



**Meeting of the Full Council**  
23rd November 2009

**Report from The Executive**

For Action/Information

Wards Affected:  
ALL

**The First Reading of the 2010-2011 Budget  
Priorities for the Administration**

**1.0 Summary**

1.1 This report sets out the Administration's top priorities for activity, spending and saving. This should be read in conjunction with the Corporate Strategy the Improvement & Efficiency Action Plan and the concurrent report from the Director of Finance and Corporate Resources.

**2.0 Recommendations**

2.1 The Council is recommended to consider the priorities alongside the Director of Finance and Corporate Resources paper on the budget and to debate them as set out in Standing Orders 25A and 44.

**3.0 PART 1**

**The Priorities**

3.1 When we set these out last year it was in the context of the beginning of the recession and the 'ever tightening financial resources' that we are experiencing.

- 3.2 Since that report was made we have further refined our thinking and analysis and have arrived at a substantive Action Plan for the next four years.
- 3.3 Our Medium Term financial Strategy agreed by full Council on the 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2009 set out the need to make savings of £53.6m over the next four years. This figure was based upon an analysis of the financial conditions which affect Local Government and a projection that in current circumstances there will be no increase in the Revenue Support Grant through the formula or in Area Based Grant for the foreseeable future.
- 3.4 The Improvement & Efficiency Strategy and Action Plan are designed therefore to meet the twin needs of making these savings in a planned and coherent fashion, whilst at the same time making the services we offer more efficient and better suited to the needs of local people.
- 3.5 This Administration, facing four square the issues of these difficult times is determined to do so in planned and effective manner and not take panic measures which will have an adverse effect on services or on staff morale.
- 3.6 The key priority of the Administration for 2010-2011 will therefore be to deliver on the Improvement & Efficiency Action Plan ensuring that both savings are captured, but as importantly that services to the public are improved.
- 3.7 This Administration is firmly of the view that the One Council approach is absolutely critical if the council is to be in a position to deliver the right services to our citizens over the coming years.
- 3.8 We will continue to respond to the effect of recession on our most vulnerable residents and will use our service offer to ameliorate its worst effect.

3.9 We remain convinced that the four key themes Crime & Community Safety, Young People, Environment Sustainability and Regeneration, which have been the corner stone of our success continue to be the most relevant and pertinent and we will therefore be seeking to direct action and additional resources, when available into programmes in these areas.

3.10 We will continue to prioritise activity with our Partners through our commitments in the LAA and will continue our package of reform and renewal in key areas.

3.11 We are proud of our achievements over the last few years in delivering our ambitious Corporate Strategy however we understand that to continue to be ambitious we must be efficient.

## **4.0 PART 2**

### **4.1 The Achievements**

This is the fourth and final year of delivering the Corporate Strategy 2006-10. The programme has proved to be both challenging and rewarding in many respects, but the current economic climate will undoubtedly present new challenges in terms of consolidating and building on the progress made to date.

The Corporate Strategy 2006-10 is structured around three key themes, which have been agreed with partners and form the basis of our Community Strategy. They are:

- A Great Place
- A Borough of Opportunity
- An Inclusive Borough

## 4.2 A Great Place

### *Reducing Enviro-crime*

- Alley-gating schemes were introduced for some 662 properties.
- Abandoned cars removed within an average of 2 days.
- 96% of street-lighting is in good working order.
- 85% of graffiti is removed within target timescales.
- Fly-tipping is removed within an average of 1.5 days.

### *Crime and Community Safety*

- Fear of crime has reduced to 38% from 66% in 2005.
- Overall crime has reduced by 21%.
- Satisfaction levels with how anti-social behavior is addressed currently stands at 97%.
- 98% of all CCTV cameras are fully operational.
- Serious road accidents have reduced by 8.2%.
- Residential fires have reduced to 200.

### *A Clean Place*

- Our road cleaning target of 86% has been met.
- 16 accessible public toilets have been introduced.
- We have the highest level of enforcement activity on Environmental Health and Trading Standards.
- Insurance claims for pavement trips and hazards are reduced.

### *A Green Place*

- 31% of household waste is now recycled.
- Recycling facility provision has increased in schools, council offices and transport hubs.
- 2 new district parks have been built in the borough.
- 2 more of the borough's parks have acquired Green Flag status.
- Improved play pitches have led to a 35% increase in users.
- 3,129 trees have been planted throughout the borough since 2006.

### *A Lively Place*

- The Olympic 2012 Action Plan has been adopted.
- The borough's sports centres have seen total of 47,000 additional visits by young people.
- 87% of young people now engage in sporting activity for 2 hours every week at school.
- 80% of residents are satisfied with the library service.
- The Council's comprehensive Festivals programme was delivered successfully.

## 4.3 **A Borough of Opportunity**

### *Local Employment and Enterprise*

- Brent in2 Work placed 1000 people into employment.
- The Wembley Regeneration Programme remains on track.
- The Local Development Framework has prioritised future growth areas and public consultations on the North Circular Road redevelopment have been successful.

### *Health and Wellbeing*

- The joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy and supporting LAA targets were agreed.
- The number of people helped to live at home has increased.
- Take up numbers for the Direct Payments Scheme have increased.
- Delayed discharge numbers have decreased.
- A new Adult Social Care transformation programme is now in place.
- The Better Government for Older People scheme is now in place.

### *Settled Homes*

- 2000 new homes have been built.
- 283 private homes have been returned to use.
- Target for reducing the number of households in temporary accommodation have been exceeded.
- We have achieved the target of decent homes (Council stock).

- We have secured significant HCS funding for future housing investment.

#### *Early Excellence*

- The borough now has 13 Children's Centres.
- 88% of childcare settings are rated as 'satisfactory' or 'better' by OFSTED.
- The Social Care Transformation programme has helped to reduce the number of Looked After Children to 350.
- We have implemented the Common Assessment Framework and Locality Working initiatives.
- Brent has already met its 2010 NEET target.
- Attainment levels for KS1 and KS2 are above the national average.
- 79% of the borough's secondary schools are rated 'good' or 'better'.
- We have reduced the gap in educational attainment levels for black and Somali children.
- We have improved the educational attainment levels for Looked After Children.
- 72% of pupils achieved 5 A-C passes at GCSE (provisional figure).

#### **4.4 An Inclusive Borough**

##### *Civic Leadership*

- The Civic Centre project is on track.
- We have successfully rolled out Neighbourhood Working.
- The Neighbourhood Working team have supported 155 local projects involving 40 partners.
- 51% of residents feel that a strong sense of community exists locally.
- 72% believe that Brent is a place where people from different backgrounds get along well.
- 83% of residents are satisfied with their local area as a place to live. (This represents an increase from 59% in 2005).
- 31% of residents feel they can influence local decisions.

### *Building Capacity*

- The HR Transformation has introduced a number of initiatives including the People Centre, improvements to the core Learning & Development offer, new Flexible Working and Absence Management policies.
- 95.5% Council Tax payments have been collected, which represents the highest ever return.
- The new Improvement and Efficiency Strategy and supporting Action Plan 2010-2014 has been agreed.
- A new Business Transformation department has been established.
- £26.4m efficiency savings were delivered in 2008.
- The majority of LAA stretch targets were delivered by 2009.
- Brent has the 17<sup>th</sup> lowest Council Tax level of the 20 outer London boroughs.

5. We continue to be proud of our achievements to date, however there is no room for complacency because the new economic realities pose significant challenges in the short and medium term.

As mentioned in Part 1 of this report we acknowledge that a step change is necessary to consolidate on our achievements to date and build a platform for future improvements during what is likely to be a prolonged period of austerity. We are up for the challenge and we know we have the capacity to raise our game.

**PAUL LORBER**  
**LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

Leaders Report – First Reading Nov 09