

Meeting of the

# OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

---

Tuesday, 6 May 2008 at 7.00 p.m.

---

## A G E N D A

---

### VENUE

M71, 7th Floor, Town Hall, Mulberry Place, 5 Clove Crescent, London,  
E14 2BG

Members:	Deputies (if any):
<b>Chair: Councillor Marc Francis</b> <b>Vice-Chair: Councillor Alexander Heslop</b>	
<b>Councillor Shahed Ali</b> <b>Councillor Alibor Choudhury</b> <b>Councillor Stephanie Eaton</b> <b>Councillor Ahmed Hussain</b> <b>Councillor Oliur Rahman</b> <b>Councillor Mohammed Abdus Salique</b> <b>Councillor Salim Ullah</b>	Councillor Lutfa Begum, (Designated Deputy representing Councillor Oliur Rahman) Councillor Peter Golds, (Designated Deputy representing Councillor Ahmed Hussain) Councillor Rania Khan, (Designated Deputy representing Councillor Oliur Rahman) Councillor Abjol Miah, (Designated Deputy representing Councillor Shahed Ali) Councillor Fozol Miah, (Designated Deputy representing Councillor Shahed Ali) Councillor M. Mamun Rashid, (Designated Deputy representing Councillor Shahed Ali) Councillor A A Sardar, (Designated Deputy representing Councillors Marc Francis, Alibor Choudhury, Alex Heslop, Mohammed Abdus Salique and Salim Ullah)

Councillor Bill Turner, (Designated Deputy representing Councillors Marc Francis, Alibor Choudhury, Alex heslop, Mohammed Abdus Salique and Salim Ullah)

**[Note: The quorum for this body is 4 voting Members].**

**Co-opted Members:**

Mr Azad Ali	– Parent Governor Representative
Terry Bennett	– Church of England Representative
Mr D McLaughlin	– Roman Catholic Diocese of Westminster Representative
Mr H Mueenuddin	– Muslim Community Representative

If you require any further information relating to this meeting, would like to request a large print, Braille or audio version of this document, or would like to discuss access arrangements or any other special requirements, please contact: Amanda Thompson,  
Tel: 020 7364 465, E-mail: [amanda.thompson@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:amanda.thompson@towerhamlets.gov.uk)

**LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS**  
**OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**Tuesday, 6 May 2008**

**7.00 p.m.**

**SECTION ONE**

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

To receive any apologies for absence.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

To note any declarations of interest made by Members, including those restricting Members from voting on the questions detailed in Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act, 1992. See attached note from the Chief Executive.

**3. UNRESTRICTED MINUTES**

**3 - 14**

To confirm as a correct record of the proceedings the unrestricted minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 1 April 2008.

**4. REQUESTS TO SUBMIT PETITIONS**

To be notified at the meeting.

**5. REQUESTS FOR DEPUTATIONS**

To be notified at the meeting.

**6. SECTION ONE REPORTS 'CALLED IN'**

(Time allocated 45 minutes)

To consider call-in requests as attached in respect of the following Section One items from the meeting of Cabinet held on 2 April 2008

**6.1 Disposal of Land – 10 Blackchurch Lane E1**

**15 - 30**

**7. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT**

There are no items to consider under this heading.

## **8. BUDGET AND POLICY FRAMEWORK**

There are no items to consider under this heading.

## **9. SCRUTINY MONITORING AND MANAGEMENT**

(Time allocated – 30 minutes)

- |            |   |                  |
|------------|---|------------------|
| <b>9.1</b> | <b>Young Peoples Participation in Sports leading up to the Olympics - Report of the Scrutiny Working Group (Report to Follow)</b> | <b>31 - 66</b>   |
| <b>9.2</b> | <b>Choice Based Lettings Scheme - Report of the Scrutiny Working Group</b>  | <b>67 - 104</b>  |
| <b>9.3</b> | <b>Evaluation of NRF - Report of the Scrutiny Working Group</b>   | <b>105 - 144</b> |
| <b>9.4</b> | <b>Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour - Report of the Scrutiny Working Group (Report to Follow)</b>                                   | <b>145 - 170</b> |

## **10. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT**

**171 - 192**

(10 minutes)

## **11. VERBAL UPDATES FROM SCRUTINY LEADS**

(Time allocated – 10 minutes)

## **12. PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF SECTION ONE (UNRESTRICTED) CABINET PAPERS**

(Time allocated – 10 minutes).

## **13. ANY OTHER SECTION ONE (UNRESTRICTED) BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR CONSIDERS TO BE URGENT**

## **14. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

In view of the contents of the remaining items on the agenda the Committee is recommended to adopt the following motion:

“That, under the provisions of Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985, the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting for the consideration of the Section Two business on the grounds that it contains information defined as Exempt in Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act, 1972.”

**EXEMPT/CONFIDENTIAL SECTION (Pink Papers)**

The exempt committee papers in the agenda will contain information, which is commercially, legally or personally sensitive and should not be divulged to third parties. If you do not wish to retain these papers after the meeting, please hand them to the Committee Officer present.

**15. PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF SECTION TWO (RESTRICTED) CABINET PAPERS**

(Time allocated 5 minutes).

**16. ANY OTHER SECTION TWO (RESTRICTED) BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT**

This page is intentionally left blank

# Agenda Item 2

## **DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS - NOTE FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE FOR MEMBERS OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

This note is guidance only. Members should consult the Council's Code of Conduct for further details. Note: Only Members can decide if they have an interest therefore they must make their own decision. If in doubt as to the nature of an interest it is advisable to seek advice **prior** to attending at a meeting.

### **Declaration of interests for Members**

Where Members have a personal interest in any business of the authority as described in paragraph 4 of the Council's Code of Conduct (contained in part 5 of the Council's Constitution) then s/he must disclose this personal interest as in accordance with paragraph 5 of the Code. Members must disclose the existence and nature of the interest at the start of the meeting and certainly no later than the commencement of the item or where the interest becomes apparent.

You have a **personal interest** in any business of your authority where it relates to or is likely to affect:

- (a) An interest that you must **register**
- (b) An interest that is not on the register, but where the well-being or financial position of you, members of your family, or people with whom you have a close association, is likely to be affected by the business of your authority more than it would affect the majority of inhabitants of the ward affected by the decision.

Where a personal interest is declared a Member may stay and take part in the debate and decision on that item.

**What constitutes a prejudicial interest?** - Please refer to paragraph 6 of the adopted Code of Conduct.

**Your personal interest will also be a prejudicial interest in a matter if (a), (b) and either (c) or (d) below apply:-**

- (a) A member of the public, who knows the relevant facts, would reasonably think that your personal interests are so significant that it is likely to prejudice your judgment of the public interests; AND
- (b) The matter does not fall within one of the exempt categories of decision listed in paragraph 6.2 of the Code; AND EITHER
- (c) The matter affects your financial position or the financial interest of a body with which you are associated; or
- (d) The matter relates to the determination of a licensing or regulatory application

The key points to remember if you have a prejudicial interest in a matter being discussed at a meeting:-

- i. You must declare that you have a prejudicial interest, and the nature of that interest, as soon as that interest becomes apparent to you; and
- ii. You must leave the room for the duration of consideration and decision on the item and not seek to influence the debate or decision unless (iv) below applies; and

- iii. You must not seek to improperly influence a decision in which you have a prejudicial interest.
- iv. If Members of the public are allowed to speak or make representations at the meeting, give evidence or answer questions about the matter, by statutory right or otherwise (e.g. planning or licensing committees), you can declare your prejudicial interest but make representations. However, you must immediately leave the room once you have finished your representations and answered questions (if any). You cannot remain in the meeting or in the public gallery during the debate or decision on the matter.

**There are particular rules relating to a prejudicial interest arising in relation to Overview and Scrutiny Committees**

- You will have a prejudicial interest in any business before an Overview & Scrutiny Committee or sub committee meeting where both of the following requirements are met:-
  - (i) That business relates to a decision made (whether implemented or not) or action taken by the Council's Executive (Cabinet) or another of the Council's committees, sub committees, joint committees or joint sub committees
  - (ii) You were a Member of that decision making body at the time and you were present at the time the decision was made or action taken.
- If the Overview & Scrutiny Committee is conducting a review of the decision which you were involved in making or if there is a 'call-in' you may be invited by the Committee to attend that meeting to answer questions on the matter in which case you must attend the meeting to answer questions and then leave the room before the debate or decision.
- If you are not called to attend you should not attend the meeting in relation to the matter in which you participated in the decision unless the authority's constitution allows members of the public to attend the Overview & Scrutiny for the same purpose. If you do attend then you must declare a prejudicial interest even if you are not called to speak on the matter and you must leave the debate before the decision.



**LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS**

**MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**HELD AT 7.00 P.M. ON TUESDAY, 1 APRIL 2008**

**M71, 7TH FLOOR, TOWN HALL, MULBERRY PLACE, 5 CLOVE CRESCENT,  
LONDON, E14 2BG**

**Members Present:**

Councillor Marc Francis (Chair)  
Councillor Shahed Ali  
Councillor Alibor Choudhury  
Councillor Alexander Heslop (Vice-Chair)  
Councillor Ahmed Hussain  
Councillor Mohammed Abdus Salique  
Councillor Salim Ullah

**Other Councillors Present:**

Councillor Ohid Ahmed – (Lead Member, Regeneration, Localisation and Community Partnerships)  
Councillor Joshua Peck – (Lead Member, Resources and Performance)  
Councillor Motin Uz-Zaman – (Lead Member, Health and Wellbeing)

**Officers Present:**

Afazul Hoque – (Acting Scrutiny Policy Manager, Scrutiny and Equalities, Chief Executive's)  
Michael Keating – (Acting Assistant Chief Executive, Chief Executive's)  
Graham White – (Legal Adviser)  
Edmund Wildish – (Scrutiny Policy Officer, Scrutiny and Equalities , Chief Executive's)  
Angus Dixon – (Interim Senior Committee Officer, Democratic Services, Chief Executive's)  
Amanda Thompson – (Team Leader - Democratic Services)

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Stephanie Eaton and Oliur Rahman and Terry Bennett, Co-opted Member.

## **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Alibor Choudhury declared a personal interest in relation to item 6.2.

Councillor Ohid Ahmed declared a personal interest in relation to items 6.1 and 6.2.

## **3. UNRESTRICTED MINUTES**

### **RESOLVED**

That the Section One minutes of the meeting held on 4 March 2008 be confirmed as a correct record, subject to Councillor Peter Golds being added to the Members listed as present.

## **4. REQUESTS TO SUBMIT PETITIONS**

No petitions were received.

## **5. REQUESTS FOR DEPUTATIONS**

### **5.1 Deputation from Mr Michael Collins in respect of the Scrutiny Review of the Licensing of Strip Clubs.**

The Chair welcomed the deputation and asked its representative to address the meeting.

Mr Michael Collins, on behalf of the deputation, addressed the meeting on the issue of controlling the impacts of sexploitation venues in the Borough and the recommendations of the Scrutiny Review Group. He outlined a number of issues raised by the deputation which focused on the need for residents views to be taken into account when determining planning/licensing applications for these venues, and the lack of enforcement and monitoring of them.

In response to a series of questions put by Members, Mr Collins stated that while he felt that the Council had taken the issue seriously, it was still work in progress and ultimately it would still be necessary to lobby Parliament with a view to a change in legislation. In addition the current levels of enforcement were not stringent enough and regular inspections of premises were needed.

The Chair thanked the deputation for attending the meeting and reassured its members that the Scrutiny Working Group report was a starting point rather than an end point.

### **5.2 Deputation by Mr Abdul Halim in respect of the Blackwell Reach Regeneration Project**

The Chair welcomed the deputation and asked its representative to address the meeting.

Mr Abdul Halim, on the behalf of Robin Hood Garden residents, spoke of their opposition to the current proposals for redeveloping Robin Hood Gardens and Blackwall Reach, in particular that the development plan failed to address directly the demand from tenants that they retain council tenure.

In response to a series of questions put by Members, Mr Halim stated that residents wanted to stay with the Council, not a Registered Social Landlord (RSL), and this had not been adequately addressed during the consultation process. There were also concerns in relation to the decanting process. For example how long it would take and also whether residents would be moved out of the area. If they were then there was a risk that they might not be moved back. Although the majority of residents had chosen the rebuild option over the regeneration option, this was not expected to be at the expense of their tenancies.

The Chair sought clarification from Mr Halim that residents wished to stay in Blackwell Reach and wanted the rebuild option, however as they wished to remain Council tenants would they take the refurbishment option in order to achieve this.

Mr Halim replied that the majority of residents wanted the rebuild option and didn't want their tenancies to change.

The Chair thanked the deputation for attending the meeting.

## **6. ADJOURNMENT FOR PRAYERS**

The meeting adjourned at 7:43pm and reconvened at 7.55pm.

## **7. SECTION ONE REPORTS 'CALLED IN'**

### **7.1 Blackwall Reach Regeneration Project - Development Framework**

The Chair outlined the call-in procedure to the Committee.

Councillor Dulal Uddin for the Call-In Members referred to the reasons in their requisition and highlighted the main issues that they held with the provisionally agreed proposed strategy for the Blackwall Reach Regeneration Project, namely that the development plan failed to address directly the demand from tenants that they retained council tenure in new or improved homes in the Robin Hood Gardens area.

Committee Members put detailed questions to the Lead Member for Regeneration, Localisation and Community Partnerships, Councillor Ohid

Ahmed, and Mr Owen Whalley, Service Head Major Project Development, on a number of issues including the consultation process, the regeneration needs of the area, clarification of the decanting process, and the value of the refurbishment of Robin Hood Gardens.

Councillor Ahmed and Mr Whalley responded on behalf of the Cabinet in detail on the points raised stating that the Council was committed to meeting residents' desire to remain in the neighbourhood following the redevelopment, and was fully committed to exploring how residents' aspirations in relation to tenure could be met. Furthermore, intensive consultation with residents would continue to be undertaken in a number of ways.

After responding to questions Councillor Ahmed left the meeting.

The Committee expressed concern about the cost of the Decent Homes estimate, and the inclusion of high density development within the project.

### **RESOLVED**

That Cabinet be requested to agree that the implementation of the Blackwell Reach Regeneration Project be delayed in order to give further consideration to their concerns and recommendations including:

- 1) That the provisional decision of Cabinet 5.3.08 to consider a range of options for adapting the Blackwall Reach Development Framework, be extended to include consideration of alternative submissions which fully address the residents' demands as reflected in the Statement of community participation and residents' and TRA statements;
- 2) That options should clarify the number of rented Council and/or RSL homes to be included, and minimise disposal of publicly owned land. These should be considered by Members following full consultation with residents; and
- 3) That a condition be inserted in the agreement to ensure that the RSL do not use Ground 8 powers to evict residents for rent arrears.

## **7.2 Draft Ocean New Deal for Communities Delivery Plan 2008/9**

The Chair outlined the Call-In procedure to the Committee.

In the absence of a representative from the Call-In Members, the Committee noted the reasons for the requisition and the main issues concerning the draft ONDC delivery plan for 2008/9 as detailed in the report.

Committee Members put detailed questions to the Lead Member for Regeneration, Localisation and Community Partnerships, Councillor Ohid Ahmed, and Ms Emma Peters, Corporate Director, Development and Renewal on a number of issues including governance of the Community

Interest Company (CIC), RSL involvement, housing proposals and community centres and facilities

Councillor Ahmed and Ms Peters responded on behalf of the Cabinet in detail on the points raised stating that the issues that were the subject of this call-in were fully reported in April and June 07 when Cabinet made the decision to set up the Ocean Regeneration Trust (ORT). Those decisions were not being reviewed or revisited in the NDC delivery plan.

It had been previously agreed that the Board of the ORT would consist of 12 members comprising 3 residents, 2 councillors, 5 independent specialists and 2 RSL/developer representatives, and the recruitment process was already underway.

A priority task for the interim board was to set up the three sub-boards, which will include residents, selected on the basis of their interest, experience and expertise. A Housing Management and a Neighbourhood Renewal Board would include a significant proportion of residents and they would be in a majority on the Housing Management Board. The Neighbourhood Renewal Board would have delegated responsibility to manage the delivery of the non-housing element of the NDC programme. Residents would therefore be making decisions on priorities, identifying needs in the community and monitoring performance of the housing management team.

The ORT would be independent of the Council but would enter into service level agreements with the Council to deliver some services. The Council would remain as the Accountable Body for the NDC programme until it ended in March 2010 and would continue to monitor the ongoing programme management and financial/governance probity of the ORT.

The timescales required to retain the essential NDC grant had driven this approach and Ocean couldn't afford any more lengthy delays in implementing the regeneration. The take-up of the NDC monies for the housing programme would depend upon being able to start refurbishment and infrastructure works immediately after the selection and appointment of the Council's RSL partner later this year.

After responding to questions Councillor Ahmed left the meeting.

During discussion the Committee expressed concern with regard to the future governance arrangements of the CIC, and the fact that no key stakeholders were represented on the ORT Board. However in the absence of any representative from the Call-In Members and the possible loss of NDC monies if any further delays were incurred, the Committee considered that the decisions did not need to be referred back to the Cabinet.

Following the debate the Committee voted on whether to refer the item back to the Cabinet for further consideration and it was

**RESOLVED:**

That the alternative course of action proposed in the Call-In not be pursued and the decision of the Cabinet confirmed.

## **8. SCRUTINY SPOTLIGHT: LEAD MEMBER**

The Chair welcomed Councillor Motin Uz-Zaman, Lead Member for Adult Health and Wellbeing, and John Goldup, Corporate Director for Adult Health and Wellbeing, to the meeting.

Councillor Motin gave a short presentation on the key achievements of the directorate over the last year, including the independent assessment of Adult Social Care as being one of the best in the country with a three star score for the fourth year in a row.

Councillor Motin then spoke of some of the challenges facing the Borough including continuing cost pressures, with care costs rising across London at 5-6% a year, an increasing demand for services, very high levels of illness, overcrowding and poor housing. The Council was also required to meet challenging Government targets over the next three years, in particular the move towards all service users controlling their own care through a personalised budget.

Members of the Committee asked questions on a number of related issues including service review timescales, closure of care homes, adult commissioning, savings and efficiency, improved outcomes for vulnerable adults, impacts of the smoking ban, and the taking over of GP practices by private healthcare Companies.

Councillor Motin and John Goldup then responded in detail to the points raised.

The Committee noted that the Council was in the top quartile for service reviews and was committed to sustaining and improving current high levels of performance. The number of care homes closing had remained stable although some were not taking any new admissions. There was a need to encourage more residents to receive care whilst living at home which meant that suitable housing also needed to form part of the commissioning process.

The Directorate had a balanced three year budget which would protect front line services and deliver genuine efficiency savings. With regard to vulnerable adults the move to choice based independence would require the delivery of more joined up services across health and social care, and the need to ensure accountability of support services.

The effects of the smoking ban had been very positive and the Health Scrutiny Panel had identified areas where the Primary Care Trust and the Council needed to improve methods of dealing with the problems that arose in the community.

The Chair thanked Councillor Uz Zaman and John Goldup for their attendance at the meeting and for answering Members' questions.

## **9. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT**

### **9.1 Tower Hamlets Index**

Councillor Joshua Peck, Lead Member for Resources and Performance, presented the end of January monitoring report for the Tower Hamlets Index 2007/08.

Councillor Peck reported that 15 of the performance indicators (34.88%) were on track to achieve their end of year target (green), and he detailed areas where performance was well above the estimated level for the end of January target. A total of 7 indicators were amber (16.28%) with action plans in place to ensure they got back on track by the end of the year, and 21 (48.84%) were at red which, based on the Manager's comments, were not expected to meet their year-end targets.

In response to a number of questions the Committee noted the following:

Recycling performance had reached 18.8% in January, the highest ever score, and the Director was confident that 40% could be achieved by 2010.

The 'Top 5% earners from an ethnic minority' indicator was nationally set and allowed easier comparisons with other Boroughs. The issue around identifying top earners was about progression – people needed to be earning well lower down the scale to earn well at the top.

Although the indicator for 'Cleanliness of land and highways' remained the same, the streets were cleaner than they had ever been. However the way the contracts were managed needed improving.

The indicator for 'Library items issued to under 16s' continued to fluctuate although wasn't that short of the target. A lot of under 16s did use the service but didn't 'borrow' items.

Although only 15 out of 43 targets had been met, 8 out of the 12 amber indicators were very close to achieving their targets.

### **RESOLVED**

That the report be noted.

## **10. RULES OF PROCEDURE**

At 10.10pm In accordance with Paragraph 9.2 of Part 4 of the Council's Constitution the Chair **MOVED** and it was

**RESOLVED**

That the meeting be extended for 30 minutes to enable the business to be concluded.

**11. SCRUTINY MONITORING AND MANAGEMENT**

**11.1 Report of Scrutiny Review Group: Licensing of Strip Clubs**

The Chair introduced the report to the Committee and additionally took the opportunity to thank all the Council officers who contributed to compiling the document, and also Ex-Councillor Louise Alexander.

The Committee agreed that the clear public statement referred to in Recommendation 8 should be multi-lingual, and also that it would be useful to engage other communities in the pan-London event referred to in Recommendation 14.

The Chair also reported that Edmund Wildish, Scrutiny Support Officer, would shortly be leaving the Scrutiny Policy Team to take up a position in another section of the Council. The Committee asked that their appreciation for all his hard work be placed on record and wished him well for the future.

**RESOLVED**

That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

1. Endorse the draft report subject to the clear public statement referred to in Recommendation 8 being multi-lingual; and
2. Authorise the Acting Assistant Chief Executive to agree the final report before its submission to Cabinet.

**11.2 Report of Health Scrutiny Panel Review Group: Smoking/Tobacco Cessation**

The Chair introduced the report to the Committee and additionally took the opportunity to thank all the Council officers who contributed to compiling the document.

The Committee asked that clarification be sought on whether the Elected Member referred to in Recommendation 1 was the Cabinet Member or the Scrutiny Lead for Health.

**RESOLVED**



That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

1. Endorse the draft report; and
2. Authorise the Acting Assistant Chief Executive to agree the final report before it's submission to Cabinet, after consultation with the Chair of Health Scrutiny Panel.

### **11.3 Verbal updates from Scrutiny Lead Members**

Scrutiny Lead members reported on progress within their respective Scrutiny areas:

Councillor Alibor Choudhury (Creating & Sharing Prosperity) reported on progress of the Evaluation of NRF Funding Scrutiny Review. At the last meeting on 27 March, representatives from NRF funded statutory and voluntary organisations attended to give their experiences of NRF. On the 20 March a focus group had taken place with residents to identify how NRF had impacted upon local people. The final meeting was due to take place on Thursday 3 April during which Members hoped to reflect on the evidence heard so far and consider the draft recommendations. Officers were currently drafting a report which was expected to be reported to the Committee at the May meeting.

Councillor Mohammed Abdul Salique (Excellent Public Services) advised that the next Challenge session for Translating and Interpreting Services was due to take place on Tuesday 22 April 2008 and he asked that as many Members as possible were in attendance.

Councillor Ahmed Hussain (Learning Achievement & Leisure) reported on the Scrutiny Review of Young Peoples Participation in Sports leading up to the Olympics. He advised that the last meeting had been cancelled and the report would be agreed with the Working Group via email before the 14<sup>th</sup> of April 2008. The review had been filmed from the start to produce a DVD about how Councillors in their role as community leaders could lead on reviews to make recommendations which made an impact on the lives of local people, and this would be available to view in May.

Councillor Alex Heslop (Living Well) reported on the Choice Based Lettings Review which was shortly due to draw to a conclusion. The recommendations in the report addressed issues ranging from access for those with sensory disabilities to the impact of CBL on community cohesion and could potentially mean changes to the way the allocations policy operated. The final session for the CBL review would take place on Monday 7 April and the report would be presented to Cabinet in May.

Councillor Salim Ullah (Living Safely) reported on the Evaluation of the Tackling Anti Social Behaviour Scrutiny Review The next meeting was on Wednesday 2 April and during the session Members would meet with the Youth Partnership to consider young peoples views on ASB, and what the Council should be doing to help young people and some of the challenges facing the Council on tackling ASB. The draft recommendations would also be discussed at this meeting with the final report being presented to the Committee in May.

## 12. PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF SECTION ONE (UNRESTRICTED) CABINET PAPERS

The Chair **MOVED** and it was: -

### **RESOLVED**

That the following pre-decision questions be submitted to Cabinet for consideration.

Agenda Item 9.1 Leasing of Premises for Children's Centres (CAB 151/078)

1. What assessment has been made of the impact on Mowlem, Old Church and Olga Primary Schools of basing a Children's Centre within their premises/grounds?

Agenda Item 9.2 Lifelong Learning Service: Proposed Fees and Charges for the 2008/09 Academic Year (CAB 152/078)

1. Given the increased cost of living, what consideration has been given to the effect that an increase in fees of 10% (far above inflation) will have on the uptake of courses by elder mature students?
2. How many Tower Hamlets employees have taken up courses with LLL? How has that helped the council in terms of work efficiency?

Agenda Item 19.1 Disposal of Land 10 Backchurch Lane E1 (CAB 156/078)

1. Why have the current sitting tenants (leaseholders, tenants/licensees) been excluded from any discussions with regard to the disposal over the past 4 years and have they been approached to determine any interest in continuing with the development of the site or to purchase the land themselves?
2. How have the current sitting tenants been consulted over the last 5 years
3. Other than clawback of ERDF monies, has any consideration been given regarding financial compensation for additional private investment by the sitting tenant into the development of the building?

4. Has any consideration been given to the impact of the disposal on the livelihood both legal and economic re provision of services, contracts, agreements and undertakings between current leaseholders and tenants and their customers/users?
5. Has any consideration been given to the wellbeing of the leaseholder with regard to their business/activities development in the exposure of the details of the proposed disposal during the past 4 to 5 years and future years?
6. Has priority been given to the Environment Trust and have they been in receipt of confidential information regarding the current leaseholders?
7. To what extent is the sale reliant on securing the ownership of adjoining land re the Environment Trust's total development proposal? Otherwise for what purpose has the proposed sale of the specific property been made?
8. Why have the tenancy rights under the 1954 Business Tenancy Act been ignored? What are the Council's obligations?
9. Why didn't the report brief members of the Cabinet that there are approximately 15 small businesses employing 100-120 employees currently using the site?

**13. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**RESOLVED**

That, under the provisions of Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985, the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting for the consideration of the Section Two business on the grounds that it contains information defined as Exempt in Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act, 1972.

**14. RESTRICTED MINUTES**

**RESOLVED**

That the Section Two minutes of the meeting held on 4 March 2008 be confirmed as a correct record, subject to Councillor Peter Golds being added to the Members listed as present.

**The meeting ended at 10.40pm**

**Chair, Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

# Agenda Item 6.1

<b>Committee:</b>  <b>OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY</b>	<b>Date:</b>  <b>6 May 2008</b>	<b>Classification:</b>  <b>Unrestricted</b>	<b>Report No.</b>	<b>Agenda Item No.</b>
<b>Report of:</b> <b>Assistant Chief Executive</b>  <b>Originating Officer(s):</b> <b>Amanda Thompson</b> <b>Team Leader, Democratic Services</b>			<b>Title:</b> <b>Cabinet Decision Called-in:</b> <b>Disposal of Land – 10</b> <b>Blackchurch Lane E1</b>  <b>Wards: Whitechapel</b>	

## 1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 The attached report of the Corporate Director, Development and Renewal was considered by the Cabinet on 2 April 2008 and has been "Called In" by Councillors Alex Heslop, Ahmed Omer, Alibor Choudhury, Shahed Ali and Marc Francis for further consideration. This is in accordance with the provisions of Part Four of the Council's Constitution.

## 2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That the Committee consider the contents of the attached report, review the Cabinet's provisional decisions arising and decide whether to accept them or refer the matter back to Cabinet with proposals, together with reasons.

---

### Local Government Act, 1972 Section 100D (As amended)

### List of "Background Papers" used in the preparation of this report

Brief description of "background paper"

**Cabinet report**

Name and telephone number of holder  
and address where open to inspection

**Amanda Thompson**  
**02073644651**

### **3. THE CABINET'S PROVISIONAL DECISION**

#### **3.1** The Cabinet after considering the attached report provisionally agreed:-

- 1) That the Corporate Director Development and Renewal explore, with Registered Social Landlords currently operating in the Borough, their acquisition of the site 10 Backchurch Lane E1, on long leasehold terms, from the Authority;
- 2) That in working up development proposals, for the site at 10 Backchurch Lane E1, Registered Social Landlords:
  - (a) Endeavour to engage, at an early stage, with the current lessees of the above site in relation to the incorporation of workspace within the development scheme;
  - (b) Seek to incorporate environmental improvements within the development scheme.
- 3) That the Corporate Director Development and Renewal be instructed to report progress, in respect of Resolutions 1 and 2 above, to the Cabinet within six months.

### **4. REASONS FOR THE 'CALL IN'**

#### **4.1** The Call-in requisition signed by the five Councillors listed above gives the following reasons for the Call-in:

- 1) The original Cabinet decision to dispose (March 2004) was taken without a competitive tendering process and without consultation with local interested parties and on the basis of a speculative development proposal in respect of which no planning application had been made.

Since March 2004 the Council has adopted new disposal protocols and the intended purchaser of the land has not made the required progress with the planning proposal upon which the disposal was contingent. It was therefore correct for the Cabinet to revisit the March 2004 decision and consider the disposal afresh.

However, the Cabinet meeting on 2nd April 2008 did not consider the *whole* issue of disposal afresh. Only two proposals were put before the meeting, namely:

- disposal by informal tender on the basis of a planning statement which would appear to have been drafted to accommodate the proposals of the original intended purchaser;

and

- disposal to the original prospective purchaser on the basis of a revised valuation.

The Cabinet was therefore not able to give due consideration to all options for disposal of the site and was unduly influenced by the decision of March 2004 to dispose of the site in respect of a development proposal which has made no progress in **four** years.

The original decision of March 2004 was not based on consideration of different possible uses of the site, including the possible disposal of it to the existing tenants – the longstanding leaseholders, AND Association, but went forward following discussion with only one potential purchaser.

By restricting the terms on which Cabinet revisited the March 2004 decision, the Cabinet has again failed to consider the whole issue of disposal. The flaw of the 2004 decision has been carried forward and has unduly influenced the April 2008 decision which should have been more objective.

- 2) In attempting to take a decision on disposal of the site without consideration of different possible uses of the site, including the possible disposal of it to the existing tenant, the Cabinet is restricting the range of possible developments of the site which are under consideration.

Further, the Council does not appear to have carried out consultation on the planning brief which it took into consideration when making its decision (no information is provided on what policies, input or discussion the author of the planning statement took into account when drafting it).

By agreeing to move towards disposal on the basis of the planning statement submitted, the Cabinet is preventing the local community and/or interested parties from raising any objections they may have effectively (once the stage of consulting on a planning application is reached, the land may already have been sold and consideration of any alternative use would be prohibited).

- 3) However, having restricted itself to considering disposal of the site on the basis of two proposals only (as outlined above), the Cabinet proceeded to agree moving towards disposal on the basis of a third option, introduced verbally by the Chair at the conclusion of the discussion. Thus:

- there was no Cabinet discussion on this option;
- the verbal proposal provided for the Head of Service to consult with possible purchasers of the site with a view to working up a new proposal, but this was again too restrictive in that only RSLs operating in Tower Hamlets were to be considered possible purchasers; thus no alternative possible purchasers were considered and nor was the option of alternative disposal;

- there is no provision in current policies for disposal of land to be restricted to RSLs currently operating in Tower Hamlets, and it is invidious that important and significant policy over such a major resource should be made “on the hoof” by way of a verbal proposal made without notice and without discussion, particularly as that policy may be used as a precedent in future land disposals.
- 4) The verbal proposal which was adopted by the Cabinet was extremely vague and gave insufficient guidance to officers to proceed with negotiations and did not require officers to consult the local community or interested parties. Further, no guidance was given to officers on whether to follow the lines of the current development proposal, save that there is a planning brief already in place (designed to facilitate the initial prospective purchasers’ proposals rather than consider the site or Council policies objectively) and it must therefore be assumed that the planning brief will be used for a purpose for which it was not originally intended. The current development proposal provides only 22 properties for rent to the Borough (significantly below the Council’s target of 50% of affordable homes for rent) and this provision would be at the expense of an unknown number of local jobs: providing housing and employment are both priorities of the Council, and no provision has been made for a procedure to assess the competing demands of the site.
- 5) Undue leeway at the meeting was given to the representations made by the Gateway Housing Association and its partners Tower Hamlets Environment Trust, who qualify to be possible purchasers of the site under the Cabinet decision, such that an objective decision could not be reached or so that there could be doubt that the decision would be seen as objective, namely:
- (a) the representative of Gateway Housing Association on the deputation to the Cabinet was permitted to make verbal references to work undertaken in progressing the original planning proposal from March 2004 to date without being requested to provide any documentary evidence to confirm these assertions; and in particular the representative’s verbal statement that agreements were in place that all land would be made available to the Housing Association and its partners for their proposed development save only for one proviso, namely that the Council made its land available too was accepted without documentary evidence; accepting such information on the basis of a verbal assertion only is not tantamount to exercising due diligence over disposal of capital assets;
  - (b) the representative of Gateway Housing Association on the deputation to the Cabinet was permitted to make verbal references to work undertaken in progressing the original planning proposal from March 2004 to date without being requested to provide any documentary evidence to confirm these assertions; and in particular the representative’s verbal statement that agreements were in place that all land would be made available to the Housing Association and its partners for their proposed development save only for one proviso, namely that the Council made its land available too was accepted without documentary evidence; accepting



such information on the basis of a verbal assertion only is not tantamount to exercising due diligence over disposal of capital assets;

- (c) the representative of Gateway Housing Association on the deputation to the Cabinet was not adequately questioned about why further progress had not been made to date on a development which had initially been proposed in early 2004 and the Cabinet was therefore not able to take into account the viability of this proposed development;
  - (d) the representative of Gateway Housing Association on the deputation to the Cabinet was permitted to draw to the Cabinet's attention his role within the Community Partnership and the fact that he had represented the Council in discussion with the Audit Commission earlier that day;
  - (e) the representative of Gateway Housing Association on the deputation to the Cabinet was permitted to draw to the Cabinet's attention the fact that it (and its predecessor organisation, Bethnal Green & Victoria Park Housing Association) had to date expended the sum of approximately £300,000 on progressing the planning proposal since 2004, which money would be wasted if the project were not to go ahead, with a sum of a similar order being expended by its partners, Tower Hamlets Environmental Trust; the decision to incur speculative expenditure of this sum was incurred by the partners, which have their own regulatory systems for agreeing speculative expenditure, and the Council cannot be held responsible for the partners' financial probity or potentially wasteful use of funds; the Cabinet cannot correctly take third party expenditure into account when managing its own assets;
  - (f) no report was made to the Cabinet to confirm that no Council resources (financial, human or otherwise) have been expended in pursuing this speculative project, so Cabinet members could not take into account whether Council funds had been spent on this project.
- 6) Inadequate facility has been afforded to the local community and/or other interested parties to put forward alternative plans for disposal or other continued use of the site and the Cabinet was therefore denied the opportunity to extend the brief to officers, agreed on the basis of the verbal proposal, more widely to consider other acceptable futures for the site.

While one deputation was allowed to the Cabinet meeting on 2nd April (from the existing tenants), this was a reactive deputation, able only to respond to documents tabled at the meeting and not requested to put forward alternative proposals.

Cabinet took its decision without due consideration of the Council's obligation under the terms of the tenants' lease.

The existing tenants received no formal notice that the matter was to be discussed at Cabinet and discovered this was to happen by chance days before the meeting. The existing tenants were therefore not afforded the opportunity (unlike Gateway HA / ET) to present to Cabinet proposals which

they had been developing with their own partners over previous months.

In particular, the existing tenants at 10 Backchurch Lane have not been invited to submit proposals for developing the site and the neighbouring tenants have not been invited to submit any comments on proposed developments for the immediate area. As the site of the intended development (which the disposal of this Council asset may be intended to facilitate) will affect a number of local businesses, local residents who work in those businesses and local businesses and projects which are in turn serviced by those businesses, the Cabinet has not taken the views of a significant element of the local community into account and has not exercised due diligence in exploring possible uses of the site to establish the best way forward.

## **5. ALTERNATIVE COURSE OF ACTION PROPOSED:**

**5.1** The Councillors submitting the Call-in requisition have proposed the following alternative course of action:

- 1) That Officers be instructed to produce a report to Cabinet, with documentary evidence, showing progress made by the Gateway HA / Environment Trust in acquiring the other component parts of the whole development site (since the original Cabinet decision of March 2004), in order to better assess the viability of their development proposal.
- 2) That LBTH allow the sitting tenants, i.e the leaseholders, AND Association, a period of 6 - 9 months to finalise the development of their own alternative proposals for the regeneration of the land, based on the Council's own requirements in terms of the Local Development Framework. The sitting tenants' proposals could then be considered alongside those submitted by RSLs or anyone else.
- 3) That LBTH opens the informal tendering process to include the sitting tenants to present alternative proposals to be considered, in particular the establishment of a "Community Land Trust / Co-operative Consortium" and/or other models based on the principles of co-operation and community-led regeneration.
- 4) That Officers be instructed to provide full disclosure of all relevant information and documents to the sitting tenants and to provide the sitting tenants with meaningful help and assistance in developing an alternative proposal for Cabinet consideration.
- 5) That Officers report back on progress to Cabinet within six months.

## 6. CONSIDERATION OF THE “CALL IN”

6.1 The following procedure is to be followed for consideration of the “Call In”:

- (a) Presentation of the “Call In” by one of the “Call In” Members followed by questions.
- (b) Response from the Lead Member/officers followed by questions.
- (c) General debate followed by decision.

**N.B. – In accordance with the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Protocols and Guidance adopted by the Committee at its meeting on 6 June, 2007, any Member(s) who presents the “Call In” is not eligible to participate in the general debate.**

6.2 It is open to the Committee to either resolve to take no action which would have the effect of endorsing the original Cabinet decisions, or the Committee could refer the matter back to the Cabinet for further consideration setting out the nature of its concerns and possibly recommending an alternative course of action.

This page is intentionally left blank

<b>Committee:</b> Cabinet	<b>Date:</b> 2 April 2008	<b>Classification:</b> Unrestricted	<b>Report No:</b> CAB 156/078	<b>Agenda Item:</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Corporate Director, Development and Renewal  <b>Originating officer(s)</b> Emma Peters		<b>Title:</b> Disposal of Land 10 Backchurch Lane E1  <b>Wards Affected:</b> Whitechapel		

1. **SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report updates members on the proposed sale of land at 10 Backchurch Lane, London E1, (originally agreed by Cabinet on 10<sup>th</sup> March 2004); on failure to date to progress the scheme; on the legal and commercial implications of this; and presents the options for to the Council for moving forward on this site.

2. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Cabinet is recommended EITHER to:-

- 2.1 Agree to market the site on a competitive basis by informal tender, on the basis of the attached planning statement; and on the basis that any purchaser assumes responsibility for the relocation of existing tenants and on the basis that any purchaser indemnifies the Council against any clawback in respect of grant funding expenditure on the site in the past; OR
- 2.2 Agree to pursue the sale to the Tower Hamlets Environment Trust on the basis of the revised valuation (see paragraph 4.below) and on the basis of the attached planning statement; and on the basis of that the Tower Hamlets Environment Trust assumes responsibility for the relocation of existing tenants and on the basis that the Tower Hamlets Environment Trust indemnifies the Council against any clawback in respect of grant funding expenditure on the site in the past.

---

**Local Government Act, 1972 Section 100D (As amended)**  
**List of “Background Papers” used in the preparation of this report**

Brief description of “back ground papers”	Name and telephone number of holder and address where open to inspection.
File: Eco Tower – land at 10 Backchurch Lane	Emma Peters ext 4247

### **3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 Land at 10 Backchurch Lane is in the freehold ownership of the Council. The site is 0.3 ha in size and consists of the disused railway viaduct plus the yard immediately to the south. There are two existing tenancies on the site.
- 3.2 In 2003-4 the Tower Hamlets Environment Trust (THET) approached the Council and proposed to develop an ECO Tower on the site as part of a much larger development, providing B1 workspace in Cable Street, the incorporation of other railway arches in Pinchin Street, leading into the Environment Trust's existing small business scheme at Johnson's Yard. At the time, the Eco Tower was proposed to be a 15 storey residential development providing some 92 residential units, 50 being for market sale and 42 for a shared equity basis for key workers. There would also be 300 sqm of light industrial workspace. There was no discussion about this proposal at that time about appropriate redevelopment with the Council's planning service.
- 3.3 The proposal required site assembly; specifically the acquisition by THET of adjacent land owned by Network Rail, plus the relocating of existing tenants (2 on the Council's land, and further tenancies on adjacent land).
- 3.3 In March 2004 the Cabinet received a report from the then Service Head Property and Facilities Management on behalf of the then Acting Corporate Director in the former Environment and Culture Directorate. That report recommended the disposal of the site to the THET, on an off market basis, subject to a number of conditions.
- 3.4 Those conditions were:
- (a) an initial payment of £25,000 followed by a payment of £100,000 or 10% of the profit on the final scheme, whichever is the greater;
  - (b) the Council receiving 10% of the profit in the scheme, from future commercial disposals as and when they occur;
  - (c) the Tower Hamlets Environment Trust indemnifying the Council against any grant clawback in respect of grant funding expenditure on the site in the past;
  - (d) the Environment Trust assuming responsibility for the site funding relocation of existing tenants, and
  - (e) a time limit of two years for the commencement of development.
- 3.5 At the time, Cabinet was advised that, due to the nature of the site and the terms of its current occupation, this site was of limited value to the Council, and that the proposed disposal would both protect current uses, protect the Council against clawback of ERDF grant (the clawback period being 20 years); provide an initial capital receipt and a further capital receipt on completion of the development.

- 3.6 At the time, the Council did not have a protocol on the disposal of assets, but the disposal was in accordance with (then) Financial Regulation D.6.3, which allowed for negotiated disposals with not for profit organisations.
- 3.7 In terms of risk, it was reported to Cabinet that the principal risk was that the development specified would not proceed. This risk was mitigated by placing a time limit (two years) on the commencement of development.

#### **4. PROGRESS TO DATE**

- 4.1 In March 2007 the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal Services) wrote to solicitors for the Environment Trust advising that, since the two years time limit had passed and the transaction had not been completed, the Council had a statutory duty to reconsider the disposal, and to assess whether the terms proposed in March 2004 still represented the best consideration that can reasonably be obtained. The Environment Trust's solicitors were advised that this would require a fresh reference to the Council's Cabinet to achieve a valid authority to dispose.
- 4.2 This letter was prompted in part by an approach by THET to the Council's planning service regarding the construction of much larger development on the site, incorporating a 34 storey tower. In planning terms, this proposal is not considered appropriate in scale.
- 4.3 The Solicitors maintained that whilst the transaction had not been completed there had been intermittent liaison with Council Officers in which the commencement of development had been confirmed as being within 2 years of the transfer of the land and not within 2 years of the Cabinet resolution, and that THET still wished to proceed on the basis of that resolution. In demonstration of THET's intentions the Solicitors mentioned continuing negotiations with Network Rail to assemble other parcels of land so as to achieve ownership of the entirety of the development site.
- 4.4 It should be noted that the site is a designated Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) in both the Adopted Unitary Development Plan (1998) and in the emerging Local Development Framework Core Strategy, which was approved as Interim Planning Guidance for the purpose of development control in September 2007. Mixed residential and employment use is considered suitable, subject to such development not compromising the integrity of the site in respect of the SINC. The constraints of the site due to the close adjacency of the DLR and C2C railway tracks also present design challenges. The site is capable of supporting a high density development (within the range of 650-1100 habitable rooms per ha) subject to the other constraints noted above.



- 4.5 Whilst the resolution referred to a two year time limit on the development commencing, legal advice obtained is that it was implicit that contracts would be exchanged within a reasonable period of time and that the developer would obtain planning consent rapidly. Neither criterion has been fulfilled in four years and the resolution is now regarded as expired by effluxion of time. Additionally, in any event Cabinet is at liberty to determine how it now wishes to proceed as contracts have not been exchanged and there is no legally binding commitment to proceed on the 2004 resolution. It is now policy under the disposal protocol that all properties must be revalued after 6 months if contracts are not exchanged and it is best practice to do so to ensure that the Council achieves best value.
- 4.6 A planning statement, setting out current planning policy considerations, has subsequently been prepared and is attached to this report.
- 4.7 The Council instructed the District Valuer to value the site in the light of the planning statement. That valuation is significantly in excess of the disposal sum agreed with THET

## **5. THE COUNCIL'S ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY**

- 5.1 A thorough review of the Council's corporate property function has been undertaken since April 2007, the service has been restructured and new standards, systems and procedures have been put in place. The new approach to property is set out in the Council's Asset Management Strategy, which was approved by Cabinet in January 2008.
- 5.2 As part of the Asset Management Strategy, a protocol governing the disposals of property has been prepared and agreed (Appendix 3 to the AMP, also appended to this report at Appendix 4). A number of standards set out in the Disposals Protocol are highlighted below.
- 5.3 The Disposals Protocol states at section 2.2 that sales should require the open invitation of competitive bids, with exceptions only by approval of the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal Services) and Chief Finance Officer and only in specific circumstances listed in the protocol as follows:
- i) sale to a sitting tenant
  - ii) sale of an access which would enable a purchaser to release development value locked up in other property
  - iii) sale to an adjoining owner or sale of a part interest in a property where amalgamation of interests could enable substantial "marriage value" to be realised
  - iv) sale to a public body (e.g. a housing association or London Development Agency or English Partnerships) at less than market value where other

benefits are offered to the Council, provided that such sale is within the General Order (Statutory power) or receives Secretary of State consent.

5.4 Furthermore, the Disposals protocol states at section 2.3 that the methods of disposal to be used will comprise one of the following:

- a) informal tenders, leading eventually to a best and final offer (a two stage process)
- b) Formal tenders (a single stage process)
- c) Auction (a single stage process)
- d) Negotiation subject to statutory powers.

5.5 In terms of planning information, the Disposals Protocol states at paras 8.3-85 that a planning brief will be prepared for large and/or complex sites, which will themselves be the subject of public consultation and adoption as Council policy by the Cabinet. For smaller sites, a planning advice note will be prepared. Save for transactions under £50,000 in value no property will be valued or marketed without such an Advice Note, and all marketing information relating to disposals (except those under statutory powers) will include the relevant planning advice note.

5.6 Should the Cabinet resolve to dispose of the site on an open market basis, rather than to proceed with the sale to the Environment Trust, it would be proposed to undertake the sale on the basis of an informal tender, with a Planning Advice Note as attached to this report.

## **6. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER**

6.1 This report updates Members on the progress of the disposal of the site at 10 Backchurch Lane and seeks approval to either dispose of the land to the Tower Hamlets Environment Trust or via sale on a competitive basis by informal tender.

6.2 The site was originally deemed surplus to requirements by Cabinet on 10 March 2004, and disposal was approved on the basis that certain conditions were attached. It was anticipated that an initial receipt of £25,000 would be generated, followed by a payment of £100,000 or 10% of the profit on the final scheme, whichever is the greater.

6.3 As outlined in this report, it was stipulated that development must take place within two years of the sale being completed. In view of the fact that the disposal has not been finalised in the four years that have elapsed since the original Cabinet decision, the site should now be revalued and disposed of so as to achieve its current market value.

6.4 Financial Procedure CR10 requires disposals to be by competitive tender or public auction, with best value for the disposal being ensured. This requirement will be met through the sale taking place at market value.

6.5 The original disposal conditions also required the purchaser to assume responsibility for the relocation of existing tenants and to indemnify the Council against the clawback of any grant funding that had previously been received in respect of expenditure on the site. These conditions will be incorporated into the updated disposal agreement, irrespective of whether the disposal is to the Tower Hamlets Environment Trust, or on the open market.

6.6 The proposal, if approved, will result in a Capital Receipt which will be 100% usable and will accrue to the Council's Local Priorities Programme in the year of disposal.

## **7. CONCURRENT REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE (LEGAL)**

7.1 Pursuant to Section 123 Local Government Act 1972 the Council may dispose of land in any manner it wishes provided the consideration is the best reasonably obtainable. Under the General Disposal Consent 2003 it may dispose at an undervalue provided the undervalue does not exceed £2 million and the disposal is for a well-being purpose within Section 2 Local Government Act 2000.

7.2 Other relevant legal considerations are dealt with in the body of the report . There is no binding agreement to sell to THET and the Council is therefore free to dispose of the land within the confines set out in clause 7.1 above

## **8. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 None arising directly from this report.

## **9. ANTI-POVERTY IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 None arising directly from this report.

## **10. SUSTAINABLE ACTION FOR A GREENER ENVIRONMENT**

10.1 Sustainable environmental issues are covered in the appropriate planning advice note.

## **11. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 The need for relatively complex site assembly; the likely delay that this entails, remains most significant risk, whether the land is disposed of to the Environment Trust or to another purchaser. A further risk is that of clawback of ERDF funding

received in the past. The terms of the disposal seek to transfer these risks to the relevant purchaser. In terms of timing/delay, it is proposed that clear longstop dates are provided for in the heads of terms to be agreed with any developer (see concurrent report of Assistant Chief Executive, Legal Services, above).

12. **EFFICIENCY STATEMENT**

- 12.1 The Council's has consolidated its operational estate, and improved its processes and procedures in respect of property disposals through the adoption of the Asset Management Plan. Disposal of redundant buildings reduces costs and minimises risk of illegal occupation.

# Agenda Item 9.1

<b>Committee:</b> Overview and Scrutiny	<b>Date:</b> 6 <sup>th</sup> May 2008	<b>Classification:</b> Unrestricted	<b>Report No.</b>	<b>Agenda Item No.</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Michael Keating, Acting Assistant Chief Executive  <b>Originating Officer(s):</b> Jebin Syeda, Scrutiny Policy Officer		<b>Title:</b> Report of the Scrutiny Review Working Group on Young People's participation in sports leading up to the Olympics		

## 1. Summary

1.1 This report is a submission of the recommendations of the Scrutiny Review Working Group on Young People's participation in sports leading up to the Olympics for the consideration of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

## 2. Recommendations

It is recommended that Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

- 2.1 Endorse the draft report.
- 2.2 Authorise the Acting Assistant Chief Executive to agree the final report before its submission to Cabinet.

---

### Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) Section 100D LOST OF "BACKGROUND PAPERS" USED IN THE PREPARATION OF THIS REPORT

Background paper:

Name, telephone and address where open to inspection:

Young People's participation in sports leading up to the Olympics documents held with the Scrutiny Policy Team

Jebin Syeda  
020 7364 0941

### **3. Background**

- 3.1 The Working Group was established in December 2007 to investigate the Council's approach to increasing young people's participation in sports leading up to the Olympics.
- 3.2 The objectives of the review were to ensure young people; particularly young disabled people participate in sports leading up to the Olympics and are part of the momentum generated by it. The review looked in particular at the following areas:
- Current initiatives in place around sports engagement for young people including young disabled people;
  - Strategy development regarding young people's participation in sports;
  - Availability of leisure facilities for local young people including disabled young people;
  - Young people and their interest in trying Olympic sports and the type of Olympic sport they would be interested in and their experiences and barriers to sports participation;
  - The role of the PCT to address health issues using the Olympics as a catalyst to promote healthy lifestyles.
- 3.3 The Working Group met three times in addition to a number of visits to organisations to consult young people and to consider the evidence for this review, including visiting local leisure facilities.
- 3.4 The report with recommendations is attached at Appendix A.
- 3.5 Once agreed, the Working Group's report and action plan will be submitted to Cabinet.

### **4. Concurrent Report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal Services)**

- 4.1 Any legal implications that may arise following the report will need to be considered at that time.

### **5. Comments of the Chief Financial Officer**

- 5.1 The report contains a range of recommendations specifically in relation to Supporting and Improving Access which have financial implications, these will need to be costed and proposals taken to Cabinet for consideration of funding options.

### **6. Equal Opportunity Implications**

- 6.1 Equalities issues were considered throughout the review. The review had a particular focus on the needs of young disabled people and young girls. A number of the recommendations have clear relevance to equal opportunities implications.

### **7. Anti-Poverty Implications**

- 7.1 Access to youth service provision does have anti-poverty implications, access affects the opportunities and life experiences of young people and is a particular issue for young disabled people and the service must continue to ensure that it is accessible for all. A number of recommendations have been made to address access.

### **8. Sustainable Action for a Greener Environment**

- 8.1 There are no direct actions for a greener environment arising from this report.

## **9. Risk Management**

9.1 There are no direct risk management implications arising from this report.

Appendix A: Report of the Scrutiny Review Working Group on Young people's participation in sports leading up to the Olympics

## **Overview and Scrutiny**

Report of the Scrutiny Review Working Group on  
Young people's participation in sports leading up to the Olympics

Tower Hamlets Council  
May 2008





	<b>Page</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Chair's foreword</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Background and Recommendations</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Background</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Introduction and Background</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>National context</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Local context</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Key Findings:</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Supporting and improving access</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Experiencing the Games</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Partnership Working</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Focus on health</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Concluding Remarks</b>	<b>32</b>

## **Acknowledgements**

---

The Working Group would like to thank all the officers and partners that supported this review. The views and perspectives of everyone involved has helped to shape the final recommendations of this report. We want to thank in particular the young people, partners, schools, youth centres and leisure centres who supported the consultation and so willingly took to completing and returning the Young People and the Olympics Survey which has been useful for informing the review. We hope that this report goes in some way of addressing some of the issues raised.

### **Working Group chair:**

Councillor Ahmed Hussain

### **Working Group members:**

Councillor Waiseul Islam

Councillor Ahmed Omar

Councillor A A Sardar

Councillor Emma Jones

Councillor Tim O'Flaherty

Councillor Salim Ullah

### **Other Members:**

Councillor Clair Hawkins – Lead Member Childrens Services

Councillor Marc Francis – Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee

### **Services:**

Mary Durkin – Interim Service Head - Youth and Community Learning

Kevan Collins - Director of Childrens Services

Helen Spedding – School and Community Sports Manager

Pauline Dunn – Acting Joint Head of Sports and Physical Activities

Simon Butler – Active Communities Co-Ordinator (Disability Specialist)

Paul Martindill – Acting Head of Cultural Services

Stephen Halsey – Director of Environment and Culture

Nick Smales – Service Head – Olympic and Paralympic Games

Living Well Community Plan Action Group

Learning, Achievement and Leisure Community Plan Action Group

Michael Keating – Assistant Chief Executive

### **External:**

Esther Trenchard-Mabere – Associate Director of Public Health

John Ridgley, students, and staff at Marion Richardson Primary School

Halima Begum, service users, and staff at the Shurjomuki Project for disabled young people

Mile End Hospital Children with Disabilities Physiotherapy Department – young people, their parents and carers and staff members.

### **Scrutiny and Equalities:**

Jebin Syeda – Scrutiny Policy Officer

Afazul Hoque – Scrutiny Policy Manager

## **Chair's foreword**

---

The enormous success of the Olympic Games can be measured not only in terms of the quality of the festivals, culture and celebration of the Games itself, but also in the sense of excitement and involvement it invokes in local people. The event highlights important human qualities of trust, friendship, respect and 'being the best'; it's an opportunity to bring communities together.

The Olympics is a historical event for many nations, this time, it's a historical event which is taking place on the door steps of Tower Hamlets and its neighbouring boroughs. It is phenomenal in scale and monumental in the potential impact it can have and the legacy it can leave behind.

The Olympics is an opportunity to experience something monumental, it is also an opportunity to address local concerns about levels of overweight and obesity in the borough.

This report is the result of a three month long inquiry by the Scrutiny Review Working Group in which we visited local leisure facilities, local schools, third sector organisations and local venues to talk to staff, users, parents and carers and young people, including young disabled people in the borough. The visits and discussions were interesting and informative, and the results have been used to inform the recommendations in this review.

The conclusions and recommendations outlined in the report are intended to improve access and the experience and opportunities for young people to engage in sports and is an area that partners can get involved in. It is also a great opportunity to work with other host boroughs to create opportunities beyond the boundaries of Tower Hamlets.

Tower Hamlets is a host borough, this does have its privileges and I hope that the opportunity is used to benefit the young people of Tower Hamlets. I am confident that the recommendations in this report will go in some way to addressing the need to increase young peoples participation in sports, enabling young people to experience the momentum generated by the Olympics, and ensuring that the Olympics contributes to promoting healthy weight and healthy lives in Tower Hamlets. We must not forget that the work we do with children early on sets them up for later life.

I would like to say that this review has been much more glamorous than expected as we have had a film crew follow this review investigation to produce a short film. I'm very excited about this short film and I hope it reaches out to the wider community and engages them in scrutiny and demonstrates that the voice of local people can lead change.

Finally, I would like to thank all the Councillors who have participated in this review, and the individual staff members who have supported this review.

**Councillor Ahmed Hussain**  
**Scrutiny Lead, Learning Achievement and Leisure**

## Background and Recommendations

---

### Background

1. With almost 30% of the population being under the age of 19 whilst the average for London is 18%, the population of Tower Hamlets is relatively young; projections indicate that the number of young people is set to grow. The diversity of the borough is well established and the diversity of the youth population is no exception; in addition to mainstream schools, there are a number of established special schools which provide services for young people with disabilities.
2. The very nature of young people, in addition to having a disability, means that services can be limiting in their accessibility for young (disabled) people. In recognition of this, and the phenomenon that is the Olympics delivered locally, the Working Group was established to ensure that the young people of Tower Hamlets, particularly young disabled people are given positive opportunities to take part in sports leading up to the Olympics and to ensure there are opportunities to try Olympic and Paralympic sports and take part in the momentum generated by the Olympics.
3. In considering and establishing ways of increasing sports participation, the Working Group undertook the following:
  - Considered current initiatives and strategy development;
  - Visited facilities available for young people, including young disabled people;
  - Considered targeted and accessible sports for young people by consulting and listening to the views of young people on their interests and barriers to sports participation;
  - Considered the use of Olympics to promote healthy lifestyles by engaging the PCT and giving consideration to partnership working.
4. The working Group agreed to investigate these issues, and hoped to make recommendations that would help improve young people's access to sports participation and make a useful contribution to enabling young people to engage in the momentum generated by the Olympics.
5. The Working Group were insistent that the review be informed by the views of local young people and undertook extensive consultation with young people and their parents and carers to identify issues that were relevant to them in sports participation. Approximately 300 young people completed the Young People and the Olympics Survey. A number of local organisations, individual parents and carers and the wider youth population were involved and this proved to be an invaluable way to inform the review. The Working Group would like to extend heartfelt thanks to the young people and the parents, carers and the organisations which helped to make this happen.
6. A key issue noted by the Working Group was that young people were interested in participating in sports but felt disconnected from the Olympics.
7. The Working Group visited 2 local leisure centres, it was noted that the facilities in Tower Hamlets have had investment over the years and in particular, the accessibility of the facilities in Mile End Leisure Centre were noted for excellence. The visit enabled the Working Group at first-hand, to experience what it is like to access leisure facilities, and was particularly informed by a Working Group member who is a wheelchair user. Members spoke to a number of users of the facilities and we know that the users found this to be useful in being able to share their views.

8. As the review progressed, consideration was also given to participation of young girls in sports.
9. This review has been progressed alongside that of a short film to promote wider understanding of the role of Councillors as community leaders and the function of scrutiny. This short film will illustrate how Councillors undertaking scrutiny reviews and local young people being engaged, can impact on the accessibility of services for young people leading up to the Olympics. It will be available to the general public and will be useful for demonstrating how scrutiny works.

### **Recommendations**

10. The recommendations from this review focus on a number of areas that require consideration. They are intended to support young people's access to sports participation and to support the work the service has done to date on improving facilities and access.
11. For the purposes of this report the recommendations from the Working Group are set out under the following key areas:

#### **Supporting and improving access**

##### **Experiencing the Games**

##### **Partnership working**

##### **Focusing on health**

12. The findings of the Working Group has lead to the following recommendations:

#### **Supporting and improving access**

- 1) That a review is undertaken of the current pricing policy of leisure and physical activities and venues with a view to:
  - Reducing costs for parents on low income;
  - Reducing the price of provisions for young people;
  - Formulating a policy for hiring and pricing of community access sports facilities and publishing this;
  - Giving free access to leisure centres for young people who are looked after;
- 2) That the results of the Young People and the Olympics Survey is used to inform the development of strategies for young people and sports, in particular that the Building Schools for the Future programme considers the views of young people in providing a variety of sports, coaching and training based on the expressions of interest, barriers and experience of young people in sports;
- 3) That incentives are introduced (activities and costs) to encourage bringing along and introducing a friend to an activity or to leisure centre facilities;
- 4) That the service develop innovative ways of engaging young girls in sports, working with community organisations, including faith organisations, schools and parents, taking in to consideration the expressions of interest in the Young People and the Olympics Survey;
- 5) That the service look at ways the leisure centres can be enhanced to actively engage and increase young disabled people with sports and physical activities leading up to 2012 including increasing the availability of disability specialist staff to support and actively engage young disabled people into sports, working with them to address transport barriers;

- 6) That budget provisions be made to mainstream Sports Search in the work that the Council does, exploring the potential to roll out Sports Search to special schools in the borough with a view to capturing data for disabled young people;
- 7) That the Service seek to increase ways in which budget allocations can be increased to further mainstream sports activities;

### **Experiencing the Games**

- 8) That annual borough-wide major community events are organised in which young people participate in Olympic and Paralympic sports, building champions to participate in the events through schools and sports programmes;
- 9) That the Council explore the possibility of negotiating free tickets or subsidised rate of entry to the Olympics and Paralympics for young people, particularly for disabled young people to experience the Paralympic Games;
- 10) That an extensive publicity campaign is put in place to promote positive images of young disabled people taking part in sports as part of the publicity strategy to promote Olympics and Paralympics in Tower Hamlets;

### **Partnership Working**

- 11) That the service find ways in which the relationship with the private sector can be further developed to enhance the funding available to support young people's engagement in sports and physical activities, exploring in particular ways in which the TTK model can be adopted to engage the private sector to fund a range of sports;
- 12) That formalised agreements as part of housing stock transfer are strengthened to secure the provision of sports facilities based on a study of the local youth population, including disabled young people, existing facilities and projected needs;
- 13) That work is developed with Wood Wharf with a view to securing opportunities for water sports in the borough;
- 14) That consideration be given to what other host boroughs have been involved in to increase sports participation with a view to adopting what works well in increasing participation, and that affordable access is negotiated for young people in Tower Hamlets to leisure facilities in other host boroughs, particularly as a legacy of the Olympics and to increase contact between young people in the different boroughs through events and competitions;

### **Focus on health**

- 15) That the PCT develop targeted work with those who are at health risk due to obesity, with primary focus on those who are particularly obese and may lack confidence to engage in sports and physical activities.
- 16) That the PCT in partnership with LBTH should deliver health promotion as part of the Olympics publicity to include messages on the damaging effects of drugs and smoking and that the publicity campaign be supported by celebrities to promote a 'cool' image of participating in sports at local venues;

## Introduction and Background

---

### Introduction

13. When setting out the 2012 vision and strategy, Lord Coe stated that the Olympics Strategy would be one which is “based around sport and getting more young people involved”.<sup>1</sup>
14. Following the award of the 2012 Olympic and Paralympics to London in July of 2005, Tower Hamlets as one of the host boroughs has a once in a life time opportunity to secure benefits for the local community and enable local people to experience a historic event. The borough established a London 2012 Olympic and Paralympics Strategy and Programme which sets out how it would approach the Olympics to maximise growth and potential including social, economic and cultural benefits.

### National context

15. Nationally, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) is working to improve access to culture, sport and play for children and young people, so that they can develop their talents and enjoy the benefits of participation.
16. DCMS Sports Division plays a key role in delivering a range of Government targets aimed at increasing sports participation and addressing the health agenda. These are developed jointly with Department of Health (a role for the PCT) and Department of Education and Skills (a role for local authorities). The targets are focused on increasing sports take-up for school children, tackling obesity amongst children under 11 and the wider population generally.
17. DCMS and the London Development Agency commissioned Price Waterhouse Coopers to undertake ‘Olympic Games Impact Study’<sup>2</sup> to assess the likely benefits of hosting the Olympics and Paralympic Games.
18. The study concluded that amongst a number of things, hosting the Olympic and Paralympic Games would:
  - Enhance and accelerate investment in sporting facilities;
  - Motivate young people to take up sports and contribute to increased participation in sports;
  - Create a significant sports and cultural legacy;
  - Improve public health;
19. To realise its ambitions, DCMS funds sports provision to improve the quantity and quality of sports and physical activities. The initiatives range from Sports England which is funded to promote and invest in grassroots level sports to Equality in Sport which aims to increase participation in sports and physical activities by under-represented group with a target of 3%.<sup>3</sup> This includes black and ethnic minority groups, women, physically or mentally disabled people and groups in certain disadvantaged socio-economic group. Tower Hamlets places equality and diversity at the heart of its service delivery, this review set out to ensure that disabled young people are given appropriate opportunities to participate in sports and physical activities.

---

<sup>1</sup> BBC Sport Profile: Lord Coe [http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport1/hi/other\\_sports/olympics\\_2012/4656275.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport1/hi/other_sports/olympics_2012/4656275.stm)

<sup>2</sup> Olympic Games Impact Study, Price Waterhouse Coopers, December 2005 For further information use the following link: <http://www.culture.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/E88F2684-F49E-4F45-B826-2F19F21374F8/0/OlympicGamesImpactStudy.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> For further information use the following link: [http://www.culture.gov.uk/what\\_we\\_do/Sport/](http://www.culture.gov.uk/what_we_do/Sport/)

## Choosing Health agenda

20. The White Paper Choosing Health: Making Healthier Choices Easier was published in November 2004 and set out the practical help Government will develop to make it easier for people to make healthier choices. It laid out a challenging programme of practical action aimed at changing the lives of many. One of the actions which came out of the White Paper was around physical activity, although many of the recommendations were focused on adults, it did recommend that children and young people should take a total of at least 60 minutes of physical activity each day.
21. In 2006, this was followed up by recommendations from National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence, one of the recommendations was that local partners should *'monitor the effectiveness of local strategies and systems to promote physical activities...focusing in particular on...helping to increase the physical activities of people from disadvantaged groups, including those with disabilities as a way of tackling health inequalities'*.<sup>4</sup>
22. Health is high on the national agenda; obesity is a growing concern. Early this year Government released **'Healthy Weight, Healthy Lives: A cross-Government Strategy for England'** with the ambition to reverse the trends in rising levels of overweight and obesity. It focuses heavily on children and tackling childhood obesity.
23. The Government has therefore set a national target for obesity to *"halt the year-on-year rise in obesity among children aged under 11 by 2010, in the context of a broader strategy to tackle obesity in the population as a whole"*

## Community cohesion

24. The disturbances of 2001 in England which included property destruction and attacks on police involving large groups of people from different backgrounds lead to Government setting up a review team lead by Ted Cante<sup>5</sup>. The Cante review report highlights the importance of contact between those of different backgrounds. It recognises that targeted programmes at younger people (though not exclusively so), are important as they are more receptive to change and their early views will shape their future lives. In shaping what might promote cohesion, sports participation was recognised for its potential role. The report recognised the need for programmes to increase contact with those from different backgrounds, for schools based programmes with parental engagement and joint development with schools with different ethnicity profiles. Sports engagement in this context would promote cohesion.
25. 2007 saw the publication of Our Shared Future, a report by the Commission on Integration and Cohesion, this and the response to this report by Government, does recognise the role sports and culture can play in bringing people together and promoting cohesion<sup>6</sup>.

---

<sup>4</sup> National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (2006) Four commonly used methods to increase physical activities

<sup>5</sup> Community Cohesion: A report of the Independent Review Team, Ted Cante, 2001

<sup>6</sup> Community Cohesion: A report of the Independent Review Team, Ted Cante, 2001



## Local context

26. Tower Hamlets is one of the 5 London Boroughs to host the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, providing opportunities for promoting community cohesion across the 5 boroughs.
27. The world's greatest sporting occasion will be happening on the doorsteps of Tower Hamlets: the men's and women's marathons and the Paralympic marathon will pass along Whitechapel Road, Mile End Road and Bow Road, while Victoria Park will be the main venue for the walk race, as well as potentially hosting Olympic cultural events. The Olympics Torch relay passed along Whitechapel Road in April 2008.
28. The Games are also bringing opportunities to Tower Hamlets that start long before 2012 – and will continue long afterwards. There is potential for creating new jobs and homes, as well as a new park and sports facilities. In addition to the physical regeneration, it's important to ensure that young people can be part of the legacy and be given opportunities to explore sports. The memories of the Olympics opportunities should be positive for all; young people can take part in the momentum and enthusiasm generated by the Games and carry through the experience by making use of host borough state of the art facilities.

## London Borough of Tower Hamlets Strategy and Programme

29. The Council has set out its strategy and programme for the Olympic and Paralympic legacy. The vision is to '*host an inspirational, safe and inclusive Olympic and Paralympic Games and leave a sustainable legacy for London and the UK*',<sup>7</sup> as agreed by the London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games and other key stakeholders, linking to the Community Plan, it sets out with the following themes:

- Theme 1 – Creating and Sharing Prosperity
- Theme 2 – A Socially Cohesive Community
- Theme 3 – A Transformed Environment
- Theme 4 – Experiencing the Games

30. The programme sets out with aims to maximise the building and infrastructure, increase jobs and training opportunities, increase business opportunities, increase corporate social responsibility, increase physical activities and health. It aims to enhance the image of the borough, and create an environment which is sustainable. It aims to address worklessness and create new opportunities for young people and encourage civic pride.
31. The London 2012 Games Legacy Strategy indicates there are current plans to engage disabled people into sports and to use the Paralympics to challenge stereotypes.

## Demographics

32. According to Office of National Statistics data for June 2005, of the population in Tower Hamlets, 21% are 0-15 years of age and 28.5% are 16 – 29 years of age<sup>8</sup>. Tower Hamlets has the largest population increase projection, this is across the borough with particular areas experiencing more growth than others. The boroughs young population is set to continue. GLA (2006) projections for Tower Hamlets demonstrates that currently 28.4% of the local population is under 19 years of age whilst the average for the rest of inner London is 18%. Projections indicate that the number of young people aged 5 to 19

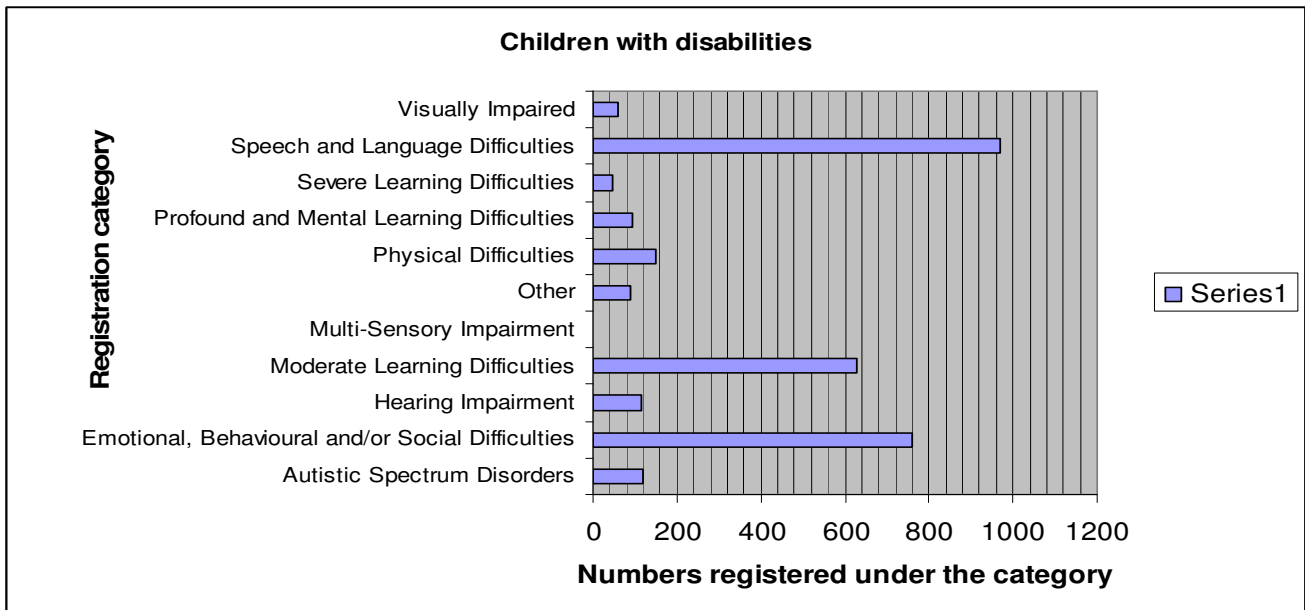
---

<sup>7</sup> Page 8, London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games Legacy Strategy and Programme, London Borough of Tower Hamlets, December 2006

<sup>8</sup> See National Statistics website for further information:  
<http://neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/LeadTableView.do?adminCompAndTimeId=22330%3A198&a=7&b=276772&c=tower+hamlets&d=13&r=1&e=13&f=22329&o=50&g=346968&i=1001x1003x1006x1005&k=june+2005&l=1818&m=0&s=1205339627281&enc=1>

are also likely to increase by 2011. This makes Tower Hamlets a relatively young borough and has implications for service provision, particularly for leisure services and facilities for sports engagement.

### Children with disabilities



**Figure 1 – Young children registered to receive services**

33. Currently there are approximately 3,000 young disabled people under the age of 19 known to the Council with a disability, this is expected to be much higher given that not all young disabled people will be registered. The table above shows the forms of disability and indicates that the largest groups are those with speech and language difficulties, emotional, behavioural and/or social difficulties and moderate learning difficulties. The very nature of young children, in addition to having a disability, can limit their access to services, potentially disproportionately impacting negatively on their chances of engaging in activities.

Physical Disability, Frailty	14
Learning Disability	133
Substance Misuse	1
Vulnerable People	1
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>149</b>

**Figure 2 – Young people know to the Council aged 18-24**

34. There are also a number of young people in the borough aged 18-24 who are registered with the Council with a disability, again this is thought to be higher as there will be those who are not accessing services and therefore not registered. Disabled people in the borough must be able to access local services.

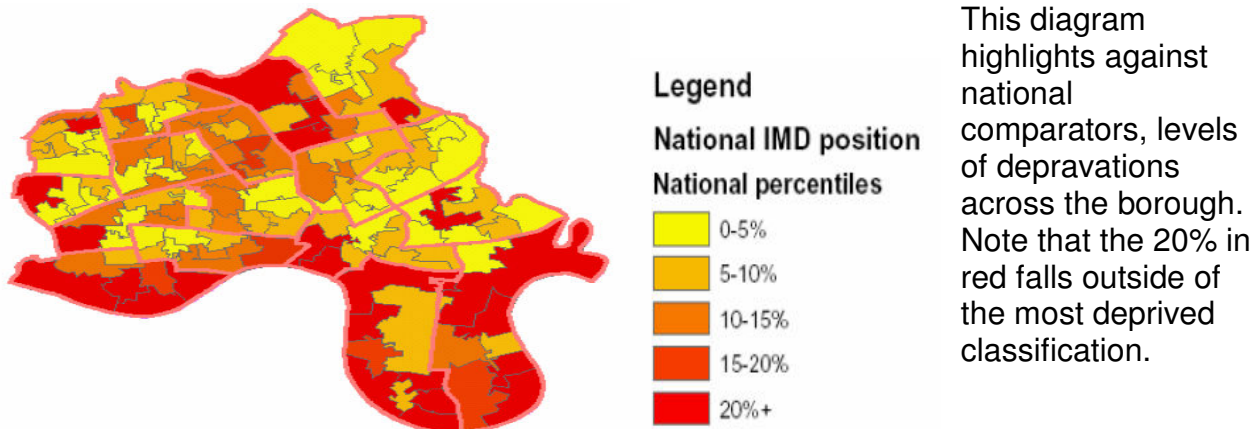
35. In 06/07 10% of 18 to 24 year old population were benefit claimants, compared to the 6% of the London population. At the time of the 2001 Census, 33,714 counts were classified as having a limiting long-term illness. 7% of the 16-24 year old population were claiming Disability Living Allowance<sup>9</sup>. This demonstrates that diversity of the borough also means

<sup>9</sup> The figures used here are from the National Statistics website unless otherwise stated. See the following for more information:  
<http://neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/LeadTableView.do?adminCompAndTimeId=22797%3A248&a=7&b=276772&c=tower+hamlets&d=13&r=1&e=4&f=22628&o=229&g=346968&i=1001x1003x1004x1005&l=1724&m=0&s=1205330570625&enc=1>

that there are communities who will have particular needs which provisions need to be made for if the Council is to deliver equitable services.

### Inequalities and deprivation

36. Tower Hamlets is currently ranked as 4<sup>th</sup> most deprived out of 354 local authorities in England. The impact of deprivation and how it manifests itself can vary; one of these is to deprive access to services for local people due to income barriers. Unemployment rate for 06/07 was 13.2% in Tower Hamlets comparative to 7.6% in London and 5.5% in England. This demonstrates an increase in unemployment rates locally and nationally against the rates for the previous year.



**Figure 3 – Levels of deprivation**

### Infrastructure

37. It should be recognised that the built environment can impact on the level of physical activities undertaken; issues here can range from transportation to get to and from venues, cycling lanes, availability of open spaces and design and layout of buildings. The availability of local facilities in addition to leisure facilities can impact on the level of physical activities; these can include local community centres and access to sports facilities/grounds in schools. In Tower Hamlets there is an under-representation of open spaces for young people to use for physical activities and also very high demands for football pitches outstripping the local supply for local young people and businesses who want access, housing and the supply of affordable housing continues to push for the development of local new build in Tower Hamlets.

38. Housing has historically been an issue for all communities in Tower Hamlets, overcrowding is a particular issue with some wards experiencing the highest levels of overcrowding in the Country. Overcrowding is recognised as having links to poor health and its negative implications for educational attainment of young people. Given the young profile of the borough and the levels of overcrowding, the provision of leisure services for giving young people somewhere to go and something to do becomes even more pertinent.

39. This sets a challenge for the provision of services in making sure that they can meet potentially increasing demands, particularly given the high levels of development in the infrastructure leading to increased demands for services. Access to local services for young children is key given that many, particularly very young children will not be able to travel out to leisure facilities.

## Health agenda – tackling obesity

40. The RELACHS<sup>10</sup> study from 2001 is a cross-sectional, school-based study of a representative sample of children in years 7 to 9 in secondary schools in inner East London. It shows that 43% of adolescent girls in Tower hamlets only exercise once a week or less outside of school. 9% never exercised outside school.
41. The RELACHS study tested the perceptions of young people of their local community, testing a range of issues from sports facilities, safety, places for young people to meet, tidiness and public transport. Of the areas tested, Tower Hamlets generally scored higher than the comparative boroughs of Newham and Hackney. For sports facilities in particular, the facilities in Newham scored higher by girls in comparison to Tower Hamlets. We know that since 2001, the leisure facilities in Tower Hamlets have had major investment across the borough and it now has some excellent facilities.

## National Child Measurement Programme - 2006-07

	Overweight				Obese				Coverage	
	Reception	+/-%	Year 6	+/-%	Reception	+/-%	Year 6	+/-%	Reception	Year 6
<b>Tower Hamlets</b>	11.1	1.3%	14.2%	1.4%	14.6%	1.4%	23.0%	1.7%	83%	88%
<b>England</b>	13.0%	.1%	14.2%	.1%	9.9%	.1%	17.5%	.1%	83%	78%

Figure 4 – Percentage of obese and overweight in Tower Hamlets and England 2006/07

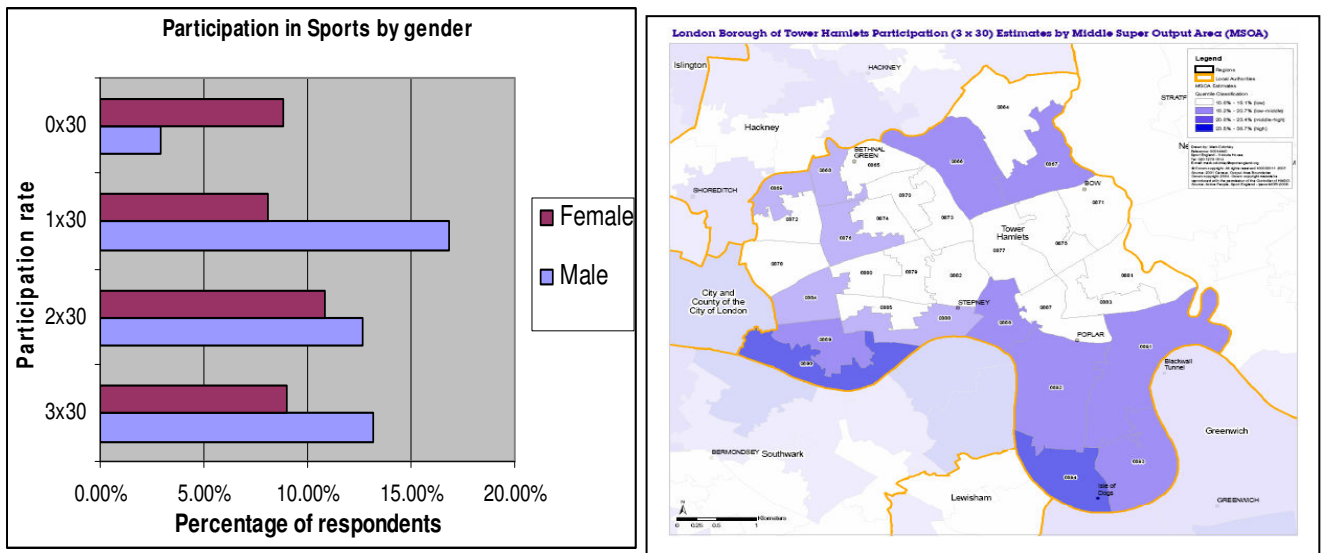
42. National Child Measurement Programme<sup>11</sup> research shows a positive relationship between deprivation and prevalence of obesity, children in local authorities classified as deprived are more likely to be obese in reception and in Year 6 although the relationship is much stronger in Year 6. The readings in Tower Hamlets are slightly different to the national picture in that prevalence of levels of obesity are higher in both reception and Year 6. Obesity is also a concern for disabled young people.

## Local participation

43. Sport England is the brand name of the English Sports Council which is a distributor of Lottery funds for sports. Its role is to provide the strategic lead for sport through advising, investing in and promoting community sport in England. Its ambition is to get two million people more active in sport by 2012. The target set by government is to increase participation in sports and physical activities by 1% annually. The Local Government White Paper: Strong and Prosperous Communities drives for an emphasis on partnership working with community engagement. Community Sports Networks were developed to deliver more localised sports participation, with increased delivery through partnerships with a range of organisations.

<sup>10</sup> Health of Young People in East London, the RELACHS study 2001, Queen Mary's School of Medicine and Dentistry, 2003.

<sup>11</sup> National Child Measurement Programme: 2006/07 School Year, headline results, 2008



**Figure 5 – Sport England – local participation**

44. Sport England researched the rate of participation in sports activities for 30 minute intervals; the figures above demonstrate that young women aged 16-24 years of age are less likely than men to undertake exercise of at least 30 minute intervals.

45. LBTH in conjunction with GLL initiated a Girls Health and Sports Activity Day in 2007 building on the successes of the previous year of a similar event. Similarly, a session was designed for disabled young people. The purpose of these events is to engage community groups in sports activities and to enable them to 'taste' the activities the borough has to offer. The long term impact of this it is hoped will be increased usage of leisure facilities by female and disabled users.

46. It is interesting that the research undertaken by Sport England on take-up of sports and physical activities mapped out across the borough (Figure 5) demonstrates that the percentage of participation increases in areas which are marked out on the map above as outside of the 'most deprived', making a stronger link between deprivation (Figure 3) and sports participation. It should also be recognised that leisure facilities are predominantly in the more affluent parts of the borough.

### **The National PE, School Sport and Club Links Strategy**

47. The National PE, School Sport and Club Links Strategy, which uses a annual collection of data on 5-16 years olds participation rate demonstrates that in Tower Hamlets the participation rate has increased to 81% from 53% in 2003/04. Amongst a number of things, it demonstrates that:

- Tower Hamlets is above average for primary schools in relation to a target of 2 hours participation;
- The vast majority of primary schools now have two hours of curriculum time;
- The borough has the highest inter-school participation data of all the East London boroughs.
- There are a vast range of sports being offered, including disability sports and less traditional ones such as fencing;
- Most sports are developed with a real effort to promote them at a local school level (curriculum out-of-hours and localised festivals), borough level and with a club; new clubs are being established to ensure an exit route for pupils. These include new judo, fencing and badminton clubs;
- Tower Hamlets has had an increasing amount of success at various levels in a range of sports for individual schools and also for borough teams;

- There are more borough representative teams and this is an important 'layer' in efforts to develop clear pathways to excellence through the opportunities provided.

This establishes that there are a number of successes, including the work to support talented young athletes to progress to high performance programmes.

48. It should be noted that the current efforts on the Olympics is focused on infrastructure and facilities planning and the service expects more local level engagement after the Beijing Olympics. It is anticipated that this will be within Tower Hamlets, across the 5 boroughs and also across London. At the time of the review, strategies were being developed to action this. Locally there a number of coaching and competitions in place which includes Olympic and Paralympic sports such as Judo, Fencing, Boccia etc and these will continue to be developed through the strategies.

## **Key Findings**

---

49. Given the local demographics of the borough in the context of deprivation and its link with sports participation, the complexities of the current infrastructure and having established the health agenda locally; the Working Group considered other key findings to put forward a number of recommendations which the Working Group believes will encourage sports participation in the local context.

### **Supporting and improving access**

50. It is established and recognised that Tower Hamlets has a young population and the 'somewhere to go something to do' factor is pertinent. Provisions for young people to access sports facilities range from local estate based multi-use games areas, ward level schools facilities, community areas where there are pools and multi-use games areas and also borough-wide catchments like Mile End. The provisions are made across the sectors from the public, voluntary and the private sector.

51. The Working Group were pleased to hear that there has been significant investment in sports facilities in the borough with a heavy investment programme starting in 1999 with refurbishments and the introduction of new facilities. It was established that there is a programme of activities, courses and competitions to engage young people in sports including Paralympic training and more general disability sports training. The Working Group felt encouraged to find that the Coach Development and Volunteer Programme was attracting and developing coaches including coaches for disability sports. User figures for young people under the age of 19 who have a membership have increased from 20k to 26k attendances for the year 07/08. Tower Hamlets also has two Sports Colleges in the borough; Langdon Park and Bishop Challoner Boy's School which are excellent local school based sports specialist centres.

52. However, despite the facilities and the current incentives, the Working Group raised concerns that young people were unable to access existing facilities due to high pricing. There was also the issue that the pricing policy for community access facilities varied across the Borough and that residents perhaps need to know how prices are decided. The Working Group also brought to attention that the hiring and booking of local venues can also vary and it was unclear who decides who can hire and what rates should be charged. This has the potential to impact differentially on community groups. The policy on booking was unclear and examples were given of inappropriate pricing and where corporate bookings were made by businesses in Docklands the community was unable to use the facilities despite no-show from the corporate booking.

53. The Young People and the Olympics Survey also indicates that cost of taking part in activities can be a barrier. The parents and carers engaged felt that their children (particularly where disability was concerned) were not getting basic needs met due to the high demand for facilities and costs of taking part in sports and physical activities. This was exacerbated where there is more than 1 child in the family and parents had to pay to enter the facilities.

54. The Working Group understand about the position of young children who are looked after, placements are often placed outside of the borough, the Corporate Parenting Group recognises that these children often have strong links to the borough with extended family and friends based in the locality. Pricing of activities can be a major barrier for these young people and the Working Group felt that these children needed to gain access to facilities, which would support them to maintain links with the borough.

**Recommendation:**

1. That a review is undertaken of the current pricing policy of leisure and physical activities and venues with a view to:
  - Reducing costs for parents on low income;
  - Reducing the price of provisions for young people;
  - Formulating a policy for hiring and pricing of community access sports facilities and publishing this;
  - Giving free access to leisure centres for young people who are looked after

55. The Sports Strategy 1999 – 2025 consultation findings illustrate that football is the most popular sport within the borough, consistent with the national trend. The consultation undertaken as part of this review also confirmed this; it also demonstrates that young people are interested in a range of sports. However, there are difficulties in facilitating sufficient number of football pitches as demand exceeds supply. It is excellent that the development of the Playing Pitch Strategy 2008 will identify ways to address this and add new facilities or increase the capacity of existing facilities through the use of new pitch technology, the Working Group were pleased that local people were being consulted in the development of this piece of work.

56. The Service has taken on board the importance of cultural sensitivity for the boroughs sports provision to encourage participation from a wide spectrum of people; for example providing separate swimming slots for women. Current provisions include six leisure centres, four schools with extended community use and ten parks with sports facilities. Sports provision is facilitated by both the voluntary and private sector and since 1999, a total of eight new sports facilities have been introduced across the borough.

**Young People and the Olympics Survey**

57. As part of the consultation with young people and their parents and carers, a survey was undertaken with local young people. It was distributed to young people across the borough through a number of different channels:

- Youth clubs and leisure centres;
  - Schools;
  - The Tower Hamlets website featured an on-line version with an article in East End Life which encouraged residents to take part;
  - A session took place to ascertain the views of older disabled children via the Shurjomuki Project;
  - A consultation session also took place with pupils from Marion Richardson School;
  - Surveys were completed at the Youth Service Fair at Limehouse Youth Centre;
  - Consultation took place at the Childrens Physiotherapy Department at Mile End Hospital, engaging young people and their parents and carers.
- Approximately 300 surveys were returned.

**Key findings of consultation with young people**

58 The survey asked young people where they would like to find information on sports available in the borough:

- 45.1% would like to get information through their local school;
- 35.2% felt this information would be most usefully contained in East End Life;
- 24.5% would like information through their local youth service facility;
- 26.5% felt the Idea Stores would be the best place to display information.
- Other suggestions were around providing information on the internet.

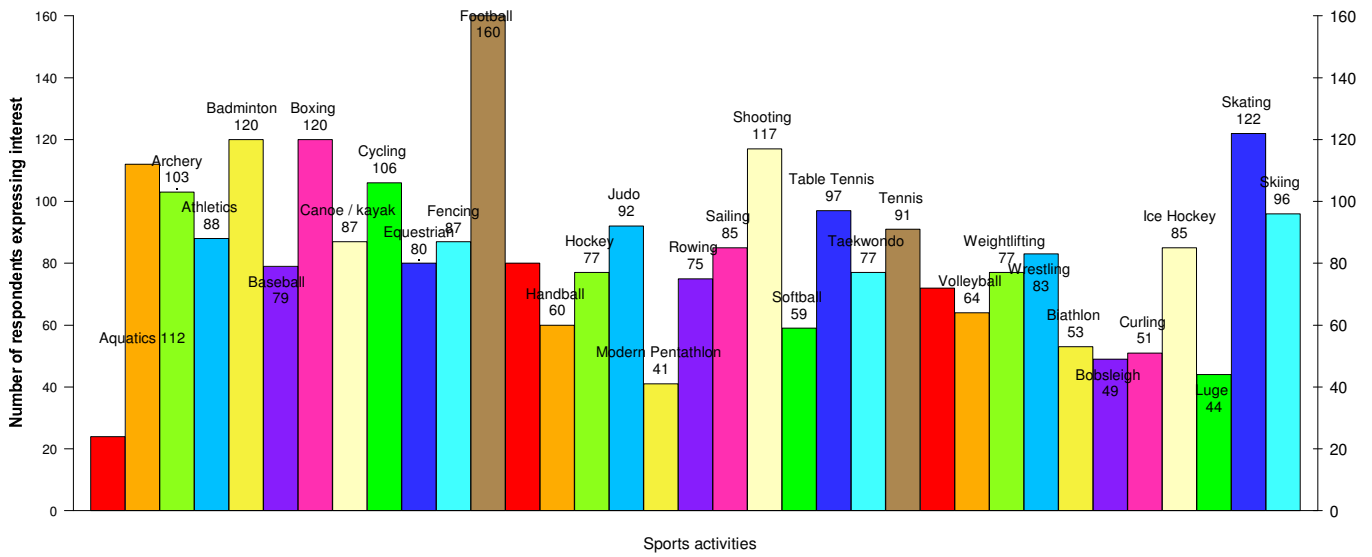


## Interest in sports

59. Young people are clearly interested in sports and would like to try a range of sports if the opportunity was available for young people to try, the stronger messages were about having a mentor/coach to introduce young people to sports and encourage them to play, with competition and prizes to make the participation 'fun'. For parents and carers, the barriers were about fear of safety and transportation, the provision of transport with support from a 'professional' – a person in the establishment who parents can trust, to oversee the safety of their children would encourage them to allow their children to take part in sports. Young people expressed that there are a number of ways in which young people can be encouraged to take part in sports. Incentives such as reduced cost of activities and incentives which encourage young people bringing a friend along and introducing them to an activity would greatly encourage them to take part in sports, some of the other points raised are summarised below:

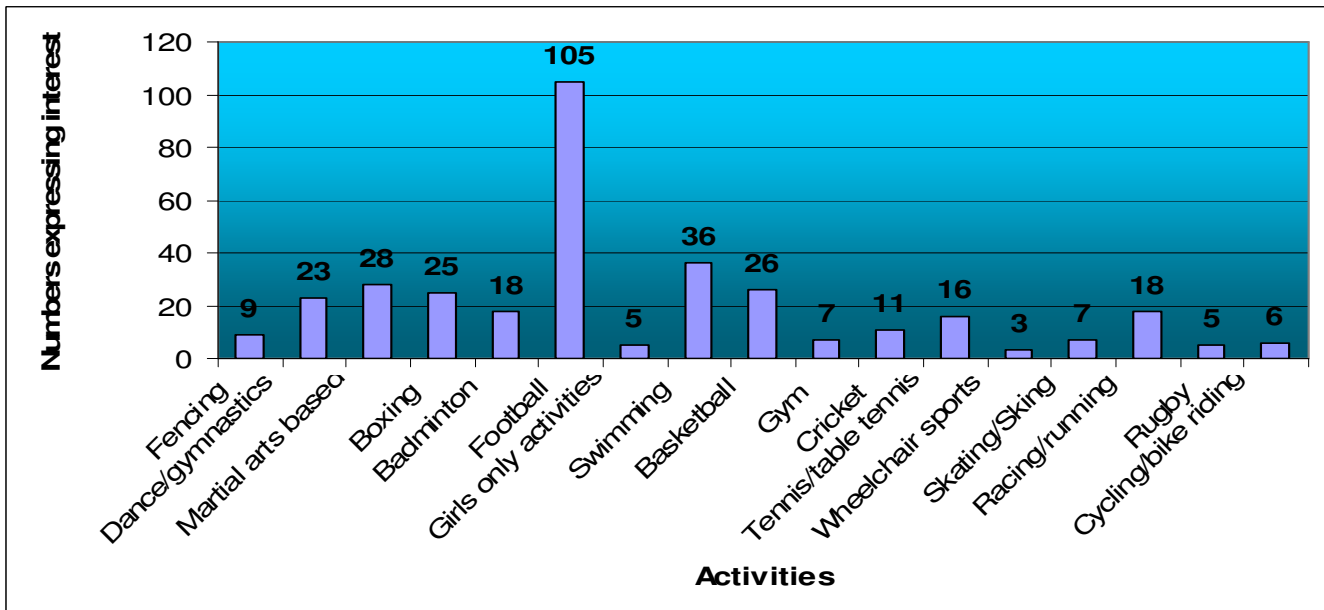
- A stronger role for schools and teachers to play in engaging young children into sports;
- Opportunities to try different sports activities, organised sports events and sports events which are hosted by celebrities;
- Transport arrangements to get young people to sports venues;
- Specific services for disabled people/separate provisions for disabled people;
- Training and coaching for young people to develop an interest in sports;
- Opportunity to experience the Olympics & free tickets to the Olympic games;
- Cheaper, reduced or free access to facilities;
- More competitions and local leagues, prizes and awards;
- Parents on board to encourage their children to take up sports activities – parents have a key role to play;
- More awareness and advertisement of opportunities;
- Involve young people and their friends as they can be shy, create opportunities for making friends, young persons to bring in other young people to encourage them into sports;
- Girls only activities;
- Highlight the health benefits of taking part in sports activities and make it look cool with celebrities involved;
- Provide more equipment, particularly adapted equipment for disabled people;
- Run sessions in a safe and welcoming environment ;
- Give demonstrations of different sports for those who are unsure;

### Expressing interest in Olympic sports



**Figure 1 – The range of sports young people are interested in.**

60. The graph above establishes that young people are clearly interested in football and also a range of other sports, and felt that they would be interested in sports if they were given the opportunity to try them, skating, badminton, boxing, shooting, cycling, aquatics and archery came out strongly.



**Figure 2 – The range of sports young people would like coaching and training in.**

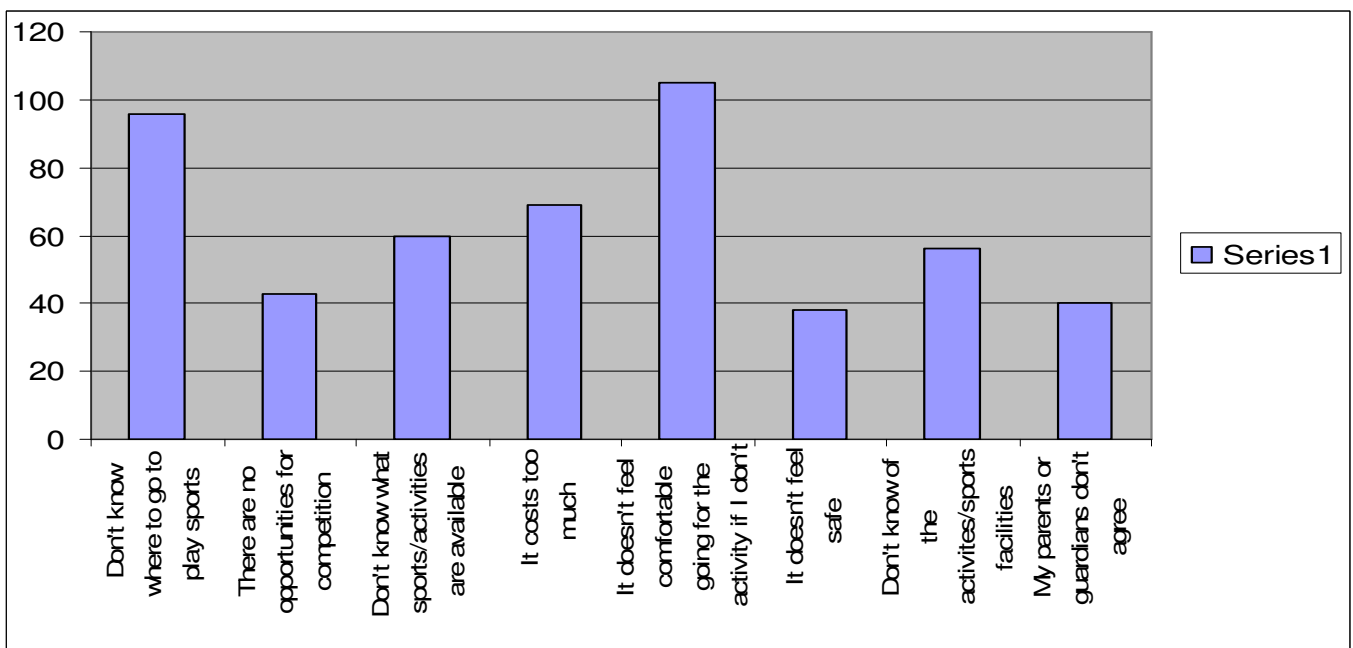
61. Parents and carers were seen as key people in influencing the interest young people develop in sports, and schools were seen as places for developing young peoples interest.
62. Not having qualified coaches was also raised as an issue; with training and coaching, it was felt that young people would be encouraged to develop an interest in sports and are more likely to become competitive.
63. Young people were asked if specialist centres should be developed across Tower Hamlets for developing sports. Overwhelmingly, the vast majority of young people

thought this was a positive way to develop sports engagement and talent. Young people were also asked what sport they would be interested in developing through coaching and training. Figure 2 above illustrates that whilst again, Football was the top sport for young people; they were interested in coaching and training in a range of sports. The Working Group were keen that this interest be taken into consideration when developing the Coaching Programme and when planning for provisions under Building Schools for the Future programme and any strategy development under sports provision.

**Recommendation:**

2. That the results of the Young People and the Olympics Survey is used to inform the development of strategies for young people and sports, in particular that the Building Schools for the Future programme considers the views of young people in providing a variety of sports, coaching and training based on the expressions of interest, barriers and experience of young people in sports;

**Barriers**



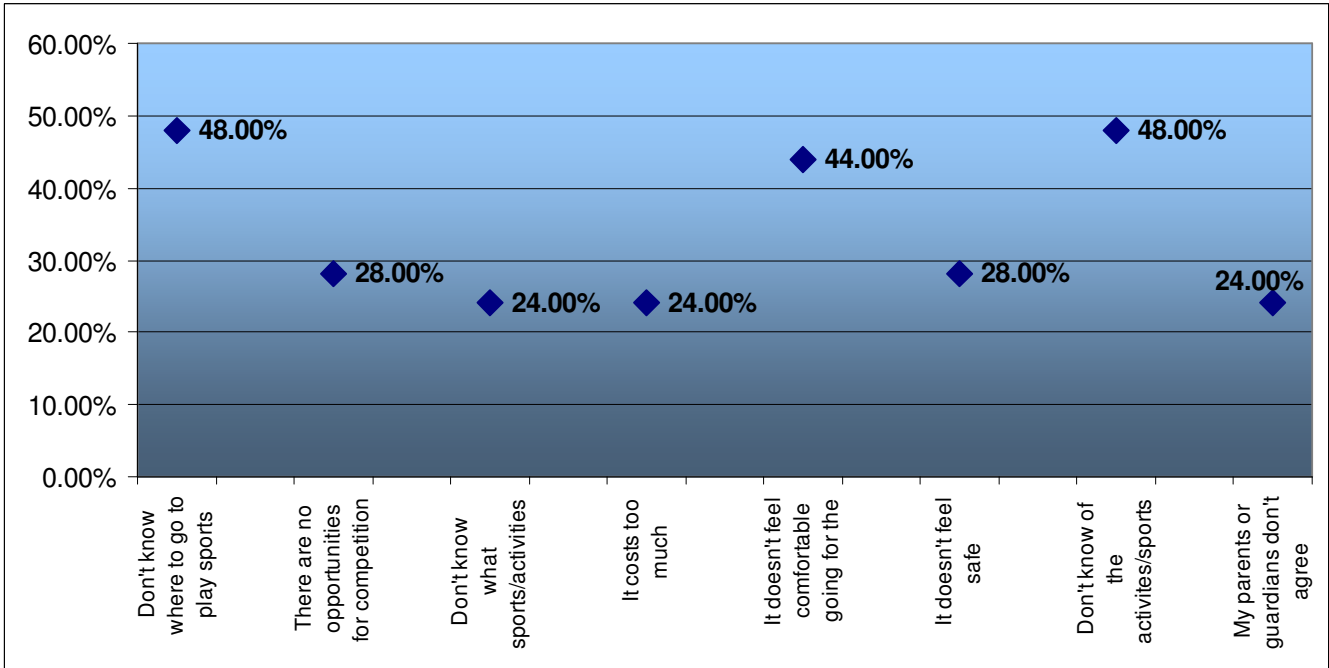
**Figure 3 – Barriers for young people.**

64. Of the existing sports opportunities available in the borough, young people were asked what stopped them from getting involved currently. The key findings are as follows:
- 38.0% of young people said they did not feel comfortable attending a sports activity if they did not know people there;
  - 34.8% felt they did not know where to go to play sports in the borough, with a further 21.7% feeling they did not know enough about which sports were on offer;
  - 25.0% were concerned that the costs of sporting activities were prohibitive;
  - 20.3% were concerned that a new activity might not be suitable for them;
  - 15.6% felt that there were too few opportunities for competition at present;
  - 14.5% were influenced by parental views, with another 13.8% refraining from activities if they felt they were not safe.
  - A number of young people felt there were not enough single-sex activities and this prevented them from getting more involved.

**Recommendation:**

- That incentives are introduced (activities and costs) to encourage bringing along and introducing a friend to an activity or to leisure centre facilities;

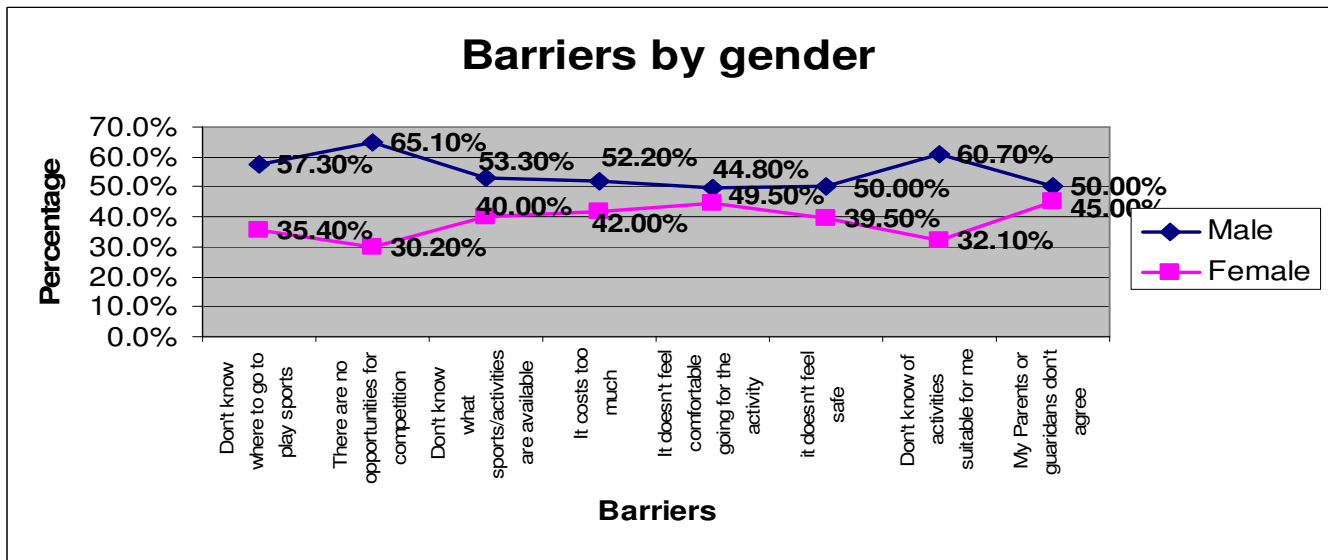
**Barriers for young disabled people**



**Figure 4 - Barriers for young disabled people**

65. The barriers for young disabled people were distinct; a significant 48% did not know where to go to play sports and did not know of the activities and sports suitable for them. The third biggest barrier for young disabled people (44%) was not feeling comfortable going for the activity if they didn't know people there, demonstrating the important role parents/coaches and those working with young (disabled) people play. The young disabled people who contributed to the consultation often had assistance from 'professionals' or parents and carers to access facilities. A barrier for them was transport arrangements to take young people to venues. It was felt that if sports development became more centralised, transportation barriers might be exacerbated.

**Barriers by gender**



**Figure 5 – Barriers by gender**

66. The biggest barrier for young boys was a lack of competition (lowest concern for girls) and not knowing which sport would be suitable for them, this would correlate strongly with the number of young people who feel that having a mentor or coach and being able to try different sports would enable them to develop interest and take part. For young girls, the biggest barrier was not feeling comfortable with going to an activity if they didn't know anyone there and also issues around parents not prioritising and agreeing for young girls to undertake sports activities. This would indicate that professionals and those working with young girls and schools have an important role to play in working with parents and young girls to establish contact. The role of Councillors was identified as an influential role in their capacity as community leaders to encourage parents to engage their children in sports and physical activities. Evidence discussed under Experiencing the Games also supports the need to address barriers for girls.

**Recommendation:**

4. That the service develop innovative ways of engaging young girls in sports, working with community organisations, including faith organisations, schools and parents, taking in to consideration the expressions of interest in the Young People and the Olympics Survey.

67. Many young people were unable to identify Olympic and Paralympic Games. Using images in the sessions helped to develop understanding. Using images of Paralympic sports encouraged disabled young people to become more engaged in the consultation process, facilitators felt that it gave them confidence to realise that disabled people can take part in sports.

68. Tower Hamlets has a Active Communities Coordinator who is a disability specialist, this was recognised as a positive attribute but also felt to be limited in access. Specialist coaches and staff with understanding of disability would improve experience for disabled young people, this would be particularly beneficial for frontline staff as they often define whether a customer comes back to use the service. This view was shared by both Members of the Working Group and the users in the consultation, in particular disabled users of leisure facilities.

**Recommendations:**

5. That the service look at ways the leisure centres can be enhanced to actively engage and increase young disabled people with sports and physical activities leading up to 2012 including increasing the availability of disability specialist staff to support and actively engage young disabled people into sports, working with them to address transport barriers;

**Sports Search**

69. Sports Search is a school club links physical education tool consisting of 10 physical tasks, with online data on tasks completed entered into the system during curriculum ICT. Children are individually matched to sports to which they are attitudinally and physically best suited and then sign posted to a local sports club through this online database. Participation and performance data is recorded and compiled in report format. Sports Search supports the obesity agenda, identifies Gifted and talented, and the Healthy Schools Initiative. Tower Hamlets is noted for being the most successful local authority to deploy Sports Search. Into its second year, over 2000 year 7 students have completed the programme.

70. Football, swimming and cricket were the sports boasting the most amount of active pupils. No facilities (both a perception of and an actual lack of) was the predominant

reason behind non participation in sports. Time constraints, not being allowed, travel concerns and laziness were also registered. Aggression and lack of confidence also featured as reasons for aversion to particular activities. Generally, attitudes towards PE were positive with children stating fitness, health, fun, and football as reasons why lessons were enjoyable.

71. Given that Sports Search is so instrumental in identifying gifted and talented young people, progresses the health agenda and encourages young peoples interest in sports, the Working Group were keen that funding for this activity be mainstreamed as part of the work that the Council does in order to ensure that the work continues to benefit young people and that any budget provisions should be adequately supported by the Council.
72. Members were concerned that Sports Search was not mainstreamed and did not include disabled children and were keen to see this introduced. The current set up of the tool is not designed for use by young people with disabilities. If the tool could be developed to facilitate monitoring of sports for disabled young people it would help to develop young disabled peoples attitude towards sports and physical activities. Tower Hamlets should look at progressing Sports Search by extending it to special schools or find ways of capturing data on disabled people, working with the PCT particularly on the health agenda.

**Recommendation:**

6. That budget provisions be made to mainstream Sports Search in the work that the Council does, exploring the potential to roll out Sports Search to special schools in the borough with a view to capturing data for disabled young people;

73. It should be acknowledged that the recommendations around improving access will incur costs which should be noted in the context of the Leisure Management Contract and the need to achieve income to recover the costs as part of the contract. In addition to this, the service has experienced budget reductions in real terms over the last two years and implementing the recommendations would incur funding implications. The Working Group were keen that sports participation be supported by the Council through budget allocation.

**Recommendation:**

7. That the Service seek to increase ways in which budget allocations can be increased to further mainstream sports activities;

### **Experiencing the Games**

74. The consultation with young people demonstrates that whilst some young people could identify with the benefits of taking part in sports and understood Tower Hamlets was one of the host boroughs, many young people saw the Olympics as an event about people coming into the borough and making money, this came out much stronger for young disabled people. In the focus groups, very few of the young people identified the potential to experience the Olympics or Paralympics and felt very disconnected from it.

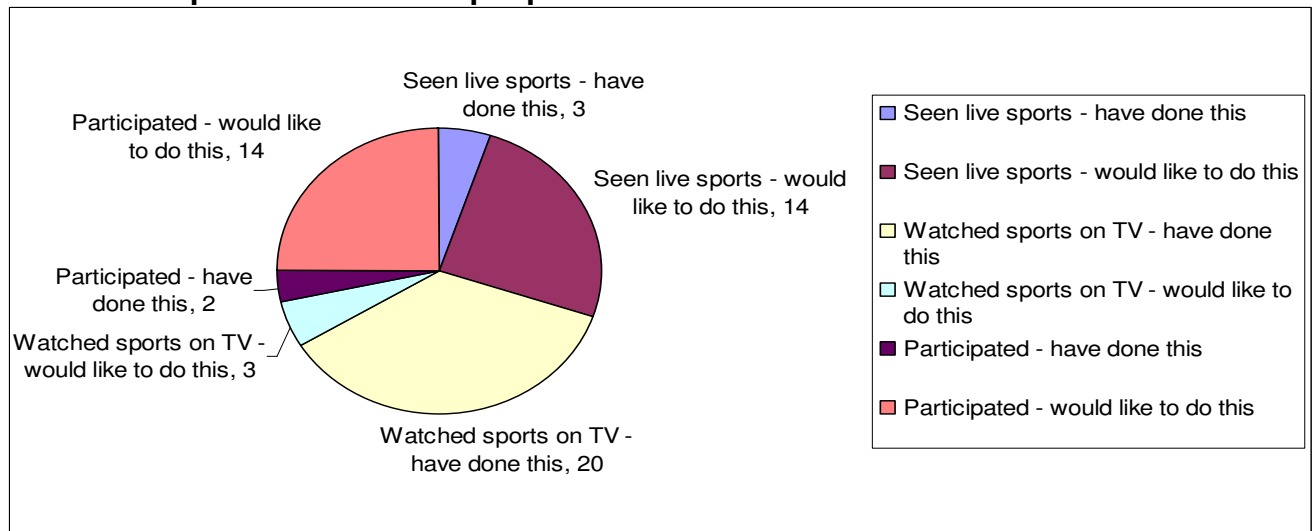
### **Young people's experience of sports**

75. The Young People and the Olympics Survey asked respondents about their experiences of watching and participating in sports:
- Whilst 29.9% of young people had already seen live sports at a venue, a further 41.7% had not but would like to in the future;

- 38.8% felt that they would participate in a new sport that they had not tried in the future;
- Of those young people who said they had tried a new sport, 62.5% were boys, compared with just 36.1% of girls;
- 68.7% of young people already watch sports on TV.

76. The results suggest that there is work to be done in motivating and making young people feel confident about taking part in sports, and that this may be a particular barrier for young girls in the survey, there were also concerns that this may be the case with those who were particularly obese and that targeted work may need to be developed. Young boys felt that the spirit of competition would encourage them to take part in sports.

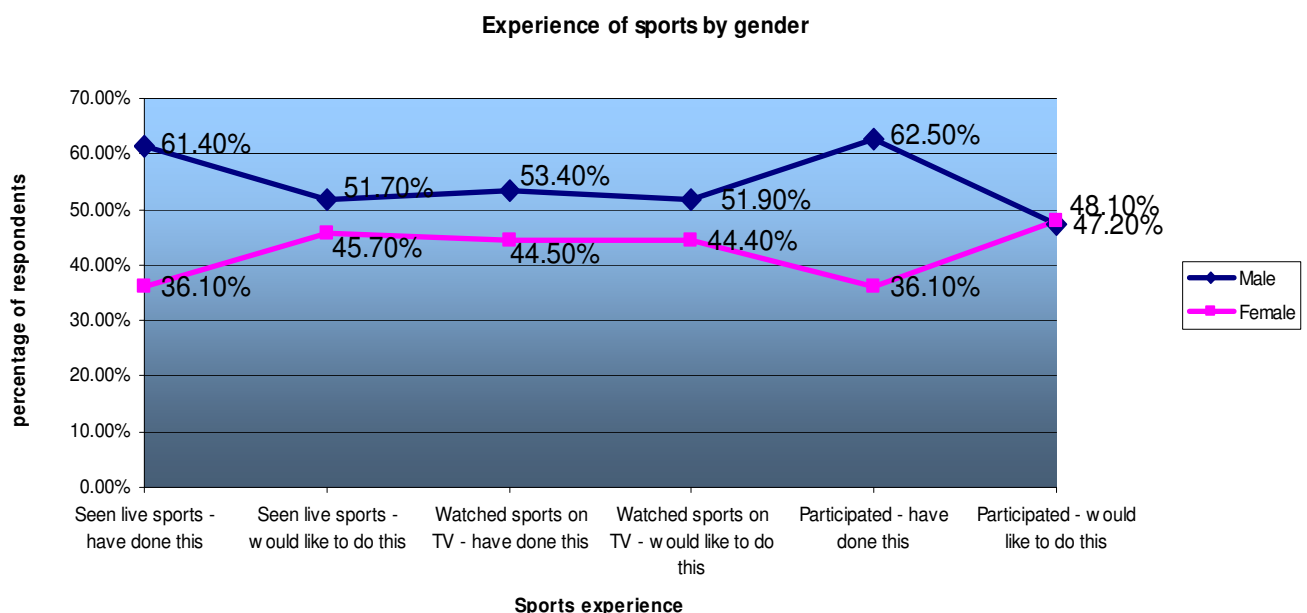
### Experience of sports for disabled people



**Figure 6 - Disabled young peoples experience of sports**

77. The sports experience of disabled young people demonstrates that whilst disabled young people may watch sports on TV, they are less likely to have participated in sports or seen live sport at a venue for the experience of watching live sports. Not too dissimilar to non-disabled young people, they have a keen interest in undertaking sports and would like to participate and see live sports at a venue.

### Experience of sports by gender



**Figure 7 – Experience of sports by gender**

78. The trend in experience of sports by gender is interesting. Boys are more likely to have experienced live sports at a venue more so than young girls, although there appears to be less disparity in the level of interest in wanting to see live sports at a venue. Similarly, young boys are more likely to have experienced participating in a live sport which they have found out about than young girls and again there is almost no disparity by gender in the level of interest young boys and girls have for participating in live sports. Discussions took place that whilst faith did not prohibit young girls from taking part in sports, the provision of sport can influence whether they take part in sports. Young girls indicated that girls' only activities taking into consideration cultural and faith understanding would encourage them.
79. The results indicate that whilst young people may have similar levels of interest, boys by far have a richer experience of sports than girls and that work needs to be developed not only with schools but also with community organisations, including faith organisations and parents to engage young girls in sports and physical activities.
80. Members were concerned that residents of Tower Hamlets would not experience the momentum generated by the Olympics and Paralympics Games. Particular concerns were raised about disabled young people being able to gain access to experiencing the Olympics. It was suggested that annual borough-wide community events in which young people, including young disabled people participate in sports is organised and participants include those developed through schools sports programmes.
81. Generally, young people and the parents and carers involved were not optimistic about the opportunities to participate in sports and to experience the momentum generated by the Olympics. Residents recognised that there were particular young people who were being developed to take part in sports through the recent coverage in East End Life.
82. Parents and carers felt it was important to ensure the engagement of young disabled people and felt that if local disabled young people could get access to experience Olympic and Paralympic sports, it would be a great experience for them and could potentially encourage a greater interest in sports participation. A positive publicity campaign with Olympics branding would generate more interest and atmosphere.

**Recommendations:**

8. That annual borough-wide major community events are organised in which young people participate in Olympic and Paralympic sports, building champions to participate in the events through schools and sports programmes;
9. That the Council explore the possibility of negotiating free tickets or subsidised rate of entry to the Olympics and Paralympics for young people, particularly for disabled young people to experience the Paralympic Games;

83. Some concerns were raised about the perceptions of young disabled people's participation in sports and that this can often be negative from the perspectives of both young people generally and, young disabled people themselves. It was felt that work could be done with organisations working with disabled young people specifically, and through publicity generally to promote positive images of young disabled people taking part in sports activities and promoting the health benefits of sports and physical activities amongst this group.



**Recommendation:**

10. That an extensive publicity campaign is put in place to promote positive images of young disabled people taking part in sports as part of the publicity strategy to promote Olympics and Paralympics in Tower Hamlets;

**Partnership Working**

84. Tower Hamlets is one of the host boroughs in the delivery of the Olympics. Sports participation is delivered through partnerships, the health agenda has a close relationship to sports and physical activities establishing a role for the PCT.
85. School Sports Partnerships are a positive attribute to the borough and well established with schools working in 'cluster' partnerships to develop sports in schools across the borough. This includes initiatives such as releasing PE teachers to work across schools for one day per week and volunteering and leadership schemes for older pupils. Using data to support participation in sports, Tower Hamlets is able to participate in Youth Games and was recognised as the most improved school in 2006/07. Tower Hamlets leads the East London boroughs in terms of the number of 5-16 year olds taking part in competitions.
86. Participation and sports engagement can increase educational attainment. A discussion took place on a sports project (TTK) which was being supported through funding from the private sector, the Working Group felt that other forms of sports can be supported and the same principle can be applied to other sports and stronger links can be made with the private sector to draw in funding to increase sports participation.
87. LBTH is in a 15 year contract with GLL which is a not for profit company. Although GLL might work with the PCT and third sector organisations on initiatives, there is currently no links with the private sector. It was felt that there is potential for developments given that Canary Wharf is in the borough and that this link could be further explored and exploited.

**Recommendation:**

11. That the service find ways in which the relationship with the private sector can be further developed to enhance the funding available to support young people's engagement in sports and physical activities, exploring in particular ways in which the TTK model can be adopted to engage the private sector to fund a range of sports;

88. The Working Group raised concerns that opportunities for improving and establishing facilities should not be wasted. Given the high level of new build developments in the borough, the Working Group felt that developers can be better used to increase sports participation. Housing stock transfer is highly developed in Tower Hamlets and the stock transfer process can be better utilised to secure provisions.
89. Concerns were raised about the lack of sports facilities and water based sports facilities as an opportunity and experience for local young people. Members thought that in working with developers and the housing stock transfer process that formalised agreements should be strengthened to secure provisions taking into consideration existing facilities, the projection of young people in the area, and the need for sports facilities with a view to securing adequate and appropriate provisions which is suited to the area.

90. The particular opportunities Wood Wharf development provides was identified for its potential to deliver local provisions and members felt strongly that this should not be bypassed as there are limited water based sports facilities in the borough. It should be noted that the service recognises that there are barriers to participation in water sports activities, these activities require water confidence or participants to be able to swim 25m or more, this can often be a barrier.

**Recommendations:**

12. That formalised agreements as part of housing stock transfer are strengthened to secure the provision of sports facilities based on a study of the local youth population, including disabled young people, existing facilities and projected needs;
13. That work is developed with Wood Wharf with a view to securing opportunities for water sports in the borough;

91. The Working Group considered how other local authorities were preparing themselves for the Olympics and the range of activities/programmes in place to encourage sports participation. The following details what the other host boroughs have in place:

**London Borough of Hackney.**

- **Schools of the Heart Programme** – This programme works with schools across the borough bringing art, literature and science together with the Olympic ideals of mutual understanding, friendship, solidarity and fair play for young people.
- **Hackney Youth Sports Fund** – In late 2007 the Council announced a £220,000 fund to boost sports development. The cash will be spent on promising individuals and clubs across Hackney, giving them the support, resources and training needed to achieve their potential. The Fund is financed by a £300,000 out of court settlement the Council was given by sporting giant Nike over its unauthorised use of the Hackney logo on its sportswear. The remaining £80,000 has already been used by the Council for coaching, equality training and to promote disability sports. The fund will run until 2012 and is divided into two sections for individual athletes and community clubs.
- **The London Youth Games** - the Council and The Learning Trust are working with local schools, colleges and sports groups to identify young sporting talent and give them the best possible opportunities to compete. In June 2007 around 400 youngsters from Hackney participated in the mini games for primary school children, and the main games for secondary school children. Their efforts resulted in Hackney reaching 23rd place in the London borough league table.
- **The Goalball Club** – Goalball is a Paralympic sport for the visually impaired. It is a fast game, played with a basketball filled with bells, and is suitable for all ages. Weekly Goalball sessions for all have recently been launched at a Hackney Leisure Centre.
- **The Olympic Park** – The main focus for the games will be located at Hackney Wick and will contain an extensive range of new sporting facilities. The Council has committed to ensuring that these facilities are kept in existence after 2012 to allow them to be used by local residents and community groups for sporting activities. There is no reason why young people of Tower Hamlets should not have affordable access to these sporting facilities.

## London Borough of Waltham Forest

- **Sports Action Zone** - The Olympic Action Zone is an Active England and Big Lottery funded project being delivered across both Waltham Forest and Newham. The project, delivered by Leyton Orient Community Sports Programme, aims to reach young people in the most deprived areas in the borough to divert them from crime and improve their health.
- **Sports Academy** – Again in conjunction with Newham, Waltham Forest is supporting some of its talented athletes to join the Newham Sports Academy, which aims to support a number of local sportspeople in their aim to participate in the London 2012 games. Academy athletes receive standard support in sports psychology, medicine, strength and conditioning training and will also meet sport specific requirements.
- **‘Come and Try’ sessions** – The Council is organising a 'Come and Try week' twice a year encouraging sports clubs in the borough to open up their doors for free to encourage local residents to go and try a new Olympic or Paralympic sport for free. This is something that Tower Hamlets could benefit from given the large number of young people who have an interest in trying different sports in the Young People and the Olympics Survey.
- Waltham Forest will host Paralympic tennis and archery, after 2012 residents will have use of the state of the art National Hockey Centre and other sporting facilities. There are also plans for a land bridge over the A406 joining the north of the Olympic Park to the rest of the Olympic Park which will benefit Waltham Forest residents.

## London Borough of Greenwich

- **Sports Search** – a web-based scheme that aims to encourage more young people to take part in sport. By taking part in physical tasks and filling in an online survey they can identify the sports and activities to which they are best suited to. As well as matching skills and abilities to specific sports or activities, the website provides links to local clubs and sports facilities. Tower Hamlets is currently doing this.
- **Increasing Participation in Sports** – Greenwich are looking at the opportunities presented by the Olympics to introduce wider access to activities for people of all ages and abilities. The Council are aiming to increase the number of people taking up sport through a number of events, all of which will also be linked to programmes to support healthy living.
- **The 2012 Diversity Toolkit** – This document provides practical working guidelines for the various groups and projects in Greenwich involved in the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. It will also be used to develop and monitor activities that will help promote equality and cohesion. The document sets out practical guidelines that help contribute towards Greenwich Council's legacy objectives for the Games, of which equality and inclusion is a priority.
- **Sports Promotion** – The Greenwich Sports Promotion Unit is devoted to nurturing and developing groups that might normally find it difficult to access the broad spectrum of leisure activities and facilities across the borough. The Unit works in partnership with sports governing bodies, local clubs, schools, Greenwich Leisure Limited, public, private and voluntary sectors, to help encourage interest in and access to sporting activities throughout the borough and also offers assistance with club funding.

- **Greenwich Starting Blocks Trust** – This is a charity committed to supporting young people's sporting talent. It provides bursaries to give young, up-and-coming athletes a chance to develop their talents. Since Greenwich Starting Blocks was launched, the Council have been working with sports bodies to identify local talent. They believe there are around 20 young athletes who, with the right encouragement, could make the national squad in 2012.

### **London Borough of Newham**

- **Going For Gold** – Newham's Strategy for Sports Participation and Healthy Living published in 2005 outlines the ways in which the Council will approach this issue, with a particular emphasis on their role as a Host Borough for the 2012 Olympics.
- **Sports for young people with disabilities** – Newham provide a number of sports and activities for young people with disabilities. There are two after school clubs that cater for young people, aged 11-16 years, with special educational needs (SEN) & disabilities. The clubs offer free sports and activities such as football, basketball, and dance.
- **Newham Gold Card** – This allows residents aged 6 to 21 years old access to many free sporting activities. This allows residents aged between 6 and 16 years old to swim for free at local leisure centres in the borough during the school holidays.
- **Estate Based Sports Programme** – Newham provides free estate-based sports activities throughout the year for young people in Newham, aged 8 to 19 years old. All sessions are delivered by qualified coaches and open to young people of all abilities. These include basketball, football, non-contact boxing, fencing, gymnastics, fencing and street dance.
- **Inclusive and Active** – Newham has become the first borough to sign up to Inclusive and Active, a London-wide sports plan for disabled people. The pledge promises better sports facilities and more opportunities for participation, including training to help coaches and instructors meet the needs of disabled people.
- **The Game on Festival** – this is run every year in Newham to mark the countdown to the Paralympic Games in 2012. Newham Sports Academy has two disabled athletes on its support programme for elite performers and has identified another ten. The borough has three disability-focussed sports clubs offering goalball, power wheelchair football and multi sports while its water sports centre offers kayaking, sailing and boating to people with special needs.
- **Paralympic sports** – Newham have also set up an action group for young disabled people to identify more ways in which they can get involved in sport. To offer a wider range of sport activity, the council aims to set up five Paralympic sports clubs and work more closely with sports clubs to help them cater for disabled people.

92. It is clear that host boroughs are developing a number of initiatives to encourage young people's participation in sports leading up to the Olympics. The Working Group felt that host boroughs should be engaging with other host boroughs with a view to increasing cross-borough opportunities for young people to engage in sports, and establishing contact between different groups.

93. The Young People and the Olympics Survey shows a strong desire for young people to be engaged in sports. The spirit of competition was marked out in the activities contained in the Children's Services Olympic Strategy, however the Working Group felt that this was

focused in secondary schools and not at primary school level and that the spirit could be further extended in working with other boroughs to increase sports experiences. This will be an opportunity for young people to make contact with young people in other host boroughs and promote community cohesion; it would also give access to facilities in other boroughs for the young people of Tower Hamlets. The Working Group felt it was important that the young people of Tower Hamlets were able to gain access and use the facilities left by the legacy of the Olympics and would encourage joint working to ensure that young people across the host boroughs are able to afford access to the facilities.

94. Whilst it is clear from the strategies and current initiatives presented to the Working Group that Tower Hamlets has put a number of initiatives in place to ensure young people participate in sports, the Working Group felt that lessons can be learnt from work being undertaken by other host boroughs and that in working with them there is potential to offer access to host borough facilities for the young people of Tower Hamlets. Given the levels of deprivation in Tower Hamlets, the Working Group felt it was important that affordability was considered in negotiating access for local young people.

**Recommendation:**

14. That consideration be given to what other host boroughs have been involved in to increase sports participation with a view to adopting what works well in increasing participation, and that affordable access is negotiated for young people in Tower Hamlets to leisure facilities in other host boroughs, particularly as a legacy of the Olympics and to increase contact between young people in the different boroughs through events and competitions;

**Focus on health**

95. The Tower Hamlets London 2012: Olympic and Paralympic Games Strategy Action Plan Strategic Objective 6 indicates the desire to engage communities in activities and events and a desire to meet communication needs. The Working Group raised concerns that the community were not yet aware of this and felt that this needed to be actively done with disabled young people. Stereotypes needed to be challenged and perceptions of and from disabled young people needed to be looked at. Concerns were raised that communication should include health agenda and that the PCT should be involved.
96. The Working Group received the Children's Services Education Olympic Strategy in draft form and were pleased it is being established to increase sports participation in addition to a number of other things.
97. The Working Group were pleased to see that activities and programmes had already been running and others being planned to increase young peoples participation in Olympic sports, including community based participation opportunities. Provisions for disabled young people in schools is being covered. The health agenda is clearly being marked out although it was felt that the focus on health was in primary schools and that the work on health should continue into secondary schools when young children are often introduced to chicken and chip shops and peer pressure, particularly around smoking.
98. There were some concerns that the opportunity to use the Olympics for health purposes can bypass, the Working Group would ask that the PCT in partnership with LBTH look at the issues of drugs and smoking as part of the health promotion work and the Olympics. The promotion of the health agenda should not only sell health benefits, it should attempt to make participation in sports look 'cool' and should be supported by celebrities to encourage young peoples participation in sports. The concept of celebrities encouraging

young people to participate in sports was also established in the Young People and the Olympics Survey.

99. A presentation from the PCT made it clear that funds had been sourced to address health issues and obesity in particular. Proposals were yet to be developed to show how the Olympics can be used as a catalyst to promote healthy lifestyles, the Working Group were keen that any issues picked up from the consultation were addressed by the PCT or relevant partners.
100. The results of the Young People and the Olympics Survey suggests that there is work to be done in motivating and making young people feel confident about taking part in sports, this may be more of a barrier for young girls in the survey, there were also concerns that this may be the case with those who were particularly obese and that targeted work may need to be developed to assist them with a view to reducing obesity.

**Recommendations:**

15. That the PCT develop targeted work with those who are at health risk due to obesity, with primary focus on those who are particularly obese and may lack confidence to engage in sports and physical activities.
16. That the PCT in partnership with LBTH should deliver health promotion as part of the Olympics publicity to include messages on the damaging effects of drugs and smoking and that the publicity campaign be supported by celebrities to promote a 'cool' image of participating in sports at local venues;

## Concluding remarks

101. The Working Group has made a number of recommendations with a view to increasing opportunities for young people to take part in sports and physical activities. The focus for the Group has been to improve access and opportunities, increase opportunities to experience the Games, strengthen partnership working and consider addressing the health agenda as part of the Olympics.
102. The Olympics is a historic event for the world and no less for Tower Hamlets and its residents, the excitement and energy that surrounds the potential to experience the Olympics should not bypass local residents. Whilst a number of events may take place locally, and local people can experience it, the opportunity for local young people to gain entry to the Olympics and Paralympics would be a truly memorable experience. The Working Group understand that it may be challenging to obtain tickets for the Olympics, they believe that it is worthy of challenging LOCOG to put forward free tickets for the Paralympics for young disabled people.
103. The consultation with local young people shows that they are very interested in participating in sports and physical activities and the Working Group urge that the Council and partners delivering provisions for young people should reflect on the views of young people in designing and making provisions available.
104. The PCT were keen to engage and the Working Group were pleased for this and ask that the PCT work together with Tower Hamlets to address the 2 recommendations on health.
105. Other recommendations have also been made to forge working relationships with other host boroughs to consider what works well in increasing sports participation and to find ways to increase young peoples opportunities to gain access to facilities in other host boroughs, particularly as a legacy of the Olympics. Establishing working relationships with other host boroughs would also establish contact between different groups across the boroughs and encourage community cohesion and the Working Group strongly urge the service to support this agenda in the lead up to the Olympics to defuse any potential for territorialism to develop around the infrastructure legacy.
106. The Working Group hope that the recommendations will help to improve young peoples opportunities for engaging in sports and that the Olympics will generally engage young people and that the review will support the activities and programmes the service has already established.
107. Finally, the DVD produced as part of this review will demonstrate how scrutiny works and how the voices of local people can influence policy and service provision. The Working Group hope that it goes in some way to demonstrating that decisions made by the Council are not made up alone by Councillors or officers but influenced by local people and can have a real impact on the lives of local people.

---

## Scrutiny and Equalities in Tower Hamlets

---

To find out more about Scrutiny in Tower Hamlets:

Please contact:

Scrutiny Policy Team  
Tower Hamlets Council  
6<sup>th</sup> Floor, Mulberry Place  
5 Clove Crescent  
London E14 2BG

[scrutiny@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:scrutiny@towerhamlets.gov.uk)

020 7364 0941



# Agenda Item 9.2

<b>Committee:</b> Overview and Scrutiny	<b>Date:</b> 6 <sup>th</sup> May 2008	<b>Classification:</b> Unrestricted	<b>Report No.:</b>	<b>Agenda Item No.:</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Michael Keating, Acting Assistant Chief Executive  <b>Originating Officer(s):</b> Jebin Syeda, Scrutiny Policy Officer		<b>Title:</b> Report of the Scrutiny Review Working Group on Choice Based Lettings.		

## 1. Summary

- 1.1 This report is a submission of the recommendations of the Scrutiny Review Working Group on the Choice Based Lettings scheme for the consideration of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

## 2. Recommendations

It is recommended that Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

- 2.1 Endorse the report and the recommendations contained within the report.
- 2.2 Authorise the Acting Assistant Chief Executive to agree the final report before its submission to Cabinet.

---

Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) Section 100D  
LOST OF "BACKGROUND PAPERS" USED IN THE PREPARATION OF THIS REPORT

Background paper

Choice Based Lettings documents held with the Scrutiny Policy Team

Name and telephone of and address where open to inspection  
Jebin Syeda  
020 7364 0941

### **3. Background**

- 3.1 The Working Group was established in October 2007 to investigate the Council's approach to Choice Based Lettings.
- 3.2 The objectives of the review were to:
- Consider the accessibility of the scheme with a view to improving access particularly for elderly and disabled residents;
  - Consider the impact of the Council's policy to tackle overcrowding in the borough;
  - Consider the medical assessment process and how they work;
  - Consider Homelessness in the context of Choice Based Lettings;
  - Explore resident and other stakeholder understanding of how the process works with a view to addressing any issues identified;
  - Consider the level of transparency in decision making in the allocation of properties;
- 3.3 The Working Group met seven times to consider the evidence for this review, including a visit to the East London Lettings Company to consider how others address the challenge of improving access and met with users and providers to consider local issues to accessing CBL.
- 3.4 The report with recommendations is attached at Appendix A.
- 3.5 Once agreed, the Working Group's report and action plan will be submitted to Cabinet.

### **4. Concurrent Report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal Services)**

- 4.1 Safeguards must be included in with 'waiting time prioritisation' to cater for the composite needs of the family to ensure that all categories of applicants are treated equally.
- 4.2 Similarly, whilst considering the introduction of a 'Sons & Daughters' policy there is a need to consider the broader implications of discrimination against groups with greater need in order to ensure that any change in policy treats the needs of all applicants proportionately. A previous 'Sons & Daughters' policy gave rise to a challenge from the then Commission for Racial Equalities and the policy was revised.
- 4.3 Prior to amending the current Lettings Policy there is a requirement to consult secure tenants who are likely to be substantially affected by the change in the policy of the authority. (Section 105 Housing Act 1985).

## **5. Comments of the Chief Financial Officer**

- 5.1 Any financial implications as a result of changes to policy and procedures that may arise following the report will need to be considered at that time.

## **6. Equal Opportunity Implications**

- 6.1 Equalities issues were considered throughout the review. The subject of community understanding of CBL and cohesion related issues were extensively discussed throughout the review. A number of the recommendations have clear relevance to equal opportunities implications.

## **7. Anti-Poverty Implications**

- 7.1 The Choice Based Lettings scheme does have anti-poverty implications; housing affects the quality of the lives of individuals, families and communities. The Equality Impact Assessment should look to identify any anti-poverty implications in addition to the equalities implications.

## **8. Sustainable Action for a Greener Environment**

- 8.1 There are no direct actions for a greener environment arising from the report.

## **9. Risk Management**

- 9.1 There are no direct risk management implications arising from the Working Group's report or recommendations with the exception of legal implications as commented by the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal Service).

## **Appendix A: Report of the Scrutiny Review Working Group on Choice Based Lettings**



**London Borough of Tower Hamlets**

**Report of the Scrutiny Review Working Group on  
Choice Based Lettings**

**DRAFT**

**May 2008**

## Contents

---

	<b>Page</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Chair's Foreword</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Introduction and Recommendations</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Background</b>	<b>13</b>
National Context	<b>13</b>
Local Context	<b>15</b>
<b>Findings</b>	<b>19</b>
Customer access and community cohesion	<b>19</b>
Improving quality and outcomes for community groups	<b>23</b>
Tackling Overcrowding	<b>29</b>
Widening access to social housing	<b>33</b>
<b>Concluding remarks</b>	<b>35</b>

## Acknowledgements

---

The Scrutiny Review Working Group would like to thank all the officers, Common Housing Register partners, third sector partners, residents and other stakeholders including the East London Lettings Company who have contributed and supported this review. It is unfortunate that former Councillor Louise Alexander is no longer with the Working Group during the consideration of the final report, the Working Group recognises the contributions Louise has made to the review and wishes her well and acknowledges that her contributions have helped to shape the recommendations. The contributions of all those involved has helped to shape how well the review has worked and the final recommendations which are contained within this report.

We feel that the report has highlighted some important and challenging issues.

### **Working Group Chair:**

Councillor Alex Heslop (Labour)

### **Working Group Members:**

Councillor Timothy Archer (Conservative)

Councillor Louise Alexander (Liberal Democrat)

Councillor Bill Turner (Labour)

Councillor Shahed Ali (Respect)

Councillor Rofique Uddin Ahmed (Labour)

Councillor Ann Jackson (Labour)

### **Other Members:**

Councillor Marc Francis (Labour), Chair of Overview & Scrutiny

Councillor Shafiqueel Hoque (Cabinet Member)

Councillor Rupert Bawden (Cabinet Member at the time of the review)

Councillor Ahmed Hussain (Respect - at the time of the review)

Councillor Clair Hawkins (Labour)

### **London Borough of Tower Hamlets**

Maureen McEleney – Director, Housing Management

Jackie Odunoye – Head of Housing Strategy and Development

Rafiqul Hoque – Lettings Services Manager

Sarah Pace – Housing Strategy Manager

Colin Cormack – Head of Housing and Homeless Advice

John Harkin – Client Support Team

Michael Keating – Assistant Chief Executive

### **Scrutiny and Equalities:**

Afazul Hoque – Scrutiny Policy Manager

Jebin Syeda – Scrutiny Policy Officer

Hannah Bailey – Scrutiny and Equalities Support Officer

### **External:**

Michael Tyrrell – Chief Executive, **Tower Hamlets Community Housing**

Gaye Brown – Lettings Manager, **East End Homes**

Audrey Sutherland – Lettings Manager, **Poplar Harca**

Sandra Fawcett – Housing Director, **SWAN Housing Group**

Stephanie McDonald – **Spitalfields Housing Association**

Tim Madelin – **Primary Care Trust**

Shiraz Bhaiji – **Development Director, East London Lettings Company**

**Contribution to service users and providers focus group were received from the following organisations and some of their service users:**

Tower Hamlets Access Group

Link Age Plus

Client Support Team

Tenancy Support Team

Carers Centre Tower Hamlets

Consultancy Plus

## Chair's Foreword

---

The Government's approach to housing and homelessness has pushed for change in the quality of housing through the Decent Homes Standard and the allocation of housing through the Choice Based Lettings Scheme and policy. Gone are the days when it was individual officers making important decisions about who gets housed and when, making an impact nationally and locally here in Tower Hamlets.

The Choice Based Lettings Scheme offers information to residents on the housing stock available and enables them to make decisions about where they wish to live, the Scheme is dependant on a policy which is not easily accessible for the community, often leading to misunderstandings.

This report follows a 6 months long inquiry by the Scrutiny Review Working Group in which a users and providers service improvement focus group proved to be invaluable in informing the review, identifying in particular, issues around access and community understanding. We also visited the East London Lettings Company to learn about how others rise to the challenges of improving access and community understanding, potentially providing residents with real-time feedback on any bids they place. The visits and the discussions have been very interesting and useful for the review and I'd like to thank all the staff and residents who have participated in this inquiry and helped inform our recommendations.

It has been a challenging and exciting review to work on and I believe we've come up with some equally challenging and exciting recommendations. The recommendations outlined in this report are intended to improve access, choice, quality and outcomes, tackle overcrowding and support better understanding of Choice Based Lettings. We hope all the parties involved will take the opportunity to address the issues highlighted in this report.

Finally, I would like to thank all the Councillors who participated in this review and Rafiqul Hoque and Maureen McEleney from Housing Lettings Service for their continued support throughout the course of the review.

**Councillor Alex Heslop**  
**Scrutiny Lead, Living Well**



## **Introduction and recommendations**

### **Introduction**

1. With over 20,000 households now on the council's waiting lists for re-housing, the operation of the Choice Based Lettings scheme is clearly an issue affecting a significant proportion of our community. But interest in and concern about the way housing is allocated stretches well beyond those directly affected. The way individuals and groups are prioritised, has been at the heart of the tensions between communities in the East End for more than three decades. Whilst the review did not explicitly set out to examine the role of the local CBL in promoting community cohesion, our work was consistently drawn into that sphere.
2. The Choice Based Lettings (CBL) Scrutiny Review Working Group was established in October 2007 and undertook its research over the next six months. A large number of Members Enquiries are generated on the subject of lettings and overcrowding is a well established challenge for the Borough. Whilst the service has pioneered the Accessible Housing Register and improved information to inform decisions for disabled applicants, it was important for the Working Group that a much wider range of issues for the community were addressed.
3. The main aim of the review was to look at the accessibility and effectiveness of the scheme focusing on the needs of elderly and disabled residents; in addition to this focus, the review set out to look at the following areas in relation to Choice Based Lettings:
  - Tackling overcrowding in the borough;
  - Medical assessments;
  - Homelessness and Choice Based Lettings;
  - Exploring resident and other stakeholder understanding of how the process works;
  - Transparency in decision making in the allocation of properties;
4. The Working Group<sup>1</sup> agreed to investigate these issues, and hoped to make recommendations that would help improve access to the service, particularly for elderly and disabled residents and make a useful contribution to improving the service in the areas mentioned above. The Working Group established was politically balanced, and chaired by Councillor Alex Heslop, Scrutiny Lead for Living Well.
5. A number of key issues were noted by the Working Group at the outset, including complexity of managing the Choice Based Lettings policy, the varying level of community understanding of CBL and the challenge for the service in providing a key service, often determining the quality of life for residents of Tower Hamlets, where demand is exceptionally high and the supply limited.
6. The Working Group undertook a users and providers service improvement focus group and met with a number of third sector/external organisations to examine the barriers that are limiting access to Choice Based Lettings and how the service can be improved. This was a very useful session, and provided the Working Group with a good insight into some of the issues facing users and providers who are assisting clients with accessing CBL, this proved to be an invaluable way to inform the review. A visit to the East London Lettings Company was also made to learn how others have dealt with the challenge of improving access.

---

<sup>1</sup> The term Working Group is a reference to the Scrutiny Review Working Group - Members nominated to the review and all stakeholders who may have presented evidence or attended the review session.

7. The Scrutiny Working Group held a special focus session on medical assessments and the impact of homelessness on CBL. In addition to this, the Corporate Parenting Group presented evidence to consider on foster carers housing needs. And finally the Working Group considered Capital Moves – a proposed pan-London project to deliver wider choice and mobility for re-housing applicants. The Seaside and Country Homes Scheme was also considered.
8. The Working Group's recommendations focus on a number of areas that require consideration. They are intended to support the findings and recommendations of other improvement initiatives and further improve access to, and public understanding of Choice Based Lettings in Tower Hamlets as the Borough looks towards introducing the Arms Length Management Organisation.

### **Recommendations**

9. For purposes of this report, the findings of the Working Group has been set out in the following 4 key themes:
  - **Improving customer access and community cohesion**
  - **Improving quality and outcomes for community groups**
  - **Tackling overcrowding**
  - **Widening choice and access to social housing**
10. Having considered the evidence, the Working Group has put forward the following recommendations:

#### **Improving customer access and community cohesion**

1. That research is undertaken to identify whether bidding habits are based on positive attributes or constraining factors and to identify the ability of the system to work with different community needs to identify how far CBL promotes or otherwise community cohesion;
2. That a full Equality Impact Assessment of CBL is undertaken in 2009/2010 including giving consideration to impact on community cohesion;
3. That work is developed to address the issue of the lack of transparency in decision making to improve community understanding and expectations of CBL, including communicating positive stories to the community to address perceptions of unfair community lets, changing the policy to allow 2 bids only per applicant per bidding cycle, replacing the coupon system;
4. That service improvement activities are developed based on the feedback obtained from the users and providers service improvement focus group with particular focus on improving access for those who have sensory disabilities and improving customer understanding of CBL;
5. That LBTH joins the East London Lettings company subject to a full feasibility study of what ELLC can offer to LBTH residents;
6. That a Local Lettings Plan is adopted for all new developments of 20 units or more affordable homes to promote mixed tenure, mixed communities and sustainable housing and delivering priority for adult children of existing social tenants by setting a specific proportion for this group;

## **Improving quality and outcomes**

7. That an open, non-discriminatory Sons and Daughters policy be considered for adoption as part of the new lettings policy and as part of the Council's affordable homes policy;
8. That Childrens Services research ways in which shared ownership might be used to assist foster carers where accommodation is a barrier, in addition to Housing prioritising adult children for housing to free up accommodation for foster carers;
9. That a review is undertaken of the medical assessment process to address concerns of accuracy and quality and give consideration to best practice, with a view to improving the transparency of the process, extending the time for appeals, , researching other potential providers for the service, sampling a work undertaken by Now Medical and considering introducing self assessments;
10. That Tower Hamlets should actively lobby DCLG Ministers to issue guidance and if necessary legislation, allowing local authorities to introduce the waiting time-based approach to lettings. LBTH should be prepared to campaign in support of these changes in partnership with other local authorities.
11. That a transitional period of between 12 months and two years should be put in place to protect those homeless families already in the system should waiting-time based approach be successful.

## **Tackling overcrowding**

12. That targeted work be developed to tackle overcrowding, including targeted work with under-occupiers, as part of this work review the Cash Incentive Scheme and the financial incentives for under-occupiers as to ensure the housing stock is used in the best way to reduce overcrowding ,working with partner RSLs to develop and fund initiatives;
13. That Overview and Scrutiny Committee conduct a through review of overcrowding which will assist the Council in developing an effective Overcrowding Strategy, potentially including research into the impact of overcrowding on health and education and using this to assist housing to secure funding to roll-out the Overcrowding Project with a view to assisting more overcrowded families;
14. That the Lettings policy be revised to reflect the changes proposed under the 'Bedroom Standards'
15. That RSL partners seek to use Right to Acquire receipts to buy back properties direct from leaseholders; That targeted work be developed to tackle overcrowding, including targeted work with under-occupiers giving consideration to allocating direct lets similar to Newham's policy. As part of this work review the Cash Incentive Scheme and the financial incentives for under-occupiers with a view to using the stock in ways to reduce overcrowding working with partner RSL to develop and fund initiatives;

## **Widening choice and access to social housing**

16. That Tower Hamlets should press the Mayor of London and the Government to reduce the proportion of lettings on new-build through Capital Moves to 25 per cent, and to equalise the numbers of accessible homes let through Capital Moves. It should also insist that Capital Moves develop a minimum standard of advertising of the properties allocated through the Pan-London Scheme to secure a common standard of accessibility. Residents should be fully consulted before a decision is reached whether to introduce the scheme;
17. That Tower Hamlets should press the Mayor of London and Housing Corporation to make funding available to expand the Seaside and Country Homes Scheme;
18. That the Council should invite other local authorities in London to identify best practice in promoting and facilitating mutual exchanges;
19. That the Council should undertake a review of Key Worker Housing in the Borough, specifically looking at its affordability and the problems experienced by those with families in non-secure/assured tenancies;
20. That the Council should undertake a review of Sheltered Housing Lettings Policy to make sure that this resource is used effectively.

### Introduction

11. Housing is a significant aspect of lives of individuals and families in the community, it represents far more than just bricks and mortar. In the context of Tower Hamlets, the challenges are acute – extremely high demand and very limited supply to meet the demand. The East End has historically been a settling point for new and emerging communities and poverty and deprivation has usually been widespread, making “a decent home for all at a price within their means” all the more important. Given the context, it’s just as important that the policy for allocation is transparent and fair.
12. By the early 1980s, the massive expansion of council estates and migration out of Tower Hamlets had made real strides in replacing bomb-damaged pre-war housing. Residents had some hope that they and their children would be able to get a decent and affordable council home after a relatively short wait of a few years. Over the years, due to stock loss through the Right to Buy, the number of units has dwindled.
13. The Housing Act 1996 governs the allocation of social housing and is a statutory function set out to allocate based on need, to give *reasonable preference* to particular groups in need such as those overcrowded, homeless and those with medical needs.
14. The Government would prefer that all local authorities operate a lettings scheme which is based on applicants having choice, Choice Based Lettings (CBL) was adopted in Tower Hamlets in 2002. Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) commissioned research which produced positive findings, mainly that CBL improved tenancy sustainment, produced better outcomes for homeless households, provides more flexibility in social housing options with choice and control to applicants to enable them to make decisions and reduce ethnic segregation. It also recognises that the policy is complex and can be difficult for applicants to fully grasp leading to confusion and frustration.

### National Context

15. The Housing Green Paper ‘Homes for the future: more affordable, more sustainable’ sets out with the focus of supplying additional affordable housing and improving the condition of existing housing in the context of house prices rising more steeply in relation to income (affordability), a commitment to improve supply (need and supply) and to meeting the challenges presented by climate change.
16. The recent Hills report ‘Ends and means: The future roles of social Housing in England’ paints a rather gloomy picture of the profile of social housing tenants. Social Housing tenants are more likely to be on low income and not be in employment, they are more likely to be disabled, a lone parent or single person and they are more likely to be aged over 60. A significant proportion (27%) of social tenants are likely to be from the black or minority ethnic household, approximately 50% are likely to be Bangladeshi and 43% from black Caribbean and black African community.<sup>2</sup> Given this, the Working Group were particularly concerned that the review look at access to CBL for elderly and disabled residents and also housing issues which may be adversely affecting particular community groups.
17. The national debate on community cohesion sparked by the Cattle report, *Community Cohesion: A Report of the independent Review Team*<sup>3</sup> followed the riots

---

<sup>2</sup> Ends and means: The future roles of social Housing in England’ John Hills 2007

in Burnley, Bradford and Oldham. Cantle outlined a number of areas that needed to be addressed to promote community cohesion. It recognised in particular that the debate on community cohesion and housing policies needed to be had. It recommended that:

*'Housing agencies must urgently assess their allocation systems and development programmes with a view to ensuring more contact between different communities and to reducing tension.'*<sup>4</sup>

18. This debate is as relevant in Tower Hamlets as anywhere else in the country. Given the diversity of the borough and it being the settling point for new and emerging communities, housing has always been a touchstone issue. The recent Young Foundation study 'The New East End: Kinship, Race and Conflict' talks of the diminished support networks in communities for which the authors pin the blame on the welfare state. They claim that housing policy based on needs where contributions of the past are not considered in distribution, has stirred up racial tension and left the white working class community embittered and fragmented.<sup>5</sup>
19. More recently in 2007, Our Shared Future<sup>6</sup> – a report by the Commission on Integration and Cohesion states that settled communities are worried about the fair allocation of public services with some thinking that immigrants and minorities are getting special treatment. This is further compounded by the national picture of the rights and freedom of immigrants being restricted. The Commission believes that work needs to be developed to dispel this myth and that the key to this is communication. In this context, the report recognises CBL as a positive innovation.
20. Starting with a new definition of cohesion, the report adopts four key principles which drive understanding of integration and cohesion. These being:
  - *shared futures*- what binds communities together;
  - *new model of rights and responsibilities* – obligations of being a citizen;
  - *new emphasis on mutual respect and civility* – community understanding and respect in the context of change, and;
  - *visible social justice* – transparency, fairness and trust in the institutions that provide services to the community.We know from the focus group that transparency and fairness were key issues for both users and providers.
21. In December 2007, the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) published *Tackling Overcrowding in England: an Action Plan* in December 2007 in response to an earlier discussion paper on the issue of overcrowding. Living in overcrowded housing can have a detrimental affect on the lives of families, with under-performance by children in schools caused by lack of space to study, stress and depression, and in worst-case scenarios, domestic violence and the breakdown of relationships. Shelter estimates that children growing up in bad housing conditions are 25% more likely to suffer ill-health and disability during childhood / early adulthood.
22. The statutory standards that define overcrowding have not been revised since their introduction in 1935. Whilst the concerns then around the 'room standard' (decency through the separation of the sexes) and the 'space standard' (provision of adequate space) are relevant today, the standards considered suitable seventy years ago no

---

<sup>4</sup> Community Cohesion: A report of the Independent Review Team, Ted Cantle, 200

<sup>5</sup> The New East End: Kinship, Race and Conflict, Michael Young et al, 2006

<sup>6</sup> Our Shared Future, Commission on Integration and Cohesion, 2007

longer fit with modern-day housing expectations. DCLG are now asking local authorities to increase their focus on tackling overcrowding.

- 23.** The role of social housing need not be static; indeed the challenges have changed over time since the post-war inception of social housing at the scale in which it was introduced. The number of households is set to grow, more so in London and meeting the decent homes agenda continues to push for quality of social housing. The challenges of striving for mixed tenure areas and supporting mobility and livelihoods is high on the national agenda – the development of regional and/or sub regional allocations are part of this agenda and Capital Moves is the current initiative to push this. Affordability continues to be an issue nationally and more so in London given that property prices have gone up steeply in relation to income. Overcrowding is still an issue in the social rented sector and the Mayor is now asking local Authorities to put together strategies for tackling overcrowding. These challenges mirror some of the challenges the authority is facing locally.

### **Local Context**

- 24.** The Council has a vision to “improve the quality of life for everyone living and working in Tower Hamlets”. The well established Community Plan which is currently being refreshed sets out a vision for Tower Hamlets to 2010 and Choice Based Lettings contributes to this. The data from the 2001 Census<sup>7</sup> indicates a rapidly growing population and the Draft Mayor’s Housing Strategy<sup>8</sup> indicates the trend is likely to continue. The borough now has the highest population densities in inner London. The Census data also shows that the make-up of the borough is ethnically very diverse with almost half from minority ethnic communities. 34% of the population is from the Bangladeshi community, the single largest minority ethnic population. Overcrowding continues to be an issue with this community with some 64% of households registered for transfer lacking one or more bedrooms.
- 25.** The population of Tower Hamlets is comparatively young. The 24-30 year old group represents 34% of the total population and a further 22% is under the age of 15 years of age. Together with this, the elderly population is forecasted to grow along side the population of young people which highlights the need for smaller size accommodation whilst the need for larger size accommodation is evident. The Housing Strategy does well to recognise the diversity of the borough and does take in to consideration the demographics of the local area in setting out the strategy. The particular needs of community groups in accessing housing must be addressed.
- 26.** In the context of high demand for affordable housing, acute housing needs and the limitations of the availability of affordable housing options, the Choice Based Lettings Service sets out to distribute a very small supply of homes in a highly populated area where the demand is very high.

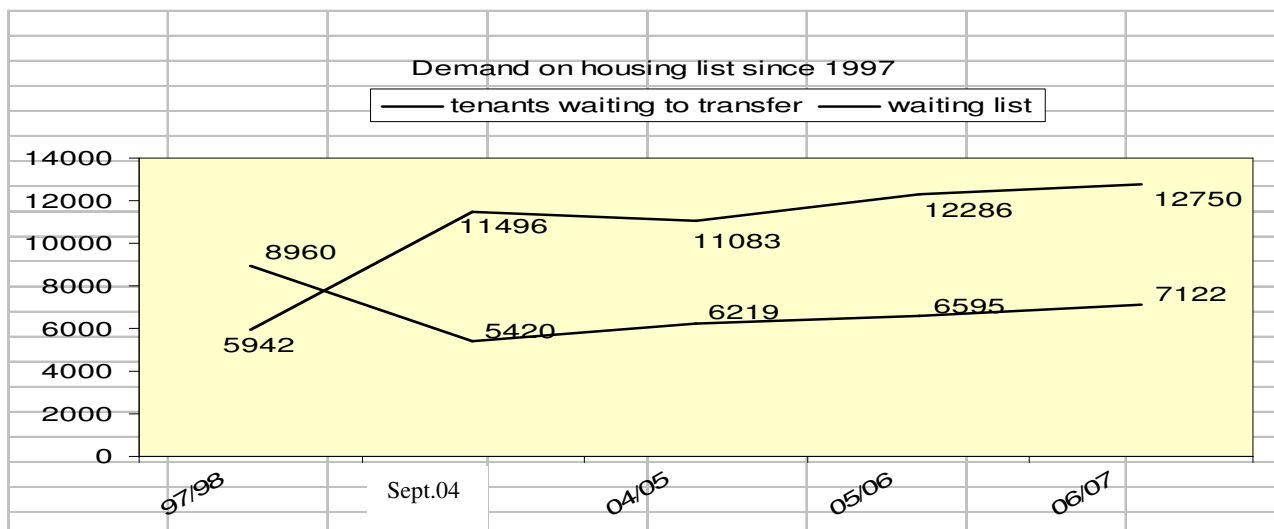
---

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/nsc1.asp?ID=7600>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.london.gov.uk/mayor/housing/strategy/index.jsp>

## Housing list demand

27. The demand on the Housing waiting list and those waiting to transfer continues to grow. The table below demonstrates the increase in demand on social housing locally.



**Figure 1- social housing demand since 1997**

## Diversity in Housing

28. Similar to the Hills report, the profile of those living in social housing in Tower Hamlets are more likely to be from the Black Minority and Ethnic community. Asian households are more likely to be living in Council housing. Black households are most likely to be living in RSL rented accommodation (34%)., while White households have a broadly similar likelihood of living in Council accommodation (26%), having a mortgage (24%) or living in private rented accommodation (22%).

29. Four out of five (79%) households which have members with special needs live in social rented housing. This is considered to be reflective of the lower incomes generally available to this group of households, and the fact that the social rented sector is more likely to contain property specially suited – with adaptations or support – to the requirements of households with special needs. Special-needs households are extremely unlikely to be living in private rented accommodation. Households with one or more persons with special needs are more likely to be in housing not suited to their needs: 38% are, compared to 22% of households where there are no special needs.<sup>9</sup>

## Overcrowding.

30. Asian households are more likely to be significantly larger than those of other ethnicities. The average number of people in an Asian household was found to be 4.3, in contrast to 1.9 persons in a White household and 2.4 persons in a Black household.<sup>10</sup> Consequently, Asian households are more likely to be overcrowded. The *2001 Census* determined that seven out of ten (70%) have at least one room less than they require, compared to a half (48%) of Black households and a quarter (23%) of White households.

<sup>9</sup> Housing Needs Survey

<sup>10</sup> Housing Needs Survey. Households were ascribed the ethnicity of the survey respondent.

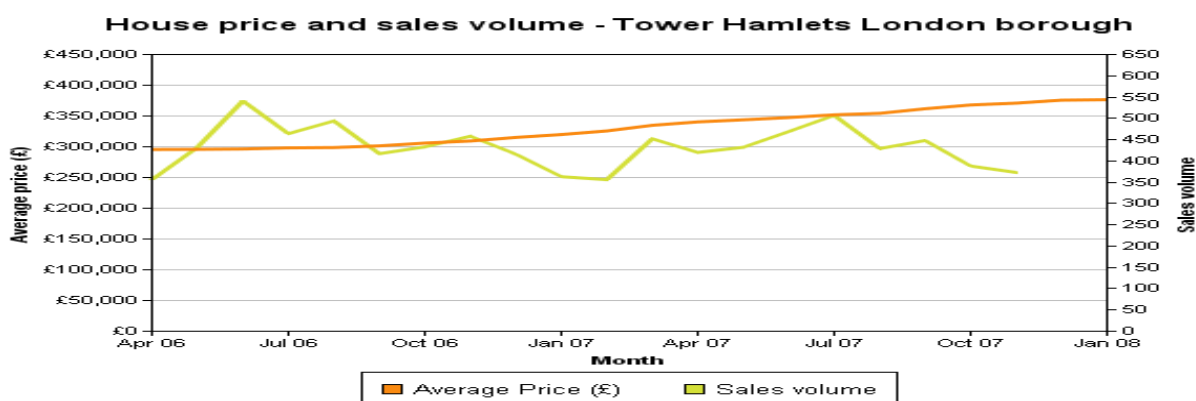


31. The *Housing Needs Survey*<sup>11</sup> used a tighter definition of overcrowding, based on the Bedroom Standard, which, while showing much smaller totals, also revealed even greater discrepancies. It shows 32% of Asian households as overcrowded, compared to 12% of Black households and 4% of White households. The borough average was 12%.

### Broader housing unsuitability.

32. Although overcrowding is the leading cause of housing unsuitability, mobility and health problems, disrepair, and the inability of families to live under the same roof were also leading causes of concern to people in 2004.<sup>12</sup> If the stricter approach to defining overcrowding is taken, then half (48%) of all Asian households were in unsuitable housing in that year, compared to one in three (34%) of Black households and one in seven (14%) White households.

### Affordability



**Figure 2 - Average prices in Tower Hamlets by sale volume<sup>13</sup>**

33. The demand for social housing may be exacerbated by the rise of house prices in the private market, leaving many in Tower Hamlets unable to buy or rent and meet their housing needs through the private market. Information in the Housing Needs Surveys 2004, indicates that 63.8% of all households in Tower Hamlets fall below the threshold of affordability to be able to afford market housing. For the different tenures, 99% of council tenants, 94% of RSL tenants and 59% of private renting tenants fall below the threshold of affordability to be able to afford market housing. In the last year alone, prices continued to rise steadily with the average price of property being in excess of £300,000. At the same time, the cost of renting has also increased, often to prohibitive levels, with many residents remaining dependant on the social rental sector to meet their housing need.

### Quality of Housing - meeting Decent Homes Standards

34. The Decent Homes programme was launched in 2000 requiring all housing to be of prescribed standard by 2010. Locally, this has been implemented through the Housing Choice programme of stock transfers to Registered Social Landlords. Those estates that did not transfer will be managed by an Arms Length Management Organisation – Tower Hamlets Homes.
35. The Housing Choice programme has brought in significant funding to invest in bringing housing to Decent Homes Standard. The process of balloting for transfer to alternative management with residents decision being to remain with the Council

<sup>11</sup> Housing Needs Survey. 2004

<sup>12</sup> Housing Needs Survey. 2004

<sup>13</sup><http://www.landregistry.gov.uk/houseprices/housepriceindex/report/default.asp?step=4&locationType=0&area=Tower+Hamlets&reporttype=1&datatype=1&from1=04%2F2006&from2=01%2F2008&image2.x=13&image2.y=16>

means challenges in meeting the Decent Homes Standards. The amount of stock which falls below the DHS has been reducing over the years, in 04/05 78% of stock was below the standard and in 06/07 the level of stock which was non-decent was 62%.<sup>14</sup> Clearly there is a large amount of stock which is needing to be brought up to DHS. The current Arms Length Management Organisation bid is seeking to secure the funding needed and to extend the deadline to 2016.

### **Homelessness**

- 36.** The Housing Needs Survey 2004 estimates that 3,000 people were without a permanent home in the borough in 2004. For the year 2003/2004, there were 1,657 households accepted as homeless and in priority need in Tower Hamlets, the majority from Black or Asian minority ethnic groups. With the anticipated population expansion, demand for affordable housing is further likely to outstrip supply<sup>15</sup>. Hundreds more single homeless people have no priority and must wait.
- 37.** Given this context and the issues highlighted by some of the research mentioned earlier in the report about community understanding of CBL, it was important to appreciate that there is no quick and easy solution to the housing crisis in Tower Hamlets. Thousands of households will continue to have to wait years for the decent and affordable home they need. However, it is possible to envisage changes to the CBL which could have some beneficial impact, particularly in terms of generating increased public understanding and therefore confidence in the allocation of those homes.

---

<sup>14</sup> Figures cited are in accordance with Best Value performance indicators

<sup>15</sup> Tower Hamlets Primary Care Trust Health Report, 2007).

## Findings

---

### **Improving customer access and community cohesion**

38. The Working Group recognises the progress of CBL in strengthening customer access and choice. It has been a positive step away from the somewhat paternalistic approach to allocating housing that became the norm after the Second World War. However, across a number of review sessions concerns were consistently raised about the continuing lack of transparency of the CBL system and the misunderstandings that residents have about the allocation process. The complexity of CBL can cause confusion and frustrations leading to misconceptions in the community.
39. The Working Group recognised the need to manage expectations which if left unmanaged will continue to make residents feel confused and frustrated. Moreover, it can add to anxiety and stress making matters worse for particularly vulnerable applicants, such as those with mental health issues. The Working Group discussed whether the result of a bid could be reported back to the applicant in order to inform future bids. This has the added advantage of increasing the transparency of what is often perceived to be an unfair and complicated system. The role of local agencies and local Councillors was recognised in addressing any community concerns.
40. A large number of Members Enquiries are generated due to poor understanding of the CBL scheme and lack of information fed back to applicants. Members Enquiries can provide the position of the applicant and their bidding history. If an automated real-time response could be generated at the time of bidding, applicants would have a better understanding of the system and make more realistic bids. When real-time feedback was introduced in the London Borough of Hackney, customer satisfaction rates improved noticeably. This would have the added bonus of reducing the number of Members Enquiries to the Lettings Section.
41. Research looking at bidding habits and preferences and whether applicants made bids based on positive attributes or constraining factors to demonstrate whether the CBL scheme operating was addressing community cohesion issues would have been informative for the Working Group as would research into how well the scheme works with different communities.
42. The current bidding system allows applicants to bid for as many properties as they wish. Analysis indicates that applicants often also bid for properties larger or smaller than that which they have been assessed as needing. This can add to expectations of being housed soon without knowing realistically what the chances are of being housed. Again, this can lead to frustration and misunderstandings about how the housing allocation policy operates. The Working Group noted that many other authorities place a limit on the number of bids that can be made in each cycle.
43. Analysis by the Housing Service demonstrates that bidding method preferences have changed over time. Web based bidding has increased over the years and is the most preferred method followed by telephone bidding. Coupon bidding is still used and focus group participants indicated that this is more likely to be used by vulnerable members of the community.
44. Some of the difficulties with the coupon system was the difficulty of getting coupons registered and the uncertainty of whether a bid has been registered if the coupon is dropped off at a Local Housing Office or a One Stop Shop (limited number of venues). Receipts are not given for coupons, adding to the uncertainty. Administratively, it can be costly. The Working Group felt that consideration should

be given to discontinuing the coupon system; however, this must be preceded by comprehensive consultation and an impact assessment given the number of potentially vulnerable tenants currently bidding via coupons.

### **The East London Lettings Company**

**45.** The East London Lettings Company set up a technology enabled facility to advertise and enable bidding to establish cross-borough mobility. Exchanges of property between boroughs are made on a balanced reciprocal basis. It currently works with a number of other boroughs and housing associations with a view to promoting customer choice, user friendly accessible services and forming partnerships that extend choice and secure Best Value. The visit to the East London Lettings Company demonstrated that the bidding system works with:

- Up to 2 bids per household per cycle
- Weekly cycle with 4 days for the applicant to bid
- Real-time feedback
- Labelling to indicate eligibility
- Location information, images and marketing information in writing and symbols
- No refusal penalty
- 170 service access points including the web, kiosk website, multi-lingual phone, magazine and text

The system demonstrated a drop in complaints; Hackney experienced a higher level of customer satisfaction. The Working Group noted that it would be possible for LBTH to join the ELLC. It also noted that there was no requirement to adopt a common lettings policy prior to entry, and that the Council could continue to advertise properties through East End Life. The greatest advantage of joining ELLC for Tower Hamlets would be the ability of the system to provide real-time feedback enabled by the technology.

**46.** Increased transparency and better understanding of the scheme should reduce perceptions of unfairness. The Equality Impact Assessment was undertaken at the inception of CBL, the scheme should now be reviewed as the Race Relation Act 2000 requires the service to review the assessment every 3 years. Members felt that given the recent debate around community cohesion and the community issues around the lack of transparency, a review of the impact of the scheme would be beneficial, particularly given the Young Foundation report.

**47.** Overcrowding is recognised as an issue and the Working Group highlighted a number of cases where applicants who were overcrowded and had been waiting many years to be housed were increasingly viewing the system as unfair.

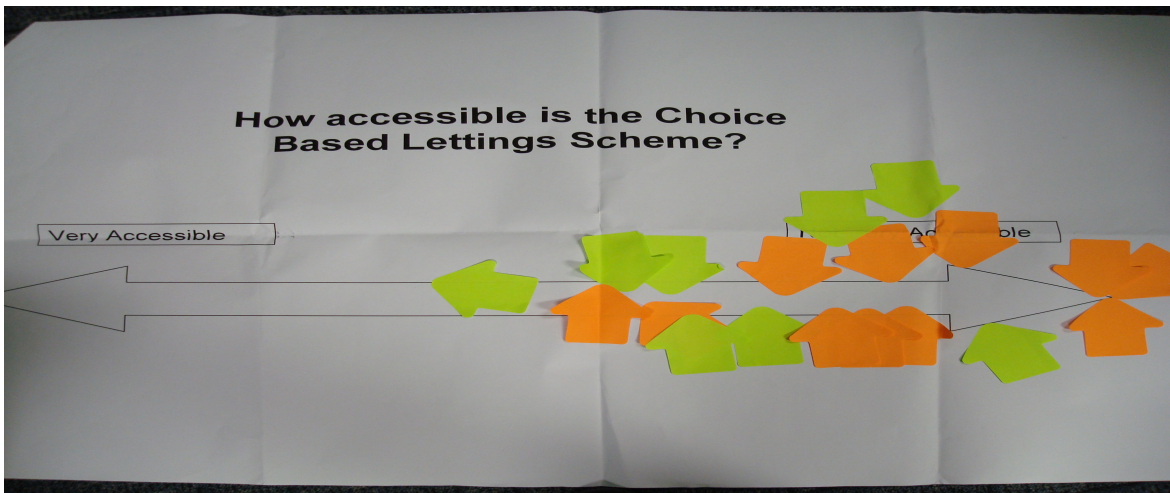
**48.** It was unclear as to how decisions were made about the percentage of lets for those in different situations such as the proportion of lets to homeless households. Given the complexity of this and the issues raised about the lack of transparency of CBL locally, the national agenda to create mixed sustainable communities and the discussion details under the Sons and Daughters policy, the service should look to produce Local Lettings Plans which sets out the allocations percentages for those homeless, overcrowded, those in medical priority and other groups it deems fit. There was potential that disabled families were not getting access to new build properties. A Local Lettings Plan would begin to address the community cohesion agenda and promote mixed tenure, mixed communities. It was recognised that this needed to be transparent and truly deliver mixed communities and be sustainable for the future.

**Users and providers service improvement focus group**

49. A focus group of users and service providers looked at access to CBL, barriers and improvements. The session was well attended by 25 attendees, including a range of service providers (5), service users (4) and a politically balanced mix of councillors (8).

**Feedback from the session:**

50. When indicating how accessible the Choice Based Lettings Scheme is the indications were made by placing a sticker on a continuum rating the access issue from very accessible to not accessible. The photograph below illustrates the views of those who attended.

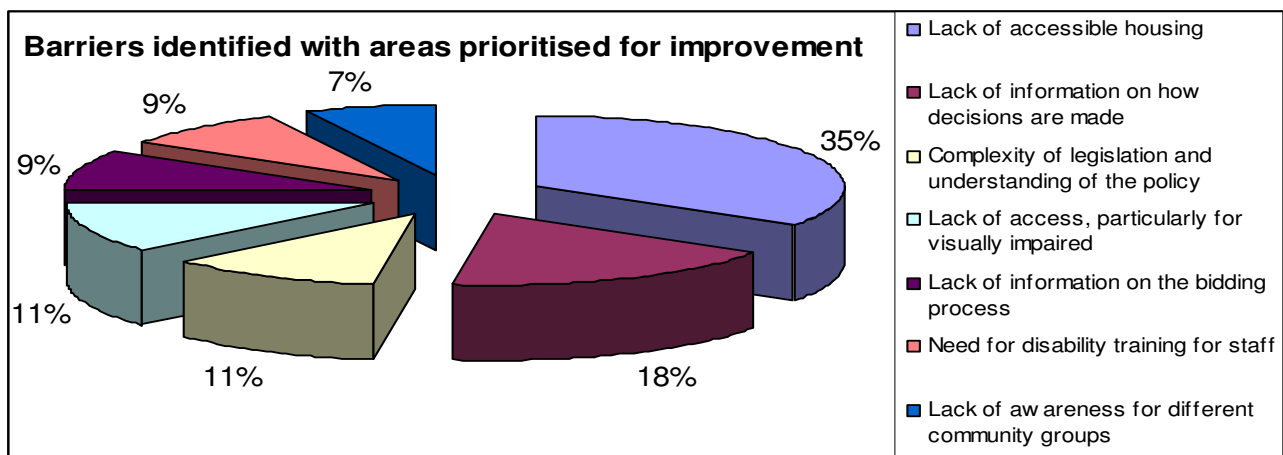


**Figure 3 – Rating access to Choice Based Lettings**

51. Participants were asked to place stickers reflecting on the current use of the scheme. Discussions took place about how the scenario would look prior to the work on the Accessible Housing Register and the Overcrowding Project; whilst the benefits of both were recognised, there was still some way to go particularly working with those with sensory disabilities and it was felt that the service needed to make changes to improve access for all disabled people to enable them to make informed decisions.

**Priority areas for improvement - barriers**

52. Based on discussions amongst the attendees focusing on what the barriers are to CBL and what support or guidance might be needed from the service to improve access, a number of key barriers were identified. These were then prioritised to identify which of the areas needed most urgent attention for service improvement.



**Figure 4 – Barriers to CBL prioritised as areas needing improvement**

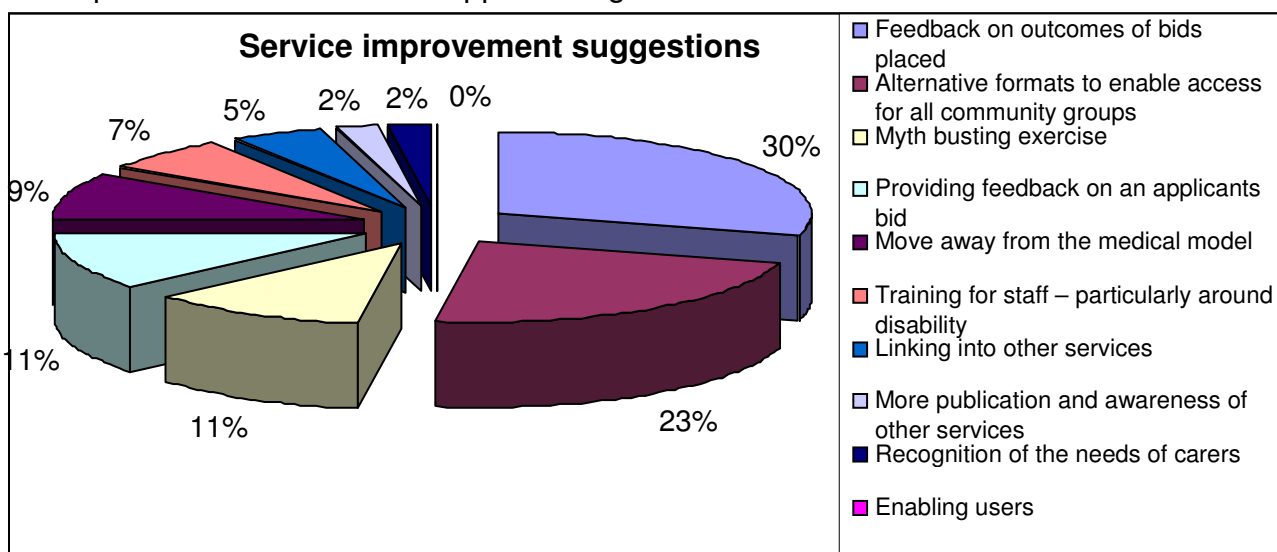
53. Whilst recognising that the chronic shortage of accessible housing lies at the heart of this problem, participants felt that more could be done to make the process barrier-less. The areas highlighted above indicates that work needs to be done to improve users and providers understanding of how the policy works in practice, including an explanation of how lettings are prioritised between different needs groups. The other key barriers are access for those who are visually impaired and staff understanding of disability issues, it was felt that training for staff would increase their understanding of issues affecting disabled people.

**Support from the Lettings Service**

54. Tower Hamlets has been at the forefront of developing a re-housing service for disabled people that is mainstreamed as part of the CBL bidding system. The Accessible Housing Register aims to provide disabled people with the information they require in making decisions to bid for suitable properties.

55. There was recognition in the Working Group that the Accessible Housing Register has made impact and improved and enabled disabled people to make an informed decision on accommodation based on the stock available. There was also a recognition that the service now needed to move the focus to those with sensory impairments and enable those with sensory impairments to make informed decisions. This was raised very strongly by 2 service users who attended and were both visually impaired to varying degree.

A number of areas needing improvements were discussed and the attendees then prioritised the areas for support and guidance.



**Figure 5 – Service improvement suggestions prioritised for service improvements**

56. The need for receiving feedback on bids was highly prioritised as was the need for alternative formats to enable access, particularly for those with sensory impairments. A number of issues are highlighted in the diagram above.

57. In considering issues with access to the CBL bidding system and the discussions about community understanding (community cohesion), and having visited the East London Lettings Company, the Working Group would like to forward the following recommendations and welcome the feedback received from the user and providers service improvement focus group:

## **Recommendations:**

- 1. That research is undertaken to identify whether bidding habits are based on positive attributes or constraining factors and to identify the ability of the system to work with different community needs to identify how far CBL promotes or otherwise community cohesion;**
- 2. That a full Equality Impact Assessment of CBL is undertaken in 2009/2010 including giving consideration to impact on community cohesion;**
- 3. That work is developed to address the issue of the lack of transparency in decision making to improve community understanding and expectations of CBL, including communicating positive stories to the community to address perceptions of unfair community lets, changing the policy to allow 2 bids only per applicant per bidding cycle, replacing the coupon system;**
- 4. That service improvement activities are developed based on the feedback obtained from the users and providers service improvement focus group with particular focus on improving access for those who have sensory disabilities and improving customer understanding of CBL;**
- 5. That LBTH joins the East London Lettings company subject to a full feasibility study of what ELLC can offer to LBTH residents.**
- 6. That a Local Lettings Plan is adopted for all new developments of 20 units or more affordable homes to promote mixed tenure, mixed communities and sustainable housing and delivering priority for adult children of existing social tenants by setting a specific proportion for this group;**

### **Improving quality and outcomes for community groups**

- 58.** Looked after children and those who may need housing needs to be assessed as a result of medical condition, were considered with a view to improving the quality of the service received and ultimately the outcomes for the applicant. Homelessness was also considered in addition to the Sons and Daughters policy.

### **Homelessness**

- 59.** The local authority has a duty under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996 to provide suitable temporary accommodation to those who are eligible following an assessment. Whilst the process is a statutory function and is driven by national targets, the key is how allocations and homelessness framework can work together to best meet housing needs.
- 60.** The number of appeals with homeless households has reduced significantly since the inception of CBL. Post-CBL the prospects of the appeal being successful was low as the match to property with the households need would be technically appropriate i.e. the service allocated a property based on assessment of need, the number of bedrooms needed etc would be technically accurate.

Year	Applications	Acceptances
2002/3	2,167	1,617
2003/4	2,118	1,657
2004/5	1,709	1,151
2005/6	1,456	789
2006/7	1,317	864
2007/8	619 [to 30/9/07]	325 [to 30/9/07]

**Figure 6 - Number of applications and acceptances under homeless duty 2002 – 2008**

61. The number of applicants formally presenting themselves to the Homeless Service has decreased significantly over the years, resulting in a proportionate reduction in the number of full homeless duty acceptances. This is a direct result of Tower Hamlets effective approach to homelessness prevention, for example through the use of rent deposits and mediation.
62. Nevertheless, the number of lettings going to homeless households is significant. Furthermore, it is unclear as to how decisions are made about the percentage of lets for those in different situations such as the proportion of lets to homeless households.

#### **Looked after children and foster carers.**

63. The borough places 75% of children looked after outside the borough and only 25% within Tower Hamlets. The Corporate Parenting Group (CPG) presented evidence to support the placement and priority of foster carers for housing. The foster carers coming forward are commonly single carers or couples and a significant number of them have larger than average households or have extended family members living with them. The Corporate Parenting Group recognises that there is potential for these carers, however due to criteria which requires placements to be made giving consideration to the accommodation capacity, it limits the pool of potential carers and the number of placements that can be made. Foster carers are currently in Community Group 2.
64. There are currently 117 in-house foster carers living in council, housing association or privately rented accommodation, of these:
- 5 would benefit from being able to move into 3 bedroom accommodation
  - 6 would benefit from being able to move into 4 bedroom housing
  - 1 would benefit from being able to move into 5 bedroom housing
  - 4 adult children of these households would be willing to move into their own accommodation
65. Good practice in other local authorities was considered, a number of local authorities have schemes which prioritise the housing of foster carers and prospective foster carers. Some examples of practice in other authorities include:
- Letters of support from social workers (Barking and Dagenham, Monmouthshire).
  - Award foster carers additional points (Westminster, Islington and Tower Hamlets).
  - Set quota of 3 bed accommodation for foster carers (Newham)
  - Make two nominations per year for housing (Waltham Forest)
  - Give families the first month of rent and/or deposit in order that they can obtain privately rented property (Bexley)
  - Re-house foster carers and prospective carers within 3 months (Bristol)



- Make interest free loans to assist with home extensions or improvements that would increase bedroom space (TACT (a private agency) and Islington)
- Assist foster carers to obtain shared ownership properties for foster carers willing to take sibling groups (Gateshead)
- Re-housing adult children of foster carers to free up space in the parental home (Islington)

66. The CPG was presented with information on Homelessness in the borough with discussion on the complexities of how prioritisation for accommodation might work. The CPG recognises the high level of demand from groups covered by Choice Based Lettings and the legislative context in which the service operates in. Further prioritisation of foster carers was considered but felt to be inappropriate given the other demands on housing and the potential that foster caring duty may cease at any point adding to complexities. It was felt that it might be more appropriate for Childrens Services to work with Registered Social Landlord and developers to secure funding sources to assist foster carers with a package of support including financial support to secure shared ownership as a way of addressing housing barriers.
67. The Working Group appreciated the need to have foster carers and the potential that these carers can offer. It was noted that the placements with family members might be beneficial for the child and the service long-term. The Working Group were keen that kinship care of children is given as much if not greater priority.

### **Medical assessments**

68. In order to ensure compliance with the 1996 Housing Act, Tower Hamlets has adopted a procedure to ensure that applicants needing to move on medical grounds have their circumstances considered and assessed.
69. The Working Group recognises that the assessment of priority because of health is not a judgement as to how ill someone is, instead it is an assessment of whether the effect of the current accommodation on the health of the person is so great that it is overwhelmingly difficult for them to continue living there. Tower Hamlets is unique in that it has a 2 stage appeal process. The medical assessment process was contracted out to Now Medical in 2004 on a long-term contract with payment based on case load.
70. Now Medical acts as medical adviser to the housing departments of over 50 local authorities, including some large equivalent London authorities (e.g. the London Boroughs of Brent, Hammersmith, Lambeth and Wandsworth). They are also advisers to numerous housing associations and trusts, and government bodies including the Home Office.
71. Now Medical are medically qualified staff who are employed to ensure that all applications are properly considered, providing advice and guidance to the Council. In the first instance the decision to proceed with a health assessment will be made by the Lettings Client Support Officers who are trained in the health criteria and factors for consideration in the decision making process. However, it can never be exhaustive and each application must be treated on its own merits. The review heard from Tim Madelin from the Primary Care Trust undertaking assessments for the final stage of appeals.
72. Since September 2005, 2044 initial health assessments have been undertaken, 431 first stage appeals have been carried out of which 32 resulted in award of priority on health grounds. 109 second stage appeals have been undertaken of which 9 have resulted in award of health priority. The applicant at the stage of appeal can submit

additional and new information for consideration which would affect the outcome of the assessment.

73. Particular issues identified during the review session was the challenge Members faced with communicating to their constituents how an assessment could accurately be made based on paper exercise given that the service does not have adequate resources to initially visit every application made. It is often perceived as a tick-box exercise.
74. It was noted that whilst there had been a weakness around the psychiatric evaluation process, this has now been addressed with the appointment of a psychiatrist to the Now Medical team who has been in post for several months. Staff employed were paid a flat rate for assessments, it was not set up based on an incentive to grant or refuse applications, however some Members were not persuaded of this.
75. Members raised the appropriateness of the timescales for submitting appeals given that those needing assistance were those with health conditions. Nevertheless, Members felt that the three week period is too restrictive, especially when applicants receive notice of the decision a week into the period as it can take time to obtain legal advice on how to pursue a review/appeal.
76. It was noted that the appeal should take place in close proximity to the original decision, in order that the same health needs are taken into account. An individual's circumstances could change significantly within a matter of months, and in this case would be eligible for a new assessment. The Working Group felt that it would greatly benefit those who needed assistance to be able to meet the timescales if it was increased from 21 days to 6-8 weeks with the exception of homeless applicants.
77. Members raised a number of concerns around medical assessments, including the need to address the issue of quality of medical assessments. Commissioning an independent review including the sampling of work would be a way to assure the community that assessments are fair, thorough and achieve the appropriate outcomes.
78. In 1997, the Council adopted the Social Model of Disability, this in essence means that the Council deems for example a disabled person not getting access to services as due to policy, physical or attitudinal barriers which the Council has not been able to address and not due to the disability of the person. Discussions took place which stressed that the current medical assessment would do well to shift the emphasis from medical assessments to a form of self assessment which are currently live at Waltham Forest and Home Connections – the assessment should be more focused on how the housing affects a persons ability to live in a house and self assessment would make the process more transparent, although verification would need to be included.

### **Sons and Daughters policy**

79. Throughout this review, members have kept coming back to the tensions that lie between the interests of different groups of people in housing need. No system that prioritises between people in a queue will ever enjoy unanimous support. However, some Working Group members argued that transparency within the current system is not sufficient. They argued that what is actually needed is a change in the way different applicants are prioritised.
80. Ever since the introduction of the Homeless Persons Act 1977, local authorities have been under a duty to house those who are found to be homeless and in priority need

and offer them reasonable preference in the allocation of council housing. While this great legislative advance has helped ensure that vulnerable homeless people are not left out in the cold, some Members of the Working Group feel it has also created some perverse incentives.

- 81.** The history of the operation and impact of the Sons and Daughters policy is well noted. In its implementation and outcome for community groups, it effectively impacted negatively on community groups who were not established in the community over a period of time as this was a requirement of the policy. It resulted in some groups like the sons and daughters of the Bangladeshi community effectively excluded, whilst the White established community benefited from this policy for a number of years.
- 82.** The Sons and Daughters policy as it was, has now been abolished. In many ways, despite wide fluctuations in the number of lettings becoming available each year, the method of prioritisation in housing allocations has stayed the same ever since 1994. In some years, this meant that almost half the lettings becoming available went to homeless households. Sons and daughters have had less and less chance of getting an affordable rented flat near their parents and wider family network, and overcrowded families must wait years in small flats, often with teenage boys and girls forced to share bedrooms.
- 83.** As the Young Foundation has noted, this has had devastating consequences for the sustainability of the long established white working class community and their perceptions. Interim research<sup>16</sup> released by the Equality and Human Rights Commission and the Local Government Association (LGA) shows no evidence social housing allocation favours foreign migrants over UK citizens. Trevor Phillips, Chair of the Commission, announced the inquiry with the LGA in a speech to mark the European Year of Equal Opportunities for All on November 1. At the time he commented:

*'...I want to propose we commission the best independent study we can by dispassionate academics on whether the housing system is being abused to the detriment of anyone - including white families. If there is evidence that it is, then we have the powers and the mandate to stop the abuse and we will do so. If there is no evidence, then we can properly say that this insinuation should play no part...'*

- 84.** Well noted locally and nationally is the high level of overcrowding in the Bangladeshi community often with children over 21 years of age living in small flats. Less well documented, however, is the growing problem it causes for families from all communities as children in their twenties are forced to move far from the family home diminishing the ability of the children to support and be supported by family networks.
- 85.** The Working Group was determined to grasp the issue of waiting time prioritisation. One proposal put forward is that the length of time an applicant has been waiting for re-housing should be given greater weight than currently. In theory, waiting time is a factor within each Community Group. In practice, however, the proportion of lettings going to Community Group 2 significantly reduces its relevance. The simple fact is that many overcrowded families are waiting twice or even three times as long as a homeless family for the family-sized home they need.

---

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/newsandcomment/Pages/Socialhousingallocation.aspx>

86. The Lettings Service counters this imbalance by allowing some new developments to allocate a fixed proportion of lettings from Community Group 3. While welcoming this approach, some members of the Working Group felt more needed to be done to ensure it is applied more consistently. Indeed, until it is underpinned by a proper policy framework, it can even be seen as adding to the complexity of the system and reinforcing the distrust some residents might have for CBL and making the allocation system less transparent, supporting the need for a Local Lettings Plan as recommended under Improving customer access and community cohesion.
87. A second suggestion, was that there should be a stronger weighting accorded to applicants who currently live within the same area as the letting. The Working Group had some sympathy for the intention of this proposal i.e. the try to help young people to stay close to their family networks. However, it felt that the introduction of such a policy at this point in time would overwhelmingly favour those living within parts of the Borough seeing the most development. And so it concluded that increasing the weighting for waiting time was more urgent priority of these two objectives.
88. At least two technical issues would need to be dealt with if Tower Hamlets were to move in this direction. Firstly, we need to address how the boundaries of the Community Groups would be drawn. For example, whether this would involve simply merging everyone in Community Groups 2 and 3, or only merging homeless and overcrowded families into a new Community Group. Those currently awarded Extenuating Health Priority would be a significant loser if the first option were chosen. If these applicants are moved into Community Group 1, applicants with Decant status or Urgent Management Priority would be adversely affected. The recent Court of Appeal judgment against Newham means that more than one “reasonable preferences” must be recognised and prioritised. The Working Group was therefore minded to conclude that those homeless or overcrowded families with Extenuating Health Priority should continue to be prioritised ahead of those who do not have such serious medical problems.
89. The second issue is how the new method of prioritisation would be implemented. Clearly, there would be losers as well as winners if these arrangements were put in place. Homeless families who have already been in temporary accommodation for two or three years would find their priority much diminished, and would be forced to stay even longer in their usually unaffordable placement. There would almost certainly be a short-term increase in the numbers of homeless households in temporary accommodation.
90. This increase would not sit well with the Government’s target for local authorities to halve the number of homeless households trapped in unsuitable temporary accommodation. The Working Group argued that the objective is not to penalise those who have already been accepted as homeless and in priority need. It is to change people’s behaviour. It noted that, when both Hackney and Newham Council moved to a waiting-time based system, they put transitional arrangements in place to protect homeless families. These were successful and could be replicated in Tower Hamlets.
91. The Working Group would expect this change in CBL to face a challenge in the courts. While the Working Group is confident that it would be found to be legal, it would be helpful to have a stronger steer from the Government confirming its legitimacy. DCLG published draft Code of Guidance for consultation in January 2007, advising councils against increasing the emphasis on waiting-time in housing allocations. However, the Working Group understands that Ministers are

unconvinced of the merits of this approach and have some sympathy for a time-based system.

92. Having considered the evidence presented to the Working Group on homelessness, medical assessments, children looked after, the Sons and Daughters policy and the discussions around waiting time prioritisation, the Working Group would like to put forward the following recommendations:

**Recommendations:**

7. **That an open, non-discriminatory Sons and Daughters policy be considered for adoption as part of the new lettings policy and as part of the Council's affordable homes policy;**
8. **That Childrens Services research ways in which shared ownership might be used to assist foster carers where accommodation is a barrier, in addition to Housing prioritising adult children for housing to free up accommodation for foster carers;**
9. **That a review is undertaken of the medical assessment process to address concerns of accuracy and quality and give consideration to best practice, with a view to improving the transparency of the process, extending the time for appeals, , researching other potential providers for the service, sampling a work undertaken by Now Medical and considering introducing self assessments;**
10. **That Tower Hamlets should actively lobby DCLG Ministers to issue guidance and if necessary legislation, allowing local authorities to introduce the waiting time-based approach to lettings. LBTH should be prepared to campaign in support of these changes in partnership with other local authorities.**
11. **That a transitional period of between 12 months and two years should be put in place to protect those homeless families already in the system should waiting-time based approach be successful.**

**Tackling Overcrowding**

93. DCLG are now asking local authorities to increase their focus on overcrowding alongside the general issues around bad housing. As part of this, five London boroughs - Barnet, Camden, Hackney, Kingston-Upon-Thames and Tower Hamlets received funding to support pilots aimed at improving the wellbeing of overcrowded families and develop options to alleviate the impact of their overcrowding.
94. In Tower Hamlets a number of initiatives have been introduced, including offering enhanced grants to under-occupying tenants, a dedicated support officer for under-occupying tenants, a packing and removal service for vulnerable tenants and an intensive support service for overcrowded tenants with specific health needs. As a result, seventy-five under-occupying families were re-housed in 2007, freeing up larger homes for those most in need. It was noted that the Mayor required all local authorities to develop a strategy for tackling overcrowding and the Working Group ask that the work undertaken locally – including the approach Tower Hamlets Community Housing (THCH) had taken to tackling overcrowding are considered in formulating the strategy to ensure local solutions are considered. One of the actions

by THCH undertook was the use of Right to Acquire receipts to buy back properties direct from the leaseholder, it was felt that other RSL should be proactive in this way.

### **The Overcrowding Project**

- 95.** A Neighbourhood Renewal Fund supported Overcrowding Project was evaluated, it set out with very specific aims:
- Identify the most severely overcrowded families and offer them a visit to their homes to discuss their situation;
  - Explain the lettings process;
  - Provide them with tips on how to improve their chances of success;
  - Link them with other services if need be.
- 96.** Home visits were carried out in order to help tenants develop an -
- Awareness of how Choice Based Lettings works;
  - Awareness of the housing shortage in the borough;
  - Understanding of the priority system and the systematic approach taken by Lettings when offering homes;
  - Awareness of other housing options;
  - Awareness that there is no longer any penalty for refusing an offer;
  - Information on a range of services and support.
- 97.** The project has benefited a number of households - 8 households have now been re-housed, a further 3 had offers which were not taken up and the remainder remain bidders as opportunities arise. Even those who still remain to be re-housed felt the benefits of the close work Council officers had been able to do with them and in feedback reported that at the very least, they now understood the system better. Some of the comments received from applicants demonstrate this:
- “I now understand how the system works and bid for appropriate property. Did not realise that if we had rent arrears we may get bypassed.”*
- “A lot of things were made clear by visit. I know what to bid for”*
- “Was bidding for larger & smaller than our needs. Made aware of this. Made aware to clear rent if offers are to be made.”*
- 98.** A further, similar exercise to visit those households with a health need lacking 2 bedrooms is currently being conducted. 8 households were specifically targeted and of these, 3 have been housed. Of the remainder, 3 have refused offers and 2 remain casual bidders. The visits once again highlighted that some applicants are not familiar enough with the system and benefited from the opportunity to better understand it.
- 99.** The Council maintains an annual budget for knock-throughs so that whenever suitable opportunities arise, much-needed larger homes may be created, particularly those making use of less popular bed-sit properties and those ancillary spaces, such as drying-rooms, surgeries and stores which feature in some of the Council’s blocks and which are now no longer used.
- 100.** To complement measures directly addressing overcrowding, the Council operates a number of schemes aimed at persuading those under-occupying households to move to smaller accommodation thus making available the larger-sized properties for which overcrowded households are waiting. Tenants Initiative is a scheme to try to encourage those who are under-occupying to move to a smaller property. There is a

regular scheme with payments relating to the number of bedrooms given up by those moving to a smaller property.

- 101.** With help under a government-sponsored overcrowding initiative for which the Council successfully bid for resources in 2006/07, financial incentives were improved significantly and enabled better use of stock.
- 102.** For 2007/08 further government resources were made available under the same initiative and the scheme benefits have been amended to try to reach those larger properties, whose scarcity means that applicants needing this size of accommodation are waiting longest.
- 103.** The Council has run a Cash Incentive Scheme for tenants for a number of years. It is available to those who have been a Tower Hamlets Council tenant for at least two years. The scheme encourages those who can afford their own property to move by offering tenants a sum of money towards the cost of buying a home in the private sector.
- 104.** It is available to those who are living in a council property with two or more bedrooms, or in one bedroom, but there is overcrowding or an urgent health reason for moving, and less than six weeks' rent is owed on the account. Preference is given to people living in larger properties or on the ground floor, especially those with gardens. Tenants in severely overcrowded accommodation or with urgent medical needs also receive priority.
- 105.** This scheme offers tenants the opportunity to receive a grant to be used to help buy a private sector property in return for giving up their tenancy.
- 106.** Provision has been made in the Council's housing capital programme to continue to fund a similar programme of grants at the current level of £0.5m over the next five years. In the past this has proved a popular scheme, but experience of the current year's scheme indicates something may be changing, as take up of the grant is running at about half of the usual level of demand. It could be that people are less confident about moving into the owner occupied sector at a time of some financial uncertainty when mortgages may also be harder to obtain from regular sources. It could also be the case that current grant levels can't be made attractive enough compared to current market prices, or merely that as the scheme has been in operation for a number of years, the pool of tenants likely to be able to take up the grant offer has grown much smaller, thus reducing effective demand.
- 107.** The Working Group noted that whilst the Scheme had been attractive in the past there appeared to be a decrease in the expressions of interest in the scheme and the Working Group were keen for the Scheme to be reviewed focusing on the level of grants made available.
- 108.** Targets to help address overcrowding form part of the annual objectives set by the Lettings service and are currently aimed at ensuring at least 230 annual re-lets are made to overcrowded households and to 110 under-occupiers in turn to help address the mismatch between need and supply. By the half-year point of 2007/08, 113 lets had been made to overcrowded households and 41 to those under-occupying.
- 109.** The Working Group noted the excellent work progressed in alleviating overcrowding and improving the lives of the families who had been living in overcrowded conditions. It was noted that more could be done in partnership with RSL partners to reduce overcrowding and where feasible, overcrowding reduction initiatives

are developed and funded by partners of the common housing register to tackle overcrowding within their own stock.

- 110.** The Working Group were concerned with child poverty and would like to see research undertaken to look locally at the impact of overcrowding on health and educational attainment.
- 111.** The Department of Communities and Local Government have begun to reconsider the use of the Bedroom Standard as a uniform method of measuring overcrowding, which may also have implications for the Health & Housing Safety Rating (H&HSR) and the use of that measure to declare properties overcrowded. DCLG's own figures suggest that introducing the change would greatly increase those caught by the definition.
- 112.** It is of course the case that it wouldn't make any difference to those households who always knew they were overcrowded all along. Notwithstanding this, as the Council's standard was more generous than the DCLG's current measure with regard to the needs of children sharing, this mooted change in effect represents an adjustment of the DCLG view in line with ours (and other local authorities) which by itself therefore would not increase the level of demand as measured locally. The main local effect in this respect would arise from the proposal that same-sex adults should be entitled to a separate bedroom. It is not yet clear exactly how many cases would be affected, the lettings policy however would need to be revised to reflect the changes proposed under the 'bedroom standard' i.e. same-sex adults (both 21 years or over) should be entitled to a separate bedroom.
- 113.** The key issue for the Working Group was that despite all the efforts of the Lettings Service to alleviate overcrowding, it still remains an issue adversely affecting particular community groups and that the Council should continue to develop targeted approaches to address overcrowding.
- 114.** The Working Group noted the positive contributions of the Overcrowding Project and having considered the evidence on overcrowding, the Working Group would like to put forward the following recommendations:



## **Recommendations:**

- 12. That targeted work be developed to tackle overcrowding, including targeted work with under-occupiers, as part of this work review the Cash Incentive Scheme and the financial incentives for under-occupiers as to ensure the housing stock is used in the best way to reduce overcrowding ,working with partner RSLs to develop and fund initiatives;**
- 13. That Overview and Scrutiny Committee conduct a through review of overcrowding which will assist the Council in developing an effective Overcrowding Strategy, potentially including research into the impact of overcrowding on health and education and using this to assist housing to secure funding to roll-out the Overcrowding Project with a view to assisting more overcrowded families;**
- 14. That the Lettings policy be revised to reflect the changes proposed under the ‘Bedroom Standards’**
- 15. That RSL partners seek to use Right to Acquire receipts to buy back properties direct from leaseholders; That targeted work be developed to tackle overcrowding, including targeted work with under-occupiers giving consideration to allocating direct lets similar to Newham’s policy. As part of this work review the Cash Incentive Scheme and the financial incentives for under-occupiers with a view to using the stock in ways to reduce overcrowding working with partner RSL to develop and fund initiatives;**

## **Widening choice and access to social housing**

- 115.** In the context of widening choice and access to social housing the Working Group looked at Capital Moves, the Seaside and Country Homes scheme and considered Key Worker housing and mutual exchanges.
- 116.** Members sought clarity about how mutual exchanges are assisted and felt that a review of mutual exchanges and its role in the allocations cycle and of advertising would be beneficial.
- 117.** Capital Moves is the pan-London choice based lettings and mobility scheme. It seeks to give people from across the capital seeking affordable housing similar choices over where they live as those buying or renting in the private sector. The development of Capital Moves is funded and led by a partnership comprising the Government, the Greater London Authority, London Councils, the Housing Corporation, London boroughs and London housing associations.
- 118.** Capital Moves once established, will be a single web based system containing details of social rented and low cost home ownership and a range of private rented homes for Londoners who want to move to a new area, either within London or beyond. Capital Moves will also incorporate the London Accessible Housing Register. It is proposed that each London borough contribute 5% of its re-lets to the programme, and perhaps 50% of new-builds - this was not finalised at the time of the review. This would be disproportionate given the comparatively high level of new build in Tower Hamlets. It is also important that the allocation of accessible housing was balanced and should not adversely impact on the residents of Tower Hamlets. The Working Group were concerned that the publicity, access and promotion of the

scheme be wide ranging and that residents of Tower Hamlets be consulted before it is introduced.

- 119.** The Working Group considered the Seaside and Country Homes scheme which offers choice to residents of social housing aged 60 years and over and frees up family sized housing which can then be used by the local authority to house transfer cases or homeless applicants.
- 120.** 150 households have moved into a SCH home since June 2007. 600 households are currently registered on the scheme as interested in a move. 28 out of 33 London Boroughs have applicants registered on the scheme. Five former residents of Tower Hamlets have moved through the scheme since June, freeing up ten bedrooms; 34 Tower Hamlets residents are currently registered on the scheme.
- 121.** There are no direct cost implications for participating London boroughs. The only obligation is to promote the scheme to eligible residents. Some London boroughs provide assistance to help households view properties and to move. This is good practice that the Government would like to see continue. Good use of Seaside and Country Homes options would include joining it up with other available assistance/incentive schemes such as those for current under-occupiers. The costs involved in helping a household move can be justified when compared to the savings made by moving a family out of temporary accommodation into the newly created void home.
- 122.** The Working Group were generally positive of the Seaside and Country Homes Scheme but felt that it needed to be expanded if it was to have any tangible impact in Tower Hamlets and recognised the limited funding available for the scheme.
- 123.** The Working Group received evidence of the take-up of Key Worker housing by residents of Tower Hamlets. Discussions took place about the level of discretion if any Tower Hamlets has over the definition of Key Worker and some examples were given where a child was born to a couple who were living in a child-free block. The Working Group felt that the scheme had been devised some time ago and needed to be revised to reflect changes. The Working Group were keen that Key Worker housing be truly affordable and accessible for residents of Tower Hamlets and would ask that the review focus on the affordability of Key Worker housing.
- 124.** Given all the issues discussed as part of this review and the proposed recommendations, it would be sensible to undertake a review of sheltered housing policy in the context of the potential changes.
- 125.** Having considered the evidence on mutual exchanges, Key Worker housing, Seaside and Country Homes and Capital Moves, the Working Group would put the following recommendations forward:

## Recommendations:

16. That Tower Hamlets should press the Mayor of London and the Government to reduce the proportion of lettings on new-build through Capital Moves to 25 per cent, and to equalise the numbers of accessible homes let through Capital Moves. It should also insist that Capital Moves develop a minimum standard of advertising of the properties allocated through the Pan-London Scheme to secure a common standard of accessibility. Residents should be fully consulted before a decision is reached whether to introduce the scheme;
17. That Tower Hamlets should press the Mayor of London and Housing Corporation to make funding available to expand the Seaside and Country Homes Scheme;
18. That the Council should invite other local authorities in London to identify best practice in promoting and facilitating mutual exchanges;
19. That the Council should undertake a review of Key Worker Housing in the Borough, specifically looking at its affordability and the problems experienced by those with families in non-secure/assured tenancies;
20. That the Council should undertake a review of Sheltered Housing Lettings Policy to make sure that this resource is used effectively.

## Concluding remarks

---

126. In conclusion the Working Group has made a number of recommendations which it feels not only will improve access for elderly and disabled people but will benefit the community as a whole. The Working Group has focused on addressing community understanding, improving the quality of medical assessments, improving outcomes for community groups, tackling overcrowding which is a challenge in Tower Hamlets and focused on ways to widen choice and access for residents in the recommendations which have been put forward.
127. Housing is a significant aspect of the lives of local residents and Choice Based Lettings is key to accessing social housing. CBL places great emphasis on the choice of applicants and any work undertaken to widen access and choice is encouraged by the Working Group if there is likely to be no adverse impact on local residents.
128. The challenges of meeting housing needs given the acute housing needs and the limited supply, the Working Group recognises the challenge the service faces in meeting the practical needs of a home for applicants but also the challenges of ensuring that the community has an understanding of how the scheme operates. Moreover, the complexities of the scheme is apparent and clearly local agencies and local Councillors all have a role in assisting local residents to grasp this.
129. The Accessible Housing Register has pioneered and progressed information for disabled people and in recognition of further progressing the action required for improving access for disabled people, the Working Group has put forward a number

of recommendations and strongly urges the Housing Service to take into consideration the issues put forward by the focus group.

- 130.** The Overcrowding Project is noted for the excellent work in alleviating the acute housing needs of large families and the Working Group feels that the issues of overcrowding needs to be investigated with a view to contributing to the boroughs new development of a overcrowding strategy and should therefore be looked at by local councillors.
- 131.** A number of recommendations have been made in this report across the 4 themes which would promote community cohesion and the Working Group would ask Housing and RSL partners to work together to improve community understanding and expectations of CBL.
- 132.** Finally, the Arms Length Management Organisation brings with it an opportunity to bring much needed improvement not just to the fabric of housing in Tower Hamlets but also an opportunity to improve service delivery and policy. The Working Group very much hope that the work in this review supports this improvement agenda and that it has a positive impact on the lives of local residents.

700  
600

## Scrutiny and Equalities in Tower Hamlets

---

To find out more about Scrutiny in Tower Hamlets:

Please contact:

Scrutiny Policy Team  
Tower Hamlets Council  
6<sup>th</sup> Floor, Mulberry Place  
5 Clove Crescent  
London E14 2BG

Telephone: 020 7364 4636

Web: [www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/scrutiny](http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/scrutiny)

This page is intentionally left blank

# Agenda Item 9.3

<b>Committee</b>  Overview and Scrutiny Committee	<b>Date</b>  6 <sup>th</sup> May 2008	<b>Classification</b>  Unrestricted	<b>Report No.</b>	<b>Agenda Item No.</b>
<b>Report of:</b>  Michael Keating Acting Assistant Chief Executive		<b>Title:</b>  Report of the Scrutiny Working Group Evaluating Neighbourhood Renewal Funding		
<b>Originating Officer(s):</b>  Ashraf Ali Scrutiny Policy Officer		<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>  All		

## 1. Summary

- 1.1 This report submits the report and recommendations of the evaluation of NRF Scrutiny Working Group for consideration by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

## 2. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

- 2.1 Endorse the draft report of the Scrutiny Working Group
- 2.2 The Acting Chief Executive be authorised to agree the final report before its submission to Cabinet, after consultation with the Scrutiny Lead for Creating & Sharing Prosperity.

### LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT, 2000 (SECTION 97)

#### ***LIST OF "BACKGROUND PAPERS" USED IN THE PREPARATION OF THIS REPORT***

Background paper	Name and telephone number of and address where open to inspection
Scrutiny Review File held in Scrutiny Policy Team	<b>Ashraf Ali</b> <b>020 7364 0528</b>

## 3. Background

- 3.1 The Working Group was established in November 2007 to evaluate the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund. The intention of the investigation was to establish how funding was spent and to investigate to what extent the NRF intervention have helped reduce the gap in the most deprived areas.
- 3.2 The Working Group heard evidence from Tower Hamlets Partnership team, Chairs and Vice-Chair of Local Area Partnerships and statutory and community organisations.
- 3.3 The Working Group have made a number of recommendations aimed at improving residents and councillors involvement in neighbourhood renewal. It has also suggested learning points for future funding.
- 3.4 Once agreed, the working group's recommendations will be submitted to Cabinet for a response to their recommendations.

#### **4. Concurrent Report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal Services)**

- 4.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report. Any legal considerations arising from the resultant Action Plan will be addressed at that point.

#### **5. Comments of the Chief Financial Officer**

- 5.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

#### **6. Equal Opportunity Implications**

- 6.1 There are no direct equal opportunities implications.

#### **7. Anti-Poverty Implications**

- 7.1 The report makes a number of recommendations in reducing deprivation and improving outcome for local people.

#### **8. Sustainable Action for a Greener Environment**

- 8.1 There are no direct actions for a greener environment arising from the report.

#### **9. Risk Management**

- 9.1 There are no direct risk management implications arising from the report or recommendations.

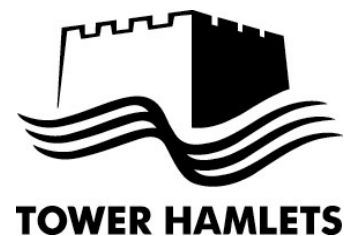
Appendix 1 Report of the Scrutiny Working Group



# Scrutiny Review Evaluating Neighbourhood Renewal Funding

**DRAFT**

Tower Hamlets Council  
May 2008



## Index

---

	Page
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Chair's foreword</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Findings</b>	
Background	10
Analysis of NRF in Tower Hamlets - a view from EDAW and Renaisi	18
Analysis of NRF in Tower Hamlets - a view from NRF-funded Statutory, Voluntary and Community organisations	20
The role of Tower Hamlets Partnership in NRF Spending	24
The Working Neighbourhood Funds allocation	29
<b>Conclusions</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>Appendices</b>	<b>33</b>

## **Acknowledgements**

---

### **Working Group Chair:**

Councillor Alibor Choudhury

### **Working Group members:**

Councillor Alex Heslop  
Councillor Salim Ullah  
Councillor Mohammed Abdus Salique  
Councillor Abjol Miah  
Councillor Rupert Eckhardt  
Councillor Stephanie Eaton

### **Other Councillors**

Councillor Marc Francis – Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee  
Councillor Ohid Ahmed – Lead Member Regeneration, Localisation and Community Partnership

### **Co-opted members**

Rachel Blake – Local Resident  
John Houghton – Local Resident

### **London Borough of Tower Hamlets**

Shazia Hussain, Interim Director of Tower Hamlets Partnership  
Chris Holme, Service Head, Resources  
Michael Keating, Acting Assistant Chief Executive  
Emma Taylor, Regeneration consultant  
Sue Hinds, Access to Employment manager  
Maswood Ahmed, Team manager, Children Looked After Central  
Jenny Boyd, Service Manger, Children Looked After  
William Roberts, Area Director – LAPs 7&8  
Robin Harris, Tower Hamlets Information System (THIS borough) Manager, Strategy and Performance

### **Scrutiny and Equalities**

Ashraf Ali, Scrutiny Policy Officer  
Nojmul Hussain, Scrutiny and Equalities Support Officer  
Afazul Hoque, Scrutiny Policy Manager

### **External**

Ana Cavilla, East London Locality Manager, Government Office for London (GOL)  
Bob Perkins, Edaw  
Patrick Gulliver, Edaw

Sheikh Aliur Rahman, Head of Tower Hamlets Community Empowerment Network (CEN)

The Working Group would like to thank all Tower Hamlets officers and Partner agencies for their time and advice. The group would also like to thank Edaw and GOL and all those LAP chair and Vice chairs that made contributions and gave input into the review.

## **Chair's Foreword**

---

To be completed

Cllr Alibor Choudhury, Scrutiny Lead, Creating & Sharing Prosperity

## **Recommendations**

---

The Working Group recommendations focus on three areas that require consideration, they include recommendations on governance arrangements, communication and management and future targets and priorities. They are intended to look at lessons learned from Neighbourhood Renewal Funding, which as of April 2008 now no longer exists and support the Tower Hamlets Partnership with forward planning for when the new Working Neighbourhood Fund is introduced.

- R1 That a Members seminar be organised on how Local Area Agreement (LAA) targets are identified and spent.**
- R2 That LAAs include targets for narrowing the gap with the average outcomes for KS2 and KS3; coronary heart disease; employment levels; take up of Incapacity Benefit and teenage conception rates.**
- R3 That Tower Hamlets Partnership introduces a learning and development programme for Local Area Partnership (LAP) members which include a session on how funding decisions are made.**
- R4 That a document detailing LAP roles and responsibilities is sent to all residents, along with an invitation to attend LAP meetings.**
- R5 That the Tower Hamlets Partnership undertakes a corporate approach to project evaluation so improve value for money. This evaluation should include an analysis of project methods, scale, target group, value for money.**
- R6 That the Tower Hamlets Partnership carry out a review of all employment project client outcomes to identify which interventions were most effective.**
- R7 That Community Plan Action Groups (CPAGs) identify project delivery methods when commissioning projects. This should ensure that suitable outreach to clients is scrutinised at the project commissioning stage.**
- R8 That CPAGs operate joint commissioning on worklessness projects in order to maximise the benefits to client outreach and improve value for money.**
- R9 That the arrangements for outreach across the projects should be reviewed. The review should address arrangements for specific outreach to intended beneficiaries and general outreach arrangements for engaging the broader community.**
- R10 That CPAGs identify project delivery methods when commissioning projects. This should ensure that suitable outreach to clients is scrutinised at the project commissioning stage.**
- R11 That the Tower Hamlets Partnership review the communication between LAPs, CPAGs and Partnership Management Group (PMG) in order to ensure that**

**local matters are reflected at PMG and that strategic matters are communicated effectively to LAPs.**

- R12 That the Tower Hamlets Partnership develops a strategic commissioning framework for regeneration funds in future, to provide a more consistent framework for assessing value for money and to ensure specific interventions reinforce higher level strategic objectives.**
- R13 That project appraisal documents provide a mainstreaming strategy which explains whether the project will a) change service practice b) seek alternative funding c) create a new mainstream service.**
- R14 That employability and skills should remain a priority for the Tower Hamlets Partnership. The project appraisal should identify which client group is being targeted and outcomes should not be restricted to 'jobs held for 13 weeks' so that the progress made towards employment can be measured.**
- R15 That funding is provided to the third sector in the Borough to ensure it is able to represent the views of the sector in strategic decisions and can support local level community capacity building activity on the community chest model.**
- R16 That the impact of Safer Neighbourhood Teams (SNTs) should be recognised and Tower Hamlets Partnership should use Working Neighbourhood Fund (WNF) to pilot an expanded SNT service in at least two wards.**
- R17 That the Tower Hamlets Partnership should examine the possibility of funding a similar Working Futures scheme to ease the poverty trap facing homeless families in the Borough.**

## Introduction

---

1. Tower Hamlets was a beneficiary of the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF) as it is among the 86 most deprived local authority areas in England and was awarded £55.7m over the period 2001 to 2006. A further £30.9m was awarded for the period 2006 to 2008. The purpose of NRF was to encourage local service providers to be more pioneering and joined up to address key national floor targets and locally identified priorities.
2. A politically balanced Working Group was established in November 2007, it comprised of 7 councillors. The Chair of the Working Group was Councillor Alibor Choudhury, Scrutiny lead for Creating and Sharing Prosperity.
3. April 2008, saw the last of NRF funding. The purpose of this review was to evaluate how NRF was used to deliver local priorities set out by local people through the Local Area Partnership and in the Community Plan; and lessons for any similar funding that may be allocated through Tower Hamlets Partnership in the future. To that end the review had six main objectives:
  - To consider how the strategic governance arrangements for the NRF prioritised funding;
  - To consider whether the objectives set out in the Neighbourhood Strategy were met;
  - To consider to what extent the priorities in the Community Plan had an impact on NRF spending;
  - To consider to what extent the priorities of local people were met and reflected through NRF spend;
  - To consider whether NRF investment has made an impact on the way mainstream resources are used and levered into the geographical and thematic areas of the Partnership;
  - To consider if there are any lessons for any similar funding that may be allocated through Tower Hamlets Partnership in the future.
4. To meet review objectives, the working Group identified policy recommendations that support service improvement, including:
  - Renewed focus on the benefits of NRF funding and the possibilities for improving some of the most deprived parts of the borough;
  - Consideration of the current allocation of funding both geographically and thematically;
  - Consideration as to what extent NRF funding is positively impacting on the lives of our most deprived residents;
  - Analysis of any 'lessons learnt' from the NRF experience to date, particularly in terms of our approach to any future funding;
  - Identify good practice and lessons learnt in mainstreaming services.



5. The following timetable was agreed to undertake work for the review:

**Introductory Meeting (January 2008)**

- Agree scoping document
- Overview of NRF in Tower Hamlets
- Tower Hamlets Partnerships role in NRF funding

**Narrowing the Gap (January 2008)**

- Impact of NRF in Tower Hamlets
- Role of LAP and CPAG chairs

**Success of NRF – an external perspective (January 2008)**

- Presentation by GOL and EDAW evaluating NRF

**Resident focus group (February 2008)**

- Round table discussion with residents

**Focus group with NRF funded organisations (February 2008)**

- Round table discussion with NRF organisations

**Final Meeting (March 2008)**

- Refresh and recommendations

- 6 Overview and Scrutiny Committee will consider the Working Group's report and recommendations. The Council's Cabinet will then respond to the report and its recommendations.

### Background

#### National Strategy

- 7 The Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF) was a non ring-fenced grant which was made available to the most deprived local authorities in England, to improve services and help to narrow the gap between the most deprived areas and the rest of the country.
- 8 NRF was introduced to support the Governments delivery of "A New Commitment to Neighbourhood Renewal - National Strategy Action Plan". The strategy was to improve mainstream services to create better outcomes in the most deprived areas. Including;
  - Improving employment and economic performance,
  - Reducing crime,
  - Improving educational attainment,
  - Improving health,
  - Improving housing.
- 9 In creating better outcomes in the most deprived areas, no-one should be seriously disadvantaged by where they live and low income households should not have to suffer poor conditions and services. This vision is reflected in two long-term goals, these are summarised in "A New Commitment to Neighbourhood Renewal - National Strategy Action Plan" as:
  - In all the poorest neighbourhoods, to have common goals of lower worklessness and crime, and better health, skills, housing and physical environment.
  - To narrow the gap on these measures between the most deprived neighbourhoods and the rest of the country.

#### Role of GOL in monitoring NRF

- 10 The Government Office for London (GOL) delivers policies and plans in the London area. GOL's aim is to make London a better place: healthy, safe, clean and green, and investing in children and economic development.
- 11 The Neighbourhood Renewal Team at GOL manages policy and plans for neighbourhood renewal across London supporting the Local Strategic Partnerships, neighbourhood renewal strategies and effective performance management frameworks in the London boroughs in receipt of Neighbourhood Renewal Funding. GOL also encourages community and voluntary sector groups to play a more active and influential role in delivering neighbourhood renewal.

- 12 It is GOLs view that Tower Hamlets “continues to be an exemplar in terms of the way it is managed, organised and effects change. In order to build on the successes it must ensure that the LAA proceeds well and gains the same level of partnership endorsement as the NRF management. Also it needs to keep learning the lessons, and accept and encourage scrutiny of the processes, have an improvement focus at all times”.

### Local Context

- 13 Tower Hamlets is remarkable in that all but one of its wards are within the most deprived 10% in the country as shown in the government’s 2007 Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD). Undeniably, Tower Hamlets is one of the most deprived boroughs in the country.
- 14 As part of the government’s initiative to bring better outcomes in deprived areas, Tower Hamlets received £23.9 million in NRF for the period 2001 - 2004 and £31.8 million for 2004 – 2006. A further £30.9 million has been allocated for the period 2006 - 2008.

### Tower Hamlets Neighbourhood Strategy

- 15 The Tower Hamlets Community plan sets out the main strategy for NRF spending. It identified 5 clear priority areas for improving the quality of life for everyone living and working in Tower Hamlets, they are;
- **A better place for living safely** – reducing crime and making people feel safer, improving the environment, reducing pollution and improving traffic conditions.
  - **A better place for living well** – improving housing, health and social care.
  - **A better place for creating and sharing prosperity** – by ensuring that all our residents and businesses are in a position to benefit from growing economic prosperity.
  - **A better place for learning, achievement and leisure** – raising aspirations, expectations and achievement and providing arts and leisure opportunities for all.
  - **A better place for excellent public service** – improving public services for local people to make sure they represent good value for money and are provided in ways that meet local needs.
- 16 Despite significant improvements in recent years and a narrowing of the gap between the most deprived areas and the rest, as identified in latest key floor targets, there is still a large gap between the quality of life of people living in Tower Hamlets and the rest of the country.

## Narrowing of the Gap - Floor Targets

- 17 Floor Targets are used by the Government to set a baseline measure of service for disadvantaged groups or areas. Floor Targets help to;
- Reduce gap between poorest areas and the rest
  - Define priorities at a local level
  - Ensure that public services are not failing
  - Set baseline for minimum standard
- 18 Floor targets help accelerate the Government's National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal and was taken into account when allocating Neighbourhood fund. Key Floor Targets and priority areas include; Education, Employment, Crime, Health and Housing.
- 19 Latest Key Floor Targets indicate that there has been growth and improvement in Tower Hamlets since allocation of NRF. For example the table below shows that the gap between Tower Hamlets and the rest of London in the rates of educational performance, burglary, life expectancy and conception rates has been closing. However employment figures show that Tower Hamlets remains well below the London average.

Indicator (Latest Data)	Rank in London	Change in Rank	Current % or rate	% Change	% London	% Change London
KS2 English (06/07)	17	15	79.0%	54.9%	79.0%	23.4%
KS2 Maths (06/07)	15	17	77.0%	71.1%	76.0%	35.7%
KS3 English (06/07)	32	-2	62.0%	34.8%	73.0%	17.7%
KS3 Maths (06/07)	31	0	65.0%	103.1%	74.0%	42.3%
GCSE (05/06)	18	11	55.7%	101.8%	58.0%	35.2%
Employment rate (2005)	31	1	54.1%	11.1%	68.6%	-1.2%
Burglary (2006)	18	-8	19.5	-32.3%	19.3	-23.4%
Decent Homes (2006)	3	0	61.8%	-26.7%	N/A	N/A
Male Life Expectancy (03/05)	30	1	74.9	4.0%	76.9	1.9%
Female Life Expectancy (03/05)	27	3	79.90	1.8%	81.4	1.8%
Under 18 conception (03/05)	18	-3	43.10	-14.8%	47.9	-5.3%

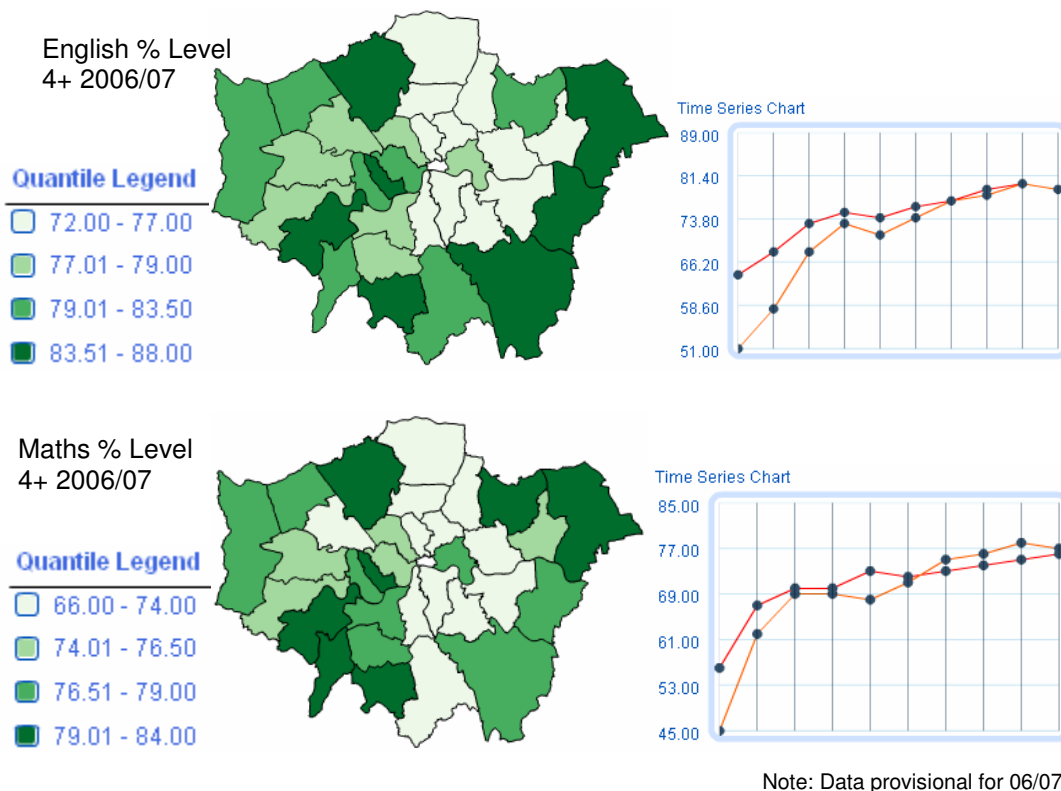
Notes: Data sourced from Floor Targets Interactive. Key Stage 2 & 3 results provisional. For Burglary, Decent Homes and Conception Rate a fall represents a positive outcome. The measure for Decent Homes is the % of Non Decent Dwellings.

## Borough level analysis

- 20 The working group were keen to analyse data at Ward level between 2001 and 2008 to see the impact of NRF in Wards. This approach was viewed as a more targeted approach to analysis than studying borough figures. However this analysis is not currently available in a format that can be easily understood and so remains absent from this review. The council is committed to providing small area analysis and that in future DCLG are aiming to provide data at the lowest possible geography, however not all datasets are comparable between ward and borough level e.g. crimes can be assigned a borough but not a ward. In the meantime, the

group went through borough level analysis to see if there has been a narrowing of the gap since the introduction of NRF. This is detailed below.

- 21 **Education (KS2)** - Maps below show the current position in London divided into quartiles, the red line on the time series chart shows London Average. Tower Hamlets is in the 3rd quartile for English and 2nd quartile in Maths. The maps highlight Tower Hamlets achievements in comparison to the surrounding areas. There has been great success at Key Stage two rising from the worst performing boroughs in 97/98 in both English and Maths to now ranked 17 in English and 15 in Maths (in London). Results also show that for the last 4 years achievement has been on or above the London average.

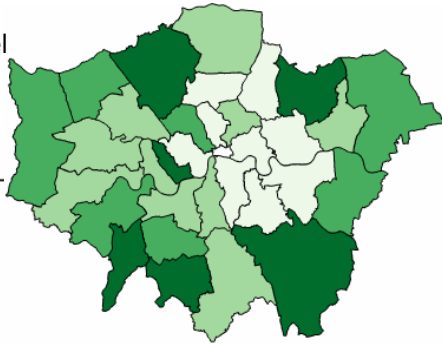
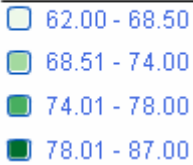


**Education (KS2) - Summary of progress** - from the one of the worst performing to now ranked 17 in English and 15 in Maths (in London). For the last 4 years achievement has been on or above the London average.

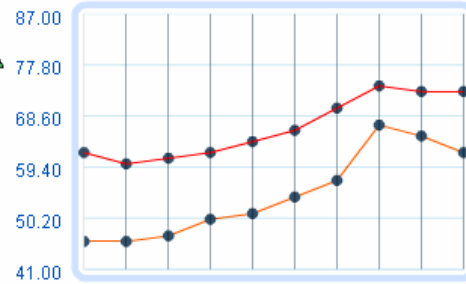
- 22 **Education (KS3)** - Maps below show the current position in London divided into quartiles, the red line on the time series chart shows London average. Tower Hamlets remains in the bottom quartile for English and Maths. However there has been a 34.8% improvement since 1997/98 in English and more than doubled attainment in KS3 Maths (from 32% in 97/98). There has been a percentage change greater in Tower Hamlets than compared to London with 17.7% change in English and 42.3% change in Maths.

English % Level 5+ 2006/07

**Quantile Legend**

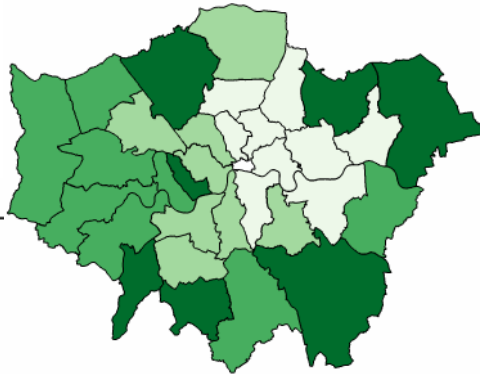
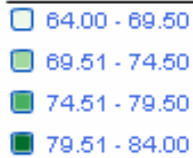


Time Series Chart

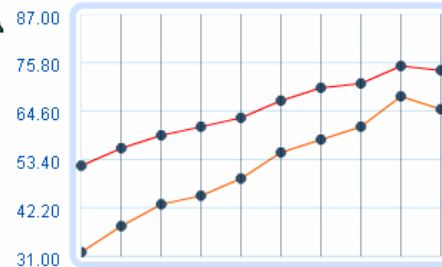


Maths % Level 5+ 2006/07

**Quantile Legend**



Time Series Chart

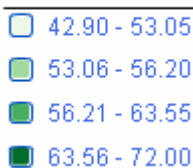


**Education (KS3) - Summary of progress** - Tower Hamlets remains in the bottom quartile for English and Maths, but 34.8% improvement since 1997/98 in English and more than doubled attainment in KS3 Maths (from 32% in 97/98).

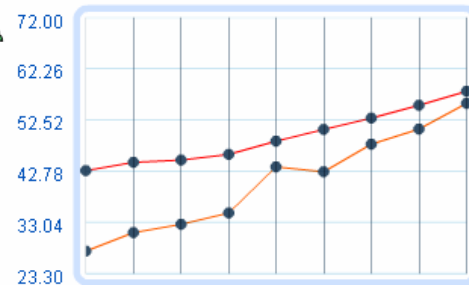
23 **Education (GCSE)** - The map below shows the current position in London divided into quartiles, the red line on the time series chart shows London average. There has been a sustained improvement since 1997/98, with more than a doubled attainment at GCSE since 1997/98 06/07. Data from the DCSF shows 59.4% of pupils are achieving at least 5 good GCSE's compared to 62% in London. There has been an improved ranking in London from 29th to 18th.

GCSE % 5A\*-C 2005/06

**Quantile Legend**

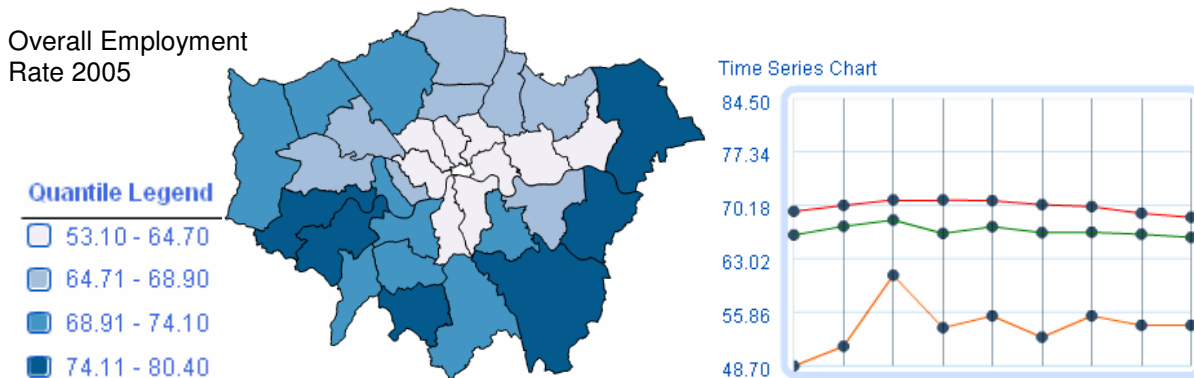


Time Series Chart



**Education (GCSE) - Summary of progress** - sustained improvement since 1997/98, with more than a doubled attainment at GCSE since 1997/98 06/07.

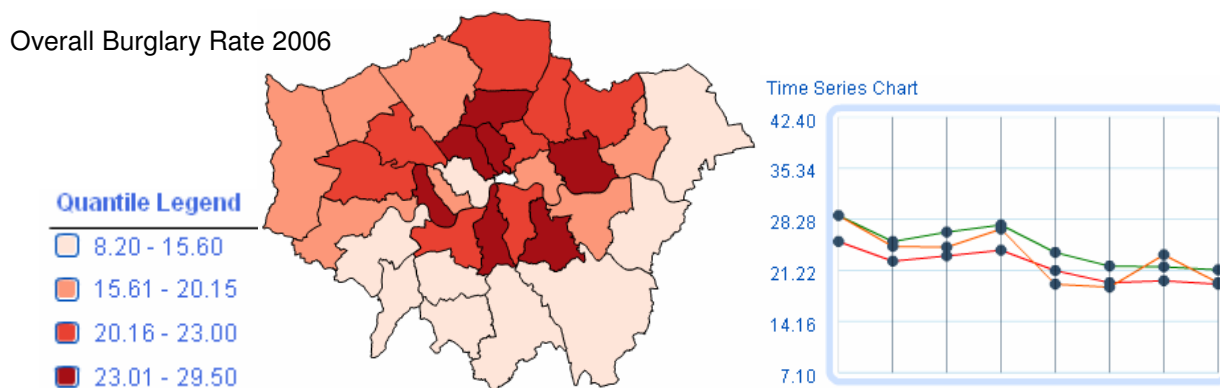
24 Employment - The map below shows the current position in London divided into quartiles, the red line on the time series chart shows the London average, the green line on the time series shows the average for NRF authorities. Tower Hamlets remains in the bottom quartile with just over 11% increase since 1997 and remains well below London and NRF average.



Notes: Red line shows London average and Green line shows average for NRF authorities

**Employment - Summary of progress** - Tower Hamlets remains in the bottom quartile with just over 11% increase since 1997 and remains well below London and NRF average.

25 Crime - The map below shows the current position in London divided into quartiles, the red line on the time series chart shows London average, the green line on the time series shows the average for NRF authorities. A percentage fall indicates a positive outcome. The overall burglary rate has fallen since 1999 from 28.8 per 1000 households to 19.5 per 1000 households; decline roughly follows other NRF authorities.

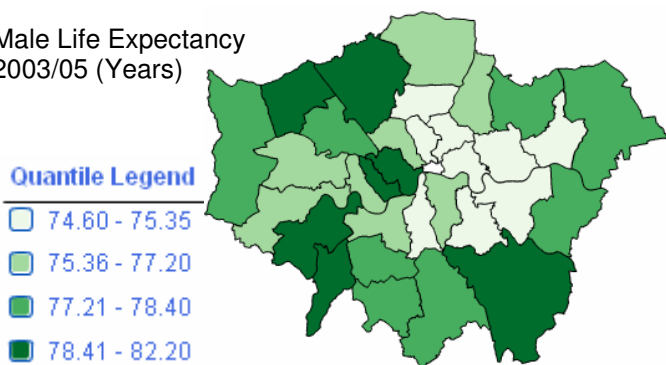


Notes: Red line shows London average and Green line shows average for NRF authorities

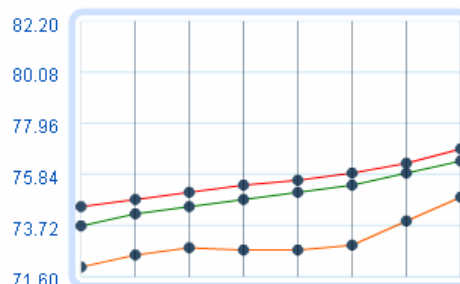
**Crime - Summary of progress** - The overall burglary rate has fallen since 1999 from 28.8 per 1000 households to 19.5 per 1000 households; decline roughly follows other NRF authorities.

26 **Health - Life expectancy** - Maps below show the current position in London divided into quartiles, the red line on the time series chart shows London average, the green line on the time series shows the average for NRF authorities. Both male and female life expectancy has improved in Tower Hamlets since 1996. For males life expectancy has increased from 72 years in 1996/98 to 74.9 years in 2003/05, for Females life expectancy has increased from 78.5 years in 1996/98 to 79.9 years in 2003/05. Life expectancy remains lower in Tower Hamlets compared to London and other NRF authorities

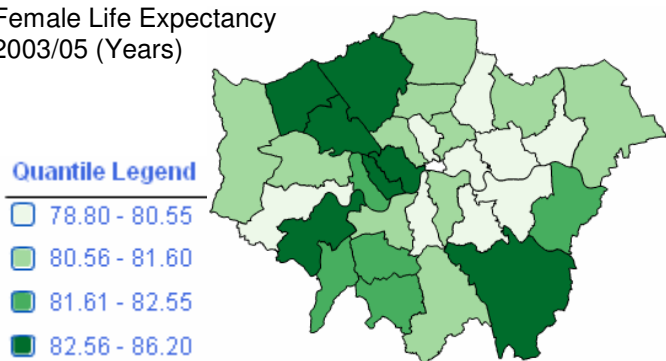
Male Life Expectancy  
2003/05 (Years)



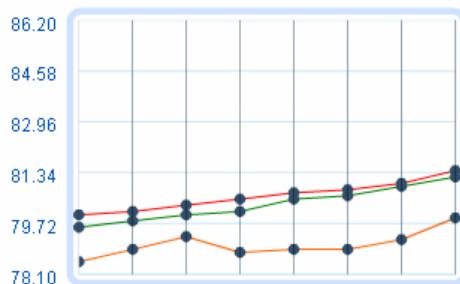
Time Series Chart



Female Life Expectancy  
2003/05 (Years)



Time Series Chart

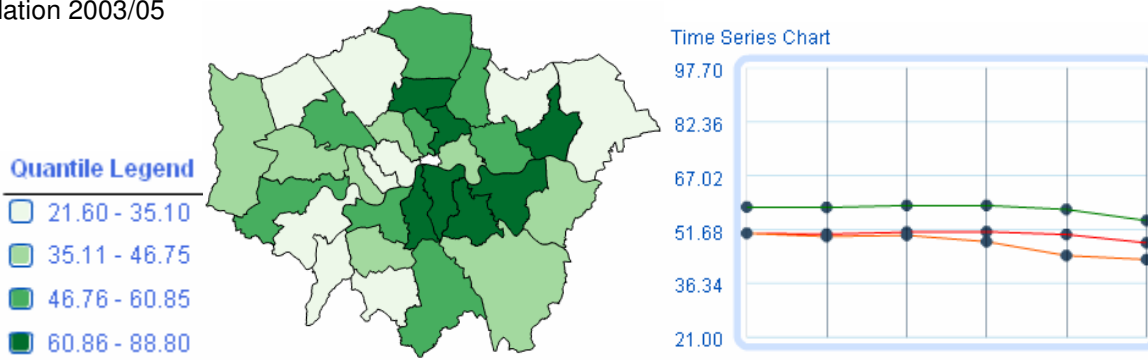


Notes: Red line shows London average and Green line shows average for NRF authorities

27 **Health – Under 18 Conception rates** - The map below show the current position in London divided into quartiles, the red line on the time series chart shows the London average and that green line on the time series shows the average for NRF authorities. Data shows the under 18 conception rate in females aged 15-17 per 1000 population. A fall in the rate represents a positive outcome. The conception rate amongst this group has remained on par with the London average since 98/00 and since 01/03 has fallen below the London average.



Under 18 Conception rate per 1,000 population 2003/05



Notes: Red line shows London average and Green line shows average for NRF authorities

**Health - Summary of progress** - Both male and female life expectancy has improved in Tower Hamlets since 1996. Under 18 conception rate since 01/03 has fallen below the London average.

## Analysis of NRF in Tower Hamlets - a view from EDAW and Renaisi

28 **EDAW**, a consulting group that specialise in projects that provides planning, urban design, landscape architecture, ecology and economic development services, was commissioned in 2002 to undertake an evaluation of NRF in Tower Hamlets. The rationale behind the evaluation was to;

*“Assist the Tower Hamlets Partnership in assessing the impact of the Neighbourhood Renewal fund on the Governments Floor Targets and in working towards the objectives of the Tower Hamlets Community Plan. To undertake other elements of evaluation and performance measurement as directed”.* (Consultant’s brief 2002)

29 Methodology used to undertake the evaluation included the following;

- **Quantitative Analysis** – used recent quantitative data and maps of the borough to demonstrate the impacts of NRF and changes over time. Performance was assessed using Government’s Floor Targets as a baseline. Ward data reports and LAP Targets have been used in the process of gathering qualitative data.
- **Qualitative Analysis** – Talking to resident and using the Tower Hamlets annual resident’s survey, people’s views and perceptions were factored into the evaluation. Also discussions with LAP chairs occurred along with a wide selection of other stakeholders, community/housing reps, and statutory organisations.
- **Evaluation of benefits of NRF** – The evaluation sought to identify those impacts which were a result of Neighbourhood Renewal and those which would have occurred anyway. Individual projects were assessed to do this.
- **Evaluation of intangible improvements** – This involved looking at activities of Neighbourhood Managers and Area Directors, to see how activity on the ground helped improve outcomes for people in Tower Hamlets.
- **Evaluation of the Partnership** - A review of Partnership structure was completed to see how LAPs, CPAGS and other stakeholders could work more effectively to improve delivery across the borough.
- **Benchmarking** - Performance of the Tower Hamlets Partnership was compared to local strategic partnerships elsewhere in the country. Also performance of NRF funded initiatives in Tower Hamlets was compared with other areas around the UK.

30 **EDAW concluded** - that the outcome targets for Neighbourhood Renewal funded activity have been met. The quantitative evidence indicates that good progress toward targets and improvements in service delivery have been reached, especially over the last three years. Despite this it has not always been possible to evaluate the precise impact of neighbourhood renewal activity. In a number of incidences there has been a clear correlation between activity and positive changes in outcomes. In general, Edaw concluded that NRF activity is making a small contribution to targets and service improvements. Most success has been in delivery on “liveability”

issues such as; Safer Neighbourhoods Teams, Better Tower Hamlets Teams and Local Management. Also NRF has helped to establish an improved interface with local communities, but there is a need to improve the communication of local priorities and issues to service delivery and commissioning bodies to improve delivery. The strength of evidence, project rationales and appraisal is questionable in the early process of project appraisals and management. Edaw believe that a major improvement in performance management and targeting techniques come about over the course of the evaluation but further work is required.

- 31 ***Renaissi*** is an independent not-for-profit company specialising in the design, development and delivery of regeneration projects and programmes. Renaissi provided the Tower Hamlets Partnership with support in implementing its Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy. This included developing systems for managing the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund, including appraisals, service level agreements, monitoring and reporting. In 2004/2005 Renaissi compiled an end of year report for the Tower Hamlets Partnership. Appendix 1 details progress against key targets highlighted in that report. Table below summarises key findings in 2004/2005.

LAP Interventions	Summary of Findings
The Safer Neighbourhood Scheme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Intervention will contribute significantly towards meeting related floor targets and the LAP targets of improved community safety.</li> </ul>
The Education block proposal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overall, the impact of raising self-esteem, increasing positive attitudes towards learning and providing access to services that support learning has been reflected in improvements being made in attainments in all participating schools and every LAP.</li> </ul>
The Open Spaces block proposal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proposal covered LAPs 1,2,3,4,6,8 and included a number of feasibility studies into the usage of open spaces in the borough, as well as improvements to children's playgrounds and play areas. All feasibility studies and improvements have been successfully completed.</li> </ul>
The Health block proposal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Mobile Dental Service was introduced to all LAPs to provide improved access to, and take up of, existing health provision. Check ups and routine NHS treatment have been delivered in all LAPs by the mobile service.</li> </ul>
The Youth Block Proposal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>LAPs wished to increase the capacity of the borough's Mobile Youth Centre fleet to enable more mobile provision to be made available within all LAPs. These activities took place according to plan, starting in December 2004 and completed in March 2005, with youth workers providing outreach work two evenings per week and for one weekend session in each LAP.</li> </ul>

## Analysis of NRF in Tower Hamlets - a view from NRF-funded Statutory, Voluntary and Community organisations

32 As noted in the Introduction, the working group invited representatives from NRF funded statutory, voluntary and community organisations to attend a review session. The working group heard evidence from, Tower Hamlets Community Empowerment Network (THCEN) and also Tower Hamlets officers from the Access to Employment team and Children Looked after Central team.

### The work of Tower Hamlets Community Empowerment Network (THCEN)

33 The Tower Hamlets Community Empowerment Network (THCEN) is an equal partner in the Tower Hamlets Partnership. THCEN's role is to help make sure that the voluntary and community sector plays an effective role in neighbourhood renewal and a full and effective part within the Partnership. It helps groups and communities to access and engage with the Partnership who might otherwise find it difficult. Additionally, the THCEN is able to provide a third sector perspective on local needs and service provision. Figure 1 shows the performance of THCEN in 2007/08.

34 In order to do this the THCEN:

- **Select representatives** to the THP Partnership Management Group (PMG) and Community Plan Action Groups (CPAGs)
- **Establish 4 Voluntary Sector Networks** (VSNs) to enable sector specific information to be passed between voluntary organisations and their users, THCEN representatives and to THP decision-making bodies.
- **Undertake outreach** to bring VCS groups who are not currently involved in The THP into the information loop.
- **Provide information** to VCS groups and their users to enable them to develop informed views on proposed decisions being made by the THP

35 **THCEN commented on NRF strategy in Tower Hamlets** - saying that on the whole NRF has made a significant contribution to their work, offering a real chance for improved service to residents in Tower Hamlets. The most common types of service improvement achieved relate to improving access to services for local people, increasing the scale of local provision and delivering services more responsively to local needs. However many challenges remain, including; making sure that all partner agencies follow the Tower Hamlets charter to ensure that there is a common way of working and improving communication between the three elements of the Tower Hamlets Partnership. THCEN also suggest that a form of induction programme should take place for new members of Tower Hamlets Partnership to ensure that the partnership has continuity in its approach to the service delivery.

**Figure 1 - Key targets and snapshot of achievements of 2007/8**

Targets	Achievements
<p>Increase participation in local consultation and decision making by – 550 contributing to LAP events</p> <p>Increase in the number of residents sometimes defined as hard to reach by 5% to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) BME 329</li> <li>b) Bangladeshi 213</li> <li>c) Somali 51</li> <li>d) Young People 77</li> </ul>	<p>955 <b>an increase of 73% above target</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) BME -757 <b>an increase of 130% above target</b></li> <li>b) Bangladeshi – 512 <b>an increase of 140% above target</b></li> <li>c) Somali <b>61 an increase of 20% above target</b></li> <li>d) Young people under – <b>348 an increase of 351% above target</b></li> </ul>
<p>Increase the strength of the Third Sector to increase participation and involvement by:</p> <p>Increasing the number of organisations engaged in voluntary sector networks to 350</p> <p>Small grants programme 100% of funding allocated to benefit 100 organisations</p> <p>Youth and Community Leaders programme to train 250 community and youth leaders</p>	<p>390 organisations engaged within Voluntary Sector Networks <b>an increase of 11.4% above target</b></p> <p>106 organisations funded with an additional 16 organisations benefiting from <b>a total of £180,000 total awarded</b></p> <p>Over 450 people trained of which 170 were young people – <b>an increase of 80% above target</b></p>

### The work of Tower Hamlets Access to Employment

36 In 2006 192,577 people were employed in Tower Hamlets, this is predicted to rise to 306,000 by 2026. Labour market trends indicate that there is a mismatch between occupations undertaken by residents against the proportion of occupations available across Tower Hamlets. In Tower Hamlets 24% of jobs are in the managerial category, yet only 14% of Tower Hamlets residents are employed in these types of

jobs. Also 11% of Tower Hamlets residents are employed in elementary occupations while these jobs make up 8% of the borough.

- 37 Since 2004, 6.3 millions pounds of NRF has been spent to meet the following employment targets;
- Improve employment rates for local residents
  - Increase employment for target groups
  - Specifically – assist 550 residents into employment
  - Offer engagement and support through Community Hubs
  - Expand innovative programmes with employers
- 38 To help meet targets, employment task groups were set which, includes a strategy for a co-ordinated cross borough approach to public sector recruitment across the council, the PCT and Barts and the London NHS Trust, Job brokerage and re-employment training, enterprise activity in schools and Community Hubs.
- 39 Results show that between 2004 and 2006, 712 residents have been gone into employment and a further 650 residents have been placed into training, both indicators show a decrease between 2006 and 2007 with 597 residents being placed into employment and 615 residents placed into training. Since 2007, 615 residents have been gone into employment and 265 residents have been placed into training. Although results indicate that there has been a decline of those going into employment and training since 2004, sustainability remains high since 2004 with figures consistently above 78%.
- 40 Results also indicate that for those residents employed 38% went into the administrative and secretarial sector, 19% into the service industry and 17% into the construction sector. Only 2% of residents went into managerial work. Ethnic breakdowns show that of those employed 48% was of Bangladeshi origin, 23% of White British origin and 7% Black Caribbean. Overall the majority going into employment are the 19-24 year old category and a high percentage claiming Job Seekers Allowance.
- 41 Despite the huge challenge faced in trying to get residents into employment, which is borne out from the fact that to increase the employment rate by 1% , you would have to get 3000 into work, many success have been achieved which have been recognised nationally. More work would need to be done to get involved within the National Curriculum in schools to improve job prospects of school leavers.

### The work of Tower Hamlets Children Looked After Central

- 42 Neighbourhood Renewal Funding was obtained in 2005, to support the development of sexual health within Tower Hamlets Social Services through the recruitment of a Sexual Health Development Worker. The need for addressing this is highlighted in government guidance and numerous legislation, including the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal.

- 43 NRF was used to train two groups of foster carers on Sex and Relationships Education for Foster Children, including Bangladeshi Foster Carers. Also two days bespoke training was commissioned on Sex and Relationships Education for Children with Disabilities Team. Work was carried out with children from Faith Communities. Emphasis was placed on education that is appropriate to the particular faith of young people and their culture as well as age and social circumstance. Also an Information booklet for young people in foster care devised by young person and disseminated to children in care.
- 44 Work carried out involved, developing positive relationships between young people and being safe from sexual exploitation, helping all young people learn about sex and relationships in a way which develops self respect, respect of others and which promotes their physical and emotional health. Sex and relationships education is part of a life long process of learning, information and skills, forming beliefs, values and attitudes about sex, sexuality, sexual health and emotions, support given to children and young people in coping with adolescence and enable them to prepare for an adult life in which they can develop values and a moral framework that will guide their decisions, judgements and behaviour.
- 45 The project fully utilised all the allocated NRF funds through careful budgeting and budget monitoring and appears to have made a real difference to the knowledge and understanding of social workers who are now helping vulnerable young people (particularly those in care) from Tower Hamlets' community.

## The Roll of Tower Hamlets Partnership in NRF Spending

- 46 The Tower Hamlets Partnership was created as the boroughs LSP, to encourage a joined up strategy which is accountable to communities and encourages them to take the lead. The Tower Hamlets Partnership brings together local authorities and other public services as well as residents and the private, voluntary and community sector organisations to improve services for the public.
- 47 The role of Tower Hamlets Partnership is to develop and implement local strategies through identifying neighbourhoods that should be prioritised, finding root causes of neighbourhood decline and developing ideas on how organisations and individuals can improve things. The Tower Hamlets Partnership also sets local targets for improving outcomes in deprived neighbourhoods.
- 48 From 2007/08 NRF will operate in the context of Local Area Agreements (LAA). The working group stressed that the Tower Hamlets Partnership continue to demonstrate, through the LAA how they are narrowing the gap between the most deprived areas and the rest.
- 49 The Working group felt that for LAAs to be completely effective Members will need to understand the nature of working with partners, the role of partners in the LAA and scrutinising the LAAs. Therefore there should be a development programme to support Members in the transition to their new role of place shaping and influencing as well as representing their communities.
- 50 The group realised the importance of the Community Plan target as a basis for any future funding. Therefore they requested more information as to how spending priorities and targets are agreed and the implications of LAA for Tower Hamlets. Particularly the working group wanted to know if the new LAAs will continue to meet Community Plan targets. The Working group was adamant that the LAAs should have a continued focus on narrowing the gap between the deprived and the rest

### Recommendation

- R1 That a Members seminar be organised on how LAA targets are identified and spent.
- R2 That LAAs include targets for narrowing the gap with the average outcomes for KS2 and KS3; coronary heart disease; employment levels; take up of Incapacity Benefit and teenage conception rates.

- 51 The partnership consists of three elements:
- **Local Area Partnerships** - To identify local priorities in dialogue with local residents, community sector and local service providers;
  - **The Community Plan Action Groups** - To meet the borough wide priorities and targets across services;
  - **The Partnership Management Group** - Oversee an effective strategic partnership which is focused on making a real difference.



## Local Area Partnership (LAPs)

- 52 There are eight Local Area Partnerships (LAPs) through which residents are involved. They include local people in considering ideas on how things can be improved and the ways in which they can influence the delivery of services in their area, but also the borough as a whole. They also provide the chance to scrutinise service performance to ensure that standards are met and promises kept.
- 53 Local Area Action Plans are produced each year to address local priorities for each of the LAPs. These set out targeted programmes for improvement and reflect Community Plan priorities at a local level. Significant amounts of Neighbourhood Renewal Funding have been used to support improved outcomes against these local priorities.
- 54 The LAP Action Plans are vital in ensuring that the Partnership target resources to deliver the biggest impact against our priority LAA outcomes. They also provide the basis for developing effective and locally-driven solutions that meet local needs.
- 55 As noted in the introduction, residents and LAP chair and Vice chairs were invited to attend a review meeting to discuss the impact of NRF in Tower Hamlets. Despite publicity, only five members of the public attended. Even though the participants were few, a number of issues were raised. All recognised the contribution of NRF in reviving local economies and supporting local community actions. Reference was made of the good work carried out by the Safer Neighbourhood Teams, who are NRF funded. Also, Chairs and Vice chairs agreed that the community themes reflected local priorities. However, there was a need to build capacity on both sides by supporting LAP participants in carrying out their role and ensuring service providers were more responsive.
- 56 Some LAP representatives did not feel they could identify the impact of NRF in their locality, beyond their own small delegated budget. They also noted that the commitment to devolution had been lost due to changes in management, commitment and resident involvement. In addition, LAPs felt that the partnership was effective in its capacity to develop and implement local strategies to improve local services, but needed to be more challenging. Also talked about better communication needs to be developed between LAPs, CPAG and PMG as to how funding is spent. The chairs and vice chairs also felt that key public sector partners who participated in and supported the LAPs, were not structured to be challenged and respond effectively to the issues that were raised. Feedback from some partners was not provided consistently.
- 57 The working group expressed concern that LAP chairs were not sufficiently aware about how NRF was being spent. The Working Group felt that better training should be made available before they take up their role and sustained whilst in their role be given to develop a better understanding of the role and responsibility of how funding decisions are made. The CPAG and PMG Chairs and steering Group members must also improve their communication with the LAPs. The Working group were keen to suggest that the structure of engagement with the community change so that there are clear expectations as to what the LAPs can influence. It was also felt that

LAP priorities should be evaluated against impact to see if there has been a narrowing of the gap.

### **Recommendation**

- R3 That Tower Hamlets Partnership introduces a learning and development programme for Local Area Partnership (LAP) members which include a session on how funding decisions are made.
- R4 That a document detailing LAP roles and responsibilities is sent to all residents, along with an invitation to attend LAP meetings.
- R5 That the Tower Hamlets Partnership undertakes a corporate approach to project evaluation so improve value for money. This evaluation should include an analysis of project methods, scale, target group, value for money.
- R6 That the Partnership carry out a review of all employment project client outcomes to identify which interventions were most effective

### The Community Plan Action Groups (CPAGs)

- 58 CPAGs oversee action plans for each community theme to ensure promises are delivered. CPAGs also oversee Neighbourhood Renewal and Identify emerging needs and priorities, in consultation with the Local Area Partnerships and all relevant local groups.
- 59 CPAGs focus on working to deliver community plan and neighbourhood renewal priorities, and meet the government's "floor targets. NRF is allocated to the four CPAGS across the Partnership. The purpose of this funding is to co-ordinate cross-borough service work focusing on progress towards floor targets and promises set out in the Community Plan.
- 60 All interventions funded through NRF, has a rigorous and independent appraisal process that is carried out through an external independent agency. The appraisal approval decision is made at the Partnership NRF Board, which includes members from the three strands of the Partnership, PMG, CPAGs and LAPs.
- 61 The Working group acknowledged that there is an intention for a robust approach to be taken when allocating funding, however some felt that there needs to be better interrogation at project development stage to guarantee right scale of action.
- 62 The Working group felt that a greater emphasis needed to be placed on the way projects are commissioned. Focus needs to remain on the suitability of organisations receiving NRF; this should include rigid scrutiny of how residents in Tower Hamlets will benefit from project. This focus on outcomes is important to ensure quality assurance and standards are met.
- 63 Furthermore the group wanted to see more focus on the way each proposal meets floor targets. This should include statistics, case studies and qualitative analysis. Also how each proposal adds value to what already exists, How it meets concerns of local residents, a set of outcomes identified and how the project is mainstreamed.

## **Recommendation**

- R7 That Community Plan Action Groups (CPAGs) identify project delivery methods when commissioning projects. This should ensure that suitable outreach to clients is scrutinised at the project commissioning stage.
- R8 That CPAGs operate joint commissioning on worklessness projects in order to maximise the benefits to client outreach and improve value for money.
- R9 That the arrangements for outreach across the projects should be reviewed. The review should address arrangements for:
- Specific outreach to intended beneficiaries in particular projects; and
  - General outreach arrangements for engaging the broader community.

## The Partnership Management Group (PMG)

- 64 The Partnership Management Group (PMG) involves residents, representatives from the Community Plan Action Groups, local councillors and representatives from the major service providers, businesses, voluntary and community sectors and faith communities. It is a small strategic group with responsibility for delivering the overall strategy and ensuring that plans are fulfilled.
- 65 This provides a strong foundation for the development of LAAs. It involves all the key service partners who will play a role in delivering priority outcomes, and has a strong community focus to enable local people to contribute to, as well as benefit from, this agreement.
- 66 The working group acknowledged that the governance arrangements at PMG were commended by GOL as being transparent, but also remembered that some LAP members expressed confusion over the administration of funding decisions. Some
- 67 felt that the governance approach had been 'one size fits all' despite the CPAG and the LAP structure. The emphasis on feedback from the LAPs and bottom up working is commendable but it's not clear that services and departments are willing and or capable of operating and be accountable in this way.
- 68 The working group recognised the importance of good communication between the partnerships three elements to help service improvement and promote joint working. Essential to good communication was the awareness of how NRF has been spent. To this end they stressed that the Partnership look for effective methods to improve the communication process between LAPs, CPAGs and PMG.

## **Recommendation**

- R10 That Community Plan Action Groups (CPAGs) identify project delivery methods when commissioning projects. This should ensure that suitable outreach to clients is scrutinised at the project commissioning stage.

- R11 That the Tower Hamlets Partnership review the communication between LAPs, CPAGs and PMG in order to ensure that local matters are reflected at PMG and that strategic matters are communicated effectively to LAPs.
- R12 That the Tower Hamlets Partnership develop a strategic commissioning framework for regeneration funds in future, to provide a more consistent framework for assessing value for money and to ensure specific interventions reinforce higher level strategic objectives.

## Working Neighbourhood Fund allocations

- 69 The Working Neighbourhoods Fund (WNF) was announced in November 2007. It is sited as a replacement for NRF however; it is 30% less than that of NRF and has different stated objectives.
- 70 The WNF will help tackle worklessness and low levels of skills and enterprise in the most deprived areas. Tower Hamlets allocation of WNF for 2008/09 is £10.279m which is the 10<sup>th</sup> highest allocation in the country, and the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest in London, behind Hackney and Newham, however most significantly the allocation is £4.3m or 29% less than the final year's NRF allocation.
- 71 Whilst there is a broad interpretation of WNF it will be ring fenced as part of the Area Based Grant. There is commitment that WNF will be delivered through the Tower Hamlets Partnership and tie into the emerging themes of the community plan
- 72 The group reminded officers that Mainstreaming is crucial to the sustainability of neighbourhood strategies and that any future funding must consider the mainstream to ensure that delivery of locally agreed priorities are met. Also there needs to be a continued focus on skills development to help people extend the ability to get employment. Officers revealed that the WNF spend can be flexible to meet local needs, to that end the Working group asked for more funding to the Safer Neighbourhood Teams to help procure additional resources.

### Recommendation

- R13 That project appraisal documents provide a mainstreaming strategy which explains whether the project will a) change service practice b) seek alternative funding c) create a new mainstream service.
- R14 That employability and skills should remain a priority for the Partnership. The project appraisal should identify which client group is being targeted and outcomes should not be restricted to 'jobs held for 13 weeks' so that the progress made towards employment can be measured.
- R15 That funding is provided to the third sector in the Borough to ensure it is able to represent the views of the sector in strategic decisions and can support local level community capacity building activity on the community chest model.

## Safer Neighbourhood Teams

- 73 Through the review, the Working Group was regularly reminded that the Boroughwide roll-out of the Safer Neighbourhood Teams ahead of other areas was one of the most obvious successes of the NRF in Tower Hamlets. In truth, this intervention was unlike many others, as instead of testing a new service, it simply brought forward one that the Mayor of London and the Metropolitan Police had already decided to implement.
- 74 Nevertheless, the sharp decline in certain categories of offence and the noticeable improvement in public perceptions around anti-social behaviour, can be said to have

come from the appearance of the SNTs in each ward. And so the narrowing of the gap has undeniably stemmed from Tower Hamlets' decision to roll-out the SNTs before anyone else in London.

- 75 The Working Group noted that the Metropolitan Police are working in partnership with a number of other local authorities to pilot an expanded Safer Neighbourhood Team structure. For example, in LB Hackney, an additional SNT has been established specifically to deal with the problems arising from the proliferation of nightlife venues in the Shoreditch "Triangle". And in LB Hammersmith & Fulham, the council is piloting "Super SNTs" of thirty Police Officers and PCSOs in Fulham Broadway and Shepherd's Bush.
- 76 The Working Group noted the confidence this has already given businesses to invest in these areas, and the jobs created and retained as a result. We consider that business opportunities and employment prospects would be similarly enhanced in these measures were replicated in Tower Hamlets. We recognise that funding an expanded SNT service sits less easily under the WNF than the NRF, but we do believe that it would be both possible and beneficial to undertake a pilot scheme in the Borough.
- 77 We estimate the cost of doubling the size of an SNT in one ward at around £300,000. It is perfectly possible therefore to undertake a two-year pilot with a twelve-strong SNT in at least two wards without placing an unsustainable burden on the Borough's WNF allocation. This should test the merit of an expanded SNT in reducing crime, improving public and especially business perceptions of the area. If the pilot proves successful, an application should be made to the Mayor of London and Metropolitan Police for this initiative to be mainstreamed under matched-funding arrangements.

### **Recommendation**

- R16 That the impact of Safer Neighbourhood Teams (SNTs) should be recognised and Tower Hamlets Partnership should use WNF to pilot an expanded SNT service in at least two wards.

### **Homelessness and Unemployment**

- 78 Over 2,000 Tower Hamlets households are currently placed in temporary accommodation after being accepted as homeless and in priority need. This accommodation is usually at sky high market rents far in excess of the equivalent council rent. This creates a deep "poverty trap" that can make it impossible to make work pay. This helps explain why the overwhelming majority of homeless households are out of work and in receipt of Housing Benefit.
- 79 Many homeless families spend two, three or even four years in temporary accommodation before successfully bidding for a council or housing association tenancy. It is well-known that, the longer people spend away from the job market, the harder it can be to re-enter it.

- 80 An innovative scheme being run by East Homes in LB Newham is attempting to tackle this problem. Under this *Working Futures* project, the homeless household is only liable for a rent up to the equivalent of a similar sized council flat. The remainder is paid by the Department of Work & Pensions in a block grant to East Homes. An independent evaluation has shown that this scheme has had some success in helping homeless people escape the poverty trap and find work that pays.
- 81 In Tower Hamlets, the NRF was not used to make any intervention to narrow the gap between the proportion of homeless people out of work and the proportion of the rest of the population. We believe that the WNF offers an opportunity to put this right, by testing the value of some focussed interventions to help homeless people secure and sustain employment while living in expensive temporary accommodation.

### **Recommendation**

- R17 That the Tower Hamlets Partnership should examine the possibility of funding a similar *Working Futures* scheme to ease the poverty trap facing homeless families in the Borough.

## Conclusion

- 82 The Working Group welcomed the opportunity to evaluate the way NRF has been spent in Tower Hamlets. The group welcomes the commitment of the Tower Hamlets Partnership in trying to meet local needs and improving outcomes through NRF for local residents. The working group also welcomes the findings which demonstrate that there is commitment in trying to narrow the gap between the deprived and the rest in Tower Hamlets.
- 83 There has clearly been a strong progress across all areas to narrow the gap. All key indicators show that improvements have been made. At a strategic level, the Partnership needs to ensure that future funding continues this trend; Mainstreaming is crucial to the sustainability of neighbourhood strategies and that any future funding must also consider the mainstream to ensure that delivery of locally agreed priorities are met.
- 84 The findings demonstrate that NRF is making a contribution to targets and service improvements; successes such as the Safer Neighbourhoods Teams prove this. However, there needs to be better communication on the ground to insure that services improve delivery. Better Project appraisal and rationales need to exist. Also more work needs to be carried out in performance management and targeting techniques for when the WNF is introduced.



84 Appendix 1 - Renaisi evaluation progress against target

Community Plan and Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy: Progress against key targets 2004 - 2005

Living Safely			
Target area	What we said we would achieve	Our performance	Success: ✓ = Yes ? ✓ = Partly X = No
<b>Total Crime</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduce crime and reduce the gap between highest CDRP areas and best comparable areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7.3% reduction total crime compared to 2003/4. This compares favourably to a London-wide fall of 4.3% in the same period.</li> </ul>	✓
<b>Acquisitive crime</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduce acquisitive crime,                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>with a 25% reduction in domestic burglary</li> <li>with a 14% reduction robbery</li> <li>with a 30% reduction in vehicle crime</li> </ul> </li> <li>against a 1998/9 baseline</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Floor target achieved for residential burglary and robbery. Not met for vehicle crime though significant improvements over last two years                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Domestic burglary – down 32.9%,</li> <li>- Robbery – down 15.7%,</li> <li>- Vehicle crime – down 14.5%</li> </ul> </li> <li>Relative position for residential burglary within the family of boroughs has improved</li> <li>Relative position for robbery now below median rate for family of boroughs</li> </ul>	✓
<b>Road deaths</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured in road accidents by 40% against 1998 figure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The number of road deaths per year fell by 38.8% compared to the average for the period 1994-1998.</li> </ul>	✓
<b>Fear of crime</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduce fear of crime</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Annual Residents Survey is positive in terms of perceptions of safety across all sections of the community with a 9% drop in the number of those rating crime as a major concern</li> </ul>	✓
<b>Youth crime</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduce youth offending</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The 2005 targets were reached in 2004 and youth offending reduced by a further 14% in 2004</li> <li>First time youth offending has fallen by 15.5% since last year although re-offending has risen 2.6%.</li> </ul>	✓
<b>Arson</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduce number of non-accidental fires</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Non-accidental rubbish container fires fell by 25.6%</li> <li>Non-accidental car fires fell by 22.3%</li> </ul>	✓
<b>Antisocial behaviour</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ASB reduced by 5% by March 2005 and by 10% by the end of 2006-7</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reported ASB increased by approx. 20% in 2004-5 and remains a top priority for the public and partnership with the establishment of a new working group under the Crime and Disorder partnership</li> </ul>	X
<b>Substance misuse</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduce the impact of substance misuse</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The number of young people accessing drugs treatment increased by 18% since last year</li> <li>The number of adult offenders accessing drugs treatment through the Drugs Intervention Programme increased by 7% since last year</li> </ul>	✓
<b>Recycling</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase tonnage of recycled waste</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tonnage of recycled waste has increased 7.3% since 2003/4</li> </ul>	✓
<b>Cleanliness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase the ENCAMS Cleanliness Index for the borough's streets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ENCAMS Index score improved from 68% in 1003/4 to 74.8% for 2004/5.</li> </ul>	✓

Highlighted / shaded areas = floor targets

Living Well

Target area	What we said we would achieve	Our performance	Success: ✓ = Yes ? ✓ = Partly X = No
<b>Life expectancy &amp; mortality rates</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduce gap in life expectancy at birth between Tower Hamlets and population as a whole</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ward data report indicates improvements in male and female life expectancy rates:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Female – 6 month improvement since 2003</li> <li>- Male – 3 month improvement since 2003</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	✓
<b>Teenage Pregnancy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduce under 18s conception rate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On target to achieve floor target if current progress is maintained.</li> <li>Local data suggests a 26% reduction since 1998 with an 8% reduction since 2003.</li> </ul>	✓
<b>Access to health care</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quicker access and shorter waiting times</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On average 98% of patients now spend no more than 4 hours in A&amp;E</li> <li>Improved waiting times although,                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 9% of patients exceeded 13 week maximum waiting time for new outpatient appointments with consultants, although all patients were seen within 17 weeks</li> <li>- 6% of patients exceeded 6 month maximum waiting time, although all patients waiting over 6 months for surgery are being offered a choice of alternative provider</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	✓ ? ✓
<b>Healthy lifestyles</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase the number of people who successfully stop smoking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On target, 3911 people stopped smoking between 2003-05</li> </ul>	✓
<b>Housing and housing services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase proportion of social housing judged to be of a decent standard</li> <li>Improve access to affordable homes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Performance (5.46%) was above the London average increase in decency (2.76%) between 2002/03 and 2003/04.</li> <li>There is clear evidence that our Housing Choice Strategy is achieving the intended outcomes, which will lead to an acceleration in progress towards the decent homes standard.</li> <li>80% of homes are located on estates that are part of or have completed stage 3 of the Housing Choice process. There have been 8 positive transfer ballots, accounting for over 5,700 homes. 3 transfers have now completed.</li> <li>538 new affordable homes have been built and 28 private homes have been returned to use</li> </ul>	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓

Highlighted / shaded areas = floor targets

Community Plan and Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy:

Progress against key targets 2004 - 2005

Learning, Achievement and Leisure

Target area	What we said we would achieve	Our performance	Success: ✓ = Yes ? ✓ = Partly X = No
Educational attainment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To increase the percentage of pupils obtaining 5 or more GCSEs at grade A* to C to at least 38%</li> <li>75% of 14 year olds to achieve level 5 or above in English and Maths and 70% of 14 year olds to achieve level 5 or above in Science</li> <li>85% of 11 year olds to achieve level 4 or above in English and Maths</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Summer 2004, 48% of pupils achieved five or more grade A*-C at GCSE. 13% improvement in the last three years, which is three times the national rate.</li> <li>% of 14 year olds achieving level 5 or above improved significantly:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>57% English (up 3%)</li> <li>58% Maths (up 3%)</li> <li>49% Science (up 2%)</li> </ul> </li> <li>% of 11 year olds achieving level 4 or above improved significantly:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>77% English (up 3% - in line with national average rate of increase)</li> <li>75% Maths (up 4% - above national average rate of increase)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	✓
School performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve school performance across the borough</li> <li>Every school in the borough has at least 25% of pupils obtaining 5 or more GCSEs at grade A*-C</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2 schools are currently identified by OFSTED as having serious weaknesses and 1 school is in special measures</li> <li>Six of our fifteen secondary schools are now producing A*-C GCSE results above the national average, and no school is below the government's floor target of 25%</li> </ul>	✓
School attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve primary school attendance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2003/4 attendance increased by 0.7% to 94.1%. Now only 0.4% below the national average; two years ago it was one of the lowest nationally</li> </ul>	? ✓
Participation in lifelong learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain adult participation in lifelong learning activities at high level of 9,700 learners achieved last year</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>11,755 learners participated in lifelong learning courses, a 21% increase over last year</li> </ul>	✓

Highlighted / shaded areas = floor targets

Community Plan and Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy:

Progress against key targets 2004 - 2005

Learning, Achievement and Leisure

Target area	What we said we would achieve	Our performance	Success: ✓ = Yes ? ✓ = Partly X = No
Educational attainment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To increase the percentage of pupils obtaining 5 or more GCSEs at grade A* to C to at least 38%</li> <li>75% of 14 year olds to achieve level 5 or above in English and Maths and 70% of 14 year olds to achieve level 5 or above in Science</li> <li>85% of 11 year olds to achieve level 4 or above in English and Maths</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Summer 2004, 48% of pupils achieved five or more grade A*-C at GCSE. 13% improvement in the last three years, which is three times the national rate.</li> <li>% of 14 year olds achieving level 5 or above improved significantly:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>57% English (up 3%)</li> <li>58% Maths (up 3%)</li> <li>49% Science (up 2%)</li> </ul> </li> <li>% of 11 year olds achieving level 4 or above improved significantly:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>77% English (up 3% - in line with national average rate of increase)</li> <li>75% Maths (up 4% - above national average rate of increase)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	✓
School performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve school performance across the borough</li> <li>Every school in the borough has at least 25% of pupils obtaining 5 or more GCSEs at grade A*-C</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2 schools are currently identified by OFSTED as having serious weaknesses and 1 school is in special measures</li> <li>Six of our fifteen secondary schools are now producing A*-C GCSE results above the national average, and no school is below the government's floor target of 25%</li> </ul>	✓
School attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve primary school attendance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2003/4 attendance increased by 0.7% to 94.1%. Now only 0.4% below the national average; two years ago it was one of the lowest nationally</li> </ul>	? ✓
Participation in lifelong learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain adult participation in lifelong learning activities at high level of 9,700 learners achieved last year</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>11,755 learners participated in lifelong learning courses, a 21% increase over last year</li> </ul>	✓

Highlighted / shaded areas = floor targets

Learning, Achievement and Leisure			
Target area	What we said we would achieve	Our performance	Success: ✓ = Yes ? ✓ = Partly X = No
Educational attainment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To increase the percentage of pupils obtaining 5 or more GCSEs at grade A* to C to at least 38%</li> <li>75% of 14 year olds to achieve level 5 or above in English and Maths and 70% of 14 year olds to achieve level 5 or above in Science</li> <li>85% of 11 year olds to achieve level 4 or above in English and Maths</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Summer 2004, 48% of pupils achieved five or more grade A*-C at GCSE. 13% improvement in the last three years, which is three times the national rate.</li> <li>% of 14 year olds achieving level 5 or above improved significantly:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>57% English (up 3%)</li> <li>58% Maths (up 3%)</li> <li>49% Science (up 2%)</li> </ul> </li> <li>% of 11 year olds achieving level 4 or above improved significantly:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>77% English (up 3% - in line with national average rate of increase)</li> <li>75% Maths (up 4% - above national average rate of increase)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	✓
School performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve school performance across the borough</li> <li>Every school in the borough has at least 25% of pupils obtaining 5 or more GCSEs at grade A*-C</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2 schools are currently identified by OFSTED as having serious weaknesses and 1 school is in special measures</li> <li>Six of our fifteen secondary schools are now producing A*-C GCSE results above the national average, and no school is below the government's floor target of 25%</li> </ul>	✓
School attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve primary school attendance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2003/4 attendance increased by 0.7% to 94.1%. Now only 0.4% below the national average; two years ago it was one of the lowest nationally</li> </ul>	? ✓
Participation in lifelong learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain adult participation in lifelong learning activities at high level of 9,700 learners achieved last year</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>11,755 learners participated in lifelong learning courses, a 21% increase over last year</li> </ul>	✓

Excellent Public Services			
Target area	What we said we would achieve	Our performance	Success: ✓ = Yes ? ✓ = Partly X = No
Better value services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recognition by residents that services are improving</li> </ul>	<p>Annual Residents Survey:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Satisfaction with the Council rose in every LAP area apart from LAP4.</li> <li>Satisfaction with the Health Service rose everywhere except LAP2, while satisfaction with Policing rose everywhere except LAPs 2, 5 and 6</li> </ul>	✓
Young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase youth involvement in planning services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Our <i>Youth Participation Strategy</i> has resulted in young people representation on the Partnership Management Group and greater involvement in LAPs. And a Youth Participation Officer will be evaluating feedback from young people on their increased involvement in planning services.</li> </ul>	✓
Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve access to services for all residents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Yes. 7 more buildings were made compliant for 2004/05. This is in line with the target of 33% for the year (and may even exceed it)</li> <li>A draft Language Charter is in place, and the new <i>Language Support Service</i> launched in January 2005 fully meets its requirements</li> </ul>	✓
Equalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Workforce to reflect the community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The proportion of BME employees in the Council's top 5% of earners has increased from 13.4% in March 2003 to 17.5%.</li> <li>20 trainees have been recruited to the Council's Graduate Development Programme.</li> <li>A new Corporate Equality and Diversity strategy for the Health Service will be in place in November 2004, which will identify ways to increase the numbers of BME employees in managerial positions.</li> <li>In the Police service, 29% of police employees (Officers, Community Support Officers and staff) recruited or transferred to the borough in the year to April 2005 were from BME communities; this compares with 22% for the year to October 2004.</li> </ul>	✓
Community Cohesion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve cohesion amongst communities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A basket of Community Cohesion indicators maintained by the Council shows steady improvement in most areas. In addition, the borough's award of Beacon status for both <i>Promoting Race Equality</i> and <i>Getting Closer to Communities</i> are further indications of our strength.</li> </ul>	✓

Highlighted / shaded areas = floor targets

# Agenda Item 9.4

<b>Committee</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Classification</b>	<b>Report No.</b>	<b>Agenda Item No.</b>
Overview and Scrutiny Committee	6 <sup>th</sup> May 2008	Unrestricted		
<b>Report of:</b> Michael Keating Acting Assistant Chief Executive		<b>Title:</b> Report of the Scrutiny Working Group Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour		
<b>Originating Officer(s):</b> Ashraf Ali Scrutiny Policy Officer		<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>  All		

## 1. Summary

- 1.1 This report submits the recommendations of the Tackling Anti Social Behaviour Scrutiny Working Group for consideration by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

## 2. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

- 2.1 Endorse the draft report of the Scrutiny Working Group
- 2.2 The Acting Chief Executive be authorised to agree the final report before its submission to Cabinet, after consultation with the Scrutiny Lead for Living Safely.

---

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT, 2000 (SECTION 97)

### ***LIST OF "BACKGROUND PAPERS" USED IN THE PREPARATION OF THIS REPORT***

Background paper	Name and telephone number of and address where open to inspection
Tower Hamlets Anti Social Behaviour Strategy	

**Ashraf Ali**  
**020 7364 0528**

### **3. Background**

The Working Group was established in November 2007. The intention of the investigation was to identify recommendations for the future direction of the Council's Anti-Social Behaviour strategy.

- 3.1 The Working Group heard evidence from the Local Strategic Partnership, residents and Registered Social Landlords. Also studied statistics and information.
- 3.2 Once agreed, the working group's recommendations will be submitted to Cabinet for a response to their recommendations.

### **4. Concurrent Report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal Services)**

- 4.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report. Any legal considerations arising from the resultant Action Plan will be addressed at that point.

### **5. Comments of the Chief Financial Officer**

- 5.1 The report contains a range of recommendations outlined at Paragraphs R1 - R15, a number of which have financial implications, these will need to be costed and proposals taken to Cabinet for consideration of funding options.

### **6. Equal Opportunity Implications**

- 6.1 There are no direct equal opportunities implications.

### **7. Anti-Poverty Implications**

- 7.1 There are no direct anti-poverty implications.

### **8. Sustainable Action for a Greener Environment**

- 8.1 There are no direct actions for a greener environment arising from the report.

### **9. Risk Management**

- 9.1 There are no direct risk management implications arising from the report or recommendations.

Appendix 1 Report of the Scrutiny Working Group on Tackling Anti Social Behaviour



# Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour

Report of the Scrutiny Working Group

Tower Hamlets Council  
May 2008

DRAFT



## Index

---

	Page
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Chair's foreword</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Findings</b>	
Background	10
Statistics and Information	15
Partnership Working	17
Enforcement	18
Safer Neighbourhood Teams	19
Public View	20
Young People's view	22
<b>Conclusions</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Appendices</b>	

## **Acknowledgements**

---

### **Working Group Chair:**

Councillor Salim Ullah

### **Working Group members:**

Councillor Mohammed Shahid Ali  
Councillor Carli-Harper Penman  
Councillor Mohammed Abdus Salique  
Councillor Dulal Uddin  
Councillor Phil Briscoe  
Councillor Stephanie Eaton

### **Other Councillors**

Councillor Marc Francis – Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee  
Councillor Abdal Ullah – Lead Member Cleaner, Greener & Safer

### **London Borough of Tower Hamlets**

Andy Bamber, Head of Community Safety Service  
Jon Underwood, CS P&P Manager  
Heather Malinder, CS Operations Manager  
Shazia Hussain, Interim Director of Tower Hamlets Partnership  
Saheed Ullah, Area Director – LAPs 1&2  
Steve Sipple, Head of Youth Community Service  
Kevin Munday, Service Development Manger, Youth and Community Service  
Blossom Young, Children and Young people's Involvement Manager, Youth and Community Service  
Michael Keating, Acting Assistant Chief Executive

### **Scrutiny and Equalities**

Ashraf Ali, Scrutiny Policy Officer  
Edmund Wildish, Scrutiny Policy Officer  
Afazul Hoque, Scrutiny Policy Manager

### **External**

Chief Inspector Rob Revell, Metropolitan Police Service  
Trevor Robinson, Metropolitan Police Service  
Rob Brown, Metropolitan Police Service  
Sarah Castro, Community Safety Manager, Poplar HARCA

The Working Group would like to thank all Tower Hamlets officers and Partner agencies for their time and advice and all those residents and young people who made contributions and gave input into the review.

## **Chair's Foreword**

---

**TO BE COMPLETED**

**Cllr Salim Ullah  
Scrutiny Lead, Living Safely**

## Recommendations

---

- R1** That the Council and all RSL'S in Tower Hamlets provide Cabinet an annual report detailing how they are meeting the six strands of the Respect agenda.
- R2** That the Council continues to identify tackling ASB as a key Corporate Priority. This should be reflected in funding decisions and performance management against ambitious targets, reflecting the emphasis that residents place on this issue.
- R3** That the Community Safety Service provide Members with a briefing explaining how the ASB database functions and complaints are investigated. This may well be a one off training session or site demonstration.
- R4** That the Council should continue to work to find ways to get all 64 RSLs operating in the Borough to develop consistent standards to tackling ASB.
- R5** That the Council and RSLs undertake a cost-benefit analysis of procuring a new single reporting system, to capture all ASB reports made in Tower Hamlets.
- R6** That the Borough Commander provides details of running costs to enable an assessment of an expansion in the number and duration of Good Behaviour Zones.
- R7** That the Council look at progress of the National pilot scheme to withdraw housing benefit from those found guilty of persistent ASB and report back to Cabinet on the merit of Tower Hamlets participating in any future pilots.
- R8** That SNTs provide Members with data on response times to ASB calls made by residents, to help evaluate the effectiveness of SNTs in their current capacity.
- R9** That the Partnership set aside funding to pilot an expanded SNT of six PCs and six PCSOs in at least two wards for a period of up to two years.
- R10** That the Community Safety Service with the help of the Tower Hamlets Partnership and East End Life look to better promote the Council's ASB strategy to residents in the Borough.
- R11** That Children's Service with the help of Education Psychologist support schools to further help develop young people's appreciation of acceptable behaviour by reviewing behaviour codes and practises that are in line with tackling ASB.

- R12 That Children Service work with the Youth Offending Team (YOT) and other agencies to identify and support vulnerable children and young people, most at risk of causing ASB and ensure that wherever possible all pupils are able to access appropriate educational provision.**
- R13 That the Community Safety Service gives further thought into early intervention and family work through working with Children's service, Schools, Sure Start and Police to develop a long term strategy for preventive work with children and their families.**
- R14 That the Council enhance youth services offered to young people, including both the quality of facilities within centres and the operating days/hours. Additional funding should be set aside to significantly expanded youth services on offer within at least two wards for a period of two years. Tower Hamlets Youth Service should undertake a thorough consultation, with young people, parents and schools to understand what would be most attractive in helping young people stay off the streets.**

## Introduction

---

- 1 Anti-social behaviour is one of the biggest challenges that Tower Hamlets, like all local authorities around the country, is facing. The Council must act within a national and local context, implementing policies and legislation from central government as well as seeking practical local solutions. Formulating effective strategies to tackle ASB effectively is therefore a complex balancing act, but it is one of the biggest responsibilities the Council faces.
- 2 This report considers the extent of anti-social behaviour (ASB) in Tower Hamlets, examines the effectiveness of the Council's ASB strategy, and explores potential for amendments to policy and practice in line with national developments and policy.
- 3 A politically balanced Working Group was established in November 2007, comprising of 7 Councillors. The Chair of the Working Group was Councillor Salim Ullah, Scrutiny Lead for Living Safely.
- 4 The review had five main objectives:
  - To consider the borough's current ASB protocols and methodology regarding; effectiveness of the ASB hotline (through a customer satisfaction survey), effectiveness of the ASB database;
  - To engage with residents and young people and consider their views on how to combat ASB;
  - To look at how the work of the Council's partners (the Tower Hamlets Partnership, Police and RSLs) is helping to combat ASB locally;
  - To provide background information on the Councillor Call for Action, and engage with councillors as to what this will mean for them;
- 5 **Methodology** - The following timetable was agreed to undertake work for the review:

### **Introductory Meeting (January 2008)**

- Agree scoping document
- Overview of how ASB is currently being dealt with.
- Summary of ASB processes and procedures
- Presentation on Councillor call for action (CCfA) and its implications for LBTH

### **Role of Partners (February 2008)**

- Role of Tower Hamlets partners in tackling ASB

### **Resident focus group (March 2008)**

- Round table discussion with residents

**Youth partnership focus group (April 2008)**

- Round table discussion with young people

- 6 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee will consider the Working Group's report and recommendations. The Council's Cabinet will then respond to the report and its recommendations.



# Findings

---

## Background

### Definition of Anti Social Behavior

- 7 ASB is not a concept that can be neatly and easily categorised. This is borne out by the multiplicity of definitions in existence, some of which are given below.
- 8 In the Housing Act 1996, ASB is defined as; causing nuisance or annoyance to another person'. However, the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 defines Anti Social Behaviour as 'a conduct which causes, or is likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to one or more persons.
- 9 Anti social behaviour can include: harassment, noise nuisance, damaging of public property, aggressive, offensive or threatening language or behaviour, violence against people or property, crimes based on discrimination and using housing accommodation for supplying drugs, or for other illegal purposes.
- 10 The Home office defines ASB as a 'variety of behavior covering a whole complex of selfish and unacceptable activity that can blight the quality of community life. Including;
  - nuisance neighbors
  - rowdy and nuisance behavior
  - yobbish behavior and intimidating groups taking over public spaces
  - vandalism, graffiti and fly-posting
  - people dealing and buying drugs on the street
  - people dumping rubbish and abandoning cars
  - begging and anti-social drinking
  - the misuse of fireworks

### Government Policy

- 11 The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 introduced the Anti-Social Behavior Order (ASBO). ASBOs can be granted by the court against people who participate in actions that cause or are likely to cause alarm or distress to other persons. An ASBO can specify types of behavior individuals should not engage in or even ban them completely from particular areas. Breach of the terms of an ASBO is a criminal offence which can result in a fine, community sentence or even a custodial sentence.
- 12 In Tower Hamlets, an ASBO is usually preceded by a warning letter and than an Acceptable Behavior Contract (ABC) which is a voluntary code of conduct drawn up with the individual behaving in a anti social manner. There appears to be strong evidence that these are effective in encouraging some individuals to moderate their behavior.

- 13 The 1998 Act also established the crime and disorder partnership, this includes the police, local authorities, probation service, health authorities, the voluntary sector, and local residents and businesses.
- 14 These partnerships work to reduce crime and disorder by:
  - Establishing the levels of crime and disorder problems in their area, and consulting widely with the population of that area to make sure that the partnership's perception matches that of local people, especially minority groups.
  - Devising a strategy containing measures to tackle those priority problems. This is to include targets, and target owners for each of the priority areas. The strategy will last for three years, but must be kept under review by the partnership.
- 15 In March 2003 the Government published a white paper outlining its proposals for tackling anti-social behavior. The '*Respect and Responsibility – taking a stand against anti-social behavior*' white paper focused on giving local authorities and the police a wider, more flexible array of powers to help meet their existing responsibilities and respond to the needs of the local communities.
- 16 The Anti-Social Behavior 2003 Act was introduced to ensure that the police have the appropriate powers to deal with serious anti-social behavior. This included tackling drug dealing, and dispersing intimidating groups. The act also enables the police to tackle the nuisance that can be caused by young people with air weapons, and supports action against gun crime by banning the possession of imitation guns and air guns in public without good reason.
- 17 Furthermore, the 2003 Act provides powers for local authorities and those working with them to tackle anti-social behavior in local communities. It extends landlords powers to deal with anti-social behavior in social housing, including a more streamlined process for the use of injunctions and the introduction demoted tenancies. The Act also includes provisions aimed at dealing with noise nuisance. It develops the sanctions that are available for use against those who engage in anti-social behavior and extends the range of agencies that can use them.

### The Respect Agenda

- 18 In January 2006, the then Prime Minister, Tony Blair, launched the Government's RESPECT Action Plan. This was intended to build upon the drive to clamp down on ASB and engender a modern culture of respect. It sought to direct focus on tackling the underlying causes of ASB, advocating early intervention where possible and broadening efforts to tackle new areas of poor behaviour. The agenda had six strands:
  - supporting families,
  - a new approach to the most challenging families,
  - improving behaviour and attendance in schools,
  - activities for children & young people,
  - strengthening communities and

- effective enforcement & community justice.
- 19 In line with the Respect agenda, the aim of Tower Hamlets Council is to achieve a major and continued reduction in the levels and fear of anti social behaviour within the borough, and to create a safer environment for community life and economic activity.
  - 20 The Working Group acknowledged that the Respect Agenda is very broad in scope and is a challenge for services and partnerships to embed. However a need to consider how services can ensure that the culture of Respect is driven forward needs to be constantly looked at. To that end the Group were keen for there to be a continued focus on early intervention, through working specifically with parents, schools, support agencies and young people to address underlying factors such as drug or alcohol misuse, truancy, peer pressure, poor parenting etc.

#### **Recommendation**

R1 That the Council and all RSL'S in Tower Hamlets provide Cabinet an annual report detailing how they are meeting the six strands of the Respect agenda.

#### The Councillor Call for Action (CCfA)

- 21 The Councillor Call for Action has been introduced through the Police and Justice Act 2006 and the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Bill 2007, with full implementation expected sometime in 2008. This new mechanism is expected to give support to all councillors to raise matters of concern for their constituents and for Overview and Scrutiny to contribute to the community leadership role of the council.
- 22 The issues that offer the most scope for these scrutiny inquiries are those which local councillors feel they have been unable to get resolved through the usual channels. If the issue represents a significant and genuine concern affecting a number of individuals within the wider community and which is about the quality of public service provision at a local level, it could very well appear as a CCfA.
- 23 This review can be considered a pilot, of sorts, of the CCfA process. The Scrutiny Lead Member for Living Safely felt that ASB in his ward, Bethnal Green South, was and is a serious enough community issue that has not been resolved and that it warranted further attention. Utilising Scrutiny to try to address this issue, when all other attempts have failed, typifies the sort of procedure that future CCfAs might take. At the same time, the review provided an opportunity to look into how the Council is tackling ASB across the borough as well, in terms of procedures, measures, partnership working and so on.

#### Local policy

- 24 Tower Hamlets Council works with the Metropolitan Police, Local Primary Health Trust, the North East London Probation Service, the London Fire Brigade and other partners within the local Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership. The Partnership has agreed a 3-year Crime & Drugs Strategy for 2005-08, which includes its targets for reducing levels of

anti social behaviour. These are to reduce the number of incidents reported and increase the percentage of effective interventions from March 2007 to March 2008

- 25 The Council's aim is to achieve a major and sustained reduction in the levels and fear of anti-social behaviour within the borough, thus creating a safer environment for community life and economic activity. These are summarised in the Tower Hamlets ASB strategy as;
- Responding promptly to all forms of anti social behaviour with action taken against perpetrators and incidents resolved as quickly as possible;
  - Enabling all residents to have quiet enjoyment of their home and neighbourhood;
  - Addressing all racial harassment and forms of intimidation focused on ethnic minority residents and groups, including encouraging the reporting of incidents of racial harassment;
  - Providing a seamless link between Social Housing providers and Community Services, which will investigate the more serious cases of anti social behaviour and take the enforcement action that is appropriate and proportionate against perpetrators;
  - Supporting victims and witnesses and increase local people's willingness to address anti social behaviour in collaboration with the council;
  - Promoting good standards of behaviour through education and awareness training;
  - Adopting best practice in dealing with incidents of anti social behaviour and in the enforcement of tenancy agreements and leases.

#### **Recommendation**

R2 That the Council continues to identify tackling ASB as a key Corporate Priority. This should be reflected in funding decisions and performance management against ambitious targets, reflecting the emphasis that residents place on this issue.

#### Tower Hamlets Community Safety Service

- 26 The Council has a dedicated Community Safety Service. This service has a co-ordinating role across the council for all services that have a major operational role in tackling anti social behaviour. Having a single service responsible for anti social behaviour removes some of the operational barriers so that a streamlined service is provided.

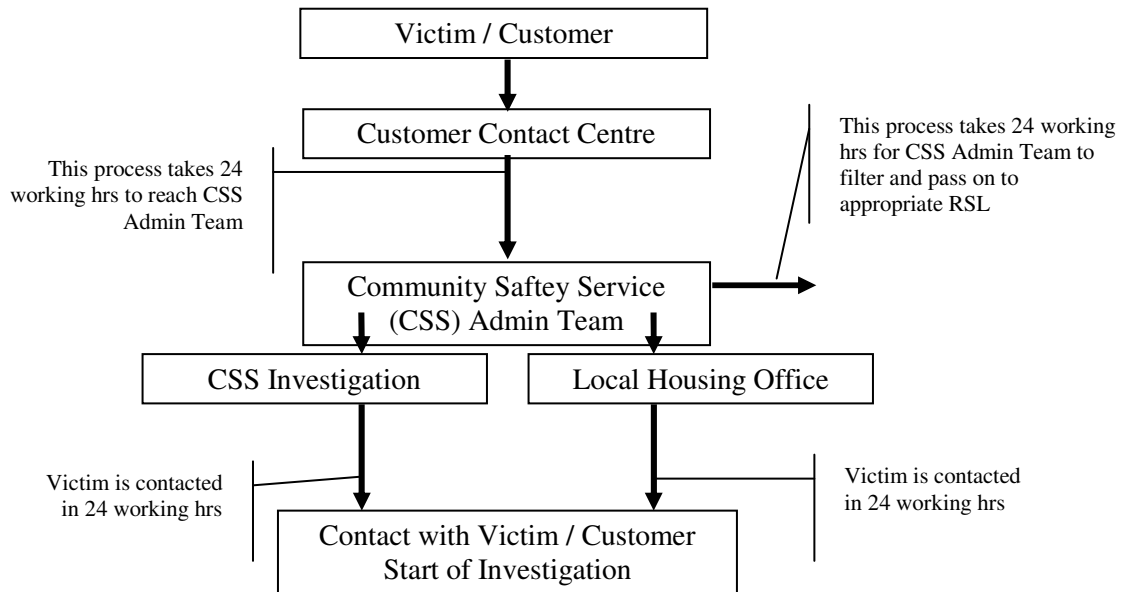
- 27 The Community Service takes the lead in delivering services to combat anti social behaviour. Complaints of anti social behaviour are logged on to a reporting and casework management system. This gives the Community Safety Service an overview and allows it to monitor investigations.
- 28 The Working Group alluded to the fact that they do not fully understand the way ASB is captured by the Community Safety Service. Although the majority understand the basic processes involved there was a general lack of awareness as to how ASB reports are stored and processed. The Working group were keen to know how different types of behaviour are recorded and also to see how the database captures information on outcomes of actions being taken.
- 29 The Working Group felt that this is an important issue, and concluded that if they understand the reporting process then they can cascade this knowledge down at a local level to help reassure residents that their complaints are properly being dealt with.

### **Recommendation**

R3 That the Community Safety Service provide Members with a briefing explaining how the ASB database functions and complaints are investigated. This may well be a one off training session or site demonstration.

- 30 For Council-owned properties, local housing officers initially investigate complaints from Council tenants and residential leaseholders. They also have a role to play where complaints are from non-council residents but the alleged perpetrator is a council tenant or leaseholder. For residents placed in temporary leased accommodation, the local housing office will arrange investigation of complaints of anti social behaviour, and where applicable, this will be done in conjunction with the Community Safety Service.
- 31 More serious cases of anti social behaviour are referred by housing officers to the Community Safety Service for full investigation and enforcement action. The Community Safety Service maintains a cross-tenure approach so that, for example, where possession orders are sought against council tenants, the Community Safety Service may also consider an application for an Anti Social Behaviour Order (ASBO) at the same time, so that the wider community continues to receive protection even after the tenant has been evicted.
- 32 The Council's policy to support the work of housing officers dealing with anti social behaviour mirrors the approach of the Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership. This approach is to firstly look at prevention, then intervention and diversion and, as a last resort enforcement, depending on the seriousness of ASB and its effect on the community.

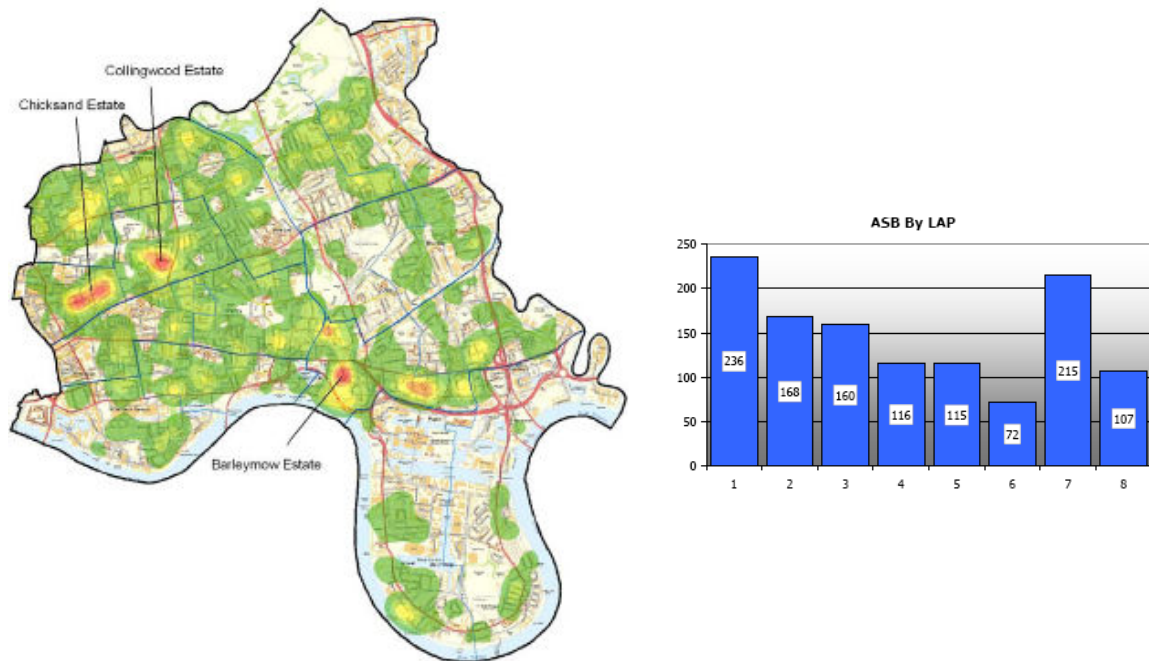
Figure 1 shows the ASB reporting process adopted by Tower Hamlets.



**Figure 1 – ASB reporting process**

## Statistics and Information

- 33 The Councils ASB strategy aims through its performance management framework to contribute towards the targets for anti social behaviour set out by the Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership. These targets are to reduce the incidents of Anti Social Behaviour and to increase the effectiveness of interventions from March 2007 to March 2008 by:
- Reducing anti social behaviour by 20%;
  - Responding to 95% of all calls about anti social behaviour promptly and appropriately;
  - Increasing the percentage who feel informed about what is being done to tackle ASB in their local area by 38%;
  - Reducing graffiti and other deliberate damage to property or vehicles to 23%;
  - Reducing people using or dealing drugs to 41%;
  - Reducing people being drunk or rowdy in public place to 18%.
- 34 Data in Figure 2 shows ASB by LAPs and Tower Hamlets estates for the last quarter in September 2007. Data indicates that reports of anti social behaviour for the last quarter in September 2007 are 13.9 per cent lower on the same period in 2006. However ASB reports have increased by 2.6 per cent on the last quarter of 2007. The data shows that LAPs 1, 2 and 7 have the highest number of reports originating from within them. In the last six months, the Collingwood, Chicksand and Barleymow Estates have all been significant hotspots. Noise harassment remains the most frequently reported incident to the hotline. Threatening behaviour and drug harassment have slightly increased as a proportion of the total number of ASB reports.



**Figure 2 - ASB in Tower Hamlets by LAP and Estates**

35 Figure 3 shows data collected from the Tower Hamlets Annual resident survey. Data indicates that for all the key indicators perception of ASB is falling. Significantly there is a less perceived problem of abandoned vehicles, and noisy neighbours in 06/07 compared to 03/04.

Percentage of residents saying the following are a 'very' or 'fairly' big problem:	2003/04	2006/07	Change
1. Noisy neighbours or loud parties	41%	33%	-8%
2. Teenagers hanging around on the streets	81%	76%	-5%
3. Rubbish and litter lying around	65%	66%	+1%
4. People being drunk or rowdy in public spaces	59%	41%	-18%
5. Abandoned or burnt out cars	54%	23%	-31%
6. Vandalism, graffiti and other deliberate damage to property or vehicles	79%	60%	-19%
7. People using or dealing drugs	82%	68%	-14%
8. Parents not taking responsibility for the behaviour of their children	No data	75%	N/A
9. People not treating other people with respect and consideration	No data	59%	N/A

**Figure 3 – Annual Resident Survey results**

36 Detailed below are latest ASB reporting data provided by the Tower Hamlets Customer Contact Centre (CCC). This information shows that the Council has exceeded targets for the number of calls answered relating to ASB. Data shows that 94 per cent of ASB calls are answered against the service target level of 75 per cent.

Service	Calls Offered	Calls Answered	% Calls Answered	Target % Calls Answered	Service Level	Target Service Level
ASB	331	311	94.0	90	81.4	75
Hate Crime	84	78	92.9	90	82.1	75
<b>ASB TOTAL</b>	<b>415</b>	<b>389</b>	<b>93.7</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>81.5</b>	<b>75</b>

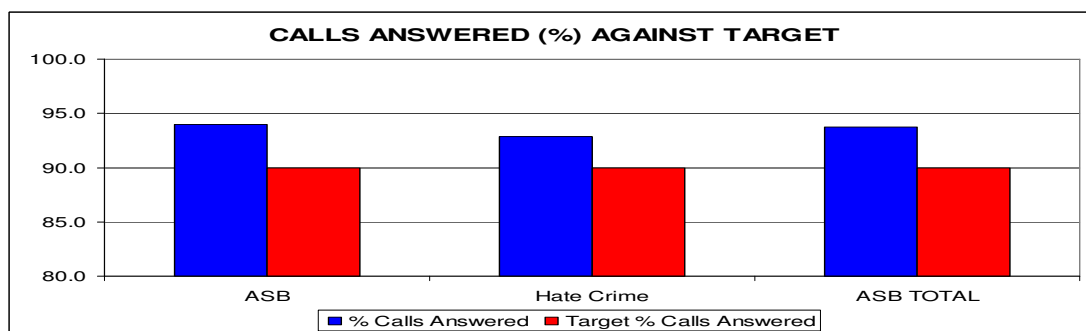
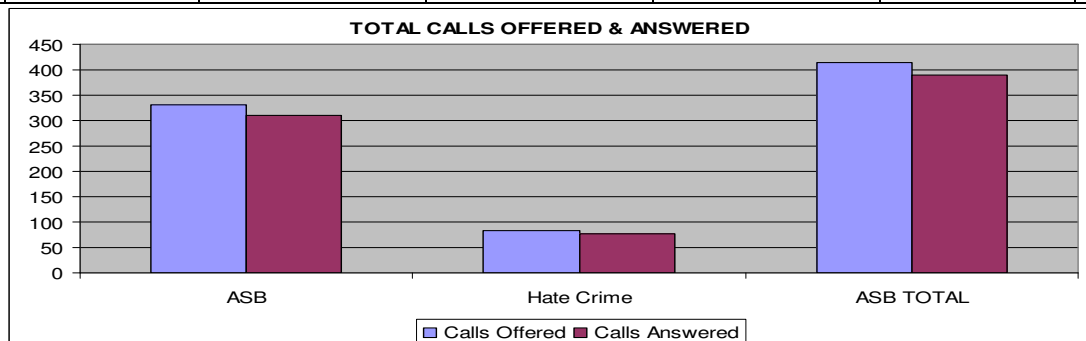


Figure 4 - ASB response to calls

## Partnership Working

- 37 A partnership approach is the best way to expand successful strategies to prevent and manage anti social behaviour. The Partnership is synchronized through the Local Area Partnership (LAP) areas to have the strongest impact on specific local concerns around anti-social behaviour.
- 38 There are large number of forums where ASB is dealt with which includes joint commissioning of youth provision which has helped to ensure the successful delivery of projects. In addition, working with the youth inclusion programme demonstrates the partnerships commitment in addressing the root causes of ASB. There is also a safer schools officer works closely with each local Safer Neighbourhood Team to improve understanding of children.
- 39 Information sharing within the Local Strategic Partnership (LSPs) is essential if ASB is to be tackled; also it is a requirement under section 115 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. The Working Group heard of good evidence of communication between the LSPs. However some members felt that more effort should be made to involve Registered Social Landlords (RSL). LSP s and RSLs should work together to help develop consistent approaches to tackling ASB.



- 40 The Working group recognises that information sharing between LSPs and RSLs is important. There will be many occasions when it will be necessary for the LSPs to request data or information from each other as well as RSLs. protocols need to be developed between Partners to facilitate the sharing of information more easily. RSLs should take proactive steps to ensure that they are represented on such protocols.
- 41 The Working Group agreed that by involving all RSLs, the Council will increase knowledge and understanding of all partners and so effectively tackle ASB. The Working Group felt that information sharing between the Council, Partner agencies and RSLs will lead to greater understanding of each other's roles and responsibilities and a collective way of working when tackling ASB.

### **Recommendation**

- R4 That the Council should continue to work to find ways to get all 64 RSLs operating in the Borough to develop consistent standards to tackling ASB.
- R5 That the Council and RSLs undertake a cost-benefit analysis of procuring a new single reporting system, to capture all ASB reports made in Tower Hamlets.

## **Enforcement**

- 42 Tower Hamlets has a clear strategy and has invested significant resources into SNTs, CCTV and yet public perceptions of the extent of anti-social behaviour remain stubbornly high. Working Group members were aware of numerous anecdotal examples of residents being asked to complete diary sheets, and yet little or no action seeming to follow it.
- 43 The Working Group was drawn to a number of initiatives designed to strengthen the sanctions available against those responsible for persistent anti-social behaviour. The first of these is the power to "demote" a secure or assured tenancy introduced in the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003. This sanction appears to be only rarely applied, or even threatened. The Working Group considers that more work should be done to understand why demoted tenancies are so rarely used in the Borough and that their use should be actively encouraged, particularly by Housing Services.
- 44 The Metropolitan Police has introduced a number of temporary Good Behaviour Zones (GBZs) within parts of Tower Hamlets in recent years. GBZs involve the use of section 30 of the Anti Social Behaviour Act, giving the police officers additional powers of dispersal and the provision of extra diversionary activities for young people. This intervention is designed to help residents and businesses in areas plagued by nuisance and harassment.
- 45 One such GBZ was instituted around Roman Road Market in October and November 2007. A full impact assessment is not yet available, but almost half the respondents in a survey said they felt that crime and ASB had reduced during this period and that they felt

safer as a result. Despite this apparent success, LBTH and the Borough Commander appear reluctant to make greater use of GBZs and the associated powers of dispersal, especially for more sustained periods.

- 46 The Working Group recognises that a GBZ will involve a significant diversion of police resources, and we are reluctant to second guess the operational decisions of the Borough Commander. Nevertheless, the Group believe that greater use could and should be made of GBZs. Details of running-costs should therefore be made available to enable an assessment to be made of an expansion in the number and duration of GBZs.

Furthermore ten local authorities have in England agreed to pilot a new sanction, which is the withdrawal of Housing Benefit from those guilty of persistent anti-social behaviour. When initially proposed by Frank Field MP, this proved extremely controversial and was opposed by most Members of Parliament and those working with people suffering anti-social behaviour. However, legislation enabling this pilot scheme to take place now includes much stronger safeguards protecting vulnerable people from its use and limiting the sanction to a short period unless the perpetrator continues to engage with services to help reform their behaviour. LBTH cannot unilaterally introduce this sanction, but the Working Group believe that officers should take a close interest in the progress of the pilot scheme and report back to Cabinet on the merit of Tower Hamlets participating in any future pilots.

#### **Recommendation**

- R6 That the Borough Commander provides details of running costs to enable an assessment of an expansion in the number and duration of Good Behaviour Zones.
- R7 That the Council look at progress of the pilot scheme to withdraw housing benefit from those found guilty of persistent ASB and report back to Cabinet on the merit of Tower Hamlets participating in any future pilots.

## **Safer Neighbourhood Teams**

- 47 Ward-based Safer Neighbourhood Teams have been introduced to provide a visible uniformed presence and discourage crime and anti-social behaviour. Tower Hamlets was the first authority in London to roll-out these teams across every ward in the Borough. The evidence shows that SNTs have had some impact in reducing crime and ASB. However, many residents are yet to be convinced of their effectiveness.
- 48 Working Group was specifically told that the local SNT response was too slow. A number of residents did acknowledge that SNTs are not meant to be rapid response teams, but anecdotal evidence seems to indicate that the response could be quicker and involve greater feedback to residents. A pilot study is apparently in process, looking at SNT response times to ASB calls made by residents.
- 49 The Metropolitan Police representative confirmed that SNT resources are overstretched. The demands of the shift system mean that it is extremely unlikely that more than three or

four of the officers within the six-strong teams would be out any one time. In a ward as big as Bethnal Green South, this is just not sufficient to cover the ground.

- 50 The Working Group considers that an increase in the size of each SNT could have a significant impact on the levels of low level crime and ASB, and especially on public perceptions. However, any expansion would clearly involve significant additional funding. The costs of this would almost certainly fall on LBTH itself, and so the Working Group believes it is prudent to test the effectiveness of a double-sized SNT before rolling it out more widely.

#### **Recommendation**

- R8 That SNTs provide Members with data on response times to ASB calls made by residents, to help evaluate the effectiveness of SNTs in their current capacity.
- R9 That LBTH set aside funding to pilot an expanded SNT of six PCs and six PCSOs in at least two wards for a period of up to two years.

### **Public View**

- 51 The Working Group met with representatives of Tower Hamlets Local Area Partnership and other local residents on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2008. Many issues were raised.
- 52 It was apparent that many of the residents are not aware of the Tower Hamlets ASB Strategy except that ASB seems to be a back office activity in that policy and strategies are in place but not much is happening on the streets. Although some residents agreed that the Council is working towards tackling ASB, some questioned the level of effort being exerted. Residents also reported that they still did not feel comfortable reporting ASB for fear of retribution. Others raised concerns about the continuing problem of young people using council properties to perpetrate ASB within estates.

#### **Recommendation**

- R10 That the Community Safety Service with the help of the Tower Hamlets Partnership and East End Life look to better promote the Council's ASB strategy to residents in the Borough.

- 53 Many residents felt that an enhanced provision of youth facilities would be an essential factor in reducing ASB. Youth Services have already been the subject of a Scrutiny Challenge Session and a series of recommendations were made by those members that took part.
- 54 Responding to Anti-Social Behaviour is not only a matter of reacting to complaints of misbehaviour, but is also about promoting tolerance, diversity and a respect for others. Through schools, it is necessary to develop young people's responsibility and involvement in the community to give them a sense of attachment.

- 55 Residents discussed that role of Schools in tackling ASB, Most agreed that schools which promotes positive behaviour, intervenes early with bad behaviour and in most cases uses exclusions as a last resort after a range of measures have been tried. Problems in school can often be symptomatic outside. Schools should be engaged with broader support services to help identify problems early and deliver a whole household response wherever appropriate. There should also be a focused action on persistent absence, including truancy. This should involve the wide range of local public services and should target both the pupils and their parents.

**Recommendation**

- R11 That Children's Service with the help of Education Psychologist support schools to further help develop young people's appreciation of acceptable behaviour by reviewing behaviour codes and practises that are in line with tackling ASB.
- R12 That Children Service work with the Youth Offending Team (YOT) and other agencies to identify and support vulnerable children and young people, most at risk of causing ASB and ensure that wherever possible all pupils are able to access appropriate educational provision.

- 56 Some residents highlighted that Tower Hamlets has one of the highest population of young people in Europe. This meant that there would always be young people congregating in large groups. This should not be a problem, rather give opportunities to engage with young people.
- 57 Particular mention was made of the work on the Cleveland Estate, where a partnership approach helped utilise (amongst others) the Housing Directorate, Youth Service, and Rapid Response Teams. This work sought to decriminalise young people, with a resultant decrease of crime by 48 per cent. It was felt that similar methods could be rolled out to other estates across the borough.
- 58 Parents have a critical role in helping their children develop good values and behavior. Some residents argued that the Council should be looking to involve parents and families in incidents involving their children. It was felt that parents must be informed by the authorities of what their children were up to, to exercise a greater control over the children than any other authority could. Also the Council should evaluate its parenting provision in the local authority and see if these provisions are enough to support parents whose children are in risk of ASB.

**Recommendation**

- R13 That the Community Safety Service gives further thought into early intervention and family work through working with Children's service, Schools, Sure Start and Police to develop a long term strategy for preventive work with children and their families.

- 59 Whilst some residents acknowledged that Councillors and the Council had improved matters, there was a feeling that there was only so much government could be expected to do. Members of the community could not rely on further funding or resources, they themselves would have to do more.
- 60 What has to be tackled is a culture of lack of respect for the rule of law and order; residents were frustrated by either the lack of a police response or ineffectual action when they did.

## Young People's view

- 61 Question remains, of the extent to which perceptions of young people causing problems reflect actual incidents in the community and personal experience. Young people are generally seen as offenders, but this is not true of the majority. For those involved in ASB, preventive measures for tackling ASB should include working with children and young people to improve their understanding of social responsibilities and the consequences of anti-social behaviour.
- 62 The working group were invited to attend the Youth Partnerships "Cotchin' with the Councillors" session. This involved young people aged between 11 and 25 asking questions on ASB, with the Working Group being on hand to answer these questions.
- 63 From this session it appears that young people are as much victims as perpetrators of ASB. Young people felt that they have often had a bad press in recent years for the way they dress (hoodies), for hanging around and for generally being seen as threatening. Some also felt that peer pressure was also a reason for them committing ASB. One young person said that "*we have to fit in otherwise we'll be bullied or beaten up*". There was also a lack of confidence in the police; some felt that the police had a negative perception of them.
- 64 One group felt that ASB exists as a result of poor provisions for young people. Specific discussions took place on the role of youth clubs. Some felt that there are not enough youth clubs for young people. Also those fortunate to be near a youth club felt that the resources were poor. One said "*there is one pool table amongst 20 kids*". The young people agreed that the lack of proper facilities leads to young people "hanging out" on the streets.

### Recommendation

R14 . That the Council enhance youth services offered to young people, including both the quality of facilities within centres and the operating days/hours. Additional funding should be set aside to significantly expanded youth services on offer within at least two wards for a period of two years. Tower Hamlets Youth Service should undertake a thorough consultation, with young people, parents and schools to understand what would be most attractive in helping young people stay off the streets.

## Conclusion

---

- 65 The Council's strategy to tackle anti-social behaviour (ASB) sends out a strong message that anti social behaviour will not be tolerated in Tower Hamlets.
- 66 Discussions with residents and council officers indicate that there is a high priority to tackling anti-social behaviour in Tower Hamlets. Anti social behaviour can include: harassment, noise nuisance, damaging or public property, aggressive, offensive or threatening language or behaviour, violence against people or property, crimes based on discrimination and using housing accommodation for supplying drugs, or for other illegal purposes.
- 67 The council and its partners, especially the Safer Neighbourhood Teams and the Tower Hamlets youth service have policies and practice in place to tackle ASB. However further involvement of RSLs needs to develop.
- 68 Annual resident survey shows that concern about crime and ASB has fallen. This proves that the Council has made good progress but needs to continue to give high priority to tackling ASB, building on successes and meeting residents' priorities.

## Scrutiny and Equalities in Tower Hamlets

---

To find out more about Scrutiny in Tower Hamlets:

Please contact:

Scrutiny Policy Team  
Tower Hamlets Council  
6<sup>th</sup> Floor, Mulberry Place  
5 Clove Crescent  
London E14 2BG

[scrutiny@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:scrutiny@towerhamlets.gov.uk)

020 7364 0528

This page is intentionally left blank



# Agenda Item 10

<b>Committee</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Classification</b>	<b>Report No.</b>	<b>Agenda Item No.</b>
Overview and Scrutiny	6 May 2008	Unrestricted		
<b>Report of:</b> Acting Assistant Chief Executive <b>Originating Officer(s):</b> Afazul Hoque, Acting Scrutiny Policy Manager		<b>Title:</b> Overview and Scrutiny Committee Annual Report 2007/2008  Ward(s) affected: All		

## 1. Summary

- 1.1 This report provides a summary by Scrutiny Lead Members of their Overview and Scrutiny work during the civic year 2007/2008. It forms the basis of the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report that will be reported to full Council and circulated more widely early in the new municipal year.

## 2. Recommendations

Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to:

- 2.1 Consider and comment on the draft annual scrutiny report to Council
- 2.2 The Acting Assistant Chief Executive be authorised to agree the final report before its submission to Council, after consultation with the Chair and relevant Scrutiny Leads.

---

### LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT, 2000 (SECTION 97)

#### LIST OF "BACKGROUND PAPERS" USED IN THE PREPARATION OF THIS REPORT

Background paper

Name and telephone number of and address where open to inspection

Annual Scrutiny Report File in Scrutiny Policy Team

Afazul Hoque  
020 7364 4636

### **3 Report**

- 3.1 Overview and Scrutiny Committee co-ordinates all of the scrutiny activity within the Council. As well as the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee, there are six Scrutiny Leads: one each for the five Community Plan themes, with a further Lead for health. Under the Council's Constitution, Overview and Scrutiny must submit an annual report of its work to Council. This is attached as a draft at Appendix 1.
- 3.2 The Annual Report outlines the work both of the Committee and of the Scrutiny Leads and their working groups over the last year. This highlights the constructive policy development role that scrutiny undertakes through its reviews. It also outlines the ongoing progress that has been made in embedding overview and scrutiny within the Council. Pre-decision scrutiny of Cabinet reports continues to encourage greater debate around key issues, while call-ins have been debated in a robust and rigorous manner at Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The majority of the work programme agreed at the start of the year has been delivered.
- 3.3 The Annual Scrutiny report will be submitted to the first full meeting of Council in the new Municipal Year (25 June 2008). Following the report to Council, it will be circulated widely within the Council and across to its partners. A summary article will also be placed in Eastend Life.

### **4 Concurrent Report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal Services)**

- 4.1 Article 6.03 (d) of the Council's Constitution provides that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee must report annually to full Council on its work. The report submitted to Council following this consideration will fulfil that obligation.

### **5 Comments of the Chief Financial Officer**

- 5.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

### **6 Equal Opportunity Implications**

- 6.1 Equal opportunities are central to the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. A number of reports and reviews have specific equalities themes including licensing of strip clubs, tobacco cessation and tackling ASB.

### **7 Anti Poverty Implications**

- 7.1 Anti-poverty is central to some aspects of the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee particularly the review undertaken by the Scrutiny Lead on NRF Evaluation looked at how this funding has helped reduce the gap in deprivation.

### **8 Sustainable Action for a Greener Environment**

- 8.1 There are no direct implications.

### **9 Risk Management**

- 9.1 There are no direct risk management implications arising from this report.

Appendix 1 Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report to Council

**Overview and Scrutiny  
Annual Report**

**Tower Hamlets Council  
May 2008**

**DRAFT**



## Index

---

	Page
Overview and Scrutiny in Tower Hamlets	3
Overview and Scrutiny Cllr Marc Francis, Chair	5
Living Well Cllr Alex Heslop, Vice-Chair	11
Creating and Sharing Prosperity Cllr Alibor Choudhury	12
Excellent Public Services Cllr Mohammed Abdus Salique	13
Living Safely Cllr Salim Ullah	15
Learning Achievement and Leisure Cllr Ahmed Hussain	16
Health Scrutiny Panel Cllr Dr Stephanie Eaton	18

## Overview and Scrutiny in Tower Hamlets

---

Overview and Scrutiny looks at how the Council and its partners deliver services so that they meet local needs and contribute to the overall vision in the borough's Community Plan. It also monitors the decisions made by the Council's Cabinet to make sure that they are robust and provide good value for money.

Overview and Scrutiny has powers to review and scrutinise local health services and make recommendations to NHS bodies. It also considers other issues of concern to local people, including services provided by other organisations, and advises the Cabinet, Council and sometimes other partners, on how their policies and services can be improved.

### Membership

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee coordinates all Overview and Scrutiny work. Reflecting the overall political balance of the Council during 2007/08 the Committee's membership comprises five Labour councillors and one each from the Respect, Liberal Democrat, Respect (Unity Coalition) and Conservative parties.

As well as the councillors, there are five other people who sit on the Committee. They have specific responsibilities for education. There are two representatives appointed by the Anglican and Roman Catholic Dioceses. There are also two parent governors. Each of these representatives can contribute to any matters discussed by the Committee but they can only vote on education issues. The final member is a non-voting representative of the Muslim community for education issues. The decision to have this position was a local one in recognition of the large Muslim community in the borough.

### Scrutiny Chair and Leads

The Chair of the Committee in 2007/08 was Councillor Marc Francis. The Chair oversees the work programme of the committee as well as taking a lead on monitoring the Council's budget.

There are six 'scrutiny leads': one for each of the themes in the Tower Hamlets Community Plan, with a further lead on health issues. The Scrutiny Leads were:

- Cllr Alex Heslop (Labour) for "living well" focusing on improving housing and social care and Vice-Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- Cllr Alibor Choudhury (Labour) for "creating and sharing prosperity" focusing on bringing investment into the borough and ensuring residents and businesses benefit from growing economic prosperity
- Cllr Mohammed Abdus Salique (Labour) for "excellent public services" focusing on improving public services to make sure they represent good value for money and meet local needs
- Cllr Salim Ullah (Labour) for "living safely" focusing on reducing crime, making people feel safer and creating a more secure and cleaner environment
- Cllr Ahmed Hussain (Respect/Conservative) for "learning, achievement and leisure" focusing on raising educational aspirations, expectations and achievement, providing a wide range of arts and leisure, and celebrating the diversity of the community
- Cllr Dr Stephanie Eaton (Liberal Democrats) for "health", through the Health Scrutiny Panel, focusing on improving local health services and the co-ordination of different health service providers within the borough

The Scrutiny Leads actively promote the work of Overview and Scrutiny with residents, partners and other stakeholders. They also pick up any relevant issues on behalf of the Committee as a whole and led the working groups within their theme.

### **What does Overview and Scrutiny do?**

The Committee:

- looks at how the Council is performing by monitoring key strategies and plans
- looks at the Council's budget and how it uses its resources
- sets up time-limited working groups to look at issues in depth and make proposals for change. Suggestions for topics may come from elected Members, full Council, the Cabinet or from local organisations and residents.
- considers decisions made by the Cabinet that are 'called in'. This happens if there is concern about the decision or what information was considered
- reviews briefly the reports that are going to Cabinet for decision and raises any concerns.

As the Committee has such a broad responsibility, it focuses on a number of key priorities each year. These make up an annual work programme for each of the Scrutiny Leads. For each area there is usually one in-depth review, as well as a number of shorter pieces of work.

### **Health Scrutiny**

The Government has given local councils specific responsibilities to scrutinise health services. The Health Scrutiny Panel was set up to do this and can look at any matter about health services within the borough including hospital and GP services, health promotion and prevention. This includes the way that health services are planned, how services are provided and how NHS organisations consult with local people.

Under the Healthcare Commission's new Annual Healthcheck for all NHS trusts, the Health Scrutiny Panel can comment on local Trusts' declarations against 24 Core Standards. These cover seven areas: safety, clinical and cost effectiveness, governance, patient focus, accessible and responsive care, care environment and amenities and public health. There is also a duty on local health services to consult with the Health Scrutiny Panel if they are making substantial changes to services.

### **Annual Report**

This report provides a brief summary of the work of Overview and Scrutiny in 2007/08. Each member of the Committee outlines the work that they have undertaken both in the reviews that they have led and also their work on the Committee.

## **Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

### **Councillor Marc Francis, Chair**

---

This is the fourth year since we changed our arrangements for Overview and Scrutiny in Tower Hamlets. Our arrangements include:

- a single co-ordinating Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- five Scrutiny Leads scrutinising the Community Plan themes and one for Health matters
- pre-decision scrutiny of Cabinet reports
- performance monitoring by considering the Tower Hamlets Index, Strategic Plan, the Diversity and Equality Action Plan, Corporate Complaints and Members' Enquiries
- a robust call-in procedure

We agreed a challenging and extensive work programme in July 2007 and I believe we have delivered on the majority of it. Over the year, we regularly monitored our progress to make sure we remained on track to complete our work.

This year, we have improved significantly the engagement with Lead Members at Committee. They have presented the majority of reports within their portfolio that the Committee considered, as well as responding to call-ins. I think this is really important in making sure we hold the Executive to account and encouraging more discussion and debate among councillors.

There has also been a high level of engagement with the public. Firstly, the majority of our reviews sought the views and experiences of local people through visits and focus groups. Secondly, a number of deputations were made by members of the public at Committee, usually related to a call-in that was being considered.

### **Performance Monitoring**

We monitor the Tower Hamlets Index (THI) every two months and twice a year the Council's Strategic Plan and Diversity and Equality Action Plan. We are the only formal councillor forum that does this and it's important in making sure that our services are performing well. I believe this worked effectively and helped Overview and Scrutiny understand and comment on the wider performance of services - a key part of improving the quality of life of local people.

We also had monthly Scrutiny Spotlights at our Committee meetings for all of the Cabinet Members including the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council. At all the sessions Lead Members discussed the performance and challenges facing services in their area of responsibility. This was particularly useful for us to discuss issues of concern and suggest ways performance could be improved. It also helped involve Lead Members more in the scrutiny process and many of them commented how useful they found the opportunity to discuss policy and performance issues with non-executive councillors at Committee. The Leader of the Council at her spotlight session commented that "Overview and Scrutiny made a valuable contribution to the work of the authority, both through detailed reviews and comments on items referred to and from Cabinet". The Committee also has held discussions in a number of our meetings on ways recycling could be improved. We have suggested using faith groups to highlight the importance of this which the Lead Member agreed to investigate.

We also considered the Council's annual Corporate and Social Care Complaints report and an update on the Members' Enquiries system and performance. All councillors were pleased to see the improved performance in responding to both complaints and Members' enquiries.

Councillors represent local people and getting a quick and full response is an essential part of their work.

## **Policy Framework**

Within the Council's Policy and Budget Framework there are a number of key policy documents that set out how the Council will act. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee consider these before Council agrees them and this year we discussed the following:

- **Licensing Authority Policy Statement**  
The Committee welcomed and supported the Licensing Authority Policy Statement and recognised the extensive consultation that had occurred in its development. We welcomed the recommended changes in the Statement which will result in a more transparent licensing process and greater regulation and control of premises' activities. The Committee reinforced the importance of continuing improvement to the Licensing Policy and look forward to the incorporation of the outcomes of the Scrutiny Review Panel's investigation of the Licensing of Strip clubs.
- **Statement on Community Involvement**  
The Committee welcomed the Statement on Community Involvement and noted the consultation process that had been undertaken. The Committee acknowledged the importance of the document regarding the future of the Council and stressed the importance of facilitating effective community engagement in all aspects of planning. The Committee noted that at the Scrutiny Challenge Session on Determination of Major Planning Applications it was agreed that residents needed to be more involved and that all documents relating to this issue are made accessible to residents of the borough.
- **Youth Justice Plan 2008/2009**  
We welcomed the Youth Justice Plan and the contribution it will make to public safety in Tower Hamlets. We did raise a number of issues for Cabinet to consider which included quality of secure accommodation for young people, challenges faced in improving youth justice, sentencing trends, significant representation of Black and mixed raced boys in the criminal justice system, improved diversionary activities and that the issue of radicalisation should be explored in the Plan.
- **Disposal of Former Bishop Challoner School Site – Christian Street and Adjoining Playing Fields – Update Report**  
Cabinet referred this report to Overview and Scrutiny Committee for their comments before they made their decision. The Committee welcomed this opportunity and sought assurances from the Cabinet about minimising length of time when the sports field and community centre would be unavailable, ensuring no net loss of open space, negotiating with the developer to increase the percentage of affordable homes and that local residents should be fully consulted throughout the process.

## **Scrutiny of the Budget**

We considered the Council's budget at two of our meetings.

In July we considered the Financial Outlook report and supported the Council's approach. We have good and stable financial management within the Council and supported the inclusion of



third sector grants / service level agreements in the base budgets for the purpose of calculating saving targets. However, we felt the following areas needed further consideration:

1. Maximising lobbying activities regarding the potential loss of £3m in the social care budget as a result of the removal of “damping” provisions;
2. That resourcing in Democratic Services be continued at current level to ensure Members are able to undertake their role fully;
3. Continuing to develop and refine our planning for the future, especially medium term financial planning and around reserves and contingencies

In February, we considered Cabinet’s budget proposals for 2008/09. There was discussion about the consultation on the budget with residents and it was noted that there was scope to improve this in future years and to encourage a wider response. Committee Members also discussed concerns raised by Staff about the efficiency savings in Adult Services and the impact these would have on local residents. We welcomed the increase in Council Tax by only 3.5%.

### **Pre-decision scrutiny**

We can submit questions about our concerns to Cabinet before a decision is taken. I feel we have strengthened this over the year and commented on 65 Cabinet reports (compared to 41 last year). Among these were:

- Award for Contract for Taxi, Coach and Minibus Provision for Children with Special Educational Needs and Adults with Care Plan
- Olympic Legacy – Securing Benefits for Tower Hamlets from the future use of venues
- Tower Hamlets Local Area Agreement – End of Year Review
- Housing Investment Strategy – Establishment of Tower Hamlets Homes
- Rich Mix Cultural Centre
- Progressing Leaseholder Buy-backs to enable RSL Regeneration Scheme
- Parking Plan – Results of Consultation on Hours of Parking Controls in A6 and C3 mini Zones
- Hostel and Move-on Strategy
- Options for Multi-Faith Burial Facility for Tower Hamlets
- Annual Performance Assessment of Adult Social Care 2006/07

Our questions and concerns provided further information at Cabinet and clarified some uncertainties thus improving the decision-making process. The responses also inform councillors' decisions over call-ins. For instance, as a result of pre-decision questions, Cabinet have referred the report on Integrated Commissioning of Health and Social Care services for adults to the Health Scrutiny Panel.

### **Call-ins**

The Committee has considered sixteen call-ins this year. This is a slight decrease from last year when there were 19.

<b>Report Called-in</b>	<b>O&amp;S Decision</b>
Review of the Inclusion (SEN) Strategy	Confirmed
Tower Hamlets Environmental Strategy 2007 to 2010	Confirmed
Housing Investment Strategy 2007/08 to 2011/12	Confirmed
Transfer of the Teviot, Brownfield, Aberfeldy Estates	Confirmed
Ocean NDC Delivery Plan	Confirmed
Disposal of Former Bishop Challoner School Site	Referred back to Cabinet

Waste Disposal Contract - The Way Forward	Confirmed
Housing Investment Strategy - Establishment of Tower Hamlets Homes	Confirmed
Residential care for Older People in Tower Hamlets	Confirmed
Progressing Leaseholder Buy Backs to Enable RSL Regeneration Schemes	Confirmed
2 Gladstone Place - Granting of Development Lease	Referred back to Cabinet
Whitechapel Centre	Confirmed
Review of Street Markets Fees and Charges 2008/09	Confirmed
Blackwall Reach Regeneration Project - Development Framework	Referred back to Cabinet
Draft Ocean New Deal for Communities Delivery Plan 2008/9	Confirmed
Disposal of land at 10 Backchurch Lane E1	<b>Awaiting Decision</b>

Debate of the call-ins was robust and rigorous. We confirmed twelve decisions although on a number of these the Lead Members gave assurances that they would take some of the concerns raised onboard. We asked Cabinet to reconsider the other three. Although Cabinet reconfirmed its decision on all of the call-ins, they did take account of our comments and concerns. For example, on the Residential care for Older People in Tower Hamlets the Corporate Director, Adults Health and Wellbeing, re-negotiated a better contract for the Council providing value for money.

It is also worth highlighting that because of the items called in, attendance by local people and other councillors has increased substantially at the Committee meetings. This helps increase the profile of scrutiny and highlight the important role it has within the borough.

### **Co-opted and Appointed Representatives**

After the difficulty in appointing all of the co-opted Members last year we have now managed to recruit the two parent governors and three faith representatives. We organised an Induction Session for co-opted members and considered how we could develop their role and help them be more effective. The Muslim Community Faith representative attended the Challenge Session on re-visiting the Youth Service Plan Scrutiny Review and commented on how useful it was to see how the department had taken forward the groups recommendations. He was also involved in the initial review and suggested a number of ways the service could continue its progress.

We intend to build on this further next year to enable co-opted Members to help us engage more local residents in the scrutiny process and ensure that more of their concerns come to the Committee's attention.

### **Raising the Profile**

We continue to improve how and when we communicate with Members, Officers and the public. We used the weekly Members' Bulletin regularly. The Manager's Briefing and the staff newsletter, Pulling Together, were also used to promote scrutiny work, so that council officers are well informed about the scrutiny work programme, upcoming reviews, review findings, and how they can assist.

Eastend Life, and our Scrutiny web pages are also vehicles to keep residents informed about the work scrutiny was undertaking. There were a number of the reviews that attracted

significant interest from local people particularly the Licensing of Strip Clubs and tackling anti-social behaviour. There are more details of these in the reports by the Scrutiny Leads.

The Scrutiny review from 2003/04 - 'Employment & Cohesion' - was recognised as an example of good practice by the Centre for Public Scrutiny. They highlighted how equalities issues can be incorporated into the scrutiny review process to improve performance and also reach out to hard to reach communities. In their publication, 'Equal to the Task', they highlighted the good practice and recommended it to other councils. This along with the recent restructure of the Chief Executive's Directorate which created the Scrutiny and Equalities Service Team was an opportunity to highlight the importance of combining tackling inequality with strengthening community leadership. Officers from the Scrutiny Team have presented on this both at national and regional conferences and events.

### **Checking our own progress**

Twice a year we monitor the recommendations we have made, not just those at committee but also those from our reviews and other investigations. Services are asked to provide an update so we can see whether progress is being made. The latest monitoring indicates that nearly all of our recommendations since July 2004 are being acted on or achieved. We also held two challenge sessions to revisit reviews undertaken last year and in 2004/05. This included the reviews on access to GP/dentistry services and the Youth Service Plan both of which are further described by the Scrutiny Leads within this annual report. I feel these sessions have highlighted the impact scrutiny has on service delivery and helped us think about how to improve the scrutiny process.

### **Councillor Call for Action (CCfA)**

We have begun work with colleagues across the Council and our partners in developing a pilot for the Councillor Call for Action. Discussions are underway and we hope to incorporate this into our work programme for next year, depending on when guidance from the government is published

### **Licensing of Strip Clubs**

In addition to the scrutiny reviews undertaken by the Scrutiny Leads I also led one this year on the Licensing of Strip Clubs. This review arose from a Council motion with cross-party support, and sought to get to grips with an issue that has provoked strong feelings from many residents. Throughout the course of the review, questions of morality were never far from the surface, but Members were careful to ascertain what *could* be done before deciding on what *should* be done.

The Working Group held sessions with officers from the Council's Licensing and Legal team, the Police, residents, and officers from several other London authorities. We also considered evidence – best practice, case studies, and data – gathered from sources across the country, in order to come to our conclusions and recommendations.

We have proposed a series of practical recommendations – notably around increased levels of enforcement, advertising, consultation with residents on new applications, and an exploration of existing policies and legislation to see if more could be done. Furthermore, there were recommendations for the future – especially regarding lobbying government for legislation change, with the support of local and national groups and other authorities.

Residents expressed their satisfaction with the review as a signal of the Council taking their concerns seriously, and stated that they were pleased with the level of input they were able to have into the process. The review served as a good example of how Scrutiny can enable the Council to engage with residents on important issues, and take positive action.

## **Conclusion**

Overall, I believe scrutiny has made considerable progress this year. In particular, having Lead Members attend the Committee to present reports and outline the reasons for decisions has significantly enhanced the role and value of scrutiny. We are holding the Executive to account - particularly around performance monitoring and through considering call-ins – and influencing Cabinet decisions. The reviews have also made an important contribution to addressing local people’s concerns – for example, around tackling anti-social behaviour, licensing of strip clubs – and worked with partners, officers and other councillors to improve services.

In the pipeline are Government proposals to extend the role of scrutiny around health consultation and working with Local Strategic Partnerships (LSP) to monitor and implement Local Area Agreements (LAA). This is an exciting time to be part of Scrutiny and I believe that our work this year has equipped us to strengthen the impact of Overview and Scrutiny in the future.

As Scrutiny Lead for Living Well, my remit covers housing, health and social care, and promoting healthy living. As the Choice Based Lettings Scheme continues to generate a large number of Members Enquiries and much local interest, I wanted to review it to check how accessible the Scheme is and consider its wider impact on families and individuals.

#### **Scrutiny Review: Choice Based Lettings Scheme**

Alongside the high volume of Members Enquiries on Choice Based Lettings, overcrowding and homelessness are established challenges for the borough. The review focused on accessibility of the scheme particularly for older and disabled people. It was an extensive review which looked at medical assessments, homelessness, resident and stakeholder understanding of the Scheme and policy and transparency of decision making in allocating properties.

I facilitated a service improvement focus group of both users and providers which proved to be invaluable by identifying particular issues around access and community understanding. We also visited the East London Lettings Company to learn about how other service providers meet the challenges of improving access and community understanding.

Key issues noted by the Working Group were the complexities of managing the policy and the varying level of community understanding of the Scheme.

It has been a challenging and exciting review to work on but I believe we have come up with some challenging recommendations focusing on the following key themes:

- Improving customer access and community cohesion
- Improving quality and outcomes for community groups
- Tackling overcrowding
- Widening choice and access to social housing

For example we have recommended introducing allocation of social housing based on waiting time on the housing register, this issue has been debated in Housing for a number of years, now it is time to look at how this might work in practice. There is a possibility that Housing services could potentially join the East London Lettings Company which is an exciting opportunity to look at how access can be expanded with prospects for residents to get real-time feedback on any bids they make, addressing many local concerns.

The review concluded that the service has a challenge in providing housing in the context of high demand, acute housing needs and insufficient supply. The Scrutiny Review provides an opportunity to address service improvements and supports the proposed service improvement agenda of the Arms Length Management Organisation.

#### **Conclusion**

Although the Housing Department have pioneered the Accessible Housing Register, improved information for disabled people and is recognised for the work on overcrowding, we cannot stand still in striving to improve the service given its impact on many of the most vulnerable members of our community.

Despite the developments around Canary Wharf and the City, Tower Hamlets remains one of the most deprived boroughs in the Country. Although progress has been dramatic in many areas over recent years, we remain determined to accelerate improvement even further. As Scrutiny Lead for Creating and Sharing Prosperity I wanted to explore the partnership approach we have taken to tackle deprivation locally and achieve lasting renewal.

### **Evaluating NRF**

When deciding on my work programme I wanted to focus on the reality that in our borough poverty is still experienced by too many people evidenced by the high uptake of means tested benefits, high unemployment and worklessness and high crime rates. Consequently I was determined to focus my work on what we are doing to create better outcomes in our most deprived areas.

I decided to undertake a review on evaluating the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF), to see how this funding has contributed to the improvement of our deprived areas. Over the course of the review, the working group heard evidence from the Tower Hamlets Partnership on how it approached the allocation of NRF to improve mainstream provisions. We also met with Chairs and Vice-chairs from the Local Area Partnerships (LAPs) to discuss how NRF has made a difference in their localities. Furthermore we held a session with Council officers from the Children Looked after Central Team and Access to Employment Team both of them managed projects funded by NRF, to discuss if there had been a narrowing of the gap between the most deprived areas and the rest.

I feel the review has successfully identified recommendations for allocating future regeneration grants in particular the new Working Neighbourhood Fund. It has also highlighted the important role Members, LAP representatives and local residents need to play in identifying priorities and leading on the implementation of some of the projects.

### **Major Planning Applications**

We seek to improve the quality of life of the people living, working, and visiting Tower Hamlets by ensuring there are opportunities for high quality development. I was interested to know more about how the Council determines major planning applications and chaired a challenge session to increase understanding and awareness of the pre-planning application process. The Group made strong recommendations about consultation and involvement that I hope will help inform and involve residents when major planning applications are made.

### **Conclusion**

As Scrutiny Lead for Creating and Sharing Prosperity, I believe evaluating how NRF has been spent and how major planning applications are determined will help to address local needs. I believe the Council and our partner agencies need to continue to deliver real change in reviving economies, creating safer communities and offering high quality public services.

The Excellent Public Services Scrutiny portfolio is wide-ranging, cutting across all Council Directorates and services provided by our partners. My role on Overview and Scrutiny this year has been to ensure we are providing value for money and are delivering services in ways that meet local needs.

### **Use of Consultants**

This year's review focused on the way we procure consultancy services within the Council. The review recognised that consultants are needed to lever in additional resources and skills. At the same time it is important to ensure that we achieve maximum value for money and that the Council considers using existing staff or builds in skills transfer and staff training wherever possible.

The key aims of the review were to look at the circumstances in which Consultants are used by Directorates and to explore current practices in engaging and managing consultant contracts. Therefore the working group reviewed expenditure on consultants from 2005/06 onwards and looked at a number of case studies. These included the use of consultants to deliver business process improvement exercises and in developing the borough's Masterplans (spatial planning documents).

We found that there was sometimes a lack of coherence about how consultants should be contracted and differences between Directorates about defining consultants which meant that there were different methods for recording expenditure. The working group welcomed the downward trend in the proportion of spend on consultants and that the majority of consultants were being used to deliver short term project work or to meet statutory regulations which require third party involvement for example to carry out Environmental Impact Assessments.

The review recommendations included the proposal for a corporate definition of consultants and the promotion of good practice to procure consultants in the future by the Council.

### **Translating and Interpreting Services**

The provision of translation and interpreting services by local authorities has been a major area of focus following the completion of the Commission on Integration and Cohesion. There have been a number of recent government briefings and guidance documents covering the emerging debate on the need to promote English language skills as a tool for developing community cohesion provided the background for reviewing our own service provision in this area. The Challenge Session explored the issues in greater detail to understand the impact of these policy developments on local communities in the borough.

The Council will be looking to compare findings of this Challenge Session with London Borough of Hackney in the next municipal year.

### **Conclusion**

This has been a productive year because I think that the recommendations of the review will help to achieve value for money and increase the use of existing staff and encourage employee skills development in a much more coherent and consistent way across the Council. I believe this will improve the transparency of the way we work and improve services for local people.

We expect everyone to take pleasure in living and working in Tower Hamlets, without the fear of violence, intimidation and attack. But crime still remains at the top of the list of concerns for most residents. As Scrutiny Lead for Living Safely I wanted to investigate the extent of Anti-Social behaviour in Tower Hamlets and the effectiveness of the Safer Neighbourhood Teams in our Wards.

### **Tackling Anti Social Behaviour (ASB)**

Anti-Social Behaviour can range from serious violence and harassment to noisy neighbours and dumping rubbish but any of these can be distressing to both individual and the whole community. I decided to focus on a review exploring the possible future direction of the Council's Anti-Social Behaviour strategy, in line with national developments and policy.

Over the course of the review, the working group met officers from the Tower Hamlets Community Safety Service and representatives from the Local Strategic Partnership including officers from the Metropolitan Police Service and the Tower Hamlets Youth Service. We also held a couple of focus groups with local residents and young people to hear different perspectives of how ASB should be tackled.

I believe we have to continue to see ASB as a major area of residents' concerns. The working group have requested that officers from the Council and Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) provide information on how they are meeting the six strands of the Respect agenda. This would include supporting families particularly the most challenging ones, improving behaviour and attendance in schools, activities for children and young people, strengthening communities through effective enforcement and community justice. It is my belief that our recommendations are robust and will assist the Council's fight to continue to reduce ASB.

### **Effectiveness of Safer Neighbourhood Teams (SNTs)**

SNTs are trained to communicate with a wide range of people, communities and partners, to tackle and solve community problems about quality of local life, for instance ASB, criminal damage, abandoned vehicles and graffiti. I chaired a one-off challenge session to evaluate the role of SNTs on our streets. Key recommendations arising from this session included; greater advertising of the role of SNTs so that residents are aware of their work and the need to improve the retention rates of officers.

### **Conclusion**

ASB is an important issue consistently raised as an area of concern in Annual Residents Survey and we need to remain focused to find solutions. With the help of officers, guided by the Tower Hamlets ASB strategy statement and Partner agencies I am confident that we will continue to see a steady decline in ASB activity. Furthermore I am a strong advocate of SNTs and hope that we can look to increase the number of teams in all our wards in the foreseeable future to continue their good work.



As Scrutiny Lead for Learning, Achievement and Leisure, my remit focuses on raising educational aspirations, expectations and achievement, providing the widest range of arts and leisure opportunities for all and celebrating the rich cultural diversity of our communities. With the Olympics on our doorstep I wanted to focus on leisure services and access particularly for young disabled people. I was keen to ensure that young people of all abilities increase their participation in sports leading up to 2012. I also undertook a Scrutiny Challenge Session to revisit a previous scrutiny review on the Youth Service Plan.

### **Scrutiny Challenge Session: Youth Service Plan**

In the Challenge Session I set out to examine the progress of a previous scrutiny review on Youth Service Plan and the impact this had on service delivery. At the same time it was an opportunity to reflect on the role of scrutiny. Youth service is important in Tower Hamlets particularly because of the high proportion of young people and changing population and I wanted to make sure that more recent concerns were brought to the attention of the service through this challenge session.

The Working Group made a number of recommendations around further involving and developing Member understanding, involving local voices in service planning and delivery, and supporting and improving access for community groups.

### **Scrutiny Review: Young People's participation in sports leading up to the Olympics**

Tower Hamlets is one of the host boroughs for the Olympics which is a fantastic opportunity for us all. I wanted to make sure young people get an opportunity to take part in the momentum generated by the Olympics and be encouraged to take up more sports and physical activities and improve their health.

Young people should strongly influence decisions we make. I talked to young people at the Youth Fair, local leisure centres, through schools, youth centres, third sector organisations and parents and carers at the Mile End Hospital Children with Disabilities Physiotherapy Department. Their views were invaluable in helping us to agree the final recommendations.

Having considered current initiatives and the views of local people, key recommendations to come out of the review focused on the themes below:

- Supporting and improving access;
- Experiencing the Games;
- Partnership working and,
- Focusing on health. [

For example young people said they are interested in playing and training in a range of sports and we have recommended that the service provides coaching and training based on the expressions of interest by young people, including making provisions as part of the Building Schools for the Future Programme. I'm excited by the potential the Olympics has to offer for local young people, recommendations framed around partnership working and experiencing the Games will open many doors to our young people in terms of their experience of engagement with young people in other host boroughs and giving them access to world class facilities that the Olympics will offer.

A new development arising from this scrutiny review was the production of a short DVD to illustrate how scrutiny works, and how the community leadership role of councillors can lead to change and influence decisions after listening to the voices of local people.

### **Conclusion**

I am pleased that we have such fantastic facilities in Tower Hamlets and that the opportunities offered by the Olympics should help us establish contact between different groups in different boroughs and promote community cohesion. I am looking forward to seeing this work progress.

## **Health Scrutiny Panel**

### **Cllr Dr Stephanie Eaton**

---

The Health Scrutiny Panel undertakes the Council's functions under the Health and Social Care Act, 2001. The Panel includes members who are co-opted from the three NHS Trust Patient Public Involvement (PPI) forums to represent patient views. Next year the establishment of the Local Involvement Network will replace the forums and I would like to take the opportunity to thank Dr Amjad Rahi from the Barts and the London NHS Forum, Mr Nuruz Jaman from the Tower Hamlets Primary Care Trust Forum and Mr John Lee from the East London NHS Foundation Trust Forum for their contributions. I would also like to thank Councillor Dr Emma Jones (Vice-Chair) who kindly chaired meetings in my absence.

This was the second year of the four year work programme developed by the Health Scrutiny Panel. We looked to build on the work undertaken last year by still retaining our focus on reducing health inequalities. We undertook a Challenge Session in which we were pleased to note the progress in implementing the recommendations from last year's review on access to GP/ dentistry services.

The Panel undertook two service visits this year. At the Barkantine Centre Members were given a tour of the facilities available at the new centre. We also visited the East London NHS Foundation Trust at their base in Mile End Hospital. Both these visits were useful in developing the panel's relationship with the Trusts and understanding of service provision by the NHS.

### **Tobacco and Smoking Cessation**

The key Health Scrutiny review this year looked at Tobacco and Smoking Cessation both from the perspective of Health Services and in terms of the Tobacco Control work carried out by the Council's Trading Standards team.

The Health Scrutiny Panel took a distinctively local approach to the problems that arise in our community from the use of tobacco products. We looked at the supply of cheap (often illegal) tobacco products through our street markets, and researched the availability of these to young people. The review also considered the high smoking prevalence among Bangladeshi men and the use of paan more widely in Bangladeshi homes.

A key part of the review focused on the materials used to promote tobacco cessation and the Panel were surprised at the lack of any comprehensive evaluation of 'what works'. There was also anecdotal evidence that health care workers such as midwives, occupational therapists and community mental health workers struggle to include smoking cessation advice with their other guidance and support to patients.

The recommendations cover a range of areas including the need to improve data collection, local engagement strategies, the evidence base, enforcement and advice to retailers. We hope that these recommendations will be implemented quickly and in full. The human and financial cost to our community of continued ill health and premature death demands we address the threat of tobacco with vigour and urgency.

### **Shah Jalal Medical Centre**

This year the Panel held a number of additional meetings to investigate reports of problems at the Shah Jalal Medical Centre, both in terms of the appointments system and issues around the physical accessibility and treatment of patients. We welcome the significant measures taken by the PCT to respond to the issues raised and the positive impact this has had for patients using the practice. At the final meeting to discuss the issue the PCT reported that the

phone system had been changed to allow more people to get through and staff were being trained to improve the levels of customer care and that the new measures had already started to improve services for patients.

### **Pan-London Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

The NHS London report, Healthcare for London: A Framework for Action has set out a radical vision for how healthcare services would be provided in the future. Authorities across London including from neighbouring Counties convened the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee (JOSC) to prepare a response to the consultation on the proposals.

Both I and Cllr Marc Francis were nominated to represent the borough on the JOSC and it has been a challenging experience where we have engaged with complex health issues considering both local needs and the need to develop a strategic-level voice on London-wide issues.

There are wide-ranging recommendations emerging from the JOSC bringing issues such as transport, patient involvement, equalities and equity of service provision to the fore. We look forward to the NHS London response to our findings and recommendations.

### **The Annual Healthcheck**

The Healthcare Commission assesses all NHS Trusts in the UK against 24 Core Standards covering the seven areas of safety, clinical and cost effectiveness, governance, patient focus, accessible and responsive care, care environment and amenities and public health.

The Panel reviewed the Annual Healthcheck Declarations of all three Trusts as part of the Annual Healthcheck process and has provided comments based on evidence gathered over the past year.

The issues raised included the poor performance of Maternity Services at Barts and the London Hospital, the need for more Bangladeshi Nurses and used the findings of the tobacco and smoking cessation review to comment on the Trusts' self-assessment. I am pleased that all the Trusts responded positively to our comments and are taking measures to address them.

### **Conclusion**

It has been another positive and very full year for the Health Scrutiny Panel. We have carried out an ambitious review and responded flexibly to local concerns such as working to resolve the problems experienced at the Shah Jalal Medical Centre. At the last meeting of the Panel we also considered a Draft Health Scrutiny Protocol which I hope will be reviewed and adopted in the coming year and help to continue to develop a closer working relationship with the three NHS Trusts serving the borough.

## Scrutiny and Equalities in Tower Hamlets

---

If you want to find out more about Overview and Scrutiny in Tower Hamlets, please contact the Scrutiny Policy Team:

Please contact:

Scrutiny Policy Team  
Tower Hamlets Council  
6<sup>th</sup> Floor, Mulberry Place  
5 Clove Crescent  
London  
E14 2BG

Tel: 0207 364 4636  
Email: [scrutiny@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:scrutiny@towerhamlets.gov.uk)  
Web: [towerhamlets.gov.uk/scrutiny](http://towerhamlets.gov.uk/scrutiny)

This page is intentionally left blank