Brent’s Community Strategy 2006-2010
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Foreword

Dear resident,

Home to nearly 270,000 with the most culturally diverse population in the country and a reputation for the peaceful co-existence and tolerance of local people, Brent is a community to be proud of.

What unites us all is our desire to make Brent a safe, clean and green place; a lively place which is prosperous and healthy; and a place where everyone’s needs are recognised and all contributions are valued.

Developed following extensive consultation with residents and local organisations, this Sustainable Community Strategy provides an insight into your aspirations and illustrates our commitment to meeting them.

Together, through Brent’s Local Strategic Partnership we have set out a clear and achievable, yet challenging, vision for Brent, with the aim of delivering better tailored and more efficient services for residents.

Brent is an exciting place to live and work in and to visit. Wembley Stadium will breathe new life into the area and with the wider redevelopment provide thousands of new jobs, extra homes, exciting leisure facilities and improvements to public transport, bringing benefits to the whole of the borough.

We are united in our determination to overcome the many challenges facing local services and optimistic about tackling the discrimination and disadvantage experienced by too many residents.

This strategy makes it clear that we all have a part to play in strengthening our community. We welcome your thoughts on it and look forward to working with you to turn it into reality.

Together, our actions will establish Brent as an even better place to live and visit, full of opportunities and welcoming to all.

Partners for Brent

July 2006

Introduction to Brent

One of only two majority black and minority ethnic boroughs, Brent has the most culturally diverse population in the country. This unique quality is celebrated locally. It has created an exciting place and a harmonious community with a youthful, highly mobile and expanding population.

As a location, Brent has much to offer residents and businesses. There are good quality services and excellent transport links both to central London and the rest of the country. Brent’s 8,000 local businesses make an important contribution to the local quality of life, as well as London’s economy, and there is potential for future business growth.

However, Brent is an outer London borough that faces many inner-London problems. Ranked 68th on the national deprivation league table, there is a north-south divide with an affluent north and generally poorer south.

This Sustainable Community Strategy, produced by Brent’s Local Strategic Partnership, sets out how the council and its partners will meet the needs and aspirations of Brent’s residents. Within the Partnership the council comes together with other public services (including the police and fire services, the National Health Service and local training and employment agencies), local businesses and community and voluntary organisations in order to better understand and serve residents’ needs, priorities and preferences.
Our vision and values

Our vision
Brent will be a prosperous and lively borough, full of opportunity and welcoming to all; a place that will thrive for generations to come, whose future will be determined by local people.

Our values
We will deliver efficient, accessible and sustainable services to excellent standards.
We will develop tailored solutions to meet the needs of individuals, families and communities.
We will celebrate our borough’s diversity and build upon our national reputation for nurturing successful community cohesion.
A great place

Brent will be a great place to live in and to visit. It will be safe, clean, green and lively. Local people will be confident that our streets and open spaces are safe places to be and that our green spaces and leisure facilities are worth visiting. Residents will care for their surroundings, appreciate where they live and enjoy what Brent has to offer.

A safe place

We want Brent to be a safe and secure place to live in and to visit. We have made real progress in recent years, halting the overall rise in crime and cutting it in our priority neighbourhoods. Our challenge is to reduce the fear of crime and its impact upon local communities.

Central to our approach to community safety has been the provision of high visibility policing and local warden services covering our parks, key housing estates, town centres and priority neighbourhoods.

We have built a national reputation for addressing the root causes of crime in the borough. Successful initiatives include the high profile launch of the Brent Against Drugs campaign, warning young people of the dangers of drugs, and our award-winning Not Another Drop campaign against gun crime, now replicated in other parts of the country.

Where possible we adopt a preventative approach to working with potential offenders, using acceptable behaviour contracts, through youth inclusion projects, addressing housing needs and promoting drug and alcohol treatment.

At neighbourhood level we have piloted new ways of working that are improving service delivery, responsiveness and resident participation which helps to reduce the fear of crime. Working at the neighbourhood level makes improvements to the street scene, for example removing rubbish, abandoned cars, fly tipping and graffiti.

We have improved safety in the home too through fire safety, security lighting and accident prevention.

Together, we are committed to ensuring that local people are safe and secure. We will:
• increase neighbourhood policing
• achieve ever greater levels of collaboration across the borough’s patrol services
• offer new opportunities for residents to become involved in plans for their neighbourhoods.

A clean place

We want to provide clean, well-designed and cared-for streets and open spaces so that people feel good about the areas in which they live and work. Our challenges are to prevent a few people from spoiling the environment for the rest of us and to raise standards fast enough to keep up with rising expectations.

During recent years we have radically improved the cleanliness of our local environment, providing additional resources for maintaining pavements, recycling facilities and environmental enforcement activities.

The impact of the Big Brent Clean-up is already evident, with residents reporting increased satisfaction with the cleanliness of the borough and the performance of the waste collection services.

The wardworking pilots have also supported the environmental agenda, providing a forum for detailed discussion on local issues and a much more responsive service for neighbourhoods.

Nevertheless, we still require considerable change to meet and maintain the high standards that our local residents expect.

Together, we are committed to creating welcoming streets and open spaces. We will:
• provide a dedicated StreetCare officer for every ward
• increase the standard of cleanliness across the borough
• reduce the gap in standards of cleanliness between neighbourhoods
• raise our performance to exceed that of neighbouring boroughs.

Brent will be a great place to live in and to visit. It will be safe, clean, green and lively. Local people will be confident that our streets and open spaces are safe places to be and that our green spaces and leisure facilities are worth visiting. Residents will care for their surroundings, appreciate where they live and enjoy what Brent has to offer.
A lively place
Brent hosts a multitude of arts and cultural events. Our successful programme of festivals has raised religious awareness, cohesion and connectivity amongst our diverse communities. Our challenges are to establish a broader range of exercise and sports activities and to ensure they are accessible for all.

Brent’s cultural assets range from the spectacular Swaminarayan Hindu Temple to the internationally renowned Wembley Arena. The new National Stadium and wider developments in Wembley will create a vibrant heart for Brent which will be complemented by a range of locally-based initiatives, for instance the relocation and expansion of our museum of community history to Willesden.

Cultural services are at the forefront of our approach to community cohesion and engagement with hard-to-reach groups.

Our festivals programme, which includes the Respect Festival, Diwali, Eid, Hanukah and St Patrick’s Day, reflects the diversity of Brent’s population. Local communities are involved in planning and delivery, and around 50,000 residents attend these events each year.

Local interest in and support for inter-cultural events and arts and sports activities will help us to promote healthy lifestyles, combat social isolation, improve youth services and reduce anti-social behaviour.

Together, we are committed to promoting leisure. We will:
• enhance civic pride by encouraging residents and visitors to celebrate their unique cultural identities and have greater interest in Brent’s history
• facilitate opportunities for physical exercise and sport, by reducing barriers to participation and promoting healthy living
• establish Wembley as a national and international destination while securing tangible benefits for local people.

A green place
Residents want to enjoy safe, clean parks, open spaces and play areas which are rich in wildlife and offer a variety of activities. They expect developments to be sustainable. Our challenges are to ensure that everyone in Brent has access to the borough’s open and green spaces and to protect our environment.

In recent years we have made a significant investment in parks, open spaces and play areas, attracting 16 million visitors and improving satisfaction among residents who use local parks. Parks in Brent have won the prestigious Green Flag ever since the scheme was established.

We promote recycling and waste reduction in local schools and communities. Most households now have door step recycling collections and we are seeking ways to provide the most inaccessible properties with a suitable service.

Our development programmes have enthusiastically embraced the green agenda with renovation works that are increasingly sustainable in both design and construction, actively encouraging the use of renewable and energy efficient resources that minimise waste.

Together, we are committed to improving the quality of life today, without compromising our future. We will:
• improve the quality and accessibility of local parks, play areas and open spaces, encouraging greater use by all
• develop better transport networks, making it easier for residents and visitors to reduce car use and benefit from Brent’s green and natural environments
• work with local people to protect our environment, reduce the amount of waste our borough sends to landfill, encourage greater biodiversity and minimise our contribution to climate change.

Together, we are committed to improving the quality of life today, without compromising our future.
A borough of opportunity

Brent will be a prosperous, healthy place where there are opportunities for all. It will be a place where income and employment levels will be higher than the London average, where businesses thrive and where residents will enjoy good health and be able to make healthy choices.

Local employment and enterprise
We want to create a place where businesses are keen to move to and can succeed. Brent is one of the country’s most deprived areas for employment and income. Our challenge is to ensure that residents fill local jobs, boosting the local economy and their own prosperity.

We have actively supported the attempts of local people to gain employment and to progress in work. By identifying the needs of local employers, preparing residents to meet them and acting as broker, our employment initiatives help local people to enter employment each year.

We will offer more support to those who are furthest removed from the labour market so that they can move from dependence on welfare benefits to employment.

Our efforts to encourage enterprise growth are centred on strengthening links between businesses and schools and including enterprise on the curriculum; creating the right environmental conditions for business growth; improving access to business advice, support and finance; and maximising opportunities for inward investment.

Together, we aim to boost local employment and income. We will:

• provide basic skills training and opportunities to progress to higher qualifications
• improve pathways to and progression within employment, particularly for those furthest from the labour market
• make sure the transformation of Wembley is sustainable and creates new opportunities for growth across the borough
• rejuvenate the borough’s town centres, ensuring that areas do not fall into decline and undermine business growth.

Health and well-being
We want Brent residents to have the best possible chance of a long, fulfilling and healthy life. Our challenge is to reduce the gap in life expectancy, which is dramatically lower in the south of the borough.

Health and wellbeing is determined by the conditions that we live and work in, the strength of our social and community networks and the lifestyle choices that we make, as well as our own physical make-up. By improving Brent’s environment and leisure facilities, tackling crime and anti-social behaviour, promoting achievement and employment and nurturing cohesion we will make a significant contribution to securing longer, healthier lives for our residents.

We have made progress towards tackling the broader factors that determine health by targeting the areas of greatest need. However, we continue to under-achieve in encouraging local people to quit smoking, the single greatest cause of preventable illness and premature death in England.

Local immunisation and cancer screening rates also remain relatively low.

Access to services is greatly improved. The proportion of residents registered with a GP has substantially increased and local people can now consistently get an appointment with a practice nurse within 24 hours and a GP within 48 hours. Practically every patient needing an urgent cancer referral sees a specialist within two weeks.

We have also made progress in modernising services. We are in the final stages of creating a new patient-focused service at the Brent Emergency Care and Diagnostic Centre and plan to update services at Northwick Park. Having redeveloped Willesden Community and Kingsbury hospitals, we are creating healthy living centres across the borough in order to shape services to meet local needs and to encourage healthier living.

Together, we are committed to reducing health inequalities and promoting well-being. We aim to:

• improve access to healthy choices and help residents to make informed choices about their health and care
• tackle smoking and obesity, reducing the prevalence and achieving better outcomes for coronary heart disease, diabetes and cancer
• halt the rise in sexually transmitted diseases and unwanted pregnancies
• improve early diagnosis of tuberculosis and cancers
• provide integrated, tailored healthcare and promotion services at neighbourhood level.

Through its actions to improve Brent’s environment and leisure, tackle crime and anti-social behaviour, promote achievement and employment and nurture cohesion this Strategy will make a significant contribution to securing longer, healthier lives for our residents.
Early excellence

We want Brent’s children to realise their potential and succeed in life. Our challenge is to support the large proportion of children who experience the greatest barriers to learning: those who live transient lives, those with additional or acute needs, and those who live in our priority neighbourhoods or within families on low incomes.

The achievement of Brent’s children and young people has improved dramatically in recent years. Collectively, Brent’s young people are among the top performers in London and they are now achieving above the national average at GCSE (A*-C). Nevertheless, key groups are falling behind, particularly black children and young people.

Local services have a track record of developing and delivering excellent and innovative services which benefit those in most need, including extended schools, support when children move from primary to secondary school, and counselling and mediation services.

2005 saw a radical reorganisation of services for children and young people, with the creation of a new inter-agency children’s service that places families, parents and carers at the core of our collective activities to secure better outcomes for local children.

Together, we are committed to early excellence across all our communities. We will:

- provide universal access to extended schools and children’s centres
- establish a new generation of local, personal and needs-led services to redress the inequalities facing Brent’s children and young people
- shift support towards earlier intervention and prevention
- provide services that are fully inclusive, accessible and sensitive to the unique cultural diversity of our young population
- encourage collective responsibility for protecting and supporting the emotional development of our children and young people
- ensure our neighbourhoods provide safe, caring, yet challenging activities and environments for young people.

Settled homes

We want to increase housing supply, particularly affordable housing, ensure decent homes and meet the needs of the most vulnerable residents. Our challenge is to find a way to secure settled homes for the large number of families with children based in temporary accommodation.

The council brings local housing providers together to work closely with each other and with residents to increase housing provision, ensure decent standards and enable tenants to shape provision. Brent’s priority areas have undergone a transformation. Nearly 4,000 new and refurbished homes will be delivered in South Kilburn. Chalkhill has been successfully regenerated, Church End is nearing completion and there are future plans for Barham Park.

In the last three years we have secured £129million for the delivery of affordable homes. This has enabled us to provide more than 600 additional homes, with over 1,000 more due for completion. Having exceeded regional targets for providing affordable homes, we now have Opportunity Borough status, which will enable us to unlock further sites for redevelopment.

Tenant satisfaction is high. We are on target for achieving decency standards for council and housing association properties and vulnerable tenants in private housing. We have a good record on bringing empty properties back to use and on preventing families from being evicted.

Together, we maintain our commitment to securing settled homes. We will:

- promote sustainable development and create balanced communities
- secure permanent housing for families in temporary accommodation, enabling them to enter paid employment
- support our most vulnerable tenants, regardless of tenure.

Local services have a track record of developing and delivering excellent and innovative services which benefit those in most need.
How to get involved

There are lots of different ways to find out what is going on in Brent, make your point and influence what happens.

Brent Council and other public services
Brent Council Consultation Team
WEB www.brent.gov.uk/consultation
EMAIL cnet@brent.gov.uk
TEL 020 8937 1055

Residents and community groups
Brent Resource and Information Network (Brain)
WEB www.brentbrain.org.uk

The voluntary and community sector
Brent Association for Voluntary Action (BrAVA)
WEB www.brava.org.uk
EMAIL info@brava.org.uk
TEL 020 8438 1520

Local businesses
Brent Employer Partnership
WEB www.employerpartnership.org.uk
TEL 020 8937 6438

Local Strategic Partnership
Partners for Brent
WEB www.brentbrain.org.uk
EMAIL pru@brent.gov.uk
TEL 020 8937 1030

Support when you need it
Most of us need help at some time and many depend upon intensive support for prolonged periods, particularly older people or those who have a long-term illness or disability. Our challenges are to provide tailored care packages for those with the greatest need and engage in preventative work so that need does not escalate unnecessarily.

Brent’s residents benefit from a broad range of services which promote independent living.

We have introduced a range of initiatives designed to improve the physical fitness and inclusion of older people, along with those with physical and learning disabilities and serious mental health difficulties, supported through the improvement of access to parks and open spaces.

Residents value our minor accident treatment services, nurse-led drop-in services, the informality and accessibility of GPs in smaller practices, our community transport schemes and the integrated community equipment service.

We have achieved a significant reduction in the number of delayed discharges from hospital, although we recognise the need for further improvements. Our well-established rehabilitative services have contributed towards a relatively low proportion of older people needing to be admitted into residential and nursing care.

Home-based caring services are sensitive to and based upon individual need and cultural preferences. These are complemented by outreach, crisis resolution and respite care services, as well as day centre and vocational projects.

Together, we are committed to enabling residents to lead more active lives and providing services that are sensitive to our diverse community’s needs. We will:
• develop a person-centred single assessment process across the borough’s health and social care services
• intervene early to prevent residents from having to face crisis and further deterioration in their health and wellbeing
• enable more people to remain in their homes and lead active lives
• maximise choice by increasing the number of people receiving direct payments
• provide tailored services for those with acute needs
• improve the health and fitness of Brent’s residents in order to secure a more active and independent future for everyone.

We are committed to enabling residents to lead more active lives.
This brochure is about the Community Strategy. To obtain a copy in another language please tick the appropriate box, fill in the form and return it to the address below.

If you would like this brochure in large print or on audio tape, please call the Local Strategic Partnership on 020 8937 1030.

Please return to: Local Strategic Partnership, Brent Town Hall, Forty Lane, Wembley, Middlesex HA9 9HD.

Name ____________________________
Address ____________________________
Postcode ____________________________