



Overview & Scrutiny Annual Report

2009 - 2010

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Foreword by Councillor Lesley Jones

Over the last year overview & scrutiny has been at the forefront in tackling issues that are important to local people and impact on Brent as a place to live and work. As well as identifying areas that are unique to the borough, we have brought a local perspective to national issues. Scrutiny has responded to concerns raised by carers of people with learning difficulties in relation to the modernisation of day care opportunities, taken an in-depth look at Local Area Agreement targets that relate to crime, started to monitor the introduction of the council's Improvement and Efficiency Action Plan and focussed on areas related to health inequalities.

The committees have completed a number of task groups this year all of which have been well received. Partners are becoming increasingly involved in our work and the *Services for women in and exiting prostitution* task group is an example of overview & scrutiny's ability to fire up a partnership response to an issue. The number of different members involved with task group work has improved this year with some members taking part in reviews who have never previously been involved.

Engaging members of the public in our work is challenging, but is one of the most rewarding parts of our role. Members have met with carers, held meetings out of the town hall, consulted with a wide variety of groups and individuals related to specific reviews and undertaken site visits. The overview & scrutiny newsletter is distributed to libraries and members of the Local Strategic Partnership as well as being available on our website.

This annual report comes at the end of an administration and therefore the current Corporate Strategy 2006 -2010. To illustrate how overview and scrutiny has contributed to the development and implementation of council priorities this report provides an overview of all of the task groups undertaken during this administration and their outcomes and impacts. It also sets out how overview & scrutiny has contributed to the delivery of the Corporate Strategy this year.

The next few years are likely to be challenging in terms of local government finances and the demand for better more efficient and integrated services. The Total Place agenda nationally and the implementation of the council's Improvement and Efficiency Action Plan will play a key role in our work programme development as will the implementation of the scrutiny related changes, such as petition appeals, introduced in the 2009 Local Government Act.

Finally I would like to thank all of the committee and task group chairs and members for their hard work and support in making this a successful year for the overview and scrutiny function in Brent. I believe that we are well placed to meet the challenges ahead.

How overview and scrutiny operates in Brent

Overview and scrutiny is a process independent of the council's decision-making Executive which was established in the Local Government Act 2000. It allows councillors to review existing policy, develop new options for improving services, hold the council's Executive and partner agencies to account and check the delivery and performance of council services against agreed aims. Overview and scrutiny is usually carried out by committees or smaller task groups.

The Centre for Public Scrutiny has outlined four principles of good scrutiny. They are:

1. Good scrutiny should provide 'critical friend' challenge to executive policy-makers and decision-makers.
2. It should reflect the voice and concerns of the public and its communities.
3. It should be carried out by 'independent minded governors' who lead and own the scrutiny process.
4. Scrutiny should drive improvement in public services.

Overview and scrutiny can provide a constructive challenge to the Executive, allowing members of all political groups to investigate issues from a non-political view point. Effective overview and scrutiny should be evidence based and engage non-executive (frontline) councillors and community representatives in the council's decision-making process.

Overview and scrutiny is a councillor led process which in Brent has adopted an overarching approach to cross-cutting issues. In Brent, we currently have an overarching Overview & Scrutiny Committee and a Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has four sub committees with a distinct focus and remit. They are the Health Select Committee, Performance and Finance Select Committee, the Forward Plan Select Committee, and the Budget Panel.

Each committee, except the Budget Panel, has a membership of eight non-Executive councillors. The Budget Panel has six members. The Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee also have six additional co-opted members from the education sector in Brent, as required by law. Four of the co-opted members have voting rights. Two are non-voting. Each committee is politically balanced to reflect the overall political balance of the council.

The committees meet between six and twelve times a year. All meetings are held in public. Each committee is responsible for setting its own work programme and deciding what it wishes to scrutinise. In addition to holding meetings, many of the committees can set up time limited task groups to look in more depth at a particular issue they wish to scrutinise. Local councillors work closely with officers from across the authority to focus the work of the council's overview and scrutiny committees and champion issues through structured work programmes. Councillors chair committees, setting their agenda, steering in-depth investigations, and endorsing recommendations for consideration by the Executive.

Overview and scrutiny meetings take place in a variety of settings. Whilst formal meetings are predominantly committee based, task group work allows for greater flexibility with meetings and focused sessions within the community. Targeted panels and visits are good ways of gaining a snapshot of an issue locally or testing services from a user perspective. Increasingly the activities of partner agencies are an important element of scrutiny work.

Links to Brent's Corporate Strategy

This was the final year of the current administration and therefore the final year for implementing the priorities and ambitions set out in Brent Council's Corporate Strategy 2006-10. The overview and scrutiny function has played a key role in monitoring and challenging how the vision outlined in the Corporate Strategy is being implemented and in developing reports and recommendations that will contribute to achieving the council's strategic goals. By providing this focus overview & scrutiny ensures it remains relevant to local people and play a significant role in engaging with local communities, helps the council make better decisions and enhances the efficiency of the organisation.

The purpose of this section of the report is to provide examples of how the overview and scrutiny function has achieved this in 2009/10.

A great place

Clean & Green – Two of the task groups completed by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee this year have contributed to this priority. These were: Climate Change in Brent Council buildings and Increasing Participation in Recycling in Flats. Both task groups were well received with the recommendations from the recycling in flats review being fed into the council's wider domestic waste review. The Performance and Finance Select Committee continued to review the performance of the current waste contract and monitored the development of a new domestic waste strategy.

Safe – The Performance and Finance Select Committee examined performance in relation to LAA targets on violent crime and crime prevention in relation to 18 – 25 year olds. Task groups completed this year included: *services for women in and exiting prostitution and safety on the journey to and from school*. The Overview & Scrutiny Committee has started to develop its role in scrutinising the work of Brent's Crime Prevention Strategy Group.

Lively – The Children and Families Overview & Scrutiny Committee reviewed how services for young people were being developed in Brent. The Performance and Finance Select Committee investigated ways of increasing adult participation in sport.

A borough of opportunity

Local employment and enterprise – The Overview & Scrutiny Committee considered the local impact of the recession to ensure that the council is taking steps to protect the local economy and jobs.

Health & wellbeing – Health & wellbeing is the focus of the Health Select Committee. The committee has reviewed the plans and performance of local health organisations and has recently completed a task group investigating childhood immunisation in Brent. The Overview & Scrutiny Committee has started a task group looking at health services for adults with learning difficulties.

Help when you need it – The Overview & Scrutiny Committee reviewed services in place for the protection of vulnerable adults and monitored the progress of Adult Social Care transformation in relation to modernising day opportunities for people with learning difficulties.

One community

Settled homes – The Overview & Scrutiny Committee scrutinised performance information relating to registered social landlords operating in Brent. The Performance and Finance

Select Committee examined the impact of Brent Housing Partnership's new responsive repair system, voids management and capital budgets.

Early excellence – The Children and Families Overview & Scrutiny Committee has taken an active interest in support for children. In particular they have examined new process for allocating funding and reviewed progress on the special education needs improvement and efficiency review.

Community engagement – The Overview & Scrutiny Committee received the Neighbourhood Working Annual Report. One of the key focuses of the committee was looking at how engagement with local communities influenced the spending of ward budget and service delivery. The Performance & Finance Committee reviewed the findings of Brent's Residents' Attitude Survey. Task groups continue to undertake community engagement specifically in relation to the subject area being investigated.

Civic leadership – The Overview & Scrutiny Committee examined the Local Strategic Partnership's Annual Report and its self evaluation. The chair of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee is now a member of the LSP's Strategic Forum. The Performance & Finance Committee has undertaken in depth reviews of specific Local Area Agreement targets.

Building capacity – The Overview & Scrutiny Committee has monitored the progress the development of the Voluntary Sector Strategy. The development of this strategy was a recommendation of a task group and is aimed at improving the council's relationship with the voluntary sector. The Budget Panel continued to scrutinise the council's budget. This year it paid particular attention to the implementation of the council's Improvement and Efficiency Action Plan.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

2009-10

Chair – Councillor Lesley Jones



The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has a wide ranging remit that includes all council services (except those in relation to Children and Families), scrutiny of partners, the Local Strategic Partnership, the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (in Brent this is called the Crime Prevention Strategy Group) and the Local Area Agreement. It scrutinises the implementation of the corporate strategy undertakes post decision scrutiny and hears councillor call for actions. The committee also oversees the work of the Budget Panel, Health Select Committee, Performance and Finance Select Committee and the Forward Plan Select Committee.

The members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee were:

Councillor Lesley Jones (Chair)
Councillor Alec Castle (Vice Chair)
Councillor Kanta Mistry
Councillor HB Patel

Councillor Chris Leaman
Councillor Ruth Moher*
Councillor David Clues
Councillor Bobby Thomas

*Cllr Moher was a member of the committee until December 2009, at which point the membership reduced from eight to seven to take into account a change in the political balance of the council.

The main issues considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in 2009/10 included:

Voluntary Sector Strategy

The committee has scrutinised the progress of the voluntary sector strategy and the implementation of the recommendations from the Voluntary Sector Task Group carried out by members in 2006/07. Around £14m is spent each year in Brent on services provided by the voluntary sector, but the purpose of the strategy is to develop a support framework for the sector that isn't just based on financial support.

When the committee first considered the strategy in May 2009, the main areas of concern were the way that the council co-ordinated its funding for the voluntary sector with other organisations, such as the PCT, the use of Grant-tracker software and the process for developing the strategy. These issues were followed up in December 2009, when three voluntary sector representatives provided evidence to the committee on their working relationship with the local authority. The committee was concerned that some of the larger voluntary sector organisations in the borough hadn't been involved in the development of the strategy at that time and that the existence of the Main Grants Programme wasn't as well known as it could have been. The committee made recommendations to the Executive in regard to this.

The development of the strategy and the work being done to build capacity and provide funding to the voluntary sector to meet the boroughs needs will continue to be scrutinised.

Crime and Disorder Scrutiny

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is the council's designated crime and disorder scrutiny committee. Its terms of reference were changed at the beginning of 2009/10 to reflect this. The committee has considered crime and disorder issues a number of times during 2009/10 in order to meet statutory obligations, but also because of the importance of this work in Brent. The initial areas reviewed by the committee included Crime Prevention Strategy Group Action Plan and the priorities for Brent. As a result of this initial scrutiny, further reports were brought to the committee on the use of Section 60 stop and search powers and the Community Payback scheme in Brent.

Task group work also provides members an opportunity to contribute to the crime and disorder reduction work happening in Brent. The most obvious example of this in the last year was the services for women in and exiting prostitution task group. The task group's recommendations have been endorsed by the Crime Prevention Strategy Group and will be added to their work programme for implementation.

Leader's update on the council's priorities

It has become customary for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to invite the Leader of the Council to attend at least two of its meetings each year to answer questions about how the administration is delivering the council's priorities. Ensuring that the Leader of the Council is called to account at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is an important part of the work programme.

Councillor Bob Blackman, Deputy Leader of the Council, attended the committee in place of the leader in July 2009. He answered questions on the following issues:

- The impact of the recession in Brent and the steps the local authority was taking to limit the impact on local people and support individuals and business in need, where necessary.
- The development of social housing in Brent and overcoming the challenge that the economic downturn was having on the development of housing.
- Steps being taken to recruit permanent social workers.
- The shortage of school places in Brent, especially in primary schools.

These issues were followed up with Councillor Paul Lorber, Leader of the Council, at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting in October 2009. The committee also questioned the Leader on the number of children in local authority care and steps being taken to share services with other boroughs, where there were opportunities to do so.

One Stop Service Redesign Project

Reshaping Customer Contact is one of the key projects included in the council's Improvement and Efficiency Action Plan. As part of this project the council has been reviewing the way that it provides customer services to people in the borough and the One Stop Service is in the process of being reconfigured. The focus on the redesign has been to reduce the use of face to face contact and open up other means of communication, predominantly through use of the council's website.

The committee considered this work twice in 2009/10. Of particular concern has been demand for customer services following the reconfiguration and the onset of the economic downturn, which was expected to lead to an increase in enquiries. This hasn't materialised and members were keen to know why this was the case and what the implications are for the One Stop Service of falling user numbers.

Members want to ensure that the needs of vulnerable people are met within the service redesign. They are also keen that in areas where face to face contact remains popular (in the south of the borough for example), service changes are managed sensitively so that local people can adapt. Follow up on this issue is to happen in November 2010 to check on the latest stages of this project.

Modernising Day Opportunities for People with Learning Disabilities

The work being done to modernise day services for people with learning disabilities has been one of the main focuses of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in 2009/10. Members have been following the service user and carer's assessment process to check that they have been implemented and that realistic assessments of need have been carried out. There is some nervousness amongst service users and carers about the switch to personalised budgets and the introduction of choice in services for people with learning disabilities.

Carers were invited to the committee's meeting in March 2010 to talk about their experiences of the assessment process and the concerns they have with the modernisation programme. In preparation for this meeting, some of the committee members visited two day centres, Stonebridge and Albert Road. The carers raised a number of concerns with members, including issues with the way carers and service user assessments had been reported back, the introduction of a contract in the service users support plan and its legal standing, and worries that service users needs had not been accurately reflected in the support plans. Carers (and councillors and council officers) are also concerned that there is an underdeveloped private sector market for services for people with learning disabilities for them to spend their personal budgets on.

The committee will continue to monitor the issues raised by carers. In addition the committee intends to set up a task group, which would involve carers, to focus on the emerging issues such as private / voluntary sector capacity to provide the services that people with learning difficulties want.

Councillor Call for Action

Councillor call for action was introduced in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and used for the first time at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in 2009/10. Councillor call for action allows any member of the council to put an issue of interest in their ward on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee agenda for discussion by members. It is the committee that decides whether to investigate the issue in detail.

There were two councillor calls for action in 2009/10. They were:

Tubbs Road

Councillor James Powney initiated a councillor call for action following concern from local residents about the traffic congestion in Tubbs Road, Kensal Green ward. Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed that this was an issue that should be investigated and it was considered in detail by the committee in December 2009. This followed a site visit by members of the committee to Tubbs Road to see the problems for themselves.

Tubbs Road is used as a way of avoiding the Harlesden one-way system by drivers wishing to get to the A40. It is a narrow residential street and is frequently blocked with traffic, including lorries too wide to pass through traffic calming measures installed at the western end of the road. The committee was concerned that action should be taken to address the issues raised by Councillor Powney and members of the public who attended the committee

meeting in December and also accompanied the committee members on their site visit. As a result, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee made a number of recommendations to the Highways Committee on Tubbs Road. The recommendations included:

- Transportation Unit officers should consult residents of Tubbs Road to find out what traffic calming solutions would be acceptable to them in order to reduce the volume of traffic using their street
- Road signs in the area should be reviewed so it is clear to drivers that Tubbs Road has width restrictions and should not be accessed by vehicles wider than 6ft 6inches.
- Road signs should be erected on High Street Harlesden that clearly direct traffic to the A40 via the Harlesden one-way system (A404 and A4000) and that signs be erected on Furness Road that direct traffic to the A40 via Scrubs Lane (A219);
- Traffic lights at the western end of Tubbs Road be re-phased so that traffic does not build up beyond the width restrictors in Tubbs Road to ease traffic congestion in the street;
- Satellite navigation companies and internet mapping organisations be contacted by officers in the Transportation Unit to see if the narrow, residential nature of Tubbs Road can be shown clearly on their maps, and that it is not depicted as a major through route, as is currently the case.
- Officers should consider the feasibility of preventing rights turns out of Furness Road into High Street Harlesden, which drivers appear to be using as a route to Tubbs Road to cut through to the A40; and preventing left turns out of Tubbs Road into Old Oak Lane, again to reduce the number of cars using Tubbs Road by stopping the direct cut through towards the A40.

The recommendations were accepted by the Highways Committee and will be followed up by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in July 2010 to see how they are being implemented.

Willesden Junction Station

Councillor James Powney also initiated a councillor call for action in relation to environmental problems at Willesden Junction Station. He was concerned that the area has become unsightly and used to dump litter, that there is poor lighting on footpaths which are underused as a result and the paths themselves are in poor condition. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has agreed to consider this in more detail in 2010/11. This may take the form of a joint task group with colleagues from Hammersmith and Fulham Council, because the station is on the border of the two authorities.

Task Groups

The Overview & Scrutiny committee followed up on the implementation of the recommendation from the *Town Centre Regeneration* task group. Some progress had been made particularly in relation to engagement with local businesses via Neighbourhood Working. The committee will continue to monitor progress.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has considered the final reports from the following task groups during 2009/10:

- **Climate Change**
- **Recycling in flats**
- **Services for women in and exiting prostitution**
- **Transition services for vulnerable young people aged 16 to 25**

Further information about these reviews is set out in the next section of this report.

The Committee set up a task group during 2009/10 which is still to be completed, but should be reporting early in 2010/11:

- **Health services for people with learning disabilities**

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has agreed to start three more task groups during 2010/11:

Enhancing local democracy – The committee has agreed a scope for this task group, which will focus on:

- How can Brent Council improve residents' understanding of local government including knowledge of the services it provides and the interaction between local government and other public sector organisations?
- Improving partners' understanding of local government so that the local authority and partner organisations are able to work together more effectively.
- Best practice examples that have been used successfully by other authorities to improve participation in local democracy
- How political events should be managed (such as Full Council meetings, Executive meetings, overview and scrutiny committees etc) to ensure there are appropriate ways for members of the public to participate.
- How service areas in Brent involved members of the public in service planning and delivery and the lessons that other departments can learn from this to improve their involvement work.
- How can the council encourage young people to get involved in democracy?
- How can the council support councillors in their engagement with local residents and make them more accessible to people in the borough?

Modernising day services for people with learning disabilities – The scope of this task group has yet to be decided but is likely to focus on one or more of the issues identified by the committee, such as private / voluntary sector capacity to provide the services that people with learning difficulties want.

Willesden Junction Councillor Call for Action – The committee has approached Hammersmith and Fulham's scrutiny committee to see if they are interested in working on a joint task group to consider solutions to the environmental issues at Willesden Junction Station. Hammersmith and Fulham have responded positively to this and work is likely to take place in early summer 2010. In reality, this might involve a number of meetings with stakeholders rather than a task group, but this will need to be worked out with councillors from Hammersmith and Fulham when terms of reference are drawn up.

Children and Families Overview & Scrutiny Committee 2009-2010



Chair – Councillor Motley

The Children and Families Overview & Scrutiny Committee's remit covers all issues relating to children's social care, youth provision and education. There is a legal requirement to have co-opted members to discuss issues relating to education. Additional teacher and Brent Youth Parliament observers who attend each meeting which means that the committee benefits from a wide range of expertise. A flexible work programme has allowed the committee to be responsive to emerging issues and events while keeping a continuous focus on issues, such as school places and Brent's application Building Schools for the Future.

The committee invited a number of witnesses who have provided crucial evidence on their unique perspective about the issue under discussion. Witnesses have ranged from council officers, young people, health officials, the police, academics and experts, such as Barnardos and Stonewall.

The members of the committee were:

Councillor	Voting Co-optees	Non-Voting Co-optees
Councillor Will Motley (Chair)	Rev Phil Stone	Dr Levinson
Councillor Fernandez (V Chair)	Mrs Bondzi-Simpson	Dr Al-Khoei
Councillor Lena Ahmed*	Mr Lorenzato	
Councillor Mary Arnold	Mr Akisanya	
Councillor Francis Eniola*		
Councillor Kanta Mistry		
Councillor Jim Moher*		
Councillor Emily Tancred		

*Cllr Eniola was a member of the committee until December 2009, at which point the membership reduced from eight to seven to take into account a change in the political balance of the council. Councillor Ahmed was replaced by Councillor Moher part way through the municipal year.

Brent Youth Parliament

This committee has a strong relationship with Brent Youth Parliament (BYP). Representatives from BYP regularly attend the committee and have official observer status. A BYP member sat on a task group on 'healthy relationships - how to involve parents and faith groups in talking to young people about sex and relationships. The committee also receives regular reports and feedback on the work of the parliament. Most recently, a quarterly meeting was set up between the chair of this committee and the BYP executive to discuss issues of mutual concern.

Child Protection in Brent

The committee has maintained a keen interest in child protection issues. This became even more pertinent following the tragic death of Baby Peter. Members were keen to ensure that all systems in Brent were delivering to a high standard. The Director for Children and Families and the Assistant Director, Social Care attended the committee to present a report and answer questions. A Detective Sergeant from Brent and Harrow Child Abuse Investigation Team also attended to provide their perspective on the issue. Following a discussion, the committee recommended that a cross party group of councillors and senior officers be convened on a regular basis to consider child protection issues. This recommendation was accepted and this group meets quarterly.

Special session on placements for Looked after Children

The committee held a special session which focussed on the differences between residential and foster care placements for children and the impact that this had upon their long term life chances.

The impetus for this session was research which highlighted that in European nations that place greater emphasis on residential care, such as Denmark and Germany, outcomes for young people are better. In the UK, looked after children generally suffer from a range of below average outcomes, for instance they are more likely to become involved in the criminal justice system and leave school without qualifications. The council is putting a lot of resource into raise attainment levels among looked after children and the committee wanted to ensure that the important area of their placement while in care is not being over-looked.

A number of witnesses were invited to the session to bring their unique perspectives to the discussion including; the Manager of the Dalling Road Children's Home, the Chief Executive of the Who Cares? Trust and the Head of London Operations, Barnardos.

There was a lively debate on the issues including the difficulties in comparing the UK model with other countries as they had different historical approaches to the issue.

In conclusion the committee asked the Children and Families department to consider developing a hybrid model of care which included the best elements of residential and foster care. The department have recently embarked upon a project which looks at new models of social care for children and will look at the committee's request as part of this review.

Special Educational Needs

The Special Education Needs (SEN) service is subject to a review as part of the council's Improvement and Efficiency Programme. Early findings from the review indicated that there needs to be a significant increase in-borough provision to reduce costs and meet the demand for SEN places in future years. The committee made a request for more information to be provided including an overview of SEN expenditure, an analysis of current and projected demand for SEN services and an outline of future plans to meet increasing demand, with reference to the Building Schools for the Future 'Strategy for Change'. Members also requested that the final findings and recommendations of the SEN Improvement and Efficiency review be presented to the committee once completed.

Raising achievement amongst white working class boys

Underachievement amongst school pupils is a major concern of the committee. In previous years members have reviewed achievement amongst looked after children and some black and minority ethnic groups. Recent data has highlighted a rise in the numbers of white

working class boys within the not in education employment and training (NEETS) category and statistics show that people within this group are less likely to go into further education. There has also been an increase in the number of child protection plans. The committee requested a report from officers on work being done to tackle this issue. Members were informed that the school improvement service was working with neighbouring authorities to improve attainment of white boys receiving free school meals. Furthermore, the improving outcomes strategy group would be looking at the additional data for these three heritage groups to consider whether or not there was a case to widen the focus of the improving outcomes group to include this strand of work.

Supporting schools to succeed

In a special meeting focussing on school related issues held at Alperton Community School, members received a report on the lowest performing schools in Brent, the factors which contributed to this and the action that had been taken by the Local Authority and the schools to address the challenges.

The Head Teacher at Newfield School attended the meeting to share her experience with the committee. Newfield had once been in special measures but had since improved its performance. The council's school improvement service had provided direct support to Newfield as well as facilitated mentoring support and a forum for teachers to meet. Newfield faced a number of challenges which included: many of the pupils are new arrivals to the UK who speak English as a second language and there was a need to improve teaching, pupil behaviour and attendance. It was reported that a number of measures had been put in place to tackle these problems including encouraging greater involvement of the parents in the school, buddy systems for new arrivals and a clear behaviour policy.

Tackling Homophobic Bullying in Brent

This committee has championed the need to tackle homophobic bullying in Brent. Last year the committee encouraged the Children and Families department to ensure that tackling homophobic bullying was a key feature within the anti-bullying policy in all Brent Schools. An annual update on progress was presented to the committee in February 2010. Members were informed that five Brent schools were participating in Stonewalls Education for All Project where students were developing anti homophobic bullying projects in schools. The good practice from these projects would be spread to all Brent Schools. The chair of this committee also attended a workshop on tackling homophobic bullying which was well attended by pupils from Brent schools. Overall the committee has played a key role in raising the profile of this issue and ensuring that more resources are directed to this important area.

Task Groups

The Children and Families Overview & Scrutiny Committee considered the final report of the Pupil safety on the journey to and from school task group.

Budget Panel

2009-10

Chair – Councillor Alan Mendoza

The principal aim of the Budget Panel is to challenge and assist the Executive during the budget making process by undertaking an in-depth review of the key budgetary issues facing the council and influencing the development of the administration's budget proposals.



The Panel's terms of reference include examining:

- The principles of budget setting
- The robustness of the budget and the ability to deliver savings
- Key revenue and capital budget outputs and decisions
- The Medium Term Financial Strategy

Members of the Budget Panel were:

Councillor Alan Mendoza (Chair)
Councillor Valerie Brown (Vice Chair)
Councillor Muhammed Butt

Councillor Mark Cummins
Councillor Pawan Gupta
Councillor Zaffar Van Kalwala

The Budget Panel met on seven occasions between July 2009 and February 2010 and received a range of evidence from across council departments. As this was the final year of the current administration and the seminal year for the implementation of Brent Council's Improvement and Efficiency Strategy and Action Plan the Budget Panel focussed on how the Corporate Strategy had been delivered and the council's capacity to deliver savings and services in future.

The Budget Panel produced three reports during the course of its work:

- **First interim report** prior to the draft budget
- **Second interim report**, which builds on the first report and includes recommendations on the draft budget prior to it being agreed by the Executive
- **Final report**, which builds on the second report and includes recommendations on:
 - the Executive's budget prior to it being debated at Full Council;
 - the budget process; and
 - the budget scrutiny process.

The recommendations made in the Panel's report fell into the following areas:

- The Budget Gap
- Budget Pressures
- Improvement and Efficiency Action Plan
- Housing revenue Account
- Delivering the Corporate Strategy

There were two main areas of concern identified by the Budget Panel. Firstly the need for scenario planning in preparation of cuts to local government finance following the general election. Secondly the need for careful monitoring of the council's Improvement and Efficiency Action Plan to ensure that benefits are realised and services are transformed and improved. The Panel wanted particular attention to be paid to the practical issues involved when introducing any new programme of this size and scope.

The Panel was pleased that the Executive responded positively to all of the recommendations made during the course of the reporting process. This was reiterated by the Deputy Leader of the Council and Councillor Blackman at the Budget Panel's final meeting. The Budget Panel's recommendations are set out below:

A. Recommendations reiterated from 2009/10 Budget Review

- 1) That balances should be set at an adequate level. In deciding what the adequate level is, the Budget Panel strongly advise the administration to be guided by the Director of Finance and Corporate Resources.
- 2) That long term budgetary and service delivery risks should be assessed and explained when making decisions on savings.
- 3) That the budget should be robust, realistic and predictive of future demand to avoid overspends.
- 4) That there should be no increases in planned levels of unsupported borrowing given the impact this has on the longer term financial prospects of the authority.
- 5) That all members be encouraged to attend future meetings of the budget panel to raise awareness of the items within the budget and feed into the budget scrutiny process. The budget panel proposes that one of its meetings or a portion thereof be earmarked for the purpose of taking submissions from other members and that they be invited accordingly.

B. Recommendations from 2010/11 Budget Review

- 6) Given the current budget challenges and demands facing the council and future financial constraints facing the public sector, the administration should ensure that in setting a budget for 2010/11 future budgets are not further strained by the excessive use of one-off resources.
- 7) Given that there is likely to be reductions in government spending after the general election regardless of the political orientation of the new government, the council should undertake detailed scenario planning prior to the local and general elections on how it will address the need to make such savings taking account of the main policies of all major political parties in order to assess where likely funding problems might arise.
- 8) That the overview & scrutiny function plays a key role in the governance of the Improvement and Efficiency Strategy and Action Plan.
- 9) That savings targets identified in the Improvement & Efficiency Action Plan are profiled and monitored, and that the lessons learned from the previous Invest to Save programme - both positive and negative - are brought to bear in ensuring that the ambitious efficiency targets are met. This information should be regularly reported to the Budget Panel.

- 10) That the council ensures that it learns from the experience of other local authorities undertaking improvement and efficiency programmes and shares our experience with others.
- 11) That the effectiveness of the council to deliver large scale change as set out in the Improvement and Efficiency Action Plan is assessed, and any weaknesses are addressed.
- 12) That the council lobbies the government on the currently proposed changes to concessionary fares and on any future changes that will have a detrimental effect on our local community and council finances.
- 13) That the council lobbies the government to ensure that sufficient funds are provided to meet all additional costs that arise from the proposals in the Personal Care at Home Bill.
- 14) That the council develops a long term sustainable Housing Revenue Account business plan and continues to lobby for changes to the current national housing finance system.
- 15) That at the end of the current administration a review is undertaken to assess where priorities in the Corporate Strategy have not been delivered and the reasons for this. This will provide the new administration with the necessary information to decide whether the items should be included in the new Corporate Strategy, as well as indicating whether the priority became obsolete or was not funded as other priorities were deemed more urgent.
- 16) That the future Corporate Strategy contains clear costs and risks set out against each priority. This should be used as a framework for comprehensive mapping of the risks faced by the council and new administration.
- 17) That members receive regular information on performance against the corporate strategy.
- 18) That an assessment is made of the impact on the capital programme of improving the standard of roads and footways in Brent to the upper quartile of London boroughs.
- 19) That the council pursues the accurate reflection of the population of Brent in the 2011 census.

**Performance & Finance Select Committee
2009-10
Chair – Councillor Dunn**



In 2009/10 the Performance and Finance Select Committee has continued to challenge performance across a wide spectrum of council and partnership activities and services focusing on value for money and service improvement.

The members of the committee in 2009/10 were:

Councillor Anthony Dunn (Chair)	Councillor Muhammed Butt
Councillor Harshadbhai Patel (Vice Chair)	Councillor Alan Mendoza
Councillor Lena Ahmed*	Councillor Rob Pagnamenta
Councillor Daniel Bessong	Councillor Zaffar Van Kalwala

*Cllr Ahmed was a member of the committee until December 2009, at which point the membership reduced from eight to seven to take into account a change in the political balance of the council.

The main issues covered by the committee in 2009/10 were:

Delivery of the waste contract and the future of waste in Brent

Since the introduction of a new waste contract in April 2007 the committee has taken a keen interest in monitoring its progress and holding the contractor to account when necessary. The committee has paid particular attention to recycling, street cleansing, missed collections and complaints. The introduction of compulsory recycling in August 2008 has resulted in a step change in the recycling rate which has led to a significant reduction of waste going to landfill. While welcoming this, the committee has remained concerned about the number of properties in Brent, particularly flats that do not have access to any recycling facilities. It has also challenged the service's ability to reach the LAA target of 40% by 2011.

The committee has been keen to monitor the development of a new domestic waste strategy for Brent which forms part of the council's Improvement and Efficiency Action Plan. The key areas of interest for the committee were: ensuring that solutions were tailored to different property types, that cross-boundary cooperation was explored, all options were considered and that residents were consulted on proposed options as soon as possible.

Quarterly Performance Reports

Quarterly Performance Reports provided the committee with information on council spending, activity throughout the year and targets achieved in relation to the Corporate Strategy. They also detailed the progress of the LAA targets offering the opportunity for the committee to select individual targets to look at in depth. The Director of Finance and Corporate Resources also included an overview of the council's latest budget position in this report.

In – depth review of partnership LAA targets

Adult Participation in Sport – this formed part of the 2006/9 LAA and set a target of 22% of the adult population undertaking 30 minutes of activity three times a week. By the end of 2008 although the council had the fourth best improvement in London it was short of

reaching the target. The committee focussed on measures being considered to improve performance. These included: improved facilities including the need for another swimming pool, use of parks including gyms, education via community centres and encouraging customers to maintain their visits to sports centres.

Crime Prevention 18-25 age group – This is measured by the number of offenders who commit and are charged with serious acquisitive crime. The LAA target is to reduce this by 2.2%. The committee questioned the Borough Commander and Interim Head of Community Safety about measures being undertaken to meet this target, which was classed as amber. These included: The ‘three strikes and you’re out initiative’, school visits, mediation projects and diversion activities. Police anti drug operations such as Ladden and Soto were also highlighted, and members explored whether initiatives such as the Family Intervention Programme piloted in Strathclyde could be considered for Brent.

Violent Crime – This target covers the most serious violent crime, including domestic violence and aims to reduce the number by 3%. Increased reporting of domestic violence has meant that the percentage has increased. The committee heard that this was in part due to increase reporting because of confidence in the police’s ability to deal with domestic violence. A domestic violence squad had recently been set up supported by the magistrates and voluntary organisations. The committee will continue to monitor the progress on this target.

Brent Housing Partnership (BHP) – Repair Service, Void Management and Capital Programme

The committee was keen to examine the impact of BHP’s new responsive repair system. Since the lean fundamentals review was undertaken the number of times a tenant had to call more than once about the same job had reduced from 50% to 20%. The percentage of jobs completed during the first visit and appointments kept had also increased. This has provided fewer opportunities for complaints which largely centred on time and process issues, rather than quality of work.

Days taken to re-let a void property had reduced from 31 days in 2006/7 to 28 between April and September 2009. The committee will continue to monitor this and asked for comparison figures with other Registered Social Landlords.

The committee heard that a capital budget of £25m was available during 2009/10 because the council had successfully bid to bring funds forward, though this would drop to £8.5m in 2010/11. Twenty major works contracts were therefore being undertaken in 2009/10. Members were concerned to hear that a capital gap of £10m per year had been identified for the next 30 years. Housing Revenue Accounts were being reviewed nationally and work was being undertaken locally. The committee will be reviewing the situation in the new municipal year.

Revenues & Benefits

Despite the economic downturn the committee was pleased to learn that council tax collection rates exceeded target. A number of initiatives were undertaken during 2009/10 to improve collection performance including revised arrangements for customers who have council tax arrears. Improvements have been made to speed up the processing of Housing and Council Tax benefits claims. The Revenues and IT contract expires in April 2011 and the committee has taken a keen interest in the process and the options available and will continue following this through to its conclusion.

Residents Attitude Survey

The committee reviewed the findings of Brent's Residents' Attitude Survey 2009. This face to face survey provided the council with the opportunity to track satisfaction with a number of services since the survey started in 1990. Key results included:

- the highest level of satisfaction with the council at 65% since the survey began an increase of 17% since the 2005 survey
- 83% satisfaction with the area as a place to live
- 74% of residents thought Brent was a place where people from different cultural backgrounds get on well together

The most important issues for residents were identified as: perceived levels of crime, activities for teenagers, road and pavement repairs, clean streets and levels of traffic congestion.

Staff Survey

The committee reviewed the results of the staff survey and the progress of actions in the resulting action plan. Areas identified for improvement included: communication, opportunities for career progression, accuracy of appraisals in reflecting performance and the visibility of senior managers. The committee was particularly concerned that there was a focus on communicating with staff during the implementation of the Improvement and Efficiency Action Plan.

Follow up on task groups

Community use of Council owned building – the committee heard that due to the recession the implementation of the recommendations was challenging, but an officer group had been formed to take forward implementation.

**Health Select Committee
2009-10
Chair - Councillor Leaman**



The Health Select Committee scrutinises the performance of local NHS Trusts to inform policy development within the council and help promote health and well-being across the borough.

The Health and Social Care Act 2001 extended the powers of scrutiny for all local authorities in England and Wales with social services responsibilities to cover local NHS bodies.

The act requires local authorities to appoint an overview and scrutiny committee to review and scrutinise local NHS organisations and matters relating to the health service in their area.

The Chair and Chief Executive of NHS Brent regularly attended meetings of the committee, along with senior personnel from North West London NHS Hospitals Trust, and Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust (the local mental health Trust). Representatives from local patient groups and voluntary organisations have also been regularly invited to attend meetings.

The members of the Health Select Committee were:

Councillor Chris Leaman (Chair)
Councillor Eddie Baker
Councillor David Clues
Councillor George Crane

Councillor Uma Fernandes
Councillor Derek Jackson
Councillor Ruth Moher
Councillor Colum Moloney*

*Councillor Moloney was a member of the committee until December 2009, at which point the membership reduced from eight to seven to take into account a change in the political balance of the council.

The main issues considered by the Health Select Committee in 2009/10 included:

Improving Access to GPs in Brent

The committee considered access to GP services on two occasions in 2009/10 and it is an issue that has been of concern to members for some time. Satisfaction with access to GP services in Brent is below the London and England averages, and is getting worse. The committee spent time scrutinising plans to improve access in Brent, but due to declining performance the committee agreed in February 2010 to set up a task group, to begin work in the new municipal year to look at this issue in more detail. In the meantime, the committee will continue to monitor the results of quarterly satisfaction surveys to look at trends in satisfaction with services throughout 2010/11.

Acute Services Review – emergency surgery services and paediatric services provided by North West London NHS Hospitals Trust

The acute services review was a major item for the Health Select Committee in 2009/10. North West London Hospitals, with NHS Brent and NHS Harrow have been looking at reconfiguring emergency surgery services and paediatric services provided at Northwick Park and Central Middlesex Hospital. The committee has spent time scrutinising the rationale for service changes, the plans for public consultation on paediatric services and

responded to those plans setting out the reasons why it supported the proposed changes to paediatric services, but setting out areas it felt needed to be addressed.

Much of this work was done in conjunction with Harrow Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Members from Brent attended a Harrow Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting in July 2009 to discuss the options for emergency surgery services (which were implemented in late 2009 because it was felt that the existing arrangements were unsustainable and unsafe – all emergency surgery carried out by the trust is now done at Northwick Park Hospital) and paediatric services. A further joint meeting took place in January 2010 to sign off the consultation plan for paediatric services. A challenge session and tour of the paediatric unit at Northwick Park Hospital was held in February 2010 to help Brent and Harrow councillors prepare their response to the consultation. The preferred option, supported by the Health Select Committee will see in-patient paediatric services centralised at Northwick Park Hospital, but two paediatric assessment units will be established, one at Northwick Park and a second at Central Middlesex Hospital. The changes to paediatric services are to be implemented during 2010/11 and the Health Select Committee and Harrow Overview and Scrutiny Committee intend to monitor implementation. There could be opportunities for further joint scrutiny of this issue.

North West London NHS Hospitals Trust Inpatient Survey and We Care Programme

The Health Select Committee has spent time looking at the North West London NHS Hospitals Trust inpatient survey. The survey had shown that the trust was the lowest performing nationally in the following areas:

- Patients being treated with dignity and respect
- Help at mealtimes
- Trust and confidence in doctors
- Pain control
- Doctors and nurses working together
- Answering questions about operations and procedures

The committee was pleased to hear that the trust was developing an action plan with committees specifically assigned to look at themes where the trust was performing below the national average. The committee wanted to keep tabs on this issue and so followed up by looking at progress in implementing the *We Care* programme.

The *We Care* programme was developed and implemented following the poor inpatient survey results and was designed to improve the experience of patients in the trust. The committee was informed that by putting in place a raft of measures to achieve sustained improvement, the trust was able to show that nursing care complaints had gone down by 25% - a significant improvement, with a similar increase in written compliments. There had also been a 50% reduction in complaints to the Ombudsman from bereaved relatives. The aim for the trust was to get patients more involved in their own care, and to achieve sustained improvement over time.

The committee has agreed to keep inpatient satisfaction in their work programme and will consider the results of the 2009 survey in July 2010. They will also follow up the *We Care* programme in autumn 2010.

Health Inequalities

Health inequalities have become a major focus of the Health Select Committee's work programme during 2009/10. Dealing with health inequalities, and in particular tackling preventative illness is a major priority for the health service and local authorities. The committee's work programme needed to reflect this. Among the issues considered in 2009/10 were:

a). Audit Commission Review into Health Inequalities in Brent

The Audit Commission has carried out a review into health inequalities in Brent and the way that they are tackled by NHS Brent and the council. The Audit Commission identified a number of key strengths in Brent including:

- the commitment of partners to tackling health inequalities
- the quality of the joint strategic needs assessment
- the high level of commitment to performance managing health inequalities.

As a result of the Audit Commission's review, partners had agreed that the local priority for tackling health inequalities would be to increase the levels of physical activity in adults. There have been improvements in getting young people involved in physical activity, but more work is needed to improve adult participation.

The review also commented on the role of the Health Select Committee in tackling health inequalities. The committee needs to consider key performance information, and a framework is being produced that it will monitor throughout 2010/11. Agendas also needed to better reflect health inequalities in Brent, and throughout the year the committee tried to ensure at least one health inequalities issue was on each committee meeting agenda.

b). Smoking Cessation

Brent's smoking cessation service has been reintroduced following implementation of the PCT turnaround plan. The Health Select Committee has been receiving regular progress reports on the service in 2009/10. Performance has been below target, in terms of the number of 4 week smoking quitters and also in the number of people registering with smoking cessation services in Brent. Members have been concerned with this service, particularly because of the impact that smoking has on people's health and the contribution that smoking cessation can play in reducing ill health and extending life expectancy.

The committee was encouraged to learn that NHS Brent has taken steps to remodel the service in an attempt to increase the number of people signing up and using smoking cessation services in Brent. As well as using the reward based system, through GPs and pharmacists, the PCT has also recruited a smoking cessation team to give greater support to this work and carry out outreach work to help people give up smoking. Because of the importance of this issue, smoking cessation performance will continue to be reported to the Health Select Committee on a quarterly basis as part of the health inequalities monitoring work.

c). Childhood Obesity

The Health Select Committee considered a report on childhood obesity in Brent, as part of its work on health inequalities. Brent has higher levels of childhood obesity than the averages in London and England. Therefore, the committee was interested in initiatives that are taking place in the borough to work with children and their families to combat obesity. The committee was told about the MEND (mind, exercise, nutrition, do it!) programme that is run in Brent with children who need an intensive programme of support to address their weight issues. The MEND programme is only able to reach a small proportion of young people who are obese and so other initiatives are run through schools to encourage young

people to eat healthily and lead more active lives. An obesity strategy is being put together and one of the chapters within that will be aimed at working with businesses, especially fast food takeaways, to try and control childhood obesity. The committee is supportive of the idea to restrict the number of hot food takeaways in close proximity to schools (especially secondary schools) and have made this recommendation to the council's Planning Committee. This will be considered at a future Planning Policy Committee meeting.

Sector Based Health Scrutiny

The chair of the Health Select Committee has worked on two sector based health scrutiny projects in 2009/10:

Stroke and Trauma Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee – The pan-London Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee was established to consider plans for stroke and major trauma services provided in the capital. Councillor Chris Leaman was Brent's representative on this committee, which reported its findings in May 2009. Follow up work was carried out in October 2009, to see how recommendations were being implemented and to check on the progress in the delivery of reconfigured stroke and trauma services. Participation in pan-London work gives Brent an opportunity to influence health services across the capital and improves relationships with other borough health scrutiny councillors, which is important as the NHS moves towards sector based commissioning for acute services.

North West London Integrated Strategic Plan – PCTs in north west London have established the North West London Acute Commissioning Partnership, which is to be the main commissioning body for hospital services in the sector. Health scrutiny chairs in north west London have met informally throughout 2009/10 with senior officers from the partnership to discuss plans for the sector. This is in preparation for the launch of the Integrated Strategic Plan for the sector, which is likely to go out to public consultation in the autumn of 2010. It is possible that a sector based Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be set up to scrutinise these plans.

Belvedere House Day Hospital

Belvedere House Day Hospital provides day services for older people and is run by Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust (the provider of mental health services in Brent). The Health Select Committee called representatives from the trust to attend the meeting held in March 2010 to discuss plans for service reconfiguration at Belvedere House. This was due to concerns raised by members of the public that the service was to change, against the wishes of service users and carers. The committee heard that services at Belvedere were to be modernised, with emphasis switched to providing services in the community, but that no changes would take place without a public consultation taking place and the trust working with service users to identify their future needs.

The Health Select Committee has agreed to continue looking at this issue as it was of significant public interest and has asked to see the trust's consultation plan when it is available in June 2010. The committee will also consider the options for change at Belvedere House later in 2010.

Task Groups

The Health Select Committee followed up on the implementation on the Access to health sites task group. There were a number of areas where good progress had been made in implementing the committee's recommendations, including the installation of an additional

bus stop on Watford Road for passengers using Northwick Park Hospital and the introduction of trial “alight here” calls when buses stop near hospitals, a pilot that is to be extended because of its success. There were areas where further work is needed, particularly engaging all parts of the NHS in transport issues and around public transport access from parts of Brent to Northwick Park Hospital, which remains poor in places despite the efforts of the hospital trust and council officers to lobby for changes. The Health Select Committee will continue to keep a check on this issue and will be following up again in Autumn 2010.

The Committee completed a task group investigating **childhood immunisation** rates in Brent. Further information about this review can be found later in this report

The Health Select Committee has agreed to start a task group looking at **Access to GP services in Brent**. The task group will focus on the reasons for poor satisfaction with access in Brent, and the work that the PCT and GPs are doing to improve access and offer a service that meets patient’s needs.

**Forward Plan Select Committee
2009-10
Councillor Janice Long**



The remit of the Forward Plan Select Committee includes monitoring the Forward Plan in advance of the presentation of any reports to the Executive, as well as scrutinising the decisions made by the Executive and subjecting those decisions to the call-In process when appropriate.

The members of the Forward Plan Select Committee in 2009/10 were:

Councillor Janice Long (Chair)	Councillor David Coughlin
Councillor Emily Tancred	Councillor James Powney
Councillor Valerie Brown	Councillor Harshadbhai Patel
Councillor Alec Castle (Vice Chair)	Councillor Kanta Mistry

This year has been a pro-active year for the Forward Plan Select Committee and members have made numerous recommendations and suggestions to the council's Executive, the Committee's main areas of work in 2009/10 included the following:

Call-Ins

In 2009/10 the Forward Plan Select Committee called in twelve reports:

- Wembley Masterplan: Consultation - Adoption as a Supplementary Planning Document
- New Accommodation for John Kelly Boys' Technology College and John Kelly Girls' Technology College proposed to be replaced by The Crest Boys' Academy and The Crest Girls' Academy
- Addendum to the West London Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy
- Modernisation of the Council's Financial Management Arrangements and Approval for Appointment of Consultants
- Third Pool in Brent – Progress Report
- Authority to participate in a West London Collaborative procurement for the provision of home care, including housing related support and "integrated" home care for adults
- Authority to participate in a West London Collaborative procurement for residential and nursing care for adults
- Brent Civic Centre – Concept Design Proposals and authority to tender contract for a design and build contractor
- Authority to Award the Residential and Respite Care Contract for People with Learning Difficulties
- Future Acquisition Strategy for Brent Transport Fleet and Authority to Tender for Provision of a Leased Maintained Vehicle Fleet
- Former Scouts Hall Site, Coniston Gardens, Kingsbury NW9
- Adult Social Care Annual Performance Assessment 2008/09

Wembley Masterplan: Consultation – Adoption as a Supplementary Planning Document

Residents addressed the Select Committee to raise their concerns regarding the impact on North End Road residents as a result of the decision to open up this road and the resulting traffic that would use it. It was also suggested that bus routes needed to be changed in the area in order to ensure that the Wembley site was well-served.

New Accommodation for John Kelly Boys' Technology College and John Kelly Girls' Technology College proposed to be replaced by The Crest Boys' Academy and The Crest Girls' Academy

Members expressed concern about the length of time pupils would be in temporary accommodation whilst the re-building of the schools was taking place. Clarification was also sought with regard to access arrangements during the re-building, what sports facilities would be available on-site and how an additional form of entry would be accommodated.

Modernisation of the Council's Financial Management Arrangements and Approval for Appointment of Consultants

The Select Committee raised a number of questions in respect of whether the reduction in staff would impact upon the quality of service delivered and whether some residents could be disadvantaged as some services would only be accessible online. Members also requested a briefing note in a few months time to assess whether the changes had led to any impact on equality.

Authority to Award the Residential and Respite Care Contract for People with Learning Difficulties

Members considered proposals to move residents in respite care services for people with learning disabilities from Melrose House to Tudor Gardens. Relatives of the residents were invited to address the Select Committee and they expressed their concerns regarding residents' assessments and arrangements for the move to Tudor Gardens. Members also heard from a GMB and Unison representative with regard to staff concerns about job security and pension and TUPE arrangements. The Select Committee sought assurances that the new provider could meet the needs of the residents and their relatives. Two recommendations were made to the Executive, including that all staff from Melrose House be transferred to Tudor Gardens and be retained for as long as possible to ensure the well-being and security of the residents; and that a contract with the new provider not be agreed until the trade unions and their advisors are satisfied with the pension arrangements. The Executive agreed the recommendation in respect of staff transferral to Tudor Gardens at the December 2009 meeting of the Executive.

Former Scouts Hall Site, Coniston Gardens, Kingsbury

Members considered a decision made by the Executive in January 2010 to dispose of the former Scouts Hall site in Coniston Gardens to a housing association. A representative of the Springfield Estate Residents' Association was invited to address the Select Committee and he expressed concern that a petition against proposals to dispose of the site had not been taken sufficiently into account and that more consultation with local residents was required. A number of views were expressed by Members, including suggestions for other uses of the site and justification was sought as to why the land should be disposed of.

The Select Committee also made recommendations on items that had not been called in, as outlined below.

Planning Enforcement: Review of Priorities for Action

Members sought details on the number of enforcement actions made annually and how widely it was implemented throughout the whole borough. The Select Committee requested that a report on Planning Enforcement be presented annually to the Planning Committee.

Domestic Vehicle Footway Crossover Policy

Members discussed enforcement of the Domestic Vehicle Footway Crossover Policy and felt that because of the number of breaches of the policy by residents, it recommended to the Executive that more publicity be given to informing residents of the policy.

Completed Task Groups

Task group investigations are one of the key ways in which overview and scrutiny can contribute to the delivery of better services for our local community. Many of the task groups we undertake in Brent are cross cutting in nature and aim to provide wider opportunities for community and partner engagement and involvement. Measuring the impact of task group work is not an exact science as the process of an investigation can frequently lead to change or progress without a task group recommendation being necessary. The aim of this section is to highlight the task groups completed this year and some of the outcomes / impacts they have achieved.

Increasing Participation in Recycling in flats

Improving recycling rates in Brent is one of the council's key priorities as outlined in the Corporate Strategy 2006-10. The Corporate Strategy sets a target of 30% of waste reused or recycled by 2010. The Government's Waste Strategy for England 2007 set new targets for recycling and composting of household waste. These are at least 40% by 2010, 45% by 2015, and 50% by 2020. The first of these targets, 40%, was built in to the council's Local Area Agreement 2008/11. Compulsory recycling was introduced in the borough in August 2008 to help increase participation rates and reduce the amount and therefore the cost of waste going to landfill. Compulsion does not currently apply to flats but if it did it would be unlikely to have the same impact on those living in flats as those in houses. This task group was set up to investigate ways of increasing participation in recycling in flats.

Key findings and recommendations focussed on the following themes:

- Understanding our local population to raise the profile of recycling
- Resources available for recycling from flats
- Making recycling easy
- Communication, education and involving residents

The Executive agreed that the task group's recommendations should be considered as part of the Waste & Recycling project in the Improvement and Efficiency Strategy.

Climate Change

The Overview and Scrutiny committee commissioned a review to consider climate change in Brent. The task group specifically focussed on the delivery of the council's Carbon Management Strategy & Implementation Plan and sought to identify and examine other opportunities for the council to reduce its CO2 emissions further and consider if more ambitious targets could be achieved in a cost effective manner.

Key findings and recommendations focussed on the following themes:

- Energy efficiency in council office buildings
- Contribution of the information technology unit
- Energy management in schools buildings
- Planning
- Raising awareness of climate change and sustainability issues amongst Brent residents
- Climate change strategy
- Evaluation of the Carbon Management Strategy and

Implementation Plan

The task group influenced the development of Brent's Climate Change Strategy which ran concurrently with the task group. All of the task group's recommendations were accepted by the Executive and the services involved.

Services for Women in and exiting Prostitution

This task group was established to investigate the scale and nature of prostitution in Brent, the impact that a major sporting arena would have on the sex trade and what could be done to help those involved in it prostitution or otherwise affected by it.

Key finding of the task group focussed on the following themes:

- The scale and nature of prostitution in Brent
- The impact of a major sporting arena
- Tackling sex industry adverts in Brent
- Working in partnership to provide services for women in and exiting prostitution

The recommendations were endorsed by Brent's Crime Prevention Strategy Group and the Executive. A sub group of the Crime Prevention Strategy Group will be set up to take the partnership recommendations forward. The Police have appointed a borough champion in relation to prostitution and vice issues who will take the police specific recommendation forward while feeding into the sub group.

Transition Services for Vulnerable Young People aged 16 to 25

The task group was established by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider the services in place for vulnerable young people in Brent aged 16 to 25. The term "vulnerable" can be applied to many different groups of people, but the task group's focus was on the following groups:

- young people who are offenders or at risk of offending
- care leavers
- those in contact with secondary mental health services
- those who have a moderate learning difficulties
- teenage parents
- young people who are not in full time education, training or employment

Key findings and recommendations of the task group focus on the following themes:

- The role of councillors as corporate parents to young people in care
- Eligibility criteria for social care and mental health services
- Early intervention and preventative services
- Housing services for young people leaving care
- The development of specific services for young people in transition
- Ideas for future overview and scrutiny task groups

The recommendations are to be presented to the council's Executive in July 2010 for approval.

Pupil Safety on the journey to and from school

The Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee set up a task group to consider concerns amongst young people about their personal safety on the journey to and from school. This was supported by a wealth of data from surveys and crime statistics which highlighted that robberies, bullying and anti-social behaviour was prevalent at the end of the school day in areas where young people congregate.

The key findings and recommendations of the task group focused on the following themes:

- Tackling bullying, anti-social behaviour and crime
- Public transport
- The role of schools

The Executive and services involved accepted all of the task group's recommendations. Transport for London has increased capacity at peak times on the 245 bus.

Childhood Immunisation

Brent Council's Health Select Committee established the childhood Immunisation Task Group because councillors were concerned about the low immunisation rates in the borough. Childhood immunisation rates in Brent for 2008/09 were reported to be below target for all of the immunisations in the national immunisation programme except human papilloma virus vaccine and tetanus, diphtheria and polio booster.

This report echoes the views of the task group members that Childhood immunisation against illnesses such as measles, mumps, polio and diphtheria are crucial to protect the long term health of young people in our borough.

Key findings and recommendations of the task group focus on the following themes:

- Data Management
- Reasons for non-immunisation
- Swine flue
- Local authority involvement in childhood immunisation

The Executive, services and partners involved accepted all of the task group's recommendations.

Task Groups Completed 2006 – 2010

Task Group	Date Commissioned	Status	Brief Synopsis	Outcome
Voluntary Sector Funding	October 2006	Complete O & S May 2007 Executive July 2007	<p>This task group was setup to review how the council's main programme grant fund was allocated. Findings & recommendations focussed on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Co-ordinating the Council's Approach</i> • <i>Establishing Funding Priorities</i> • <i>Length of funding period</i> • <i>Application, Assessment and Monitoring</i> • <i>Capacity Building and the Voluntary Sector Team</i> 	<p>All, except one of the task group's recommendations were accepted by the Executive and officers were asked to revise the main programme grant process taking the task group's recommendations into account.</p> <p>The Overview & Scrutiny Committee has kept a close watch on one of the task group's main recommendations which was the development of a Voluntary Sector Strategy. This is currently being developed.</p>
Tourism in Brent	October 2006	Complete	This task was set up by the overview and scrutiny committee to look at the role that the	Some of the recommendations were implemented including

		O & S Oct 07 Exec Dec 07	council plays in providing tourism services in the London Borough of Brent and consider how they can be improved.	convening a cross council group to look at how to strengthen the tourism focus. The task group recommended that there should be a post within the council which has tourism as part of its role. This is carried out by the Business Development Manager. The Executive concluded that were no additional resources available to implement recommendations which required additional funding.
LINKs	October 2006	Complete HSC March 2007	The Health Select Committee established a time limited task group to examine the Department of Health's proposals to reform Patient and Public Involvement Forums (PPIF) and introduce Local Involvement Networks (LINKs). The focus of the task group investigation was new governance arrangements, in particular how the proposed LINKs could fit with existing bodies such as the Council's Overview & Scrutiny structure and the Health & Social Care Partnership Board (HSCPb) of the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP).	This report helped to prepare the Health Select Committee the council and partners for the introduction of LINKs.
Brent PCT	December 2006	Complete	On 23 rd November 2006 the board of Brent	

		HSC Feb 07 Exec March 07	tPCT agreed savings proposals and efficiencies within its "Turnaround Plan". The Council's Health Select Committee elected to establish a cross-party task group to examine the plan in full, given the gravity of the proposed savings, the lack of detailed information and public documentation.	
Improving Outcomes for Black African and African Caribbean boys in Brent	November 2006	Complete C & F Sep 07 Exec Nov 07	Statistics over a number of years have shown that some ethnic minority young people in Brent have below average outcomes across a range of indicators including educational attainment, crime and school exclusions. The most affected groups are African Caribbean and Somali boys. The Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee commissioned this task group to review the councils approach to tackling this issue.	All of the task group's recommendations were endorsed by the Children and Families Department and supported by the Executive. Many of the recommendations have been implemented. For instance the extended services have provided parents forums and homework clubs for this group and there is better access to employment at the council through a programme of job tasters and work experience
Increasing Participation in Sports through Sports Clubs	May 2007	Complete O & S July 08 Exec Oct 08	Increasing participation in sport is one of the council's key priorities as outlined in the Corporate Strategy 2006 - 10 and Brent's first Local Area Agreement (LAA). The Corporate Strategy sets a target for increasing the number of adults taking part in sport and physical exercise for thirty minutes on three occasions (3x30) per week by four percent by	Most of the recommendations have been implemented and included in the Sport Service's service plan. In particular the use of Mosaic data to ensure resources are better target was seen as a priority.

			2009. Brent Council's Sports and Physical Activity Strategy identifies widening the membership of sports clubs as a way of increasing physical activity. This task group was set up to investigate how this could be achieved.	Only two recommendations that require additional funding have not been implemented, but alternative sources of funding are being investigated.
Town Centre Regeneration	May 2007	Complete O & S May 2008 Exec Sep 08	The work was commissioned by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to investigate the measures in place to support town centre regeneration in Brent and consider how it can be improved.	Some of the recommendations have been implemented including a stronger focus on town centre regeneration within the neighbourhood working teams. A protocol between the environmental service and the planning team is soon to be implemented meaning a faster response to requests from town centre managers reporting environmental issues.
Healthy Relationships – How to encourage parents and faith groups to talk to young people about sex and relationships.	October 2007	Complete C & F Nov 08 Exec April 09	The Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny committee commissioned this task group to consider the role of parents and faith groups in talking to young people about sex and relationships. This followed a review of Brent council's approach to teenage pregnancy which found that more work needed to be done on the preventative agenda.	All of the recommendations of the task group were accepted by the Children and Families Department and the Executive. An update report will go to overview and scrutiny in November 2010.

Climate Change	October 2007	Complete O & S Dec 09 Exec March 10	The Overview and Scrutiny committee commissioned a review to consider climate change in Brent. The task group specifically focussed on the councils Carbon Management Strategy & Implementation Plan and sought to Identify and examine other opportunities for the council to reduce its co2 emissions further and consider if more ambitious targets could be achieved in a cost effective manner.	All of the task group's recommendations were accepted by the Executive and the service department. An update report will go to overview and scrutiny in December 2010
Access to Health Sites	December 2007	Complete O & S & HSC Dec 08 Exec March 09	<p>Good public transport access to health facilities plays a vital role in helping people, especially those from poorer communities, get the care they need to maintain healthy lives.</p> <p>This task group was established in response to concerns raised by the pan London JO SC into Darzi's review of health services, calling for improved transport access to health sites across London. There were also local concerns regarding transport access to health sites in Brent. Councillors were keen to promote active travel, encouraging people not to drive where possible and use sustainable, environmentally friendly travel options.</p> <p>In short, the task group's work focussed on</p>	<p>Most of the task group's recommendations were accepted, although implementation has varied. Some significant developments since the completion of the task group include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An additional bus stop has been put in place on Watford Road opposite the entrance to Northwick Park Hospital for northbound 182 buses, which will improve access for people using the hospital. The stop will be used from March 2010. • London Buses has tried the "alight here for..." approach on

			<p>two key issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public transport access to health sites and the work that was taking place to improve access. This included hospitals in Brent and hospitals outside of the borough used by Brent residents and primary care facilities within the borough. How work was progressing to adapt transport services and improve access to health sites, as they are reconfigured to implement the vision of health services set out in <i>Healthcare for London</i>. 	<p>three routes, including information for NHS hospitals. Feedback from passengers has been positive and the trial is being extended to a further 20 routes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lobbying work continues with TfL to improve bus services to Northwick Park Hospital, particularly from Wembley and south Brent.
Pupil Safety on the Journey to & from School	February 2008	To Exec C & F Oct 09 Exec March	The Children and Families Overview Committee agreed to set up a task group to consider concerns amongst young people about their personal safety on the journey to and from school. This was supported by a wealth of data from surveys and crime statistics which highlight that robberies, bullying and anti-social behaviour is prevalent at the end of the school day in areas where young people congregate.	All of the recommendations of the task group were accepted by the Children and Families Department and the Executive. An update report will go to overview and scrutiny in October 2010.
Community Use of Council Owned Buildings	June 2008	Complete P & F March 09 Exec June 09	The council had a varied approach to letting council owned buildings to the third sector. Many contractual agreements between the council and local organisations were made years ago and may not reflect current council objectives or take into account changes in the	All of the recommendations were agreed by the council's Executive and are currently being implemented. As this is a complete change to how the council undertakes lettings changes will

			<p>local community.</p> <p>This task group was set up to assist the council in reconsidering arrangements for voluntary and community sector use of council buildings to ensure that outputs contribute to the social regeneration of the local area and that arrangements are fair to all sections of the community. Public buildings need to be used to their full potential and all sections of the local community need to be considered.</p>	take time to bed in.
Increasing Participation in Recycling in Flats	July 2008	<p>Complete</p> <p>O & S October 09</p> <p>Exec December 09</p>	<p>Improving recycling rates in Brent is one of the council's key priorities as outlined in the Corporate Strategy 2006-10. The Corporate Strategy sets a target of 30% of waste reused or recycled by 2010. The Government's Waste Strategy for England 2007 set new targets for recycling and composting of household waste. These are at least 40% by 2010, 45% by 2015, and 50% by 2020. The first of these targets, 40%, was built in to the council's Local Area Agreement 2008/11. Compulsory recycling was introduced in the borough in August 2008 to help increase participation rates and reduce the amount and therefore the cost of waste going to landfill. Compulsion does not currently apply to flats but if it did it would be unlikely to have the same impact on those living in flats as those in houses. This task group was set up to investigate ways of increasing participation in recycling in flats.</p>	<p>The Executive agreed that the recommendation should be considered as part of the Waste and Recycling Gold Project which forms part of the Improvement and Efficiency Action Plan.</p> <p>This project is in progress and is due to be completed in September 2010.</p>

<p>Services for Women in and Exiting Prostitution</p>	<p>December 2008</p>	<p>To Exec O & S February 10 Exec TBC</p>	<p>This task group was established to investigate the scale and nature of prostitution in Brent, the impact that a major sporting arena would have on the sex trade and what could be done to help those involved in it or otherwise affected by it.</p>	<p>All of the task group's recommendations were agreed by the Executive and the individual partners involved. In addition the recommendations were endorsed by the Crime Prevention Strategy group.</p> <p>The Crime Prevention Strategy Group has included the delivery of these recommendations within its work programme.</p>
<p>Childhood Immunisation</p>	<p>February 2009</p>		<p>Childhood immunisation against illnesses such as measles, mumps, polio and diphtheria are crucial to protect the long term health of young people in our borough. Immunisation has the most robust evidence in terms of safety, efficacy and cost effectiveness of all healthcare activities, but there have been long standing problems in achieving good levels of coverage in London. Brent has been no exception to the London-wide trend of low immunisation rates.</p> <p>Brent Council's Health Select Committee established the Childhood Immunisation Task Group because councillors were concerned about the low immunisation rates in the</p>	<p>The task group report was endorsed by the Health Select Committee in March 2010 and approved by the Executive and partners in April 2010. Follow up on recommendations will happen at the end of 2010, but already NHS Brent is putting resources into a new immunisation take up campaign.</p>

			borough. Childhood immunisation rates in Brent for 2008/09 were reported to be below target for all of the immunisations in the national immunisation programme except human papilloma virus vaccine and tetanus, diphtheria and polio booster.	
Transition Services for 18 – 25 year olds	December 2007 not started until 2009		<p>The Overview and Scrutiny Committee established the Transitions Services Task group to look at the services in place for vulnerable young people in Brent aged 16 to 25. The term “vulnerable” can be applied to many different groups of people, but the task group’s focus has been on the following groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • young people who are offenders or at risk of offending • care leavers • those in contact with secondary mental health services • those who have a moderate learning difficulties • teenage parents • young people who are not in full time education, training or employment <p>The group was interested in the transition from childhood to adulthood, which can be a difficult time for any young person, even those that grow up in a stable family environment with strong parental support. The groups of interest to the task group</p>	The report was endorsed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in March 2010 and will be presented to the Executive in July 2010.

			capture the majority of Brent's most challenging young people. Ensuring these young people receive the help and guidance they need during transition is crucial. The task group was keen to look at the journey young people go on as they leave the responsibility of children's services and become adults.	
Health Services for Adults with Learning Disabilities	May 2009		This task group was formed in response to concerns raised by Brent carers about the difficulties that they face when trying to access health services for people with learning disabilities. This is also a problem across the UK. The task group will be reviewing both the council and NHS Brent's approach to tackle this problem to ensure that reasonable adjustments are made to health services for this group.	