



Budget Panel

Wednesday, 23 September 2009 at 7.30 pm
Committee Room 4, Brent Town Hall, Forty Lane,
Wembley, HA9 9HD

Membership:

Members

Councillors:

Mendoza (Chair)
V Brown (Vice-Chair)
Butt
Cummins
Gupta
Van Kalwala

First alternates

Councillors:

Detre
Corcoran
Coughlin
Bessong
Leaman
Beswick

Second alternates

Councillors:

H M Patel
Motley
Crane
C J Patel
Anwar
Jones

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The press and public are welcome to attend this meeting

Agenda

Introductions, if appropriate

Apologies for absence and clarification of alternate members

Item	Page
1 Declarations of personal and prejudicial interests	
Members are invited to declare, at this stage of the meeting, any relevant financial or other interest in the items on this agenda.	
2 Deputations	
3 Minutes of the previous meeting	1 - 4
4 Matters arising	
5 The local impact of the recession - a six-month review	5 - 20
Report from the Director of Policy and Regeneration.	
A report on the local impact of the recession was received by the Executive on 16 March 2009. This detailed the impact the recession was having in Brent and a number of recommendations. The current report sets out Brent's position six months on and progress to date on recommendations made. Economic data indicate that the recession has a high impact in Brent, particularly in our most deprived wards. Work continues across Brent to ameliorate the impact of the recession.	
6 Housing Revenue Account (HRA) update	21 - 26
Report from the Director of Housing and Community Care.	
This report updates the Budget Panel on key issues and the latest development concerning the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). In particular, the report sets out details on the HRA Business Plan, the recently published consultation on the Reform of Council Finance, and the current HRA Forecast Outturn for 2009-10.	
7 Review of previous budgets	27 - 32
Report from the Director of Finance and Corporate Resources.	
The work programme for the Panel includes a review of the progress achieved through previous budgets. This report sets out some key indicators of budget performance, including outturn compared to budget and delivery against LAA indicators.	

8 Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the Budget Panel is scheduled to take place on Tuesday 13 October 2009.

9 Any other urgent business

Notice of items to be raised under this heading must be given in writing to the Democratic Services Manager or his representative before the meeting in accordance with Standing Order 64.



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- The meeting room is accessible by lift and seats will be provided for members of the public.
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MINUTES OF THE BUDGET PANEL Monday 27 July 2009 at 7.30 pm

PRESENT: Councillor Mendoza (Chair) and Councillors Gupta and Jones (for Van Kalwala).

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Dunwell.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors V Brown, Butt, Cummins and Van Kalwala.

The Chair welcomed Mick Bowden (Deputy Director, Finance and Corporate Resources) to his first meeting of the Panel.

1. Declarations of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

None.

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting – 11 February 2009

RESOLVED:

that the minutes of the meeting held on 11 February 2009 be approved as an accurate record.

3. Matters Arising

None.

4. Budget Strategy 2010/11 to 2013/14

Duncan McLeod (Director, Finance and Corporate Resources) presented the report and answered questions from members on the financial prospects for the Council for the following four years. The report had been agreed by the Council's Executive on 14 July 2009. Duncan McLeod informed the Panel that, within a difficult economic context, the Council was basing its budget approach on an improvement and efficiency strategy. This would seek to deliver the necessary efficiencies, while directing resources towards the Council's priority objectives and would necessarily require a change of emphasis from short-term planning to a genuine consideration of medium-term horizons. Duncan McLeod emphasised that the economic situation and recession were unprecedented and changing rapidly. Times ahead would be very difficult financially and would need to be dealt with differently from in the past. As was well known, the recession was having an impact on the Council's income with, for example, the effect of lower interest rates. As well as this, the demand for Council services was rising, with increases in the number of benefit claims, for example. It was also certain that there would be reductions in government grants over the four-year period, regardless of the outcome of the next general election. This was in a context of rising demands on services and limited ability to increase levels of council tax.

Duncan McLeod took members through an updated forecast of the position of the General Fund for the four-year period. The assumptions on which the forecast had been based were set out in the report and included, for example, 2.5% per annum for pay inflation (including national insurance increases) and 2% general price increases. The main resource assumption was that government formula grant would increase by 1.5% in 2010/11 in line with the three-year settlement for 2008/09 to 2010/11. After that, no increases in grant or council tax were assumed.

The overall reductions required to set a balanced budget in this context and with no council tax increase were set out in the report as follows: £14.1m in 2010/11, £13.1m in 2011/2012, £13m in 2012/13 and £13.5m in 2014/14. The cumulative saving at the end of the period would be £53.7m.

Duncan McLeod added that the capital programme was constrained in two ways. While demand continued to increase across a whole range of areas, the recession meant that it was difficult to sell assets at reasonable prices. As a result, the ability to fund expenditure depended on third parties or increased borrowing. There were particular issues around the Housing Revenue Account, on which the government had issued a consultation paper. This would be discussed at the next meeting of the Budget Panel.

Duncan McLeod informed the Panel that, while funding gaps had been addressed in the past, most of the options had been used, and a more radical planned approach was needed to meet the new challenges. He felt that across-the-board percentage savings targets were not necessarily effective, because they did not reflect each service's ability to deliver savings. The report set out the Council's Improvement and Efficiency Strategy and the main strands of indicative savings targets. These included £10m as a result of service transformation and reviews, £7.5m from better commissioning and contract management, £5m by stopping low priority activities and £5m after a review of structure and staffing. The strategy would be a four-year rolling programme, looking fundamentally at the way all services were delivered. It was important to be realistic and to take account of capacity issues, and it would not be possible to deliver simultaneously on every project. Members noted that the Panel would be considering work streams more closely at the next meeting.

Duncan McLeod drew members' attention to Appendix B of the report, which set out the main stakeholders in the process and how the Council hoped to involve them, and Appendix C, which provided a draft outline timetable for the 2010/11 budget.

Asked about the feasibility of the four-year plan, Duncan McLeod pointed out that the current plan was more of a medium-term strategy than the Council had had in the past. In his view, the plan should be sustainable, both in theory and in practice, but further detailed plans were still needed in order to be fully confident of the plan. In answer to a question about the prospects for inflation, Duncan McLeod informed the Panel that it was difficult to come to a view. The conventional view was that increased money supply fuelled inflation and there

was a possibility that in two years' time inflation might be higher than forecast in the report, but with no increase in government grants to local authorities.

In response to a question on the possibility of an increase in the employer's contribution to the Pension Fund, Duncan McLeod informed the Panel that the government had released a consultation document on this recently. He reported that, with poor stock market performance, it had become increasingly likely that an increase would be needed. However, performance in the last quarter had improved.

Asked whether the savings targets were in addition to those required by the Gershon Efficiency Review, Duncan McLeod confirmed that they were.

In answer to a question on the status of the Council's investments in two Icelandic banks, Duncan McLeod was pleased to be able to report that the Council hoped to get back all of its £5m investment with Glitnir Bank. In terms of the investment with Heritable Bank, the Council was assuming it would get back 80% of its £10m investment, and it would be receiving 15% the following day, plus some interest.

Answering a question about the administration of benefits, Duncan McLeod reported that the government had given local authorities a welcome extra grant to deal with the increased uptake. In theory the government funded 100% of benefit payments to residents, but in practice this assumed no inefficiency, overpayments or errors and the Council inevitably bore some costs, particularly in relation to fraudulent claims. Mick Bowden (Deputy Director, Finance and Corporate Resources) added that the amount paid out in housing and council tax had increased from £174m in the previous year to £215m in the current year. Duncan McLeod confirmed that the total loss to the Council in this area was around £500,000 in 2008/09.

In response to a suggestion that the Council reduce the cost of demand-led services by providing only those that were statutory, Duncan McLeod informed the Panel that the Council had had some success in controlling the cost of statutory services, and that one of the savings strands – stopping low priority activities – fell into this category.

Asked how much more commercially minded the Council was in a position to be than in the past, Duncan McLeod acknowledged that the Council had struggled with this in the past and that current market conditions did not make the task any easier. However, there was the potential to set up a company to provide services to a wider market. An example of this might be to provide payroll and/or payment services to other local authorities. While some services did sell their expertise, there were issues such as insurance liability and the need to maintain a large enough operation to make this worthwhile. The greatest potential seemed to be in carrying out work for other local authorities. The Council also aimed to keep its buildings open for longer and to make them multi-functional. For example, the new centre in Kingsbury would be a multi-function centre.

Members suggested that commercial sponsorship of, for example, public libraries and the Civic Centre, might be considered.

In answer to a suggestion on the need for robust discussion with partners on the budget situation, Duncan McLeod reported that the Council had been trying hard to do this, but that there were still problems getting information. There were many good examples of co-operation on projects, and performance reward grants did encourage this, but there was a long way to go before it could be said that there was a genuinely joined-up approach. He informed the Panel that in some parts of London the PCT and Council had effectively merged.

RESOLVED:

that the report and the comments above be noted.

5. Update on the Budget Panel's recommendations

Mick Bowden (Deputy Director, Finance and Corporate Resources) presented a report updating members on the progress of the Panel's recommendations in relation to the 2009/10 budget. Members agreed to continue to monitor the progress of recommendations throughout the year.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that the report be noted;
- (ii) that the Panel continue to monitor the progress of its recommendations.

6. Budget Panel's Work Programme

The Chair drew the Panel's attention to a report providing a brief overview of the work of the Panel in 2008/09 and setting out the work programme for 2009/10. The Chair encouraged members to let him know of any further requests to include items on what was already a detailed work programme.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that the report be noted;
- (ii) that the 2009/10 work programme be agreed.

7. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting, originally due to take place on Tuesday 15 September 2009, had now been scheduled for **Wednesday 23 September 2009**.


8. Any Other Urgent Business

None.

The meeting ended at 8.30 pm.

A MENDOZA

Chair

	<p style="text-align: center;">Budget Panel 23 September 2009</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Report from the Director of Policy and Regeneration</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Wards affected: None</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">The local impact of the recession – 6 month review (presented to the 15 September 2009 Executive meeting)</p>	

Forward Plan Ref: PRU-0910-05

1. Summary

- 1.1. The report, the local impact of the recession, was received by the executive on the 16th of March 2009. This detailed the impact the recession was having in Brent and a number of recommendations. This report details Brent's position 6 months on and progress to date on recommendations made. Economic data indicates the recession has a high impact in Brent, particularly in our most deprived wards. Work continues to be undertaken across Brent to ameliorate the impact of the recession.
- 1.2. When we reported to Members in March 2009 we stressed the importance of having a sober and fact based approach to responding to the recession and not asking ourselves or our partners to engage in a 'pre-emptive list of actions which lose focus, waste money and unnecessarily raise expectations'. Our approach and our interventions (as set out in para 4.17) exemplify this approach, we have made interventions where the evidence shows there is need and where they can be effective.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. That the executive:
 - 2.1.1. note progress made against recommendations made in the report received by executive on the 16th of March 2009; and
 - 2.1.2. take under consideration the outcomes from the recession conference provided in Attachment 2.

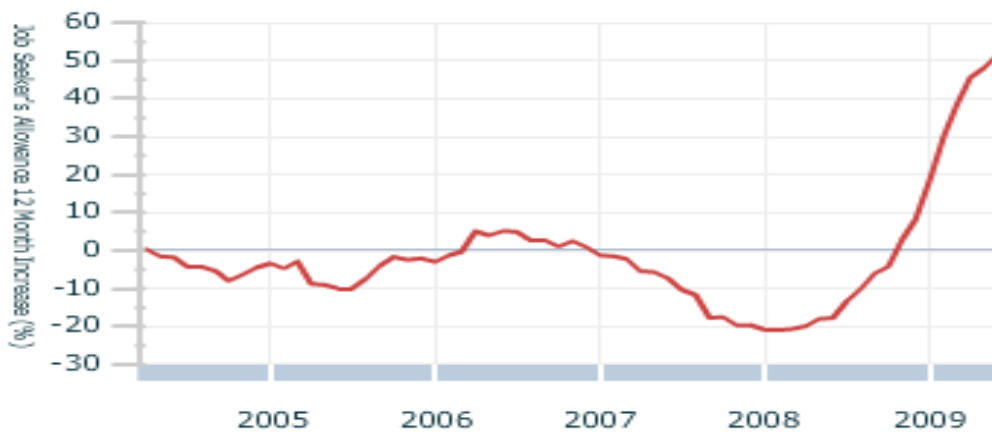
3. Recession indicators – Six month position

Job Seekers Allowance

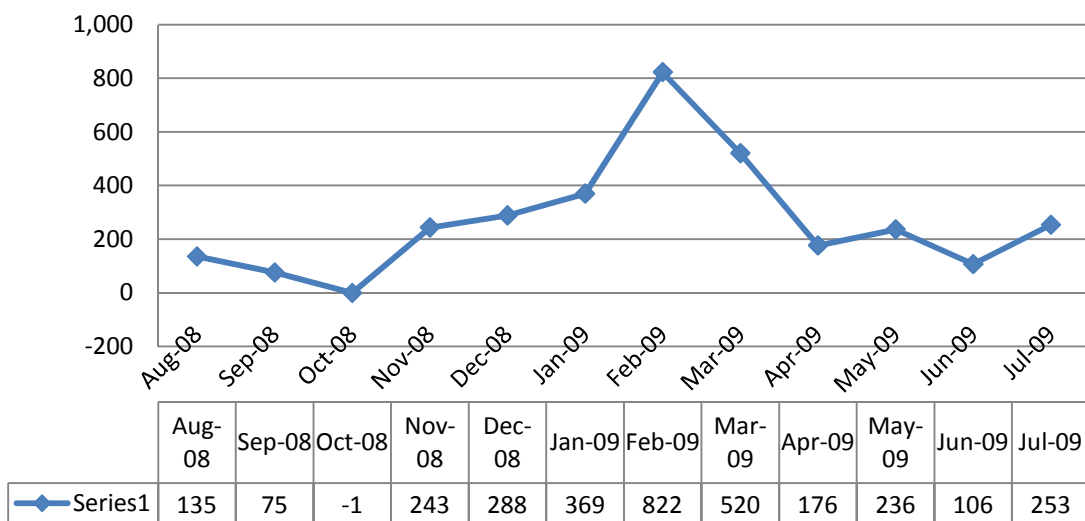
3.1. The number of people claiming Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) and national insurance credits is the closest measure the UK has to unemployment. This measure is available monthly and allows us to closely monitor the progress of the recession. In Brent the JSA claimant count has been increasing sharply over the past 6 months (**Graph 1**). In July 2009 there were 9278 people claiming, this is approximately 250 more than the previous month (June 09, 9025) and over 3000 more claimants than the same time last year (July 08, 6056). The largest increases were seen in the months of February and March 2009 (**Graph 2**). Brent's claimant count represents 5.11% of the working age population, this is above the London average of 4.33%. In July Brent had the 11th highest claimant count in London.

3.2. The highest numbers of JSA claimants live in Stonebridge and Harlesden wards (**Graph 3**). Whilst number of claimants has also increased in the more wealthy wards, the wards with the highest proportion of claimants continue to be the wards with the highest levels of deprivation.

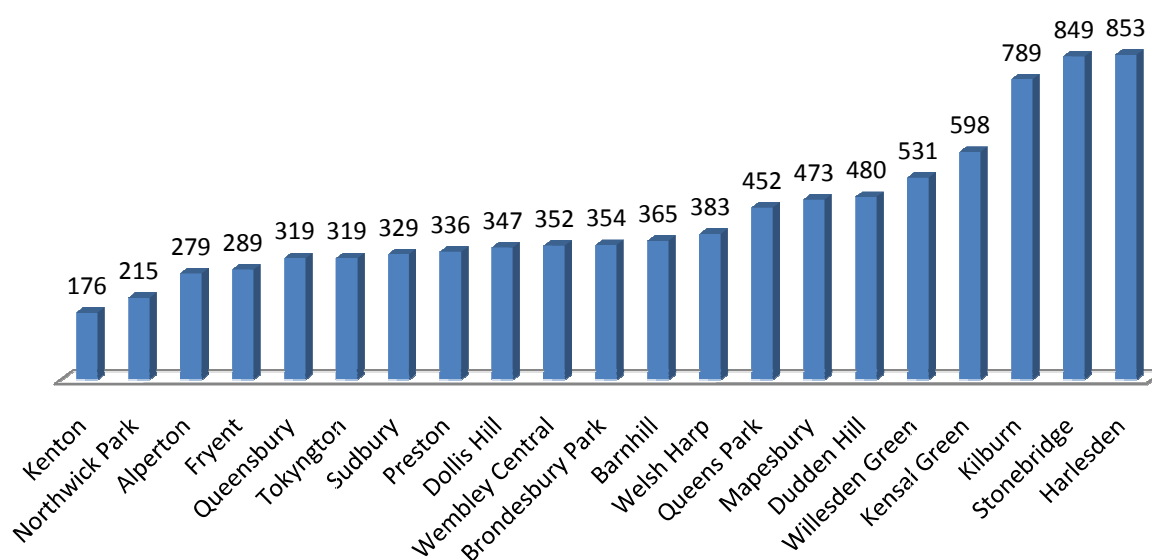
Graph 1: % JSA claimant count Brent (2005-2009)



Graph 2: Monthly increase JSA claimant count Brent (Aug 08- July 09)



Graph 3: JSA Claimant count, Brent Ward (July 09)



3.3. The top 15 jobs sought by JSA claimants in Brent are mainly low paying jobs, further supporting the scenario that the people worst affected by the recession are our most deprived residents.

Table 4: Sought Occupations, JSA claimants, Brent (July 09)

1. Sales and retail assistants	1,220
2. General office assistants/clerks	670
3. Other goods handling and storage occupations	665
4. Customer care occupations	400
5. Van drivers	325
6. Packers, bottlers, canners, fillers	270
7. Cleaners, domestics	255
8. Kitchen and catering assistants	175
9. Painters and decorators	165
10. Receptionists	155
11. Accounts and wages clerks, book-keepers, other financial clerks	145
12. Retail cashiers and check-out operators	145
13. Security guards and related occupations	145
14. Care assistants and home carers	130
15. Labourers in building and woodworking trades	130

Employment and Unemployment Rate

3.4. The employment and unemployment rate for working age population is another measure used by national government. This is a more broader measure and captures number of unemployed that are not necessarily receiving a benefit. The impact of the recession has not yet been evident through this data source. There is an investigation being undertaken by the DWP to determine why this might be the case. This data set is updated quarterly, however, the period of measurement is annual. Considering this, it is unlikely the impact of the recession would become evident until 2009 data is released.

3.5. Brent's employment rate is currently 71.3 this is under the UK average of 74 but just above the London average of 70.4. Brent's unemployment rate is 7.1 this is inline with the London average but above UK average of 5.9.

Table 5: Working Age Employment Rate, Brent Nomis, (2006-2008)

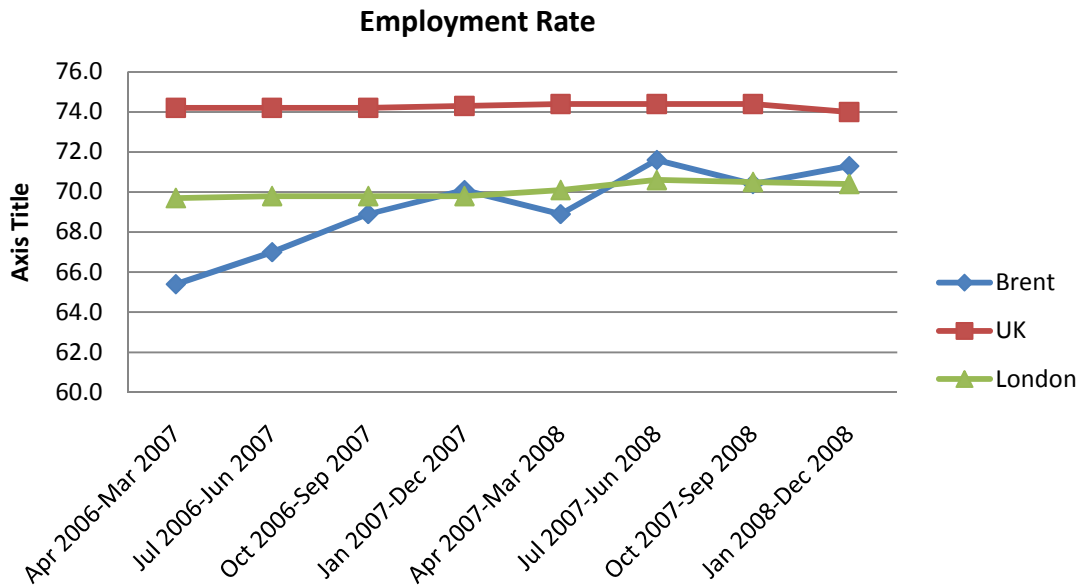
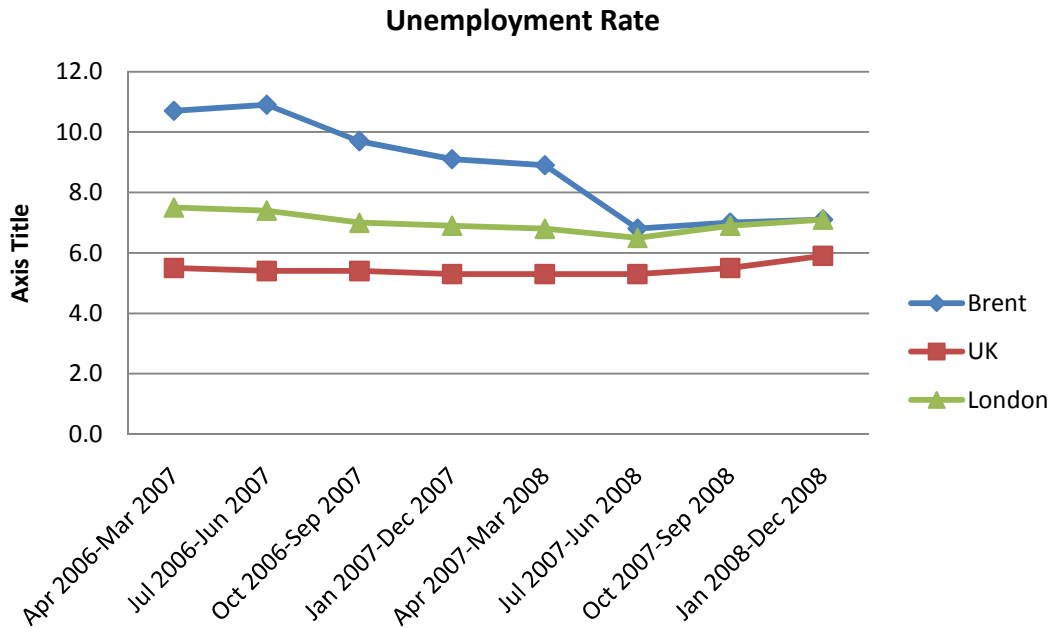


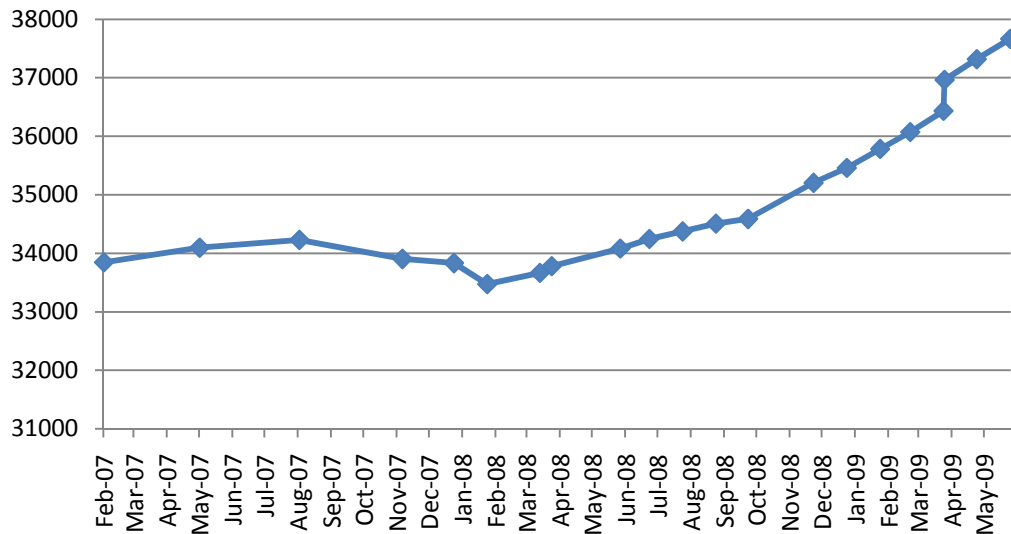
Table 6: Working Age Unemployment Rate, Brent Nomis, (2006-2008)



Housing and Council Tax

- 3.6. The number of people claiming housing and council tax benefits is 37,663 (June 09). This number has also been steadily increasing since the recession and it is over 3,500 more than the same time last year (June 08, 34,245).

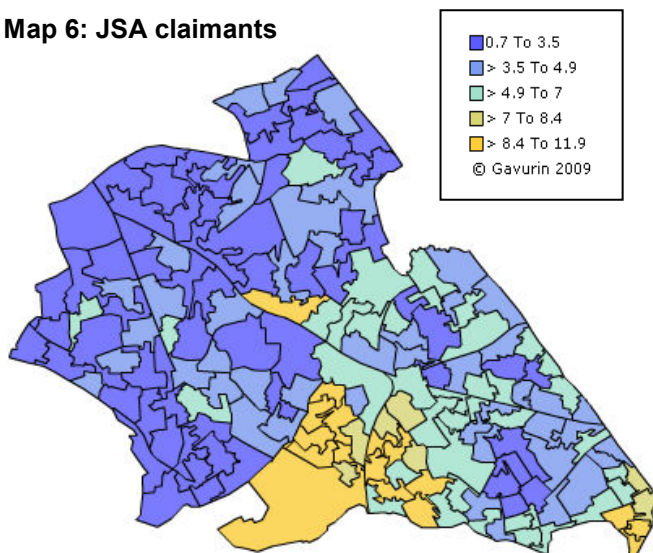
Graph 5: Housing and Council Tax, Brent time-series (Feb 07 - July 09)



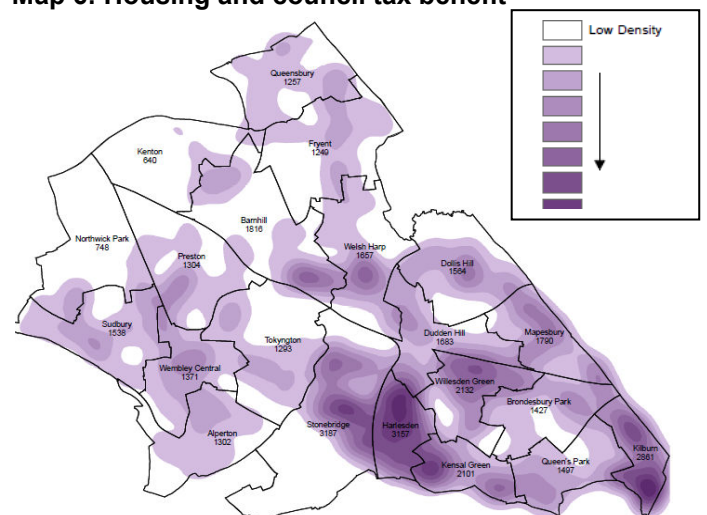
Deprivation and Satisfaction

- 3.7. The Wards with the highest levels of deprivation also have the highest levels of JSA claimants and housing and council tax benefit claimants, the lowest income levels and the poorest satisfaction with their local area and Brent Council.

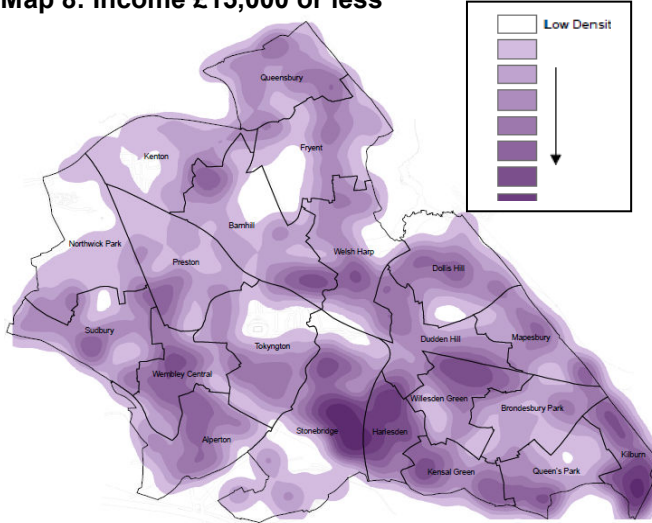
Map 6: JSA claimants



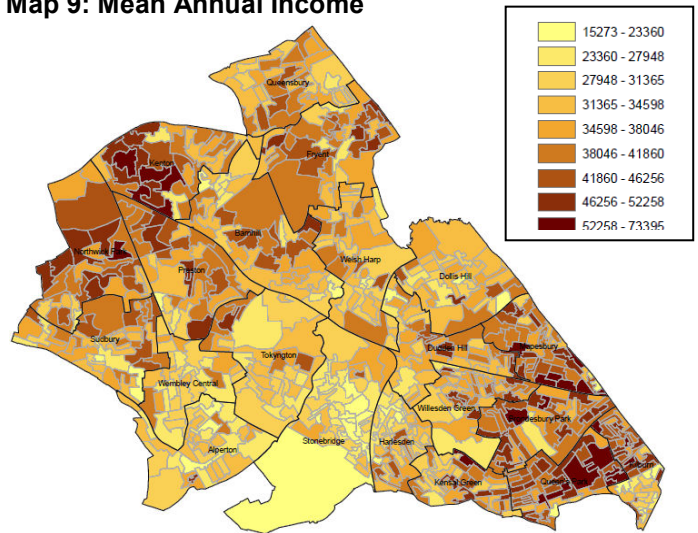
Map 6: Housing and council tax benefit



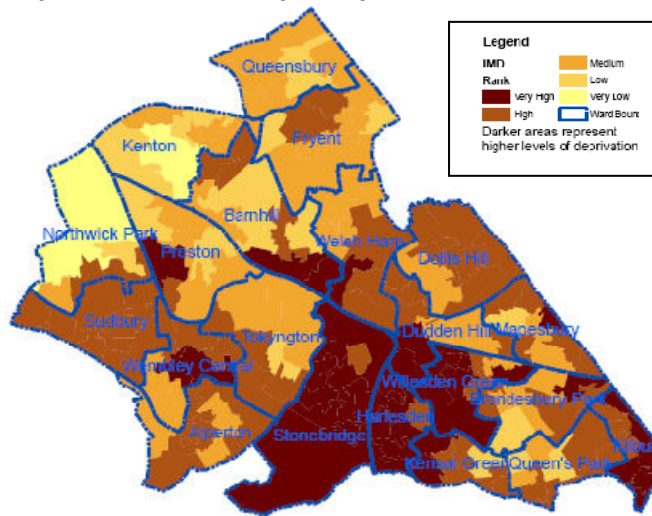
Map 8: Income £15,000 or less



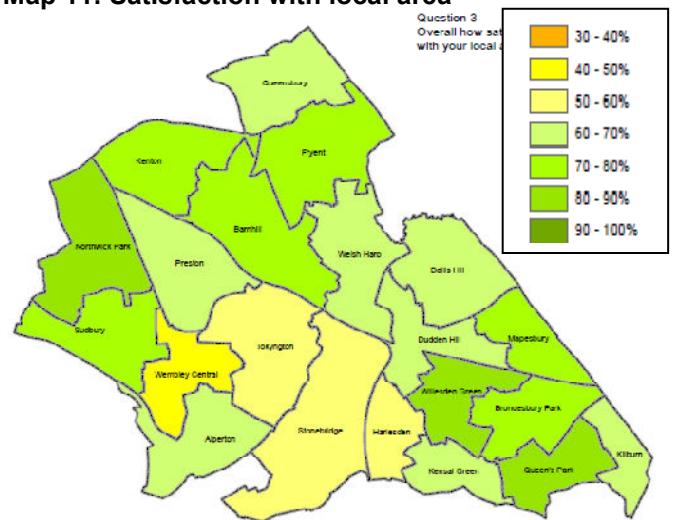
Map 9: Mean Annual Income



Map 10: Index of Multiple Deprivation



Map 11: Satisfaction with local area



Map 5: JSA claimants Brent, Nomis, June 2009

Map 6: Housing and council tax benefit, Brent Council, April 20 09

Map 7: Households with income £15,000 or less, CACI, 2008

Map 8: Mean Annual Income, CACI, 2008

Map 9: Index of Multiple Deprivation, CLG, 2007

Map 10: Satisfaction with local area, Place Survey, 2008-09

4. Progress made against key recommendations

4.1. The recession report sent to executive on the 16th of March had a number of recommendations. This report lists progress made against each recommendation.

Regular Monitoring

4.2. The report highlighted that regular monitoring should take place to assess the impact of recession across council services. A set of 16 national indicators were selected for monitoring. Performance for quarter 1, 2009-10, is provided in **Appendix 1**. The majority of these indicators are monitored via the council's quarterly reporting process, Vital Signs. There are a few exceptions with some indicators being annual and not available for in year monitoring.

4.3. Figures from quarter 1, 2009-10 for this set of key indicators do not yet indicate any have had a negative impact from the recession. Only 3 indicators are flagged as high risk / not meeting target:

- NI016 Serious acquisitive crime rate
- NI146 Adults with learning disabilities in employment
- NI150 Adults receiving secondary mental health services in employment.

4.4. Whilst most indicators are achieving their target, many are on a negative trend reflecting worse performance from the previous quarters figure. This may indicate an impact from the effects of the recession, or it might simply reflect an unrelated in year variation. Indicators on a negative direction of travel include:

- NI136 People supported to live independently through social services (all adults)
- NI155 Number of affordable homes delivered (gross)
- NI117 16 to 18 year olds who are not in education, employment or training (NEET)
- NI045 Young offenders engagement in suitable education, employment or training

4.5. In addition to the quarterly performance monitoring, an economic bulletin is produced each month by the Regeneration Team. This bulletin specifically concentrates on how the job market is affected by the recession. It provides an overview of changes to Job Seeker Allowance data and the employment rate. In addition, Brent's new Evidence Base was finalised in June 2009. This comprises of key datasets (including economic data) for the partnership are provided in an easy to, accessible format. Tools are made available on the external website and will be updated quarterly. The tools can be used by the council and partners to develop a better understanding of the needs of our customers. In particular, the evidence base focuses on geographic differences within data sources, clearly illustrating the difference in outcomes across wards in Brent.

Improvement and Efficiency Programme

- 4.6. The Improvement and Efficiency Programme aims to ensure the council is using its resources efficiently and is delivering high quality services to our customers, especially those who have the highest need. For the first year of the programme, an Improvement and Efficiency delivery plan is being developed. The plan will comprise of projects critical to the success of the programme. Prioritisation of projects has been in terms of expected efficiencies to be achieved. The BEST team are working closely with finance to help identify and capture savings and efficiencies which will pump prime future improvement and efficiency work as well as being re-invested to improve the quality of council services to residents.

Regeneration Agenda

- 4.7. Over the last six months the Council has pro-actively driven forward the Borough's large physical regeneration schemes. In South Kilburn the Council is taking the lead on preparing planning applications for two residential sites which combined will deliver some 500 new homes, which will assist in decanting existing tenants from poor quality tower blocks. In addition the Council has established the South Kilburn Neighbourhood Trust, which is utilising regeneration funding to acquire sites, secure planning applications and re-invest capital receipts and ground rents back into delivering further regeneration. To date one residential site has been acquired, and discussions are under way with regard to a further site for a healthy centre being transferred to the Trust.
- 4.8. In relation to Wembley, consultants have been commissioned to identify the Council's options in relation to potential land acquisition, with a view to identifying the most appropriate sites in terms of providing local infrastructure, stimulating future growth, and securing value for money.
- 4.9. In relation to the North Circular Road the Council has completed a full study of the first two rows of residential properties, which has shown that their redevelopment could solve the local noise and air pollution issues. Ongoing work is being undertaken to assess financial viability.
- 4.10. Key to ensuring that local people are best placed to benefit from a future upturn will be their ability to secure future new jobs that may be created. In the financial year 2008/09, Brent in2work placed over 1000 people into work, and secured sustainable employment for a significant majority of these. Funding for Brent in2work is threatened beyond March 2010, and to this end the Council is progressing towards an innovative Joint Venture arrangement with Working Links, one of the country's leading providers of employment services. This will allow us to bid for large DWP contracts and secure a local service which the Council can influence for at least the next five years.

Recession Conference

- 4.11. A Partnership Recession Conference was successfully held on the 15th of July 2009. A range of council and external speakers were heard including:-
- The Leader of the Council, Councillor Paul Lorber spoke of the impact the recession was having in the UK and in Brent, as well as his own personal experiences.
 - Phil Newby, Director Policy and Regeneration provided an in depth overview of the impact of the recession in Brent.

- Jackie Sadek, Chair, British Urban Regeneration Association discussed the impact of the recession on the housing market and regeneration industry.
- Sandra van der Feen, London Voluntary Service Council spoke of recent research undertaken on the impact of the recession on the voluntary sector.

4.12. An interactive session was held where participants were asked to discuss ideas which could be taken forward in partnership for existing projects or potential new projects. Many ideas were generated by this exercise (Appendix 2). Those relating to existing projects will be taken forward by staff across the council with relevant partners. New ideas will be reviewed by the Local Strategic Partnership for consideration.

Income Maximisation

4.13. Income maximisation is a project within Brent's Local Area Agreement 2008-11 which is aimed at improving the quality of life of Brent's most disadvantaged residents. The aim of the project is to work strategically across the Council and its partners to develop and implement interventions which increase the entitlement take up of council benefits and reduce financial hardship, debt and deprivation across a range of key groups of residents. The project will facilitate new ways of working across service boundaries, which are much more focussed on overall outcomes for customers (as opposed to service specific outcomes and more effective use of existing resources). In particular the project will create links between employment initiatives (eg. Brent n2 Work), the corporate debt policy and benefits service.

Benefit Take Up

4.14. Relating to the income maximisation project, the Benefits Team have used Brent's customer segmentation model mosaic to identify target customers from benefits service. These particular included the mosaic customer 'types' which were likely to be from the older age groups who may have moderate income levels and not realise they are eligible for a benefit. Letters were sent out that were designed in consideration of the identified mosaic types key characteristics. The benefits service reported an increase in take up after this initiative.

Mortgage Rescue Scheme (MRS)

4.15. Brent Council was selected as a Fast Track Authority to trial the Government's new Mortgage Rescue Scheme, before it was launched nationwide on 5th January 2009. MRS is a new £200m package of measures designed to prevent some of the most vulnerable families from losing their homes and experiencing the trauma of repossession. This scheme is aimed at those who would be eligible for homelessness assistance and is subject to a range of eligibility criteria. This includes those whose gross income is less than £60K and where the current valuation of their properties is less than £295K.

4.16. There has been very limited take up of this scheme to date. The main reason for this is the eligibility criteria restricting households, particularly the property value cap of £295K which is not inline with London property values. Brent is currently lobbying government for a relaxation of these criteria. Despite this, the scheme has proven to be very helpful in preventing homelessness and working with families early on to resolve financial difficulties through other channels. Prior to the scheme, few families would contact the council, or

contact us too late regarding difficulties in paying their mortgage. The scheme has increased the profile of the council and enabled the provision of a variety of support, guidance and aid to families in need.

Overall

- 4.17. Overall the key things Brent is doing regarding the recession include:
- Collect robust evidence base on impact on local people since recession
 - Improvement & Efficiency Programme – freeing up resources
 - Encourage take up of small business rate relief
 - Support for firms in paying business rates (planned)
 - Provision of information and support on job opportunities
 - Provide targeted employment training and support to job seekers
 - Closer working with Job Centre Plus and Learning Skills Council
 - Introduce more apprenticeships (work in progress)
 - Benefit take up initiatives
 - Council tax rebate schemes (planned)
 - Provision of debt and financial advice
 - Developing councils initiative in join public / private ventures (work in progress)
 - Bringing forward councils planned major capital programmes (planned)
 - Reviving stalled private housing development by purchasing land to develop social housing schemes
 - The council, police and businesses working together in Harlesden using a PCSO team to tackle town centre crime
 - The council, police and small businesses working to improve security on industrial estates
 - The council and police offering shadowing opportunities to young people to provide them with the stepping stones into employment

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1. There are no direct financial implications from this report. The impact the recession is having on Council finances and other resources is high. The increase in the number of people receiving housing and council tax benefits has significantly increased council's expenditure. In addition, the council's ability to increase the amount of revenue earned from external sources has reduced. Revenue from external sources has either not been improving or seen reductions. For instance in June 2009 revenue gained from planning application was half that from the same time last year. The impact of the recession on the council's finances continues to be closely monitored.

6. Legal Implications

- 6.1. There are no direct legal implications from this report.

7. Diversity Implications

- 7.1. There are no direct diversity implications from this report. Economic data on the impact of the recession suggest that Brent's most deprived wards are the most affected.

Background Papers

Executive Report: The Local Impact of the Recession, 16th of March

Contact Officers

Phil Newby
Director of Policy and Regeneration

Rebecca Fogarty
Policy and Regeneration

Appendix 1: Select national indicators for recession monitoring

	YTD Actual	YTD Target	Alert	Distance between Actual & Target	Perf. previous Qtr	Perf. this Qtr	DOT	Annual target	Good perf. is?
NI016 Serious acquisitive crime rate	6.71	6.59	▲	0.12	2.32	2.36	✖	2.4	Smaller is Better
NI045 Young offenders engagement in suitable education, employment or training	85	90	●	-5	88.24	85	✖	?	Bigger is Better
NI052 Free school meals take up	*54.7	50%	★	4.7					Bigger is Better
NI062 Stability of placements of looked after children: number of moves	1.6	3	★	-1.4	15.8	1.6	✔	?	Smaller is Better
NI117 16 to 18 year olds who are not in education, employment or training (NEET)	5.2	6.5	★	-1.3	4.8	5.2	✖	6.5	Smaller is Better
NI136 People supported to live independently through social services (all adults)	2217	?	!	!	3985.49	2217	✖	?	Bigger is Better
NI146 Adults with learning disabilities in employment	3.83	60	▲	-56.17	6.9	3.83	✖	?	Bigger is Better
NI150 Adults receiving secondary mental health services in employment	7.19	8	▲	-0.81	6.83	7.19	✔	?	Bigger is Better
NI151 Overall employment rate (working-age)d	***70.34	69	★	1.34	71.59	70.3	✖	?	Bigger is Better
NI155 Number of affordable homes delivered (gross)	29	29	★	0	253	29	✖	458	Bigger is Better
NI156 Number of households living in Temporary Accommodation	3549	3667	●	-118	3651	3549	✔	3485	Smaller is Better
NI171 New business registrations	**85.49	n/a		14.59	70.9	85.5	✔		Bigger is Better
NI154 Net additional homes	n/a	n/a							Bigger is Better
NI159 Supply of ready to develop housing sites	n/a	n/a							Bigger is Better
NI174 Skills Gap in the current work force reported by employer	n/a	n/a							Smaller is Better

Key:

Indicators highlighted in orange are annual and data is not yet available

Indicators highlighted in purple have no targets as they are not part of vital signs

* NOTE: This is performance figure for 2008-09

** NOTE: This is 2007 figure

*** NOTE: Quarter 2's figure has been provide in section 3.2 of this report, this figure is 71.3 which is an improvement.


Appendix 2: Recession Conference

Results from Interactive Session:-

- Investigate gap in support for white, young people aged 14-19, who are a growing group of NEETs. Provide analysis by locality and neighbourhood.
- Further develop the voluntary and community strategy regarding key themes: community cohesion, domestic violence and racism.
- Build capacity in the voluntary sector to capitalise on results of recession, in particular emerging highly skilled volunteers.
- Sell the opportunities of redundancy for retraining and new career paths.
- Learn from the successful commissioning by the connexions service of the voluntary sector to undertake outreach/engagement.
- Get the best from the Future Jobs Fund for London (BACES, JCP, Regen, others).
- Consider what influence we can exert on banks to lend to limit the stalling of regeneration projects
- Link smaller businesses to financial advice, particularly ensuring they are aware of available options for loans
- Develop a robust tourist strategy which markets Brent as a tourist attraction, capitalising on the benefits of the borough and attracting more people into the borough for recreation, shopping, commercial purposes.
- Work with partners (eg. hotels) to market to different concert crowds going to Wembley
- Improve communication across the partnership, promoting successes of partners on BRAIN, raise awareness of services and develop opportunities for joint working
- Improve coordination and delivery of critical services to high need groups such as the migrant communities
- Improve coordination across departments and partners on financial advice, services, to affected priority customer groups e.g. financial safeguarding, loan sharks
- Review approach to commissioning to ensure approach does not disadvantage local voluntary and community organisations
- Review the options for the Voluntary and Community Resource Centre as soon as possible - is their space in the civic centre?
- Encourage businesses to cross train and multi-skill staff to make them more flexible and explore flexible contracts.
- Develop an approach for retaining skilled school leavers in the Borough.
- Look at work based training and apprenticeships across the borough as a single project to improve access and co-ordination.
- Learn from successful training programmes and replicate eg. E&C engineering training offered for unemployed people. Delivered through a charity, this assisted sixty people. It was motivated by a particular gap in the market for people with engineering skills, and was made possible in part by the voluntary efforts of E&C staff in offering their spare time.
- Look at planning policy on use of building to ensure it is flexible to cope with change in circumstances.
- Develop “green” opportunities in the economy for businesses and for volunteers.
- BACES to work with partners to bridge the funding gap (more users than funding). In particular through the provision of education/training

- Working smarter across partner organisations to genuinely reduce costs for everyone, in particular shared services to ensure economies of scale, e.g. finance, HR, financial management, building space.
- The impact of the recession on business needs to be highlighted more. Utilise businesses in improving employment opportunities during the recession, for example advertise in JobCentre Plus. Other areas for discussion are self-employment and social enterprise.
- Improve volunteering opportunities
 - Learn from and mirror other successful volunteer programme taking place across partnership (eg. Police programme for long term volunteering, 1-2 years to build up a higher skill level).
 - Explore opportunities with big employers (public and private), perhaps by changing the way big organisations accommodate volunteers. This should be done as a branded initiative for partnership (eg Volunteering into Work) rather than individually across separate organisations.
- Develop more coordinated support package for business, including where to go for funding opportunities, help for business to build capacity.

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	Budget Panel 23 September 2009 Report from the Director of Housing and Community Care
	Wards Affected: ALL
Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Update	

Forward Plan Ref:

1.0 Summary

1.1 This report updates the budget panel on key issues and the latest development concerning the HRA. In particular, the report sets out details on the HRA Business Plan, the recently published consultation on the Reform of Council Finance, and the current HRA Forecast Outturn for 2009-10.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to note the contents of this report.

3.0 Detail

Introduction and Background

3.1 The HRA contains the income and expenditure relating to the Council's landlord duties in respect of approximately 9,450 Council dwellings. The current HRA regime was established by Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and started on 1st April 1990. The HRA is a "ringfenced" account, which means that the expenditure on the Council's housing stock has to be met by the income relating to it, and funds cannot be switched between the HRA and the General Fund. There are limited cases of permitted movement between the revenue two accounts, for example debt charges.

3.2 The following items of expenditure must be charged to the HRA:-

Expenditure

Supervision and Management of Council dwellings
Repairs and Maintenance
Rent and Rates
Loan Charges

The following items of income must be credited to the HRA:-

Income

Rents from Council Dwellings
HRA Subsidy
Other income including commercial rents
Charges for Services and Facilities
Interest Receivable

HRA Business Plan

- 3.3 The Council's HRA Business plan 2002 received an excellent 4* rating, was deemed "fit for purpose" by the Government and led to the establishment of Brent Housing Partnership (BHP) Ltd, the council's Arms Length Management Organisation. BHP was given the responsibility for the management and maintenance of the Council's housing stock, including the delivery of the housing stock investment programme to meet the Government's decent homes standard. BHP completed its decent homes standard investment programme in 2006, well ahead of the Government's target date of 2010, using £68m of capital resources provided through the Government's ALMO programme.
- 3.4 A report to the Council's Executive on 16 February 2009 briefed members on the key issues arising out of the updated 30 year HRA Business Plan 2009. The key issues identified were:-
- 3.4.1 The initial projection of the investment needs of the housing stock over a 30 year period, will be a net shortfall of the region of £518m including South Kilburn stock and £414m excluding South Kilburn Stock; and
- 3.4.2 The initial projection for the Operational HRA (both including and excluding South Kilburn housing stock) is that the account is likely to be running into a net deficit from year 5. Remedial actions will be required to prevent this happening, as Local Authorities are legally required to set a balanced HRA budget each financial year.
- 3.5 The report discussed the following key options for addressing the HRA business plan:-
- Stock retention (PFI and/or self-financing (dependent upon Housing Finance Reform);
 - Stock transfer; and
 - Future role of BHP (again dependent upon Housing Finance reform).
- 3.6 The Executive noted the report and agreed that a further report be submitted to members once certain stock condition data had been updated and the outcome of the Government's review of Council Housing Finance is known.

Council Housing Finance Reform

Current System

- 3.6 The current (and now discredited) national Housing Finance system is a major factor leading to the negative position on the Council's HRA business plan. The problems with the current system include:-
- 3.6.1 The requirement for authorities to contribute their rent income (and annual rent increases) back to the Government for distribution to other areas;
 - 3.6.2 Local responsibility and accountability is weak;
 - 3.6.3 The fairness of the system depends on the accuracy of assumptions made about spending in over 200 councils, which is difficult to manage nationally;
 - 3.6.4 The system is broadly in balance nationally (some say it is positive), with around two-thirds of Councils paying notional surpluses into the system, with only a third (including Brent) receiving subsidy. Furthermore, the system is predicted in the medium/long term to go significantly positive nationally;
 - 3.6.5 The annual nature of the process, with the volatility that it brings, makes it difficult for Councils to plan long term. There are currently annual changes in the system at short notice; and
 - 3.6.6 The system is not transparent and is complex. It is hard to understand and often its outcomes are difficult to predict.

The Proposed System

- 3.7 The Government published is long awaited consultation on the reform of Council Housing Finance in July 2009. The consultation finishes on 27 October 2009, and the main proposals are:-
- 3.7.1 The HRA ringfence should continue and be strengthened, and should include capital;
 - 3.7.2 Additional funding for Management and Maintenance Allowances (5% nationally), Major Repairs Allowances (54% nationally), and lifts and common parts;
 - 3.7.3 To allow local authorities to set up sinking funds for works to leaseholders stock;
 - 3.7.4 Two options are set out for the fundamental reform of the system. These are:-
 - 3.7.4.1 Improvements to a national system for funding council housing – in which revenues continue to flow between local and central government as a result of ongoing assumptions made by Government about landlord costs; and
 - 3.7.4.2 A devolved system (self financing) in which rents are retained by councils to spend on their own services, in exchange for a one off reallocation of debt.
 - 3.7.5 To allow local authorities to keep 100 per cent of their right to buy receipts, with a requirement that at least 75% is re-invested in housing.

- 3.8 Generally, the consultation proposals have been widely welcomed by Housing and Finance professionals alike. The option to introduce a devolved system of Housing Finance with local authorities being allowed to keep future revenue and capital receipts is encouraging. However there are some authorities (some of those who currently pay into the system) that find the proposal for the reallocation of debt difficult to accept. Broadly speaking, the two-thirds of authorities that pay into the system at the moment would swap negative subsidy for additional debt, while the third that receive subsidy (like Brent) will have their debt reduced so that they can manage their affairs without the need for subsidy. The Government has indicated that if legislation is required to effect the proposed changes, then the self financing option would not be in place before 2012-13. However this could be accelerated, maybe to as early as 2010 if agreement could be achieved by Councils for a national debt settlement.
- 3.9 At a local level, if and when the proposals are confirmed, it would be necessary to update the council's HRA business plan in order to model the impact of the changes. An initial assessment on the financial aspects of the proposals shows that in particular the adoption of a devolved self financing system would bring about considerable additional resources building up over time (arising out of the ability to keep annual rent income and relaxation of the capital receipts pooling requirements). This is however subject to the technical detail of the redistribution of HRA debt, and assumes that this would be neutral at a local level (to include being neutral on the General Fund).
- 3.10 Finally, it is not clear at this stage whether a change of Government in the 2010 General Elections would continue with these plans.

HRA Budget Forecast 2009-10

- 3.11 The HRA budget for 2009-10 was agreed by the Executive on 16 February 2009. The current forecast outturn for 2009-10 is an overspend of £42k, and this comprises the following items:-
- 3.11.1 Rent Income – Additional £154k income forecast from HRA commercial properties;
- 3.11.2 Capital Financing – forecast overspend of £155k, mainly associated with borrowing costs on the build of Granville New Homes.
- 3.11.3 Housing Repairs – forecast underspend of £112k due to capitalisation of revenue costs.
- 3.11.4 General management – Forecast Overspend of £153k – this budget forecast contains many budget lines, but the most significant is a forecast overspend of £1.017m on communal electricity, which is offset in part by a number of underspending budgets on general and supervision management.

4.0 Financial Implications

- 4.1 This report is wholly concerned with financial issues.

5.0 Legal Implications

- 5.1 Under section 74 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 (“the 1989 Act”), the Council is required to keep a separate Housing Revenue Account of sums falling to be credited or debited in respect of its housing stock. Sections 75 and 76 of the 1989 Act set out the rules for establishing and maintaining that account. Under section 76 of the 1989 Act, the Council is required to formulate in January and February of each year proposals for the HRA for the following year which satisfy the requirements of that section and which relate to income, expenditure and any other matters which the Secretary of state has directed shall be included.
- 5.2 In formulating its HRA budget proposals the Council must secure that upon their implementation the HRA will not show a debit balance assuming that the best assumptions and best estimates it can make at the time prove to be correct. Put simply, the legislation requires the Council to prevent a debit balance, to act reasonable in making assumptions and estimates and to act prudently.
- 5.3 The Act also requires the authority to review the proposals from time to time and make such adjustments as are necessary to ensure that the requirements, as set out above, continue to be met.
- 5.4 This report sets out the Government’s options and proposals for changing the Council Housing Finance System. With regard to the self financing proposals, if councils could agree on the basis of the settlement voluntarily, then the Government could use the powers of the Housing and Regeneration Act could be used to implement this. If this could not be brought about, then the Government would need to secure primary legislation to achieve a national settlement.

6.0 Diversity Implications

- 6.1 There are no specific diversity implications arising from this report.

7.0 Staffing/Accommodation Implications

- 7.1 There are no specific staffing/accommodation implications arising from this report.

8.0 Background Information

Review of HRA business plan - report to Executive on 16 Feb 09
Reform of Council Housing Finance – Consultation July 2009
HRA budget working papers


Any person wishing to inspect the above papers should contact:

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Martin Cheeseman - Director of Housing and Community Care

	<p>Budget Panel 23 September 2009</p> <p>Report from the Director of Finance and Corporate Resources</p>
For Information	Wards Affected: ALL
<p>Review of Previous Budgets</p>	

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 The work programme for the Panel includes a review of the progress achieved through previous budgets.
- 1.2 This report sets out some key indicators of budget performance, including outturn compared to budget and delivery against LAA indicators.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Panel is asked to consider the information contained within the report.

3.0 Performance Since 2006

3.1 Budget Management

The Council has had a strong record of managing its finances and keeping to budget. This has been recognised in successive Use of Resources inspections and is illustrated in Table 1 below.

Table 1 – Revenue Budget Outturn Compared to Budget

	Budget	Outturn	Variance	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	%
2006/07	235,423	235,869	446	0.2
2007/08	244,514	243,742	-772	-0.3
2008/09	257,077	256,973	-104	0.0

3.2 Budget and Council Tax Increases

Table 2 below highlights that the last three budgets have seen reductions the rate of increase in budgets, formula grant from the government and council tax.

Table 2 – Budget, Government Grant and Council Tax Increases

	Budget	Formula Grant	Council Tax
	%	%	%
2007/08	3.5	2.7	4.8
2008/09	3.0	2.0	3.8
2009/10	2.3	1.75	2.5

3.3 Local Area Agreement

Brent's LAA 2006-09 is due to finish in 2009. This agreement is comprised of 12 stretch targets with an associate performance reward grant (PRG) of over £8m. The majority of LAA priorities for 2006-09 achieved their agreed stretch target, with many significantly overachieving:

- Reducing Domestic Violence
- Reducing Accidental Fires
- Street cleaning (provisional data)
- Disadvantaged Groups into Employment - (achieved in part – provisional data). This is due to a process of reclassification and verification currently underway for the first 2 years of the target.
- Housing and Council Tax Benefits Processing Times
- Healthy schools
- Extended schools
- Children and Young People Sports Participation (provisional data)
- Volunteering (provisional data)
- Improving Educational Outcomes for Looked after Children – data is not available until October / November 2009, although both targets are expected to be achieved.

3.4 The following stretch targets have either not achieved their target or are high risk:

- Smoking cessation
- Adults Participating in Sport and Physical Activity

3.5 Detailed performance figures are set out in the Appendix to this report.

4.0 **Legal Implications**

4.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

5.0 Diversity Implications

5.1 There are no direct diversity implications arising from this report.

6.0 Staffing/Accommodation Implications (if appropriate)

6.1 There are no direct staffing implications arising from this report.

7.0 Background Papers

Performance and Finance reports to Executive
Budget Setting reports to Full Council

8.0 Contact Officers

Mick Bowden – Deputy Director of Finance and Resources (020 8937 1460)

DUNCAN McLEOD
Director of Finance and Corporate Resources

Appendix – Performance against LAA Targets

	Performance YTD	Target YTD	Alert YTD	Distance from target	Performance Previous Quarter	Performance this quarter	Direction of Travel	Target this quarter	Annual Target	Performance is?
1 Community Safety										
NI 016 D Serious Acquisitive Crime Rate	24.14	31.30	★	-6.36	7.36	7.21	🟢	7.83	31.30	Smaller is Better
NI 024 D Satisfaction with the way the police & local authorities deal with ASB	97.00	81.00	★	16.00	90.00	97.00	🟢	81.00	81.00	Bigger is Better
NI 015 Serious Violent Crime Rate	1.97	n/a	n/a	n/a	0.47	0.59	🔴	n/a (baseline)	n/a (baseline)	Smaller is Better
CS DV LAA01.1.2.32 D % domestic violence incidents where suspect is present and arrest is made ST	77.00	51.20	★ PUN	25.80	79.10	74.70	🔴	51.20	51.20	Bigger is Better
CS DV LAA01.1.2.33 D Sanctioned detection rate for domestic violence	43.20	37.40	★	5.80	37.10	46.70	🟢	37.40	37.40	Bigger is Better
CS CPS01 D % of ineffective/cracked cases	20.4 (provisional)	26.30	★	-5.90	27.78	20.40	🟢	26.30	26.30	Smaller is Better
BY142iii No. Accidental Fires in Residential Properties	231.00	272.00	★	-41.00	59.00	57.00	🟢	68.00	374.00	Smaller is Better
2 A Clean Place										
BY199a.05 D Env. Cleanliness - Litter (4 monthly tranche periods)	12.58	19.00	★	-6.42	22.20 (period 2)	12.58 (period 3)	🟢	19.00	19.00	Smaller is Better
NI 192 % of Household Waste sent for Reuse, Recycling or Composting (formerly BY82a+b)	28.39	27.00	★	3.64	27.91	25.97	🔴	24.75	27.00	Bigger is Better
NI 188 D Adapting to climate change	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Level 1	Plan is Best
NI 185 D CO2 reduction from Local Authority operations	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Bigger is Better
3 Employment										
REG 11 LAA BME jobs achieved	651.00	244.00	★	407.00	122.00	392.00	🟢	61.00	244.00	Bigger is Better
REG 12 LAA Disadvantaged jobs achieved	275.00	180.00	★	95.00	71.00	57.00	🔴	45.00	180.00	Bigger is Better
NI 152 D Working age people on out of work benefits	14.04	14.00	●	0.04	13.97	13.83	🟢	14.00	14.00	Smaller is Better
NI 150 D Adults in contact with secondary mental health services in employment	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Bigger is Better
BY078a D Average time for new claims	21.90	24.00	★	-2.10	23.49	19.96	🟢	24.00	23.33	Smaller is Better
4 Health and Wellbeing										
PCT SST LAA02.2.26 The number of people who quit smoking for 13 weeks borough wide ST	3 (provisional)	n/a	n/a	n/a	0.00	0.00	n/a	n/a	255 (over 3 yrs)	Bigger is Better
PCT SST LAA02.2.27 The number of people who stop smoking for 4 weeks in NRF areas ST	261 (provisional)	n/a	n/a	n/a	130.00	46.00	🔴	n/a	790 (over 3 yrs)	Bigger is Better
NI 040 % change drug users in effective treatment after 12 week continuous treatment	934 (Jan 09)	1000 (Dec 08)	●	-66.00	n/a	934.00	n/a	n/a	1000.00	Bigger is Better
EC SP25 D % of Adults who Take Part In Sport/Exercise for 30 mins on three occasions a week.	19.50	22.00	▲	-2.50	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Bigger is Better
NI 121 D Mortality rate from all circulatory diseases at ages under 75	89.00	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	84.00	Smaller is Better
NI 112 D Under 18 conception rate	44.20	32.70	▲	11.50	n/a	41.90	n/a	n/a	32.70	Smaller is Better
5 Settled Homes										
NI 156 D No of households living in temporary accommodation	3651.00	3715.00	★	64.00	3721.00	3651.00	🟢	3715.00	3715.00	Smaller is Better
NI 155 D Number of affordable homes delivered (gross)	705.00	458.00	★	247.00	116.00	253.00	🟢	44.00	458.00	Bigger is Better
NI 154 D Net additional homes provided	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Bigger is Better

(see separate attachment for enlarged version)

Appendix – Performance against LAA Targets (continued)

6 Early Excellence										
	Performance YTD	Target YTD	Alert YTD	Distance from Target	Performance Previous Quarter	Performance this Quarter	Direction of Travel	Target this Quarter	Annual Target	Good performance Is?
NI108(a) Key Stage 4 Attainment for BME Groups (Black Caribbean Boys)	Annual Survey - no data yet	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	34.00	Bigger is Better
NI108(b) Key Stage 4 Attainment for BME groups (Somali Boys)	Annual Survey - no data yet	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	19.00	Bigger is Better
NI 111 D First time entrants to the Youth Justice System aged 10 - 17	259.00	240.00	▲	19.00	74.00	59.00	↕	60.00	240.00	Smaller is Better
NI 056 D Proportion of primary children in yr 6 height and weight measured	89.00	88.60	★	0.40	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	88.60	Bigger is Better
NI 056 D % primary children in yr 6 obese	22.5 (2007/8)	22.10	▲	0.40	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	22.10	Smaller is Better
NI 063 Stability of placements of looked after children	65.25	78.00	▲	-12.75	66.00	67.00	↕	78.00	78.00	Bigger is Better
CF SI LAA.02.2.18 Number of schools attaining December 2005 National Health Schools Standard ST	53.00	53.00	★	0.00	51.00	53.00	↕	53.00	53.00	Bigger is Better
CYP3.06.1 D % Sch. Providing Access to Extended Services: Primary	93.00	80.00	★	-11.50	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	80.00	Bigger is Better
CYP3.06.2 D % Sch. Providing Access to Extended Services: Secondary	100.00	100.00	★	-13.50	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	100.00	Bigger is Better
CF LD LAA.03.2.28 The proportion of LAC 16 year olds attaining 5+ A*-G GCSEs ST	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	31.00	Bigger is Better
BV050 Children looked after -1 A*-G GCSE	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	80.00	Bigger is Better
EC SP 11 No of Visits by Young People to Council Sports Facilities.	80463.00	40920.00	★	39543.00	13755.00	15892.00	↕	10230.00	40920.00	Bigger is Better
NI 051 D Effectiveness of CAMHS services	14.00	14.00	★	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	14.00	14.00	Bigger is Better
NI 054 D Services to disabled children parent satisfaction survey	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Bigger is Better
7 Help when you need it										
	Performance YTD	Target YTD	Alert YTD	Distance from Target	Performance Previous Quarter	Performance this Quarter	Direction of Travel	Target this Quarter	Annual Target	Good performance Is?
NI 130 D Social Care clients receiving Self Directed Support (Direct Payments and Individual Budgets)	248.78	172.00	★	76.78	167.68	248.78	↕	n/a	172.00	Bigger is Better
NI 135 D Carers receiving needs assessment or review and a specific carer's service, or advice & info	16.56	19.60	▲	-3.04	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	19.60	Bigger is Better

(see separate attachment for enlarged version)