

Meeting of the

# **OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

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Tuesday, 7 October 2008 at 7.00 p.m.

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## **A G E N D A**

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### **VENUE**

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

<b>Members:</b>	<b>Deputies (if any):</b>
<b>Chair: Councillor Abdul Asad</b> <b>Vice-Chair: Councillor Bill Turner</b>	
<b>Councillor Stephanie Eaton</b> <b>Councillor Waiseul Islam</b> <b>Councillor Ann Jackson</b> <b>Councillor Shiria Khatun</b> <b>Councillor Abjol Miah</b> <b>Councillor Oliur Rahman</b> <b>Councillor A A Sardar</b> <b>Two Vacancies</b>	Councillor M. Shahid Ali, (Designated Deputy representing Councillors Abdul Asad, Waiseul Ialm, Ann Jackson, Shiria Khatun, A. A. Sardar and Bill Turner) Councillor Lutfa Begum, (Designated Deputy representing Councillor Oliur Rahman) Councillor Carli Harper-Penman, (Designated Deputy representing Councillors Abdul Asad, Waiseul Islam, Ann Jackson, Shiria Khatun, A. A. Sardar and Bill Turner) Councillor Azizur Rahman Khan, (Designated Deputy representing Councillor Stephanie Eaton) Councillor Rania Khan, (Designated Deputy representing Councillor Oliur Rahman) Councillor Abdul Matin, (Designated Deputy representing Councillor Stephanie Eaton) Councillor Fozol Miah, (Designated

Deputy representing Councillor Abjol Miah)  
Councillor Harun Miah, (Designated Deputy representing Councillor Abjol Miah)  
Councillor Tim O'Flaherty, Designated Deputy representing Councillor Stephanie Eaton  
Councillor M. Mamun Rashid, Designated Deputy representing Councillor Abjol Miah)  
Councillor Salim Ullah, (Designated Deputy representing Councillors Abdul Asad, Waiseul Islam, Ann Jackson, Shiria Khatun, A. A. Sardar and Bill Turner)

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

**Co-opted Members:**

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

If you require any further information relating to this meeting, would like to request a large print, Braille or audio version of this document, or would like to discuss access arrangements or any other special requirements, please contact: Amanda Thompson, Democratic Services, Tel: 020 7364 4651, E-mail: [amanda.thompson@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:amanda.thompson@towerhamlets.gov.uk)

# LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

## OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 7 October 2008

7.00 p.m.

### SECTION ONE

#### 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To receive any apologies for absence.

#### 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

#### 3. UNRESTRICTED MINUTES

3 - 10

To confirm as a correct record of the proceedings the unrestricted minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 9 September 2008.

#### 4. REQUESTS TO SUBMIT PETITIONS

To be notified at the meeting.

#### 5. REQUESTS FOR DEPUTATIONS

To be notified at the meeting.

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

##### 6.1 Report Called In - 33-37 The Oval and Bethnal Green Gasholders Site, E3

11 - 28

(Time allocated – 30 minutes)

The confidential appendix to the original cabinet report that forms part of this item is attached in Section 2 of the agenda at 13.1

#### 7. SCRUTINY SPOTLIGHT: LEAD MEMBER

The Lead Member for Health and Wellbeing, Councillor Anwara Ali, will attend to report on her portfolio.

(Time allocated – 30 minutes)

## **8. PERFORMANCE MONITORING**

### **8.1 Members Enquiries 29 - 36**

(Time allocated – 15 minutes)

## **9. SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT**

### **9.1 Overview and Scrutiny Recommendation Tracking Report 37 - 136**

(Time allocated – 10 minutes)

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

(Time allocated – 15 minutes).

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

## **12. 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.

## **13. SECTION TWO REPORTS 'CALLED IN'**

### **13.1 Appendix to Section 1 Call-in Report - 33-37 The Oval and Bethnal Green Gasholders Site, E3 137 - 140**

This is an exempt appendix to the Section 1 report listed at Agenda item 6.

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

(Time allocated 15 minutes).

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

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# Agenda Item 2

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

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

### Declaration of interests for Members

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



**LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS**

**MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**HELD AT 5.00 P.M. ON TUESDAY, 9 SEPTEMBER 2008**

**ROOM M71, 1ST FLOOR, TOWN HALL, MULBERRY PLACE, 5 CLOVE  
CRESCENT, LONDON, E14 2BG**

**Members Present:**

Councillor Abdul Asad (Chair)  
Councillor Stephanie Eaton  
Councillor Ann Jackson  
Councillor Abjol Miah  
Councillor A A Sardar

**Other Councillors Present:**

Councillor Marc Francis  
Councillor Lutfur Rahman  
Councillor Abdal Ullah

**Co-opted Members Present:**

Mr H Mueenuddin – Muslim Community Representative  
–

**Guests Present:**

Paul Rickett - Borough Commander  
Steve Bending - Met Police

**Officers Present:**

Lutfur Ali – (Assistant Chief Executive)  
Andy Bamber – (Service Head Community Safety, Communities  
Localities and Culture)  
Suki Binjal – (Interim Legal Services Manager)  
Stephen Halsey – (Corporate Director, Communities, Localities and  
Culture)  
Afazul Hoque – (Acting Scrutiny Policy Manager, Scrutiny and  
Equalities, Chief Executive's)  
Michael Keating – (Service Head Scrutiny & Equalities, Chief  
Executive's)  
Chris Naylor – (Corporate Director, Resources)  
Alan Steward – (Acting Service Head, Strategy and Performance,  
Chief Executive's)  
Jebin Syeda – (Scrutiny Policy Officer, Scrutiny and Equalities,  
Chief Executive's)

Amanda Thompson

– (Team Leader - Democratic Services)

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Shiria Khatun and Bill Turner.

Councillor Josh Peck, Lead Member for Performance and Resources, who was due to present the Tower Hamlets Index item, also gave his apologies.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None declared.

**3. UNRESTRICTED MINUTES**

**RESOLVED**

That the unrestricted minutes of the meeting held on 29 July 2008 be confirmed as a correct record.

**4. REQUESTS TO SUBMIT PETITIONS**

None received.

**5. REQUESTS FOR DEPUTATIONS**

None received.

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

There were no decisions 'called in' from the meeting of the Cabinet held on 30 July 2008.

**7. SCRUTINY SPOTLIGHT: LEAD MEMBER**

Councillor Abdal Ullah, Lead Member for Cleaner, Greener, Safer, gave a presentation on the key issues, opportunities and challenges arising from his portfolio. Also present to respond to questions was the Borough Commander, Paul Rickett, and Steve Bending, Met Police.

Councillor Ullah advised that crime remained the greatest concern for residents, and although it remained around the London average, concern about crime had increased over the past two years and so there was still more challenging work to do.

Councillor Ullah referred to the Crime and Drugs Reduction Partnership Plan 2008-20 which was due to be considered later on the agenda, and advised that this strategy had been developed with the involvement of a wide range of partners and aimed to reduce crime, anti-social behaviour and drug misuse. The priorities for 2008/09 had been agreed by the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership following consultation with the community.

Litter was the second most important issue of concern for residents, and again although this was in line with the London average, there had been an increase over the last year. Councillor Ullah reported on a number of initiatives that were being implemented to address environmental cleanliness, including 'hot spot action teams', street cleansing contract monitoring, and a recycling improvement plan.

Members of the Committee asked questions on a number of related issues including crime reduction targets and performance, information sharing between partners, the introduction of Tower Hamlets Enforcement Officers (THEOs) and female safety.

Councillor Ullah and the Borough Commander then responded in detail to the concerns raised.

The Committee noted that 64% of key targets had been successfully achieved, a new information sharing database was about to go live, and the role of the THEOs was to be proactive in preventing crime and identifying problems before they escalated. Gender based violence was also a priority across the whole of the Metropolitan Police Service, and barriers within the criminal justice system were being addressed.

The Chair thanked Councillor Ullah for his presentation, and the Borough Commander for attending.

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

### **8.1 Crime and Drugs Reduction Partnership Plan 2008-2011**

Andy Bamber, Head of Community Safety, presented the draft Crime and Reduction Partnership Plan 2008-11 which formed part of the Budget and Policy framework for the Council under the Council's Constitution.

The Police and Criminal Justice Act 2006 now required the plan to include priorities arising from the Strategic Assessment, a performance management framework, a delivery plan (including partners' contributions and how they will be resourced), and details of how the views of the community will be incorporated.

Arising from the question and answer session that followed, the Committee

## **RESOLVED**

That the following comments be submitted to the Cabinet for consideration:

The Committee broadly welcome the Plan which highlights the priorities for the Council and its partners in tackling and preventing crime within the Borough. The Committee noted that crime still remains a major concern for local residents in the Annual Residents' Survey. Members of the Committee commented that in line with the Community Plan theme of 'One Tower Hamlets', this strategy should refer to the needs of the whole community rather than individual communities as stated on page 4 of the current plan. Concerns were also raised regarding the limited consultation undertaken, as the views of residents are vital to ensure the Plan reflects the needs of the community.

The importance of up-to-date data was also highlighted when setting appropriate and ambitious targets. Members also felt that a resident satisfaction survey of the police similar to the Annual Residents' Survey would be useful to help set appropriate targets for this plan. Members were assured that targets set were realistic and based on a number of local considerations.

Members commented that one of the key targets relating to drug treatment should be the number of people that have been successfully treated as this gives a clear indication of how many people have been helped to move away from substance misuse.

The Committee welcomed the initiative to localise services through 'high visibility services' by the Communities, Localities and Culture Directorate. The media hype around certain crimes has created a perception amongst local residents that crime is higher in their neighbourhood than the actual figures indicate. The high visibility initiative is designed to reduce some of those anxieties.

The Committee ask that consideration be given to the funding for the Tower Hamlets Environmental Officers (THEOs), and recommend that local residents are involved in setting their priorities and work programme. It was also suggested that the strategy should address women's safety separately as they are particularly vulnerable.

## **9. PERFORMANCE MONITORING**

### **9.1 Tower Hamlets Index**

Chris Naylor, Corporate Director of Resources, presented the first quarterly monitoring report for the new Tower Hamlets Index covering the period April-

June 2008. Members noted that so far performance was in line with expectations.

In response to questions from the Committee, Mr Naylor advised that if inflation continued to rise as it was then this could be contained, however if there was a recession it would be more difficult to assess how the Council's services would be affected. However Treasury Management had performed better than expected.

The overspend in facilities had been brought on by the increase in fuel prices, work programmes being brought forward, and land disposals which still hadn't taken place.

Mr Naylor agreed to provide a written response to Councillor Anne Jackson's question concerning the safeguarding of the Council's investments.

### **RESOLVED**

That the report be noted.

## **10. SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT**

### **10.1 Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme**

Mr Michael Keating, Service Head Scrutiny and Equalities, introduced the work programme for the municipal year 2008/2009.

The Chair **MOVED** and it was

### **RESOLVED**

That the work programme be finalised by the Service Head Scrutiny and Equalities after consultation with the Chair.

### **10.2 Verbal Updates from Scrutiny Leads**

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

Councillor Ann Jackson (One Tower Hamlets) reported that the draft scoping report for her review on child poverty would be sent out to all the stakeholders for comments very soon.

She was also keen for the Working Group Members to assist in undertaking intensive research on child poverty, including case-study interviews and a number of focus groups with local residents to talk about their personal experiences.

The first review session which had originally been scheduled for 18 September 2008 had now been cancelled, however rescheduled dates would be put in draft scoping report before it went out. Some nominations for the Membership of the Working Group had also been received.

Councillor A A Sardar (Prosperous Community) reported that he had agreed to scrutinise parental involvement in secondary education, and had met with Helen Jenner (Service Head – Early Years Children and Learning) and Sarah Gale (Head of Equalities and Parental Engagement) in order to discuss the review timetable and some of the witnesses that would be called. A scoping report was being drafted and would shortly be circulated.

The Working Group hoped to visit secondary schools and hold focus groups with parents, governors, head teachers and staff about how they are improving parental involvement. Visits to specialist groups, such as the Parent Information Point session, were also planned.

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

The Chair MOVED and it was:-

##### **RESOLVED**

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

##### **Agenda Item 7.1 Resourcing Youth Services (CAB 038/089)**

1. The report does not give a proper reason and justification why the services for LAPs 1, 2 and 3 should be tendered rather than retained in-house. Can the Cabinet ensure that the tendering will deliver results?
2. As it is not mentioned in the report, how have the recommendations of the Scrutiny Challenge Session held last year which revisited the Youth Services Review undertaken in 2004/05 been incorporated into the new service delivery?
3. How will the needs of disabled children be addressed by this report?

##### **Agenda Item 7.2 33-37 The Oval & Bethnal Green Gasholders Site, E3 (CAB 039/089)**

1. What is the feasibility of this site being used to provide a cemetery in the borough?
2. When were the HSE Criteria (article 10) updated, and does this change affect any other sites within LBTH? How does the planning department now ensure all checks are made in relation to planning requests? Is there a revised sign off on development reviews prior to case approval?
3. In paragraph 5.4 it can be inferred that the developer could have deliberately withdrawn the application in order to get to the current situation wherein they stand to gain possibly more money from the Council. Does the Council itself have any recourse against the developer in this?
4. Has the Council considered identification of another site for this development that could be recommended instead to possibly allow the developer to recoup losses and also save Council funds?

**Agenda Item 10.1 Working Neighbourhoods Fund Proposed Interventions (CAB 042/089)**

1. Can the Cabinet confirm that all the organisations mentioned in the report have applied for the grant and not been chosen simply because of their previous work? Can the Cabinet ensure that funding from WNF is equally available for all community organisations?

**Agenda Item 12.5 Corporate Revenue Budget Monitoring 2008/09 – First Report – Housing Revenue Account (CAB 048/089)**

1. There seems to be a higher rental income due to fewer tenants transferring to RSLs and lower leaseholder charges due to higher leaseholder transfers than expected? What is the explanation for this?

**Agenda Item 12. 6 Treasury Management Outturn Report 2007/08 (CAB 049/089)**

1. Given concern about the adverse impact of the 'credit crunch' on financial institutions which have previously perform well, what measures have been taken to choose an investment management company which can safeguard the Council against the current US problems as much as possible?

**12. 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.

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

The Chair MOVED and it was:-

**RESOLVED**

That the following section pre-decision question be submitted to Cabinet for consideration:

**Agenda Item 17.2 Roman Place (2 Gladstone Place) – Granting of Development Lease (CAB 052/089)**

This is a very sensitive development and any perceived adverse changes allowed now could further harm local perception. Therefore, could the Cabinet outline how they will inform and consult the local community about this proposed change?

The meeting finished at  
6.50pm.

Councillor Abdul Asad, Chair



# Agenda Item 6.1

<b>Committee:</b>  <b>OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY</b>	<b>Date:</b>  <b>7 October 2008</b>	<b>Classification:</b>  <b>Unrestricted</b>	<b>Report No.</b>	<b>Agenda Item No.</b>  <b>6.1</b>
<b>Report of:</b> <b>Assistant Chief Executive</b>  <b>Originating Officer(s):</b> <b>Amanda Thompson</b> <b>Team Leader, Democratic Services</b>			<b>Title:</b> <b>Cabinet Decision Called-in:</b> <b>33 - 37 The Oval and Bethnal Green Gasholders Site, E3</b>  <b>Wards:</b> Bethnal Green North	

## 1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 The attached report of the Interim Corporate Director, Development and Renewal was considered by the Cabinet on 10 September 2008 and has been "Called In" by Councillors Archer, Eckardt, Golds, Hussain and Snowdon. This is in accordance with the provisions of Part Four of the Council's Constitution.

## 2. RECOMMENDATION

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

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

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

Brief description of "background paper"

**Cabinet report – 10 September 2008**

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

**Amanda Thompson**  
**02073644651**

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

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

- 1) That the Corporate Director Development & Renewal be authorised, after consultation with the Lead Member for Resources and Assistant Chief Executive (Legal Services), to enter into a conditional agreement (subject to the revocation [planning consent]) with the Developer to acquire land known as 33-37 The Oval, as identified on the plan attached at Appendix A to the report (CAB 039/089); and
- 2) That the Chief Executive be instructed to commission a comprehensive investigation to establish whether the Authority has put in place adequate controls to prevent a recurrence of the procedural errors, referred to in the body of the report (CAB 039/089).

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

- 4.1 At the Cabinet meeting on the 10<sup>th</sup> September 2008 the Cabinet was asked to either: note the report and risk for compensation arising out of the situation with 33-37 The Oval; or enter into a conditional agreement with the Developer to acquire the land. The reason that these two options were placed before the Cabinet was that planning permission had been granted for the site without the Council consulting with the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) as it was legally required to do due to the presence of a gas works. This failure to consult has left the original planning permission vulnerable to legal challenge by the HSE and both the Council and the Developer exposed to costs arising out of this.
- 4.2 Officers informed the Cabinet that this situation arose due to both technical and human error. The transference of planning records from paper to the electronic system of GIS meant that gasholder safeguarding data was not available to officers who went ahead with the application without checking the paper records. The human failure was that the case officer failed to note the gas works during his site visit.
- 4.3 We, however, are concerned that this situation is not as straight forward as that and believe that this issue needs further scrutiny.
- 4.4 The Developers had a design statement produced by the Neptune Group for the site in March 2005. This statement sets out full details of the area, the sit and the proposed development. This document was then lodged along with an application for development with the Council on the 19<sup>th</sup> April 2005. On virtually every page of this document there is a reference to the presence of the gas works. At this point officers should have been on notice that the HSE should be consulted under Article 10 of the General Development Procedure Order.

- 4.5 On 29<sup>th</sup> September 2005, as part of the planning application procedure, a Delegated Planning Application Report was drawn up by officers for this development recommending that the Council grant planning permission. In paragraph 3.1 the document clearly states that *"to the west is the Pritchards Road gas works site, which seems to be still partially in use"* and contained a map at the back of the document that clearly shows the gas works. Officers could not then have been as ignorant of the presence of the gas works as was stated to Cabinet. In section 5 of the report it goes on to state which agencies had been consulted in relation to this development and the HSE was not mentioned. When this document was reviewed before being placed before members the gas works should have been noted and the HSE informed.
- 4.6 We then have some trouble in following what happens next. According to the Cabinet report of the 10<sup>th</sup> September 2008 the application was considered and permission issued on the 19<sup>th</sup> December 2005. The report does not state which committee but it must be assumed that this was placed before the Strategic Development Committee (SDC) for approval. This date does not, however, correlate with the case file on this development that states the decision was granted on the 15<sup>th</sup> December 2005. While in the documents placed before the SDC on the 16<sup>th</sup> November 2006 regarding an application to amend the original plans the date was given as the 12<sup>th</sup> December 2005. Council officers are clearly uncertain as to when planning permission for this site was granted and this in itself is very worrying.
- 4.7 A letter was sent out to the Developers dated the 15<sup>th</sup> December and it must be assumed that the correct date for approval was the 15<sup>th</sup> December 2005 despite the fact that this letter seems to predate the SDC meeting in the evening.
- 4.8 As search of both the electronic and hard records for meetings of the Council on the 15<sup>th</sup> December show no mention of a SDC meeting. In fact there is no mention of any SDC meetings for the whole of December that year. If one goes backwards and forwards of this date you will still not be able to find any mention of The Oval site application being placed before the SDC. This is hugely worrying to the undersigned members as not only are they not able to examine the original papers placed before the SDC but a very important meeting that may well land the Council with very high costs has been erased from the public record making it now impossible to determine what actually happened. It is this lack of documentation that may explain why officers are unable to provide an exact date for this application being approved.
- 4.9 It is our belief that when this application was presented to members of the SDC it would have made mention of the gas works either in the body of the report or by reference to the site plans. Any member reading these documents would have been aware that a gas works site existed and that the HSE had not been consulted. The SDC, therefore, failed in its duty to ensure this planning application was issues properly.
- 4.10 In the letter of the 15<sup>th</sup> December 2005 sent to the developers it makes it clear that development of the site shall not begin until the site has been inspected

and judged safe for human habitation. This would include both “*potential on-site and off-site sources*” as well as both an investigation of the “*site based on the findings of the desk study and walkover.*”

- 4.11 According to the case file the desk study lead to the approval of plans submitted for the site on the 13<sup>th</sup> January 2006, while none of the documents make clear when the site visit happened. It can be stated, however, that if officers were ignorant of the presence of the gas works and the need to inform the HSE, which we do not agree with, then they became fully aware of it on or around the 13<sup>th</sup> Jan 2006 when the plans the site were approved. We cannot accept, as a result of this, that the stated reasons of both a technical and human error lead to this situation. At all times officers were aware of the gas works and it must be assumed so were members and the HSE should have been notified.
- 4.12 It is also the case that development of the site could not legally go ahead as a potential off-site source threatened the safety of any future residents of The Oval. The planning permission was therefore flawed at the point of inception and a new application should have been submitted and no works begun.
- 4.13 In the spring of 2006 the HSE and the national grid raised concerns about the planning decision but were past the time-limit when they could challenge the decision. This shows that the Council was aware that it had failed to consult the HSE no later than 4 months after the original decision was made and that as a result the decision granted in Dec 2005 was unsafe. At this time officers should have sought to amend the decision granted and resolve this issue.
- 4.14 Instead the officers entered into discussions with the Developers, HSE and National Grid to negotiate a way forward. This led to a new application for planning permission being submitted on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2006 and being discussed at the SDC on 16<sup>th</sup> November 2006. Rather than seek to rectify the problem of the HSE, officers advised the Council grant planning against the HSE advice which meant that the Secretary of State could call in the application. This in fact happened and as a result the developer withdrew the new application and proceeded to implement the original permission. In the past year and half the Council has not prevented the development of the site which is now considerable. No information has been placed before members as to why officers sought to proceed with the flawed application over the objection of the HSE and risk involving the Secretary of State.
- 4.15 Officers are now concerned that the HSE would seek to persuade the Secretary of State to require the Council to revoke the original permission which would leave the Council liable to compensation. We, however, do not think that this will be the case. The developer clearly proceeded with the development knowing that the planning permission was not valid and that it may be revoked. He has thus not innocently incurred his costs. This issue was not fully brought to the attention of the Cabinet and may well have changed their decision.

4.16 The full costs regarding the second option of the council purchasing the land have not been discussed in the report of the 10<sup>th</sup> September 2008. Officers have requested that the Cabinet agree to a scheme that has not been fully costed and to which the cabinet will bind the Council to fund. This is a breach of the fiduciary duty owed by members to the residents of Tower Hamlets and as such should not have been agreed to.

4.17 We are also concerned that when this issue was placed before Cabinet the Lead Member for resources was not present and so the Cabinet did not discuss the issues of affordability of either option placed before it. We feel that before taking such an expensive step that this matter be fully discussed with reference to the Council finances

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

The Call In members therefore suggest the following alternative course of action for consideration:-

- a) That a full investigation by officers be undertaken to find out what exactly officers knew in relation to this site and a report laid before the Cabinet- including why the original SDC meeting has gone missing from the official record,
- b) An investigation be undertaken of why officers sought to proceed with this application despite the objection of the HSE in August to November 2006 in the full knowledge that the Secretary of State could challenge it and why they allowed building work to continue on a flawed planning application,
- c) That a full report should be drawn up by officers and laid before the Cabinet stating what legal liabilities, if any, the Council will be subject to- if necessary legal counsel should be sought,
- d) That an investigation be undertaken by officers to determine if by his actions the developer has incurred his own costs due to his actions in continuing to develop the land using a flawed application and its results communicated to the Cabinet,
- e) That officers draw up a full report on the costs and liabilities to be incurred by the Council should it proceed with purchasing the land from the developer, with special regard being placed on the current fall in land prices, and then placed before the Cabinet,
- f) That this issue be then sent back to Cabinet to be fully discussed and an opportunity be given to the Lead Member for resources to inform members as to the affordability of both option

## **6. CONSIDERATION OF THE "CALL IN"**

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

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

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

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

<b>Committee:</b> Cabinet	<b>Date:</b> 10 September 2008	<b>Classification:</b> <b>Unrestricted</b>	<b>Report No:</b>	<b>Agenda Item:</b>
<b>Report of:</b>  Corporate Director Development & Renewal  <b>Originating officer(s):</b> Paul Evans Interim Director Development & Renewal		<b>Title:</b>  33-37 The Oval & Bethnal Green Gasholder Site E3  <b>Wards Affected:</b> Bethnal Green North.		

## 1. **SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report is concerned with a site (33-37 The Oval E3) where a planning permission for a mixed business/residential use is vulnerable to challenge by the Health & Safety Executive (HSE)/Secretary of State due to an administrative oversight that resulted in a failure to consult the HSE. The options available to the Council are examined.

## 2. **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**Cabinet is recommended to:**

**Either**

- 2.1 Note the contents of the report including the risk of claims for compensation arising and take no action in relation to the acquisition of the land known as 33-37 The Oval.

**OR**

- 2.2 That the Corporate Director Development & Renewal be authorised, after consultation with the Lead Member for Resources and Assistant Chief Executive (Legal Services), to enter into a conditional agreement (subject to the revocation) with the Developer to acquire land known as 33-37 The Oval as identified on the plan attached at Appendix A.

### 3. INTRODUCTION

- 3.1 This report relates to a site in Bethnal Green known as 33-37 The Oval located adjacent to and east of a gas storage installation containing 4 gas holders of various sizes.
- 3.2 The site has a frontage of 22 metres a depth of 25.5 metres and a site area of 0.056 hectares. It used to contain a single storey building that occupied most of the site and was used by a timber furniture manufacturer. The immediate area is generally light industrial in nature however the wider area has a significant residential population.
- 3.3 The gasholder site is identified by the HSE as a notifiable installation and therefore under Article 10 of the General Development Procedure Order (GDPO) the Council as Local Planning Authority have to consult the HSE on certain specified applications within distances prescribed by the HSE. All residential developments have to be referred. Historically the consultation distance for this type of installation was 60 metres, however recently the HSE has revisited their criteria and introduced a new system called PADHI+, which relates to more extensive zones of up to 280 metres.
- 3.4 Under the old system, HSE would look at each case and provide advice in the form of either “advise against” or “do not advise against” within the 21 day period given in legislation for them to reply. The new system seeks to automate the process by having what is known as “standing advice”. However at about the same time as this change in methodology, HSE has also reviewed the risks associated with gas holder sites. This has resulted in much wider consultation zones for these installations. At the centre of the new consultation system is a matrix with distance from hazard against nature of the development resulting in either “advise against” or “don’t advise against” the development. There are 3 zones: inner (about 80m), middle (about 200m) and outer (about 280m), measured from the edge of the gas holder and there are 4 types of development in the PADHI model. The following is just an illustration of them (the PADHI model has a more detailed definition):
- |                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| Development Type 1 | Low density uses such as warehousing and industry where there are low numbers of people                              |
| Development Type 2 | Low density housing: < 40 dwellings per hectare (we hardly ever build at this density in Tower Hamlets)              |
| Development Type 3 | High density housing: > 40 dwellings per hectare   |
| Development Type 4 | very large or sensitive developments – e.g. a sports stadia (high numbers of people) or care home (hard to evacuate) |
- 3.5 The reason for this report is that in relation to the site mentioned in paragraph 3.1, the Planning section failed to properly discharge its duty to consult the HSE and the consequences of this error need to be addressed.



#### **4. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 4.1 Planning permission was sought on 17 March 2005 (PA/05/421) for the “demolition of existing building and redevelopment to provide a five storey building comprising 3 Use Class B1 (business) units on the ground floor with 14 flats above (6 one bedroom, 6 two bedroom and 2 three bedroom flats)”. The application was considered and permission was issued on 19 December 2005. A subsequent application was submitted (see paragraph 5.3).
- 4.2 This development site is only a short distance from the National Grid Gas Bethnal Green gasholder site, a notifiable installation. Under Article 10 of the General Development Procedure Order the HSE should have been consulted due to the location of these developments in relation to the notifiable installation. The holder was not identified as such on our safeguarding maps and therefore the HSE were not consulted.
- 4.3 Information about notifiable installations was originally held on paper maps along with other safeguarding information. The transfer of the paper data to an electronic mapping system of records (GIS) was a huge task and had to be carried out in a staged process over several years. The GIS based system was in use in 2002 but the gasholder safeguarding data was not available via the GIS system until 2006 and therefore when the two applications were processed (in 2004 & 2005) reference was not made to paper records and it was not picked up during the planning consultation stage. This was corrected as soon as the problem was discovered in 2006.
- 4.4 However, the fact that the site was close to a gas holder complex should clearly have been evident to the planning case officer from the site visit that is undertaken as part of the processing of the application and there would always have been a duty to consult HSE. Unfortunately there is no evidence that the planning case officer had contacted the HSE from our files when HSE subsequently contacted the Planning Department. The planning officer who dealt with the case had left the Council some years before now.
- 4.5 The Council had granted planning permission for the development without taking into account a material planning consideration; the views of a statutory consultee, the HSE. This renders the permission vulnerable to challenge. This is explained in more detail below.

#### **5. SUBSEQUENT DISCUSSIONS**

- 5.1 Both HSE and National Grid raised concerns about the 2005 decision on 33-37 The Oval in Spring 2006 but were past the time-limit when they could challenge it in the courts.

- 5.2 Officers had a number of meetings with the HSE, National Grid and the developers to negotiate a way forward on 33-37 The Oval as clearly there are other residential buildings built many years ago within the HSE's new zones.
- 5.3 On 1 August 2006 the developer submitted a fresh planning application (PA/06/1393) for 33-37 The Oval for "demolition of existing building and redevelopment to provide a five storey building for use as 2 Class B1 (business) units on the ground floor with 14 flats above (6 one bedroom, 6 two bedroom and 2 three bedroom flats)". This was an amendment to the permitted scheme (PA/05/421) being a more efficient design, albeit essentially the same development.
- 5.4 The opportunity was taken by officers to negotiate improvements to the design to address the gasholder safety issue. It was possible to achieve an 18 metre separation distance, which was within the limits set out by National Grid. The HSE however, maintained their objection in principle as they wanted a minimum of separation 80 metres from the gasholders. On 16 November 2006, the Council's Strategic Development Committee resolved to grant planning permission for the amended scheme upon advice from officers balancing the risk with the need for housing. Where a Council is proposing to go against the advice of the HSE, they are required to give them the opportunity to ask the Secretary of State to call in the application for her own determination. The Secretary of State did call it in and the application was set to be examined at a public inquiry. The Developer withdrew the application, which meant the inquiry fell away.
- 5.5 The developer decided to implement the original 2005 planning permission (PA/05/421). As this permission is flawed in its processing because the HSE had not been consulted the Council as a responsible Local Planning Authority is obliged to consider whether it should take action by serving an Order to revoke the Planning Application. . Officers believe, that, based on the previous 'call in' on this site, it is very likely that if the Council does nothing, the HSE would seek to persuade the Secretary of State to require that the Council makes the Order although it is a power that is rarely exercised by the Secretary of State.
- 5.6 Although there are potentially three different types of Order that could be served: a revocation or modification order under section 97 of the Town & Country Act 1990 or a discontinuance order under section 102. Our advice from Counsel is that revocation order is most appropriate.
- 5.7 Where any such order comes into effect, compensation would be payable by the Council to the developer under the Act. The compensation would cover all cost and expense incurred in carrying out the building work which is rendered abortive. The Council would not acquire the land under a compensation order.
- 5.8 Before the Strategic Development Committee could take any decision to serve a revocation order Council as Local Planning Authority must decide whether it was expedient to do so and this is a decision that must be based on planning grounds only. The possibility of compensation is not material to that decision. As a separate matter Cabinet must consider the financial implications of such a decision taken by the Strategic Development committee.

- 5.9 The nature of the risk at the heart of HSE's objection is key to the Strategic Development Committee decision. In order to fully understand this, the Council commissioned independent advice from experts (Atkins Oil and Gas). This advice formed the basis of the report that was put to the Council's Strategic Development Committee on 8 November. The HSE, National Grid, Government Office for London (on behalf of the Secretary of State) and the developer were fully consulted on the report. The officer recommendation to Strategic Development Committee was that after considering the risks against the planning benefits that accrue from the development, it was not necessary to revoke the planning permission. However the HSE did not accept the conclusions of the report and maintain their position that no development should be built within the radius they have specified.
- 5.10 The Strategic Development Committee on 8 November 2007, did not support the officer's recommendation, but before they voted to serve a notice of revocation the Service Head Development Decisions asked the committee to defer any further consideration to enable officers to prepare more details on the alternative approaches.

## **6. WHAT ARE THE OPTIONS AVAILABLE TO THE COUNCIL?**

- 6.1 Whilst the HSE are concerned about the planning permission, their priority is to prevent the development from being implemented in accordance with their policy guidance. From the Council's point of view it is important to stop the developer spending further money by continuing to complete the development as this would increase the level of any possible compensation payable. The developer was well advanced with the site infrastructure and the structural frame towards the end of 2007 but agreed to stop building pending discussions with Corporate Property Services and the due diligence on the developers build costs to date.
- 6.2 Before looking at what options are available to the Council, it is necessary to understand 3 issues:
- What are the consequences of the developer stopping construction activity on site?
  - What is the possibility of removing the source of the risk: the above ground gas storage?
  - What uses could the land in question currently be put to (i.e. without the above ground gas storage being removed)?

### **Stopping activity on site**

- 6.3 The cessation of activity on site, although welcome, must be seen as temporary as the developer has ongoing debt financing costs and pre-sales agreements with purchasers.
- 6.4 Currently the land is blighted by the uncertainty. An obvious way forward is to remove the risk that is the source of HSE's concern – i.e. the gasholders – and thereby free up this site, and others, for development. This suggestion came from HSE as it is technically possible to store gas underground in pressured pipes and provided the

pressure does not exceed 15Bar, it is understood that the HSE/PADHI+ development constraints would largely be removed in response to this change in storage methodology however this solution would be a long-term project to regenerate this low grade industrial site which would very much improve the environment for residents in the area and result in a large number of new homes to support housing policy. It would require partnership with the National Grid and other public sector partners such as the new Homes and Communities Agency and would be a long term project of at least 10 years. However a pilot project could have national significance to improve amenity and provide housing nationwide.

- 6.5 The removal of the gas holders would create increased land values for a number of sites in the area and therefore could create the funding to finance an undergrounding project. Very early estimates suggest that the cost of undergrounding this gas storage facility would be around £10M. There is strong development interest in a number of sites around this installation, so there is good reason to be confident that a partnership package could be negotiated to secure delivery..
- 6.6 The larger extent of land potentially blighted by HSE's position is effectively a 200 metre zone around the gas holders within which they will "advise against" most residential development. Experience to date suggests that they will only press this position in the inner 80 metre zone. This inner zone comprises an area of land of some 2 hectares around the gasholder site. The gasholder site itself is about 2.25 hectares. If the gasholders were decommissioned and say about half of the gasholder site was then capable of development, the total land available could produce between 750 and 1400 dwellings, given the Public Transport Accessibility Level of the area (PTAL 5) and development plan density policies (i.e. between 240 and 435 dwellings per hectare). Given recent trends in development densities, this is likely to be at the upper end of this range or even exceed it. Accordingly the cost of facilitating this project (i.e. undergrounding the gasholders) represents just over £7,000 per dwelling on the basis of around 1,400 dwellings being brought forward.
- 6.7 As the undergrounding of the gasholders is clearly a longer term project that is likely to take a number of years to secure the current use of the land within the policy must be explored. The land in question could serve a number of purposes in the intervening period.
- 6.8 The HSE PADHI+ model does indicate that there are a range of development types and thresholds that under the notification system they will not routinely advise against. The criteria are detailed, but the following provides a reasonably comprehensive flavour of the range of developments that fall within this category and the reasons why the HSE would not object to them.

<b>Development Type</b>	<b>Threshold</b>	<b>Reason</b>
Indoor use by public (generally use classes A1, A2, A3, D1 & D2)	Development with less than 250 m2 total floor space	Minimal increase in numbers at risk
Workplaces - offices,	Workplaces	Places where the

factories, warehouses, haulage depots, farm buildings, non-retail markets, builder's yards (generally use classes B1, B2 & B8)	(predominantly non-retail), providing for less than 100 occupants in each building and less than 3 occupied storeys	occupants will be fit and healthy, and could be organised easily for emergency action. Members of the public will not be present or will be present in very small numbers and for a short time
Housing – Infill or backland development (use class C3)	Developments of 1 or 2 dwelling units	Minimal increase in numbers at risk
Smaller guest houses, hostels, youth hostels, holiday homes, halls of residence, dormitories, holiday caravan sites, camping sites (includes use class C1)	Accommodation of less than 10 beds or 3 caravan / tent pitches	Minimal increase in numbers at risk
Parking areas - car parks, truck parks, lock-up garages	Parking areas with no other associated facilities (other than toilets)	Minimal increase in numbers at risk

6.9 Therefore it would appear that the land in question could be used for the following purposes:

- A transport depot
- A store or maintenance yard
- A civic amenity site
- A car park

6.10 Detailed discussions would be needed with HSE to confirm that any particular use comes within the parameters outlined above and that they would not resist it through the planning system. However, if the land was acquired by the Council and used for purposes such as a depot its possible the Council could free more valuable sites for sale for housing to support the cost of the acquisition of the site.

6.11 There are essentially two options open to the Council when the matter goes back to Strategic Development Committee if they decide upon a revocation Order:

- (a) To allow the matter to continue through the statutory compensation route;
- or
- (b) To enter into an agreement with the developer to acquire the land

6.12 There are variations of detail with each option and these are dealt with below. It is important to point out that any decision to revoke the Planning Application is one for the Council as Local Planning Authority to make (i.e. Strategic Development Committee) on its planning merits alone. The financial implications for the Council are

not material in making a decision whether to revoke or not. However in Cabinet deciding whether to chose between (a) and (b) above the financial considerations are relevant

#### Revocation considerations

##### **Option A: Revocation**

- 6.13 It has to be noted that even if the Strategic Development Committee had accepted the recommendation not to take any action and allow the development to continue, that is unlikely to have been the end of the matter. The HSE's position is strongly held; that this development should not proceed. It is thought to be very likely that the HSE will approach the Secretary of State and ask her to consider using her powers to revoke the planning permission (almost identical powers to the Council's, however the Council would have to pay any compensation). The Secretary of State will choose whether to intervene or not, but if her own safety adviser was saying a situation was not safe, then she would have been under pressure to act. She did this when requested to call in PA/06/1393 by the HSE, so it is likely that she will do so again. She would probably order a public inquiry (along the lines of a planning inquiry) so that she could receive a report from a planning inspector to enable her to make a decision. The decision would have turned on the balance between the health and safety considerations (as advocated by the HSE) and the other material planning considerations, particularly the regeneration of the area and the provision of housing and jobs. This would mean significant delay and uncertainty for the developer and his purchasers.
- 6.14 It is difficult to speculate on the likely outcome of such an unusual inquiry. Clearly the planning inspector and the Secretary of State would be heavily influenced by the views of the government's safety adviser. However they would also have to consider all the other material planning considerations and balance them against the safety objection. It is likely that we would have the support of the GLA. They have publicly stated that they consider the HSE's position on these matters as too cautious and unjustified by the empirical evidence about risk. Whilst it is possible to see how such an inquiry could be won, the more likely outcome is that the Secretary of State would support the HSE.

#### Revocation and acquisition considerations

##### **Option B: acquiring the site from the developer by agreement**

- 6.15 Open book discussions between the developer and the Council have established the costs incurred by the developer to date (including land acquisition, finance charges and the like). These costs have been verified by Council appointed building surveyor experts in a due diligence exercise over the last 6 months. The developer will not enter into an agreement without selling the land. Contract Terms have been agreed on a without prejudice basis subject to the revocation order.
- 6.16 Such an acquisition will place LBTH in an unfettered position. In the short term the Council could use the land for a suitable use to release other more valuable sites. In the long term it would enable the Council to lead on a significant regeneration project

that could be a model nationwide to regenerate Gasholder sites and create additional housing.

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

- 7.1 The legal implications are set out in the report. Terms of an agreement conditional upon the revocation have been negotiated and agreed on a without prejudice basis with the developer subject to revocation in the event that Cabinet endorses option B.

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

- 8.1 The financial comments are dealt with in the exempt addendum report.

## **9. CONCLUSIONS**

- 9.1 Members are asked to consider in the event that Strategic Planning Committee decides to revoke the planning consent whether to allow the statutory compensation process to proceed option A or to agree to option B to enter into an agreement with the developer to acquire the site.

## **10. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 No specific issues are raised.

## **11. ANTI-POVERTY IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1 No specific issues are raised.

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

- 12.1 No specific issues are raised.

## **13. EFFICIENCY STATEMENT**

- 13.1 No specific issues are raised.

## **14. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

- 14.1 The report deals with risks to society from a hazardous installation and financial and reputational risks to the council.

## **APPENDICES**

- Appendix A Site Plan 33-37 The Oval & Bethnal Green Gasholder Site E3
- Exempt Confidential Appendix circulated in the confidential part of the agenda

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LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 (AS AMENDED) SECTION 100D

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
Nov 8 2007 Strategic Development Committee and Strategic Development Committee and Planning File for public inspection	Isabella Freeman 020 7364 4801





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# Agenda Item 8.1

Committee Overview & Scrutiny	Date 7th October 2008	Classification Unrestricted	Report No.	Agenda Item No. <b>8.1</b>
Report of Assistant Chief Executive  Originating Officer(s): John S Williams/Beverley McKenzie	Title <b>Members' Enquiries</b>  Wards affected: All			

## 1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Overview & Scrutiny Committee have been kept advised of progress on the Members' Enquiries Business Process Improvement (BPI) project. This report updates Members on further progress in taking forward the project and sets out current performance data in relation to Members' Enquiries.
- 1.2 Implementation of the BPI project activities began in May 2007 and a number of key milestones have been achieved. These include:
- The Members' Enquiries Guide – a detailed guide providing policy, protocol and best practice has been developed and distributed to all Members and Officers that are required to process Members Enquiries. This includes guidance on what should be raised as a Members Enquiry, standard policy and process for Members to raise enquiries and Officers to respond, standard format/template to initiate enquiries and expectations for quality monitoring.
  - The Members' Hotline has been piloted and will be moving forward to a full implementation for all Members to utilize for Streetline enquiries as of 7 October 2008.
  - Modifications have been made to the Siebel system to enhance the record keeping and reporting functions. Further modifications to report generation is anticipated in November 2008.
  - Information on the Members Intranet has been refreshed and Directorates are encouraged to utilize this method to provide additional information to all Members
  - Work has begun with the Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) to encourage their adherence to the Council's Members Enquiries Guide
  - Regular quality surveys are provided to Members to validate satisfaction with responses
  - A Members Enquiries Quality Forum has been established with representatives from Directorates to share best practice and improve communications between Members' Support and directorates
- 1.3 As many of the milestones in the original project have been achieved, to continue the focus on the process improvement, during the month of October, there will be a review conducted of the Members Enquiries processes to determine further activities that can

be carried out that would positively impact on the quality and timeliness of the responses to the Members.

- 1.4 In relation to response times, the performance target of 85% of enquiries responded to within 10 working days has been identified as a strategic performance indicator. The corporate results are reported to LAB/CMT on a bi-monthly basis and the specific performance of each directorate is shared amongst the CMT on a monthly basis.

## 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the Committee notes the current activities and progress made in the Members' Enquiries Business Process Improvement project.
- 2.2 That the improvement in timeliness of responding to Members' Enquiries is noted but that further work will be undertaken to ensure early achievement of the 85% performance target across all services.
- 2.3 That a further progress report and performance data be submitted in March 2009.

<b>LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT, 2000 (SECTION 97)</b> LIST OF "BACKGROUND PAPERS" USED IN THE DRAFTING OF THIS REPORT	
<b>Brief description of background papers:</b>  None	<b>Name and telephone number of holder and address where open to inspection:</b>

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Members' Enquiries are the formal requests for information from a Councillor and are logged onto the Siebel IT system and distributed to the relevant Directorate or external body for response. Raising an enquiry is one way in which Members can act for their ward constituents and provides a valuable opportunity for local issues to be brought to the attention of officers delivering services.
- 1.2 A BPI project for Members' Enquiries was initiated following concern amongst some Members regarding variable speed and quality of responses to enquiries. The aims of the project can be summarized as follows:
- To increase Members' satisfaction with responses;
  - To increase the proportion of enquiries answered within the target time; and
  - To reduce the amount of staff time spent dealing with enquiries
- 1.3 The project comprises delivery of an improvement action plan with three themes:
- (i) **Providing information to Members** through briefings, improvements to the intranet etc., to help reduce the number of enquiries raised.
  - (ii) **Improving the Quality of Responses** - including the development of Best Practice Guidance and implementation of quality monitoring at the Directorate level to ensure the quality of responses received are to the satisfaction of Members.
  - (iii) **Streamlining the end-to-end process** including the introduction of a Members' Hotline and improvements to the Siebel IT system and related processes to allow for quicker responses and improved tracking.

## 2. PROGRESS UPDATE

- 2.1 Implementation of the Improvement Action Plan began in May 2007 and regular activity has been taking place since then. While the project activities have been delivered and some improvements in both quality and speed of response have been secured, it is noted that overall performance is still falling short of the target of 85% of enquiries responded to within 10 working days.

### Quality Process

- 2.2 In terms of the quality of response to Members' Enquiries, officers are advised to respond in full in accordance with the required timescales. Where a complete response is not possible within the 10 working day deadline, officers are advised to send an interim response, to be followed by a full response as soon as possible. The target for responding to Members' Enquiries is also set out clearly in the Constitution (Member Officer Protocol – paragraph 10.5).

- 2.3 Regular meetings of the Directorates Members' Enquiries Officers have been held to share best practice and develop quality guidelines for processing Members Enquiries. This has resulted in the Members' Enquiries Guide which was implemented in June 2008. The document provides specific direction to Officers on the timeliness, format, accuracy and quality of the responses for Members Enquiries.
- 2.4 A meeting was held with the Tower Hamlets Housing Forum Executive on 24 September 2008 to raise the profile of Members' Enquiries and explain the position of the Council. Copies of the Members Enquiries Guide was distributed to those in attendance. It was agreed that a specific protocol for the RSLs, inline with the Council's guidance be developed. Further, RSLs indicated a willingness to cooperate with the Council in responding to Members Enquiries. The contacts for the RSLs will be refreshed and enquiries that are not responded to will be escalated within the RSL. The Executive highlighted a common problem of Members approaching them directly and requested that Members be encouraged to use Members' Support. It was also agreed that the RSLs would be provided with regular updates on open Members Enquiries; and that the performance results would be shared with the RSLs and with the Housing Corporation and Audit Commission to demonstrate partnership working.

### **Members' Hotline**

- 2.4 The Members' Hotline is a restricted telephone number into the Customer Contact Centre (CCC) for the exclusive use of Members. The calls receive a very high priority level, second only to race & hate crime reporting, and the Hotline therefore represents an opportunity for Members to obtain a quicker response than through the traditional Members' Enquiry process. All enquiries are tracked on the Siebel systems and reports are generated to reflect enquiries completed by the CCC, in addition to those processed by Members Support. Members will receive an automated e-mail advising them when the service requested has been completed.
- 2.5 The pilot of the Members' Hotline has been concluded and implementation of availability to all members will take place from 7<sup>th</sup> October 2008.
- 2.6 A phased approach has been taken to implementation with initially Street Services being the primary service supported by the Contact Centre.

### **Siebel upgrade**

- 2.7 The Members' Enquiries (ME) Process Improvement Support Team and Members Support staff have identified a number of enhancements to the Siebel IT system that are required to better support the processing of enquiries. The Siebel team has dedicated time to the enhancements and these were completed in April 2008.
- 2.8 Further enhancements to provide better management information reports and allow for more in-depth performance management are underway and it is expected that this will be available in November 2008. Tracking reports are now available to Members to support them in managing their casework.

### 3. PERFORMANCE DATA

- 3.1 Performance is monitored by the volume (by percentage) of enquiries completed within the target of 10 working days.
- 3.2 The figures from April to August 2008 indicate that there has been a gradual improvement in performance. However, further improvement is still required and it is expected that this will be achieved in the coming months as the impact of the actions outlined in this report are increasingly felt. The summary monthly performance figures for 2008/09 to August, the last month for which final figures are available at the time of writing, are set out below and the full analysis by directorate is attached at Appendix 1.

	<b>2008</b>			<b>2007</b>	
<b>Month</b>	<b>Closed</b>	<b>% within 10 WD</b>		<b>Closed</b>	<b>% within 10 WD</b>
April	557	64.09%		394	61.68%
May	424	60.85%		480	56.04%
June	509	69.16%		453	72.63%
July	597	74.37%		455	74.51%
August	509	68.17%		526	71.48%

### 4. CONFIDENTIALITY OF MEMBERS' ENQUIRIES

- 4.1 Confidentiality and trust is central to an effective Members' Enquiries process and the Council's Constitution includes a Member/Officer Protocol which sets out the key requirements in this regard.
- 4.2 This message has been reinforced in the guidance that has been distributed to ensure that responses to Members' Enquiries are timely and of high quality, but that answers should be sent only to the Member who made the enquiry and to anyone they have specifically asked to be copied in. Members Enquiries and/or responses should not be copied on to other Members for information at officers' instigation, but only at the enquiring Member's specific request.

### 5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Members' Enquiries system seeks to ensure that all local residents, including those who require advocacy or support from their elected representatives, have access to the Council's services and information. Improving the process is therefore key to ensuring equal access for all.

## **6. COMMENTS FROM THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER**

- 6.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations contained in this report.

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

- 7.1 There are no immediate legal implications relating to the recommendations contained in this report.

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

- 8.1 Many of the Members' enquiries relate to reports of environmental issues such as dumped rubbish or conditions of street and estates. The rapid resolution of these issues via the Members' Hotline will support the Council's Living Safely and Cleaner, Greener objectives. The movement of these enquiries to the Hotline will allow for more of a paper-free process, which is environmentally desirable.

## **9. ANTI POVERTY COMMENTS**

- 9.1 The Members' Enquiries system seeks to ensure that all local residents are provided advocacy or support from their elected Member to access Council services and information. Improving the process will support our anti-poverty activity.

## **10. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

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



### Members Enquiries - Performance by Directorate

	From		1 August 2008		To		31 August 2008		Average Days to Complete	MEs closed in period	% of all MEs				
	0-10 Working Days		11-20 Working Days		21-30 Working Days		31-40 Working Days					41-50 Working Days		51+ Working Days	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%				Number	%	Number	%
Adults Health & Wellbeing	33	94.29%	2	5.71%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	4	35	6.88%
Chief Executive	2	100.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	4	2	0.39%
Children's Services	18	100.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	5	18	3.54%
Comm, Localities & Culture	73	61.34%	24	20.17%	16	13.45%	5	4.20%	1	0.84%	0	0.00%	12	119	23.38%
Development & Renewal	14	58.33%	8	33.33%	1	4.17%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	1	4.17%	14	24	4.72%
Resources	9	75.00%	2	16.67%	1	8.33%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	8	12	2.36%
<b>Total - LBTH</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>70.95%</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>17.14%</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>8.57%</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2.38%</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0.48%</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0.48%</b>		<b>210</b>	<b>41.26%</b>
Metropolitan Police	1	25.00%	1	25.00%	2	50.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	18	4	0.79%
Other	2	50.00%	1	25.00%	1	25.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	11	4	0.79%
Registered Social Landlord	72	50.35%	28	19.58%	10	6.99%	8	5.59%	9	6.29%	16	11.19%	21	143	28.09%
Tower Hamlets Homes	123	83.11%	12	8.11%	9	6.08%	1	0.68%	2	1.35%	1	0.68%	8	148	29.08%
<b>Total - Non-Council</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>66.22%</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>14.05%</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>7.36%</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>3.01%</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>3.68%</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>5.69%</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>299</b>	<b>58.74%</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>347</b>	<b>68.17%</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>15.32%</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>7.86%</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>2.75%</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>2.36%</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>3.54%</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>509</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

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# Agenda Item 9.1

<b>Committee</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Classification</b>	<b>Report No.</b>	<b>Agenda Item No.</b>
Overview and Scrutiny Committee	7 October 2008	Unrestricted		9.1
<b>Report of:</b> Assistant Chief Executive		<b>Title:</b> Overview and Scrutiny Recommendation Tracking Report: Update		
<b>Originating Officer(s):</b> Hannah Bailey, Scrutiny & Equalities Support Officer		<b>Ward(s) affected: All</b>		

## 1. Summary

- 1.1 This report provides a progress report on Overview and Scrutiny Committee's recommendations.

## 2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to note the progress in implementing its recommendations.

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

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

Background paper

Name and telephone number of and address where open to inspection

Recommendation Tracking Report – March 2008

### 3 Report

- 3.1 As part of its regular work programme, Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) receives a regular, 6-monthly, recommendation tracking report to monitor progress in implementing past recommendations. This report had been monitoring all its recommendations since 2003/04, including those from the Committee and Working Group reviews, however as many of these have now been completed and are no longer monitored.
- 3.2 In considering the monitoring and tracking of scrutiny recommendations it was suggested that it may be useful for Members to consider revisiting a review to look at progress, its impact and the potential lessons for future reviews.
- 3.3 In November 2007, it was reported that the Scrutiny Lead Member for Learning Achievement and Leisure would revisit the Scrutiny Review on the Youth Services Plan. The Challenge Session took place on 11<sup>th</sup> December 2007. The action plan of recommendations arising from this session and update is attached at appendix 8 for Members' consideration.
- 3.4 Similarly, a Health Scrutiny Challenge Session with the PCT on the access to GP and dentistry services review was held at the Barkantine Centre in February of this year. Productive discussions were held with the PCT and a number of local GPs about the implementation of the recommendations to date. A further update on this progress is attached at appendix 11. It is also planned to hold a Challenge Session to examine the progress of the smoking cessation review later on in the municipal year.
- 3.5 The tracking report shows that overall services are implementing the majority of the recommendations made by Overview and Scrutiny. This takes a number of forms from being mainstreamed into ongoing service development through to specific initiatives.
- 3.6 Appendix 1 provides an update of the tracking system. It is organised by the broad themes from the new Community Plan with the additional area of Excellent Public Services to focus on Value for Money, performance and customer services. Where there are changes since the last update, they are highlighted like **this**.
- 3.7 As noted in the report of 4<sup>th</sup> March 2008 meeting, many of the updates will not change significantly from one tracking report to the next given the nature of the recommendations. For each recommendation there is an indication of whether monitoring should continue and, if so, when a detailed update will be sought.
- 3.8 Appendix 1 summarises the progress made in implementing the recommendations arising from the reviews. This summary highlights some of the challenges faced in implementing the recommendations. Agreed recommendations can be affected by issues such as delays with the tendering process, as highlighted in both appendix 2 (improving recycling) and appendix 12 (tobacco and smoking cessation. Further to this, the update attached at appendix 6 (determination of planning applications) demonstrates that the Council has no power to compel external bodies (with the exception of the PCT) to comply with scrutiny recommendations.
- 3.9 A number of the reviews are now monitored on an annual basis and were last considered at the March 2008 meeting. A further update on these reviews will therefore be submitted to the March 2009 OSC meeting.

- 3.10 As with other corporate monitoring reports, a traffic light system is used to indicate progress. Red highlights an area where there has been no progress or there is significant delay in implementing the recommendations. Yellow indicates that the recommendation is in the planning stage or that, although there is some progress, this is less than satisfactory. Green shows that the recommendation has been achieved or progress in its implementation is satisfactory.
- 3.11 The report shows that in terms of the 14 issues monitored, 8 are at green with 6 currently at yellow, due to these reviews being in the early stages of implementation. Furthermore, in undertaking the tracking at this stage we are able to identify that with many of the recent reviews the Cabinet has responded positively to all the recommendations by agreeing to implement the recommendations from the scrutiny review. The next monitoring report in March 2009 will incorporate all the action plans from those reviews undertaken in 2007/08.

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

- 4.1 Under Section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000, the Council has a duty to deliver an effective and robust Overview and Scrutiny function. Monitoring the progress and impact of recommendations made by Overview and Scrutiny ensures that this duty is discharged effectively.

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

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

#### **6 Anti Poverty and Equal Opportunity Implications**

- 6.1 Equalities considerations are central to the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. A number of reports and reviews have specific equalities themes including the interpreting and translation challenge session, which sought to respond to the issue of local and new residents' access to services, as well as those with sensory impairments.
- 6.2 Anti-poverty is key to many aspects of the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. This theme is reflected in both the graduate unemployment review and the access to GP and dentistry services review, which sought to respond to local health inequalities through the issue of local residents' access to vital services.

#### **7 Risk Management**

- 7.1 There are no direct risk management implications arising from this report. Monitoring of the implementation of the Committee's recommendations is important to make sure that the Council responds to the suggestions and findings of Overview and Scrutiny's work.

- Appendix 1 Overview and Scrutiny Recommendation Tracking Update
- Appendix 2 Improving Recycling
- Appendix 3 Leaseholders – A Study of Customer Care
- Appendix 4 Tower Hamlets Hostel Strategy
- Appendix 5 Copy of response from DWP (recommendation 5 of the Hostel Strategy)
- Appendix 6 Determination of Major Planning Applications
- Appendix 7 Graduate Unemployment
- Appendix 8 Youth Service Plan – Challenge Session
- Appendix 9 The role of Ward Councillors in the Tower Hamlets Partnership
- Appendix 10 Interpreting and Translation Services – Challenge Session
- Appendix 11 Access to GP and Dentistry Services – Challenge Session
- Appendix 12 Tobacco and Smoking Cessation
- Appendix 13 The Use of Consultants

## Overview and Scrutiny Recommendation Tracking Update

## 'A great place to live'

<b>Issue</b> Improving Recycling	<b>Recommendation Date</b> 7 November 2007	Yellow
<b>Monitoring Status</b> – Maintain six-monthly monitoring		
<b>Recommendation</b> This review examined the issue of recycling to investigate the measures the Council has introduced and may introduce in the future and feed into the introduction of a new integrated waste contract in 2008. The final report made 11 recommendations for implementation.	<b>Response / Progress</b> Whilst progress has been made against the 11 recommendations arising from the review, some actions have not been fully implemented due to delays in the tender process for the new recycling contract. The update is attached at appendix 2 for Members' information.	

<b>Issue</b> Leaseholders – A Study of Customer Care	<b>Recommendation Date</b> 3 October 2007	Green
<b>Monitoring Status</b> – Maintain six-monthly monitoring		
<b>Recommendation</b> This recent review was designed as a case study of the customer care received by people using Council services. In total 19 recommendations were made as a result, with 15 of these specifically for the leaseholder.	<b>Response / Progress</b> Of the 19 recommendations made by the review group, all are either implemented or on track to be completed within the timescales. The update is attached at appendix 3.	

## 'A safe and supportive community'

<b>Issue</b> Tower Hamlets Hostels and Move On Strategy	<b>Recommendation Date</b> 7 November 2007	Green
<b>Monitoring Status</b> – Maintain six-monthly monitoring		
<b>Recommendation</b> This review was conducted in order to review the draft Tower Hamlets Hostels and Move-On Strategy. Twelve recommendations in total were presented to Cabinet arising out of the review.	<b>Response / Progress</b> Of the 12 recommendations made, 9 have now been implemented and completed as shown in appendix 4. Three are partially completed but remain on track. In terms of recommendation 5, a response from the Department for Work and Pensions is attached at appendix 5 for Members information.	

<b>Issue</b> Review – Domestic Violence	<b>Recommendation Date</b> 4 April 2006	green
<b>Monitoring Status</b> – Maintain annual monitoring		
<b>Recommendation</b> This review considered domestic violence in Tower Hamlets and the multi-agency response to the issue. The report made 12 recommendations for action.	<b>Response / Progress</b> A full update on implementation of the recommendations was provided in March 2008. All the recommendations have been completed. A further update will be provided in March 2009.	

### ‘A prosperous community’

<b>Issue</b> The Determination of Major Planning Applications	<b>Recommendation Date</b> 8 <sup>th</sup> January 2008	Yellow
<b>Monitoring Status</b> – Maintain six-monthly monitoring		
<b>Recommendation</b> This recent Challenge Session examined how the Council determines major planning applications, with a particular focus on new arrangements to increase public consultation around the pre-application planning process. The session resulted in 7 recommendations.	<b>Response / Progress</b> Progress has been made against all 7 recommendations following the Challenge Session in late 2007, as detailed in appendix 6. It should be noted that recommendations 2 and 3 have met with resistance from applicants and officers have been unable to compel all applicants to conform.	

<b>Issue</b> Graduate Unemployment	<b>Recommendation Date</b> 5 December 2007	Green
<b>Monitoring Status</b> – Maintain six-monthly monitoring		
<b>Recommendation</b> This recent review examined the issue of the transition from education to employment amongst young people in the borough. Seven resulting recommendations were presented to Cabinet.	<b>Response / Progress</b> The action plan arising from the review was submitted to the OSC meeting in March 2008. An appendix showing progress made against the recommendations is attached at appendix 7. Progress has been made against all seven recommendations, with the exception of recommendation 1, for which no further funding has been identified.	

<b>Issue</b> Revisiting the Scrutiny Review of the Youth Service Plan	<b>Recommendation Date</b> 4 March 2008	Yellow
<b>Monitoring Status</b> – Maintain six-monthly monitoring		
<b>Recommendation</b> This Challenge Session revisited the	<b>Response / Progress</b> The action plan and update from this recently held	



Scrutiny Review of Youth Services that was conducted in 2005. 8 new recommendations were made as a result of the session.	challenge session is attached at appendix 8. Progress has been made against all 8 recommendations, however work is being undertaken and further progress is expected, as detailed in the appendix 8.
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<b>Issue</b> School Exclusions	<b>Recommendation Date</b> 4 April 2006	<b>Green</b>
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**Monitoring Status** – Maintain annual monitoring

<b>Recommendation</b> This review looked at school exclusions within the borough to increase understanding of the issues, the support available and action being taken to deal with them. It made 10 recommendations to Cabinet.	<b>Response / Progress</b> An update report showing progress on the implementation of the recommendations was submitted to the March 2008 meeting. A further update will be submitted in March 2009.
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### ‘One Tower Hamlets’

<b>Issue</b> The role of Ward Councillors in the Tower Hamlets Partnership	<b>Recommendation Date</b> 7 February 2006	<b>Green</b>
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**Monitoring Status** – No further monitoring

<b>Recommendation</b> This review was conducted in 2005/06 and considered the role of councillors in the Partnership. It resulted in a report with 11 recommendations for action.	<b>Response / Progress</b> All 11 recommendations have been implemented, as reported in March 2008. It was proposed at that time that no further monitoring take place, however this update has been provided due to the recent refresh of the Partnership’s governance structures.
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<b>Issue</b> Interpreting and Translation Provision Challenge Session	<b>Recommendation Date</b> 10 June 2008	<b>Yellow</b>
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**Monitoring Status** – Maintain six-monthly monitoring

<b>Recommendation</b> This Challenge Session was held to examine current interpreting and translation provision within the Council in the light of publication of the DCLG report ‘Guidance for Local Authorities on translation of publications’. 7 recommendations were made as a result of the session which was also attended by a number of representatives from partner organisations.	<b>Response / Progress</b> The action plan and update from this recently held Challenge Session is attached at appendix 10. There has been progress made against most of the 9 recommendations, however the yellow traffic light status denotes that some of this work is in the early stages and there is further progress needed, as detailed in the appendix.
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## 'A healthy community'

<b>Issue</b> Access to GP and Dentistry Services	<b>Recommendation Date</b> 5 December 2007	Green
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**Monitoring Status** – Maintain six-monthly monitoring

<b>Recommendation</b> This review was conducted by the Health Scrutiny Panel and examined what level of access residents in the borough have to GP and dentistry services. Consequently 11 recommendations were made to the PCT.	<b>Response / Progress</b> Of the 11 recommendations made from the challenge session, all are either implemented or on track to be completed within the timescale. The update is attached at appendix 11.
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<b>Issue</b> Tobacco Cessation in Tower Hamlets	<b>Recommendation Date</b> 30 July 2008	Yellow
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**Monitoring Status** – Maintain six-monthly monitoring

<b>Recommendation</b> This review was conducted by the Health Scrutiny Panel and examined the provision and impact of tobacco cessation services in Tower Hamlets. A total of 9 recommendations arose from the review, for both the PCT and LBTH.	<b>Response / Progress</b> An update on progress made against the recommendations is attached at appendix 12. Progress has been made with all recommendations however there has been some slippage with recommendation 9 due to delays in the tendering process.
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<b>Issue</b> Delivering Choosing Health: A Case Study of Obesity	<b>Recommendation Date</b> 26 September 2006	Green
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**Monitoring Status** – Maintain annual monitoring

<b>Recommendation</b> This review considered the Government's Delivering Choosing Health initiative through a case study of services and initiatives aimed at tackling obesity. It made 12 recommendations to the Council and Tower Hamlets PCT.	<b>Response / Progress</b> An update was submitted in March 2008 charting the progress made in implementing the recommendations. A further update will be made in March 2009.
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## 'Excellent public services'

<b>Issue</b> The use of consultants	<b>Recommendation Date</b> 30 July 2008	Yellow
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**Monitoring Status** – Maintain six-monthly monitoring

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Response / Progress</b>
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This review was established in order to investigate the use of consultants internally within the Council, leading to 7 recommendations being made.

This review was recently approved by Cabinet and is in the early stages of implementation. However there has been progress against 5 of the 7 recommendations as shown in appendix 13.



## Response to Scrutiny Working Group Report on Improving Recycling

Recommendation	Response / Comments	Date	Update – October 2008
<p>R1 The review commends the work being undertaken with the private sector to reduce the amount of waste entering the municipal waste stream. Increasing recycling of market waste must be a priority, including food waste.</p>	<p>Waste recycling of the same materials covered by the household co-mingled re-cycling service has been available since April 2007 to all trade waste customers. The Veolia sales-force promote recycling on every visit. Trade recycling costs the same as residual waste but there is an advantage to smaller customers as there is no minimum quantity for a recycling sacks contract.</p> <p>Commence full co-mingled recycling collection pilot Whitechapel Market</p> <p>Evaluate pilot and produce roll out strategy for other markets</p> <p>Evaluate food waste collection in markets post tender of food waste lot in integrated re-cycling procurement</p>	<p>Oct 2007</p> <p>Jan 2008</p> <p>April 2008</p>	<p>Due to the delay in the tender process for the new recycling contract the implementation of these actions has been delayed also. Progress to date:</p> <p>Whitechapel Market is now a 100% recycling market with both co-mingled dry recycling and organic (food) waste recycling collections in place. The launch event was held on 5<sup>th</sup> August which received extensive media coverage.</p> <p>Waste Management and Market Services are currently developing a programme to facilitate the roll out of the Whitechapel pilot to all other markets.</p>
<p>R2 The Group welcomes the planned work to increase</p>	<p>Engage temporary outreach staff to implement the programme of bringing recycling to</p>	<p>August 2007</p>	

Recommendation	Response / Comments	Date	Update – October 2008
<p>recycling within hospitals, and other institutions, and suggests that the Tower Hamlets Partnership is a good channel to deliver these changes through. All efforts should be made to ensure that the necessary funding is secured for the expansion of the service to take place. The Group would also suggest that all Council buildings, including the Idea Stores and leisure centres are doing their best to minimise waste.</p>	<p>hospitals, charities and other institutions eligible for free of charge recycling.</p> <p>Engage Tower Hamlets Partnership to assist with the programme.</p> <p>Negotiate and provide service to Mild May, Mile End and the Dental Hospitals</p> <p>Contact and offer service to 35 new organisations a month</p> <p>Complete roll out of co-mingled recycling service to remaining administrative buildings and Idea Stores</p> <p>Install co-mingled recycling in all Leisure Centres</p> <p>York Hall, Mile End Leisure Centre, Mile End Stadium, St Gerorge's Pool, Tiller Leisure Centre, Whitechapel, John Orwell.</p> <p>Langdon Park</p> <p>Implement waste minimisation plan developed by London Remade Anchorage House and Mulberry Place</p>	<p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>On-going</p> <p>Dec 2007</p> <p>August 2007</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Dec 2007</p> <p>Oct 2007</p>	

Recommendation	Response / Comments	Date	Update – October 2008
<p>R3 Whilst the group understands the importance of recycling plastic in order to achieve targets, there is concern about the pollution of China with these recycled plastics and the wider issue of excessive packaging. The review group would therefore support the Local Government Association's calls for tougher laws and serious fines for excessive packaging. At a local level, the group would like to raise the awareness of this issue locally, including the merits of buying products in alternative containers and recycling their plastic bags. It is suggested that this should be pursued through the Tower Hamlets Partnership.</p>	<p>Include requirement in the specification for the new integrated re-cycling contract requiring contractors bidding for the Materials Re-cycling Facility (MRF) element of the contract to make efforts to use domestic markets wherever possible.</p> <p>Incorporate criteria in tender evaluation</p> <p>Support London Councils proposals for a ban or levy on 'throw out' shopping bags for inclusion in the proposed 10<sup>th</sup> London Local Authorities Bill</p> <p>Respond to consultation</p> <p>Bill deposited</p> <p>Tesco, Waitrose, ASDA, Sainsbury and Sommerfield have all signed up to Governments Voluntary Code of Practice on Carrier Bags in Feb 07 and are running a variety of schemes in the borough.</p> <p>Include packaging and e.g. 'Bag for Life' schemes as an issue in campaigns and activities</p>	<p>Sep 2007</p> <p>Sep 2007</p> <p>Oct 2007</p> <p>Nov 2007</p> <p>On-going</p>	<p>Whilst every effort was made on the tender of the new recycling contract to achieve local markets for the reprocessing of the dry recycle, it has had to be accepted that for some materials there is not sufficient reprocessing capacity in this country to deal with the quantity of materials now being collected.</p> <p>The ban on throw out shopping bags has not yet been implemented in London however, many supermarket chains are now withdrawing these in favour of "bags for life".</p>

Recommendation	Response / Comments	Date	Update – October 2008
<p>R4 A key concern for the review is the current state of the bring sites. More work needs to be done to make sure that these sites are well managed and are a more attractive part of the local landscape. Improvements would need to include making the sites more attractive, that they are emptied more frequently and that they are in the best location. Improvements should also be made to the signage of the bring sites.</p>	<p>Complete upgrade of all 54 on street bring sites to co-mingled 1280 litre containers. Ensure recycling message is displayed clearly on bins.</p> <p>Increase street cleaning around sites</p> <p>Increase frequency all sites are emptied to twice weekly</p> <p>Facilitate new public recycling point at Virginia Quay (opposite Budgens) via Section 106 agreement with Barratt Homes</p> <p>Install new textile recycling banks in partnership with SCOPE at Kelsey Street/Chester Street, Old Bethnal Green Road/Canrobert Street and Cephas</p> <p>Assess all additional sites and pass information to SCOPE</p>	<p>Sept 2007 Complete</p> <p>Sept 2007 Complete</p> <p>Oct 2007</p> <p>Nov 2007</p> <p>Aug 2007 Complete</p> <p>Dec 2007</p>	<p>Whilst many actions in relation to the bring bank improvement programme have taken place there are some items still outstanding.</p> <p>Cleaning around sites has improved and collections are now twice weekly.</p> <p>A mini recycling site is now in place for Virginia Quay.</p>



Recommendation	Response / Comments	Date	Update – October 2008
	<p>Install new media recycling banks in partnership with SCOPE at Northumberland Wharf, ASDA on the Isle of Dogs, Sainsbury's Whitechapel and Tesco's Bromley by Bow</p> <p>Commuter re-cycling scheme at Bethnal Green and Tower Hill Tube stations</p>	<p>June 2007 Complete</p> <p>Oct 2007</p>	<p>The commuter recycling scheme is being rolled out across the borough and includes facilities in Parks as well as at Transport hubs</p>
<p>R5 Whilst the review commends the service offered at Northumberland Wharf reuse and recycle centre, it also notes that it is only accessible by car, which excludes the majority of Tower Hamlets residents. The group would therefore like to see the introduction of smaller collection points across the borough to compliment some of the services offered at Northumberland Wharf.</p>	<p>Despite feasibility studies there is no site in Tower Hamlets which has been identified as suitable for licensing for the transfer of waste. The implications of a "mini-tip" anywhere other than Northumberland Wharf are: traffic movements, both domestic and lorries, potential noise, dust dirt and odours and cost. Include options for additional facilities in strategic review of waste disposal options</p> <p>Review arrangements for collection and disposal of bulky waste</p>	<p>Jan 2008</p> <p>Jan 2008</p>	<p>The Council is currently reviewing the Municipal Waste Strategy which will encompass a review of all services. A draft report on the strategy is expected in December 2008</p> <p>Whilst the collection arrangements for bulk waste remain the same, the Council's contractor Veolia are now separating additional bulk waste for</p>

Recommendation	Response / Comments	Date	Update – October 2008
<p>R6 An area of grave concern for the group is the lack of appropriate recycling facilities and access to facilities in new housing developments. The group understands that planning is able to penalise developers via a breach of condition notice. It therefore recommends that there should be a more joined up approach, between the recycling team and planning to monitor new developments and enforce action. The working group expresses concern that the Council does not have the resources to check new housing developments for breach of contract (including for recycling facilities) and sign them off as compliant, especially with the large number of developments</p>	<p>Review and implement process for joint working and enforcement.</p> <p>Conditions are attached to planning permissions requiring the provision and approval of appropriate waste and recycling facilities prior to the occupation or completion of the development. At both the pre-application and formal application stages Waste Management officers give guidance on the plans for waste and recycling facilities proposed This includes access for collection vehicles, capacity of containers and maintenance of the bins and stores.</p> <p>Once either a certificate of occupation or a final completion certificate arrives at the Council a Waste Management officer visits the premises to ensure that</p>	<p>August 2007 Complete</p>	<p>recycling. Tonnages have doubled since this new activity was introduced in July 2008</p>

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<p>under construction. Additional resources need to be considered to make sure that enforcement is given greater priority. This is vital in safeguarding the quality of the borough's environment.</p>	<p>accessible bins for recycling and residual rubbish are in place, of adequate capacity and kept clean and tidy. If facilities are found to be in breach of the planning conditions the Recycling Officer immediately refers the case to a Planning Officer for appropriate enforcement action.</p>		
<p>R7 This review recognises the decision for the new contract to cease door to door collections in high rise accommodation, based on the increased value for money of the near entry approach, and suggests the following provisos:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i a wide range of consultation is undertaken to ensure that the majority of high rise residents are supportive of adopting the near entry approach.</li> <li>ii If the consultation is positive and the near entry approach is adopted that effective communication is undertaken to</li> </ul>	<p>Detailed inventory and assessment of recycling facilities high rise stock including assessment of compliance with London Fire Brigade guidance in respect of Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order in October 2006 (funded by ROTATE and conducted by SNU and London Remade)</p> <p>One third of stock (c.700 blocks)</p> <p>Complete Phase 1 consultation and conversion</p> <p>Complete Phase 2 inventory, consultation and conversion</p>	<p>Sep 2007 Complete</p> <p>March 2008</p> <p>March 2009</p>	<p>The conversion of door step collections to communal collections is still ongoing in line with the requirements of the London Fire Brigade.</p> <p>To date more than 1/3 of the high rise properties in the borough have been converted with the remaining properties due to be completed by March 2009.</p> <p>This conversion process is undertaken with</p>

Recommendation	Response / Comments	Date	Update – October 2008
<p>explain why it has been introduced and the benefits of the changes</p> <p>iii That this change must not make it harder for people living in high rise accommodation to recycle, with particular emphasis on how the recycling is moved from the home to the communal facility.</p>			<p>consultation with the management companies, landlords and residents</p>
<p>R8 The review group would expect the new contractor to use the results of recent waste analysis to help develop a service based on the recycling needs particular to Tower Hamlets. The Review would therefore welcome the re-investigation of the option to introduce food waste recycling. Whilst the group is aware that the majority of London Authorities providing this service only do so for street level properties, the review would welcome an innovative approach as to how food waste</p>	<p>Include separate food waste 'lot' for street based properties in tender for integrated recycling contract to assess affordability</p> <p>Evaluate potential for high rise food waste service with recycling contractor</p>	<p>Sept 2007</p> <p>Oct 2008</p>	<p>Food waste collections for all street properties commenced on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2008. The new service has also included a pilot for 7,000 high rise properties.</p> <p>A further roll out to high rise properties is dependent on further funding being secured.</p>

Recommendation	Response / Comments	Date	Update – October 2008
<p>recycling could be rolled out to all properties.</p>			
<p>R9 The review would encourage the contract proposal to make reference to the recent national policy guidance on recycling and regional London-wide changes that might be introduced. Based on the evidence of this review, the group would welcome any changes that would stream line the approach to recycling and develop a more co-ordinated approach to waste minimisation across the capital, including the proposed London Single Waste Authority.</p>	<p>Although there have been proposals for a single waste authority by the GLA this has not progressed. The government is considering legislation to allow waste authorities to enter into voluntary consortia and this will be considered as part of the strategic review of waste disposal options. In the meantime officers will continue to work closely with other London boroughs to share best practise and resources wherever possible.</p>	<p>ongoing</p>	<p>With the change of Mayor of London it is unlikely that in the foreseeable future there will be a single waste authority for London.</p> <p>Tower Hamlets is currently reviewing and revising the Waste Strategy which will evaluate the opportunities to join together with other waste authorities. As above a draft report is anticipated in December 2008</p>
<p>R10 The group would support increasing publicity around recycling, particularly around what happens to the recycling when it is picked up. The group commends the new pamphlet explaining recycling in a range of community languages but would propose that other</p>	<p>Tender for comprehensive “door stepping” awareness raising campaign of all properties in the borough, canvassers to include Sylheti and Somali speakers. (WRAP funded) Contractor appointed  Phase 1 Door stepping 21,234 low rise properties completed</p>	<p>May 2007 - Completed  Aug 2007 Completed</p>	

Recommendation	Response / Comments	Date	Update – October 2008
<p>methods of communication are also utilised using a range of media. The Recycling team should have a presence at the boroughs wide range of festivals and community events to provide information and recycling facilities to residents. A regular page or column in East End Life, highlighting some of the more innovative approaches to recycling should also be considered. An estate recycling road show may be another option.</p>	<p>Revisit non contact properties completed Re run participation survey (baseline March 2007) and evaluate</p> <p>Phase 2 High Rise properties completed Evaluation</p> <p>Recycling facilities to be available at all major events in the Borough. ( 9 major festivals serviced in summer period)</p> <p>Continuing programme of publicity including Ease End Life, EID and Christmas campaigns</p> <p>Muslim Women's Environmental Collective established in partnership with the LSP programme includes:</p> <p>Befriending scheme targeting 80 families and monitoring behaviour change regarding recycling and sustainable living.</p> <p>Community outreach activities involving community radio and an address to 400 women on the purpose of the collective and sustainable living.</p>	<p>Sep 2007</p> <p>Oct 2007</p> <p>Feb 2008</p> <p>Mach 2008</p> <p>On-going</p> <p>On-going</p> <p>Jan 2008</p>	<p>Recycling facilities are now in place for all major events in the borough</p> <p>A major recycling communications campaign is due to launch on 7<sup>th</sup> October, to follow up on the new recycling services that the Council has implemented (food and garden waste collections)</p> <p>The Council will be implementing a Recycling Champions scheme, after the launch. The recycling champions will help with the dissemination of information to residents.</p>

Recommendation	Response / Comments	Date	Update – October 2008
	<p>The Waste Education Project has a series of films and publications encouraging recycling and waste minimisation widely available.</p> <p>Waste Education pack distributed to all schools</p> <p>All major RSLs include recycling booklet in new tenant packs</p>	<p>Oct 2007</p> <p>Sept Completed</p> <p>On-going</p>	<p>A new schools recycling programme is being launched September 2008 which will concentrate on food waste recycling</p>
<p>R11 Schemes such as the community composting should be rolled out to all residents living in high rise accommodation, as well as schools. The Council should look at further ways to incentivise residents to recycle.</p>	<p>Roll out community composting : Scheme is very labour intensive and not suitable for all high-rise blocks. It requires enthusiastic co-ordinators living at each block where a scheme is introduced. Schemes have already been implemented at: Mullet Gardens, Evelyn House, Cinnabar Wharf and Spelman Street, (Spitalfields HA)</p> <p>Matilda House</p> <p>Jubilee Crescent</p> <p>Develop financial incentive scheme for consideration by Members. (Subject to outcome of central government</p>	<p>June 2007 Completed</p> <p>Sept 2007 Completed</p>	<p>Despite the fact that the Council has implemented the food waste collection service, Tower Hamlets is continuing to promote home and community composting as the two services are complementary as cooked food waste is often not suitable for community or home composting but is collected as part of the food waste recycling service.</p>

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	consultation and necessary legislation).		



Response to Scrutiny Working Group Report on Leaseholders and Customer Care

Recommendation	Response / Comments	Date	Update – October 2008
<p>R1 Housing should explore the potential merit of establishing a new borough-wide leaseholder’s forum. The Working Group would suggest that any new forum should see a balanced range of representation including: Council officers, Councillors, Leaseholder Representative Bodies. Functions of this forum might include; interalia,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• User test service charges</li> <li>• User test all future communications</li> <li>• Measure performance against an agreed set of performance indicators.</li> <li>• Review all communications with leaseholders in an effort to reduce the number of complaints and minimise the number of leaseholders withholding payment. This would include more detailed</li> </ul>	<p>The housing service will investigate the potential merit of establishing a new borough-wide leaseholders forum. In doing this the service will look at the role of existing mechanisms for consulting with tenants and leaseholders and look at those issues which are common to both tenants and leaseholders eg performance standards and monitoring, and those which are specific to leaseholders eg service charges, leaseholder communications etc.</p> <p>Existing mechanisms which will be considered in the review include the role of the leaseholders sub-group of the Borough-wide Compact Group as well as the Resident Involvement Register where recent workshops have been held with tenants and leaseholders on resident involvement and estate management, including standards.</p> <p>The review will also take into account the proposed establishment of Tower Hamlets Homes and the arrangements for leaseholder and Councillor board members as well as the current review of the Tenant Compact.</p> <p>It is proposed that a specific leaseholder workshop</p>	<p>December 2008</p>	<p>Proposals for the future THH resident involvement structure have been developed in consultation with the resident group set up to consider resident involvement. In addition a number of focus groups have been held with leaseholders on specific issues including communications, service charges and performance.</p> <p>The proposals for the future THH resident involvement structure set out a range of options including an option for a boroughwide leaseholder forum reporting to an overarching resident panel. Consultation on the options is currently being carried out through a survey of residents on the Getting Involved Register which is scheduled to complete in</p>

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Response / Comments</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Update – October 2008</b>
<p>explanation of service charges including the differences and reasons for estimated and actual bills and why leaseholders in the same block may be paying different levels of charge</p>	<p>of the resident involvement register is held to discuss current arrangements for leaseholder consultation and develop proposals for consideration.</p> <p>The issues to be discussed will include service charges, communications and performance indicators, however it will also be important to ensure that those issues that equally affect both tenants and leaseholders are also addressed.</p>		<p>September.</p> <p>When finalising the proposals for future resident involvement structures all feedback will be taken into account.</p>
<p>R2 Housing should deliver greater transparency on the deliberations and decisions of Due Regard Panels (for Major Works) including giving leaseholder representatives an opportunity to present their case against works to the panel, providing feedback to local leaseholders on the outcomes and reasons for its decisions.</p>	<p>The Due Regard Panels are an innovative area of leaseholder engagement in major works schemes, creating a forum where leaseholders views or concerns on any major works proposal can be considered.</p> <p>This area of work can be developed further and the proposals made will be addressed as part of this process.</p> <p>Increased transparency will be provided by setting out further information regarding the due regard panels, incorporating circumstances in which they will be held, arrangements for making representations and feedback mechanisms to leaseholders.</p>	<p>September 2007</p>	<p>The procedure in respect of the Due Regard Panel has been amended and further information regarding the panels has been provided.</p>

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Response / Comments</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Update – October 2008</b>
<p>R3 Housing should implement a key lessee system, seeking maximum estate coverage, similar to the one delivered by City West Homes.</p>	<p>The housing service is keen to explore further ways of engaging leaseholders in all aspects of the service.</p> <p>We will explore this potential initiative further with City West Homes in order to gain a better understanding of how the key lessee system operates, the resources needed to service and support this, and its effectiveness.</p> <p>The housing service will also explore the extent to which this initiative can be linked to current leaseholder involvement through the Resident Involvement Register.</p> <p>It is intended to develop recommendations for action by November 2007.</p>	<p>December 2008</p>	<p>We have explored this initiative with City West Homes.</p> <p>Relevant aspects of the City West key lessee scheme have been built into our proposals for service charges and estate inspections as well as leaseholder consultation.</p>
<p>R4 The key elements of service provision at a local level, such as cleaning, need to be subject to greater independent quality review and that the involvement of leaseholders in estate inspections needs to be enhanced. The Working Group believes the key lessee system would support this.</p>	<p>The current process of estate inspections is currently being reviewed to increase effectiveness and improve resident involvement. This includes looking at who attends estate inspections, what is looked at as part of estate inspections, what services are involved and how feedback is provided. This recommendation will be incorporated as part of this work.</p> <p>Resident Involvement in Estate Inspections is now monitored through the LHO performance returns.</p>	<p>October 2008</p>	<p>A caretaking residents panel has been established and this panel has agreed new caretaking service standards and response times which are now being implemented.</p> <p>The Caretaking Residents panel has also identified a resident monitoring panel</p>

Recommendation	Response / Comments	Date	Update – October 2008
<p>R5 Housing should conduct a review of its leaseholder communications, and guidance pack with a view to increasing accessibility and penetration of leaseholders.</p>	<p>The resident involvement register workshop recently considered this area and made a number of proposals for enhancing estate inspections which will also be incorporated.</p> <p>The estate inspection process is being reviewed as part of the Housing Management Improvement Project, this is intended to improve the gathering and recording of information, such as caretaking/cleaning standards; horticulture; communal repairs. Estate inspection reports will be recorded using mobile technology enabling repairs to be issued on site.</p> <p>A relaunch of the estate inspections is planned for later in the year. This recommendation will be incorporated in this relaunch.</p>		<p>who are scheduled to receive training on monitoring standards. The panel will be undertaking regular monitoring of cleaning standards on estates from October 2008.</p>
<p>R5 Housing should conduct a review of its leaseholder communications, and guidance pack with a view to increasing accessibility and penetration of leaseholders.</p>	<p>The housing service is proposing to issue a regular leaseholders newsletter similar to the arrangements currently in place for tenants.</p> <p>It is proposed that the leaseholder workshop drawn from the resident involvement register be asked to consider current and proposed communications, to prioritise the areas for review and take an active role in this process.</p>	<p>Commence review November 2007</p>	<p>A leaseholders focus group was held to discuss communications.</p> <p>A readers panel has now been established.</p> <p>Leaseholder information is now included as a specific section of Open Door, our</p>

Recommendation	Response / Comments	Date	Update – October 2008
<p>R6 Housing must publish the “apportionment of time” data that informed the Housemark benchmarking exercise. Housing should undertake, in partnership with leaseholders, a review programme focused on improving service charge transparency and data provision.</p>	<p>The apportionment of time data that informed the housemark benchmarking exercise has been placed in the public domain. The apportionment of time data will be regularly and routinely collected from relevant services and the housing service will look at the best way of routinely reporting on this. The leaseholder workshop will incorporate work on identifying the key areas where service charge data provision can be improved and a programme of work developed to achieve this.</p>	<p>April 2009</p>	<p>The housemark benchmarking exercise has been placed in the public domain.  Further work is needed with leaseholders to develop this area.</p>
<p>R7 Housing should send all leaseholders – and tenants – the caretaking schedule for their block, details of the annual horticultural maintenance programme, and clarify which other blocks are included in the estate cleaning service charge. The Working Group would also encourage Housing to consider including full details of the works covered by the block maintenance charge in the</p>	<p>Many leaseholders will already have a copy of the current caretaking schedule for their block, however we will further extend this to be accessible to all residents and cover further areas including horticulture and map site areas.  We will therefore develop information that can be made available at all offices and on the Tower Hamlets/Tower Hamlets Homes website and provide further information on these issues in the proposed leaseholder newsletter.  We will also improve the detail of the information provided regarding block maintenance charges</p>	<p>August 2008</p>	<p>Caretaking schedules have been placed in the noticeboards of each block and work is ongoing to provide similar information on horticulture. We are also making this information available on our website.</p>

Recommendation	Response / Comments	Date	Update – October 2008
<p>'Actual'.</p>	<p>including use of the Council's website and explore the potential to include this information with the actual bills.</p>		
<p>R8 The Working Group welcome the steps being taken to improve staff training and Leaseholder open days. These actions should be maintained and embedded further to improve leaseholder engagement.</p>	<p>The housing service is continuing its programme of leaseholder open days and are looking to develop this to provide leaseholder surgeries linked to the production of estimated and actual bills.</p> <p>A schedule of Open Days for 2008/09 will be developed.</p> <p>Staff training programmes on leasehold issues now form a core part of the housing training plan.</p>	<p>Annual review 31.03.09</p>	<p>Completed and subject to annual review.</p>
<p>R9 Housing should ensure that it implements and embeds fully all aspects of the Council's Customer Promise, in both process and culture.</p>	<p>Specific training has been carried out in recent months on the Council's core values and this work will continue.</p> <p>A specific customer care element of the cross service leaseholder training has been put in place providing training for all front line staff including caretakers, housing officers and technical staff.</p> <p>A further training and staff development programme is being developed.</p> <p>Monitoring systems are in place to monitor the</p>	<p>Annual review 31.03.09</p>	<p>Completed and subject to annual review.</p> <p>All staff transferred to THH received a specific induction on the values and customer ethos of THH, and this is ongoing.</p>

Recommendation	Response / Comments	Date	Update – October 2008
<p>R10 There is clear evidence that a significant number of leaseholders lack confidence in the current Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) scheme's independence and fairness. The Working Group believe that 3 options should be considered by Housing and Cabinet, following consultation with leaseholders and their representatives:</p> <p>i. Relaunch the current ADR scheme. There would need to be clear communication to leaseholders that the system had changed and what the improvements were intended to achieve. This would include: clearer information about the new transparent ADR process including;</p>	<p>extent to which each area of service meets the requirements of the Customer Promise and this needs to be extended to ensure all services can be monitored in all areas of the promise. The move to consolidated service locations will assist in this process.</p> <p>The three options put forward will be evaluated and consultation carried out.</p> <p>We will also use the Leaseholder Workshop to explore how to make information on the scheme clearer, provide a more streamlined process and use the corporate complaints procedure for stage 1 and 2 complaints with the potential for the ADR independent mechanisms to replace the stage 3 process.</p> <p>Information from other Local Authorities does however suggest that the principles of the current scheme are good practice in that it:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- is available for any dispute affecting service charges</li> <li>- offers a three stage resolution process</li> <li>- provides a range of independent routes for resolution administered by the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators.</li> </ul>	<p>Commence November 2007</p>	<p>Discussions have taken place with THLA and a paper setting out four potential ADR options has been developed.</p> <p>This paper is currently subject to consultation with THLA.</p> <p>Once agreed a wider consultation involving a range of stakeholders will be carried out and firm recommendations developed for THH Board and the Council's Cabinet.</p> <p>In the meantime, we have been obtaining improved feedback from the current scheme and we are continuing to ensure</p>

Recommendation	Response / Comments	Date	Update – October 2008
<p>- That the ADR is one option and clearly set out the different options, and when each one is most appropriate.</p> <p>- Clearer guidelines around the specifics of the process, including the rights and responsibilities of both parties.</p> <p>ii. Disband the ADR process and make all complaints go through the corporate complaints procedure. If this option was taken it would be necessary for an option of arbitration/ mediation to take place between stage two and three of the complaints procedure.</p> <p>iii. Develop a new ADR scheme reflecting current industry best practice</p>	<p>It Any revised scheme or replacement proposals will be accompanied by clear information on how the scheme works and the roles of all parties.</p>		<p>leaseholder service charge disputes are properly investigated and settled where possible.</p>
<p>R11 The current relationship between the ADR scheme, the use of a Leaseholder Valuation Tribunal and Corporate Complaints Process is not clear. As a matter of urgency, Housing should, in</p>	<p>It is agreed that further clarity should be provided on the current routes, and further development of this will be linked to recommendation 10.</p> <p>Clear guidance for staff and leaseholders will be produced.</p>	<p>November 2007</p>	<p>This recommendation is linked to recommendation 10 above.</p>



Recommendation	Response / Comments	Date	Update – October 2008
<p>consultation with key leaseholder groups, provide clear guidance to staff and leaseholders on the role of each process.</p> <p>R12 The Working Group would encourage Housing to adopt a model which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• officers within the central team being given geographical patches to provide a more cohesive service</li> <li>• Specific Leaseholder Officers within the Local Housing Office, proportionate to the number of leaseholder properties</li> <li>• More leaseholder services to be provided at the Local Housing Office.</li> </ul>	<p>The housing service will explore the recommendation of Overview and Scrutiny. The first stage of the Local Housing Office reconfiguration to provide four customer access centres concentrates on consolidating existing services. A further phase of work is planned following the reconfiguration to look at what other services could be provided from the customer access centres and this element of the recommendation will be considered as part of this second stage assessment.</p> <p>The proposed future structures for the home ownership service are currently being reassessed and a customer services team with a geographical focus is being proposed as part of this process.</p> <p>The potential to provide more information to leaseholders and answer a broader range of queries on leaseholder issues accessed centrally maintained databases will be developed as part of the move to customer access centres and</p>	<p>April 2008</p>	<p>Restructuring of Local Service Centres and the Home Ownership Service has now been completed and alignment to LSC areas has been carried out wherever possible.</p> <p>We are in the process of carrying out a trial, giving teams within the central leaseholder teams specific responsibility for each LSC area. We will keep this under review to ensure close working continues to develop between the central team and the LSC offices.</p>

Recommendation	Response / Comments	Date	Update – October 2008
<p>R13 Housing should review the current contract with Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) so that it provides a service that deals specifically with managing the financial issues faced by leaseholders.</p>	<p>particularly the proposed co-location with one stop shops enabling a broad range of enquiries to be answered at the first point of access.</p> <p>The current contract with the Citizens Advice Bureau does provide leaseholders with access to specific workers to address the financial issues faced by leaseholders.</p> <p>This contract is due for renewal next year and therefore a re-tendering process will be carried out with a reviewed specification to ensure an effective, value for money service is provided.</p>	<p>April 2009</p>	<p>A report on the CAB and the options available has been prepared for further discussion.</p>
<p>R14 Housing should meet with Tower Hamlets Community Credit Union to explore developing specific support for leaseholders so that they can access affordable loans.</p>	<p>Arrangements will be made to meet with Tower Hamlets Community Credit Union to explore the options that the credit union can offer in respect of providing assistance to leaseholders.</p> <p>The housing service will also explore whether standard information on advice agencies can be incorporated with all relevant correspondence to leaseholders.</p>	<p>November 2007</p>	<p>Initial discussions held with TH Credit Union in 2007. A bid has been made for Supporting People funding to develop specific proposals. This has been discussed with TH Credit Union who are taking proposals to their Board in Sept/Oct 2008.</p>
<p>R15 Housing should provide clear guidance to leaseholders on the law surrounding statute barred debt.</p>	<p>It is anticipated that issues around statute barred debt should be a relatively short term issue as old disputes are resolved.</p> <p>The extent to which any debt may be statute barred is dependent on the date the debt was incurred, the terms of the debt, as well as the dates</p>	<p>April 2008</p>	<p>Information is provided on a case by case basis as the extent to which any debt is statute barred depends on the particular circumstances of each case.</p>

Recommendation	Response / Comments	Date	Update – October 2008
<p>R16 Communication underpins how the Council deals with local residents. In improving the responsiveness of services, the Council needs to invest further so that communication is clear, accessible and appropriate to services. This is particularly important in explaining the reasons for the way that services are delivered, particularly where individual charges are being raised.</p>	<p>on which residents were alerted and reminded of the debt.</p> <p>The housing service will review the information it provides to leaseholders in respect of arrears to address the issue raised in this recommendation.</p> <p>Communications team will review with Housing their current communications channels and materials to ensure that future work is properly targeted, accessible, clear and concise.</p>	<p>By early Autumn 2007</p>	<p>Tower Hamlets Homes (THH) has invested in a permanent Communications Manager to enhance and improve communications with THH residents.</p> <p>A communication protocol has been established between the Council and Tower Hamlets Homes (THH) communications team to ensure targeted and precise communications.</p> <p>These include a strategy for the Estate Improvement Programme and the launch of the Overcrowding Strategy.</p> <p>Regular liaison meetings take place between the LBTH &amp; THH Communications colleagues.</p> <p>A THH website has been</p>

Recommendation	Response / Comments	Date	Update – October 2008
<p>R17 The Council needs to explore further how it can get closer to customers. For front-line high volume services such as housing, it would seem beneficial to have a strong connection between service providers and localities. This seems to provide the greatest potential to build a strong customer relationship based around both ownership and accountability.</p>	<p>The Council's current proposals for access to front line services will integrate the provision of housing services with other front line services accessed through One Stop Shops as well as expand the range of services accessed through the Council's call centre. By 01.04.08 It is recognised that there can be benefits from having a strong connection between service providers and localities and the Council is therefore looking at what services can be located in the local centres proposed including caretaking and ASB. In addition where physical location is not proposed the Council is looking at whether central teams can be patch based to give geographical alignment.</p>	<p>April 2008</p>	<p>South Poplar OSS opened in April 2008 and proving to be a popular location for customers. The five OSS are working with the LSC's to provide services to customers.</p>
<p>R18 The Corporate Complaints Process is a crucial part of the Council's delivery of the</p>	<p>Leaflets on the various complaints processes are promoted. The leaflet and publicity on Corporate Complaints, available to customers and staff,</p>	<p>February 2008</p>	<p>Procedures have been put in place and are working well in relation to complaints</p>

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Response / Comments</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Update – October 2008</b>
<p>customer promise. The Council should ensure that its relationship with any other statutory or non-statutory processes that directorates may use is clear to both staff and residents.</p>	<p>clearly states this procedure does not replace any formal appeal process or other statutory complaint processes. This leaflet and accompanying publicity will be reviewed by the end of the year with an opportunity to check and improve clarity. The Corporate Complaints team passes on any complaint that has to be dealt with by any other process to the appropriate person/team. Regular training for staff on complaints is held, in which the different statutory procedures are described. Each Directorate has a designated complaints officer who advises staff on complaint matters and can identify appropriate procedures to be used. The effectiveness/reach of this training and the information on the Council's website will be reviewed</p>		<p>monitoring between the Council and THH. The complaints procedure is promoted on THH website.</p>
<p>R19 The Customer Promise is a vital statement of the Council's culture and delivery of Excellent Public Services. The Council should develop clearer mechanisms for ensuring both the spirit and content of the Customer Promise are being delivered in Directorates.</p>	<p>Customer Promise standards are already embedded and monitored for the high volume services being dealt with by the Council's Contact Centres. The Action Plan agreed to support the new Customer Access Strategy includes a number of actions regarding performance monitoring. Work is nearly complete on benchmarking costs per contact with other boroughs and work also being undertaken to identify robust measurements of quality and customer satisfaction rather than just speed, which is line with the Varney report on</p>	<p>April 2008</p>	<p>New performance indicators have been agreed as part of the development of the new Strategic Plan. A review of the Customer promise is also under way and will be presented to Members in due course.</p> <p>New methods to monitor customer satisfaction have</p>

Recommendation	Response / Comments	Date	Update – October 2008
	<p>efficiency. This will also include a review of the Customer Promise and the type of indicators included within it, including more meaningful monitoring in future.. We are also looking to add to the services delivered through the Customer Access division, allowing these services to benefit from the quality control processes already in place and being continually developed within the division.</p>		<p>now been put in place. These include kiosks in OSS and automated surveys with the contact centre as well as mystery shopping.</p>

Response to Scrutiny Working Group Report on the Hostels Strategy

Recommendation	Response / Comments	Date	Update – October 2008
<p>R1 That the Supporting People Team work with all the hostels to explore the potential for further infrastructure improvement. Specifically the Council should work with Look Ahead Housing Association to develop proposals for improving the Aldgate hostel with the minimum possible loss of bed spaces and consequent funding.</p>	<p><i>Key stages and milestones:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dialogue and meeting to take place with Look Ahead linked to the Housing Corporation bidding round 08 – 2011.</li> <li>Publicise aim to continue to improve infrastructure to hostels sector more widely.</li> <li>Discuss options and prioritise bids (if not possible to submit all of them to the Housing Corporation), through SPCB.</li> </ol>	<p><i>(The numbers in this column below refer to the stages/ milestones in the response/ comments column in each row).</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>July 2007 (completed)</li> <li>August</li> <li>November</li> </ol>	<p>Completed (initial dialogue linked to options) as part of the bidding round for both Housing Corporation in 2007 and the 'Places for Change' capital bidding round.</p> <p>Further discussions are taking place in September 2008 to revisit the future of Aldgate Hostel with Look Ahead, linked to further options and changes they are actively exploring and which focus on delivering improved accommodation at this or other sites, should they be identified.</p>
<p>R2 That the Providence Road Housing Association (PRHA) Hackney Road service should be opened up to achieve direct local access by LBTH based agencies. In partnership with</p>	<p><i>Key stages and milestones:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meet with PRHA and LBTH Homelessness, to confirm how to present and approach the CLG.</li> <li>Draft letter and agree with the parties above outlining request.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>August</li> <li>September</li> <li>October</li> </ol>	<p>Completed and LBTH Homelessness services now have 75% access to vacancies at Hackney Road (agreed together with central government</p>

Recommendation	Response / Comments	Date	Update – October 2008
<p>PRHA the Council's Cabinet should make representations to DCLG to this effect.</p>	<p>3. Submit letter to November Cabinet Draft letter attached.</p>		<p>and PRHA). 25% of vacancies are for outreach teams who arrange move on accommodation.</p>
<p>R3 That research should be undertaken to understand the perception and cultural issues affecting BME residents around accessing hostels leading to an Action Plan being developed to improve BME access.</p>	<p>Key stages and milestones:  1. Revisit the information in Hostel and Move on strategy and update data to gain accurate picture of current position.  2. Consult with key partners, particularly BME groups and draw on work completed for Homelessness Strategy review of levels of homelessness in the borough  3. Draw up an action plan, with targets for different BME groups, for the Hostels sector in LBTH, drawing on good practice elsewhere.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Sept</li> <li>2. October</li> <li>3. November</li> </ol>	<p>Partially completed – initial discussion and comments sought from the Hostels and Single Homeless Forum, to feed into how the research work is undertaken, which has now taken place.</p> <p>It is anticipated that the researcher will be in post by end of October with project completion by end of March 2008.</p>
<p>R4 That the HOST team works in partnership with local agencies to deliver a more joined up services, centred on delivering a personalised service tailored to individual clients.</p>	<p>Key stages and milestones:  1. Hold a stakeholder event to consult widely on the HOST model  2. Continue to proactively ask for feedback from all partners as HOST is implemented. Carry out a formal review 3 months after HOST up and running.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. July (completed)</li> <li>2. February 2008 (based on Nov 07 HOST start up).</li> </ol>	<p>Completed – initial discussion of HOST operation taken place at the Single Homeless and Hostels forum, using initial monitoring data (for first 6 months of operation). No major concerns expressed, although ongoing detailed</p>



Recommendation	Response / Comments	Date	Update – October 2008
<p>R5 That the Council should publicly backs the Foyer Federation’s campaign to persuade the Department of Work &amp; Pensions to waive the 16-hour rule for residents of foyers.</p>	<p>Key stages and milestones: 1. Draw up a letter to the DWP, for amendment and approval at November Cabinet, backing the campaign.</p>	<p>1. September.</p>	<p>work is taken place to continue to refine procedures and liaison with individual services. Completed (see attached response from DWP).</p>
<p>R6 That the Council should support Citizens Advice and Shelter’s campaign to scrap the Single Room Rent Restriction and Shared Room rate of LHA.</p>	<p>Key stages and milestones: 1. Draw up a letter to the DWP, for amendment and approval at November Cabinet, backing the campaign - draft attached for comment.</p>	<p>1. September</p>	<p>Completed – as above.</p>
<p>R7 That the Supporting People Team develops in partnership with service providers a strategic response to work with clients to reduce evictions and abandonments. That the response ensures that referral and assessment work is undertaken, support needs are</p>	<p>Key stages and milestones: 1. Collate and analyse the current data for all hostel services linked to evictions and abandonments. 2. Benchmark with other areas in and outside of London. 3. Set targets with individual services 4. Review progress against targets and address any poor performance</p>	<p>1. September 2. October 3. November 4. January and April 08 5. January 08. 6. September 07</p>	<p>Completed – all hostels have initial targets for abandonments and evictions, a new way of collecting data has been devised to allow greater analysis of where performance can be improved and the</p>

Recommendation	Response / Comments	Date	Update – October 2008
<p>accurately identified and assessed, there is some choice for clients in terms of hostels allocated and that hostel staff have detailed plans to support clients.</p>	<p>5. Though contract monitoring and visits to individual services ensure that referral, assessment and support plans and processes are all in place in a hostels quality report, pulling together a summary of all the feedback from service users and service visits.</p> <p>6. Include choice in the design and operation of HOST so that people have some influence of the supported housing they are offered.</p>		<p>underlying causes of unplanned moves and a 'good practice' seminar has been arranged by the SP team for October 2008, for the whole hostels sector.</p>
<p>R8 That the Supporting People Team work with hostel providers to explore the potential for further expansion of second stage accommodation.</p>	<p>Key stages and milestones:</p> <p>1. Include this specific objective in the work with providers in Recommendation 1 above, including taking forward the redevelopment of Daniel Gilbert House (PRHA).</p>	<p>As Recommendation 1 above.</p>	<p>Completed – after consultation with the Hostels and Single Homeless forum, it has been agreed to move toward more of an individualised approach; that is people are assessed and referred to services within the hostels sector that match their particular needs and preferences (where possible). It was agreed that it was more helpful to look at hostel services as being on a continuum,</p>

Recommendation	Response / Comments	Date	Update – October 2008
<p>R9 That the Supporting People Team work with service providers to ensure clients are not forced to move into private rented sector and are adequately prepared to live in private rented accommodation, including providing help with Rent Deposits, Housing Benefit / Local Housing Allowance, and if necessary, Discretionary Housing Payments to cover benefit shortfalls.</p>	<p>Key stages and milestones:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Set up a dedicated short term project though appointing a project worker, to work through the detailed procedures and safe guards that need to be in place for successful moves into the PRS.</li> <li>2. Draw detailed policies, based on feedback from service users, providers and other rent deposit schemes. Focus on detailing scenarios of how the move would work and all the ongoing short and long term financial implications, including links with HB.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. August (completed).</li> <li>2. January 08.</li> </ol>	<p>providing a wide range and level of support, rather than mechanistically dividing projects into first and second stage.</p> <p>Completed – following an initial short term project, successfully piloted and led by Providence Row Housing and Look Ahead Housing and Care, no feedback has been received of anyone feeling pressured to move into the private rented sector. One to one meetings have taken place between the HOST team and hostel services (including direct contact with service users), who have often responded with interest to explore any options and support to move on.</p>
<p>R10 That the Supporting People Team explore the potential for specific floating support service be made available to</p>	<p>Key stages and milestones</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Propose the extension of support to the PRS by existing Floating Support providers to ensure support available to</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. July (Completed)</li> <li>2. July (Completed)</li> </ol>	<p>Completed – the ongoing development of floating support services and draft service specifications</p>

Recommendation	Response / Comments	Date	Update – October 2008
<p>clients moved from hostels to private tenancies.</p>	<p>people moving from hostels to the PRS</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Establish formal links between hostel providers and rent deposit services.</li> <li>3. Feed this recommendation into the strategic review of Floating Support services (due for completion in November).</li> </ol>	<p>3 August (Completed).</p>	<p>following the strategic review of floating support services, explicitly notes that services will support people moving on from hostels.</p>
<p>R11 That the Living Well CPAG reviews the decision to withdraw the HHELP service from hostels and specifically examines the effectiveness of its proposed replacement service in reaching hostel residents. Furthermore the Living Well CPAG considers how the Supporting People Programme can be incorporated into the wider partnership so that they are consulted and involved about important changes to service delivery and development.</p>	<p>Key stages and milestones:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Collate feedback from Hostel providers on the previous HHELP service and detail any key issues to feed into current service development.</li> <li>2. Discuss issues with the ELMHCT.</li> <li>3. Based on the above, produce a final report for Living Well CPAG that maps out a way forward and explores any proposals to develop services in partnership.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. October</li> <li>2. November</li> <li>3. January.</li> </ol>	<p>Partially completed – collection of views requested from hostel providers, but little written feedback received to date. SP team to revisit with hostel sector and establish any areas where constructive feedback or suggestions can be passed to the ELMH Foundation Trust, on future service developments in this area.</p>
<p>R12 That the Council should</p>	<p>Key stages and milestones:</p>	<p>1. October</p>	<p>Partially completed – multi</p>

Recommendation	Response / Comments	Date	Update – October 2008
<p>examine the possibility of increasing its support for the Drug Action Team to ensure it has the capacity to provide satellite services in local hostels.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Together with the DAT, review the range of DAT funded services that currently work with local hostels.</li> <li>2. Together with the DAT and local hostels, identify any local good practice and any gaps in the current range of services, including any different ways of working in either Hostels or DAT services to meet any gaps or operational issues.</li> <li>3. Draw the feedback and analysis from the steps above, into a final report, with a set of key proposals for consideration by the DAT and SPCB.</li> <li>4. Discuss the effectiveness of a small drugs and hostel half day conference, endorsed and chaired jointly by the DAT and SP (will arrange practicalities), involving hostels and key stakeholders to help work through the above.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. November</li> <li>3. January 08</li> <li>4. September 07</li> </ol>	<p>agency party convened, together with the DAAT and specification written building on comments and advice from the hostels sector, to commission a researcher to take forward. It is anticipated that the researcher will be in post by end of October with project completion by end of March 2008. Additionally, hostels have formally been asked to notify the SP team of any issues of concern or areas to work on together with DAAT agencies and this is being taken through the DAAT partnership groups.</p>

Abbreviations:

- SP = Supporting People
- SPTM = Supporting People Team Manager

- CLG = Communities and Local Government (pay SP Grant to local authorities and determine the regulations under which SP operates, as well as monitoring the programme).
- SPCB = Supporting People Commissioning Body (SPCB), the partnership group which oversees and has formal responsibility for the SP programme in LBTH. It is chaired by John Goldup.
- PRHA = Providence Row Housing Association.
- PRS = Private Rented Sector
- ELMHCT = East London Mental Health Care Trust

# DWP Department for Work and Pensions

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London Borough  
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24 JAN 2008

Adults Services

Your Reference: 3020/JG/aw

Our Ref: TO/08/00201

Date: 23 January 2008

Dear Mr Goldup

Thank you for your letter of 18 December 2007 to Peter Hain concerning Housing Benefit. I have been asked to reply and I apologise for the delay. I am sorry that Peter Hain has not been able to reply to you personally, but I hope you will understand that he receives a great deal of correspondence on a variety of subjects and it is not possible for him to reply to each letter individually.

The Government understands the concerns you have raised regarding the difficulties young homeless people experience when trying to break the 'no home - no job - no home' cycle. The Government continues to work closely with organisations like Foyer to see what more can be done to support vulnerable young people needing a second chance at education.

The Secretary of State recently announced in the *Opportunity, Employment and Progression: making skills work* publication that the Government will consider defining limited exemptions from the '16 hour rule' for specific vulnerable groups who require housing benefit whilst undertaking necessary full time training – such as young people living in supported accommodation. A copy of the publication can be found at <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/welfarereform/making-skills-work.pdf>

Officials across Government are currently considering how they can best meet the needs of vulnerable groups and expect to have proposals developed later this year. The Government is keen to see an early resolution that meets the needs of all concerned, and I trust you will view this as a positive move forward.

I now turn to the issue of Single Room Rents. The Government is very much aware that some stakeholders view the Single Room Rent (SRR) as a source of

hardship for many young people and that they would like to see the Government abolish it.

However, The Government believes that abolishing the SRR would result in single young people on benefit being able to afford a level of housing that their working peers could not. For example, three-quarters of single under-25s not on benefit rent shared accommodation.

The Government believes that abolishing the single room rent would create a situation where those in receipt of Housing Benefit could afford a level of accommodation that they would not be able to maintain were they employed. This could create a situation where young people would not want to work as they would not be able to afford their accommodation if they were not in receipt of benefits. This goes against the grain of everything that Department is trying to achieve in its welfare to work agenda.

In a recent review the Department has identified issues with the workings of the SRR, namely around affordability, accessibility and availability.

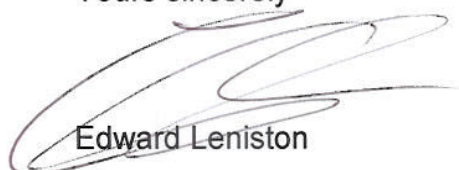
However, the introduction of the national Local Housing Allowance (LHA) will address some of these issues by changing the treatment of under 25s through the move to a median LHA rate and the new Shared Room Rate. The latter covers a wider definition of shared accommodation than under the current SRR and will better reflect the range of accommodation available to tenants.

The Department plans to make an initial assessment of the impact of the changes from the LHA and to monitor the SRR as part of the Two Year Review of the LHA.

The SRR does not affect those who are most vulnerable, for example those who are severely disabled, and certain young people leaving care (under age 22) are exempt from the restriction. Those who are in supported accommodation or social housing are also not subject to this restriction.

The Government does not believe it would be appropriate to exempt further specific groups from the SRR. A key aim of the Single Room Rent is to ensure that benefit claimants are in the same position as non-benefit claimants, so that we do not make the transition into work harder than it already is.

Yours sincerely



Edward Leniston



Appendix 6

Action Plan - Response to Scrutiny Challenge Session on Determination of Major Planning Applications

Recommendation	Response / Comments	Date	Update – October 2008
<p>R1 That Development and Renewal seek to improve resident involvement through holding sessions that help support and give guidance about proposed developments. This would give residents the confidence to exercise and extend involvement to its fullest potential.</p>	<p>Planning process training sessions to be offered through the LAP network to local residents.</p>	<p>During 2008/9</p>	<p>Officers from Development Control and Development Schemes attended such sessions in early 2008 to inform and discuss with LAP members and residents the planning process and legal (S106) agreements.</p>
<p>R2 Public meetings on Pre-Planning Applications should be held during daytime at weekends to maximise community participation.</p>	<p>Community Forum Customer Feedback forms to include a question on preferred times for holding public meetings.  Future Community Forum meetings to be arranged in accordance with customer's wishes.</p>	<p>View taken over next 6 months</p>	<p>Officer requests to hold Community Forums at weekends have not been well received by applicants and resisted in all instances. Nevertheless, officers have encouraged exhibitions of very large schemes to take place at weekends in suitable venues and have been largely successful in achieving this. Attendance at evening Community Forums has been very healthy in almost all instances and</p>

Recommendation	Response / Comments	Date	Update – October 2008
<p>R3 An external facilitator should be asked to chair public meetings to ensure its smooth running and avoid accusations of bias.</p>	<p>Applicants to be requested to provide and finance an independent facilitator from list provided by officers.</p> <p>It must be noted that applicants cannot be compelled to do this and in the absence of an independent facilitator these meetings will be chaired by officers.</p>	<p>On-going – reviewed December 2008</p>	<p>their content and usefulness have been praised widely.</p> <p>Applicants have resisted paying for an “independent facilitator” on cost grounds, preferring instead to use their own (already hired) PR/communication consultants. The results of using these consultants to run meetings have been mixed and less effective than when run by officers. This appears to be because officers are seen as ‘neutral’, whilst the applicant’s communications consultants are seen as being connected to the applicant and therefore biased.</p>
<p>R4 Lists of current and forthcoming Major Planning Applications to be circulated to all Councillors.</p>	<p>Many early discussions on developments do not result in an application. Generally these discussions are also commercially sensitive and have to be treated confidentially. Once a Community Forum is proposed, pre-application developments can be circulated to members in</p>	<p>From April 2008</p>	<p>Current applications’ lists are already sent to members and lead members are briefed on request by the Heads of Service. A study is currently underway in</p>

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Response / Comments</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Update – October 2008</b>
<p>R5 That documents should be prepared to guide local residents confronted with the complexity of planning applications and legislation, with advice and practical support to enable them to support or object to applications that affect them. This would include guidance in simple language on what is a material planning consideration, how to comment on planning applications, how the council determines applications etc. Members' suggestions on what type of guidance might assist</p>	<p>the form of a period list. Current applications can be included in this list.</p> <p>A suite of such documents is being prepared and will be published on the web site in the next few months. When published, members will be informed via the Members' Bulletin and requested to advise on what other material may help their constituents.</p>		<p>conjunction with Legal Services to improve member involvement in major applications prior to their reporting at Strategic Development Committee. This has to be carefully set up due to probity considerations. It is being undertaken in consultation with the chair of the development committees.</p> <p>A comprehensive suite of guidance notes have been completed and publicised. The planning pages on the council's web site have also been extensively revised to improve their utility to the public. The notes are available both in the planning reception and on the Council's website.</p>

Recommendation	Response / Comments	Date	Update – October 2008
<p>constituents could be considered.</p>			
<p>R6 Research into other Local Authorities should take place to see best practice when consulting with residents. This might help develop and improve the delivery of service.</p>	<p>The Service Head Development Decisions, as Chair of the Association of London borough Planning Officers, will undertake an audit of other London Boroughs' practice and explore further any examples of best practise.</p>	<p>Audit by April 2009</p>	<p>The Service Head will carry out this audit in the first quarter of 2009 to enable what in many cases are recently introduced procedures to bed in and reveal best practise.</p>
<p>R7 Support with any training needs that may help Members become involved more.</p>	<p>The current programme of compulsory "core" training in planning and probity each May will continue, and be supplemented with 3-monthly courses on other planning issues. Section 106 and Development Finance has already taken place and a session on the LDF process is planned for April. Future ideas for sessions are Urban Design and Secure by Design.</p>	<p>On-going – reviewed April 2009</p>	<p>Completed – training on legal (S106) agreements, development finance and the LDF process have been undertaken. Further on-going training sessions will follow in due course in response to emerging needs and requests.</p>

## Appendix 7

### Response to Scrutiny Working Group Report on Graduate Unemployment

The Working Group recommendations focus on areas requiring consideration and action by the Council and other organisations working to support local graduates into appropriate employment and training. It is important to stress that improving the opportunities for local graduates to develop their employment skills and enter appropriate level roles is not the responsibility of one agency, it's something that many different organisations can help contribute to. That's why we're directing our report and recommendations to the Tower Hamlet Partnership's Community Plan Action Groups (CPAGs).

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Response / Comments</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Update – October 2008</b>
<p>R1 The Employment Task Group commissions research to establish the extent and nature of graduate unemployment and underemployment in the borough to provide a baseline to inform future action.</p>	<p>There is no funding currently available to resource this research. Approach to be made to Metropolitan University representative on Creating and Sharing Prosperity CPAG (Jenny Sommerville) to determine if there are any resources or funding routes available to universities for this type of research.</p>	<p>Nov 07</p>	<p>No funding identified for further research</p>
<p>R2 The Council expands in-house graduate training to maximise opportunities for graduates to gain skills, experience and professional qualifications in a public sector workplace setting, regardless of their ethnic background.</p>	<p>The council has recently agreed a revised and enhanced graduate training scheme which has been recruited to for 07/08. The council is adopting a more cohesive approach to training and work experience generally and including graduates and is working closely with the PCT on this. It is also intended to develop a competency and qualification framework that will be used in recruitment and training which will, amongst other things, identify graduates who have not</p>	<p>Oct 07</p>	<p>9 local graduates were taken on in September 2007 under the revised scheme which was aligned with the National Graduate Development Programme to reflect the same level of remuneration. Local graduates are engaged on a two year fixed term contract. 8 of the 9 local graduates are Bangladeshi and the other local</p>

Recommendation	Response / Comments	Date	Update – October 2008
R3 A Task Group is established to champion employment opportunities for local	entered the workforce via a particular scheme, and develop their skills and knowledge. Progress on the scheme will be reported to C&SP CPAG every 6 months.		graduate who has recently left the scheme is Somali. The scheme provides for local graduates to undertake four, 6 monthly placements across council directorates whilst working towards a Postgraduate Diploma in Public and Community Service. In addition, the Local Graduate Positive Action Scheme which also commenced in September 2007, engaged 4 local BME graduates (3 Bangladeshi, 1 Black Caribbean) who began a direct course of study in the following areas: Occupational Therapy, Legal and Planning. The two graduate trainee occupational therapists remain in full time study, the legal graduate trainee has left the scheme and the Planning graduate trainee has been offered a temporary contract with the council
R3 A Task Group is established to champion employment opportunities for local	The Employment and Employability Task Group will take on this role. A small task group will be formed to include Tower	Task Group established Sept 07	<b>Members of the task group:</b> <b>Sally Roberts - ELBA (Chair)</b> <b>Sonia Chumber- Skillsmatch</b>

Recommendation	Response / Comments	Date	Update – October 2008
<p>graduates, and to coordinate initiatives to achieve this. This should include Council officers, employers, universities and graduates.</p>	<p>Hamlets College, LBTH, ELBA and Connexions. ELBA have facilitated the successful CAT scheme and local graduates from that programme will be included as well as local employers identified through ELBA. Task group will report to the wider Employment and Employability task group and from there to C&amp;SP CPAG</p>		<p><b>Shamsol Hoque- Tower Hamlets College</b>  <b>Andrew Attfield- Tower Hamlets PCT</b>  <b>Rehana Begum- London Metropolitan University</b>  <b>Ahmed Mohamed- Careers Management Futures</b>  <b>Patricia Nnadi- London Metropolitan University</b>  <b>Samul Alom – Ex CATS ELBA</b></p> <p>The group have met formally twice and have had lots of email contact between meetings.</p> <p>This information has been fed back through the Employment task Group</p>
<p>R4 The Task Group explores:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• using Skillsmatch to develop volunteering or secondment opportunities for graduates to gain experience of working in local companies and organisations</li> </ul>	<p>These tasks will be explored by the Task Group and progress and outcomes reported back to the C&amp;SP CPAG.</p>	<p>Quarterly reports to CPAG</p>	<p>The Skillsmatch programme has assisted 23 graduates into employment between April 08 and Sept 08.</p> <p>Through this programme and the graduate programmes offered by TH College at least 55 graduates</p>

Recommendation	Response / Comments	Date	Update – October 2008
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>developing a mentoring scheme for local graduates.</li> </ul>			<p>are currently being assisted through a variety of programmes linked to employer opportunities.</p> <p>The mentoring scheme is still being developed by ELBA. Queen Mary's and London Met both have existing mentoring programme and THC has suggested extending it's existing mentoring programmes to local unemployed graduates.</p>
<p>R5 The Task Group explores:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>how to identify the key employment skills shortages now and in the future based on the likely development of the local labour market projected in the Tower Hamlets Regeneration Strategy</li> <li>the best means of improving the range and relevance of careers advice to the local labour market.</li> </ul>	<p>The evidence base of the refresh of the Regeneration Strategy will identify skills shortages and potential areas of employment as well as the recent Learning and Skills Council research. However the advice to graduates provided locally is based on current job vacancies, the career aspirations of graduates and the work experience essential to gain access to appropriate career pathways.</p> <p>This information will be co-ordinated and made available to all local agencies working with graduates</p>	<p>Evidence base available January 08</p> <p>Advice information available in leaflet form by</p>	<p>The Emerging Employment Strategy offers background to growth sectors of employment and has been developed in conjunction with the Employment Task Group.</p> <p>The group has identified current initiatives and shared best practice. It has also discussed ways of disseminating the information to local undergraduates and graduates as well as all local agencies working with graduates.</p>



Recommendation	Response / Comments	Date	Update – October 2008
		March 08.	Destination data is now available at universities and the representative from London Met has agreed to coordinate this data.
<p><b>R6</b> The Task Group support and monitor the proposed East London Business Alliance (ELBA) and Queen Mary University Graduate Network pilot to increase the opportunities for local graduates to meet local employers and to consider how this can be extended across the borough.</p>	To be considered by Task Group following presentation by ELBA and QM University	Feb 08	The pilot, known as the ELBA Business Club, was extended to include other local universities: London Metropolitan, Queen Mary's and Greenwich. The pilot was very successful and the scheme will be replicated in the spring 2009. Information about the programme is available.
<p><b>R7</b> The Task Group develop further the links between schools and employers by coordinating and facilitating careers workshops / advice sessions between all agencies.</p>	Timetable of activity to be determined	Feb 08	<p>A project to help students with their UCAS forms was successfully piloted between graduates at Credit Suisse and sixth formers from Central Foundation School for Girls and will be replicated with George Green School and Credit Suisse in October 2008.</p> <p>A conference facilitated by ELBA</p>

Recommendation	Response / Comments	Date	Update – October 2008
			<p>and UEL called Raising the Bar took place in June 2008.</p> <p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To get commitment from academics and lecturers to their role in preparing students to take advantage of economic regeneration of East London</li> <li>• <b>To open the dialogue between employers and educators and start the process of them building more fruitful and productive relationship with businesses</b></li> <li>• <b>To identify way forward and new programmes</b></li> </ul> <p><b>The group agreed that it would be useful to roll out this initiative to other local universities</b></p>

Note: All activity and progress against action plan will be monitored and minuted by the Task Group and reported back to CPAG in quarterly reports.

Response to Scrutiny Challenge Session on the Youth Service Plan

Recommendation	Response / Comments	Date	Update – October 2008
<p><b>R1</b> That a Members seminar be organised to inform Members about the JAR, Aiming high and areas raised in scrutiny review.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding levered in by contractors</li> <li>• Contracting and monitoring arrangements</li> <li>• Performance information and comparative data across the LAP areas</li> <li>• Accessibility for disabled people and what is being done to encourage participation</li> <li>• Future developments of youth provision and accommodation across LAP areas</li> <li>• Provisions made for girls</li> </ul>	<p>Date for Seminar confirmed for 19<sup>th</sup> June</p> <p>Briefing note QA framework – copies to be provided at Seminar</p> <p>Briefing note</p> <p>Briefing note</p> <p>My Place Strategy document to be completed</p> <p>Briefing note/Equality and Diversity Action Plan</p>	<p>19<sup>th</sup> June</p> <p>19<sup>th</sup> June 19<sup>th</sup> June</p> <p>19<sup>th</sup> June</p> <p>19<sup>th</sup> June</p> <p>July/Sept 08</p> <p>19<sup>th</sup> June</p>	<p><b>RECOMMENDATION FULLY IMPLEMENTED</b></p> <p>The Members Seminar went ahead as planned on the 19<sup>th</sup> June and was well attended.</p> <p>The three briefing notes and the QA framework was distributed at the seminar and is available from Youth Services.</p> <p>The My Place strategy went to Cabinet on the 10<sup>th</sup> September and it was agreed to submit a bid to redevelop the Haileybury Youth Centre.</p> <p>Actions to increase the provision for young women have been built into the Children’s Services Gender Equality Plan. Targets have been built into the Youth Service contracts and show</p>

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<p><b>R2</b> That Members be given an opportunity to visit contractor facilities.</p>	<p>Members will have access to project visits during August as part of monitoring arrangements. Visits to providers can be arranged directly or through member's enquiries.</p>	<p>August 2008</p>	<p>year on year improvements.  <b>RECOMMENDATION FULLY IMPLEMENTED</b>            Opportunities were advertised in the Members Bulletin. Two Members took up the opportunity and visited eight Positive Activities for Young People.</p>
<p><b>R3</b> That the Service should involve and consult local voluntary groups including mother tongue groups on issues around detached youth service provision.</p>	<p>6 month deployment of mobile projects to include COF, Voluntary Sector Forum and Head of Community languages.</p>	<p>Sept 2008 April 2009</p>	<p><b>RECOMMENDATION PARTLY IMPLEMENTED</b>            We will be consulting and involving the names parties when we decide the deployments for October 2008 onwards. Our Rapid Response Team is developing a Detached and Outreach Forum which will involve local voluntary groups.</p>
<p><b>R4</b> That the Service explores ways an audit can be undertaken of disabled users of youth service and how these services are publicised to the public and Members.</p>	<p>Audit undertaken JAR young inspector reviewed information, publicity and promotional activities.            "Places to go, things to do" brochure to target 1000 teenagers identified. AMP website to focus on access. COO-L</p>	<p>19<sup>th</sup> June</p>	<p><b>RECOMMENDATION FULLY IMPLEMENTED</b>            We are increased the funding for a range of provision, including at the Tower</p>

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	activities to be promoted to young people with LDD.		<p>Project, St. Hilda's East and through our youth work contractors. The JAR young inspectors visited a range of provision and judged it to be good.</p> <p>The new 'Places to go, Things to do' brochure has been published and will be distributed to schools in October 2008. The new AMP website will also be launched at the same time. The implementation of COO-L has been very successful and over 1300 young people are engaged.</p>
<b>R5</b> That the Service continues working to put in place a mechanism to engage the Chinese and any new emerging communities	Initial meeting undertaken with CATH Chinese community actively prioritised in commissioning of mainstream grants process.	Ongoing	Meetings are continuing and we will be prioritising the Chinese community within mainstream grants for 2009/10.
<b>R6</b> That in consultation with the Inter-Faith Forum, service users and staff, the Service explores how religious needs could be incorporated in youth service	Staff conference and workshop already undertaken. Youth Service ran events with the Inter Faith Forum in Inter Faith week. "All different all equal" youth work week events run in 2007	Ongoing	The next round of Preventing Violent Extremism projects is currently being commissioned.

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<p>curriculum.</p>	<p>Service has appointed Hate Crime Champions PEACE and Preventing Violent Extremism project has been established.</p>		
<p><b>R7</b> That the Council and the youth service maximises opportunities during stock-transfer and master planning process to secure adequate youth provision.</p>	<p>Discussion underway in Bishopsgate and Chrisp Street.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>We have made a presentation about youth services at the Housing Forum and have supported a range of Registered Social Landlords with developing youth provision, including East End Homes, Bethnal Green and Victoria Park Housing Association and our own Tower Hamlets Homes.</p>
<p><b>R8</b> That Members be involved in the development of the <i>'Aiming high for young people: a ten year strategy for positive activities'</i> in Tower Hamlets.</p>	<p>To be covered at Seminar (R1)</p>	<p>19<sup>th</sup> June</p>	<p><b>RECOMMENDATION FULLY IMPLEMENTED</b></p> <p>This was comprehensively covered in the Member's Seminar in June and a further update was given in the Cabinet paper on 10<sup>th</sup> September.</p>

**Appendix 9**  
**Response to Scrutiny Working Group report on the Role of Ward Councillors in the Tower Hamlets Partnership**

Recommendation	Comments	Date	Update: October 2008
<p><b>R1</b> A job description for 'councillors as community leaders' should be formulated with the involvement of both councillors and the wider Partnership. This would include the community leadership councillors provide through different partnership forums, cabinet, overview and scrutiny and casework.</p>	<p>A role description has been developed and agreed with the Member Training and Development Group. It covers Member responsibilities, activities and sets out the different duties in their role as community leaders, on Cabinet, on Overview and Scrutiny and on external bodies.</p> <p>It will be provided to all councillors in the new Council and is being used as the framework for the Members Induction programme following the May elections.</p> <p>The Job Description includes that Councillors will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attend LAP and LAP Steering Group and other Partnership meetings to which they are invited</li> <li>• Lead and mediate between issues of concern within their LAP</li> <li>• Encourage and develop relationships to make people in the partnership valued, trusted and included, recognising people from different backgrounds. Empowering others to take responsibility.</li> </ul>	February 2007	<p>Under the new Tower Hamlets Partnership governance structures being introduced in October 2008 there is greater emphasis on councillors playing a leading role within the partnership structures. At the LAP level ward councillors are expected to participate fully in LAPs and share the role of leading the LAPs as the LAP steering group chair, at the same time also facilitating the participation of other residents and community members.</p>

Recommendation	Comments	Date	Update: October 2008
<p>R2 The role of councillors should be recognised in the Tower Hamlets Partnership Charter.</p>	<p>The Tower Hamlets Partnership Charter is agreed for all partners and is seen to apply to all regardless of the agency or sector they represent. To include specific elements of the Charter for councillors may suggest special privilege and this runs counter to a fundamental principle of partnership working generally and the Tower Hamlets Partnership specifically.</p> <p>Importantly, the principles contained in the Charter echo those set out in the role description for councillors for partnership working.</p>	<p>February 2007</p>	<p>Implemented</p>
<p><b>Developing the capacity, skills, expertise and knowledge of ward councillors</b></p>			
<p>R3 Learning and development should include greater emphasis on the skills of councillors to engage with their local wards. This would include developing an understanding of accountability, community leadership, public and stakeholder engagement and service improvement.</p>	<p>This was achieved through LAP induction events in June/July 2006. The purpose of the ward based induction was to provide Members with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An opportunity to meet with key ward representatives from the Safer Neighbourhood Team, PCT, and voluntary sector, plus Area Directors, Partnership Support Officers and LAP Steering Group Members</li> <li>• An overview of the LAP including priorities and key issues for local residents</li> <li>• Key facts and data about the ward</li> <li>• Information about LAP action plans; and</li> <li>• An understanding of Members' role in the</li> </ul>	<p>February 2007</p>	<p>A programme of induction is being developed to support the role out of the new governance structures such as the new LAPs and Community plan Delivery Groups, Members will be asked to make the time to participate in these alongside the other participants to help bond the new groups and to ensure that there is a common understanding of the roles</p>



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	LAP		and contributions that different people bring to the table. This is an opportunity for Councillors to demonstrate leadership and the ability to engage with and influence the partnership agenda.
R4 Support to councillors should include a greater emphasis on how to develop their role at LAP level as community leaders – beyond administrative support.	The new organisational structure in Members Services and the review of member's enquiries should improve support to ward councillors. This needs further discussion and exploration with councillors however, particularly with the proposed new powers for ward members proposed in the Local Government White Paper.	February 2007	The new Members' Support structure is now in place and the Members' Enquiries Business process Improvement action plan is being implemented. Support services for Councillors are however subject to further review following the enactment of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and associated development of the ward councillor role and the Councillor Call for Action.
R5 Ward performance data should be provided regularly to Councillors in an accessible format to enable them to formulate evidence-based	THIS Borough has now been implemented and is accessible to all. Ward-based performance information and data is available through the system. We are currently setting a date within the	February 2007	We are continuing to develop THIS Borough as an accessible portal to information and data about

Recommendation	Comments	Date	Update: October 2008
<p>judgments.</p>	<p>Members' Learning and Development programme for training around this system.</p> <p>Presentations of ward based information were developed for each LAP Steering Group to inform Local Area Action planning. These are available via the THIS Borough system. The ward data report is also currently being updated and will be disseminated to ward councillors and the Partnership more widely.</p>		<p>the localities in Tower Hamlets including at ward level. Further training in use of the system for members can be provided if required.</p>
<b>Improving linkages between the Partnership and ward councillors</b>			
<p>R6 The five scrutiny leads should have a standing invitation to the relevant Community Plan Action Groups and be encouraged to attend and participate.</p>	<p>CPAG papers are circulated to the relevant Scrutiny Leads to inform their work. The CPAG meetings are open meetings and the Scrutiny Policy Team incorporates the CPAGs into the activities of the Scrutiny Leads.</p>	<p>February 2007</p>	<p>Scrutiny Leads will continue to have access to the Community Plan Delivery Groups as a forum to test out the conclusions and recommendations from Scrutiny work relating to different service areas and issues. They will be invited to attend appropriate meetings.</p>
<p>R7 The accountability arrangements for Area Directors should be clarified to enhance the working arrangements of LAP steering</p>	<p>The Local Management Team, which the Area Directors form a part, is accountable to the Excellent Public Services Community Plan Action Group, with management reporting currently</p>	<p>October 2006</p>	<p>The Local Management Team, including Area Directors, is now within the span of responsibility of the</p>

Recommendation	Comments	Date	Update: October 2008
<p>groups.</p>	<p>through Chief Executive Directorate of the Council.</p> <p>Following the Partnership Review, we need to further promote the links between the different parts of the Partnership. As part of this, we will clarify the role of the Area Directors and how they can act as a bridge between the LAPs and the wider partnership structures.</p> <p>We have been awaiting the publication of the Local Government white paper to consider how best to link area based working with the wider Partnership within the latest policy framework. This will now be considered as part of the Council's and Partnership response to the white paper and its implementation.</p>		<p>Corporate Director of Communities, Localities and Culture.</p> <p>Area Directors continue to deliver an important bridging role between the different elements of the Partnership, particularly at the local level, by providing local knowledge and an understanding of the barriers and issues that can constrain progress in local areas.</p> <p>A further review of local management and arrangements for accelerating local delivery is scheduled to take place in early 2009.</p>
<p>R8 The Partnership Support Team should play a key part in the Member induction programme.</p>	<p>The Partnership Support Team was part of the Corporate team that planned and delivered the Member Induction programme. This included LAP induction sessions and information on the partnership role of being a councillor.</p>	<p>February 2007</p>	<p>This element will also be built into the planning process for the Induction programme of Members following the 2010 Council elections.</p>
<p>R9 A major role of the Partnership</p>	<p>The Partnership Support Team is continuing to</p>	<p>February</p>	<p>As stated above there will be</p>

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Comments</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Update: October 2008</b>
<p>Support Team should be to enhance the skills and capacity of LAPs, including councillors. This would develop their ability to make the links between their work as ward councillors with the work of the wider Partnership.</p>	<p>support and provide development opportunities for the LAPs (including councillors). The new role description places considerable emphasis on the councillors duties to not only attend Partnership events but to act as an advocate for the Partnership within their wards and other work.</p> <p>The Partnership Support Team organises four development sessions a year. These are informed by both the Partnership awaydays and discussions with LAPs. For example training on advocacy and questioning has been provided.</p> <p>It is important to deepen all councillors understanding of both the Partnership and the different agencies and organisations that contribute within it, so that they can maximise their contribution to the Partnership and act as advocates for the Partnership within their ward and other work.</p> <p>The formation of the Communities and Localities Directorate will help to increase the responsiveness of services with place, as outlined in the Local Government White Paper, and will strengthen the links between the Local Area Agreement and the wider Partnership.</p>	2007	<p>further programmes of capacity building designed to extend the skills and knowledge of LAP steering group members including councillors.</p>
<b>Developing the involvement of ward councillors in the Partnership through Overview and Scrutiny</b>			

Recommendation	Comments	Date	Update: October 2008
R10 A LAP based scrutiny project should be piloted which could include how 'choice and personalisation' of public services is being delivered in a local area.	The Local Government White Paper has changed the context for this recommendation. There are significant new powers for Scrutiny including the Community Call for Action. This is being explored, including a planned session with Scrutiny members, to consider how best this can be implemented.	February 2007	As part of this year's Scrutiny Work programme the Scrutiny Lead for Living Well is undertaking a review on tackling anti-social behaviour focusing on specific ward based data as well as piloting the 'Councillor Call for Action' model. This could be used as model to roll out ward based scrutiny projects.
R11 The monitoring of the Local Area Agreement through LAP-based performance indicators by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee should be developed.	A progress report on the Local Area Agreement was considered by Overview and Scrutiny Committee in December 2006. This will be developed further as part of the consideration of first year's performance.	February 2007	THIS Borough will be enabled to deliver up to date information on progress on the LAA target areas. This will assist the OSC to monitor more regularly.

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Response to Scrutiny Challenge Session on Interpreting and Translation Provision

Recommendation	Response / Comments	Date	Update – October 2008
<p><b>Recommendation 1</b> – That work is undertaken to review the collection and quality of data around interpreting and translation, and an examination of the practicalities and merits of implementing a customer tracking system across the authority is made.</p>	<p>The Corporate Equalities team receive regular monitoring data from Newham Language Shop. An examination of how we use and monitor this data will be made in order to consider how we can utilise this more effectively and improve our internal monitoring. An exploration will also be made of the practicalities of implementing a customer tracking system in consultation with other directorates, after seeking advice from other local authorities.</p>	<p>November 2008</p>	<p>An analysis of the interpreting and translation data has been undertaken to inform the Council's review of I&amp;T. Initial discussions have taken place with Newham Language Shop about developing the way in which information is collected and reported to enable the Council to better use this information to inform service delivery.</p> <p>A Customer Tracking System has been adopted by Tower Hamlets Homes. A recommendation of the I&amp;T Review is to explore how this can be expanded to services across the Council.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 2</b> – That the Lifelong Learning Service examine ways in which new arrivals and those with limited English be targeted and offered</p>	<p>The Lifelong Learning Service work closely with the main providers of ESOL in the borough. There is co-ordination between the partners to ensure that</p>	<p>November 2008</p>	<p>Two projects targeting new arrivals, both funded by the EIF, run in the borough. One, run by the Arbor Centre, targets those</p>

Recommendation	Response / Comments	Date	Update – October 2008
<p>the opportunity to take an entry-level ESOL course.</p>	<p>learners looking for ESOL classes are assessed and e directed to where provision is available or onto a waiting list. This would include checking eligibility. Two European Integration Fund projects target new non EU new arrivals. This work is co-ordinated through the External Partners Action Group and regularly reviewed. A progress report will be made.</p>		<p>here under a year and the project runs to 2010. The other is a consortium led by Tower Hamlets College and targets those in the UK less than five years . Progression for learners is co-ordinated by EPAG partners.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 3</b> – That work be undertaken to examine alternative sources of funding for ESOL through a number of channels including the Local Strategic Partnership, Section 106 agreements and opportunities created by the 2012 Olympics.</p>	<p>Funding for ESOL is kept under review through the Adult Strategy Group and opportunities to secure different funding streams are actively followed up. A Working Neighbourhood Fund (WNF) bid will be made Section 106 and Olympic possibilities will be explored with the relevant directorates. A progress report will be made</p>	<p>November 2008</p>	<p>A recent joint Tower Hamlets Newham application to the City Strategy Partnership was unsuccessful for the employment initiative targeting parents with ESOL needs. Nevertheless the resources will be available in the borough and managed by the successful contractor. Negotiations are near conclusion and local providers will be looking at ways to make appropriate referrals.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 4</b> – That an examination be made of the feasibility of</p>	<p>ESOL classes are held in a variety of community venues including schools,</p>	<p>November 2008</p>	<p>A WNF bid is being worked up by existing ESOL partners and</p>



Recommendation	Response / Comments	Date	Update – October 2008
<p>holding ESOL classes in conjunction with partner organisations, such as Poplar HARCA, and the voluntary sector at a range of accessible community locations, such as GP surgeries. Also to examine alternative methods of delivering English language courses.</p>	<p>community centres as well as at Idea Stores. Planning on a LAP basis will be taken forward more systematically in future in conjunction with the Extended Services co-ordinators and progression planned within cluster and mini-cluster groups. A progress report will be made.</p> <p>At entry level, ESOL needs to be organised as a structured learning programme with a teacher/tutor. We will explore other methods of delivery through EPAG</p>		<p>providers to extend the overall availability of ESOL in the borough and to tackle some specific needs for example intensive support for speaking and listening for those whose confidence undermines their performance. Partners and providers continue to meet and cross – refer where possible</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 5</b> - That work be undertaken to examine advertising and sign posting of ESOL services.</p>	<p>A review of signposting will be undertaken and the feasibility of limited advertising considered. A progress report will be made.</p>	<p>November 2008</p>	<p>This review has not taken place yet.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 6</b> – That an examination of the opportunities for partnership working on the issue of interpreting and translation be made.</p>	<p>The Corporate Equalities team are to explore the possibility of conducting a joint procurement exercise to procure interpreting and translation services in partnership with other organisations such as the PCT and Registered Social Landlords.</p>	<p>November 2008</p>	<p>A meeting with the PCT took place on at the beginning of Sept to explore the potential for joint procurement of I&amp;T services.</p>

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Response / Comments</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Update – October 2008</b>
<p><b>Recommendation 7</b> – That the arrangements for the provision of interpreting and translation services within the new ALMO be examined.</p>	<p>The Corporate Equalities team will liaise with colleagues in the Housing department to clarify the arrangements for the provision of interpreting and translation services within the new ALMO and take any necessary action.</p>	<p>November 2008</p>	<p>Tower Hamlets Homes (THH) will use the Council's main provider for interpreting and translation services, Newham Language Shop. It will access this service under the Council's arrangements. THH is currently developing a Communications Strategy, a subset of which will be an Accessible Communications Strategy setting out its policies and procedures in relation to interpreting and translation. This policy is being developed in liaison with the Council and will be consistent with the Council's I&amp;T policies and procedures.</p>

Response to Scrutiny Working Group Report on Access to GP / Dentistry Services

Recommendation	Comments	Lead	Update – October 2008
<p><b>Recommendation 1</b> That the PCT supports GP practices in developing a mechanism to share models of good practice especially so that GPs that are performing poorly work with GPs that are performing well.</p>	<p>The PCT recognises that there is a wide variability of GPAQ scores across Practices. Some Practices which have scored below average, have already contacted other practices which have received higher ratings and which have similar practice and population characteristics. They have identified the actions that these practices have taken and begun to apply these in their practices. The PCT actively encourages this sharing of good practice, by ensuring that comparative results are made available across all practices. PCT Managers review each Practice's GPAQ action plan at regular practice visits.</p> <p>The PCT will invite practices which received above average scores in the GPAQ survey to describe the methods and processes that exist in the practice which they feel contribute to this positive rating, and if they would be happy to support other practices. Information from these practices will be collated by the PCT into a written guide which will be sent to all practices.</p>	<p>Primary Care Development TH PCT</p> <p>Primary Care Development TH PCT</p>	<p>Analysis of the GP practice GPAQ surveys for 2007/08 has shown an improved score on all question areas across Tower Hamlets practices.</p> <p>Practices have been given the comparative results for all practices so have been able to identify practices which are scoring better than they are and to find out which approaches that these practices took were successful.</p> <p>Most practices (33 out of 36) have now established patient participation or “critical friends” groups. This is a significant increase on last year.</p>

Recommendation	Comments	Lead	Update – October 2008
<p><b>Recommendation 2</b></p> <p>That the PCT provide the Health Scrutiny Panel with a comparative analysis of the results of the 'Your Doctor, Your Experience, Your Say' with the General Practitioners Assessment Questionnaire Survey results. Furthermore, the PCT use the results of both surveys to identify areas of improvement and improve performance monitoring of services.</p>	<p>The PCT will provide a comparative analysis of the results of both surveys to the Health Scrutiny Panel – GPAQ (results were available in January 2007) and the Ipsos-Mori Survey "Your doctor, your experience, your say" (results were released end July 2007).</p> <p>The results of the Ipsos-Mori survey have now been analysed by the PCT and a Primary Care Access Strategy and action plan for improvement have been developed. An Access Steering Group has been established which will monitor performance of the PCT against the milestones in the action plan. The PCT will provide a progress report to the Health Scrutiny Panel.</p> <p>The Primary Care Commissioning Managers will ask Individual practices to provide an update on their progress with their action plans in response to the results of their GPAQ surveys. Results will be collated into a progress report.</p> <p>The 2007 GPAQ survey is being distributed to patients during August, September and October. Results will be available by February 2008. A summary report comparing these results with the previous year will be made available to the Health</p>	<p>David Groom, Access Re-Design Manager, TH PCT</p> <p>David Groom, Access Re-Design Manager, TH PCT</p> <p>Vivienne Cencora Associate Director, TH PCT</p> <p>Primary Care Development TH PCT</p>	<p>The PCT commissioned a comparison of the GPAQ survey results with the national MORI poll results and this demonstrated a strong correlation. As the ability to access a GP appointment is improving, patient experience as a whole with the practice is also improving.</p> <p>Tower Hamlets PCT is the most improved PCT in the country for the provision of access to GP appointments. The over-all average for patient satisfaction with 48 Hour access went up from 68% to 74%.</p> <p>The ability of patients to get through to their practice on the phone also improved more than another London PCT.</p> <p>All practices now have an action plan in place which aims to reduce demand for appointments, increase supply of appointments and deliver 100% access to appointments within 48 hours.</p>

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<p><b>3</b> That the PCT reviews the training and guidance provided to GPs and Dental Practice reception staff in particular focusing on Customer Services and understanding the needs of disabled and BME patients.</p>	<p>Scrutiny Panel.</p> <p>The PCT is commissioning training for all front of house staff in General Practice in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Customer care</li> <li>• Dealing effectively with conflict</li> <li>• Valuing and understanding diversity</li> <li>• Cultural competence</li> </ul> <p>For Dental Practices:</p> <p>The PCT will conduct a baseline assessment of training undertaken by reception staff in all General Dental practices in relation to customer care, disability and cultural awareness.</p> <p>The training modules commissioned for General Practice staff, as described above, will then be made available to dental reception staff.</p> <p>A directory of dental practices is currently being developed which will identify for each dental practice, the languages spoken by staff, and whether the clinical rooms and toilets are accessible for wheelchair users.</p>	<p>David Groom Access Re-Design Manager, TH PCT</p> <p>Sajid Shah, Dental Development Manager, TH PCT</p> <p>Sajid Shah, Dental Development Manager, TH PCT</p>	<p>All practices have now had 3 days of customer care training which included conflict management, valuing diversity and cultural competence. The training incorporated the use of actors and feedback has been excellent.</p> <p>Assessment of training needs for dental practice reception staff has not yet been undertaken. This will take place as part of the dental clinical governance programme later this year and training will be commissioned once the results of the survey are known.</p> <p>The directory of dental services has been published and the Find-a-dentist service is now established. This telephone advice service is commissioned by the PCT from LBTH and has received about 100 calls in relation to dentistry per month since it was set up in June 2008.</p>

Recommendation	Comments	Lead	Update – October 2008
<p><b>4</b> That the Primary Care Trust works with local schools, GPs and community organisations to begin compilation of data about local peoples oral health and improve uptake of dental services.</p>	<p>The PCT already has information about children's oral health at ages 5 years and 12 years. The PCT Community Dental Service provides dental inspections for children in primary and secondary schools, where parents have given consent, as part of the national epidemiological study into children's dental health.</p> <p>The Community Dental Service is also piloting a new service in September in two primary schools with the highest numbers of children identified with levels of dental decay. This pilot will involve the dentists and link workers from the Community Dental Access Project working closely with each school to develop parental understanding of the role of the screening in identifying children with disease and what they need to do to access suitable care. It will also offer application of fluoride varnish 2-3 times per year, to all children aged 5 or under, whose parents consent to this treatment. Following the school screening, the team will work with families to make sure they are fully supported in getting treatment.</p> <p>The PCT Dental Public Health Department is collecting data on the proportion of residents in each LAP who access dental care and will analyse trends</p>	<p>Ursula Bennett Head of Dentistry, TH PCT</p> <p>Ursula Bennett Head of Dentistry, TH PCT</p> <p>Desmond Wright Consultant in Dental Public Health</p>	<p>The pilot programme in two primary schools ("Happy Teeth") ran for the academic year. Lessons have been learned from the pilot and will be used to roll out a screening and fluoride application programme in other schools in Tower Hamlets during this school year for nursery and reception children.</p> <p>A survey of oral health in 300 adults aged over 16 years has been undertaken in Tower Hamlets during the period March to July 2008. Surveys were undertaken in people's homes and, with their consent, a clinical examination was undertaken by a dentist. The survey is now completed and the results are being analysed. Results will be available in November 2008.</p> <p>An epidemiological survey has also been undertaken with 3 year old children in Tower Hamlets&gt; Results are being analysed and a report will be available in November.</p>

Recommendation	Comments	Lead	Update – October 2008
	<p>in uptake, reporting in March 2008. The PCT does not have a comprehensive oral health screening programme for adults and older people and it is therefore not possible to systematically assess their oral health needs. However, the Community Dental Access Team, through use of mobile dental clinics does undertake screening and initial treatment for those who use the mobile service and will provide a report on the oral health needs for the population who are using this service.</p>	<p>Ursula Bennett Head of Dentistry, TH PCT</p>	
<p><b>Recommendation 5</b> That the Primary Care Trust undertakes a comprehensive review of the impact of the new dental contract and charging system and reports the finding to the Health Scrutiny Panel. In particular the Trust is asked to work with Dental</p>	<p>The PCT dental commissioning team monitors NHS contracts with Dental Practices to check for any changes in the types of patients being seen or in the treatments being provided. Information is available to the PCT on Units of Dental Activity undertaken by each practice, patients charges collected and any variances between expected and actual achievements. During mid-year and annual review meetings with Dental Practices, the PCT has taken the opportunity to explore issues of access and availability. The PCT is also working with the complaints department and PALS to get a better understanding of patient experience. A review of these findings will be reported to the Health Scrutiny Panel.</p>	<p>Sajid Shah, Dental Development Manager, TH PCT</p>	<p>The Department of Health has recently published the findings of patient responses to questionnaires about dental services for 2007/08. Two key indicators were patients' satisfaction with the dentistry received and patients' opinion about time taken to get a dental appointment. Around 83% of patients in Tower Hamlets were satisfied with the dentistry received compared to 88% in London. Sixty nine percent (69%) of Tower Hamlets patients were able to get a dental appointment as soon as was necessary compared to 82% in London.</p> <p>There has been an increase in the number of</p>

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Comments</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Update – October 2008</b>
Practices that do not work with NHS patients and are currently just working with private patients.	The PCT does not have a commissioning role with private dental practices and therefore has no legitimate way of working with them. A number of dental practices have NHS contracts to provide NHS care only to those patients who are exempt from paying charges. Where an opportunity arises to renegotiate these contracts, the PCT will include NHS charge-paying patients. The PCT will report on any changes in the review mentioned above.	Sajid Shah, Dental Development Manager, TH PCT	<p>patients accessing NHS dental services commissioned by Tower Hamlets over the past 2 years, but there is still more work to do to improve access.</p> <p>Currently 5 practices (out of the 28 dental practices in Tower Hamlets) only provide NHS care to those who are exempt from paying NHS charges. Where possible these contracts will be renegotiated to include fee-paying patients.</p>
<b>Recommendation 6</b>	The PCT will ensure that information is made widely available about dental practices which currently	Sajid Shah, , Dental Development	Patients with disabilities are able to access the Community Dental Service and an



Recommendation	Comments	Lead	Update – October 2008
<p>That all disabled patients without an accessible dental practice near their home be offered the option to be referred to the Mobile Dental Unit.</p>	<p>have wheelchair access.</p> <p>The PCT will publicise the route whereby patients can be referred to the dental mobile service or, depending on their specific needs, to the PCT domiciliary dental service.</p>	<p>Manager, TH PCT</p>	<p>appointment can be arranged in special surgeries equipped to provide better care for people in wheelchairs.</p> <p>In addition, domiciliary visits can be arranged if necessary via the Community Dental Service.</p> <p>The PCT will ensure that the find-a-dentist service has information about which dental practices are wheelchair-accessible, and how people can be referred to the community dental service.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 7</b> That the Mobile Dental Unit visits schools and local community events to make this service more visible and target residents from a young age.</p>	<p>The mobile dental unit currently visits local community events, e.g. LAP area events, whenever possible and this service is popular. The schedule of locations and times for the mobiles across Tower Hamlets will be publicised.</p> <p>The Mobile Unit will be visiting the Primary schools within the pilot mentioned as part of recommendation 4.</p> <p>A report on activities and locations where the Mobile Units have operated will be made available to the Health Scrutiny Panel.</p>	<p>Sajid Shah, Dental Development Manager, TH PCT</p> <p>Sajid Shah, Dental Development Manager, TH PCT</p>	<p>The mobile dental unit was used to support the public consultation event for the new dental practice in Bow.</p>

Recommendation	Comments	Lead	Update – October 2008
<p><b>8</b> That the PCT reports to the Health Scrutiny Panel on how good practice and performance from around the country - particularly areas that face similar issues as the borough - informed the development of the Oral Health Strategy.</p>	<p>The PCT will provide a report to the Health Scrutiny Panel on the evidence base that was used to inform the development of the Oral Health Strategy.</p>	<p>Desmond Wright, Consultant in Dental Public Health , TH PCT</p>	<p>A report was provided in the February 2008 update for the Scrutiny Committee.</p> <p>The PCT Oral Health Strategy was informed by the national strategy “Choosing Better Oral Health”. The Department has also recently produced and evidence based oral health toolkit which has been sent to all dental practices.</p> <p>The PCT is using evidence from a new and innovative model of dental practice in Oldham and Salford to inform the model of service for the new dental practice being established in Bow.</p>
<p><b>9</b> That Tower Hamlets PCT develops a major publicity campaign that explains the role of GPs, Dentists and other primary care professionals and also increases</p>	<p>The PCT supports the need for an information campaign explaining the role of different professionals and how to access different types of health services. The PCT Communication Lead will work with colleagues in the Local Authority, voluntary sector and Primary Care, to identify the most appropriate ways of publicising this information, through developing a health information communication strategy and campaign programme.</p>	<p>Jeremy Gardner Associate Director Head of Communications and Community Involvement &amp; Sajid Shah, Dental Development Manager , TH PCT Sajid Shah, Dental Development</p>	<p>The PCT launched an information campaign – “Easier, Quicker and Better Care in Tower Hamlets”, explaining how to access care in General Practice.</p> <p>Leaflets and posters have been distributed to all GP surgeries, dentists, community pharmacists and optometrists for display; and also to public libraries and East End Life. The find-a-doctor helpline was established in</p>

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Comments</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Update – October 2008</b>
<p>awareness of the availability of additional primary care services including Pharmacy First and the Walk-In Centres. The PCT should work closely with the Council and voluntary sector in undertaking this campaign. The Working Group suggests that East End Life is used to publicise information about how to join a GP and Dental Practice and also the rota for the Mobile Dental Unit. The Mobile Dental Unit rota should also be provided to all GPs, Dental Practices, and community organisations</p>	<p>The PCT will ensure that the Dental Mobile rota is more widely available – through pharmacies, dental practices, health centres, GP surgeries, local community organisations, councillors and the local media.</p>	<p>Manager , TH PCT</p>	<p>June 2008.</p> <p>In relation to dental services, the following actions have been taken by the PCT:</p> <p>Ensured that details on dental services are fully up to date and available on the NHS Choices website.</p> <p>Commissioned the new find-a-dentist service from LBTH which started in June 2008.</p> <p>A public consultation exercise was conducted during May to June to canvas views on the setting up of a new dental practice in Bow. This included a short questionnaire for residents in Laps 5 and 6 posted in East End Life, discussion at LAP meetings, a Saturday morning information event in Roman Road market, and a facilitated focus group.</p> <p>The PCT is planning a marketing and information campaign on dental services to be launched in the autumn</p> <p>The rota for the mobile dental unit is sent to East End Life and also displayed in local GP surgeries, community pharmacists and community centres.</p>

Recommendation	Comments	Lead	Update – October 2008
<p>working in the field of health as well as local Councillors.</p>			<p>The PCT Oral Health Promotion Team has a regular presence at community events and they also took out a one-page advertisement in East End Life in July 2008.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 10</b> That the PCT works closely with 'LINKs' and the Health Scrutiny Panel to monitor primary care services including asking LINKs Members to make service visits to GPs and Dental Practices.</p>	<p>The PCT welcomes the opportunity to work closely with LINKs and the Health Scrutiny Panel in monitoring primary care services and is happy to coordinate visits to General Practice and Dental Surgeries. PCT Primary Care Services will be guided by the PCT Lead for Patient and Public Involvement, regarding the most appropriate way of working with LINKs.</p>	<p>Abbas Mirza Associate Director, TH PCT</p>	<p>The PCT welcomes the opportunity to work closely with LINKs and the Health Scrutiny Panel in monitoring primary care services and is happy to coordinate visits to General Practice and Dental Surgeries.</p> <p>We are aware that the LINKs is just being established and have highlighted the need for closer working with nominated public representatives in relation to dental services.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 11</b> That the PCT works closely with the Council and voluntary sector to improve patient education. In</p>	<p>The PCT will proactively work with Health Guides and Health Trainers so that they have the information that they need to signpost residents to appropriate services and provide appropriate health information to patients.</p> <p>The PCT will coordinate patient education schemes aimed at maximising the ability of patients to</p>	<p>Abbas Mirza Associate Director, TH PCT</p>	<p>The PCT has maintained its commitment to the Health Trainers and Expert Patients programmes.</p>

Recommendation	Comments	Lead	Update – October 2008
<p>particular using Health Trainers to link up residents with local community organisations, PCT and the Council.</p>	<p>manage their health conditions, e.g. through the Expert Patient Programme.</p> <p>The coordinated publicity and information campaign outlined in recommendation 9 will be central to this programme.</p> <p>A progress report will be made available by end March 2008, although this is a long term commitment for the PCT.</p>	<p>Abbas Mirza Associate Director, TH PCT</p>	

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## Response to Health Scrutiny Review of Tobacco Cessation in Tower Hamlets

Recommendation	Response / Comments	Date	Update – October 2008
<p><b>R 1</b> That the Tobacco Control Alliance (TCA) include an elected member to reflect the health scrutiny role and raise the profile of this work.</p>	<p>TCA has invited a member to join the Alliance</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>An elected member has been invited to join the alliance and has accepted.</p>
<p><b>R 2</b> That the Communications Strategy accompanying the Tobacco Control Strategy be overseen by the Tobacco Control Alliance.</p>	<p>The Communication Strategy is reported directly to the Alliance. Leads from the PCT and LBTH attend these meetings in order to ensure that the action plans for the communications stream fit with all the other workstreams.</p>	<p>July &amp; September 2008 TCA meetings  To be reviewed quarterly thereafter by the TCA</p>	<p>The Communication strategy continues to be overseen by the Tobacco Control Alliance. Meetings are held every 2 months and minutes are available on request.</p>
<p><b>R 3</b> That the Communications Strategy, design of future campaigns and resources for tobacco cessation publicity reflect the community of Tower Hamlets and take account of the results of social marketing exercises commissioned by the Primary Care Trust.</p>	<p>The communications strategy reflects the overall aims and outcomes of the strategic work which addresses this. A needs assessment and current market research as well as social marketing have identified future campaigns, merchandise and health promotional materials. Examples include a resource pack for faith groups, a dedicated programme of campaigns for the Bangladeshi community, resources for Ramadan and for young people. Campaigns for</p>	<p>Communications in community Languages to be produced from August – October 2008 Pre –Ramadan campaign leading up to September 2008 Targeted Marketing exercise in</p>	<p>Information on tobacco use and services available has been produced in Bengali and Somali as well as English. A website has been developed. The results from social marketing work are informing the following projects: 1. Raising awareness of the risks of tobacco use and marketing cessation services to Bangladeshi men. This is a</p>

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	<p>students and manual workers, pregnant women and those marginalised have been planned. Resources in Sylheti and Somali are planned.</p> <p>The PCT health intelligence unit monitors changes in ethnicity and languages needs so that new materials can be produced and culturally sensitive activity planned.</p>	<p>October 2008 aimed at Bangladeshi Men</p> <p>Prevention programme – targeted work in Schools from September 2008</p>	<p>target group in terms of preventable ill health and premature death. October 2008</p> <p>2. Preventing young people starting and helping them to stop. September 2008</p> <p>Ramadan campaign is currently underway. There has been widespread cover in all the press and media channels. 2 TV shows have been broadcast on Channel 5 and Bangla TV and 2 programmes are coming on MCR radio.</p> <p>There is mosque based activity in 9-11 mosques.</p> <p>The PCT health intelligence unit continues to review the needs of the community.</p>
<p><b>R 4</b></p> <p>That communications resources be developed to target the users of all types of tobacco consumption, including chewing tobacco, Paan and sheesha pipe smoking.</p>	<p>The development of these resources is contained in current action plans. A leaflet on chewed tobacco has been produced (Paan) and an evidence based review of sheesha pipe smoking has been commissioned so as to ascertain the health risks prior to the development of materials.</p> <p>Another piece of work is establishing prevalence of sheesha smoking in Tower Hamlets which is currently low.</p>	<p>Mapping of Paan &amp; sheesha sales &amp; enforcement activity ongoing throughout 2008/09</p> <p>Detailed dates available through work programme plans</p>	<p>The Tobacco control alliance work reflects that whilst smoking tobacco via cigarettes poses the greatest health risk to the community tobacco is used in other forms which require different approaches.</p> <p>Paan information has been produced and sheesha information is in draft.</p> <p>The research into Paan use has been commissioned. Significant enforcement and research has taken place into Sheesha use</p>



Recommendation	Response / Comments	Date	Update – October 2008
<p><b>R 5</b> That the Tobacco Control Unit develop a service level agreement with the new helpline provider to capture information to help understand user's needs and to gauge the effectiveness of communications resources.</p>	<p>Established, SLA in place and evaluation data collected and agreed</p>	<p>20/06/2008 - and quarterly monitoring thereafter</p>	<p>The Health Hotline first quarterly report will be end of September. The number has been widely publicised.</p>
<p><b>R 6</b> That the Trading Standards Team develops a business plan to demonstrate the time and effort involved in enforcement, education and support activities.</p>	<p>The Trading Standards and Environmental Health Commercial Service have now produced a comprehensive action plan for 2008/9, which has been resource assessed and will be monitored on regular basis.</p>	<p>01/05/2008</p>	<p>The smoke free action plan has been produced and good progress against targets has been made. In service monitoring is taking place every month and quarterly performance reports are being provided to the PCT for evaluation. Visits to business are on target and the development of a Smoke Free award for business is completed. With plans to have at least 30 businesses signed by the end of the year</p>
<p><b>R 7</b> That the Primary Care Trust introduce measures to ensure all health professionals working in hospital or community settings offer advice to change smoking habits and refer smokers to services to help them quit, whenever possible.</p>	<p>There is a programme of public health champions being developed to oversee this work within the provider/front line services including mental health services. A programme of training has been developed and all front line staff now receive brief intervention training</p>	<p>20/06/2008</p>	<p>15 public health champions from the PCT provider unit have been trained and will champion tobacco cessation within their work areas. Training has been completed in the mental health unit with representatives from all wards. A member of staff has been</p>

Recommendation	Response / Comments	Date	Update – October 2008
	(level 1 training).		<p>appointed to develop skills within the borough's acute hospital and will commence a programme of training in October.</p> <p>All GP practice staff and community pharmacists have been trained.</p> <p>Dental practices are now being trained- to complete by Dec 2008.</p> <p>Ophthalmic practitioners will start training in Jan 2009.</p>
<p><b>R 8</b></p> <p>That the PCT commission more Level 1 and Level 2 Smoking Cessation advisors and develop an action plan to re-energise inactive advisers.</p>	<p>There is currently a programme to review all smoking cessation provision in Tower Hamlets in partnership and new commissioning areas for 09/10 are currently being identified as part of the PCT commissioning process. The objective is to ensure that services match need and that there is appropriate capacity. 50 staff are currently trained monthly. A programme of re-activation is underway.</p> <p>Dental services are now commissioned.</p>	01/09/2008	<p>All current advisers have been contacted and those not active have been released.</p> <p>A training review is under way and from Jan 2009 a new licensing system for advisers will begin</p> <p>Dental practices are now being trained- to complete by Dec 2008</p>
<p><b>R 9</b></p> <p>That the PCT commission more voluntary and community sector organisations including exploring options through the Tower Hamlets Partnership to deliver smoking</p>	<p>A tendering process will occur in July 2008 in order to commission additional capacity from the third sector. All current third sector provision have had their funding confirmed for 2008-2009 and have</p>	01/09/2008	<p>There has been some slippage with the tendering progress. A recovery plan will ensure that this is completed by the end of July. A member of the PCT has been appointed to develop capacity and links within the</p>

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Response / Comments</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Update – October 2008</b>
cessation services.	had funding increases in order to reflect additional requirements.		community and third sector. Early examples of this include work with Poplar Harca and several Somali groups.

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Response to Scrutiny Working Group Report on Use of Consultants

Recommendation	Response / Comments	Date	Update – October 2008
<p>R1 That the following criteria and definition of a consultant to be adopted across the Council.</p> <p>Consultants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have a defined work scope with deliverables</li> <li>• Often provide a report as an output that provides recommendations for further action but the consultant is not contracted to deliver at that time.</li> <li>• Have payment contingent upon completion of staged completion of the work</li> <li>• Do not act as staff members i.e. do not have Tower Hamlets e-mail addresses, phone numbers or desks.</li> <li>• May be able to provide a</li> </ul>	<p>There is tendency for the term ‘consultancy’ to be used fairly loosely and sometimes pejoratively, It is useful for the Council to have a definition of what is meant by consultancy, not least to enable guidelines and standards for the procurement of consultants to be established and if necessary enforced.</p> <p>This definition has been adopted for financial planning and monitoring purposes, and all future reporting of the costs of consultancy will follow this definition.</p> <p>This will be reinforced with consultancy guidance on the Procurement intranet page, and detailed guidance will be included in the Contracting Toolkit, which is due to be published on the intranet during Summer 2008.</p>	<p>April 2008</p> <p>July 2008</p>	<p>The Contracting Toolkit, including guidance on commissioning of consultants, is currently in draft form.</p>

Recommendation	Response / Comments	Date	Update – October 2008
<p>substitute to undertake the work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are not in a templated position for the purposes of the Comensura contract – i.e. they do not relate to standard jobs within the Council, which could be provided by either permanent or temporary staff</li> <li>• Are contractually responsible for their outputs</li> <li>• Are liable for their own performance and the content of their work</li> </ul>			
<p>R 2 That future work on the procurement strategy to include programme of activities to help disseminate and embed procurement related policies within the organisation, e.g. presentations at all Directorate Management</p>	<p>Procurement strategy is due to be reviewed during 2008, through the Corporate Procurement Board, with wide consultation across the Council. This will be backed up by workshops and training to promote the new strategy.</p>	<p>Draft Procurement Strategy by Oct 2008, for approval by Dec 2008.</p> <p>Code of Practice</p>	<p>Development of the Procurement Strategy is on target.</p>

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Response / Comments</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Update – October 2008</b>
<p>Team meetings and officer training.</p>	<p>A Procurement Code of Practice is currently in draft form, reviewing the procurement rules and procedures. The document will cover matters relating to the commissioning of consultants.</p> <p>Consultation has commenced on a restructure of the Procurement Service, with the objective of developing a more proactive approach, which covers all non-pay spend throughout the whole contracting cycle. This is based around Category Management, whereby all spend is divided into four broad categories (Construction &amp; Repairs; Care &amp; Commissioning; Environment &amp; Facilities; Corporate Services), and Category Managers will have strategic stewardship of their nominated categories. Using this approach will help to disseminate and embed effective policies and procedures across the organisation.</p>	<p>to be finalised by October 2008.</p> <p>Restructure complete by November 2008.</p> <p>Available now</p> <p>Tollgates currently being trialled. Full implementation by October</p>	<p>The Code of Practice has been issued for comments, and is currently being redrafted in the light of feedback.</p> <p>The restructure of the Procurement Service is proceeding according to plan.</p> <p>Tollgates are still in trial phase, but due for formal launch in October.</p>

Recommendation	Response / Comments	Date	Update – October 2008
	<p>Officer training is currently available through the corporate training programme. The standard training consists of three modules (Essentials of Procurement &amp; Contract Law; Letting Procurement Contracts; Contract Management), but the training will be adapted for specific requirements, such as large consultancy contracts.</p> <p>All high value contracts (over £250K) require the approval of Competition Board, and a new project appraisal process of “tollgates” has been introduced to facilitate this. Tollgates ask targeted questions about the client’s approach to the contract, and make recommendations for improvement. They also provide the opportunity for Procurement to identify gaps, provide support and promote good practice in contracting.</p> <p>Presentations for Directorate officers to be arranged Summer / Autumn 2008. These will focus on the emerging Corporate</p>	<p>2008.</p> <p>October 2008</p>	<p>Reference to consultancy contracts is included in the internal training courses, which run from September 2008.</p>



Recommendation	Response / Comments	Date	Update – October 2008
<p>R 3 That financial reporting on procurement of consultancy services should clearly identify source of funding such as Section 106 or Lottery Funds.</p>	<p>Procurement Strategy, Procurement Code of Practice, and the category management approach.</p>		
<p>R 3 That financial reporting on procurement of consultancy services should clearly identify source of funding such as Section 106 or Lottery Funds.</p>	<p>It is important for the authority properly to manage all funds for which it is responsible. The use of consultancy is sometimes particularly valuable in relation to one-off projects or programmes, for which one-off funding streams are often used. Future financial reports will identify separate funding streams</p> <p>The Procurement Service employs various tools to track expenditure, which will inform the Category Plans. Areas where consultants are widely used will be examined in the category planning process, and alternative means of achieving objectives will be encouraged through a standard approach to options appraisal.</p>	<p>May 2008</p> <p>June 2008 – March 2009</p>	<p>Development of Category Plans is dependent upon appointment of Category Managers following the restructure of the Procurement Service. These posts have been advertised in September 2008.</p>

Recommendation	Response / Comments	Date	Update – October 2008
<p>R4 That targets for reducing expenditure on consultants should be highlighted as an objective in the Tower Hamlets Strategic Plan. The Corporate Management Team to set indicative targets and for progress to be reported back.</p>	<p>The authority spends relatively little on consultants (around 0.1% of total spend on average over recent years), and expenditure varies markedly from year to year. Often expenditure on consultants is the most effective way of delivering benefits to the community. It is proposed that, while CMT should monitor expenditure on consultants, setting a target may be counter-productive in the long run, and the focus should instead be on assurance that consultants are used in the right circumstances and their outputs are monitored and managed correctly.</p>		
<p>R5 That directorates review expenditure on consultants to assess the extent to which they are used and to establish a baseline for</p>	<p>(See R4)</p>		<p>Directorates are required to submit monthly reports to the Corporate Director of resources on their use of consultants. Directorate Management Teams review the use</p>

Recommendation	Response / Comments	Date	Update – October 2008
<p>reviewing their use of consultants. Directorates should identify areas and set targets for reducing future spend in alignment with the Council's horizontal savings exercise.</p>			<p>of consultants on a regular basis.</p>
<p>R 6 That directorates should increasingly use internal secondments and graduate trainees for one-off projects, tying in with the corporate approach to developing staff.</p>	<p>Directorates should consider the implications of using consultants in preference to staff and restrict the use of consultants to those areas where local capacity cannot deliver the same outputs.</p> <p>This advice will be included in the Procurement intranet pages, but responsibility for exploring secondments and trainees must lie within individual Service areas.</p>		<p>To be included in Procurement Guidance referenced in R1</p>
<p>R 7 That options should be explored to enable the corporate Consultation and Involvement team to become a gatekeeper for procuring</p>	<p>The Best Value Review of Consultation and Involvement identified a number of recommendations to adopt good practice and rationalise the</p>		

Recommendation	Response / Comments	Date	Update – October 2008
<p>external consultation services.</p>	<p>consultation and engagement activities across the Council, which are yet to be implemented. This is an opportunity to take forward these recommendations.</p> <p>1. Proposed consultation activities to be approved by the Participation and Engagement team and to develop and agree a set of guidelines detailing the approval process.</p> <p>In order to facilitate the gatekeeper role it is proposed that CMT nominate Consultation Leads in Directorates and for Partner Organisations to nominate lead participation staff within their organisations.</p> <p>2. To develop a shared resource for undertaking opinion research through the development of proposals with EPS CPAG.</p> <p>Options will be explored for greater shared working across Council Directorates. Any additional</p>	<p>March 08</p> <p>March 08</p>	

Recommendation	Response / Comments	Date	Update – October 2008
	<p>activities will need to be met through existing resource arrangements.</p> <p>A joint post is currently being explored with the PCT at the moment to coordinate activity with the PCT though not focused on training or delivery.</p>		

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