use to access the council's systems will also be used as their work phone line (attracting no call charges).

The deployment of a corporate EDM system will mean that staff no longer need to be near the traditional paper files. Instead all incoming documents will be scanned (where necessary) and indexed. Once the document is held electronically it can be made available automatically to the relevant service area. For example pensioners who currently receive Housing Benefit and Adult Care packages currently have to submit their income/savings information to each service area. In future this information need only be submitted once where it would be stored electronically and made available to both service areas. This will be a major advantage to the customer and an efficiency gain for the council.

Current mechanisms for managing internal documents are notoriously inefficient - there are several versions of the same document which are circulated multiple times by email without adequate version control or indexing. This will be improved by a new document management system which will be integrated with our office software and will act as a repository for all documents with access and version control, standard metadata tagging and workflow for consultation and approval.

As with customer data our own staff data is currently held across a number of systems. Work has already started to build one single definitive source of staff information and this will underpin a substantial review of our internal working processes. We're currently investigating the deployment of staff smartcards that will both control access to buildings but also enable access to IT systems.

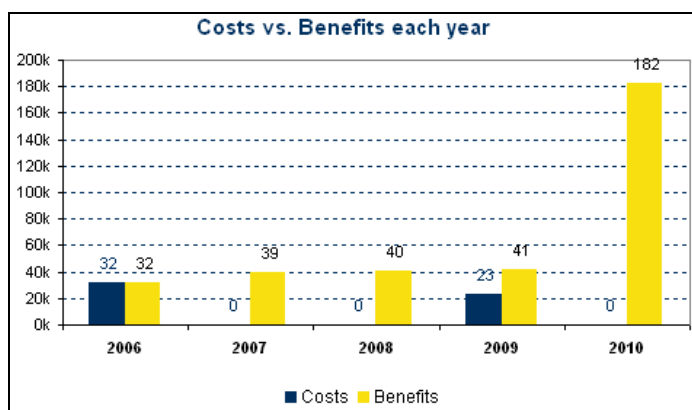
Whilst we rightly concentrate on deploying technology that improves service provision we must ensure that our own staff have the tools and skills needed for their job. The deployment of Microsoft Exchange in 2007 will be the start of a major service improvement programme for Brent staff with projects like corporate document management and MS Sharepoint following. For each new service we will introduce new ways of working to ensure that we exploit the maximum potential of any product - for example Exchange will see the enforced use of online calendars for all staff and the introduction of online meeting room booking (replacing the traditional paper diary).

The unseen technology that enables this new level of service provision is:

- Full usage of the Microsoft collaboration environment - Exchange email, Live Communications Server for instant messaging, SharePoint for document management.
- Mobile data pushed to PDAs or Blackberries.
- IP Telephony to support voice conference calls and home/mobile working.
- Video support where there is adequate network bandwidth.
- LA Life is a projected development of current web based 3D virtual worlds.

4. Funding and efficiencies

A new IT Funding strategy will underpin these strategic aims. Wherever possible future projects will be made on a self-funding basis either covered by existing funding streams or funded from savings that will be achieved through project implementation. Each project will have a dedicated business case linked directly to the efficiencies that will be achieved. Extensive use of Brent's nationally acknowledged "Return on Investment" (ROI) tool will be used to calculate the level of savings that will be achieved.



We recognise that the deployment of new technology on its own will only have limited effectiveness unless it is also accompanied by changes in the way we as an organisation work. In future all major IT projects will be accompanied by changes in working practices. It's only through the powerful combination of new technology and business change that the council will make the required levels of efficiency savings and service improvements.

5 Business Engagement

5.1 Stakeholder relationships

IT affects everyone in the council and the community and appropriate means are required to ensure that IT plans and developments are communicated to all relevant staff, the public and external organisations.

Extensive use is made of standard communication channels such as the Intranet, Internet, staff and borough magazines. There are regular meetings between the IT Unit and its customers at which current performance and future plans are discussed.

The corporate IT Strategy Group (ITSG) oversees the council IT programme with membership drawn from corporate ITU and all council departments. With the increased emphasis on the realisation of efficiency savings the council's Efficiency Board will play a key role in the management and prioritisation of the corporate IT Programme.

Our commitment to partnership has seen us increasingly working closer with local stakeholders e.g. Primary Care Trust (PCT) and with partners in West London. Under the Shared Services agenda this will develop further once the most appropriate areas for joint working have been identified.

Regular discussions are held with major third party IT suppliers of outsourced services and key software solutions. These discussions will assume greater significance as the pressure for integration between systems increases.

The e-Government programme carried out extensive communications with the public and it will be necessary to continue this in the future to ensure that there is appropriate consultation regarding plans for e-services. We intend to continue the regular survey of Brent residents' attitudes towards e-Government to ensure that our services are meeting their requirements.

The survey is also a key element ensuring that the IT services for the public meet the council's Equality Policy and are delivered appropriately to all sections of the community. The IT Unit has regular meetings with staff groups to ensure that IT solutions meet accessibility requirements.

5.2 Business Transformation

The IT function is no longer about simply providing technical support to council staff, instead the future is very much about IT playing a key role in actively promoting business change and transformation. A recent Gartner report¹ predicted that over the next 4 years the proportion of IT staff involved with technology infrastructure will decline from 65 to 40% whereas those involved in information & process management will increase from 30 to 50%.

Business process improvement involves looking at the way the council's current business processes (i.e. how things work) and creating new ones that maximise efficiencies and

¹ ITexpo Symposium Barcelona May 2006

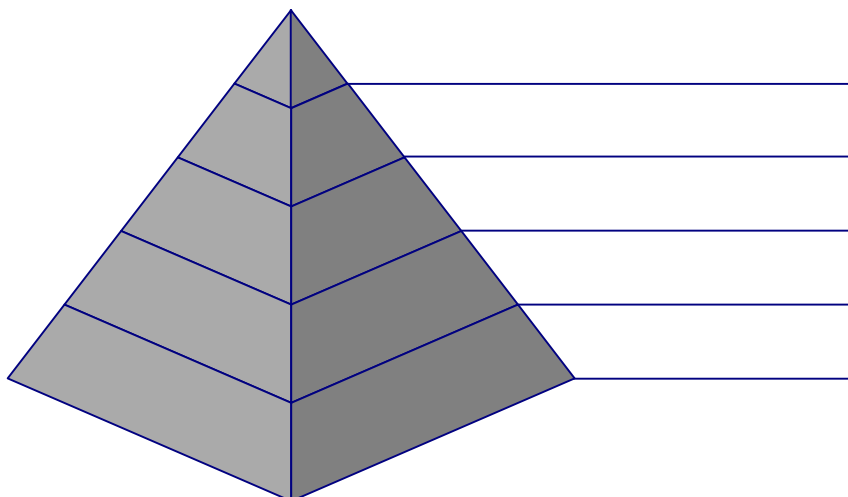
improvements to customer service. Often the new business processes are built on top of newly deployed and available technology. The risk is that new technology is simply deployed where there is no change in business process, this not only substantially negates any new technical improvements but also realises few or no efficiencies. A combination of the exploitation of new technology and changes in the way we work are a powerful means of making services more efficient.

Whilst the corporate IT Unit has not traditionally played a lead role in business transformation it will do so in the future. It is proposed to significantly increase the proportion of IT Unit resources available for business analysis and business transformation activities. Working with operational teams ITU will provide leadership and support for business process improvement and making use of an appropriate business change methodology. Any new deployment of technology will be accompanied by the use of change management resources to ensure that technical and business process change take place together.

Funding for future IT provision in Brent is substantially built on the basis of “invest to save” i.e. any investment is recovered through efficiencies that have been achieved in the relevant work of the service unit.

This level of change will require a corporate commitment to business transformation which cuts through departmental boundaries and a significantly wider use of standard process methodologies, workflow and electronic document & records management.

Processes and information are the link between business objectives and the IT systems and infrastructure



6 Governance

6.1 IT Governance arrangements

Decisions on major new IT projects and investments are taken to the Corporate Management Team (service area Directors) and then to the Executive (councillors) for approval. The Brent IT community works closely with the lead member for IT.

The IT Steering Group is the primary corporate IT body consisting of representatives from all the main services areas and IT Unit staff. This group oversees IT use across the council.

Each service area has its own IT management group with representatives from the IT Unit. These deal with service area issues, spending plans and review IT Unit performance.

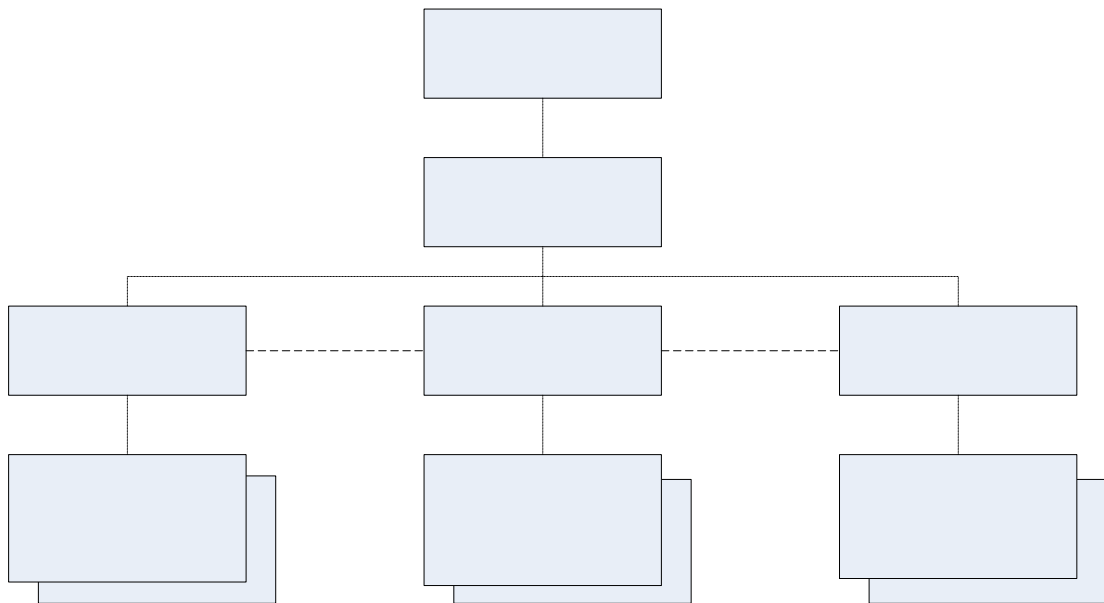
There are separate groups which oversee specific corporate IT related functions such as the use of Web technology, Information Management, Process Review and Project/Programme Management. After a recent review the management of Web technology is now carried out by separate Executive, Strategic and Technical groups.

The previous e-Government Programme governance structure has now been replaced by a residual arrangement to manage ongoing maintenance issues.

The Efficiency Board oversees the Information and Project Management Groups.

Individual projects have their own project boards which review the business case, project plans and progress.

These arrangements have suited the largely devolved IT environment in the past but the increasing emphasis on a corporate IT function and the consolidation of IT investment will require these to be reviewed and new governance structures developed. This will probably require a more strategic management of IT across the council with a greater degree of corporate direction over the use of IT resources. It is proposed to develop these new arrangements over the next 2 years.



7 Technical Architecture

7.1 Current IT architecture

Like most large scale organisations our current IT infrastructure reflects a process where business specific requirements have driven the introduction and replacement of systems, hardware etc. Our main systems support the relevant business area but there is little or no linking with other corporate systems. The number of servers and other associated hardware has grown incrementally with each project, funding stream or new application. In short our IT architecture has evolved over time, meets most of our business needs and would support limited future change in council business processes.

However, with ambitions for a more transformational approach to service provision the current environment will not be fit for purpose. The drawbacks are:

- As the development of the IT architecture has followed specialist business needs we have effectively built a silo based infrastructure that meets their individual requirements but can do little else
- Within each silo are key pieces of information and knowledge that are not made available to the rest of the council
- It does not demonstrate value for money and is inherently inefficient
- It is unsustainable in terms of the resources to maintain unrestricted and unstructured growth
- There are no standards or overarching strategy for the council's IT architecture

7.2 Planned IT architecture

The challenge for the future will be to ensure we maximise the potential of the investment the council has already made but also that we build an IT infrastructure that is more flexible and cost effective. Fundamentally the future is about building a technical environment that enables and supports joined up service provision across the council.

Our definition of "joined up" means the following:

- All our systems, and the information held within them, are linked and able to share information between them. In achieving this objective we will be able to support a more pro-active and efficient service response.
- Our data network is linked in with all our major stakeholders such as the NHS, central government and other authorities. This will mean that we can electronically share information with partners and make use of the data they hold. Not only does this facilitate Shared Service opportunities but it also supports areas in Social Care where we have joint council/NHS staff - those staff currently need two separate PCs on separate networks to access client/patient information but in the future all the information will be available via just one single PC with secure access to a joined up network.

- Our voice (telephony) network is linked in with all major stakeholders. This will enable the council to maximise the benefits of our IP telephony solution. Calls between all partners currently attract the traditional call charges, by linking in with our partners calls will effectively be free.

7.2.1 The Brent i-Hub

We intend to build a Brent “i-Hub” to support our joined up approach to more efficient services. Sitting at the centre of our IT architecture the i-Hub will link our systems and information together. Crucially it will enable us to automatically pass information from one part of the organisation to another. Through being able to access the information we hold, the hub will be able to collate and present the data that is needed by staff and residents.



Like most large organisations our current environment strongly supports each service area as it provides its portfolio of services. Each service area is busy in its own right and often acts as an island of service excellence but there is no connection to the rest of the council.

Whilst each area is working efficiently in its own right there are drawbacks -

Everyone is working in separate boxes with little or no links between the various parts of the organisation. Each part is, rightly, concentrating on its own service portfolio but cannot technically exploit the information held by other parts of the council.

So in terms of single service provision the model works, and works well, but has little or no flexibility for a more radical joined up approach to service provision. It is not an arrangement that can facilitate efficiencies and financial savings.

This is where the Brent i-Hub comes in.

In the future the technical barriers between various parts of the organisation will be removed. All the benefits of the single service model will be retained but in addition the IT infrastructure will support and enable a corporate multi-dimensional approach to service provision.



7.2.2 Presentation layer

Having linked our systems and information together we will be able to electronically pass information seamlessly around the council and, when necessary, share it with partners. We are also able to collate the information and present it where it is needed - website, CRM, mobile phone, digital television etc. The next 4 years will see an ever increasing emphasis placed on what we term this "Presentation layer".

Two key presentation vehicles are our website and CRM system. A major review of our website has already started with specific aims of improving the quality of content and placing a greater emphasis on the transactional role of the site i.e. the ability of customers to use it for all their interactions with the council. The use of CRM in Brent has been reviewed and suppliers will be asked to tender appropriate solutions.

7.2.3 Personalised services

Having such a flexible infrastructure will provide the basis for providing more personalised services i.e. services and information that are relevant to their requirements. The needs of a single person aged 22 are very different to those of a pensioner couple or those of households with young children. The service opportunities that the i-Hub provide mean that in future the services and information we provide can be personalised and targeted at the various social groups that make use of services. The private sector has been doing this very successfully and the public sector needs to follow.

In practice this means that instead of sending out a generic pack of information detailing the traditional A-Z of our services we will be able to send out information that is relevant to the single person aged 22, the pensioner couple and the household of children. In making the information more relevant to their needs it becomes more accessible and gives the impression of a organisation that is both aware and committed to providing excellent customer service.

7.2.4 IT Architecture compliance

Procurement standards will be developed to ensure that all new applications comply with our new IT architecture. The i-Hub is designed to be flexible and as systems are replaced they can simply be detached and replaced with the new application. The procurement standards will ensure that the system is compliant and this will be built into the supplier procurement process.

Purchase of new applications will be subject to formal approval from the IT Steering Group and IT Unit.

7.2.5 Service Continuity

Having an integrated infrastructure opens up other opportunities for us. One key benefit will be to enable us to improve our disaster recovery / service continuity provision. As a multi-million pound organisation it is obviously vital that we do not lose our IT capability. Like all major organisations we also face the growing security threats of terrorist acts and security breaches. Brent is a lead member of the WLA's Service Continuity group and working with our WLA partners we aim to be able to link up so that in the event of a local loss of service another partner can ensure that our customers have minimal loss of service. The recent

availability of server virtualisation makes this proposal a viable proposition and a business case is currently in development amongst the partners.

7.2.6 Standard corporate software

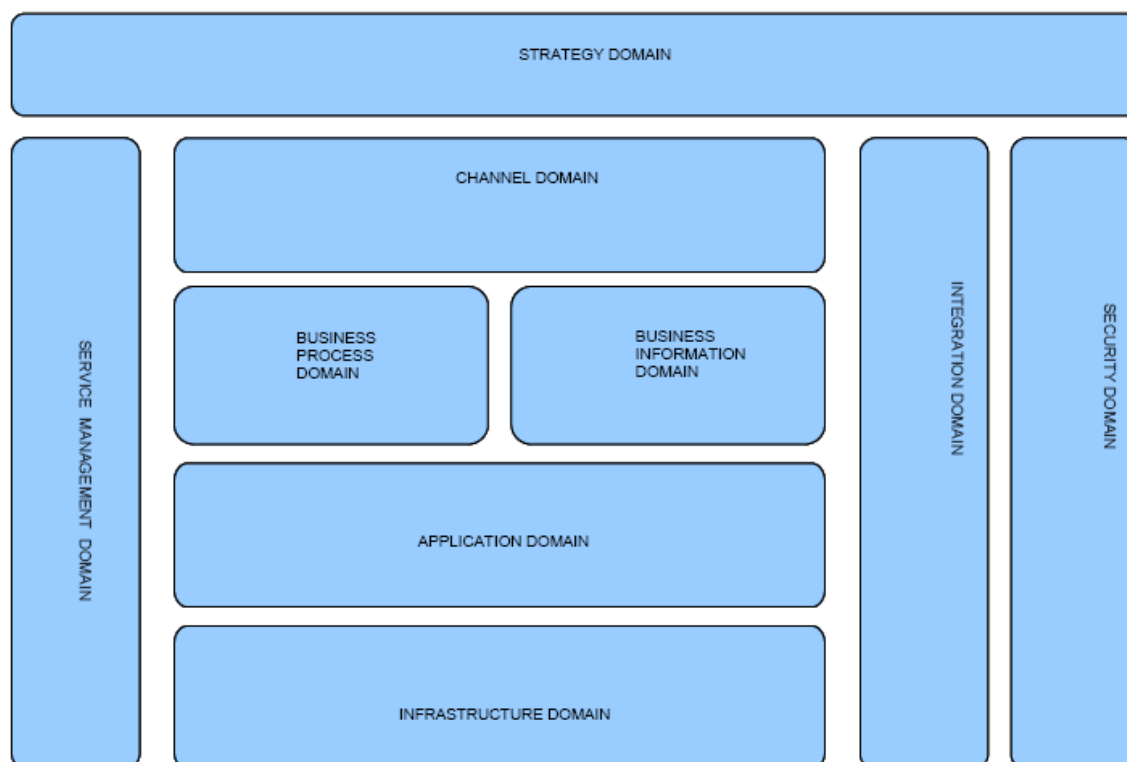
We will continue to move towards standardised corporate software which is available for all staff in the council and seek to minimise the use of different software products for the same purpose.

Office software, email, geographic information (GIS) and web content management (CMS) software are already standardised and used to increase productivity across the council.

Areas which require further rationalisation include document management and workflow (where we use Lotus Domino.Doc, Global 360 and Accolate) and reporting/business intelligence (where we currently use Business Objects, Cognos and Crystal reports).

7.2.7 Government Enterprise Architecture

The Chief Technology Officer (CTO) Council has released the first version of the cross-Government Enterprise Architecture (xGEA). It proposes a reference model that will act as a framework to assist government organisations to share and re-use standard IT assets. Brent will seek to align its IT architecture with this model as it evolves.



8 Systems Development

8.1 Development

Brent primarily uses packaged software and aims to minimise bespoke development. This policy will be continued and the principles of standard methodologies for application development will be used where appropriate. Development work will largely consist of the configuration of packaged software and the integration tools to connect them together.

8.2 Integration

Integration and connectivity between internal application systems and with external systems is a key area of development. This will allow data to be unlocked from the existing departmental silos and reused where appropriate.

LGOL-Net is currently the council's standard middleware product. To date it has not been used very extensively and its suitability for major use by the Client/Business Index and other systems will need to be evaluated and, if necessary, replaced by a product that offers the required ease of use, performance and flexibility.

Although Brent currently has no formal policy on the use of Service Oriented Architectures (SOA) this area will be kept under review as part of our overall plans for integration technology.

A fully integrated IT environment depends crucially on the application software from third party suppliers providing appropriate adapters and interfaces to allow the electronic exchange of data rather than expecting these processes to be performed manually. At present this is not the case and the council is supporting national initiatives such as the Local Government Integration Practice (LGIP) to encourage software suppliers to make their systems compliant with standards and open to data exchange with other systems.

Brent has developed and currently hosts the e-Government Register (eGR) website which holds extensive data about UK local authorities' use of software and encourages the open exchange of information about integration and connectivity.

Brent is the founding and lead member for the London Data Connects group which aims to pool the capital's experience and skills on data matching and data integration.

9 Information Management

9.1 Legislation & Standards

The IT Unit has staff dedicated to providing support and guidance on IT related legislation including the Freedom of Information (FOI), Data Protection (DPA) and Disability Discrimination Acts.

Responsibility for day-to-day work associated with FOI or DPA requests from the public lies with staff in service areas but the IT Unit assists with complex requests and monitors overall progress in meeting response times.

Online training for awareness of the DPA and FOI is available for all staff.

The Integrated Public Sector Vocabulary (IPSV) is being used to categorise both internal and external data items so that they meet ISO 2788 (BS 8723) guidelines for metadata. This will improve searching for information and allow standardisation in document management.

Information sharing with external partners and the associated data sharing protocols are already in place for social care data sharing with the NHS and will be extended to other systems as required.

9.2 Governance

A new Information Governance Group has recently been established and an Information Audit and Asset register is under development prior to consideration of suitable solutions for future document and records management.

Policies for legal admissibility and data retention are in place and will be improved as part of the Information Asset register.

Online training is available for staff to support awareness and compliance with legislation and good practice. This will be extended to include good practice in data management as well as compliance with standards.

9.3 Information Strategy

As previously stated we see “information” and “data” as key corporate assets.

An Information Strategy which will provide direction of the use and protection of information assets is under development by the Information Governance Group.

Implementation of the new Information Strategy (with appropriate technology) will achieve the following:

A standard structure under which all our information (client, business, property, documents etc) will be stored and indexed.

- Ability of the council to know exactly what information assets it has access to, where they are and who can access them.

- Documents and spreadsheets that are only stored once but can viewed and updated by numerous users (ending the traditional process of documents being emailed to numerous people with little control over version control and inefficient use of data storage space).
- Improved service provision through faster location, retrieval and use of information

An Information Audit will lead to the establishment of an Information Asset Register. Data items will be classified by IPSV keywords and document management systems will use this taxonomy for structuring data across the organisation. This will allow an automated lifecycle management of data from document creation, classification, data retention schedules through to final disposal.

The evaluation of existing document management systems and selection of a single system to support corporate requirements will be a key outcome from the Information Governance Group.

The introduction of the i-Hub and the matching of person data from all key application systems in the council will result in a process of data quality improvement which will lead to significant benefits for customer service and efficiency.

10 Information Security

Information security has become a critical issue to provide adequate protection for the council's information assets in the face of an ever increasing level of threat.

10.1 Standards

The IT Unit is working towards compliance with the ISO27001 (BS7799) standards by 2008. Compliance will ensure a means by which the council can monitor and control its security, minimising the residual business risk and ensuring that it continues to meet corporate, customer and legal requirements.

Aside from ensuring business continuity, compliance is also a key building block for our partnership strategy. It will be necessary to meet the GSi & N3 codes of connection in order to participate in the Government Connect Secure Extranet (GCSx) and communicate with central government and the NHS. These are both based on BS7799.

10.2 Plans

Compliance with ISO27001 by 2008, including:

- Information Security policies, to be agreed by the Information Governance Group and approved at director level
- Redeveloped approach to security risk management, based on ISO27000 series of standards.
- Implementation of policy and technical controls to meet risks as appropriate.

Work to allow compliance with the relevant Codes of Connection is underway so that use of the Government Connect Secure Extranet (GCSx) and LPSN N3 gateways can be provided in 2007/8.

Connection to LPSN and GCSx will allow secure email and data exchange with a variety of central government agencies (including DCLG, DWP, DLVA and NHS N3)

Advice about information security is available from a dedicated Intranet website. An Information Governance intranet website is being set up, which will cover a wider range of issues, including compliance with legislation and information management.

Compliance with the council's information security policies is mandatory for all users of the data network. These will be part of the induction process for all new staff. Awareness of changes to the policies will be enforced through an automated questionnaire system linked to PC start-up.

11 Performance Management

11.1 Measurement

The IT Unit participates in the Socitm Benchmarking Service in order to compare its performance with similar authorities in London. This is an annual survey which provides a comprehensive comparison of key performance indicators of all the major aspects of the IT service. It covers service quality, costs, use by staff & the public, investment, staffing and structure.

Brent aims to be in the top 25% for all Socitm Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) by 2008.

Annual external customer satisfaction surveys are used as an objective measure of satisfaction with the level of service.

Reporting performance against service level agreements (SLAs) is carried out via the service desk system and communicated regularly to customers.

A "Customer Champion" has been appointed to represent our customers should they feel dissatisfied with any service ITU provide. This person is empowered to challenge all aspects of the service within ITU and reports directly to the Head of IT.

11.2 Plans

The IT Unit has adopted ITIL (Information Technology Infrastructure Library) as a service management methodology. In 2006 the helpdesk software was replaced by a new ITIL compliant service desk system (HP Service Desk) and the ITIL incident management process has been implemented. The service desk system is used for recording and managing all service requests and allows customers to view progress on their resolution.

Next steps in the use of ITIL will include the development of the Configuration Management Database (CMDB) and change management processes.

Once the appropriate level of ITIL has been achieved then the council will seek certification to ISO 20000 (BS 15000) standards for service management.

The introduction of ITIL requires the active cooperation of both the IT Unit and the user community and appropriate planning and communication.

12 IT Sourcing

12.1 Procurement

The council is increasingly taking a strategic approach to procurement and the IT Unit is making use of corporate procurement facilities and taking advantage of regional or national procurement frameworks to ensure it obtains the best value for money.

Recent major procurements have included PC Desktops where the national OGC agreement has been used, the Client/Business Index which was an OJEU tender and the CRM upgrade which is using OGC Catalyst.

Electronic procurement processes will be employed where possible.

Software discovery tools will allow automated reconciliation against the asset register. This will assist software licensing reviews.

12.2 Supplier Management

The adoption of ITIL and the recent creation of the Business Support Manager post will allow the IT Unit to improve its arrangements for supplier management and move to more formal terms of engagement. These will result in greater control over the quality of goods & services, supplier costs and contracts.

We would also expect to work in association with partners in London and the West London Alliance and product user groups to ensure that the council obtains best value from its suppliers.

12.3 Shared Services

The council already has several shared service arrangements (such as Revenues & Benefits, Payroll & Pensions, Libraries) and the IT Unit expects to participate in further initiatives when the overall council policy towards shared services has been developed.

Our policy towards shared services is to form partnerships with any organisation that can demonstrate value to the council and assist in achieving service excellence.

Our technical infrastructure will be designed to support the secure exchange of data with any authorised shared services partnership.

13 Programme & Project Management

13.1 Programme Management

Managing Successful Programmes (MSP) is the standard methodology employed for delivering business change and the realisation of benefits from a portfolio of projects.

Programme Management has had a limited use in the past (such as in the e-Government Programme) but it is expected that it will be increasingly employed to support the IT Unit's involvement in major business change initiatives in the future.

13.2 Project Management

PRINCE2 was adopted as the standard project management methodology during the e-Government Programme and has since been employed more widely across the council.

A Projects Database available on the Intranet was established by the IT Unit during the e-Government Programme to provide a repository for all key project information and use of this system has now been adopted across the council.

A Project Management User Group has been established to extend programme and project management skills and awareness across the organisation.

14 Skills Management

14.1 IT competencies

The increasing use of IT across the council and by the public requires an increasing level of competence in the use of IT hardware and software at all levels of the organisation and throughout the borough.

Within the council the IT Unit will work with Human Resources to encourage improved IT skills and awareness. ECDL (the European Computer Driving Licence) is already used as the basic standard for IT competence. E-Learning facilities are increasingly employed to deliver IT related training. As part of the council's HR Transformation programme a new e-Literacy strategy is being developed that will ensure all staff have the IT skills needed to efficiently carry out their duties

Digital inclusion and the take up of e-services by Brent residents and businesses will be diminished if there are inadequate skills to make use of electronic services. The borough has had a high number of UK Online centres in the past but their number has declined with the end of national funding for the scheme. The council's Adult & Community Education Service (BACES) provides a wide range of IT related training.

14.2 IT Staff Development

The rapid pace of change in IT requires a correspondingly high level of training to ensure that staff are able to make use of new software and hardware. The more structured environment for service and project management also requires staff to have appropriate training to participate effectively. Management and leadership skills are increasingly required at all levels of the organisation.

The IT Unit intends to make use of the Government IT Profession initiative to provide a consistent career path in line with the local and central government IT standards and to make use of SFIA (Skills Framework for the Information Age) to ensure that we use nationally recognised IT competencies in the our roles and job descriptions.

Traditional course based learning and the use of Brent's e-learning facilities will be employed for ongoing training.

Participation in the Socitm Continuing Professional Development Scheme (CPD) will be considered.

The council is a certified Investors in People organisation.

15 Service Management

The IT Unit is committed to the introduction of ITIL (Information Technology Infrastructure Library) as an overall framework for IT service management. This will radically transform the way in which IT is delivered throughout the council and will lead to a much more effective IT service.

A major investment has been made in new service desk software (HP Service Desk), asset management, consultancy support and staff training for the introduction of ITIL.

Two new posts are being created - a Business Support Manger to act as a customer champion and oversee financial management and a post dedicated to oversee the implementation of further ITIL processes.

The new Service Desk and the initial disciplines of Incident and Problem management have been implemented. Service Level Agreements are being revised and the Service Catalogue is being revised. The software asset management system is being implemented. Further ITIL disciplines will be introduced over the next four years.

It is planned to seek BS15000 certification once a sufficient range of ITIL processes have been successfully implemented.

Performance management will use information from the Service Desk system, regular surveys of customer satisfaction and the Socitm Benchmarking service. Brent aims to be in the top 25% for all Socitm Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) by 2008.

15.1 Service delivery

Service Delivery is primarily focussed on forward looking services that the IT Unit provides to the council as a customer.

In ITIL terms these include Service Level Management, Capacity Management, Continuity Management, Availability Management and Financial Management.

Service Level and Financial Management is now handled by the Business Support Manager.

15.2 Service support

Service Support is primarily focussed on ensuring that the IT service user has access to the appropriate facilities to support the business functions.

In ITIL terms these include the Service Desk and Incident, Problem, Configuration, Change and Release Management.

The new Service Desk system is now used for recording all service requests and ITIL processes for Incident and Problem management have been introduced.

16 The Green IT Agenda

16.1 Environmental issues

The increasing use of IT has some significant environmental implications - IT equipment is a major consumer of electricity, a generator of heat, involves the use of scarce resources during manufacture and risks environmental pollution during disposal.

However IT can also contribute positively to the council's environmental impact through initiatives such as supporting home/remote working to reduce travel requirements and replacing the use of paper by electronic media.

Brent intends to meet the requirements of the Green Agenda to reduce carbon emissions and environmental impact through :

- taking steps to reduce energy consumption through the purchase of more efficient hardware, a reduction in the overall number of computer rooms by consolidating servers into a few larger data centres and switching off computer devices when they are not required
- reducing paper consumption through increased use of electronic documents, more efficient use of printers, multi-functional print devices and toner cartridges
- supporting environment friendly hardware manufacture and disposal (via purchasing and disposal policies) and ensuring that the council meets the European Commission Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Directive (WEEE) on recycling and disposal of IT equipment.
- improving education for staff and the public on best practice in the use of computer equipment
- reducing transport related emissions through the use of electric or dual fuel vehicles and greater use of home/remote working

The consolidation of servers into a few larger data centres will reduce the number of smaller server rooms with their separate power and air conditioning requirements but will also introduce a new challenge to maximise the energy efficiency of the new data centres.

The IT Unit will review its environmental impact plans on a regular basis and consider the use of international tools for best practice such as EPEAT environmental performance analysis during procurement and ISO 14000 standards for environmental management.

17 Timelines for Key Initiatives

17.1 Timelines

These are indicative timescales for some of the key initiatives.

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Business transformation					
Business change analysis					
Corporate document management/EDRMS					
Corporate workflow					
IT Architecture					
Client/Business Index					
Brent i-Hub					
Middleware review					
Single domain					
Mobile/remote working					
Data network extension					
Data centre server consolidation					
Email migration to Exchange					
Sharepoint implementation					
IP Telephony & ACD					
ITIL implementation					
IT Security & connectivity					
LPSN					
N3 connection					
GCSx					
ISO 27000					
New IT Applications					
Client/Business Index					
CRM upgrade/replacement					
HR/Payroll					
Finance					
Libraries					
Children's database					
Corporate Complaints					
IT Governance					
Information Audit					
Information Register					
Information Strategy					
IPSV data classification (website)					
IPSV data classification (internal)					
Performance Management					
ITIL implementation					
ISO 20000					

18 Appendix A - Software & Hardware environment

Some of the key applications used in the council are

Email : Lotus Notes
Web content management : Lotus Domino
Document Management : Domino.Doc, Global 360, Accolate
Workflow: Lotus Workflow, View360, NonStopGov
Middleware: LGOL-Net
CRM: Onyx e-Shop
Finance : Oracle, Epicor, Unity
HR/Payroll : LogicaCMG
Environment : Acolaid
Streetcare : Contender
GIS : ESRI
Land & Property Gazetteer : Aligned Assets
Housing : Sx3 (Oracle)
Revenue & Benefits : Sx3 (Oracle)
Pupils : IDEAR
Social Care : Frameworki (Oracle)
Libraries : Dynix
Trading Standards : Flare
Complaints : NonStopGov, Respond

Database:

Oracle and SQL Server are used for the primary applications systems

Operating Systems:

Primarily Windows 2003 with Solaris for some major application systems

Network:

Cicso (following recent upgrade from 3Com)

Telephony:

Mitel. Recent upgrade and IP telephony now being installed
ACD : CIC recently installed

Servers & data storage:

Current equipment is HP servers for file & print and Windows applications, HP SANs, Sun for Solaris applications.

More details about overall product usage in Brent is available from the Brent related pages on the e-Government Register website at www.brent.gov.uk/egr

19 Appendix B - IT Budget

Brent has historically had a low level of IT funding - in fact the 2006 Socitm Benchmarking survey shows that Brent is the 3rd lowest amongst London boroughs in terms of IT spend as a percentage of overall revenue budget. Correspondingly it also has the 2nd lowest number of IT staff.

The budget profile has a very high proportion of income derived from internal trading activities - 81% with only 19% from corporate sources. It is proposed to reduce the proportion derived from projects and service level agreements.

The approximate breakdown of the current 2006/7 IT budget is:

Salaries	2,500,000
Temporary staff	83,000
Training	33,000
Other staff costs	138,000
Premises	275,000
Transport	20,000
Supplies & services	5,000,000
Debt management	50,000
Precepts	327,000
Total expenditure	8,426,000

It is proposed to invest in the following areas over the next 5 years and the costs are still under discussion:

Information management
Email/collaboration migration & management
Corporate document management & workflow
Information security
Data centre consolidation
ACD development
IT Service management
Data/voice convergence
Business transformation

With this additional investment it is estimated that significant savings can be achieved over 5 years through the centralisation of IT resources and extra efficiency resulting from business transformation (using process improvement and corporate document management & workflow).

20 Appendix C - Glossary & Links

ACD	Automatic Call Distribution (of telephone calls)	Web
BACES	Brent Adult & Community Education Service	Web
BVPI	Best Value Performance Indicator	Web
CIO	Chief Information Officer	Web
CMDB	Configuration Management Database	Web
CPD	Continuing Professional Development	Web
CRM	Customer Relationship Management	Web
CTO	Chief Technical Officer	Web
DCLG	(Department of) Communities and Local Government	Web
DDA	Disability Discrimination Act	Web
DPA	Data Protection Act	Web
DVLA	Driver & Vehicle Licensing Agency	Web
DWP	Department of Work & Pensions	Web
ECDL	European Computer Driving Licence	Web
EDM	Electronic Document Management	Web
EDRMS	Electronic Document & Records Management System	Web
eGR	e-Government Register	Web
EPEAT	Electronic Product Environmental Assessment Tool	Web
FOI	Freedom of Information Act	Web
GC	Government Connect	Web
GCSx	Government Connect Secure Extranet	Web
KPI	Key Performance Indicator	Web
ICT	Information and Communications Technology	Web
IP	Internet Protocol	Web
IPSV	Integrated Public Sector Vocabulary	Web
ISO	International Organisation for Standardisation	Web
ITIL	Information Technology Infrastructure Library	Web
IT Profession	Government IT Profession	Web
ITSG	Brent IT Steering Group	Intranet
ITU	Brent IT Unit	Intranet
LPSN	London Public Sector Network	Web
MSP	Managing Successful Programmes	Web
NeSDS	National e-Service Delivery Standards	Web
N3	National Health Service N3 secure network	Web
OGC	Office of Government Commerce	Web
OJEU	Official Journal of the European Union	Web
PDA	Personal Digital Assistant - eg Palm, I-Paq, Blackberry	Web
PCT	NHS Primary Care Trust	Web
SAN	Storage Area Network	Web
SFIA	Skills Framework for the Information Age	Web
SOA	Service Oriented Architecture	Web
Socitm	Society of IT Managers	Web
WEEE	Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Directive	Web
WLA	West London Alliance	Web
Virtualisation	Running several systems on one server	Web
xGEA	Cross Government Enterprise Architecture	Web
XML	Extensible Mark-up Language	Web