1. **SUMMARY**

1.1 This report submits the responses and action plan to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Working Group on the Evaluation of Neighborhood Renewal Funding.

2. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Cabinet is recommended to: -

2.1 Approve the Action Plan attached at Appendix 1, which are responses to the recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Working Group on the Evaluation of Neighborhood Renewal Funding.

2.2 Consider the report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Working Group on Evaluation of Neighborhood Renewal Funding attached at Appendix 2.
3. **BACKGROUND**

3.1 The Working Group was established in November 2007 to evaluate the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund. The investigation sought to evaluate the way funding was spent and to investigate the extent to which NRF intervention has helped reduce the gap in the most deprived areas and the rest.

3.2 The Working Group has made a number of recommendations aimed at improving residents and councillor’s involvement in neighbourhood renewal. It has also suggested learning points for future funding. The Working Group recommendations focus on four areas that require consideration, they include recommendations on:

1. Governance arrangements
2. Communication and consultation
3. Management of funding
4. Future targets and priorities

They are intended to look at lessons learned from Neighbourhood Renewal Funding, which as of April 2008, no longer exists and support the Tower Hamlets Partnership with forward planning for when the new Working Neighbourhood Fund is introduced.

It is worth noting that recommendations 11 to 14 have already been achieved. These are recommendations around; improving communication between each segment of the Tower Hamlets Partnership, that the Tower Hamlets Partnership develops a strategic commissioning framework for regeneration funds in future when funding is carried out, Mainstreaming funding and a continued focus on employability and skills.

3.3 The Review report with recommendations was agreed at Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 6th May 2008 and is attached at Appendix 2. A detailed Action Plan setting out the responses to the recommendations of the relevant officers is attached at Appendix 1.

4. **BODY OF REPORT**

4.1 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.

5. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

5.1 This report sets out a series of proposals arising from the Overview and Scrutiny review of the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund. 2007/08 was the final year NRF was allocated to Local Authorities, as accountable bodies, for Local Strategic Partnerships to determine spending priorities in accordance with their Neighbourhood Renewal Strategies. The review has focussed on future Tower Hamlets Partnership arrangements, and the role of the Partnership in delivering the Local Area Agreement, along with ensuring of improved value for money with regard to future external funding streams. The Council has agreed a commissioning strategy for the Working Neighbourhoods Fund which is in line with these principles.

5.2 Costs of additional programme evaluation in line with recommendation R6 of the report will need to be met either from appropriate existing mainstream budgets or as a first call on respective external funding regimes such as Working Neighbourhoods Fund. Other costs arising from the recommendations are predominantly opportunity costs relating to staff time. With regard to recommendation R15, any allocations are subject to Cabinet approval as part of the budget making process.

6. CONCURRENT REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE (LEGAL)

6.1 There are no immediate legal consequences arising from this report.

7. ONE TOWER HAMLETS CONSIDERATIONS

7.1 With issues around funding it is important that distribution of resources take place to all groups from different backgrounds.

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 IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no direct risk management implications arising from the Working Group’s report or recommendations.
10. **EFFICIENCY STATEMENT**

10.1 The report sets out different approaches to the way the Woking Neighbourhood Fund can be spent, with a renewed interest in mainstreaming and offering value for money. The recommendations make clear that the commissioning approach to future funding, needs to be more robust. This is to ensure that funding is efficient and is spent on projects that offer the best return.

---

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

List of “Background Papers” used in the preparation of this report

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brief description of “background papers”</th>
<th>Name and telephone number of holder and address where open to inspection.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scrutiny Review File held in Scrutiny Policy Team</td>
<td>Ashraf Ali 02073640528</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11. **APPENDICES**

1: Action Plan and response to Overview and Scrutiny Committee Working Group on Evaluation of Neighbourhood Renewal Funding.

2: Overview and Scrutiny Committee Working Group report: Evaluation of Neighbourhood Renewal Funding.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>Response / Comments</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R1</td>
<td>That a Members seminar be organised on how Local Area Agreement (LAA) targets are identified and met.</td>
<td>A Seminar on the LAA will be organised in Jan / Feb 09. It is proposed to refresh the LAA at the end of year 1. This is because the Government delayed target setting on a number of the indicators and to allow an assessment of the targets set as it was the first year of measuring many of them. This process starts in November 2008, with the aim of concluding in the first quarter of 2009. A Members Seminar on the LAA as part of this process would allow Member input. Six month monitoring data will also be available – in December 08 - for a number of the indicators and this can also be considered at the seminar.</td>
<td>Alan Steward, Interim Service Head - Strategy and Performance</td>
</tr>
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</table>
| 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. | The LAA indicators and targets were driven by the refresh of the Tower Hamlets Partnership Community Plan so that they reflected the key priorities for the borough. Only indicators from the new national indicator set could be included within the LAA. Our LAA includes targets on most of these measures as follows:  
- there are 16 statutory educational attainment, 10 of which include aspects of KS2 and KS3  
- three indicators are included around employment rates: employment rates (NI 151), people claiming out of work benefits in the worst performing wards (NI 153)and people claiming out of work benefits (NI 152)  
- Under 18 conception rate (NI 112) is included  
- Coronary Heart disease is not included. The LAA includes targets for the all age all cause mortality (NI 120) - which is seen as the best composite indicator of | n/a |
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|   | health – as well as obesity (NI 56) and smoking (NI 23).  
- There is one national indicator around incapacity (NI 173). This is not included in the LAA but – as part of the national indicator set – it will be monitored as one of the Council’s priority indicators. |   |
| R3 | That the Tower Hamlets Partnership ensures that the guiding principles of the Partnership Charter are adhered to; making sure that there is continuity in the way the Partnership functions. This should include better publicity through East End Life and also on the Partnership website. Furthermore all new and existing LAP members and Partners should be given a copy to refer to. | The Partnership Charter is currently being updated as part of the Partnership refresh process. We are ensuring this is aligned with the Citizens Charter and will be launched as part of the Community Plan launch. 

The refreshed Partnership Charter will be on the Partnership website, as it is currently. All members will be asked to read, agree and sign up to the Partnership. |
|   | Susan Ritchie, Interim Head Participation and Engagement Team | October 2008 |
| R4 | That Tower Hamlets Partnership introduces a learning and development programme for Local Area Partnership (LAP) | A Development and Training programme is currently being prepared for all Partnership members and will be implemented throughout the autumn and winter months. |
|   | Susan Ritchie, Interim Head Participation and Engagement Team | September-March 2009 |
members which include a session on how funding decisions are made.

<p>| R5 | That a document detailing LAP roles and responsibilities is sent to all residents, along with an invitation to attend LAP meetings. | This will be part of the new Terms of Reference for the Partnership Governance. These are currently in draft and after 30th July Cabinet they will be agreed and sent to all members of the Partnership. | Shazia Hussain, Interim Director of Tower Hamlets Partnership | November 2008 |
| R6 | That the Tower Hamlets Partnership undertakes a corporate approach to project evaluation to improve value for money. This evaluation should include an analysis of project methods, scale, target group, value for money. | Full evaluations have been carried out for all NRF interventions. We will ensure that these are done corporately for the Working Neighbourhood Fund (WNF), once activities have been commissioned. There will be a need to earmark a specific sum from the WNF to undertake this detailed evaluation work. | Shazia Hussain, Interim Director of Tower Hamlets Partnership | On-going |
| R7 | That the Tower Hamlets Partnership carry out a review of all employment project client outcomes to identify which interventions were most effective. | Details of all output monitoring has been made available, along with independent evaluations undertaken in this area. These will be used to inform the process for commissioning of WNF interventions. | Shazia Hussain, Interim Director of Tower Hamlets Partnership | 2008 |
| R8 | That CPAGs operate joint commissioning on | A commissioning framework has been agreed by Cabinet with regard to those interventions to be supported through the | Shazia Hussain, Interim Director of | On-going |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>R9</th>
<th>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</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A mapping exercise is being undertaken by Development and Renewal to facilitate a better assessment of the scale of the local third sector in Tower Hamlets, the services provided by it and the target beneficiaries. This will then help to inform outreach arrangements for engaging the broader community, undertaken by the Participation Team in the Tower Hamlets Partnership. Furthermore a programme group of third sector agencies and lead officers to be chaired by Lead Member for Regeneration,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shazia Hussain, Interim Director of Tower Hamlets Partnership / Dave Clark, Head-Accountability and External Funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>December 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R10</td>
<td>That CPAGs identify project delivery methods when commissioning projects. This should ensure that suitable outreach to clients is scrutinised at the project commissioning stage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R11</td>
<td>That the Tower Hamlets Partnership reviews 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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R12</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R13</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R14</td>
<td>That employability and skills should remain a priority for the Tower Hamlets Partnership. The project appraisal should identify which client group is being targeted.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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. | Subject to Cabinet approval, LAP Steering Groups will be able to commission localised activity up to the value of £300,000. This is being developed into the Participatory Budget Model to be rolled out in April 2008. | Shazia Hussain, Interim Director of Tower Hamlets Partnership | September 2008 |
| 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. | The Participatory Budget Model has a menu of options. One such option will be around improving SNTs. | Shazia Hussain, Interim Director of Tower Hamlets Partnership | April 2009 |
| R17 | That the Tower Hamlets Partnership should examine the | The possibility of developing a similar scheme to that operating in the London Borough of Newham will be for consideration by the appropriate CPDG. | Steve Halsey – Corporate Director CLC | On-going |
| possibility of funding a similar Working Futures scheme to ease the poverty trap facing homeless families in the Borough. |   |   |
Appendix 2

Scrutiny Review
Evaluating Neighbourhood Renewal Funding

Tower Hamlets Council
May 2008
# Index

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Acknowledgements

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Councillor Alibor Choudhury

Working Group members:

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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

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John Houghton – Local Resident

London Borough of Tower Hamlets

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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
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Robin Harris, Tower Hamlets Information System (THIS borough) Manager, Strategy and Performance

Scrutiny and Equalities

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Bob Perkins, Edaw
Patrick Gulliver, Edaw
Sheikh A. 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

Over the past ten years, Tower Hamlets has worked with the government and local communities to significantly improve the quality of life and life chances of the residents of our poorest neighbourhoods. Ten years ago, we were one of the worst performing boroughs in key indicator scores. Today, we are at or above the London average, and Tower Hamlets council is now recognised as a 4 star authority. However we still have greater ambitions to accelerate improvements in the future.

Despite the developments around Canary Wharf and the city, Tower Hamlets still continues to remain one of the most deprived boroughs in the country. Most local authorities have just one or two deprived areas. Tower Hamlets is unusual in that deprivation is spread across the whole borough and affects our diverse communities in different ways. The level of deprivation in the borough is borne out by the government's 2007 Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), which confirms Tower Hamlets as one of the most deprived areas of the country on a basket of indicators covering income, employment, health and disability, education, skills and training, barriers to housing and services, crime and the living environment.

As part of its drive to transform deprived areas and improve the lives of the poorest residents, the government gave the country’s most deprived local authority areas a Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF). Tower Hamlets received £23.9 million in NRF for the period April 2001 to March 2004 and £31.8 million for 2004 – 2006. We received a further £30.9 million for 2006 - 2008. The NRF was used to accelerate improvement by ensuring that service providers and local people work together to target efforts where the need is greatest. To bring about real, lasting improvements, it is essential that public services, voluntary and community groups, businesses and residents plan and work together, with a clear, agreed approach towards tackling local residents’ main concerns.

This report follows a three month long inquiry by the Scrutiny Review Group. The Group heard a range of evidence, talked to staff and residents and questioned officers from the Tower Hamlets Partnership team. Discussions were interesting and informative, and at times rousing. I would like to thank and congratulate the members for the time they invested in this review and praise the effort of all, in contributing to this piece of investigation.

The conclusions and recommendations outlined in the report are intended to reflect upon the way NRF was spent in Tower Hamlets and to help set challenging approaches for delivering future neighbourhood renewal initiatives.

I believe the ideas made in this document will help deliver a robust approach for when the Working Neighbourhood Funding (WNF) is introduced, helping to support our Council and partner agencies deliver real change in reviving economies, creating safer communities and offering high quality public services.

Cllr Alibor Choudhury
Scrutiny Lead, Creating and 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 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 the Tower Hamlets Partnership ensures that the guiding principles of the Partnership Charter are adhered to, making sure that there is continuity in the way the Partnership functions. This should include better publicity through East End Life and also on the Partnership website. Furthermore all new and existing LAP members and Partners should be given a copy to refer to.

R4 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.

R5 That a document detailing LAP roles and responsibilities is sent to all residents, along with an invitation to attend LAP meetings.

R6 That the Tower Hamlets Partnership undertakes a corporate approach to project evaluation to improve value for money. This evaluation should include an analysis of project methods, scale, target group, value for money.

R7 That the Tower Hamlets Partnership carry out a review of all employment project client outcomes, to identify which interventions were most effective.

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 reinforces 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 to 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.
Findings

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 still remains 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 were 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.

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

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 Dw ellings.

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. The group felt that Ward level data offered a better approach to analysis then 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. Therefore, the group
studied borough level data to see if there has been a narrowing of the gap since the introduction of NRF. This is detailed below.

**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.

![English % Level](4+ 2006/07)

![Maths % Level](4+ 2006/07)

**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.

**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.
**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).

**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.

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

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.

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.

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)](chart1)

![Female Life Expectancy 2003/05 (Years)](chart2)

**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.
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

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)

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.

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 Renaisi is an independent not-for-profit company specialising in the design, development and delivery of regeneration projects and programmes. Renaisi 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 Renaisi 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LAP Interventions</th>
<th>Summary of Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Safer Neighbourhood Scheme</td>
<td>• Intervention will contribute significantly towards meeting related floor targets and the LAP targets of improved community safety.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Education block proposal</td>
<td>• 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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Open Spaces block proposal</td>
<td>• 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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Health block proposal</td>
<td>• 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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Youth Block Proposal</td>
<td>• 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.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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. Since 2004, THCEN received just over 1.4 million pounds of NRF money 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:

- Elect 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Targets</th>
<th>Achievements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increase participation in local consultation and decision making by – 550 contributing to LAP events</td>
<td>955 an increase of 73% above target</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Increase in the number of residents sometimes defined as hard to reach by 5% to: | a) BME -757 an increase of 130% above target  
b) Bangladeshi – 512 an increase of 140% above target  
c) Somali 61 an increase of 20% above target  
d) Young people under – 348 an increase of 351% above target |
| a) BME 329  
b) Bangladeshi 213  
c) Somali 51  
d) Young People 77 |  
Increase the strength of the Third Sector to increase participation and involvement by:  
Increasing the number of organisations engaged in voluntary sector networks to 350 | 390 organisations engaged within Voluntary Sector Networks an increase of 11.4% above target |
| Small grants programme 100% of funding allocated to benefit 100 organisations | 106 organisations funded with an additional 16 organisations benefiting from a total of £180,000 total awarded |
| Youth and Community Leaders programme to train 250 community and youth leaders | Over 450 people trained of which 170 were young people – an increase of 80% above target |

The work of Tower Hamlets Access to Employment

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 up. This includes a strategy for a co-ordinated cross borough approach to public sector recruitment across the council. Included with in the Task groups are; 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 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 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 legislation, including the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal.
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.

Work carried out involved, developing positive relationships between young people and safeguarding against sexual exploitation. Also 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. Furthermore emphasis was placed around sex and relationships education being part of a life long process of learning, forming beliefs, developing values and attitudes about sex, sexuality, sexual health and emotions. Support needs to be given to children and young people to help cope with adolescence and enabling them to prepare for adult life in where young people can develop values and a moral framework that will guide their decisions, judgements and behaviour.

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 that 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 The Group were keen for Tower Hamlets Partnership to ensure that everyone working within the Partnership set up understood their role and responsibilities. Along with the Community Plan, the Partnership Charter was cited as a means of making people understand how the Partnership aims to improve the quality of life for local people. To that end the group were keen for there to be publicity of the Partnership Charter so that new and existing LAP members and Partners understood the Tower Hamlets Partnership ethos.

49 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.

50 The Woking 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.

51 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.
R3 That the Tower Hamlets Partnership ensures that the guiding principles of the Partnership Charter are adhered to; making sure that there is continuity in the way the Partnership functions. This should include better publicity through East End Life
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)**

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.

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.

The LAP Action Plans are vital in targeting resources to deliver the biggest impact against the priority LAA outcomes. They also provide the basis for developing effective and locally-driven solutions that meet local needs.

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.

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.

58 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 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**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R4</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R5</td>
<td>That a document detailing LAP roles and responsibilities is sent to all residents, along with an invitation to attend LAP meetings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R6</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R7</td>
<td>That the Partnership carry out a review of all employment project client outcomes to identify which interventions were most effective.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**The Community Plan Action Groups (CPAGs)**

59 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.

60 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, with emphasis on progress towards floor targets and promises set out in the Community Plan.

61 All interventions funded through NRF have 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.

62 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.
63 The Working group felt that a greater emphasis was required in 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 projects. This focus on outcomes is important to ensure quality assurance and standards are met.

64 Furthermore the group sought more focus in 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**

| 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)

65 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.

66 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.

67 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 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 being 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.
NRF Commissioning Process

The Local Area Partnership (LAP) and the Community Plan Action Groups (CPAGS) identify areas of priorities to help endorse funding. This is based on information using the ward data analysis, service and local information and experience of using services in the local area. Neighbourhood Renewal (NR) decisions are based on discussions, dialogues and consensus and is coordinated by LAP and CPAG leads. This is followed by the identification of lead organisations and partners to carry out NR and a submission of a detailed proposal for specific targeted initiative is made. 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. PMG then considers NRF proposal and then a service agreement is prepared and the interventions commence. The Working group felt that for future funding it was important that the commissioning process be more rigorous to ensure that the relative small amount of money allocated through the Working Neighbourhood Fund is spent strategically and offers value for money.

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

70 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.

71 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 10th highest allocation in the country, and the 3rd 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.

72 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.

73 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

74 Through the review, the Working Group was regularly reminded that the Borough wide 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.

75 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.

76 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.

77 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. The group consider that business opportunities and employment prospects would be similarly enhanced if these measures were replicated in Tower Hamlets. It was widely recognised that funding an expanded SNT service sits less easily under the WNF than the NRF, but that it would be both possible and beneficial to undertake a pilot scheme in the Borough.

78 It was argued that the estimate the cost of doubling the size of an SNT in one ward is 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

79 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.

80 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.
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.

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. The Working Group felt 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

83 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.

84 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.

85 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.
## Appendix 1 - Renaisi evaluation progress against target

### Community Plan and Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy:

#### Progress against key targets 2004 - 2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target area</th>
<th>What we said we would achieve</th>
<th>Our performance</th>
<th>Success:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Crime</td>
<td>- Reduce crime and reduce the gap between highest CDRP areas and best comparable areas</td>
<td>- 7.3% reduction total crime compared to 2003/4. This compares favourably to a London-wide fall of 4.3% in the same period.</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Acquisitive crime  | - Reduce acquisitive crime, - with a 25% reduction in domestic burglary - with a 14% reduction robbery - with a 30% reduction in vehicle crime against a 1998/9 baseline | Floor target achieved for residential burglary and robbery. Not met for vehicle crime though significant improvements over last two years  
- Domestic burglary - down 32.9%,  
- Robbery - down 15.7%,  
- Vehicle crime - down 14.5%  
- Relative position for residential burglary within the family of boroughs has improved  
- Relative position for robbery now below median rate for family of boroughs | ✓        |
| Road deaths        | - Reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured in road accidents by 40% against 1998 figure | - The number of road deaths per year fell by 38.8% compared to the average for the period 1994-1998. | ✓        |
| Fear of crime      | - Reduce fear of crime                                                                       | The Annual Residents Survey is positive in terms of perceptions of safety across all sections of the community with a 3% drop in the number of those rating crime as a major concern | ✓        |
| Youth crime        | - Reduce youth offending                                                                     | The 2005 targets were reached in 2004 and youth offending reduced by a further 14% in 2004  
- First time youth offending has fallen by 15.5% since last year although re-offending has risen 2.6% | ✓        |
| Arson              | - Reduce number of non-accidental fires                                                     | Non-accidental rubbish container fires fell by 22.3%                                              | ✓        |
| Antisocial behaviour| - ASB reduced by 5% by March 2005 and by 10% by the end of 2006-7                           | 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 | X        |
| Substance misuse   | - Reduce the impact of substance misuse                                                      | The number of young people accessing drugs treatment increased by 18% since last year  
The number of adult offenders accessing drugs treatment through the Drugs Intervention Programme increased by 7% since last year | ✓        |
| Recycling          | - Increase tonnage of recycled waste                                                         | Tonnage of recycled waste has increased 7.3% since 2003/4                                           | ✓        |
| Cleanliness        | - Increase the ENCAMS Cleanliness Index for the borough's streets                           | ENCAMS Index score improved from 68% in 1003/4 to 74.8% for 2004/5                                  | ✓        |

Highlighted / shaded areas = floor targets
## Community Plan and Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy: Progress against key targets 2004 - 2005

### Living Well

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| **Life expectancy & mortality rates**    | • Reduce gap in life expectancy at birth between Tower Hamlets and population as a whole    | • Ward data report indicates improvements in male and female life expectancy rates:  
  - Female – 6 month improvement since 2003  
  - Male – 3 month improvement since 2003     | ✓       |
| **Teenage Pregnancy**                    | • Reduce under 18s conception rate                                                          | • On target to achieve floor target if current progress is maintained  
  • Local data suggests a 26% reduction since 1998 with an 8% reduction since 2003. | ✓       |
| **Access to health care**                | • Quicker access and shorter waiting times                                                  | • On average 96% of patients now spend no more than 4 hours in A&E  
  • Improved waiting times although,  
  - 9% of patients exceeded 13 week maximum waiting time for new outpatient appointments with consultants, although all patients were seen within 17 weeks  
  - 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 | ✓       |
| **Healthy lifestyles**                    | • Increase the number of people who successfully stop smoking                                | • On target, 3911 people stopped smoking between 2003-05                         | ✓       |
| **Housing and housing services**         | • Increase proportion of social housing judged to be of a decent standard  
  • Improve access to affordable homes                                                  | • Performance (5.46%) was above the London average increase in decency (2.76%) between 2002/03 and 2003/04.  
  • 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.  
  • 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.  
  • 538 new affordable homes have been built and 28 private homes have been returned to use | ✓       |

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

### Learning, Achievement and Leisure

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| Educational attainment           | • To increase the percentage of pupils obtaining 5 or more GCSEs at grade A* to C to at least 38%  
• 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  
• 85% of 11 year olds to achieve level 4 or above in English and Maths | • 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.  
• % of 14 year olds achieving level 5 or above improved significantly:  
  - 57% English (up 3%)  
  - 58% Maths (up 3%)  
  - 43% Science (up 2%)  
• % of 11 year olds achieving level 4 or above improved significantly:  
  - 77% English (up 3% - in line with national average rate of increase)  
  - 75% Maths (up 4% - above national average rate of increase) | ✓  
| School performance               | • Improve school performance across the borough  
• Every school in the borough has at least 25% of pupils obtaining 5 or more GCSEs at grade A*-C | • 2 schools are currently identified by OFSTED as having serious weaknesses and 1 school is in special measures  
• 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% | ✓  
| School attendance                | • Improve primary school attendance | • 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  | ? ✓  
| Participation in lifelong learning | • Maintain adult participation in lifelong learning activities at high level of 9,700 learners achieved last year | • 11,756 learners participated in lifelong learning courses, a 21% increase over last year | ✓  

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

### Learning, Achievement and Leisure

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     - 75% Maths (up 4% - above national average rate of increase) | ✔️   |
| School performance           | • Improve school performance across the borough  
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   • 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% | ✔️   |
| School attendance            | • Improve primary school attendance                                                          | • 20034 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 | ? ✓    |
| Participation in lifelong learning | • Maintain adult participation in lifelong learning activities at high level of 9,700 learners achieved last year | • 11,756 learners participated in lifelong learning courses, a 21% increase over last year | ✔️   |

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• Every school in the borough has at least 25% of pupils obtaining 5 or more GCSEs at grade A*-C | • 2 schools are currently identified by OFSTED as having serious weaknesses and 1 school is in special measures  
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| School attendance                | • Improve primary school attendance                                                           | • 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 | ? ✓    |
| Participation in lifelong learning | • Maintain adult participation in lifelong learning activities at high level of 9,700 learners achieved last year | • 11,756 learners participated in lifelong learning courses, a 21% increase over last year | ✓   |
### Excellent Public Services

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| Better value services| • Recognition by residents that services are improving                                         | Annual Residents Survey:  
  • Satisfaction with the Council rose in every LAP area apart from LAP4. Satisfaction with the Health Service rose everywhere except LAP2, while satisfaction with Policing rose everywhere except LAPs 2, 5 and 6 | ✓        |
| Young people         | • Increase youth involvement in planning services                                              | Our Youth Participation Strategy 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. | ✓        |
| Access               | • Improve access to services for all residents                                                  | 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)  
  • A draft Language Charter is in place, and the new Language Support Service launched in January 2005 fully meets its requirements | ✓        |
| Equalities           | • Workforce to reflect the community                                                           | The proportion of BME employees in the Council’s top 5% of earners has increased from 13.4% in March 2003 to 17.5%  
  • 20 trainees have been recruited to the Council’s Graduate Development Programme  
  • 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  
  • In the Police service, 29% of police officers (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. | ✓        |
| Community Cohesion    | • Improve cohesion amongst communities                                                         | 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 Promoting Race Equity and Getting Closer to Communities are further indications of our strength. | ✓        |