

# London Borough of Barking and Dagenham

## Notice of Meeting

### THE EXECUTIVE

**Tuesday, 29 April 2003 - Civic Centre, Dagenham, 7:00 pm**

**Members:** Councillor C J Fairbrass (Chair); Councillor C Geddes (Deputy Chair); Councillor J L Alexander, Councillor S Kallar, Councillor M E McKenzie, Councillor B M Osborn, Councillor J W Porter and Councillor T G W Wade.

**Declaration of Members Interest:** In accordance with Article 1, Paragraph 12 of the Constitution, Members are asked to declare any direct/indirect financial or other interest they may have in any matter which is to be considered at this meeting

17.04.03

Graham Farrant  
Chief Executive

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### AGENDA

1. **Apologies for Absence**
2. **Minutes - To confirm as correct the minutes of the meeting held on 15 April 2003 (circulated separately)**

#### **Business Items**

*Public Item 3 is a business item. The Chair will move that this be agreed without discussion, unless any Member asks to raise a specific point.*

*Any discussion of a Private Business Item will take place after the exclusion of the public and press.*

3. **Embedding Workplace Basic Skills In London Local Authorities Project (Pages 1 - 23)**

Appendix 3 - Spend Profile will be circulated separately.

4. **Managing Members and M.P. Enquiries in Social Services Report (Pages 25 - 36)**

**5. Attendance at Conferences (Pages 37 - 38)**

**Discussion Items**

**6. Best Value Review of School Attendance (Pages 39 - 83)**

**7. Youth Support and Development Service Plan 2003/04 (Pages 87 - 124)**

**8. Appeal System - Housing Allocation Offers and Homelessness Offers (Pages 125 - 135)**

**9. Audit of Child Protection Services: Laming Recommendations (Pages 137 - 138)**

A copy of the draft response to the Audit requirement will be circulated separately.

**10. Procurement Spend to Save (Pages 139 - 144)**

**11. Any other public items which the Chair decides are urgent**

**12. To consider whether it would be appropriate to pass a resolution to exclude the public and press from the remainder of the meeting due to the nature of the business to be transacted.**

**Private Business**

The public and press have a legal right to attend Council meetings such as the Executive, except where business is confidential or certain other sensitive information is to be discussed. The list below shows why items are in the private part of the agenda, with reference to the relevant legislation (the relevant paragraph of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972).

**Discussion Items**

**13. Education Private Finance Initiative (PFI) Selection of Preferred Bidder (Pages 147 - 152)**

*Concerns a Contractual matter (paragraphs 8 and 9)*

**14. Procurement of Capital Projects (Pages 153 - 156)**

*Concerns a Contractual matter (paragraphs 7 and 9)*

**15. Accord LBBD Partnering Arrangement - Accord Costs for Non Inclusion (Pages 157 - 159)**

*Concerns a Contractual matter (paragraphs 9 and 10)*

- 16. Accord LBBB Repairs and Maintenance Partnership - Support to Community Housing Partnerships (Pages 161 - 163)**  
*Concerns a Contractual matter (paragraphs 9 and 10)*
- 17. Pondfield House - Conditions of Use by the Accord LBBB Partnership (Pages 165 - 169)**  
*Concerns a Contractual matter (paragraphs 9 and 10)*
- 18. Thames Accord / LBBB Repairs and Maintenance Partnership - Conditions of Contract (to follow)**  
*Concerns a Staffing Matter (paragraph 1)*
- 19. Technical Support to the Community Housing Partnerships - Appointment of Designer (Pages 171 - 173)**  
*Concerns a Contractual Matter (paragraph 7)*
- 20. Land in Abbey Road - Relocation of the Canoe Club (to follow)**  
*Concerns a Contractual matter (paragraphs 9 and 10)*
- 21. Consideration of Alternative Locations for the Alcohol Advisory Service (Pages 175 - 180)**  
*Concerns a Contractual matter (paragraph 9)*
- 22. Refurbishment of Civic Centre Public and Civic Areas (Pages 181 - 188)**  
*Concerns a Contractual matter (paragraphs 9 and 10)*
- 23. Regeneration of Becontree Heath (Pages 189 - 190)**

#### **Business Items**

None.

- 24. Any other confidential or exempt items which the Chair decides are urgent**

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**THE EXECUTIVE****29 APRIL 2003****REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION, ARTS AND LIBRARIES**

<b>EMBEDDING WORKPLACE BASIC SKILLS IN LONDON LOCAL AUTHORITIES PROJECT</b>	<b>FOR INFORMATION</b>	
<i>This is a report on developments designed to improve the basic literacy, numeracy and ESOL (English for speakers of other languages) skills of the Council's workforce.</i>		
<b><u>Summary</u></b>		
This report outlines the benefits of joining a pilot project to embed workplace basic skills provision. The main features of the project are to:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure policies are established which address employees' needs;</li> <li>• Provide training for managers, HR staff and Learning Representatives</li> <li>• Provide basic skills courses for council employees</li> <li>• Demonstrate the effectiveness of education in improving job skills.</li> </ul>		
<b><u>Recommendations</u></b>		
The Executive is asked to note the aims of the project and support its implementation across all Council departments. This will involve;		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encouraging staff to attend contextualised basic skills courses;</li> <li>• Training key personnel (HR managers, Service managers, Learning representatives and identified champions); and</li> <li>• Setting up a steering group.</li> </ul>		
<b><u>Reasons</u></b>		
The project provides external funds and expertise, which will support the Council's stated commitments to develop the skills of the whole of its workforce. In the past the take up of training amongst manual grade staff has been very low.		
<b>Contact Officer:</b> Mark Adams	Adult Basic Skills Coordinator	Telephone: 020 8270 4882 Fax: 020 8270 6791 Email: <a href="mailto:mark.adams@lbbd.gov.uk">mark.adams@lbbd.gov.uk</a>

**1. Background**

- 1.1. The 'Embedding Workplace Basic Skills in London Local Authorities Project' will involve three London local authorities, start in March 2003 and be managed by the Basic Skills Agency on behalf of the London Development Agency.

- 1.2. The Adult Basic Skills Initiative, backed by TMT, has made a successful bid to join this pilot on behalf of Barking and Dagenham Council. TMT have agreed in principle to release employees for up to three days per year to attend basic skills courses. 'Basic Skills' encompasses literacy, numeracy and ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) below NVQ level 2 (GCSE level).

## **2. Consultations and Implications**

- 2.1. TMT and representatives from HR, Trade Unions and Learning Representatives in all departments have been consulted; initial support has been received although some issues have already been identified.
- 2.2. To reflect this and in order to start the process of change the project will take a flexible and sensitive approach to negotiating the release of employees to attend training.
- 2.3. In the short-term the bid allows for the fully funded release for managers and learners to attend meetings and courses. This is to make involvement with the project attractive, to encourage managers to overcome barriers, and allow the positive effects of training to be demonstrated.
- 2.4. In the longer term it is envisaged that employees' basic skills needs will be addressed through embedded policies and procedures. By measuring performance criteria such as job skills improvement, internal job progression, staff retention and staff absenteeism the project will seek to make a business case for training. This should guarantee the future of such important training.
- 2.5. Over the 25 months for the duration of the project the benefits will be:
- A grant of £94 000 to develop and implement a workplace basic skills strategy.
  - A grant to employ an experienced workplace basic skills practitioner.
  - Sustained support to embed workplace basic skills training.

With a commitment from the Council to provide:

- Release for 15 staff to attend training and develop strategies and policies (HR staff, Managers and employee representatives)
- Release for at least 100 learners to attend 30-hour courses to develop their literacy, numeracy and language skills.

In order to be successful the project will need to be supported at all levels across the Council.

### **Background Papers given as appendices**

<sup>1</sup> B and D application.

<sup>2</sup> Monitoring performance and success criteria.

<sup>3</sup> Spend profile Barking and Dagenham.

<sup>4</sup> Functions and tasks in workplace literacy, numeracy and ESOL.



## APPLICATION FORM

### GRANT TO EMBED WORKPLACE BASIC SKILLS TRAINING IN LONDON LOCAL AUTHORITIES 2002 - 2005

*Please refer to the Grant Prospectus when completing this form.*

Local Authority: London Borough of Barking and Dagenham	
Address: Civic Centre Dagenham RM10 7BN	
Correspondence Address: Mark Adams Community Inspection and Advisory Service The Westbury Centre Ripple Road Barking IG11 7PT	
Contact name: Mark Adams	Tel: 020 8270 4892
	Fax: 020 8270 6791
	Email: mark.adams@lbbd.gov.uk
Job title: Adult Basic Skills Coordinator	Mobile: 07941 794455

**Your organisation (For information only)**

1.1 Please list numbers of low and semi-skilled staff by grade and department, indicating where these staff are contracted out.

**Department**

**Numbers of low and semi-skilled staff/ areas of work**

**Grade**

**Contracted out?**

Leisure and Environmental services

Cleaners- 480

Leisure attendants- 50

School crossing patrol- 45

Grounds maintenance- 80+

Refuse - 60

Drivers -50

Roads, Highways, Misc -150

**Manual Grades 1-6 Spinal points 4-11**

NONE

Social Services

Home care- 175

Care home workers- 135

Health disabilities, day careworkers- 72

**Manual Grades 1-6 Spinal points 4-11**

NONE

Housing and Health

200 Direct Labour Organisation

30 Building caretakers

**Manual Grades 1-6 Spinal points 4-11**

NONE

Education, Arts and Libraries

Catering- 300

Supervisory assistants 584

Caretakers 60

Transport -90

**Manual Grades 1-6 Spinal points 4-11**

NONE

Chief Executive's

NONE

NONE

NONE

Total staff (all grades):

Council Employees

F/t Male - 2450 F/t Female - 4232

P/t Male - 246 P/t Female - 2058

2696

6290

TOTAL 8986



- What staff development activities are currently offered to low and semi-skilled employees, including those in contracted out services?

Currently no services are contracted out although there are imminent plans to contract out some services in the Leisure and Environmental services and Social services Departments.

**Corporate training** - Most training is geared mainly towards managers. The training suitable for low and semi-skilled employees is detailed below. There is currently very limited funding in this area.

There is a corporate Employee Development programme in place, including:

- Corporate induction
- Self-management
- Handling stress
- Taking minutes
- Communications programme- General communications/ Listening/Persuading & Negotiating/Writing/Meetings/Assertion/Presentation (Evening sessions)- Listening skills, Better writing-Effective meetings-Assertiveness-Giving a Talk
- Customer Focus- Assertion Without Aggression/Customer Care skills/Customer service/Managing Violence and Aggression/Building Equalities into customer care
- Raising Standards- Health and Safety/ Equal Opportunities
- NVQ programme customer service, Health and Safety

#### **Departmental training**

In addition, departments have their own training programmes:

#### **Leisure and Environmental Services**

- Communication skills, Health and Safety Training, Equalities, NVQs

#### **Social Services**

- Communication, Health and Safety, Moving and handling, disability awareness, first aid, food hygiene

#### **Housing and Health**

- Induction
- Health and Safety training
- Job-related training

#### **Education, Arts and Libraries**

- CPD programme for classroom assistants

#### **Chief Executive's**

- (see Corporate training)

## Experience in supporting basic skills learning at work (For information only)

2.1 What past or current experience does your Local Authority have in supporting employees to improve their literacy, numeracy and ESOL skills?

The Employee Development Programme was mainly management-focused. Take up of communications courses amongst manual employees was very low. All departments have a training programme and a Training and Development Officer. These personnel attend a monthly Lifelong Learning Working Party where the introduction of Basic Skills into workforce development has been the agenda for the past four years. A total of 8 manual employees were registered on Basic Skills Courses in the workplace with the Adult College. Indications are that this number has increased. Borough residents are now prioritised for some courses.

In March 2001 the Council set up the Adult Basic Skills Initiative to tackle the problem of poor basic skills within the Borough. A key objective, mentioned in Skills for Life, states 'Barking and Dagenham local education authority are initiating a five-year programme of training and accreditation for council staff, volunteers and others to provide the necessary community capacity in teaching literacy and numeracy skills.' A Management group including all Council departments and a Working group was set up to oversee the Initiative. From January 2002 a team was recruited, comprising specialists in adult literacy, numeracy and ESOL to support providers and develop learning materials. External consultants audited provision in the Borough. More recently a Basic Skills Agency Consultancy audited programme systems amongst major providers, based on the Quality Mark. A good working relationship has been established with providers through the ABSI management/working groups and a recently formed tutor-training group. A whole Borough framework details the Borough's plans till 2006 and beyond. Partners include the Adult College, Barking FE college, voluntary sector providers, Ford Offline and LEARNDIRECT.

The Council has given support to the nationally recognised Union Learning funded project, Growth through learning. This has built an extensive network of 35 Learning representatives across all departments. The second phase has begun and aims to double this number. Feedback from active Representatives revealed very limited participation of training of any kind amongst low and semi-skilled staff. Most recently a workplace basic skills tutor has been seconded onto the Union project from the Adult College to plan and deliver courses to Borough employees over the current year. All relevant EMPNTO mappings have been acquired and are currently being used to plan 'Frontline skills courses' using a consultant from Workbase, the Basic Skills specialists. Recruitment of learners has begun mainly in the Leisure and Environmental services department.

Basic Skills awareness courses and consultations have taken place with Learning Representatives, senior managers across the Council (as part of an Investment in People Conference), Council Members, Departmental Heads of Human Resources and senior managers in the Leisure and Environmental services Department. The Employer Toolkit has been used widely. Links have been established with the Local job centres, Citizens advice bureaus and Information, Advice and Guidance networks. As members of the Workplace Basic Skills network ABSI recognises the importance of learning from specialists in the field.

2.2 How does this experience inform your application?

There are a number of measures in place across the Borough upon which we can build. ABSI has been established to coordinate the Council's existing commitments in this area and is available to coordinate the project. Since Members and Senior managers across all Council Departments are fully aware and supportive of these aims this application recognises the need to concentrate on the crucial elements of encouraging demand for courses and embedding processes to make training accessible and routine. Consultations have revealed that, although most managers are fully supportive, negotiating release is a major barrier. The application recognises that this is a major issue and, although in the long term the benefits of training should overwhelmingly outweigh costs within each Department, in the short term more funding will be needed in this area. The standing of Barking and Dagenham as virtually the worst authority in the country for combined Adult Literacy and numeracy standards together with a poor record of addressing the basic skills needs of its workforce highlights the need for urgent and radical action. The building of the network of Learning Representatives will be strengthened. Experience has shown us that recruitment of learners is most successful through a trusted human contact. If Representatives have, themselves, been through the whole process they will be in a much better position to encourage and support new learners. With this in mind this bid seeks to raise the profile of our Learning Representatives even higher by giving them the experiences of assessing, improving and testing their own skills before persuading others to do the same.

### 3. Evidence of need and vision – 20 Marks

3.1 What do you consider to be the need for improving literacy, numeracy and ESOL amongst employees in your Local Authority, based on nationally and locally available evidence?

Of the 87 473 adults in the Borough 27 405 are estimated to have urgent literacy needs and 29 957 are estimated by the Basic Skills Agency to have urgent numeracy needs. These represent a combined total of 32.9% of the population aged 16-60 (the worst figures in London) It seems reasonable to extrapolate that low paid employees, a target group in the strategy, would fall into this category in at least these proportions implying a minimum of 1203 employees needing urgent help in literacy and numeracy alone. (Census figures indicate a rapidly rising ESOL population also.) Initial findings from a Learning Representative survey suggest that the proportion in the workplace may be far higher. Amongst those working in the Parks Department for example around 50% have volunteered themselves for our first Basic Skills courses this month. Many manual employees have done little or no literacy or numeracy training since leaving school. The Borough has the lowest proportion of HE qualifications in the country. Most were educated in this Borough at a time of very low achievement. This contrasts with the Borough's recent huge improvement in school achievement- it was the fastest improving in the country from 1997 to 2001- making an inter-generational gap between employees and their children.

3.2 What is your organisation's vision for literacy, numeracy and ESOL development amongst your employees? Vision: 'A community that expects functional literacy and numeracy throughout the adult population' (Whole Borough Framework for Action) Council members: 'Low or very low basic skills is a key issue for the community of Barking and Dagenham. High expectations and aspirations are part of this vision based on the propositions that: aptitude is a function of time and opportunity to learn, not innate ability, nor what happens early in life or at school; capacity to think and learn declines, if at all, only minimally with age; literacy and numeracy are available to all - no-one is illiterate - all can get better - literacy is present in everyone's life embedded as a set of social practices; programmes are needed to work on everyone's literacy and numeracy ;motivation of men benefits them and their families; writing is more difficult to deal with than reading; speaking and listening are vitally important also in this community.' Targets have been set by the Council to achieve national average rates in adult literacy and numeracy by 2010. Literacy and numeracy development plans (subject to Best Value appraisal) have been established. 'A clear and workable Workplace basic skills policy' and 'Good penetration of the workforce, especially the hard to reach groups' have been cited as key aims of Council policy. The establishment of 1:1 appraisals is a key aim. The use of a growing number of community venues has been planned for. A total of 10 new UKONLINE centres, designed specifically with teaching basic skills in mind, are due to be completed this year.

3.3 How does this proposal support your Local Authority corporate objectives? (Reference should be made to key performance indicators).

There are 7 Community priorities- Raising pride in the Borough, Developing rights and responsibilities with the local community, Improving health, housing and social care, Better education and learning for all, Regenerating the local economy, Making Barking and Dagenham cleaner, greener and safer, Promoting equality, opportunities and celebrating diversity. The authority uses the Balanced scorecard framework for planning. The four perspectives are "Community first, Customer First" (Community Leadership role and customers), "Performance Counts" (Our processes to ensure efficient delivery of quality services), People Matter (The organisation, staff and culture) and "Funding the future" (Financial issues). Each department team sets performance indicators derived from this framework. People matter clearly recognises the development of its employees as key. The Borough regeneration strategy, preparing for the huge Thames Gateway development spells out clearly the aims of developing adult skills throughout the community. The Council as a whole has recently applied for Investors in People status. An assessment is due in March. This objective makes it essential to demonstrate commitment to the 4 principles required: Commitment, Planning, Action and Evaluation. Learning opportunities for all of the workforce are an essential part of the Standard.

#### 4. Demonstrating commitment and preparedness - 20 Marks

4.1 Please describe the extent of senior management commitment for the activities proposed in this application. How far are key players engaged within your organisation?

In preparing the bid the following senior managers have been consulted, contributed to the application and confirmed their support personally and jointly through TMT (the Management Team of the Council- The Chief Executive, Heads of all Departments- Education, Arts and Libraries, Social Services, Housing and Health and Leisure and Environmental Services- and the Borough Personnel Officer). The Head of Corporate HR, Departmental Heads of Human Resources, Training and Development Officers within each Department, Senior managers in the Leisure and Environmental services department, the Borough Equality and Diversity and Corporate Communications Officers have also been consulted at a recent event and have confirmed their support.

This support builds on existing commitments which mirror the aims of the project: The Borough as a whole has applied for IIP status, TMT has agreed 6 days per annum release for all Learning Representatives (in excess and ahead of legislation) and up to 3 days release time for employees wanting Basic Skills courses (2 days for everyone else). Further evidence for support for the provision of Basic Skills in the workforce can be found in the Organisation Development plans for each Department, the Regeneration strategies, the Adult and Community Learning Plans and the Adult Basic Skills Initiative Minutes from April 2001 to date. The Borough is committed to raising the skills of its workforce up to and beyond the NVQ training targets set by the Government. In addition the Borough is committed to developing 1:1 appraisals for all and is already a corporate Member of the Plain English campaign.

4.2 What links have already been established with key local players including your LSC, basic skills training providers and Learn Direct and how does this inform your proposal?

The nationally recognised TUC-funded Growth Through Learning Project has been and continues to be a major link in training Learning Representatives and supporting this agenda, most recently in the appointment of a full-time workplace Basic Skills tutor. In partnership with ABSI and the Adult College this project has already begun to train Representatives and recruit Council Employees for courses planned in conjunction with Workbase the Basic Skills specialists.

Major Trade unions ( T&GW, GMB, GMB APEX, Unison) are fully supportive of the aims of ABSI and current plans to engage the workforce. Union involvement is further supported through TUC learning services, which is represented on the ABSI management group. Negotiations at a senior level are possible using the well-established JNC/Union forum, which meets regularly. Existing Links between these partners include the ABSI management Group, the Growth through learning Steering Group and the Corporate HR's Lifelong Learning Working Party. The Employer toolkit and BSA Awareness Raising Pack have been used extensively to persuade key players of the importance of overcoming resistance to change.

The ABSI Coordinator sits on the London East Learning and Skills Council's External reference group and the Centre of Excellence Operations Group and has won support and separate contracts for teacher training (ESF/LSC) and developing ESOL (Regeneration/LDA). Contacts with major providers have been further strengthened by the recent formation of a tutor-training group.

The local LEARNDIRECT hub manager supports the bid and has suggested the possibility of establishing LEARNDIRECT 'pods' in accessible Council venues. Because of the existence of various links and contacts built up since January 2002 the proposal seeks to extend and develop our existing plans.

## 5. A realistic delivery plan – 10 Marks

5.1 How have you developed your delivery plan to make use of organisational strengths and previous experience?

In Barking and Dagenham much of the infrastructure, commitment and agreement to develop and embed a workplace basic skills programme is already in place. The delivery plan seeks to build on these strengths using expertise from specialist consultants to ensure that training is effective and workable.

Specialist consultants will be engaged to advise our existing workplace tutor on all aspects of good practice in needs analysis, assessment, programme planning, delivery and review. This will guide current plans for imminent courses and enable the project to begin as soon as possible. Since the Council is already working closely with the Adult College on this, a target and delivery schedule could be drawn up quickly using established contacts.

Groups have been established which could be mandated to take over the internal management of the project, namely the Lifelong Learning working party or the Adult Basic skills Initiative management group. Since each HR department has its own Training and Development officer these staff could be offered the planned training. Payment in recognition of the time commitment and extra work needed would be made to each department.

The number of Learning Representatives will be increased, and their profile raised, through intensive training designed to enable them to experience the whole process of basic skills development first-hand. This would strengthen their knowledge base and give credibility to their recommendations. Following training 10 could be selected to take the Level 2 qualifications to ensure a spread across departments and venues.

Through intensive discussions, early morning meetings and persuasion by the ABSI training and development officer, a number of supervisors/ frontline managers have already emerged as supporters. Key personnel would be offered the bespoke training provided through the project. Recruitment of learners has already begun, focussing on the Leisure and Environmental services department. The Delivery plan outlines a gradual process of recruitment through Departments aiming to gain support in depth across the different layers of management. This should encourage reluctant employees to come forward and ensure that progress is built on solid foundations.

The plan recognises the difference between making a funded-project work and embedding policy for the whole organisation, independent of extra funding. The Steering Group will look at ways of moving forward the process of 1:1 appraisals in Council policy terms and provide guidance on ways of establishing training needs, especially at the induction stage.

As Corporate members of the Clear English campaign the Council has already begun the process of revising public documents both in paper and electronic format. This will be extended in the plan to include workforce documentation across service and HR teams and formats. Commercial materials will be purchased to supplement our own in-house materials, which will be developed by the workplace tutor in conjunction with the literacy, numeracy and ESOL specialists in the existing ABSI team. The plan recognises the importance of using software as well as paper-based materials to take advantage of the Borough's expanding network of venues for e-learning. In order to maximise the effectiveness of training much emphasis will be placed on making training relevant to the workplace. This will be achieved through the use of extensive needs analyses, EMPNTO units and resources used by existing practitioners, downloaded from the net. The Corporate Management team has agreed the bid including the HR commitments required by the project in terms of staff release. To overcome the possible reluctance of learners to take the national tests a number of measures have been built into the bid, including Learning Representative training to break down the barriers and extra intensive training sessions to teach test techniques and give time for practice. To create a sustainable corporate strategy will entail embedding this issue in all organisational plans and amongst key personnel at every level in each department.

## 6 Added value - 10 Marks

6.1 What additional outcomes will be generated through this funding over and above activities already planned?

As a result of this project it is envisaged that there will be many additional benefits accruing to the organisation, Council employees and the public in general. These will include:

- Performance targets- as a result of improved performance by the workforce
- Additional learning outcomes through other training programmes- by increased involvement at all levels, not just Basic Skills.
- Move the Council further towards delivering on their stated aim of 1:1 appraisals for all -Group appraisals as a stepping stone are currently being used
- NVQ targets in Care and other vocations -currently delayed progress due to unmet Basic Skills needs
- Strengthening of the link between induction and training requirements @ 1,2,4 and 6 months- currently under-utilised for identifying training
- Council awarded Investors in People status -Whole Council assessment due in March
- Improved IIP procedures -from inter-departmental working
- Entitlement to training guarantee realised in practice -procedure of take-up of entitlements unclear at present
- Organisational development plans embed Basic Skills -The 'People part' of departmental balanced scorecards which guide planning
- Strengthened Learning representative training programme- Targets to double the number of Learning Representatives and to encourage 300 learners to take up further learning
- Identification of key individuals as additional champions within departments over and above the minimum number required by the bid
- Growth in the proportion of men involved in adult literacy, numeracy and ESOL- Meeting targets for 20% increase year on year to 2006 in the number of adults studying literacy and numeracy
- Increased participation in all forms of learning through family involvement- Key targets to increase the number of adults on Family courses
- Strengthened inter-departmental links
- Improved inter-agency links, e.g. Social Services/Health (from a shared agenda)





## 7 Delivery plan - 15 Marks

Describe how funded activity will be delivered including key activities and milestones. Your plan should include all Local Authority outcomes listed in Section 2 of the prospectus. An example of possible milestones and activities is given at the end of this form.

Outcomes	Milestones & Activities	Target Date	How Evaluated
An established partnership with a good quality, specialist basic skills provider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Basic skills provider selected</li> <li>Consultant practitioner provided</li> </ul>	<p>March 03</p> <p>March 03</p>	<p>Provider named, agreed targets and delivery schedule</p> <p>Specialist consultant engaged / support programme agreed</p>
Working with the project team, to support capacity building for partner providers to include a minimum of 20 basic skills specialists receiving a minimum of 30 hours additional training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Arrange ABSI/Lifelong learning group to obtain mandate to deliver contract –becomes internal steering group</li> <li>Select HR reps</li> <li>Select Learning reps after intensive training</li> <li>Select supervisors from first targeted team</li> <li>Tutor training group identifies additional basic skills specialists from partner providers</li> <li>Specialists complete training</li> </ul>	<p>March 03</p> <p>April 03</p> <p>April 03</p> <p>May 03</p> <p>June 03</p> <p>January 04</p>	<p>Minutes of group show agreement to all aspects of the contract</p> <p>Named staff represent all departments</p> <p>50% trained reps with agreed time release</p> <p>Named staff planned release</p> <p>Staff register for support training</p> <p>20 specialists trained in workplace basic skills</p>
Working with the project team, to recruit 100 organisation employees to receive 30 hours minimum basic skills training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plan strategy to recruit 5 cohorts of 20 learners per period (2 classes per cohort)</li> <li>Recruitment (preceded by learning needs analysis) in 5 cohorts working mainly, but not exclusively, within departments- DLES then</li> </ul>	<p>March 03, September 03, January 04, April 04, November</p>	<p>Written strategy</p> <p>Learner starts (ILRs)</p>

	Social services, Housing & Health, EAL and Chief Execs	04	
A workplace basic skills policy for the whole organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Terms of policy mapped by internal steering committee</li> <li>Departmental HR contribute reports for good practice guide</li> </ul> <p>External steering group advises internal steering group on drafting corporate policy, subsequently ratified by TMT and Members</p>	<p>July 03</p> <p>December 03</p> <p>March 04</p>	<p>Minutes agree policy guideline</p> <p>Departmental reports</p> <p>Corporate policy published</p>
Workforce documentation revised to meet the guidelines of the Plain English Campaign	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All departments submit agreed documentation to the Plain English Campaign/ Crystal Mark</li> </ul>	August 03	Paper and electronic resources collected and identified for revision in priority order
An in-house basic skills resource bank which could include customised learning material, schemes of work and lesson plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish bank of commercially available resources</li> <li>All SOW/learning materials written in consultation with ABSI, stored and added to bank (including ABSI resources)</li> </ul>	April 03	Catalogue of resources Growing bank of high quality annotated materials
A flexible basic skills employee training programme, including progression tracking for all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learning needs analyses begin</li> <li>5 cohorts of learners (20 each cohort) complete interview, initial assessment, Training programme, diagnostic and final assessment process. Identify best practice for assessment processes, standard recording sheets and</li> <li>Steering committee reviews each cohort and drafts training programme in light of experience. Employee training programme guidelines written</li> </ul>	<p>March 03</p> <p>July 03</p> <p>November 03</p> <p>March 04</p> <p>November 04</p> <p>March 05</p> <p>March 05</p>	<p>Departmental/Occupational exemplar Learning needs analyses</p> <p>Programmes matched to Core curricula and EMPNTO units</p> <p>Assessment models established for each stage</p> <p>Written guidelines</p>
Learning pods established in two workplace venues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Purchase PCs, furniture and software</li> <li>Site Pods strategically to maximise use and security</li> </ul>	<p>June 03</p> <p>December</p>	

<p>A team of appropriately trained organisation staff, of whom at least 16 have been enabled to undertake a minimum of 30 hours of logged training each in aspects of support for basic skills over the life time of the project</p> <p>50 organisation employees to gain nationally recognised basic skills qualifications (achievement raised by one level of the National Basic Skills Standards)</p>	<p>30 hr logged package of learning re: Basic skills support completed: 1 x Champion 5x HR (Level 4/5) 10 x Learning Representatives/ Supervisors (Level 2/3)</p> <p>10 x Learners from each cohort complete intensive post-course unit and pass national test</p>	<p>03</p> <p>March 04 March 04 March 04</p> <p>August 03 December 03 April 04 December 04 March 05</p>	<p>16 registered staff achieve L units, Level 2 support units and bespoke training as appropriate</p> <p>Certificates recording level improvement in Literacy, numeracy (ESOL)</p>
<p>A sustainable strategy for workplace basic skills delivery embedded in the organisational HR strategy</p>	<p>HR reps write reports of experiences to departmental heads</p> <p>All Balanced scorecards include mechanisms for identification, personal development plans, planning, delivery and review of workplace basic skills</p> <p>Corporate HR agrees exit strategy delivery models for 04/05</p>	<p>March 04 June 04 December 04</p>	<p>Reports submitted to each department</p> <p>Balanced score cards show sustainable exit strategy</p> <p>Corporate HR strategy</p>

## 8 Sustainability - 15 Marks

**8.1** What steps will be taken to ensure sustainability once the project has ended? What is your business case for continuation?

In formulating this bid I have become acutely aware of the importance of long-term future training priorities being independent of additional funding. In order to be sustained the project must make the case for workplace basic skills training to be self-financing. Below Level 2 such training needs to be viewed as essential, more than justifying the costs involved. Moreover this message needs to be spread throughout the organisation to include policy-makers, HR personnel at all levels, supervisors, senior managers, trade unions and learners themselves. It must be emphasised that this process can never be 'completed'. In an ever-changing world there will always be a need to improve skills for all. Education and training for all will always be cheaper than ignorance. This message will make Basic skills training essential. The project will be promoted as a means to start this process off, to overcome inertia and show the benefits.

Sustainability will be ensured by building in commitments to employees at all levels across the organisation. Organisational development plans will guarantee that this is a standing item on managers' agendas. Access to appropriate training needs to be seen as an equality issue. Most managers have access already. Appraisals are used to set personal development aims and plan suitable training outcomes. A system will be established which seeks to make this a common process for all.

Sustainability will be achieved by a system, which generates demand for training from managers and from employees themselves.

To ensure continuity the issue needs to be on the agenda at each stage of an employee's working life, from induction to retirement. Commitments will need to be shared and publicised in order to promote access for all. Managers will be trained to recognise and overcome barriers to learning by matching job requirements to people's skills. The Investors in People commitment will require this.

The Corporate and Departmental training programmes will be reviewed to ensure appropriate courses are available and accessible at all levels. Basic skills courses will be publicised in different forms and learning representatives, in person, will encourage learners to apply.

The establishment of the resource centre and ICT pods will allow continued access to e-learning and distance learning and encourage the Borough Housing Department's 'Lofts for learning initiative'.

Signposting to the Borough's many ICT venues will also support this process.

The Adult Basic Skills Initiative will continue beyond the life of the project as a permanent team. This will ensure that good practice is shared and built upon and expanded into the community. Champions in different roles will emerge to reenergize the learning revolution by using project examples to demonstrate the possibilities.

Lifelong learning is a key part of the Borough's 2020 vision. With the huge new development of the Thames Gateway and the regeneration of the whole area the issue of skills will remain high on the Council's agenda long into the future.

The case for continuation will include the presentation of data gained directly from the experience of the project. Measurable data will include sickness, accident rates, recruitment and retention rates, absenteeism, punctuality and numbers of qualifications. Longitudinal studies of a selection of learners will show the massive impact which a short course can have on those previously excluded from the learning process. Learners themselves will be asked to describe the effects of their training on their morale, accuracy and ability to meet targets and deadlines. Improvements to Council services will be dramatic since most frontline employees have a direct immediate effect on the services they deliver. This effect alone will guarantee support for the continuation of workplace basic skills programmes. The authority will link with partner authorities involved in the London project and the National Support project, to create a snowball effect of continued good practice. Becoming part of a national initiative will create momentum for further development.

## 9 Cross-cutting themes – 10 Marks

9.1 How will this proposal promote equality and diversity. (For example, how do proposals take account of employees' needs for childcare, travel, translations, etc.)

This proposal supports the new Borough Equalities and Diversity policy framework which states, 'The Council is committed to eliminating discrimination on the grounds of : Class, Age, Disability, Colour, Ethnic origin, Nationality, National origin or race, Gender, Transgender/Transexual, HIV/AIDS status, Marital status, Faith, Caring responsibility for dependents, sexuality or unrelated criminal conviction. Equalities and Diversity Officers have been recruited to each department to ensure these commitments are adhered to. The Borough officer responsible for this has endorsed the bid. By promoting equal access to training and development it is essential to realise that there are a number of further barriers to overcome before this is realised in practice. This is primarily a people issue. A number of channels need to be cleared to enable individuals to be treated according to their needs. The timing of courses is crucial, as is their venue. Some shift patterns have already been mapped and this will be extended to all departments to maximise the opportunities to attend. The proposal allows for an extensive needs analysis for individuals. It is important to consult the learners themselves about possible effects for the timing and venue of courses rather than rely on assumptions. A number of possible venues already identified are newly built and so (physical) access issues should be minimised. Childcare issues for courses outside work time or at distant venues may be partially overcome through the use of crèches at newly built sites using funding drawn down through the Learning and Skills Council. Any travel expenses incurred will be reimbursed to reduce the effects of this barrier to participation. The publication of courses needs to fit into the readability terms of the project. Materials will need to be carefully developed for ESOL courses in consultation with the Borough ESOL Development Officer. A variety of courses will be planned to attract different types of learners. Open access to these courses will be promoted personally, rather than relying on printed materials. Even though this is expensive experience has shown that this is the most effective method.

9.2 To what extent will information and communication technology (ICT) be used to support the project?

The use of Information technology will be a key theme running throughout the project. The maximum amount of capital funding will be used to purchase PCs to provide access to the internet and Borough Intranet which many frontline workers lack. Negotiations have begun with LEARNDIRECT to look at the possibility of creating LEARNDIRECT 'pods' with these machines.

A key aim of the project is to encourage the take up of ICT learning opportunities in the Borough, which has one of the lowest PC ownership rates in the country. There is a real danger of people becoming disenfranchised by being unable to participate in the e-learning revolution. Employees will be encouraged to use the extensive network of Learning villages, City Learning Centres, UK Online and LEARNDIRECT centres to supplement and enhance taught programmes. The Adult College has recently expanded into several of these community venues, which have been built with the integration of the latest ICT in mind. Each site is equipped with PCs, ceiling mounted data projectors, retractable screens, multimedia TV and video. The workplace tutor has been trained in the use of this display technology as well as new interactive technology. He intends to integrate ICT to enhance the effectiveness of delivery and participation. A borough-wide licence has been purchased for the latest adult basic skills software (Target Skills). This will be supplemented will be added to through the bid and will complement relevant national ICT materials in literacy, numeracy and ESOL. We will be closely supported by the Education ICT team who have, as part of their remit responsibility to spread the use of this technology. All Borough providers are being offered training in the use of this equipment. This training for the trainers is often the key component in developing changes in practice.

All members of the ABSI team are ICT literate. Extensive use will be made of the extensive Borough Website and Intranet for information and communication including the new HR online facility.

## 10 Ability to deliver

20 marks

10.1 What structures and systems will be in place to manage the proposed activities?

Overseeing the project at the highest level will be the management team of the Council comprising the Chief Executive, Team Heads, Borough Personnel Officer and Finance Officer. The ABSI Management group (which includes representatives from all involved parties) or the Lifelong Learning party (comprising Corporate HR, Departmental Human resources heads and training and development officers) could be used -certainly at the initial stages- to incorporate some of the functions as a steering group.

The Adult Basic Skills Initiative team which has well-established contacts to all relevant parties, a team of specialist professionals and admin support would assume micro-level functions. Communication with Unions will be facilitated through ABSI, the Growth through learning steering group and joint JNC/Employer/Union meetings. A Tutor training group has recently been established to facilitate the training of tutors, following the BSA consultancy report. This will link tutor inputs directly and disseminate information.

10.2 Please describe how you will monitor progress, ensure continuous improvement and monitor financial activity.

Primary data capture will be through ILRs, as these will be a requirement of LSC funding. Use will be made of all the recommended Skills for Life infrastructure, including the new Initial BSA Assessment and mappings to the core curricula. Online assessments and Basic Skills management software will allow a greater amount of information to be kept on all learners.

ABSI data and that collected through The Growth through learning project will supplement the data required through the project. This includes current internal monitoring of separate targets for literacy, numeracy and ESOL.

Experience in managing data through current LSC/LDA contracts will be used to develop a flexible and effective MIS.

ABSI will use its existing financial management system (Oracle) and staff to monitor all financial activity.

10.3 Identify the main risks in achieving the objectives of the proposal and say how these will be managed or overcome. At the highest level the organisation is committed to achieving all the objectives of the proposal. The main risks to achieving the outcomes and possible strategies to overcome them are as follows:

- Lower Recruitment of learners than expected- 2 full-time workers (Growth through Learning/ABSI development officer) experienced and successful recruiters have already recruited 80 learners
- Poor attendance of learners despite recruitment-Management/supervisors' guarantees sought for release. Most managers are fully supportive.
- Low completion of learners- Investigate causes and adjust programmes as necessary
- Failure to engage with national tests- Intensive courses planned for this. Champions to experience and promote qualifications
- Unused Computer pods- Use Learndirect expertise to site and signpost them and the Borough publicity machine to promote.
- Unclear policies- Make as plain and simple as possible. Link to appraisal process
- Policies don't work- Investigate causes of undiagnosed training needs and remove blockages
- Management time commitment lacking- Refer to senior management HR/Agreement to this proposal
- 30 hours training not enough- Possibility to extend using 50:50 funding agreement. Look at linking courses to LSC programmes in different providers.

## 11 Financial information

10 Marks

Please provide a breakdown of the total cost of your application to show what the funding will pay for. Attach this as an appendix.

- Enter the total staff, participant, and other costs in the table below
- The breakdown of costs must be specific: For example: administration @ 15 hrs pr wk x 52 wks x £8.50 per hour
- Capital expenditure should not exceed 10% of the £94,000 grant. Single items of equipment should not exceed £1500.
- Other costs should cover items such as rent, stationery and consumables.
- You may be asked during the assessment process to justify your expenditure and to provide more details. An example of a funding profile is provided at the back of this form.

Total Staff Costs (including £10 000 local authority match funding, and £41 250 grant for employment of basic skills consultant practitioner)	£ 108 045
Total Participants' Costs (includes £36,500 LSC match funding for delivery of basic skills programmes to Adult College and £9 000 grant towards development costs for Adult college)	£ 67 100
Total Capital Costs	£ 9 400
Total Other Costs Rent, Stationery, Consumables, Software	£6 200
<b>Total Proposal Costs</b>	<b>£190 745</b>
Total Number of LDA beneficiaries	Minimum 100 learners 16 trained employees 20 specialists in providers
Total Number of Hours on Learning Programmes	4080
Average Hours on Learning Programmes per beneficiary	30

## 12 Other information

1. Is this the only source of funding for this work?      Yes       No

If no, please list below other funds and arrangements you will be using.

The Trade Union Learning Fund is funding 1 project worker and 1 full time Workplace Basic Skills tutor who will be working full-time on this project. (£60k pa Y 1 only)

The Council has funded the Adult Basic Skills Initiative from its reserves, which will give approx  $\frac{1}{4}$  of its time to this work. This comprises a team of 5 full time employees. (£40k pa pro rata) An additional member of the team is funded by the LDA to support ESOL Development through Neighbourhood Renewal Funding. (£10k pa) Additional funding for its materials and tutor-training programme has been secured through an £85k Co-financed bid to the LSC. (Apportion £5k pa for time/materials pro rata)

I confirm the above information is correct and agree that the information may be passed onto other partners.

Signed (Project Manager).....

Print Name and Status **MARK ADAMS, ADULT BASIC SKILLS COORDINATOR**

Organisation **Dept of Education, Arts and Libraries, London Borough of Barking and Dagenham**

Date 13 February 2003

Signed (Chief Executive).....

Print Name and Status **MR GRAHAM FARRANT, CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

Organisation **London Borough of Barking and Dagenham**

Date 13 February 2003



## Embedding Basic Skills in London Local Authorities - Success Criteria

Performance Indicators	How we will get this information
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organisational policy level commitment to address employee literacy numeracy and ESOL learning needs within HR strategy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workplace Basic Skills Training Strategy in place</li> <li>• Tracking of achievement of project training outputs</li> <li>• Minuted evidence of paid release for basic skills learning</li> <li>• Minuted evidence of paid overtime for basic skills learning if release not possible</li> <li>• Collate staff JDs which include responsibility for promoting, identifying and supporting basic skills learning</li> <li>• Identify essential and desirable LNE skills levels defined within JDs for low skilled and semi-skilled workers</li> <li>• Track tools designed and in use throughout organisation to identify LNE learning needs amongst new recruits</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A flexible basic skills employee training programme implemented including use of new technology where it is available</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Programme published and promoted to all staff</li> <li>• Establishment of an in-house resource bank which includes customised learning materials, schemes of work and lesson plans</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workplace documentation which meets plain English standards</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documentation review and revision monitored at steering groups</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support for embedded basic skills training across the organisation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Track numbers of employees recruited subject to attending LNE in-house training</li> <li>• Track how many employees referred to attend LNE learning opportunities by managers and union reps</li> <li>• Record comments at Steering meetings from managers, learning reps, employees and tutors on benefits from participation on LNE programmes</li> <li>• Survey management and union views on impact of programme by questionnaire to feed into evaluation</li> <li>• Record minutes of committee meetings where relevant</li> <li>• Track referral by peers to LNE learning programmes</li> <li>• Record number of articles written supporting the programme by participants and other employees in company newsletter</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The development of the learning culture within the organisation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Track numbers of employees recruited subject to attending LNE in-house training</li> <li>• Track how many employees referred to attend LNE learning opportunities by managers and union learning reps</li> <li>• Record benefits from participation on LNE programmes at Steering meetings reported by managers, employees and tutors</li> <li>• Survey management views on impact of programme by questionnaire to feed into evaluation</li> <li>• Record minutes of committee meetings where relevant</li> <li>• Track referral by peers to LNE learning programmes</li> <li>• Record number of articles written supporting the programme by participants in company newsletter</li> <li>• Establish base line and track additional numbers of low, semi-skilled, part-time and BME staff participating in development activities</li> <li>• Track additional numbers of staff who have undertaken awareness raising and training through this project to support others to participate in development activities eg LNE learning</li> <li>• Track achievement on basic skills learning programmes and national tests</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Track progression to further education or training for low and semi-skilled workers, part-timers and BMEs a result of this project</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ILPs completed and monitored at Steering group for all participants including info recorded about broad aim for learning, short term goals, LNE curriculum related targets and steps to achieve these, formative and summative assessment, reflection on learning experience, review</li> <li>• Tracking of achievement of national tests</li> <li>• Identify base line and track changes attributable to project activities in job skills through appraisal and performance management</li> <li>• Survey managers and record feedback in internal job progression at steering group minutes</li> <li>• Establish base line data and track changes in recruitment of BME employees attributable to project activities</li> <li>• Establish base line data and track changes in staff retention attributable to project activities</li> <li>• Establish base line data and track changes in absenteeism attributable to project activities</li> <li>• Track progress to further education and training through logged IAG session and 3 month follow up check</li> <li>• Establish base line for indicating level of customer service. Track changes attributable to project activities</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The impact from LNE learning programmes on achievement of LNE learning goals</li> <li>• achievement of national tests in LNE</li> <li>• job skills improvement</li> <li>• internal job progression</li> <li>• recruitment of minority ethnic communities to reflect the community</li> <li>• staff retention</li> <li>• staff absenteeism</li> <li>• progression to further education and training</li> <li>• customer satisfaction</li> </ul>	

Here is a list of roles and sample tasks for workplace basic skills provision with a list of possible players below.

<b>Function</b>	<b>Sample Tasks</b>
Build Capacity	Coordinate provision in the area, plan/create specialist provider team including practitioner recruitment strategy, carry out practitioner training needs analysis, organise CPD
Manage Provision	Responsibility for strategy, action-planning, co-ordination, quality assurance, monitoring, review and continuous improvement
Promote to Employers	Produce marketing plan, organise promotional activities (eg seminars, networking, publicity, cold-calling, research/surveys)
Lead Programme	Maximise programme opportunities, engage senior management, set up steering group, manage programme process, lead practitioner team, evaluate and report stakeholder value
Raise Awareness	Engage key workplace personnel, communicate potential programme benefits throughout organisation
Identify Needs	Organisational needs analysis (managers' views, procedure and systems review, job shadowing, frontline staff interviews, analysis and reporting)
Engage Employees	Organisational needs analysis process, promotion and publicity
Develop Programmes	Identify and agree participants, negotiate release, design curriculum, agree evaluative procedure
Deliver Learning Opportunity	Reconcile workplace priorities with individual learning goals, maintain quality/audit records, provide IAG, celebrate achievement
Evaluate	Impact analysis including job skills improvement, key performance indicators and softer outcomes for individuals and family

### **Possible Players**

Broker, Consultant Practitioner, Workplace Champion, Learning Rep, internal staff, LNE practitioner

It seems reasonable to suggest that it's not important who plays each role, as long as all players have agreed who does what, and that there are recognised lines of communication.

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**THE EXECUTIVE**

**29 APRIL 2003**

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES LBBD**

<b>MANAGING MEMBERS AND M.P. ENQUIRIES IN SOCIAL SERVICES</b>	<b>FOR DECISION</b>	
<p><i>This report seeks Members approval to pilot a new protocol in respect of Member and MP enquiries.</i></p> <p><b><u>Summary</u></b></p> <p>A protocol has been produced which outlines the processes to be followed in relation to Member and M.P. enquiries within Social Services. The protocol seeks to provide a clear framework under which such enquiries will be dealt with, including clear timescales and responsibilities.</p> <p><b><u>Recommendation</u></b></p> <p>The Executive is asked to agree to the piloting of the new monitoring system for Member and M.P. enquiries in Social Services for six months. If this is successful, then consideration will be given to applying the system across the Council.</p> <p><b><u>Reasons</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To introduce improved efficiency and accountability in relation to Member and MP enquires.</li> <li>• To clarify exchange of personal information issues for Members, officers and service users.</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Contact</b> Chris Feeley</p>	<p>Interim Head of Human Resources</p>	<p>Tel: 0208 227 2315                  Fax: 0208 227 2241                  Minicom 020 8227 2462                  E-mail <a href="mailto:chris.feeley@lbbd.gov.uk">chris.feeley@lbbd.gov.uk</a></p>

**1. Background**

1.1 In Social Services Member and M.P. enquiries have been dealt with through a range of routes. Members, officers and service users have sometimes had difficulties in the current arrangements with confidentiality. The Data Protection Act and the "Caldicott" arrangements for the NHS and Social Care (the latter of which sets clear standards of managing confidential information) are now in place and it is timely to review this in order to support good practise and ensure there is clarity for all concerned.

- 1.2 Within the document, a clear and straightforward process for seeking consent to share information is proposed.
- 1.3 Members and MP enquiries need to be dealt with within the timescales prescribed within the attached document.
- 1.4 A monitoring process using a database will be set up managed by Directors and Heads of Service, thus ensuring appropriate follow-up measures are in place.
- 1.5 The new arrangements are compliant with legislative requirements under the Data Protection Act and with Caldicott.
- 1.6 Clear guidance notes will be sent to Members and staff outlining the new arrangements.
- 1.7 We are writing to the two local Members of Parliament to seek their engagement with the pilot.

### **Background Papers**

Protocol for Monitoring Members' / M.P. enquires attached as Appendix A.

## **Proposal for monitoring Members' / M.P. enquiries in Social Services**

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The purpose of this paper is to outline a more effective and transparent system for dealing with and monitoring all M.P./Council Member enquiries plus complaints for the Social Services Department. Heads of Service need to be able to access and track such enquiries. Members and officers have expressed concern for clarity in relation to sharing confidential information and for ensuring enquiries are dealt with promptly and effectively.

Consideration is given to the objective of capturing all M.P./Members enquiries through the 'Respond' System. This is to enable regular reports to Member's on enquiries from their own constituents.

### **1. Management Process for Members Enquiries**

#### **Councillors and M.P.s contact via:**

- § Letter
- § E-mail
- § Phone
- § In person

#### **Contact may relate to:**

- § Referring person to service
- § Enquiry about individual's service
- § Complaint made on behalf of service user/carer
- § General enquiry about service or policy
- § Consent for Social Services to share personal information ( See Appendix 2 for example of pro forma)

#### **Process for enquiries:**

All enquiries to go to Head of Service/Head of Business Performance/Executive Director of Health and Social Care and logged:

##### **a) Referrals:**

- § Log
- § Acknowledge which team referred to(see appendix 3).
- § Pass to appropriate team.
- § No further action.

##### **b) Enquiry about service for an individual:**

- § Acknowledge and to whom passed(see appendix 3).
- § Head of Service to log.

ξ Check 'Consent to share personal information' form completed(see appendix 3).

If not:

ξ Letter to individual seeking consent to share information(see appendix 4).

① copy to enquirer with acknowledgement.

ξ Response written:

① Advise referrer if refused.

ξ Log off and file.

c) Complaints/compliments:

ξ Head of Service/Head of Business Performance/  
Executive Director of Health and Social Care to  
acknowledge.

ξ All complaints to Customer Care Team for complaint  
procedure.

d) Service and Policy enquiries:

ξ Log

ξ Respond

ξ Log off

ξ File

#### **Timescales:**

ξ Acknowledge 3 working days  
(with the exception of Social  
Service complaints being an  
acknowledgement within 24  
hours).

ξ Respond 7 working days or advise  
reason for delay and expected  
time of response  
(response timescales for  
complaints will differ).

**Please note: M.P./Members complaint timescales are governed by the relevant complaint procedure(see appendix 1).**

#### **System Support:**

Current Heads of Service do not have access to 'Respond' system.  
Need to consider access to 'Respond' software support for Heads of  
Service/Head of Business Performance/Executive Director of Health  
and Social Care's P.A.s to:

ξ Log, chase, respond, file, report



- ξ Notify Heads of Service of imminent deadlines and outstanding enquiries.
- ξ Quarterly reports.

**Standard letters/forms:**

- ξ Acknowledgement(see appendix 3).
- ξ All letters to be marked 'confidential' on letter and envelope.
- ξ 'Consent to share personal information' form to be completed by Complainant(see appendix 2).

**Phone/in person/email:**

- ξ Record and then respond as above.

All M.P./Members enquiries are to be recorded on the 'Respond' system by the Departmental Management Team and Customer Care Section.

**2. Reporting M.P.s/Members enquiries**

A separate database is to be formed on the 'Respond' software exclusively to incorporate Members/M.P enquiries in order to track and report on them.

**3. Financial Considerations**

**Access by Heads of Service to the 'Respond' system :**

It is possible for the Head of Business Performance and Heads of Service P.A.s to have access to the 'Respond' system to see and track M.P./Members enquiries and viewing can be customised to reflect their particular service area. The resources required are :

Further licences for the 'Respond' Software. These can only be obtained in groups of 5 and should be accompanied by a one day training session for Heads of Service and a days consultation for the Customer Care Section, supplied by 'Respond':

**Cost:**

- ξ £5,900 for 5 licences
- ξ £2,400 two day consultation/training

**Total cost - £8,300**

**Benefits:**

Heads of Services will be able to view outstanding M.P./Members enquiries at a glance along with details of who is dealing with the complaint.

#### 4. Overall Benefits

- § The Departmental Management Team will be able to record all M.P./Members enquiries on one system. Thus, all enquiries received can be tracked.
- § Heads of Service will be able to see and track their own service area enquiries.
- § The Members Officer and the Corporate Complaint Section will be able to provide reports to M.Ps./Members concerning their own particular Wards.

#### **In summary:**

It is possible to improve the current procedures for capturing M.P./Members enquiries by recording such enquiries on the 'Respond' system, under four new categories.

The objective is to capture all Members enquiries on the Corporate 'Respond' system in order for enquiries to be logged and chased and for reports to be made to Councillors/M.P.s.

It is proposed that this is to be piloted in Social Services and eventually rolled out corporately to other departments.

Customer Care Section  
Feb 03

**Please note: M.P.s do not have access to private and confidential council reports or some internal communications as they are not Members of the Council.**

**Appendix 1:**

**Social Services complaint procedure:**

**Stage 1 – Local solution**

- ① Acknowledgement within 24hrs.
- ① Response within 10 working days.

**Stage 2 – Formal investigation**

- ① Acknowledgement within 3 days.
- ① Respond within 28days.

**Stage 3 – Review Panel**

- ① Acknowledgement within 3 days.
- ① Review Panel within 28 days

**Corporate Complaint Procedure**

**Stage 1 – Informal stage**

- ① Complaint response 'on-the-spot'

**Stage 2 – Management investigation**

- ① Acknowledgement within 7 days
- ① Line manager to investigate and respond within 28 days

**Stage 3 – Formal investigation**

- ① Acknowledgement within 7 days
- ① Response within 28 days

**Appendix 2:**

## Consent to share personal information

I hereby give consent for my personal information held about me by the Social Services Dept., to be shared with the following as my representative:  
(This does not include access to files)

**Councillor:**

**Ward:**

**Address:**

**Contact no:**

**Declaration of Councillor:**

I have satisfied myself as to the true identity of the applicant, and confirm that I am an elected member for the ward in which the applicant lives.

**Signature of Councillor:**

**Date:**

**Details of Applicant:**

**Full name:**

**Address:**

**Contact no:**

**Declaration of applicant:**

I consent to the disclosure of this information to my representative.

I understand that:

- some of the information held about me by Social Services may be of a sensitive nature.
- Social Services may not be able to share all of the personal information held about me.

**Signature of Applicant:**

**Date:**

**Appendix 3:**

**Please note:** the 'Respond' system has the ability to salutate letters. Thus the correct information for each individual case will automatically be inserted into the shaded areas of this letter

**Example:**

Name  
Address  
Address  
Postcode

Ref: Reference  
020 8227 XXXX  
020 8227 XXXX  
020 8227 2462  
www.barking-dagenham.gov.uk  
firstname.surname@lbbd.gov.uk

Date

**Private and Confidential**

Dear Councillor name/name M.P.,

**Social Services Member Enquiry/Referral**

Thank you for your letter/telephone call of Date outlining your enquiry/referral regarding name of service. This matter is now being dealt with by name of officer who will respond to you within 7 working days.

If you need to talk about the matter in more detail, please contact name of officer direct on telephone number phone no.

Should you have any further queries, please feel free to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

First name Surname  
Job Title

**Appendix 4:**

Name  
Address  
Address  
Postcode

Ref: Reference

☎ 020 8227 XXXX

☎ 020 8227 XXXX

☎ 020 8227 2462

www.barking-dagenham.gov.uk  
firstname.surname@lbbd.gov.uk

Date

**Private and Confidential**

Dear name of enquirer,

**Social Services Member Enquiry/Referral**

We have been contacted by Councillor name/name M.P. to look into matters raised by you, on your behalf. In order for us to deal with your enquiry, we require consent from yourself to share information with your Councillor/M.P. Therefore we enclose an 'Consent to share personal information form' for you to complete and enclose a stamped addressed envelope for your convenience. On return of your form, the matter will be dealt with promptly.

Thank you for your enquiry and we look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely,

First name Surname  
Job Title

**Have you got something to say?**

Please use this form to:

make a comment

make a suggestion

make a complaint

make a compliment

If you are filling in this form for somebody else, please fill in section A. If you are not filling this form for somebody else, please go straight to section B.

**A**

Your name Address  Phone number	
Your relationship to the service user	
Does the person know you are acting on their behalf?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

**B**

Service user's name Address  Phone number	
--	--

**Please carry on over the page.**

**Please give details here and say what you would like to see done.**

**Signature: ..... Date: .....**

**Please return this form to:**

**London Borough of Barking and Dagenham  
Customer Care Manager  
Social Services Department  
Freepost  
Civic Centre  
Dagenham  
RM10 7BW.**





**THE EXECUTIVE****29 APRIL 2003****REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF HOUSING AND HEALTH**

<b>ATTENDANCE AT CONFERENCES 2003</b>	<b>FOR DECISION</b>	
<p><i>This report seeks approval for attendance at conferences in accordance with the Council's Conference, Visits and Hospitality Rules, which states that the Executive must approve such attendance.</i></p>		
<p><b><u>Summary</u></b></p> <p>The Executive is asked to agree representation at the following Conferences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chartered Institute of Housing Conference 2003;</li> <li>• Chartered Institute of Environmental Health Conference &amp; Exhibition 2003; and</li> <li>• Local Government Association (LGA) Housing Conference - 2003.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Recommendation</u></b></p> <p>The Executive is asked to agree representation at the following Conferences:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Director of Housing and Health and two other officers to attend the Chartered Institute of Housing Conference.</li> <li>2. Three delegates to attend the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health Conference &amp; Exhibition 2003; and</li> <li>3. Three delegates to attend the Local Government Association Housing Conference 2003.</li> </ol>		
<p><b>Contact Officer:</b> David Woods</p>	<p>Director of Housing and Health</p>	<p>Tel: 020 8227 5700            Fax: 020 227 5705            Minicom: 020 7227 5755            E-mail: <a href="mailto:david.woods@lbbd.gov.uk">david.woods@lbbd.gov.uk</a></p>

**1. The Chartered Institute of Housing Conference**

- 1.1 The Chartered Institute of Housing Conference is held annually in Harrogate and regarded as a valuable conference, promoting the Institute's purpose to maximise the contribution housing professionals can make to the wellbeing of communities.
- 1.2 This year's conference is being held from 17 - 20 June 2003 and is based around the theme "Focus", with a new programme structure and new formats, and delegates being able to opt for an in-depth analysis of specific issues or an overview of a range of trends. This Conference will bring together a distinguished series of presenters and the programme is being developed with a range of partners ensuring it remains at the cutting edge of housing policy, practice and implementation.

- 1.3 Conference cost for 3 delegates is £1829.46 (inc. VAT), plus accommodation and travel.
- 2. Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH) Conference & Exhibition 2003**
- 2.1 To be held in Belfast from 23 - 25 September 2003. This year's theme is 'Environmental Health - Working in Business'.
- 2.2 The CIEH Conference & Exhibition is the most important event in the environmental health calendar. This year's event will continue to raise the profile of environmental health, providing professionals the opportunity to explore solutions, exchange ideas and facilitate change.
- 2.3 Conference cost for 3 delegates is £1329.39 (per delegate is £464.13) (inc VAT).
- 3. Local Government Association (LGA) Housing Conference - 2003**
- 3.1 This year's Conference will be held on 5th/6th November 2003 at the Liverpool Institute of Performing Arts.
- 3.2 This is an annual conference held for provincial towns and cities; focuses on practical issues around regeneration, new build, design, conversion, partnership working etc. Sessions are mainly workshops and visits rather than traditional conference presentations. This conference is considered to be most valuable at senior practitioner level.
- 3.3 Conference cost for 3 delegates is £ 1,305 (per delegate £435), plus accommodation.

### **Background Papers**

[www.cih-housing.co.uk](http://www.cih-housing.co.uk)  
[www.cieh.org](http://www.cieh.org)  
[www.lga.gov.uk](http://www.lga.gov.uk)

**THE EXECUTIVE****29 APRIL 2003****REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION, ARTS AND LIBRARIES**

<b>BEST VALUE SERVICE REVIEW OF SCHOOL ATTENDANCE</b>		<b>FOR DECISION</b>
<p><i>This report sets out the findings of the Best Value Review of school attendance. The report makes recommendations for the future of the Access and Attendance Team. Final decisions relating to Best Value Reviews are reserved for the Assembly.</i></p>		
<p><b><u>Summary</u></b></p> <p>The Best Value Review of School Attendance was undertaken over a period of 15 months between April 2001 and July 2002. In accordance with statutory guidance the review included a number of stages, namely challenge, consult, compare and compete.</p>		
<p><b><u>Recommendation</u></b></p> <p>The Executive is asked to recommend that the Assembly agree the recommendations outlined in the Action Plan included within the main report.</p>		
<p><b><u>Reason</u></b></p> <p>The preferred option for future service delivery is in line with the principles of best value. The proposed Action Plan will lead to significant improvements in the Service over the next five years.</p>		
<p><b>Contact Officer:</b> Justin Donovan</p>	<p>Head of Lifelong Learning and Inclusion</p>	<p>Tel: 020 8227 3364 Fax: 020 8227 4877 Minicom: 020 8227 3180 E-mail: <a href="mailto:jdonovan@bardaglea.org.uk">jdonovan@bardaglea.org.uk</a></p>
<p>Paul Kelly</p>	<p>Principal Access and Attendance Officer</p>	<p>Tel: 020 8227 5521 Fax: 020 8227 5541 E-mail: <a href="mailto:paul.kelly@lbbd.gov.uk">paul.kelly@lbbd.gov.uk</a></p>
<p>Councillor J L Alexander</p>	<p>Lead Member</p>	<p>Tel: 020 8924 8239</p>

**1. Outline of the Service Under Review**

- 1.1 The Service provides support to schools and other educational establishments in response to issues of poor or non-school attendance. The Service fulfils the statutory functions of the LEA with regard to school attendance, child employment and children in entertainment.

## **2. Main Findings**

### 2.1 Challenge

The team reviewed the function of the Service, whether it needs to be provided, and whether the current provider (Access and Attendance Service) is the appropriate one. The review determined that the Access and Attendance Service promotes regular attendance and contributes to DEAL's inclusive strategies, as well as providing statutory responses in relation to school attendance which no other service can provide.

### 2.2 Consultation

Consultation was affected by the early restructure of the service from the Education Social Work Service to the present Access and Attendance Service. Further consultation is included as part of the Action Plan.

### 2.3 Compare

When compared to other authorities, the Access and Attendance Service has responded well to both local and national initiatives. The service has benefited from the input of the DfES Truancy and Attendance Adviser and refocused its resources into primary and secondary teams in line with previous DfES advice. The Service plays an integral role within the Behaviour Improvement Programme and has responded to other DfES initiatives (e.g. regular truancy patrols).

### 2.4 Compete

The Review Group found it difficult to identify any providers of comprehensive attendance services in the private sector or other LEAs operating as potential competition.

## **3. Background**

3.1 The Best Value Review of School Attendance was initiated in April 2001, a year earlier than originally planned. The decision to make an early start was made in the light of the Borough's comparatively poor performance in respect of school attendance, in contrast to its rapidly improving performance in respect of attainment.

3.2 As these factors were not only the cause of local concern but also concern expressed by the DfES, it was decided not only to start the Review early but also, as a matter of urgency, to modify the structure and focus of the Education Social Work Service.

#### **4. Review of the Education Social Work Service**

- 4.1 The review of the Education Social Work Service was initiated in April 2001, and completed the following September.
- 4.2 There was consultation with staff, schools, other agencies and the Best Value Review Group.
- 4.3 The review resulted in:
- The name of the Service being changed to the Access and Attendance Service.
  - The restructuring of the Service to enable it to work in a more strategic manner as recommended in national guidance and to facilitate an approach to its work with an educational rather than a social work focus.
  - The creation of separate primary and secondary teams.
  - The introduction of a transparent and objective time allocation to schools.
  - The creation of posts within the Service to enable the LEA to meet more efficiently the needs of young offenders, looked after children and the more mobile and transient members of the local community.
- 4.4 In November 2001, an appointment was made to the newly established post of Mobility Officer. Although all posts in the Service had not been filled by the end of 2001, there was evidence that the steps taken to improve recruitment and retention had been successful.

#### **5. The Challenge Phase**

The challenge phase asked a number of questions about the LEA's support for school attendance and, on the basis of the research undertaken, answers were found to these questions:

- 5.1 Does the service need to be provided?
- The Council has statutory obligations in this area of operations.
  - The work of this Service directly supports the Council's priorities.
  - There is a high level of demand for the Service by residents and stakeholders.
- 5.2 What outcomes are we trying to achieve and what is our vision for the service?
- The LEA's vision for services in support of school attendance is one where an effective, high quality, centrally maintained Service is valued by its users.
  - The Service aims to ensure that its work makes a lasting positive impact on improving attendance within the Borough.

### 5.3 Are we the appropriate provider?

- The Review Team was unable to identify an existing provider within the private sector.
- There was good evidence to suggest that the alternatives either generate strategic or operational inefficiencies, or may increase levels of risk to vulnerable children and families.
- The responsibilities placed on the Council to ensure high levels of attendance and a range of cross cutting responsibilities (e.g. community safety, youth offending, lifelong learning and child protection), mean that the LEA should continue to provide services in support of school attendance.

### 5.4 To whom should we provide the Service?

- Services in support of school attendance in the Borough have a high level of support and schools report that performance is satisfactory. However, the Service and the LEA have aspirations to achieve excellence by further developing initiatives that have recently been introduced and to work towards continuously improving service delivery.
- Mechanisms identified as useful in actively pursuing high standards of service delivery include developing effective protocols with key partners, setting challenging targets and ensuring that information systems have the capacity needed to effectively support the service.

## 6. **The Consultation Phase**

- 6.1 In the light of the early review of the Education Social Work Service, it was difficult to conduct this phase of the Best Value Review in the normal way. There seemed little point in carrying out extensive consultation about the performance of a Service which was already in the process of change and it was not possible to consult widely about a Service which had yet to develop a track record.
- 6.2 During the review of the Education Social Work Service there was consultation with serving staff, schools and other agencies. The Review Group took the view that consultation with a wider group of stakeholders would only be valuable once the newly established Access and Attendance Service had performed over time.
- 6.3 The Review Group also took into consideration the fact that the LEA would be subject to an OFSTED inspection in January 2002 and that recommendations about the structure and nature of the Access and Attendance Service could be made as the result of this process. Consequently, it was agreed that the matter of consultation with all stakeholders would be considered further as part of the Action Plan.

## **7. Compare Phase**

- 7.1 A number of attendance services in other LEAs were examined and lessons learnt from their practice. The LEAs visited and/or contacted included Blackpool, Havering, Nottingham, St Helens, Oldham, Bury and Leeds.
- 7.2 The Review Group also compared the Borough's performance in respect of school attendance with those LEAs ranked most closely with Barking and Dagenham in terms of academic performance, and those LEAs considered by OFSTED to be our statistical neighbours.
- 7.3 At the beginning of the Review the Department compared the performance of the Education Social Work Service and the recommendations set out in the Audit Commission's report "Missing Out". The results of this comparison contributed to the view that an early restructuring of the Service was needed.
- 7.5 Examination of the relevant data suggests that the Borough's performance in attendance is not yet keeping pace with its improvements in attainment. Members of the Review Group felt that this was an issue which should be reflected in the Action Plan.

## **8. Compete Phase (including Option Appraisal)**

- 8.1 The Review Group debated extensively the need to try to identify private service providers in this area of work or, failing that, other LEA providers operating as potential competitors to the Borough's own Service. Whilst the Review Group believed the former to be unavailable and the latter inappropriate, there was an understanding that within the Best Value framework there would be a need to continue to review the availability and appropriateness of both alternatives through the Action Plan.
- 8.2 The Review Group's preferred option was to maintain the direction determined by the early restructuring of the Borough's attendance service. Joint commissioning and partnership working will be kept under review in the light of developments both locally and nationally, including consideration of the implications of the DfES pilot projects in fourteen LEAs. These projects relate to the devolution to secondary schools of parts of LEA attendance services.

## **9. Conclusion**

To retain the Access and Attendance Service as a centrally funded function to work alongside schools, parents and pupils to improve attendance levels in line with targets identified in Education Development Plan (94% in Primary, 91% in secondary).

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**BEST VALUE REVIEW (SCHOOL ATTENDANCE)  
FINAL REPORT  
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

## **BACKGROUND**

The Best Value Review of School Attendance was initiated in April 2001, a year earlier than originally planned. The decision to make an early start was made in the light of the Borough's comparatively poor performance in respect of school attendance (in contrast to its rapidly improving performance in respect of attainment). In addition to this, the Education Social Work Service, the LEA's service which supported schools, parents and pupils with regard to attendance and pupil welfare was having sustained difficulty in recruiting and retaining staff.

As these factors were not only the cause of local concern but also concern expressed by DfES (Department for Educational Skills - the central government department with responsibility for education), it was decided not only to start the Review early but also, as a matter of urgency, to review the structure and focus of the Education Social Work Service within the context of national research and guidance.

Whilst this review within a review reflected very much the principles underpinning the Best Value approach, the fact that it was completed within the first six months of the Best Value Review did have an impact on, in particular, the Consult and Compare Stages of the Review.

## **REVIEW OF THE EDUCATION SOCIAL WORK SERVICE**

The review of the Education Social Work Service was initiated in April 2001, and completed the following September.

There was consultation with staff, schools, other agencies and, of course, the Best Value Review Group.

The review resulted in:

- ❖ The name of the Service being changed to the Access and Attendance Service;
- ❖ The restructuring of the Service to enable it to work in a more strategic manner as recommended in national guidance and to facilitate an approach to its work with an educational rather than a social work focus;
- ❖ The creation of separate primary and secondary teams;
- ❖ The introduction of a transparent and objective time allocation approach to providing support to schools;
- ❖ The creation of posts within the Service to enable the LEA to meet more efficiently the needs of Young Offenders, Looked After Children and the more mobile and transient members of the local community;
- ❖ An increase in gradings at all levels within the Service as remuneration had been identified as a key factor with regard to the difficulties in recruitment and retention;

- ❖ An opportunity for main grade Access and Attendance Officers to move up a grade if they were able to demonstrate that they had met certain published performance criteria.

All main grade Education Social Workers were automatically assimilated onto the lower of the two main grades established for Access and Attendance Officers. The two Senior Education Social Workers were invited to express an interest in the two Senior Access and Attendance Officer (Primary) and (Secondary) posts. At interview, both postholders were successful in moving into the posts in which they had respectively expressed an interest.

Although the Principal Education Social Worker elected not to express an interest in the Principal Access and Attendance Officer's post, she did express an interest in the newly created Looked After Children's Co-ordinator post and was assimilated into it. Consequently, the new Principal's post was put out to national advertisement and an appointment was made, taking up post in December 2001.

Two out of the six main grade Access and Attendance Officers in post at the time of the Service review expressed an interest in moving to the higher grading. Each postholder was required to make a presentation at interview and was successful in obtaining the higher grade.

In November 2001, an appointment was made to the newly established post of Mobility Officer. Although all posts in the Service had not been filled by the end of 2001, there was evidence that the steps taken to improve recruitment and retention had been successful.

## **THE BEST VALUE REVIEW**

### **The Challenge Phase**

The Challenge Phase asked a number of questions about the LEA's support for school attendance and, on the basis of research and information undertaken on behalf of the Review Group, answers were found to these questions:

*Q1. Does the service need to be provided?*

A. The Council must continue to provide services in support of school attendance: not only does the Council have significant statutory obligations in this area of operations but such services underpin every one of the Council's priorities and there is a high level of demand for the services by residents and stakeholders in the Borough.

*Q2. What outcomes are we trying to achieve/what is our vision for the service?*

A. The London Borough of Barking and Dagenham's vision for services in support of school attendance is one where an effective, high quality, centrally maintained service is valued by service users, resource holders and policy makers and which makes a lasting positive impact in improving attendance within the Borough. To achieve this vision, complementary approaches need to be developed or reviewed and further developed:

- robust and effective partnerships with the community of schools and other relevant agencies within which the Access and Attendance Service leads in developing a clear direction and effective practice in driving-up rates of attendance
- seeking to allocate resources in ways that achieve high impact
- balancing direct interventions with children and families and work with schools (in partnership with the LEA's Inspectors); to review and strengthen our systems for responding to pupil absence; including the active dissemination of good practice - 'What Works in improving attendance in Barking and Dagenham'
- initiating approaches that raise community awareness about the positive benefits of regular attendance - creating the conditions for good (two-way) communication between schools, parents, the LEA and the community.

Q3. *Are we the appropriate provider?*

A In this Review we have considered three alternatives in answering the question 'Are we the appropriate provider?': no provider exists in the private sector and there is good evidence that the alternatives either generate strategic and operational inefficiencies or may increase levels of risk to vulnerable children and families.

The responsibilities placed on the Council in ensuring high levels of attendance and in the range of cross cutting responsibilities (for example, community safety, youth offending, lifelong learning, child protection) mean that the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham should continue to provide services in support of school attendance. The Access and Attendance Service has the capacity to:

- take a broad view of attendance patterns across the Borough - modifying and targeting service delivery profiles to meet issues and needs that have been identified in partnership with schools and the LEA's Inspectors and where the absence of individuals is a shared concern with key partners (for example, Social Services Departments, NHS Trust, Youth Offending Team, and Connexions Partnership);
- provide the lead in emphasising and enforcing the obligations of all parents within the Borough for ensuring that their children attend school regularly;
- develop a lead in putting into practice the Council's vision on driving up levels of attendance within a multi-stakeholder partnership - promoting clear directions, shared objectives, and effective communication about attendance between stakeholders; and

- raising awareness about good practice from other areas, and facilitating the sharing of good practice in managing attendance amongst the community of schools.

An identified area for development is the identification of a benchmark group of Authorities so that Elected Members, Senior Officers of the Education, Arts and Libraries Department and the Access and Attendance Service Team can compare themselves against performance to which they aspire.

**Q.4** *To whom should we provide the Service?*

**A** Services in support of school attendance in the Borough have a high level of support and schools, a major group of customers, report that performance is satisfactory. However, the Service and the LEA have aspirations to achieve excellence by further developing initiatives that have recently been introduced and to work towards continuously improving service delivery. Mechanisms that may be useful in this striving toward excellence include: developing effective protocols with key partners, communication with service users, setting challenging targets in service delivery, and ensuring that the information systems of the Service have the capacity effectively to support service delivery.

**THE CONSULTATION PHASE**

In the light of the early review of the Education Social Work Service, it was difficult to conduct this phase of the Best Value Review in the normal way. There seemed little point in carrying out extensive consultation about the performance of a Service which was already in the process of change and it was not possible to consult widely about a Service which had yet to develop a track record.

Whilst, during the review of the Education Social Work Service, there was consultation with serving staff, schools and other agencies, the Review Group took the view that consultation with a wider group of stakeholders would only be valuable once the newly established Access and Attendance Service had had an opportunity to perform over time.

The Review Group also took into consideration the fact that the LEA would be subject to an OFSTED inspection in January 2002 and that recommendations about the structure and nature of the Access and Attendance Service could be made as the result of this process.

Consequently, it was agreed that the matter of consultation with all stakeholders would be considered further in the development of the Improvement Plan.

**COMPARE PHASE**

In this phase of the review, a number of attendance services in other LEA were looked at and specific practices identified for consideration within our own Service. The LEAs visited and/or contacted were:

Blackpool  
Havering  
Nottingham  
St Helens  
Oldham  
Bury  
Leeds

The Review Group also compared the Borough's performance in respect of school attendance with (a) those LEAs ranked most closely with Barking and Dagenham in terms of academic performance and (b) those LEAs considered to be our 'statistical neighbours'.

Discussions with officers in other LEAs and visits to other local authorities have enabled Service Managers and Senior Officers to construct a menu of identified good practice in improving school attendance; decisions about whether any of these options and ideas could be incorporated into the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham's service delivery profile have yet to be discussed with schools and other partners, and their viability evaluated.

At the beginning of the Review, the Department made the comparison between the performance of the Education Social Work Service and the recommendations made in respect of LEA support for school attendance in the Audit Commission's "Missing Out". The difference between the two was one of the motivating factors for the early restructuring of the service.

Examination of the comparative information regarding Key Stage 2 and G.C.S.E results for 2001 suggests that the Borough's performance in respect of attendance is not yet keeping pace with the improvements in attainment. Members of the Review Group agree that this is an issue which should be reflected in the Improvement Plan so that schools and the LEA could do even better if attendance were improved.

### **COMPETE PHASE (INCLUDING OPTION APPRASAL)**

The Review Group debated extensively the need to try to identify private service providers in this area of work or, failing that, other LEA providers operating as potential competitors to the Borough's own Service. Whilst the Review Group believed the former to be unavailable and the latter inappropriate, there was an understanding that within the Best Value framework, there would be a need to continue to review the availability and appropriateness of both alternatives through the Improvement Plan.

The Review Group's preferred option is to maintain the direction determined by the early restructuring of the Borough's attendance service. Joint commissioning and partnership working will be kept under review in the light of developments both locally and nationally - including consideration of the implications of the DfES pilot projects in fourteen LEAs (these projects relate to the devolution to secondary schools of parts of LEA attendance services).

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# **EDUCATION, ARTS AND LIBRARIES DEPARTMENT**

## **BEST VALUE - ATTENDANCE**

**APRIL 2003**

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 BACKGROUND

The Best Value Review of Support for School Attendance is submitted under the Council's five year Best Value Review Programme. The Review began in April 2001 and ended in July 2002.

The timespan for the completion of the Review was extended from one calendar year for two reasons: firstly, there was an urgent need to restructure and refocus the Borough's Education Social Work Service at the outset of the Review (please see section entitled 'Details of Service under Review') and, secondly the OFSTED inspection of the Local Education Authority (LEA) which took place in January 2002 required relevant Departmental managers and members of the newly established Access and Attendance Service to give to that inspection their complete attention. Consequently, Review Group meetings were suspended from just prior to just after the inspection.

The Review Group consisted of:

Christine Grice:	Head of Children's Support Division (Lead Officer until 31.01.02)
Alan LARBALTESTIER	Director of Education, Arts and Libraries (Lead Officer from 01.02.02)
Jeremy Watt:	Service Manager (Access): Project Manager
Gary Anderson:	Acting Principal Access and Attendance Officer (until 01.12.01)
Paul Kelly:	Principal Access and Attendance Officer (from 11.01)
Greg Vaughan:	Senior Access and Attendance Officer (until 12.01)
David Botterill:	Mobility Officer (until 12.01)
Richard Epps:	Primary Headteacher representative
Marjorie Brook-Williams: } Paul Thomas }	Secondary School representatives
Jenny Crossley:	Head of Policy and Planning
David Rosenthal:	Principal Inspector - CIAS
Georgina Green:	Administration and Information Officer (Policy and Planning Division)
Gaynor Lovell:	Care Management & Assessment Services Manager - Social Services
Michele Moloney:	Policy and Review Division (Chief Executive's Department)
Sandy Waugh:	Headteacher, Tuition Service
Phil Peters: } Dawn Bowskill: }	Metropolitan Police



Tony Browne:	Unison
Councillor Mrs Cridland Councillor Curtis Councillor Mrs Alexander Councillor Parkin Councillor Mrs Rogers	
David Hoyle:	Independent Consultant (11.01 - 3.02)

At the outset of the Review, the Education Social Work Service was based in the Town Hall, Barking. Early in 2002, as a result of pressing accommodation difficulties within the Education, Arts and Libraries Department, the newly established Access and Attendance Service relocated to Morline House at 160, London Road, Barking.

During the Review meetings have been held on the following dates: 03.04.01, 27.04.01, 15.05.01, 06.06.01, 26.06.01, 17.07.01, 11.09.01, 20.11.01, 12.03.02, 13.03.02, 01.05.02, 01.07.02, 05.09.02.

## 1.2 Scope of the Review

The Review Group determined the scope of the Review as follows:

- \* the work of the (then) Education Social Work Service in promoting school attendance
- \* the work of the Education Social Work Service in supporting children and their families at risk of exclusion
- \* the effectiveness of the Education Social Work Service in child protection matters.

It is acknowledged by members of the Review Group that the promotion, maintenance and enforcement of high levels of school attendance by children of statutory school age is a complex task undertaken successfully only when parents, schools and the LEA work together in an effective partnership. However, in the interests of maintaining a clear focus to the Review, it was decided that only the LEA's support for school attendance would be considered.

The Review Group decided upon the following objectives for the Review:

- \* to review the effectiveness of the LEA's strategy for promoting school attendance
- \* to ensure all statutory and legal responsibilities are fully met
- \* to review the LEA's policy and guidance
- \* to review the effectiveness of the LEA's support for improving the attendance of vulnerable groups (eg Looked After Children)
- \* to review/ensure the effectiveness of the LEA's data collection and target setting systems
- \* to review/ensure the effectiveness of the Education Social Work Service's deployment in schools

## 1.3 Attendance: the national context

On any one school day in England and Wales almost 400,000 of the 8 million children and young people who should be attending school will be absent. In a school year, over 6 million pupils will have at least 1

authorised absence and over 1 million pupils will have at least 1 absence that has not been authorised by staff at their school<sup>1</sup>; without regular attendance the investment, hard work and morale of teachers in schools that enables young people to attain high standards is inevitably compromised. Regular attendance at school is of fundamental importance for individuals, for local neighbourhoods and communities and for the country as a whole - correlations have been evidenced between low rates of attendance and the following problems:

- \* low educational attainment<sup>2</sup>
- \* criminal behaviour and offending<sup>3</sup>
- \* laxity in work habits, low employability and instability in the world of work<sup>4</sup>

Arguably, the two major challenges facing local authorities in securing the effective and efficient use of resources in supporting regular attendance at school are:

- \* absence from school is a problem that has multiple causes - factors that trigger or maintain a child or young person's pattern of absence have been identified in: the individual themselves, their parenting and family, their community and peer group, in the curriculum and in systems and processes for responding to absence within their school and
- \* this means that there are few - if any - easy solutions; good ideas have been developed and implemented - some have been effective, but most are local initiatives; there are few national strategies - and the dissemination of effective practice is, at best, patchy.

#### 1.4 Attendance: the local context

Despite the efforts of schools, most parents and the LEA, levels of attendance at Barking and Dagenham schools continue to be comparatively low. For example, Borough attendance figures for the school year 2000-2001 fell slightly from the previous year:

##### **Primary Attendance**

	<b>1999 - 2000</b>	<b>2000 - 2001</b>
Local	93%	92.6%
National	94.3%	93.9%

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<sup>1</sup> Missing Out: LEA Management of school attendance and exclusion, Audit Commission, 1999

<sup>2</sup> Understanding Truancy: Links between attendance, truancy and performance, Scottish Council for Research in Education, 1996

<sup>3</sup> Misspent Youth, Audit Commission, 1996

<sup>4</sup> Youth Cohort Study 34: Education, Training, Employment of 16-18 year olds in England, and the factors associated with non-participation (<http://dfes.gov.uk/statistics/DB/SBU>)

## Secondary Attendance

	1999 - 2000	2000 - 2001
Local	89.9%	89.3%
National	91.4%	90.9%

The Borough's attendance targets, as set out in the Education Development Plan and the forthcoming Community Strategy, have been set at 94% for the primary phase schools and 91% for the secondary phase. Reference to these targets is also made in the Borough's Regeneration Strategy.

Immediately prior to the start of the Review, the Education Social Work Service had been facing significant medium term recruitment and retention difficulties and had been unable to respond to all the recommendations made in national guidance such as the Audit Commission's "Missing Out" published in 1999 and the OFSTED report entitled "Improving Attendance and Behaviour in Secondary Schools" published in February 2001.

The Borough's comparatively poor attendance figures had prompted surveillance and advice from the DfES's Attendance Advisor for Barking and Dagenham. This advice required the Authority to act as a matter of urgency to review, restructure and refocus the Education Social Work Service.

A local issue of particular concern is the extent to which parents in Barking and Dagenham choose to take their children on family holidays during term time.

The following figures for 1999-2000 give an indication of the extent of the problem:

No of pupil Years R -13: 27335  
No of pupils taking term-time holidays: 7096  
Percentage of pupils taking term-time holidays: 26%  
Minimum amount of holiday: 1 day  
Maximum amount of holiday: 2 weeks +  
Average amount of pupil holiday in term-time: 6 days

Both nationally and locally, good attendance has been identified as a pre-requisite for improving academic attainment. Local levels of holiday taking in term time may well be playing a part in impeding the Borough's continuing and rapid improvement in raising levels of attainment.

As the OFSTED inspection in January 2002 took place before it was possible for the impact of the new Access and Attendance Service to be evaluated, it is worth referring to aspects of the inspection report in describing the local context:

Extracts from "Inspection of Barking and Dagenham LEA" OFSTED May 2002:

#### **Paragraph 4**

**The London Borough of Barking and Dagenham serves some of the most deprived urban districts in the country. Unlike other London boroughs, its population, despite the recent arrival of large numbers of asylum seekers, is mainly white, but 17 of the borough's 20 wards have high levels of deprivation. Educational disadvantage is also high; indeed, the borough has the lowest proportion of adults with higher educational qualifications in the country.**

#### **Paragraph 12**

**Barking and Dagenham is an innovative, in some respects pioneering, LEA. Its approach is not precisely like that of any other, and it has some limitations. The balance of strengths and weaknesses, though, is overwhelmingly positive. It is one of a very small number of LEAs who have shown that it is possible to counter the effects of disadvantage: that poverty does not inevitably lead, through the grinding mechanisms of grim and hopeless determinism, to failure at school. The LEA has the capacity to address its weaknesses. Its current performance offers an example for what can be achieved, given the resolution.**

#### 1.5 Electronic Registration

In January 2002, the LEA was invited by the DfES to consult with four of its maintained community secondary schools (Dagenham Priory, Sydney Russell, Warren and Robert Clack) with a view to submitting bids for government funds to enhance existing electronic registration systems. The Authority was successful in obtaining funds for these schools:

Dagenham Priory - £21,640

Sydney Russell - £25,730

Warren Comprehensive - £23,720

Robert Clack - £26,270

The LEA was notified of these successful bids during the course of the Summer term 2002 and discussions between the Education, Arts and Libraries Department and the schools concerned continue with regard to making the most effective use of these funds.

#### 1.6 Behaviour Improvement Programme

The LEA has, during the course of the Summer term 2002, made a successful bid, in response to an invitation from the DfES (as a part of the Government's targeted initiative to tackle street crime), for additional funds to support the development of an extensive Behaviour Improvement Programme within the Borough.

The Programme will involve four secondary schools and their feeder schools.

One aspect of this initiative is the establishment, for at least a three year period, of four additional Access and Attendance Officer posts - one of which will be attached, on an operational basis, to the Borough's Youth Offending Team.

1.7 Finally, every Council service in Barking and Dagenham operates within the context of seven Community Priorities established through extensive consultation with the local community. The LEA and its central services are all committed to these priorities and believe they can make a contribution to them. The Community Priorities are:

- \* Promoting equal opportunities and celebrating diversity
- \* Making Barking and Dagenham cleaner, greener and safer
- \* Better education and learning for all
- \* Developing rights and responsibilities with the local community
- \* Improving health, housing and social care
- \* Raising general pride in the Borough
- \* Regenerating the local economy

## **2. DETAILS OF SERVICE UNDER REVIEW**

2.1 In early 2001, the Education, Arts and Libraries Department was faced with a difficult situation. The Education Social Work Service, a long established LEA service which focused principally upon supporting schools, parents and children in maintaining and improving pupils' attendance at school was in significant difficulty.

2.2 The Service had continual recruitment and retention difficulties and was rarely fully staffed. Consequently, it had not been able to respond pro-actively to national advice given in publications such as "Missing Out". In the light of comparatively low levels of pupil attendance in the Borough, the DfES Attendance Advisor assigned to Barking and Dagenham suggested that service managers should, as a matter of urgency, consider the implementation locally of national guidance, particularly in respect of developing a service which operated more strategically with schools.

2.3 In addition to these factors, the Service needed to be in a position to respond appropriately to the development of the Connexions Service and once the results were known, consider, the implications of the DfES pilot projects in respect of EWO/ESW Services in a number of LEAs.

2.4 In the light of all these factors, the Department decided firstly to bring forward the Best Value Review for Attendance to 2001 - 2002 and, secondly, to review the Education Social Work Service at the outset of the Review.

### 3. CHALLENGE PHASE

#### 3.1 The questions we asked about support for attendance at school:

During the Challenge Phase, the Review Group bought in the services of David Hoyle, a consultant, to draw together the work being undertaken during this phase of the Review, to facilitate discussion of the information obtained in response to the questions asked by the Review and to draft this element of the Review report.

The challenge aspect of the Best Value Review,

"Is an opportunity to review what we do and the way that we do it and, therefore, it will have to be probing. The outcome will be directed at providing a better service for the people of the Borough; it will give an opportunity to highlight and understand the positive things about the way we currently work as well as the areas that need to be improved"<sup>5</sup>

The challenge aspect of each Best Value Review by the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham is achieved through providing evidence based answers to four questions<sup>6</sup>: Does the service need to be provided?; What outcomes are we trying to achieve/what is our vision for the service?; Are we the appropriate provider?; and, Who should we provide the service for?

#### 3.2 Does the service need to be provided? - this aspect of the challenge relates to the statutory obligations of the Council; the priorities and policies of the Council; and public demand for the services under review.

The enforcement of regular attendance at school is an obligation placed on local education authorities by both primary legislation and a number of associated statutory instruments. Services in support of school attendance are one of a very limited number of 'Mandatory Exceptions' under delegation of funding arrangements:

- Local Education Authorities must ensure that children of compulsory school age within their area receive regular, full time education which is both efficient and suitable (Education Act 1996, Section 7) and must set challenging targets for reducing levels of unauthorised absence in the Education Development Plan (School Standards and Framework Act 1998);
- The Education (Pupils' Attendance Records) Regulations 1991 state, "The principal function of the Education Welfare Service (services in support of school attendance) is to help parents and the LEA meet their statutory obligations on school attendance; and

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<sup>5</sup> The London Borough of Barking and Dagenham Best Value Took Kit (BV/Toolkit/Guidance/00Feb-

- The Education (Financial Delegation to Schools) (Mandatory Exceptions) Regulations 1995 include the prescription of expenditure by LEAs on services provided in the support and enforcement of regular attendance at school.

LEAs also have obligations to ensure the safety, well being and protection from exploitation of children who are working part time, or who are working in entertainment:

- The Children and Young Persons Act 1933 (Section 18(2)) requires local authorities to pass Bye laws regulating the employment of children of compulsory school age; The Children (Protection at Work) Regulations 1998 brought amendments to Section 18(2) required by the EC Protection of Young Workers Directive (94/33); and the Education Act 1996 (Section 559) requires that LEAs initiate enforcement proceedings if a child's employment is prejudicial to their health or regular attendance at school, and
- An LEA's responsibilities in respect of children working in entertainment are contained in; the Children and Young Persons Acts 1933 and 1963; The Children (Performances) Regulations 1968; The Children (Performances) (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 1998; and The Children and Young Persons (Performances) Amendment Regulations 2000. As the licensing authority, the LEA also has a responsibility to approve 'Chaperones' or 'Matrons' who have a duty of care for the safety and well being of the young person during the performance, or on the occasions to which the licence relates.

Support for regular attendance at school underpins every one of the priorities and policies adopted by Barking and Dagenham Council:

- regular attendance at school by young people who will become stakeholders in Barking and Dagenham is central to all of the Council's priorities; Better education, rights and responsibilities, raising pride, regenerating the local economy, securing equalities, improving health housing and social care, and establishing a cleaner greener and safer Borough
- promoting social inclusion - raising standards and expectations for vulnerable groups, providing services and facilitating services by partner agencies in the statutory, voluntary and independent sectors for 'hard-to-reach' groups
- community safety - absence from school is an evidenced pre-cursor of anti-social behaviours including criminality (see reference 6, above)



- lifelong learning and economic regeneration - strong correlations have been identified between irregular attendance at school and low skilled work, and patterns of employability and employment in later life

There is a high level of demand for services by members of the public - the Access and Attendance Service receives high numbers of self-referrals from parents and the families of young people who are experiencing difficulties in schools, and in accessing learning opportunities. Access and attendance have an important role in facilitating access to 'hard-to-reach' individuals and groups by workers in partner agencies - for example, in connection with local priorities in relation to health, housing and social care.

### Summary

The Council must continue to provide services in support of school attendance: not only does the Council have significant statutory obligations in this area of operations, but such services underpin every one of the Council's priorities, and there is a high level of demand for the services by residents and stakeholders in the Borough.

- 3.3 **What outcomes are we trying to achieve/what is our vision for the service?** - this aspect of the challenge focuses on the outcomes that the service under review must achieve, or wishes-to achieve, and seeks to identify the kind of service provider that is needed to achieve these outcomes.

Services in support of school attendance must enable the Department of Education, Arts and Libraries to achieve a number of both national targets and performance indicators, and local targets, performance indicators and success criteria:

- reducing levels of unauthorised absence, raising standards in all schools, reducing levels of youth crime, reducing perceived threat within community safety initiatives - through Acceptable Behaviour Contracts and Anti-Social Behaviour Orders, reducing levels of 'youths causing annoyance', and encouraging young people to remain in learning beyond compulsory school age.

The vision of the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham for its services in support of school attendance must also take into account National Guidance, and identified local needs:

- National Guidance; including findings from the National Foundation for Educational Research evaluation of the 'Tackling Truancy Together' pilot schemes of delegation; good practice identified by the DfES<sup>7</sup>; and, the DfES perspective of LEA service providers as agencies that work with schools to enable them to further develop their capacity to manage attendance more effectively,

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<sup>7</sup> for example, <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/schoolattendance>

- Developing a robust partnership between services in support of school attendance, schools and relevant agencies to design and implement a tiered strategic approach - a medium to long term approach which uses early intervention as a means of supporting parents, whilst diverting children and families away from a need for services - from whatever agency - at higher (more resource intensive) tiers<sup>8</sup>
- Thinking critically about balancing costs and benefits in the use of the Authority's legal powers in enforcing school attendance; developing an approach within which parents are supported through reasonable opportunities to change their behaviours and those of their children before legal action is initiated by the LEA.

Local needs; Schools, Elected Members, Parents and the Community;

- Schools - effective targeting of resources across the community of schools within the Borough and between the primary and secondary phases - in ways that deploy resources in inverse proportion to success in managing attendance whilst ensuring equality of access to services.
- Elected Members - ensuring that Members remain informed about comparisons between services in support of improving school attendance in Barking and Dagenham and other local authorities, about cross cutting approaches being developed and implemented in partnership with schools and other relevant agencies, and about the impact of these approaches both on levels of attendance, and on standards in schools, young people remaining in learning after compulsory school age, reductions in complaints of 'youths causing annoyance' and levels of youth crime
- Governors - the LEA has supported and guided governing bodies in relation to attendance by reporting to them regularly on individual school and LEA performance in this area. Governing bodies are asked annually to consider their attendance policies and strategies.

The LEA has successfully encouraged Governing Bodies to appoint 'Attendance Governors' to guide and support relevant school staff in improving attendance; such governors are being supported, as are other specialist governors, through the development of job specifications for such a role and through training.

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<sup>8</sup> Hardiker P, Exton K, Barker M, 1991, The Social Policy Contexts of Prevention in Child Care  
British Journal of Social Work, Volume 21, pp 341-359.

- Parents - it has been acknowledged by Elected Members and Officers of the Department that many parents of children who are currently registered pupils at schools in the Borough, were themselves pupils during a period when there were difficulties; it is important to develop strategies that balance support for children and their families with a consistent and robust reinforcement of parent's responsibilities that enable parents to change their perceptions of education and schools and support their children more effectively, and
- Community - ensuring that the community as a whole is fully aware of the Council's positive reasons for seeking to improve levels of attendance at school, and how this fits with what focus groups and 'Citizen Panels' identify as important.

## Summary

The London Borough of Barking and Dagenham's vision for services in support of school attendance is one where an effective high quality centrally maintained service is valued by service users, resource holders and policy makers, and which makes a lasting positive impact in improving attendance within the Borough. To achieve this vision complementary approaches need to be developed, or reviewed and further developed:

- robust and effective partnerships with the community of schools and other relevant agencies within which the Access and Attendance Service leads in developing a clear direction and effective practice in driving-up rates of attendance
- seeking to allocate resources in ways that achieve high impact
- balancing direct interventions with children and families and work with schools (in partnership with the LEA's Inspectors) to review and strengthen our systems for responding to pupil absence; including the active dissemination of good practice - 'What Works in improving attendance in Barking and Dagenham', and
- initiating approaches that raise community awareness about the positive benefits of regular attendance - creating the conditions for good (two-way) communication between schools, parents, the LEA and the community.

- 3.4 **Are we the appropriate provider?** - this aspect of the challenge relates to seeking out information about all possible providers in the service area under review - considering the public, private and voluntary sector, and public/public, public/private, public/voluntary partnerships, and asking whether any or all of the options assist in achieving the required service outcome/vision.

In every Local Education Authority in England and Wales strategic and operational responsibilities for supporting school attendance, and for licensing and monitoring children in employment and in entertainment are

undertaken by the Education Welfare/Education Social Work Service (or its equivalent). However, there are significant differences in staffing and expenditure on services across local authorities;

Staffing ratios:

- 1 officer:1560 young people of compulsory school age in one authority, to 1: 9780 in a Metropolitan Borough in northern England
- the national average is 1:3050
- the ratio in the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham is 1:2860 (based on a schools population of 28610 children)

Expenditure:

- from £6.25 per pupil of compulsory school age to £22.75 per pupil
- the national average is £14.25 per pupil
- expenditure in the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham is £14.12 per pupil (based on a schools population of 28610 children and an annual budget of £404,000)

In asking whether the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham is the appropriate provider of services in support of school attendance, we investigated the following before reaching a conclusion:

#### 3.4.1 Services in the private sector

The inherent difficulties in driving up attendance and addressing pupil absence means there is no agency within the private sector in England and Wales that provides a service which is comparable with the Access and Attendance Service. However, in one area a private sector provider has marketed services to schools, to undertake a very specific and very limited task of investigating pupil absence that has not been explained by a parent:

- in East Yorkshire 'First Call' provides schools purchasing services with a first day contact service: 'First Call' is a private sector provider that contracts with a school or consortium of schools to telephone the parents of every pupil who is absent on each school day,

#### 3.4.2 Services in the voluntary/independent sector

In one Authority (also one of the local authorities involved in the recent 'Tackling Truancy Together' pilot programme) some schools used monies devolved from the LEA to contract with a local charitable body to provide workers who

would undertake some of the family support, counselling and guidance aspects relating to pupil absence. Whilst allowing the schools maximum flexibility in the use of resources, this approach brought a number of major obstacles to the efficient and effective delivery of services in support of school attendance:

- meeting the statutory obligations of the Authority, and addressing the responsibilities and accountabilities of the Local Authority in achieving a clear strategic direction for services in support of regular attendance that contributed to meeting Council priorities
- the approach generated inefficiencies in service delivery inconsistencies in approaches to referrals to the LEA core service by different workers/schools, a reactive rather than pro-active approach to pupil absence, and attendance difficulties escalated over time to a level where pupils became school refusers
- there is a danger in individuals who have not been subject to rigorous checks during recruitment, assessment, selection and appointment having unsupervised access to vulnerable, marginalised and disadvantaged children and families; and in addition such staff were not bound by the disciplinary procedures of the Council, nor local information sharing protocols (for example, with the Metropolitan Police, or local Area Child Protection Procedures).

### 3.4.3 Services in collaboration with other local education authorities

As part of this Review, Senior Officers of the Department of Education, Arts and Libraries have begun the process of contacting peers in neighbouring LEAs to undertake a S.W.O.T.<sup>9</sup> analysis on collaborative working arrangements between local authorities in providing services in support of school attendance.

#### **Summary**

In this Review we have considered three alternatives in answering the question 'Are we the appropriate provider?': No provider exists in the private sector and there is good evidence that the alternatives either generate strategic and operational inefficiencies or may increase levels of risk to vulnerable children and families.

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<sup>9</sup> An acronym for an organisational analysis of a joint venture or project that focuses on - Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

The responsibilities placed on the Council in ensuring high levels of attendance, and in the range of cross cutting responsibilities (for example, community safety, youth offending, lifelong learning, child protection) mean that the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham should continue to provide services in support of school attendance. The Access and Attendance Service has the capacity to:

- take a broad view of attendance patterns across the Borough - modifying and targeting service delivery profiles to meet issues and needs that have been identified in partnership with schools and the LEA's Inspectors, and where the absence of individuals is a shared concern with key partners (for example, Social Services Departments, NHS Trust, Youth Offending Team, and Connexions Partnership);
- provide the lead in emphasising and enforcing the obligations of all parents within the Borough for ensuring that their children attend school regularly;
- develop a lead in putting into practice the Council's vision on driving up levels of attendance within a multi-stakeholder partnership - promoting clear directions, shared objectives, and effective communication about attendance between stakeholders; and
- raising awareness about good practice from other areas, and facilitating the sharing of good practice in managing attendance amongst the community of schools.

An identified area for development is the identification of a benchmark group of Authorities so that Elected Members, Senior Officers of the Education, Arts and Libraries Department and the Access and Attendance Service Team can compare themselves against performance to which they aspire<sup>10</sup>.

**3.5 To whom should we provide the service?** - this aspect of the challenge relates to the 'customers' of the service under review; considering all stakeholders and service users; asking what are their expectations about the service - and how do we know; and, are we meeting their expectations - and how do we know.

'Customers' of services in support of school attendance include a diverse range of individuals and groups, where the interests of some may conflict with those of others. Principal stakeholders and users of services include: schools, parents, young people, other LEA service units (SEN services), Social Services, Youth Offending Team, Metropolitan Police, health services and agencies in the voluntary sector (for example, Young Carers).

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<sup>10</sup> A group of local authorities against which the performance of Barking and Dagenham can compare itself can be built within the recently launched Audit Commission website: <http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/itc/attendnacecomparative>

Whilst there is a high level of support for school attendance by Elected Members and Senior Officer and schools in the Borough have expressed satisfaction in a survey conducted by OFSTED prior to their recent inspection, a strategy for effective two way communication with parents, other agencies and the community has been recognised as an area for development. The elements envisaged include:

- developing effective partnerships and joint service delivery arrangements with other agencies where areas for operational responsibility overlap; for example, with Social Services on children 'in need' assessments and Looked After Children, with the Metropolitan Police on the use of Powers under Section 16 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, with health providers where children who are not attending school may have mental health difficulties;
- developing effective communication and feedback mechanisms with parents and young people - for example, 'customer satisfaction' surveys;
- developing Local Performance Indicators and Local Success Criteria for services in support of school attendance that set challenging targets for all aspects of service delivery;
- reviewing, and where necessary improving, management information and data capture systems as a basis for providing qualitative and **quantitative** evidence of the impact of services in support of school attendance.

## Summary

Services in support of school attendance in the Borough have a high level of support and schools, a major group of customers, report that performance is satisfactory. However, the Service and the LEA have aspirations to achieve excellence by further developing initiatives that have recently been introduced and to work towards continuously improving service delivery. Mechanisms that may be useful in this striving toward excellence include: developing effective protocols with key partners, communication with service users, setting challenging targets in service delivery, and ensuring that the information systems of the Service has the capacity effectively to support service delivery.

## 4. CONSULTATION PHASE

4.1 The Consultation Phase of the Review has been affected by the early restructure of the Borough's attendance service. Whilst consultation has been a strong feature of the Review, it has not been possible, within the Review's timescale, to consult on the efficiency and effectiveness of the newly established Access and Attendance Service.

Consequently, the Review Group has set out in the Support for School Attendance Improvement Plan, the framework and timescale for further consultation. This further consultation will relate to the efficiency and effectiveness of the Access and Attendance Service and seek to obtain the views about the Service held by parents and children (this latter consultative work having been delayed by not only the restructuring but also by the OFSTED inspection of the Authority in January 2002 and the

departure, in late January 2002, of the Review's Lead Officer, Christine Grice, Head of Children's Support Division.

- 4.2 However, the restructuring of the Borough's attendance service did not take place in a vacuum. Between April and June 2001, the views of a number of service stakeholders were obtained about:
- (a) the issues which the Authority should address in restructuring its attendance service and
  - (b) the proposals put forward by Departmental managers in respect of the new structure of the service. In addition to this, the Department was made aware through its own consultation and that undertaken by OFSTED in the Autumn Term 2001 of the views of schools in respect of the Authority's support for school attendance.
- 4.3 On 27<sup>th</sup> April 2001, members of the Education Social Work Service were informed about the immediate review of their Service and the reason for it. At this point, they were invited to put forward, in writing, "any issues the Department should address through this review or any ideas which might help to move the Service forward."

Five members of the Education Social Work Service responded to this invitation. Their recommendations included:

- \* Changes to the existing arrangements for panel meetings (meetings held with relevant families and their children in respect of serious difficulties with attendance) with a view to making them more efficient and accessible to parents;
- \* Proposing the establishment of a Court Officer post within the Service;
- \* Proposing the introduction of term-time only working for those officers who wanted such a facility;
- \* Proposing a more strategic emphasis to the role of the Service
- \* Changing the name of the Service;
- \* Enhancing the influence and status of the Service;
- \* The creation of a leaner management structure within the Service;
- \* The establishment of primary and secondary teams;
- \* The inclusion of research and evaluation work as part of the overall work of the Service;
- \* The establishment of more career development opportunities within the Service;
- \* Opposition to the possibility of "hot-desking";



- \* The need to ensure that job specifications continue to reflect adequately the nature of the work undertaken by officers working within the Service;
- \* The need for the Service to remain independent of schools;
- \* Detailed recommendations regarding the roles and responsibilities which should be held within the Service;
- \* Continuation of the Service being based at the Town Hall, Barking;
- \* The establishment of an annual action plan for the Service directly connected to the Education Development Plan;
- \* The introduction of "hot-desking" in the central office and the establishment of physical bases in secondary schools for LEA officers who work in them;
- \* The co-ordination of LEA and school staff INSET;
- \* The establishment of effective cross-Borough working arrangements;
- \* More effective links with other local services;
- \* More flexibility with working hours to enable more effective, responsive and targeted work (e.g. evening or weekend work).

4.4 On 25<sup>th</sup> May 2001, Departmental managers put forward proposals for the establishment of the Access and Attendance Service. This time, views on the proposals were sought from trade union representatives, headteachers, Social Services as well as from existing staff.

Responses received can be summarised as follows:

<b>CONSULTEES</b>	<b>RESPONSES RECEIVED</b>	<b>COMMENTS MADE</b>
Headteachers	2	<p>The need for the continuation of support to primary phase schools in working with parents in support of attendance</p> <p>The need for an emphasis at an early age in respect of difficulties with school attendance.</p> <p>The need for more competitive rates of pay for Service staff</p> <p>The need for each primary phase school to be assigned a named officer</p> <p>General support for the proposals</p>

Service Staff	1	Support for the change in name  The need for more emphasis on the status of Parenting Orders and on 'recent legislation'
Social Services	1	The need to connect the work of the new Service with corporate Council work on inclusion and with the targets in major strategic plans  The need to use the establishment of a new Service as an opportunity to develop joint services and more effective joint work.  Proposing that Service staff work towards obtaining qualified Social Worker status.  The possibility of wider consultation with stakeholders

- 4.5 Although OFSTED was not consulted in the usual sense of the word, its views regarding the LEA's support for attendance are key to any future development of the Service.

In the Autumn Term 2001, OFSTED initiated the inspection process by issuing all state maintained schools situated in the Borough with a questionnaire in which they were asked to grade, on a five point scale, the full range of LEA activities in relation to its work with schools.

In respect of this area of the service, schools were asked to grade LEA's "support for promoting a high level of attendance". The grading system was as follows:

- 1 - Very good
- 2 - Good
- 3 - Satisfactory
- 4 - Poor
- 5 - Very poor

School evaluations of this aspect of the LEA's role were as follows:

#### **PRIMARY PHASE SCHOOLS**

<b>RATING</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE OF SCHOOLS</b>
Poor	18%
Satisfactory	50%
Good	24%
Very Good	8%

(N.B. There were no 'very poor' ratings from our primary phase schools)

## SECONDARY PHASE SCHOOLS

RATING	PERCENTAGE OF SCHOOLS
Poor	38%
Satisfactory	38%
Good	25%

(N.B. There were no 'very poor' or 'very good' ratings from our secondary phase schools)

When these scores were combined in the analysis undertaken of all the responses to the OFSTED questionnaire, the LEA's score was within the middle range of scores achieved by those 94 LEAs inspected from Spring 2000 to Autumn 2001 and those programmed for inspection in Spring 2002.

It should be recognised that these responses were made at a time when, because of the recruitment and retention difficulties faced by the Education Social Work Service some schools had been without a full service for some months.

OFSTED's judgements on (a) Attendance and (b) Child Protection are set out in full below:

### Paragraph 151

**Attendance: Support for attendance is satisfactory. Attendance remains a concern, but was identified as a serious issue at the time of the first inspection. Weaknesses lie in support for primary schools where there has been little improvement in attendance and no improvement in unauthorised absence since the last inspection. In secondary schools, there has been some improvement in attendance, and a considerable reduction in unauthorised absence. Action has not been sufficiently prioritised until relatively recently.**

### Paragraph 152

**Over the last two years, the education welfare team became depleted. Staffing difficulties were encountered last year. The service has now been restructured and strengthened. The capacity for further improvement is good. The access and attendance team operates within the new Children's Support Division, working with pupils and their families and supporting schools. Additionally appointed officers support pupils in public care, young women of school age who are mothers and the increasing number of mobile pupils. In secondary schools, links with the learning mentors are used as a lever to improve attendance.**

### Paragraph 153

**A new handbook has recently been launched. This is a model of good practice. It makes clear the roles and responsibilities of schools and officers, offers guidance on procedures and definitions, and gives good practical advice to schools. Previous**

**inconsistencies in marking registers should now be eliminated, ensuring that attendance and unauthorised absence figures are more accurate, and court cases easier to substantiate.**

#### **Paragraph 154**

**Inspector's first systematic visit of the year involves an Access and Attendance Officer. Discussions with headteachers on attendance targets and exclusion issues have resulted in good plans for remedial action. There is already evidence of impact, particularly in highlighting underlying reasons for absence and negotiating appropriate remedial action with schools. The combination of this good intervention strategy, the new handbook, additional resources to schools through Standards Funding and newly appointed staff should ensure further improvement. Alongside this, a central pupil database is being introduced to allow closer and more rapid monitoring of attendance and exclusion.**

#### **Paragraph 155**

**Co-operation with other agencies, especially with social services and the police, is good. An Access and Attendance Officer is a member of the Youth Offending Team which has carried out truancy sweeps. Regular discussions with magistrates regarding court action proceedings result in a generally successful impact.**

#### **Paragraph 160**

**(Child Protection) Support for health and safety, welfare and child protection is good. Multi-agency co-operation has been much improved since the previous inspection. There is close working between the education service, social services and the police. In addition, other agencies such as housing have been effectively involved when circumstances warrant. The borough's welfare officer, educational psychology service and industrial chaplain offer support and guidance to schools and families in cases of trauma. The Healthy Schools Initiative has successfully supported schools in developing health and education programmes. There is a good working arrangement with officers in surrounding boroughs.**

#### **Paragraph 161**

**There has been a recent transfer of responsibilities for child protection to the Access and Attendance Service. All schools have emergency contact numbers and officers are available to advise on cases either prior to, or at the time of a referral. A consultant is providing training and additional support to child protection co-ordinators. Course attendance is monitored and areas of concern well followed up. The existing policy and procedures document is being revised in consultation with schools.**

**It is worth reflecting, in terms of best practice, that in "Missing Out: LEA Management of school attendance and exclusion" published by the Audit Commission in 1999, the recommendations made to LEAs were as follows:**

**LEAs should make more effective use of data by:**

1. systematically analysing attendance and exclusion data at group and pupil level, in addition to school level
2. collecting and analysing data on fixed period exclusions to monitor and, where necessary, target prevention at vulnerable groups
3. examining the characteristics of permanently excluded pupils and others being educated by the LEA outside school, to inform strategic reviews of provision

**LEAs should support school level work by:**

4. providing a framework and strategic direction for both improving attendance and preventing exclusion in their area
5. recognising the importance of effective links with the advisory and inspection service in improving school attendance
6. placing greater emphasis on working with school management on their policies, procedures and use of data, as well as doing individual casework with pupils
7. encouraging and assisting schools to improve their management of attendance and exclusions by both providing expert advice and challenging under-performance

**Work with other services, agencies and local authorities could be improved if LEAs establish:**

8. high level agreements on shared budgets for residential placements
9. clarity on roles and responsibilities when dealing, for example, with a looked after child who is not attending school
10. shared databases and perspectives among local front-line staff
11. clear referral routes, with LEA services acting as gateways to other services and agencies for schools, parents and pupils

**LEAs should enhance education welfare service management by:**

12. reviewing the focus, funding and comparative demands on their EWs
13. monitoring service effectiveness at case, group, school and LEA level and using that information to inform future service planning

**In order to ensure good quality education for all children outside school, LEAs should:**

14. proactively manage the exclusion process
15. have a 'champion' within the LEA for each pupil out of school to track their progress from the point they are out of school to their placement back in full-time education.
16. focus on all pupils outside school who are not receiving an effective education, not just those on permanently excluded
17. monitor the effectiveness of school reintegration packages
18. monitor the costs and outcomes of placements for all those outside mainstream schooling, including checks on what happens to these pupils after they reach the age of 16
19. quality assure all forms of education not subject to external inspection
20. forge close links and share information with those agencies and schemes providing assistance for disaffected young people after the age of 16

The creation of the Access and Attendance Team was intended to enable the LEA to move, as rapidly as possible, towards these approaches.

## 5. COMPARE PHASE

As part of this Best Value Review, officers have made visits to compare service delivery approaches in other local authorities, and have had discussions with officers in other LEAs and with Merle Davies (Attendance Advisor, Department for Education and Skills).

- Blackpool** - identified good practice by the DfES in the management of monitoring pupil mobility into/out of the authority and in working with schools to challenge off-rolling. In addition to this, the visit also stimulated thinking about regular consultation between the Service and schools on joint initiatives to tackle absence, the implementation of cost effective approaches to employment licensing, and the development of integrated practice arrangements with partner agencies supported by the exchange of information (for example, with the Housing Department about families moving into the Borough).
- Practice to consider - Initiate discussions and planning with schools and key partners at a strategic level about attendance matters - seeking to enhance partnerships through working towards shared goals and performance targets.
- Havering** - the Authority has recently completed a Best Value Review of the Education Welfare Service and is also one of the authorities in the DfES delegation pilot.
- Practice to consider - Incorporate the findings of the Best Value Review into robust Service/Business planning processes
- Nottingham** - identified good practice in the use of Police Powers under section 16 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, in supporting vulnerable young people on the streets, and is devolving Education Welfare Service budgets to schools on a service buy-back basis
- Practice to consider - Build effective partnerships with local divisions of the Metropolitan Police to identify shared goals (for example: emphasising the importance of regular attendance/reducing youth crime; targeting truancy 'hotspots' (community safety - fear of crime)/Police Powers under Section 16 of the Crime and Disorder Act
- St. Helens** - delegation of the Education Welfare Service to schools in 1990/91 leaving the Council's statutory responsibilities to be carried out by the Authority's Legal Services Department
- Practice to consider - Agreeing a service delivery profile in support of attendance at school that balances support and opportunities for young people and their families to change their behaviour against the use of the Authority's legal powers

Oldham - DfES have identified good practice in initiatives that focus on key themes (eg extended absence to country of origin), working strategically with schools to develop whole school initiatives on improving attendance rates, and the implementation of Management Information Systems that enable effective monitoring, support targeting of service delivery and underpin the evaluation of Service performance.

Practice to consider - Work with interested schools on whole school initiatives, and disseminate good practice on the impact of such projects. In-depth review of Management Information Systems of the Service; in support of service delivery, and of benchmarking in accordance with the aspirations of elected members and senior officers of the LEA.

Bury - identified good practice in raising the awareness of parents about the importance of regular attendance, and about their legal responsibilities.

Practice to consider - Develop and implement a 'core message' of two or three items about the importance of regular attendance that can be used by any elected member, senior officer, access and attendance officer, headteacher, learning mentor whenever attendance and absence is discussed. Develop and implement a publicity campaign about the commitment of the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham to driving up rates of attendance.

Leeds - the Attendance and Behaviour Support Team is a business unit within Education Leeds (a wholly owned company limited by guarantee of Leeds City Council and Capital) where good practice is being developed in the integration of the work on disaffection of the Attendance support team, Learning Mentors and Personal Advisors.

Practice to consider - seek to develop effective collaboration at school and whole authority levels between the LEA's support for school attendance and Learning Support Mentors (Excellence in Cities) and Personal Advisors (Connexions Partnership).

In addition to the information gained in these exercises, Members of the Group were interested to compare the Borough's performance in respect of school attendance with (a) those LEAs ranked most closely with us in terms of academic performance (Key Stage 2 and GCSE results) and (b) those LEAs considered to be our 'statistical neighbours' (ie those LEAs which have the closest overall statistical profile to Barking and Dagenham).

## Key Stage 2 2001

The table below displays the Key Stage 2 results of 2001. The results are aggregated and ranked. It shows that of the 149 local authorities in England, Barking and Dagenham are ranked joint 77<sup>th</sup> highest performing with 4 other authorities.

Key Stage 2 2001	English	Maths	Science	Aggregate Score	Rank Total of 149	DfES Attendance 2000/01 PRIMARY
Derbyshire	75	70	87	232	77	94.6
Somerset	75	69	88	232	77	94.1
Stockton on Tees	74	71	87	232	77	93.9
Slough	74	72	86	232	77	93.0
<b>Barking &amp; Dagenham</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>232</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>92.5</b>

Where the performance of Barking and Dagenham is compared with other authorities, Ofsted's statistics profile should be used. The profile identifies 10 statistical neighbours on the basis of contextual data which shows similarities between authorities. Ofsted has developed the statistical neighbours method to enable comparisons on a 'like for like' basis. The aggregate scores and performance rank of the borough's statistical neighbours is shown below for information.

### Statistical Neighbours

Key Stage 2 2001	Aggregate Score	Rank Total of 149	DfES Attendance 2000/01 PRIMARY
Tameside	228	88	94.0
Stoke on Trent	222	118	93.7
Halton	233	69	93.7
Rochdale	227	101	93.6
Oldham	228	98	93.4
Coventry	221	121	93.3
Salford	229	93	93.3
City of Kingston Upon Hull	223	115	93.2
Southampton	216	128	92.5
<b>Barking &amp; Dagenham</b>	<b>232</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>92.5</b>
Sandwell	212	136	92.4



## GCSE 2001

The table below shows the GCSE results 2001 for the 5+A\* to C GCSE grades indicator. Of the 149 LEAs in England Barking and Dagenham was ranked 123<sup>rd</sup>. The rounded results (38%) mean that this position is shared with Luton and Blackburn with Darwen.

	Percentage of Pupils on roll 5+A*-C	Rank of 149	DfES Attendance 2000/01 SECONDARY
Luton	38.1	124	91.1
Blackburn with Darwen	37.5	125	90.6
<b>Barking &amp; Dagenham</b>	<b>38.2</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>89.3</b>

As stated above it is crucial to compare performance on a like for like basis. Barking and Dagenham's statistical neighbours are therefore ranked below.

### Statistical Neighbours

	Percentage of Pupils on roll 5+A*-C	Rank of 149	DfES Attendance 2000/01 SECONDARY
Tameside	42.0	106	90.9
Stoke on Trent	35.6	130	90.6
Oldham	41.4	109	90.6
Southampton	43.0	98	90.3
Coventry	42.6	102	89.9
Rochdale	40.4	113	89.6
<b>Barking &amp; Dagenham</b>	<b>38.2</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>89.3</b>
Halton	39.9	115	89.0
Sandwell	34.3	137	88.7
Salford	34.3	137	88.2
City of Kingston Upon Hull	27.5	149	87.6

### Summary

Discussions with officers in other LEAs and visits to other local authorities have enabled Service Managers and Senior Officers to construct a menu of identified good practice in improving school attendance; decisions about whether any of these options and ideas could be incorporated into the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham's service delivery profile have yet to be discussed with schools and other partners, and their viability evaluated.

At the beginning of the Review, the Department made the comparison between the performance of the Education Social Work Service and the recommendations made in respect of LEA support for school attendance in the Audit Commission's

"Missing Out". The difference between the two was one of the motivating factors for the early restructuring of the service.

Examination of the comparative information regarding Key Stage 2 and G.C.S.E results for 2001 suggests that the Borough's performance in respect of attendance is not yet keeping pace with the improvements in attainment. Members of the Review Group agree that this is an issue which should be reflected in the Improvement Plan so that schools and the LEA could do even better if attendance were improved.

## 6. COMPETE PHASE (INCLUDING OPTION APPRAISAL)

6.1 The Review Group has found it difficult to identify any providers of a comprehensive attendance service in the private sector or other LEA providers operating as potential competitors to the Borough's own service.

However, the Review Group made a commitment to include within the Improvement Plan an undertaking that, through the Service's links with other LEA providers, the possibility of partnership working would be explored.

The Review Group considered the relevant options in the following way:

OPTION	APPROPRIATE	NOT APPROPRIATE	COMMENTS
Marketing testing of all or part of the service		✓	The current absence of a market rendered this option unviable
Formation of a public/private or public/public partnership, through a strategic contract, or joint venture company for example	✓		This option would be kept under review through service links with other LEA providers
Transfer or externalisation of the service to another provider (with no in-house bid)		✓	Given the absence of competitors and the Authority's commitment to its own service this option was rejected

Restructuring or repositioning of the in-house service	✓		The Review Group made a strong commitment to this option, given the early restructuring of the in-house service for the reasons set out in Section 2 of this report
Joint Commissioning or delivery of the service		✓	This option would be given further consideration as part of the on-going review of the Service
Cessation of the service in whole or in part		✓	Statutory obligations prevent this

6.2 The Review Group's preferred option is to maintain the direction determined by the early restructuring of the Borough's attendance service. Joint commissioning and partnership working will be kept under review in the light of developments both locally and nationally - including consideration of the implications of the DfES pilot projects in fourteen LEAs (these projects relate to the devolution to secondary schools of parts of LEA attendance Services).

## GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS AND INITIALS USED IN THE REPORT

OFSTED	- Office for Standards in Education
LEA	- Local Education Authority
CIAS	- Community Inspection and Advisory Service
CMAS	- Care Management and Assessment Services (Social Services)
UNISON	- Britain's biggest trade union, representing over 1.3 million workers, principally within the public sector
DfES	- Department for Education and Skills
EWO	- Education Welfare Officer
ESW	- Education Social Worker
NHS	- National Health Service
SEN	- Special Educational Needs
INSET	- In-service training (now referred to as CPD - Continuing Professional Development)

**BEST VALUE (ATTENDANCE)**

**IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

<b>Improvement Required</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Key Actions</b>	<b>Timescales</b>	<b>Outputs</b>	<b>Resources</b>	<b>Lead</b>
<b>Public Perspective</b>						
Continue the public promotion of high levels of attendance at school and of all the consequences of poor attendance	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Meet with head of Corporate Communications to develop a plan to further raise the profile of the service</li> </ul>	By March 2003	Minutes of meetings	No additional resources required	PK
	M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Develop a target to publish at least 3 articles in the Citizen relating to the Access and Attendance Service</li> </ul>	1 per term from Spring Term 2003	Press releases	No additional resources	PK
	M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Provide information on the service area on the website</li> <li>❖ Anonymous publication of successful prosecutions with the support of Corporate Communications</li> </ul>	March 2003	Relevant updated web page	No additional resources	PK
<b>Community First</b>						
Develop good communication links between the service and schools, parents, children and the community	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Develop a consultation strategy for the service which includes the following:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identifies key stakeholders</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	March 2003	Consultation strategy document	Resourcing needs to be considered through development of strategy	PK

Improvement Required	Priority	Key Actions	Timescales	Outputs	Resources	Lead
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Sets out the method of consultation and frequency</li> <li>▪ Sets out the method of evaluating feedback</li> <li>▪ Sets out how the feedback received will feed into the decision making process</li> <li>▪ Sets a deadline for the first round of consultation to commence</li> </ul>				
<p><b>Improve Access to Service</b> (i.e. access by schools governors, parents, children, Members and other agencies - as appropriate to the documents, activity or issue under consideration)</p>	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Review all literature to ensure that appropriate information is provided ie contact details services standards etc</li> <li>❖ Work with reception services at all Council buildings to ensure that appropriate information is available to enable customers to access service (link with Customer First Project)</li> <li>❖ Make appropriate information available on the website including service related forms with the ability to return information/completed forms electronically</li> </ul>	<p>March 2003</p> <p>July 2003</p> <p>March 2003</p>	<p>Copies of revised leaflets finalised</p> <p>Meetings held</p> <p>Completed revision of website</p>	<p>Consultation with schools</p> <p>Printing costs for revised/additional literature</p>	<p>PK</p> <p>PK</p> <p>PK/CW-D</p>

Improvement Required	Priority	Key Actions	Timescales	Outputs	Resources	Lead
<b>Funding the Future</b> Continue to measure the cost effectiveness of the service with others in the public and private sector	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Work with Finance to ensure that financial information relating to service costs are available to all managers</li> <li>❖ Continue to cost benchmarking with other local authorities</li> <li>❖ Review all LEA policies and funding which impact on supporting attendance at school</li> </ul>	<p>April 2003</p> <p>Annually from January 2003</p> <p>July 2003</p>	<p>Establish of cost centre management</p> <p>Register cost comparisons with services on other LEAs</p> <p>Revised policies as appropriate</p>	No additional resources	PK/PP
<b>Performance Counts</b> Review the effectiveness of the service to ensure that it has the capacity to deliver the service objectives and to achieve best practice as set out in 'Missing Out' (Audit Commission Publication) Develop a clear strategy for the service setting out a clear vision and key objectives  Develop user focussed standards for all areas of service in consultation with key stakeholders  Work towards achieving top quartile performance in service related best value indicators taking account of the	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Undertake a review of the structure and report findings and make the necessary recommendations</li> <li>❖ Work with management team on developing a strategy and service standards</li> <li>❖ Circulate to key stakeholders for comment</li> <li>❖ Undertake an analysis of the causes of non-attendance i.e. Unauthorised holidays,</li> </ul>	<p>December 2002</p> <p>March 2003</p> <p>March 2003</p> <p>Annually from April 2003</p>	<p>Implement review recommendations</p> <p>Draft strategy</p> <p>Completed circulation</p> <p>Analysis Report</p>	<p>Bid to DMT for additional resources</p> <p>No additional resources</p>	<p>PK/AH</p> <p>PK</p> <p>PK/AH</p>

(Contd over 4)

Improvement Required	Priority	Key Actions	Timescales	Outputs	Resources	Lead
recommendations made in the OFSTED report, targets set out in the Community Strategy and Service Scorecard	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ truancy, mis-reporting etc</li> <li>❖ Develop an action plan for tackling each area and set targets for improvement and the resources required</li> </ul>	July 2003	Completed Action Plan		PK
	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Monitor and report progress on implementation on a quarterly basis</li> </ul>	September 2003	Quarterly monitoring report		PK
Develop relevant local indicators which will measure service performance against standards	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Develop a set of local performance Indicators</li> </ul>	July 2003	List of performance indicators	No additional resources	PK
	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Circulate to key stakeholders for comment</li> </ul>	September 2003	Circulation list		
	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Monitor performance</li> </ul>	Termly from December 2003	Monitoring report		
Develop procedures to monitor the implementation of the Improvement Plan	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Meet with Members assigned to the review on a 6 monthly basis to monitor implementation progress</li> </ul>	June 2003	Minutes of meetings	No additional resources	PK/AH
	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Prepare a report for the Corporate Monitoring Group on a six monthly basis</li> </ul>	June 2003	Copy of report		PK/AH
	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Ensure that any report that relates to this area of service make reference to the impact on the implementation of this plan</li> </ul>		Copy of reports		PK/AH



Improvement Required	Priority	Key Actions	Timescales	Outputs	Resources	Lead
<b>People Matter</b> Ensure that all the staff involved in service delivery have the necessary training to enable them to carry out their duties in an effective manner	H	Undertake a training audit	March 2003	Analysis report	Training budget	PK/HR
	M	Develop individual training programme for all staff	July 2003	Staff training records		PK/HR

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**THE EXECUTIVE****29 APRIL 2003****REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION, ARTS AND LIBRARIES**

<b>YOUTH SUPPORT &amp; DEVELOPMENT SERVICE PLAN: 2003/04</b>		<b>FOR DECISION</b>
<p><i>A new Government requirement for Local Authority Youth Services is the submission to Government Offices of a Service Plan that has been agreed by the Local Authority.</i></p> <p><b><u>Summary</u></b></p> <p>This report has been written according to the sets of guidelines laid down by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) in their 'Transforming Youth Work' Reports. The plan identifies how the Youth Support &amp; Development Service is responding to local authority priorities and sets out its' Strategic Plan for 2003-06 and its' Delivery Plan for 2003-04.</p> <p><b><u>Recommendation</u></b></p> <p>The Executive is asked to agree the report.</p> <p><b><u>Reason</u></b></p> <p>Local Authority agreement of this plan prior to submission to the Government Office for London is a Department for Education and Skills (DfES) requirement in line with its national "Transforming Youth Work" agenda.</p>		
<p><b>Contact Officer:</b> Brian Lindsay</p>	<p>Head of Youth Support &amp; Development Service</p>	<p>Tel: 020 8270 6743 Fax: 020 8270 6742 E-mail: <a href="mailto:brian.lindsay@lbbd.gov.uk">brian.lindsay@lbbd.gov.uk</a></p>
<p>Councillor J Alexander</p>	<p>Lead Member</p>	<p>Tel: 020 8924 8239</p>

**1. Youth Support & Development Service**

- 1.1 The Youth Support & Development Service (YSDS) is a part of the Lifelong Learning and Inclusion Division in the Department of Education, Arts & Libraries. As a Local Authority service it is linked to the developments within the government's "Transforming Youth Work" agenda which has been the subject of three key Department for Education & Skills reports that set out new specifications and expectations.

**2. Service Plan**

- 2.1 In addition to listing background information about the Borough and the Service, the Plan identifies the Service's formal links with Borough priorities:

- Identifies how the YSDS links to Council Priorities
  - Identifies how the YSDS links to the Education Development Plan Priorities
- 2.2 The Plan sets out targets for the Youth Support & Development Service based on its contribution to the Lifelong Learning & Inclusion Division's Balanced Scorecard.
- 2.3 The contribution the Service makes to the Balanced Scorecard can be summarised within the following four priorities:
- To provide accessible quality learning opportunities to meet the needs of young people 11-19
  - To develop effective working partnerships with the voluntary sector and other council services and departments
  - To make use of all available resources
  - To ensure high quality service delivery
- 2.4 These were established following the Member led Review of the Service in 2000 and are still relevant to the main aim of re-engaging young people within positive educational based programmes.
- 2.5 One of the main aspects of the government's Transforming Youth Work programme is the adoption by Local Authority Youth Services of the National Youth Agency Standards of Youth Work Provision. These Standards, including a defined curriculum framework have been included in the Plan as YSDS targets within the specified timescale.

### **3. Summary**

- 3.1 The full YSDS Service Plan attached meets all of the criteria set out in the government's "Transforming Youth Work" agenda. It endorses the National Youth Agency Standards and clearly lays down the Service's contribution to Council, DEAL and Divisional priorities.

#### **Background Papers**

DfES "Transforming Youth Work" Reports:

- Developing Youth Work for Young People
- Planning for the Local Authority Youth Service: 2003/04 Guidance
- Resourcing Excellent youth Services

## **Youth Support & Development Service**

**Service Strategic Plan 2003-2006**

**Service Delivery Plan 2003-2004**

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## Context

This Strategic Plan (2003-2006) and Service Delivery Plan (2003-2004) has been developed as a result of the *Transforming Youth Work* documents - **Developing Youth Work for Young People and Planning for the Local Authority Youth Service: 2003-04 Guidance**. It takes into account the specifications and expectations laid out in the **Resourcing Excellent Youth Services** document in relation to sufficiency and builds on the progress that the Youth Support & Development Service (YSDS) has made following the major review and restructuring completed in 2000.

The Youth Support & Development Service already had a Service Action Plan in place, much of which is relevant to the expectations laid out in the aforementioned documents. This has created a position where the link with a national Common Planning Framework is a natural extension of ongoing, local YSDS practice. There are differences, but there are many similarities.

The review of the then Youth Service created a position where the new service, renamed Youth Support & Development Service, engaged more effectively with other LEA services. Additionally it emphasised that an educational base was critical for all YSDS activities and programmes.

The priorities laid down at that time, and the subsequent organisational developments that were put in place, enabled the service to be in a position to seamlessly endorse the aims and objectives of the Connexions Service which were launched the following year.

Whilst it would be true to suggest that the Youth Support & Development Service in Barking & Dagenham has endorsed and implemented a modernised agenda, it would also be true to state that there are a number of challenges to be met to complete the exercise.

## **The London Borough of Barking & Dagenham Overview**

Barking and Dagenham is one of the smaller London Boroughs in terms of area and population. It is situated on the eastern outskirts of Greater London and covers 3,680 hectares. It lies on the north bank of the Thames and has excellent transport links into central London via the road, rail and underground networks. The borough is also in close proximity to the London City Airport and the proposed channel tunnel Rail Link.

### **Population**

The population is approximately 165,359 and is expected to grow steadily over the next 10 - 15 years. This in part can be attributed to the borough's extensive new house building programme which includes Barking Reach. In 1994 there was a boundary change which resulted in an increase of approximately 10,000 people in the borough.

The number of children under 15 has risen since the 1991 census and is set to increase with the progress in house building. According to GLA projections, the population aged 0-15 in 2002 make up 23.2 per cent of the population (38,466 children). This is 2 percentage points more than in 1991 and represents an increase of 7,538 children. Figures for 2006 show a further increase. The numbers of 15 - 19 year olds are also set to rise. Figures since 1991 have increased from 8,670 in 1991 to 10,834 in 2002 and based on the GLA forecast this trend is expected to continue. Without the effects of the programme of house building, birth rates are showing an overall decline. However the net effect is expected to show an increase.

The borough's residents are predominantly working class. Under 14% of children are in high social class households, which is well below the national average of 31% and below the average for those boroughs identified by Ofsted as statistical neighbours of 19%. Only 10% of children are in households where the head has a higher educational qualification. This is by far the lowest proportion in London and significantly below national norms of 13.5% and below that for our statistical neighbours at 8%. Data is derived from the 1991 Census and will be updated when the Census 2001 data is available.

### **Ethnic Mix**

Barking and Dagenham has one of the smallest ethnic group populations in London. At the 1991 census 6.8% of the population were from ethnic minority groups, although this has since grown.

There has been a recent influx of about 1,000 refugee and asylum seekers from Kosovo, many of whom are single males. Between January 2001 and January 2002 the number of asylum/refugee children on roll schools in Barking and Dagenham has almost doubled (from 294 in January 2001 to 588 in January 2002). There are many languages spoken in Barking and Dagenham and these include: Arabic, Bengali, Cantonese, French, German, Greek, Gujerati, Italian, Punjabi, Serbo-Croat, Swahili, Somali, Turkish, Urdu and Vietnamese and more recently Albanian.



## **Housing**

There are over 69,000 homes in the borough, of which the council owns 26,380 (with around 14,500 properties having been sold through the Right to Buy scheme). There have been over 1,550 homes developed through Housing Associations' new build and purchase of street property schemes. The borough has 55 tower blocks, mainly concentrated in the Barking area. Major refurbishment of the council's stock is taking place over an 8-year period via its Shape Up for Homes programme. The borough has a programme for housing development over the next 3 years. The main development is on Barking Reach where a total of between 10,000 – 12,000 homes are planned. Other major developments include South Dagenham which could provide an additional 5,000 new homes, Barking Town Centre with the possibility of 4,000 new homes and the development intended for Lymington Fields which is expected to support over 500 homes. There are also proposals for the development of the UEL site on Longbridge Road. As more information becomes available the LEA will be better able to assess the impact on school places.

## **Local Economy and Unemployment**

Along with the national average, unemployment in the borough has declined in recent years, from 14.2% in 1993 to 5.2% in January 2000 and to 4.5% in July 2002 (ONS Claimant Count). New companies are attracted to the borough due to the borough's proximity to London and good transport links. The Council has also been successful in a number of major economic and social regeneration projects and is working towards a range of initiatives to improve both the infrastructure and physical environment of the borough. This has brought a range of opportunities in the construction field offering employment to a high number of people with construction skills.

There are several major manufacturing plants located in the borough, including Ford Motor Company, Welbeck Steel Services Centre and the international pharmaceutical company, Aventis Pharma (formerly known as Rhone-Poulenc Rorer) which employs 65,000 worldwide. Although the radical reorganisation of Ford at the Dagenham Plant means that cars are no longer being manufactured, Ford have made a multi-million pound investment in diesel engine engineering and manufacturing over five years and Dagenham remains as London's largest industrial centre.

Barking and Dagenham is experiencing growth in the retail, leisure and care sectors. The care sector accounts for 10 per cent of employment in the borough and a further 5 per cent growth is forecast in 2002.

## **Indices of Deprivation**

Barking and Dagenham ranks amongst the most deprived areas in England. It is the 24<sup>th</sup> most deprived authority of the 354 districts in England according to the Department for Environment, Transport and the Regions index of local conditions to measure levels of deprivation 2000. Since the demographic profile of each of the borough's wards is strikingly similar, the rankings of individual wards are within a relatively narrow range.

There are however, wards that can be identified as having a higher rating such as Longbridge and Chadwell Heath and those identified as having the worst such as the old Fanshawe ward (now part of Parsloes) and Gascoigne. Generally those wards with the worst ranking are deprived in terms of employment opportunities, health, unsatisfactory housing, low income, lack of qualifications, child poverty and poor geographical access to services. Higher ranking wards still exhibit a high level of social need with levels of deprivation well above the England average. Data for the new ward boundaries is currently unavailable, the analysis above is therefore based on the old ward boundaries.

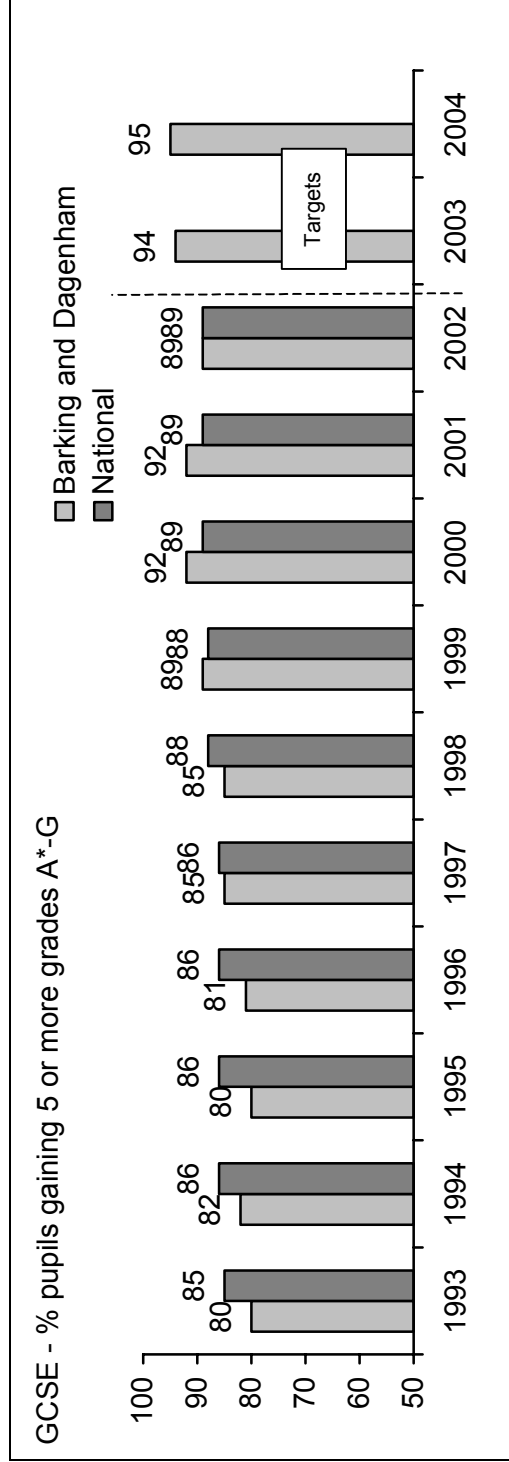
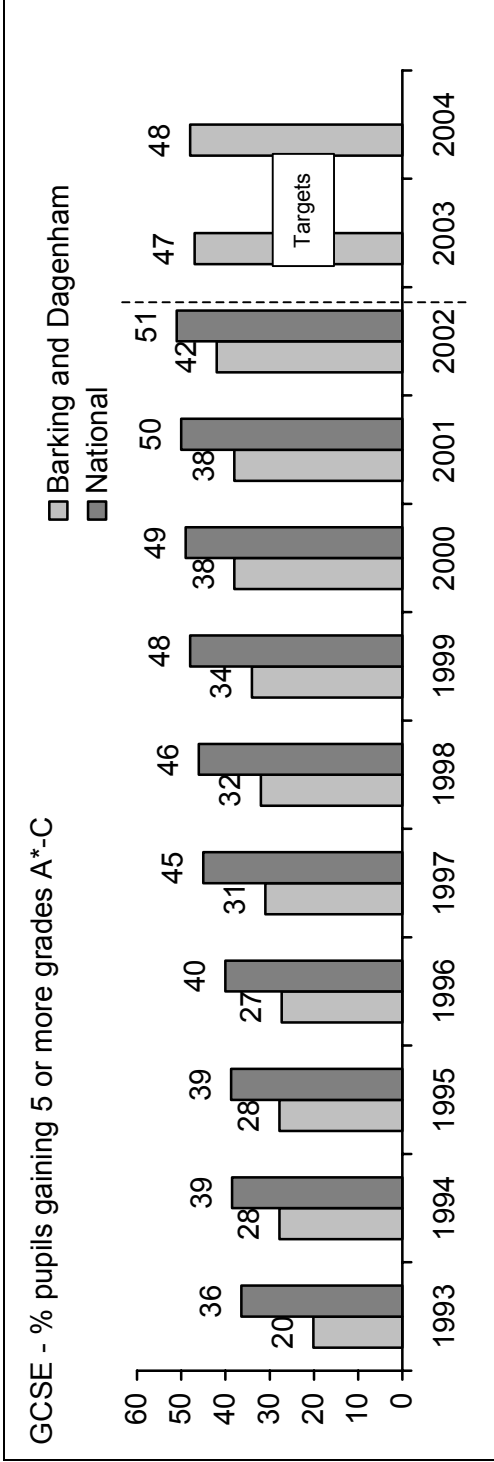
**Youth Population  
(Barking & Dagenham 2001 Census Extract)**

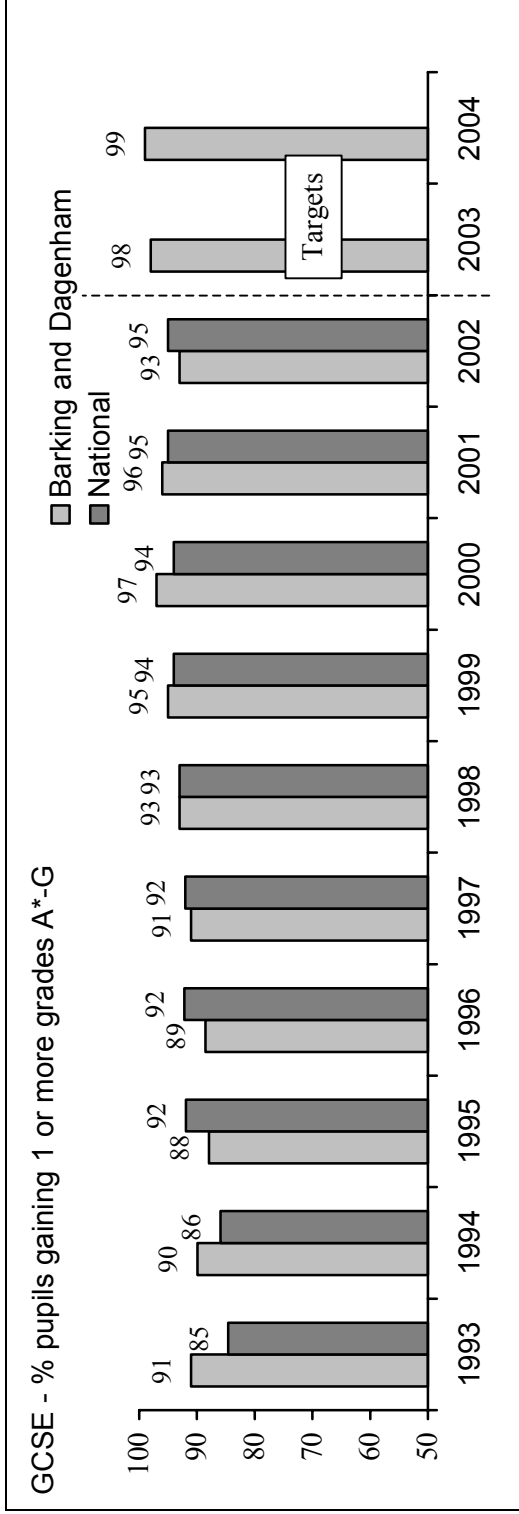
<b>Age</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
<b>11</b>	2259	1205	1054
<b>12</b>	2171	1183	988
<b>13</b>	2172	1154	1018
<b>14</b>	2055	1120	935
<b>15</b>	2284	1119	1165
<b>16</b>	2347	1145	1202
<b>17</b>	2091	1031	1060
<b>18</b>	2163	1085	1078
<b>19</b>	1985	982	1003
<b>20</b>	2187	1027	1160
<b>21</b>	2195	1027	1168
<b>22</b>	1973	912	1061
<b>23</b>	2090	953	1137
<b>24</b>	2125	969	1156
<b>25</b>	2176	1003	1173
<b>11-25 Total</b>			
	32273	15915	16358
<b>13-19 Total</b>			
	15097	7636	7461

# Educational Data

## Participation & achievement

### GCSE





### Education Development Plan Priorities

1. Promoting social inclusion
2. Raising standards in literacy at all levels of attainment
3. Raising standards in numeracy at all levels of attainment
4. Raising standards for primary children (Foundation Stage and Key Stages 1 and 2)
5. Key Stage 3 Improvement
6. Raising standards at GCSE and above
7. Attainment through support for school management
8. Improve the teaching and use of ICT in schools

## **Youth Employment**

### **A look behind the raw figures of Barking & Dagenham's labour market 2002.**

As a general overview in key skill occupational areas consisting of retail, engineering, clerical/admin, warehouse and practical based work, linked with qualifications and skills related to youth employment in a number of occupational areas, of which the findings and figures are as follows.

A total of 466 16 to 19 years olds were registered at the Connexions Centre in Monteagle Court as actively seeking work at the April 2002 return. Although this peaks and troughs across the year the statistical return for December 2002 showed this figure to be 550, it was found that approximately 40% of young people were looking for full-time Retail and Customer Service related opportunities with another 40% looking for Clerical/Administration opportunities. The remainder was made up by a practical emphasis with a first choice interest of approximately 10% into Engineering and 10% Warehousing. Employer recruitment from this age group has become more difficult to encourage and the level of vacancy requirement often outstrips availability. There will be pockets of interest for areas such as Care and Hospitality though generally recruited to after age 18. The Employer and vacancy teams spend a considerable time promoting young people though it is evident that the young people registered often do not match the qualifications profile that the Employer believes is necessary to carry out the tasks. Much emphasis therefore has to be placed on bringing realism to the job description so that young applicants can be considered.

### **Engineering:**

In engineering the required criteria requested by companies were Double Science, Maths and English with Information Technology skills increasingly being sought. The position of basic motor mechanic would appear to be taking a decline with the advent of more sophisticated motor vehicles. This has prompted the industry to look for academic qualifications as a starting point and has therefore created a decline in employability for training within this highly technical service.

### **Retailing:**

It was found that companies generally were not requiring high grade passes but specified GCSEs at a basic level in mainly Maths & English. They also requested good communication skills with a pleasant and friendly manner, enthusiasm and the ability to understand the products being sold.

As an overview it needs to be noted that most companies were offering part-time hours linked to weekends. This resulted in fewer jobs as young people were looking for full-time employment within this industry. It can be difficult to gain a position under these circumstances depending upon individual circumstances and level of support. Management positions were the only areas for full-time employment and thus required the more experienced or with additional qualifications.

**Clerical/Office Admin:**

It was found that this industry requirement was to be educated to reasonable standard with GCSE Maths & English. There is incidence of the traditional office junior being in decline as more and more workers now process their own correspondence and support functions. Skills required were good I.C.T. skills evidenced by ability to use popular packages coupled with good communication skills and telephone manner.

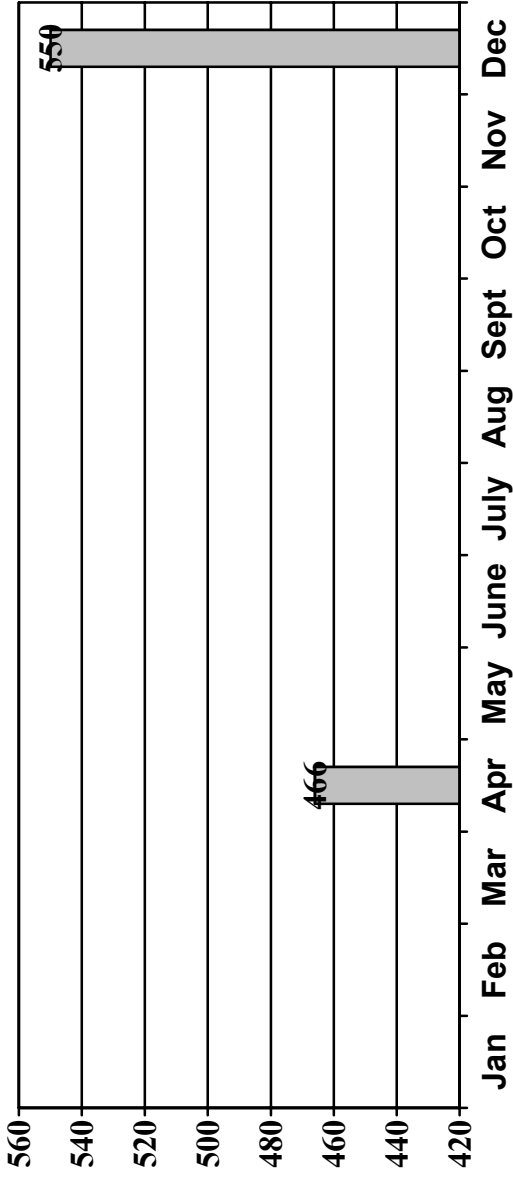
There are still good opportunities to be had within this industry but with an emphasis on IT, competence and an overall aptitude to do the job.

**Warehousing:**

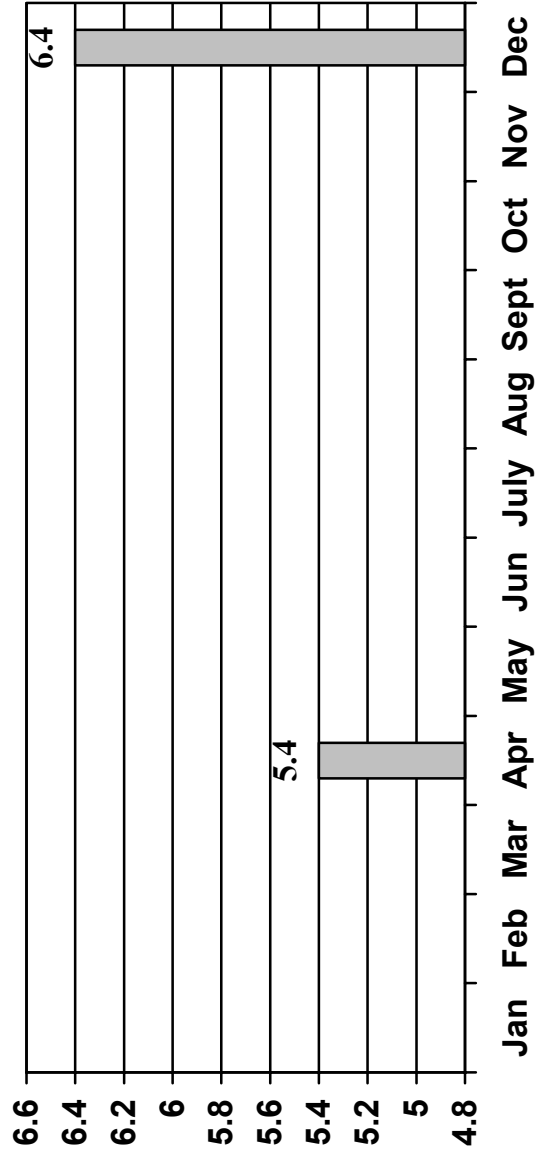
Again no formal qualifications generally required other than basic GCSE in Maths & English essentially to be able to demonstrate numeracy and literacy as part of the job role in order to act safely. I.C.T. skills were also required, as technology has moved into this industry and has much influence on stock control.

There were fewer warehouse jobs to be had compared to previous years but cold calls to employers yielded a small number of opportunities.

### Unemployment rates



Figures represented as a % of total 16-19 population





# Youth Support & Development Service

## LEA Overview

In the summer of 1999 the Council brought together the previously separate areas of Education, Arts and Libraries into a single department. This restructuring marked the start of a new approach to Education, Lifelong Learning and Cultural Development.

The new department aims were to secure high standards of educational attainment, high quality opportunities for lifelong learning and excellent cultural facilities so as to improve the quality of life of the residents, assist in the regeneration of the area and to tackle social inclusion.

The Lifelong Learning and Inclusion Division was established within the new structure to raise standards and to pursue two main aims:

1. To bring coherence and direction to the Borough's provision for post-14 and post-16 education and training.

To do this, the various services contributing directly to this aspect of the department's work were brought together into a single division. This includes the **Youth Support and Development Service**, Trident, the Adult College, Careers Education, the Post-14 Team, the Education Business Partnership and Barking and Dagenham Training Services.

2. To drive up standards of education and to raise the stock of skills and qualifications acquired by the adult population.

The overriding aim of the Lifelong Learning and Inclusion Division is to work with the community and other relevant Council departments and agencies to significantly raise the stock of skills and qualifications within the community.

The team aims to contribute to the Authority's aspirational targets to eliminate the very low levels of attainment within its community and to make Level 2 in the basic skills an entitlement for all.

The need to raise standards in education and levels of qualifications is motivated by three central needs:

The Authority intends to be successful in regenerating its local economy (aided by ESF and SRB funds). It needs, therefore, to offer a skilled local workforce to potential inward investors.

The Authority intends its community to develop in confidence. It needs, therefore, to ensure its residents have access to learning (both formal and informal) which will help develop personal interests, skills and competencies and extend choice.

The Authority wishes to continue to improve the educational standards achieved in its schools (currently amongst the fastest improving LEAs in the country). It needs, therefore, to ensure that the educational standards across the community as a whole are raised.

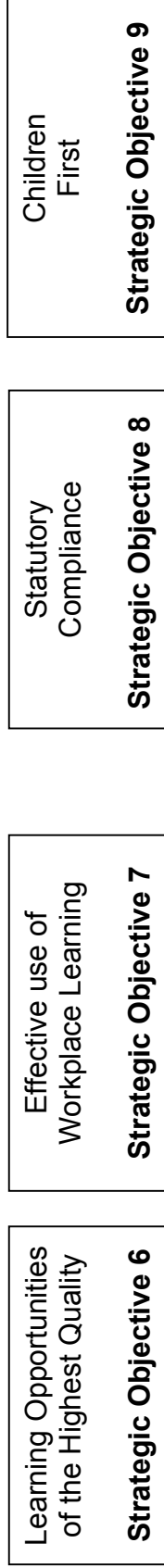
In order to deliver what is expected of the Division a set of strategic objectives for 2003-04 has been agreed. These objectives provide the division with a shared understanding and commitment to a set of common goals. They are presented as a Strategy Map as follows;

Strategy Map

Community First - Customer Perspective



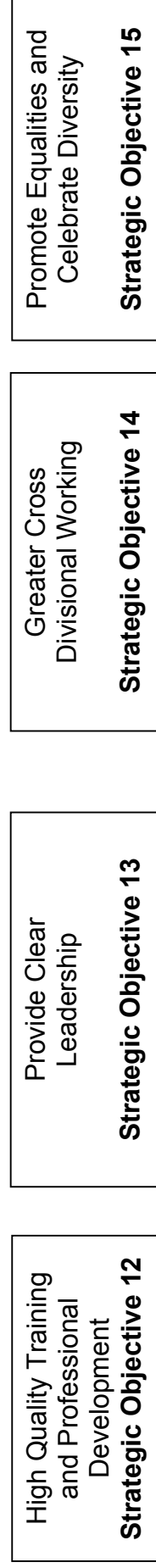
Performance Counts - Organisational Processes Perspective



Funding the Future - Financial and Resource Perspective



People Matter - Learning and Growth Perspective



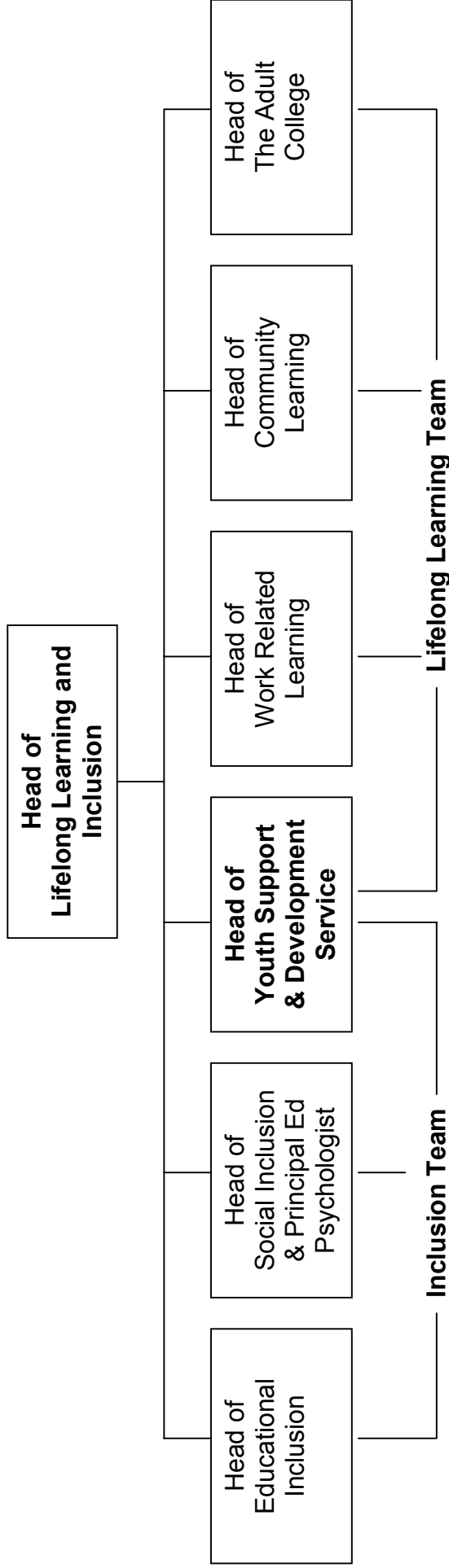
The Strategy Map is followed by a set of Strategic Objectives that will be used to assess the progress being made in relation to each specific objective. A summary implementation plan detailing specific actions or projects to deliver these objectives during 2003-04 has also been compiled. Finally, each service area has summarised its development, action or business plan into a standard format which completes the strategic objective setting and planning process for the Division. This new Youth Support & Development Service Development Plan will replace the current version contained in the 2003-04 Divisional Strategic Plan.

The Division is directly involved in the delivery of the London Borough of Barking & Dagenham's Community Strategy and has a significant role to play in, and a direct impact upon, the delivery of the Council's Community Priorities. These Community Priorities are based on the three core elements of the Barking & Dagenham 2020 Vision statement.

The realigning of the Youth Support & Development Service within the Lifelong Learning & Inclusion Division has created formal linkages where the YSDS engages fully with all of the relevant strategic Council and Departmental objectives within a framework that brings the variety of planning processes into a single coherent approach.

## LEA Linkages

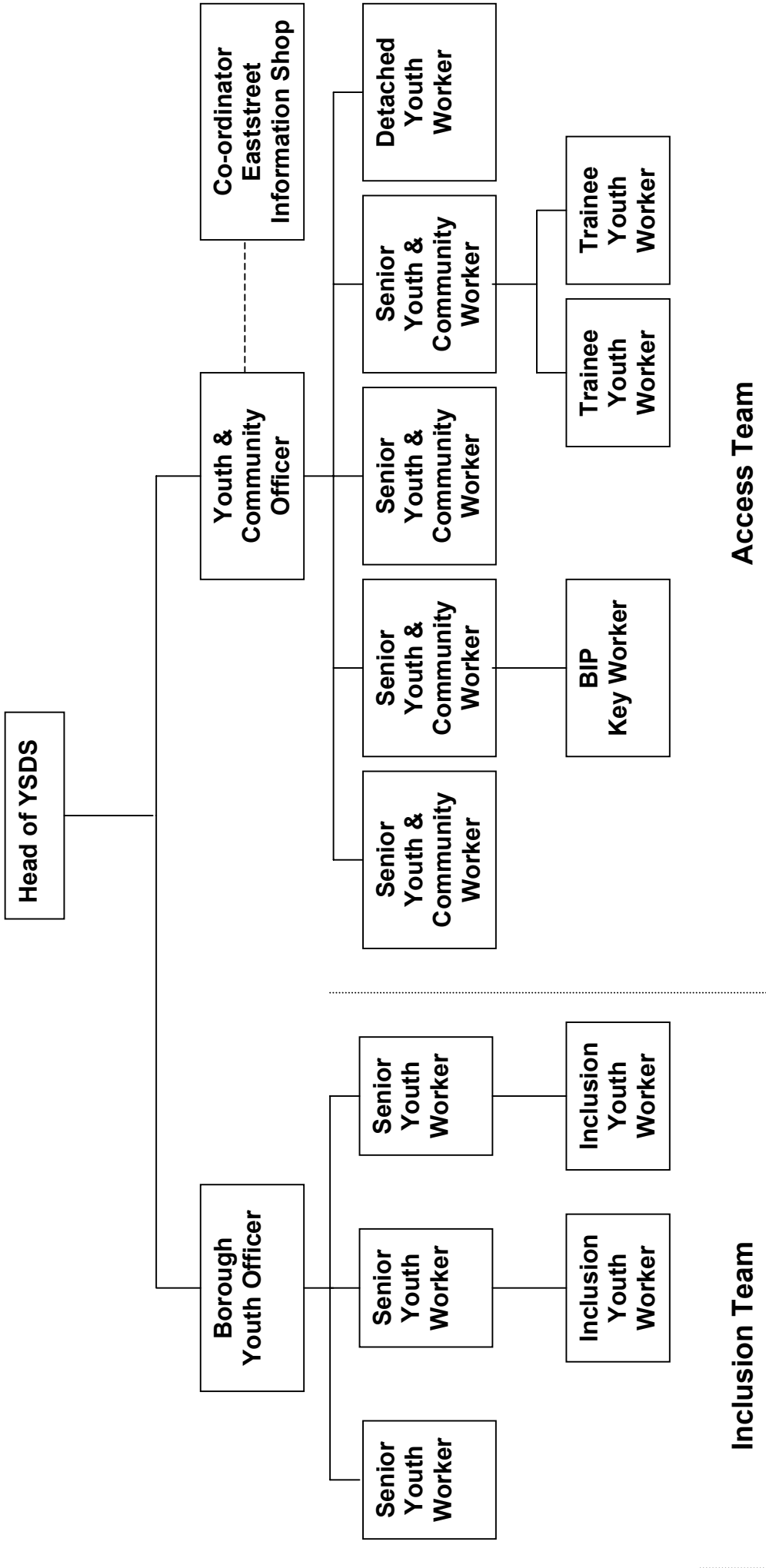
As indicated previously, the Youth Support & Development Service is located within the Lifelong Learning & Inclusion Division in the Department of Education, Arts and Libraries.



As illustrated, the YSDS is engaged with both team aspects of the Division's work. The Head of YSDS is a member of the Lifelong Learning Team, the Deputy Head of YSDS is a member of the Inclusion Team. This engagement allows an operational linkage with the work of the Division.

It creates opportunities for raising awareness and understanding of the contribution the YSDS can potentially make as well as planning joint work across the range of responsibilities and initiatives managed by the Division that are consistent with the Divisional Strategic Plan.

# Structure



**Access Team**

**Inclusion Team**

## YSDS Service Action Plan (Priorities, Programmes and Targeted Groups 2002-2003)

Priorities	Programmes	Targeted Groups
<p>To provide accessible quality learning opportunities to meet the needs of young people 11-19</p> <p>To develop effective working partnerships with the voluntary sector and other council services &amp; departments</p> <p>To make use of all available resources</p> <p>To ensure high quality service delivery</p>	<p><b>Health Education:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇒ Relationships</li> <li>⇒ Sexual Health</li> <li>⇒ Mental Health</li> <li>⇒ Drugs &amp; Alcohol</li> </ul> <p><b>Social Skills:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇒ Self Awareness/Self Esteem</li> <li>⇒ Communication Skills</li> <li>⇒ Interpersonal Skills</li> <li>⇒ Explore &amp; Manage Feelings</li> <li>⇒ Understand &amp; Identify with Others</li> <li>⇒ Values Development</li> <li>⇒ Problem Solving</li> <li>⇒ Negotiation Skills</li> <li>⇒ Action Planning</li> <li>⇒ Reviewing Skills</li> </ul> <p><b>Empowerment:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇒ Young People's Participation</li> <li>⇒ Life Skills</li> <li>⇒ Advice &amp; Information</li> <li>⇒ Opportunities for New Experiences</li> </ul> <p><b>Achievement:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇒ Accredited Programmes</li> <li>⇒ Informal Education</li> </ul>	<p>Teenage Mothers</p> <p>First Time Teenage Fathers</p> <p>Young Women and Alcohol</p> <p>Young People at Risk of Exclusion from Statutory Schooling</p> <p>Young People Looked After</p> <p>Young People with Disabilities/Learning Difficulties</p> <p>Disenfranchised Young People</p> <p>Disaffected Young People</p>

## Resources

<b>2003-04 budget</b>		
Base revenue funding		£920,000
External revenue funding		
	• UK Online	£75,000
	• TYWDF	£30,552
	• SEND	Amount to be confirmed
	• NRF	£40,000
LBB&D Capital funding		
	• Beacon Youth Centre Upgrade	£720,000
Accommodation & Outlets		
	Beacon Youth Centre	
	Oaks Youth Office	
	Farr Avenue Cyber Cafe	
	Sue Bramley Centre	
	Eaststreet Information Shop for Young People	
	Sydney Russell UK Online Centre	
	Community Based Projects	
	Detached Work	
	Connexions Service Partnership Programmes	
	Positive Activities for Young People Initiative	
	Voluntary Youth Sector Partnership Programmes	

## Partnerships

<b>Adult College</b>	UK Online Centre
	Sue Bramley Centre
<b>B&amp;D Training Services</b>	YSDS Social/Life Skills programme
<b>Barking College</b>	Farr Avenue Cyber Café
<b>Children's Fund</b>	Summer and Holiday Programmes
<b>Community Safety Strategic Partnership</b>	Head of YSDS is DEAL representative
<b>Connexions</b>	Various - see separate section
<b>DAT</b>	Voluntary Sector support
<b>Eaststreet Information Shop for Young People</b>	Service Level Agreement including secondment of staff, core funding, professional support and joint training, and youth work projects.
<b>Health Authority</b>	Healthy Eating Funded Programme
<b>Housing &amp; Health</b>	Barking Foyer Project
<b>Leisure Services</b>	Young People in Parks Project (Teen Shelters)
<b>PCT</b>	YSDS Social/Life Skills programme
<b>Police</b>	Member of Police/Community Working Party
<b>PRU</b>	YSDS Social/Life Skills programme
<b>Schools links</b>	YSDS Social/Life Skills programme
<b>Social Services</b>	Adolescent Resource Team programme
<b>Teen Pregnancy Strategy</b>	Member of Strategy Group
<b>YOT</b>	Member of Strategy Group
	Community Based programmes (Youth Inclusion Programme)



<p><b>Vol Sector</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Directory of Voluntary Youth Organisations:</b> This Directory is in its 2<sup>nd</sup> edition and is a well produced glossy publication in two sections. The first section lists youth organisations in the borough that have registered with the YSDS; the second section lists services for young people. The registration process only accepts youth organisations that endorse CRB checks for all staff. This CRB check to be formally in place through the organisations parent/umbrella group or through the YSDS, which processes and resources the check. Currently there are 45 organisations listed in the directory with a number of applications being processed. It is our stated intention, with the agreement and support of the voluntary and independent sector organisations, to develop this registration process to include borough wide youth work standards as part of both the registration process and the information contained in future directories under each organisations listing. This is being developed in conjunction with the Young People's Workers Forum and the Transforming Youth Work Strand A initiative.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Voluntary Youth Organisations Forum:</b> A long standing representative forum that meets quarterly and is chaired by the Deputy Lieutenant for the London Borough of Barking &amp; Dagenham, Colonel Stephen Foakes TD DL. The Forum has 78 local voluntary youth organisations registered with it and is formally represented on the Connexions Local Management Group.</li> <li>• <b>Young People's Workers Forum:</b> Again, a long standing forum. It meets monthly and is attended by workers from the statutory, voluntary and independent sectors. Currently, the Forum has 99 workers from the borough on its invitation list with a high turnout at each meeting.</li> <li>• <b>Joint Work:</b> Various community and agency based programmes. TYWDF initiatives as well as thematic projects.</li> </ul>
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## **Strategic Plan 2003-2006**

The Strategic Plan for the Youth Support & Development Service is that which is illustrated in the LEA Overview on pages 12-14 supplemented with the Council and Department of Education, Arts & Libraries strategic plans.

Government priorities are endorsed both within the strategies above as well as within the YSDS Delivery Plan on page 23. This plan takes account of and reflects the proposals and requirements outlined through the Transforming Youth Work Initiatives as well as building on the developing relationship with the priorities set out following the LEA led Service review of 2000.

## YSDS Delivery Plan 2003-2004

### Brief description of the Service

The Youth Support & Development Service provides opportunities for young people between 11 and 19 years (the 13-19 age range is the priority group) to engage with informal education programmes outside the formal curriculum. The Service is increasingly engaged in offering daytime opportunities to young people who are disaffected and is developing its inclusion programme which emphasises links with schools, colleges and the Connexions Service. The structure is based on two teams reflecting the two main strands of inclusion work and informal education programmes including advice and guidance, and support to community based youth organisations.

### Strategic Aims of the Service

The YSDS aims to engage young people 11-19 years in:

- a range of informal education opportunities that enhance their personal and social development and learning
  - services which provide information, advice and support that meets their needs
  - programmes that are creative, varied, accessible and flexible, based on their needs and interests
- To work with young people 13-19 years who are disaffected to reengage them with the Lifelong Learning agenda

Key Current Priorities	Strategic Objectives	Tasks to be completed to successfully pursue each key priority (2003/04)
1. To provide accessible quality learning opportunities to meet the needs of young people 11-19 years	SO1 SO2 SO3 SO7 SO9	1.1 Ensure a variety of routes into programmes. Start where the learning is at. 1.2 Develop strategies for engaging with young people based on developing relationships which ensure that opportunities offered are relevant.

(cont)		<p>1.3 Extend the quality assurance framework to ensure that all programmes offered are of a high standard.</p> <p>1.4 Carry out customer satisfaction surveys with young people.</p> <p>1.5 Achieve IP standard.</p> <p>1.6 Ensure that young people's achievements are publicised.</p>
2. To develop effective working partnerships with the voluntary and independent sector and other council services and departments	SO4 SO12 SO14	<p>2.1 Build on current good practice and extend the range of partners.</p> <p>2.2 Develop measures to ensure effective partnership working.</p>
3. To make effective use of all available resources	SO5 SO6 SO10 SO11 SO13	<p>3.1 Identify clear objectives in relation to youth work strategies and secure funding to support achievement of same.</p> <p>3.2 Clearly define the contribution the YSDS can make to the lifelong learning agenda to develop and enhance engagement with departmental initiatives.</p> <p>3.3 Review structure and priorities to ensure engagement with local needs is maintained.</p> <p>3.4 Develop the YSDS relationship with the London East Connexions Partnership and the Barking &amp; Dagenham Local Delivery Plan.</p>
4. To ensure high quality service delivery	SO8 SO10 SO11 SO12	<p>4.1 Develop an in service framework to ensure maximum opportunities for professional and personal development to improve YSDS staff skill base.</p> <p>4.2 Develop a staff development policy.</p> <p>4.3 Strengthen the YSDS training programme.</p> <p>4.4 Update the YSDS staff appraisal system.</p>

## **Priorities**

The list of Key Current Priorities above will be translated into a Service Action Plan based on the work of the two Service Teams - the Inclusion Team & the Access Team. This process will ensure that the YSDS is both planning and delivering its work in direct relation to both the Council and the Department of Education, Arts & Libraries strategic objectives as well as working within a clear framework consistent with the Council's Balanced Scorecard.

The priorities already laid down on page 18 of this plan will form the basis of the individual Team Action Plans. These priorities are the priorities set within the Service Action Plan which was agreed in January 2002 following a formal planning and consultation process. The Action Plan was intended as a three year plan and following an evaluation in late 2002 has been identified as consistent with the planning process associated with the Transforming Youth Work initiative requirements. It is therefore a development of existing practice rather than a new initiative and is consistent with the developments within the Lifelong Learning & Inclusion Division.

## **Targets**

The set of targets the YSDS hopes to achieve is based on the annual youth service targets set down in section 6 of the Transforming Youth Work; Resourcing Excellent Youth Services report. It has been extended to include local targets already set.

### **DfES Set of Annual Youth Service Unique Targets**

- ❖ 25% of the 13-19 target population to be involved in YSDS programmes.
- ❖ 60% of this group to be involved in a personal development/social skills programme which results in an accredited outcome.
- ❖ An engagement with young people within the target age range who are at risk of or already fall into the following categories;
  - Not in education, employment or training (NEET)
  - Teenage pregnancy
  - Youth offending
  - Drugs, alcohol or substance misuse
  
- ❖ 70% of those participating in programmes expressing satisfaction with the service.

### **Outcomes Based on the National Youth Agency Standards of Youth Work Provision**

- ❖ A defined curriculum framework document.
  - This framework to link with Youth Standards 1 & 2 in a majority of YSDS programmes.
- ❖ A defined participation framework for young people.
  - This framework to set out clear arrangements for involving young people in democratic processes.
- ❖ A Staff Development framework document.
  - This framework to set out clear policies and practices for recruitment, initial and induction training and continuing professional development for all YSDS staff.

### **National Youth Agency Standards of Youth Work Provision**

- A national working group is currently updating the original version and this exercise should be completed early summer 2003. This set of standards is designed to promote young people's social development and personal achievement.
- ❖ The YSDS will adopt the revised set of standards and will implement them within the agreed timetable which is currently identified as 2006.

## Involving Young People

Young People's participation is critical to the development of YSDS policies, aims & objectives and programmes. The BAD Youth Forum was established in the autumn of 2001 following a period of consultation involving young people, Councillors and other council departments.

Currently in year 2 it is a borough wide representative forum. Members are elected from secondary schools, representative groups and youth organisations and reflect the diversity of young people within the borough. The Forum has a number of sub-groups and has formal representation on:

- UK Youth Parliament
- Connexions Youth Board
- Connexions Local Management Group
- Children's Fund Committee

The work of BAD Youth Forum to date has been supported and extended by help and opportunities offered by other Council Departments. The Chief Executive's Department has been particularly helpful in the Forum's development, and continues to actively support young people through Democratic Services Department.

The active involvement and support of elected Members of the Council is a critical aspect of the Forum's development.

The YSDS Senior Youth and Community Worker (Training and Service Development) is lead officer for coordinating young peoples' participation in Borough forums. For 2003-04 a key aspect of this work will be the development of an overall young people's participation strategy in conjunction with all youth organisations in the Borough.

This strategy will approach young people's participation at different levels, involving young people at youth organisation, community, school and Borough levels as well as developing appropriate 'on-line' participation opportunities.

The engagement of young people in participation programmes and the activities they will be involved in will be linked with other Youth Support and Development Service initiatives developing national accreditation schemes. Participation is suitably and specifically mentioned in the National Youth Achievement Award Scheme.

## Equality & Diversity

A fundamental component of good service planning is the promotion of equality and social inclusion. Whilst there is always room for improvement it is essential that an agreed framework is in place to monitor and evaluate the range of actions that should be taken into account to help establish best practice.

Policies and data and information systems are critical to the process, as is communication and liaison with other agencies and departments.

Current developments in place are;

- ❖ YSDS Equal Opportunity Policy
- ❖ Senior Youth & Community Worker with responsibility for Equal Opportunities
- ❖ SEND funded programme for 2002-03 nearing completion
- ❖ Specific partnership programmes addressing needs of young people who are asylum seekers or refugees
- ❖ Engagement with the Connexions Service and local voluntary and independent sector to identify local needs
- ❖ Borough Disability Officer fully involved with youth centre upgrading
- ❖ TYWDF quality standards initiative in partnership with local voluntary and independent sector
- ❖ Participation in the DEAL/LLID Inclusion Team developments

New developments proposed are;

- ❖ SEND funded programme for 2003-04 (awaiting details)
- ❖ Development of the TYWDF initiative
- ❖ Adoption and implementation of the NYA Management Information System
- ❖ Appropriate routes for young people's participation



## Quality & Staff Development

Some key developments associated with quality and staff development are already outlined within other sections of this plan. These are;

Outcomes Based on the National Youth Agency Standards of Youth Work Provision

- ❖ A defined curriculum framework document
- ❖ A defined participation framework for young people
- ❖ A Staff Development framework document

There are, however, other developments that contribute to this section which have been endorsed as YSDS priorities. These are;

- ❖ Part of the Council's "Investor In People" process
- ❖ Component part of DEAL policies and updates on
  - Child Protection
  - Health & Safety
  - Educational Residentials and Visits
  - Data Protection
  - Best Value
  - Drugs Related Incidents
  - Special Educational Needs & Disabilities Act

Specific YSDS developments for 2003-04, co-ordinated by the YSDS Senior Management Team or the Training, Monitoring and Evaluation Group, are;

- ❖ OFSTED Inspection Framework and Self Assessment Schedule preparation and implementation
- ❖ Detached Work Guidelines
- ❖ Transforming Youth Work Development Fund Strands A & C programmes (single strand of funding 2003-04);
  - Developing a 'Safer Youth Work Practices - Quality Standards Framework' in conjunction with voluntary sector organisations
  - Appropriate training programmes to support this initiative

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

In order to ensure that the YSDS makes significant and sustained movement on the proposals and developments identified above it is essential that an adequate monitoring and evaluation framework is in place.

The delivery of the YSDS Action Plan is based on the work of the 2 operational teams. Each team has its operational plan and evaluation process to monitor and evaluate its progress. In addition there is currently a cross team Training, Monitoring and Evaluation Group which includes part-time staff participation.

Whilst the YSDS SMT regularly review the work it is important that a more robust mechanism is put in place.

As a priority for 2003-04 it is therefore proposed that a formal timetabled framework be put in place to ensure that sufficient emphasis and importance is put on the monitoring and evaluation of all aspects of this plan. The NYA and the Association of Principal Youth & Community Officers will be approached for support and guidance to expedite this proposal.

This will include regular reporting to the LLID Management Team, Elected Members and other representative bodies and forums as appropriate.

## Connexions

### Overview

#### Barking & Dagenham LECP Priorities

Over the last year the Partnership has grown from strength to strength. The size of the Partnership, the diversity of needs, service providers and the range of challenges faced by many of the Local Authorities within the Partnership have highlighted key issues for it to tackle this year. As a Partnership, it has taken on board many of the lessons learnt over the last year and incorporated these into its plans for the future.

Within each of the ten London boroughs and nine Local Management Group areas, a number of different priorities exist linked to the needs of young people in the area and the availability of service provision; however the priorities as set out in the guidance are shared:

- Within the context of a universal service for all young people the LECP will strive to reduce the number of 16-18 year olds who are not engaged in education, training or employment.
- It will work with its full range of partners to support young people who are at risk of becoming involved in offending behaviour thereby reducing the numbers of young people who become involved in criminal behaviour.
- It will work through the Local Management Groups and local partners to develop a seamless integrated service for young people based on multi-disciplinary team of Personal Advisers and effective and relevant joint working protocols between key agencies.
- It will strive to provide better outcomes for young people from black and minority ethnic groups of young people, who are over-represented in the NEET category.
- It will work with partners and through the Local Management Groups to improve the overall effectiveness of services in meeting young people's needs.

## How it will achieve these outcomes

In 2002, the London East Connexions Partnership set its roots firmly in the framework of services for young people. Through the Local Management Groups, the recruitment and deployment of over 100 new Personal Advisers across the Partnership, the establishment of nine local Connexions bases, One Stop Shops, the development of Partnership Agreements between key agencies and effective promotion events, the Connexions brand is now well recognised in the Partnership. A range of contracts and grants have been awarded filling gaps in service delivery for young people and these will begin to have a marked impact in 2003. In 2003, it will seek to achieve the outcomes listed above by:

- Working through the established Local Management Groups to ensure that services are tailored to meet local need, determined by local providers and linked to local initiatives and priorities.
- Enhancing the delivery through multi-disciplinary, multi-agency teams of Personal Advisers delivering a seamless service across a range of agencies working to end the fragmentation and duplication of services as identified in the 'Bridging the gap' report.
- Devolving more resources to local based delivery ensuring that the deployment of Connexions resources are based on robust analysis of need and on effective consultation with young people specifically those who are vulnerable, disengaged or at risk of disengaging.
- Continuously engaging with a range of providers locally and at Partnership level and established agencies ensuring that their expertise and experience informs the strategies and direction for the future.
- Ensuring that young people remain at the heart of the service at all levels and that their active involvement informs and directs the development and provision of services across the Partnership.
- LECP will work with partners to influence and modernise services for young people, ensuring that together a range of youth support services that are relevant to young people's needs today and are based on evidence based good practice is developed.
- It will seek to ensure that service provision is informed by the needs of young people and not by the needs of institutions, providers or practitioners and that services are designed to meet young people at their point of need wherever and whenever such needs arise.

## Priorities and Resources

All young people during the 13–16 phase will need support, advice and information to enable them to make appropriate and positive choices about their future. Although a primary focus is on the needs of the NEET group, it is vital that the needs of young people who are not considered as vulnerable and who are more able are also met, particularly in schools and colleges.

It is clear however from consultation carried out in 2002/2003 and from the local plans that the indication of need in each borough differs slightly according to the ethnic groups represented within the borough. Broadly speaking the priority groups within the 13-16 groups will include the following:

- Young people who are in care or accommodated by the Local Authority.
- Young offenders or those identified as being at risk of offending.
- Young people who are at risk of being excluded or have been excluded from schools.
- Young unaccompanied refugees and asylum seekers.
- Young people identified by other key agencies as being at risk due to specific circumstances which may be present within their homes.

In 2003/2004, LECP will work through the Local Management Groups to deploy resources to develop effective local intervention strategies in partnership with other key agencies to ensure that Connexions resources can be deployed flexibly to meet the needs of young people who fall into these categories.

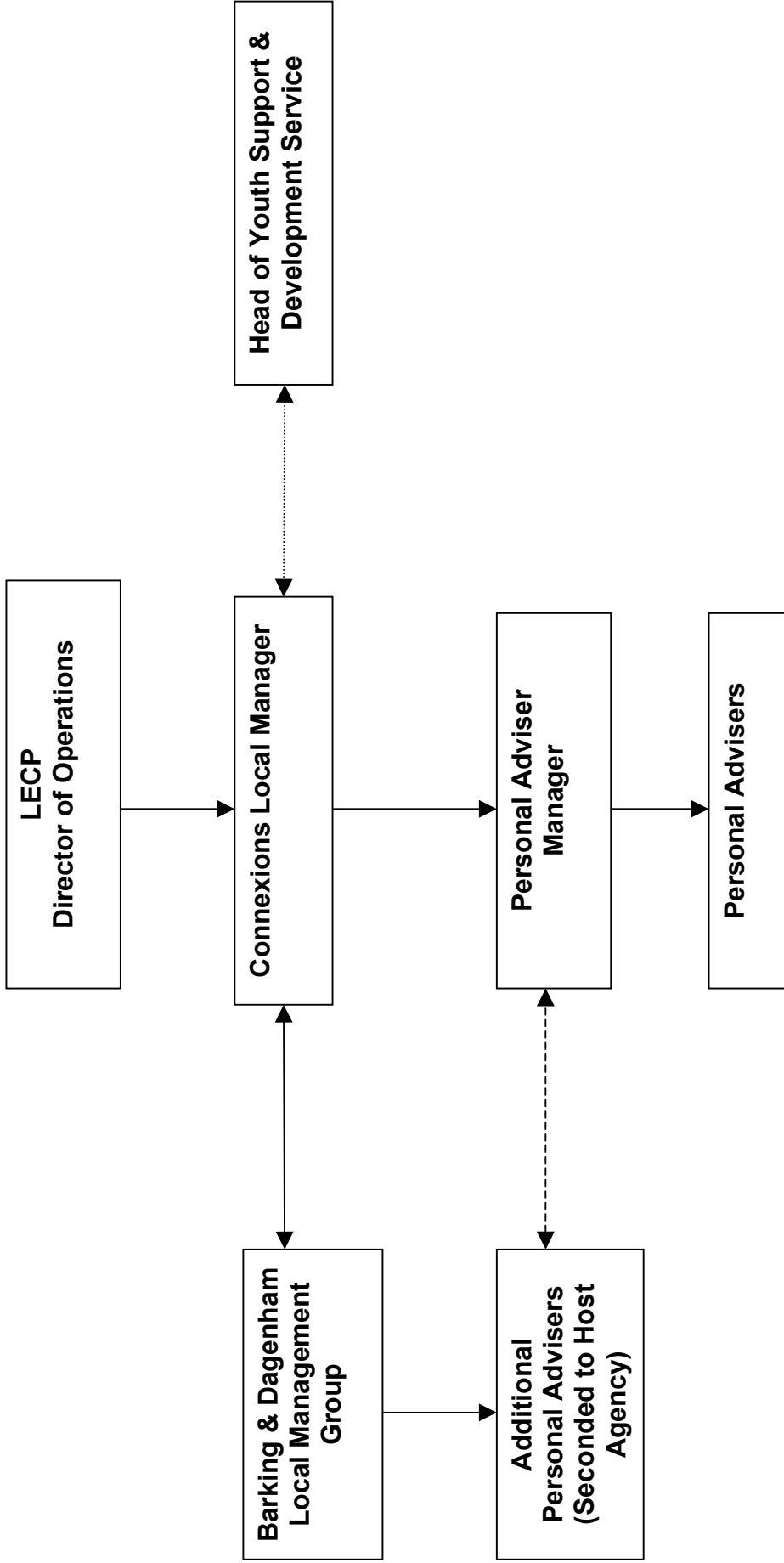
The objective will be to ensure that young people within this age group do not go on to become NEET post 16 and receive the appropriate advice and support to remain in education or go on to employment or training.

### Connexions Representation

Barking & Dagenham YSDS representation is as follows:

- Head of Youth Support & Development Service is Chair of the Local Management Group
- Head of Youth Support & Development Service is substitute (LEA) Board Member - Member is Head of Lifelong Learning and Inclusion Division
- Head of Youth Support & Development Service is Member of the Connexions East Thames Operations Sub-Committee

# Connexions Team Structure



## Local Delivery Plan Priorities (2002-03)

Barking and Dagenham has a track record of partnership work across services in the Council and particularly in partnership work with the voluntary sector and other statutory organisations. It is currently in receipt of numerous externally funded programmes within the Department of Education, Arts & Libraries as well as other broad-based initiatives such as regeneration and social inclusion. This has allowed the introduction of the Connexions Service to benefit from existing networks and partnership work and created the opportunity to build on existing good practice.

Priority		LECP Target
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>YP who are teenage mothers and first time teenage fathers</li> </ul>		Increase by 5% proportion of 16-19 yr old mothers in education, employment or training
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>YP at risk of exclusion from statutory education</li> </ul>		A 10% reduction of young people leaving education and training to become NEET
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>YP who are refugees and unaccompanied asylum seekers</li> </ul>		An increase of 10% in numbers of young refugees participating in education, employment or training
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>YP who are disaffected</li> </ul>		A 10% reduction of young people leaving education and training to become NEET
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>YP with offending behaviour or at risk of offending</li> </ul>		At least 90% of young people supervised by the YOT in education, employment or training by 2004
Establish a network of Connexions One Stop Shops, Satellite and Information Points		A rolling programme starting Year 1

## Glossary

<b>APYCO</b>	Association of Principal Youth & Community Officers
<b>BAD Youth Forum</b>	Barking & Dagenham Youth Forum
<b>BIP</b>	Behaviour Improvement Programme
<b>CIAS</b>	Community Inspection & Advisory Service
<b>CRB</b>	Criminal Records Bureau
<b>DEAL</b>	Department of Education, Arts & Libraries
<b>EDP</b>	Education Development Plan
<b>EiC</b>	Excellence in Cities
<b>ESF</b>	European Social Fund
<b>GCSE</b>	General Certificate of Secondary Education
<b>LA</b>	Local Authority
<b>LBBD</b>	London Borough of Barking & Dagenham
<b>LEA</b>	Local Education Authority
<b>LECP</b>	London East Connexions Partnership
<b>LLID</b>	Lifelong Learning and Inclusion Division
<b>LMG</b>	Local Management Group
<b>MV</b>	Millennium Volunteers
<b>NEET</b>	Not in Education, Employment or Training
<b>NRF</b>	Neighbourhood Renewal Fund
<b>NYA</b>	National Youth Agency
<b>OFSTED</b>	Office for Standards in Education
<b>ONS</b>	Office for National Statistics
<b>PAYP</b>	Positive Activities for Young People
<b>SEND</b>	Special Educational Needs and Disability Act
<b>SRB</b>	Single Regeneration Budget
<b>TYWDF</b>	Transforming Youth Work Development Fund
<b>UEL</b>	University of East London
<b>Vol Sector</b>	Voluntary Sector
<b>YOT</b>	Youth Offending Team
<b>YSDS</b>	Youth Support & Development Service



**THE EXECUTIVE****29 APRIL 2003****REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF HOUSING & HEALTH**

<b>APPEAL SYSTEM - HOUSING ALLOCATION OFFERS AND HOMELESSNESS OFFERS</b>	<b>FOR DECISION</b>	
<p><i>This report deals with the issue of appeals against offers under Part VI (Housing Register &amp; Housing Transfers) and Part VII of the Housing Act 1996 (Homeless applicants), as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002.</i></p> <p><b><u>Summary</u></b></p> <p>This paper proposes an offer appeal system for permanent offers of accommodation. The 2002 Homelessness Act granted a further right of review for homeless applicants to those allowed under the 1996 Housing Act. This now includes appeals against the suitability of offers of accommodation.</p> <p><b><u>Recommendations</u></b></p> <p>The Executive is recommended to agree:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. That Rehousing Team Leaders for each Community Housing Partnership decide appeals made against offers of accommodation for transfer and waiting list applicants.</li> <li>2. That the authority to deal with appeals against permanent offers of accommodation to homeless applicants be delegated to the existing section 202 Review Panel.</li> <li>3. 3. That the Principle Advice Manager chairs the section 202 Review Panel to decide upon the suitability of permanent offers made to homeless applicants.</li> </ol> <p><b><u>Reason</u></b></p> <p>The appeal system will allow officers to make decisions with the appropriate delegated authority. Other items in the Report relate to decisions reserved for the Executive, which affect all Council wards.</p>		
<p><b>Contact:</b> Anthony Alexander</p>	<p>Community Housing Manager</p>	<p>Tel: 020 8227 2210 Fax: 020 8227 2841 Minicom: 020 8227 2685 E-mail <a href="mailto:aalexander@lbbd.gov.uk">aalexander@lbbd.gov.uk</a></p>

**1. Background**

- 1.1 A report was presented to the Executive on 28<sup>th</sup> January 2003 about the changes required to conclude the implementation of the Allocations Policy Review. (See Appendix A)

- 1.2 The Executive agreed all but one of the recommendations. A reservation existed about the proposal made to deal with appeals against offers of permanent accommodation.
- 1.3 It was requested that further options for a system of appeal be prepared and presented back to the Executive. The Executive asked that the appeal system should involve either Members or Officers.
- 1.4 Consideration was given to the likely future proposed development of the allocation service as it is decentralised to the Community Housing Partnerships, (CHP). It was decided consequently that officers should administer the appeal system proposed in order to ensure the greatest responsiveness and flexibility.
- 1.5 In part this conclusion was also reached on the basis of recommendations in the Local Government Act 2000 which is that decision making of operational matters should be delegated to officers as a way of ensuring more efficient decision making within policy guidelines. Adopting the proposed approach of delegated decision making brings this appeal process into line with other appeal processes, which are already delegated, to officers.
- 1.6 The key elements of the offer appeal system are that the officer hearing the appeals should not take part in making the original offer and should have sufficient seniority.
- 1.7 The appeal systems proposed are considered to offer a sound way forward. They fit in with the changes in the structure of allocation service delivery proposed for the new Community Housing Partnerships.
- 1.8 In preparing the proposal a further anomaly was identified. This was the lack of delegated authority of officers to deal with a new category of appeal granted for Homeless applicants by the Homelessness Act 2002. This paper seeks to resolve this anomaly.

## **2. Housing Register and Housing Transfers - Appeals against Offers of Accommodation (1996 Housing Act Part VI)**

- 2.1 At the present time most Housing Register and Housing Transfer applicants receive two offers of accommodation.
- 2.2 Letting officers, make offers, with reference to the Allocations Policy Procedures and Practice.
- 2.3 The few appeals that arise are addressed informally by senior allocation staff.
- 2.4 In a forthcoming restructuring of the allocation service into new Community Housing Partnership areas a new senior position of Rehousing Team Leader is being created for each CHP allocation area.
- 2.5 The Team Leader Rehousing will have overall responsibility for allocation activity within the new CHP areas.

- 2.6 It is proposed that the Rehousing Team Leader post should hear appeals against offers made. The one exception would be if the Rehousing Team Leader has taken part in the allocation. In this situation a Rehousing Team Leader colleague in an adjacent CHP would deal with the appeal.
- 2.7 In practice the appeal heard would be against suspension of the application. The appeal process would therefore first apply in respect of a second offer. As part of the appeal process the first offer would also be reviewed. This would limit the volume of appeals heard.
- 2.8 There are two main outcomes of the appeal process.
- If the appeal application were successful the applicant would have further offer entitlement.
  - If the appeal were unsuccessful the application would be suspended for a period of a year.
- 2.9 If an applicant were not satisfied with the outcome of this appeal then the Executive could consider one of the following options
- A next final stage of appeal would be to the Community Housing Manager for the relevant Community Housing Partnership area.
  - Alternatively an appeal against an offer could be made through the mechanism of a stage 3 Corporate Complaint system.

### **3. Homeless Persons - Appeals against Offers of Accommodation (1996 Housing Act Part VII)**

- 3.1 Homeless applicants are entitled to one offer of permanent accommodation. Lettings staff based outside the Homeless Persons section make the offers to homeless applicants.
- 3.2. The Housing Act 1996 originally introduced a general right to request a review under section 202 of the Act. This right allows a homeless applicant to request a review of a Council's decision in any aspect of the assessment or resolution of their homeless application.
- 3.3 An existing review mechanism exists to consider these reviews under this original 1996 Act called a section 202 Review Panel. This is made up of the Principle Advice Manager and the General Manager (Service Development).
- 3.4 The Homelessness Act 2002 revised the 1996 Housing Act. One key change made was to alter the review process for homeless applicants in respect of offers of accommodation made. Applicants are now allowed to accept an offer of accommodation and then challenge its suitability.
- 3.5 A large and growing volume of permanent offers are made to Homeless families. There is therefore potential for future growth in the volume of appeals against the suitability of offers.

- 3.6 Once a review around the suitability of accommodation is requested a decision must be made on whether or not the offer was a 'reasonable' one given the circumstances of the homeless applicant.
- 3.7 In line with the review process generally the Homelessness Act 2002 specifies that the officer hearing the appeal is of sufficient seniority and not involved in making the original decision, (i.e. offer made).
- 3.8 It is recommended that the existing section 202 Review Panel hear these appeals. This is because as part of the appeal process a good awareness of homelessness practice and procedure is needed. This review is best conducted therefore within the Homeless Person and Advice section.
- 3.9 The section 202 Review Panel to hear appeals on the suitability of offers should therefore comprise the Principle Advice Manager together with one other manager from the Homeless Person and Advice sections.
- 3.10 The Executive will need to delegate the authority to this section 202 Review Panel to hear this category of appeal. As a standing panel they will have the capacity to ensure that appeals are addressed speedily within the statutory guidelines.
- 3.11 The section 202 Review Panel in hearing appeals would have the objectivity said to be a requirement under the detailed provisions of the Homelessness Act 2002.
- 3.12 There are two possible outcomes of this appeal process.
- If the appeal is not upheld and the offer is considered reasonable the local authority will have discharged its duty towards the homeless applicant. The only other appeal then is on a point of law to the County Court.
  - If the appeal is upheld the homeless applicant will be entitled to a further offer of permanent accommodation.

**Background Papers used in the preparation of this report.**

- Housing Allocations Policies and Practices Document
- Homelessness Act 2002
- Homelessness and Allocations – Legal Action Group (A. Arden and C. Hunter)

**THE EXECUTIVE**

**28 JANUARY 2003**

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF HOUSING & HEALTH**

<b>ALLOCATIONS POLICY REVIEW: OUTSTANDING MATTERS FOR DECISION CONSULTATION AND IMPLEMENTATION</b>	<b>FOR DECISION</b>	
<i>This report addresses a number of outstanding matters affecting the Council in the revision and review of its rehousing service provision.</i>		
<b><u>Summary</u></b>  This report draws together a series of outstanding items for decision and consideration. These need resolution before final revision and implementation of the new Housing Allocations Policy can proceed. Included within this paper is feedback on the outcomes of recent consultation, the proposals to advise members on the operation of the new policy and a provisional timetable for the launch of the new Allocations Policy.		
<b><u>Recommendations</u></b>  The Executive is recommended to consider:  <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. The outcomes of consultation on the new points prioritisation scheme.</li><li>2. The proposed date for the introduction of the new allocation policy.</li><li>3. The proposals suggested for briefing members on the operation of the new allocation policy</li></ol> The Executive is recommended to agree:  <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. That nominations to Registered Social Landlords count as formal offers.</li><li>2. The establishment of an appeal mechanism to determine if offers made to applicants are 'reasonable'. (i.e. in accordance with Council policy).</li><li>3. Enhanced provision within the Housing Allocations Policy for children leaving the Council's care where a need for social housing has been assessed.</li><li>4. An annual review of the number of lettings made under the 'children leaving care' provisions alongside the general volume of annual lettings.</li><li>5. The proposal to explore choice-based lettings options for the council.</li></ol>		
<b><u>Reason</u></b>  The prioritisation scheme will produce a more transparent allocation process. Other items in the Report relate to decisions reserved for the Executive, which affect all Council wards.		
<b>Contact:</b> Anthony Alexander	Community Housing Manager	Tel: 020 8227 2210 Fax: 020 8227 2841 Minicom: 020 8227 2685 E-mail <a href="mailto:aalexander@lbbd.gov.uk">aalexander@lbbd.gov.uk</a>

## **1. Background**

- 1.1 A review of the Housing Allocations Policy began originally in October 1999. The review period is about to be drawn to a closure prior to full implementation of the new policy.
- 1.2 During the course of this review a number of changes have been made to the allocations policy and procedure with the agreement of the Executive. A series of further changes are proposed as part of this paper to facilitate the operation of the new policy.
- 1.3 A key final change proposed has been around the scheme for awarding points to applicants and the merging of the current separate lists for homelessness cases, housing register applicants and transfer applicants.
- 1.4 The new revised points prioritisation scheme (Scheme agreed by Executive 19/3/02 attached as APPENDIX A) introduces one common list with bands into which all the above categories of applicant are placed.
- 1.5 As part of the review process consultation with an extensive range of key stakeholders has taken place. This feedback from the most recent consultation is presented. The proposals for taking forward the review are set out in this paper.
- 1.6 A series of other additional proposals supplementary to the main one are included within this paper. Including some outline of the council's present position in respect of the recent Government initiative of choice based letting schemes.

## **2. Outcomes of Consultation**

- 2.1 There has been public consultation on the changes proposed to the points prioritisation scheme under the revised Allocation Policy. In the new scheme the transfer waiting list and transfer lists are effectively combined with the creation of a 4 band system into which all applicants including homelessness cases are listed.
- 2.2 Included as part of a comprehensive consultation on this scheme publicity articles were issued in Spotlight (August 2002), The Citizen (June 2002) and the Members bulletin (June 2002). Consultation was also undertaken with tenants' representatives.
- 2.3 In addition to the articles published leaflets and posters were created for distribution setting out the proposed changes to the prioritisation and points scheme. These were displayed in the Area Housing Offices and other public buildings such as Libraries across the borough.
- 2.4 The public was advised to present comments on the points prioritisation scheme by a deadline of 30<sup>th</sup> September 2002.
- 2.5 There were just five responses received in different formats to the consultation exercise. These raised a range of issues varying from the impact of the banding system through to the process of implementation of the new policy. The issues raised were acknowledged and addressed by officers.

### **3. Members Briefing on the new allocation policy**

- 3.1 As a first part of the briefing for members an article will be placed in the members' bulletin setting out the details of the proposed new prioritisation scheme.
- 3.2 In addition to this formal briefing sessions will be offered to members to work through the proposed operation of the new scheme. This is to assist Members in responding to enquiries made at their surgeries.
- 3.3 As part of this briefing a pack will be prepared that includes relevant key paperwork (e.g. applicant guides) that are being produced to support the introduction of the new scheme. This information will also be provided to the Borough's Members of Parliament.
- 3.4 An objective will be to hold these briefing sessions prior to final implementation of the new policy

### **4. Introduction and Implementation of the new allocation policy**

- 4.1 The new points prioritisation scheme simplifies the assessment process with all applicants completing one common application form and being entered into one of several bands on one combined list.
- 4.2 There are a series of remaining actions that are required before implementation of the new allocation policy can take place. These include the following key actions.
  - Agreement on the details of an incentive scheme to increase the supply of specified properties (e.g. Large or Disabled units) within the housing stock.
  - The collation of additional information from existing applicants to administer the new points scheme.
  - Changes to the computer system in order to run the new prioritisation scheme.
- 4.3 A letter setting out the general details of the new banding scheme will be provided to applicants on the Housing register and the transfer list. This will give an outline of the new banding scheme. It is hoped to be able to send this letter by May 2003.
- 4.4 A second letter to applicants will give a specific indication of the impact on their applications, their revised points total, and how it will affect their prospects for rehousing.
- 4.5 It is anticipated that the new prioritisation scheme will come into operation in approximately June 2003.

### **5. Registered Social Landlords Nominations**

- 5.1 At the moment when applicants on the waiting or transfer list are nominated to a Registered Social Landlord and receive an offer of accommodation it does not count against their tally of offers.

- 5.2 Applicants may refuse the nomination made and still be eligible to their quota of offers.
- 5.3 It is proposed that in future nominations to RSL count as offers against their tally. This will enable the council to make the best use of the diminishing supply of the available to let properties.
- 5.4 If the Executive agrees this change our RSL partners would be consulted on the proposed change.

## **6. Allocations Offer Appeal Mechanism**

- 6.1 The Homelessness Act 2002 made it necessary to establish an appeal mechanism for offers of property made as part of the allocations process
- 6.2 Applicants who were dissatisfied that an offer made was a 'reasonable' one, with regard to their assessed need, would be able to make a formal appeal. This would be made to a person other than the original allocation officer.
- 6.3 A number of possible grounds for appeal could exist including around the issue of medical assessment, the condition of the property, bedroom size and issues of personal safety, in respect of management transfer cases.
- 6.4 Appeals would need to be dealt with speedily to ensure that offers of accommodation made were not kept open for long periods affecting the turnaround times of empty properties.
- 6.5 It is proposed that a formal mechanism for dealing with appeals against offers of accommodation be established. Several options are set out for Members to consider.
- As indicated in an earlier paper of 29<sup>th</sup> October 2002 to the Executive the Community Housing Partnership (CHP) Board Members might have a role in dealing with appeals.
  - Alternatively as the separate staff structures of the different CHP areas develop a senior officer in an adjacent CHP area could deal with appeals.
  - A final option is that Members deal with appeals with the support of officers.
- 6.6 The recommended option is that a senior officer in an adjacent CHP area hears appeals. In addition to this senior officer having the detailed experience of the housing stock, policies and procedures further key benefits are that they would guarantee a degree of independence, address confidentiality matters and be able to respond more swiftly than a CHP Board or Members panel.
- 6.7 This provision of appeals being undertaken by a senior officer would allow for a flexible response to any future potential growth of appeals.



## **7. Additional provision for children leaving the Council's care**

- 7.1 An arrangement exists between the Housing and Health and the Social Services departments to jointly assess the housing needs of young people leaving care.
- 7.2 At the present time it has been agreed that a maximum of 15 units be allocated to care leavers following this assessment process.
- 7.3 In the two full years to date 2000/01 and 2001/02 the quota set has not been exceeded.
- 7.4 The scheme has proved successful insofar as of the 41 tenancies created 38 have been sustained
- 7.5 The Children and Families Division of Social Services have indicated that the present quota set will not be adequate to meet projected demand both in the current year 2002/03 and the following year 2003/04.
- 7.6 The main cause of the increase of demand has been the responsibility the council has had to assume for unaccompanied children who have entered the country who have been granted leave to remain in the UK.
- 7.7 Once these unaccompanied children reach the age of 17/18 they have to be treated in the same way as native care leavers.
- 7.8 An estimate provided by the Asylum Seekers team indicates that approximately 15 of these additional care leavers will become eligible for housing this year.
- 7.9 In view of the Council's corporate parent responsibility towards children leaving its care and to ensure consistency of response the same provision of accommodation via the Allocations Policy should be made to this category of care leaver.
- 7.10 In order to facilitate this the existing quota for care leavers would need to be raised from the present level of 15 units to 30.
- 7.11 As in the existing system the assessment process would need to be satisfied with the young person demonstrating that they were able to live independently with an appropriate package of support being provided.
- 7.12 To ensure that these applications receive adequate priority applications will be placed in Band B of the new Housing allocations prioritisation scheme, as agreed by the Executive on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2002.

## **8. Annual Review of Lettings**

- 8.1 Under the new Housing Allocations Policy it is proposed that an annual report on lettings be made to Members via Members Matters. This will set out the overall volume of lettings made and how they are apportioned by category. (e.g. Transfer, Waiting List or other special category such as key worker or care leaver)
- 8.2 This report would allow members to see how the outcomes of allocation performance matched against the agreed targets for specific allocation groups.

8.3 This report would be made to the Executive in the first quarter of each allocation year in either May or June to allow opportunity for collation of the lettings outcomes for the pre-ceding year.

8.4 This would also provide useful information to Members on lettings patterns and stock availability.

## **9. Choice Based Lettings**

9.1 As the allocation policy review is drawn to a close it is proposed to extend the terms of a separately conducted overlapping review on choice-based lettings. This is the Government's preferred way for local authorities to carry out lettings in future.

9.2 The purpose of choice-based lettings schemes is to promote greater applicant and customer choice. This accords with the Government's broader agenda of modernising public services.

9.3 The principles of choice based lettings schemes can be set out as follows,

- Initiative taken by customers
- Market information supplied to customers
- Property and neighbourhood information for customers
- Systems for vulnerable households
- Selection and eligibility criteria (i.e. need)
- Quality of communications between customers and organisations

9.4 The Government has signalled that 25% of local authorities should have choice-based lettings schemes by 2005 and 100% by 2010.

9.5 The outcomes of lessons learnt from a series of choice-based lettings pilots has recently been released in a guide for social landlords. The government proposes to release a good practice guide on choice based lettings in the latter part of 2003.

9.6 The design of choice-based lettings schemes is aimed to give greater transparency in the way the lettings process works. A series of potential benefits can derive as a consequence of such schemes. These include

- empowering residents by giving them greater involvement in the management of their rehousing application.
- freeing up staff time in the management of the letting system hence staff resources.
- reducing the volume of members enquiries as communication around lettings is improved.

- 9.7 The council has already taken an active interest in the choice based scheme run by Newham Council, the East London Lettings Company.
- 9.8 It is proposed within the next nine months to explore how choice based lettings might be introduced in Barking and Dagenham in a manner compatible with the new decentralised structures of the Community Housing Partnerships.
- 9.9 This will consider a range of options for taking forward the choice-based lettings scheme. Included will be an assessment of whether to join the choice- based scheme run by the East London Lettings Company.

## **10. Consultation**

- 10.1 Consultation would be required with RSLs about the proposals to make nominations count against an applicant's formal offer quota.

## **11. Links to Corporate Agenda and Justification for the Proposals**

- 11.1 The new points prioritisation system will make the allocations scheme more transparent in operation thus meeting with the Council's priority of developing rights and responsibilities.
- 11.2 The proposal to monitor lettings and report formally to the Executive will support the Council's equalities agenda in ensuring fairness and consistency in the operation of the allocations policy.
- 11.3 The enhanced provision of units for care leavers will reduce the incidence of homelessness for this vulnerable group of young people and promote social inclusion.

### **Background Papers used in the preparation of this report.**

- Housing Allocations Policies and Practices Document
- Initiatives to raise void performance
- Report to Housing Allocations Working Party 29/2/2000
- Report to the Allocations Working Party 18<sup>th</sup> October 1999
- Report to the Executive 19/03/2002
- Housing Green Paper 'Quality and Choice – A Decent Home For All'
- DETR and DSS 2000.
- How to Choose Choice – Lessons from the first year of the ODPM's CBLs Pilot Schemes (A Guide for Social Landlords).

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**THE EXECUTIVE****29 APRIL 2003****REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE**

<b>AUDIT OF CHILD PROTECTION SERVICES: LAMING RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<b>FOR DECISION</b>	
<p><i>This report presents the contents of a self audit, as required following the publication of the Laming Report into the death of Victoria Climbié, prior to its submission to the Department of Health.</i></p> <p><b><u>Summary</u></b></p> <p>Following the publication of the Laming Report into the tragic death of Victoria Climbié, the Government is taking steps to ensure quick, significant and sustained improvement in child protection services. As part of that process all Local Authorities have been asked to complete a self audit of their services. Similar audits are required of other agencies such as the Police and Health Services and we are co-ordinating this with colleagues locally.</p> <p>A copy of the draft response to the Audit requirement is attached as Appendix 1. Although completed primarily by Social Services staff, it is important to understand that the Audit is one of the services provided by the Council as a whole and to links with other agencies. Standard One, relating to the referral of cases for example, includes the appropriate training of all front line staff across the Council. Standard Seven relates to the overall governance and scrutiny of policy and practice, particularly by Members and Chief Officers.</p> <p><b><u>Recommendation / Reason</u></b></p> <p>The Executive is recommended to note the content of the self audit and action plan and to approve it being submitted to the Department of Health. The Executive is also asked to note that the Chief Executive, the Executive Director for Health &amp; Social Care and the Director of Education, Arts and Libraries are planning an audit of how the children are protected during the late summer in support of the Area Child Protection Committee.</p>		
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**1. Background**

- 1.1 The paper attached in Appendix 1 has been developed by a Working Group including staff from Legal Services, Housing and Education and has been circulated to members of the Area Child Protection Committee for comment. It has involved lengthy discussions and evidence gathering, albeit within the short time period allowed. The Working Group also involved a consultant external to the Council to ensure an element of challenge to the discussion. Discussions with other Authorities has indicated that our process has been robust.

- 1.2 The paper is in the format required by the Department of Health. Although lengthy and not easy to read, its approach is the same for each area it covers. Firstly, the Laming Report's recommendation is stated. This is then given as a standard against which we are asked to assess our service. Each of these standards is then broken down into more detailed statements. For each statement, we are asked to choose a response from a "drop down menu", where '1' indicates a poor service and '4' a very good service. We are also asked to indicate when we expect to meet the standard to provide supporting text in a box below.
- 1.3 Given the deadlines set by the Government, it has not been possible to produce a final version of the text for circulation in advance to the Executive. The Appendix remains a working document and amendments are being made as further evidence and comments are being received. Any significant amendments for the final version, which needs to be with the Department of Health by the 30<sup>th</sup> April, will be indicated in the presentation to the Committee.
- 1.4 Appendix 2 is the resultant Action Plan.

## **2. Conclusion**

- 2.1 The document is likely to be closely scrutinised by Officers in the Department of Health. They are likely to pay close attention to two areas in particular. Firstly, any area of work which falls well below the standards indicated in the audit and secondly, any improvements claimed which do not accord with other information they have about the service – for example from management information submitted to them or from any recent inspections. Where such improvements are claimed, we may anticipate a requirement to evidence them. The Department of Health will also be conducting audits of Councils with Social Services responsibilities.

### **Background Papers**

'The Victoria Climbié Inquiry Report' – published January 2003

**THE EXECUTIVE****29 APRIL 2003****REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE STRATEGY**

<b>PROCUREMENT SPEND TO SAVE BID</b>		<b>FOR DECISION</b>
<p>This report asks the Executive to approve a “Spend to Save” initiative in procurement for three years.</p> <p><b><u>Summary</u></b></p> <p>Central resources for procurement in Barking and Dagenham are currently limited to one officer, located in the Corporate Strategy Department. Whilst it has been agreed by TMT that the role of this officer should be fundamentally strategic, this does leave a significant gap in resources in terms of operational support, particularly for the procurement of services. Current research and comparison with other local authorities has demonstrated that providing additional appropriate operational support, training and guidance over a three year period could produce substantial savings, details of which are included in the body of this report.</p> <p><b><u>Recommendation</u></b></p> <p>The Executive is asked therefore to agree the proposal and that to fund it a total of £173,000 can be released from reserves over a three year period.</p>		
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**1. Introduction**

- 1.1 Barking and Dagenham has recently come under some criticism for lack of resources in procurement, including from the CPA and annual Audit Letter. In addition, the Best Value Review currently underway has established that the Council has very few strategic or support resources for this area, particularly when compared with “good” or “excellent” local authorities.
- 1.2 Alongside recommendations for long-term developments in procurement, which will arise out of the review, it is proposed that a “Spend to Save” bid is approved because there are real financial savings to be had in improving processes and deliverables through increased support and training.
- 1.3 Better procurement will save the Council money and has done so already – eg:
  - Citizen’s Panel Contract – this contract was recently retendered and awarded to Martin Hamblin GFK. Retaining a clear specification and performance targets will ensure high quality service standards whilst the anticipated financial savings amount to approximately £30K per annum

- Fixed price contracts achieved for many consultancy projects have reduced overspends – Health and Consumer Services Quality Assurance, Cleaning Review Consultant, Harts Lane Contaminated Land Survey Manager etc.
- Policy and Performance has reviewed purchasing and made savings by using corporate contracts and Central Stores of around 40%<sup>1</sup> since August 2002. This does not include the additional savings generated through paperless transactions directly using Oracle.

1.4 The private sector take procurement very seriously as it affects their profit margin, as do some of the “excellent” local authorities such as Westminster and Wandsworth, but Barking and Dagenham, with a debt free history has not until now had to consider the serious implications of budget cutting exercises.

1.5 The potential savings from better procurement could overtake those identified from the Savings Implementation Plan – in a much more painless way.

## **2. The Proposal**

2.1 The spreadsheet attached as Appendix 1 details the proposed expenditure and savings over a three year period. The total required budget is £173,000 and the estimated savings £400,000. This is a conservative estimate and at the end of the three year period savings will continue to be achieved, and will probably rise.

2.2 The majority of the funding required is for a PO4 graded Procurement Officer and running costs for the unit, plus some running costs, training support and legal advice.

2.3 It is anticipated that likely savings will come from:

- Support and training leading to a culture change across the organisation whereby the importance of good procurement practice is widespread.
- Reduction in maverick spend on high volume, low price purchases such as stationery, office furniture and other consumables – through increased use of Central Stores and corporate contracts.
- Reduction in corporate financial costs through improved use of e-procurement through Oracle.
- Improved procurement processes and deliverables for service contracts
- Improved working relationships and reduction in overspends in building contracts.
- More structured use of consultants using clear framework agreements, to secure a considerable reduction in cost and improved outcomes generally.

## **3. Conclusion**

3.1 There are considerable potential and relatively painless savings which the Council could make from efficient and effective procurement. However, this will not come about without strengthening of the corporate function, training, support and a culture change across the organisation.

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<sup>1</sup> Based on a shopping basket of commonly purchased items including post-its, pens, paper and toner cartridges with prices compared between Central Stores and another frequently used supplier with their offered discount of 45% from catalogue price.



- 3.2 This proposal sets out a clear three year spend-to-save plan, which should more than pay for itself during the period and continue to do make savings in the future. In times of increasing budget constraint, this option should be considered as a positive way forward.

**Background Papers**

None

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## Appendix 1 - Proposal

Task	Year 1		Savings Rationale	Cost
	Outcome	Potential Savings		
Recruit a three year fixed term post at PO4 to provide additional procurement support and inhouse training.	Procurement Support enhanced - training programme implemented.	£ 10,000.00	Savings targets will be set on an increasing basis for the period of the appointment.	£ 39,295.00
Small annual running costs for the Corporate Function to provide IT, equipment, publications, training etc - plus ad hoc legal advice.	Procurement Function operates efficiently and can follow through the plan.	£ -	N/A	£ 5,000.00
Carry out a skills analysis of procurement across the organisation and recommend posts for procurement training. This is possible to carry out in house with the support of HR.	Level of skills and competency shortfalls identified across the organisation.	£ -	See below	£ -
Work with HR to ensure that all new Person Specifications for budget holders and operational managers who have a responsibility for purchasing have a degree of procurement competency.	New officers are competent in procurement principles and the culture is cascaded down the organisation.	£ -	See below. Savings will occur once new officers are in place.	£ -
Implement first year training programme to cover basic skills as follows: Purchasing training for Admin Staff, Strategic Procurement for Managers, Procurement of Consultants for Managers. Most of this training can be carried out in house providing the additional post is filled.	Officer capacity is increased to enable better basic procurement	£ 15,000.00	Estimated £15K (5%) of savings on small service procurements such as consultants (say £300K worth) during the one year period. Additional savings will come with the review of Contract Rules/Standing Orders. I believe 5% overall is achievable with the right procedure.	£ 5,000.00
Review of spend around high volume low value purchases and use of central stores in conjunction with the Procurement and Stores Section and the BV Review.	Efficiency and cost effectiveness of the purchasing process is improved.	£ 25,000.00	It is unlikely there will be savings in Year 1 due to the timescale. However, projected savings will be able to be sustained once the process and direction is established.	£ -
<b>FIRST YEAR TOTAL SAVINGS</b>		£ 50,000.00	<b>FIRST YEAR TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	£ 49,295.00

## Appendix 1 - Proposal

Task	Outcome	Potential Savings	Savings Rationale	Cost
	<b>Year 2</b>			
Procurement Officer Post and running costs ongoing	As for Year 1	£ 50,000.00	Some savings can be made in the provision of in-house training on procurement issues. 20 days training should save the Council approx £12,000 in trainers fees. In addition, there should be considerable savings from service contracts. On the basis that the Citizen's Panel contract saved £30K per annum, £50K would seem conservative with support provided to say 3 or 4 medium sized procurements.	£ 44,295.00
Further training carried out appropriate to officer responsibility in procurement	Officer capacity is increased to enable better basic procurement	£ 25,000.00	Year one savings sustained plus new savings for year 2.	£ 5,000.00
A full suite of corporate template contracts for services, goods and works is set up for use by Officers across the organisation. Some external legal advice will be needed in addition.	The Council's interests are safeguarded, properly and control is maintained.	£ -	This proposal is unlikely to achieve instant financial savings. However, savings will be made "in kind" with improved services and less officer time in fault rectification work with contractors/service providers.	£ 5,000.00
Review of the Contract Rules with a view to enforcement and compliance issues around Central Stores, Corporate Contracts, waivers, delegated powers and other procurement issues. Some external assistance may be required through the IDeA and other organisations.	Contract Rules are revised and directives given to ensure use of Central Stores and Corporate Contracts as a minimum. This is likely to be only achieved near the end of the 1st year period. Full savings and improvement targets will only be achievable in future years.	£ -	The likely savings will depend on when the directives are given (included in item below). Some enforcement can be made immediately, although there are issues about the ease of use of Central Stores/Corporate Contracts which are being investigated by the BV Review.	£ -
Off contract spend for items available from Central Stores or from Corporate Contracts is prohibited.	Reduction/removal of maverick spend.	£ 35,000.00	This is a conservative estimate. One purchase off contract this year (fortunately stopped) would have cost the Council £55K more than the Corporate Contract for Furniture price. There is no cost to this proposal apart from integrating advice and guidance into training courses.	£ -
Review of use of consultants with clear guidelines for sensible usage. To comply with EU directives a select list of consultants is procured to ensure ease of use cost efficiency.	Easy procedures for using consultants. Unnecessary use of consultants is reduced. Savings are negotiated.	£ 50,000.00	Potentially a very high level of savings could be achieved. Possibly 25% reduction across the board.	£ 15,000.00
	<b>SECOND YEAR TOTAL SAVINGS</b>	£ 160,000.00	<b>SECOND YEAR TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	£ 69,295.00

## Appendix 1 - Proposal

Task	Outcome	Potential Savings	Savings Rationale	Cost
	<b>Year 3</b>			
Procurement Officer Post and running costs ongoing	As for Year 1. Skills have been transferred and officers now capable of managing procurement processes effectively.	£ 50,000.00	This would be the minimum figure. It is likely that the figure could be higher	£ 44,295.00
Further training carried out appropriate to officer responsibility in procurement	All Officers with procurement responsibility are now trained and competent according to the appropriate level. This would involve the final stage of training in more complex areas and require additional external resources.	£ 40,000.00	Year one and two savings sustained. New savings for Year three as officers become more competent.	£ 10,000.00
Procedures for monitoring and compliance across the range of procurement areas are agreed and implemented.	Procurement is carried out efficiently, effectively and within the bounds of legislation and the Constitution. Maverick spend is therefore almost eradicated..	£ 50,000.00	As for year 2. Savings will be ongoing.	£ -
Select list of consultants widely and effectively used and monitored	Efficiency savings and improved outcomes from use of consultants. Over reliance on consultants is reduced.	£ 50,000.00	As for year 2. Savings will be ongoing.	£ -
	<b>TOTAL YEAR 3 SAVINGS</b>	£ 190,000.00	<b>TOTAL YEAR 3 EXPENDITURE</b>	£ 54,295.00
	<b>TOTAL PROJECTED SAVINGS</b>	£ 400,000.00	<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	£ 172,885.00

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