

**14**

**Policy Issues  
with  
Local  
Impact**



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# Long – term issues

### Issue 1 – Building a Better Bromley / Local Area Agreement

Building a Better Bromley 2020 vision is the Bromley Local Strategic Partnership's long term vision to improve Bromley. It is the Sustainable Community Strategy - which all councils are required to produce by the Government. It sets out the broad vision of long term changes. It also has shorter term targets which each of the constituent parts of the Local Strategic partnership need to deliver ( see partnership page). BBB2020 Vision was consulted on in the summer 2008 and a further public meeting was held in January 2009 to update people.



Read a copy of [Building a Better Bromley](#).

As well as this long term vision local councils and Local Strategic Partnerships have to agree Local Area Agreements with the Government. These cover three year periods have specific targets for improvements that council's and LSPs need to meet over the course of three years based on a selection form 198 National Indicators. If they are met then councils are entitled to reward money.



Read the [Bromley LAA for 2008-11](#).

At the end of each financial year the LAA is reviewed by the LSP and can be renegotiated with the Government. The agreement is then "refreshed" for the following year.



Read the [2009 LAA refresh](#).

These documents set the work and activity for many council departments and partnerships. It will also affect commissioning and funding priorities (see separate page for information on commissioning)

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### Issue 2 – Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA)

The Comprehensive Area Assessment came into effect on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009 and is the new monitoring system to judge performance of councils and public bodies. It replaces and is wider in scope than the old Comprehensive performance Assessment which was rather bureaucratic. The CAA aims to:

- Look at the quality of all the services provided in a local area, regardless of who provides them
- Judge the quality of services on the outcomes they achieve, rather than merely target numbers
- Reduce the number of inspections
- Increase joint working between the inspectorates
- Take more account of the views of local people on the services they use
- Provide residents and service users with useful information about the quality of local services

All this will clearly affect the working of the Local Strategic Partnership.

The CAA will have:

- An area assessment judging how well the area is doing and how it is likely to improve,
- An organisational assessment for each individual local authority, fire and rescue authority, police authority and primary care trust, using the same set of 198 National Indicators as the LAA is selected from. In London some bodies will be assessed London wide (e.g. the police won't be assessed in each borough, but their contribution to the local partnership may be).
- Briefing produced by LVSC on the consultation proposals
- Briefing produced by NCVO on the background to the CAA
- information on the new process on the Audit Commission website

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### **Issue 3 – Partnership and representation – Local Strategic Partnership structure**

Many important plans and policies are decided by multi – agency partnerships. The most of important of these is the Local Strategic Partnership. The structure of this has just been reviewed. There are thematic partnerships responsible for specific issues reporting to it. These in turn have more specialist groups reporting to them. Linked to this is a network of voluntary sector forums. To find out how they interrelate follow this link to [detailed article and diagram](#)

### **Issue 4 – Commissioning**

There are useful resources on commissioning on the [LVSC website](#). Bromley Children’s trust (see below) has also produced a [glossary](#) as part of its strategy Link. There are a range of development s in PCT, local authority and elsewhere and a [detailed articles is available here](#).

### **Issue 5 – Transforming Social Care**

LLB Bromley has received a Transforming Social Care Grant - to enable it to pilot the “personalisation” agenda. Personalisation is the phrase used to describe changing social services - away from designing services t and assessing people’s eligibility towards identifying what each individual needs and identifying where to buy services to suit them. People will be allocated a budget - but this may not pay for all the services they need. This will be a major change in attitude and way of working for social services, voluntary sector and service users and carers.

- [Read more on the Department of Health](#) website
- Read more [on individual budgets on this website](#)

Bromley Council has set up a Transforming Social Care Programme Board which includes some voluntary sector membership. The board met from August to December. The lead officer is Andy Crawford, Programme Manager – Transforming Social Care. Read his report to

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the adult and community services portfolio councillor on the [Council website](#).

A key part of making personalisation a success is brokerage - linking people with social care needs with potential providers. Currently both Age Concern Bromley and Bromley Mencap have brokerage programmes.

The following is extracted from LVSC policy bulletin –

“Individual budgets are of particular interest to VCS groups working in the health and social care or support field, as they will produce a major change in the way these services are funded. Organisations will need to ensure they develop a business model that markets their service to individuals, rather than social service departments, and can cope with different levels of demand

“The Department of Health has now published its response to the evaluation of the first individualised budgets pilots. Evaluation of the pilots of this scheme demonstrated that holding an individual budget was associated with better overall social outcomes and higher perceived levels of controls for those using them. However, the report identified there were significant barriers to take up of the scheme amongst people with mental health problems and older people had less positive findings than other groups. Amongst older people qualitative interviews suggested that many did not want the additional burdens that they associated with planning and managing their own support. Significantly the evaluation showed that the cost of service packages under individual budgets was slightly lower than standard packages (£280 per week versus £300 per week)”.

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# Current /Recent issues

### Issue 6 – Impact of the recession

Whilst strictly not a policy issue in itself this has obviously led to policy responses being developed. There was also brief specific mention of the third sector in the Pre Budget Report – and third sector specific support was announced in February called Real Help for Communities. This can be found at ... The Office of the Third Sector is holding regional roadshows for small and medium frontline third sector organisations on the real help for communities package, what support is available and how to get it. The schemes included are the Real Help for Communities: Modernisation Fund, Real Help for Communities: Targeted Support Fund and Communitybuilders programme. The London roadshow is in Central London, at Abbey Community Centre, on Thursday 7th May. You can register via the link [Register for the roadshows](#) [external website]

Summaries of the pre budget report and also the full report can be found at: [www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/prebud\\_pbr08\\_index.htm](http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/prebud_pbr08_index.htm)

The recession will have an impact on the voluntary and community sector in a number of ways - on direct giving, as people often cut back on donations, on fundraising as charitable trusts with incomes reliant on invested funds have a lower return and in increased demand for services.

Locally Bromley council has produced a [debt advice booklet](#) which also includes details of the Government mortgage rescue scheme – which although announced in December only became operational recently.

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### Issue 7 – Local Authorities - Duty to Involve

The legal “duty to involve” placed on local authorities comes into force on 1st April 2009. In essence local councils must allow local communities a say in decisions that affect them. It is contained in the Local Government Act 1999 as amended by the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. The Government has also produced statutory guidance for local councils on their responsibilities around partnership, community engagement and sustainable communities act. It is called [Creating Strong, Safe and Prosperous Communities](#).

Neither the Acts nor the guidance specifies any particular ways to fulfil the duty - the important this is that councils do what works best for them and their communities. Similarly it does not specify any sanctions for failure to satisfy the duty or how citizens may take action to enforce the duty. However it is likely that the new Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA - the way the Government measures councils' effectiveness) conducted by the Audit Commission will consider how well councils are discharging their duty to involve as part of its broader assessment.

Extract from **Creating Strong, Safe and Prosperous Communities**, *statutory guidance for councils*.

“The duty requires authorities to take those steps they consider appropriate to involve *representatives of local persons* in the exercise of any of their functions, where they consider that it is appropriate to do so. It specifies the three ways of involving that need to be covered in this consideration:

- **providing information** about the exercise of the particular function
- **consulting** about the exercise of the particular function
- **involving in another way**”

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“Local persons” are not just the residents but a whole range of bodies such as charities, community groups, businesses and others that might be affected. Once people are invited to take part the extent to which they can affect the outcome should be made clear. However if a council consistently invites people to take part and says that their input will make little difference then it may not be meeting the duty or showing bad faith. If there is more than one stage people should continue to be involved - but this doesn't mean that new people should be excluded.

Authorities regularly need to make decisions about how best to engage their local community. In terms of fulfilling the duty we would expect authorities to consider:

Accessibility, Proportionality, Coordination, Partnership-working and Timing.

### Issue 8 – 2008/9 legislative programme

Bills in progress which may be of relevance to local groups or their clients include:

- Health Bill – see below
- Welfare Reform Bill- see below
- Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Bill (see below)
- Children, Skills and Learning Bill – mostly around qualifications and apprenticeships but including some changes to Children's Trusts (the [subject of consultation](#) last year. The impact on sector only is indirect – responsibility for Children & Young People's Plan transfers to Children's Trusts rather than local authority. More people will also be covered by a duty to consult - schools but not voluntary sector). This has made limited progress so far.  
[Background to the bill](#) is available here.
- Child Poverty Bill – legislation to give legal duties to public bodies to reduce child poverty - as part of the Government pledge to

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reduce then eliminate child poverty – no parliamentary progress so far

- Equality Bill - a consolidation bill bringing together existing equality legislations and broadening equality duties on public bodies. No parliamentary progress so far

### Issue 9 – Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Bill

This includes some of the matters in the community empowerment white paper – Communities in Control)

**Community Empowerment White Paper** This sets out a whole range of initiatives but also restatement of existing ideas. Key ideas will be rights to information, participatory budgets – where local residents are actively involved in setting priorities and making allocations of money - and other citizen decision making. This could also encourage services to be devolved towards smaller local services and decision making.



Communities in Control – [real people real power](#)



Communities in Control – [real people real power](#) –summary



[An NCVO briefing on the bill](#)

### Issue 10 – Health Bill / NHS reform

The health bill has been through a number of its stages in the House of Lords. There is a number of resources on the [department of health website](#) it is legislating for some of the Darzi reforms

Darzi review.

Following recommendations for London, Lord Darzi – surgeon and Government minister produced further ideas for [reforming the NHS](#), making patient choice more central and making the NHS “independent” (see previous editions and website) with [its own constitution](#).

New initiatives that the bill will introduce are

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- A formal NHS constitution
- Creation of “quality accounts” measuring quality of care and clinical outcomes not just statistical targets
- Pilot schemes for personal health budgets similar to personal social care budgets (more [detail on this website](#))
- A [performance regime](#) with new powers to deal with unsustainable or poor quality providers (very loosely closing dirty, dangerous or bankrupt hospitals, or transferring their management to others)
- Health promotion, specifically controls on display and sale of tobacco

By way of background and contrast you may also want to see:

### Health Select committee reports

The House of Commons Health Select Committee has now published the results of its inquiry into health inequalities. Although there was widespread praise for the explicit commitment this Government has made to tackle health inequalities, over the last ten years health inequalities between the social classes has widened; the health of the rich is improving more quickly than the health of the poor. The report found:

- A lack of evidence of what works and poor evaluation of methods
- delays in Primary Care Trusts receiving funds to tackle health inequalities;
- neglect of age- and gender-related inequalities and those relating to mental health;
- the need for the Quality and Outcomes Framework, which measures GPs performance, to better reward actions which reduce health inequalities;
- the number of health visitors and midwives is falling,
- Government departments, other than just the Department of Health, need to be much more involved in tackling health inequalities.

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The report is [available on the website](#) .

The Government has recently [published a response](#) to an earlier Health Select Committee report on the [NHS Next Stage Review](#) addressing each of the Committee's recommendations including:

- they aim to address weaknesses in Primary Care Trust (PCT) commissioning through the 'world-class commissioning programme' –although the Committee had expressed concerns about the effectiveness of this;
- they argue that there is strong support for [practice-based commissioning](#) amongst GPs; the Committee's evidence was that it had failed to engage doctors;
- they welcome the Committee's support for the piloting of personal health budgets (similar to personal budgets in social care)
- obligations in the current Health bill going through Parliament will stop people thinking of the new NHS Constitution as "a lot of waffle", as suggested by the Select Committee.

### Issue 11 – Welfare Reform Bill

Legislating for matters in the Green Paper - Welfare Green paper.

There will be an impact on those working with or supporting people receiving benefits. Recipients need to be much more pro-active in finding suitable work - with assistance and could mean people having to work for benefits - including volunteering. This will radically alter the dynamic of third sector activities. There will be an impact on advice agencies and support agencies for those with disabilities (in widest sense) and for those involved in volunteering - having potentially less willing volunteers. This is also an example of contestability – voluntary groups can bid for contracts to deliver support services – with payment strictly by results.



No one written off – [full document](#)



No one written off – [summary](#)

There have already been changes to the way benefits for those unable to work due to illness or disability. Incapacity benefit has ceased for all

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new claimants and been replaced with employment support allowance. As the name suggest the purpose is not to provide income for those unable to work but to provide additional resources and support for people who are sick or disabled to gain and retain employment. The Department of Work and Pensions has issued some factsheets .

### **Issue 12 – Bromley Children & Young People’s Plan 2009-11**

The current Children & Young People’s Plan for Bromley ends this year and a draft plan for 2009 -11 is being consulted on until April 30<sup>th</sup>. Much of the plan relates to the Building a Better Bromley and Local Area Agreement priorities and has input from the Voluntary Sector Children & Families Forum



[View draft plan](#)

Read Stephen Blann Policy & Networks officer [summary briefing](#) on our website.

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# ON-GOING ISSUES

### Issue 13 – Picture of Health

The decision of the Joint Committee of Primary Care Trusts was announced in the summer 2008 with some token reference to the consultation process. The decision reached was that Queen Mary's Sidcup will lose A&E and only undertake planned surgery (whilst Princess royal will only undertake emergency and day case surgery. Surgery will end Orpington hospital.

This was challenged in autumn 2008 by the Joint overview and scrutiny committee of local councils, leading to a referral to the Secretary of State for Health. He in turn referred the matter in December 2008 to the Independent Reconfiguration Panel for their advice. The panel reported at the end of March 2009, expecting to make their report public in May 2009, at around the same time as the Secretary Of State makes a final decision.

In the meantime there has been a merger of the hospitals involved into one trust - [South London Healthcare NHS Trust](#). The Picture of Health project board also continued with an implementation plan covering the period up to 2012 for those parts of Picture of Health which were not the subject of a referral. See [www.apictureofhealth.nhs.uk](http://www.apictureofhealth.nhs.uk) for more information.

### Issue 14 – New Mayor

As the new mayor consolidated his team a number of consultations on new plans and strategies were issues in the latter half of 2008. The final versions of many of these are expected in the coming months and in the meantime links to the consultation drafts appear below. The list of the [mayor's priorities](#) are mostly short statements of principle but more of these now have links to much fuller documents and consultation setting out detail. These include -

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- A draft transport strategy,
- A housing strategy covering the need for and building of new homes including social and affordable housing and individual boroughs responsibilities
- a more comprehensive planning strategy which will form the basis of the London plan - which will in turn affect planning policies of boroughs
- and a document on London wide approaches to addressing climate change - of particular interest in Bromley recently reported to have the largest "carbon footprint" in London.
- The mayor has also produced a draft equality framework setting out vision and also desired outcomes.