

## **APPENDIX 2:**

### **SUMMARY OF THE PUBLIC CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN AND THE COMMENTS RECEIVED.**

#### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The Conservation Strategy has been created in consultation with, and the detailed input of, a wide range of organisations, both locally and nationally. Recognised experts in the field, including in the national context English Heritage and the National Amenity Societies were consulted, and all locally knowledgeable groups have been consulted for their views and guidance.
- 1.2 But just as importantly, arrangements were made to consult with the widest range of local people for their input, because it is those who know the local history and context of Tower Hamlets who had much to offer in terms of knowledge of the borough's history. In formulating the Strategy's specialist aims, their view and guidance on the future of the heritage was counted as vital. Extensive internal consultation also occurred within the Council itself, including the convening of a steering group with key internal stakeholders.
- 1.3 The first draft Strategy was subject to very widespread public consultation, following posting on the Council's website for comment; residents, landowners and stake-holders were notified and were given the opportunity to comment / meet regarding the documents. Two public meetings focused upon the new Strategy.
- 1.4 This report provides Members with a briefing on the consultation process and the responses received during that consultation which ran from December 2009 until April 2010.

#### **2. Background**

- 2.1 The Government's Planning Policy Statement 5, "Planning for the Historic Environment" (PPS 5), is the basis for the creation of the Conservation Strategy which advises: "Plans and strategies should set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment."
- 2.2 PPS 1, "Delivering Sustainable Development", further advises that "local communities, businesses, the voluntary sector, and individuals have a right to a high quality planning service that is fast, fair, open, and transparent." This consultation process has been set up to ensure the greatest openness and transparency in the evolution of this new Strategy.

#### **3. Consultation Undertaken**

- 3.1. A consultation plan was written to guide and inform the consultation process in conformity with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement. Additionally, an Equality Impact Assessment was carried out on the new Strategy and the process around its evolution.

- 3.2 The draft strategy, with options including information about the Public Meeting, was placed on the Tower Hamlets website and a related consultation survey website. A consultation email address was also advertised to receive comments.
- 3.3 Letters were sent to all stake-holders with an interest in the borough's heritage, including LAP's, major landowners, public agencies, amenity societies, residents associations and registered social landlords, informing them of the draft document and seeking their comments. The Tower Hamlets Interfaith Forum, Access Group and LBGT Group were contacted in this way. All stake-holders were given the opportunity of meeting officers for detailed discussions.
- 3.4 A Public Meeting was held on the 20th of January 2010 at Oxford House in Bethnal Green and was advertised in East End Life and on the Council's website, stake-holders were also invited by letter. The building was fully accessible and an exhibition of consultation material was on display and a comprehensive presentation was made by officers of the draft document. Provision was made for translation and the aurally and visually impaired. 35 members of the public attended and took part in discussions; comments were both made directly at the meeting to officers and later in writing. All comments were recorded and analysed. A further key local stake-holders meeting took place on 10th February at the Town Hall.
- 3.5 Drop-in sessions with exhibitions attended by officers were run at the Council's Idea Stores, and consultation drafts of the strategy deposited at the Council's Idea Stores, libraries and Bancroft Road Reference Library.
- 3.6 Council departments were consulted internally for their comments regarding the drafts and workshops were held with key officers in evolving the document.

#### **4. Comments Received**

4.1 Comments were received at the Public Meetings and drop-in sessions, at face - to-face meetings, by post and by email. In all approximately 700 comments on individual matters were received from residents, businesses and stake-holders at the national, regional and local levels; below are set out the organisations who responded.

- English Heritage
- British Waterways
- The Historic Chapels Trust
- Historic Royal Palaces
- Leaside Regeneration
- Design for London
- Transport for London
- Mile End Old Town Residents Association
- Jewish East End Celebration Society
- Gateway Housing Association
- Tower Hamlets Conservation and Design Advisory Panel
- Docklands Light Railway

4.2 A wide ranging and useful discussion was had with those who attended the public meeting and this meeting generated many useful comments that were acted on in revising the document. The representations received covered a wide range of issues; the key ones are set out below. The Strategy has been adjusted in line with those public comments .

4.3 There was general public support for the overall aims of the Strategy in preserving and enhancing the character of the Borough’s historic environment. There were no objections to the main proposals of the Strategy, comment was made as to details in the document.

4.4 Revisions were suggested to:

1.	Make document clear and easy to read, with clear definitions and explanation of scope of matters covered.
2.	Increase participation in the heritage, chiefly around communication with the public, key stakeholders and third sector organizations, as well as learning, particularly among owners and young people; particular comment was made by the Docklands Light Railway to not restrict the ongoing development of the DLR and to work with the DLR towards managing its heritage, and that the aim of conservation, regeneration and improved public transport are complementary, and that the Strategy should not restrict the deemed planning powers of the DLR.
3.	Increase learning about how to protect the heritage, particularly with building owners and amongst young people;
4.	Bring forward greater education and assistance for RSL’s, community and regeneration organisations;
5.	Emphasise climate change, sustainability and available heritage skills;
6.	Improve the condition of the heritage, particularly that empty or at immediate risk;
7.	Emphasise the re-use of heritage buildings;
8.	Need to balance conservation with need for new development and infrastructure, ensuring that a focus on heritage is not so excessive as to be favoured at the expense of vital future change;
9.	Highlight the role of enjoyment of the heritage locally, increase heritage interpretation and tourism;
10.	Recognise the role trees and streetscape have to play in the heritage and make improvements to historic public realm;
11.	Recognise particular heritage types Including Industrial archaeology, public houses, University Settlements, cemeteries, pie-and-mash shops, Art-Deco buildings, museums and archives and historic social housing;
12.	Highlight the need for wider protection of 'non-designated' heritage of communal value, borough views, locally important buildings and places;
13.	Improving the quality of historic building records, and make records accessible on the web;
14.	Proactively emphasise archaeology, canals, markets and industrial, twentieth century as well as social history;

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| 15. Increase protection of historic buildings and places, and their setting, and use enforcement action. |
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## **5. Considering the Representations and Next Steps**

- 5.1 Officers scheduled and assessed in detail all the comments received, which are available for inspection. This schedule has informed the amendments to the text of the document where appropriate, the text being extensively revised to reflect public comment. It is this public consultation which has formed the most important thread of the Strategy evolution, and it is upon this that the Strategy Goals are based.
- 5.2 An acknowledgment letter or email will be sent to all individual organisations who commented on the draft documents, thanking them for their kind assistance and providing feedback to comments regarding the course of action taken and information about the completed strategy and next steps of implementation.
- 5.3 Where comments on the strategy were not directly relevant, these will be taken up for consideration by Council officers outside the strategy framework.