

THE EXECUTIVE

3 AUGUST 2004

REPORT FROM THE DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT

REGENERATION BEST VALUE REVIEW IMPROVEMENT PLAN: QUARTERLY PROGRESS REPORT	FOR DISCUSSION	
<p><i>This report is for the Executive as it deals with issues of a strategic nature.</i></p> <p><u>Summary</u></p> <p>This is the first progress report on the implementation of the Regeneration Best Value Review Improvement Plan. The key conclusions are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Good progress in improving project delivery and policy focus, including the restructuring of regeneration activities, the establishment of the Regeneration Board and greater policy congruence with the Community Strategy. Further work is needed to agree and disseminate the Regeneration "Vision";• Progress in promotional, lobbying and influencing work and work underway to raise the Council's game around the Barking Town Centre programme and to meet the challenge of the UDC's establishment;• Good progress with the regeneration of Dagenham Dock. We have developed an Action Plan to coordinate and monitor the implementation of the Economic Development Strategy;• Steps to embed a culture of design excellence in the borough and the securing of Sustainable Communities Fund resources to improve the public realm in Barking Town Centre; <p>Implementation delays have been caused by restructuring or recruitment difficulties in Regeneration, Planning and Lifelong Learning. There is some risk that these may continue to delay or constrain implementation.</p> <p><u>Recommendation</u></p> <p>The Executive is asked to discuss these findings and to agree the report.</p> <p><u>Reasons</u></p> <p>Implementation of the Improvement Plan is critical to the Community Priority of Regenerating the Local Economy.</p>		
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1. Background

- 1.1 Last year's cross-cutting Best Value Review (BVR) of regeneration resulted in a comprehensive Improvement Plan covering all Council Directorates. The Executive agreed the Improvement Plan on 17th February 2004 and asked for quarterly reports on its implementation. The attached matrix (Appendix 1) reports on progress towards each of the Implementation Plan's twenty targets.
- 1.2 Implementation of the Improvement Plan is being monitored by Regeneration Implementation Division, overseen by the Regeneration Board. The Board has corporate ownership of the Review and of the Balanced Scorecard for Regeneration, for which the delivery of the Improvement Plan is an underlying objective. The quarterly reports to the Board form the basis of the reports to the Executive and other Council bodies, including the BVR Member Challenge Panel, Scrutiny Management Board and Corporate Monitoring Group.
- 1.3 The Improvement Plan is divided into six sections. Significant achievements and delays are summarised below for each section.

2. Achieving Step Change

- 2.1 We have made good progress with the restructuring of regeneration activities, the establishment of the Regeneration Board and policy congruence with the Community Strategy. We are taking forward work to improve project management systems and to agree social infrastructure needs with partners. We need to do more to enable Members to engage with external partners, get closer to primary stakeholders in business and the community, and step up our influencing and lobbying work. Completing and agreeing the "Vision" for Regeneration is the most urgent priority.

3. Education

- 3.1 We have undertaken or commissioned surveys of employment land use and patterns of recruitment in the borough and secured NRF funding for a package of support for business and skills development in Barking Town Centre. However, progress towards other milestones has been delayed by restructuring in the Lifelong Learning Division and by delays in external bodies releasing funding.

4. Jobs and economy

- 4.1 We have made significant progress in the development of Dagenham Dock as a focus for environmental technologies and have strengthened our support for social enterprises. A number of activities have helped the Council get closer to business stakeholders. We have developed an Action Plan and reporting matrix for the implementation of the Economic Development Strategy (EDS). We are making progress against most objectives in the EDS, but some further project planning may need to be done by the new Group Manager for Economic Development on arrival. Recruitment delays for this and other posts in Economic Development have added to implementation delays, particularly around actions to improve our ability to access European and other external funding streams.

5. Transport

- 5.1 A Strategic Transport Group and Champion have been appointed. The Council has undertaken lobbying work around the DLR extension and East London Transit and we have taken forward the Renwick Road proposal. Recruitment difficulties are likely to delay achievement of some milestones, including the development of a Transport Strategy.

6. Housing

- 6.1 The housing needs survey and Housing Futures Appraisal are underway. The Charlecote Road project, the first to incorporate our policy on space for learning has won a number of design awards. The main priority here is to step up our marketing work to private sector housing developers in Barking Town Centre over the summer and autumn of 2004.

7. Distinct Environment

- 7.1 A Design Champion and a Project Manager for the Parks and Green Spaces Strategy are in post. An Action Plan for the Parks and Green Spaces Strategy has been adopted and the Regeneration Board agreed a Design Framework for the borough in March 2004. £2 million from the Sustainable Communities Fund was secured in January 2004 for the implementation of the Public Realm Strategy.

8. Financial Implications

- 8.1 This is a progress report on the implementation of the agreed Improvement Plan. There are no financial risk or implications for the Council. Finance Department is content with the report.

9. Consultation

- 9.1 The report was compiled from contributions by officers in: Regeneration and Environment; Education, Arts and Libraries; Corporate Strategy; Social Services; and Housing and Health. It was discussed by the Regeneration Board (TMT and the Lead Member for Regeneration) on 29th June.