

London Borough of Barking and Dagenham

Notice of Meeting

THE EXECUTIVE

Tuesday, 17 February 2004 - Civic Centre, Dagenham, 7:00 pm

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

Also Invited: Councillor W F Barns for Agenda Item 9.

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

9.02.04

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 27 January (attached, pages 1 - 7) and 10 February 2004 (to follow)**

Business Items

Public Items 3 to 5 and Private Items 20 to 22 are business items. The Chair will move that these 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. **Members Telephones (Pages 9 - 11)**
4. **Replacement of Revenues Systems (Pages 13 - 16)**
5. **Eastbrookend Country Park- Declaration of Local Nature Reserve (Pages 17 - 20)**

Discussion Items

6. Local Futures (Presentation)

John Fisher from Local Futures will give a presentation

7. MORI (Presentation)

Ashley Aimes from MORI will give a presentation

8. Response to Scrutiny Management Board: Call in: Selection of Barking and Dagenham's Panel of Registered Social Landlord Partners (Pages 21 - 39)

9. Housing Associations Scrutiny Panel (Pages 41 - 48)

10. Regenerating the Local Economy - Cross Cutting Best Value Review (Pages 49 - 50)

A full copy of the Regenerating the Local Economy - Cross Cutting Best Value Review is available from the Members' Rooms, on the Internet and at public libraries.

11. Land Disposal (Pages 51 - 75)

Appendix 12 is attached in the Private and Confidential part of this agenda.

12. Local Authority Regeneration Schemes: Bids for Funding from Regional Pot (Pages 77 - 79)

13. Housing Capital Investment Programme 2004/5/6 (to follow)

14. Any other public items which the Chair decides are urgent

15. 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

- 16. Barking Reach Company Agreement: New Joint Venture Vehicle (Pages 81 - 92)**

Concerns a Contract Matter (paragraphs 7 and 9)

- 17. Restructure of the Housing Landlord Services Division (Pages 93 - 99)**

(Concerns a Staffing Matter (paragraph 1))

- 18. Shape Up for Homes and Schal International Plc (to follow)**

- 19. Award of Contracts for Housing Futures (to follow)**

Business Items

- 20. Changes to the Local Agreement in Respect of Occupational Sick Pay for Industrial Injuries (Pages 101 - 107)**

Concerns a Labour Relations Matter (paragraph 11)

- 21. A13 Goresbrook Interchange - Authorisation of Funding to meet Contractor's Claim (Pages 109 - 112)**

Concerns a Contract Matter (paragraphs 7 and 8)

- 22. Tender for Provision of a Home Improvement Agency (Pages 113 - 116)**

Concerns a Contract Matter (paragraphs 7, 8 and 9)

Land Disposal Appendix 12 - Land Values

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

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THE EXECUTIVE

Tuesday, 27 January 2004
(7:00 - 8:40 pm)

Present: Councillor C J Fairbrass (Chair), Councillor C Geddes (Deputy Chair), Councillor G J Bramley, Councillor S Kallar, Councillor B M Osborn, Councillor L A Smith and Councillor T G W Wade

Also Present: Councillor D S Miles and Councillor Mrs V M Rush

Apologies: Councillor J L Alexander, Councillor M E McKenzie and Councillor J W Porter

259. Minutes (13 January 2004)

Agreed.

260. Rehousing from Service Tenancies

Deferred.

261. Axe Street Town Square Phases 1 and 2, Planning Brief

Received a report seeking to adopt the revised Planning Brief for Axe Street Car Park as Supplementary Planning Guidance.

Agreed, in order to pave the way for the development of new affordable homes allied to the Town Square development, to:

1. The revised Axe Street Town Square Phases 1 and 2 Planning Brief as Supplementary Planning Guidance; and
2. Enter into partnership with East Thames Housing Group, as the Council's preferred developer for 100% affordable housing on the Axe Street site, subject to the agreement of the 'Housing Partnership' (the Housing Corporation and English Partnerships).

262. London Road / North Street Redevelopment

Received a report providing an update on the London Road / North Street project, which included an outline of the process for bringing the site forward for development through a proposed partnership with Metropolitan Housing Trust, one of the Councils preferred Registered Social Landlord partners.

Agreed, in order to begin the regeneration process for Barking Town Centre in line with the agreed Barking Town Centre Framework:

1. To the partnership with Metropolitan Housing Trust in order to produce a development brief for the London Road / North Street area;

2. To comprehensive stakeholder engagement in order to produce the development brief; and
3. That funding be sought to facilitate the stakeholder engagement.

263. Housing Revenue Account Estimates and Rent Levels 2004 / 2005

Received a report setting out a review of the Housing Revenue Account estimates for 2003 / 2004 and 2004 / 2005 and the level of rents for Council Tenants for 2004 / 2005.

Agreed, in order to comply with the statutory duty to review rent levels annually and to ensure they conform with rent restructuring proposals, and to produce a balanced Housing Revenue Account, to:

1. The revised estimates for 2003 / 2004 and the estimates for 2004 / 2005 as set out on Appendix A of the report;
2. An average weekly rent increase of £2.22 per dwelling (3.8%);
3. Changes taking effect from 5 April 2004; and
4. Make representation to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister to apply the lower Right to Buy Discount.

264. Land Disposal Sites: Revising Housing Development Schemes

Further to Minute 238 (26 November 2002), received a report setting out a revised balance of the mix of property tenure types and the reason for the changes in respect of the proposed development of the former allotment sites at Blackborne Road, Digby Gardens, Hedgemans Road and Reede Road.

Agreed, in order to deliver the Council's objectives in terms of capital receipts and a range of new homes to help meet local housing needs and aspirations, to proceed with the disposal and development of Blackborne Road, Digby Gardens, Hedgemans Road and Reede Road sites on the basis of the housing mix schemes shown in paragraph 3.3 of the report with Metropolitan Housing Trust and Stort Valley.

265. Procurement Best Value Review

Received the final report of the Procurement Best Value Review, which presents the findings of the review and recommendations for the future.

Agreed, in order to achieve significant improvements over the next five years, to:

1. Recommend the Assembly to adopt the findings of the Procurement Best Value Review and agree the Improvement Plan;
2. The Procurement Strategy as set out in Appendix 1 of the Review Report.

3. The principle of establishing a Strategic Procurement Unit, subject to final post evaluation and cost analysis;
4. A growth bid of £150,000 to support the development of the Strategic Procurement Unit; and
5. To receive a future report on the overall structure, role and responsibilities of the Strategic Procurement Unit from the Director of Finance following full job evaluation.

266. Consultation on the Proposed Urban Development Corporation for East London - Response of the Council

Received a report outlining the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's formal consultation paper on the proposed Urban Development Corporation (UDC) for East London, incorporating parts of Barking and Dagenham (a copy of the consultation paper was attached to the report).

Agreed, in order to assist the Council in achieving its Community Priorities of "Regenerating the Local Economy", and "Improving Health, Housing and Social Care", and respond by the deadline of 6 February 2004, to:

1. Endorse the Council's response to the UDC consultation (attached as Appendix 2 to the report subject to comments made by Members), noting that the Council is currently unable to endorse the establishment of the UDC due to fundamental issues remaining unresolved, and
2. A further report on the Government's final proposals to be presented to the Executive in due course, when a final decision on whether to support the establishment of the UDC will be presented to Members for consideration.

267. Barking Town Centre Partnership

Received a report setting out progress made in establishing collaborative working by agencies at national and sub regional level in pursuit of the plans set out in the Barking Town Centre Action Plan.

Agreed, the establishment of the Barking Town Centre Partnership and the draft Terms of Reference and Joint Statement of Intent, attached as Appendix 1 to the report, in order to provide a coordinated approach to the regeneration of Barking Town Centre.

268. Future Management of Garages

Received a report suggesting proposals to change the current policy on the letting and management of Council owned garages following a report to the Scrutiny Management Board on 25 June 2003 (Minute 12 refers).

Councillor Fairbrass declared an interest in this item.

Agreed, in order to reduce the void level for garages by 10% in the next financial year and to ensure that rental income is maximised and the repair and cleanliness of garages can be enhanced, to:

1. Introduce a reduced rental for new garage tenants for a six-month period as an incentive in areas where garages are difficult to let. Decisions on the setting of introductory rent charges to be delegated to the Director of Housing and Health in consultation with the Director of Finance;
2. Receive a further report on the issue of relaxing the policy around garage usage;
3. To the continuation of garage rental income being ring fenced and being used for:
 - a) The provision of additional security to garage sites.
 - b) The demolition of deteriorated sites where this is considered to be the only viable option.
 - c) The continuation of a refurbishment programme, to be delegated to the Director of Housing and Health in consultation with the relevant Community Housing Partnership Boards.
4. Increase rents in line with inflation by 19p per week net, which is in line with the Charging Policy Commission recommendations;
5. Set up a cleaning team to carry out cyclical cleaning of garage sites. The funding of this team to be met from the ring fenced garage income; and
6. The targets set for the reduction of void garages in the next financial year.

269. 61 Keir Hardie Way - Uplift of Restrictive Covenant

Received a report seeking authorisation to remove a restrictive covenant at 61 Kier Hardie Way, Dagenham in order that the developer named in the report can replace the existing single dwelling with a small block of 12 flats. It was noted that the issue of the covenant is not a Planning matter and therefore could not have been considered at the time planning permission was granted.

Agreed, to the removal of the restrictive covenant at 61 Keir Hardie Way, in order for the named developer to undertake a project compatible with the Community Priorities of 'Improving Health, Housing and Social Care'.

Councillor Smith asked that his vote against the recommendation for the uplift of the covenant be recorded.

270. * More Choice in Lettings

Received a report detailing the principles of More Choice In Lettings (MCIL), which outlined the alternative preference systems in operation. The report also proposed a programme of consultation.

Agreed, in order to enhance the Community Priority of 'Developing Rights and Responsibilities with the Local Community', to:

1. Adopt a MCIL policy based on a date order model using 3 bands:
 - a) A 'non active' band for those households who do not fall into a reasonable preference category;
 - b) An emergency or 'additional preference' band for those households who cannot continue in their present home; and
 - c) A 'reasonable preference band' for all other households.
2. Appoint the East London Lettings Consortium (ELLC) to administer the scheme in conjunction with the Council, as outlined in paragraph 4.6;
3. The public consultation process outlined in paragraph 6.3 of the report;
4. Arrangements for transitional protection as outlined in paragraph 3.1 of the report;
5. The Tenants Incentive Scheme outlined in paragraph 5.1 of the report; and
6. Single tender action for the purchase from specialist suppliers of the Novalet lettings system; Internet kiosks and property advertising magazine.

271. Private Business

Agreed to exclude the public and press for the remainder of the meeting, as the business was confidential.

272. Regrading of an LPOR to LSMR Post and Continued Employment of a Consultant

Received a report proposing changes to the Service Manager (Admissions and Support for Schools) post in Policy and Management Services Division within the Education, Arts and Libraries Department. The report also sought approval for the continued employment of the existing part-time interim Manager / Consultant employed via an agency.

Agreed, following a review of customer facing services and the services provided to schools, which has resulted in an increase in scope and management responsibilities, to:

1. The upgrading of the LPOR post 'Service Manager (Admissions and Support for Schools)' to an LSMR post 'Head of Management Information and Customer Service' at spinal point 63;
2. The continued engagement of Ms Kathryn Livingston until the post is advertised and filled as quickly as possible; and
3. Waive the Constitution (Contract Rules) in order to continue to employ Ms Livingston.

273. Approval of LSMR Grades within the Leisure and Environmental Services and the Corporate Strategy Department

Further to Minute 111 (16 September 2003), received a report outlining changes to posts and grades within the Leisure and Environmental Services Department as a result of the organisational restructure within the Strategic Planning and Transportation Division and Regeneration and Implementation Division. The report also outlines the changes to two LSMR posts within the Corporate Strategy Department.

Agreed, in order to assist the Council in achieving its Community Priority of "Regenerating the Local Economy", to:

1. The changes and grading of eight posts to LSMR within the Leisure and Environmental Services Department, with an effective date of 15 October 2003;
2. The changes in responsibilities of two LSMR posts, and the grading of one of these posts with an effective date of 1 August 2003, the date from which the post has been occupied; and,
3. The application of a market supplement to the post of Group Manager (Strategic Transportation).

274. Approval of LSMR Grades within Corporate Strategy Department

Received a report which detailed how following the implementation of the Best Value Improvement Plan (2001) within Corporate Communications, the post of Press and Public Relations Manager had expanded in scope, influence and responsibility.

Agreed, that the post of Press and Public Relations Manager be upgraded to LSMR spinal point 53 (£40,548), following the recent job evaluation which considered the increase in scope and management responsibilities of the post holder.

275. * Town Hall Refurbishment

Further to Minute 86 (19 August 2003), received a report outlining a projected overspend and saving options considered and agreed by the Members Steering Group (Accommodation) as detailed in the report. Noted the revised project cost for the refurbishment of the Town Hall is £2,582,000.

Agreed, in order to improve facilities for the public and so assist in achieving the Community Priorities of *“Raising General Pride in the Borough”, “Developing Rights and Responsibilities”* and *“Promoting Equal Opportunities and Celebrating Diversity”*, that additional funding of £240,000 (to be spent in 2004 / 2005) be allocated for the refurbishment of the Town Hall in the Capital Programme. The funding to be determined as part of the review of the Capital Programme.

276. * Further Progress Report on the Education Private Finance Initiative (PFI) Contract

Further to Minute 246 (23 December 2003), received a further update on the situation with regards to the signing of the Education Private Finance Initiative contract with the preferred bidder, Bouygues Education UK.

Agreed, that:

1. A further indemnity committing up to £1.4m towards an early works programme (in addition to £1.2m already committed), be given to Bouygues Education UK;
2. A provision for further legal fees up to £0.8m be included in the PFI capital programme budget; and
3. In the event that the PFI deal does not go ahead, the costs of up to £5.24m be funded from the PFI capital programme budget.

277. * Homelessness Acts and Houses to Transfers

Received a report seeking amendments to the current Housing Allocations policy to conform with recent legislation.

Agreed, in order to comply with the Homeless Act 2002, to:

1. Adopt an open housing register and to delete the exclusion of owner occupiers and the residence qualification from the Housing Allocations policy;
2. Adopt the local connection categories as outlined in paragraph 2.2 of the report;
3. Adopt the policy in respect of assets and priority outlined in paragraph 8;
4. Delete section 12.1 from the Council’s current Housing Allocations policy; and
5. Conduct ethnicity monitoring, following implementation of the revised policy, to ensure that the policy is not discriminatory in practice.

* Item considered as a matter of urgency with the consent of the Chair under Section 100 (4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972.

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THE EXECUTIVE**17 FEBRUARY 2004****REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE STRATEGY
AND THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE**

MEMBERS' TELEPHONES	FOR DECISION
<p><i>This report is submitted to the Executive following the Scrutiny Management Board Call-In.</i></p> <p><u>Wards</u> - This is not a Ward related issue but it does affect ALL Members.</p> <p><u>Summary</u></p> <p>On 17 December 2003 the Scrutiny Management Board considered a Call-In following the Executive's decision of 25 November 2003 clarifying issues associated with Members' Telephones and Out of Hours IT Support.</p> <p>After weighing up all the evidence the Board concluded: that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) all Members should be treated equally in relation to the provision and related costs of telephones for Council business use, and as such all costs should be borne by Members from their Members' allowances ii) there should be no exception to this rule, either now or in the future, and accordingly a/ those with mobile telephones provided by the Council should be required to discontinue their use and hand them back, and b/ the one remaining Centrex line connection should be disconnected iii) should any Member position require a mobile telephone or other similar means of contact or communication, the Member holding that position should personally purchase the necessary equipment and pay for all costs, again making use of their basic or, where appropriate, special responsibility allowance. <p>Clarification was also sought as to what percentage of the Members' allowance can be offset against tax for the telephone element and the Board has asked the Director of Finance to issue general tax guidance to all Members.</p> <p>An extract from the Executive's previous minutes is attached.</p> <p><u>Recommendation</u></p> <p>The Board therefore asks the Executive to revise their original decision concerning telephones for Members accordingly, that is by reconfirming the original decision number 1 in relation to the telephone handsets provided with the computer equipment, but deleting 2 and 3 and replacing them with i/, ii/ and iii/ above. [The original decision number 4 is unaffected as this relates to IT support for Members, not telephones.]</p>	

If the Executive is unable to agree with the Board's request the matter will need to be referred to the Assembly for final determination in accordance with the Council's Constitution.

Contact: Nina Clark	Head of Democratic Support	Tel: 020 8227 2114 Fax: 020 8227 2171 Minicom: 020 8227 2685 E-mail: nina.clark@lbbd.gov.uk
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Background Papers

- Members Telephones and Out of Hours IT Support (Minute 206, 25 November 2003)

EXTRACT FROM

THE EXECUTIVE

Tuesday, 25 November 2003
(7:00 - 7:30 pm)

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

Also Present: Councillor M A McCarthy, Councillor Mrs V M Rush, Councillor Mrs P A Twomey and Councillor Mrs M M West.

206. Members Telephones and Out of Hours IT Support

Further to Minute 121 (23 September 2003), received a report on Members' telephones and the possible introduction of an 'Out of Hours' IT support facility.

The report addressed a number of concerns previously expressed by Members in relation to telephones and set out the possible advantages / disadvantages and cost implications of several options.

It also outlined a proposal for the provision of 'Out of Hours' IT support for Members, including a help desk facility together with a 'mobile technician'.

Agreed, in order to clarify the issues associated with Members' telephones, that:

1. If they wish, when the new ADSL computer connections are made, Members be allowed to keep and use the telephone handset, already provided, for incoming calls only at no extra charge to the Council (Option Two);
2. Members are generally expected to continue to use their own private telephones for Council business calls and to meet all related costs from their Basic Allowance;
3. Notwithstanding 1 and 2 above, no change be made to the current allocations of mobile telephones and connections to the Centrex system, as set out in the report; and
4. An 'Out of Hours' IT support for Members not be provided at this time.

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THE EXECUTIVE**17 FEBRUARY 2004****REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE**

REPLACEMENT OF REVENUES SYSTEMS	FOR DECISION
<p><i>This report is submitted to the Executive as it seeks a waiver under section 4.1(d) of the Council's Constitution (Contract Rules).</i></p>	
<p><u>Summary</u></p>	
<p>This report provides an update on progress to date in respect of the replacement of the Revenues' systems approved by the Executive at its Meeting on 29 July 2003. The Executive is advised that the funding position has been clarified following a successful bid to the Department of Works and Pensions for financial support towards the cost of the project.</p>	
<p>The report also identifies the difficulties encountered to date in securing a project manager, with the appropriate skills set, through the usual recruitment channels and that any delays in recruiting such a person may impact on the capital spend profile. An alternative procurement process is therefore submitted for decision.</p>	
<p><u>Recommendations</u></p>	
<p>The Executive is asked to:</p>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agree a waiver under section 4.1(d) of the procurement contract rules; 2. The Director of Finance be authorised to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (a) approach companies capable of introducing or providing a person with the appropriate skills, knowledge and experience, and (b) engage such a person on contract to the Council; 3. Note the current position on procurement of the Revenues systems and the recent award of Department of Works and Pensions (DWP) funding; and 4. Note the potential impact of the delay in the appointment of a project manager on capital spending for the project, and note the commission of an independent review. 	
<p><u>Reasons</u></p>	
<p>Approval of the Executive is required for a waiver, under section 4.1. (D), of the procurement rules to allow the recruitment, without delay, of a suitably qualified project manager. This will help ensure that the Revenues' Project is managed to a successful conclusion and that exposure to risk throughout the project life-cycle is minimised.</p>	

Contact Officer Abimbola Odunsi	Head of Revenue Services	Tel: 020 8227 2505 Fax: 020 8227 2574 Minicom: 020 8227 2685 E-mail abimbola.odunsi@lbbd.gov.uk
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1. Background

- 1.1 On 29 July 2003, the Director of Finance gave the Executive a comprehensive situation statement on current performance, standards, targets, and aims and objectives for the Revenue Services. The report also identified the need and funding required for the replacement of existing IT systems and introduction of a document management system considered necessary to underpin the Service
- 1.2 At its Meeting, the Executive considered a range of measures designed to improve service delivery within Revenues and agreed a number of recommendations. Those, that are relevant to this report, were:
- the replacement of the revenues systems
 - the introduction of a document management system
 - adding £2.2m to the capital programme for this project
 - using DWP capital funding if available
 - an improvement plan

2. Current Position

- 2.1 By the time that Members consider this report the Council will be part way through the formal Tender process for the selection of a supplier from a short-list of six.
- 2.2 To date the preparation of system specifications and associated documentation has been managed, with assistance from corporate procurement, by an external consultant (see 4.1), owing to the ongoing pressure on the Service and skills shortage.
- 2.3 That work is now complete and the Council is moving into the next phase of systems replacement commencing with the evaluation of Tenders and, subsequently, the implementation of systems beginning with the introduction of EDMS.
- 2.4 However, some difficulties are being experienced, as set out in Section 3 following, in the recruitment of a suitable project manager. It has also been necessary to provisionally extend the Tender evaluation period, which includes detailed examination and road-testing of software, owing to the number of potential suppliers invited to tender, compared to that originally envisaged.

3. Project Management

- 3.1 It is critical to the successful implementation of systems, as demonstrated by the SWIFT project, that their introduction, as a key plank of the Revenues Improvement Plan approved by the Executive, is managed by a dedicated resource.

- 3.2 The original proposal to resource the project manager from IS&T is not now possible owing to other demands on that Team, particularly the duration of the project (up to eighteen months) as a result of its wide scope; namely replacing four major systems (Housing Benefits, Council Tax, Business Rates and Rents) and the introduction of EDMS.
- 3.3 Ideally the project manager will have the usual range of project management skills, complemented by the specific experience of introducing or replacing revenues systems, particularly in dealing with issues such as, for example:
- Linkage with corporate financial systems
 - Impact on Housing Benefit subsidy received from the DWP
 - Data conversion (personal and payments account details and reconciliation)
 - System security and audit trails.
 - EDMS requirements (workflow, archiving, performance management and Freedom of Information Act)
 - Ongoing legislative changes throughout the life cycle of the project.
- 3.4 The replacement of the systems is undoubtedly high risk and in order to mitigate these risks, a person specification was produced and considerable efforts already have been made in an effort to find a person with the necessary attributes that match the Council's requirements, using the usual processes. This process has resulted in one unsuccessful interview only.
- 3.5 As such, it is now considered essential that the Council engages with a number of specialist companies to ensure that it finds the right person for this key strategic role, at the best available price, and avoid, as far as possible, further delay to the project.
- 3.6 Initial enquiries to one of these companies' shows that suitable candidates are in considerable demand. Crucially, they further advise that it is highly unlikely that the Council will find anyone who will consider direct employment by the authority.

It therefore appears inevitable that an appointee will be on contractor day rates.

- 3.7 Given this demand, and the potential for increasing day rates, it is considered that the Council cannot afford to delay any further in formally contacting specialist companies to secure the services of a project manager. (to ensure that it obtains competitive quotes) As it is there may be an unavoidable wait whilst the preferred choice of project manager completes his/her existing contract.
- 3.8 It is therefore suggested that a minimum of three companies be contacted to ensure that the Council
- a) Obtains details of people matching the person specification,
 - b) Receives competitive quotes, and
 - c) Achieves best value from the process

Executive approval is therefore requested for the waiver of the procurement contract rules to allow a prompt recruitment to this role.

3.9 A budget of £99k for this position is included in the total project costs set out at 4.1 below.

4. Funding

4.1 The Executive, on 29 July 2003, approved a budget of £2.2m for the total cost of system purchase and implementation. This amount includes the cost of support services, such as; consultancy (see 2.2) data cleansing and transfer, training etc

4.2 The Executive may recall that shortly after its meeting a capital bid application was made to the DWP for assistance with the cost of this project that related to Housing Benefits.

4.3 It is, therefore, pleasing to report that a positive decision on the application to the DWP has now been received and subject to certain conditions, the Council has been awarded the full amount it requested (i.e. £669k, towards the cost of replacing the benefits system, and £138k in respect of the benefits element of the EDMS system).

4.4 On an equally positive note the amount awarded is around £140k more than reported to the Executive in July 2003, This follows the submission of two separate applications for funding rather than the single one originally envisaged. The new approach followed a number of conversations with the DWP about how best to present the application, particularly so far as costs were concerned so that the DWP evaluation panel would find it difficult to resist the Council's case.

Funds will be released to the authority over the life cycle of the project.

4.5 Members should however, be aware that a combination of the factors set out above may mean that it is necessary to re-profile the capital spend.

4.6 However, before such a recommendation is made to Members, and in the continuing absence of a project manager, a review of the project has been commissioned to provide an independent focus on the priority issues and risks, including whether or not the project timetable is realistic and deliverable.

4.7 This review will also help ensure that all project areas are proceeding to the appropriate quality standards and that the overall business and project risks are being, and will be managed effectively.

On completion, Members will be advised as to any changes considered necessary to the capital spend profile.

Background Papers

- Executive Report - Replacement of Revenues IT Systems (Minute 70, 29 July 2003).

THE EXECUTIVE**17 FEBRUARY 2004****REPORT FROM THE DIRECTOR OF LEISURE AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES**

EASTBROOKEND COUNTRY PARK - DECLARATION OF LOCAL NATURE RESERVE (LNR)	FOR DECISION	
<i>This report concerns a strategic matter and is therefore reserved to the Executive by the Scheme of Delegation.</i>		
<u>Summary</u>		
The designation of Eastbrookend Country Park is the first target to be achieved under the Borough's Local Public Service Agreement with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. Following consultation with English Nature, it is proposed to designate Eastbrookend Country Park as the Borough's second Local Nature Reserve. This follows the designation of The Chase as a Local Nature Reserve in 2001.		
A plan showing the proposed area to be designated is attached (Appendix A).		
<u>Wards Affected</u> - The majority of the proposed nature reserve area is within Eastbrook Ward however, a small proportion does go into Heath Ward.		
<u>Recommendation</u>		
The Executive is recommended to:		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approve the declaration of Eastbrookend Country Park, as marked on the attached plan, as a Local Nature Reserve (LNR); and 2. Authorise Officers to issue the necessary Notices and enter into the necessary legal arrangements to enable the Declaration to take place. 		
<u>Reason</u>		
The designation of Eastbrookend Country Park as a Local Nature Reserve will assist the Council in achieving its Community Priorities of ' <i>Making Barking and Dagenham Cleaner, Greener and Safer</i> ' and ' <i>Raising General Pride in the Borough</i> '.		
Contact: Mike Levett	Senior Park Development Officer	Tel: 020 - 8227 3387 Fax: 020 - 8227 3254 Minicom: 020 - 8227 3042 E-mail: mike.levett@lbbd.gov.uk

1. Background

- 1.1 On 16 May 2001 the Executive gave approval to declare part of The Chase Nature Reserve within the Council's ownership as a Local Nature Reserve (Executive Minute 641, 16 May 2001 refers). This implemented Unitary Development Plan Policy G56 which showed a clear commitment to declare Local Nature Reserve (LNR) Status for The Chase Nature Reserve.
- 1.2 LNR status can only be declared by a Local Authority (or Parish / Town Council with delegated powers).
- 1.3 The Council recently signed a Local Public Service Agreement with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. One of the targets to be achieved over the period of the agreement (2003-2006) is the designation of further areas of land under the Council's ownership as Local Nature Reserves. For instance, Eastbrookend Country Park, Eastbrookend Country Park (Beam Valley Extension) and the Ripple Nature Reserve.
- 1.4 The target for 2003/04 is for Eastbrookend Country Park to be designated as a Local Nature Reserve (Appendix A).
- 1.5 The Eastbrookend Country Park has repeatedly won the Green Flag Park Award, (co-ordinated by the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE Space). Designation of the site as a Local Nature Reserve will assist in the submission for a Green Flag Park Award in 2004, as part of the Council's Local Public Service Agreement.

2. Financial Implications

- 2.1 There would be no additional costs to the Council as a result of declaring Eastbrookend Country Park a Local Nature Reserve.
- 2.2 The declaration of Eastbrookend Country Park as a Local Nature Reserve would enable the Council to bid for funding from English Nature. Acting as a Green Spaces Award Partner, English Nature with the New Opportunities Fund distributes grants specifically for Local Nature Reserves. This funding would enable the Council to undertake further improvement works, which may otherwise not be possible.

3. Consultation

- 3.1 Formal consultation with English Nature has been carried out, as required in Section 21 (6) of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 (as amended), and their agreement to the process has been received.
- 3.2 A formal letter of intent to proceed with declaration has also been circulated to the Following:

Eastbrookend Support Group Members
Environment Agency
Countryside Agency
Thames Chase Community Forest

3.3 The following Officers have seen this report and are happy as it stands.

Peter Wright, Head of Planning and Transportation
Jane Bufton, Head of Corporate Communications
Linda Parker, Corporate Legal Manager, CS

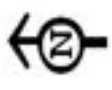
The following Councillors have also been advised of the proposal.
Councillor Porter, Portfolio Raising General Pride in the Borough.
Councillors Parkin, Collins and Little (Eastbrook Ward).
Councillors Fairbrass, Kallar and Osborn (Heath Ward).

Background Papers

- Executive Report and Minute 641, 16 May 2001 re: The Chase Nature Reserve Declaration
- Local Nature Reserves in England, A Guide to their Selection and Declaration. Issued by English Nature 1991 (revised 1999).
- The London Borough of Barking & Dagenham Unitary Development Plan 1995

**Eastbrookend
Country Park
Local Nature
Reserve Designation**

1:6,000



Key

- boundary
- UNDESIGNATED
- boundary

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THE EXECUTIVE**17 FEBRUARY 2004****REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF HOUSING AND HEALTH**

RESPONSE TO SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD CALL-IN: SELECTION OF BARKING AND DAGENHAM'S PANEL OF REGISTERED SOCIAL LANDLORD PARTNERS	FOR DECISION
<p><i>This report responds to the decision of Scrutiny Management Board to refer back to the Executive its decisions of 7 October 2003 on establishing a panel of RSL partners.</i></p> <p><u>Summary</u></p> <p>This report gives the background to the decision and reasons to set up a panel of preferred Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) to partner the Council to deliver new affordable homes, excellent housing services and regeneration initiatives. It also provides the sequence of events leading to the decisions of the Executive on 20 May and 7 October 2003. The report responds to the decision of Scrutiny Management Board on 29 October to refer back the decision of the Executive. The comments of those who participated in the RSL selection interviews are included in the report together with responses to the points raised. The report also draws on the issues highlighted by the Housing Association Scrutiny Panel (reported elsewhere on this agenda) and its recommendation on further monitoring.</p> <p>Proposals with justifications are contained in the report to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • admit the additional RSLs to the panel based on the original criteria; • arrange an annual review process; and • put in place regular performance monitoring of the RSL partners. <p>The delay in preparing this report was due to the time taken to receive the written comments from the participants in the selection interviews (paragraph 4).</p> <p><u>Recommendations</u></p> <p>The Executive is asked to consider the views of the Scrutiny Management Board and decides whether to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Admit London and Quadrant Housing Trust (subject to the condition in paragraph 5.1) and Presentation Housing Association to the preferred RSL partner panel; 2. Continue to monitor the performance of Southern Housing Group and ask officers to report back to the Executive in March 2004. 3. Adopt the selection criteria for RSL partners as set out in paragraph 5.3 for future assessments; 	

4. Request the RSL forum which is being established within the Barking and Dagenham Partnership to monitor on a quarterly basis the performance of the Council's RSL partners; and
5. Receive annual reports reviewing the RSL partner panel and consider any proposals to add or exclude any RSLs.

Reasons

The extension of the RSL panel will strengthen the Council's ability to deliver high quality new affordable homes and bring about regeneration programmes for the community. The annual review process will drive up performance standards and ensure greater accountability.

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1. Background

- 1.1 The approach adopted in the selection of RSLs had historically been piecemeal. When a development opportunity arose a competition for that specific site took place between RSLs that might be interested. This did nothing to develop longstanding commitment from the RSLs to issues such as community safety, anti social behaviour protocols and social regeneration. It also did nothing to give RSLs an understanding of what the Council's priorities were. Under this system complaints have been received from Members about the management performance and lack of accessibility / responsiveness of the RSLs that had carried out piecemeal developments.

To address the complaints of Members and the other deficiencies of system in place, it was decided to establish a panel of preferred RSL partners, each with their own particular strengths. It also means that better accountability is secured for the performance of the RSL partners - they will sign up to protocols and participate in a forum with Members as part of the Barking and Dagenham Partnership.

- 1.2 As part of the selection process to set up the RSL panel it was decided to bring together a panel of stakeholders that would comprise Members, Housing Corporation and tenants' representative, as well as Council officers. The aim was to be inclusive and was composed in discussion with the Executive portfolio lead – the Executive did not appoint the panel, nor were any powers delegated to the panel. It should be stated that some Members of the panel may not have been aware of its status and remit.
- 1.3 The panel met on 21 February 2003 to receive presentations and interview the 9 shortlisted RSLs. Evaluation forms were issued to all panel members which focused on the following:
 - Development delivery and design excellence / environmental sustainability

- Management performance and responsiveness
- Regeneration capacity, experience and innovation
- Black and minority ethnic record
- Supported accommodation record
- Demonstration of partnership approach with Barking and Dagenham

Some participants completed the forms, others stated at the completion of the session their preferences and in some cases which RSLs they would not support.

- 1.4 On 16 April the Council Members who had been invited to join the panel met to consider the evaluations of the RSLs. It was explained at this meeting that a report would go to the Executive recommending RSLs to comprise the partner panel. Officers had assessed that based on the responses of the panel to the presentations and interviews, 6 RSLs should be recommended. However, it was the very strong view of some Members present that due to some specific concerns in relation to 2 of the RSLs (London & Quadrant and Presentation) they should be excluded.
- 1.5 A report then went to the Executive on 20 May. It was agreed that Anglia / Stort Valley HA, East Thames Housing, Metropolitan Housing and Ujima be admitted to the RSL panel and that further enquiries be made of L&Q and Presentation with a view to adding these to the panel.

These investigations took place, satisfactorily addressing the outstanding issues - though in the case of L&Q there remained concerns specific to management of sheltered housing.

Southern Housing Group submitted fresh information on plans that had come to fruition in the borough and other initiatives put in place contributing to achieving community priorities.

- 1.6 A report went to the Executive on 7 October recommending the inclusion of L&Q (subject to no new development of sheltered housing for older people), Presentation and Southern, subject to monitoring of performance on the new developments over 6 months. These recommendations were agreed. The call-in process was then instigated.

2. Scrutiny Management Board

- 2.1 The decision of Scrutiny Management Board (SMB) on 29 October 2003 was that this matter be referred back to the Executive as they concluded that the views of Members who did not concur with the course of action agreed by the Executive on 7 October were not satisfactorily represented. Therefore, the written comments of the participants in the interviews of 21 February have been sought. SMB also recommended that the Executive:

- consider the views of the Housing Association Scrutiny Panel.
- review, define and agree the RSL selection criteria and set out the annual review process - paragraphs 5.3, 5.4 and 5.5 respond to these issues.

3. **Housing Association Scrutiny Panel**

- 3.1 Scrutiny Management Board also recommended that the Executive consider the views of the Housing Association Scrutiny Panel (HASP) which investigated a number of relevant issues, a copy of the report is located elsewhere on this agenda.
- 3.2 These specific issues are set out below. Direct evidence was gathered from interviews with 3 tenants of RSLs and presentations from 4 RSLs.

Topic	HASP comments
RSL estate and tenancy management performance. Ensuring greater accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of local housing company with Stort Valley will enhance accountability and provide a good model • New measures put in place should improve performance levels and strengthen accountability • 2 L&Q tenants had complaints re: anti social behaviour and repairs. Remedial action had been taken by RSL, not yet effective.
RSLs' potential contribution to regeneration programmes	HASP accepted the need to work in partnership with RSLs and recognized the regeneration benefits to be derived from the funding sources and initiatives available to them.
Take up of Right To Acquire (RSL) compared to Right To Buy (Council)	The disparity in take up rates was noted and HASP concluded that RSL involvement helps ensure the continuation of social housing stock.
Comparison of rent levels, repairs policies and complaints procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rents – HASP noted that ODPM policy is to deliver rent convergence within 10 years. • Repairs policies and complaints procedures - HASP considered the standard repairs response times and performance levels of the RSLs and Council as well as the complaints procedures and noted little variance.

- 3.3 HASP recommended in order to monitor the success of the mechanisms put in place to ensure accountability of the activities of RSLs, it should reconvene 1 year on to evaluate.

4. **Comments of participants in the selection session / interviews**

- 4.1 All of those who participated on 21 February have been contacted and asked to provide written statements. These are contained in full in Appendix A.

4.2 The following table draws the issues from the participants' comments and responds to them:

Name	Issue raised	Response
Cllr. Mrs. Rush & Cllr. Mrs. Twomey	<p>Points focused on 2 main areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process - panel invited to be part of the selection process, but the majority view of the original panel has now been effectively overturned. 	<p>The panel did not have delegated authority, it could make recommendations. Decisions could only be made by the Executive. The views of the selection panel were represented in the Executive reports of 20 May and 7 October 2003. Some panel Members were clearly not aware of its status and remit - this will be clarified by the protocol being developed for ad-hoc meetings by the Head of Democratic Services.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews and performance of RSLs - 4 RSLs could not be appointed, Circle 33, L&Q, Presentation and Southern. <p>Continuing concern about the performance of L&Q and Southern. Also pointed to an error on Southern's website that they are a preferred partner for the transfer of LA housing stock. Item withdrawn from Southern's website as soon as it was mentioned by Cllr. Mrs Rush.</p>	<p>Agreed that Circle 33 should not be included. Concern about specific performance of L&Q for local sheltered housing schemes is reflected in the recommendation. The continuing issues on the performance of L&Q and Southern are fully addressed in Appendix B - in addition the measures put in place in 5.2, 5.4, 5.5 and 5.6 will drive up performance. The exclusion of these RSLs will have the negative consequences for Barking and Dagenham in terms of needed new developments and nominations indicated in 5.2. It is proposed to continue monitoring of Southern and report back to the Executive in March on the outcome of this.</p>

Joan Davies	<p>Set out a critique of L&Q, Presentation and Southern based on the interview process and her own research.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • L&Q - supported the position taken in this report, including the restriction on development of any new older person sheltered housing. • Presentation - gave details of their extensive development programme and innovative partnerships. Based on a discussion with a tenant on the RSL's performance, Joan Davis does not support Presentation's inclusion. 	<p>Noted.</p> <p>The objection is based upon the experience of one tenant. In the Housing Corporation's Performance Assessment it is reported that "55% of tenants are very or fairly satisfied. There is a commitment to continuous improvement backed by a training programme and regular checks on service standards". Under the Housing Corporation's recently introduced programme partnership for best performing RSLs, Presentation have been awarded this status which gives additional development flexibility.</p> <p>Noted.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Southern – gave details of tenant surveys conducted independently. Supported inclusion. 	
Belinda Porich - Housing Corporation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerned about issues of inconsistencies in scoring on evaluation sheets - specific reference to working as partners of LBBD. • Positive performance of Southern in terms of estate regeneration and having pioneered innovative construction methods 	<p>Individual panel members made their own judgments about this matter on the basis of interviews and experience.</p> <p>Noted.</p>

	highlighted. The strong performance of Southern in delivering their investment allocation from the Housing Corporation was also covered.	
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5. **Proposals and justification**

5.1 There is a need for the Council to have a strong panel of RSL partners with the development capacity, range of experiences and expertise to match the demands of Barking and Dagenham's opportunities. The Housing Corporation's London Region receives the highest share of the national investment for new affordable housing. The top 10 RSLs includes (there are 101 RSLs with development projects operating in London):

Ranking 2002/03	RSL	Total grant	New build homes
1.	London & Quadrant	£43.7 million	658
3.	East Thames	33.8	502
4.	Ujima	26.6	252
5.	Southern	22.4	261
7.	Presentation	21.1	210

Given that L&Q, Presentation and Southern feature strongly and for the reasons set out in 5.2 it is proposed to admit L&Q and Presentation to the RSL panel. In the case of L&Q this will not include the development of new older person sheltered housing. It is also proposed to continue to monitor Southern's performance in terms of new developments, estate management and partnership working and report back to the Executive in March.

5.2 These proposals are based assessments against the original criteria in 1.3. The justifications for this course are set out below:

- to exclude any of these 3 may well jeopardise new affordable homes and regeneration schemes. To indicate the local implications – in the past financial year 262 new affordable home starts (out of a programme of 572) are with these RSLs.
- East Thames, L&Q and Southern have formed Thames Gateway Alliance to combine their strengths. They have at present £60m for new strategic developments on large sites within the east London area of London Thames Gateway. Their approach will be to work with individual boroughs, English Partnerships and the Housing Corporation to share risks. This partnership is supported by EP and the HC and could become a significant partner for Barking and Dagenham in taking forward the developments across Barking Reach, Creekmouth and South Dagenham.

- the responses to the specific issues of concern about Southern, L&Q and Presentation are given in Appendix B.
- the reservations indicated by HASP in one instance and some of the participants in paragraph 4.2 largely focus on estate management issues which are addressed by a range of checks put in place to contribute to driving up the standards of performance of RSL partners. These are:
 - establishing a protocol which includes the matters in 5.5, that all RSLs will have to sign up to.
 - more effective monitoring of RSLs has been put in place which will deliver greater compliance and accountability.

5.3 In future the criteria for the selection of RSLs for admission to the partnering panel will be the contribution that they are able to make to achieving the community priorities. In particular, prospective partners must demonstrate a commitment to building sustainable communities in Barking & Dagenham. The assessment will be based on the factors shown in paragraph 1.3. These relate to all of the 7 community priorities.

5.4 A RSL forum is to be convened under the framework of the Barking and Dagenham Partnership - the forum will include Council Members. The forum will meet quarterly and receive reports on the performance of the Council's RSL partners.

5.5 There will be an annual review process of the performance of RSL panel members. This will be undertaken by officers and will assess:

- estate and tenancy management – using customer satisfaction surveys to evidence
- repairs performance – measured against RSLs' own targets
- compliance with nomination agreements
- development performance – on time and on cost
- participation in RSL forum (within Barking and Dagenham Partnership)
- commitment to building sustainable communities.

Positive consideration should also be given to RSLs prepared to make a practical commitment to partnership working and building community capacity by setting up Local Housing Companies to own and manage their housing stock in Barking and Dagenham.

This assessment will then be reported to the Executive together with any proposals to admit new RSLs or exclude existing RSLs, as appropriate.

5.6 The recommendation of HASP to reconvene in 1 year to assess RSL performance fits well with the monitoring and review regime that has been set up.

Background papers used in the preparation of this report:

- Evaluation form.
- Executive report - "Selection of Registered Social Landlords" - 20 May 2003 (Minute 5).
- Executive report - "Selection of Registered Social Landlords for Barking and Dagenham's Preferred Partners" - 7 October (Minute 141).
- Scrutiny Management Board report - "Call-In: Selection of Registered Social Landlords for Barking and Dagenham's Preferred Partners" -29 October (Minute 39).

Comments of Participants in the Selection Session / Interviews

Cllr Mrs. Rush

Scrutiny RSLs

Members were invited to be part of Selection process. After spending the whole day and making our recommendations.

There were 4 RSLs that Members would not appoint either thru poor performance at interview or history, Circle 33, L & Q, Presentation and Southern.

Some weeks later Members were called to a meeting and asked to change their position on the above, this was refused.

A report was then put forward to the Executive which tried to by pass the decision of Members this was pulled and Members were again called to a meeting and requested to change their position, again this was refused.

As far as we were concerned this was an interview process and should be treated as such. We were not advised there was an appeal procedure, and stand by our decision.

At the call-in we were joined by other Members who had working experience of several of the above and were able to put forward their views on the poor management capability of the RSLs in question which confirmed our views in not selecting them as preferred partners.

In fact two of the above still raise grave questions in my mind namely L & Q and Southern even thru all of this and they must know its going on they have done very little to raise their credibility other than some press releases that may read very well but if you look at the actual working practices the leave an awful lot to be desired.

Also on Southern's website there is a statement that "they are the preferred partner of LB of Barking and Dagenham for the transfer of LA housing stock" this is not true.

Fully appreciate the need to have a preferred partner list, but the quality must be there, and also Members when taking part in a selection process and taking a decision this decision should stand, otherwise why go thru the process you could have just put the 10 up to the Executive and if Members had a problem with any then it could have been called in.

Joan Davies

As a tenant representative and member of the Housing Sub-group of Barking and Dagenham Partnership (LSP), Ken Jones invited me to join the panel of Elected Members and Officers which met on 21 February 2003 to select RSLs for Barking and Dagenham's Preferred Partners List.

Nine RSLs attended on the appointed day, each making a presentation with handouts/brochures for the panel. All panel members asked questions which were answered in full. The interview process was carried out with fairness and equality.

With regard to the three RSLs in question – London & Quadrant Housing Trust; Presentation Housing Association; and Southern Housing Group, I would comment as follows:

LONDON & QUADRANT HOUSING TRUST (L&Q includes Tower Homes and Forest Homes)

L&Q's presentation to the Interview Panel centred on Neighbourhood Management, Community Development and new housing developments.

Neighbourhood Management: They have a dedicated team who carry out regular publicised estate inspections. They have a small budget for estate improvements (£0.5m regionally). They do not have their own repairs and maintenance staff but have partnership contracts with local contractors.

They use larger contractors for planned maintenance (Budget £30m). Their management office is in Ilford. 90% of tenants prefer to contact L&Q by phone; 25% of tenants have internet access which they use for paying rent and reporting repairs. They have a multi-agency approach to anti-social behaviour and have one ASB contract in place in Dagenham. They have a 24-hour hate crime reporting line, and give tenants access to financial services and business loans.

Community Development: They are actively involved in community initiatives in Marks Gate and have part-funded a youth club and contribute to the Summer Scheme. In Herne Hill, they secured £0.5m funding from the Sports Council to refurbish a park next to L&Q housing.

Forest Homes in Waltham Forest (2,600 homes) has a Board with residents as Chair and Vice-Chair. They have established a community programme of £2.2m, funded by L&Q but run and managed by residents. Grants of between £5 and £5,000 are available for community projects. They have established a website, opened a cyber café, and held a Residents Conference in August 2003.

London & Quadrant were recently awarded a Charter Mark for excellence in customer services. They have also established a website for their residents.

I agree with the decision not to include this RSL in the development of sheltered housing for older people. L&Q manage Barnmead Court and the residents there complain about the service charges they have to pay and the absence of a resident warden. There is a housing officer who works weekday office hours but she is often out on courses or at meetings.

Many of the elderly residents are frail or have dementia and need supported residential care. If these residents didn't have carers provided by Social Services, I don't know what they would do.

I understand that the plans for Barnmead Court included CCTV although cameras were never installed when the building was completed, and, two years ago, residents of the surrounding area as well as residents of Barnmead Court lobbied the Council to install CCTV at the Fanshawe Community Complex in order to combat anti-social behaviour that has been prevalent on the site since Barnmead Court has been built. Unfortunately, the installation of CCTV has been delayed due to technical problems.

I support the inclusion of London & Quadrant HT on the Council's Preferred RSL List with the exception of Sheltered Housing Schemes.

PRESENTATION HOUSING ASSOCIATION

According to the literature provided, Presentation's vision is "to be the leading black-led social investment agency in the UK". None of their literature contained the address of their offices.

In 2002, Presentation received £24m from the Housing Corporation, had a capital programme of £50m and built new homes worth £30m. As of December 2002, Presentation had an asset base of £213m and reserves of £80m.

Their 'holistic service' includes the provision of affordable housing, shared ownership homes, key worker homes, market rent homes, and outright sale homes. They adopted a self-build co-operative approach on the Angell Town Estate in Brixton (Lambeth). They set-up an Estate Board on St Martin's Estate in Lambeth (stock transfer).

Presentation has 'innovative partnerships' with:

- Tung Sing HA (Chinese) - £0.5m investment in programmes
- Songhai (private voluntary organisation)
- Sheltered Housing
- Large Family Homes (250 large homes including 9-bedroomed homes)
- Investors in Communities
- Getting Engaged Project (training programme)

During their interview, Presentation said they had undertaken a number of community needs surveys although their newsletter about Investors in Communities only referred to one.

I recently met one of Presentation's BME tenants who lives in Southwark through the London tenants' network and asked her about her views on Presentation as a Landlord, and she made the following comments:

- They have poor communication with their tenants
- There is no local office in Southwark - their offices are based somewhere in Clapham (Wandsworth)
- They do not encourage or promote tenant participation

- They do not deal with anti-social behaviour
- Their officers are not qualified in mediation
- The quality of contractors is not up to standard

I do not support the inclusion of Presentation HA on the Council's Preferred RSL List.

SOUTHERN HOUSING GROUP

The Group is made up of three not-for-profit organisations:

Southern Housing Group Ltd (the parent body) - a charitable housing association originally founded in 1901 by a bequest from the wealthy financier Samuel Lewis. It has 19,000 properties in the South East of England. In Barking and Dagenham, Southern has properties in Village and Goresbrook wards, Marks Gate and is currently redeveloping the St Ann's site on the Gascoigne Estate.

Southern Housing Home Ownership Ltd - the group's non-charitable arm and looks after all home ownership and leasehold properties.

Southern Housing Foundation - a registered charity formed in 1998 that provides funding for social investment initiatives to help residents build sustainable communities. Community groups can apply for small grants of up to £5,000. Grants of over £5,000 have to be approved by the Foundation Board. The Foundation is involved in the following projects:

- The Heba Project - a training, support and enterprise project for Bengali women based in East London
- 'Faith in the Future' - a joint project funded by the Housing Corporation
- The Bayle Lifelong Learning Centre, Folkestone - a place where people of all ages from 18 upwards can go to develop their skills and knowledge for personal development or to help them obtain work
- Partnerships with Sure Start programmes
- Credit Unions

I support the inclusion of Southern Housing Group on the Council's preferred RSL List for the following reasons:

- They have a long history of housing provision
- They have opened an office in Barking for their Thames Gateway Regional operations
- Southern won an award for resident involvement on the Millennium Plus Project in Hackney, and have a 'Tenant Compact' in place
- They hold 'Focus Group' meetings and develop training programmes for residents
- They employ a Housing Support Officer for vulnerable tenants
- They have a customer service centre (opened in 2002) which is open from 8am to 8pm

- The Housing Corporation inspection found housing management 'well perceived' by residents
- Tenant Survey 2002/2003: an independent organisation sent out questionnaires to 5,000 tenants. 2,479 completed questionnaires were returned (just under 50%). 66% of tenants in the Thames Gateway Region and 66% of tenants in the London Region were satisfied with the services provided by Southern Housing Group. The results compare favourably with other HAs. See www.shgroup.org.uk

Joan Davies

Resident Representative

Ad Hoc Interview Panel for Selection of RSL Preferred Partners

Belinda Porich
Investment Manager
Housing Corporation

Preferred Partner Selection

Last April, (via an e mail on 3/4/03), I raised some concerns with you about the results shown on the evaluation matrix for the preferred partner competition. As you have asked me to make a submission to be included with the Cabinet report on the partner process, I will repeat those concerns.

There appeared to me to be internal inconsistencies in the matrix. For instance, the Genesis Housing Group, with no stock or activity in the borough, scored higher than Southern Housing Group on *Partnership - demonstrating being good partners with LBB*. Southern have clearly been supported by the borough in their development activity over a number of years and so I was puzzled by this.

I was also unclear as to why Southern, with a demonstrable track record of regeneration experience, including two ERCF funded transfers of local authority stock and extensive remodelling and regeneration of their own estates, should have scored one of the lowest marks in the category *Regeneration*.

Southern also scored the lowest mark in the category *Development- delivery, design, sustainability*. Given that they have pioneered innovative construction methods (tunnel form construction) in this country, I would have expected that they could have demonstrated considerable expertise and experience in this area. In addition, Southern have a very good record of delivering Housing Corporation allocations and are rated highly by us in this area.

My e-mail noted that Cllr Rush, at the end of the day of presentations, made remarks about Southern which indicated that she had a low opinion of the association. I did not consider that the remarks were well supported by evidence and this concerned me.

On the basis of the presentations which the associations made, I considered that Southern did at least as well as most associations and better than some. The full evaluation of the associations obviously covered more than just the presentations, nonetheless, I was uncomfortable with the overall conclusions which were reached. I indicated to you that if any association were to raise concerns with me about the process, then I would have to agree that the decisions should bear additional scrutiny and checking.

Subsequent to my e mail and in discussions with yourself and with David Woods, I reiterated my concerns about the process and said that in the event that Southern bid for deliverable schemes in LBB, which met sub regional priorities, then I would consider funding them with or without the support of the borough.

I know that there have been substantial discussions between yourselves and Southern subsequent to my raising these concerns with you and that these have been amicable and productive. I am hopeful that we are now moving towards a satisfactory conclusion to these discussions.

I am happy for you to make use of my comments as appropriate.

Yours sincerely

Belinda Porich
Investment Manager

Responses to the concerns about specific RSLs

Southern Housing Group (SHG)

- The complaints about Southern related to the delays to the new development on St Ann's and the inactivity in coming forward with ideas for the regeneration of Gascoigne estate. The issue of St Ann's also points to failures of the Council e.g. in not pointing out that roads remained as adopted highway. However, the development is underway – they are engaging with residents extremely well and have invited a rep to attend all contract progress meetings. They are issuing newsletters and are attending the local tenants' meetings to give updates and field questions.
- SHG regularly attend meetings of the Barking and Dagenham Partnership as observers (they have requested to become full members)
- They have employed a Social Investment Officer dedicated to working in the borough. His work programme covers a number of projects across estates.
- The Youth Development Officer employed by SHG works with young people on their estates in Barking and Dagenham – developing activities.
- Members of their staff are involved in the Crime and Disorder Working Group as well as the Borough Housing Association Group.
- SHG have set up in Crown House, Barking Town Centre their Thames Gateway Regional operation for their management, maintenance and regeneration teams. This comprises 25 staff and gives a local contact and service access point their tenants in Barking and Dagenham (and neighbouring boroughs).
- They are to commit £30,000 towards Active Citizenship pilots after having received support from the Housing Corporation to run 2 pilots in London. SHG had identified Barking and Dagenham for one of these and begun discussions with the Council.
- Currently SHG are developing 173 new affordable homes in the borough (social rent, shared ownership and the innovative community bonus low cost home ownership at St Ann's) across 6 schemes. In the last 5 years they have built 176 new affordable homes here. The new schemes are now progressing in development with evidence of involvement of local communities.
- A member of Southern's staff is secretary of the Marks Gate Agenda 21 Neighbourhood partnership
- Southern (and L&Q) play an active part in encouraging youth activities on Marks Gate – they fund £2,500 towards the Summer Scheme - £5,000 to a Youth environment Project.
- Southern (and L&Q) are assisting in developing an Anti-Social Behaviour booklet for Marks Gate – funding £500

London & Quadrant (L&Q)

- L&Q have admitted making past errors in failing to consult in relation to decisions affecting the management of 2 sheltered housing schemes – the recommendation excludes L&Q from new sheltered in response to this.
- However, L&Q have new management and are meeting with Members and officers and have constructively suggested ways of correcting the situation.
- The Housing Association Scrutiny Panel spoke to 2 L&Q tenants from the Rush Green area who made complaints about estate services. Again L&Q have new management arrangements in place and are addressing such issues – this includes a recent eviction of an anti social tenant on this estate.
- The management base for L&Q is currently in Ilford Town Centre.
- L&Q (and Southern) play an active part in encouraging youth activities on Marks Gate – they fund £2,500 towards the Summer Scheme - £5,000 to a Youth environment Project. L&Q (and Southern) are assisting in developing an Anti-Social Behaviour booklet for Marks Gate – funding £500.
- L&Q are involved with the Marks Gate Support Group – where agencies meet to share information and prioritise action on individual cases linked to behaviour in school and the community.
- L&Q received the highest value of ADP and Challenge Fund allocations in 2002/03.
- L&Q are currently developing 8 homes at the rear of Sebastian Court specifically for people with learning disabilities – together with 8 general needs homes.

Presentation Housing Association

- Lack of local presence – currently Presentation have no homes in Barking and Dagenham. As their portfolio grows as members of the RSL panel and as the significance of our position in Thames Gateway in terms of new developments takes hold, we will negotiate that they set up a management service base in the borough.
- They have demonstrated a commitment to Barking and Dagenham by acquiring at risk the Pipers pub site for redevelopment. Planning consent has now been granted – taking an environmental eyesore and transforming it to give affordable new homes.
- Presentation have demonstrated a commitment to eco – home standards by working with the architect for the BedZed scheme for new planned developments (including the Pipers site).

- This RSL received the seventh highest investment allocation from the Housing Corporation. In the Corporation's annual assessment it is stated "Presentation has responded positively to the regeneration agenda. Their experience and success in this field has led them to refocus and create a new group structure that will allow the association to become a social investment agency".
- Presentation are providing valuable support and staff time to contribute to the development of the Council's first BME Housing Strategy.

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THE EXECUTIVE**17 FEBRUARY 2004****REPORT OF THE HOUSING ASSOCIATIONS SCRUTINY PANEL**

HOUSING ASSOCIATIONS SCRUTINY PANEL	FOR DECISION
<p><i>Final Reports of Scrutiny Panels are submitted to the Executive as set out in paragraph 11 of Article 5B of the Constitution.</i></p>	
<p><u>Summary</u></p>	
<p>This report outlines the work of the Housing Associations Scrutiny Panel, for comment by the Scrutiny Management Board and The Executive and for decision by Assembly. Having regard to the terms of reference, the report raises the following key points:</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trickle Transfer Programme - in its current state this programme is no longer a viable option for the Council because the Local Authority Social Housing Grant has ended. • Right to Buy and Right to Acquire Schemes - there is considerable disparity between these. • Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ differing levels of customer satisfaction. ➤ regeneration benefits through closer working with RSLs. ➤ recently developed mechanisms to ensure RSLs will be held accountable for their services. ➤ an ongoing restructuring of housing rents for a convergence of rents between RSL and Council properties. ➤ comparison of standard response times and the complaints procedures between RSL and the Council. ➤ consultation with RSLs and RSL tenants. 	
<p><u>Recommendations</u></p>	
<p>This Panel makes the following recommendations and observations:</p>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the Trickle Transfer Programme in its current state is no longer a viable option for the Council because the Local Authority Social Housing Grant has ended. In the unlikely event that the Director of Housing and Health's further investigations might prove there to be a positive and tenable case for continuing the Trickle Transfer Programme, the Director should submit a report to the Executive and the Assembly for consideration, as this would be a major policy issue for the Council. 2. That RSLs will be held accountable for services through four key channels: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the new Housing Strategy Officer will monitor compliance of RSLs in terms of management performance, nomination rights, and community development, and will also make sure tenant satisfaction surveys are undertaken and reported. 	

- the RSL Forum, through the Barking and Dagenham Partnership Housing Sub Group, will address regeneration and new developments, management services to tenants, nominations, anti-social behaviour, community safety, community development and tenant participation.
 - the Barking and Dagenham Housing Association will have responsibility for all the homes transferred to Stort Valley Housing Association from the Council plus all of its new build (some 500 homes in the Borough);
 - under current arrangements, the RSL Preferred Partner Panel members will undertake all new affordable housing developments in the Borough and the ultimate sanction of being removed from it will encourage RSLs to deliver satisfactory services.
3. That, in order to monitor the success of the mechanisms designed to ensure accountability of Housing Associations' management services, this Panel should reconvene at a period no later than a year after completion of its investigations to consider an evaluation report, particularly on RSLs.

Contact: Councillor F Barns	Lead Member	Tel: 020 8594 1509 Email: fred.barns@lbbd.gov.uk
John Barry	Democratic and Electoral Services	Tel: 020 8227 2352 Fax: 020 8227 2171 Minicom: 020 8227 2685 E-mail: john.barry@lbbd.gov.uk

1. Introduction

- 1.1 At its meeting of 18 December 2002, the Scrutiny Management Board (SMB) received a report from the Director of Housing and Health in response to a suggestion by Councillor Liam Smith that the policy of trickle transfer of void houses to Stort Valley Housing Association should be reviewed in light of the Government's proposed changes to the housing capital finance rules.
- 1.2 The SMB agreed to set up a Scrutiny Panel to consider issues relevant to the trickle transfer programme of houses to RSLs and, following a request from Councillor Mick McCarthy, the management services provided by RSLs to their tenants and estates.

2. Membership

- 2.1 The membership of the Panel originally comprised Councillors W F L Barns (Lead Member), Ms M G Baker, A H G Cooper, M A McCarthy and L A Smith. Following Councillor Smith's appointment to the Executive his place on the Scrutiny Panel was taken by Councillor R C Little.
- 2.3 After some initial difficulty finding a candidate, Mr J McDermott was appointed as the Panel's external representative.

2.4 Ken Jones, Interim Head of Housing Strategy, was the Lead Client Officer, Jeremy Grint, Head of Regeneration, was the Independent Scrutiny Support Officer and John Barry, Democratic and Electoral Services, supported the Panel.

3. Terms of Reference

3.1 The terms of reference of the Panel were:

1. To examine the Trickle Transfer Programme under which the Council transfers stock to a Housing Association and to comment on the appropriateness of the Programme in the light of the Government's proposals on Housing and Finance. In doing so, to consider (a) possible alternative ways of property disposal, and (b) apparent delays in the transfer process and resultant void periods.
2. To look also at various aspects related to the housing services provided by Housing Associations including:
 - Comparisons of rent levels and rent convergence, and of repairs policies;
 - The Management services provided by Housing Associations and how to ensure accountability for properties that have been transferred and any future new build;
 - Matters associated with complaints about non or poor service delivery by Housing Associations and how to access their service point contacts;
 - The Right to Acquire Scheme, its take up and how it compares with the Council's Right to Buy Scheme.
3. To have regard to any Equalities and Diversity issues.
4. To report back with findings and any recommendations.

4. Work Programme

4.1 The Panel's work can be divided into three main areas- Trickle Transfer Programme, RSLs, and consultation/evidence. Set out below is the work undertaken within each of these areas.

4.2 Trickle Transfer Programme

As the Panel commenced its work, the Director of Housing and Health was examining the policy of Trickle Transfer of void properties to Housing Associations in light of the Government's proposed changes to housing capital finance rules.

In looking at the Trickle Transfer Programme, the Panel considered the following:

- the Executive's decision of 11 March 2003 to apply a discount of 10% to the final batch of 40 properties in the Trickle Transfer Programme.

- problems with continuing the Trickle Transfer Programme, particularly as this was considered highly unlikely because:
 - ministerial consent would have to be given to increase the maximum number of properties allowed in this scheme; and
 - the imminent cessation of the Local Authority Social Housing Grant (LASHG) which underpins the whole scheme would make the transfer of housing stock considerably less attractive.
- implications of pursuing Trickle Transfer without the LASHG.
- the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's (ODPM) position on extending the maximum number of properties allowed under Trickle Transfer.
- options and underpinning principles for the continuation of Trickle Transfers, following ministerial approval from the ODPM granting the Local Authority permission to transfer a further 111 Council properties.

4.3 Registered Social Landlords

The Panel looked at various issues around Housing Association management, including:

- the creation of a post in the Housing Strategy Division specifically created to monitor management performance standards of RSL's and the nomination rights given to the Council for re-lets of properties.
- the creation of the:
 - RSL Preferred Partner Panel
 - the RSL Developer Forum
 - the Local Housing Company (Barking and Dagenham Housing Association)
- RSLs' potential contribution to regeneration programmes in Barking & Dagenham.
- the RSL's 'Right to Acquire' scheme compared with the Council's 'Right to Buy' scheme and their relative impacts.
- comparisons between RSLs and the Local Authority in the areas of rent levels, repairs policies and complaints procedures.
- the issue of ensuring greater accountability from RSLs to the Council and their tenants.

4.4 Consultation/Evidence

The Panel consulted with RSL residents and representatives of Housing Associations as follows:

- spoke to three RSL residents.
- made two site visits to RSL properties.
- received a written report from a resident.
- met with John Lefever, Thames Gateway Manager, and Mike Ward, Business Growth Manager, representing Stort Valley Housing Association.
- met with Dawn Smart, Head of Development, Margaret Wright, Thames Gateway Regional Director, Karl Allison, Social Investment Manager and Tony Hughes, Area Manager representing the Southern Housing Group
- met with Victor daCunha, Managing Director, Jonathan Gregory, Head of Neighbourhood Management and David Anteh, Head of Customer Services representing East Thames Housing Group.
- met with Steve Yianni, North Thames Region Director, and Dianne Hart, Head of Housing representing London & Quadrant Housing Group

5. Equalities, Diversity and Health Issues

- 5.1 Considerations around equalities, diversity and health are adequately covered in existing arrangements with RSLs.

6. Observations/Conclusions

To examine the Trickle Transfer Programme under which the Council transfers stock to a Housing Association and to comment on the appropriateness of the Programme in the light of the Government's proposals on Housing and Finance:

- 6.1 The Panel was of the view that subsequent to the ending of the LASHG it was highly unlikely that any further properties would be transferred under the Trickle Transfer Programme. In the unlikely event that the Director of Housing and Health's further investigations might prove there to be a positive and tenable case for continuing the Trickle Transfer Programme, the Director should submit a report to the Executive and Assembly for consideration, as this would be a major policy issue for the Council.

Comparisons of rent levels and rent convergence and of repairs policies:

- 6.2 Using a formula to be set by the ODPM, housing rents are to be restructured so that within 10 years of April 2002 RSL rents will only be 5-10% higher than the Local Authority rent for an equivalent property. Already efforts have been made in Barking and Dagenham to equalise the rents (for example, rents for the void houses transferred to Stort Valley under the Trickle Transfer Programme are within 5% higher than identical (though un-refurbished) Council properties).
- 6.3 The Panel compared both standard response times and complaint procedures between the Council and some of its RSL partners. In both cases, the differences in times and procedures varies very little between RSL and the Council. There may be questions about how accurately the tables reflect the real situation, but from the

Panel's interviews with residents it is clear that there are instances where the RSL procedure is better than the Council's own.

The Management services provided by Housing Associations and how to ensure accountability for properties that have been transferred and any future new build:

- 6.4 The establishment of a Local Housing Company, Barking & Dagenham Housing Association, between the Council and Stort Valley Housing Association to take ownership and management of all of Stort Valley's housing in the Borough is a demonstration of practical benefits to be gained from partnerships. The board of the Company includes equal numbers of Councillors and tenant representatives.
- 6.5 RSLs will be held accountable for services through four key channels:
- (i) the new Housing Strategy Officer will monitor compliance of RSLs in terms of management performance, nomination rights, community development and will also ensure tenant satisfaction surveys are undertaken and reported;
 - (ii) the RSL Forum through the Barking and Dagenham Partnership Housing Sub Group will address regeneration and new developments, management services to tenants, nominations, anti-social behaviour, community safety, community development and tenant participation;
 - (iii) the Barking and Dagenham Housing Association will have responsibility for all the homes transferred to Stort Valley from the Council plus all of its new build (some 500 homes in the borough);
 - (iv) under current arrangements, the RSL Preferred Partner Panel members will undertake new affordable housing developments in the borough and the ultimate sanction of being removed from it will encourage RSLs to deliver satisfactory services.
- 6.6 The Panel was satisfied that there is a definite link between regeneration and the supply of new houses and therefore a clear reason for working in Partnership with RSLs. Through the use of various sources of funding, the Housing Corporation's Approved Development Programme, the Challenge Fund, private finance sources as well as their own private reserves, RSLs are able to help towards achieving some of the key targets from the Council's Housing Strategy action plan. RSLs will also play a major role in helping the Council achieve the Decent Homes Standards.

Matters associated with complaints about non or poor service delivery by Housing Associations and how to access their service point contacts:

- 6.7 There are a number of Housing Associations operating in the Borough. These and the number of properties managed by each are appended.
- 6.8 Consultation with RSL residents has shown differing levels of satisfaction with RSL management. Two residents of London & Quadrant properties listed numerous complaints, which included anti-social behaviour, faulty lighting and parking problems. There was evidence that London & Quadrant had made efforts to address some of these issues, but they had thus far failed to remedy the problems. By

comparison, the Stort Valley resident commented positively on both the condition of the property when she first moved in and the ease with which she could contact the RSL to report repairs.

The Right to Acquire Scheme, its take up and how it compares with the Council's Right to Buy Scheme:

- 6.9 It was noted that there was a considerable disparity between the take-up of the Council's Right to Buy Scheme (some 18,000 homes have been purchased since the schemes inception in 1980) and the RSL's Right to Acquire (of their 2,500 housing stock, only 3 properties have been sold). It seems probable this difference is in part attributable to the variance in discounts available to potential home-owners (the maximum discount for RSL tenants in Barking and Dagenham being £13,500 compared to £38,000 for Council tenants) and an ongoing ten-year restructuring of rents, which aims to reduce the present 15% difference in sector rents to 5-10%. In effect RSL involvement ensures the continuation of social housing stock.

Background papers used in the preparation of this report: -

Minutes of the Housing Associations Scrutiny Panel 18 March, 20 May, 24 June, 22 July, 3 September, 24 September, 15 October, 28 October, 11 November and 10 December 2003.

Housing Associations/Properties Managed

Housing Association	Number of Properties in the Borough
Swan	11
Estuary	23
Warden	25
Boleyn & Forest	152
Stort Valley	508
Hanover	60
Southern	166
London & Quadrant	142
East Thames	238
Solon	31
Anchor	31
Springboard	372
Circle 33	8
Peabody	no reply yet
Metropolitan	no properties
Ujima	no properties

THE EXECUTIVE**17 FEBRUARY 2004****JOINT REPORT FROM THE DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE STRATEGY AND
THE DIRECTOR OF LEISURE AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES**

REGENERATING THE LOCAL ECONOMY - CROSS CUTTING BEST VALUE REVIEW	FOR DECISION	
<p><i>To obtain the Executive's agreement to the Best Value Review Report and Improvement Plan.</i></p> <p><u>Summary</u></p> <p>This report sets out the conclusions of the cross-cutting Best Value Review of Regeneration functions.</p> <p>The Review was undertaken between April 2002 and December 2003. The requirements of the Best Value statutory guidance were applied to a broad cross-cutting service. The report provides a summary of these stages and, for the first time, brings together the significant achievements of the council in regeneration activities and proposes an improvement plan designed to improve the effectiveness of the Council's regeneration role.</p> <p><u>Recommendations</u></p> <p>The Executive is asked to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Note the Report and to comment on whether the Report reflects the achievements of the Council. 2. Agree the improvements and actions detailed in the Improvement Plan. 3. Agree that those actions requiring Neighbourhood Renewal Funding become the priority schemes for the council when submitting applications 4. Agree to receive reports on the implementation of the improvement actions in line with the Report. <p><u>Reason</u></p> <p>This report identifies the key actions the Council needs to agree to implement the findings of the Regenerating the Local Economy Best Value Review. The proposed Improvement Plan will lead to significant improvement over the next five years.</p>		
Contact Councillor Kallar	Portfolio Member - Regeneration	E-mail: sidney.kallar@lbbd.gov.uk

John Tatam	Director of Corporate Strategy	Tel: 020 8227 2138 Fax: 020 8227 2346 Minicom: 020 8227 3034 Email: john.tatam@lbbd.gov.uk
Niall Bolger	Director of Leisure and Environmental Services	Tel: 020 8227 3200 Fax: 020 8227 3149 Minicom: 020 8227 3034 Email: niall.bolger@lbbd.gov.uk
Nick Kingham	Head of Strategy & Support, Leisure and Environmental Services	Tel: 020 8227 3363 Fax: 020 8227 3149 Minicom: 020 8227 3034 Email: nick.kingham@lbbd.gov.uk

Financial Implications

During the course of the Review, Members have invested an extra £700,000 in the regeneration service in recognition of the issues raised above. The improvement plan also includes a number of actions, which will be dependant on securing Neighbourhood Renewal Funding (NRF). If this is not forthcoming then alternative sources of funding will need to be identified.

Background Papers

- Community Strategy
- Restructuring Regeneration - Preparing for the Future Executive Report 16 September 2003 Minute 111
- Economic Development Strategy Executive Report 28 October 2003 Minute 173
- Workforce Development Executive Report 23 September 2003 Minute 119
- UDC Consultation Paper
- LBBB, Barking and Dagenham: An Urban Renaissance in East London 2001.
- Heart of Thames Gateway: An Urban Strategy for London Riverside, July 2002.
- Learning and Skills Council, LSC Workforce Development Strategy.
- London Development Agency, Economic Development Strategy, 2001
- Mayor of London, the Draft London Plan - Draft Spatial Development Strategy for Greater London, June 2002
- Thames Gateway London Partnership, Going East - Thames Gateway: the future of London and the South East 2002.

THE EXECUTIVE**17 FEBRUARY 2004****REPORT FROM THE DIRECTOR OF LEISURE AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES**

LAND DISPOSAL	FOR DECISION	
<p><i>This report concerns a strategic issue, namely the sale of Council property which could have a significant effect on one or more wards is therefore reserved to the Executive.</i></p>		
<p><u>Summary</u></p> <p>The report seeks authority to dispose of the freehold interests of the property assets identified in the report and to remove two properties from the disposal programme.</p> <p><u>Wards Affected</u> - Abbey, Albion, Becontree, Chadwell Heath, Eastbrook, Mayesbrook and Village Ward.</p> <p><u>Recommendations</u></p> <p>The Executive is recommended to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approve the disposal of the freehold interests in the land and vacant sites shown in Appendix 1 (and shown on site plans Appendix 2 to 11); 2. Note that the terms of the sales will be undertaken by the Director of Leisure and Environmental Services (as prescribed by the Scheme of Delegation, Section P and Land Acquisitions and Disposals Rules in the Constitution and Legislation); and, 3. Approve the removal of the Sterry Road Depot, Dagenham and Rogers Road Depot Dagenham from the Land Disposal Programme. <p><u>Reason</u></p> <p>The decision will permit the disposal of surplus property as part of a programmed disposal approach to identifying and re-using surplus and under utilised land and property to fund the Capital Programme and assist the Council in achieving its Community Priorities of "Regenerating the Local Economy", "Improving, Health, Housing and Social Care" and "Raising General Pride in the Borough".</p>		
<p>Contact: Colin Beever</p>	<p>Head of Property Service</p>	<p>Tel:020 8227 3336 Fax: 020 8227 3223 Minicom: 020 8227 3034 E-mail: colin.beever@lbbd.gov.uk</p>

1. Background

- 1.1 At its meeting held on 26 March 2002, the Executive considered the Land Disposal Programme in the context of the Council's wish to diversify the range of housing and improve local choice. This matches with the Council's 2020 Vision which seeks '*to improve quality, choice and availability of housing opportunities accessible to all sections of the community*'. The Disposals Programme can deliver a flow of affordable housing with a range of tenures and types together with a significant increase in aspirational housing.
- 1.2 On 26 November 2002 the Executive also approved the disposal of a substantial number of properties to support the Capital Programme.

2. Proposals

- 2.1 Since November 2002 additional properties have been identified as surplus to requirements and approval is now sought to dispose of these properties, which are identified on the attached Appendix 1. All the properties which it is proposed be sold are shown hatched on Appendices 2 to 11.

There is a separate Appendix 12 (which is in the Private Business section of this Agenda) that identifies the values of individual properties.

- 2.2 The exception to the above, but also included in Appendix 1 and specifically identified on Appendix 11, is the request to dispose of the public car park on Axe Street (to the rear of the Central Library). This car park has been identified as the site to accommodate some of the affordable housing which is to be constructed as part of the Town Square development proposals. Although it is proposed to re-provide the car parking within the Town Square development it is not proposed that any new car park is managed in-house and therefore there will be no replacement income from the new car park. In the situation where a car park is being closed it is usual for some of that displaced cars to park in other car parks so the income at the alternative car parks is increased and off sets the loss. However, there are proposals which affect the other car parks in the Town Centre and it is likely that virtually all of the current income of £70,019 from the car park will be lost.
- 2.3 There are ongoing investigations into the use of Council land and property and it is expected that there will be further reports to the Executive seeking authority to dispose of vacant and surplus land. There may also be proposals to dispose of land and property which support the strategic aims and objectives of the Council.
- 2.4 The existing provision of child care places (this includes all types of child care - after school clubs, homework clubs, pre school facilities, child minders, day care etc) per head of child population in the Borough is the lowest in England. The former Sterry Road Depot, Dagenham which has been identified as a suitable location and property for the provision of a Children's Resource Centre which will provide a variety of services including pre-school places and a support club for child minders.

- 2.5 The provision of Children's Resource Centres is supported by Government and £3,000,000 has been ring-fenced by the Department of Education and Skills (DfES) for the Council to draw down for appropriate schemes.
- 2.6 A further report from the Director of Education, the Arts and Libraries will be prepared when the proposal is finalised. However, authority is now sought to remove the former Sterry Road Depot from the Approved Disposal Programme and use it to provide a Children's Resource Centre.
- 2.7 The Director of Housing and Health is proposing to create a Borough-wide caretaking service for the Council owned flats. It is proposed that this service be located at several locations throughout the Borough and the Rogers Road Depot has been identified as one suitable location. A further report about the use of this depot will be prepared when the proposal is finalised.

3. Strategic Issues

- 3.1 The disposals will assist in rationalising the Council's land holdings and will generate capital receipts, which will provide resources to fund the Council's Corporate and Community aims and objectives.
- 3.2 The properties are vacant, unused or surplus assets some of which are subject to vandalism and other anti-social behaviours. The disposal of these assets will result in them being brought back into use and will help regenerate the local economy and improve pride in the Borough. Additionally, all the sites will be used to provide residential accommodation and help to meet the target for the provision of new housing in the Borough.

4. Financial Issues

- 4.1 With the exception of the Axe Street Car Park, none of the assets generate an income but the management of the properties, security and vandalism are resulting in Revenue spending which will stop when the properties are sold.
- 4.2 The sale of the Axe Street Car Park is likely to result in the loss of the majority of the £70,019 per annum income but the site will be used to develop residential units (100% affordable) to support the Town Square development.

5. Consultation

- 5.1 The following people were consulted during the preparation of this report and have raised no objections.

Councillor Geddes, Portfolio Holder for Property Services.

Leisure and Environmental Services Department

Bob Cooper, Interim Head of Finance

Laura Williams, Management Accountant Finance

Tina Woodhouse, Finance

Dick Trott, Property
Allan Aubrey, Head of Leisure and Community
Damien Parker, Acting Group Manager Cemeteries, Parks & Security
Mike Mitchell, Head of Environmental Services.
Mike Livesey, Head of Civil Engineering
Julie Davis, Project Manager, Regeneration

Housing and Health Department

Jim Ripley, Head of Landlord Services
Ken Jones, Head of Housing Strategy
Isabella Rossi, Project Manager, Housing Strategy
Derek Barclay, Head of Estate Services

Education, Arts and Libraries Department

Chris Bestwick, Children's Centre Strategic Manager, Children's Support
Paul Pearson, Head of Finance
Jenny Crossley, Education Officer - Policy & Planning

Social Services Department

Bob Kedward, Head of Children & Families Division
Andy Bere, Assets Manager

Background Papers

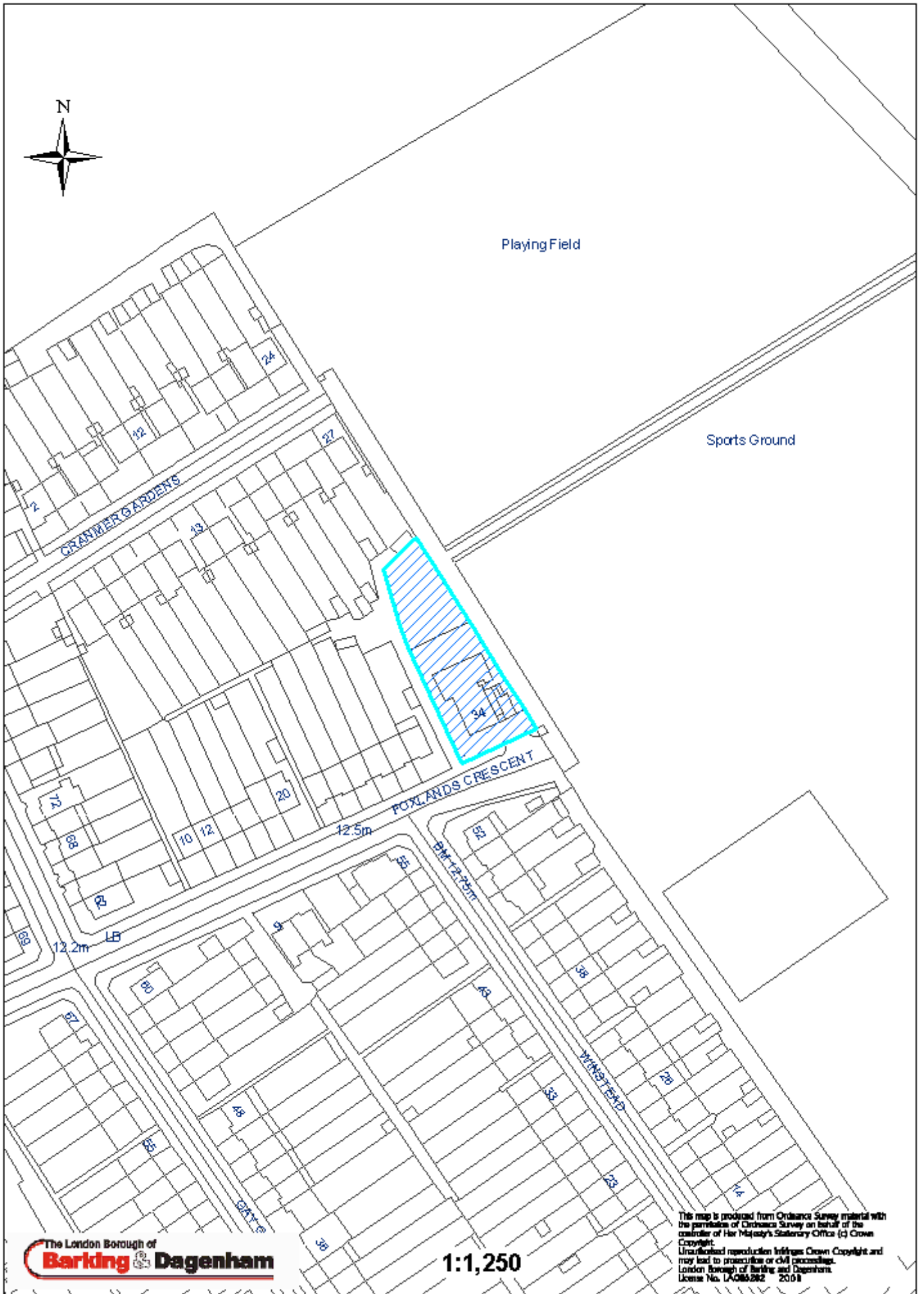
- Executive Minute 412, 26 March 2002 re: Land Disposal Programme/Corporate Asset Management
- Executive Minute 238, 26 November 2002 re: Land Disposal Programme and Frizlands Lane

LIST OF SITES / LAND FOR DISPOSAL

Foxlands Crescent, Dagenham	Appendix 2
Eastbrook Depot, Eastbrook Avenue, Dagenham	Appendix 3
Land at Cadiz Road, Dagenham	Appendix 4
Rose Lane, Roles Grove and Sheepcotes Road	Appendix 5
Rugby Road, Blithbury Road, Dagenham	Appendix 6
Highview House; Highgrove Road	Appendix 7
Thaxted House, Siviter Way, Dagenham	Appendix 8
Victoria Road, Barking	Appendix 9
Blake Avenue; Barking,	Appendix 10
Axe Street Car Park, Barking,	Appendix 11

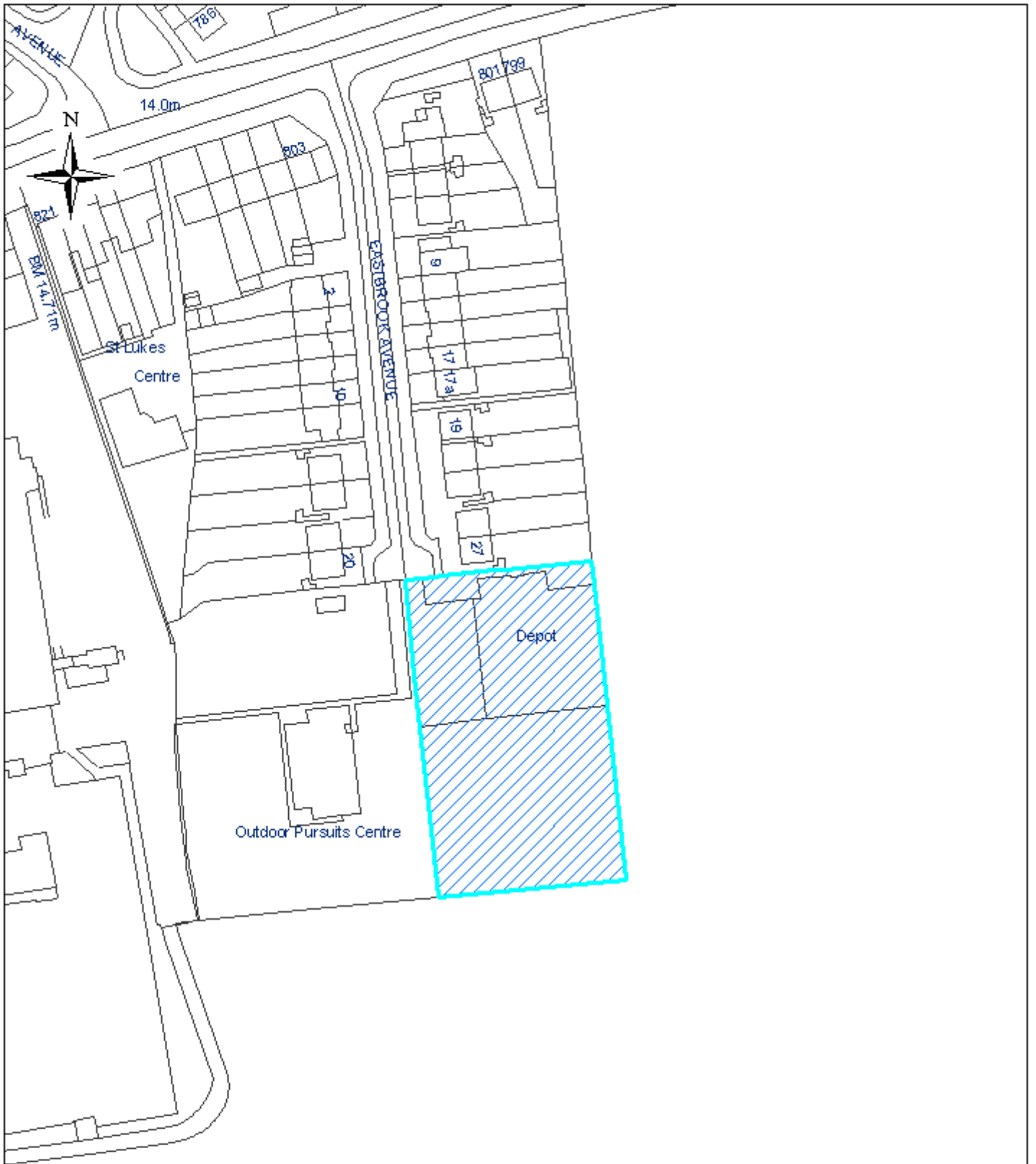
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Appendix 2



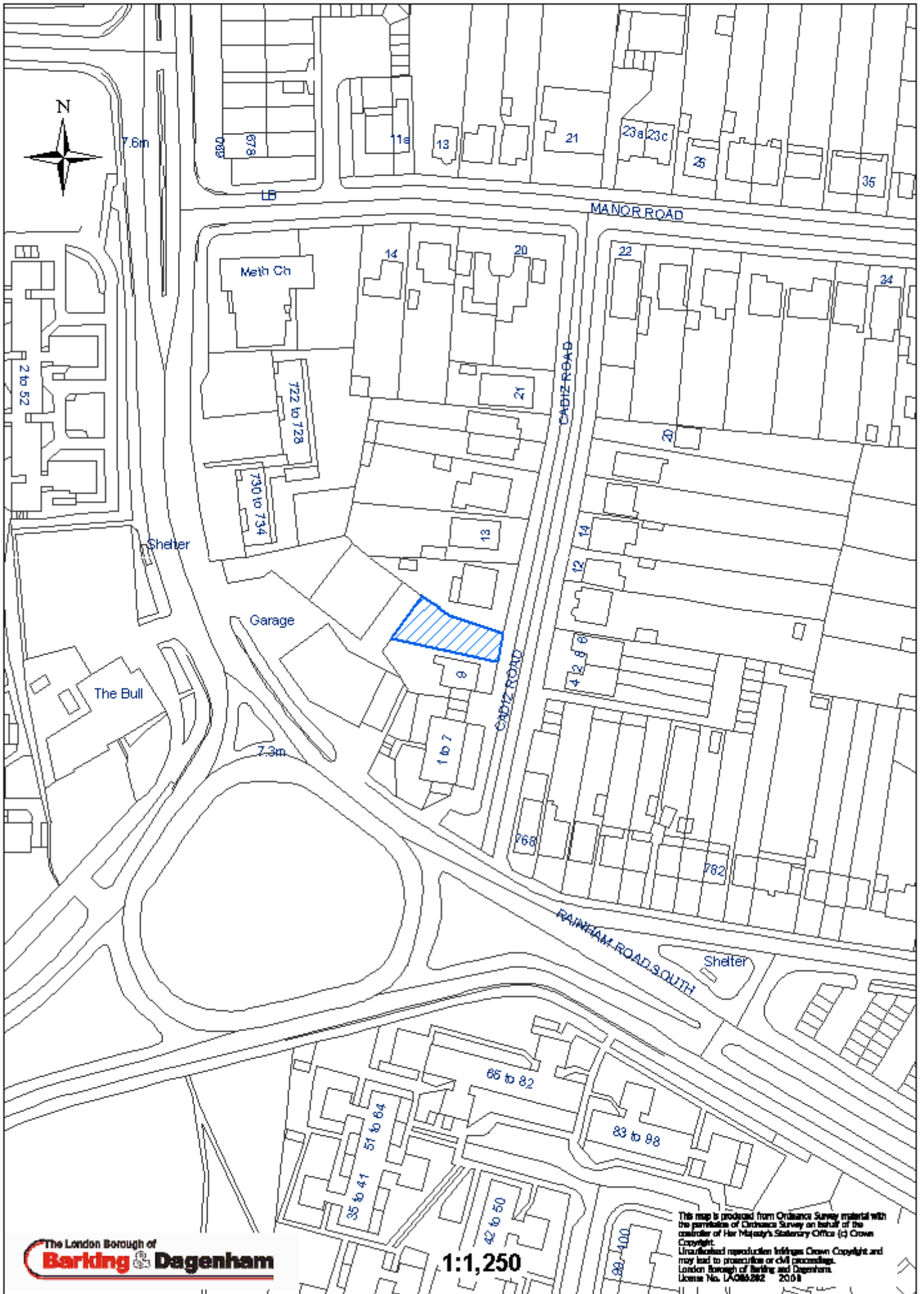
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Appendix 3



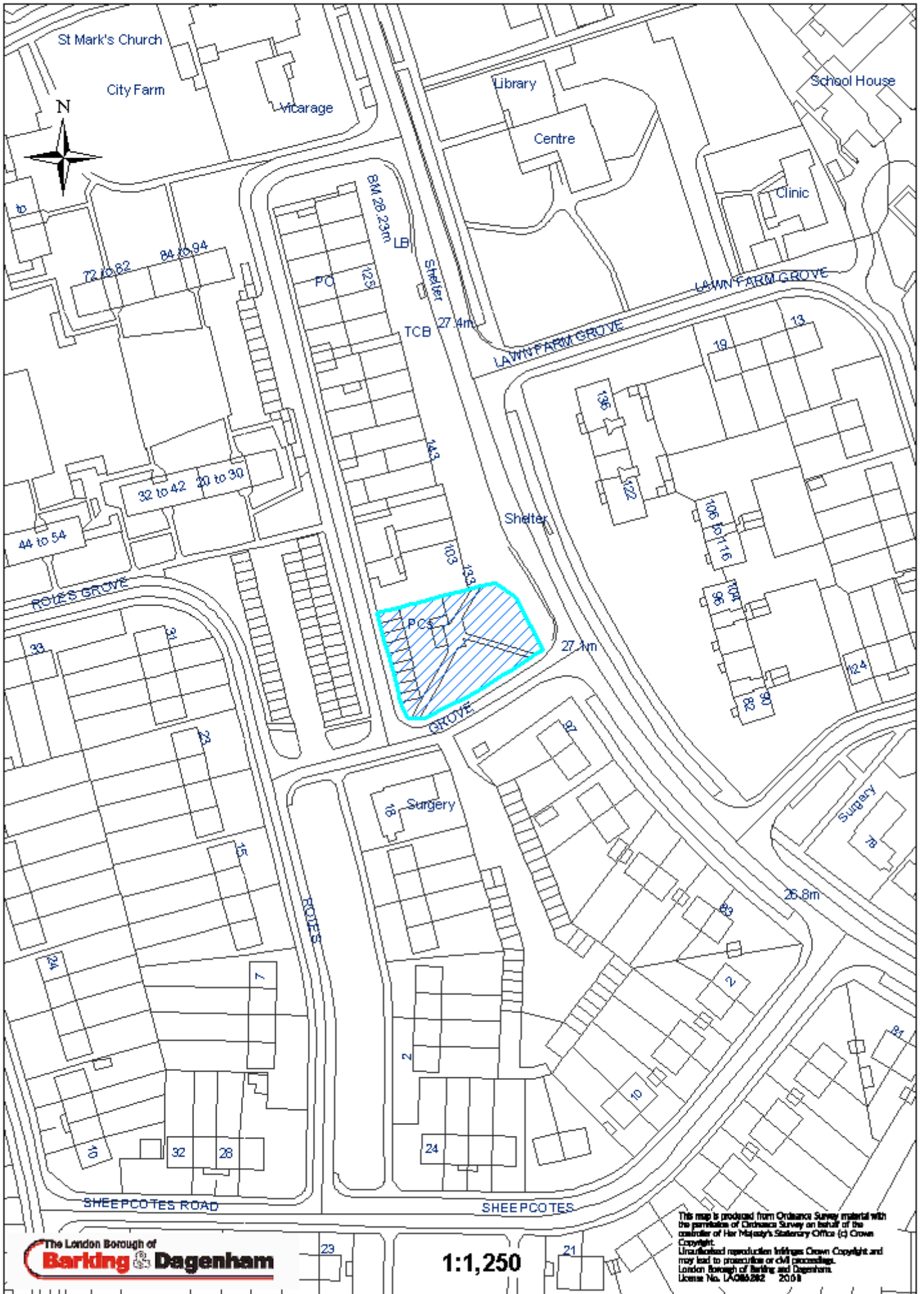
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Appendix 4



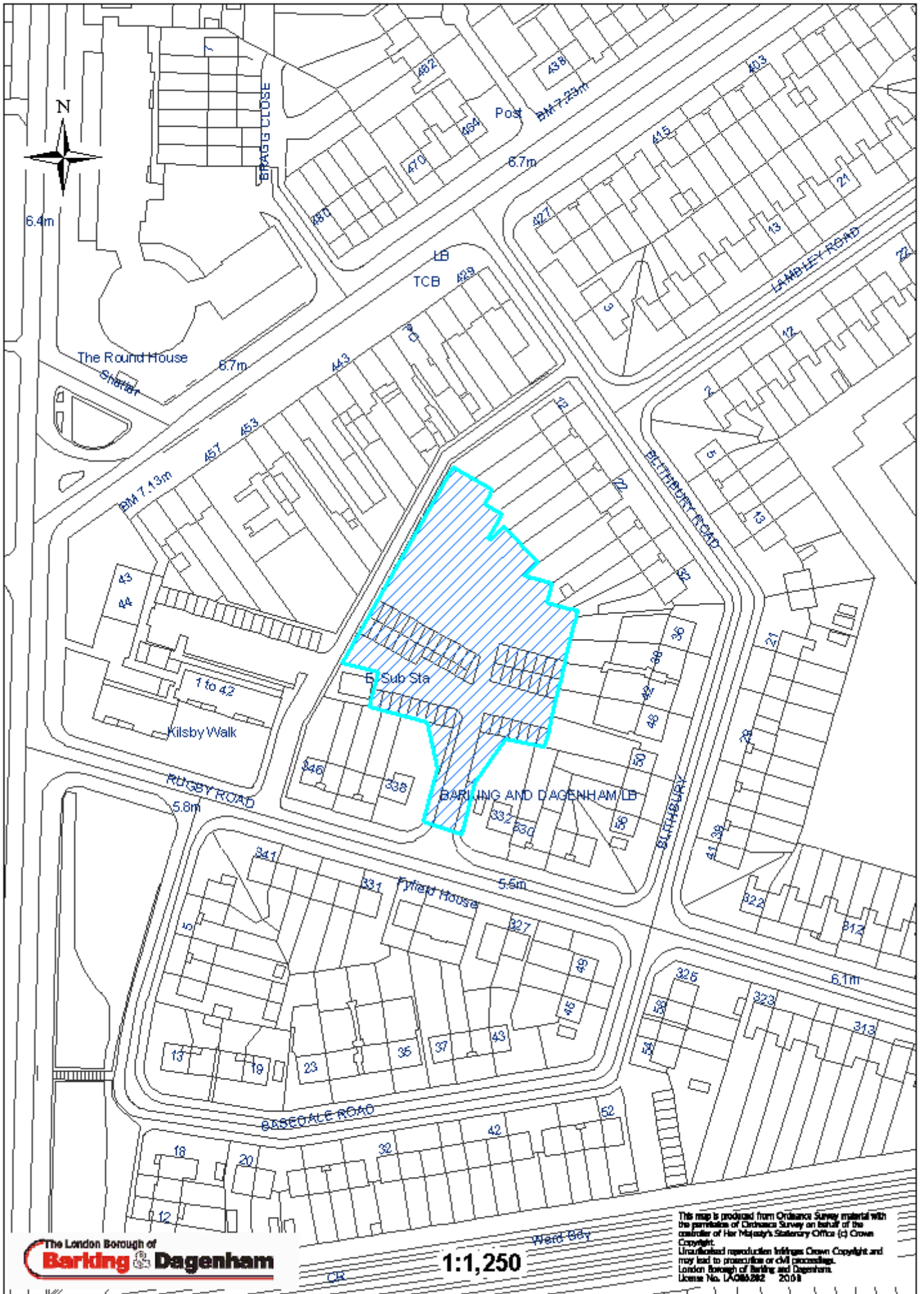
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Appendix 5



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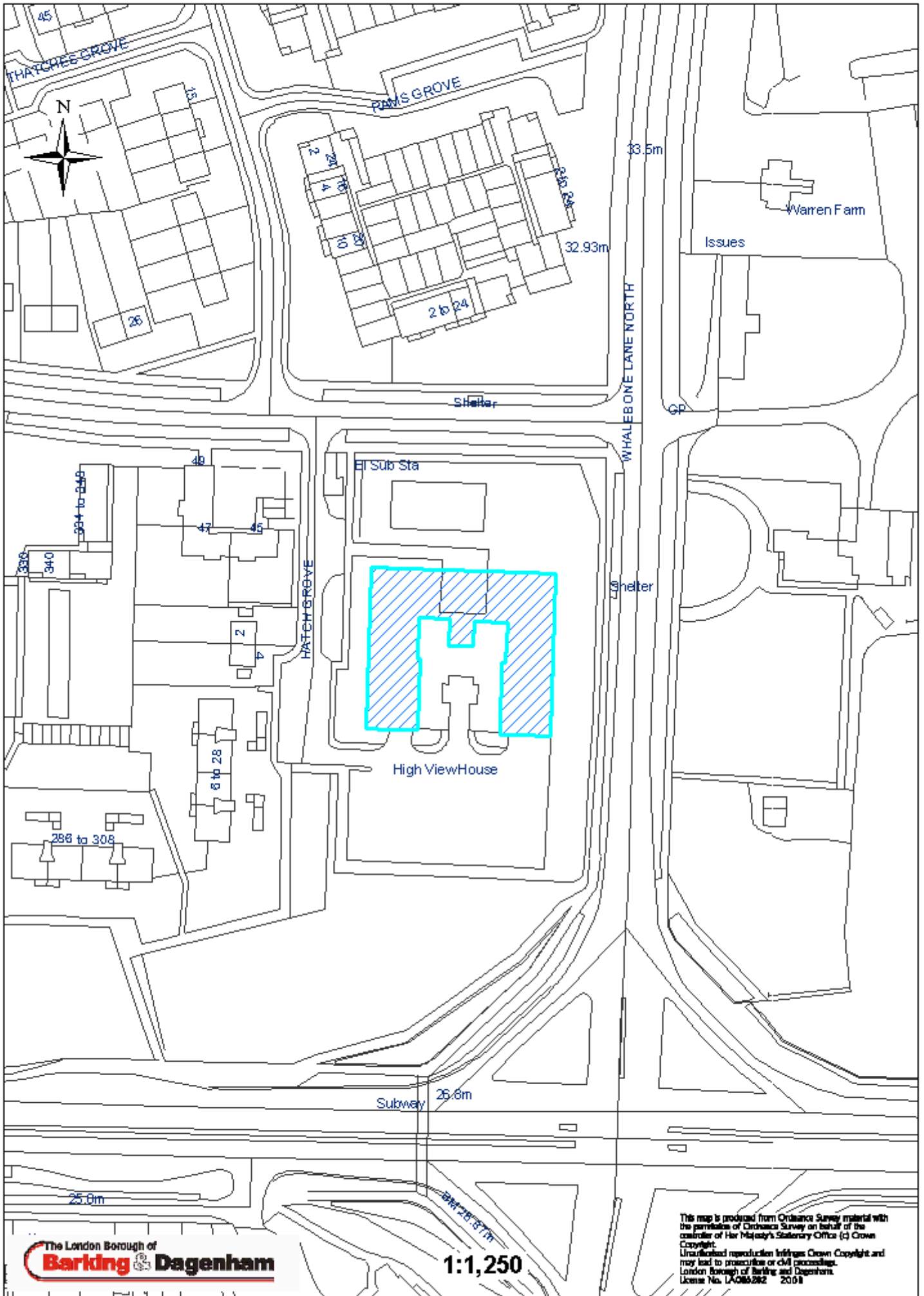
Appendix 6



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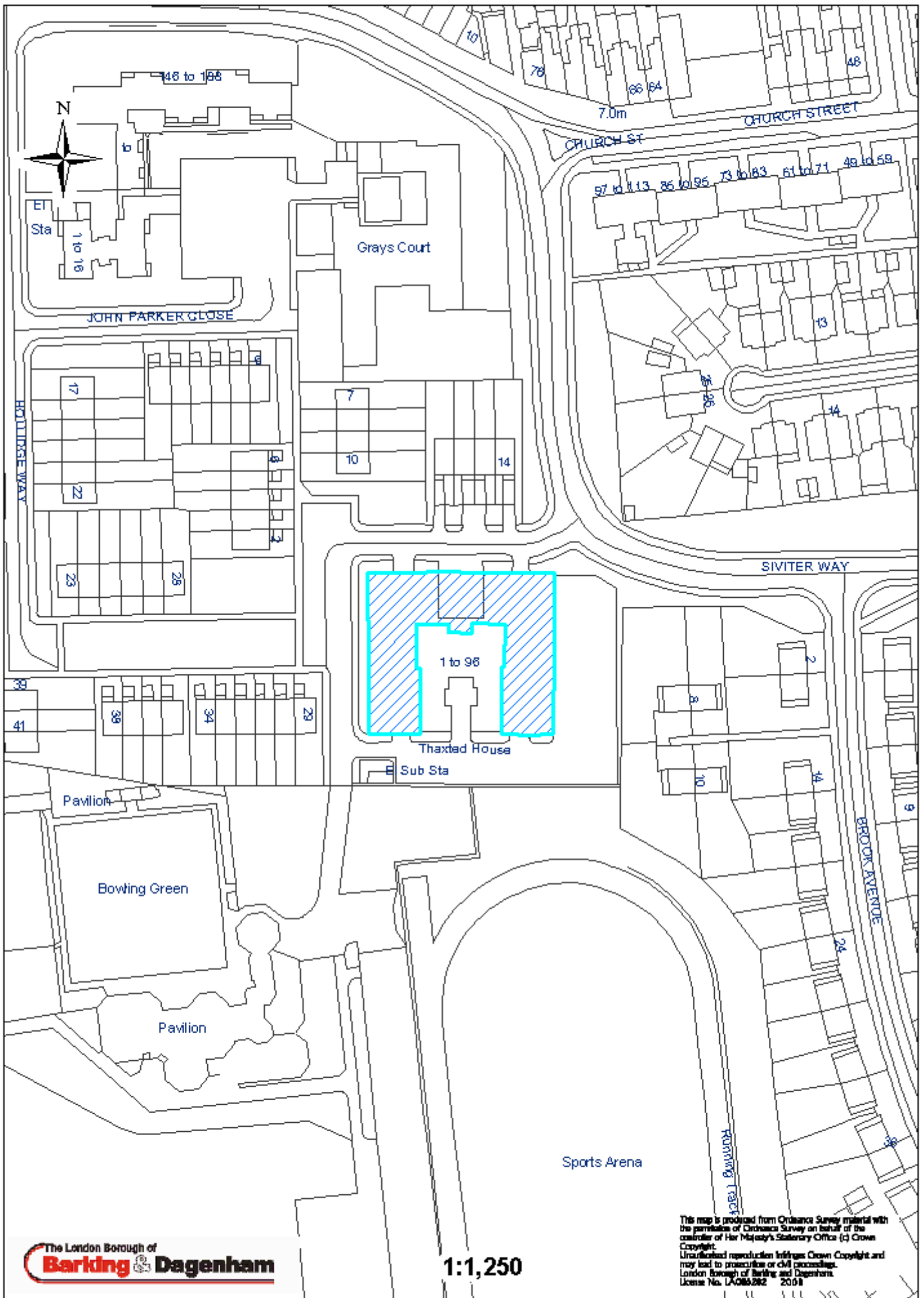
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Appendix 7



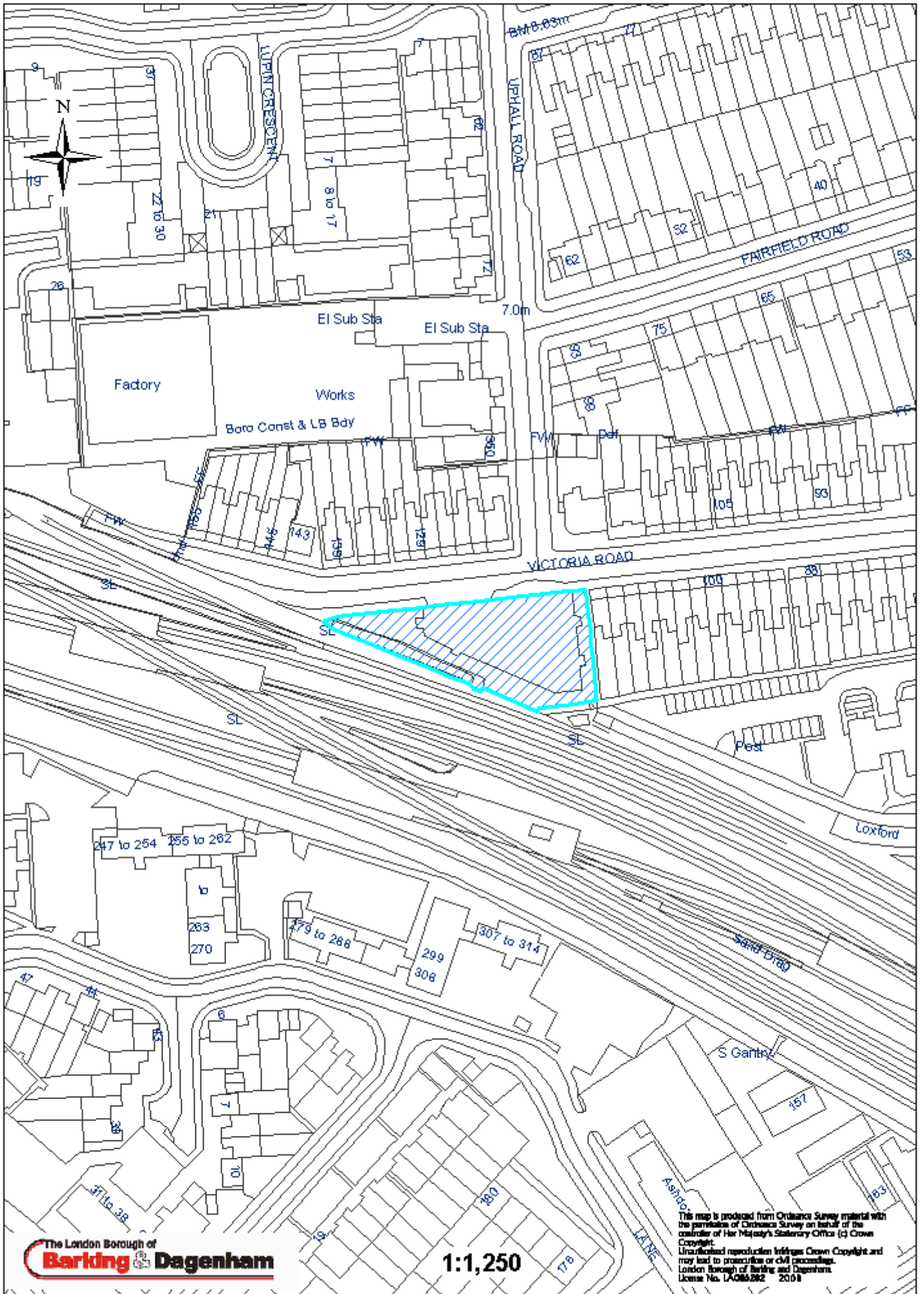
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Appendix 8



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Appendix 9



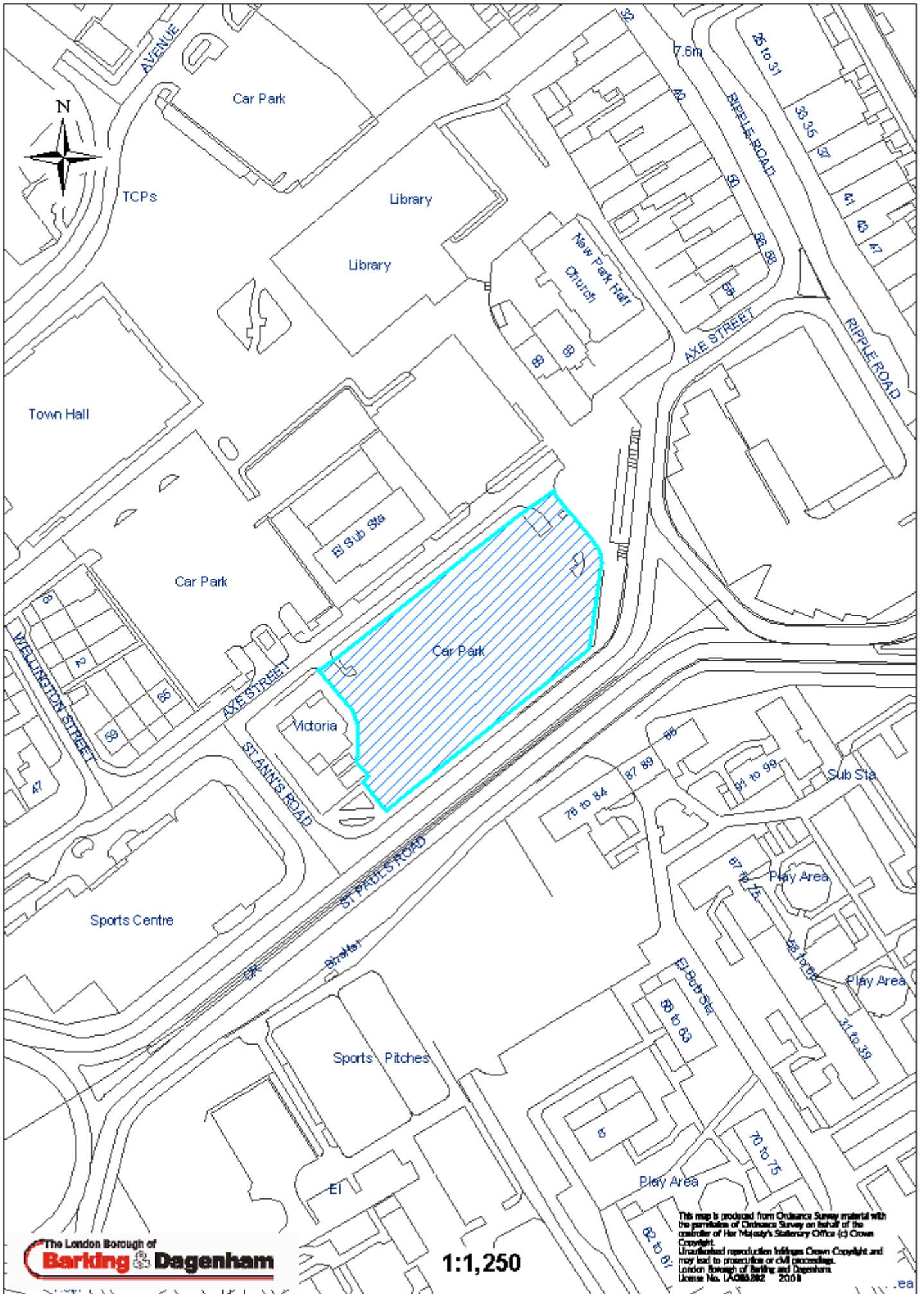
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Appendix 10



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Appendix 11



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THE EXECUTIVE**17 FEBRUARY 2004****REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF HOUSING AND HEALTH**

LOCAL AUTHORITY REGENERATION SCHEMES: BIDS FOR FUNDING FROM REGIONAL POT	FOR DECISION	
<p><i>This report deals with funding bids to progress Council estate renewal schemes.</i></p> <p><u>Summary</u></p> <p>This report provides details of a new Government funding source for Local Authority housing regeneration projects. The funding available for this regional programme is relatively low and is targeted at small to medium size estate renewal schemes.</p> <p>Given the criteria for project bids under this programme, which are set out in the report, it is proposed that support be given to 2 bids for outline estate renewal schemes to benefit London Road / North Street and Cadiz Court.</p> <p>The lead Members for Regeneration and Housing, Health and Social Care have been consulted on this matter.</p> <p><u>Recommendation</u></p> <p>The Executive is asked to support bids under this new funding source for housing regeneration schemes for estate renewal schemes at London Road / North Street and Cadiz Court.</p> <p><u>Reasons</u></p> <p>The potential schemes at these 2 estates best fit the criteria for this new funding source. Securing the funding for estate renewal will bring forward schemes which will assist the Council to achieve the decent homes target and meet broader regeneration objectives.</p>		
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1. Background

- 1.1 The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) have for 2004/05 and future years aggregated the capital resources for housing which had formerly been available under the Housing Investment Programme for Local Authorities and the Housing Corporation's Approved Development Programme for Registered social Landlords

(RSLs). Within this a stream has been created for Local Authority Regeneration Schemes for council housing estates. The Government Office for London (GOL) informed London councils on 23 December 2003 of the criteria and invited bids - with a deadline imposed of 30 January 2004.

- 1.2 The funding available under this programme to the London region is £38.9million for 2004/05 and £41.8million for 2005/06.

2. Criteria for project bids

- 2.1 Projects must deliver an improvement in the condition or replacement of the housing stock to address the future demand for affordable homes and be consistent with overall regeneration plans. It must also be demonstrated that schemes have the support of the local community, in particular from tenants / residents within the specific estate. In particular, the stated criteria are to:

- increase the supply and / or density of homes
- improve energy efficiency and affordable warmth
- produce a safe local environment
- deliver well designed public spaces
- address social exclusion
- produce an innovative approach

3. Proposal

- 3.1 Barking and Dagenham has a number of housing estates which would meet the criteria, though in the great majority of instances schemes are not progressed to the stage where bids could be made and in particular local residents have not been engaged.

- 3.2 At present there are 2 potential projects at London Road / North Street and Cadiz Court which could meet the criteria in that:

- substantial investment will be needed to achieve the decent homes standard
- the opportunity exists to both increase the supply and improve the quality of homes as well as substantially enhance the local environment
- the schemes can contribute to the delivery of wider regeneration objectives
- some consultation with local residents has begun

A report on the regeneration of London Road / North Street was prepared for the Executive on 27 January - the proposed bid is fully consistent with this.

The combined value of the bids is £5,130,000 (the Cadiz Court bid is for £2,500,000 and the London Road/North Street bid is for £2,630,000).

- 3.3 Following consultation with Councillors Kallar and Osborn, lead Members for regeneration and Housing, Health and Social Care, outline bids are being progressed with GOL. The Executive is asked to support this action.

3.4 There remain some details to be established from GOL on any conditions which may be attached to funding - for example, are nominations to the affordable homes produced to be shared. It is planned to report back to the Executive on progress with the bid and provide further details.

Background papers used in the preparation of this report:

- Letter from GOL dated 23 December 2003
- Executive Report - London Road / North Street Redevelopment (Minute 262, 27 January 2004)

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