

Meeting of the

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 31 July 2007 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):
Chair: Councillor Marc Francis Vice-Chair:	
Councillor Alibor Choudhury Councillor Stephanie Eaton Councillor Peter Golds Councillor Alexander Heslop Councillor Ahmed Hussain Councillor Oliur Rahman Councillor Mohammed Abdus Salique Councillor Salim Ullah	Councillor Louise Alexander, (Designated Deputy representing Councillor Stephanie Eaton) Councillor Shahed Ali, (Designated Deputy representing Councillors Ahmed Hussain and Oliur Rahman) Councillor Tim Archer, (Designated Deputy representing Councillor Peter Golds) Councillor Rania Khan, (Designated Deputy representing Councillor Ahmed Hussain) Councillor Abjol Miah, (Designated Deputy representing Councillor Ahmed Hussain) Councillor M. Mamun Rashid, (Designated Deputy representing Councillor Oliur Rahman) 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 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: Mark Redhead, Democratic Services, Tel: 020 7364 4877, E-mail: mark.redhead@towerhamlets.gov.uk

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 31 July 2007

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.

Note from the Chief Executive

In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, Members must declare any **personal interests** they have in any item on the agenda or as they arise during the course of the meeting. Members must orally indicate to which item their interest relates. If a Member has a personal interest he/she must also consider whether or not that interest is a **prejudicial personal interest** and take the necessary action. When considering whether or not they have a declarable interest, Members should consult pages 195 to 198 of the Council's Constitution. Please note that all Members present at a Committee meeting (in whatever capacity) are required to declare any personal or prejudicial interests.

A **personal interest** is, generally, one that would affect a Member (either directly or through a connection with a relevant person or organisation) more than other people in London, in respect of the item of business under consideration at the meeting. If a member of the public, knowing all the relevant facts, would view a Member's personal interest in the item under consideration as so substantial that it would appear likely to prejudice the Member's judgement of the public interest, then the Member has a **prejudicial personal interest**.

Consequences:

- If a Member has a **personal interest**: he/she must declare the interest but can stay, speak and vote.
- If the Member has **prejudicial personal interest**: he/she must declare the interest, cannot speak or vote on the item and must leave the room.

When declaring an interest, Members are requested to specify the nature of the interest, the particular agenda item to which the interest relates and to also specify whether the interest is of a personal or personal and prejudicial nature. This procedure is designed to assist the public's understanding of the meeting and is also designed to enable a full entry to be made in the Statutory Register of Interests which is kept by the Service Head of Democratic Services on behalf of the Monitoring Officer.

3. UNRESTRICTED MINUTES

To confirm as a correct record of the proceedings the unrestricted minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 3 July 2007.

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'

6.1 REPORT CALLED IN - Disposal of Former Bishop Challoner School Site – Christian Street and Adjoining Playing Fields (Pages 11 - 26)

7. SCRUTINY SPOTLIGHT: FINANCE AND RESOURCES

The Lead Member for Finance and Resources, Councillor Joshua Peck, will report on the Council's Performance Management Framework and how it delivers improvements for local people.

There will be opportunities for questions and answers.

(Time allowed: 30 Minutes)

8. BUDGET AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

8.1 Financial Outlook and Review 2008/09 - 2010/11 (Pages 27 - 60)

This report sets out the financial pressures facing the Council in the medium term and the level of resources likely to be available to meet those pressures.

(Time allowed: 15 Minutes).

9. PERFORMANCE MONITORING

9.1 Tower Hamlets Index Monitoring Report (Pages 61 - 72)

This report introduces the end of May monitoring report for the Tower Hamlets Index 2007/08.

(Time allowed: 15 Minutes)

9 .2 Corporate Complaints and Social Care Annual Report (Pages 73 - 114)

Report containing a summary of complaints received by the Council in the period April 2006 to March 2007.

(Time allowed: 10 Minutes)

10. SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT

10 .1 Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2007/08 (Pages 115 - 128)

Report outlining the work programme for Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) for municipal year 2007/08.

(Time allowed: 10 Minutes)

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

(Time allowed: 15 Minutes)

12. ANY OTHER SECTION ONE (UNRESTRICTED) BUSINESS CONSIDERED TO BE URGENT

13. 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.

14. RESTRICTED MINUTES

To confirm as a correct record of the proceedings the restricted minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 3 July 2007.

15. SECTION TWO REPORTS 'CALLED IN'

15 .1 REPORT CALLED IN - Disposal of Former Bishop Challoner School Site – Christian Street and Adjoining Playing Fields (Pages 133 - 150)

(Time allowed: 20 Minutes)

16. **PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF SECTION TWO (RESTRICTED) CABINET PAPERS**
17. **ANY OTHER SECTION TWO (RESTRICTED) BUSINESS CONSIDERED URGENT**

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

HELD AT 7.00 P.M. ON TUESDAY, 3 JULY 2007

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

Members Present:

Councillor Marc Francis (Chair)
Councillor Alibor Choudhury
Councillor Stephanie Eaton
Councillor Peter Golds
Councillor Alexander Heslop (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Ahmed Hussain
Councillor Mohammed Abdus Salique
Councillor Salim Ullah
Councillor M. Mamun Rashid

Other Councillors Present:

Councillor Rania Khan
Councillor Abjol Miah
Councillor Oliur Rahman
Councillor Joshua Peck
Councillor Rupert Bawden
Councillor Abdal Ullah

Co-opted Members Present:

Mr H Mueenuddin – Muslim Community Representative

Guests Present:

–

Officers Present:

Suki Binjal – (Interim Head of Non-Contentious Team, Legal Services)
Ian Brown – (Interim Service Head, Corporate Property, Development and Renewal)
Michael Carr – Scrutiny Policy Officer
Afazul Hoque – (Acting Scrutiny Policy Manager)
Bryan Jones – (Service Head, Environmental Control, Environment & Culture)
Michael Keating – (Service Head, Scrutiny & Equalities)
Maureen McEleney – (Director of Housing Management)

Jackie Odunoye	– (Interim Service Head Housing Strategy and Development)
Emma Peters	– (Corporate Director, Development & Renewal)
Sara Williams	– (Assistant Chief Executive)
Angus Dixon	– (Democratic Services)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Oliur Rahman for whom Councillor Mamun Rashid was deputising.

RESOLVED

That the apologies for absence be noted.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following declarations of interest were made:

- Councillor Alex Heslop declared a personal interest in item 6.2 as he was a leaseholder in the Borough.
- Councillor Mohammed Abdus Salique declared a personal interest in item 6.2 as he was a leaseholder in the Borough.
- Councillor Salim Ullah declared a personal interest in item 6.2 as he was a leaseholder in the Borough.
- Councillor Alibor Choudhury declared a personal interest in item 6.4 as Ocean Estate was in the ward he represented.

3. UNRESTRICTED MINUTES

The Chair **MOVED** and it was

RESOLVED

That subject to the following amendments, the Section 1 minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Tuesday, 5th June, 2007 be confirmed as a correct record and the Chair be authorised to sign them accordingly:-

1. An addition at item 5.2 to the table of requested changes to the protocol '9.2 - that petitions and deputations only relate to items on the agenda'.
2. The noting of Councillor Shahed Ali's attendance at the meeting.

4. REQUESTS TO SUBMIT PETITIONS

There were no requests to submit petitions.

5. REQUESTS FOR DEPUTATIONS

One deputation request had been received from Mr Alec Steward on the subject of the transfer of Teviot, Brownfield and Aberfeldy Estates.

The Chair welcomed the deputation and asked its representatives to address the meeting. Mr Alec Lockhart, on behalf of the deputation, presented to the Committee the reasons why they wanted the estates to be transferred to Poplar HARCA as soon as possible. These included the ongoing deterioration of properties and the overwhelming support of the residents for the proposal.

The Deputation responded to questions put by Members covering the level of support within the estates for the transfer and the use of open space at Jolly's Green.

The Chair thanked the deputation for its attendance.

6. SECTION ONE REPORTS 'CALLED IN'

6.1 Tower Hamlets Environmental Strategy 2007 to 2010 (CAB 001/078)

Councillor Rania Khan for the call-in Members outlined the main issue that they held with the Environmental Strategy – namely that there is insufficient leadership shown by the Council with regard to reducing environmental impacts. They believed that there were further measures that the Council should investigate to become more environmentally sustainable.

Committee Members put detailed questions to the Lead Member for Cleaner, Safer, Greener, Councillor Abdal Ullah, and the Service Head Environmental Control, Bryan Jones, on a number of issues including working with larger developers to bring in new measures and recycling.

Councillor Ullah and Mr Jones responded in detail on the points raised stating that the Council is looking at what they can do to improve the environmental performance of 'new builds', and that whilst recycling is a focus area residents should also take some responsibility for making the schemes work.

The Committee considered that given the strategy is the Council's strategy, and not one for the entire Borough, that it should not have to encompass all the detail on the points discussed. Therefore it was decided the decision did not need to be referred back to Cabinet.

6.2 Housing Investment Programme 2007/08 to 2011/12 (CAB 004/078)

Councillor Abjol Miah for the call-in Members outlined the main issues that they held with the proposed Housing Investment Programme – including the money spent on the Council’s office refurbishment and inadequate levels of affordable housing. They believed that there were other options for housing investment and that the Central Government was acknowledging this.

Committee Members put detailed questions to the Lead Member for Development and Housing, Councillor Rupert Bawden, and the Director of Housing Management, Maureen McEleney, on a number of issues including the use of section 106 funds and the number of ‘new builds’ built by the Council.

Councillor Bawden and Ms McEleney responded in detail on the points raised stating that 106 funds can only legally be used for ‘new builds’, and that there were approximately 4000 ‘new builds’ built in 2005/06.

The Committee considered that given the urgent need to have money flowing into the Housing Programme, and that most of the Committee’s concerns had been addressed, that the decision process should not be delayed. Therefore the decision did not need to be referred back to Cabinet.

6.3 Transfer of the Teviot, Brownfield, Aberfeldy Estates (CAB 005/078)

Councillor Abjol Miah for the call-in Members outlined the main issues that they held with the proposed property transfers – including that there is insufficient detail provided in the report on which to base a decision and that there are inadequate levels of affordable housing prescribed. They believed that there were other options for the estates and that there had yet to be sufficient consultation.

Committee Members put detailed questions to the Lead Member for Development and Housing, Councillor Rupert Bawden, and the Director of Housing Management, Maureen McEleney, on a number of issues including the level of open space to be provided and options for refurbishment.

Councillor Bawden and Ms McEleney responded in detail on the points raised stating that there will be no net loss of open space and that whilst refurbishment was considered it was not the best value option.

The Committee considered that given the majority support of the residents for the transfers, and that assurances had been received on a number of key points, that the process should not be held up. Therefore the decision did not need to be referred back to Cabinet.

6.4 Ocean NDC Delivery Plan (CAB 007/078)

Councillor Oliur Rahman for the call-in Members outlined the main issues that they held with the Ocean NDC Delivery Plan – including that residents had overwhelmingly voted against the proposal and that residents are being forced into a situation due to a lack of planning by the Council. They believed

that there were other options for Ocean and that there had yet to be sufficient consultation with residents.

Committee Members put detailed questions to the Lead Member for Development and Housing, Councillor Rupert Bawden, and the Corporate Director Development and Renewal, Emma Peters, on a number of issues including the timeline to decide a partner for the plan and how residents would be represented on the Board.

Councillor Bawden and Ms Peters responded in detail on the points raised stating that it is envisaged it would take 12-15 months to confirm a partner and that there would be about 18 residents on the Board, whom would be selected as per best practice recommended by CLG.

The Committee considered that despite significant concerns regarding the residents 'ownership' of the project, that it was imperative that a decision, and consequently the much needed development, should not be delayed any further. Therefore the decision did not need to be referred back to Cabinet.

ADJOURNMENT

At 9:22 p.m. the Chair adjourned the meeting.

At 9:40 p.m. the meeting resumed consideration of the remaining items of business.

7. PERFORMANCE MONITORING

7.1 Strategic Plan 2006/07 (April 2006 – March 2007) End of Year Monitoring Report

Councillor Joshua Peck, Lead Member Performance and Resources, introduced the report explaining to the Committee that the Strategic Plan was based around the Council's specified outputs. Councillor Peck stated that for 2006/07 the Council had achieved completion of 75% of its activities which was a solid performance across the range of directorates. He also stated that the Council monitored a number of trends and targets in order to tackle problem areas.

The Committee discussed a number of issues including exploring further links between the strategic activities identified in the plan, and how this impacts at the operational level. The Committee discussed concerns on performance in a number of areas including the Rich Mix Cultural Centre, recycling, and various Children's Services activities to which the Lead Member responded.

The Chair **MOVED** and it was

RESOLVED

That the Committee note the good progress of the Council in actioning the Strategic Plan for 2006/07.

8. SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT

8.1 Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Work Programme

The Scrutiny Leads briefly commented on their review focus areas for the year ahead.

Health

Councillor Stephanie Eaton advised members that the Health Scrutiny Panel had already met and were targeting smoking cessation.

Living Well

Councillor Alexander Heslop informed the Committee that his review would surround 'Choice based letting'.

Excellent Public Services

Councillor Mohammed Abdus Salique told members that his work would include considering interpreting and translation, possibly jointly with Hackney and would be examining the cost effective use of consultants.

Living Safely

Councillor Salim Ullah stated that his topics would be focusing on Anti-Social Behaviour and the Safer Neighbourhood Teams.

Creating and Sharing Prosperity

Councillor Alibor Choudhury explained to the Committee that he was undertaking consultation with his constituents to help him focus his review area and that he hoped to have this finalised prior to the next meeting of the Committee.

Learning, Achievement and Leisure

Councillor Ahmed Hussain advised the Committee that he would be investigating the participation of young people, including those with severe disabilities, in leisure activities, and that this would tie into the Olympic Strategy.

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

The Committee discussed a number of concerns and areas in need of clarification at the 4th July Cabinet meeting.

Committee Members expressed concerns about the urgency requirements placed on the Olympic Legacy item. In particular Members felt that the Olympic Delivery Authority is rushing through issues without allowing boroughs to consult and debate issues. It was discussed that this may set a

precedent for future reports on the Olympics. The Committee felt that Cabinet should forward this concern to the ODA to ensure that in future sufficient time is allowed for consultation and debate.

The Chair **MOVED** and it was

RESOLVED

That the following questions be submitted to Cabinet for consideration:

Agenda Item 7.2 – The Redevelopment of Mayfield House Day Centre – Somali Resource Centre (CAB 014 078)

Para 3.7 – Does the Cabinet intend that the restricted tendering process should result in a Somali-led organisation or consortium being commissioned to run the proposed Resource Centre at Mayfield House?

Para 3.12 – Will the Cabinet require that Old Ford HA give a commitment to maintain the availability of the facility or an equivalent facility for community/care services, whether in its present location or through re-provision in the same vicinity as Mayfield House?

Para 4.2 – Will LBTH continue to meet the transportation costs of Somali elders using the Resource Centre once it has been contracted out?

Agenda Item 8.3 – Olympic Legacy – Securing Benefits for Tower Hamlets from the future use of venues (CAB 018/078)

What assurances has the Cabinet received about discounted admission for Tower Hamlets residents if it makes a financial contribution to the construction costs of the Aquatic Centre?

What evidence is there to support the claim in paragraph 7.3 that there will be an increase of 60,000 visits by Tower Hamlets residents if leisure water is included within the Aquatic Centre?

In view of the conditions and terms of use of Section 106 Agreements allowed, will Section 106 Monies raised from development projects in the borough indeed be available for the Aquatic Centre development, as suggested in the report? (Ref para 8.6).

We are promising to pay £1.5M towards the project over three instalments - mostly to come out of the S106 money- how did we calculate this figure when we are the smaller partner in the total project? The 10,000 properties to be built on the site - how much are we actually getting?

Can the Cabinet seek an agreement from the ODA that the Aquatic Centre will have access for disabled users?

Agenda Item 9.1 – Play Matters in Tower Hamlets: A Strategic Approach to Play in Tower Hamlets (CAB 109/078)

Can the Cabinet give reassurances that Registered Social Landlords will be expected to maintain existing open spaces and create new open spaces? What current conditions are included to ensure RSL are doing this? Will the Cabinet ensure this clause is included in future transfers to RSL's.

Agenda Item 9.2 – Proposal to Re-acquire Land at Weavers Field previously sold to East Thames Housing Group (CAB 020/078)

What work has been undertaken with East Thames Housing Group and residents of Drapers City Foyer to determine the merit of retaining the Weavers School Building for homeless young people?

Agenda Item 10.2 – Tower Hamlets Local Area Agreement – End of Year Review

Priority Outcome 1 - Does the failure to meet targets on assault and robbery indicate that a stronger police presence is needed within the Safer Neighbourhood Teams?

Priority Outcome 2 – What specific action has been agreed with the cleansing contractor to improve performance against the target to reduce the levels of litter and detritus on council land and highways, and what is “utilising Capital Standards technical support more fully” expected to achieve?

Priority Outcome 10 – Will the new model of home ownership being devised under the Community Land Trust model be affordable to those on average incomes in Tower Hamlets?

Agenda Item 10.8 – Disposal of former Bishop Challoner School Site Christian Street and adjoining playing fields – update report

How do you intend to create new open spaces as this is not made clear in the report? In light of the increase in local population does Cabinet feel that building a new community hall of the same size will be able to meet the need of the local community?

Agenda Item 11.1 – Housing Revenue Account Provisional Outturn Report 2006/07(CAB 029/078)

What factors led to the £5 million surplus on the Housing Revenue Account in 2006/07?

What was the total income from Leasehold Management & Administration service charges in 2005/06 and 2006/07, and what is the estimated Administration charge in 2007/08?

Does the Cabinet feel the Leasehold Administration charge should be recalculated in the light of the surpluses on the Housing Revenue Account in 2005/06 and 2006/07?

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

There was no urgent business considered.

11. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

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

RESOLVED

That in accordance with 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 contained information defined as exempt or confidential in Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government, Act 1972.

SUMMARY OF EXEMPT PROCEEDINGS

12. RESTRICTED MINUTES

The Chair **MOVED** and it was

RESOLVED

That subject to the following amendments, the Section 2 restricted minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Tuesday, 5th June, 2007 be confirmed as a correct record and the Chair be authorised to sign them accordingly:-

1. The noting of Councillor Shahed Ali's attendance at the meeting.

13. SECTION TWO REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION

13.1 Disposal of Former Bishop Challoner School Site – Christian Street and Adjoining Playing Fields – Update Report (CAB 013/078)

Councillor Joshua Peck, Lead Member for Performance and Resources, and Emma Peters, Corporate Director Development and Renewal, discussed the report and outlined the consultation activities that had occurred thus far and that were planned as the proposal progressed. A further report on the latest consultation event was tabled.

The Chair **MOVED** and it was

RESOLVED

That the meeting be extended under rule 9 of the Council's procedure rules.

The Committee welcomed the opportunity to comment on this report before it was considered by Cabinet and detailed a number of points that they felt Cabinet should consider.

RESOLVED

That the points raised be referred to Cabinet for consideration.

The meeting ended at 10:58 pm.

Councillor Marc Francis
Chair, Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Agenda Item 6.1

Committee OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY	Date 31 July 2007	Classification Unrestricted	Report No.	Agenda Item No. 6.1
Report of: ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE		REPORT "CALLED IN" – Disposal of Former Bishop Challoner School Site – Christian Street and Adjoining Playing Fields		
Originating Officer(s): Mark Redhead		Ward(s) affected: Whitechapel		

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 The attached report of the Corporate Director, Development and Renewal, Emma Peters, and Interim Service Head, Asset Strategy Capital Delivery and Property Services, Ian Brown, was considered by the Cabinet on 4 July, 2007 but has been "Called In" for further consideration by:
 - 1.2 A: Councillors Azizur Rahman Khan, Rania Khan, Peter Golds, Tim O'Flaherty and Stephanie Eaton; and
 - 1.3 B: Councillors Dulal Uddin, M Rashid, MA Munim, Oliur Rahman, and Rania Khan, both in accordance with the provisions of Part 4 of the Council's Constitution.
- 1.4 The call-ins each cover both the attached report and the restricted report considered by the Cabinet on the same matter which is circulated at item 15.1. Details of the call-in requisitions are also set out at agenda item 15.1, as they include exempt information.

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, 2000 (SECTION 97) LIST OF "BACKGROUND PAPERS" USED IN THE PREPARATION OF THIS REPORT

Brief description of "background paper"

**Cabinet report (CAB033/078)
dated 4th July, 2007**

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

**Mark Redhead
020 7364 4877**

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Committee Cabinet	Date 4 July 2007	Classification Unrestricted	Report No.	Agenda Item No.
Report of Emma Peters Corporate Director Development & Renewal		Title: Disposal of former Bishop Challoner School Site Christian Street and adjoining playing fields – update report		
Originating Officer(s) Ian Brown Interim Service Head, Asset Strategy Capital Delivery and Property Services		Wards Affected: Whitechapel		

1. **SUMMARY**

- 1.1.1 As part of the redevelopment proposals for this site, the Council will need to dispose of land which is currently open space to the developer. In the development proposals, re-provision of open space is a requirement to be met.
- 1.2 The Council may only dispose of open space having given public notice of the intention so to do and having considered any objections received. Following public notice, 146 objections in similar form have been received.

2. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Cabinet is recommended to:

- 2.1 Note the objections to the disposal of land as detailed in Section 4 and Appendix 2 to the report.
- 2.2 Approve the disposal of the land identified on the plan comprising Appendix 1 pursuant to redevelopment proposals to be agreed for this site.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT, 1972 SECTION 100D (AS AMENDED)

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

Brief Description of background paper

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

146 letters of objection

Angus Taylor
Senior Committee Officer
Tel: 020-7364-4333

3. **BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 Part of the land proposed to be disposed of for redevelopment is open space used for recreational purposes, including the area currently used as a football pitch. The area is shown on the plan attached at Appendix 1.
- 3.2 Pursuant to Section 123 Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) before disposing of such land the Council must give public notice of the intention to dispose and consider any objections to the proposed disposal which may be made.

4. **OPEN SPACE CONSIDERATION**

Notice of intended disposal was given in East End Life on 7 and 14 May with a closing date for comments or objections of noon on 11 June 2007.

Shortly before the closure of the objection period 146 letters of objection were delivered to the Council. These letters were all the same in nature and content but each was signed by a different person. These letters are available for inspection. An anonymised version of the form letter is attached at Appendix 2.

The letter raises 7 points of objection to the intention to dispose, comments upon which are as follows:

1. It is intended that in the redevelopment of the site there will be no net loss of open space, and that an area for active recreational use is a necessary element of that re-provision. At the present time the Council is consulting the local community in respect of how the open space can be improved, so the precise size and location of any facility has still to be determined. The final scheme will be developed having regard to the community consultation taking place. There has been further consultation arranged and the outcome of this will be reported at the meeting.
2. This report is unrestricted and in the public domain.
- 3-5. These objections do not relate to the intention to dispose of the open space per se, but to the redevelopment proposals, the subject of the further report on this agenda. Opportunities to develop the site to best advantage will all require the disposal of the current open space and its re-provision in redevelopment proposals.
6. The public notice provided a general description and referred to a plan showing the area more particularly. The plan was available for inspection throughout the objection period and is Appendix 1 hereto. The area of land/open space north of Bishop Challoner School is not the subject of the Council's intention to dispose. However in the redevelopment of the area it is hoped that this land will be improved along with the new open space provision by way of planning obligations in the section 106 agreement. Comments regarding the football pitch are set out in 1 above.
7. This refers to a separate open space notice which was incorrect. That land will be re-advertised without reference to re-provision of open space upon this site.

Not all the areas of objection specified in the form letter are relevant to the consideration of whether to dispose of the open space. Those which are relevant are numbers 1 and

6. The law requires that in reaching a decision Cabinet should take account of all relevant considerations but ignore irrelevant considerations.

5. **COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER**

5.1 There are no direct financial issues arising from the objections. Detailed financial implications of the disposal are considered in the further report on this agenda.

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

6.1 Section 123 Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) provides that the Council may not dispose of any land consisting or forming part of an open space unless before disposing of it public notice of the intention to dispose is advertised for two consecutive weeks in a newspaper circulating in the area in which the land is situated and consideration is given to any objection to the proposed disposal which may be made to the Council.

6.2 Public notice of the intention to dispose was given in East End Life on 7 and 14 May 2007 and that together with the Cabinet's consideration of the objection received at this meeting, fulfil the Council's obligations under the Act.

7. **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 None directly arising from this report though the re-provision of open space will provide further access opportunities for residents.

8. **ANTI POVERTY IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 The aim of disposal and re-provision of open space at a higher standard will help to address raising the level of community facilities in the area.

9. **SUSTAINABLE ACTION FOR GREENER ENVIRONMENT IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 As the disposal of the open space is tied up with proposals for re-provision resulting in no overall loss, the impact is a neutral one.

10. **RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 A decision not to dispose of the open space will give rise to additional implications for the further report on this agenda.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Bishop Challoner Open Space Layout 1

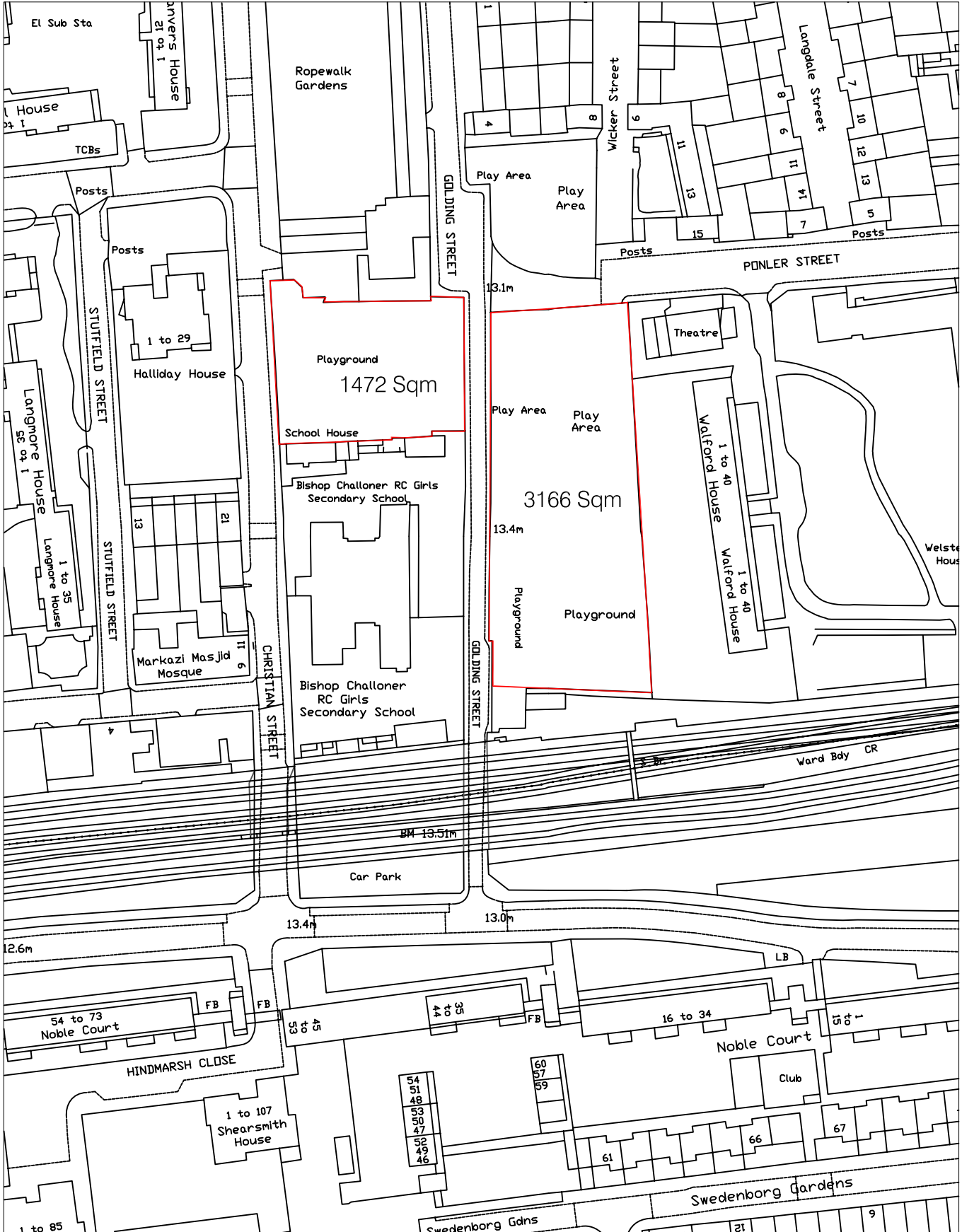
Appendix 2 – Bishop Challoner Objections

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FORMER BISHOP CHALLONER SCHOOL
SITE AT CHRISTIAN STREET, E1

advert

Scale : 1/1250



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London Borough of Tower Hamlets
Mulberry Place
5 Clove Crescent
London, E14 2BG

Dear Sir or Madam

RE: DISPOSAL OF OPEN SPACE AT GOLDING STREET, LONDON, E1

I wish to register my objection to the above disposal for the following reasons.

Objection 1: Do not want to change the characteristics of the current football pitch, as it cannot retain the same size and dimensions otherwise on site.

Objection 2: Council Report on this item should ~~not~~ be unrestricted so that the opportunity to petition and ask questions and put forward deputations is not excluded. Financial and contractual aspects can be kept confidential. The report presented to Cabinet in April 2007 was not restricted; therefore there is no reason why this latest or forthcoming report should be restricted.

Objection 3: Bellway Homes has been given exclusive rights to tender for this development. This should not be the case. There has been no opportunity to explore other proposals from other parties.

Objection 4: The cabinet exchanged contracts with Bellway Homes for acquisition of this site in September 2006 in ignorance of the cabinet decision taken in 2003 which clearly stated that the site has to be remarketed if the agreed dates for exchange and completion of contracts are not met.

Objection 5: Cabinet of April 2006 was asked if Bellway Homes had any legal right to make the council liable for contracts already exchanged, and the council responded that the exchange of contracts was NOT binding because it did not have council authority. However, the Cabinet report of June 2006 clearly stated that Bellway Homes were likely to challenge the council decision if the council were to withdraw from the contract.

This is a potential contradiction which needs to be addressed. The council is not in a position to make an informed and impartial decision in face of this threat. Favourable terms should not be exclusive to one organisation. The council must explore every possible opportunity to develop this site and to encourage better opportunities for its development.

Objection 6: Advert placed in East End Life, 7-13 May 2007, Page 36 does not provide an accurate description of the disposal. The advert says in the opening sentence: *"London Borough of Tower Hamlets intends to dispose of land held open space namely a former playground east of Golding Street London E1"*.

This is inaccurate because:

- It does not mention the area of land/open space north of Bishop Challoner School.
- There are areas surrounding the Community Building (Berner Centre) which is also not mentioned.
- On various occasions, Council officers have insisted to residents and various community stakeholders that the football pitch will not be lost, including its current dimension. However, this cannot possibly be the case if the pitch was relocated otherwise in the site.

Objection 7: Advert placed in East End Life, 4-10 June 2007, Page 36. Disposal of open space at Lukin Street, E1.

This advert states that loss of open space is to be re-provided in the Christian Street site. The objection in this case is that the Christian Street site is already oversubscribed, and not fit to serve as an alternative to the lost site at Lukin Street.

Name _____

Address _____

Signature _____ Date _____

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Former Bishop Challoner School

Christian Street

Consultation Update



June 2007

1. Introduction

- 1.0 In May 2007 the Council's Consultation & Involvement team was asked to undertake a consultation exercise in respect of the old Bishop Challoner School site, Christian Street and surrounding area.
- 1.1 The purpose of the consultation exercise was to explore the requirements of local residents on the:
- use and design of the publicly accessible open space *and*
 - use and design of a new community centre
- 1.2 In summary, the Council is seeking the redevelopment of the site to provide new homes, improved open space and a new community facility to replace the existing Berner community building. In particular, any redevelopment proposals must be based on the following principles:
- That there is no net loss of the existing amount of publicly accessible open space
 - The importance of integrating the open space with Rope Walk Gardens immediately to the north
 - The need to make provision for active recreational use within the open space – for example a sports pitch
 - The requirement to re-provide as a minimum the existing level of community floorspace to provide a new community building to better meet the needs of the existing occupiers

2. Consultation Process

- 2.1 The site area is 0.87ha. The boundary of the development site is illustrated in appendix A. To ensure the Council captured the views of all residents, a local walk-about of the area in question was organised. The walk about was scheduled to start at the Berner Community Centre where a discussion about the use and future requirements of a centre would take place. This was to be followed by a walk through the open space affected by the development, and resulting in a workshop activity to document the community needs, which was to be held in the Wapping Women's Centre. 3,500 invites were distributed amongst the local community.
- 2.2 All invitations were delivered by hand to avoid any delay with postage. Distributors of the invitation kept a record of which residences were inaccessible:
- Hogarth Court - 1 - 33;
 - Drewett House - 7 - 18;
 - Hawkness House - 1 - 22;
 - Hatson House, Cable Street - 1 - 85;
- 2.3 Over 50 local people turned up to participate in the consultation event, but the event had to be abandoned due to some residents' objections. Whilst there was not consensus about cancelling the consultation, some participants were so vociferous that it was not possible to ensure effective engagement took place. The main objections raised related to:
- unequal distribution of the leaflet (suggestions that not all households received the invitation);

- o insufficient information on the invitation (didn't clearly state that it was the Council conducting the consultation, and did not specify the details of the walk- about and resultant workshop);
- o objection to consultation taking place so close to cabinet meeting with the suggestion that decisions about the space and community centre had already been taken; and
- o local councillors felt they had not been adequately informed about the planned consultation event.

2.4 Subsequent quality checks on the distribution of the leaflet were inconclusive; some residents indicated they had received the leaflet and others said they had not (within the same blocks).

Whilst the invitation did not display the Council logo, the leaflet stated that the Council were conducting the consultation about community requirements for open space and a new community centre.

Planning for the consultation process took place as soon as was viable, and results made available in time for the planned cabinet meeting. Cabinet Members were clear that any decision on the use and requirements for the open space would not be made until consultation had been conducted.

All ward councillors were provided with an invitation which went out through Members' Services.

2.5 At the Cabinet meeting it was decided that additional efforts to consult the community should be made, in light of the confusion surrounding the first attempts. The following plan was agreed with Council officers and Councillors:

- o A full briefing on the disposal of the site, and the situation surrounding the open space and community centre, be provided to all ward councillors as soon as possible;
- o A letter outlining the key facts be sent to all residents in the surrounding area;
- o A telephone survey with a sample of residents be conducted; and
- o A meeting with key community groups to be arranged.

2.6 All of the above took place with the exception of a meeting with key community groups. Despite numerous attempts to make telephone contact it has been impossible to arrange a meeting. Where the Council has email addresses of those groups, an electronic request to contact the Council was also made. The only two groups that we were able to make contact with were:

- o The Environment Trust
- o Children's Education Group

The Environment Trust expressed a keen desire to be involved in the design of the open space once a developer has been agreed. They made a specific request that the developer commission the organisation to work with the community to design and deliver the open space in the area, as they have a successful track record of conducting meaningful involvement on this topic. If this is not possible it is essential that any future developer arranges an appointment with the group to explore options.

The Children's Education Group was keen to be consulted but unable to meet before the planned Cabinet meeting. They were however keen to be involved with any future discussions.

3.0 Consultation Findings

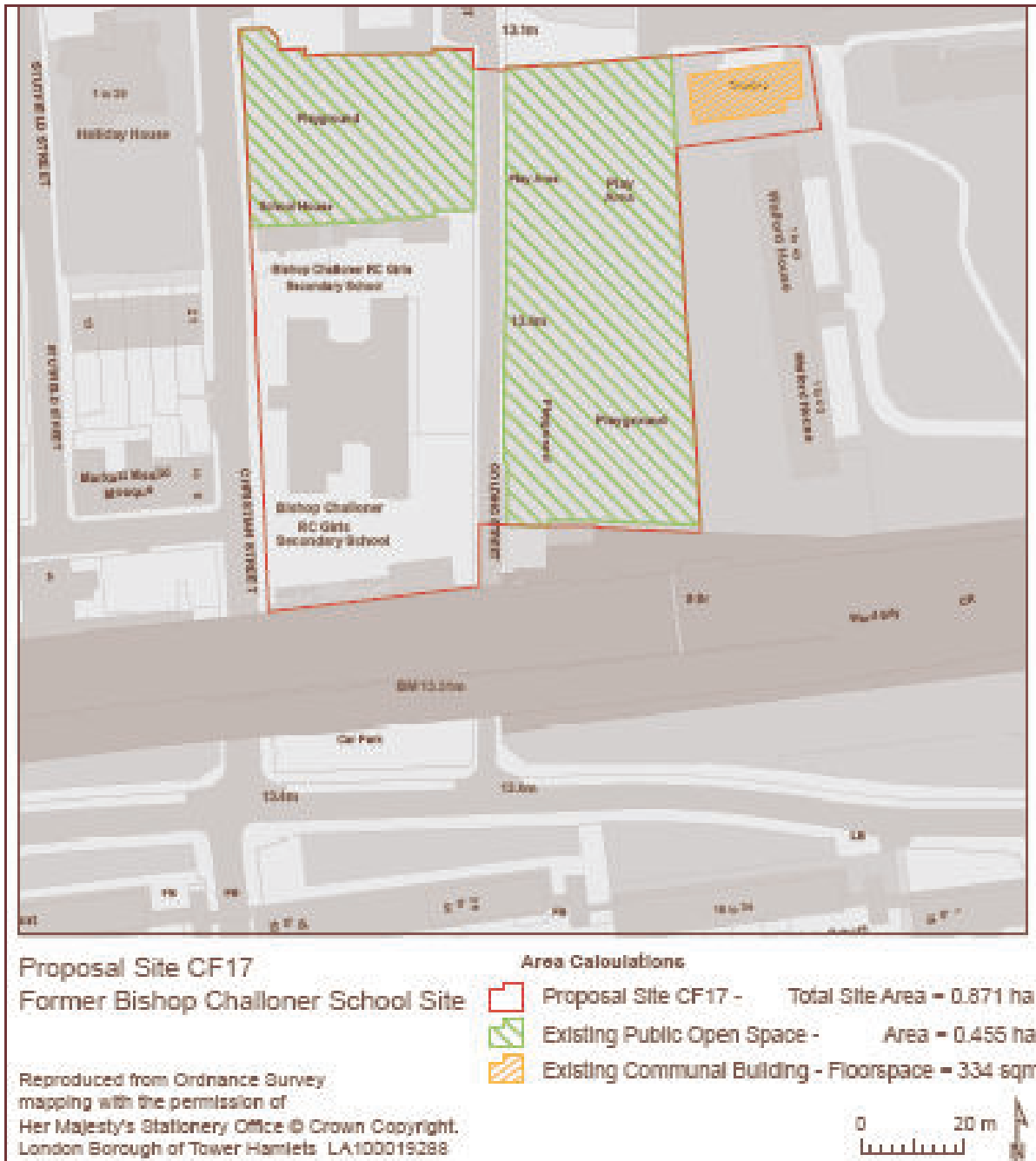
3.1 Telephone Survey: an address file of the area was merged with a market research tool owned by the managers of the Councils Residents' Panel. A total of 222 addresses were matched with telephone numbers, which provided a final sample of 78 participants. The results of the survey are attached in appendix 2.

4.0 Next Steps

4.1 The findings from this consultation process will be submitted to the future developer with recommendations that:

- all community group leaders in the area, and ward councillors, are involved in a dialogue about changes in the use and design of open space and the community centre;
- survey findings are used to inform any development plans;
- wider involvement techniques are employed to engage the community throughout the development, including regular postal updates to every address; and
- consultation with community leaders takes place about the effectiveness of communicating with Sylheti speakers in Bengali (not all Sylheti speakers read Bengali).

APPENDIX 1 SITE PLAN AND AREA CALCULATIONS



APPENDIX 2 : Bishop Challenor Consultation: Telephone Survey Overall Results

From the 27 -30 June 2007, a telephone survey was carried out with 78 respondents as part of the Bishop Challenor consultation exercise. The key findings and demographics of the respondents are outlined below:

Findings

- Over 80% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that there should be the same size of open space as there is now, although in a different layout;
- Only 13% of respondents disagreed with this proposition, with half of these respondents wishing things to stay the same;
- 63% of respondents felt a multipurpose pitch should be provided in the proposed new open space;
- 90% of respondents wanted community gardens to be incorporated within the open space, while 100% of respondents thought that the community gardens should provide space to sit and relax;
- 91% of respondents felt the Berner Community Centre should be replaced by a new accessible facility of the same size (only 1 respondent thought the centre was fine as it is);
- There were wide-ranging suggestions on how the new facilities could be used with the top 3 being- Youth Clubs- 59%
Older People's Clubs- 59%
Social Functions- 45%
- 90% of respondents felt that the open space and community centre should be managed by the Council;
- A substantial majority of respondents felt it was fairly or very likely they would use the improved open space (82%), the multipurpose pitch (67%), and the new community centre (74%).

Demographics

- The demographic profile of respondents is balanced between men and women, between age groups, and ethnicity (51% of respondents were Bangladeshi and 30% of respondents white);
- Over 55% of respondents have lived in their current home for more than 10 years and over 65% of respondents have lived in the area for more than 10 years;
- The majority of respondents (58%) come from households with no children under 18.

Agenda Item 8.1

Committee: Overview & Scrutiny Cabinet	Date: 31 st July 2007 1 st August 2007	Classification: Unrestricted	Report No.	Agenda Item
Report of: Chief Executive Originating Officer: Alan Finch, Head of Corporate Finance and Chief Finance Officer		Title: Financial Outlook & Review 2008/2009 to 2010/2011 Ward(s) Affected All		

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report sets out the financial pressures facing the Council in the medium term and the level of resources likely to be available to meet those pressures. It provides the background information to enable Cabinet to determine a strategy for setting a medium term financial plan for the period 2008/09 – 2010/11, and a balanced budget and Council Tax for 2008/09 in March.
- 1.2 The report also covers the plans for capital investment in local assets and infrastructure. These decisions are inseparable from the day-to-day running of services dependent upon those assets.
- 1.3 The report brings together the following pieces of information to provide an initial financial projection for the next three financial years.
 - the financial impact of existing commitments and identified service pressures (including demographic change and Government initiatives)
 - a forecast of available resources, including the increase in Formula Grant already announced for 2007/08 and forecasts of national grant provision.
- 1.4 Any forecasting exercise inevitably involves estimates. Although development of the financial planning process means that the projections are more robust than at this time last year, they are, at this stage in the budgetary cycle, based on relatively raw data. Identified spending commitments have also not yet been subject to significant corporate challenge or scrutiny.
- 1.5 There is also a tendency outside the constraints of the annual budget process for forecasts to focus on spending needs rather than strategic savings opportunities. In setting the 2007/08 budget, officers were asked to identify savings for the following two financial years, and these were approved by Members subject to the consideration of each year's detailed

budget. The consideration of these and further savings will a requirement of the detailed 2008/2009 budget process, informed by the overall position presented in this report.

- 1.6 By offering a longer term perspective of the Council's finances, the report is intended to provide the context for the detailed 2008/2009 budget process, and an essential component in reviewing the medium term financial strategy. Longer term planning also enables options to be considered which have a longer planning horizon than the few months of the annual budget process.
- 1.7 The ongoing Government Spending Review means that the 2008//09 financial year, and indeed the whole three year planning period 2008/09–2010/11 carries much greater uncertainty than usual. It is clear from Government announcements made so far that the future financial outlook will be much more challenging than in recent years. The Council will face cost pressures associated with maintaining and improving its services over the medium term, but the tighter resource outlook means that not all of the commitments and service improvements identified are affordable. This is the case with both the revenue and capital budgets, but the position with capital is more acute due to uncertainty over the available capital receipts to fund new investment.
- 1.8 The current resource outlook suggests that meeting new cost pressures will require an increasingly rigorous approach to identifying efficiencies, productivity improvements and reprioritisation within services, and corresponding adaptations to the service and financial planning framework.
- 1.9 Against this background the report identifies the planning parameters which should apply to service and financial planning for 2008/09- 2010/11, with the overall aim of providing sufficient flexibility to deal with risk and provide scope for a degree of policy choice, and invites Cabinet to consider a strategy for meeting a balanced budget.
- 1.10. Notwithstanding these forecasts, projections indicate that these measure will enable Tower Hamlets to increase spending on services by £11-12m a year on average over the next three years.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

Overview & Scrutiny Committee is recommended to consider the report and pass any comments it wishes to make to Cabinet

Cabinet is recommended to:

- 2.1. Note the financial outlook and draft medium term projection set out in this report
- 2.2. Agree that revenue budget inflation should be fully funded and that the provisional base budget for 2008/09 should be increased by £5.932m to reflect this (paragraph 5.1.5).

- 2.3 Agree to plan to fund committed growth in 2008/09 at the overall level currently projected at paragraph 5.2.1.
- 2.4. Request Corporate Directors to incorporate detailed justifications for committed growth in their service and financial planning submissions so that they can be evaluated as part of the 2008/09 planning cycle..
- 2.5. Agree that Corporate Directors should undertake initial service and financial planning for 2008/09- 2010/11 in accordance with the following planning parameters:-
 - That there be no expectation of service improvement growth at this stage.
 - Corporate Directors be asked to identify savings totalling £20m over the next three financial years, with a target of no less than £7.7m in 2008/09. Firm proposals to be submitted for 2008/09 and 2009/10 and realistic, indicative proposals to be provided for 2010/11.
 - Any further committed growth identified by Directorates above the level identified at 5.2.1. to be offset by further efficiencies and savings.
- 2.6. Consider whether third sector grants/Service Level Agreements should be included in the base budget for the purposes of calculating savings targets (paragraph 8.2).
- 2.7. Note the indicative requirement for capital investment, the resources available to fund the capital programme and the potential implications of this for the revenue budget and request Corporate Directors to include proposals for mainstream and local priority funding for 2008/09-2010/11 in their service & financial planning submissions.
- 2.8. Agree that Corporate Directors prepare service and financial planning submissions in accordance with the agreed parameters, and the outline process and timetable set out in section 8.
- 2.9. Request officers to develop options for public consultation in line with the principles set out in section 9, taking account of the impact of the financial outlook.

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2000 SECTION 100D (AS AMENDED)
LIST OF "BACKGROUND PAPERS" USED IN THE PREPARATION OF THIS REPORT**

Brief description of "background papers"	Tick if copy supplied for register	If not supplied, name and telephone number of holder
Files held by Chief Executive's Directorate 5th floor, Mulberry Place)		Alan Finch 020-7364-4915 Martin McGrath 020-7364-4645

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Medium term financial planning is an essential component of the Council's strategic planning framework. While many key decisions, including the formal setting of Council Tax, will continue to be taken annually, those decisions need to be set in the context of a longer term planning horizon. Forward planning also offers the opportunity to link service and financial planning, as decisions taken on an annual basis are constrained in scope.
- 3.2 The Council operates a sound resource allocation process underpinned by an integrated service and financial planning framework. In short, our processes are designed to ensure that:
- Service plans are developed against the background of forward looking financial forecasts
 - Identifying the financial consequences of proposed actions is seen as an integral part of service planning
 - Financial plans allocate resources to address changing community needs and priorities.

The current arrangements contribute to the Council's CPA score of 3 out of 4 for the Use of Resources.

- 3.3 The use of the Prudential Borrowing system also requires the Council to be clear about its proposed capital spending plans for three years ahead and explicit about the impact of the associated financing costs on Council Tax.
- 3.4 The Government intends to provide three year financial settlements with effect from 2008/09- 2010/11. This applies to the main Formula Grant and, it is hoped, to a wide range of specific grants. This is a welcome development which should improve local authorities' ability to plan ahead and improve the effective and efficient use of resources.
- 3.5 This current report therefore provides forecasts for a three-year plan covering 2008/09-2010/11. The report is intended to provide the context for the development of the detailed budget in the coming months and the parallel review of the medium term financial plan.

4. FINANCIAL OUTLOOK FOR 2008/09- 2010/11

4.1 Process and Principles

- 4.1.1. Instructions and guidelines for preparing submissions to the three year financial plan were issued in April. These guidelines defined what should be included in each category (i.e. inescapable/demand-led committed growth, savings etc). Inflation was estimated corporately to ensure consistency.
- 4.1.2. As far as possible the guidance and definitions have been consistent with those used in last year's budget process. This is intended to assist interpretation of the results and enable this exercise to flow into the detailed

budget work that is currently taking place. A brief summary of the guidelines issued for preparing the forecasts follows:

4.1.3. Committed Growth

This consists of two main elements - inescapable growth and demand-led growth. Inescapable committed growth comprises costs arising from changes in responsibilities and new legislation. Demand-led committed growth covers changes in demography and client numbers. A third category relates to transfers in the method of Government funding from specific grant to general grant; however, there are no such growth bids identified for 2008/09.

4.1.4. Reduction in Specific Grants

As set out in further detail below, uncertainty created by the Comprehensive Spending Review means it is necessary as part of this budget process to consider the risk and potential impact of the possible loss of specific grant funding in 2008/09.

4.1.5. Savings

As part of the 2007/08 budget process, Directorates were asked to identify savings for 2008/09 and 2009/10. These savings were approved in principle by Members in setting the 2007/08 budget, subject to further consideration in each year's budget. As part of the current exercise, Directorates have been requested to revisit these proposed savings and confirm that they are remain deliverable.

4.1.6. Revenue Impact of Capital Spending

Projections include staff and running costs associated with major capital projects e.g. new buildings are included in the Committed Growth forecasts.

4.1.7. Strategic/Community Plan Service Improvements

This category comprises funding which Directors have identified as being required to accelerate progress towards the objectives and priorities of the Community/Strategic Plan. Directors have not been asked to identify any such cost pressures as part of the financial outlook exercise.

4.2 **The Council's Financial Health**

4.2.1. The Council's current financial position is sound, but will require continuous assessment and vigilance in the light of the pressures and issues identified in this report.

4.2.2. The current forecast for financial performance at this relatively early stage of the financial year is that spending will be in line with the approved budget..

4.2.3. General Fund balances currently stand at 6.6% of the total budget requirement. The target level of balances established in previous budget rounds is between 5.0%-7.5% of budget requirement and balances are

therefore within this target. A full analysis of budget risks will, however, take place later in the year and further advice will be given as appropriate.

- 4.2.4. The Council's overall financial health places it in a good position to manage the anticipated reduction in growth of funding, providing key decisions are taken at appropriate times. Most of the financial risks identifiable over the next three years relate to the funding settlement for 2008/09. The setting of the budget for 2008/09 will thus be important in setting a strategic direction and approach to the delivery of the Medium Term Financial Plan over the next three years.

4.3. Funding of the Schools Budget

- 4.3.1. From 2006/07, funding of the schools budget was removed from the Formula Grant of local authorities and a ring-fenced Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) was introduced. The level of schools funding is now determined largely by an annual announcement of the level of DSG by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF).
- 4.3.2. The Government has made it plain that local authorities can fund schools at a level higher than the DSG if they wish. It follows that in a budget year, an authority may increase the schools budget by more than the increase in DSG. There is a disincentive for authorities to do this because the full cost of this decision would fall to be met from Council Tax.
- 4.3.3. However the fact that Local Education Authorities remain responsible for school standards in the area, and for maintaining the local schools funding formula, means there also remains a responsibility on the authority to monitor the level of schools funding, and to assist schools in lobbying for more funds where necessary.
- 4.3.4. For this reason, officers will continue to monitor the impact of change on schools budgets and this information will be presented as memorandum information throughout the budget process.

4.4 Integrated Revenue and Capital Planning

- 4.4.1. Section 6 of this report sets out the outlook for Capital resources for the period 2008/09 to 2010/11.
- 4.4.2. The Capital Programme agreed by the Council invariably has revenue cost implications.
- Capital financing may be charged to revenue accounts either in the form of direct contributions to capital expenditure, or as costs of borrowing or other credit arrangements to finance capital expenditure.
 - Building schemes normally carry with them ongoing running costs which in some circumstances cannot be met from existing resources.

It is therefore not possible to consider the Capital Programme and revenue plans in isolation from each other. Directorates have been asked to ensure that the revenue consequences of capital decisions already taken are reflected in the revenue figures provided in this report. These figures also reflect a provision for the revenue consequences of capital decisions yet to be made, based on previous experience. Firmer figures will be set out in relevant reports and built into the Three Year Plan later in the budget process.

4.4.3. The Council is empowered to set its own level of borrowing and other credit arrangements to fund capital expenditure, providing that level is affordable, sustainable and prudent. The benefit of prudential borrowing is that it enables an authority to come to its own view as to the appropriate balance between revenue and capital spending, to undertake options appraisal for revenue-intensive and capital-intensive options on a consistent basis, and to borrow for capital purposes as needs arise instead of when Government gives its approval. The Council may decide to fund additional capital expenditure through prudential borrowing where the tests of affordability, sustainability and prudence are met, and where it appears to offer value for money to do so.

4.4.4. Currently, prudential borrowing powers are used to: -

- Provide contingency arrangements for funding within the Capital Programme, enabling a larger proportion of available capital resources to be allocated to schemes. It has not been necessary so far to use these contingency arrangements;
- Fund capital-intensive service improvement;
- Provide 'bridging' finance where there is a mismatch between capital investment and capital receipts;
- Finance Invest to Save schemes, which are self-financing in the long run.

4.4.5. As part of the financial strategy, the Cabinet may decide to explore further options for prudential borrowing. In general the consequence of this would be that resources would need to be found within revenue budgets to cover the additional cost of borrowing for a period of years into the future. The detailed financial implications of this would need to be set out in further reports.

5. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PROJECTION

5.1 Base Budget & Inflation for 2008/09

5.1.1. The budget set by Council on 8th March was for the current financial year, 2007/08, was £280.143m and this is therefore the base budget for consideration of the budget in 2008/09.

5.1.2. In previous years, it has been the practice to calculate an estimate for inflation in the forthcoming financial year, and to agree at this stage to fully fund this amount. This enables a base budget to be set for the forthcoming financial year at a new price base, and for all further budget considerations to be dealt with on this basis. It is proposed that the same principle be applied for 2008/09.

5.1.3. The importance of making provision for inflation in the budget is based around the fact that a certain level of inflation is bound to occur in 2008/09 and over the next few years. Failing to provide for inflation at the outset would therefore reduce the spending power of the Council's budget, and this would need to be managed by officers during the financial year. For clarity, it is best practice to provide for inflation so that budget decisions are specific and driven by policy.

5.1.4. For 2008/09 an estimate of the cost of funding inflation has been prepared on the following basis:

- ◆ 2.25% for pay in line with the targeted average for public sector pay awards announced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in the March 2006 budget.
- ◆ 2.50% for general costs.

5.1.5 The table provides a summary broken down according to the current Directorate structure:

2008/2009	£000s
Adult Services	1,779
Children's Services	1,451
Environment & Culture	1,478
Development & Renewal including Housing General Fund	257
Chief Executive's	624
Corporate Costs	343
Total	5,932

5.1.6 Cabinet is asked to agree that inflation should be funded according to the estimates above and that provisional targets should be increased by £5,932,000 as shown above. The provisional base budget for 2008/09 will therefore be, £286.075 million.

5.1.7 The impact of inflation in the following two financial years, 2009/10 and 2010/11 will be dependent upon inflation and pay awards and other growth in the authority's budget. For planning purposes, and assuming that inflation remains close to Government targets, a further £6.222m for 2009/10 and £6.494m for 2010/11 have been adopted.

5.2 Committed Growth Pressures

5.2.1 Directorates have undertaken a preliminary analysis of the main service financial pressures facing them over the next three years. This includes the full-year effects of committed growth identified in previous years. Corporate cost pressures facing the Council as a whole have also been identified. A summary is set out below.

	2008/09 £'000s	2009/10 £'000s	2010/11 £'000s
Adults, Health & Wellbeing	1,556	2,953	4,108
Children's Services	1,535	2,464	3,395
Environment & Culture	464	4,160	8,507
Development & Renewal	329	134	134
Chief Executive's	NIL	NIL	NIL
Corporate/Capital	265	345	510
Total identified growth	4,149	10,056	16,654

5.2.2. The main areas of committed growth over the next three years are expected to be ;

- Social care commissioning budgets, driven by increasing population and greater numbers of residents requiring care.
- Residential and nursing home care, due to increased client numbers.
- Collection and disposal of waste, driven by larger volumes of waste and the imperative to meet recycling targets.

5.2.3. It should be stressed that at this stage of the planning cycle these figures remain provisional and are likely to be understated as new pressures and burdens are identified during the course of the year.

5.2.4. In recent years, the cost of committed growth and inflation has consistently added between 5.5% to 6.5% to the budget requirement each year. In this cycle, pressure on budgets would appear to have eased slightly. Nevertheless, without further action or intervention, inescapable commitments and inflation are currently projected to increase service spending by 3.7% in 2007/08, and a further 4.5% in 2008/09 and 4.7% in 2009/10.

5.3. Savings Identified for 2008/09 & 2009/10

5.3.1. As part of the budget process for 2007/08, Directorates were asked to identify savings proposals for further savings in 2008/09 and 2009/10. As

part of the current exercise, Directorates have been asked to review these savings proposals to ensure that they are still valid. These savings proposals have been approved by Members, subject to further consideration as part of the detailed budget process, and this will need to take place as part of the 2008/09 budget setting process. However, for planning purposes the following savings can be considered in total;

	2008/09 £'000s	2009/10 £'000s
Adults, Health & Wellbeing	343	793
Children's Services	463	954
Environment & Culture	219	1401
Development & Renewal	365	638
Chief Executive's	721	1,405
Total identified Savings	2,111	5,194

5.4 Resource Projections

Formula Grant

- 5.4.1. The main grant contributing towards the authority's General Fund revenue budget is the Formula Grant. In 2007/08, Formula Grant totals £213.821m and provides 76% of the funding for the Council's budget requirement.
- 5.4.2. Due to the Spending Review, there has been no Government announcement of Formula Grant for 2008/09 or any subsequent year, although a three-year settlement announcement is anticipated in November. Forecasting the outcome of the Spending Review is difficult. However, the Treasury has set stringent criteria for the review aimed at improving value for money, including a 3% cashable efficiencies target for local authorities, and there have been strong signals from Government that the forthcoming settlement will be much tighter than in recent years. In June 2006, Gordon Brown, then Chancellor of the Exchequer, remarked that "the next Comprehensive Spending Review moves us from a time when public spending was rising by 5 per cent a year as we caught up and addressed the investment backlog, to one where we expect it to rise by 2 per cent".
- 5.4.3. A number of funding announcements have been made as part of the subsequent Budgets. Figures from the Institute of Fiscal Studies suggest that if NHS funding is increased by the 4.4% recommended by the Wanless Report in 2002, then the funding available for other remaining Government expenditure, which includes local government, will be an increase of 0.4%, which is around 2% less than the current rate of inflation.
- 5.4.4. Formula Grant settlements from 2008/09 onwards will reflect a review of the grant distribution formula which last took place in 2005. The last

reassessment of relative needs was potentially detrimental to Tower Hamlets, especially in relation to Social Care Services. However, the effect of these changes was damped in the distributed grant figures so that the immediate effect was minimised. A consultation paper on the new formula was published on 17th July 2007, as this report was being finalised, and it includes consultation on the question of whether to withdraw the damping of Social Care. If that were to happen, Tower Hamlets would lose the equivalent of £3m in grant relative to last year's grant floor; the amount lost in 2008/09 and beyond would depend upon the level of the grant floor set for that year.

- 5.4.5. Grant figures for the next three years, 2008/09 - 2010/11 are therefore extremely difficult to project. However, for planning purpose, the following figures are being used, which reflects an estimated 1% increase in grant.

	2007/08 Actual £m	2008/09 Forecast £m	2009/10 Forecast £m	2010/11 Forecast £m
Formula Grant	213.821	215.959	218.119	220.300
Increase £m		2.138	2.160	2.181
Increase %		1.0%	1.0%	1.0%

5.5. Dedicated Schools Grant

- 5.5.1. The Government introduced new arrangements for funding school budgets from April 2006, replacing funding from Formula Grant and Council Tax with the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). Most DSG funding is distributed to schools in their delegated budgets, but some is required to fund local authority expenditure in support of the provision of education.
- 5.5.2. Initially the DSG is distributed in the same way as the former Schools Formula Spending Share (FSS), with adjustments to reflect the level at which individual authorities were actually spending, which in Tower Hamlets was slightly higher than FSS. This means that, by and large, authorities are currently receiving sufficient grant to sustain levels of spending on schools at historic levels and to provide for the Minimum Funding Guarantee for schools, which is set by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF, formerly the Department for Education & Skills) each year. Local authorities may supplement school budgets from their own resources, but this would have a direct impact on Council Tax.
- 5.5.3. The DCSF has recently consulted upon the arrangements for funding schools and Local Education Authorities, including DSG and other specific grants. The review will report to coincide with the Spending Review 2007 and any changes would be likely to affect funding with effect from 2008/09. It is not anticipated that this will have a major impact on the distribution of grant to Tower Hamlets.

- 5.5.4. The Government announced on 1st June the final allocation of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) for 2007/08, which was recalculated using January pupil numbers. Tower Hamlets' final 2007-08 DSG allocation is £214.012m, representing an decrease of £1.84m from the provisional DSG announced in November 2006 (£215.852m).
- 5.5.5. Demographic trends indicate that pupil numbers will increase over the period to 2015. Further, the Council's participation in a two year pilot targeted at families less likely to use pre-school provision, opens potential for up to 200 additional places for three-year-olds from September 2007. These two issues will be reflected in future DSG allocations.
- 5.5.6. Some of these pressures may be mitigated by utilising the DSG for 'combined services'. This provision has been added to the regulations to recognise the multi-agency work that local authorities already are or will be undertaking in relation to the Every Child Matters agenda and where that work is of direct benefit to pupils and schools. Again, this would be subject to agreement of the School Forum.
- 5.5.7. These issues will be addressed further in reports of the Director of Children's Services during the budget process.

5.6 Other Specific Grants

- 5.6.1 Tower Hamlets will receive around £110m in specific grants in 2007/08, excluding the DSG and housing and benefit subsidies. This compares with a Formula Grant allocation of £213m. Specific Grant funding therefore makes a significant contribution to service delivery in the Borough.
- 5.6.2 For 2007/08 specific grant funding (excluding Dedicated Schools Grant) increased by 4.7% over 2006/07. Specific grants are distributed by a number of different Government departments and aggregated forecasts are not published. The Government uses specific grant funding – otherwise known as ringfenced or targeted funding - to 'bend' service provision in the direction set by Government priorities, and this makes individual allocations difficult to predict over the medium-term. This may improve with the introduction of three-year settlements.
- 5.6.3. Specific grant allocations are therefore sensitive to change in Government policy. Many of the Government Departments which allocate the funding are themselves waiting to hear how they will be affected by the Spending Review. For these reasons, specific grant income will be particularly difficult to predict for the period 2008/09-2010/11.
- 5.6.4. It is known that two grants are due to be reviewed and possibly discontinued for 2008/09, although there has been no indication of whether these will be replaced. The most significant of these for Tower Hamlets is the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund, from which the Council currently is due to receive £15.566m in 2007/08. The Waste Performance and Efficiency Grant, from which the Council receives £0.365m will also discontinue.

- 5.6.5. It is expected that a number of specific grants will be rolled up into a new area based 'Local Area Agreement' Grant towards the delivery of Local Area Agreements (see below). The details of this arrangement are not known, but it can be expected that, since Local Area Agreements are intended to become the main expression of partnership between local and central government, in future local government revenue funding will be thought of as representing three major strands; Formula Grant, 'area' grant, and ringfenced specific grants.
- 5.6.6. The discontinuation or reduction of grant income presents the Council with some difficult choices. Specific grants are allocated to deliver specific aspects of Government policy, so their discontinuation could be taken as a signal that Government no longer considers that area of policy as a priority in that particular area. The authority will need to decide whether to adopt this same approach and discontinue or scale down expenditure accordingly, or seek to continue to fund expenditure from its own resources. These judgements can only be made on a grant by grant basis once grants have been announced.

5.7 Local Area Agreement

- 5.7.1 The Local Area Agreement to deliver a broad range of outcomes agreed between the Tower Hamlets Partnership and the Government Office for London began in April 2006 and is now in the second of its three years. The Local Government White Paper in October 2006 made it clear that this is likely to be the first in a series of such agreements, which will gradually be rolled out to encompass the delivery of more targets, and legislation to formalise this is currently going through Parliament.
- 5.7.2. The Local Area Agreement involves identifying certain specific grant streams to be 'pooled' to deliver the Local Area Agreement. These pooled funds are expected to increase year on year as Local Area Agreements are rolled out and, as described above, from 2008/09 they may be allocated as a single non-ringfenced 'area' grant. This would be unlikely to involve extra funding, but the consolidation of existing grant streams within the pooled fund.
- 5.7.3. In 2007/08, the total pooled fund is expected to amount to around £23.4m, and the main specific grants involved are Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF), Children's Services Grant and Waste Performance and Efficiency Grant, which between them total £19.1m.
- 5.7.4. The significance of this in financial planning terms is that pooled funds are available to allocate to LAA targets as the Partnership sees fit. This moves away from the traditional approach whereby specific grants have been allocated to Directorates, and it will be important to recognise this in planning the Local Area Agreement refresh for 2008/09.

5.8 Efficiency Target

- 5.8.1. As part of the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG)'s response to the Gershon Review, local authorities were given efficiency

targets of 2.5% per year for the period 2005/06-2007/08. At least half of this total, which for Tower Hamlets amounted to £6.4m a year, was required to come from 'cashable efficiencies' or savings. (i.e. efficiencies that release cash savings that can be used for other purpose). Tower Hamlets is on track to meet these targets comfortably.

5.8.2. For the period 2008/09- 2010/11, the Government has announced efficiency targets of 3% per year, all of which must be 'cashable' savings. Moreover, the efficiencies are no longer described as freeing up resources for reallocation to front-line services, but to 'free up resources to meet the challenges ahead'. This is an indication that the new efficiency targets are expected to help manage what may be a real terms reduction in grant funding.

5.8.3 The Government has not announced the methodology it will use to calculate these targets. However, on the basis of the methodology used for Gershon targets, a 3% cashable efficiency target would amount to £7.8m, which would apply to the General Fund, Housing Revenue Account and capital expenditure.

5.9 Other Issues and Risks

5.9.1. Collection Fund

Council Tax collected on behalf of the Council and the Greater London Authority is paid into the Collection Fund. Any surplus on the fund is available to the authorities to reduce the Council Tax in future years; any deficit must in turn be recovered from Council Tax.

The Council Tax base in Tower Hamlets has been growing for some years and continues to do so, reflecting the scale of development in the borough. The position on the Collection Fund is that, after allowing for the planned distribution of funds in 2007/08, the fund has a £1.0m surplus, while a further surplus of £0.5m is forecast in 2007/08, making £1.5m in all. The Council's share of this would be £1.1m and this amount is available to reduce Council Tax in 2008/09. However this compares with £1.5m used to reduce Council Tax in 2007/08, and the £0.4m difference must therefore be planned for in setting the Council's budget and Council Tax.

It should be noted that the aim each year is to equalise the fund, so the amount available from redistribution should reduce ultimately to zero.

5.9.2 Three-Year Planning

As stated earlier in the report, three year grant settlements should be implemented fully with the current Spending Review, the first three year period beginning in 2008/09.

The advent of three year budgets presents the opportunity for the authority to adopt a full three-year planning approach, and set savings targets for all

three years of the medium-term planning period. Members may also wish to consider whether to set draft budgets for 2009/10 and 2010/11 as part of the 2008/09 process. These would need to be reviewed and finalised on an annual basis, partly because Members would wish to ensure that they continued to meet changing priorities, and partly because Council Tax can legally only be set on an annual basis.

Full three-year planning would have the following advantages;

- A clear direction for financial planning would facilitate medium term planning across the Council and Partnership as a whole, by setting clear financial priorities and cash targets.
- Any expected financial changes and risks could be assessed and planned for in advance to minimise the risk that the Strategic and Community Plans are knocked off course by unforeseen financial issues.
- Savings targets could be planned for over a longer lead-in period, opening up opportunities for savings requiring medium-term preparatory work.

5.9.3. Decent Homes

The Council's policy in relation to delivering Decent Homes has the impact of reducing the extent to which services within the General Fund can recharge costs to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

The consequence of delivering Decent Homes policies is that that corporate and support services currently charged to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) may need to downsize over the next few years. The impact of this on the General Fund is subject to the speed of progress. In response to this, the authority has been setting aside resources into a Housing Choice Reserve for a number of years.

It is currently considered that the resources set aside in the Housing Choice Reserve will be sufficient to manage a smooth transition as these initiatives progress, but the position requires regular review.

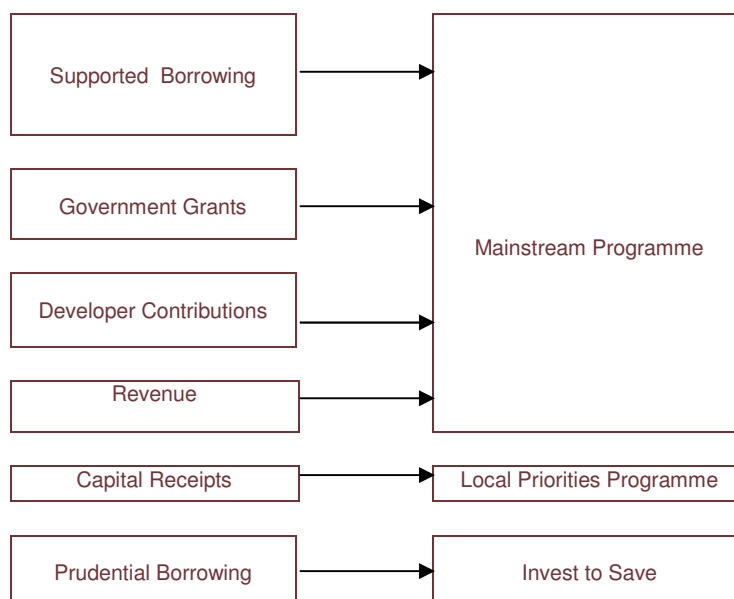
5.9.4. Local Authority Business Growth Incentives (LABGI)

The LABGI allows local authorities to retain part of the growth in revenue from business rates provided that it exceeds a specified level, determined on the basis of recent historic trends. A review of the LABGI is currently underway, However, unless there is radical change to the scheme, it is unlikely that Tower Hamlets will benefit, because historic rates of growth have been among the highest in the country and current rates of growth, though still high relative to other areas, will not trigger LABGI criteria.

6. CAPITAL PROGRAMME

- 6.1. Expenditure on services comprises a recurring, revenue element (eg. staff salaries, running costs, contract payments etc) and planned capital investment in assets and infrastructure (eg. buildings, vehicles etc). Effective service delivery requires these resource elements to be considered together. The Capital Programme is concerned with planning for investment in assets and infrastructure necessary to deliver high quality services to residents.
- 6.2. Capital and revenue funding have always been closely linked because of the revenue consequences of running costs associated with new capital investment and the ongoing costs of capital expenditure funded by borrowing. Since 2004/05, the option of prudential borrowing has emphasised this link and brought revenue and capital planning more closely together.
- 6.3. This part of the report sets out the potential demands on future years capital resources. Its principal purpose is to assist service and financial planning. It does not approve individual projects or finalise allocation of resources. These aspects will be the subject of separate reports, which will depend upon Government capital allocations in December/January, and final decisions on budget strategy and Council Tax for 2008/09.
- 6.4. Tower Hamlets' capital spending over recent years has averaged around £100m a year, and capital resources have been sufficient to manage this fairly flexibly, bringing in new schemes as required. The diagram below illustrates, for example, how the capital budget has traditionally been funded.

Resourcing of Capital Budget



- 6.5. Mainstream programmes are driven mainly by the allocation of resources by Government and other external sources. Much of this funding is ringfenced, but most revenue supported capital expenditure, which comes from Government

departments via the 'Single Capital Pot' could be spent on the Council's own priorities. There is, however, a risk that this would deter Government departments from allocating further resources in future years. The bulk of the Council's own locally generated resources, in the form of capital receipts, is used to support the Local Priorities Programme.

- 6.6. The table below shows how the 2007/08 capital programme is planned to be funded. This excludes the Office Accommodation Strategy (OAS).

		£ million	%
Mainstream Programme	Supported Borrowing	28.051	50.1
	Capital Grants	21.726	38.8
Local Priorities	Capital Receipts	5.510	9.8
	Prudential Borrowing	0.200	0.4
	LPSA Reward Grant	0.495	0.9
		55.982	100

This programme will be supplemented by further allocations of capital grant during the year, and the final programme is likely to be around £80m, compared with £106m in the 2006/07 financial year.

- 6.7. Funding of the programme from capital receipts has reduced from historic level of around 25% to less than 10% in 2007/08, largely due to the reduction in Right to Buy (RTB) housing receipts. Planning has been underpinned by a background level of RTBs, but the table below shows how quickly this income has fallen away. In recent weeks there has been an indication that Right to Buy sales may have achieved a plateau of approximately 100 sales per year, but more data will be required to determine whether this is a new trend.

	Projected Usable RTB Sales £m
2004/05	22.3
2005/06	11.6
2006/07	5.4
2007/08	3.5
2008/09	2.2
2009/10	1.1
2010/11	0.7

- 6.8. As the income from housing sales shrinks, funding of the programme has become more reliant on income from other asset disposals. This is 'lumpier' in nature, because it relies upon fewer, larger sales, and the level and timing at which it comes in is dependent upon the local property market. In any event, saleable assets are not an unending resource. The level of the capital programme is being sustained in 2007/08 through the planned realisation of major capital receipts, but this approach cannot be relied upon in future years and carries a high degree of risk.

- 6.9. The Local Priorities Programme for 2007/08 has been set at a level that allows for £4.2m in Capital Receipts to be allocated to local priority schemes in 2008/09 and 2009/10. This assumes that the capital receipts in the current disposal programme are realised, and in the event that any of these receipts are not delivered, it may be necessary to revisit these planning totals.
- 6.10. Government support to the capital programme is again entirely dependent upon the Spending Review 2007. Indications are that capital budgets will be under similar pressure to revenue allocations, and this is likely to impact upon the resources available for mainstream programmes. Planning for 2008/09-2010/11 will proceed on a broad assumption that the total level of mainstream funding will be similar to that in previous years but in practice it could be significantly less.
- 6.11. The table below summarises the Capital Programme for 2007/08 on a Directorate by Directorate basis.

Local Priorities Programme 2007/08	Mainstream £million	Local £million	Total £million
Adult Services	0.1	0.3	0.4
Children's Services	15.3	NIL	15.3
Environment & Culture	2.7	2.8	5.5
Housing	31.7	1.1	32.8
ICT	NIL	1.5	1.5
CCT	NIL	0.5	0.5
Total	49.8	6.2	56.0

- 6.12. An initial capital resource position for the Local Priorities Programme for 2008/09-2010/11 is set out at **Appendix A**. Expenditure assumptions reflect the in principle decision made by Council to fund a programme of £4.2m in each of the next two years. Any surplus capital receipts programmed over the course of the three years of the projection have been allocated to the 2010/11 programme, and this shows an indicative programme for that year of £1.1m. Detailed decisions will need to be taken as part of the budget process to determine the allocation of resources, but clearly the capital programme will be difficult to sustain at current levels.
- 6.13. In developing a strategy to deal with this issue, the link between capital and revenue budgets is of key significance. There has always been such a link because of;
- the revenue implications of the capital programme.- running costs and borrowing costs.
 - the funding of elements of the capital programme directly from revenue budgets – roughly £4m a year in Tower Hamlets.
 - the trade-off between routine maintenance (which should normally be funded from revenue) and structural maintenance and renovation (capital).
- 6.14. Responding to the loss of capital receipts income is at least as great a challenge as the issues facing revenue. The options are;
- to cut back the 'local choice' elements of the capital programme to fit the funding available.

- to find alternative sources of funding from revenue or prudential borrowing (clearly difficult in view of the pressures on revenue budgets) or other sources.
 - to 'recycle' resources eg. to use the 'Single Capital Pot' (and any other non ringfenced sources of funding allocated by Government Departments) to supplement spending, and accept the 'opportunity cost' of lower priority schemes foregone.
- 6.15. In setting the revenue and capital budgets for 2008/09, around £1.7m was transferred from capital budgets to revenue to cover the costs of funding redundancies and recurring asset management costs. This ensured that tight capital funding was utilised for investment in infrastructure.
- 6.16. In order to address strategic issues arising from funding of the capital programme, Directorates' capital plans and the local priority capital bids will again be considered alongside revenue bids as part of the Service & Financial Planning process. Members will at this time be able to take strategic decisions on the use of capital and revenue funding and consider, for example, whether they wish to undertake prudential borrowing to finance capital spending, or use revenue budgets to fund repairs and maintenance expenditure.

7. FINANCIAL OUTLOOK SUMMARY

- 7.1 It is clear from initial work that the future financial outlook will be more challenging than in recent years. A special feature of this year's budget is the uncertainty brought about by the Spending Review, which means that the 2008/09 budget process will have to make greater provision than usual for contingency planning.
- 7.2 The summary revenue budget forecast, incorporating the issues set out in the report above, is set out at **Appendix B**.
- 7.3 In relation to the revenue budget, there will be pressures on the authority to maintain and improve services, but a tighter resource outlook over the medium term. The cost of maintaining services at existing levels will rise, and the forecast allow for spending on services to increase by an average of between £11-12m a year for each of the next three year. However grants are certain to increase by less than the amount required to fund this growth. To manage its position, the authority needs to take a medium term view of risks and opportunities and balance these over the period to ensure that budget plans in later years are sustainable.
- 7.4 Overall, based on current forecasts, there is a potential requirement to identify savings of around £20m in order to set balanced budgets. Such a level may also be necessary to fund inescapable growth and keep Council Tax increases affordable. This assumes for planning purposes that Council Tax increases broadly in line with inflation at 2.5%, although this decision is a matter for Council in setting each year's budget. Initially, efficiencies will need to be sought to deliver these savings, although it should be pointed out that finding and delivering efficiencies will become harder each year.

- 7.5 At £20m target over three years would equate to £6.7m a year. However, in establishing a target for each of the three financial years, it needs to be borne in mind that most of the financial risk identified for the next three financial years falls in 2008/09 as a result of uncertainties over SR2007. It is therefore considered prudent that savings targets should be set at a higher level for 2008/09, and a figure of no less than £7.7m is recommended.
- 7.6 In relation to capital, the pattern established in recent years continues. The unavailability of alternative capital receipts to replace Right to Buys has meant that the authority has been unable to sustain historic levels of capital spending, and the reliance on large scale asset disposals means that even this reduced level may be unsustainable after 2009/10. This outlook may need to be reviewed downwards still further if capital receipts in the current disposal programme do not reach fruition.
- 7.7. In addition to the issues explicitly set out in the financial forecasts, a number of further risks are flagged up in the report. These are;
- 7.7.1. The main driver of growth in the period 2008/09-2010/11 could be contributions to the Pension Fund. Pensions costs will remain a significant pressure as long as the Pension Fund remains less than 100% funded. The next triennial valuation of the Pension Fund takes place in 2007. Forecasts are awaited from the actuary.
- 7.7.2. The forecast does not reflect any additional costs in relation to the impact of Decent Homes. Current forecasts suggest that costs to the General Fund should be containable within the reserves set aside over recent years.
- 7.7.3. This report relates mainly to the General Fund. The Housing Revenue Account is subject to a separate and parallel budget process. As with other services, Housing funding is subject to the Spending Review. Income has reduced significantly, in line with the reduction in stock, and this will need to be matched by cost reductions to the HRA. The HRA currently has a healthy balance and reserves set aside to fund the cost of downsizing. However if reserves should be used up, any deficits would then need to be met from the General Fund.
- 7.7.4. In addition, the Office Accommodation strategy carries proportionate financial risks. The strategy aims to produce savings of £2m in a full year to the General Fund and the HRA, but these have not been factored into the forecasts as they are reliant on the timely vacation and disposal of surplus office accommodation, the ongoing costs of new accommodation and market conditions on disposal.
- 7.8. In relation both to revenue and capital, the current resource outlook suggests that meeting new cost pressures will require an increasingly rigorous approach to identifying efficiencies, productivity enhancements, and reprioritisation within services, and corresponding adaptations to the service and financial planning framework. This is, of course, consistent with the targets set by Government.

- 7.9. Overall, Members are therefore advised to set a budget strategy that recognises the resources available but allows for lower grant increases and reducing capital funding in the medium term and provides sufficient flexibility to deal with the potential implications of SR2007.

7. SERVICE AND FINANCIAL PLANNING 2007 TO 2010 – PLANNING PARAMETERS AND OUTLINE PROCESS

Principal parameters

- 8.1. Against this background it is suggested that the following planning parameters should apply to service and financial planning for 2007/08, with the overall aim of providing sufficient flexibility to position the authority for the medium term, including providing scope for a degree of policy choice:-
- 8.1.1. That inflation be funded at 2.25% for pay and 2.5% for other expenditure, and that the provisional base budget for 2008/09 be increased by £5.932m to reflect this.
- 8.1.2. That committed growth in 2008/09 should be funded at the overall level currently projected at paragraph 5.2.1.
- 8.1.3. That Corporate Directors incorporate detailed justifications of individual committed growth submissions in their service and financial planning submissions so that they can be reviewed as part of the 2008/09 planning cycle).
- 8.1.4. That there be no expectation of service improvement growth at this stage.
- 8.1.5. That Corporate Directors be asked to identify cashable savings of no less than £20m over the period 2008/09 to 2010/11, with a target not less than £7.7m in 2008/09. Firm proposals to be submitted for 2008/09 and 2009/10 and realistic, indicative proposals to be provided for 2010/11.
- 8.1.6. That any further committed growth identified above the level identified at 5.2.1. be offset by further efficiencies and savings.
- 8.2. In line with previous policy Cabinet may wish to decide whether the base budget for the purpose of calculating savings targets should include budgets for grants and agreements with the third sector.

Outline process and timetable

- 8.3. In the last two years, the preparation of financial plans and proposals to meet the agreed planning parameters have been a component of broader Directorate Service & Financial Planning submissions encompassing factors which included performance, priorities, and user/customer and resident perception. These submissions built on a range of existing information and performance review mechanisms and were the subject of challenge and review to inform the development of service and financial plans for 2007/08.

- 8.4. It is proposed that these submissions should be prepared again, with the further development that they should be extended to incorporate capital investments pressures and requirements as well as revenue. This will facilitate strategic consideration of the interrelationship and trade-offs between capital and revenue.
- 8.5. An outline of the proposed content of submissions and related information sources is set out in the following table.

Content	Existing Information Sources
<p>Draft Service Plan Synopsis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Overview of Directorate role and key client groups - Overall performance- key achievements, strengths and areas for improvement - National and local change drivers - Future service demand - Key outcome related targets - Customer choice and expectations - Priorities for improvement and investment - Priorities for resources redirection/ efficiencies 	<p>Community plan, strategic plan, research and scrutiny e.g. demographic forecasts, Government strategies.</p>
<p>Performance Digest</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Achievement of Strategic Plan objectives - Evaluation of planning objectives to date - Core Performance Indicators - Comparative performance - Financial outturn - Staff/user feedback - Audit and inspection reports - Critical performance and managerial issues 	<p>BVPP, strategic/service plan monitoring, THI, benchmarks, annual residents survey, budget monitoring reports, core indicator monitoring.</p>
<p>Efficiency & Value for Money</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Efficiency strategy - Key efficiency initiatives - Procurement and commissioning plans - Productivity improvements - Explanation of Unit costs and benchmarks 	<p>Annual efficiency statement, corporate procurement board forward plan, VFM profiles, benchmarking data, strategic and service plans, per capita costs index</p>
<p>Draft Financial Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cost pressures - Resource redirection - Efficiency savings - Capital bids - Proposals to meet 2008/09 – 2010/11 budget parameters 	<p>Financial outlook and review, annual efficiency statement, medium term financial projection, budget book.</p>

- 8.6. An outline timetable is set out below. This proposes that Directorate submissions are prepared over the Summer and are then subject to a challenge/review process in September/October. Draft budget proposals would then be developed following the provisional grant settlement expected in mid-November.

Date	Activity
June/July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Agreement of parameters for developing service and financial plans for 2008/09- 2010/11 ▪ Development of outline content for Directorate service and financial planning submissions
July/August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Leadership clarifies top priorities for this planning cycle ▪ Directorates prepare service and financial planning submissions ▪ Establishment of challenge/scrutiny group ▪ Agreement to preferred approach to 2008/09 budget consultation
Mid Sept/October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Challenge/scrutiny of Directorate submissions
November/December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Development of draft budget proposals for 2008/09- 2010/11 ▪ Development of Capital Strategy and programme 2008/09-2010/11 ▪ Development of Medium Term Financial Plan 2008/09-2010/11 ▪ Announcement of Spending Review 2007 and associated revenue grant allocations ▪ Announcement of Supported Capital Expenditure allocations
January to March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Confirmation of 2008/09 grant settlement ▪ Agree Final budget and Council Tax ▪ Agree Capital Programme ▪ Preparation of draft Strategic Plan and Service Plans

9. CONSULTATION ARRANGEMENTS

9.1 Consultation on the budget for 2007/08 was undertaken through the Residents' Panel and the local press. Focus groups were also run in each of the LAP areas comprising members of the Residents' Panel. Residents were asked for their views on priorities for service improvement and the level of Council Tax increases, and responses informed the final resource allocation decisions.

9.2. The period from September 2007 to January 2008 is available for a consultation process and further discussions will be held with Members as to the form this will take.

10. NEXT STEPS

10.1 Budget Timetable

A timetable for the remaining stages of the budget process is shown at [Appendix C](#).

10.2 Instructions to Officers

Following this meeting, the Director of Resources will issue instructions to officers to seek options for delivering the budget strategy and targets agreed by the Cabinet in accordance with the timetable.

11. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

11.1 The comments of the Chief Financial Officer are the subject of this report.

12. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

12.1 The absence of a forward financial forecast would expose the Council to the risk of making decisions which are not sustainable in the longer term, or of missing opportunities which might only be identified through a longer term planning horizon. Furthermore, inadequate integration of service and financial planning gives rise to the possibility of service planning without regard to affordability, or a budget that does not direct resources to service priorities.

12.2 This report, and its subsequent development, is intended to substantially address those risks.

12.3 The timetable includes provision to consider specific financial risks as part of the budget making process, initially in the Autumn. The Chief Executive/Director of Resources will report further to Members throughout the budget process.

13. EFFICIENCY STATEMENT

13.1 The authority is required to achieve a 3.0% efficiency target in 2008/09, although at present there is limited information on how this will be calculated. The report sets out proposals for seeking efficiency gains to achieve such a target.

13.2. The efficiency and value for money implications of individual budget proposals will be set out as part of the budget process.

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

14.1. Whilst there are no specific legal implications at this point, this report is written having regard to the legislative framework governing local government finance with recommendations which accord with that regime.

15. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

15.1 Equalities considerations will be taken into account in the forecasts.

16. ANTI POVERTY IMPLICATIONS

16.1 Anti-poverty considerations will be taken into account in the forecasts.

17. SUSTAINABLE ACTION FOR A GREENER ENVIRONMENT

17.1 SAGE considerations have been taken into account in the forecasts.

APPENDICES

Appendix A - Local Priorities Resource Profile

Appendix B – Medium Term Financial Plan Forecast

Appendix C – Budget Timetable 2008/9 to 2010/11

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Appendix A

Local Priorities Resource Profile

	2008/09 £m	2009/10 £m	2010/11 £m	Future Years £m	Total £m
Resources					
Capital receipts	6.760	2.100	0.700		9.560
Expenditure					
Local Priorities Programme	4.215	4.215	1.130		9.560
Underprogramming (cumulative)	2.545	0.430	0.000		0.000

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MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN FORECAST

	2007/08 Budget £000s	2008/09 Projection £000s	2009/10 Projection £000s	2010/11 Projection £000s	3 yr total 2008/11 £000s
Indicative Budget Requirement	267,894	280,143	285,208	289,664	
Inflation	5,624	5,932	6,222	6,494	
Committed Growth identified	9,330	4,149	5,907	6,598	16,654 (See report para 5.2.1)
Savings identified	-4,211	-2,111	-3,080	-7,288	
Balance of savings required		-2,905	-4,593		-19,977
Capital provision	1,677				
Change in contribution to Reserves	-300				
	280,014	285,208	289,664	295,468	
Loss of Formula Grant adjustment	129				
Budget Requirement	280,143	285,208	289,664	295,468	
Formula Grant	-213,821	-215,959	-218,119	-220,300	
Collection Fund Surplus	-1,505	-1,151	0	0	
Council Tax Requirement	64,817	68,098	71,545	75,168	
Council Tax Base	77,498	79,435	81,421	83,457	
Council Tax Band D	836.37	857.28	878.70	900.68	
Council Tax Increase (planning projection)		2.5%	2.5%	2.5%	

NB In this table, figures for inflation, growth and savings year on year are incremental and not cumulative

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BUDGET 2008/09 to 2010/11 TIMETABLE

Technical stages in *italics*

Decision-making stages in **bold**

	Date	
Forward Look	8 th May 2007	Forward Look (initial draft of Financial Outlook) reported to CMT
Budget Strategy	20 th June 2007	Discussions with lead Cabinet Members to challenge base budget assumptions & develop aspects of budget strategy. Discussions take place in the context of performance information and forward look projections.
Cabinet	1st August 2007	Financial Outlook & Review 2008/09 to 2010/11 Report results of financial outlook, covering both revenue budget and Capital Programme. Agree budget strategy for 2008/09-2009/10 and request officers to action.
Consult-ation	September 2007- January 2008	Period available for budget consultation, subject to decision
Return of growth & savings proformas	September 2007	Deadline for return of detailed growth & savings proformas
Officer/Lead Member Review Process –	Late September 2007	CMT Peer Review Meeting – All Directorates
Officer/ Lead Member Review Process	Sept/ Nov. 2007	Challenge/ scrutiny of Directorate submissions. Dates to be confirmed

APPENDIX C

Cabinet	7th November 2007	CAPITAL STRATEGY Agree Capital Strategy for 2008/09-2010/11 to provide strategic context for Capital Programme decisions.
Cabinet	October 2007 (if necessary)	Interim report on budget 2008/09 - 2010/11 any decisions outstanding from 1st report re inflation.
FSMT	Sept/Oct 2006	Financial Services Management Team considers budget risks for 2008/09- 2010/11
CMT	Oct/Nov 2006	Receives report of officer review group.
<i>Spending Review 2007</i>	<i>Mid November 2007 onwards</i>	<i>Announcement by Government of local authority planning targets for 2008/09-2010/11 and provisional announcements of projected Formula Grant, specific grants and Supported Capital Expenditure (SCE) for 2008/09.</i>
Strategic/ Service Planning	January- March 2007	Preparation of draft Strategic Plan and Service Plans
Cabinet	9th January 2008	Provisional Budget considered and proposals referred to Overview & Scrutiny. Service budget reports (including HRA) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Committed growth and savings ◆ Directorate targets ◆ Overall budget ◆ Rent levels ◆ Revised estimates 2006/07
<i>Final Formula Grant announcement</i>	<i>End January 2008</i>	<i>Anticipated date for confirmation of 2008/09-2010/11 Formula Grant figures</i>
Overview & Scrutiny	5th February 2008	Considers Provisional Budget Proposals of Cabinet for Revenue Budget and Capital Programme 2008/09-2010/11

APPENDIX C

Cabinet	6th February 2008	REVENUE BUDGET - Final budget report and 2nd service budget reports (Including HRA) if required <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Integrated capital and revenue report ◆ Prudential Indicators ◆ Single Capital Pot Allocations ◆ Council tax for LBTH
Cabinet	6th February 2008	CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2008/09 –2010/11 Agree capital programme and funding for 2008/09-2010/11
<i>Council Tax Leaflet</i>	<i>January-March</i>	<i>Prepare Council Tax leaflet draft</i>
Precept	Mid February 2008	GLA agrees its precept
Council	27th February 2008	Formally agrees budget and Council Tax
<i>Budget Book</i>	<i>31st March 2008</i>	<i>Publish budget book</i>

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Agenda Item 9.1

Committee Overview and Scrutiny	Date 31 July 2007	Classification Unrestricted	Report No.	Agenda Item
Report of: Assistant Chief Executive		Title: Tower Hamlets Index - Monitoring Report April - May 2007		
Originating Officer: Christina Mack, Performance Officer		Ward(s) Affected: All		

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report introduces the end of May monitoring report for the Tower Hamlets Index 2007/08. The set of indicators that constitutes the Tower Hamlets Index reflects the Strategic Plan 2006-11 and Local Area Agreement. This is the second year that this set has been reported.

Appendix 1 provides an overview of performance and comments on each indicator.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That the Committee notes and comments on the performance as identified in section four.

Local Government Act, 1972 Section 100D (As amended) List of Background Papers used in the Preparation of this Report	
Brief description of background papers:	Name and telephone number of holder and address where open to inspection:
Tower Hamlets Index Monitoring Reports Strategic Plan 2006/07 Best Value Performance Plan 2006/07	Christina Mack, 020 7364 4565 Mulberry Place, 6 th Floor

3 Background

- 3.1 The Tower Hamlets Index consists of key Strategic Plan indicators through which we measure progress towards the Council's 12 strategic objectives.
- 3.2 The Tower Hamlets Index has been designed as a tool for Corporate Directors and their staff to accelerate improvement or sustain excellent performance in priority areas. It enables Members to monitor the overall rate of improvement across the Council.
- 3.3 Each directorate has set annual targets to assist the Council in reaching its ambition of being one of the top performers in Inner London, and in the top 25% in Greater London by 2010. These targets are integrated into the service planning, team planning and performance management arrangements within each directorate.
- 3.4 We undertake an annual assessment of our ranking on all Tower Hamlets Index indicators which are Best Value Performance Indicators. We monitor our performance monthly on a wider suite of Index indicators which includes local PIs for which national comparisons are not available. The bi-monthly Index excludes all indicators for which data is available only annually. In some cases proxy indicators replace the annual indicators – for example, school attendance instead of annual test and examination result indicators.
- 3.5 There are 4 indicators that are monitored quarterly and 2 indicators that are monitored each school term.

4. Current Performance

- 4.1 Performance against the first bi-monthly monitoring of these indicators for the period April 2007 - May 2007 is set out in Appendix one.
- 4.2.1 Currently 17 of the performance indicators are on track to achieve their end of year target (green). Areas where performance is well above the estimated level for the end of May target are as follows:
- Wounding: number of violent crimes (common assault plus ABH/GHB) per 1,000 population
 - Increased number of under 18s accessing treatment - Enhancing young people
 - Percentage of urgent repairs completed in government time limits
 - Number of supported admissions of older people to permanent residential and nursing care per 10,000 population aged 65 or over
 - Average time for processing new housing benefit and council tax benefit claims (days).
 - Percentage of people attending LAP events who are from targeted communities: Somali residents
- 4.2.2 A total of 3 indicators are not on track to meet their end of year target (red). These are:
- Percentage of household waste sent for recycling
 - Unauthorised absence rates (primary and secondary)

4.2.3 The remaining 20 indicators are at amber (not currently meeting in-year targets but with action in place to ensure that they meet the end of year targets).

4.2.3 The table below compares the traffic lights for this period with the equivalent period in 2006/07. This shows that there are significantly fewer red indicators than last year.

	Green	Amber	Red
2006/07	14 (38.9%)	14 (38.9%)	8 (22.2%)
2007/08	17 (42.5%)	20 (50.0%)	3 (7.50%)

4.2.4 There are still 10 months to the end of year and comments reflect the steps being taken to ensure targets are met.

5 Finance

5.1 It is important that performance monitoring takes account of financial performance so that it can be shown to have been achieved within existing resources and therefore to be broadly sustainable.

5.2 The latest corporate financial monitoring information available relates to the year-end position for 2006/07 (i.e. as at 31st March 2007). For the General Fund, this indicates a net underspend for the year against Directorate budgets of £2.5m, of which just under £1.6m related to prior year adjustments for housing benefits. Only Environment & Culture over spent its budget - which was due to higher energy costs within transportation & highways, additional costs incurred on crime initiatives within market areas and the need to increase the bad debts provision within Parking Services. The 2007/08 budget has been set to deliver £4.6m in efficiency savings, with inflation and unavoidable growth fully funded and no allocation for improvement growth. The Housing Revenue Account made an operating surplus in 2006/07 of £5.1m.

5.3 Although it is not possible to be specific about individual performance indicators, this tends to indicate that, in general, current levels of performance are being achieved within the resources allocated in the budget.

5.4 Financial monitoring within Directorates takes place on a monthly basis, and Directorate Management Teams should monitor use of resources alongside service performance to ensure that performance is sustainable and to give early warning of any issues to be addressed.

5.5 In addition, the Performance Review Group focuses on performance and where it could be useful can look at allocating resources to support performance improvement.

6. Comments from the Chief Finance Officer

6.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report. Any specific financial implications relating to the performance indicators have been incorporated in the officer comments attached to this report.

7. Concurrent Report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal)

7.1 The Local Government Act 1999 places a duty on the Council to secure continuous improvement in the way its functions are exercised having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. Performance monitoring using the Index

combined with implementation of the Strategic Plan will assist in discharging that obligation.

8. Equalities Implications

- 8.1 The Council's ambitious targets for service delivery are focused on meeting the needs of the diverse communities living in Tower Hamlets. The Tower Hamlets Index reflects the priority the Council gives to equality and diversity issues, and includes equality indicators such as LAP attendance from specific groups and the percentage of women and BME people in the top 5% of earners in the Council.

9. Anti Poverty Implications

- 9.1 A number of the indicators in the Index specifically address unemployment and homelessness families, targeting some of the most vulnerable communities in Tower Hamlets. A number of the other indicators address service improvements that have a greater impact on those communities in most need of Council services.

10. Sustainable Action for a Greener Environment

- 10.1 A number of the indicators contribute directly towards a greener environment, including improving the cleanliness of streets. The Council will ensure that in monitoring and reporting on the Tower Hamlets Index, the environmental impact locally will be kept to a minimum.

11. Risk Management Implications

- 11.1 In line with the Council's risk management strategy, the implementation of the Tower Hamlets Index will assist the Cabinet, Corporate Directors and relevant service managers in delivering the ambitious targets set out in the Strategic Plan. Where any difficulties or slippage arise, the process will create an opportunity for Members and Corporate Directors to discuss remedial action and keep progress under regular review.

Tower Hamlets Index First Monitoring Round – April-May 2007

PI Ref No	Description	Outturn 06/07	May Actual	May Estimate	Annual Target	Preferred Outcome	Traffic Light	Responsible Officer
<u>SP101</u>	Wounding: number of violent crimes (common assault plus ABH/GBH) per 1000 population	22.9	2.56	3.5	20.15	Lower	GREEN	Andy Bamber
Comment: This indicator includes key crime areas such as Grievous Bodily Harm (GBH), Actual Bodily Harm (ABH) and Common Assault. We are currently on target.								
<u>SP104</u>	Increased number of under 18s accessing treatment - Enhancing young people	711	468	399	732	Higher	GREEN	Andy Bamber
Comment: End of May estimate exceeded and on track to meet end of year target								
<u>SP105</u>	Reduction in overall crime rate (British Crime Survey – BCS - Comparator Offences)	18592	3208.22	3018.17	18109	Lower	AMBER	Andy Bamber
Comment: The recorded crime BCS comparator is the suite of statistics recorded by the police that cover crime types that are most similar to those captured by the BCS. These are: vandalism, burglary, vehicle-related theft, bicycle theft, theft from the person, robbery, common assault and wounding. We are slightly behind target on this indicator. Personal Robbery and theft from the person seem to be key contributors to this rise. The partnership is deploying an array of tactics to meet the target.								
<u>SP108</u>	The proportion of relevant land and highways (expressed as a percentage) that is assessed as having combined deposits of litter and detritus that fall below an acceptable level. [amended]	22.0	N/A	N/A	12.0	Lower		John Palmer
Comment: Tranche 1 is conducted between April and July and reported in September.								
<u>SP111</u>	Percentage of household waste which has been sent by the authority for recycling.	11.72	12.21	13	22.00	Higher	RED	John Palmer
Comment: This BVPI is calculated using data entered into Wastedataflow and outturns are provided to the Audit Commission by DEFRA. Validation through Wastedataflow may lead to information being changed. The target is a stretch target and the Council is implementing a number of measures to increase the recycling rate as contained within the Recycling Improvement Plan for 2007/08. This includes a sustained programme of marketing and publicity including community door-knocking to raise awareness. Whilst performance is predicted to continue rising, it will be difficult to meet the end of year target.								
<u>SP203</u>	Percentage of urgent repairs completed in government time limits	96.59	97.12	96.6	97.0	Higher	GREEN	Maureen McEleney
Comment: Results are significantly above the projected target for May.								

Appendix 1

PI Ref No	Description	Outturn 06/07	May Actual	May Estimate	Annual Target	Preferred Outcome	Traffic Light	Responsible Officer
<u>SP204</u>	Average time taken to re-let local authority housing. - [New PI]	34.30	36.01	37	31	Lower	GREEN	Maureen McEleney
<p>Comment: Bi-monthly targets have been set which recognises the initial delays caused by the introduction of the new Lettings IT system. Results are anticipated to achieve the year end target.</p>								
<u>SP205</u>	Percentage of residents satisfied with the Councils repairs service	90.22	88	91	91	Higher	AMBER	Maureen McEleney
<p>Comment: Results for May are still being collected from contractors. Results are for April only</p>								
<u>SP210</u>	Average length of stay in bed and breakfast accommodation of households which include dependent children or a pregnant woman and which are unintentionally homeless and in priority need.	3.67	3.6	3.6	3.50	Lower	GREEN	Colin Cormack
<p>Comment: This figure is an estimate for the first TH1 monitoring period. A new IT system has been introduced which will be in function shortly. We anticipate reaching our end of year target.</p>								
<u>SP211</u>	Number of supported admissions of older people to permanent residential and nursing care per 10,000 population aged 65 or over	74.6	6.84	11.67	70	Lower	GREEN	Luke Addams
<p>Comment: Exceeded end of May estimate and on track to meet the end of year target</p>								
<u>SP212</u>	Adult and older clients receiving a review as a percentage of those receiving a service.	84.9	12.7	14.3	86	Higher	AMBER	Luke Addams
<p>Comment: During April and May, much effort was made by the information team to make sure that the target was met for the 06/07 outturn. As a result, practitioner teams were not presented with the usual GAP reports (which list clients in need of a review) in April. Teams were issued with a PAF D40 GAP report in the middle of May, and, most recently, on 25th June. In addition, due to the large number of reviews completed by teams in the run-up to the end of the financial year, many teams took the decision to complete a slightly lower number of reviews in April/May than would be proportionate, so that practitioners were able to complete other pieces of work. We anticipate that the number of reviews will return to meeting the target shortly, once teams react to the management information they have been given.</p>								
<u>SP214</u>	Percentage of child protection cases which should have been reviewed during the year that were reviewed.	100	100	100	100	Higher	GREEN	Kamini Rambellas
<p>Comment: 100% achieved. Cases continue to be monitored closely to ensure all reviews are completed on time and we anticipate continued 100% performance in this indicator.</p>								

Appendix 1

PI Ref No	Description	Outturn 06/07	May Actual	May Estimate	Annual Target	Preferred Outcome	Traffic Light	Responsible Officer
<u>SP215</u>	Percentage of children looked after at 31 March with three or more placements during the year	10.95	11.1	10.79	10.00	Lower	AMBER	Kamini Rambellas
<p>Comment: The percentage of moves is slightly higher than anticipated for the rolling 12 month period, however compares favourably with 13.58 reported this time last year. Analysis of year to date figures to May 31st show that 3 out of 342 children have had 3 or more placements in the last 12 month period, this equates to 0.9%. Based upon 342 children in placements the annual target of 10% equates to no more than 34.2 children in a year. The current figure of 3 for the first 2 months of the year therefore compares favourably and shows we are on track to achieve 10% by the end of the year. A Placement Stability Steering Group, meeting approximately 3 monthly, scrutinises performance in this area to ensure that moves are appropriate and that children at risk of multiple placements are being closely monitored. The aim is to maintain children in placements wherever this is possible and appropriate. Our rolling 12 month performance is anticipated to get back on track, particularly from October when the lower performance reported in July and September 2006 is no longer included as part of this years' rolling 12 month period.</p>								
<u>SP218</u>	Average time for processing new housing benefit and council tax benefit claims (days).	28.49	25.08	28.5	28	Lower	GREEN	Maureen McEleney
<p>Comment: The target for the first monitoring period has been exceeded and the yearly target should be met.</p>								
<u>SP301</u>	Percentage of major planning applications determined within 13 weeks.	38.33	54.55	60.00	60.00	Higher	AMBER	Mike Kiely
<p>Comment: Although the interval target is currently unmet, performance has improved on the previous year; this is despite the disproportionately high number of major strategic proposals being submitted in the Borough. The Directorate's performance monitoring of its current caseload has continued as we strive to maintain an improved rate of output of planning decisions. It is proposed to delete this PI under the White Paper proposals as the Government accepts the target is unrealistic for major applications.</p>								
<u>SP302</u>	Percentage of minor planning applications determined in 8 weeks.	80.49	82.80	80.29	80.5	Higher	GREEN	Mike Kiely
<p>Comment: The first review period reflects steady progress and improvement on last year's performance. Additional staff and improved monitoring systems have led to better support for planning officers.</p>								
<u>SP303</u>	Percentage of other planning applications determined in 8 weeks.	84.18	89.47	88.26	88.30	Higher	GREEN	Mike Kiely
<p>Comment: See previous comment</p>								
<u>SP304</u>	Number of businesses / social enterprises assisted to improve their performance	43	N/A	N/A	40	Higher		Jackie Odunoye
<p>Comment: Monitored Quarterly</p>								

Appendix 1

PI Ref No	Description	Outturn 06/07	May Actual	May Estimate	Annual Target	Preferred Outcome	Traffic Light	Responsible Officer
<u>SP306</u>	Percentage of young people in Tower Hamlets aged 16-18 not in education, employment or training	10.8	11.9	12.8	8.2	Lower	GREEN	Mary Durkin
<p>Comment: The May performance figures were available from 25th June and so have been used to report May TH Index. Performance is better than target and better than reported for the same period last year. There has been a 26% reduction in the number of young people not in education, employment or training compared to the same time last year. It is expected that the numbers will increase from Easter - September because of school leavers. The following actions are being put in place to continue to address increase opportunities for young people: Rolling out of the September guarantee providing that every child who requires a place in college receives it. Commissioning a new work based learning. Continue the activities agreement wrap around work with workless families. Doubling the skills ladder offer (work experience for young people). The number of young people not in education, employment or training varies seasonally and a sharp decrease is usually observed from October onwards due to school leavers and others enrolling in educational courses or commencing employment. The method used to calculate estimates has been refined this year to take account of these seasonal fluctuations.</p>								
<u>SP307</u>	Number of people aged 24 and under in receipt of Jobseekers Allowance (and not on New Deal) helped into paid employment of over 16 hours a week for at least 13 consecutive weeks or more	139	17	16	250	Higher	GREEN	Jackie Odunoye
<p>Comment: Met the estimate for end May</p>								
<u>SP308</u>	Percentage of young people in Tower Hamlets aged 18 - 25 claiming unemployment-related benefits	20.7	19.2	16.5	16.0	Lower	AMBER	Jackie Odunoye
<p>Comment: We are only able to monitor the 16-25 age group and the figures reflect this. Nationally there has been an overall increase in economic inactivity for under 25s. The figure is reflective of young people leaving Full Time education and previous trends have suggested this figure declines later in the year.</p>								
<u>SP309</u>	Percentage of local residents claiming unemployment-related benefits	8.6	8.3	8.0	8.0	Lower	AMBER	Jackie Odunoye
<p>Comment: Since April the general claimant count has decreased by 0.3% which is generally in line with national decrease but not as significant as the decrease in London.</p>								
<u>SP310</u>	Increased supply of employment opportunities in key growth sectors prompted directly through the Employment Consortium	1354	N/A	N/A	1400	Higher		Jackie Odunoye
<p>Comment: Monitored Quarterly</p>								

Appendix 1

PI Ref No	Description	Outturn 06/07	May Actual	May Estimate	Annual Target	Preferred Outcome	Traffic Light	Responsible Officer
<u>SP404a</u>	Improved overall attendance rates at primary school	93.39	94.55	95.50	95.50	Higher	AMBER	Helen Jenner
<p>Comment: There has been a significant increase in attendance levels due to Local Area Agreement actions to raise parental awareness of attendance. There is also a cross borough action plan to address attendance. Eid fell over the holiday period which has minimised the impact upon attendance, which is normally estimated to have a minimum of a 0.5% impact upon attendance levels.</p>								
<u>SP404b</u>	Improved overall attendance rates at secondary school	92.48	92.64	93.00	93.00	Higher	AMBER	Helen Jenner
<p>Comment: See above</p>								
<u>SP405a</u>	Unauthorised absence rates - primary	1.24	1.20	0.95	0.95	Lower	RED	Helen Jenner
<p>Comment: The borough has a robust approach to deal with attendance during term time - we do not authorise any holiday based absence. Performance is unlikely to get back on track as this practice has the effect of increasing reported absence. However this year, absence codings have changed enabling local authorities to analyse reasons for absence. When the national coded data is available – anticipated in October 07 - this will allow for more accurate and transparent tracking of absence across schools and allow for more accurate benchmarks with other boroughs.</p>								
<u>SP405b</u>	Unauthorised absence rates - secondary	2.05	2.04	1.90	1.90	Lower	RED	Helen Jenner
<p>Comment: See above</p>								
<u>SP408</u>	Number of under 16s who are active users of the Idea Stores and libraries	13473	13,135	19,272	19272	Higher	AMBER	Ian McNicol
<p>Comment: The target is not currently being met but a summer programme of promotion and activities for under 16s has been planned. This will focus on recruiting and also on retaining young users in high numbers across the rest of the year. The impact of the increased activity for young people should result in improved performance by September</p>								
<u>SP409</u>	Total number of library items issued to under 16s - Enhancing young people	266303	40,290	40,000	317000	Higher	GREEN	Ian McNicol
<p>Comment: Target exceeded</p>								
<u>SP410</u>	Number of young people under 16 attending study support sessions - enhancing young people	750	N/A	N/A	765	Higher		Ian McNicol
<p>Comment: Reported termly</p>								
<u>SP411</u>	Total number of under 19s completing a course in Idea Stores, libraries and learning centres - enhancing young people	1741	N/A	N/A	1,760	Higher		Ian McNicol
<p>Comment: Reported termly</p>								

Appendix 1

PI Ref No	Description	Outturn 06/07	May Actual	May Estimate	Annual Target	Preferred Outcome	Traffic Light	Responsible Officer
<u>SP412</u>	Number of physical visits to public library premises per 1000 population	9182.00	1240	1647	9881.07	Higher	AMBER	Ian McNicol
<p>Comment: The target has not been met as the remaining 3 library sites are unable to attract the high numbers of visits seen in the 4 Idea Stores. However, the library sites have been assessed and remedial actions taken to improve Bethnal Green Library and Watney Market Library. This should result in increased visitor numbers at those sites. The visitors to Idea Store Canary Wharf continue to rise month on month. The overall performance should be nearer the target by September as very high visitor numbers are expected across all sites over the summer months.</p>								
<u>SP501</u>	Budget Performance	-2500000	N/A	N/A	0	Lower		Alan Finch
<p>Comment: First quarter budget monitoring will be available in July.</p>								
<u>SP505</u>	Number of working days/shifts lost to sickness absence per employee.	7.92	8.15	7.90	7.75	Lower	AMBER	Deb Clarke
<p>Comment: There appears to be a slight increase in absence levels across the organisation. Ongoing sickness absence management processes should help to ensure that this PI is on target for the year end.</p>								
<u>SP506</u>	Percentage of Undisputed Invoices Paid on Time	91.87	92.84	92.5	96	Higher	GREEN	Deb Clarke
<p>Comment: We have met the target for this first monitoring period and are on track to meet the end of year target.</p>								
<u>SP509</u>	Increased attendance at Local Area Partnership events	5202	50	150	5250	Higher	AMBER	Shazia Hussain
<p>Comment: With the refresh of LAP8 Steering Group, only one event was held during this period (rather than the two planned). The events co-ordinator is now also post that will mean we can meet our targets for the next monitoring period (June - July). This will bring us back on track to meet our annual target.</p>								
<u>SP510</u>	% of telephones answered within the customer promise standard	69	66.34	67.0	77	Higher	AMBER	Claire Symonds
<p>Comment: With changes to the Council's email and telephone systems, work is continuing to improve monitoring and reporting systems. These will be implemented for the next reporting cycle and improve management information for remedial action.</p>								
<u>SP511</u>	% of letters responded to within customer promise standard	N/A	77.8	90	90	Higher	AMBER	Claire Symonds
<p>Comment: This information relates to Development and Renewal directorate only. This is a pilot before adopting an improved corporate monitoring system by September 2007. This will improve management information for remedial action.</p>								
<u>SP512</u>	% of calls handled by the customer contact centre	N/A	33	45	45	Higher	AMBER	Claire Symonds
<p>Comment: With changes to the Council's email and telephone systems, work is continuing to improve monitoring and reporting systems. These will be implemented for the next reporting cycle and improve management information for remedial action.</p>								

Appendix 1

PI Ref No	Description	Outturn 06/07	May Actual	May Estimate	Annual Target	Preferred Outcome	Traffic Light	Responsible Officer
<u>SP513</u>	Percentage of complaints completed in time - Council as a whole - Stage 1	65	50	66	80	Higher	AMBER	Claire Symonds
<p>Comment: With the Exception of Housing, who improved slightly in the month, all other directorates performance fell. Chief Executive's is the only directorate above the May estimate and close to the annual target. Improvement plans previously agreed must start to show results</p>								
<u>SP515a</u>	Percentage of people attending LAP events who are from targeted communities: BME residents	54	44.4	48	48	Higher	AMBER	Shazia Hussain
<p>Comment: With the refresh of LAP8 Steering Group, only one event was held during this period (rather than the two planned). The events co-ordinator is now also post that will mean we can meet our targets for the next monitoring period (June - July). This will bring us back on track to meet our annual target.</p>								
<u>SP515b</u>	Percentage of people attending LAP events who are from targeted communities: Bangladeshi residents	39	24.4	33	33	Higher	AMBER	Shazia Hussain
<p>Comment: With the refresh of LAP8 Steering Group, only one event was held during this period (rather than the two planned). The events co-ordinator is now also post that will mean we can meet our targets for the next monitoring period (June - July). This will bring us back on track to meet our annual target.</p>								
<u>SP515c</u>	Percentage of people attending LAP events who are from targeted communities: Somali residents	5	11.1	5	5	Higher	GREEN	Shazia Hussain
<p>Comment: A lot of work has been carried out to engage the Somali community, in particular Somali women. This includes for example working through a local Somali-led third sector organisation and targeted events at the Wessex Centre. The early results are encouraging and we hope we can engage more of the Somali community consistently.</p>								
<u>SP515d</u>	Percentage of people attending LAP events who are from targeted communities: Young residents (16 - 25)	35	13.3	15	15	Higher	AMBER	Shazia Hussain
<p>Comment: With the refresh of LAP8 Steering Group, only one event was held during this period (rather than the two planned). The events co-ordinator is now also post that will mean we can meet our targets for the next monitoring period (June - July). This will bring us back on track to meet our annual target.</p>								
<u>SP516</u>	The percentage of the top 5% of Local Authority staff who are from an ethnic minority.	15.26	16.32	15.5	18.00	Higher	GREEN	Deb Clarke
<p>Comment: We have exceeded the target for this first monitoring period and are on track to meet the end of year target.</p>								
<u>SP517</u>	Percentage of top 5% of earners of Local Authority staff that are women.	53.21	53.57	50	50	Higher	GREEN	Deb Clarke
<p>Comment: We have exceeded the target for this first monitoring period and are on track to meet the end of year target.</p>								

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Agenda Item 9.2

COMMITTEE: Overview and Scrutiny	DATE: July 2007	CLASSIFICATION: UNRESTRICTED	REPORT NO.	AGENDA ITEM NO.
REPORT OF: MARTIN SMITH CHIEF EXECUTIVE		TITLE: CORPORATE COMPLAINTS AND SOCIAL CARE ANNUAL REPORT		
ORIGINATING OFFICER(S): RUTH DOWDEN CORPORATE COMPLAINTS MANAGER		Wards Affected: ALL		

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report contains a summary of complaints received by the Council in the period April 2006 to March 2007 through the Corporate Complaints Procedure, Children's Social Care and Adults Social Care Complaints Procedures and those received and determined by the Local Government Ombudsman in the same period. This report fulfils the statutory requirements under the Children Act 1989 to produce an annual report.
- 1.2 Under the Corporate Complaints procedure there are significant reductions in stage 2 and Ombudsman complaints, demonstrating lower escalation rates. This is a very positive outcome, indicating that complaints are being resolved closer to the point of service delivery and to the satisfaction of the customer.
- 1.3 Adults and Children's Social Care Complaints come under new statutory procedures. The Council has achieved significant improvements in response times to Social Care complaints.
- 1.4 The Local Government Ombudsman has commented positively in the Annual Letter to the Council regarding the Council's response times, willingness to take action to settle complaints, reduction in volumes of complaints and positive liaison with the Ombudsman's office.
- 1.5 The Service has received reaccreditation to British Standards Institute standard for Complaint Handling (CMS 86:2000).

2. Comments of the Chief Financial Officer

- 2.1 This report recommends that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee notes the contents of the annual review of the complaints procedure report, a statutory requirement under the Children Act 1989.
- 2.2 There are no significant financial implications arising from the recommendations in this report that impact on the Children's Services and Adult's Health and Well Being

Services Revenue or Capital Budgets, or other directorate budgets, in current and future years.

- 2.3 Corporate Complaints procedures and quality checks are designed to minimise the cost of making good and compensation, but where this is necessary, payment is contained within the Directorate budget.

3. **Concurrent report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal Services)**

- 3.1 Local authorities are required by an Order made under Section 7B Local Authority Social Services Act 1970 to establish a complaints procedure relating to their Social Services functions.
- 3.2 Complaints which relate to the exercise of a local authority's exercise of its child care functions are required to be considered under a procedure established by Section 26(3) Children Act 1989. An annual report on the operation of that procedure is required under the Representations Procedure (Children) Regulations 1991.
- 3.3 Advice is tendered as required on any potential service breach of statutory or other responsibilities and local settlement advocated to avert other legal action. This has been successful to date.

4. **Equal opportunities Implications.**

- 4.1 The Annual Report provides a breakdown of the ethnicity and gender of complainants and other aspects such as age and disability are collated. Corporate Complaint Procedures have been subject to Equalities Impact Assessments and action to increase the collection of equalities monitoring data, for comparison against borough profiles, has been successful. The Social Care complaints procedure is an important mechanism to ensure that vulnerable members of the community being assisted by the Council are able to voice their concerns.
- 4.2 There is a Social Care complaints leaflet available in five community languages and on tape in both English and Sylheti, which is widely distributed through out the Directorate and within the local voluntary sector agencies. There is also a leaflet for children and young people which is in community languages. This publicity ensures that all members of the community are made aware of the procedure.
- 4.3 The Directorate also ensures that complainants are offered the opportunity of an interpretation service to assist them in making their complaint. Young people are always offered the opportunity of an advocate in line with the Children Act 1989.

5. **Anti-poverty implications**

- 5.1 The Social Care and Corporate complaints procedures provide an important mechanism for vulnerable service users to give feedback on services. Continuing publicity will ensure that all residents and service users will have better awareness of their right to voice any concerns.

6. Sustainable action for a greener environment

6.1 There are no specific implications.

7. Risk management implications.

7.1 The Complaints Team looks at means of redress where complaints are upheld. This successfully reduces the risk of Ombudsman Enquiries findings of maladministration, and compensation claims.

8. Recommendations

8.1 Members are asked to note the content of the report.

**Local Government Act 2000 (Section 97)
List of Background papers used in the preparation of this report.**

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report addresses sets out the volume of complaints received by the Council in the period 1 April 2006 to 31 March 2007, the outcome and the standard of performance in dealing with them.
- 1.2 The Corporate Complaints Team work within the Customer Access division. The team comprises seven members of staff .registers complaints under all stages of the Council's Corporate Complaints Procedure, the statutory Adults and Children's Social Care Complaints Procedures, and those investigated by the Local Government Ombudsman. The officers monitor complaint progression and provide management information on performance.
- 1.3 Officers also investigate stage 2 Adults Social Care complaints and Children's Social Care complaints, and stage 3 corporate complaints on behalf of the Chief Executive. The Adults and Children's Social Care complaints procedures are explained further and reported on in a separate Annual Report. (Attached as Appendix 3)
- 1.4 The Team work within the Customer Access division and comprises seven members of staff.

2 THE CORORATE COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

- 2.1 Most successful organisations encourage service users to complain, and as such a high volume of complaints is often an indication of a healthy relationship with service users. However, complaints should be resolved at the lowest possible point and the escalation of complaints can indicate difficulties in addressing matters at the service level.
- 2.2 The Corporate Complaints Procedure is a three stage process, accepting issues from anyone who wants or receives a service from the Council, except where the matter is covered by another channel of redress, such as a legal or appeal process (e.g. benefits, parking penalty charges, leasehold matters), or where a statutory procedure exists. The Complaints Team process and investigate complaints relating to non-statutory duties and school complaints reaching stage 3 in Education.

3 LOCAL GOVERNMENT OMBUDSMAN

- 3.1 The Local Government Ombudsman is an independent watchdog and considers complaints (usually) after the complainant has exhausted the internal complaints procedure and covers Education and Social Services matters.

4 ENQUIRIES, COMMENTS AND COMPLIMENTS

- 4.1 In order to capture fully the team's contact with the public, all telephone and written enquiries are also recorded on the complaints component of the Council's Customer Relationship Management (CRM) database.
- 4.2 A small number of compliments were recorded, with 29 in Chief Executives and 6 in Environment and Culture. The service also recorded 15 service comments.

5 COMPLAINT STATISTICS AND ANALYSIS 2006 TO 2007

5.1 VOLUME OF COMPLAINTS

VOLUME OF COMPLAINTS						
	2005 / 2006		2006 / 2007		Variance	
Stage 1	1641		1841		200	10.9%
	77.2%		80.5%			
Stage 2	374		330		-44	-13.3%
	17.6%		14.4%			
Stage 3	111		116		5	4%
	5.2%		5.1%			
Total	2126		2287		161	7%
	100.0%		100.0%			

Table 1

5.2 Table 1 shows that the total number of complaints received by the Council in the year is slightly higher than in the previous year, but the escalation to stage 2 has reduced, indicating that resolution of stage one was prompt and comprehensive.

5.3 The volume of stage 3 complaints is similar to last year, at 5% of all complaints. However compared against stage 2 complaints 35% of this years stage 2 went to stage 3 whilst last year it was 29%. Consideration should be given to whether this could be due to the quality of stage 2 replies, or may be indicative of services being declined.

CORPORATE COMPLAINTS				
	2005 / 2006		2006 / 2007	
		Escalation Rate against stage 1 05/06		Escalation Rate against stage 1 06/07
Stage 1	1641		1841	
Stage 2	374	22%	330	18%
Stage 3	111	7%	116	6%
Total	2126		2287	
	100.0%		100.0%	

Table 2

5.4 In total, of the complaints recorded at stage1, 18% progressed to stage 2, and 6% proceeded to stage 3, (table 2), indicating a lower overall progression rate than last year for each stage.

5.5 Chart 1 (below) demonstrates the seasonal trends and peaks in the reporting of complaints.

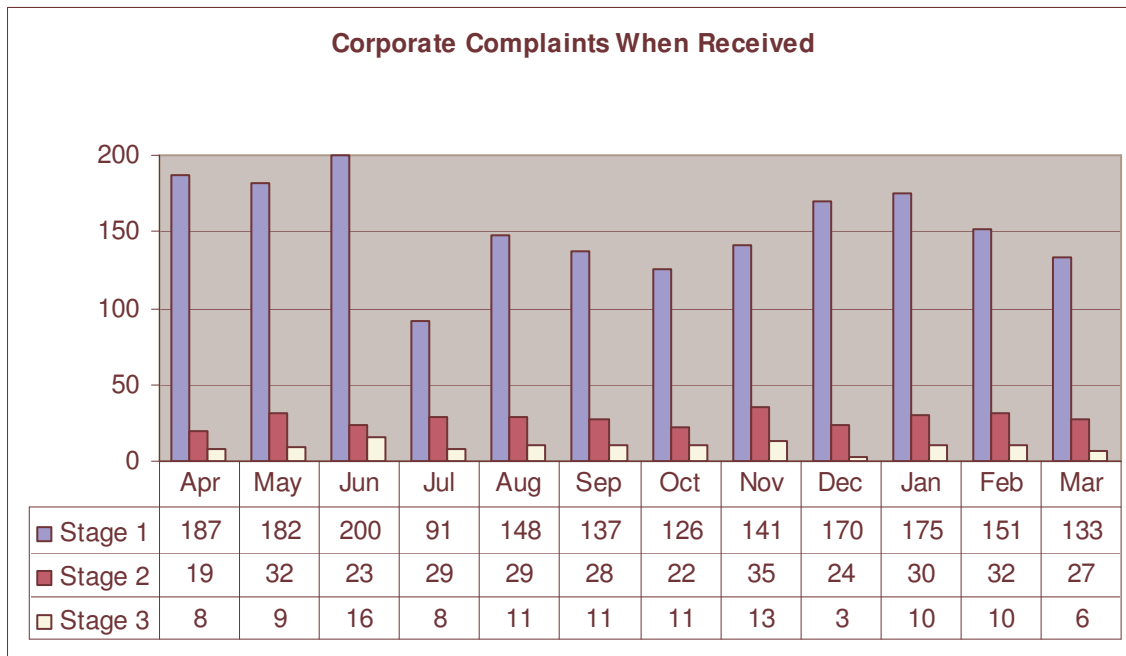


Chart 1

5.6 In addition to the recorded complaints, the team dealt with 986 enquiries from the public in 2006/07.

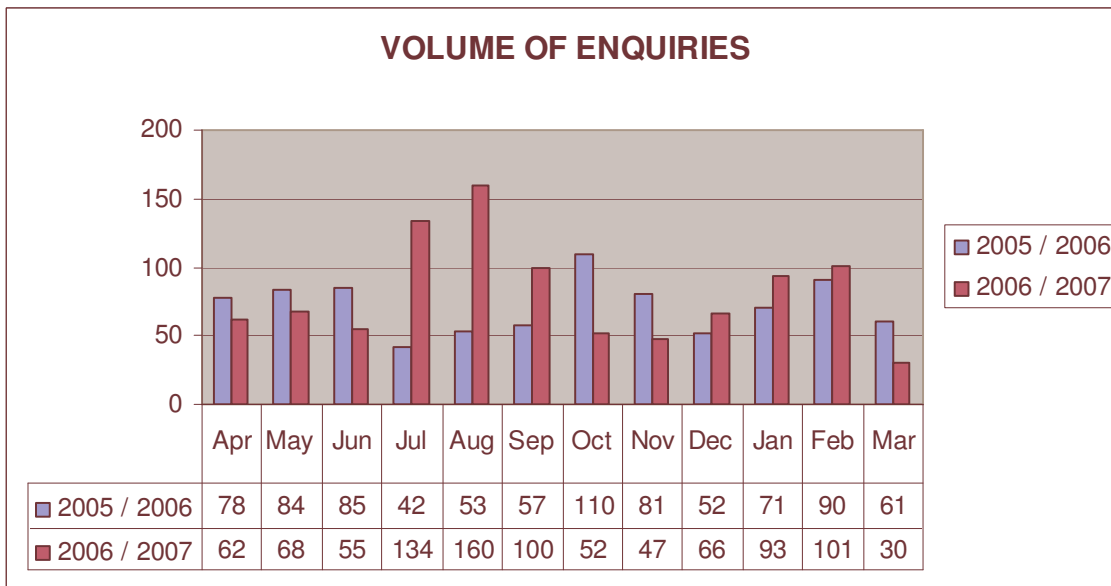


Chart 2

5.7 There is no obvious reason for the peak in July and August.

6 CORPORATE COMPLAINTS BY DIRECTORATE.

Directorate	Total Received in 2005 / 2006	Total Received in 2006 / 2007	Upheld		Partially Upheld		Escalated to Next Stage (no response in time)		Not Upheld		Withdrawn or Closed		Completed in Time		Average Days to Complete
Stage 1															
Chief Executive's	140	169	25	15%	76	45%	0	0.0%	64	38%	4	2%	154	91%	6
Development & Renewal	27	29	7	24%	5	17%	2	6.9%	12	41%	3	10%	14	48%	11
Development & Renewal, Housing	1128	1040	426	41%	8	1%	14	1.3%	563	54%	29	3%	611	59%	10
(Education and) Children's Services	13	22	4	18%	2	9%	0	0.0%	5	23%	11	50%	20	91%	7
Environment & Culture	330	572	172	30%	150	26%	1	0.2%	224	39%	25	4%	384	67%	9
(Social Services and) Adult Services	3	9	2	22%	0	0%	0	0.0%	3	33%	4	44%	7	78%	10
Total for Stage 1	1641	1841	636	35%	241	13%	17	0.9%	871	47%	76	4%	1190	65%	10
Stage 2															
Chief Executive's	37	20	0	0%	8	40%	0	0.0%	12	60%	0	0%	20	100%	7
Development & Renewal	16	12	0	0%	4	33%	0	0.0%	7	58%	1	8%	9	75%	16
Development & Renewal, Housing	268	232	84	36%	2	1%	0	0.0%	141	61%	5	2%	175	75%	16
(Education and) Children's Services	7	3	0	0%	1	33%	0	0.0%	2	67%	0	0%	3	100%	12
Environment & Culture	45	61	21	34%	13	21%	0	0.0%	24	39%	3	5%	44	72%	18
(Social Services and) Adult Services	1	2	0	0%	0	0%	0	0.0%	2	100%	0	0%	2	100%	14
Total for Stage 2	374	330	105	32%	28	8%	0	0.0%	188	57%	9	3%	253	77%	15
Stage 3															
Chief Executive's	8	18	0	0%	3	17%	0		15	83%	0	0%	11	61%	19
Development & Renewal	9	10	3	30%	3	30%	0		4	40%	0	0%	8	80%	17
Development & Renewal, Housing	81	73	22	30%	13	18%	0		35	48%	3	4%	58	79%	19
(Education and) Children's Services	0	1	1	100%	0	0%	0		0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	21
Environment & Culture	12	14	2	14%	4	29%	0		7	50%	1	7%	10	71%	19
(Social Services and) Adult Services	1	0	0	-	0	-	0		0	-	0	-	0	-	0
Total for Stage 3	111	116	28	24%	23	20%	0		61	53%	4	3%	87	75%	19

Table 3

6.1 Table 3 provides an overview of the complaints by directorate at each stage. Due to directorate changes within the year, complaints relating to the previous Education and Social Services Directorates are grouped under the new directorate headings.

COMPARISON OF STAGE 1 COMPLAINTS BY DIRECTORATE FOR LAST YEAR			
Directorate	2005 / 2006	2006/ 2007	Variance
Chief Executive's	140 8.5%	169 9.2%	29 20.7%
Development & Renewal, Non Housing	27 1.6%	30 1.6%	3 11.1%
Development & Renewal, Housing	1128 68.7%	1040 56.5%	-88 -7.8%
Children's Services	13 0.8%	22 1.2%	9 69.2%
Environment & Culture	330 20.1%	571 31.0%	241 73.0%
Adults Health and Wellbeing	3 0.2%	9 0.5%	6 200.0%
Total	1641	1841	200 12.2%

Table 4

- 6.2 Table 4 shows the initial complaints by directorate. In order to provide a fuller analysis of complaints, Development and Renewal figures are divided into Housing and other complaints. This enables better comparison with previous years.
- 6.3 The variance in complaint volume for the directorates is largely attributed to the changes in structure. The proportion of complaints relating to housing matters has fallen and processes improved. The volume of housing stock has also fallen through the year.
- 6.4 As stated earlier, most Social Care complaints come under their statutory, 3-stage complaints procedure. Similarly, Education complaints come under a separate procedure at Stages 1 and 2. The final stage comes under the Corporate Complaints Procedure, at stage 3. Headline detail of these complaints can be seen under item 6.12.
- 6.5 The charts that follow provide a breakdown of the corporate complaints in each directorate by service area.

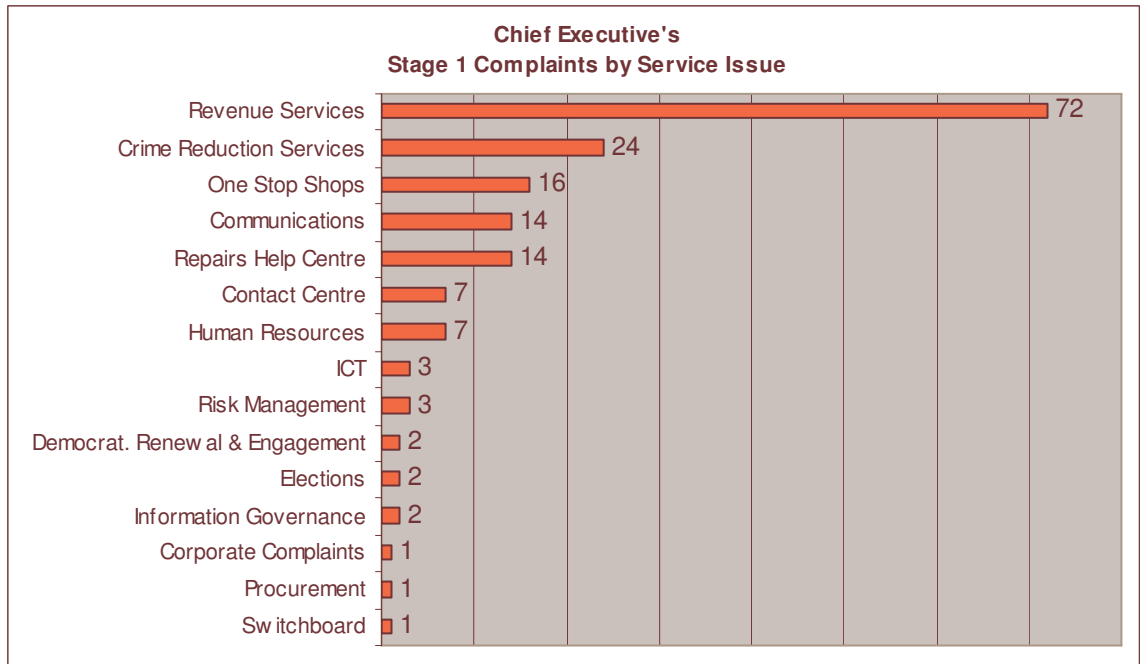


Chart 3

6.6 Although the volume of complaints regarding Revenue Service is higher than others in Chief Executives, when considered against the volume of transactions across all households, this volume is not unduly high.

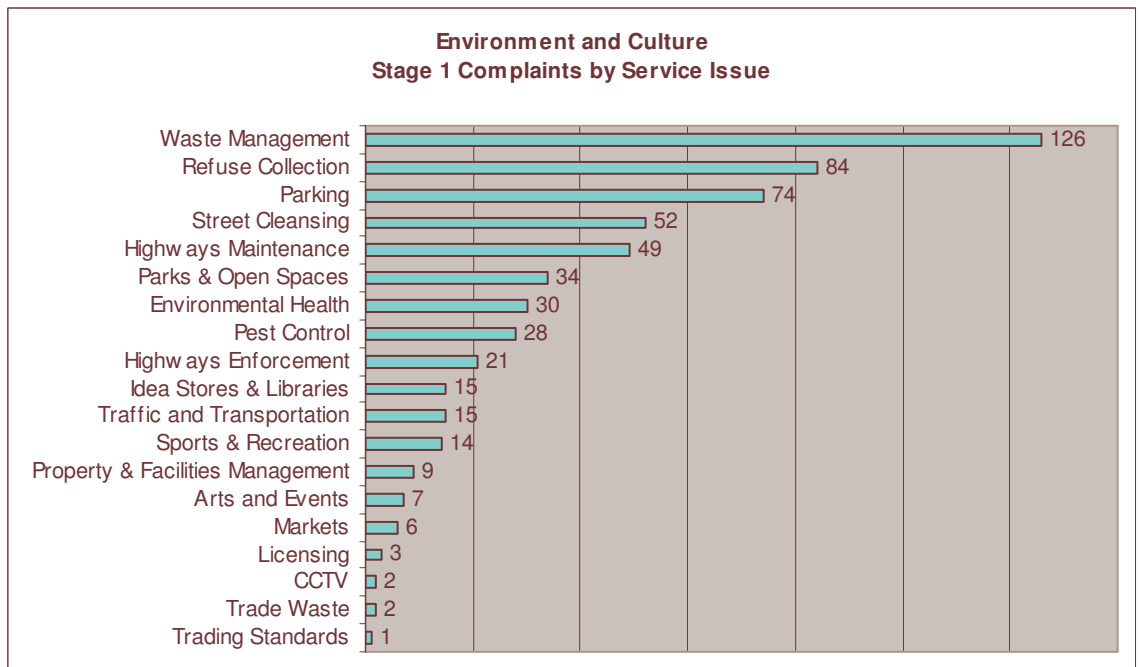


Chart 4

6.7 Complaints in Environment and Culture are spread across a range of services. The volume of complaints regarding refuse collection and recycling (waste management) rose following the change of contactor in January 2007.

6.8 As stated earlier, Housing complaints are analysed separately to other Development and Renewal Complaints. The split of complaints regarding Planning applications and Building Control can be seen in chart 5.

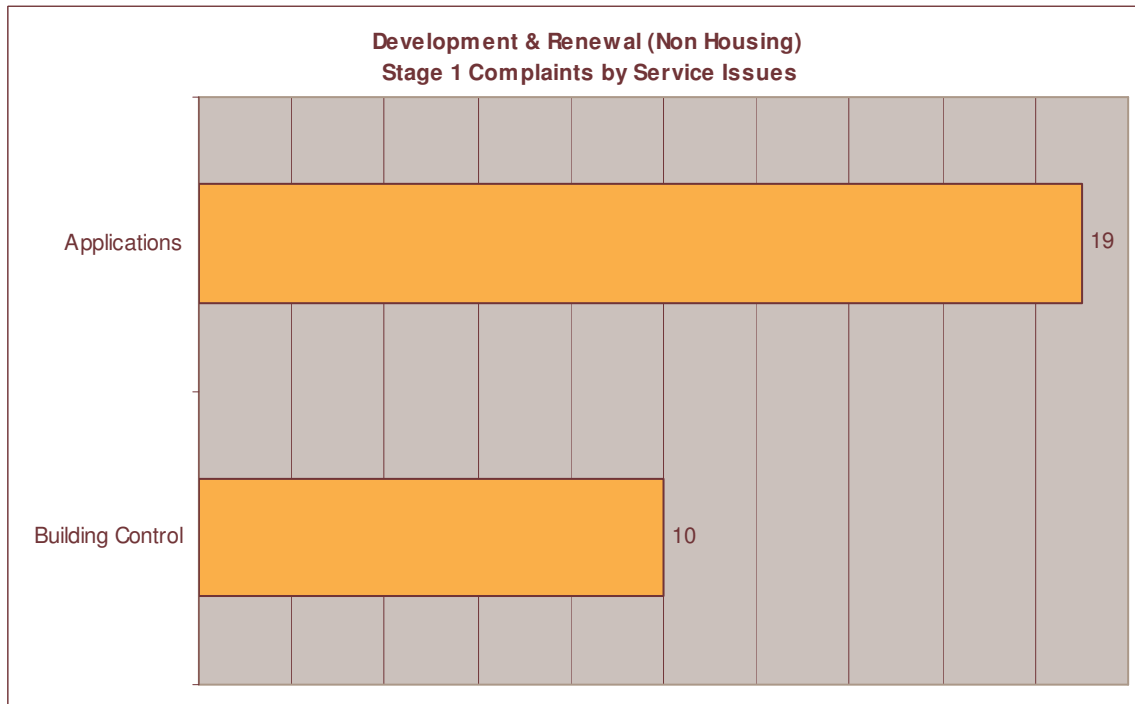


Chart 5

6.9 Housing related complaints fall into a number of areas, with repair issues comprising the highest volume. These issues are reviewed under contract monitoring.

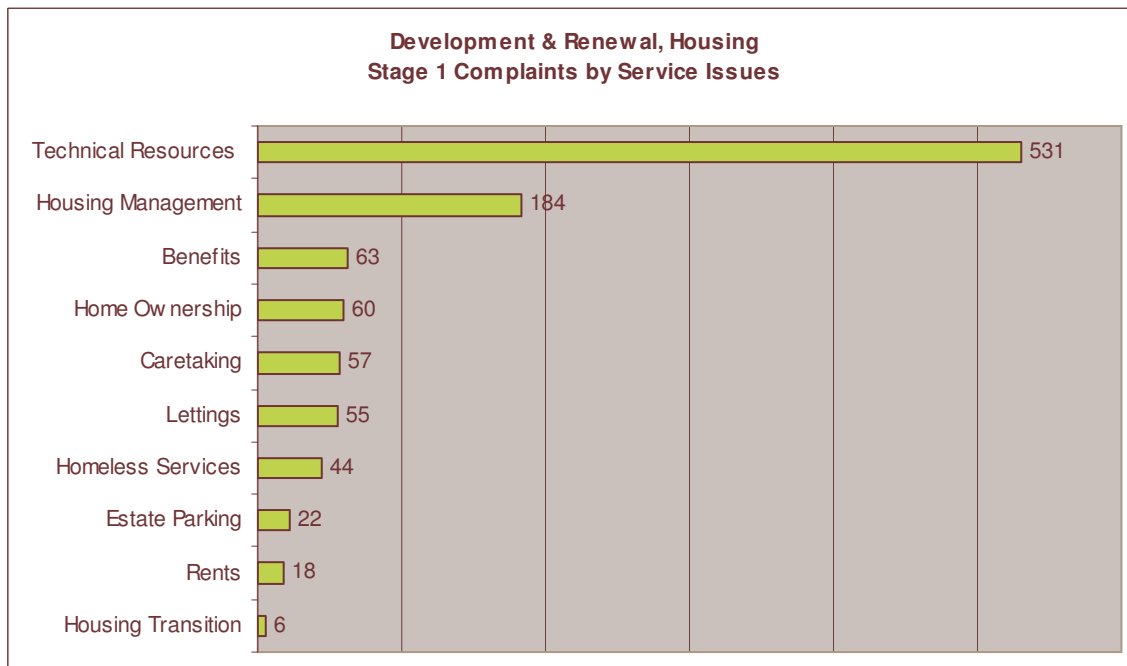


Chart 6

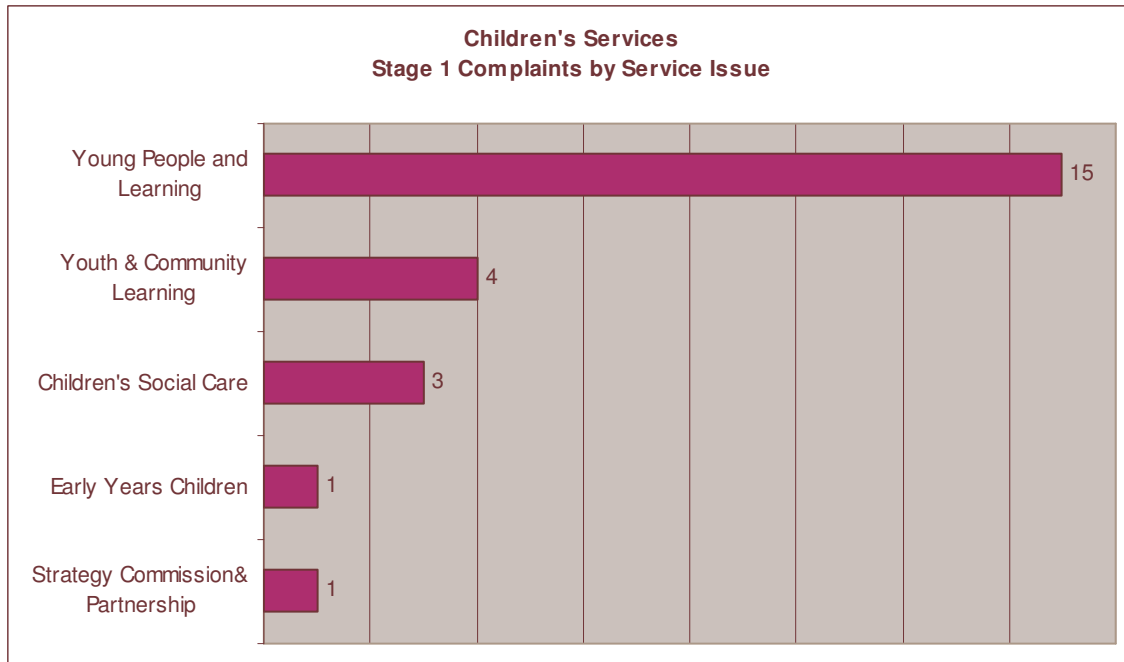


Chart 7

6.10 Corporate Complaints against both Adults Health and Wellbeing and Children's Services are few in number and relate to non-statutory processes.

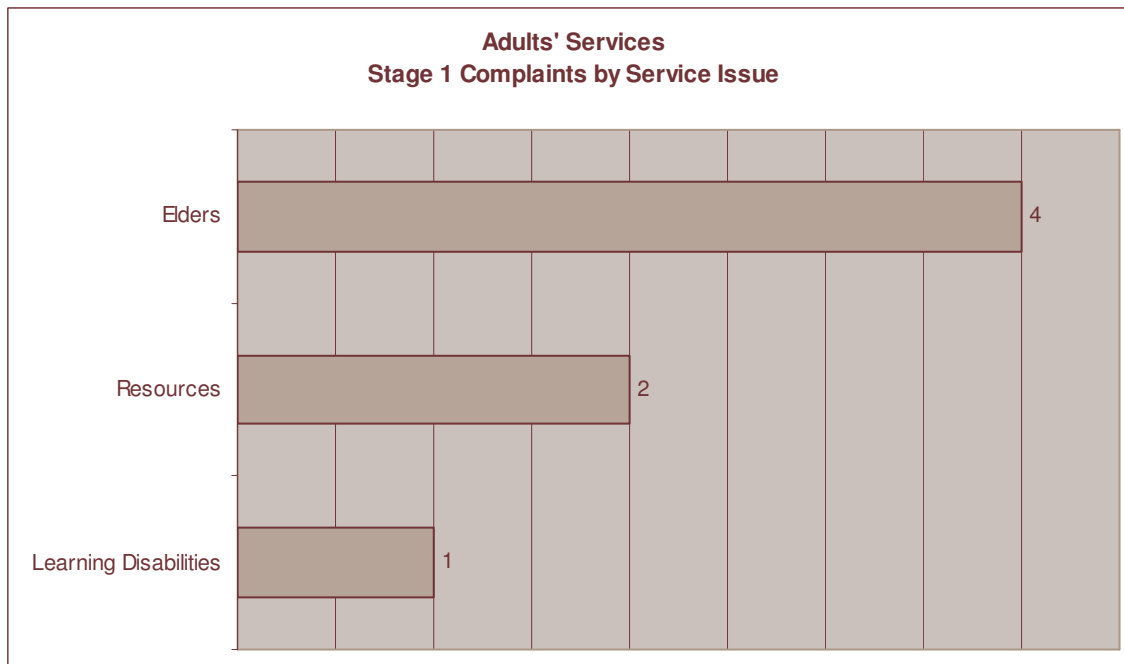


Chart 8

6.11 Tables 5 and 6 below compare the complaint volumes stage 2 and 3 for 2006/07 with the previous year.

COMPARISON OF STAGE 2 COMPLAINTS BY DIRECTORATE FOR LAST YEAR			
Directorate	2005 / 2006	2006/ 2007	Variance
Chief Executive's	37 9.9%	20 6.1%	-17 -45.9%
Development & Renewal, Non Housing	16 4.3%	12 3.6%	-4 -25.0%
Development & Renewal, Housing	268 71.7%	232 70.3%	-36 -13.4%
Children's Services	7 1.9%	3 0.9%	-4 -57.1%
Environment & Culture	45 12.0%	61 18.5%	16 35.6%
Adults Health and Wellbeing	1 0.3%	2 0.6%	1 100.0%
Total	374	330	-44 -11.8%

Table 5

COMPARISON OF STAGE 3 COMPLAINTS BY DIRECTORATE FOR LAST YEAR			
Directorate	2005 / 2006	2006/ 2007	Variance
Chief Executive's	8 7.2%	18 15.5%	10 125.0%
Development & Renewal, Non Housing	9 8.1%	10 8.6%	1 11.1%
Development & Renewal, Housing	81 73.0%	73 62.9%	-8 -9.9%
Children's Services	0 0.0%	1 0.9%	1 #DIV/0!
Environment & Culture	12 10.8%	14 12.1%	2 16.7%
Adults Health and Wellbeing	1 0.9%	0 0.0%	-1 -100.0%
Total	111	116	5 4.5%

Table 6

6.12 Table 7 shows the headline figures for these procedures.

		2005/2006	2006/2007
Social Care Complaints Procedures			
Stage 1	Adult	51	64
	Children	22	44
	Total	73	108
Stage 2	Adult	9	8
	Children	6	11
	Total	15	19
Stage 3	Adult	0	3
	Children	2	0
	Total	2	3
Education Complaints Procedure			
Stage 1		11	8
Stage 2		6	0

Table 7

7 STAGE 3 COMPLAINTS

COMPARISON OF STAGE 3 COMPLAINTS								
	Total	Upheld	Partially Upheld	Not Upheld	Withdrawn or Closed	In Progress	Completed in Time	Average Days to Complete
2005 / 2006	111	41	24	42	4	0	71	19
		36.9%	21.6%	37.8%	3.6%	0.0%	64.0%	
2006 / 2007	116	28	23	61	4	0	87	19
		24.1%	19.8%	52.6%	3.4%	0.0%	75.0%	
Variance	5	-13	-1	19	0	0		0
	4.5%							0.0%

Table 8

- 7.1 The average days to complete stage 3 investigations remained at 19 days, continuing the improvement from last year, now on average meeting the corporate target of 20 days. The volume completed in time rose to 75%. A target of 80% is set for 2007/08. A summary of Stage 3 complaints that were upheld is attached at appendix 1.
- 7.2 Although the escalation rate of complaints is consistently decreasing year on year, further efforts must be made to ensure that complaints are resolved at an early stage.
- 7.3 In 2005/06 the number of stage 3 cases where financial compensation was made was 16, with payments ranging between £30 and £500, and an average payment of £264.

- 7.4 In 2006/07 payments were made in 20 cases, totalling £4,260, an average payment of £213. In two cases accounts were adjusted and in a further case a recharge was removed.
- 7.5 A summary of complaints upheld at stage 3 contained in Appendix 1 and information on lessons learned/ to be learnt from these and upheld ombudsman complaints for the year is contained in Appendix 2.

8 Monitoring

- 8.1 Service improvements have been made to help track complaints at all levels.
- 8.2 Weekly list of complaints due and outstanding are distributed to the Corporate Management Team, and monthly directorate performance figures are also used to monitor response times.
- 8.3 The Corporate Management Team and Directorate Management Teams review reports on complaints each quarter in order to focus on areas of concern. There are also regular meetings of Directorate Complaints officers lead by the Corporate Complaints Manager

9 COMPLAINTS SERVICE USER PROFILES

9.1.1 The service continues to provide bi-lingual access

9.2 The service can be accessed by phone, minicom, fax, post, email, web-form and in person.

BREAKDOWN OF HOW COMPLAINTS RECEIVED								
How Received	2005 / 2006				2006 / 2007			
	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Total	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Total
Email	255 15.5%	46 12.3%	10 9.0%	311 14.6%	356 19.3%	72 21.8%	32 27.6%	460 20.1%
Web Form	150 9.1%	10 2.7%	3 2.7%	163 7.7%	359 19.5%	22 6.7%	2 1.7%	383 16.7%
Complaint Form or Letter	594 36.2%	209 55.9%	90 81.1%	893 42.0%	553 30.0%	151 45.8%	73 62.9%	777 34.0%
Fax	20 1.2%	10 2.7%	2 1.8%	32 1.5%	19 1.0%	3 0.9%	4 3.4%	26 1.1%
Telephone	600 36.6%	93 24.9%	5 4.5%	698 32.8%	533 29.0%	82 24.8%	5 4.3%	620 27.1%
In Person	22 1.3%	6 1.6%	1 0.9%	29 1.4%	21 1.1%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	21 0.9%
Total	1641	374	111	2126	1841	330	116	2287

Table 11

9.3 Web form and email are increasing in popularity and now count for 37% of all complaint submissions, a significant increase from 22.3% in 2006/07. It should also be noted that the use of the phone and post still account for the majority of contacts.

9.3 Table 9 below, contains a breakdown of the primary contact for each complaint.

BREAKDOWN OF SERVICE USER OR ADVOCATES								
Complainant	2005 / 2006				2006 / 2007			
	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Total	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Total
Advocate - Advice Worker	14 0.9%	9 2.4%	2 1.8%	25 1.2%	14 0.8%	3 0.9%	3 2.6%	20 0.9%
Advocate - Councillor	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1 0.1%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1 0.0%
Advocate - Family	18 1.1%	5 1.3%	4 3.6%	27 1.3%	25 1.4%	6 1.8%	2 1.7%	33 1.4%
Advocate - Other	1 0.1%	0 0.0%	1 0.9%	2 0.1%	6 0.3%	1 0.3%	1 0.9%	8 0.3%
Advocate - Solicitor	4 0.2%	5 1.3%	2 1.8%	11 0.5%	11 0.6%	2 0.6%	0 0.0%	13 0.6%
Service User - Business	23 1.4%	6 1.6%	1 0.9%	30 1.4%	53 2.9%	2 0.6%	5 4.3%	60 2.6%
Service User - Leaseholder	173 10.5%	42 11.2%	10 9.0%	225 10.6%	163 8.9%	44 13.3%	15 12.9%	222 9.7%
Service User - Out of Borough	95 5.8%	26 7.0%	11 9.9%	132 6.2%	97 5.3%	22 6.7%	13 11.2%	132 5.8%
Service User - Resident	486 29.6%	120 32.1%	40 36.0%	646 30.4%	778 42.3%	118 35.8%	43 37.1%	939 41.1%
Service User - Tenant	827 50.4%	161 43.0%	40 36.0%	1028 48.4%	693 37.6%	132 40.0%	34 29.3%	859 37.6%
Total	1641	374	111	2126	1841	330	116	2287

Table 9

10 EQUAL ACCESS TO THE SERVICE

BREAKDOWN OF COMPLAINTS BY ETHNICITY							
Ethnicity	2005/ 2006			Borough Population Projection	2006 / 2007		
	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3		Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3
Asian Total	339	51	22		280	56	20
% (where ethnicity known)	33.1%	25.5%	34.4%	36.6%	29.3%	31.3%	25.6%
Bangladeshi	303	45	19		253	52	18
Chinese	9	1	1		8	0	0
Indian	12	3	1		11	3	2
Pakistani	5	1	1		1	1	0
Vietnamese	2	1	0		2	0	0
Asian Other	8	0	0		5	0	0
Black Total	81	28	6		66	10	10
	7.9%	14.0%	9.4%	6.0%	6.9%	5.6%	12.8%
African	27	10	1		18	1	2
Caribbean	32	14	3		24	6	6
English	1	1	0		0	0	0
Somali	9	1	2		11	2	0
Black Other	12	2	0		13	1	2
Mixed Heritage	35	8	1		29	4	3
	3.4%	4.0%	1.6%		3.0%	2.2%	3.8%
Other ethnic background	0	0	0		2	2	0
	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%		0.2%	1.1%	0.0%
White	570	113	35		578	107	45
	55.6%	56.5%	54.7%	51.0%	60.5%	59.8%	57.7%
English	431	81	26		465	90	35
Irish	30	7	1		19	5	1
Jewish	1	1	0		4	0	0
Scottish	18	6	2		14	3	1
Welsh	9	3	3		2	0	0
White Other	81	15	3		74	9	8
Sub total (where ethnicity known)	1025	200	64		955	179	78
Not Known	469	146	44		783	137	33
Declined	147	29	3		103	14	5
Total	1641	375	111		1841	330	116

Table 10

10.1 The team continue to make every effort to collate this information from service users.

10.2 Table 11 below shows the volume of complaints by ward and LAP for stage 1.

BREAKDOWN OF STAGE 1 COMPLAINTS BY LAP AREA FOR THE YEAR 2006 / 2007												
LAP Area	Ward	Total 2005 / 2006	Change		Total 2006 / 2007	Upheld	Partially Upheld	Escalated to Next Stage (due to non response in time)	Not Upheld	Withdrawn or Closed	Complete in Time	Average Days to Complete
1	Bethnal Green North	105	-14	-13%	91	32	11	1	44	3	64	9
1	Mile End & Globetown	121	0	0%	121	43	13	1	62	2	78	9
1	Weavers	99	22	22%	121	39	15	2	59	6	79	9
Total For LAP Area 1		325	8	2%	333	114	39	4	165	11	221	9
2	Bethnal Green South	100	8	8%	108	35	9	2	55	7	73	9
2	Spitalfields & Banglatown	66	6	9%	72	28	11	0	31	2	50	9
Total for LAP Area 2		166	14	8%	180	63	20	2	86	9	123	9
3	St Dunstan's & Stepney Green	127	-3	-2%	124	46	13	1	63	1	76	11
3	Whitechapel	98	35	36%	133	41	11	0	78	3	82	10
Total for LAP Area 3		225	32	14%	257	87	24	1	141	4	158	10
4	Shadwell	96	-14	-15%	82	28	11	1	41	1	47	11
4	St Katharine's & Wapping	89	-10	-11%	79	25	13	1	36	4	50	10
Total for LAP Area 4		185	-24	-13%	161	53	24	2	77	5	97	11
5	Bow East	105	21	20%	126	57	16	1	50	2	74	10
5	Bow West	96	22	23%	118	53	7	0	57	1	70	9
Total for LAP Area 5		201	43	21%	244	110	23	1	107	3	144	10
6	Bromley-By-Bow	58	22	38%	80	19	23	1	35	2	51	11
6	Mile End East	30	20	67%	50	13	14	1	20	2	38	8
Total for LAP Area 6		88	42	48%	130	32	37	2	55	4	89	10
7	East India & Lansbury	83	9	11%	92	33	9	0	48	2	53	10
7	Limehouse	88	34	39%	122	55	14	4	44	5	70	10
Total for LAP Area 7		171	43	25%	214	88	23	4	92	7	123	10
8	Blackwall & Cubitt Town	81	12	15%	93	28	16	0	39	10	63	9
8	Millwall	60	5	8%	65	18	16	0	25	6	50	8
Total for LAP Area 8		141	17	12%	158	46	32	0	64	16	113	9
Out of Borough		139	25	18%	164	43	19	1	84	17	122	8
Total for Stage 1		1641	200	12%	1841	636	241	17	871	76	1190	10

10.3 The chart below (9) shows the volume of complaints relating to each LAP area by directorate. It gives some indication of the differing issues across the borough.

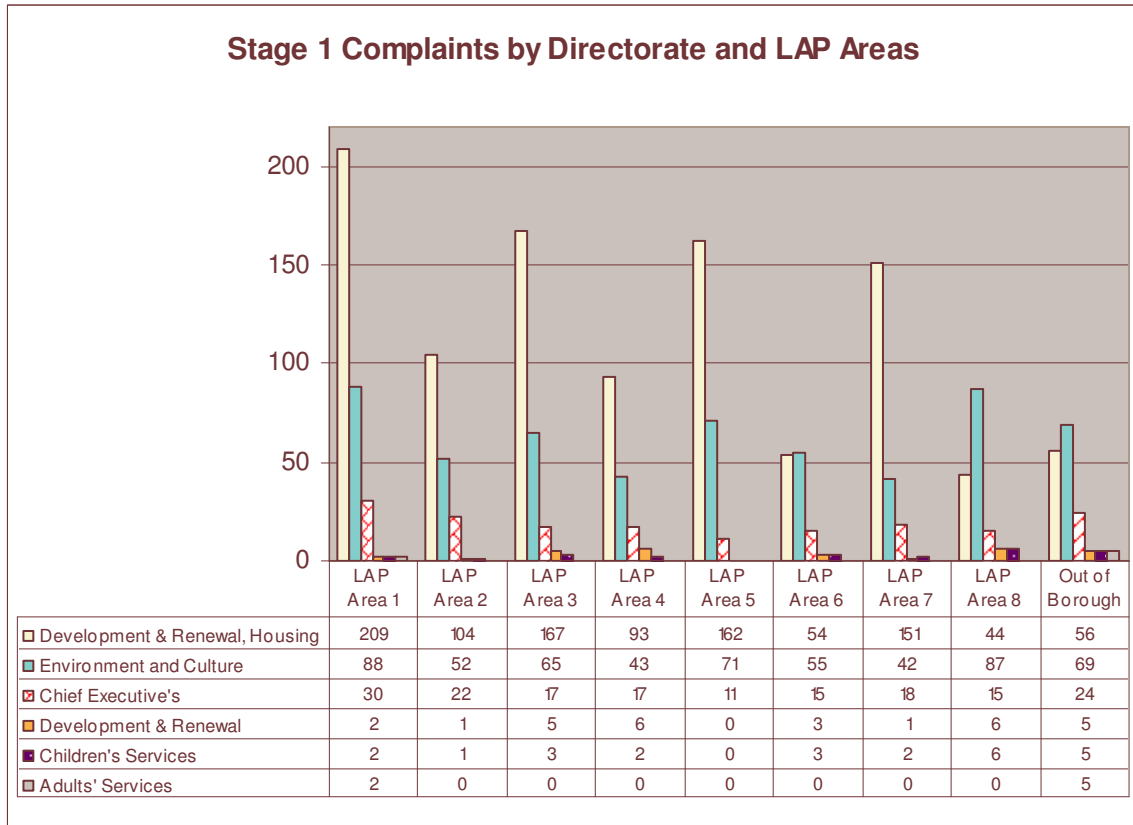


Chart 9

11 LOCAL GOVERNMENT OMBUDSMAN (LGO) COMPLAINTS

11.1 The LGO statistics for 2006/07 show the number of complaints received by the LGO reduced for the third year. The Ombudsman has changed the categories used to record complaints but for ease of comparison the earlier years' complaints are shown under the new categories. Housing complaints remained the largest volume, but this fell significantly and reflects the trend in the Corporate Complaints procedure. Table 12 and chart 10 below set out the volumes by subject area. The volume of housing complaints continues to fall significantly.

LGO Complaints Received by Subject Area											
	Adult Care	Benefits	Children and Family	Education	Housing	Other	Planning / Building Control	Public Finance	Social Services - other	Transport and Highways	Total
2004/05	7	8	10	1	97	20	12	3	1	16	175
2005/06	14	10	0	0	68	25	14	7	1	10	149
2006/07	7	7	4	0	47	18	12	5	0	12	112

Table 12

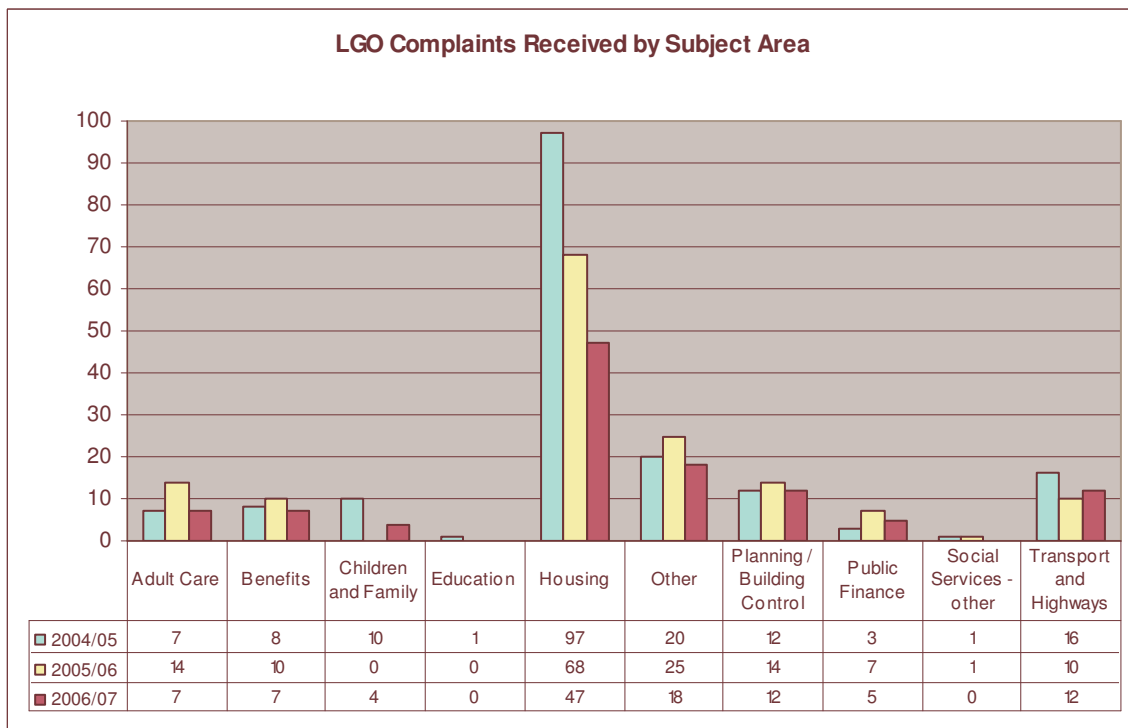


Chart 10

11.3 Complaints determined by the Ombudsman.

Determination	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07
Maladministration causing injustice	3	1	0
Local Settlement	21	31	24
No maladministration	44	46	24
Ombudsman's discretion	24	21	15
Out of jurisdiction	17	18	19
Premature complaints	38	50	29
Total excluding premature complaints	109	117	82
Total	147	167	111

Table 13

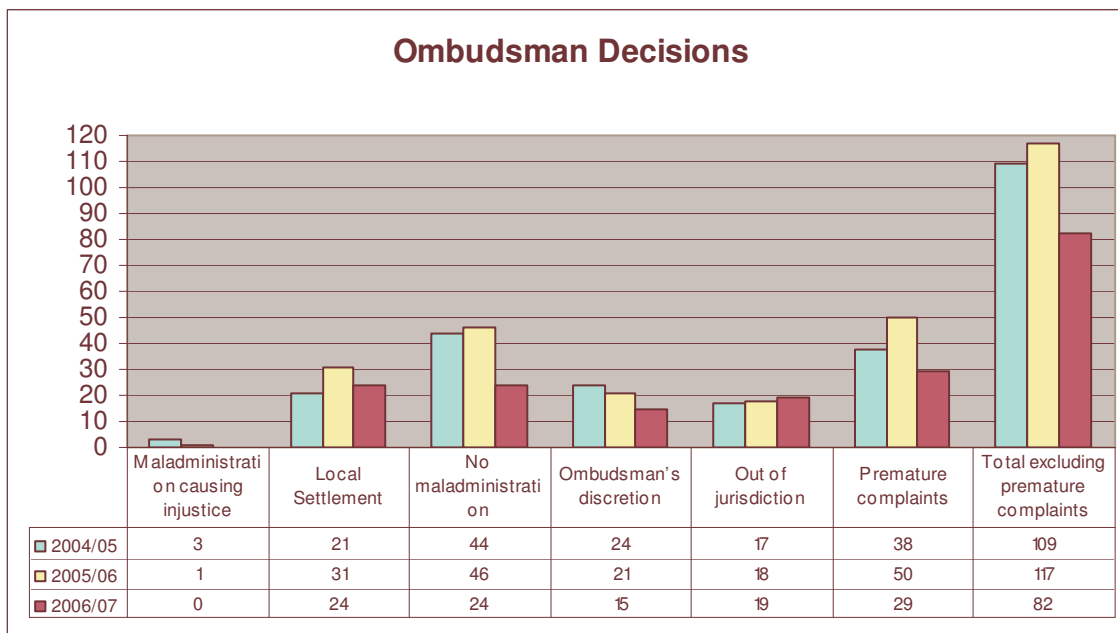


Chart 11

- 11.3.1 Premature complaints are those directed to the LGO without prior reference to the Council's complaints procedure. In 22% of cases the ombudsman referred the matter to the Council to consider under the corporate or statutory social care complaints procedures.
- 11.3.2 The Council has sought the early resolution of complaints where there is either some indication of fault or where a gesture of goodwill may be appropriate to promote a positive relationship. These are recorded as Local Settlements and amount to 29% of the total.
- 11.3.3 In 31% of cases the matter was considered to be outside the Ombudsman's jurisdiction or a matter they otherwise determined not to consider.
- 11.3.4 There were no findings of maladministration with injustice, against 1 finding the previous year, and 3 the year before that.

11.4 Response times

11.4.1 The Ombudsman maintains statistics of the time taken for the first response from the initial enquiry, which are published nationally. Only 36% of London Boroughs achieve an average response time within their target of 28 days. The Council's performance has remained well within target at 18.6 days.

Response Times		
	No of First Enquiries	Average no of days to respond
2004/05	84	19.7
2005/06	65	17.7
2006/07	48	18.6

Table 14

2006/07	number of initial enquiries	ave days to respond	% in time
Chief Executive's	6	19	100%
Environment and Culture	7	20	86%
Development and Renewal, Housing	25	18	80%
Development and Renewal Planning	6	24	83%
Social Care (Adults and Children)	4	11	100%
Total	48	18.5	85%

Table 15

11.4.2 The Council's performance in responding to Ombudsman enquiries has been good across all directorates.

11.5 The Ombudsman congratulates the Council on its response rate in the 2006/07 Annual Letter to the Council along with the reduction in housing complaints and that no formal reports were issued.

11.6 Tower Hamlets' comparators for benchmarking are Hackney, Newham and Southwark and LGO statistics for the four authorities are as follows:

	Tower Hamlets 05/06	Tower Hamlets 06/07	Hackney 06/07	Newham 06/07	Southwark 06/07
Complaints determined	117	82	173	110	213
Findings of maladministration	1 (0.59)	0	3 (1.73)	1 (0.91)	0
All London Boroughs (33)	25=	1=	32=	21=	1=
Inner London Borough (13)	10=	1=	13=	10=	1=
Complaints not proceeded with	86 (72%)	58 (70%)	126 (73%)	77 (70%)	128 (60%)
All London Boroughs (33)	22	16=	29	20	31
Inner London Borough (13)	6	5	9	6	11
Local Settlements	31 (26%)	24 (29%)	44 (25%)	32 (29%)	85 (40%)
All London Boroughs (33)	23	19	27	26	32
Inner London Borough (13)	6	5	8	6	12

Table 20

11.7 Comparative statistics on this subject should be treated with caution due to the substantial variations in the number of complaints determined between Boroughs, with 255 at one extreme with only 5 at the other. Clearly with such variations, authorities with larger numbers of LGO complaints will struggle to achieve upper quartile rankings. However, Tower Hamlets is moving in the right direction and compares well against its immediate neighbours and other inner London authorities. Rankings for findings of maladministration are somewhat unhelpful given the low numbers across the board.

12 RISK ASSESSMENT

12.1 Areas of risk that the Council may face can be summarised as follows:

Project / Issue	Pen Picture	Value £m's	Risks / Comments
Complaints handling	The complaints procedure is explained in section 2 of this report. The volume of complaints is also contained in this report.	Difficult to quantify but includes officer time, cost of making good and compensation payments (the latter being the most easily measured). Reputation is also to be considered.	A complaint may lead to an Ombudsman ruling, judicial review or other legal remedy over justified complaints. The Council is also at risk from spurious or malicious complaints if these are not identified and handled appropriately.
Probability	Impact	Recommended Mitigating Action	Risk Owner
Low	Medium	The Complaints process should encourage the earliest possible resolution of complaints. Tracking first Stage complaints through the Siebel database will encourage and support officers to do this. The back up and co-ordinated working of Corporate Complaints, Insurance and Legal Services serve to support decision-making within Directorates on complaint issues. Policies on Complaint Handling, Compensation and Redress, and Dealing with Persistent Complainants are in place.	The relevant Corporate Director

13 IMPROVEMENT INITIATIVES

13.1 British Standards Institute

The Council achieved British Standards Institute Accreditation for Complaints Handling [CMS 86:2000] in March 2005. There is an annual reaccreditation and in March 2007, the Council achieved the revised higher ISO 10002 accreditation. This standard recognises the complaint handling processes, publicity and customer care. Few Local Authorities have achieved this accreditation. The inspection covered all elements of central complaint recording and monitoring; staff induction, training and customer care skills; the Council's monitoring of the quality of complaint response and resolution; senior management involvement in and support for effective complaints management; directorate processes for recording and monitoring complaints; escalation monitoring and handling of outstanding issues; customer information, publicity and access and learning from customer feedback.

13.2 Training Programmes

In addition to the courses run under the Corporate Training Programme, the Complaints Team continue to delivered training workshops and advice to Council staff.

13.3 Publicity

In addition to regular distribution and auditing of publicity material in reception areas new post boxes have been placed in One Stop Shops, IDEAs Stores and main reception points.

13.4 Monitoring

Weekly outstanding lists are circulated to Directors and the Chief Executive. Detailed monthly monitoring is also distributed. Quarterly reports on quality issues and service improvements arising from complaints are discussed at the Corporate Management Team and Directorate Management Teams. Twice each year, information is submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Standards Committee.

13.4 Lessons Learnt

Lesson learnt from complaints are examined by Directorate Management Teams and regular meetings between the Complaints Manager and Directorate Complaints Officers will be used this year to collate information to be shared council wide.

APPENDIX 1

SUMMARY OF UPHELD STAGE 3 COMPLAINTS BY DIRECTORATE AND TYPE OF COMPLAINT 2006/2007			
Service		Complaint & Reasons to Uphold	Redress
Development & Renewal, Planning [3]			
1	Enforcement	Action not taken when breaches of permission reported	Apology and action planned
1	Tree Preservation Order	A tree preservation order was not issued in time when requested and could not be enforced.	£500 offered
1	FOI	A request for information was inaccurately rejected as exempt	Information provided
Development & Renewal, Housing [24]			
1	Benefits	Deductions incorrectly made using out of date information	Apology and £75 offered
5	Leasehold Services	Handwritten notes regarding meeting over service charge dispute disposed of before minutes of meeting agreed	Move on with resolution of dispute
		Discounts previously applied were not appropriate	Discount removed
		2 x complaints regarding lack of response to FOI requests Responses were unduly delayed.	Process of checking generic email address reviewed (£50 offered on second occasion)
		Request for details of maintenance bill not met in timely manner	Provide information offered £100
4	Local / Area Housing Management	Reports of neighbour noise, no action taken	Action agreed and £250 offered
		Sale garden not progressed	Agree action
		Block cleaning, Standard not acceptable	Increased monitoring undertaken
		Estate Lighting, Delay in fixing	
12	Repairs	6 x cases of water penetration, delays in identifying correct source	compensate for delay, between £100 and £500
		2 x cases of void repairs not complete before property let	1 x £50 1x£180 and works completed
		1 x disrepair	£2000 offered
		Communal Ariel, Delay in fixing	
		Blocked Gulley, Delay in fixing	
		Missed appointments; Appointments were not recorded	£30 offered
Education [1]			
1	Life Long Learning	Course started but withdrawn due to poor take up	part refund fees £100 & £50 for inconvenience
Environment and Culture [2]			
	Corporate Property Services	Shopkeepers Service Charges Methodology for apportionment not appropriate or transparent	Accounts audited and methodology agreed
	Waste Management	Collections not made, Contractor had not been collecting when left at doorstep	Contractor reminded to go up paths to collect

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The most common issues arising are failure to follow procedures and the time taken to identify the true source of the problem.

APPENDIX 2 – Lessons Learnt

Monitoring of the upheld stage 3 and Ombudsman complaints allows for trends to be identified and lessons to be learnt. Below is a list of the key issues and actions to be taken for the complaints monitored in this period. Implementation of these actions will be monitored over the coming months.

Issue	Action
Missed appointments and consequent delay in repairing properties	Regular and effective contract monitoring. Additionally, consideration of calling a sample of residents to check if appointments were met and work completed is being considered.
Issues requiring the attention of more than one service could be dealt with better. E.g. Environmental Protection and Planning; ASB and Housing Management; Social Services and Housing Management.	Identify joint protocols and processes to pick up referrals.
Record keeping – file notes and visit records are not always kept making it difficult to establish an audit trail.	All officers should take notes on site visits and on ad-hoc encounters with service users – protocol to be publicised
In some cases, where there has been no fault in the Council's decision making or application of policy and procedure, the service user had not been properly informed of the decision or the status of their application/ case.	Decisions (and, if necessary, reasons for delay) must always be communicated – protocol to be publicised
Publicity regarding high cost planned work, such as lift replacement and major works, could be better publicised in order to help manage expectations. This includes comments on issues the Council is aware of but not yet in position to tackle.	Regular features in East End Life and via other forum would be useful. This includes stating what cannot be achieved in the immediate future.

APPENDIX 3 SOCIAL CARE COMPLAINTS 2006/07

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This report sets out the volume, response times and outcome of complaints received by the Council, for Adult and Children's Social Care during the period 1 April 2006 to 31 March 2007.
- 1.2. The Social Care Complaints Team co-ordinates the Directorates' responses to complaints and Ombudsman enquiries. The Team covers complaints and representations from service users, carers, and their representatives, across both Adult and Children's Social Care.
- 1.3. As required by the statutory regulations, the Council has a Complaints Manager who is responsible for the central administration of the complaints procedures. In addition to the Complaints Manager, the staffing of the Complaints Team consists of one Senior Complaints Officer, one full-time Complaints Officer and one Administrator. Since September 2006, the Complaints Team has worked within the Chief Executive's Directorate and forms a distinct but integral part of the Corporate Complaints Team.

2. The Social Care Adult and Children's Services Complaints Procedure.

- 2.1. There is a legal requirement under the NHS and Community Care Act 1990 and the Children Act 1989 for Local Authorities to have a system for receiving representations and complaints by, or on behalf of people who use social care services, or their carers.
- 2.2. In September 2006 two new statutory complaints procedures for Adults and Children's Social Care came into force.

The key features for both new procedures include:-

- The introduction of a 12 month time limit to make complaints;
- Requirement to appoint a Complaints Manager;
- The reduction of the timescale for a Stage One response from 15 to 10 working days. This can be increased to 20 working days in certain circumstances.
- The timescale for a Stage Two investigation is now 25 working days and this can be increased to 65 working days with the agreement of the complainant;
- A requirement for the composition of a Stage Three – Review Panel to be independent. This should ensure less variation between authorities and a more consistent response to complainants against measurable frameworks.

The particular changes of the new procedure for Children's Social Care complaints include:-

- A local resolution stage (Stage One), without involving an Independent Person;
- Extension of the scope or application of the procedures to services provided under Part IV (Care and Supervision) and Part V (Protection of Children) of the Children Act 1989.

- 2.3. The Council places a strong emphasis on the informal resolution of complaints and in assisting Social Care Teams in effectively managing and resolving complaints.

- 2.4 The main purpose of the new complaints procedures are to ensure the voices and experiences of young people, vulnerable adults and their representatives are heard and to highlight where things have gone wrong in the system and help to ensure that the organisation learns from feedback from complaints.
- 2.5 The complaints processes have three stages.

Stage One Complaints – Initial

Team Manager are required to provide a written response to complaints within 10 working days. There is a possible extension to 20 working days, to allow for a local resolution.

Stage Two Complaints – Formal.

If complainants are not satisfied with the Stage One response they have a right to go to Stage 2 investigation. Complaints are generally investigated internally by Complaints Officers, however in exceptional circumstances external investigators are used. Investigations should be completed within 25 working days. However this can be extended to 65 working days in negotiation with the complainant due to the complexity of complaints.

An independent person is appointed to oversee formal complaints at Stage 2 relating to children and young people. This ensures that there is an impartial element and is a legislative requirement under the Children Act 1989.

Following thorough investigation of the complaint, the investigators produce reports making recommendations, including changes in service delivery, to the relevant Head of Service. An internal adjudication meeting is held and following this a copy of the report sent to the service user and relevant managers within the Directorate.

Stage Three Complaints – Independent Review Panel.

The complainant has a right of appeal to an Independent Review Panel if they don't agree with the findings of the Stage 2 investigation. This is chaired by an independent person and at least two other people who are independent of the Council.

The Panel will review the case and where appropriate make recommendations to the Director of Adults Health and Well Being or the Director of Children's Services.

Local Government Ombudsman.

- 2.6 If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the Independent Review Panel they have the right to take their complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman.

The Local Government Ombudsman is an independent watchdog and generally considers complaints after the complainant has exhausted the internal complaints procedure.

3. Role of the Adult and Children's Social Care Complaints Team.

The Complaints Team's role is to:-

- receive complaints, enquiries and representations from service users and carers,
- support front line services by advising on statutory duties, internal policies and procedures,
- offer training and support to staff in resolving complaints,
- undertake formal complaints investigations,
- organise and facilitate Complaints Review Panels,
- provide reports to Team Managers and the Directorates Management Team on a regular basis regarding the trends and progress of complaints,
- facilitate advocacy and support to complainants and
- ensure effective access for all service users to the statutory processes.

4. Complaints registered.

ADULTS

TOTAL ADULT SOCIAL CARE COMPLAINTS			
Stage	2005 / 2006	2006 / 2007	Percentage Variance
1	52	64	23.08%
2	9	8	-11.11%
3	0	3	
Total Complaints	61	75	22.95%

Table 1 Adult Social Care Complaints.

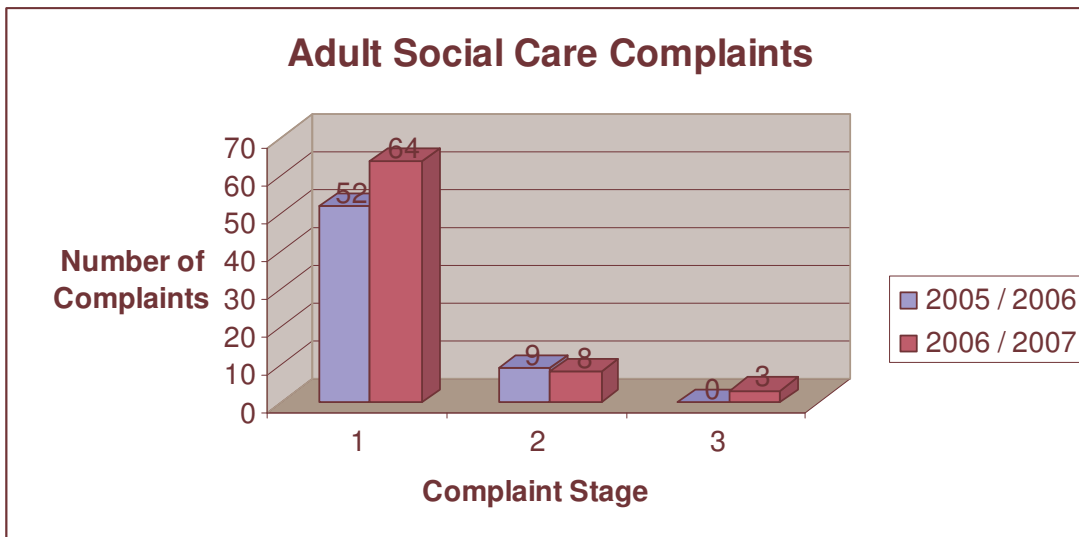


Chart 1 Adult Social Care Complaints.

- 4.1 The table shows that the number of Stage 1 complaints increased by 23% in 2006/2007 however the number of Stage 2 complaints reduced by 11%.
- 4.2 The increase in the number of Stage 1 complaints can be seen as a positive indication that service users feel confident in accessing Social Services complaints procedure. There are also various reasons for an increase in complaints in some service areas (See point 10.1)
- The low rate of Stage 2 complaints in comparison to the significant increase at Stage 1 suggests that there is more effective resolution of complaints at Stage 1 of the process.
- 4.3 There has been an increase in complaints at Stage 3, however, this still remains a small proportion compared to the total number of complaints.

CHILDRENS

TOTAL CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE COMPLAINTS			
Stage	2005 / 2006	2006 / 2007	Percentage Variance
1	20	44	120%
2	6	11	83.33%
3	2	0	
Total Complaints	28	55	96.43%

Table 2 Children's Social Care Complaints.

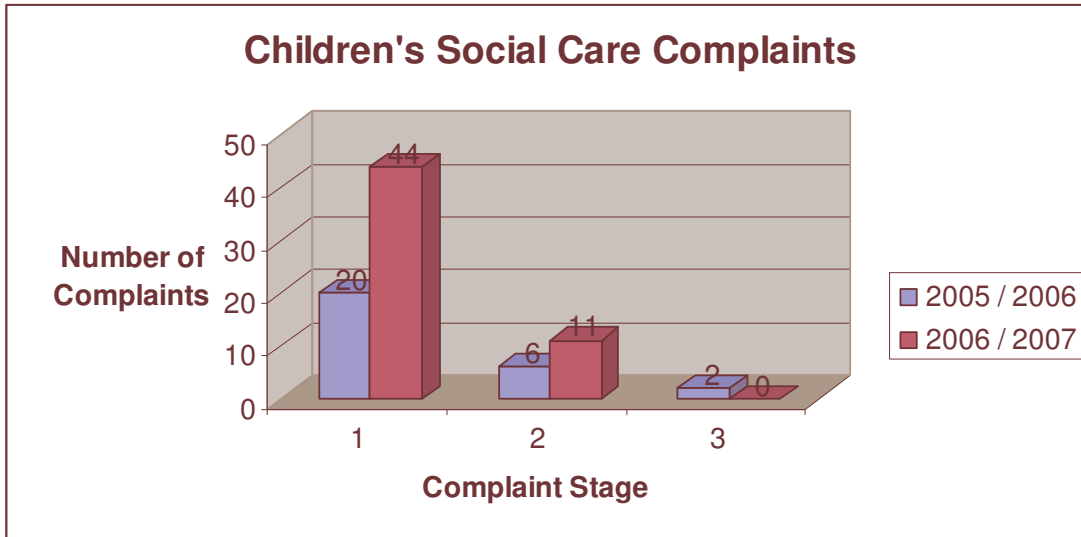


Chart 2 Children's Social Care Complaints.

4.4 There has been a significant increase in Stage 1 complaints this year. There has also been a corresponding increase in Stage 2 complaints. However, only 25% of Stage 1 complaints escalated to Stage 2 this year compared with 30% last year. This is a positive indication that young people's concerns are being resolved effectively at earlier stages.

4.5 The increase in Stage 1 complaints is also a positive indication that young people and their representatives are aware of their right to complain.

The increase is also likely to be due to the extension of the scope of the complaints procedure. There has been an extension of the scope and application of the procedures to services provided under Part IV (Care and Supervision) and Part V (Protection of Children) of the Children Act 1989.

4.6 There have been no review panels this year which suggests that complainants were satisfied with the way their complaints were investigated and there was effective resolution at Stage 2.

Stage 3 Complaints

4.7 The Complaints Team carries out a very small number of Stage 3 Review Panels each year and only 3 were conducted during 2006/07, all for Adult Services. As a result of the very small number we have included a separate breakdown of Review Panels below.

Directorate	Section	Reason for Complaint	Ethnicity of Complainant	Contact Channel	Who made the Complaint?
Adult Social Care	Elders	Failure to provide a service	White	Email	Advocate - Family Member
Adult Social Care	Disabilities	Failure to provide a service	Asian	By post	Advocate - Family Member
Adult Social Care	OT	Challenge assessment decision	White	By post	Service User (Adult)

Table 3 Review Panels

5. Complaint Response Times.

Stage 1 Complaints

STAGE 1 COMPLAINTS - RESPONSE TIMES FOR ADULTS' & CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE COMPLAINTS				
	Answered within timescale	Answered outside timescale	Answered within 20 days	Average response time (days)
2005/2006 (Timescale 15 days)	39 54.2%	33 45.8%	Unavailable	20
2006/2007 (Timescale reduced to 10 days from 01/09/06)	77 71.3%	31 28.7%	88 81.5%	12

Table 4 Stage 1 Response Times

- 5.1 Under the new procedures the timescale was reduced from 15 to 10 working days. The percentage of complaints answered within this timescale has risen from 54.2% to 71.3%. This is a marked improvement in response times.
- 5.2 However, the timescale can be increased to 20 working days with the agreement of the complainant. This is to allow for local resolution of the complaint and 81.5% of Stage 1 complaints were responded to within this time.
- 5.3 The Complaints Team has a role in monitoring complaints ensuring that complaints are responded to in a timely manner. Failure to meet timescales is escalated appropriately. This includes sending early reminders for over-due complaints. A weekly list of overdue complaints is also sent to Heads of Service.

5.4 The Complaints Team support front line staff by advising on Stage 1 responses and have also commissioned training on complaints handling which will continue to improve the standard and response times of Stage 1 complaints.

Stage 2 Complaints

STAGE 2 COMPLAINTS – RESPONSE TIMES FOR ADULTS’ AND CHILDREN’S SOCIAL CARE COMPLAINTS				
	Answered within timescale	Answered outside timescale	Answered within 65 days	Average response time (days)
2005/2006 (28 days)	2 13.3%	13 86.7%	Unavailable	160
2006/2007 (25 days from 01/09/06)	1 5.3%	18 94.7%	12 63.2%	55

Table 5 Stage 2 Response Times

5.4 Under the new procedures the timescale was reduced from 28 to 25 working days. However, the timescale can be increased to 65 working days with the agreement of the complainant.

5.5 Table 5 demonstrates that only one complaint was answered within the statutory timescale of 28 days. Social Care complaints are often complicated and involve interviewing staff and service users, and can therefore take longer than the target date. However, 63.2% of complaints were answered within the 65 day time frame.

5.6 The average response time for Stage 2 complaints has been reduced by 105 days, from 160 to 55. This is a 66% improvement in performance.

5.7 Previously there was a lack of consistency between Local Authorities about when complaints were registered. In Tower Hamlets complaints were registered at the point the complainant requested a Stage 2 investigation. In accordance with the new guidance, complaints are now registered when the Complaints Team receives the agreed interview notes, which defines the complaint scope, back from the complainant or their representative.

6. **Adults Social Care – Breakdown of Complaints.**

COMPARISON OF ADULT SOCIAL CARE COMPLAINTS BY SECTION						
SECTION	Stage 1			Stage 2		
	2005 / 2006	2006 / 2007	Variance	2005 / 2006	2006 / 2007	Variance
Disabilities	10 19.3%	24 37.5%	+14 +18.2%	0 0%	5 62.5%	+5 +62.5%
Elders	12 23.1%	23 35.9%	+11 +12.8%	2 22.2%	1 12.5%	-1 -9.7%
Learning Disabilities	5 9.6%	0*	0*	1 11.1%	0*	0*
Mental Health	5 9.6%	1 1.6%	-4 -8%	1 11.1%	0 0%	-1 -11.1%
OT Services	6 11.5%	10 15.6%	+4 +4.1%	3 33.3%	2 25%	-1 -8.3%
Resources	14 26.9%	6 9.4%	-8 -17.5%	2 22.2%	0 0%	-2 -22.2%
Total	52	64	+12	9	8	-1

Table 6 Adult Complaints by Service

(* Disabilities and Learning Disabilities figures are combined in 2006/07 due to changes in data management).

- 6.1 It is evident from table 6 that the Disabilities Care Management Team received the highest number of complaints at Stage 1 and at Stage 2.
- 6.2 The Elders Team also has a large number of complaints which is consistent with the fact that they are the largest single service within the adults division.

Breakdown of complaint by reason for complaint.

COMPARISON OF ADULT SOCIAL CARE COMPLAINTS BY REASON FOR COMPLAINT (Stage 1 and 2)		
REASON FOR COMPLAINT	2005 / 2006	2006 / 2007
Delays in service provision	7 11.5%	6 8.3%
Failure to provide a service	9 14.8%	8 11.1%
Challenge Assessment Decisions	18 29.5%	40 55.6%
Attitude of staff	7 11.5%	5 6.9%
Competence of service	10 16.4%	6 8.3%
Lack of information	0 0%	3 4.2%
Appropriateness of service	6 9.8%	2 2.8%
Breach of confidentiality	3 4.9%	1 1.4%
Discriminatory practice	0 0%	0 0.0%
Change in Service Provider	0 0%	0 0.0%
Other reason	1 1.6%	1 1.4%
Total	61	*72

Table 7 Reason For Complaint

(*Please note that this figure does not include Stage 3 Review Panels).

6.3 The highest number of complaints for 2006/07 related to “Challenging Assessment Decisions.” This may reflect an increased focus within Adult Services on the consistent application of the Council’s eligibility criteria for community care services.

7. Children's Social Care – Breakdown of Complaints.

COMPARISON OF CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE COMPLAINTS BY SECTION						
SECTION	Stage 1			Stage 2		
	2005 / 2006	2006 / 2007	Variance	2005 / 2006	2006 / 2007	Variance
Child Protection & Reviewing*	1 5%	3 6.8%	+2 +1.8%	0 0%	0 0.0%	0 0%
Fieldwork Services	12 60%	24 54.7%	+12 -5.4%	4 66.7%	5 45.5%	+1 -21.2%
Health Partnership*	6 30%	13 29.5%	+7 -0.5%	1 16.7%	6 54.5%	+5 +37.8%
Resources	1 5%	2 4.5%	+1 -0.5%	1 16.7%	0 0%	-1 -16.7%
Children Looked After	0*	2 4.5%	0*	0*	0 0%	0*
Total	20	44		6	11	

Table 8 Children's Complaints by Service

(* Children Looked After is a new category in data management for 06/07. In last years figures it was combined with Child Protection and Reviewing).

- 7.1 The Service descriptions are slightly different to those used in the 2005/06 report. This is because of revised service structures.
- 7.2 Fieldwork services have received the highest number of complaints at Stage 1 and Stage 2 as is expected. This is due to the contentious nature of the service and the large number of service users. The higher number of complaints for this service in comparison to last years figures also relates to the extension of the Complaints Procedure to cover Sections 4 and 5 of the Children Act 1989.

Breakdown of Complaint by Reason for Complaint.

COMPARISON OF CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE COMPLAINTS BY REASON FOR COMPLAINT (Stage 1 and 2)		
REASON FOR COMPLAINT	2005 / 2006	2006 / 2007
Delays in service provision	3 11.5%	4 7.3%
Failure to provide a service	4 15.4%	3 5.5%
Challenge Assessment decision	7 26.9%	23 41.8%
Attitude of staff	2 7.7%	7 12.7%
Competence of service	4 15.4%	10 18.2%
Lack of information	2 7.7%	4 7.3%
Appropriateness of service	3 11.5%	1 1.8%
Breach of confidentiality	0 0%	0 0%
Discriminatory practice	0 0%	2 3.6%
Other reason	1 3.8%	1 1.8%
Total	*26	55

Table 9 Reason For Complaint

(*Please note that this figure does not include Stage 3 Review Panels).

7.3 The highest number of complaints in Children’s Social Care relates to “challenging assessment decisions”. One likely reason for this is a change in the way services are delivered by the Integrated Health Partnership. In line with good practice guidance, services are being provided by a range of other agencies and include services outside of the home rather than care packages alone. It is likely that service users find changes in service provision unsettling which would account for the rise in complaints in this area.

8. **Breakdown of complaints by ethnicity.**

PROPORTION OF COMPLAINTS FROM ETHNIC GROUPS RELATIVE TO NUMBER OF SERVICE USERS (ADULTS' & CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE)					
	No. of service users in 2006-07	No. of complaints received	Percentage of service users by ethnicity	Percentage of complaints by ethnic group	Variance
Asian	2875	42	28.5%	33.0%	4.5%
Black	1093	18	10.8%	14.2%	3.4%
White	5141	63	50.9%	49.6%	-1.3%
Mixed Race	326	1	3.2%	0.8%	-2.4%
Other	335	0	3.3%	0%	-3.3%
Not Stated	329	3	3.3%	2.4%	-0.9%
Totals	10,099	*127	100.00%	100.00%	

Table 10 Complaint by Ethnicity

(Please note that this figure does not include Stage 3 Review Panels).*

- 8.1 The current recording categories are not subdivided in accordance with the corporate monitoring categories for ethnicity. Therefore table 10 figures do not include a fuller breakdown of ethnicity detail. It is anticipated changes to the database to enable collection of this data will be completed in August 2007.
- 8.2 In general, the number of people complaining is proportionate to the number of service users from minority ethnic groups. This indicates that there is no significant relationship between ethnicity and dissatisfaction with service provision. It also indicates that service users from minority ethnic groups are accessing the complaints procedure.

9. How complaints were made.

CONTACT CHANNEL OF COMPLAINANT (ADULTS' & CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE COMPLAINTS)			
Contact Channel	Number of Complainants (2005/2006)	Number of Complainants (2006/2007)	Percentage of Total Contact (2006/2007)
Phone	51	67	52.7%
Post	33	51	40.2%
In Person	3	5	4.0%
Email	0	3	2.3%
Fax	0	1	0.8%
Total Complaints	*87	*127	100%

Table 11 Contact Method

(* Please note that this figure does not include Stage 3 Review Panels).

9.1 It is demonstrated in table 11 that the majority of complainants prefer to make complaints by telephone.

9.2 Last year 3 people made their complaint in person. This has risen to 5 this year.

10. Who made the complaint

WHO MADE THE COMPLAINT? (ADULTS' & CHILDREN'S SERVICES)		
Complainant	Number of Complaints	Percentage of Complaints
Advocate - Advice Worker	2	1.6%
Advocate - Family Member	21	16.5%
Service User (Adult)	67	52.8%
Service User (Living out of Borough)	0	0%
Service User (Child)	9	7.1%
Service User (Carer)	0	0%
Parent / Carer of Child	28	22%
Total Complaints	*127	100.0%

Table 12 Contact Person

(* Please note that this figure does not include Stage 3 Review Panels).

10.1 Table 12 shows that the largest single source of complaints (Adult Social Care) is from service users themselves. For Children's Social Care complaints it is the parent / carer of the child.

11. Complaints By Ward

BREAKDOWN OF COMPLAINTS BY LAP AREA FOR THE YEAR 2006 / 2007		
LAP Area	Ward	Total 2006 / 2007
1	Bethnal Green North	10
1	Mile End & Globetown	4
1	Weavers	8
Total For LAP Area 1		22
2	Bethnal Green South	12
2	Spitalfields & Banglatown	6
Total for LAP Area 2		18
3	St Dunstan's & Stepney Green	15
3	Whitechapel	6
Total for LAP Area 3		21
4	Shadwell	2
4	St Katharine's & Wapping	4
Total for LAP Area 4		6
5	Bow East	1
5	Bow West	9
Total for LAP Area 5		10
6	Bromley-By-Bow	9
6	Mile End East	8
Total for LAP Area 6		17
7	East India & Lansbury	7
7	Limehouse	6
Total for LAP Area 7		13
8	Blackwall & Cubitt Town	3
8	Millwall	4
Total for LAP Area 8		7
Out of Borough		10
Ward not recorded		3
Total Complaints at Stage 1 and Stage 2		127

Table 13 Complaint by Ward and LAP

(* Please note that this figure does not include Stage 3 Review Panels).

11.1 Table 13 indicates that the highest number of complaints came from St Dunstan's and Stepney Green. Please note that because of the small number of complaints caution should be take with identifying trends.

12. General Achievements and Improvement Initiatives

- 12.1 The Complaints Team has commissioned training from an external provider to run courses for Team Managers throughout 2007 / 2008 on complaints handling.
- 12.2 The Team continues to provide information sessions to teams and offer advice and support to staff and managers. For example by assisting managers to improve the quality of their Stage 1 responses.
- 12.3 Weekly outstanding lists are circulated to the Directorate Management Teams. The use of Siebel has improved monitoring and recording of complaints providing more effective information themes, trends and outcomes of complaints. The Complaints Team will also be producing quarterly Complaints Bulletins for services to help identify future trends.
- 12.4 The Complaints Team has improved its complaint response times performance targets for 2006/07, in accordance with the Team Plan.
- 12.5 The Complaints Team has produced a publicity leaflet for Adult and Children's Social Care in line with the new policy guidance. This continues to raise awareness of the Complaints Team. Social Work teams are performance monitored on providing the leaflet the service users at the point of assessment.
- 12.6 The Complaint Team has set a target for 2007/08 to increase the number of Stage 1 responses to 80% answered within 10 working days.

The Team also aims to respond to 15% of Stage 2 complaints within 25 working days and to 80% within 65 working days.
- 12.7 Recommendations from complaints are used to highlight deficiencies in the system and there is a commitment by Senior Management to take on board feedback from complaints.

Agenda Item 10.1

Committee	Date	Classification	Report No.	Agenda Item No.
Overview and Scrutiny	31 July 2007	Unrestricted		
Report of: Assistant Chief Executive Originating Officer(s): Michael Keating, Service Head Scrutiny & Equalities / Afazul Hoque, Acting Scrutiny Policy Manager		Title: Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2007/08 Ward(s) affected: All		

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report outlines the work programme for Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) for municipal year 2007/08

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to consider and comment on the proposed work programme.
- 2.2 Authorise the Head of Scrutiny and Equalities after consultation with the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee, to finalise the work programme.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT, 2000 (SECTION 97) LIST OF "BACKGROUND PAPERS" USED IN THE PREPARATION OF THIS REPORT

Background paper

N/A

Name and telephone number of and address where open to inspection

Afazul Hoque
020 7364 4636

3 Background

- 3.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) agreed a two year work programme at its meeting on 1st August 2006. At the end of the first year most of the items for year one have now been completed. These include the following reviews/ challenge sessions:
- Leaseholders: A Case Study in Customer Care
 - Master Planning
 - NRF Employment Challenge Session
 - Disability Equality Scheme Challenge Session
 - Graduate Unemployment
 - Hostels Strategy
 - Access to GP / Dentistry Services
 - Improving Recycling
- 3.2 Building on last year's proposals to ensure continuity, but also to reflect the new members' input, the Work Programme for 2007/8 is now being updated to include issues which have arisen throughout the year and also consider any items remaining from the preceding year. The new draft programme is attached and includes analysis required to develop a coherent programme for the in-depth review aspects of the Committee's work. This will be timetabled into 2008/09 to maintain the consistency and ensure overall effective delivery of the reviews undertaken. Some further work will be undertaken in-year to strengthen this.
- 3.3 As both an evaluation of last year and a preparation for this a members' session (without any officers) was facilitated by the Centre for Public Scrutiny. A short note of the event is attached as Appendix 1. Members of OSC and the Health Scrutiny Panel felt generally positive about the work of OSC and reviews undertaken last year. However they were keen to improve public engagement and awareness of the scrutiny process in particular in reviews. In addition, they wanted to see further engagement and involvement of Cabinet Members to develop a more effective working relationship with scrutiny. Involvement in yearly performance reviews and additional training for new scrutiny members and co-opted members were also required to maintain the focus on good teamwork they believed. In the discussions held with the new members these issues are being addressed both through the work programme and their development.

4 Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- 4.1 A draft 2007/08 "Forward Plan" for OSC is attached at Appendix 2. This is based on the schedule of reports and issues considered by OSC in 2006/07. Amongst the issues the Committee will consider include the Community Plan refresh which will allow non-executive Councillors to feed into a key document which will plan the future of the borough. It also includes:
- Regular monitoring reports such as the Tower Hamlets Index and Strategic Plan;
 - Budget and policy framework items such as the Licensing Authority Policy Statement and Revenue Budget preparation

- 4.2 Call-ins and pre-decision are dependent on Cabinet decisions and reports and these need to be programmed in when they arise. OSC also considers the reports arising from its investigations and reviews before they are passed through to Cabinet and again, these will be added when they arise.
- 4.3 Two years ago, the Committee introduced the Scrutiny Spotlight sessions. These were organised by directorate and both the relevant Cabinet member(s) and directors attended to present the key performance challenges facing the Council, focusing on issues arising from the TH Index. This gave OSC members the opportunity to discuss issues with them. The new Chair of Overview and Scrutiny has indicated a desire that these should be organised around Cabinet portfolios rather than directorates and is keen to ensure a spotlight session is held for all the Cabinet Members during this Municipal Year. It has therefore been suggested that the Scrutiny Spotlight be held at every meeting. This would assist in meeting the CPA criteria by helping demonstrate that OSC is holding the Executive to account.

5 Reviews and Challenge Sessions

- 5.1 Appendix 3 outlines the investigations, reviews and challenge sessions that Overview and Scrutiny could undertake in 2007/08. As last year, the issues will focus on the Council's improvement agenda and contribute to achieving outcomes that benefit the community. In addition, the review topics would add to the Council's CPA inspection process around the value for money agenda and the community leadership role of non-executive councillors. The role of Scrutiny Leads is also to monitor and suggest areas for improvements on their theme related to the Community Plan.
- 5.2 In drawing up the work programme we have undertaken an analysis of key documents to identify potential scrutiny issues. We have also considered issues raised through Scrutiny's own work in 2006/07. Discussions have also taken place with relevant directorates to explore some of the issues and to seek recommendations for additional topics around challenges faced by services and where Overview and Scrutiny can add value to existing work. We have also held initial meetings with the Scrutiny Leads to discuss these and their own suggestions. The outcome of these discussions and analysis is reflected in the proposed programme.
- 5.3 Against each item on the draft Work Plan, objectives and areas for analysis on the proposed topics are indicated and include:
- Methodology – the approach used for the scrutiny investigation
 - Performance and Improvement - the links to performance improvement issues and Value For Money (VFM)
 - Planned Work – work either currently underway or scheduled, which the scrutiny review may feed into.
 - OSC Criteria – how the topic and Members' contribution could improve services
- 5.4 Scrutiny topics are prioritised against defined criteria to ensure that the work:
- would assist in tackling an area of poor or challenging performance (bottom quartile or equivalent) that has priority within the Strategic Plan
 - would assist with sustaining high performance that has priority within the Strategic Plan

- would assist in addressing an area of national policy development that has significant implications for the Council and where member input would be valuable
- relates to a planned service inspection and member input would be valuable in providing a robustness test before inspection (or submission of self-assessment)
- would help address a gap between community perception or concern and objective performance by utilising the members' leadership role
- would contribute particularly toward improving VFM

5.5 Research into effective scrutiny has highlighted the importance of members' commitment and enthusiasm to undertaking their work. They need to believe that their work will impact positively upon their constituents' lives and help solve the problems presented at their surgeries and other community forums. The revised draft Work Programme attached at Appendix 3 applies the objective criteria outlined above but also reflects the members' consideration of their respective OSC work areas.

5.6 The work will follow one of four different approaches, as follows:

- **Scrutiny Challenge Sessions**

These are one-off sessions chaired by Scrutiny Leads which explore issues in a question and answer format. To date these have proved useful for improving members' understanding of new policies or guidelines or as part of the preparation for an inspection or report. There is potential for these to develop aspects of a particular policy on the subject for future service development work.

- **Mini-reviews**

These examine a topic over perhaps two or three meetings which allow members to consider different perspectives in greater depth, for example the work on hostels strategy included various visits to hostels and session with service providers.

- **Reviews**

These are more extensive pieces of work spanning several months. They enable more in-depth research to be undertaken, visits to see practice elsewhere, participation of external experts, etc.

- **Developing the Scrutiny Lead champion role**

In addition to the more formal settings above, it is important for the scrutiny leads to develop expertise in championing issues within the work of OSC and with fellow frontline councillors. This would be particularly useful for topics where it is more challenging to engage councillors, such as VFM/ efficiency. Potentially each Scrutiny Lead would undertake this role within their portfolio. It is probably better decided on a topic base rather than a matter of course.

5.7 It is envisaged that over the next year there will be up to six reviews and six challenge sessions subject to resources. This represents a manageable work programme which allows all the OSC portfolio holders to be involved as well as ensuring there is joint working. It is worth stressing that there is some flexibility built into the programme. This ensures capacity if the regular monitoring at OSC indicates a need to either remove or add items.

- 5.8 The Full Council has referred the licensing of Strip Clubs as an issue for OSC to consider. The Chair of OSC has agreed to lead on this review and this will be timetabled into the work programme after discussion with the directorate. The Chair of OSC is also keen to undertake a piece of work with the Committee around the establishment of an Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO) and this will be scheduled into the work programme. The Scrutiny Lead for Creating and Sharing Prosperity is currently consulting his colleagues and residents about the main topic for his review and this will be agreed prior to submission to OSC.
- 5.9 In all cases, once the issues are agreed, the scope of the work and timing will be developed in close consultation with the relevant directorates and services. This will also ensure that the investigations are focused and can deliver on their objectives. The Work Programme will be considered by OSC at its meeting on 31st July 2007. Once agreed, it will be circulated to CMT and Cabinet for information.
- 5.10 We will also ensure that the updates on the Work Programme considered by Overview and Scrutiny Committee are also reported to CMT (and Cabinet). The update will cover all aspects of the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme including Call-Ins, performance monitoring and Budget and Policy Framework items.

6 Health Scrutiny Panel

- 6.1 Following an extensive Induction process last year the Health Scrutiny Panel committed to a four year work programme. The Panel held an Induction Session on 19th June 2007 with the new members. Following this the work programme for year 2 is now being further developed. The key theme for the Panel is reducing health inequalities and as the first stage of this a review on Access to GP / Dentistry Services was undertaken last year. The Panel will build on this by undertaking work focussed on reducing smoking given its key importance locally. Discussions are currently being held with health partners to finalise the work programme which will be considered by the Health Scrutiny Panel at its meeting on 18th September 2007.

7 Communication and Profile of Scrutiny

- 7.1 To maintain good communication about Overview and Scrutiny's work, it is proposed to circulate regular updates on the Work Programme considered by Overview and Scrutiny Committee to Corporate Management Team and Cabinet. This is provisionally scheduled for November and April 2008. The update will cover all aspects of the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme including call-ins, performance monitoring and Budget and Policy Framework items.
- 7.2 A short summary of the OSC and Health Scrutiny Panel meetings will also be placed in the Members Bulletin so that all Members are aware of the Committee's work. Discussions have also been held with London Councils Scrutiny Network for Tower Hamlets to host a Conference on Scrutiny of Local Strategic Partnership. A joint bid has been put together to Capital Ambition to secure funding for this event. This would help raise the profile of the borough and in particular scrutiny function in Tower Hamlets.
- 7.3 As a number of the reviews cut across the work of the Tower Hamlets Partnership, discussions have taken place around presenting the review reports to the relevant Community Plan Action Groups. This has been a useful exercise when the Health Scrutiny Panel's review on Choosing Health using Obesity in young people as a case

study was presented to the Living Well CPAG. The review undertaken last year on Graduate Unemployment has also been positively welcomed by the Learning Achievement and Leisure CPAG and the Creating and Sharing Prosperity CPAG. Representatives from these CPAGs are working towards establishing a Working Group to address some of the recommendations of the review.

8 Concurrent Report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal Services)

- 8.1 The Local Government Act 2000 places a duty on the Council to deliver a robust and effective overview and scrutiny function. The Committee's work programme is a contributory element towards discharging that responsibility. There are no other immediate legal implications.

9 Comments of the Chief Financial Officer

- 9.1 This report details the proposed work programme of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee. All costs involved in achieving this work programme will need to be met from within existing budgetary provisions.

10 Anti-Poverty Implications

- 10.1 Reducing poverty is central to the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and this is reflected in work around the impact of Choice Based Lettings Scheme.

11 Equal Opportunity Implications

- 11.1 Equal opportunities are central to the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and this is reflected in work to consider the provision of interpreting and translation services and monitoring the Council's progress in its Equalities Action Plan twice a year.

12 Risk Management

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

SCRUTINY EVALUATION 2006 / 7

6.30 PM 17TH MAY 2007

Members in Attendance: Cllr Motin Uz-Zaman, Cllr Mohammed Abdus Salique, Cllr Alex Heslop, Cllr Mohammed Shahid Ali, Cllr Ahmed Hussain, Cllr Lutfa Begum, Cllr Rania Khan, Cllr Clair Hawkins, Cllr Stephanie Eaton, Cllr Salim Ullah, Cllr Shiria Khatun, Cllr Ann Jackson, Cllr Marc Francis

Also In Attendance: Barrie Taylor (Centre for Public Scrutiny)
Nico Andreas Heller (The Democracy School)

INTRODUCTION

- Cllr M Uz-Zamen (outgoing Chair of Overview & Scrutiny) welcomed members and introduced Barrie Taylor from the Expert Advisory Team (Centre for Public Scrutiny)
- Cllr Uz-Zamen also introduced Cllr Francis as the incoming Chair. All present introduced themselves, their past involvement in scrutiny and Wards that they represented.
- Members had previously received a briefing paper on the Local Government White Paper – Strong and Prosperous Communities. Members further received background papers relating to future issues which the committee would need to address in the coming year – in particular Department of Health bulletins on proposals contained in the Local Government and Public Involvement Bill. Members noted that ‘LINKs’ (Local Involvement Networks) were proposed to be established in each local authority area with social services responsibilities.

LAST YEAR

- Barrie Taylor invited members to identify issues ***considered to have worked well*** in the past year. Members raised the following issues:
 - Open access visits to facilities (nearer to users / showed impact of funding changes)
 - Public consultation procedures (improved by planners meeting face-to-face with public)
 - Composition of Panel (well balanced and challenging for Executive)
 - Reviews (allowed to unpack policy in detail)
 - Public engagement (greater awareness of scrutiny by public)
 - Greater community involvement (e.g. professional staff / religious leaders)
 - Good sense of teamwork (linked to improved cross part relations)
 - Valuable feedback from frontline staff
 - Willingness of Executive to be engaged / take part

Members were invited to identify any ***pitfalls / difficulties***:

- There needs to be closer engagement with co-opted members
- More early warnings are required to improve community engagement
- There needs to be more methodical performance reviews of both policy and the operational performance of the authority
- There was a mixed response to the value of ‘Call Ins’ – both highly valued and restrained
- Call In process seen as positive advantage by members – but needs greater linking to residents interests
- Greater need for improved scoping of reviews (but not to lose flexibility)
- Need for earlier consideration of overall scrutiny work plan

- Need to use three month forward decision making process of Cabinet members to the advantage of scrutiny
- Party political differences should not be ignored
- There is a need for more short sharp wins
- Health scrutiny – chair needs to develop good working relationships with all health agencies
- Consideration needs to be given to restraining the influence of the Executive priorities on O&S agendas
- Members welcomed the ‘Spotlight on Executive members’ sessions

ISSUES FOR NEXT YEAR’S WORK PLAN

- Consideration needs to be given to improving the following activities:
- Further improvements in public engagement and awareness of scrutiny process and its relevance to local communities
- Early consideration should be given to the Overall work plan for scrutiny
- Scoping of potential reviews needs to be developed (to identify specific objectives and timings)
- ‘Call Ins’ – whilst seen as a positive contribution towards developing more responsive policy making – should not overwhelm the agenda for scrutiny
- Additional training for new scrutiny members and co-opted members is required – maintaining the focus on good teamwork
- Cabinet members should be invited to propose improvements in the working relationship with scrutiny
- Scrutiny members would welcome a methodical analysis of yearly performance reviews undertaken and the potential for scrutiny to contribute towards such reviews

Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2007/08

Forward Plan

31 July 07	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial Outlook (BPF) Tower Hamlets Index (PM) Annual Complaints Report (PM) OSC Work Programme (OSMM) Scrutiny Spotlight – Lead Member Finance and Resources
4 Sep 07	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Plan Refresh Scrutiny Spotlight – Lead Member Cleaner, Safer, Greener
2 Oct 07	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Budget Update (if required) (BPF) Tower Hamlets Index (PM) Members Enquiries (PM) OSC Work Programme (OSMM) OSC Recommendation Tracking Report Update (OSMM) Scrutiny Spotlight – Lead Member Regeneration, Localisation and Community Partnerships
6 Nov 07	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Licensing Authority Policy Statement (BPF) Complaints Report - six month report (PM) Scrutiny Spotlight – Deputy Leader of the Council
4 Dec 07	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tower Hamlets Index (PM) Strategic Plan Half Year Monitoring Report (PM) OSC Work Programme (OSMM) Scrutiny Spotlight – Lead Member Employment and Skills
8 Jan 08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revenue Budget and Capital Programme (BPF) Equalities Action Plan (PM) Youth Justice Plan Scrutiny Spotlight – Lead Member Children’s Services
5 Feb 08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Budget Requirement and Council Tax (BPF) Tower Hamlets Index (PM) OSC Work Programme (OSMM) Scrutiny Spotlight – Lead Member Culture
4 Mar 08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OSC Recommendation Tracking Report Update (OSMM) Children and Young People’s Plan Review Scrutiny Spotlight – Lead Member Development and Housing
1 Apr 08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tower Hamlets Index (PM) OSC Work Programme (OSMM) Annual Report (OSMM) Scrutiny Spotlight – Lead Member Health and Well being
6 May 08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be confirmed

BPF - Budget and Policy Framework

PM - Performance Management

OSMM - Overview and Scrutiny Monitoring and Management

NB

Call-ins will be added where accepted

Pre-decision questions are a standing item on the agenda

The Committee will also consider reports arising from the investigations and reviews conducted by the Scrutiny Leads

Scrutiny Spotlights - To be confirmed following discussion with Cabinet Members

May 2007 - Apr 2008

Lead: Cllr Marc Francis – Chair of OSC

Issue	Strip Clubs in Tower Hamlets	Method	Scrutiny Review
Lead officers	Colin Perrins and John Cruse		
Objective/outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fulfilment of community leadership role on an area of community concern Establish the view of local people 		
Performance Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 		
Other Drivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requested by full Council Cross-party support to review an area of high concern 		
Planned Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate the impact of strip clubs, and trends in new applications, on the local community, employees and users; Seek evidence from experts, residents, community and faith groups. Undertake benchmarking exercises 		
OSC Criteria	Meets criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Would assist in involving Members and the local community in informing the Council's approach to safeguarding the rights of women and protection of children as well as the wider community. 		

Excellent Public Services (Lead: Cllr Mohammed Abdus Salique))

Issue	Use of Consultants	Method	EPS Review
Lead officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sara Williams 		
Objective/outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunity to explore an issue of high interest; Address misconceptions and improve Members' understanding of a controversial issue 		
Performance Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need to improve VFM component in use of resources; Audit Commission places importance of scrutiny involvement in VFM 		
Other Drivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High media coverage and Members' concerns Reassure local residents on VFM issues around use of consultants 		
Planned Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 		
OSC Criteria	Meets criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribute towards improving focus on VFM Increase Member understanding of key challenges and responses 		

Issue	The provision of interpreting and translation services	Method	Excellent Public Services challenge session jointly conducted with Hackney
Lead Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Michael Keating 		
Objective/outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a clearer understanding of local interpreting and translation practice and provision Make proposals for the better co-ordination of services in East London 		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider the real impact on integration and cohesion of such services Identify barriers to learning English
Performance Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">
Other Drivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report form the Commission on Cohesion and Integration has highlighted interpreting and translation services as potential barriers to cohesion and integration There has been press interest and Freedom of Interest requests about the extent of Council expenditure
Planned Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EPS CPAG is undertaking work on local English language provision. This work would dovetail with this. East London Learning and Skills Council have reduced local English language classes despite high demand
OSC Criteria	<p>Meets criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> would assist in addressing an area of national policy development that has significant implications for the Council and where member input would be valuable where there is gap between community perception or concern and objective performance and members adopting a more community leadership role would assist in managing this would contribute particularly toward improving VFM

Living Safely (Lead: Cllr Salim Ullah)

Issue	The changing context for tackling Anti-Social behaviour	Method	Living Safely Review
Lead Officer	Andy Bamber		
Objective/outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop local proposals for how to operate the Community Call to Action Improve Member knowledge around important community issue (raised through their surgeries, community contacts and role in SNAGs) 		
Performance Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CPA/KLOE self assessment identified ASB Case Management as an area for improvement Crime remains the main area of concern for local people in the 2006/7 Residents' Survey 		
Other Drivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multi-landlord environment will require further service development 		
Planned Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ASB Strategy and Action Plan Corporate review to take to examine how Respect Action Plan is implemented. Linked to Strategic Plan / LAA to improve case management and better performance review 		
OSC Criteria	<p>Meets criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> would assist in addressing an area of national policy development that has significant implications for the Council and where member input would be valuable where there is gap between community perception or concern and objective performance and members adopting a more community leadership role would assist in managing this 		

Issue	Evaluation of the effectiveness of Safer Neighbourhood Teams	Method	Living Safely Challenge Session
Lead Officer	Andy Bamber		
Objective/outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assist evaluation of SNTs Informs the development of the Super SNTs Contributes to developments to address impact on and fear of crime 		
Performance Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BVPP identifies that BV126 – 128: PI targets for violent crime, burglaries, robberies and vehicle crime not met. Crime remains the main area of concern for local people in the 2006/7 Residents' Survey 		
Other Drivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tower Hamlets is the first borough to have SNTs in every ward. Significant investment and need to ensure VFM and effectiveness There is some evaluation of the SNTs - nationally (ACPO) and regionally (Met) - based around inspections - but nothing locally or that involves local councillors. 		
OSC Criteria	Meets criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> would assist in addressing an area of national policy development that has significant implications for the Council and where member input would be valuable contributes toward improving the focus of services on VFM 		

Creating and Sharing Prosperity (Lead: Cllr Alibor Choudhury)

Issue	Determination of Major Planning Applications	Method	CSP Challenge Session
Lead officer	Michael Kiely		
Objective/outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fulfilment of community leadership role in an area of community concern 		
Performance Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BV109a identifies Major Planning Applications at red Only 35% (of 60% target) determined within 13 weeks LBTH has highest number of strategic major applications in London 		
Other Drivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of member involvement in major planning applications (other than committee decision making) due to probity constraints Need to encourage developer engagement with community at pre-application stage 		
Planned Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve pre-application process to enable speedier determination of planning applications Maintain high quality decision making and development outcomes Increase community and member involvement in process 		
OSC Criteria	Meets criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> would assist in tackling an area of poor or challenging performance (bottom quartile or equivalent) that has priority within the Strategic Plan Increase Member understanding of key challenges and responses 		

Living Well (Lead: Cllr Alex Heslop)

Issue	Choice Based Lettings Scheme	Method	Living Well Review
Lead officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maureen McElaney 		
Objective/outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides evidence of member input into monitoring and development of key policy area 		
Performance Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Large percentage of Members' Case Work concerns Lettings Policy Star rating for ALMO 		
Other Drivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DCLG guidance on CBL Capital Moves DCLG policy developments on overcrowding 		
Planned Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review current Lettings Policy Identify areas of best practice and areas of improvement 		
OSC Criteria	<p>Meets criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> where member input and understanding would assist with sustaining high performance that has priority within the Strategic Plan would assist in addressing an area of national policy development that has significant implications for the Council and where member input would be valuable 		

Issue	Implementation of the BVR Older People Improvement Plan	Method	Living Well Challenge Session
Lead officer	John Goldup		
Objective/outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides evidence of member input into monitoring and development of key policy area as well as VFM 		
Performance Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BV054 - number of older people aged 65 or over helped to live at home per 1000 population aged 65 or over - at red Although TH is a top performer on social care services for older people, the lack of a strategic corporate approach was identified as a weakness in CPA KLOE Self Assessment 		
Other Drivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Role for OSC in monitoring implementation of Improvement Plans Linked to Customer Access and Equalities work 		
Planned Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BVR Older People Improvement Plan 		
OSC Criteria	<p>Meets criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> where member input and understanding would assist with sustaining high performance that has priority within the Strategic Plan would assist in addressing an area of national policy development that has significant implications for the Council and where member input would be valuable 		

Learning Achievement & Leisure (Lead: Cllr Ahmed Hussain)

Issue	Young Peoples Participation in Sports Leading Up to Olympics	Method	LAL Review
Lead officer	Paul Martindill		
Objective/outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop proposals for engagement of young people • Develop proposals to improve access/usage for disabled young people • Develop proposals to improve take up of a wide range of physical activities 		
Performance Improvement			
Other Drivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The provision of leisure services for young people was highlighted as an area of concern in the 2006/07 Residents' Survey, with the lowest levels of satisfaction • The Olympic Games provide a major opportunity to promote and enhance • Suggestion is to focus on increasing participation • Paralympics and promotion / celebration around disabled people 		
Other issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires focus to avoid potentially substantial and wide ranging review 		
OSC Criteria	<p>Meets criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • would assist in addressing an area of national (regional) policy development that has significant implications for the Council and where member input would be valuable • where there is gap between community perception or concern and objective performance and members adopting a more community leadership role would assist in managing this 		

Issue	Revisiting the Youth Services Plan review	Method	LAL Challenge Session
Lead officer	Mary Durkin/Steve Sipple		
Objective/outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor impact of previous OSC review • 		
Performance Improvement			
Other Drivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members' suggestion • Demonstrate Scrutiny impact (CPA) 		
OSC Criteria	<p>Meets criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • where there is gap between community perception or concern and objective performance and members adopting a more community leadership role would assist in managing this • relates to a planned service inspection and member input would be valuable in providing a robustness test before inspection (or submission of self-assessment) 		

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