



**SAFER
COMMUNITIES**

**VALUE
FOR
MONEY**

**CLEANER
STREETS**

MJ Awards 2009
Ealing Council

Best Achieving Council of the Year



Ealing, in west London, has both inner-city style areas and green and suburban spaces, and is home to 300,000 people



With 40% of residents from ethnic minorities and more than 100 languages spoken in schools, Ealing is the fourth most diverse borough in the country.

How clear priorities transformed Ealing

- In our 2007 corporate plan, we promised to address residents' top three concerns: making the borough cleaner, safer, and delivering excellent value for money across all services.
- Prioritising based on residents' needs has enabled us to become a dynamic and effective community leader.
- The result is that resident satisfaction with the Council and the area has increased and we have made significant improvements in overall performance.
- In addition, focus on efficiency has facilitated investment in innovative and sustainable improvements.

About Ealing

Ealing is an extremely diverse borough in the heart of west London. It is home to 300,000 people, and has characteristics of both inner and outer London. Its identity is built around seven town centres, some of which have a green and suburban feel, and some of which are more like inner cities.

More than 40% of residents come from ethnic minorities, making Ealing the fourth most ethnically diverse borough in the country. Over 100 languages are spoken in our schools.

This diversity extends further than ethnicity and covers ages, family types, faiths, languages, cultures and traditions, and comes together in a unique mix that makes the borough, for many, a very special place to live.

However, the general prosperity of the borough is not shared by all of our communities. Poor standards of health and education, low household incomes and high levels of benefits dependency are concentrated in pockets of deprivation.

Listening to residents: where the three priorities came from

Our approach to fulfilling a dynamic community leadership role is startlingly simple but strikingly effective. We:

- **Ask residents** what they want and what they are most concerned about.
- **Take action**, deploying resources according to residents' needs, feeding back to residents so they know what we will do and when.
- **Ask again**, to see whether improved performance has actually made any difference to people's lives, and to find out what needs to be done next.

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We focus on delivering excellence against three immediate priorities



Over the last year satisfaction with street cleaning has risen 11%

Residents told us that they were most concerned about litter, levels of crime, and the amount of council tax they pay. Our response was to implement a policy that focused the organisation on delivering excellence against three immediate priority areas:

- **Cleaner Streets**
- **Safer Communities**
- **Value for Money**

What were the results?

Put simply, the results have been that a real difference has been made to the lives of all Ealing residents. By focusing always on what residents tell us they want, we have been able to deliver remarkable improvements in performance and outcomes. Some examples include:

Our 'Cleaner Streets'

In the light of feedback from resident and community surveys, and a massive waste collection consultation to which over 10,500 responded:

- £3.8 million has been invested in new innovative waste collection systems, reducing concerns about litter.
- Residents are now given same day refuse and recycling collections, plastics recycling and reusable sacks for garden waste.
- Streets are cleaned the day after collections and a new street-washing programme has been introduced.
- 15,000 free wheelie bins were provided to households that told us they wanted them.
- Charges for removing old fridges and freezers were scrapped increasing collections to 600 per month, reducing fly-tipping and increasing recycling.
- £8.5 million has been invested in road and pavement repairs – our biggest investment in more than 10 years.
- Year-end performance showed that streets were significantly cleaner and recycling rates had hit the Government's 30% target two years early.
- Recycling rates have improved by 39% over the last three years, and we are currently exceeding ambitious recycling and composting targets set in the LAA.
- Over the last year, satisfaction increased with refuse collection from 76% to 83% and street cleaning 65% to 76%.



Spending on "Alley Gating" doubled to £400,000



A £2 million investment in 50 PCSOs reduced crime



Presenting value for money for Ealing's residents.

Our commitments to building a safer and stronger community

- We invested £2million in 50 additional Police Community Support Officers, which contributed to reductions in violent crime during 2007/08 – violent crime down 7% (from 10,319 to 9,598); robberies down 34% (from 2,359 to 1,541) and vehicle crime down nearly 25% (from 6,668 to 5,081).
- £500k was invested in 23 new CCTV cameras, leading to 1,236 arrests this year.
- Doubling spend on 'Alley Gating' has prevented alleys from being used as rat-runs.
- We have enabled residents to protect and improve their neighbourhoods. Ealing 'Streetwatchers', a body of 350 volunteers who have been recruited, trained and supported to help tackle crime, anti-social behaviour and enviro-crime has contributed enormously to improved performance in these areas, and won the 'Engaging Communities' category of the Cleaner, Safer, Greener Awards in 2008.
- 94% of residents told us they feel safe in their neighbourhoods during the day – much higher than the London average of 79%
- 84% are satisfied with their neighbourhood, and concern with crime is going down.

Our focus on Value for Money and efficiency, which enables future innovation and improvement we can sustain:

Our successes demonstrate that Ealing's financial management and focus on improvement and efficiency is second-to-none. Our solid financial standing gives us confidence that this year's outstanding performance improvements are sustainable long-term:

- This year's Council Tax rise was 1.89%, the lowest in Ealing for 14 years and the 6th lowest in London
- Record levels of Council Tax (96.35%) were collected in 2007/08.
- Our alertness enabled us to pull money out of Icelandic Banks at an early stage.
- In the last four years, we have achieved £61.3m in savings and efficiencies, investing £46.5m back into service improvement.
- We saved £11.2 million in the budget setting process for 2008/09 through making internal departments more efficient for example: £500k saved through homecare re-enablement and efficiency project, £481k saved through Parking Service Improvement Programme, £760k through agency, scanning and printing related procurement savings.
- £2 million was added to General Fund balances bringing them to £14.2 million.
- The Council was awarded the top score of 4 from the Audit Commission for our financial standing.
- 72% residents feel the Council is efficient and well run and concern with Council Tax levels is down.



Regular newsletters encourage residents to participate in local decision-making at new style ward forums



Residents think the borough is a safe place to live and a community where people get on well together



Almost 70% of residents feel informed about what we are doing

To summarise some of our achievements:

	2005/6	2008
Residents say the Council is increasingly:		
Doing a good job	65%	78%
Efficient and well run	55%	72%
Involving residents in decision making	39%	60%
Keeping residents informed about what they are doing	53%	69%
Successfully tackling resident's top concerns:		
Concerns about street cleanliness (cleaner streets)	30%	26%
Concerns about crime (safer communities)	43%	29%
Concerns about council tax (value for money)	43%	25%
Increasing resident satisfaction with services residents have prioritised:		
Street Cleaning	52%	76%
Refuse collection	69%	83%
Crime – people feeling safe during the day	84%	94%
Providing good value for money for Council Tax paid	33%	46%
Building a stronger and more cohesive community:		
People of different backgrounds are getting on well together	71%	89%

But it doesn't end there

We have truly risen to the challenge of leading the local community. With our partners on the Local Strategic Partnership, we have agreed an ambitious vision for the community, set out in the Ealing Sustainable Community Strategy:

"In 2016 Ealing will be a successful borough at the heart of west London where everyone has the opportunity to prosper and live fulfilling lives in communities which are safe, cohesive and engaged."

To realise this vision, we brought the same level of sharp focus to our partnership working that had proved so successful within the Council. As a result, Ealing LSP agreed a sharply focused Local Area Agreement (LAA) setting out 23 priorities for improvement over the next three years. The outcomes of extensive resident consultations (such as our consultation with over 6,000 children and young people) fed directly into the LSP's debates about which priority indicators to select for its LAA. We have ensured these 23 priorities provide the basis for both our corporate plan and the delivery programme of the LSP.



Consultations with over 7,000 young people means we focus on providing services that children and young people actually want and really need



Our services to older people have gone from zero to three stars in three years

Involving residents

Furthermore, we have delegated spend of £1million to residents themselves. Twenty-three ward forums have become a much more popular alternative to Area Committees, with each forum a lively environment for residents to connect with their local councillors, and debate how best to spend small capital budgets. Outcomes from these meetings, combined with the outcomes from surveys and consultations, provide us with a clear steer on how to prioritise resources.

What else has this approach achieved?

Once again, prioritisation, together with consultation has proved to be a recipe for success, delivering:

- First class services for children and young people
- Our innovative consultation with over 7,000 young people has enabled us to focus on providing services that children and young people actually want and really need.
- The result is 88% of our PIs have improved on the previous year.
- 94% of PIs measuring outcomes for children and young people have improved over the last three years, which is well above the single tier average of 82-85%.
- Outcomes for Looked After Children in Ealing far exceed the national picture, with 13% now going on to university.
- In 2008 our Children's Services received a "good" inspection rating with excellent prospects for improvement, and Fostering services achieved an "excellent" rating.
- We won "Council of the Year" award for Children's and Young People's services in 2007, in recognition of these outstanding achievements; and an Ealing Council employee won the prestigious "Play worker of the Year" award in the National Children's Star Awards.

Outstanding improvements in Adults' services

- Last year, CSCI awarded Ealing the maximum 3 star rating for the service it provides with 'excellent' capacity to improve: a remarkable, 0 to 3 star improvement over just three and-a-half years.
- A 2008 inspection of older people's services concluded that good outcomes are achieved by services and that the capacity to improve them is excellent.
- Home care has now achieved the top national performance banding.



Outstanding improvements in staff morale

Furthermore, a sharper focus on residents' needs has boosted staff morale and effectiveness.

- 71% of staff are happy in their roles.
- 73% of staff understand the Council's three priorities and 74% of staff understand the Council's overall objectives. The average for local authorities is 54% and the wider public sector average is 61%.
- 46% of staff believe that the Council is good at communicating with its staff (the public sector average is 25%).
- 68% of staff feel that diversity and difference are valued by the Council (the public sector average is 35%).
- 38% of staff feel they are consulted on decisions that affect them. The national average for local authorities is 22%.
- 77% of staff believe the Council is making the local area a better place to live compared to 71% in 2006/07.

Conclusion

Ealing Council has had a remarkable year. Our ability to focus on the needs of our residents, and to share this approach to planning and delivery with our partners, has driven remarkable improvement in performance and outcomes.

These are some of the reasons why the Audit Commission complimented us recently on our "clear strategic focus" and delivery of "sustained outcomes that benefit all people." (Corporate Assessment follow-up report November 2008).

Thanks to the success of our approach to efficiency and value for money, we have achieved sustainable progress, underpinned by consistently improving resident satisfaction.

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Our focus on residents' needs has driven remarkable improvements in performance, outcomes and satisfaction